

2027 Tourism Grant Program

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Q: Who is eligible to apply for the 2027 Tourism Grant Program?

A: Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) / Municipal DMOs / Tribal Nations

- Destination Marketing Organizations - Legally organized, nonprofit (501c6 or 501c3) Minnesota organizations whose primary purpose is to market their community or area for tourism or has been appointed this authority by the area(s) they represent.
- Examples of eligible organizations include, but are not limited to, convention and visitor bureaus, chambers of commerce and resort associations.
- Municipal DMOs - Municipal DMOs must have designated city staff that devote time to marketing their community for tourism and have a tourism-focused website separate from their city website.
- Tribal Nations defined as the 11 federally recognized Tribal Nations that share geography with Minnesota.

NOTE - there is a limit of one grant award per eligible organization in the same community or area.

Q: If our destination marketing is part of our city, are we eligible to apply for a grant?

A: Yes, but **ONLY** if your Municipal DMOs has designated city staff that devote time to marketing their community for tourism and have a tourism-focused website separate from their city website and is the primary tourism marketing entity for your community or area.

Q: Can I apply for a grant for my organization and a group/collaborative or multi-community grant?

A: No, Statewide associations and collaborative initiatives are not eligible under this program.

Q: What are the 2027 Tourism Grant key program dates?

A: See key program dates below:

- **June 1, 2026, at 9 a.m. CST** - Application open date
- **August 21, 2026, at 4 p.m. CST** - Application close date
- **July 1, 2026** - Contract effective date/ no expenses can be incurred you have a fully executed contract.
- **December 4, 2026** - Progress reports due
- **April 16, 2027** - Grant program ends
- **May 28, 2027** - Reconciliation materials due

Q: What are the Grant Award Levels for the 2027 Tourism Grant?

A: Award amounts vary based on the organization's total budget. All awards require a 1:1 cash match.

- **Nonprofit DMOs and Tribal Nations:** may receive funding based on their **total organizational budget**
- **Municipal DMOs** may receive **up to \$2,500**
- Applicants can request less than the maximum award and there is no minimum request.

Organization total budget	Max award amount	Grantee total spend 1:1 match
\$99,999 or less & Municipal DMOs	\$2,500	\$5,000
\$100,000 to \$499,999	\$4,000	\$8,000
\$500,000 to \$999,999	\$6,000	\$12,000
\$1,000,000 to \$4,999,999	\$9,000	\$18,000
\$5,000,000 and higher	\$14,000	\$28,000

Q: Will there be another grant offered in calendar year 2026?

A: Not at this time.

Q: We have not applied for an Explore Minnesota grant for several years; how can we find out what our Swift number is?

A: For help regarding Supplier Portal Registrations, User ID Requests, Password Resets, EFT Forms & Bank Change Requests, Supplier Portal Navigation, Supplier Updates (i.e., banking, addresses, contacts, etc.), and Payment Review, Contact Minnesota Management & Budget – EFT Helpline, efthelpline.mmb@state.mn.us Phone: 651-201-8106 Fax: 651-797-1305

Q: Do you have to provide a detailed marketing plan in the application?

A: No, however when applying you will be asked to outline your request for grant funds on a project summary worksheet and project budget worksheet; please answer all of the questions and provide as many details as you can at the time of application.

Q: Is there only one reimbursement from Explore Minnesota?

A: Yes. Please enter all completed projects/campaigns on one request for reimbursement form and submit all reconciliation materials at one time no later than the reconciliation deadline of **May 28, 2027**.

Q: Does this Grant cover Livability Marketing?

A: No, this grant is not designed for livability, resident recruitment or workforce development campaigns, it is intended for tourism marketing only. Please be sure you indicate your intention to use the grant funds in your application and in your budget worksheet form when applying.

Q: If I get my grant contract executed before July 1, can I start my advertising early?

A: Although your grant contract could be executed before July 1 (all signatures received and distributed) no marketing/advertising programs can start under this grant **until or after July 1**.

Q: Where can I find information about the 2027 Tourism Grant Program, FAQ's, Webinar Recording, Guidelines and Application?

A: All of the 2027 Tourism Grant Program details will be posted on the Explore Minnesota Industry Website: <https://www.exploreminnesota.com/industry/opportunities/grant-programs>

Q: If work cannot begin before July 1, can I commit to advertising now (before July 1) even if I do not pay for the ad until after I have my grant executed and in place to use?

A: It is advised not to reserve or commit to advertising until you have a fully executed grant after July 1, 2026. Grant funding should not be assumed and cannot be promised as payment until an official award has been made with a fully executed contract in place and after July 1, 2026.

Q: Can I advertise in the 2027 State Travel Guide using the 2027 Tourism Grant?

A: Yes, if you reserve and pay for an ad in the 2027 State Travel Guide *after* you have a fully executed grant contract or after July 1, 2026, whichever occurs later.

Q: Is there a 1:1 match requirement for the 2027 Tourism Grant Program?

A: Explore Minnesota requires a cash match under the grant program to help unlock the legislatively appropriated private-sector match incentive funds for the continuation of the program.

Q: What if I do not submit my application on the opening date? Could all of the 2027 Tourism Grant Funds be consumed/contracted within the first few weeks of the application opening date?

A: There is a total of \$500,000 available for funding the 2027 Tourism Grant. Applications and awards are based on your organization's total budget and requires a 1:1 match. Your organization may choose to apply for up to the full grant award available based on your organizational budget or your organization can take less than the grant award allotted based on your budget category. The application period will open **June 1, 2026 at 9 a.m. CST** and will remain open until all funds are awarded or **August 21, 2026 at 4 p.m. CST**, whichever occurs first.

Q: What if my 2025 990 Form is not available when the 2027 Tourism Grant opens?

A: Please provide your most recent 990 Tax Form; it can be as recent as the last two years (tax year 2023 or 2024).

Q: What is the grant requirement for proof of payment?

A: The proof of payment includes either a *bank statement* or a *canceled check* as proof of payment when reconciling.

Zero balance invoices from vendors will NOT be accepted as proof of payment.

Q: What is a COI?

A: A COI refers to a Certificate of Incorporation and is filed when forming a new corporation in Minnesota. It outlines the corporation's basic information, such as its name, purpose, and registered agent. Explore Minnesota requires that your corporation maintain an active and good standing status with the Secretary of State. To verify your status, please search for your corporation here: <https://mbisportal.sos.mn.gov/Business/Search>. If your status indicates that you are not in good standing or inactive, please complete the recertification process with the Secretary of State.

In addition to submitting your organization's most recent 990 Tax Form, a Minnesota Secretary of State Certificate of Incorporation (COI), and confirmation of good standing are required when submitting your grant application.

Q: Do I need to include all of the pages of our 990-tax form(s) with my grant applications or is the first page of my 990 acceptable?

A: A 990 EZ File Tax Form will be accepted, however if your organization does not file a 990 EZ file form, you must include your organizations' entire 990 filing documents with all schedules with your 2027 Tourism Grant Application to be considered.

Q: If you use your grant for SEO, what additional requirements are there beyond having the Explore Minnesota Logo on your website?

A: To utilize the program for SEO tactics, you must contract the service with a 3rd-party vendor, provide a detailed invoice (this indicates proof of service) and qualified payment information (this indicates proof of payment for the services referenced) when you are submitting reconciliation materials.

Q: If a Tribal Nation applies and a local chamber of commerce in the same area both apply, can they each get their own grant? Or will only one or the other be able to receive a grant?

A: Tribal Nations may receive their own grant if they choose to apply. There is only a limit of one grant award per eligible organization (DMO, Chamber of Commerce, CVB/Visitor Bureau, Municipal DMO) in the same community or area.

Q: Are out of state tradeshows covered under this grant?

A: Yes, the grant will cover the following trade show expenses

- Registration fees
- Booth space rental
- Electrical rental
- Furniture rental
- Carpet rental
- Cleanup costs
- Shipping of materials or display elements to the show site

Q: If our data or research contract runs on a Jan. - Dec. calendar year, would it be eligible under this grant? Or would it need to align with the July contract effective date(s)?

A: No work can begin until you have a fully executed contract after July 1, 2026. Your data contract would need to align with the dates of your grant contract to be considered eligible within the grant timeline.

Q: Will the application be available ahead of June 1?

A: Yes, the application will be available for viewing prior to June 1, 2026; however, applications will NOT be accepted until June 1, 2026 at 9 a.m. CST. If you submit your application prior to that date and time it will NOT be accepted and fall to the bottom of the grant's queue.

Q: Is a Regional DMO 501c6 eligible to apply for this grant?

A: Yes, if the primary role is for tourism marketing.

Q: Visit Lake Street (Minneapolis), some marketing overlaps with Meet Minneapolis – are we eligible?

A: Business Associations that are supported by a primary DMO are not eligible. The DMO in the area would be the only eligible organization for this grant.