

Market Ready Criteria – Draft for discussion

This new approach will assist our tourism partners and businesses to seize the global opportunity that tourism offers and at the same time increase consumer confidence and meet expectations when potential visitors are considering Grey County as their Destination of choice.

Am I in the Tourism business?

Tourism refers to “the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes”. (UNWTO definition). A **visitor** is any person visiting a region or country other than his usual place of residence and in which he spends less than a year, for any reason other than paid work. A **tourist** is a visitor who is motivated to travel for recreation, pleasure, health, study, sports, business, family and so forth and spends at least a night in the country visited. In Canada for a domestic trip to be part of tourism it has to be an “out-of-town” trip and, in addition, for same day trips it has to be 40 kms one way from the traveller’s home. This implies that **not all visitors are tourists**.

Grey County Tourism’s goal is to increase sustainable tourism revenues through managing and marketing Grey County as a tourism destination.

If your businesses, activity or event provides services for the tourist market then you might consider a listing on visitgrey.ca.

Marketing is key to attracting tourists to Grey County and these criteria will assist our tourism partners & businesses to better understand what marketing opportunities are available for them. This new approach will give businesses the advantage to position themselves to benefit from a growing tourism market and actively participate in the success of the tourism industry in Grey County.

Today’s travelers expect certain minimum standards when doing business with tourism operators, accommodations and event organizers. In order for our tourism industry to remain competitive, we’ve implemented minimum criteria necessary for those businesses accessing Grey County’s marketing & partnership programs.

We have developed the following criteria for our industry partners to self-evaluate for participation in our Grey County marketing programs. The criteria has been developed referencing other destination and provincial “Best-in-Class” practices.

The goal of this program is two-fold.

- First, it is to provide Grey County’s tourism industry with “best practice” criteria to maintain a competitive approach in today’s global marketplace.
- Second, it is to increase consumer confidence when potential visitors are considering Grey County as their destination of choice. Increased consumer confidence results in satisfactory visitor experiences and will encourage repeat visitation for longer stays.

Visitor Ready

Visitor Ready refers to a business that has all their licenses, permits and insurance in place in order to operate legally. These criteria will determine if a tourism supplier is able to offer business - ready products to consumers.

1. Does my business cater to visitors?
2. Do you maintain a good standing of all applicable business licenses, insurance and legislative requirements?
3. Do you have sufficient washroom facilities for casual visitors.
4. Do you maintain a staffed business location with a set schedule of operating hours?
5. Do you comply with local/regional health, safety and sanitation standards?
6. Do you provide a contact telephone number and email contact year-round?
7. Do you have a web or social media page where visitors can obtain and request information?
8. If closed for season, do you provide automated response through voicemail and or email?
9. Do you accept credit & debit cards? If not, do you clearly post that you accept cash only or that there is a debit machine nearby?
10. Do you have branded on-site signage?

Results

This is the basic level required to conduct business. Meeting this criteria means the operator/facility;

- Qualifies as a business listing on our visitgrey.ca tourism website

Market Ready

Market Ready refers to a business that markets to potential visitors in the planning stages, communicates with potential visitors year-round, and is ready to accept advanced reservations. These criteria will determine if a tourism supplier is ready to offer market - ready products to consumers. The business must meet “Visitor Ready” criteria **plus**:

1. Does your business already market to potential visitors?
2. Do you communicate with potential visitors year-round?
3. Are you ready to accept advanced reservations?
4. Do you provide a published pricing policy?
5. If so, can you set and confirm prices six months in advance?
6. Do you have a published consumer billing, payment, and cancellation policy?
7. Do you have marketing materials such as brochure, rack card, website or social media accounts?
8. Do you have parking in close proximity to your site?
9. Do you provide way - finding for your visitors through printed maps, online, GPS or signs?
10. During operating season, do you maintain a 24-48 hour response time or less, to inquiries and a 24-hour response time to reservation/booking requests?
11. Are you prepared to communicate and accept reservations by telephone, fax or e- mail and provide same day confirmation of booking arrangements?
12. Do you have high-resolution images and/or video footage for promotional purposes?
13. Do you have frontline staff that is trained in customer service?
14. Optional: Does your location offer bilingual services (list in drop down languages)?
15. Optional: Does your business provide value added services? (Luggage drop for hikers/cyclists, member of Ontario By Bike)

Results

This is the basic level of readiness to conduct tourism operations. Meeting this standard means the operator/facility:

- Qualifies for an enhanced website listing for their business on visitgrey.ca, the official destination website for Grey County (i.e. full profile, reciprocal links to your website)
- Is eligible to participate in Grey County promotions for local and regional markets (eg. Grey County Fam/Media Tours, GCT produced content, website travel path, etc.)

- Is eligible for inclusion in itineraries/packages
- Gains first opportunity to take part in media activities
- Gains priority registration at regional and national consumer shows and travel trade marketplaces

Experience Ready – RTO7 Program

RTO7 provides an [Experience Implementation Program](#) to assist stakeholders to develop products and experiences that differentiate our region from other places in Ontario, and benefit the business. Experiences can help increase length of stay, increase yield per visitor and encourage visitors to return more frequently. Part of the Program includes the following list of criteria:

1. Businesses or organizations must be established and be able to demonstrate the capacity (financial and otherwise) to execute the project.
2. Able to execute and meet agreed upon timelines.
3. Organizations must be legally registered to operate in Ontario.
4. Tourism businesses/organizations outside BruceGreySimcoe (e.g. a provincial association) can apply as long as there is strong involvement from a relevant BruceGreySimcoe stakeholder and part of the experience or product must be within the geographical boundaries of BruceGreySimcoe.
5. Carry liability insurance and add RTO7 as an additional insured party.
6. All required operating permits (federal, provincial, municipal, etc.)
7. Have a website/social media page(s), phone number and email address that are regularly monitored.
8. Identify BruceGreySimcoe and Ontario as *partners* on website with active links back to BruceGreySimcoe.com and ontariotravel.net respectively.
9. Identify BruceGreySimcoe as a partner in all press releases related to the product or experience.
10. Social media posts related to the product or experience tag @BruceGreySimcoe and use #brucegreysimcoe on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
11. Identify BruceGreySimcoe and the Province of Ontario as partners on all printed collateral supported through the program by including each logo.
12. Complete the free BruceGreySimcoe Service Excellence online training program prior to submitting an application.
13. Maintain a current operator listing on BruceGreySimcoe.com.
14. Maintain a current operator listing on Ontariotravel.net.
15. Join the RTO7 E-Newsletter <http://rto7.ca/Public/Special-Pages/Mailing-List-Signup>, These criteria will be used to determine if a tourism supplier is ready to offer experiential product to consumers.

Export-Ready Criteria

The [Canadian Signature Experiences](#) (CSE) program promotes unique and compelling Canadian experiences to the international travel trade, and through the trade, to consumers. Working with the travel trade requires some additional practices on the part of businesses, due to the greater degree of pricing reliability, operational integrity, and marketing lead time required. As the CSE program has been developed to promote sales of tourism experiences through the travel trade, these practices must be adhered to by any business applying to have a tourism experience included in the CSE program.

This program works in conjunction with [Ontario's Signature Experiences](#) program. There are currently 34 Signature Experiences in Ontario, with 2 in Grey County (Scenic Caves Nature Adventures – Out of the Ice Age, and Blue Mountain Resorts Ltd/Blue Mountain Village Association – Apple Pie Trail Peddle & Paddle Adventure.)