VISIT TAMPA BAY
TREASURE AWAITS

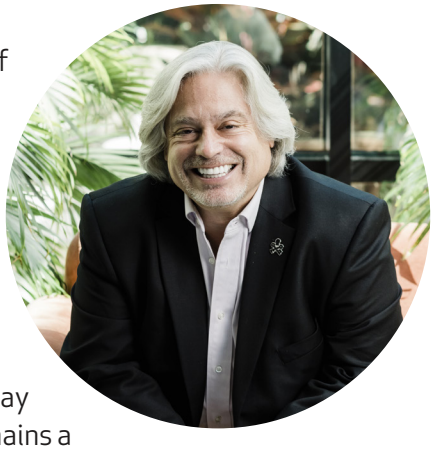
TAMPA BAY'S GUIDE TO SOCIAL IMPACT

Visit Tampa Bay appreciates the opportunity to share more information about our organization and our vibrant destination. Tampa Bay has always been and will continue to be a community that welcomes everyone.

The travel industry is founded on hospitality and is made up of many of the community's most welcoming individuals. Tampa Bay is both a diverse residential community and an international destination that welcomes visitors from all backgrounds and beliefs to our destination.

Event professionals can be certain that attendees from all backgrounds and identities will feel valued and respected – come as you are, and you will no doubt be welcomed with open arms.

VISIT TAMPA BAY
TREASURE AWAITS



Since its inception, Tampa Bay has flourished because of the diversity of its people. From the early 1800s, when our destination was a little more than a military outpost and fishing village, to the present day's booming metropolis. This community has thrived because of a blend of people and cultures that have created the unique and memorable experiences that make Tampa Bay Florida's top destination for visitors and meetings.

Cuban cigar rollers and African American musicians helped lay the foundation for the heart of Florida's Gulf Coast, which remains a magnet for fortune-seekers who add their unique flavors to the mix of local life.

The arrival of Henry Plant's railroad and Vicente Martinez Ybor's cigar factory in the mid-1880s turned Tampa Bay into a thriving area for immigrants from Cuba, Spain, Italy, Germany, Eastern Europe, and beyond – supercharging its diversity, industry, and creativity.

Our development has come with lessons, and we have grown stronger as a community. We celebrate our diverse community year-round with festivals, parades, and restaurants that fuse the best part of our kaleidoscope of cultures into unique creations.

Wherever you're from, we know you will easily find yourself reflected in the people you meet here. While here, you will experience languages, rituals, and cultures you've never known. Simply put, its multicultural charm is Tampa Bay's most significant treasure. Treasure Awaits!

SANTIAGO C. CORRADA
President and CEO, Visit Tampa Bay

CITY OF TAMPA

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Jane Castor, Mayor

Greetings:



Tampa, Florida has a unique culture and rich heritage, and our city is proud to be well-known globally as a diverse and inclusive community that promotes equity and celebrates all its citizens, businesses, and organizations for the contributions and positive impact they make within our neighborhoods.

The Tampa Bay region is well-known for its rich history and diverse blend of people. The City of Tampa is very proud of our inclusiveness and protects all residents and visitors from discrimination and harassment, including those within the LGBTQ community and those of other cultures who celebrate their own unique traditions and beliefs. We have proudly and consistently received the top score of 100 from the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Municipal Equity Index for our LGBTQ inclusive laws, policies, and services. The Tampa community proudly celebrates and promotes our inclusiveness with community events such as festivals, parades, and concerts that incorporate our diverse cultural make-up. As a city, we take enormous pride in the progress we have made over the years to ensure all people, citizens and visitors alike, are treated with dignity, equality, respect, and civility. Promoting and protecting our inclusiveness contributes greatly to Tampa's success as a diverse city and enhances our economic growth, improves neighborhoods, advances the arts and culture scene, and adds to our rich and unique heritage.

I hope you have an opportunity to visit our wonderful city, whether attending a conference or convention, enjoying a major professional sporting event, or to just spend time in our unique community. You will discover that Tampa is one of the greatest and most welcoming places, and your visit is sure to be a positive and memorable experience.

Sincerely,

Jane Castor

Jane Castor



> As Mayor of Tampa, I can absolutely assure anyone and everyone considering a visit or move to Tampa that they will be welcomed with open arms. The vibrant blend of cultures are central to what makes Tampa one of America's greatest and friendliest cities.
>
> *- Mayor Jane Castor*



VISIT TAMPA BAY
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CITY OF TAMPA

DEMOGRAPHICS & SAFETY

Tampa Bay embraces diversity through inclusion, and we have a vibrant cultural community to show for it.

DID YOU KNOW?

Tampa ranks **#1** Most Diverse City in America

Source: Rocket Mortgage, 2025

Jane Castor is Tampa's **openly LGBTQ+ mayor,** elected in 2019, and won re-election in 2023

Tampa remains **one of the safest** cities of it's size in the nation

Source: Tampa.gov

Tampa Bay has a **100% score** on the *Human Rights Campaign Municipal Equality Index Scorecard.*

POPULATION

453,887

AGE

5.0%	Under 5 years
21.1%	Under 18 years
11.4%	65 years and over

RACE

42.1%	Caucasian
21.7%	Hispanic or Latino
18.6%	Black or African American
12.6%	Two or More Races
4.6%	Asian
0.4%	American Indian and Alaska Native

View Full Report

Source: US Census Bureau

VISIT TAMPA BAY RESOURCES

VIDEOS



THE MANY LAYERS OF TAMPA BAY

From its earliest days, Tampa Bay has thrived on the diversity of its people. Cuban cigar rollers and African-American musicians helped lay the foundation for a modern metropolis that remains a magnet for fortune-seekers from across the country and around the world – newcomers who add their own unique flavors to the mix of local life.



CULTURE SERIES PLAYLIST

From its earliest days, Tampa Bay has thrived on the diversity of its people. Through our Cultural Series, you can learn about how the Cuban cigar rollers and Black musicians helped lay the foundation for a modern metropolis that remains a magnet for fortune seekers from across the country and around the world.



ACCESSIBLE TAMPA BAY

Bask in the sun of Florida's Most exciting destination and experience Tampa Bay's accessible attractions for travelers with special needs. Join Jamie, your accessible travel expert, as she shares some of her favorite mobility-friendly attractions.



HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated from September 15 – October 15, but in Tampa Bay, Hispanic heritage is celebrated 365 days a year! On this episode of Unlocking Tampa Bay, we're diving into Hispanic Heritage Month to see how Hispanic culture and influence helped shape Tampa Bay into the destination it is today.

Visit Tampa Bay YouTube Channel





TAMPA BAY MULTICULTURAL GUIDE

The Multicultural Guide was first published in 2018 and spotlights Tampa Bay's unique blend of history and culture that sets this community apart from its peers in Florida and elsewhere. It describes the ways Tampa Bay offers visitors an experience they cannot have anywhere else. By capturing a wide range of cultural groups and experiences, the guide reveals to meeting planners and leisure visitors the many facets of the community, allowing visitors to make unique discoveries while they also find themselves and their interests reflected in the destination.

View the Guide





VISIT TAMPA GAY

Visit Tampa Gay was developed and first published in 2019 with the help of Creative Loafing, a popular arts weekly with a large LGBTQ+ following, Visit Tampa Gay aims to introduced the Tampa Bay region to LGBTQ+ travelers looking for a change of pace and alternatives to their usual Sunshine State adventures. Tampa Bay's reputation as a family-friendly destination appeals to the growing number of same-sex couples raising children, as does the proximity of beaches regularly ranked among the best in the country.

View the Guide

WEBPAGES & CONTENT



MULTICULTURAL MEETINGS

The Heart of Florida's Gulf Coast is a mecca of sunshine and opportunity for all. Tampa Bay is known for its cultures and backgrounds that have shaped the city we know today and is displayed through the diverse groups and meetings that are held. Accessibility, affordability, and amenities are what make this stellar destination the perfect place to unlock the potential of your next meeting.

Learn More



ACCESSIBLE TRAVEL

Adventure Easily and experience Tampa Bay's accessible attractions for travelers with special needs. Our destination offers unique experiences, offering unforgettable memories, and specific accessibility guidelines for people of all abilities to enjoy.

Learn More



CONQUER WITH LOVE

When it comes to having fun, Tampa Bay has everything under the sun. From art festivals and culinary delights to dazzling dance clubs and outdoor adventures, there's a treasure trove of discoveries waiting for you.

Learn More

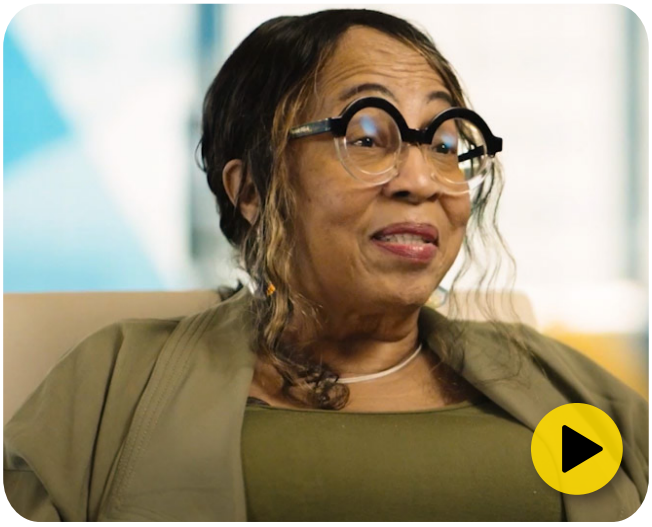


MULTICULTURAL EVENTS

Discover the vibrant and diverse world of events and festivals that Tampa Bay has to offer. Immerse yourself in cultural celebrations, savor culinary delights from around the world, and enjoy authentic performances that showcase the richness of different traditions.

Learn More

TESTIMONIALS



With its unique blend of accessibility, exceptional dining experiences, and unparalleled venues, Tampa Bay is the ideal destination to unlock the full potential of your next meeting. Beyond being a prime location for business, our destination's warm and welcoming hospitality extends to all visitors and is deeply woven into Tampa Bay's cultural fabric.

Don't just take our word for it—convention attendees and planners who have experienced the spirit of Tampa Bay. They share firsthand accounts of how our unique offerings and inclusive atmosphere have elevated their meetings to new heights. All are welcome in Tampa, where your attendees will feel right at home.

Watch the Video

> "THE VENUES WERE OUTSTANDING, AND THE INCLUSIVITY AND WARMTH OF THE PEOPLE MADE THE EXPERIENCE UNFORGETTABLE."

KAPPA ALPHA PSI FRATERNITY, INC. 86TH GRAND CHAPTER MEETING

July 17, 2024 - July 22, 2023

"Visit Tampa Bay has elevated tourism and the greatness of a meeting experience. Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. is witnessing firsthand how the city embraces diversity and inclusion with action. The fraternity feels honored and welcomed to bring the 86th Grand Chapter Meeting to Tampa Bay, Florida."

John F. Burrell
Executive Director of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc.

DESTINATIONS INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL MEETING

July 16, 2024 – July 18, 2024

"As a European and a destination management professional, I was truly impressed by the exceptional hospitality and meticulous arrangements at Destination International annual convention in Tampa Bay. The venues were outstanding, and the inclusivity and warmth of the people made the experience unforgettable. Visit Tampa Bay exceeded all expectations, showcasing Tampa Bay as a premier destination that truly understands the needs of the international guests."

Yrjötapio (Y.t.) Kivisaari
President & CEO, Visit Oulu

VISIT TAMPA BAY
TREASURE AWAITS

GLOBAL DIVERSITY ALLIANCE

> Events provide opportunities for real, genuine interaction as it exposes meeting attendees to locals and destinations and new impulses reminding us that we are all human and crave interaction. It encourages dialogue, something that can be quite powerful in places where censorship is prevalent.

- ***Dave Jefferys***, *Executive Director & Founder Global Diversity Alliance*

This publication was built on, inspired by, and further developed on the work already done by industry pioneers. We would like to thank and acknowledge; ASAE, Destinations International, EiC, ICCA, MPI, MPA, PCMA and many other diversity, equity and inclusion practitioners.

Learn More

ADULT AND MINOR HEALTH CARE RESTRICTIONS

(FLORIDA SB 254)

In June 2024, a federal district court permanently blocked Florida from enforcing a law that bans medical care for transgender adolescents and restricts it for transgender adults. The ruling in Doe v. Ladapo found that Florida SB 254 and the related Boards of Medicine (BOM) rules were motivated by animus, bias, and disapproval of transgender people and that they violated the equal protection rights of transgender individuals and parents of transgender minors in Florida. This ruling permanently blocks those restrictions and the ban on care for adolescents, which the Court preliminarily blocked last June.

"Today's ruling striking down Florida's discriminatory restrictions on medical care is a huge victory for the transgender community and for the freedom of all Floridians and their families to make their own private medical decisions." - Nadine Smith, Equality Florida's Executive Director.

The original Florida SB 254 (2023) bill prohibited sex-reassignment treatments and procedures for minors, defined "sex" based on biological criteria, restricted the use of state funds for such procedures, required informed consent for adults, and mandated that licensed facilities attested to not provide these treatments to minors. The bill was signed into law on May 17, 2023, and was then preliminarily blocked in June 2023.

INDUSTRY GUIDANCE

DESTINATIONS INTERNATIONAL

The Destinations International (DI) Annual Convention, held in Tampa, Florida, July 16-18, 2024, demonstrated how to navigate political challenges and foster inclusion. Despite the political landscape, it was the association's largest convention to date, with approximately 2,000 participants, of whom 750 were international from 30 countries and territories.

"Our experience and research suggest that engagement is far more effective than withdrawal," said Don Welsh, president and CEO of Destinations International. "This belief guided us in selecting Tampa, not despite the challenges, but because of them. It was a deliberate choice to engage where it's most needed, to learn, to influence, and to make a tangible difference."

"Boycotts are not effective because they aren't narrowly tailored enough to inflict pain on the people who can make the change," says Jack Johnson, chief advocacy officer for Destinations International.

Read Full Response

INTERNATIONAL GAY AND LESBIAN TRAVEL ASSOCIATION

"IGLTA was founded in Florida 40 years ago and has many valued members and partners located in this U.S. state, where the government is currently focused on enacting laws that endanger and demean LGBTQ+ people and other marginalized communities.

This hateful legislation contradicts the messages of inclusivity that we strive to elevate in the travel industry globally and defies the very spirit of hospitality. But laws are not reflective of an entire state or population.

IGLTA will always stand with our members against boycotts, choosing to unite with the many destinations, tourism businesses, and individuals in Florida and beyond that celebrate equity, diversity, and inclusion. It is through these connections that we can create and maintain safe spaces for all travelers."

Read Full Response

NATIONAL COALITION OF BLACK MEETING PROFESSIONALS

"To be clear, the NAACP's Travel Advisory is not a ban or a boycott of the State of Florida. It is an advisory that implores visitors to be aware of their surroundings and to be purposeful in how they engage while traveling. It is our belief that travel is a personal decision, rooted in hospitality, curated experiences, and a vast eco-system of dollars generated within a community."

Read Full Response

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES

"In ASAE's case, the input of our destination partners in the host city can often help us address policy concerns and maintain our values without moving a meeting or boycotting a city or state," said Michelle Mason, ASAE president and CEO.

Read Full Response

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

(S.B. 300 / HB 7)

On November 5, 2024, despite the support of a majority of Florida voters, Amendment 4, which would have amended the state constitution to prohibit government interference with the right to an abortion prior to viability, failed to meet the 60 percent threshold required to amend the Florida Constitution. As of May 1, 2024, Florida is enforcing a six-week ban on abortion, making it illegal to have an abortion after six weeks of pregnancy. Exceptions include cases of rape, incest, human sex trafficking, and existing exceptions for the life and health of the mother and fatal fetal anomalies up to 15 weeks. Many states have restrictions on abortion access, including Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas.

Learn More

CONSTITUTIONAL CARRY FACT SHEET

HB 543 - CONSTITUTIONAL CARRY

The "Public Safety Bill", or HB 543, will allow individuals 21 years of age or older to carry a concealed weapon or firearm within state lines without a permit. The Law applies to residents and nonresidents of Florida. The Law, which was passed and will go into effect on July 1, 2023, does not impact open carry, which remains unlawful. Until HB 543 takes effect, individuals must be licensed to carry a concealed weapon or firearm.

Quick Facts:

Florida is the 26th state to take effect, joining: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

States allowing permitless concealed carry include:

- Alabama
- Alaska
- Arizona
- Arkansas
- Florida (HB 543)
- Georgia
- Idaho
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- Maine
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- Montana
- New Hampshire
- North Dakota (residents only)
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- South Dakota
- Tennessee (handguns only)
- Texas
- Utah
- Vermont
- West Virginia
- Wyoming (residents and qualifying nonresidents)

- The majority of U.S. states have enacted permitless concealed carry laws.
- Permitless carry does not enable someone to openly carry in public.
- There will be no changes to gun purchase regulations – federal and state background checks still apply.
- Permitless carry law only extends to individuals who meet the present criteria for a concealed carry permit.
- Present concealed carry laws will apply to individuals carrying permitless beginning July 1, 2023.

VISIT TAMPA BAY
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PARENTAL RIGHTS IN EDUCATION

(HB 1557)

On March 11, 2024, Kaplan Hecker & Fink LLP and the National Center for Lesbian Rights reached a historic settlement agreement with the Florida State Board of Education, Florida Department of Education, and school districts that resolves a facial challenge to Florida's "Don't Say Gay" law brought by more than a dozen parents, students, and teachers throughout Florida, along with non-profit organizations Equality Florida and Family Equality.

"It's a beacon of hope that heralds a future where every student can safely and confidently be themselves, embracing diversity and fostering a sense of belonging for all."
- Family Equality President & CEO Jaymes Black

Specifically, the settlement agreement clarifies the following:

- **Free Expression Restored:** Students and teachers can speak and write freely about sexual orientation and gender identity in classroom participation and assignments.
- **Anti-Bullying Protections Strengthened:** The settlement reinforces safeguards against bullying based on sexual orientation and gender identity.
- **Gay-Straight Alliances Protected:** GSAs are officially protected, providing students with essential support and advocacy spaces.
- **Classroom References Clarified:** The law cannot prohibit references to LGBTQ+ individuals, relationships, families, or topics in any educational or extracurricular context.
- **Non-Discrimination Assured:** Targeting LGBTQ+ persons, couples, families, or issues under the guise of this law is explicitly forbidden.
- **Extracurricular Activities Protected:** Participation in and support of LGBTQ+ student clubs and cultural presentations remain unaffected.

Signed in March 2022, the bill, also known as "Don't SayGay," prohibited "classroom instruction by school personnel or third parties on sexual orientation or gender identity" in certain grade levels "or in a manner that is not age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate for students in accordance with state standards."

Learn More