



Making Tourism Accessible for Visitors Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision

BUSINESS CASE



The Business Case

There is a compelling business case for making tourism accessible for blind and low vision visitors. The combination of social necessity and economic opportunity offers a special motivation to develop a more inclusive travel sector. Tourism destinations should prioritize catering to blind and low vision visitors to not only ensure inclusivity but also tap into an underserved market. Creating such accessibility can boost the competitiveness of tourism businesses and make it easier for everyone to enjoy their experience. Accessibility for blind and low vision visitors offers both the visitors and tourist destinations a golden opportunity. This business case highlights the economic, social, and ethical benefits of making tourism destinations more accessible for this demographic.

What is Accessible Tourism?

Accessible tourism is a form of tourism involving a collaborative process among stakeholders to enable people with access requirements (including mobility, vision, hearing and cognitive dimensions of access) to function independently and with equity and dignity by delivering universally designed tourism products, services and environments.^{1 2}

What is Accessibility About?

Making things simpler and more comfortable for your guests is what accessibility is all about. Being accessible to everyone entails offering your goods and services in a way that guarantees guests of all abilities are treated fairly and with dignity.³

Why Focus on Making Tourism Accessible for Blind and Low Vision Visitors

As an operator of a destination for tourists, it is likely that you are aware, like any business, that being be all things to all people is a tall challenge. There are few businesses that will appeal across broad range of demographics. All business providers who offer services, however, need to have a starting point in reviewing their facilities and services to ensure that they are meeting accessibility needs. Too often people think that accessibility is about, for example, wheelchairs and assistance dogs. There are, however, many other forms of accessibility. Catering for blind and low vision visitors can commence with simple and no or low-cost modifications to your current operations.

This suite of resources provides an excellent starting point and saves businesses from undertaking the research themselves. In addition, many of the ideas presented will cater for visitors across various disabilities, alongside their families, support people and the wider community.

By delivering accessible experiences to blind and low vision visitors and their travel party, tourist venues can welcome more people, bring more jobs and economic benefits to local communities. Embracing this valuable market can also help demonstrate destination operators' leadership in inclusion and accessible tourism.

¹ World Tourism Organization (2013), Recommendations on Accessible Tourism, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284415984>

² Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games Inclusive Tourism (2016) Inclusive Tourism - Making Your Business More Accessible and Inclusive, Queensland Government. Available at: <https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/inclusive-tourism/resource/6edc79fe-36ff-4cb1-a8e2-6ca2658d0be7>

³ Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games Inclusive Tourism (2016) Inclusive Tourism - Making Your Business More Accessible and Inclusive, Queensland Government. Available at: <https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/inclusive-tourism/resource/6edc79fe-36ff-4cb1-a8e2-6ca2658d0be7>