

MONTANA BIG SKY FILM GRANT INSTRUCTIONS & GUIDELINES

WHO CAN APPLY?

The incentive applies to production costs incurred in Montana. Eligible productions* include:

- Feature Films
- Episodic television series
- Television pilots, TV presentations, TV movies and TV miniseries
- Credited director or producer with previous theatrically distributed or Network presented projects.

*Certain categories of productions are excluded from the program, including, but not limited to, broadcast news or current affairs programs, interview or talk shows, instructional videos, sport shows or events, and daytime soap operas. NOTE: These exclusions may not apply to Development Grants. Contact montanafilm@mt.gov for more information.

CATEGORIES

FEATURE FILM & TV GRANT

If a film or television project meets the grant criteria and the in-state spend exceeds \$300,000 AND shoots at least 50% of principal photography in Montana, a qualifying scale of funds of all expenditures while filming in the state can be eligible for allocation.

RESIDENT FILMMAKER GRANT

If a filmmaker is a resident of Montana and has a validated credit as a Producer, Director or primary Director of Photography on a nationally distributed theatrical release, they can apply for a resident filmmaker allocation up to \$50,000 for a project that meets the grant criteria and shoots at least 50% of principal photography in Montana.

DEVELOPMENT GRANT

If either a Montana filmmaker or resident production company creates Montana centric content that can be screened exclusively on the Montana Office of Tourism, and/or Montana Film Office YouTube Channels or another established, well visited YouTube channels, they can apply for development grant allocations up to \$50,000. Click the link below to learn more about applying for development grant funding.

FESTIVAL GRANT

If a film associated with Montana, either by filming here or shot by a Montana resident filmmaker, is accepted into a juried/world class festival, up to \$5,000 can be allocated for marketing assistance and travel to the festival.

NOTE: As a stipulation for receipt of a Montana Big Sky Film Grant, each recipient will properly credit the state of Montana at the appropriate level. This could include a listed credit, Montana Film Office or VisitMT.com logo placement in the film credits and/or on posters, web pages and other marketing materials, as well as screening considerations, cross marketing on DVD and/or other negotiable concepts. All recipients must provide access to EPK and other marketing materials and include the following credit in press releases associated with the project: "Shot on location in Montana." Only one grant per project can be awarded.

WHEN SHOULD I APPLY?

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Applications for the Big Sky Film Grant are accepted throughout the year. To apply to any of the grant-types above, contact the film office directly at 406-841-2876 or email montanafilm@mt.gov.

APPLICATION & GRANT EVALUATION CRITERIA: Feature Film & TV Grant

Projects applying for the Feature Film and TV grant are evaluated based on the economic impact of local spend, resident jobs, lodging nights and marketing consideration. Grant awards are based on Montana expenditures and a qualifying scale of funds can be awarded as a rebate on Montana expenditures verified by 3rd party CPA review.

Funds can be awarded within 30-60 days of principal photography, and are subject to availability.

Special consideration is given to projects that:

- Shoot 100% of principal photography in Montana.
- Have named talent attached.
- Have industry-proven production company, DP, or director attached.
- Have wide distribution contracts or agreements in place.
- Project is a Montana-based story (historical, topical, or place-based significance and/or Montana writer associated).
- Shooting in a shoulder season (fall/winter/early spring).
- Hire at least 30% resident Montana crew.
- Produced by a Montana production company.
- Spend a minimum of \$25k on post-production expenditures with a Montana company.
- Spend a minimum of \$10k on local grip/electric expenditures with a Montana company.

Timeline:

- Completed applications must be received **no less than 60 days prior to the start of principal photography** or festival travel.
- Submit a completed application no less than 60 days **but not more than 180 days prior to the start of principal photography in Montana** or festival travel.
- Start principal photography in Montana no more than 45 calendar days before or after the principal photography date provided in the production's original application.
- Feature Films Require a third-party CPA review no more than 60 days after filming. This is a production focused grant and funded projects need to be scheduled to be on the ground and in principal photography within the 180-day timeline with other funding secured.

Allocations: The allocation amount** is based on an evaluation of all the project's elements and how they best fit the goals of the grant. An award will be given as a percentage of expenditures with a maximum allocated amount. Upon CPA review, if the production exceeds the expenditure estimate only the maximum will be given. If the production does not meet the budgeted estimate, the allocation will be adjusted at the percentage awarded.

**Due to required non-disclosure agreements with the production entities, the Montana Film Office cannot disclose the award until principal photography is completed and a CPA review of the film budget has been completed.

Marketing Partnership Consideration: The Big Sky Film Grant is funded through bed tax dollars used to promote the state of Montana for tourism and film. Productions may be considered for additional funding if they can provide marketing partnership considerations. Contact the Montana Film Office for a list of marketing coop options.

Application & Review: Qualified projects should work with the Montana Film Office prior to and throughout the application and review process. If a project is deemed eligible, the film office will provide a link to the Feature Film & TV Grant application. Please contact the film office for more information, 406-841-2876 or montanafilm@mt.gov.

APPLICATION & GRANT EVALUATION CRITERIA: Development, Resident Filmmaker & Festival Grants

Applicants will be required to provide basic application information and responses to four application sections. Responses are evaluated on the following criteria. Instructions and criteria will vary slightly for each separate grant (festival grant detail in parentheses).

1. **Project Description:** Provide a brief description of your story, its connection to Montana, and why the location is set in Montana. List all associated financial and creative producing entities and include URLs and IMDB links. Describe the production team in detail including: attached talent, directors, and any other relevant details that are a part of the production. If you are proposing deliverable content, please describe these content pieces in detail and how they are a valuable asset for the state's tourism and film marketing efforts.
2. **Financial Profile & Operating Plan:** Provide the top sheet for your entire film budget (or festival marketing and travel). Provide a broken-out budget specifically detailing the days of principal photography and/or post production in Montana and related expenditures. Include the number of resident hires and what positions and number of non-resident hires and positions. Include the production's planned Montana locations and total days at each location, start date of Montana pre-production, start date of principal photography, overall total of principal photography days, completion date of principal photography, post-production dates and activity in Montana. Include a list of funding sources that are secured for the Montana portion of the production at the time of application. Do **NOT** include funding sources that are not secured. Provide specific detail on what the funds from the Big Sky Film Grant will be used for if awarded.
3. **Marketing, Distribution & Project Appeal:** Describe the marketing and distribution plan (or festival strategy) in detail. Describe how this project could provide a broad, long-term tourism impact and/or presents Montana in an indelible way to the public and/or film industry.

4. **Need for Project:** Describe how the proposed project (or festival exposure) will have an economic impact on the local area, region and state (jobs created, payroll generated, earned media values etc.).