



Achieving AWESome Program

SUMMER 2023

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Who is the Achieving AWESome Program designed for?

The audience or ideal participants for this program are new experience providers, defined as: an individual or business operator who has no previous involvement in developing or delivering a tourism experience to the travelling public. However, established operators who have been in the tourism industry for years and have an interest in developing tourism experiences can also apply.

All applicants must demonstrate that they have a story to share and are willing to invest time and money to create an interactive, hands-on guest experience.

Examples:

Non-traditional operator: a woodworker who could diversify their existing non-tourism business revenue by developing a tourism experience around their trade.

Established properties/businesses that have not previously offered guest experiences but see the advantages for increasing revenue, etc. An example could be an accommodation provider who wants to diversify into offering guided historical boat tours on a nearby lake.

Community events or attractions that want to expand to be more of a tourism draw by developing experiences. An example could be a small local rodeo interested in developing a “day in the life of a rodeo clown” experience to attract more than just the rodeo competitors.

2. What exactly is a tourism experience?

Visitors to a destination are curious about the people who live in the area. Visitors want to know why people do the things they do and live the way they live. Travellers want to be immersed in the surroundings and participate in hands-on activities. A tourism experience should consider all these factors.

3. Why should I develop a tourism experience?

People travel for a variety of reasons. They may be motivated by activities or experiences a destination offers – by the energy, dynamics and “what’s happening” in an area.

If you have a skill that you are doing differently than others, or have specialized knowledge or a talent, you may have what it takes to develop a tourism experience. Things that we take for granted in our local communities can be of great interest to people in other areas of Saskatchewan, Canada and far beyond.

4. What makes an experience unique?

Uniqueness does not necessarily mean one-of-a-kind or that a similar experience has never been developed. It comes from a variety of attributes. Most specifically, uniqueness reflects the people who develop and deliver the experience – being true to themselves and sharing their stories and knowledge in their own way.

Sometimes it is the location that makes an experience unique. Take guided interpretive hiking, for instance. The example of hiking an urban paved pathway along a river is far different than exploring a remote route in northern Saskatchewan. Both are fulfilling experiences that share a common element of guided interpretation; however, they would be distinctly different experiences for different types of travellers.

5. How is the program delivered and what is required if I am accepted?

Each participant is offered several steps or stages to fulfil the program. As much as possible all elements, except for Steps Two, Four and Five, will be delivered online (virtually). Some steps are completed on the participant's own time and schedule, others involve live (in real-time) online group sessions.

There are several components that are the core program and other development, and training supports will be made available to all participants as optional programming.

Fall 2023 Program Delivery:

STEP ONE: AWESome Experience Design Studio (online self-directed) – September 2023

The course aims to inspire its audience to create a new visitor offer with unexpected and high-quality encounters, designed by the participant to meet their business and/or community goals and draw on their own capacities and strengths in the design process. It is offered as a high-end multi-media online course and guides learners through the process of creating their own unique visitor experience.

STEP TWO: Tourism Experience Exposure (in person) – October 2023

This step will bring the participants together in a central location to have them directly participate in an in-market immersive experience so that they all have an improved understanding of what an immersive hands-on tourism experience is. They will come away from this with new ideas and concepts to implement in their own experience design and delivery.

STEP THREE: AWESome Actions (online self-directed and online scheduled meetings) – October to December 2023

This course aims to inspire its audience by expanding on the concept that they worked on in Step One. It will be offered with asynchronous and synchronous sessions (self-directed and group sessions), allowing the participant to work on assignments on their own, and then meet up with their peers and the course instructor to discuss where they are at and continue the development process.

STEP FOUR: Piloting (in-person, on-site) – on demand

Considering that revisions and refinement of newly developed experiences are a critical step in the development process, it is recommended that new experiences are piloted with individuals who are knowledgeable about the tourism industry and that key (ideal target market for the experience) Tourism Saskatchewan staff are engaged in this process to provide meaningful feedback, advice, and support to the program participants. If appropriate, this step could also include the photo and video capture of the piloted experience to assist with future marketing efforts.

STEP FIVE: Digital Content Capture (in person, on-site) – on-demand

This step includes professional services of a photographer/videographer. The content collected will be valuable for the promotion of the experience. This would be implemented when most appropriate for the experience provider and financially supported by Tourism Saskatchewan.

Other optional supports that will be made available to participants:**Tourism Champions Program** (online self-directed)

The Tourism Champions course offers learners high level, general information about tourism and allows the participant to gain a clear understanding of the tourism industry within Saskatchewan and Canada. This information is essential to anyone new to tourism, giving them the basics of what operating a tourism business entails.

Introduction to Heritage Interpreter (3 day in-person group delivery in Saskatoon)

This course will help participants become master storytellers. They will learn to use their knowledge and first-hand experience to share stories so visitors can relate on a personal level. The course is intended for individuals with new or limited experience in designing and delivering interpretive content. This course will help those who are responsible for conducting guided tours, talks, presentations, living history, activity programs and special events. It will also help those who develop interpretive exhibits, displays and similar media.

Firecircle (online self-directed course)

Firecircle was founded to address the ongoing gap between current entrepreneur and small business tourism training and the sustained support required to ensure a higher volume and caliber of tourism infrastructure development in rural and remote Canada. It ensures that good ideas make it from paper to reality. This includes new product development by existing businesses. Participants of this program will produce a fully fleshed-out business plan for their business and/or experience. This program is offered by on-demand enrollment with a 6-month subscription and a 3-hour coaching bundle.

Digital Marketing Workshops (online scheduled and recorded webinars)

Social media marketing and website design webinars will be made available.

Promotions and Delivery

When you are ready to move to this stage, Tourism Saskatchewan will be there to support you with a range of application-based programs, one-on-one assistance and providing the available tools and resources required.

Costing and Pricing Coaching Sessions

Support for those who require further assistance with costing and pricing their experience will be available on-demand.

6. Can I just commit to certain parts of the program and not others?

The first five steps have been carefully crafted and designed to give new experience providers all the training and supports needed to develop high-quality saleable experiences. They must be fully completed and adhere to the scheduled order. All approved participants will be required to sign a training agreement indicating that they understand and accept the conditions before starting the program.

The optional supports are exactly that, optional, and participants will be able to access any of them as required and desired.

7. How long does it take to complete the program?

The program is designed to move participants along in a scheduled format. Steps One to Three will be completed within four months of the starting date. After Step Three, timelines will vary depending on the experience in development, time of year or season the experience will be offered and readiness of the applicant to complete all steps.

8. Why do I need to have a computer and internet access?

The Step One and Step Three training components will be delivered online; to fully and actively participate in the program and complete the program requirements, it is necessary to work in Microsoft Word, Excel and with PDF documents. Participants are required to have basic skills in using email, Zoom, MS Teams, and file and document management. Video conferencing will require a webcam, audio microphone and adequate connection to the internet. Completing the program with a mobile connection through a cell phone is not possible or acceptable to be eligible for the program.

9. I am still looking for more information, who can I contact?

Contact Industry Development Consultants, Brenden Branscombe, at 306-933-7493, brenden.branscombe@tourismsask.com or Corrina Kapeller, at 306-812-8882, corrina.kapeller@tourismsask.com for more information.