



## Digital Presence and Marketing Grant Review Criteria & Scoring

Reviewers will be provided with the following information to guide their decision-making process:

- Roger Brooks Assessment Report
- Pilot Community Tourism Grant Program scope of work and purpose
- Grow Garfield County Mission and Vision statement

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 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 Score: \_\_\_\_/40

**Reviewers: Please check one of the following**

- Fund the full amount requested
- Fund partial amount (reviewer can include recommended award amount: \$\_\_\_\_\_)
- Do not fund

**Reviewer Comments:**



## **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

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."

**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**

**Jot Form Access code (to encrypt data): VKW@qDEbhTxr5Ee**

## **SCORING CRITERIA:**

### **Considerations for your review process:**

- How many people will you need to review grant proposals?
  - Propose 3-5 Reviewers from out of area
- Will any or all of these people need specific expertise?
  - Tourism
  - Business development
  - Community development
  - Website/social media
- How will they be compensated?
  - Need to discuss with committee
- How much time will they need to dedicate to you?
  - 5-10 hours (depends on the number of applicants)
- Where will your reviewers be located? Will they be remote?
  - Remote; will gather via zoom to make final decisions
- What kind of training will your reviewers require?
  - Review report from Roger Brooks
  - Review GGCo mission and PCTGP scope of work

### **Suggestions:**

- Rachel Mullen - MDOC Tourism
- Carla Hunsley - MRCT
- Lisa Koski - Glasgow Chamber of Commerce
- Dax Schieffer - Voices of MT Tourism
- Miranda Gilbert - Girl Geek media
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### **Considerations for your review process:**

- How many rounds of review will you require?
  - One - external review committee
- How will you minimize bias during your process?
  - Reviewers from outside the community/county will be selected. Reviewers will be asked to disclose potential conflicts of interest prior to review of applications. The sub-committee will determine if potential conflicts will require the reviewer to be replaced.
- How long will this process take?
  - 1-2 months
- Will you share review comments or notes with your grant applicants?
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- How will you determine the final decision?
  - Step 1: Applications will be reviewed (by Christine) for completeness - all contact information and responses to all questions must be filled in
  - Step 2: Outside review committee scores and ranks applications. Recommendations for funding will depend on the number of applications received and total amount of funds requested.

- Step 3: The Subgrant committee will accept review committee recommendations for funding and determine final funding amounts based on the recommendations. The Subgrant committee will recommend awardees to the full board for acceptance.
- Step 4: Full board moves to accept final recommendations for funding

<b>April 14, 2025 - May 12, 2025</b>	<b>Application Accepted - via email to <a href="mailto:clweder@yahoo.com">clweder@yahoo.com</a> or completed online at:</b>
<b>May 13 - May 26, 2025</b>	<b>Rank and review of applications, recommendation of award</b>
<b>June 2, 2025</b>	<b>Grow Garfield County steering committee final decision</b>
<b>June 3, 2025</b>	<b>Announcement of awards - letters sent</b>
<b>June 3, 2025 - June 1, 2026</b>	<b>Award letters sent, awards announced in press release, and contracts executed by all parties</b>

Year Two: Community Sub-Grant Program: \$776,000

Focus: Business Enhancement

- Goal - storefront, signage for your business
- Infrastructure?

**- Destination development and infrastructure upgrades**

- Establishing new or improving existing campgrounds, expanding rental features like small cabins and/or RV Parks with upgraded amenities like electrical hookups, 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)
- WILL THIS PAY FOR TRAVEL TO TOURISM SHOWS?
  - Discuss as ineligible Wages, meals, transportation, lodging, and mileage reimbursements.
  -
- Improved ADA accessibility at existing locations
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- Ineligible:
  - Land and livestock purchases.

**Match Requirement**

Qualified applicants must demonstrate a combination of cash, equipment, and in-kind match of actual and committed money invested in the proposed project. Reasonable in-kind services, in-kind labor, and/or volunteer hours, as well as committed cash, are eligible for the match requirement. However, a cash match must be no less than 50% of the match required. For example, an applicant requesting a \$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.

## Tribal Tourism Small Business Grant Program

The purpose of the Tribal Tourism Small Business Grant is to increase economic opportunities in the tribal tourism industry by encouraging the development, success, and expansion of Native-owned small businesses. As the designated seventh tourism region in Montana, Indian Country's tribal tourism program objectives, goals, strategies, and metrics focus on elevating the brand, expanding opportunities, and inspiring visitation to the eight tribal nations.

The Indian Country tourism activity functions are administered by the Montana Department of Commerce (§ 90-1-104, MCA), to advance tourism development priorities for Montana's Tribes through funding under the Tribal Tourism as authorized by the 68th Montana Legislature in 2023, Senate Bill 540, Section 90-1-122(1)(b) MCA.

Enrolled tribal citizens of a Montana tribe, 18 years old or older, will select one tribal tourism activity for up to **\$10,000 in grant funding**, to start or expand their business, with no match requirement. Awardees will have two years to complete their project, starting May 2025 and completing by May 2027. Awardees will be provided opportunities for trainings periodically to assist with the success of their business, including promotional resources from Montana's Department of Commerce Tribal Tourism Program.

- Native American Made in Montana (NAMIM) products for retail sale
- Hosting Accommodations or Experiences (Vacation rental, tours, etc.)
- Licensed Outfitter or Guide (hunting, fishing)
- Licensed Food and/or Beverage Vendor, or Small Grocery
- Supplier or Service Provider supporting Tribal Tourism businesses or events

Awardees will utilize grant funds to purchase equipment, building materials, inventory, supplies, signage, branding, and other business expenses outlined in the guidelines.

NOTE: Required attachments are found in the "Application Form" tab. Applicants are advised to preview the all the attachments, including reading the guidelines before applying. Be sure to save work frequently, and resave attachments with a unique name, such as your name or business name to assist in the review of your submission. Click APPLY to start the application. The application form can be copied and pasted into a word document for offline use. For questions contained in the on-line application that require a long-form answer, it is recommended to draft answers in a separate word document, then copy and paste them into the application form as needed. This method should make completing the application easier and less time consuming. Applicants may also attach supplemental materials to demonstrate elements of their business plan, that may not fit sufficiently into the application fields. If you have questions, please email [DOCTribal@mt.gov](mailto:DOCTribal@mt.gov).

SELECT THE TYPE OF BUSINESS CATEGORY THAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR BUSINESS

- Native American Made in Montana (NAMIM) products for retail sale

- Hosting Accommodations or Experiences (Vacation rental, tours, etc)
- Licensed Outfitter or Guide (hunting, fishing)
- Licensed Food and/or Beverage Vendor, or Small Grocery
- Supplier or Service Provider supporting Tribal Tourism Businesses or events

Contact info\_\_\_\_\_

Social Media\_\_\_\_\_

EMERGENCY CONTACT\_\_\_\_\_

1. ARE YOU AN ENROLLED MEMBER
2. I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE GUIDELINES
  - a. WHICH MONTANA TRIBE ARE YOU ENROLLED WITH?
3. IS THIS A NEW BUSINESS? IF YES, GO TO QUESTION 6 . IF NO, GO TO QUESTION4 & 5 .
4. APPROXIMATELY WHAT MONTH AND YEAR DID YOU START YOUR BUSINESS?
5. ARE YOU CURRENTLY REGISTERED AND IN GOOD STANDING WITH THE MONTANA SECRETARY OF STATE AND/OR TERO DEPARTMENT.
6. WHAT IS, OR WHAT WILL BE, THE NAME OF YOUR BUSINESS?
7. IS YOUR CURRENT OR NEW BUSINESS: (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)
  - a. SEASONAL OPERATION ONLY.
  - b. MOBILE OR POP UP BUSINESS WITH NO PERMANENT LOCATION OF OPERATION.
  - c. ONE LOCATION, BRICK AND MOTOR, COMMERCIAL LEASE SPACE OR OWNED PROPERT YOU OWN.
  - d. ONE LOCATION, VACATION RENTAL ON PROPERTY YOU OWN.
  - e. ONE LOCATION. GROWN IN MONTANA, PRODUCTS OR SERVICES.
  - f. EVENT BASED BUSINES, VARIABLE LOCATIONS AND HOURS OF OPERATION.
  - g. OPERATES ACROSS THE STATE, ON AND OFF TRIBAL LANDS.

8. Where is your business headquartered and your business contact information: (complete all fields)

- a. Business Email
- b. Business Phone number
- c. Business address
- d. Business City
- e. Business State
- f. Business Zip

10. Amount requested

11. Please provide a brief summary of your tribal tourism business: (1000 words or less)

12. . Please provide a proposed timeline, from May 2025 to May 2027, for your business activities related to this grant.

2000 words, please answer each numbered question in your response.

- 1. What are the business activities to be undertaken?
- 2. Who is responsible for each activity?
- 3. When will each activity begin? (approximate date)
- 4. How long will each activity take to complete? (estimate number of hours, days, or months)
- 5. What are the items, materials, and services you need to purchase?
- 6. How much does each purchase cost?
- 7. How did you determine what you should buy, and why you should buy it?
- 8. What is the business purpose, use, or function of each purchase or business expense?
- 9. How much time will it take to secure each purchase and how do you expect to receive or obtain the items and/or services?
- 10. When do you anticipate you will complete each activity building your business in order to be ready to open, or to expand your business, with this use of this funding?

13. Please outline any concerns you have, or additional assistance you may need to ensure the success of your business. (1000 words)

14. What do you plan to accomplish with this funding? Your answer must clearly demonstrate how this funding will directly benefit your family or community through a new or expanded business. (300 words)

15. Will your business generate overnight stays in or near your community?

16. Will your business create additional jobs?

17. Identify the metrics that you will use to measure the benefits that your business has on the community, event, or tribal tourism industry, and please describe them.

18. Please describe how your business educates customers and the general public about your tribe and/or tribal tourism in Montana. (300 words).

19. Demonstrate how your business diversifies or enhances existing businesses in your area or Montana. (300 words)

**Knowledge / Partnerships / Marketing / Long-Term Development:**

20. How will you market or advertise your business? (500 words)

21. Who is your target customer? (200 words)

22. Who are your community partners or relationships that strengthen or contribute to your business success and how do they do so? (500 words)

23. What are the long-term goals of your business? (300 words)

**Applicant Acknowledgement:**

To the best of my knowledge and belief, the information contained in and submitted with this application is true and correct and the governing body of the applicant has authorized this application to be submitted.

The applicant will comply with all applicable laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination, including on the basis of race, sex, religion, national origin, age or handicap.

The applicant will comply with all federal, state and community licenses, permits, laws, and regulations.

The applicant acknowledges and agrees that any information they submit to the Department may be subject to public disclosure under Montana's Public Records Act.

The applicant acknowledges and agrees that submitting false or misleading information in connection with this application will result with the application being found disqualified for consideration from this funding opportunity.

**Attachment Section:**

Please attach all required materials and those relevant to your application:

- Legible copy of Tribal ID, enrollment, and/or Certified Indian Blood (CIB) Form, and proof of current address (*required*)
- For existing business, proof of good standing with the Montana Secretary of State and/or TERO Department
- Business plan (*required*)
- Profit and loss spreadsheet or budget (*required*)
- Marketing plan, logo and branding, marketing materials
- Business location, schematics, sketches of ideas, photos

- Signage and display
- List of equipment, inventory, tools
- Research regarding purchases you intend to make with grant funds

<b>October 1 through November 30, 2024</b>	<b>ServiceNow Grant Application Portal open for applications</b>
<b>December 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024</b>	<b>Rank and review of applications, recommendation of award to Director and Governor</b>
<b>January 1 through March 1, 2025</b>	<b>Director and Governor finalize awards, contract drafting</b>
<b>March 1 through April 1, 2025</b>	<b>Contract legal review and award letter drafting</b>
<b>April 1 through May 1, 2025</b>	<b>Award letters sent, awards announced in press release, and contracts executed by all parties</b>