

NEW PROGRAM PROPOSAL
for SMALL TOURISM BUSINESS
MARKETING GRANT PROGRAM - PILOT

I. Background

The Grand County Economic Development Department (EDD) seeks to create and fund programs that support business retention and expansion in Grand County. The EDD specifically aims to bolster the marketing abilities of small, locally-owned businesses within Grand County's tourism sector so as to support the diversity of businesses within our region. Businesses awarded these funds will be required to limit their marketing to visitors already in the Moab area.

II. Overview

The EDD proposes the creation of a grant program pilot with the aim of supporting small businesses, non-profits, and other organizations that contribute to the tourism sector of Grand County. The current stated goal of this grant program pilot is:

To support projects that boost the visibility of small, locally-owned tourism businesses and/or their services. Provided with free capital, small businesses are able to market their services to visiting tourists in the Grand County area. Resulting increased profits can contribute to the diversity of tourism-related businesses in Grand County.

The EDD has budgeted \$55,000 to fund this pilot via the Tourism Promotion carve out of transient room tax (TRT)¹ revenue expected to be collected in fiscal year 2022. The EDD will conduct significant public outreach in the months prior to the application launch to provide information on how to craft a robust application and access other business resources in our region. Applications will be scored for basic business health and across four criteria by a committee consisting of no EDD staff.

The EDD expects to disburse about 11 awards from this fund during fiscal year 2022. All awards will require a small match from the recipient organizations with the sources of match being flexible. Awardees will be given one year to spend their grant award.

¹ "Purposes of Transient Room Tax and Expenditure of Revenue -- Purchase or Lease of Facilities -- Mitigating Impacts of Recreation, Tourism, or Conventions -- Issuance of Bonds. (Effective 5/5/2021)." *Utah Code Section 17-31-2*. https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title17/Chapter31/17-31-S2.html?v=C17-31-S2_2018050820180508. See Section (2) (a) (i).

III. Costs & Resource Requirements

The EDD expects the total cost of this pilot not to exceed the \$55,000 allocated. No application fees will be charged.

The EDD will generate application resource materials, possibly including and not limited to the following listed items, in order to support applicants:

- Webinar(s) guiding applicants through the process and addressing frequently asked questions
 - Separate webinars may be created to assist for- vs. non-profit operators
- A frequently asked questions resource (web and physical page)
- An application tips and best practices resource (web and physical page; possible video)
- A list of example projects and disallowed projects (web and physical page)
- An email distribution list to receive grant timeline updates and other grant-related communications from our office
- An online feedback form assessing the grant application process
- An online feedback form assessing the grant design (already created and circulated, see: <https://rb.gy/bnclst>)
- Offer of in-person assistance to applicants
- A list of verified grant writing resources, including contractors (web and physical page)

The EDD will require applicants to meet with our region's local Small Business Development Center (SBDC) staff prior to crafting their grant application. The EDD will work with the SBDC staff in the weeks prior to the application opening date to build an understanding of Grand County grant programs as well as other resources that applicants should be directed to. The goal of this requirement is to connect Grand County businesses, non-profits, and other organizations with the office of the SBDC, a free resource that provides year-round organization assistance on matters including but not limited to funding opportunities.

As of the date of the submission of this proposal, an individual has yet to be placed in the role of SBDC staff member for our county. The role requires nearly three months of training before the new staff member is fully-equipped to assist organizations; therefore, this requirement may be amended during the program design process so that applicants are connected with other available resources.

IV. Timeline

The following timeline was created by the EDD. Currently, the creation of this pilot has aligned with the timeline set out:

Date	Engagement	Note
3/1/2022	County commission workshop	Completed
3/3/2022	Community engagement session: land use open house at Star Hall	Completed
3/8-10/2022	First governing bodies review: Grand County Economic Development Advisory Board, Grand County Economic Diversification Advisory Council, Moab Area Travel Council Advisory Board	Completed
3/29-31/2022	Community engagement sessions: public workshops at Grand Center and Moab Arts & Recreation Center	Completed
4/12-13/2022	Second governing bodies review: Moab Area Travel Council Advisory Board	Completed
4/19/2022	County commission review for approval	Underway
5/1/2022	Grant program pilot launch	Beginning of public engagement campaign publicizing grants and application resources
7/1-31/2022	Application period	This period is dependent on the hiring of an SBDC staff member for Grand County
8/1/2022	Evaluation committee convenes	This date is an estimate
9/1/2022	Grants disbursed	This date is an estimate

V. Eligibility

All small, locally-owned established organizations, including for- and non-profit businesses, will be eligible to apply to this grant program. Applications will require applicants to list a tax ID

number and business name, allowing newly-established organizations that have been licensed to apply but excluding organizations that have not yet been created.

A. Definition of a “small” business or organization

For the purpose of this pilot, the EDD has chosen to define a “small” business or organization as one that employs no more than 10 employees full-time or equivalent. “Full-time” is measured at 35 hours per week. “Equivalent” is an allowance for organizations that may employ more than 10 employees at a lower capacity than full-time. For example, a business that employs 20 employees at a rate of 17.5 hours per week would be eligible to apply to this grant.

B. Definition of a “locally-owned” business or organization

For the purpose of this pilot, the EDD has chosen to define a “locally-owned” business or organization as one in which:

- The owner or primary operator resides in Grand County or the Spanish Valley region of San Juan County; or,
- A majority of the employees work in Grand County.

VI. Evaluation Criteria

The EDD has established five points of criteria with which to evaluate applications:

Criteria	Description	Weight
Basic Business Health	Is the applicant a viable and established business or organization? Have they submitted a relatively feasible plan for the use of these funds?	Yes/No - applications cannot move forward without a “yes”
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Does the organization engage underserved or minority populations? Does the organization encourage a diverse and accepting environment within the organization and/or within our region? Is the organization owned or operated by OR does the organization employ or significantly serve the following communities? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Women or non-binary ● LGBTQ+ 	1-5 points

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Minority races and ethnicities ● Individuals w/ disabilities ● Veterans 	
Collaboration	Will these funds be spent locally? Does the proposed project engage local organizations as partners? How, if at all, does the project support local organizations and partners other than the direct recipient of these funds?	1-5 points
Alignment with Sustainability and Community Goals	Does the project include Leave No Trace, Tread Lightly, Responsible Recreation, and similar messages? Could this project or organization contribute to quality of life concerns from local residents, including noise pollution in neighborhoods?	1-10 points
Return on Investment	What is the increase in revenue or services offered that the organization expects as a result of this project? How do these returns compare to the organization’s typical revenue or offerings?	1-10 points

Applications that receive a “yes” in the Basic Business Health category and the greatest number of points will receive first consideration for funding.

VII. Evaluation Committee

To maintain impartiality throughout the grant application, disbursement, and reporting process, the EDD will not participate in the assessment of any applications and will serve solely as the administrator of this grant program. Application criteria will be assessed by a committee assembled by the EDD and consisting of:

- One Grand County commissioner
- One Moab City representative
- One Grand County community non-profit representative
- One Grand County community business representative
- One State of Utah representative (potentially a member of the Governor’s Office of Economic Opportunity)

Committee members are responsible for revealing any conflicts of interest related to applicant organizations and will be expected to recuse themselves from scoring those applications.

Committee members will be asked to score each application by the criteria listed above. Committee members will then meet, review each application and their individual assessments, and work to generate a list of funding recommendations for the EDD. The EDD will review these recommendations with the committee and draft individual grant contracts should no concerns over the recommended projects arise. Following county commission approval of these grant contracts, the EDD will disburse funds.

During the evaluation process, applicants may be asked to provide further information related to their application.

VIII. Grant Match Requirement

Awardees are required to match their grant awards by 10%. Half of the required match must be contributed as cash. For the remaining half of the required match, awardees can apply any of the following sources:

- Cash
- Materials and supplies
- Services
- Value, volunteers, or donated labor²
- Donations
- Other grants, excluding any grant provided by Grand County

Non-profit and other organizations that rely primarily on grant funds for their operational budget may apply grant funds to part of the small tourism business marketing grant's required cash match; however, any grant funds applied as cash must be related to the small tourism business marketing project.

IX. Grant Disbursement

Awardees who receive funding through this grant program will be required to sign a grant contract to be approved by the county commission. Awardees will have one year to spend their award.

² The value of one volunteer hour in the state of Utah in 2020 was \$27.82, up 6.2% from 2019. The EDD intends to value volunteer hours based on the 2020 value. See: Independent Sector. "The Value of Volunteer Time / State and Historical Data." April 19, 2021. https://independentsector.org/resource/vovt_state_2021/.

Grand County Economic Development Department
Proposal: Small Tourism Business Marketing Grant - Pilot
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Grants will be disbursed on a 90/10 basis: upon grant contract approval, awardees will initially receive 90% of their total award. To access the remaining 10%, awardees must spend their initial 90% disbursement as well as the project's total match funds.

For this pilot, the EDD aims to disburse 11 grants of about \$5,000 each. Award sums will ultimately depend on the applications received and approved.

The EDD intends to disburse funds beginning in September 2022. This is contingent upon the hiring and training of an SBDC staff member for Grand County.