



 WESTERN MONTANA'S  
**GLACIER COUNTRY**

# Visitor Information Center Grant Program Guidelines

 Libby. © GLACIER COUNTRY



CSKT Bison Range. © ANDY AUSTIN

## Program Overview

### PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

Western Montana’s Glacier Country (Glacier Country) supports community-based Visitor Information Centers (VICs) through training and financial assistance.

#### Research shows that visitors who engage with staffed visitor information centers:

- › Stay longer in the community
- › Spend more money locally
- › Explore more attractions and businesses
- › Adjust travel plans based on local recommendations
- › Report higher satisfaction with their experiences

Successful VIC programs support the local visitor economy by providing a welcoming first impression and reliable, up-to-date information about attractions, accommodations, responsible recreation, and the history and culture of Montana and the community.

Glacier Country’s VIC Grant Program provides staffing assistance to eligible organizations operating visitor information centers within Glacier Country’s eight-county region.

### STAFFING ASSISTANCE LEVELS

**Minimum Requirement:** VIC must be open at least 30 hours per week, Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend.

<b>Peak Season Hours (Memorial Day–Labor Day)</b>	<b>Maximum Award</b>
30–39 hours/week .....	\$6,000
40–49 hours/week .....	\$8,000
50+ hours/week .....	\$10,000

### TOTAL PROGRAM FUNDING

**Total Available Funding:** \$80,000

**Use of Funds:** Awards support staffing expenses needed to maintain or increase VIC hours of operation during peak visitation season—Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend.

**Funding Structure:** One-time payment at the beginning of the grant term.

**Award Range:** \$6,000–\$10,000 per eligible VIC based on hours of operation.

Awards may be adjusted based on funding availability.

### GRANT TERM

**Operating Dates:** May 22–September 8, 2026

**Final Reporting Deadline:** September 30, 2026 (via Submittable)

All funded hours must fall within the official grant term.

Applications open every spring.  
 Learn more here: [partners.glaciermt.com/visitor-information-center-grant-program](https://partners.glaciermt.com/visitor-information-center-grant-program)



# Eligibility Requirements

## ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Applicants must be located within Glacier Country's eight-county region:

Flathead, Glacier, Lake, Lincoln, Mineral, Missoula, Ravalli and Sanders counties.

Eligible entities include:

- › Nonprofit organizations in good standing with the Montana Secretary of State
- › Economic development organizations
- › Local governments (city, county, consolidated governments)
- › Tribal governments and organizations

Examples: Chambers of commerce, tourism improvement districts, economic development authorities and established visitor information centers.

Applicants **may not** be a destination organization that receives the Montana Lodging Facility Use Tax.



## OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

To qualify for funding, the VIC must:

- › Be open ≥30 hours/week from May 22–September 8, 2026
- › Maintain exterior wayfinding signage
- › Be ADA accessible
- › Offer ADA and RV-size parking
- › Provide public access to phone, computer/tablet and Wi-Fi
- › Maintain general liability and workers' compensation insurance (including volunteer coverage if applicable)
- › Process payroll using recognized accounting software (manual spreadsheets not accepted)

## REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION (APPLICATION STAGE)

Applicants must upload:

- › IRS nonprofit status certification (if applicable)
- › Signed and dated current-year IRS W-9
- › Employer Identification Number (EIN)
- › Certificate of Liability Insurance naming Glacier Country Regional Tourism Commission Inc. (legal name) as additional insured
- › Photo of exterior wayfinding signage
- › Name of recognized payroll accounting software

## FACILITY + SERVICE EXPECTATIONS

Funded VICs must:

- › Maintain a clean and welcoming interior and exterior (including adjacent sidewalks)
- › Serve as travel counselors for their community, region and the state of Montana
- › Prominently display the Western Montana's Glacier Country Travel Guide at no cost
- › Distribute additional materials, such as highway maps, regional guides, museum brochures, activity flyers, lodging information and local points of interest

Submission of an application constitutes agreement to comply with all program requirements.



Glacier National Park. © ANDY AUSTIN

## Allowable Use of Funds

Program funds may be used only for expenses directly related to VIC staff providing travel counseling services.

### ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

- ✓ Hourly wages for VIC-assigned staff
- ✓ Payroll taxes
- ✓ Workers' compensation insurance
- ✓ VIC staff hours accrued completing Customer Service Essentials training

### INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

- ✗ Wages or expenses unrelated to VIC operations
- ✗ Paid vacation, sick leave or PTO
- ✗ Administration or organizational overhead
- ✗ Staff not assigned to travel counseling roles

**Only hours worked between May 22 and September 8, 2026, are eligible.**

All PTO, vacation or sick leave must be excluded and clearly identified in reporting.



Missoula Farmers Market. © ANDY AUSTIN



## Payroll + Staffing Requirements

### For fiscal transparency purposes:

- › Payroll must be processed using recognized accounting software (e.g., QuickBooks, BambooHR, Paychex, Gusto, etc.)
- › Third-party payroll processors are allowed
- › Manual spreadsheets are not accepted

### Final payroll reporting must include:

- › Employee name
- › Hours worked
- › Hourly wage rate
- › Payroll period

### The organization remains responsible for:

- › Federal and state tax filings
- › Maintaining workers' compensation insurance
- › General liability coverage
- › Employee benefits outside the scope of this program

## TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Each staff member and/or volunteer whose hours are recorded and reimbursed during the grant term must:

- › Complete **Customer Service Essentials** (required at least once every three years)
- › For VIC managers, **Train the Trainer** may substitute for the Customer Service Essentials course
- › Submit a valid certification of completion annually

### Additional training (optional):

- › **Don't Add Fuel to the Fire** (this training does not replace the required Customer Service Essentials certification)

Training is offered at no cost through Glacier Country's Learning Center.

Each staff member/volunteer must register individually and obtain their own certificate.

For date verification and compliance, training certificates must be submitted with the final report annually for each staff member and volunteer who engages with visitors during the grant term.



Polson. © CHRISTIAN SAWICKI

## Visitor Tracking Requirements

Each funded VIC must track all visitors served during the grant term. Glacier Country will provide a visitor-tracking template for upload with the final report.

### REQUIRED DATA COLLECTION

**For each visiting party:**

- › Date of visitation
- › Number of people in the party
- › Country of residence (if outside the U.S.)

No personal identifying information is required.

### TRACKING STANDARDS

- › Only documented visitors may be counted (e.g., visitor log book)
- › Estimates are not permitted
- › If visitors do not self-sign, staff must ask: “Where are you visiting from?”
- › Data must be entered into the Excel tracking form provided
- › PDFs or alternate formats will not be accepted

Accurate visitor tracking strengthens program credibility and demonstrates community impact. Accurate reporting also enables Glacier Country to continue advocating for the continuation of the VIC Grant Program.

## Hours of Operation + VIC Calendar

**Each organization must maintain a VIC calendar documenting:**

- › Actual hours of operation for each day
- › Staff and volunteer hours worked

Glacier Country will provide an official Excel template to be uploaded with final reports.



Darby's Wild West Rodeo. © CHANCE JACKSON



# Required Closeout Documentation

Due by noon, September 30, 2026 (via Submittable)

## Final reports must include:

- › Training certification for all VIC staff, paid and volunteer
- › Payroll reports verifying eligible hours
- › Completed VIC calendar (Excel template provided)
- › Insurance verification, if policies have changed during the grant term
- › Brief narrative summarizing highlights, challenges and year-over-year comparisons (if applicable)
- › Accurate data for visitor counts and locations (Excel template provided)

Late or incomplete reports may affect future eligibility. Changes to VIC hours of operation during the grant term may require the applicant to return unused award funds.





## Application Process

All applications must be submitted via the online platform Submittable.

### Applicants will provide:

- › Eligibility form
- › Official tax designation or exemption letter to verify entity type
- › Organizational information
- › Authorized representative contact information
- › EIN (upload a copy of your organization's current signed and dated IRS Form W-9)
- › Hours of operation
- › Facility and accessibility details
- › Photo of exterior wayfinding signage
- › Certificate of Liability Insurance naming Glacier Country Regional Tourism Commission Inc. (legal name) as additional insured
- › Name of recognized payroll accounting software

## Review & Award Process

- › Staff review applications for completeness
- › Complete applications are evaluated by a grants committee
- › Applicants are notified of funding decisions
- › Approved applications serve as the contractual agreement
- › Grant terms may not be extended without prior approval



## Questions?

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