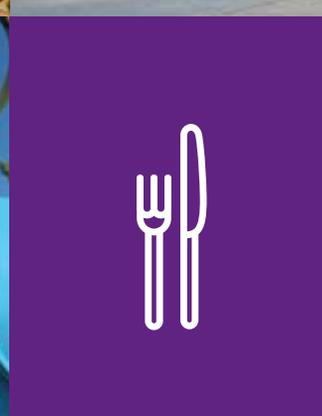


2020 RESOURCE GUIDE



EXPLORE **m** MINNESOTA™





VISION

To elevate Minnesota as a premier travel destination through results-driven, innovative destination marketing.

MISSION

To inspire consumers and facilitate their travel to and within the state of Minnesota.

We do this by marketing Minnesota tourism through consumer advertising, public relations, publications, websites, social media, international marketing and other efforts. Our work to promote tourism in Minnesota contributes to a thriving economy that encourages business growth and employment opportunities.

We invite you to contact your regional partner relations team member for more information on all of our programs, and to talk about ways in which Explore Minnesota can partner with your business, organization or community.

As the official state tourism office, Explore Minnesota serves as a resource for the entire Minnesota tourism industry. In this guide, you will find brief introductions to the many ways that you can get involved in Explore Minnesota partnerships and programs, all of which are designed to help you grow your tourism business. Highlights include educational opportunities, grant programs, marketing partnerships and co-ops, advertising and public relations opportunities, events and trade show support, and much more. For more information on any of these programs, please visit the links provided, or contact the staff person listed or your regional partner relations team member.

PARTNER RELATIONS

TOURISM COUNCIL

The statewide Explore Minnesota Tourism Council is comprised of tourism industry representatives appointed by the Governor to provide broad-based input into Explore Minnesota's direction and activities. Representing various facets of the tourism industry, the Council advises Explore Minnesota on programs and policies and is a key communication channel between the state office and the tourism industry. A list of current members is posted on the industry site: exploreminnesota.com/council. For more information, contact **Beth Helle at beth.helle@state.mn.us | 651-757-1872**.

REGIONAL PARTNER RELATIONS TEAM

The state is divided into five tourism regions for the purpose of industry outreach and promotion. Each area is administered by a regional partner relations team member, who serves as the agency contact and resource for businesses, organizations and communities within that region. To contact your regional partner relations team member, see exploreminnesota.com/partnerrelations or page 10 of this guide.

EMT EXPRESS NEWSLETTER

EMT Express is a biweekly e-newsletter that provides tourism destinations and businesses with timely information on marketing opportunities, travel and industry trends, and other relevant news. It's the best way to stay up-to-date on Minnesota tourism and upcoming opportunities to tie into Explore Minnesota marketing initiatives. News of broad interest to the tourism industry can be submitted for possible inclusion to **Lisa Havelka at lisa.havelka@state.mn.us 507-389-2683**. Sign up to receive the newsletter at exploreminnesota.com/express.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING AND AWARDS

TOURISM CONFERENCE



The Explore Minnesota Tourism Conference is the annual learning opportunity designed specifically for the Minnesota tourism industry. Held in late winter, the two-day educational event includes national keynote speakers, topical breakout sessions, networking, a tourism awards ceremony, and plenty of fresh and actionable ideas. A schedule with session descriptions, hotel and registration information is available at exploreminnesota.com/conference.

EXPLORE MINNESOTA TOURISM AWARDS

The Explore Minnesota Tourism Awards celebrate the outstanding people, events, marketing initiatives and activities that help to make Minnesota a premier travel destination. The Only in MN Awards are presented to people and businesses in communities who are doing outstanding work on a local level to further tourism. Destination Marketing Awards honor exceptional destination marketing efforts and execution. The call for nominations is announced in the fall, and the awards are presented annually during the Explore Minnesota Tourism Conference.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Educational programs on various topics of interest to the state's travel industry are often offered in conjunction with regional meetings, industry association meetings and through tourism partner organizations. Watch for these opportunities in EMT Express and on the industry website.

CO-OP MARKETING & PARTNERSHIPS



CO-OP MARKETING

Private-sector tourism businesses and non-profit tourism organizations can purchase advertising at exclusive co-op rates. The co-op program is designed to make innovative and affordable advertising opportunities available in partnership with Explore Minnesota. Annual options include print advertising, out-of-home advertising, TV and video packages, digital and social programs, and more. You can find a detailed list of programs at exploreminnesota.com/coop or contact **Derek Ramthun** at derek.ramthun@state.mn.us | 651-757-1843.

PARTNERSHIPS AND PROMOTIONS

Explore Minnesota partners with private-sector businesses, sports teams, media outlets and statewide organizations to extend the reach of advertising to new audiences and preferred geo-targets. Potential partners are expected to have strong brand equity, have audiences who match Explore Minnesota's intended traveler profile, and can contribute in a meaningful way to mutually beneficial advertising/promotion. Tourism partners can often get involved by offering prize packages and promotional support. You can find more information at exploreminnesota.com/partnerships or contact **Glori Rantz** at glori.rantz@state.mn.us | 651-757-1869.

GRANT PROGRAMS

MARKETING GRANTS

Grants are available to eligible private and non-profit Minnesota organizations whose primary purpose is to promote its community or area as a tourism destination and/or has the promotion of its community or area as a tourism destination as a major part of its work. Organizations are required to provide a cash match based on organizational budget. Guidelines are typically posted at exploreminnesota.com/grants in August with a deadline for applications in September. For more information contact your regional partner relations team member.

NEW EVENTS GRANTS

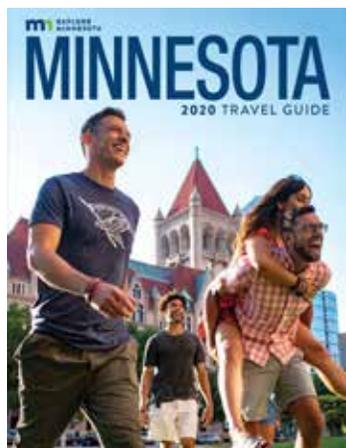
Fiscal Year 2020 funding has been allocated. If future funding becomes available, information will be announced on the industry site and in EMT Express.

This program is designed to generate economic impact and increase media awareness of the state as an event destination by providing funding to secure and operate new events throughout the state. Applicants must meet the minimum requirements in order to be considered for this opportunity. Eligible events must be new to Minnesota and open to the public. Applicants must demonstrate support from the local tourism organization, have available lodging capacity and agree to generate other funding (minimally two-thirds of cash expenses). Refer to exploreminnesota.com/grants for full details and application. For more information, contact **Lori Peterson** at lori.a.peterson@state.mn.us | 651-757-1876.

MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS AND SPORTS GRANTS

This program supports the Minnesota tourism industry in the promotion of meetings and conventions, and sports-related travel to and within the state of Minnesota. All funds awarded under this program are considered multi-community projects (projects that include three or more eligible organizations partnering together). Final funding for partnerships is dependent on the number of requests received and amount of funding available. Funds are intended for trade-facing efforts toward meetings, conventions (planners) and sports (event rights holders) in the following categories: U.S. & international trade shows (and related events), public relations campaigns and activities, and trade advertising. For more information, contact **Lori Peterson at lori.a.peterson@state.mn.us | 651-757-1876.**

ADVERTISING & CONTENT



PRINT

Optimize your marketing budget when you purchase a print ad with the state's premier tourism organization. Explore Minnesota produces and distributes a variety of high-caliber print publications—from annual publications like the Minnesota Travel Guide to the seasonal Explorer series—and we're proud to offer competitively priced ad space to our industry partners. To place an ad in these publications, look for details on deadlines and investments in EMT Express or contact your regional partner relations team member.

ANNUAL

Travel Guide
Highway Map
Group Tour Planner

BIANNUAL

Fishing Guide
Golf Guide
Biking Guide

SEASONAL

Explorer Travel
Newspaper
(spring/summer, fall & winter)

MINNESOTA EXPLORER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Qualifying events may be included in the Explorer newspaper calendar of festivals and events, arts and sports; listings are pulled from the existing events calendar on exploreminnesota.com. An e-mail is sent seasonally announcing deadlines for this free opportunity.

Deadline for winter issue: September | Deadline for spring/summer issue: January | Deadline for fall issue: May



EXPLOREMINNESOTA.COM

As a powerful extension of the Explore Minnesota brand, exploreminnesota.com receives over 5 million visits annually. Launched in Feb. 2020, our new website inspires and connects travelers with a vast amount of searchable travel information throughout Minnesota.

FREE LISTINGS

Our extensive Explore Minnesota Extranet database of thousands of tourism businesses, organizations and events provides much of the travel information accessed through our website, and is used by our marketing and communications team as well as our travel counselors to provide customized travel planning for consumers.

Robust free listings are available to attractions, accommodations, eating and drinking establishments, events and tourism promotion organizations (such as chambers and visitors bureaus). Listings can include general information about your business or event, descriptive copy, photos, videos, social channel sharing, links to your website, a Google map, TripAdvisor ratings and more! For more information on listings and qualifications, see exploreminnesota.com/ourwebsite.

To set up a new listing account on the Explore Minnesota Extranet, visit exploreminnesota.com/extranet.

PAID DIGITAL OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to free listings (see above), there are paid opportunities for featured business listings and banner advertising both on the website and in e-newsletters to draw travelers to your destination.

- **Native Banner Advertising** – The new native advertising model on *exploreminnesota.com* is based on impressions-over-time and allows you to target your message by site content, season or geography.
- **Featured Listings** – Available for Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) and tourism businesses only, featured listings are displayed in a top-tier random sort order with premium positioning.
- **E-newsletters** – Align your banner advertisement with highly engaged audiences in our monthly Travel newsletter, bimonthly Biking newsletter and seasonal Fall Colors newsletter. Other newsletters may be available in the future, so check with your regional partner relations team member.

For more information on paid opportunities, visit exploreminnesota.com/ourwebsite or contact your regional partner relations team member.

EXPLORE MINNESOTA EDITORIAL CONTENT

Explore Minnesota produces editorial content for all of its print publications and *exploreminnesota.com*. Information and travel news about destinations and attractions, and suggestions for story ideas are welcome. Please send ideas to:

Brian Fanelli at brian.fanelli@state.mn.us.

WEBSITE FEED

The website feed builder is a free tool that allows others to easily add Minnesota travel information pulled from *exploreminnesota.com* to their own websites. The website feed can be customized to display lodging, attractions or events for a city, county or region. Instructions and tips are provided at exploreminnesota.com/ourwebsite.

MEDIA RELATIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Explore Minnesota works with the tourism industry to promote Minnesota as a travel destination through media coverage regionally, nationally and internationally. Tourism destinations and businesses can participate in the media relations program by providing assistance with itineraries, lodging, attraction passes and meals for working travel media (familiarization tours: FAMs), and sharing ideas, travel news and high-resolution multimedia assets from your area for consideration in story pitches. To share your media story, please contact **Alyssa Hayes** at alyssa.hayes@state.mn.us 651-757-1857 (domestic and Canadian media) or **Jake Juliot** at jake.juliot@state.mn.us | 651-757-1864 (international media).

SOCIAL MEDIA

Explore Minnesota is active on major social media channels, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Pinterest. Tourism businesses and destinations are encouraged to interact with Explore Minnesota by using our popular hashtag, **#OnlyinMN**, with over 1 million uses and counting! Watch EMT Express for additional opportunities to get involved, including seasonal Tweetchats, co-op programs and more. For more information, please contact **Caitlin Hannah** at caitlin.hannah@state.mn.us | 651-757-1874.



@exploreminnesota



@exploreminn



ExploreMinnesota



@exploreminn

EXPLORE MINNESOTA LOGOS & PHOTOS

An extensive collection of photography featuring destinations across the state and Explore Minnesota's official logos are available for tourism businesses to use free of charge. For access to our assets, please contact **Melanie Graves** at melanie.graves@state.mn.us | 651-757-1870.

SHARE YOUR IMAGES AND VIDEOS

Explore Minnesota is always in need of high-resolution, professional quality images and videos of your destinations, attractions, events and other tourism offerings. Assets shared may be used in a variety of ways, including but not limited to: print, exploreminnesota.com, social media posts, advertising, and to share with media outlets for potential use in articles, blog posts and TV segments about Minnesota. To submit your multimedia assets for potential use, please contact **Melanie Graves** at melanie.graves@state.mn.us | 651-757-1870.

INFORMATION SESSIONS

Destination marketing organizations and major attractions and events are invited to schedule a presentation regarding their tourism offerings at the St. Paul offices. Travel counselors, marketing, communications and many other Explore Minnesota staff sit in on these sessions and keep your information top of mind for upcoming opportunities. To schedule a session, contact **Julie Ramer** at julie.ramer@state.mn.us | 651-539-5105.



GOVERNOR'S FISHING AND HUNTING OPENERS

Explore Minnesota annually seeks host communities for three annual Governor's Opener events: Fishing (May), Pheasant Hunting (October) and Deer Hunting (November). These high-visibility events attract large numbers of media—generating travel, sporting and lifestyle stories—and create a positive and lasting impact for the host communities through significant media exposure and coverage of these events. Convention and visitors bureaus, chambers of commerce and resort associations may submit proposals to host these events. For more information on the Governor's Openers, contact your regional partner relations team member.

TOURISM INDUSTRY RESEARCH

Explore Minnesota provides a variety of recent research and reports of interest to the tourism industry. This information includes profiles of Minnesota travelers, tourism industry survey results, sales tax and jobs reports from the Minnesota Department of Revenue, and much more. Sales tax and employment information for Minnesota's leisure and hospitality sector is often used to convey the positive economic impact of the tourism industry.

Annual fact sheets featuring this information for Minnesota counties and regions, along with the variety of other research material previously noted, are posted on the industry website at exploreminnesota.com/research. For more information, contact **Pat Simmons** at patrick.simmons@state.mn.us | 651-757-1868.

FIND YOUR
TRUE NORTH

#ONLYINMN

FIND YOUR TRUE NORTH TOOLKIT

There are 10,000 ways to tell your tourism story to prospective travelers. Browse our toolkit of marketing resources to help tell your own True North story. You'll find signature graphics from the Find Your True North campaign, style guide, print layouts and videos to share, plus examples of what other industry partners are doing to tell their unique True North story. For more information, visit exploreminnesota.com/fytn or contact **John Schultz** at john.schultz@state.mn.us | 651-757-1846.

MARKET DEVELOPMENT

GROUP TOUR MARKETING

Group tour marketing focuses on travel professionals who conduct tours for leisure groups of 10 or more people and primarily includes trade shows and advertising. Promotion is targeted to reach U.S. travel trade markets, including tour operators, package travel operators, group travel leaders and group tour media representatives. For more information, contact **Millie Philipp** at millie.philipp@state.mn.us | 651-757-1867.

INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

The international target markets (both individual and packaged travel) for Explore Minnesota include: China, France, Germany/Switzerland, Japan, Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Iceland) and the Netherlands.

New nonstop flights into MSP Airport also direct some of our efforts, with several new routes that launched in 2019, including Delta Airlines daily non-stop service from Seoul, South Korea; Mexico City, Mexico; and Dublin, Ireland.

Explore Minnesota is a member of Great Lakes USA (targeting China, Germany and the UK) and Mississippi River Country (targeting Japan and new for 2020, Canada). We also maintain an in-country representation contract in China.

A new strategy for 2020 is to develop more consumer advertising campaigns as well as continued partnerships with Brand USA on consumer advertising programs. In addition, trade marketing activities will include attending trade shows, and as appropriate, sales missions. For more information, contact **Beth Helle** at beth.helle@state.mn.us 651-757-1872.

TOUR OPERATOR & MEDIA FAMILIARIZATION TOURS

Explore Minnesota sponsors trips for domestic and international tour operators and international media representatives to familiarize them with destinations and provide information they need to develop travel programs or to publish travel stories. Showcase your unique tourism assets and experiences to travel influencers by helping host/co-sponsor familiarization (FAM) tours and providing complimentary lodging, meals, attractions or guide services. For more information, contact **Jake Juliot** at jake.juliot@state.mn.us | 651-757-1864.

PARTNER OPPORTUNITIES

We invite you join us and help stimulate travel into your community or business. Various opportunities are available annually and include activities such as:

- Marketplace sponsorship at American Bus Association (ABA) in January
- Tour operator recognition event and showcase, Minneapolis-St. Paul area in the spring
- U.S. Travel's IPW international trade and media conference (June 2020 and April 2021)
- Travel trade and media familiarization tours are ongoing through all seasons

GROUP TOUR PLANNER

This directory of Minnesota destinations and resources for group tours and packaged travel is provided to group tour operators across the country. Tourism promotion organizations, attractions and accommodations can purchase editorial listings and display advertising. The advertising deadline is typically in the fall.

For more details on Market Development, see exploreminnesota.com/ourmarketing or contact **Gayle Junnila** at gayle.junnila@state.mn.us | 651-757-1852.

TRAVEL GUIDE DISTRIBUTION

BECOME AN AFFILIATE WELCOME CENTER

Dozens of community welcome centers across the state are designated as Explore Minnesota Affiliates. Explore Minnesota provides these centers with the use of the Explore Minnesota logo on signs and state travel brochures to distribute to visitors. Affiliate locations are also included in Explore Minnesota publications and on exploreminnesota.com. Contact **Linda Vuicich** at linda.vuicich@state.mn.us | 507-448-3311.

EXPLORE MINNESOTA WELCOME CENTERS

Minnesota's communities, travel areas and non-profit attractions may have their Minnesota travel information distributed free of charge at Explore Minnesota's highway Welcome Centers. Brochures must be approved prior to distribution. Contact **Julie Ramer** at julie.ramer@state.mn.us | 651-539-5105.

WELCOME CENTER COLLABORATION

Destination marketing organizations are encouraged to consider a Welcome Center collaboration to talk with the traveling public about their destination, share information with Welcome Center staff and promote their destination. Contact **Julie Ramer** at julie.ramer@state.mn.us | 651-539-5105.



MALL OF AMERICA AND MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Through Explore Minnesota's partnership with Mall of America, tourism businesses and tourism promotion organizations can pay to have their travel information available at this prime location.

Through partnership with the Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport, tourism businesses and tourism promotion organizations can pay to have their travel information available at this prime location. Space is limited and determined annually via lottery. Contact **Gail Walkowiak** at gail.walkowiak@state.mn.us | 218-723-4938.

TRAVEL GUIDE REQUEST LEAD GENERATION PROGRAM

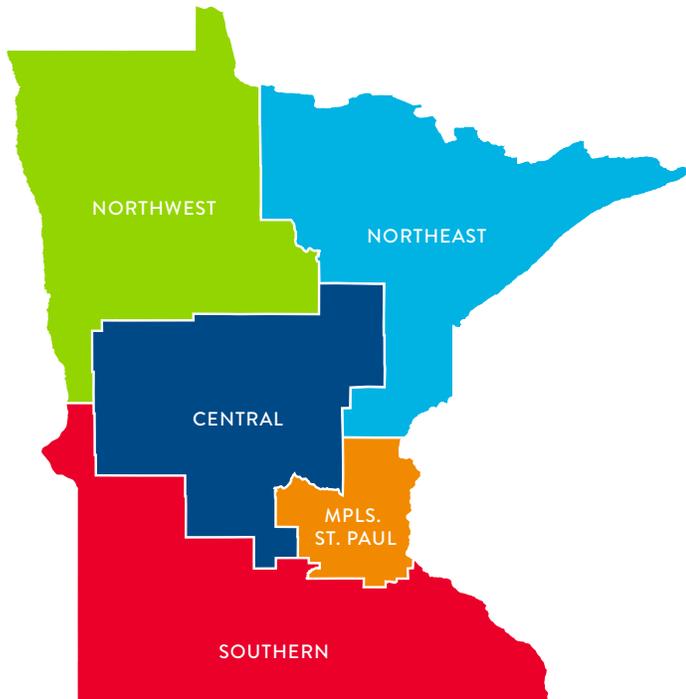
This opportunity is only available to Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs). Gain exposure with Explore Minnesota's most qualified audience, as these potential visitors have shown an interest in receiving information about your destination by requesting a printed travel guide to be mailed to them directly by the DMO.

Visitors will receive a confirmation email from Explore Minnesota with a short custom message from each of the communities they requested. Participating partners receive an automated email daily with any leads requested and are responsible for fulfilling the requests by mailing each lead their travel guide.

Participating organizations pay on a per-lead basis, starting with a \$250 investment for 500 leads. For more information on paid opportunities, see exploreminnesota.com/ourwebsite or contact your regional partner relations team member.

REGIONAL PARTNER RELATIONS

Explore Minnesota's partner relations team serves the entire Minnesota tourism industry throughout the state. With offices in each region, the team works closely with communities and businesses involved in tourism promotion.



SENIOR MANAGER PARTNER RELATIONS

BETH HELLE

121 7th Place East, Suite 360
St. Paul, MN 55101
P: 651-757-1872
F: 651-296-7095
beth.helle@state.mn.us

PARTNER RELATIONS SUPPORT

DAWN BUSHMAN

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Pequot Lakes, MN 56472
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TF: 888-629-6466
dawn.bushman@state.mn.us

MARKETING STRATEGIST

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NORTHWEST REGION

DAVID BERGMAN

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