

“How to Guide” for Writing a Tourism Grant Application

The Tourism Grant application is modeled after a simple business plan. While it's very straight forward, there are some questions that warrant special attention. This “How to Guide” provides hints on how to write a strong grant application. For help with the grant application, call or email:

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1. The project must be tourism related.

In the “Project Description” section of the application, clearly explain how the project falls within the tourism industry. Realistically forecast how it will increase nonresident visitation and expenditures, resulting in positive economic benefits for the community. The project must be of interest to the nonresident visitor as outlined in “Montana Destination Brand Research.” This research can be found at: <http://marketmt.com/Programs/Marketing/Research>

2. The Tourism Grant Policy states that priority will be given to projects that:

- Clearly define how the project will be marketed once complete.
- Have been identified as key tourism projects in a professionally-conducted community master planning process.
- Are supported by one or more of the following tourism partners: an official Montana Tourism Region, Convention and Visitors Bureau, or Tourism Advisory Council.

The grant review committee will prescreen and rank applications based on responses to these priority issues. Applications will not be disqualified if they fail to address these items, but they will not be given priority in the review process.

3. The budget must itemize the cost of the project as defined in the “Project Description.”

Example: A facility needs a new roof, HVAC system and ADA accessible restroom. The budget must detail the cost of:

- Roofing – demolition, supplies, materials, construction
- HVAC – unit cost, installation
- Restroom – supplies, materials, construction

For each line item cost, applicant must clearly indicate grant and applicant cash match of the total cost (example below uses 2 to 1 match). The application budget will be used for audit purposes when requesting grant fund reimbursement. If grant funding is requested for an activity not listed in the budget, a grantee will not be reimbursed.

	Bed Tax Reinvestment Grant	Applicant Match	Total
Demolition	\$1,000	\$500	\$1,500
Supplies	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$3,000
Materials	\$4,000	\$2,000	\$6,000
Grand Total	\$7,000	\$3,500	\$10,500

4. Project budget must be based on realistic professional estimates.

Applicant must solicit a professional estimate for the scope of the project and the budget must be based on that estimate. Grant funds can't be used for preliminary reports or professional project estimates; however, an application's success partially depends on a realistic budget. Projects must be "shovel ready" and completed within one year from the date of the signed contract.

5. SMART

- *Specific* - Clearly define how the project will increase nonresident visitation and expenditures.
- *Measurable* - Identify targets and milestones to track progress.
- *Achievable* - The goal can be successfully attained given the project environment.
- *Relevant* – The goal fits with your business model.
- *Traceable* - Identify a specific period of time for the goal.

If a project is awarded grant funding, the grantee will be asked to provide a report detailing how the SMART criteria was met. Applicants must be precise and realistic in setting goals for their project.

For tourism-related research or help understanding your community's target market, call or go to:

- Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research - itr.uvm.edu/
- Montana's Tourism Regions and CVBs - marketmt.com/TourismRegionsCVBs
- Tourism Advisory Council - marketmt.com/TourismAdvisoryCouncil