



Montana Broadband Communications Advisory Commission Meeting

August 26, 2025

Discussion Topics

August 2025 Commission Meeting:

- BEAD Program Update
 - Application Review Process
 - Applications Received
 - Overview of Preliminary Awardees
 - Selected Awardees
- Final Proposal and Next Phase
- Public Comment



Benefit of the Bargain Round

Purpose of the Benefit of the Bargain Round

- This round required an additional subgrantee selection round for every BEAD-eligible location, treating all technologies equally. Overall eligibility remained the same.

Additional Changes required by NTIA's BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice

- Removed non-statutory application and reporting requirements.
- Reverted definition of “Priority” to the definition in IIJA.
- Focused scoring on cost, with limited secondary criteria.
- Reopened Prequalification Application and provided updated technical assistance.
- Updated Benefit of the Bargain Project Areas from Census Block Groups (CBGs) to reflect previously negotiated project areas to allow for streamlined applications.



Evaluation Criteria

Primary Criteria: Minimal BEAD Program Outlay

- For the same general project areas, MBO will choose the option with the lowest cost based on minimal BEAD Program outlay per NTIA's [Bead Restructuring Policy Notice](#).
- When comparing competing proposals, MBO will assess the total BEAD funding that will be required to complete the project (i.e., the total project cost minus the applicant's proposed match) and the cost to the Program per location (i.e., the total BEAD funding that will be required to complete the project divided by the number of BSLs the project will serve).

Secondary Criteria* (if multiple applications in the same project area were within 15% of the lowest-cost proposal) the following criteria were also evaluated:

- [Speed of Network and Other Technical Capabilities](#): Ability for network design to demonstrate technical performance (speed and latency) and future scalability.
- [Preliminary/Provisional Subgrantees](#): Project was previously preliminarily selected.

*Secondary Criteria was not utilized because there were no projects in the same general project area within 15%



Additional Factors Used To Evaluate Projects

Priority Broadband Project

Proposals for “Priority Broadband” projects were evaluated against the revised Priority Broadband definition outlined in the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice, on a per-project basis. The following applicable network components were assessed:

- Logical Network Diagram
- Access layer
- Headend & internet backbone connectivity
- Reliability & quality of service
- Customer premises equipment
- Tower locations
- Uplink/Downlink throughput
- Gateway infrastructure & satellite uplinks

Project Area Criteria

- In addition, the project area criteria, such as location density, provider capacity, and scalability, were also assessed. Applications were scored according to the updated criteria in the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice and the approved scoring rubric.

Capacity Performance Calculations

- A minimum of 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload
- ≤ 100 ms roundtrip latency
- Simultaneous 5 Mbps to all connected locations, including BEAD and non-BEAD users

Scalability Performance Calculations

- Ability to meet performance targets five years after initial deployment, assuming a 25% annual increase in capacity demand

Support for 5G and Advanced Services Calculations

- Ability to deliver at least 300 Mbps download and 30 Mbps upload capacity to each of three distinct locations within the proposed project area (*totaling 900/90 Mbps aggregate capacity*)
- Maintain roundtrip latency no greater than 100 ms on each of these links



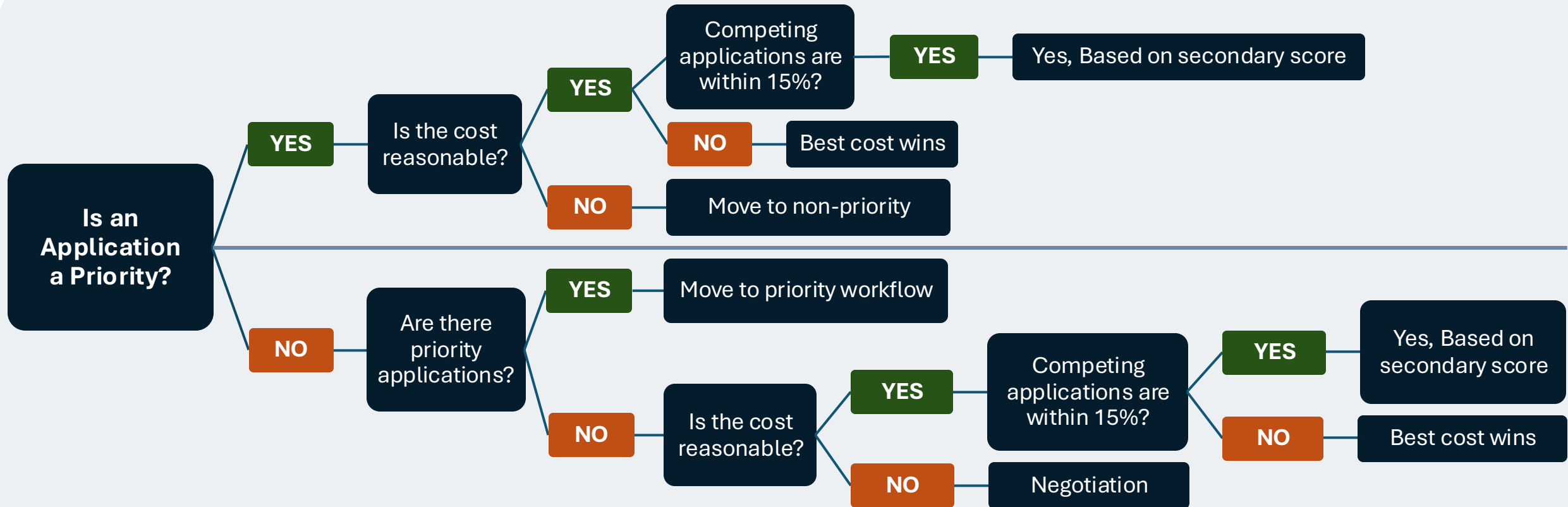
Applications Received

Benefit of the Bargain Round closed Friday, July 25, 2025:

- **47 Benefit of the Bargain Round Applications**
- **Technology types represented**
 - MBO received applications proposing Fiber, LFW, ULFW, LEO and hybrid solutions
 - Every application requested to be considered priority, 27 were determined to be priority
- **All Eligible BSLs covered**
 - MBO received an application for every eligible BSL in the state, many applications also proposed to serve CAls
- **Total Funding**
 - MBO received applications totaling to almost \$557 M



Benefit of the Bargain – Application Logic



Award Totals

Total Number of Awards

- **Preliminary subgrantee selection includes 32 applications covering 71,975 locations**
 - Total funding requested is approximately \$557 million
 - The original Main Round request was \$740 million

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Total Deployment Cost | \$308,194,874.32 |
| EE Average Cost per BSL | \$4,281.97 |
| Lowest Cost per BSL for a project | \$600.00 |
| Highest Cost per BSL for a project | \$14,994.64 |
| Total Match Provided | \$148,368,966.83 |



Overview of Preliminary Awards

Highest Cost Per BSL

| Awardee | BEAD Cost Per BSL | Number of BSLs Served | Technology Type |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Inland MT LLC (Cascade, Fergus) | \$14,994.64 | 2,894 | LFW |
| Inland MT LLC (Rosebud) | \$14,989.00 | 135 | LFW |
| Inland MT LLC (Lewis and Clark) | \$14,875.75 | 458 | LFW |
| Range Telephone Cooperative, Inc. (Rosebud) | \$14,650.62 | 120 | FTTP |
| Charter Communications Inc (Missoula) | \$14,436.69 | 171 | FTTP |
| Inland MT LLC (Cutbank to Pondera) | \$13,917.39 | 561 | LFW |
| Gallatin Wireless Internet LLC (Multi County) | \$13,773.15 | 6,754 | FTTP, LFW |
| Charter Communications Inc (Flathead) | \$12,919.33 | 1,483 | FTTP |
| Range Telephone Cooperative, Inc. (Treasure) | \$12,809.61 | 184 | FTTP |
| Lincoln Telephone Company Inc (Lewis and Clark) | \$11,008.61 | 70 | FTTP |



Overview of Preliminary Awards

Top 5 Preliminary Awardees Award Amount Total

| Awardee | Number of BSLs Served | BEAD Award Amount |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Gallatin Wireless Internet LLC | 8,055 | \$103,219,990.75 |
| Inland MT LLC | 4,048 | \$60,038,764.00 |
| Space Exploration Technologies Corp. | 20,406 | \$33,780,705.85 |
| Charter Communications | 2,379 | \$27,268,877.00 |
| Blackfoot Communications | 3,724 | \$26,234,611.50 |



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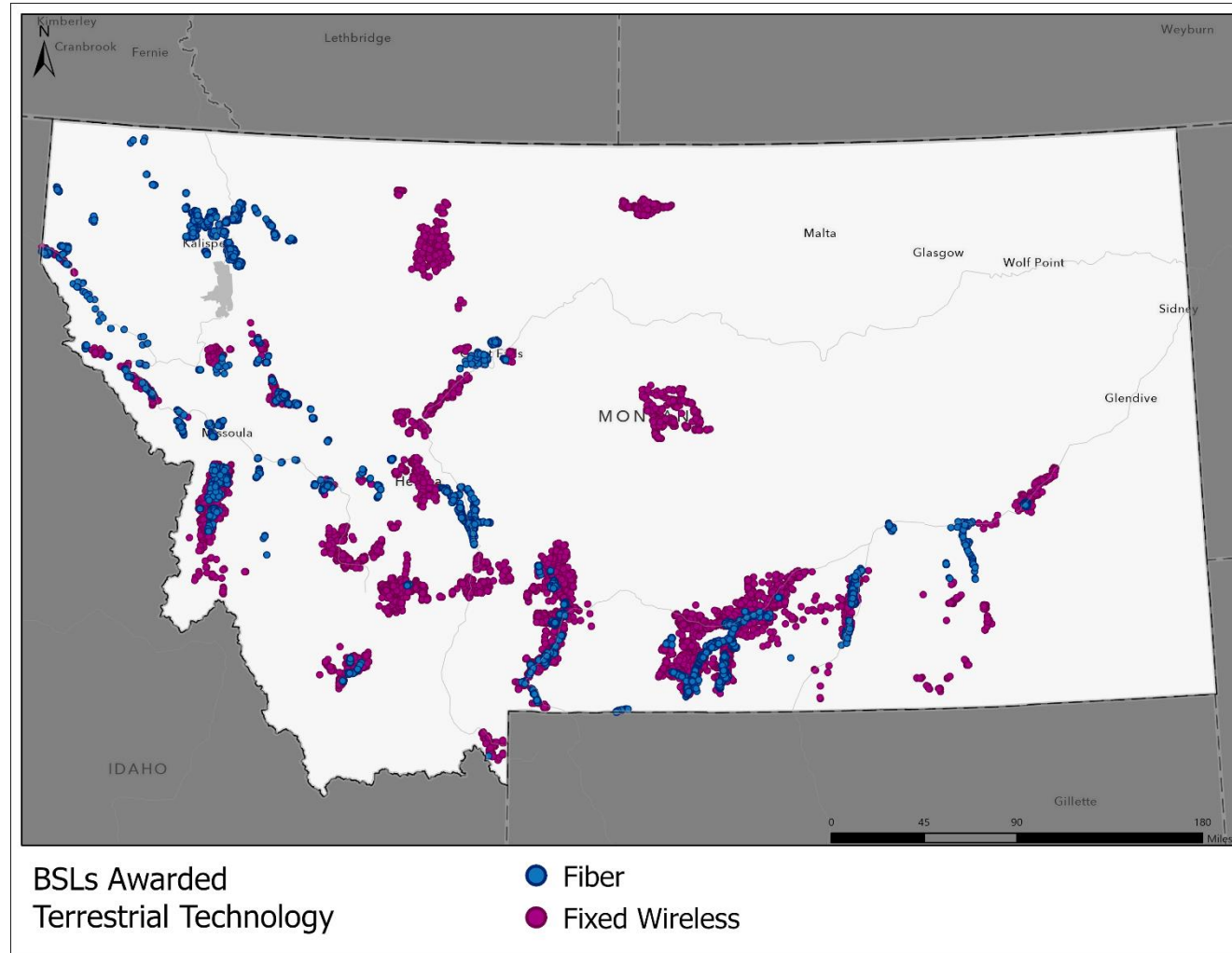
Overview of Preliminary Awards

Technology Types

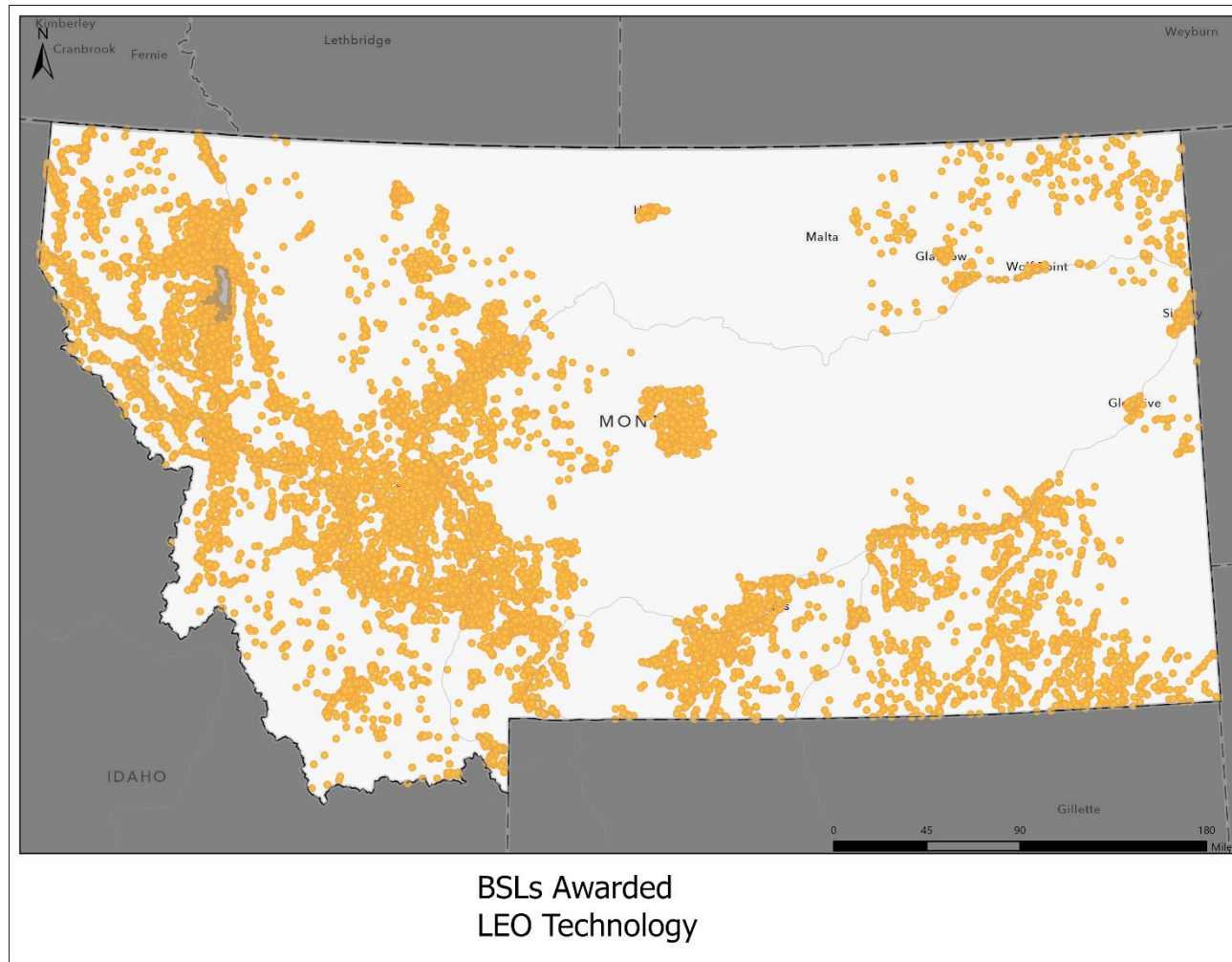
| Technology Type | % of Total BEAD Investment | % of BSLs Covered |
|--|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Optical Carrier/ Fiber to the Premises (50) | 44.16% | 20.02% |
| Licensed Terrestrial Fixed Wireless (71) | 37.53% | 12.74% |
| Non-Geostationary Satellite (60) | 16.13% | 65.19% |
| Unlicensed Terrestrial Fixed Wireless (70) | 0.95% | 1.56% |
| Licensed by-Rule Terrestrial Fixed Wireless (72) | 0.62% | 1.09% |
| Copper Wire (10) | 0% | 0% |
| Coaxial Cable/ HFC (40) | 0% | 0% |
| Other (0) | 0% | 0% |



BSLs Awarded by Technology



BSLs Awarded by Technology



Total Broadband Investment in Montana

Montana's Broadband Investments Since 2020

- **MT ARPA Program**
 - \$300,000,000
- **USDA ReConnect**
 - \$140,975,521
- **Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program**
 - \$142,978,583
- **Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program**
 - \$11,756,500

Total: \$595,710,604





Selected Awardees

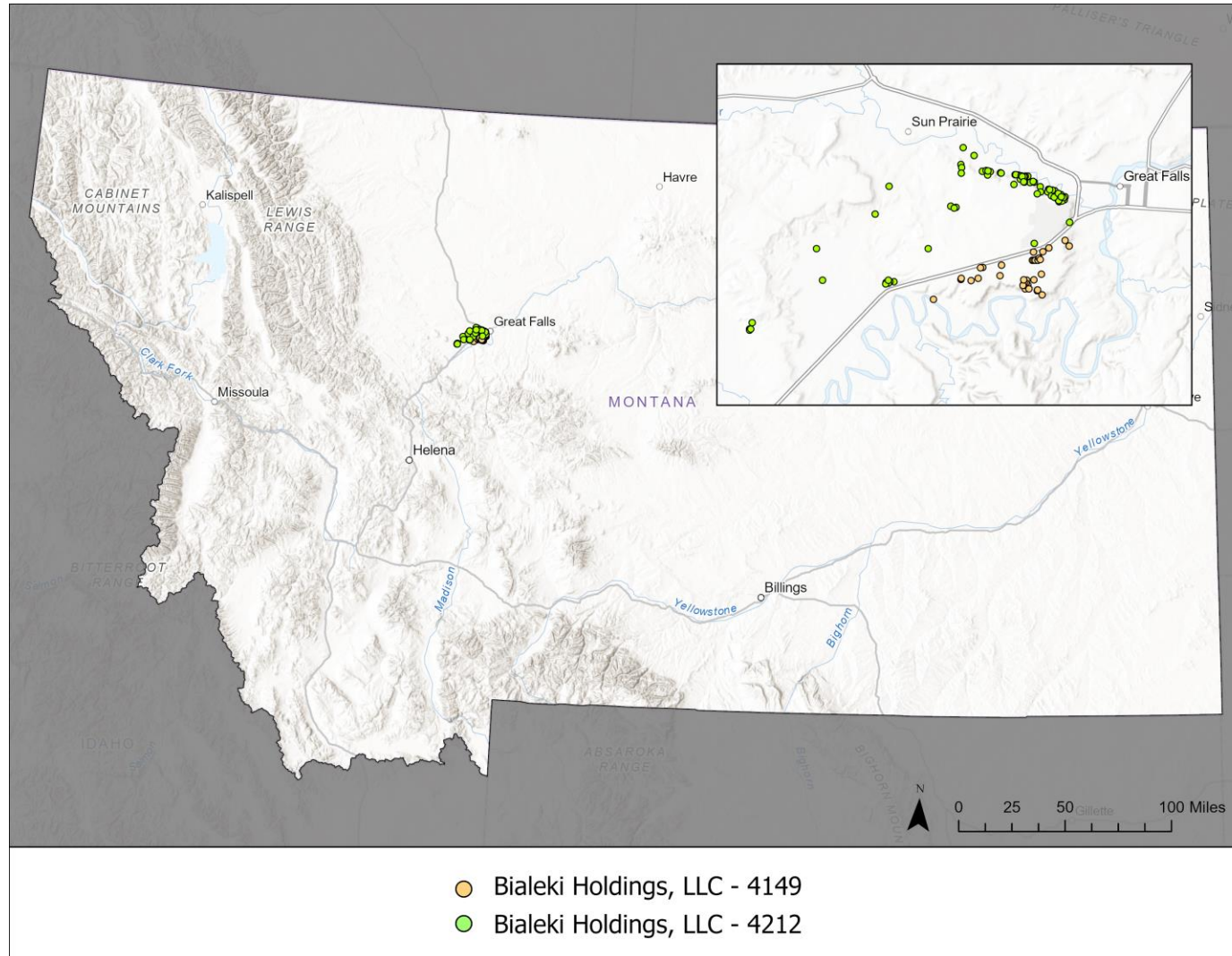
Selected Awardees

Bialeki Holdings, LLC

| Application | Award Amount | Match | Number of BSLs Served | Technology Type |
|--|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Bialeki Holdings, LLC – Cascade County | \$331,803.00 | \$110,601.00 | 36 | Fiber |
| Bialeki Holdings, LLC – Cascade County | \$692,479.00 | \$230,827.00 | 76 | Fiber |
| TOTAL | \$1,024,282.00 | \$341,428.00 | 112 | |



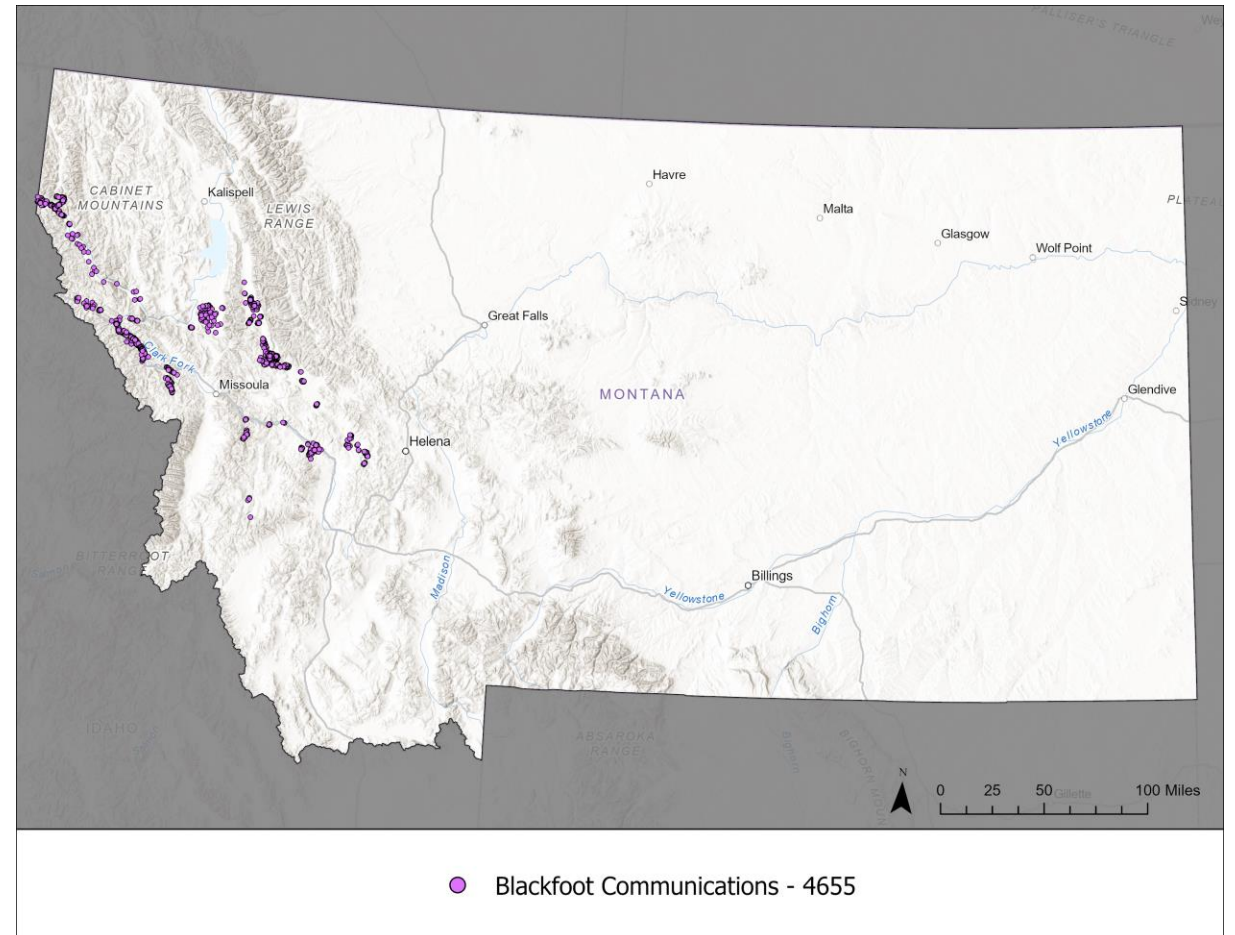
Selected Awardees



Selected Awardees

Blackfoot Communications - Missoula

- Award Amount: \$26,234,611.50
- Match: \$8,744,870.50
- Number of BSLs Served: 3,724 (49 CAI)
- Technology Type: Fiber, ULFW



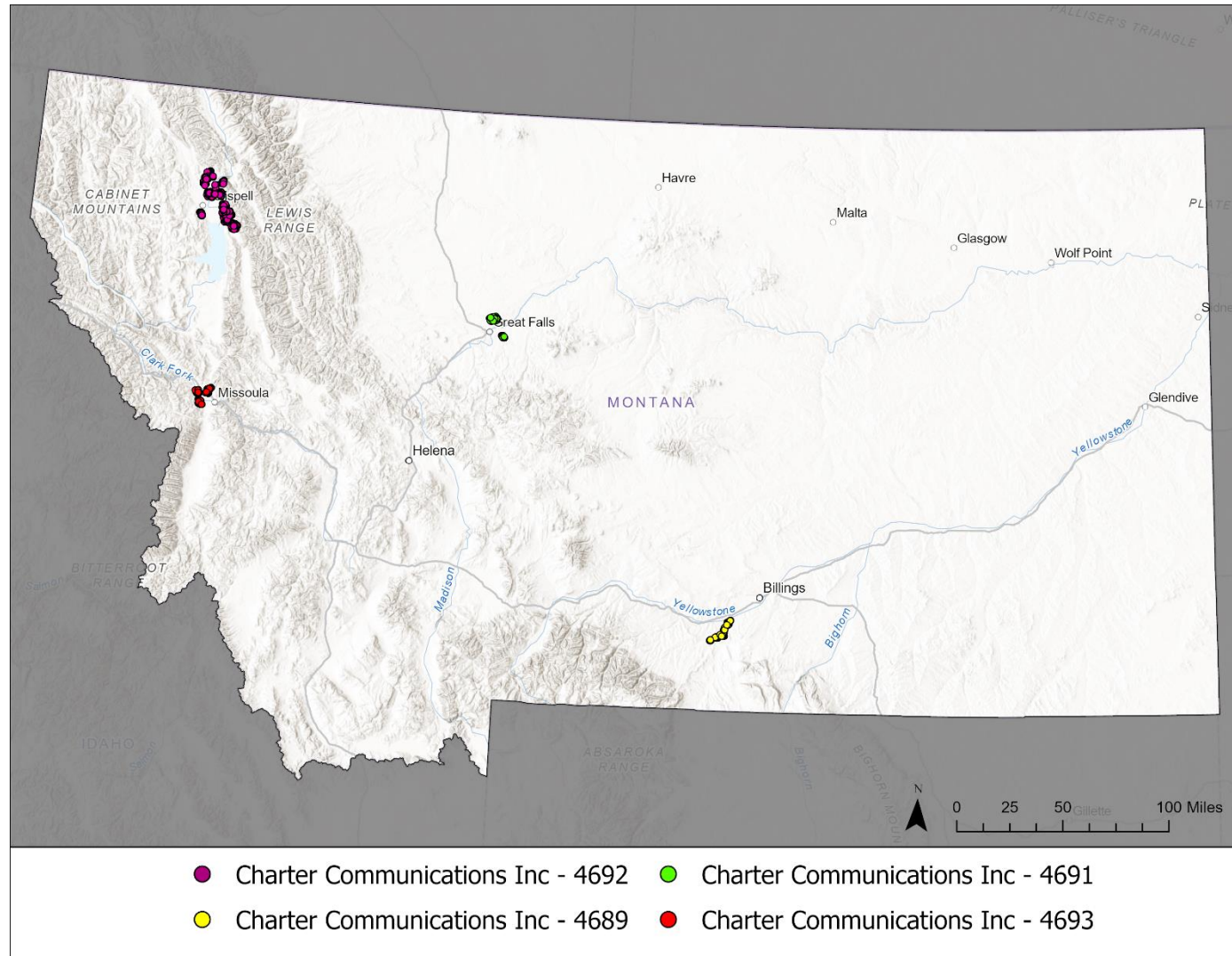
Selected Awardees

Charter Communications, Inc

| Application | Award Amount | Match | Number of BSLs Served | Technology Type |
|--|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Charter Communications Inc - Carbon County | \$3,478,221.00 | \$1,159,407.00 | 442 | Fiber |
| Charter Communications Inc – Cascade County | \$2,162,620.00 | \$720,873.00 | 283 | Fiber |
| Charter Communications Inc - Flathead County | \$19,159,362.00 | \$6,386,455.00 | 1,483 | Fiber |
| Charter Communications Inc – Missoula County | \$2,468,674.00 | \$822,891.00 | 171 | Fiber |
| TOTAL | \$27,268,877.00 | \$9,089,626.00 | 2,379 | |



Selected Awardees



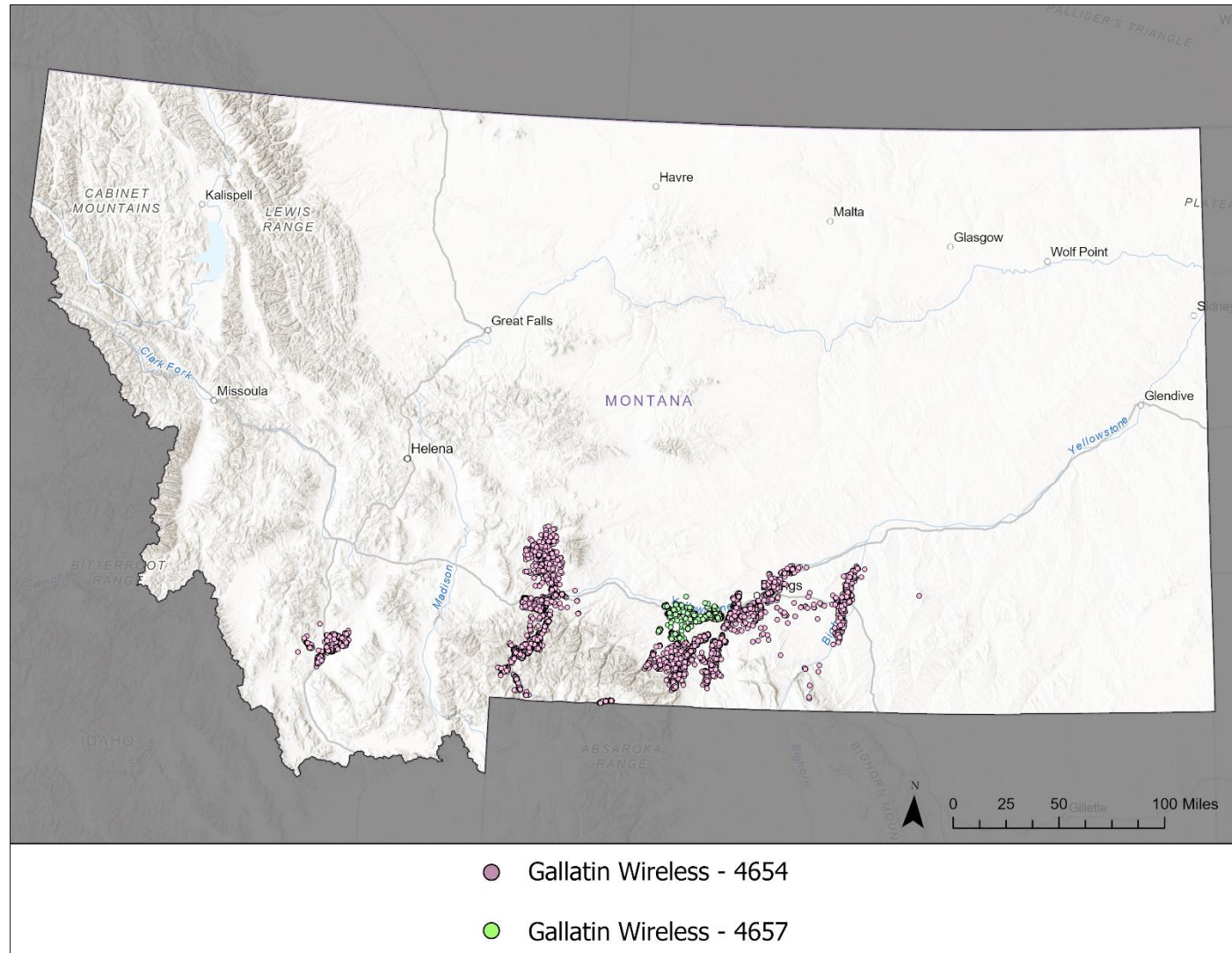
Selected Awardees

Gallatin Wireless Internet LLC

| Application | Award Amount | Match | Number of BSLs Served | Technology Type |
|---|------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Gallatin Wireless Internet LLC - Park County | \$93,023,837.48 | \$16,398,099.32 | 6,754 | Fiber, LFW |
| Gallatin Wireless Internet LLC - Stillwater County | \$10,196,153.27 | \$3,398,899.03 | 1,301 | Fiber, LFW |
| TOTAL | \$103,219,990.75 | \$19,796,998.35 | 8,055 | |



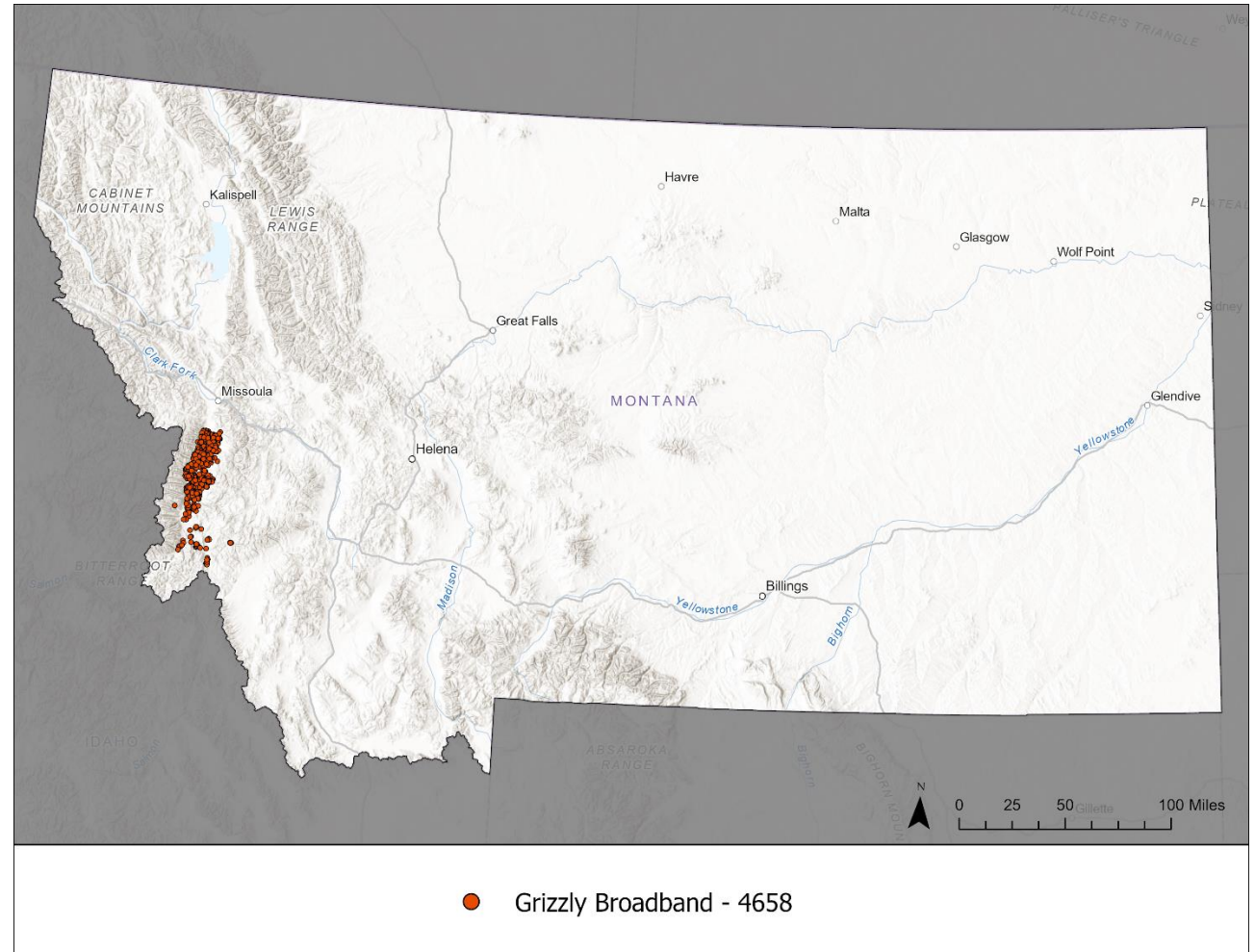
Selected Awardees



Selected Awardees

Grizzly Broadband, LLC – Ravalli County

- Award Amount: \$8,532,450.81
- Match: \$2,844,301.96
- Number of BSLs Served: 1,147
(51 CAI)
- Technology Type: Fiber, LFW



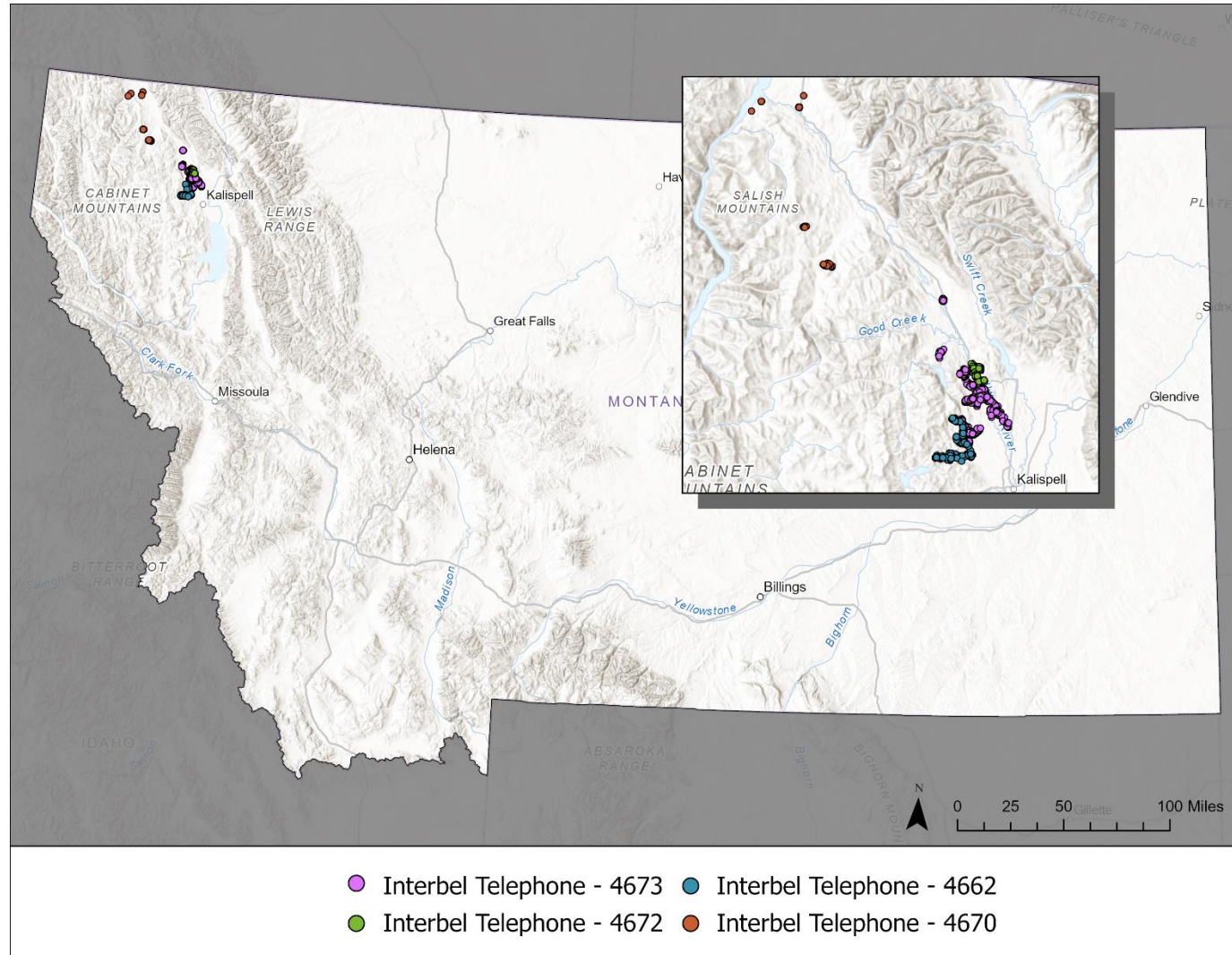
Selected Awardees

InterBel Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

| Application | Award Amount | Match | Number of BSLs Served | Technology Type |
|--|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| InterBel Telephone Cooperative, Inc. - Flathead County | \$1,687,140.00 | \$908,460.00 | 205 | Fiber |
| InterBel Telephone Cooperative, Inc. - Lincoln County | \$413,550.00 | \$137,850.00 | 66 | Fiber |
| InterBel Telephone Cooperative, Inc. - Flathead County | \$620,925.00 | \$206,975.00 | 86 | Fiber |
| InterBel Telephone Cooperative, Inc. - Flathead County | \$3,148,600.00 | \$3,148,600.00 | 388 | Fiber |
| TOTAL | \$5,870,215.00 | \$4,401,885.00 | 745 | |



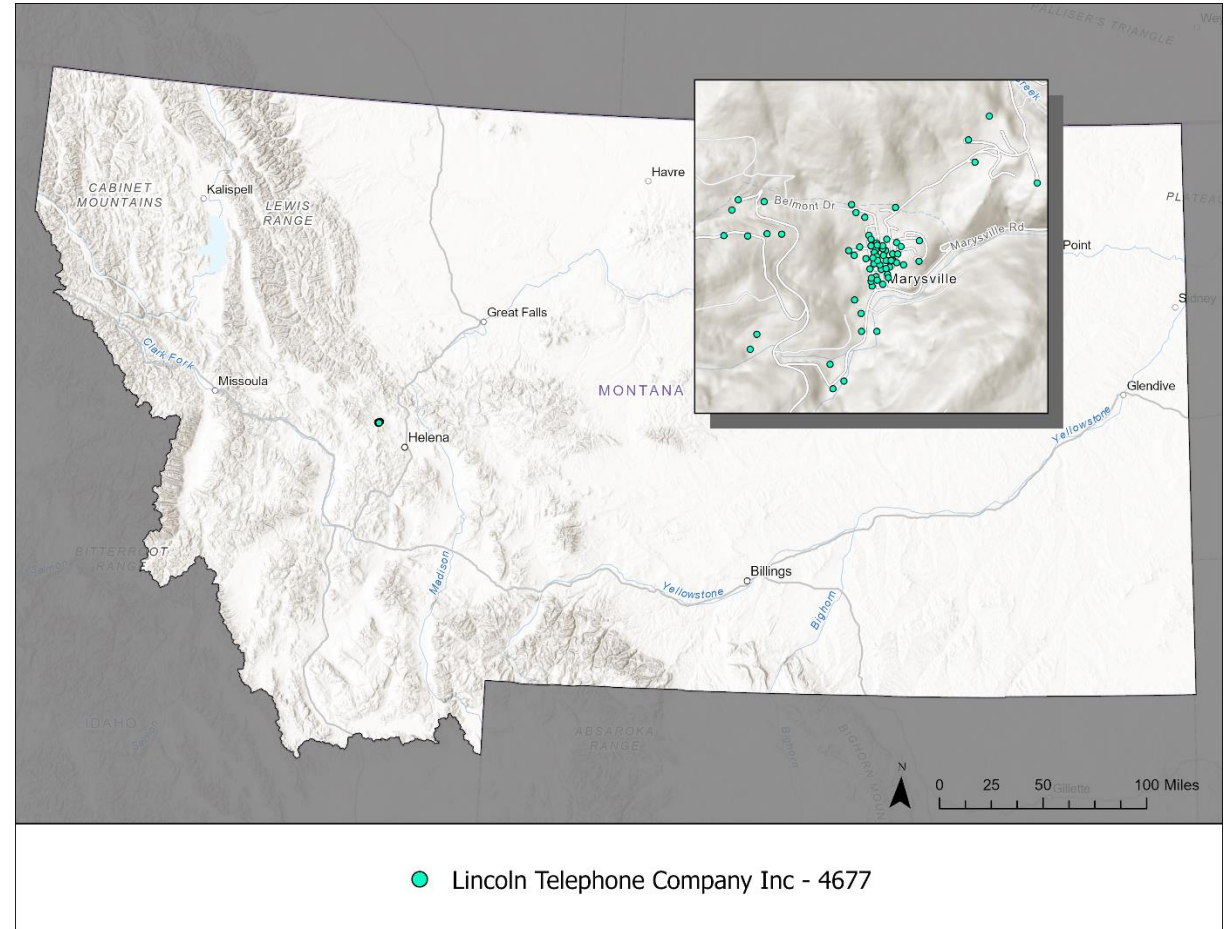
Selected Awardees



Selected Awardees

Lincoln Telephone Company – Lewis and Clark County

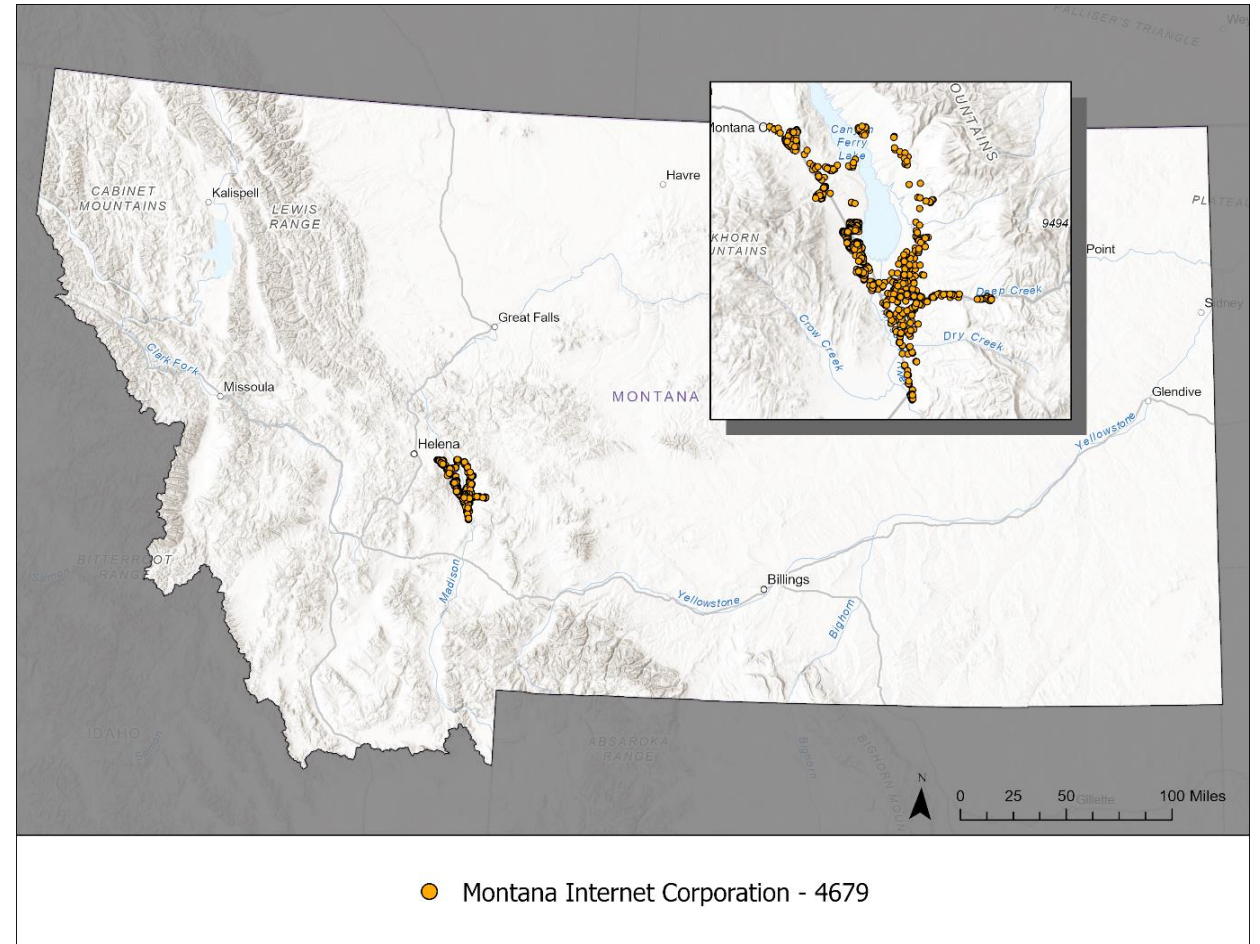
- Award Amount: \$770,602.45
- Match: \$256,867.49
- Number of BSLs Served: 70
- Technology Type: Fiber



Selected Awardees

Montana Internet Corporation – Broadwater County

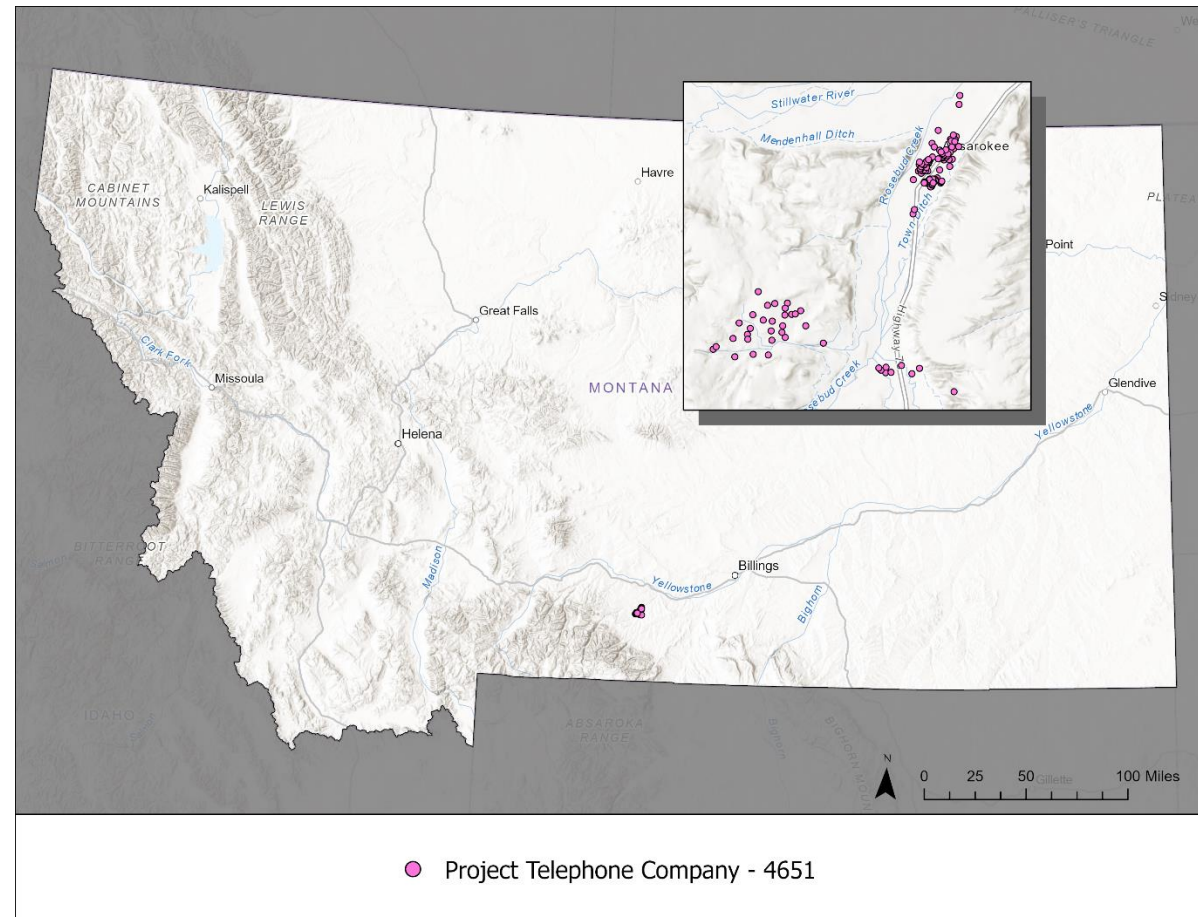
- Award Amount: \$4,600,623.00
- Match: \$6,241,873.00
- Number of BSLs Served: 1,154
(10 CAI)
- Technology Type: Fiber



Selected Awardees

Project Telephone Company – Stillwater County

- Award Amount: \$1,000,000.00
- Match: \$1,073,776.90
- Number of BSLs Served: 135
- Technology Type: Fiber



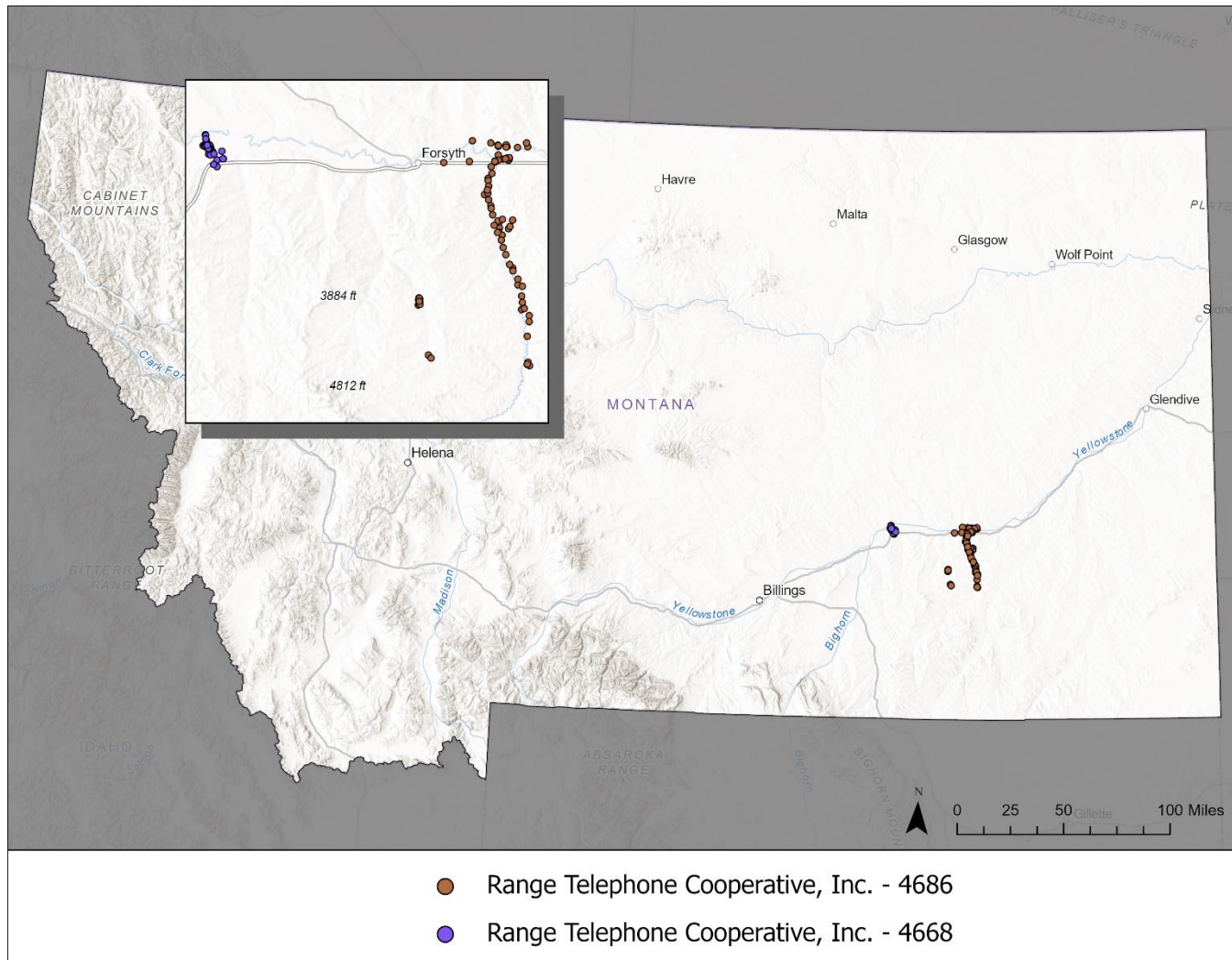
Selected Awardees

Range Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

| Application | Award Amount | Match | Number of BSLs Served | Technology Type |
|---|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Range Telephone Cooperative, Inc. - Treasure County | \$2,356,969.00 | \$785,656.00 | 184 | Fiber |
| Range Telephone Cooperative, Inc. - Rosebud County | \$1,758,074.40 | \$3,125,465.60 | 120 | Fiber |
| TOTAL | \$4,115,043.40 | \$3,911,121.60 | 304 | |



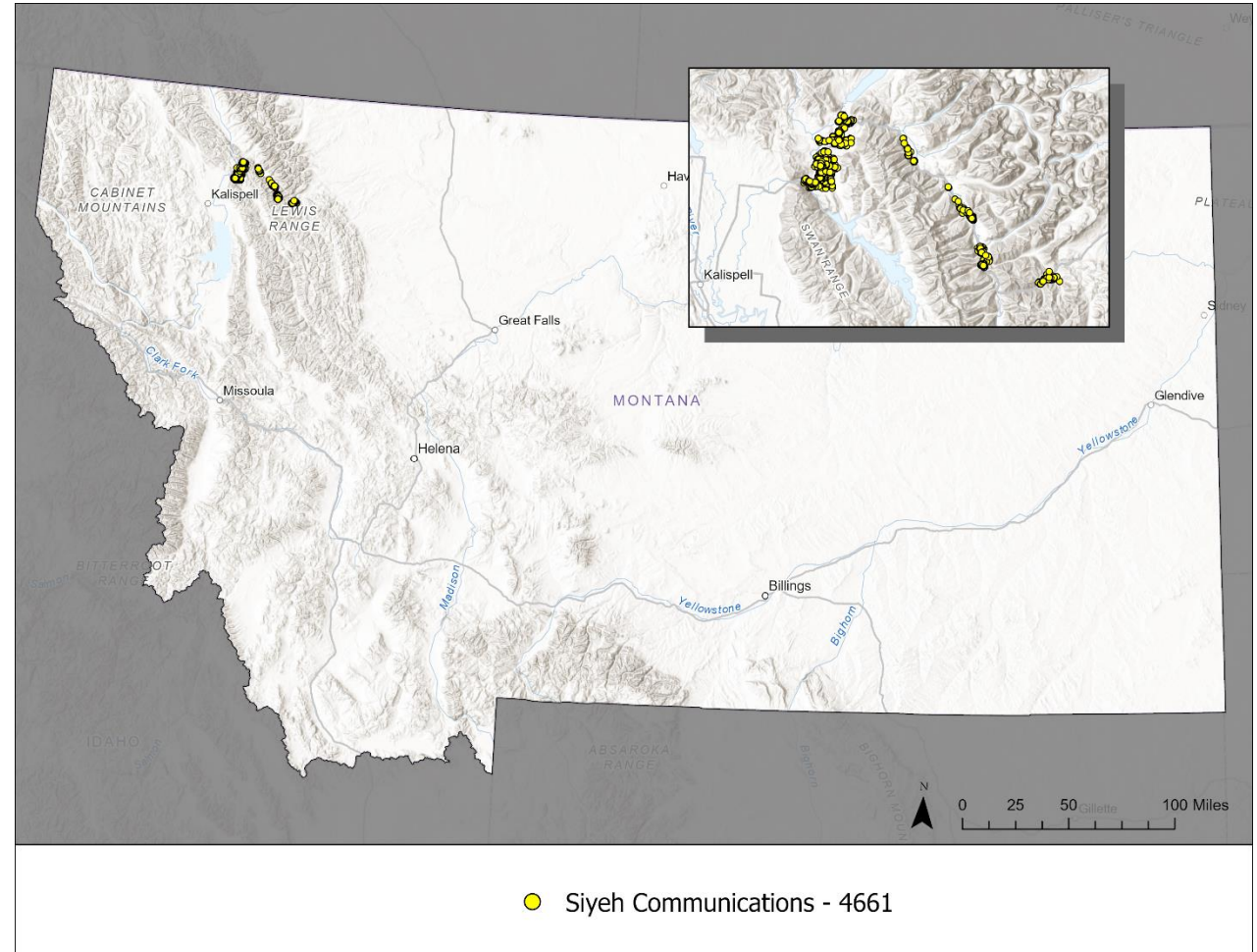
Selected Awardees



Selected Awardees

Siyeh Communications – Flathead County

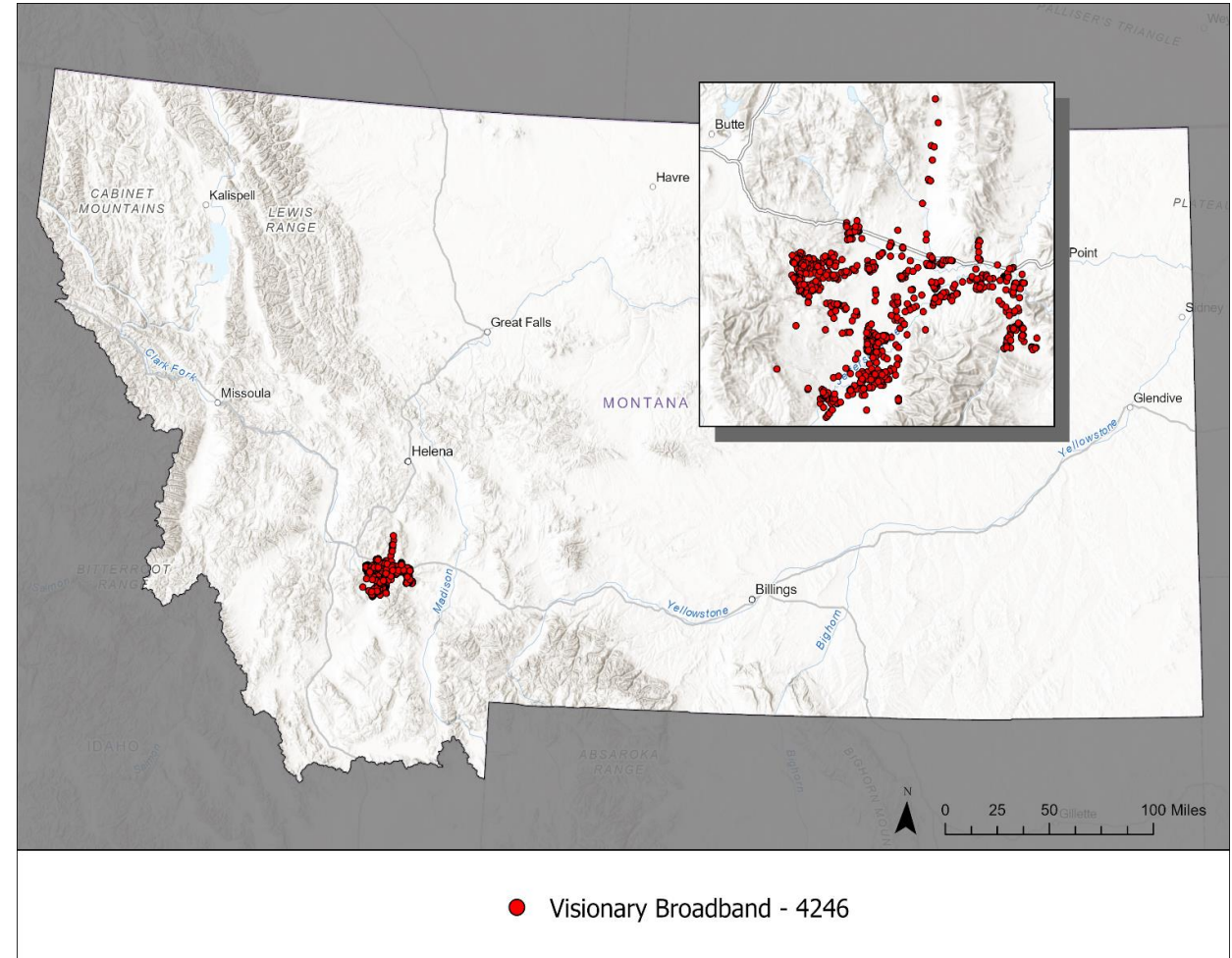
- Award Amount: \$8,960,175.00
- Match: \$2,986,725.00
- Number of BSLs Served: 914
(4 CAI)
- Technology Type: Fiber



Selected Awardees

Visionary Broadband – Jefferson County

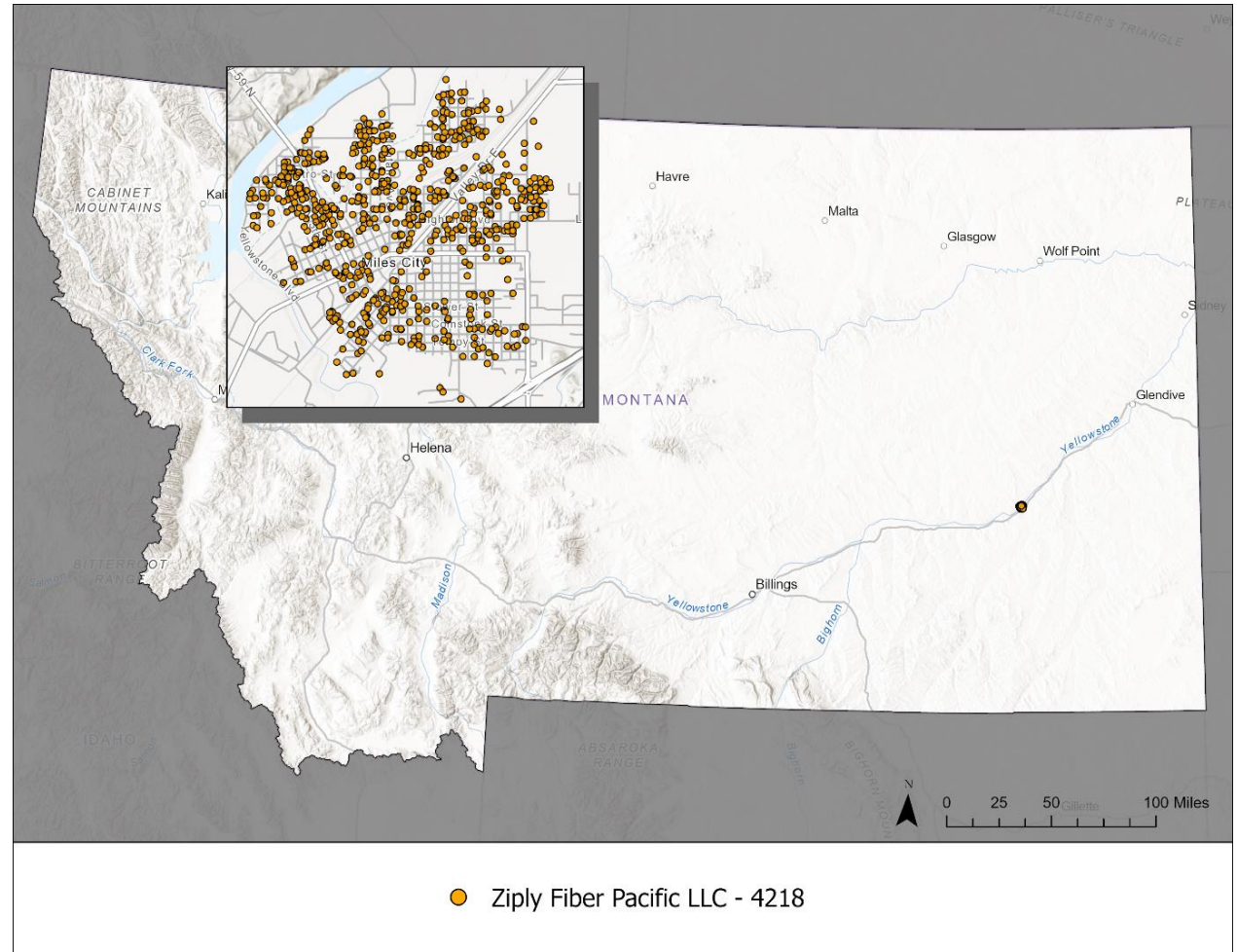
- Award Amount: \$828,822.59
- Match: \$169,231.37
- Number of BSLs Served: 758
(1 CAI)
- Technology Type: Fiber, LFW



Selected Awardees

Zipty Fiber Pacific LLC - Custer and Dawson Counties

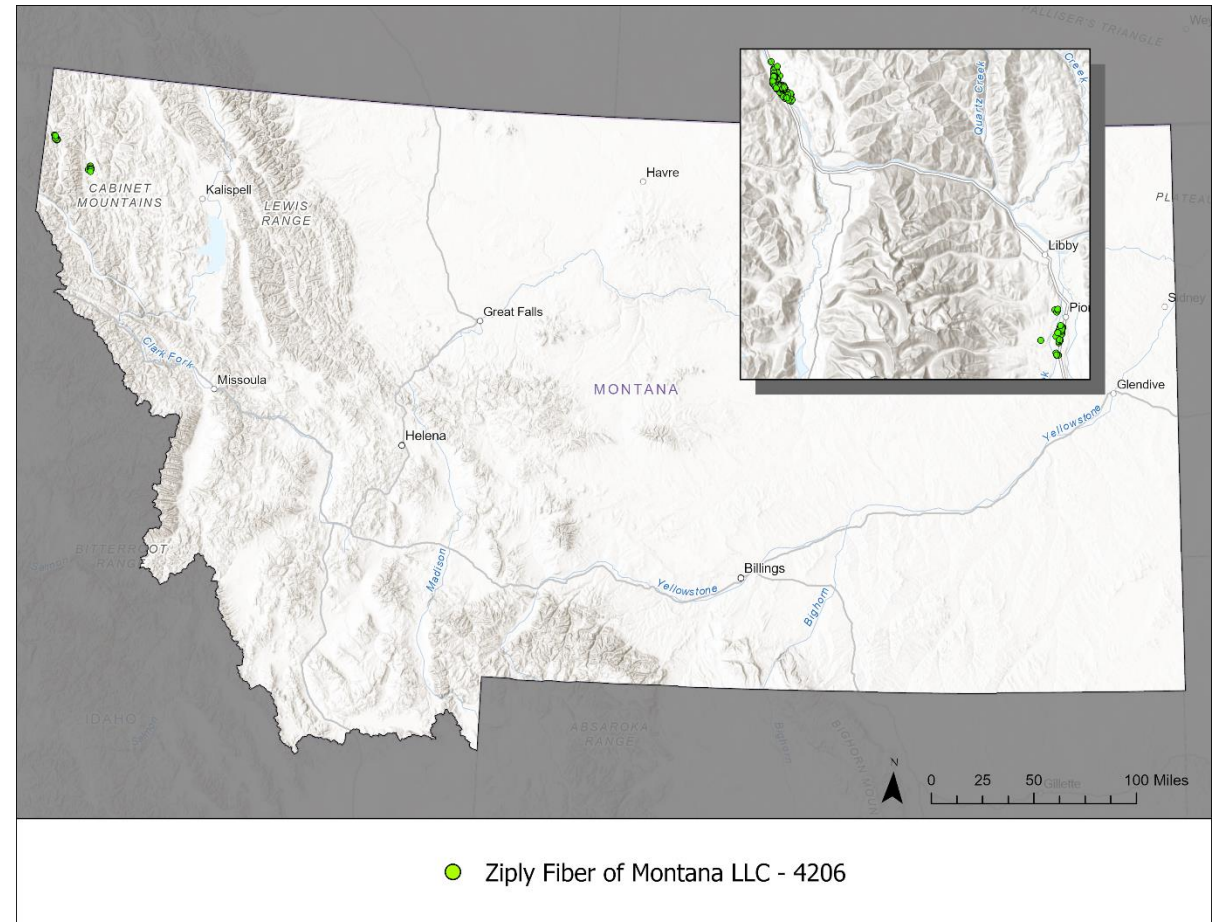
- Award Amount: \$1,823,195.75
- Match: \$5,523,675.00
- Number of BSLs Served: 686
- Technology Type: Fiber



Selected Awardees

Ziply Fiber of Montana LLC – Lincoln County

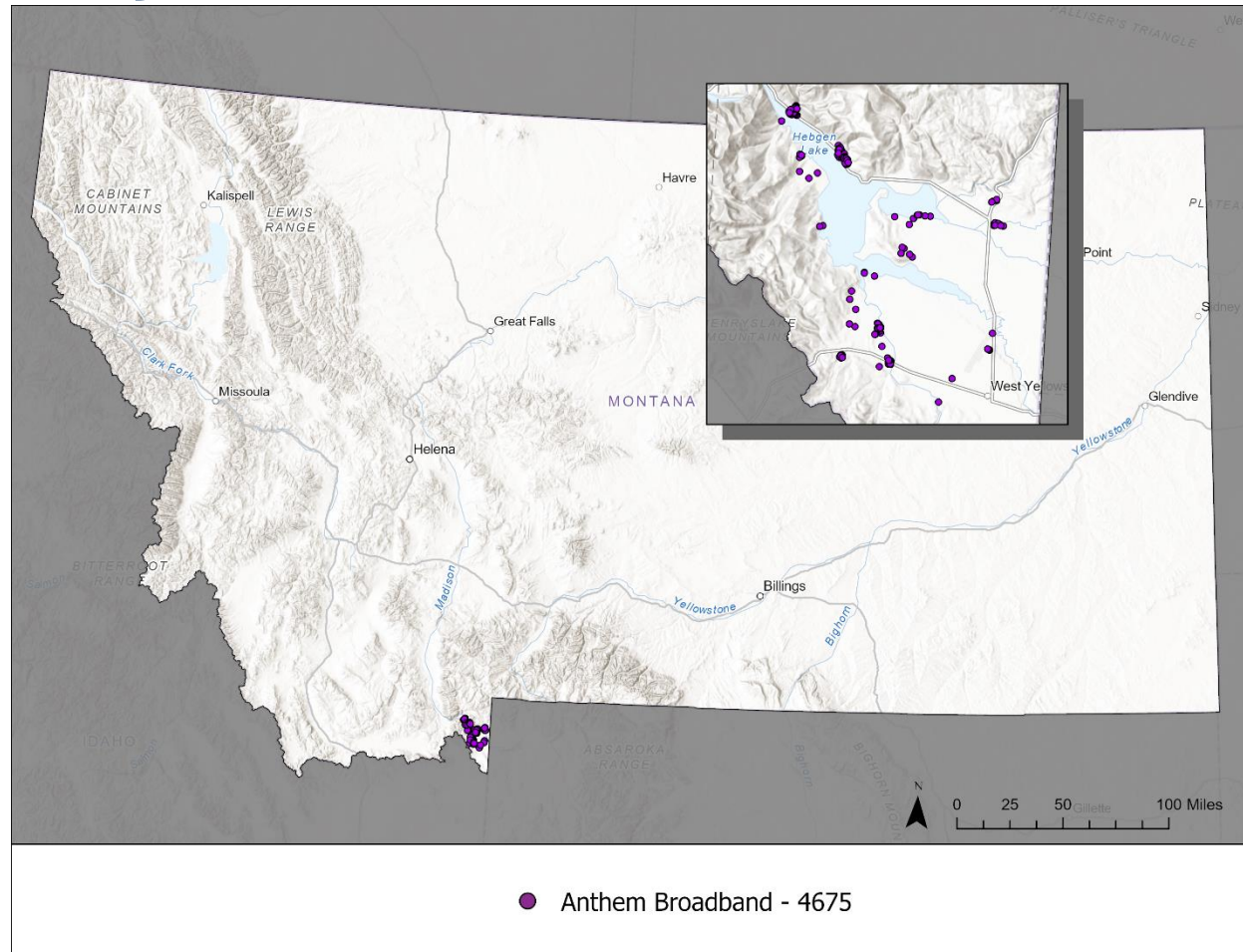
- Award Amount: \$2,234,434.36
- Match: \$744,811.45
- Number of BSLs Served: 215
- Technology Type: Fiber



Selected Awardees

Anthem Broadband – Gallatin County

- Award Amount: \$1,348,583.86
- Match: \$449,527.95
- Number of BSLs Served: 217
- Technology Type: LFW, Fiber



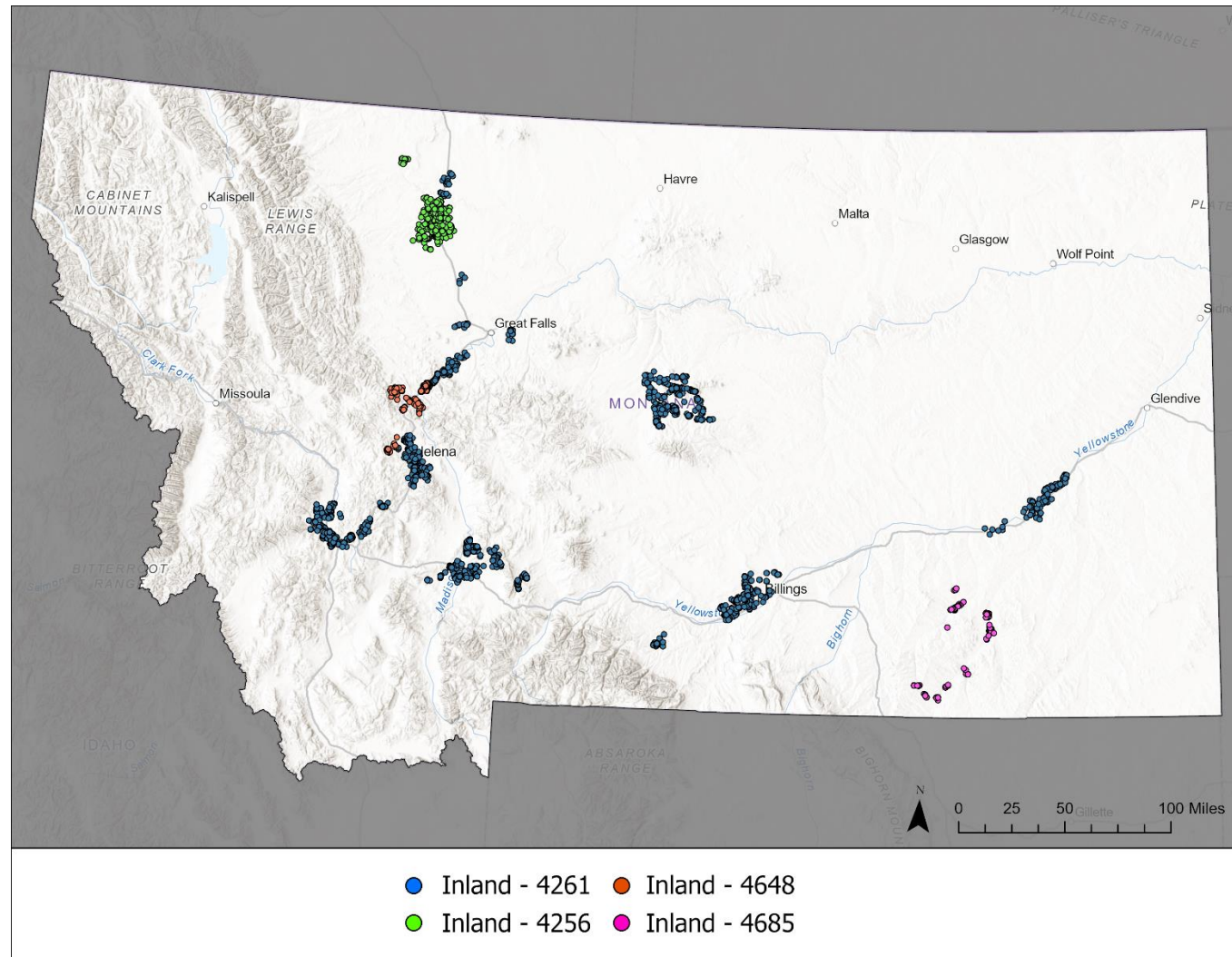
Selected Awardees

Inland MT LLC

| Application | Award Amount | Match | Number of BSLs Served | Technology Type |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Inland MT LLC – Pondera County | \$7,807,654.00 | \$2,602,552.00 | 561 | LFW |
| Inland MT LLC – Cascade and Fergus Counties | \$43,394,500.00 | \$39,546,500.00 | 2,894 | LFW |
| Inland MT LLC - Lewis and Clark County | \$6,813,095.00 | \$2,272,000.00 | 458 | LFW |
| Inland MT LLC - Rosebud | \$2,023,515.00 | \$674,505.00 | 135 | LFW |
| TOTAL | \$60,038,764.00 | \$45,095,557.00 | 4,048 | |



Selected Awardees



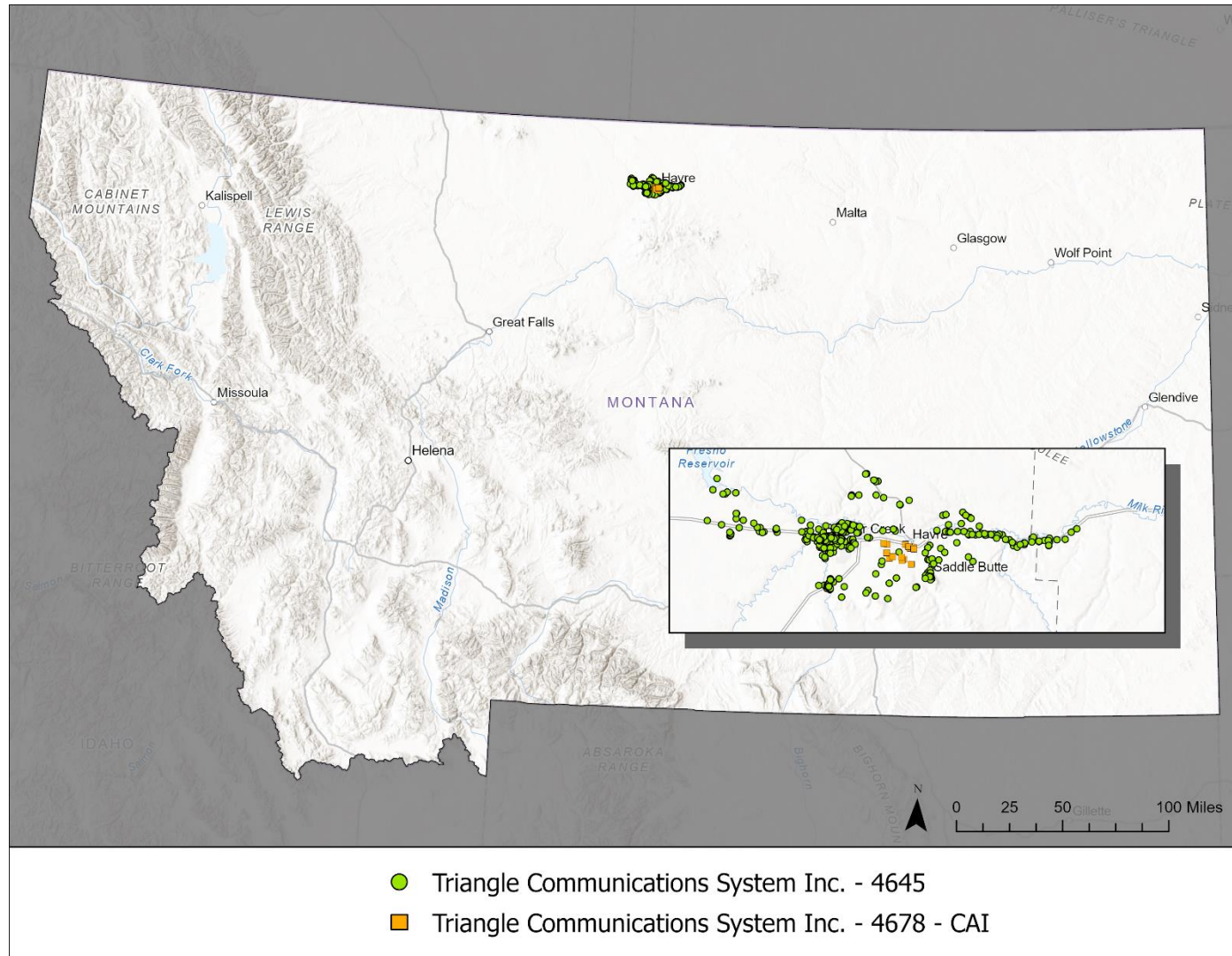
Selected Awardees

Triangle Communications System Inc.

| Application | Award Amount | Match | Number of BSLs Served | Technology Type |
|---|--------------|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Triangle Communications System Inc. - Hill County | \$599,573.00 | \$199,858.00 | 388 | LFW |
| Triangle Communications System Inc. - Hill County | \$33,124.00 | \$11,042.25 | 21 (CAI) | Fiber |
| TOTAL | \$632,697.00 | \$210,900.25 | 388 BSLs 21 CAIs | |



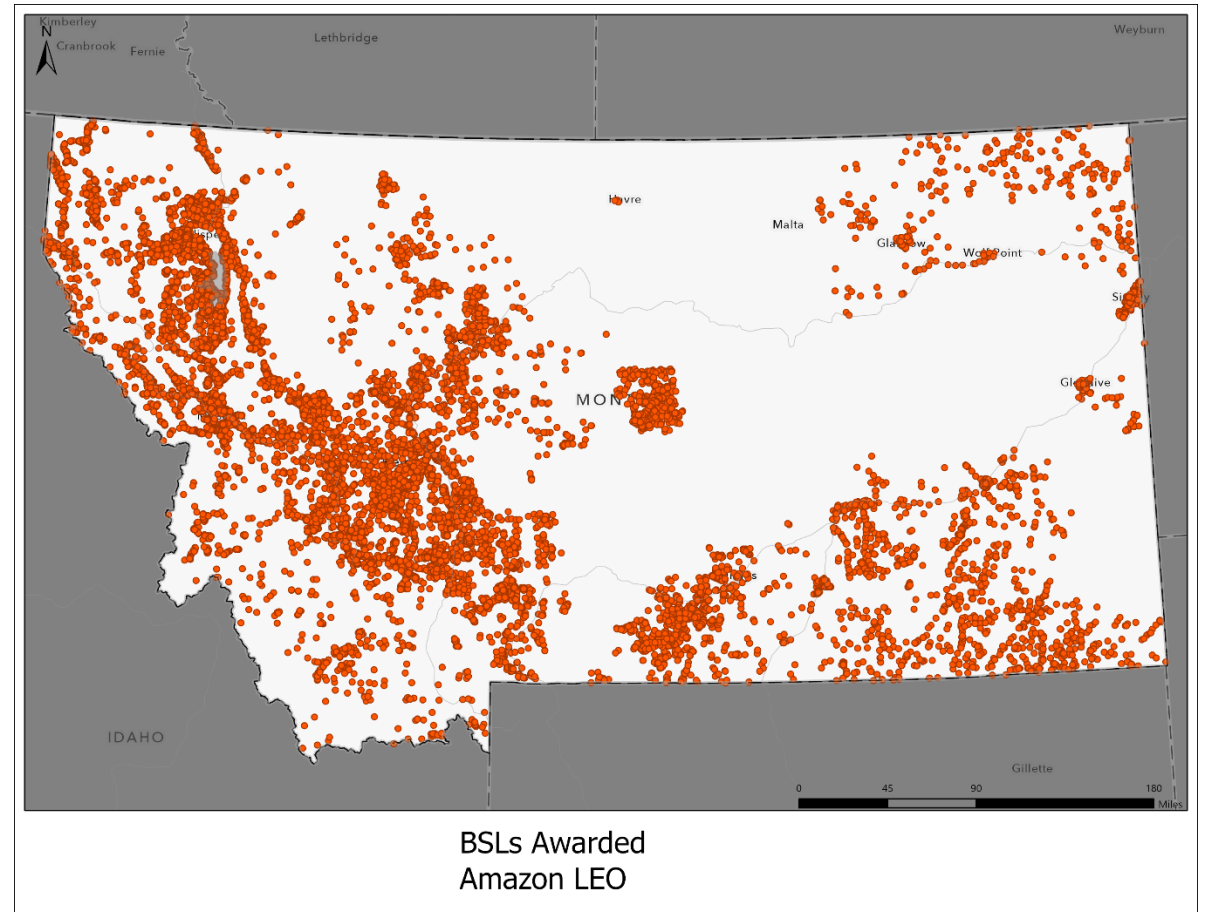
Selected Awardees



Selected Awardees

Amazon Kuiper Commercial Services LLC – Multi-County

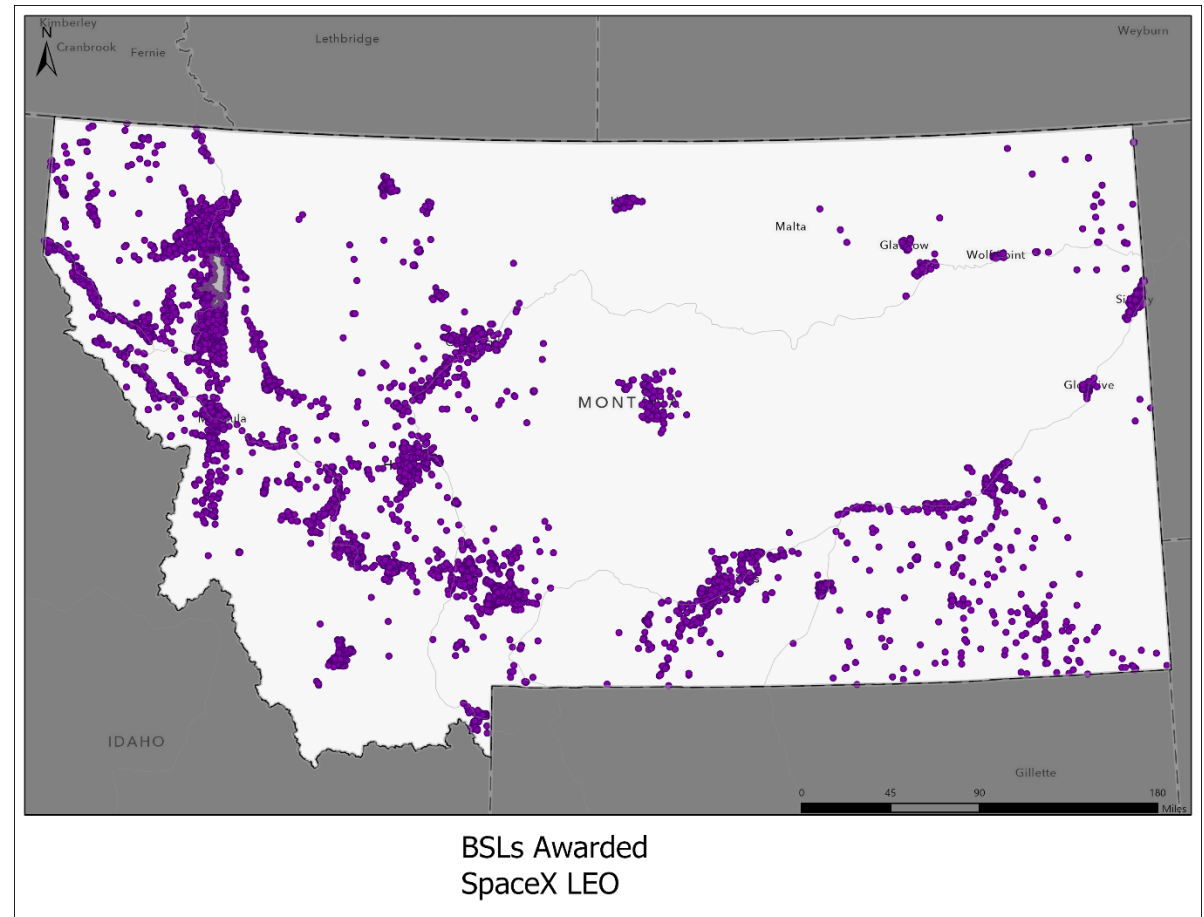
- Award Amount: \$15,910,800.00
- Match: \$5,303,600.00
- Number of BSLs Served: 26,518
- Technology Type: Satellite



Selected Awardees

Space Exploration Technologies Corp. - Multi-County

- Award Amount: \$33,780,705.85
- Match: \$31,182,190.01
- Number of BSLs Served: 20,406
- Technology Type: Satellite





Recess

What Comes Next

Final Proposal Public Comment Period

- Posted on [ConnectMT website](#) on August 22, 2025, and will close on Friday, August 29, 2025
 - Comments can be sent to ConnectMT@mt.gov

Submit Final Proposal to NTIA

- Target date to submit is September 3, 2025
- Due no later than September 4, 2025

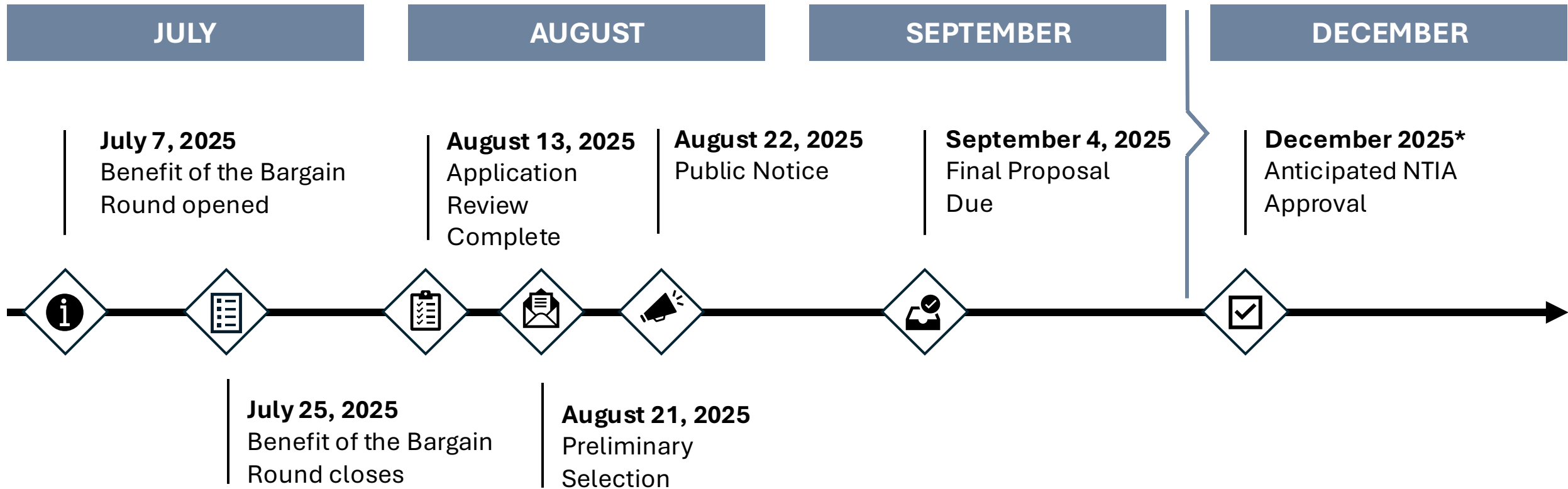
Then What?

- Prepare Grant Agreements for Subgrantees
- Wait for final approval from NTIA / Secretary Lutnick
- Upon approval, work with companies to initiate grant agreements
- Ongoing Compliance (required by NTIA and 2 CFR 200)
 - Subgrantees have 4 years to complete the buildout and connect customers
 - 10-year compliance for LEO



2025 Program Timeline

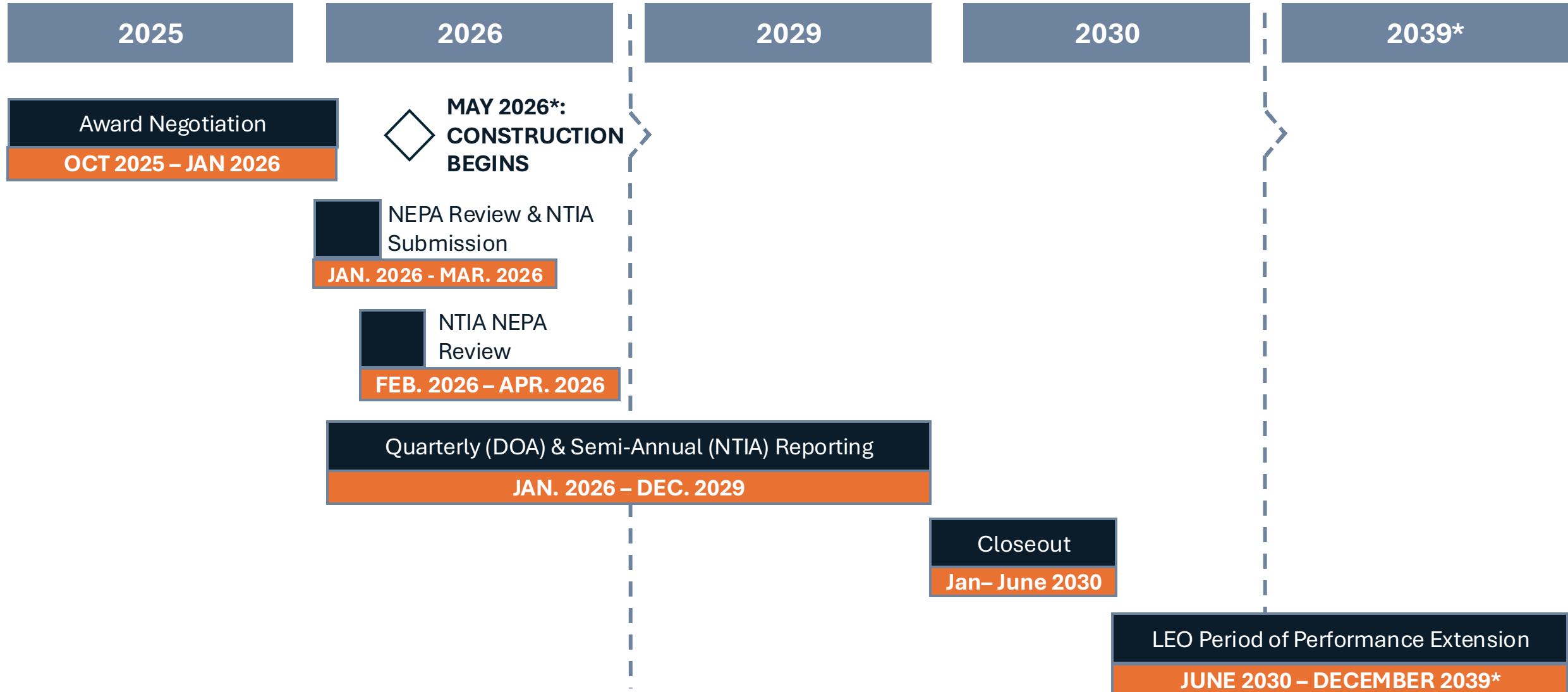
June 6, 2025, Policy Update Notice Issued



* Dates are estimated and subject to change



Ten-Year Program Timeline





Public Comment