



request for proposal

HOST THE 80TH MINNESOTA
GOVERNOR'S FISHING OPENER

Seeking Host Communities for the following event dates:
Friday, May 12–Saturday, May 13, 2028



The state of Minnesota is seeking proposals from communities interested in hosting the 2028 Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener. This event is a cooperative effort between the host community, Explore Minnesota, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and the Office of the Governor of Minnesota ("the State").

The Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener is an 80-year Minnesota tradition and an unparalleled opportunity for your community.

By hosting the 2028 event, your community will receive extensive media attention. This prestigious event draws media from across the state and throughout the region, offering a meaningful opportunity for your community to showcase its unique character and outdoor recreation opportunities. This can significantly raise public awareness and support of your community's marketing, development and civic goals. This is more than just a weekend event—it's a powerful platform to boost tourism, and to promote community livability, local businesses and conservation efforts to create a lasting, positive impact for your community.

Please contact Kari Brumback with any questions or to submit a proposal.

Kari Brumback

Explore Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener Coordinator

Phone: 651-757-1849

Email: kari.brumback@state.mn.us

overview

The goal of the Minnesota Governor’s Fishing Opener is to generate earned media coverage which showcases recreational fishing and encourages travel in Minnesota, and, more specifically, highlights tourism opportunities in the host community. This is achieved by hosting core events for invited media and official guests, which are coordinated by Minnesota state agencies – the Department of Natural Resources, Explore Minnesota, and the Governor’s Office – in cooperation with the host community. Public relations, radio, print, television, and social media covering these events will focus on Minnesota’s fishing and outdoor recreation opportunities, natural resources, and the host community’s assets. The resulting stories will inspire participation in recreational fishing in Minnesota and drive awareness of the host community to encourage travel.



community benefits

- **Earned media coverage** includes promotional event coverage, event-related media coverage and travel and community-related media coverage for the host community. Coverage may also include social media, stories, reels, and blog posts – across multiple platforms.
 - » A full report of earned media coverage and audience reach will be provided to the community following the Governor’s Fishing Opener
- **Increased economic activity** related to spending during these events in the form of lodging, food, shopping, entertainment and services.
- **Legacy benefits** may include a cultivated base of active community volunteers, community stewardship efforts resulting from an increased awareness of responsibility for natural resources preservation and protection, and overall civic pride.

eligible host community

Eligible community organizations that may apply to host the event include chambers of commerce, convention and visitors bureaus, resort associations, cities and municipalities, or a committee formed specifically to host the event.

proposal process

Proposals for Friday–Saturday, **May 12–13, 2028**, must be received by **December 19, 2026**.

Proposals must be emailed to kari.brumback@state.mn.us.

proposal evaluation

The cooperative state agencies will evaluate all proposals. The submission of a proposal does not obligate the State to award the event, and the responding community will not be recognized as an official host community until an agreement has been fully executed by all parties.

award to host community

The award to the host community is expected to be made by **April 2027**.

proposal outline

Reference the explanation of event requirements below, and please explain in detail the following elements in your proposal:

- Letter of Introduction
- Registration
- Lodging
- Media Row
- Youth Education Day
- Community Celebration
- Launch Ceremony
- Fishing
- Shore Lunch
- Other Community Information
- Insurance
- Financials
- Application

letter of introduction

Introduction of your organization and community. Please include why your community would like to host the Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener, including marketing, media relations and civic goals, and how hosting this historic event can help achieve your objectives.

registration

ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE

20–30 Media; 50 State of Minnesota staff members; 30 Legislative and Select Invitees; 50 Community Members or Sponsors; and 45 Boat Hosts. Total attendance is approximately 200.

REGISTRATION

An official list of invited guests will be determined by the State and host community, subject to approval by the Governor's Office. All event guests must register in advance. Participation is limited to invited guests only. No one will be allowed to participate in any portion of this event without prior approval. On-site registration of invited guests is at the discretion of the host community and subject to approval by the State.

REGISTRATION SYSTEM

Explore Minnesota will host the event website and online event registration system. Individual registration fees collected through this system will be paid directly to the host community via their credit card processor.

REGISTRATION TYPES & PAYMENT

Media: Invited media representatives are expected to be fully hosted by the community. The host community will provide complimentary lodging (Thursday & Friday), full participation in event(s), applicable food and beverage, commemorative items, and hosted and escorted fishing (excluding necessary license). Estimated attendance for media personnel is approximately 30 people.

State of Minnesota Staff: Lodging and participation fees will be paid directly to the host community by the State. Estimated attendance for state of Minnesota staff is approximately 50 people.

Select Invitees: Members of the legislature, community invitees, special guests and sponsors will register and pay for participation (if applicable). Estimated attendance for select invitees is approximately 50 people.



lodging

Proposal should include primary lodging and any supplementary lodging facilities. An event headquarters that is combined with lodging and located on proposed fishing waters may be given priority.

Please include property names, estimated number of rooms committed to the Governor's Fishing Opener event, nightly rate, physical addresses, and website URLs. Providing a map showing the lodging properties locations is appreciated.

The local planning committee will be responsible for assigning attendees to lodging accommodations. rooming list used to assign State staff and invited media will be set up with the lodging properties and managed between Explore Minnesota and the hotel property.

A small room block will be held for this group, but lodging will be reserved and paid on an individual basis. Estimated attendance of select invitees is approximately 45 people. Estimated lodging, reserved and paid by the individual guests, is approximately 10 room nights (5 Thursday and 5 Friday).

Estimated room nights for this event are 160 (80 Thursday and 80 Friday) and consist of:

Media: The host community will provide complimentary lodging for all invited media, estimated at approximately 30 room nights (15 Thursday and 15 Friday).

State of Minnesota Staff: Estimated lodging paid by the state of Minnesota to the host community is approximately 90 room nights (45 Thursday and 45 Friday).

Select Invitees: A room block, for individual-pay guests, estimated at 10 room nights (5 Thursday and 5 Friday) will be held for all other invited guests. Reservations and payment will be made directly to the hotel.

Rate for optional (self-pay) lodging on Saturday night should be included in the proposal.

ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

The host community will be required to provide for all attendees (estimated at 200):

- A printed and/or electronic schedule of events for attendees.
- Official wearable credential including badge and lanyard.
- An adjustable band, branded bill-style hat with the Governor's Fishing Opener logo.

media row

Friday Morning: Media Row (6:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.)

The Friday morning Media Row event is primarily live radio broadcasts with pre-scheduled interviews featuring spokespersons from the Governor's Office, the Department of Natural Resources, Explore Minnesota and the host community.

A location for Media Row should accommodate up to 100 people including:

- 20 six-foot banquet tables (or similar) with three chairs per table (60 chairs)
- Access to electricity, 20/20 high-speed Wi-Fi internet
- Continental breakfast.
- This facility should be within 15 minutes of Governor's Fishing Opener event headquarters and supplementary lodging.

A space for virtual interviews and recorded and live television should also be available on-site.

youth education activity

Friday Morning and/or Afternoon: (Tentatively between the hours of 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.)

In collaboration with the host community and local school district, the Department of Natural Resources will coordinate a youth educational activity or program and provide all necessary materials. The host community will designate a representative to participate in monthly or bi-weekly sub-committee planning meetings. The host community, in conjunction with the school district, will arrange for bus transportation and food if the location of the event is not at a school (i.e., at a community park near the event headquarters).

community celebration

Friday Afternoon: Community Celebration (5 p.m. – 7 p.m.)

Include details for a public, community celebration to celebrate the Governor's Fishing Opener and the opener weekend. This event will include a short program of speakers and/or performances. This event can range from a casual happy-hour gathering at a local brewery or a reception at a meeting center to a block party or outdoor event with entertainment, food trucks and vendors. Public address system should be available.

Please contact the Governor's Fishing Opener coordinator prior to submitting your application if you have any questions about requirements of the Community Celebration.

launch ceremony

Saturday Morning: Launch Ceremony (8 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.)

Identify a location for the Saturday morning Launch Ceremony to include a short program, brief comments from community leaders, Explore Minnesota, the Department of Natural Resources and/or the Governor's Office, and others. A portable sound system/public address system with microphone is required, but you may consider special equipment such as a stage, podium, and chairs on stage for those speaking. The host community is further encouraged to include local elements in the ceremony such as a presentation of colors by the VFW, the National Anthem sung by a local singer or group, remarks from nearby Tribal Nation, etc.

fishing

Saturday Morning: Opening Day Fishing

- **Fishing Waters Information:** Include information on the proposed fishing waters, including the walleye catch potential for that time of year, size of lake(s)/rivers, public access information and proximity to lodging properties.
- **Boat Hosts/General:** Host community must identify 45 boat hosts for attendees who indicate they would like to host guests at no charge for fishing or boating. Boat hosts must be knowledgeable of the area fishing but need not be professional guides. Each boat host must provide a boat, motor, fishing equipment, bait and tackle, and must have a current Minnesota boat license and fishing license, liability insurance and safety equipment as required by Minnesota laws.
- **Boat Hosts/Dignitary Hosts:** The host committee will submit 5 boat hosts as candidates for dignitary hosting duties, with suggestions for the Governor, Lt. Governor, and other select guests. These applicants agree to a conservation and a criminal background check.
- **Fishing Licenses:** Registered guests are responsible to secure their own fishing license.
- **Navigable Waters:** In cases of navigable waters as defined by the U.S. Coast Guard, the sponsoring organization must secure approval of the U.S. Coast Guard to meet Federal Government requirements. Be sure to check to see if the waters within the proposal are considered navigable waters by the U.S. Coast Guard.

shore lunch

Saturday: Shore Lunch (11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.)

The shore lunch should be located directly adjacent to the proposed fishing waters. Shore lunch consists of commercially sold walleye with appropriate side dishes and non-alcoholic beverage service, and must follow all Minnesota Department of Health rules regarding safe food service. All caterers/food providers must hold appropriate State of Minnesota licenses for on- or off-premise food service. Consider food and beverage service and equipment, prep areas, handwashing stations, restrooms, tents/tables/chairs, docking facilities and vehicle parking.

community information

OTHER COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Please provide information on what visitors and attendees can see and do in your community including: restaurants within hotel properties and around the area for meals; information on downtown or main street events and activities; list local businesses selling fishing licenses; the top 10 Instagram spots; outdoor activities available in nearby local or state and federal-managed lands; and, any other information about the community that may be helpful in evaluating the proposal.

ADDITIONS TO CORE REQUIREMENTS

Depending on interest and resource availability, communities can develop a weekend agenda that goes beyond the core requirements to tell their story. Please provide information on additional events or elements to be included. Examples include golf tournaments, biking tours, cultural and technical tours and community scavenger hunts.

insurance

EVENT INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

The host community will be responsible for securing and maintaining a \$2 million event insurance certificate to cover all aspects of the event, as required by the State of Minnesota. A certificate of insurance as evidence of the required insurance coverage must be submitted to Explore Minnesota at least 90 days prior to the event.

financials

FINANCIAL COMMITMENT

The host community must provide or generate the necessary event support funding for this event through existing budgets, sponsorships, or fundraising activities.

Include a preliminary budget estimating lodging, events, food and beverage, marketing, and other costs in your proposal, along with the primary funding mechanism(s) you propose.

Regular budget and financial reports will be included in the monthly planning meetings showing income and expenses to date.

SPONSORSHIPS

All sponsorships of the Governor's Fishing Opener or use of official logo must be approved by the State in advance. The State reserves the right to approve/reject potential sponsors. The local planning committee should work closely with Explore Minnesota to obtain final approval of all sponsors.

EVENT GRANT

Explore Minnesota will provide a grant to the host community up to \$20,000 to assist with costs of event operations and execution of the event. This grant is subject to expenditure limitations, eligible expenses, and requires a 1:1 cash/in-kind match. For questions about eligible expenses, please contact Kari Brumback, kari.brumback@state.mn.us.

The community agreement will indicate that any surplus in funds raised for the event will be used by the host community for community tourism marketing and promotion. The community will provide a plan for expending remaining funds at the conclusion of the event.

governor's fishing opener host community application

Proposals must be emailed to Kari Brumback at kari.brumback@state.mn.us by December 19, 2026.

Name of Sponsoring Organization _____

Host Community Contact Person _____

Address _____

City _____

Zip Code _____

Phone _____

Cell Phone _____

E-mail _____

Website _____

Tourism Region

[Click here to see Explore Minnesota's tourism regions.](#)

Southern ☐ Central ☐ Northwest ☐ Northeast ☐ Metro ☐

Authorized Officer's Signature _____

Printed Name _____