



TBID GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

We are pleased you are interested in applying for Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) funding. Please use this form for guidance when seeking grants over \$1,500. For a lesser amount request, please contact us regarding other opportunities.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this program is to increase visitation and support Helena’s lodging partners. Other partners such as local retailers, restaurateurs, transportation businesses, and tourism attractions also benefit from increased visitation. The execution of Helena Tourism Alliance (HTA) grant funding must be in line with the Tourism Business Improvement District's (TBID) mission to generate room nights for lodging facilities in the City of Helena, Montana by effectively marketing the region as a preferred travel destination.

GOALS

- ✓ To fund events that generate NEW hotel room nights, preferably in value season months (October-April).
- ✓ To fund events that reach potential visitors outside of Helena, preferably 100+ miles.
- ✓ To fund events that have potential to increase the number of visitors or to extend the visitors stay.
- ✓ To fund events that economically benefit the Helena community and Visit Helena tourism partners.

HOW IT'S FUNDED

These funds are made available through the Helena TBID via area lodging partners. For every occupied room night, guests are assessed \$2.00 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. Revenue collected from this assessment must be used for activities and expenditures designed to increase tourism, events, rallies and convention business.

NUMBER OF GRANTS AWARDED

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 TBID Board.

To date, the TBID has awarded grant funds as small as \$500 and as large as \$5,000 per event.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

EXISTING EVENTS

- January 31st by 5pm MST: For events taking place the following May - September (summer events).
- June 30th by 5pm MST: For events taking place the following October - April (winter events).

NEW EVENTS

- OPEN but at least 90 days prior to the proposed event.



ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Any organization or individual presenting an event that supports the Helena Tourism Alliance (HTA) grant purpose and goals is eligible to apply for funding. Applying organizations or individuals must be prepared to meet the following criteria:

- Provide proof of dollar for dollar match for the requested grant funds.
- Proven ability to generate, track and report hotel room nights and economic impact of the event.
- Prove 75% of the committed new hotel room nights listed on the application realized in order to receive the final 25% of grant funds, which can be withheld.
- Provide a basic marketing plan, budget (forms available), and an event planning timeline with your application.
- Existing events must submit event history, including number of hotel rooms booked and prior attendance.
- Communication with hotels regarding hotel arrangements and room blocks must begin with the Visit Helena Sales Manager.

ELIGIBLE FUNDING & CRITERIA

Applicants that meet the eligibility requirements above may be awarded funding based upon:

1. A proven or qualified ability to generate, track, and report hotel/motel room nights and economic impact to Helena
2. Available resources of HTA

Approved projects must agree to follow the rules and regulations set forth by HTA as outlined below:

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 print/digital projects:
 - 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 an "Accommodations" page or section providing direct links to all chosen Helena TBID hotels.
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)
5. All marketing investments must be placed outside Helena to encourage potential visitors from surrounding areas to stay a night or longer at a Helena lodging facilities. For instance, a newspaper advertisement placed in a community outside a 100-mile radius of Helena would potentially boost overnight visitation more compared to the same advertisement in a newspaper in a town 25 miles away from Helena.



Print Advertising

- a) All print ads shall be coded to provide a means of evaluation through inquiry tracking.
- b) Copies of ads and original invoices must be provided.

Online/Digital Advertising

- a) Clicks from all online ads shall be monitored with the ability to report the statistics.

Television and Radio Advertising

- a) When appropriate, the words "Helena, Montana" shall be stated on all audio tracks produced which include speaking - except when event is advertised within Montana. In that case, just the word "Helena" needs to be included.
- b) An affidavit of media buy shall be on file at the organization upon completion of the project.
- c) A copy of the audio/video tape shall be on file at the organization.
- d) Television advertising shall include the Visit Helena logo.

Marketing Assistance

1. HTA may assist event with press release preparation and distribution.
2. HTA will post on event on "Visit Helena" social media and www.helenamt.com.
3. HTA will share event information with Downtown Helena for the opportunity to be promoted within their membership businesses to welcome out of town participants to Helena.
4. HTA will share event information with 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. HTA may share event information with any other relevant partners for distribution.

Other

1. Regardless of where an applicant is headquartered or physically located, 100% of the funding received from HTA must be in support of programs or events providing a measurable benefit to the assessed hotels within the city of Helena.
2. Funding will not be retroactive. (i.e.: HTA will not pay for advertising/promotions/obligations/other contracted items for or by the event prior to grant being awarded).
3. If grant is awarded and the event fails to happen or is cancelled, full repayment of the grant is expected within 30 days of the proposed event date or legal repercussions may be enforced.
4. Other rules, regulations, policies, and procedures pertaining to this grant are at the sole discretion of Visit Helena.

POST EVENT REPORTING

Grant recipients must provide a wrap-up report and samples of produced pieces to the Visit Helena staff upon completion (within 30 business days of event end date) via e-mail. Any delay could affect future funding.



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)
- Total number of out of town event participants and spectators (number of attendees, delegates or visitors staying at least one night)
- A detailed list of each lodging partner utilized and how many room nights they received
- Post Event Survey results - sent to out-of-town event attendees (we suggest using SurveyMonkey):
 - 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 (totals from survey results or figured from total Room Nights x ADR)
- Other ideas, comments, relevant materials for HTA reference

The report must be received via e-mail no later than 30 days after your event end date. If the report is received past the deadline, and/or if 75% of the committed new hotel room nights are not realized, the final grant funds may be withheld.

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.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Step One: Eligible applicants must complete the standard grant application form found at <https://helenamt.com/rfp-request/>. An e-mail confirmation will be sent after submission.

Step Two: The Sales 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 HTA.

Step Four: Applicants must make themselves available for the interviews at the next TBID Board of Directors meeting following the application deadline, which occur on the third Wednesday of every month.

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.



Before grant can be awarded, recipients are required to sign an agreement committing to meet all the criteria previously listed in this document. After the agreement has been signed, the following issuance of funds will be executed [50-25-25]:

- **50%** of the grant will be awarded within 30 business days of Board approval
- Another **25%** paid 30 days prior to the event so long as the following is in place:
 - Submitted marketing plan and timeline are on track
 - Communication and contact with Sales Manager are sufficient for promoting event
- The remaining **25%** distributed when a complete Post Event Report is received, approved, and all other criteria are met

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 30 Points - Application responses
- Maximum 20 Points - Budget
- Maximum 15 Points - Event taking place in value season (October-April)
- Maximum 10 Points - New event
- Maximum 10 Points - Basic Marketing Plan
- Maximum 5 Points - Event Planning Timeline

CONTACT

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