BUSINESS MT DIVISION

TRIBAL TOURISM PROGRAM

APPLICATION GUIDELINES FOR:

FY24 TRIBAL TOURISM GRANT

Governor Greg Gianforte
Director Scott Osterman

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I.   ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Tribal Tourism Program, under the direction of The Department of Commerce Business MT Division, Office of Indian Country Economic Development (OICED), the State-Tribal Economic Development Commission (STEDC) and the Tourism Advisory Council (TAC), administers tourism development and promotion activities on behalf of the Indian Tourism Region.

Established by Senate Bill 309 of the 65th Montana Legislature in 2017, the Indian Tourism Region includes all reservations in Montana as well as other locations significant to tribes with a modern or historical connection to Montana.

Activities are funded through a 0.5 percent allocation of Montana's Lodging Facility Use Tax collections, within budgetary caps set by the Montana State Legislature.

II.   PROGRAM CALENDAR

Following is a chart of proposed activities and deadlines for the FY24 Tribal Tourism Grant**:**

	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
FY24 TRIBAL TOURISM GRANT					**Applications Accepted October 1, 2023 to November 30, 2023**		**Application Review**		**Awards & Contracts**			

III. FY24 TRIBAL TOURISM GRANT

A. SUMMARY

The 2024 Tribal Tourism Grant is a competitive grant program to connect participating Tribes of Montana with the resources necessary to advance one or more self-identified tourism priorities.

Up to $120,000 is available to fund projects defined under section "E. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES."

B. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Funds are available to the governing bodies of the federally recognized tribes in Montana. Any applicant in arrears or default with a Department of Commerce program is ineligible. Applicants must establish an Okta account to access the application portal, by following these instructions: https://business.mt.gov/_shared/ICED/docs/TBDG/OktaInstructions.pdf

C. INELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

This program isn't intended for tribal member-owned small businesses or for economic development activities not related to tourism. However, tourism-related tribal member owned small business projects may be eligible under the Indian Equity Fund Small Business Grant Program. For more information please visit: https://business.mt.gov/Business-Assistance/Indian-Country-Programs/Indian-Country-Economic-Development-Program/Indian-Equity-Fund-Small-Business-Grant

D. FUNDING AVAILABILITY

Applications will be accepted on an open cycle basis from October 1, 2023 to November 30, 2023. Check the ServiceNow Grant and Loans application platform for more specific deadline details: https://montana.servicenowservices.com/mtgl

The total budget for the grant program is $120,000. Applicants may request a maximum of $50,000; however, actual grant awards may be less than requested. For this reason, OICED encourages applicants to consider contingency funding sources when preparing their project budgets. Actual grants will depend on the number of applications received and the discretion of the Review Committee.

E. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Applicants may choose from one of two eligible "shovel-ready" long-lasting project categories:

1. **Destination development and infrastructure upgrades**
   Examples are, but not limited to:

- Establishing new or improving existing campgrounds, expanding rental features like Tipi rentals, small cabins, and/or RV Parks with upgraded amenities like electrical hook ups, potable water, grey water disposal, restroom facilities, showers, picnic pavilions, fire rings, tent pads, camp host residence, facilities maintenance equipment and/or vehicles, gift shop or visitors center with point-of-sale system for purchases
- Historical markers with areas for travelers to stop and rest with shade and/or use the restroom at a vault toilet or access potable water
- Interpretive trails with informational kiosks on flora, fauna, or historical significance
- Agritourism offerings (Certified guided fishing, hiking, hunting, horseback riding, Bison Range tours, stargazing, bird watching, bicycle tours, boat tours)
- Improved ADA accessibility at existing locations

2. **Product development and technology systems**
   Examples are, but not limited to:
   - Certified guide curriculum and course certification program offered at a Tribally owned college or within the Tribe's Historic Preservation Department
   - Tribal Tourism Website where visitors can; explore offerings, frequently asked questions section, map of locations, promote events like Powwows and Indian Relay Races, post travel alerts, booking system for tours or campground reservations, and make electronic payments

F. INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The following activities will not be funded:

- Reimbursement for activities completed prior to receipt of application or not related to tourism.
- 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 when approved by Commerce as necessary to fully fund the project.
- Land purchase, prize money, wages, one-time events, advertising, or indirect administrative costs, offerings for tribal members only or not available to the public.

G. MATCH REQUIREMENT

Qualified applicants must demonstrate combination of a cash, equipment and in-kind match of actual and committed money invested in the proposed project. The match requirement is a minimum of 50% of the award total, $1 applicant to $2 award. Reasonable in-kind services, in-kind labor, and/or volunteer hours and committed cash are eligible for the match requirement, however, cash match must be no less than 50% of the match required. For example: an applicant requesting $6,000 grant award must demonstrate they have $3,000 matching; where at least

$1,500 is a cash match, and $1,500 in-kind and/or equipment committed to the completion of the project as match.

H. HOW TO APPLY

Applications must be completed online through the ServiceNow Grants and Loans application platform located at https:/

First time applicants will be required to create a free Okta account 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 ServiceNow. Applicants are encouraged to apply early so that they can make any necessary adjustments or changes before the deadline to make their application competitive.

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 Review Committee.

I. APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

1. **RECEIPT 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. The Program coordinates the application review and ranking timeline.
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

Because this is a competitive grant, each application will be evaluated for its strengths and weaknesses compared to other applications. Examples of review criteria include:

1. How well does the applicant define the scope, budget, and objectives of the project? Is it clear from the application how the grant funds would be used and what the applicant hopes to accomplish? How does the applicant intend to promote the project to the public, specifically where and how will marketing and promotion be undertaken, and will it be featured on a website? Does the applicant provide a detailed budget with reasonable cost estimates and well-defined matching funds in line with the requirements?

2. What challenges must be mitigated to ensure the project's success? Has the applicant appropriately considered the factors necessary for a successful outcome? How

has the applicant outlined measures that will be taken to ensure the project is protected from potential damage by severe weather, vandalism, theft, neglect, security breaches, needed maintenance, or wildlife? How will the Tribe manage increases in visitors to the area in terms of waste management, parking, way finding, laws, permit requirements, accommodations, and crime prevention? Who will be responsible for maintaining a website to ensure the information is up-to-date and secure?

3. How will the project positively impact tourism for the tribal community? Will the project have the support of the tribal community and be welcoming for visitors? Does the project take into consideration the concerns from the tribal community about potential negative attitudes towards tourism in the area?

4. How well does the project aligned with and support the tribe's greater economic development plans? Will the project create any new jobs? How will the Tribe ensure new positions are filled and associated wages are sustainable? How well does the project extend the seasonality of tourism to the region? Is the project dependent upon seasonal conditions or future grant funding?

5. How will success of the project be measured? In what ways will the applicant measure tourism visitation? What metrics will be captured and who is responsible for collecting this data?

K. GRANT NOTIFICATION AND CONTRACT

Applications will be reviewed during the month of December 2022. Recommendations are forwarded to the Director for final funding approval. This process can take anywhere from 30 to 90 days. The Program is aiming to notify applicants of funding decisions by March 2023. Once applicants have been notified of funding decisions, those applications awarded funding will begin the contracting process initiated by the Department.

L. REIMBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

Grant funds are paid on a reimbursement basis. No funds are paid directly, up-front to grantees. Grant funds are intended to be expended within one year of award.

Grant funds are reimbursed to the grantee with the submission of:
a)   W-9 (with first request only if not already on file)
b)   EFT form with banking information or mailing address (with first request only)
c)   Completion and submission of required Forms and related receipts;
 *Request for Reimbursement Form
 *Project Receipt Worksheet with receipts
 *Project Status Update Report

Forms are available for download at our website: <ins>https://business.mt.gov/Business-Assistance/Indian-Country-Programs/Tribal-Tourism</ins>

M. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

<u>Project Progress Reports, Status Updates</u>, <u>Project Completion, Close-out Form & Reporting</u>.

(a)   <u>Project Progress Reports and Status Updates</u>. During the term of this Contract, the Tribe will submit project progress reports to the Department in conjunction with each Request for Reimbursement. These reports, also known as Status Updates, will briefly describe the year-to-date status of the activities set forth in Section 5 SCOPE OF WORK, including, at a minimum, the percentage of the Project that is completed, costs incurred, funds remaining, and projected completion date. The progress report must also provide proof of payment documentation supporting each claim for expenses to be reimbursed, describe any significant problems encountered in carrying out the Project and the scope of any necessary modifications the Tribe is requesting in the Project scope of work or budget. The Department, at its sole discretion, may decline to honor any Request for Reimbursement if the required project progress report has not been submitted to or approved by the Department. The Department will make available a Project Report/Status Update Form for use to complete the information needed to accompany the Request for Reimbursement Form. These Forms will be available on the Department's website as well as emailed to the Tribe after the contract has been executed.

(b)   <u>Project Completion and Close-out Form & Reporting</u>. Upon completion of the Project or by September 30, 2025, whichever occurs first, the Department will email the Tribe a final Project Completion and Close-out Form. The Tribe will complete and return the final Project Completion and Close-out Form for review by the Department, on or before October 31, 2025. The Project Completion and Close-out Form will serve as a final Report, and will describe the total costs incurred for the Project, identify the final completion date, provide metrics used to measure the success and/or other testimonials statements about the impact of the project, contain diagrams and photos where appropriate, summarize any significant problems encountered in carrying out the Project, and answer any additional project questions asked of the Tribe from the Department. Upon approval of the

Project Completion and Close-out Report the Department will issue the Notice of Project Close-out by November 30, 2025.

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