

CAPITAL REGION USA

WASHINGTON, DC · MARYLAND · VIRGINIA

ANNUAL REPORT **FY21**

Washington, DC



Maryland



Virginia



CAPITAL REGION USA (CRUSA)

Is the official region destination marketing organization promoting **Washington, DC, Virginia** and **Maryland** internationally, in partnership with Destination DC, the Virginia Tourism Corporation, the Maryland Office of Tourism Development and the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority.

MISSION

More overseas travelers staying longer and spending more money.

Target Markets:



United Kingdom



Germany



France



China



India



Goal 1: FUNDING AND FINANCE



Ensure long-range funding stability for CRUSA marketing efforts on behalf of its partners. Achieve an annual budget of \$4 million, to include cash and in-kind investments from industry partners.

While international travel remained closed to the US for FY21, CRUSA continued to reduce expenses and as with many other destinations across the country, faced reduced funding. Despite these challenges, CRUSA achieved a budget of **\$1,238,812** including **\$107,146** in cash and in-kind investments from corporate sponsors, tour operator partners and suppliers across the region.

Funding	FY16*	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21
Primary Partner Income (Destination DC, Maryland Office of Tourism, Virginia Tourism Corporation, Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority)	\$2,000,000	\$2,150,000	\$1,600,000	\$1,600,000	\$1,600,000	\$1,036,666
Membership Income				\$116,720	\$243,967	\$95,000
Cash & In-kind Contributions	\$2,006,703	\$1,732,692	\$1,681,810	\$1,730,710	\$908,260	\$107,146
Total	\$4,006,703	\$3,882,692	\$3,281,810	\$3,447,430	\$2,752,227	\$1,238,812

**Primary Partner Income includes an additional \$400,000 from VTC for Air China marketing.*

Goal 1: FUNDING AND FINANCE



Allied and Affiliate Membership Program

In September 2018, CRUSA announced a new membership program, designed to encourage investment and participation in CRUSA's programs. Available to regional DMOs, attractions, hotels and other tourism entities, these memberships bundle CRUSA's most popular programs and opportunities and offer a chance for Allied Members to share input with our board as part of a new advisory committee.

In FY21, nine DMOs were part of the membership program: **Visit Annapolis**, **StayArlington**, **Charlottesville**, **Albemarle CVB**, **Visit Frederick**, **Visit Williamsburg** and **Visit Virginia Beach** as Allied members and **Visit Alexandria**, **Visit Fairfax** and **Visit Richmond** as Affiliate members.

Full details on the program are available at CRUSA.org.



Goal 2: MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS



Create and implement integrated marketing strategies that are innovative and “leading edge,” that advance the **CRUSA** brand and that attract funding.

CONSUMER MARKETING

CRUSA completed year 11 of its integrated marketing partnership with Miles, providing opportunities for industry participation in CRUSA’s print holiday guides, website advertising, email, search engine marketing and Brand USA opportunities. The program generated **\$93,146** in support from industry partners.

PRINT TRAVEL GUIDES

CRUSA’s overseas representatives in China, the United Kingdom, Germany and France distributed approximately **53,373** print holiday guides to travel trade, media and consumers. In addition, there were **872** downloads of the e-Guide across all languages.



Goal 2: MARKETING

Maintain a robust, interactive website that supports the brand and is CRUSA's primary marketing tool.



WEB MARKETING:

CRUSA's responsive website in seven languages engages visitors with immersive photography, videos and prominent calls to action.

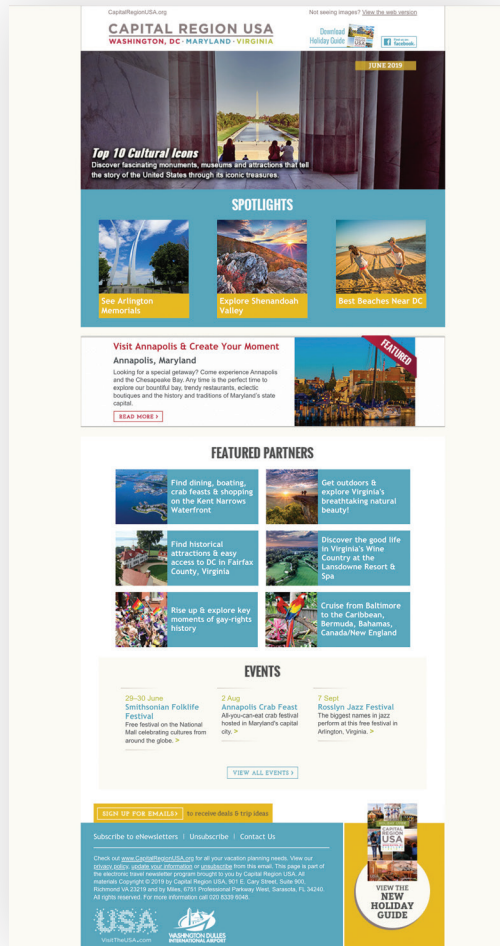
In FY21, CRUSA continued enhancing a content optimization strategy to boost ongoing digital marketing efforts. CRUSA focused on a customized content marketing approach (a smart balance of paid and organic traffic) to complement the traditional search engine marketing (paid traffic) campaigns. The goal was to incrementally improve organic performance and user engagement on the site — which is demonstrated in many of the following metrics:

- ▶ 109% increase in Deal views (80,051 total views)
- ▶ 4.4% increase in unique visitors to the site (469,016)
- ▶ 10.6% increase in overall sessions (686,704 sessions total)

Goal 2: MARKETING

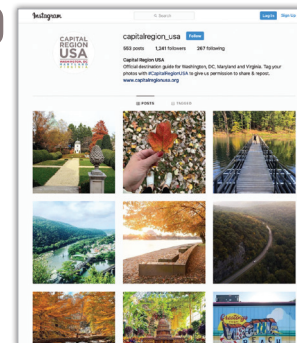
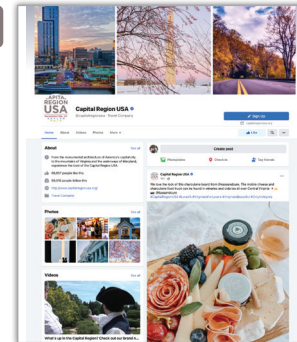


E-MAIL MARKETING



CRUSA delivered **76,090** e-newsletters in English, generating **36,028** opens and **4,911** clicks.

SOCIAL MEDIA:



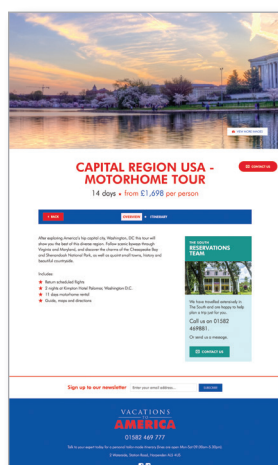
- Grew Facebook fan base by **2.4%** to **67,951** followers.
- Additionally, CRUSA's Facebook page reach increased by **158,825** (3.6K%) and Instagram reach by **132,035** (1.7K%).

- Grew Weibo fan base by nearly **8%** to **52,207** fans.
- Grew WeChat fan base by **32%** to **14,111** followers.

Goal 2: MARKETING

Partner with tour operators to develop cooperative marketing campaigns to reach the consumer and generate flights and room night bookings.

TOUR OPERATOR COOPERATIVE MARKETING



Due to ongoing travel restrictions to the US throughout the majority of 2021, CRUSA continued to pause any tour operator campaigns and instead focus on maintaining and growing relationships with overseas operators through regular calls and trainings. We assisted several operators in enhancing existing product and developing new product offerings. Highlights of CRUSA's efforts include:

- With the surge in popularity of RV travel during the pandemic, CRUSA worked with Vacations to America to develop the Great American Road Trip itinerary, giving UK travelers an opportunity to experience the wide-open spaces and scenic rural destinations in the region. The 14-day itinerary is being sold by Vacations to America, is featured on CRUSA's website, and has been pitched to media.

- CRUSA's US team and UK trade representative participated in the Virtual UNITE Visit USA event on March 23–24. The event brought together US based exhibitors with tour operators from the UK and Europe in pre-arranged 25-minute appointments to discuss contracts, rates, and marketing initiatives and the latest situation in their country/hotel. During the two-day event, CRUSA met with 40 tour operators.

- CRUSA's UK, Germany and France offices completed an update of their region's product inventory.

- CRUSA was a featured panelist for Visit USA Ireland & Irish Travel Trade Network (IITN) Return to America travel trade webinar.

Goal 2: MARKETING

Use media relations to generate at least \$17.5 million in earned media.

MEDIA RELATIONS

CRUSA achieved editorial coverage in print and electronic media outlets with an earned media value of **\$7.24** million.

CRUSA and its partners hosted two virtual fam tours for journalists from the UK, France and Germany. Thirty travel media from Germany and France experienced a wine, beer and spirits tour of the region while 21 travel journalists from the UK were treated to “An Evening of Crab Cracking, Oyster Shucking and Gin Cocktail Making.” Participating media received gift baskets prior to the events featuring products shared during the fam tours and were also treated to live demonstrations, educational insights from regional experts and updates on new offerings in the Capital Region.



Goal 2: MARKETING



Trade marketing efforts must provide an opportunity to deliver CRUSA brand messages to the consumer to drive room nights and increase length of stay.

TRADE MARKETING

CRUSA reps conducted 230 sales calls and 31 training seminars for 676 travel agents and tour operator sales and reservations staff members across the UK, France and Germany.

Sales missions remained paused this year due to international travel restrictions.

CRUSA participated in 13 international consumer and trade shows, including Brand USA Travel Week, Unite Visit UK and IMM Travmedia.



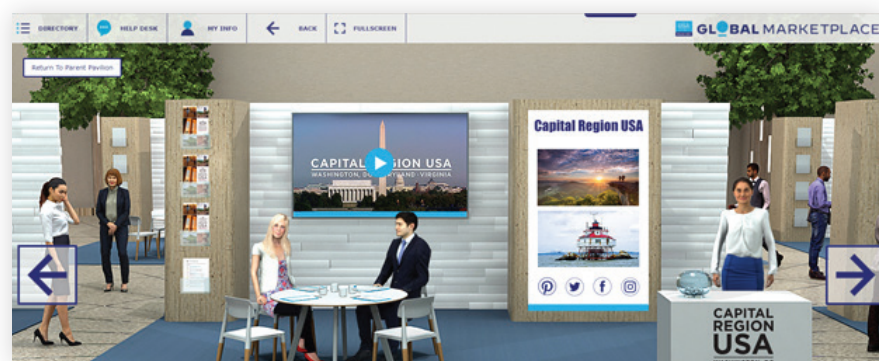
Goal 2: MARKETING

Work with Brand USA to ensure that CRUSA maximizes exposure across all relevant platforms.

BRAND USA GLOBAL MARKETPLACE

While Brand USA campaigns remained paused throughout FY21, Brand USA focused on their Global Marketplace — a custom-built, always-on, virtual platform that providing comprehensive access to US destinations, attractions and points of interest for the international travel industry. Brand USA hosted targeted events throughout the year on the platform to encourage the international travel community to engage with US destinations. These events included pre-scheduled meetings, enrichment opportunities and other educational events.

CRUSA participated in the following Global Marketplace events:



- Travel Week Europe 2020, a virtual event hosted in October. Our team met with 24 tour operators during the event.
- On March 15–18, CRUSA participated in one-to-one business meetings with 30 operators from the UK, France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and The Netherlands.
- On February 23, Brand USA hosted Focus on Germany to provide US partners with the latest insights and trends on Germany's post-pandemic travel mindset.
- On April 20–21, Brand USA hosted Focus on UK and Ireland, a virtual event aimed at providing US partners with relevant insights on the travel landscape as well as share updates on the US tourism industry with the UK and Irish travel trade community. Leads and key insights from these events were shared with CRUSA partners in our industry newsletters.



UNITED KINGDOM: JANUARY-APRIL 2020

- ▶ Full-page advertorial in The Time magazine (516,000 circulation; 1.3 million readership)
- ▶ Digital versions of the advertorial appeared on bespoke Brand USA hub (9,274 views) and The Telegraph iPad edition (6,864 views)
- ▶ Customized CRUSA Expedia landing page generated \$515,662 (2,488 room nights) in booked hotel revenue and \$271,779 (392 flights) in booked flight revenue
- ▶ Total campaign impressions: 4.49 million

Goal 3: RESEARCH

Strengthen research tools to (1) better understand our customer, (2) assess economic impact of overseas arrivals to region and (3) measure and evaluate marketing programs.

As restrictions continued to limit international travel in FY21 (329,000 overseas visitors came to the Capital Region), 2019 will be the benchmark for measuring the rebound of overseas visitation until fully recovered. 2019 data is presented here again for reference.

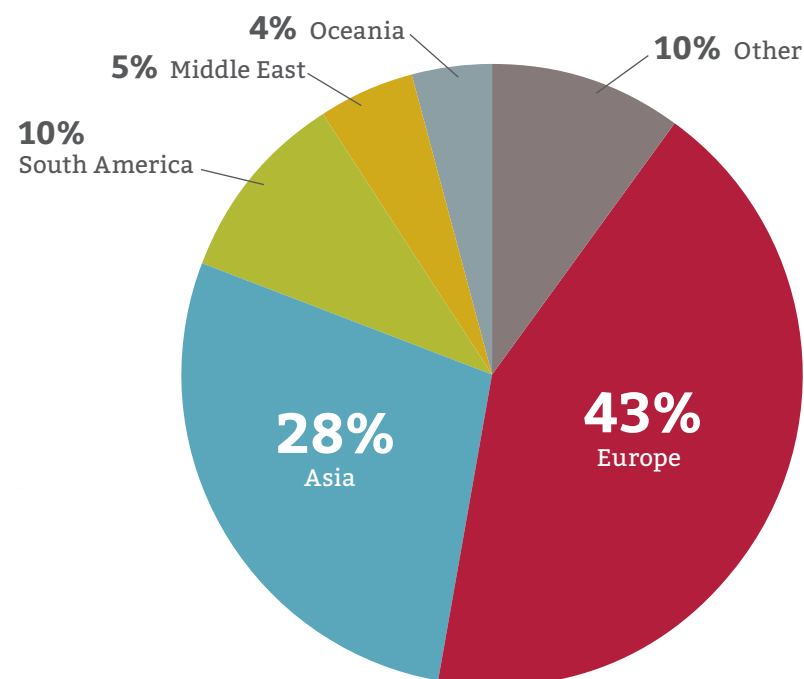
Overseas visitors stay longer and spend more money in the Capital Region than visitors from the USA. In 2019, 2.4 million overseas travelers visited the Capital Region, stayed an average of 9.4 nights and spent nearly \$5.2 billion on hotels, meals, shopping, attractions and other goods and services across Washington, DC, Maryland and Virginia.

2019 OVERSEAS ARRIVALS & RECEIPTS TO CRUSA

Country of Residence	Arrivals	Receipts
China	241,000	\$1,337,494,146
United Kingdom	259,000	\$330,229,969
Germany	176,000	\$228,240,926
France	115,000	\$165,382,854
South Korea	139,000	\$433,611,141
India	176,000	\$328,733,452
Total Overseas	2,403,000 (-1.2%)	5.2 billion (-3%)

Research reports on 2019 Overseas Arrivals to CRUSA may be obtained by contacting **Scott Balyo** at 540-450-7593 or scott@capitalregionusa.org.

2019 ARRIVALS BY WORLD REGION



CAPITAL REGION USA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



CAPITAL REGION USA
WASHINGTON, DC • MARYLAND • VIRGINIA

Virginia Tourism Corporation:

Rita McClenny,
President & CEO

Diane Bechamps,
Vice President, Marketing

Heidi Johannesen,
Global Marketing Director

Maryland Office of Tourism Development:

Liz Fitzsimmons,
Managing Director, Division of Tourism, Film & the Arts

Marci Ross,
Assistant Director

Rich Gilbert,
Travel Trade Sales Manager

Destination DC:

Elliott Ferguson,
President & CEO

Theresa Belpulsi,
Vice President, Tourism, Sports & Visitor Services

Robin McClain,
Senior Vice President, Marketing & Communications

Officers:

Chair,
Theresa Belpulsi

Vice Chair,
Heidi Johannesen

Secretary/Treasurer,
Liz Fitzsimmons

Capital Region USA, Inc.

PO Box 13352
Richmond, VA 23225
USA

Scott Balyo,
Executive Director
scott@capitalregionusa.org

Kimberly Petersen,
Marketing and Administrative Director
kimberly@capitalregionusa.org

Stacey Sheetz,
Marketing and Membership Director
stacey@capitalregionusa.org

Audited financial statements for Capital Region USA may be obtained by contacting
Scott Balyo at 540-450-7593 or scott@capitalregionusa.org.

CapitalRegionUSA.org