

CENTRAL OREGON



2021-2023 CENTRAL OREGON PLAN

REGION: Central Oregon

The Central Oregon Visitors Association (dba Visit Central Oregon) has served as the Regional Destination Marketing Organization for Central Oregon since 1971 and is the longest-serving tourism marketing organization in the region. An industry-elected board of thirteen directors, who represent both the geographic and diverse tourism product of the region, governs Visit Central Oregon. Functioning as the industry voice for the region, Visit Central Oregon actively engages with our industry and DMO partners on a daily basis. The region includes South Wasco, Jefferson, Crook and Deschutes counties.

The Visit Central Oregon is an eight-member team, including two regional visitor information center staff. Independent of the Regional Cooperative Tourism Program (RCTP), Visit Central Oregon manages an annual budget of approximately \$3.1 million; directly leveraging and optimizing the RCTP investment for the highest and best use of both Deschutes County and statewide lodging taxes.

MISSION

Visit Central Oregon's mission is to generate overnight visitation to support an enduring economy for the region.

VALUES

- Partnerships - We are stronger through collaboration and facilitate valuable opportunities to work with industry partners.
- Inclusion - We welcome all to experience Central Oregon and invite diverse perspectives and cultures to the region.
- Sustainability - We support a sustainable future for our region and its resources.
- Innovation - We lead with vision and creativity.
- Advocacy - We champion the value of tourism for the long-term vitality of the region.

EQUITY STATEMENT

Visit Central Oregon recognizes the importance for our region to be a destination that welcomes people of all races, ages, ethnicities, sexual orientations, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, religions, visible and invisible disabilities, and socio-economic statuses.

We advocate that all who travel to and within Central Oregon are able to enjoy their journey and feel safe in the region. Visit Central Oregon believes that diversity, equity, and inclusion are vital for a thriving region. We encourage industry partners, our communities, and visitors to join us in cultivating a welcoming destination for all.

Visit Central Oregon is committed to participating in programs and opportunities that will transform social change. Through training and collaboration, we will continue to learn and grow in this space, and implement diversity, equity, and inclusion principles in our programs and practices.

RCTP GOALS:

Goal 1: Bolster regional reopening and recovery through programs designed to maintain and expand commercial air service, increase year-round demand and level seasonal peaks of visitor volume.

Goal 2: Collaborate with regional partners to support and incorporate sustainable and inclusive messaging to ensure our natural assets are retained as quality visitor experiences and are protected for our communities.

Goal 3: Foster, amplify and advocate for regional diversity, equity and inclusion.

Goal 4: Increase rural stakeholder collaboration and support innovation towards rural tourism product development and infrastructure.

OVERALL SUCCESS MEASURES:

Central Oregon's RCTP plan is leveraged by Visit Central Oregon's programs and focuses on regional research, destination development and creating opportunities for the region.

Visit Central Oregon's Strategic Plan outlines our program measurements and provides the roadmap for regional destination marketing and management. For economic impact measurements, Visit Central Oregon extrapolates regional data from research reports prepared for the Oregon Tourism Commission by Dean Runyan Associates (Oregon Travel Impacts), and regional airport reports including enplanements, flight frequency and markets served.

Visit Central Oregon's marketing campaigns are highly measured to track return on investment. Key Performance Indicators include:

- Website analytics and conversion reports
- Referral traffic to members
- Public relations and social media analytics
- Event activation exposure
- Lodging occupancy and revenue reports
- Transient room tax reports
- Industry surveys

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK:

Visit Central Oregon understands the role of the RDMO is to help ensure that regional stakeholders have the opportunity to communicate and engage in a shared regional vision. We hold a minimum of two Central Oregon stakeholder meetings annually and a State of the Industry education and networking event.

Visit Central Oregon worked with Destination Analysts on a comprehensive consumer-focused research project. Our DMO partners and various stakeholders helped distribute the surveys to people on their consumer lists. We gained valuable insights into consumer decision-making and preconceptions about Central Oregon from these surveys and shared the data with our partners. These insights are being interwoven into all of our marketing efforts whether it be the creative direction in our campaign photo and video shoots, the look and feel of our brand and identity guidelines, blog content on our website and more.

Stakeholder feedback given in our quarterly Marketing Advisory Committee meetings is vitally important in understanding how regional strengths, weaknesses and opportunities can vary enormously between the diverse communities of Central Oregon. Urban areas are much more prone to feeling the compression of over-visitation, while rural communities seek to develop products and experiences to pull visitor volume to under-visited and developing assets nearby.

Visit Central Oregon's top-line RCTP strategies were shared with attending stakeholders during the 2021 Oregon Tourism Engagements sessions in partnership with Travel Oregon on March 16, allowing for the opportunity to ask questions and offer feedback. Additionally, the recording of Central Oregon's engagement session was made available via Industry eNews, and posted on Travel Oregon's industry site, with the opportunity to offer feedback via an online feedback form. The *DRAFT* submissions for FY21-23 RCTP budget and narrative will be sent out via June 2021 Industry eNews as a final opportunity for review and feedback prior to finalization with Travel Oregon and implementation July 1, 2020.

Additional communications platforms currently in place and in development include:

- Monthly Industry eNews w/ previous month Lodging Report
- Monthly PR report in partnership w/ DVA
- Quarterly Marketing Advisory Committee meetings
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion webinars and Committee meetings
- Quarterly Group Sales / Business Development Advisory Committee meetings
- Industry webinars
- Other research and reports, i.e., commissioned research with Destination Analysts

DEPARTMENTAL STRATEGY OVERVIEW 21-23

Our programs include destination marketing, promotion, sales, public relations and destination development which directly support business diversification throughout the region, leading to economic vitality and resource sustainability.

GLOBAL MARKETING STRATEGY:

Optimizing the Visit Central Oregon brand to drive visitor awareness. Visit Central Oregon is using data from recent research projects to build a new website and brand identity. We're actively promoting the entire region through all of our marketing initiatives. To optimize Visit Central Oregon's visitor awareness, we're focusing on reaching a broader audience, driving awareness and engagement of our website and driving visitation to the region. The strategies outlined below highlight the work we're doing with our RCTP budget to achieve this goal.

Optimize Visit Central Oregon's reach to a broader audience

Strategies:

- Research, revisit and redesign all brand assets: brand guidelines, website and brand creative assets.
- Develop a new, user-friendly and mobile-responsive website.
- Using searcher intent research data to target potential visitors with relevant blog/ other content in sectors such as culinary, arts and culture, recreation.

Drive awareness and engagement of VisitCentralOregon.com

Strategies:

- Create a content strategy that highlights Central Oregon's diverse tourism offerings.
 - Produce blog/other content around Culinary, Adventure, Arts and Culture to drive interest.
 - Commission a series of murals throughout the region and create blog/social/video content for the murals landing page.
- Educate and advise through regional video content.
- Broaden content to target weddings and meetings business with specific digital guides.

Drive visitation to the Central Oregon region

Strategies:

- Design seasonal blog/other content (lifestyle/golf/ski) campaigns and develop programs (arts and culture, culinary) to grow each off-season.
- Identify lesser-known tourism product and locations in the region and acquire assets to promote them.
- Continue to build our asset library through partner collaboration and their resources.
- Collaborate with regional stakeholders to promote seasonal offerings and coordinate campaign timelines.

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:

Visit Central Oregon advises and collaborates on destination development programs designed for the enhancement and stewardship of regional trails, public lands, agritourism and other infrastructure. We work with our DMOs, regional non-profits, land managers, recreational collectives and tourism industry partners. In this next biennium, efforts towards agritourism include support for the High Desert Food Farm Alliance for a regional “High Desert Food Trail,” and the development of mountain biking trails, working with Central Oregon Trail Alliance, Oregon Timber Trail Alliance and Ochoco Trails Collaborative.

Central Oregon’s RCTP will continue to support and allow Discover Your Forest (DYF) to move forward with re-strategized winter focused messaging via their “Deschutes National Forest Ambassadors” program. Supporting Central Oregon’s National Forest with their public outreach efforts is more important than ever. Winter “Ambassador Site” trailheads selected and overseen by DYF will serve as communication touch points for public health and sustainable messaging to park users. “Take Care Out There” messaging will continue to complement DYF’s and the region’s responsible recreation messaging efforts through video and social media and perpetuating the “Take Care Out There” brand and framework.

Central Oregon RCTP will once again benefit from Travel Oregon and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) collaborative Oregon Trails Fund (OTF) to improve trail infrastructure via planning, development, and maintenance of Oregon’s trail network. RDMO projects that qualify for the OTF will receive an unencumbered reimbursement of 45% of the total project cost once the project has been completed. Additionally, Visit Central Oregon will continue to serve as a key stakeholder with Deschutes Trails Coalition and the Discover Your Forest Advisory Committee.

GLOBAL SALES STRATEGY:

As we know the corporate group industry may be slower to recover, key tactics for this strategy will include reengaging the meetings and events industry by promoting our centrally located destination as a valuable and intimate meetings and events destination, rich in outdoor recreation with diverse opportunities for escape and inspiration. Leveraged state and region-wide partnerships will invigorate the long-term momentum of RDMO Global Sales efforts.

Visit Central Oregon's role as RDMO continues to broaden with new expectations for management and destination development, additionally creating demand for increased staff capacity for project management and implementation. Visit Central Oregon will be seeking to contract with a PT Business Development coordinator to fulfill a necessary role for Visit C.O. as RDMO. Their focus will be to effectively collaborate with and support our hospitality, recreation, and businesses during this time of recovery, striving towards rejuvenating corporate meetings and events, and lead generation for winter/shoulder-season business. Additionally, efforts will be made towards the longer-term recovery of inbound international markets through Travel Oregon leveraged statewide familiarization tours and experiential events showcasing our destination with Travel Oregon’s Global Sales team.

GLOBAL SALES STRATEGY (Cont.):

Central Oregon will be represented at industry trade shows that have been postponed due to the pandemic for business development and lead generation. Visit Central Oregon and Visit Bend will partner to host qualified meeting and event planners in the region, showcasing the region during off-seasons. We look forward to these collaborative opportunities, supporting recovery of our regional destination resort and hospitality industry partners to share that, with respect to “new normal” guidelines, Central Oregon is open for business and looking forward to welcoming everyone back.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS STRATEGY:

We are supporting our tourism industry and partners with marketing support and resources. Currently, we are partnering with the U.S. Forest Service, Deschutes Trail Coalition, Discover Your Forest, SmithRock.com, local tour operators and more. We collaborate with our partners to amplify messaging around responsible recreation.

As found in the 2020 Oregon Tourism Industry Stakeholder Survey conducted by Travel Oregon (Oct. 2020), 59% of Central Oregon respondents believe the tourism industry should play a role in advancing social and racial justice, and more than half of all respondents (54%) would be interested in participating in a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) related training. As a result, Visit Central Oregon is excited for our newly formed partnership with local DEI consultant collaborative, Allyship in Action (AIA). We are working with AIA to develop valuable DEI Training sessions with a tourism and outdoor recreation lens for our partners who may not have the resources to invest in these types of trainings on their own. There will be multiple sessions of foundational DEI training, followed by the development of a regional tourism DEI Advisory Committee to perpetuate this practice of inclusion, with the goal that all visitors will feel welcome while in Central Oregon.

Additionally, Visit Central Oregon will continue to support and collaborate with the Central Oregon Film Office (COFO), filling a vital role to build awareness for Central Oregon as a stunning and valuable destination for media production. Where before, regional DMOs and chambers would attempt to represent our respective areas for this very niche industry, COFO can speak the media and film lingo, and has successfully brought productions like Netflix teen-series, “Everything Sucks!” and the auditions for the 2020 season of “American Idol” to Central Oregon. In the 2017-2019 biennium, the Oregon Film Office tracked \$280M of in-state spending that was directly associated with projects coming through their various film incentive programs. Those projects have impacted more than 8,000 jobs on more than 100 different projects taking production into many areas of the state. COFO continues to strive to make sure that Central Oregon is on the industry’s radar to receive its share of that year-round revenue stream.

As RDMO, we will continue to seek collaborative opportunities for supporting regional tourism development and partner with organizations to get messages out across our marketing channels.

STAFFING & ADMINISTRATION STRATEGY:

Visit Central Oregon's entire team invests significant time and resources supporting the Central Oregon RCTP, ensuring full integration of the initiatives and programs into the Regional Destination strategies. 35% of RCTP funds will go towards our organization's administration of regional RCTP. Visit Central Oregon team involvement with Central Oregon's RCTP include:

President & Chief Executive Officer: Position oversees the Visit Central Oregon team and ensures that RCTP strategies are staffed and implemented in accordance with the RCTP plan. Position oversees RCTP strategies relating to Commercial Air Service initiatives and attends committee meetings, as well as attends all OTC, ODMO, RDMO, and Central Oregon Stakeholder meetings.

Vice-President – Industry Relations: Position oversees the overall RCTP plan development and execution, in collaboration with the President & CEO and VP-Marketing, ensuring that RCTP resources are complemented and fully leveraged by Travel Oregon and Visit Central Oregon's overall strategic plan. Position oversees, coordinates and attends Central Oregon hosted FAM trips in collaboration with Travel Oregon Global Sales and regional stakeholders. Position oversees, coordinates and attends the Global Sales trade shows identified within the RCTP plan. Position oversees and is facilitator for RCTP Destination Development and Strategic Partnerships; continues to oversee the completion of Central Oregon Matching Grants Program (COMGP) projects paused due to COVID-19; and will be facilitator for regional strategic investment support and recovery projects for this biennium. Position facilitates the overarching communications pipeline from Travel Oregon to RDMO to DMO and regional partners and attends all Central Oregon Stakeholder Meetings, RDMO and OTC meetings.

Visit Central Oregon Marketing oversees, coordinates and staff Marketing and PR activations and media industry co-op projects within the RCTP plan.

Vice-President - Marketing: Position is the lead for Global Marketing RCTP plan development and execution, coordinating all external marketing programs to ensure that RCTP resources are complemented and fully leveraged by Visit Central Oregon's larger Regional Destination Marketing strategies. Role includes project development, media buying, research and execution of plan strategies. Position coordinates communications, keeping the funnel of information flowing with industry partners at all levels for Global Marketing RCTP. Position attends all Central Oregon Stakeholder Meetings, RDMO and OTC meetings.

Communications Manager: Position supports VP-Marketing, staffs and coordinates all public relations programs and social media content for RCTP strategies. Position oversees, coordinates and attends Central Oregon hosted media-related FAM trips in collaboration with Travel Oregon and regional stakeholders. Position coordinates communications for Global Marketing RCTP, keeping the funnel of information flowing with industry partners at all levels. Position attends all Central Oregon Stakeholder Meetings.

Marketing Manager: Position supports VP-Marketing and Communications Manager for Global Marketing RCTP programs. Position attends all Central Oregon Stakeholder Meetings.

Regional Visitor Information Center Staff: Position oversees OTIS, Travel Oregon Regional Pack and Welcome Center fulfillment responsibilities. Position additionally provides RDMO leadership team support for RCTP programs when necessary.

Operations Manager: Position provides RDMO leadership team support for all RCTP programs and coordinates all Central Oregon Stakeholder meetings. Position additionally supports the Regional Visitor Center Staff with OTIS and TORP. Position attends all Central Oregon Stakeholder Meetings.

OTHER - AIR SERVICE DEVELOPMENT:

Flight capacity to Redmond Airport has declined with some flights either cancelling or decreasing service. Flights from our major markets including San Francisco, Denver and Los Angeles have decreased seat capacity and other flights including United service to/from Chicago and Allegiant service to/from Las Vegas have been paused indefinitely and the launch for Alaska service to/from San Jose airport has been postponed - currently planned to start service in September.

Visit Central Oregon has worked with the Central Oregon Air Service Team (COAST) to maintain relationships with the airlines throughout the pandemic. Serving as the regional marketing arm for air service, we will provide marketing support as flights rebound post-pandemic. Opportunities include marketing existing and new service with dedicated campaigns for new flight markets when they come online i.e., Dallas and San Jose.

Visit Central Oregon is also working with RDM to implement and manage a regional welcome desk for inbound air passengers. The desk will provide maps and brochures from around the region and will be staffed at peak arrival times. This is an important new initiative to provide incoming guests with a great first impression and warm welcome as their first point of contact upon arrival.

OTHER – STRATEGIC INVESTMENT FUND:

Visit Central Oregon will administer approx. 21% of RCTP funds for regional Strategic Investments that are designed for more immediate response to high-value destination development or management projects in critical moments of need. Strategic Investment Funds may also support tourism-related professional development opportunities. Regional rural community projects will be prioritized that align with Central Oregon’s RCTP programs and Visit Central Oregon’s strategic plan.

Visit Central Oregon will also continue to be a conduit of information and a resource for regional stakeholders for beneficial grant opportunities and webinars/workshops.

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THANK YOU!

TOTAL CENTRAL OREGON REGIONAL BUDGET ALLOCATIONS FY 21-23

DEPARTMENT / CATEGORY	2021-22 BUDGET	2022-23 BUDGET	% OF TOTAL BUDGET FY21-23 BIENNIUM
GLOBAL MARKETING	\$ 282,015.00	\$ 206,200.00	27.2%
DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT	\$ 63,500.00	\$ 23,500.00	4.9%
GLOBAL SALES	\$ 113,650.00	\$ 141,500.00	14.2%
GLOBAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS	\$ 39,500.00	\$ 35,000.00	4.2%
IOF / STRATEGIC INVESTMENT FUND	\$ 201,955.00	\$ 146,863.00	19.5%
STAFFING/ADMIN	\$ 219,727.00	\$ 219,727.00	24.5%
OTHER: Air Service	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	5.6%
ANNUAL DISBURSEMENT SUBTOTALS	\$ 970,347.00	\$ 822,790.00	100.0%
RRSF	\$ 142,429.00	\$ 0.00	7.9%
ALLOCATED ROLLOVER FY 20-21** **Subject to change. Amounts will be finalized post reconciliation of RCTP FY20-21 and/or closing of FY19-21 Biennium	\$ 200,128.00	\$ 195,000.00	22.0%
TOTAL BUDGET FY21-23 BIENNIUM @ \$1,793,137**	\$ 970,347.00	\$ 822,790.00	100%