

Washington, DC



Maryland



Virginia



CAPITAL REGION USA

WASHINGTON, DC
MARYLAND
VIRGINIA

Annual Report 2023

About Capital Region USA

Capital Region USA (CRUSA) is the official regional 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.

Our Mission

More overseas travelers staying longer and spending more money.

Target Markets



United Kingdom



Germany



Ireland



Austria



France



Switzerland



Belgium



The Netherlands



Goal 1: Funding & 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.

In FY23, CRUSA achieved a budget of **\$1.76 million** including **\$131,804** in cash and in-kind investments from corporate sponsors, tour operator partners, and suppliers across the region.

Funding	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
Primary Partner Income (Destination DC, Maryland Office of Tourism Development, Virginia Tourism Corporation, Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority)	\$1,600,000	\$1,600,000	\$1,036,666	\$1,100,000	\$1,300,000
Additional Revenue (Membership Income, Global Travel Exchange, Sales Opportunities)	\$116,720	\$243,967	\$95,000	\$110,000	\$334,377
Cash & In-Kind Contributions	\$1,730,710	\$908,260	\$107,146	\$56,587	\$131,804
Total	\$3,447,430	\$2,752,227	\$1,238,812	\$1,266,587	\$1,766,181



Goal 1: Funding & 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 FY23, **eleven 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, Visit Harford, and Visit Richmond as Affiliate members.

Full details on the program are available at CRUSA.org



Goal 2: Marketing & 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 13 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. In Fy23, the program generated **\$117,000** in support from industry partners.

Print Travel Guides

CRUSA’s overseas representatives in the United Kingdom, Germany, and France distributed approximately **43,000** print holiday guides to travel trade, media, and consumers.



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 FY23, CRUSA completed a refresh of the Capital Region USA websites. Designed to improve user experience and engagement, updates included:

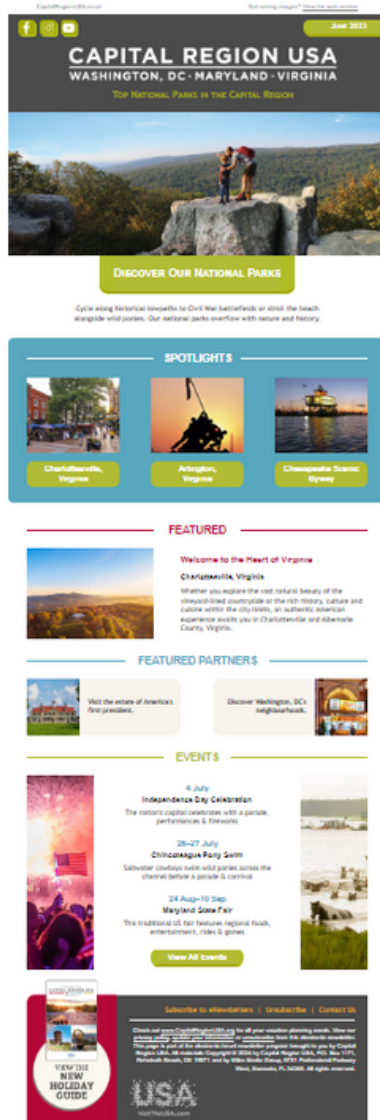
- Redesign of the homepage to include a large, animated hero image, scrolling map, prominent regional overviews, and more prominent callouts for our members.
- Site navigation was enhanced to allow access to all language options and the main menu across all pages of the site.
- Additional filters were added to the calendar of events, trip ideas, and itineraries allowing users to better search the best options for their visit.

Goal 2: Marketing

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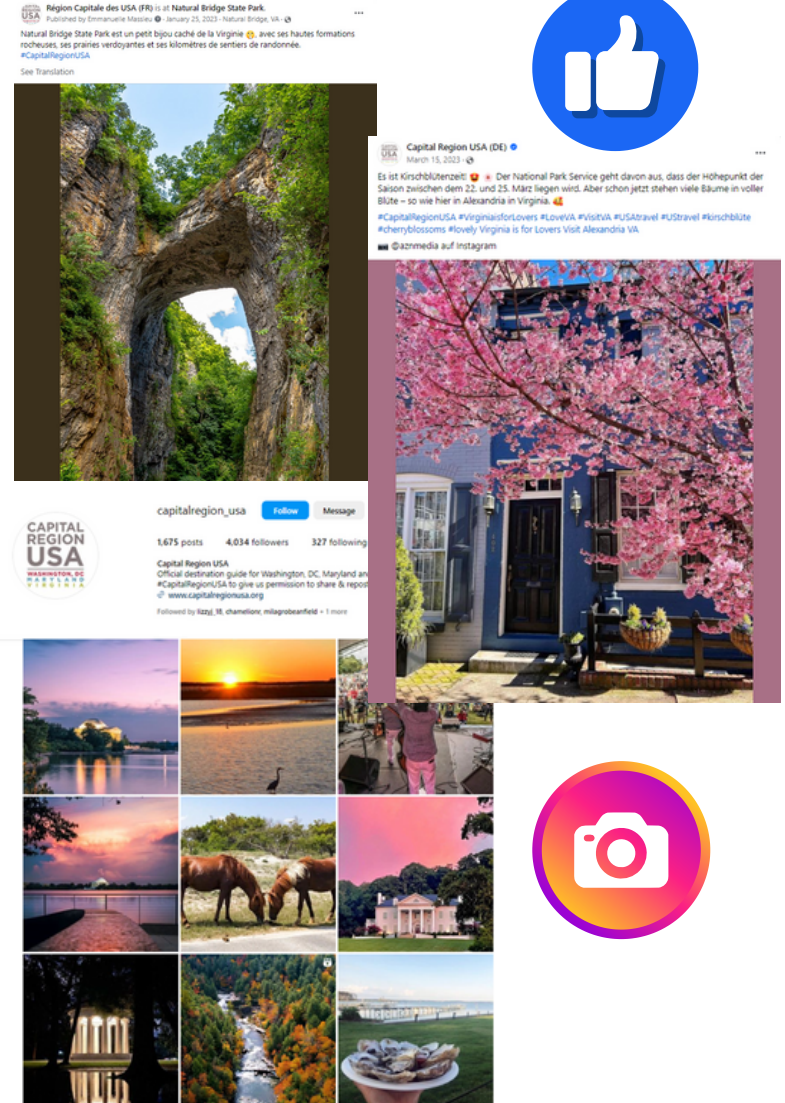
Email Marketing

CRUSA delivered **67,503** e-newsletters in English, generating **39,463** opens and **1,659** clicks.



Social Media

CRUSA's Facebook page reach increased by **60.6%**, content interactions were **up 2.5K%**, and link clicks increased by **337%**. CRUSA's Instagram saw an increase reach of **332%**.



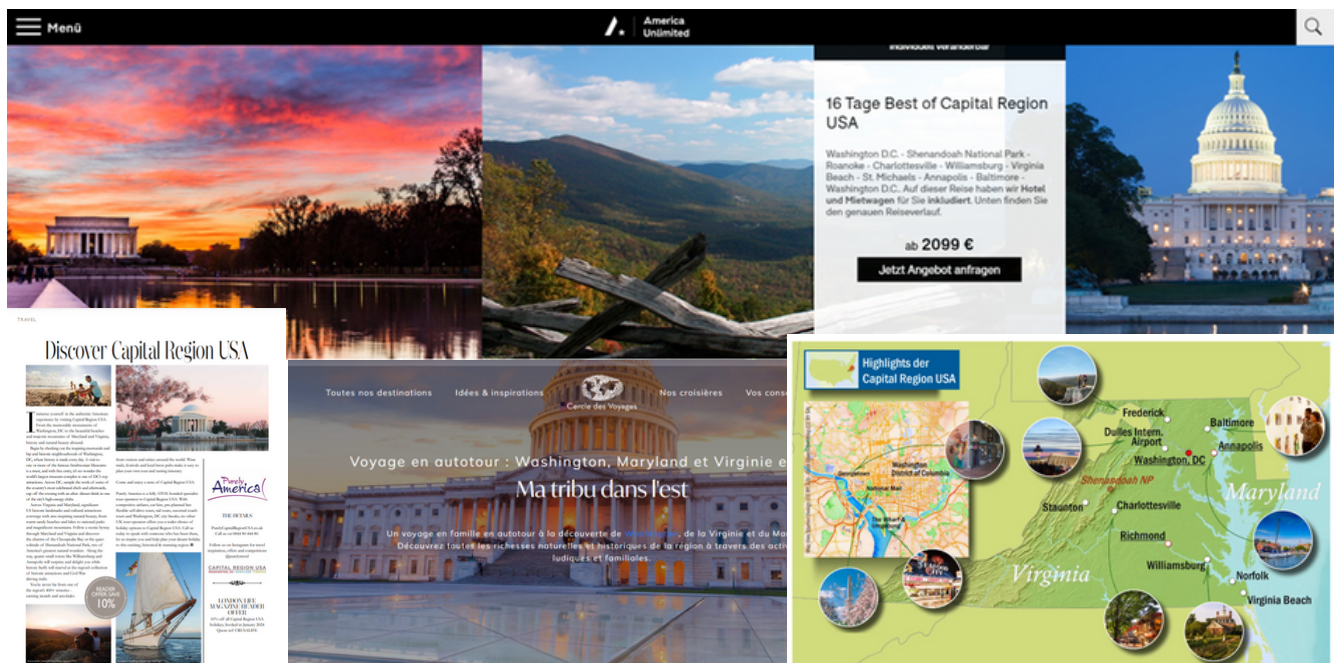
Goal 2: Marketing

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

Tour Operator Cooperative Marketing

CRUSA restarted its Tour Operator Cooperative Marketing program in FY23 with **five campaigns** (one in the UK, two in France, and two in Germany). CRUSA invested **\$35,000** in programs valued at **\$79,000**. The results included:

- CRUSA was the featured destination at a B2B event with French operator, Kuoni, for their top 15 travel agencies
- Cercle des Voyages created a new 12-night fly-drive itinerary focused on family travel
- Argus Reisen developed a new interactive map of the region for their consumer website
- America Unlimited created a new exclusive regional microsite
- The region received an advertorial in *London Life* magazines (70,000 copies over 12 titles)



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 **\$10.9 million**. CRUSA and its partners hosted **three group fam tours** for **nine journalists** from the UK, France, and Germany as well as **12 individual media visits**. CRUSA overseas office distributed **51 press releases**.

Séjour
Séjour Etats-Unis | 13 jours | Balade au
Cœur de Washington-DC, du Maryland et
de la Virginie

FIGARO VOYAGE SÉLECTION – Voyage dans la Région Capitale
avec la ville de Washington-DC et ses monuments
emblématiques, combinée aux Etats du Maryland et de la
Virginie. MARCO VASCO vous convie à parcourir ces Etats lors
d'un road trip en toute liberté, dès 1320€.



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 **227 sales calls** and **23 training seminars** for **339 travel agents** and tour operator sales and reservations staff members across the UK, France and Germany.

In addition to the **29 buyers** hosted on GTE fams, CRUSA hosted eight buyers on individual familiarization visits to the region.

CRUSA participated in **5 international consumer and trade shows**, including Brand USA Travel Week, Destinations Travel & Holiday Shows in Manchester and London, f.r.e.e. Munich, CMT Stuttgart and numerous Visit USA events.

CRUSA attended **IPW 2023** in San Antonio, Texas from May 20-24. Suppliers from around the region joined the CRUSA delegation, meeting with 140+ international buyers and travel trade professionals.

Six international missions were hosted in FY23 (three sales and three media missions in each market). Missions traveled to London, Scotland, Ireland, four cities in Germany, Austria, Belgium, France, and Switzerland. These missions generated **nearly 200 leads** for international media and travel specialists interested in the Capital Region.



Goal 2: Marketing

Global Travel Exchange

CRUSA's 2nd annual Global Travel Exchange (GTE) was hosted in Annapolis, Maryland. The event brought **more than 30 qualified overseas buyers** and US-based receptive operators to the Capital Region. These buyers participated in **more than 1300 appointments** with the **48 regional suppliers** who attended the event.



WASHINGTON, DC
MARYLAND
VIRGINIA



INTERNATIONAL
TRADE
ADMINISTRATION



Goal 2: Marketing

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

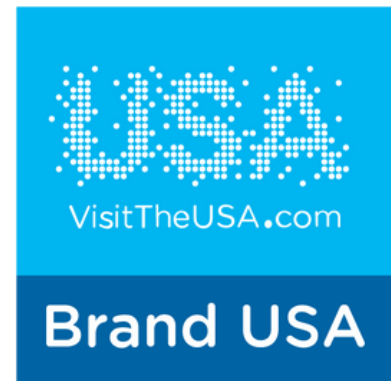
Brand USA Campaigns

UK Winter Multichannel Campaign

January-May 2023

RESULTS:

- 8.5 million impressions
- 13,260 clicks
- 2,575 room nights booked (\$689,619 Gross Hotel Bookings)
- 164 air tickets sold (\$195,218 Gross Air Bookings)
- **\$884,837 Total Bookings**



Brand USA Events

In September, CRUSA participated in Brand USA's Travel Week Europe hosted in Frankfurt, Germany.



Brand USA Talks Travel Features Scott Balyo

Scott Balyo was a featured guest on Brand USA's podcast. The topic of discussion was lessons learned from CRUSA's first Global Travel Exchange.

Goal 3: Research

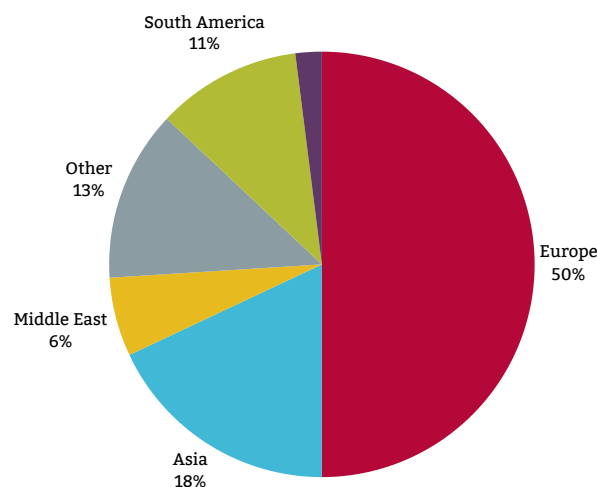
Strengthen research tools to (1) better understand our customer, (2) assess economic impact of overseas arrivals to region and (3) measure and evaluate marketing programs.

Overseas visitors stay longer and spend more money in the Capital Region than visitors from the USA. In 2022, **1.57 million** overseas travelers visited the Capital Region, stayed an average of **10.4 nights** and spent **\$6.2 billion** on hotels, meals, shopping, attractions and other goods and services across Washington, DC, Maryland and Virginia.

OVERSEAS ARRIVALS & RECEIPTS

Country of Residence	Arrivals	Receipts
United Kingdom	213,000	\$524,582,202
Germany	176,000	\$354,068,898
India	176,000	
France	115,000	\$225,432,554
China	241,000	
South Korea	139,000	
Brazil	77,000	\$174,095,172
The Netherlands	40,000	\$82,769,811
TOTALS	1,569,000	\$ 6,205,209,251

WORLD ARRIVALS BY REGION



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

Capital Region USA Board of Directors

Destination DC:

Elliott Ferguson,
President & CEO

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

Robin McClain,
Senior Vice President,
Marketing & Communications

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

Virginia Tourism Corporation:

Rita McClenny,
President & CEO

Diane Bechamps,
Vice President, Marketing

Heidi Johannesen,
Global Marketing Director

Officers:

Chair, Liz Fitzsimmons

Vice-Chair, Theresa Belpulsi

Treasurer, Heidi Johannesen

Audited financial statements
for Capital Region USA
may be obtained by contacting
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