

Educational Assistance Grants to Encourage and Support Media Reporting on Jobs, Business and the Economy

Background

The Vision/Mission statement of the Greater Montana Foundation is:

*The Greater Montana Foundation
benefits the people of Montana by encouraging communication
with an emphasis on electronic media
on issues, trends and values of importance
to present and future generations of Montanans*

In accordance with its vision and mission, the Greater Montana Foundation (GMF) has determined by quantitative and qualitative research that Montanans rank issues involving jobs and the economy as the highest priority set of issues facing our state. The Trustees of the Greater Montana Foundation believe that improvements in media reporting on such issues should be encouraged and supported.

The resulting educational assistance program described below has been approved by the IRS to provide grants to qualified applicants without the applicants incurring a tax liability.

Program Summary

In addition to news and public affairs program grants and educational and internship grants that the GMF makes to and through other non-profit organizations such as the University of Montana, the Trustees have approved a program to encourage and assist Journalism students, working journalists and those in direct supporting positions such as editors, news directors and program producers, who wish to improve their knowledge, skills and ability to report on economics, business, jobs and related subjects and who will provide feedback on their progress in so doing. Grants are made to individuals to provide educational incentives and to help defer tuition costs of college- and/or university-level courses in economics, business and related subjects.

Grant Amounts

Grants are \$500 per college- or university-level course, transmitted to successful applicants in advance of courses in anticipation of successful completion. Applicants must agree to return grants in the event courses are not successfully completed.

Eligible Grant Applicants

Montana Journalism students, working journalists and those in direct supporting positions such as editors, news directors and program producers are eligible for grants made to individuals selected by the Greater Montana Foundation. Not eligible are GMF employees, trustees, donors, or their relatives.

Grant Consideration Process

The Greater Montana Foundation Grants Committee, with final Board of Trustees approval, determines eligibility of applicants and awarding of grants as necessary during the year, based on the Committee's evaluation of how well the applicants meet the criteria listed below. Grants are made on an objective and nondiscriminatory basis.

Grant Requirements

Grant applicants must plan to attend a Montana institution of higher learning (college or University) and, in the case of working journalist or support field employee, be employed by a Montana news organization.

All prospective grant-receiving students must meet entry, and/or course prerequisite, requirements of the institution providing the course(s) being sought.

Working journalists must obtain a recommendation or endorsement by his/her employer as well as adequate schedule flexibility permission to take a course with GMF assistance.

Students and working journalists must explain why they are applying for the grants, how they anticipate benefitting by the courses, and how they anticipate applying what they will have learned.

Applicants must agree to provide GMF with feedback on the program upon course completion, including educational institution evidence of successful course completion.

Applicants must agree to return all grant funds if a course is not completed.

Applicants must agree to provide, within one year following successful completion of courses, a brief report one year following course completion on:

- whether or how their new knowledge and skills were put to practical use to improve media reporting on business, economics and related topics; and,
- whether or how they expect they will be able to continue to use knowledge and skills obtained through the program into the future.

Roles of Colleges and Universities

Accredited Montana higher education institutions provide eligible courses from their standard curricula course offerings, and provide to GMF any advice or recommendations they believe to be appropriate regarding the program.

Evaluation

The Greater Montana Foundation compiles and tracks information on the program and its results from participant and educational institution reports and other feedback. Both the GMF Grants Committee and the full Board of Trustees review the program annually to recommend and approve program improvements.

Further information and an application form are available at www.greatermontana.org.

Questions may be addressed to Ms. Sidney Armstrong, Executive Director of the Greater Montana Foundation at info@greatermontana.org.



Application

Educational Assistance Grant to Encourage and Improve Reporting on Jobs and the Economy

Applicant Name _____

Address _____

E-Mail _____ Telephone _____

Employment Status _____
(such as job title and years in media field, etc.)

Current Media Employer _____

Address and Contact _____

(supervisor, etc., w/ e-mail and telephone)

If student: _____
(Institution where enrolled)

Educational Status/
Achievement _____
(educational level achieved to date)

Educational Institution _____
(name and department)

Course Proposed _____
(number and title, in-person or online)

(address and registrar contact information)

Course Dates _____

Do you meet Institution admission requirements and course prerequisites?

Yes _____ No _____

If currently employed, does your employer support your taking the course and will you have schedule flexibility to meet course attendance requirements?

Yes _____ No _____

(If yes, please attach a signed brief statement of support and schedule flexibility from your employer.)

On a separate page: Please explain why you are applying for this course. Include:

1. What you hope to learn and how you hope to benefit by it.
2. How you plan to apply what you learn in your journalism or media work.

Do you agree to provide within 30 days following the end of the course:

1. Brief feedback on the educational assistance program and your course.
2. Educational institution evidence that you have successfully completed the course?

Yes _____ No _____

Do you agree to return any grant funds following the projected course end-date if you do not successfully complete the course?

Yes _____ No _____

Do you agree to provide to GMF, within one year of successful course completion, a brief report that includes your thoughts on the overall educational assistance program, and specifically:

1. How your new knowledge and skills were put to practical use to improve media reporting on jobs, the economy and related topics (such as business, labor, etc.)
2. Whether or how you expect you will be able to continue to use knowledge and skills obtained by the program into the future?

Yes _____ No _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Please email application to Sidney Armstrong, Executive Director, at info@greatermontana.org