

TOPIC: Race and Equity

POSITION STATEMENT

Not everyone will join us on this journey to make Virginia more inclusive.

SUGGESTED USE

- What happens if a site/destination/community doesn't believe in this direction?

CORE MESSAGES

- Virginia is becoming a national exemplar in addressing the historical injustices and inequities that have existed for the last 400 years within all systems across the Commonwealth. As a brand of the state, we are doing our part to address these issues in the tourism industry by creating an overall sense of welcome in Virginia, and we are helping others do that locally.
- This type of change will not happen overnight, but to help us get there, we are setting an objective to become an inclusive state for travelers. This is our aspiration.
- We do not condone any actions that promote racism, and within that we understand that sites and destinations have to move at a pace that makes sense for them.
- We will highlight and promote the sites and destinations that are aligning with the Commonwealth's value of inclusion.
- The change of becoming more inclusive presents a significant growth opportunity for sites and destinations that decide to advance in this direction.
- A great way to start analyzing your site or destination is by looking inward at the diversity, equity and inclusion within your organization. Improving internally will help your organization gain the perspectives needed to help create authentic and equitable experiences for Black travelers.

PROOF POINTS

- In 2019, Governor Northam appointed the nation's first cabinet-level Chief Diversity Officer to oversee the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The shared goal of the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is to develop Virginia into an inclusive state where people can live, learn, work, visit and thrive.

- Black leisure travelers spent \$109.4 billion on travel in 2019 and their overnight stays — which totaled over 458 million last year — account for more than 13% of the U.S. leisure travel market (*The Black Traveler: Insights, Opportunities & Priorities* by MMGY Global).
- Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) sponsored a study by Wilkening Consulting, *Americans, Our History and the 250th*, which found that there is a growing population segment that values inclusive experiences and has an additive approach to history.
- If you're ready to begin this journey:
 - As part of VTC's research around the Black traveler experience, a workbook was created that is designed to help sites and destinations analyze their organizations through the lens of diversity and begin taking steps toward connecting and engaging with Black travelers in a more authentic and equitable way
 - VTC will connect sites and destinations with its research and diversity, equity and inclusion partner, JMI + Share More Stories, if interested in investing further in this effort with a consultant.

AUDIENCE SEGMENTS

- Industry