



Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)
2026 Rural Grant Program
IMPACT GRANT

OVERVIEW

The Missoula Board of County Commissioners created the Rural Grant Program to support community-driven projects that enhance the quality of life in the rural areas of Missoula County. The program includes two unique funding opportunities: Micro Grants, with awards between \$100 and \$500, and Impact Grants, with awards over \$500 and up to \$4,000.

This notification of funding availability (NOFA) is for the Impact Grant, which provides between \$501 and \$4000 in grant funds and is designed to support community projects that can be completed by December 31 of the award year.

Who can apply

Eligible entities are 501(c)3 not-for-profit organizations, citizen groups, community councils, individuals, schools, and special districts. Current grantees with an unspent Rural Grant balance are not eligible to apply for additional funding through the program. All project proposals must be able to demonstrate direct public benefit.

Grant amount

The minimum grant request must be at least \$501 and the maximum is \$4,000. The County may partially fund a grant request.

Eligible project costs

Examples of eligible costs include, but are not limited to, the purchase of equipment, materials and supplies, advertising/marketing, or professional services* that **benefit the local community in which the project will take place**. Impact Grant funded project expenses will be detailed in a budget worksheet provided in the online application portal.

*Examples of professional services include: advertising, printing, and mailing; construction; specialized workshops, classes, lessons, etc. Contact the grants department to discuss specific professional service project costs.

Ineligible project costs

- General operations such as staff salaries, administrative expenses, monthly rents, subscriptions, utilities, insurance, websites or routine maintenance costs.
- Projects by private businesses that benefit only that business's clientele.
- Sponsorships, including auctions, dinners, tickets, or fundraising.
- Political action or legislative advocacy.
- Expenses solely for religious purposes.

The applicant cannot be the direct beneficiary of grant funds.

*This is not an exhaustive list, please contact the grants department if you have specific questions.

How to apply

To preview the application questions and apply, go to the Rural Grant Program website at <http://missoula.co/ruralgrant>. If accommodations are needed to apply, contact the grants department listed at the end of this notice.



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Deadline

Applications are due by **11:59 p.m. Saturday, February 28, 2026**. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

Tentative timeline

The following is a preliminary timeline of activities associated with the submission, review, and award process for the Impact Grant.

Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) release date	January 5, 2026
Application deadline	11:59 p.m. February 28, 2026
Review committee reads, evaluates, and scores applications, leading to preliminary grant funding recommendations to Board of County Commissioners.	March 2026
County staff notifies applicants of tentative Impact Grant award amounts and contracting begins. <i>Applicants may be requested to provide additional information.</i>	Early April 2026
Contracts are finalized and approved.	End of April 2026
Projects can begin	May 2026
Final Reports due	30 days after project completion or Jan. 20 th , 2027, whichever is soonest

Project period

The project cannot begin until the award contract is signed by the grantee and Missoula County. Expenses incurred prior to the contract execution date will not be reimbursed. The review and contracting process can take up to 60 days. Projects must be completed by December 31 of the award year.

How grant funds are provided

Payment(s) will be made on a reimbursement basis. Reimbursement requests will be submitted to the grants department with supporting documentation. Once documentation is reviewed and verified, a check or direct deposit will be processed. Contact the grants department if receiving funds as a reimbursement is a barrier to applying.

Reporting

Expenditure Report(s), a Mid-way, and a Final Report will be required.

Matching funds

No matching funds are required.



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Evaluation criteria

1. **Demonstrated Need.** Describe the need or demand for the project and state why it is important. Make sure to clearly identify which community or rural area will benefit from this project. Preference will be considered for projects submitted by local community members.
2. **Community Benefit.** Describe how the project will make a positive difference for the community. Include who and how many people the project will serve, and how the project benefits that population.
3. **Community Support.** Submit at least three (3) letters of support from community organizations or from community members who are not related to the project leader. Letters should pertain to the proposed project and not be a character reference about the applicant.
4. **Project Impact.** Describe the impact the project will have in the community. Think big picture – what is the ripple effect of this project?

Additional verification of project viability

- If the project takes place on property not owned by the applicant, written permission granting access and verifying support from the owner is required.
- If the project costs more than the Impact Grant request, provide written documentation of the commitment by other funder(s).
- If a service is to be contracted, provide a quote verifying cost.

Applicant obligations

Before submitting the application, applicants will be required to certify that they understand and will abide by the terms and conditions listed in the application to receive the grant funding.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- **Project location** – Projects must take place in **rural communities** within Missoula County, outside of the Missoula city limits.
- **Frequency for applying** – Only one Impact Grant may be submitted by an applicant per calendar year. Applicants can receive funding for the same project for a maximum of two years.
- **Contracting** – Applications from unincorporated groups will need to identify an individual/point person that will sign a contract with Missoula County on behalf of the group.
- **Tax consequences** – Applicant is responsible for determining any tax implications from receiving this grant. Upon notice of award, submission of a W9 is required to receive payment from Missoula County.
- **Insurance requirements** – The need for liability insurance coverage will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. *Projects involving youth often require proof of insurance.

QUESTIONS?

Contact the grants department by emailing grants@missoulacounty.us or calling 406-258-4657 if you have questions about this grant opportunity.