

Agritourism Grant Program

Frequently Asked Questions

- **What is Agritourism?** Montana law generally defines this term as “a form of commercial enterprise that links agricultural production or agricultural processing with tourism in order to attract visitors to a farm, ranch, or other agricultural business for purposes of entertaining or educating the visitors.” See Mont. Code Ann. § [27-1-752\(1\)](#).

Under this Program, Agritourism also will be defined to include the following:

- Agriculture Experiences;
 - Direct sales;
 - Education;
 - Entertainment;
 - Hospitality; and
 - Outdoor recreation.
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- **What is the purpose of the Agritourism Grants Program?** The purpose of Agritourism Grants is to assist Montana’s Rural and tribal agricultural businesses and communities and to promote Agritourism diversification and support in Montana.
 - **Who is eligible to apply for Agritourism Grant funding?** Individuals and entities that work in Montana’s agriculture sector, provide Agriculture Experiences, or provide Agritourism opportunities to the public may apply for an Agritourism Grant. Eligible individuals and entities include the following:
 - Local governments, including city governments, county governments, and consolidated governments;
 - Schools, including K-12, universities, and colleges;
 - Tribal governments (a waiver of sovereign immunity likely will be required for a tribal government to receive Agritourism Grants funding);
 - Enrolled member(s) of the eight (8) federally-recognized Montana Tribes;
 - Montana residents; and
 - Businesses, including not-for-profit businesses, that are registered and in good standing with the Montana Secretary of State if required by Montana law.

- **What if the applicant is not registered with the Montana Secretary of State?** If the applicant is not registered with the Secretary of State, they should explain in the text box why the entity is not registered. There might be a variety of reasons why an applicant is not registered with the SOS.
- **Are there any other eligibility requirements for an Agritourism Grant?** The Agritourism project must be in Montana and the eligible entity must also be the primary organizer of the project. Eligible entities are limited to one submission per grant cycle. The eligible entity should have significant alignment in the industry of agritourism.
- **What are eligible uses of funds for the Agritourism Grant?** Grantees generally may use Program funds to provide Agritourism services in Montana. Eligible uses of Program funds for Agritourism purposes include:
 - Advertising and marketing
 - Agriculture Experiences or Activities
 - Business planning and development
 - Education and outreach
 - Safety and accessibility additions or improvementsA detailed narrative for each cost requested, must be provided in the Agritourism Grants Budget Template.
- **Can we use grant funds to purchase locally produced alcoholic beverages that are made with Montana grown ingredients for an Agritourism event?** No, purchasing alcohol is not an eligible use of grant funds. This is inconsistent with Department of Commerce directives.
- **What counts as \$1 to \$1 match?** Administration, indirect, or regular operating costs are not allowed expenses per the grant guidelines, however, these expenses can be counted in the \$1 to \$1 match for any project request above \$10,001. Other expenses or costs that can be included in the \$1 to \$1 match are rental costs of tables and chairs, contractor fees, advertising, or office supplies.

- **What counts as in-kind?** Up to 25% of the \$1 to \$1 match for projects above \$10,001 can be in-kind expenses. In-kind expenses represent the value of a good or service provided, such as an estimate of volunteer hours, donated equipment or space, food or beverages supplied by a sponsor, or grant project accounting services donated by a community member.
- **If a grant request is in excess of \$10,000 does the entire amount need to be matched 1:1? Or only the portion in excess of the \$10,000?** For a grant of \$10,000 or more – the total request is matched \$1:\$1. If the total project has a cost of \$30,000 – the grant award is \$15,000 and the match must be \$15,000. This match must be met on every request for funds and identified on all invoices.
- **How will an approved Grant recipient receive their grant?** Agritourism Grant funding recipients may be reimbursed for allowable expenses after they sign a contract with the Department and submit Invoices to the Department. Every submitted invoice must document the \$1 to \$1 match and if applicable, in-kind match of up to 25% for all grants exceeding \$10,000.
- **Can I be reimbursed for Agritourism project costs I paid for before my grant was awarded?** No, you may not use Agritourism grant funds to pay for expenses incurred prior to the date on your grant award letter.
- **How does an eligible entity submit an application for an Agritourism Grant?** To apply for an Agritourism Grant, interested and eligible applicants must complete and submit to the Department the application that is located on Destination MT's website at <https://commerce.mt.gov/Business/Programs-and-Services/Tourism-Marketing/Tourism-Grant-Program/Agritourism-Grant-Program>
The primary organizer of the project should submit the application along with the required Agritourism Grant Program Budget located in the resources for applicants section on the webpage.
The application and budget are also located on the MT Grants + Loans website at <https://montana.servicenowservices.com/mtgl>
Completed applications will be evaluated by a Destination MT review committee.

- **How are applications considered?** All applications received through the online platform are initially reviewed by Destination MT staff for completeness. All eligible applications received will be reviewed and evaluated by the Program's review committee. A high-level of concentration and prioritization of funding will be given to Agritourism Projects in rural communities, under-visited areas of Montana, and/or tribal communities. All applicants will be notified of their funded or un-funded application status.
- **Is there a preference for larger funding requests? Do I have a better chance of being awarded if my grant is larger than \$10,000?** No, all grants are reviewed equally without preference for larger projects.
- **What are data-drive measurements of success for an Agritourism Project?** The goal of any Agritourism Project should be to increase revenue opportunities for the farm, ranch or community and increase visitation to the area, including overnight stays. Applicants should measure the effectiveness of their project using available data.
 - Partner with the local Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitor Bureau, Tourism Region to gather visitor information
 - Reach out to Montana Department of Commerce Tourism Research Division to utilize resources like Zartico;
 - Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research (ITRR) offers data and has an option to purchase their Survey Kits
 - or customize and distribute your own Survey utilizing online or digital tools.

When strategies are put into place, collecting data will allow you to determine how well your strategy is performing, and if your approach needs to be tweaked or changed over the long term.

- **What tools and resources are provided for Agritourism Grantees?** On the Tourism Grant Program website there are several templates and resources for potential applicants as well as post-award grant management documents within the Agritourism Grant Toolkit. For more information on the Tourism Grant Program and Opportunities please visit the Tourism Grant Program website or contact Tourism Grant Program staff by email at tourismgrants@mt.gov.