



Committee: ECON
Committee Review: Completed
Staff: Bilal Ali, Legislative Analyst
Purpose: To make preliminary decisions – straw vote expected

AGENDA ITEM #3M
 5/5/2026
Discussion

SUBJECT

Conference and Visitor’s Bureau (Visit Montgomery) FY27 Recommended Budget

EXPECTED ATTENDEES

- Kelly Groff, President & CEO, Visit Montgomery
- Ken Hartman-Espada, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, Office of the County Executive
- Julie Knight, Fiscal and Policy Analyst, Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

FY27 COUNTY EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATION

Conference and Visitor’s Bureau NDA (i.e., Visit Montgomery)	FY26 Approved	FY27 CE Recommended	Change from FY26 Approved
General Fund	\$2,330,606	\$2,388,871	2.5%
Personnel Costs	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Staffing (FTEs)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Operating Costs	\$2,330,606	\$2,388,871	

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

- The ECON Committee concurred with the County Executive’s recommendation, but did not vote on the 2.5% inflationary adjustment, as inflationary adjustment for nonprofit service providers is a separate item within the budget.
- Council Staff highlighted on potential reduction for consideration, that would have a resulted in savings of up to \$953,290. The Committee did not support the recommendation.

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- Visit Montgomery is funded primarily by the room rental and transient tax (i.e., the hotel/motel tax). Bill 36-12 dedicates “at least seven percent of the revenue from the tax” to Visit Montgomery. However, since FY22, the Council has approved a general fund appropriation above the mandated amount because hotel/motel tax revenues has not been growing, while expenditures have grown by at least the inflationary adjustment every year. For FY27, OMB estimates the appropriates amount above the hotel/motel tax will be \$953,290.
- Council Staff note that the County Executive’s recommended budget of \$2.39 million represents a same services budget for Visit Montgomery, and reducing the appropriation would have impacts on programming, and potentially staffing levels.

This report contains:

Visit Montgomery FY27 Staff Report	Pages 1-8
Visit Montgomery Responses to Council Staff Questions	© 1-7
Visit Montgomery Base Budget Scenarios	© 8-9
Visit Montgomery 2025 Annual Report	© 10-73

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Agenda Item: #5

Date: April 10, 2026

Staff: Bilal Ali, Legislative Analyst

Subject: FY27 Operating Budget – Conference and Visitor’s Bureau NDA (i.e., Visit Montgomery)

Purpose: Worksession - make recommendations for Council consideration (vote expected)

Expected Attendees:

- Kelly Groff, President & CEO, Visit Montgomery
- Ken Hartman-Espada, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, Office of the County Executive
- Julie Knight, Fiscal and Policy Analyst, Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

Executive Summary and Key Issues for Committee Review

- The County Executive recommends an increase of \$58,265 or 2.4% from the FY26 Approved operating budget for department.
- The Executive’s increase reflects the inflationary adjustment for all non-profit service providers. The inflationary increase will be placed on the reconciliation list as its own item, budget-wide. The Committee does not need to vote on this item.
- Council staff has identified one potential reduction for Committee consideration that was not included in the Executive’s recommended budget. The potential reduction would result in a savings of up to \$953,290.

A. Summary of FY27 Recommended Budget

Conference and Visitor’s Bureau NDA (i.e., Visit Montgomery)	FY26 Approved	FY27 CE Recommended	Change from FY26 Approved
General Fund	\$2,330,606	\$2,388,871	2.4%
Personnel Costs	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Staffing (FTEs)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Operating Costs	\$2,330,606	\$2,388,871	

B. Public Testimony

The Council held public hearings on the FY27 Operating Budget and related items on April 7, 8, and 9, 2026. Recordings of the public hearings as well as written/video testimony are available on the Council’s [website](#).

C. Department Background

Overview

The Conference and Visitors Bureau, also known as Visit Montgomery, is the County's Destination Marketing Organization (DMO). Visit Montgomery promotes the county as a destination for meetings/conferences, student group travel, group tours, leisure travel, and amateur sports events. Visit Montgomery develops and distributes publications on points of interest to tourists, implements public information campaigns promoting tourism and event facilitation in Montgomery County, and attends trade shows and sales missions in target markets.

Visit Montgomery is also a resource center assisting small and large hospitality businesses considering new product development and/or expansions. Visit Montgomery also coordinates with the Maryland Office of Tourism Development (Visit Maryland), Maryland Film Office, Capital Region USA (CRUSA), TEAM Maryland, and national and regional events to promote tourism growth, increased visitor spending, and visitation in Montgomery County.

Visit Montgomery is funded primarily by the room rental and transient tax (i.e., the hotel/motel tax). Bill 36-12 dedicates "at least seven percent of the revenue from the tax" to Visit Montgomery.

Recent Committee Worksessions: None.

Updates from FY26

Strategic Plan Update: Visit Montgomery has engaged the Coraggio Group to prepare the strategic plan. Coraggio Group will hold their final session with the Board of Directors on Monday, April 13. The full report should be released by the end of April 2026.

Visit Montgomery Staff recommend the ECON Committee hold a briefing to review the outcomes and recommendations of the 2026-2031 Strategic Plan.

Rural Branding Strategy. Visit Montgomery is working on a rural branding strategy utilizing a grant. Visit Montgomery Staff recommend the ECON Committee hold a briefing for a broader update on the Rural Branding project milestones, research, brand messaging and implementation plans. A brief summary of progress to-date is provided on © 3-4.

Annual Report. Progress on their work plan and accomplishments in 2025 are provided in the Annual Report, attached on © 10-73. Visit Montgomery Staff will provide a presentation summarizing their work over the past year during this budget worksession.

Planned for FY27. Visit Montgomery Staff provided a detailed summary of work they have planned for FY27. This is provided on © xxx and summarized below:

- Develop a future predictable, diversified and scalable funding model for Visit Montgomery
- Building National Visibility Through Earned Media
- Scaling Storytelling to Drive Visitation

- Expanding Direct-to-Visitor Outreach in Key Markets
- Strengthening Meetings & Group Travel Pipeline
- Consistent Presence in Key Target Meeting Planner Trade Shows and Conferences
- Launching a New Signature Event (pending funding)
- Leverage Major Events to Drive Overnight Visitation
- Expand Rural Montgomery brand

D. Operating Equity Budget Tool (OBET) Analysis

Visit Montgomery did not receive an Operating Budget Equity Tool analysis.

E. Budget Discussion Items

The County Executive is only recommending an inflationary increase to the FY26 appropriation for Visit Montgomery. The ECON Committee does not weigh in on the recommended 2.5% inflationary adjustment.

Table 1: FY26 CE Recommended Budget Changes

Program	FY26 Cost
Increase Cost: Two and a Half Percent Inflationary Adjustment to Non-Profit Service Provider Contracts	\$58,265

1. CE Recommended Budget Changes – Reconciliation List

The County Executive has not recommended any changes that would be placed on the reconciliation list for Visit Montgomery, specifically.

2. Potential Reductions for Committee Consideration

2.1. Appropriation Above Mandated 7% of Hotel/Motel Tax Revenue (\$953,290)

Visit Montgomery is funded primarily by the room rental and transient tax (i.e., the hotel/motel tax). Bill 36-12 dedicates “at least seven percent of the revenue from the tax” to Visit Montgomery.

As a result of artificially low hotel/motel tax revenue following the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council approved additional one-time funding (\$804,201) for Visit Montgomery to maintain their funding at their FY21 level of \$1,632,834.

For FY23, the one-time funds from ARPA had been replaced by a General Fund appropriation of \$112,078, as hotel/motel tax revenues had not recovered to pre-pandemic levels. In addition, the Council also approved \$500,000 for Destination Management, for a total General Fund appropriation of \$612,078. This raised Visit Montgomery’s FY23 appropriation to \$2,132,834 and this figure was increased by the inflationary adjustment for non-profit providers for both FY24 and FY25.

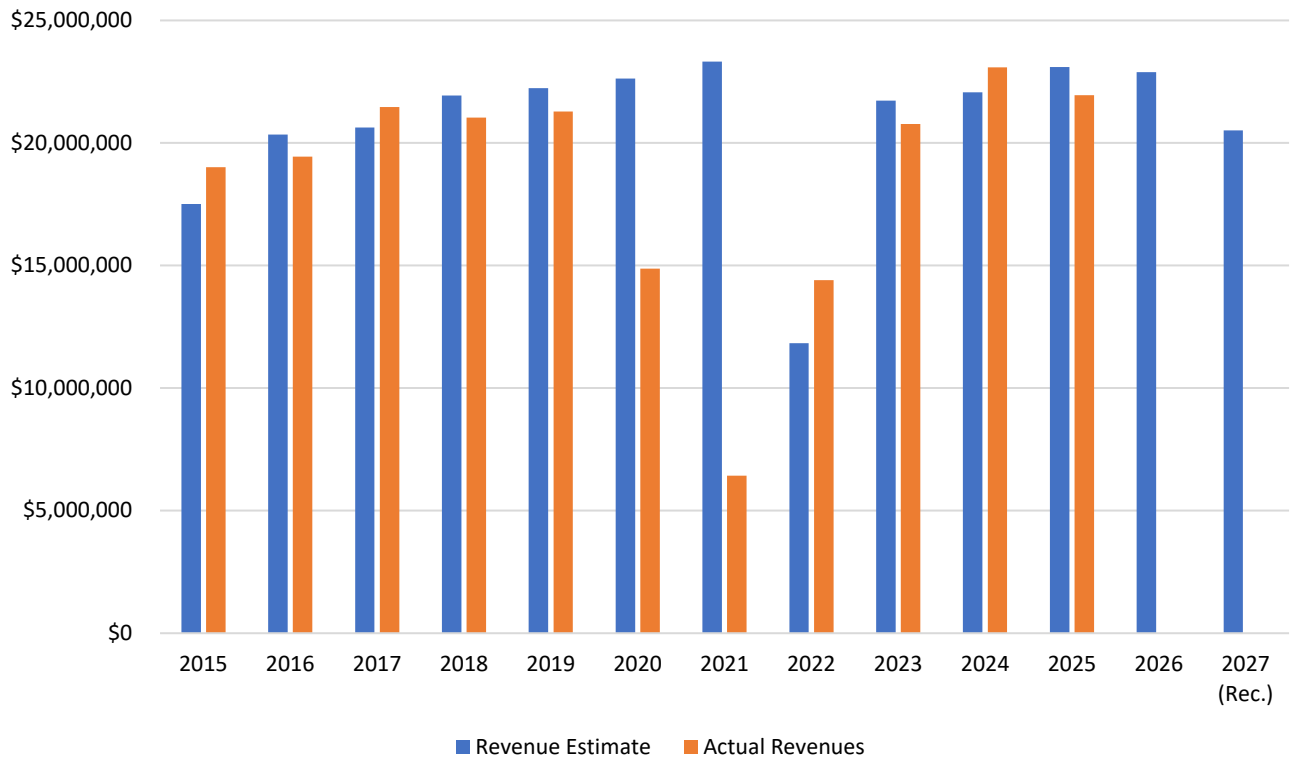
Notably, prior to the appropriation supplementing Visit Montgomery in FY22, Visit Montgomery did not receive an inflationary adjustment, and was appropriated only the mandated 7% of hotel/motel tax revenues.

There are several issues related to the fiscal sustainability of Visit Montgomery’s budget:

- Hotel/Motel Tax revenues have not recovered to pre-pandemic levels
- Hotel/Motel Tax revenue is not growing, and it is unclear if and when Hotel/Motel Tax Revenues would experience consistent year-over-year growth at or above inflation
- Visit Montgomery’s budget grows year-over-year by the rate of inflation, at least
- The County’s appropriation to Visit Montgomery above the mandated 7% of Hotel/Motel Tax Revenues will continue to grow.

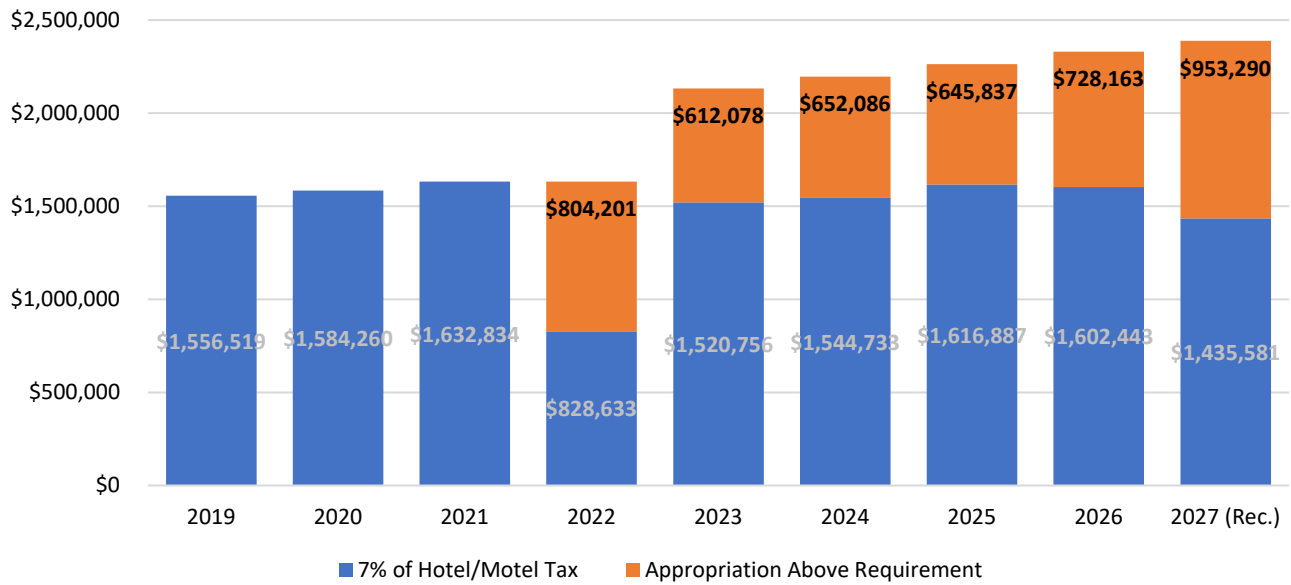
Figure 1 below shows the change in Hotel/Motel Tax Revenues since FY15. Figure 2 below shows the change in the appropriation to Visit Montgomery, specifying the amount above the mandated share of Hotel/Motel tax revenues since FY19.

Figure 1: Hotel/Motel Tax Revenues, FY15-FY27 Est.



Source: Office of Management and Budget, 2026.

Figure 2: Visit Montgomery Appropriation, FY19-FY27 Recommended



Source: Office of Management and Budget, 2026.

Potential Impacts to Visit Montgomery

Table 1 shows the change from the approved FY26 Visit Montgomery budget for two scenarios: the County Executive’s recommended funding level for FY27 and a funding level without an appropriation above the mandated amount. These scenarios were provided by Visit Montgomery and the scenario without an additional appropriation assumes \$733,159 above the mandated amount, whereas OMB projects this figure to be \$953,290. Council Staff does not have analysis or data that reflects the County Executive’s recommendation. **A more detailed version of this table, with line items for operating expenses, is provided in © 8-9.**

Table 2: Visit Montgomery Base Budget Summary – FY26 Approved, FY27 Recommended, and FY27 Tax-only Scenario

Visit Montgomery Base Budget - Summarized Revenues	FY26	FY27 - CVB Estimate		FY27 - Tax Only	
	Approved	Recommended	Change from FY26	Tax Only	Change from FY26
7% of Hotel/Motel Tax *	\$1,616,887	\$1,597,447	(\$19,440)	\$1,597,447	(\$19,440)
Additional Appropriation *	\$645,837	\$733,159	\$87,322	\$0	(\$645,837)
Inflationary Adjustment	\$67,882	\$58,625	(\$9,257)	\$58,625	(\$9,257)
Municipal Hotel Tax	\$88,000	\$75,000	(\$13,000)	\$75,000	(\$13,000)
MD Office of Tourism Marketing Grant (a)	\$113,000	\$125,000	\$12,000	\$100,000	(\$13,000)
MD Alcohol Manufacturing Grant (b)	\$226,000	\$0	(\$226,000)	\$0	(\$226,000)
Other	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$0	\$125,000	\$0
Total Revenues	\$2,882,606	\$2,714,231	(\$168,375)	\$1,956,072	(\$926,534)
Operating Expenses					
Administrative (incl. personnel)	\$1,330,044	\$1,330,792	\$748	\$1,164,734	(\$165,310)
Strategy and Business Development	\$91,000	\$87,200	(\$3,800)	\$25,200	(\$65,800)
Marketing and Communications	\$1,178,603	\$1,015,904	(\$162,699)	\$595,803	(\$582,800)
Destination and Group Sales	\$282,959	\$280,335	(\$2,624)	\$170,335	(\$112,624)
Total Operating Expenses	\$2,882,606	\$2,714,231	(\$168,375)	\$1,956,072	(\$926,534)

Notes:

*This Table shows the base budget based on revenue estimates from Visit Montgomery (CVB), not the figures ultimately recommended by the CE. Whereas Visit Montgomery believes the share of hotel/motel tax is \$1,597,447 and the additional appropriation is \$733,159, totaling \$2,330,606. According to OMB, the share of hotel/motel tax will be \$1,435,581 and the additional appropriation is \$953,290, totaling \$2,388,871

(a) This revenue source is based on the size of the local appropriation

(b) This was a one-time grant

If the Committee were to recommend the 'Tax-only' scenario, the Marketing and Communications budget would be reduced significantly. Despite reductions to the Administrative expenses, it appears that no personnel would be reduced in this scenario. **The Committee may wish to confirm that if the Council does not approve an appropriation above the required amount, and Visit Montgomery's budget was \$1.96 million as shown in Tax Only Scenario, whether there would be an impact on personnel, operating expenses, or both.**

Given the discrepancy in Visit Montgomery's and OMB's estimate of the Hotel/Motel Tax, if the Council supported an appropriation towards the \$1.96 million budget shown in the Tax Only scenario, would place \$791,424 on the reconciliation list:

CVB Estimate of 7% of Hotel/Motel Taxes = \$1,597,447
OMB Estimate of 7% of Hotel/Motel Taxes = \$1,435,580
Difference = \$161,866
OMB Estimate of Appropriation above 7% Hotel/Motel Taxes = \$953,290
 $\$953,290 - \$161,866 = \$791,424$

Alternatively, Committee members could ask Visit Montgomery to explain tradeoffs of placing different amounts on the reconciliation list, in round numbers, such as in increments of \$100,000. It appears if the appropriation above the mandated amount is reduced, the impact would mostly be on the size of the Marketing and Communications budget. **The Committee may wish to understand the trade-offs of reducing this part of the budget on Visit Montgomery's impact on the County's economy, if that can be measured.**

Summary of Recommended Reductions

1. Place the appropriation above mandated amount on reconciliation list (\$953,290). The impacts of this are unknown.
2. Place \$791,424 on the reconciliation list. Given OMB's estimate of hotel/motel tax revenue for FY27, reducing the appropriation by this amount would reduce Visit Montgomery's budget to the amount shown in the Tax Only Scenario (\$1.96 million)
3. Place increments of \$50,000 or \$100,000 on the reconciliation list based on input of how different amounts impact the proposed expenditures.

F. Fund Balance Policies

OMB recommends a reserve amount equivalent to one month of operating expenses for organizations like Visit Montgomery. For FY27, Visit Montgomery has a \$184,000 fund balance from salary lapse in FY26, specifically.

G. Summary of Committee Decision Points

The table below summarizes increases, potential reductions, or other items identified for Committee decision based on the Council President's recommended budget approach. The Committee may also

reduce items from the Executive’s budget instead of placing them on the reconciliation list and may recommend adding items to the reconciliation list that were not included in the Executive’s budget. All items on the reconciliation list remain subject to final decision making by the Council for funding approval.

Item	FY27 Amount	Notes
Other Potential Reductions		
Appropriation Above Mandated 7% of Hotel/Motel Tax Revenue	\$953,290	Trade-offs of placing different amounts on the reconciliation list are summarized on page 7. Alternative amounts and approaches for determining alternative amounts are also described on page 7.

This report contains:

- Visit Montgomery Responses to Council Staff Questions
- Visit Montgomery Base Budget Scenarios
- Visit Montgomery 2025 Annual Report

- © 1-7
- © 8-9
- © 10-73

Visit Montgomery FY27 Budget Questions

Overall Budget

1. Please submit copies of your approved FY25 and FY26 budgets, and your draft FY27 budget, showing all revenues and expenses by program area. Please show your year-end fund balance in the budget.

FY2025 Notes:

-Revenues came in higher, the MoCo Eats Showcase revenues. Expenses for the event were covered by an EDA Grant.

Expense Highlights

- Advertising production, portion of videos project payment delayed to FY 2026
- Publications/Collateral (travel guide project design and printing delayed to FY 2026)
- Salaries balance of \$184,000 due to lapses
 - Destination Sales Manager – 6 months
 - Part Time position – 12 months
 - Strategy and Business Development Manager – 4 months
- EDA Rural Grant balance of \$81,517.85 moved to FY 2026

FY 2026 Notes: *(through February 2026)*

- Alcohol Manufacturing Grant Promotion Fund (must be spent by the close of FY 2026)
- Publications/Collateral (allocated to printing of travel guide, Tastemakers Trail Map, meetings guide)
- Unused promotions/public relations funds can be moved to advertising
- Membership marketing (*MoCo Eats which was postponed from displacement at the Bethesda North Marriott Hotel & Conference Center due to labor union dispute, will not be held in FY 2026*)
- Special projects balance to be used for Strategic Plan Consultant

2. Going back to 2022, please submit a table showing the County's appropriation, specifying the portion from the General Fund and the portion from the Hotel and Motel Tax.

Can OMB provide this?

It would be helpful to also visually see the increases in Airbnb Short Term Rental hotel tax revenues since the pandemic. (Showing transient versus non-transient because non-transient do not pay hotel taxes if staying more than 30 days.)

3. Please explain the impact to your organization of the Council not approving the amount above the 7% of Hotel/Motel Tax Revenues?

See attached budget with reductions

Highlights of reductions:

- Reduction in salaries, not adding positions
- Cut all consumer trade shows (AAA and Travel and Adventure Show and other local public facing events (\$14,000)
- No MoCo Eats or small business promotions or special campaigns and events (\$40,000)

- Reduction in advertising (\$300,000)
- Reductions on printed publications and promotions and public relations programming (\$85,000)
- Reduction in sales programming, cutting trade shows by \$90,000

4. Please provide a comparison with the annual budget of regional DMOs. Please explain their funding structure to the extent possible (i.e., how much do they receive in public funds?)

Sent 4/1/2026

5. What is a recommended budget for Visit Montgomery regardless of funding constraints, and how would the additional funding be programmed?

- Advertising – we would like to have a minimum of \$1.5 million annually for just advertising
- Staffing – a dedicated staff full time to attend consumer trade shows, local events, manage mobile visitor center and brick and mortar visitor center in a central location. Also, a dedicated staff member to assist the President & CEO with administrative, human resources, budget, board meeting organization and board development, etc.
- Funding to attract one to two signature events that draw weekend overnight visitation (music festival, food festival, etc.)

The Visit Montgomery staff have worked with the Strategic Plan partner to identify gaps in services and programming. The strategic plan will provide comparative DMO destination budgets, funding structures and recommendations for Visit Montgomery’s future funding formulas to address these gaps. Strategic Plan partner, Coraggio Group, will hold a session with the Visit Montgomery Board on April 13, 2026.

FTEs and Vacant Positions

6. How many total FTEs do you have?

We have 7.5 positions (7 full time and one part time position)
 Pending the budget outcome for FY 2027, we would increase the hours of the .5 position to a full-time position to assist the administration and marketing divisions in the last quarter of FY 2026 and beyond.

7. How many vacancies are there, and for what positions? Please note how long each position has been vacant. FY 2026

Communications Manager – hired with start date April 13, 2026, vacant 4 months
 P.T. position to move to F.T. pending budget for FY 2027

8. For vacant positions, is there ‘lapse’ (funds budgeted but unused)?

Yes, there was a lapse in FY 2025:
 Destination Sales Manager – 6 months
 Part Time position – 12 months

Strategy and Business Development Manager – 4 months

The FY 2026 lapse:

Communications Manager – 4 months

Part Time position – 6 months lapse, their start date for 25-30 hours per week was January 2026.

Update

9. Please share a copy of your annual report.

Sent 4/1/2026

10. Please provide an update on your strategic plan.

Coraggio Group will hold their final session with the Board of Directors on Monday, April 13. The full report should be released by the end of April 2026.

Visit Montgomery would like to request a session with the ECON Committee following the FY 2027 Budget Sessions to provide a report on the outcomes and recommendations of the 2026-2031 Strategic Plan.

11. Please provide an update on your rural branding strategy.

Visit Montgomery would recommend a session with the ECON Committee following the FY 2027 Budget Sessions to provide a broader update on the Rural Branding project milestones, research, brand messaging and implementation plans. Below are some highlights of the project.

Development Process Completed:

- Selection of Contractor, CivicBrand
- Kick off meeting
- Committee Meetings
- Status Checks
- Data, Research and Surveying
- Trip 1 - Engagement & Asset Audit
- Virtual Engagement & Research
- Trip 2 - Equitable Engagement
- Place Brand Audit
- Mission & Vision
- Brand Story & Principles
- Identity & Brand Architecture
- Messaging & Visual Language
- Brand Guidelines
- Website complete
- Allocation of advertising funds to promoting Rural Montgomery

In-Progress:

- Implementation Plan
- Impact v. Effort Matrix
- Management & Measurement
- Launch Plan

Marketing Goals:

1. Increase destination awareness in feeder markets
2. Drive off-season and midweek visitation
3. Increase length of stay (day trip → overnight)
4. Support local businesses through shared promotion
5. Establish the brand as a recognized outdoor + craft destination

Purpose

The goal of expanding the rural Montgomery County message is to position the region as a sustainable, authentic rural destination where visitors can explore deeply, connect with the land, and experience the full value of its farms, outdoor recreation, craft foods, arts, heritage, and other cultural experiences. The messaging we use highlights local businesses and producers, showcase the economic and cultural value of tourism, and encourage experiences that are immersive, educational, and rooted in the community's values.

Visitors can walk the trails, meet the farmers, explore the orchards, and uncover the stories behind every product, every landmark, and every experience. What's grown, made, and shared here is best explored firsthand.

12. Please summarize key accomplishments for Visit Montgomery in FY26 to-date

FY26 Accomplishments highlights are below. Visit Montgomery staff will provide expanded details on the information below at the ECON Committee Meeting on April 10, 2026, with a PPT (we plan to submit this to Bilal on Monday, April 6).

-Recognized as a State Leader: Received three Maryland Tourism & Travel Summit awards for collaboration, digital marketing, and leadership, reinforcing Montgomery County's role as a leader in tourism.

-Leveraged MD Department of Commerce, Division of Tourism, funding to continue the Meet In Maryland (MIM) initiative further broadening Visit Montgomery as a destination to meeting professionals nationwide.

-Stronger, Higher-Quality Digital Engagement: Website engagement continues to grow, with page views up 15% and engaged sessions up 35%, indicating more visitors are actively planning trips.

-Expanded Visitor Planning Tools: Significant growth in the Visit MoCo App (+138% users) and the launch of new tools like an AI chatbot, upcoming digital guide “Q,” and interactive kiosks at the Montgomery County Conference Center and the Maryland SoccerPlex.

-Featured Marketing Campaigns: Expedia campaign running from fall through the holidays generated 7,000 room nights and \$1M in revenue, with a 26:1 return on ad spend. During the same timeframe, we piloted an AI-driven ad unit that allowed potential visitors to ask questions and explore the county directly within the ad. Its strong performance led to presenting a case study at a national tourism conference.

-Direct Engagement with Travelers: In-person outreach in key markets provided both promotion and real-time visitor insights, helping to better understand traveler interests.

-Development of New Programs: Several successful initiatives, including rural branding, C&O Canal partnerships, Meet in Maryland and MoCo Eats Food & Beverage Showcase were launched with grant funding that has now ended. Continuing these programs requires local investment to maintain momentum and impact.

-Secured a \$226,000 grant from the Maryland Alcohol Manufacturing Promotion Fund. This fund will help to foster growth, attract visitors, support special events, and promote Montgomery County’s breweries, wineries and distilleries industry countywide.

-Launching in May 2026 a retail brewery tour and winery tour to provide Tastemakers Trail features businesses with an opportunity for generating more revenue on off-peak days of week.

-Sales Division’s bookings are up 54% for the period of July to December 2025 from the previous year.

-Sales Division’s bookings in the association market have increased 50% year over year and tour and travel bookings have increased 41% year over year.

13. What is planned for FY27?

Develop a future predictable, diversified and scalable funding model for Visit Montgomery to compete regionally, reduce volatility and ensure tourism economy growth.

- Evaluate existing funding sources and create new funding opportunity scenarios
- Develop a long-term plan under a new funding model that is strategic and has strong return on investment and metrics.

Building National Visibility Through Earned Media

- Visit Montgomery is a finalist to host the Society of American Travel Writers (SATW) conference, which would bring nearly 100 travel journalists to Montgomery County.

- This presents a significant opportunity to generate national media coverage and long-term exposure for the County.
- To secure the bid, we must invest in hosting, specifically evening receptions, dining experiences, and familiarization tours that showcase the County.

Scaling Storytelling to Drive Visitation

- Develop curated itineraries, articles, and videos that highlight Montgomery County’s communities, culture, and unique experiences, focusing on helping visitors easily plan weekend trips and overnight stays.
- Requires continued investment in content development, video production, and digital distribution to remain competitive in how travelers discover destinations today.

Expanding Direct-to-Visitor Outreach in Key Markets

- These events allow us to connect directly with travelers who are actively planning trips, which provides both immediate promotion and in-market research to better understand visitor preferences.
- Competing destinations invest in large-scale, immersive setups that attract attention and engagement.

Strengthening Meetings & Group Travel Pipeline

- Pursue and host a meeting planner conference to bring decision-makers to Montgomery County.
- Hosting planners in-market significantly increases the likelihood of future bookings

Consistent Presence in Key Target Meeting Planner Trade Shows and Conferences

- Implement trade show schedule and client events and activations that shift reliance on federal government and federal contractor business transient and group business to broader markets.
- Key target markets will be Corporate, BIO/Pharmaceutical, Association, Tour and Travel Social/Military/Educational/Religious/Fraternal (SMERF) and sports/sports retention
- This requires destination sales managers not just showing up at trade shows but attending repetitively and developing long term relationships

Launching a New Signature Event *(pending funding)*

- Partner with a professional promoter to introduce a new music and food event to drive visitation and overnight stays.
- Strategic investment is required to launch and sustain an event that can grow into a recurring economic driver.

Leverage Major Events to Drive Overnight Visitation

- Execute targeted campaigns tied to:
 - America 250
 - NFL Draft
 - KPMG Women's PGA Championship
- Requires timely and targeted marketing, beyond general marketing campaigns, to ensure Montgomery County is visible when travelers are making decisions.

Expand Rural Montgomery brand through not just promotion but product creation, packaging and storytelling that turns scattered assets (outdoor recreation, history, wineries, breweries) into bookable, themed experiences.

- Increase destination awareness in feeder markets but also to local and regional residents
- Support local small businesses through shared promotion and storytelling via paid and earned media.

Visit Montgomery Base Budget	FY26	FY27 - CVB Estimate		FY27 - Tax Only	
	Approved	Recommended	Change from FY26	Tax Only	Change from FY26
Revenues					
7% of Hotel/Motel Tax	\$1,616,887	\$1,597,447	(\$19,440)	\$1,597,447	(\$19,440)
Additional Appropriation	\$645,837	\$733,159	\$87,322	\$0	(\$645,837)
Inflationary Adjustment	\$67,882	\$58,625	(\$9,257)	\$58,625	
Municipal Hotel Tax	\$88,000	\$75,000	(\$13,000)	\$75,000	(\$13,000)
MD Office of Tourism Marketing Grant (a)	\$113,000	\$125,000	\$12,000	\$100,000	(\$13,000)
MD Alcohol Manufacturing Grant (b)	\$226,000	\$0	(\$226,000)	\$0	(\$226,000)
Other	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$0	\$125,000	\$0
Total Revenues	\$2,882,606	\$2,714,231	(\$168,375)	\$1,956,072	(\$926,534)
Operating Expenses					
Administrative	\$1,330,044	\$1,330,792	\$748	\$1,164,734	(\$165,310)
Personnel	\$948,600	\$977,058	\$28,458	\$893,000	(\$55,600)
Consulting/Management	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$0	\$0	(\$40,000)
Special Projects	\$90,000	\$65,000	(\$25,000)	\$30,000	(\$60,000)
Montgomery College Scholarship	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$0	\$0	(\$6,000)
Other	\$245,444	\$242,734	(\$2,710)	\$241,734	(\$3,710)
Strategy and Business Development	\$91,000	\$87,200	(\$3,800)	\$25,200	(\$65,800)
MoCo Eats Showcase	\$38,000	\$40,000	\$2,000	\$0	(\$38,000)
Other	\$53,000	\$47,200	(\$5,800)	\$25,200	(\$27,800)
Marketing and Communciations	\$1,178,603	\$1,015,904	(\$162,699)	\$595,803	(\$582,800)
Advertising	\$610,000	\$669,019	\$59,019	\$348,918	(\$261,082)
Promotions/Public Relations	\$90,053	\$90,000	(\$53)	\$45,000	(\$45,053)
Research	\$76,050	\$83,655	\$7,605	\$68,655	(\$7,395)
Maryland Alcohol Manufacturing Marketing Grant (b)	\$226,000	\$0	(\$226,000)	\$0	(\$226,000)
Other	\$176,500	\$173,230	(\$3,270)	\$133,230	(\$43,270)
Destination and Group Sales	\$282,959	\$280,335	(\$2,624)	\$170,335	(\$112,624)
Dues/Subscriptions/Sales Prospecting Tools	\$48,869	\$50,335	\$1,466	\$50,335	\$1,466
Meetings/Conventions/Trade Shows/Sponsorships	\$102,090	\$110,000	\$7,910	\$60,000	(\$42,090)
Group Tour Trade Shows/Sponsorship	\$16,000	\$20,000	\$4,000	\$16,000	\$0
Sales - International	\$20,000	\$3,000	(\$17,000)	\$0	(\$20,000)
Familiarization Tours & Sales Missions	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$0	\$10,000	(\$10,000)
Sports Marketing Bid Fees/Grants	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	(\$10,000)
Other	\$66,000	\$67,000	\$1,000	\$34,000	(\$32,000)
Total Operating Expenses	\$2,882,606	\$2,714,231	(\$168,375)	\$1,956,072	(\$926,534)

Notes:

*This Table shows the base budget based on revenue estimates from Visit Montgomery (CVB), not the figures ultimately recommended by the CE. Whereas Visit Montgomery belie

(a) This revenue source is based on the size of the local appropriation

(b) This was a one-time grant



VISIT
MONTGOMERY
MARYLAND'S CULTURAL CAPITAL™

ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2025





A Letter from the President & CEO

The Visit Montgomery Team and Board of Directors are pleased to present our Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Report.

We administered four Economic Development Administration Grants over the last year.

- Meet In Maryland, a collaboration of five destination marketing organizations (Visit Baltimore, Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County, Visit Howard, Visit Montgomery and Experience Prince George's) launched in November 2024.
- Let's Go C & O Canal, a partnership with Visit Allegany, Visit Frederick and Visit Hagerstown/Washington County, has provided additional exposure about all the experiences that can be found along the canal.
- Rural Branding, the open space that is one third of the county's land mass, will have a new brand and slogan that guides residents and visitors through the farms, wineries, breweries, distilleries, outdoor recreation and historic sites.
- We launched the inaugural MoCo Eats Showcase and Hospitality Conference with a sold-out crowd.

Our sales team continues to stay focused on key market segments sourcing 499 leads with a booking conversion rate of 41%.

Marketing and communications efforts also delivered strong results this year. The Visit Montgomery website saw 1.1 million sessions and 1.9 million page views, and our earned media efforts generated \$2.9 million in publicity value. We also strengthened our social media impact, increasing Instagram engagement by 11% and Facebook engagement by 41%.

We look forward to continue our partnership with the community and growing the tourism economy.



Your friend in hospitality,

Kelly R. Groff, CDME
President & CEO

MEET THE TEAM



Lee Callicutt
Senior Destination Sales Manager



Maria Bardos
Manager, Strategy and
Business Development



Leticia Engel
Senior Marketing Manager



Kelly Groff
President and CEO



Katherine Crosse
Destination Sales Manager



Aynae Simmons
Communications Coordinator



Joseph Doran
Community Engagement and
Partnership Manager

Visit Montgomery



Incorporated in 1983 as the
Conference & Visitors Bureau of Montgomery County, MD (CVB)

Structure:

- 501 (c)6 Non-Profit Organization
- Under contract with Montgomery County, Maryland
- Volunteer Board of Directors self-nominated
- Destination marketing organization (DMO) recognized by the State of MD as the only County DMO

Mission:

The mission of Visit Montgomery is to market and develop the county and its communities as a preferred destination for group and individual travel thereby fostering **economic growth** and **quality of place** through tourism.

Economic Impact of Tourism in 2024

Source: *Tourism Economics & Smith Travel Research*

\$2.2 Billion

Spent into the Local Economy

By **8.9 Million** Visitors

including **\$23 Million**
in hotel tax revenue



Organization Focus

Destination Marketing

Key objective is to attract more visitors to Montgomery County, MD

- Advertising in print, digital, broadcast and out-of-home media
- Destination sales tradeshow attendance and sales missions
- Leisure travel sales programs and strategies to increase weekend room night generation
- Familiarization tours – event planners, meeting planners, influencers and travel writers
- Website, content development and email marketing

Destination Management

Key objective is to develop the destination through community development and outreach

- Advancements in market research and engagement technology to develop future strategies
- Develop strategic plans that address the future of sports and meeting facility infrastructure
- Tourism product development that ties comparable themes and programs together into a unified experience
- Community engagement and advisory groups
- Developing diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives

Performance Metrics



Visitation and Visitor Spending

- Day & Overnight Visitation
- Visitor Spending by Category
- Overall Economic Impact to the Destination
- Hotel Room Tax Collections
- MD Sales & Use Tax Collections in Tourism Sectors

Marketing

- Website Sessions & Page Views
- Time on Website
- Social Media Following
- Social Media Engagement
- Stories Placed
- Adventure Planner App Downloads
- Advertising Equivalency for Editorial
- Advertising Impressions

Sales

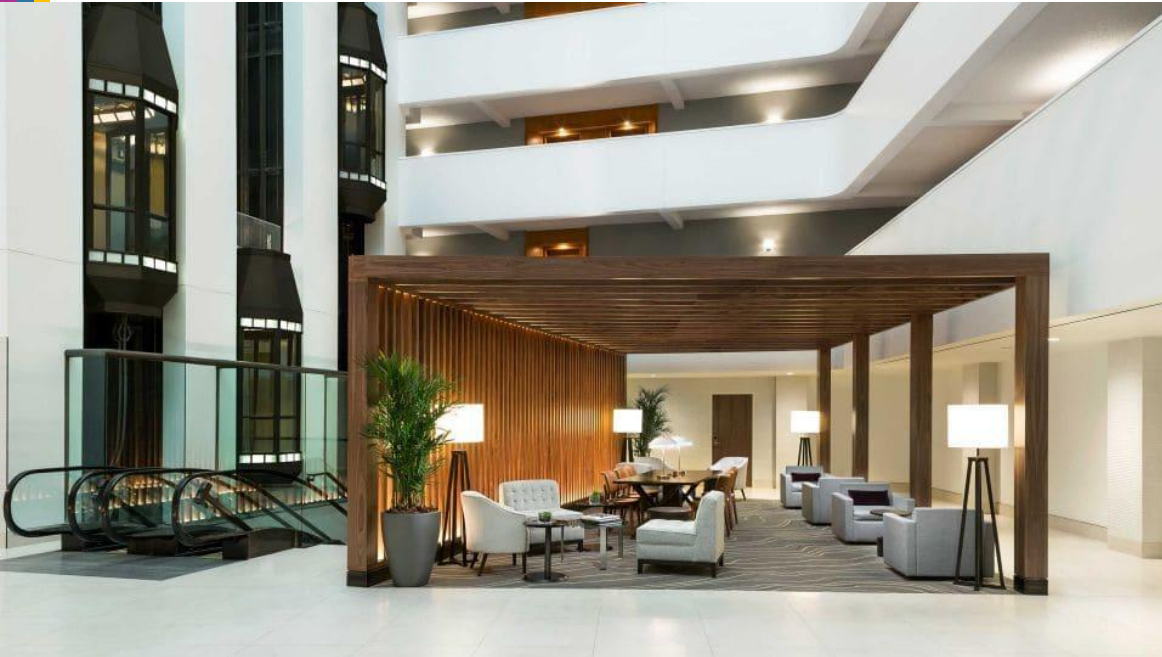
- Leads Sourced
- Potential Room Nights
- Potential Attendees
- Prospects generated from trade show attendance
- Overall Leads
- Definite Groups
- Trade Show Leads Booked
- Definite Room Nights
- Definite Booking Attendees
- Booking Growth in Targeted Sectors including Bio/Pharma/Association

LODGING UPDATE
HOTELS





Hotel Census Fiscal Year 2025



Community	# Hotel Rooms
Bethesda/Chevy Chase	2510
Rockville	2499
Gaithersburg	2010
Silver Spring	1317
Germantown	500
TOTAL	8836

Source: Smith Travel Research.

* Bethesda North Marriott Hotel is included in the Rockville census.

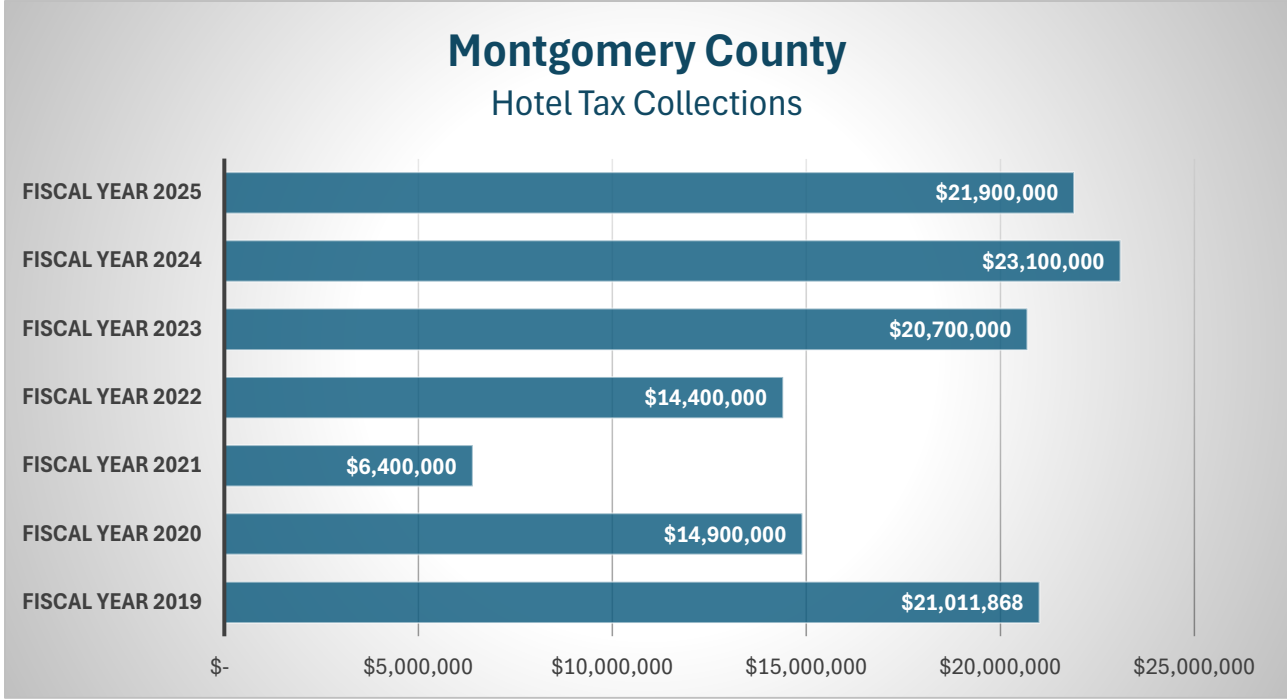
**The Hotel Silver Spring closed in April 2025 (246 rooms)

Montgomery County's hotel census was 9,671 pre pandemic

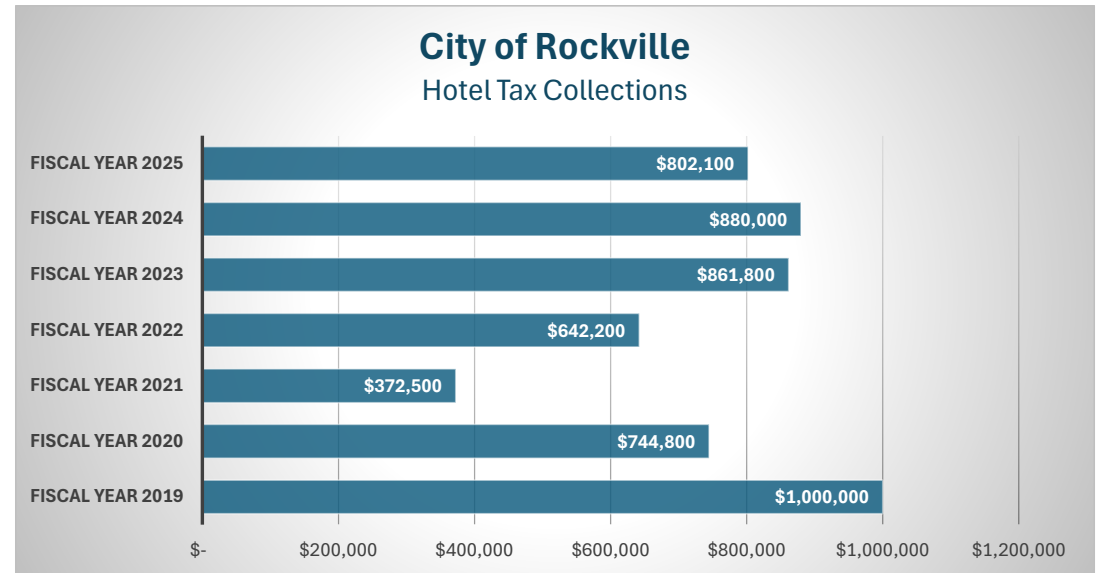
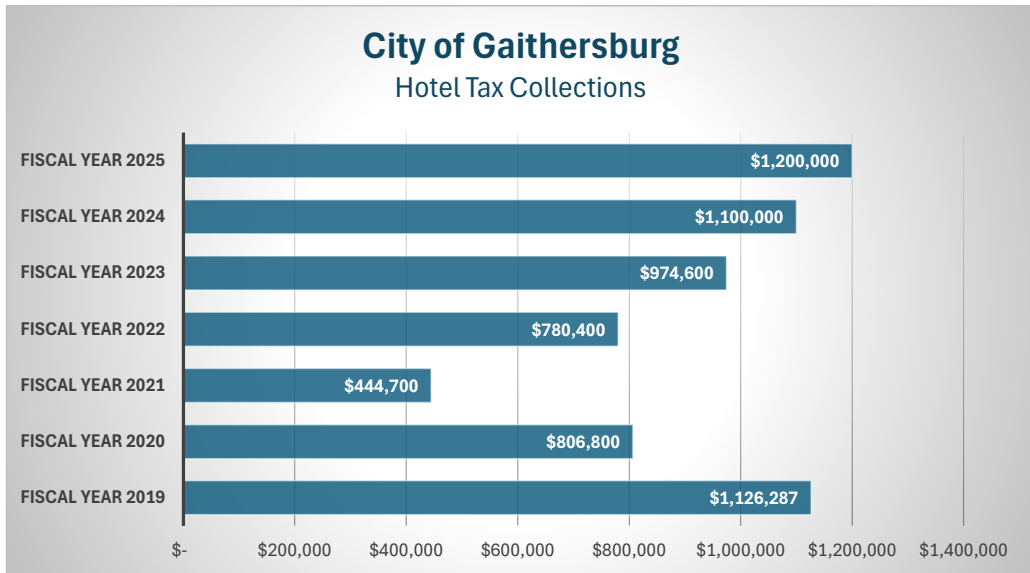


Hotel Tax Collections Fiscal Year 2025

	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
Montgomery County	\$21.0M	\$14.9M	\$6.4M	\$14.4M	\$20.7M	\$23.1M	\$21.9M
City of Gaithersburg	\$1.1M	\$806.8K	\$444.7K	\$780.4K	\$974.6K	\$1.1M	\$1.2M
City of Rockville	\$1.0M	\$744.8K	\$372.5K	\$642.2K	\$861.8K	\$880.0K	\$802.1K



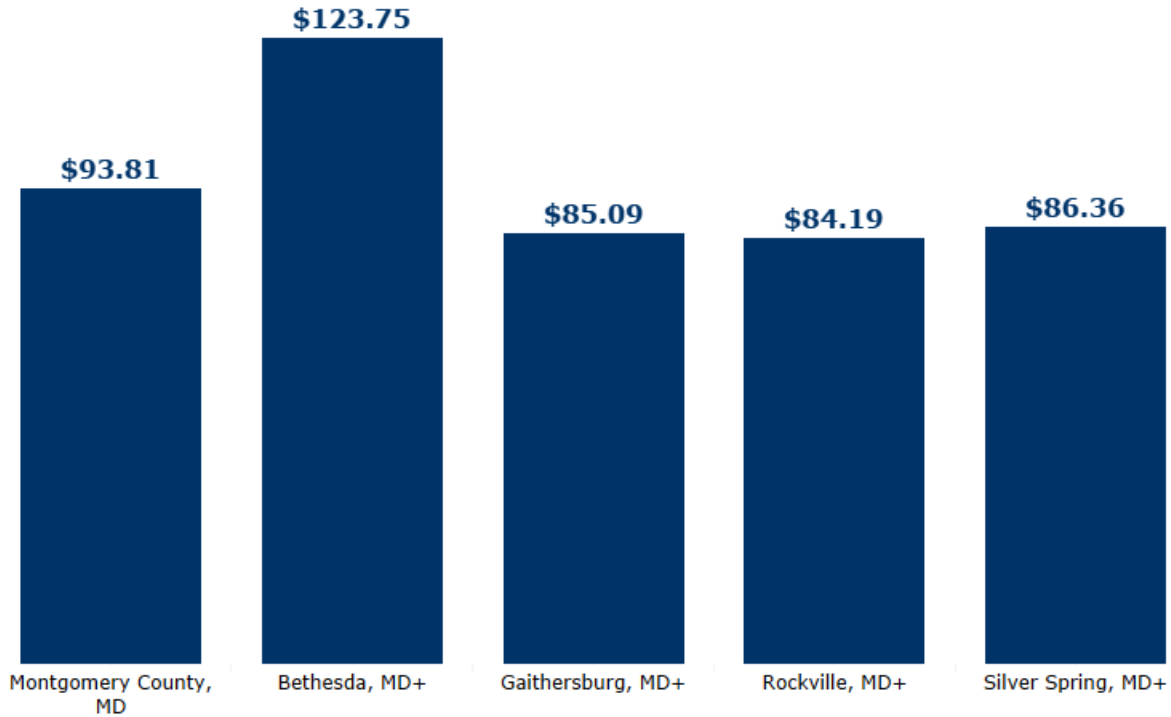
Source: Smith Travel Research



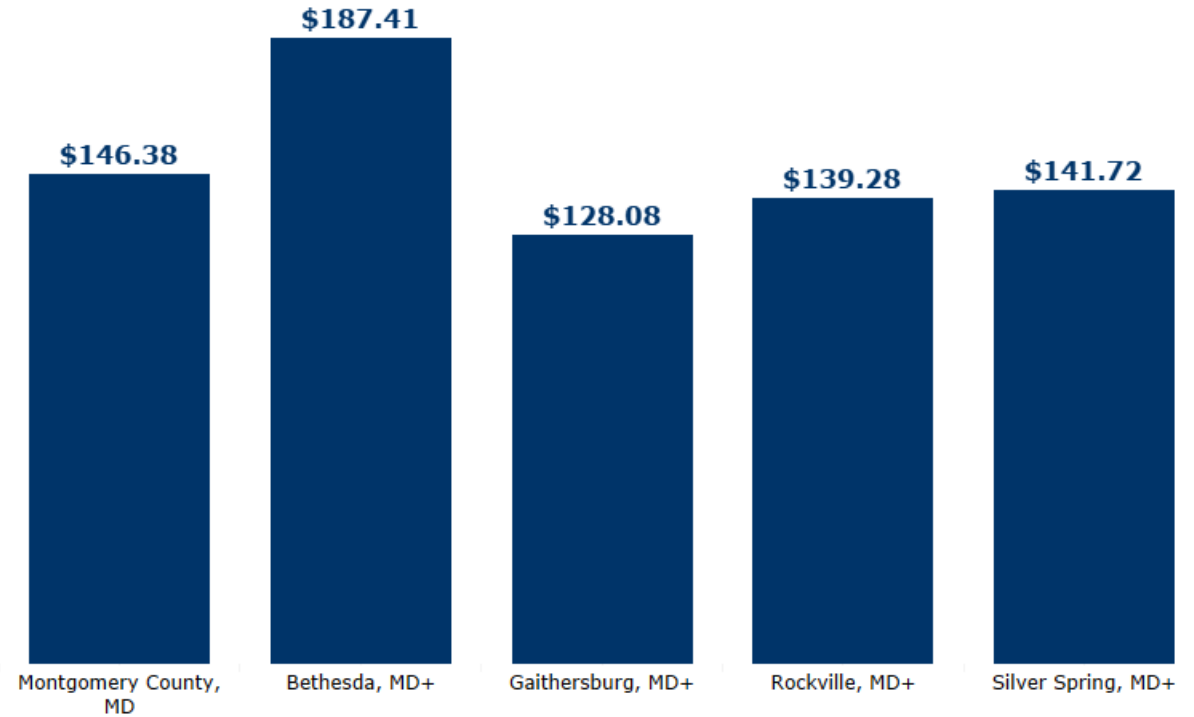
Hotel Occupancy Fiscal Year 2025

<p>Revenue</p> <p>\$310.3M</p> <p>-3.3%</p>	<p>Occupancy</p> <p>64.1%</p> <p>-2.4%</p>	<p>ADR</p> <p>\$146</p> <p>-0.8%</p>	<p>RevPAR</p> <p>\$94</p> <p>-3.2%</p>	<p>Supply</p> <p>3.3M</p> <p>-0.1%</p>	<p>Demand</p> <p>2.1M</p> <p>-2.5%</p>
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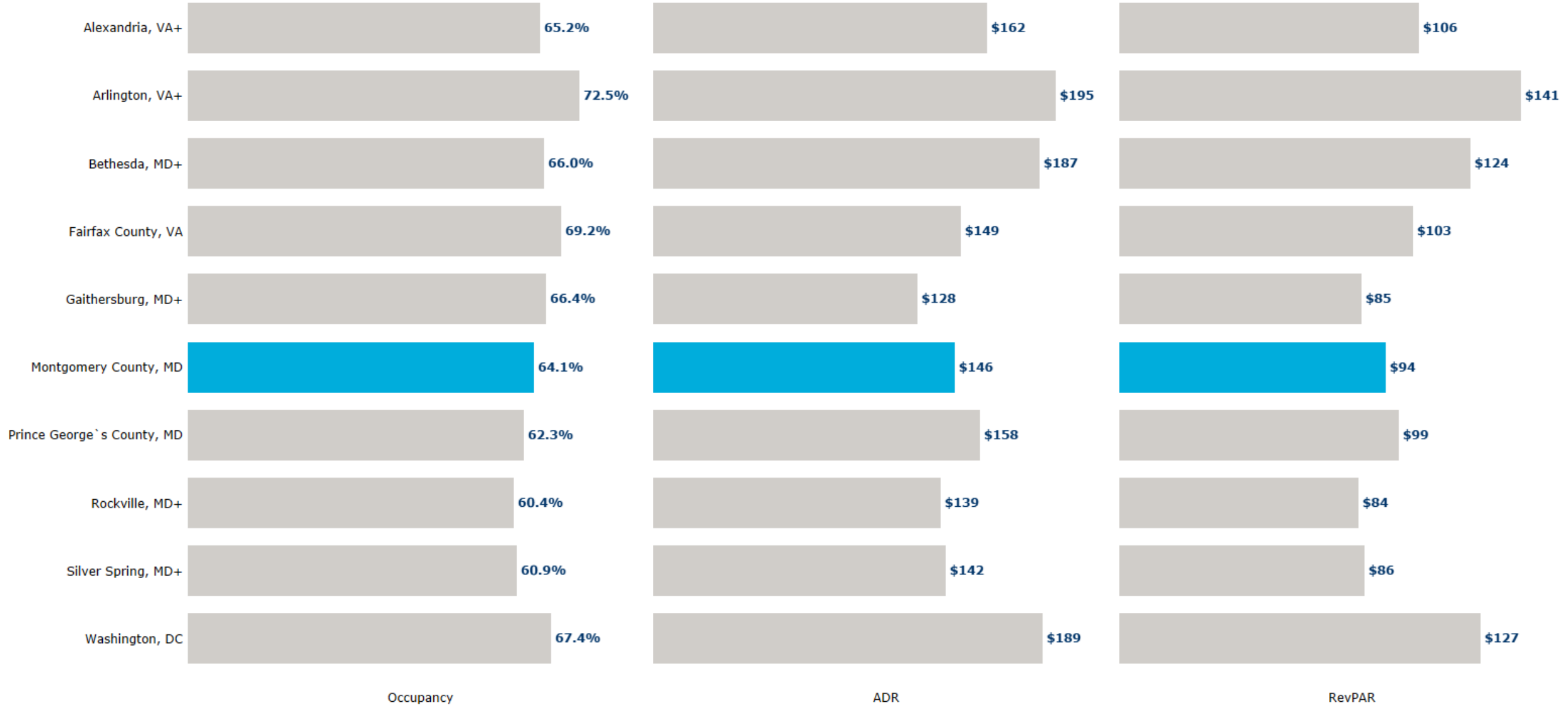
Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR)



Hotel Average Daily Rate



Competitive Markets Performance Fiscal Year 2025



LODGING UPDATE

Short Term Rentals



Short Term Rental in Montgomery County Fiscal Year 2025



Occupancy
66.6%
-0.4%

ADR
\$114
+1.8%

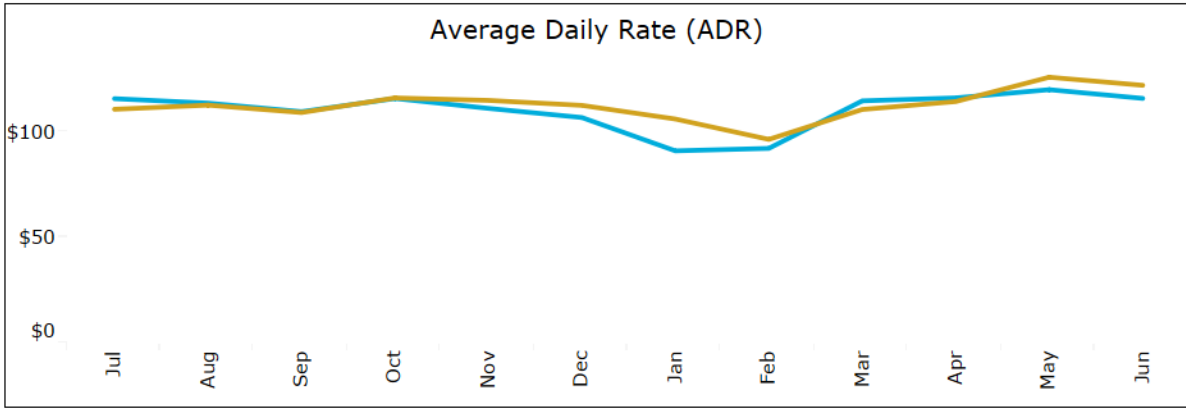
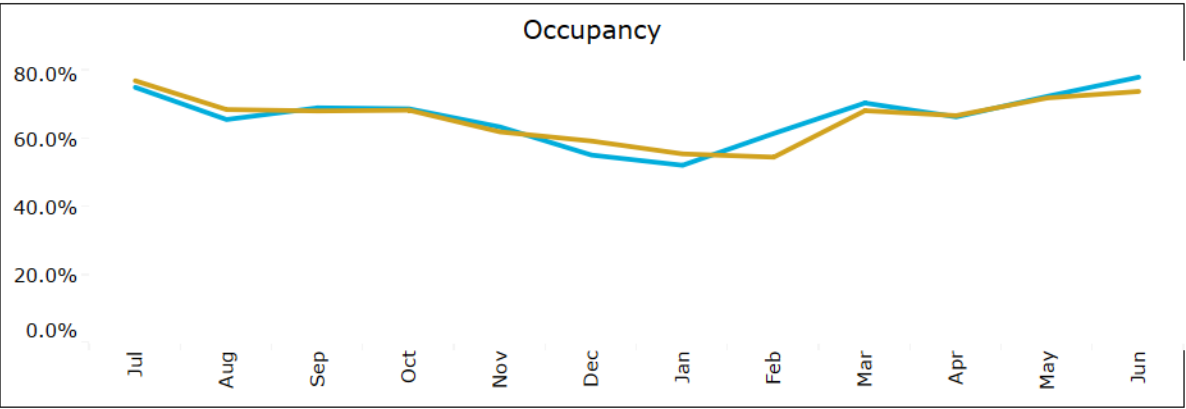
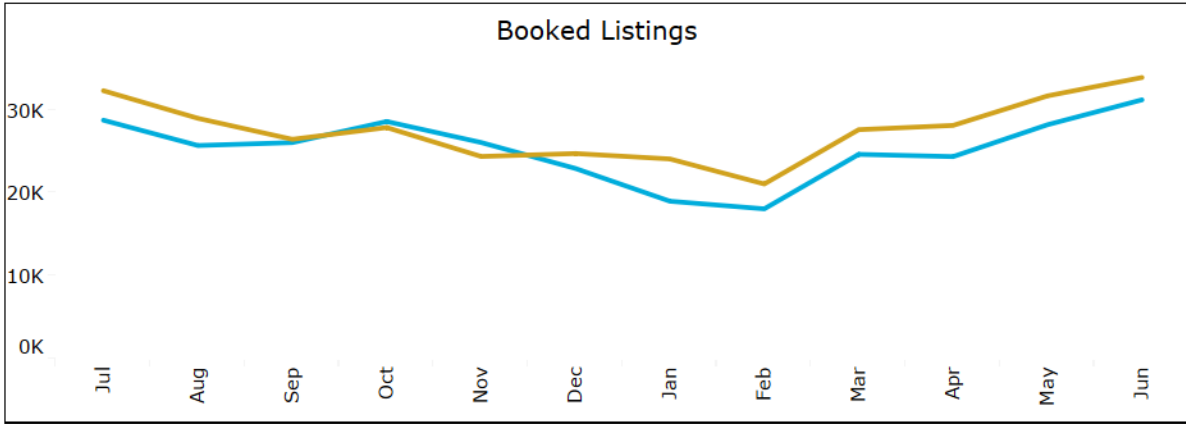
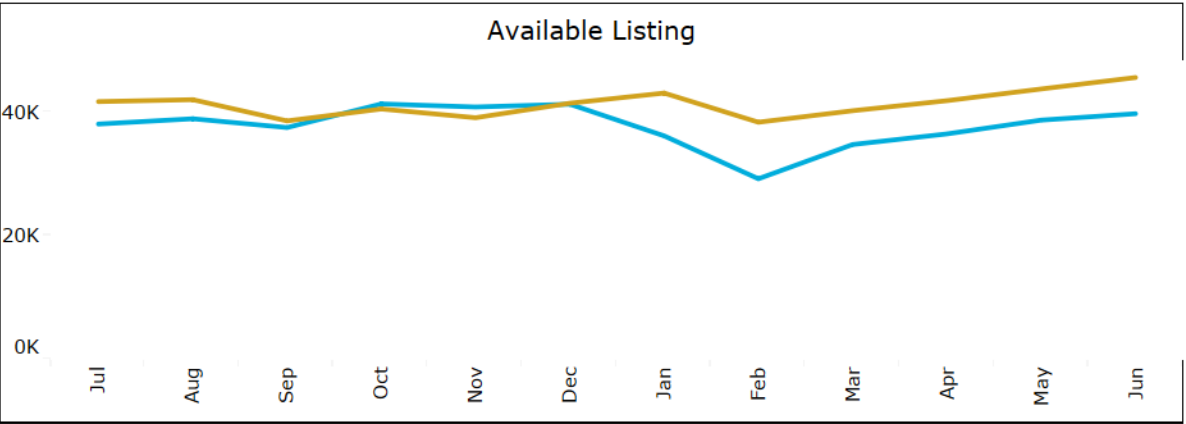
RevPAR
\$76
+1.3%

Supply
497.6K
+9.6%

Demand
331.4K
+9.1%

Revenue
\$37.6M
+11.0%

■ 2024 ■ 2025



Short Term Rental in Gaithersburg, MD Fiscal Year 2025



Occupancy
71.7%
+4.4%

ADR
\$83
+12.6%

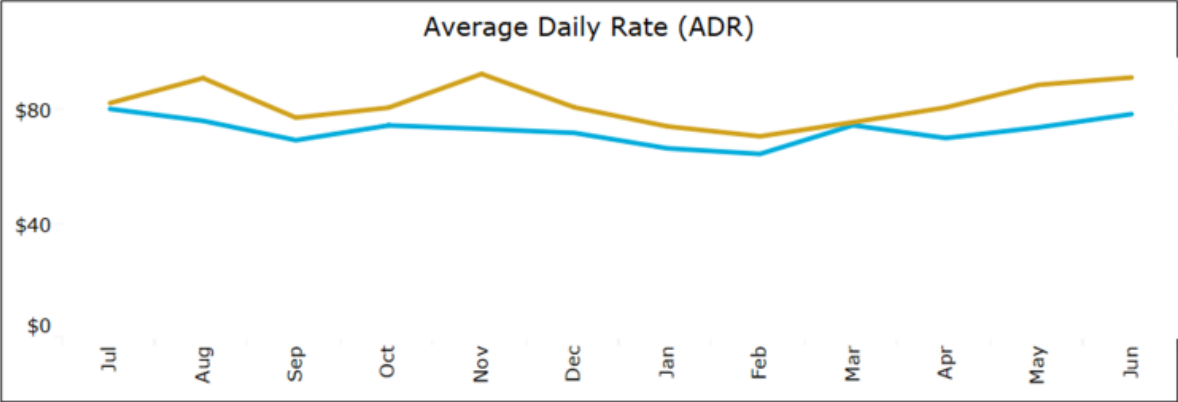
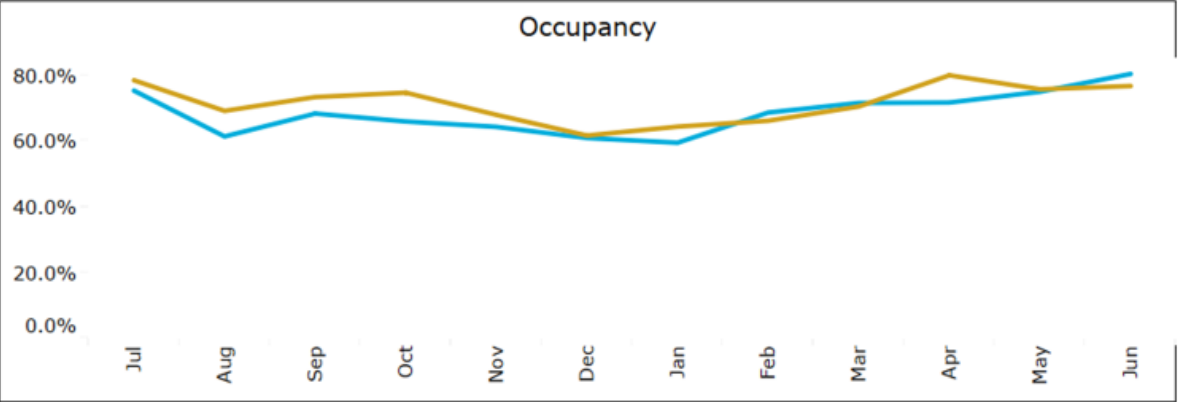
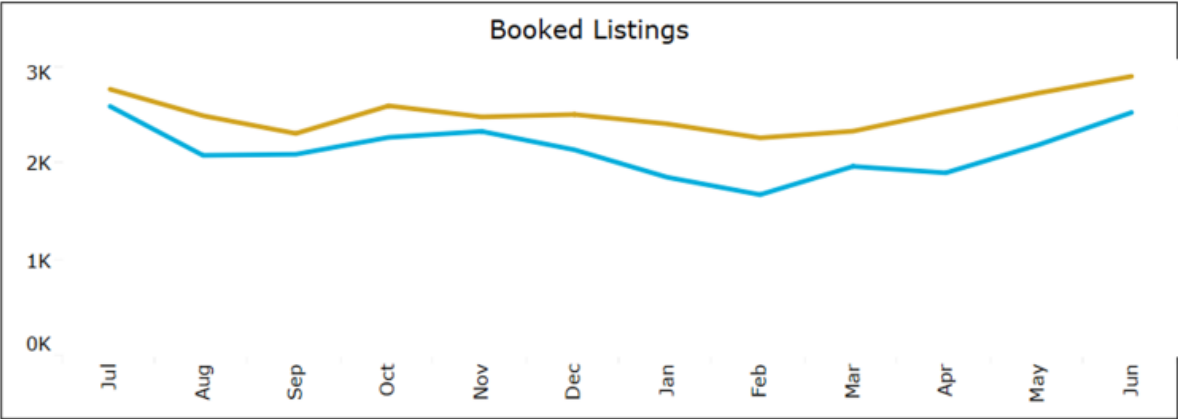
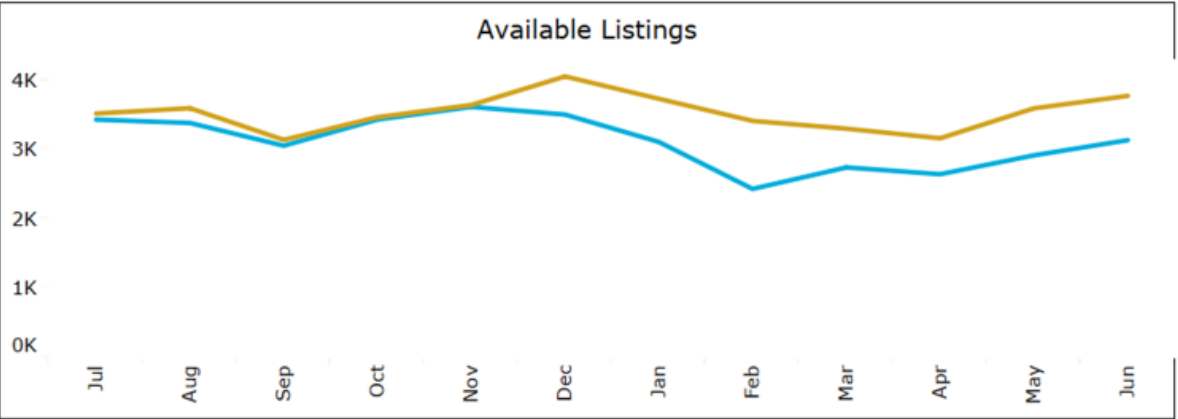
RevPAR
\$60
+17.6%

Supply
42.4K
+13.4%

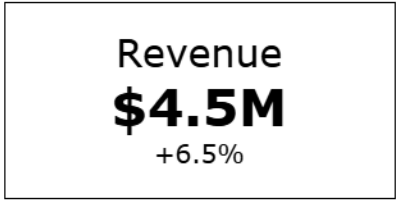
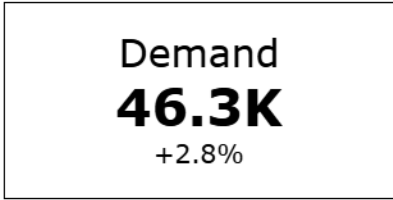
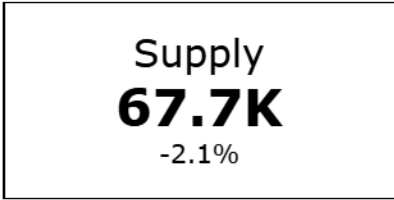
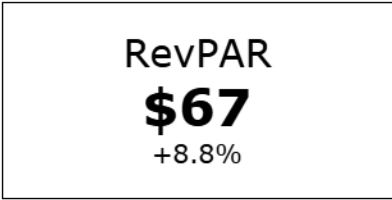
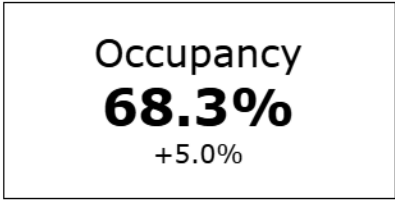
Demand
30.4K
+18.4%

Revenue
\$2.5M
+33.3%

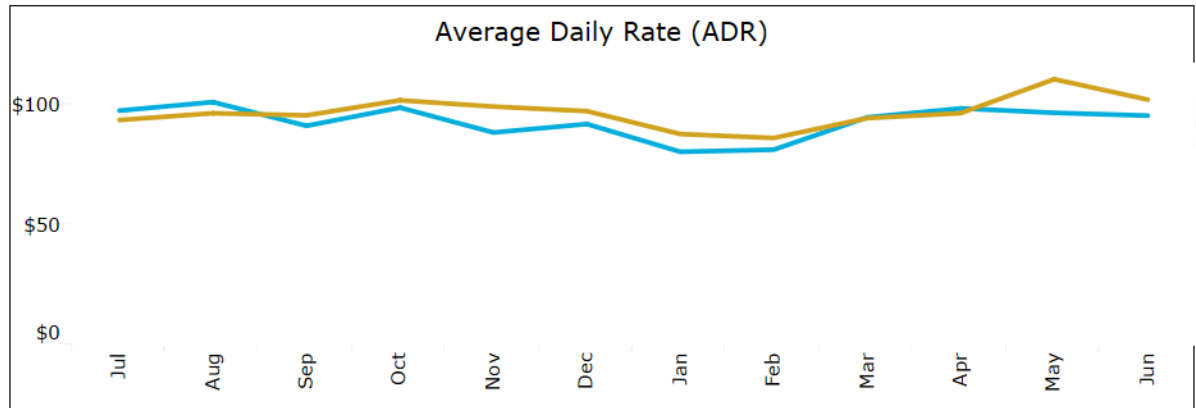
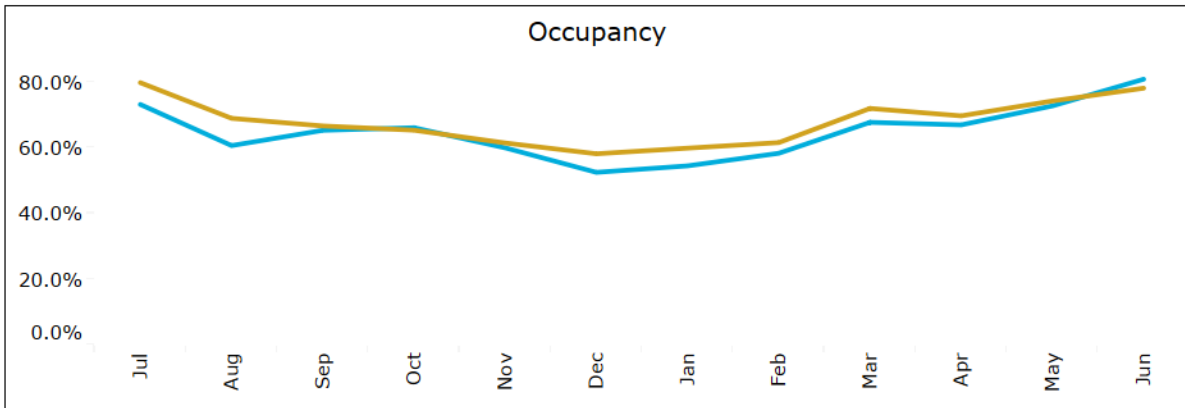
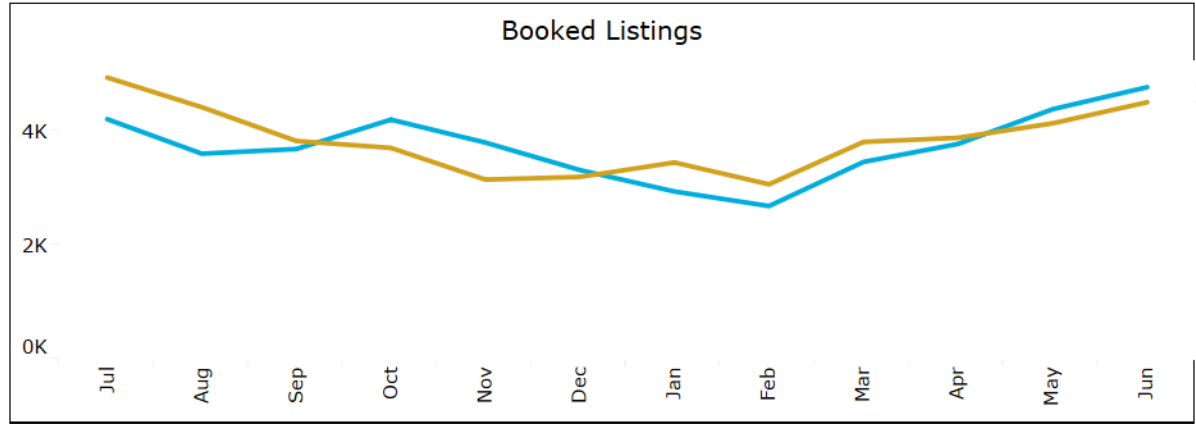
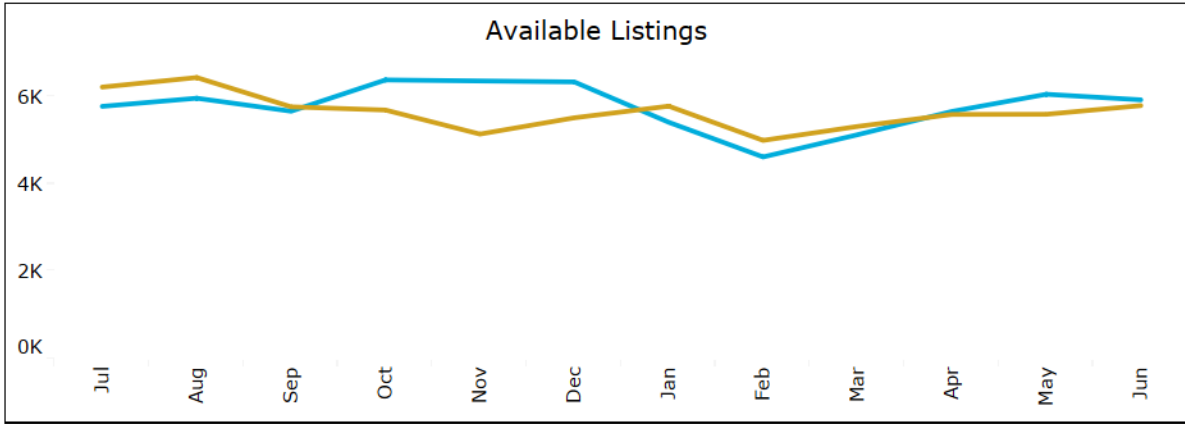
■ 2024 ■ 2025



Short Term Rental in Rockville, MD Fiscal Year 2025



■ 2024 ■ 2025



DIVISION UPDATE

Sales





Sales Focus



Destination Sales Manager 1

Primary Markets

Corporate

BIO/Pharmaceutical

Government

Association

*(Representing markets of corporate,
PHARMA, and Government)*

Destination Sales Manager 2

Primary Markets

Tour and Travel

Social/Military/Educational/Religious/Fraternal
(SMERF)

Association

*(Representing markets of tour
and travel and SMERF)*

Sports Development + Retention

☰	Event Count	Requested Rooms	Room Attendees	EEI Value
	207	72,271	67,165	\$14,826,236

Association	23
Bio-Tech	3
Corporate	13
Educational	16
Entertainment	4
Fraternal	1
Government	8
Health	1
Military	5
Religious	2
Reunion	2
Social	7
Sports/ Competition	19
Tour & Travel	103
Grand Total	207

The Destination Sales Division sourced **8 more** hotel bookings over Fiscal Year 2024.

Leads by Market Segment Fiscal Year 2025

Event Count	Requested Rooms	Room Attendees	EEI Value
499	196,852	159,617	\$42,716,486

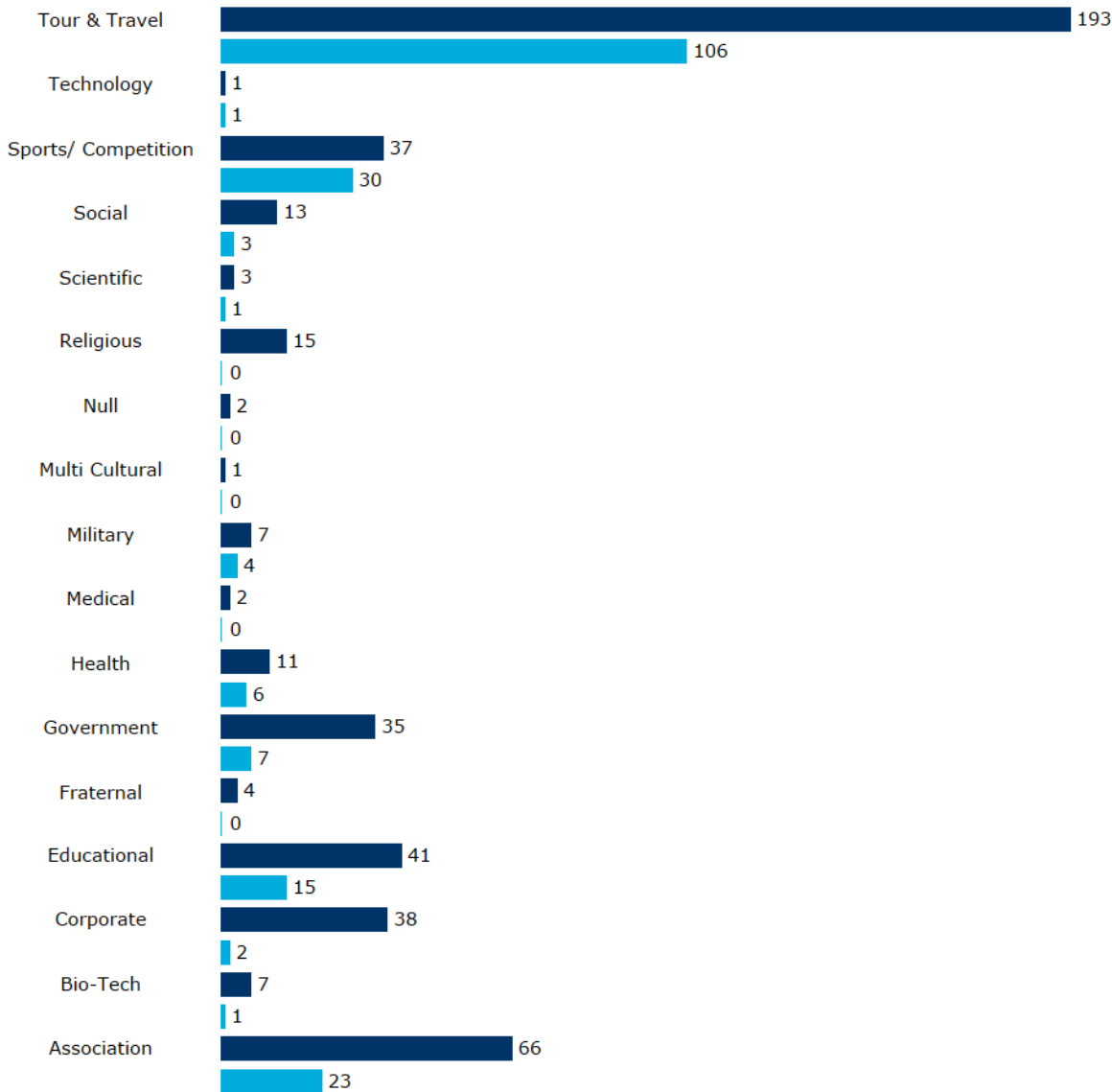
Association	78
Bio-Tech	11
Corporate	59
Educational	35
Entertainment	5
Fraternal	7
Government	34
Health	3
Medical	1
Military	5
Religious	14
Reunion	4
Social	9
Sports/ Competition	28
Technology	1
Tour & Travel	205
Grand Total	499

The Destination Sales Division sourced **20 more** leads over Fiscal Year 2024

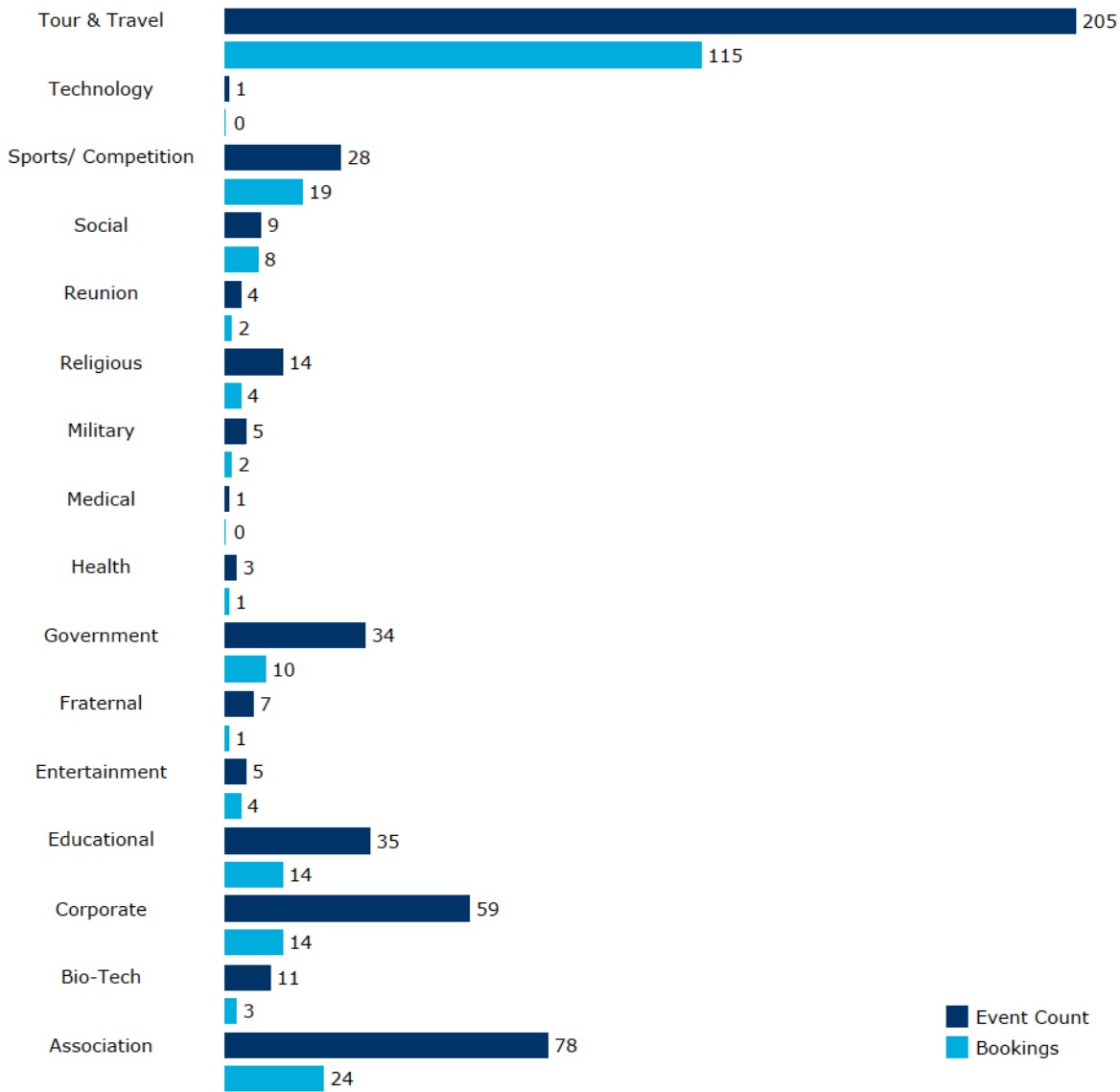
Lead to Booking Volume Fiscal Year 2025



Sales Division Fiscal Year 2024
Lead to Booking Volume



Sales Division Fiscal Year 2025
Lead to Booking Volume



■ Event Count
■ Bookings

Trade Show Schedule – Group Tour Fiscal Year 2025



EVENT NAME	Estimated # of Attendees	# number of years attending	Date	Location	Cost
Student Youth Travel Association (SYTA) Annual Conference	1100	7	August 8-13, 2024	New York, NY	\$ 4,005
Maryland Motorcoach Group Leader Showcase	600	3	September 23-24, 2024	Hagerstown, MD	\$ 418
National Tour Association (NTA) Travel Exchange	1200	7	November 17-20, 2024	Huntsville, AL	\$ 3,439
American Bus Association (ABA) Marketplace	1500	7	February 1-4, 2025	Philadelphia, PA	\$ 2,598
Pennsylvania Bus Association (PBA) MarketPlace	600	4	March 24-25, 2025	Lancaster, PA	\$ 1,116
Pennsylvania Bus Association (PBA) Annual Meeting and Sales Retreat	500	3	June 16-19, 2025	Richmond, VA	\$ 3,293
IPW	1500	7	June 15-19, 2025	Chicago, IL	\$ 5,005
GRAND TOTAL					\$ 19,875

Trade Show Schedule – Meetings & Conventions Fiscal Year 2025



Event Name	Estimated # Of Attendees	# Years Attending	Market Segment	Date	Location	Cost
Connect MarketPlace 2024	1500	8	Corporate/Association	August 27-29, 2024	Milwaukee, WI	\$ 12,754
Small Market Meetings	300	3	Corporate/Association	September 25-27	St. George, UT	\$ 3,559
Northstar Destinations East	500	1	Corporate/Association	October 21-23, 2024	Niagara Falls, NY	\$ 6,264
Connect DC	200	4	Corporate/Association	November 20-22, 2024	Washington, DC	
Association Forum Holiday Showcase	1200	1	Association	December 4-5, 2024	Chicago, IL	\$ 3,473
RCMA	1000	7	Faith Associations	January 6-8, 2025	Phoenix, AZ	\$ 2,302
PCMA Convening Leaders	3000	4	Association	January 12-15, 2025	Houston, TX	\$ 2,861
Association Express Conference	300	New	Association	April 7-10	Tempe, AZ	\$ 5,132
Smart Meetings	250	3	Corporate/Association	May 18-20, 2025	Atlantic City, NJ	\$ 6,112
Small and Boutique Meetings	300	2	Corporate/Association	June 1-3 ,2025	Burlington, VT	\$ 8,354
HelmsBriscoe ABC	1500	3	All Markets	June 28-30, 2025	Toronto, Canada	\$ 7,500
GRAND TOTAL						\$ 72,471

Sports Tourism



Youth Sports Tournaments - 2025



Event Name	Dates	2025 Actual/Expected Room nights
Potomac Presidents Day Cup	Feb 15-17, 2025	Less than 50
National Collegiate Rugby	April 25-27, 2025	3,000
MLS (Major League Soccer) Next Qualifiers	May 9-13, 2025	3,800
Potomac Memorial Soccer Tournament	May 23-26, 2025	4,300
Mid-Atlantic Cup	June 14-15, 2025	325
IWLCA (Intercollegiate Women's Lacrosse)	June 20-22, 2025	5,000
Naptown Challenge	June 30-July 1, 2025	1,200
Crossover Hoops (Basketball)	July 12-13, 2025	125
3 Step League Alliance LAX League Summer Championships	July 12-13, 2025	1,000,
Pinnacle Lacrosse	July 19-20, 2025	1,100
Discovery Cup Soccer Tournament	October 10-12, 2025	900
Big East Womens Championship	November 4-9, 2025	300
Bethesda U9-12 Soccer Tournament	November 7-9, 2025	300
Big East Mens Championship	November 11-16, 2025	300
Bethesda Girls Soccer Tournament	November 15-17, 2024	3,500
Bethesda Boys Soccer Tournament (35)	November 22-24, 2024	5,000



Montgomery County, MD Hosted Amateur Professional Golf Events

Event Name	Location	Date
Adaptive Open USGA	Woodmont Country Club	July, 2026
KPMG Women's PGA Championship	Congressional Country Club	June, 2027
USGA US Senior Women's Amateur	Chevy Chase Country Club	August, 2027
USGA US Junior Amateur	Woodmont Country Club	July, 2028
PGA Professional Championship	Congressional Country Club	June, 2029
PGA Professional Championship	Congressional Country Club	June, 2031
Senior PGA Championship	Congressional Country Club	May, 2033
Ryder Cup	Congressional Country Club	September, 2037



Montgomery County Sports Tourism Task Force

Montgomery County Council

Resolution No.: 20-547

Introduced: May 21, 2024

Adopted: June 18, 2024

The task force will include the following members:

Montgomery County Revenue Authority

Maryland Sports Commission

Maryland SoccerPlex

Visit Montgomery

Montgomery County Parks Department

Montgomery County Sports Advisory Committee

Montgomery County Public Schools

Montgomery County Department of Recreation



Montgomery County Sports Tourism Task Force

**Workforce
Development
Needs**

**Facility
Needs
Assessment**

**Recruitment of
Amateur and
Professional
Sports
Franchises**

**Connecting &
Collaborating**



Fiscal Year 2025 Progress

- The task force completed a study that included sports tourism national impacts, data analysis, trends in sports participation, sports destination marketing budgets and structures, local tourism reach and regional draws, potential future economic impacts and growth opportunities in the sports tourism sectors.
- In April 2025, the Montgomery County Council approved an allocation of \$100,000 to partner with the Maryland Stadium Authority on a comprehensive study of the sports landscape. The total cost of this study is estimated to be \$200,000, with the Stadium Authority contributing the remaining \$100,000

DIVISION UPDATE

Marketing & Communications



Visit Montgomery Marketing Strategy



Visit Montgomery Research Tools



AIRDNA



SYMPHONY



Epsilon®

Montgomery County Visitor Profile FY25



1.7 days
Avg. Length of Stay

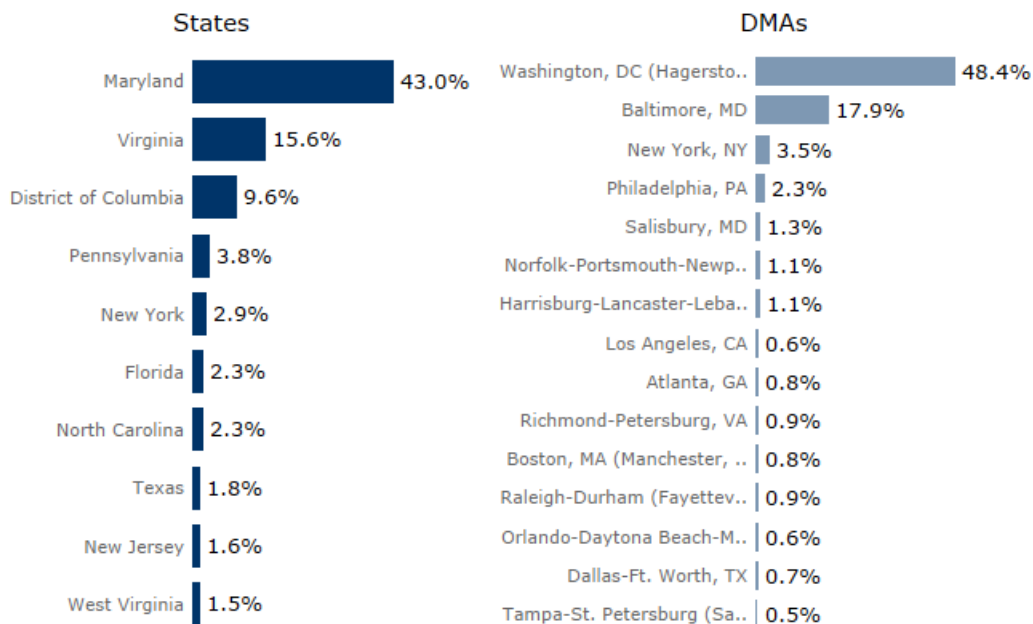


74.0%
Overnight Trip Share



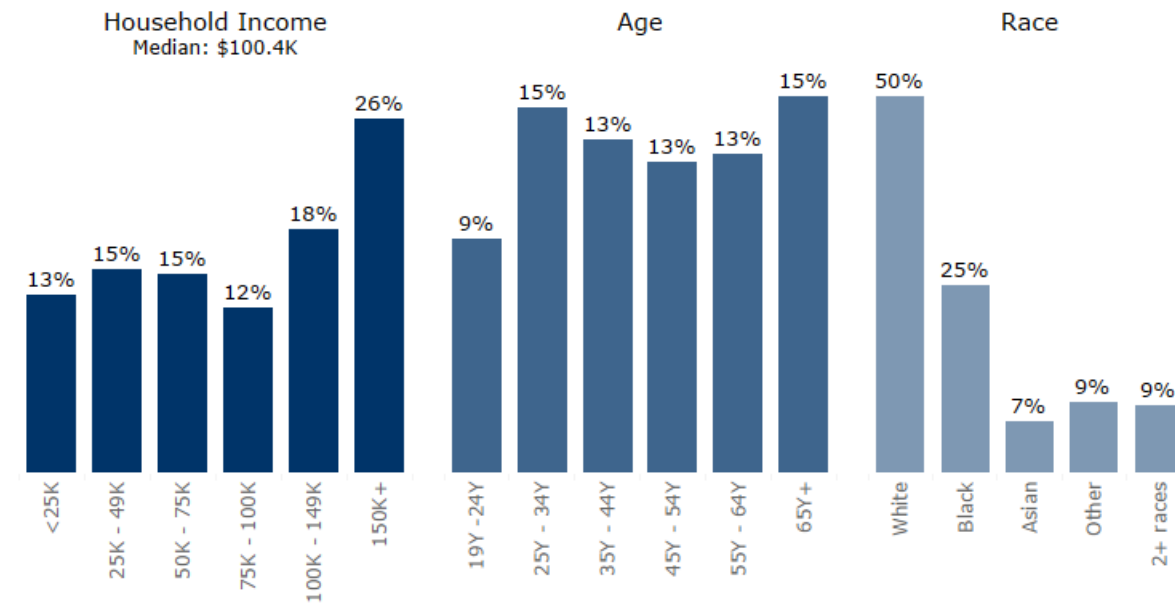
75.5%
Repeat Trip Share

Top Origin Markets



Visitor Origin Demographics

Share of Total



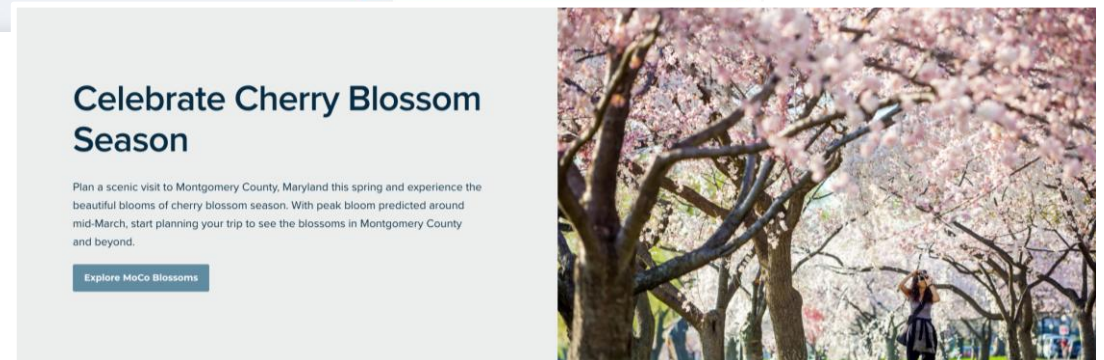
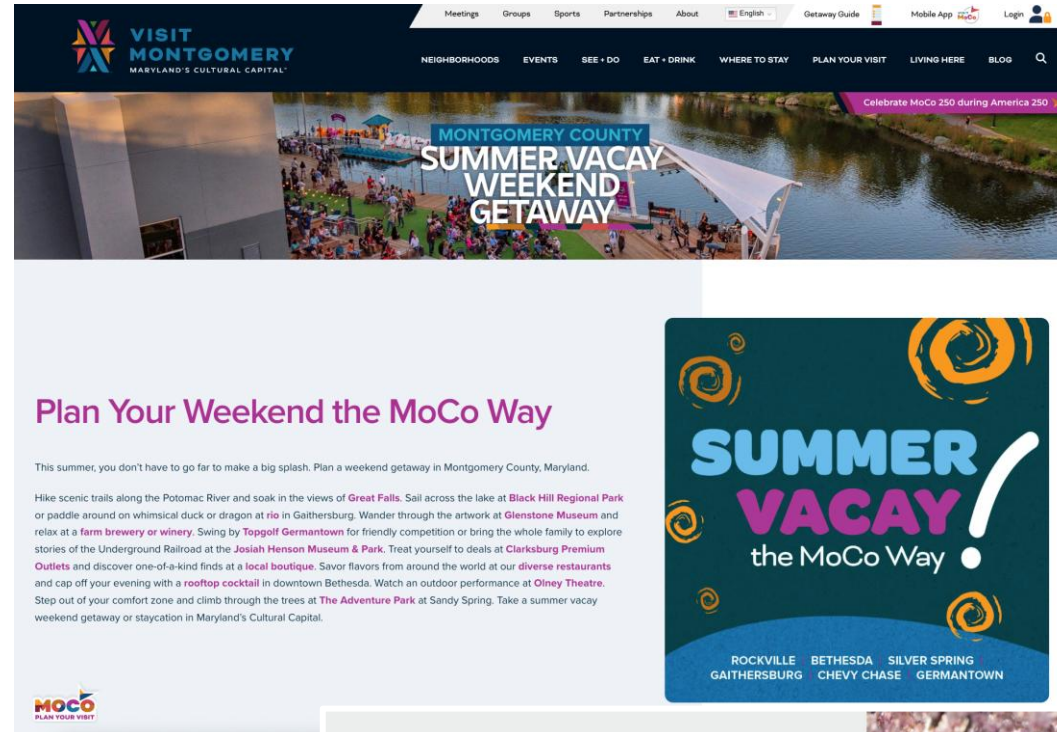
Visit Montgomery Website Fiscal Year 2025



1.1 Million
Sessions

1.9 Million
Page Views

00:01:53
Session Duration



Engagement: Users, Sessions & Page Views



Sessions
1.1M
-3.2% YOY



Users
930.5K
-1.9% YOY



Engaged Session
611,139
+50.1% YOY



Engagement Rate
53.3%
+18.91% pt YOY

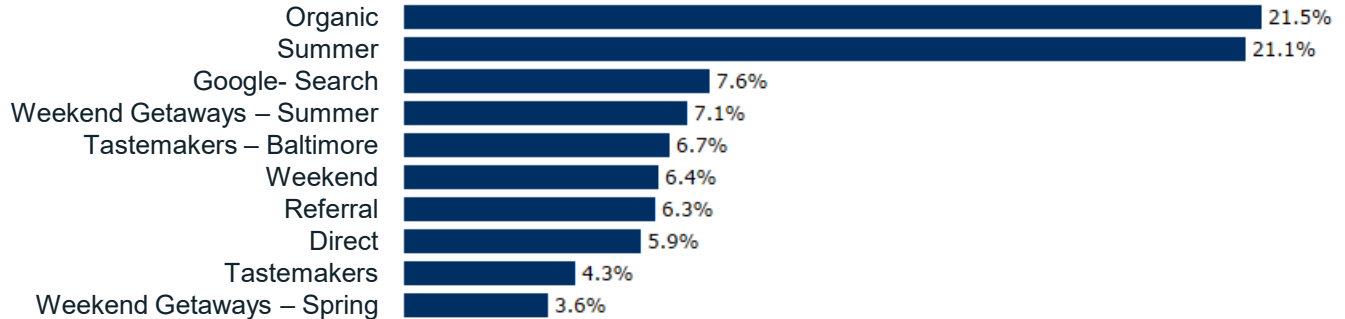


Avg. Session Duration
00:01:53
+18 sec YOY

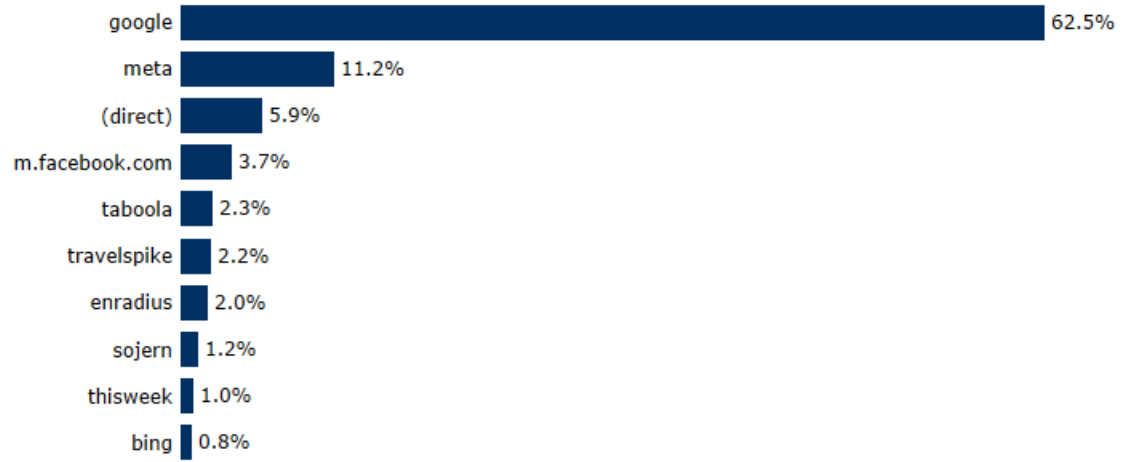


Page Views
1.9M
+5.9% YOY

Campaigns



Sources



While overall website sessions decreased **3.2% year-over-year**, the quality of our audience significantly improved. **Engaged sessions increased by 50%**, and our **engagement rate rose by 19%**, showing that visitors are spending more time exploring our content with purpose.

Average **session duration increased by 18 seconds**, and **page views grew by 6%**, indicating that the users who are coming to the site are more invested and more likely to convert. These metrics reflect a higher-value website visitor and a more efficient digital marketing strategy.

Visit Montgomery Social Media

Fiscal Year 2025



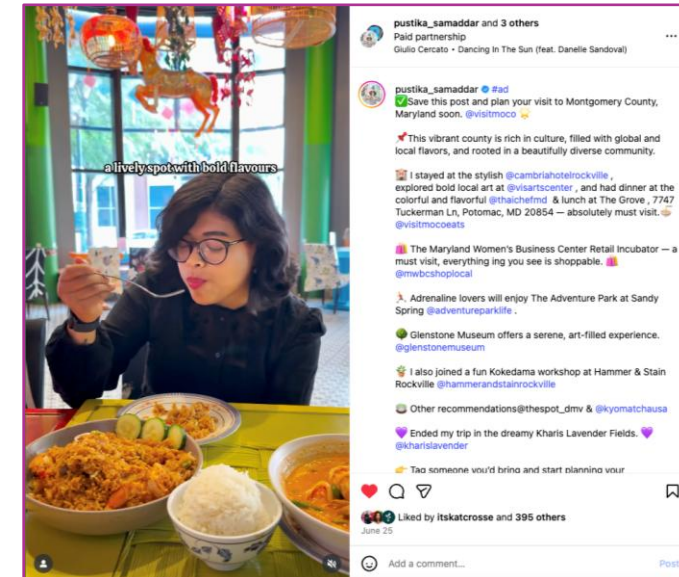
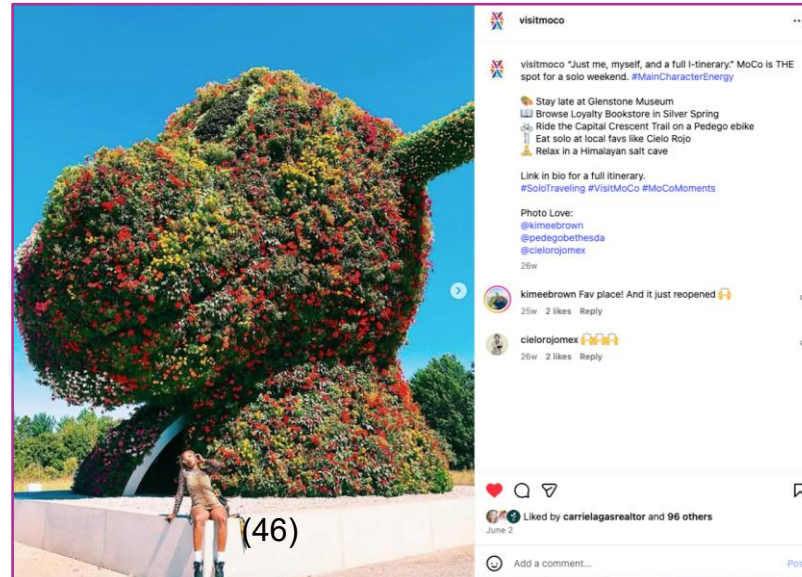
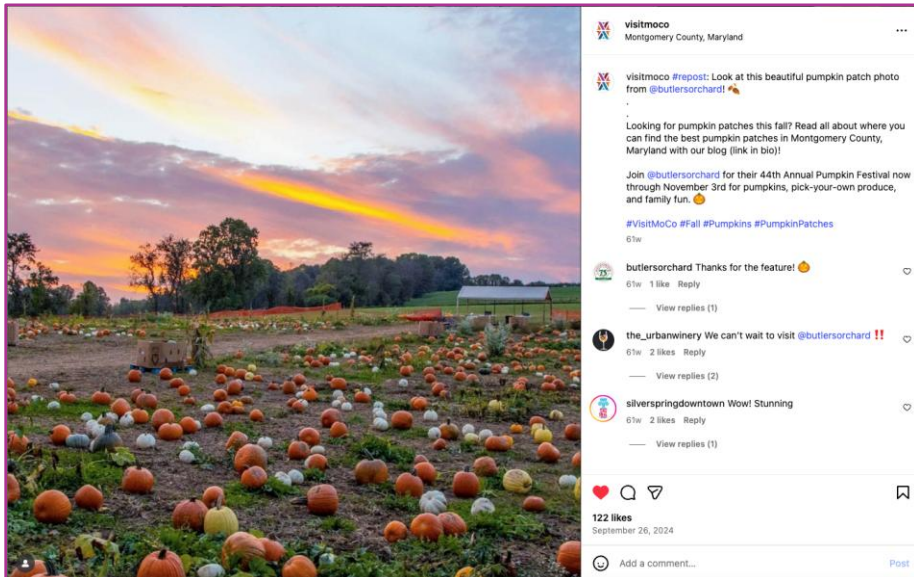
71,434 Followers

+ 5.3% YOY Across Platforms

Instagram Engagement + 11% YOY

Facebook Engagement + 37% YOY

Source: Hootsuite



Instagram

3.7% Engagement Rate
258,743 Reach
7,462 Likes

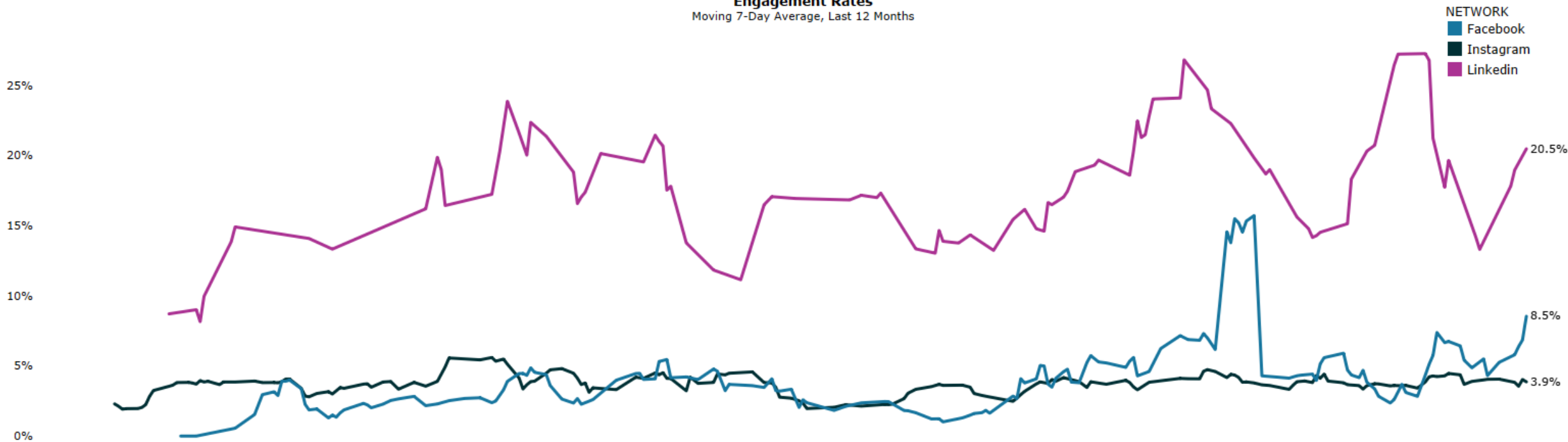
Facebook

4.5% Engagement Rate
2,937 Reach
500,059 Reactions

LinkedIn

18.2% Engagement Rate
157 Impressions
2,086 Likes

Engagement Rates
 Moving 7-Day Average, Last 12 Months



Visit Montgomery Public Relations Fiscal Year 2025



Mentions by Media Type



- TV
- Online + Print
- Instagram
- YouTube
- Radio
- Facebook
- X

Audience by Media Type



- TV
- Online + Print
- Instagram
- YouTube
- Radio
- Facebook
- X

Publicity by Media Type



- TV
- Online + Print
- Instagram
- YouTube
- Radio
- Facebook
- X

-63%
decrease YOY

+366%
increase YOY

+306%
increase YOY

Public Relations efforts focused on higher quality media with a wider reach and higher publicity value.

Seasonal Advertising Creative

Fiscal Year 2025



ENTIRELY MARYLAND

Distinctly Different

Sip farm-to-table cocktails at a speakeasy, savor global cuisine, explore historic trails along the C&O Canal, and discover art, shopping, and cultural festivals. Plan a weekend in Montgomery County, Maryland, just minutes from Washington, DC.



[VisitMontgomery.com/Weekend](https://www.visitmontgomery.com/Weekend)



ENTIRELY MARYLAND

Distinctly Different

Plan a weekend full of unique adventures in Montgomery County, just minutes from Washington, DC.



[Learn More](#)

SUMMER VACAY!
the MoCo Way

This summer, you don't have to go far to make a big splash. Plan a weekend getaway in Maryland's Cultural Capital, just minutes from Washington, DC.

Montgomery County, Maryland

ROCKVILLE | BETHESDA | SILVER SPRING | GAITHERSBURG | CHEVY CHASE | GERMANTOWN



[START PLANNING](#)

EDA Grant Funded Projects





**Visit Montgomery Secured Four (4)
Economic Development Administration Grants**

\$782,000

GRANT #1

Maryland Meetings Market Initiative

\$250,000

Collaboration Partners

Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County, Visit Baltimore, Visit Howard County,
Visit Montgomery and Experience Prince George's County.

Project Narrative

Business events, conferences, conventions, and meetings of all sizes bring a significant economic impact to Maryland. The collaboration of these 5 destination marketing organizations (DMOs) will help in jointly marketing the Baltimore and Capital Region areas of Maryland as a meetings destination.

This collaborative approach will help bring attention to Maryland as a meetings destination.

This DMO cluster is strategically located in the Mid-Atlantic to serve as an attractive location for small to mid-sized meetings.



About the Cooperative Partnership

The Meet in Maryland collaboration brings together five destination marketing organizations - **Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County, Visit Baltimore, Visit Howard County, Visit Montgomery, and Experience Prince George's**. During the pandemic recovery, these partners **secured an Economic Development Administration grant** from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Tourism, to launch a joint initiative **promoting Maryland as a premier meetings destination.**

In addition to marketing individually, the DMOs adopted a **multi-destination approach** to expand their **reach to meeting professionals** and **drive more business events, conferences, and conventions to Maryland**. Collectively, these destinations account for 58% of the state's Adjusted Tourism Sales and Use Taxes, emphasizing their economic importance.

Conveniently **located in the Mid-Atlantic and near Baltimore-Washington Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI)**, the five destinations offer an ideal setting for **small- to mid-sized meetings**. Each DMO has dedicated staff focused on increasing room nights through proactive sales efforts and have **layered in the Meet in Maryland brand to strengthen the collective impact of this regional collaboration.**



WEBSITE LANDING PAGE

Meet Us in The Heart of the Mid-Atlantic

Meet **Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, Baltimore, Howard County, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County**—each home to premier meeting sites such as Baltimore, Bethesda, BWI Airport, College Park, Columbia, Gaithersburg, National Harbor, Rockville, Silver Spring, and many more.

Whether you're seeking a scenic retreat, a city adventure, or a waterfront experience, we're excited to help you find the perfect destination for your meeting. Maryland — where every event is memorable, and even our crabs say, You're Welcome.



ADVERTISING CREATIVE

CUSTOM CONTENT

In National Harbor and Baltimore, scenic waterfronts make a splash

BY VICKIE MITCHELL

Waterfronts always make a splash, and two major convention destinations in Maryland are making the most of theirs. Here's a look at them.

NATIONAL HARBOR

In 2003, *Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center* opened on the Potomac River eight miles from Washington, D.C. and a major meeting destination, *National Harbor*, was born. Today, *Gaylord National* remains National Harbor's centerpiece, but now it's joined by some lively neighbors: five hotels, including a casino resort; a dozen blocks of restaurants and shops and boat cruises, a 175-foot Ferris wheel and other amusements.

Gaylord National's 1,996 guest rooms and more than half a million square feet of meeting space make it the largest convention resort along the East Coast, and its 178,787 square feet of exhibit space is the largest of any D.C. metro hotel. Other National Harbor hotels, including the *Westin* and the *AC Hotel*, have meeting space as well. The *MGM National Harbor*, a mile from National Harbor's downtown, has 26,000 square feet of meeting space.

But even with all the development, the Potomac remains much of the focus in National Harbor. The river is the view from the *Gaylord's* 1.5-acre stadium. Many of its meeting spaces and its rooftop bar also afford water views. A waterfront promenade invites strolling, peddleboats, water taxis and tour boats get visitors out on the water. And

restaurants are a marvelous mix — everything from Maryland crabs and rollabakes to hot chicken and tiki meals.

BALTIMORE

Baltimore's Inner Harbor is a scenic, waterfront destination along the I-95 corridor. It is the centerpiece of the city's walkable convention campus, home to the *National Aquarium*, the *Maryland Science Center*, delicious dining, restored historic ships, and water taxis to nearby neighborhoods like *Fell's Point* and *Baltimore's Fells Peninsula*. Only a few blocks inland, *Casimir Yards*, home of the *Baltimore Orioles*, and *M&T Bank Stadium*, home to the *Baltimore Ravens*, draw sports fans.

Only two blocks away from the Inner Harbor is the *Baltimore Convention Center*. The center has much to offer planners, with 500,000 square feet of exhibit space, 50 meeting rooms, a 36,600 square-foot ballroom, and a 16,000-square-foot terrace. It is also connected to not one, but two downtown hotels: the 737-room *Hilton Baltimore Inner Harbor Hotel* and the 496-room *Hyatt Regency Baltimore Inner Harbor Hotel*. Each has significant meeting space: 128,043 square feet at the Hilton and 25,000 at the Hyatt. And they are by no means the only nearby hotels. Baltimore has 8,000 hotel rooms downtown, and 4,000 of them are within a block of the convention center.

To learn more about National Harbor and Baltimore or other greater D.C. meeting destinations, visit meetinmaryland.com, a partnership of Visit Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, Visit Baltimore, Visit Howard County, Visit Montgomery, and Experience Prince George's, five DMAs that work together to market Maryland meeting venues in the greater D.C. area.



Meet in Maryland™

The Heart of the Mid-Atlantic™

Meet in Maryland™
MeetInMaryland.com

Meet Us in The Heart of the Mid-Atlantic



Connect with each Maryland destination



Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, home to BWI Airport and Maryland's State Capital, offer waterfront views, attractions like Live! Casino, and historic sites, blending business and adventure by the Chesapeake Bay.

In Baltimore, we are writing a new chapter in our city's history fueled by diverse artists, tastemakers and social entrepreneurs. Plan your event in our waterfront city for a fraction of the price of other East Coast cities.



Howard County offers versatile venues, state-of-the-art hotels, and unique spaces for meetings. Its mix of pastoral farms, historic towns, and urban lifestyles ensures memorable gatherings, with amenities participants will enjoy.

Montgomery County welcomes visitors with genuine hospitality and a wide range of venues perfect for meetings, conferences, and group events. Just outside Washington, DC, this diverse destination blends scenic outdoor adventures and rich agritourism with urban shopping and cultural attractions.



Prince George's County, near Washington, DC, offers 850,000 sq ft of meeting space, including Four-Diamond hotels. With rich history, outdoor adventures, and modern amenities, it's an ideal destination for unforgettable events.

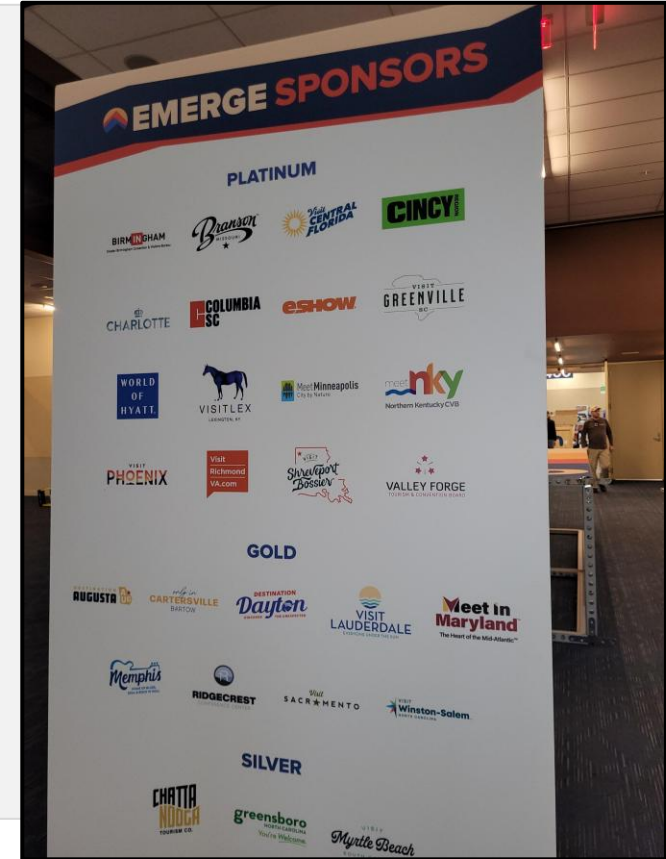


WHERE WE'VE BEEN RCMA



January 6-8, 2025
Phoenix, Arizona

- 5 DMO Trade Show Booths
- 5 Booth Staff Registrations
- Refreshment Break Sponsorship



WHERE WE'VE BEEN

RCMA Refreshment Break



WHERE WE'VE BEEN

Mid-Atlantic Events Magazine – Client Event, Philadelphia, PA
May 13, 2025



WEBSITE METRICS

Nov 1, 2024 - Aug 31, 2025

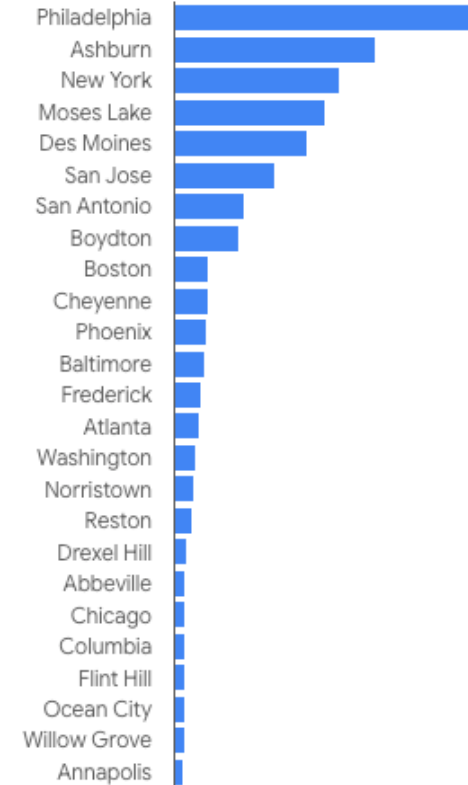
Engagement Summary

Active users: 1.4K
Views: 1.8K
Pageviews per User: 1.3
Average session duration: 00:01:19

Top Traffic Sources

Session source	Session medium	Sessions	% Sessions
Philadelphia Business Journal	display	790	54.9%
(direct)	(none)	233	16.2%
unknown	email	136	9.5%
google	organic	96	6.7%
usae	email	57	4.0%
member-news	email	30	2.1%
bing	organic	12	0.8%
smartmeetings	print	11	0.8%
yahoo	organic	10	0.7%
usae	advertorial	8	0.6%

Top Cities



Active users



GRANT #2

Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Experience

\$250,000

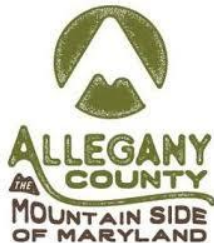
Collaboration Partners

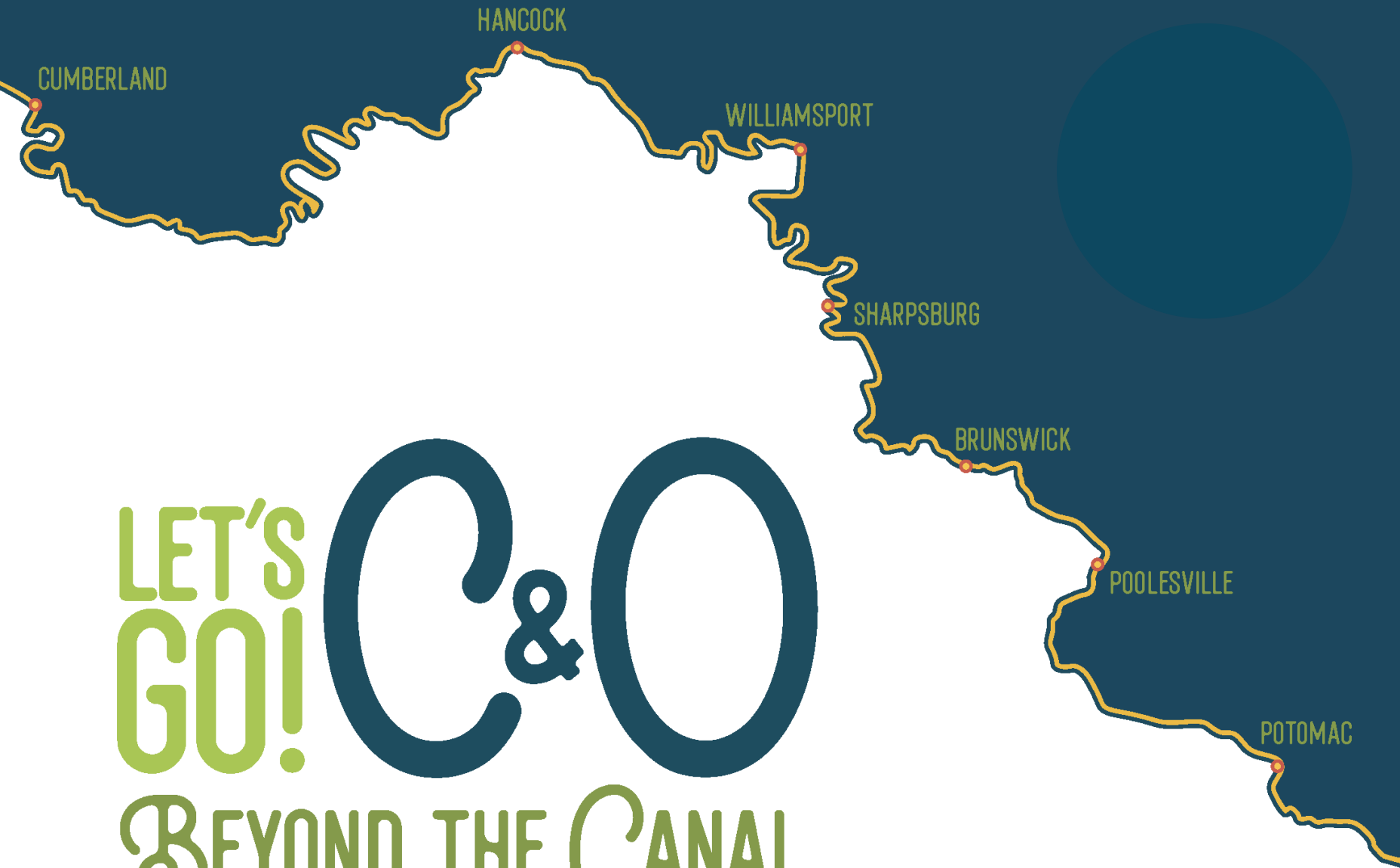
Visit Allegany County • Visit Frederick • Visit Montgomery • Visit Hagerstown/Washington County

Project Narrative

The C&O Canal Experience Marketing Alliance goal is to continue the momentum and expand its scope with the goal of driving additional tourism dollars to the communities surrounding the park. The collaboration plans to capitalize on the data collected from a Rockport Analytics study to align messaging with the interests of the core markets and audiences. Marketing strategies will be focused on attracting travelers with interests in cycling, hiking/walking, museums, sightseeing, shopping and pleasure driving.

This initiative aligns with the Maryland Office of Tourism's Trails Second-to-None Program, Civil War Trails, and Maryland's Scenic Byways.





LET'S GO! **C&O**
BEYOND THE CANAL

Beyond the Canal

About the Let's Go C&O Project

The Let's Go C&O campaign **drives tourism to communities along the C&O Canal National Historical Park** by using a digital strategy to target key markets. Messaging **highlights cycling, hiking, history, culture, and scenic exploration**, aligning with **Maryland's Trails Second-to-None initiative, Civil War Trails, and Scenic Byways**. The campaign invites visitors to discover the natural, historical, and cultural experiences that are **within and surrounding the park**.



Beyond the Canal

Let's Go C&O

Campaign Landing Page

LET'S GO!

Montgomery County Frederick County Washington County Allegany County



ADVENTURE AWAITS ON AND OFF THE TRAIL

Multi-destination experience – Discover unique finds at stylish boutiques, treat yourself to a savory meal, and unwind at a local winery. **Let's Go!**

LET'S GO! C&O BEYOND THE CANAL

Scroll to discover

OVERVIEW OF CANAL AREA

Discover the C&O Canal National Historical Park, a 184.5-mile stretch of history, nature, and adventure that winds its way from Georgetown to Cumberland. Let's Go C&O is your guide to uncovering the many activities available on and off the trail. From hiking and biking along the canal towpath to exploring the communities and attractions nearby, each section of the park offers its own distinct experiences. Whether you're planning a day trip or a weekend getaway, the C&O Canal invites you to explore its rich heritage and natural beauty at every turn.



BEYONDTHECANAL.COM



MONTGOMERY COUNTY

IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, the C&O Canal National Historical Park is perfect for outdoor adventures like hiking the Billy Goat Trail or taking in the views of rushing rapids at Great Falls Overlook. Stay overnight in one of five historic lockhouses and live like a lock keeper. Explore the Canal Town of Proletoville, known for its historic spots, local art, and nearby farm experiences.

After your canal journey, visit the 230-acre Gambrine Museum, where contemporary art collides with nature. Then, unwind with local craft beverages along the Tastemakers Trail or enjoy global cuisine in downtown Bethesda, Rockville or Silver Spring.

[Start Planning](#)



FREDERICK COUNTY

Step into history and nature along Frederick County's section of the C&O Canal National Historical Park. From the iconic Monocacy Aqueduct to the charming Canal Towns of Brunswick and Front of Backs, explore more than 15 miles of scenic towpath perfect for hiking, biking, and discovering America's past. Relish at local eateries, sip craft beverages, and even spend the night at Lockhouse 26. Perfect for those chasing outdoor adventure or a peaceful retreat, Frederick County's C&O Canal experience offers something unforgettable at every turn.

[Start Planning](#)

(63)



HAGERSTOWN-WASHINGTON COUNTY

Discover the charm of the C&O Canal in Washington County, MD, where history and recreation intertwine along its 8.5 miles. Explore the canal's storied past as you stroll or bike along the towpath, imagining mules hauling barges through the intricate lock system, and enjoy peaceful kayaking or canoeing observing diverse wildlife. In Williamsport, witness the remarkable restoration of canal features, including the meticulously rebuilt Conococheague Aqueduct along with a lock house and railroad lift bridge, offering a captivating glimpse into a bustling canal town. Our Canal Towns offer a variety of attractions, eateries, breweries, and vibrant arts. Unforgettable moments await your discovery!

[Start Planning](#)



ALLEGANY COUNTY

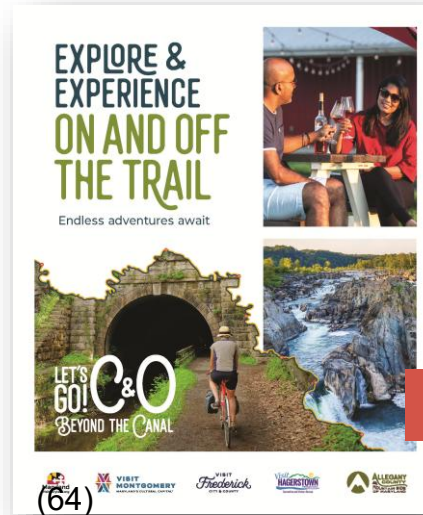
Allegany County, the Mountain Side of Maryland, is the ultimate trail destination for explorers, with more than 200 miles of trail systems. But that only scratches the surface. You'll also find historic trails, scenic overlooks and byways, and opportunities to satisfy your cravings, like the Ice Cream Trail, Tap and Pour Trail, and Donut and Coffee Trail. When you're looking for fun, the trail starts here.

[Start Planning](#)

Beyond the Canal

Let's Go C&O Advertising Creative

DISPLAY ADS



DEDICATED EMAIL



DIGITALITALLY INTEGRATED PUBLICATIONS

LET'S GO!

Let's Go C&O

Website Metrics

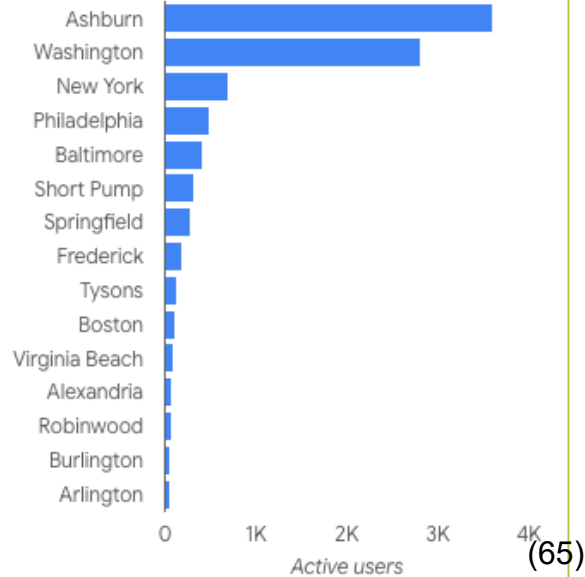
March 1 – August 31, 2025

Engagement Summary

Active users: 15.5K
Views: 18.1K
Average session duration: 00:00:47

94
Email
Sign-ups

Top Cities



Smithsonian Online and Travel Spike drove the highest volume of web traffic (78%) in key drive markets, while integrated print boosted online engagement.

Top Traffic Sources

Session source	Session medium	Sessions	% Sessions
smithsonian	display	7,361	41.8%
travelspike	display	6,437	36.6%
(direct)	(none)	1,412	8.0%
bhg	print	368	2.1%
washingtonian	print	302	1.7%
gardengun	print	241	1.4%
travelleisure	print	206	1.2%
baltimoremag	print	196	1.1%
view.ceros.com	referral	150	0.9%
aarp	print	141	0.8%
mdmountainside.com	referral	126	0.7%
mpt	print	106	0.6%
m.facebook.com	referral	64	0.4%
phillymag	print	62	0.4%
roadrunner	print	46	0.3%
facebook.com	referral	43	0.2%
aarp	digital	36	0.2%
phillymag	email	32	0.2%

GRANT #3

Rural Space Branding Project

\$170,000

Creating Visitor Experiences

Project Narrative

The MD Tourism EDA Grant request will support three components of a “Rural Montgomery” project:

- Focus Groups with the agricultural community
- Research – current visitor volume, visitor origin, visitor demographics and visitor activities of visitors to the “Rural Montgomery” area.
- Product and Brand Development

The “Rural Montgomery” area is located to the west of the urban centers (Bethesda, Silver Spring, Rockville) of Montgomery County, Maryland, to the borders of eastern Frederick County, MD, and north of the Maryland side of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal. Montgomery County also has 269.6 miles of paved and nature surface trails within 33 trail systems many of which weave through the rural area of the County. The C&O Canal and shoreline of the Potomac River spans approximately 40.25 miles along Montgomery County.



GRANT #4

MoCo Eats Food & Beverage Showcase Grant

\$112,320

Project Narrative

Visit Montgomery through this new initiative, MoCo Eats Showcase and Expo, provides opportunities for business and consumer connections, triggers innovation and educates the future work force on career paths in tourism and hospitality.

Engage the hospitality industry suppliers in a business expo format with the local businesses within the hospitality sector, retailers, breweries and wineries, and restaurant operators/owners to connect their business and workforce needs with solutions in a trade show and educational format.

Promote the county's social economy by introducing and showcasing local flavor and entrepreneurial spirit in a consumer attended expo that celebrates Montgomery County's diversity through cuisine and alcoholic and non-alcoholic tastings (food trucks, restaurants, wineries, and breweries).



**FOOD & BEVERAGE
SHOWCASE**

March 30-31, 2025

Hilton Rockville, Maryland



MOCOEATS.COM



**VISIT
MONTGOMERY**
MARYLAND'S CULTURAL CAPITAL™

ADVERTISING & PROMOTIONAL CREATIVE



CALLING ALL VENDORS & FOOD ENTHUSIASTS!

FOOD & BEVERAGE SHOWCASE
March 30-31, 2025
Hilton Rockville, Maryland

The MoCo Eats Food & Beverage Showcase is a fun 2-day experience in Montgomery County, Maryland, where industry professionals and food enthusiasts come together to explore the latest in culinary innovations.

This year, the showcase features two exciting events designed for two different audiences:

- **Day One Consumer Expo:** A public event for food enthusiasts looking to explore the diverse food and beverage scene of the capital region.
- **Day Two Hospitality Conference:** An industry event tailored for restaurateurs, chefs, and hospitality professionals to learn, network, and grow.

BECOME A VENDOR

Feature your business at the MoCo Eats Food & Beverage Showcase and connect directly with both industry professionals and consumers. This is the perfect opportunity to grow your brand, build relationships with local venues, and engage face-to-face with consumers.

Vendors can also participate in educational sessions, panel discussions, and connect with the next generation of industry professionals.

Join us for an exciting two-day celebration of innovation, entrepreneurship, and local flavor!



Visit MoCoEats.com to register and for more details.

Full Page Print

FOOD & BEVERAGE SHOWCASE
March 30-31, 2025
Hilton Rockville, Maryland

REGISTER TODAY

YOUR FRONT-ROW SEAT TO A CULINARY JOURNEY.

Consumer Postcard

JOIN US AT THE MOCO EATS CONSUMER EXPO

FOOD & BEVERAGE SHOWCASE

SUNDAY, MARCH 30, 2025
HILTON ROCKVILLE

Experience the best of the region's culinary talent, all in one convenient location!

Head out onto the expo floor for food and beverage tastings, to learn more about local and regional products, interactive experiences, and to purchase items to bring home. Come check out over 90 participating businesses, including local breweries, wineries, distilleries, ice cream shops, popcorn and chip makers, restaurants, bakeries and more.



MoCoEats.com (69)

FOOD & BEVERAGE SHOWCASE
CONSUMER EXPO

SUNDAY, MARCH 30
80+ LOCAL BUSINESSES

SIP, SAMPLE & LEARN
MEET THE MAKERS
SHOP YOUR FAVORITES

REGISTER TODAY

Digital Ads

FOOD & BEVERAGE SHOWCASE
March 30-31, 2025
Hilton Rockville, Maryland

The MoCo Eats Food & Beverage Showcase is your front-row seat to a culinary journey from your favorite restaurants, breweries, and local makers. Discover new products, meet the creative minds behind them, and take home delicious finds.

MOCOEATS.COM





BUSINESS PARTICIPATION

96 Total Vendors

92 Sunday

58 Monday

EVENT SPONSORS

10 Sponsors

7 Media Sponsors



Media Sponsors





TWO- DAY EVENT SUMMARY

Key Performance Indicators

Event Awareness

7 Million

Advertising Impressions

\$125k Earned Media

Digital Engagement

63k Website & App users

167k Page Views (site/app)

4.4k Expo App Check-ins

Total Attendees

929 Over Two Days

Business Participation

96 Total Vendors



Fiscal Year 2026 Highlights

- Alcohol Manufacturing Promotion Fund Grant
- Rural Branding (FY 2026 Launch)
- Destination Strategic Plan
- 250th Celebration
- Consumer Trade Shows and Activations
- Meet in Maryland
- MoCo Eats Food and Beverage Showcase
- Interactive Kiosks
- Meetings Video
- New Video



Visit Montgomery Board of Directors

Fiscal Year 2025

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