



# Aboriginal Tourism Champions Program Guidelines





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## Introduction: Aboriginal Tourism Champions Program

Aboriginal tourism in Canada employs roughly 32,000 people, which is two per cent of the entire Canadian travel sector workforce. Aboriginal tourism companies are involved in a variety of business areas, including outdoor and adventure related activities, event and conference management and attractions related products and experiences and services.

The Aboriginal Tourism Champions Program is a specialized program where selected individuals act as a resource in smaller communities in the Northwest Territories (NWT) to develop, expand and improve authentic Aboriginal tourism products and initiatives. This program provides individuals with the opportunity, guidance and financial support to help develop tourism in Aboriginal communities or to assist tourism operators to incorporate elements of Aboriginal culture into existing tourism operations.

Aboriginal Tourism Champions help to:

- support the economic growth and development of local communities;
- preserve local culture and language;
- encourage interest and pride in younger generations in their culture, history and heritage;
- increase understanding between people from different cultures; and
- support the preservation of natural areas of cultural value.

## Program Goals

The goals of the program are to:

- support Aboriginal tourism development in communities throughout the NWT;
- strengthen Aboriginal cultural tourism capacity in Aboriginal communities;
- promote tourism as a means for economic development, cultural revitalization and a way to retain Aboriginal languages;
- provide resources for Aboriginal people and organizations in the NWT with an interest in Aboriginal tourism; and
- develop a network of Aboriginal people throughout the NWT with the skills and passion to energize and motivate communities and organizations to leverage tourism to improve economic, cultural and environmental conditions.

## Aboriginal Tourism Definition

For the purpose of this program, Aboriginal tourism is defined as, *an authentic experience offered to visitors in a manner that is appropriate, respectful and true to the culture of Aboriginal people of the Northwest Territories and that actively involves Aboriginal people in the development or delivery of the tourism experience.*

## Program Administration

The program is funded and managed by the Government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI). ITI provides support, training and programs to foster economic and tourism growth across the Northwest Territories.

Regional Tourism Officers are available at local ITI offices to answer questions, help complete applications and accept completed application forms.

## Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility under this program is restricted to NWT residents of Aboriginal ancestry (First Nations, Inuit, or Métis) who were born in and reside in a NWT community.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Selected Champions will be expected to:

- help communities include and develop Aboriginal tourism initiatives;
- work to increase the number of Aboriginal cultural tourism products and facilities;
- expand the number of authentic Aboriginal tourism products to give visitors a true cultural experience;
- increase the number of skilled workers in the Aboriginal tourism industry through training, workshops and other initiatives;
- foster development of new Aboriginal tourism businesses, help existing businesses grow, and improve the profitability of Aboriginal tourism operations; and
- consult and maintain effective relationships with government agencies, local governments, the tourism industry, and other individuals and organizations associated with Aboriginal tourism and Aboriginal tourism activities.

## Eligible Expenses

ITI provides each Champion with a financial contribution to perform their duties. The contribution is based on a work plan that is agreed to by both the Champion and ITI.

The maximum contribution per year, per Champion, is \$5,000 and may include the following eligible costs:

- travel to selected communities where the Champion is delivering programs;
- meeting logistics such as facility rentals, catering or door prizes; and
- communication and promotional materials.

Please note that travel costs to deliver specific training and workshops may be covered separately by ITI. Contact your Regional Tourism Officer for further information.

In-kind donations of products and/or services are not eligible for reimbursement.

Applicants need to submit a workplan that outlines their proposed activities and how the funding will be used for eligible expenses for those activities.

## Ineligible Expenses

The following expenses are not eligible for reimbursement:

- assets previously or currently owned by the applicant, shareholders or partners in the project (for example, materials, property or other personal possessions);
- wages or honouraria to the applicant;
- wages or payments to shareholders, family members or related businesses;
- expenses over and above the maximum eligible expenses of \$5,000 annually.

Note that this list is an example only and all expenses must be first agreed to or authorized by ITI prior to purchase.

## Application Process

Applicants can get an application form at their regional ITI office or download and print forms online at [www.iti.gov.nt.ca/atcp](http://www.iti.gov.nt.ca/atcp).

Completed forms and workplans are to be submitted at a regional ITI office or sent by email. Applicants are encouraged to ask ITI staff about any questions they have or for assistance to complete the application form or the workplan.

## Selection Process

A selection committee will evaluate applications. Final approval of successful Champions is with the Director of Tourism and Parks, ITI.

Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Must be of Aboriginal Ancestry (First Nations, Inuit, or Métis)
- Must reside in the NWT
- Must be originally from a community within the NWT
- Must demonstrate previous work or significant interest in Tourism

## Appeals Process

Applicants who have not been selected for the program and are not satisfied with the decision of the selection committee can appeal the decision to the Assistant Deputy Minister of ITI. Appeals must be submitted in writing and include details as to why the applicant is appealing the decision.

## Applicant Notification

ITI will notify successful applicants by letter, email or telephone within 4-8 weeks of their application.


ITI and the selected Champion will discuss and agree to a contribution agreement that outlines performance indicators for the Champion, prior to any work taking place.

## Term of Appointment

Appointment to the program will be for a term of three years. After the three-year term, ITI will discuss and evaluate how each Champion performed their duties, based on the performance measures agreed to prior to starting work on the program. If both parties are in agreement, the term may be extended.

## Reporting and Monitoring

Champions will work independently in the communities on projects and initiatives outlined in a work plan agreed to by the Champion and by ITI. Champions are expected and encouraged to seek guidance from and collaborate with Regional Tourism Officers as required.



Champions are required to submit an annual report to ITI outlining the following:

- Activities the Champion performed and why these specific activities were selected;
- Performance indicators as identified in the contribution agreement signed with ITI prior to starting as a Champion;
- Activity evaluation reports by community participants.

The annual report must also include all receipts for goods and services the Champion purchased in delivering the program.

The annual report is due April 30 of each year, for activities that took place the previous year. For example, if a Champion started activities on May 15, 2016 for a year, the annual report would be due on April 30, 2017.

## Performance Indicators

All selected Champions must agree to the performance measures as outlined in the contribution agreement. ITI staff and the Champion will review the success of these measures annually.

Key performance measures may include:

- the change in the number of Aboriginal cultural tourism products and facilities;
- the number of communities actively pursuing tourism development;
- the change in the number of Aboriginal owned and operated tourism businesses; and
- an increased number of visitor packages containing Aboriginal cultural tourism components.

Please note there may be additional performance measures that ITI and the Champion agree to. These additional reporting requirements will be outlined in the contribution agreement.