

Visit Big Sky
Big Sky, Montana

Request for Proposal:
2025 Marketing Services

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General Information

RFP Overview

The purpose of this Request for Proposal is to select an agency to provide the marketing campaigns for Visit Big Sky for 2025 and possibly beyond. Under the scope of the agreed contract, the chosen agency will execute marketing strategies designed to enhance the visibility and attractiveness of Big Sky and its surrounding areas as a destination as well as be sensitive to the Big Sky Destination Strategy efforts. The new agency must provide comprehensive and trackable solutions, including geo-location-based digital marketing, creative asset production, media planning and buying, and results reporting. All services must align with the existing contract terms and will focus on campaign-based deliverables outlined herein.

Introduction and Background

Visit Big Sky is the official destination marketing organization for the community of Big Sky, Montana, committed to promoting the community as a premier travel destination. As a nonprofit 501(c)(6) organization, Visit Big Sky has been a leader in tourism marketing for nearly 15 years, utilizing innovative strategies to attract high-value visitors, support leisure and group travel, and drive economic growth for the region.

Our primary objective is to increase trackable overnight stays in Big Sky through the use of geo-location-based technology while elevating the destination's profile in a way that remains true to the community's roots, awe-inspiring natural surroundings, and dedication to sustainable tourism.

Visit Big Sky seeks to diversify our visitor base by attracting a broader demographic and extending the economic benefits of tourism throughout the year. We envision Big Sky as a vibrant, year-round destination that supports local businesses, fosters diverse and accessible housing opportunities, and preserves the community's unique character. By blending Big Sky's frontier spirit with the development of a modern resort community, we aim to create a thriving destination that continues to serve as both a cherished home for residents and an unforgettable experience for visitors.

Goals

The primary goal of our partnership with our new agency is to drive measurable increases in overnight stays in Big Sky through data-driven, persuasive and engaging advertising campaigns that effectively highlight Big Sky's unique attractions and experiences.

In addition to increasing overnight stays, the selected agency will help achieve broader objectives, including enhancing year-round visitor engagement, boosting economic impact, and elevating brand awareness and online engagement.

Desired Services May Include

- **Meetings:** Campaign and audience planning meetings prior to advertising campaigns and campaign management and regular meetings during campaigns with the Visit Big Sky team. See Appendix A: "Campaigns" for campaign information.
- **Research and Data:** Location-based data to identify high-value audiences that are likely to convert more cost effectively. Data should also demonstrate when would be the appropriate time to launch the three itinerary-based campaigns listed below. The chosen agency will have access to the Visit Big Sky research that includes Google Analytics, Datafy Tracking data, Credit Card spending via VisaVue and others. We anticipate audiences to include:
 - **Remarketing:** Identifying and targeting individual visitors from outside of 100 miles who have previously visited Big Sky in general, or specific points of interest in previous years, and serve them with the advertisements that promote the entire overnight stay experience.
 - **Competing Markets/Attractions:** Identifying and targeting people who have visited destinations like Big Sky such as Jackson Hole, Sun Valley, Telluride.
 - **Look-Alikes:** Identifying and targeting audiences based on the behavior of those who live in the same areas and have similar demographics and psychographics.
- **Media Buying and Negotiations:** Access to a demand-side platform (DSP) that will allow the placement of ads and the flexibility to cancel and change ad placements as necessary. Will include the ability to place and track search engine and social media advertising performance through Google Ads, Facebook and Instagram. All ad campaigns should include integration with MAIDs (mobile ad ID) to allow trackability and attribution.
- **Cross-Platform Integration:** Use of Visit Big Sky existing social media and email audience information to identify MAIDs and build marketing audiences that are predisposed to our messaging by virtue of having followed Visit Big Sky on social media or opted in to one of our email lists.
- **Sensitive to the efforts of the [Destination Strategy](#) work presented by Visit Big Sky in Fall 2024.** As a Destination Marketing and Management Organization messaging needs to be on point regarding being a good visitor and recognizing that the residents of Big Sky, Montana are also a customer that Visit Big Sky serves.
- **Results Reporting:** Tracking and reporting on pacing of ad delivery, as well as campaign performance based on traditional ad metrics (CPM, impressions,

clicks, click-through rate, reach, audience, etc.) as well as conversion-based metrics conversions, conversion rate, cost per conversion, and return on ad spend. Conversions for the purposes of this RFP will be considered trackable in-market overnight stays, however the agency chooses to track those.

- **Advertising asset production:** Formats may include, but are not necessarily limited to static ads, video ads (including YouTube pre-roll), and HTML5. Photography and video assets will be provided by Visit Big Sky.
- **Breakdown of Deliverables:** Ads placement, KPI's and Return on Investment beyond overnight stays.

Budget and Terms of MOU

Budget

We are asking agencies interested in this RFP to provide a budget estimate, based on the expected return on investment, as measured by geo-trackable night stays in Big Sky in 2025.

Please include all expenses for a spring 2025 campaign, summer 2025 campaign and winter 2025/2026, including media buys, creative asset development services. See the "Campaigns" appendix for details on campaigns.

1. Annual Itinerary-Based Marketing Campaign #1: Big Sky and Yellowstone National Park – marketing itineraries for Spring 2025 visitation.

Expected total overnight stays generated: 1,000

2. Annual Itinerary-Based Marketing Campaign #2: Summer 2025 – marketing of itineraries and events for visitors to Big Sky and the Yellowstone Region.

Expected total overnight stays generated: 1,000

3. Annual Itinerary-Based Marketing Campaign #3: Winter 2025 – marketing of itineraries for December 2025 and January, February, March and April 2026

Expected overnight stays generated: 1,000

Length of MOU

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the awarded agency will cover the entirety of the last six months of the 2025 fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, with renewal starting July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026.

RFP Responses, Evaluation, and Schedule

Must Submit the Following Information to be Considered

- Corporate Overview – legal name, background, number of employees.
- Marketing and Data Products and Services – description of data, media buying, and attribution tools your agency has available to execute the campaigns outlined in the appendix. Please also include which data or tools you would expect the client to provide.
- Approach - how the agency would use the products and services to execute the campaigns, including achieving anticipated results (listed previously under "Budget," and measured by overnight stays in Big Sky) per campaign.
- Budget – the estimated cost of achieving the listed overnight goals, broken out by campaign and trackable digital marketing channel.
- Reporting - sample report of how you report marketing results, conversions/attribution, and the conversion-related metrics mentioned above.
- Conflicts of Interest - if your agency foresees any conflicts of interest that could be created by working with the Big Sky destination, please include them.
- Work Samples – specific samples showing a strong use of data to develop audiences, execute campaigns, and report results.
- Customer Reference – two minimum; travel, tourism, or hospitality industries preferred.

Evaluation Criteria

All RFP responses will be evaluated systematically, based on the following criteria:

- Response addresses Visit Big Sky outlined needs
- Value-to-budget in generating the stated volume of trackable over-nights
- Quality of Agency's portfolio and work samples
- Qualifications and experience of key individuals
- Qualifications and experience of past destination marketing campaigns, programs, and strategies to media buying and implementation
- Agency's compatibility with our team

The above selection criteria are provided to assist proposers and are not meant to limit other considerations that may become apparent during the course of the selection process.

RFP Schedule

RFP Sent	December 13, 2024
Questions Due (1 week)	January 10, 2025
Proposals Due	January 15, 2025
Internal Review	January 21, 2025
Agency Selected	January 24, 2025

This schedule is subject to change.

Contact Information

When asking clarifying questions, please email Liz McFadden- Liz@VisitBigSkyMT.com

Emails will be addressed in a timely manner. Phone and/or virtual meetings will be accepted up until January 10, 2025 at 5pm MST.

Appendix A: Campaigns

Visit Big Sky has received funding for three seasonal marketing campaigns, which consist of the below. Each campaign will be accompanied by non-advertising components that are not covered in this RFP, such as a social media influencer program and public relations activities.

1. Annual Itinerary-Based Marketing Campaign #1 (Big Sky and Yellowstone National Park – marketing itineraries for Spring 2025 visitation.

The itineraries listed below were developed based on visitor geo-data identifying points of interest that are proven tourism demand generators. We will work with the agency to identify which four of the following five itineraries we will activate and market.

Itinerary 1: Epic Lift Accessed Skiing

Demand Generator: Epic Skiing at the 3rd largest ski area in North America

Overview: Once called Biggest Skiing In America, Big Sky, Montana still boasts big skiing. With over 5800 skiable acres and 39 chairlifts it's not uncommon to have an acre of skiing to yourself daily. Set in the Northern Rockies, Big Sky is a skiers dream with over 400 inches of snow annually and terrain so vast that you'll never ski over your tracks from the run before. The resort is committed to make a skier smile from ear to ear when visiting Big Sky, this includes the chairlift ride up. Big Sky Resort has made a huge investment in lift operations and now the home of the fastest chairlifts in North America. Several chairlifts feature heated seats with the infamous blue bubbles that protect riders from the elements. In 2024, Big Sky Resort updated it's Tram to the top of Lone Peak. This state of the art 75 passenger tram whisks riders and sightseers to the peak in minutes. New for winter 2024 is the Madison 8, the largest eight passenger heated bubble chair in the world.

Itinerary 2: Outdoor Adventure and Wildlife

Demand Generator: Hiking Big Sky, Biking Big Sky

Overview: Big Sky, Montana, is a haven for outdoor adventure enthusiasts and wildlife lovers alike. Nestled in the heart of the Rockies, this picturesque destination offers an extensive network of trails for hiking and mountain biking, winding through pristine forests, alpine meadows, and rugged mountain terrain. Adventurers can marvel at breathtaking vistas, including views of Lone Peak, while keeping an eye out for native wildlife such as elk, moose, and even the occasional bear. Whether you're seeking the thrill of a challenging ascent or a leisurely ride through wildflower-strewn landscapes, Big Sky provides a perfect backdrop for reconnecting with nature and exploring the great outdoors.

Itinerary 3: Dining in the Shadow of the Mountain

Demand Generator: Mountain Top Dining at Big Sky Resort

Overview: Big Sky, Montana, offers an exceptional dining scene that combines rustic mountain charm with world-class culinary experiences. Nestled in the heart of the Rockies, the town boasts a diverse array of restaurants, from cozy cafés and family-friendly diners to upscale bistros and fine dining establishments. Visitors can savor locally sourced ingredients in dishes ranging from hearty Montana steaks and wild game to creative farm-to-table creations and international cuisine. Whether you're indulging in après-ski treats, enjoying an intimate dinner with panoramic mountain views, or grabbing a quick bite before exploring the great outdoors, Big Sky's vibrant dining options promise to satisfy every palate.

Itinerary 4: Choose Your Own Adventure

Demand Generator: Fly Fishing, Horseback Riding and Whitewater Rafting...

Overview: Spring 2025 in Big Sky, Montana, offers an adventure tailored to your spirit of exploration. Begin your day casting a line into the crystal-clear waters of the Gallatin River, where trout leap in the brisk morning air, or saddle up for a horseback ride through rolling hills and fragrant pine forests, perhaps venturing onto hidden trails leading to panoramic views. As the afternoon sun warms the landscape, take on the rapids of the Gallatin River, choosing between the thrill of Class III waves or the heart-pounding challenge of Class IV waters. If you prefer a quieter pace, find a secluded spot surrounded by blooming wildflowers to sketch the breathtaking scenery or reflect on the day. No matter the path you take, your Big Sky experience is filled with unforgettable moments, enhanced by its natural beauty and boundless opportunities for adventure.

Itinerary 5: Road Trip Yellowstone National Park

Demand Generator: Day trip adventures from Big Sky to Yellowstone National Park

Overview: A day trip from Big Sky, Montana, to Yellowstone National Park in spring or summer 2025 is an unforgettable adventure into one of America's most iconic landscapes. Just a scenic hour's drive away, Yellowstone offers a kaleidoscope of natural wonders. Explore its famous geothermal features, including the bubbling mud pots and the dramatic eruptions of Old Faithful, set against a backdrop of wildflower-filled meadows and lush pine forests. Wildlife enthusiasts can marvel at bison, elk, and bears roaming freely in their natural habitat, while anglers may find their perfect cast in the park's pristine rivers. For those seeking breathtaking views, the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone offers cascading waterfalls and rugged cliffs. With the long days of spring and summer, visitors can pack in plenty of exploration before returning to Big Sky to relax and recount their adventures.

2. Annual Itinerary-Based Marketing Campaign #2 Summer 2025– marketing of itineraries and events for visitors to Big Sky and the Yellowstone Region.

The itineraries listed below were developed based on visitor geo-data identifying points of interest that are proven tourism demand generators. We will work with the agency to identify which two of the following five itineraries we will activate and market.

Itinerary 1: Big Sky Events: Music In the Mountains and Farmers Market

Demand Generator: Visitor Activities in Big Sky

Overview: Summer in Big Sky, Montana, is a season of vibrant community events and outdoor fun set against a backdrop of breathtaking mountain scenery. The Big Sky Farmers Market is a weekly highlight, offering locally grown produce, artisanal crafts, and live music that captures the spirit of the region. Music in the Mountains fills the air with melodies on warm evenings, as free outdoor concerts bring together locals and visitors to enjoy a diverse lineup of performances under the stars. For an adrenaline-pumping spectacle, the annual Professional Bull Riding (PBR) event showcases the grit and skill of world-class riders, drawing enthusiastic crowds. Coupled with endless opportunities for hiking, mountain biking, and fly fishing, summer in Big Sky is as lively as it is unforgettable.

Itinerary 2: Family Road Trip Extravaganza

Demand Generator: Road trip scenery and along-the-route experiences

Overview: Big Sky, Montana, is the perfect base for day trips around the Yellowstone Region, offering a mix of natural beauty, cultural experiences, and outdoor recreation. A short drive takes you to the charming town of Bozeman, where you can explore the Museum of the Rockies, stroll through vibrant downtown streets, and enjoy farm-to-table dining. Nature lovers can venture to Hyalite Canyon for hiking, paddleboarding on Hyalite Reservoir, or picnicking amidst alpine scenery. For history enthusiasts, the Gallatin History Museum in Bozeman provides a glimpse into the area's rich past. Head west to the Madison River for world-class fly fishing or rafting. With its mix of wilderness and small-town charm, Gallatin County provides a variety of adventures to complement your stay in Big Sky.

Itinerary 3: A Long Weekend of Fun In Big Sky, Montana

Demand Generator: Fly In Market for a Montana Getaway

Overview: A long summer weekend in Big Sky, Montana, is a perfect mix of outdoor adventure, breathtaking scenery, and indulgent dining. Start your days

with invigorating hikes, exploring trails that wind through wildflower-filled meadows, past cascading waterfalls, and up to panoramic mountain views. For thrill-seekers, afternoons can be spent ziplining, mountain biking, or rafting down the Gallatin River's exhilarating rapids. As the sun sets, Big Sky's vibrant dining scene beckons, offering everything from rustic mountain fare to gourmet meals crafted with locally sourced ingredients. After dinner, unwind with live music at a cozy venue or under the stars at an outdoor concert. Whether you're chasing adrenaline or savoring serenity, Big Sky promises a weekend that's as adventurous as it is unforgettable.

Itinerary 4: Big Sky, Montana Unique Lodging for Your Next Summer Vacation

Demand Generator: Unique Lodging as Your Base for Your Montana Adventure

Overview: Big Sky, Montana, offers unique lodging options that blend luxury with the rugged charm of the mountains, creating an unforgettable summer retreat. Choose from cozy log cabins tucked in pine forests, luxurious ski-in/ski-out chalets that transform into hiking havens, or boutique hotels offering modern amenities and panoramic views of the Gallatin Range. For a truly distinctive experience, consider a stay in a yurt or glamping tent, where you can enjoy a rustic atmosphere without sacrificing comfort. Many accommodations feature outdoor hot tubs, fire pits, and private decks, perfect for stargazing under Montana's famous big sky. Whether you're seeking seclusion in nature or a lively base near the heart of town, Big Sky's lodging options promise to make your summer visit truly special.

Itinerary 5: The Family Vacation- Guaranteed Not to Suck

Demand Generator: Family Adventure- Made for Mom to have fun!

Overview: Big Sky, Montana, is the ultimate summer family vacation destination, guaranteed to keep everyone entertained and awe inspired. The town offers endless opportunities for outdoor fun, from family-friendly hiking trails and scenic chairlift rides to fly fishing lessons and horseback riding adventures. Kids and parents alike will marvel at the natural wonders of nearby Yellowstone National Park, just a short drive away, with its geysers, wildlife, and otherworldly landscapes. For thrills closer to town, ziplining, mountain biking, and whitewater rafting provide excitement for all ages. Big Sky also delivers when it comes to downtime, with cozy accommodations, delicious dining options, and lively events like outdoor concerts and farmers markets. Add in the breathtaking mountain views and fresh air, and you've got a vacation that's anything but ordinary—making boredom impossible and memories unforgettable.

3. Annual Itinerary-Based Marketing Campaign #3 Winter 2025- marketing of itineraries for December 2025 and January, February, March and April 2026

The itineraries listed below were developed based on visitor geo-data identifying points of interest that are proven tourism demand generators. We will work with the agency to identify which two of the following three itineraries we will activate and market.

Itinerary 1: One a Chairlift by Noon

Demand Generator: Easy Fly in Ski Vacation to Big Sky, Montana

Overview: Flying into Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport makes a winter getaway to Big Sky, Montana, incredibly convenient. With direct flights from numerous major cities across the U.S., travelers can easily arrive in the morning, pick up their gear, and be on the slopes by afternoon. The airport is just a scenic hour's drive from Big Sky, with shuttle services, rental cars, and private transfers readily available. Once there, the resort's seamless ski-in/ski-out accommodations and world-class terrain mean you can go from touchdown to carving powder on some of the best runs in the Rockies in no time. It's the perfect blend of accessibility and adventure, making Big Sky an unbeatable destination for a quick and exhilarating winter escape.

Itinerary 2: Epic Lift Accessed Skiing

Demand Generator: Epic Skiing at the 3rd largest ski area in North America

Overview: Once called Biggest Skiing in America, Big Sky, Montana still boasts big skiing. With over 5800 skiable acres and 39 chairlifts it's not uncommon to have an acre of skiing to yourself daily. Set in the Northern Rockies, Big Sky is a skier's dream with over 400 inches of snow annually and terrain so vast that you'll never ski over your tracks from the run before. The resort is committed to make a skier smile from ear to ear when visiting Big Sky, this includes the chairlift ride up. Big Sky Resort has made a huge investment in lift operations and now the home of the fastest chairlifts in North America. Several chairlifts feature heated seats with the infamous blue bubbles that protect riders from the elements. In 2024, Big Sky Resort updated its Tram to the top of Lone Peak. This state of the art 75 passenger tram whisks riders and sightseers to the peak in minutes. New for winter 2024 is the Madison 8, the largest eight passenger heated bubble chair in the world.

Itinerary 3: Ski In/Ski Out Lodging in Big Sky, Montana

Demand Generator: Epic Skiing at the 3rd largest ski area in North America

Overview: Big Sky, Montana, is renowned for its exceptional ski-in/ski-out lodging, allowing visitors to step out of their accommodations and directly onto the slopes. From cozy mountain chalets to expansive luxury homes, these properties cater to skiers and snowboarders seeking convenience and breathtaking alpine views. For those desiring an elevated experience, the Montage Big Sky offers unmatched

luxury. Nestled within the Spanish Peaks, this sophisticated resort combines rustic elegance with five-star amenities, including a world-class spa, gourmet dining, and après-ski lounges. With heated outdoor pools, plush rooms, and curated activities, the Montage redefines mountain luxury. Whether you choose slope-side charm or refined indulgence, Big Sky's lodging ensures a seamless and memorable winter retreat.

RFP Evaluation Score Sheet

Project: Marketing Services for Visit Big Sky

Evaluator Name: _____

Date: _____

Evaluation Criteria	Weight (%)	Score (0-10)	Weighted Score(Weight x Score)	Comments
<p>1. Response addresses Visit Big Sky's outlined needs</p> <p>Does the proposal clearly and comprehensively address the outlined goals and deliverables?</p>	20%			
<p>2. Value-to-budget in generating trackable overnights</p> <p>Does the budget demonstrate strong ROI potential and cost-effectiveness?</p>	20%			
<p>3. Quality of Agency's portfolio and work samples</p> <p>Do the samples reflect creativity, quality, and alignment with Visit Big Sky's branding?</p>	15%			
<p>4. Qualifications and experience of key individuals</p> <p>Do key personnel have relevant expertise in destination marketing, media buying, and campaign implementation?</p>	15%			
<p>5. Experience with past destination marketing campaigns and strategies</p> <p>Has the agency successfully handled similar campaigns, with a track record of measurable results?</p>	20%			
<p>6. Agency's compatibility with our team</p>	10%			

Does the agency demonstrate alignment with Visit Big Sky’s culture and collaborative approach?				
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Scoring Instructions

- **Score each criterion from 0-10**, where:
 - **10** = Excellent, fully meets or exceeds expectations.
 - **8-9** = Very Good, meets most expectations with minor gaps.
 - **6-7** = Good, meets expectations but with some areas for improvement.
 - **4-5** = Average, meets minimum requirements with significant gaps.
 - **0-3** = Poor, does not meet expectations.
- **Weight:** Represents the importance of each criterion in the overall evaluation.
- **Weighted Score:** Multiply the score by the weight for each criterion.

Final Score Calculation

Total Weighted Score _____ / 100%

Evaluator’s Final Recommendation

Based on the evaluation, would you recommend this agency for further consideration?

- Yes
- No

Comments/Justification:
