TRIBAL NATIONS

Tourism Grant Program Guidelines

Second Grant Round
FY2024-2025

EXPLORE MINNESOTA

INTENTION OF THE PROGRAM

The Tribal Nations Tourism Grant program is funded and administered by Explore Minnesota for the purpose of providing funds to the 11 federally recognized Tribal Nations in Minnesota.

The intention of the grant program is to support development and promotion as it pertains to forming or expanding sustainable tourism assets, culture, heritage, arts, agritourism and outdoor recreation for the economic benefit of the 11 federally recognized Tribal Nations and their communities.

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Credit: Jaida Grey Eagle, Courtesy of Meet Minneapolis

ELIGIBILE APPLICANTS

This program is open to the 11 Tribal Nation Governments in Minnesota

- Cansa'yapi / Lower Sioux Indian Community
- Gaa-waabaabiganikaag / White Earth Nation
- Gaa-zagaskwaajimekaag / Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
- Gichi-Onigaming / Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- Mdewakanton / Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
- Misi-zaaga'iganiing / Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
- Miskwaagamiiwi-Zaagaiganing / Red Lake Nation
- Nagaajiwanaang / Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- Pezihutazizi / Oyate (Upper Sioux Community)
- Tinta Wita / Prairie Island Indian Community
- Zagaakwaandagowininiwag / Bois Forte Band of Chippewa

FUNDING

- The second round is funded at a total of $715,000 for FY2024-2025
- Each Tribal Nation may request an amount up to the $65,000
- There are no matching funds required
- A complete report of grantees and award amounts, including any canceled or returned grant funds will be posted on the Explore Minnesota Tourism Industry website. All grantee information is public data per Minn. Stat. §13.599.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

The purpose of the grant program is to provide funds to Tribal Nations Governments for forming or expanding sustainable tourism assets, culture, heritage, arts, agritourism and outdoor recreation for the economic benefit of their communities.

Examples of eligible costs include, but are not limited to:

Tourism Initiatives

- Research, market and feasibility studies, economic impact studies
- Equipment purchases, improvements or repairs
- Elder Honorariums for cultural tourism development
- Training programs for staff
- Educational courses or certifications in tourism and leisure and hospitality
- Community conversations defining tourism for the Tribal Nation

Tourism Marketing

- General Consumer Marketing: Projects targeted to the individual consumer.
- Travel Trade, Meetings & Conventions and Sports: Projects with primary distribution to tour operators, tour planners and/or travel agents, advertising in meeting & convention media, and targeted sports media. Marketing and/or sales activities to secure or promote group business, such as meetings, conventions or sporting events.

Tourism Marketing (continued)

- Marketing of Public Events
- Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion Marketing and Programming

Third-Party Vendor Services

- Tourism website development and enhancement, including accessibility improvements and content creation
- Social Media Management
- Fulfillment pieces such as visitor guides, maps and brochures
- Media Production, including photo and video asset collection
- Direct Mail
- Public Relations Services

Tourism-Related Travel Expenses

Travel expenses must comply with the approved budget as specified in the Work Plan and Budget of an executed grant contract. Travel expenses must meet the guidelines specified in the current "Commissioner's Plan" found on the Minnesota Management and Budget Website.

The Grantee will not be reimbursed for travel and subsistence expenses incurred outside Minnesota unless the State has provided prior written approval for out of state travel. Minnesota will be considered the home state for determining whether travel is out of state.

- Automobile Expenses
    - » Automobile mileage will be reimbursed at the current Federal IRS mileage reimbursement rate.
    - » In addition to mileage, actual parking fees and toll charges will be reimbursed.
    - » There will not be mileage reimbursement for commuting between a permanent work location and home.

Tourism-Related Travel Expenses (continued)

- Other Travel Expenses
  - » Commercial or ride-share transportation (air, taxi, rental car, etc.), no air transportation via first class.
  - » Hotel, motel and campsite accommodations provided that good judgment is exercised in incurring lodging costs and that charges are reasonable and consistent with the facilities available.
  - » Meals in travel status shall be reimbursed as follows:

    Breakfast

    - Reimbursements for breakfast may be claimed if the employee leaves their temporary or permanent work location before 6:00 am or is away from home overnight.
    - $11.00 Maximum reimbursement including tax and gratuity per person.

    Lunch

    - Reimbursements may be claimed if the employee is in travel status more than 35 miles from their temporary or permanent work location and work extends over the normal noon lunch hour period.
    - $13.00 Maximum reimbursement including tax and gratuity per person.

    Dinner

    - Reimbursements may be claimed if the employee is in travel status after 7:00 pm or requires an overnight stay.
    - $19.00 Maximum reimbursement including tax and gratuity per person.

Tourism-Related Travel Expenses (continued)

- Documentation
  - » Backup documentation (receipt, proof of payment, etc.) must be submitted for reimbursement for parking and lodging expenses, and expenses listed as “Other costs.”
  - » No backup documentation is necessary for meals.
  - » Mileage reimbursement should include a map screenshot of trip miles.
  - » Per the audit clause of the grant contract, supporting documentation for all travel expenses (invoices, receipts, employee time records, proof of payment, etc.) shall be maintained on file by the Grantee and available upon request by the State.

- Travel Log

  Grantees shall document travel related expenses on the Travel Log provided by the agency.

  The following expenses must be included on the Travel Log:

  - » Date – This is the date the travel occurred.
  - » Time – This must be included if meal costs are being submitted for reimbursement.
  - » Destination – This should include the destination for traveling employees
  - » Mileage – Mileage is reimbursed at the Federal IRS mileage rate.
  - » Parking – Parking costs are reimbursed as long as they are reasonable and consistent with the facilities available.

The following expenses must be included on the Travel Log: (continued)

» Lodging – Lodging costs are reimbursed as long as they are reasonable and consistent with the facilities available. Lodging costs eligible for reimbursement include hotels, motels, and campsites.

» Meals

» Number of Travelers – This must be included if lodging or meals are being claimed for reimbursement.

» Other costs – Additional costs eligible for reimbursement should be previously agreed upon with the agency and may include public transportation expenses or taxis.

Tourism-Related Salaries

Grant budgets that include salaries and benefits are required to include salary detail. This detail can be found in the budget document and incorporated into the grant agreement as Exhibit B.2.
The following is required for all positions funded by the grant:

- Job title or position name
- Number of FTE's funded by the grant
- Rate of pay for each position
- Salary/fringe associated with the position, and billed to the grant
- Any other staff costs included in the Salary and Benefits line item

Employees who perform work funded by the grant should be tracking and certifying their own time using timesheets or using an electronic timekeeping system. Additionally, employee time billed to the grant must also be reviewed and approved by a supervisor.

Tourism-Related Salaries (continued)

Time tracking guidance:

- The amount of staff compensation charged to grant funds for wages, salary, and benefits should be reflective of each individual's workload on the project.
- Checks and balances should be in place to ensure that grant funds are charged in a way that accurately reflects actual employee or contractor time.
    - » This could include staff tracking their actual time spent on grant programs on an on-going basis or allocating cost according to staff position descriptions.
    - » If a Grantee does not have a personnel time report system that can handle actual hours, a reasonable percentage of time spent on grant activities approach can be used. The percentage used for individual programs should be checked periodically for accuracy.
    - » The Grantee should complete expenditure corrections and adjust position descriptions accordingly if/when changes take place in staffing or after the state has approved work plan or budget revisions.
    - » Grantees should implement the system that is most efficient and effective for them.

INELIGIBLE COSTS

Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services and payroll taxes
- Fundraising
- Lobbyists, political contributions
- Land acquisition, construction and infrastructure projects
- Purchase of alcohol
- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, or contingency funds
- Parking or traffic violations

OPEN SOLICITATION ROUND

Applications will be accepted during the **Open Solicitation Round** beginning **Monday, September 16, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.** and will continue until all funds are awarded or **Friday, December 6, 2024, at 4:00 p.m.**, whichever arrives first. If there are funds remaining after the first solicitation round, a second round of funding will be offered to eligible entities.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Application materials can be found on the Explore Minnesota Tourism Industry Website.

Applications will only be accepted electronically via emngrants@state.mn.us.

PLEASE NOTE: This mailbox is for grant applications and reconciliation only and is not monitored for questions and is an electronic mailbox created and hosted by the State of Minnesota (MNIT), with the sole purpose of receiving and reconciling grants. The time and date stamp is electronically generated and cannot be changed or manipulated. Replies from this mailbox will be automatically generated. Explore Minnesota is not responsible for any electronic outages or faults outside of its control.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- Application
- Project Summary Worksheet
- Budget Worksheet

NOTIFICATION OF AWARD

Explore Minnesota will review applications in the order received and will notify the applicant of acceptance or rejection, contingent amount of grant award and next steps in the grant contracting process via email within 30 business days.
Upon acceptance of the application, a grant contract will be created and sent to the applicant, indicating the award amount. The grant award is not guaranteed until the contract has been fully executed and signed by the grantee representative and by Explore Minnesota.

GRANT CONTRACT

All grant awards are contingent until there is a fully executed grant contract between the applicant and Explore Minnesota. A fully executed contract does not guarantee repayment of expenses.

Projects under the grant contract must be completed by **Monday, June 15, 2026**, to be eligible for reimbursement under this program. This deadline allows sufficient time for processing, proper documentation retrieval, and to minimize the risk of potential loss of funds.

Execution of a grant contract with Explore Minnesota signifies the applicant's acceptance of the terms of the contract and the program guidelines.

GRANT MONITORING VISITS

Per Grants Management Policy 08-10, Explore Minnesota will conduct at least one (1) monitoring visit with each grantee during the grant cycle.

REIMBURSEMENT AND RECONCILIATION

This grant program is payable on a reimbursement basis. Grant payments shall not be made on grants with past due reporting. Projects under the grant contract must be completed by **Monday, June 15, 2026**, to be eligible for reimbursement under this program. This deadline allows sufficient time for processing, proper documentation retrieval, and to minimize the risk of potential loss of funds.

To begin the reimbursement process, Grantees must submit a reimbursement request.

Documents must be complete and correct for reimbursement to occur.

Reconciliation

A reconciliation form must be used to request payment and include the following information:

- Grant Contract number – this number is provided by the State and can be found on the Signature page of the grant contract.
- Invoice date – This is the day that the invoice is submitted to the agency.
- Reimbursement Payment Request Number – This number is based on how many reimbursement requests have been submitted previously to the State for this grant contract.
- Period Covered – This includes the start and end dates that services were performed, or work was incurred. This period should not overlap with previous reimbursement requests. If you have an expense from a previous payment period that has not yet been billed to the grant, please describe the expense in the reimbursement request submission email.
- Reimbursement amount – This is the amount requested for reimbursement by the State.
- The agency works to promptly pay Grantee reimbursement requests within 30 days. The 30-day window does not begin until the reimbursement documents are complete and correct.

Reconciliation (continued)

In some cases, additional documentation may be necessary. If the grant contract includes language around extra backup documentation, then grantees may need to provide invoices, timesheets and proof of payment for grant expenses in order to be reimbursed.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Grantees may submit an invoice for reimbursement no more than once per month or at the conclusion of the grant program.

A fully reconciled grant is one in which: the grantee has submitted all the necessary documentation required for reimbursement; documents are approved, payment has been determined. Notification will be made via email to the primary contact listed on grant reconciliation materials.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

All application information submitted is presumed to be public information pursuant to the Minnesota Data Practices Act, Minnesota Statute Chapter 13.

RECORDS RETENTION & AUDITS

Per Minn. Stat. §16B.98 Subdivision 8, the grantee's books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices of the grantee or other party that are relevant to the grant or transaction are subject to examination by Explore Minnesota and either the legislative auditor or the state auditor, as appropriate for a minimum of six years from the grant agreement end date, receipt, and approval of all final reports, or the required period to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later.

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