



Destination MT Division

Montana Film Office | Big Sky Film Grant Program

Application Information – A guide to preparing the online application INTAKE form.



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Grant Website: [https://www.montanafilm.com/mfo\\_bigskyfilmgrant/](https://www.montanafilm.com/mfo_bigskyfilmgrant/)

**Big Sky Film Grant Program Application Information – A guide to preparing the online application INTAKE form.**

The Big Sky Film Grant (“BSFG”) is a competitive grant program intended to attract and support filmmakers and production companies operating in Montana and, by doing so, to stimulate economic activity, community enhancement, and statewide tourism through increased investment, job creation or retention, business expansion, and local tax base growth. To be considered for grant funding in the current calendar year, eligible applicants must submit their applications by **midnight MST on the close date.**

The BSFG program applications, guidelines, project administration, and other relevant information and resources are available on the MFO website at [https://www.montanafilm.com/mfo\\_bigskyfilmgrant/](https://www.montanafilm.com/mfo_bigskyfilmgrant/). Contact MFO staff via email at [montanafilm@mt.gov](mailto:montanafilm@mt.gov) or by calling 406.841.2876, or 1.800.553.4563.

The application guidelines explain grant categories, eligibility, how to apply for BSFG funding, evaluation criteria and provide reference to the administrative requirements of the program.

This document explains what information is requested and required for the current funding application and serves as a guide for applicants to prepare the information and supporting documents/files used to complete the online application INTAKE form.

The questions, required fields, uploads and attachments mirror those found in the online application INTAKE form. Applicants are encouraged to review this guide, gather and organize files needed before starting the online INTAKE form.

Applications will only be accepted through the online application INTAKE portal. Do not submit this document as an application. It is provided as a guide and for informational purposes only.

To access the BSFG online application INTAKE portal, applicants must first register for an OKTA account, the state of Montana’s secure login platform (replaced EPass). See instructions included.

For assistance, contact:

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301 S. Park Avenue | PO Box 200533  
Helena MT 59620-0533  
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[montanafilm@mt.gov](mailto:montanafilm@mt.gov) | [https://www.montanafilm.com/mfo\\_bigskyfilmgrant/](https://www.montanafilm.com/mfo_bigskyfilmgrant/)

BIG SKY FILM GRANT CATEGORIES – Applicants may apply in one category only; each category will have a unique INTAKE form; please select the correct category INTAKE form.

- **FEATURE FILM & TV GRANT** - Awarded to a Montana-based, feature-length film or TV series that shoots at least 50% of Principal Photography days in Montana and has a minimum Montana-Spend of \$350,000. Award amounts are not limited but are subject to annual program funding limitations.

**Type of Production\***

See BSGF application guidelines for eligible types of production.

- Animation
- Documentary
- Feature Film
- Scripted Service for TV broadcast or streaming platform
- Other

- **SHORT FORM CONTENT GRANT** - Awarded to a Montana-based production of a short-form content film project. Examples include a short narrative, pilot episode, documentary, animation, webisode, Montana-centric story, or a film series of episodes each 60 minutes or less in length and with a budget of less than \$350,000 per episode. Award amounts are a minimum of \$1,000 and a maximum of up to \$50,000 per project.

**Type of Production\***

See BSGF application guidelines for eligible types of production.

- Animation
- Documentary
- Music video
- Pilot
- Series
- Short form
- Video game
- Webisode
- Other

- **RESIDENT FEATURE FILM & TV GRANT** - Awarded to a Montana-based production of a feature-length project that is produced by a Montana resident filmmaker who has a validated credit as a Producer, Director, or primary Director of Photography. Award amounts are a minimum of \$1,000 and a maximum of up to \$100,000 per project. Proof of Montana residency required.

**Type of Production\***

See BSGF application guidelines for eligible types of production.

- Animation
- Documentary
- Feature Film
- Scripted Service for TV broadcast or streaming platform
- Other

- **RESIDENT SHORT FORM CONTENT GRANT** - Awarded to a Montana-based production of a short-form content film project that is produced by a Montana resident filmmaker who has a validated credit as a Producer, Director, or primary Director of Photography. Examples include a short narrative, pilot episode, documentary, animation, webisode, Montana-centric story, or a film series of episodes each 60 minutes or less in length and with a budget of less than \$350,000 per episode. Award amounts are a minimum of \$1,000 and a maximum of up to \$50,000 per project. Proof of Montana residency required.

**Type of Production\***

See BSGF application guidelines for eligible types of production.

- Animation
- Documentary
- Music video
- Pilot
- Series
- Short form
- Video game
- Webisode
- Other

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## INFORMATION REQUESTED/REQUIRED TO COMPLETE THE ONLINE APPLICATION INTAKE FORM FOR EACH CATEGORY

### APPLICANT & PROJECT

**Title of Project\***

Enter the title (or working title) of the film production project.

**Applicant\***

Select one option only.

- Individual Person – Individual/sole proprietor or single-member LLC
- Business Entity - C Corporation, S Corporation, Partnership, Trust/estate, LLC
- Organization – non-profit entity, non-government

**IRS Form W-9\***

Download fillable form.

**Applicant IRS Form W9 Taxpayer Identification Number\***

**Applicant must upload current IRS Form W-9\***

Should an award be made, the individual or an authorized representative of the entity will need to provide a current, signed W-9 if different from the applicant.

UPLOAD completed, signed W-9

**Applicant - Individual or Entity\***

Enter the full name of the individual or entity that is applying for the grant.

Applicant name should match your IRS Form W-9. Note, should an award be made, the individual or an authorized representative of the entity will be the contract signatory responsible for authorizing and fulfilling contract obligations.

If you are the Grant Liaison and not the applicant, enter your contact information in the Grant Liaison section.

***For Resident Filmmaker categories only - those applicants applying for a Resident Filmmaker category will be automatically prompted to complete the Proof of Montana residency section below.***

**Proof of Montana residency\***

Individuals must provide proof of Montana residency by providing a copy of a current and valid Montana driver's license, Montana-issued ID Card, Montana Tribal ID card, or voter registration card. Entities must be controlled by a Montana resident and provide proof of an established physical address located in Montana and an active business registration with the Montana Secretary of State

UPLOAD a single file labeled Montana ID. Use Attachment section for additional files. Label appropriately.

**Applicant Address\***

Enter the primary address for the applicant

Country

Address

Address Line 2 optional

City

State Province or Region

Zip or Postal Code

**Applicant Phone\***

**Applicant Primary Email\***

**Applicant Website**

**Applicant IMDb Page**

**Grant Liaison\***

Enter the name of the contact who will be the primary grant liaison (this may be the same or differ from the applicant and differ from the contract signatory responsible for authorizing and fulfilling contract obligations).

**Grant Liaison Email\***

**Grant Liaison Phone\***

**Grant Liaison Address\***

Country

Address

Address Line 2 optional

City

State Province or Region

Zip or Postal Code

**Has applicant received a Big Sky Film Grant award, for any category, in the past?\***

- Yes
- No

If yes, please list the project name and year of the award.

[Text Box for answer]

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**PROJECT DETAILS**

A complete and detailed project description (pitch package) including the synopsis, treatment, script, lookbook or mood board, and need for the project, is reviewed and will be used to evaluate the application for potential funding. Please note that documents applicants submit to MFO may be considered public documents and subject to the public's right to know.

Only one file can be UPLOADED in each section. For additional files, use the Attachments section as the end of the form. Label all files appropriately.

**Script\***

UPLOAD single file labeled Script.

**Treatment\***

A multi-page document written in prose that tells the story that happens in the screenplay. It is more detailed than the synopsis and may include details of directorial style. It should be written in present tense.

UPLOAD single file labeled Treatment. Use Attachment section for additional files. Label appropriately.

**Lookbook\***

A collection of photographs arranged to provide a visual representation of the mood, tone, or feeling of the film.

UPLOAD single file labeled Lookbook or Moodbook; use Attachment section for additional files. Label appropriately.

**Logline\***

Describe the plot in a captivating way and state the main concept of the story in a few concise sentences.

[Text Box for answer]

**Project Description / Synopsis\***

The synopsis is a breakdown of the project's story into prose, and it should fit on a single page. The introduction or synopsis is the most critical element of the film project proposal because it highlights how compelling the project is and reveals how passionate the filmmaker is. A dynamic synopsis strategically placed makes a strong impression.

[Text Box for answer]. Use Attachment section for additional files. Label appropriately.

**Project Need\***

This establishes the focus and rationale for the grant proposal. This may include the project's economic impact on the local area, region, or state. Project need can also be based on the pure art form or its the subject matter, etc. Funding needs should be addressed separately in the Finance Plan & Budget Detail section.

[Text Box for answer]. Use Attachment section for additional files. Label appropriately.

**Primary Filming Locations\***

Please list all Montana towns, cities, tribal territories, or other defined areas where the majority of proposed Principal Photography days will take place.

[Text Box for answer]. A link to a map of Montana is provided within the INTAKE form.

**Teaser, Trailer, Previous Work example or Related Video** - Include a URL hyperlink, example YouTube, Vimeo, etc.

UPLOAD single video file labeled appropriately. Provide password, if required for video link

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**FINANCE PLAN & BUDGET DETAIL**

Accuracy and relevancy are essential. Although it is an estimate, the project budget should be thorough and detailed and line up with the production plan. The application should include a full budget breakdown – not just the top sheet. The grant amount the applicant has requested is also compared to the amount of secured funding available. Include how the project will be financed (private cash, investors, grants, etc.) and provide a list of funding sources and amounts and proof of commitment or availability. If approved, the grant award will be based on the project’s plan as compared to the budget and all funding sources, as well as available funding.

**Grant Amount Requested\***

Enter the amount of grant funding requested.

**Total Project Budget Amount\***

Enter the total film production budget amount; this is a comprehensive estimate and should include postproductions costs.

**Budget Detail\***

Enter all income (funding sources) and expense categories. All expenses must be labeled for spending either in Montana (“Montana-Spend”) or out-of-state. *See Guidelines.* A customizable template is available from the Montana Film Office.

UPLOAD a single file labeled Budget Detail. Use Attachment section for additional files. Label appropriately.

**Total Montana-Spend\***

Enter the total estimated Montana-Spend. Include all compensation paid to Montana residents. Wages, independent contract work, catering, etc. along with commercial liability insurance and travel must be purchased from Montana vendors to qualify, i.e. airfare purchased from a Montana travel agent qualifies, but airline tickets purchased directly from the airline do not. *See BSGF application guidelines for the definition of Montana-Spend.*

Note - every grant recipient must prove the total amount of the BSGF award was spent on compensation of Montana residents and Montana vendors by submitting a list of expenditures along with proof of payment and receipts totaling at least the amount of grant funds received as part of the project final completion reporting.

**Secured Funding Sources\***

Applicants must submit a letter of commitment of funds, availability of funds in a financial account, or similar documents to substantiate that secured funding of at least 1% to 5% of the submitted budget is immediately available. Additionally, the application must demonstrate funding sources beyond the grant award (private or otherwise) are available to successfully fund the project. Applications without evidence of secured funding will receive a deduction in evaluation scoring.

- Private funds \_\_\_\_\_%
- Bank loans \_\_\_\_\_%
- Crowdfunding \_\_\_\_\_%
- Grants \_\_\_\_\_%
- In-Kind \_\_\_\_\_%
- Negative pickup deal \_\_\_\_\_%
- Presales \_\_\_\_\_%
- Product placement \_\_\_\_\_%
- Tax credits \_\_\_\_\_%
- Other incentives \_\_\_\_\_%

UPLOAD a single file labeled Secured Funding. Use Attachment section for additional files. Label appropriately.

**Potential Funding Sources\***

Select all potential sources of funding not yet secured/committed; include a plan securing funds that includes amount from each source, timeline, contingencies, etc.

- Private funds
- Bank loans
- Crowdfunding
- Grants
- In-kind
- Negative pickup deal
- Presales
- Product placement
- Tax credits
- Other incentives

UPLOAD a single file labeled Potential Funding. Use Attachment section for additional files. Label appropriately.

**PRODUCTION DETAILS**

The proposed project’s production plan and production schedules will be evaluated for feasibility, workability, and potential economic impact on the local area, region, and state.

**Project Production Plan Summary\***

Provide a summary that outlines the operational elements of the film production project; list key individuals and their roles and how each may benefit the project, timelines, expected outcomes, etc. (who is responsible for doing what and when).

[Text Box for answer]

**Key Individuals - Brief bios or resumes\***

Key crew (producer, director, writer, director of photography, sound editor, etc.)

[Text Box for answer]

Use Attachment section for additional files. Label appropriately.



**Production Schedules\***

Include schedules for preproduction, production, and if applicable postproduction.

**Preproduction Start Date\***

**Preproduction End Date\***

**Principal Photography – Production Start Date\***

**Principal Photography – Production End Date\***

**Production Wrap Date\***

**Total Production Days (all, estimated)\***

**Total Production Days in Montana (estimated)\***

**Total Postproduction Days in Montana (estimated)\***

Include only the number of days the project is utilizing postproduction services and/or facilities in Montana. UPLOAD a single file labeled Production Schedule. Use Attachment section for additional files. Label appropriately.

**Employment & Compensation (estimated)\***

- Total number of expected Montana jobs created (cast, crew hired)
- Total dollar amount of expected Montana wages and compensation

**Production Details – Special Considerations**

**Select all that apply.** Each special consideration requires supporting documentation. Please upload a single document where requested. If needed, upload additional documents in the Attachments sections (at the end of the application); label appropriately with the name of the special consideration.

- Rural location** – a project planning to film 50% or more of the principal photography days in a \*Rural Montana location.  
 \*Big Sky Film Grant guidelines define Rural as the locations in Montana that are not considered to be Urban. Urban is defined as: (i) one with a population at or exceeding 30,000 people; or (ii) an incorporated city/town within 10 miles of an identified urban area. Currently, the Urban areas in Montana are Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Great Falls, Helena, Kalispell, and Missoula; those within 10 miles of those areas are the cities of Belgrade, Columbia Falls, East Helena, Laurel, Walkerville, and Whitefish. Therefore, there are 13 defined Urban areas in Montana while the rest of the state is considered Rural.  
  
 List all proposed Rural locations and the number of days of principal photography planned for each.  
 [Text Box for answer]
- \$10,000 in expenditures with a single Montana vendor.**  
 UPLOAD a single file of a quote or bid from a Montana vendor indicating at least \$10,000 for purchase, rental, etc. Label file 10k Spend.
- \$25,000 in postproduction expenditures with one or more Montana vendors.**

UPLOAD a single file of a quote, letter of commitment to hire Montana residents, or purchase products and service from Montana vendor(s) for postproduction expenditures totaling \$25,000 or more. Label file 25k Spend.

- Crew is made up of at least 30% Montana residents.** List proposed Montana crew to be hired that includes: crew position, city of residence, and estimated wages/payment for each. Include the calculation as to how 30% is achieved.  
[Text Box for answer]  
or UPLOAD a single file labeled MT Compensation that includes the section of the production Budget detail for proposed crew compensation, position and Montana city of residence (do not include individual person names).
- Officially accredited production company, director, or director of photography is attached.** List professional qualifications, accreditation, association membership, etc., and verification source. Note, IMDb is not a professional qualification.  
[Text Box for answer]
- Name talent attached to production.** List name(s) of talent.  
[Text Box for answer]
- Montana based story** – historical, topical, or place-based significance or a Montana writer is associated with the project. Describe elements of project that are based on Montana.  
[Text Box for answer]
- 100% of planned\* Principal Photography Days to be filmed in Montana.** List all proposed Montana locations and the number of days of principal photography planned for each.  
[Text Box for answer]  
\*Big Sky Film Grant guidelines define Principal Photography Days as the filming period measured in 24-hour day(s) in which all material covering speaking and non-speaking parts is filmed.
- Filming at location(s) in Montana during the shoulder season(s)** of fall, winter, early spring, or outside of peak tourism and visitor travel. List proposed filming locations and dates.  
[Text Box for answer]
- Wide distribution contracts or agreements have been secured.**  
UPLOAD a single file labeled Distribution. Use Attachment section for additional files. Label appropriately.

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## MARKETING AND DISTRIBUTION PLAN\*

Provide a marketing and distribution plan that outlines the overall marketing strategy, specific goals, and management of publicity, advances, direct sales, and distribution.

UPLOAD a single file labeled Marketing and Distribution Plan. Use Attachment section for additional files. Label appropriately.

**Genre\***

Select all that apply:

- Action
- Anime
- Comedy
- Documentary - Reality
- Drama
- Fantasy – Science Fiction
- Gaming
- Horror
- Music
- Mystery -Thriller
- Romance
- Western
- Other, please specify

**Target Audience\***

- Adults
- Children (5-11 years old)
- Family Groups
- Genre Fan
- Seniors
- Teenagers / Young Adults

**Distribution Platform\***

- Broadcast
- Festivals
- International
- Self-distribution
- Social Media
- Theatrical
- VOD or streaming platform
- Other, please specify

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**APPLICATION CERTIFICATION**

The applicant hereby certifies the following:

- The proposed project is Montana-based defined as a production filming 50% or more of the Principal Photography Days at a location(s) within Montana, and
- The proposed project is in a stage ready to proceed within the next twelve months and has not yet reached final editorial stage or distribution, and
- The applicant must demonstrate at the time of application that a financial commitment of at least 1% to 5% of the submitted budget is immediately available, and
- The proposed project is not a production considered to be broadcast news, a current affairs program, an interview, a talk show, an instructional video, a sports show or event, a religious campaign, a political campaign, adult content or a daytime soap opera, and

- The proposed project does not include a company owned, affiliated, or controlled by, in whole or in part, a company or person that is in default on a loan made by this state or a loan guaranteed by this state or a company or person that has filed for bankruptcy, and
- The proposed project does not contain any Obscene material or performance as defined by § 45-8-201(2), MCA, and
- The proposed project is prohibited from receiving tobacco industry compensation for tobacco product placement, advertisement, or other tobacco use in the production, this includes vape products, and cannabis, and
- The applicant is not a current or former BSFG Grantee with an open BSFG grant contract for an uncompleted project, and
- The applicant will submit only one application per funding cycle and that a production project cannot be used in more than one application, and
- 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; refer to Montana Human Rights Bureau (<https://erd.dli.mt.gov/human-rights/>), and
- The applicant will comply with all federal, state and community licenses, permits, laws, and regulations, and
- The applicant acknowledges and agrees that any information submitted to the Department through the application or required reporting may be subject to public disclosure under Montana's public records law, and
- The applicant acknowledges and agrees that submitting false or misleading information in connection with this application will result in the application being found disqualified for consideration from this funding opportunity, and
- The applicant is registered with the Montana Secretary of State and has received certification as a company in good standing to transact business in Montana, or will obtain certification prior to contracting with Commerce, and
- The applicant is aware funds will not be awarded to a project prior to receipt of a negotiated and signed contract by the Grantee and Montana Department of Commerce, and
- The applicant agrees that as a stipulation for receipt of a Montana Big Sky Film Grant, each recipient will properly credit the State of Montana including, but is not limited to, as: a listed credit, logo placement in the film credits and/or on posters, on applicant's web pages, and other marketing materials, as well as screening considerations, cross marketing deliverables, and/or other negotiable concepts, and
- The applicant acknowledges and agrees that should an award be made, the recipient must complete and submit a Final Report to Commerce prior to the contract end date or upon project closeout, whichever occurs first. The report shall include all of the actual Montana locations used in the project, total actual expenditures and the total actual Montana expenditures, and, proof of Montana-Spend, and
- To the best of my knowledge and belief, the information contained in and submitted with this application is true and correct and the submitted application meets all the eligibility requirements for the Big Sky Film Grant.

By checking each box and signing, you are certifying the above and validating this document as the authorized signatory and representative.

**Applicant or Authorized Representative's Name & Title\***

**Electronic Signature\***

**Date\***