

TOURISM GRANT PROGRAM

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

The Tourism Grant Program awards funds to projects that strengthen Montana's economy through the development and enhancement of the state's tourism and recreation industry. Funds are awarded annually to projects that develop and enhance tourism and recreation products that have the potential to increase non-resident visitation.

The Tourism Grant Program is funded by the 4% Lodging Facility Use Tax commonly known as the "Bed Tax," which is collected from guests of hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, guest ranches, resorts, and campgrounds.

Of the 58.2% collected bed tax distributed to the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development, approximately \$750,000 is awarded annually through the Tourism Grant Program.

Since 1995, over \$10.8 million has been awarded to 391 tourism and recreation related projects, resulting in a positive economic benefit for communities throughout Montana.



*Restoration of the W.A. Halls Sells Everything sign, Gardiner, MT
Photo credit: Yellowstone Forever/Matt Ludin*

ENTITIES IN MONTANA THAT ARE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR A TOURISM GRANT INCLUDE:

- A registered non-profit organization (501(c)(3) or 501(c)(6))
- A tribal government
- A city or county government

Eligible entities cannot use funds as a pass-through for ineligible entities, which include for-profit businesses, individuals, and state or federal agencies.

The asset/proposed project must be owned by the entity applying for the grant, or the applicant must have a long-term lease with automatic renewal in place with the owner (such as for placing or constructing an asset on leased land or a project that is within a facility that is rented).

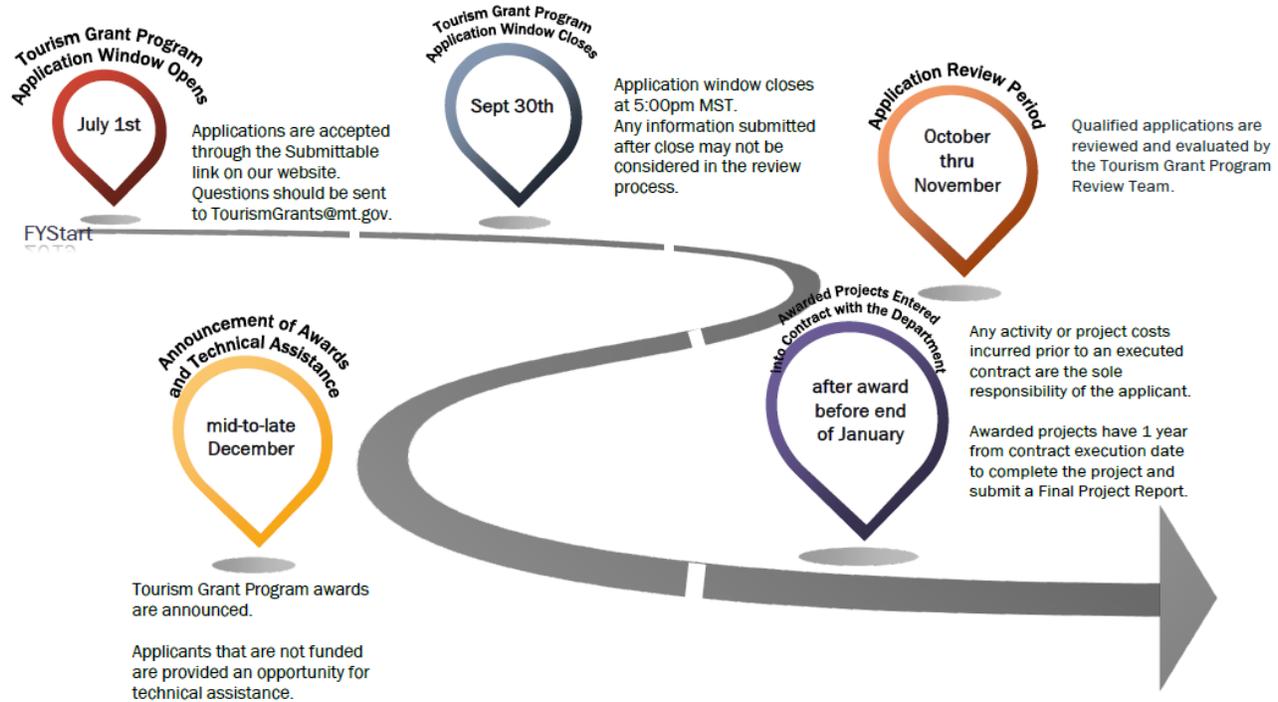
FUNDS ARE AWARDED TO TOURISM AND RECREATION PROJECTS IN THESE CATEGORIES:

- **Arts / Culture / Heritage Preservation:** projects that preserve, protect, or restore Montana's arts, culture, and/or heritage treasures.
- **Visitor Facility Upgrades / Construction:** projects that will enhance the non-resident visitor experience and increase expenditures.
- **Niche Product Development:** projects of interest to non-resident visitors as identified in Montana Destination Brand Research (can be found at <https://marketmt.com/TourismGrants> under Qualifiers & Timeline).

Qualified applicants **must** demonstrate a cash match of actual and committed money invested in the proposed project. The cash match is \$1 applicant to \$2 award. For example: An applicant requesting a \$6,000 grant award must demonstrate it has \$3,000 committed to the completion of the project as match. In-kind services, in-kind labor, and/or volunteer hours cannot count as a match.

A **key** component of a successful application to the Tourism Grant Program is for the applicant to demonstrate the proposed project has the support of community and tourism partners. These partnerships build sustainability and assist with destination marketing upon successful completion of the project.

Applications are accepted via an online platform beginning July 1 of each fiscal year. The application window closes at 5 p.m. MST on September 30 of each fiscal year. The typical timeline looks like:



From the date of award, funded applicants have one year to complete the project, therefore Tourism Grant Program funds are typically not appropriate for front-end construction projects, projects that are still in the fundraising or planning phase, and/or non-shovel-ready projects.

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MONTANA OFFICE OF TOURISM AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

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