

**Cooperative Marketing Program — Applicant Guide (2025 Cycle)**

*A program of Visit Southwest Montana (VSWMT) designed to help communities and partners co-market the region and events.*

**Program Snapshot**

* **Purpose:** Support new or expanded marketing projects, increasing the tourism appeal of a city or the greater Visit Southwest Montana region.
* **Who may apply:** Organizations and communities promoting an area or event on a cooperative basis with a non-profit tourism-related organization**.**
* **Project size:** $500+ total project value.
* **Match:** VSWMT may fund up to, but not more than, 50% of the total marketing budget. Administrative and/or operational costs are not eligible for a match. In-kind services are not eligible to be matched.
* Administrative expenses are not eligible.
* **Typical award:** ~$2,000; Total program budget: $25,000.
* **Project completion deadline:** All expenses completed and paid no later than May 31, 2026.
* **Request for Payment and Final Completion Report(s):** At the end of the project, all Completion Reports are due and must be submitted with an invoice for payment. Please refer to the Excel spreadsheet for the information needed for the Key Performance Indicators (KPI). Please submit copies of all promotional materials, which can include links, streaming promotion, or screenshots. **Invoice and Completion Reports are due by June 15, 2026.**
* **Application Deadline:** First round applications are due **October 17, 2025**, with a decision rendered at the October Board Meeting.
* Organizations/communities can only receive one-time funding per project per Fiscal Year (July 1 – June 30).
* Projects that have commenced before the funding decision are ineligible.

**Eligible Projects (Examples)**

* Paid digital & social campaigns
* Print ads, brochures, rack cards (with required language)

 Print Projects: For projects totaling $5000 or more, please attach bid specs and three written original bids. (Bid specs must include size, stock, number of copies, style & color, if applicable) Must consist of the following credit line: And printed in the USA (or whichever country it was printed in) for free distribution. Printing on recycled paper is encouraged. Montana, spelled out in its entirety, shall appear at first glance on all printed material.

* Radio/TV/streaming placements
* Please attach the buy, schedule, and rotation. Script copy. Stations and reach. Must meet 150 GRP/week requirement. When appropriate, the word Montana shall be stated on all audio tracks produced that include speaking.
* YouTube
* Out‑of‑home (billboards, posters) where allowed

 Billboards, airport dioramas - either traditional or electronic displays. It may be constructed as a Cooperative Project provided appropriate documentation has been submitted to the approved DMO before commitment of funds. This could include contracts, permits, easements, and maintenance agreements.

* Photography/videography explicitly used for marketing

**Not eligible:** Any activities conflicting with Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) Rules & Procedures, or items not primarily for marketing. (When in doubt, ask before you buy.)

**How to Apply**

**Multi-Year Event Funding (for Events Only)**

An event can receive funding **once per year for up to three years**:

* **Year 1:** Awarded amount (based on application and budget)
* **Year 2:** Up to **60% of the Year 1 amount**
* **Year 3:** Up to **40% of the Year 1 amount**

Goal: help events become **self-sustaining** by year four.

**Example: If Year 1 award = $2,000 → Year 2 max = $1,200; Year 3 max = $800.**

1. Complete the online application. (Use the current VSWMT form.)
2. Fill out the project budget section in the application (including all line items and who pays what).
3. Email your completed application to office@southwestmt.com.

**Budget & Match Rules**

* VSWMT can cover no more than 50% of the total project and no more than 50% of each line item.
* Minimum total project value: $500.
* Keep clear invoices/receipts and proof of payment for your completion report.
* All expenses must be fully paid by May 31, 2026.

**Compliance — Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) Rules**

You **must** follow the Montana Rules and Regulations as approved by the Governor’s appointed Tourism Advisory Council. [Microsoft Word - Rules and Regs NEW.docx](https://commerce.mt.gov/_shared/brand/Regions-CVBs/docs/Resource-Page/Regulations-and-Procedures-January-20221.pdf) (non-compliance can result in **fines and repayment** of funds).

Highlights:

* **Required language** must appear on **all print pieces** (and other assets where applicable). *Use the exact current TAC wording.*
* **Each project has specific rules.** Please read them carefully before spending funds.
* **Payments:** Follow the **approved payment & documentation process** (keep invoices, proofs of payment, copies/tear sheets, screenshots, links, etc.).
* **Completion Reports:** **Must** be submitted with an invoice for reimbursement. Include: paid invoices, proofs of payment, creative samples/links, screenshots, distribution details, and any available **results/metrics** using the Excel Spreadsheet provided. **IMPORTANT:** If you produce print collateral, **obtain the VSWMT Executive Director's review** **before going to print** to avoid common omissions.

# Cooperative Marketing Application

All applications must be filled out online and emailed back to: office@southwestmt.com

Reminder: Make sure to fill out the project budget section.

## Applicant Information

Organization Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Legal Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_City: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Project Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Visit Southwest Montana President: Rachael Elliott-Brug Telephone: 406-396-4168

## Project Details

Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Total Budget for Project (taken from attached detailed budget): $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Percentage of Cooperative Funds Requested: \_\_\_\_\_\_ %

Dollar Amount of Cooperative Funds Requested: $ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Dates (maximum 1 year):

Beginning Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Ending Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## Funding Sources

Provide a detailed outline of all sources of funding.

a. Regional / CVB funds: $ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

b. Other Sources:

 1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ $ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ $ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL (should equal total project budget): $ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## Application Questions

1. Narrative description of this project. (Include how the project is executed.)
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Anticipated economic benefit of this project.
(Examples: increased visitation, length of stay, how the project will increase the appeal of the region as a travel destination, etc.)
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. Target market for this project.
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4. Method of project evaluation.
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|  |
| --- |
| Project Budget |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | **Regional Grant Funds** |   | **Other Funds** |   | **Total** |
| **PROFESSIONAL SERVICES:** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | $0 | + | $0 | = | $0 |
|  |  | $0 | + | $0 | = | $0 |
| **TOTAL** |   | $0 |   | $0 |   | $0 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Marketing / Advertising:** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | $0 | + | $0 | = | $0 |
|  |  | $0 | + | $0 | = | $0 |
|  |  | $0 | + | $0 | = | $0 |
|  |  | $0 | + | $0 | = | $0 |
|  |  | $0 | + | $0 | = | $0 |
| **TOTAL** |   | $0 |   | $0 |   | $0 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **OTHER:** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | $0 | + | $0 | = |  |
|  |  | $0 | + | $0 | = |  |
|  |  | $0 | + | $0 | = |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **TOTAL** |   | $0 |   | $0 |   | $0 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Quick Budget Example (Single‑Year Project)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Line Item** | **Total Cost** | **Applicant Pays** | **VSWMT Request (≤50%)** |
| Facebook/IG Ads | $1,200 | $600 | $600 |
| Print Rack Cards | $800 | $400 | $400 |
| Video Edits | $600 | $300 | $300 |
| **Totals** | **$2,600** | **$1,300** | **$1,300** |

**Another Example (Checking 50% by Line Item)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Line Item | Total | Request | Okay? |
| Billboard | $1,000 | **$600** | ❌ *exceeds 50% ($500 max)* |
| Radio | $800 | **$400** | ✅ |
| Design | $400 | **$200** | ✅ |

Submission Checklist

## \_\_\_Completed Cooperative Marketing Application and Application Questions

## \_\_\_Project Budget

## \_\_\_Certificate of Compliance (see below)

\_\_\_Email the above to office@southwestmt.com

## Montana Tourism Cooperative Marketing Funds Program

## Certificate of Compliance

The following are self-explanatory and are required to be fully completed by the applicant.

Yes No

 The organization understands that the Montana Department of Commerce reserves the right to audit the project, both for performance and accounting purposes.

It is understood that no commitment to Visit Southwest Montana will be made until after the authorized approval of the project.

 It is understood that budget items can be adjusted up to 15%. That total marketing funds will be provided only in the amount approved by Visit Southwest Montana and the Department.

It is understood that the Department has the right to deny any payment of any invoice if it is found that the organization does not meet eligibility guidelines, or that the organization is not complying with the approved program.

 It is understood that the organization will in no way represent itself as the Department or Visit Southwest Montana.

I certify that the 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 Date

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Maria Pochervina, Visit Southwest Montana Date