

EMERGING DESTINATIONS PROGRAM 2025-2026





Eskasoni Cultural Journeys, Goat Island



Hall's Harbour

What attracts visitors to your community? Build capacity for your community to appeal to travellers with Tourism Nova Scotia.

The Emerging Destinations Program helps communities build capacity to identify and position the most compelling tourism assets, such as attractions, experiences, food and drink, events and accommodations, to increase awareness with potential travellers.

Tourism Nova Scotia (TNS) is seeking municipalities, chambers of commerce and business associations interested in collaborating to maximize tourism opportunities in one season, preferably fall or winter, with late-summer also eligible. TNS will consider applicants based on the community's ability to host visitors, community leadership for tourism opportunities, availability of compelling and differentiating tourism products, and the community's ability to provide online resources for visitors to plan a trip. The Emerging Destinations Program is part of the Compelling Tourism Communities Initiative.

Program partners will benefit from:

- Coaching, tools and resources to identify and position your most compelling tourism products and develop a tourism action plan;
- Exploring opportunities to maximize or extend a tourism season;
- Target market research insights for regional travellers; and
- A travel media/influencer visit to generate new photos and digital content to increase the profile of the community's seasonal tourism products (such as a social media post and a new story/travel itinerary on [NovaScotia.com](https://www.novascotia.com)).



Amherst Shore Provincial Park



The Barn at Wentworth Bike Park, Wentworth

AREAS OF FOCUS

Partners will receive coaching through the following steps:

STEP 1- Destination Dynamics & Your Visitors: Choice of an in-person or virtual meeting organized by the partner and facilitated by TNS. Gain insights on travellers, explore your community capacity to host and identify your most appealing tourism product and experiences, including ways to best position your destination to travellers.

STEP 2- Increase Destination Profile: Focusing on one priority season, we will collaborate to confirm your community's most compelling tourism products and attractions to be featured in a seasonal itinerary. This itinerary will guide a travel media/influencer visit to your community and provide an outline for a featured story on [NovaScotia.com](https://www.novascotia.com).

Deliverables include:

- New seasonal photography of community;
- Seasonal social media posts by travel media/influencer;
- Boosted carousel post in social media to further increase awareness;
- Potential for new business listings on NovaScotia.com for eligible businesses in community;
- New community story on NovaScotia.com; and
- Enhanced destination profile on [NovaScotia.com](https://www.novascotia.com).

STEP 3- Tourism Action Plan: During a virtual meeting with the community project lead, we will discuss short term goals to increase tourism capacity, awareness and appeal of your community, including leveraging TNS programs and resources.

Content created through this program may be used by TNS in marketing activities and uploaded to the TNS digital asset library, Simpleview, to share with approved tourism industry and qualified partners. Content creation and boosting are at the discretion of TNS.

TNS is dedicated to advancing equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility (EDIA) in Nova Scotia. We encourage and prioritize applications from equity-seeking communities, chambers of commerce and business associations, as well as those that offer tourism activities that amplify and reflect equity-seeking communities, experiences and voices. For example, preference will be given to Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian applicants.



Cape Chignecto Provincial Park



Alan Syliboy Art Studio, Millbrook

REQUIREMENTS

Emerging Destinations Program partners must:

- Have been in operation for at least one year and be in good standing with the Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stocks, as applicable, and the Province of Nova Scotia. TNS is a division of the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage;
- Represent a community offering a tourism cluster with a minimum of five market-aligned businesses and attractions, including a unique place to stay, somewhere to eat local flavours and something to do. Preference will be given to compelling product clusters focused on fall or winter, but will also consider late-summer;
- Tourism products featured in program activities must qualify for a listing on NovaScotia.com and meet all required permits, licenses, and permissions to operate. Roofed accommodations must be registered with the province's Short-term Rentals Registry;
- Demonstrate interest in championing a destination and willingness to support the profile of compelling or differentiating tourism product to travellers in Nova Scotia and the Maritime region;
- Have the ability to commit time and energy to coordinate a community meeting of tourism businesses and stakeholders as well as inform, advance and complete program deliverables by March 2026;
- Agree to take part in program meetings with a TNS tourism development advisor; and
- Agree to report milestones and program feedback to TNS.

Successful applicants will enter into a written contract with TNS and be required to deliver on the activities as jointly identified. Partner contribution includes time and community coordination to achieve outcomes as mutually agreed to in the Letter of Agreement. TNS may, in its sole discretion, determine that a proponent is not eligible.



Highland Village Museum | Baile nan Gàidheal, Iona



Fishing in Yarmouth and Acadian Shores

APPLICATION PROCESS

Each applicant will be assessed for best fit with program guidelines for 2025-2026. All successful applicants will be contacted to further discuss the program with TNS staff. Although an applicant may be eligible, eligibility does not guarantee acceptance into the program. If the application is successful, some or all of the requested activities may be supported. Advice on the outcome of your application is available after a formal decision has been made and communicated to you in writing.

Preference will be given to applicants that are underrepresented, including Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian applicants, and communities focused on extending the tourism season in fall and winter.

HOW TO APPLY?

Municipalities, chambers of commerce and business associations are invited to complete the online application form at: <https://tourismns.ca/ctc-programs-emerging-destinations/application>

Applications are open until **Wednesday, May 7, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. ADT.**

EVALUATION

Applications will be reviewed by a panel of experts from Tourism Nova Scotia and our Agency of Record.

PROGRAM CONTACT

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