

The Tourism Business Mentorship Program aims to provide interested tourism businesses (entrepreneurs/mentees) with the opportunity to work with experienced tourism industry operators/professionals (mentors) who are willing to share their expertise and knowledge. The program is designed to support and encourage young and/or inexperienced Northwest Territories (NWT) operators to acquire the necessary skills and business acumen to enable them to maximize their potential, improve their leadership skills and become successful and profitable independent operators.

The process may involve visits by mentees to the mentor's place of business or the mentor visiting the mentee's place of business to provide strategic and/or operational advice. It could also involve harnessing today's technology to provide a learning environment that is not restricted by geography.

### Goals of the Tourism Business Mentorship Program

The goals of the program are to:

- Provide opportunities for interested NWT tourism businesses to learn and benefit from more experienced tourism operators/professionals.
- Provide an inter-generational bridge between young and experienced entrepreneurs in the tourism sector.
- Provide the resources necessary to assist interested tourism businesses to work with more experienced tourism operators/professionals.

### Program Tourism Definition

For the purposes of this program, the definition of a tourism business is a business that relies on travellers for a significant portion of their income. For the purpose of this fund, the aviation industry is excluded from this definition of tourism.

### Eligible Mentees

To be eligible for the program, tourism business operators (mentees) need to meet the following criteria:

- Must be a resident of the NWT.
- Must have a valid Tourism Operator License or be a business, collective or organization that is engaged in the tourism sector.
- Must be legally entitled to be a business in the NWT.
- Must have a business plan.

### Eligible Mentors

Mentors will have to meet the following criteria to be considered for the program:

- Should be experienced successful business people.

- Coming from either a small or large tourism or tourism oriented business environment is preferable but not a must.
- They may have senior management experience in a corporate environment or have successfully managed their own business for more than five years minimum.
- Should have an understanding of the operating context of small to medium scale enterprises.
- Should have empathy for small business operators, managers and entrepreneurs and genuinely want to be of assistance.
- The business they are currently involved in should be financially stable.
- They are willing to make time available for their mentees and commit themselves to meeting the mentee at least twice during the mentorship process.
- Understand the skills and tools required to be a mentor.
- Be open to further developing their mentoring skills.
- Understand the legal and ethical requirements of mentoring.
- Capable of ensuring mentees understand what to expect from the mentoring process.
- Be able to create an environment in which mentees will feel at ease.
- Be able to communicate effectively with mentees.
- Be able to help mentees identify their real needs and priorities.
- Be able to encourage mentees to develop the confidence, understanding and skills to meet their personal and business objectives.
- Be able to help mentees manage a program of activity that develops their confidence, understanding and skills.

Interested mentors will be required to fill out an application form to become a mentor. The selection and approval of mentors will be completed in a timely manner by ITI through an appointed Mentorship Committee.

Approved mentors will be eligible for an honorarium as indicated in the Government of the Northwest Territories' Financial Administration Manual.

Once the process is completed the mentor will be expected to provide a written evaluation as per the agreed evaluation format.

### Program Priority Areas

The following areas are the priorities of the program:

- Marketing
- Product Development
- Product Packaging and Pricing
- Business Planning
- Financial Management
- Human Resources Management
- Technology and Business
- Business Performance Management

### Program Ethics

- Mentors and mentees must agree to the terms outlined by ITI before the start of the process.
- Mentors cannot have a financial interest in the mentee's company during the process.
- Mentors and mentees will jointly decide what issues to address during the course of the relationship subject to the program guidelines and approval by the Mentorship Committee.
- Respect should be given to the privacy and confidentiality of mentor and mentee information.

### General Funding Requirements

- Funding will cover costs up to a maximum of \$10,000. The mentee must be able to invest \$500 maximum as equity for the total eligible costs. The eligible costs do not include the mentor honorarium, which will be paid directly to the mentor by ITI.
- Payment is on a reimbursement basis upon submission of receipts for eligible costs and reports by both the mentee and mentor.

- However in exceptional cases and for specific costs e.g. transportation, mentees may apply for advance funding and for funding in excess of the stipulated maximum \$10,000. This will be subject to demonstration of need and is only applicable where there is express approval from the Director of Tourism and Parks.
- Tourism mentors will be paid an honorarium as identified by the Government of the Northwest Territories' Financial Administration Manual. However such honorariums may not exceed \$2,500 per duration of agreement.
- All allocations are subject to fund availability.

### Exceptions to the General Funding Requirements

- The Program will also consider funding, for interested participants to be part of group visits for learning purposes at a place of business that agrees to provide such service. In such instances the honorarium will be different to what is set forth in the guidelines but will not be calculated per participant. The equity requirements for groups participating in this format of mentorship will still be \$500 and costs covered up to a maximum of \$10,000.

### Eligible Costs

- Once the process is over, reports and receipts can be submitted for reimbursement.
- Reimbursement for mentees will include costs up to a maximum of \$10,000 less the required equity of \$500.
- Out of pocket costs could include airfare, accommodations, meals and ground transportation.
- The mentee will be expected to contribute \$500 towards the eligible costs.
- For those mentees who host their mentors at their place of business such as a remote lodge or tourist establishment, they can claim for rack or published rates for the period of time they host the mentor as an eligible cost.
- Mentors will be paid the honorarium after the receipts and evaluation reports are submitted to ITI. However such honorariums may not exceed \$2,500 per duration of agreement.
- Incidental and travel costs incurred by mentor will be paid by mentee and submitted to ITI for reimbursement subject to the \$500 equity requirement.

### Selection of Mentors

Mentees can select a mentor from one of two ways:

1. Propose a mentor who will then be vetted by ITI to see if they meet the criteria for mentorship.
2. From an ITI developed database of potential mentors. Operators can choose any person whom they will like to be their mentor, from this database. Restrictions will obviously apply to the number of operators a mentor can have at a time.

### Matching of Mentors to Mentees

- Mentees will send an application form to ITI with the preferred name of mentor. The choice of mentor could have come through efforts of the mentee or through the database provided by ITI.
- The Mentorship Committee, set up by the Director of Tourism and Parks, will then study the file to determine if the mentor is a good match for the mentee and approve accordingly.
- If the mentor is not a good match for the mentee, the Mentorship Committee can, where possible, determine an appropriate match for the mentee.
- The final approval on who becomes a mentor is with the Mentorship Committee.
- The Mentorship Committee will then advise the Director of Tourism and Parks, ITI (the Director), of their decision.

### Approval of Mentorship

Final approval of mentorship agreement will be by the Director.

### Appeals Process

In the event of a prospective mentee not being satisfied with the decision of the Mentorship Committee, they can appeal to the Assistant Deputy Minister of ITI.

### Finance and Reporting

- Successful applicants will be notified by letter, email or telephone.
- Successful applicants will be required to submit original receipts for all eligible expenses at the end of the process in order to be reimbursed for up to \$10,000 of eligible costs, less the \$500 equity.
- Reimbursements of mentee expenses can also occur in the course of the process as long as there is an agreement in place and receipts are provided. Mentor honorariums will only be paid at the end of the process and directly to the mentor by ITI. But other mentor expenses may be submitted by mentee in the course of the process.
- A written final report as described in the application by the mentee should be submitted with the original receipts.

### Measurable Targets (Outcomes)

The program has a target of three individual business operators per fiscal year and one group workshop per fiscal year.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

The Mentorship Committee will continually monitor and evaluate the program using indicators they deem fit, to measure program targets and ensure success of the program.