



Achieving AWEsome Program

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 of increasing revenue, etc., by doing so. An example could be an accommodation provider who wants to diversify into offering guided historical boat tours on a nearby lake.

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 with local residents. 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 want to share with 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 fulfill the program. As much as possible, all elements, except for Steps Five, Eight, and Nine, 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 core program components, and other development and training supports will be made available to all participants as optional programming.

Program Delivery:

Week One and Two:

STEP ONE: Introduction to the Visitor Economy – This is an online self-directed course that will take approximately two hours to complete. You will learn about the tourism industry in Saskatchewan, the impacts of tourism, Tourism employment, Tourism myths and success stories, and Tourism Saskatchewan's 10-year strategy for tourism product development across the province.

STEP TWO: Marketing Saskatchewan – This online self-directed micro-course will take approximately one hour and includes a short quiz to complete. It is designed to give you a foundational understanding of the marketing approach used by Tourism Saskatchewan. This course will provide information on Saskatchewan's unique selling points, market segments, and priority niche markets for growth, all considerations that are important when developing a new tourism product in the province.

STEP THREE: Introduction to Storytelling – This online self-directed course will take approximately one hour to complete and includes a multiple-choice quiz and a simple workbook to submit. This micro-course explores the world of narrative-driven travel experiences and is crafted for individuals wanting to unlock the art and science behind effective storytelling. Upon completing this course, you will possess a comprehensive understanding of storytelling and be able to start to put things into practice.

Week Three and Four:

STEP FOUR: AWESome Experience Design Studio- This online self-directed course that will take approximately 8 hours to complete and includes a workbook to submit. The goal of the AWESome Experience Design Studio is to inspire and guide you to enhance an existing product or create a new visitor offer with unexpected and high-quality encounters that you will be proud of. Through this course, you will begin to design a memorable Saskatchewan visitor experience that works for you and your customers.

Week Five:

STEP FIVE: Tourism Experience Exposure - (in person) 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. You will come away from this with new ideas and concepts to implement in your own experience design and delivery.

Week Six to Ten:

STEP SIX: AWESome Actions - This course is a facilitated online self-directed and includes one one-on-one coaching and online scheduled group meetings. This course aims to inspire you by expanding on the concept that you worked on in the previous steps. 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.

Week Eleven:

STEP SEVEN: Applying Marketing Strategy - This online self-directed course will take approximately one hour to complete and includes a simple workbook to submit. This micro-course is designed to provide you with the knowledge to start creating a marketing strategy for your tourism business. Participants will explore key concepts and tools essential for creating an effective marketing strategy that aligns with provincial planning. By the end of this course, you will have gained the knowledge and skills needed to create, implement, and evaluate effective marketing strategies in various business contexts.

On Demand:

STEP EIGHT: 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 NINE: 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:

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 with on-demand enrollment. If interested, please contact the Destination Development Team at Tourism Saskatchewan.

Marketing, 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 program has been carefully crafted and designed to give new experience providers all the training and support needed to develop high-quality, saleable experiences. It 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 Seven will be completed within three months of the starting date. After Step Seven, timelines will vary depending on the experience in development, the time of year or season the experience will be offered, and the readiness of the applicant to complete all steps.

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

Most of the 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, an audio microphone, and an 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 Consultant, Corrina Kapeller, at 306-812-8882, corrina.kapeller@tourismsask.com for more information.