Rural Tourism Asset Grant Program

Application Instructions

Application open/close dates	Funding range	Apply at
March 3-26, 2026, at 11:59 p.m.	Up to $75,000	montana.servicenowservices.com/mtgl

Program Purpose

The Rural Tourism Asset Grant Program at the Montana Department of Commerce provides funding to strengthen a rural community's capacity to develop, enhance or restore tourism assets that improve visitor experience, attract leisure visitation and spending and contribute to local economic vibrancy.

Important funding note: TAG is reimbursement-based. Awarded organizations must be able to pay expenses up front and request reimbursement after work is completed and documentation is submitted.

Before You Apply

This instruction guide includes the full set of application questions to help applicants prepare in advance. Applicants are **strongly encouraged** to prepare an offline draft before entering responses in the Montana Grants and Loans Portal. The portal automatically logs users out after 60 minutes; you must complete the application within that time or save it as a draft to return later.

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Getting Started Checklist

- Review the TAG guidelines:
  - Verify eligibility.
  - Have a Montana Secretary of State's Office Certificate of Good Standing or a screenshot from the website (for non-government entities only).
- Understand scoring and access:
  - Familiarize yourself with the TAG scoring criteria.
  - Create an OKTA account for access to the online application. To create an Okta account as a first-time user, visit login.mt.gov and choose "citizen login" when prompted. Click the sign up link to begin the process. For assistance, contact the IT Help Desk at 406-444-2000.
- Prepare your application materials:
  - Obtain an Employer Identification Number or Unique Entity Identifier along with a current W-9 form.
  - Download and complete the Scope of Work.
  - Download and complete the Budget Template.
- Document uploads as outlined on page 7.

Application Template

All application fields are required and must be filled out for an application to be considered complete and reviewed by the review committee.

Eligibility

Note: The applicant is the lead entity applying for this funding opportunity and, if awarded, will enter into a contract with Commerce and will receive funding. If you are unsure if your organization is eligible to be the lead entity, please review the program guidelines and definitions.

1. Organization name:

2. Organization type:

   - A primary 501(c) organization
   - Tribal government
   - City government
   - County government
   - Consolidated government
   - Economic development organization
   - Other; please specify:

3. Organization's mailing address:

   - Mailing address
   - City
   - State
   - ZIP code
   - County

4. Employer Identification Number or Unique Entity Identifier (if applicable):

5. Is the lead entity registered and in good standing with the SOS Office? Yes or no.

   - If yes, attach documentation or a screenshot showing current registration and good standing.
   - If no, explain why.

6. Project location (List community where project will occur.):

Primary Contact (Authorized Signatory)

Note: The authorized signatory is the primary point of contact for the application and will have full power and authority to enter into this grant agreement. They will also be included in all communication from Commerce's Destination MT Division staff.

7. Last name, first name:

8. Position/title:

9. Phone:

10. Email:

11. ☐ Check if mailing address is listed above. If different, provide mailing address information below:

    - Mailing address
    - City
    - State
    - ZIP code
    - County

12. ☐ Check if physical address is same as above. If different, provide the physical address information below:

    - Physical address
    - City
    - State
    - ZIP code
    - County

Secondary Contact

Note: Each submission requires two different points of contact. This information cannot be the same as the legal signatory list above. The secondary contact will be included in all communication from Commerce's Destination MT Division staff.

13. Last name, first name:

14. Position/title:

15. Phone:

16. Email:

17. Mailing address:

- Mailing address
- City
- State
- ZIP code
- County

Project Description

18. Project title (eight words or less):

19. Project summary (limit to five sentences):

Tourism Impact and Community Readiness

20. TAG focuses on demonstrating tourism readiness by highlighting key planning processes that have occurred within the community. Select all that apply:

   - Community has an affiliate status with the Montana Main Street Program.
   - Community has participated in a strategic planning process.
   - Community has participated in a resiliency planning process.
   - Community has participated in a community planning process.
   - Community has participated in a tourism asset survey.
   - Community has participated in other community related assessments.
   - Community has participated in other plans or assessments not listed.
   - Community has not participated in any planning/assessment processes.

21. Provide the name(s) and date(s) completed for any plans or assessments identified above and upload the portions that address the project for which funds are being requested.

22. Describe the current role tourism plays in the community and how this project will enhance it (200 words or less).

23. How will the community measure the seasonal and year-round impacts as a direct result of TAG funds (100 words or less)?

24. Will this project create jobs as a direct result of TAG funds (100 words or less)?

25. Describe the plan for community engagement, education and public involvement (200 words or less).

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Required Documents

26. Download and complete the required "TAG Scope of Work Form" (Attachment A). Upload to the Montana Grants and Loans Portal.

27. Download and complete the "TAG Budget Template." Please use the spreadsheet provided on the website and upload it to the Montana Grants and Loans Portal.

28. Download and complete required "Signatory Certification Form." Please use the form on the website and upload it to the Montana Grants and Loans Portal.

29. Upload proof of committed match. Examples include a county resolution, an award letter from a matching grant or a letter from the town on letterhead and signed by the mayor/town manager.

30. Upload two letters of support. One letter must be from a partner like a chamber of commerce or economic development organization. One letter must be from the local government (city/town/county) where the project will take place.

Applicant Acknowledgement

By submitting this application for Rural Tourism Asset Grant Program funding, I hereby certify the following on behalf of the applicant:

- To the best of my knowledge and belief, the information contained in and submitted with this application is true and correct. If the applicant learns any such information is incorrect, it will inform the Montana Department of Commerce, hereafter referred to as Commerce, immediately.

- I understand that submitting false or misleading information in connection with this application may result in the applicant being disqualified to receive financial assistance from the State of Montana. Awards made based on false application may result in the applicant having to repay the award amount and being referred to local authorities for criminal prosecution.

- I understand that information provided to Commerce, including this Rural Tourism Asset Grant Program application and supporting documents, may be subject to public disclosure under Montana law. If I believe that any information should be protected as confidential for any reason, I understand and agree to the following process: (i) Notify Commerce of that belief prior to submitting the information; (ii) submit an affidavit establishing the basis for that belief; and (iii) if Commerce agrees, sign a non-disclosure agreement with Commerce.

- I have read and understand the Rural Tourism Asset Grant Program Guidelines published by Commerce before submitting this application.

- I have legal authority to submit this application, and the governing body of the applicant (if applicable) has directed me to submit this application.

- I understand that, if awarded Rural Tourism Asset Grant program funding, the applicant may be required to provide matching funds as directed by Commerce.

- The applicant will comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including those prohibiting discrimination, including on the basis of race, sex, religion, national origin, age or handicap.

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- I understand that the applicant will provide Commerce with reports on how it has used Rural Tourism Asset Grant Program funding whenever requested, and in the format required, by Commerce at no cost to Commerce.
- I understand that the applicant is the lead organization and must sign a contract with Commerce prior to receiving any Rural Tourism Asset Grant Program funding.

Attachment A

Scope of Work and Implementation Table

Please use the form provided on the website for your "Scope of Work and Implementation Table" and upload it to the Montana Grants and Loans Portal.

Task 1	Use budget	
Budget line	**Description**	**Date range**
	Example Only	
Task 2		
Budget line	**Description**	**Date range**
Task 3		
Budget line	**Description**	**Date range**
Task 4		
Budget line	**Description**	**Date range**

Rural Tourism Asset Grant Program

TAG Scoring Process and Criteria

Evaluation and Scoring

There are two steps in the scoring process for TAG applications. First, the Montana Department of Commerce's Destination MT Division staff screen for eligibility to make sure the applicants meet the basic criteria. If an applicant fails to meet any of the eligibility criteria, their submission will be considered ineligible and will not be reviewed by the review committee. Second, a scoring panel scores each application based on three categories. There is a maximum score of 200 points. If you have any questions, please contact Destination MT staff at tourismgrants@mt.gov.

Eligibility	**Question 2:** Is the entity an eligible organization?
	• Pass/Fail
	Question 3: Is the entity located in Montana?
	• Pass/Fail
	Question 5: Is the entity registered and in good standing in the Montana Secretary of State's Office? If not, did the applicant provide a suitable explanation of why they are not?
	• Pass/Fail
	Question 6: Is the community location eligible? Check map.
	• Pass/Fail
Project description (20 points)	**Questions 18-19:** Does the applicant provide a title and brief project summary within one to five sentences and identify tourism assets?
	• 20 points

Tourism impact and success (120 points)	**Question 20:** How many key planning processes have occurred in the community? • 20 points possible **Question 21:** Did the applicant provide the names and dates completed for any plans or assessments identified above and upload the portions that address the project for which funds are being requested? • 20 points possible **Question 22:** Does the applicant describe the current role tourism plays in the community and how this project will enhance it? • 20 points possible **Question 23:** How will the community measure the seasonal and year-round impacts to the community as a direct result of the TAG funds? • 20 points possible **Question 24:** Will this project create jobs as a direct result of this funding? • 20 points possible **Question 20:** In 200 words or fewer, does the applicant identify the plan for community engagement, education and public involvement? • 20 points possible
Document upload (60 points)	Did the applicant utilize the required scope of work template? • 5 points Did the applicant utilize the required budget template? • 5 points Does the budget align with the Scope of Work and only have eligible expenses? • 20 points Is the Signatory Certification Form signed and uploaded? • 5 points

	Two letters of support, including the government entity:
	• 5 points
	Did the applicant upload proof of match?
	20 points

Scoring Range

1. The applicant did not sufficiently answer the question or provide necessary documentation.
2. The applicant sufficiently answered the question or provided necessary documentation.
3. The applicant sufficiently answered the question in detail and provided necessary documentation.
4. The applicant sufficiently answered the question in detail using quantifiable data and provided necessary documentation.

Reviewers must select a level (1-4) for each question and record the corresponding point value (5-20) in the scoring matrix.

Level	Descriptor	Points
1	Minimal or pass	5
2	Adequate	10
3	Strong	15
4	Exceptional	20