



EDA TOURISM GRANT OVERVIEW

March 22, 2022

**RHODE
ISLAND**
COMMERCE

Rhode Island Tourism Trends – KPIs

- 2019 visitation = 26.2 million; tourism generated \$843 million in state and local taxes.
- 2020 visitation = 21.0 million; tourism generated \$597 million in state and local taxes.
- Hotel occupancy statewide was up 15.8% in 2021 compared to 2020 (43.9% to 59.7%) and down by 5.8% vs 2019 (65.5%).
- 2021 state hotel tax brought in slightly higher revenue vs 2019 (\$27.9M vs \$27.8M).
- Meal Taxes were up 32% in 2021 vs 2020 (\$30.3M vs \$ 23.0M) and up 3% 2021 vs 2019 (\$29.5M).
- Tourism spending in December 2021 was up by 4% compared to December of 2019 – trending ahead of the national average of 2%. This is the first month since March 2020 that overall tourism spending has reached above 2019.
- According to Tourism Economics, Rhode Island travel spending in December 2021 compared to December 2019, outpaced CT (-5%) and MA (-15%).

U.S. Travel Forecast

- Share of 2019 Travel Forecast

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
TOTAL # OF TRIPS	100%	67%	80%	90%	99%	104%	106%
DOMESTIC PERSON TRIPS	100%	68%	81%	91%	99%	104%	105%
LEISURE	100%	76%	91%	94%	101%	104%	106%
BUSINESS	100%	39%	45%	76%	92%	102%	102%
AUTO	100%	71%	83%	92%	100%	104%	105%
AIR	100%	42%	60%	77%	94%	102%	106%
INTERNATIONAL ARRIVALS	100%	24%	33%	71%	90%	102%	109%
CANADA	100%	23%	31%	77%	100%	112%	118%
MEXICO	100%	38%	57%	90%	97%	101%	102%
OVERSEAS	100%	19%	24%	60%	83%	98%	108%

RI Rebounds: \$13M for Tourism & Impacted-Industries

Program	Overview	Status
Hospitality, Tourism, and Events Grant Program	\$8M program to support targeted impacted industries in state--including hotels, tour operators, travel agencies, restaurants, event professionals, and arts/cultural institutions	Application portal is live at commerceri.com/rirebounds Application closes April 6
Placemaking	\$3M program to build “placemaking” attractions, events, and capital improvements to spur tourism and economic activity	Request for Proposals now live First round due March 23; second round due April 20
Tourism Marketing	\$2M to deploy marketing in collaboration with the Airport Corporation and tourism regions	Waiting for PRO approval. Deployment of funds in Q2 2022.

EDA Tourism Grant Overview (\$10.6M total)

- Grant will allow us to:
 - Support our economic recovery and growth through increased visitation and overnight stays.
 - Expand and improve current marketing efforts for the state.
 - Elevate our state and regional marketing technological capabilities.
 - Increase the shoulder and off-season calendar of events.
 - Support RIAC advertising of non-stop flights to Rhode Island.
 - Explore ways to connect visitors to areas of the state that have been historically transportation challenged.
 - Expand the practice of sustainable tourism.

\$10.6M – Key Areas of Focus

**Paid
Advertising**



\$3.0 M

**Tech Upgrades &
Collateral Refresh**



\$3.1 M

**New Attractions &
Destination Events**



\$3.7 M

**Strategic Analysis
&
Accessibility
Projects**



\$0.8 M

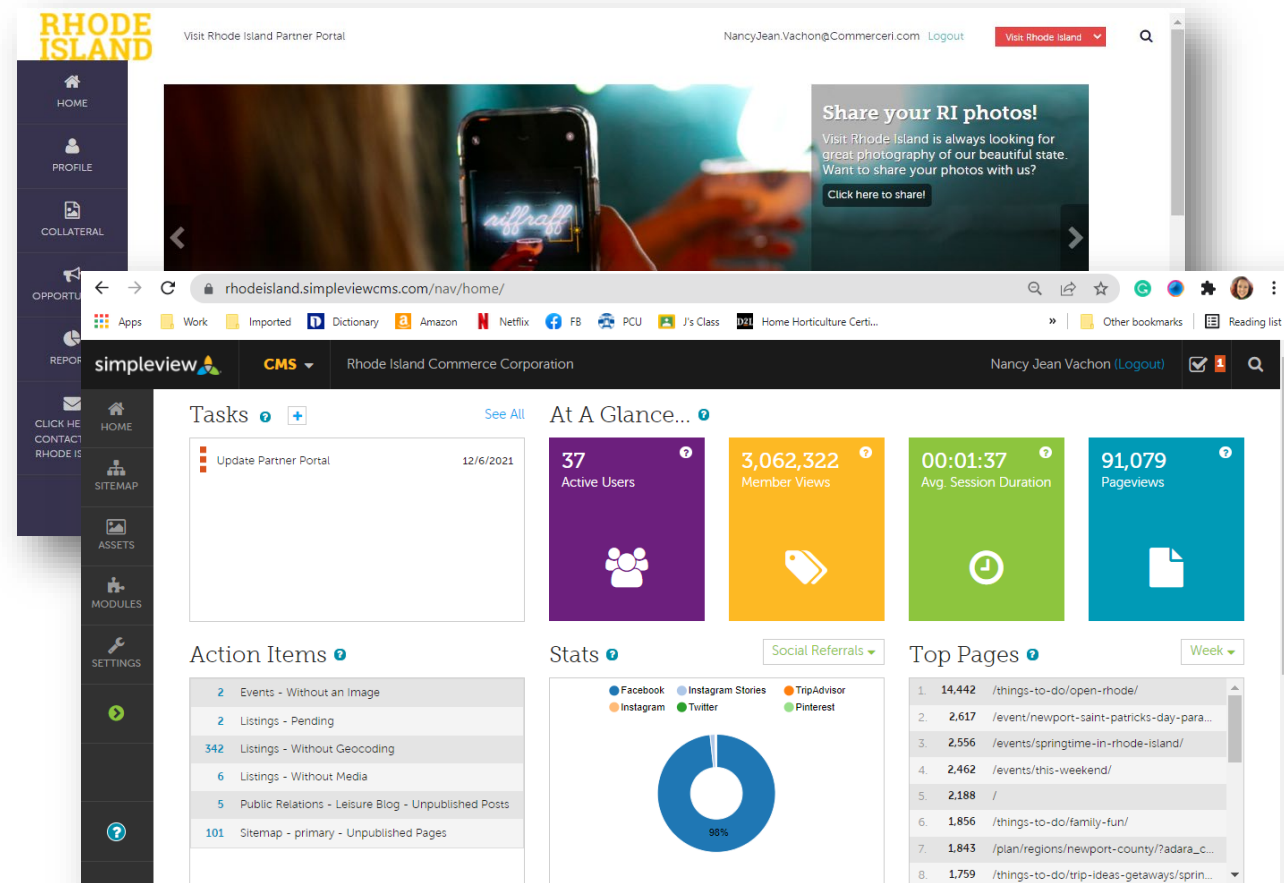
Paid Advertising

- Digital Advertising:
 - Drive market
 - Partnering with RIAC to support advertising in markets with non-stop flights to Rhode Island.
- Push off-season and shoulder events, in cooperation and coordination with the regional marketing efforts.
- Support new attractions that are being built, like the new world-class professional soccer stadium.
- Assist with regional initiatives such as ad campaigns promoting business travel, off season leisure travel, local restaurants, and sporting events.
- Awards to be disbursed to regions.



Tech Upgrades & Collateral Refresh

- Work to migrate all regions on to one website platform, Simpleview
- Simpleview platform backend upgrades including a dynamic itinerary function, 24-hour chat box
- Provide a Marketing dashboard for all regions and the airport
- Creation of a Rhode Island State Tourism App
- Secure database acquisition kiosks with gamification capabilities
- Collateral refresh via the execution of lifestyle and architectural photo shoots





New Attractions & Destination Events

Available to the 6 regional tourism boards as well as municipalities and non-profits who have the support of their relevant tourism region.

PHASE 1

\$2.7M available for grants via RFP process

- Bucket 1 = \$1.0 million – (for big ideas) awards up to \$500k
- Bucket 2 = \$1.7 million – no minimums

PHASE 2

\$1.0M available for large scale signature events

Strategic Analysis & Accessibility Projects

- Conduct RFPs for a statewide strategic marketing plan that includes a transportation and sustainability study/recommendations. Partner with regions to pilot projects for improved transportation accessibility.
 - Study transportation deficits to identify opportunities to create a stronger transportation infrastructure
 - Partner with regions to deploy pilot programs
 - Improve wayfinding from Rhode Island airport to various points of interest in the state
 - Create a statewide sustainable tourism action plan



Next Steps and Timeline

- Continue to work with the EDA Regional office on approval for all expenditures
 - Period of performance 11/8/2021 – 11/7/2025 (48 months per notice of award)
 - All EDA funds must be spent by 9/30/2027
- New Attractions & Destination Events RFP will be available end of Q2/beginning of Q3 2022



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THANK YOU!

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