

Maximizing Charlotte's global tourism appeal and economic potential with Visa Destination Insights

Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority (CRVA) is responsible for promoting the "Queen City" as a top tourism destination and helping to fuel Charlotte's robust visitor economy via leisure travel, sports and convention events, and destination development. The organization has nearly 700 regional partners¹ and also manages several City of Charlotte-owned venues, such as the Charlotte Convention Center, NASCAR Hall of Fame, and Bojangles Entertainment Complex.²



Opportunity

[Growing Charlotte's international visitors by understanding trends and spending behavior patterns](#)

The CRVA is a data-driven organization with a finger on the pulse of visitor trends and motivators through its tourism industry research, but there are few resources available to CRVA to measure international visitor trends and growth patterns. To attract more international visitors to Charlotte in today's competitive travel landscape, CRVA looked to Visa Destination Insights to help create a targeted approach to connecting with international visitors while maximizing ROI.



Solution

[CRVA uses Visa Destination Insights to better understand visitor journeys](#)

With nearly 30 million visitors traveling to it annually,³ Charlotte is increasingly becoming one of the top travel destinations in the U.S.⁴ To sustain this growth in a highly competitive tourism environment, it is imperative for CRVA to make marketing investments that are strategically targeted and cost-effective.

Visa Destination Insights empowers CRVA with relevant spend intelligence — built from massive volumes of actual, depersonalized spend data — so they can better understand visitor behavior and spending habits, and drive better planning and decision-making. This array of information is available via an interactive web-based dashboard and easy-to-understand visualizations, allowing the team at CRVA to quickly find the insights they need.

Using Visa Destination Insights has also helped CRVA shift its approach from relying on anecdotal signals to utilizing timely, granular insights that help them uncover seasonal travel patterns and unique growth opportunities.

[Targeting specific international countries and educating partners on new trends](#)

Nearly one-third of all Charlotte's international travel comes from Canada. With the aim of making Charlotte a priority destination among Canadian travelers, CRVA engaged in a co-op promotional campaign connecting Canadian travelers with their apparent preferences and interests via several activities in Charlotte.

CRVA used Visa Destination Insights to identify restaurants & dining, hotels & lodging, and shopping as key spend categories for Canadian travelers in Charlotte. Restaurants & dining in particular saw a greater share of wallet for Canadian travelers than visitors from most other countries. These insights helped CRVA create targeted promotional campaigns, highlighting Charlotte's vibrant dining scene and exceptional local culinary experiences. From 2015 to 2019, pre-COVID, Canadian visitation to Charlotte increased by 4.1% on an annual basis.

The CRVA team also used these insights to help educate industry partners, such as hoteliers, tour operators, and event organizers, on seasonal travel patterns and spending behavior in order to better cater to traveler behaviors and interests. CRVA also trained their visitor info center employees on likely Canadian visitor preferences — for example, how Canadian tourists typically explore the city and spend their money — empowering info center employees to help create positive destination experiences.



Visa Destination Insights helps us make smart, targeted, and cost-effective marketing investments. As cross-border travel picks up, it is important that we deliver experiences that are highly personalized across key market segments, and the insights provided by Visa Destination Insights are indispensable to our ability to engage international audiences and drive visitor volume.

Heath Dillard
Director of Insights,
Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority



Results

Visa Destination Insights:

- Supports CRVA's understanding of share of wallet and spend trends of international visitors
- Bolsters CRVA's empowerment of tourism and merchant partners to deliver personalized travel experiences
- Helped CRVA achieve **4.1% YoY growth** over a four-year period in visitor volume from Canada by guiding a co-op promotional travel campaign

Visa Destination Insights helps Charlotte build deeper connections with international travelers

As Charlotte's technology sector and immigrant population continue to grow, CRVA has found ways to target a high percentage of international travelers who are visiting family. By using their own data with travel and spend behavior trends from Visa Destination Insights, CRVA creates local brand ambassadors – making them aware of the plethora of activities that Charlotte has to offer for international travelers.



Contact your
Visa Account Executive



Email us at
VisaDestinationInsights@visa.com



Visit <https://usa.visa.com/products/visa-destination-insights.html>

Sources

¹<https://www.crva.com/what-we-do/partners-in-tourism>

²<https://www.crva.com/our-brands>

³<https://www.crva.com/what-we-do/leisure-travel>

⁴https://travel.usnews.com/Charleston_SC/