

Background

About Visit California

The California Travel and Tourism Commission, doing business as Visit California, is a 501(c)6 nonprofit corporation formed in 1998 to market California as a desirable tourism destination. Visit California works in close coordination with California's Office of Tourism – while Visit California conducts marketing programs that drive visitation, the Office of Tourism oversees the assessment program that helps to fund these initiatives.

The budget for California's tourism marketing is funded by investors in five industry segments:

- Accommodations
- Attractions
- Passenger Car Rental
- Restaurants & Retail
- Travel Services

For more information about Visit California, go online at industry.VisitCalifornia.com.

To be inspired about travel within the state of California, go online at www.VisitCalifornia.com.

Mission

Visit California is a nonprofit organization with a mission to develop and maintain marketing programs – in partnership with the state's travel industry – that keep California top-of-mind as a premier travel destination.

Vision

Visit California will be the recognized source for statewide marketing planning and implementation, and information and support to California's vast travel and tourism industry, thereby maintaining California's position as one of the world's preeminent travel and tourism destinations.

Key Objective

Maintain and increase non-resident leisure travel and spending in California.

California is the **No. 1 travel destination** in the United States — and the first state in the nation to have more than \$100 billion in travel-related spending.

Dreaming Big for California

Visit California was established in 1998 as a coalition of travel industry interests with the mission of developing marketing programs that keep California top-of-mind as a premier travel destination. And it's working.

In 2015, **more than 258 million visitors to the state spent \$122.5 billion, a 3.4 percent increase over 2014.**

This spending resulted in \$9.9 billion in state and local tax revenues and jobs for more than 1 million Californians. Workers in the tourism industry earned \$42.2 billion.

California is the No. 1 travel destination in the United States — and the first state in the nation to have more than \$100 billion in travel-related spending — more than entire countries such as Australia, Turkey, South Korea and Canada.

History

1998

- California Travel and Tourism Commission established as a private-public joint marketing venture.

2001

- Industry referendum renews Visit California with 84 percent approval.

2007

- Visit California renewed by a 91 percent margin.
- Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signs AB 2592 into law, creating an assessment program for the passenger car rental industry, resulting in a total marketing budget of \$50 million.
- Marketing programs broaden to include California Wine & Food, as well as rural- and snow-focused campaign platforms.

2010

- “Five-Year Strategic Marketing Plan” published.
- Visit California board begins global media analysis.

2011

- Visit California transitions to become a division of the newly formed Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz).

2012

- China Ready program launched to prepare industry for growing numbers of Chinese tourists.
- Visit California board leaders launch effort to explore increasing funding to attract emerging markets.

2013

- Industry renews Visit California with 93 percent approval.
- Board unanimously approves “Dream Big Vision” to pursue additional funds.
- Consumer marketing launches in China and Mexico.

2014

- Industry ratifies Dream Big Dividend assessment rates.

2015

- Industry committees convene to develop Dream Big Dividend Activation Plan, which was adopted at the May 2015 Commission Meeting.
- Visit California opens three new offices, adding to the two existing offices in China (Chengdu, Guangzhou, Taipei, Beijing, Shanghai).
- Visit California expands global social media footprint with the onboarding of ICUC, a social media community management agency.

The successful efforts of Visit California will increase desire and ability for travelers to come to the state, while raising the overall profile of California around the world.

Visit California serves as the industry leader for more than 100 regional destination marketing organizations (DMOs) and thousands of businesses in the state that make money from traveler spending. Working in collaboration with these partners, Visit California provides a statewide platform with scalable marketing programs and unified messaging DMOs can leverage to broaden the state's overall reach to consumers around the world.

Welcoming millions of new visitors strengthens the state — by creating jobs essential to the economy that provide opportunities for Californians. In fact, travel and tourism businesses produced 36,000 new jobs in 2015. The travel workforce earned a combined \$42.2 billion in 2015 — furthering the economic reach of the overall visitor spend.

Boosting tourism also encourages critical infrastructure improvements and attracts strategic investment in the state, including significant economic development.

Visit California's primary objective to increase tourism is supported by the following principles that guide the program of work:

Guiding Principles

1. Do what the industry cannot do for itself.

Visit California will provide a statewide marketing and communications platform to promote the California brand, as well as the value of tourism, to consumers and media around the world. Visit California serves as the foremost authority on the travel and tourism industry in California, as well as the issues affecting it, engaging in opportunities that will elevate the profile of the industry and the state overall. By unifying industry leaders to raise the relevance of the travel industry, Visit California aims to elevate elected officials' perception of the importance of the industry.

2. Deliver value to and collaborate with tourism-related businesses.

Visit California will be a resource to the state's DMOs and assessed tourism businesses by providing marketing opportunities, web leadership, authoritative tourism research, messaging framework, networking opportunities and other resources vital to the success of their operations.

3. Build awareness and preference for the California brand to stimulate travel.

Visit California will develop marketing programs that attract new consumers to California through the power of the California brand, while boosting the image of California overall. A diverse array of Visit California-developed marketing programs will provide industry partners with opportunities to reach new markets that are otherwise cost-prohibitive.

4. Leverage all assets and alliances.

Visit California will introduce the California brand to far-reaching audiences and establish strategic alliances with trusted in-market brands. Partnerships support efforts to develop relationships and elevate California's overall image, through the media and other venues, with the goal of raising perceptions of California across the globe.

5. Use key metrics and ROI to inform the strategic direction of the program of work.

Visit California will track and evaluate market penetration and program impact on attracting leisure travelers to reinforce organization's value to travel-related businesses, as well as the state of California.

Figure 1-1 Industry Committees

Visit California Board Of Directors

Marketing Advisory Committee

Brand & Content
Committee

Sponsorship
& Marketing
Committee

Rural
Committee

International
Committee

Research
& ROI
Committee

Public
Relations
Committee

Snow
Committee

Welcome
Centers
Committee

Gateway
CEOs

Crisis Task
Force

Airlift Task
Force

Editorial Task
Force

Industry Committees

In 2014, a new committee structure was implemented to guide the process of determining next steps following the Dream Big Dividend Competitiveness Initiative vote. The committees were born out of a pair of stakeholder meetings held in fall 2014 where DMOs, assessed businesses and other industry partners gathered for interactive workshops to discuss how the Visit California Marketing Work Plan will scale in the Dream Big Dividend funding environment. The groups reviewed Visit California's guiding principles, brand platform and overall content strategy, analyzed new research and the marketing allocation platform and discussed new opportunities for partnerships and incentive travel.

That work continues to play a pivotal role in directing how the Dream Big Dividend funds are spent, including development of the Visit California Work Plan, which is presented to the full Commission for a vote each spring.

Industry representatives also support a wide range of request for proposals(RFP) across all Visit California work, including participation with 12 RFPs in FY15/16 for international representation, advertising, content, digital and measurement activities.

The committees include:

- **Research & ROI:** Working to validate data and methodologies used to support development and measurement of Visit California's marketing programs, including new Dream Big programming. Also advises on allocation of research funds.

Chair: Kerri Verbeke Kapich | Senior Vice President of Marketing & Strategic Partnerships, San Diego Tourism Authority

Vice Chair: Sheldon Duncan | Vice President of Marketing & Insights, Universal Studios Hollywood

- **Brand & Content:** Evaluates marketing programs, focusing on consumer targeting and profiling, global consumer advertising and consumer content programming.

Chair: Ted Molter | Chief Marketing Officer, San Diego Zoo Global

- **Sponsorship & Marketing Programs:** Reviews sponsorship and cooperative marketing programs, focusing on non-endemic sponsorship strategy, platform cooperative marketing programs and campaign cooperative marketing programs.

Chair: Agnelo Fernandes | Senior Vice President Sales & Marketing, Terranea Resort

Vice Chair: Matt Stiker | Chief Marketing Officer & SVP of Sales, City Pass

- **International:** Monitors all economic and other influences on, as well as the effectiveness of, California's international marketing efforts, while weighing in on ways to leverage Brand USA's global activity.

Chair: Howard Pickett | Executive Vice President & Chief Marketing Officer, San Francisco Travel

Vice Chair: Kristen Esposito | Vice President of Tourism Marketing & Development, Simon Property Group

- **Public Relations:** Assesses global consumer PR programs with emphasis on earned media, as well as ways to scale PR programs for the Dream Big budget.

Chair: Tim Zahner | Chief Marketing Officer, Sonoma County Tourism

- **Rural:** Reviews rural marketing program, including the Rural Regional Grant Program, Multi-Regional Grant Program and Beyond the Gateway destination positioning.

Chair: Ashlee Ciora | Vice President of Travel Industry Sales, Greater Palm Springs Convention & Visitors Bureau

Vice Chair: Terry Selk | Executive Director, Yosemite/Mariposa County Tourism Bureau

- **Snow:** Provides guidance on winter-specific marketing activity, including timing, messaging and content creation.

Chair: John Urdi | Executive Director, Visit Mammoth