

Funding Opportunities for Agritourism in Montana

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As many producers in Montana consider implementing agritourism opportunities on their operations, they may find themselves wondering if there is funding available to support these new activities. While there are many state and federal programs that support agriculture, many of those programs are specifically focused on things like conservation, energy improvements, and value-added agriculture. These programs have had numerous positive impacts on Montana producers and the state's agriculture industry at-large, but their eligibility requirements have, in some cases, left agritourism out in the cold.



However, while many of these programs may not be a great fit to help with agritourism activity costs, there are other options that are available for producers in Montana. Securing funding from these programs can help to offset some of the costs associated with implementing a new activity. This can, in turn, help producers minimize the risk of "going it alone" when trying something new with their operation (like agritourism). In addition to funding programs, there are also numerous technical assistance resources available throughout the state to help refine proposals and access funding.



At the Montana Department of Agriculture, there are two sources of funding to consider when seeking funding for agritourism activities. The Business Acceleration and Marketing Program (BAM), through the Growth Through Agriculture program, and the Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG), a federal program through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s Agriculture Marketing Services (AMS). This info sheet includes details on both, including amounts you can apply for, who is eligible, and what the funds can be used for.

- What grants and resources are available for producers branching into agritourism?
- Which ones can you apply for on your own operation?
- Details on the BAM (Business Acceleration and Marketing Program) and the Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG)

Business Accelerated Marketing

The Business Acceleration and Marketing Program (BAM), which is a subset of the Growth Through Agriculture program (GTA), is designed to support businesses entering expansionary phases of growth and to aid in the access, development, and expansion of new markets. Eligible applicants include: individuals, businesses and industry organizations, start-up businesses that have been in operation for at least 6 months, public and private agencies and organizations, educational institutions, local governments and cooperatives. Applicants are eligible for up to \$20,000 in funding with up to \$5,000 of that available for equipment. There is a 50% cost-share requirement with the grant and the term of the grant is one year. The BAM program may be a good option for producers as they consider adding agritourism activities within their operation.

Eligible costs for the program include:

- Trade Show expenses, including:
 - Booth/space rental
 - Booth equipment, furniture, and carpeting rental
 - Promotional materials (product flyer specific to show, booth signage, etc.)
 - Booth utility costs
 - Shipping, storage, drayage (costs of moving freight at exhibition site) and show labor.
 - Travel expenses (airfare or mileage, hotel)
- Foreign trade mission participation
- Web development including market-specific website updates and e-commerce capabilities.
- Certifications needed for specific market access.



- Expenses for domestic and international marketing products and campaigns
- Packaging/label design
- Agritourism*
- Product development
- Product commercialization
- Process/plant layout and design
- Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point planning
- Business planning support
- Supply chain planning
- Return on investment analysis
- Equipment up to \$5,000 (\$10,000 grant+-match), must be essential to project

*Agritourism is defined as a form of commercial enterprise that links agricultural production or agricultural processing with tourism in order to attract visitors to a farm, ranch, or other agricultural business for purposes of entertaining or educating the visitors.

Specialty Crop Block Grant

Additionally, the Montana Department of Agriculture also administers the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBG), a federal program through the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agriculture Marketing Service (AMS). The purpose of the program is to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops in Montana. For purposes of the program, specialty crops are defined as fruits, vegetables, peas and lentils, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture).

Agritourism fits into the program by increasing the competitiveness of specialty crops through visibility. If people know where these people and places are and what they are doing, the consumption of Montana specialty crops can be increased. It is important to note that projects from this program must illustrate an industry-wide benefit. Funding to help support the formation of an agritourism organization and educational outreach to producers and consumers are just some of the things that come to mind when considering this program. There is no match requirement for the program, and applications are typically accepted in the Spring, with awards beginning in the Fall.

As more producers consider agritourism, these funding programs should be considered. Additionally, the programs discussed here are only programs that are administered by the Montana Department of Agriculture; there are other programs coming online, both at the state and federal level, that may help producers with funding.



To learn more about the Business Accelerated Marketing Program, scan this QR code or visit <https://agr.mt.gov/Topics/E-G/GTA-Pages/GTA-BAM>



To learn more about the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, scan this QR code or visit <https://agr.mt.gov/SpecialtyCropBlockGrants>

