



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT VISIT FLORIDA'S ROLE IN TOURISM

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1 How big is the tourism industry in Florida?

Florida is one of the nation's top vacation destinations, and tourism is Florida's No. 1 industry. In 2018, the state welcomed 124.7 million visitors and, based on the latest economic impact study, those visitors added \$86 billion to our state's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is more than the entire GDP of 12 states.

2 What are the industry's benefits to Florida residents?

Tourism supports 1.5 million jobs, roughly one of every six jobs in Florida. Their spending also generates revenue for state, county and municipal government services, relieving the burden of those programs falling solely on Florida taxpayers. Tourists, according to the U.S. Census Bureau and Rockport Analytics, save every household in Florida \$1,512 annually on state and local taxes.

3 What is VISIT FLORIDA, and what is its role in the industry?

VISIT FLORIDA is the state agency responsible for travel planning and marketing Florida's many tourist attractions and destinations to travelers around the world.

4 What is VISIT FLORIDA, and what is its role in the industry?

The Florida Legislature created VISIT FLORIDA as a not-for-profit corporation, a public-private partnership that matches dollar for dollar public monies with private funds through cooperative advertising campaigns, marketing programs and innovative ventures with airlines, hotels, tourist attractions, local convention and visitors' bureaus and other entertainment and travel-related businesses, including members of the South Florida Business Council.

5 What is the benefit of having an agency like VISIT FLORIDA?

Tourism is a very competitive global industry and, given its importance to Florida, our state needs to continue its coordinated efforts to compete with other vacation and business travel destinations. VISIT FLORIDA provides the state-level marketing to reach a diverse group of travelers that enhance similar campaigns of major tourist attractions, small and medium-sized markets. VISIT FLORIDA also protects Florida's tourism brand during natural crises by supporting state emergency response, including communicating life safety information directly to travelers through the web, social media and at the agency's welcome centers.

6 What are some of VISIT FLORIDA's targeted markets?

Among the 126 million travelers visiting Florida, 10.8 million are from overseas, a segment of the travel market that has increased recently. International travelers are vital to our economy because they typically stay longer and spend almost twice as much per person as domestic visitors. Our state is also a top destination for domestic visitors, including adventure travelers, families, beachgoers, Baby Boomers, Gen-Xers, Millennials and African American leisure travelers.

7 Name one of VISIT FLORIDA's more successful marketing campaigns?

Florida receives more overnight family travelers than any other state, and families make up one-third of Florida's domestic visitors. The agency's 2018 Family Memory Makers was VISIT FLORIDA's largest marketing investment in family travel. The campaign generated 1.1 billion impressions across the United States and the number of family trips to the state that year grew by 24.4 percent compared to 2017. The growth rate in previous years, according to TravelTrak America, hovered between 4.1 and 4.5 percent.



8 Why is there a move in the Florida Legislature to close VISIT FLORIDA?

State lawmakers, particularly in the Florida House of Representatives, have questioned previous promotional contracts and believe VISIT FLORIDA does not generate enough revenue from the amount of money spent on expenses, such as administrative and staff salaries, benefits, travel and related business expenses. The data suggests otherwise. For every \$1 invested in VISIT FLORIDA, \$2.15 is returned to the taxpayers, and VISIT FLORIDA matches each taxpayer dollar it receives with a dollar or more from the private sector.

9 What happens if the state fails to fully fund VISIT FLORIDA?

Funding for VISIT FLORIDA is set to end on June 30, 2020, and if state leaders allow VISIT FLORIDA to lapse into non-existence, it would have a chilling effect on tourism. Colorado, Pennsylvania and Washington made the mistake of either cutting their tourism marketing budget or eliminated their marketing programs altogether. Within four years, Colorado lost \$2.4 billion in traveler spending. Pennsylvania lost \$3.2 billion after five years and Washington saw the growth of its tourism spending and tax revenue from travel plummet. Florida shouldn't follow suit. VISIT FLORIDA needs to be re-authorized and fully funded for at least \$76 million annually for the next eight years.

10 What can the business sector do to keep this agency operating?

The South Florida business community can make a difference by making its voice heard. We urge the friends and members of the South Florida Business Council to contact their state representative and state senator and join such prominent organizations like Associated Industries of Florida, The Florida Chamber, The Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association and Florida TaxWatch to support full re-authorization of VISIT FLORIDA.