Program Overview

The Colorado Tourism Office and [DarkSky Colorado](#) seek to partner with tourism destinations across the state that are interested in advancing strategies that help achieve International Dark Sky Place (IDSP) certification and enhance Colorado's visitor experience.

Participants in the Colorado Dark Sky Certification Mentor program will receive 70 hours of free consulting from DarkSky Colorado to implement activities that reduce light pollution and protect access to Colorado's incredible night skies. Successful implementation will increase Colorado's competitive edge as a destination and provide a wealth of benefits for Colorado communities.

Program objectives include:

- increased collaboration between state and local tourism leaders
- reduced energy consumption and economic impact from cost savings and increased property value
- increased local and regional quality of life through enhanced health and well-being, cultural heritage, and sense of place
- increased awareness of the value of visible night skies and their benefit to local wildlife and ecology
- increased number of IDSP certifications in Colorado

Program participants will collaborate with representatives from DarkSky Colorado to develop a scope of work that details how they will utilize the 70 hours of free consulting provided through the program. Example consulting activities include:

- understanding how to structure a successful application for IDSP Certification
- foster alignment between local stakeholders and buy-in for IDSP certification
- understand the requirements and successful language related to local ordinances and land use codes to reduce light pollution and energy consumption
- facilitate site visits to conduct assessments of local lighting infrastructure and measure darkness levels with a Sky Quality Meter
- host stargazing or other community dark sky awareness events
- increase outreach and education regarding the benefits of dark sky certification that improve quality of life
- develop, enhance, and promote visitor experiences related to stargazing
- support local partner organizations that provide long-term sustainability of dark sky programming

Program Timeline:
- ● October 3, 2023 - Applications Open
- ● November 9, 2023 at 4pm MDT - Applications Close
- ● December 15, 2023 - Award Notifications
- ● December 2023 - Work Begins
- ● June 2024 - Program Completed

Selection Process
A panel of industry partners and representatives from both the Colorado Tourism Office and DarkSky Colorado reviews applications and recommends awards based on demonstrated need, capacity to participate, and demonstrated support from local government agencies. A representative from the Colorado Tourism Office will respond to your application within one month of the application deadline.

Questions?
For programming questions, contact Andrew Grossmann, Director of Destination Development, at andrew.grossmann@state.co.us.

For technical issues (login/registration on OEDIT portal) contact Sami Wells at sami.wells@state.co.us.

Section One: APPLICANT INFORMATION
Please provide all the requested contact information below. The organization name listed must be an eligible applicant.

Eligible applicants include:
For the initial launch of this program, eligibility is limited to locations that have already opened a file and been accepted into the International Dark Sky Places (IDSP) Program designation pipeline with the International Dark-Sky Association via pre-application.
Pre-Application

Registered non-profit organizations or local city, county, state, or federal governmental organizations are eligible to apply.

Collaboration with the local destination marketing organizations is encouraged.

The applicant contact must be an employee or board member of the applying organization.

1. First Name
2. Last Name
3. Organization
4. Phone
5. Email Address
6. Organization County
7. Organization Street Address
8. Organization City

9. Organization State
10. Organization ZIP

Section Two: DESCRIPTION OF INTEREST

The CTO and DarkSky Colorado are interested in working with destinations that seek to secure International Dark Sky Place (IDSP) certification and enhance the visitor experience. Eligibility is limited to locations that have already opened a file and been accepted into the International Dark Sky Places (IDSP) Program designation pipeline with DarkSky International via pre-application.

Narrative questions have a 5,000 character limit unless otherwise stated.

1. Describe the specific location that will apply for the International Dark Sky Place (IDSP) certification. Include any information related to geography, existing stargazing and other dark sky tourism assets, and other pertinent information.
2. Describe the work that has already been done at this location for IDSP certification, or where in the application process this location is. This includes submitting the pre-application, conducting a lighting study, and/or hosting outreach events.
3. Describe the type of free consulting desired to continue work towards certification. Where is support needed most, or what project(s) would the mentor handle?
4. Share why now is the right time to pursue IDSP certification for this location. Include why the IDSP certification will matter to the area as it relates to tourism.

Section Three: CAPACITY

The CTO requires that each applying destination identifies one or more local tourism champions to serve as the lead applicant for the application. Roles and responsibilities of program participants include:

● identifying a project champion currently leading the application who will work directly with the mentor
● participation in planning meetings with the Colorado Tourism Office and DarkSky Colorado to develop a scope of work for 70 hours of free consulting
● ongoing leadership within their destination to implement the scope of work
● timely responses to communications from the Colorado Tourism Office and DarkSky Colorado

Narrative questions have a 5,000 character limit unless otherwise stated.

1. Demonstrate broad community support for this program by listing 4-6 local tourism stakeholders, representing all communities reached via certification, that will support the application and promotion of the IDSP certification.
2. What barriers (budget, organizational capacity, community support, etc.) exist that may hinder the success of the IDSP certification process?
3. What local resources exist to implement activities that satisfy the requirements for IDSP certification. For example, is funding available to retrofit non-compliant lighting or is capacity available to engage in outreach and education?

Section Four: SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

A Certificate of Good Standing from the Colorado Secretary of State is required and must be in PDF format. Required form [available here](#). Certificate of Good Standing must be dated within the last 3 months.

Label file in this format: Applicant Organization_Certificate

Government entities (state entities, local governments, and federally recognized tribes) are exempt from uploading a Certificate of Good Standing. Please upload a document stating that you are exempt and why.

Optional: Letters of Support: Please combine all letters of support into one PDF document. Letters of support are not required but applications demonstrating broad community support are more competitive.

Label file in this format: Applicant Organization Name_Letters

Each file upload has a size limit of 5MB. Note: If you are encountering problems uploading a file, shorten the file name.

1. Certificate of Good Standing (5MB File Size Limit) Local municipalities, and city and county governments are exempt from this; however, in order to submit the application, please upload a document stating that you are exempt and why.
2. Optional: Please upload letters of support from supporting individuals and organizations. Letters of support are not required but applications demonstrating broad community support are more competitive.
3. Optional: Please upload a letter of support from a land manager if the proposed location includes public lands.