



MONTANA
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

MONTANA OFFICE OF TOURISM AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

**INDIAN COUNTRY ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT (ICED) PROGRAM**

APPLICATION GUIDELINES FOR:

TRIBAL BUSINESS PLANNING GRANTS

Governor Steve Bullock

Director Tara Rice

Indian Country Programs

301 South Park Avenue

PO Box 200533

Helena MT 59620-0533

Phone: (406) 841-2061

Fax: (406) 841-2731

Website: <http://indiancountry.mt.gov>

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I. 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 August 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://montanadepthofcommerce.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 measurable 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

Maria Valandra

Program Manager

Office of Indian Country Economic Development

Montana Department of Commerce

301 S. Park Ave Room 188

PO Box 200533

Helena, MT 59620

Phone: (406) 841-2061

Email: maria.valandra@mt.gov

Website: <http://marketmt.com/ICP/ICED>