

## TOPIC: Race and Equity

### POSITION STATEMENT

Black travelers have been under-prioritized, and Virginia is changing that.

### SUGGESTED USE

- Why is Virginia only focused on the Black traveler's experience?
- Why is Virginia investing in this work?

### CORE MESSAGES

- Black travelers as a group have been overlooked and underserved in tourism. Creating a more inclusive and equitable travel experience for Black travelers is not only the right thing to do, but it also represents a significant tourism opportunity for the state.
- Because of our unique role in the history of race in America, it is important that we prioritize making all travelers, especially Black travelers, feel welcome, safe and that they belong here when they visit.
- There are non-Black travelers that represent a growing population segment that values inclusive experiences at destinations, attractions and sites.
- Virginia is committed to telling the whole story of our history in an inclusive, authentic way.

### PROOF POINTS

- Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) sponsored a global travel study, *The Black Traveler: Insights, Opportunities & Priorities*, by MMGY Global, which benchmarked the size and spending power of the Black travel market in the U.S.
- 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).
- In 2019, Black leisure travelers took an average of three overnight vacations and spent an average of 13.1 nights in paid accommodations. Black travel parties spent an average of \$600 on each overnight leisure stay, with an

average stay of 2.5 nights for each trip (*The Black Traveler: Insights, Opportunities & Priorities* by MMGY Global).

- 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.
- VTC sponsored a study by Share More Stories, *The Black Travel Experience*, that analyzed the Black traveler experience in Virginia to help sites and destinations better understand this audience segment and engage with Black travelers in a more authentic and equitable way.
- Industry professionals across the state have participated in educational sessions designed to help the industry better understand the Black traveler experience and how to improve it at their locations
- VTC has developed website content that highlights great experiences for connecting with Black culture and tools to help travelers plan those experiences.

## **AUDIENCE SEGMENTS**

- Black travelers
- Non-Black travelers interested in inclusive experiences
- Non-Black travelers who don't understand or appreciate inclusive experiences
- Industry