




GRAND RAPIDS TOURISM AMBASSADOR

*“Tourism is about creating experiences. Front-line workers can have the biggest impact on making a visitor’s trip to **Grand Rapids the best it can be.**”*

CERTIFIED TOURISM AMBASSADOR™ ENROLLMENT APPLICATION



Submit only one application per person. This form may be reproduced.

Congratulations on your decision to become a Certified Tourism Ambassador™!

Easy online enrollment is available at www.CTANetwork.com!!

You also may mail or fax the completed form below along with the non-refundable, non-transferable \$35 application fee to Experience Grand Rapids, 171 Monroe Ave NW Suite 700, Grand Rapids, MI 49503, or fax to 616-459-7291. For more information or questions, please e-mail LVerhil@ExperienceGR.com, call 616-459-8287, or visit www.CTANetwork.com.

Contact Information (please print):

Note: This information will be used internally to help us stay in touch with you and provide you with important, up-to-date information on the program and new happenings in the region.

TITLE (circle one): Mr. Mrs. Ms. Miss

FIRST NAME: _____ LAST NAME: _____

JOB TITLE: _____

COMPANY: _____

WORK ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

WORK PHONE: () _____

SUPERVISOR NAME (optional): _____

SUPERVISOR E-MAIL (optional): _____

HOME ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

HOME PHONE: () _____

CELL PHONE (optional): () _____

PREFERRED E-MAIL: _____

SECONDARY E-MAIL (optional): _____

PREFERRED CONTACT METHOD (check one): E-Mail Mail

PREFERRED MAILING ADDRESS: Work Home

SPECIAL NEEDS: _____

Classroom Session Choice (Indicate your first and second choice)
See schedule at www.CTANetwork.com

1. Location: _____ Date: _____

2. Location: _____ Date: _____

The Grand Rapids Tourism Ambassador (GRTA) program is a multi-faceted program that serves to increase tourism by inspiring front-line employees and volunteers to turn every visitor encounter into a positive experience. When visitors have a positive experience they are more likely to return in the future and also share their experience with others. Everyone benefits – the visitor, the industry, the local economy and most importantly, the front-line worker.



Program Vision

Grand Rapids tourism leaders have partnered to unite our front-line tourism representatives not only to serve our current visitors, but also to prepare for the future. The GRTA program demonstrates our dedication to promoting our destination as one of the best, with a high level of commitment to our visitors.



**COOL
CITY.
WARM
HOSPITALITY.**

www.CTANetwork.com



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Fax: 616-459-7291
Email: LVerhil@ExperienceGR.com
www.CTANetwork.com

Online enrollment available at:
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CERTIFIED TOURISM AMBASSADOR™
Enhancing the Visitor Experience™

BY SIGNING THIS APPLICATION I AGREE THAT I:

- Currently work (or am seeking work) and/or volunteer in the hospitality or tourism industry and that my current duties include directly or indirectly serving the region's tourists/visitors, or that I am no longer directly working at this time but I am still committed to building tourism for our region.
- Will demonstrate my commitment to becoming a Certified Tourism Ambassador™ (CTA) which I understand is an official industry designation presented by Experience Grand Rapids on behalf of the Tourism Ambassador Institute® (TAI®), that the TAI® reserves the right to revoke certification or refuse renewal of certification at their sole discretion, and I understand and agree that certification as a Certified Tourism Ambassador™ (CTA) does not constitute TAI's warranty or guarantee of my fitness or competency to practice in the hospitality or tourism industry.
- Will complete the required pre-class reading and exercises; open-book exam; and assignments.
- Will actively participate in a half-day education/training session.
- Will work to earn annual certification renewal points every year in order to maintain my CTA designation and that it is my responsibility to be aware of current requirements for renewal of certification, as the TAI® may update or revise the materials/requirements over time.
- Will continue my education by learning about how to best serve my customers and what the region has to offer.
- Will keep Experience Grand Rapids informed of any changes to my contact information, authorize Experience Grand Rapids to submit my name to be listed in the TAI's nationwide list of CTAs, authorize use of any CTA-related event photos in which I may appear in TAI® or Experience Grand Rapids print or online media, and understand and agree that TAI® may also use anonymous and aggregate application and examination data for statistical and research purposes.
- Will provide input to Experience Grand Rapids on how the program can be enhanced to meet my needs and the needs of my customers.
- Will uphold the status of the CTA by pledging to maintain the highest standard of personal conduct and ethics.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Payment: The application fee is non-refundable and non-transferable.

Check (Make payable to Experience Grand Rapids Amount enclosed):

\$ _____

Credit Card Visa/MC AMEX

Credit card number: _____ Exp. _____

Name on card: _____

Signature: _____

Why Participate?

For Employers

Tourism is big business. Visitors spend money attending to work, touring attractions and learning about the history of an area. This infusion of "new money" into a local economy often holds local tax increases at bay and raises extra money to enhance infrastructure – making the destination even more appealing over time. That's why cities like ours spend lots of money courting convention and leisure travelers.

But the reality is, no amount of money will make up for a bad experience. A visitor's bad experience in Grand Rapids negatively impacts our brand and overall image as a destination.

The GRTA program teaches front-line employees and volunteers the best practices for creating a good experience, and ensures that they understand their role in increasing tourism. GRTA helps front-line personnel increase their knowledge of the region, provides answers to the questions they often get from visitors, and gives them the chance to meet other front-line personnel – so they can learn from each other's experiences and celebrate together!

For Employees

What separates GRTA from other training programs is that it's certification, not just training. Employees and volunteers who complete the program receive a credential and accompanying initials that can be used behind their name to denote their commitment to their profession as a *Certified Tourism Ambassador™* (e.g., Jim Smith, CTA). The CTA logo may also be used on your website and business cards/communications with approval.

As an Accredited Provider, Experience Grand Rapids presents official CTA designation on behalf of the *Tourism Ambassador Institute®*, the national oversight body for the certification program.



What's in it for you?

Becoming a *Certified Tourism Ambassador™* is a great achievement. It is a national designation to add to your résumé. It gives the tools and knowledge necessary to create a more memorable visitor experience and reap benefits like these:

- Provides a meaningful credential
- Increased business, higher tips
- Builds valuable skills
- Career advancement
- Networking opportunities
- Receive regular advice & updates
- Rewards and incentives*

*Many employers offer incentives for career training and certifications. Check with your employer to learn about company incentives.

Program Curriculum

Every certification program requires successful completion of a core curriculum. The CTA program is delivered through reading assignments and in-class participation.

Module 1: The Power of Tourism

Module 2: Discovering Grand Rapids and West Michigan

Module 3: Knowing, Finding, Using Resources

Module 4: Exceeding Customer Expectations

Program Requirements

You must meet these standards to earn CTA designation:

- Complete required reading
- Attend half-day classroom session
- Complete learning assignments
- Complete open-book examination

Upon successful completion, participants will earn the *Certified Tourism Ambassador™* designation and receive a CTA certificate and lapel pin. An annual renewal process of certification is also necessary to maintain your certification.

Cost

There is a one-time non-refundable, non-transferable application fee of \$35.00 per person and an annual renewal fee of \$10 per person. Access the class schedule and additional information online at www.CTANetwork.com

Program Research Results

In developing the GRTA program, thorough research was conducted – including focus groups, a subject matter expert panel, and a survey of management and front-line personnel.

Employers Show a High Level of Support

- Better customer service ratings
- Improved team morale
- Increased Employee satisfaction
- Encouragement to employees for career advancement

"Certification is a wonderful tool to add value to the staff member's body of knowledge and confidence in providing quality service to customers. I think everything about the value of the certification is positive!"

"Will make those who earn certification proud of their accomplishment."

Front-Line Indicates a High Level of Interest

"It would be very helpful and give me more confidence in my ability to help customers!"

"I think it denotes professionalism and an official image I would proudly uphold."

"Reaching a new level of guest service in Grand Rapids!"