



ALASKA

TRAVEL INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION



2023-24 ANNUAL REPORT

2023 - 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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ATIA MISSION & VISION

MISSION

The Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) will be the leading industry organization promoting Alaska as a top visitor destination, communicating and promoting the Alaskan tourism industry as one of the state’s major economic forces, and will be the respected voice of the industry for the growth of the industry, while remaining stewards of the state’s natural resources, cultures, and Alaska’s unique quality of life.

VISION

- Alaska is recognized as a world-class visitor destination where year-round tourism is treated as an important, sustainable opportunity for economic and resource development.
- Alaska is recognized as one of the top 10 world destinations.
- As a recognized and leading industry for Alaska, tourism is a year-round experience with opportunities to engage in natural and cultural connections in urban and rural Alaska and in large and small-scale options.
- ATIA is a recognizable and respected steward of the state’s tourism marketing investment and highlights our positive role as an economic driver in Alaska for Alaskans.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

ATIA will:

- Promote and facilitate travel to and throughout the State of Alaska.
- Provide a broad-based association of individuals and companies with an interest in the visitor industry in Alaska.
- Encourage the increase and improvement of quality visitor facilities, services, and attractions throughout Alaska.
- Lead private sector efforts to assure a robust and broad-based statewide tourism marketing plan.
- Increase awareness of the economic importance of the visitor industry.
- Develop and implement programs beneficial to travel suppliers and supporting industries.
- Initiate and cooperate with local, state, and federal entities in developing and implementing programs, policies, and legislation that are responsive to the needs of the industry and to intervene in those issues and initiatives that would directly affect the facilitation and promotion of travel to and within Alaska.
- Work cooperatively with the public sector on tourism development and long-range planning.

TRAVEL ALASKA, LEXI QASS'UQ TRAINER (CUP'IK/YUPIK)



LETTER FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR & PRESIDENT

The past year was a dynamic time for ATIA and Alaska’s travel industry, marked by significant milestones, metrics, and challenges. The tourism industry continues to play a pivotal role in Alaska’s economy, generating \$5.6 billion in total economic output, \$3.9 billion in direct visitor spending to Alaska businesses, and supporting over 48,000 jobs. New research revealed the success of ATIA’s tourism marketing campaign. Visitors spent \$378 in Alaska for each dollar paid in advertising. An incredible return on investment!

As a result of consistent investments in tourism marketing and the resiliency of the industry, between May of 2023 and April of 2024, we welcomed an unprecedented 3 million visitors to Alaska, beating previous records. Winter visitation numbers continue to grow with both Fairbanks and Anchorage reporting strong airport arrival and hotel occupancy rates during non-summer months.

This new high mark is a testament to our collective efforts to showcase the unparalleled beauty, adventure, and culture that make Alaska a year-round dream destination. This success reinforces the importance of our industry as a pillar of economic growth and stability for communities and families across the state.

But the industry faces challenges as independent travelers aren’t growing at the same rate as cruise passengers, dropping from 40% to 35% of total summer visitors last year. Furthermore, communities are facing initiatives to restrict cruise ships and passengers that ignore the work done with stakeholders to find meaningful solutions.

In FY24, we saw infrastructure developments across Alaska’s tourism landscape. Several communities upgraded their visitor facilities, including dock projects in Klawock, Whittier, and soon, an expansion in Seward to better accommodate passenger ships. New, expansive trails were opened in Denali National Park’s front country, and a record number of businesses attained certifications with Adventure Green Alaska for investments in sustainable tourism.

ATIA introduced a dedicated seat on the Board of Directors for a member of a federally recognized tribe in Alaska or a shareholder of an Alaska Native Corporation. The Cultural Enrichment Committee has moved from a marketing subcommittee to a full board committee, reflecting the significance of cultural tourism to the state and industry as a whole.

While we celebrate these successes, we must also prepare for the challenges and opportunities ahead. As we enter FY25, our priorities include advocating for sustainable tourism marketing funding, expanding partnerships, and supporting our member businesses to maintain Alaska’s position as a world-class destination.

Thank you to each of our members for your dedication, creativity, and resilience. The strength of our industry is due to your substantial efforts.

Sincerely,

Craig Jennison
ATIA 2023-2024 Board Chair

Jillian Simpson
ATIA President & CEO



ATIA 2023-2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Board Chair
Craig Jennison
TEMSCO Helicopters

Vice Chair
Josh Howes
Premier Alaska Tours

Immediate Past Chair
Scott Habberstad
Alaska Airlines

Secretary/Membership Chair
Jacqui Taylor-Rose
White Pass & Yukon Route

Treasurer/Finance Chair
Dave McGlothlin
Holland America - Princess

Tourism Policy & Planning Chair
Colleen Stephens
Stan Stephens Glacier & Wildlife Cruises

Government Relations Co-Chair
Lalanya (Lanie) Downs
Cruise Lines International Association - Alaska

Government Relations Co-Chair
Elizabeth Hall
John Hall's Alaska Tours & Transportation

Marketing Co-Chair
Dan Rough
Holland America Line

Marketing Co-Chair
Julie Saupe
Visit Anchorage

ATIA President & CEO
Jillian Simpson

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Matt Atkinson
Northern Alaska Tour Company

Wade Binkley
Riverboat Discovery

Heather Dudick
Alaska Railroad

Camille Ferguson
Sitka Tribal Tours

Mandy Garcia
Salmon Berry Tours

Juno Kim
Ovibos Consulting

Scott McCrea
Explore Fairbanks

Bill Pedlar
Knightly Tours

Liz Perry
Travel Juneau

Jordan Sanford
Kantishna Roadhouse

Stacey Simmons
Kodiak Brown Bear Center / Koniag, Inc

Linda Springmann
Port of Seattle

Elizabeth Barlow
Above and Beyond Alaska
ex-officio

Alaska Lt. Governor
Nancy Dahlstrom
ex-officio

MEMBERSHIP

602 ATIA Members

ATIA’s membership includes a wide array of businesses and nonprofits representing these sectors:

- Tour Operators
- Fishing Lodges
- Wilderness Resorts
- Cultural Attractions
- Hotels
- Bed and Breakfasts
- Destination Marketing Organizations
- Alaska Native Corporations
- Transportation Providers
- Cruise Lines
- Media & Publications
- Travel Planners
- Restaurants & Bars
- Breweries and Distilleries
- Retail Stores

Most of ATIA’s members are small businesses, with 60% having fewer than 20 full time employees.

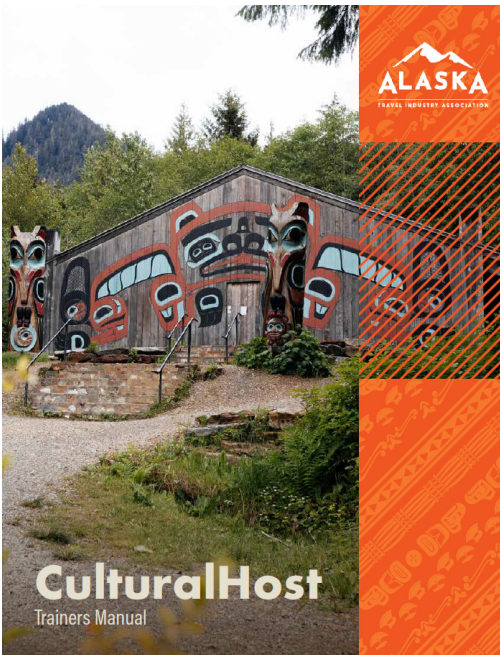


MEMBER BENEFITS

ATIA is the leading statewide industry organization for travel-related businesses and supporters. ATIA’s members enjoy exclusive benefits such as the ATIA Annual Convention and Trade Show, online courses offered through the ATIA E-Learning Center, participation in local chapters, access to health benefits, business to business discounts, and networking opportunities.

ATIA offered training through the AlaskaHost and Alaska CulturalHost workforce development programs (managed through a memorandum of agreement with the State of Alaska’s Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development). In FY24, ATIA led two virtual and four in-person AlaskaHost trainings, and one “train-the-trainer” session. Several Indigenous-led CulturalHost trainings were delivered in Southeast Alaska.

ATIA hosted monthly virtual “coffee chats” and education webinars to connect with members and provide a venue for business-to-business engagement. Webinar topics included communication tips, marketing education, advocacy, partnerships, banking & finance, and travel trade opportunities. ATIA also co-hosted three receptions in Ketchikan, Fairbanks, and Anchorage to connect with members and local legislators.



Five Chapters: Anchorage; Fairbanks; Juneau; Ketchikan; Arts, Culture, and Heritage

Number of Communities Represented by ATIA Membership: 54

MEMBER TESTIMONIAL:

The ATIA network has connected us with a vast number of businesses that we would otherwise have not known existed or have had access to. These connections not only help MidnightRun and our clients but strengthen the tourism industry as a whole, through relationship building, sharing of ideas and inspiration.

- Mary Goddard, MidnightRun LLC



ATIA CONVENTION

The ATIA Annual Convention & Trade Show took place in Fairbanks in October of 2023. As always, the Golden Heart City delivered on hospitality and camaraderie. ATIA hosted over 500 members who participated in sessions addressing Cultural Tourism, public lands management, sustainability, marketing, government relations, and more. The event featured many networking breaks and collectively remains our highest valued member benefit year after year.

MEMBER TESTIMONIAL:

Because of ATIA and the ATIA convention, I now know businesses in the tourism industry from Utqiagvik to Ketchikan I can recommend to my guests, and they do the same in return for my business.

- Stephanie Millane, Sunny Cove Sea Kayaking



ADVENTURE GREEN ALASKA

Adventure Green Alaska Members: 117
New members in FY24: 13



Adventure Green Alaska (AGA) is ATIA's voluntary certification program for sustainable tourism businesses operating in Alaska. Since 2009, AGA has recognized and promoted Alaska tourism businesses who practice economic, environmental, social, and cultural sustainability. The Sustainability Subcommittee of the ATIA board of directors was expanded and refreshed to focus on larger sustainable tourism initiatives for Alaska and advising the AGA program, including growth and the potential for an upgraded certification.

Thank you to lead sponsor, Alaska Airlines, and supporting sponsors Alaska Railroad, Alaska Wildland Adventures, Allen Marine Tours, Explore Fairbanks, Holland America-Princess/Princess Cruises/Holland America Line, Major Marine Tours, Mat-Su CVB, Seward Chamber, Premier Alaska Tours, and Visit Anchorage for your support of Adventure Green Alaska.

MEMBER TESTIMONIAL:

We've been part of the (AGA) program since its inception many years ago. We've always believed in leaving a place better than you found it, and so we want to be part of statewide efforts to take care of Alaska and the places where Alaska tourism happens.

- Howard Carbone, Alaska Nature Guides



ADVOCACY

ATIA's advocacy focuses on state and federal issues impacting Alaska's travel and tourism industry. These efforts aim to influence policies that help maintain a strong and thriving tourism sector as a key component of Alaska's economy and are funded through membership fees.

Highlights Included:

- Advocating for consistent and stable tourism marketing funding to attract year-round visitors in a competitive marketplace.
- Hosting the 5th annual Alaska Land Managers Forum, bringing public and private land managers together with representatives of the tourism industry.
- Advocating for passage of the federal EXPLORE Act, an omnibus bill including numerous public lands provisions.
- Co-sponsoring the inaugural Alaska Resources Day in Washington DC with sister trade associations.
- Participating the US Travel Association's Destination Capitol Hill annual advocacy event for national issues.
- Expanding our communication efforts to policymakers through Tourism Snapshots e-newsletter, hosting Visitor for a Day events, and advocacy awareness campaigns.
- Advocating for the prompt adoption of summer and winter Alaska Marine Highway System schedules.
- Communicating with our federal delegation about the importance of supporting the Workforce Housing Tax Credit and other housing solutions.
- Advocating for several state legislative bills including the Seward Railroad Dock Financing bill, Alaska Long Trail funding, the Turo Tax bill, and a bill that would have expanded the workforce by allowing minors ages 18-20 to serve alcohol in lodges and restaurants.
- Opposing the minimum wage ballot initiative due to harm to small businesses.
- Opposing efforts to eliminate daylight savings time.



Alaska Resources Day in Washington, D.C.

MEMBER TESTIMONIAL:

ATIA's advocacy efforts ensure that the interests of the tourism industry are represented at the state and federal levels, helping to shape policies that promote sustainable tourism growth. I know the ATIA staff work tirelessly for all of our members, and for this, I am very grateful.

- Stacey Simmons, Kodiak Brown Bear Center & Lodge



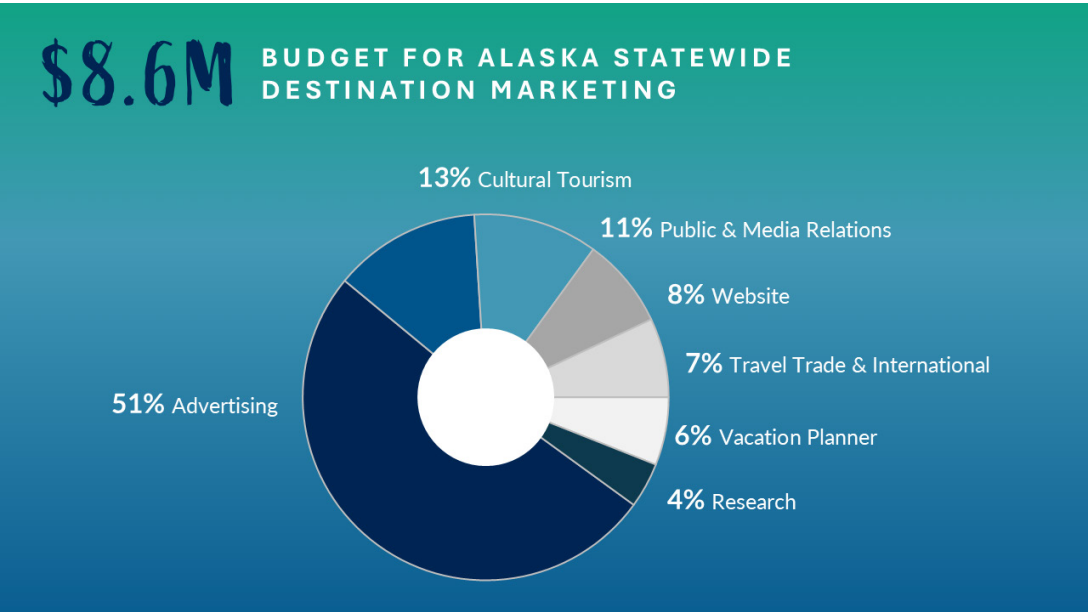
TOURISM MARKETING

ATIA manages Alaska’s statewide destination marketing campaign, Travel Alaska. Guided by a 25-member marketing committee and ATIA’s board of directors, the program draws on industry expertise to position Alaska as a top-tier, year-round travel destination.

The goal of the Travel Alaska program is to implement a comprehensive, multi-channel strategy that drives economic growth by boosting visitor numbers and spending across the state.

Strategic Priorities:

- 1) Grow Alaska’s position as a top domestic and international, year-round vacation destination.
- 2) Enhance and strengthen the destination brand domestically and globally.
- 3) Establish ATIA and Travel Alaska as an innovative leader in the travel and tourism industry.
- 4) Focus on cultural and sustainable integration in all brand efforts.
- 5) Establish measurement framework baseline metrics for future success.



Funded through a \$2.5 million grant from the State of Alaska, \$5 million from a federal EDA grant, and \$1.1 million from industry contributions.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

ATIA retained SMARInsights to conduct an Advertising Return on Investment and Impact study for paid media placed in 2023. The results were impressive. ATIA’s destination advertising program is considered one of the most efficient in the country and directly influenced **\$2.1 billion in visitor spending!**

\$378 TO \$1 RETURN ON INVESTMENT for funding allocated to Travel Alaska paid media in 2023.	615,500 AD-INFLUENCED TRIPS Those who saw paid media were 2x more likely to visit Alaska than those who didn't.	15 MILLION HOUSEHOLDS REACHED in the U.S. by the paid media campaign.
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TARGET AUDIENCE

DOMESTIC PRIMARY TARGET MARKETS: California, Texas, Florida, Washington, and New York.

DOMESTIC SECONDARY TARGET MARKETS: Chicago, Phoenix, and Minneapolis metro areas.

INTERNATIONAL PRIMARY TARGET MARKET: German Speaking Europe

INTERNATIONAL SECONDARY TARGET MARKET: India

PRIMARY TARGET AUDIENCES: Boomer/Retiree, Independent, and Family Travelers.

- BEHAVIORAL DEMOGRAPHICS:**
- Audiences showing intent to travel.
 - Audiences consuming travel content focused on Alaska.
 - Audiences consuming content focused on activities found in Alaska—e.g., fishing, hiking, biking, wildlife viewing, dog sledding, skiing, snowboarding, Alaska Native culture, northern lights, cruising.

RESULTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- Over **40,000 Vacation Planners** fulfilled, with 9,000 additional digital copies downloaded
- **8,870** new unique e-newsletter subscribers
- **55,000** new consumer leads

Paid Media:

- 273,000,000 impressions
- 11.7% Click Thru Rate (14% increase year-over-year)
- 87% Video Completion Rate (Industry Avg. 70%)

E-newsletter:

- Over 500,000 opt-in subscribers
- Open rate: 40%

TACTICS

ADVERTISING

ATIA employs paid media to build brand awareness using high-impact strategies that encourage travel to Alaska. The advertising mix includes linear, connected, and streaming TV; digital display; search engine marketing; retargeting; paid social media; print ads; email campaigns; content partnerships; asset development; and the Official State Vacation Planner.

Media Placements Included:

- National Geographic
- Smithsonian
- Digital Billboard in Times Square
- AFAR
- Hulu & Disney+
- TripAdvisor

ATIA monitors media performance and travel trends using the Zartico operating system dashboard, along with insights from Adara Consortium and US Travel reports. Together, these tools form ATIA’s data framework for evaluating advertising effectiveness and identifying opportunities.

WEBSITE

TravelAlaska.com is Alaska’s official travel planning website, **reaching over 4 million potential Alaska visitors** in FY24. This highly engaging, visually appealing, and interactive website features trip planning tips, itineraries, and articles, along with community, public lands, and activity pages. The website is continually being refreshed with new, inspirational written content and images, keeping Alaska top-of-mind for visitors, reflecting seasonality and travel trends, and improving search engine optimization so Alaska remains competitive with other domestic and international destinations in organic search.

TravelAlaska.com also provides partner advertising opportunities including profile ads, banner ads, travel specials, integrated ads, and sponsored content. As ATIA’s core marketing tool, all advertising campaigns drive to pages on the website. Leads are generated from travel planner requests and newsletter subscriptions.



RESULTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- 5,651,000 pageviews
- Organic traffic up 47% year-over-year
- 398,000 partner referrals (19% increase over previous year)
- Over 50 new landing pages, including travel articles and itineraries, with 7 Alaska Native culture content pages



CULTURAL TOURISM

Alaska Native culture has been expanded throughout the entire Travel Alaska program in recent years. ATIA has worked closely with Alaska Native leaders and content creators to authentically share the living cultures of Alaska. The centerpiece of the effort is the Alaska Native Culture Guide that was inserted into all Travel Planners and made available digitally through TravelAlaska.com.Website and social media content was greatly expanded, and a paid media campaign supported the effort.

RESULTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- 34,029,000 paid media & social impressions
- 13 articles published (goal 10)
- Top 10 pages in website traffic



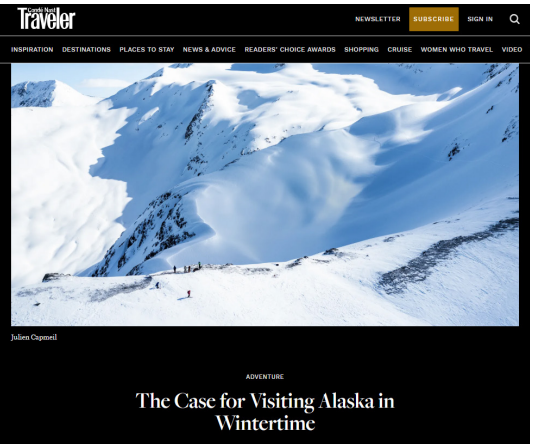
PUBLIC & MEDIA RELATIONS

ATIA utilizes public relations through media assistance, outreach, an annual media event and organic social media to place positive, travel-related news about Alaska into the editorial channels of national media. Earned media allows Travel Alaska to cost-effectively reach high-circulation audiences with stories about Alaska’s unique travel experiences. ATIA provides media assistance to domestic and international media in the form of fact-checking, answering questions, and photo assistance.

ATIA hosted the 20th annual media event, Alaska Media Road Show, bringing 30 ATIA partners together with 26 media representatives from outlets such as AFAR, Matador Network, LA Times, AARP, and more. The three-day event generated 46 media clips, resulting in over 353 million impressions and more than \$3.2 million in advertising equivalency value from October 2023 – June 2024.

Top Media Hits:

- New York Times
- CNN Travel
- Condé Nast Traveler
- AARP
- U.S. News & World Report



RESULTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- 563 journalists assisted (goal of 300)
- 333 articles published
- Barcelona Score of 77 (goal of 67)
- \$40 million in ad equivalency value – PR (goal of \$20 million)
- Quarterly newsletter sent to over 650 media resulted in a 41% average open rate

TRAVEL TRADE & INTERNATIONAL

TRAVEL TRADE:

The travel trade – including tour operators, travel agents, and cruise advisors – plays a vital role as a distribution channel for visitors to Alaska. ATIA supports this sector by fostering the development and expansion of Alaska trip packages. This is achieved through destination education and outreach efforts such as trade show participation, partnerships with travel agent consortia, training webinars, familiarization tours (FAMs), and the Alaska Certified Expert (ACE) Program.

INTERNATIONAL:

International travelers make up 5.5% of Alaska’s visitors, but the inbound overseas markets have not fully recovered to pre-Covid levels. In FY24, ATIA continued efforts to engage key overseas markets while also outreaching to developing markets, like India. The association contracts with a representative office in German-speaking Europe (Germany, Switzerland, and Austria) and conducts marketing through travel trade and media outreach. ATIA also organized international sales missions and participated in Visit the USA events in Germany, Switzerland, United Kingdom, New Zealand, and India to promote Alaska travel in these priority markets.

Alaska’s top long-haul markets include: (*Tourism Economics*)

- 1. United Kingdom
- 2. Australia / New Zealand
- 3. German Speaking Europe
- 4. India
- 5. South Korea
- 6. Japan
- 7. China
- 8. Italy
- 9. France
- 10. Brazil

RESULTS & HIGHLIGHTS

- 335 one-on-one meetings
- 44 FAM participants
- 28 trainings
- 3,291 tour operators / travel advisors trained
- 3,424 new ACE registrants
- 1,477 ACE graduates
- Attended 15 shows and events

TRADE SHOWS & EVENTS:

ATIA organized or participated in the following:

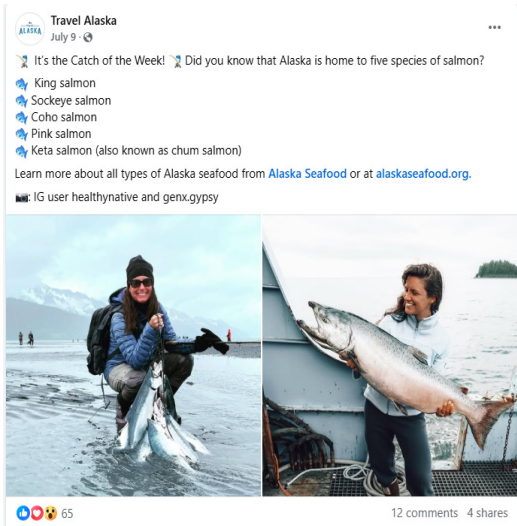
- American Bus Association (ABA Marketplace)
- CLIA Professional Development Training
- Cruise 360
- IPW (U.S. Travel Association)
- Sales Missions: United Kingdom, India, Australia & New Zealand
- Seatrade
- Travel Agent Forum
- Travel Agent Owner’s Forum
- Travel Leader’s Network - EDGE
- United States Tour Operators Association (USTOA)
- Visit the USA Trainings: Germany, Switzerland, New Zealand



SOCIAL MEDIA

Organic social media channels include Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, Tik Tok, Pinterest, and YouTube. The content on these pages is aimed at increasing awareness and engagement about travel to Alaska.

Combined, the channels have more than 771,000 followers and an average engagement rate of 4.6%, two times above the industry average.



NORTH TO ALASKA

North to Alaska is a collaborative initiative between Travel Alaska, Travel Alberta, Destination British Columbia, and Yukon Tourism, aimed at promoting highway travel from the Lower 48 through Canada to Alaska. In late 2023, the program launched an Instagram page, which has complemented its dedicated page on TravelAlaska.com – consistently among the site’s top 10 most-visited pages. This partnership has been a cornerstone of regional tourism collaboration since 1988 but concluded at the end of this fiscal year.

COOPERATIVE MARKETING PROGRAM

ATIA provides marketing opportunities for industry partners to amplify their reach by combining their funds with ATIA’s campaign dollars. Over 300 partners participated in digital and print placements, media events, travel trade shows, and website initiatives, ensuring their Alaska businesses stayed top of mind for consumers and travel professionals. Partner contributions generated over \$1 million in FY24, which was reinvested into the marketing program.

MEMBER TESTIMONIAL:

We see the value of ATIA in co-op marketing, statewide marketing efforts which bring added attention to our corner of Alaska, and through networking with members.

– Adriel Butler, Borealis Basecamp



ATIA FOUNDATION

ATIA supports the growth and education of Alaska’s travel industry through the ATIA Foundation, a separate 501(c)3 non-profit organization. The Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) Foundation’s mission is to assist Alaskans desiring to further their education in the travel industry. As a non-profit 501(c)3 charitable organization, the Foundation supports programs that educate and enhance the quality of Alaska’s visitor industry, educates the general public regarding tourism, and invests in Alaskans to ensure the quality of people employed in Alaska’s visitor industry through scholarships and support for community events. Funds are raised through annual events and donations from supporting individuals.

ATIA Foundation 2023-2024 Board of Directors:

Board Chair: Kory Eberhart, *A Taste of Alaska Lodge*
Vice Chair: Kelly Bender, *Lazy Otter Charters*
Secretary/Treasurer: Lilly Kelly, *Visit Anchorage*
Mandy Garcia, *Salmon Berry Tours*
Craig Jennison, *TEMSCO Helicopters*
Jillian Simpson, *ATIA*



Income: \$39,771

Scholarships Awarded: 16 scholarships representing 7 communities (Juneau to Healy), totaling \$33,500

Special thanks to these businesses which have provided scholarship funding:

- Alaska Airlines
- Alaska Railroad
- Chuck West Family
- Explore Fairbanks
- Holland America Line
- Kris Geldaker Family
- Lazy Otter Charters
- Premier Alaska Tours
- Pursuit
- Tania Hancock Family
- Tim McDonnell Family

MEMBER TESTIMONIAL:

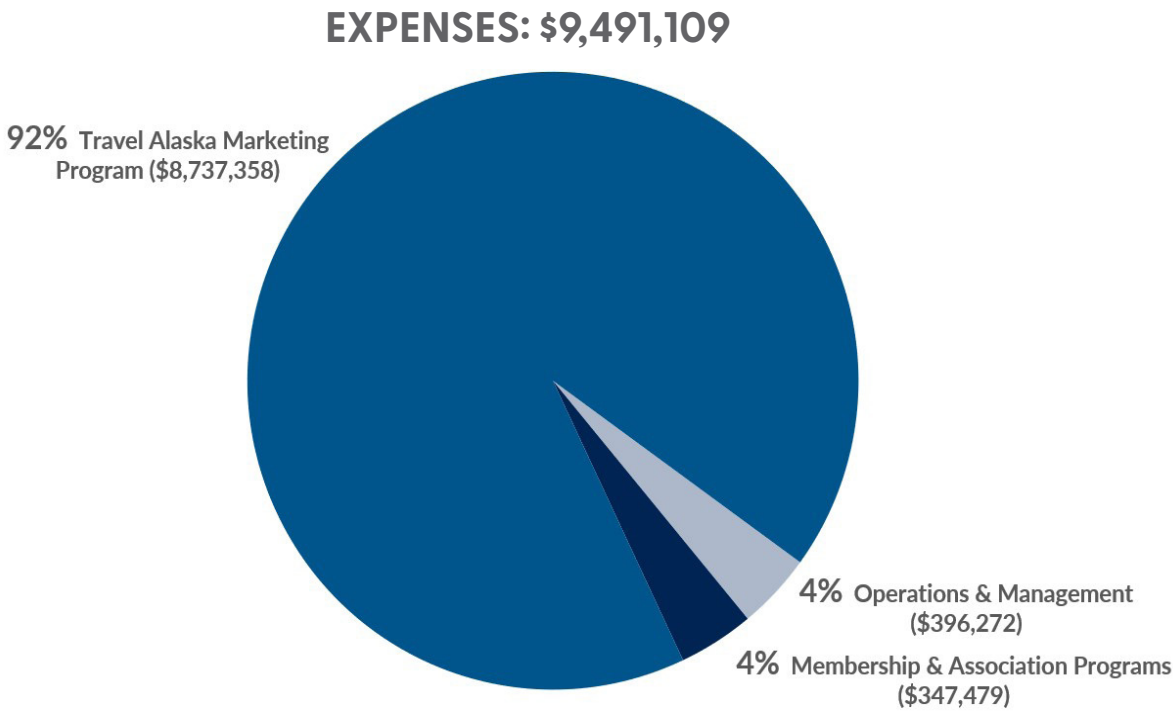
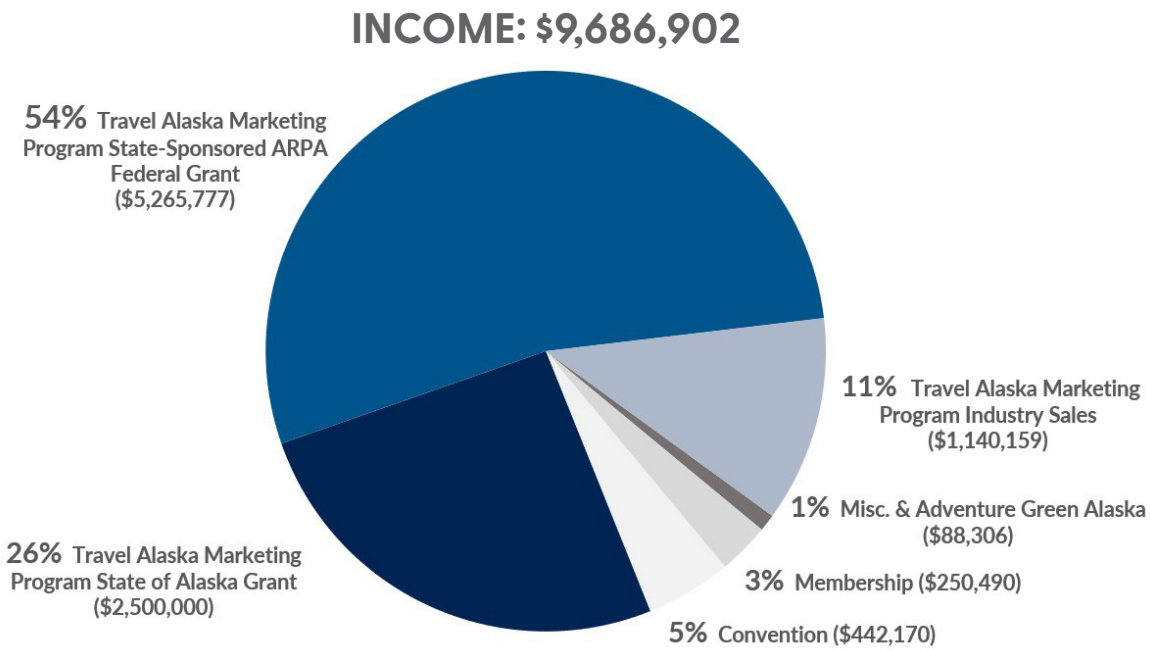
Being a member of ATIA provides small businesses like ours with a powerful advocacy voice, with networking and learning opportunities that are invaluable.

- Dan & Chris Morris, Alaskan Sights & Bites



FINANCIAL INFORMATION

ATIA received income funding from a variety of sources including membership fees, convention sales, a State of Alaska marketing grant, and remaining funds from an Economic Development Administration grant designated to ATIA by Governor Dunleavy in 2021.





ATIA STAFF

Jillian Simpson, President & CEO

Wendy Swenson, Director of Tourism Marketing

Tanya Carlson, Director of Travel Trade, International
Markets, & Sustainability

Jeff Samuels, Director of Policy & Communications

Andrea Rayt, Director of Finance & Administration

Tay Clayton, Membership Director

Lindsey Middendorf, Content & Brand Manager

Skye Hostetler, Sales Manager

Samantha Brow, Bookkeeping & Administrative
Manager