

TRAVEL NEVADA

FY21 Recovery Plan

June 23, 2020



ALWAYS BEEN HERE. ALWAYS WILL BE.

This Recovery Plan details Travel Nevada's strategy to compete in a travel industry that has been transformed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our traditional audiences will consider a new set of needs and concerns as they make their travel decisions. Nevada's statewide tourism partners will change the way they do business to accommodate health and safety concerns.

The strategies detailed here reflect our attention to the well-being of the domestic traveler, the economic downturn in the global economy, and limitations placed on international visitation. Though these dramatic changes within the industry are a challenge, we are heartened by the knowledge that Nevada is determined to adapt and is well-positioned to benefit from new visitors who crave exactly what our destination offers.

The Spirit of Nevada lives on.



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A large, faint watermark of the Nevada Travel logo is visible in the background. It features a circular emblem with a mountain range, a sun, and the word "NEVADA" in a stylized font, with "TRAVEL" written in a smaller font above it.

**EVOLVE THE
BRAND**

EVOLVE THE BRAND

GOAL

Continually align campaigns and programs to reinforce and inspire what distinguishes Nevada as a competitive travel destination.

STATUS

Travel Nevada's core value of freedom will hold a new meaning for audiences in the coming year. Visitors will respond well to the sentiment of freedom and what it represents physically in Nevada: urban playgrounds, open space, vast scenic landscapes, and long winding roads.

STRATEGIES

› **Creative**

Instead of developing prohibitively expensive new creative assets, existing creative will be released only as needed. Copy inappropriate in a post-pandemic culture will be replaced. More organic online efforts have seen increased engagement, and these responsive audiences will be cooked for re-marketing purposes as budget allows. A consistent tone, one that reinforces our uninhibited brand pillars, has been established on our social channels, and this will be the most cost-efficient way of promoting Nevada in the new travel space.

› **Website**

Through FY20, Noble Studios and internal staff worked diligently on a website redesign. The new site will live on a more easily updated platform, which will lead to cost savings and the ability to be more nimble for website updates. While the technical changes were necessary, this opened an opportunity to develop a design that better complements the current branding and to further develop content more strategically. Our content will continue to be focused on core branded topics and we will continue to pursue more customized content opportunities based on search volume research. Blending keywords into existing and newly developed content secures more engaged traffic to the site, with efforts already resulting in increased time on site and more visits to rural pages. The new design will offer even more opportunities to educate visitors about offerings throughout the state, serving the goal for visitors to want to explore more places on their visit and extend their stay. This new site will launch during the first quarter of FY21 and will be the backbone of our consumer efforts.

› **Paid Media**

The projected funding deficit will challenge our ability to exist competitively in the post-COVID-19 marketplace. Our approach will be hyper-targeted with a focus on consumers who have continued to engage with the Travel Nevada brand over the last few months. Paid media partners will be leveraged based on contracts that were suspended rather than cancelled, using content that was created, just not yet amplified.

› **Customer Relationship Management**

Audiences who have already consumed Travel Nevada content on the website, ordered a guide, subscribed to our emails, or followed our social channels show a higher propensity to become visitors. Continuing to market to these groups is cost-effective and results-driven.

› **Public Relations**

Nevada offers exactly what travelers will be seeking during this recovery process, and the media relations strategy will align with our brand pillars of uninhibited freedom, inspiring discoveries, rewarding adventures, and unexpectedly diverse. The public relations group, along with its external partners, will work with traditional and social media to craft stories that educate and inspire travelers at whatever stage of recovery the industry is in. These messages, as appropriate, are supported by compelling creative and paid media placements.

› **Research**

In response to a volatile travel market, we will prioritize our response to research and heavily monitor audience sentiment to best position ourselves in the new marketplace.

TACTICS

- › While brand creative development will need to be on hold until budgets allow, existing content from both in-house and paid efforts may be revised for release as appropriate.
- › Several paid media partners were mid-campaign when travel became restricted. While we will not be able to spend many additional dollars through the period of lowest revenue, there are partners whose work has been produced but not yet run. This provides an opportunity to amplify those messages at minimal to no cost when travel is more possible.
- › Emails will be sent more frequently to get more timely content in front of visitors who are already engaged. Via our owned web and social channels, we will continue to actively build audiences to grow this base.
- › While paid media efforts will remain “gray” (not completely dark, but very light and only placed as appropriate) until budgets allow, limited spending will be focused on search, social, and re-marketing campaigns rather than large-scale brand awareness.
- › While appropriate, PR will continue to supply media outlets with virtual travel experiences, repurposed travel content, and opportunities for virtual fairs and desksides.
- › Earned media will promote the economic drivers in rural communities while educating readers and viewers on the benefits of the wide-open natural space in Nevada. Nevada offers inherent social distancing, and media relations efforts will focus on this selling point.
- › As business travel resumes, PR can amplify partner meeting/convention resources and work through CVBs to offer “add a day” messaging to convention bookings. Messaging will be built around the benefit of meetings/conventions in Nevada where sun, fresh air, and wide-open space is a given, even in Las Vegas (tie to So. Nev. road trips).
- › Rather than concentrate on the high-level brand campaign, efforts such as Discover Your Nevada and Road Trips will represent the brand in a more literal, itinerary-focused way.
- › As re-openings develop in the coming months, plans will be in-line with our communities who are ready for visitation.
- › Communicate the brand accurately to partners, tour operators, and travel agents, sourcing TravelNevada.com for future travel inspiration and planning and providing comprehensive brand guidelines for appropriate collaborations.



**DESTINATION
DEVELOPMENT**

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

GOAL

Long-range tourism-based community planning.

STATUS

Travel Nevada’s mission is to drive visitation to the state, specifically in our rural communities. In alignment with other state and local agencies, efforts will be focused on holistically supporting a rural community to strengthen its viability as a destination.

Tourism is crucial when it comes to the state’s economy, a truth deeply felt since the COVID-19 outbreak. However, rural Nevada is poised to recover more quickly than urban centers as it is assumed visitors will be looking to get away from crowds and will respond well to Nevada’s open spaces. From both a short- and long-term strategic standpoint, it makes sense to develop as much product in rural Nevada as possible. Even with reduced budgets, much work has been completed on the strategic framework for pilot communities.

STRATEGIES

- › The Destination Development program includes partners from several local, state and federal agencies, who collaborate and accomplish goals set by the Governor’s Task Force to improve economies in rural areas, setting up a much-needed injection of funds into Nevada’s communities.
- › The pilot program, though slightly delayed and reimaged, will be used to identify and implement infrastructure improvements in the pilot community, as well as use the experiences and information derived from the pilot to inform on the criteria for a fully-formed Destination Development program. This will allow Travel Nevada to build a program suited to rural Nevada’s unique strengths and challenges.
- › The rural grant process will be restructured to better identify needs for recovery and destination development programs.
- › From a marketing standpoint, Travel Nevada will implement strategies similar to our own detailed in the “Evolve the Brand” section of this document. Every community has their own unique product and brand look and feel; there is an opportunity to enhance the existing branding in communities to complement the statewide brand.

TACTICS

- › Lead discussions regarding destination development with available State partners (Office of Outdoor Recreation, GOED, UNR Cooperative Extension, Nevada Arts Council) as well as any Federal partners (USDA, BLM, US Forest Service.)
- › In order to provide a competitive assessment, we will gather data—to the degree it is available—about the size, complexity, offerings and resources of Destination Development programs for Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah.

- › We will design and facilitate an interactive session at the Rural Roundup Conference that will highlight the structure of the proposed rural program, detail the eligibility criteria for communities to participate, will serve as a live workshop for one community, and will share how different entities will contribute to the “Action Team.”
- › From a marketing standpoint, Travel Nevada will implement strategies similar to our own detailed in the “Evolve the Brand” section of this document. Every community has their own unique product and brand look and feel; there is an opportunity to enhance the existing branding in communities to complement the statewide brand.
- › The grant review process will be modified to allocate funds specifically to recovery efforts. In the short-term, guidelines will be revised to identify and prioritize programs that aid recovery efforts
- › Travel Nevada will meet with each community to develop cohesive integrated marketing plans based on the unique offerings, geographic location, and audiences of the destination. Research will be utilized to identify resident and visitor sentiment and to identify target audiences.
- › As part of the product audit, Travel Nevada will ensure website content is current and focused on new developments in each community. Photo and video assets will be shared where appropriate.
- › Community highlights fit seamlessly into our Discover Your Nevada campaign. Content may be featured in newsletters and advertorials in publications such as Nevada magazine. Social media and search campaigns may be developed with even smaller budgets. Remarketing campaigns may be built to target audiences who have visited relevant pages on TravelNevada.com, as budgets allow. With healthier budgets, partnerships with travel brands may also be developed.
- › Partnerships with tour operators, RV companies, and other travel brands should be explored.



**DISCOVER YOUR
NEVADA**

DISCOVER YOUR NEVADA

GOAL

Engage Nevada residents to inspire in-state travel.

STATUS

As travel restrictions are lifted, travelers will be looking for staycations first. Travel within the state can prove to be less costly and feel safer for people who do not want to travel great distances. Road trips will become the preferred method of travel for the near future.

STRATEGIES

- › Encourage Nevadans to travel throughout the state, ultimately becoming loyal brand ambassadors.
- › Discovering Nevada is, by extension, “buying local,” which has become very important through the COVID-19 crisis. “Hometown Tourism” is a tenant of Travel Nevada’s mission.
- › Educate Nevadans about their state and reinforce a sense of pride while being respectful and safe in their home state. The organic and authentic tone we have established on social will allow us to maintain an ongoing conversation around **#ThatNevadaLife**.

TACTICS

- › The new website design will allow pages to be built for Nevadan-specific stories. New content will include bucket lists for residents that support entreaties such as “all Nevadans should...” and “So You Call Yourself a Nevadan?”
- › “To-go” itineraries will be built based on the road trips, but will also include information specific to where the audience is located, ie day trips, must-stay overnights, etc.
- › Produce low-cost Facebook lead-generation ads pushing e-newsletter sign-ups, with variable content to serve Nevada-based fans and Nevada-based non-followers, broken down by specific demographics/interest/geographic location.
- › Launch targeted, sponsored Facebook & Twitter ads promoting web and in-platform content that pushes Nevadans to destinations in their region, destinations outside of their region they can road trip to, and weekend getaway (packages) destinations outside of their region.
- › Include reasons to stay overnight: to explore more when you don’t have the burden of driving home, to experience the sunrise outside your hotel window, etc. There is also a “buy local/support local” call-to-action here, reinforcing “Hometown Tourism.”
- › Emails will be sent to the growing Nevada audience (via recovery efforts and lead-generation ads) that focus on discovering Nevada. This will allow us to include community snapshots that highlight spots that locals may not even know and show them how to recreate responsibly.
- › Paid Media availability will be limited, but can include newspaper inserts, paid search, Nevada magazine partnerships, and replacement of existing domestic ad buys.
- › Work with rural tourism partners to anticipate readiness for visitation and develop local-only deals.
- › Work with in-state tour operators and travel agents ensuring the 10 branded Nevada road trips are being promoted and implemented in their product offerings.
- › Issue press release(s) and media pitches on seasonal activities that are centered on safe and responsible travel. There is an increased opportunity for earned coverage as local news outlets are looking for positive content that benefits local communities.
- › Develop and distribute a piece with Nevada magazine that will be distributed as part of the statewide 4th-grade curriculum, tying in to “Discover Your Nevada”
- › Develop collateral/programs as budget allows: Updated Road Trip Guide, one-sheets promoting “48 hours in xxx”, Nevada Day promotions, overruns of newspaper inserts.



PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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GOAL

Outreach to stakeholders and lawmakers to better position Travel Nevada as a proactive tourism thought leader.

STATUS

Nevada’s tourism industry has long been the economic driver of the state’s economy, and that will be an essential message now more than ever. Although the economy has diversified, the tourism industry must ensure key stakeholders – from elected officials to industry influencers – understand the value of tourism and its role not only in driving the economy, but also enhancing the perception of the state and conveying its contribution to the quality of life to residents and economic diversification.

STRATEGIES

- › Communicate the contribution of tourism to the Nevada economy, and safeguard the jobs and revenue created by the tourism industry.
- › The role of Travel Nevada is to lead the tourism industry in advocacy and education about the value of the industry. The tourism industry should remain inspired and mobilized to help share the message and has the proper tools to do so.
- › Tourism is still the state's No. 1 industry and its largest economic driver. It will be imperative to educate lawmakers and to rally partners to preserve our budget.
- › Protect current funding source by educating stakeholders on the economic impact of tourism to Nevada.

TACTICS

Enhance Partnerships

- › Create a toolkit for partners – should include existing resources, social graphics, ways to contact elected officials, and talking points.
- › Continue in-house improvement and updates on TravelNevada.biz to reflect current economic impact for Nevada, charting current status compared to “normal” projections.

Advocate for the Industry

- › Identify rural small-business champions and write op-eds and letters to the editor for them to submit to their local newspapers.
- › Include these letter templates in the Partner Toolkit.
- › Follow U.S. Travel requests as appropriate to our state and with approval from the Governor's office.
- › Hold virtual industry events – video chats and town halls.
- › Build up industry social accounts to increase followers made up primarily of stakeholders and decision-makers.

- › Establish editorial calendar of posts that continually push the value message. Use social platforms for calls to action.
- › Establish status reports to send to stakeholders. Communicate immediately and often that we are implementing a recovery plan and Travel Nevada is a proactive leader in the industry
- › Survey partners on immediate issues, support, toolkits, local influence, etc.

Legislative Outreach

- › Set one-to-one meetings with legislators/key candidates/stakeholders, with focus on Senate Finance and Assembly Ways & Means committees.
- › Emphasize the Division of Tourism's Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram pages as consistent areas for information on the importance of the tourism industry.
- › Continue using TourismMeansMore.com as the central campaign hub of information. Reposition content to be focused on damage of the COVID-19 crisis to the economy and how travel can help the state rebound.
- › Create stakeholder videos: short, shareable soundbites from partners talking about what Travel Nevada brings to them.
- › Use infographic and complementary social media graphics in the newsletter and encourage stakeholders to share graphics.
- › Establish a regular legislator email newsletter. Determine which legislators are employed by or otherwise engaged in the tourism industry and establish individual relationships with them. This may include personal phone calls or meetings.



DOMESTIC MARKETS

DOMESTIC MARKETS

GOAL

Strategic planning to identify and grow travel markets within the U.S.

STATUS

While growth in new markets is highly unlikely in the first half of FY21, we will rely on research to tell us when visitors are ready to travel, and which markets may be viable. Current sentiment among domestic markets shows that many Americans are looking forward to vacations they can attain by car, which positions Nevada well among Western states. We are watching surveys on air travel; as currently 43% of Americans are not considering air travel until 2021. Budget will call for us to target less-expensive markets and prioritize those that are most easily accessed by car, as Americans are now more likely to travel up to 700 miles by car.

STRATEGIES

- › Use sentiment research and real numbers to gage which markets are the most cost-effective and results-driven for marketing Nevada in the post-COVID-19 world.
- › Continue to build audiences in target markets to better focus affordable, owned marketing efforts.
- › Utilize content on website to best serve drive markets through personalized messaging, resuming CRO tests as budget allows.
- › Focus SIP efforts on domestic markets to build up to CY21 when more long-haul travel will resume.
- › Inspire travelers in target markets through earned media placements.

TACTICS

- › Work with multiple research partners at local, regional and federal levels to monitor willingness and ability to travel.
- › Determine which DMAs may have best ability to travel, both physically and financially, through the remainder of calendar year.
- › Monitor performance of paid media by market, assessing interest level as they come back online.
- › Focus any paid efforts in drive markets first and hold longer-haul, staggering release.
- › Focus domestic spending based on new re-targeting audiences via owned channels and search efforts first.
- › Identify domestic shows that may be affordable and productive. Determine which consumer shows or B2B shows can provide the biggest impact.
- › Continue to meet and collaborate with partners and groups to align targeted marketing efforts.
- › Maximize opportunities with domestic tour and receptive operators.
- › Explore new SIP opportunities such as: hosting virtual training webinars for travel agents and tour operators, providing self-drive FAM trips for travel agents, partnering with neighboring states to promote borderless itineraries.
- › Where appropriate, leverage SIP efforts to create buzz-worthy PR coverage of Nevada.



GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

GOAL

Identify and grow international markets with highest statewide visitation potential.

STATUS

Due to the current global pandemic involving the COVID-19 virus which has essentially eliminated all international travel for the near future, Travel Nevada will continue to evaluate the worldwide travel situation and make new recommendations as to how to proceed with international promotion with a significantly reduced budget. While contracts with international representation remain in place, budget is not being expended internationally, and will not in this calendar year.

STRATEGIES

- › Rely on data to determine viability of international travel resuming.
- › Prioritize markets based on economic and health recovery in their respective markets, and likelihood to travel to Nevada, and past visitation and spending data.
- › Use FY21 to re-evaluate global strategy and set FY22 goals.

TACTICS

- › Evaluate markets that may return in shorter term, specifically RV/drive/snowbird markets.
- › Consider expanding OTA buys to the international space to maximize audience.
- › Continue to seed travel stories and demand through PR and social content, dependent on the market's recovery status; focus on "dreaming" stage and future planning of travel.
- › Maximize partnerships with other western states and DMOs.
- › Explore ways to combine markets at a reduced rate, for future RFP consideration.
- › Utilize credit funds from Brand USA to market to international travelers once borders start to open back up.

