

Profile

Applicant: Regional Application

Grant Manager: Barbara Desmarais

Name of Organization: Midcoast Maine Chamber Council

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Bath, ME 04530

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Date of Incorporation: October 1st, 1987

EIN: 01-0431230

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

YouTube videos, Facebook Pay Per Click Campaigns, updated print ad

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.

Our three primary goals continue to be to solidify our established visitor base, encourage longer visits throughout the year, and increase brand awareness as follows:

1. Solidify our established visitor base and convey a value message to potential new visitors 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, year-round 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. Update www.MainesMidCoast.com website
2. Ongoing Marketing & Social Media including ongoing blog & Facebook posts and a Facebook Pay Per Click Campaign
3. print, radio and television advertising.

Our overall strategy for 2012 is much like that of 2011. We have determined which projects increased visits to our website, calls to the toll free number, and enhanced this year's increase in visitors. Details follow:

- A. 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 markets in Maine, Quebec, greater Boston, and the Northeast.
- B. We will encourage longer visits to MidCoast Maine by sharing information about activities in different parts of the region through

distribution of the Vacation Planner & Map at appropriate visitor centers, chamber offices, travel trade shows and online. The 16-page 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. Continued distribution of the brochure at trade shows in the Northeast and Canada, and at Visitors Centers from Kittery to Belfast will encourage visitors to consider staying in the MidCoast region for their vacation. We will also post the brochure to our website and to VisitMaine.com to increase our reach.

C. We will increase brand awareness with a wider audience through use of the mainesmidcoastpress.com websites; web-based advertising and press release sites; and the continued integration of social networking (blog and Facebook) into the MidCoast brand.

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

We will promote the MidCoast region and distribute branded materials as a snapshot of the overall Maine travel experience. Through 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: Briggs Advertising

Address: Brigs ADvertising
199 Water St.
Bath, Me 04530

Phone: 207.443.2067

Email Address: laura@briggsadv.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:

Downeast Magazine
Yankee Magazine
Boston Magazine
Boston Globe
Maine Media

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

Downeast Magazine
Yankee Magazine
Boston Magazine
Boston Globe
Maine Media
WCSH TV
WGME TV
WMTW TV
Maine Today
Coastal Journal
Times Record
Forecaster

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 media advertising campaign in cooperation with other Maine regions.

We send representatives to staff or brochures to display at the Maine Pavilion at travel trade shows.

We are supporting the Maine Sports Commission, and participating in MOT's Red Sox Gold Co-op.

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:

Our website is designed to promote the Maine's MidCoast brand, reinforcing the iconic attractions of the MidCoast region and celebrating the natural beauty, authentic culture, heritage, & accessibility of the region. It is attractions based & data driven.

Divided into Outdoors, In Town, Heritage, The Kitchen, Arts, Touring, Getting Here & More Info pages, each page describes an attribute that draws 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 7 chambers of commerce and 1 business development corporation that form the Midcoast Chamber Council. Listings include Google mapping. An automatic update feature ensures that the database remains current. The site also links to a Media Site, mainesmidcoastpress.com.

The site now includes a blog featuring seasonal events.

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

We are planning a website redesign via Briggs Advertising and TechShare which will include a fresh, new look and improved functionality to encourage site visitors to spend time on www.MainesMidCoast.com, increasing the site's value to potential tourists.

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 collect Google Analytics data for general geographical information on our visitors and we note which blog and Facebook posts elicit the most interest.

Budget Summary

Current Projects

Project 1: Administrative Costs

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

MTMPP Award: \$20,000.00

Project 2: Support for Cruise ME

Project Type: Travel Trade & Consumer Shows: Registration, Operation, Exhibit Design & Upgrade

Description: Financial Support to Cruise Maine

Element 1: Financial Support

Project: Support for Cruise ME

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

Timeline: SeaTrade Convention in 2013

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, our intention to provide a portion of our regional grant to help further the worthy cause of multi-regional entity. The cruise industry is a growing source of valuable tourism dollars that 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 CruiseMaine marketing materials, website updates and maintenance, direct mail, e-mail campaigns, 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: We will continue our traditional support of \$3000 contingent on a workplan from CruiseMaine.

MTMPP Award: \$3,000.00

Cash Match: \$0.00

In-Kind Match: \$0.00

Project 3: Vacation Planner Display and Distribution

Project Type: Fulfillment: Brochures, Guides, Maps & Distribution

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, as well as by mailing brochures to those who request them via www.MainesMidCoast.com and our 800 telephone number.

Element 2: SeeLife! Brochure Display and Distribution

Project: Vacation Planner Display and Distribution

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, as well as by mailing brochures to those who request them via www.MainesMidCoast.com and our 800 telephone number.

Timeline: The contractor will check inventories on a regular basis, more often during the busiest tourist season, less often through the winter months. E-mail and phone requests are checked daily.

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, chambers and trade show venues; and www.MainesMidCoast.com, 800 number.

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.

Partners: MOT via trade shows, chambers at their centers.

Budget Description: Brochure Display and Delivery \$2500

MTMPP Award: \$2,500.00

Cash Match: \$650.00

In-Kind Match: \$1,200.00

Project 4: Maine Invites You Placement & Design

Project Type: Paid Advertising: Print, Broadcast, Online

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.

Element 3: Maine Invites You Placement

Project: Maine Invites You Placement & Design

Element 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.

Timeline: Materials will be provided to the publication for the 2013 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: Online & Print

Co-op Opportunity: *(No Response)*

Budget Description: Placement \$6000

MTMPP Award: \$6,000.00

Cash Match: \$500.00

In-Kind Match: \$2,000.00

Element 4: Maine Invites You Design

Project: Maine Invites You Placement & Design

Element Description: Design of Maine Invites You ad for MOT website.

Timeline: Design will be completed before the 2013 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: Online & Print

Co-op Opportunity: We will use the same ad for Chamber brochures & other ad placement.

Budget Description: Design \$1000

MTMPP Award: \$1,000.00

Cash Match: \$100.00

In-Kind Match: \$0.00

Project 5: Marketing & Social Media

Project Type: Paid Advertising: Print, Broadcast, Online

Description: 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 a blog and Facebook page.

Element 5: Blogs & Facebook Posts

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 twice-weekly blogs and Facebook posts.

Timeline: 2-3 Facebook posts each week,
2 blogs per week

Tracking: We will use Google Analytics to track website hits as each item is posted or e-mailed, as well as track comments on Facebook and the blog.

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: Online: Facebook, www.MainesMidCoast.com blog

Co-op Opportunity: Our posts are often reposted by other non-profits, as well as our general readers.

Budget Description: Blog & Facebook Posts \$14,690

MTMPP Award: \$14,690.00

Cash Match: \$2,400.00

In-Kind Match: \$0.00

Element 6: Facebook Pay Per Click Campaigns

Project: Marketing & Social Media

Element Description: The goal of the PPC campaigns is bringing awareness of the MidCoast brand to our target audience. This should increase visitors to our website, blog, and Facebook page and, ultimately, increase visitors to the MidCoast area.

Timeline: The first campaign will most likely take place in the late summer to fall, with the second the following late spring.

Tracking: We will track to see if there is an increase in clicks on our website, more blog comments, and an increase in Facebook Friends.

Target Market: Our audience is the northeast US, the largest percentage from Maine and Massachusetts, and also northeastern Canada.

Rationale: We chose the PPC programs because they were effective tools in the past, successfully increasing the number of visitors to our website, Facebook page and blog - which shows an increased interest in visiting the MidCoast.

Media Type: Online - Facebook

Co-op Opportunity: 2 Facebook Pay Per Click Campaigns @ \$2000 each = \$4000

Budget Description: Fall Campaign \$2000, Spring Campaign \$2000, total \$4000

MTMPP Award: \$4,000.00

Cash Match: \$400.00

In-Kind Match: \$250.00

Element 7: On-going PR

Project: Marketing & Social Media

Element Description: The goal of this project is to take advantage of emerging PR opportunities.

Timeline: This will be on a case-by-case basis.

Tracking: We will track the responses to our PR to measure its effectiveness.

Target Market: Potential MidCoast visitors.

Rationale: The marketplace continually changes, offering new opportunities to share our brand with potential

visitors. We want to have the ability to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

- Media Type:** Print, Online, Broadcast, Radio - as appropriate
- Co-op Opportunity:** *(No Response)*
- Budget Description:** PR \$2000
- MTMPP Award:** \$2,000.00
- Cash Match:** \$200.00
- In-Kind Match:** \$200.00

Project 6: Print Advertising

- Project Type:** Paid Advertising: Print, Broadcast, Online
- Description:** Strategically timed advertising placement in targeted publications.

Element 8: Print Advertising

Project: Print Advertising

- Element Description:** We will place print ads to promote seasonal tourism based activities and events in the midcoast region during the prime summer and spring and fall shoulder seasons to an upscale readership with ties to New England.
- Timeline:** Once the board has determined which print publications best fulfill this grant cycle's need, we will reserve space and supply artwork - usually 2 months prior to publication.
- Tracking:** We will measure success chiefly through the number of inquires generated by the advertising through our website and phone line and will make a broad inference of effectiveness through spikes in web hits following publication.
- Target Market:** People who love the New England coast, countryside and traditions, people who love Maine, or who have always been interested but need a stimulus to visit.
- Rationale:** Appropriate print advertising reaches a qualified readership that is affluent, already interested in New England culture and traditions, and in many cases living within a days drive of Maine. We will seek to advertising in publications that will help extend the reach of our brand and increase brand awareness, and can be used to spur tourism activity during the shoulder seasons.
We will use this venue to drive visitors to our website, increase our email contact list, and promote the midcoast as a year-round travel destination at a time when readers may be making vacation plans or ready to make an impulse trip.
- Media Type:** Print
- Co-op Opportunity:** *(No Response)*
- Budget Description:** Print Design & Placement \$10,410
- MTMPP Award:** \$10,410.00
- Cash Match:** \$1,250.00
- In-Kind Match:** \$4,500.00

Project 7: Web Maintenance & Redesign

- Project Type:** Website Development: Design, Upgrades, Mobilization
- Description:** Refresh look and increase functionality of www.MainesMidCoast.com.

Element 9: Web Maintenance & Redesign

Project: Web Maintenance & Redesign

Element Description: The goal is to refresh the look of www.MainesMidCoast.com, which is about 5 years old, and increase functionality to improve the site visitor's experience.

Timeline: Briggs will redesign the site per needs of MC3; Techshare will create architecture; upon board approval, updated site will go live.

Tracking: We use Google Analytics to track website visitorship and demographics. Additionally, we track the number of e-mails to info@mainemidcoast.com.

Target Market: Potential & past MidCoast visitors, particularly the Internet-savvy, and those who "like" the MidCoast Maine Facebook page.

Rationale: This past year we added a brochure order form on the website and had 20 requests within the first 2 weeks. Google Analytics has shown us that our Facebook and blog readers regularly visit our website. With this increase in visitorship it's important that the site be fresh and easy to use.

Budget Description: Website Maintenance & Redesignng \$12,000

MTMPP Award: \$12,000.00

Cash Match: \$4,550.00

In-Kind Match: \$4,400.00

Element 10: TechShare Website Architecture

Project: Web Maintenance & Redesign

Element Description: Objective

The Maine Office of Tourism (MOT) has made significant technological investments in marketing the State of Maine online, and in establishing an award winning online presence. This is in response to an increasing reliance by travelers on destination marketing websites for inspiring, researching and planning their trips. In an effort to help grow tourism throughout the State, the MOT has committed to sharing appropriate technologies at a regional level to help enhance each region's online presence, and to simplify the administrative burden of managing regional tourism data via the TechShare Technology Sharing program.

Goals

The goal of the TechShare program is to leverage the core technologies behind the VisitMaine.com website, and make them available to eligible Regional Tourism Organizations. This provides an online feature-set not otherwise available to MC3, given our limit budget.

Timeline: Once Briggs Advertising has created an MC3-approved website design, Portland Webworks will encode the html and css necessary to wrap the design around the TechShare platform.

Tracking: We will use Google Analytics to track visitors, pageviews, geographical info, and other pertinent statistical information.

Target Market: Our target audience is people planning their vacation, business relocation, or retirement to Maine - especially those in Northern New England.

Rationale: The TechShare platform offers regions a more comprehensive web presence, while at the same time shifts much of the burden for maintenance to area businesses and organizations, by allowing them to manage their own content. Key benefits of the TechShare platform are:

- Deep and comprehensive. The TechShare platform allows for comprehensive business and event listings management, extensive control over content, interactive mapping features and an integrated Trip Planner. In short, all of the features that users have come to expect from a top quality destination marketing website.

- User managed. The majority of content on the site (business and event listings, special packages) is managed by the users themselves, allowing them to submit and maintain their listings, as well as access comprehensive reporting on their listing's popularity. Site visitors even have to opportunity to submit content, with an available "Vacation Memories" section.

- Region controlled. Placing the emphasis on users for submitting content, allows region staff to play the

role of content-approvers rather than content-creators. The TechShare platform includes a comprehensive administration interface, allowing for easy review, approval and publishing of submitted content.

- **Accurate Data.** By sharing data across Regions, and between Regions and the MOT, submissions are thoroughly vetted, ensuring accurate, up-to-date information for potential visitors.

Budget Description: Website architecture & website hosting: \$20,000 - \$10,000 2013; \$10,000 2014

MTMPP Award: \$10,000.00

Cash Match: \$0.00

In-Kind Match: \$0.00

Project 8: Sports Commission Support

Project Type: Special Projects

Description: Financial Support to the Maine Sports Commission

Element 11: Sports Commission Financial Support

Project: Sports Commission Support

Element Description: Financial Support to Maine Sports Commission

Timeline: Per MOT and Sports Commission work plan

Tracking: Per MOT

Target Market: Sports enthusiasts who would attend national and regional events of all sizes ranging from professional golf tournaments to youth soccer competitions and Olympic trials.

Rationale: Per MOT: The sports marketing business is worth more than \$7 billion and there are more than 3,500 sporting events annually looking for somewhere to locate. We'd like to get a few more of those in Maine.

Budget Description: Sports Commission Support \$7400 this year, \$800 2013-14 grant cycle, contingent on the Sports Commission Work Plan.

MTMPP Award: \$7,000.00

Cash Match: \$0.00

In-Kind Match: \$10,000.00

Project 9: Red Sox Gold MOT Co-op

Project Type: Paid Advertising: Print, Broadcast, Online

Description: Red Sox Gold MOT Co-op Package as follows:
Boston Red Sox Radio Network
Trip Advisor
Consumer Online Advertising
Major Annual Contest Promotion
Maine Office of Tourism Consumer Email

Element 12: Red Sox Gold MOT Co-op

Project: Red Sox Gold MOT Co-op

Element Description: The goal of this project is increase brand awareness among potential visitors through a shared interest of our target audience, New England Boston Red Sox fans.

- Timeline:** *Boston Red Sox Radio Network: 1 :30 spot/wk during game, July-Oct 2012 and April-Oct 2013.
 *TripAdvisor: Tourism Sponsorship of Maine Page Sept 2012-Aug 2013 (tent).
 *MOT Annual Sweepstakes: MIY Collateral Sept 2012- Aug 2013.
 *MOT Consumer Online: Banner ads Boston.com, Downeast.com, Yankee.com, Orbit.com, advertising.com, Travora, Weather.com, Facebook, Ourdoors.org Sept-Nov 2012 (tent) and June-Aug 2013.
 *MOT e-newsletter Sept 2012-Aug 2013 (tent).
- Tracking:** One way of tracking this element's effectiveness will be the number of Annual Sweepstakes entries. Another will be our traditional analysis of new website visits, particularly on and immediately following game days.
- Target Market:** Our target audience is New England. Red Sox fans
- Rationale:** This MOT co-op advertising opportunity provides effective radio, online and email advertising at a very reasonable price and will enhance our brand exposure to our New England target audience.
- Media Type:** radio, internet, collateral
- Co-op Opportunity:** MOT
- Budget Description:** \$8600 split \$7400 in 2012-13 & \$800 in 2013-14 per MOT
- MTMPP Award:** \$7,400.00
- Cash Match:** \$0.00
- In-Kind Match:** \$7,400.00

Project Quick Reference

	<u>MTMPP Award</u>	<u>Cash Match</u>	<u>In-Kind Match</u>
Administrative Costs			
Administrative Costs	\$20,000.00		
Support for Cruise ME			
Financial Support	\$3,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Vacation Planner Display and Distribution			
SeeLife! Brochure Display and Distribution	\$2,500.00	\$650.00	\$1,200.00
Maine Invites You Placement & Design			
Maine Invites You Placement	\$6,000.00	\$500.00	\$2,000.00
Maine Invites You Design	\$1,000.00	\$100.00	\$0.00
Marketing & Social Media			
Blogs & Facebook Posts	\$14,690.00	\$2,400.00	\$0.00
Facebook Pay Per Click Campaigns	\$4,000.00	\$400.00	\$250.00
On-going PR	\$2,000.00	\$200.00	\$200.00
Print Advertising			
Print Advertising	\$10,410.00	\$1,250.00	\$4,500.00
Web Maintenance & Redesign			
Web Maintenance & Redesign	\$12,000.00	\$4,550.00	\$4,400.00
TechShare Website Architecture	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Sports Commission Support			
Sports Commission Financial Support	\$7,000.00	\$0.00	\$10,000.00
Red Sox Gold MOT Co-op			
Red Sox Gold MOT Co-op	\$7,400.00	\$0.00	\$7,400.00

Budget Summary

Proposed MTMPP Award:	\$100,000.00
Administrative Costs:	\$20,000.00
Cash Match:	\$10,050.00
In-Kind Match:	\$29,950.00
Total Match:	\$40,000.00
Total Proposed Budget:	\$140,000.00