

Step 2: Plan and Organize

BEST PRACTICES: Kentucky's Cultural Heritage Tourism Strategic Plan



Kentucky has long been known for its bluegrass, bourbon and horses. It's also the birthplace of country music stars like the Judds, Dwight Yokum and Loretta Lynn. Quilting, Shaker furniture, and other arts and crafts put the state on the map, too. With the rising interest in cultural heritage tourism, suddenly the state found that several organizations and state agencies in the Commonwealth of Kentucky were working on parallel tracks to accomplish activities related to cultural heritage tourism, which was positive but also frustrating practice.

The state tourism office recognized the need for an effective umbrella to bring the scope and purpose of projects together. So, under the sponsorship of a multi-agency task force, the state launched a comprehensive and inclusive planning process to 1) help define what cultural heritage tourism means to Kentucky; and 2) set goals both the public and private sector could work toward.

“Without the plan, the state was working in a vacuum. By establishing very clear goals and objectives, identifying potential partners and articulating desired results, we stay focused. We allocate resources carefully and attract new partners – such as the Department of Transportation – because of a vision and purpose. We also can look back and measure our efforts against the plan.”

Carole Summers, Cultural Heritage Tourism Coordinator
Kentucky Department of Travel

The collaboration has allowed the state to participate in several broader regional efforts, including the multi-state Freedom Trek commemorating the journey of Booker T. Washington as president of several colleges. The program, a partnership among tourism offices and Historic Black Colleges, focuses on One Man's Journey, a People's Legacy and highlights African American history in Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky and West Virginia. The state is also collaborating with Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee to develop the folklife history along Highway 51 Corridor.

