
MONTANA
FILM OFFICE



INSTRUCTIONS & GUIDELINES

GRANT CATEGORIES

FEATURE FILM & TV

Grant funds on qualified Montana expenditures can be awarded if the project's in-state spend exceeds \$300,000 and shoots at least 50% of principal photography in-state.

RESIDENT FILMMAKER — FULL-LENGTH

Grant funds of up to \$50,000 can be awarded for a full-length project who is a Montana resident filmmaker that has a validated credit as a Producer, Director, or primary Director of Photography and shoots at least 50% of principal photography in-state.

SHORT-FORM CONTENT

Grant funds of up to \$50,000 can be awarded to filmmakers who create short form content. Examples include short narrative, documentary, animation, webisodes, and Montana-centric stories which are produced, created, and/or filmed at least 50% in-state.

PRODUCTION TYPES

Big Sky Film Grant eligible productions* include:

- Feature Films
- Short films
- Documentaries
- Television pilots, miniseries, and series
- Content for streaming outlets/networks

*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, adult content, and daytime soap operas. Contact montanafilm@mt.gov for more information.

WHEN & HOW TO APPLY / SUBMISSION DEADLINE

Our grant cycle runs July 1st through June 30th every year. To apply to any of the grant-types, you will have to **submit a pre-pitch** to the MFO. We **start accepting pre-pitches every year on March 30th** to be consider for the FY cycle that begins July 1st.

If your pre-pitch is viable, we will **invite you to formally apply** to one of the grant categories above by **sending you a link to our application** on the *Submittable* platform.

To receive more information on pitching your project, contact the Incentives Coordinator, Stacey Zyliak at 406-841-2883 or email szyliak@mt.gov for pre-pitch requirements.

APPLICATION REVIEW

The Big Sky Film Grant Review Committee meets late July/early August every year to award fiscal year grant rounds. If your pre-pitch qualified and you have formally applied via our application process, your application is guaranteed to be reviewed by the grant committee and scored for value and special considerations (mentioned on page 3).

APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applicants will be required to provide basic application information and respond to questions. Responses are evaluated on the following criteria. Criteria will vary slightly for each grant type – but all shall include:

- **Project Description:** Provide a brief description of your story, its connection to Montana, why the location is set in Montana, or why you are choosing 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 an asset for the state's tourism and film marketing efforts.
- **Financial Profile & Operating Plan:** Provide the top sheet for your entire film budget. 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.

- **Marketing, Distribution & Project Appeal:** Describe the marketing and distribution plan 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.
- **Need for Project:** Describe how the proposed project will have an economic impact on the local area, region, and state (jobs created, payroll generated, earned media values, etc.)

Marketing Montana 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.

Criteria Specific to the 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. Feature film grants/projects require a third-party CPA review after filming.

Grant awards are based on Montana expenditures and can be awarded on those expenditures that are verified by third-party CPA review. Upon CPA review, if the production exceeds the expenditure estimate - only your original award amount is given. If the production does not meet the award amount in Montana expenditures, the grant amount will be adjusted to reflect that.

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 \$10k on local grip/electric expenditures with a Montana company

STIPULATIONS

- Only one project/applicant can be awarded in one of the three categories per grant cycle.
- The amount awarded to the Grantee's project **must be used** for Montana expenditures and the Grantee will be required to verify the award was spent in Montana by submitting receipts to the Film Office that total the grant amount.
- The Grantee must supply proof of compliance with the Montana Workers' Compensation Act by either submitting proof of Workers' Comp insurance or an Independent Contractor Exemption certificate.
- The Grantee/Production Company/LLC must register with the Montana Secretary of State. To obtain registration materials, call the Office of the Secretary of State at 406-444-2034, or visit their website at sosmt.gov/business.
- Recipient/Grantee 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 tagline credit in press releases associated with the project: *"Made Possible in Part by the Montana Big Sky Film Grant."*

NOTE: This is NOT an exhaustive list of stipulations. Grantees must be compliant with other applicable Montana laws and permitting.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS & DELIVERABLES

Every Big Sky Film Grant that is awarded is legally bound by a contract with the Montana Department of Commerce. Deliverables (what you will do/submit to the Film Office for the award) are determined per project and by project scope – but will most likely include providing the Film Office with:

- One exclusive trailer with the MFO logo(s);
- One exclusive selected scene from the film with the MFO logo(s);
- Scenic B-roll;
- MFO logo prominently displayed on any related websites controlled by the Grantee;
- MFO name recognition as a sponsor in all press releases controlled by the producer associated with project;

- MFO and Big Sky Film Grant logo and name recognition in the credits of the film as follows: “Made Possible in Part by the Montana Big Sky Film Grant”;
- MFO logo and/or name recognition on posters or signage controlled by the Grantee;
- A hard copy version of your completed project.

Every Big Sky Film Grant that is awarded is required to submit various reports, lists, and documents to the MFO that include:

- Status reports on performance with the contract
- Vendor lists
- Crew list and/or call sheets
- Itemized list of expenditures
- Receipts that prove Montana expenditures
- Location contact list

*The MFO can provide you with templates for these types of lists upon request.

- A detailed final narrative report on your project that can include on:
 - Estimated number of hours Montana crew/cast members worked on your project
 - Filming locations and counties your project took place in
 - Lodging expenses
 - Airfare expenses
 - Catering/craft services expenses
 - Location and/or permit fee expenses
 - Equipment rental expenses
 - Distribution Plan
 - Awards, press, or festival entrance your project receives

We appreciate your interest in the Montana Big Sky Film Grant Program. We work to serve the Montana filmmaking community. We look forward to receiving your application.