

# Montana Department of Commerce

Operated by **Montana's Department of Commerce**, the Indian Country Economic Development (ICED) Program administers **several robust grant programs**. Since 2005, three grants have served to bolster tribal economies and communities, as well as stimulate future investment and support, awarding up to \$664,000 in state funds per fiscal year.

## THE CHALLENGE

ICED has three staff members. Due to the expansion of their grants program, by 2015 the team was spending hundreds of hours managing paper applications and an intricate review process. For one grant alone, they were converting more than 70 printed applications into a digital format and organizing them with manually generated spreadsheets. A single staff member was managing a multi-stage review process that involved coordinating with over 75 individuals at the state and local levels.

## THE SOLUTION

ICED urgently needed a grant-management system that would be easy to use, and could be shared across the agency and across state programs. According to Heather, her team was impressed by Submittable's **"accessibility and ease of use for differently-abled users, as well as the responsiveness of Submittable staff** to questions and technical-assistance needs."

## THE RESULTS

Although she did experience some initial resistance to an online system, Heather says that, "Once folks saw they could **access applications in real time, make changes, remotely communicate decisions and questions, perform reviews, and have one central place to access applications**, they became comfortable with the process. Plus," she says, **"we didn't need weeks of training to deploy the tool."**

**Heather estimates that ICED has gained close to three weeks of staff time, saving over \$4300, per grant cycle by switching to Submittable.** They have also seen a 20% increase in applications. As Heather observes, "with less time spent on managing touch points for applicants and reviewers, we're able to look at the global, holistic view of the program, and get feedback about what can be better." With Submittable, Heather and ICED can spend more time focusing on their mission: growing the private sector economy on Reservations in Montana.