

2025 HSMIAI ADRIAN AWARDS ENTRY

# WELCOME ALL

INCLUSIVE STORYTELLING THROUGH  
LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS IN MAINE



# MAINE.

FORGED BY NATURE





# OUR STORY

With its stunning landscapes, welcoming communities and unparalleled outdoor activities, **Maine has something to offer everyone.** However, historically the state hasn't been seen as a destination of choice for many underrepresented audiences. The Maine Office of Tourism (MOT) set out to change that perception through a nontraditional media campaign that let influencers tell the state's story to a wide, diverse audience.





## OBJECTIVES

The Inclusive Creator Program had several core objectives, including:

- To **shift perceptions of Maine** among historically excluded travel audiences.
- To **uplift local businesses**, empowering Maine's community partners to benefit from increased visibility and alignment with right-fit influencers.
- To **spotlight inclusive experiences** through authentic, creator-led storytelling.
- To **encourage long-term connections** between content creators and their audiences by fostering repeat visits, sustained storytelling, and authentic word-of-mouth advocacy.







GREEN BOOK GLOBAL



CORNERS OF BOSTON

## STRATEGIES & TACTICS

To present Maine as a welcoming destination for travelers of all backgrounds, we selected a roster of different creators. While all of these content creators focused on travel, their audiences spanned a wide range of different groups, including Black and African American, Hispanic, Asian, Multiracial, European and LGBTQ+ travelers.

In 2025, our creators were:

- **Green Book Global** (@greenbookglobal on Instagram), who focuses on Black and African American travelers, inclusivity and safety.
- **Corners of Boston** (@cornersofboston on Instagram), whose areas of expertise include weekend getaways and cuisine.



## STRATEGIES & TACTICS

- **Gabi and Shanna Meit-Sciara** (@27travels on Instagram), an LGBTQ+ travel couple in search of exciting events who bring an international audience.
- **Marwa Oswan** (@thecitylists on Instagram), who highlights Arab-owned businesses and culture.
- **Mike Myerscough-Harris** (@expiredfilmclub on Instagram), a UK-based sports and lifestyle marketer with a particular interest in Portland's new Hearts of Pine major-league soccer club.



GABI &amp; SHANNA




MARWA OSWAN



MIKE MYERSCOUGH-HARRIS








**27travels and visitmaine**  
Paid partnership  
Sugartapes • Head In The Clouds

...



27travels Welcome to Maine — one of our favorite LGBTQ+ friendly states in the USA 🏳️‍🌈 #ad

We spent Pride weekend on a dreamy, coastal getaway in [@visitmaine](#) and had the best time exploring its charming ocean towns, stunning nature, and celebrating Bangor Pride!

As a lesbian couple, we felt so safe and welcomed everywhere we went. Experiencing Pride in a small town with their local community was so special, and seeing rainbow flags and inclusive signs all across the state brought a huge smile to our faces 🥰🏳️‍🌈 Maine truly is a place where everyone is welcomed exactly as they are – and it has so much to offer.

Here's where we stayed, what we did, and where we ate so you can add it to your Maine itinerary!

Stays:





- 📍 Salt Cottages, Bar Harbor [@saltcottages](#)
- 📍 Tarratine Inn, Bangor [@thetarratine](#)

Things to Do:


- 🌲 Acadia National Park
- 🚢 sightseeing with Acadian Boat Tours
- 🏳️‍🌈 Bangor Pride

Vegan & Inclusive Eats:

- 🥛 Milk & Honey Cafe, Northeast Harbor [@milkandhoneyneh](#)
- 🥗 Thrive Juice Bar, Bar Harbor [@thriveinbarharbor](#)
- 🌿 Little Fern at The Claremont, Southwest Harbor [@claremontmaine](#)
- 🍷 Barliman's, Bangor [@barlimans](#)
- ☕ Chimera Coffee, Bangor [@chimeracoffeeco](#)



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July 17



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# STRATEGIES & TACTICS

Each creator partnered with local businesses, cultural organizations, and guides to produce authentic, community rooted content, including short-form videos, photo stories, and Instagram Highlights.

Unlike traditional influencer campaigns, the Inclusive Creator Program prioritized relationship-building and values alignment. Creators were intentionally connected with LGBTQ+ friendly places to stay, BIPOC and culturally rooted businesses, and local nonprofits across Maine.



## STRATEGIES & TACTICS

Each creator had a unique way of engaging with the community. One spotlighted Arab owned restaurants in Portland, prompting comments like “I didn’t know Maine had this kind of food, adding it to my list!” Another joined Black Travel Maine a nonprofit-led Juneteenth walk and shopping experience supporting Black owned businesses. Another captured content at a local soccer match hosted by Hearts of Pine, a community-based team championing inclusivity in sports.

This content was amplified through MOT’s channels and reshared by featured businesses and community partners, generating authentic visibility and long-term impact.



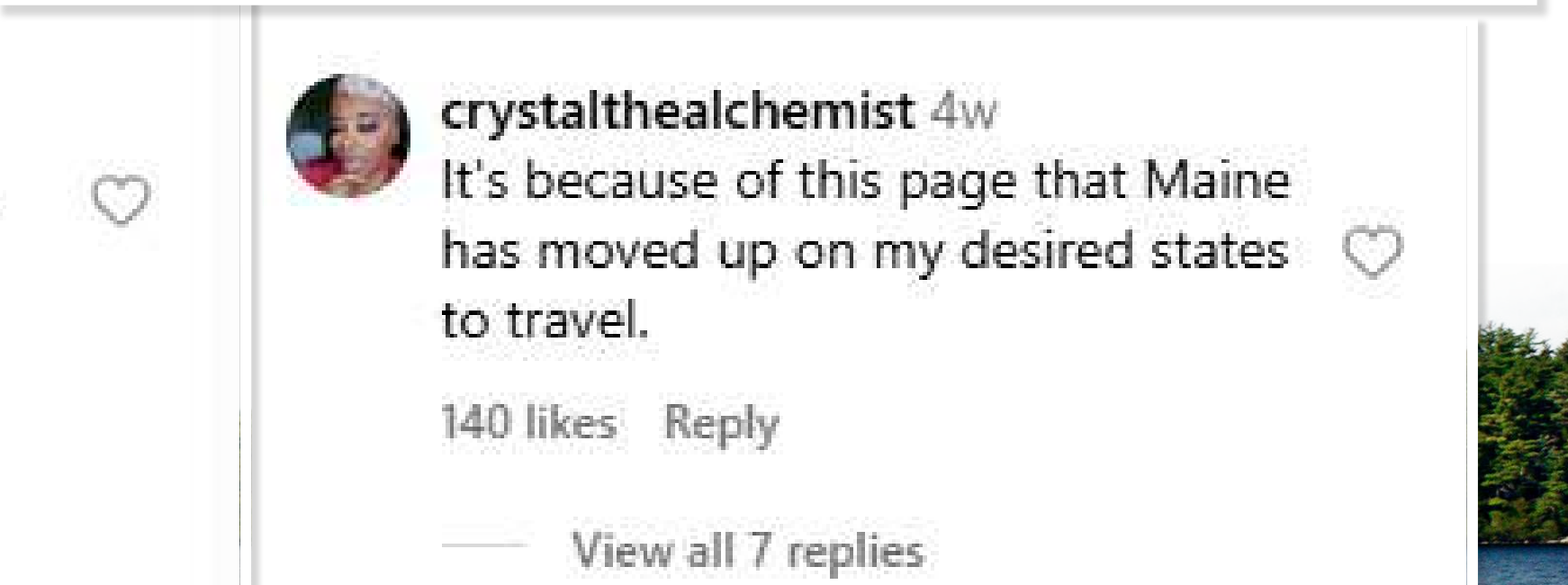
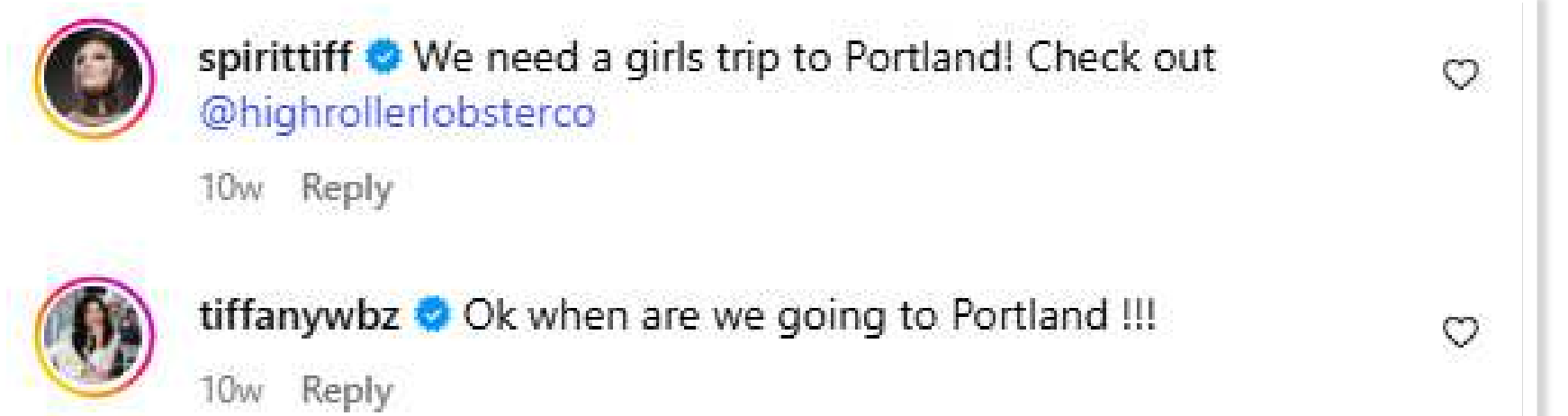
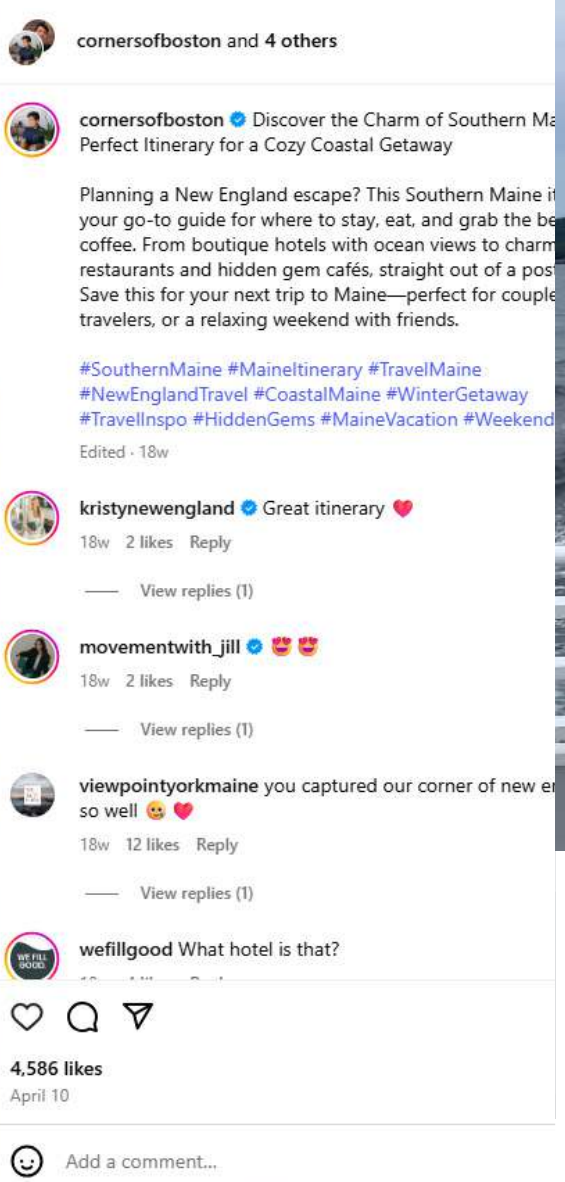


# RESULTS

Here are just a few highlights of our 2025 digital media results:

- **2M impressions**
- **100K+ engagements**
- **An average engagement rate of 7.8% across platforms like Instagram and TikTok**

These posts were saved and/or shared at a **2.7x higher rate** than MOT’s average content benchmarks, showing that users found ongoing value in the content produced by these creators. Viewer comments show how these posts sparked conversations about Maine’s inclusive nature.





## RESULTS

However, the program saw more than digital media results. Featured businesses reported increased foot traffic and visibility, while community testimonials highlighted the program's impact in showcasing Maine as inclusive and welcoming.

Ultimately, the campaign showed that authentic, story-driven social content can have a tremendous impact, reaching diverse audiences and showing them that they, too, belong in a destination.

***"The multiple posts from Green Book Global have driven series business to Luke's [Lobster] from a diverse audience that may not otherwise have visited us and brought a lot of positive attention to [our nonprofit] Lift All Boats. We are so glad that the MOT sees the potential of reaching out to new audiences and the importance of featuring inclusive and welcoming destinations."***

- Ben Conniff, Co-founder of Portland-based restaurant Luke's Lobster.





THANK YOU  
**MAINE.**  
FORGED BY NATURE

