



## **Year One Pilot Community Tourism Program - Enhance Community Online Presence Grant**

**Announcement Date:** Thursday, May 1, 2025

**Applications Due:** 5 PM, Wednesday, May 31, 2025

**Award Announcements:** June 17, 2025

**Grow Garfield County Mission Statement:** Grow Garfield County enhances and protects our resources by fostering community pride, supporting local businesses, and driving sustainable tourism growth through impactful projects and responsible development.

### **ABOUT THE PROGRAM**

Grow Garfield County is a community-driven initiative dedicated to enhancing and protecting the county's resources. Through impactful projects and responsible development, it fosters community pride, supports local businesses, and drives sustainable tourism growth.

In 2024, Grow Garfield County was awarded funding through the Montana Department of Commerce's Pilot Community Tourism Grant Program (PCTGP). This state-funded initiative, authorized by the Montana Legislature (SB-540), is designed to help communities increase economic vibrancy, strengthen tourism infrastructure, and develop regional tourism strategies sustainably and responsibly. The program provides funding to enhance tourism-related assets, support local businesses, and foster collaboration to promote long-term economic growth.

### **Program Goals**

The Grow Garfield County Pilot Community Tourism Grant Program is designed to:

- **Improve the county's visibility as a tourist destination** by strengthening the online presence of local businesses and organizations.
- **Support economic development** by helping businesses and nonprofits reach new audiences, attract visitors, and increase revenue.
- **Encourage collaboration among local stakeholders** to build a shared vision for sustainable tourism and community revitalization.
- **Ensure long-term benefits** by creating digital tools and resources to enhance visitor experiences and support businesses beyond the grant period.

As part of this effort, Grow Garfield County has allocated **\$60,000 in grant funding** to support businesses and nonprofits in improving their **digital presence and marketing efforts**, making it easier for visitors to discover and engage with Garfield County's unique offerings.

#### **A. Eligible Applicants**

Funds are available to businesses and nonprofits in Garfield County.

- Businesses must be registered with the Secretary of State of Montana.

- Nonprofit organizations must be in good standing with the Secretary of State and provide documentation of their 501(c)3 status.

## **B. Ineligible Applicants**

- This program is intended for economic development activities undertaken by Garfield County businesses and nonprofits that are tourism-related and can demonstrate how they will contribute to the goals of the Grow Garfield County Pilot Tourism Community Grant Program.

## **C. Funding Availability**

- Applicants may request a maximum of \$10,000
- Funds are disbursed to awardees on a REIMBURSEMENT basis.
- Projects must be completed in 12 months; if awarded, brief quarterly progress reports to the Grow Garfield County committee will be required.
- Actual grant awards may be less than requested. For this reason, Grow Garfield County 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.

## **D. Eligible Tourism Projects**

Examples are, but not limited to:

### **Website Development & Enhancement:**

- Creating or upgrading a mobile-friendly website showcasing a business or nonprofit's services, tourism offerings, and contact details.
- Add visitor-focused content, such as an FAQ section, an interactive map of attractions, a trip planner, or travel tips for exploring Garfield County.
- Developing search engine optimized (SEO) content that highlights local experiences and ranks better on Google searches.
- Embedding a booking system for tours, accommodations, or events, making it easier for visitors to plan trips.

### **Social Media & Digital Marketing**

- Establishing or enhancing social media pages (Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, TikTok) to engage potential visitors.
- Creating short-form video content (30–60-second clips) promoting Garfield County's key attractions, businesses, and events.
- Running targeted online advertising campaigns to reach potential visitors in key markets.
- Implement a social media content calendar to keep tourism-related content fresh and engaging.

### **Local Business Listings & Online Reputation Management**

- Claiming and optimizing Google Business Profiles for local businesses, ensuring accurate hours, location, and contact information.
- Improving TripAdvisor and Yelp listings, ensuring up-to-date photos, descriptions, and responses to customer reviews.
- Setting up automated review request systems to encourage customer feedback and engagement.

### **QR Code & Digital Guide Initiatives**

- Developing QR code-based marketing materials that link to websites, menus, local guides, or event calendars.

- Creating a self-guided digital tour of Garfield County's historic, scenic, or business attractions using QR codes at key locations.
- Implementing a digital visitor information hub, providing real-time updates on local businesses, events, and attractions.

#### **Content Creation & Branding**

- Developing a county-wide visitor branding campaign (i.e., "Montana's Hidden Gem for Adventure").
- Designing professional tourism photography and video assets for digital and print marketing.
- Launching a Garfield County tourism blog featuring itineraries, local business spotlights, and visitor testimonials.

If you have questions regarding eligible activities, please email Christine Weder at [clweder@yahoo.com](mailto:clweder@yahoo.com)

#### **E. Ineligible Activities**

Examples of activities that will not be funded:

- Reimbursement for activities completed before award.
- Reimbursement for activities not related to the contract scope of work.
- Duplicative reimbursement for activities receiving funding for the same activities through any other local, state, or federal grant or funding program, except as necessary to fully fund the project.
- Reimbursement of wages and salary for business or nonprofit owners or staff.

If you have questions regarding eligible activities, please email Christine Weder at [clweder@yahoo.com](mailto:clweder@yahoo.com)

#### **F. Match Requirement**

No match is required from applicants.

#### **G. Application Review Process**

**RECEIPT OF APPLICATION**—Once submitted, each application is assessed for completeness and clarity. During the review process, the applicant may be contacted to request additional information to aid the evaluation process.

**REVIEW**— Great Northern Development Corporation staff are assisting Grow Garfield County with reviewing and ranking applications. The Review Committee consists of business and tourism professionals located outside Garfield County and without connections to Garfield County businesses, nonprofits, or Grow Garfield County committee members. Reviewers will sign a conflict of interest disclosure form. They will then independently score and submit their ranking sheets. The scores will be averaged and ranked by Great Northern Development Corporation staff, then submitted to the Grow Garfield County Online Presence sub-grant committee to make final funding recommendations. The Grow Garfield County committee will adopt the final slate of awards.

**NOTICE OF AWARD** - Grow Garfield County will make award notifications no later than 30 days after the application due date.

## H. Application Review Criteria

Below is the criteria reviewers will use to rank applications. This is provided to applicants as informational only (applicants do not need to complete this section).

Criteria	Description	Points
<b>Project Relevance &amp; Impact</b>	How well does the proposed project align with the goals of Grow Garfield County and the PCTGP? Will it impact the applicant's digital presence in a way that supports tourism growth in Garfield County?	0-10 _____
<b>Project Plan &amp; Readiness</b>	Is the project clearly described, with a specific goal/goals, timeline, and activities? Can the project be reasonably completed within 12 months?	0-10 _____
<b>Budget &amp; Use of Funds</b>	Is the budget clear and reasonable? Are the requested funds being used for eligible, impactful activities?	0-10 _____
<b>Sustainability &amp; Commitment</b>	Has the applicant described how the project will be maintained or built upon after the grant ends? Is there a commitment to long-term visibility and marketing?	0-10 _____

Total points possible: 40

### Resources:

- Montana Nonprofit Association offers a "Partners for Good" Directory of businesses, vendors, and consultants at <https://members.mtnonprofit.org/directory>. On this site, select the "Partners for Good" directory, then filter by category -> "Website."
- Destination Development Garfield County Tourism Assessment by Roger Brooks: <https://assets.zyrosite.com/mk3DXzXwVQipL9kl/garfield-county-assessment-report-roger-brooks-low-Yleqa4R5l6cvEbkP.pdf>

**Applications may be submitted online at**

**<https://form.jotform.com/251137586342155>**

**or**

**mailed to Great Northern Development Corporation % Tori Matejovsky at 233 Cascade St., Wolf Point, MT 59201.**

**APPLICATIONS ARE DUE NO LATER THAN 5:00 PM ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 31, 2025**



## Digital Presence and Marketing Grant Application

Business/Nonprofit Name:

Business/Nonprofit Address:

Contact Name:

Contact Phone:

Contact email:

Amount Requested for Project:

Expected Project Completion Date (no later than June 1, 2026):

### Program Goals

The Grow Garfield County Pilot Community Tourism Grant Program is designed to:

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- Support economic development by helping businesses and nonprofits reach new audiences, attract visitors, and increase revenue.
- Encourage collaboration among local stakeholders to build a shared vision for sustainable tourism and community revitalization.
- Ensure long-term benefits by creating digital tools and resources to enhance visitor experiences and support businesses beyond the grant period.

**1. Briefly describe the proposed project, including need, business goals, and how the project aligns with the Grow Garfield County Pilot Community Tourism Grant Program goals.**

**2. Describe how you will implement the project, including specific activities and timelines (max project length - 12 months):**

3. **Identify sources of financial support for ongoing operating costs and maintenance for this project. Please be as specific as possible and identify any other funding sources you may be utilizing:**
4. **Provide a brief project budget: Please outline how you plan to use the grant funds. If you have estimates or quotes, you may include them as attachments. (This is not required, but it is recommended.)**

**Completing the Application:**

Make sure you do ALL of these things. Please double check your application.

- ☐ Did you provide contact information for the business or nonprofit?
- ☐ Did you answer the four questions to the best of your ability?
- ☐ If applicable, did you upload project cost estimates or quotes?
- ☐ If applicable, did you include evidence of 501(c)(3) status?