

Annual ECONOMIC IMPACT Report

FISCAL YEAR 2024–2025

Explore YORK®

economic impact made here

Annual Report Fiscal Year 2024–2025

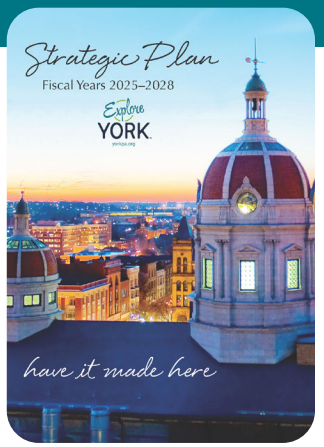
Mission & Vision Statement

Our Mission: to maximize tourism expenditures and their economic impact in York County, PA, through comprehensive tourism sales and marketing programs.

Our Vision: where tourism is recognized for the value of its economic impact and its role in raising the profile of York County as a sought-after destination.

Strategic Plan

This plan supports our mission, vision, and four dedicated areas of focus: To promote, maximize, foster & identify key relationships. Our approach integrates stakeholder collaboration and a commitment to highlighting our unique assets.

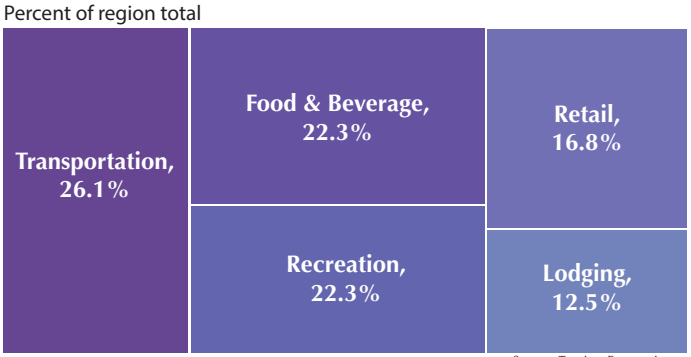


Tourism Matters

Explore York serves as the official Tourist Promotion Agency for York County, dedicated to showcasing York as a leading travel destination. We drive economic impact by attracting visitors and encouraging overnight stays through our strategic sales and marketing programs. These efforts support local businesses and enhance the quality of life for York County residents. We promote our county's diverse offerings—from attractions and events to arts and culture, fresh local food, rich history, outdoor adventures, and the exceptional services provided by our tourism partners.

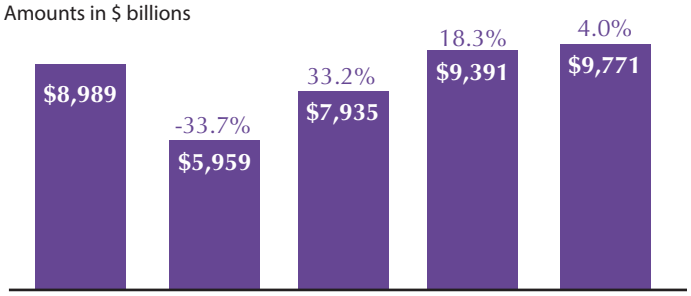
The tourism industry plays a vital role in the local economy, generating revenue, providing jobs, and allowing Explore York to reinvest dollars through its Tourism Grant Program. This program funds projects & events designed to support the tourism industry. Visitor spending was especially strong in Fiscal Year 2024–2025, ***which runs from July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025***, reinforcing tourism's positive impact on York County.

Visitor Spending by Category, 2023
Percent of region total



Source: Tourism Economics

Dutch Country Roads – Visitor Spending, 2016–2023
Amounts in $ billions



Source: Tourism Economics

Tourism is big business. Its impact is felt through visitor spending across the retail, entertainment, food & beverage, transportation, and lodging segments. Visitors spent more than $1 Billion in York County in FY 24-25. York County employs more than 7,900 people in the travel & tourism industry and our tourism economy generated $58 Million in state & local taxes, providing direct tax relief for York County residents.

Board & Staff

FY 24–25 Board of Directors

Chair: Dan Johnson, **Vice Chair:** Glenn Smith, *Brewery Tours*
Treasurer: Robert Berkebile, *RKL, LLP*, **Secretary:** Jason Schultz, *High Hotels,* **President:** Laura Wagner, *Explore York.*
Members: Patrick Ball, *York Expo Center* | Mike De Julia, *Yorktowne Hotel* | Meagan Hess Given, *The Pretzel Company* | Mike Jones, *PA House of Representatives 93rd District* | Leah Nadu, *Historic Ashland,* | Jada Richardson, *City of York* | Joseph Scarcelli, Ph.D., *York College of Pennsylvania* | Sam Terroso, *South County Brewing Company* | Julie Wheeler, *York County President Commissioner* | Joanne Wilmore, *Grace Manor B&B.*

FY 24–25 Explore York Staff

Laura Wagner, *President* | Melissa Beaverson, *Vice President of Marketing & Communications* | Diane Yocum, *Business and Administration Director* | Andrea Ryan, *Senior Marketing Manager* | Morgan Madanick, *Senior Sales Manager* | Alexis Noel Shaffer, *Senior Membership Manager* | Elizabeth Waite Fisher, *Grant Program Manager* | Nicole Young, *Group Tour Sales Manager* | Julie Murphy, *Web & Social Media Marketing Manager* | Megan Groff, *Graphic Designer* | Mary Yeaple, *Marketing & Communications Coordinator* | Katie Kline, *Membership & Community Engagement Coordinator*| Madeline Bradley, *Administrative Assistant* | Linda Greenstein, *Travel Counselor.*

Sales Department Sports | Meetings | Groups

Explore York's Sales Department drives economic impact through its Sport York initiative, group tours, and meetings & conventions, which combined, generated over 46,000 room nights in York County in FY 2024-2025.

Sport York

The sports market, York County's largest economic driver, generated 33,620 room nights. On average, every athlete traveling to York for a sporting event brings an additional 2.5 people. These visitors not only stay in our hotels, but visit attractions and restaurants, further stimulating the economy. This fiscal year we secured four five-year contracts, and two three-year contracts and brought back PSAC swim for another year.

Five-year contracts: MLK & Prez Day Volleyball, Frost Fest, Blue Ribbon Brawl & York Strong Finish Volleyball. Three-year contracts: MAC Swimming and Special Olympics of PA Indoor Winter Games.

33,620 Room Nights

Sport YORK
An Explore York Initiative
have it played here





Meetings & Conventions

Explore York's Meetings and Conventions team generated 10,920 room nights in FY 2024-2025. We work with local hotel stakeholders to strategically design competitive bids and leverage local relationships to increase meeting opportunities and to attract diverse conventions to York County.

This fiscal year we worked with seven NEW meeting/convention groups, and secured Ohio Valley Military Max Show and Eastern Star Convention for three years.

10,920 Room Nights

Group Tour

1,505 Room Nights

York County is an affordable hub & spoke destination for tourists who want easy access to bus tours in nearby markets such as Baltimore, Gettysburg & Lancaster. Our Group Tour program generated 1,505 room nights in FY 2024-2025 and gained 12 new members in our group tour program. We attended seven trade shows, in addition to the IPW Conference, the world's leading inbound travel trade show connecting destinations with travel buyers through face-to-face meetings and networking opportunities.

TourYORK
Buses & Groups have it made here.



Marketing Department Advertising | Digital | Print

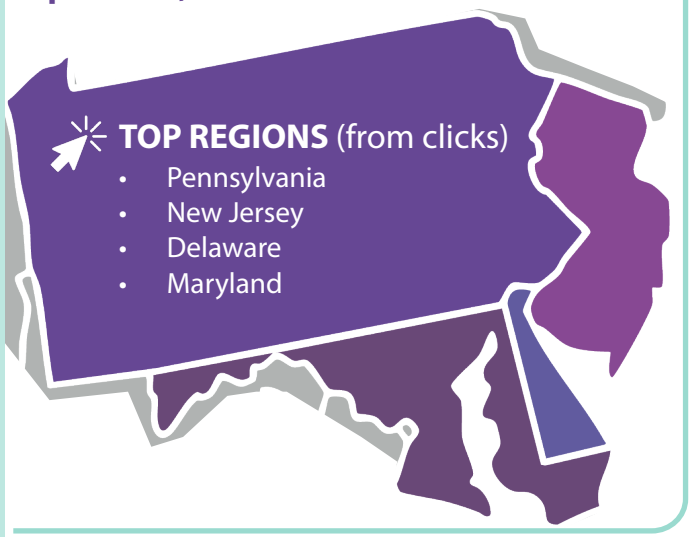
The Explore York Marketing Department creates thoughtful and impactful campaigns designed to feature the unique offerings of York County. We use a variety of mediums to advertise York County to our key markets such as Philadelphia, New York, New Jersey, Virginia, Maryland, and Washington D.C. These mediums include digital advertising, social media, email marketing, print advertising, radio, and sponsorships. We also host social media influencers and travel writers throughout the year and use visitor data to ensure our campaign goals align with our visitor profile.

Explore YORK | YORK COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA
have it made here

MADDEN | Annual Campaign Metrics
September 2024–June 2025

Tactics: Google SEM + META + Lead Gen

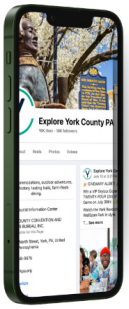
3.6 Million Impressions Served
101,000 Clicks
5.5% Average Click–Through–Rate
Time on site: 3+ Minutes
Captured 2,349 Leads from Leisure Visitors



Social Media

We continue to see strong interactions and growth, contributing to greater social reach.

- Instagram and Facebook had a combined reach of more than 1.7 Million.
- 13 targeted paid social campaigns, generating a combined reach of 356,445 and 17,876 conversions.
  (Conversion = Specific & measurable action.)



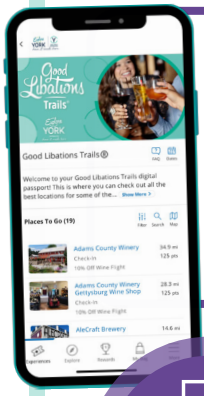
Content Views
- facebook 4,542,318
- Instagram 441,791

▲ 14% ▲ 27% ▲ 6% ▲ 15%

Email Marketing

We have a robust email strategy to engage with visitors, members & industry stakeholders. The content is specific to the audience and provides relevant tourism information and promotes York County.

- 197 Total Email Campaigns Sent
- 17,042 Getaway Guide Contacts
- 63.2% Conversion & Engagement Rate



Good Libations Trails

Top Five Locations
- Collusion Tap Works
- Aldus Brewing Co.
- Gift Horse Brewing Co.
- Mudhook Brewing Co.
- South County Brewing Co.



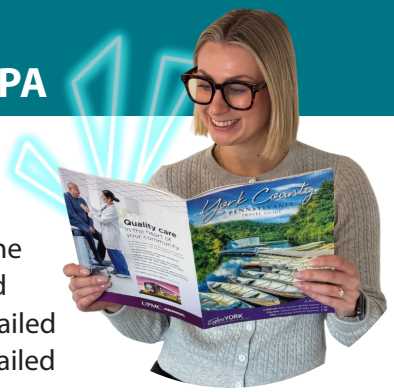
1,153 Check-ins

YoCo Twist Blog

The goal of the York County Twist Blog is to share information about York County attractions, accommodations, special events, and more!

- During the 24-25 FY, 37 blogs were published
- Three blogs published per month
- Blog posts contain links to our members to help drive traffic to their listing and throughout YorkPA.org

72 Million people live within a 4-hour drive of PA



2025 Travel Guide

Explore York printed 105,000 Travel Guides in 2025. 90,000 were distributed state-wide across welcome centers, rest areas, turnpike plazas along our interstates, AAA offices in the mid-Atlantic region, neighboring visitor bureaus, and at a variety of other tourism-related businesses. The remaining 15,000 guides are distributed to Explore York members and mailed to consumers. We routinely receive requests from all 50 states and in FY 2024-2025 we mailed internationally to 15 countries.



2025 Pennsylvania Travel Guide

PA | THE GREAT AMERICAN GETAWAY

- 225,000 copies of the PA Travel Guide were distributed. Explore York's full-page ad celebrated the grand opening of the York County History Center's new museum.

VisitPA.com is the official website for Pennsylvania and receives more than 3.5M online visitors. In FY 24-25, Explore York:

- Placed custom videos on history & outdoor landing pages
- Sent 2 dedicated emails + 5 featured deal emails to 160,000+ subscribers
- Received 1,098 leads from lead generation campaign for leisure visitors
- Placed a custom content article on history landing page for 12 months
- Served up 200,000 digital ads on VisitPA.com
- Ran a fall/holiday campaign that generated 5.9 Million impressions & 59,000 clicks to YorkPA.org

Media/Public Relations:

- Total media mentions ▲ 67% from previous FY
- Hosted a combined 30 Travel Writers and/or Influencers
- Attended 3 conferences = 122 media pitches
  - MATPRA (60)
  - IFWTWA (37)
  - Travel Media Meetup (25)
- Sent 25 press releases & 20 media pitches

Website Stats FY24-25:

- Average session time ▲ 50.5% from *2 minutes and 13 seconds* to *3 minutes and 21 seconds*
- 46% increase in actions performed on our site (scrolls, clicks, page views)
- ▲ 14% in engagement rate, from *62.29%* to *71.16%*
- Organic search remains strongest source of website traffic



Notable Earned Media Mentions

- *HGTV.com* feature on York State Fair, fairs in all 50 states
- *Matador Network* feature on Northern Central Railway of York
- *USA Today's 10 Best*, places to visit outside of New York City
- *AAA World*, New Year's Eve Drops
- *Northern VA Magazine*, York to Fork
- *UNSTOPPABLE Stacey*, Really Fun Things To Do in York for Couples
- *WhereverFamily*, Holiday Happenings in York County
- *SportsTravel*, Destinations that bring in economic impact with small staffs
- 4 regional placements for Makers Spirit Event.
- Placed 4 travel stories throughout media websites in New York, generated 93 confirmed placements with a total reach of 19.6 Million

Membership made here!

This year, 40 new businesses joined Explore York promoting York County as a premier tourist destination! From local makers and outdoor adventures to charming main streets and historic sites, we proudly highlight our region's diverse offerings. Membership helps introduce your business to visitors and connects you with travelers eager to explore, dine, shop, and experience all that makes York County special. Together, we make York County a must-visit destination.





Exclusive Benefits That Put Your Business in the Spotlight

- Reach visitors, event planners, and media outlets
- Travel Guide and website listings
- Event promotion
- Targeted advertising
- Benefits Summary in the Member Hub
  - Highlights the value of Explore York's marketing and sales efforts, including Media/PR coverage, website statistics, and more.

Member Engagement in Action

Explore York proudly led meaningful initiatives that deepened connections with our member organizations and sparked cross-sector collaboration.

- Six Member Mixers | Four Member Blitzes | Community Events
- Weekly Member Minute Emails



Annual Tourism Industry Event | January 23, 2025

This January at the Valencia Ballroom, Explore York celebrated 22 years of the Annual Tourism Industry Event. This signature event celebrates our work and recognizes our industry. We happily hosted 166 individuals and other VIP guests. Our keynote speaker, Sarah Benoit of Learn Tourism, dazzled the crowd with her session on all things AI. We presented three awards, two for members who embody the Makers Spirit and one recognizing the Tourism Grant Program – Grant of the Year. These beautiful awards were created by Candi J. Duda Stained Glass and Garden Art.

Makers Spirit Event | Have it Made Here

Held June 13–15, Explore York's annual Makers Spirit Event brought hands-on fun and local flair at more than 25 spots across the county. Standout experiences included the sold-out factory tour at Snyder's in Hanover and an exclusive sneak peek inside The Bakery Complex. From farm to foundry, Makers Spirit showed once again—York County is where creativity comes to life.

› *Bubble Glaze*
The Prancing Pig Pottery
Makers Spirit Event Participant



York County Coffee Crawl

Explore York's Annual Coffee Crawl is a county-wide celebration of York County's local coffee scene. The 2024 event featured more than 20 participating coffee shops—its largest lineup yet. The crawl attracts local media, including Fox 43, which visited locations to showcase the area's diverse coffee offerings.

2025 marks the 5th anniversary of the Coffee Crawl, continuing a tradition that brings together local businesses and coffee lovers alike!



Making Strides in our County

Our Staff in the Community

The Explore York team is dedicated to making a positive impact across York County. This year, we participated in more than 25 community events, attended monthly ribbon cuttings to support new businesses, and celebrated community partner anniversaries and milestones. Explore York also contributed 13 sponsorships to support events and initiatives that enhance the visitor experience. Our staff proudly serves on more than 15 boards and committees throughout the county, volunteers with local organizations, and actively supports efforts that strengthen the region's tourism vitality. We remain focused on delivering outstanding visitor experiences and nurturing partnerships that ensure thriving tourism and a positive legacy for our community.





25 Community Events

15+ Boards & Committees

Tourism Grant Program

Explore York's Tourism Grant Program supports and funds projects that attract visitors and encourage overnight hotel stays in York County. Tax dollars generated through hotel occupancy are reinvested in York County businesses, events, and attractions. Through this program, we also provide sustained financial support to organizations for place-based marketing initiatives. Through FY 2024-2025, 27 grants totaling $1,575,206 were awarded in the following categories: Development (6), Marketing (3), and Events (18).

FY 24–25 York County Tourism Grant Program Committee

Chair: Eric Menzer, *York Revolution* | Elaine Bonneau, *Bonneau & Associates* | Tyler Chronister, *County of York, Pennsylvania* | Scott A. Deisley, Ed.D., *CAY History and Culture Center* | Katie Mahoney, *YCEA & Downtown Inc* | Christina McCullough, *Stewart & Tate* | Sarah Messer, *Hanover Area Chamber of Commerce* | Dora Polk, *District Director, State Senator Dawn Keefer's Office* | Bryan Tate, *York County Register of Wills.*

$7.8 MILLION*
*awarded since program inception in 2017

26 Total Unique Recipients

27 Total Grants Awarded

2 Annual Grant Rounds



Explore YORK®

yorkpa.org

have it made here℠

PA | THE GREAT AMERICAN GETAWAY

DESTINATION MARKETING ACCREDITED ORGANIZATION ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

Business Statement

For our statement of activities, please reference the QR code or visit YorkPA.org.