

MHPG Webinar Questions

12.13.2023

Q: Can a project be phased and qualify for this Grant?

A: Yes, but it depends on how the phasing is structured. Please keep in mind Statutory Criteria A (the degree to which timing of the project can be completed without delay) and Statutory Criteria H (the degree to which the applicant demonstrates anticipated public benefit, including the extent the site or building will be open to the public and the degree of immediate facility use after project completion). It will strengthen the phased project's application if the facility will be open to the public after each phase.

Q: On Eligibility Continued slide: "Projects should demonstrate economic impact immediately after completion." How can this be best demonstrated for local govt/public buildings open to the public?

A: If a building is open to the public upon project completion it meets this criterion. In the case of civic or public buildings, the impact would not refer to retail or commercial space but would instead relate to the overall accessibility and public value. A strong local community, which includes its public buildings, has spillover economic benefits.

Q: Is there a specific procedure to designate an Authorized Representative for the ECO?

A: There is no specific procedure required by the MHPG program. Please follow the procedure for your specific organization on completing resolutions and designating an authorized representative.

Q: If you begin construction on a project after February 28, 2023, are you eligible for approved costs to be reimbursed if the grant is awarded, or are construction costs after February 28, 2023, considered "matched funds" until award date?

A: Costs submitted for reimbursement can only be incurred after the governor signs the bill. If an applicant starts a project prior to the bill signing, those costs are potentially eligible towards the match, but cannot be reimbursed as part of the grant award. Commerce checks the invoices submitted for reimbursement to ensure they post-date the bill.

Q: Is the Replacement of the mechanical and electrical system exempt from MEPA?

A: This appears to be categorically exempt from MEPA review under ARM 8.2.328(2) as projects that involve only minor repairs or rehabilitation to an existing facility, including functional replacement of an existing facility or facility components are exempt. There may be other components of the larger project that would require a higher level of MEPA review.

Q: Can an applicant submit a grant application for more than one property?

A: Yes, multiple applications can be submitted by one applicant for different projects, but multiple applicants cannot apply for the same project. For example, a local government might apply for needed improvements to multiple historic buildings but may not apply for multiple grants for a single building. Similarly, a nonprofit and a business cannot both submit applications for the same building or historic site.

Q: Can a non-profit hire a project coordinator as a contractor that can be included as a project cost?

A: Yes, a grantee can hire a grant administrator to manage the grant. However, only 10% of the grant can be spent on administrative costs.

Q: If the project was by riparian areas but not in the riparian area is that consider something needing environmental review?

A: The applicant should consider all potential environmental impacts of their project. Questions to be considered by a potential applicant is to define the project's scope of work and then consider if project activities will affect the riparian area. This will help the applicant determine if the project meets the requirements under ARM 8.2.304(5) and ARM 8.2.328(2) to be statutorily categorically exempt and if further environmental review should be completed.

Q: Does DOC have a sense of the number and/or amount of grants to be funded in the current grant cycle?

A: No, DOC will not receive a projected funding amount from the bed tax until the summer of 2024. However, based on the previous two cycles, the funding level seems to be rising. Also, during the last two sessions the legislature has chosen to award beyond the funding line.

Q: In reviewing applications, are there page or character limits on responses?

A: There are no page or character limits to the application.

Q: If a project looked to restore a previously removed architectural feature of the structure, is this eligible?

A: Technically, yes. However, it might prove more difficult to demonstrate PURPOSE AND NEED (Statutory Criteria B), as well as ONGOING ECONOMIC BENEFIT (Statutory Criteria F), especially in comparison to projects that address the integrity or accessibility of a building.

Q: What if the pre-construction legwork is happening during the award cycle?

A: Pre-construction work can be completed prior to or during the application process and can contribute to the "shovel readiness" of a project. Pre-construction costs can also potentially count towards the match.

Q: When will the recording be available?

A: The recording of the December 13, 2023 webinar is available now on the [MHPG website](#) under the "Applying for Grants" tab.

Q: Would the implementation schedule start date for grant award be July 2025?

A: An Implementation Schedule template is available on the website, but the implementation schedule will vary from project to project. There may be elements of a project's Implementation Schedule that pre-date the award itself.

Q: Is there such a thing as TOO MANY associated documents? Our project has a significant backstory, history, pictures, masterplans, and other documentation.

A: Technically, there is no limit. However, applicants are encouraged to focus on quality over quantity and avoid redundancies.

Q: If we have multiple buildings that need new roofs, do we include them all in the grant application or apply for multiple grants?

A: It depends on the site and the scope of the project, including its shovel readiness. One historic site can have multiple structures addressed in one project, or the applicant may opt to treat each structure as its own project. Moreover, some entities manage multiple sites, in which case they would submit separate applications for each project.

Q: We're a city library. Would you prefer audited city financials or just a summary of department (library-only) financials?

A: A summary of the department (library-only) financials would be sufficient.

Q: What are some best practices for MHPG applications?

A: Stay in contact with Commerce staff, particularly the Montana Historic Preservation Grants Program Specialist, as you complete the application. Be specific and detailed in your application. After applying, be prepared to testify during the legislative session. Make sure your representatives are aware of your project, regardless of whether they are on the committee.

Q: Is there a list of funded projects this last cycle?

A: Yes. Please refer to 2023 House Bill 12, available [here](#).