

Alternative accessible formats for this document will be provided upon request. If you need this document in an alternative format, please contact the Department of Commerce ADA Coordinator at 406-841-2706. Those using TTY may call through the Relay Service at 711. Additional information may be found here: <https://dphhs.mt.gov/detd/mtap/traditionalrelayservice>

The Montana Department of Commerce does not discriminate based on disability in admission to, access to, or operations of its program, services, or activities. Individuals who need aid or services for effective communications or other disability-related accommodations in the programs and services offered are invited to make their needs and preferences known. **Please provide as much advance notice as possible for requests.**

Indian Country Economic Development (ICED) Program

**APPLICATION GUIDELINES 2025**

**TRIBAL TOURISM GRANT (TTG)**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

About the Program 1

Program Calendar 2

Summary 3

Eligible Applicant 3

Ineligible Applicant 3

Funding Source 3

Eligible Tourism Business Categories and Activities 4

Ineligible Activities 5

Match Requirement 5

How to Apply 5

Application Review Process 6

Application Review Criteria 6

Grant Notification and Contract 7

Disbursement of Funds 7

Reporting Requirements 7

Program Contact 8

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Indian Country tourism activity functions are administered by the Montana Department of Commerce (§ 90-1-104, MCA), to advance tourism development priorities for Montana’s Tribes through funding under the Tribal Tourism as authorized by the 65th Montana Legislature in 2017 and the terms of Senate Bill 309, and additionally by the 68th Montana Legislature in 2023. Activities are funded through a 0.5 percent allocation of Montana’s Lodging Facility Use Tax collections, within budgetary caps set by the Montana State Legislature.

As the designated seventh tourism region in Montana, Indian Country’s tribal tourism program objectives, goals, strategies, and metrics focus on elevating the brand, expanding opportunities, and inspiring visitation to the eight tribal nations.

The Tribal Tourism Program, under the direction of The Department of Commerce Business MT Division, Office of Indian Country Economic Development (OICED), the State-Tribal Economic Development Commission (STEDC) and the Tourism Advisory Council (TAC), administers tourism development and promotion activities on behalf of the Indian Tourism Region.

PROGRAM CALENDAR

Proposed activities and deadlines for the Tribal Tourism Grant (TTG) program, this schedule is subject to change:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **October 1 through November 30, 2024** | **ServiceNow Grant Application Portal open for applications** |
| **December 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024** | **Rank and review of applications, recommendation of award to Director and Governor** |
| **January 1 through March 1, 2025** | **Director and Governor finalize awards, contract drafting** |
| **March 1 through April 1, 2025** | **Contract legal review and award letter drafting** |
| **April 1 through May 1, 2025** | **Award letters sent, awards announced in press release, and contracts executed by all parties** |

TRIBAL TOURISM GRANT

A. Summary

The 2025 Tribal Tourism Grant is a competitive grant program to connect participating Tribes of Montana with the resources necessary to advance one or more self-identified tourism priorities. Approximately $120,000 is available to fund projects defined under section “E. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES.”

B. Eligible Applicants

Funds are available to the governing bodies of the federally recognized tribes in Montana. Any applicant in arrears or default with a Department of Commerce program is ineligible. Applicants must establish an Okta account to access the application portal, by following these instructions: <https://business.mt.gov/_shared/ICED/docs/TBDG/OktaInstructions.pdf>

C. Ineligible Applicants

Non-profits are ineligible to apply. This program is not intended for tribal member-owned small businesses or for economic development activities not related to tourism. However, tourism-related tribal member owned small business projects may be eligible under the Indian Equity Fund (IEF) and IEF Tribal Tourism Small Business Grant Programs administered by Commerce.

D. Funding Availability

Applications will be accepted on an open cycle basis from October 1, 2024 through November 30, 2024. Please visit the ServiceNow Grant and Loans application platform for more specific deadline details: <https://montana.servicenowservices.com/mtgl>

The total budget for the grant program is approximately $120,000. Applicants may request a maximum of $50,000; however, actual grant awards may be less than requested. For this reason, the Program encourages applicants to consider contingency funding sources when preparing their project budgets. Actual grants will depend on the number of applications received and the discretion of the Review Committee.

E. Eligible Tribal Tourism Projects

Applicants may choose from one of two eligible “shovel-ready” long-lasting project categories. Examples are, but not limited to:

**1. Destination development and infrastructure upgrades**

* Establishing new or improving existing campgrounds, expanding rental features like Tipi rentals, small cabins, and/or RV Parks with upgraded amenities like electrical hook ups, potable water, grey water disposal, restroom facilities, showers, picnic pavilions, fire rings, tent pads, camp host residence, facilities maintenance equipment and/or vehicles, gift shop or visitors center with point-of-sale system for purchases
* Historical markers with areas for travelers to stop and rest with shade and/or use the restroom at a vault toilet or access potable water
* Interpretive trails with informational kiosks on flora, fauna, or historical significance
* Agritourism offerings (Certified guided fishing, hiking, hunting, horseback riding, Bison Range tours, stargazing, bird watching, bicycle tours, boat tours)
* Improved ADA accessibility at existing locations

**2. Product development and technology systems**

* Certified guide curriculum and course certification program offered at a Tribally owned college or within the Tribe’s Historic Preservation Department
* Tribal Tourism Website where visitors can; explore offerings, frequently asked questions section, map of locations, promote events like pow wows and Indian Relay Races, post travel alerts, booking system for tours or campground reservations, and make electronic payments

F. Ineligible Activities

Examples of activities that will not be funded:

* Reimbursement for activities completed prior to award contract execution.
* Reimbursement for activities not related to contract scope of work.
* Duplicative reimbursement for activities receiving funding for the same services, equipment, or improvements through any other local, state, or federal grant or funding program, except as necessary to fully fund the project.
* Wages, meals, transportation, lodging, and mileage reimbursements.
* Land and livestock purchases.

G. **Match** **Requirement**

Qualified applicants must demonstrate a combination of cash, equipment, and in-kind match of actual and committed money invested in the proposed project. The match requirement is a minimum of 50% of the award total, $1 applicant to $2 award. Reasonable in-kind services, in-kind labor, and/or volunteer hours and committed cash are eligible for the match requirement, however, cash match must be no less than 50% of the match required. For example: an applicant requesting a $6,000 grant award must demonstrate they have $3,000 matching; where at least $1,500 is a cash match, and $1,500 in-kind and/or equipment committed to the completion of the project as match.

**H. How to Apply**

Applications must be completed online through the ServiceNow Grants and Loans. First time applicants will be required to create a free Okta account profile which requires a valid email account.

Applications considered incomplete or ineligible can be re-opened for editing and negotiated from the Program back to the applicant through ServiceNow. Applicants are encouraged to apply early so that they can make any necessary adjustments or changes before the deadline to make their application competitive. Receipt of an application does not imply a commitment for funding from the Montana Department of Commerce (MDOC). Applications will be reviewed for eligibility and suitability with state and program requirements. Applications will be reviewed by a Review Committee.

**I. Application Review Process**

1. **RECEIPT OF APPLICATION-** Once submitted each application is assessed for completeness and clarity by the Program. The Program may contact the applicant to request additional information during the review process to aid in the evaluation process. The Program coordinates the application review and ranking timeline at the Division level of the Department.
2. **REVIEW –** The Review Committee makes funding recommendations to the Commerce Director, who makes the award decision. Awards are finalized by the Governor, whose office issues award letters.

J. Application Review Criteria

This is a competitive grant program. Each application is evaluated for its strengths and weaknesses compared to other applications. Examples of review criteria include:

* How well does the applicant define the scope, budget, and objectives of the project?
* What challenges must be mitigated to ensure the project’s success?
* How will the project positively impact tourism for the tribal community?
* How well does the project aligned with and support the tribe’s greater economic development plans?
* How will the success of the project be measured?

K. Grant Notification and Contract

Applications are reviewed during the month of December 2024, with recommendations for awards beginning January 2025. The review and award process can take anywhere from 30 to 90 days. The Program aims to notify applicants of award decisions by the end of March 2025. The contracting process is expected to be completed no later than May 31, 2025. The Grantee has 24 (twenty-four) months from the date the contract is fully executed to complete the funded project.

L. Disbursement of Funds

Grant funds are paid on a reimbursement basis. No funds are paid directly, up-front to Grantees. Grant funds are intended to be expended within two years of the contract’s start date.

Grant funds are reimbursed to the Grantee with the submission of:

* W-9 (with first request only if not already on file)
* EFT form with banking information or mailing address (with first request only)
* Completion and submission of required Forms and related receipts; \*Request for Reimbursement Form

\*Project Receipt Worksheet with receipts

\*Project Status Update Report

Forms are available for download from the Department’s website.

M. Reporting Requirements

Project Progress Reports, Status Updates, Project Completion, Close-out Form & Reporting are as follows:

1. Project Progress Reports and Status Updates. During the term of this Contract, the Grantee will submit project progress reports to the Department in conjunction with each Request for Reimbursement. The Department will make available a Project Report/Status Update Form for use to complete the information needed to accompany the Request for Reimbursement Form. These forms will be available for download from the Department’s website.
2. Project Completion and Close-out Form & Reporting. Upon completion of the Project or by September 30, 2026, whichever occurs first, the Grantee will submit their final Project Completion and Close-out Form for review by the Department. Upon approval of the Project Completion and Close-out Report the Department will issue the Grantee a Notice of Project Close-out, by November 30, 2026.

N. Program Contact

|  |
| --- |
| **Rachelle Brown****Tribal Tourism Officer****rachelle.brown@mt.gov****Montana Department of Commerce****T: 406-841-2734  C: 406-558-9274   commerce.mt.gov** |
| **Montana Department Of Commerce** |
|  |
|  |