



BUSINESS PLAN

FY 25-26

RICHMOND REGION TOURISM

ABOUT US

As the Region’s destination organization, we are experts who have a deep love for the community in which we live, work, and play.

We enrich the lives of our residents and visitors by sharing the unique culture and humanity that is the Richmond Region.

We generate economic prosperity through tourism by attracting conventions, meetings, sports tournaments, and visitors and ensuring that all have an unforgettable experience.

We enhance the quality of life for the people in our community by supporting the places that make the Richmond Region wonderful.

We strengthen local programs that drive tourism through our Richmond Region Tourism Foundation.

We do all of this through a lens of diversity, equity and inclusion.

MISSION

Share a passion for the Richmond Region with the world.

VISION

As a thriving community, the Richmond Region is known for being inclusive and welcoming to all.

VALUES



PASSION

Intense enthusiasm for our community and its people



INCLUSIVENESS

Deep commitment to equity and community engagement to advance, develop and sustain the Region



INTEGRITY

Dynamic culture built upon trust, honesty, and credibility



INNOVATION

Leading-edge work that is rooted in creativity and transformational for the Region



STEWARDSHIP

Ambassadors of our destination’s development, image and reputation



COURAGE

Doing the right thing and upholding our values

RRT FOOTPRINT AND FUNDING

Richmond Region Tourism (RRT) is the official destination marketing organization (DMO) for the Richmond Region which comprises Chesterfield, Hanover, Henrico and New Kent counties, the cities of Richmond and Colonial Heights and the Town of Ashland. An accredited member of Destinations International and a member of the U.S. Travel Association, Richmond Region Tourism is a private, nonprofit 501(c) 6 corporation and is in its 41st year of operation.

Richmond Region Tourism's primary funding comes from the transient lodging tax that hotel guests pay in the localities of Chesterfield, Hanover, Henrico and the City of Richmond. Richmond Region Tourism receives two percent of the transient lodging sales. RRT is also partially funded by Class B member localities (New Kent, Colonial Heights and Ashland), the Greater Richmond Convention Center Authority (GRCCA) and from other local partners and sponsors. RRT administers the programs for the Richmond Region Tourism Improvement District.

Richmond Region Tourism focuses on those programs that directly impact hotel occupancy and drive visitor spending. Efficient and accountable fiscal controls are carefully monitored by the Richmond Region Tourism Board of Directors to ensure that resources are invested carefully and efficiently. To allow for adjustments to changing market conditions, select plan objectives and/or tactics may change throughout the year.

RICHMOND REGION TOURISM IS COMMITTED TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Every day we passionately promote the Richmond Region to the world. We take pride in our roles because we know it's important to the community's quality of life, economy, and collective identity. Richmond Region Tourism's success is dependent on all employees, partners and stakeholders showing up as their authentic selves because their unique perspectives and experiences add value and make our work stronger. To effectively market the region, we're weaving Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion into every aspect of Richmond Region Tourism's strategy and values.

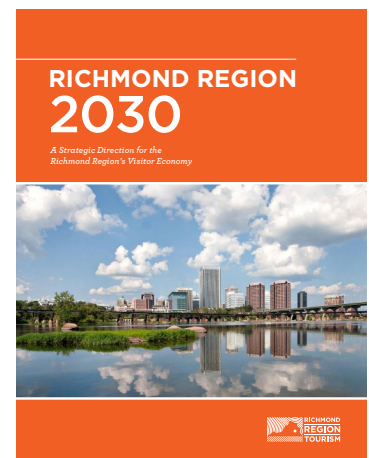
Richmond Region Tourism's DEI Task Force, a group of team members focused on advancing DEI, is collaborating internally and externally to drive positive change, and helping to establish the organization's priorities. Richmond Region Tourism is committed to growing and investing in DEI for the long term. Specific strategies and tactics are outlined in the Administration section of the business plan.

TOURISM MASTER PLAN

RICHMOND REGION 2030: A STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR THE RICHMOND REGION'S VISITOR ECONOMY

Richmond Region 2030 was developed in 2019 with extensive feedback from the community. Launched in fall 2020, the plan establishes priorities that, when executed over the next decade, will ensure that the quality of the visitor experience can be balanced with the quality of life for residents; that we attract the kinds of visitors who would most appreciate the region's character; and that we responsibly grow our tourism industry for the benefit of all in our community.

Since the plan launch, the following priorities have been completed or are underway:



- Inspiration campaign launched
- Community-based sports advisory committee created
- Formalized RRT sports tourism incentive program
- Commissioned headquarters hotel feasibility study. Hotel development underway with the City of Richmond EDA and GRCCA
- Sustainable funding: increased Transient Occupancy Tax allocation to RRT to two percent and formed a regional Tourism Improvement District generating an additional two percent fee
- Created online version of I Am Tourism educational program
- Prioritized the diversity and inclusion makeup of the board of directors, committees and staff
- Partnered with local economic development organizations to recruit targeted meetings and conventions
- Commissioned region-wide study of sports tourism facilities

ADMINISTRATION

Richmond Region Tourism's Administration department oversees strategic planning, management, direction, execution, implementation and alignment of strategies to achieve organizational goals and objectives. Leads the annual organization business plan development and related key performance metrics. Reviews results and data of all programs to ensure goals are met. The Administration department also spearheads the implementation of the Tourism Master Plan in collaboration with the Executive Committee and staff committee liaisons.

The Administration department provides support to the 23-seat Board of Directors, which governs Richmond Region Tourism, and the five-seat Greater Richmond Convention Center Authority (GRCCA), which governs the Greater Richmond Convention Center. The department oversees all financial and human related resources, benefits and welfare for the employees.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors is comprised of the following matrix of members:

9 (SEATS) - CLASS A MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORS

- Henrico County: 3 seats – 1 elected official and 2 seats filled by a hotel, attraction, retail, restaurant or tourism stakeholder
- City of Richmond: 3 seats – 1 elected official and 2 seats filled by a hotel, attraction, retail, restaurant or tourism stakeholder
- Chesterfield County: 2 seats – 1 elected official and 1 seat filled by a hotel, attraction, retail, restaurant or tourism stakeholder
- Hanover County: 1 seat – 1 elected official



Henricus Historical Park

1 (SEAT) - CLASS B SHARED SEAT

- Town of Ashland – Elected Official (holds vote FY26)
- City of Colonial Heights – Elected Official (holds vote FY25)
- New Kent County – Elected Official (holds vote FY27)

9 (SEATS) - EX OFFICIO DIRECTORS

- Capital Region Airport Commission: 1 seat – CEO
- Kings Dominion: 1 seat – CEO
- Richmond Raceway: 1 seat – CEO
- Venture Richmond: 1 seat – CEO
- Virginia Tourism Corporation: 1 seat – CEO
- Richmond Sports Backers: 1 seat – CEO
- Retail Merchants Association (InUnison): 1 seat – CEO
- ChamberRVA: 1 seat – CEO
- Tourism Improvement District Governance Committee: 1 seat – Chair or Vice Chair of Committee

4 (SEATS) OTHER APPOINTED DIRECTORS

- At-Large Director: 1 seat – appointed by the Richmond Region Tourism Board
- At-Large Director: 1 Corporate seat appointed by the Richmond Region Tourism Board
- At-Large Director: 1 seat appointed by the Museum Directors Association
- At-Large Director: 1 Hotel seat appointed by the Richmond Region Tourism Board

ADMINISTRATION PLAN

OBJECTIVE

Maintain effective financial and human resource management of all aspects of the organization.

TACTICS

- Manage office facilities, equipment, office supplies and inventory while allowing staff to work a flexible hybrid schedule. Ensure effective internal communications with staff
- Control purchasing and cost management with future budget planning

- Manage IT support and Data Analytics office-wide
- Manage employee relations and work with external HR consultant. Manage the recruiting and hiring process as needed for future growth or as position vacancies occur
- Maintain job descriptions and performance appraisals for all positions
- Ensure the employee policies and procedures document is updated continuously to reflect recent laws and legislation. Communicate all changes to staff in an efficient manner
- Continually update the Crisis Communication Plan to accurately keep all staff informed and educated with tools and resources to follow in case of an emergency
- Annual review of an efficient Technology Plan for keeping the appropriate technology trends and resources available to staff to conduct the mission of the organization
- Manage finances and all budget and accounting for Richmond Region Tourism, Richmond Region Tourism Foundation and the Tourism Improvement District
- Ensure that the organization maintains accreditation through the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program of our industry's parent association

SPECIFIC GOALS FOR FY26

- Establish a true HRIS (Human Resource Information System) system to track recruiting, onboarding, HR, benefits, payroll, time/attendance, leave, performance, compensation, learning/engagement and certifications. The system will also address expense reporting and automate invoice processing
- Quarterly work with DiSC assessment facilitator to create team norms, quarterly virtual DiSC sessions and middle manager learning experiences
- Design, schedule and present quarterly financial wellness seminars for staff
- Create a space in the office center that will engage staff and departments to collaborate together and to celebrate successes
- Renew our accreditation through Destinations International
- Achieve Top Workplaces designation and outpace previous score. Conduct a Compensation Study Review to ensure competitive pay structures are in place
- Continue Internship Program that focuses on students in the tourism, hospitality

management and sports management industry through local Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Offer department summer internship experiences as well as some fall/winter experiences

- Continually upgrade technology by upgrading computer hardware equipment every four years. Next upgrade planned for 2027. Work to establish a new policy for using Artificial Intelligence and train staff on steps for using AI in the workplace
- Continually improve upon the VisitRichmondVA.com transparency landing page on the website to assist people with finding out more about Richmond Region Tourism
- Continue to monitor staff performance through new software. Staff are evaluated every six months regarding their specific goals and metrics for each position



Hour Cycle Studio

DEI TASK FORCE

Richmond Region Tourism's work in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) is ongoing, continually expanding and evolving to better address the needs of our diverse community, foster more inclusive experiences, and drive sustainable growth.

An internal taskforce, led by staff co-chairs, was created to design a DEIA plan that focuses on the following areas:

- Advancement & Retention
- Staff Education & Experiences
- Purpose-Drive Partnerships

ADVANCEMENT & RETENTION

Goal: Strengthen and provide equitable access to opportunities for employee professional growth and advancement, while fostering an environment that supports their overall well-being and fulfillment both personally and professionally.

- Create clear pathways for professional development, with transparent criteria for promotion and growth
- Offer equitable access to leadership training, workshops, and industry certifications
- Regularly assess employee satisfaction and retention
- Provide resources for work-life balance and flexible work policies that promote retention across diverse employee demographics

STAFF EDUCATION & EXPERIENCES

Goal: Educate staff and board members on the importance of a diverse, equitable, accessible, and inclusive organization, enhancing the quality of life for our residents, partners, and visitors.

- Encourage participation in external conferences, seminars, and certifications related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Promote cross-departmental collaboration on DEIA initiatives to deepen understanding and engagement.
- Foster experiential learning opportunities, such as community outreach programs, to connect staff with local DEIA efforts.

PURPOSE-DRIVEN PARTNERSHIPS

Goal: Develop best practices that support responsible sourcing, equitable partnerships, and sustainable business impact across all departments, internally and externally, with a focus on corporate social responsibility and stakeholder engagement.

- Expanding external community stewardship.
- Growing partnerships with organizations such as VisitAble and Virginia Green Travel Alliance.
- Maximizing the community-to-convention pipeline through the BLK RVA and Out RVA campaigns.
- Identifying opportunities to showcase the economic impact of community-driven campaigns to meeting, convention, tournament planners, and stakeholders.
- Creating equitable business opportunities for local businesses to establish their identity and participate in the tourism supply chain.
- Establishing partnerships that encourage and support an inclusive and accessible workplace environment.
- Integrating DEIA values into departmental business strategies.
- Being a resource for best practices within the DMO industry.



New Kent Welcome Center

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The Community Relations department advances tourism's impact on the quality of life in the Richmond Region by generating awareness and educating residents about the importance of tourism, as well as serving as a voice for the tourism industry in government relations and as a voice for the visitor in regional planning and development.

The Community Relations department also operates the Richmond Region Tourism Foundation to advance the impact and benefit of the organization by supporting and investing in local education, diversity and inclusion programs, and sports tourism.

DEPARTMENT GOALS/OUTCOMES

- Maximize efforts to bring forward the interests of the local tourism industry to governmental and community decision-makers that impact the Richmond Region's desirability as a tourism, meetings, conventions, and sports destination
- Influence decisions that support the Richmond Region's viability as a tourism destination through robust advocacy and communications
- Liaise with tourism representatives in the community to advance the tourism ecosystem and promote regional collaboration
- Promote the destination locally as a dynamic place to live, work, play and stay
- Support regional tourism efforts by serving as a leader/convener amongst the hospitality community
- Lead the organization's externally facing diversity, equity, and inclusion programs in BLK RVA and OUT RVA
- Produce awareness-driving and revenue-generating programs and events through both the Richmond Region Tourism Community Relations department and the Richmond Region Tourism Foundation
- Secure sponsorships, in-kind partnerships, and grants to advance the mission and reach of the Richmond Region Tourism Foundation

COMMUNITY RELATIONS STRATEGIES

The primary audiences for this plan are local stakeholders, government and elected officials, hospitality industry partners, sponsors, and partners.

LOCAL AWARENESS

OVERVIEW

The value of travel and tourism to the Richmond Region community is appreciated and apparent because of years of investing in purposeful advocacy and public relations.

OBJECTIVES

- Collaborate with local programs and partners to create united messaging to enhance the public's understanding of tourism's role in the Richmond Region
- Serve as a spokesperson/advocate for the organization and/or the tourism industry on government and community boards, committees/task forces and in presentations to community organizations
- Manage in-depth community advocacy plan including strategic local public relations and communication
- Oversee local-facing marketing assets including the RRT LinkedIn account, monthly community digital e-news, monthly Tourism Digest email, and reoccurring media partnerships
- Make Richmond Region Tourism the go-to source for travel and tourism-related stories through regular outreach and knowledge sharing

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

OVERVIEW

As a regionally funded organization, government relations and advocacy are critical to our success on a regional and state level.

OBJECTIVES

- Make tourism a leading public policy priority
- Be the public policy expert on the travel industry and Richmond Region's place within it
- Advocate on the local, state, and national level
- Be known as the trusted source of advice on RVA travel and tourism industry issues

COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT

OVERVIEW

Richmond Region Tourism has continuously prioritized telling the story of the importance of tourism to our residents. We must ensure our residents are educated and understand the full benefits of our region to influence future travel, meetings, convention and sports development and recruitment. With a collaborative, engaged, and informed hospitality and services network, we can help more people discover our region and ensure the best possible visitor experience when visitors are here. Richmond Region Tourism will continue to work to empower residents and local business owners to become ambassadors and stewards of the region, while also supporting the local business community.

Workforce development in the tourism and hospitality industry sector is also essential. From job creation to economic prosperity, bringing group business to a destination creates a ripple effect in our communities that will continue to fuel the economic engine that is tourism.

OBJECTIVES

- Instill pride for residents who both explore and invite guests to the Region
- Grow the I Am Tourism Ambassador Training program to engage constituents to learn what's in their own backyard and gain a visitor's perspective of our region and knowledge of our many tourism products and offerings to educate tourism professionals, constituents, and other partners so that they become resources for all who visit the Region
- Work with entities involved with the visitor economy to open lines of communication and participation.
- Communicate regional tourism economic impact to non-traditional partners
- Create strategic workforce development partnerships to assist local hospitality and tourism businesses and organizations with the heightened demand of recruiting talented workers and retaining them

INDUSTRY SUPPORT

OVERVIEW

The Community Relations department exists to support the local industry on a variety of levels ranging from product and economic development to cultural champions and stakeholder engagement.

OBJECTIVES

- Work with the Richmond Region Tourism Visitor Experience department on, community partnerships, and experiential tourism that enhance the Region
- Support various events through sponsorships from both the Richmond Region Tourism Community Relations department and the Richmond Region Tourism Foundation to provide marketing support, guidance, etc. on a case-by-case basis
- Act as a voice for the tourism and travel industry in regional planning
- Provide information resources, intellectual capital, and guidance to tourism-related businesses
- Work closely with economic development organizations and departments to drive synergistic development and tourism



Lehja Restaurant

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW

The Community Relations department strategically cultivates partnerships with tourism and hospitality partners and local businesses to offset Richmond Region Tourism Foundation organizational costs and provide businesses added exposure with the intention of growing our community facing programs. The department is dedicated to expanding partnerships with the local business community through strategic programs, marketing/promotional opportunities, and special events aimed at championing tourism and its impact on the Region.

OBJECTIVES

- Generate cash, grant, and in-kind sponsorships to augment programming and marketing initiatives to support the Richmond Region Tourism Foundation
- Engage partners with outstanding events and partnership opportunities
- Create multi-year partnership opportunities to generate long-term support during the recovery process
- Foster networking among partners to encourage business-to-business partnerships and cross promotional opportunities

TACTICS

- Enhance corporate sponsorship development strategies and build relationships to create increased sponsorship revenue for programs and events including:
 - Signature RRT events including the Tourism Awards and Annual Meeting, BLK RVA Community Awards, and the RVA Sports Awards
 - I Am Tourism Ambassador
 - DEI Programs in BLK RVA and OutRVA that work to change perception of the Region and create a welcoming environment for both constituents and visitors alike
 - Scholarships for students in both hospitality and sports management programs
 - Sports Grant program that incubates new events and provides marketing support to existing events to drive increased participation and new visitors to the Region

- Execute the BLK RVA Community Awards and RVA Sports Awards as primary fundraising vehicles for the Foundation
- Execute Tourism Awards & Annual Meeting event to raise awareness for Richmond Region Tourism and the Richmond Region Tourism Foundation by recognizing stakeholders and celebrating the Region's stellar tourism and hospitality professionals
- Research corporate and foundation grant opportunities and utilize contract grant writer to apply for large revenue generating opportunities for programs and events
- Recruit and expand Foundation donation solicitation process to augment traditional Foundation sponsorship recruitment
- Maintain engagement with sponsors and partners to continue to highlight the relevancy and value of partnerships
- Identify and solicit new partners while refining and expanding existing partnerships



Ashland Theatre

MARKETING

OVERVIEW

The team is again committed to building on the previous two years' accomplishments with the main goal of disrupting and inspiring across all our marketing efforts.

In 2025 - 2026, the team will continue to grow as an internal marketing agency while driving awareness and visitation to the Richmond Region. In addition, it will continue to ensure that the messaging of the Richmond Region Speaks for Itself campaign is integrated across all campaigns while also creating additional campaigns that will promote our partners and localities. In addition, the team will continue to build out the black traveler marketing campaign.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

The Marketing department will work toward achieving the following major objectives in FY 2025-2026:

- Raise awareness of all that the region has to offer
- Promote DEI in all our marketing efforts
- Disrupt and be different than other destination marketing efforts
- Continue to amplify the messaging of the inspiration campaign



Science Museum of Virginia

GOALS

The Marketing goals will be organized under five major themes:

- Continue to produce way out-of-the-box creative
- Maximize the use of data to improve targeting and ROI
- Be diligent stewards of RRT funds
- Integrate our RRT marketing efforts when possible with TID marketing efforts
- Oversee the new rebranding exercise

CONTINUE TO PRODUCE WAY OUT-OF-THE BOX CREATIVE

As we have proven with award winning campaigns such as Pet Friendly Richmond, Get Here on a Tank of Gas or Less and Speaks for Itself, as well as concepts such as the Richmond Region Mimosa Trail and Our Four Totally Made-up Holidays, being different and disruptive not only wins awards, but, more importantly, drives awareness and visitation. So, we will continue to watch what other destinations do and not do that!

- Continue to amplify the creative and messaging for the Mimosa Trail and four made up holidays using paid, owned, shared and earned strategies
- Build out a Mimosas and Museums paid media campaign
- Continue to build out a "Find Your Hotel in Richmond" campaign
- More than half of the visitors to the Region don't stay in a hotel. With occupancy leveling off and new properties coming online, a campaign to convert existing overnight visitors staying with friends and family to overnight hotel visitors is needed to grow hotel market share. Traveler habits cannot be changed overnight. This is a long-term strategy and should be considered as an evergreen campaign much like the SFI campaign
- Create and implement an activation or promotion using AR
- Create and execute a PR campaign for the Richmond Region Mimosa Trail to increase its visibility to travelers in our drive and fly markets. Run at least four targeted paid advertising campaigns with metrics outperforming global averages. Use advertising on new platforms such as Pinterest and TikTok

MAXIMIZE THE USE OF DATA TO IMPROVE OUR PERFORMANCE

Data will continue to direct our marketing efforts in helping to target qualified travel intenders and measuring and analyzing our results.

- Develop a marketing response plan to the recent Longwoods Travel Study results, especially for areas that are trending down
- Find an alternative to Arrivalist to assist in creating geo-targeted TID media campaigns
- Help drive new first-party data by campaigning for new sign ups of enews
- Update, organize and grow the media contact list. Establish aggressive KPIs

INTEGRATE DEI THROUGHOUT OUR MARKETING EFFORTS/OPERATIONS

Integrating DEI throughout our marketing efforts remains a top priority and goes far beyond ensuring that we have diverse representation in our creative. We want to be a leading marketing organization in inclusivity.

- Develop a checklist and signoff for all creative being produced to ensure consistent inclusivity messaging
- Include the DEI committee on major projects
- Expand the black traveler's marketing campaign, including the new black travel video
- Improve the content and functionality of BLKRVA and OutRVA websites
- Create or update fact sheets for OutRVA, BLK RVA and accessible travel
- Continue to build on our most viral social media content series highlighting local Black owned restaurants sharing part three of the ongoing series in collaboration with BLK RVA. Series can be expanded to highlight AAPI and Latino owned businesses

BE DILIGENT STEWARDS OF RRT FUNDS

We understand the responsibility of using RRT funds effectively and efficiently while generating ROI and driving visitation. It is a responsibility that the Marketing staff takes seriously. It is the major reason why we have built an internal marketing agency culture that saves agency fees and other related costs.

- Continue to be aggressive in doing more and more creative, campaign production and media buying in-house. Goal is 90 percent in-house
- Adapt the new navigation mechanisms being developed for the M&C/Sports microsites for VisitRichmondVA.com. Once the new widget is completed, RRT can internally replicate and customize the functionality across all sections of the site without spending additional monies with Simpleview. Internally customizing the navigation will save RRT approximately \$9,000 in development costs for each section revised including; Leisure, Partner, Media and Group, for a potential savings of more than \$35,000
- Continue to tap into local influencer and content creator market to supplement our content creation and photography library while building relationship with destination ambassadors and amplifying voices in our community

INTEGRATE RRT MARKETING EFFORTS WITH TID MARKETING EFFORTS

We will continue to ensure that our RRT marketing efforts complement the TID Marketing efforts when it comes to messaging, creative and ensuring that all jurisdictions and marketing buckets are embraced.

OVERSEE THE RRT REBRANDING EXERCISE

The Marketing team along with the rebranding committee will ensure that the rebranding process is pushed forward while keeping senior team and the board in the loop throughout the exercise.



Keystone Truck & Tractor Museum

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

OVERVIEW

Building on the foundation established in FY25, Richmond Region Tourism’s Visitor Experience department will continue to enhance the tourism industry in the region. This plan outlines key strategies to refine destination management, expand development initiatives, and elevate visitor engagement, meetings and convention services, and group tour sales.

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

- Implement a system for regular stakeholder feedback to ensure alignment and address challenges
- Develop a comprehensive communication plan for VA250 and TBEX events
- Assess the effectiveness of Bandwango Trails and make data-driven adjustments.

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

- Create a communication plan to collaborate with the four major experiential verticals in the destination to develop a one- and two-year strategy to drive visitors to their businesses
- Restart the “Tourism Picks Up” initiative
- Communicate with businesses in the convention neighborhood through foot patrols



Greater Richmond Convention Center

VISITOR ENGAGEMENT

- Refresh signage with specific imagery for art, outdoor, heritage, and history
- Standardize information tables provided for meetings and conventions
- Manage and coordinate the mobile visitor center and upgrade vehicle



Buttermilk Trail

DESTINATION SERVICES

- Identify base functions of how AI integrations can streamline the services workflow
- Adopt corporate-social-responsibility best practices within the services/event planning process
- Achieve a 45% meeting planner survey response rate

GROUP TOUR SALES AND SERVICES

- Implement targeted marketing campaigns for specific group tour segments
- Refine KPIs to measure the success of group tour initiatives
- Develop specialized itineraries and packages for emerging trends

CONCLUSION

In FY26, the Visitor Experience department will build upon previous successes and enhance the Richmond Region’s tourism industry. By refining destination management, expanding development, and elevating visitor engagement, meetings and convention services, and group tour sales, the department aims to solidify the region’s reputation as a premier travel destination.

DESTINATION SALES AND SPORTS TOURISM

OVERVIEW

The Sales department at Richmond Region Tourism is dedicated to driving economic impact by promoting the region to meeting planners and sports tournament rights holders. Our key objectives for FY26 include recruiting high-value events, improving sales tools and processes, enhancing our national and international sales strategies, and leveraging industry partnerships to boost client engagement.

SALES DEPARTMENT GOALS

The Sales department goals consist of four main themes.

- Partner closely with local stakeholders to attract events that matter to them
- Optimize department resources and integrate AI for improved efficiency
- Sharpen sales efforts to better use time and resources and develop an international strategy
- Leverage industry partnerships to enhance our client engagement both in-market and nationally



NJCAA Cross Country - Pole Green Park

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

STRENGTHEN STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

In FY26, we will enhance stakeholder collaboration through the following tactics.

- Host quarterly meetings with local businesses and an RRT board member to promote the RVA Champions Program
- Partner with ChamberRVA to market Richmond as a destination for Inner City Visits
- Redesign the “Meaningful Meetings” initiative into the “Meetings that Matter” program by collaborating with organizations like GRP to highlight and promote the intellectual capital in our region that provide unique and impactful experiences
- Partner with four to six local sports tourism parents to create a Parent Team Advisory group to assist in recruiting sports tournaments and enhancing attendee experiences
- Hold quarterly meetings with athletic directors and facility contacts at six area universities and colleges

MAXIMIZE RESOURCE EFFICIENCY

With a variety of sales resourcing and tools at our disposal, the following tactics will ensure that we optimize our resources for efficiency, enhance our industry knowledge, and incentivize families traveling for sports events to extend their stay.

- Establish an internal playbook for sales resources to include best practices for the use of AI for sales efficiency and a planner concierge program for rebooking strategies
- Optimize our CRM and project management tools to increase efficiency and workflow within our department and collaboration and workflow cross department
- Digitize our tradeshow appointment books to enhance our efficiency with post-show follow-up with clients for lead generation
- Participate in quarterly training to stay current with industry trends
- Launch a sports tourism experience pass through Bandwango to encourage families to extend their stay

REVAMP SALES STRATEGY

We will optimize our sales efforts with data-driven strategies and industry collaboration all while expanding both national and international outreach through the following tactics.

- Based on data from our sales resources, we will visit five different cities twice a year with a local partner to promote our convention and sports packages
- We will utilize social media platforms like LinkedIn to target clients in cities with a high concentration of meeting planners and sports tourism rights holders to raise awareness of the Richmond Region
- During out of market sales missions and while attending industry tradeshows we will partner with other Capital Cities to pool resources and expand our reach
- Create a focus group of local third-party planners to develop and recruit meetings in STEM and new consumer markets
- Revise our prospecting strategies to enhance account nurturing and intentional contact
- Increase data driven decision to profile individual markets and emerging opportunities

- Collaborate with local jurisdiction, venue, and hotel partners on sales missions and marketing collateral
- Work internally with the Marketing and Visitor Experience department to develop the framework for RRT's international sales strategy

ENHANCE CLIENT ENGAGEMENT THROUGH INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

Industry partnerships extend beyond B2B recruiting. Through the following KPI's we will enhance our partnerships to increase our visibility with meeting planners and sports tournament rights holders.

- Leverage industry partnership to host FAMs and client events in key growth markets
- Elevate presence with industry associations by sponsoring networking and education events and hosting virtual presentations and webinars that will enhance our direct visibility with meeting planners and rights holders
- Position our sales department to be nominated and win industry awards



Jolene Family Winery