



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Arroyo Grande Tourism Business Improvement District (AGTBID) Advisory Board

**FROM:** Sheridan Bohlken, Recreation Services Director

**SUBJECT:** Consider and Discuss How to Engage More Arroyo Grande Businesses in Visit SLO CAL's Travel & Tourism Customer Service Training

**DATE:** February 20, 2024

---

### **SUMMARY OF ACTION:**

Consider and discuss Visit SLO CAL's (VSC) progress with the SLO CAL Welcome, the customer service training program that was developed for the San Luis Obispo (SLO) County travel and tourism industry.

### **IMPACT ON FINANCIAL AND PERSONNEL RESOURCES:**

As this is a free program offered by VSC, there are no financial impacts or use of personnel resources other than the time provided for feedback and discussion to involve more local businesses.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Consider and discuss the VSC's customer service training program and provide feedback to VSC on how to attract additional local businesses to participate in the free program.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Visit SLO CAL is the non-profit countywide destination marketing and management (DMMO) organization for SLO CAL<sup>®</sup> (San Luis Obispo County, California). As a destination marketing and management organization, Visit SLO CAL (VSC) is responsible for promoting the Central Coast community as an attractive travel destination and enhancing its public image as a dynamic place to live and work. Through the impact of travel, the intent of partnerships strengthens the economic position of local communities, providing opportunities for people who live and work on the Central Coast.

Working with, and on behalf of, its investors, partners, stakeholders, and the community to promote SLO CAL to both domestic and international visitors, VSC's goal is to collaborate with partners to build the SLO CAL brand through a data-driven, efficient dynamic marketing and sales program while simultaneously enhancing the resident

**Consider and Discuss How to Engage More Arroyo Grande Businesses in Visit SLO CAL's Travel & Tourism Customer Service Training**  
**February 20, 2024**  
**Page 2**

quality of life. Built on research with a strategy of continuous improvement, VSC aims to establish SLO CAL as a favorite West Coast destination known for its signature slower pace of life and unique mix of incredible, immersive guest experiences.

**ANALYSIS OF ISSUES:**

SLO CAL Welcome is a certified first-of-its-kind, online customer service-learning program specifically designed for San Luis Obispo County's (SLO CAL) travel & tourism industry. The training provides a valuable tool for employers to add to their workforce development resources.

This self-paced program is designed to provide customer-facing employees or volunteers in SLO CAL's tourism and hospitality industry with the knowledge, tools, and resources they need to be experts in customer service. It is free to all and available in English and Spanish on both mobile and desktop.

The program consists of six required courses, including three-tiered customer service modules:

- Welcome 101 – Introductory Customer Service
- Welcome 102 – Intermediate Customer Service
- Welcome 103 – Advanced Customer Service
- Welcome 104 – Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Welcome 105 – Specialized Modules (industry specific: Restaurant, Lodging or Experiential Attractions which include wineries, breweries, cultural attractions, and recreational businesses).
- Welcome 106 – Destinations

The courses are designed to provide learning in a fun, interactive environment featuring flip cards, videos, and insider tips. Participants will need to successfully pass each module's Knowledge Check section to advance to the next module. Once all six courses are completed, participants earn a certificate and pin and become an official SLO CAL Welcome Expert. Businesses that have their employees complete the training will earn their SLO CAL Welcome Experts in Service star.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

The following alternatives have been provided for the AGTBID Advisory Board's consideration:

1. Discuss and provide feedback to VSC on the SLO CAL Welcome program and how to garner additional participation with local businesses; or
2. Provide other direction to staff.

**ADVANTAGES:**

Providing feedback on the SLO Welcome program will benefit the intent of the program and potentially further awareness of the program for local businesses. Creating a broader level of participation will enhance destination awareness within the business community.

**Consider and Discuss How to Engage More Arroyo Grande Businesses in Visit  
SLO CAL's Travel & Tourism Customer Service Training  
February 20, 2024  
Page 3**

**DISADVANTAGES:**

No disadvantages of discussing this program and providing feedback to VSC are known at this time.

**PUBLIC NOTIFICATION AND COMMENTS:**

The Agenda was posted at City Hall and on the City's website in accordance with Government Code Section 54954.2.