Helena Event Grant

We are pleased you are interested in applying for Visit Helena's Event Grant. Please use this form for guidance when seeking grants over $1,500. For a lesser amount request, please contact us regarding other opportunities.

DESCRIPTION

Visit Helena's Tourism Grant is open to businesses, non-profits, and event organizers to assist with monetary funding to launch and grow new events in the greater Helena, Montana region. The tourism grant seeks applicants looking to develop and grow multi-day events that promote Helena's outdoor recreation, history, or arts and culture. The grant program encourages applicants to utilize funding toward event marketing and promotion to attract visitors from across Montana and further.

Visit Helena supports all the community members in Helena, Montana. The organization commits to building a stronger future by incorporating Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in all its actions/activities. We commit to promoting Equity, Diversity, and inclusion throughout its programs. The organization will not support events, businesses, or community members that promote violence, divisive behavior, or exclusivity.

GOALS

- ✓ To fund events that attract new and returning visitors to lengthen their stay in the Helena area.
- ✓ To fund events that promote an inclusive community.
- ✓ To fund events that help grow the local economy through resident and visitor spending.
- ✓ To fund events that promote Helena's community values as an outdoor recreation, historical, and cultural town.

HOW IT'S FUNDED

These funds are made available through Visit Helena via area lodging partners. For every occupied room night, guests are assessed $4.00 which stays in Helena to aid in tourism promotion of the community as a tourism destination.

The Business Improvement District Law Montana Code Annotated 2007, 7-12-1101 through 7-12-1144 as amended, is for the funding of all uses and projects for tourism promotion within Helena as specified in the Helena TBID budget.

GUIDELINES & DEADLINES

There is no set number of grants that may be awarded in any fiscal year. However, the total dollar amount of grant funds awarded may not exceed the total amount of funds allotted each year by the Visit Helena Board. To date, Visit Helena has funded grants of up to $15,000.

EXISTING EVENTS

- Winter (November – May)
  - Application Opening: July 1, 2026
  - Application Deadline: August 30, 2026, by 5 pm MST
- Summer (July – October)
  - Application Opening: December 1, 2026
  - Application Deadline: January 31, 2027, by 5 pm MST

NEW EVENTS

- OPEN but at least 120 days prior to the proposed event.

FUNDING DISTRIBUTION

Before grants can be awarded, recipients are required to sign an agreement. The agreement must be returned within 10 business days of submission. Fund distribution schedule: [**50-50**]:

- **50%** of the grant will be awarded within 30 business days of Board approval and returned signed agreement.
- The remaining **50%** distributed when a complete Post Event Report is received, approved, and all other criteria are met.

FUTURE FUNDING

Funds should be viewed as money to assist with events in the formative years and should not be viewed as a guaranteed continuous source of funding. Applicants will not be guaranteed funding after the first year of the award and will need to reapply in subsequent years.

Other

1. Funding will not be retroactive. (i.e.: Visit Helena will not pay for advertising/promotions/obligations/ other contracted items for or by the event prior to granting being awarded).
2. If the grant is awarded and the event fails to happen or is canceled, full repayment of the grant is expected within 30 days of the proposed event date or legal repercussions may be enforced.
3. Other rules, regulations, policies, and procedures pertaining to this grant are at the sole discretion of Visit Helena.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Any organization or individual presenting an event that supports Visit Helena grant goals are eligible to apply for funding. Applying organizations or individuals must be prepared to meet the following criteria:

- Provide a **marketing plan, budget** (forms available), and an **event planning timeline** with your application.
- Non-profits, private businesses, and event organizers are all eligible to apply.
- Provide proof of dollar-for-dollar match for the requested grant funds. ○ Vendor fees, entrance fees, and sponsorships all apply.
- Provide proof of insurance to host the event.
- Post-Survey is completed and returned to Visit Helena within 30 days of the event.
- Communication with hotels regarding room blocks and rates must begin with the Visit Helena Program & Event Manager .

ELIGIBLE FUNDING & CRITERIA

If Eligibility requirements are satisfied and event organizers are approved for funding, the grant funds can be utilized on the following items:

- Digital Advertising & Marketing – Social Media, Google, Search, Placed Digital Ads, Website Advertising
- Content & Asset Collection – Hiring photographer, videographer, or creative agency for future advertising.
- Print Advertising & Marketing – Print Ads, Banners, Flyers, Postcards, Mailers, etc.
- POP, Giveaway items (No Cash) – Any items purchased to give to attendees the Visit Helena logo MUST be Included
- Radio & TV Ads
- Ineligible use of funds: Operations, Salary, Venue Fees, Cash Awards, Alcohol, or Permits

**Documentation of receipts may be asked upon completion of the post-survey report. If found to misuse funds, Visit Helena has the authorization to request grant funding be paid back in full.*

General Advertising

1. The words "Helena, Montana" shall appear on all printed and digital materials except when the event is advertised within Montana. In that case, just the word "Helena" should appear.
2. Include the following information on the event website:
    a. Visit Helena web site www.helenamt.com
    b. Visit Helena logo (official artwork will be supplied)
    c. Acknowledgement of grant on collateral: "Produced with support from Visit Helena" 3.

    Event website and attendee communications **must** include a link to Visit Helena's Stay Page. https://helenamt.com/explore/stay/#all
4. A Visit Helena banner prominently hung at the event location for the duration of the event. Banner placement should be reflective of title sponsorship and visible to all event attendees. (Visit Helena banner will be supplied)

Print Advertising

a) Please submit copies of print ads in the post-survey report.

Online/Digital Advertising

a) Clicks from all online ads shall be monitored with the ability to report the statistics.
b) Please submit copies of digital advertising in the post-survey report.

Television and Radio Advertising

a) When appropriate, the words "Helena, Montana" shall be stated on all audio tracks.
b) A copy of any invoices and audio/video transcripts be submitted in final reporting.
c) Television advertising shall include the Visit Helena logo.

Marketing Assistance

1. Visit Helena may assist the event with press release preparation and distribution.
2. Visit Helena will post about the event on "Visit Helena" social media and www.helenamt.com/events.
3. Visit Helena will share event information with Downtown Helena Inc. for the opportunity to be promoted within their member businesses to welcome out-of-town participants to Helena.
4. Visit Helena will share event information with the Helena Chamber of Commerce for the opportunity to be included on community calendar emails to member businesses to welcome out-of-town participants to Helena.
5. Visit Helena may share event information with any other relevant partners for distribution.

POST-EVENT REPORTING

Grant recipients must provide a wrap-up report and samples of produced marketing to the Visit Helena staff upon completion (within 30 business days of the event end date) via e-mail. Any delay could affect future funding. A postevent reporting template can be requested at any time.
To obtain final payment from the awarded grant, the Post Event Report should include, but is not limited to the following:

- Total number of local event participants and spectators (number of attendees, delegates, or visitors not staying overnight)
- The Total number of out-of-town event participants with information regarding their stay:
    - Hotel
    - Short-Term Rental/Vacation Rental
    - Camping
    - Friend/Family

- Post Event Survey results - sent to out-of-town event attendees: ○ What were the highlights of your visit to Helena? ○ What would have made your Helena visit better? ○ Will you return to Helena? If not, why? ○ Total estimated cost of your trip (gas, lodging, food, etc)
- Estimated total economic impact that the event had on Helena.
- Digital Marketing performance report, detailing target marketing, CTR, impressions, and engagement.
- Other ideas, comments, and relevant materials for Visit Helena reference.

The report must be received via e-mail no later than 30 days after your event's end date. If the report is received past the deadline Visit Helena has the right to withhold up to 25% of the final payment.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Step One: Eligible applicants must complete the grant application at https://helenamt.com/helena-montana-tourismgrant-form/

Step Two: The Visit Helena Program & Event Manager will review all applications for eligibility and score. Applications that do not meet all the criteria are incomplete, do not include required event documents, or are received past the deadline listed above will automatically be disqualified and will be notified thereof.

Step Three: All qualified applications will then be submitted to the TBID Board of Directors for review after scoring. All applications that score a minimum of 60 points will be given the opportunity for an interview with the TBID Board of Directors and will be contacted by Visit Helena.

Step Four: Applicants are encouraged to make themselves available for the interviews at the next TBID Board of Directors meeting following the application deadline, which occurs on the second Wednesday of every month at 1:30 pm in Reeder's Alley Conference Center. If applicants cannot attend, Visit Helena asks that a written statement is submitted to be presented.

Decision: After applicant interviews have been conducted, the TBID Board of Directors will deliberate to select successful grant requests. An HTA staff member will contact each applicant to inform them of the outcome.

APPLICATION SCORING

Each application will be scored using identical criteria and can earn a maximum of 120 points. The point distribution is as follows:

- Maximum 30 Points - Amount of new room nights generated
- Maximum 25 Points - Application responses
- Maximum 25 Points - Budget
- Maximum 10 Points - New event
- Maximum 25 Points - Marketing Plan
- Maximum 5 Points - Event Planning Timeline

CONTACT

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