

**Report on the Response of the
Virginia Tourism Authority
to the Impact of the Aging of Virginia's Population**

February 17, 2015

Pursuant to Code of Virginia §§ 2.2-5510 and 51.5-136, the Virginia Tourism Authority submits this report of its progress in addressing the impact of the aging of Virginia's population.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rita D. McClenny', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Rita D. McClenny, President and Chief Executive Officer

February 17, 2015

Designated agency official responsible for reviewing policy and programs and accommodating the interests of older adults and adults with disabilities under Code of Virginia § 2.2-604.1:

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Executive Summary

Although VTA offers its services to an extensive and varied consumer base, it does provide a variety of services that are popular among older visitors to Virginia. VTA provides many senior-friendly travel resources, including printed travel guides, “1-800” phone numbers, and printed Virginia road maps. VTA’s handicapped-accessible welcome centers, which are located throughout the Commonwealth, provide travel assistance and the face-to-face customer service experience desired by many older visitors. While VTA does not expect the future demands of older Virginians to significantly impact its operations, it does plan to continue offering services to the Commonwealth’s elderly population and older visitors to Virginia. VTA has not seen any significant changes or personnel needs attributable to an aging workforce.

Agency Description

The Virginia Tourism Authority (VTA) serves the broader interests of the Virginia economy by supporting, maintaining, and expanding the Commonwealth’s domestic and international travel markets and motion picture production, thereby generating increased visitor expenditures, tax revenues, and employment. The VTA develops and implements programs beneficial to Virginia travel-related and motion picture production-related businesses and consumers.

The VTA’s activities are divided into five programmatic areas. The responsibilities for management of these areas are vested with the President/CEO and four Vice-Presidents.

Executive & Board of Directors

This function provides oversight through the President/CEO and the Board of Directors. It includes administrative support services such as Board of Directors relations and corporate communications.

Operations & Finance

Operations & Finance includes budget development and monitoring, financial reporting, accounting, and procurement, as well as strategic planning coordination and policy management.

Marketing

The Marketing division plans and implements domestic and international marketing programs that include: brand management, national and international media relations, international trade and sales, promotions, domestic sales, merchandising, creative services, and digital marketing. In addition, the Marketing division is responsible for management and operation of the state welcome centers. Each program has targeted purposes and objectives, each geared towards promoting Virginia as a travel destination. All marketing initiatives and efforts are based on research findings.

Virginia Film Office

The Virginia Film Office is committed to attracting film and video production to Virginia and supporting the indigenous production industry, with the ultimate goal of bringing economic and employment benefits to the Commonwealth. Film, video, and multi-media production is a growth industry worldwide and in Virginia, and the economic benefits to the state have grown significantly. The Virginia Film Office pursues its goals through the creation and implementation of aggressive marketing and development programs.

Partnership Marketing

The Partnership Marketing division works closely with communities throughout Virginia through tourism development and grant programs.

Development: This program provides communities and tourism entrepreneurs with tourism planning expertise and assistance. It assists with strategic planning, product planning, and identifying funding resources to achieve the planning goals and grow the Commonwealth's tourism product.

Grants: VTA is a resource for the industry to seek and secure grants to supplement marketing and product development programs. VTA works closely with Virginia's localities and attractions to identify grant opportunities and options for stretching limited resources to market the Commonwealth's tourism product.

1. If your agency has undertaken any actions to respond to the current and future impact of an aging population, such as needs assessments, strategic planning, or use of best practices, please briefly describe those actions. Please indicate what assistance from DARS could help your agency as it prepares to serve an aging Virginia population.

VTA's clients are Virginia communities and tourism-related businesses, as well as visitors to Virginia. With respect to Virginia communities, VTA does not expect any significant impact on its programs as a result of population aging in Virginia. VTA also expects tourism-related businesses will continue to find the workers they need in Virginia. With respect to visitors to Virginia, VTA has identified baby boomers as one of its target markets. Research indicates that baby boomers take frequent extended weekend trips to Virginia to enjoy wine, culinary adventures, festivals, scenic drives, and cultural activities.

2. Briefly describe your agency's services that are used primarily by older Virginians and the funding streams (types and amounts) that support those services. If these particular services or funding streams are provided in conjunction with other state or local agencies or other for profit or non-profit organizations, please list them.

VTA makes some allowances for the fact that some visitors to Virginia are older. For example, even though the agency has moved to more digital-based marketing, VTA still maintains "1-800" phone numbers and printed travel, meeting planning, and tour planning guides. (However, VTA will be discontinuing the meeting planning and tour planning guides after this year.) Also, to reach an older (60+) audience, VTA places advertisements in print publications such as Southern Living and runs broadcast television ads during local/regional news programs. VTA operates eleven handicapped-accessible welcome centers throughout the Commonwealth, providing visitors with maps, travel guides, and brochures; these welcome centers also offer a hotel booking service whereby welcome center employees are available to make hotel arrangements for visitors. Further, VTA markets the Commonwealth as a premier group travel destination; group motor coach tours, in particular, are very popular among elderly travelers. VTA's tour planning guide offers family-friendly sample itineraries, such family reunion and grandparent-grandchild trip ideas.

3. Identify current agency programs specifically designed to serve older Virginians that fall into any of the following eight categories:

- o Health Care/Wellness

- o Education
- o Public Safety (including Adult Abuse Prevention)
- o Recreation
- o Housing
- o Accessibility (including Livable Communities <http://www.vadrs.org/vblc/>)
- o Financial Security
- o Transportation

See question #2.

4. Is your agency able to meet all of the service demands of older Virginians for the services listed above? If there are any instances where the demand for services exceeds your agency's ability to meet the demand, please indicate the service and the extent of the unmet demand. Also, if your agency maintains waiting lists for services, please provide this information, including the waiting list numbers for each service.

VTA believes it is able to meet the service demands of older Virginians.

5. Provide the number of persons, by gender if available, who received services from the agency in each of the past five state fiscal years (FY 2010 through FY2014) who fell into the following age ranges: 60-64; 65-74; 75-84; and 85 and older. If your agency lacks specific information about the numbers of older Virginians it serves but has other evidence indicating that it is serving more or fewer older Virginians than it has in the past, please describe the basis for that estimation.

VTA does not track its services by recipient age.

6. Referring to the services or funding you described in item two, describe any services or funding provided to older Virginians for which the accessibility or availability varies considerably in different parts of the Commonwealth.

While accessibility or availability to tourism-related services may vary by locality or region, VTA's services do not vary by area.

7. Over the next five to 10 years, in what ways do you anticipate that an aging population will impact your agency's services, funding streams, or policies? Consider the impact from an increase in the number of older Virginians and whether the needs of older Virginians will differ from those of today's older adults. Please include any anticipated impacts upon the cost of services, changes in type of services or the manner of service delivery, or modifications to agency policies, staffing needs, or procedures.

Over the next five to 10 years, VTA does not anticipate that an aging population will impact its services, funding streams, or policies.

8. Please describe the primary steps that should be taken at the federal, state, or local levels to meet the future demands of older Virginians and to make services delivery more effective and efficient.

VTA does not expect the future demands of older Virginians to significantly impact its operations.

9. Identify the extent to which your agency provides "customer-oriented" publications and websites that are designed to be "senior-friendly." If the information you currently provide is not readily accessible to older Virginians, please identify any steps your agency is taking to improve their access to this information.

VTA continues to maintain its "1-800" phone numbers and printed travel guides in part because of the needs of older travelers. In addition to offering printed travel guides, VTA's welcome centers provide printed Virginia road maps and brochures partly to meet the needs of elderly travelers. Also, VTA's websites and electronic publications, like all such products, can be enlarged using the "zoom" features built into the viewing programs to make them easier to see.

10. Describe any other services or programs that your agency plans to implement in the future to address the impact of the aging of Virginia's population.

VTA does not plan to implement any additional services or programs to address the impact of the aging of Virginia's population. Moving forward, VTA plans to continue offering its current programs and services to the Commonwealth's elderly population.

11. Please indicate if your agency is experiencing an increase in employees retiring later and describe any actions your agency is taking or plans to take to accommodate its aging workforce with innovative practices.

VTA is not experiencing an increase in employees retiring later.