



State of Montana EMPG Programmatic and Financial Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I find information regarding the EMPG program?

Here is a list of valuable resources to learn more about EMPG:

- EMPG State Grant Guidance – found at <https://des.mt.gov/Grant-Programs/EMPG/EMPG-Resources>
- Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) – found at <https://des.mt.gov/Grant-Programs/EMPG/EMPG-Resources>
- 2 CFR Part 200 – found at https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl
- Your District Grant Coordinator

Who is the Grant Coordinator for my district?

Western District:

Vacant, Contact Ryan Lee

ryanlee@mt.gov

(406) 417-9237

Central District:

Jamie Mortimore

Jamie.Mortimore@mt.gov

(406) 202-4835

Eastern District:

Amanda Avard

amanda.avard@mt.gov

(406) 202-4195

What forms are due when?

EMPG applications are typically due to MT DES on or about the first week of March. The Amplifund application will be open on or about the first week of January.

Status Reports/Performance Report and Reimbursement Claims/Payment Requests submitted:

- Performance Report are due by the 10th day after the end of each quarter.
- Payment Requests are due no later than 45 calendar days after the end of each quarter.

Reporting Period	Performance Report Due Date	Payment Request Due Date
July 1 – September 30	October 10	November 15
October 1 – December 31	January 10	February 15
January 1 – March 31	April 10	May 15
April 1 – June 30	July 10	August 15

Accruals are due the second week of June. Reference page 6 of this document for more information on the accrual process.



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Closeout Letter is due October 1st.

What is the period of performance (POP) for the EMPG grant?

The period of performance is the window of time in which all grant expenditures must be expended. The EMPG grant POP in the state of Montana is July 1 – June 30. All expenditures associated with your grant award must be made within the associated time frame. Any expenditures made outside the period of performance are not eligible for that year's grant.

ALLOWABLE EXPENDITURES

PLANNING:

Can I use EMPG funds to develop or enhance emergency management planning activities?

Yes. Planning spans all five National Preparedness Goal mission areas of prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery. During the application process each sub-recipient is required to fill out a work plan that acts as a guide to fulfilling EMPG baseline requirements as well as recommended activities to enhance their emergency management program.

ORGANIZATION COSTS:

What are organization costs?

Organization costs are for EMPG eligible personnel and are broken into two categories including salary and fringe.

- Organization Salary (salary, overtime, compensatory time off) may be claimed for EMPG operations, staffing and daily activities that support emergency management principles.
- Organization Fringe includes personnel benefits (health, unemployment, retirement, etc.) provided by the entity which employs any EMPG eligible personnel.

What are operational utility costs?

Operational utility costs are related to the EMPG workspace or EOC and includes land line phones, cell phones, internet, rent, and utilities.



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TRAVEL:

What are the required criteria for authorized travel/reimbursement?

In order to be eligible for reimbursement under the EMPG program, travel must meet the following criteria:

- Must be official business related to approved training, exercise activities and/or linked to accomplishing activities outlined in the EMPG program work plan.
- Must be verifiable, allowable, allocable, and reasonable and may include airfare, mileage, per diem and hotel.
- Abide by your local/state travel policy. Note reimbursement may not exceed federal per diem rates. For reference, the State of Montana Travel Policy can be found at the provided link: <http://doa.mt.gov/employee-travel>

Travel reimbursement payment requests must include the below documentation:

- General Ledger for hard expenses (hotel, per diem, airfare, etc.) – required to show a description of the expense (must be able to be tied back to an eligible activity).
- Receipts or County reimbursement form (if applicable)
- Mileage log showing name of person traveling, date of travel, reason for travel, destination, and total number of miles
- Event agenda or justification

TRAINING AND EXERCISES:

Can I use EMPG funds for training and exercise-related costs?

Yes. EMPG funds can be used to:

- Design, develop, and conduct trainings and exercises.
- Fund travel (e.g. airfare, mileage, per diem and hotel)
- Hire qualified staff, contractors and consultants to help provide services that correspond with the associated work plan.
- Assist with instructor (re)certification.
- Implement HSEEP principles into exercise program.
- Support other expenditures (e.g. limited items consumed in direct support of exercise activities (i.e. location rentals for planning and conducting exercises, equipment rentals, and procurement of essential nondurable goods).



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Are food purchases allowable under the EMPG grant?

Yes, but very limited. Working lunches and light refreshments are allowable when provided for meetings, trainings and exercises that are directly related to the EMPG program and exceed a 4-hour period (2 hours prior to lunch and 2 hours following). If you have questions regarding food purchases, please contact your Grant Coordinator prior to submitting the payment request.

SUPPLIES, ACCOUNTABLE SUPPLIES, AND EQUIPMENT:

What is the difference between supplies, accountable supplies, and equipment?

- Supplies are items that cost less than \$5,000.00 are expended or consumed during daily business, trainings, planning, etc. Supplies are expendable and typically have less than a one-year lifespan. Supplies would be pens, paper, printer ink, etc.
- Accountable Supplies are expendable, cost less than \$5,000 and typically have a lifespan of greater than one year. Accountable supplies would be computers, printers, phones, etc. IT software may be allowable with proper justification.
- Equipment are items that cost more than \$5,000.00 and typically have a lifespan of greater than one year.

Is equipment allowable under EMPG?

No. Per the State Guidance, equipment is not allowable under the standard EMPG program. However, if reverted funds are available equipment may be awarded if it is reasonable, allocable, allowable, and necessary to accomplishing the project identified in the jurisdiction's reverted funds application and designated to be used only for the EOC. Reverted funds applications open in May and close in June.

Can I buy a vehicle or radios with EMPG funds?

Vehicles are not allowable under the standard EMPG program. However, if reverted funds are available jurisdictions may apply under EMPG's Reverted Funds Special Project.

Radios are allowable under the standard EMPG program but are only eligible for reimbursement if pre-approved and purchased for use by the DES Coordinator and/or Deputy. Radios must be included in the sub-recipients work plan prior to purchase and would fall under the "accountable supply" budget category as long as each radio is \$5,000.00 or less. It is encouraged to request radios through the EMPG Reverted Funds Special Project application. Subrecipients may not use



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any FEMA funds to procure or obtain radios that are China made or China affiliated. Please reach out to your Grant Coordinator for guidance.

What budget category do computers fall under?

Personal computers and laptops are not considered equipment and should be claimed under accountable supplies.

Are membership dues and newspaper notices for LEPC meetings allowable?

Yes. Membership dues such as MADESC, and newspaper notices for LEPC meetings are allowable and can be claimed under the supplies budget category.

Are burn permit renewals allowable?

No. Costs to renew burn permits are not allowable under EMPG as they are not a necessary expense for the emergency management program.

Are promotional items allowable?

No. Promotional items such as shirts, caps, cups, etc. are not an allowable expense as they are not a necessary expense for the emergency management program.

CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION:

Are construction and renovation projects allowable under EMPG?

Construction and renovation projects are not allowable under EMPG due to the short one-year period of performance timeframe and need to do an Environmental Historic Preservation (EHP).

GRANT MODIFICATIONS

Can I request a grant amendment during the period of performance?

Yes. Grant amendments may be requested by contacting your MT DES Grant Coordinator. Amendments may be submitted for:

- Unanticipated costs that were not incorporated into the budget at the time of the application.
- Project goals or expected work plan outcomes changed as milestones were completed.
- Change of authorized official or key personnel, including any reduction or increase in time or salary, as well as other significant personnel changes.



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How do I submit a grant amendment request?

Sub-recipients will need to submit their grant amendment request including justification for the modification through the Amplifund system (i.e. modification to the budget, performance plan/work plan, etc.). Contact your Grant Coordinator for additional guidance.

How soon will I hear back from MT DES on amendment requests?

An approved request results in a modification to the award documentation. MT DES reviews requests and notifies sub-recipients of approval of modifications within 30 days.

ACCRUAL PROCESS

What is an accrual, and do I need to do one?

An accrual, as found in the Montana Operations Manual, is the recognition of expenditure activity prior to its actual receipt or disbursement. All sub-recipients are required to submit accruals annually to the SAA no later than the second week of June for approval.

Valid accruable expenditures should include:

- Materials and supplies ordered or purchased prior to July 1st but not yet reimbursed for, regardless of when they were paid for.
- Any time for services or hours worked prior to July 1st even if not paid until after June 30th to include salary, or benefits.

MONITORING VISITS

Will I be monitored this year?

Yes, all sub-recipients will be monitored. At minimum, monitoring visits will be conducted by the District Field Officer (DFO) twice a year and by the Grant Coordinator once every two years. Monitoring visits are conducted on site at the office of the sub-recipient. If an on-site visit cannot be scheduled than it may be ask that monitoring be performed over the phone or through video conferencing.

Why are monitoring visits performed?

MT DES conducts monitoring visits with sub-recipients to ensure compliance with the EMPG program guidance.



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What happens during a monitoring visit?

Monitoring visits provide the opportunity for questions to be asked, best practices to be shared, and concerns to be addressed. Also, for review of programmatic forms and discussion of program requirements as outlined in the grant guidance; to discuss possible modifications, to provide new personnel with an overview of the grant requirements, and/or provide any additional support to grants staff as needed. During the visit, a formal monitoring review form is used to ask various programmatic, financial, performance, compliance and administrative processes, policies, activities questions.

SOFT MATCH (IN-KIND MATCH)

What constitutes soft match?

Soft match is in-kind match for donated time and travel for non-federally funded personnel for LEPC meetings, trainings and exercises that are specific to the EMPG program and outlined in the work plan. Sub-recipients must provide supporting documentation with payment requests in Amplifund that include both a sign-in roster and agenda for all events claiming soft match. For additional guidance contact your Grant Coordinator.

Who is eligible to claim soft match?

Only non-federally funded personnel may be claimed under soft match. The only exception to this is that federally funded elected officials may be included under soft match for attending LEPC meetings.

What is the reimbursement rate for time and travel?

Volunteer rate is adjusted in April of each year affective the fourth quarter of the given grant year. To find the most current volunteer rate follow the provided link:

<https://independentsector.org/value-of-volunteer-time-2021/>

Mileage rate is updated in January of each year by the IRS, affective the third quarter of the given grant year. To find the most current mileage rate follow the provided link:

<https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/standard-mileage-rates>