

# Grand Rapids, Michigan



Experience  
**GRAND RAPIDS**  
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

# Why Grand Rapids?

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Every city has buildings, places and people.  
So what makes Grand Rapids different?

## The Art of Collaboration.

Grand Rapids boasts an unprecedented level of cooperation between public, private, nonprofit and philanthropic sectors – a partnership fueled by an innovative, pioneering spirit that moves the city ever forward in new and dynamic directions.

When you hold your event in Grand Rapids, you benefit from the results of this collaboration: A meetings infrastructure rivaling that of much larger cities. Leisure options that are nationally and internationally recognized. And a commitment to marshal all the city's resources to support your success.

Don't take our word for it. Talk to the leaders of the nation's largest metropolitan areas, who attended the CEOs for Cities National Meeting here in 2013.

Grand Rapids is the first "second-tier" destination ever to host this prestigious event – chosen because organizers and attendees wanted to see first-hand how collaboration can make a city soar.

It can also make your event soar. We invite you to collaborate with us to make it happen.



### Select Recognitions:

- #1 U.S. Travel Destination for 2014
- America's Best Beer Town
- Top 10 Most Exciting City
- Top 15 Emerging Downtown
- Midwest's Best-Performing City





# Downtown Convention Campus

We know you want a convention campus that's convenient, accessible, safe and enjoyable. Downtown Grand Rapids delivers all of this within a 10-minute walk:

## DeVos Place Convention Center

- State-of-the-art meetings design and technologies
- 162,000 sq. ft. column-free exhibition hall
- 40,000 sq. ft. ballroom
- 26 individual meeting rooms (32,000 sq. ft.)
- 12 spacious loading docks

## Downtown Hotels

- 5 hotels and 1,436 rooms
- 1,233 rooms connected by skywalk to DeVos Place
- 2 of the Midwest's top 10 hotels (per Condé Nast)
- #1 JW Marriott for guest satisfaction in all of North America

## Walkable Attractions

- 100+ restaurants, nightclubs and entertainment venues
- Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum + 4 more world-class museums
- 5 breweries, including the world's 3rd best
- Outstanding collection of public art
- Parks and boardwalks along the Grand River
- One of the nation's finest historic home districts

## Convenience & Safety

- Travel by bus, cab, trolley, pedicab and horse-drawn carriage
- Roaming Safety Ambassadors and Certified Tourism Ambassadors®
- GOSite visitor information center
- America's 2nd most secure large city (per Farmers Insurance)



## Weatherproof Comfort

No need to stress about weather in Grand Rapids:

- Climate-controlled skywalk connects convention center with hotels and attractions
- Snowmelt system keeps sidewalks clear
- Lake Michigan keeps us cooler in summer and warmer in winter



# Meeting Around Town

Perhaps you want a different kind of meeting experience – more budget flexibility, ample free parking and even closer access to specific attractions. Grand Rapids fits the bill with 100+ hotels and meeting facilities outside downtown. Select area highlights:

## Northeast

- Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, a “top 30 must-see world museum”
- Robinette’s Apple Haus & Winery
- Rogue River fishing & canoeing
- Meet in a movie theater, ski lodge or Victorian greenhouse

## Northwest

- Alpine commercial corridor for brand-name shopping

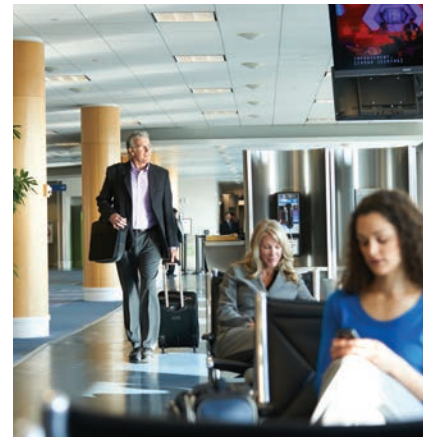
- Professional baseball and basketball teams
- Berlin Raceway stock cars
- Meet in a brewery, ballpark or the area’s 2nd largest convention center

## Southeast

- Gerald R. Ford International Airport
- Abundant shopping and dining includes 3 malls
- Indoor water park, ice rink & excellent golf
- Meet on a college campus, at a golf club, in a brewery

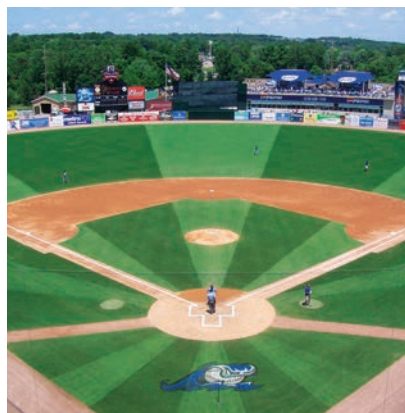
## Southwest

- Rivertown Crossings Mall, Tanger Outlets Mall, Cabela’s
- 2,000+ animals at John Ball Zoo
- Quick access to Gun Lake Casino (south) and Lake Michigan (west)
- Meet in a hilltop “treehouse,” a paddlewheel riverboat or one of America’s largest urban parks



**GRANDRAPIDS**  
PURE MICHIGAN®

Every section of Grand Rapids is “Pure Michigan” – as seen in the nationally broadcast TV ad that promotes our ability to deliver “an artful experience.”



# After the Meeting

You want to make sure every attendee has a great after-hours experience during your event. Grand Rapids offers world-class experiences for every interest:

## Craft Beer Lovers

Voted Beer City USA and named America's Best Beer Town by USA Today, the city is home to 40+ breweries, cideries and distilleries.

## Fresh Foodies

Acclaimed as America's #2 most affordable foodie city, Grand Rapids offers fantastic dining, food shopping and educational opportunities – all at incredible prices.

## Art Enthusiasts

Grand Rapids hosts ArtPrize – the annual art competition Time

magazine called one of the world's top 5 festivals – as well as three exceptional art museums and a downtown teeming with outdoor public art.

## Performance Patrons

Professional theatre, symphony, ballet and opera companies share area stages with comedy troupes and touring Broadway shows.

## Live Music Lovers

Local venues host a diverse slate of musical acts most every night – from local favorites to superstars like Fleetwood Mac. Outdoor summer concerts are the best!

## Sports Fans

Professional baseball, basketball and hockey teams share the spotlight with twice-yearly Olympics-style competitions.



## City Twist

Our innovative digital planning tool makes it easy for attendees to find events and attractions catering to 18 specific interests – via smartphone, tablet or computer.





### Outdoor Explorers

There are hundreds of places to run, bike, boat, swim, fish, golf, skate and ski, all within minutes of downtown.

### Chic Shoppers

From Cabela’s to West Elm stores, upscale malls to outlet malls, brand names to one-of-a-kind boutiques, Grand Rapids is a shopper’s paradise.

### Fun Families

America’s Best Place to Raise a Family (per Forbes magazine) is also the best place to bring the kids along – they’ll find plenty to do while mom or dad is in meetings.

### Eco Advocates

Named “America’s Greenest City” by Fast Company magazine, Grand Rapids has received worldwide recognition for its sustainable efforts, including “green” lodging and attractions.

### Health Nuts

Paved “rail-to-trail” pathways, nationally recognized mountain biking and an abundance of fresh, healthy food will help your attendees maintain their fitness regimens.

### History Buffs

From museums filled with historical treasures to one of the nation’s top historic home districts, Grand Rapids is a perfect place to explore the past.

### Wine Connoisseurs

Grand Rapids is the gateway to Michigan’s Wine Coast, with 30+ wineries and tasting rooms stretching from the city to the lakeshore.



# Time Well Spent

Your attendees won't waste time in traffic jams and endless lines here. Everything is close and convenient in Grand Rapids, so your group can experience more in less time:

## Within a 10-minute walk of downtown hotels:

- 100+ restaurants & 50 retail stores
- 7 theatre & concert stages
- 5 museums
- 5 breweries
- 1 food emporium with 20+ artisan food vendors

## Within a 10-minute drive of downtown:

- John Ball Zoo
- Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, one of the world's 100 most visited art museums
- Millennium Park, 1,500 acres of greenspace, hiking & biking trails, swimming & canoeing lake
- Fifth Third Ballpark, home to a Detroit Tigers Class A baseball affiliate, outdoor summer concerts and a mammoth Winter Beer Festival

- Woodland Mall, Breton Village Mall, Rivertown Crossings Mall

## Within 15-20 minutes:

- Gerald R. Ford International Airport
- Rockford, picturesque shopping village on the Rogue River
- Art Van Sports Complex – baseball & softball
- 30+ breweries, cideries & distilleries
- 30+ golf courses

## Within 30-45 minutes:

- 18 public beaches on Lake Michigan, one of the world's top 25 shorelines (per Condé Nast)
- Four beach towns, each with its own unique character and charm
- 20+ wineries and tasting rooms



## Money Well Spent

Affordability is always a top concern for your organization and your attendees. These per diem rates\* prove Grand Rapids is a great deal:

Grand Rapids	\$139
Columbus	\$155
Detroit	\$156
Indianapolis	\$159
Las Vegas	\$163
Sacramento	\$163
Orlando	\$164
Cleveland	\$167
St. Louis	\$174
San Antonio	\$176
Atlanta	\$189
Austin	\$191
Portland, OR	\$192
Charleston, SC	\$206
San Diego	\$210
Denver	\$222
Philadelphia	\$223
Chicago	\$245
Washington, DC	\$271

Grand Rapids also boasts lower hotel taxes than these cities – in fact, our rate is lower than all but 18 of the nation's 150 largest urban centers\*\*. That's a huge plus for your attendees!



\*Fiscal year 2015 per diem rates – including lodging, meals and incidental expenses – determined by the U.S. General Services Administration.

\*\*2014 HVS Lodging Tax Report - USA

# Getting to Grand Rapids

We know you want to make it convenient and cost-effective for attendees to reach your meeting destination. Grand Rapids is easily and affordably accessible by plane, train and automobile:

## Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GRR)

Airports Council International named GRR one of the world's top 5 airports serving 2 million to 5 million passengers a year – the only U.S. airport on the list.

- 120+ daily nonstop flights to/from 20+ major market destinations
- 6 air carriers including Southwest Airlines
- Astonishingly fast and easy check-ins/departures

- Airfare prices trending downward
- 15 minutes from downtown Grand Rapids

## Amtrak

Daily service between Grand Rapids and Chicago, with convenient connections to other cities.

## Car Travel

Grand Rapids is located within a day's drive of half the U.S. population, at the junction of two major expressways.

Sample drive times:

- Detroit 2.5 hours
- Chicago 3 hours
- Indianapolis 5 hours
- Toronto 6 hours
- Pittsburgh 6.5 hours
- Minneapolis 9 hours

## Nonstop Flight Service:

- Atlanta
- Baltimore/Washington
- Charlotte
- Chicago – O'Hare
- Cincinnati
- Dallas/Fort Worth
- Denver
- Detroit
- Fort Myers (seasonal)
- Houston
- Las Vegas
- Minneapolis
- New York – LaGuardia
- New York – Newark
- Orlando International Airport
- Orlando – Sanford
- Philadelphia
- Phoenix – Mesa
- St. Louis
- Tampa International Airport
- Tampa/St. Petersburg – Clearwater International
- Washington - Dulles





# Collaborate With Our Team

Planning a meeting involves an endless series of details that require your attention. We're here to help.

Our Grand Response™ convention services team will act as your personal assistant before and during your event, doing much of the legwork for you. We want you to take advantage of our years of planning experience and in-depth knowledge of the Grand Rapids market to make your job easier.

## We can help you:

- Plan and organize site inspections
- Create attendance building-promotions
- Arrange attendee welcomes
- Organize on-site activities and entertainment

And just about anything else you might need – including an assist with brainstorming creative new approaches to make your event stand out.

Our online, on-demand suite of planning tools and services will help you research and select local facilities, service providers and off-site events. You can access all the maps, diagrams and travel information you need with the click of a mouse. And be sure to follow our Meeting Minds blog, a site that provides tips, articles and thought leadership on all things meeting planning.

All of our services are complimentary – just one more way Grand Rapids is a superior value!



Our Grand Response™ convention services program – so unique we branded it – is every bit as collaborative, pioneering and innovative as the city itself. And like the city, we can deliver more than you ever dreamed possible. Just ask!



**MEETING MINDS**  
Connecting great minds to smart planning.



# Client Testimonials

*“Grand Rapids was the perfect host city for our convention. Our attendees were treated to outstanding hospitality and enjoyed the friendly atmosphere especially from the staff and the general public.”*

Gary Anderson,  
USA/Canada Lions Leadership Forum

*“I was impressed with the friendliness and cleanliness of the city and it offered several culturally diverse activities. I give the experience 5 Stars.”*

Ms. Melanie Dungan,  
National Farmers Association

*“Lovely city. Feels safe walking downtown. Even the alleys are clean.”*

Rod Crittenden, Michigan Floral  
Association

*“We may not have been a big player in the realm of conference events, but Grand Rapids made us feel as if we were.”*

Jon Rice,  
National Association of County Engineers

*“Shocked at the city, was not expecting such a vibrant town, friendly, good restaurants.”*

Gwen Mathis, SPE Thermoforming  
Division Conference & Expo

*“The setting by the river was lovely and even two years later we continue to hear comments about how perfect Grand Rapids was for our meeting.”*

Edith A. Guffey, Associate General Minister,  
United Church of Christ

Join the conversation  
about Grand Rapids:

