



COMMUNITY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Tourism Assessment Program

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Tourism Assessment Program (TAP) mobilizes communities interested in assessing and developing their community assets for tourism. The program brings expertise from University of Minnesota Extension educators and Tourism Center specialists to local community groups working on tourism efforts. There are three phases to the Tourism Assessment Program.

- First, local teams inventory local assets. Assets include natural and built attractions, services, facilities, people, organizations and more. These inventories plus other documents and past reports gathered by the community create a baseline of information.
- Second, a Visitors' First Impressions team makes a mystery visit to the community and provides their perspective about the visitor experience and the community's tourism assets.
- Third, a team of tourism experts, created by the University of Minnesota Tourism Center, visits the community and assess local assets. During the visit, the team facilitates a discussion with community members to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) from tourism in the community. Findings are compiled into a written report to assist the community in creating action priorities.

This robust Tourism Assessment Program process delivers a 360° look at your community's current tourism assets and potential for tourism development.

TOURISM ASSESSMENT PROGRAM GOALS

With education, research and facilitation support from our educators and tourism specialists. Your community will

1. inventory local tourism assets;
2. assess tourism assets from local, visitor and expert perspectives;
3. uncover opportunities for tourism development; and,
4. identify action steps for sustainable tourism development.



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PROGRAM COST \$7,000

PROGRAM TIMELINE

Approximately 12-18 months.

NEXT STEP

Contact your regional Center for Community Vitality Educator or the University of Minnesota Tourism Center.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

You can find additional information about the Tourism Assessment program at:

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/community/tourism-development/>.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

University of Minnesota Tourism Center: Cynthia Messer cmesser@umn.edu or call 612.624.6236.

STRENGTHENING MINNESOTA'S TOURISM

The University of Minnesota Tourism Center is a collaboration of University of Minnesota Extension and the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences.



TOURISM ASSESSMENT PROGRAM PROCESS

The Tourism Assessment Program is guided by both community members and University of Minnesota Extension staff. The following table outlines the roles and responsibilities of everyone who pitches in.

Steps	Extension Educator (EE)	Tourism Center (TC)	Community
1. Complete program application and Identify community leadership team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discusses program goals, timeline and application with community contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides Program Application Provides job description for the community leadership committee and community team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit 3-6 people for the Community Leadership Committee
2. Educator meets with the community team to plan the TAP community visit	<p>Conduct an orientation and planning meeting with the team to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Review job descriptions of the Community Leadership Committee and community teams Identify existing information / data about the community Develop a plan for recruiting a cross-section of community members to complete the Inventories and Assessments and then return them to the educator Identify potential dates for the Tourism Experts Team visit. Support Community Leadership Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruits Tourism Experts Team members (e.g. Explore Minnesota Tourism, tourism experts, graduate students, etc.) Set dates for Expert Team Visit (coordinated with Educator and community) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completes Asset Inventories and returns them to Educator (Leadership team recruits several teams of 2-3 community members to complete these; goal is to get at least 6 different perspectives) Reserves and pays for meeting room and refreshments for TAP Expert Team visit and community SWOT meeting Invites community members to the SWOT; pays for any costs (printing, postage); keeps an RSVP list; monitors RSVPs to ensure diversity in the people who attend.
3. Data analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collects completed asset inventories and sends to the Tourism Center for tabulation Authors first draft of the secondary data section of report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviews secondary data section drafted by educator Tabulates the asset inventories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locates copies of existing information or previous reports about the community & region and forwards to Educator prior to the Expert Team Visit including past reports, studies, secondary data resources, etc.
4. First Impressions visit		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates the Visitor First Impressions team for the mystery visit Provides guidelines and materials for the visit Collects and tabulates findings from Visitor First Impression 	

5. Tourism Experts Team visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participates as a member of the program Tourism Experts Team visit • Facilitates the community meeting(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participates as a member of the program Tourism Experts Team • Processes expert team expenses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invites community members to meeting/generates participation • Issues press release to inform community of the community meeting • Provides meeting arrangements: room, name-tags, refreshments, etc. • Arranges and pays for commercial lodging, meals & meeting facilities as needed by Tourism Experts Team (community may seek in-kind support of lodging and meals from local businesses)
6. TAP written report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-authors report with Tourism Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-authors report with Extension Educator • Arranges internal and external review of draft report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a written list of people involved in the program locally (for inclusion in the report)
7. TAP report delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prints up to four copies of the report for the Community Leadership Committee. • Presents report to the Community Leadership Committee • Facilitates conversation to plan community actions with Community Leadership Committee • Guides Community Leadership Committee to additional resources within Extension. • Provides up to six hours of consultation to Community Leadership Committee during 12 month action implementation period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report is posted to the Center's tourism development webpage after presentation to the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prints any additional reports beyond the number needed for the Community Leadership Committee • Invites community members to hear the TAP report findings and Community Leadership Team recommendations for action at a meeting • Recruits volunteers to spearhead implementation of selected items
8. Post-program Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits the community in 6-12 months after the report is delivered to evaluate the program and identify outcomes and impacts. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shares outcomes and impacts of the program with the Educator in the 6-12 months following community visit.