



## ***AITKIN COUNTY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & RECREATION GRANT PROGRAM***

### ***PROGRAM OVERVIEW***

The purpose of this grant fund is to leverage county funds, private funds and volunteer efforts to increase small business development activities in Aitkin County, with an emphasis on increasing sustained tourism and recreation activities. Several organizations may submit a single application or organizations may apply individually. Organizations need only to commit one hundred dollars (\$100) in good faith to ensure commitment to the grant request. The Aitkin County Board of Commissioners, have approved funding to be used to directly impact the Community of Aitkin County by executing the Aitkin County Business Development & Recreation Grant.

**Grant Guidelines:** Guidelines for application and awarding of Aitkin County Business Development & Recreation Grants are as follows:

1. **Funding Limits:** Minimum of \$100 and a maximum of \$2,000 per grant application. The Economic Development Committee may recommend to the Board of Commissioners to increase or decrease the amount awarded at their discretion. The Aitkin County Board of Commissioners grants the final approval for funding.
2. **Matching Funds:** The Aitkin County Business Development & Recreation Grant Program is intended to leverage locally funded promotions and not replace that funding. Significant consideration will be given to the amount and quality of matching funds/in kind contributions when grant applications are evaluated by the Economic Development Committee and County Board.
3. **County-Wide Distribution:** The intent of this program is to provide assistance throughout Aitkin County. Consideration shall be given to amounts awarded and number of grants approved per year for any particular region of the county to ensure that an equitable level of funding is available throughout the county.
4. **Grant funds shall not be used to pay the salaries of part or full time staff associated with a particular event/business development activity or organization associated with an event/business development activity. Funds shall not be used for any type of prizes or other material items that may be offered, awarded, sold or given away. Funds are not intended to be an annual budget supplement. Funds are intended for incremental business development and recreation.**
5. **Aitkin County Business Development and Recreation Grant funds may not be used to reimburse expenses occurred prior to grant approval by Aitkin County.**
6. **Eligible Project Examples:**
  - Sustainable marketing and advertising materials including but not limited to permanent signage materials, etc.
  - Menu signs (interior)
  - Technology or training programs
  - Any other activities to develop your business
7. **Eligible Event Examples:**
  - Annual events promoting tourism & recreation



- Events must provide incremental tourism growth
- Grant Funds shall be used to market business development activities that create sustainable tourism or recreation growth or activities/businesses that will enhance the Aitkin County economy.

8. Eligible organizations:

- Businesses located in Aitkin County.
- Local Governments
- Non-Profit organizations
- Special consideration will be given to applications that will enhance the Northwood's ATV Trail or River Trails through signage, promotion, activities or trail amenities

**Application Procedure:** Guidelines for applications are as follows:

1. Grant requests should be submitted by EMAIL to:  
[mark.jeffers@co.aitkin.mn.us](mailto:mark.jeffers@co.aitkin.mn.us), subject line: BD&R2024  
or by mail to:  
Mark Jeffers  
Aitkin County Government Center,  
307 2<sup>nd</sup> Street NW, Room 316,  
Aitkin, MN 56431.
2. Funding recommendations will be considered at the regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Aitkin County Economic Development Committee. Application deadline is **May 31, 2024**.
3. Committee recommendations will be submitted to the Aitkin County Board of Commissioners for final approval.

**Reporting Requirements**

1. Applicants that are awarded a Business Development & Recreation grant are required to submit proof of fund use prior to the end of the one-year grant period. Reporting information documents and deadlines will be included in the award letter.
2. Economic Development staff will collaborate with grant award winners to verify qualified grant use.
3. Unused funds at the conclusion of the one-year grant period must be returned to Aitkin County.

Further information and additional forms and materials may be obtained by contacting:

Mark Jeffers  
Aitkin County Economic Development Coordinator  
218-531-6188  
[mark.jeffers@co.aitkin.mn.us](mailto:mark.jeffers@co.aitkin.mn.us)