

A glass of bourbon whiskey on a wooden bar with bokeh lights in the background. The glass is a snifter, partially filled with amber liquid, and sits on a clear, faceted glass coaster. The background is dark with warm, out-of-focus lights, suggesting a bar or restaurant setting.

Bourbon City Amplified

Louisville Tourism
2024-25
Destination Sales and Marketing Plan

Bourbon City Amplified:

Staying the Course and Strengthening Our Position

It's official...2023 marked a record year for Kentucky tourism, and our industry generated \$13.8 billion in economic impact with Louisville accounting for 30% of that tourism pie, adding another reason we ended the fiscal year on a high note. Our hospitality and tourism industry in Louisville continues to grow, employing nearly 70,000 people in Jefferson County.

Over the past year, we've received accolades from major publications. Southern Living named Bourbon City one of the "South's Best Cities," and Travel + Leisure included Louisville in its "50 Best Places to Travel to in 2024" and "The Best Food Cities in the U.S."

To capitalize on Bourbon City's tremendous growth, Louisville Tourism developed a new Consumer Engagement Strategy including the launch of a new Airport Welcome Center at Muhammad Ali International Airport, the first of its kind at SDF, to connect with and guide travelers as soon as they step off the plane. The downtown Louisville Visitor Center underwent a major remodel, now inviting guests into 'Louisville's living room' to enhance and maximize their experience while they are with us. Additionally, a mobile visitor center will be introduced soon to engage both locals and visitors while on the road and locally at city events.

The recent landmark year for local tourism was marked by record-breaking visitation at city attractions, the Urban Bourbon Experience and citywide festivals. Louisville also welcomed new Bourbon experiences, hotels, a seasonal LouGrass music series and hosted a trifecta of major events drawing visitors globally for the 150th Kentucky Derby, 106th PGA Championship and Meeting Professionals International annual World Education Congress. The fruits of our labor are evident in the smiles of our guests, record attendance and the glowing reviews that continue to pour in.

We are also optimistic about Louisville's new and emerging markets, including an innovative partnership with 502 Film, helping us capture additional market share throughout the robust film industry.

As we move forward, we will strengthen our position with annual and legacy clients and are encouraged by new and exciting developments related to Bourbon experiences and hotel growth on the horizon. We look forward to hosting additional national and international opportunities including the Women's Division I Volleyball Championship, PCMA edUcon and Travel South's Global Media Marketplace – among others.

We are excited to offer our hospitality community this positive outlook and remain confident that our efforts will continue to drive success.

Cheers!

Cleo Battle, Louisville Tourism President & CEO

Sales and Marketing Plan Contents

Leisure Markets Sales & Advertising Strategy – pg 3
Convention Markets Sales & Advertising Strategy – pg 11
Promotional Travel Schedule – pg 17
Louisville Tourism Programs – pg 20
Visitor Center
78 Social
Workforce Development
Departmental Goals – pg 22

LEISURE MARKETS

MARKET OVERVIEW

Over the past decade, strong branding and infrastructure growth has established Louisville as a bona fide leisure tourist destination. Continued development and upwardly trending tourism metrics suggest the city will be able to maintain this positive trajectory. Continued marketing of Louisville’s brand pillars of Bourbon, Culinary, Southernness and Authenticity position us well in this environment.

GENERAL CONSUMER MARKETING STRATEGY

As we continue to increase and maintain awareness of Louisville as a top leisure destination, we will focus strategy on reaching our target at every point of the travel purchase funnel to achieve sustained brand awareness. Various tactical approaches, including paid advertising, public relations, marketing partnerships, email marketing, content marketing & social media will achieve this. We will continue expanding into key seed and growth markets, focusing efforts to increase visitation and support leisure development and attraction ticket sales.

TARGET AUDIENCE

PRIMARY: General Leisure Traveler

Adults ages 25-54. Which encompasses older Gen Z (ages 7-27), Millennials (ages 28-42) and Gen Xers (ages 43-57), with a sweet spot of 25-45. Since 2019, Millennials are now the largest generation in the workforce and claim the largest share of the U.S. population. These are highly connected travelers who value authentic experiences when traveling, including Bourbon and culinary highlights.

TARGET MARKETS

Target geographic markets were established based on the analysis of several data points, including but not limited to Adara, Arrivalist, Google Analytics, quarterly Longwood Research reports and the latest Future Partners Visitor Profile Study. These markets were then grouped and categorized based on priority and known exposure of the Louisville Tourism brand.

Growth Markets – These are the core feeder markets that Louisville Tourism has put a large focus on over the past 3-5 years and continue to rank high in visitation data. These markets have a higher awareness of the Louisville brand and a high importance on maintaining current momentum and brand recognition. These markets offer continued growth opportunities. They include:

Atlanta, GA	Columbus, OH
Cincinnati, OH	Indianapolis, IN
Chicago, IL	Nashville, TN

Seed Markets – These are newer markets for Louisville Tourism, both regional and national. They either continue to show up higher in visitation data or offer potential growth opportunities based on airlift development at the Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport. Compared to the growth markets, these markets offer minimal to no known direct exposure to the Louisville brand or tourism messaging. They could include*:

Austin, TX	Dallas, TX
Boston, MA	Detroit, MI
Charleston, WV	Minneapolis, MN
Cleveland, OH	New York, NY

**Continued monitoring of data points will determine market targeting prior to the campaign launch*

MESSAGING STRATEGY

We will continue implementing brand-centered messaging and promoting Louisville as 'Bourbon City' while elevating the look and feel of how this message is portrayed. This Bourbon City message will be featured across all markets and will focus on the Bourbon culture and how it ties together all of Louisville’s core brand pillars. Since the inception of the new brand platform and strategic planning, we have not simply launched a single-year campaign or initiative but a long-term approach to destination marketing.

In addition to a consistent brand message, we will tailor messaging to hit on Louisville’s value proposition – easy to get here, affordable and diverse things to do for all travelers – where applicable.

TACTICS

PAID ADVERTISING

Paid advertising efforts will consist of multiple campaigns targeted to reach consumers at as many touch points as possible along the travel purchase funnel to keep Louisville top of mind when making travel decisions.

Leisure Awareness Campaigns:

Growth Markets

Always On

The average travel planning window is ever-changing and will vary by individual. With this in mind, we will deploy an annual digital campaign in key growth markets targeted to people searching for travel inspiration, actively planning a trip and those who have shown interest in Louisville. This sustained Louisville messaging will help maintain our position on target travelers’ consideration sets.

Flighted Campaigns

Awareness of Louisville as a top travel destination is the main focus of our flighted campaigns. This will allow us to cast a wider net and garner more attention from our target audience. The campaigns will be deployed seasonally with the message being “Bourbon City” forward.

- Flight #1 – Fall
- Flight #2 – Spring

Some of the key media tactics will include:

- Targeted out of home placements in top feeder markets (i.e. billboards, transit, signage)
The high impact of out of home placements in key feeder markets coincide with digital flights to garner additional awareness and add another touchpoint in highly trafficked areas.
- Video and Connected TV. Vendors could include YouTube, YouTube TV, DirectTV Now and others.
- Programmatic digital buying.
- National & Regional print publications that align with brand pillars

Reach and engagement will be the primary measurement when choosing media outlets, but a strong call to action that generates conversion will be incorporated.

Supplemental Leisure Awareness Campaigns (Niche/Affinity Markets)

Alongside our broader consumer-targeted digital campaigns, we will launch additional digital campaigns specifically aimed at Black and LGBTQ+ travelers. These campaigns will run concurrently with the general awareness efforts, targeting these audiences in key markets. While the overall message will remain consistent, the visuals and individuals featured in the ads will be customized to resonate with each specific audience.

Seed Markets

Inbound Flight Support

Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport continues exponential growth, from record-breaking total passenger traffic to the highest number of inbound direct flights. The airport team continues to focus many of its marketing efforts on outbound traffic and airlift development while we will continue to focus our efforts on increasing inbound flight traffic by building awareness of Louisville in key direct flight markets.

Regional Drive Markets

As we continue to expand the regional footprint of Louisville visitors, we will capitalize on Louisville’s drivability for over 2/3rd of the U.S. population by targeting new markets within a 5-hour drive radius. This campaign will be flighted during the high travel season of Spring and Summer to take advantage of individuals actively looking for a road trip or a long weekend.

Online Travel Agency (OTA) Partnerships

Louisville will maintain its annual partnerships with leading OTAs, including Expedia Brands and Booking Holdings. Expedia Brands encompasses top sites like Hotels.com, Travelocity, and VRBO, while Booking Holdings includes Priceline, Kayak, and Open Table. Together, these two companies hold over 92% of the OTA market share in North America. As OTAs continue to compete with hotel

brands for market share, they remain a significant source for end-of-funnel travel research, especially during times when discount travel is still relevant.

In addition to traditional OTAs, we will continue our partnership with TripAdvisor to reach travelers seeking inspiration and peer reviews of hotels, attractions, and more. This partnership will involve publishing and maintaining our destination profile page, as well as paid advertising targeting TripAdvisor users with itineraries and things to do in Louisville as they plan their trips.

Content Marketing

An unchanged constant in tourism is the desire that people want to experience the authenticity of a destination. Louisville is positioned very well with an abundance of unique assets that appeal to a diverse group of people.

Blog

From the city's unique neighborhoods and culinary traditions to its attractions and events, we will use the Louisville Tourism blog to showcase the city's authenticity through the perspectives of local contributors. Alongside our curated content, we will collaborate with local writers and experts from diverse backgrounds to share these stories. Whether it's immersive dives into neighborhoods, local recommendations, or other local lore, all these stories aim to inspire the next must-do experience in Louisville.

This content will be featured on our website, social media channels, and email marketing efforts. Additionally, our sales team can use these stories to keep their clients excited about booking their next trip to visit Louisville.

Email Marketing

We will continue our ongoing efforts to reach leisure visitors within a 100-mile drive-market radius through our established event-focused e-newsletter. This newsletter features a curated selection of events designed to inspire short-term travel and build long-term brand awareness. Despite the crowded market for local event roundups, our goal is to create compelling content that not only attracts a local following but also keeps residents informed about Louisville's top offerings.

Additionally, we will maintain a quarterly email newsletter that showcases curated blog content, keeping our entire leisure database inspired to return.

Social Media

Social media platforms remain a crucial connection to consumers in tourism marketing and are among the most powerful tools for building and increasing brand awareness. They also serve as a primary means of keeping consumers, including local audiences, informed about timely events and happenings in the city. We will implement social media strategies and campaigns across three primary platforms—Facebook, Instagram, and X—to complement our traditional marketing efforts. The main goal of Louisville Tourism's social media channels will continue to be inspiring travel and providing daily content, following an annual editorial calendar and supplemented with real-time news from our many industry assets.

LEISURE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

- Continue to focus leisure sales efforts on solidifying and growing our leisure database with the collection of email opt ins in established regional drive and seed markets ensuring strong direct marketing capabilities.
- Maintain leisure sales presence in regional growth and seed markets to complement and enhance leisure advertising with physical presence in market through travel trade show attendance and special event activations.
- Increase travel agent awareness and engagement with Louisville Tourism by participating in trade shows and scheduling appointments at the National Travel Agent Forum. Additionally, we will provide ongoing virtual destination awareness training through our agency's leisure sales team, offer active booking incentives and organize familiarization tours to drive interest and promote Louisville to travel agent's base of customers.

NICHE/AFFINITY - BLACK TRAVEL & LGBTQ+

MARKET OVERVIEW

Niche markets are defined as a "visitor segment where travelers see themselves and their interest in the destination they are planning to visit." As an inclusive city, it is important that Louisville is recognized as culturally diverse, inclusive, and welcoming to all visitors, allowing Black and LGBTQ+ travelers the ability to see themselves here and want to experience it for themselves.

KEY MARKETING STRATEGIES

In addition to the supplemental paid advertising efforts outlined in the General Consumer section, we will look to amplify our Bourbon City message directly to the niche and affinity markets by partnering with some of the top media outlets in those spaces. We will be pursuing partnerships that offer us unique media opportunities and event opportunities to get our team in front of the publication's audiences.

KEY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

- Host the fall Association of Black Travel Professionals Association Annual Conference. Program includes trade show and one-on-one appointments with professional travel planners, agents and tour operators from across the U.S., city tours, opening night reception and educational opportunities.
- Launch Bourbon & Belonging State-wide Promo- October 2024- Kentucky's Queer Bourbon Week, the first LGBTQ inclusive Bourbon festival in the country.
- Activate and sell Louisville as a welcome and inclusive destination for Black travelers around a strategic partnership with Ebony Magazine and Media group to include advertising, digital presence and in person events in key Ebony subscription markets that also act as feeder markets to inspire awareness and interest in visitation to Louisville.
- Continue to be a resource for the hospitality industry by providing access to ongoing complimentary DEI training for partners to ensure an equitable industry and welcome and inclusive destination to all.

LEISURE TRAVEL TRADE

DOMESTIC TRAVEL TRADE MARKET OVERVIEW

In 2024, group travel will no longer mean a one-size-fits-all approach. Tour operators and travel advisors will need to leverage crafting hyper-personalized itineraries for each group, considering their unique interests, preferences and demographics. This trend will elevate the group travel experience, making trips more meaningful and memorable. A focus on strengthening existing relationships with top buyers in the Domestic Travel Trade sector will be a key strategy for Louisville Tourism and is one of the most powerful and effective ways to showcase the destination's ongoing commitment to the travel trade market.

MARKETING STRATEGIES

Sustain Louisville's brand awareness as a compelling and diverse group travel destination.

TACTICS

Paid Advertising

Partner with industry group travel media partners to capitalize on their engaged audience in key niche publications to help support key development goals. These publications could include the National Civil Rights Trail Guide and the Travel South Tour Planner.

KEY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

- Reinforce brand and client relationships with participation in legacy travel trade shows like American Bus Association, National Tour Association and Domestic Showcase.
- Leverage opportunities to drive business through booking incentives, cooperative advertising, familiarization tours, and agent training with clients who have the highest likelihood to drive the most group tour business to Louisville.
- Offer the ability of the leisure sales team to provide onsite/in market travel agent training and destination feature presentations to travel customers in key feeder markets driving client's customer base awareness, interest and desire to book Louisville.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL TRADE

MARKET OVERVIEW

Driven by Tourism Economics' travel forecasting model, the latest U.S. Travel Forecast projects that international travel to the U.S. is growing quickly but is still far from a full pre-pandemic recovery. An expected global macroeconomic slowdown, a strong dollar, and lengthy visa wait times could inhibit future growth, with volume reaching 98% of 2019 levels in 2024 (up from 84% recovered in 2023) and achieving a full recovery in 2025.

MARKETING STRATEGIES

Louisville Tourism will continue to prioritize international efforts in travel trade markets, with a particular focus on the primary feeder markets of the United Kingdom and Germany. We will expand the scope of work for our independent sales and marketing representatives in these regions. Most traditional marketing efforts will concentrate on PR in non-paid earned media, while also increasing paid efforts in the consumer space to raise awareness of Louisville as a leisure travel destination.

Although Canada is not a traditional overseas market, it remains part of our international strategy. With the potential for a direct flight from Toronto and the current daily service from Toronto to NKY/Cincinnati, we aim to grow our flight traffic and strengthen our presence in Canada.

KEY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

- Host Travel South International Global Summit & Media Marketplace April 2025. Program includes trade show and one on one appointments with 50-75 international journalists.
- Continue work with independent in market sales reps in top international feeder markets (UK and Germany) including ongoing current business reporting, agent training, sales outreach and PR efforts
- Grow strategic partnership opportunities with organizations such as Brand USA, US Travel Association, Travel South International and attendance at key legacy travel trade events that include IPW, Brand USA Travel Week, and Travel South International
- Work in coordination with Travel South International to sponsor the "All Y'all" are Welcome After-Hours Concert and the Kentucky Department of Tourism for primary placement and activation within the Kentucky trade show aisle during annual IPW Tradeshow.
- Expand London Cocktail Week sponsorship and leverage Bourbon brand partnerships to position Louisville as the premier destination in Kentucky's Bourbon Country.

CONVENTION MARKETS (Meetings & Events)

MARKET OVERVIEW

The past fiscal year saw incredible successes and an increase in attendance for many of the meetings held at Kentucky Venues. Two legacy clients, Utility Exposition and Equip Exposition are ranked 2 of the top 5 largest tradeshows in the country, with Equip Exposition having a record attendance of over 28,500 attendees.

Louisville's sports market and events continue to play an integral part of the city's economic impact and room nights generation. Hosting the 150th Kentucky Derby and PGA Championship gave Louisville global news coverage. The Average Daily Rate (ADR) and hotel occupancy continue to rise year over year. Louisville hosted the key industry event of the Meeting Professionals International- World Education Congress (MPI WEC) which provided unique opportunities and exposure to our clients.

Louisville's brand is at a high level of national awareness with meeting planners and decision-makers. We will continue to capitalize on this, furthering Louisville's growing reputation as a premier meetings destination.

TARGET AUDIENCE

PRIMARY: National and Local Convention Meeting Planners/Sports Event Owners and Rights Holders

Those who plan meetings/events, solicit bids and negotiate agreements, perform site visits, influence site selections, coordinate services at events and monitor event activities.

SECONDARY: Association Executives and CEOs

The key influencers/decision makers and organizational leaders of professional associations.

MARKETING STRATEGIES

Louisville Tourism has established integrated marketing and event partnerships with leading industry associations and media outlets to leverage the city's brand assets and generate sales leads. These partnerships have been crucial in aligning our strategies across markets and have played a vital role in building and maintaining brand awareness. Louisville Tourism will continue to host events and industry shows, providing our target audience with opportunities to immerse themselves in the destination's culture and offerings, and fully experience the authenticity of our brand.

MESSAGING STRATEGY

As Louisville's meeting and convention package continues to evolve and expand, we will continue marketing an ongoing development message with expansion plans at the Kentucky Exposition Center. In addition to leveraging Louisville's core brand pillars of Bourbon, culinary, Southernness and uniqueness, the following will continue as key supporting messages:

- Walkability of downtown with a tight concentration of dining and attractions
- Attraction & venue development including new distilleries, tasting rooms, Waterfront Botanical Gardens and more.

TACTICAL APPROACH

Industry Partnerships

Louisville will continue partnerships with the following meetings industry organizations:

American Society of Association Executives (ASAE)	Maritz Global Events
Association Forum	Meeting Planners International (MPI)
ConferenceDirect	Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA)
CVENT	International Exhibitions and Events (IAEE)
HelmsBriscoe	North Star Media

These industry partnerships will not only reach Louisville’s target convention market segments but also allow us to reach our primary and secondary convention audiences in our target cities nationwide. While these partnerships reach nationwide, we will focus on the top convention markets:

Washington, DC - Chicago - Atlanta - New England

DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

Our goals and sales strategies for FY 23/24 have been shaped by the current economic landscape and represent a significant increase over previous years' targets. While inflation and rising costs are causing adjustments in how our clients conduct business, we remain optimistic. Our destination continues to offer unique experiences and value propositions that are unmatched elsewhere. We will strategically pursue groups that promise a strong return on investment in terms of room nights and economic impact. Our promotional efforts will be amplified through various channels, including LinkedIn and Facebook.

We anticipate another successful year and are excited to host PCMA edUcon in June 2025 and the NCAA DI Women’s Volleyball Championship (Final Four & Championship) in December. Annual events like the Kentucky Derby, Louder than Life, and Bourbon Beyond by Danny Wimmer Presents, along with the newly opened Downtown Derby Gaming, new hotels and direct flights, are setting the stage for a brighter and more prosperous future for Louisville.

The convention sales team participates in major tradeshow such as Cvent Connect, Sports ETA, TEAMS, IMEX, MPI, PCMA, IAEE, ASAE, Maritz Global Events, sales missions and various activations in Chicago, Atlanta, Nashville, Washington, D.C., New York, Las Vegas, Detroit, Denver, Columbus, Oklahoma City, Kansas City, and Tampa.

KEY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Re-establish Louisville Tourism's major key events in respective region: Southeast, Northeast, and Mid-West

We are now fully staffed at our key regional markets.

Develop action plan to generate new conventions and re-engage past citywide clients

We will solicit citywide clients to fill need periods (August, December, January) and work closely with Kentucky Venues to identify and maximize open calendar dates for 2025 and beyond. We plan to assess our current client database, analyze market demands and trends, and better understand group decision windows.

Leverage Strategic Partnership Agreements

Louisville Tourism is privileged to have strategic partnerships with major third-party intermediary organizations such as Maritz Global Events, ConferenceDirect, and HelmsBriscoe. We will have direct access to their main offices for presentations, client activation events, and host hybrid meetings when needed. They continue to create awareness and help put Louisville on the map. We will utilize monthly and quarterly reports to assess new opportunities, further develop the corporate, financial, and technology markets.

Engage with top brands headquartered in Louisville

We will leverage and capitalize on existing assets and relationships with top brands headquartered in our backyard like UPS, Ford Motor Company, GE, Humana, Norton Healthcare, UofL Health, Yum! Brands, Papa John's, and the Kentucky distilleries to help generate more room nights and economic impact into our city. We will attend and support local events to gain access to influential local leaders and meeting planners and develop regular touch points to keep planners engaged.

Regional Directors' key role

Regional directors main focus is on generating sales leads, securing tentative room nights and representing Louisville in their respective markets. The key states identified in each region are crucial for our selling activities. We are introducing some new events in the Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, and re-activation of events that were popular pre-Covid 19.

Midwest Regional Office - Chicago

Chicago and Midwest market states of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, and Northern California. This year, we will re-activate the Bourbon Heritage Month event and add an event to celebrate Valentine's Day in February.

Northeast Regional Office – DC/VA/MD

Washington, D.C., Virginia, Maryland are key association markets to include the Northeast market states of West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. We will continue an activation in DC for Derby Day in April, as we partner with MPI's largest chapter the Potomac Chapter.

Southeast Regional Office - Atlanta

Atlanta and Southeast market states of Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas. Key markets in the Southeast include Corporate, Scientific & Engineering and Technology. We will take advantage of bourbon heritage month in September and produce popular The Art of Bourbon event.

Meetings, Convention & Events Services

The positive impact of events and group travel will continue to be felt in the coming fiscal year as over 550 events are expected to draw over 3.5 million people to the city. In 2024/2025 the destination will host several key legacy events including TFN's Run 4 Roses, Equip Exposition, DWP's Louder Than Life and Bourbon & Beyond, National Farm Machinery Show, Junior Volleyball Association, and the Mid-America Trucking Show. These events serve as key highlights for the year, creating significant compression points and enabling the city to achieve overall hotel occupancies exceeding 90% during their respective dates.

Louisville is also poised to host numerous industry shows. Partnering with some of industries top associations Louisville will host key clients throughout the year culminating with PCMA's edUcon in June 2025. In addition to supporting these events, the convention sales department will also be in tune to visitor enhancements, advocacy and sustainability.

KEY STRATEGIES

Social and environmental impact

The Leave a Legacy corporate social responsibility program will continue to provide seamless access for incoming groups to Louisville's locally grown charities and non-profits. This initiative will align with the destination's overall sustainability objectives. Our team will proactively engage meeting and event planners to match these opportunities with the right events based on their goals and objectives. Understanding the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities in each area will be crucial to positioning incoming events for the greatest social and sustainable impact. Connecting to need areas that resonate with the destination's authentic pillars is essential for creating a meaningful and lasting legacy. In the new year, we will focus on feeding the hungry and supporting natural resources that mitigate the urban heat island effect in the city.

The Destinations Services team will continue to strengthen relationships with stakeholders and thought leaders in the non-profit and sustainability sectors. Collaborations with the Metro Office of Advanced Planning and Sustainability, along with other local resources, will help generate content and rebuild resources for incoming groups. The Strategic Alliances team will seek opportunities to identify service providers and innovative ways for meetings and events to engage with the local community, while also supporting sustainable initiatives.

Building attendance and the value of services

The Destination Services role in growing attendance is vital. This year as the services team works with numerous industry events, the focus will be showing clients and planners how they can host successful events in Louisville by plugging them into authentic experiences. By providing exceptional customer service and giving each of these events a taste of the city, we will help them develop strong attendance building tactics for their audience.

The post-convention evaluations will also receive an update in the new year to be more user-friendly and help gather more relevant client experience and satisfaction ratings.

Strengthening how we connect community partners to one another and our stakeholders

Louisville Tourism serves as the bridge for local businesses to connect with the tourism industry and its network of attractions, lodging, dining, transportation and related assets. In the new year, the Strategic Alliances team will launch a more refined program that enables businesses to integrate more seamlessly into the industry. This program will include strategic sponsorships, advertising opportunities for visitors and meeting planners, event access, and professional development, all designed to help businesses grow and capitalize on opportunities within this sector.

Key opportunities will involve the Annual Gala and ROSE Awards as it once again offers opportunities to celebrate, support and expose brands to the hospitality community. 78 Social Diplomats continue to experience premier networking and connection within the city and endorsed learning to grow professionally. There will also be new opportunities to connect directly with the incoming convention and event attendees during their time in the city.

Enhancing the visitor experience and leaving a legacy

Providing relevant and effective support to incoming events is crucial for maintaining the destination's competitiveness in group business. Delivering industry-leading customer service to meeting and event planners requires addressing the needs of their stakeholders and attendees. The services team will continue to focus on adding value to incoming groups and the local community. Key areas for the coming fiscal year include housing services, the Leave a Legacy initiative, and ongoing visitor enhancements in beautification, safety, and wayfinding.

Housing services offer a true value proposition for qualifying groups and help the team build stronger connections with organizers. With a 20% year-over-year increase in reservations, the department will continue to identify incoming groups and local organizations that could benefit from this service. Utilizing leisure housing software presents an additional opportunity as local festivals and entertainment venues begin to recognize its value.

Destination Services will remain actively involved in the community by connecting incoming groups with local non-profits for monetary donations and community service projects through the Leave a Legacy program. Advocating for and supporting local visitor enhancements will also remain a priority, including a significant wayfinding initiative focused on placemaking, enhancing safety, and drawing visitors to neighborhoods throughout the community.

LEGACY ORGANIZATIONS AND EVENTS

To receive the legacy designation, the organization has shown a strong commitment to Louisville while meeting specific criteria for size and reach of their event(s). The legacy organizations that receive Louisville Tourism services and are planning to hold their events in the 2024-2025 fiscal year are listed below:

CONVENTIONS & TRADESHOWS

National Street Rod Association – 55th Annual Street Rod Nationals (August 2024)

Mid-America Trucking Show (March 2025)

National Farm Machinery Show and Championship Tractor Pull (February 2025)

North American International Livestock Expo and Championship Rodeo (November 2024)

Outdoor Power Equipment Institute – Equip Exposition (October 2024)

SPORTING EVENTS & FESTIVALS

Danny Wimmer Presents

 Bourbon & Beyond (September 2024)

 Louder Than Life (September 2024)

Junior Volleyball Association World Challenge (April 2025)

Kentuckiana Cluster of Dog Shows (March 2025)

Kentucky Derby Festival (April 2025)

KIVA Sports (Volleyball)

 Adidas Bluegrass Volleyball Tournament (March 2025)

 Adidas Midwest Championship (June 2025)

National Archery in the Schools Program National Tournament (May 2025)

St. James Court Art Show (October 2024)

TFN Camps & Clinics

 Run 4 Roses (July 2024)

 The Splash/The National Championship (July 2024)

 Grassroots Showdown (July 2024)

 Grassroots Showcase (April 2024)

 The Classic (May 2025)

USA BMX

 Derby City Nationals (September 2024)

Varsity Brands

 WSF Louisville Grand Nationals (December 2024)

 Dance Super Nationals (February 2025)

 U.S. Finals (Cheer) (April 2025)

PROMOTIONAL TRAVEL

Louisville Tourism staff will host out of market events and attend the following key industry meetings, tradeshow, travel markets, pre-promotes and media missions in order to drive business to the destination.

CONVENTION MARKET

LT Regional Team Meeting (July 16) & HelmsBriscoe Virtual Presentation (July 17)	Scottsdale, AZ	July 2024
HPN Presentation	Scottsdale, AZ	July 2024
DI Annual	Tampa, FL	July 2024
PCMA Greater Midwest Chapter Golf Classic	Chicago, IL	July 2024
Cadmium Spark	Washington, DC	July 2024
ACCESSE Leadership Conference (CESSE Annual Conference)	Toronto, ON	July 2024
AMC Institute Engaged	Montreal	July 2024
CEMA Summit	Seattle, WA	August 2024
2024 MI&W Summit	Chicago, IL	August 2024
DC CVBReps Summer Bash	Washington, DC	August 2024
Hotel Data Conference	Nashville, TN	August 2024
ASAE Annual	Cleveland, OH	August 2024
Kellen Leadership Summit	Louisville, KY	August 2024
Connect Marketplace - MEGA	Milwaukee, WI	August 2024
Maritz Activate	National Harbor, MD	August 2024
ConferenceDirect CDX 2024	Portland, OR	August 2024
ATL Bourbon City Social	Atlanta, GA	September 2024
HPN Annual Partner Conference	Houston, TX	September 2024
Freeman Golf Classic	Dulles, VA	September 2024
KSAE Annual Convention	Covington, KY	September 2024
TEAMS	Anaheim, CA	September 2024
Dine with Destinations and PCMA Heartland Golf Classic	Kansas City, OK	September 2024
PCMA NY Chapter event	New York, NY	September 2024
NE CVB Reps Client Retreat	Northeast	Sept or Oct 2024
Six in the City DC - Fall Sales Mission	Washington, DC	October 2024
IMEX America	Las Vegas, NV	October 2024
Destinations East	Niagara Falls, NY	October 2024
Smart Meeting National	Newport, RI	October 2024
Bourbon City Social & CEO Event	Chicago, IL	October 2024
FICP Annual Conference	Denver CO	November 2024
Connect Faith	Greenville, SC	November 2024
ConferenceDirect CD Forum 2024 Corp	Orlando, FL	November 2024
Coalition of Black Meeting Planners	Birmingham, AL	November 2024

NOA Fall Summit	Rochester, MN	November 2024
ConnectDC	Washington, DC	November 2024
MPI New England Chapter Sponsorship event	Boston, MA	November 2024
Team Louisville Holiday Party	Frankfort, KY	December 2024
Nashville Holiday Showcase	Nashville, TN	December 2024
Holiday Showcase + Client Brunch	Chicago, IL	December 2024
Site Southeast Education Summit	Greenville, SC	December 2024
DC CVB Reps Holiday Party	Washington, DC	December 2024
IAEE Expo Expo	Los Angeles CA	December 2024
NE CVB reps event	Northeast	December 2024
MPI NY Chapter Annual Auction and Mixology event	New York, NY	December 2024
RCMA	Phoenix, AZ	January 2025
PCMA Convening Leaders	Houston, TX	January 2025
Event Service Professionals Association (ESPA)	Louisville, KY	January - February 2025
ATL ST. Valentine's Sales Mission and Client Event	Atlanta, GA	February 2025
AMC Institute	Tampa, FL	February 2025
Joint Commission on Sports Medicine	Cleveland, OH	February 2025
2025 Maritz Presentation	St. Louis, MO	February 2025
Connect NYC	New York, NY	February 2025
Philadelphia PCMA Chapter Sponsorship event	Philadelphia, PA	February 2025
Meet NY and NY PCMA Chapter event	New York, NY	February 2025
Sports ETA CE Summit	Fort Worth, TX	February 2025
Direct Selling Assoc. Sales Conference	Salt Lake City, UT	February 2025
PharmaForum	Boston, MA	March 2025
Simpleview Summit	San Francisco, CA	April 2025
Sports ETA Symposium	Tulsa, OK	April 2025
CD APM	Philadelphia, PA	April 2025
Maritz Elevate (end user)	Chula Vista, CA	April 2025
International Association of Exhibitions & Events (IAEE) Women's Leadership Forum	Washington, DC	April 2025
Spring Connect	Las Vegas, NV	April 2025
CD Diversity	TBD	May 2025
HB Annual Business Conference	Toronto, Canada	May 2025
PCMA edUcon	Louisville, KY	June 2025
MPI WEC	St. Louis, MO	June 2025
CVENT Connect 2025	San Antonio, TX	June 2025
FICP Education Forum	Palmetto Bluff, SC	June 2025

MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS PRE-PROMOTES

SHRM Inclusion	Denver, CO	November 2024
COSSBA Annual Conference	Atlanta, GA	March 2025
ACE Hardware Spring Convention	San Antonio, TX	March 2025
CLOC Global Institute	Las Vegas, NV	May 2025

LEISURE MARKET

Domestic Travel Trade

Southeast USA Spotlight	Georgetown, KY	July 2024
Association of Black Travel Professionals	Louisville, KY	August 2024
Blacks in Travel & Tourism	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	October 2024
National Tour Assn. (NTA)	Huntsville, AL	November 2024
Ontario Motorcoach Assn. (OMCA)	Windsor, Ontario	December 2024
American Bus Assn. (ABA)	Philadelphia	January 2025
Domestic Travel Trade Sales Mission	TBD	February 2025
Southeastern Tourism Society Domestic (STS)	TBD	March 2025
African American Travel Conference	Buffalo, NY	May 2025

International Travel Trade

Travel South International	Atlanta, GA	August 2024
Brand USA Week	London	October 2024
Travel South International Sales Mission 2	TBD	January 2025
International Inbound Travel Association (IITA)	Salt Lake City, UT	February 2025
Europe Sales Mission	TBD	March 2025
Travel South International Global Summit	Louisville, KY	April 2025
IPW	Chicago, IL	June 2025

Niche/Affinity

Cincinnati Music Festival	Cincinnati, OH	July 2024
Detroit Bourbon and Blues Festival	Detroit, MI	August 2024
Nomadness Festival	Charlotte, NC	September 2024
Black Travel Expo	Atlanta, GA	October 2024
Ebony Event	Detroit, MI	April 2025
Indianapolis Pride	Indianapolis, IN	June 2025
Cincinnati Pride	Cincinnati, OH	June 2025

Consumer

Americana Fest	Nashville, TN	September 2024
Atlanta Travel & Adventure Show	Atlanta, GA	January 2025
New York Travel & Adventure Show	New York	January 2025
Chicago Travel & Adventure Show	Chicago, IL	February 2025
Toronto Outdoor Adventure Show	Toronto, Canada	February 2025
Charleston Food & Wine Show	Charleston, SC	March 2025
Las Vegas Travel Agent Forum	Las Vegas, NV	March 2025
ROMP Music Festival	Owensboro, KY	June 2025

MEDIA MISSIONS

Society of American Travel Writers	Istanbul	November 2024
Midwest Travel Journalists Fall Conference	Branson, MO	Fall 2024
Midwest Travel Journalists Spring Conference	Grand Island, NE	June 2025
PRSA Travel & Tourism	Tampa, FL	June 2025
Media Missions	NYC, DC, Chicago, LA	Ongoing

LOUISVILLE TOURISM PROGRAMS

VISITOR CENTER/VISITOR SERVICES

OVERVIEW

Louisville Tourism will look to utilize its visitor experiences to drive deeper connections and engagement with both visitors and community residents. Visitor Experiences will include the newly launched Welcome Center in the Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport, a renovated Downtown Visitor Center and the development and deployment of a Mobile Visitor Center.

The Airport Welcome Center space will be many travelers' first interaction with the Louisville story. The onsite team will be the proverbial welcome committee for each person with whom it interacts, offering information and activation, and ushering them deeper into the Bourbon City narrative.

The Downtown Visitor Center will continue providing the highest level of information services to each visitor it sees, but its offerings have been expanded. The space itself and merchandise has been reimaged with a focus and intentionality around an authentic Louisville experience.

The in-progress Mobile Visitor Center will allow Louisville Tourism to put intentional effort behind building support in our own hometown for tourism as a shared community value. This mobile operation will allow us to bring the Louisville Tourism brand to life at various local events ranging from large scale festivals to small events in neighborhoods across the destination. Our goal will be to drive community engagement by sharing what Louisville Tourism is and why we exist, along with the impact the Tourism industry has on our community.

A destination's story is written by those who live, do business in, and visit it. Louisville Tourism's investment in visitor experiences aims to cast the net as wide as possible so every resident and visitor sees themselves reflected in, and integral to, the Louisville story.

KEY STRATEGIES

- Launch authentic and elevated welcome center to serve as front door to destination upon arrival at Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport, with information and activation to inspire deeper engagement with destination assets.
- Launch renovated, elevated downtown visitor center that is completely unique and authentic to Louisville and a must-see experience within the destination.
- Build and deploy a mobile visitor center that allows Louisville Tourism to engage in mobile storytelling, meeting people where they are to learn the value of tourism and increase destination knowledge.
- Refresh the Louisville Visitor Center's merchandising program to focus on things that are more in line with our destination brand, authentic to Louisville and when possible sourced directly from Louisville-based businesses and attractions.
- Host curated bespoke events at Louisville Tourism's Visitor Experiences on a quarterly basis, activating around four foundational pillars per year: Mint Julep Month (April), Old Fashioned Fortnight (June), Bourbon Heritage Month (September), and Light Up Louisville (December). These events are ways for Louisville Tourism partners, organizations, and local artists to engage with the leisure traveler, with the aim of driving traffic to those partners' businesses and social media platforms.

STRATEGIC ALLIANCES and 78 SOCIAL

OVERVIEW

Strategic Alliances is dedicated to connecting community partners with each other and our stakeholders. The 2024/2025 fiscal year will be a time to build on what we've learned over the past two years and implement new strategies for growth. Identifying revenue growth areas will be one of our three key focus areas. While not all aspects of the business present revenue growth opportunities, pinpointing the areas with the most potential will be crucial for developing specific tactics for the future. Initial plans will focus on 78 Social and leveraging our owned programs, such as the Rose Awards, as catalysts for sponsorship and strategic partnership opportunities.

KEY STRATEGIES

- New opportunities through the ROSE Awards, digital media and city information will be developed. 78 Social will continue to nurture destination diplomats by offering networking and professional development opportunities through endorsed learning. Prioritizing quality over quantity will guide the planning of events and experiences, ensuring the program remains relevant for all participants.
- 78 Social will continue to provide an avenue for connections, ambassadorship and education. Efficient and impactful education will be at the forefront with work being done alongside internal departments and external stakeholders to build online modules and in-person experiences focused on professional development.
- Connections to Louisville's knowledge hubs will remain crucial to provide better service to incoming conventions and events. Organizers are looking for opportunities to connect with local business clusters and key industries within the destination. Identifying strategic alliances in the city will help increase attendance and revenue for both local partners and incoming groups.

DEPARTMENT GOALS AND METRICS

CONVENTION DEVELOPMENT

The agency’s largest team, these sales professionals work to solicit meetings, conventions and event business through four offices. They work to secure leads, host site visits with meeting planners and book business into Louisville’s hotels and venues.

Louisville Office

Produce 750,800 group room nights
Generate 1,474 sales leads
Host 189 site visits

Northeast Regional Office

Produce 341 sales leads
Produce 442,843 tentative room nights
Produce 12,000 definite room nights

Midwest Regional Office

Produce 412 sales leads
Produce 621,432 tentative room nights
Produce 14,000 definite room nights

Southeast Regional Office

Produce 238 sales leads
Produce 262,550 tentative room nights
Produce 9,000 definite room nights

DESTINATION SERVICES

This team focuses on two key areas: connecting community partners to one another and our stakeholders; and providing industry-leading group services to meeting planners and event organizers of all group gatherings

Refer at least 650 area businesses to meeting planners and event organizers
Average score of 4.0 or higher in Client Satisfaction (1-5 scale)

MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

This team works to create awareness about Louisville as a sought-after and unique destination for all markets through positive media coverage, innovative advertising, marketing and sales collateral, advocacy, digital and social media campaigns and differentiating brand strategy.

Generate and service 90 hosted journalist visits in market
Generate website traffic of 1,838,550 unique visitors
Engage and retain 160,000 social network subscribers
Convert 50 press pitches to regional, national or international coverage

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

This team sells Louisville as a leisure travel destination across domestic and international markets and works to service visitors from across a spectrum of evolving consumer and travel trade markets.

Generate leisure attraction attendance of 3,781,234
Generate group tour attraction attendance of 669,089
Generate 71,087 group tour room nights
Host 70,007 walk-in visits to Visitor Center
Attain 49,005 leisure partner referrals