INDIAN COUNTRY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (ICED) PROGRAM

APPLICATION GUIDELINES FOR:

INDIAN EQUITY FUND (IEF) SMALL BUSINESS GRANTS

TRIBAL BUSINESS PLANNING GRANTS

NATIVE AMERICAN BUSINESS ADVISOR (NABA) PROGRAM

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I. ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Indian Country Economic Development (ICED) program, created by the 59th Montana State Legislature, is a State-funded program administered by the Montana Department of Commerce. Since October 2005, the State Legislature has made a restricted biennial appropriation of One-Time-Only (OTO) grant funds to be made available to Montana’s tribal nations and tribal businesses for business development activities. In the 66th legislative session, $1.75 M in funding for the ICED program was approved as part of House Bill 2, state special revenue, and signed into law by Governor Bullock in May 2019.

The family of programs funded under the ICED program (Tribal Business Planning Grant, Indian Equity Fund (IEF) Small Business Grant, and Native American Business Advisors (NABA) allow the Office of Indian Country Economic Development of the Department of Commerce to continue to articulate measurable successes of the program to tribal communities, the administration, and to the elected leadership.
II. PROGRAM CALENDAR

Following is a chart of proposed activities and deadlines for OICED funded programs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JUN</th>
<th>JUL</th>
<th>AUG</th>
<th>SEP</th>
<th>OCT</th>
<th>NOV</th>
<th>DEC</th>
<th>JAN</th>
<th>FEB</th>
<th>MAR</th>
<th>APR</th>
<th>MAY</th>
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<tr>
<td>NATIVE AMERICAN BUSINESS ADVISOR (NABA) GRANT</td>
<td>NABA application period (through July)</td>
<td>IEF application assistance</td>
<td>IEF application assistance</td>
<td>Midterm Report</td>
<td>NABA capacity building activities</td>
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<td>INDIAN EQUITY FUND (IEF) GRANT</td>
<td>Indian Equity Fund grant application periods: JUL-SEP</td>
<td>Local Review</td>
<td>State Review</td>
<td>Awards &amp; Contracting</td>
<td>Fiscal year end 2020 Progress Report &amp; Final Draw</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRIBAL BUSINESS PLANNING GRANT*</td>
<td>Tribal business planning grant application period: JUL-SEP</td>
<td>Grant Review (or earlier depending on application date)</td>
<td>Awards &amp; contracting</td>
<td>Midterm Report</td>
<td>Fiscal Year End Progress Report &amp; Final Draw</td>
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*Early application to the Tribal Business Planning Grant is encouraged to maximize the amount of time available to complete project activities.
III. NATIVE AMERICAN BUSINESS ADVISORS (NABA)

A. SUMMARY
The Native American Business Advisors (NABAs) Grant is a fund to support the activities of Native American community-based organizations, tribal colleges, and tribal government organizations that support private sector business development on reservations and in tribal communities. These entities offer business counseling and credit counseling, and application support to Native American businesses in Montana. The NABAs are a key community asset necessary in the development and success of Native American businesses. To develop this asset, the Program is focused on increasing the technical capacity of the NABA network such as assisting individuals in business start-up, marketing, utilization of business resources, and commercial loan application assistance. Additionally, NABAs will also provide more robust application assistance to the Indian Equity Fund Small Business Grant applicants. A total of $20,000 per year is available to fund up to eight NABA applications in each of tribal nation areas.

Eligible applicants include local Native American development organizations that have offered technical assistance services to pre-venture and established Native American businesses in Montana. Additionally, those organizations that have been awarded NABA grants in the past should either demonstrate a history of submitting timely reports and meeting required performance targets or should provide a detailed plan demonstrating a commitment to meeting reporting, capacity building, and performance targets. Any unused funds may be provided to complete special projects that support private sector development on reservations and in tribal communities at the discretion of the Department of Commerce.

B. REQUIRED NABA ACTIVITIES
The NABA organizations are tasked with completing the following activity requirements:

- **BUSINESS COUNSELING SERVICES**- assist applicants in creating, writing, and implementing a business plan, establishing product or service cost structures, assisting with market analysis and feasibility resources, establishing realistic financial projections, or providing marketing and sales instruction and information. Note: NABAs should establish regular times to which they are available and can schedule business counseling and Indian Equity Fund Small Business application assistance.

- **INDIAN EQUITY FUND SMALL BUSINESS GRANT APPLICATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**- assist a minimum of six (6) Native American businesses with
developing and submitting quality applications via the Submittable™ online platform to the Indian Equity Fund Small Business Grant program.

- **COMMERCIAL LOAN APPLICATION ASSISTANCE**- assist Native American businesses (where applicable) with developing and submitting a commercial loan application such as those submitted to a community bank, a community-based lender, tribal loan program, or program such as USDA.

- **ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SMALL BUSINESS CONSULTANTS (AASBC) CERTIFICATION**- participating organizations will need to have at least one staff test and become certified as an Accredited Small Business Consultant™. Organizations new to the NABA network must budget for plan for at least one staff member to obtain this accreditation.

- **CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES**- each organization must propose additional activities to enhance their services to their communities. Activities can be fiscal year specific or can be spread across both fiscal years.

  - **CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM CERTIFICATION**- for those NABAs who would like to increase their organization capacity to:
    - expand their organization’s understanding of trends in cultural heritage and native tourism,
    - learn best options and approaches for managing tourism at the community level
    - understand how to conduct a comprehensive tourism assessment and evaluate the potential of cultural heritage tourism for your community, or
    - gain tools needed to introduce cultural heritage tourism to your community and to plans for its adoption and growth

  An online George Washington University International Institute of Tourism Studies training is available **September 30- November 17, 2019** at a cost of $2,775. The cost of 6-8 hours of additional staff time per week (training is 6 weeks) to participate in the training can be added into the budget. More information can be found here: [https://business.gwu.edu/academics/programs/executive-education/professional-certificates/cultural-heritage-tourism](https://business.gwu.edu/academics/programs/executive-education/professional-certificates/cultural-heritage-tourism)

  - **CREDIT COUNSELING SERVICES**- provide training (where applicable) for individuals to strengthen their financial management skills such as developing and utilizing a budget, understanding and establishing creditworthiness and accessing credit.

  - **SITE VISITS**- organizations may be requested to host site visits and organize Indian Equity Fund business site visits. (See the program calendar section for more details.)
• **NABA RECAP**- grantees may be requested to provide feedback near the end of the grant period to debrief fiscal year activities and to strategize for future NABA initiatives based on business community needs.

**C. FUNDING AVAILABILITY**
A yearly amount of $20,000 is available for the NABA grants for the following activities:

- $4,000 for providing business technical assistance services.
- $6,000 for providing technical assistance services to help businesses develop and submit quality Small Business Grant applications to the Program. A minimum of 6 high quality IEF Small Business Grant applications submitted for consideration are recommended to access the total $6,000.
- $10,000 in funds is available to the NABAs to increase the capacity of the organization to provide more robust business technical assistance and credit education services to their reservation communities and to attend required trainings or convening of NABAs.

**D. DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS**
The Department requires approved documentation verifying eligible costs incurred by the grantee. The Department reserves the right to request further documentation in a particular case when, in the exercise of its judgment, such documentation is needed to confirm performance. For payment, the basic documentation typically includes:

1. A Fully Executed Contract
2. Designation of Depository Form *(only required for new accounts or new grantees)*
3. Signature Certification Form *(only required for new signatories or new grantees)*
4. Request for Payment Form

**E. PAYMENT SCHEDULE**

B Payment for approved expenses under the contract will be paid typically following the disbursement schedule listed below. For an award of $20,000/ fiscal year schedule of payments would be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JULY (Initial Drawdown)</th>
<th>NOVEMBER (Midterm Progress Report)</th>
<th>MAY (Closeout Report)</th>
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<tr>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>$6,000 for assisting a minimum of 6 Indian Equity Fund applicants submit applications for the current round of</td>
<td>$10,000 upon submission of closeout report</td>
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PROPOSED PAYMENT SCHEDULE:

1. **Initial Payment Request:**
   a. *Request for Payment Form* for $4,000 for baseline technical assistance services,
   b. Designation of Depository Form (only required for new accounts or new grantees), and
   c. Signature Certification Form (only required for new signatories or new grantees).
   d. Once the contract is fully executed by all parties, this initial drawdown request will be processed for payment.

2. **Midterm Payment Request:**
   a. *Request for Payment Form* up to $6,000

3. **FYE (Fiscal Year End) Payment Request:**
   a. *Request for Payment Form* for up to $10,000 can be requested for completion of additional capacity building activities, travel, and administrative costs as budgeted, and
   b. *Fiscal Year End Report* with evidence of completed capacity building activities, travel, and administrative costs.

**F. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

During the contract term, the grantee must report on Program funds and activities as follows:

1. **MIDTERM PROGRESS REPORT:** By November, the grantee will submit a Midterm Progress Report for approval by the Program. The Midterm Report will describe the total costs incurred for the project to date, summarize required baseline and capacity building activities on a monthly basis, identify the six (6) Indian Equity Fund applicants assisted for the Indian Equity Fund grant process, identify a success story, identify significant problems encountered in carrying out the services, and provide the Program documentation of completion of any training or certification.

2. **FYE (FISCAL YEAR END) REPORT:** By May, the grantee will submit a FYE Report for approval by the Program. The report will describe the total costs incurred for the project to date, summarize required baseline and capacity building activities on
a monthly basis, identify any Indian Equity Fund applicants assisted for the upcoming Indian Equity Fund grant process, identify a success story, and identify any significant problems encountered in carrying out the services.

3. **CLOSEOUT CERTIFICATION FORM:** This form will be sent out after Final Project and final payment requests have been processed. This form needs to be signed by the Chief Executive Officer, College President, or Executive Director. It certifies that activities undertaken by the grantee with grant funds have been carried out according to the contract and removes the contract from the ICED program’s grant line item. The grantee is required to maintain all grant contract related information for five years from the date of the Closeout Certification Form.

G. PROGRAM CONTACT

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Program Manager  
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IV. INDIAN EQUITY FUND (IEF) SMALL BUSINESS GRANTS

A. SUMMARY
The Indian Equity Fund Small Business Grant is a grant to assist a start-up or expanding Native American business in Montana. This money can be used for a variety of activities such as the purchase of new equipment or the development of a new product line. A total of $320,000 is available to fund Native American business applications in Montana.

B. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS
The funds are available to enrolled members of Montana’s federally recognized tribes in Montana and to enrolled members of the Little Shell Tribe residing in Montana. All applications must include documentation of tribal enrollment in the form of a Certified Indian Blood (CIB) Form or tribal ID. An application will be considered incomplete without this information.

C. INELIGIBLE APPLICANTS
Any applicant or business in Montana that is debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, or declared as ineligible to receive State of Montana funds is ineligible to receive these grant funds.

Additionally, any applicant under a garnishment order at the time of application from the Montana Department of Revenue for monies owed to the State of Montana is an ineligible recipient of funds. Examples of garnishment include taxes owed to the State, child support payments that are past due and funds owed the university system.

D. FUNDING AVAILABILITY
Applications will be accepted on an open cycle basis from the beginning of July to the end of September. Check the website for more specific deadline details: https://marketmt.com/ICP/IEF

Applicants can request a maximum of $14,000 and must demonstrate a reasonable justification for the use of funds. (Please round request to the nearest $100 increment.) Award amounts are at the discretion of the Review Committee. Applicants are encouraged to only apply for what they need so that grant dollars can be distributed across as many businesses as possible.

E. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES
Funds can be used for a variety of business activities usually funded by a commercial lender. These activities may include but are not limited to:
• Purchase of land, building and equipment.
• Purchase of assets including furnishings, equipment and technology.
• Selected use of working capital for business operations. A very strong case must be made to utilize funds for working capital.

Existing business owners must show how the funding will support growth in their business either through the development of a new product or service with the existing business strategy.

F. INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES
The following activity will not be funded:

• Reimbursement for activities completed prior to receipt of application.
• Reimbursement for activities not related to business start-up or expansion
• 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.

G. MATCH REQUIREMENT
The requested grant funds require a minimum of dollar to dollar cash or in-kind match ($1:$1) and be firmly committed and documented in the application. Documentation of match will be required prior to the release of funds. Cash match may include collateral such as cash or loan proceeds from a tribal loan fund, a micro loan program, or a commercial lender. In-kind match may include inventory, supplies, equipment, tools or vehicles that are part of the activity of the business.

H. HOW TO APPLY
Individuals can submit applications on their own or utilize a Native American Business Advisor (NABA) to assist them with their application. Applications must be completed online through the Submittable™ application platform located at https://montanadeptofcommerce.submittable.com/submit. First time applicants will be required to create a Submittable™ 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 Submittable™. Applicants are encouraged to apply early so that they can make any necessary adjustments or changes before the deadline to make their application competitive.

It is essential that business owners understand their business. Native American Business Advisors NABAs are available on each reservation and to Little Shell tribal members to provide business counseling and assistance with the various aspects of the application such as marketing and development of cash flows and financial information. NABAs may assist in application preparation and are trained in the Submittable™ online application.
submission process. A list of NABA organizations is located at http://marketmt.com/ICP/ICED/NABA. Additionally, the Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) Network is located throughout the state and can provide business counseling services. A map of SBDC host organizations is located at http://sbdc.mt.gov/About/Locations.

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 Local Review Committee where possible and a State Review Committee.

I. APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

1. RECIPIENT OF APPLICATION- Once submitted each application is assessed for completeness and clarity by the Program. Applications that are incomplete or lack clarity can be opened for editing to the applicant if submitted prior to the deadline. As needed, the Program will provide the NABA contact information in the applicant’s community as a resource. The Program coordinates the application review and ranking timeline at the local and state levels.

2. REVIEW – The Review Committee makes funding recommendations to the Montana Department of Commerce Director who makes the final funding decision.

J. APPLICATION REVIEW CRITERIA

The following criteria will be used to evaluate the proposals for potential funding:

1. APPLICATION QUALITY- Is the application complete, clear and logical, proofread for spelling, and/or mathematical errors?

2. APPLICATION PROJECT REQUIREMENTS- It is critical that the reviewers have a clear understanding of how the grant funds will be used. Did the application include a listing of all the assets of the business? This will tell us your current capacity. Did the application show in detail the use of the grant funds? This will tell the reviewers how these assets will help your business start or expand. When necessary was documentation of use of funds shown such as price quotes, equipment or inventory to be purchased, photos of facilities to be upgraded or other documentation that will provide support for a quality application. Did the cash flow projections reflect the use of funds? This will show how your use of project funds will impact your sales, expenses and if you will have positive cash flow at the end of a year. Does the application have a written project narrative that reflects the use of the grant funds? The written narrative and the cash flow projections (narrative in dollars) should describe the same project development.

3. APPLICANT BUSINESS EXPERIENCE- Does the applicant have experience in the business that is proposed in the application? If the applicant doesn’t have experience, has the applicant demonstrated in the application that they have the capacity to endure a business start-up and make sustainable business decisions?
4. **FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS** - Are the cash flow projections convincing and understandable? For established businesses, have the most current financials been provided and explained?

5. **OPERATIONS** - Are the operational aspects (partners, suppliers, production costs, key resources, and pricing structure) of the business identified in the application?

6. **MARKETING PLAN** - What are the products and services that the value proposition is built around? Who is the target market and customer segment? How do the target market and the value proposition match?

7. **MATCH QUALITY** - Is the match business or farm machinery, equipment, furniture, or fixtures? Is the match land/buildings, inventory, accounts receivable, or other assets dedicated to the business? What is the market value, unpaid balance and depreciated cost of these items? If using a vehicle as match, equity must be documented. For example, if a business vehicle has a Kelly Blue Book value of $18,000 and the applicant has an unpaid balance of $12,000, then the in-kind match of the vehicle is $6,000.

8. **FINANCIAL NEED** - The fund is designed to assist the new business start-up and or the growing small business that demonstrates a financial need in their application.

9. **PREVIOUS RECIPIENTS** - An applicant that has previously received an Indian Equity Fund Small Business Grant will rank less competitively than other applicants who have not received a previous award. In addition, an applicant who was a previous recipient must provide a status update of the business and meet one of the below criteria in their application:
   - New technology;
   - A new product or line of products; or
   - A new service or services.

**K. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

1. **TOURISM-RELATED APPLICATIONS** - Applications from grantees who are considering a tourism business or growing their tourism business are welcome and encouraged. Applicants are encouraged to:
   b) Submit a business listing for inclusion on the visitmt.com website: [https://www.visitmt.com/places-to-go/indian-country.html](https://www.visitmt.com/places-to-go/indian-country.html). Contact the Tribal Tourism Officer at doctribal@mt.gov or at (406) 841-2734 for assistance.
   c) **Review Linking Communities, Tourism & Conservation: A Tourism Assessment Process** (George Washington University)
d) **Access additional tourism tools and business development resources** for cultural heritage tourism, assessment and development, destination management, community-based tourism, customer relations for the hospitality industry, and best practices in event management can be accessed by contacting the Tribal Tourism Officer at doctribal@mt.gov or at (406) 841-2734.

2. **NATIVE AMERICAN MADE IN MONTANA**- Applicants who are ‘producers’ (creating or adding value to a product that is made, grown, or enhanced in the state of Montana with the end product being worth 50% or more in added value) are eligible to register with the Made in Montana Program. Those producers that are enrolled members of tribes in Montana are eligible to register products as Native American Made in Montana. There is no cost to this registration and can be done online at https://app.mt.gov/madeinmontana/BusinessType/Create?ReturnUrl=%2fmadeinmontana%2fbusinesstype%2fcreate or by registering with a fillable form http://madeinmontanausa.com/Portals/184/shared/Current_New_Member_Signup%203-27-17%20fillable.pdf. Additional information can be obtained by contacting the program at (406) 841-2757 or by email at madeinmontana@mt.gov.

**L. GRANT NOTIFICATION AND CONTRACT**

Applications will be reviewed during the months of October and November. Recommendations are forwarded to the Director for final funding approval. This process can take anywhere from 30 to 60 days. The Program is aiming to notify applicants of funding decisions by the end of December. Once applicants have been notified of funding decisions, those applications awarded funding will begin the contracting process initiated by the Department.

**M. DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS**

Grant funds are paid on a reimbursement basis. No funds are paid directly, up-front to Indian Equity Fund grantees. Grant funds are intended to be expended within one year of award. Grant funds can be dispersed for the grantees use in one of three common ways:

1. Grant funds are reimbursed to the grantee with the submission of:
   a) a W-9,
   b) banking information, and
   c) receipts for reimbursement,

2. Grant funds are paid on behalf of the grantee to a vendor with the submission of:
   a) a W-9 from the vendor and the grantee,
   b) banking information for the vendor, and
   c) an invoice or quote from the vendor with the grantee’s name and contract number,

3. Grant funds can also be paid to a vendor on behalf of a grantee by the use of a state procurement credit card with the submission of vendor contact information for the Program to coordinate either an over-the-phone or online purchase.
4. In the rare case of an award for working capital, the program will determine with the applicant how to proceed with establishing access to this working capital.

N. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

FINAL REPORT AND SURVEY - The Grantee will be requested to complete a Final Report at the end of the contract prior to the closing of the contract. In addition, the Grantee may be surveyed after the contract period to obtain follow-on information regarding the impact of the grant on their business.

O. PROGRAM CONTACT

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V. TRIBAL BUSINESS PLANNING GRANTS (TBPG)

A. SUMMARY
The Tribal Business Planning Grants (TBPG) portion of the Indian Country Economic Development Program funding is intended to assist tribal governments in deploying comprehensive business planning strategies and activities.

B. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS
The governing bodies of each of Montana’s eight tribal governments are the only eligible applicants for this portion of the Program. *Note: If a tribal government fails to make application by the deadline other Native American tribal organizations (other than the recognized tribal governments) may make application for the funding. The tribal organization must be a legal entity in the State of Montana with the ability to enter into agreements or contracts.

C. FUNDING AVAILABILITY
A maximum of $30,000 per governing body or tribal organization per fiscal year. Applications will be accepted on an open cycle basis from the beginning of July to the end of September. Check the website for more specific deadline details: https://marketmt.com/ICP/ICED/BusinessPlanning

The Department retains sole and broad discretion over the use of any funds not applied for by an eligible governing body by the end of September.

D. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES
Eligible activities include the following activities evidenced by tangible deliverables (i.e. ordinances, codes, business planning, study, and analysis documents, etc.):

- Business plan development
- Market analysis
- Feasibility study
- Physical business infrastructure planning, such as zoning
- Legal and financial codification or ordinances benefitting business(es)

TBPG funds can be used to match other funding sources in the above areas as long as the funding is not duplicative (see ineligible activities below).

E. INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES
The following activities will not be funded:
• Operation and maintenance costs or expenses;
• Financial expenses, included but not limited to interest expense, bond issuance costs, or any other debt-related costs or expenses;
• Reimbursement for activities completed prior to application;
• Reimbursement for activities not related to business planning;
• 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; or
• Projects whose primary development will be a casino or other gambling establishment, aquarium, zoo, golf course, or swimming pool.

F. HOW TO APPLY

Applications will be accepted online through the Submittable™ application platform https://montanadeptofcommerce.submittable.com/submit. Applications should include complete information or uploaded documents in the following sections:

• APPLICATION (ONLINE) – The application section should contain a detailed project description and background, an explanation of use of funds, the project objectives and tangible deliverables (i.e. feasibility study or market analysis), and a summary of the economic impact the project would have on the geographic area and its residents.

• TRIBAL RESOLUTION OR AUTHORIZATION (UPLOAD) - Appropriate authorization for application to the Program by the tribal government according to established tribal governmental procedures (i.e. tribal council resolution, authorization of the chief elected official of the executive branch, whichever is applicable) is required and will need to be uploaded. The resolution should include the name of the project being applied for, the name of the tribal organization or entity that will be responsible for managing the application process and contract and the governing body’s approval to apply for the Program funds. Note: if a tribal government does not apply for the funding by the application deadline, the governing body of the organization must provide a letter of authorization for the application.

• PROJECT TIMELINE (ONLINE) – Applicants will need to provide a timeline for when the project activities/scope of work will be completed within a one-year contract period. Project start-up or preparation activities need to be included as well as any the timeframe for procurement of professional services (if applicable) and project implementation and execution of activities.

• PROJECT SOURCES AND USES OF FUNDS (ONLINE) – A budget will need to be completed listing all sources and uses of funds for the entire project including
cash and in-kind contributions. Expense assumptions and how costs are derived should be included.

- **ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT (ONLINE)** - Information for key staff or procured services and qualifications should be included. Project contacts including the main project contact, the reporting contact, accounting/financial contact(s), and alternate project contact should be identified. Adherence to tribal procurement processes for professional services should be documented.

- **DESIGNATION OF DEPOSITORY FORM (UPLOAD)** – This form should be uploaded with the application in order to designate a direct deposit tribal government account into which all payments can be made.

- **SIGNATURE CERTIFICATION FORM (UPLOAD)** – This form should be uploaded with signatures of at least two officials authorized by the tribal government or organization to request a draw down in grant funds on the contract. Should the tribal Chair or President, or authorized signatories change during the time period of the contract; a new form will need to be submitted.

- **REQUEST FOR FUNDS (UPLOAD)** – This form will need to be submitted to request a draw down in funds on the grant contract. It should be signed by two of the authorized signatories from the most current Signature Certification Form submitted and on file.

**G. APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS**

The Program will first review the application for completeness and sufficiency. During the review, the Program may contact the applicant to discuss any concerns or questions or to request additional information or documentation. The Program may require additional information from the applicant to clarify information presented in the application. Site visits by the Program may be made to the proposed project area for the purpose of verifying or further evaluating information contained in the application.

After the application is deemed complete and sufficient information is available to evaluate the proposed project(s), the application will be evaluated on the extent to which the project proposal meets the goals and objectives of the Program, using the following criteria:

- Potential for the project to help applicants make more strategic decisions about the start-up, expansion, or diversification of a tribal enterprise or venture.
- Likelihood that a specified feasibility study is of sufficient magnitude to have a significant economic impact on the future economic development of the reservation;
- Likelihood that the specified planning activity will provide important or relevant guidance for decision making in the development of land, resources, business, financial or legal infrastructure.
- Overall quality of the application, including measureable project goals, tasks, and activities, a well-developed work plan and budget, and easily identifiable deliverables.
- Capability of the applicant to undertake and satisfactorily complete the project and ensure proper management and reporting of Program funds (i.e. use of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles- GAAP).

The Program will present the evaluation of each application to an internal Grant Review Committee. The applicant can notify the Program if he/she would like to make a 10-minute presentation to the Grant Review Committee. The Committee will review the application and make a preliminary funding recommendation to the Director of the Department, who makes the final funding decision.

H. GRANT NOTIFICATION AND CONTRACT

Once a project has been approved by the Director, The Tribe or organization will be notified by award letter of the grant. A contract will be executed between the Department and the tribal government or organization by a digital routing and signature process requiring a valid email for the digital execution of the contract by the executive signatory.

I. DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

The Department can request documentation verifying eligible costs incurred by the grantee. The Department reserves the right to request further documentation in a particular case when, in the exercise of its judgment, such documentation is needed to confirm performance. For payment, the basic documentation should include:

1. Designation of Depository Form (only required for new accounts or new grantees)
2. Signature Certification Form (only required for new signatories or new grantees)
3. Request for Payment Form

J. PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Payment for approved expenses under the contract will be paid in accordance to the disbursement schedule listed below. $4,000 of drawdown funds can be utilized for administration. For an award of $30,000 the schedule of payments would be as follows:

1. (Initial) Payment #1 - $25,000 of the award amount will be available upon contract execution in conjunction with the receipt of:
   a. Designation of Depository Form,
   b. Signature Certification Form, and
   c. Request for Payment Form
2. **(Final)** Payment #2 - $5,000 will be available upon receipt and approval of the following information:
   a. Project Closeout Report & Certification Form,
   b. Request for Payment Form

All payments will be made via direct deposit into a designated account. Once a contract has been executed, the initial payment can be made to the Tribal government if necessary financial forms have been received. If authorized signatories including tribal chair/president, Chief Financial Officer, or Director designated on Signature Certification Form change, new financial forms may need to be submitted.

If a tribal government receives an adverse audit opinion or disclaimer from any state or federal agency or authorized agent thereof, the Department reserves the right to release Program funds to that tribal government on a reimbursement basis only, upon receipt of a Request for Reimbursement accompanied by adequate supporting documentation of eligible project expenses.

**K. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:**

1. **MIDTERM PROGRESS REPORT:** After the halfway mark of the contract term, the Grantee should submit a report detailing the progress made on the project over first half of the contract and anticipated progress over the final half of the contract and if applicable, drafts or updates that have been received from the professional completing the activity with a narrative summary update.
2. **PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT:** Upon completion of the final project, the grantee will submit a final Project Completion Report for approval by the Program.
3. **CLOSEOUT CERTIFICATION FORM:** After approving the Project Completion Report, the Program will issue the Notice of Project Closeout (Closeout Certification Form) that will need to be signed by an authorized signer.

**L. PROGRAM CONTACT**

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