

## **Fiscal Year 2020-2021 through FY 2024-2025**

### ***Agency/Program Vision Statement***

The Louisiana Office of Tourism’s vision is to market and promote the brand of *Feed Your Soul* showcasing Louisiana as a travel destination, increasing revenue generated by the tourism industry, and contributing to the economic impact of tourism in all 64 parishes.

### ***Agency/Program Mission Statement***

The Louisiana Office of Tourism will have a tremendous economic impact on local economies. To economic benefits like new businesses, jobs and higher property values, tourism adds less tangible—but equally important—payoffs. A well-managed tourism program improves the quality of life as residents take advantage of the services and attractions tourism adds. The office will promote community pride, which grows as people work together to develop a thriving tourist industry.

### ***Agency/Program Philosophy***

The Louisiana Office of Tourism is a multi-pronged agency charged with leading Louisiana’s large and diverse tourism industry. The Office of Tourism partners with tourism professionals and industry stakeholders in private and public sectors to extend and enhance their efforts to reach domestic and international travel trade and consumers.

The Louisiana Office of Tourism promotes economic growth of Louisiana through the implementation of a variety of specialized programs designed to encourage visitation to the state and increase visitor spending. These programs include: the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area, Louisiana Trails and Byways, Audubon Golf Trail, Retire Louisiana Style, as well as the many sections of the Louisiana Office of Tourism that work on a daily basis with tourism partners to develop opportunities around the world to promote and market Louisiana. These include: Communications, Research, Sales, Advertising and the network of Louisiana Welcome Centers. These combined efforts implement tasks ranging from in-state, domestic and international marketing and promotion to the creation and support of new tourism product and tourism industry initiatives.

### ***Agency/Program Goal***

Ensure that there is a balance between tourism and regional community lifestyle, through promotion of the community’s values of sustainability, lifestyle and connectivity:

- Increase length of stay, visitor expenditure (yield), dispersal (geographical and seasonal) and market share;
- Leverage economic benefits from Louisiana natural attractions, major events while also improving and developing innovative and sustainable man-made attractions;
- Continue to strengthen partnerships and working relationships with stakeholders in the region;
- Develop tourism programs that meets the needs and expectations of visitors and local communities in order to improve visitor experience;
- Maintain research program which measures the economic, cultural, and social benefits and impacts of tourism as well as measurement of visitor profile and trends. The research program will continue on an ongoing basis;
- To conduct an ongoing promotional campaign of information, advertising and marketing to create and sustain a positive image and understanding of Louisiana (R.S. 15:1255); and
- Develop the professionalism of the tourism industry in the region in terms of customer service, internationally ready product; and accreditation.

**Program A: Administration**

**Program Mission:** The mission of the Administration program of the Office of Tourism is to coordinate the efforts and initiatives of the other programs in the Office of Tourism with the advertising agency, the other agencies with the department, and other public and private travel industry partners in order to achieve the greatest impact on the tourism industry in Louisiana.

**Program Goal:** The Administration program will derive the maximum return on investment from the dollars invested in tourism advertising and promotion by the Office of Tourism.

**Program Objective:**

**Objective 1:** Increase the amount of spending by visitors by 18 percent from \$18.8 billion in 2019 to \$22.1 billion in 2025.

<b>Program Activity:</b>	Administration
<b>State Outcome Goal:</b>	Economic Development

**Objective 1: Increase the amount of spending by visitors by 18 percent from \$18.8 billion in 2019 to \$22.1 billion in 2025.**

**Program A:** Administration

**Program Activity:** Administration

**State Outcome Goal:** Economic Development

**Strategies:**

- 1.1 Seek out best practices, innovative solutions and models for efficiency to better manage the Office of Tourism.
- 1.2 Establish ambitious but realistic annual goals for the advertising and public relations agencies, and require the agency to report progress on these goals.
- 1.3 Coordinate all programs within the Office of Tourism to ensure maximum efficiency of resources in meeting all goals and objectives.
- 1.4 Establish regular benchmarks/standards for quality of performance by the advertising agency, such as campaign reports, click-through-rate, cost-per-acquisition, and advertising recall, and insure that these benchmarks/standards are driving the direction of the advertising.
- 1.5 Improve the communications between the advertising agency and the Office of Tourism through weekly conference calls.
- 1.6 Assure a quality tourism website and make improvements that afford visitors a state-of-the-art experience as well as access to up-to-date information.
- 1.7 Seek out innovative technologies that provide better customer service opportunities, attract new markets and assist with other tourism marketing initiatives.

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**Indicators:** Direct visitor spending by visitors to Louisiana  
Number of visitors to Louisiana

**Output:** Number of visitors to Louisiana

**Outcome:** Direct visitor spending by visitors to Louisiana

**Program B: Marketing**

**Program Mission:** It is the mission of the Marketing program of the Office of Tourism to provide advertising and publicity for the assets of the state of Louisiana; to design, produce, and distribute advertising materials through all media; and to reach as many potential tourists as possible with an invitation to visit Louisiana.

**Program Goal(s):**

1. The Marketing program will increase the number of visitors to Louisiana by 2025.
2. The Marketing program will increase the number of jobs in the tourism industry by 2025.

**Program Objectives:**

**Objective 1:** Increase the number of visitors to Louisiana by 20 percent from 51.3 million in 2019 to 61.6 million in 2025.

**Program Activity:** Advertising  
**State Outcome Goal:** Economic Development

**Objective 2:** Increase the number of jobs within the Louisiana tourism industry by 10 percent from 238,800 in 2019 to 262,680 in 2025.

**Program Activity:** Communications  
**State Outcome Goal:** Economic Development

**Objective 3:** Increase the number of rounds of golf played at Audubon Golf Trail (AGT) courses to 325,000 annually by 2025.

**Program Activity:** Audubon Golf Trail  
**State Outcome Goal:** Economic Development

**Objective 1: Increase the number of visitors to Louisiana by 20 percent from 51.3 million in 2019 to 61.6 million in 2025.**

**Program B: Marketing**

**Program Activity: Advertising**

**State Outcome Goal: Economic Development**

**Strategies:**

- 2.1 Contract with professional advertising and public relations firms to develop and implement campaigns and news publications, in conjunction with LOT.
- 2.2 Explore new and emerging domestic and international markets.
- 2.3 Increase the number of international and domestic sales missions and familiarization tours.
- 2.4 Continue LOTs presence at strategically important domestic and international trade shows.
- 2.5 Continue ongoing support of new events, attractions and special events within Louisiana through grant programs.
- 2.6 Coordinate marketing programs with the State convention and visitor bureaus.
- 2.7 Create strong authentic themes and messages to promote Louisiana as a top-of-mind destination.
- 2.8 Develop and promote programs that encourage longer overnight visitation.
- 2.9 Continue sponsorship and marketing cooperative opportunities with private-sector sponsors.

**Indicators:** State taxes collected from visitor spending (in millions)

Total mail & telephone inquiries, signals of intent to visit, and walk-ins

Click-Through-Rate

Amount of expenditures in Louisiana by U.S. resident visitors

Amount of expenditures in Louisiana by international visitors

Number of U.S. resident visitors

Number of Canadian and overseas visitors

**Outputs:** Total mail, telephone, internet inquires and walk-ins

Number of U.S. resident visitors

Number of Canadian and overseas visitors

**Outcomes:** State taxes collected from visitor spending (in millions)

Amount of expenditures in Louisiana by U.S. resident visitors

Amount of expenditures in Louisiana by international visitors

**Efficiency:** Click-Through-Rate

**Objective 2: Increase the number of jobs within the Louisiana tourism industry by 10 percent from 238,800 in 2019 to 262,680 in 2025.**

**Program B:                      Marketing**

**Program Activity:              Communications**

**State Outcome Goal:        Economic Development**

**Strategies:**

- 3.1      Create external communications through distributing and publishing newsletters and maintaining relationships with industry partners and stakeholders.
- 3.2      Encourage more cruise lines, airlines and hotel chains to expand business into Louisiana.
- 3.4      Collaborate with local communities to prepare employees to attract visitors interested in Louisiana tourism activities.
- 3.5      Develop other educational outreach programs for the Louisiana tourism industry, such as workshops for social media.
- 3.6      Monitor all advertising results through various annual research methods, such as website conversion studies, mid and post-flight campaign reports, inquiry tracking reports, and utilize the findings from the research to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the advertising.
- 3.7      Develop value-added products from byways systems and advertise byways to promote the use of Louisiana's most scenic roadways.
- 3.8      Maintain micro-websites to assess in the promotion of niche-markets.

**Indicators:** Hotel/motel room nights sold

Number of people employed in travel and tourism industry in Louisiana

**Input:**                      Hotel/motel room nights sold

**Outcome:**                Number of people employed in travel and tourism in Louisiana

**Objective 3: Increase the number of rounds of golf played at the Audubon Golf Trail courses to 325,000 annually by 2025.**

**Program B:**                      **Marketing**

**Program Activity:**            **Audubon Golf Trail**

**State Outcome Goal:**        **Economic Development**

**Strategies:**

- 4.1    Implement a comprehensive marketing program which may include:
  - Social Media
  - Print Ads
  - Outdoor Advertisement
  - Online promotion
  - Trade Shows
  - Journalist FAM trips
- 4.2    Align AGT with a nationally recognized Louisiana resident Golf Professional to serve as the public face for AGT.
- 4.3    Develop interagency, intra-agency and public-private collaborations to help advance the awareness of the AGT.
- 4.4    Uphold the standards of each of the golf courses participating on the AGT through the use of regularly review courses with course managers.
- 4.5    Develop participation programs with AGT courses.
- 4.6    Add three new member courses across the state to the AGT.
- 4.7    Create sponsorship and marketing cooperative opportunities with private-sector sponsors.

**Indicators:** Annual number of rounds of golf played on AGT courses  
Percent increase in rounds of golf played

**Input:**                      Percent increase in rounds of golf played

**Outcome:**                Annual number of rounds of golf played on AGT courses

## **Program C: Welcome Center**

**Program Mission:** The mission of Louisiana’s Welcome Centers, located along major highways entering the state and in two of Louisiana’s largest cities, is to provide a safe, friendly environment in which to welcome visitors and provide them information about area attractions and to encourage them to spend more time in the state.

### **Program Goal(s):**

1. The Welcome Center program will provide a safer, friendlier environment in which an increasing number of travelers can learn more about Louisiana’s food, culture, and attractions.
2. The Welcome Center program will provide the highest quality, customer service at each center.

### **Program Objectives:**

**Objective 1:** Increase the number of welcome center visitors by 20 percent from 750,000 in 2019 to 825,000 in 2025.

**Program Activity:** Welcome Center  
**State Outcome Goal:** Economic Development

**Objective 2:** Maintain average length of stay by welcome center visitors at 2.0 nights from 2019 to 2025.

**Program Activity:** Welcome Center  
**State Outcome Goal:** Economic Development

**Objective 1: Increase the number of welcome center visitors by 20 percent from 750,000 in 2019 to 825,000 in 2025.**

**Program C:** Welcome Center

**Program Activity:** Welcome Center

**State Outcome Goal:** Economic Development

**Strategies:**

- 5.1 Maintain the current level of travel counselor staff at each welcome center and add additional counselors, maintenance personnel, and custodians to larger centers as needed.
- 5.2 Provide a more inviting atmosphere to the exterior of the centers by improving the landscaping, adding interpretive exhibits, and enhancing the interior design.
- 5.3 Encourage visitors to sign the visitor book.
- 5.4 Work with DOTD in providing 24-hour security officers at all interstate rest areas in which a Welcome Center resides.

**Indicators:** Total visitors to welcome centers  
Number of Welcome Center Travel Counselors  
Number of welcome centers

**Input:** Number of Welcome Center Travel Counselors  
Number of welcome centers

**Output:** Total visitors to welcome centers

**Objective 2: Maintain the average length of stay by welcome center visitors at 2.0 nights from 2019 to 2025.**

# **Program C:**                      **Welcome Center**  
**Program Activity:**            **Welcome Center**  
**State Outcome Goal:**        **Economic Development**

**Strategies:**

- 6.1 Provide appropriate preventative maintenance of facilities.
- 6.2 Management of workforce schedules to maximize efficiency.
- 6.3 Manage overall operating cost.

**Indicators:** Cost per visitor  
Average length of stay for welcome center visitors

**Outcome:** Average length of stay for welcome center visitors  
**Efficiency:** Cost per visitor

## Office of Tourism Supporting Documentation

**A. Statement identifying the principal clients and users of each program and program objective and the specific service or benefit derived by such persons or organizations:**

As specified in its enabling legislation, the Office of Tourism is established to help the Louisiana economy grow by promoting Louisiana as a travel destination, thereby helping the Louisiana travel industry. Therefore, the Office of Tourism's clients are hotels, restaurants, attractions, convention and visitor bureaus and others within the travel industry, who depend on hospitality as their livelihood. Louisiana visitors are the Office of Tourism's clients since they depend on the Office's literature for information about Louisiana, and they depend on the Office's Welcome Centers as a safe, clean environment in which to learn more about what Louisiana has to offer.

**B. List of external variables:**

The successful accomplishment of the goals and objectives described within this document is heavily dependent upon a number of external variables. For example, travel and tourism must respond to global events, financial considerations, changing demographics, and traveler preferences in order to be effective. Also, national and international lifestyle/life stage trends can affect travel and tourism, such as the increasing/decreasing amount of leisure time available or the increasing number of people under the age of 35 and over age 55 within the U.S. population. National and international transportation trends and/or crises, such as airline disasters or airline fare wars can have either a positive or negative impact on travel to Louisiana. National and international man-made crises such as travel advisories due to war or terrorism can have an adverse impact; so can natural disasters, such as hurricanes or oil spills, which may cause temporary but significant changes in travel patterns. National and international media stories about Louisiana may significantly alter awareness of Louisiana as a travel destination.

**C. Statement of how duplication will be avoided when the operations of more than one program are directed at achieving a single goal, objective or strategy:**

All three programs within the Office of Tourism work in coordination to accomplish all goals and objectives identified within this plan. There is no duplication; rather there is a dependence on one another to handle complex tasks that are integral to the program's success.

**D. Statement of how the plan will derive management decisions and other agency processes:**

The strategic planning process continues to provide the impetus for the agency to evaluate opportunities for improved and increased service to the public armed with a clear mission; thorough self-assessment and stakeholder analysis; the agency formulated strategies; and priorities to achieve the goals described in the plan. As a result of the planning process, the agency has focused a new proactive approach to management of its resources. Annually, the agency will measure the effectiveness of the strategies in the attainment of the desired outcomes. Based on the measurements, and taking into account the impact of any external variables, the agency will be able to determine the need to modify its strategies and reallocate resources.

**E. Authorizations for each goal:**

All goals within the Office of Tourism are authorized under R.S. 36:4, R.S. 36:201 et seq, R.S. 51:1251 et seq.

**F. Documentation as to the validity, reliability and appropriateness of each performance indicator and how such will drive decision-making and other agency processes:**

The following is a list of primary performance indicators and their rationale, validity, reliability and appropriateness:

*1. Number of visitors to Louisiana* - The number of U.S. residents taking a trip to or within Louisiana that is at least 50 miles away from their residence and the number of international residents who visit Louisiana while on their trip within the U.S. The source for U.S. resident visitors is from the Louisiana Visitor Volume and Spending Report by D.K. Shifflet and Associates. The source for international visitors is from the National Travel & Tourism Office I-94 Publication and Survey of International Air Travelers to the U.S.-overseas and U.S. - Mexican markets, and Tourism Economics reporting of Canadian residents. All sources are widely used within the travel industry and are valid and reliable sources.

*2. Number of inquiries* - The number of brochures and other materials sent to potential travelers who have requested further information as the result of an advertisement or by some other source. Inquiries are subdivided into several categories. For example, consumer inquiries are the result of Advertising within consumer print publications and electronic media. Trade inquiries are the result of Advertising within travel trade publications. Internet inquiries are those inquiries left on the Office of Tourism's web site. Mail inquiries are those inquiries received from inquirers who sent either a business reply card or a letter requesting travel information. Generating inquiries is a primary goal of advertising; therefore, measuring the number of inquiries is a valid and effective method for determining the performance of advertising. Inquiry tracking reports are generated monthly by the Office of Tourism.

*3. Amount of expenditures in Louisiana by all visitors* - The exchange of money or the promise of money for goods or service while traveling, including any advance purchase of public transportation tickets, lodging or other items normally considered incidental to travel, but which may be purchased in advance of the trip. Expenditures are measured annually by D.K. Shifflet and Associates, the results of which are obtained by the Office of Tourism. The company has been used by the Office of Tourism for more than three years as a measurement of growth within the Louisiana travel industry.

*4. Ad Recall from high BDI markets* - Advertising recall from those areas which are most heavily advertised. This indicator comes from an Assessment of the Effectiveness of Louisiana's Tourism Advertising/Marketing Promotional Campaign. It is a qualified random sample mailed survey of households within those markets in which an adult in the household is asked a series of questions regarding Louisiana's advertising. Ad recall is an industry standard used for measuring the effectiveness of ad campaigns.

*5. Number of people employed directly in travel and tourism* - The number of jobs attributable to travel and tourism in Louisiana are determined monthly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for leisure and hospitality and seasonally adjusted.

*6. Average cost per inquiry packet* - The advertising packet cost is determined by adding the following: a) the handling cost per packet derived from the ad agency fulfillment/telemarketing cost and dividing by the number of packets fulfilled; b) add the cost of the inquiry packet items (tour guide and map); and c) add the average postage cost.

*7. Hotel Room Demand* - The actual number of room nights sold for a period of time. The Office of Tourism uses the research from a national hospitality research company (STR, Inc.) to determine the number of room nights sold by hotels in Louisiana. This figure is monitored on a monthly basis and

comparisons are made with national trends as well as competing states. The percentage change in room nights sold provides an insight into increased tourism business in Louisiana.

*8. Number of welcome center visitors* - Visitors who enter any of Louisiana's 10 state welcome centers are asked to sign a registration sheet and record the number of people in their travel party, the state they are from, and the number of nights they are planning to stay in Louisiana. These sheets are then compiled into monthly reports in which the number of visitors and their state/country of origin are recorded. These reports serve as a measurement of how many visitors have come into the center. Monthly, calendar year and fiscal year reports are developed and provide standard measures for periodic performance.

*9. Cost per welcome center visitor* - The amount of dollars spent for staffing and operating welcome centers divided by the number of welcome center visitors determines the cost per welcome center visitor. While some differences exist between centers due to location and highway traffic volume, this performance indicator is still valid when tracked through time.

*10. Average length of stay for welcome center visitors* - The average number of nights welcome center visitors stayed in Louisiana while on their trip to Louisiana. This indicator is determined by comparing the number of visitor parties with the number of nights each party stays in Louisiana. This information is obtained from the visitor sign-in sheet located in each welcome center and reported monthly to the Communications and Research section.

*11. Advertising Return on Investment (ROI)* – An indicator derived from a survey of recent visitors to Louisiana. The ROI involves calculations of the following factors: 1) the number of Louisiana visitors' households who have seen a Louisiana advertisement and admitted that it had a positive impact on their trip; 2) average household expenditures on trip to Louisiana; 3) average expenditures for taxes from visitor spending; and 4) actual spending by the Office of Tourism for advertising placement and production.

*12. Number of inquiry packets mailed* - This is very similar to the number of inquiries but is broken into categories by mail delivery, such as bulk-rate packets, first-class packets and international packets. The mix of these packets has a significant impact on how much time it takes for inquirers get their LOT travel guide. For example, the large majority of travel guides are mailed using the U.S. Post Office's bulk rate system. This system is the least expensive method but is also the slowest. Domestic inquirers who do not indicate that their trip is within three weeks are sent travel guides using this method. Domestic inquirers who indicate that their trip is within three weeks of their request for information will receive their travel guide via first-class postage. International inquirers will be sent a travel guide via a private mail carrier.

## **G. Glossary of Terms**

**BDI** –Business Development Index. It is an indexing procedure used to prioritize geographic areas for marketing purposes. An area receiving a higher index value indicates a higher potential for receiving more visitors from that area.

**CGP** – Competitive Grant Program. The program provides matching grants to reimburse a percentage of the actual cost of qualifying marketing expenses associated with the promotion of a tourism event. The goal of the program is to encourage and support marketing initiatives for tourism events that attract and retain visitors to the state and have a positive impact on Louisiana's economy.

**CMP** – Cooperative Marketing Program. A program which allows Convention and Visitors' Bureaus and, in some instances, industry members to buy at a special rate into cooperative advertising pages in magazines and newspapers.

**Cost per Inquiry** – The cost associated with an advertisement (usually the placement cost only) divided by the number of inquiries. For example, Ad X costs \$5,900 to place within the March issue of Southern Travel magazine. The ad generated 1,000 inquiries from readers wanting a copy of the Louisiana Tour Guide. Therefore, the cost per inquiry for that ad was \$5.90.

**CVB** – Convention and Visitors Bureau. A CVB is a non-profit organization supported by transient room taxes, government budget allocations, private memberships or a combination of any of these funding mechanisms. A CVB promotes tourism by encouraging groups to hold meetings, conventions and trade shows in its city.

**FAM** – Familiarization Tour. A complimentary or reduced-rate travel program for group tour operators, travel agents, travel writers, etc. designed to acquaint them with a specific destination in order to promote sales for that area. The suppliers on the itinerary usually provide their services at no charge. Area or state tourist commissions usually organize FAM tours.

**LTA** – Louisiana Travel Association. A non-profit, private-sector trade association representing the state's travel and hospitality industry. LTA offers cooperative programs to assist businesses by helping to assess needs and planning marketing strategies.

**Louisiana Tour Guide** – The primary fulfillment piece for LOT, the Louisiana Tour Guide is sent to more than a million people who call or write to express an interest in visiting Louisiana. The guide contains helpful information and advertising which is available to any tourism business. This piece is published annually in January.

**Media Placement Budget** – The amount of money used for buying advertising in television media (time) and print media (space). This budget does not include the actual production (design, photos, etc.) of the ad.

**Sales Mission** – A marketing strategy in which a number of coordinated promotions are conducted sequentially either in an area with high market potential and/or directed at a group of people with great potential to bring a large volume of people to Louisiana. For example, for a sales mission directed at French-speaking Canadians, Louisiana tourism officials may travel to Canada and participate in various radio and TV shows, a travel trade reception and direct meetings with key tour operators.

**Byways** – Part of a federal/state program to preserve rich rural heritage. Roads that receive this prestigious designation must meet stringent national standards. The byways, which cross almost every area of the state, cover many of Louisiana's most beautiful scenery.

**Tour Operator** – A company which creates and/or markets inclusive tours whose responsibilities include advertising, selling, folder distribution and reservation operations of a tour. Many tour operators sell through travel agents and directly to clients.

**Tourism** – The business of providing and marketing services and facilities for travelers.

**Travel Agent** – A company or individual selling travel services and representing transportation, accommodation and/or tour operators.

**Tourism Summit** – An annual statewide conference sponsored by the Louisiana Travel Association in which the Louisiana travel industry meets to exchange ideas and plans for promoting tourism.

**Visitor** – A visitor is any person who travels at least 50 miles from his residence for the purpose of entertainment, vacation, personal business and/or attending a meeting, conference, seminar or some other business function that is not routine. Travel involving commuting to work, foreign students, seasonal employment or any routine work-related travel (such as pilots or delivery truck drivers) is not recorded as travel/tourism.

**Welcome Center** – A program within the Office of Tourism that provides direct information to potential and actual visitors to Louisiana via the 10 state welcome centers around the state (seven are on interstate highways near the state’s borders; one is on major U.S. highway near St. Francisville; and two are in major cities: New Orleans and Baton Rouge).

**H. Program evaluation used to develop objectives and strategies:**

In establishing its objectives and strategies, the agency referred to the *Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism’s Annual Report*. Also, numerous other reports were consulted to determine performance indicators, such as the *Tourism Spending in Louisiana Parishes, The University of New Orleans, 2018*; *Louisiana Visitor Volume & Spending Report, D.K. Shifflet, 2018*; and *Louisiana Economic Impact, Tourism Economics, 2018*.