

May 05, 2020



Governor Steve Bullock today announced that families, small businesses, non-profits, health services centers and individuals across Montana hardest-hit by impacts of COVID-19 will be eligible to apply for grants through nine new programs created in response to the emergency.

Guided by more than 1,400 public comments and his Coronavirus Relief Fund Advisory Council, Governor Bullock is making \$123,550,000 available in the first round of emergency grants funded through the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

**“Montanans have made it clear it’s imperative that we step in and do everything possible to ensure small businesses can responsibly reopen, non-profits continue to serve our vibrant communities, homeowners can stay in their homes, and Montanans most in-need have access to services,”** Governor Bullock said. **“We’re all in this together and I know Montana will emerge from this challenge even stronger than before.”**

Beginning **Thursday, May 7**, Montanans out of work, families with limited resources, small businesses, non-profits and others can apply for financial relief for things like rental and mortgage assistance, business and non-profit grants, grants to serve seniors and those living with a disability, food banks and local food producers.

The following new programs join the state’s suite of existing support services and direct federal appropriations:

- The **Montana Business Stabilization Grant program** will provide working capital for Montana-owned small businesses with 50 or fewer employees that have sustained a loss of revenue due to COVID 19. Current funding available is \$50 million, the maximum award amount per business is \$10,000.
- The **Montana Innovation Grant program** is intended to help companies scale up, improve capabilities, or drive expanded distribution of products or services developed in response to COVID-19. Non-profit and for-profit businesses of less than 150 employees with primary operations in Montana that have created an

innovative product or service intended to directly confront the COVID-19 emergency can apply for grants of up to \$25,000. Current funding available is \$5 million.

- **Montana Food and Agriculture Adaptability Program** grants are available to food and agriculture businesses to help increase community resilience amid the COVID-19 pandemic and other economic disruptions. Examples of eligible projects include those focused on accessing new markets, projects which strengthen and expand local food systems, and other business adaptations that decrease food and agricultural waste. Current funding available is \$500,000, with a maximum grant award of \$10,000.
- **Emergency Housing Assistance Program** will provide rent, security deposit, mortgage payment, and/or hazard insurance assistance as-needed for Montanans who have lost a job or substantial income loss as a result of COVID-19. Initial payments may include up to three months assistance where the eligible household can demonstrate arrears for April and May, with continuable inability to make their June payment. Montana Housing will pay the difference between 30 percent of the household's current gross monthly income and their eligible housing assistance costs, up to \$2,000 a month. Household income limits range from \$75,000-\$125,000 based on family size. Montanans receiving other forms of housing assistance are not eligible. Total funding available is \$50 million.
- **Public Health Grants** are available to local and tribal health departments and urban tribal clinics to help in the response to COVID-19 and to meet the needs of their communities. Each organization is eligible to apply for funding. Current funding available is \$5 million.
- **Stay Connected Grants** ranging from \$500-\$2,000 per applicant are available to reduce social isolation among Montana's seniors. Eligible applicants include area agencies on aging, assisted living facilities, nursing homes, and tribal elder services. Grant funds can be used to fund technologies and other efforts to encourage physically distant forms of social interaction for elderly Montanans during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Current funding available is \$400,000.
- **Food Bank and Food Pantry Assistance** of up to \$50,000 per applicant are available to increase food security for Montanans hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Eligible applicants include community organizations providing food assistance to Montanans with limited resources, food banks, food pantries, community cupboards, and entities with infrastructures already in place to begin new food distribution programs. Current funding available is \$2 million.
- **Social Services Nonprofit Grants** of up to \$10,000 per applicant are available for nonprofit organizations impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency to retain existing programs and services, employees, or organizational viability for provision of future services and operations. Eligible applicants are registered, Montana-based social service nonprofits that were operating prior to February 15, 2020. Current funding available is \$10 million.
- **Telework Assistance Grants** of up to \$1,000 per individual will go towards purchasing equipment to assist Montanans with disabilities access telework equipment. DPHHS will partner with a local non-profit organization to assess and support assistive technology needs of individuals with disabilities during COVID-19. This assistance will help ensure people with disabilities have the equipment needed to adapt to the change in working environment due to COVID-19. Current funding available is \$650,000.

A comprehensive information resource and application portal is available at [COVIDRELIEF.MT.GOV](https://COVIDRELIEF.MT.GOV). The application portion of the website will go live at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 7. To prepare for the application,

businesses and non-profits should have their tax ID, proof of business registration, a brief description of how the grant will be spent, and a brief description of how COVID-19 has impacted operations. Homeowners and renters should have bank account information available and verification of job or income loss.