

ANNUAL
**MARKETING
& SALES PLAN**
FY2023





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A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Still here. Still persevering.

Like any great call to action like “Clear eyes, strong hearts, can’t lose,” from Friday Night Lights or “Yes, we can,” a line called out by former President Barack Obama on the campaign trail, it’s important to know your battle cry.

In Washington, DC there has been a perceptible shift from a sense of holding on and trudging through the pandemic to doing the work like we used to, in person and with a sustained budget that helps support our marketing and sales efforts.

It feels good to be on the other side. We don’t take it for granted and are growing back smart and solidly applying the lessons learned from the past three years.

It’s so important to remember our local hospitality industry is not fully recovered. After finishing our first solid recovery year in FY2022, the temptation might be to take our success for granted, approach the work exactly like we used to and just breathe easier.

That is not in the nature of me or anyone at Destination DC (DDC) and after 21 years in this market, I know our stakeholders also expect more.

In FY2023, it is DDC’s mission to continue fighting for recovery. Even with the positive indicators that domestic and group visitation has improved since the pandemic, we focus on how to compete for the visitors who haven’t returned, international and individual-business travelers. Projections are that these groups won’t fully return to the U.S. until 2025.

How do we best position ourselves? How do we compete for market dollars? How do we ensure that we create the consistent economic impact for the District that helped sustain the market pre-pandemic?

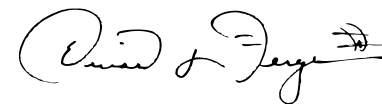
Fundamentally, it means DDC has to have a competitive budget. It’s why we’re working towards creating a Tourism Recovery District (TRD) assessment of 1% at DC-based hotels over the next 3-4 years. Adding the approximately \$20.7 million to DDC’s annual budget through the TRD means we can

aggressively apply those dollars. That budget influx would be the foundation to our post-pandemic strategy to win more overseas visitors, more meetings business, a wider range of domestic visitors and business travelers.

As we celebrate the highest advertising ROI we’ve ever seen in the history of the study at a \$3.08 return on every dollar spent on our advertising in FY2022 (see page 8), we immediately consider how we can extend that kind of economic impact for the full and bountiful recovery of our nation’s capital.

We are still here and still persevering on behalf of you.

Sincerely,



Elliott L. Ferguson, II
President & CEO
Destination DC





ABOUT DESTINATION DC

VISION

Destination DC (DDC) will utilize its increasingly strong presence in the global marketplace to attract visitors from around the world to the nation's capital. As an economic development organization for Washington, DC, DDC's goal is to generate visitor spending and support local jobs through the continued development and execution of integrated marketing, communications and sales initiatives. As a sustaining community partner in the District of Columbia, DDC embraces the values of diversity, equity and inclusion as it welcomes all visitors to the city.

MISSION

As the official destination marketing organization for Washington, DC, DDC's mission is to promote the nation's capital as a premier destination for business, convention, tradeshow, meeting and leisure travel. In doing so, we aim to create an economic impact that creates new jobs and benefits the District's local economy and community.

BUDGET

DDC's programs and operations are funded by a combination of hotel tax revenue, membership dues and sponsorships. The FY2023 working budget is \$25.1 million, up 23 percent over the FY2022 budget of \$20.4 million. DDC's FY2023 hotel tax collection is expected to reach close to FY2019 pre-pandemic levels.

REPRESENT ALL DC TRAVEL AND TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS

DDC will represent and unite the tourism stakeholders in the city, including hotels and other accommodation providers, restaurants, attractions, tour operators, destination management companies, entertainment venues, event managers, caterers, transportation companies, retail outlets, local and national governments, Capital One Arena, Nationals Park, Audi Field, RFK Campus, St. Elizabeths Campus, the Entertainment and Sports Arena and the Walter E. Washington Convention Center.

DDC will represent stakeholders with the following principles in mind:

- 1. Spread the Word:** Create a narrative that increases positive awareness and demand for travel to the nation's capital.
- 2. Maintain Leadership:** Continue to influence product development, redevelopment and infrastructure improvements that impact DDC's mission and DC's image.
- 3. Maximize Limited Resources:** Creatively and efficiently utilize budget and staff to achieve mission and vision. Quantifiable goals will be applied to measure effectiveness and direct resources. Every program contributes to generating visitor spending in the city.
- 4. Be Inclusive:** Leverage the expertise of all member organizations to promote the city to expanding visitor markets; build relationships with groups in support of the tourism economy.
- 5. Develop Advocates:** Build community-wide support for tourism and DDC, particularly among residents, industry experts and city government officials.



SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

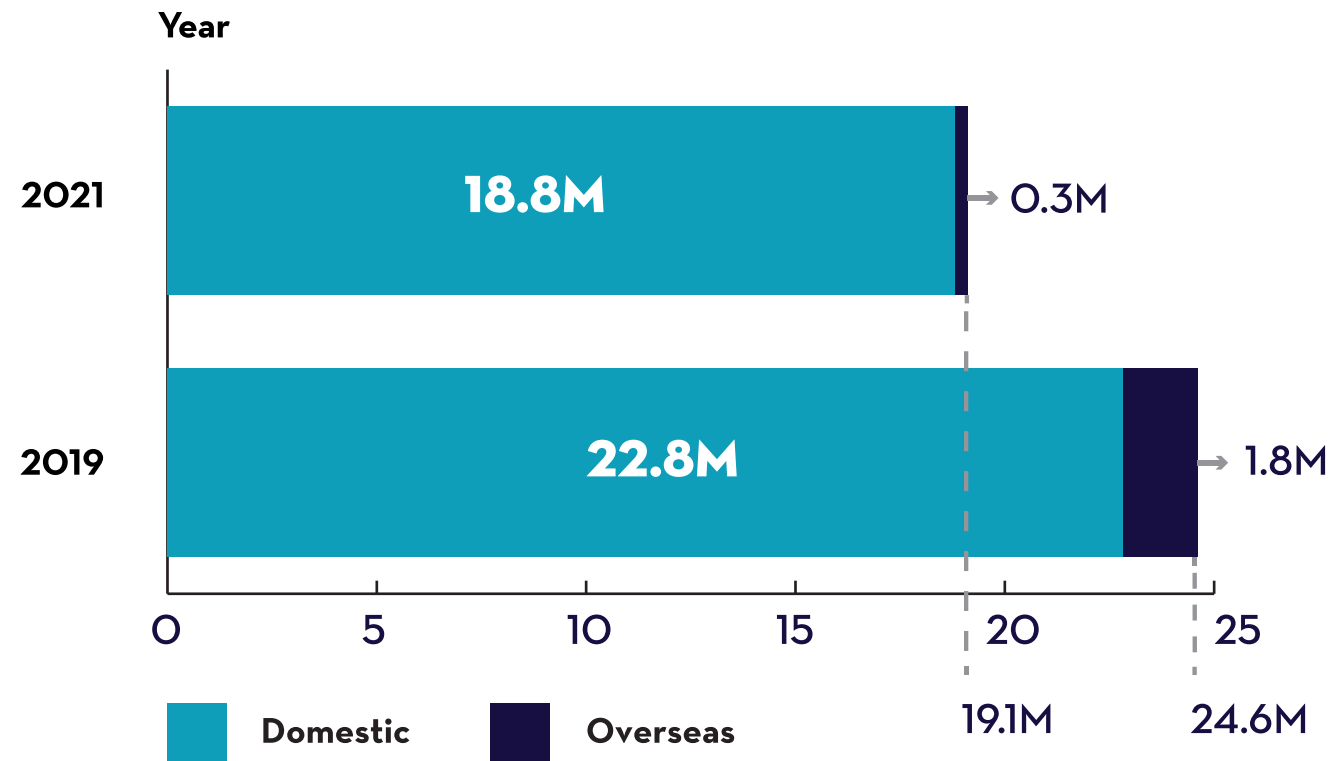
Tourism recovery is ongoing through FY2025, based on a variety of factors including:

- Covid-19 variants and country-specific restrictions
- Recovery of international visitation and individual business travel
- Visa policies and wait times
- Global wars/unrest
- Inflation, gas prices and other volatility in the domestic market
- Exchange rates/strength of the U.S. dollar
- DDC's efforts to implement dedicated funding via a Tourism Recovery District

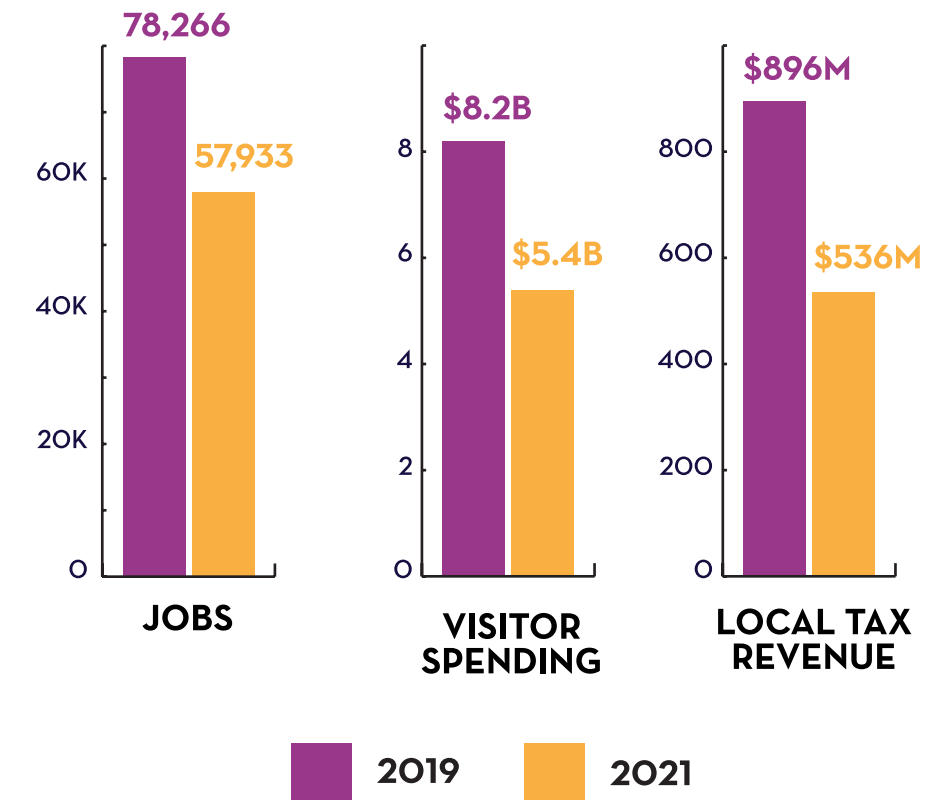
As DDC works to market the city during FY2025, the organization's ability to adapt its recovery efforts and to be flexible in leveraging evolving consumer sentiment will determine its success.

VISITOR IMPACT 2019 VS. 2021

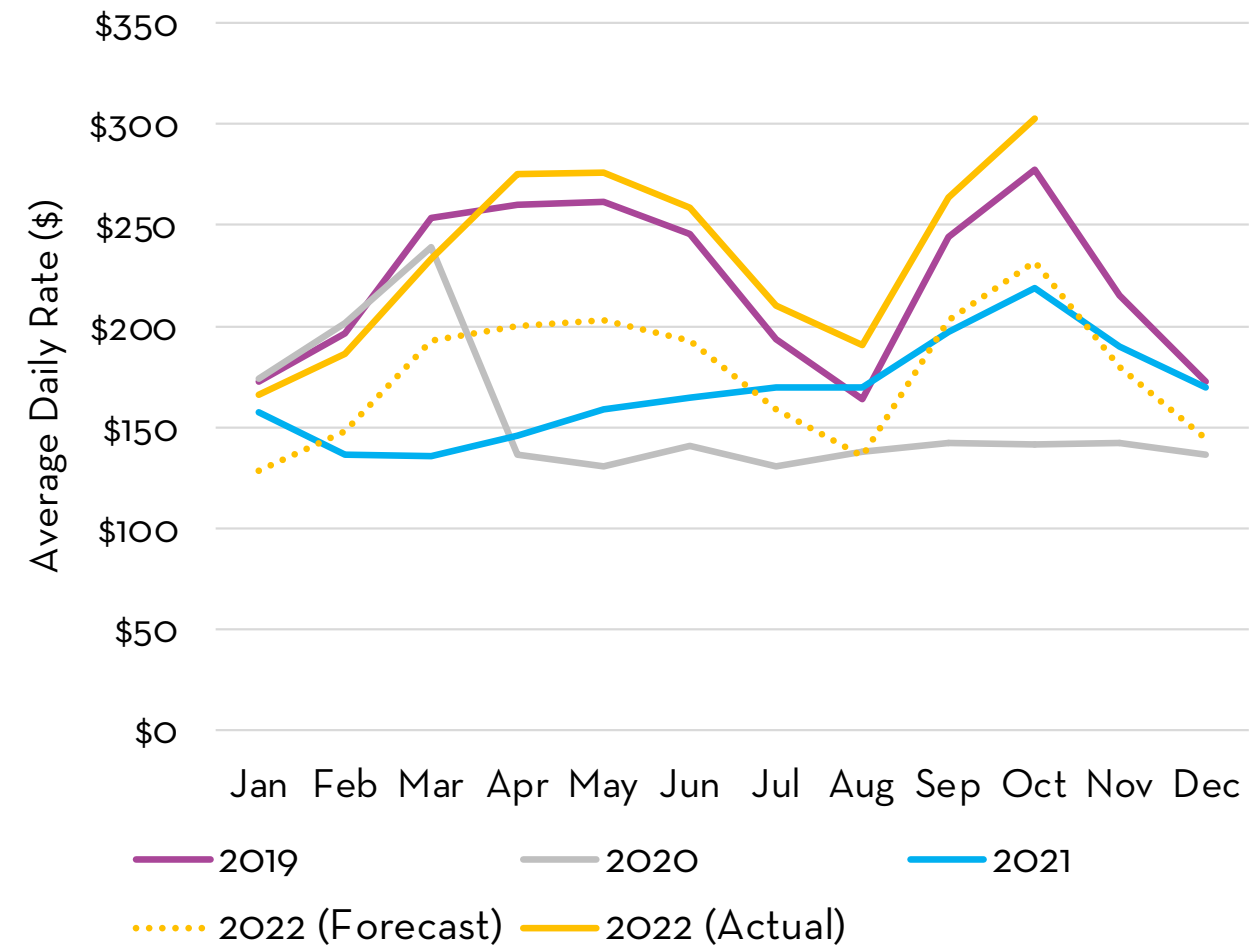
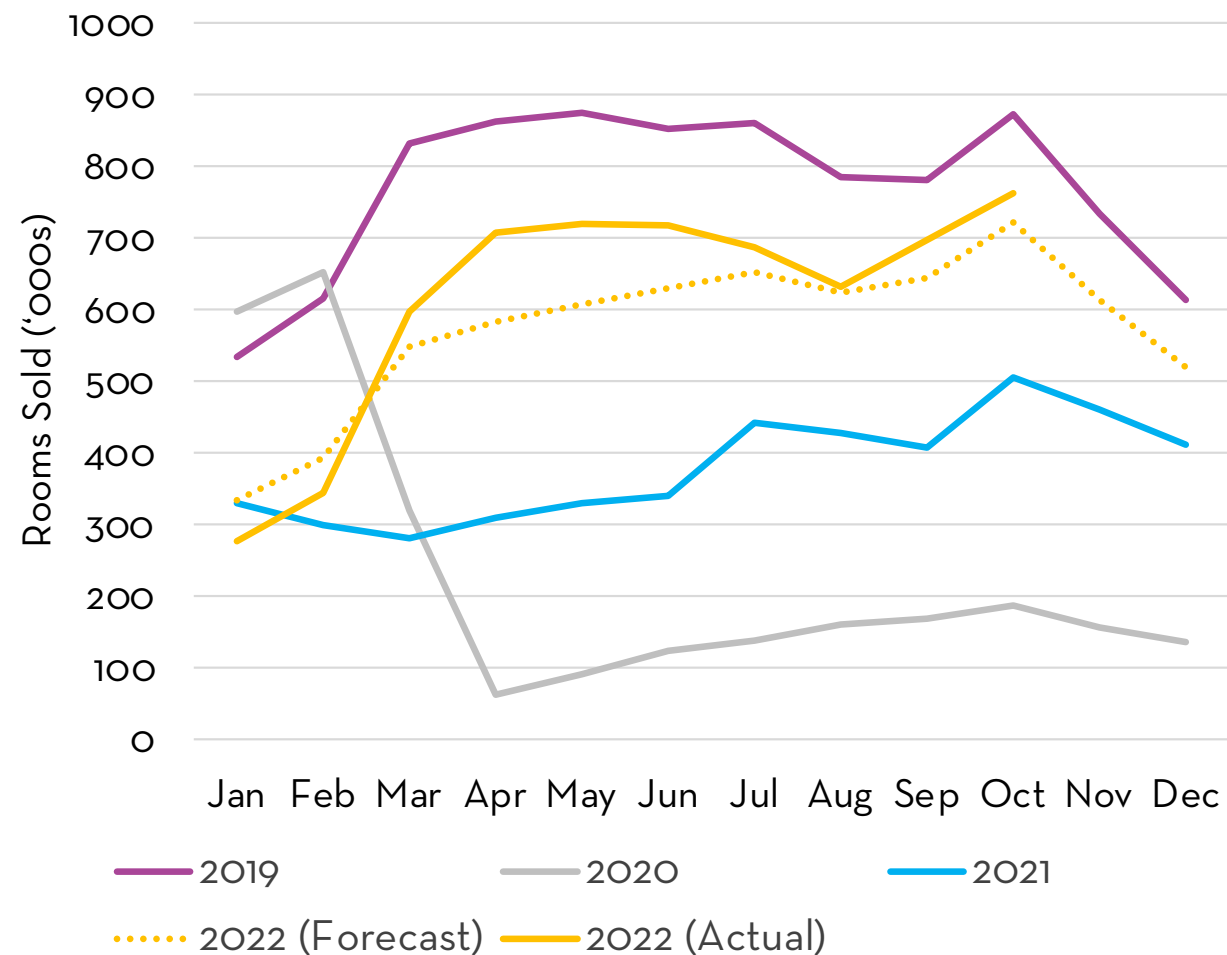
TOTAL VISITORS (MILLIONS)



VISITORS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR



HOTEL PERFORMANCE FORECAST



2022 RETURN ON INVESTMENT RESULTS

\$4.25M

Advertising Campaign
(April-September 2022)



\$175.1M

Total Incremental Visitor
Spending Generated*



\$13.1M

Total Tax Revenue
Generated



\$41.21

in visitor spending for
every \$1 spent on the campaign



\$3.08

in taxes for every \$1
spent on the campaign

In 2022, DDC ran a **\$4.25 million** advertising campaign from April to September. For every dollar invested in this campaign, **\$41.21** was spent by visitors to Washington, DC.

For every dollar invested in this campaign, a record-breaking **\$3.08** was returned to Washington, DC.



WHAT'S NEW IN WASHINGTON, DC

HOTELS

RECENTLY OPENED



SALAMANDER WASHINGTON, DC *(September 2022)*

Middleburg, Virginia-based Salamander Hotels & Resorts has taken over the 373-room Mandarin Oriental, Washington D.C. in Southwest. Within distance of iconic monuments and museums, the luxury property includes grand ballrooms, fully equipped meeting rooms and a beautiful garden.



CITIZENM WASHINGTON DC NOMA *(September 2022)*

Situated near the metro and Union Market, the 292-room property is the city's second citizenM hotel. It has a ground floor restaurant and bar, meeting space and fitness center.



SELINA *(June 2022)*

The DC property is designed in partnership with local artists, creators and tastemakers. Located in NoMa, Selina features 106 guest rooms and offers curated local experiences.



WALDORF ASTORIA WASHINGTON, DC *(June 2022)*

Located on Pennsylvania Avenue, DC's first Waldorf Astoria features 263 rooms and suites. Inspired by the legacy of the Old Post Office, the bespoke hotel offers a variety of grand and intimate event spaces, a 10,000-square-foot spa and a restaurant by José Andrés called Bazaar opening in 2023.



AC HOTEL WASHINGTON DC CAPITOL HILL NAVY YARD *(February 2022)*

The 225-room property is situated between DC's Capitol Hill neighborhood, Navy Yard and the National Mall. The modern hotel features many guest rooms with two queen beds, private balconies and Capitol views. There's a 10,000-square-foot fitness center, flexible meeting and light-filled event spaces and a large rooftop restaurant and bar named Smoke & Mirrors.



COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT WASHINGTON DC DUPONT CIRCLE *(January 2022)*

The renovated Courtyard by Marriott features a contemporary design in historic Dupont Circle a few blocks from the National Geographic Museum. The 143-room property includes a 24-hour fitness center and light-filled guest rooms with views of St. Matthew's Basilica. The lobby has two dining options, check-in pods and private booths equipped with built-in monitors.

HOTELS

RECENTLY OPENED

HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS WASHINGTON DC DOWNTOWN *(November 2022)*

Close to the Walter E. Washington Convention Center and Capital One Arena, the 14-story hotel features 247 contemporary guest rooms, a 24-hour fitness center and a complimentary hot breakfast bar. Top-level meeting space offers views of the U.S. Capitol.

PENDRY WASHINGTON DC - THE WHARF *(November 2022)*

Featuring curated collections of art and local craftsmanship, the multi-faceted property has 131 guestrooms and includes 34 suites. It hosts three signature dining and bar concepts, the state-of-the-art Spa Pendry and 5,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor event and meeting space.

THE MORROW HOTEL WASHINGTON, DC CURIO COLLECTION BY HILTON *(Winter 2023)*

The 203-room hotel is in The Morrow at Central Armature Works, a redeveloped site in NoMa next to the NoMa/Gallaudet Metro station. The hotel anticipates a LEED Silver certification and has indoor and outdoor event space and three food and beverage outlets from local Michelin-starred chef Nick Stefanelli.

THE ROYAL SONESTA CAPITOL HILL *(Spring 2023)*

Close to Capitol Hill and the National Mall, the LEED Gold Certified Royal Sonesta has 274 guest rooms, 16 suites, a state-of-the-art fitness center and ample meeting and event space. Sustainable features include a green roof with drought-resistant plantings.

MOB HOTEL *(2023)*

A stylish Paris-based chain anchored by designer Philippe Starck is expected to open its first of five planned North American hotels in DC. The brand embraces neighborhood culture and hosts art talks and concerts. The hotel has 144 rooms and rooftop views of the U.S. Capitol along with live music, a restaurant, bar and cinema.

HOTELS

OPENING SOON



SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM *(Reopened Fall 2022)*

After an extensive renovation, one of the world's most visited museums has unveiled its transformed self to dazzled audiences. Eight new and refined galleries await visitors, including displays such as America by Air, Destination Moon, Early Flight and Nation of Speed.



RUBELL MUSEUM *(Opened Fall 2022)*

The Rubells' second museum draws from the family's extensive collection of contemporary sculptures, paintings, photographs and videos. The 32,000-square-foot space also offers activation spaces, a bookstore and a café with indoor and outdoor dining.



MUSEUM OF ILLUSIONS *(Opened Winter 2022)*

The sensation that has already swept more than 30 major cities has touched down in the District. Visitors can learn how the human brain works and sharpen their perception while immersed in trickery.



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WOMEN IN THE ARTS *(Reopening Fall 2023)*

The only museum solely dedicated to highlighting women artists will reopen its doors with improved interior and exterior spaces, new mechanical systems, enhanced amenities and accessibility, enlarged gallery space and additional research and education space.

NEW & RENOVATED MUSEUMS



MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

The marketing and communications team promotes the Washington, DC brand domestically and internationally through all earned, paid and owned channels.

Why it matters: Generating positive buzz about DC inspires overnight business and leisure visitation to the District and creates demand for meetings and conventions.



EXPERIENCE DC: ADVERTISING TO CONTINUE THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

Why it matters: The Experience DC advertising campaign helps generate economic impact by bringing visitors back to Washington, DC. (\$3.08 return for every \$1 spent on ads)
The placements include custom content, dynamic digital, streaming audio and video and out-of-home.

WHO WE REACH:

- Five audiences whose interests cover family activities, history, local culture, dining and sports
- Three target geographic markets: locals, consumers within a four-hour drive and a broader national audience of consumers who show travel intent
- Additional buy aimed at Black, Latinx and LGBTQ+ travelers

TWO KEY CHANGES IN FY2023:

- DDC is advertising consistently throughout the year based on budget and the current opportunity to capture travelers
- Media will be added to specifically target “bleisure” travelers, visitors who combine business and leisure travel, with the goal for them to extend a work trip because of exciting things to do in Washington, DC





CAMPAIGN CREATIVE EVOLUTION

DDC's Experience DC campaign creative has evolved based on findings from a research study conducted with Destination Analysts in summer 2021.

First, a simple, concise call to action: "Experience DC." Next, a play on capital that speaks directly to target audiences: "The Capital of Cheering Crowds" targets sports fanatics, while "The Capital of Family Fun" engages parents.

Experience DC is designed as a call to action in digital placements, and we've played up brand colors of purple and teal for a fun pop of color.





COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The communications team is enticing journalists to visit and write about Washington, DC beyond pre-pandemic levels.

WHY IT MATTERS:

Consumers reading positive travel stories get curious about visiting or meeting in DC. Stories complement advertising messages and generate more exposure for member businesses. Locals and stakeholders understand the economic value of bringing visitors to the city.

WHO WE REACH:

Journalists for local, domestic, international, travel trade, meetings trade and niche outlets.

WHAT'S NEXT:

Major pitch opportunities generate interest, including:

- **Infrastructure:** Silver Line expansion, airport renovations and Union Station improvements
- **New Development:** Wharf Phase 2, Capitol Crossing, City Ridge Complex
- **Arts & Culture:** National Air and Space Museum reopening, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden redevelopment, East Building of National Gallery of Art reopening, Native American Veterans Memorial dedication
- **Outdoors:** From rooftops to waterfronts to the neighborhood parks and National Mall
- **Free Things to Do:** No other destination allows entry to so many museums for free, which is important given inflation and the strength of the dollar.
- **Dining & Nightlife:** Celebrity chefs; Michelin-reviewed, local spots
- **Sustainability:** Trending topic for leisure and meetings
- **Civil Rights and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** Black Lives Matter Plaza, protest tourism, supporting Black-owned and minority-owned local businesses, new 51 Steps to Freedom trail
- **New and Renovated Hotels and Venues:** 26+ hotels in the pipeline
- **Sports & Live Events:** MLS All-Star Week, cultural and music festivals

CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY

Why it matters: The content team is an authority on visiting Washington, DC. Consumers are inspired to travel through [washington.org](https://www.washington.org), official visitor publications, email marketing and social media.

CAPITALIZE ON ENGAGING CONTENT

From media-rich articles to mapping components to videos to event listings, [washington.org](https://www.washington.org) provides users with a wide-range of inspirational content.

WHAT'S NEXT:

- More ambient video headers across the website
- Comprehensive coverage of major exhibitions and experiences
- Data-led strategy to inform future content priorities
- Themes include:
 - FREE things to do, as consumers seek value-driven travel amid a possible recession
 - Authentic ways to Experience DC and differentiate the city from competing destinations (highlighting neighborhoods, events, museums, attractions and more)

PERSONALIZATION & AUDIENCE INTEL

Personalization provides site visitors with relevant content and drives users to take actions, including visiting member websites, signing up for newsletters and visiting key pages.

WHAT'S NEXT:

- Pilot a website concierge that will connect trip planners to future seasonal content for when they visit
- Use surveys and feedback, plus Google Analytics, to understand the content our web visitors and email audiences are seeking
- Addressing the removal of third-party cookies from web browsers, DDC plans to capture more first-party data via newsletter signups, visitor guide requests, webforms and personalization
- Increase brand engagement by launching a new customer data platform (with CRM integration) to assist in paid media and remarketing strategies

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

DDC embraces DEI, sustainability and accessibility. Creating more sustainability content throughout email and web is a priority. The team will also develop additional content to support underserved audiences, celebrate the city's diverse communities and ensure visitors facing mobility, auditory, visual, sensory and other disabilities are equipped to best experience Washington, DC.

THE GOAL:

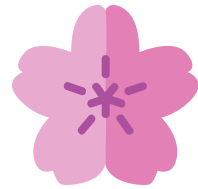
Ensure all visitors and groups are represented and know they can create lasting positive change in the city.

SOCIAL MEDIA

DDC generates engagement around Washington, DC experiences for leisure, local and hospitality industry audiences on social media.

Why it matters: Social media is a prime and timely medium for potential visitors considering travel.

SOCIAL VIDEOS



WHAT'S NEXT:

- In-house video and photography capabilities allow the team to heavily invest in Instagram Reels and TikTok to drive social media engagements.
- DDC will leverage more video from members and more member site visits. Both allow for more coverage and access to in-the-moment content.
- The paid media and social teams will work with impactful content creators and influencers to share videos that provide different perspectives, drive engagements and highlight the District.

USER-GENERATED CONTENT (UGC)

Why it matters: Nielsen Consumer Trust Index reported that ninety-two percent of consumers trust organic UGC more than traditional advertising (zdnet.com, April 4, 2017)

WHAT'S NEXT:

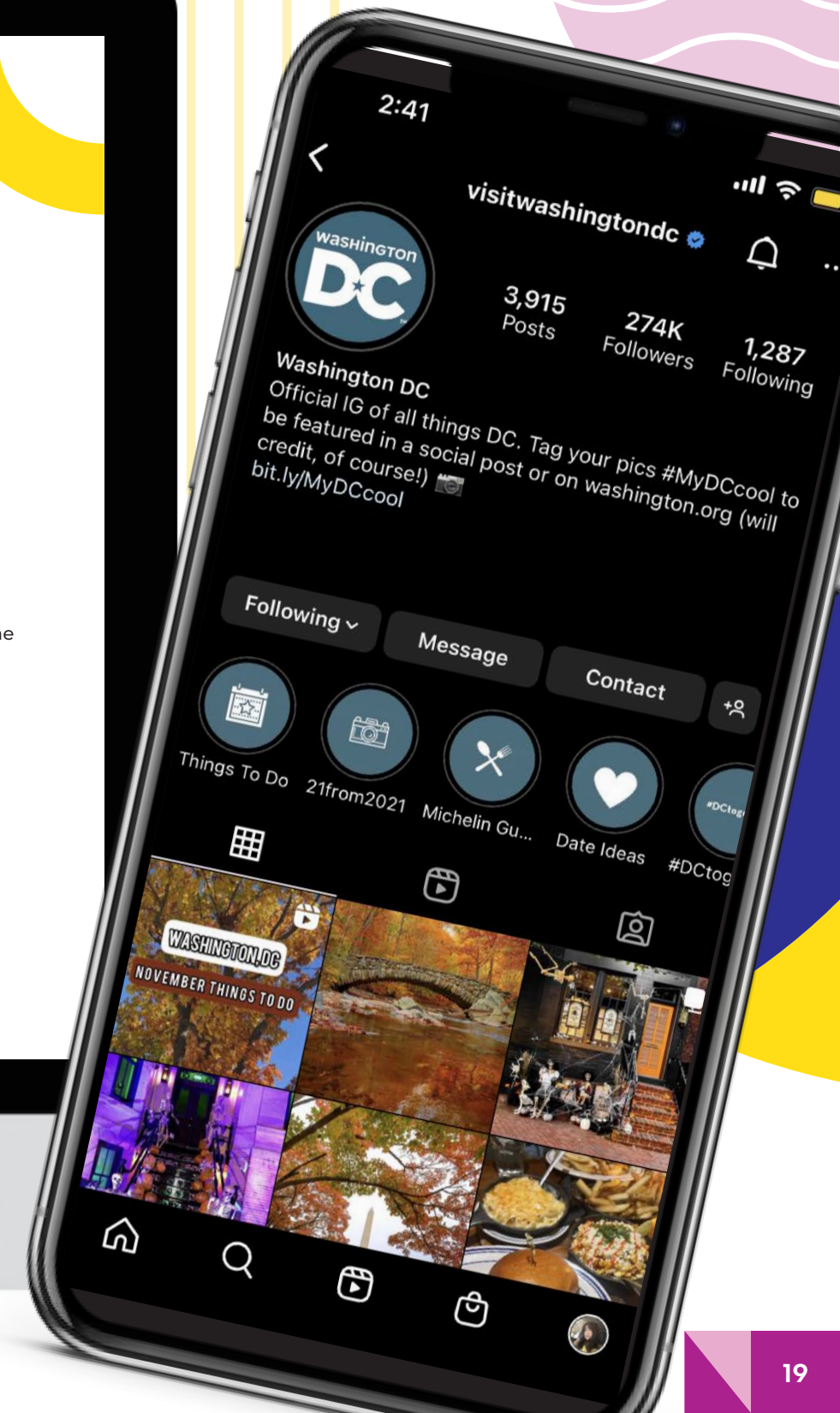
- While a UGC-first strategy continues to be the primary driver of DDC's inspirational visual media content, UGC video is also a priority.
- The team has developed new UGC and Content Collaborator Guidelines to ensure brand consistency across all channels and align on considerations unique to video, such as music, voiceover, editing and point of view.

UPPING BRAND ENGAGEMENT

Adjusting strategy consistently helps drive the highest engagement and utilize the right mix of social content.

WHAT'S NEXT:

- With the Trivia Tuesday series and a variety of giveaways, users are enticed to engage with the destination and select partners.
- DDC teases things to do by week, weekend, month and season through Instagram Stories, web links and videos.
- The industry social media strategy will build on FY2022's record-setting engagement with a strong LinkedIn focus, more DDC event exposure and updates regarding executives and the organization.



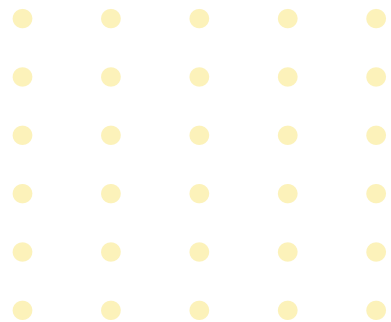
EVENTS TEAM

EVENTS STRATEGY

The new, cohesive events team develops seamless events and customer experiences that leave a lasting impression of Washington, DC.



Why it Matters: Memorable events help showcase unique venues and only-in-DC opportunities, creating an impact as part of the sales cycle for those booking business in DC. Members, clients and stakeholders benefit from elevated events that are held to DDC's standard of excellence across content and experience.





CONVENTION SALES & SERVICES

CONVENTION SALES

Customers are carefully choosing which destinations and events to attend. Convention Sales and Services highlights DC's exclusive benefits as a meetings destination.

CONNECTED — MEET WITH PURPOSE

- The campaign creates a competitive advantage by positioning Washington, DC as a city of change-makers. Customers use the city as a platform to showcase their organization's values and mission and advocacy initiatives. Coupled with the knowledge economy and support of thriving industries, Connected offers event strategists so many reasons to meet.
- Factors in destination considerations:
 - Customer's personal work-life balance; organization's alignment with mission
 - Among DC's selling points: customers can advance issues impacting their business and mission. They can impact change here.

SHORT-TERM PROVIDES BIG OPPORTUNITIES

- Booking windows are decreasing
- The in-house sales team helps hotels by filling gaps between citywide conventions
- Corporate business is less predictable, but the team's increased leads and tenacity impacts results
- Investments in industry organizations such as MPI and third-party meeting planners like Maritz support efforts

CLIENTS CRAVE ENGAGEMENT

- Face-to-face meetings pay off
- Meeting in-person with customers in FY2022 has rebuilt the foundation for exceptional client experiences in FY2023

REINFORCING DC'S EXPERTISE

- Dynamic advertorials and interesting international marketing placements complement sales efforts and city buzz
- NEW: artistic, magazine-style "Look Book" shows off only-in-DC venues and hidden gem meeting locations



Progressive trade placements in multi-media avenues focus on attracting key sectors like incentive, association and corporate business.

LEAVE A LASTING IMPACT: CONNECTED COMMUNITY

- Intentional meetings can have both social and economic legacy
- DDC helps align an organization's mission with the city's values for an extended impact
- Immediate volunteer and service opportunities
- Showcases the city's robust DEI-related initiatives

LEADING HEALTH & SAFETY

- Safe events are expected
- DDC highlights Events DC's international recognition at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center:
 - First center in the world to achieve a WELL Health-Safety Rating for its protocols
 - Accolades also include GBAC STAR™ Accreditation

IMPACTFUL CLIENT EXPERIENCES

- Highlight unique opportunities for delegates
- Showcase outdoor options
- Incorporate sustainability efforts to benefit meetings and conventions
- Highlight the diversity of DC's businesses and the city's DEI efforts

DRIVING REVENUE THROUGH STAFFING SOLUTIONS

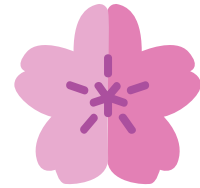
- Win-win: Customers have access to knowledgeable and local temporary staffing and DDC increases revenue
- Training and recruiting the "Redcoat" workforce fills a critical need for customers

CONVENTION SERVICES



connecteD★Community
Your Meeting. Your Impact. Your Legacy.

INTERNATIONAL SALES



FASTER RECOVERY

Despite challenges such as VISA wait times, overseas business travel is expected to fully recover before overseas leisure travel.

STANDING OUT ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

Washington, DC is a knowledge capital of thriving industries (i.e. technology, sustainability, biotech/pharma). It provides potential local speakers and headliners, as well as unique experiences. The city entices more delegates, exhibitors and sponsors and showcases the industry ecosystem.

SUCCESSFULLY MAXIMIZING PARTNERSHIPS

- International Business Events Council (IBEC): Continue to engage members on strategic direction
- Ambassador Circle: Grow the group of industry leaders who champion bids in their respective fields
- Connected DMV: Collaborate with the regional initiative to expand the area's profile in thriving industries
- Global Association Hubs Partnership: Align with Brussels, Dubai and Singapore to jointly attract more international association headquarters in respective destinations





TOURISM, SPORTS & VISITOR SERVICES



TOURISM, SPORTS & VISITOR SERVICES

INTERNATIONAL

Why it matters: As 7 percent of visitation and 27 percent of the spend in 2019, DC's tourism industry will not fully recover until overseas travelers return. All efforts are to grow market share.

- **In-market sales and PR representation** help us be aggressive and timely.
 - **DC only** – UK, China, Australia and India
 - **Capital Region USA** partnership with Maryland, Virginia and Washington Metropolitan Airports Authority – UK, China, Germany, France
- **Sales and media missions** are all back in FY2023 (except for China).
- **Air lift:** more options lead to more travel.
 - DDC entices new international air service with the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority and airline partners.
- **Training:** When travel agents understand what's new in DC, the destination benefits.
 - DDC is partnering with airlines, tour companies and others on training programs.

UK LEADS IN VISITATION

- Initial data shows the UK is outperforming other markets.
 - December UK mission goal: increasing early 2023 spring travel from the UK.
 - Consumer activation in London, client and media meetings

UPDATE ON CHINA

- Traditionally DC's top market, potential remains. When pandemic restrictions lift in China, DC is ready.
 - Maintaining presence through PR and social media (WeChat, Weibo and DouYin)
 - Working with tour operators to reinstate content
 - Updating the Welcome China program for DDC members

EAST COAST USA PARTNERS ON AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

- **Goal:** Attract more Aussie and Kiwi visitors to spend more time in East Coast destinations.
- Two flights on airlines from New Zealand to New York City assist: Air New Zealand (running now) and Qantas (launching in June 2023).



SPORTS ENTHUSIASTS FIND REASONS TO VISIT

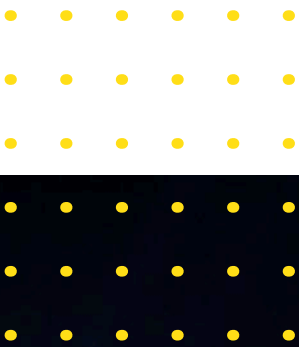
- Growing sports across domestic and international professional, collegiate and amateur events create significant economic impact and raise DC’s profile
 - Focus: men’s and women’s soccer, NCAA basketball, rugby, tennis, events utilizing DC’s one-of-a-kind landscape (marathons, cycling, extreme sports)

ATTRACTING MORE LIVE EVENTS

- New music and cultural festivals of all sizes create a new pool of potential travelers
- Working with Events DC and partners, DDC attracts more offerings for DC’s calendar

SOCCER STARS JOIN MLS ALL-STAR WEEK

- Hosted at Audi Field in July 2023, the event shows that DC is a premier destination for soccer and sports fans
- Includes citywide celebration (fan fest, community events and more)



STUDENT SUCCESS EXPANDS

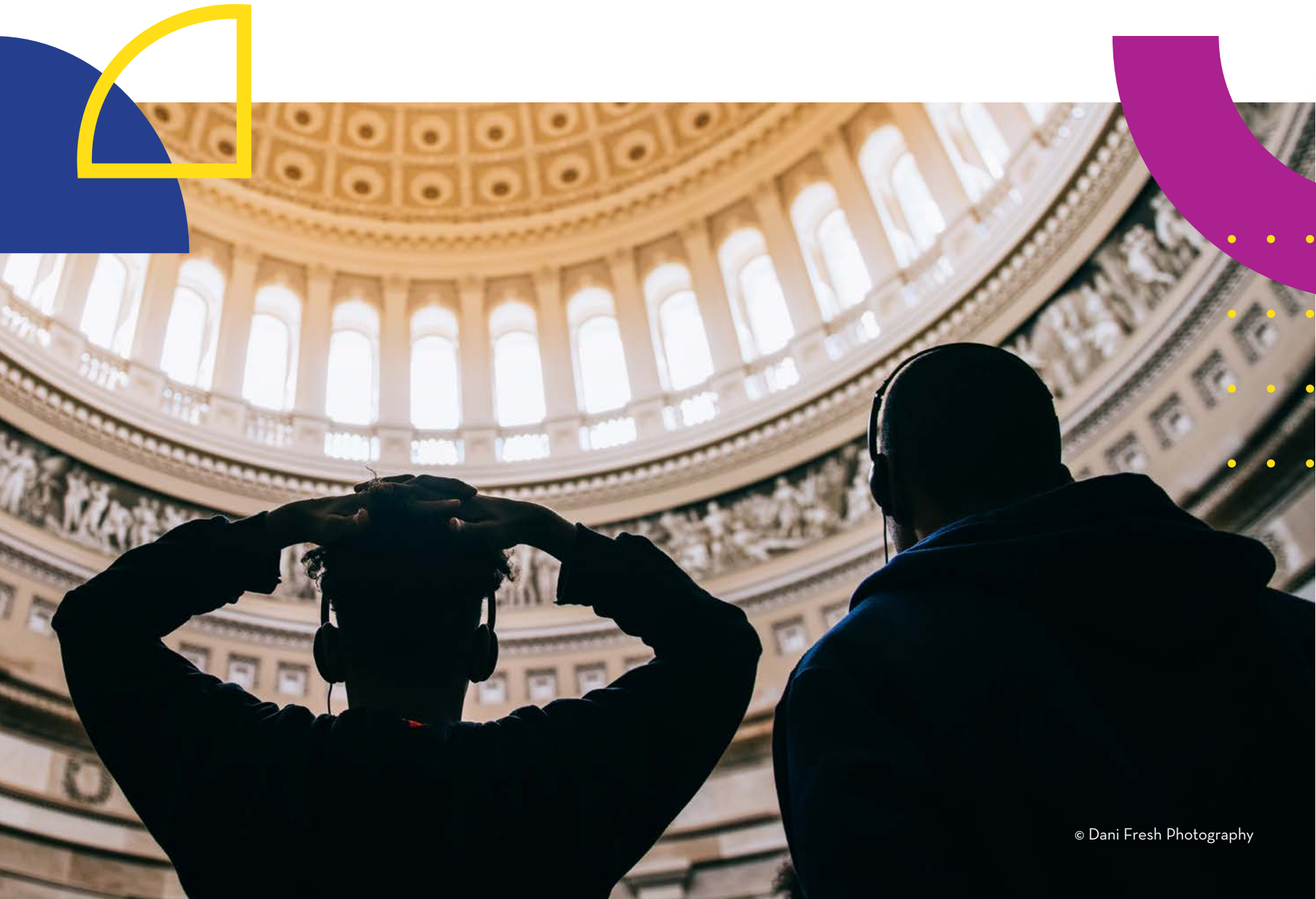
- The Student Youth Travel Association’s annual conference in August 2022 exposed operators to the wealth of product for their clients
- DDC is building on the many leads and new products for students in FY2023

GROUPS LEAD THE WAY

- DDC adapts to what groups are looking for
 - The new “senior” traveler is looking for more active and flexible programming based on lifestyle travel preferences

VISITOR SERVICES ANSWERS THE CALLS, EMAILS AND CHATS

- The expert team provides insightful recommendations and information to all visitors who contact DDC
- Print collateral is still important and distributed
- NEW: Members can benefit from destination training from the team





PARTNERSHIPS & ALLIANCES

PARTNERSHIPS & ALLIANCES

Provides connections, visibility, resources and ways to engage to support member businesses

Why it matters: Members join because DDC provides access and exposure to DC's tourism economy. Growing membership dues and sponsors benefits DDC's bottom line.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership offers businesses ways to get involved in DDC's sales and marketing programs. Data provided helps members shape strategy and plan ahead. Benefits are quantified to show real results.

DEI BUSINESS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

The new initiative offers complimentary membership for small businesses owned by people of color, members of the LGBTQ+ community, women and those with accessibility needs. The initial cohort of 14 businesses benefited from marketing, mentorship, education and networking opportunities to help them build their sales and marketing programs. A new group starts in January 2023.

PUBLICATIONS

Members have an opportunity for inclusion in two inspiring resources for leisure visitors and business event strategists: the Official Visitors Guide and the Event Planning Guide. Both feature detailed member listings and invite readers to explore more on [washington.org](https://www.washington.org).

"Destination DC has connections to parts of DC life that I just never knew about. I have been able to meet tour leaders and hotel managers. They have made it easy to expand my network and get our products to more people than I could have imagined."

— Shannon Boyle
Owner, Uncle Chips



DINING & DRIVING POWER

Partners offer complimentary services and receive direct interaction with DDC clients (meeting planners, tour operators, travel journalists). The goal: fantastic menus or transportation lead to further business or media coverage.

MEMBER EVENTS

DDC-hosted gatherings provide valuable industry expertise, networking opportunities and exclusive access to new and unique venues. Partnerships and Alliances will continue to work closely with the events team to engage members at in-person and virtual events and showcase partners who work with DDC.

PARTNERSHIPS

Strategic relationships with partners ensure mutual success. Partners provide resources to support DDC and offset expenses. In turn, DDC provides ample marketing benefits and exclusive access to decision-makers.



“I’ve been able to grow Cake-wich Craft from a small business being run in my free time to a full-scale operation in part due to the support of Destination DC and the business leads and public relations referrals they provide. It is impossible not to grow if you put in the work and use the tools that come with membership. I am eternally grateful for their support!”

— Aleatra Dimitrijevi
Owner, Cake-wich Craft

“The Hotel Washington has received new business leads on the spot during co-op sales missions with Destination DC including at IMEX America where we met both domestic and international clients. We also joined DDC to meet with association customers in Chicago. As an independent hotel unaffiliated with a large brand or chain, we find participation in Destination DC co-ops crucial to our sales success.”

— Julia Quinn
Director of Sales & Marketing, Hotel Washington

“Destination DC has been crucial to the success of Swingers—The Crazy Golf Club. Besides the steady flow of RFPs and leads sent our way for both our current and planned DC locations, Swingers’ inclusion in DDC’s “20 Unique Date Ideas in Washington, DC” has generated a plethora of business. We had the pleasure of exhibiting in the DDC booth at IMEX America and could not be more thrilled with the results. Anyone looking for a great partnership with tangible ROI, should have Destination DC at the top of their list!”

— Ian Brickey
Proactive Sales Manager, Swingers—The Crazy Golf Club

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WASHINGTON
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY

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Cherry Blossom
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SAAM
Smithsonian
American Art
Museum

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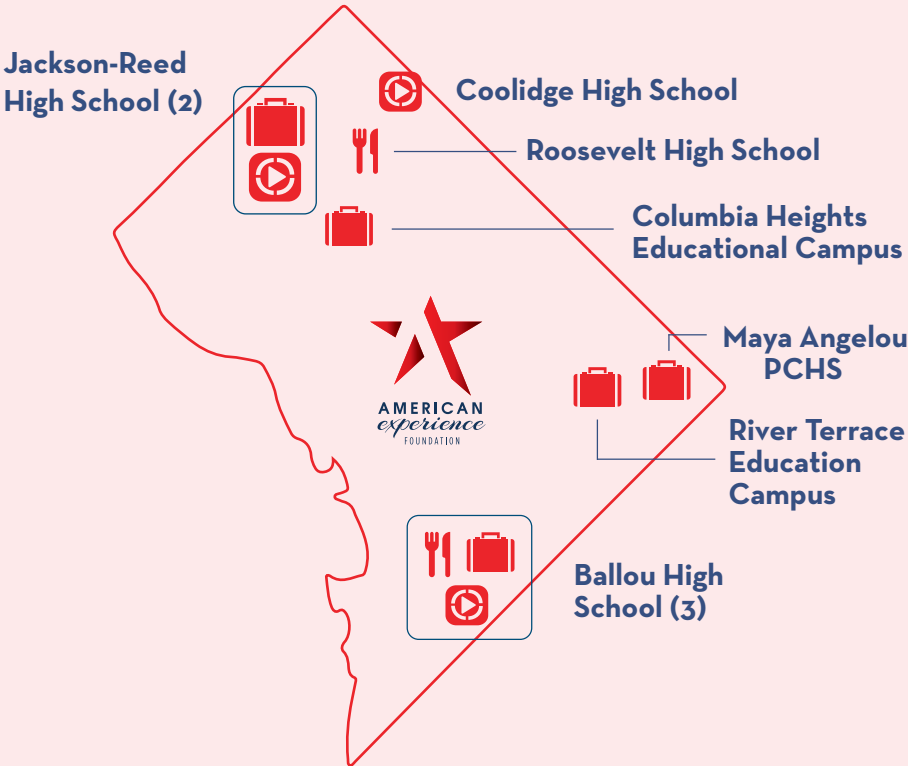
THE WASHINGTON
AUTO SHOW 

The background features several abstract geometric elements: a blue circle with white wavy lines in the top left; a light blue semi-circle on the left; a red semi-circle and a yellow arc in the bottom left; a grid of blue dots in the bottom left; a grid of yellow dots on the right; a large red semi-circle in the bottom right; and a blue arc with a pink background in the top right.

AMERICAN EXPERIENCE FOUNDATION

AMERICAN EXPERIENCE FOUNDATION

The American Experience Foundation (AEF) enriches the lives of students through inspirational travel experiences and educational opportunities to cultivate the next generation of hospitality industry leaders. AEF invests in young people in our community, supporting their college and career readiness.



Academies
of Hospitality
& Tourism



Academies of
Culinary Arts



Academies of
Mass Media

WHAT WE DO:

- 1. INSPIRE** through free field trips to the treasures of our nation's capital for students from DC and across the country
- 2. TRAIN** through internships and educational opportunities to connect students with industry professionals
- 3. EDUCATE** through scholarships to qualified students and alumni from DC's ten high school Academies of Hospitality & Tourism, Culinary Arts, and Mass Media

AEF is the official non-profit affiliate of Destination DC (DDC), the destination marketing organization for the nation's capital. By leveraging the resources and networks of DDC and its nearly 1,000 member businesses, AEF is uniquely positioned to open doors for students, filling a need for career exposure and paths to success.





Students participated
in AEF programs



Students attended events
through AEF connections

Scholarships
awarded

8



4

Repeat winners



27

Interns
directly hosted



43

In-kind
partners



15

Funding
partners



114

Individual
cash donors

For 20 years, the American Experience Foundation has been dedicated to supporting the hospitality industry in Washington, DC. After September 11, the affiliated charity of Destination DC was created to support tourism recovery. In 2015, AEF's mission narrowed to focus on student career development.

AEF inspires the next generation of hospitality professionals. It has grown as a leader in diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives for the hospitality workforce, youth development and pandemic recovery.

Challenges surrounding uncertainty in in-person schooling remained this year. AEF adjusted to a hybrid internship to match a new workforce structure, and proudly supported the Academies of Hospitality and Tourism and Culinary Arts. On our 20th anniversary, we celebrate resurgence.

HERE ARE A FEW HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR:

- ★ AEF celebrated over \$100,000 in scholarship awards since 2015.
- ★ Destination DC partners welcomed Academy graduates Zoe Roberts (Jackson-Reed, '18), Diamond Hunter (Jackson-Reed, '18), and Cayla Lewis (Columbia Heights, '19).
- ★ DDC welcomed Christen Miller to the Partnerships and Alliances team. Christen brings a wealth of knowledge from both the destination marketing industry from her time at VisitPITTSBURGH and non-profit development at Junior Achievement of Greater Washington.
- ★ Field trips were reinstated.
- ★ We led by connecting education to real world experiences in the industry and through professional development opportunities for educators.



Michael Akin
Chair, Board of Directors,
American Experience Foundation
President,
LINK Strategic Partners

AEF'S PROGRAMS AND IMPACT GROWS IN FY2023 BY:

- ★ Welcoming a new Academy of Hospitality and Tourism at River Terrace Education Campus
- ★ Working closely with the Academies of Mass Media at Ballou, Coolidge and Jackson-Reed high schools
- ★ Launching a new mentorship program to connect industry professionals to future leaders
- ★ Restarting overnight field trip programs to share the treasures of our incredible city with young people

Finally, we're expanding communication. In addition to subscribing to our monthly newsletters, please connect with us on LinkedIn and Twitter. We'll also be launching student-run, student-focused Instagram and TikTok accounts to better connect with young people in our community. We look forward to the year to come together and thank all our partners for making our 20th year one of growth and success.



Claire Carlin
Executive Director,
American Experience Foundation
VP of Partnerships & Alliances,
Destination DC



SCHOLARSHIPS

Support the fund at AmericanExperienceFoundation.org/donate

The AEF Scholarship Fund achieved a huge milestone in 2022, surpassing over \$100,000 awarded in scholarships to current students and alumni of the Academies of Hospitality and Tourism and Culinary Arts. Congratulations to this year’s recipients:

AEF SCHOLARSHIPS



Damek Bennett
Maya Angelou Public Charter School '22



Kaiya Lewis
Maya Angelou Public Charter School '22



Antonio Newton
Maya Angelou Public Charter School '22



Anura Sharma
Columbia Heights Educational Campus (CHEC) '22



Nana Sissoko
Jackson-Reed High School '22

AEF ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIPS



Cenaria Fells-Watson
Towson University
Columbia Heights Educational Campus '21



Britney Rivera-Martinez
Cornell University
Jackson-Reed High School '19

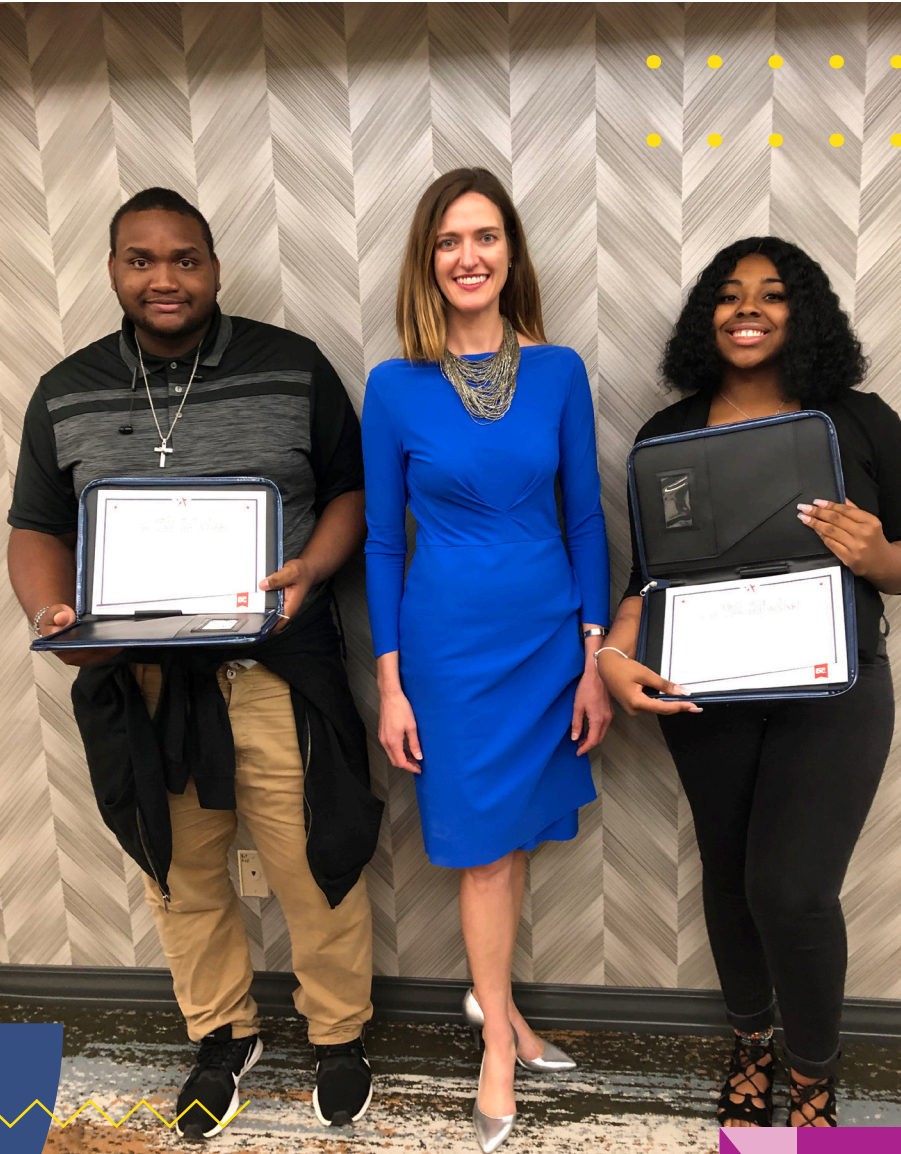
DAVID ISELIN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE



Jean-Pierre Roberts
Jackson-Reed High School '22
Connecticut State University, Class of 2026

“I have been serving others because I truly enjoy supporting my community around me. Now to see my love and care for the community come back around and support me in my college education is beautiful. I couldn’t be more grateful.”

— Jean-Pierre Roberts



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