

**TOURISM CALGARY- CALGARY CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU**

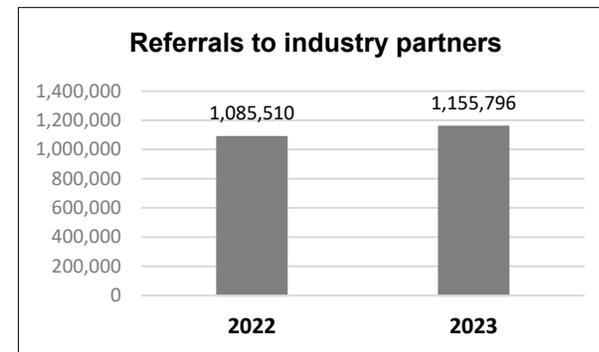
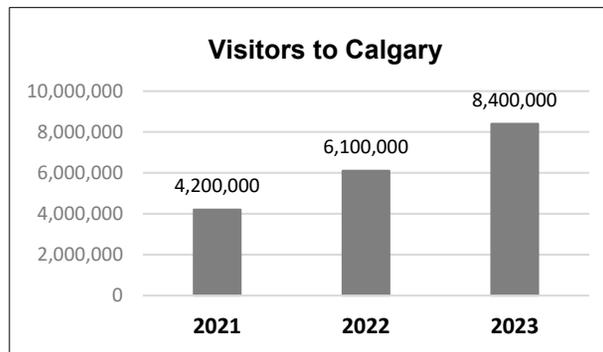
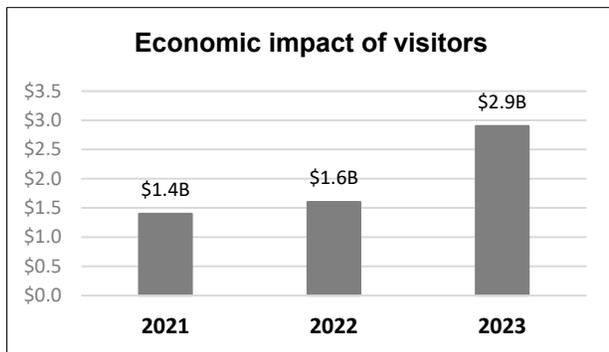
**Mandate:** As the official destination management organization for Calgary, Tourism Calgary works with industry and community to drive demand to local member businesses, increasing the economic impact of the visitor economy in Calgary, while considering the needs of the community and the environment.

**One Calgary Line of Service: Economic Development and Tourism**

**2023 City Investment**

**Operating Grant:** \$2,964,703  
**Operating Grant:** \$1,000,000 (one time)  
**Special Events Fund:** \$3,966,000

**2023 Results**



**The story behind the numbers**

- The number of visitors in 2021 was impacted by COVID-19 restrictions but Calgary has recovered much faster than anticipated and has exceeded pre-pandemic visitation numbers of 8 million people as of 2023.
- Tourism Calgary supports local businesses and partners by increasing the number of visitors to Calgary and driving demand to businesses.
- An increase in Tourism Calgary’s membership of local businesses means more businesses receive referrals and marketing support. Collection of data about referrals to industry partners changed in 2022, and data for previous years is not available.

**Benchmarks**

- Tourism Calgary’s business plan, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and targets are reviewed and updated annually. As a Destination Management Organization, Tourism Calgary continues to evaluate and change its strategy to consider impacts to residents, year-round vibrancy and contributions to making Calgary a better place to work, live, play and visit.
- KPIs include number of Canadians planning to visit Calgary in the next two years, ratings of Calgary as a vibrant community with lots to see and do and Calgarians who believe a strong tourism industry is good for my community.

**Looking ahead: 2024 highlights**

- Tourism Calgary’s business plan focuses on key target markets from 2024-2027 including regional markets, domestic markets, U.S. markets, local costs. Strategic focus areas include strengthening Calgary’s reputation through brand, becoming a year-round eventful city, elevating Calgary to be a top convention city and building community and collaboration.



## TOURISM CALGARY - CALGARY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU 2023 Civic Partner Annual Report

**Civic Partner Name:** Tourism Calgary - Calgary Convention & Visitors Bureau

**Legal Structure:** Independent External organization (Societies Act)

**Fiscal Year End:** December 31

**Manage/operate a City-owned asset:** No

### **Mandate:**

As the official destination management organization for Calgary, the purpose of Tourism Calgary is to work closely with industry and community partners to drive demand to local member businesses, increasing the economic impact of the visitor economy in Calgary, while also considering the needs of the community and the environment. We:

- Promote Calgary as a destination of choice, marketing the city locally, nationally, and internationally.
- Steward Calgary's destination brand.
- Attract and host sport, cultural and major events and meetings and conventions.
- Advocate and support the ongoing development of Calgary as a destination, including its products and experiences.
- Connect with current and future visitors, providing the information they need to have a great experience in Calgary.

### **1. What 3-5 key results did your organization achieve in 2023 that contributed to:**

#### **a) one or more Council Strategic Directions- economic resilience, social resilience, climate resilience?**

Tourism Calgary's role is to showcase Calgary as a welcoming, vibrant, safe, year-round eventful city to attract leisure and business travellers, secure conventions representing several industries, and secure and host a variety of sports, culture and major events.

The work we do together with our many partners not only contributes to the visitor experience, but also considers the needs of the local community, businesses, partners, and environment.

**Economic Resilience** - In 2023, the tourism industry contributed \$2.9 billion into the local economy in visitor spend. The events (meetings, conventions and sport, cultural events) we attracted to the city through our teams' efforts contributed more than \$225 million in direct economic impact.

While 2023 numbers are being finalized, on average, the tourism industry contributes to approximately 84,000 jobs and helps to support 7,800 local businesses.

Tourism Calgary's work drives demand for local businesses – including more than 1,030 local business partners (Tourism Calgary members) such as local attractions, hotels, restaurants, transportation businesses and more, with more than 1 million referrals through website marketing and direct referrals from our team.

**Social & Climate Resilience** – Tourism Calgary continues to refine and enhance our efforts in this area. One of the significant ways we have enhanced our efforts in this area is through our participation in the **2023 Global Destination Sustainability Index**. The [GDS-Index](#) is benchmarking

system that ranks the sustainability performance of destinations. Nearly 70 criteria focus on the areas of Environment, Social, Supplier and Destination Management to ensure that member cities and regions become more regenerative, flourishing, and resilient places to visit, meet in and thrive in.

The Index has a membership of over 100 destinations on 5 continents and is fully aligned with the United National Sustainable Development Goals.

It is our goal to create an understanding of how we can continue to advance a regenerative and resilient destination that ranks alongside other cities on the world stage.

In 2023, Calgary ranked 8 out of 20 destinations in Canada. We worked closely with City of Calgary departments and other partners including convention centre venues, hotels, the Calgary Airport Authority and more to gather information to contribute to the index. We also created a Destination Sustainability Strategy, hiring a Director, Sustainability to support our work in this area.

Brand - Significant work was done in recent years related to Calgary's brand. This work contributes to ensuring all people feel welcomed and included in our city and is a significant part of our three-year business plan and strategy. This work continues with the rollout of the brand in 2024.

Tourism Calgary also continued its efforts towards reconciliation through it's work related to the North American Indigenous Games, including Indigenous training for executive and other team members, creating further relationships and enhancing our learning and involvement with Indigenous Nations.

Our event servicing team continues to work with Indigenous communities, people and businesses to connect them with event planners and involve them in the delivery of events.

In late 2023, Tourism Calgary made a funding commitment to Indigenous Tourism Alberta (ITA) together with the Calgary Hotel Association to contribute to supporting the development of local Indigenous businesses, and to covering memberships for all Calgary area Indigenous businesses so they can take advantage of ITAs offerings.

In the fall of 2023, Tourism Calgary also made a commitment as part of it's work on the Special Olympics Canada Winter Games Calgary legacy program to create awareness about inclusive hiring of people with intellectual disabilities and has undertaken training through Goodwill Industries of Alberta to update our hiring practices, to provide education to our teams and to share these learnings with our partners.

Tourism Calgary continues to show support and involvement for diverse events, businesses and people in our city through our marketing as well as relationship development and our participation in such events as Calgary's Pride Parade alongside other Civic Partners.

**b) Your own organization's strategy?**

Our new 3-Year Business Plan introduced in 2023 outlined four key pillars of focus for our organization:

- Strengthen Calgary's Reputation through Brand
- Become a Year-Round Eventful City
- Elevate Calgary to be a Top Convention City
- Build Community and Collaboration

Significant progress and work has been undertaken to support these focus areas, with continued work to be done in the coming years. We have made significant progress on moving the Calgary brand work forward, together with CED and with support from The City. Rollout of that brand will happen in 2024. As part of becoming a year-round eventful city, we focused our efforts on Winter in year one of the business plan – with a concerted effort around the development and support of Chinook Blast as well as the attraction of major sporting events in winter. This work created a winter boost for the city, and has only continued and been amplified further in the events and activity we were able to bring to Calgary in Winter 2024. Becoming a Top Convention City requires not just having a facility that allows us to be considered ‘Tier One’, but the funding to attract large conventions to our city, a Champions program to connect with local industry, sales teams, servicing team, and a great destination with lots to see and do that will allow Calgary to deliver on what it means to be a Top Convention City. Together with partners, great inroads have been made on this pillar. Finally, build community and collaboration – Tourism Calgary recognizes that we cannot do this work alone. It takes a great relationship with our partners, local community, civic partners, venues, funders to truly showcase Calgary as the great destination we know it is. Enhanced efforts in this area will continue in 2024.

In 2023 we undertook a stakeholder consultation and extensive research using a third-party firm, Twenty31 Inc. (now Skift Advisory), to begin to create a 10-year tourism strategy for Calgary. The results of that strategy align with our 3-year business plan and will be shared in 2024. This strategy, based on feedback from hundreds of local stakeholders and partners, will be our NorthStar for how we progress forward.

Below are key initiatives connected with our 2023 – 2026 business plan, which has been updated in 2024.



**2. Performance measures help demonstrate the return on The City’s investment in a partner’s operations, and support continuous improvement for Partners. What performance measures reflect your organization’s impact in 2023?**

	<b>Performance Measure Name</b>	<b>2021 results</b>	<b>2022 results</b>	<b>2023 results</b>	<b>How does this measure reflect your organization’s impact?</b>
<b>How much did you do?</b>	Number of annual visitors to Calgary	4.2 million*	6.1 million*	8.4 Million	<p>Tourism Calgary supports local businesses/partners by increasing the number of visitors to Calgary and driving demand to their businesses.</p> <p>We have increased membership of local businesses with Tourism Calgary, meaning a greater number of businesses are able to receive referrals and marketing support from our organization.</p> <p>Recovery from the pandemic was not expected until the end of 2024; Calgary has recovered much faster than anticipated, and has exceeded pre-pandemic visitation numbers of 8 million people as of 2023.</p> <p>These numbers were driven by a number of factors, including the Sport, Culture and Major Event strategy, the number of events we were able to bring to the city, as well as our year-round eventful city strategy, which attracts people to the city during typically slow periods of time for the city and the businesses we help to support.</p>
	Referrals to industry partners through visitcalgary.com and virtual in-destination services	N/A	1,085,510 partner referrals (new)	1,155,796 (new)	
	Tourism Calgary partners		970 local business partners (members)	1,030 local business partners (members)	
	Meetings & Convention Events Hosted		58 events \$37 M EI	108 events \$95M EI	
	Sports, Culture and Major Events Hosted		61 events \$119M - EI	62 events \$130M - EI	
<b>How well did you do it?</b>	Number of Canadians who plan to visit Calgary in the next two years	N/A	49%	64%	<p>Tourism Calgary has had overwhelming support of its stakeholders year over year.</p> <p>There is an increasing interest in visiting Calgary, partly due to the external marketing of our city as well as our efforts related to the attraction of sport, culture and major events and meetings and conventions to our destination. We hear continuously that people choose to come back to Calgary because of the great experience</p>

					they had while here and the service provided by our team.
<b>How are Calgarians better off?</b>	Visitor spend  Creation of jobs/support for local business	\$1.4 billion  78,000 tourism related jobs  7500 tourism related jobs	\$1.6 billion  84,000 tourism related jobs  7800 tourism related businesses	\$2.9 billion  Numbers not yet confirmed	Tourism Calgary’s work supports the economic resilience and diversity of our city.  The tourism industry supports a significant number of jobs and businesses in our city, including for new immigrants.  Our ability to attract and support activity to the market also enhances vibrancy and quality of life. This is done through the attraction of large conventions and world class sporting and major events, contributing to a year-round eventful city.

\*Impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and travel restrictions; \*\*Google Analytics introduced a new system and methodology in 2023. The Numbers indicated with (new) are the numbers provided by the new Google Analytics system. The ‘old’ system we used for reporting previously no longer exists.

**3. Are there any additional stories or information you wanted to share beyond performance measures that demonstrate the impact of your organization’s programs or services?**

In 1962, Tourism Calgary began an annual tradition of recognizing outstanding professionals and volunteers from the local hospitality industry. This became known as the Calgary White Hat Awards. Having celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2023, the program inspires tourism and hospitality staff to consistently deliver unparalleled customer service – contributing to Calgary’s reputation as an ultimate host city. More than 650 nominations are put forward every year. The ultimate achievement is the coveted Mayor’s White Hat Award, given out to the one individual who best represents the spirit of the white hat and has made a significant contribution to the industry.

This iconic program features nominations from both the tourism industry and public and is designed to inspire, recognize, and reward front of house and back of house employees and volunteers who work tirelessly to deliver exemplary service to the 7 plus million visitors to our city. Each year 20 of Calgary’s best and brightest Calgary ambassadors receive the coveted white hat at a celebratory Awards event at the Southern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium. This longstanding tradition helps Calgary to develop our destination by enhancing visitor experience and contributing to our visitor economy, while supporting our brand as a welcoming, world-class destination with undeniable community spirit.

Taking Calgary’s commitment to delivering service excellence even further, Tourism Calgary launched the White Hat Academy for the tourism industry in 2019. This free, first of its kind learning program is designed to build an army of knowledgeable Calgary ambassadors. As ultimate hosts, Academy graduates have all the tools needed to provide white-hat-worthy service. To date, the program has had

over 2,000 graduates from all areas of the hospitality and tourism sector. The program is also offered in SAIT's Travel and Tourism School of Hospitality curriculum.

Event statistics:

- 650 nominations received.
- 1,500 attendees at the awards show
- 35+ industry sponsors
- 150+ volunteers
- 22 awards presented
- Multiple local Calgary entertainers

**4. Does your organization use benchmarks to evaluate and improve performance and operations, and increase your organization's impact?**

**a) Examples of benchmarks:** See below.

**b) What is your current and targeted performance in comparison to these benchmarks?** Overall in our business plan last year, we targeted overall visitation levels and visitor spend to return to 2019 levels by 2024 due to the impacts of the pandemic. We have far exceeded targets and expectations, with visitation reaching 8.4 million visitors (2019 = 8 million) and annual visitor spend reaching \$2.9 billion in 2023 (2019 = \$2.1 billion).

**c) How this information is being used to support continuous improvement?**

Our business plan, KPIs and targets are reviewed and updated annually. With significant changes due to the pandemic, changes in traveller behaviour and travel trends, and changes within our city such as the expansion of the BMO centre and other development projects, our strategy continues to evolve. While Tourism Calgary's mandate continues to focus on the attraction of visitors to the city, as a Destination Management Organization, we also continue to re-evaluate and change our strategy to consider impacts to residents, year-round vibrancy and our contributions to making the city a better place to work, live, play and visit.

## 2023 KPIs



### 5. How does your organization address equity, diversity or inclusion, or support racial equity?

Tourism Calgary continues to work on its equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts. In 2023 we:

- Had all employees participate in the IDEA Essentials 2.0 certificate program – which has become mandatory training for all employees.
- Made a commitment as part of our Special Olympics Canada Winter Games Calgary legacy program to create awareness about inclusive hiring of people with intellectual disabilities and have undertaken training through Goodwill Industries of Alberta to update our hiring practices, to provide education to our teams and to share these learnings with our partners.
- Refined our DEI strategy, including review of diversity and inclusion employee policies as part of our employee handbook.
- Increased diversity representation in our photos, videos, and digital content used as part of our marketing efforts.
- Participated in the Calgary Pride Parade and encouraged employees to participate in events such as this in our community.
- Enhanced strategic focus on the attraction of events that represent diverse communities, such as Special Olympics Calgary Winter Games and the North American Indigenous Games.
- Focused effort to enhance diversity on Tourism Calgary Board and Committees as part of our recruiting processes.

### 6. How is your organization advancing Indigenous Truth and Reconciliation? (For example addressing specific calls to action in the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#) report or [The City's White Goose Flying Report](#))

- Relationship building with Indigenous people, communities and Nations.
- Further involvement with Indigenous Tourism Alberta, ITAC, Indigenous partners and leaders
- Chinook Blast
  - Continuation of supporting local Indigenous artists and culture
  - Incorporating an Indigenous presence throughout events
- Inclusion of land acknowledgements and blessings at Tourism Calgary events and convention site visits
- Highlighting Indigenous partners and experiences in the white hat academy program (training for frontline tourism industry staff)

- Indigenous representation in photos, videos; digital content created by Indigenous people
- Indigenous engagement in Brand, Destination Strategy and NAIG
- Indigenous training for employees
- Refinement of event strategy to consider further involvement of Indigenous people in events.
- Integration in Tourism Calgary experiences including corporate events, conventions (locations, marketplaces, blessings), and Sporting events (opening ceremonies, driving business to Indigenous venues and businesses, blessings).

**RESOURCES**

**7. Please estimate how The City’s operating funding was allocated in 2023.**

<b>40%</b>	Advertising and promotion
<b>10%</b>	Programs or services
<b>2%</b>	Office supplies and expenses
<b>10%</b>	Professional and consulting fees
<b>38%</b>	Staff compensation, development and training
<b>%</b>	Fund development
<b>%</b>	Purchased supplies and assets
<b>%</b>	Facility maintenance
<b>%</b>	Evaluation or Research
<b>%</b>	<i>Other, please name:</i>

**8. Did volunteers support your operations in 2023? (including board and committee members)**

How many volunteers?	1500 volunteers recruited and trained in 2023/early 2024 for the Special Olympics Canada Winter Games Calgary  Between our Boards and Committees we have approximately 35 volunteers who dedicate their time to Tourism Calgary and to the development of our city and the visitor economy
Estimated total hours provided by volunteers:	TBC – reports are being finalized

**9. Did your organization receive any awards or recognition in 2023, or have any client or participant feedback that you want to highlight?**

Tourism Calgary continues to receive high praise from its partners/members as well as event planners and rights holders who bring their events to Calgary. Tourism Calgary strives to give the “ultimate host” experience to all who visit. A few ways Tourism Calgary connects is through Events and our events servicing team.

- Our event servicing team, which supported **63** meetings and conventions, **44** sport, culture and major events, and coordinated logistics for over **78** site visits plus two familiarization tours to Calgary in 2023 have received a **100%** satisfaction score through post event surveys conducted for the work they do to, which includes but is not limited to:
  - Connecting clients to local suppliers i.e., restaurants, venues, local entertainment, transportation suppliers
  - VIP meet and greet services
  - Welcome pageantry at hotels and around the city
  - Custom microsites, collateral and social media to help event planners promote Calgary
  - Locally made gifts, attendance building
  - White hat ceremonies and more!

Part of Tourism Calgary’s mission to provide excellent customer service is through our Calgary Attractions Pass which was just ranked as one of the Top 5 Attractions passes in North America.

Our Sports, Culture and Major Events team receive high praise from events rights holders who bring their events to Calgary, including most recently from the CEO of Ontario Special Olympics who said in a recent letter:

*“Calgary has a rich history when it comes to hosting sporting events, so it was no surprise to me that you did yourself proud, once again.”*

*“It is in this context, and through your wonderful management, that the 2024 Special Olympics Winter Games in Calgary receives the highest praise.”*

*“Finally, to the citizens of Calgary, you’ve got a wonderful community, filled with talented and dedicated people, who with pride and great dignity have done yourselves proud.”*

Finally, our travel media team have generated more than 126 positive media stories for Calgary in 2023 in outlets such as Fodor’s, Chatelaine, Toronto Star, Canadian Geographic, and many more - with a readership reach of over 300M around the world.

And although Tourism Calgary cannot claim this, we wanted to highlight that Calgary has received very high praise as the friendliest city globally.



**10. How did your organization address climate change in 2023, for example, operational or program changes that reduced green house gas emissions (GHG), air/water pollution, or waste that aligned with [The City’s Climate Change Program](#) including Council’s Climate Emergency Declaration?**

Tourism Calgary worked closely with The City of Calgary and other partners to participate in the **2023 Global Destination Sustainability Index**. The [GDS-Index](#) is benchmarking system that ranks the sustainability performance of destinations. Nearly 70 criteria focus on the areas of Environment, Social, Supplier and Destination Management to ensure that member cities and regions become more regenerative, flourishing, and resilient places to visit, meet in and thrive in.

The Index has a membership of over 100 destinations on 5 continents and is fully aligned with the United National Sustainable Development Goals.

It is our goal to create an understanding of how we can continue to advance a regenerative and resilient destination that ranks alongside other cities on the world stage.

In our first year of participation, we ranked 8 out of 20 Canadian Destinations and have continued our efforts around sustainability, creating a Destination Sustainability Strategy in 2023 and hiring a Director Sustainability to support this work.

**11. Are there any projects, initiatives or plans for 2024 that you want to briefly highlight?**

- See our [Business Plan](#)

**THE FOLLOWING SECTION IS FOR CIVIC PARTNERS MANAGING CITY-OWNED ASSETS**

**12. CAPITAL PROJECTS AND ASSET MANAGEMENT**

**Asset: N/A**