



# MEMBERSHIP GUIDE

2023-2024



# WELCOME



Dear Indigenous Tourism Colleagues,

It is with great excitement that I welcome you to walk with Indigenous Tourism Alberta as we continue to grow Alberta into a premier Indigenous tourism destination in the world. Our focus is on supporting members across the province at every stage of their business journey. We work together to unify and promote our industry, with the ultimate goal of supporting the economic and cultural vitality of all of our Indigenous Peoples, nations, languages and communities.

It is no secret that, in the last few years, Indigenous tourism has been hit harder than other industries by the pandemic. So in response, we made a point of working tirelessly to build a solid foundation for members to prepare for the post-pandemic travel boom. I am proud to say our efforts have led to significant achievements that will directly contribute towards all of our success. We have never been better positioned as an industry than we are today.

The world-class, immersive tourism experiences our members offer are even attracting international interest. Indigenous experiences in Alberta were named a premier travel destination for 2023 by National Geographic, the only Canadian destination named out of 25 places worldwide. This is a testament to the powerful tourism experiences offered by ITA members, and the hard work undertaken by ITA, its members and its partners to raise awareness of those experiences.

Our partnerships with industry partners are also strengthening. The alignment with the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada provides our team and members access to further development programs, grants and mentorship opportunities. Travel Alberta continues to be an integral partner which helps support and promote our member experiences. In 2022, ITA signed strategic partnership agreements with WestJet and Edmonton International Airport. It is our role to nurture these partnerships and to ensure that your entrepreneurial spirit continues to be recognized as a vital component of the economic strength of Alberta.

This is a time of opportunity and momentum for our industry, thanks to the passion, resilience, and continued commitment from ITA and its members. Through collaboration and partnership, we will continue to build on this momentum to benefit all of our businesses, nations and communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Shae Bird', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Shae Bird**

Chief Executive Officer  
Indigenous Tourism Alberta

# INTRODUCTION

**This membership guide is an overview of the membership program offered by Indigenous Tourism Alberta (ITA). ITA is the provincial destination marketing organization for Indigenous tourism in Alberta.**

## MISSION

To grow and promote authentic, sustainable and culturally rich Indigenous tourism experiences showcasing Alberta as a premier Indigenous tourism destination in Canada.

## VISION

To see the Indigenous Peoples in Alberta thrive through a financially sustainable Indigenous tourism economy sharing culture and stories.

## IMPORTANT UPDATE ABOUT MEMBERSHIPS DURING THE ONGOING COVID-19 CRISIS

ITA is a member-driven organization, and is committed to rebuilding and sustaining the Indigenous tourism industry in Alberta.

To ensure value to members, to move forward with a strong and committed community of members, and with Covid-19 international travel restrictions largely removed across the world, ITA will no longer be waiving membership fees beginning in 2023.

## STRATEGY

The Indigenous tourism sector's overall economic footprint in Alberta moderately rebounded in 2021 compared with 2020, contributing \$85.1 million in GDP and supporting 2,431 jobs in Alberta.

Based on projections for the overall tourism sector in Alberta, the Indigenous tourism sector will completely recover by 2026. Over 2022–26, we expect the sector to add an average of \$135.4 million annually to Alberta's GDP and provide an average of 4,000 jobs annually within the province.

## KEY PRIORITIES

- Lead the growth and development of Alberta's Indigenous tourism industry;
- Develop sustainable market-ready and export-ready Indigenous tourism products;
- Increase demand for Alberta's Indigenous tourism experiences.

## MEMBERSHIP

ITA is a member-based organization and any Indigenous person or Indigenous organization that has an interest in advancing Indigenous tourism in Alberta may apply to become an ITA Member.

The ITA Membership Program includes experience development support, training, information resources, networking, and marketing programs. ITA's primary goal is to assist their members in developing their business and attracting visitors allowing their members to establish successful and sustainable business operations and provide stable, rewarding jobs through Indigenous tourism. ITA aims to provide valuable and meaningful business resources for Indigenous entrepreneurs and communities in Alberta.

## FUNDERS

ITA has established key partnerships to help ITA and its members grow and strengthen their tourism businesses. These partnerships are designed to support ITA members as they work to establish or improve their tourism product.



Prairies Economic  
Development Canada

Développement économique  
Canada pour les Prairies



Indigenous Services  
Canada

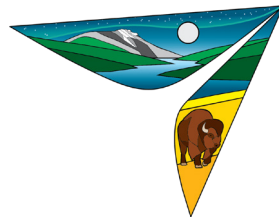
Services aux  
Autochtones Canada

## STRATEGIC PARTNERS

### EXPLORE EDMONTON

ITA's partnership with **Explore Edmonton** has benefitted everyone in the visitor economy across the region.

From providing Indigenous cultural awareness training to people working in the tourism industry, to joint marketing campaigns, to shared travel-trade sales missions, the partnership has laid the groundwork for further growth of Indigenous-owned businesses and of cross-cultural industry partnerships.



**Edmonton International Airport's** commitment to partnership is clear in its work with ITA. From the recent opening of its Indigenous Interpretive and Retail Centre to its work with authentic Indigenous businesses on its property to its unique logo collaboration with Cree artist Jason Carter, ITA's partnership with YEG is part of a broader commitment to action on reconciliation.



**ITAC** is a key strategic partner and was instrumental in the formation, growth and success of ITA. ITAC continues to provide funding, expertise, inspiration and partnership across many marketing and development programs, and continues to lead and advocate for Indigenous tourism across the country.



ITA's strategic partnership with **WestJet** is a truly reciprocal relationship, helping educate and empower WestJetters through truth and knowledge of Indigenous culture, language and diversity, while supporting ITA's development and marketing goals and offering opportunities for visitors to Alberta to connect with the true Indigenous histories and cultures of this place.



**Travel Alberta's** support and leadership has enabled ITA to build a solid foundation from which it can thrive. A true partnership, the relationship has also helped Travel Alberta become a leader and champion for Indigenous tourism, which has set the tone for further support and development of the industry across the province.



# MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

**Any person, Indigenous organization, or Indigenous tourism supporter, that has an interest in advancing Indigenous tourism in Alberta may apply to become an ITA Member.**

ITA membership categories are based on your level of tourism business readiness. Each of these categories come with different types of member benefits to match your business' needs and opportunities. When you apply for membership with ITA, you will be asked to select one of four ITA membership category options: Please note that based on ITA bylaws, all ITA members must Market Ready and have been non-voting members for a year before acquiring voting status.

Once you select one of these three membership categories as part of the membership application process, you will be asked a set of questions to verify your business readiness by confirming the services you provide and confirming the level of your business operations you actively have in place.

If you are a non-Indigenous business or organization, ITA welcomes your partnership. Please contact us at [membership@IndigenousTourismAlberta.ca](mailto:membership@IndigenousTourismAlberta.ca) and we look forward to reviewing with you our ITA partnership opportunities such as program support, sponsorship with our annual Indigenous Tourism Summit and shared marketing efforts.

## **In-Development Business (Non-Voting Membership)**

- You are 51% Indigenous owned or operated;
- Your tourism business does not have set operating hours and does not yet have the required licenses and certifications to legally operate OR;
- You do not currently have an active tourism business; your business (or business idea) is in development.

## **Industry Partner (Non-Voting Membership)**

- Any Indigenous or non-Indigenous tourism-oriented businesses, organizations, associations (incorporated or otherwise) or persons who wish to support ITA's vision and mission and the growth of Indigenous tourism in Alberta.

## **Visitor-Ready, Market-Ready Business (Non-Voting Membership)**

- You are 51% Indigenous owned or operated;
- You have a tourism business with set operating hours and you have all the necessary licenses and certifications to legally operate;
- You maintain a staffed and branded business location with a posted set schedule of operating hours and you follow those operating hours consistently;
- You do not yet have promotional items such as an active website or brochures;
- You are not yet set up to receive and respond to business inquiries within 24 hours;
- You do not currently meet the market-ready criteria established by the tourism industry.

## **Market-Ready or Export-Ready Business (Voting Membership)**

- You are 51% Indigenous owned or operated;
- You currently meet a minimum of market-ready criteria established by the tourism industry;
- You have a tourism business with set operating hours and you have all the necessary licenses and certifications to legally operate;
- You have up-to-date promotional items such as a website or brochures;
- You are able to respond to business inquiries (received by phone, email, website or social media) within 24 hours;
- You provide visitors an option to pre-book an experience by phone, email or online.

# MEMBERSHIP FEES & DEADLINES

Fees listed below will begin April 1, 2023.

## MEMBERSHIP FEES

<b>Industry Partner</b> (Non-Voting Membership)	<b>\$199</b>	ANNUALLY In place 2023-'24
<b>In-Development Business</b> (Non-Voting Membership)	<b>\$49</b>	ANNUALLY Waived 2022-'23
<b>Visitor-Ready, Market-Ready Business</b> (Non-Voting Membership)	<b>\$99</b>	ANNUALLY Waived 2022-'23
<b>Market-Ready or Export-Ready Business</b> (Voting Membership)	<b>\$149</b>	ANNUALLY Waived 2022-'23

## DEADLINES

### ITA Voting Rights Deadline: March 31, 2023

Apply for your ITA membership before March 31, 2023 in order to have voting rights for the 2023-2024 membership year if you are a market-ready or export-ready business. Please note that businesses in development and visitor-ready businesses are not eligible for ITA voting rights.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR ITA VOTING STATUS

If a member has voting status with ITA, the member has voting rights at the ITA Annual General Meeting regarding motions and Board member selections and a voting member is also eligible to be selected for a position on the ITA Board. To attain ITA voting status, a member must be:

- A confirmed and paid member of ITA with a fully completed application form;
- Minimum market-ready tourism-related business;
- Minimum 51% Indigenous owned or controlled Alberta-based business;
- Previous non-voting membership status.





## MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

The ITA Membership Program is designed to provide helpful and useful support that can help you build the success of your business through development & training, marketing and partnerships. Each membership category has specific benefits:

### Industry Partner (Non-Voting Membership)

- Advocacy by ITA with industry partners;
- Access to research and studies as published or shared by ITA;
- Access to the ITA Annual General Meeting;
- Networking opportunities;
- Access to ITA Connect
- Invitation to regional and provincial events where possible;
- Eligible for ITA training and capacity development programs.

### In-Development Business (Non-Voting Membership)

- Advocacy by ITA with industry partners;
- Access to research and studies as published or shared by ITA;
- Access to the ITA Annual General Meeting;
- Networking opportunities;
- Access to ITA Connect
- Invitation to regional and provincial events where possible;
- Eligible for ITA training and capacity development programs.

### Visitor-Ready, Market-Ready Business (Non-Voting Membership)

All the above benefits as well as:

- Eligible to be included in ITA newsletter & blog promotional channels;
- Opportunity to promote your special events through ITA and ITA partners;
- Link on ITA website.

### Market-Ready or Export-Ready Business (Voting Membership)

All the above benefits as well as:

- Voting rights with ITA at Annual General Meeting;
- Eligible for ITA Board representation;
- Opportunity to be included in ITA and Travel Alberta marketing programs and co-op partnerships;
- Alberta Tourism Information System (ATIS) Profile with ITA and Travel Alberta marketing channels;
- Included in ITA Experiences Guide (annual publication);
- Website profile (up to 250 words, up to 10 images and 1 video);
- Eligible to participate in media and travel trade programs;
- Opportunity to be included in itinerary development and story ideas.

## MEMBERSHIP SIGN-UP PROCESS

Applicants to the ITA Membership Program have the choice of applying online or offline, either by:

- Filling out this form and scan/emailing, faxing or mailing it in:
  - Email: [membership@IndigenousTourismAlberta.ca](mailto:membership@IndigenousTourismAlberta.ca)
  - Mail: ITA Membership, Floor 5 - 9990 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, T5J 1P7

OR

- Using the **online form** to submit your information:  
[IndigenousTourismAlberta.ca/membership](https://IndigenousTourismAlberta.ca/membership)

Applicants will self-assess their business readiness by answering a set of questions for their specific membership category. Your membership application will be reviewed by ITA staff and you will receive confirmation by email.

Annual Membership is valid from April 1 to March 31. If an applicant applies after April 1 in any year, their membership is valid only until March 31 of the current membership year.

## Questions?

For more information on ITA or for assistance with completing your Membership Application, please email [Membership@IndigenousTourismAlberta.ca](mailto:Membership@IndigenousTourismAlberta.ca).





# 2023-24 MEMBERSHIP FORM

## INDIGENOUS OWNED OR CONTROLLED

Any Indigenous person or Indigenous organization that has an interest in advancing Indigenous tourism in Alberta may apply to become an ITA Member.

You are Indigenous or represent a minimum 51% Indigenous-owned or -controlled business or organization:

☐ Yes ☐ No

Name of Nation or Home Community:

## MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY

☐ **In Development Business** (Non-Voting)

☐ My business meets all In Development Business requirements in the attached, completed checklist.

☐ **Industry Partner** (Non-Voting)

☐ I wish to support Indigenous tourism in Alberta.

☐ **Visitor-Ready Business** (Non-Voting)

☐ My business meets all Visitor-Ready Business requirements in the attached, completed checklist.

☐ **Market-Ready or Export-Ready Business** (Voting)

☐ My business meets all Market-Ready or Export-Ready Business requirements in the attached, completed checklist.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact Name

Contact Title

Email Address

Phone Number

## BUSINESS INFORMATION

Please provide us with information on the business that you are applying for ITA membership for. If your business is still in development and you don't have this information you may skip to the next page of this form.

Business Name

Website

Email Address

Phone Number

Toll-Free

Fax

Physical Address

Mailing Address ( ☐ Same as physical address )

## TOURISM BUSINESS CATEGORY

Type of tourism product or experience you offer, or plan to offer (check all that apply):

- ☐ Accommodations (includes hotels, motels, lodges and campgrounds)
- ☐ Attractions (includes museums, cultural centres, event venues)
- ☐ Retail/Artisan (includes retail businesses, artists or artisans)
- ☐ Food & Culinary (businesses that offer food and culinary experiences, category also includes restaurants)
- ☐ Outdoor Experiences/Guided Tours (also includes workshops and training or instruction)
- ☐ Powwows and Events (includes festivals, performances, exhibits, shows and powwows)
- ☐ Industry Partner

I certify that the information provided on this form is true to the best of my knowledge.

Name

Signature

Date

## CRITERIA CHECKLISTS

Please only complete the section corresponding to the membership category you are applying for.

### In Development Business (Non-Voting Membership)

Your tourism business is:

- ☐ In development, you are not yet 'open for business', OR
- ☐ Open for business but do not yet meet the Visitor-Ready standards of ITA membership (i.e.: set business hours, all necessary licenses & certification etc.)

### Industry Partner (Non-Voting Membership)

- ☐ I wish to support Indigenous tourism in Alberta.

### Visitor-Ready Business (Non-Voting Membership)

1. Business is open and operating (year-round or seasonally).  
Yes    No    N/A
2. You maintain good standings with all applicable business licenses, insurance and legislative requirements.  
Yes    No    N/A
3. You maintain a staffed and branded business location with a posted set schedule of operating hours and you follow those operating hours consistently.  
Yes    No    N/A



## Market-Ready or Export-Ready Business (Voting Membership)

Questions 1-18 are based on the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada's national standards and guidelines.

1. Do you maintain a staffed business location with a set schedule of operating hours?  
Yes    No    N/A
2. Is your business available by email or telephone year-round? If you are seasonal, do you provide an automated response through voicemail or email?  
Yes    No    N/A
3. Can your business/operation be reached 24-hours a day, 365 days a year by website, phone, fax or email? (Not to directly speak to someone but to have access to information and to be able to leave messages, send bookings, etc.)  
Yes    No    N/A
4. Do you return messages within 24 hours during standard business hours?  
Yes    No    N/A
5. Do you have a website where visitors can obtain information? This website should have all key information on operating hours, location and instructions on how to get there (i.e. Google Maps links).  
Yes    No    N/A
6. Do you offer a quality experience to visitors?  
Yes    No    N/A
7. How do you know that you offer a quality experience? (Check all that apply)  
  - ☐ Increase in visitors
  - ☐ High repeat visitation
  - ☐ Direct feedback (calls, emails, etc.)
  - ☐ Guestbook (comments)
  - ☐ Visitor feedback forms
  - ☐ Visitor/customer surveys
  - ☐ External/independent review
  - ☐ Industry accreditation and standards
  - ☐ Industry support and partnerships
  - ☐ Industry awards and recognition
  - ☐ Other
8. Do you have alternate plans if there is bad weather or a community emergency? This is very important for outdoor, adventure and winter-based experiences.  
Yes    No    N/A
9. If your tourism experience requires special equipment or training do you provide it? (i.e. safety equipment, lifejackets, camping equipment, hats, gloves, etc.)  
Yes    No    N/A
10. Have you maintained good standing of all applicable business licenses, insurance, and legislative requirements?  
Yes    No    N/A
11. Please list the licenses and permits you hold:  


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12. Are your operating hours clearly posted for visitors on site and for trade on your website and materials? Do you follow those operating hours consistently?  
Yes    No    N/A
13. Do you have branded on-site signage?  
Yes    No    N/A
14. Are you tracking, measuring and evaluating results to ensure a consistent level of customer satisfaction? Tracking and evaluation can help identify who your visitors are, their level of satisfaction and the economic impact in the community.  
Yes    No    N/A
15. Do you have promotional materials that present the product (experience), the price, dates and key reasons to visit?  
Yes    No    N/A
16. Please rate the amount of Indigenous culture included in the overall experience (1 = low, 5 = high):  
1    2    3    4    5
17. Please rate the level of physical activity required (1 = low, 5 = high):  
1    2    3    4    5
18. In which months are your experience(s) available? (Check all that apply)  

☐ January

☐ July

☐ February

☐ August

☐ March

☐ September

☐ April

☐ October

☐ May

☐ November

☐ June

☐ December
19. Your ITA membership will include a business profile created through the Alberta Tourism Information Service (ATIS). If you already have an ATIS business profile with Travel Alberta or if you intend to develop an ATIS profile, do you give permission to ITA to co-manage the business profile through the ATIS system?  
Yes    No    N/A
20. You consent to allow ITA to use any and all images and video that are submitted to ITA for the purpose of marketing and promoting Indigenous tourism in Alberta through the ITA website, social media channels and print and promotional materials. You also consent to allowing ITA's tourism marketing partners (as listed in the ITA Membership Guide) to also use submitted images and video for promotional purposes.  
Yes    No    N/A



Indigenous Tourism Alberta is a non-profit organization devoted to help grow and promote authentic, sustainable and culturally rich Indigenous tourism experiences we want to share with the world.

[IndigenousTourismAlberta.ca](http://IndigenousTourismAlberta.ca)

## Questions?

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ARC'TERYX