
ROUTE 66 CENTENNIAL GRANT PROGRAM

NEW MEXICO TOURISM DEPARTMENT

GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

PROGRAM SUMMARY

New Mexico will be commemorating the 100th anniversary of Route 66 in 2026 and will be participating in both national and statewide initiatives to celebrate the country’s “Mother Road”. Route 66 played a significant role in shaping the history and identity of numerous communities in the United States and in New Mexico. The Centennial Anniversary of Route 66 presents a unique occasion to recognize and honor the contributions of New Mexico’s diverse communities, businesses and individuals along the historic route.

In preparation for the Centennial, the New Mexico Tourism Department (NMTD) will be offering a Route 66 Centennial grant program to allocate funding to support this initiative statewide. The following are details regarding the program.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THE GRANT PROGRAM?

The Route 66 Centennial grant program aims to provide communities along historic Route 66 support for programs related to consumer experiences, events, destination enhancements, marketing and promotions. An overarching goal is to ensure that New Mexico Route 66 projects dovetail effectively with the National Route 66 Commission to provide consistency with national goals while still tailoring efforts to local communities.

WHAT QUALIFIES AS A ROUTE 66 CENTENNIAL PROJECT?

A Route 66 Centennial Project must have a clear tie to Route 66. The project must be within the communities connected to the recognized historic alignment of Route 66 within New Mexico ([Map](#)). Projects must adhere to the grant categories established through these guidelines.

Projects must raise awareness about the history and significance of Route 66. Centennial projects can also encourage the preservation and conservation of its historic sites and provide experiences for travelers, history enthusiasts and tourists from across the country and around the world to contribute to tourism in New Mexico. Projects can also instill a sense of pride for residents celebrating the important Route 66 historic resources through programs, initiatives and events.

Projects can fall within one or more of the following nationally recognized strategic principles with regard to Route 66 activities, to include: **Celebrate and honor; preserve protect and enhance; generate tourism demand; tourism development; economic development; national collaboration; and research and education.**

Examples of applicable projects can include, but are not limited to: ceremonies, celebrations, media production, marketing and promotion, infrastructure enhancements, and issuance of commemorative items.

Projects that are matched through other resources and part of larger community initiatives will be considered as part of this process. In addition, projects that are tied to multi-community or multi-state programs and that are tied to the National Route 66 Commission endeavors are welcome.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

An eligible fiscal agent is required for all parts of the Route 66 Centennial Grant Program.

Eligible fiscal agents include legal, nonprofit tourism-related organizations, as designated by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), municipalities, counties, tribal governments, and special districts (i.e., Councils of Government) within the State of New Mexico.

Note: 501(c)(3) organizations are strongly encouraged to partner with a local government for all parts of this program. Additionally, 501(c)(3) organizations **must** be registered with the New Mexico Secretary of State **and** be in good standing with the New Mexico Department of Justice, formally known as the Attorney General's Office. 501(c)(6) organizations **must** be registered with the New Mexico Secretary of State.

CRITERIA FOR CONSIDERATION

Successful applicants must have a clear **Route 66 Centennial theme**. There must be a clear tie to the significance of Route 66 within the applicant's community. Connections to Route 66 historic resources will be highly rated. Plans to ensure that visitors know and care about Route 66 must be part of the goal of any project.

All projects funded by the Route 66 Centennial Grant Program must be encumbered/expended by **June 15, 2025**. Applicants must provide a detailed timeline and budget plan demonstrating how they will meet these deadlines. Ensuring adherence to these requirements will be a critical component of the application process.

Match is not a requirement but **partnership** in this process will be highly valued. As Route 66 was a great connector, successful applicants will develop community partnerships and cultivate sponsorships to best leverage resources. Demonstration of such partnerships in the application process will make for stronger submissions.

The Route 66 Centennial is a **statewide and a national initiative**. Applicants who indicate how they work within national strategic principles and/or provide statewide connections will be highly rated.

WHAT ARE THE GRANT CATEGORIES?

Grant categories have been established in order to allow applicants the opportunity to craft proposals within three key areas. Applicants can apply to any and all of the categories. The grant categories include:

- **Special Events Sponsorship** – This grant category is related to promotional sponsorship for Route 66 events, fairs and festivals. Successful applicants will identify NMTD as an official sponsor of the event and co-brand marketing with the official New Mexico Route 66 logo.
- **Marketing and Promotions** – The primary goal of this category is to promote Route 66 destinations, particularly communities. NMTD would manage the marketing of these destinations and for Route-66 related promotions throughout the year. Communities and eligible non-profits may opt-in to be part of this grant program. Promotional items and assistance with web development/enhancement can be part of this grant track.
- **Infrastructure or Destination Enhancements** – Grants in this category would provide funding to improve Route 66 related infrastructure. Examples of applicable projects could include: upgrading and renovating signs, improving lighting, installing Route 66 related art projects, or supporting historic structure preservation initiatives.

SPECIAL EVENTS GUIDELINES

Qualifying Special Events Sponsorship Information

Special events related to celebration of the Centennial of Route 66 will be eligible for sponsorship. Successful applicants for special events will coordinate directly with NMTD regarding sponsorship.

The following are specific guidelines related to this grant track. These types of events must clearly work to:

- Promote the Route 66 Centennial
- Support both in-state and national visitation
- Have a methodology to collect demographic information about visitors and clearly document project success

Event Sponsorship Project Specifics

Selected Route 66 special events would be approved to use the NMTD Route 66 Centennial logo and would receive Route 66 co-branding support and co-advertising through NMTD's website.

Applicants must: Have a clear Route 66 themed event; provide written support from the event's municipality, County or Chamber of Commerce; have a clear event plan with a budget and goals for success; demonstrate advertising potential; have a media/communications plan; and have a website and social media strategy.

Funding Threshold

Special events sponsorships cannot exceed \$20,000 and will be based on event attendance.

<i>Tier</i>	<i>Maximum Award</i>	<i>Number of Attendees</i>
1	Up to \$10,000	Up to 10,000
2	Up to \$20,000	Over 10,000

MARKETING AND PROMOTIONS GUIDELINES

Successful applicants would work with NMTD and promotions contractor to focus on Route 66 destination marketing and promotions for specific areas and communities, year-round. Selected applicants would be supported through a strategic and targeted marketing and promotional campaign managed by NMTD.

In addition to creative production and a dedicated ad campaign, this grant track will offer *flex* options designed to enhance marketing efforts, which include:

- Promotional Items: Funding to assist with production of branded materials to raise awareness and encourage engagement with the Route 66 destination.
- Web Development/Enhancement: Enhancements or development of website to better promote the Route 66 destination, improve user experience, and provide up-to-date information.

Applicants would need to clearly frame how their community, or the community they are serving, is a Route 66 destination and what aspect of the community they are working to promote.

The following are specific guidelines related to this grant track. The advertising and promotion through this track must inspire the following:

- Promotion of Route 66 destinations
- Must encourage both in-state and national visitation

Applicants should: Have a clear tie to Route 66; have a clear marketing plan ideally with a budget and goals for success; have a plan for the effective and efficient distribution of promotional items; and have a website and social media presence.

Examples of marketing and promotions projects could include: written articles, social media, maps and branding, videos and radio ads, web development/enhancement, and promotional/commemorative product development.

Funding

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Maximum Reimbursement</i>
Promotional Items	Up to \$2,000
Web Development/Enhancements	Up to \$5,000
Creative Production	Funded 100% by NMTD
Strategic Ad Campaign	Funded 100% by NMTD

INFRASTRUCTURE OR DESTINATION ENHANCEMENT GUIDELINES

Infrastructure or destination enhancement eligible grant projects must have a clear connection to Route 66 and must be located within communities along the historic route ([Map](#)). Successful applicants must indicate how projects will improve or enhance infrastructure related to the history of Route 66. Reporting of project progress and success will be critical.

Qualifying Infrastructure Examples

Route 66 infrastructure or destination enhancements can include but are not limited to:

- Signage and wayfinding
- Public Art
- Development/renovation of historic assets
 - Historic Signs
 - Museums and Exhibits
 - Theaters
 - Public Spaces
- Beautification and conservation
 - Education and visitor information centers
 - Park or public space enhancement

Infrastructure Project Specifics

The following types of projects can be funded through this program to enhance Route 66 infrastructure, including but not limited to:

- Renovation of historical/cultural attractions
- Modernizing tourism experiences
- Installation of signage and wayfinding
- Adopting and adapting technology to highlight Route 66 experiences

This grant track will **NOT** cover fees, costs or expenses associated with ongoing or recurring repairs or maintenance of any property.

Funding Threshold

Funding for construction, equipment, renovation, and modernization projects will not exceed \$250,000.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The Route 66 Centennial grant program is located on the [NMTD website](#) and entities can provide applications for one or all of the grant categories, by completing an individual application track for each category. Application instructions will be delineated with the NMTD website.

Applications for the Infrastructure and Special Events track will be accepted from **July 15, 2024 - August 19, 2024**. Opt-ins for the Marketing and Promotions track will be accepted from **July 15, 2024 - August 13, 2024**. All applicants will be notified of award status. Successful applicants will be provided with agreements signed within a month following award notification.

ROUTE 66 CENTENNIAL GRANT EVALUATION MATRIX

<u>Scoring Criteria</u>	<u>Weighting (out of 100 points)</u>
<p>Eligibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be an eligible applicant and project according to guidelines and its various conditions • Project must be related to the Route 66 Centennial in New Mexico 	15 points
<p>Meeting Route 66 Centennial Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must support Route 66 Centennial commemoration statewide themes and goals • Provide plan augmenting awareness of historic Route 66 and its statewide/national significance • Improve or enhance the visitor and resident experience and increase visitation related to Route 66 • Increase national and global recognition of New Mexico as a Route 66-member state 	35 points
<p>Partnership Connections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration of partnerships and co-sponsorships within communities, statewide or nationally • Consideration of state Route 66 Centennial goals and cultivation of partners to achieve goals • Consideration of nationally recognized Route 66 strategic principals in development of project 	20 points
<p>Organizational Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of previous and current experience in completing projects on time and within budget • Evidence of previous project planning engagement and completion with NMTD or other entity • Evidence that the applying organization has necessary documents, resources and capacities to undertake and complete the project • Evidence of legal compliance, financial reliability, key stakeholders in tourism and other industries, and other relevant organizational information 	20 points
<p>Measuring and Reporting Success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a clear plan to report success of project, program or promotion • Evidence of appropriate, reliable, accurate and precise methodology and measurement of project success 	10 points