

# Application Summary

**Application:** FY26 DMO Plan - Visit Billings

**Applicant:**

**Funding opportunity:** FY26 DMO Plan

## Application Responses

**Organization Name:** Visit Billings

**First Name:** Alyson

**Last Name:** Eggart

**Street Address 1:** 815 South 27th street

**Street Address 2:** 815 South 27th street

**City:** Billings

**State:** MT

**Zip:** 59107

**Funding Opportunity:** FY26 DMO Plan

**Amount Requested:** 522,213

**TAC Approved Budget:** 522,213

## General Description Information

**1. Describe your destination (who you are, who you wish to attract and why would they come) addressing your strengths, opportunities, and potential challenges.:**

### 1a. Destination:

#### ABOUT BILLINGS

Billings, Montana's largest city, is the cultural and economic heartbeat of the state. With a population of over 122,000 and a regional trade area that serves more than 500,000 people, Billings blends urban accessibility with unrivaled access to natural beauty and historical significance. Framed by the iconic Rimrocks and shaped by the Yellowstone River, the city offers sweeping vistas, an ever-expanding trail system, and year-round outdoor recreation.

Billings is a vibrant hub for culinary, cultural, and recreational exploration. Its dynamic food scene—home to James Beard-nominated chefs and a celebrated craft beer culture—complements a rich array of arts venues, museums, and independent shops. The city also serves as a gateway to major national landmarks including Yellowstone National Park, Little Bighorn Battlefield, Pompeys Pillar, and the Beartooth Scenic Byway.

As a well-connected destination with newly expanded air service and a first-class airport, Billings is easy to reach and even easier to enjoy. The city's nearly 4,500 hotel rooms, flexible meeting spaces, and growing sports infrastructure position it as a top-tier destination for both leisure travelers and event organizers.

With a strong sense of place and a welcoming spirit, Billings continues to evolve—offering visitors and residents

alike an experience that's authentically Western, yet unmistakably its own.

## **ABOUT VISIT BILLINGS**

Visit Billings represents the Billings Tourism Business Improvement District (BTBID) and the Billings Convention and Visitors Bureau (BCVB), both managed by the Billings Chamber of Commerce. The organization's mission is to generate room nights for lodging facilities in the city of Billings by effectively marketing the region as a preferred travel destination. As the designated destination leadership organization (DLO) for Billings, Visit Billings serves as the strategic driver of tourism growth and development in the region.

A DLO does more than promote a destination, it champions long-term strategies that support the visitor economy, such as air service development, event recruitment, tourism education, and inclusive visitor experiences. Visit Billings is deeply integrated into the leisure, meetings, sports, and group travel markets, working closely with planners, tour operators, media, and stakeholders to position Billings as a dynamic and welcoming destination.

With 55 lodging properties and nearly 5,000 rooms, the city is well-positioned to host travelers seeking scenic adventure, cultural exploration, and vibrant urban experiences. Visit Billings promotes access to renowned attractions like Little Bighorn Battlefield, the Beartooth Scenic Byway, and Yellowstone National Park, while also supporting signature local offerings—such as our culinary scene, trail systems, and year-round events.

Visitor satisfaction is a priority. Repeat visitation is encouraged through frontline training programs like the Certified Tourism Ambassador (CTA), as well as accessibility initiatives like the Certified Autism Destination (CAD) designation. These efforts ensure that Billings is not only a great place to visit, but one travelers want to return to again and again.

## **FUNDING**

Visit Billings is funded primarily through the Billings Tourism Business Improvement District (BTBID) and a portion of the State Lodging Facility Use Tax. The BTBID assesses \$4.00 per occupied room per night on all qualifying hotels and motels within the city. FY26 marks the first year Visit Billings will fully realize the increased revenue from this updated assessment, approved by the BTBID Board in fall 2023. These additional funds directly support the execution of the 2024–2027 Visit Billings Strategic Plan, enabling investments in air service development, sports tourism, destination marketing, and enhanced visitor services.

In addition, the State of Montana imposes two lodging-related taxes: a 4% Lodging Facility Use Tax and a 4% Lodging Facility Sales Tax, resulting in a combined 8% lodging tax. These funds are collected at the point of stay and remitted to the Montana Department of Revenue.

Together, these funding sources ensure that Visit Billings can remain competitive, innovative, and responsive to the evolving needs of the tourism industry.

### **1b. Strengths:**

Billings is a vibrant, accessible, and evolving destination that blends urban amenities with sweeping natural beauty.

As Montana's largest city, it offers the greatest concentration of lodging options in the state with 55 properties and nearly 5,000 rooms. This hotel capacity, combined with meeting space, sports venues, and new infrastructure projects, makes Billings uniquely positioned to accommodate leisure travelers, event planners, and tour groups alike.

The destination is rich with authentic Montana experiences. Visitors can explore nearly 50 miles of multi-use trails and 24 miles of bike lanes, including the Skyline Trail along the sandstone Rimrocks, which offer panoramic views of the Yellowstone River Valley. Year-round outdoor recreation is complemented by a diverse culinary scene—including James Beard finalist chefs—and Montana's only zoo and botanical park.

Billings' historic downtown is home to a flourishing brewery trail, local boutiques, public art, museums, live music, and seasonal events that showcase the community's creative spirit. Anchored by top attractions such as ZooMontana, the Western Heritage Center, Yellowstone Art Museum, and Pictograph Cave State Park, the city offers an unmatched blend of culture, history, and adventure.

Recent renovations at Billings Logan International Airport and growing air service connectivity through multiple national carriers continue to enhance the visitor experience and accessibility. The airport's central location, paired with Billings' position along the I-90 and I-94 corridors, strengthens its role as a key gateway to Yellowstone National Park, Bighorn Canyon, and the Beartooth Scenic Byway.

With its strong hospitality industry, welcoming community, and growing national visibility, Billings is a well-rounded destination poised for sustainable tourism growth.

### **1c. Opportunities:**

Billings continues to see significant investment in its hospitality sector, with several new hotels opening in recent years and more expected to come online. The city now boasts 55 lodging properties and nearly 5,000 rooms—more than any other destination in Montana. While this expanded capacity is a strength, it also creates an imperative: tourism must continue to grow in order to sustain strong occupancy and average daily rates across the market.

On average, Billings welcomes 2.6 million visitors annually who travel for leisure, business, medical, and event-related purposes. Those visitors contribute approximately \$621 million each year to the local economy through spending at hotels, restaurants, retailers, attractions, and other businesses (Destination Analysts, 2018). And yet, the city currently captures just over 20% of Montana's total visitation—highlighting a clear opportunity for growth. In 2023 alone, Montana hosted 12.5 million visitors who spent \$5.45 billion statewide (ITRR, 2023). Billings has the infrastructure, accessibility, and community support to responsibly welcome a greater share of those travelers.

FY26 also builds on a pivotal milestone: the launch of Visit Billings' first local Tourism Education Campaign, executed during National Travel & Tourism Week in May 2025. This campaign marked the beginning of a long-term initiative to raise awareness about the value of tourism among residents, stakeholders, and civic leaders. Increasing local understanding and support for the visitor economy is essential to maintaining momentum and ensuring the continued success of Billings as a tourism destination.

With enhanced air service, new sports and meeting facilities in development, and a strategic brand evolution underway, Billings is well-positioned to grow its market share and elevate its reputation as a year-round destination for travelers seeking authenticity, adventure, and connection.

## **1d. Potential Challenges:**

While enthusiasm for travel remains high, economic uncertainty continues to influence how—and whether—families plan leisure trips. Inflation, rising interest rates, and fluctuating fuel prices have placed greater pressure on household budgets, prompting many travelers to prioritize shorter getaways or delay vacations altogether. For destinations like Billings, this means the competition for traveler dollars is more intense than ever. Visit Billings must continue to deliver high-value messaging and promote experiences that feel both rewarding and accessible.

Seasonality also presents a recurring challenge. Billings sees the lowest visitation levels during the winter months, particularly January and February. These early-year lulls impact hotel occupancy and local business revenues at a time when economic activity is already slower across the region. The need for compelling winter product—whether it be indoor experiences, events, or seasonal campaigns—is critical to drive overnight stays and visitor engagement during this off-peak period.

Additionally, challenges persist around public perception and understanding of tourism’s value. While Visit Billings has made progress through its inaugural tourism education campaign, continued outreach is needed to ensure community buy-in and advocacy. The tourism industry’s success is closely tied to how well residents understand its economic impact—and how they contribute to the visitor experience.

To stay competitive, Billings must also address broader industry-wide issues such as air service reliability, staffing shortages in hospitality, and aging infrastructure in some sectors. Maintaining forward momentum will require cross-sector collaboration and continued investment in the people, places, and partnerships that make tourism thrive.

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## **2. Briefly describe how your destination aligns with the Montana brand or describe the Brand strategy for your DMO.:**

### **DESTINATION BRAND ALIGNMENT & STRATEGY**

Visit Billings proudly aligns with the Montana Office of Tourism’s efforts to inspire travel to our state through the Destination Montana brand. As the official destination leadership organization for Billings, we complement these statewide efforts by focusing on what makes Billings a unique and essential part of the Montana experience. We share the collective goal of growing visitation, strengthening economic vitality, and showcasing the authentic character that defines our region.

While Destination Montana works to elevate interest in the state as a whole, Visit Billings helps translate that interest into action—motivating travelers to include Billings in their itineraries, extend their stays, and experience all the city has to offer. From scenic beauty to cultural attractions, Billings contributes meaningfully to the broader Montana brand.

In FY26, Visit Billings will launch a refreshed brand platform that builds upon this shared foundation. Through

extensive research and stakeholder input, it became clear that a new approach was needed—one that celebrates the people, places, and perspectives that shape our city’s identity. Rather than positioning Billings solely as a gateway, the new brand will emphasize its value as a destination in its own right, grounded in local pride and rich with experiences.

As this brand evolution unfolds, Visit Billings will continue to partner with Destination Montana, Visit Southeast Montana, and other regional allies to ensure our collective messaging resonates with travelers. Together, we’re building a stronger narrative for Montana—one that honors each community’s voice while working toward a shared vision of sustainable tourism growth.

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**Destination Marketing:**

**Destination Management:**

**Destination Stewardship:**

**Destination Development:**

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### **3a. Define your audience(s) (demographic, geographic and psycho-graphic):**

#### TARGET AUDIENCE DEFINITIONS

Visit Billings develops and executes marketing strategies that target a variety of key audiences across geographic, demographic, and psychographic segments. Each campaign is designed to align with our brand values, respond to market trends, and drive high-value visitation to the city.

#### PRIMARY LEISURE AUDIENCE

Demographic & Geographic Focus: Our core leisure audience includes adults aged 30–65, with and without children, primarily residing in key regional and national markets. These include:

- Regional drive markets across Montana, Wyoming, the Dakotas, and western South Dakota
- Flight markets including Chicago, Dallas/Fort Worth, Denver, Minneapolis, Phoenix, Seattle, Salt Lake City, Portland, and Los Angeles

Psychographic Focus: These travelers value authenticity, local culture, and access to outdoor recreation. They are road trippers, national park adventurers, history enthusiasts, food and craft beverage lovers, and active families. Many are seeking meaningful, affordable escapes that allow for discovery, personal connection, and relaxation.

Other strategies include

#### SPORTS & EVENTS MARKET

Billings’ growing reputation as a sports destination attracts athletes, families, and fans from across the region and country. Our audiences include youth and collegiate tournament participants, event organizers, and sports tourism decision-makers. We also target sports enthusiasts interested in hockey, volleyball, wrestling, and other key regional events.

#### MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS

This segment includes association planners, SMERF (social, military, educational, religious, and fraternal) groups, and regional/national meeting professionals. Many of these planners are seeking mid-sized, accessible destinations that offer value, hospitality, and memorable off-agenda experiences. Our efforts focus on building long-term relationships and multi-year contracts, particularly with Montana-based and regional associations.

#### GROUP TOUR & INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

We continue to engage with both domestic motorcoach operators and international inbound tour planners. Our strongest potential lies in small-group, customized travel experiences tied to national parks, cultural heritage, scenic byways, and culinary tourism. As international travel rebounds, our focus is on building relationships with tour operators who cater to extended fly/drive itineraries across the American West.

#### LOCAL & STAKEHOLDER AUDIENCE

Billings residents, businesses, hospitality partners, and elected officials play a critical role in the success of our visitor economy. Through our tourism education campaign, in-market activations, and community storytelling, Visit Billings aims to increase understanding of tourism's value and foster local pride and support.

### **3b. What research supports your DMO strategy? :**

Visit Billings relies on a strong foundation of research and data to inform decision-making, evaluate performance, and adapt strategies that drive meaningful tourism growth. In collaboration with national research partners, agency teams, and in-market insights, our efforts are grounded in real-time data and long-term planning.

In FY26, a key priority will be the execution of a comprehensive **Visitor Profile Study**—our first since 2018. This long-overdue study will provide updated insights into who is visiting Billings, where they're coming from, what motivates their travel, how long they stay, how much they spend, and what experiences influence their decisions. These insights will help us refine our marketing focus, optimize budget allocation, and identify high-value target markets to increase both the economic impact and lifetime value of a visitor.

In addition to the Visitor Profile Study, Visit Billings continuously tracks performance and visitor behavior through:

- **Smith Travel Research (STR):** Room demand, occupancy, and average daily rate
- **Destinations International Economic Impact Calculator:** Event and tourism ROI modeling
- **VisaVue & Affinity/Zartico:** Visitor spending, geolocation, and behavioral insights
- **State Lodging Facility Use Tax & BTBID Assessments:** Revenue and trend tracking
- **Future Partners / State of the American Traveler:** Trend forecasting and media preferences
- **AirDNA:** Short-term rental performance and traveler intent
- **Goodway Group / Agency Analytics:** Digital campaign results, ROI tracking, and optimization

These tools allow Visit Billings to stay agile, adjust to evolving travel behaviors, and ensure our strategies deliver measurable results for stakeholders. The addition of updated visitor profile data will significantly enhance our ability to prioritize markets, maximize ROI, and tell a compelling story about the value of tourism in Billings.

## FY26 TRAVEL & CONSUMER INSIGHTS

Tourism research and industry trends continue to inform Visit Billings' approach to destination marketing. Recent data from Future Partners, the State of the American Traveler, and other national sources provide valuable perspective on traveler motivations, behaviors, and expectations in the year ahead. Key takeaways influencing our FY26 strategies include:

- **Leisure travel demand remains strong:**

99% of American travelers plan to take a leisure trip in 2025, with relaxation, cultural exploration, and escape from daily life ranking as top motivators.

- **Economic sensitivity influences travel decisions:**

Inflation and personal finances remain key concerns for travelers, with many seeking high-value destinations and affordable alternatives to popular hotspots (“dupes”). Billings, with its access to iconic landscapes and affordable accommodations, is well-positioned to meet this demand.

- **Longer leisure stays and blended travel are rising:**

As business travel slowly rebounds, more travelers are extending trips for leisure—particularly Millennials and Gen Z. This blend of work and play presents new opportunities to promote midweek stays and longer itineraries.

- **Travel planning windows are shrinking:**

The average lead time for planning a weeklong domestic trip is now under 10 weeks—down significantly from past years. This trend highlights the importance of always-on marketing and short-term campaign flexibility.

- **Short-form video and visual storytelling dominate:**

Platforms like Instagram and TikTok are among the top inspiration sources for Gen Z and Millennial travelers. YouTube continues to be a powerful tool across demographics. Destination marketers must prioritize compelling visuals and video to remain relevant.

- **Social values and inclusivity matter:**

Over half of travelers say a destination's political and cultural environment influences their decision to visit—especially among younger travelers. This underscores the importance of inclusive messaging, DEI initiatives, and community storytelling.

- **Streaming and podcasts shape travel interest:**

Popular shows and platforms continue to inspire trip planning. With the enduring interest in series like *Yellowstone*, *Montana*—and Billings specifically—benefit from this cultural relevance.

- **AI-assisted trip planning is emerging:**

While only 14% of American travelers have used AI tools like ChatGPT to plan a trip, nearly two-thirds expect this technology to become more common in 2025. Visit Billings will monitor this evolution and explore future integration opportunities.

These insights are critical as Visit Billings refines messaging, content strategy, platform mix, and market prioritization heading into FY26. Combined with the upcoming Visitor Profile Study, this research will help ensure strategies are both responsive and forward-looking.

### 3c. What are your emerging markets?:

#### What are your emerging markets?:

In FY26, Visit Billings will focus on growing awareness and visitation from key direct flight markets where opportunity for increased demand exists. These include:

- **Chicago**
- **Los Angeles**
- **Phoenix**
- **Dallas/Fort Worth**
- **Portland**
- **Seattle**
- **Denver**
- **Salt Lake City**
- **Minneapolis**
- **Houston**

These cities are well-connected to Billings via nonstop air service and represent strong potential for both leisure and group travel. Strategic marketing in these markets will support air service sustainability, increase room demand, and introduce new audiences to all that Billings has to offer.

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**4a. Describe proposed tactics and projects as related to overall goals and controlled by the organization in its financial statements.:**

Visit Billings’ primary goal under the CVB budget is to increase leisure visitation to Billings by generating room nights through targeted, research-driven advertising and promotional strategies.

These strategies support Visit Billings’ mission of positioning the city as a preferred year-round travel destination—especially in a competitive tourism landscape where value, authenticity, and accessibility are key decision factors for travelers.

FY26 Goals:

- Drive year-round awareness of Billings as an ideal leisure destination, with a focus on direct-flight and drive markets.
- Promote the full Billings experience—from national park access and iconic landscapes to downtown culture, culinary offerings, and outdoor recreation.
- Reach high-value leisure travelers through digital, print, out-of-home, and content marketing channels.
- Execute a new Visitor Profile Study to update target market intelligence and increase long-term marketing effectiveness.

Key Tactics:

- Implement research-informed leisure advertising campaigns under the “Outside Voice” platform, evolving creative to reflect fresh visual storytelling and emotional appeal.
- Promote Billings as a launchpad for adventure with seasonal digital campaigns that highlight things to do, places to stay, and trails to explore.
- Leverage digital video, connected TV, social media, paid search, and display advertising to engage drive and direct-flight audiences.
- Create and promote editorial-style content (blogs, emails, and videos) to align with audience interests such as scenic drives, local food, and outdoor experiences.



- Continue to invest in earned media and influencer relationships to extend the reach of leisure messaging in cost-effective ways.
- Support public relations outreach through press releases, hosted media tours, and story development tied to seasonal campaigns and key events.
- Execute a comprehensive Visitor Profile Study in FY26—the first since 2018—to gain updated insights on who is visiting Billings, how they travel, and what drives decisions.
- Monitor and optimize campaigns using platforms like Google PMAX, Meta Ads, and advanced analytics to track ROI and improve performance across markets.

All tactics are reported under CVB-controlled budget categories including: paid media, research, agency services, opportunity marketing, earned media/tourism, and education/outreach. These efforts are measured against year-over-year benchmarks including website traffic, conversions, room night generation, and audience engagement.

### GROWING GROUP TRAVEL: GOALS & TACTICS

Billings continues to serve as a key stopover and regional hub for group tours exploring the Western U.S. From national parks and heritage sites to group-friendly dining and lodging, the city offers an ideal blend of accessibility, affordability, and authentic experiences.

With Montana seeing increased interest from both domestic and international operators, Visit Billings aims to further elevate the city's profile among motorcoach companies, receptive tour operators, and international travel planners through targeted outreach and collaborative marketing efforts.

#### FY26 Goals:

- Increase Billings' visibility and appeal as a group-friendly destination along iconic road trip routes and Western itineraries.
- Strengthen relationships with domestic and international tour operators to encourage repeat business and longer itineraries.
- Support the return of international inbound travel, especially among fly/drive visitors beginning their journeys in Salt Lake City, Denver, or Billings.

#### Key Tactics:

- Attend targeted industry events such as the American Bus Association (ABA) Marketplace and U.S. Travel Association's IPW to build and maintain tour operator relationships.
- Host the America Cup Golf Invitational (ACGI) in FY26—a high-impact networking event for domestic and international tour operators and travel trade partners. ACGI will include regional FAM tours and create expanded opportunities to build both new and existing relationships.
- Collaborate with Destination Montana and Visit Southeast Montana to maximize exposure in international cooperative marketing and group tour publications.
- Develop and distribute itinerary-ready tools and collateral highlighting Billings' strengths for motorcoach and small-group travel—including accommodations, parking logistics, step-on guides, and group-friendly restaurants.

- Promote seasonal opportunities and shoulder season availability to help operators plan during off-peak months.
- Provide planning support and servicing assistance for operators booking overnights in Billings to enhance group experiences and encourage return visits.

#### SUPPORTING SPORTS TOURISM: GOALS & TACTICS

Sports tourism continues to be a powerful driver of visitation and economic impact in Billings. While infrastructure investments and event servicing are primarily supported by the BTBID budget, the CVB plays a complementary role in building awareness, enhancing the visitor experience, and sharing the story of Billings as a sports destination.

With major events like the Big Sky Volleyfest and the upcoming launch of the Signal Peak Ice Arena, Visit Billings is expanding its sports messaging through earned media, promotional support, and destination storytelling that elevates Billings' competitive position.

##### FY26 Goals:

- Raise awareness of Billings as a premier sports event destination through earned and digital media efforts.
- Support sports event visibility and visitor experience through promotional tools and content resources.
- Help showcase Billings' growing sports portfolio, including new facilities like the twin-sheet ice arena, through brand storytelling.

##### Key Tactics:

- Promote hosted events and tournaments via media outreach, content development, and social coverage to drive community engagement and visitor excitement.
- Provide sports planners and event attendees with visitor materials such as the Billings Brew Trail map, downtown guides, and things-to-do content to help extend stays and improve the experience.
- Amplify new opportunities, such as the growth of ice sports, through earned media placements and feature stories.
- Participate in the Special Olympics Montana State Summer Games community welcome and awareness efforts in May 2025.
- Assist in hosting sports-focused familiarization (FAM) tours that highlight Billings' facilities, amenities, and community support for tournament organizers.

#### MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS: GOALS & TACTICS

Meetings and conventions are a key year-round driver of hotel demand in Billings. While the TBID supports much of the direct sales and incentive servicing, Visit Billings' CVB-funded efforts focus on brand awareness, content development, and promotional strategies that inspire planners to choose Billings as a trusted and convenient meeting destination.

With a central location, accessible airport, and walkable downtown, Billings offers exceptional value for regional and mid-sized conferences. The CVB continues to support lead generation and awareness through content, advertising, and digital tools that elevate Billings' meetings profile.

#### FY26 Goals:

- Increase awareness of Billings as a competitive meetings destination in regional and national markets.
- Support lead generation and planner engagement through digital campaigns and content tools.
- Promote “Meet Me in Billings” and “Big Skies Mean Big Attendance” messaging to inspire site consideration and booking.

#### Key Tactics:

- Develop and promote branded digital content (blogs, videos, and social posts) that highlight off-agenda activities, local culture, and attendee experiences.
- Update and distribute meeting planner tools, including the digital sales kit and visitor-focused resources such as brew trail maps, group dining lists, and activity guides.
- Support the sales team with email marketing and lead nurturing content aimed at regional associations and SMERF planners.
- Promote meeting-specific campaigns such as “Meet Me in Billings” and “Big Skies Mean Big Attendance” through owned digital channels and collaborative placements.
- Provide support for meeting planner FAM tours by curating itineraries and in-market experiences that reflect the destination’s value and hospitality.
- Assist with earned media coverage and case studies from successful conferences held in Billings to build third-party credibility.

### ENHANCING THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE: GOALS & TACTICS

A positive visitor experience directly influences repeat visitation, destination reputation, and word-of-mouth referrals. Visit Billings invests in frontline service training, accessibility initiatives, and visitor resources to ensure travelers feel welcomed and supported throughout their stay.

In FY26, the CVB will continue building on service and inclusion efforts, including Certified Tourism Ambassador (CTA) training, support of Certified Autism Destination (CAD) programs, and in-market outreach that helps visitors connect with local experiences and hospitality partners.

To further improve how visitors navigate and explore Billings, Visit Billings will also support the installation of digital visitor information kiosks in high-traffic areas. These kiosks—funded by the TBID—will serve as an on-the-ground resource, helping travelers discover things to do, places to stay, and events happening during their visit.

#### FY26 Goals:

- Improve frontline customer service and destination knowledge through education and training.
- Enhance the accessibility and inclusivity of the Billings experience to ensure all travelers feel welcome.
- Support in-market visitor engagement through tools, resources, and digital touchpoints.

#### Key Tactics:

- Expand participation in the Certified Tourism Ambassador (CTA) program to support hospitality partners and elevate visitor interactions.
- Advance the destination’s work as a Certified Autism Destination (CAD) in partnership with local businesses and attractions.
- Distribute and promote visitor resources such as the Billings Brew Trail map, digital itineraries, and interest-based

content.

- Align CTA messaging with Trail Guide-style storytelling to reinforce community pride and destination knowledge.
- Increase visibility at local festivals and events, and continue to meet visitors where they are with tourism information booths and branded collateral.
- Support the launch of digital kiosks in key locations across the city—an initiative funded by TBID—to give visitors real-time access to information, maps, and activity suggestions.

**4b. How will the addition of LFST funds enhance your overall goals?:**

The addition of LFST funds in FY26 will allow Visit Billings to invest in a long-overdue **Visitor Profile Study**—our first since 2018. This research is essential to refining our destination marketing strategy, targeting the most valuable traveler segments, and ensuring the highest return on investment for our campaigns.

The study will provide updated, actionable insights on who is visiting Billings, how they travel, what motivates their decisions, and where opportunities for growth exist. With this data, Visit Billings can better tailor messaging, optimize media placement, and focus resources on markets that deliver longer stays, higher spending, and greater lifetime visitor value.

This strategic investment, made possible by LFST funding, will directly support the CVB’s mission to generate room nights by making our marketing efforts more precise, cost-effective, and performance-driven.

**5. Define and describe your overall objectives. Objectives are formed from your goals. They are logical, attainable steps to achieve the goals and are able to be measured.:**

**Objectives/Metrics/Evaluation:**

OBJECTIVES	MEASURABLE METRICS FOR SUCCESS	REPORT THE METRIC ACHIEVED	EVALUATION OF SUCCESSFUL METRICS
<p>Increase Awareness of Billings as a Leisure Travel Destination while also increasing consumer engagement with the destinations brand.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Achieve 10% YoY increase in campaign activities generated (website visits, downloads, event registrations, etc.).</li> <li>- Increase website sessions by 10% from target markets.</li> <li>- Reach 50 million impressions across PMAX, Meta, Pinterest, Native &amp; Display, and Paid Search.</li> <li>- Maintain above a 30% open rate on e-newsletters (industry average 28%)</li> </ul>		
<p>Execute a Comprehensive Visitor Profile Study</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Visitor Intercept Survey – Two separate waves of 400 visitors, so 800 total. Conducted by Future Partners Staff.</li> <li>-Online Survey of owned audiences. Our email lists.</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Online survey of potential visitors.</li> <li>-Economic Impact of Tourism Analysis.</li> </ul>		
Strengthen Billings' presence in the domestic and international group tour market.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attend 3 major trade shows (ABA, IPW, ACGI).</li> <li>- Host ACGI (30 group tour operators alongside 30 suppliers and destinations.</li> <li>- Rebuild the group tour page on visitbillings.com.</li> </ul>		
Promote Billings as a Sports Tourism Destination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Attend 2 sports trade events, TEAMS and Sports ETA to build relationships with planners and tournament directors.</li> <li>- Book and/or support 30 sports events in Billings.</li> <li>- Support at least 1 sports planner FAM tour.</li> </ul>		
Increase awareness of Billings for Meetings & Conventions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Book, support, and/or retain 30 meetings or conventions in Billings.</li> <li>- Attend 2-4 Meeting trade shows such as Connect, Small Market Meetings, or Smart Meetings.</li> <li>- Rejoin and attend the Military Reunion Network.</li> <li>- Host 2 meeting planner FAM tours.</li> </ul>		

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**Budget Form:** DMO Budget Form LST LFUT 3 (2).xlsx

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**DMO Budget:**

**DMO**

Allowable Method	Budget	% Budgeted	Amend +/-	Updated Budget
<b>Lodging Facility USE Tax (LFUT) Budget</b>				
Administration	\$104,442.00	18.80%		\$104,442.00
Agency Services	\$30,000.00	5.40%		\$30,000.00
Earned Media/Tourism Sales	\$5,000.00	0.90%		\$5,000.00

Education/Outreach	\$3,500.00	0.63%		\$3,500.00
Joint Ventures	\$15,000.00	2.70%		\$15,000.00
Opportunity Marketing	\$500.00	0.09%		\$500.00
Paid Media	\$154,000.00	27.72%		\$154,000.00
Marketing Personnel	\$86,000.00	15.48%		\$86,000.00
Research	\$93,000.00	16.74%		\$93,000.00
Travel/Trade Shows	\$5,000.00	0.90%		\$5,000.00
Visitor Services	\$24,771.00	4.46%		\$24,771.00
Website Development (Online, Website, Mobile)	\$1,000.00	0.18%		\$1,000.00
		0.00%		\$0.00
		0.00%		\$0.00
		0.00%		\$0.00
<b>TOTAL LFUT Budget</b>	<b>\$522,213.00</b>	<b>93.98%</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$522,213.00</b>

<b>Lodging Facility SALES Tax (LFST) Budget</b>				
Administration	\$6,884.00	1.24%		\$6,884.00
Research	\$26,538.00	4.78%		\$26,538.00
		0.00%		\$0.00
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		0.00%		\$0.00
		0.00%		\$0.00
<b>TOTAL LFST Budget</b>	<b>\$33,422.00</b>	<b>6.02%</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$33,422.00</b>

<b>TOTAL LFUT &amp; LFST BUDGET</b>	<b>\$555,635.00</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$555,635.00</b>
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LFST Revenue Projection	522,213.00
LFUT Revenue Projection	33,422.00
Funds not spent during previous fiscal year	0.00
LFST Rollover Funds at Commerce	0.00
LFUT Rollover Funds at Commerce	0.00

Allocated Following Audit

0.00

**Budget total**

555,635.00

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**The Narrative Evaluation report is used to a) provide a written evaluation of the Objectives and Metrics section and b) provide a written summary of how the LFST Funds were spent and the metric(s) achieved.:**