



GFDA 2026 Marketing Plan

Adopted 1/8/26

GFDA offers a comprehensive array of professional services and undertakes multiple initiatives designed to achieve the 19 strategic priorities detailed in our Economic Development Strategy. This complicates our marketing efforts, requiring us to be focused, use clear messaging, and work together as a team and closely with partners. We invest most of our limited resources in professional staff rather than common economic development marketing activities such as advertising, sponsorships, trade show exhibits, and lead generation consultants.

Our market targets include existing businesses in our trade area, future entrepreneurs, real estate developers, partner organizations, community and government leaders, referral sources, site selection consultants, and primary sector companies in our target industries. We also undertake talent attraction efforts through our Live in Great Falls efforts and provide support to Great Falls Tourism and Central Montana Tourism.

Objectives

We have seven marketing objectives to support our Economic Development Strategy. At a minimum, our marketing must produce sufficient results to enable us to meet our contracted service and organizational budget goals.

Leads

Generate high-rated leads aligned with strategic priorities.

This is always the top objective of our marketing. We seek to generate leads that we rank as high priority to achieve our strategic priorities. We use our Matrix to rank leads.

Information & Connections

Provide valuable information and connections to resources.

We seek to provide accurate information and to facilitate connections of value in support of our strategic priorities.

Awareness

Increase awareness of GFDA services and tools.

We want to increase the awareness and understanding of our services and tools to encourage more targets to contact us.

Investment & Engagement

Drive investment in GFDA and encourage volunteer engagement.

We want to recognize our GFDA Investors, drive new and increased investment, and encourage investors to become engaged in our efforts.

Partnerships & Referrals

Strengthen partnerships and expand referral sources.

We want to strengthen and expand our partnerships with target entities and strengthen and expand our network of referral sources.

Celebration & Trade Area Perception

Celebrate success and improve perception of trade area.

We seek to celebrate client and partner successes, putting them in the forefront, and promote a more positive perception of the Great Falls trade area to drive new investment in the region, encourage greater entrepreneurial activity, and attract workforce talent.

Values

Uphold our Transparency and Communication values.

We seek to be as transparent as possible while strictly protecting client confidentiality. Communication in and of itself is one of our core values.

Improvement Focuses for 2026

Continuous improvement is one of our values, ingrained in everything we do. In this spirit, there are four focus areas for 2026.

Target Identification

Enhancing our target identification efforts will help generate more high-ranked leads.

- 1) Staff Training
In-house target identification training.
- 2) Outreach Tracking
Improved tracking of targets identified through outreach.
- 3) Increased Use of AI
Identification of targets through use of AI.
- 4) Engagement of Clients, Investors & Partners
Increased engagement to identify high-ranked targets.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities

Better aligning our marketing tactics with our strategic priorities will increase our productivity.

- 1) Trainings
More strategic choosing of business training subjects and offerings.
- 2) Cohorts
Expansion of business cohorts to target industries,
- 3) Industry Engagement
More organized engagement in target industries.

Online Marketing

Improving our online marketing and focusing it on our strategic priorities will better support our other marketing tactics and generate greater results.

- 1) Email Database
Expansion of contact database and increasing readership and click throughs.
- 2) LinkedIn
Increasing followers, engagement and lead generation.
- 3) GFDA Website
Improving user experience and SEO rankings.
- 4) Content
Generation of new content that is more focused on our lead generation priorities and is more effective in generating engagement and leads.

Community Awareness

Increasing local awareness of GFDA mission, strategy and the services we offer will increase community support for projects and increase lead generation.

- 1) Investor Cooperative Marketing
Launching cooperative marketing effort with GFDA Investors.
- 2) Advertising & Sponsorships
Experimenting with radio, television, and billboard and selected local sponsorships to determine effectiveness in building awareness and generating leads.
- 3) Speaking Engagements
Expanding speaking engagements to local organizations, partners and investors.
- 4) Promotional Materials
Distribution of promotional materials through outreach meetings, trainings, events, and volunteers.

Tactics

We will utilize six tactics to achieve our marketing objectives.

Market Research

Target Identification

Identify companies, developers, site selection consultants and referral sources that align with our strategic priorities.

Market Assessments

Commission market assessments as determined in our strategic priorities. Scheduled for 2026 is to complete the childcare market assessment and commission a defense industry market assessment. In 2026 we will also work to secure funding to commission a community impact investment fund feasibility assessment.

Face-to-Face Targeted Outreach

Personal Outreach

Outreach meetings including business retention/expansion, referral sources (banks, brokers, partners, agencies), property owners and targets.

Site Selection Consultants

Networking with site selection consultants at consultant forums, Montana hosted events, and industry events.

Industry Events

Networking with targets at selected industry events.

Online Marketing

Websites

GFDA and Live in Great Falls websites.

Email

Email marketing aligned with lead generation objectives.

Social Media

Social media posts and boosting aligned with lead generation objectives.

Events & Trainings

GFDA Events

Hosted events including Ignite, The Fire Within, GFDA Annual Meeting, Entrepreneur Celebration, as well as special announcement and project-related events.

Trainings

In-person and online trainings aligned with our strategic priorities.

Cohorts

Business cohorts aligned with our strategic priorities.

Media & Public Relations

Local Media

Engagement with local media in trade area.

Public Relations

Engagement with select writers and influencers through public relations campaign in partnership with Great Falls Tourism.

Promotion

Investor Cooperative Marketing

Engaging GFDA Investors in cooperative marketing efforts.

Advertising & Sponsorships

Highly selective advertising and sponsorships aligned with our lead generation objectives.

Speaking Engagements

Presentations to partners, community organizations and public bodies in region.

Promotional Materials

Awareness raising materials such as pins, postcards, clothing, etc.

Publications

Livability Great Falls

Annual talent recruitment online and print magazine in partnership with Livability Media.

Annual Report

Annual report to investors and partners.