



Kentucky: VFR Travelers

Brian Screenshot - VP, Client Engagement

Longwoods
INTERNATIONAL



WHO WE ARE

Established in 1978 as a market research consultancy

Headquartered in Columbus, OH and Toronto, ON

Focused in tourism since 1985

Working with over 175 Destinations and Brands

Longwoods
INTERNATIONAL



Travel USA® - Domestic Visitor Profile Data

- Begun in 1990, Longwoods Travel USA® is the largest and longest running American domestic trip tracking study.
- Annual database of approximately 250,000 trips is representative of all the leisure and business trips taken by Americans each year. Data is collected quarterly.
- In 2024, the total overnight base size is 2,921 trips to Kentucky.
- An overnight trip is any journey for business or pleasure, outside your community and not part of your normal routine, where you spent one more nights away from home.

Kentucky Overnight – Main Purpose of Trip

Visiting Friends & Relatives: 44%

US norm: 41%

Marketable: 45%

US norm: 48%

Business: 8%

US norm: 8%

	Kentucky	US Norm
VFR	44%	41%
Touring	12%	10%
Special event	9%	8%

63%

of Kentucky's 2024 overnight VFR
visitors had visited the state
before in the past 12 months

2023

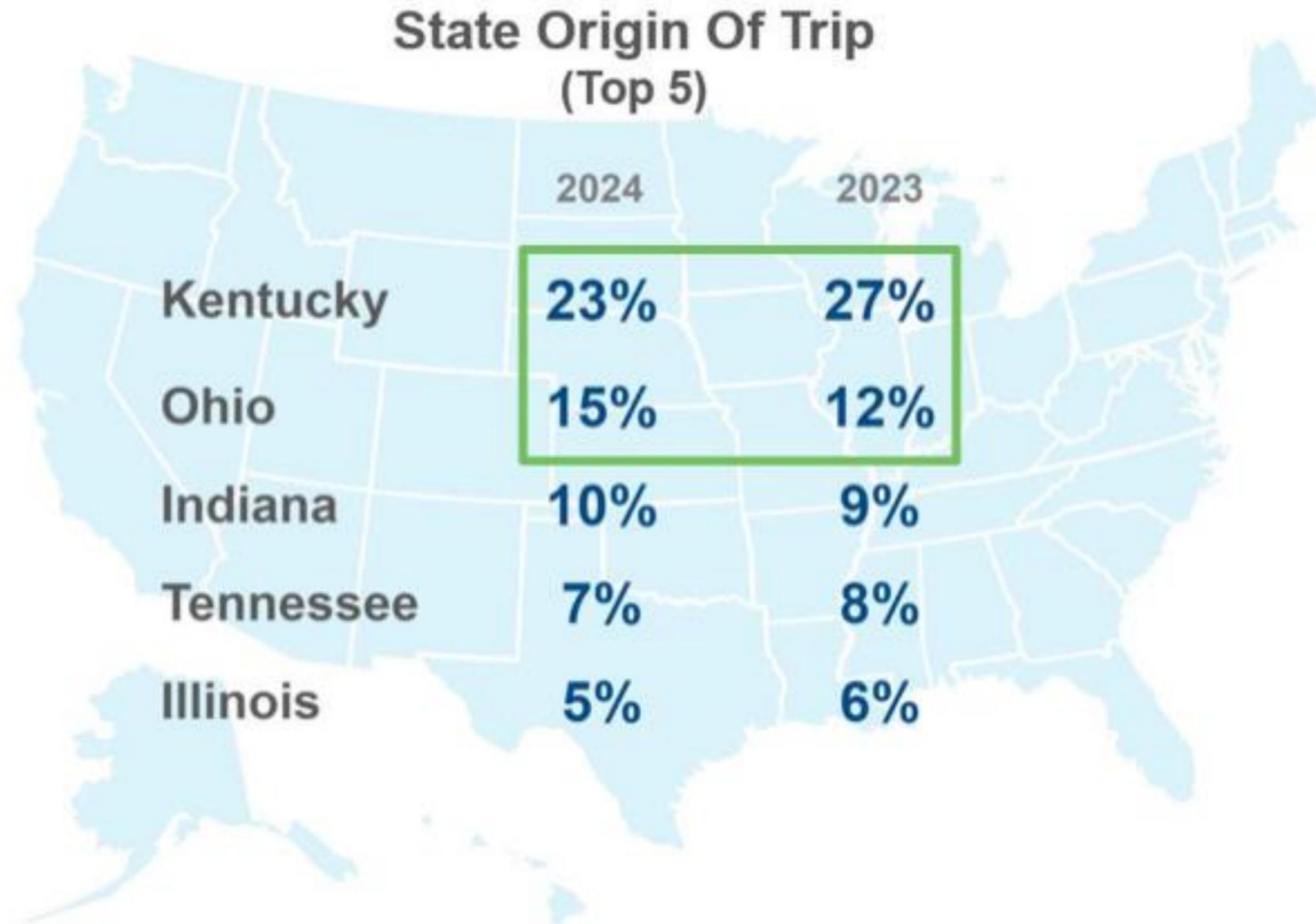
65%

US Norm

64%



Kentucky Overnight VFR Trips - State of Origin



Kentucky Overnight VFR Trips Origin Markets

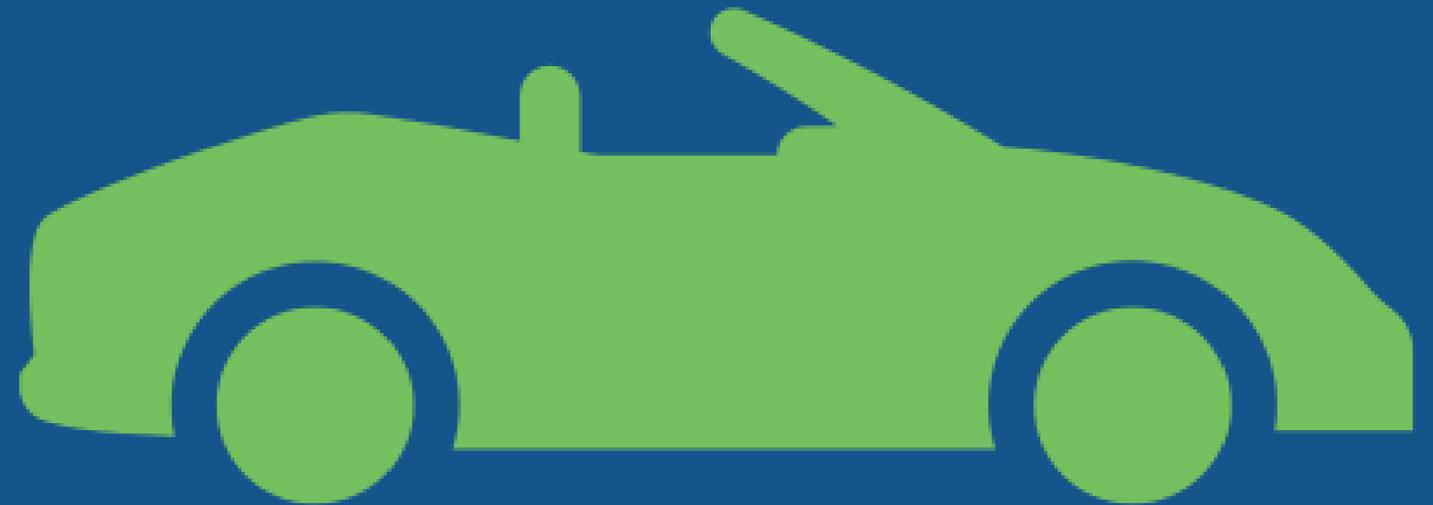
DMA Origin Of Trip (Top 10)	2024	2023
	Lexington, KY	8%
Cincinnati, OH/KY	8%	6%
Louisville, KY	8%	6%
Nashville, KY/TN	6%	6%
Indianapolis-Lafayette, IN	5%	5%
Chicago, IL	4%	4%
Charleston-Huntington, KY/OH/WV	4%	4%
Columbus, OH	3%	2%
New York, NY	3%	2%
Cleveland, OH	2%	2%

Kentucky Overnight VFR Trip - Transportation

83% of Kentucky overnight VFR trips involved travelers using their own car/truck to get to their destination.

84% 2023

66% US Norm



Kentucky VFR Travel Party Composition



Spouse/partner: 63%



Child(ren): 41%



Parent(s): 12%



Friend(s): 16%

Kentucky Overnight VFR Trips – Accommodations

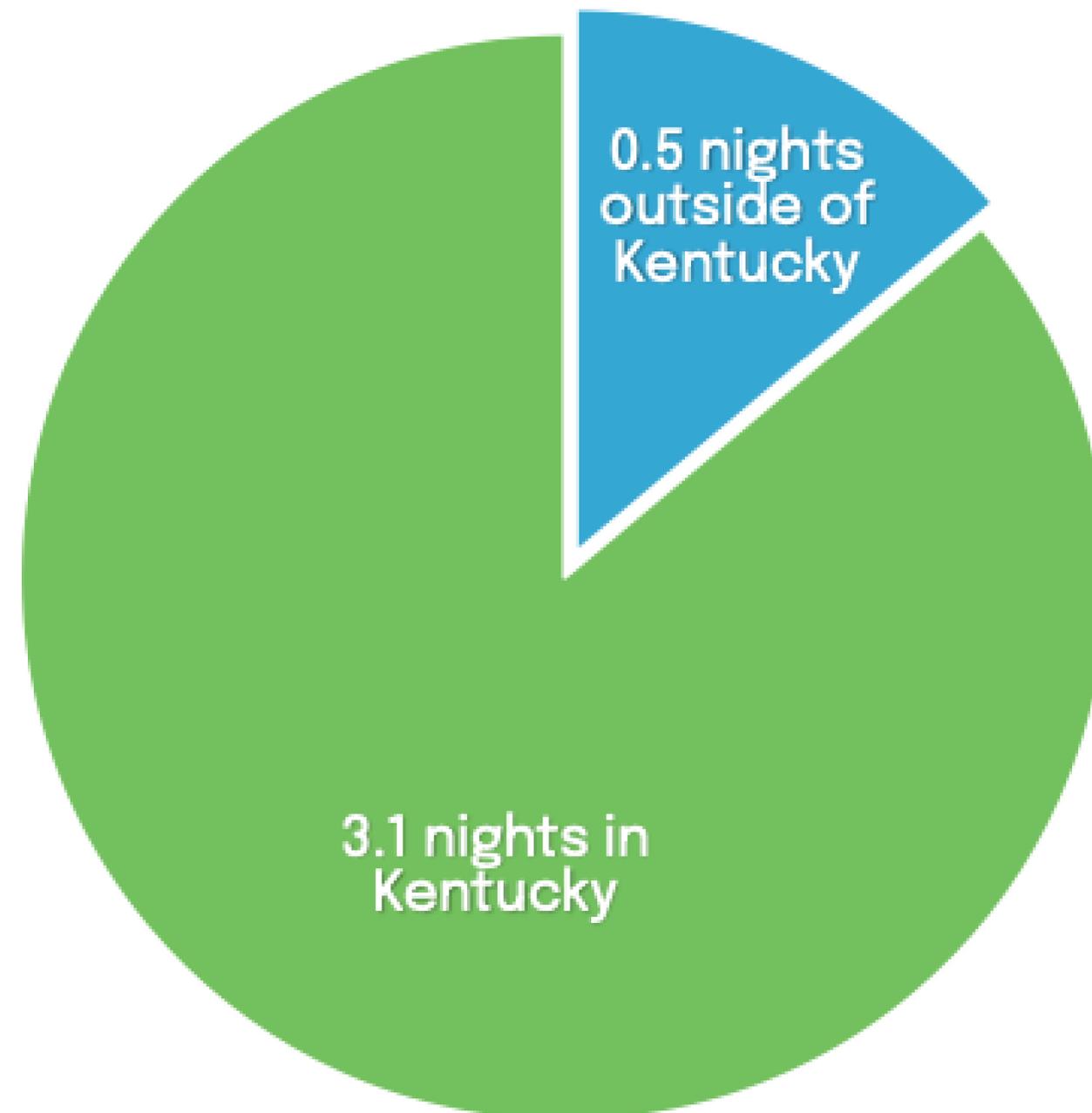
Accommodations (Top 7)

		2024	2023
	Hotel	37%	36%
	Home of friends / relatives	37%	42%
	Motel	13%	12%
	Bed & breakfast	7%	4%
	Rented home / condo / apartment	5%	4%
	Campground / RV park	4%	3%
	Resort hotel	4%	4%

Kentucky Overnight VFR Trips – Length of Stay

Average Length of VFR Trip: 3.6 Nights

US norm: 3.7 nights



On average, 86% of each VFR trip was spent within Kentucky.

- Outside of Kentucky
- In Kentucky

Kentucky Overnight VFR Activity Participation



Entertainment Activities: 56%



Outdoor Activities: 43%



Sporting Activities: 19%



Shopping: 30%



Attending celebration: 23%

45%

Overnight VFR visitors have
children in their
households

2023

43%

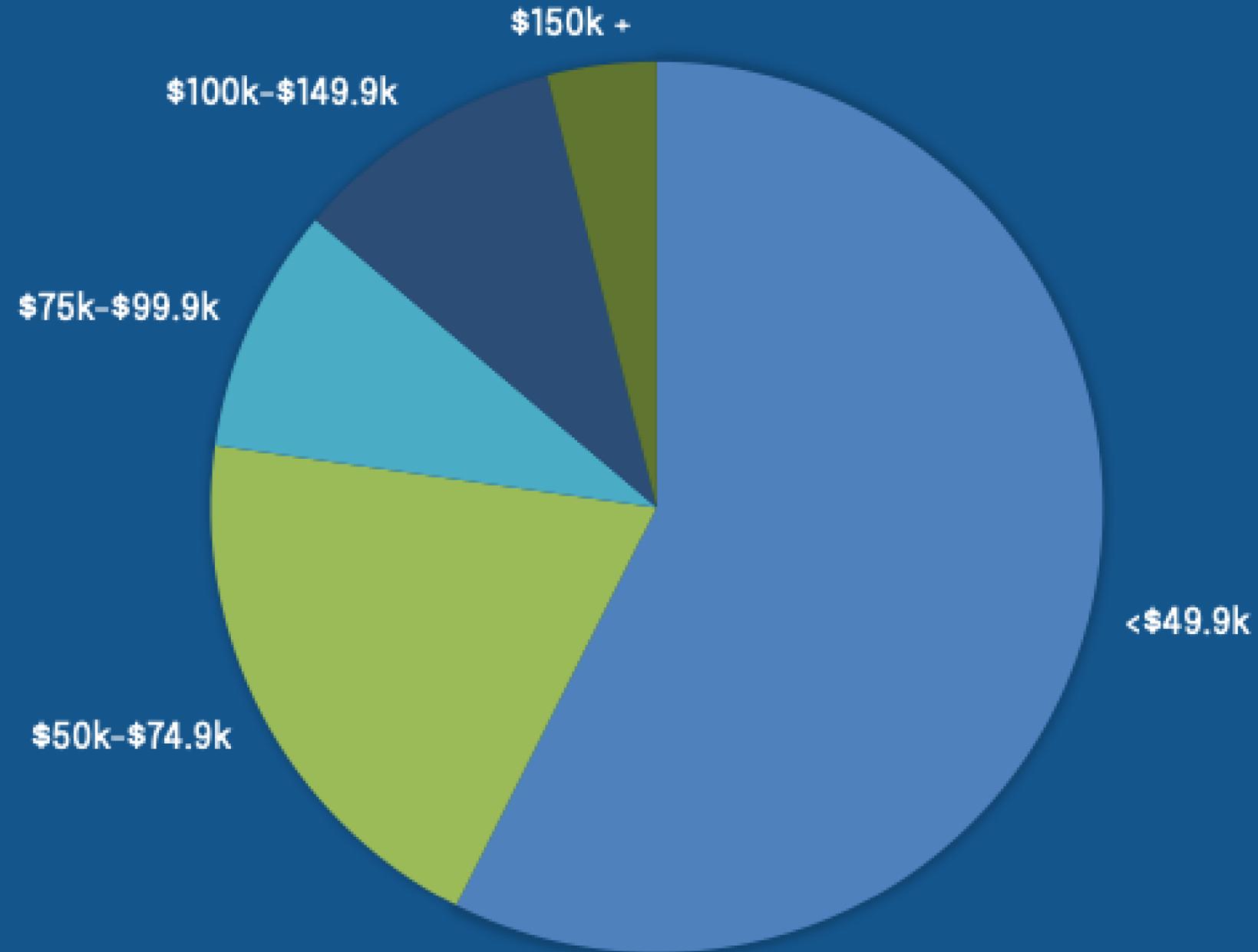
US Norm

44%



Kentucky VFR Household Income

KENTUCKY OVERNIGHT VFR HHI



66%

VFR are very satisfied with the
friendliness of Kentucky's
people.

19% somewhat satisfied

Only 1% very dissatisfied



61%

VFR very satisfied with
Kentucky's quality of food

26% somewhat satisfied

Only 1% very dissatisfied



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **The 44% Powerhouse: Your Most Loyal Revenue Driver**
- VFR travelers represent 44% of Kentucky's overnight trips—the largest single trip purpose category—with an impressive 63% returning within just 12 months. This isn't just a large segment; it's your most reliable, repeat customer base that requires lower acquisition costs and generates sustained year-round demand while serving as authentic brand ambassadors for your destination.
- **Drive Time is Prime Time: Winning the Regional Road-Tripper**
- With 83% arriving by personal vehicle and 23% originating from Kentucky and neighboring states (Ohio, Indiana, Tennessee, Illinois), VFR travelers are quintessential drive-market visitors. Top DMAs like Lexington, Cincinnati, Louisville, Nashville, and Indianapolis create concentrated target zones within 3-5 hours, offering cost-efficient, high-conversion marketing opportunities.
- **Family Reunion 2.0: Designing Multigenerational Memory-Making**
- VFR parties are family-focused—63% travel with spouses/partners and 41% with children—and actively seek shared experiences including entertainment (56%), outdoor activities (43%), shopping (30%), and attending celebrations (23%). Destinations that create "locals + guests" programming, multigenerational itineraries, and celebration-worthy experiences transform simple home visits into unforgettable destination discoveries that residents proudly share with their visiting friends and relatives.
- **Beyond the Couch: The Commercial Accommodation Opportunity**
- While conventional wisdom suggests VFR visitors crash on couches, a majority book commercial accommodations during their 3.6- total night average stays. These travelers spend 86% of their trip time in-state (3.1 nights), creating substantial economic impact across hotels, restaurants, attractions, and retail.

Thank You!



Brian Screenshot – VP, Client Engagement





VISITING FRIENDS & RELATIVES: A HIDDEN TREASURE



THE POWER OF THE VFR SEGMENT

- Toledo: 52% of visitors are VFR
- Kentucky: 44% of visitors are VFR
- Nearly half of all travelers!



MORE THAN AUNT SUSIE'S COUCH

- Common perception: staying with family, not spending
- Reality for Toledo: they engage, explore, and spend, or are looking to do so



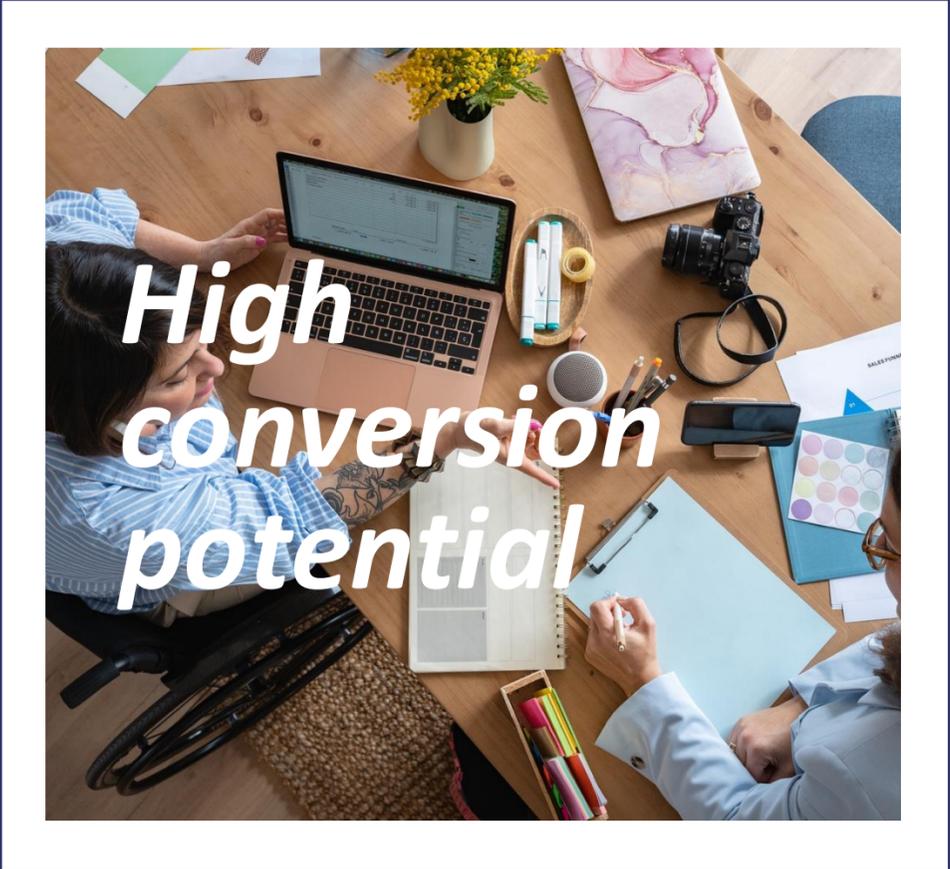
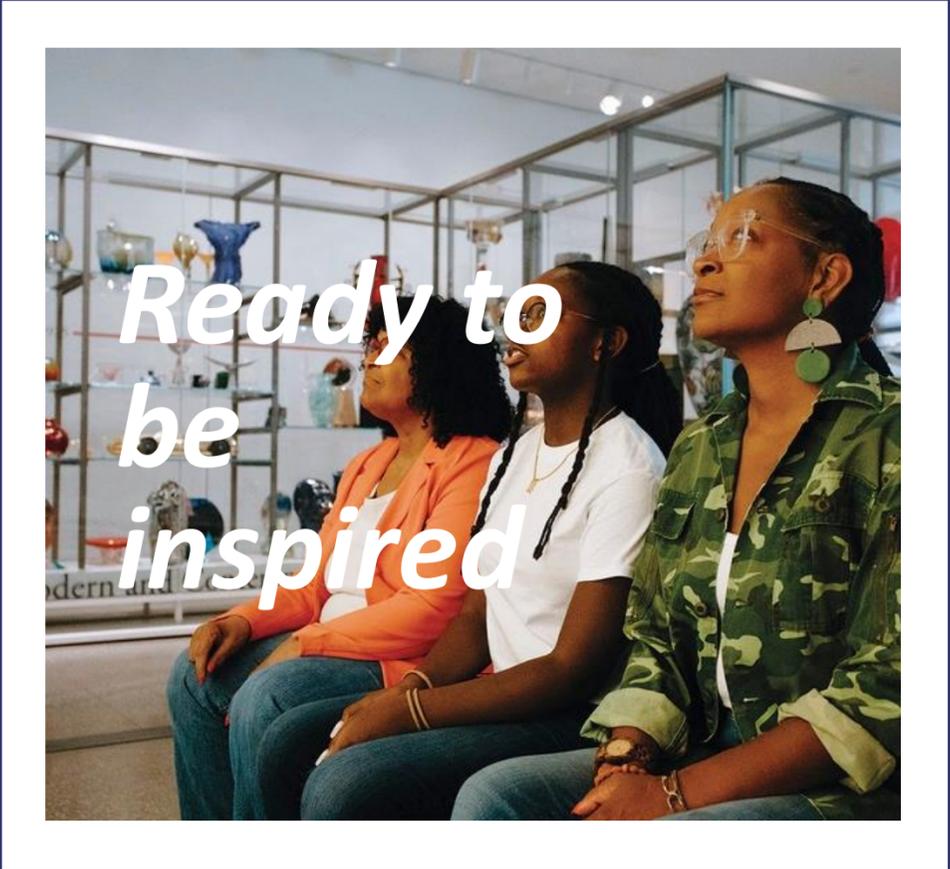
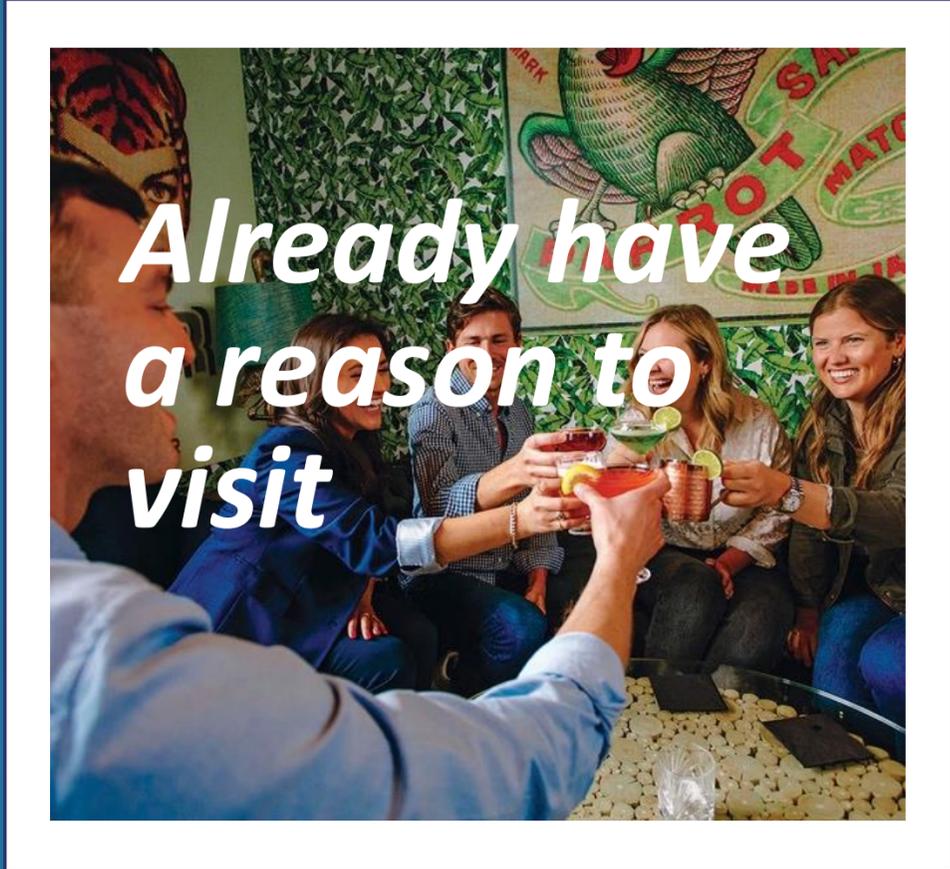
BEHAVIOR THAT MIRRORS A TYPICAL LEISURE TRAVELER

Engaging with local attractions

Dining out, going to events, shopping, etc.

Staying in partner hotels





VFR: A MARKETER'S DREAM

LOCALS: YOUR MOST AUTHENTIC INFLUENCERS

- *Spark hometown pride*
- *Equip residents to share their city*
- *The reason someone visits*



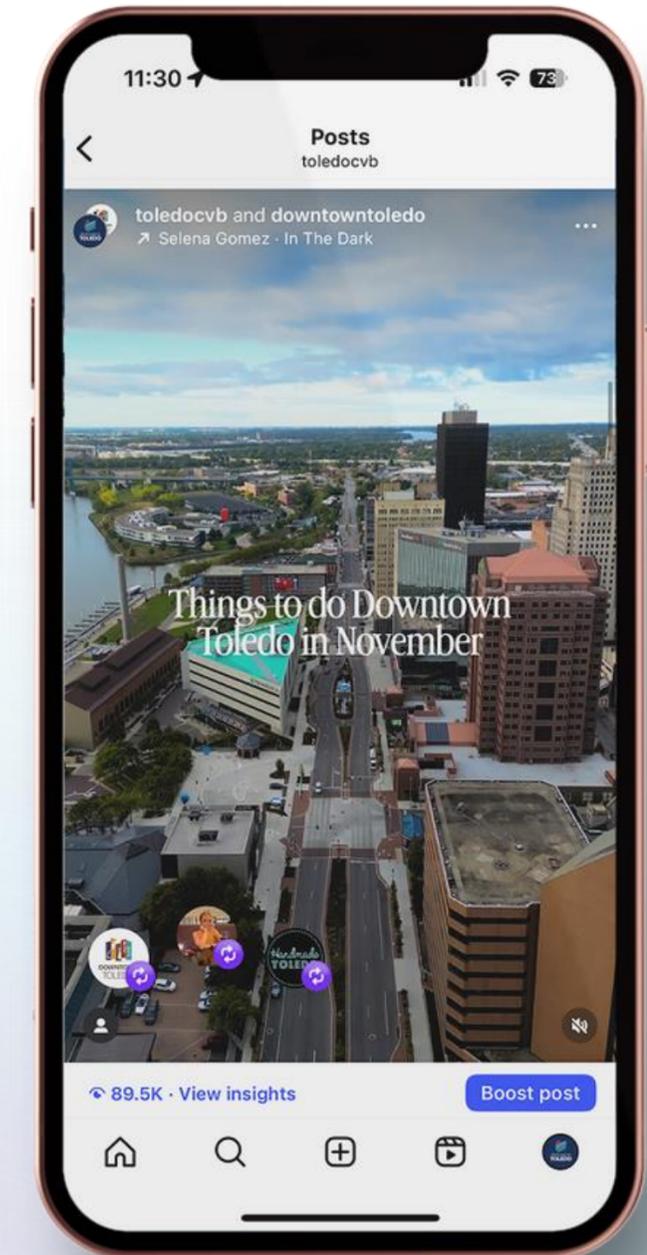
STRATEGIC POSITIONING AS 'LOW EFFORT, HIGH REWARD'

- Accessible, affordable, and stress-free
- Perfect for short, spontaneous trips
- Adventure close to home



HIGHLIGHTING RELATABLE EXPERIENCES

- Focused on what locals already love
- Messaging that appeals to visitors and locals alike
- Encouraged ‘live like a local’ experiences
- Targeted “Family Adventurers” within 90 minutes–3 hours



TURNING VISITS INTO STAYS

Lead with Value-Driven Messaging: Affordability and lighter crowds

Weekday hotel packages and special deals

More quality time together

WEEKDAY FAMILY ADVENTURES IN TOLEDO

LOOKING FOR A FUN, STRESS-FREE FAMILY ESCAPE THAT WON'T BREAK THE BANK?

Plan a weekday getaway to Toledo—named Forbes Advisor's *Most Affordable City for Family Vacations!* With fewer crowds, lower prices, and easy-to-plan adventures, it's the perfect way to sneak in some quality time without clashing with busy summer schedules. From hands-on museums and lakefront fun to one-of-a-kind experiences you won't find anywhere else, Toledo delivers big memories with less hassle.

Featured Hotels & Deals



Hiltons at Toledo Downtown



Renaissance Toledo Downtown Hotel



Delta Hotels by Marriott Toledo



Maumee Bay Lodge & Conference Center

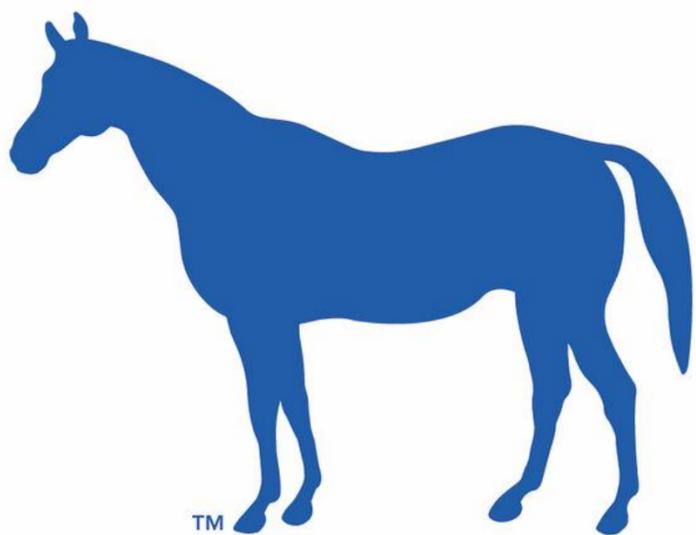
A group of people are dining at a restaurant. The table is set with various breakfast dishes including waffles, pancakes, toast, and salads. There are also drinks like iced coffee and orange juice. The text "THEY'RE ALREADY VISITING, LET'S MEET THEM HALFWAY" is overlaid on the image.

THEY'RE ALREADY VISITING,
LET'S MEET THEM HALFWAY

THANK YOU

KENTUCKY!





TM

VISITLEX



Leslie Miller
Vice President, Marketing
VisitLEX



Our Mission

To market and sell Lexington's Bluegrass region by driving economic impact through tourism and meetings to enhance the quality of life for Lexingtonians.



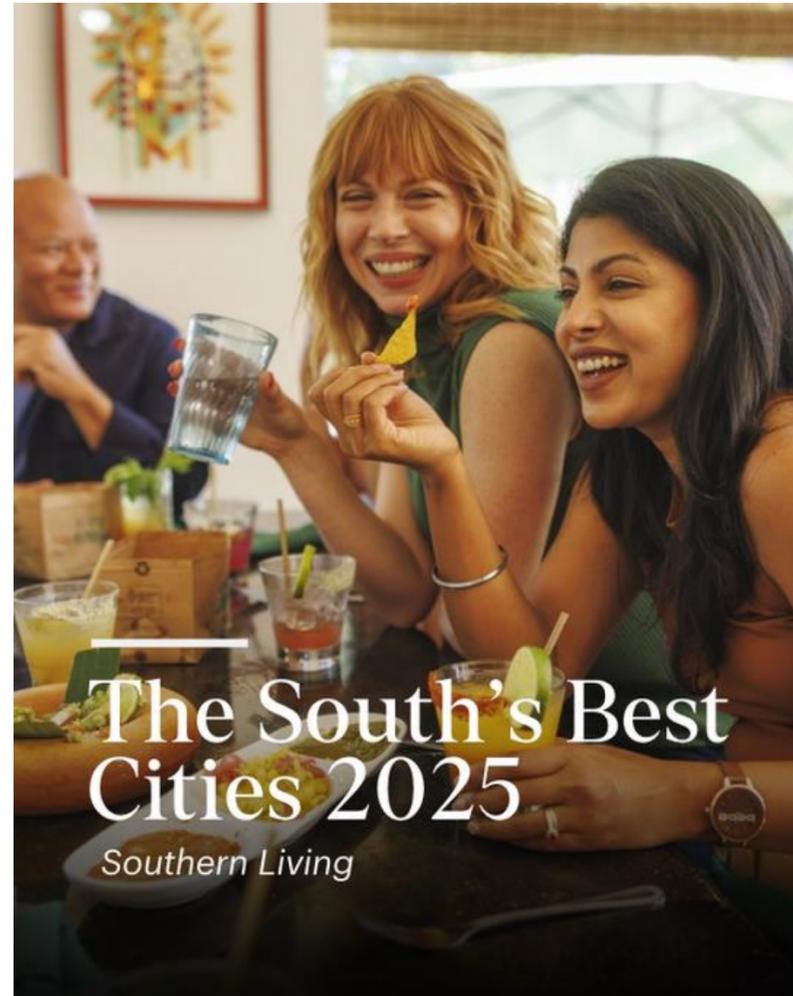
In celebration of **Lexington's 250th Birthday**, the city planned events every month, to ensure no one misses out on the excitement. Each month highlights key pillars and industries special to Lexington.

June was designated "**Come Home Month**" to encourage people to come home and experience all that has evolved in Lexington.

How can VisitLEX capitalize on this opportunity to drive occupancy in June?

We know that the #1 and #3 reason people travel is to visit friends and family, so let's engage our locals to reach our VFR travelers.

Lexington, KY: A 'Must Visit' Destination in 2025



EBONY TIME

AFAR

GARDEN@GUN

Condé Nast
Traveler

Bloomberg

TRAVEL+
LEISURE

THE CHALLENGE

Raise your hand if you're participating in at least 1 group chat.

The average American is involved in 1 to 4 group chats, and 83% of people are regularly participating in this range.

It's hard to break out of the group chat to make things happen.

Who is currently on a **family group chat**?

Text messaging is the most common form of communication among American families, with families exchanging an average of **10,384** messages per year.

People increasingly rely on digital means to keep in touch with friends and family.

People want to get together in person — but things often break down in the details.



THE INSIGHT

People want to say yes to plans –
NOT planning.

THE OPPORTUNITY

A totally turn-key opportunity to get everyone together.

Location is set – Lexington, KY

Dates are narrowed – June

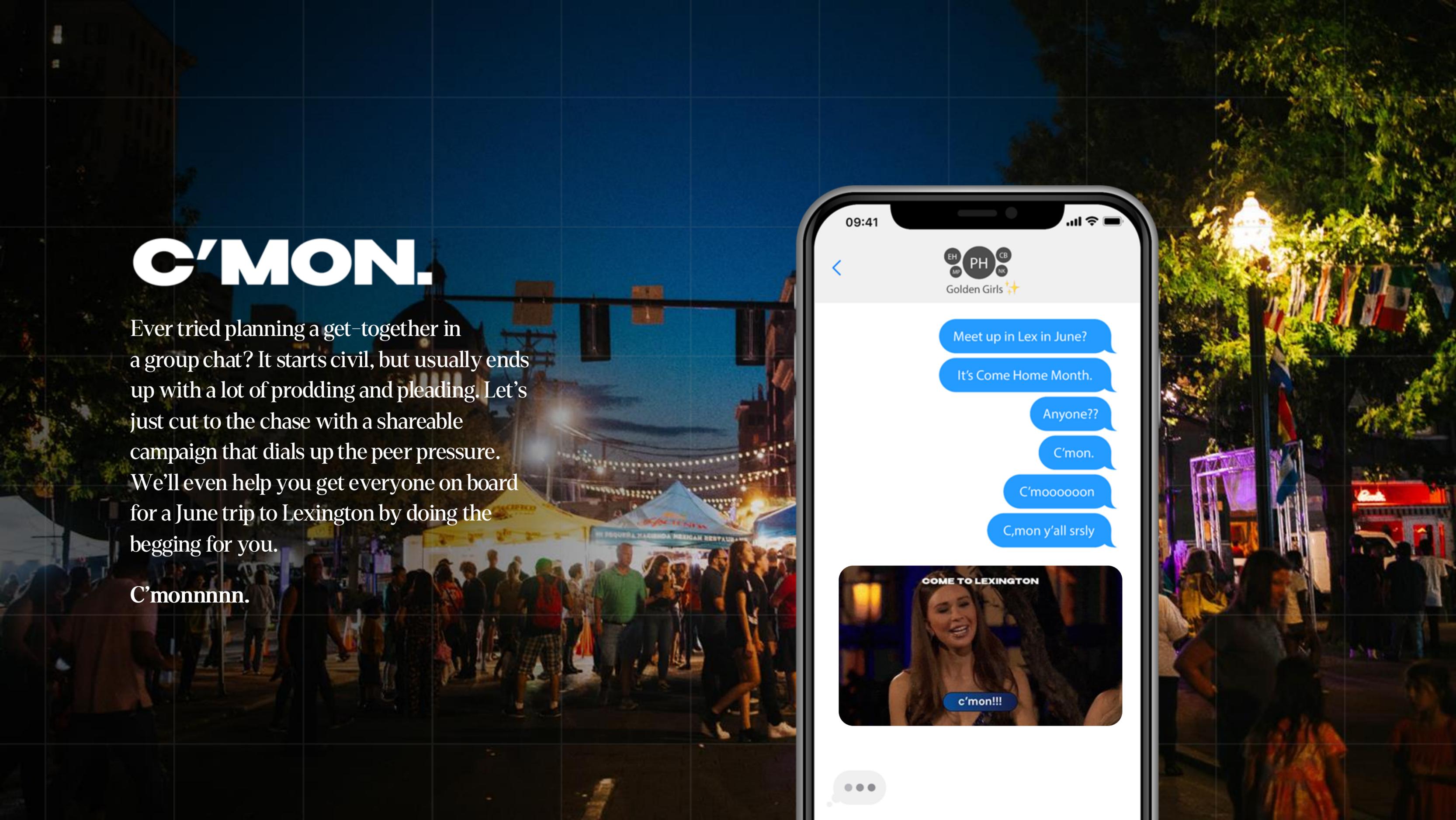
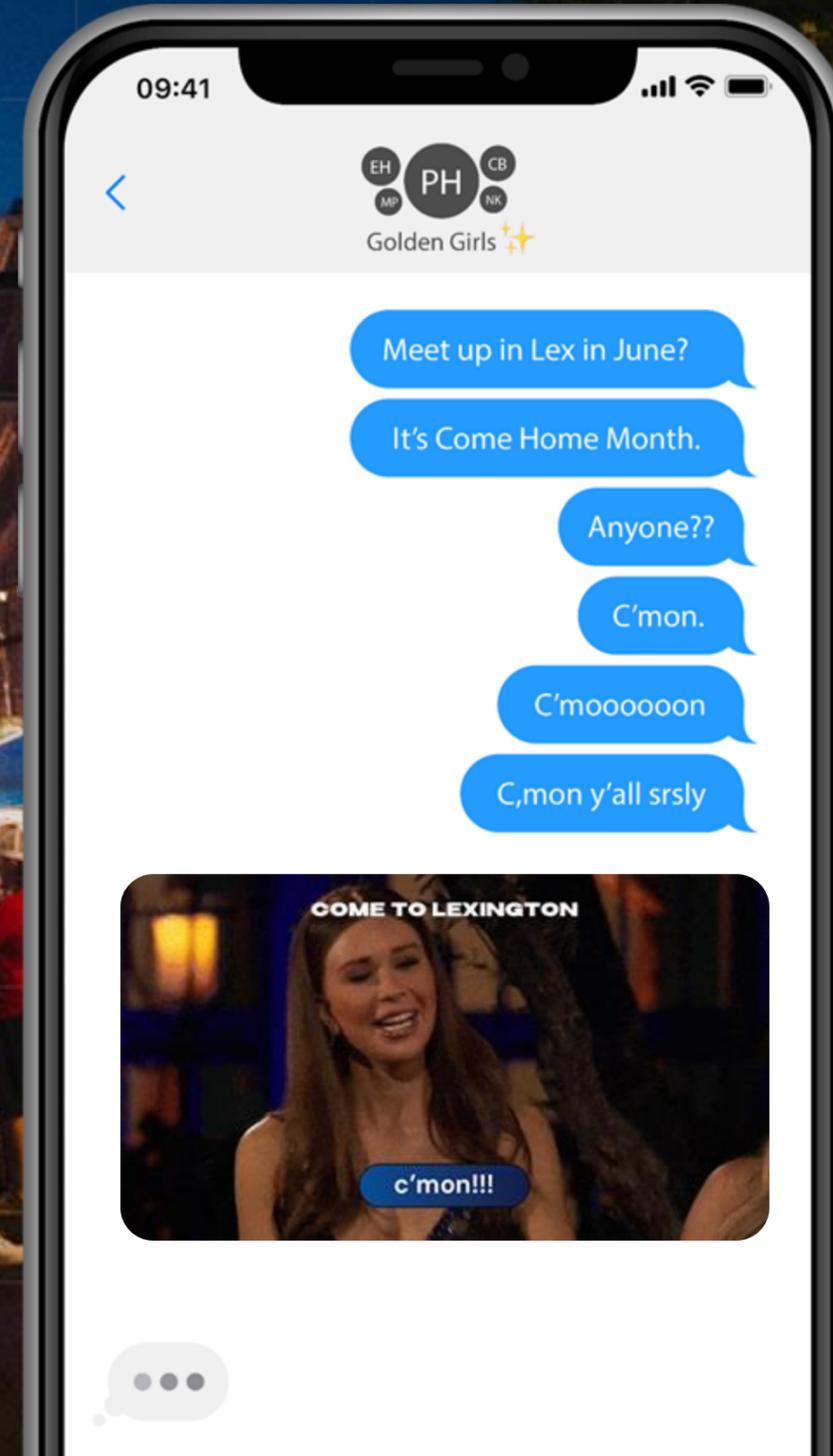
Range of activities that are available

**Let's equip locals to be the group chat catalyst with a plan
no one can resist!**

C'MON.

Ever tried planning a get-together in a group chat? It starts civil, but usually ends up with a lot of prodding and pleading. Let's just cut to the chase with a shareable campaign that dials up the peer pressure. We'll even help you get everyone on board for a June trip to Lexington by doing the begging for you.

C'monnnnn.



JUNE 2025

c'monnnnn

RAILBIRD!!!!

C'MON

c'mon y'all

Pride!

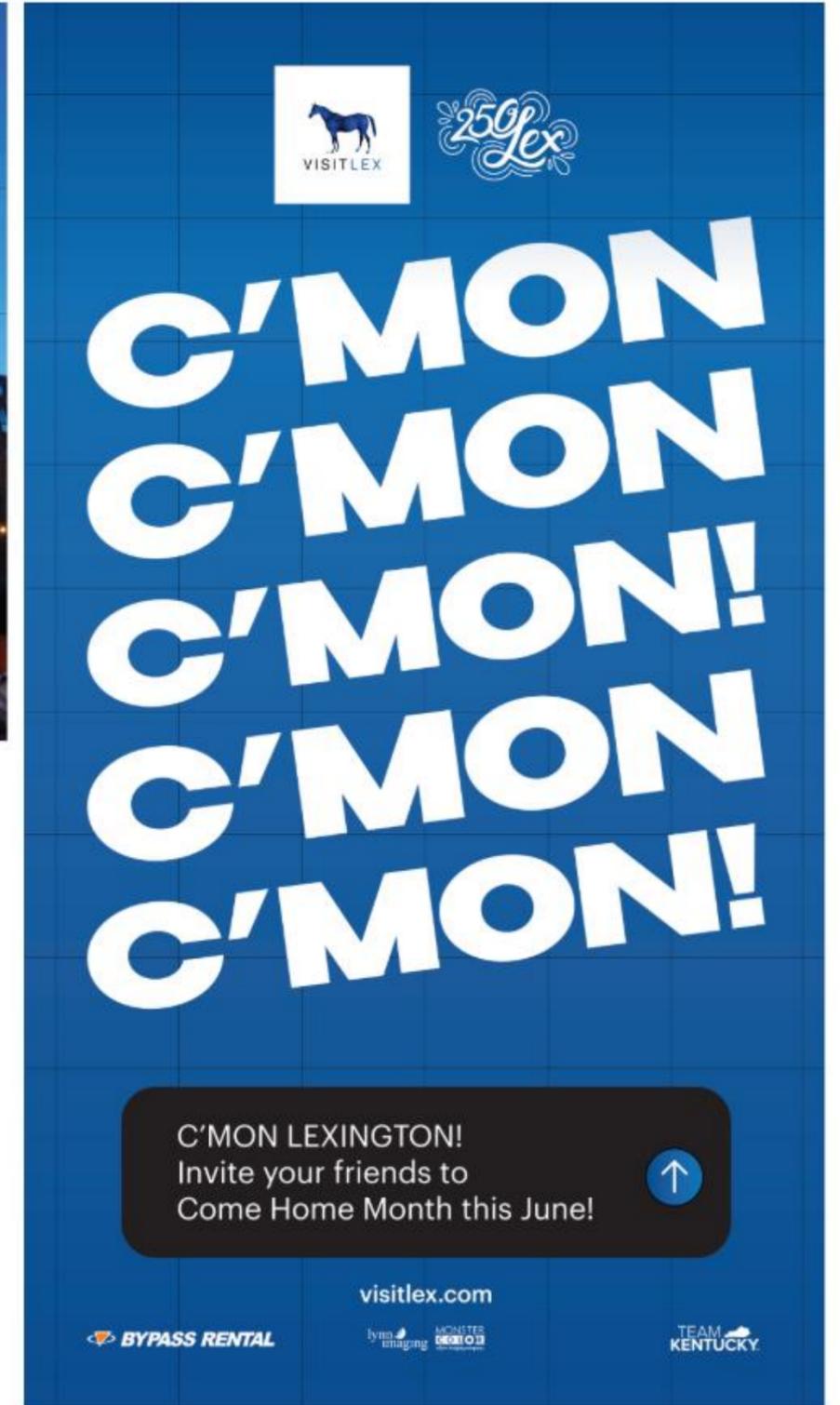
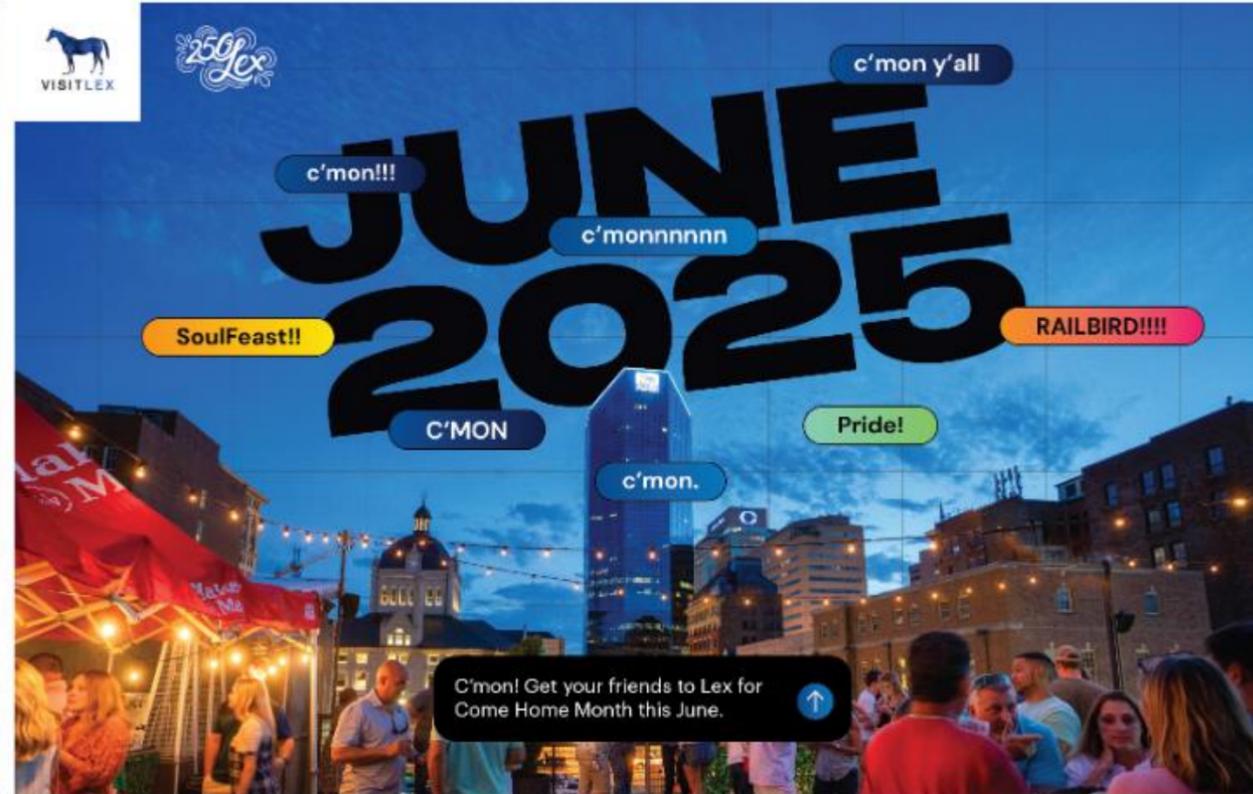
Soulfeast!!

c'mon!!!

C'mon! Get your friends to Lex for
Come Home Month this June.











Giphy Stickers

Use our animated stickers on Instagram stories by searching for "VisitLEX" in the add-ons. You can also use these gifs in iMessage by searching for "VisitLEX" in the "#images" icon.



Peer Pressure Postcards

Hand these printed postcards out to locals who visit your attraction or business. Encourage them to send these to their friends, inviting them to visit for Come Home Month this June.



Group Chat Gifs

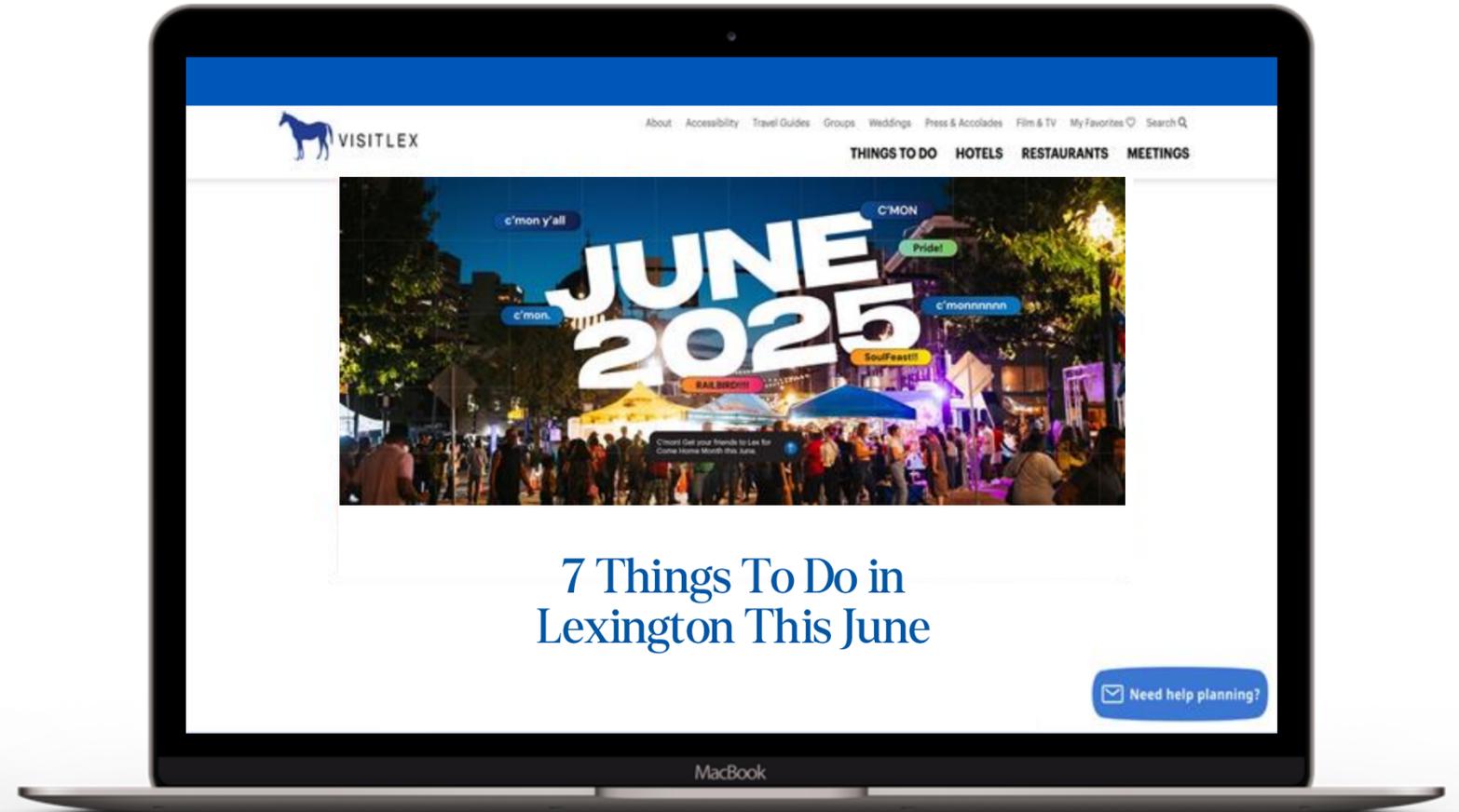
Download these gifs from the [VisitLEX.com/cmon](https://www.visitlex.com/cmon) webpage. Drop these in your group chats or use on social to invite your out-of-town friends to Lexington and prompt others to do the same.

Landing Page



Dedicated landing page for local audience equipping them with fun and easy ways to convince their friends and family to come to Lexington.

Guide



Travel guide resource for locals and visitors outlining all the great things there is to do in Lexington during the month of June.



Peer Pressure Postcards

Postcards for locals available for pick up at the Visitors Center to send to their friends and family inviting them to Lexington this June. QR code to go to guide with all the things to do during Come Home month.



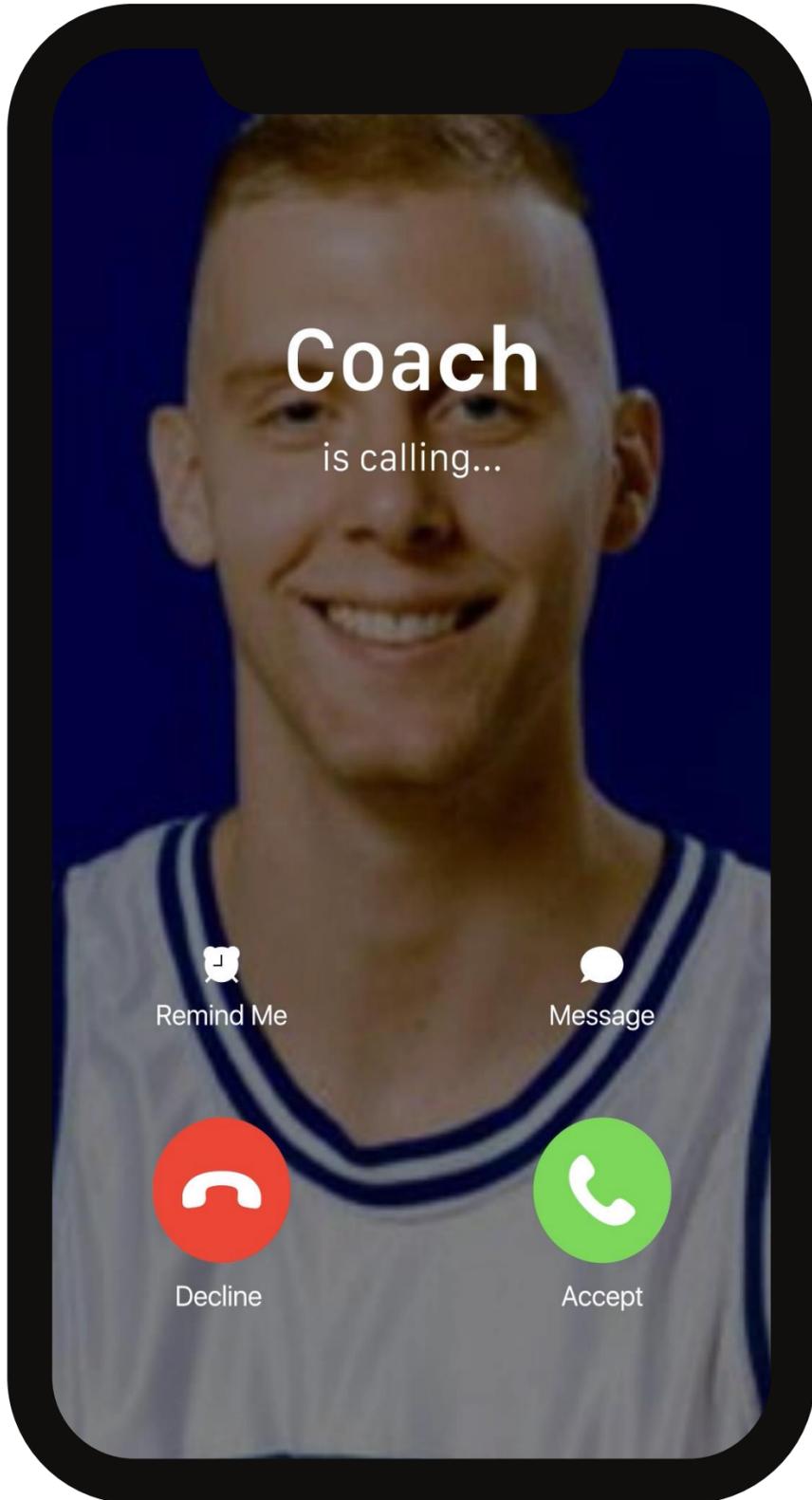
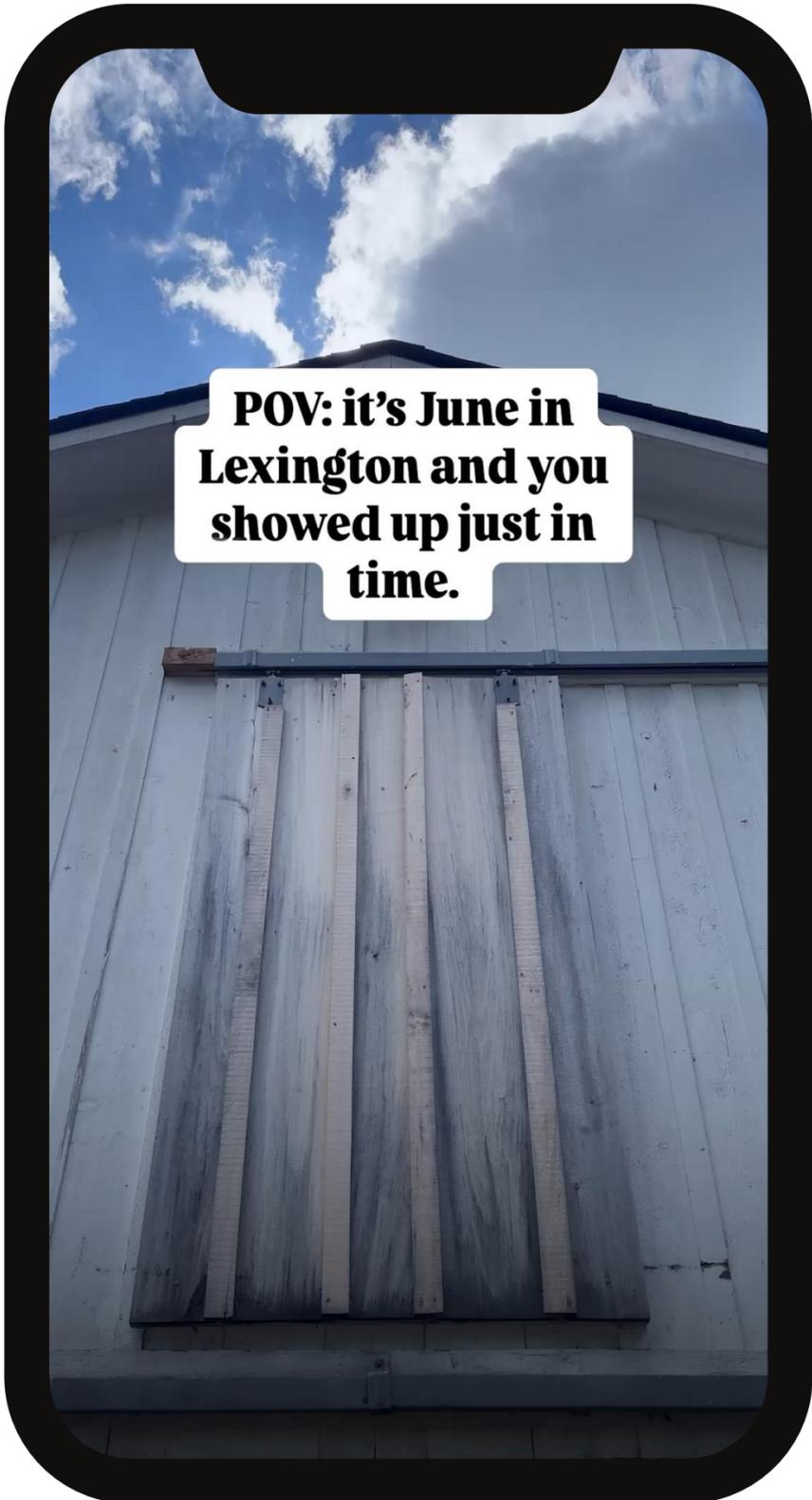
C'moncierge Service

Need a hand planning your friends' trip to Lexington? Stop by the Lexington Visitors Center or reach out to our hospitality pros for assistance.



Host Package

Stop by the Visitors Center for a free host package so you can roll out the red carpet for guests this June. Includes items such as: Visitors Guide, Stickers, Blue Horse socks, Hats with the Horse shoes, Pins



13.7MM

Total Impressions
34% more than estimated

21.8K

Total Clicks
94% more than estimated

Foot Traffic

Our Visitors Center saw foot traffic in June outpace pre-pandemic levels
(set CY attendance record twice)

56% increase

Visitors Center Retail Sales

More than 350

Total Host Package Signups
Resulting in 350 new email sign ups

500,000+

Views across social platforms



**Increased June
occupancy by 4.2%**

