

**OREGON WINE COUNTRY LICENSE PLATES
MATCHING GRANT
2026 GUIDELINES**



Contents

[PROGRAM INTENT](#).....3

[ELIGIBILITY](#).....3

[DEVELOPING A STRONG APPLICATION](#)4

[REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS; DECISION TO AWARD](#).....6

[GRANT CONTRACTS](#)6

[GRANT TIMELINE](#)8

[HOW TO APPLY](#) 8

[REVIEW CRITERIA](#)9

[REGIONAL DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS \(RDMOs\)](#)10

Cover photo: Michelle Horsey

PROGRAM INTENT

TRAVEL OREGON'S MISSION AND GRANTS 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. With funding provided through sales of the Oregon Wine Country license plate, Travel Oregon administers a program to make grant awards available to "tourism promotion agencies" for projects that promote wine and culinary tourism.

Oregon Wine Country License Plates Matching Grant applicants may apply for grants of up to \$50,000 per project and may apply for no more than two projects in the same cycle. Each project requires its own application. Applicants must demonstrate a 1-to-1 dollar match with at least 50% of the matching funds being cash funds.

There is \$350,000 available to award in this funding cycle.

Oregon Wine Country License Plates Matching Grant projects **must** promote wine and/or culinary tourism.

INVOLVING YOUR REGIONAL DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION (RDMO)

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact their local [Destination Management Organization](#) (DMO) and Regional Destination Management Organization (RDMO) about their grant project idea and request letters of support to enhance their overall application. A list of RDMOs can be found on page 12 of these guidelines. *Please note: RDMOs will be unable to provide last-minute requests for letters of support and need to be provided with a minimum of seven days to respond.*

ELIGIBILITY

ENTITY ELIGIBILITY

Tourism Promotion Agencies located in Oregon are eligible to apply for this grant. ORS 320.300 defines a "Tourism Promotion Agency" as:

- An incorporated nonprofit organization or governmental unit responsible for the tourism promotion of a destination on a year-round basis.
- A nonprofit entity that manages tourism-related economic development programs and projects.
- A regional or statewide association that represents entities that rely on tourism-related business for more than 50% of their total income.

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.

- Entities that have failed to fulfill past grant award requirements within the past three years, including project completion, completion of required grant reporting, and proper use of grant funds.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

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

Projects must promote wine and/or culinary tourism.

“Tourism promotion” is defined as:

- Advertising, publicizing or distributing information for the purpose of attracting and welcoming visitors.
- Conducting strategic planning and research necessary to stimulate future tourism development.
- Operating tourism promotion agencies (specific to wine and culinary tourism efforts).
- Marketing special events and festivals designed to attract visitors.

Project is intended to increase the likelihood of visitation from 50 miles outside the local area. Though it is not a requirement, ideally, the project will lead to an increase in overnight stays in local lodging facilities. Partnerships with tourism entities and businesses, economic development and/or government entities are looked upon favorably and strengthen an application.

Grant funds can only be spent to promote destinations located inside the state of Oregon. However, if a region may be involved with a joint promotion campaign with destinations outside of Oregon, funds may pay for the relative share of the Oregon region’s participation in that campaign.

Please also note that certain project types will be given preference for funding. A list of these project types can be found in the section, “Developing A Strong Application.”

INELIGIBLE PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

The following activities are **not** eligible for grants:

- Projects that are not directly related to promoting Oregon’s wine or culinary industry.
- Mobile app development.
- Costs of staff or consultant salaries, mileage or associated fees that are not directly associated with wine and culinary tourism promotion.
- 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.
- Cannabis or tobacco tourism-related projects.
- Event expenses besides those for marketing /advertising /promotion of the event. Although these types of expenses cannot be paid by the grant award, they can be paid by the matching dollars required by the grant.

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:

- Project goals that align with regional and/or local objectives.
- Projects that address a need in the tourism industry and show potential to generate significant regional and/or local impact.
- Proposal's narrative and supporting documents show clear throughline, highlighting both quantitative and qualitative information.
- Community support is evident both through local matching contributions (cash or in-kind) and support letters.
- The applying entity has a track record of effective work which is evident through strong support letters.
- Good planning is evident in the project timeline and budget.
- Plans for evaluating impact and measuring a return on investment are clear, appropriate, and achievable.
- Letters of support from partners or sponsors

PREFERRED PROJECT TYPES

The following project types will be given preference for funding:

- Print/broadcast advertising.
- Digital advertising, including social media and search.
- Bolstering marketing presence in target markets or maintaining a presence in existing markets.
- Content development that supports tourism marketing, including photography and video.
- Familiarization tour support.
- Marketing of wine/culinary events.
- Strategic planning/research or feasibility studies to stimulate future tourism development.
- Planning or marketing initiatives that address seasonality and/or recovery or resiliency from wildfire/climate change issues.
- Projects that emphasize strengthening diversity, equity, or inclusion.
- Projects that build on an existing brand, ongoing campaign, or existing marketing push by the Oregon Wine Board or another partner.

PROJECT BUDGET

The grant project budget must be submitted using the Excel template provided by Travel Oregon. Grant recipients are required to keep the project budget updated throughout the lifetime of the grant. A final budget, including receipt documentation for expenses incurred, will be required to be uploaded in the Grant Accomplishment Report.

MATCHING FUNDS

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

[Oregon Wine Country License Plates Tourism Promotion Distribution](#) funds are eligible for use as matching funds.

SIGNAGE

Grant projects that involve signage of any kind require approval letters from each organization or entity involved in permitting or approving signage installation. Evidence of approval must be on official letterhead and be included with any other support letters when submitting the application.

Applications will not be considered unless evidence of approval has been submitted.

REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS; DECISION TO AWARD

Applications will be reviewed and decisions to award will be made based on the following:

- Degree to which grant project furthers wine and culinary tourism promotion.
- Application illustrates intended project outcomes and anticipated return on investment for positive economic impact in community/region.
- Potential for project to stimulate and generate wine/culinary tourism economic development.
- Project demonstrates clear viability, integrity, and long-term sustainability.
- Demonstration that applicant and project meet the eligibility requirements of Section, “Eligibility” and that the application is complete and contains all information required by these grant guidelines.

Travel Oregon reserves the right to award grants in amounts totaling less than all funds that are available under the Oregon Wine Country License Plates Grants Program, to award a different amount than is provided in a grant application, to make changes to the Grant Guidelines or to cancel the Oregon Wine Country License Plates Grants Program in its entirety.

GRANT CONTRACTS

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

BUDGET MONITORING; TIMELINES

Projects will be monitored by Travel Oregon. Grant recipients shall maintain accurate records, including receipt documentation for expenses, and will use provided report templates for submission of all required information. Grant recipient will be required to keep an ongoing, updated timeline and budget throughout the lifetime of the grant. Travel Oregon may request copies of the working budget throughout the lifetime of the grant. Travel Oregon will provide access to all reports and additional forms required.

RECOGNITION

In many areas of Oregon, a regional style guide has been developed for use by tourism businesses and destination marketers. Grant recipients are encouraged to adopt these guidelines in order to better align with other communication efforts. Wine industry members are encouraged to utilize the [Oregon Wine brand assets](#).

Grant recipient shall visibly display on all finished grant projects (publications, websites and other significantly visible project activities) the acknowledgement: *“This project has been funded in part by an Oregon Wine Country License Plates Matching Grant.”*

Do not place recognition on wayfinding signage, unless authorized to do so by Travel Oregon. Grant recipient must submit signage designs to Travel Oregon for review prior to production and placement.

PROJECT DESIGN

Grant recipient shall allow at least two weeks for Travel Oregon to review the project design and provide feedback (timing will depend on the complexity of the project). Grant recipients must cease further grant project design work until feedback from Travel Oregon has been delivered. While the grant recipient is not required to make all recommended changes Travel Oregon may provide, the grant recipient must adhere to all grant program requirements. Required recognition could be different than what is listed above and will be included in grant recipient's contract or determined while working with grant recipient.

GRANT REPORTS

All required reports will be submitted through Travel Oregon's online grant management system.

Mid-Project Report*

Mid-project Report is only required for projects over \$10,000 in grant awards. The Mid-Project Report and a current project budget must be submitted to Travel Oregon 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 submitted to Travel Oregon by June 15, 2027. The final budget along with receipt copies of project expenses must be uploaded as part of the report. No further reimbursement will be provided after submission of this report.

GRANT FUNDS DISBURSEMENT

Any grant funds not used as approved shall be returned to Travel Oregon pursuant to the grant contract. Projects must be completed within the approved grant timeline. Following approval and execution of contract, grant awards of \$10,000 or less shall be fully disbursed in a single payment. For grant award greater than \$10,000 and less than \$20,000, Recipient may request up to \$10,000 as an initial disbursement. For a grant award of \$20,000 or more, the Recipient may request up to 50% of the award as an initial disbursement. Recipients are eligible to receive up to 90% of the remaining awarded funds through a reimbursement system, upon invoice and with documentation of expenses. These funds may only be used for costs related to the project and clearly identified in the grant budget. Final disbursement of funds will be sent once the project is complete and the Grant Accomplishment Report and final budget have been submitted, reviewed and approved by Travel Oregon.

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 Travel Oregon.

Travel Oregon will not reimburse a grant recipient for any costs associated with a grant project that are incurred before a grant contract has been signed.

GRANT TIMELINE

Below is the timeline for the Oregon Wine Country License Plates Matching Grants:

- Dec. 18, 2025 – **Grant Guidelines Available**
- Jan. 20, 2026 (2 p.m. PST) – **Online Application Opens for submissions**
- Feb. 19, 2026 (5 p.m. PST) – **Online Application Closes for submissions**
- May 6, 2026 – **Oregon Wine Country Plates Grant Application Status Notification**
- Mid-May 2026 – **Mandatory Grant Agreement Review Meeting for Grant Administrators new to this grant**
- May 29, 2026 – (5 p.m. PST) – **Oregon Wine Country Plates Grant Signed Agreement Due to Travel Oregon**
- Dec. 1, 2026 – **Mid-project Reports Due**
- June 4, 2027 – **Project Completion Date**
- June 15, 2027 – **Grant Accomplishment Reports Submitted to Travel Oregon**

HOW TO APPLY

GRANT APPLICATION CHECK LIST

Complete a thorough reading of this grant guidelines document.

Access the 2026 Oregon Wine Country Plates Grants Application ONLINE.

- [View the application questions before you begin.](#)

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
- ✓ Project Budget ([must use the required form](#))
- ✓ Project Timeline
- ✓ Project Support Letters (Highly recommended, not required)
- ✓ **Distribution Plan:** If producing marketing collateral, you must describe your distribution plan and associated budget costs
- ✓ **Signage Project:** Evidence of approval from all parties involved
- ✓ **Construction Permitting:** If your project involves construction, you must include plan drawings and approval from permitting authorities if required locally

Note: The application includes an optional upload field to add supporting materials that application reviewers may find valuable. (Examples: pricing quote documents, target markets, year-over-year wine/culinary tourism promotional operational costs, etc.)

ONLINE APPLICATION

The Oregon Wine Country License Plates Matching Grants application will be available for completion and submission beginning January 20, 2026, 2:00 p.m. PT. Completed applications are due no later than February 19, 2026, 5:00 p.m. PT. Applications must be submitted through our online application system.

Access the online application here: <https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=otc>

Applicants who have previously applied for an Oregon Wine Country License Plates Matching Grant or Travel Oregon Competitive Grant 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. Be sure to triple-check your work prior to submitting the application.

QUESTIONS

Direct additional questions to grants@traveloregon.com. Please allow two business days for Travel Oregon to respond.

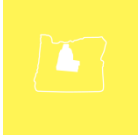
REVIEW CRITERIA

Criteria	Exemplary (6 points)	Meets (4 points)	Needs Improvement (1 point)	Missing (0 points)
A. Degree to which grant project furthers wine and culinary tourism promotion	Project provides an excellent likelihood to further wine & culinary promotion	Project likely to further wine & culinary promotion	Project needs improvement to increase likelihood of furthering wine & culinary promotion	Project unlikely to further wine & culinary promotion
B. Project clearly illustrates intended project outcomes, return on investment (ROI) and positive community/region impacts	Project clearly illustrates excellent project outcomes, (ROI) and positive community / region impacts	Project likely to meet intended project outcomes, (ROI) and positive community / region impacts	Project needs improvement of project outcomes, (ROI) and positive community/region impacts	Project outcomes, and / or (ROI), positive community/region impacts are missing
C. Project’s potential to stimulate and generate wine/culinary tourism economic development	Project shows excellent potential to stimulate and generate wine / culinary tourism economic development	Project likely to stimulate and generate wine / culinary tourism economic development	Project needs improvement to stimulate and generate wine/culinary tourism economic development	Project does not show potential to stimulate and generate wine/culinary tourism economic development
D. Project demonstrates clear viability, integrity and long-term sustainability	Project demonstrates excellent viability, integrity and long-term sustainability	Project likely viable, demonstrates integrity and long-term sustainability	Project needs improvement to demonstrates clear viability, integrity and long-term sustainability	Project does not demonstrate viability, integrity and long-term sustainability
E. Project type given preference for funding (Refer to “Preferred Project Types” section for details)	N/A	Project type is one of the preferred project types for funding	N/A	N/A

OREGON'S SEVEN REGIONAL DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS

RDMO: REGIONAL DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

The Oregon Tourism Commission has identified seven (7) regions within the state. Each region has one DMO to act as its Regional Destination Management Organization (RDMO). RDMO's submit regional plan proposals for use of state dollars for the Regional Cooperative Tourism Program (RCTP). By leveraging state dollars along with private and public resources, the RDMO's work with Travel Oregon to bolster Oregon's tourism economy. RDMO contact information is listed below.



CENTRAL OREGON

Visit Central Oregon
visitcentraloregon.com | 800.800.8334
Kristine McConnell,
kristine@visitcentraloregon.com

**Counties: Jefferson, Deschutes, Crook, South Wasco County*



EASTERN OREGON

Eastern Oregon Visitors Association
visiteasteroregon.com | 541.970.4551
Alana Garner Carollo,
execdirector@visiteasternoregon.com

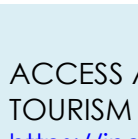
**Counties: Sherman, Gilliam, Wheeler, Morrow, Union, Umatilla, Wallowa, Grant, Baker, Harney, Malheur*



PORTLAND REGION

Travel Portland
travelportland.com | 503.866.9505
Michael Cavanaugh,
michael@travelportland.com

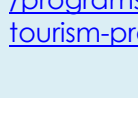
**Counties: Washington, Columbia, portions of Multnomah and Clackamas*



SOUTHERN OREGON

Travel Southern Oregon
southernoregon.org | 541.326.2640
Bob Hackett, bob@southernoregon.org

**Counties: Klamath, Lake, Jackson, Josephine, portions of Douglas*



WILLAMETTE VALLEY

Willamette Valley Visitors Association
willamettevalley.org | 971.388.6185
Claire Harriman, [claire](mailto:claire@willamettevalley.org)

**Counties: Yamhill, Polk, Benton, Marion, Linn, portions of Lane and Clackamas*

ACCESS AND DOWNLOAD REGIONAL
TOURISM PLANS
<https://industry.traveloregon.com/opportunities/programs-initiatives/regional-cooperative-tourism-program/>