



# **Eastern Oregon Visitors Association**

## **REGIONAL GRANTS PROGRAM**

**2024-2025 GUIDELINES**

**Applications will be open for a 5-week window,  
from September 23 to October 28 at 11:59pm**

## I. PROGRAM INTENT

The mission of the Eastern Oregon Visitors Association (EOVA) is: “to promote the Eastern Oregon visitor experience and enhance and preserve the region’s quality of life and economy.”

With passage of HB4146 Travel Oregon, the statewide tourism marketing organization was required to establish a Regional Cooperative Tourism Program (RCTP) to invest 20% of the statewide lodging tax in Oregon’s seven designated tourism regions. EOVA serves as the appointed Regional Destination Management Organization (RDMO) for the Eastern Oregon region and will implement the RCTP on behalf of the region. An Eastern Oregon stakeholders group was formed to advise and collaborate with EOVA on its RCTP funded grant program.

EOVA’s Regional Grant Program applicants may apply for grants once per fiscal year. Applicants may apply for one grant per fiscal year. Applicants must demonstrate at least a 10% cash match for a grant ask range from \$1,000-\$7,000. EOVA strives to be equitable to each of the 4 sub-regions (*refer to Section II-Eligibility*).

## PROGRAM KEY INITIATIVES

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*Applicants will need to identify in your application which of the following key initiatives your project aligns with (Projects that do not align with at least one of the initiatives below will be ineligible for funding)*

1. Drive visitation and overnight stays from Eastern Oregon’s key domestic and international markets.
2. Develop destination-based products that are in concert with the Eastern Oregon’s natural environment, support the stewardship of the state’s resources and its rich history
3. Tie into or enhance one of EOVA’s marketing and development pillars: Outdoor Recreation, Culture & Heritage, or Culinary & Agritourism.

*Please note: This program previously funded industry professional development and training opportunities. We have shifted funding for these opportunities to a rolling request process. The program details are being finalized. We will share more information in an upcoming industry e-newsletter. Stay tuned for further updates!*

## INVOLVING YOUR LOCAL DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATION (DMO)

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EOVA works closely with our community Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) partners and Tribes in Eastern Oregon through the Regional Cooperative Tourism Program. Local Eastern Oregon DMO partners can be found online at [Industry.TravelOregon.com](http://Industry.TravelOregon.com). If you have questions, or are unable to reach your local DMO, please contact EOVA at [outreach@visiteasternoregon.com](mailto:outreach@visiteasternoregon.com).

**Each applicant is encouraged to discuss the project scope and outcomes with their local DMO or Tribe. Letters of support from collaborators and partners are also encouraged but not required.**

## **II. ELIGIBILITY**

### **ENTITY ELIGIBILITY**

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Eligible applicants include those listed below that are *doing business* in Eastern Oregon. Priority will be given to businesses based in Eastern Oregon. Entities must demonstrate direct work in support of improving the economic impacts of Eastern Oregon’s travel and tourism industry:

- Local government- *Defined as city, county, state or national agencies. Local refers to the location and impact from the scope of work. Work must be within or market the Eastern Oregon Region.*
- Port districts
- Federally recognized Tribes
- Non-profit entities
- For-profit entities
- Community Groups with fiscal agent identified

### **ENTITY INELIGIBILITY**

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Ineligible applicants include those listed below:

- Entities that have a bankruptcy or other financial corruption within the past five years
- Entities that currently have an open grant through the EO Regional Grant Program
- Entities that have failed to submit a completed Grant Accomplishment Report and Final Budget and supporting documents for any other EO Regional Grant Program cycle.

### **PROJECT ELIGIBILITY**

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*Eligible projects or initiatives must provide for the improvement or expansion of the tourism economy in the Eastern Oregon Region.*

Project should create an enhancement to the visitor experience in Eastern Oregon and is intended to increase the likelihood of visitation from 50 miles outside the local area. Though it is not a requirement, ideally, the project will lead to an increase of overnight stays in local lodging facilities. Partnerships with tourism entities and businesses, economic development and/or government entities are looked upon favorably and strengthen an application.

Preference will be given to projects that enhance a community or sub-region rather than one entity.

Projects can include but are not limited to:

- Branding development

- Content development
- Feasibility studies or research
- Global sales support (i.e. FAM tours, trade show attendance, etc.)
- Mapping
- Out-of-state marketing
- Photo/Video asset procurement
- Signage design or construction
- Visitor experience and amenities development
- Visitor welcome-ability improvements
- Visitor Center improvements (excludes structural improvements)
- Voluntourism efforts

## INELIGIBLE PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

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The following activities are **not** eligible for grants:

- In-state marketing
- Mobile app development
- Costs of staff or consultant salaries, mileage or associated fees that are *already* budgeted to execute a particular area of work within an entity.
- Cannabis or tobacco tourism-related projects
- Cannot be used to build an endowment fund
- Repeat projects that have received funding in prior EOVA grant cycles

## III. DEVELOPING A STRONG APPLICATION

### PREFERENCE

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Applications should be clearly written and present a strong case for support. Preferences identified that will enhance a grant applications' competitiveness include:

- Project goals that align with regional and/or local objectives
- Projects that address a need in the tourism industry and shows potential to generate significant regional and/or local impact
- Community support is evident both through local cash or in-kind match contributors and support letters
- Applying entity has a track record of effective work
- Good planning is evident in the project timeline, budget and sustainability
- Plans for evaluating impact are clear, appropriate and achievable

- Projects that showcase a public/private partnership with Oregon-based small businesses

## **PROJECT BUDGET**

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The grant project budget must be submitted using the Excel template provided by Eastern Oregon Visitors Association. Grant recipients are required to keep the project budget updated throughout the lifetime of the grant. A final budget, including documentation for expenses incurred, will be a required upload in the Grant Accomplishment Report.

## **MATCHING FUNDS**

Grant applicants *must* provide a minimum of 10% cash match of the total amount awarded. Additional match above the required 10% cash match will enhance your overall application.

Travel Oregon grant funds may not be used as matching funds for any EOVA grant application.

## **SIGNAGE**

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Grant projects that involve signage may require approval letters from each organization or entity involved in permitting or approving signage installation. *Please review your local sign codes.* Evidence of approval must be on official letterhead and be included with any other support letters when submitting the application.

*Applications will not be considered unless evidence of approval has been submitted.*

## **PERMITTING**

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Grant projects that involve permits of any kind, require approval letters from state and/or local permitting authorities. Evidence of approval must be on official letterhead and be included with any other support letters with submitting the application.

## **HISTORICAL STRUCTURES**

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Local, state, and federal compliance approval processes need to be followed. Additional documentation may be required depending on the scope of the project. Project or structure must demonstrate being a cultural, historical tourism asset in the community. If applicable, include evidence that the historic structure is part of a certified local government community, designated Main Street area, or local or National Register historic district or place.

## **IV. REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS; DECISION TO AWARD**

For fiscal year 2024-2025, the application will open from Monday, September 23rd to Monday, October 28th at 11:59pm. No applications or materials will be accepted after the deadline.

EOVA staff will review and provide feedback on applications received by the October 21st deadline. Applicants will have the opportunity to revise their application based on this feedback prior to review by the broader grant review committee. All final revisions to grant applications are due by Wednesday, November 27th at 11:59pm

Applications will be reviewed and decisions to award will be made based on the following:

- Degree to which grant project aligns with and furthers the identified key initiatives (as defined in Section I of these guidelines)
- Includes intended outcomes and return on investment for positive economic impact on the community and/or region as a direct result of the project
- Demonstrates clear viability, integrity and long-term sustainability of the project
- Demonstrates that applicant and project meet the eligibility requirements of Section II, and that the application is complete and contains all information required by these grant guidelines

*EOVA reserves the right to award grants in amounts totaling less than all funds that are available to award, a different amount than is requested in a grant application, to make changes to the Grant Guidelines or to cancel the Grants Program in its entirety.*

## **V. GRANT CONTRACTS**

Applicants who are awarded a grant will enter into a contract with EOVA, which includes agreements to comply with all guideline requirements and to complete projects as approved.

### **BUDGET MONITORING; TIMELINES**

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Projects will be monitored by the Eastern Oregon Visitors Association. Grant recipients shall maintain accurate records and will use provided report templates for submission of all required information. Grant recipients will be required to keep an ongoing, updated timeline and budget throughout the lifetime of the grant. EOVA may request copies of the working budget throughout the lifetime of the grant. EOVA will provide access to all reports and additional forms required.

## EOVA & TRAVEL OREGON RECOGNITION

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Grant recipient shall visibly display on all finished grant projects (publications, websites and other significantly visible project activities) Travel Oregon and Eastern Oregon Visitors Association's logos, along with the acknowledgement: *"This project has been funded in part by a grant from Eastern Oregon Visitors Association in utilization of Travel Oregon Regional Cooperative Tourism Program funds."* EOVA will work with grant recipient to ensure proper usage and placement of the logo.

A regional style guide has been developed for use by tourism businesses and destination marketers. Grant recipients are encouraged to adopt these guidelines in order to better align with the other communication efforts.

### **Design Review**

All marketing collateral must adhere to grant program requirements and be approved by the Eastern Oregon Visitors Association prior to finalizing a published piece. Grant recipient shall allow at least two weeks for EOVA to review marketing collateral and provide feedback (timing will depend on the complexity of the project).

### **Sales Project Types**

Not all sales project types will be able to display EOVA and Travel Oregon recognition. For trade-show shipping or participation costs, host bids or tour operator support, EOVA and Travel Oregon recognition is not required. For projects that are events, trade-show related production, receptive tour operator trainings, or similar EOVA and Travel Oregon recognition must be on published collateral, if applicable.

### **Development Project Types**

Not all development project types will be able to display EOVA and Travel Oregon recognition. For projects such as feasibility studies, research, or strategic plans, Travel Oregon recognition must be displayed on a final published report, if applicable. Do not place EOVA and Travel Oregon recognition on wayfinding signage, unless authorized by EOVA and Travel Oregon to do so. Grant recipient must submit signage designs to EOVA for review prior to production and placement. For professional development, technical assistance, or conference participation, EOVA and Travel Oregon recognition is not required.

## GRANT REPORTS

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All required reports will be submitted through EOVA's online grant management system.

### Mid-Project Update

Mid-project update must be submitted to EOVA halfway through the award notification and the identified project completion date, using the form provided by EOVA. The mid-project update should also include an updated project timeline and project budget.

NOTE: All Development Type Grants that involve construction of any kind are required to complete a Mid-Project Report.

### Grant Accomplishment Report and Final Budget

Project must be completed within 12 months from the notification date. The Grant Accomplishment Report must be submitted to EOVA within 30 days after grant project completion or **by January 20, 2026 at the latest**. The final budget along with copies of detailed project expenses must be uploaded as part of the report. No further reimbursement will be provided after submission of this report.

Marketing Grants may require additional follow up.

NOTE: In addition to the Grant Accomplishment Report and final budget, recipients receiving grant funding to attend a conference or training must submit a post-conference/training testimonial on the value of attending.

NOTE: In addition to the Grant Accomplishment Report and final budget, recipients of Sales Type Grants for tradeshow must submit a post-trade show report that includes the ROI and outcomes which may include leads generated, and other results as appropriate.

## GRANT FUNDS DISBURSEMENT

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Funds will be distributed at 100% of the approved grant amount. These funds may only be used for costs related to the project and clearly identified in the grant budget. Any grant funds not used as approved shall be returned to EOVA pursuant to the grant contract. Projects must be completed within the approved grant timeline. Failure to complete the grant in the allotted time, and/or to submit Grant Accomplishment Report and final budget will require funds to be returned to the Eastern Oregon Visitors Association. Failure to comply with the grant guidelines, including the submission of reports by their deadline, may result in the ineligibility of any future grant programs offered by EOVA.

You may submit reports earlier than required dates if your project timeline allows.

NOTE: EOVA will not disburse funds for any project costs incurred before the grant contract is signed.



## VI. QUESTIONS

View the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page for commonly asked questions. Submit additional questions to outreach@visiteasternoregon.com. Please allow seven business days for EOVA to respond.

## GRANT TIMELINE

Below is the timeline for the Eastern Oregon Visitors Association Regional Grants Program:

September 23, 2024	<b>Application Opens</b>
October 28, 2024 (11:59pm)	<b>Application Closes</b>
November 6, 2024	<b>Staff Provides Feedback to Applicants (optional)</b>
November 27, 2024 (11:59pm)	<b>Revisions to Applications Due (if opted in for feedback)</b>
January 21, 2025	<b>Grant Application Status Notification (work can officially begin)</b>
January 31, 2025 (5 p.m.)	<b>Signed Grant Contract Due to Eastern Oregon Visitors Association</b>

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## GRANT APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Access the EO Grants Program Application [ONLINE](#).

- View the application questions before you begin
- Refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page for troubleshooting

Before beginning the online application, we encourage applicants to gather all information and/or documents required to submit the application:

- Project Budget
- Project Timeline
- Project Support Letters, if applicable
- Federal Tax ID Letter
- Evidence of approval from all parties involved for projects involving permits of any kind
- Marketing Projects:** If producing collateral, you must describe your distribution plan and associated budget costs

