



MONTANA

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

BUSINESS MT DIVISION

APPLICATION GUIDELINES FOR:

FY25 TRIBAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GRANT

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I. ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Tribal Business Development Grant Program (TBDG), under the direction of the Montana Department of Commerce (DOC) Business MT Division, Office of Indian Country Economic Development (OICED) is intended to assist Montana Tribal Government businesses in deploying shovel-ready projects (i.e. planning is more or less complete, approval permits are in place, and construction crews can begin once sufficient funding is secured). The grant is designed to aid in the development of for-profit tribal businesses and to create job opportunities within tribal economies.

II. PROGRAM CALENDAR

Following is the proposed activities and deadlines for the Tribal Business Development Grant:

Applications accepted September 16, 2024 – December 20, 2024

Application review by January 17, 2025

Awards and contracts by March 21, 2025

III. FY25 TRIBAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GRANT

A. SUMMARY

The Tribal Business Development Grant is a competitive grant program to connect participating Tribes of Montana with the resources necessary to advance a shovel-ready project that will provide a measurable beneficial economic impact for the community. Such projects will create short- and long-term jobs in Tribal for-profit businesses and/or a measurable increase in revenue for tribal businesses. These fields may include commercial real estate development, commercial property purchase, small business centers, retail infrastructure, renovations, rehabilitations, or remodeling of existing properties for commercial use, industrial use, business incubators, or certain new/used equipment with a defined depreciation schedule.

Up to \$240,000 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 State of Montana program is ineligible. Applicants who have never received this award are given additional points in scoring.

C. INELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

This program is intended for the governing bodies of the Montana’s eight Tribal Governments. This program is not intended to assist Tribal Governments in developing business planning strategies.

D. FUNDING AVAILABILITY

Applications will be accepted on an open cycle basis from September 16, 2024 to December 20, 2024.

The total budget for the grant program is \$240,000. Applicants may request a maximum of \$240,000; 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

Development and infrastructure upgrades for a Tribal for-profit business in Montana

Examples are, but not limited to:

- Establishing new or improving an existing commercial business such as storage units, greenhouses, etc.
- Commercial property purchase, excluding raw land
- A shovel-ready construction project to build, expand, or develop a new or existing commercial asset
- Renovations, rehabilitations, or remodeling of existing property for commercial use
- Federal funding match
- Equipment purchase

F. INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The following activities will not be funded:

- Reimbursement for activities completed prior to receipt of application
- 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
- Sole purchase of raw land
- Commercial property purchase that is in a mixed use zone where property can be used or rented as residential lease space
- Prize money, wages, one-time events, advertising, or indirect administrative costs
- Exclusive, private, adult only, require Tribal affiliation, or for members-only
- Projects whose primary development will be a casino or other gambling establishment, or a marijuana establishment or marijuana-related products or services
- 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

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

G. MATCH REQUIREMENT

Qualified applicants must demonstrate a 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, grant administration costs, and/or volunteer hours may equal 20% of the match. Committed cash is eligible for the match requirement; however, cash match must be no less than 80% of the match required. For example: an applicant requesting a \$6,000 grant award must provide \$3,000 in matching funds where at least \$2,400 is a cash match, and up to \$600 in-kind and/or equipment use committed to the completion of the project as match.

Indirect costs are not eligible for reimbursement under the grant award funds.

H. HOW TO APPLY

Applications must be completed online through the Montana Grants and Loans Portal located at <https://montana.servicenowservices.com/mtgl>.

Applicants will be required to create an Okta profile which requires a valid email account. Okta is located at <https://okta.loginmt.com>.

The application section should contain a detailed project description and background, an explanation of use of funds, the project objectives and tangible deliverables, 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.

TO BE DETERMINED - PROJECT TIMELINE (ONLINE) Applicants will need to provide a timeline for when the project activities/scope of work will be completed up to a two-year contract period, no later than two years from the contract date. Program staff will evaluate scheduled project proposal dates and delineate a 1-, 1.5-, or 2-year time horizon for completion, including milestones. Project start-up or preparation activities need to be included as well as the timeframe for procurement of professional services (if applicable) and project implementation and execution of activities.

TO BE DETERMINED - 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 match contributions. Expense assumptions and how costs are derived should be included (e.g. quotes from contractors, etc.).

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 Department. A Review Committee will review the applications for eligibility and suitability with state and program requirements.

I. APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

1. **RECEIPT OF APPLICATION** – Once submitted, each application is assessed for completeness and clarity by OICED. OICED coordinates the application review and ranking timeline. OICED may contact the applicant to discuss any concerns or questions or to request additional information or documentation. Site visits by OICED may be made to the proposed project area for the purpose of verifying or further evaluating information contained in the application.
2. **REVIEW** – The Review Committee makes funding recommendations to the 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?

3. How will the project positively impact the Tribal Community? Will the project have the support of the Tribal Community?

4. How well does the project align 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?

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

K. GRANT NOTIFICATION AND CONTRACT

Applications will be reviewed by January 17, 2025 by a review committee. Recommendations are forwarded to the Director for final funding approval. This process can take anywhere from 30 to 60 days unless a specific deadline applies. Once applicants have been notified of funding decisions, those applications awarded funding will begin the contracting process initiated by OICED.

L. REIMBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

Twenty percent maximum up-front grant funds may be paid to grantees. Otherwise, grant funds are paid on a reimbursement basis. Grant funds are intended to be expended by the deadline of the contract period of the 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: www.IndianCountry.mt.gov

M. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Project Completion and Close-out Reporting.

Upon self-reported completion of the Project, or by the deadline of the contract, whichever occurs first, OICED 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 OICED, on or before the deadline of the contract. The Project Completion and Close-out Form will serve as a final Report. It will describe the total costs incurred for the Project, identify the final completion date, provide applicable 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 OICED. Upon approval of the Project Completion and Close-out Report, OICED will issue the Notice of Project Close-Out.

N. PROGRAM CONTACT

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