

Visalia, California, Becomes First Certified Autism Destination

The growing demand from travelers for accessibility and inclusion, Visalia has taken steps to ensure visitors have multiple trained and certified options

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EINPresswire.com/ -- Through an initiative started by [Visit Visalia](#), in partnership with the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards ([IBCCES](#)), Visalia is now the first city to achieve the

[Certified Autism Destination](#) designation. This designation is granted by IBCCES to communities where multiple attractions, lodging and entertainment options have completed a training and certification process to ensure autistic or sensory-sensitive visitors have a positive experience.

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IBCCES created the Certified Autism Destination™ credential specifically to ensure that communities that are working toward being accessible and welcoming not just to visitors but to residents”

*Myron Pincomb, Board
Chairman of IBCCES*

Becoming a CAD will help Visit Visalia in its mission to encourage travelers to choose Visalia as a destination and differentiate it from other options in the area.

“Visit Visalia and its tourism partners throughout the city are more than just autism-friendly, they are autism-certified,” said John Oneto, board chair of Visit Visalia. “This allows Visalia to provide memorable experiences to our visitors with autism with the help of well-trained staff, able to anticipate their needs,” said John Oneto, board chair of Visit Visalia.

With 1 in 6 people having a sensory need or sensitivity, and 1 in 44 children being diagnosed with autism in the US (CDC), the need for more travel and entertainment options for these travelers and their families has never been greater. More than 32 million travelers of varying abilities, including autistic individuals, travel yearly and are seeking locations where they can feel welcomed and understood. Research released earlier this year by Expedia Group Media Solutions shows seven out of 10 consumers would choose a destination,



lodging, or transportation option that is more inclusive to all types of travelers, even if it's more expensive. In the same survey, 92% of consumers think it's important for travel providers to meet the accessibility needs of all travelers.

Achieving the CAD designation in Visalia is just the beginning of a long-term commitment to accessibility and inclusion. Currently, organizations in Visalia who completed autism training and certification from IBCCES include Visalia Adventure Park, Imagine U Interactive Children's Museum, Wyndham Visalia, Tulare County Museum, Visalia Marriott At The Convention Center, Valley Oak Golf Course, Hampton Inn Visalia, Downtown Visalians, Comfort Inn Visalia, Lamp Liter Inn, Best Western Visalia, Arts Visalia Gallery, Farmer Bob's World, and Visalia Fox Theatre

with more locations joining the ongoing initiative and becoming certified moving forward. These locations have completed industry and position specific training through IBCCES, and some attractions such as Visalia Adventure Park and ImagineU Children's Museum also completed onsite reviews conducted by IBCCES experts and, as a result, are able to provide additional supports such as sensory guides for visitors to utilize in planning their visit.

"Visalia's leadership and commitment to ensuring travelers have certified options is an outstanding achievement," said Myron Pincomb, IBCCES Board Chairman. "IBCCES created the Certified Autism Destination credential and designation, specifically to ensure that communities that are working toward being accessible and welcoming not just to visitors but to residents as well have a reliable third party for support and have standards as well as a long-term strategic partner to ensure that these changes and these improvements can last and that the movement continues growing. We are excited for this announcement and for our continued work in Visalia."

For more than 20 years, IBCCES has been the leader in cognitive disorder training and certification for healthcare, education, tourism and hospitality, law enforcement, and corporate professionals around the globe. IBCCES created programs specifically for hospitality and entertainment organizations such as hotels, attractions, museums, recreational facilities and



more. IBCCES is the only credentialing board offering these types of programs, which include training from subject matter experts and autistic self-advocates, as well as long-term support and continuous learning, onsite reviews, and more.

IBCCES also created AutismTravel.com, a free online resource for parents that lists certified destinations and connects families to other resources and each other. Each destination listed on the site has met the Certified Autism Center™ (CAC) requirements.

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About Visit Visalia

Visalia – an easy drive from all of California’s major population and business centers – lies in the heart of the Central Valley, at the base of the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. Our welcoming community hosts visitors from across the United States and from many nations worldwide – all eager to explore the unrivaled beauty of the National Parks and find adventure in the great outdoors.

The city is more than a basecamp for national park travelers. With a vibrant downtown, unique foodie restaurants, craft breweries, farmers’ markets, boutique shopping and a thriving, eclectic art scene, Visalia is a destination all its own. It’s a hub for family travel, with expansive youth sports facilities and children’s venues and attractions. And its walkable downtown and access to hotel rooms and meeting space make it a popular convention destination, as well.

About IBCCES

Committed to providing The Global Standard For Training and Certification in The Field of Cognitive Disorders – IBCCES provides a series of certifications that empower professionals to be leaders in their field and improve the outcomes for the individuals they serve. These programs are recognized around the world as the leading benchmark for training and certification in the areas of autism and other cognitive disorders.

Meredith Tekin

IBCCES

+1 904-508-0135

meredith@ibcces.org

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