

APPLICATION FOR SOUTHEAST MONTANA VIC GRANT FUNDS



Applications for Visitor Information Center (VIC) funding should be forwarded to Southeast Montana electronically (preferred) or mailed with 5 copies to:

Visit Southeast Montana
Brenda@SoutheastMontana.com
815 South 27th St.
Billings, MT 59101
Ph. 406.294.5270 Fax. 406.245.7333

APPLICANT CONTACT INFORMATION

MANAGING ORGANIZATION NAME _____

ORGANIZATION DIRECTOR/MANAGER _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

EMAIL _____ TELEPHONE _____

APPLICANT VIC INFORMATION

VIC NAME _____

AMOUNT OF FUNDS REQUESTED (NOT TO EXCEED \$5,000) _____

PROPOSED DATES GRANT FUNDING WILL COVER

(ALL FUNDS WILL BE COMMITTED BUT NOT PAID UNTIL REPORT AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS ARE SUBMITTED)

FUNDING DATES: _____

Southeast Montana Application for Funding

We are pleased you have requested an application to apply for a Southeast Montana VIC funding grant. The purpose of these funds is to grow our tourism economy through increased visitor spending throughout Southeast Montana. We recognize that our VICs are essential in providing our visitors with the information and inspiration they need to get the most out of their visit in our region.

Funds are made available through the lodging tax collected in the Southeast Montana region. For every occupied room night in Montana lodging establishments, guests are taxed 7%. A portion of those funds are returned to Southeastern Montana for tourism promotion.

Granting Periods

Grants are available starting in March of each year. However, only one grant per VIC will be awarded during each fiscal year. Applications close June 15. Funds will not be dispersed until reporting requirements are met.

Eligible Applicants

To be eligible for funding, applicants must manage one of the three VICs that were once funded through the Montana Office of Tourism. These VICs are located in Wibaux, Broadus and Hardin.

In addition:

1. All VICs requesting funding must be managed by a not-for-profit organization registered in the state of Montana.
2. The VIC shall be open at a minimum of 24 hours per week or a total of 300 hours within the Memorial Day to Labor Day time period. Requests for funding shall be accompanied by visitation figures and staffing for the previous two years or the first year of operation for the months that funding is being requested.
3. VIC signage shall include the words "Visitor Information".
4. VIC must be will to track visitor data as noted under Reporting Requirements below.

Funding Restrictions

Visit Southeast Montana funding can be used for staffing only. VICs are responsible for all federal/state taxes, workers' compensation, and all employee benefits. Duties considered part of a travel counselor manager/staffing may include but are not limited to:

1. Responding to tourism inquiries in person via phone, email, fax and letter;
2. Compiling and inputting data into the computer regarding information on visitors, calendar of events, local hotels & other tourism businesses;
3. Making lists of businesses to contact about tourism concerns;
4. Researching information for guests;
5. Ordering / storing / stocking brochures and maps from attractions/hotels, etc.;
6. Maintaining the VIC area;
7. Conceiving / developing area wide tours and support materials for same;
8. Serving as support staff for the Montana information computer;
9. VIC Scheduling / payroll;
10. Attending Superhost training and other familiarization activities with all the attractions in their area;

11. Studying Montana guides and brochures and have the ability to converse and interact with visitors of all ages. VIC staff should have a general knowledge of road conditions, construction delays and alternate routes.

Reporting Requirements

The VIC will be responsible for submitting a report to Visit SEMT at the end of the staffing period during which the funds were used. This is typically after Labor Day but may extend beyond that date; however, the report must be received by Sept. 30th. The report must include:

1. Total number of visitors during the funding period, plus a summary of top 10 states of origin; visitor's final destination and/or reason for travel (if willing to share); and, visitor's email address (via "opt in" question, i.e. Do you want to receive occasional e-blasts about regional attractions and events).
2. Funding for VICs shall include a summary of total hours open and hours which are funded by lodging tax;
3. Payroll summary to verify funds were spent for VIC personnel only. Grant funding will only cover salaries and employer-paid taxes for VIC staff (no employer-paid benefits are allowed).
4. Data and accompanying report on visitation should be submitted in digital format (i.e. Word document and/or spreadsheet with collected names and email addresses).

Process

1. If submitting application by mail or hand delivery, 5 copies of the attached application must be provided to Visit SEMT at the Southeast Montana offices: Attn: Brenda Maas; VISIT SOUTHEAST MONTANA; 815 S. 27th St; Billings, Mt 59101. If submitting application electronically via email or fax, only one copy is necessary: Brenda@SoutheastMontana.com; Fax: (406) 245-7333. Note: email submission is preferred.
2. Grants will be reviewed once per month. Please note that the Executive Committee meets the 1st Tuesday of each month.
3. Funds will be considered "committed" upon Executive Committee's approval and applicants' signing of "letter of agreement" and dispersed upon satisfactory reporting (as outlined above under Reporting Requirements), after the end of the VIC's "season."
4. Grant applications must be received no later than June 15 of each year.
5. Failure to comply with any of the criteria listed here may require full repayment of Southeast Montana monies from the awarded organization;
6. Other rules, regulations, policies, and procedures pertaining to this grant are at the sole discretion of Southeast Montana and the state Tourism Advisory Council;
7. Award recipients must provide an annual report (as outlined above).
8. Funds will be dispersed to applicants when all the requirements are met, at the end of the VIC's season.

**SOUTHEAST MONTANA VIC FUNDING PROGRAM
 CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE and CHECKLIST
 (a "no" answer does not necessarily disqualify the applicant)**

- | YES | NO | |
|-----|-----|--|
| () | () | 1. Do you have an established visitor information center? |
| () | () | 2. Can you comply with the required staffing hours? |
| () | () | 3. Do you have a paid executive director? |
| () | () | 4. Will your employee(s) receive SuperHost training or other training, if available in region? |
| () | () | 5. Do you have a visitor tracking system in place? If so please describe: |
| () | () | 6. Do you feel additional staffing assistance is necessary? If so please provide the reason: |
| () | () | 7. Do you have the necessary liability insurance in place? |
| () | () | 8. Are you a registered not-for-profit organization with the state of Montana? Please attach a copy of:
-State of Montana not-for-profit certification or IRS designation
-Current W9 |
| () | () | 9. Do you understand that both Visit Southeast Montana and the Montana Tourism Advisory Council reserve the right to audit this program both for performance and accounting? |
| () | () | 10. Is it understood that the organization is to complete and submit a completion report verifying all staff funding allocations and with verification of spent program dollars, as well as to summarize visitor tracking information (as detailed above) no later than Sept. 30 th of the granting year? |
| () | () | 11. I have included visitation figures and staffing costs for the previous two years. |

I certify that the information provided in this application and its attachments are correct to the best of my knowledge. I am aware that, if approved, this application becomes an agreement.

 Project Supervisor (signature required)

 Date

Signature/DATE Project Authorized by Southeast Montana _____