



Montana Main Street Community Collaboration Grant Application

Montana Main Street Program

Due Oct. 15, 2026

Montana Department of Commerce
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Application Guidelines

Overview

The Montana Main Street Program is dedicated to bettering the economic, historic and cultural vitality of Montana downtowns through community development, revitalization and historic preservation. MMS will foster grassroots efforts through coordination and technical assistance, focused on a comprehensive approach to restoring healthy community commercial districts and preserving the historic structures that contribute to Montana's unique sense of place.

The purpose of this grant is to encourage communities to collaborate on shared projects that impact or involve multiple member communities.

Community Collaboration Grants are intended to cultivate, advocate and support community-based projects that assist with activation of spaces for downtown revitalization. Emphasis will be placed on large and impactful projects, but funding may be awarded to a wide variety of community-prioritized projects. Applicants should focus on projects involving real and immediate benefits and demonstrate a need for assistance.

MMS Grant Program applications, grant application guidelines and other relevant information and resources are available on the Montana Department of Commerce's website at: commerce.mt.gov.

All grants are dependent upon the availability of funding. The deadline for submitting grant applications is **Oct. 15, 2026**.

Award Amounts and Match Requirements

Applicants must clearly demonstrate the need for funding. Maximum awards are dependent on available funding and can change from year to year. Communities with current grants **can be** eligible for this grant.

A minimum local match of 1-to-5, or \$1 of local match for every \$5 committed by the State, is required. While applicants are not required to document a secured match at the time of application, grantees must demonstrate firm commitment of funds from all other funding sources prior to contracting with Commerce. Up to 20% of the applicant's match may be in the form of in-kind services or labor with appropriate documentation of value. In-kind labor contributions are considered an eligible match at a rate of \$20 per hour.

Application Submission

Grant applications are due to Commerce no later than **11:59 p.m. on Oct. 15, 2026**. To apply for MMS Grant funds, eligible applicants must complete the application and submit the supplemental materials via the Montana Grant and Loan Portal. To submit your application through the Montana Grants and Loans Portal, go to montana.servicenowservices.com/mtgl.

Alternative accessible formats of the application will be provided upon request. Commerce does not discriminate based on disability in admission to, access to or operation of its programs, services or activities. Therefore, individuals who need the application in an alternative format, or need to submit the application by other means, should contact Commerce's Community MT Division at 406-841-2770. Please provide as much advance notice as possible for these requests.

Eligible Applicants

An applicant must be an official member of the MMS Program, provide the annual recertification letter and have signed the participation and member agreement. Each member community may submit one Community Collaboration application. Applications

must have a certified letter from the local coordinating program that is on file with Commerce, if the applicant is not the local coordinating program.

The application must be certified by the “lead” applicable local government chief executive, mayor or city manager. MMS communities must be up to date on quarterly reporting at the time of application submission. Please connect with Commerce staff to discuss potential projects by emailing doccdd@mt.gov or calling 406-841-2770.

It is recommended that applicants reference Appendix A — Application Eligibility Screening Checklist before applying for the grant.

1. Eligible Projects

Funds must be used for implementation projects in a Main Street community. Except for some administrative activities, funds may only reimburse eligible expenses incurred after the Governor’s Award Letter.

The following are examples of project activities:

- Regional resources/collaborations
- Trails (e.g., Montana Dinosaur Trail, Book Store Trail, Burger Trail, Bike Trail)
- Shared beautification projects (e.g., murals)

Inquire with Commerce staff about other suggestions/ideas.

2. Ineligible Expenses

- Advertising for specific businesses
- Entertainment and events
- Travel, lodging, food and drink

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- Ongoing operations or general maintenance costs such as rent, utilities, personnel costs and personal expenditures
- Activities that do not deliver on the objectives of the program or are not related to the submitted proposal
- Any otherwise eligible project costs incurred prior to the date of announcement of the Governor's Award Letter

Application

The MMS Community Collaboration Grant is an opportunity for communities to partner and collaborate with one another on multi-community educational, artistic, historic and/or visual arts projects.

How many communities will be joining this collaborative project? _____

Name of lead city or county (This will be the fiscal agent.)	
Address including city, state and zip	
Applicant name (chief elected official — mayor, manager, administrator)	
Title	
Wet signature	
Phone	
Email	

Name of local Main Street coordinating organization, if not the same as above	
Address including city, state and zip	
Name of contact	
Title of contact	
Email of contact	
Phone number of contact	

All partner communities shall write a letter of support indicating what role they will play in the project.

1. Partner applicant community (city or county)	
Applicant coordinating program organization	
What year did the community become a Montana Main Street member?	
Did you attach a letter of support?	
2. Partner applicant community (city or county)	
Applicant coordinating program organization	
What year did the community become a Montana Main Street member?	
Did you attach a letter of support?	
3. Partner applicant community (city or county)	
Applicant coordinating program organization	
What year did the community become a Montana Main Street member?	
Did you attach a letter of support?	
4. Partner applicant community (city or county)	

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Applicant coordinating program organization	
What year did the community become a Montana Main Street member?	
Did you attach a letter of support?	
5. Partner applicant community (city or county)	
Applicant coordinating program organization	
What year did the community become a Montana Main Street member?	
Did you attach a letter of support?	

Section B. — Proposed Project Timeline

Table B.1 provides a timeline and award process. Consider it when filling out a proposed project timeline for your application.

Table B.1

Application Due	Oct. 15, 2026, at 11:59 p.m.
Review and Rank	November-December 2026
Award Letter	Approx. end of January 2027 Effective date grantees can start to incur costs
Startup	Documentation to complete startup <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W9 and EFT • Budget • Project schedule • Proof of insurance (workers' compensation, liability and property) • Management plan • Signer information
Contract	Execute a contract with Commerce once startup documentation is complete.
*Procurement	Procurement services (architect/contractor) must be followed according to state law. Once procurement has been completed, select the firm and execute a contract. Send all documentation including rank and review to project manager. Types of procurement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sole source • Small purchase • Limited solicitation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal solicitation
Construction	<p>Begin construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive invoices • State prevailing wage rates may apply
Request for Funds	<p>Once the contract is signed by all parties, the grantee can begin to submit request(s) for reimbursement.</p> <p>Submit all applicable forms and documentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request for Funds Form • Progress and/or completion report • Uniform tracking sheet • Applicable invoices <p>Commerce will send funds within 7-10 business days</p>
Project Closeout	<p>Receive certificate of substantial completion.</p> <p>Project manager from Commerce will send a Notice of Project Completion letter.</p> <p>Grantees must retain project records for five years from closeout date.</p>

Applicant Proposed Timeline

Task	Date — indicate the quarter and year
Application deadline	Q4 — 2026
Award announcement	Q1 — 2027
Project startup	
Contract with Commerce	
Selection of contractor	
Project implementation and draws	
Project closeout	

Section C. — Criteria Questions

MMS grant applications are reviewed and ranked by Commerce Community and Economic Vitality Program staff along with representatives from other Commerce programs including the Office of Tourism, the Destination MT Division and planning.

All questions are required. **If questions are skipped, the application may be deemed ineligible.**

If you require more space for narrative responses, please attach a Word document. You may also choose to use a Word document to answer all of the following questions. If you choose this option, be sure to write in the question boxes below, “See attached.” Do not leave any boxes blank, as doing so may cause your project to be deemed ineligible.

The total possible points are 115. Projects that score within 81-115 are considered “Complete” and will be prioritized for funding. Projects that score within 41-80 are considered “Adequate” and will also be considered for funding. Projects that score within 0-40 are considered “Incomplete and/or Inadequate” and will not be recommended for funding.

Question 1

Provide an overview of the proposed project in 500 words or fewer. We may not be familiar with your communities, so help us understand them and their relationship to one another. In this narrative, address the following:

- Provide facts, figures and photos to support the summary.
- Describe the target population(s).
- What will happen if the project is not completed?

15 points

Question 2

How was the project prioritized with the other partner communities? What is the significance of the project/problem? Please include a map indicating where in the district(s) the project is located, if applicable.

Ideally this project is located downtown or in Main Street Districts. If the project is not in a downtown district, help us understand how it directly or indirectly benefits the Main Street Districts.

15 points

Question 3

How does this project qualify as a Main Street project? Refer to the relevant components of the [Four-Point Approach](#) in your response.

10 points

Question 4

Please describe how this project implements a regional plan or vision. Strong applications will identify the process by which this project was selected/prioritized and will reference the relevant plans.

For example, “In Section 2.3 of the 2024 Downtown Master Plan...” Be sure to attach relevant page(s) of the sections cited. You do not need to attach full plans.

10 points

Question 5

Please describe the local effort and support for the project in all participating communities. Describe how the project promotes or enhances your downtown districts now and in the future. Strong applications will also demonstrate how the proposed project will benefit the affected communities more broadly.

10 points

Question 6

Please describe the local effort and support for the project. This question should summarize Section A.

10 points

Question 7

Describe how the applicant will complete the project. This narrative should reflect Section B.

15 points

Question 8

Describe the project management and administration. Include information about the people who will be working with Commerce as the staff/project liaisons and their experience managing similar projects. Strong applications will also include success stories of completed grant projects.

10 points

Question 9

Describe the project costs and overall budget. This narrative should include how you determined the estimated project costs. Strong applications will provide two to three quotes/estimates and/or explain how the project costs were determined.

10 points

Question 10

How will the project meet the 1-to-5 match requirement? What other funding sources (grants, loans, etc.) will support the proposed funding stack, and what is the status of these funds?

This is reflective of Section A and Appendix B. Funding sources may include other Commerce grants such as Community Development Block Grants, Community Technical Assistance Program Grants, Montana Coal Endowment Program Grants, destination/tourism grants and/or Coal Board grants; donations; and/or community/foundation grants. If no other funding sources have been awarded or are anticipated to be awarded, please indicate that in the narrative response.

10 points

Appendix A

Application Eligibility Screening Checklist

Please fill out this checklist and submit it with the application.

Question	Yes	No
1. Are all communities members of the MMS network? If you select no, you are not eligible.		
2. Has your application been certified by the lead applicable local government, chief executive, mayor or city manager?		
3. Are all communities current with quarterly updates? If you select no, you are not eligible.		
4. Did you contact the MMS Program coordinator prior to applying? If yes, please include the date of your email or phone call: _____		
5. If you are not the registered local coordinating program, did you provide a support letter from said program? If you select no, you are not eligible.		
6. Did you attach your annual recertification letter approving annual membership for all communities?		

If you have questions or need help preparing this form, contact Commerce at doccdd@mt.gov or 406-841-2770.

Appendix B

Status of Funds

For the proposed project, use this form to indicate any previously or currently awarded funds used for it. If no additional funding has been associated with the proposed project, please indicate this by checking the box.

I attest that this project has not received any other type of funding.

Name of Fund (e.g., Community Development Block Grant)	Type of Fund (grant, loan, etc.)	Dollar Amount	Status (awarded, pending, etc.)