

Development of an Accreditation Program Aimed at Recognizing Receptive Businesses Serving LGBT+ Customers

Project Overview and Purpose

As part of an Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED)-funded initiative, Canada's LGBT+ Chamber of Commerce (CGLCC) and Tourism HR Canada (THRC) are collaborating to deliver a responsive, comprehensive and sustainable LGBT+ Tourism Market Ready Program aimed at helping businesses and communities develop a lucrative and fast-growing LGBT+ market. We are working with a contractor, Magnus Conventus, to develop an accreditation program aimed at recognizing market ready businesses receptive to the LGBT+ customer.

Accreditation Program

The accreditation program will be a voluntary process that grants a time-limited recognition to businesses or communities for demonstrating compliance with the quality standard (i.e., the National Guidelines). Accredited businesses are deemed *market ready* for the LGBT+ customer and given the right to be associated with the program's prestigious designation mark.

Benefits of Accreditation

Businesses will benefit from guidelines that provide information, advice and resources on ensuring that LGBT+ customers feel welcome and accepted. Accredited businesses will be able to demonstrate and market themselves as safe destinations for the LGBT+ market with progressive policies and practices as well as exceptional service standards. The program will be sufficiently flexible and responsive to emergent needs and attainable to a variety of business types and sizes within a range of industries.

Field Test

At this point, program materials are being developed based on criteria that define the required standards of practice. These standards, or National Guidelines, inform the program's processes, tools and guidance and have been validated by an inclusive, expert Validation Review Panel. We are ready to begin organizing and conducting a Field Test of the program's processes and materials.

Benefits of Participating in the Field Test

SME Benefits:

In addition to a free year of membership with CGLCC, CGLCC will provide the following opportunities for businesses participating in the LGBT+ Safe Space Accreditation Pilot Program:

- Article / story feature on CGLCC owned channels
- Podcast / Interview opportunity on CGLCC podcast
- Social media promotion

Corporation Benefits:

In addition to a free year of membership with CGLCC, CGLCC will provide the following opportunities for corporations participating in the LGBT+ Safe Space Accreditation Pilot Program:

- Article / story feature on CGLCC owned channels
 - Podcast / Interview opportunity on CGLCC podcast
 - Social media promotion
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Next Steps

Building on the Field Test findings, we will finalize the materials and related administrative tools later this winter.

