

Visit
Richmond
VA.com

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

RICHMOND REGION TOURISM INSPIRATION CAMPAIGN

May 17, 2022



Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Purpose of the Request For Proposal	5
Project Goals	5
Challenges	6
Creating a Halo Effect	8
Background/Research	8
Target Audiences	9
Identification	9
Scope of Work/Deliverables	10
Project Details	11
Timeline	12
Proposal Structure	13
Tell Us the Richmond Story	14
Proposal Evaluation	15
Proposal Requirements	16
Questions	16
Proposal Delivery	16
Notice of Intend to Bid	16
Notice of Intent to Bid Form	Attachment A
Budget Form	Attachment B
Proposal Evaluation Form	Attachment C
Presentation Evaluation	Attachment D
Richmond Region Tourism Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	Attachment E



INTRODUCTION

Federal Funds: This is a federally funded project and Contractors shall be responsible for compliance with all applicable federal laws and executive orders. If

any provisions listed herein conflict with any federal procurement guidelines, the federal procurement guidelines shall prevail. Contract Provisions can be found at the following link: [eCFR :: Appendix A to Subpart B of Part 600, Title 10 -- Contract Provisions](#)



Richmond Region Tourism (RRT) is a private, non-profit 501(c)(6) organization that strives to build a more livable and prosperous region that balances the quality of life for locals and excitement and fresh experiences for visitors.

RRT is the official tourism promotion agency for the Richmond Region, promoting and raising the awareness of all that our seven jurisdictions have to offer. The seven include: four counties (Chesterfield, Hanover, Henrico, and New Kent), two cities (Colonial Heights and Richmond) and the town of Ashland.

Representatives from RRT, Greater Richmond Partnership (GRP), Chamber-RVA and five out of our seven jurisdictions will be part of the selection of the agency or agencies for this important project. The five are Chesterfield, Hanover, and Henrico counties, and the cities of Richmond and Colonial Heights).

This is a major point of differentiation between RRT and other destination marketing organizations (DMOs) in the U.S. that primarily market just their city and county.

Our primary funding comes from a transient lodging tax that hotel guests pay in our Region.

Our primary missions include:

- To drive visitation to the Richmond Region (We define a visitor as someone who resides at least 50 miles outside our Region)
- To promote the Richmond Region both domestically and internationally
- To promote the diversity of the Region
- To create a halo effect to show that the Richmond Region is a great place to visit, live, go to school, play, work and build businesses

We also work with local organizations such as the Greater Richmond Partnership (GRP), Chamber-RVA, Venture Richmond and many others to help fulfill our missions.

RRT drives visitation through three primary verticals:

- Meet Richmond (business meetings and conventions)
- Sports Richmond (sports events)
- Visit Richmond (leisure tourism as well as friends and families) marketing efforts include fly markets supported by seven major airlines. Fly markets include: Boston, Ft. Lauderdale, Orlando, Dallas, Houston, and Chicago.

<https://www.visitrichmondva.com/plan/direct-flights-to-richmond-va/>

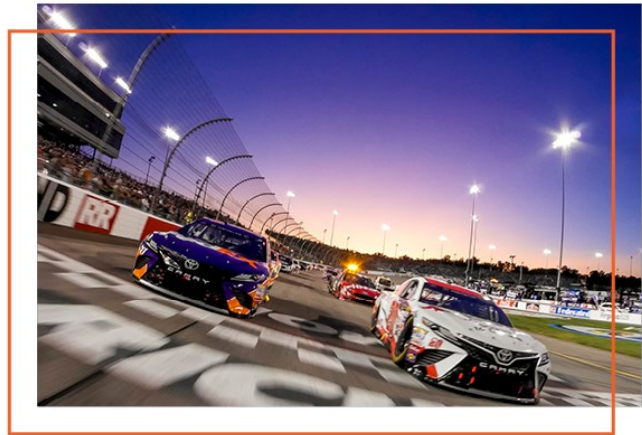
RRT's traditional drive markets also include some new, strategic drive markets based on the expansion of our drive market bubble post Covid (within 6 hours) :

- Washington DC, Virginia (excluding Richmond DMA), North Carolina, Maryland, Delaware, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania
- 6 Hour Bubble: All of VA, MD, DE and most of NC, Myrtle Beach, Columbia, western PA and eastern Ohio.
- Top 5 Origination Markets: DC/Northern Virginia, Hampton Roads, Roanoke/Lynchburg, Raleigh/Durham; and Baltimore

Focus on our drive markets became even more critical during Covid-19 as more travelers opted for drive vacations compounded by cancelled meetings and conventions.

The recent spike in gas prices across the country has made us pivot with a new campaign: **Get Here on a Tank of Gas or Less.**

Fortunately, with meetings and conventions starting to come back, overall visitation is climbing, and airport traffic is rebounding.



Purpose of the Request for Proposal (RFP)

Our jurisdictions will be receiving funding from the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) via Virginia Tourism Corporation to help the local tourism industry recover from the devastating effects of Covid-19. This funding MUST be used for tourism recovery efforts.

The purpose of this Request for Proposal is to retain a qualified, highly creative, and diverse agency for the development of an inspiration campaign to help raise awareness of the region and to drive tourism.

We want the campaign to make visitors and potential visitors to feel something positive when they view our creative and hear our messaging and allow them to become part of an experience that is meaningful – to create brand recall.

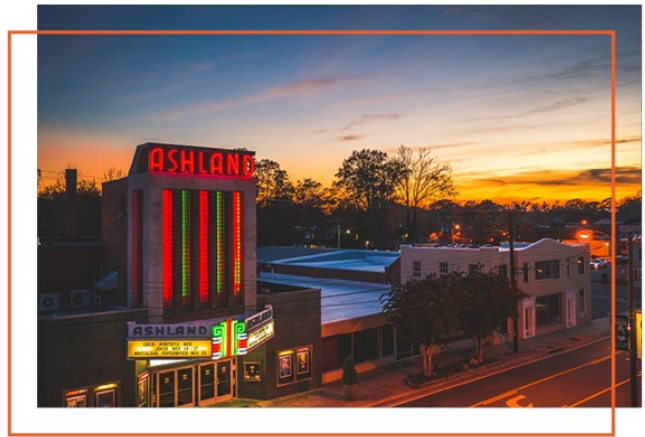
This is not a rebranding exercise. We will include the RVA brand in the campaign, but the assets should also include the words “The Region of Richmond, Virginia.”

Goals of this Project

The primary goal of this project is to drive tourism and help the region’s tourism industry continue its recovery.

The campaign will also create a halo effect that is intended to achieve the following goals:

- Raise awareness of the Richmond Region as a thriving and exciting destination for leisure, family and friends travel, sports events, and business meetings.
- Raise awareness of the region as a prime location for economic development.
- Raise awareness of what RRT’s jurisdictions have to offer.
- Raise awareness of the region as an excellent destination to live, work, learn and play.
- Drive hotel occupancy and visitation to the region’s businesses and attractions.
- Promote the diversity of the region, and raise awareness of our diversity initiatives including BLK RVA and OutRVA. (Please see Attachment E.)
- Complement the efforts of Virginia Tourism Corp. in driving visitors to the Commonwealth and encouraging our visitors to vacation throughout Virginia.



Challenges

The Covid-19 Effect on Richmond Region Tourism

Tourism is vital to the economic well-being of the Richmond Region. Covid decimated the tourism industry, and the Richmond Region was no exception, as the following numbers show. This is why this campaign's main goal is to help our tourism industry recover. While visitor numbers are rebounding quickly, there is still much work to be done to ensure long-term success.

Our numbers for 2019 (Pre-Covid) were:

- 7.7 million visitors to the Richmond Region.
- Visitor spending in 2019 amounted to more than 3.2 billion.
- Local tax revenue generated by visitors is estimated at \$161 million.
- More than 31,000 jobs in the Richmond Region are directly supported by tourism.

Our numbers for 2020 were:

- 4.9 million visitors to the Richmond Region.
- Visitor spending in 2020 amounted to more than 1.9 billion.
- Local tax revenue generated by visitors is estimated at \$113 million.
- More than 22,000 jobs in the Richmond Region are directly supported by tourism.

Industry projections had shown us to be at 9 million visitors by 2030. This campaign needs to help us recover to 2019 numbers but also move the Region to that projected number.

But as we know, the Covid-19/Omicron challenge is not over and may not be for some time. This will continue to affect the way that meeting and event planners as well as leisure travelers think about in-person participation. When they think about travel, though, we want them to think about the Richmond Region. The same goes with business leaders and developers, prospective students, people looking to relocate, etc.

Changing Richmond's Narrative

In 2021, the City of Richmond made the decision to remove the statues along famed Monument Avenue following protests surrounding the murder of George Floyd and the demonstrations that followed. While many felt that the decision was long overdue, others, including many Richmond residents, felt the statues were part of our history and should have remained.

But we have been moving away from this narrative for some time.

As our Region continues to evolve and thrive, we want to build on the lessons of our past; celebrate the diversity of our Region, our rich Black history (i.e., Maggie Walker and Jackson Ward, and our part in the social justice conversation; and continue to position Richmond Region as welcoming. This messaging needs to be part of this inspiration campaign.

RRT has long championed the racial and sexual-orientation diversity of the region with programs such as BLKRVA and OutRVA, respectively, and we want to continue to be a leader in the industry.



experiences and attractions.

Biggest Challenge

But the biggest challenge will be the ability to be heard above all of the noise -- most cities and states will also receive ARPA funding to be used to help their tourism industries recover.

So, we need to be more effective in speaking to our intended audiences and, most importantly, authentic. As you look at what other destinations are doing, keep in mind we need to be different.

Marketing a Region not a Destination

Unlike some destinations receiving ARPA funding, RRT is responsible for promoting and raising awareness of seven jurisdictions. So, this project must incorporate assets from each jurisdiction.

This is a major differentiation and one we want to maximize.

There are also many unique things about our region that serve as another point of differentiation – our Only-in-Richmond

Creating a Halo Effect

Research has long demonstrated that tourism advertising and the visitation it inspires have a positive impact on consumers' image of destinations as a place for leisure travel and recreation, known as the "Halo Effect."

This plan/campaign is intended to create a halo effect that will raise awareness of the Richmond Region that extends beyond its appeal just as a destination to visit and meet but also help achieve other economic objectives. The campaign should raise awareness that the Richmond Region is a favorable destination to live, work, start a business, expand a business, attend college, and retire.



Background/Research

Recently, both Greater Richmond Partnership (GRP) and RRT independently retained professional research firms to conduct surveys among corporations/site location consultants and visitors respectively to determine current awareness, perception, and image-related feedback around the Richmond Region among key targets.

GRP - Overall, the research conducted by DCI (150+ respondents) indicated that Greater Richmond is less likely to be considered than competitors (Raleigh, N.C., Denver, Colo., Austin, Texas, Nashville, Tenn., Charlotte, N.C., Portland, Ore., Tampa, Fla., Charleston, S.C.). Charlotte is 17.5% more likely to be considered among site selectors and Raleigh is 33% more likely to be considered among corporate executives. This is likely due to low awareness resulting from lack of marketing investment over the past years from regional and state levels.

RRT - The image and perception research project conducted by Longwoods International (1,000+ respondents) indicated that among competitors (Baltimore, Md., Charleston, S.C., Columbus, Ohio, Nashville, Tenn., and Raleigh, N.C.) Richmond ranks 4th amongst its competitive set, closely behind Charleston, Raleigh and Nashville.

Because this research is so recent, we don't believe we will need additional research for the build out of the tourism image campaign.

Although we will require the selected agency to interview key stakeholders to ensure that this campaign is a collaborative effort.

Target audiences

RRT's primary target markets for this campaign include:

- RRT's traditional drive markets and some new, strategic drive markets based on the expansion of our drive market bubble post Covid (within 6 hours).
- Direct fly markets and major cities that make the most sense.
 - Boston, Ft. Lauderdale, Orlando, Dallas, Houston, and Chicago
- Business leaders and developers
- Corporate Real Estate professionals
- Airline executives
- Meeting planners
- Sports events planners
- Local, domestic, and international media
- Richmond Region elected officials
- Residents (through earned and shared media) – we need to be the ones amplifying the messaging.

Identification

We feel the RVA branding has taken root, so we do not want a new branding exercise as part of this project.

However, the RVA brand would not be well known outside Virginia, and definitely, not known nationally. So, the words "The Region of Richmond, Virginia" will have to be used in the creative.

In addition, because 90% of our marketing is outside the region, many residents do not know who we are or what we do. This campaign needs to be widely seen as a way to show our residents what we do and to educate our stakeholders using earned and shared media.

We will want to give locals a sneak peak of the campaign prior to launching the campaign regionally and nationally.

Diversity and inclusiveness as well as our region being welcoming should be three important messages in our inspiration campaign.

In addition, the campaign creative needs to be flexible enough to accommodate global adaptations and will also need to work with a variety of formats and presentations, from print to web to mobile.

Scope of Work/Deliverables

In helping solve the above challenges, the selected agency/agencies will complete the four parts of this project or some of the parts. Agencies should address all four parts in their bids and whether they will partner with other agencies.

Note: RRT will determine if one agency or multiple agencies will be chosen for this project, but the preference is to choose one vendor that may or may not choose to have partners for this project.

1. Creative

The Creative will include:

- Campaign theme
- Development of campaign assets, including photography for digital advertising
- Campaign video (60, 30 and 15 sec. versions)
- Messaging to be used by stakeholders in promoting the region
- Media kit template

2. Campaign Launch Plan

The Campaign launch plan will include:

- Regional and national media plan, incorporating paid, owned earned and shared media
- Timeline and delivery channels
- KPIs to measure success
- 2 to 3 campaign launch concepts – e.g., events, social campaigns, activations

3. The Media Buying Plan

The Media Buying Plan will include:

- Timelines
- Platforms to be used
- Strategies
- KPIs to measure success
- Agency Fees

4. Public Relations Plan

The Public Relations Plan will include:

- Timelines
- Strategies
- KPIs to measure success
- Agency fees

Project details

Applicants are encouraged to shape their proposal based on the following budget suggestions as a guide.

Campaign creative

This will include the creation of a campaign media kit for jurisdictions and a campaign launch plan.

\$300,000

Activations

\$75,000

Media

Paid

\$1,670,000

Initial Summer 2022 Rollout: \$

Fall 2022 Buy: \$

Spring 2023 Buy \$

Fall 2023 Buy \$

Note: Includes agency fees

Earned

\$200,000

Includes agency fees

Shared (Social media)

\$50,000

Owned

Assets Production

\$150,000

Photography, website page builds, video content,

Printing

Timeline

Tuesday, May 17, 2022	RFP released
Friday, May 27, 2022 (5p.m. EST)	Written questions due
Wednesday, June 8, 2022	RRT responds to questions via email
Thursday, June 16, 2022 (5p.m. EST)	Notice of Intent to bid due
Thursday, June 30, 2022 (5p.m. EST)	Proposal due
Week of July 11, 2022	Proposal evaluation by scoring committee
Week of July 18, 2022	Notification and scheduling of finalists
	Interviews
Week of August 8, 2022	Presentations at RRT office
Week of August 15, 2022	Contract awarded
Weeks of August 22 and 29, and	
September 5, 2022	Agency to meet with group of RRT stakeholders to discuss needs/wants
Week of September 19, 2022	Agency to present concepts to RRT
Week of October 17, 2022	Launch of campaign

Campaign could be rolled out in two initial media buys – first in October 2022 and then again in Spring 2023. A third phase, possibly, could be launched in Summer 2023.

Proposal Structure

Your proposal shall contain the following sections:

1. Executive Summary

Letter of interest and narrative summary that includes company history and proposer's services and activities. List the locations of the office(s) for which work on this contract would be performed and the size of the agency by headcount.

2. Company Background

Please include the following items:

- A description of your company's primary services
- The year in which your company was formed
- Your company's experience in branding and image development
- Your company's global reach
- The address from which the primary work on the contract would be performed
- Numbers of total employees and contractors
 - Diversity of staff and/or subcontractors
- A current and past client list.

3. Conflict of Interest

Please list all tourism-related clients for whom you have represented during the past 24 months. Please include a brief description of the type of activity and services you provided.

4. Company Management & Staff

Please include the following items:

- The contract manager for this scope of work.
- The individuals who will be conducting the day-to-day work.

For all individuals assigned to this account, please provide:

- Current resumes/biographies demonstrating qualifications related to this RFP.
- Length of time with your company

5. Case Studies

Showcase studies (minimum of three) with demonstrated results relevant to Richmond Region Tourism (scale, industry, and/or similarity).

6. Questions and Answers

Please provide answers to the following questions.

- What is your unique selling proposition over competitors?
- Do you have experience in travel and tourism marketing? If so, please include examples. If not, show comparable experience.
- What has been the biggest issue you have encountered with domestic and international strategy and creative development, and how did you solve it satisfactorily?
- What is your methodology in solving branding issues?
- What is your familiarity with RRT and the Richmond Region?

7. Proposal on Scope of Work

You should include:

- Details of methodology used in solving challenges presented in this RFP
- Details and strategies of how you intend to accomplish the tasks involved
- How will you measure success of the work completed?
- Estimated time frames for accomplishing those tasks
- Any deliverables you may provide that will be derived from those tasks

8. Budget

A complete Budget Form (Attachment B) must be included and must include all requested budget line items. All costs associated with the Scope of Work must be included in the format provided in U.S. dollars. Costs for developing proposals are entirely the responsibility of the proposer and shall not be reimbursed by Richmond Region Tourism. All proposers agree that budget costs submitted with their proposals are valid for 180 days from the date Richmond Region Tourism receives your proposal.

Please ensure your proposal includes the following:

- A detailed table of contents or index which lists each key section of your proposal.
- Page numbers; and
- Tabs or other methods to identify key sections of your proposal.

Please also place sections of your proposal in the order as they are presented within this RFP.

Tell Us the Richmond Region Story

As part of your bid package, please, in no more than 2 pages, tell us the Richmond Region Story. We want you to be frank.

- Who are we?
- What are we?
- Where did we come from? Where are we now? Where are we positioned to go?
- What should people outside the region know about us?
- What makes us different?

Proposal Evaluation

Richmond Region Tourism has formed a committee to evaluate the written proposals. The criteria for the scoring of the proposals is included as Attachment C. The committee may at any time during the evaluation process seek clarification from Proposers regarding any information contained within their proposal.

Final scores for each Proposer will reflect a consensus of the evaluation committee. Any attempt by an agency to contact a member of the evaluation committee outside the RFP process, in an attempt to gain knowledge or an advantage may result in disqualification of Proposer.

The top finalists chosen by the evaluation committee will be asked to provide oral presentations to the evaluation committee. All proposers and key team members working on the account should ensure they are available for the on-site visits during the dates presented in the Tentative Schedule. After the oral presentations, there will be a question-and-answer period.

Please note: Upon completing the selection process under this RFP, Richmond Region Tourism will notify the winning Proposer. You will be notified of the total presentation time. In addition to Agency management and committee members, key personnel performing day-to-day activities will be requested to attend. The criteria for the scoring of the oral presentations are included as Attachment D. and all other Proposers who were not selected. RRT's deliberations are confidential. Accordingly, while we understand that non-selected proposers may wish to ascertain reasons for their non-selection, RRT is unable to respond to any subsequent questions and/or requests for information as to why a company was not selected.

Reserved Rights

All proposals submitted shall become the property of RRT and shall not be returned to the Proposer. RRT also reserves the right to:

- Reject any and all bids
- Cancel this RFP
- Revise the amount of funds available under this RFP
- Amend this RFP as needed
- Not select an agency and award a contract from this RFP

Proposal Requirements

Proposals must address each item listed with details on techniques to be used in achieving these requirements. Proposals may be rejected if minimum requirements are not met.

Questions

All Proposers wishing clarification of this RFP must submit questions via email (with subject line: Questions about RRT RFP) to: Tom Loftus, Vice President of Marketing, tloftus@visitrichmondva.com by **Friday, May 27, 2022 (5p.m. EST)**.

RRT will respond to any questions received by close of business on Wednesday, June 8, 2022.

Notice of Intent to Bid

Notice of Intent to Bid, Attachment A, must be received by **Thursday, June 16, 2022 (5p.m. EST)**. The notice must be submitted via e-mail (with subject line: RRT Image Campaign) to Tom Loftus, Vice President of Marketing at tloftus@visitrichmondva.com.

The Notice of Intent to Bid is non-binding; however, it ensures the receipt of all addenda related to this RFP. Proposals will be accepted only from applicants who submit a Notice of Intent to Bid.

Proposal Delivery

Proposals must be submitted as PDFs by Thursday, **June 30, 2022, by 5 p.m.**, EST to an RRT Dropbox link that will be provided after receipt of Intent to Bid. In addition, but not in replacement of the Dropbox submission, you can submit a hand delivery to:

Richmond Region Tourism
Attention: Tom Loftus, Vice President of Marketing
401 N. 3rd Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Attachment A

NOTICE OF INTENT TO BID

Due: June 16, 2022, 5p.m. PDT

Send to

Vice President of Marketing, Richmond Region Tourism, tloftus@visitrichmondva.com

Name of Proposer

Contact Person

Agency URL

Telephone

Email Address

Name

Signed

ATTACHMENT B
BUDGET FORM

<u>Budget Line Item</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Staffing</u>
-------------------------	-------------	-----------------

Creative

Campaign Launch Plan

Media Plan

Activations

Photography/Video Assets

Other

Mailing Address

ATTACHMENT C

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

WRITTEN PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be reviewed, evaluated and scored by an evaluation committee based on the criteria below to the degree of responsiveness present in the written proposal submitted.

Proposal Criteria Max Score: 100

Overall Experience of Firm. Our evaluation will include an assessment of such items as the history of your company, your experience as it relates to the requirements within this RFP, evidence of past performance, and related items.

15

Scope of Work. Our evaluation will include an assessment of the quality of proposed strategies, creativity, detail of plan, ROI measurement systems, and related items.

20

Familiarity with Richmond Region Tourism Brand and Product. Our evaluation will include our assessment of your understanding of our organization and how you integrated this knowledge into your proposal, cultural fit, and related items.

10

Qualifications and Diversity of Team. Our evaluation will include an assessment of the qualifications, experience, diversity and creativity of your managerial team, staff, and subcontractors, and related items.

20

Capabilities. Our evaluation will include an assessment of your past performance related to this RFP.

20

Cost Effectiveness. The maximum services provided in relation to the per-hour fee charged and value of overall project. The budget is reasonable and appropriate.

15

TOTAL 100

ATTACHMENT D

PRESENTATION EVALUATION

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

IN-PERSON PRESENTATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

Presentations will be reviewed, evaluated and scored by an evaluation committee based on the criteria below to the degree of responsiveness presented.

Presentation Criteria Max Score: 100

Quality and completeness of answers regarding the proposed work plan. Professionalism and staff expertise, creativity and ratio of personnel assigned to the account.

30

Market knowledge and industry relationships. 10

Richmond Region Tourism Knowledge. Our evaluation will include our assessment of your understanding of our organization and the Richmond Region and how you integrated this knowledge into your proposal, cultural fit, and related items.

15

Quality of proposed strategies, tactics and work samples.

30

ROI, budget recommendations and cost effectiveness

15

TOTAL 100

ATTACHMENT E

Richmond Region Tourism is committed to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

You're welcome and valued in the Richmond Region

We welcome, value, and respect all people in our community. Every day, we invite visitors from diverse experiences and backgrounds to get to know our region better.

You are an important part of the Richmond Region's story. As the region's marketer and an advocate for the hospitality industry, Richmond Region Tourism is committed to developing a clear, honest, and positive image of our community that reflects everyone. We do this work intentionally and passionately, while ensuring Diversity, Equity and Inclusion drives every approach we take. Learn more about RRT's internal DEI goals.

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.

We celebrate our region's diversity

Richmond Region Tourism introduces millions of people per year to the region through integrated marketing and public relations strategies. We focus on consistently sharing diverse voices from underrepresented groups in all our communications.

While there is always work to be done, we're proud to highlight diverse groups through community-driven promotional campaigns. The Richmond Region Tourism Foundation has continued to grow BLK RVA, an initiative to support local, Black-owned businesses by increasing tourism and broadening our collective understanding of our past and future. Our OutRVA program also has become a trusted resource to learn about the region's LGBTQ+ community.

Learning and advocating, together

Richmond Region Tourism uses its platform to educate and engage. Throughout the year, we facilitate sessions to help hospitality partners create more inclusive environments, such as accessibility, LGBTQ+ and safe sport trainings. We also regularly share and uplift resources to educate local stakeholders through email and social media.

We care about the people in our community. What recommendations do you have for building on our DEI commitments?