

# Application Summary

**Application:** FY26 DMO Plan - Belgrade DMO

**Applicant:**

**Funding opportunity:** FY26 DMO Plan

## Application Responses

**Organization Name:** Belgrade Chamber of Commerce

**First Name:** Erin

**Last Name:** Hoppe

**Street Address 1:** 10 E. Main

**Street Address 2:**

**City:** Belgrade

**State:** MT

**Zip:** 59714

**Funding Opportunity:** FY26 DMO Plan

**Amount Requested:** 130,583

**TAC Approved Budget:** 130,583

## 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:

Belgrade, Montana is truly at the crossroads of adventure. With Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport right in our backyard, we're the gateway to Southwest Montana and Yellowstone Country. Our community offers the convenience of easy access, the charm of small-town hospitality, and rapidly growing list of amenities- all at a more affordable price point than surrounding areas. Visitors can enjoy cozy accommodations, local restaurants, unique shops and a friendly atmosphere, all while staying close to major attractions like Bozeman, Big Sky and Yellowstone National Park.

### 1b. Strengths:

We are a welcoming, tight-knit community with a deep appreciation for Montana's natural beauty and adventurous spirit. Our goal is to attract families looking for meaningful, stress-free travel experiences. Belgrade offers the perfect home base for families to enjoy day trips to Big Sky, Bozeman, and Yellowstone while returning each evening to a relaxed, friendly town filled with good food, community parks and hidden gems. We want families to feel like they belong here- and to keep coming back year after year.

### 1c. Opportunities:

Belgrade is perfectly positioned to become "basecamp" for regional exploration. As more travelers look for authentic, affordable, and accessible destinations, we have the opportunity to showcase our small-town charm paired with modern conveniences. Continued investment in local businesses, dining and recreation options is creating new experiences for visitors. With the airport nearby and increasing regional interest, we're ready to welcome more families looking for a central and comfortable place to launch their Montana Adventure!

### 1d. Potential Challenges:

As Belgrade continues to grow, one of our key challenges is maintaining our unique community feel while accommodating increasing visitation. Infrastructure development, lodging capacity, and wayfinding improvements are essential to ensure a smooth experience for guests. Additionally, we must differentiate ourselves from neighboring destinations by emphasizing what makes Belgrade special—our affordability, accessibility, and community-focused experience. However, we must also navigate potential disruptions from ongoing infrastructure projects. The Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport is undergoing a significant East Terminal Expansion, slated for completion by 2030, which includes phased construction that may impact passenger flow and access. Additionally, from April 8 to May 20, 2025, the airport's main runway will experience temporary closures during weekday evenings for extension and navigational aid upgrades, potentially affecting flight schedules. On the ground, the Montana Department of Transportation has proposed resurfacing approximately six miles of Interstate 90 between Belgrade and Bozeman, with construction tentatively planned for 2026, which could lead to traffic delays and detours. These developments, while ultimately beneficial, present short-term challenges that require proactive communication and planning to minimize their impact on visitors and the community.

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

Our brand strategy positions Belgrade as "Your Basecamp to Yellowstone Country". We will focus on accessibility, affordability and authenticity. By promoting proximity to the Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport, our central location to major destinations like Yellowstone, Big Sky and Bozeman and our growing amenities, we're appealing to families and independent travelers who want a convenient and welcoming launch point for their Montana adventures. Our storytelling can highlight local experiences, hidden gems and the warm hospitality that sets us apart in the heart of Big Sky Country.

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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):**

Our primary audience will include families with children, typically ages 30-50, who are looking for accessible, budget friendly travel options. We also appeal to multi-generational travelers and outdoor loving couples. These travelers tend to value experiences over luxury and are looking for destinations that feel safe, relaxed and authentic.

We will target regional markets within Montana and surrounding states (Idaho, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota) as well as fly in visitors from major hubs like Denver, Salt Lake City and Seattle. Proximity to Bozeman International Airport makes Belgrade a natural fit for both road trippers and fly-in adventures.

Our ideal visitors are experience seekers- families and individuals who value authenticity, connection and adventure. They prefer local food, scenic drives as opposed to crowded attractions, and personal memories over mass-market tourism. These travelers are independent, nature-inspired and appreciate the "hidden gem" feel Belgrade offers while still being close to major regional attractions like Yellowstone, Big Sky and Bozeman.

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

Our strategy is supported by insights from Voices of Montana Tourism, ITRR data, and industry trends shared by Yellowstone Country and Visit Montana. Research shows that travelers are increasingly seeking that authentic, local experience and are extending their stays to explore beyond major attractions. Additionally, studies indicate a growing interest in secondary destinations that offer affordability, less crowding and easy access to regional highlights- qualities that align perfectly with Belgrade's strengths.

Repeating myself here, but our proximity to the airport is a key advantage. With record breaking passenger numbers and continued airport growth, we are in a prime position to intercept and capture those visitors.

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

**Young families**- looking for affordable, outdoor-oriented travel with easy access to parks and nature.

**Remote workers**- seeking small-town charm and local culture as part of longer stays.

**Multi-generational travelers**- combining visits to Yellowstone with relaxed home-base experiences.

**International travelers**- flying into the airport who are open to staying in lesser-known towns enroute to major destinations.

By targeting these with storytelling, digital content, and family friendly trip itineraries, we can position Belgrade as the smart, welcoming, and centrally located "basecamp" for exploring Yellowstone Country

and Southwest Montana. This approach supports both short term visitation and long-term community investment.

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

Our overall goal is to establish Belgrade as a recognized, family-friendly "basecamp" for exploring the area. We are aiming to increase overnight stays, support local businesses through visitor spending, and elevate Belgrade's visibility as a distinct destination- and expand on it being a pass-through town or airport hub. We are committed to enhancing the visitor experience through strategic marketing, development of local tourism assets and community-based storytelling that reflects the authentic character of Belgrade. We are hoping to make our visitor center a focal point of our downtown area within walking distance to may local eateries and the airport. Making it an inviting place to visit, shop and relax.

Brand and Content Development- Develop "Basecamp Belgrade" branded material and photography content that highlights dining, lodging, recreation and small-town charm.

Website Enhancements & SEO- improve our online presence with updated itineraries and family focused trip planning tools, google friendly content to attract more organic traffic.

Wayfinding & Signage Improvements- work toward improved signage and visitor navigation tools that connect guests to local businesses and attractions.

Event Support and Development- partner with community events and explore the development of small-scale, family-oriented activities that encourage overnight stays.

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

The LFST funds will be very helpful to achieving our goals. These funds will allow us to scale our marketing efforts, invest in quality content creation and develop necessary infrastructure and visitor materials.

**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
Increase Awareness and Digital Presence of Belgrade as a Travel Destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Relaunch the redesigned Visit</li></ul>		

	<p><b>Belgrade website by end of Q3 FY26</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>Progress metric:</i> Website relaunch checklist completed and site goes live by June 30, 2025.</li> <li>• <b>Launch Google Ads and Meta campaign</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>Progress metric:</i> Campaign goes live with UTM tracking enabled; monitor impressions, reach, and click-through rates monthly.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Increase website traffic by 5% year-over-year</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>Progress metric:</i> Track monthly website sessions using Google Analytics and compare against same period in FY25.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
Promote Year-Round Visitor Experiences Through Product Development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Partner with a minimum of 10 local businesses to develop and promote bundled “Stay and Play” packages by Q3 FY26</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>Progress metric:</i> Track number of business partners</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

	<p>signed on and package offerings finalized by September 30, 2025.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Increase overnight stays during shoulder seasons by 10% compared to previous year</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>Progress metric:</i> Monitor monthly lodging tax data and compare shoulder season occupancy rates (April–May, October–November) to FY25.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
Enhance Visitor Services to Improve the In-Market Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Install automated visitor counter at Visitor Center by Q1 FY26</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>Progress metric:</i> Counter installed and operational by September 30, 2025; monthly visitor data reviewed and logged.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Distribute updated visitor materials (maps, guides, itineraries) to walk-in visitors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>Progress metric:</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

	<p>Track quantity of materials printed and distributed each quarter; update materials as needed based on visitor feedback.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Complete at least 1 visual/structural improvement to Visitor Center to enhance visibility and curb appeal by end of FY26</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>Progress metric:</i> Improvement project selected, budgeted, and completed by June 30, 2026; before-and-after documentation included in final report.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
Strengthen Partnerships Through Joint Ventures and Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Collaborate with at least 3 neighboring communities or attractions to jointly promote at least 2 events in FY26</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>Progress metric:</i> Identify partners and events by end of Q2 FY26; track joint marketing efforts (social media, print, digital) and audience reach.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Partner with City and community organizations to install or update at least 1 visitor signage or wayfinding element</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>Progress metric:</i> Finalize location and design by Q3 FY26; document installation and include before/after photos in final report.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
Increase Marketing Reach through Paid and Opportunity Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Place seasonal print and/or digital ads in at least 1 regional or national tourism publication/channel in FY26</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>Progress metric:</i> Identify publication and submit creative assets by start of each season; track publication dates and estimated reach/impressions.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Host or collaborate with at least 1 travel writer or influencer for events or destination features</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>Progress metric:</i> Confirm partnership and itinerary details in advance; track</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		



	resulting content (blogs, posts, articles) and engagement metrics.		
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**Budget Form:** Bekgrade DMO FY26 budget approved (003).xlsx

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**DMO Budget:**  
**Belgrade DMO**

Allowable Method	Budget	% Budgeted	Amend +/-	Updated Budget	% l
<b>Lodging Facility USE Tax (LFUT) Budget</b>					
Administration	\$15,117.00	20.00%	\$0.00	\$15,117.00	
Website Development (Online, Website, Mobile)	\$12,130.00	8.96%	\$0.00	\$12,130.00	
Product Development	\$47,397.00	35.00%	\$0.00	\$47,397.00	
Visitor Services	\$7,000.00	5.17%	\$0.00	\$7,000.00	
Opportunity Marketing	\$8,723.00	6.44%	\$0.00	\$8,723.00	
Joint Ventures	\$19,179.00	14.16%	\$0.00	\$19,179.00	
Paid Media	\$14,837.00	10.96%	\$0.00	\$14,837.00	
Education/Outreach	\$6,000.00	4.43%	\$0.00	\$6,000.00	
Agency Services	\$100.00	0.07%	\$0.00	\$100.00	
Research	\$100.00	0.07%	\$0.00	\$100.00	
		0.00%		\$0.00	
		0.00%		\$0.00	
		0.00%		\$0.00	
		0.00%		\$0.00	
		0.00%		\$0.00	
<b>TOTAL LFUT Budget</b>	<b>\$130,583.00</b>	<b>96.43%</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$130,583.00</b>	

<b>Lodging Facility SALES Tax (LFST) Budget</b>					
Administration	\$967.00	0.71%		\$967.00	
Paid Media	\$3,870.00	2.86%		\$3,870.00	
		0.00%		\$0.00	
		0.00%		\$0.00	

		0.00%		\$0.00	
		0.00%		\$0.00	
		0.00%		\$0.00	
		0.00%		\$0.00	
		0.00%		\$0.00	
		0.00%		\$0.00	
<b>TOTAL LFST Budget</b>	<b>\$4,837.00</b>	3.57%	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$4,837.00</b>	

<b>TOTAL LFUT &amp; LFST BUDGET</b>	<b>\$135,420.00</b>	100.00%	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$135,420.00</b>	
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LFST Revenue Projection	4,837.00
LFUT Revenue Projection	75,583.00
Funds not spent during previous fiscal year	55,000.00
LFST Rollover Funds at Commerce	0.00
LFUT Rollover Funds at Commerce	0.00
Allocated Following Audit	0.00
<b>Budget total</b>	<b>135,420.00</b>

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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.:**