

**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
PERFORMANCE OVERSIGHT PRE-HEARING QUESTIONS**  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

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January 10, 2025

Mr. Elliott Ferguson  
President & CEO  
Destination DC  
901 7<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Ferguson:

The Committee on Business and Economic Development (“Committee”) will hold performance oversight hearings on agencies under its purview in February. The oversight hearing for public witnesses for all the agencies under the Committee’s purview will be held on February 5, 2025 at 9:30a.m. The oversight hearing for government witnesses of Destination DC (“DDC” or “Organization”) The hearing will be held on February 12, 2025, at 9:30a.m. DDC is currently scheduled for first on the agenda.

In preparation for the hearing, the Committee is sending the attached pre-hearing questions for your response. Please submit your responses no later than **5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 5, 2025**, in Word or Excel format, as applicable, and *minimize the use of attachments*. Note that the Committee will make agency responses publicly available. If there are answers or documents that should be redacted, please provide an unredacted copy for the Committee and a redacted copy for public review.

Please contact Doni Crawford, Committee Director, at [dcrawford@dccouncil.gov](mailto:dcrawford@dccouncil.gov), with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "K.R. McDuffie".

Kenyan R. McDuffie

## **Racial Equity**

1. Describe any programs or policies where the Organization has had success in building racial equity during Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025 to date.

DDC has demonstrated a commitment to building racial equity through successful initiatives in FY24 and FY25.

### **DDC's team:**

- DDC prioritizes and practices DEI work. We note the diversity of Washington, DC, the city we represent, and our responsibilities as leaders in our community. DDC is an equal opportunity employer with a diverse team representing many races, ethnicities and sexual orientations, led by a Black President & CEO and CMO. We actively recruit a diverse pool of candidates during the hiring process.
- DDC has a culture focused on DEI and has an employee resource group, the DEI Task Force, dedicated to the effort. Composed of employees from diverse backgrounds, the DEI Task Force advances an agenda focused on how to attract a diverse application pool, discussing relevant DEI-related issues and developing new company initiatives and constantly evolving to make all employees feel welcomed.
- DDC also regularly participates in the Tourism Diversity Matters apprenticeship program. The paid apprentices are early career professionals who gain real-world experience in our industry to help launch their careers.
- Notably, Our DDC Apprenticeship Program has proven effective in providing meaningful career pathways for underrepresented communities. In FY24, two apprentices successfully completed the program and were subsequently hired as full-time employees within DDC in FY24-FY25. This program not only provides valuable on-the-job training but also creates opportunities for long-term career growth within the organization. We are currently hosting two apprentices for FY25.
- Furthermore, DDC has prioritized partnerships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to diversify its talent pool. In FY24, over six HBCU interns gained valuable professional experience through DDC's internship program, contributing to a more inclusive and diverse workforce.
- In addition to HBCU partnerships, DDC has developed a successful partnership with The Washington Center, a non-profit organization that provides internships and educational programs for college students in Washington, DC. This partnership resulted in one summer internship placement in FY24 and continues to be a valuable source for identifying diverse candidates from a broader pool of qualified college students. These successful programs, including the Apprenticeship Program, HBCU internships, and the partnership with The Washington Center, exemplify DDC's dedication to fostering an equitable and inclusive environment building racial equity.

### Membership

- In DC, minority-owned businesses account for 43.3% of the total economic landscape (U.S. Small Business Administration, 2023).
  - DDC's DEI Business Fellowship (DEIBF) is now entering its fourth year. The program was launched in 2021 as a purposeful effort to highlight and support businesses owned/operated by historically underrepresented groups and underserved communities. Each year, the selected cohort receives complimentary DDC membership and sales and marketing training. Since its inception, the program has developed into a globally recognized business development and socially sustainable initiative.
  - At the start of this program, only ~21% of DDC's membership base included businesses owned by underrepresented groups (961 members). At the conclusion of this FY24, we are forecasting that figure to rise to **25.8%**, assuming a 60% conversion among CY2024 Fellows (268 of 1,038 members).
  - Overall, the DEI Business Fellowship has taken our minority-owned businesses from 1-in-5 to 1-in-4 businesses.
2. In the context of the Organization and its mission, describe three areas, programs, or initiatives where the Organization has the greatest opportunity to address racial inequity.
- DDC's greatest opportunity to address racial inequity will be by expanding our Apprenticeship Program to include more apprentices, diversify roles, and strengthen partnerships with community organizations. Furthermore, DDC is focused on strengthening our DEI Task Force by providing adequate resources, setting clear goals, and ensuring transparency and accountability in our efforts. Finally, DDC continues to optimize our use of Circa's diversity recruitment platform by conducting data analysis, training hiring managers, and regularly evaluating the platform's effectiveness in identifying and hiring diverse candidates. These actions will help DDC create a more equitable and inclusive organization and contribute to a more just construction industry.
  - DDC's affiliated 501(c)(3) charity, the American Experience Foundation (AEF), plays a vital role in advancing racial equity within Washington, D.C.'s vibrant hospitality and tourism industry. AEF uniquely empowers DC-based BIPOC students by providing invaluable career exposure and pathways to success through inspiring experiences, real-world training, and mentorship opportunities. By leveraging DDC's extensive network, resources, and industry expertise, AEF provides students with unforgettable experiences that bring their education to life and foster their college and career readiness.

- Furthermore, AEF empowers young BIPOC people with the knowledge and tools necessary to become agents of positive change within the industry. Through collaborative partnerships, AEF encourages industry professionals to invest their time, energy, and resources in supporting and mentoring BIPOC youth. This collaborative approach fosters a deeper understanding of the unique challenges and needs faced by young people from underrepresented communities, ultimately paving the way for a more equitable and inclusive future for the hospitality and tourism sector in Washington, DC.
  - Promoting Washington, DC's history and unique experiences connected with racial equity in editorial and content is another area of focus. The content on washington.org encompasses a range of articles and stories about civil rights and the history that race plays in the city. Additionally, the DEI District pages of the website highlight how visitors looking to engage experientially through DC's many attractions that address the topic of race and inequity. As we look towards celebrating the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of America in 2026, the opportunity to learn more about our nation's roots, inequities and the impact of the Declaration of Independence during a time when not all Americans were free is a differentiating factor of Washington, DC.
3. What barriers does your Organization face when trying to: (1) make progress toward racial equity or (2) better understand racial inequity within the agency's context and operations (if any)? How does your Organization's spending address existing racial inequities (grant disbursement, procurement/contracting, etc.)?
- Destination DC recognizes that striving to make progress ongoing, and though we are proud of the many programs and initiatives we have in place, there is always more work to do. In terms of spending, one area that we are focused on is the impact that we can have to drive new sources of revenue through tourism or convention and event attendees throughout businesses in all eight Wards of the District.
  - In addition, Destination DC is doing more business with Certified Business Enterprises (CBEs) throughout the year. In FY2023, DDC spent \$118K with CBEs. The CBE spending increased to over \$4 million. The details of CBE spending are provided in question 36.
4. Please provide data on the racial diversity among leadership and at all staff grade levels. How does retention differ by race across levels? How does pay differ by race within levels?
- See attached tab Q4

## **General Questions**

5. Please provide a current organizational chart of the DDC, including the number of vacant, frozen, and filled full-time equivalents (“FTEs”) in each division or subdivision, as well as the names and titles of all senior personnel. Please include the date when the information was collected. Additionally, please provide the following:

- See attached (DDC Org Chart by Dept) Other information is addressed in attachment tab Q7

An explanation of the roles and responsibilities of each division and subdivision, including specific programs and projects administered by each division. Please also explain the administrative organization within each division and provide the number of personnel allocated to each division; and

- **Executive Office Department (8)**
  - CEO: Oversees the organization as a whole and strategizes towards having economic impact on the city through Travel & Tourism
  - Chief of Staff: Meets with Executive Team and follows up on all deliverables between departments for presentations, deadlines, strategic meetings, etc. Acts as liaison to President & CEO for board members, donors, sponsorship commitments, and members
  - Executive Office Assistant: Maintains appointment schedule for the President with support from the Chief of Staff
  - Events Team manages, produces and oversees all aspects of events and customer engagement for Destination DC
- **Finance and Administration Department (11)**
  - Responsible for the financial and administrative oversight of the organization. Finance and Administration is responsible for: Office and IT Services, Human Resources, and Accounting.
- **Partnerships & Alliances Department (13)**
  - Partnerships & Alliances (P&A) is an exciting and entrepreneurial revenue-generating department within DDC. P&A generates revenue through membership dues, sponsorship, and special events. Engagement and retention of over 1,000 business members and acquisition of new members is key to DDC’s success. Sponsorships contribute to the organization’s operational budget and strategic partnerships help leverage key assets within our city. DDC members, sponsors and partners contribute to our city’s vibrant economy and the positive image and identity of Washington, DC as a world-class destination for locals, visitors and convention attendees to enjoy.
  - AEF, The American Experience Foundation (AEF) enriches the lives of students through inspirational travel experiences and educational opportunities to cultivate the next generation of hospitality industry leaders. AEF invests in young people in our community, supporting their college and career readiness. The American Experience Foundation (AEF) enriches the lives of

students through inspirational travel experiences and educational opportunities to cultivate the next generation of hospitality industry leaders. AEF invests in young people in our community, supporting their college and career readiness.

- **Marketing & Communications Department (35)**
  - The Chief Marketing Officer leads the following verticals:
    - **CONTENT TEAM:** Develops content on washington.org, creates and manages email marketing strategy and optimizes content for organic and paid search. Implements social strategy across platforms and manages the #Only1DC campaign
    - **COMMUNICATIONS TEAM:** Pitches and earns domestic, international, trade and local media coverage
    - **CREATIVE TEAM:** Develops print, digital, photo and video assets in support of marketing and company-wide efforts
    - **ADVERTISING & RESEARCH TEAM:** Reaches potential visitors through paid domestic, international and convention trade advertising; analyzes data to provide insight on the impact of leisure, convention and business visitors
- **Convention Sales & Services Department (36)**
  - **CONVENTION SALES TEAM:** Markets the convention center and hotel meeting space for meetings. Size can range from 10 rooms to 10,000 rooms.
  - **GLOBAL SALES TEAM:** Works with global companies and ambassadors to bring international congresses to the city. Organizations main address is outside of the United States.
  - **CONVENTION SERVICES TEAM:** Brings booked meetings to life. Team works with meeting planners to help with hotel booking management, staffing solutions, transportation, special event locations, sightseeing tours, and more.
- **Global Tourism, Sports, & Visitor Experience Department (14)**
  - **GLOBAL TEAM:** Targets individual (FIT) travelers through product building and strategic partnerships with international inbound tour operators and airlines
  - **SPORTS TEAM:** Targets professional, collegiate, amateur and esports events of all sizes. Work in partnership with Events DC to promote DC as a sports hub.
  - **VISITOR EXPERIENCE TEAM:** Assists travelers by responding to phone calls and web inquiries and provides up-to- date information on ways to experience Washington, DC.

A narrative explanation of any changes made during the previous year.

- The previous year saw a notable increase in full-time positions within the organization. This growth was primarily driven by the implementation of new requirements and initiatives mandated by the Tourism Recovery District (TRD).
- These changes necessitated the expansion of our workforce to effectively meet the demands of the expanded reach and lift to promote the District globally

and successfully execute the associated initiatives.

6. Please provide a list of DDC's current board members and executive board. For each member, please provide the following:

- See attached (Q6)

- Name;
- Seat type;
- Whether the member is a District resident and if so, the Ward they live in;
- Whether the member is also a member of the executive board;
- When the member's term started and expires; f. Who the member replaced in the event they are a recent appointee; and
- Attendance record for calendar year 2024 and 2025, to date.

7. Please provide a current Schedule A for the Organization, which identifies all employees by title/position, current salary, fringe benefits, and program. This Schedule A should also indicate whether the positions are continuing/term/temporary/contract and whether they are vacant or frozen positions.

- See attached (Q7)

- For each vacant position, please state how long the position has been vacant, and provide the status of the Organization's efforts to fill the position, as well as the position number, the title, the program number, the activity number, the grade, the salary, and the fringe associated with each position. Please also indicate whether the position must be filled to comply with federal or local law, and whether there are impediments to the Organization's ability to fill those vacancies.
- For each filled position, please provide the employee's length of service with the Organization. Please provide any available information on turnover rates and/or trends identified by the Organization.

8. Please list all employees detailed to or from the Organization, if any. For each employee identified, please provide the name of the agency from/to which the employee is detailed, the reason for the detail, the date of the detail, and the employee's projected date of return.

N/A

9. Did the Organization conduct annual performance evaluations of its employees in Fiscal Year or Fiscal Year 25, to date? Who conducted the evaluations? What are the performance measures by which employees are evaluated? What steps are taken to ensure that all employees are meeting individual job requirements? What steps are taken when an employee does not meet individual job requirements?



- Destination DC conducts annual performance during October/November each year immediately following the fiscal year end. The evaluations are conducted by each manager and rolled up to the department heads for final review. Then the final performance evaluation is shared with President & CEO for any additional input and approval.
  - Destination DC conducts mid-year reviews to ensure all employees are on course to meet individual job requirements and expectations.
  - DDC leadership team also provides any performance related feedback regularly.
  - When an employee does not meet individual job requirements, DDC leadership team, working together with HR, provides more training and additional resources as needed. However, if an employee fails to meet the requirements and expectations, verbal warning/performance improvement plan can be put in place immediately and ultimately leads into termination.

10. What is the Organization’s current remote work policy?

- See attached (“Work From Home Hybrid WorkPlace Policy”)

11. Please complete the following chart about the residency of **new hires** in FY24, and FY25, to date:

<i>Position Type</i>	<i>Total Number</i>	<i>Number of District Residents</i>
Continuing	17	11
Term	57	34
Temporary	139	77
Contract	N/A	N/A

12. Please provide the Committee with the following:

- A list of all employees who received or retained cellphones, personal digital assistants, or similar communications devices at Organization expense in Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025, to date;
  - None
- A list of all vehicles owned, leased, or otherwise used by the Organization and to whom the vehicle is assigned, as well as a description of all vehicle accidents involving the Organization’s vehicles in FY2024 and FY2025, to date;
  - See attached (Q12)
- A list of travel expenses, arranged by employee, for Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025, to date, including the justification for travel and description of activities engaged in during the travel;



- See attached excel document (Q12-c and Q12-c1)
- A list of employee bonuses or special award pay, raises, and step increases granted in Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025, to date; and
- A list of the total overtime and workers' compensation payments paid in Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025, to date, including the number of employees who received overtime and workers' compensation payments, in what amounts, and for what reasons.
  - See attached (Q12)

**13. Regarding the use of communication devices:**

- Please describe procedures that are in place to track which individuals or units are assigned mobile devices (including, but not limited to smartphones, laptops, and tablet computers) and how the usage of these devices is monitored.
  - Destination DC issues laptops to all full-time team members, apprentices and some interns. Devices network information is stored on-premises in Microsoft Active Directory, cloud synched to the Microsoft Office 365 Entra portal. Once a device is allocated and assigned to a user that users Microsoft account is synched with the device and retained in the Entra portal. The devices are monitored for malware and viruses using the Sentinel One software agent, that our MSP (NTIVA) installs on the devices. The devices can be remotely wiped using Microsoft Entra. Devices are remotely supported using Gotoassist (internal IT) or Screen Connect (MSP IT), when support is required.
  - Destination DC does not issue other mobile devices such as smartphones.
- How does the Organization limit the costs associated with its mobile devices?
  - While Destination DC does not issue any smartphone, it does cover partial/full expenses monthly via reimbursement. The amount of reimbursement is determined by the responsibilities of each position.
- For Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025, to date, what was the total cost including, but not limited to, equipment and service plans for mobile communications and devices?
  - FY2024 DDC spent \$68,685 on new devices for staff members, \$6,800 of that total was for service plans for the devices. For FY2025 Destination DC has spent \$41,200 for new devices, service plans, \$3,200.

**14. Please provide a chart showing the Organization's approved budget, revised budget (after reprogramming, etc.) and actual spending, by division, for Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025, to date. Include a description and explanation for any variance between fiscal year appropriations and actual expenditures.**

- See attached tab Q14

**15.** For Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025, to date, please identify any special purpose revenue funds maintained, used, or available for use by the Organization. For each fund identified, please provide:

- N/A

- The revenue source name and code;
- Legal authority for the fund (i.e. D.C. Code or DCMR citation);
- A description of the program that generates the funds;
- The amount of funds generated by each source or program;
- Expenditures of funds, including the purpose of each expenditure; and
- The current fund balance.

**16.** For Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025, to date, please list all intra-District transfers to or from the Organization. For each transfer, include all the following details:

- N/A

- The program and activity codes and names in the sending and receiving agencies' budgets;
- Funding source (i.e., local, federal, SPR);
- Description of memoranda of understanding ("MOU") services;
- Total MOU amount, including any modifications;
- Whether a letter of intent was executed for Fiscal Year 2024 or Fiscal Year 2025, and if so, on what date;
- The date of the submitted request from or to the other agency for the transfer;
- The dates of signatures on the relevant MOU; and
- The date funds were transferred to the receiving agency.

**17.** Please list any additional intra-District transfers planned for Fiscal Year 2025, including the anticipated agency(ies), purposes, and dollar amounts.

- N/A

**18.** Please list each contract, procurement, lease, and grant ("contract") awarded, entered into, extended, or option years exercised, by the Organization during Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025, to date. For each contract, please provide the following information, where applicable:

- See attached tab Q18

- o The name of the contracting party;
- o The nature of the contract, including the end product or service;
- o The dollar amount of the contract, including amount budgeted and actually spent;
- o The status of deliverables;
- o The term of the contract;
- o The Certified Business Enterprise status;
- o Whether the contract was competitively bid;
- o The name of the Organization's contract monitor and the results of any monitoring activity; and
- o The funding source.

**19.** Please list all MOU entered into by the Organization during Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025, to date, as well as any MOU currently in force. For each, indicate the date entered and the termination date.

- See attached Q19

**20.** Please list the ways, other than MOU, in which the Organization collaborated with analogous agencies in other jurisdictions, with federal agencies, or with non-governmental organizations in Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025, to date.

- N/A

**21.** Please identify all recommendations identified by the Office of the Inspector General, D.C. Auditor, or other federal or local oversight entities during the previous 3 years. Please provide an update on what actions have been taken to address these recommendations. If the recommendation has not yet been implemented, please explain why.

- N/A

**22.** Please describe any anticipated spending pressures for Fiscal Year 2025. Please include a description of the pressure, the estimated amount, and any proposed solutions.

- Per the most recent OCFO's revenue estimate, FY25 overall tax collection may be less than FY24 and the variance could be up to \$3 million. Since Destination DC's marketing and promotion work requires advance planning and commitment, Destination DC may have to delay or modify some plans pending the financial status as FY25 unfolds.

**23.** Please provide a list of all budget enhancement requests (including, but not limited to, capital improvement needs), for Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025, to date. For each, please include a description of the need and the amount of funding requested.

- N/A

**24.** Please list each grant or sub-grant received by the Organization in Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025, to date. List the date, amount, and purpose of the grant or sub-grant received. Additionally, provide the following:

- Destination DC received \$625,000 from DMPED for the Hospitality Technical Assistance and Workforce Development Program Grant. Funds for this grant are to be spent in FY2024 and FY2025. Funds are used for hospitality technical training and workforce development.
- Whether any FTEs are dependent on grant funding and, if so, how many; and
  - The grant supports the full salary of the Business Fellowship apprentice (for hospitality technical training).
  - The grant supports partial salaries of the Director of Membership, Membership Manager (for hospitality technical training), Partnerships Manager and American Experience Foundation Program Manager and Associate Director (for workforce development).
- A description of the terms of this funding, and, if it is set to expire, what plans, if any, are in place to continue funding.
  - The funds received from this DMPED grant must be spent by the end of FY2025. Funds are all used to support programs that focus on technical training including sales and marketing, and high school work-based learning and internship programs in the hospitality and media fields. Destination DC intends to continue technical training and workforce development programming for both member businesses and DC scholars. Destination DC will continue to explore sponsorship and partnership opportunities to support this work.

**25.** Please describe any grant the Organization is, or is considering, applying for in Fiscal Year 2025.

- At this time, we do not understand that the Hospitality Technical Assistance and Workforce Development Program Grant (or anything similar to it) will be renewed. If it does open again, Destination DC will apply.

**26.** Please list any pending lawsuits that name the Organization as a party. Please identify any lawsuits that could potentially expose the District to significant financial liability and/or result in a change to Organization practices, and please include the current status of the litigation. Please provide the basis and extent of each claim, regardless of its

likelihood of success. For those identified, please include an explanation of the issues involved in each case.

- N/A

**27.** Please list all settlements entered into by the Organization, or by the District on behalf of the Organization, in Fiscal Year 2024 or Fiscal Year 2025, to date. Include the parties' names, the amount of the settlement, and, if related to litigation, the case name and a brief description of the case. If unrelated to litigation, please describe the underlying issue or reason for the settlement (e.g., administrative complaint, etc.).

- N/A

**28.** Please list and describe any ongoing investigations, audits, or reports on the Organization or any employee of the Organization, including, but not limited to, personnel complaints, or any investigations, studies, audits, or reports on the Organization or any employee of the Organization that were completed during Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025, to date, along with the Organization's compliance or non-compliance with any recommendations.

- N/A

**29.** Please provide the total number of administrative complaints or grievances filed against the Organization in Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025, to date, broken down by source. Please describe the process utilized to respond to any complaints and grievances received and any changes to Organization policies or procedures that have resulted from complaints or grievances. As it relates to a constituent challenging the Organization's response to grievances, please indicate:

- N/A

- Whether a formalized process is in place to request a hearing by the Commissioner;
- If so, whether the Commissioner's decision is appealable; and
- If there is a formalized hearing process, whether that process is described on the Organization's website.

**30.** Please describe the Organization's procedures for investigating allegations of sexual harassment or misconduct committed by or against its employees. Please list and describe any allegations received by the Organization in Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025, to date, and whether those allegations were resolved.

- N/A

- Has the Organization identified a primary and alternate sexual harassment officer ("SHO") as required by Mayor's Order 2023-131 ("Sexual Harassment Order")? If not, why not and does the Organization have a similar plan in place? If yes, please provide the names of the primary and alternate SHOs.

- At Destination DC, Terri Carter, Director, People & Culture assumes responsibilities as the primary SHO.
- Has the Organization received any requests from staff in an otherwise prohibited dating, romantic, or sexual relationship for a waiver of the requirements of provisions of the Sexual Harassment Order? What was the resolution of each request? If a waiver has been granted, are there limitations on the scope of the waiver?
- N/A

**31.** Please provide the number of FOIA requests received by the Organization during Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025, to date. Please include the number of requests which were granted, partially granted, denied, or pending. Please also provide the average response time, estimated number of FTEs required to process requests, and the estimated number of hours spent responding to these requests.

- For FOIA requests disposed of because no records or Organization records containing the requested information exist, please describe the nature of the request.
- N/A

**32.** Please provide a list of all studies, research papers, reports, and analyses that the Organization prepared, or contracted for, during Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025, to date. Please state the status and purpose of each and attach a copy.

#### **FY24 Advertising Effectiveness Study**

- DDC studies the organization's advertising effectiveness annually, most recently with the FY24 Ad Awareness & Return on Investment Study in Fall 2024. The ROI study was a formal review of the organization's advertising campaign running from October 2023 to September 2024 completed by Future Partners, a third-party destination research company. The study was presented to the DC Office of the Chief Financial Officer on Dec. 16, 2024. Key takeaways from the FY24 ROI Study include:
    - DDC Paid Media Spend: \$22.4 million
    - Total Incremental Visitor Spending Generated for DC: \$554.7 million
    - Total Tax Revenue Generated for Washington, DC: \$46.9 million
- 33.** Please list all reports or reporting currently required of the Organization by the District of Columbia Code or Municipal Regulations. Please indicate whether the Organization complies with these requirements, and if not, why (e.g., the purpose behind the requirement is moot, etc.).
- N/A

34. Please identify any boards or commissions associated with the Organization, and provide a chart listing the names, confirmation dates, terms, wards of residence, and attendance of each member. Include any vacancies. Please also attach agendas and minutes of each board or commission meeting in Fiscal Year 2024 or Fiscal Year 2025, to date, if minutes were prepared. Please inform the Committee if the board or commission did not convene during any month. Finally, please indicate whether the board or commission met virtually or in person.

- Destination DC Board of Directors
- See Tab Q34

35. Please describe how the Organization solicits feedback from customers.

- Please explain what the Organization has learned from this feedback, including specific examples; and
- Explain how the Organization has changed its practices due to such feedback.
- Annually, Destination DC conducts a survey of its member businesses. Members are asked what they value about their membership, familiarity with benefits and resources, top reasons for joining, what they'd like to see added or expanded and more.

Overall, in the 2024 survey, hotel respondents indicated they were 86% likely to renew and non hotel members 76% likely to renew. In practice it is rare for a hotel member to drop membership. Among non-hotels, the retention rate is usually 85%.

36. Please attach copies of the required annual **small business enterprise ("SBE") expenditure** reports for the Organization for Fiscal Year 2023, Fiscal Year 2024, and Fiscal Year 2025, to date.

- See attached Q36
- D.C. Official Code § 2-218.53(b) requires each District agency to submit supplemental information with their annual SBE expenditure report, including a description of the activities the Organization engaged in to achieve their fiscal year SBE expenditure goal and a description of any changes the Organization intends to make during the next fiscal year to achieve their SBE expenditure goal. Has the Organization submitted the required information for Fiscal Year 2024? If so, please provide a copy as an attachment. If not, please explain.

37. Please provide a copy of the Organization's Fiscal Year 2024 performance plan. Please explain which performance plan objectives were completed in Fiscal Year 2024 and whether they were completed on time and within budget. If they were not, please provide an explanation.



- See attached (FY25 Annual Marketing & Sales Plan Final)

## **Personnel**

38. Is the Organization operating under a full or partial hiring freeze? If so, why?

- No, DDC is not operating under a full or partial hiring freeze.

39. Please separately list each Organization employee whose salary was \$100,000 or more in Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025, to date. Please provide the name, position number, position title, program number, activity number, salary, and fringe for each. In addition, please state the amount of any overtime or bonus pay received by each employee on the list.

- See attached Q39

40. Please list, in descending order, the Organization's top 25 overtime earners during Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025, to date. For each, please state the employee's name, position number, position title, program number, activity number, salary, fringe, and the aggregate amount of overtime pay earned.

- See attached Q40

41. Please provide each collective bargaining agreement that is currently in effect for Organization employees and include the bargaining unit and the duration of each agreement.

- N/A

42. Does the Organization conduct employee satisfaction surveys or otherwise solicit such information from employees? If so, please explain how such information is collection and evaluated, including whether responses are anonymous and/or confidential. Please explain what steps are taken to ensure that all employees are comfortable in the work environment.

- Destination DC is committed to fostering a positive and supportive work environment for all employees. To achieve this, we prioritize employee feedback and regularly conduct surveys to assess employee satisfaction, including their relationship with their managers. The FY24 Management Effectiveness Survey was conducted anonymously to ensure employee confidentiality. Individual responses were aggregated to maintain privacy.
- The Director of People and Culture and the Talent Acquisition Manager reviewed the survey data, identifying key trends and areas for improvement. A summary of the survey results was shared with all staff and presented to the President & CEO and department heads. Based on the feedback, the HR team identified necessary actions,

including implementing management training programs to address identified areas for improvement.

- We believe a comfortable and supportive work environment is essential. To foster a positive and supportive work environment, we prioritize employee feedback through various channels. We actively encourage employee participation by maintaining an employee suggestion box, where all suggestions are presented to our CEO monthly. Furthermore, we uphold an open-door policy that encourages open communication between employees and management at all levels. We also provide valuable resources such as employee assistance programs and diversity & inclusion training to support employee well-being. Finally, DDC leadership is committed to promptly addressing any employee concerns that may arise.

**43.** Please provide the total number of complaints or grievances from employees or former employees that the Organization received or was made aware of in Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025, to date, including, but not limited to, matters concerning program implementation and work environment.

- N/A

**44.** Please provide a list of any additional training or continuing education opportunities made available to Organization employees. For each, provide the subject of the training, the names of the trainers, and the number of Organization employees who participated. Please discuss whether the Organization accepts requests from employees to engage in training opportunities.

- One of the major benefits to DDC membership is access to one-of-a-kind events.
- Members and DDC employees can connect with leaders in the travel and tourism industry and explore trends, technologies and happenings. These include exclusive experiences at DC's attractions and museums and most importantly, educational programs about travel and tourism trends and strategies to inform sales and marketing.
- DDC offers a variety of training and continuing education opportunities for its employees to foster an inclusive workplace.
- **Nonprofit HR DEI Training:**
  - **Subject:** Engaging in an Inclusive Workplace Environment
  - **Trainer:** Bryan W. Jackson, MA, Senior Consultant, People & Organizational Strategy
  - **Participants:** All staff
- **Traliant On-Demand Training:**
  - **Subject 1:** DEI: Creating Inclusive Workplaces

- **Subject 2:** Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion in the Workplace V4.1
  - **Trainer:** Traliant (online platform)
  - **Participants:** All staff
- **Bias in the Workplace Training:**
  - **Subject:** Bias in the Workplace; Race Bias, Gender Bias,
  - **Trainers:** DEI Taskforce Co-Chairs
  - **Participants:** All staff
- **DEI Hiring Training:**
  - **Subject:** Integrating Diversity & Inclusion into the Hiring Process
  - **Trainer:** Brittany Edlow
  - **Participants:** All staff
- DDC also accepts requests from employees to engage in training opportunities. This allows employees to identify and address specific skill gaps or areas for professional development, including those crucial for advancing racial equity within the organization. By actively seeking employee input, DDC demonstrates a commitment to supporting individual growth and ensuring that training initiatives align with the evolving needs of the workforce, fostering a more equitable and inclusive environment for all.

**45.** Please discuss any training deficiencies the Organization identified during Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025, to date, and any plans the Organization has to address those deficiencies.

- **CBE Trainings:** Destination DC invited member businesses to attend a free program to learn more about the process of becoming a CBE. The workshop was developed and run by MW Consulting, a CBE business. Marcus A. Williams covered topics including benefits of certification, how to apply, and unlock new business opportunities.
- **Internships:** DC high school students who intern with Destination DC through the American Experience Foundation receive certification in DDC's Special Agent Academy as well as phishing and cyber security training through NTIVA – the same training that DDC employees must complete. In addition, interns have the chance to train and network with professionals across the company and industry through interviews, site visits, and events. AEF and DDC work closely with DC Career Academies to coordinate and complement classroom curriculum with workplace learning training experiences.

## **Operations**

**46.** Please list each new program implemented by the Organization during Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025, to date. For each initiative, please provide:

- A description of the initiative;
- Funding required to implement the initiative and the source of such funding; and
- Any documented results of the initiative.

### **WorldPride Marketing/Promotions:**

- Marketing/Media and Promotions strategy to attract visitors from all over the world to come to Washington, DC during WorldPride 2025, May 17-June 8, 2025
- TRD Funding: \$2.4 million dollars
  - Promotional activities in top international and domestic markets include activations, paid marketing, public relations and tour operator promotions
- Expected results:
  - Anticipated 2 million overnight visitors and 1 million regional visitors
  - \$787 million anticipated economic impact

### **2Synergize: Destination DC - Citywide Sales Strategy**

- The purpose of the citywide sales strategy project is to develop a strategic approach to securing citywide conventions that aligns with your hotel partners and The Walter E. Washington Convention Center objectives. This project will address a new definition of success while curating buy-in from stakeholders, to establish a common sales strategy within the destination.
- TRD Funding: \$50,000
- Project is ongoing but feedback from stakeholders has been positive.

**47.** Please explain the impact on the Organization of any legislation passed at the federal level during Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025, to date, which impacted Organization operations. If regulations are the shared responsibility of multiple agencies, please note.

- **December 2024 – Continuing Resolution Bill**
  - D.C. Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium Campus Revitalization Act (H.R. 4984) to the continuing resolution to extend federal spending
- **January 2025 – Federal funding freeze (Executive Order)**
  - Directly impacts members, stakeholders and partners we promote that rely on grant funding for activations and to perform their work
- **January 2025 – Federal workforce in office return (Executive Order)**
  - Directly impacts member businesses and restaurants in area positively that are downtown near offices. Reverse impact for members in various neighborhoods that saw increase in business while many in federal workforce worked remotely

**48.** Please list all regulations to which the Organization is subject at the federal level. Please explain how the Organization complies with those regulations and explain any non-compliance or lapses in compliance.

- N/A

**49.** Please identify any statutory or regulatory impediments to the Organization's operations.

- N/A

**50.** Please identify all electronic databases maintained by the Organization, including the following:

- See attached (Q50)
- A detailed description of the information tracked within each system;
- The age of the system and any discussion of substantial upgrades that have been made or are planned to the system; and
- Whether each system is publicly accessible, in whole or in part.

**51.** Please provide a detailed description of any new technology acquired by the Organization in Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025, to date, including the cost and its purpose. Please explain if there have been any issues with implementation.

- DC250.us website – Drupal CMS
  - Cost: \$83,300
    - Purpose: Microsite to promote Washington, DC as the premier destination for celebrating America's 250th anniversary; website connects to washington.org
- LiveChat/ChatBot
- Cost:
  - \$1704 annual subscription for generative AI-supported ChatBot
  - \$2124 per year for 3 seats of LiveChat support
    - Purpose: Train a generative AI on washington.org content to provide an informational, useful guide to answer questions and connect users with relevant content.
- Grammarly
  - Cost: \$10,500 for one-year subscription
  - Purpose: Efficiently edit and message both internally and externally; utilize editorial style rules for clarity and consistency; generative AI tool; and assist global teams if translations are necessary.

**52.** Please describe any efforts by the Organization in Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025, to date, to improve the transparency of Organization operations.

- Communication and reports on events/activities and strategies are outlined in the following:
- **TOURISM RECOVERY DISTRICT REPORTS:** Bi-annual report to the appointed Tourism Recover District committee that has oversight of our efforts on events/activations/sales related to the additional TRD dollars
- **INDUSTRY COLLABORATION**
  - Presentations to the board of Events DC
  - Regular meetings with DC's hospitality alliance, which includes Destination DC, Events DC, Hotel Association Metropolitan Washington and Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington
- **COMMITTEE MEETINGS:** Quarterly meetings to engage all sectors of our industry across all organization functions
  - Tourism, Sports, and Visitor Experience
  - Convention Sales and Services
  - Marketing and Communications
  - Membership Committee
  - Audit Committee

**53.** Please list the top five priorities for the Organization and provide a detailed explanation for how the Organization expects to achieve or work toward those priorities in Fiscal Year 2025.

As an economic development organization, Destination DC's mission is to promote the nation's capital as a premier destination for business, convention, tradeshow, meeting and leisure travel. In doing so, we create an economic impact that leads to jobs for residents and benefits the District's local economy and community.

Washington, DC enjoyed record-breaking visitation in 2024, welcome 25.95 million total visitors –up by about 4 million visitors or 16%. Increased visitation resulted in:

- Record \$10.2 billion in visitor spending
- Record \$2.065 billion in DC tax revenue (up 29.5%)
- Record 102,366 DC jobs (up 22%)

DDC's strategic objectives are as follows:

- **Spread the Word:** Increase positive awareness of and demand for Washington, DC as a visitor destination by crafting a comprehensive narrative around the nation's capital.
- **Maintain Leadership:** Continue to influence product development, redevelopment and infrastructure improvements that impact Destination DC's mission and the image of Washington, DC.
- **Maximize Limited Resources:** Creatively and efficiently utilize its annual budget and staff to achieve Destination DC's mission and vision. Metrics, monitoring and modifications will also be applied to measure effectiveness and suggest resource

allocations. Ensure every program contributes to generating visitor spending in the city.

- **Be Inclusive:** Leverage the knowledge, initiatives and connections of all member organizations to market the city to expanding visitor markets; build relationships with groups that will support the DC tourism economy.
- **Develop Advocates:** Build community-wide support for tourism and Destination DC, particularly among residents, industry experts and city government officials.
- How did the Organization address its top five priorities last year?

DDC leveraged all resources to execute its sales and marketing goals, which resulted in exceeding pre-pandemic levels of total visitation, visitor spending and jobs. It leveraged all available resources, led by additional Tourism Recovery District dollars, to reach more potential visitors than ever before.

DDC works in concert with stakeholders and members for the benefit of increased tourism. By focusing on retaining and recruiting talent, maintaining the expertise of DDC's leadership and partnering with local officials, DC's tourism economy is strong and growing.

**54.** Please identify any legislative requirements that the Organization lacks sufficient resources to properly implement. Please identify any statutory or regulatory impediments to your agency's operations or mission.

- N/A

**55.** Please describe the Organization's current legislative priorities, whether consideration by the Committee is warranted, and if the Organization foresees introducing additional measures for the Council's consideration during Fiscal Year 2025.

- The Council passed a hotel tax that provides funding for DDC for marketing purposes a few years ago. Can DDC please provide an update on how much money DDC has received from this tax and how much has been spent of it?
- Tourism Recovery District (TRD) funding has provided DDC additional funding to promote DC tourism since April 1, 2023. As of December 2024, DDC has received \$41.5 million, representing 20 months of collections. The majority (\$40 million) was spent on domestic and international advertising/production, international event promotions and trade shows and client events.

### **DDC Programs**

**56.** Please provide a breakdown of business and leisure visits (actual or anticipated) for Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024, and any information regarding group visits (business or pleasure, if available). For that information, please also discuss the following:



- a. DDC's top overseas and domestic visitor markets;
  - b. The specific decrease in visitor count and visitor spending; and
  - c. The overall impact meetings and conventions had on the District's and DDC's revenues in Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025, to date, when compared to Fiscal Year 2023.
- For the domestic market, the most recent year for which DDC has visitor data is calendar year 2023. In 2023, Washington, DC welcomed 24 million domestic visitors. Domestic visitation in 2023 has fully recovered from its pre-pandemic level in 2019, when DC welcomed 22.8 million domestic visitors. In 2023, business visitors made up 32% of our total domestic visitation, while leisure made up 68%. Domestic visitors in 2023 spent \$7.7 billion in DC, an increase from \$6.1 billion in 2022.
  - Based on the preliminary results from Tourism Economics, DC's total international visitors in 2024 are estimated to be 2.2 million. This is an increase from 1.95 million international visitors in 2023.
  - Washington, DC's top overseas visitor markets in 2023 were:
    1. Canada
    2. UK
    3. India
    4. Germany
    5. France
    6. South Korea
    7. Mexico
    8. Italy
    9. Spain
    10. China
  - Washington, DC's top domestic visitor markets in 2023 were:
    1. New York, NY
    2. Philadelphia, PA
    3. Washington, DC
    4. Norfolk, VA
    5. Richmond, VA
    6. Baltimore, MD
    7. Atlanta, GA
    8. Boston, MA
    9. Raleigh, NC

## 10. Harrisburg, PA

- The Convention Sales and Services team works to confirm citywide conventions that create economic impact through meetings held at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center and hotels throughout Washington, DC.

Fiscal Year WEWCC Business				
Fiscal Year	No. of Meetings	Total Attendees	Total Room Nights	EIC
2022	43	511,496	318,295	\$213,848,909
2023	39	304,600	342,509	\$313,625,281
2024	46	566,281	455,985	\$624,213,393
2025	44	347,910	463,475	\$374,061,590
2026	39	360,640	464,185	\$433,326,244
<b>Total</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>2,090,927</b>	<b>2,044,449</b>	<b>\$1,959,075,417</b>
Total Room Nights column reflects contracted rooms data				
EIC calculated for all groups over 1,350 on peak at WEWCC				
Fiscal Year Non-WEWCC Business				
Fiscal Year	No. of Meetings	Total Attendees	Total Room Nights	
2022	753	226,331	317,290	
2023	1236	363,205	456,451	
2024	1470	290,844	495,785	
2025	912	238,331	404,667	
2026	193	113,038	199,949	
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,564</b>	<b>1,231,749</b>	<b>1,874,142</b>	
Total Room Nights column reflects contracted rooms data				

### TOURISM/SPORTS/VISITOR EXPERIENCE:

- The Tourism and Sports division produces room nights that include a combination of group tour, global promotions and sporting events
- Numbers have been on a positive trajectory year over year, with the goal of exceeding 2019 room nights
  - COVID recovery is still present in our international markets due to several factors including air lift availability and visa restrictions in a few key markets
  - International visitation to Washington, DC is on a very growth strong pattern with forecast to return to pre-pandemic numbers by 2026
- Goals represent:
  - Group tour – student and senior motorcoach tours
  - Global promotions – room nights generated from direct marketing promotions in top international feeder markets
  - Sporting/special events – room nights generated from sports events hosted at all our key sporting venues and is inclusive of special events to include festivals and music events

ROOM NIGHT	TEAM GOAL	
YEAR	Goal	Actual
2011	117,500	126,739
2012	137,000	179,776

<b>2013</b>	187,500	196,008
<b>2014</b>	205,800	210,350
<b>2015</b>	233,400	306,520
<b>2016</b>	348,000	451,121
<b>2017</b>	429,360	442,830
<b>2018</b>	464,971	561,948
<b>2019</b>	509,190	514,432
<b>2020</b>	512,129	COVID
<b>2021</b>	64,000	COVID
<b>2022</b>	237,000	243,684
<b>2023</b>	296,292	338,334
<b>2024</b>	433,067	437,613
<b>2025</b>	466,500	EOY report out

**57.** What are the business and leisure visit projections for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2025 and for Fiscal Year 2026? In DDC's responses, please discuss the following:

- What measurements are used to track each type of visit;
- How the numbers for Fiscal Years 2023, 2024 and 2025 compared to DDC's earlier projections; and
- The reason for (and impact of) any variances in great detail.

Destination DC does not have access to projections for leisure vs. business segments for FY25 or FY26.

Total forecasted visitation to DC for 2025 and 2026 are as follows:

- 2025 forecasts: 25M Domestic, 2.3M International
- 2026 forecasts: 25M Domestic, 2.5M International

Domestic visitation is calculated by D.K. Shifflet. DKS has a panel of more than 50,000 Americans, of whom they survey monthly about their travel (destination, reason, length, spending, etc.). DKS then uses the data to determine the number of visitors who come to DC each year, as well as the breakdown between business and leisure travel.

- International visitation is calculated by the Iolite Group, which uses data from the Survey of International Air Travelers, conducted by the U.S. Department of Commerce and border crossing surveys.
- In the calendar year 2023, business visitors made up 32% of our total domestic visitation, while leisure made up 68%. DC's domestic market is likely pacing just as forecasted. We do not have projections on the breakdown of business vs. leisure visitors for 2024 currently.

58. Discuss DDC's research that explores the types of people most likely to travel to DC and the associated reasons. In your response, please discuss the following:

- Who the visitors are (by demographic group or persona);
  - Why they travel to DC;
  - How DDC has incorporated that research into its strategic planning; and
  - Whether these demographics are likely to remain the same or change in a post-pandemic world.
- 
- During the fall of 2022, DDC utilized third-party Experian spending data and location-based vendors to identify the individuals most likely to travel to the District. During this analysis, the organization identified the following visitor profiles:
    1. **Suburban Dwellers:** Family travelers wanting their children to experience as much as possible: museums, live sports, waterfront activities and more.
    2. **Sophisticated Boomers.** Travelers in the age range of 55+ who consider themselves to be thriving in their golden years. Interested in history, museums and bucket-list items, but also willing to spend on unique experiences.
    3. **Prosperous Families:** Visitors with a high-propensity to spend above average amounts on travel who see themselves as an elite group looking for high-end experiences.
    4. **Modest Travelers:** Adventurous single or couple travelers interested in local cultures and flavors.
  - Destination DC also deploys advertising to target minority groups that may not be reached through standard demographic targeting. Marketing is deployed to specifically reach these groups to ensure campaign coverage:
    1. **LGBTQ+ Travelers:** Travelers who identify as LGBTQ+ and for whom an LGBTQ+-friendly destination is extremely important
    2. **Black Travelers:** Travelers who are interested in the African-American experience, either culturally or historically

3. **Latine Travelers:** Travelers who are interested in the Latine experience, either culturally or historically
  4. **Asian and Pacific Islander Travelers:** Travelers who are interested in the Asian and/or Pacific Islander experience, either culturally or historically
- DDC will be targeting these audience segments through data partners throughout our FY25 advertising campaigns. Digital media buys coupled with access to data partners allow us to identify consumers as falling within one of our target audiences, and then serve them with advertising specifically meant for them. This strategy creates deeper engagement and increases the likelihood of a conversion to booking an overnight visitor.
59. How have the results of this analysis changed, if at all, between Fiscal Years 2023, 2024, and 2025, to date? For this response, please also discuss the following:
- Which of the eight personas discussed in last year’s performance oversight responses have been most and least impacted by the pandemic;
  - What lessons DDC learned; and
  - How DDC plans to adapt or pivot its business model and marketing approach, particularly with regards to potential travel in a post COVID-19 world.
60. During last year’s testimony, DDC noted that “Washington, DC is only the 7<sup>th</sup> most visited U.S. destination for overseas visitors.” Has the District retained its ranking? What is DC’s domestic travel ranking? How has this rank changed over the years?
- Washington, DC has maintained its NTTO ranking as the 7<sup>th</sup> most visited U.S. destination for overseas visitors. A ranking of domestic travel to U.S destinations is not recorded by any one officially recognized data source. Destinations each measure their own domestic visitation using different methodologies. Destination DC works with D.K. Shifflet, a third-party vendor in the travel and tourism research sector, to determine the number of domestic visitors to Washington, DC. D.K. Shifflet maintains a spending database of 50,000 U.S. households. D.K Shifflet is then able to determine annual domestic visitation to Washington, DC based on spending patterns and occupancy information from CoStar’s nationally recognized hotel KPI reports.
61. As this campaign for the “There’s Only One DC” comes close to year in place, please describe any milestones and/or challenges with this initiative. Please describe what successes it had and what could be learned from this initiative

- “There’s Only One DC” is both a promotional campaign used to inspire visitation to Washington, DC and a brand created by Destination DC’s marketing team to uniquely showcase the city distinctly from its competitive set. The campaign officially launched in November 2023 (FY24) and has received a wide range of support and interest from local stakeholders and government leaders to DDC members and visitors.
- The campaign creative and messaging continues to evolve and is credited in an independent Annual ROI Study on advertising effectiveness as having generated record visitor spending of \$554.7 million and total tax revenue of \$46.9 million – the highest rates in the study’s more than a decade history.

62. Please describe the steps that were taken for the launch of the new “There’s Only One DC” marketing campaign. Please describe how the rollout of the “There’s Only One DC” marketing campaign and the initial feedback received after the launch?

- The rollout of “There’s Only One DC” began at the 2023 Annual Marketing Outlook Meeting that Destination DC held at the Warner Theatre in August. The paid media campaign launched in November 2023, supported by TRD dollars that helped expand the reach of the advertising domestically and internationally. The campaign and brand identity were immediately supported by a wide range of stakeholders and consumers alike.

63. How have recent social and political demonstrations held in DC impacted DDC? Can the District better position itself to improve its image and grow its tourism market? With the number of in-person protests in District the past several years, are more people traveling to the District to participate in First Amendment Activities?

- Washington, DC has long been known as a place for visitors and residents to demonstrate their First Amendment rights. The city makes it clear that peaceful protests are welcome in the nation’s capital, and “Protest Tourism” is a differentiating factor for Washington, DC.
- DDC’s current campaign, “There’s Only One DC,” highlights differentiating factors that inspire travel to Washington, DC. The nation’s capital is the only one place where visitors can come to demonstrate and make their voices heard against the backdrop of Congress and the White House. The campaign also speaks to the other things to enjoy about DC while in town: DC’s local culture, diverse neighborhoods, free things to do, arts and theater, nightlife, music scene, small businesses and much more.
- DDC includes information on exercising your rights through our marketing and communications channels, including content on [washington.org](http://washington.org). Protest tourism in DC has also been covered editorially.

- The Convention Sales and Services department often sources venues and hotels for First Amendment events and protests that are part of larger citywide conventions. Examples include:
  - American Academy of Pediatrics
  - March on Washington (National Action Network)
  - March for Life
  - NATO Summit
  - Society for Neuroscience

**64.** The District is a proud home to people of many different cultures and ethnicities. What cultural events does Destination DC market targeting visitors and tourists?

- The 2024 and 2025 year has been focused on the execution and celebration of our LGBTQ community as we march toward **WorldPride 2025** being held in Washington, DC May 17 – June 8.
- The event will generate over \$787 million dollars in economic impact and attract more than two million out-of-town visitors and one million regional visitors throughout the event dates.
- In addition to WorldPride, DDC works with all festivals and agencies in Washington, DC to amplify their events through DDC owned channels such as washington.org, social channels, marketing and promotions.
- Festivals include but are not limited to: DC JazzFest, National Cherry Blossom Festival, Passport DC, July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration, Juneteenth, GoGo, Lunar New Year, etc.
- DDC currently has eight international offices: India, China, UK, Australia, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Japan. They highlight Washington, DC’s culture, food, arts, music experiences and more to inspire visitation from these markets.

**65.** WorldPride Washington, DC 2025 is this year. Please provide an update on preparations for the event. How will DDC be supporting the District and other entities with the event?

- **Committee work:** The Destination DC team works directly with the Capital Pride Alliance on all aspects of the 3-week festival event. This includes assisting with a first-time LGBTQ+ sports festival, strategic planning for all event execution, outreach to the hospitality community for full city activation, hotel room blocks and local/regional outreach and support as appropriate.
- **Economic Impact:** DDC works with the Mayor’s office on identifying the economic impact of WorldPride.
- **Marketing/Promotions/Media/Sales:** DDC has been promoting WorldPride for the last two fiscal years and during FY24 invested in extensive advertising, marketing and promotional events, hosting LGBTQ+ media and social media influencers.
- Content for WorldPride experiences on washington.org: [washington.org/visit-dc/world-pride-2025](https://washington.org/visit-dc/world-pride-2025)



66. How many visitors (business/leisure) should we expect to see in the District each year? What is the goal? How, specifically, has this goal shifted? How does this compare to visitors to other major metropolitan areas?

In the calendar year 2023, leisure visitors made up 68% of our total domestic visitation, while business visitors made up 32%. This is generally the make-up of our visitation profiles to DC: about two-thirds of visitors travel to DC for leisure purposes, while about one-third of visitors travel to DC for business.

Destination DC calculates the breakdown of leisure vs business travelers annually through D.K. Shifflet, a third-party vendor in the travel and tourism research sector. DKS maintains a database of 50,000 U.S. households and uses monthly survey data to track travel and spending trends. DKS uses this survey information, as well as hotel occupancy from CoStar's nationally recognized hotel KPI reports to determine annual domestic visitation to Washington, DC.

Because each destination has its own way of calculating and reporting out leisure vs. business travelers, Destination DC is not able to comment on how our breakdown compares to other major markets.

67. Please provide a copy of your 2025 marketing plan and marketing outlook presentation. Also, please provide a summary highlight of what is new for 2024.

- What criteria does DDC use to evaluate the effectiveness and return on investment of each marketing strategy?
- Destination DC tracks its paid media investments through an Annual ROI Study on advertising effectiveness through an independent company, Future Partners. The parameters for the study were developed in coordination with the District's Office of the Chief Financial Officer.

68. Please provide an evaluation of your 2024 marketing plan, including successes and challenges of the communications strategy, convention sales and services strategy, and the tourism and visitor services strategy.

- See Attached ("DDC FY24 Q4 Status Report & DDC FY24 Q4 Report Card")

69. Please provide a copy of your Fiscal Year 2025 goals presentation, including a copy of the Fiscal Year 2024 goals. How is DDC performing compared to Fiscal Year 2024 goals?

- See Attached ("FY25 Goals Presentation")

70. In calendar year 2024, how many virtual and/or in-person District-wide conventions and special events were hosted? How many total room nights, if any, did these convenings generate? How has this differed from past years? Please discuss the overall impact of tourism on the District.

- When compared to calendar year 2023, how many visitors did the District receive in the last three calendar years of available data?
- How much money did visitors spend in the last three years of available data?
- For the same three years, how much money did those visitors generate in local taxes?

Calendar Year WEWCC Business				
Calendar Year	No. of Meetings	Total Attendees	Total Room Nights	EIC
2022	48	541,999	357,604	\$433,326,244
2023	38	326,600	389,639	\$374,025,500
2024	43	565,481	469,668	\$638,162,867
2025	45	329,410	422,779	\$361,713,022
2026	38	389,140	500,887	\$449,680,232
<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>2,152,630</b>	<b>2,140,577</b>	<b>\$ 2,256,907,865</b>
Total Room Nights column reflects contracted rooms data				
EIC calculated for all groups over 1,350 on peak at WEWCC				
Calendar Year Non-WEWCC Business				
Fiscal Year	No. of Meetings	Total Attendees	Total Room Nights	
2022	883	260,065	372,110	
2023	1304	361,708	447,549	
2024	1482	303,466	510,822	
2025	672	215,307	377,038	
2026	130	80,910	149,066	
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,471</b>	<b>1,221,456</b>	<b>1,856,585</b>	
Total Room Nights column reflects contracted rooms data				

71. What are DDC’s current efforts related to its Strategic Plan goals and strategies?

- (See Attached “FY25 Annual Marketing and Sales Plan”)

## Marketing and Communications

- **Advertising FY2025 Strategy**  
Destination DC will continue to grow the Only 1 DC brand and marketing campaign launched in November 2023. The team will work with existing and new data sources to determine the ideal placements and targeting to deliver a substantial campaign return on investment.
- With the extra Tourism Recovery District funding source, DDC will expand its domestic target markets and bring on new direct-to-consumer advertising in top international markets. The team executed a comprehensive international marketing plan to influence travel to DC in top target markets – a first-ever coordinated effort for the organization. One strategy that crossed both domestic and international paid media: Developing the Only 1 DC campaign to speak to each individual audience and market to maximize influence over potential visitors.
- **Goals**

- Implement media buys tied to immediate booking revenue/ROI
- Maximize the additional funding provided through the TRD
- Develop advertising specifically meant to highlight DDC members
- Expand advertising placements to include large-scale products to make a big impact, such as out-of-home advertising in top visitor markets
- **Action**
  - Stay current on interpreting travel data, keeping aware of trends and consumer confidence levels throughout the fiscal year.
  - Utilize audience profile data made available in December 2022 to determine how advertising buys should further adapt in FY2025

## **TOURISM/SPORTS/VISITOR EXPERIENCE**

- **GLOBAL TOURISM:**
  - Target/expand “always on” /year-round marketing opportunities to influence travel for peak months and capture short-term bookings in our key international markets: China/India/Brazil/Mexico/Aus/Canada/UK/Japan
  - Continue expansion of international research to direct marketing/promotion strategy throughout all our key markets
- **SPORTS/SPECIAL EVENTS:**
  - Secure premier domestic & International professional, collegiate, and amateur sporting events throughout Washington, DC
  - Execute, in collaboration with the Washington, DC LGBTQ+ community, the best WorldPride 2025
- **VISITOR EXPERIENCE:**
  - Expand our community marketing message: The Washington, DC Welcome to our entire Hospitality community
- **CONVENTION SALES**
  - **High Yield Events**
    - Board meetings executive retreats
    - Incentive and recognition travel
    - Corporate conferences
    - Global meetings
  - New Business Acquisition
    - Brand-new business
    - New in the last 10 years
  - Convention Strategy Manager
    - Maximizing group space

- Create Compression through Connected Campus
- Revised Citywide Sales Strategy Rollout
  - Identification of top accounts that equate to success for each hospitality entity including hotels, convention center, city.
  - Stakeholder perspective and engagement
  - Crossover goals
  - Create compression
- Engage the Data Division to guide booking parameters, identify market segments, and determine need periods
- Third-party strategic partnerships
- **GLOBAL SALES**
  - Concentrate efforts on strongest geographic regions and market segments
  - Streamline international association bid development funnel based on target parameters
  - Collaborate with hotel global sales, DMC consortiums and in-market representatives to identify and convert business
  - Maximize the potential of the United Kingdom market by utilizing dedicated in market representation
  - Differentiate proposals by customizing content and elevating customer site visit experience
- **CONVENTION SERVICES**
  - Design exclusive opportunities for delegates
  - Showcase DC's one-of-a-kind venues
  - Set a benchmark for sustainability by promoting city initiatives
  - Support the DEI District & Sustainability District businesses for an authentic delegate experience
  - Champion Connected assets and positioning to benefit customers

**72.** What efforts are underway to recruit other organizations or events that would have a significant impact on tourism spending? Please also include an update on your Asset Intelligence Project.

- While all business is appreciated, we capitalize on the assets of the area. One of the focuses is aligning with educational institutions, specifically HBCUs, that can help drive diversity in meeting sectors. We have been successful in booking the following sorority/fraternity meetings in DC:

Location	Account	Meeting	Start Date	End Date	Definite Date	Peak Rms	Total Rms	Attendees
Hotel Only	Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity, International	2025 PAD Day at the Supreme Court	6/4/2025	6/4/2025	12/13/2024	25	45	75
WEWCC	Delta Sigma Theta Sorority	57th National Convention (Biennial)	7/9/2025	7/12/2025	7/28/2020	5,700	24,339	16,000
Hotel Only	Iota Phi Lambda Sorority Inc.	Iota Phi Lambda 96th National Convention	7/30/2025	8/2/2025	7/19/2024	180	840	450
Hotel Only	Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc.	ZNEF (Zeta National Educational Foundation)	10/1/2025	10/4/2025	10/31/2024	25	100	25
Hotel Only	Sigma Delta Tau	Sigma Delta Tau 2026 Convention	6/18/2026	6/20/2026	11/19/2024	114	372	275
WEWCC	Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated	Alpha Kappa Alpha - North Atlantic Regional Con	3/25/2027	3/27/2027	12/30/2024	1,310	4,223	7,000
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>6</b>					<b>29,919</b>	<b>23,825</b>

- As we continue to evolve our asset intelligence program, we are moving to develop a comprehensive digital resource on washington.org, leveraging top-tier data and research in collaboration with DMPED, the Washington, DC Economic Partnership and McKinsey consultants. This tool will serve as a versatile asset for the Convention Sales and Services Bid Book, client engagement and outreach efforts. The initiative aims to position DC as a hub of innovation and expertise across these industries, reinforcing its appeal as a premier destination for meetings/events, business and thought leadership.
- The focus will center on three primary sectors, aligned with DMPED's key industries:
  - Life Sciences (encompassing health, medical, and bio/pharma)
  - Technology
  - Consulting and Business
- Additionally, the product will integrate intersecting subsets that enhance these sectors, including:
  - Sustainability (with an emphasis on transportation)
  - Government Advocacy
  - Research and Education

**73.** How does DDC evaluate the return on investment for any advertising promotions on social media or otherwise by Destination DC for events, attractions or locations not within the District of Columbia?

- DDC does not regularly market events, attractions or locations not within the District of Columbia through advertising on social media. Because of this, we do not have details about the financial benefits of this practice.
- DDC's owned social media primarily focuses on experiences within the District of Columbia, but may highlight DDC members in Northern Virginia and Maryland, such as Arlington National Cemetery, Reagan National Airport and National Harbor.
- What metrics are used to measure or quantify the financial benefits that Destination DC's social media marketing provides?

The team measures social performance through engagements (likes, clicks, saves, shares, etc.), not through purchases. High engagement signals that visitors and locals are excited about the city, actively sharing their experiences and influencing their networks to consider DC as a destination. User-Generated Content (UGC) is at the core of the

strategy and is one of the most authentic ways to showcase the city. Engagement with UGC and the #Only1DC hashtag helps turn visitors and locals into brand ambassadors, driving organic promotion at no additional cost. Tracking engagement helps Destination DC understand what resonates with audiences, allowing for smarter content strategies that highlight DC's cultural, culinary and event-driven appeal.

74. Aside from membership fees, what revenue does DDC receive from any entity outside of the District of Columbia? Please provide descriptions and amounts along with an example.

- Registration fees – Service fees received by organizations that host meetings in DC and utilize our seasonal workforce on registration services.
- Coop fees – when attending industry conferences, a few selective members may join Destination DC booths to showcase their businesses. Or when Destination DC goes on sales mission, a few selective members may join Destination DC to showcase their businesses.
- Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority (MWAA) – annual support on expense reimbursement on international events to promote Washington Dulles and Reagan Airports up to \$150,000 per year

75. Please provide a copy of your bylaws.

- See attached (“DDC Bylaws 2024”)
  - Please provide an update on your contract with Events DC. Please also provide the following:
  - A highlight or summary of activities conducted pursuant to this contract in Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025, to date;
  - A list and copies of all reports, plans, presentations, or analysis DDC provided as a part of the contract for Fiscal Year 2024 and 2025, to date;
  - A copy of approved budgets for Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025; and
  - A copy of any addendums or updates made within the last year.

76. Please list any awards or accolades DDC has received or been nominated for in the past year.

Recognition for Elliott L. Ferguson, II, president and CEO:

- [PCMA Lifetime Achievement Award](#)
- 100 Most Influential People in the Events Industry, U.S., 100 Eventex Index, 2024

Destination DC:

- 2024 Stella Award for Best CVB/DMO, Northstar Meetings Group
- 2024 Smart Star Award for Best CVB/DMO, Smart Meetings
- 2024 Best of Award for Best East CVB/DMO, Meetings Today
- (2) 2024 Addy Awards for “There’s Only One DC” Photography & Cinematography, American Advertising Federation

- 2024 Magellan Award for our collaboration with AFAR's SoFar Sounds, Travel Weekly
- (4) 2024 Adrian Awards for Best Digital DEI Marketing, Advertising Brand Campaign, Digital Video and Television Advertising, Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association
- (6) 2024 Muse Creative Awards for Best Publication, Outdoor Advertising, TV Advertising, Cinematography, and Travel & Tourism Videos
- (2) 2024 Telly Awards for Online Video Series and TV Commercials
- 2024 Davey Award for Travel & Tourism Video Series, Academy of Interactive & Visual Arts
- 2024 W3 Award for Travel & Tourism Video Series, Academy of Interactive & Visual Arts

Destination Accolades:

- #1 State for Tech Careers – [Forbes, 2024](#)
- #1 Global Cybersecurity Talent Market (Metro Area) – [CBRE, 2024](#)
- #1 Most Innovative State – [Wallethub, 2024](#)
- #12 Global Startup Ecosystem – [Startup Genome, 2024](#)

Editorial Accolades:

- \* [52 Places to Go in 2025, The New York Times](#)
- \* [The Best Places to Eat in 2025, Conde Nast](#)
- \* [The Best Places to Go in the US in 2025, Conde Nast](#)
- \* [The 38 coolest neighborhoods in the world, Time Out \(Mount Pleasant\)](#)

**2024 NAF Alumni Awards:** Membership Manager & AEF Student Advisory Board chair, Zoe Roberts was recognized at the national level as a NAF alumni who has excelled in college or their career or demonstrated an entrepreneurial spirit influenced by their high school career academy experience.

**I&D Community Impact Award:** DDC's DEI Business Fellowship shortlisted.

**2024 Skift IDEA Awards (finalist):** Senior Sustainability Manager Shelby Luzzi shortlisted as a Rising Star in the Change Makers category

**2024 World Sustainable Travel & Hospitality Awards:** Shelby Luzzi shortlisted as a World Leading Sustainability Leader of Tomorrow

**Eventex's 100 Most Influential People in the Events Industry in the US for 2024:** Both Elliott Ferguson and Shelby Luzzi were voted in by industry peers as two of the top 100 most influential Americans in our industry

**International Journal of Business Events and Legacies vol. 3, iss. 1:** An industry white paper on DDC's DEI Business Fellows program was submitted and published in an academic journal ("Advancing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion through Destination DC's




DEI Business Fellowship by Destination DC”). Authored by Zoe Roberts, Shelby Luzzi and Susan O’Keefe, and published in August 2024.

**2023 Global Destination Sustainability-Movement's Innovation Award:** DDC’s DEI Business Fellowship was recognized as an initiative helping to push the travel industry towards a more regenerative future. Awarded in October 2023 (FY24 Q1).

77. The DC Council at the end of Council Period 24 passed a temporary 1% hotel tax that will bring in additional funding for DDC marketing to help boost DC tourism, it codified the tax into a permanent tax in B25-202 “Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Support Act of 2023”. How has Destination used this new budget, and how will it be used to grow tourism in the District?
- What metrics is DDC using to evaluate the effectiveness of these dollars? Please share any data from those metrics.
  - Tourism Recovery District (TRD) funding has been used to promote the city as a destination for leisure, meetings, sports and entertainment among other purposes, and increase revenue to the District by maximizing sales of hotel rooms and visitor spending in the District. The Metrics include:

## **TOURISM, SPORTS & VISITOR EXPERIENCE**

### **International Marketing**

- Launched year-round, consumer-direct marketing in the UK/Australia/India/China/Japan/Brazil/Mexico/Canada
- Marketing/promotion efforts supporting WorldPride 2025
- Hired CBE business for global market research and data to inform marketing and promotions.
- Recap on activities and room night generation/economic impact:  [DC Council Hearing January 2025.pptx](#)

### **Domestic Marketing**

- Destination DC launched a national advertising campaign in 2023 utilize the TRD funds and promote the Only 1 DC brand in top domestic markets. Paid media in the form of out of home ads, custom content with premium publishers, target digital focused on hotel booking and more launched in FY23 and ran throughout FY24. Details of these placements include:
  - A major sponsorship of the 2024 US Open Tennis Tournament, marketing Washington, DC as the official tourism sponsor of the event. This resulted in thousands of hours of brand exposure for Washington, DC and a sponsorship value more than double the investment.

- One of a kind and first to market content with premium publishers like The New York Times, which featured DC as its chosen location for the first-ever 36-Hours In video series sponsorship.
- Digital features focused on local hotel brands and bookings ensured that overnight conversations were a heavy component of the advertising campaign. Advertising with outlets like Expedia, Travelzoo, TripAdvisor, Booking.com, Priceline and others ensure that Destination DC was consistently pushing consumers to book travel to Washington, DC.
- A large-scale out of home campaign in New York, Philadelphia and Los Angeles was accompanied by consumer activations to promote WorldPride 2025.

### **Visitors Services/Experience**

- Developed and launched DDC member destination training program. This program is a short 10 -minute video for the entire hospitality community be confident on the top things you need to know about Washington, DC <https://washington.org/dcwelcome>
- Expanded Accessibility in DC content on the website <https://washington.org/accessibility>
- Relaunch our customer facing, Washington, DC travel trade training program in eight languages <https://washington.org/traveltrade/special-agent-academy>

### **Convention Sales & Services**

1. Attracting International and National Conventions
  - Familiarization (FAM) Tours: In FY24 DDC hosted familiarization tours for two key meeting planner groups:
    - Maritz – Aug. 24-26, 2024: Hosted group of 28 planners from various vertical markets prior to their internal conference (Maritz Activate). Over three days, we highlighted not only DC’s amazing hotel offerings, unique venues and Walter E. Washington Convention Center, but illuminated DC’s art and culture as well as historical landmarks.
    - 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Corporate Planners – Sept. 10-12, 2024: Hosted a group of 3<sup>rd</sup> party meeting planning agencies whose primary focus is the corporate market. These planners, whose customers cover the corporate landscape from Tech to retail, would not have been in DC except for our ability through TRD funds to host and position DC as a city fit for corporate clientele.

- Large higher-end 3<sup>rd</sup> party companies/Association Management Company Institute – TRD funding has allowed DDC to partner with 3<sup>rd</sup> party organizations such as:
  - McVeigh Global meetings and event to host a lunch for 25 of their top clients as well as their team.
  - Host 20 AMCI members for dinner, each of whom leads a number of individual association management companies
  - As a result of our work with AMCI, we hosted its six-member board of directors’ dinner in Washington, DC

## 2. Convention-Related Events and Programs

- Convention Sponsorships: TRD funding has been used to sponsor large, high-profile conventions or trade shows, providing DC a platform to showcase its offerings to potential clients.
  - American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) – in 2029, Washington, DC will host the American Society of Association Executives Annual Convention. This convention has not been held in DC since at least the 1980s.
  - Financial and Insurance Conference Planners (FICP) – From Nov. 2-5, 2025, we will host the Financial and Insurance Conference Professional Annual Conference at the Washington Hilton. The conference attracts 800 attendees, but 300 are planners from the financial and insurance sectors whose meetings usually account for higher spending per capita than most other conference sectors.
  - Enhanced presence at tradeshow – TRD funding has allowed DDC to increase our level of engagement and presence at key industry tradeshow/conventions and conferences, such as:
    - IMEX – widely considered the super bowl of our industry, IMEX America is the largest trade show for the global meetings, events and incentive travel industry. Suppliers and buyers from every sector of the meetings industry come together at IMEX. TRD funding has allowed DDC to be more creative in booth scale and design, which allows us to bring a bit of DC to the planners we discuss the benefits of holding their events in Washington.
    - ASAE annual meeting and expo – for the first time in decades, Destination DC has a presence at the annual event attended by thousands of association professionals and industry partners gather to exchange knowledge, resources, strategies, solutions
  - Increased level of regional interactions – with TRD funding, we have been able to expand our reach regionally into key markets like the Northeast and Midwest. We have had a presence in these regions but now have the financial

resources to fully engage the market to maximize impact through regional sponsorship of local industry chapter events and more frequent face to face sales calls.

**What metrics is DDC using to evaluate the effectiveness of these dollars? Please share any data from those metrics.**

Convention Sales and Services will evaluate advancements in these key areas:

- Business Development
- Programs and Events
- Sponsorship and Activation
- Market and Asset Intelligence
- Technology
- Staffing

**78.** What metrics does DDC track on the impact of crime and perceptions of crime on tourism in the District? Please share any data from those metrics for Fiscal Years 2023, 2024, and 2025, to date.

- The impact of crime and safety plays a role in perception and Destination DC sometimes receives questions related to safety from customers and visitors. DDC’s role is to share the extensive efforts in place from the city and its federal and local partners to keep the city safe. We rely on the city’s programs, data and statistics (i.e. violent crime down 35% year-over-year) to tell this story. There is not a mechanism in place to track specific visitation data related to crime and safety.

**79.** Does DDC have data or projections indicating the number of business and leisure visits to the District are attributable to sports events? Please provide any data you have collected for these and related metrics (e.g., expenditure data or projections) by sports team.

**SPORTS:**

- **Room Night generation for contracted sports and special events**
- **Includes goals/actual**

ROOM NIGHTS	SPORTS	
YEAR	Goal	Actual
2023	91,123	109,273
2024	119,107	119,125
2025	127,500	90,000

- 80.** The District is hosting part of the FIFA Club World Cup soon. Please provide an update on what steps Destination DC has taken to prepare for this event.

The DDC Sports division has been working together with the FIFA Club Cup organizers on the following:

**Hotel Site Selection**

- Since June 2024, Destination DC has supported the FIFA Hotel Accommodations Team with hotel sourcing for team, staff and VIP room blocks. Destination DC has welcomed representatives from FIFA to the District for hotel site visits. We anticipate additional site visits over the next few months. Destination DC will continue to communicate with the FIFA Hotel Accommodations Team and the hotel community as final decisions are made on host properties.

**Promoting Washington, DC**

- FIFA hosted a Marketing and Promotional Plan kick-off meeting for all destinations involved with the Club World Cup on Jan. 27, 2025. Destination DC is working directly with the FIFA Marketing and Fan Operations teams to support promotion of the matches in DC, including the launch of an External Hub which will be available to fans to access information about the tournament.