



CHAPEL HILL/ORANGE COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU

CHAPEL HILL

HILLSBOROUGH & CARRBORO

2023-24

ANNUAL REPORT

IMPACT OF TOURISM IN ORANGE COUNTY, NC

The initiatives of the Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau work to attract a variety of visitors from all corners of the world to enjoy the authentic experiences Orange County, NC has to offer. We tell the story across a number of channels to positively impact tourism to the area that builds the economy.

Dining on Churton Street in downtown Hillsborough by SP Murray

Tourism initiative cultivates visitors and gro



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rowth.

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Get to know the faces behind the Visitors Bureau endeavors.

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Hello and welcome from Karen DeHart.

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Working with county hotels, unique venues and meeting planners.

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Marketing the destination to keys audiences through multiple forms of advertising media.

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VISITORS BUREAU STAFF

WHO WE ARE

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau is a department of Orange County, NC government and serves as the official accredited Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for Chapel Hill and the communities of Orange County.

OUR MISSION

To market Orange County, NC in collaboration with community stakeholders; to attract and serve visitors; and to positively impact the local economy and quality of life.

OUR VISION

To establish and promote Orange County as a premier place to visit; and a conference destination.

ORANGE COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU

308 W. Franklin Street
Chapel Hill, NC 27516
(919) 245-4320
info@visitchapelhill.org

Monday - Friday, 8:30am - 5pm
Saturday, 10am - 3pm

WWW.VISITCHAPELHILL.ORG



visitchapelhill



@visitchapelhill



@visitchapelhill

Front cover photo: Franklin Street in downtown Chapel Hill by Donn Young

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS JULY 1, 2023– JUNE 30, 2024

KAREN DEHART, Chair, North Carolina High School Athletic Association
D.R. BRYAN, The Chamber for a Greater Chapel Hill-Carrboro
HEIDI WERNER DAWSON, Orange County Hotels
MEREDITH SAYBE, At-Large
SAM VADGAMA, Orange County Hotels
SHARON HILL, Orange County Economic Development Commission
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ANITA SPRING COUNCIL, Town of Chapel Hill Economic Development, Ex-Officio
JERI LYNN SCHULKE, Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership, Ex-Officio
JON HARTMAN-BROWN, Town of Carrboro Economic Development, Ex-Officio

OTHERS WHO SERVED DURING THE 2023-24 TIME FRAME

MANISH ATMA, **MARK BELL**, **EARL MCKEE**, **BEVERLY PAYNE**,
DAMON SEILS, **KAREN STEGMAN**

ORANGE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS (AS OF 6/30/24)



ORANGE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

JAMEZETTA BEDFORD, CHAIR
AMY FOWLER
EARL MCKEE

SALLY GREENE, VICE-CHAIR
JEAN HAMILTON
PHYLLIS PORTIE-ASCOTT

ANNA RICHARDS

VISITORS BUREAU STAFF (AS OF DECEMBER 2024)

LAURIE PAOLICELLI, Executive Director
HANNAH HEMPHILL, Business Officer
MARLENE BARBERA, Sales Director
PATTY GRIFFIN, Communications Director
TINA FULLER, Website/Social Media Coordinator
PIX WALSH, Welcome Center Coordinator
BOBBI WILKINS, Saturday Receptionist

A Letter From The Chair



Dear Tourism Partners,

Dear Tourism Partners,

Your dedication has helped make Orange County a premier destination in North Carolina. Thanks to your efforts, we helped generate \$267 million in visitor spending this year—a 13% increase—which is the highest spending increase out of all North Carolina's 100 counties.

The Visitors Bureau 2023-2024 Business Plan has successfully promoted our exceptional hotels, meeting spaces, and convenient RDU access. As we build on this momentum, we remain committed to showcasing Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and Hillsborough's unique attractions to bring even more visitors to our communities.

I want to especially recognize everyone who makes our more than two million annual visitors feel at home—from our restaurant workers and valet staff to our hotel teams and elected officials. Your daily dedication to creating a welcoming atmosphere is what truly sets our community apart.

Thank you for your partnership in making Orange County a vibrant destination.

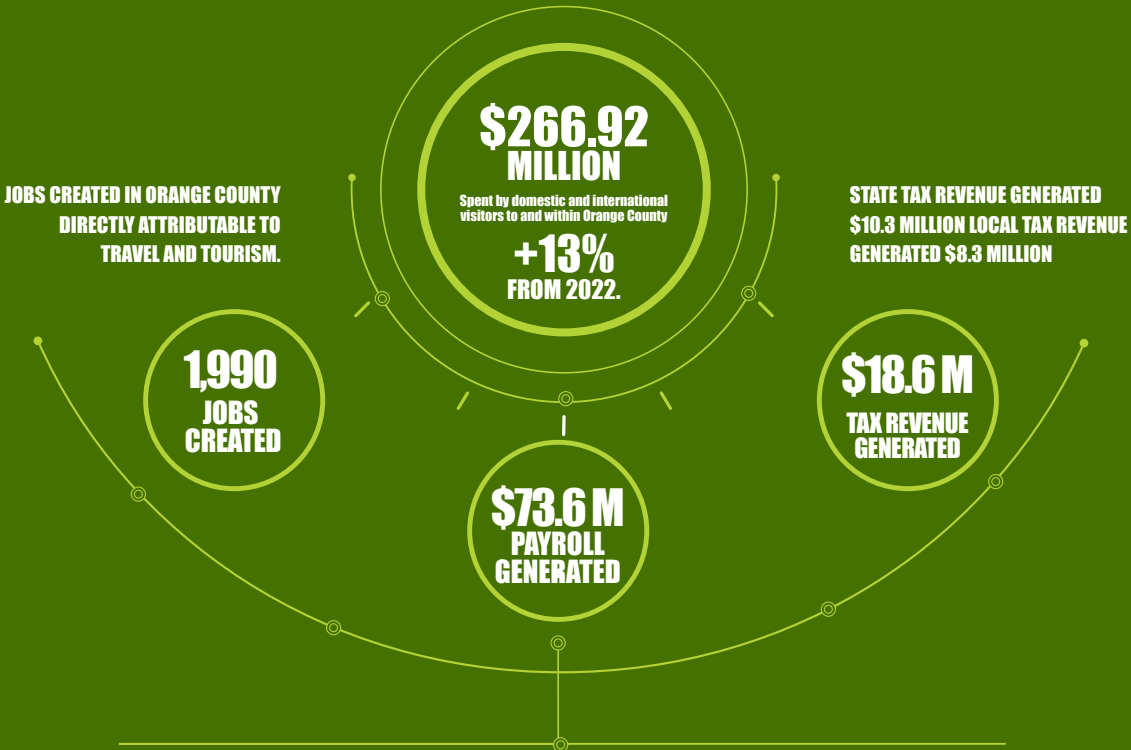
Best regards,

Karen DeHart
Associate Commissioner

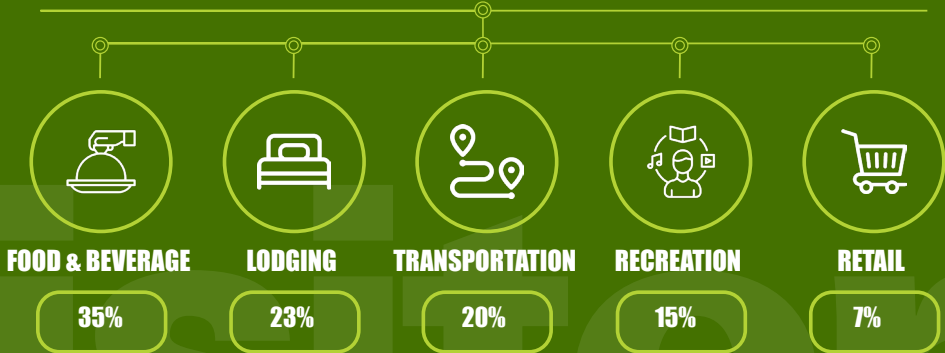
Development, Marketing and Administrative Services
North Carolina High School Athletics Association

TOURISM HELPS DRIVE

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TRAVEL TO ORANGE COUNTY*



VISITOR SPENDING BY SECTOR



*Statistics from the "Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties 2023," which was prepared for Visit North Carolina by Tourism Economics.

THE ORANGE COUNTY ECONOMY

HOTEL OCCUPANCY STATISTICS

TAX REVENUE GENERATED	2023-24	2022-23	% change
OCCUPANCY PERCENTAGE OF ROOMS OCCUPIED	65.3%	60.6%	7.8%
AVERAGE DAILY RATE ROOM REVENUE DIVIDED BY ROOMS SOLD	\$173.93	\$163.22	6.6%
REVPAR REVENUE PER AVAILABLE ROOMS ROOM REVENUE DIVIDED BY ROOMS AVAILABLE	\$113.62	\$98.88	14.9%
SUPPLY ROOMS AVAILABLE THE NUMBER OF ROOMS TIMES THE NUMBER OF DAYS IN THE PERIOD	584,000	584,430	-0.07%
DEMAND ROOMS SOLD NUMBER OF ROOMS SOLD OR RENTED (EXCLUDES COMPLIMENTARY ROOMS.)	381,489	354,053	7.7%
ROOM REV TOTAL REVENUE GENERATED FROM THE SALE OR RENTAL OF ROOMS.	\$66.35 MILLION	\$57.78 MILLION	14.9%

SALES & MEETINGS ACTIVITIES AND PROMOTIONS

ONLINE SALES PROMOTIONS

- **LINKEDIN PROMOTIONS**
Awareness and click for **VENUE LOOK BOOK** Campaign.
- **GOOGLE KEY WORD SEARCH CAMPAIGN**
- **CVENT PROMOTIONS**
 - Upgraded to a Three Diamond Listing.
 - Chapel Hill VB will appear higher in the search results within the Raleigh/Durham market, so we are capturing the planner who is already thinking about Raleigh/Durham and getting them to also consider Chapel Hill.
 - Google Display Ads
 - Geo-Targeting- Increase from 500 to 800 clicks.
 - .77 click rate. (average is .55%).
 - Targeted Banner Ads when someone is looking at Raleigh and Charlotte.
 - Destination Request a Quote - Does planner want to add Chapel Hill to their sourcing.

TRADE SHOWS, PROMOTING ORANGE COUNTY HOTELS & MEETINGS SITES

- Attended **DESTINATION SOUTHEAST** conference in Cape Coral, Florida in August 2023.
- Attended **SMALL MARKET MEETINGS** conference in Cedar Rapids, Iowa in September 2023.
- Coordinated the **"MINGLE AND JINGLE SHOWCASE OF EVENT VENDORS FOR UNC MEETING PLANNERS"** event held at the Friday Center in December 2023. Largest vendor event with 30 local vendors from across the meetings industry. 140 planners attended.
- Attended **INDEPENDENT PLANNER EDUCATION COMMUNITY** conference by Northstar in Greenville, SC in January 2024.
- Attended **RENDEZVOUS SOUTH** in Spartanburg, SC in February 2024.

SALES NUMBERS



35

TOTAL BOOKINGS



2,135

ROOM NIGHTS



\$917,149

ESTIMATE SPENDING



156

LEADS GENERATED

BOOKINGS BY MARKET



51%

CONFERENCE/
MEETING



26%

WEDDINGS



20%

SOCIAL/ACCOMMO-
DATIONS ONLY

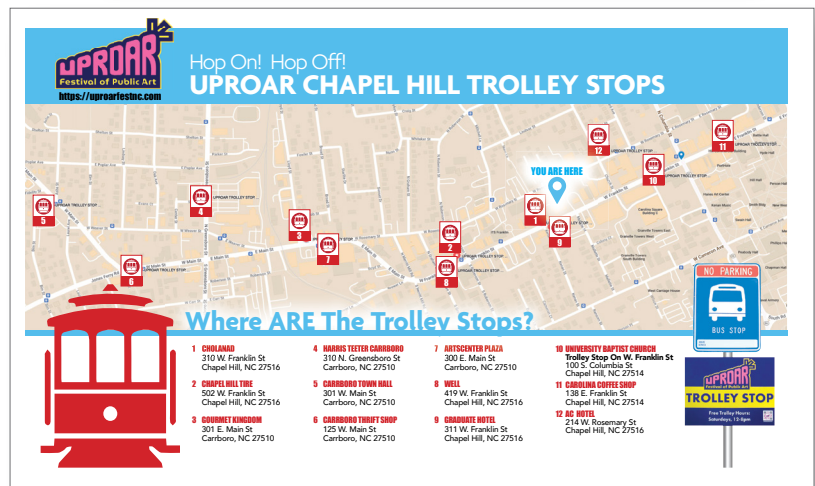


3%

SPORTS

COMMUNITY EVENTS

- Managed trolley route for **UPROAR PUBLIC ARTS FESTIVAL** and sent trolley information to local hotels for the summer 2023 event.
- ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE.** Coordinated 3rd annual open house at the Welcome Center in May 2024. This yearly event welcomes our stakeholders to a celebration on Franklin Street.
- FC SERIES INTERNATIONAL SOCCER MATCH MANCHESTER CITY VS CELTIC FC** in July 2024
 - Coordinated Mascots and swag delivery to hotels and local businesses.
 - Worked with downtown business to create offering, specials, etc. to be promoted during the week of the soccer match.
 - Designed print and digital Google trolley map highlighting offerings from downtown Chapel Hill and Carrboro businesses, area parking lots and trolley stops for 3 days before and after the match. The trolley was sponsored by The Town of Carrboro.
 - Visitors Bureau sent media releases, produced a special website page and printed posters for the match.



PUBLIC RELATIONS & COMMUNICATIONS

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau tells the story of our destination to garner positive publicity and media exposure for the community while promoting our tourism amenities.

MEDIA RELATIONS

- Met directly with 59 travel writers, freelancers, and bloggers from local, regional and national outlets at media missions or visiting our destination.
- In 2023, attended VISITNC IN-STATE MEDIA MISSION in Raleigh in October and the New York Media Mission in November. In 2024, attended Media Marketplace at VisitNC Tourism Conference in Greenville, NC in March and the Public Relations Travel & Tourism Conference in Greenville, SC in June as well as participated in the SATW Virtual Media Mission in June.
- Directly assisted 170 journalists on their stories during the year.
- 258 Orange County editorial stories secured.
- Helped coordinate May 2024 visit by four national travel writers as part of the VisitNC Quite Luxury Media Tour

LOCAL PALATE AND BUREAU PARTNERSHIP:

From March through June 2024, produced 7 additional stories added to the **ON THE ROAD CHAPEL HILL CITY GUIDE** highlighting food, outdoors, attractions, accommodations, shopping and more in Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Hillsborough.

DESTINATION PUBLICATIONS PRODUCED

- 2024 Official Visitors Guide
- 24-25 Official Orange County Visitors Map
- Mural Map Pad
- Restaurants of Orange County Map Pad
- Carolina Basketball Brochure
- 30 Things to Do in Chapel Hill & Carrboro - poster & flyer
- 12 Things to Do in the Greater Chapel Hill Area brochure

visitors bureau

JUST SOME OF WHAT THE MEDIA IS SAYING

GARDEN & GUN
Chapel Hill A Local's Pick

TRAVEL + LEISURE
12 Best Small Towns in North
Carolina includes Hillsborough

SOUTHERN LIVING
The Oldest Restaurant In
North Carolina Is Still A
Magnet For College

OUR STATE MAGAZINE
Your Guide to Chapel Hill

ACC NETWORK/ESPN
3-Day Weekend Feature
on Chapel Hill

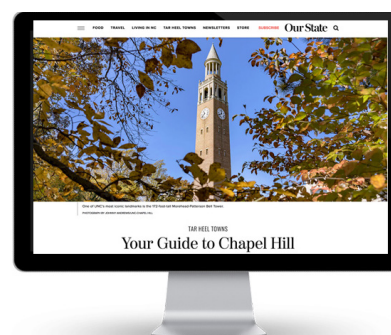
**NORTH CAROLINA
WEEKEND**
PBSNC story Carolina Inn's
Centennial

CULTURE TRIP
10 Most Beautiful Towns in North
Carolina includes Hillsborough

VACATIONIDEA
Places to Visit in North Carolina

NCTRIPPING.COM
Taste Carolina: Things We Loved
in Carrboro and
Chapel Hill

EATER CAROLINAS
Chapel Hill Bombolo is 2023
North Carolina
Restaurant of the Year



MARKETING & ADVERTISING

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau marketing team communicates with its key audiences directly through social media, our website, e-communications, print ads and more.

Promotional Marketing Campaigns:

● LET CURIOSITY LEAD YOU HERE

- Leisure campaigns continue encouraging overnight visitation and exploration
- New leisure video produced

● SNEAK PIQUES VIDEOS

- 24 snack-sized videos that offer sneak piques into unique experiences you can only find in Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and Hillsborough. Just enough of a peek to help plan an itinerary. Click [HERE](#) for the mini-online film festival.

● TARGETED PRINT ADS

- Magazines
 - OUR STATE
 - CAROLINA ALUMNI REVIEW
 - WALTER MAGAZINE
 - LOCAL PALATE
 - SOUTHERN TRAVEL + LIFESTYLE
 - TRAVELGIRL MAGAZINE
 - TRAVELHOST OF THE TRIANGLE MAP

● BUSINESS TRAVELER CAMPAIGN

- Two print brochures: GOT BUSINESS IN HILLSBOROUGH and GOT BUSINESS IN CHAPEL HILL & CARRBORO
- Online business campaign
- Spring 2024 advertising Campaign at Raleigh-Durham International Airport
- Campaign focusing on meeting planners and bringing meetings/conferences to Orange County with advertising, video and meetings webpage.

● CHAPEL HILL TRANSIT BUS WRAP - READY TO EXPLORE?

● WEBSITE

- 23-24 was spent redesigning VISITCHAPELHILL.ORG with final design completed in September 2024.
- Two new microsites created:
 - Neighborhoods
 - Accessibility
- New social feed added.
- 29 blogs published.

● DIVERSITY WEBSITE

Ongoing updates:
WWW.CHAPELHILLDIVERSITY.COM

● NEWSLETTERS

Distributed monthly to 6,060 stakeholders and subscribers as of June 30, 2024.

- Weekly "ORANGE SLICES"
- Monthly "TOURISM BY THE NUMBERS" and "CHECK IT OUT"

let curiosity lead you here

PAID AD CAMPAIGN NUMBERS*

REACH

4,163,873

PAGE ENGAGEMENT

1,448,624

IMPRESSIONS

43,701,006

LANDING PAGE VIEWS

52,802

CLICKS

239,300

PAGE LIKES

1,634

* Includes campaigns run by our agency (leisure, hotels, business travelers, Uproar and Soccer) as well as in-house campaigns (facebook page, blog and giveaway promotions)

WEBSITE NUMBERS

SESSIONS

597,488

PAGE VIEWS

1,014,468

SOCIAL MEDIA NUMBERS

FACEBOOK | INSTAGRAM | X | PINTEREST

ENGAGEMENT 171,935

YOUTUBE

121,422 VIEWS

NC FARM APP/ ORANGE COUNTY

2,827 VIEWS

ANALYTICS ENDED MARCH 2024

LINKEDIN

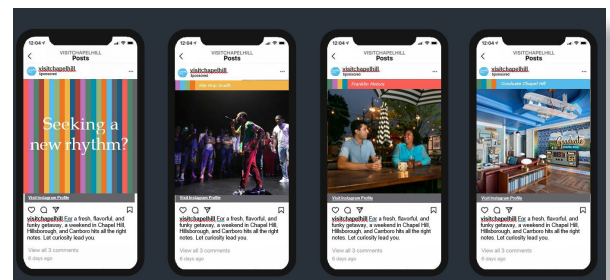
293 FOLLOWERS

WALK-INS TO
WELCOME CENTER,
VISITOR CALLS
EMAILS, AND
WEBSITE INQUIRIES

6,690

ATTENDANCE
MAJOR
VISITOR
ATTRACTIONS
AND TOURS

2,184,120



VISITORS BUREAU IN THE LOCAL AND

welcome center

- New Welcome Center sign added in October 2023
- Welcome Center hosted May 2024 Open House for the community
- Hometown Ambassador Guided Walking Tours left the Welcome Center on select Saturdays at 11am, Spring through Fall.

[HEARTOFTHEHILLTOURS.COM](https://www.heartofthehilltours.com)

uproar

Bureau helped promote and market the Orange County Arts Commission UPROAR Festival of Public Arts July 14-August 12, 2023 with Saturday trolley leaving from the Welcome Center, trolley map, media, blogs and newsletters. Also, hosted one of the art entries.



D GREATER TOURISM COMMUNITIES

destinationNEXT survey

The Visitors Bureau released the 2024 results from the Chapel Hill Orange County DestinationNEXT (DNEXT) Assessment at a presentation at The Carolina Inn on January 31, 2024.

Developed in collaboration with industry experts MMGY NextFactor, this study presents an in-depth analysis of the future trajectory of tourism in Orange County, delivering invaluable insights into the trends, challenges, and opportunities that will shape the region's visitor economy.

bureau's tourism memberships

- Destinations International and Accreditation
- US Travel
- North Carolina Travel & Tourism Coalition
- North Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association
- Association Executives of NC.
- International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association

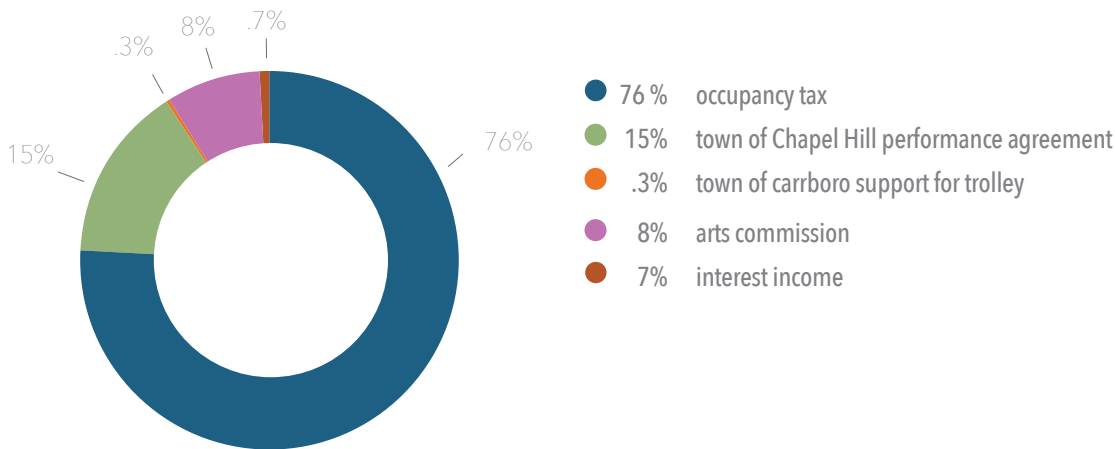
Sample Of Community Partners:

- Carolina Alumni UNC Black Alumni Reunion
- Carrboro ArtsCenter Ribbon Cutting
- ArtsCenter 50th Anniversary Gala
- Hog Day
- Moorefields Blue Grass Festival
- Orange County Arts Guild Open Studio Tour
- Veterans Day Memorial
- Elfland Christmas Festival
- Florafetti



The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau
taxes collected by Orange County, NC. The
highlights our county's internal

REVENUES



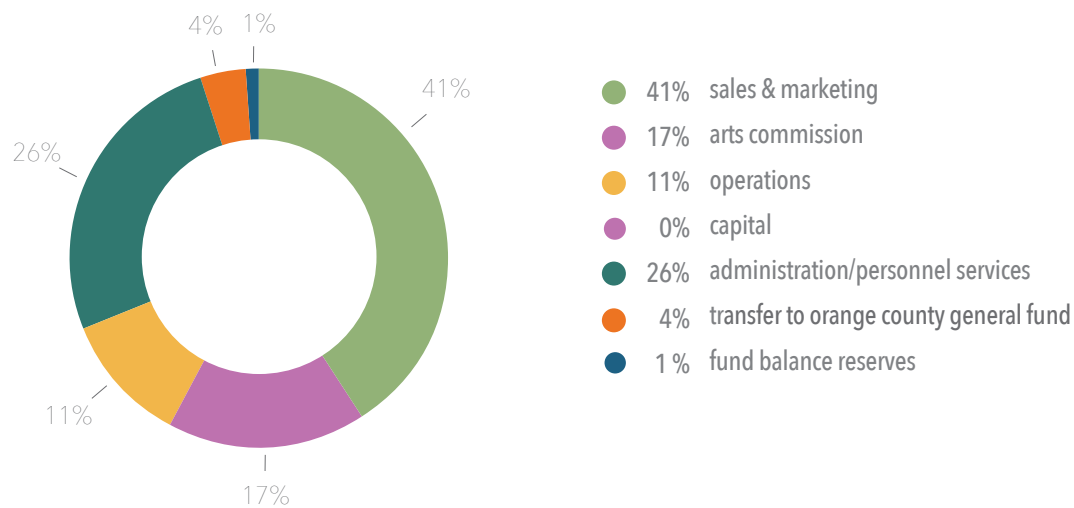
OCCUPANCYTAX	\$2,223,599	76%
TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT	\$ 457,439	15%
TOWN OF CARRBORO SUPPORT FOR TROLLEY	\$ 10,000	.3%
ARTS COMMISSION*	\$ 223,850	8%
INTEREST INCOME	\$ 21,885	.7%
TOTAL REVENUES:	\$2,936,773	

*Revenue came from program revenues, Eno Arts Mill rentals and state art grants.

FINANCIALS

Bureau is funded through the accommodations occupancy tax. The Visitors Bureau receives an annual financial audit which ensures compliance with control policies and prudent use of funds.

EXPENDITURES



SALES & MARKETING	\$1,187,852	41%
ARTS COMMISSION	\$ 476,353	17%
OPERATIONS	\$ 329,946	11%
CAPITAL	0	0%
ADMINISTRATION/PERSONNEL	\$ 746,854	26%
TRANSFER TO ORANGE COUNTY GENERAL FUND	\$ 112,000	4%
FUND BALANCE RESERVES	\$ 38,768	1%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 2,891,773	



Fresh ideas in every town.
Welcome to Orange County.



CHAPEL HILL
HILLSBOROUGH & CARRBORO

ORANGE COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU

visitchapelhill.org