



What is Visitor Readiness?

Visitor readiness is the consistent delivery of an experience at a site, an event, or an activity.

Consistency is defined by:

- Adhering to published hours of operation,
- Providing experience based on published price of admission,
- Amenities and services offered (gift shop, tour guides, on-site literature)

Visitor readiness also means being prepared to welcome the public, having the ability to meet their expectations, and exhibiting high standards of appearance and operation.

General visitor readiness criteria:

- **Basic Operation**
 - Contact email and telephone number
 - Prominent site signage
 - Set schedule operating hours
 - Well maintained paths and roads
- **Open to the Public**
 - At least one weekend day and three days a week
 - By appointment only is not recommended
 - Accessible to all people (meets ADA compliance)
- **Staffing**
 - Trained volunteers or paid staff to greet visitors, provide information, and/or guide tours
 - On-site in case of an emergency
- **Exhibitions**
 - Are there rotating exhibits to keep connect fresh and encourage repeat visitors?
 - Are exhibits well signed, attractive, and engaging?
 - Is there a collections policy in place?
 - Are curatorial practices in place?
- **Programs**
 - Are multiple programs offered or is the same program for all visitors?
 - Is the program schedule reflective of the days and times visitors want to attend?
 - Is there a special or separate program for children or school groups?
 - If there is a giftshop, does the merchandise reflect the program themes or does the shop showcase local artists or destinations?

- **Tour Guides and Docents**

- Is there a program to recruit docents in the community?
- Do docents or guides receive training?
- Are tour guides encouraged to learn more about the community and pass knowledge to visitors?
- Are materials and tours offered in different languages?
- Is there an emergency contact for staff or board members in case of an emergency, conflict, or concern?
- Are docents rewarded or recognized for their service?

Evaluating visitor readiness:

1. Visitor ready: Meet all of the visitor readiness criteria
2. Almost visitor ready: Sites meet some criteria but need help meeting or satisfying other criteria.
3. Not ready: Sites need further development to meet the basic criteria or contribute to a cultural heritage visitor experience.

Examples of visitor ready sites:

1. [Old Barracks Museum](#)



The Old Barracks Museum in Trenton City, NJ is the only remaining barracks structure in New Jersey. The Museum is open daily Monday – Saturday, 10am to 5pm and offers guided and self-guided tours, historic interpreters, school programs, and special annual events. The Museum hosts the following amenities: gift shop, parking, and ADA accessible programs and restrooms.

2. [Historic Cold Spring Village](#)



Historic Cold Spring Village in Cape May, NJ is New Jersey’s largest open-air museum. The buildings are open June through September, 10am to 4:30pm. The grounds are open daily. The Village offers self-guided tours, costumed interpreters, children’s programs, and special events throughout the year. The Village hosts the following amenities: giftshop, restaurant, brewery, partially ADA accessible, visitor center, and ADA restrooms.

3. [Liberty Hall Museum](#)



Liberty Hall Museum in Union, NJ was the home to New Jersey’s first governor, William Livingston. The Museum is open April – December, 10am to 4pm and offers hourly guided tours, an introductory video, school programs, and special events throughout the year. The Museum also hosts the following amenities: gift shop, visitor parking, bus parking, and partially ADA accessible.