



## **ISLAND WELCOME CENTRE PROGRAM**

The **Island Welcome Centre Program** has been developed to assist non-profit-community operated visitor information centres to increase their level of service to the travelling public, therefore, maximizing their ability to promote Prince Edward Island and their local communities. In particular, this program has the following objectives:

- \* to provide the travelling public with greater access to quality visitor information services presented in a professional, courteous and hospitable manner.
- \* to enable the non-profit community groups and tourist associations access to designated signage, information and literature.
- \* to ensure a minimum standard of quality service is offered by non-profit/community operated visitor centres.

### **Purpose:**

The program will benefit the Island's tourism industry by ensuring that generic information and symbols are made available to those non profit/community based entities who meet the program guidelines.

### **Duration:**

Tourism PEI has been committed to this program since 1999. The Tourism Industry Association of PEI and Tourism PEI will jointly monitor and review the program to ensure objectives are being met.

### **Criteria:**

All applications for the Official Island Welcome Centre program will be evaluated against a standard list of criteria. Various weights will be assigned to each criteria and applicants must achieve a combined score of **80** in order to be eligible for Welcome Centre Funding Grant. Following is the list of criteria:

- \* Must be a tourism related/community/non-profit organization.

- \* Welcome Centre must be clearly identified and operated within a defined, prominent area. Appropriate retail items may be included in the centre (ie. souvenir crafts and clothing). Adequate counter space with map must be provided.
- \* Operator will ensure all Welcome Centre staff receive appropriate training:
  - 1) World Host Program
  - 2) Provincial VIC Training Program
  - 3) Provincial and/or local familiarization tours
  - 4) First Aid & CPR (fully stocked First Aid kit must be located on site)
 (Please contact Heather Pollard or your local provincial VIC manager to determine your staff's training needs.)
- Island Welcome Centres will have staff dedicated solely to address the needs of the travelling public.
- \* Space must contain adequate literature racks to display provincial and local tourist information. Centre must also include an appropriate customer service desk which can adequately display a provincial road map.
- \* Must have access to a fax machine and/or the Internet in order to receive current information updates from provincial Visitor Services.
- \* Regular hours of operation must be posted.
- \* Must have access to public washroom facilities and a public telephone/Internet.
- \* Travel counsellors will be required to wear name tags and appropriate dress at all times. (Tourism PEI will provide **dedicated** Welcome Centre staff with the Welcome Centre golf shirts at no cost to the Welcome Centre. All shirt orders are to be placed through Heather Pollard, Tourism PEI.)
- \* After hours, the Island Welcome Centre will post such information as the Tourism PEI toll-free number.
- \* The Island Welcome Centres must be clean and tidy in appearance (inside and out).

### **Review/Selection Process:**

All non-profit community based entities requesting designation under the program will forward an application to the Tourism PEI Manager of Visitor Services who is responsible for all provincially operated Visitor Information Centres. Upon receiving an application, the Visitor Services Manager will arrange to visit the site and meet with operators of the proposed Island Welcome Centre (application attached).

### **Requirement:**

- \* Each Island Welcome Centre is required to distribute all provincial literature (ie. Visitor's Guide, provincial maps). Information will be available through the provincial VICs or the Tourism PEI Distribution Centre. **Note: Island Welcome Centres who wish to pick-up literature orders at their local provincial VIC must contact their local Provincial VIC to determine the date which literature orders must be submitted.**
- \* Island Welcome Centres will ensure staff are adequately trained.
- \* The Tourism PEI Visitor Services Manager will inspect each Island Welcome Centre at various occasions throughout the season. Island Welcome Centres will be required to incorporate feedback from these spot checks into their continued operation. Island Welcome Centres not able to comply with the stated criteria will lose all benefits associated with the program.
- \* Island Welcome Centres will provide a year end report summarizing comments, complaints, visitation notes and other information pertinent to the operation of the Island Welcome Centres and the Island Welcome Centre program.

### **Benefits:**

Each certified Island Welcome Centre will receive the following benefits:

- \* Two (2) generic information signs (produced and installed by the province). In certain circumstances, the number of signs required for a particular Island Welcome Centre will be left to the discretion of the Tourism PEI Visitor Services Manager.
- \* Promotion of Island Welcome Centres in provincial publications such as the Visitor's Guide and map.
- \* Access to Island Welcome Centre training sessions, access to provincial FAM tours and assistance in coordinating additional training seminars as required (ie. World Host).
- \* Island Welcome Centre uniform top. (*Issued as available on an "as needed" basis.*)
- \* Access to the Island Welcome Centre official logo.
- \* Access to the Prince Edward Island poster series for resale at your Island Welcome Centre. The posters which are retailed at \$5.00 (tax included) are available for Welcome Centres to purchase at the cost of \$2.50 per poster. Posters may be purchased at your local VIC. If a large quantity is required, an advance order must be requested.

### **Welcome Centre Achievement Grant and Training Subsidy:**

- Available to non-profit/community operated Welcome Centres
- Welcome Centres receiving a yearly inspection average score of 80% or more will receive the **Welcome Centre Achievement Grant** of \$500.00. In recognition of the successful delivery standards provided by the Welcome Centre
- Training is key to the success of the Welcome Centre Program. To help offset salary costs

during Welcome Centre training, Tourism PEI will contribute \$50.00 per employee who has attended and successfully completed the one-day Welcome Centre Training Program and/or regional FAM tour. The FAM tour dates will vary, please check with your local provincial VIC for dates and times. Classroom training focussing on using the resources and customer service will be held in two sessions in late June, early July. Locations/Dates TBD.

### **Program support and status**

Tourism PEI will no longer provide direct funding to individual Welcome Centres. The program funding has been dedicated to the general operation and maintenance of the program. This is to include items such as staff training, signage, etc.

Training is one of the most important components of the Welcome Centre Program. Tourism PEI understands the challenges faced by operators in accommodating the training dates and is therefore committed to working with Welcome Centres to meet their training needs.

In order to receive full Welcome Centre status, all Welcome Centre staff must receive Welcome Centre training. If Welcome Centres do not meet the training requirements, their future status as a Welcome Centre will be re-assessed to determine if the appropriate level of commitment exists in order to maintain status as a Welcome Centre. Please contact Heather Pollard to determine your training needs.

*(April 2015)*