



ANNUAL REPORT

FY 24/25



OUR MISSION

Discover Lehigh Valley® builds the region's economy and image through destination marketing that increases the number of leisure and business visitors, the number of nights they stay, and the number of things they do in the two-county area of Lehigh and Northampton Counties. These marketing efforts also enhance the quality of life and sense of hometown pride for Lehigh Valley, PA residents.



Dear Partners,

This past fiscal year has been remarkable, marked not only by achievements but also by a renewed sense of purpose across our community. As we moved into FY 25/26, we did so with confidence, resilience, and a shared vision for the future of Lehigh Valley's tourism and hospitality sector.

FY 24/25 reflects a proactive marketing reinvestment year for Discover Lehigh Valley. We increased promotional spending by roughly \$280,000 (+15%), strategically investing in digital advertising, web development, and market research tools to better position our region for growth and impact. DLV's functional expense allocation remains mission-focused, with 87% of total spending supporting programs such as marketing, meetings, and sports, which are well above nonprofit best-practice thresholds.

While operations remain stable, over 97% of DLV's revenue continues to come from hotel rooms tax receipts, underscoring the need for ongoing diversification to ensure long-term sustainability.

Together, we have navigated change with determination, embraced innovation with care, and strengthened the bonds that make our region such a vibrant destination. Through collaboration, creativity, and a steadfast commitment to excellence, Discover Lehigh Valley continues to advance the work of telling our region's story to the world.

I remain deeply grateful for our dedicated board members, elected officials, and loyal partners. Your commitment and support have been essential to our progress. Most of all, I am inspired daily by the Discover Lehigh Valley team, whose professionalism, passion, and adaptability ensure that we meet challenges

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Alex Michaels". The signature is fluid and cursive.

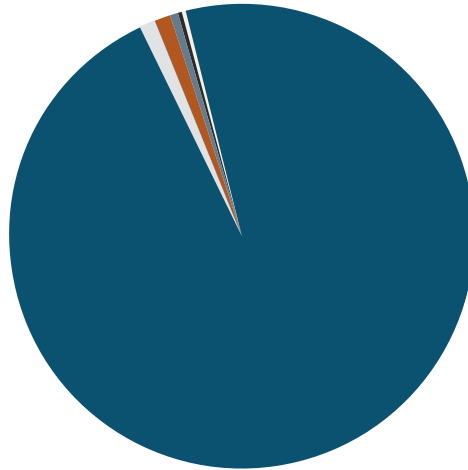
Alex Michaels
President & CEO

Financials

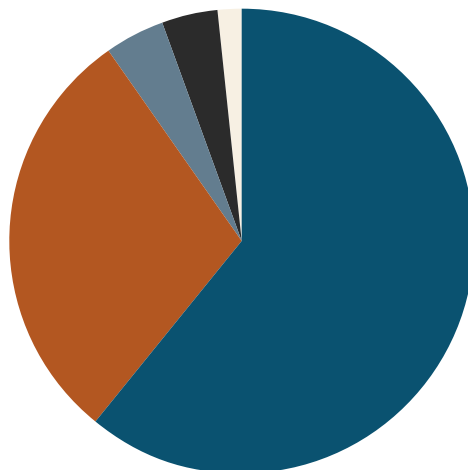
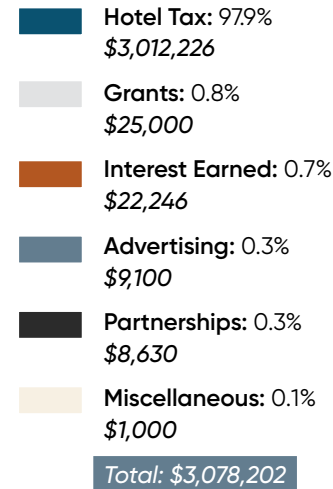
Hotel tax revenue for the year totaled \$3,012,226, which was \$73,774 (2.4%) less than expected.

Overall, the organization ended the year with a net loss of \$364,741, but that was \$160,897 better than budgeted, because the budget had planned for a larger \$203,844 loss. The main reason for the loss was higher promotional spending – \$2,210,453 – which was \$198,033 (9.8%) over budget.

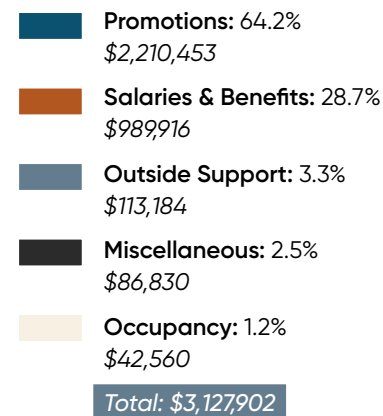
Fully-loaded labor costs were \$989,916, \$132,784 (11.8%) under budget. Cash balances decreased by \$474,937 (12.2%) year-over-year.



REVENUE



EXPENSES



Funding Structure

HOTEL TAX PRIMER

Guests pay a 10% tax on Lehigh & Northampton county hotel rooms. So, how is that money divided and who gets it?

SALES TAX (6%)

goes to Commonwealth of PA

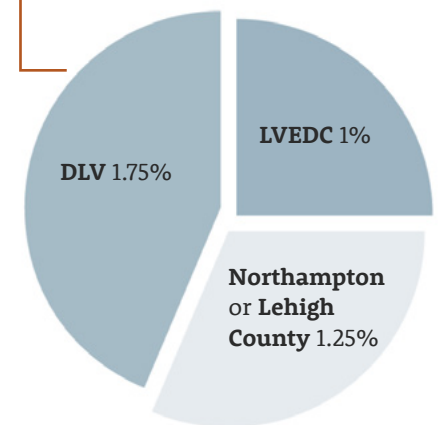
HOTEL TAX (4%)

is shared by four entities:

1.75% DLV

1.25% Lehigh County /
Northampton County

1%: Lehigh Valley Economic
Development Corporation



FY Comparison: 23/24 vs. 24/25

Strategic Spending Shift

- FY 24/25 reflects a **proactive marketing reinvestment year**. Discover Lehigh Valley increased promotional spending by roughly **\$280K (+15%)**, investing heavily in **digital advertising, web development, and market research tools**.

Hotel Room-Tax Dependence

- Despite stable operations, **over 97% of DLV's revenue continues to come from room tax receipts**, underscoring the need for continued diversification.

Operational Efficiency

- Despite a larger budget and more complex marketing operations, DLV's **functional expense allocation remains mission-focused**, with **87% of total spending supporting programs (marketing, meetings, sports)** – well above non-profit best-practice thresholds.

Looking Ahead

FY 25/26 STRATEGIC OUTLOOK

With major infrastructure and brand investments behind it, DLV enters FY26 poised to rebalance marketing intensity with sustainable budgeting.

Focus areas include:

Aligning media spend to room-tax pacing.

Leveraging grant opportunities more aggressively.

Tracking campaign conversion metrics to validate FY 24/25's higher marketing investment.



Longwoods International Visitor Profile Data: A 3-Year Comparison of 2018, 2022, and 2024

Discover Lehigh Valley has partnered with Longwoods International, a highly respected travel and tourism research consultancy that has served destination marketing organizations, tourism boards, and public-sector clients for more than 45 years. Together, we have conducted **visitor profile studies across multiple years to better understand evolving travel trends in the region.**

This comparative analysis examines the 2018, 2022, and 2024 Lehigh Valley Visitor Profile Reports, highlighting key shifts and consistencies in visitation, spending, trip purposes, demographics, and visitor satisfaction.

High Level Summary

Visitation levels across the region have remained steady since 2018, but traveler spending has surged—driven largely by inflation and higher per-trip expenditures. Visiting friends and relatives now represents a larger share of overall travel than ever before, while business travel has notably declined. Pennsylvania residents continue to play an increasingly important role, underscoring the region's strength as a regional, drive-market destination. Overall satisfaction and visitor demographics have remained stable.



Visitation Trends

Market Size & Spending

Spending has nearly doubled since 2018, but total visitation has plateaued around 16–16.6M trips, with slight declines in overnight trips post-2022.

Trip Purpose Shifts

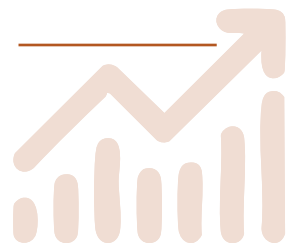
In 2024, Visiting Friends & Relatives (VFR) spikes again to **53% overnight** and **41% day trips**, while **business trips drop to 4–6%.**

Visitor Origins

In 2024, **Pennsylvania stays dominant (38–60% depending on day/overnight)**, with New Jersey and New York still strong contributors.

Activities

Visitors lean toward indoor/entertainment and family/friend activities. DLV's marketing campaigns in 2023/ 2024 were very focused on family friendly vs. outdoor recreation.



Dive deeper into the Longwoods analysis.

[VIEW MORE DATA ↗](#)

Lodging Performance

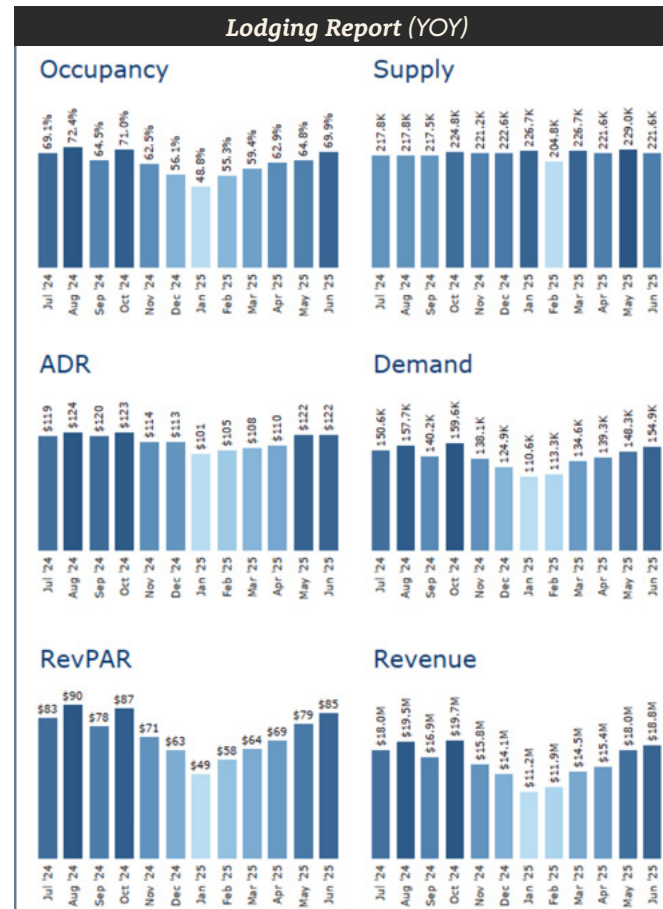
Monthly Trends (FY 24/25 v. 23/24)

- **Best Months:** May 2025 – Highest occupancy (72.4%) and strong revenue (+3.7% YOY)
- **March 2025** – Strong rebound in both demand (+8.3%) and revenue (+9.4%)
- **Soft Months:** December 2024 & June 2025 saw the steepest RevPAR declines (–7% to –11%)
- **Seasonal Patterns:** Demand and revenue peaked in spring (Mar–May) and late summer (Jul–Aug)
- Lower performance in winter months (Nov–Feb)

Pandemic Benchmarking Key Notes

(FY 24/25 v. 2019)

- Demand has rebounded to slightly above 2019 levels despite significant room growth.
- Pricing power regained, ADR +10.5 % vs 2019, showing strong consumer spending and market confidence.
- Revenue growth outpacing pre-COVID with total hotel revenue +13.1%, even with occupancy lagging.
- Nearly 19% more supply—proof of investment and market optimism.



Dive deeper into
lodging performance.

[VIEW MORE DATA ↗](#)

Hotel Performance (FY 24/25 vs. 2019)					
Occupancy	ADR	RevPAR	Supply	Demand	Revenue
63.0%	\$116	\$73	2.7M	1.7M	\$193.7M
▼ -13.9%	▲ 10.5%	▼ -4.9%	▲ 18.9%	▲ 2.4%	▲ 13.1%

SYMPHONY TOURISM ECONOMICS

Public Relations

In FY 24/25, Discover Lehigh Valley generated strong regional and national visibility through targeted pitching, seasonal press releases, and customized FAM trip invitations. Nearly 100 pitches and press releases produced 934 earned media placements, driving \$561K in publicity value and reaching 2.7M readers and viewers. Although overall media impressions declined—a common election year trend—placement volume and value increased, underscoring the strength of our strategy.

A Changing Media Landscape

Nationally, travel story output declined nearly 10% YOY, and print publications continue to shrink as more than 50% of U.S. adults now get news from social media.

Even in this environment, DLV secured an increase in total placements and publicity value, proving our stories resonated with both regional and national outlets.

Collaboration Remains Key

Partner-driven stories — including Sayre Mansion, Hotel Bethlehem, Dorney Park, Coca Cola Park, and more — generated some of the year’s most engaging coverage. Our partnerships are the strongest lever available to us for earned media success.

Media Visits Still Win

Targeted FAM trips delivered rich, high-value coverage, with outlets like Main Line Today and OnBetter Living, capturing Lehigh Valley’s food, culture, and outdoor offerings.

EDITORIAL HEADLINES

“The Lehigh Valley Is a Must-Visit Destination Near the Main Line”
Main Line Today

“28 US Cities That Go All Out for Christmas” *Condé Nast Traveler*

“13 Magical Christmas Destinations: From Cozy New England to Sunny Puerto Rico” *USA TODAY*

“7 Romantic Getaways for a Perfect Valentine’s Day Celebration”
Philadelphia Today

“Mother’s Day Weekend in Philadelphia: Brunch and More”
Mommy Poppins

TRAVEL+
LEISURE

USA TODAY

Condé Nast
Traveler

yahoo!
news



PHILADELPHIA.TODAY™
Positive, Upbeat Philly News



TTW™
TRAVEL AND TOUR
WORLD

Condé Nast
Traveler

10 USA TODAY
10Best

yahoo!

TRAVEL+
LEISURE



EARNED MEDIA

934

MEDIA PLACEMENTS

2,708,314

IMPRESSIONS

\$561,618

AD VALUE

EARNED &
ORGANIC
MEDIA

3,128

MEDIA PLACEMENTS

+114% increase

146,264,993

IMPRESSIONS

\$6,428,445

PUBLICITY VALUE

+339% increase

Public Relations (continued)

MEDIA RELATIONS SUPPORT

Moravian Church Settlements—Bethlehem

Discover Lehigh Valley played a key role in supporting Bethlehem's successful designation of its Moravian Church Settlements as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in July 2024. Working alongside partners and Vault Communications, DLV amplified this once-in-a-lifetime achievement through strategic media outreach, on-the-ground support during the UNESCO vote in New Delhi, and coordination of milestone events in Bethlehem—including the local press conference, inscription ceremony, and recognition dinner. These efforts celebrated Bethlehem's history, strengthened community pride, and inspired visitors to experience this global treasure firsthand.

Tactics & results

686 media placements

93,990,879 impressions

\$20,444,858 ad value



“Pennsylvania city celebrates UNESCO World Heritage designation”

Yahoo! News

“Moravian Church Settlements Across Four Countries Inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List” *AP News*

“New UNESCO World Heritage Sites Around the World Have Been Announced — See Where They Are” *Travel + Leisure*

Looking ahead

PR efforts in FY 25/26 will include:

- Consistent focus on seasonal earned media coverage, including:
- Seasonal press releases
- Targeted FAM Trip outreach
- Selective influencer outreach and engagement
- Leverage once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to put Lehigh Valley center stage, including America250, and FIFA World Cup.

Marketing & Advertising

VISITPA CAMPAIGNS

DLV strengthened our relationship with the PA Tourism Office. DLV contributed a record \$775,000, matched by the state, for a total of \$1,705,000, advertising to the markets Philadelphia, HLLY, Wilkes Barre/Scranton, Washington DC, Baltimore, Northern New Jersey, New York City, with smaller secondary markets of Pittsburgh, Ottawa & Montreal.

Key Insights

- **Google Responsive Display was the top performer:** nearly 2.6M clicks and a CTR of 1.35% (benchmark between 0.05%-1%)
- **Paid Search had the strongest CTR** at 5.56% (3.17% benchmark)
- **NY had the most clicks**, followed by Philadelphia and Baltimore
- **Google Video** delivered the most video completions (20.1M)
- **OOH/Transit delivered more than 88.3M impressions**, with 7.5M being added value impressions, equating to \$45,013 in added value

VISITPA CO-OP PERFORMANCE

294m

Total Digital Impressions

88.3m

Total Out-of-Home Impressions

3.1m+ Total Clicks

37m

Total Video Completions

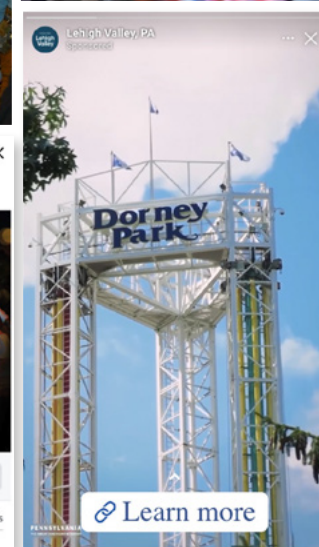
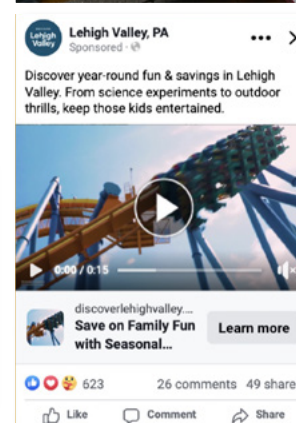


Fig Lehigh Valley

DLV leveraged a partnership with Fig to speak to our local audience, highlighting our tourism assets to encourage the community to experience the region as if they were a visitor. Showcasing these stories enhances regional pride and show off quality of life.



Marketing & Advertising, *continued*



Adams Outdoor

DLV continued a significant out-of-home presence with Adams Outdoor across the region as a way to build awareness locally and welcome visitors to the region. Creative varied, promoting family-friendly memberships and events in Lehigh Valley, along with co-op'd partnerships with Allentown Art Museum, and more. DLV utilized the space to congratulate Moravian Church Settlements–Bethlehem on their World Heritage announcement in July 2024.



International Marketing

The marketing team continued promotion of World Heritage via international partnerships with BrandUSA and VisitTheUSA.com (Travel guide, 15 sites & 8 languages), as well as collaborative efforts through VisitPA.com.



FY 24/25 SPECIAL PROJECT

Commercial Development "It's all here"

DLV partnered with Allentown-based agency, Klunk & Millan to create a powerful, anthemic commercial to be used in our media buys. The result is a visually stunning and inspiring, providing DLV with versatile themes, cuts, and orientations for greater flexibility and wider reach.

- Shot at 50+ Locations across Lehigh Valley
- Commercial was completed in Spring 2025 and began circulation in summer 2025.

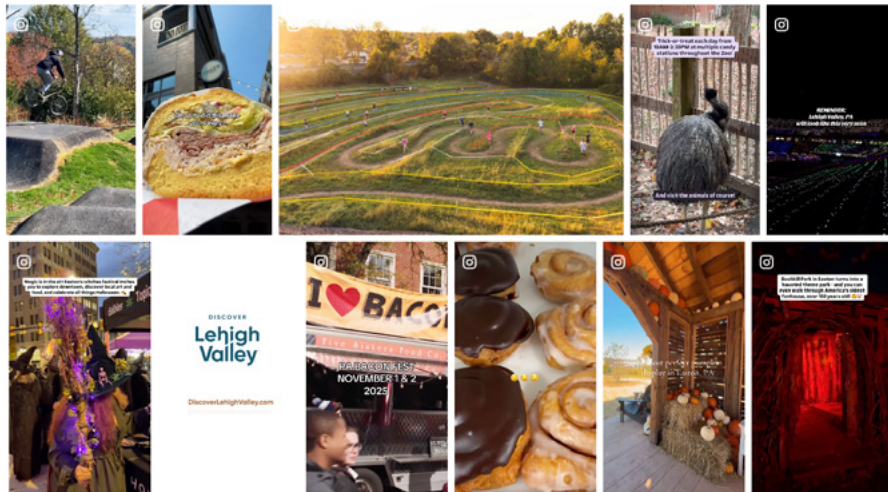
Social Media

ORGANIC SOCIAL MEDIA

DLV's organic strategy continued to build momentum across nearly every channel. By leaning into video content, planning ahead with a robust content calendar, publishing more than 2,500 posts, we kept our audiences engaged and growing.

Instagram and TikTok were standout performers, driving double- and even triple-digit increases in followers and engagements, while Facebook and LinkedIn delivered steady year-over-year gains. We made a strategic choice to reduce focus on X, allowing us to invest more energy into the platforms delivering the highest returns.

Altogether, our organic efforts grew the community to 356,901 total social fans (+18%) and sparked over 2.1M engagements (+13%) — clear proof that consistent, engaging storytelling is bringing more attention to Lehigh Valley every day.



356,901

total social fans (+18.2%)

CHANNEL GROWTH

Facebook

170,160 followers (+6%)

1,112,709 Engagements (-9.3%)

Instagram

89,512 Followers (+36.9%)

733,404 Engagements (+28.1%)

X

50,321 Followers (-0.5%)

1,974 Engagements (-38.4%)

TikTok

37,351 Followers (+120.8%)

313,852 Engagements (+156%)

LinkedIn

8,107 Followers (+12.1%)

27,788 Engagements (+34.6%)

YouTube

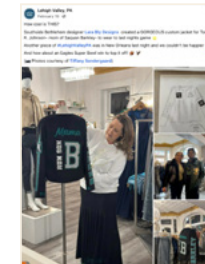
1,450 Followers (+6.6%)

1,809 Engagements (+209%)

2,191,536

engagements (+12.6%)

TOP POSTS



TOP ORGANIC FACEBOOK

Lara Bly Designs Saqun Jacket

Engagement Rate: 31.2%

Impressions: 51,900

Engagements: 16,213

Likes: 1.3K

Comments: 45

Shares: 84



TOP ORGANIC TIKTOK

Dorney Park

Engagement Rate: 14%

Likes: 5,972

Shares: 2,894

Comments: 383



TOP ORGANIC INSTAGRAM

Christmas in July Giveaway

Engagement Rate: 11.9%

Views: 23,566

Engagements: 2,810

Likes: 1.5K

Comments: 1.2K



TOP ORGANIC LINKEDIN

Lehigh Valley Zoo

Engagement Rate: 82.6%

Impressions: 758

Engagements: 626

Reactions: 64

Social Media (continued)

PAID SOCIAL EFFORTS

DLV maintained a consistent, always-on paid media strategy to build awareness and inspire travel. Campaigns ran across Facebook, Instagram, Outbrain, TikTok, and –starting in Q2–YouTube Shorts, using dynamic visuals and video to highlight the region's attractions, events, and natural beauty.

This year, the focus shifted from conversions to top-of-funnel goals, with increased targeting of non-local audiences, including spring breakers and summer vacationers. Interest-based and contextual targeting, along with lookalike audiences, helped expand reach and drive traffic to Discover Lehigh Valley's website while positioning the region as a must-visit destination.

Results

27,427,259
IMPRESSIONS

536,136
CLICKS

8,093
FOLLOWS

4.1%
AVG. CTR (+199%)

\$0.09
AVG. CPC (~85%)

Facebook/ Instagram

- 14,782,423 Impressions
- 450,944 Link Clicks
- \$4.45 CPM
- 6.99% CTR
- \$0.06 CPC

Outbrain

- 7,586,031 Impressions
- 85,192 Link Clicks
- \$1.28 CPM
- 1.12 % CTR
- \$0.12 CPC

TikTok

- 4,144,188 Impressions
- 8,093 Follows
- 581,620 video views
- \$0.02 cost per 6-second video view

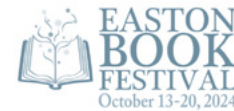
YouTube Shorts

- 915,117 Impressions
- \$0.02 cost per view

PARTNER ADVERTISING SUPPORT

Throughout the year, Discover Lehigh Valley provided support for its partners by leveraging its relationship with Vault Communications to run custom digital advertising campaigns across Facebook and Instagram to drive awareness of local events and drive traffic to their respective listings on DiscoverLehighValley.com.

These campaigns delivered nearly 5 million impressions, a \$0.05 cost per click (benchmarks are \$0.50 - \$0.70) and a 7.04% CTR (benchmarks are 0.8% - 1.3%).



Website

Website traffic surged in FY24–25, with total users up 60% and nearly 3.9M new visitors discovering DiscoverLehighValley.com. Sessions topped 5M and page views exceeded 9M, driven by strong display, search, and social campaigns. New markets like Massachusetts, Georgia, and Florida joined core audiences in Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey—broadening reach and inspiring more travelers to explore Lehigh Valley.

4,424,848

TOTAL USERS (+60.6% increase)

5,005,567

SESSIONS (+32.2% increase)

3,917,440

NEW USERS (+58.5% increase)

9,135,127

PAGEVIEWS (+23.5% increase)

Top 10 Locations of Visitors to Website

1. **Pennsylvania** 1,121,687
2. **New York** 1,096,709
3. **New Jersey** 289,788
4. **Virginia** 264,043
5. **Florida** 164,418
6. **Massachusetts** 135,393
7. **Georgia** 131,195
8. **Maryland** 112,264
9. **Ohio** 115,534
10. **Michigan** 103,333

Top Acquisitions Channels

1. **Display** 1,439,704
2. **Organic Search** 717,294
3. **Cross-network** 457,099
4. **Organic Social** 374,405
5. **Direct** 296,232

Visitors by Gender

62% FEMALE

38% MALE



FY 24/25 SPECIAL PROJECT Working towards a new DiscoverLehighValley.com

Project Kick Off: Fall 2024

Launch: August 5, 2025

Throughout the FY, DLV worked to transition and improve our website; shifting providers from Simpleview to Tempest, a Philadelphia-based leader in digital marketing and destination technology, the site features smart tools, immersive content, and bold design enhancements to inspire exploration and drive tourism growth.

- Smarter search, seasonal inspiration, and fresh content tools drive deeper engagement for visitors
- Heritage-inspired visuals with modern typography & playful icons
- A prominent AI-powered search that acts as a digital concierge
- CMS that allows for easy content updates and campaign flexibility
- Easy to use language translation

Website, continued

Website sessions totaled 5.1M for FY 2025. This was an increase of 38.2% over the prior FY. Page views totaled 9.1M, growing 24.2% over the prior FY. The top Landing Section of the site was "Things to do" with 31.7% share of all sessions. Display was the highest channel source, accounting for 36.1% of all sessions. November 2024 had the highest monthly session count with 653.5K sessions.



Website Trends

Traffic Peaks

November 2024 – highest activity across sessions, users, and page views (likely tied to holiday events and seasonal travel planning).

Engagement Rate:

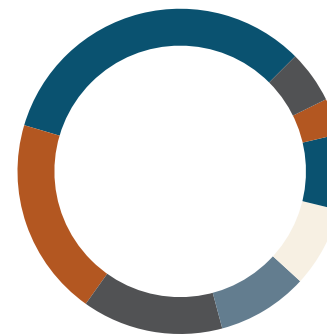
Engagement is highest around **July 2024 (~60%)**, dipping to around 40% mid-year, then rebounding briefly in January 2025.

Long-Term Monthly Trends



Top 5 Website Sections, by Sessions

Visitors are primarily searching for activities and events, underscoring strong intent to plan trips and experiences.



Dive deeper into website analytics

[VIEW MORE DATA ↗](#)

Partnership

DLV partners are tourism-facing businesses across Lehigh and Northampton Counties that contribute to the rich diversity of experiences available to visitors each day. These businesses can participate in a wide range of services enhancing their visibility and engagement with visitors and residents.

1,200+

Total partners

178

New partners onboarded

389

Partner Accounts that
logged into Extranet



PARTNER CATEGORY BREAKDOWN

- Accommodations: 5.3%
- Retail & Shopping: 12.9%
- Food & Beverage: 35.3%
- Attractions & Recreation: 22.8 %
- Services: 15.1%
- Venues & Meeting Spaces: 8.6%

267,237

Partner Referrals
69% increase YOY

766,358

Partner Listing Hits

Breakdown of what partners updated, vs previous year:

- Accounts: 28% Increase
- Listings 7.6% Increase
- Coupons 40% Increase
- Leisure Events 32.6% Increase



Becky's Drive-In, Walnutport



Cutter's Bike Shop, Bethlehem

Lehigh Valley Insider

In May, DLV transitioned from Lehigh Valley Ambassador to Lehigh Valley Insider, introducing an elevated in-the-know experience for both DLV partners and Insiders. The initiative removed barriers with no memberships, no courses, and no fees, making it easier for visitors and residents to connect with the best of the region. A free digital wallet unlocks exclusive perks across Lehigh Valley, while a weekly e-newsletter keeps Insiders up to date on where to eat, stay, and play

1,754

Lehigh Valley Insiders

July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025

80

of Lehigh Valley Insider Deals & Experiences



Sales, Services, & Sports

FY 24/25 was a remarkable and productive period for the Tourism Development team. DLV generated 148 business opportunities for hotel, venue, and sports facility partners, achieving a 5% year-over-year increase and resulting in more than 13,000 hotel room nights booked.

A key accomplishment during the fiscal year was the team's successful collaboration with three strategic partners and the state tourism office to secure \$130,000 in state grant funding. These funds provided direct support to DLV partners for both national and regional events, enhancing the region's tourism infrastructure and further elevating the Lehigh Valley's reputation as a premier destination for travel, meetings, and sporting events.

Events attended

- PA Sports Summer Summit
- PA County Commissioners Association Annual Meeting in partnership with Wind Creek Bethlehem
- American Society of Association Executives in partnership with Wind Creek Bethlehem
- Connect Marketplace
- TEAMS: Travel, Events and Management in Sports Tradeshow
- SPORTS Relationships Conference
- Connect DC
- Wind Creek Bethlehem Client Holiday Event
- Professional Convention Management Association: Convening Leads
- American Bus Association Annual Tradeshow
- Connect NYC in partnership with Wind Creek Bethlehem
- Meeting Professionals International Middle PA Chapter Bowling Event
- Pennsylvania Society for Association Excellence Annual Connections Conference
- Sports Events and Tourism Association: Annual Symposium
- Tempest Tourism Academy

DLV Hosted Groups & Event Organizers

- Keystone Welcome Center (Delaware Gap) FAM
- High School National Invite (Ultimate Frisbee National Tournament) Site Visit
- Greater Northeast Motorcoach Association FAM Tour

DLV Sales/Hotelier Events:

- Fall Sales Update Breakfast & Networking Event



LEADS
GENERATED

148

total leads generated
(5% increase YoY)

95

Meetings and Conventions
(15% increase YoY)

53

Sports

HOTEL ROOM
NIGHTS BOOKED
for the future

14,500+

Overall
(13% increase YoY)

5,500+

Meetings/Conferences
(13% increase YoY)

9,000+

Sports
(38% increase YoY)

Sales, Services, & Sports, continued

STATE GRANT FUNDING & PARTNER SUPPORT

A significant portion of the Tourism Development team's efforts this fiscal year was dedicated to identifying and communicating state funding opportunities to partners. In some cases, Discover Lehigh Valley applied directly for funding; in others, the team provided critical data and support to assist partners in their own applications.

\$130,000

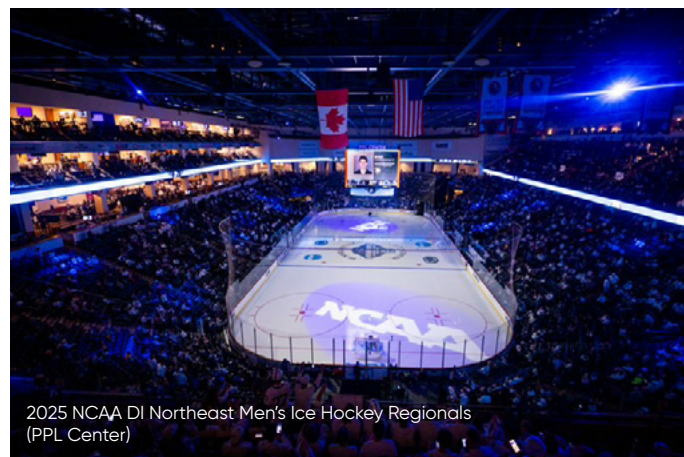
TOTAL GRANT MONEY AWARDED FY 24/25

- **2025 NCAA DI Northeast Men's Ice Hockey Regionals (PPL Center)**
- **2025 Banana Ball (Coca-Cola Park)**
(Actualized in FY 25/26)
- **2025 High School National Invite (CUT Camp - Ultimate Frisbee)**



2025 High School National Invite
(Grange Park)

Photo by Kevin LeClaire, UllrPhotos.com



2025 NCAA DI Northeast Men's Ice Hockey Regionals
(PPL Center)



2025 Banana Ball (Coca-Cola Park)