

Visit OMAHA 2021 BUSINESS PLAN



VISIT OMAHA - OMAHA'S TOURISM AUTHORITY - VISITOMAHA.COM

OMAHA TOURISM BRINGS FAMILIES CLOSER TOGETHER AND HELPS NEIGHBORHOODS GROW.



VISIT OMAHA

ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

Visit Omaha is the metropolitan area's tourism expert and a major contributor to the local economy, supporting job creation and new product development that enhances Omaha's appeal to visitors.

MISSION

To stimulate economic growth by promoting and developing Omaha as an appealing tourism destination.

Visit Omaha creates sustainable demand for the community through meeting, event, sports and leisure marketing; collaborative relationships; broad industry experience; and unprecedented product knowledge.

VISIT OMAHA ORGANIZATIONAL PILLARS

Relevant: We are committed to being consistent, accountable, transparent, perseverant, and dedicated to excellence.

Innovative: We are committed to being creative, pioneering, collaborative, and problem solving.

Grateful: We are committed to being appreciative of both the big and small contributions that make our industry and organization valuable to our community.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- **Stimulate economic growth for our community by increasing visitation**
- **Influence tourism development to ensure future destination success**
- **Deliver a positive and memorable customer experience**
- **Collaborate and enhance relationships with local organizations, businesses and stakeholders**
- **Operate as an efficient, high performing organization**

TRAVEL AND TOURISM TRENDS FOR 2021

Visit Omaha utilized research from national and global industry experts to create this plan, but 2020 taught the team to remain flexible. Visit Omaha plans to collaborate with vendors that allow the staff to stay nimble and able to adjust strategies as needed. Tourism Sentiment Index, for example, is a tool that monitors sentiment through recovery by tracking online conversations about Omaha in real time. After a year of uncertainty, quarantining, and Zoom calls, 2021 finds many eager to get out and start exploring the world again. This pent-up demand, paired with a solid calendar of events and a positive shift in consumer sentiment, provides hope as the new year begins.

INDUSTRY TRENDS

Tourism Economics, a global research firm, predicts this will be a year of two halves. During the first six months, the tourism industry will continue to struggle, with the second half expected to see a travel boom as new vaccines help usher in a recovery. Data reported by Destination Analysts echoes this sentiment. Their research shows that 26% of American travelers have already planned trips for the month of July, and many are planning as much, if not more travel in 2021 than they did in 2019 to make up for lost time. Though anxiety about the pandemic is still present, many Americans are feeling more optimistic about traveling due to the vaccines, with more saying they will take one of the available inoculations.

STR PROJECTIONS

STR projects local hotel occupancy in 2021 will average 48%. While this is a 30% increase from 2020, Douglas County occupancy is traditionally 10 points higher. ADR and RevPAR are projected to come in at \$94.44 and \$46.10 respectively. STR projects that Douglas County hotel revenue in 2021 will come in at just over \$179 million. In 2019, revenue reached \$219 million. From all indications, it will take at least two to three years for the local hotel industry to reach pre-pandemic numbers.

SALES FORECASTS

Based on Tourism Economics' projections for the meetings industry, full recovery will not happen until 2024. Tourism Economics projects that: in 2021, group business will be 35% of what it was in 2019; in 2022, 79%; in 2023, 90%; and in 2024, meeting business is expected to be 95% of what it was before the pandemic hit.

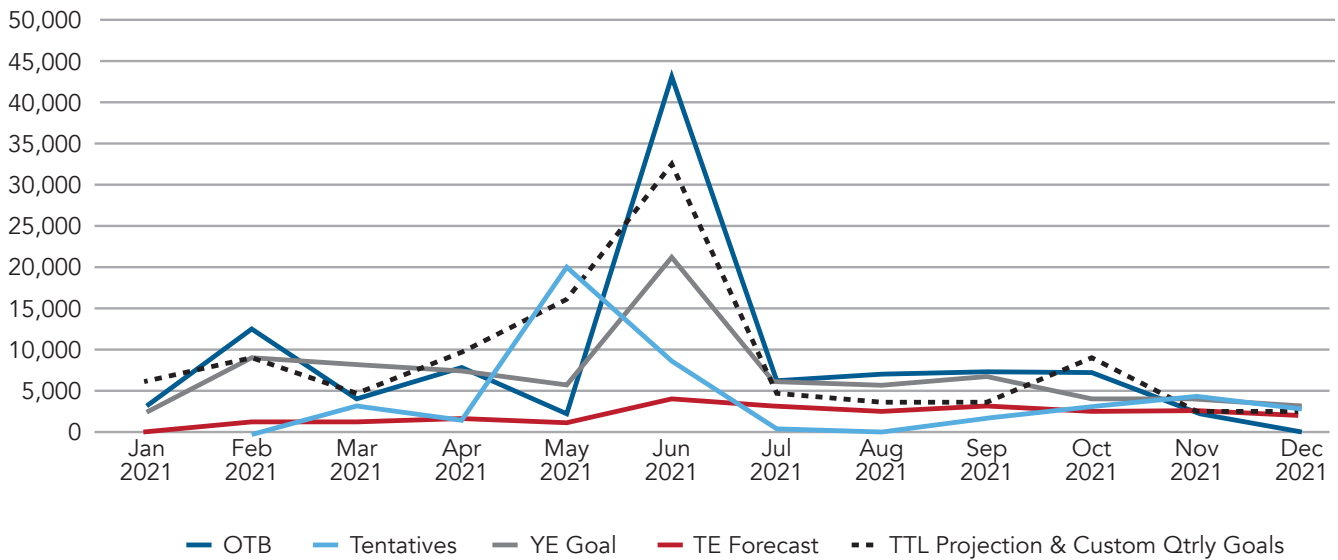
The Future Pace reporting tool utilizes historical data along with definite and tentative business to provide a booking pace for the Visit Omaha sales team. This information helps in strategizing and updating sales goals based on market conditions.

Note: The graphs on the right show Omaha's booking pace as of January 1, 2021. These projections are updated quarterly to ensure Visit Omaha sales goals match current market conditions.

THE FUTURE PACE

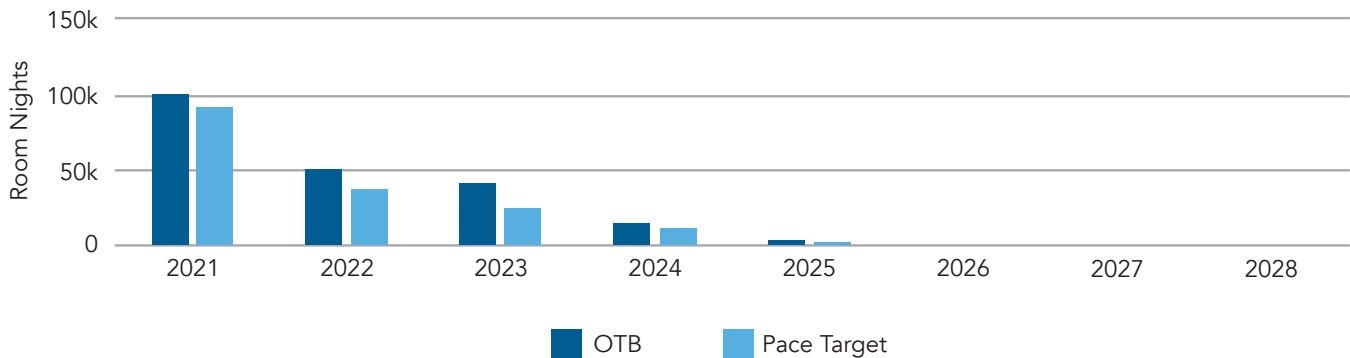
2021 PROJECTIONS

The graph below highlights how Omaha meeting and event business, currently on the books (OTB), is pacing well above Tourism Economics' national average (TE Forecast). The Tentatives line shows business that Visit Omaha is still working to secure. YE Goal reflects the predetermined year-end goal for the Visit Omaha Sales team, and Total (TTL) Projection & Custom Quarterly Goals measures where the team realistically thinks business will land.



PACE TARGET

This graph compares definite business on the books (OTB) to pace targets. Currently, Visit Omaha is ahead of pace through 2025.



*At this time, only 2021 year-end goals have been set.

MEETING, SPORTS AND EVENT SALES

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

Visit Omaha's sales team is responsible for bringing convention, sports and event business to Omaha in order to increase revenue for local meeting and sports facilities, hotels, attractions, restaurants, vendors, and retail shops. The sales team focuses on selling Omaha as a viable destination for state, regional, national and international conventions, meetings, sporting events, and motorcoach groups. The team's efforts contribute to the economic health of our local community by increasing business revenue and tax revenue, which in turn help provide jobs for our friends, family and neighbors.

KEY AREAS OF WORK

- Establish and set year-end goals for future years utilizing FuturePace, Tourism Economics, and Meetings Database analytics.
- Evaluate and review sales efforts in key markets to ensure sales team efficiencies.
- Continue to partner with national organizations including ASAE, Association Forum, Helms Briscoe, C-Vent and PCMA to increase awareness of Omaha as a Midwest meeting destination.
- Collaborate with the Omaha Sports Commission and SPORTS Nebraska to attract sporting events to Omaha.
- Engage and build relationships with local board members of national organizations to gain support for Omaha as a location for that organization's annual or regional meeting.
- Ensure a professional, cohesive citywide sales effort by developing and maintaining a high level of trust and camaraderie with the local hospitality community.
- Enhance ongoing research programs to identify new meeting, sports and event business for the local community.
- Qualify, develop and generate motorcoach leads for local hotels, attractions, and performing arts facilities.

NEW INITIATIVES

In response to changing market conditions, goals will be evaluated and revised quarterly.

- Redeploy the sales team to better position them for success during recovery.
- Research and update all key contacts in the meetings database due to 2020 furloughs and layoffs.
- Participate in four virtual shows January–June 2021: PCMA Convening Leaders, CESSE, Heritage Club, and American Bus Association.
- Attend and exhibit at five shows July–December 2021: ASAE Annual Expo, CONNECT, IMEX, TEAMS and Holiday Showcase.
- Complete a minimum of eight sales trips in the second half of the year to meet with qualified meeting planners and organizers to solicit new and repeat business for Omaha.
- During the first and second quarters, host six virtual events for qualified meeting planners and update them on new developments in Omaha.
- Establish a new partnership with Conference Direct and utilize webinars to educate associates on Omaha’s new developments and hotel package.
- Rebuild our sales pipeline through a six month call campaign to regional and national prospective planners.
- Establish a new partnership with CONNECT and host 15 qualified meeting planners, with city-wide business, on a familiarization tour of Omaha’s convention district.
- Further promote the Small Meetings Cash Incentive offer to third party planners and promote the City-Wide Incentive to prospective city-wide business.
- Collaborate with the City of Omaha Parks Department on new sports initiatives, which include the development of Tranquility Park.
- Conduct site visit destination training to convert more qualified leads into booked business.
- Host quarterly strategy meetings with convention partners to analyze and collaborate on targeted meeting and event business.
- Host a Military Reunion Familiarization Tour in the fall.
- Host a focus group of 25 meeting planners in the Chicago market during an Association Forum event.

TARGET GOALS

JANUARY-JUNE

Generate:

48,000

Room night leads

30,000

Definite room nights

45,000

Attendees

JULY-DECEMBER

Generate:

165,000

Room night leads

62,000

Definite room nights

93,000

Attendees

MEETING, SPORTS, EVENT SERVICES AND HOUSING

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

Once a meeting or event is confirmed, the Visit Omaha services team is responsible for working with organizers to coordinate details before, during and after the event to increase attendance and satisfaction. Their efforts generate business for local vendors who are hired by meeting and event planners. The team also manages housing services, which provides clients with an easy way to manage blocks of hotel rooms. The team quantifies success by measuring the event organizer's satisfaction, attendance, the number of referrals sent to local businesses, hotel room nights utilized, and the economic impact the group has on the local community.

KEY AREAS OF WORK

- Support the sales team's efforts throughout the sales process, and establish relationships with event organizers to enhance Omaha's ability to close business.
- Provide exceptional service and support to event organizers by providing planning assistance, site visit coordination, pre-attendance promotional materials, and registration support.
- Manage the "Show Your Badge" program to provide attendee discounts that increase business referrals to local businesses and restaurants.
- Serve as the destination expert to connect meeting and event planners with local businesses, speakers and community resources in order to leverage Omaha's assets.
- Coordinate with the hospitality community to ensure a positive experience for event organizers and attendees.
- Provide housing services to event organizers who utilize a local venue, and two or more hotel properties.
- Solicit and capture event organizer and attendee feedback, both formally and informally, and share the results with key industry stakeholders.

NEW INITIATIVES

- Establish a process to track how COVID-19 continues to impact future meetings and events – including any reduction in room blocks and attendance changes.
- Provide partners with quarterly updates on the status of in-coming groups.
- Partner with the Omaha Sports Commission to create an engagement experience for U.S. Olympic Swim Trials attendees.
- Partner with the United States Golf Association to create an engagement experience for U.S. Senior Open attendees.
- Work with the sales team to secure additional housing business.



TARGET GOALS

350

Leads and/or referrals

3

New housing contracts

30

Post-event surveys with
75% completion rate

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Visit Omaha marketing and communications team is responsible for convincing leisure travelers to visit the community in order to increase revenue for local attractions, restaurants, bars, hotels, retail shops and other businesses. The team crafts and articulates the destination's brand; leads the organization's direct to consumer advertising and promotion efforts; and executes advertising programs to support the meetings, sports and events sales team. The team strategically plans and implements all advertising and promotional efforts for Visit Omaha.

The team also manages Visit Omaha's network of social media channels, the consumer and partner e-newsletters, the Omaha Visitors Guide, and the VisitOmaha.com website. The Visit Omaha communication efforts focus on securing media coverage for Omaha, which in turn raises awareness of the city regionally and nationally. Increased visitation from targeted markets, social media engagement, and number of people reached through promotional and advertising efforts, are the main metrics used to gauge success.

KEY AREAS OF WORK

- Execute a multi-media leisure advertising and promotion strategy to inspire visitation from core Midwest drive markets such as Kansas City, Des Moines, Sioux Falls, and Minneapolis, while researching and cultivating new fly markets to increase awareness of unique experiences that visitors can only enjoy in Omaha.
- Produce and maintain a high quality destination guide and an online network of platforms that provide inspirational content.
- Build upon the brand position that Omaha is the Midwest destination for memorable weekends because Omaha lets the traveler focus on creating new experiences instead of the hassles of travel.
- Enhance awareness of Omaha as a unique food destination by creating multimedia content for distribution through Visit Omaha's online social media network, through media partnerships, with paid advertising campaigns, and by managing Omaha Restaurant Week, which supports local restaurants and builds local brand advocates.
- Inspire new product development with initiatives that focus on creating unique travel-worthy experiences in neighborhoods and at existing attractions.
- Implement an ongoing local advocacy plan focused on educating residents and decision makers on how tourism brings families closer together and helps neighborhoods grow, value sentiments research shows Omaha residents strongly embrace.
- Generate positive, inspirational and topical media coverage of Omaha as a desirable travel, meeting and sports destination by working with targeted travel writers, editors, bloggers, online media, and other influencers.

NEW INITIATIVES

- Launch a nine month COVID-19 recovery campaign utilizing traditional media, streaming television applications, social media, and other digital platforms.
- Employ digital media technology that customizes ads based on consumer preferences and tracks actual visitation to the city, and spending by those customers reached by Visit Omaha advertising.
- Utilize the Tourism Sentiment Index reporting tool to assess visitor sentiment in real-time and change tactics and messaging when needed.
- Develop and launch local and regional Public Relations campaigns that draw attention to Omaha's minority-owned businesses, LGBTQ+ celebrations, Omaha's recovering culinary scene, the expansion of the OMAR the Troll attraction, and tourism's impact on the community.
- Produce a 360 video library of key Omaha convention partner locations that will provide the convention sales team and meeting planners with a multi-media tool to explore the city.
- Create a six-month direct marketing campaign targeting 250 meeting and event decision makers.
- Launch the Visit Omaha blog to generate new promotional content and increase awareness of tourism partners by utilizing video, photography, and guest bloggers.
- Partner with local restaurants to create #OmahaDiningChats, a social media segment highlighting unique stories and experiences behind local restaurants.
- Survey Omaha restaurants to determine how Omaha Restaurant Week can best assist them in the recovery process.
- Research web design and functionality trends in preparation for the redesign of VisitOmaha.com.
- Create a monthly newsletter to be used by the convention sales team for regular outreach. Primary goal of the outreach is to educate planners on Omaha's convention package.

TARGET GOALS

20%

Increase in
VisitOmaha.com
page views from
target markets

10%

Increase in visitation
from targeted markets

30%

Increase in GDPR
compliant consumer
database

20%

Increase in overall
time spent on
VisitOmaha.com

10%

Increase in social
media engagement

VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICES

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Visitor Information team is responsible for educating and encouraging visitors to experience Omaha area attractions, restaurants, bars and retail shops, which increases the amount of money visitors spend in our local community. The team staffs the downtown Omaha Visitors Center near the Old Market; and manages two visitor information kiosks at Omaha's airport, which are staffed by volunteers from the Kiwanis Club of Omaha Golden K.

In all locations the staff interacts directly with visitors, answering questions and providing an insider's perspective on Omaha metro area points of interest such as attractions, tours, hotels, restaurants and local businesses.

The visitors centers provide visitors and local residents a wide variety of metro area maps, visitor guides, recreational information and promotional brochures from Visit Omaha partners. The team also coordinates Visit Omaha's brochure program, distributing Omaha promotional material across the state of Nebraska.

KEY AREAS OF WORK

- Year-round operation of the Omaha Visitors Center and the airport information kiosks.
- Provide visitors with engaging information and excellent customer service to ensure a memorable experience, which maximizes their satisfaction and increases visitation to, and spending with, our local tourism partners.
- Educate local residents on things to do with visiting friends and family, which in turn will increase local awareness and appreciation of Omaha as a tourism destination.
- Partner with the Council Bluffs Convention & Visitors Bureau and Sarpy County Tourism on the annual Omaha Metropolitan Area (OMA) Tourism Awards. These awards recognize those in the tourism community who exemplify excellent customer service.

NEW INITIATIVES

- In partnership with local hospitality and transportation partners, research and implement new visitor outreach programs.
- Research opportunities to distribute visitor information materials at Omaha area venues and arenas.
- Collaborate with local colleges and universities to recruit additional volunteers for the Omaha Visitors Center, and develop outreach programs for incoming students and their families.



TARGET GOALS

Coordinate **6** “Experience the Destination” tours for volunteers and staff that provide a diverse view of the city

Recruit, train and retain a diverse group of **75** volunteer ambassadors

ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Visit Omaha administration team develops and executes the strategic direction of the organization, manages daily operations and technology needs, ensures financial accountability and stability, leads community partnership and engagement efforts, and serves as administrator for the City of Omaha Destination Marketing Corporation (DMC). The DMC is a 501(c) 6 non-profit entity which is responsible for the management of the Strategic Marketing Fund used to incentivize meeting and event business.

KEY AREAS OF WORK

- Achieve revenue and expense goals.
- Lead advocacy efforts to promote and educate community leaders on the value of tourism.
- Collaborate with local, state and regional organizations to increase awareness of Omaha as a tourism destination.
- Manage the Omaha Destination Marketing Corporation and the Strategic Marketing Fund to offer incentives to attract meeting and event business to our community.
- Serve as a resource to Douglas County Visitor Improvement Fund applicants.
- Maintain Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP) certification to ensure Visit Omaha continues to meet and exceed industry standards.
- Ensure the organization has leading-edge technology to maximize efficiency and productivity.
- Provide staff training to increase employee performance and job satisfaction.

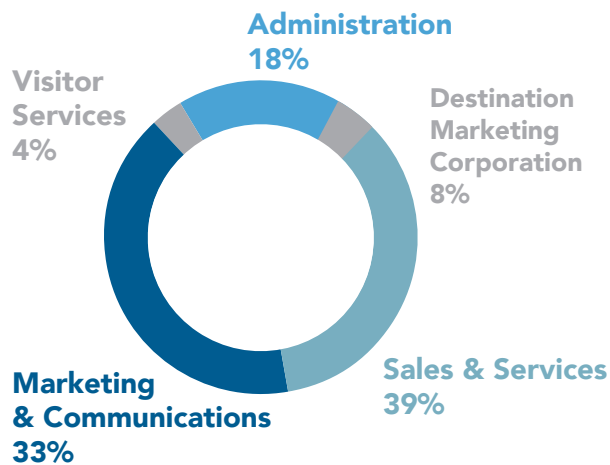
NEW INITIATIVES

- Update and enhance reporting software to improve real-time access to financial, meeting sales and marketing data to better manage and measure COVID recovery efforts.
- Identify and implement new technology that increases efficiency when working remotely.
- Collaborate with the City of Omaha's Deputy Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to develop staff awareness programming, and to create new strategies for employee recruitment and vendor selection.
- Utilize Gallup Clifton Strengths to improve employee performance and job satisfaction.
- Develop leadership-learning experiences to build bench strength within the department, and provide staff with an opportunity for growth.

OMAHA DESTINATION MARKETING CORPORATION

To remain competitive, Visit Omaha created the Omaha Destination Marketing Corporation (DMC), a 501(c) 6 non-profit organization. The DMC is funded through Visit Omaha's portion of the lodging tax paid by visitors. Each year, Visit Omaha calculates how much hotel tax revenue it will receive based on visitation projections, and sets its operational budget. When that revenue exceeds projections, those dollars are saved in a reserve fund. The corporation allows Visit Omaha to take those reserve funds and use them as incentives to entice meeting, sports and event groups to select Omaha. Since the majority of meeting, sports and event business is booked three to five years in advance, the corporation allows Visit Omaha to earmark these funds and hold them until it is time to pay for a specific meeting or event. The Destination Marketing Corporation Board and the Omaha City Council approve fund disbursement.

2021 BUDGET BY DEPARTMENT



BUDGET

The majority of Visit Omaha's funding comes from hotel tax paid by visitors. The state collects a 5% lodging tax on each Douglas County hotel room booked: 1% is for the state's tourism promotion efforts; 2% goes to the county for tourism development; and the remaining 2% funds Visit Omaha's tourism promotion efforts. In addition, the City of Omaha collects a 5.5% occupation tax on hotel rooms; the .5% goes to Visit Omaha. In 2021, the city will contribute \$1.8 million from its general fund to invest in tourism sales and promotion efforts. Visit Omaha also brings in private revenue by selling advertising on its website, in its visitor guide, and through promotional and tradeshow partnerships with local hotels, attractions and restaurants.

2021 REVENUE

	Projected
Lodging Tax - County (2%)	\$3,011,608
Occupation Tax - City (.5%)	\$725,508
General Fund - City	\$1,800,000
Private Dollars	\$182,201
Destination Marketing Corporation	\$375,079

Total revenues \$6,094,396

2021 EXPENSES

	%	Projected
Administration	18%	\$1,068,178
Meeting Sales & Services	39%	\$2,376,151
Marketing & Communications	33%	\$1,991,314
Visitor Information	4%	\$263,674
Destination Marketing Corporation	8%	\$395,079

Total expenses by dept \$6,094,396

*Adopted city budget

VISIT OMAHA STAFF

ADMINISTRATION

Deborah Ward
INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR / PRESIDENT

Dean Miller
VICE PRESIDENT OF OPERATIONS

Jodie Jordon
ACCOUNTING CLERK

Cindy Brickey
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Jasmyn Goodwin
*INTERIM VICE PRESIDENT OF
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS*

Erin O'Brien
SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER

Amy Cunningham
GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Lynn Mace
MARKETING COORDINATOR

VISITORS CENTER

Michele Hayes, PHR, SHRM-CP
DIRECTOR OF VISITOR SERVICES

MEETING, SPORTS AND EVENT SALES

Cathy Keller
VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES & SERVICES

Mark Rath, CSEE
DIRECTOR OF SALES

Matt Heck
NATIONAL SALES MANAGER

Mattie Scheeter, CMP
NATIONAL SALES MANAGER

Jessica Settje
TOURISM SALES MANAGER

Sue Chevalier
RESEARCH ANALYST

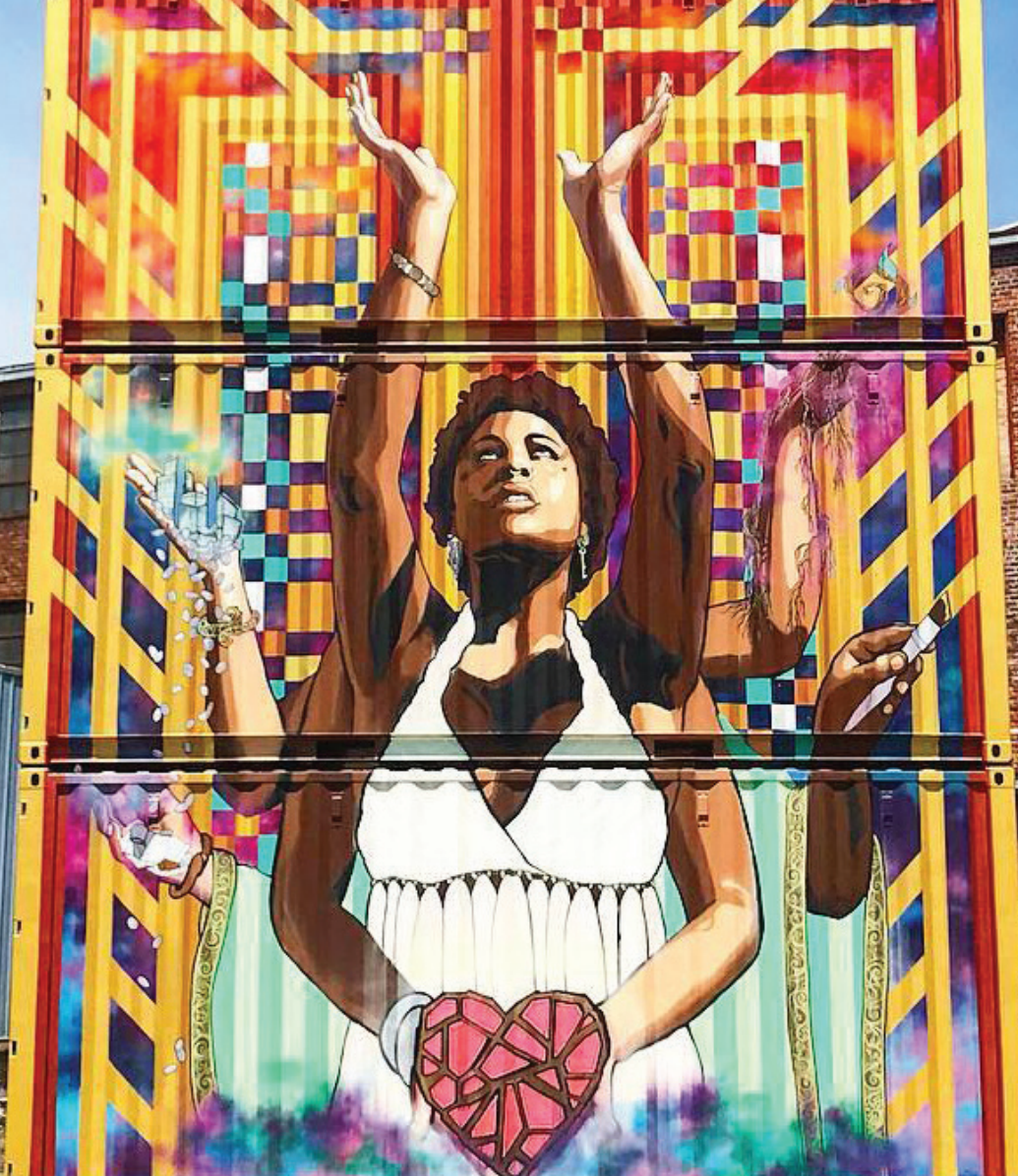
Kristin Beglin
NATIONAL SALES COORDINATOR

MEETING, SPORTS AND EVENT SERVICES

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