



VHR COMMUNITY INVESTMENT MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM

PROGRAM INTENT:

The mission and purpose of Visit Hood River (VHR) is to inspire and sustain economic vitality and responsible destination development as stewards of community resources, in partnership with local leaders. Entrusted with public and private funds, VHR is committed to develop, execute, measure, communicate and provide ongoing accountability for programs designed to support a vital and enduring economy for the businesses, residents, and guests of our community.

Community vitality and reinvestment support are key components of the VHR Community Grant Program (VHR-CGP). VHR intends to award matching cash grant support “to eligible applicants for projects that contribute to the development and improvement of the Hood River community by means of the enhancement, promotion and sustainability of Hood River as a destination.”

The VHR Community Grant Program will recur annually. In fiscal year 2026-2027, the total Grant Program is funded with up to \$40,000 for all projects awarded. Each project requires its own application. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to meet the matching requirements for funding.

PROGRAM KEY INITIATIVES:

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

1. Maximize the economic return on public and private investments for the community of Hood River
2. Support non-peak, multi-night visitation to Hood River
3. Develop destination-based products and/or services that are in concert with Hood River’s natural environment
4. Support the stewardship and sustainability of Hood River as a livable community and destination

ELIGIBILITY:

Eligible applicants will be VHR Stakeholders, including those listed that are doing business within Hood River County and can demonstrate support for improving the community vitality of Hood River:

- Non-profit entities
- For profit businesses
- Federally recognized Tribes and indigenous peoples

Eligible projects or initiatives must be *new* and must provide for the improvement or economic vitality of greater Hood River as a destination.

Eligible grant projects shall include an actionable plan objective to support and advance the Visit Hood River diversity, equity, and inclusion statement objectives. If available, please include the DEI values statement for your business or organization.

Projects should create an enhancement to the community and to the visitor experience in Hood River and should support improving the community and destination. Preference will be given to proposals that help encourage visitation and overnight stays in local lodging facilities in **non-peak** periods. Non-peak travel periods are October through May (peak season is June through September).

Leveraged, collaborative partnerships with tourism entities and businesses, and economic development and/or government entities are looked upon favorably and strengthen an application.



INELIGIBILITY:

Ineligible applicants are identified as:

- Entities that have a bankruptcy or other financial corruption within the past five years
- Entities that have failed to fulfill past grant award requirements within past three years (includes: project completion, submission of required grant reporting, proper use of grant funds)
- Entities requesting a grant without written letters of support from at least three community partners
- Activities that are not new efforts, initiatives, or offerings

Ineligible grant expenses include:

- Costs of staff or consultant salaries, mileage or associated fees that are **already** budgeted to execute a particular area of work within an entity
- Projects that emphasize private profitability and/or investments that could be considered a regular cost of doing business
- Deferred, regular or ongoing maintenance and upkeep

PROJECT BUDGET:

The grant project budget must be submitted in detail, clearly outlining the entire scope of the project inclusive of all anticipated matching funds, revenue, and expenses. Grant recipients must keep the project budget updated throughout the grant's lifetime, providing quarterly status reports to VHR.

VHR reserves the right to request a copy of and/or audit the project budget throughout the grant's lifetime. A final budget, including documentation for expenses incurred, will be required in the Grant Accomplishment Report.

MATCHING FUNDS:

Grant applicants must provide a 1-to-1 match of the total amount awarded. Matching funds must include a minimum of 50% cash match of the total amount awarded. An additional match above the required 50% cash match may come as in-kind services.

HISTORICAL STRUCTURES:

Local, state, and federal compliance approval processes need to be followed. Additional documentation may be required depending on the project's scope. 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.

REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS:

The application process and grant awards will be opened annually, as funds remain available. Applications will be reviewed and decisions to award will be made based on the following:

- Applicant meets all Eligibility Requirements
- Non-profit organization projects will be preferentially considered
- The degree to which grant project aligns with and furthers the identified key initiatives of the VHR Strategic Plan



- Proposal details intended outcomes and return on investment for positive economic impact on the community 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 and submits a complete application containing all elements required by these grant guidelines
- Applying entity has a record of accomplishment of effective work, evident through strong support letters
- Plans for evaluating impact are clear, appropriate and achievable

DECISIONS TO AWARD:

The VHR Board of Directors is responsible for contractual and fiduciary oversight of the VHR Community Grant Program and reserves the right for final decisions in awarding grant funds:

- beyond the recommendation(s) of the VHR Community Grants Program committee, and/or in amounts totaling less than all funds that are available under the VHR Community Grants Program
- to award an amount different than requested in a grant application
- to make changes to the Grant Guidelines or to cancel the Community Grants Program in its entirety

GRANT CONTRACTS:

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

BUDGET MONITORING | TIMELINES:

Projects will be monitored by VHR, and grant recipients shall maintain accurate records. Grant recipients will be required to keep an ongoing, updated timeline and budget throughout the grant's lifetime. VHR reserves the right to request copies of the working budget throughout the grant's lifetime.

VISIT HOOD RIVER BRAND ALIGNMENT:

VHR operates with a community brand style guide for use by tourism businesses and destination marketers. Grant recipients are encouraged to adopt these guidelines to align and complement consistent destination tourism communication efforts.

MID-PROJECT REPORT:

A Mid-Project Report is only required for projects over \$10,000 in grant awards. Mid-project reports and an updated project budget must be submitted to VHR six months after award notification. **NOTE:** All 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 and Grant Accomplishment Report, inclusive of actual budget, submitted to VHR within 12 months of grant project notification. Final reimbursement will be provided after submission of the final report and budget.



GRANT FUNDS DISBURSEMENT:

Any grant funds not used as approved shall be returned to VHR pursuant to the grant agreement. Projects must be completed within the approved grant timeline. Following approval and execution of contract, a disbursement of the grant award will be sent to recipient.

You may submit reports earlier than required dates if your project timeline allows. Failure to submit reports by their deadline may result in ineligibility for any future grant programs offered by VHR. **NOTE: VHR will not reimburse a grant recipient for any costs associated with a grant project incurred before a grant contract is signed.**

GRANT TIMELINE:

March 16, 2026 – **Application Period Opens**

April 30, 2026 – **Application Period Closes at 5pm**

May 15, 2026 – **Matching Grant Application Status Notification**

May 29, 2026– **Matching Grant Signed Agreement due to VHR**

June 12, 2026 – **Funds Released**

June 30, 2027 – **Projects must be completed**

VISIT HOOD RIVER COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION CONTENT REQUIREMENTS AND FORMAT:

- Entity Name:
- Entity Federal Tax Identification Number:
- Entity Mailing Address:
- Entity Phone Number:
- Grant Application Contact Name:
- Grant Application Contact Email Address:
- Grant Application Contact Phone Number:
- I have read the VHR Community Grant Program Guidelines
- Project Name:
- Grant Amount Requested:
- Total Project Cost:

If Grant Project Contact is different from the Application Contact*

- Grant Project Contact Name:
- Grant Project Contact Email Address:

NARRATIVE QUESTIONS | Overview

PROJECT:



- Describe the project for which funding is requested (details should include your project's primary goals).
- Describe the need for your project.
- What is your long-term plan for your project?
- How will you measure the success of your project, in the short-term and in the long-term? Be as specific as possible.
- How will your project increase the likelihood of visitation from 50 miles outside the local area?
- How would these grant dollars make a difference to your project?

PROJECT PREFERENCE:

You are not required to answer project preference questions; however, answers may help to enhance a grant application's competitiveness. *There is a 400-word maximum for each question response.*

- Demonstrate how this project has the support and involvement of community Stakeholders.
- In what ways does this project address a need in the tourism industry and show potential to generate significant regional and/or local impact?
- Describe how this project complements and is consistent with our local strategic objectives.

REQUIRED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

- Proof of Federal Tax ID (letter from IRS)
Note: If you are a tax-exempt non-profit organization, and you cannot find your Affirmation Letter, you may contact the IRS Tax Exempt and Government Entities Customer Account Services at 877-829-5500 to request an Affirmation Letter.
- Entity's Federal W-9 Form
- Grant Budget: detailing all revenue and expenses
- Grant Timeline: Project timeline, including benchmark dates and approximate grant project planning meeting dates, project benchmarks, etc.
- Signage Documentation: If your grant project involves signage of any kind, you are required to gather and submit letters from all required local, regional, or state sign authorities involved demonstrating approval to place signage on their land/property during the timeframe of the grant.
- Distribution Plan: If producing collateral you must describe your distribution plan, including budgeted costs.
- Construction Permitting: If your grant project involves infrastructure development/construction you must include plan drawings and approval from permitting authorities if required locally.

OPTIONAL DOCUMENTS:

- Letters of Support from community partners are strongly encouraged.
- Optional Attachments: Applicants can provide supporting materials they believe the review committee may find valuable when reviewing the application.

SUBMIT QUESTIONS and/or SUBMISSIONS VIA EMAIL TO: katie@visithoodriver.com