



FY25

DMO Certification
Guidelines

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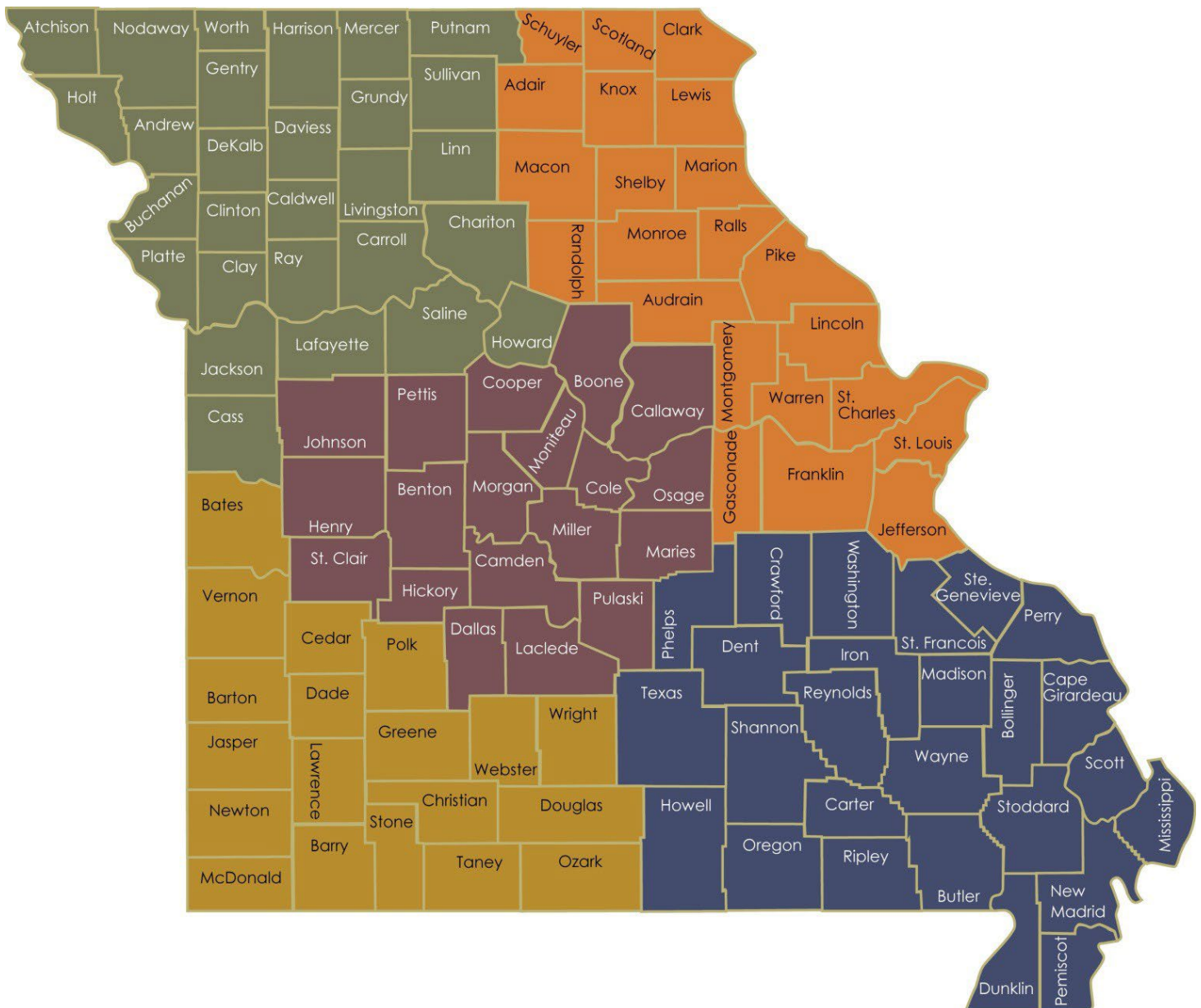
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MISSOURI TOURISM REGIONS



DMO CERTIFICATION OVERVIEW

The Missouri Division of Tourism (MDT) partners with Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) across the state to advertise and promote Missouri's vast array of tourism assets. The Division's Cooperative Marketing Programs invest in projects that are specifically designed to increase visitation and visitor spending throughout the state.

In order to reach the goals established in the MDT strategic plan, the goals and executions of Cooperative Marketing are aligned with MDT's overall strategic goals. Funds are distributed among separate matching grant programs and MDT funds qualified advertising and marketing projects to achieve the following objectives:

- Support and further MDT's overall annual marketing strategy as outlined in the annual marketing plan and position Missouri to compete more effectively for travel and tourism market share.
- Create programs based on the common marketing goals of MDT and the DMO, thereby creating mutually beneficial marketing executions.
- Create a program that is efficient to implement for both MDT and its partners.

MDT has several programs available to all DMOs; however, DMO certification is required to participate in the Marketing Matching Grant (MMG). To learn more about the programs available, visit the site at Industry.VisitMO.com.

Administration

MDT administers the Cooperative Marketing Programs on behalf of the Missouri Tourism Commission, which reserves the right to make all final decisions.

Contact Information

Missouri Division of Tourism
Attn: Cooperative Marketing
301 West High Street, Room 290
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Megan Rogers, Cooperative Marketing Manager
megan.rogers@ded.mo.gov

Cooperative Marketing Program Advisory Committee (CMPAC) – The advisory committee is comprised of 10 tourism industry professionals representing each of the five regions of the state, providing valuable customer input about design and administration of the program.

Disclosures:

- The State of Missouri reserves the right to review/audit participant's contract records for a period of five years after the close of the contract period.
- MDT may terminate any contract upon discovery of a violation of any terms and/or requirements of the contract committed by the participant.
- Failure to complete an approved project may result in a one-year disqualification from participation in the programs. In some situations, partial completion of a project or the completion of a project vastly altered from the approved project may result in the withholding of approved funds.
- Failure to complete a project as agreed to will be a consideration in the evaluation of future applications.
- The Missouri Tourism Commission reserves the right to make all final decisions concerning the administration of this program.

TIMELINES

All of the dates below are for the FY25 DMO Certification.

DATE	Activity
September 1, 2023	DMO Certification Application Opens
October 31, 202	DMO Certification Application Closes
December 15, 2023	DMO Certification Emails Sent
December 15, 2023	CTL Emails Sent
March 1, 2024	MMG Guidelines Posted
April 1, 2024	MMG Application Opens
May 30, 2024	MMG Application Closes
June 15, 2024	Awards are Announced
July 1, 2024	FY24 Program Year Begins

DMO Eligibility

Missouri Division of Tourism (MDT) defines a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) as a non-profit (under Missouri Chapter 355) or benevolent (under Missouri Chapter 352) Missouri corporation or government unit responsible for and actively engaged in the promotion and marketing of travel and tourism in Missouri, supported by the organization's mission, charter, budget, funding sources and financial statements.

A DMO meets the following requirements:

- The organization is one of the following types of nonprofit or benevolent organizations:
 - Convention and Visitors Bureau/Commission (MACVB or DMAI approved)
 - Chamber of Commerce (MCC or US Chamber of Commerce approved)

- A city or county government, or a subdivision of a city or county government, that functions as a DMO, (ex. city or county tourism department)
- City or county (or designee) taxing authority that operates by contract as the primary tourism marketing organization for the city or county
- Tourism commission or board that operates by contract as the primary tourism marketing organization for the city or county
- Regional partnership
- The organization has an established funding source in place
- The organization has been incorporated as a nonprofit or benevolent entity and is registered and in good standing with the state of Missouri (city and county tourism departments are exempt)

The following organizations do not satisfy requirement above:

- Special event organizations and event organizers
- Single attractions or organizations representing single attractions

MDT has several partnership opportunities available to DMOs (non-certified) – for more information, visit the Industry VisitMO.com website.

A DMO must become a Certified DMO to participate in the Marketing Matching Grant (MMG). Participating in the MMG is the only reason a DMO needs to be 'certified'.

To qualify as a certified DMO, an entity must be able to satisfy all of the DMO requirements, as well as the following requirements:

- The organization is recognized through an adopted resolution by the county commission/governing body as the county's single official countywide DMO for participation in MDT programs (St. Louis meets this qualification per statute 67.607)
- The organization employs an adequate amount of staff to ensure management of the requested funding – if you are unsure of your County Tourism Level (CTL), please contact the Cooperative Marketing team.
 - For an organization with a CTL of 5 or less, one full-time (32 hours a week, at least minimum wage) paid staff member exclusively dedicated to travel/tourism is required

- For non-government organizations with a CTL of 6 or higher, three paid full-time employees (32 hours per week, at least minimum wage) who are exclusively dedicated to travel/tourism are required for DMO certification and participation in the Marketing Matching Grant.
 - Government organizations with their own administrative departments, to include financial, legal and other supervisory roles, are required to have one full-time paid employee (32 hours per week, at least minimum wage) exclusively dedicated to travel/tourism to become a certified DMO and participate in the Marketing Matching Grant.
 - If an organization's sole purpose is travel/tourism, then all employees, including administration, would be considered a travel/tourism employee. However, an organization that is not strictly dedicated to travel/tourism must only count employees that are directly responsible for promotion of travel/tourism. This includes staff members dedicated to marketing, public relations, group travel, convention sales, etc.
- The organization can demonstrate it is currently, and has been, actively engaged in tourism destination marketing for a minimum of two years
 - The organization has a tourism exclusive marketing brochure
 - The organization has a tourism exclusive website

Exceptions to DMO certification maybe made by MDT on a case-by-case basis.

CERTIFICATION

Organizations receiving MDT certification must work with tourism organizations and businesses within the county to promote on a countywide basis. No more than one DMO can be certified for each Missouri county; however, a DMO may represent up to three contiguous counties.

MDT reviews the certification application and documentation and based on the information provided, the application is approved or rejected. The DMO certification is valid for five years. Any certified DMO that is inactive in a MDT program for two consecutive fiscal years is required to recertify. However, MDT reserves the right to re-

evaluate and/or review information to ensure that the organization continues to meet all requirements throughout the duration of the certification. If the organization fails to meet the DMO certification requirements, program participation will be suspended and/or certification will be revoked.

APPLICATION

To qualify for participation in the Marketing Matching Grant (MMG) Program for fiscal year 2025, qualified organizations not currently certified must submit the official certification application (that opens September 1, 2023) and required documents to the MDT by 5 pm on October 31, 2023. The DMO certification application and required documentation are available on the Submittable website at <https://missouritourism.submittable.com/submit>.

DMOs with certifications expiring prior to July 1, 2024, must re-certify to participate in the MMG program. The organization must submit the official re-certification application and required documents to the MDT by 5 pm on October 31, 2023. The DMO re-certification application and required documentation are available on the Submittable website at <https://missouritourism.submittable.com/submit>.

If DMOs do not meet certification or re-certification requirements for the MMG Program for fiscal year 2025, they can apply for fiscal year 2026. Applications for FY26 open on September 1, 2024 and are due by 5 pm October 31, 2024. These applications and required documentation will be available on the Submittable website at <https://missouritourism.submittable.com/submit>.

The DMO certification and MMG awards are separate applications and due at separate times.

Required Documentation

The following, required documents must be provided to MDT along with the DMO certification application by the application deadline:

- Resolution – A resolution adopted by the county commission recognizing the applicant as the official Destination Marketing Organization for the county/counties

to participate in the MMG. *(This must be an official form on letterhead and signed by a commissioner – a sample is attached to the application)* St. Louis City/County is the exception and needs no resolution (per statute 67.607). The resolution must be signed in the same year as the certification or re-certification application.

- **Employee Attestation** – A letter from the organization signed by the president/CEO attesting to the number of full-time (32 hours per week, at least minimum wage) paid travel and tourism staff members.
- **Financial Statements** – Financial statements reflecting budget, revenues and expenses for the previous two years detailing applicant organization's travel and tourism marketing expenditures, payroll/administrative expenses and sources of revenue (Not required for re-certification)
- **Statement of Activities** – A statement of travel and tourism marketing activities successfully completed and paid for by the applicant organization in the last two years. Include samples all travel and tourism marketing materials listed. These activities must be detailed in the financial statements. (Not required for re-certification)
- **Marketing Plan** – The organization's current marketing plan with detailed action plan. (Not required for re-certification)
- **Brochure** – A current tourism marketing brochure or guide. (Not required for re-certification)
- **Website** – The organization's tourism marketing website address. The website must be a tourism website that will be the 'call to action' on marketing materials paid for through the cooperative marketing programs. (Not required for re-certification)

The documents above are required for all new DMO certifications; however, only the Commission Resolution and Employee Attestation are required for re-certification.

Additional documentation may be requested from any organization, if determined necessary by MDT and/or the CMPAC. MDT and the CMPAC review all certification

applications. The Missouri Tourism Commission reserves the right to make final decisions.

NEXT STEPS

DMO certification does NOT guarantee funding. The certified DMO must apply for individual grants or cooperative marketing opportunities – separate from the DMO certification. DMO certification applications are completed in the fall, organizations notified of their status in December, the grant application process in the following spring and the grant awards in early summer. Please see the program calendar for specific dates.