

VISIT TACOMA PIERCE COUNTY

2026 SALES AND MARKETING PLAN

Tacoma Regional Convention and Visitor Bureau (dba Visit Tacoma-Pierce County) is the combined regional destination marketing organization (DMO), convention & visitors bureau, and sports commission for all of Pierce County. Our mission is to deliver tourism through the creation of measurable hotel room nights and economic impact (day visits, tax collections, spending at local businesses) county-wide by focusing on three pillars of business:

- Amateur Sports
- Leisure Tourism
- Meetings & Conventions

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This marketing plan outlines Visit Tacoma-Pierce County's strategy for marketing Pierce County as a destination, in order to maximize the region's competitiveness in the national and regional sports, meetings and conventions, and leisure tourism markets.

In everything we do, Visit Tacoma-Pierce County uses overnight stays as its primary metric of success. To that end, we have developed deep roots in the Pierce County hospitality community, working closely with lodging partners throughout the county in several capacities, including sales, marketing, and consulting. In 2026, **we project to deliver approximately 130,000 room nights in Pierce County.**

As it applies to the aforementioned pillars of business:

- Amateur Sports (42,955 room nights county-wide in 2026; 2,325 at events directly in Lakewood)
- Leisure Tourism (53,555 room nights in 2026)
- Meetings & Conventions (33,900 room nights in 2026)

CORE FUNCTIONS

Meeting & Convention Sales / Convention Center Sales

As an organization that writes contracts to host meetings, conventions, and special events at the Greater Tacoma Convention Center, and sporting events throughout Pierce County, Visit Tacoma-Pierce County regularly sends qualified leads from meeting planners to hotels throughout Pierce County. These leads result in tens of thousands of room-nights annually at local hotels. When responding to RFPs from meeting planners and sporting event organizers, Visit Tacoma-Pierce County partners with hotels to ensure we have the right rooms at the right price-points to secure that business. For larger hotels with meeting space that serve as their own venues, Visit Tacoma-Pierce County often refers business to them when there is a good fit for space needs and scheduling.

We proactively sell the Greater Tacoma Convention Center – as well as other event and hospitality spaces – as venues for meetings, conventions, and tradeshow to generate revenue for the venue itself, as well as room nights and increased economic impact throughout the community. We will achieve these goals by engaging meeting planners through advertising and marketing in trade publications, prospecting, tradeshow and conference participation, industry memberships, networking, site visits, hosted client events, community relationships, and sponsorships. We will partner with other destination marketing organizations where collaborations make sense and will increase return on investment.

Leisure Tourism and Event Marketing

From a leisure marketing perspective, Visit Tacoma-Pierce County offers exposure through our social media platforms and inclusion of Pierce County hotels, attractions, and points of interest in advertising programs targeting leisure travelers. Utilizing the latest geo-targeting technology, we offer our partners both unparalleled visitor data and the marketing opportunities to reach those visitors. We also work with local hotels to host qualified travel journalists, bloggers, and influencers, with the goal of generating media and social media coverage for the host property. Visit Tacoma-Pierce County's website (www.visitpiercecounty.com) receives more than a million visits annually, with most traffic arriving at business/hotel listings and events – both of which offer direct access to our hotel partners.

In addition, Visit Tacoma-Pierce County develops three publications: a visitor guide (called our Destination Dispatch) aimed at attracting leisure travelers to Pierce County, a meeting planner guide geared toward helping meeting planners assess Pierce County's fitness and capacity to host their events, and an illustrated Tacoma visitor map. We are currently developing illustrated visitor maps for other cities within Pierce County. Lodging plays strongly into decisions by both leisure travelers, and meeting planners, so we feature hotel properties prominently in both these publications.

Sports

We market Tacoma and Pierce County as a destination for tourism-generating amateur and professional sporting events and lead the development of athletic programs and venues throughout the region.

We recruit and develop annual (and sustainable) events that will generate tens of thousands of valuable hotel room night stays and increase the local economic impact. Working hand in hand with event organizers and governing bodies, we consult on venue development, as well as contribute expertise as consultants in event operations.

Consulting Services

For hotel brands and developers considering entering or expanding within the Pierce County market, we offer consulting services to gauge potential demand from meetings and leisure business. We receive weekly and monthly reports on hotel and short-term rental performance in Pierce County and select competing markets from STR and KeyData, which we share with local lodging partners. And through our geolocation data service, we are able to provide geolocation data, analysis, and reporting to help cities and LTACs in Pierce County better measure the effects of local events and visitation.

Destination Development

Use research, decades of tourism expertise, and on-the-ground experience to help develop events, attractions, hotels, and unified brand positioning throughout the destination. Given the increasing importance of the tourism and hospitality sectors to

the local economy, we will keep the community informed and engaged about the destination's tourism and hospitality industries' health and competitive position.

Familiarization Tours

Generate destination awareness and consideration among key decision makers, media, and influencers. While overnights are the metric by which tourism health is often gauged, each overnight begins with awareness of the destination. The best way to make top influencers and awareness gatekeepers connect with our destination on a deeper level is to have them experience it first-hand. That's why we bring travel media, social-media influencers, event producers, meeting planners and tour operators to Tacoma and Pierce County to touch, see, taste and experience all this destination has to offer.

Visitor Services

The job of a destination marketing organization doesn't stop once the visitor is in-market. We influence visitor spending and regional visitor distribution, and lengthen stays by providing visitors with recommendations, visitor guides, brochures, and maps of the region to help make the trip exciting and memorable for them, and lucrative to local businesses, organizations, and partners. We do this through our online portals, social channels, visitor services phone number, and in-person visitor service center (when available).

PART OF TOURISM ON LOCAL, STATE AND NATIONAL LEVELS

Tremendous benefit to Visit Tacoma-Pierce County and the staff comes from being actively involved members in national, regional, state and local tourism industry organizations. These partnerships help Visit Tacoma-Pierce County leverage valuable community resources and bring like-interests together for collaboration.

Destinations International

Provides an annual international tourism convention for a global perspective on the industry, ongoing access to resources and research, tailored conferences that focus on specific aspects of DMO departments.

DMA West

Provides annual conventions and industry guidelines and research for marketing organizations that represent the western half of the United States.

Washington State Destination Marketing Organizations Association (WSDMO)

An independent, non-profit trade association advocating tourism investment and promotion as economic development. The mission of the WSDMO is to enhance the awareness and influence of the tourism industry and to serve as the single unifying voice for all of Washington State's destination marketing organizations and tourism industry.

State of Washington Tourism

The official Destination Marketing Organization for the State of Washington, with the sole purpose of marketing Washington to tourists through advocating, promoting, developing, and sustaining destination tourism marketing.

Sports ETA

A non-profit trade association for the sports events and tourism industry in the United States, Sports ETA helps sports events and tourism professionals become more successful at bidding on and hosting sporting events. They do so through education and sharing knowledge of industry trends and best practices; advocacy and representation on national issues and initiatives related to the sports and tourism industry; providing information and trend analysis; and facilitating networking among sports and tourism professionals.

2026 GOALS AND ESTIMATES

- Amateur Sports (42,955 room nights county-wide in 2026; 2,325 at events directly in Lakewood)
- Leisure Tourism (53,555 room nights in 2026)
- Meetings & Conventions (33,900 room nights in 2026)

42,955 Room Nights from Sports Events

- Estimated 44 events throughout Pierce County, including the WIAA state sports tournaments that were won by Visit Tacoma-Pierce County and partners at open bid in 2024.
- Room nights are tracked by reporting on the number of room nights generated by registered attendees who live 50 miles outside of the county or more.

33,900 Room Nights from Meetings and Conventions

- Combined from Greater Tacoma Convention Center and other countywide meeting space assets.
- Room nights are measured by contracted room blocks with hotels.

53,555 Room Nights from Marketing; Travel, Leisure and Events (non-sport/non-meetings)

- Targeted, flexible, itinerary-based campaigns that focus on the tourism assets of various areas within Pierce County.
- A new, most-advanced-of-its-kind service Visit Tacoma-Pierce County onboarded in 2020 allows us to geo-fence areas of high tourism value, gain insight as to what kind of visitor enters those areas and where they are visiting from (local or visitor, down to a zip code level), how long the visitors stay, and where they stay. This provides invaluable, indisputable data to support the efficacy of our marketing and event activities.
- In addition to geolocation-based marketing and attribution measurement of room nights, we have onboarded a marketing partner that places ads by targeting individuals by credit card spending behaviors, and monitors spending to see if the ad target later swiped a credit card in Pierce County at a hotel or other paid lodging.
- Summer Magic and Holiday Magic: The Visit Tacoma-Pierce County marketing team leverages the breadth of events during these two core event windows to aggressively market the concept of visiting for multiple events across several days, connecting them with an itinerary.

TARGET AUDIENCES

We reach these visitors directly, through our marketing and visitor services, and indirectly, through professionals in the event planning, tour operations, and travel writing fields.

Meetings and Conventions Target Audience

- Education Professional – Priorities: affordability, convenience, and safety.
- Government Professional – Priorities: per diem parameters, affordability, and negotiable terms & conditions
- Association Professional – Priorities: focused on overall experience, robust pre- and post-activities, affordability, flexibility and ample meeting space
- Social Planner – Personally invested; seeking high-value and convenience with unique experience; easy transportation and parking; expects very personalized service; retained through word of mouth and social media

Sports Audience

Visit Tacoma-Pierce County's goal is to recruit state, regional, and national-level event products into the Tacoma and Pierce County area. The target customers are national and regional governing bodies that seek a host city that is near a first-tier city or is itself a second- or third-tier city. Before bidding on an event, Visit Tacoma-Pierce County must consider the number of hotel room nights the event will produce. All event products our organization seeks to win are based on generating hotel room nights in Pierce County.

Leisure Tourism Audience

In 2026, Visit Tacoma-Pierce County will focus leisure marketing efforts on drive markets such as Portland, Seattle, Yakima, Tri-Cities and Spokane, as regional drive-travel is forecast to continue to dominate the travel landscape in 2026. These have also historically been shown to be the most likely to convert to an overnight stay through marketing efforts.

In addition to geographic markets, Visit Tacoma-Pierce County will use geolocation data that affords deep insight into visitation of areas of high tourism value, and determine what kind of visitor is attracted to those areas, where they are from (local or visitor, down to a zip code level), how long they stay, and where they stay. This data can also be used to market to the actual people who have visited various areas of Pierce County, as well as lookalike audiences.

PROGRAMS

CONVENTION AND MEETING SALES

These sales marketing activities are focused on recruiting events that are the best fit for Pierce County cities. Primary meeting/convention targets are the association, corporate, and speciality (social, military, education, religion, and fraternal) markets.

Additionally, we are working collaboratively with local South Sound tourism assets to identify opportunities to promote venues throughout Pierce County to the local and regional market more effectively and efficiently. This collaboration is aimed at collective and cohesive marketing strategies to attract more one-day and multi-day events to Pierce County from the surrounding Washington and Pacific Northwest region. Opportunities with South Sound partnerships, NW Events Show and South Sound Magazine are being explored to see what may flesh out as potential opportunities to showcase the destination and convert and recruit new business.

Key Sales Strategies

- Leverage destination and convention center awareness through the leading global event venue directory (CVENT) and web planning. The destination will brand itself through regional and state banner ads and the convention center will brand itself through Seattle/Tacoma preferred placement to drive opportunity from third party, independent and organization planners.
- Partnerships to increase destination awareness to leading trade associations, societies, and volunteer organizations through five elements: connections, tradeshow, advertising & marketing, sponsorship, and membership opportunities.
- Promote destination and convention center at industry events (in-person or virtual, as conditions allow), tradeshows and conferences to generate leads, and build contacts to increase opportunities to book business.
- Increase customer “touches” with local and destination sales calls, hosted client events, site inspections, familiarization tours, promotions, social media and interactive engagements to keep the destination and convention center at front-of-mind with planners.
- Engage in industry memberships to build rapport and develop strong relationships with planners and industry partners for referral opportunities, and build destination and convention center awareness.
- Participate in outbound industry sponsorships to increase awareness of destination and convention center, sales team, and dedication to meetings and events.

Corporate Partnerships + Industry Memberships and Sponsorship Events

Commitment to the tourism community, industry, and members creates a business network designed to increase sales effectiveness. Industry memberships increase knowledge of industry issues, best practices, relationships, prospecting, referrals, etc.

Marketing for Meetings and Events

Marketing efforts to attract meetings and events to a destination combine activities that pay off immediately and in the long term. With that in mind, the marketing budget is used to showcase our meetings-first assets and venues to meeting planners and decision-makers to increase sales and profitability.

Advertising campaigns (online and print) will continue to be informed by research. These campaigns are created to enhance ongoing lead generation and sales at industry associations, familiarization tours, client events, sales calls, tradeshows, conferences, site visits, etc. These investments directly support our scope of work and benchmarks.

Primary Sales Activities

- Updated content on CVENT representing Tacoma and the surrounding communities, the #1 meeting planner online resource to research destinations and source leads.
- Attendance at six national trade shows, including SmartMeetings, Connect & CVENT Connect, and promotional packages where images and information will be included in materials shown to meeting planners.
- An East Coast sales mission that includes hosted client events with association meeting planners and four quarterly virtual client events where destination images and information will be included in the presentation.

- Booking larger events in neighboring communities, which create room nights throughout Pierce County by way of compression. Pierce County hoteliers can confirm the positive effects of these events are felt in their hotels.
- Offering sponsorships for first-time events booking our destination. This sponsorship is based on signing hotel agreements at any hotel in Pierce County. Visit Tacoma Pierce County sales will provide all hotels with collateral to assist in promoting this opportunity to valuable prospects.
- Attending smaller, more local trade organization events such as WSAE and SGMP. These organizations are comprised of a variety of planners who book events of all sizes, including smaller regional events that may be the right fit for properties in communities outside Tacoma.

LEISURE MARKETING

Primary Leisure Marketing Activities

In 2026, Visit Tacoma-Pierce County will continue to use a mix of marketing tactics, including digital advertising, social media marketing, and public relations and media relations outreach to draw overnight visitors. The marketing channels will be almost exclusively digital, which combines the greatest flexibility and provides the greatest trackability of results.

Visit Tacoma-Pierce County's marketing team works to attract new and repeat visitors to Pierce County, and encourage repeat visits through data analytics, targeted advertising, public relations, social media marketing, and visitor services.

We primarily use a geolocation-based digital marketing service that allows us to attribute overnight stays from our advertising. In 2026, Visit Tacoma-Pierce County will conduct ten marketing campaigns: two itineraries per travel season, and two events calendars (one for summer, one for the Holiday season). Each campaign will be accompanied by social media, public relations, and videography efforts. The campaigns are currently drafted as the following:

Spring

Spring TPA Itinerary: Luxe for Less

Demand Generator: Affordable indulgence and elevated experiences in Tacoma and surrounding towns

Spring PC LTAC Itinerary: Brushstrokes and Backroads: An Art Lover's Guide to Mount Rainier

Demand Generator: A creative road trip through the artsy side of Mount Rainier

Summer

Summer TPA Itinerary: Liquid Tourism

Demand Generator: A craft beverage crawl through the heart of Pierce County

Summer PC LTAC Itinerary: Epic Pierce County

Demand Generator: Bucket-list adventures and quirky attractions around Mount Rainier

Fall

Fall TPA Itinerary: The Pacific Northwest Starter Pack

Demand Generator: A crash course in Pacific Northwest culture, all in one county

Fall PC LTAC Itinerary: Three Feet High & Rising

Demand Generator: Family adventures from a kid's-eye view in the Mount Rainier foothills

Winter

Winter TPA Itinerary: Artsy and Festive (Artsy AF)

Demand Generator: Make, explore, and gift art all winter long in Tacoma and beyond

Winter PC LTAC Itinerary: The Rest Quest

Demand Generator: Cozy winter escapes with forest adventures and deep, dreamy sleep

Summer Events Calendar

Demand Generator: 120+ events taking place in just 10 weeks during the summer.

Holiday Events Calendar

Demand Generator: With a calendar filled with holiday happenings, there's something unique to do each day of the holiday season.

Using the most advanced geolocation data available to ascertain the kind of visitor who comes to Pierce County, Visit Tacoma-Pierce County has the capability to gain insight – via anonymized, aggregated data – to where people visit and how long they stay once they are in Pierce County. This rich data gives us the ability to determine who is visiting, from where, and for how long, which allows us to measure our marketing activities in terms of actual people who were reached and who were then inspired to visit and stay overnight in Pierce County. Additionally, it is invaluable in future planning for marketing, event, and venue development, and even for city planning.

Please be aware that if unforeseen circumstances arise and campaigns cannot go forward, unused funds will be returned to our funding partners.

Destination Awareness: Travel Writers and Influencers

Destination/brand awareness efforts lean heavily on Pierce County's unique geographic platform to pitch and host travel writers on a two-to-three-day urban-agriculture-small town-mountain itinerary, which includes both the natural assets, and the communities that thrive here.

We will continue to seek marketing partnerships with outdoors- and culinary-focused regional blogs and influencers. We prioritize those who are open to using trackable channels for overnights, such as discount codes or trackable URLs that will allow us to report on room nights delivered.

We will continue to pitch stories on Visit Tacoma-Pierce County's major 2026 itinerary campaigns to travel and lifestyle media and distribute press releases related to those itineraries.

Visitor Services

Business and hotel referrals – Visit Tacoma-Pierce County uses its digital (website, social channels, etc.) and physical (self-serve visitor center and walk-in visitor information center) to reach visitors and entice those visitors through the doors of Pierce County businesses that make the most sense for them and their visit. We will continue to increase the number of these referrals by optimizing our content and website structure. As of 2023, there are more than 140,000 local business listing views on traveltacoma.com.

Newsletters

Visit Tacoma-Pierce County continues to use proper GDPR appropriate methods to grow its opt-in database of future visitors and meeting planners to inspire and motivate overnight stays. We have thousands of recipients who have self-identified as having a travel interest in Pierce County and have opted into our various email newsletters.

Social Media

Visit Tacoma-Pierce County will continue to grow social followings through content development and advertising. The focus is on Facebook and Instagram, and by working with local tourism-facing businesses and organizations (hotels, museums, restaurants, tour operators, etc.) who are already creating outstanding, compelling visual content on their own, we are able to showcase that content on our channels to target it toward potential visitors from outside the region.

We also use our social media channels to promote Pierce County special events, offerings, and new and updated attractions, exhibitions, and any other news that could potentially impact visitation.

In addition, Visit Tacoma-Pierce County is working to create more searchable content on important platforms like Pinterest and YouTube.

Visitor Guides

We have transitioned production of the Visit Tacoma-Pierce County Visitor Guide in-house (renamed Destination Dispatch), and created an ad-free, visitor-first catalog. Designed to provide inspiration, rather than information, the purpose of the guide is to drive traffic from the printed and digital copies to Visit Tacoma-Pierce County's website, where more complete – and more updated – information is available.

Geolocation Data Partnership

The same geolocation tool Visit Tacoma-Pierce County uses for destination marketing has the potential to help cities and municipal LTACs in Pierce County better understand their own communities, visitation, and the impacts of local events better. These communities often do not have the resources to purchase such a service or dedicate time and specialized personnel to interpreting the data that it provides.

Recognizing the opportunity to help the cities and communities that have their own needs for reliable data on visitation, attendance, and movement of people, Visit Tacoma-Pierce County offers insights and analysis to its stakeholders and partner cities and their LTACs.

SPORTS

Key Strategies:

Event Development

Researches and develops bids for events that attract tourism and overnight hotel stays.

Develops relationships with NGBs that result in more events hosted in the region that impact Pierce County hotels and hospitality-related businesses.

Club Development

Increases host potential of sports clubs and organizations by working directly with club management to assist them in the development and/or expansion of their membership and programming.

Venue Development

Advocates, supports, and assists any municipality, district, enterprise fund, or private investors in the development of sports venues that increase the host potential of the region.

We are currently in steering/advisory roles for venue enhancement and new development for:

- Tacoma
- Pierce County Parks
- Puyallup
- Sumner
- DuPont
- Gig Harbor
- Lakewood
- Fife

Community Development

Implements strategic partnerships to enhance the host potential of our community.

Engages elected officials and government entities, as well as the media to leverage resources and educate on the value of sports tourism.

Event Services

Serves on Local Organizing Committees to fulfill all commitments made during the bidding process.

Enhances the visitor experience for competitors, attendees, fans, families, etc., with the end result being benefits to the tourism industry and the tax collections of the county.

STRUCTURE TO SUPPORT OUR TOP PRIORITIES

EXECUTIVE + ADMINISTRATIVE

- President + CEO
- Operations Manager

Strategic Administrative Partners:

- Contract: HR Services
- Contract: Finance and Billing
- Contract: IT Services

Priorities

- Financial and organizational stability; Board relations; community relations; partnership development; collaboration; alternative revenue generation

MARKETING

- Chief Marketing and Data Officer
- Marketing Content Manager

Strategic Marketing Partners

- Contract: Marketing content development support
- Contract: Website development, hosting, and maintenance
- Contract: Geolocation data services
- Contract: Geolocation marketing services
- Contract: Spending-based marketing services

Priorities

- Marketing to individual leisure travelers and events. This team serves as the production house for advertising and collateral for all markets.

SPORTS

- Director of Sports Development

Priorities

- Recruitment, development, and servicing of amateur sporting events

SALES AND SERVICING

- Director of Convention and Regional Sales and Services
- Senior Sales Manager
- Convention Center Sales Manager (2)

Priorities

- Generate economic impact through sales activities that provide a consistent return on investment for funders by delivering room nights and increasing spending throughout the Pierce County community.