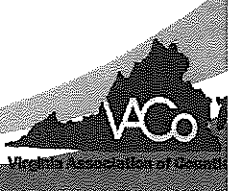


ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2024.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact Gage Harter.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Stafford County
Program Title: Stick to Stafford
Program Category: Community & Economic Development

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Lisa Logan
Title: Tourism Program Director
Department: Parks, Recreation, Facilities and Tourism
Telephone: 540-658-4580 Website: TourStaffordVa.com
Email: lmlogan@staffordcountyva.gov

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Donna S. Krauss
Title: Deputy County Administrator
Signature: Donna S. Krauss

Executive Summary

The "Stick to Stafford" campaign emerged as a creative response to the economic challenges posed by the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic and aligned with Stafford County's strategic goals to enhance tourism and historical assets. Launched in January 2024 by the Stafford County Tourism Department, the campaign aimed to attract visitors and support local businesses through collectible stickers.

The campaign, conceived during a brainstorming session, leveraged lightweight, cost-effective stickers, initially distributed at the Marine Corps Marathon and later at various local businesses. Designed by local artist Krista Miller, the stickers highlighted Stafford's tourism offerings, including History, Art & Culture, Leisure, and Outdoors, with additional collections on Black History and seasonal themes.

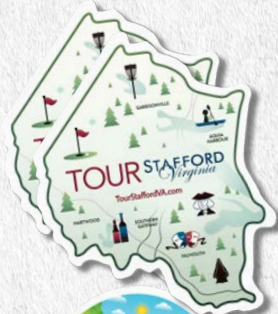
Stickers are released monthly at different businesses, with upcoming designs unveiled at the end of each month, fostering anticipation among collectors and driving foot traffic to participating establishments. Marketing efforts included traditional media partnerships and targeted digital campaigns, supported by the #SticktoStafford hashtag to encourage community interaction and content sharing.

The campaign has garnered enthusiastic feedback and significant community engagement, increasing foot traffic to local businesses, boosting sales, and visibility. Social media metrics show strong online interest, with videos and advertisements reaching over 298,000 views. Local news outlets have also recognized the campaign, enhancing Stafford County's visibility as a tourist destination.

Beyond economic impacts, "Stick to Stafford" has strengthened community ties by instilling pride in local heritage and promoting educational awareness. Demonstrating effective collaboration between government, businesses, and residents, the campaign serves as a model for revitalizing local economies post-pandemic.

In conclusion, "Stick to Stafford" embodies innovation, resilience, and community spirit, underscoring Stafford County's commitment to leveraging its cultural and historical richness to attract visitors and support local economic recovery.

TOUR STAFFORD *Virginia*



The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic hit all tourism destinations in ways we could never have imagined, and Stafford County was no exception. The decline in travel was seen worldwide, impacting our local economy significantly. During this time the Stafford County Board of Supervisors Strategic Plan was also being released. One of the goals was to bolster the historical and tourism assets across the county through new and innovative solutions. Since then, the Stafford County Tourism Department has been working diligently to devise new and creative ways to attract visitors and support local businesses. Our goal was not only to encourage visitors to experience Stafford but also to bolster our local economy by supporting our local businesses. Given that our destination is not as well-known as others, we aimed to develop a unique campaign to capture the attention of both visitors and residents.

The "Stick to Stafford" campaign was conceived during a brainstorming session where we sought a cost-effective promotional item to distribute in bulk at the Marine Corps Marathon. Stickers emerged as an ideal solution due to their lightweight nature and low shipping costs. This idea evolved into a broader campaign with the goal of creating and distributing special edition stickers representing Stafford in unique ways, available at various businesses throughout the county to entice collectors.



TOUR STAFFORD *Virginia*



Krista Miller, a Stafford County local and graduate of Brooke Point High School and the Savannah College of Art and Design, was selected as the graphic designer for the campaign. Collaborating with the Tourism Office, Miller designed sticker collections that represented the four major marketing areas of Stafford County Tourism: History, Art & Culture, Leisure, and Outdoors. These collections expanded to include specialty designs such as the Black History Collection, featuring notable Stafford County resident Anthony Burns, and seasonal collections to appeal to diverse interests.



To maintain interest and engagement in the campaign, a strategic plan was developed to address the distribution of the stickers. It was decided that 2-5 stickers would be released monthly at different locally owned businesses across the county. To keep the campaign fresh and exciting, the locations for sticker pickups would change each month, and the designs for the upcoming month would be revealed only at the end of the previous month. This element of surprise keeps collectors eager and engaged, never knowing what to expect next.



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STICK TO STAFFORD

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The campaign plan also included comprehensive marketing strategies, leveraging both traditional and digital media. We partnered with local media outlets to feature the campaign in news stories and advertisements, ensuring widespread visibility. On social media, the campaign employed targeted advertisements and organic content to engage a broader audience. The hashtag #SticktoStafford was created to encourage community participation and user-generated content, fostering a sense of belonging and excitement around the campaign.

The "Stick to Stafford" campaign launched in January 2024 and is scheduled to continue through December 2024. At the halfway point, the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Consumers have reported visiting businesses specifically to collect stickers and making additional purchases while there, which has driven new traffic to local businesses. The campaign has also achieved significant success on social media, making Stafford a more recognized destination with nearly 98,000 views on the initial Stick to Stafford social media campaign video and over 200,000 views on targeted advertisements. The campaign has even garnered recognition from local news outlets.



TOUR STAFFORD *Virginia*



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In addition to driving economic benefits, the campaign has strengthened community bonds. Local businesses have expressed appreciation for the increased patronage, and residents have enjoyed the sense of discovery and pride that comes with the unique sticker designs. The campaign has also provided educational value, with historical and cultural themes helping to inform and engage the public about Stafford's rich heritage.

In conclusion, the "Stick to Stafford" campaign offers an innovative solution to the challenges faced by our local tourism industry in the wake of the pandemic. By promoting intergovernmental and local business cooperation, it has created dynamic model that other local governments can learn from and implement. The campaign's success in driving both foot traffic and online engagement demonstrates its effectiveness and potential for replication. We believe that "Stick to Stafford" embodies the spirit of the VACO award criteria and serves as a testament to the resilience and creativity of Stafford County. The collaborative efforts, strategic planning, and community involvement that have gone into this campaign exemplify the innovative and impactful approaches that can revitalize local economies and foster a sense of unity and pride among residents and visitors alike.



STICK TO STAFFORD

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Data and Results from January - June 2024

163K

accounts reached on social media
since January 2024

17.4K

landing page visits to
SticktoStafford.com

6%

campaign engagement rate

*Bringing the
community and its
assets closer together*

