

Star Attractions Program



✓ Riding Mountain National Park



What is the Star Attractions Program?

The Star Attractions program is administered by Travel Manitoba. The program provides tourism marketing opportunities and access to highway directional signage to qualifying tourist attractions.

What is a Star Attraction?

A Star Attraction is not just a tourist attraction; it is one of Manitoba's premier destination attractions, including unique rural attractions that engage visitors in experiences and stories they'll never forget.

How is eligibility determined?

Attractions are required to demonstrate that they have achieved a heightened level of tourism readiness, including service standards, high quality visitor-oriented programs and extended operating season. These standards are intended to ensure that destination attractions demonstrate the highest levels of accessibility, professionalism and market readiness. Once an attraction has all the information required to support a request for designation, the next step is to submit an expression of interest via mail or email for review. The expression of interest must include a declaration signed by an authorized official of the organization (i.e., board chair or executive). Applicants will be contacted within seven working days to confirm receipt and to review the application. Attractions may be asked to receive an on-site visit and tour the facilities by Travel Manitoba staff to discuss its eligibility. A site visit allows Travel Manitoba staff to participate in the visitor experience and provide feedback to applicants prior to the application proceeding for review.

How are decisions about the designation made?

1. Travel Manitoba staff review the applications to determine eligibility.
2. Recommendations are made to the Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade.
3. Travel Manitoba notifies the designated attractions.

What if my attraction has not been designated?

Recommendations are based primarily on the 'Expression of Interest' and any supplemental information provided through the detailed application.

If an attraction has not sufficiently demonstrated that it meets the program criteria, Travel Manitoba will notify the applicant that the attraction has not met the program eligibility.

If an attraction's application is declined, it is ineligible to reapply.

Travel Manitoba staff are available to work with attractions that are interested in refining their product offering for re-application.

How do I apply?

Contact Travel Manitoba to request an 'Expression of Interest' worksheet. In some circumstances, Travel Manitoba may forgo the 'Expression of Interest' process and instead nominate an attraction for designation. These instances are typically limited to the introduction of new iconic destination attractions that are export ready and exceed all applicable criteria at the time of designation. This special designation process will only be considered for attractions that are anticipated to have a far-reaching positive impact on local support services and other tourism attractions due to significant visitation projections and international appeal.

What is the intake process?

To apply, complete the Expression of Interest Worksheet. Star Attractions will be designated every two years.

What are the timelines for intake and designation?

The Star Attractions program is now accepting expressions of interest and the next designations will occur in May of 2020.

Why does the 'Expression of Interest' worksheet request information about marketing?

The worksheet requests information about marketing objectives and how the attraction complements the provincial tourism brand: *Manitoba, Canada's Heart... Beats*. The application package should also include examples of any marketing and promotional materials produced.

Applicants are asked to provide this information to assist in evaluating market potential and potential for brand alignments and marketing partnerships.

While it is not required that the applying organization directly participate in Travel Manitoba Partnership Initiatives, designated attractions will be required to demonstrate brand alignment in any identified marketing and promotional initiatives that are undertaken.

What is brand alignment?

Travel Manitoba has introduced brand alignment guidelines that have been developed for use by tourism businesses, attractions and destination marketers. Designated attractions are required to adopt these guidelines on their publications, websites and other significantly visible activities where possible.

Travel Manitoba's Brand Toolkit can be found [here](#).

How can the Star Attraction logo be used?

Designated attractions are permitted to display the Star Attractions logo when producing marketing and promotional materials or communications and messaging. Visual-use guidelines will be provided.

What is the term of the designation?

Upon approval, the Star Attractions designation is conferred for a period of five (5) years. During this period, attractions are expected to maintain the operational standards and practices appropriate to the designation category criteria. At the conclusion of the designation term, attractions may re-apply to extend their participation in the program.

Who can I call with any questions relating to Star Attraction programs?

The program provides access to tourism marketing opportunities, highway directional signage and tourism development grants (for regional attractions).

For more information, please contact Travel Manitoba at 204-927-7800.

Where do I send my application package?

Forward the complete 'Expression of Interest' document, including all supporting documentation, to:

Travel Manitoba
21 Forks Market Road
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3C 4T7

Please direct any questions relating to the guidelines and application process to 204-927-7800.



> Assiniboine Park Zoo - Journey to Churchill

What is a destination attraction?

Destination attractions provide high quality visitor-oriented programs. They attract a significant number of visitors from outside the immediate area and may be of interest to national and international audiences. Destination attractions can be either of the following:

- Major Attractions
- Park/Casino Destinations

Major Attractions include museums, significant heritage sites, performance theatres, science centres, zoos, cultural interpretive centres and national historic sites.

Park destinations include managed provincial and national parks that provide a range of visitor-orientated services, attractions and programs on a year-round basis.

Casino destinations include provincially regulated casino resorts, regional casinos and live sports-gaming attractions. Casino destinations must demonstrate partnerships with community-based interests that engage visitors in local and regional programs.

What are the operational standards for destination attractions?

Destination attractions must provide quality tourism experiences in terms of maintenance and operation of the built facility. This includes:

- Easily accessible by local/regional traffic routes (i.e., all-weather roads; location near major/regional highway)
- Maintain year-round operations, with regular and substantive hours of operation
- Meet standards for accessibility for people with disabilities, including appropriate washrooms
- Complies with all government regulations and licensing requirements, including liability insurance
- Meet generally accepted standards for tourism market and/or export readiness

What are the visitor experience standards for destination attractions?

Destination attractions must also provide a high quality tourism experience. This includes:

- Have a demonstrated public appeal, attracting a significant number of visitors from outside the immediate area and may be of interest to national and international audiences
- Provide a diversity of tourism services (gift shop or general tourist information)
- Offer a visitor experience that appeals to Travel Manitoba's target audience (EQTM visitor profiles, Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers)
- Provide a high quality visitor experience in terms of substantive visitor-orientated programming

- Offer a unique visitor experience, particularly in terms of maintaining programs unique within Manitoba or specific to a region of Manitoba
- Maintain formal connections to visitor programs that represent the local history, culture, heritage and/or cuisine (e.g., linkages to community-based programs)
- Partner in regional tourism initiatives (e.g., regional product partnerships, etc.)
- Partner in provincial tourism initiatives (e.g., provincial marketing, training, etc.)
- Undertake annual program development (e.g., special events, interpretive programs, tours, etc.)
- Have the ability to accommodate events/programs that require ancillary tourist services and amenities (e.g., food services, entertainment, etc.)

What type of supplemental information would support my application?

Including the following supplemental information is recommended as a way to enhance your application:

- Attendance data, including ongoing collection and maintenance visitor numbers and feedback
- Information about future development plans (e.g., capital, programming, partnerships, services, etc.)
- Examples of any local and regional industry partnerships developed and any partnership initiatives undertaken
- Copy of your attraction's annual program and events plan
- Copy of your attraction's annual training plan
- Copy of your attraction's annual marketing and promotions plan
- Examples of tourism promotion and marketing campaigns and materials produced in the previous operating year (e.g., print materials, advertisements, trade shows, up-to-date website, social media, etc.)

What are the ongoing expectations for designated destination attractions?

For the duration of the designation term, attractions are expected to maintain these criteria as operational standards and practices appropriate to the category.

At the conclusion of the designation term, attractions may re-apply to extend their participation in the program. Designated attractions may anticipate periodic visits from Travel Manitoba and/or requests for information or updates in order to review the attraction's ongoing capacity to meet the program eligibility criteria.