

Washington, DC



Maryland



Virginia



CAPITAL REGION USA

WASHINGTON, DC
MARYLAND
VIRGINIA

Annual Report 2024

July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024





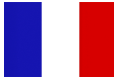



About Capital Region USA

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 | |

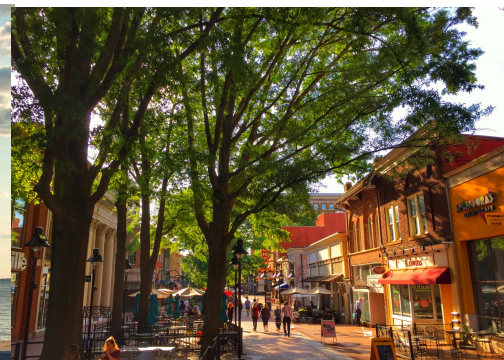


Goal 1: Funding & Finance

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 FY24, CRUSA achieved a budget of **\$3.25 million** including **\$935,098** in cash and in-kind investments from corporate sponsors, tour operator partners, and suppliers across the region.

Funding	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
Primary Partner Income (Destination DC, Maryland Office of Tourism Development, Virginia Tourism Corporation, Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority)	\$1,600,000	\$1,036,666	\$1,100,000	\$1,300,000	\$1,640,000
Additional Revenue (Membership Income, Global Travel Exchange, Sales Opportunities)	\$243,967	\$95,000	\$110,000	\$334,377	\$275,000
Cash & In-Kind Contributions	\$908,260	\$107,146	\$56,587	\$131,804	\$935,098
Total	\$2,752,227	\$1,238,812	\$1,266,587	\$1,766,181	\$3,250,098



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 FY24, **fourteen DMOs** were part of the membership program: Visit Annapolis, StayArlington, Visit Baltimore, Charlottesville & Albemarle CVB, Visit Frederick, Visit Virginia Beach, and Visit Williamsburg as Allied members and Visit Alexandria, Visit Fairfax, Visit Hagerstown & Washington County, Visit Harford, Visit Loudoun, Experience Prince George’s, and Visit Richmond as Affiliate members.

Full details on the program are available at CRUSA.org

Allied Members



Affiliate Members



Goal 2: Marketing & Public Relations

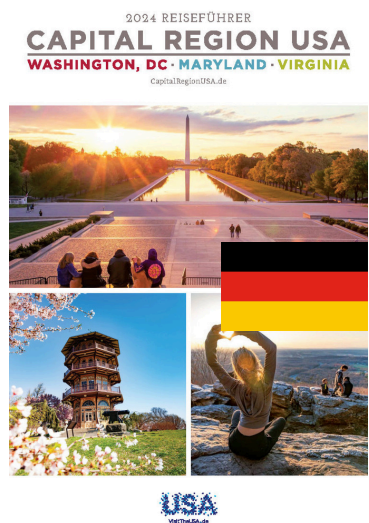
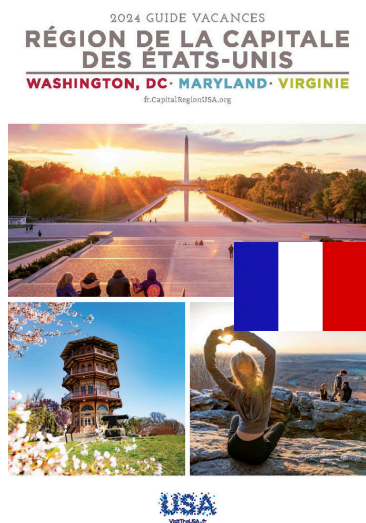
Create and implement integrated marketing strategies that are innovative and “leading edge,” that advance the CRUSA brand and that attract funding.

Consumer Marketing

CRUSA completed year 14 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 FY24, the program generated **\$196,463** in support from industry partners.

Print Travel Guides

CRUSA’s overseas representatives in the United Kingdom, Germany, and France distributed nearly **54,000** 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.



After a thorough audit, several updates were made to the site in FY24 including enhancing the homepage map to be more interactive, boosting UX and SEO with content updates, and adding keyword rich alt text to images. These enhancements are part of CRUSA's continued focus 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 effectiveness of this strategy can be seen in the following metrics:

Site Performance

- 511,000 Sessions
- 415,000 Unique Users
- 681,000 Pageviews
- 1:05 Engagement Time
- 39.76% Engagement Rate
- 1.34 Pageviews per session

Google Ads

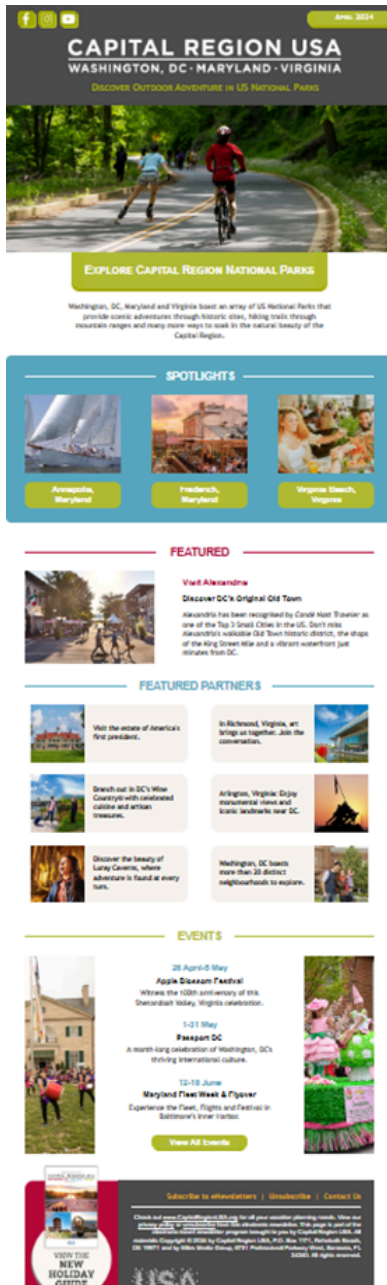
- 4.99 million impressions
- 185,162 clicks
- 3.71% CTR
- \$0.20 CPC
- 53,000+ conversions
- \$75,000 invested in SEM

Goal 2: Marketing

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

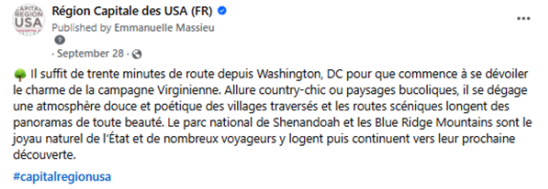
Email Marketing

CRUSA delivered **63,927** e-newsletters, generating **29,566** opens and **1,271** clicks.



Social Media

While the size of CRUSA's global audience remained relatively stable (up 1% YOY), **reach and content interaction increased dramatically** with reach up **290%** on average across Facebook and **35%** on Instagram. Link clicks were up **42%** on Facebook and content interactions increased by **36%**.



Goal 2: Marketing

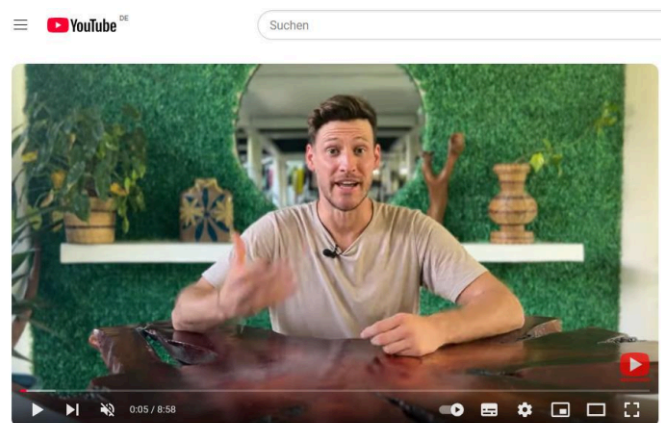
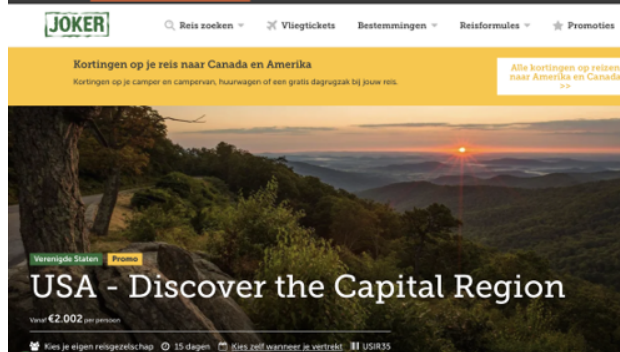
Partner with tour operators to develop cooperative marketing campaigns to reach the consumer and generate flights and room night bookings.

Tour Operator Cooperative Marketing

In FY24, CRUSA ran a total of **12 cooperative marketing campaigns** (three in the UK, three in France, and six in Germany). CRUSA invested **\$92,500** in programs valued at **\$185,400**. Campaign components included:

- o National press advertising
- o Newsletter placements and social media posts
- o Itineraries, blog posts, and special offers
- o Travel agent trainings and consumer events

As of December 2024, a few results are pending. Booking results to date have generated **8,246 room nights** (3,868 DC; 1,116 MD; and 1,643 VA).



Capital Region USA: Die besten Tipps für deine Reise



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 **\$9.8 million**. CRUSA and its partners hosted **26 journalists** from the UK (6), France (9), and Germany (11) on media visits to the region. CRUSA overseas offices distributed **43 press releases**.

Additionally, CRUSA hosted **three media missions** generating **71 leads**.

Market	Dates	Countries/Cities Visited	Participants
German	Jan 29 – Feb 2	Germany & Switzerland	Destination DC, Maryland, Virginia Beach
UK/Ireland	Feb 19-23	London, Dublin	VTC, Charlottesville, Virginia Beach, Baltimore, Frederick
France/Belgium	Jun 3-7	Paris, Brussels	Destination DC, Maryland, Virginia Beach

Voyage aux États-Unis : et pourquoi pas Washington ?

Publié le 01 octobre 2023 à 13h30



Photo d'illustration - ©Joecho-16/iStock

SAUVEGARDER

Il n'y a pas que New York à visiter sur la côte est ! Épatante et verdoyante, on s'emballe pour D.C et ses environs.

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 **219 sales calls** and **37 training seminars** for **356 travel agents** and tour operator sales and reservations staff members across CRUSA's markets.

In addition to the **26 buyers** hosted on GTE fams, CRUSA hosted **61 buyers** on individual and group familiarization visits to the region.

CRUSA participated in **11 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, Vakantiebeurs in The Netherlands, and numerous Visit USA events.

CRUSA attended **IPW 2024** in Los Angeles, California from May 4-7. Suppliers from around the region joined the CRUSA delegation, meeting with **160+ international buyers** and travel trade professionals.

Three international sales missions were hosted in FY24. These missions generated **nearly 200 leads** for international media and travel specialists interested in the Capital Region.

Market	Dates	Countries/ Cities Visited	Participants
French	Dec 11-15	France, Belgium, The Netherlands	Destination DC, Virginia Beach, MWAA
UK	March 11-15	London, Scotland	Destination DC, Baltimore, Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax, Virginia Beach
German	April 15-19	Germany, Switzerland	Destination DC, Frederick, Fairfax, Richmond, Virginia Beach



Goal 2: Marketing

Global Travel Exchange

CRUSA's **2nd annual Global Travel Exchange (GTE)** was hosted September 18-20, 2024 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.



Goal 2: Marketing

Work with Brand USA to ensure that CRUSA maximizes exposure.

Brand USA Optimized Audience Campaigns

UK Winter

January-March 2024

RESULTS:

- 5.5 million impressions
- 3,791 clicks
- 4,456 room nights booked (\$1,095,834 attributable bookings)
- 441 air tickets sold (\$428,786 attributable bookings)
- **\$1,524,620 Total Bookings**
- View full campaign results [here](#).



Germany Winter

February-April 2024

RESULTS:

- 7.1 million impressions
- 7,151 total clicks
- 775 room nights booked (\$169,701 attributable bookings)
- 65 air tickets sold (\$58,910 attributable bookings)
- **\$228,610 Total Bookings**
- View full campaign results [here](#).

France Spring

March-May 2024

RESULTS:

- 7.56 million impressions
- 6,643 completed clicks
- 356 room nights booked (\$96,485 attributable bookings)
- 50 air tickets sold (\$42,089 attributable bookings)
- **\$138,575 Total Bookings**
- View full campaign results [here](#).

The Telegraph

December 2023-April 2024

The Telegraph has a total reach of 16.1 million, including 2.7 million monthly print readers. The print and digital campaign resulted in:

- 9.4 million impressions
- 18,017 total clicks
- 419,675 video completions

View the [Food Lover's Guide to Capital Region USA](#) and [Capital pleasures: Historic cities and neighbourhoods to explore in the Capital Region USA](#)

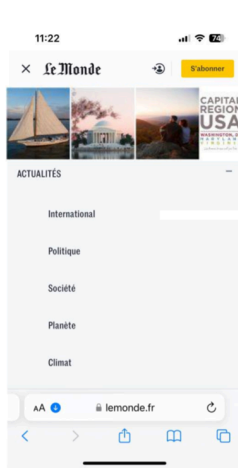


Goal 2: Marketing

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

Consumer Marketing

amadeus



Campaign Details

Duration: 18 December - 29 February
Markets: UK, Germany, France, Mexico
Budget: \$120,000
KPI: Geo-location conversions

Results

Impressions: 20,257,426
Clicks: 187,846
Geo-location conversions: 4,572
CPC: \$0.64
CPA: \$26.25

[View full campaign results.](#)

hotelbeds



Campaign Details

Duration: 1 February - 31 May
Markets: UK, Germany, France
Budget: \$50,000
KPI: Bookings

Results

Room Nights Booked: 7,288
(33% increase YOY)
Room Night Revenue: \$1,463,873
(35% increase YOY)

[View full campaign results.](#)

Goal 3: Research

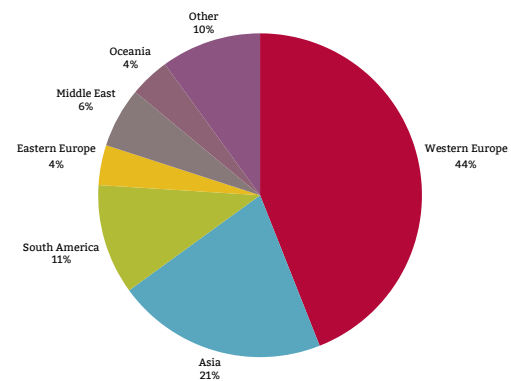
Strengthen research tools to (1) better understand our customer, (2) assess economic impact of overseas arrivals to region and (3) measure and evaluate marketing programs.

In 2023, **2.04 million** overseas travelers visited the Capital Region (31% increase over 2022), stayed an average of **8 nights** and spent **\$8 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	242,000	\$600,116,461
Germany	145,000	\$332,808,789
India	174,000	\$1,678,886,627
France	105,000	\$261,926,597
China	88,000	Not reported
South Korea	47,000	Not reported
Brazil	79,000	Not reported
The Netherlands	61,000	Not reported
TOTALS	2,042,000	\$8,028,751,160

WORLD ARRIVALS BY REGION



Research reports on 2023 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,
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Rich Gilbert,
Travel Trade Sales Manager

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Heidi Johannesen,
Director, Global Marketing
and Media Relations

Officers:

Chair, Liz Fitzsimmons

Vice-Chair, Theresa Belpulsi

Treasurer, Heidi Johannesen

Audited financial statements
for Capital Region USA
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