



*Back road near Dupuyer, Rocky Mountain Front*

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## **14 Productions to Share \$500,000 in Big Sky Film Grants to Film in Montana**

MONTANA – Fourteen film productions will share \$500,000 through the Big Sky Film Grant from the Montana Film Office to film on-location across the state, the Montana Department of Commerce announced today.

**“Film, television and commercial productions have a direct economic impact in Montana, creating good-paying jobs and infusing outside dollars into Montana communities,”** Montana Film Commissioner Allison Whitmer said. **“The Big Sky Film Grant is one of a suite of incentives the state offers to filmmakers that makes Montana competitive with other states and countries as the ultimate filming location.”**

The 14 film projects have a total estimated production cost of almost \$126 million and expect that they will spend an estimated \$72 million in Montana. A total of 42 projects

requested more than \$5 million in grant dollars this year, with only \$500,000 available through the competitive Big Sky Film Grant for fiscal year 2021.

The productions will film at locations across Montana, from Dupuyer to Missoula to several places in eastern Montana.

The Big Sky Film Grant builds and supports partnerships with filmmakers and production companies to create good-paying Montana film industry jobs. The grant program enhances the marketing efforts of Montana's tourism regions and advocates for the state's people, history and overall quality of life.

The following projects will receive funding:

#### **Feature Film and Television Grant**

- **“Buds Eternal”** (Feature film – Ryan Dickie, Producer/Writer/Director; Jeri Rafter, Producer) will receive \$25,000 to film in Missoula. “Buds Eternal” is a story about three best friends who come to Montana when one of them inherits his late grandfather's luxury mountain estate. The guys find themselves dazzled by the gorgeous landscape and serene nature, but quickly come to realize the house is haunted by the grandfather's benevolent spirit.
- **“Defending our Defenders”** (Documentary – J. Lazarus Auerback, Producer/Director) will receive \$25,000 to film in various locations across Montana. Synopsis: Montanans are 22 percent more likely to become a suicide statistic than anywhere else in the United States. This means that for soldiers who are dealing with PTSD, there is no place more likely for them to have an attempt at suicide. Through exploring every aspect of both what causes PTSD and the long-term effects on these soldiers, this documentary will strive to show the reasons that lead these brave people to thoughts of suicide, which treatments are available, which therapies are working and how those who need it can find help.
- **“Diamondback”** (Feature film – Jennia Fredrique Aponte, Director; Jennifer Julian, Producer; Holly Payberg, Producer; Rene' Haynes, Casting Director) will receive \$100,000 to film in southwest Montana. “Diamondback” is an action-packed, redemptive revenge drama, set in the stunning backdrop of 1880's Montana and featuring a fiercely independent, Black, Apache-trained warrior determined to take down the outlaws who killed her father.

- **“Sooyii (Creatures)”** (Feature film – Paige Rasmussen, Producer; Pat “Judge” Hall, Producer; John Murray and Jesse Derosier, Historical Consultants; Krisztian Kery, Writer/Director) will receive \$40,000 to film in Dupuyer. “Sooyii” is a historical drama taking place in the early 18th Century in the Americas about a young Blackfeet man, the lone survivor of a deadly disease that decimates his camp, who joins forces with the daughter of an enemy tribe. The film will be cast entirely of Native Peoples and will be one of the first films to use only the authentic Blackfeet and Shoshone languages with English subtitles.
- **“Wild Animal”** (Feature film – Joseph Marconi, Writer/Director; Lysette Urus, Producer) will receive \$45,000 to film across Montana. Synopsis: This story is inspired by Montana's own Ireland Moran who started fighting in the cage at only 13 years old. “Wild Animal” seeks to tell a relevant and authentic story to those already steeped in the world of MMA and strives to reach audiences outside the fighting community by focusing on the emotional, human quest towards the greatness and enlightening of oneself.
- **“Yellowstone”** (Television series – Taylor Sheridan, Writer/Director/Producer; Kevin Costner, Actor/Producer; Art Linson, Producer; John Linson, Producer) will receive \$50,000 to film near Darby and Hamilton. Synopsis: A ranching family in Montana faces off against others encroaching on their land. “Yellowstone” follows the Dutton ranch and its family members in land and business conflicts with the local Native American tribe, land developers, other family members and outside forces.

### **Resident Filmmaker Grant**

- **“Aaron”** (Feature film –Travis Fine, Writer/Director/Producer; Jenna Ciralli, Amber Rose Mason, Nina Alviar and Don Teschner, Producers) will receive \$15,000 to film across Montana. Synopsis: When a 13-year-old boy is orphaned in his remote Montana home by World War I and the pandemic of 1918, he must fight the elements to not only stay alive, but also to find meaning and hope in a world that seems to be teetering on the edge of destruction.
- **“Do You Know Where Your Parents Are?”** (Feature film – Michelle Hartly, Executive Producer; Linda Metcalf and Scott Rosenfelt, Screenplay) will receive \$50,000 to film across Montana. Synopsis: “Do You Know Where Your Parents Are?” portrays the dynamics within a three-generational family against the

backdrop of a multimillion-dollar empire and what it really means to care for senior citizens in a direct, honest way. The movie is heartwarming, funny, and you'll laugh and cry as you root for those who want to do the right thing against overwhelming odds.

- **“Landscapes of a Western Mind: The Story of Ivan Doig”** (Documentary – Produced by Kristina Martin, Nic Davis, Scott Sterling, and Aaron Pruitt in partnership with Montana Public Broadcasting Service) will receive \$30,000 to film across Montana. Synopsis: The story of how an iconic author saw the world, through the landscapes that shaped him.
- **“Mankind’s Greatest Story”** (Documentary – Seth Warren, Producer/Director; Shane Doyle, EdD, Native Nexus/Cultural Consultant/Tribal Navigator/Narrator) will receive \$25,000 to film in various locations across Montana. Synopsis: “Mankind’s Greatest Story” will be a mosaic of discovery stories and historical revelations chronicling the first inhabitants of Montana from the period of 10-15K years ago.
- **“Stolen Sisters”** (Documentary – Scott Duthie, Producer) will receive \$25,000 to film across Montana. Synopsis: This documentary will explore the issues that involve tribal women and how this has affected them. “Stolen Sisters” will showcase how the Montana task force is really making a positive difference in tribal women’s lives and helping them finally find justice.

### **Development Grant**

- **“The Adventures of Nicholas Gnome”** (Television, streaming – Nick Greil, Director/Producer; Jenny Greil, Writer/Producer) will receive \$25,000 to film in Missoula. Synopsis: Entirely written, filmed, and produced in Montana, “The Adventures of Nicholas Gnome” provides high-quality, educational content for children. Part live-action, part animation, and part musical, each episode uses memorable narratives, music, and fun to teach essential lessons based on the Montana Office of Public Instruction’s Early Learning Standards.
- **“The Program”** (Documentary – Ann Rogers, Director/Producer) will receive \$25,000 to film in eastern Montana. Synopsis: When an unexpected Facebook friend request unearths decades of male child sexual abuse at a rural Montana high school, former student athletes and their lawyers seek justice in the courtroom and fight for future victims in the state legislature.

- **“The Story of Us: A History of the Women Who Help Shape Montana”**  
(Television – Kimberly Hogberg, Producer) will receive \$20,000 to film across Montana. The mission of this project is to highlight and feature the history of Montana’s women and bring their stories to life.

The production of films, television shows and commercials contributed \$47.6 million to Montana’s economy from January 2019 to June 2020, according to [an independent report on the film industry’s impact](#) commissioned by Commerce. Over that same time, 117 productions were filmed in Montana, directly spending \$23.9 million in Montana communities, supporting 280 jobs, and contributing \$1.3 million in local tax revenue.

For more information about the Big Sky Film Grant, visit [MONTANAFILM.COM](http://MONTANAFILM.COM).