

# National Travel & Tourism Strategy Update



2019

# Contents

<b>I. Promoting the United States .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>II. Enabling and Enhancing Travel and Tourism to and within the United States .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>III. Providing World-Class Customer Service and Visitor Experience.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>IV. Coordinating across Government.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>V. Conducting Research and Measuring Results.....</b>	<b>17</b>

# I. Promoting the United States

## Goal: Increase travel and tourism exports.

When foreign nationals visit the United States the goods and services they purchase are exports. Exports of goods and services in connection with the travel and tourism industry totaled \$256.1 billion in 2018, accounting for 31 percent of services exports.

Increasing travel and tourism to and within the United States, requires fostering additional demand for the product and providing travelers the information and resources they need to plan and execute their trips. The federal government plays a unique and essential role in promoting the American tourism product to potential travelers. Federal employees manage iconic destinations, facilitate and regulate travel systems, implement programs and policies that impact the travel and hospitality industry, monitor and regulate passage across our borders, and directly serve visitors at federally owned and managed tourist attractions. The depth and breadth of federal engagement in travel and tourism confers on the federal government a special opportunity to communicate with potential visitors using a consistent marketing message and a broad spectrum of media.

The federal role in promoting tourism is distinct and additive to that of Brand USA, which promotes travel and tourism to the United States by international visitors and assists the federal government in communicating travel requirements and policies. The federal government can supplement Brand USA's efforts by using its authority, messengers, and outlets to communicate the wealth of opportunities available to potential visitors and also how to plan a visit to our country.

Overseas travelers to the United States who visit national or tribal lands and waters tend to stay longer in the United States, to visit more destinations within the country, and are more likely to be repeat visitors to the United States. As the manager of many of these destinations, the federal government is in a unique position to reach these high-value customers.

The federal government is also well positioned to provide information about our laws and policies governing travel to the country. The perception that acquiring a U.S. visa is difficult is a barrier to increased travel and tourism, particularly in certain key growth markets where visitors may require U.S. visas. To combat misconceptions, the public and private sectors must work together to provide timely, engaging, and accurate information on the visa application process for both new and returning travelers.

Once potential travelers have embraced the idea of traveling to and within the United States, they need access to information on how to execute their trips. Although the sale and marketing of travel goods and services is largely the domain of the private sector (e.g., travel agents, hotels, and airlines), the public sector (e.g., recreation.gov and state and local tourism offices) plays an important role in communicating the diversity of travel experiences available in the United States. There are significant opportunities for new and existing public-private partnerships to amplify positive messaging and to realize synergies in our existing resource constrained environment. Continuous investment in federal travel and trip-planning digital platforms is necessary in order to keep pace with traveler needs and expectations.

The scope of federal efforts to promote the United States as a destination and help visitors plan their travel should be broad. Promotional efforts should highlight a wide variety of destinations that would entice visitors to extend their stays, from the well-known to those off the beaten path, near major metropolitan centers and in rural areas, in the continental United States as well as in Alaska, Hawaii, and the territories. A number of federal agencies can leverage existing programs and assets for promotion, including, for example the America's Byways® program, which showcases 150 distinct roadways that have significant historical, cultural, recreational, natural, archeological, and scenic beauty and provides themed and special interest itineraries. Amtrak also offers promotions and contests to showcase destinations, including national parks that are accessible by train

### **Strategy 1: Provide a Welcoming Entry Experience to Foreign Visitors**

Communicate through U.S. government officials and programs that the United States wants and welcomes international visitors.

▶ **Provide Accurate Information About Ease of Travel to the United States.**

Enable visitors to come to the United States by communicating accurate information about visa rules and regulations.

▶ **Engage Government Spokespersons.**

Engage officials at the highest levels of the federal government, including the President of the United States and ambassadors, to communicate that the United States wants visitors, and provide accurate information, a welcoming message and an invitation to visit.

### **Strategy 2: Engage with Brand USA and Leverage Partnerships**

Coordinate with Brand USA in its mission to promote international travel to the United States. Engage in public-private partnerships and partnerships with state, local, tribal, and territorial governments to provide promotional content and in-kind support, as well as to leverage resources for international and domestic marketing efforts.

▶ **Coordinate with Brand USA.**

Coordinate federal promotion efforts with Brand USA's marketing campaign, which will target our neighbors, Canada and Mexico; visa waiver countries and fast-growing economies. Provide information to Brand USA in support of its marketing and communication programs and activities.

▶ **Partner with Private Sector Entities.**

Coordinate promotional efforts with the travel and tourism industry. Use new and existing agreements to conduct joint promotions that match the unique assets and messengers of the federal government with the resources and expertise of travel and tourism businesses.

▶ **Partner with State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Governments**

Join non-federal tourism authorities in place-based and activity-based promotional campaigns. Provide grants and technical assistance to qualified public sector entities to support their efforts to attract and serve additional visitors.

### **Strategy 3: Enhance Federal Promotional Efforts**

Attract new international visitors, particularly from visa waiver countries and from fast-growing economies, and our neighbors, Canada and Mexico, as well as encourage more Americans to vacation within the United States

▶ **Coordinate Interagency Promotion.**

Establish a unified federal promotion effort in the international marketplace to encourage travel and tourism. Coordinate agency promotional efforts and use personnel and programs to amplify the message. Coordinate travel policy communications as well as marketing messages and programs, including tradeshows, familiarization tours, itineraries, and materials.

▶ **Provide Information About Destinations We Manage.**

Increase exposure by travelers and potential tourists to travel and tourism promotion materials for federally managed destinations. Cross promote American cities, parks, museums, and other points of interest. Develop and promote itineraries designed to appeal to visitors with interest in certain subjects, activities, historic events, or anchored by well-known and popular destinations.

### **Strategy 4: Provide User-Friendly Planning Tools and Resources**

Provide coordinated trip-planning information for end users, as well as portable data that partners can use to develop their own travel planning tools.

▶ **Update Data.**

Ensure information on federally-managed websites is comprehensive, reliable, and accessible to individual visitors and to application and program developers. Fully utilize existing databases to connect potential visitors with the range of sites, experiences, and resources available to travelers

▶ **Improve Tools.**

Continue to improve trip planning websites operated by federal agencies such as recreation.gov, nps.gov and the Bureau of Land Management's website for natural conservation lands.

## II. Enabling and Enhancing Travel and Tourism to and Within the United States

**Goal:** Reduce barriers to trade and make it safer and more efficient for visitors to enter and travel within the United States and its territories.

The federal government plays a primary role in addressing institutional barriers to international trade, including those impacting the travel and tourism industry. While travel and tourism is among the most liberalized sectors, some barriers to trade in travel and tourism services remain. For example, restrictions on airline entry, service levels, and the cities that can be served; the sale of outbound travel and packaged group travel; the use of enabling technologies; and the nationality of tour operators. To support growth in trade in the travel and tourism industry, the federal government should expand its efforts at working with foreign governments to identify and lower barriers to trade in travel services, including working towards incremental liberalization of aviation services and additional open-skies agreements and exploring cooperation agreements to increase travel flows.

The government is responsible for safeguarding the country from security threats while efficiently processing all persons seeking to travel to the United States. The federal government strives to provide all qualified visa applicants with an experience that promotes a positive image of the United States without compromising security. To achieve this, the Department of State has targeted important facilities for expansion, improved security and enhanced the vetting process for applicants, and has implemented a Global Support Strategy (GSS) covering 175 posts in 120 countries. GSS shifts parts of the application and document delivery process to contracted partners, improving efficiencies and enabling the Department of State to focus its staff and resources on conducting interviews and adjudicating applications while still providing consular officers with appropriate oversight. In particularly high-volume locations such as Mexico and India, GSS provides off-site biometric (fingerprint and photograph) collection, improving customer flow and freeing up window space for interviews at our embassies and consulates. In all covered locations, GSS provides consistent support services, including management and reporting tools that can be accessed by consular sections and in Washington, which allows consular staff to better manage interview appointments and backlogs. As of August 2019, posts utilizing GSS processed 98 percent of all visa applications.

The government can apply the lessons learned from the previous sharp rise in demand for visa services in China and Brazil to other instances where anticipated economic growth will spur significant demand for nonimmigrant visa services. New policies and initiatives designed to provide qualified visa applicants with a positive experience, while continually improving border security, will enable the government to keep pace with any growth in the demand for visas.

The federal officers who secure our nation's borders while facilitating the movement of legitimate travel and trade through our ports of entry have a unique opportunity to create a positive first impression of the United States, while maintaining the highest standards of security. The government is working to improve the arrival experience for passengers traveling to the United States through training, processing enhancements, automation, wait times measurement and posting, and the use of innovative technology.



Through the introduction of risk-based security programs and policies, and by leveraging the latest technologies and intelligence, the federal government can focus its efforts on those passengers who are unknown or who are higher risk, thereby enhancing the travel experience for known and trusted travelers. Passenger processing involves many layers, both seen and unseen, and the federal government has developed partnerships with local airport authorities, airlines, and the private sector to continuously assess and resolve challenges in aviation security operations. One way to streamline passenger processing and reduce wait times is to process expeditiously low-risk travelers, which frees resources to focus on remaining travelers. For example, the TSA's new expedited screening initiative, TSA Pre✓™ allows TSA to focus more attention on travelers about whom we know less, while providing expedited screening, and perhaps a better travel experience, for those travelers about whom we know more. In order to prevent potential terrorists from exploiting the system, TSA will always incorporate random and unpredictable security measures throughout the airport and no individual will be guaranteed expedited screening. Another example of a risk-based security program is CBP's Global Entry program, an effort through which qualified travelers provide more information to enroll, thereby allowing CBP officers to focus resources on screening other passengers.

A safe and reliable domestic transportation infrastructure allows U.S. citizens to travel within our country and connects international visitors to the many wonderful destinations located away from major ports of entry. To accommodate growing demand by domestic and international travelers, our transportation infrastructure must provide consistent and dependable service, minimize cost and energy consumption, and be safe, efficient, environmentally friendly, and resilient.

As the nation expands opportunities for travel and tourism, and energy prices potentially increase, pedestrian, multimodal, and mass-transit options will become even more important for travel and tourism. Federal grant programs and discretionary funds support the development of pedestrian and bicycle networks, streetcars, airport-downtown rail extensions, alternative transportation, and enhanced multimodal connections in cities and towns, on federal and tribal lands and America's Byways®. Infrastructure improvements directed at local residents and commuters, as well as those that provide access to rural areas, also enable travelers to visit less-prominent areas and to utilize alternative transportation modes.

## Strategy 1: Lower Barriers to Trade in Travel Services and Increase Travel Flows

▶ **Continue Aviation Liberalization.**

Continue open-skies outreach to additional aviation partners beyond our current partners, including working towards incremental liberalization with key remaining countries.

▶ **Identify Impediments to Growth in Key Markets.**

Coordinate with the private sector to identify and address challenges to the free flow of trade in travel and tourism services.

▶ **Engage with International Partners.**

Enter into cooperative agreements with governments in key markets to promote travel flows.

## Strategy 2: Streamline the Visa Application Process

▶ **Explore and implement internal programs to increase efficiency and security.**

Continue to refine GSS action plans to manage anticipated demand over the long term; incorporate visitor arrival projection data into visa demand projections for planning capacity improvements; and review lessons learned from the previous sharp increases in demand in China and Brazil.

▶ **Expand Consular Fellows Program.**

Investigate the possibility of expanding the Consulate Fellows Program to increase visa adjudication capacity.

▶ **Expand Existing Facilities, Consider Additional Visa-Processing Capability in China and India.**

Continue expansion projects in China and India, including the opening of a new consulate in Wuhan, China, opening a new facility with increased capacity in Shenyang, China, and expanding facilities in New Delhi and Hyderabad, India.

▶ **Increase Efforts to Expand the Visa Waiver Program and Travel by Nationals of VWP Countries.**

Continue to work with international partners such as Poland to meet VWP eligibility requirement; support congressional efforts that seek to appropriately and securely expand VWP; and support interagency efforts to increase travel by nationals of VWP countries.

▶ **Leverage Private and Federal Channels to Educate Foreign Publics.**

Continue existing public-private partnerships with travel and tourism private sector stakeholders to create materials to provide timely, engaging, and accurate information on the visa application process to potential visitors and continue consular staff outreach programs with host country nationals.



### Strategy 3: Improve Customer Service at Ports of Entry

▶ **Expand Trusted Traveler Enrollment.**

Increase enrollment in NEXUS, SENTRI, and Global Entry, which frees CBP resources to manage other travelers. Continue to work with external partners to expand trusted traveler programs.

▶ **Deploy Technology.**

Continue deployment of advanced technology at land borders.

▶ **Re-Engineer Processes.**

Improve the way processing takes place in all inspection environments and make continual assessments for process improvement. New technology, as well as improved programming and policies, such as initiatives that allow travelers to move more quickly through screening areas or prioritize passengers with urgent connections, can be developed, where port facilities allow, to enhance efficient and secure processing.

▶ **Prioritize Customer Service.**

Work internally to continue to maximize available resources to achieve greater efficiency while improving the overall traveler experience. Continue to make customer service at the ports of entry a priority, using the results of traveler satisfaction surveys and other data.

▶ **Leverage Partnerships.**

Develop and use partnerships with airlines, airports, travel and tourism industry representatives, and other travel stakeholders to continuously assess and tackle shared challenges and opportunities.

### Strategy 4: Enhance Passenger Screening

▶ **Expand Expedited Screening Initiative.**

Expand TSA Pre✓™ to additional airlines, airports, and populations of known travelers.

▶ **Develop and Use Risk-Based Approach.**

Focus resources and improve the passenger experience at security checkpoints by applying new intelligence-driven, risk-based screening procedures and enhancing use of technology. Strengthen partnership and communication with the travel and tourism industry, the traveling public and other key stakeholders to better develop, implement, and assess new initiatives, programs, and technologies.

## Strategy 5: Maintain and Improve Transportation Infrastructure

### ▶ **Initiate Pilot Aviation Cooperation Program.**

Expand the Department of Transportation's work with the European Union and China to implement the recommendations of the Secretary of Transportation's Future of Aviation Advisory Committee, which support the development of air transportation service options to and from the United States.

### ▶ **Invest in infrastructure.**

Continue efforts to improve transportation and Land Port of Entry infrastructure related to U.S.-Canada and U.S.-Mexico border crossings. Implement on-going and new, as budget allows, U.S.-Canada and U.S.-Mexico border crossing infrastructure projects, including projects to improve inspection plazas, roads, bridges, tunnels, and ferries.

### ▶ **Update Air Systems and Infrastructure.**

Improve the condition of the nation's air transportation infrastructure through implementation of NextGen and other programs. Support the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) efforts to reduce barriers to international air travel and to maintain the efficient functioning of the international aviation system, including harmonization of NextGen, as well as efforts to enhance international security standards.

### ▶ **Connect Visitors to Iconic and Off-the-Beaten-Path Destinations.**

Enable travelers to see America's special places that are off the beaten path through programs that increase access and awareness, such as America's Byways®, the Federal Lands Highway Program, the Transit in Parks Program, and the Recreation Trails Program, and increase the availability of multimodal mass-transit options to these destinations.

### ▶ **Continue to Identify Critical Transportation Issues That Impact Travel and Tourism.**

### III. Providing World-Class Customer Service and Visitor Experience

**Goal:** Provide a high-quality visitor experience for U.S. and international visitors to achieve high customer satisfaction and inspire repeat visits.

The federal government can leverage its resources to meet a high standard of customer service and provide memorable visitor experiences that will generate new and repeat visitation. We have the opportunity at our federally-managed sites to serve as hosts to our guests. The federal government also influences the travel and hospitality industry by offering incentives and programs to help train the private workforce, and by providing special assistance to small businesses in the sector.

When travelers visit a federally-managed site – such as a national park, national conservation land, refuge, lake, reservoir, marine sanctuary, or national forest – the U.S. government gains a unique opportunity to create an unforgettable experience. The reputation of staff at federal sites is outstanding; park rangers are among America’s most recognizable and beloved public figures, and are reflective of the on-site welcome provided by all federal public land and water agencies. Federal agencies can facilitate a positive experience by providing information and services, and educational opportunities, to a wide variety of visitors from across the country and the world, while also providing these visitors the space and freedom to discover and be inspired.

Delivering high-quality visitor experiences is an essential part of the mission for America’s federal lands and waters, and it can be a challenging task. Federal agencies apply aspects of sustainable tourism principles, that is, tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities. Iconic sites frequently receive high levels of visitation, and the hospitality amenities available on federal lands often differ from what is available in private sector or urban areas. Visitation must also be managed responsibly to avoid degrading the world-class resources visitors expect to see and experience. Federal land-management agencies must continue to work collaboratively with communities and the private sector to meet visitor expectations while protecting world-class resources on federal lands.

At all tourist destinations, whether managed by the federal government or the private sector, the quality of a visitor’s experience depends largely on the “front line” customer-facing workers who engage tourists from arrival to departure. A skilled tourism and hospitality workforce is therefore essential to a robust travel and tourism industry. The federal government plays an important role in supporting the private sector’s efforts to ensure that workers in the travel and tourism industry are skilled and competent. The NATIVE Act further identifies the federal government as an integral resource to support capacity-building for recreational travel and tourism on Tribal or Native Hawaiian lands.

The travel and tourism industry varies greatly by locality and workers are needed in a wide range of sectors including lodging, food service, transportation, recreation, and arts and entertainment. A top-down approach to workforce development is, therefore, unlikely to succeed. Our experience shows that the most successful strategy is for state and local workforce investment boards to work closely with existing tourism boards and local leaders in education, labor, and community organizations to examine workforce needs and develop plans to meet them. Federal tools such as online collaborative workspaces and competency models have also been widely utilized to promote this kind of dialogue at the local level, helping to focus the agenda for all stakeholders.

In the travel and tourism industry, businesses include travel agencies, tour operators, convention and visitors bureaus, casinos, lodging providers, federal concessionaires, outfitters, and guides. Through the Small Business Administration, the federal government helps these businesses grow and provide high quality goods and services to their customers. SBA grants and programs, and its partnerships with states, municipalities, and industry and trade associations, help businesses create business plans, conduct financial and auditing analysis and build marketing strategies, among other things.

## Strategy 1: Provide Visitor Services at Federally-Managed Sites

Exceed visitor expectations for service and information, provide information about available experiences including lesser-known destinations, facilitate visitation via cross-promotion and collaboration, and provide a high-quality experience to diverse visitors

### ► **Showcase the American Experience.**

Manage policy, and invest in partnerships, programs, and technology that facilitate high-quality visitor experiences and raise awareness of the breadth and variety of tourism opportunities on federal lands and waters. Examples of recent and ongoing initiatives include:

- o **Provide Access to Recreation:** Increase and expand the supply of recreation opportunities on public lands, including in approved areas for hunting and fishing, use of recreational vehicles (e.g., e-bikes, all-terrain vehicles, etc.) on appropriate trails on public lands, expansion of ranger-led recreation programs, and improved collaboration with private-sector guides and outfitters.
- o **Improve Digital Resources:** Continuously improve resources for trip-planning and visitor information, including recreation.gov, NPS.gov, digital apps, and social media platforms. Improve access to federal data sets used by private sector travel planning apps and websites, such as the API datasets available for developers from the National Park Service and recreation.gov.
- o **Support Broadband Connectivity:** Continue promoting deployment of broadband internet and cellular connectivity in rural areas, including near and within public lands and recreation areas. Expanded connectivity will improve outdoor recreation safety and enhance the overall visitor experience.
- o **Foster Community Collaboration:** Work with gateway community partners, Tribes and State agencies to provide seamless, high-quality visitor experiences that integrate public lands and waters into the overall tourism destination. Tactics include collaborative, comprehensive signage, and visitor information plans that make it easy for visitors to navigate a community and federal site(s); inclusion of federal sites in destination promotional and marketing materials; and strategic planning for transportation networks to ensure that federal sites are included in and/or connect with public transportation services and routes.
- o **Coordinate Visitor Management:** Work closely with communities adjacent to high-demand public lands and waters to find and implement visitor management solutions that deliver high-quality experiences balanced with resource protection.

### ► **Serve Diverse Audiences.**

Provide information and interpretation in both plain English and foreign languages. Recruit multi-lingual staff and volunteers and deploy them strategically to assist international travelers. Expand the use of new technology and social media to provide customized visitor information for different cultures, ages, languages and interests.

### ► **Improve Access.**

Invest in strategic infrastructure and road upgrades and reconstruction, public-transit development and multi-modal connections, land and easement acquisition, and improved access to information about opportunities for recreational, historical, and cultural experiences.

## Expanding Recreation and Tourism Opportunities on Federal and Tribal Lands and Waters

Agency	Strategy	Example
National Park Service	Providing new and expanded recreation opportunities in the national park system	Expanding trail access for electric bikes (e-bikes)

National Park Service	Investing in trails and campgrounds, improving the visitor experience and expanding recreation opportunities	FY18 - \$63 million investment
Fish and Wildlife Service	Cooperative marketing	Empowering wildlife refuge partners to work with local communities on sustainable tourism activities, such as birding festivals.
Fish and Wildlife Service	Increasing access to public lands and waters recreation	In 2019 and 2020, expanding hunting and fishing access at 77 National Wildlife Refuges and 15 National Fish Hatcheries, adding 1.4 million acres for hunting and fishing, nationwide
Fish and Wildlife Service	Increasing access to public lands and waters recreation	Improving and sharing recreation information with travel and tourism digital media and mobile applications
Bureau of Land Management	Increasing access to public lands and waters recreation	13,000 newly accessible acres in Montana and 11,000 accessible acres in Oregon for hiking, snowmobiling, mountain biking, hunting, and fishing
Bureau of Land Management	Enabling and Enhancing Travel and Tourism to and within the United States	Developed a Travel & Tourism Action Plan to guide sustainable tourism management on agency public lands and waters, in support of the National strategy
Bureau of Indian Affairs	Implementation of the Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience (NATIVE) Act to enhance and integrate Native American tourism development and management through coordination of federal tourism assets and Tribal capacity building for recreational travel and tourism	<p>Signed an MOU among the Department of the Interior, Department of Commerce and the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association, to coordinate implementation of the NATIVE Act</p> <p>Supported establishment of the North Dakota Native Tourism Alliance to help Tribes conduct regional and individual tribal tourism feasibility assessments for long term development planning and investment.</p>

## Strategy 2: Foster a Skilled Hospitality and Tourism Industry Workforce

Use federal and local resources to help businesses grow and provide high quality goods and services to their customers through grants and other programs as well as ongoing partnerships with the private sector.

### ▶ **Partner with the Private Sector.**

Encourage local governments to strengthen partnerships with travel and tourism businesses and convene the business community in their respective regional markets to assess workforce issues. Cross-train private sector hospitality and federal recreation and visitor services workforces through collaborative curriculum development and delivery

### ▶ **Create Space to Collaborate.**

Assist workforce professionals, employers, and educators in sharing knowledge and tools to support the employment needs of the industry. Use technology and new media to foster information sharing, dialogue and partnership.

## Strategy 3: Support Small Business in Travel and Tourism

Develop and coordinate a targeted approach at the federal level to support small- and medium-sized travel and tourism businesses.

### ▶ **Expand Outreach and Education.**

Use federal websites, email and social media to educate small businesses. Provide entrepreneurs with the information needed to start a travel and tourism business, including key business opportunities in in-demand travel sectors, how to write a business plan, and information on how to access financing. Widely distribute information on federal programs. Share content and seek options for deliberated, focused engagement with other federal agencies and tourism promotion organizations, including federal land and water managers and the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA).

### ▶ **Promote Existing Small Businesses.**

Partner with travel and tourism associations to increase awareness of the small businesses in their communities and encourage tour operators to include stops at local, small businesses.

### ▶ **Increase Counseling and Mentorship.**

Help small travel businesses gain the confidence to withstand seasonality and demand volatility so they can grow and hire. Develop a targeted plan to strengthen counseling opportunities for tourism small businesses through SBA's broad network of Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) and Women Business Centers (WBCs). Utilize counselors and mentors to help build awareness of the tourism initiative in their respective locality.

### ▶ **Expand Access to Capital.**

Work with SBA's lending partners and small business investment companies (SBICs) to specifically target outreach to travel and tourism small businesses, so they understand the various traditional and patient capital options SBA's partners offer.



## IV. Coordinating Across Government

**Goal:** Prioritize and coordinate support for travel and tourism across the federal government.

Successful implementation of the National Travel and Tourism Strategy will require sustained, high-level commitment throughout federal agencies, which in turn will depend on continued recognition of travel and tourism as a priority for the federal government. Similarly, private sector participation in and evaluation of these policies, programs, and initiatives is critical to their success.

In addition to better coordination within the federal government, we need to better coordinate with the private sector and state, territorial, tribal, and local governments. In many cases, the private sector and these non-Federal government bodies have resources to promote their destinations both internationally and domestically. In addition, many state, territorial, tribal, and local governments have regulatory authorities and existing programs to promote tourism within their respective jurisdictions. Better communication and the dissemination of best practices throughout all levels of government and the private sector will strengthen tourism development across the country.

### Strategy 1: Establish Travel and Tourism as a U.S. Government Priority

Strengthen the leadership structure for travel and tourism within government and coordinate with federal agencies to implement the National Strategy.

▶ **Continue to Convene the Tourism Policy Council.**

Commit to high-level representation by each member agency, organize working groups aligned with this National Travel and Tourism Strategy, and meet at least annually to identify and address barriers to progress and coordinate efforts.

▶ **Conduct Outreach with Public and Private Partners.**

Effectively engage with travel and tourism allies to foster communication among federal agencies and leaders of state travel offices, destination management organizations, and trade associations.

▶ **Study and Implement Best Practices.**

Engage federal agencies in dialogue with other countries on best practices in travel and tourism.

## V. Conducting Research & Measuring Results

**Goal:** Collect and analyze data to support decision-making in the public and private sectors and allow the federal government to better measure the effectiveness of its efforts to increase travel and tourism.

Product development, marketing strategies, investment plans, transportation planning, and competitiveness tracking all require good data and information. Data on visitors' origins, profiles, activities, motivators, states and cities visited, length of stay, and spending patterns can help with the successful branding, marketing, and sustainability of the United States as a visitor destination. Information on travel and tourism is the basis of sound policy and informs business decisions. Strategic planning for and performance measurement of the travel and tourism industry depends on the availability, validity, consistency, and reliability of statistics and information.

### **Strategy 1: Conduct Research**

Work with the travel and tourism industry to collect and analyze data to support decision-making in the public and private sectors and allow the federal government to better measure the effectiveness of its efforts to increase travel and tourism.

### **Strategy 2: Monitor and Evaluate Results**

Collect and analyze data to evaluate progress on the goals of the National Travel and Tourism Strategy and report progress through the Tourism Policy Council