

# Tourism Calgary's New Integrated Learning Program Mobilizes the City's Ultimate Hosts

*White Hat Academy instils confidence in Calgary's tourism industry – creating better ambassadors and storytellers for the city*

BY BRIDGETTE SLATER

Tourism Calgary works with the community to foster a destination that is welcoming, innovative and experience-rich. This includes creating strong city ambassadors who evoke positive sentiment, increase partner referrals and encourage exploration of Calgary.

To inspire customer-facing employees in Calgary's tourism industry to be better ambassadors and storytellers for the city, Tourism Calgary developed the White Hat Academy. This multifaceted, multi-level learning program blends online modules with experiential learning to provide members of Calgary's tourism industry with the knowledge, tools and resources they need to be Ultimate Hosts. The experiential component ties in with Tourism Calgary's Frontline Experience Pass program, which was launched in 2016 to ensure Calgary's tourism industry is well informed about, has personally experienced and can recommend key Calgary experiences.

The inspiration for this program stemmed from interviews with thousands of Calgary White Hat Award nominees over multiple years. The results indicated there was a need for easily accessible tools and resources that industry members could use to enhance their knowledge of Calgary's diverse offerings and to elevate visitors' experiences.

Additionally, Tourism Calgary surveyed over 700 industry supervisors and staff in early 2018. Findings showed there was strong interest in an industry certification training program and increased access to Calgary-related tools and resources. Based on these findings, Tourism Calgary developed the White Hat Academy, which will support



members of Calgary's tourism industry in developing, delivering and promoting Calgary's experiences.

The free online learning program is mobile-compatible and is comprised of a series of videos, websites, photos, interactive maps and an ever-expanding library of information about Calgary. Industry members are invited to complete activities and review content at their own convenience. As they excel through the modules, they will not only receive incentive rewards, but will become equipped with the knowledge, tools and resources they need to inform and inspire visitors and Calgarians.

By establishing a standard knowledge baseline for all Calgary ambassadors, Tourism Calgary hopes to increase the likelihood that visitors recommend Calgary as a travel destination. As a result, this will help build pride of place for residents in addition to Calgary's robust visitor economy and reputation as the Ultimate Host City.

To learn more about Tourism Calgary, view [visitcalgary.com](http://visitcalgary.com). **B**