

LEWISTOWN

Economic Impact and Destination Event Program Guidelines

Destination MT Division

Montana Department of Commerce | commerce.mt.gov | montanarelay.mt.gov (711)
P.O. Box 200533 | Helena, MT 59620-0533 | Phone: 406-841-2700 | Fax: 406-841-2701

COMMERCE

Table of Contents

I. Introduction 2

II. Definitions 2

III. Eligible Applicants 4

IV. Eligible Events 5

V. Ineligible Events 5

VI. Eligible Uses of Funds 6

VII. Ineligible Uses of Funds 7

VIII. Application Process 8

IX. Application Review and Scoring Criteria 8

X. Award Process and Grant Administration 9

I. Introduction

The 2023 Montana Legislature authorized the Economic Impact and Destination Event Grant Program.

An allocation of the 4% Lodging Facility Use Tax, commonly known as the bed tax, funds the Destination Event Grant.

The purpose of the Destination Event Grant is to assist Montana communities with existing and new events that will increase tourism statewide, particularly in rural and under-visited communities during the shoulder seasons, and generate economic impact within Montana communities.

The Montana Department of Commerce's Destination MT Division administers reimbursement-based Destination Event Grants in accordance with these guidelines.

II. Definitions

Commerce has adopted the following definitions:

Advertising: Eligible forms of advertising that reach an audience to boost tourism event attendance generally include traditional media, such as television ads, radio ads, newspaper, printed materials, billboards and social media.

Content creation: The activity or job of developing and producing relevant media including text, images, audio or video to engage and inform a specific audience.

Contract services: Professional services contracted or outsourced to another company in support of the event.

Economic impact: The quantifiable effect a particular activity or event has on the economy of a specific area, county or region.

Grantee: The applicant who applies for and is awarded a Destination Event Grant from Commerce.

Invoice: Proof of transaction, bill or bill of costs from an entity that includes: the invoice number(s), a brief description of goods delivered and/or services performed, date(s) service was performed, type(s)/number of delivered goods and total amount being billed.

Rural: Rural is defined as “not urban.” See below.

Shoulder season: Periods of time between the end of one of Montana’s typical tourism seasons and the beginning of Montana’s next typical tourism season. Shoulder seasons may vary based on geographic location within Montana but typically run September through November and March through May.

Tourism: Refers to the activity of people traveling to and staying in places at least 50 miles from their usual environment for leisure, business or other purposes.

Tourism event: A special gathering or occurrence taking place at a specific location that individuals or groups choose to attend to fulfill a social, cultural, recreational or educational objective.

Tribal event: A public event that elevates, expands and inspires visitation to tribal tourism experiences hosted by a Montana Tribal Nation or tribal entity that can be contracted through the tribal government, or a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit that is

managed by an enrolled Montana tribal citizen hosting a public event related to the tribal tourism industry.

Under-visited: The 4% Lodging Facility Use Tax dataset determines if a place is over- or under-visited, based on a three-year average of a convention and visitor bureau's bed tax collection. If a CVB's bed tax collection is below the simple average of all CVBs' bed tax collections, then it is under-visited. If a CVB's bed tax collection is above the simple average of all CVBs' bed tax collections, then it is over-visited. Urban and over-visited designations can be found at: arcgis.com.

Urban: Urban places are either: (1) a census urban area with a population at or exceeding 30,000 people according to the most recent United States Census; or (2) an incorporated city/town within 10 miles of one of those large urban areas. Areas in Montana that meet this definition include Belgrade, Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Columbia Falls, East Helena, Great Falls, Helena, Kalispell, Laurel, Missoula, Walkerville and Whitefish.

III. Eligible Applicants

Only the following entities are eligible to apply for a Destination Event Grant:

- A primary, registered nonprofit 501(c) organization
- A cooperative
- An incorporated city or town
- A county government
- A consolidated government
- A tribal government
    - A waiver of sovereign immunity will likely be required for a tribal government to receive Destination Event Grant funding.

IV. Eligible Events

Destination MT generally will consider eligible applicants' proposals to host events that promote tourism and demonstrate economic impact in local communities.

Events must be held in Montana.

Priority will be given to applicants who plan to hold an event in a rural community, a tribal community, an under-visited community and/or during the shoulder seasons.

Eligible events include:

- Entertainment shows, festivals and concerts
- Indigenous and tribal events
- Historical celebrations
- Signature events

If you have specific event eligibility questions, please contact Commerce's Destination MT Division staff directly.

V. Ineligible Events

Event activities that are not eligible to be supported with Destination Event Grant funds include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Any event prohibited by Montana or federal law
- A state, county or community trade or job fair
- Any school or league tournament, including athletic tournaments
- A high school, college or family reunion
- Any professional sporting event that is not open to public participation

- Any private and/or members-only event
- An event that is held for the main purpose of fundraising
- Events that are part of an organization's ongoing operational activities

VI. Eligible Uses of Funds

Based on availability of funds, Commerce reserves the right to award partial or full grant requests up to $25,000, or reject applications. A match is not required to receive Destination Event Grant funding.

Destination Event Grant recipients may obtain reimbursements for allowable expenses after they sign a contract with Commerce and submit the required documents to Commerce.

Reimbursement of eligible expenses specific to the event include the following:

Marketing and promotion, which generally include:

- Content creation
- Event advertising and/or marketing
- Contracted professional services to provide content creation, event advertising or marketing

Onsite event infrastructure, which generally includes:

- Portable restrooms
- Portable wash stations
- Refuse collection, trash and recycling
- Equipment rental associated with the event (AV, stage, seating, etc.)
- Venue rental

- Event permit
- Safety and security

Event signage, which generally includes:

- Production, printing, construction and/or installation costs of signage, wayfinding, event schedules, banners or posters promoting the event

Event research, which generally includes:

- Surveys and data collection for purposes of marketing optimization, event evaluation and outcomes and future planning

VII. Ineligible Uses of Funds

Expenses that generally are not eligible to be supported with Destination Event Grant funds include:

- Uses prohibited by the contract signed by the grantee and Commerce
- Uses prohibited by these guidelines or other Commerce directives
- Uses prohibited by Montana or federal law
- Ongoing or monthly general operating expenses such as wages, labor, insurance, equipment or machinery needed for day-to-day operations
- Purchases of transferable property or operating equipment, except for those specifically listed in the “Eligible Uses” section above
- Purchase of real property
- Purchase of vehicles
- Costs related to refinancing, servicing or interest towards any existing debt
- Costs incurred prior to the date identified in the award memo
- Reimbursement for travel expenses and/or per diem, including mileage, food, beverage and lodging

- Event insurance
- Domain registration and website hosting

VIII. Application Process

To apply for a Destination Event Grant, interested and eligible applicants must complete and submit to Commerce the application that is located on the Montana Grants and Loans Portal at: montana.servicenowservices.com/mtgl.

Not all eligible grant applications will be funded. Some grant applications may receive a partial grant award. A previous event grant award does not guarantee a subsequent event grant award.

Interested parties can also email tourismgrants@mt.gov or call the Tourism Grant Program at 406-841-2796 with questions about Destination Event Grants.

IX. Application Review and Scoring Criteria

1. All applications received through the online platform are initially reviewed by Destination MT Division staff for completeness. Complete and eligible applications are reviewed and evaluated by the review committee.

2. The review committee applies the scoring criteria available on Commerce's website at: commerce.mt.gov.

3. During the review, Destination MT Division staff may contact an applicant to discuss concerns or questions, or to request additional information or documentation.

X. Award Process and Grant Administration

1. Destination MT Division staff will notify all applicants of their status after the conclusion of Commerce's review process.

2. Commerce will issue an official announcement of event grant awardees. Awardees will hold their announcements until after Commerce has made its official announcement.

3. Successful grantees then enter a contract between Commerce and the grantee. The grant contract must be signed by an authorized agent of the grantee prior to disbursement of any grant award.

4. Each grantee will be assigned a Destination MT Division liaison. The liaison will facilitate monitoring, the request for reimbursement and reporting requirements.

5. During the contracting process, the grantee and Destination MT Division liaison will review the grant administration process, including:
    - Submitting forms and other documents to Commerce
    - The request for reimbursement
    - Training and technical assistance materials
    - Final report requirements and submission

6. Grantees must notify Destination MT Division in writing if issues occur in relation to the event. Changes are subject to Destination MT Division review and may require approval or denial before proceeding. Examples include:
    - Performing the duties required of the Destination Event Grant
    - Modifications over $1,000 to the approved budget
    - Adjustment of the event date(s)

- Changes to the grantee's primary or secondary contact information or legal signatory

7. Commerce's logo will be provided to each grantee and should be displayed on sponsor banner(s)/signage, social media, printed materials and, if applicable, the grantee's website. The grantee must also recognize Commerce in any announcements.