

Adopt-A-Highway

Adopt-A-Highway (AAH) is a program administered by the Iowa Department of Transportation to address environmental needs along Iowa highways by making sections of roadsides available for "adoption." This gives the adopting individuals or groups opportunities to improve the appearance of our roadsides throughout the state through litter removal.

AAH activities can reduce litter along highways, enhance the environment, beautify roadsides, and build community support for anti-litter and highway beautification programs. Caring for roadsides will not only make them more attractive to the traveling public but will also make major improvements in our environment.

Groups or individuals adopting sections of highway will be responsible for that roadside for a minimum of two years. Litter removal must be done at least twice a year or as necessary to keep the area clean. Litter pickup on primary roads may include both sides of the highway. Interstate highway litter pickup will be on one side of the highway. Generally, adoption of at least 2 miles is required. Smaller sections may be permissible on unusual sections of highway. One-day pickup permits are also available to sponsors who wish to organize a single special event pickup day instead of a long-term adoption.

While working along a highway can be fun, safety of workers is a priority. Adopting organizations are required to hold safety meetings before work begins. Participants 14 years of age or younger should have adequate adult supervision. Participants must also wear high-visibility safety vests when working on the highway right of way. Vests and orange trash bags will be furnished by the Iowa DOT. For the safety of persons picking up litter, do not pick up large objects or anything on or within 10 feet of the pavement. Picking up litter from the medians is not allowed. If sponsors encounter anything they regard as hazardous, they should not pick it up, but should notify the Iowa DOT.

The sponsor must be willing to separate litter according to the requirements of the landfill used by the local Iowa DOT maintenance garage. The sponsor may retain any recyclables and take them to a recycler of the sponsor's choice.

For eligible sponsors, signs featuring our state flower, the wild rose, may be erected by the Iowa DOT at no cost to the sponsor to recognize the efforts of adopting groups or individuals. In areas with many signs or very rough terrain, AAH signing may not be possible. A sign indicating the sponsor's name may be ordered through the Iowa DOT's representative for the adopted area. A sign with the sponsor's corporate, business, or organization logo may be used in place of the sign shown above, but the sign must be supplied by the sponsor and some restrictions apply. Call the Iowa DOT representative for details. Signing is not a requirement for AAH sponsorships. Sponsors may elect to adopt a highway section without signing.

Signs will not be placed for political candidates, elected officials, or entities that would be considered partisan or inflammatory. Signs will not be placed for one-day pickup permits.

This Adopt-A-Highway program is only for adoptions along US or Iowa State highways, outside of city limits. People wishing to initiate beautification projects along a county road should contact their county conservation boards or county engineers for details.

For more information on the Adopt-A-Highway program, contact:

Office of Maintenance

800 Lincoln Way Ames, IA 50010

515-239-1824

<https://iowadot.gov/maintenance/adopt-a-highway-information>