

Profile

Applicant: Regional Application

Grant Manager: Jennifer Geiger

Name of Organization: Midcoast Maine Chamber Council

Mailing Address: 199 Water St.
Bath, Maine 04530
(2010-2011 Grant Management RFP currently outstanding)

Physical Address: 199 Water St.
Bath, Maine 04530

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Date of Incorporation: September 27th, 1988

EIN: 22-2982547

What were the top three highlights from the previous fiscal year?

1. **COLLATERAL MATERIALS:** See Life! Vacation Planner & Map: We updated maps, events and attractions on our branded 16-page See Life! Vacation Planner & Map brochure. This brochure illustrates the extensive coastline formed by the region's peninsulas (a key attraction of the region), and lists the diverse activities, attractions and primary events of each of the region's core communities. It also directs visitors to the region's website, www.mainesmidcoast.com. Previously we distributed at the Kittery, Yarmouth and Gardiner Visitors Centers, as well as through individual chambers, at trade shows and by mail. This year we increased distribution of the planner to the Portland area and the Bath Visitors Center.
2. **COLLATERAL MATERIALS:** Facebook-style Print Ad: We designed and placed a new print ad evoking a Facebook page in Maine Invites You and Yankee Magazine. The fresh graphics and text mimicking the popular online social medium Facebook help bring MidCoast's Maine assets to the important 20-30-year-old market.
3. **WEB-BASED MARKETING:** Blog: We created and maintain a blog, <http://www.mainesmidcoast.com/blog/index.php>, on our website that is updated weekly and highlights specific themes in detail.

Please state your three primary goals for the next year and how you expect them to increase tourism revenue for the region with cooperative funds.

- 1) Solidify our established customer base and convey a value message to potential new customers in our primary geographic markets. Focusing on the accessibility of the MidCoast region in terms of the natural beauty, relaxed lifestyle and unique cultural experience it offers, without the inconveniences of more remote locales, will stimulate both repeat visits and new exploration of the region.
- 2) Encourage longer visits to Maine's MidCoast by promoting travel throughout the region. Exploring the many attractions of the regional peninsulas and coastal communities will create a more varied experience for vacationers and leave them wanting more.
- 3) Increase brand awareness with a wider audience through the use of new media with coordinated, integrated creative materials and public relations activities that focus on the key attributes and attractions of the region. Clear communication of the beauty, maritime culture and unique geography of the MidCoast will help spread the word about the Maine's Midcoast experience and draw new tourists to the region.

Please describe the overall strategy you will implement to achieve these goals.

- 1) We will increase repeat as well as new tourism visits to Maine's MidCoast by continuing to engage our core customers through targeted advertising of our brand in print and online publications that have a Maine or New England centric readership and/or are geographically targeted to our primary market in the greater Boston area.
- 2) We will encourage longer visits to MidCoast Maine by sharing information about activities in different parts of the region through distribution of a Vacation Planner & Map at appropriate visitor centers, chamber offices, travel trade shows and online. The

brochure gives a branded overview of the region but also organizes information about regional attractions in a way that makes it easy for enthusiasts from diverse interest groups to follow their interests from point to point. The reprint of this brochure will allow us to continue a broad distribution strategy and fulfill information requests. Additionally, we will further enhance brand awareness with the installation of a mural at the Main St. Bath offices in the Bath train station building, one of our Vacation Planner & Map venues. This will encourage visitors to consider staying in the MidCoast region for their vacation.

3) We will increase brand awareness with a wider audience through use of the mainesmidcoast.com and mainesmidcoastpress.com websites, our regional events e-newsletter; web-based advertising and press release sites; and the integration of social networking (blog and Facebook) into the MidCoast region's marketing plan.

How do these goals and strategies fit with the Office of Tourism's?

Promotion of the MidCoast region and materials distributed will be presented as a snapshot of the overall Maine travel experience. In our marketing we will encourage visitors to stay for an extended period, travel throughout the region, and visit year-round in support of MOT goals.

Please describe how the financial resources will be monitored by your organization.

We request estimates or call for bids and compare costs before purchases. The Treasurer maintains records of all income and expenditures. The accounts are reconciled and a detailed financial statement is prepared for board review and approval on a monthly basis. At the close of each fiscal year, the account will be reviewed and all appropriate filings prepared by a certified public accountant.

Primary Analysis

Research

Is your region or event conducting any research initiatives this year?

No

If you have Research Initiatives, please state the purpose and give a brief description of each.

(No Response)

Public Relations

Who is the person/company that is responsible for your PR program?

Company: 2009-2010 SK Public Relations (2010-2011 RFP currently outstanding)

Address: 50-5 Howard St.
Somerville, MA 02144
(2010-2011 RFP currently outstanding)

Phone: 207-542-3723

Email Address: skpr@skpublicrelations.com

Would you be interested in participating in a two-hour public relations workshop?

Yes

Would you like to be contacted regarding PR efforts?

Yes

Please provide a list of editorial contacts:

Please contact Sharon Kitchens at skpr@skpublicrelations.com for this information.

Please provide a list of publications and/or broadcast outlets you would most like to target:

Country Living
Forbes Life
AAA Northern NE Journeys
Boston Magazine
Yankee
Baltimore Sun
Boston Globe
Hartford Courant
Philadelphia Inquirer
Wall Street Journal
Washington Post
National Geographic Travel
Outside
Toronto Star
The Toronto Sun
Bon Appetit
Gourmet
Saveur
Real Simple
Better Homes & Gardens
O, the Oprah Magazine
The New York Times
The New York Times Magazine
Coastal Living
Conde Nast Traveler

Co-Op Efforts

In what type(s) of co-op effort, if any, is your group participating?

Internal, e.g. A local matching program with hotels and inns., External, e.g. Partnerships with other groups., State-wide, e.g. Coordinated intra-state vacation effort in partnership with the MOT, participate in MOT/PSA

Please describe in further detail your co-op efforts:

Internal Partnerships:

Our member chambers of commerce place branded advertising for the region in their yearly guidebooks and on their websites.

External Partnerships:

We financially support the marketing efforts of Cruise Maine.

Statewide:

We contribute a portion of grant funds to fund the statewide rich media advertising campaign in cooperation with other Maine regions. We send representatives to staff the Maine Pavilion at travel trade shows.

Website Development & Maintenance

If you currently have a website, please provide us with your URL:

URL: www.mainesmidcoast.com

Please provide a brief description of the overall goal of your site and the functionality that the site offers to its visitors:

The mainesmidcoast.com website is designed to promote the Maine's MidCoast brand, which reinforces the iconic attractions of the MidCoast region, and celebrates the natural beauty, authentic culture, heritage, and accessibility of the region. It is designed to be attractions based and data driven.

The site is divided into Outdoors, In Town, Heritage, The Kitchen, Arts, Touring, Getting Here and More Info pages. Each page describes one of the attributes that draw visitors to our region, with specific information on related topics of interest. On every page a menu that identifies services by categories that answer travel needs allows access to a database that includes all members of the seven chambers of commerce that form the Midcoast Chamber Council. Database listings include Google mapping. An automatic update feature ensures that the database remains current. The site also links to a Media Site, mainesmidcoastpress.com.

Please provide a brief description of the intended strategy for improvement over the next one to two years:

Our strategy to improve our branding and our reach is to continue to integrate and coordinate all creative, including print and on-line advertising, free-standing kiosks, collateral materials, as well as on-line social media including our blog and Facebook.

This will include coordinating online social media so that our newsletter, blog and Facebook entries support one another. Recognizing the increasing importance of social media in reaching a larger and, sometimes, younger audience, we have requested proposals for a new project, a Marketing and Social Media consultant.

Visitor Database

Do you collect and compile information on your visitors (names, addresses, areas of interest, etc.)?

Yes

If so, please describe how the database is currently structured and how it is used for marketing and communication initiatives:

We have an opt-in button on our website for visitors to sign up to receive a quarterly newsletter. Visitors can also sign up for the blog and visit us on Facebook. We use all three venues to market local events and festivals, as well as convey local color. We collect names and email addresses through Campaign Monitor and use the service to distribute the quarterly newsletter with updates on seasonal MidCoast events.

Budget Summary

Current Projects

Project 1: Cooperative Regional Advertising

Description: Regional Representatives chose to support Public Service Announcements to inform Maine residents about the role tourism plays in the Maine economy and to promote vacationing in Maine.

MTMPP Award: \$10,000.00

Project 2: Administrative Costs

Description: The Administrative fee is 20% of the regional grant allocation and does not require a match.

MTMPP Award: \$17,212.00

Project 3: Cruise Maine

Project Type: Travel Trade & Consumer Shows

Description: Financial Support and Trade Show Staffing

Element 1: Financial Support

Project: Cruise Maine

Element Description: To help further the development of Maine as a major cruise destination for both large and small ships.

Timeline: SeaTrade Convention in 2011

Tracking: We will measure success by the number of cruises booked, and make a broad inference of effectiveness through spikes in unique visits at CruiseMaine's website, www.cruisemaineuse.com, over the year, as well as an educated estimate to the amount of new dollars brought to the region through these efforts.

Target Market: National and International Cruise Lines

Rationale: With a significant number of our members being served by the efforts of the Cruise Maine Coalition, it is our intention to provide a portion of our regional grant to help further the worthy cause of this multi-regional entity. The cruise industry is a growing source of valuable tourism dollars that we feel benefits our region and the state of Maine as a whole. Given the growing connection between tourism and security, our region, and the State as a whole stands to benefit greatly from its position as a safe, secure destination. Visitors from cruise ships have the opportunity to sample the attractions and beauty of our region and may choose to return for a longer stay.

By its nature, the cruise industry provides a great source of revenue to the region and state, with minimal amount of long term impact, or stress upon resources. The money will go towards funding of CruiseMaine marketing materials, website updates and maintenance, direct mail, e-mail campaigns, and trade show costs for the annual Seatrade convention in Miami. The success of the Cruise Maine coalition is dependent on time, energy and money from each member and we are committed to our support.

Partners: Other coastal tourism regions, MaineDot and MOT

Budget Description: Cruise Maine has requested a one-time increase in funding.

MTMPP Award: \$7,000.00

Cash Match: \$0.00
In-Kind Match: \$3,000.00

Project 4: Visitor Center Kiosks

Project Type: Advertising
Description: Update graphic design of free standing Kiosks at the Kittery and Yarmouth Visitors Information Centers.

Element 2: Free Standing Kiosks

Project: Visitor Center Kiosks

Element Description: Yearly Space Rental Fee

Timeline: Design & Production June 2010
Yearly Renewal Agreement July 2010

Tracking: The number of brochures and guides distributed from each center.

Target Market: All of the qualified visitors coming to the Maine Tourism Visitor's Centers in Kittery and Yarmouth.

Rationale: Over 850,000 visitors pass through the Kittery and Yarmouth Visitor's Centers annually. Evidence from both the state's own data and interviews conducted with Visitor Center staff tell us that a very large number of people come to Maine with no particular destination in mind until they reach the Visitor's Centers.

Our kiosks in these centers provide us with the graphic vehicle and point of fulfillment opportunities necessary to help make a strong case for a Mid-Coast vacation, and encourage more and longer visits through effective communication of the region's events and activities.

We are updating the Kiosks' look for consistency of branding to reinforce awareness of the attractions of Maine's MidCoast to those who have already chosen to visit Maine and lead them to explore the MidCoast region.

Media Type: POP Free-Standing Display Kiosks

Co-op Opportunity: *(No Response)*

Budget Description: Kiosk Space Rental \$1500
Graphic Design \$400
Production of New Kiosk Graphics \$1600

MTMPP Award: \$3,500.00

Cash Match: \$0.00

In-Kind Match: \$0.00

Project 5: Vacation Planner Brochure

Project Type: Brochures

Description: 16 page brochure featuring maps of the regional peninsulas, attractions and scenic drives, for use at the MOT travel show pavilion and visitor centers.

Element 3: Production

Project: Vacation Planner Brochure

Element Description: Reprint of 35,000 copies of regional Vacation Planner & Map. Brochure includes maps that guide readers through the region along Rt. 1 and illustrates the unique topography of the mid-coast peninsulas and

harbors. Accompanying copy and photos identify area attractions and activities for visitors. The brochure:
 Encourages travel within the region
 Raises the profile of our brand image
 Differentiates midcoast Maine from competitors
 Maintains a direct-to-customer contact model
 Coordinates with Maine Tourism Bureau marketing

Timeline: Design and Copy approvals - Fall 2010, followed by 3 print quotes
 Print Completion - end of 2010
 Distribution at Travel Trade shows 2011
 Distribution at Visitor Centers and Chambers of Commerce - ongoing 2011

Tracking: We will measure effectiveness by the number of brochures distributed, and more generally through an educated assessment of increases in travel throughout the region.

Target Market: Travel show attendees who are exploring vacation options; visitors within Maine.

Rationale: As an affordable and somewhat underutilized travel destination, Maine's mid-coast region is well positioned for growth; the "undiscovered" coast has the natural beauty and relaxing attributes of more remote locations without the inconveniences.

Updating and reprinting the brochure enhances this powerful marketing tool by maintaining accurate information for the visitor and coordinating the cover design with our other advertising and marketing pieces to enhance the MidCoast brand.

By distributing a brochure that guides visitors through the region, we make it easy to explore the attractions of each area and encourage users to stay longer or return another time in order to experience those portions of the coast they might have missed.

Distribution Plan: The brochure is designed to fit racks at the Maine Office of Tourism travel show pavilion for distribution at Travel Trade shows and statewide visitors booths. The brochures were sent to all the MOT pavilion shows and are also stocked at the regional Chambers of Commerce; Visitors Centers in Kittery, Portland, Yarmouth, Bath and Belfast; and will be sent to those who request printed materials about the region.

Budget Description: Number of brochures will be determined by extent of design changes needed and print bids receive.

Design & Printing \$12,000, \$2500 Cash Match, \$5500 In-Kind Match

MTMPP Award: \$12,000.00

Cash Match: \$2,500.00

In-Kind Match: \$5,550.00

Element 4: Vacation Planner Brochure Display and Delivery

Project: Vacation Planner Brochure

Element Description: The goal is to maintain ample brochure stock at the several visitors centers and the chambers throughout the year. This will be accomplished by hiring an independent contractor to deliver and maintain brochure inventory at all locations.

Timeline: The contractor will check inventories on a regular basis, more often during the busiest tourist season, less often through the winter months.

Tracking: We will track the effectiveness of deliveries by checking in with brochure venues to confirm timely and consistent restocking.

Target Market: Visitors to the various visitors centers and chambers.

Rationale: Maintaining the presence of the MidCoast brand necessitates our brochure be available at all times and in all seasons at the various visitors centers and chambers. Ease of finding MidCoast information will encourage more visitors to spend time in the region.

Distribution Plan: The contractor will store undistributed brochures, check with brochure venues periodically, and deliver brochures to venues as needed.

Budget Description: Brochure Display and Delivery \$2500, \$1000 In-Kind Match

MTMPP Award: \$2,348.00

Cash Match: \$0.00

In-Kind Match: \$1,000.00

Project 6: Public Relations Program

Project Type: Public Relations

Description: 2008-2009 Public Relations

Element 5: Annual Contract

Project: Public Relations Program

Element Description: We seek to expand and strengthen awareness of Maine's Midcoast as a unique and attractive vacation destination by partnering with an as-yet to be determined consultant for public relations outreach, which creates a powerful residual effect when systematically implemented over time.

Timeline: Ongoing with 3-6 month short-term and 6-12 month long-term lead time for story submissions.

Tracking: We measure success by the quality and quantity of articles secured from year to year. We will also be tracking "Where did you hear about us" through our telephone and website inquiries.

Target Market: Local, regional, national and international media outlets including online, print, broadcast, and radio. plus trade show and media events.

Rationale: On-going public relations outreach is important to building and broadening interest in the MidCoast Maine region. It allows us to potentially reach a wider national audience that would be prohibitive using our limited advertising dollars. It also provides the flexibility to adapt our message as needed to respond to short-term trends and occurrences in the market place.

Budget Description: \$10,000 for event-based public relations

MTMPP Award: \$10,000.00

Cash Match: \$1,000.00

In-Kind Match: \$4,009.00

Project 7: Maine Invites You

Project Type: Advertising

Description: Create a strong, branded positioning statement celebrating the attractions of the Mid-Coast region and promoting our website, www.mainesmidcoast.com within the publication's pages to a very qualified audience,

Element 6: Full Page Color Ad

Project: Maine Invites You

Element Description: Design and place a 1- page, 4-color ad within Maine Invites You, promoting the Maine's MidCoast brand and highlighting the diverse attractions of the region. The advertisement will promote our website (www.mainesmidcoast.com) and invite subscription to our on-line newsletter.

Timeline: Materials will be provided to the publication for the 2011 issue before the due date.

Tracking: We will measure success chiefly by the number of requests for information generated through the advertisement made to our website and phone number, and will make a broad inference of effectiveness through spikes in web hits during the period.

Target Market: Potential visitors to the state who have specifically requested information from the MOT.

Rationale: As the primary print fulfillment piece distributed by the Office of Tourism, Maine Invites You is a leading method for reaching an audience interested in visiting our state. Inclusion in MIY allows MC3 to make a strong, branded positioning statement that summarizes the experience of visiting the region and delivers

it to a prime audience.

Media Type: Print
Co-op Opportunity: *(No Response)*
Budget Description: Placement \$6000
MTMPP Award: \$6,000.00
Cash Match: \$0.00
In-Kind Match: \$2,000.00

Element 7: Maine Invites You Design

Project: Maine Invites You
Element Description: Design of Maine Invites You ad for MOT website.
Timeline: Design will be completed before the 2011 due date.
Tracking: We will measure success by the number of information requests generated by the ad to our website and phone number and will make a broad inference of effectiveness through spikes in web hits during the period.
Target Market: Potential visitors to the state who have specifically requested information from the Maine Office of Tourism.
Rationale: It is important that the MidCoast brand be consistent and fresh in order to maintain our connection with previous visitors and also forge new links to those who have yet to visit the MidCoast
Media Type: Print
Co-op Opportunity: *(No Response)*
Budget Description: Design \$1000
MTMPP Award: \$1,000.00
Cash Match: \$0.00
In-Kind Match: \$0.00

Project 8: Website Development

Project Type: Website Development
Description: Improve effectiveness of the mainesmidcoast.com site in reaching audiences, attracting visitors, and delivering information.

Element 8: Website Maintenance

Project: Website Development
Element Description: Our goal is to update our website www.mainesmidcoast.com as needed to maintain the accuracy of visitor information, enhance the ease of site use and engage site visitors.
Timeline: Update chamber information and links as needed on an ongoing basis.
Tracking: We will measure success partly by the number of requests for information generated from our website and phone number, as well as by the number of newsletter subscribers, Facebook followers, and blog posters.
Target Market: Internet-savvy visitors.
Rationale: The website www.mainesmidcoast.com is the foundation of our integrated social media efforts. It allows us to direct site visitors to our blog, sign up for our quarterly newsletter, and invites visitors to our Facebook page. The website allows potential visitors to "see" the MidCoast at any time of the day or night, from any location, letting visitors know "our door is always open".

Budget Description: Ongoing website maintenance \$2000
MTMPP Award: \$2,000.00
Cash Match: \$856.00
In-Kind Match: \$1,000.00

Project 9: Marketing & Social Media

Project Type: Advertising
Description: This project has RFPs outstanding.

We seek to expand our outreach, in particular by using ever-evolving social media in a targeted and integrated way on a timely, on-going basis. Our current social media include an e-newsletter, blog, and Facebook page.

Element 9: Marketing & Social Media

Project: Marketing & Social Media

Element Description: Our goal is to integrate the MidCoast brand marketing, particularly the ever-evolving social media, to reach potential visitors more effectively and consistently. Our current social media include an e-newsletter, blog, and Facebook page.

Timeline: RFPs outstanding

Tracking: RFPs outstanding

Target Market: Potential & past MidCoast visitors, particularly the Internet-savvy.

Rationale: We chose to separate Marketing & Social Media from traditional regional event-based PR in order to increase our on-line presence. Many potential visitors now use the Internet to plan their trips, so we must target that venue in order to reach these visitors.

Media Type: On-line and other - RFPs outstanding

Co-op Opportunity: *(No Response)*

Budget Description: \$10,000
MTMPP Award: \$10,000.00
Cash Match: \$3,000.00
In-Kind Match: \$4,009.00

Project 10: Bath Visitors Center Advertising

Project Type: Advertising
Description: Bath Visitors Center Display and Brochure Program

Element 10: Bath Visitors Center Advertising

Project: Bath Visitors Center Advertising

Element Description: Rental space for 4' x 17' mural and display space for See Life! Vacation Planner Brochure.

Timeline: Ongoing.

Tracking: We will track effectiveness of the display and brochures by the number of inquiries at the Bath Visitors Center.

Target Market: Visitors going north or south on Route 1 and those arriving at the train station.

Rationale: The Bath Visitors Center had become a gateway center to the MidCoast because of its location on Route 1 and as its function as a train station.

Media Type: Print brochure and wall mural.

Co-op Opportunity: *(No Response)*

Budget Description: Mural and brochure display \$4000
In-Kind \$1000

MTMPP Award: \$4,000.00

Cash Match: \$0.00

In-Kind Match: \$1,000.00

Project 11: Maine Coast Welcome Center - Belfast

Project Type: Advertising

Description: Display space fee in the Belfast Maine Coast Welcome Center.

Element 11: Maine Coast Welcome Center, Belfast, Display Spcae

Project: Maine Coast Welcome Center - Belfast

Element Description: We are placing our See Life! Vacation Planner brochure in the newly opened Maine Coast Welcome Center in Belfast to reach visitors who may be on their way Downeast, as well as those who are traveling south, to encourage them to visit the MidCoast region.

Timeline: Ongoing

Tracking: We will ask the staff at the Welcome Center for numbers of inquiries re: the MidCoast and number of brochures distributed.

Target Market: Visitors already in the Belfast region.

Rationale: We already stock our brochure at the southern end of the MidCoast but were missing the northern end of the region. The Belfast center will better position us to gain visitors who might otherwise have only gone Downeast or straight through to Portland.

Media Type: Print collateral - brochure

Co-op Opportunity: *(No Response)*

Budget Description: Maine Coast Welcome Center Display Fee \$1000

MTMPP Award: \$1,000.00

Cash Match: \$0.00

In-Kind Match: \$500.00

Project Quick Reference

	<u>MTMPP Award</u>	<u>Cash Match</u>	<u>In-Kind Match</u>
Cooperative Regional Advertising			
Cooperative Regional Advertising	\$10,000.00		
Administrative Costs			
Administrative Costs	\$17,212.00		
Cruise Maine			
Financial Support	\$7,000.00	\$0.00	\$3,000.00
Visitor Center Kiosks			
Free Standing Kiosks	\$3,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Vacation Planner Brochure			
Production	\$12,000.00	\$2,500.00	\$5,550.00
Vacation Planner Brochure Display and Delivery	\$2,348.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
Public Relations Program			
Annual Contract	\$10,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$4,009.00
Maine Invites You			
Full Page Color Ad	\$6,000.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00
Maine Invites You Design	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Website Development			
Website Maintenance	\$2,000.00	\$856.00	\$1,000.00
Marketing & Social Media			
Marketing & Social Media	\$10,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$4,009.00
Bath Visitors Center Advertising			
Bath Visitors Center Advertising	\$4,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
Maine Coast Welcome Center - Belfast			
Maine Coast Welcome Center, Belfast, Display Spcae	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$500.00

Budget Summary

Proposed MTMPP Award:	\$86,060.00
Administrative Costs:	\$17,212.00
Cash Match:	\$7,356.00
In-Kind Match:	\$22,068.00
Total Match:	\$29,424.00
Total Proposed Budget:	\$115,484.00