

Montana Historic Preservation Grant Program

Application Workshop Q&A

Jan. 15, 2026

Q: When will Montana Historic Preservation Grant funds be available?

A: July 1, 2027.

Q: If the applicant is a nonprofit entity but the building owner is a for-profit entity, which match is required?

A: The grant is attached to the entity responsible for the building, which is new to this application cycle. Since the building is privately owned, a 1-to-1 match of the grant request is required.

Q: Can we use some of the MHPG funds, if awarded, to move a historic railroad car to be used as a museum?

A: Yes.

Q: If awarded MHPG funding, are there limitations on what the city/applicant can do regarding the rehabilitation of the building or how the building could be handled in the future?

A: There are no specific limits regarding future use of the building following project completion. However, interested applicants should not apply if there are plans to demolish or fundamentally undermine the historic integrity of the structure following project completion. In addition, per the terms of the grant, completed projects should continue to demonstrate public benefit and access, as outlined in the application, following the completion of the grant. Finally, as part of the application process, applicants are asked to outline how they will adhere to the Secretary of the Interior's

standards for their project. You can reach out to the [State Historic Preservation Office](#) for guidance, as they are a great resource.

Q: What would make the letters of support most valuable?

A: Commerce encourages representation and quality over quantity when it comes to letters of support. Letters included in the application should demonstrate broad local support from a range of entities and partners. Stronger letters are authentic rather than variations on a prepared template.

Q: Should I be reaching out to get overall costs or second opinions for my project? Is there a certain policy or person I should be reaching out to?

A: Applicants should provide estimates or bids provided to demonstrate how they arrived at the projected cost of the project. There is no specific person or policy required.

Q: Are there any other pro tips that will give applicants a better chance at getting awarded?

A: There are a few things applicants can do:

1. Reach out to your local representatives early and often. Provide them with regular updates regarding the application process, send them a copy and invite them to tour the site prior to the legislative session.
2. Double check that your entire application is complete. Do not skip any questions.
3. Don't assume that the reviewers are already familiar with your project or its importance to your community. Make sure the application addresses the past, present and future of the structure. Ask someone unfamiliar with your project to review your application prior to submission.
4. Make sure you are available to testify about your project during the legislative session.

Q: Is it better to testify in person or online?

A: During the last legislative session, it was highly recommended that applicants testify in person. If they were unable to testify in person, online testimony was also received favorably. Written testimony was accepted but not prioritized or granted the same weight as in-person or online testimony. For the upcoming session, we recommend applicants testify in person if they are able. Commerce staff will provide additional guidance regarding testifying closer to legislative session.

Dec. 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 C, Shovel Readiness, and Statutory Criteria G, Public Benefit. It will strengthen the phased project's application if the facility will be open to the public after each phase.

Q: On the Eligibility Continued slide: “Projects should demonstrate economic impact immediately after completion.” How can this be best demonstrated for local government/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: If you begin construction on a project after Feb. 28, 2026, are you eligible for approved costs to be reimbursed if the grant is awarded, or are construction costs after Feb. 28, 2026, considered matched funds until award date?

A: Costs submitted for reimbursement can only be incurred after Gov. Greg Gianforte 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: 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 nonprofit 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 is by riparian areas but not in a riparian area, is an Environmental Review required?

A: The applicant can consider all potential environmental impacts of their project; however, an Environmental Review is not a requirement for the 2026 application.

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

A: No, Commerce will not receive a projected funding amount from the bed tax until the summer of 2026.

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

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

Q: Is restoration of a previously removed architectural feature of a structure an eligible project?

A: Technically, yes. However, it might prove more difficult to demonstrate Statutory Criteria A, Purpose and Need, as well as Statutory Criteria B, Economic Stimulus or Economic Activity, especially in comparison to projects that address the integrity or accessibility of a building.

Q: What if the preconstruction legwork is happening during the award cycle?

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

Q: When will the recording be available?

A: The recording of the Jan. 15, 2026, webinar is available now on the [MHPG page](#) of Commerce's website, under the Applying for Grants tab.

Q: Would the implementation schedule start date for grant award be July 2027?

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 redundancy.

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 from the last cycle?

A: Yes. Please refer to House Bill 12 for each biennium, available on the [MHPG page](#) of Commerce's website, under the Reports tab.