

TRAVEL OREGON
**2024-2025 RECREATION READY
PROGRAM GUIDELINES**



I. PROGRAM INTENT

TRAVEL OREGON'S MISSION AND PROGRAM KEY INITIATIVES

The mission of Travel Oregon is to inspire travel that uplifts Oregon communities. Collaborating with stakeholders and partners to align as stewards of Oregon, we work to optimize economic opportunity, advance equity and respect ecosystems, cultures and places that make Oregon...Oregon.

Program purpose:

The Recreation Ready program is available to rural and tribal communities that are part of the nine federally recognized Tribes of Oregon. The program is aimed at supporting communities in developing outdoor recreation visitor experiences that drive economic prosperity and respect natural environments while increasing access and equity.

Successful program applicants will have identified an outdoor recreation visitor experience project concept and be early in the development phase. At the time of program application, project concepts should not yet be ready to seek traditional infrastructure investments but in need of assistance to get to that position in the future.

Project concepts eligible for Recreation Ready should relate to:

- Soft-surface trail recreation
- Water recreation
- Dark skies
- Camping

Program cost:

There is no cost to participate in the program, however there are capacity requirements to identify a Project Steering Committee, participate in meetings, community engagements and other work.

Optional Phase 1 Scholarship:

A \$6,000 optional scholarship is available to the applicant organization to support their capacity for participation in Phase 1 of the program. If the applicant chooses not to select this optional scholarship payment, it will allow Travel Oregon to offer it to future program awardees who are in need.

PROGRAM TIMELINE, PHASES & PARTICIPANT CAPACITY REQUIREMENTS

PHASE 1 PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT (JANUARY-JULY 2025)

Step 1: Program Kick-Off (Jan. 8-17, 2025)

A virtual program kick-off meeting for all participants will be held on **Wed., Jan. 8 from 10-11:30 a.m. This meeting is required for lead applicants and optional for Project Steering Committee members.** Each Project Steering Committee will begin their bi-weekly 60-90-minute planning meetings on **Tues., Jan. 14 or Fri., Jan. 17.**

Step 2: Oregon State University (OSU) Elevate Outdoors Training (Dec. 20, 2024 to Jan. 10, 2025)

Lead applicants will be required to take a self-paced, four-hour OSU virtual training titled Elevate Outdoors, which is designed to teach different skills and tools for developing inclusive and welcoming outdoor recreation visitor experiences. The training will culminate with a facilitated virtual session on **Fri., Jan. 10** to help participants apply the learnings to their Recreation Ready project concept. Training and meetings are required for lead applicants and optional for Project Steering Committee members.

Step 3: Feasibility Analysis (Jan. 8, 2025-Apr. 30, 2025)

Participants will receive dedicated technical assistance from Travel Oregon staff and an outdoor recreation planner/consultant. They will work as a team to elevate and build momentum for the outdoor recreation visitor experience project within their community. It includes a rapid feasibility analysis to evaluate the viability of the project, community readiness and assessment of risks and opportunities.

Step 4: Disability and Inclusion Assessment (Feb. 2025-Apr. 2025)

A high-level disability and inclusion assessment of the project will be performed by a professional consultant to help support the project in meeting the growing diversity of visitor demand and foster more inclusive and accessible outdoor experience that is welcoming to all.

Step 5: Community Engagement and Input (Apr. 2025-May 2025)

To engage the community and receive critical input on the project, a short virtual survey will be available, and one to two in-person engagement sessions will occur in the community.

Step 6: Final Project Feasibility Report and Action Plan (May 2025-June 2025)

Project Steering Committee will submit a final feasibility report and action plan highlighting the key next steps and recommendations to advance the project forward into implementation. This will conclude Phase 1 of the program.

Step 7: Mid-Program Evaluation (June 2025-July 2025)

Before determining eligibility or participation in Phase 2 of the program, a mid-program evaluation will take place to determine prior steps have been completed successfully and to provide feedback on the program.

Destinations that successfully complete Phase 1 will be eligible for Phase 2.

PHASE 2 POST-ENGAGEMENT AWARD (JULY 2025-DEC. 2026)

Based on the evaluation review, communities will be eligible and invited to participate in Phase 2 of the program. The lead applicant will work with Travel Oregon to submit a one-year project scope of work (SOW) to apply project investment funds (up to \$100,000) to advance the action plan outcomes. Areas of work eligible for funding will include but are not limited to:

- Technical assistance for pre-infrastructure analysis and planning
- Technical or environmental assessments
- Infrastructure design or construction

PHASE 2 PARTICIPANT CAPACITY REQUIREMENTS

Lead applicants should allocate an average of one to two hours of work per week. Depending on the SOW and determined project outcomes. The lead applicant will likely have reduced workload through the end of Phase 2. These roles and expectations will be assessed and determined during the SOW development period.

Project Steering Committee members should allocate an average of one hour per week through the first several months of Phase 2. These roles and expectations will need to be assessed and determined during the SOW development period.

II. ELIGIBILITY

ENTITY ELIGIBILITY

The Recreation Ready program is available to rural and tribal communities that are part of the nine federally recognized Tribes of Oregon. This program is designed for Destination Management/Marketing Organizations (DMOs) or other organizations working closely with destination managers to be the lead applicant.

Eligible applicants include:

- 501(c)3, 501(c)6, government entity or Port District in rural Oregon*
- One of the nine federally recognized tribes of Oregon*

*This program defines “rural” as communities with populations of 35,000 or less and not adjacent to (or part of) an urban or metropolitan area of 50,000 or more. Tribal applicants do not need to meet this definition of “rural.”

INVOLVING YOUR DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION (DMO)

This program requires participants to have a Project Steering Committee that will shape and guide their project. If the applicant is not a DMO, you will be required to have a DMO representative on your Steering Committee. For more information about DMOs, visit: <https://industry.traveloregon.com/resources/tourism-in-oregon/destination-management-%20organizations/>

ENTITY INELIGIBILITY

Ineligible applicants include those listed below:

- For-profit entities
- Entities that have a bankruptcy or other financial corruption within the past five years

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

Eligible projects or initiatives must contribute to the improvement or expansion of the tourism economy in Oregon.

Projects must be intended to increase the likelihood of visitation from 50 miles outside the local area.

The following project types are eligible:

- Soft-surface trail recreation
- Water recreation
- Dark skies
- Camping

III. DEVELOPING A STRONG APPLICATION

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

- The project strongly aligns with the program's purpose: Recreation Ready supports rural communities in developing outdoor recreation visitor experiences that drive economic prosperity and respect natural environments while increasing access and equity.
- The project could be catalytic to the future of the community.
- The application makes a strong case for the project's readiness for program participation.
- Community interest and engagement for the project is evident in the application.
- The application clearly describes your organization's needs for the program in order to move your project forward.

IV. REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS AND DECISION TO AWARD

The application process will open for a 25-day window. Applications will be reviewed and decisions to award will be made based on the following:

- Degree to which project is in alignment with the program's purpose and intent
- Demonstration of community support for project
- Demonstration of immediate need for project to receive program support
- Demonstration of project feasibility through research, data, etc.
- Demonstration of basic understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) concepts and a desire and commitment to elevating DEI in their future visitor experience development work
- Completeness of application and strength of case made for program support

The Scoring Rubric that application reviewers will use is located at the end of this document.

Travel Oregon reserves the right to make changes to the Program Guidelines or to cancel the Recreation Ready Program in its entirety.

V. PROGRAM CONTRACTS

PHASE 1: PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT CONTRACT

Applicants who are admitted into Phase 1 of the program will enter into a contract with Travel Oregon, which includes agreements to comply with all guideline requirements and to complete projects as approved.

PHASE 2: POST-ENGAGEMENT AWARD CONTRACT

Based on the evaluation review conducted at the end of Phase 1, communities will be eligible and invited to participate in Phase 2 of the program. The lead applicant will work with Travel Oregon to submit a one-year project scope of work (SOW) to apply for project investment funds (up to \$100,000) to advance the action plan outcomes.

VI. QUESTIONS

View the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) page](#) for commonly asked questions. Direct additional questions to grants@traveloregon.com. Please allow three business days for Travel Oregon to respond.

PROGRAM APPLICATION CHECK LIST

Access the 2024-2025 Recreation Ready Program Application ONLINE in the next section, below.

- [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:

- [Travel Oregon Substitute Federal W-9 Form](#) – form must be complete, signed and dated
- 3-5 Letters of Commitment from Project Steering Committee Members

ONLINE APPLICATION

The Recreation Ready program application will be available for completion and submission beginning at 2 p.m. on Nov. 12, 2025. All applications must be completed and submitted online by 5 p.m. PT on Dec. 6, 2024.

Access the online application (beginning at 2 p.m. on Nov. 12, 2024) here:

<https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=otc>

Applicants who have previously applied for other Travel Oregon grants or funding, may use their existing password to log on. Once logged into your applicant dashboard, you can access the application by selecting “Apply” in the top navigation. All other applicants will need to select “Create New Account” to begin.

All submissions are final.

SCORING RUBRIC – RECREATION READY PROGRAM

CRITERIA	EXCELLENT (3 points)	STRONG (2 points)	SATISFACTORY, WITH ROOM TO GROW (1 point)	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (0 points)	RELATED APPLICATION QUESTIONS
<p>Program Intent (0-3 points available)</p>	<p>PROJECT DESCRIPTION: is very clear and excels in its description, including the location, and in what ways the project could be catalytic to the future of the community. OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMY: the application makes an excellent case for how project will drive economic prosperity through outdoor recreation tourism. OUTDOOR RECREATION ENVIRONMENT: the application makes a an excellent case for how the project will respect the natural environment of its location. OUTDOOR RECREATION ACCESS: the application makes a strong case for how project will increase recreation access for all. (3 pts)</p>	<p>PROJECT DESCRIPTION: is adequately clear, including the location, and in what ways project could be catalytic to the future of the community. OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMY: the application makes a strong case for how project will drive economic prosperity through outdoor recreation tourism. OUTDOOR RECREATION ENVIRONMENT: the application makes a strong case for how the project will respect the natural environment of its location. OUTDOOR RECREATION ACCESS: the application makes a strong case for how project will increase recreation access for all. (2 pts)</p>	<p>PROJECT DESCRIPTION: is somewhat unclear, including the location, and in what ways project could be catalytic to the future of the community. OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMY: the application is somewhat unclear about how project will drive economic prosperity through outdoor recreation tourism. OUTDOOR RECREATION ENVIRONMENT: the application makes a satisfactory case for how the project will respect the natural environment of its location. OUTDOOR RECREATION ACCESS: the application is somewhat unclear about how project will increase recreation access for all. (1 pt)</p>	<p>PROJECT DESCRIPTION: is unclear, including the location, and in what ways project could be catalytic to the future of the community. OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMY: the application is not clear about how project will drive economic prosperity through outdoor recreation tourism. OUTDOOR RECREATION ENVIRONMENT: the application does not make a decent case for how the project will respect the natural environment of its location. OUTDOOR RECREATION ACCESS: the application is not clear about how project will increase recreation access for all. (0 pts)</p>	<p>Project Description Outdoor Recreation Economy Outdoor Recreation Environment Outdoor Recreation Access</p>

<p>Community Support (0-3 points available)</p>	<p>COMMUNITY SUPPORT: the application clearly demonstrates a strong community interest and engagement in the project. PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE: applicant has identified 3-5 Steering Committee Members and provided a LETTER OF COMMITMENT for each member. (3 pts)</p>	<p>COMMUNITY SUPPORT: the application demonstrates moderate community interest and engagement in the project. PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE: applicant has identified 3-4 Steering Committee Members and provided a LETTER OF COMMITMENT for each member. (2 pts)</p>	<p>COMMUNITY SUPPORT: the application demonstrates minimal community interest and engagement in the project. PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE: applicant has identified 3 Steering Committee Members and provided a LETTER OF COMMITMENT for each member. (1 pt)</p>	<p>COMMUNITY SUPPORT: the application does not demonstrate community interest and engagement in the project. PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE: applicant has identified no Steering Committee Members and provided no LETTERS OF COMMITMENT. (0 pts)</p>	<p>Community Support Project Steering Committee Identification Letters of Commitment</p>
<p>Immediate Need (0 to 3 points available)</p>	<p>CHALLENGES, NEED/DESIRE TO MOVE PROJECT FORWARD: application clearly explains the challenges the project is experiencing and a strong desire / need to move the project forward. WHY RECREATION READY: application strongly demonstrates their organization's need for this program to help move their project forward. (3 pts)</p>	<p>CHALLENGES, NEED/DESIRE TO MOVE PROJECT FORWARD: application is less clear in explaining the challenges the project is experiencing and the desire / need to move the project forward. WHY RECREATION READY: application provides enough demonstration that their organization's need for this program to help move their project forward. (2 pts)</p>	<p>CHALLENGES, NEED/DESIRE TO MOVE PROJECT FORWARD: application minimally explains the challenges the project is experiencing and the desire / need to move the project forward. WHY RECREATION READY: application minimally demonstrates their organization's need for this program to help move their project forward. (1 pt)</p>	<p>CHALLENGES, NEED/DESIRE TO MOVE PROJECT FORWARD: application does not explain the challenges the project is experiencing and the desire / need to move the project forward. WHY RECREATION READY: application does not demonstrate their organization's need for this program to help move their project forward. (0 pts)</p>	<p>Challenges & Desire to Move Project Forward Why Recreation Ready</p>

<p>Feasibility (0 to 3 points available)</p>	<p>PROJECT PLANNING: application provides a good amount of project planning done so far for project. RESEARCH OR DATA: application includes a description of substantial research or data that exists to support the project. (3 pts)</p>	<p>PROJECT PLANNING: application provides some project planning done so far for project. RESEARCH OR DATA: application includes description of some research or data that exists to support the project. (2 pts)</p>	<p>PROJECT PLANNING: application provides little project planning done so far for project. RESEARCH OR DATA: application includes description of minimal research or data that exists to support the project. (1 pt)</p>	<p>PROJECT PLANNING: application provides no project planning done so far for project. RESEARCH OR DATA: application includes description of no research or data that exists to support the project. (0 pts)</p>	<p>Project Planning Research or Data</p>
<p>Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (0 to 3 points available)</p>	<p>DIVERSITY, EQUITY and INCLUSION: application clearly demonstrates a strong and sound basic understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) concepts and a desire and commitment to elevating DEI in their future visitor experience development work. (3 pts)</p>	<p>DIVERSITY, EQUITY and INCLUSION: application clearly demonstrates a sound basic understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) concepts and a desire and commitment to elevating DEI in their future visitor experience development work. (2 pts)</p>	<p>DIVERSITY, EQUITY and INCLUSION: application clearly demonstrates less than a sound basic understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) concepts and a desire and commitment to elevating DEI in their future visitor experience development work. (1 pt)</p>	<p>DIVERSITY, EQUITY and INCLUSION: application does not clearly demonstrate a sound basic understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) concepts, nor a desire and commitment to elevating DEI in their future visitor experience development work. (0 pts)</p>	<p>Diversity, Equity & Inclusion</p>
<p>Completeness and Presents Strong Case for Support (0 to 3 points available)</p>	<p>Application is complete, contains all information required and clearly provides a strong, compelling case for program support. (3 pts)</p>	<p>Application is complete, contains all information required and clearly provides a good case for program support. (2 pts)</p>	<p>Application is complete, contains all information required, but provides a minimal case for program support. (1 pt)</p>	<p>Application is incomplete, does not contain all information required and lacks a reasonable case for support. (0 pt)</p>	<p>All application questions</p>