

Charlottesville Albemarle Convention and Visitors Bureau

Operating Plan

For the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2024

Executive Summary

The Charlottesville-Albemarle Convention and Visitors' Bureau Executive Board (CACVB) is an innovative, collaborative and service-oriented destination marketing and management organization that welcomes all visitors to Charlottesville and Albemarle County with the goal of improving the quality of life for residents and supporting a robust tourism ecosystem. This ecosystem is sustained and enhanced through partnerships with all tourism-related businesses and attractions in Charlottesville and Albemarle County. The CACVB is solely funded through a portion of the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT), generated through overnight stays in our wide variety of accommodations. As the CACVB grows the TOT tax base, our budget grows. Therefore, welcoming all visitors to stay overnight is the primary mission of our organization.

- Administrative: The CACVB staff is the most knowledgeable, approachable and accurate resource for wholistic visitor information in Charlottesville and Albemarle County. The CACVB is a responsible steward of public funds and supports its team internally to work collaboratively, joyfully and effectively.
- Promotion: The CACVB promotes our community through inclusive and welcoming Marketing, Public Relations and Sales efforts. These efforts are enhanced by our team's individual passion for telling authentic stories, our destination's wealth of amenities, a diverse array of businesses and attractions, and emphasizing and supporting partnerships.
- Visitor Services: The CACVB proactively serves our tourism partners, potential visitors, and visitors by responding to inquiries, providing brochures individually and in bulk, and at our Mobile Visitor Center locations in the City and County. There is visitor information available Monday through Friday at the McIntire County Office Building Visitor Entrance when that building is open, and there will be a future partnership between the CACVB and UVA for visitor services at the UVA Hotel and Conference Center.
- Community Support & Service: The CACVB acts as a resource to serve all tourism-related businesses/attractions and the community in Charlottesville and Albemarle County, especially with the goal of fostering collaboration. The CACVB collaborates with hundreds of businesses, attractions and individuals every year providing support in grant writing, connecting partners for the betterment of all involved and educating people on how to access the robust visitor economy.

The report below shares more about the history and specifics of our organization and Executive Board in the Introduction. Our Mission Statement & Value Proposition; Vision, Values & Equity, Organizational Structure, and Strategic Plan illustrate how and why we do our work. Finally, the Budget Summary shows our revenue and expenditures, as well as breakdowns in key budget areas with details on how we provide a strong return on investment to our localities. Thank you for your continued investment in our community and our organization.

Introduction

The Charlottesville-Albemarle Convention and Visitors' Bureau Executive Board (CACVB) was established through an Agreement made and entered into on July 1, 2004. The "Charlottesville-Albemarle Agreement for Operation of A Joint Convention And Visitors' Bureau" was authorized by adopted ordinances by both the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County, with then-City Manager, Gary O'Connell, and then-County Executive Robert Tucker, Jr. This Agreement under Section 1 both established the CACVB and stipulated the functions charged to the CACVB.

This Agreement was reestablished and reauthorized on February 25, 2022 with a third amended operating agreement with an adjusted Executive Board structure, fund balance provisions and diversity, equity and inclusion language. The Executive Board is enabled as a joint exercise of the powers vested in Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville pursuant to Virginia Code §§15.2-940 and 15.2-1300. The purpose of the CACVB is to promote the resources and advantages of the County, the City and the region pursuant to the terms and conditions of the updated Agreement, including the marketing of tourism, as well as the marketing of initiatives that: attract travelers to the City and the County, increase lodging at properties located within the City and the County, and generate tourism revenues within the City and the County.

The CACVB is funded by a portion of the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) generated by guests staying overnight in City and County lodging properties, which equals 30% of the first 5% of the TOT for each locality. (Any amount over 5% of the TOT for each locality goes directly to the general fund with no portion coming to the CACVB.) The FY2024 budget is based on TOT collections from FY2022 and will increase to \$2,358,875, reflecting TOT collected from July 2021 – June 2022 and an initial TOT recovery from COVID.

The CACVB Executive Board is composed of 15 voting members:

- 1. One member of the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors;
- 2. One member of the Charlottesville City Council;
- 3. The Albemarle County Director of Economic Development or their designee;
- 4. The Charlottesville Director of Economic Development or their designee;
- 5. The Executive Vice President or Chief Executive Officer of the University of Virginia or their designee;
- 6. One tourism industry organization representative appointed by the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors;
- 7. One accommodations representative appointed by the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors;
- 8. One food and beverage representative appointed by the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors;
- 9. One tourism industry organization representative appointed by the Charlottesville City

Council;

- 10. One accommodations representative appointed by the Charlottesville City Council;
- 11. One food and beverage representative appointed by the Charlottesville City Council;
- 12. The President or Chief Executive Officer of the Charlottesville Regional Chamber of Commerce or their designee;
- 13. One representative of the arts community jointly appointed by the Executive Board members of the County Board of Supervisors and the Charlottesville City Council;
- 14. One representative of the recreation community jointly appointed by the Executive Board members of the County Board of Supervisors and the Charlottesville City Council; and
- 15. The President or Chief Executive Officer of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation or their designee.

The Board of Directors meets every other month or six times per year.

The CACVB maintains administrative offices at 501 Faulconer Drive, Suite 1A, in Albemarle County, Virginia.

Mission Statement & Value Proposition

Being a non-membership destination marketing and management organization, the CACVB serves the broad interests of the Greater Charlottesville community in many areas beyond lodging, including dining, retail, agritourism, entertainment, heritage, outdoor recreation, arts, festivals, weddings, special events, and transportation.

Annually, the Virginia Tourism Corporation via Tourism Economics (and in coordination with localities) compiles economic impact numbers that provide relevant and quantifiable data for our region. The CACVB's efforts helped to stimulate more than \$768 million dollars of combined direct visitor spending in our community in 2021 (most recently available year). This economic activity sustained local businesses by supporting more than 5,600 people who work for the tourism industry. Below is the tourism industry economic impact data for Charlottesville and Albemarle County in calendar year 2021:

Direct Economic Im	pact and S	pending S	Shares by	Industries	s, 2021							
Source: Tourism Econom	iics											
	2021 Direct Impacts											
		Direct Visitor Spending, 2021 (in millions)										
Locality					Transport*	Total	Total Spending	Spending	Employment	Labor Income	State Taxes	Local Taxes
	Lodging*	F&B	Retail	Recreation	*	Spending	% Change	Share of	Employment	(in millions)	(in millions)	(in millions)
						Spending	(2021/2020)	State				
ALBEMARLE	\$92.0	\$125.8	\$45.5	\$71.2	\$87.0	\$421.5	60.0%	1.67%	3,087	\$160.3	\$12.0	\$20.3
CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY	\$81.5	\$135.2	\$44.1	\$52.8	\$33.2	\$346.8	57.0%	1.38%	2,763	\$96.5	\$10.0	\$17.2

^{*}Lodging includes 2nd home spending

^{**}Transportation includes both ground and air transportation

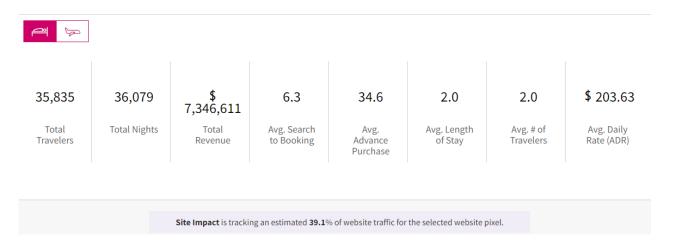
Mission

The mission of the CACVB is to enhance the economic prosperity of City and County by promoting, selling and marketing the City of Charlottesville and County of Albemarle as a destination, in pursuit of the meetings and tourism markets (as defined by the operating agreement).

Value Proposition

For FY2023, the CACVB is operating on a budget of \$2.33 million dollars, including significant one-time funding through County, City and Virginia Tourism Corporation ARPA funding to aid in the recovery of the tourism economy and improve the TOT, Sales and Meals tax bases through the visitor dollar. The CACVB placed more than 25 million advertising impressions through robust digital and print marketing campaigns in calendar year 2022 and served more than 22,000 visitors directly through its mobile visitor centers and direct visitor communications.

In calendar year 2022, the CACVB saw 647,450 users and 1.6 million pageviews on its website, which was redesigned in December 2021, and generated \$44,000 of advertising revenue on www.visitcharlottesville.org in calendar year 2022. The website alone boasted the following economic impact (data collected via ADARA, which only accounts for 39% of trackable website data).



Vision, Values, & Equity

Vision for 2025

Albemarle County and Charlottesville will create a better quality of life for residents by being the most inclusive, diverse, welcoming, thriving destination for visitors in the Southeast.

Values

Creativity, Diversity, Unity, Resiliency, Responsibility

Equity and Inclusivity Statement

Albemarle County and Charlottesville inclusively and equitably welcome visitors, including but not limited to/irrespective of all races, ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations, gender identities, age, mental/physical disability and citizenship. The CACVB pledges to create inclusive content, share diverse local stories and provide equitable opportunities for local partners in its work.

Organizational Structure

The CACVB currently employs 9 full-time staff:

- Executive Director, Courtney Cacatian
- Director of Marketing & Public Relations, Brantley Ussery
- Marketing Manager, Amanda Vierrether
- Sales Manager, Teresa Lamb
- Visitor and Community Relations Manager, Cassie Ivey
- Travel Specialists Carla Mullen and Teri Burgan
- Finance Administrator, Kathy O'Leary
- Special Projects Coordinator, Christopher Ridder

The CACVB board has approved the addition of two positions for FY2024: a Social Media and Content Manager and a Destination Development Manager to increase capacity for our promotional and collaborative efforts.

Strategic Plan

At the December 2019 CACVB Executive Board meeting, the Board kicked-off a research effort with SIR, a research firm based in Richmond, to determine the current state of the destination with recent and prospective visitors. The Executive Board and the tourism industry attended this meeting and collaborated on performing a SWOT analysis of the destination and gave feedback on the survey topics for SIR.

The results of this survey were presented at the February 2020 Board meeting. Shortly thereafter, COVID-19 derailed our economy, promotional efforts and specifically the CACVB's strategic planning process. The current strategic action plan (outlined below) is meant to provide interim guidance and a work-plan based on the data collected in the strategic planning process to date and given the current economic and public health situation.

Strategic Imperatives

The CACVB strives to optimize tourism economic impact in Charlottesville and Albemarle County for the betterment of the community. Optimizing the tourism industry bolsters economic development by connecting tourism to the uplifting of people and places that are an integral part of our destination. Leveraging the momentum of improved industry and governmental alignment and community participation, the CACVB promotes this destination through the strength of the entire region. In creating this transitional strategic plan, the CACVB leaned on its values to define the following strategic imperatives, which are detailed in the paragraphs below:

Resiliency

As defined by its mission, the primary function of the CACVB is to <u>Drive Overnight Visitation</u>, which fuels and funds the rest of the strategic imperatives and improves the general fund for each locality through TOT, Sales and Meals tax revenues.

Unity

This destination is only as strong as the partners it represents and how well those partners work together to <u>Increase Visitor Spending</u> as a unified place.

Diversity

Our community has a diverse range of people, places, and experiences. The CACVB helps to <u>Develop New Visitor Opportunities</u> (tourism product) by fostering strong partnerships with tourism-related businesses and non-profits.

Creativity

Destinations are defined by what makes them unique, and we have the opportunity and responsibility to <u>Tell Stories that Uplift and Inspire</u>.

Responsibility

As a governmental body, the CACVB has the responsibility to <u>Utilize Public Funds with</u> Transparency and Efficiency to optimize its impact.

Budget Summary FY23 – FY24 Comparison

		% of Total		% of Total
Revenue	FY '23 Budget	Budget	FY '24 Budget	Budget
Albemarle County	605,771	46.00%	964,617	41.60%
City of Charlottesville	711,092	54.00%	1,354,258	58.40%
Total	\$1,316,863	100%	\$2,318,875	100%

Inclusion of Fund Balance:

		% of Total		% of Total
Revenue	FY '23 Budget	Budget	FY '24 Budget	Budget
Albemarle County	606,281	35.04%	964,617	40.89%
City of Charlottesville	711,092	41.13%	1,354,258	57.41%
Fund Balance	400,000	23.14%	0	
Misc (Website)	12,000	0.69%	40,000	1.70%
Total	\$1,728,863	100%	\$2,358,875	100%

Four areas comprise the operating budget for the CACVB (Administrative, Marketing, Visitor Services and Payroll):

		% of Total		% of Total
Area of Expenditure	FY '23 Budget	Budget	FY '24 Budget	Budget
Administrative	122,1810	9.28%	168,838	7.28%
Marketing	456,638	34.68%	1,147,552	48.63%
Visitor Services	197,409	14.99%	267,620	11.54%
Payroll (-Visitor Svcs)	540,635	41.05%	754,865	32.55%
Total	\$1,316,863	100%	\$2,318,875	100%

Fund Balance Total Pre-Audit

\$00.00

FY 2024 Financial Plan Summary, Administrative

The administrative functions required for the daily operation of the CACVB and those products and services needed to conduct business are covered in this section. Albemarle County, acting as the fiscal agent for the CACVB, provides key essential services, including human resources, IT, procurement and purchasing, and legal support. This support is reflected in the GF Admin Charges line item and consists of 2% of the CACVB budget annually.

In addition to ensuring the proper and transparent use of funds, the CACVB has become a national leader in equity in destination management and won three national and international awards this past year recognizing its distinction in this space. To bring under resourced businesses into the tourism economy and welcome all people to the community, the CACVB established Tourism for All, in collaboration with Destinations International and TripAdvisor. The first of its kind, Tourism for All is a community building effort that guides tourism businesses into creating a community pledge and action plan to ensure that the community commits to and makes progress towards becoming a welcoming destination. Notable elements of this effort to date include an internal Diversity, Equity and Inclusion plan for the CACVB, Discover Black Cville, accessibility assessments for tourism partners through Wheel the World and initial conversations with LGBTQIA+, Latinx, APIDA and Monacan Nation stakeholders.

Discover Black Cville has been recognized with three awards within the first year since its national launch. The George Washington University's Master of Science in Tourism, Hospitality and Event Management (MSTHEM) program presented the Executive Director with the Outstanding Alumni Award in recognition of her contributions to society. This award specifically recognized the Discover Black Cville tourism community effort. This effort also won a Destiny Award for Community Building through the U.S. Travel Association's ESTO conference for incorporating community building as a major function of its strategy. This award is presented to destination organizations nationally. Finally, in February 2023, the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International (HSMAI) presented Discover Black Cville with a Bronze Adrian Award. These awards recognize tourism organizations, including destinations and hotels, for their work internationally with competition spanning country-wide marketing efforts and the efforts of companies such as Marriott International.

Through the late 2022 and into 2023, the CACVB worked with Wheel the World to provide free accessibility assessments for our industry partners. The CACVB partnered with the firm to make the Charlottesville-Albemarle area more accessible and provide accurate listing information for visitors. The CACVB was only one of only two destination organizations to utilize Wheel the World and had an outstanding response from industry partners. More than sixty industry partners completed the assessments and now have access to Wheel the World's e-learning platform. The CACVB and Wheel the World are now in the process of marketing these

experiences.

For Career Education Month (February), the CACVB partnered with Monticello High School and the Global Scholars Program to take students to Boar's Head Resort to hear from industry experts. This pilot program included presentations from hotel management, sports management, culinary, and special events. The program will extend into March with three presentations from the CACVB team and a job fair at Monticello High School on March 15, 2023. Twenty-four industry partners (max capacity) will have the ability to connect with 1,000 students about their organization and hiring needs. This pilot program directly supports the CACVB's 2025 vision of creating a better-quality life for residents and supports Albemarle County Public School's creation of a Hospitality Career Cluster. FY2024 will see a continuation of these efforts and growth into additional schools.

Revenue	FY '24 Budget	% of Total Budget
Albemarle County	70,234	3.03%
City of Charlottesville	98,604	4.25%
Total Income	\$168,838	7.28%
Expenditures - Administration	<u> </u>	
Rent	30,000	1.20%
GF Admin Charges	46,378	2.00%
Education & Training	23,460	1.01%
Professional Services	11,000	0.47%
Office Supplies	5,000	0.22%
I.T. Services	15,050	0.65%
Contractual Services	3,000	0.13%
Equipment/Furniture	10,000	0.43%
Local Travel (Mileage)	5,000	0.22%
Meals (Travel)	3,000	0.13%
Software	4,950	0.21%
Insurance Liability	9,000	0.39%
Equipment Rental	3,000	0.13%
Total Expenditures	\$168,838	7.28%

FY 2024 Financial Plan Summary, Marketing

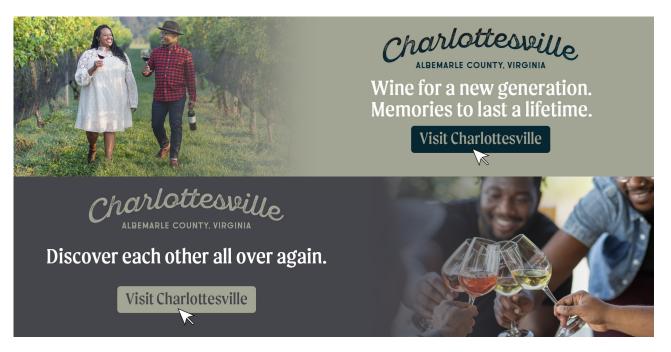
For FY2023, Marketing focused on a robust digital campaign centered on wine, culinary, outdoor recreation and diverse demographic markets. The campaign reached visitors in traditional drive markets like Northern Virginia/Washington, D.C., Raleigh/Durham, Charlotte, Virginia Beach, and the Baltimore metro areas through search engine marketing, paid social media placements, display advertising, print, and programmatic TV, with additional efforts through major national travel publications like Travel & Leisure, Food & Wine, The Local Palate, Wine Enthusiast, Essence, Bon Appetit, Conde Nast Traveler, Hemispheres, the Virginia Travel Guide, Blue Ridge Outdoors, and overseas efforts through Capital Region USA (Germany, France and the UK).

COVID-19 dramatically impacted the Marketing strategies for all destination marketing organizations, but the CACVB remained agile and adapted its strategies continuously throughout the past three years as variants and challenges have come and gone. Through exceptionally strong advertising pushes focused on need times, Charlottesville & Albemarle County lodging properties saw the highest revenue per available room (combination of occupancy and average daily rate) on record in 2022. Promotional efforts are executed through:

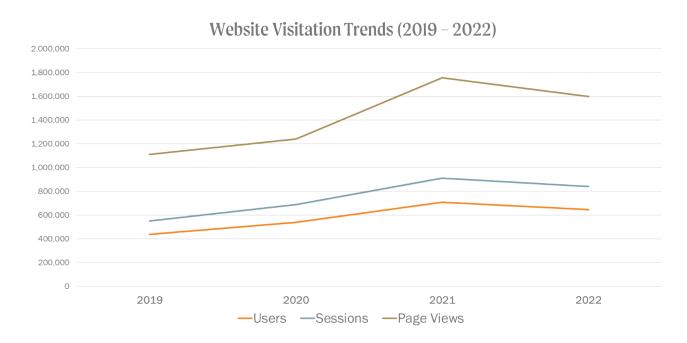
- 1. Owned media (website, social media, e-newsletters, visitor guides, maps)
- 2. Earned media (public relations, familiarization tours, press release distribution)
- 3. Paid media (advertising, sponsorships, media and sales missions and shows)
- 4. Research (insights on hotel performance, visitor information and trends, effectiveness of www.visitcharlottesville.org in booking hotel and air trips)

The CACVB launched a wine-centric marketing campaign in the fall of 2021 (Historic Vines. New Roots) and launched the Discover Black Cville brand nationally in March 2022. Both campaigns include significant partner participation, especially through the associated digital passports powered by Bandwango. Marketing plans for FY2024 will continue to leverage the success of these campaigns and showcase the destination as vibrant and inclusive.

Below is sample creative used in a variety of the media placements made in FY23, including many of the CACVB's national media buys:



All paid media placements are directed to www.visitcharlottesville.org. With a greater focus on advertising, website traffic has increased substantially over the past few years. Page views spiked the most, which means that website visitors are exploring more of our website content and are genuinely interested in our destination. Website traffic was down slightly in 2022, in the wake of unprecedented demand for travel information in 2021, following the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, and as the new website was read by search engines for relevancy.

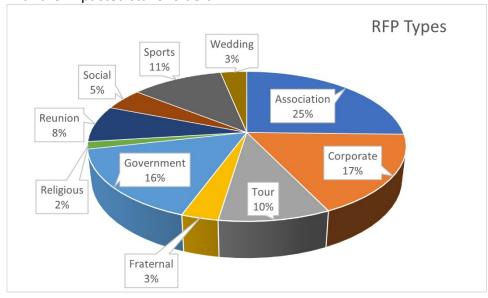


The CACVB continues to maintain robust media relations efforts throughout the year, working with a variety of travel writers, influencers, and content creators. The results of these efforts included major earned media placements in publications such as: Food & Wine, Travel + Leisure, Fodor's Travel, ESPN, AAA World Magazine, and a variety of international publications through media collaborations with Capital Region USA (CRUSA) and the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC). A robust media relations strategy is vital to the CACVB's overall marketing success, as earned media placements are essentially free advertising, helping to complement the organization's paid media efforts.

The CACVB also hosted a group media familiarization (FAM) tour in March 2022 to coincide with the national launch of Discover Black Cville. As part of this FAM tour, the CACVB invited seven Black content creators to Charlottesville and Albemarle County to experience the activities involved with the national launch. This FAM tour resulted in several articles being written about the launch of Discover Black Cville, helping raise awareness of these important efforts to new audiences. The relationships made with this group of content creators continues to produce new earned media coverage, even a year later.

A collection of recent earned media coverage generated through the CACVB's media relations efforts can be found here.

The CACVB's Sales opportunities have significantly increased under Sales Manager position. The Sales Manager has attended trade shows, distributed 63 Requests for Proposals (tripled from last year) and secured group room blocks to fill hotel rooms and event venues. These sales efforts seek to attract meetings, reunions, multi-city tours and additional group business, especially during the need times of weekdays year-round, and weekends in the winter and late summer. The investment in different Sales markets are evaluated annually and in coordination with the impacted stakeholders.



FY 2024 Financial Plan Summary, Marketing

MARKETING Operating Financial Plan

Revenue	FY '24 Budget	% of Total Budget	
Albemarle County	469,045	19.88%	
City of Charlottesville	658,507	27.92% 0%	
Fund Balance	0		
Misc (Website)	40,000	1.70%	
Total Income	\$1,207,552	49.50%	
Expenditures - Marketing	FY '24 Budget	% of Total Budget	
Marketing			
Marketing & Advertising	919,981	39.00%	
Website	30,000	1.27%	
Printing	30,000	1.27%	
Research	125,000	5.30%	
Non-Local Travel	28,000	1.19%	
Postage	11,000	0.47%	
Dues	15,000	0.64%	
Phone (Main Line + Cells)	8,571	0.36%	
Marketing Expenditures	\$1,167,552	49.50%	

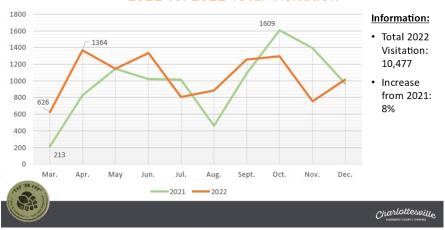
FY 2024 Financial Plan Summary, Visitor Services

The Visitor Services team welcomes visitors to our destination using Mobile Visitors Centers (MVCs), which are stationed throughout the City and County five days a week on a regular schedule and at relevant special events as available. The Visitor Services team provides direct and personal travel assistance during their shifts. Using the Mobile Visitor Centers, Visitor Services reached over 10,500 people during the 2022 run (Mid.-March to Mid.-December). The 2023 Mobile Visitor Center schedule has been finalized, and the MVCs are back at their locations as of March 15, 2023. With additional support from the CACVB team and our partner locations, Visitor Services is working to increase visitation to the Jefferson School City Center and better assist visitors coming through Charlottesville Albemarle Airport (CHO) during non-shift times. The team will increase its presence at special events to reach a higher volume of visitors.

In addition to in-person interactions, Visitor Services fulfilled over 15,000 requests for information about our destination: bringing the total reach to over 100,000 people. As the CACVB is the only certified Visitor Information Center through the Virginia Tourism Corporation in Charlottesville and Albemarle County, the Visitor Services budget supports the improvement and operation of Mobile Visitors Centers and administrative needs of the Visitor Services team. There is visitor information available Monday through Friday at the McIntire County Office Building Visitor Entrance when that building is open, and there will be a future partnership between the CACVB and UVA for visitor services at the UVA Hotel and Conference Center.

With assistance from marketing, the Visitor and Community Relations Manager increased communication with industry partners and enhanced the visibility of the Mobile Visitor Centers through the CACVB's digital presence and marketing materials. Visitor Services upholds the CACVB brand through its distribution of publications, special event listings, and specialized itineraries that adhere to the CACVB style guide. With input from CACVB staff and industry partners, the Visitor and Community Relations Manager will reestablish familiarization tours to educate industry partners and continue a speaker series in FY23. Continuing from FY22, the Visitor Services team has provided support and visitor input to local outdoor recreation and arts organizations to increase awareness of the of these industry sectors to visitors in Charlottesville Albemarle area and bolster partnership opportunities.

2021 vs. 2022 Total Visitation



2021 vs. 2022 MVC Locations: City



2021 vs. 2022 MVC Locations: County



Special Events

- 2022 Special Event Visitation: +2,000
- Participated in a good balance of events (in city vs. in county, arts vs. outdoor rec.)
- Visitor Services has a goal of increasing participation in special events
- VS is considering out-of-area events to promote Charlottesville-Albemarle

Events
Cville Marathon Packet Pickup (Apr.)
Cville Bikefest at Dairy Market (Apr.)
Riverfest at RCC (May)
Crozet Arts and Craft Festival (Spring & Winter)
Batteau Festival (Jun.)
UVA Class of 2025 Back-to-School (Aug.)
Festival of the Wheel (Aug.)
Loop de'Ville
UVA Football Games (Fall)
2 Up Wine Down Wine Festival (Oct.)
VA Film Festival (Nov.)
Grand Illumination (Dec.)
Winter Wander (Dec.)



Rovenue

Charlottesville

% of Total Budget

VISITOR SERVICES Operating Financial Plan

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Albemarle County	111,326	4.80%	
City of Charlottesville	156,294	6.74%	
Total Income	\$267,620	11.54%	
Expenditures	FY '24 Budget	% of Total Budget	
Visitor Services			
Salaries Portioned to Visitor Services	249,891	10.78%	
Van - Fuel	5,000	0.21%	
Van - Repairs	10,000	0.43%	
Cell Phone & Wi-Fi	2,729	0.12%	
Visitor Services Expenditure	\$267,620	11.54%	