

## TOPIC: Race and Equity

### POSITION STATEMENT

Virginia wants Black travelers to seek out Virginia as a vacation destination.

### SUGGESTED USE

- Does Virginia want Black travelers to visit?
- Why should Black people visit Virginia?
- Are there diverse things for Black travelers to do in Virginia (beyond just exploring history about slavery)?

### CORE MESSAGES

- Black travelers are a group that has been overlooked and underserved in tourism. They represent a significant opportunity for Virginia.
- Virginia is focused on creating a more authentic and equitable experience for Black travelers.
- We recognize that Black people are not monolithic, so we want to make sure all sites and destinations make Black travelers feel welcome, a sense of belonging and safe.
- Virginia is the place to connect with yourself, your relationships, your roots and your world. In addition to history, Virginia offers authentic experiences to reconnect through vibrant cities, food and drink, outdoor recreation, arts and culture, spas, beaches and more.
- We also know that Black travelers want to be able to connect with their culture, so Virginia has experiences designed to highlight and celebrate Black culture.

### PROOF POINTS

- 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).
- With Governor Northam's creation of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in 2019, 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 our Commonwealth.

- Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) is actively working to engage Black travelers authentically through the messaging and content on virginia.org, its travel blog, social media accounts, campaign ads, and other consumer-facing collateral.
- VTC is developing website content that highlights great experiences for connecting with Black culture and tools to help travelers plan those experiences.
- VTC has created a Black travel section on its industry site which provides research reports for partners.
- Examples of events/festivals that celebrate Black culture include the 2nd Street Festival, Something in the Water, Hampton Jazz Festival, Richmond Jazz and Music Festival, Shagfest, Afrikana Film Festival, HBCU Homecomings, and others.
- 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.

## **AUDIENCE SEGMENTS**

- Black travelers