Montana Main Street Grant Application

Montana Main Street Program

Due Nov. 14, 2025

Montana Department of Commerce
P.O. Box 200523
Helena, MT 59620-0523
Phone: 406-841-2700 | Fax: 406-841-2701
commerce.mt.gov
Montana 711: montanarelay.mt.gov

COMMERCE

Applicant community (city or county)	
Applicant coordinating program organization	
Project name	
Date submitted	
What year did the community become a Montana Main Street member?	

Application

Name of city or county	
Address including city, state and zip	
Applicant name (chief elected official – mayor, manager, administrator)	
Title	
Wet signature	
Phone	
Email	

Name of Main Street organization	
Address including city, state and zip	
Name of contact	
Title of contact	
Email of contact	
Phone number of contact	

Name of project partner	Organization	Support letter submitted? Yes or No

Strong applications will have a minimum of three support letters from different groups or organizations.

Project overview – 20 points Please provide a brief description of the proposed project (250 words or fewer).

Note: If the project includes historic building rehabilitation or a façade improvement, the applicant is strongly encouraged to contact the State Historic Preservation Office for guidance on maintaining the historic integrity of the structure.

Criteria questions – If the space provided is not sufficient, please use a Word document.
A. Project need and benefit (total 25 points)
1. What is the need for the proposed project in your community? 5 points
2. How was the project prioritized? 5 points

3. What are the anticipated outcomes of the proposed project – both immediate and long-term? 5 points
4. Please describe how this project implements a community plan, vision or community revitalization goal. 5 points

5. Please describe the local effort and support for the project. 5 points

Criteria Questions – If the space provided is not sufficient, please use a Word document.
B. Project readiness (total 15 points)
6. Describe how the applicant or subrecipient will implement the project. 5 points
7. Describe how you estimated the project cost. Strong applications will provide supporting materials such as bids or proposals. 5 points

8. **Briefly describe the availability of matching funds and an explanation of any funding gaps. If in-kind matches are provided, please include documentation of value as described in the application guidelines.**
   5 points

Project budget – Please list all funding sources for the project, the amount committed, whether the commitment is pending or firm and the source of the funds. Funding sources may include other grants, loans or cash on hand from partners. If in-kind match is proposed, please include documentation.	
Total grant request	**$**
Total estimated project cost	**$**

Project funding sources	Amount	Status: “pending,” “firm,” “grant,” “loan,” “in-kind” or “cash”

Project implementation schedule – Please provide a brief timeline of when the project will begin and conclude.	
Task	**Date – indicate the quarter and year**
Example	Quarter 1 – 2027
Project startup	
Contract with Commerce	
Selection of contractor	
Project implementation	
Project closeout	

Application Guidelines

Overview

The Montana Main Street Program is dedicated to bettering the economic, historic and cultural vitality of Montana downtowns through community development, revitalization and historic preservation. MMS will foster grassroots efforts through coordination and technical assistance, focused on a comprehensive approach to restoring healthy community commercial districts and preserving the historic structures that contribute to Montana's unique sense of place.

MMS Grant Program applications, grant application guidelines and other relevant information and resources are available on the Montana Department of Commerce's website.

All grants are dependent upon the availability of funding. The deadline for submitting grant applications for funding is **November 14, 2025.**

Award Amounts and Funds Criteria

Applicants must clearly document the need for the funds. Communities may not apply for funding while maintaining an active MMS Grant-funded project unless the active grant is in the closeout process. Maximum awards are dependent on available funding and can change from year to year.

A minimum local match of 1-to-5, $1 of local match for every $5 committed by the State, is required. While applicants are not required to document a secured match at the time of application, grantees must demonstrate firm commitment of funds from all other funding sources prior to contracting with Commerce. Up to 20% of the applicants' match may be in the form of in-kind services or labor with appropriate documentation of value. In-kind labor contributions are considered an eligible match at a rate of $20 per hour.

Application Submission

Grant applications are due to Commerce no later than 11:59 p.m. on Nov. 14, 2025. To apply for MMS Grant funds, eligible applicants must complete the application and submit the supplemental materials via the Montana Grant and Loan Portal. To submit your application through the Montana Grants and Loans Portal.

Alternative accessible formats of the application will be provided upon request. Commerce does not discriminate based on disability in admission to, access to or operation of its programs, services or activities. Therefore, individuals who need the application in an alternative format, or need to submit the application by other means, should contact the Community MT Division at 406-841-2770. Please provide as much advance notice as possible for these requests.

Eligible Applicants

An applicant must be an official member of the MMS Program, provide the annual recertification letter and have a signed participation and member agreement. Each member community may submit one application. Applications must have a certified letter from the local coordinating program that is on file with Commerce, if the applicant is not the local coordinating program.

The application must be certified by the applicable local government chief executive, mayor or city manager. MMS communities must be up to date on quarterly reporting at the time of application submission. Please connect with Commerce staff to discuss potential projects by emailing doccdd@mt.gov or calling 406-841-2770.

It is recommended that applicants reference Appendix A – Application Eligibility Screening Checklist before applying for the grant.

Select the Project Type (Check Only One)

☐ Implementation project – continue to Section A.

☐ Planning project – continue to Section B.

Section A. – Application Guidelines for an Implementation Project

Implementation projects are intended to support MMS communities' need for implementation dollars for projects to activate spaces for downtown revitalization. Emphasis will be placed on large and impactful projects, but funding may be awarded to a wide variety of community-prioritized projects. Preference will be given to projects linked to overall community revitalization efforts prioritized through planning or revitalization goals. Applicants should focus on projects involving real and immediate benefits and demonstrate a need for assistance.

1. Eligible Projects

Funds must be used for implementation projects in a Main Street community. Except for some administrative activities, funds may only reimburse eligible expenses incurred after the Governor Award Letter.

The following are examples of project activities:

- Wayfinding signage in accordance with a previously completed wayfinding plan
- Creation of a pocket park or pedestrian gathering space
- Placemaking improvements in the downtown area
- Façade improvements to buildings
- Streetscape implementation
- Aesthetic and safety improvements such as historic street or alleyway lighting
- Parklets, pedlets and other installations to activate additional spaces

2. Ineligible Expenses

- Advertising for specific businesses
- Entertainment and events
- Travel, lodging, food and drink
- Ongoing operations or general maintenance costs such as rent, utilities, personnel costs and personal expenditures
- Activities that do not deliver on the program objectives or are not related to the submitted proposal
- Documents including reports, studies and plans
- Any otherwise eligible project costs incurred prior to the date of announcement of Governor's Award Letter

Section B. – Application Guidelines for Planning Project

Planning grants are intended to support MMS communities' needs for studies and plans. Emphasis will be placed on large and impactful projects, but funding may be awarded to a wide variety of community-prioritized projects. Preference will be given to projects linked to overall community revitalization efforts through planning or revitalization goals. Applicants should focus on projects involving real and immediate benefits and demonstrate a need for assistance.

1. Eligible Projects

Funds must be used for planning projects in a Main Street community. Planning projects must better the economic, historic and cultural vitality of local downtowns through community development, revitalization and/or historic preservation. Funds may only reimburse eligible expenses incurred after the Governor Award Letter.

The following are examples of project activities:

- Long-range planning:
  - Growth policy development or update
  - Downtown master plan or update
  - Capital improvements plan
  - Strategic organizational planning
  - Board development training
  - Tax Increment Financing District creation
- Assessment studies:
  - Preliminary architectural reports
  - Architectural renderings
  - Tourism assessment
  - Business recruitment and/or retention plan
  - Business plan development
  - Historic preservation assessment and inventory
  - Wayfinding study and plan
  - Market research
  - Feasibility study
- Infrastructure and brick and mortar:
  - Public signage – e.g., historic district welcome sign/designation plan
  - Streetscape or public improvements plan – e.g., transportation plan, lighting district plan
  - Creation of a façade improvement program
- Promotion:
  - Website development
  - Branding

2. Ineligible Expenses

- Advertising for specific businesses
- Entertainment and events
- Travel, lodging, food and drink
- Ongoing operations or general maintenance costs such as rent, utilities, personnel costs and personal expenditures
- Activities that do not deliver on the program objectives or are not related to the submitted proposal
- Non-project related salaries or administrative costs excluding postage, in-state mileage costs and copy and printing costs associated with the administration of eligible planning grant activities
- Any otherwise eligible project costs incurred prior to the date of announcement of Governor's Award Letter

Appendix A

Application Eligibility Screening Checklist

Please fill out this checklist and submit it with the application.

Question	Yes	No
1. Are you an MMS community member? If you select no, you are not eligible.		
2. Does your community currently have an active MMS grant? If you select yes, you are not eligible.		
3. Has your community previously received an MMS grant? If you answer no, continue to question 4.		
Please describe the year and previous grants awarded by MMS in the box below.		
4. Has your application been certified by the applicable local government, chief executive, mayor or city manager?		
5. Is your community current with quarterly updates? If you select no, you are not eligible.		
6. Did you contact the MMS Program coordinator prior to applying? If yes, please also include the date of your email or phone call.		

7. If you are not the registered local coordinating program, did you provide a support letter from said program? If you select no, you are not eligible.		
8. Did you attach your annual recertification letter approving annual membership?		

If you have questions or need assistance preparing this form, please contact Commerce at doccdd@mt.gov or via phone at 406-841-2770.