



VISIT MONTGOMERY
FISCAL YEAR 2019
COMMUNITY REPORT
ON TOURISM



A Letter from Our Chair

Dear Hospitality Industry Partners,

In Fiscal Year 2019, Visit Montgomery began its first year of implementing the board-approved three year Strategic Destination Plan.



In the process of developing the strategic destination plan we first paused to reflect on our previous year's seven major accomplishments: stronger visitor industry performance record with overall increased tourism spending in the economy; increased number of meetings/sporting events generated from sales efforts; higher destination marketing organization (DMO) recognition in the county and its communities; enhanced online destination presence; increased lodging/transient room tax allocation from Montgomery County; completed research-based rebranding strategy including new brand notion, logo and creative; and compiled an effective talented and stable DMO team.

Now looking ahead, our Visit Montgomery team has 18 priority-based program initiatives. This Community Report on Tourism for Fiscal Year 2019 provides some of the highlights of our first year following our Strategic Destination Plan launch.

Visitors have many choices when considering locations for meetings, conferences, family reunions, youth sporting events, leisure travel and business travel when planning a visit to the nation's capital. We strive to make Montgomery County the first choice in the region as a base for a visitor to stay and explore.

The tourism industry continues to benefit all of us through the growing visitor spending in our local economy. As an organization in partnership with our hospitality community, we experienced some great progress and significant successes in Fiscal Year 2019.

Thank you for your support.

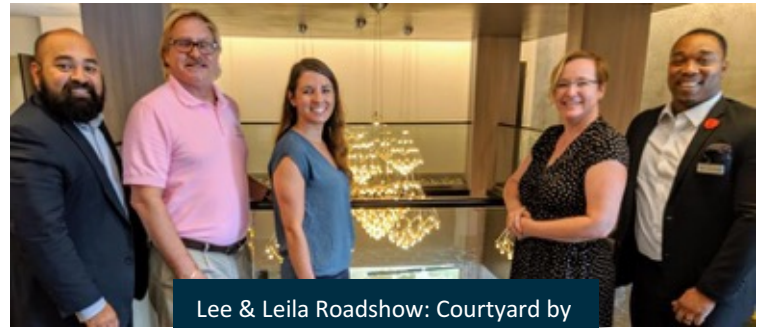
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carol A. Collins". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carol Collins
Chair, Visit Montgomery
Fiscal Year 2019

ORGANIZATION 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.



Lee & Leila Roadshow: Courtyard by Marriott Bethesda Chevy Chase

ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

Visit Montgomery is a 501 (c) 6 non-profit organization with the oversight by a volunteer board of directors. The Montgomery County Council designates one ex-officio member to the board annually. The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce also has an ex-officio board seat. Visit Montgomery has a Past President's Council with voting rights. The organization operates under a contract with Montgomery County Government, Department of Finance. The President & CEO is certified under Destinations International as a Certified Destination Management Executive (CDME).



Montgomery County Sports Hall of Fame

ORGANIZATION FUNDING

The primary source of funding for the organization is through the 7% hotel occupancy tax allocation from Montgomery County. In addition, Visit Montgomery receives 3.5% of the total hotel occupancy tax collections from the City of Rockville (current occupancy rate is 2%). Visit Montgomery also receives 4% of the total hotel occupancy tax collections from the City of Gaithersburg (current occupancy rate is 2%). Visit Montgomery's operating budget includes other revenue sources including: partnership dues, marketing grant from the Maryland Office of Tourism, cooperative advertising, trade show partnerships, and events and housing service rebates.



Smart Meetings Conference in Marco Island, Florida

THREE YEAR STRATEGIC DESTINATION PLAN GUIDING PRINCIPLES FY 2019-2021



Strengthen destination awareness and conversion



Increase overnight visitors



Convert day visitors to overnight guests



Increase visitor frequency year-round/off-peak periods

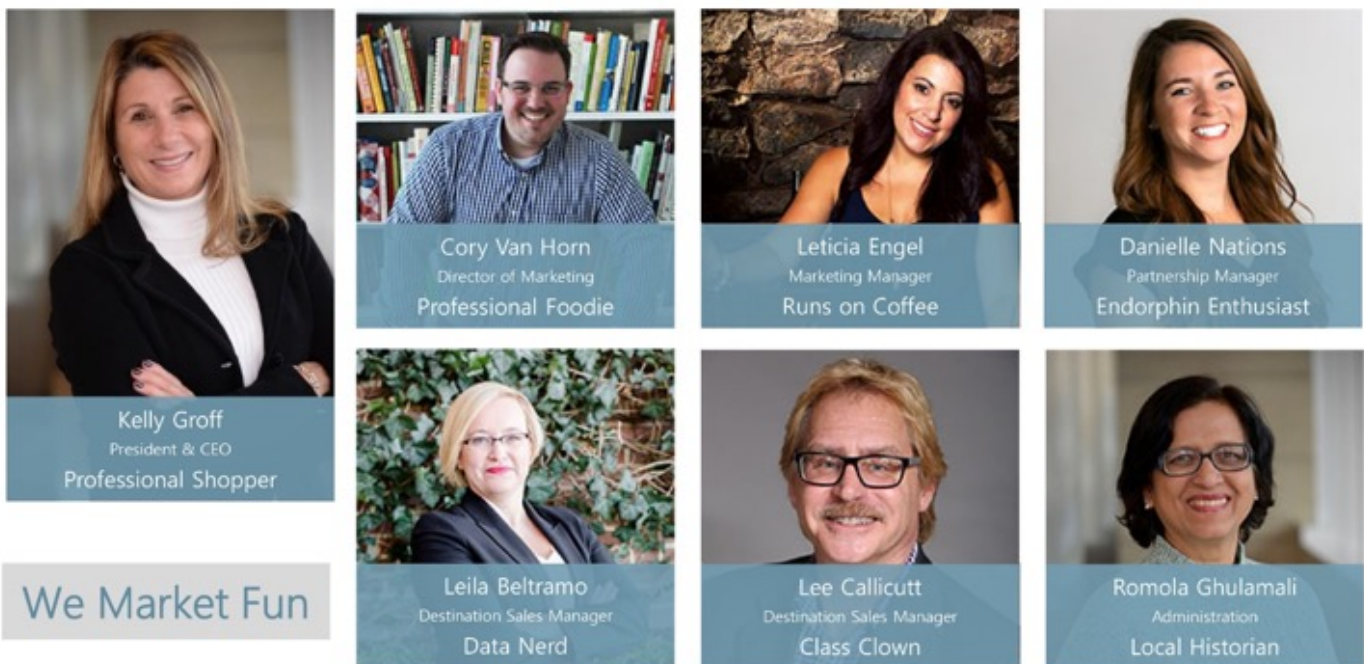


Extend length of visitor stays



Enhance destination experience value

VISIT MONTGOMERY TEAM ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



VISIT MONTGOMERY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Fiscal Year 2019

Executive Committee

- Carol Collins, CMP-HC****
Board Chair
AstraZeneca
- Katie Doherty**
Immediate Past-Chair
Holiday Inn Gaithersburg
- Ruth K. O'Rourke, MS, CHE**
Chair Elect
University of MD Eastern Shore at
Universities of Shady Grove
- Eric Rasch**
Secretary
Silver Spring Civic Building at
Veterans Plaza
- Jill McCarthy**
Treasurer
Federal Realty Investment Trust

Board of Directors

- Ray Barry**
American Film Institute Silver Theatre
and Cultural Center
- Lynn Bowersox**
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit
Authority
- David Child**
Bethesda North Marriott Hotel and
Conference Center
- Joe Frandoni****
Arts & Humanities Council of Montgomery
County
- John Hines**
Adventure Park at Sandy Spring
- Charles Kauffman****
Vamoose Bus
- Leticia Proctor**
Donohoe Hospitality Services

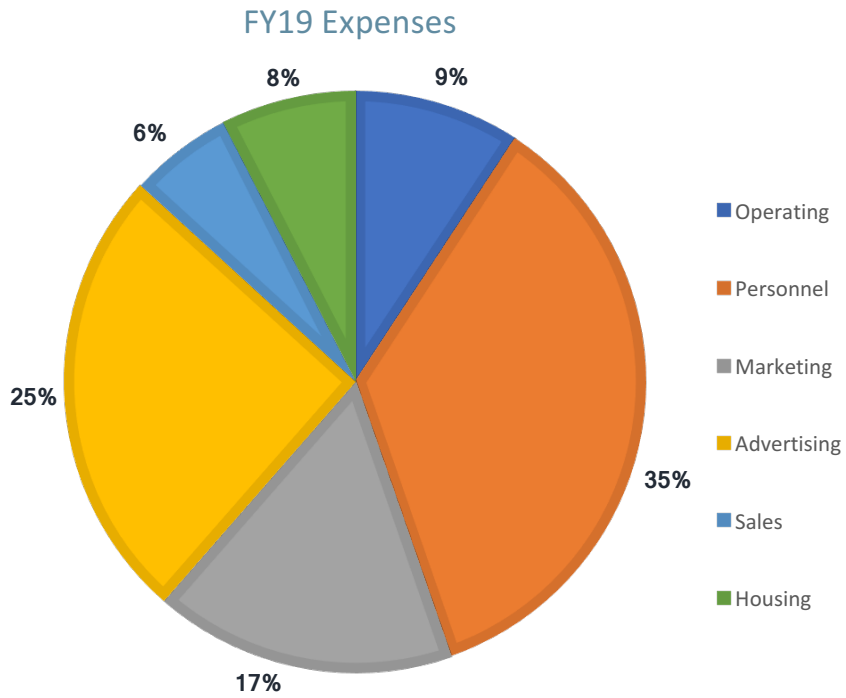
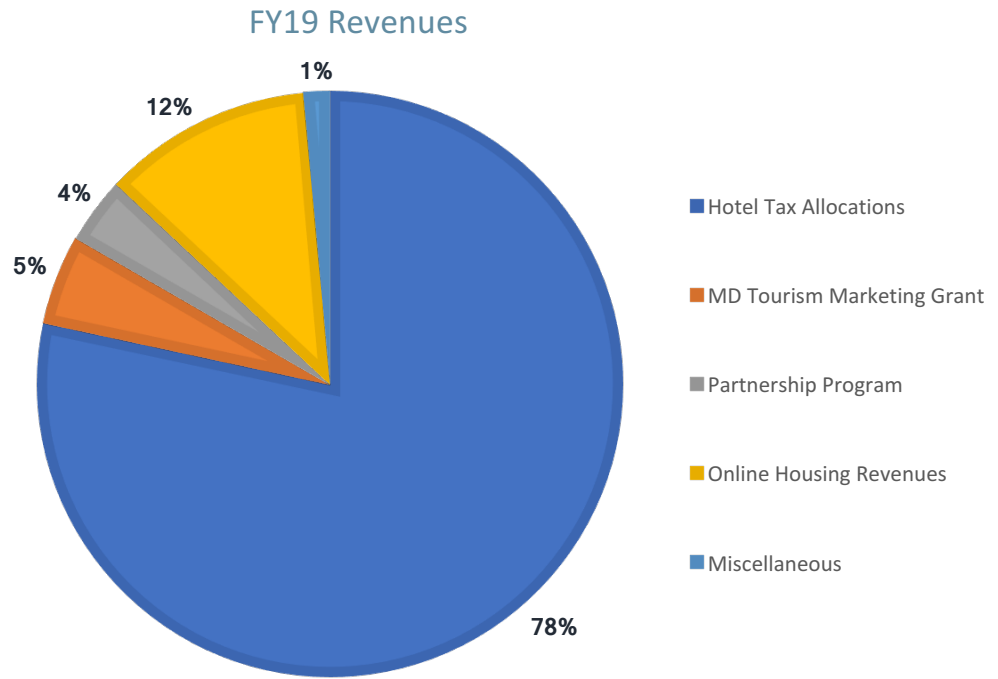
- Sarah Rogers****
Heritage Montgomery
- Leon Scioscia***
Strathmore
- Tricia Swanson**
Ex Officio
Montgomery County Chamber
of Commerce
- Councilmember Craig Rice**
Ex Officio
Montgomery County Council

Past President's Council

- Sara Torrence****
Sara Torrence & Associates
- Vira Safai**
Comfort Inn Shady Grove

*Finance Committee
**Tourism Development Committee

BUDGET SUMMARY FISCAL YEAR 2019



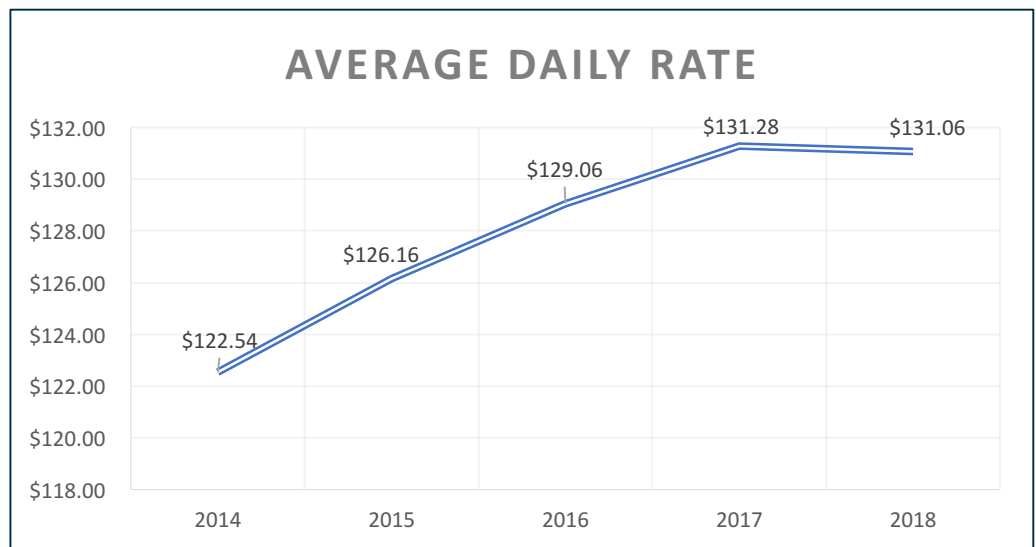
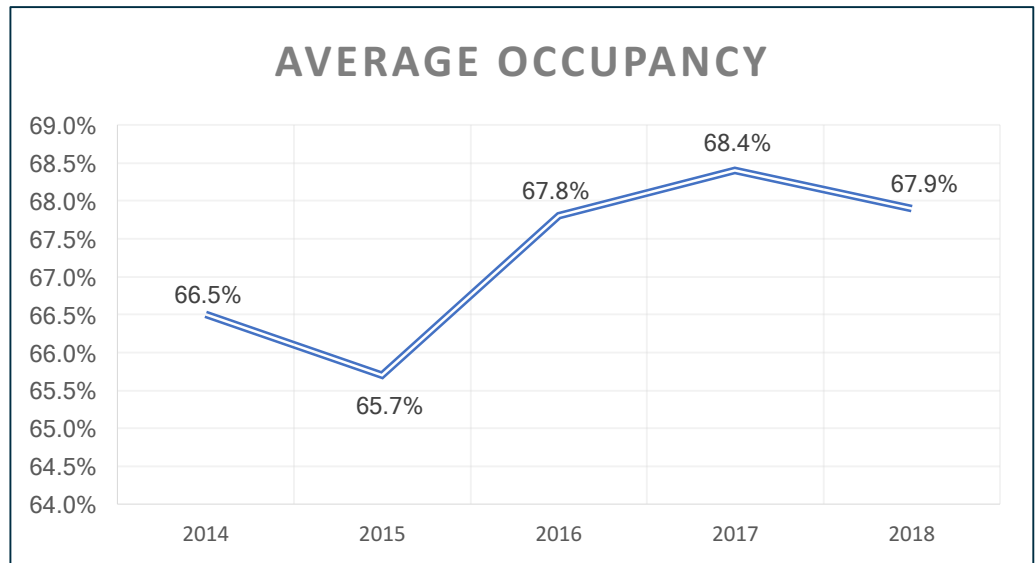
LODGING INDUSTRY

HOTEL OCCUPANCY AND AVERAGE DAILY RATE

Impact of U.S. Federal Government Shutdown

Decline in hotel occupancy and average daily rate are in part attributed to the U.S. Federal Government shutdown of 2018-2019 which occurred from December 22, 2018 until January 25, 2019. It was the longest government shutdown in history.

Other impacts were the additional new inventory of hotel rooms to the D.C. market and the decrease in compression from city-wide D.C. conventions in 2018 and 2019.

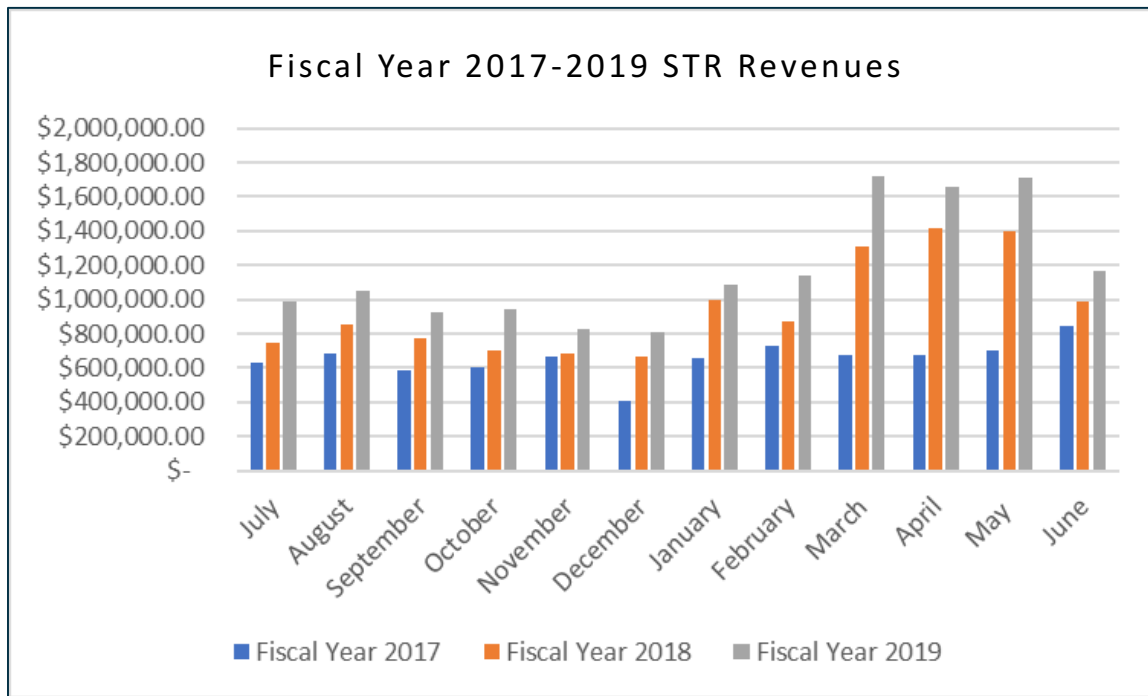


Hotel Occupancy Summary

- ◆ Hotel occupancy countywide decreased **-0.9%** from 2017 to 2018.
- ◆ The average daily rate in Montgomery County was **flat** to the previous year, 2017.
- ◆ Hotel occupancy in the region was down **-1.2%** (DC, Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax, Frederick, Howard, Prince Georges)

Rockville	2.6%
Gaithersburg	-0.2%
Silver Spring	-2.3%
Bethesda	-1.7%

LODGING INDUSTRY SHORT TERM RENTALS (STR)



Sales taxes were NOT collected on short term rentals in Fiscal Year 2018 or Fiscal Year 2019. Beginning July 1, 2019 MD Comptroller has begun sales tax collections on short term rentals.

Airdna Data: Montgomery County

Rockville has **220** active STRs with average rate of **\$106** and **73%** occupancy

Bethesda has **327** active STRs with average rate of **\$202** per night and a **55%** occupancy

Gaithersburg has **124** active STRs with average rate of **\$133** and **67%** occupancy

Silver Spring has **503** active STRs with average rate of **\$103** and **78%** occupancy

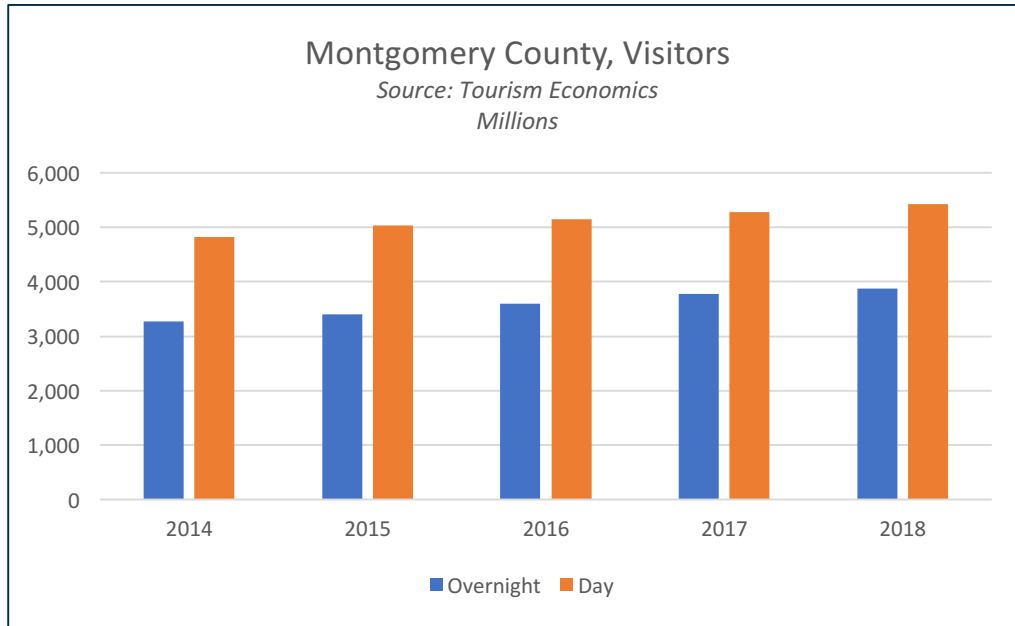
SALES & USE TAX COLLECTIONS ATTRIBUTABLE TO TOURISM

SALES TAX CATEGORY	TAX FACTOR	FY 2018	FY 2019	% CHANGE
Restaurants with WO/BWL	33%	\$ 2,316,374	\$ 2,425,960	4.70%
Hotels/Motels Selling Food - with BWL	100%	\$ 8,522,950	\$ 8,222,269	-3.50%
General Merchandise	5%	\$ 1,084,736	\$ 1,094,374	0.90%
Hotels/Motels - WO/BWL	100%	\$ 11,166,604	\$ 10,694,704	-4.20%
Recreation and Amusement Places	50%	\$ 348,345	\$ 370,844	6.50%
Sales and Use Taxes Attributable to Tourism		\$ 76,656,494	\$ 78,240,274	2.10%

BWL – Beer, Wine and Liquor
WO/BWL – Without Beer, Wine and Liquor

MONTGOMERY COUNTY TRAVEL DATA

- Visitation to Montgomery County increased 2.8% from 2017 to 2018.
- Overnight visitation increased 2.8% and day trip visitation increased 2.7%.
- Tourism Industry Sales from 2017 to 2018 increased modestly by 0.8%.
- Total economic impact of spending by visitors to Montgomery County in 2018 was \$1.94 billion.



Tourism Industry: Measures the value of traveler activity within “tourism characteristic industries.” This concept measures only the direct impact of the travel industry.

Tourism Economy: Includes the tourism industry plus government spending and capital investment in support of tourism. This is the basis of the total economic impact analysis, including direct, indirect and induced impacts.

MARKETING: WEBSITE

In early Fiscal Year 2019, the marketing team launched a redesigned website that included a bold design, user-friendly navigation, Localist events calendar platform and a dedicated blog section. The team also implemented a robust content development strategy that significantly increased the number of blog posts and landing pages that were published to the website. As a result, VisitMontgomery.com saw a dramatic increase in pageviews, pages per session and average session duration. The content strategy also translated into more engagement on Visit Montgomery's most popular social media channels – Facebook and Instagram.



Website

537,962 Pageviews

262,601 Sessions

Pages Per Session: 2.05

↑ **18.03% YOY**

Average Session Duration: 1:25

↑ **21.1% YOY**

Bounce Rate: 67.8%

↓ **5.2% YOY**



Blog Content

17,197 Page Views

↑ **4.5% YOY**

Average Session Duration 1:22

↑ **118.3% YOY**

Bounce Rate: 73.76%

↓ **7.4% YOY**

Social Media Engagement



Engagement 15,168

↑ **10.8% YOY**



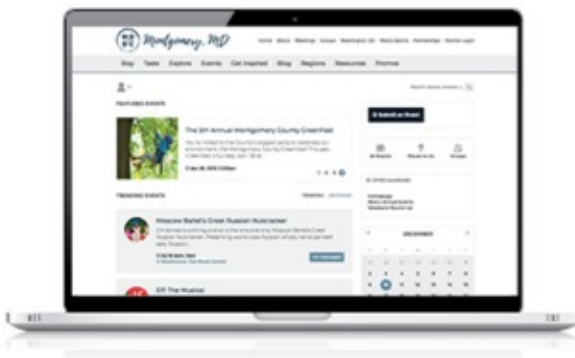
Engagement 14,678

↑ **16.3% YOY**



Engagement 2,272

↓ **34.4% YOY**



Events Calendar

277,045 Page Views on Events

2,373 Users Actively Posting Events

Use of Localist Platform is in its Second Year

#1 Most Visited Pages on Website



MARKETING: YOUR WEEKEND, YOUR WAY SPRING CAMPAIGN

Overview: “Your Weekend, Your Way” was a multi-channel spring campaign that was solely focused on positioning Montgomery County, Maryland as a weekend getaway destination. The primary objective was to drive weekend overnight travel. The secondary objective was to promote a wide range of activities and attractions that could fill an entire weekend while visiting the county.

Campaign Duration: February 1, 2019 – June 31, 2019

7,096 sign-ups

26,456 landing page views

12 media placements

ADVERTISING OUTLETS



TARGET MARKETING



Drive Market

3-4 hour driving radius

Pittsburgh
Philadelphia
Richmond
New York City
Raleigh/Durham



Fly Market

2 hour direct flights from BWI or DCA

Chicago
Charlotte
Charleston
Columbus
Atlanta
Boston

Day Trip & Overnight

1 hour driving radius (w/ traffic)

Washington, DC
Baltimore
Arlington

Groups & Meetings

Highest growth segments

Tour & Travel
Corporate
Government
Association
Social

Target States

Virginia
West Virginia
Maryland
Pennsylvania
New York
New Jersey
Delaware
Connecticut
Massachusetts

MARKETING: YOUR WEEKEND, YOUR WAY DESIGNS

**M/D
D/C**

Next Door to Washington, DC
Your next weekend getaway begins in Montgomery County, Maryland. Explore the great outdoors along the C&O Canal, visit wineries and breweries in the county's 93,000-acre Agricultural Reserve, soak up rich history, and indulge in some of the country's finest dining and shopping. Catch a show at one of several world-class performance venues, just a short Metro ride to Washington, DC. Experience your weekend, your way - with classic Maryland flavor!

*Your Weekend
Your Way*

Request a Travel Guide &
Enter to Win a Weekend Getaway
VisitMontgomery.com/Weekend

**M/D
D/C**
Montgomery, MD

Maryland
VisitMaryland.org

**M/D
D/C** *Montgomery, MD*
Close. For comfort.

**SPEND THE WEEKEND IN 93,000-ACRES
OF ABUNDANT BEAUTY**

Book your weekend stay at Tusculum Farm where the views are endless and nature is at its purest. Head to Sandy Spring Museum and meet local artists right in their own studios. Pop into Ricciuti's Kitchen for a seasonally inspired, farm-to-table meal. Savor a glass of Hazy American IPA at Elder Pine Brewing or relax with a tasting flight on Waredaca Brewing Company's horse farm. Feel at home as you browse locally-made specialty products at The Family Room.

Experience Your Weekend, Your Way!
www.VisitMontgomery.com/ag-reserve

*Your Weekend
Your Way*

Your next getaway to Washington, DC begins in Montgomery County, Maryland. Explore the outdoors, soak up history, unwind at local breweries, and indulge in some of the country's finest museums. Experience your weekend, your way - with classic Maryland flavor!

Request a Travel Guide &
Enter to Win a Weekend Getaway
VisitMontgomery.com/Weekend

**M/D
D/C** *Montgomery, MD*
Close. For comfort.

*Your Weekend
Your Way*

**M/D
D/C**
Montgomery, MD
Win a Weekend Getaway ▶

**M/D
D/C** *Montgomery, MD*
Close. For comfort.

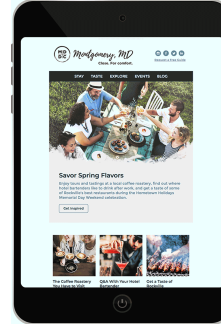
*Your Weekend
Your Way*

Win a Weekend Getaway ▶

MARKETING: EMAIL MARKETING



In Fiscal Year 2019, the marketing team increased their focus on developing a strong email marketing strategy. As a result, the email newsletter for consumers was redesigned with a more user-friendly style, vibrant color scheme and more call-to-actions to the website.



General Database
 FY 18: 14,253
 FY 19: 38,338

312%
 increase YOY



Average Open Rate
18.97%



Average Engagement Rate
21.65%



Average Click Rate
2.69%



Time Spent on Website
3:32

Compared to Organic Search
1:34

MARKETING: PUBLIC RELATIONS

Accelerated press coverage of Montgomery County's tourism experiences in leisure, group and meetings publications.

72

Press Clippings to Date

\$799,429

Ad Equivalency Value

Top Media Outlets



CRUSA Travel Writers: China



Good Morning Fox 5 DC



Fox 5 ZipTrips Germantown

MARKETING: ADDITIONAL ADVERTISING DESIGNS

MD DC *Montgomery, MD*
Close. For comfort.

The Smart Choice for Your Next Meeting is Right Outside Washington, DC

Montgomery County, Maryland puts participants at the center of pharma, government and bio tech industries - a short Metro ride from the nation's capital.

With distinctive meeting space ranging from small unique venues to a 48,000 sq. ft. conference center, meeting planners will find a broad scope of locations right at their fingertips.

VisitMontgomery.com

Montgomery County Communities

- Chevy Chase
- Bethesda
- Silver Spring
- Rockville
- Gaithersburg
- Germantown

Contact Leila Beltramo at lbeltramo@visitmontgomery.com for meeting guidance & free value-adds.

MD DC *Montgomery, MD*
Close. For comfort.

Neighbor to Washington, DC:
Montgomery County, Maryland puts downtown and upcountry experiences right at your fingertips.

Take in world-class performances at The Music Center at Strathmore. Hike the Underground Railroad Experience Trail at Woodlawn Manor Cultural Park. Tee off at one of nine different MCG public golf courses. Zip through the trees at Go Ape.

There's something for everyone - with classic Maryland flavor.

Get Inspired!
www.VisitMontgomery.com
Socialize: @visitmoco

MD DC *Montgomery, MD*
Close. For comfort.

Montgomery County Communities

- Chevy Chase
- Bethesda
- Silver Spring
- Rockville
- Gaithersburg
- Germantown

MD DC *Montgomery, MD*

The Smart Choice for Your Next Meeting is Right Next to Washington, DC

Montgomery County, Maryland puts participants at the center of pharma, government and bio tech industries - a short Metro ride from the nation's capital.

With distinctive meeting space ranging from small unique venues to a 48,000 sq. ft. conference center, meeting planners will find a broad scope of locations right at their fingertips.

From site selection to sending out an RFP to all hotels, Leila Beltramo offers one-stop-shop support, saving you time and providing free added value to enhance the attendee experience. Contact Leila at lbeltramo@visitmontgomery.com for meeting guidance & free value-adds.

www.VisitMontgomery.com

MD DC *Montgomery, MD*
Close. For comfort.

Montgomery County Communities

- Chevy Chase
- Bethesda
- Silver Spring
- Rockville
- Gaithersburg
- Germantown

Where Education Meets Exploration

MD DC *Montgomery, MD*
Close. For comfort.

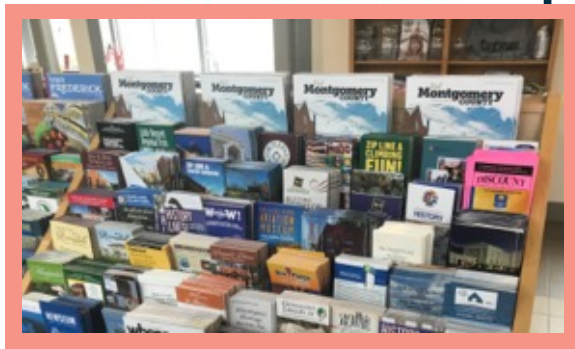
Montgomery County, Maryland puts the National Capital Trolley Museum, award-winning STEM programs, and world-class performance venues right at your student's fingertips. Just a quick Metro ride from Washington, DC. There's something for everyone - with classic Maryland flavor.

Get Inspired! VisitMontgomery.com

MARKETING: GETAWAY GUIDE



The Fiscal Year 2019 marketing and advertising strategy efforts resulted in a significant increase in Getaway Guide requests over Fiscal Year 2018.



Guide Inquiries

Fiscal Year 2018	Fiscal Year 2019
Total Requests 26,380	Total Requests 44,131
↑ 67.3%	
Advertising 11,248	Advertising 17,470
Online/Website 11,248	Online/Website 17,470
Your Weekend, Your Way Campaign N/A	Your Weekend, Your Way Campaign 1,066
Email/Phone 61	Email/Phone 57
Bulk Requests 14,480	Bulk Requests 24,851

MARKETING: MOCO SPORTS

The marketing team developed a dedicated marketing strategy for families traveling to Montgomery County for sports tournaments. At the heart of the strategy was a branded "MoCo Sports" email newsletter program that promoted things to do while attending the tournament and reasons to return.



General Database

FY 18: 8,809
FY 19: 14,649

↑ 66%
increase YOY



Average Open Rate
73.1%



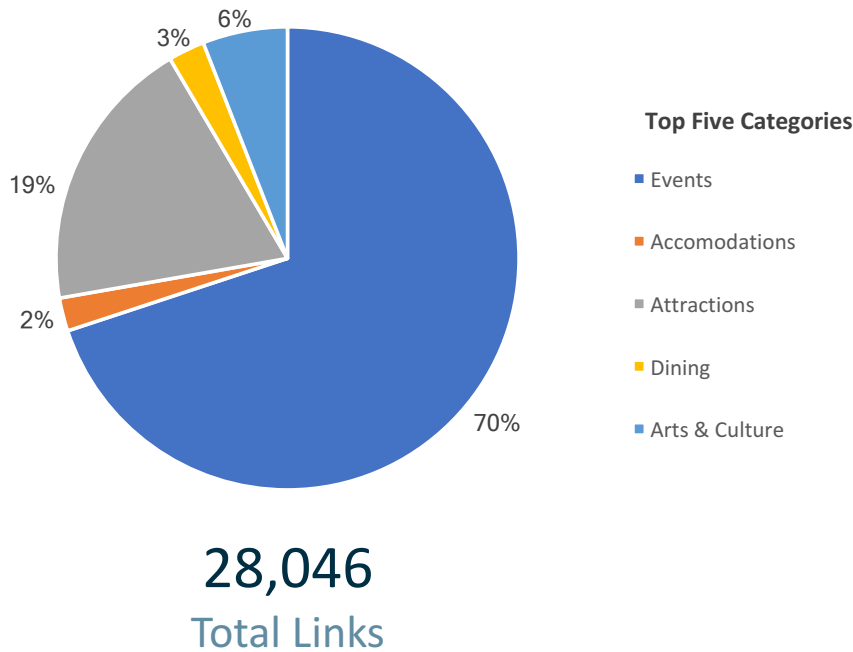
Average Click Rate
11.9%



Average Engagement Rate
84.9%

MARKETING: MD TOURISM OUTBOUND LINKS

Visit Montgomery works closely with the Maryland Office of Tourism to have Montgomery County's attractions, hotels, restaurants and events featured on VisitMaryland.org. For Fiscal Year 2019, Visit Montgomery received 28,046 referral links from the Visit Maryland website over to the Visit Montgomery website. The highest percentage of referral links came from events that were posted and then promoted on the Visit Maryland website.



Maryland Hotel Lodging Association
Annual STARS of the Industry Event at Maryland Live



Foundation for Hospitality
& Restaurant Management Taste of
Hospitality Event at UM Shady Grove



SALES: TRADE SHOWS

The sales team travels to industry trade shows throughout the fiscal year. The shows are aligned with the team’s target market segments and are a mix between traditional exhibit and appointment-based formats. Attendance at these shows enables the sales team to develop relationships with meeting planners and tour operators throughout the country. As a result, 43 leads and 29 RFP’s were generated directly from trade show attendance.

Trade Show Highlights FY19

Trade Shows Attended 15	Appointments Generated 394	RFP’s Directly Generated 29	Leads Generated 43
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SALES: HIGHLIGHTS



International POW WOW Conference in Anaheim, CA

Industry Engagement

- Lee was appointed Co-Chair of the Membership Committee/New Attendee Committee of the Student Youth Travel Association (SYTA)
- Lee became a new member of PCMA’s Membership Committee
- Leila became co-chair on MPI’s Potomac Chapter Retention Committee
- Leila is working with BIO Health Innovation on strategies to connect the BIO Health Capital Region with our hospitality partners
- Leila became a Certified Government Meeting Professional (CGMP)

SALES: HIGHLIGHTS

Client Events/Sales Missions

- Hosted BCD Travel Agents from the UK and US that book AstraZeneca travel (November 2018)
- Co-Sponsored Society of Government Meeting Professionals Certified Government Meeting Professional training class held at the Canopy by Hilton North Bethesda (February 2019)
- Gold Sponsorship of Global Meeting Industry Day in Philadelphia was held on April 4, 2019 and organized with a sales mission
- Hosted 8 travel agents from Switzerland with Capital Region USA (CRUSA) (May 2019)
- Co-sponsored mini FAM Tour for Amy Martell's Florida based HelmsBriscoe Team (May 2019)



Public Safety Awards at Bethesda North Marriott Hotel and Conference Center

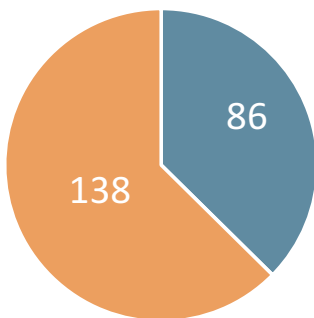
SALES:

Fiscal Year 2019 Total Bookings, Booked Room Nights and Leads Distributed

Economic Impact in Definite Bookings FY19
\$4,804,352

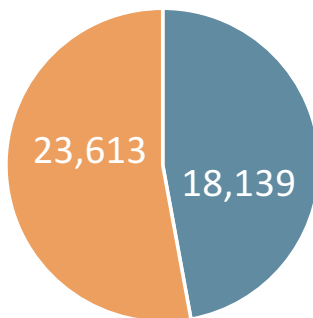
Bookings by Market Segment			
Tour & Travel: 48	Association: 21	Social: 8	Educational: 5
Corporate: 30	Sports: 12	Government: 8	Religious: 4
			Reunion: 2

Total Bookings



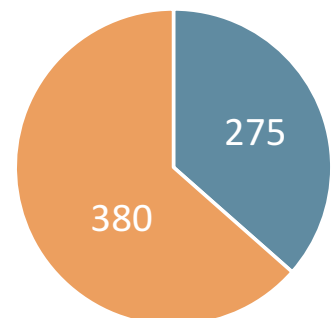
60% Increase

Booked Room Nights



30% Increase

Leads



38% Increase

■ FY 2019 ■ FY 2018

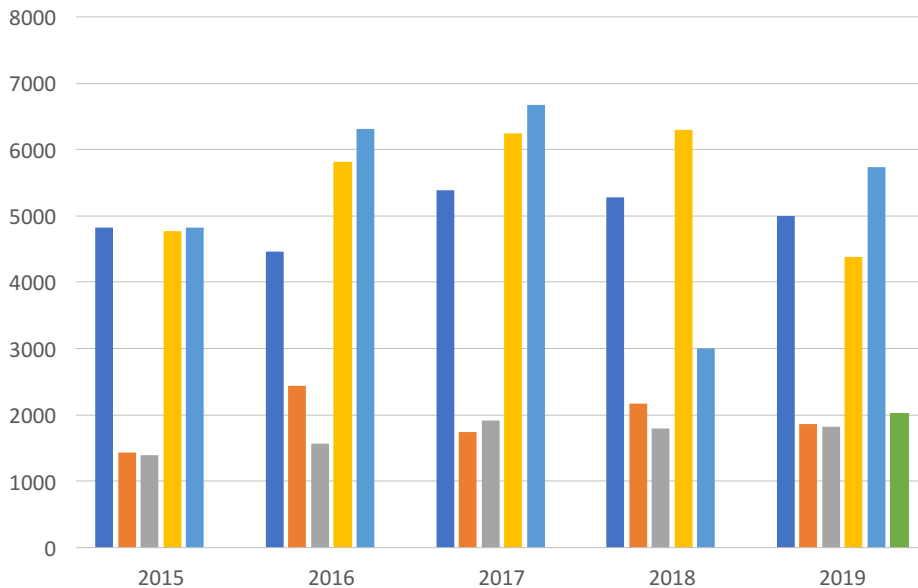
SPORTS TOURNAMENT HOUSING DATA

Visit Montgomery has a partnership with ITS R House to provide a hotel reservation platform for larger tournaments hosted at the Maryland SoccerPlex. The Visit Montgomery team manages the group blocks and works with ITS R House on managing the reservation process with teams attending each of the events.



Washington Spirit Players at Women's World Cup

Sports Events Room Night History Maryland SoccerPlex 2015-2019



Total Room Nights
99,164
over 5 Years

- Potomac Soccer Association Memorial Day Tournament
- FLG Lacrosse
- Discovery Cup
- Bethesda Soccer Girls
- Bethesda Soccer Boys
- Bethesda Soccer Boys and Girls U9-U14



2019 FISCAL YEAR TO DATE HIGHLIGHTS

From 2017 to 2018, the county saw an increase of 0.8% in tourism sales and 2.8% increase in visitation.

The consumer email database grew 312% over the prior fiscal year.



The Silver Spring-based Localist event calendar platform grew to 2,373 users actively posting events and generated 277,045 page views.

A unified website editorial strategy has resulted in a 18.03% increase in pages per session, 46.1% increase in time spent on site and a 21.1% increase in blog readership.



Sales division has increased total bookings 60% year over year with an economic impact of \$4,804,352.

Secured two industry premier conferences that have not been held in Montgomery County in the past.

- Travel & Tourism Research Association (TTRA) Marketing Outlook Forum in 2019 with renewal option for 2020 and 2021.
- Spotlight on the Mid Atlantic, a tour and travel industry trade show.

Increased public relations efforts with ad equivalency of \$799,429.





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

1801 Rockville Pike, Suite 320
Rockville, MD 20852

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