

# Rural Tourism Asset Grant Program

## Frequently Asked Questions

**What is tourism?** Tourism refers to the activity of people traveling to and staying in places at least 50 miles from their usual environment for leisure, recreation, business or other purposes.

**What is the purpose of the Rural Tourism Asset Grant Program?** This program provides support for rural communities in improving tourism assets that attract new visitors, enhance visitor experience and provide economic growth. Successful projects will create a tangible benefit — such as improved facilities, amenities or expanded tourism capacity — that continue to serve the community well beyond the life of the grant.

**What is a tourism asset?** Any feature of a community or destination that attracts leisure visitation and spending or supports visitation activities.

**What does enhancing visitor experience mean?** Enhancing visitor experiences refers to improving the quality, enjoyment and educational value of interactions that tourists have with a destination or community. This can include interpretive educational infrastructure, accessibility improvements, outdoor recreation amenities, wayfinding signage, visitor centers and rest areas.

**Who is eligible to apply for the TAG Program?** Eligible lead entities are:

- An economic development organization
- Local governments, including tribal, city, town, county and consolidated governments
- A nonprofit organization

**What if the applicant is not registered with the Montana Secretary of State's Office?** If the applicant is not registered with the Secretary of State's Office, they should explain in the text box of the application why the entity is not registered. For example, "Governments are not registered with the SOS Office."

**What is a convention and visitors bureau?** A convention and visitors bureau refers to a nonprofit corporation organized under Montana law and recognized by a majority of the governing body in the city, consolidated city-county, resort area or resort area district in which the bureau is located. More information regarding the CVBs can be found here: [commerce.mt.gov/business/programs-and-services/tourism-marketing/regions-dmos-and-cvbs](https://commerce.mt.gov/business/programs-and-services/tourism-marketing/regions-dmos-and-cvbs).

**Is a match required?** Yes; a grant match is required. Qualified applicants must demonstrate a 10% match of actual and/or committed funds invested in the proposed project for a successful grant award. Up to 5% of the match may be administrative.

**Can an applicant request partial funding?** Yes; the program awards up to \$75,000 to each selected applicant. Applicants may request less than the full amount based on fund availability.

**How do grantees receive their grant funding?** TAG funds are provided on a reimbursement basis for eligible costs after a contract is signed between the grantee and Commerce; detailed invoices are submitted using the required reimbursement forms and processes.

**What is administration for the grant? Can project management be billed separately?** Administration for the grant are costs that are tied directly to the delivery of a particular project, service or activity undertaken by a grantee to achieve an outcome intended by the TAG Program in accordance with the most current guidelines and the contract.

No; project management cannot be billed separately from administration. TAG Program funding will only reimburse a maximum of 5% of administration and project management for eligible expenses that meet the following criteria:

- They are directly related to the approved grant for an eligible project.
- They are itemized and documented in detail.

Grantees may be denied/disallowed the reimbursement of administrative costs that are not approved in the contract or any approved amendments.

**Is there a preference for one large project or multiple small to medium projects?**

No; all applications are reviewed equally.

**Can TAG Program funding support the creation of a tourism master plan or other planning documents?**

No; this funding is intended to support one-time, stand-alone projects that result in tangible tourism asset improvements.

**Why are maintenance costs for projects considered an ineligible use of funds?**

TAG Program funding is intended to act as a catalyst for a community to reimburse major expenses associated with a project. Interested applicants should consider and plan for long-term maintenance of a proposed project.

**What is a letter of support?** A letter of support is a written endorsement that expresses an individual and/or organization's backing of a project. These letters help to validate the proposal by showing that others believe in its potential and are willing to endorse it. Letters of support should contain the following:

- They should be written on the letterhead of the individual or organization.
- In a concise manner, they should identify why the organization supports the applicants' submission/projects and how the work will benefit tourism development in the rural/under-visited community.

**From which organizations or agencies do I need to obtain letters of support for my application?**

- One letter must be from a tourism partner like a chamber of commerce, tourism region or a CVB.
- One letter must be from the community's local government (tribal/city/town/county) where the project will take place.

**Can TAG Program funding support the creation of sub-grant programs? No.**

**Are there insurance or workers' compensation requirements for the program?**

Yes; there are workers' compensation and insurance requirements that grantees must maintain for the lifecycle of the grant and contract.

**Can TAG Program funding support insurance expenses for grant-approved projects?** No; TAG Program funding cannot reimburse insurance expenses in relation to approved projects. Interested applicants should consider this prior to submission.

**What tools and resources are provided for TAG Program grantees?** On the Tourism Grant Program web page, there are several templates and resources for potential applicants as well as post-award grant management documents within the TAG Program toolkit. For more information on this program and opportunities, visit the [Tourism Grant Program page on Commerce's website](#) or contact Tourism Grant Program staff at [tourismgrants@mt.gov](mailto:tourismgrants@mt.gov).

**When do I get to start the TAG project, and when does it have to be completed?**

The start date is the date of the letter of award from the governor. Expenses can be billed until Feb. 26, 2028. The final reimbursement request and report must be submitted by April 30, 2028.