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Montana Broadband Communications Advisory Commission Meeting

November 25, 2025

Discussion Topics

November 2025 Commission Meeting:

- BEAD Program Update
- ARPA Program Update
 - Background
 - Lightning Round Overview
 - Lightning Round Outcomes
 - Next Steps
- Public Comment



BEAD Program Update

Final Proposal Submission

- MBO submitted Montana's Final Proposal to NTIA on September 3, 2025

NTIA Approval

- NTIA announced approval of Montana's Final Proposal on November 18, 2025

NIST Approval

- Montana's Final Proposal still requires approval from NIST, but this is not expected to be a long process

Grant Agreements and Post-Award Activities

- Preparing updated draft grant agreement, reimbursement policy, and post-award monitoring and compliance procedures; as updates are available, they will be posted to the ConnectMT website



ConnectMT ARPA Program Background

Initial program awards were announced in 2022

- Subgrantees must complete their projects by September 30, 2026
- The ARPA program must be completed by December 31, 2026

About \$310 million in grant funds were awarded

- Awards came from a combination of CPF and CLEER program funds

56 awards were made to 16 different subgrantees

- The CAC implemented an award cap, limiting the amount given to a single awardee to 35% of the ARPA funds
- The CAC also passed a motion to allow DOA to award unallocated/defaulted funds to the “next-in-line” applications that were not awarded during subgrantee selection process

Awards will serve about 60,000 locations and deploy 2,000+ miles of fiber

Several project defaults have resulted in the need to reallocate unused program funding



ConnectMT ARPA Lightning Round

Treasury has allowed Montana to run another round of subgrantee selection (the Lightning Round) to reallocate remaining program funds

- Treasury required the same scoring criteria and technical requirements as used in previous rounds of ARPA subgrantee selection
- The new awards are still subject to the program end date of September 30, 2026

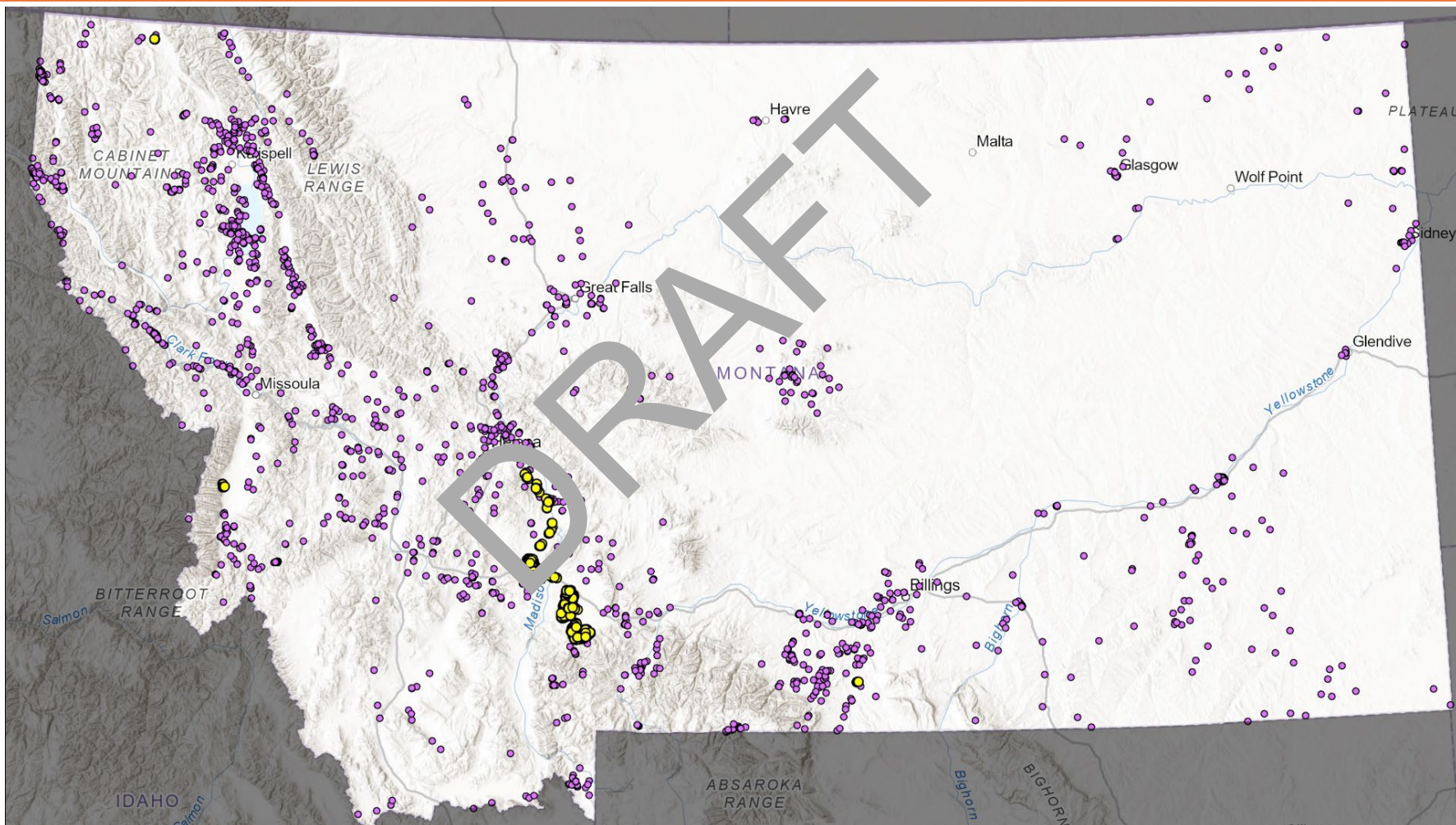
About \$18 million of ARPA funds are available to be re-allocated

Following BEAD awards, Montana has 4,040 BSLs eligible for ARPA funding

- 2,017 BSLs from defaulted ARPA projects
- 2,023 BSLs eligible from BDC Map Fabric v6, but not allowed in BEAD by NTIA



ARPA Lightning Round Eligible Locations



ARPA Lightning Round Scoring Criteria

The Lightning Round scoring criteria match the criteria from the original subgrantee selection process

ConnectMT ARPA scoring rubric (maximum of 130 points)

15 Points: Matching funds

20 Points: Service designation of project locations

6 Points: Demographics of project locations

30 Points: Scalability of network

5 Points: Speed of deployment

10 Points: Jobs created

10 Points: Existing infrastructure

34 Points: Additional community commitments



ARPA Lightning Round Results

The Lightning Round application period was open from October 20th through November 3rd

Montana received 6 eligible applications

- Each application was fiber-only in compliance with Lightning Round requirements
- \$18.8 million in total grant requests
- 200+ miles of fiber proposed
- 2,772 BSL proposed

2 applications had overlapping BSLs

- This overlap was substantial with the lower-scoring application eligible to receive less than 1% of its total proposed BSLs and budget

This results in 5 application eligible for award

- \$16.2 million in total grant requests
- 160+ miles of fiber
- 1,488 BSLs



ARPA Lightning Round Award Outcomes

Applicant	Project Name	Score	Total Project Cost	Total Match	% Match	Total Funding Request	Total Funding Recommended
TCT	Carbon 1	84	\$ 6,320,420.00	\$ 1,264,147.00	20%	\$ 5,056,273.00	\$ 5,056,273.00
KDS	Cascade County Foothills 1	81	\$ 715,887.00	\$ 144,000.00	20%	\$ 571,887.00	\$ 571,887.00
KDS	Cascade County Airport 1	81	\$ 290,250.00	\$ 58,050.00	20%	\$ 232,200.00	\$ 232,200.00
Gallatin	Three Forks	74	\$ 13,329,308.20	\$ 3,332,327.05	25%	\$ 9,996,981.15	\$ 9,996,981.15
Grizzly	Ravalli 3	69	\$ 515,037.61	\$ 103,012.67	20%	\$ 412,024.94	\$ 412,024.94
Visionary	Gallatin	51	\$ 4,219,342.00	\$ 1,691,836.00	40%	\$ 2,527,206.00	\$ —
				\$ 6,593,372.72		\$ 18,796,572.18	\$ 16,269,366.09

- **Visionary's application is not recommended due to a >99% overlap with a higher-scoring application**
- **\$1.8 million in ARPA funding left over after recommended awards**



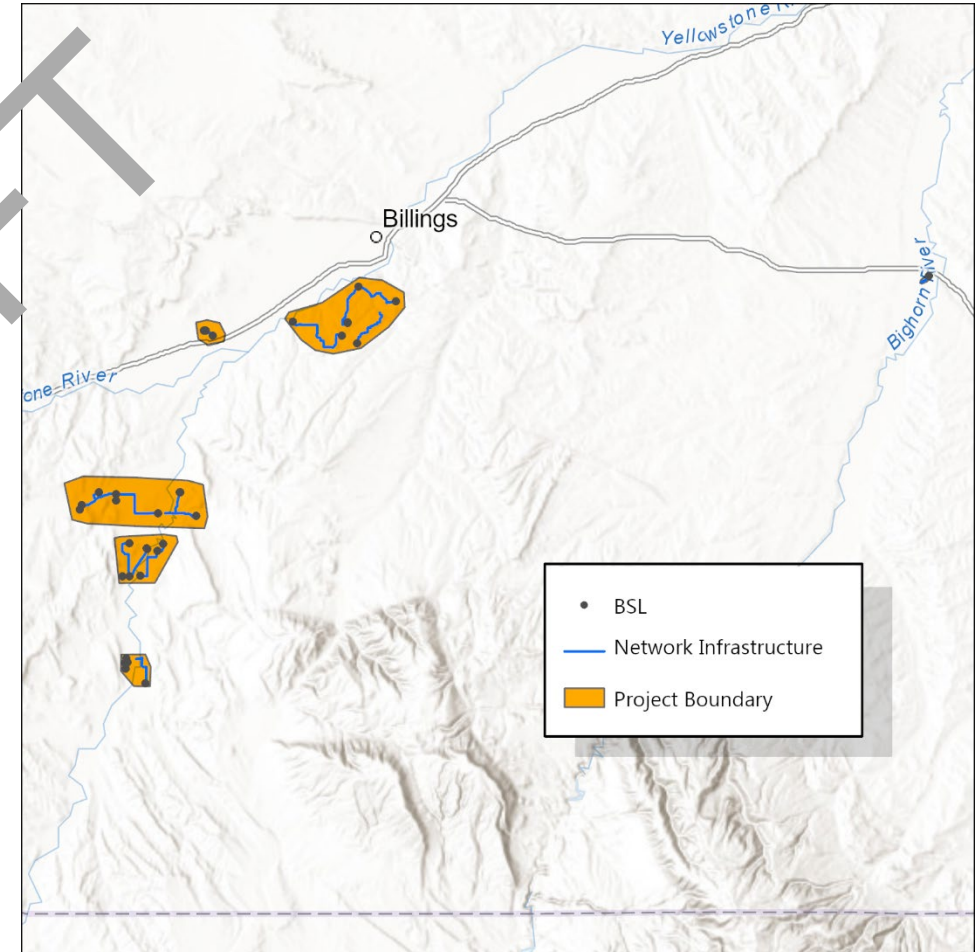
Overview: TCT – Carbon 1

Project details:

Score:	84
Grant request:	\$5,056,273.00
Match amount:	\$1,264,147.00
Total cost:	\$6,320,420.00
Fiber miles:	57
BSLs served:	28

Key Community Locations:

Fromberg Police Dept.
Bridger Police
Blue Creek Fire Dept.
Clark's Fork Vally Ambulance
Riverstone Health Clinic
Golden Age Society



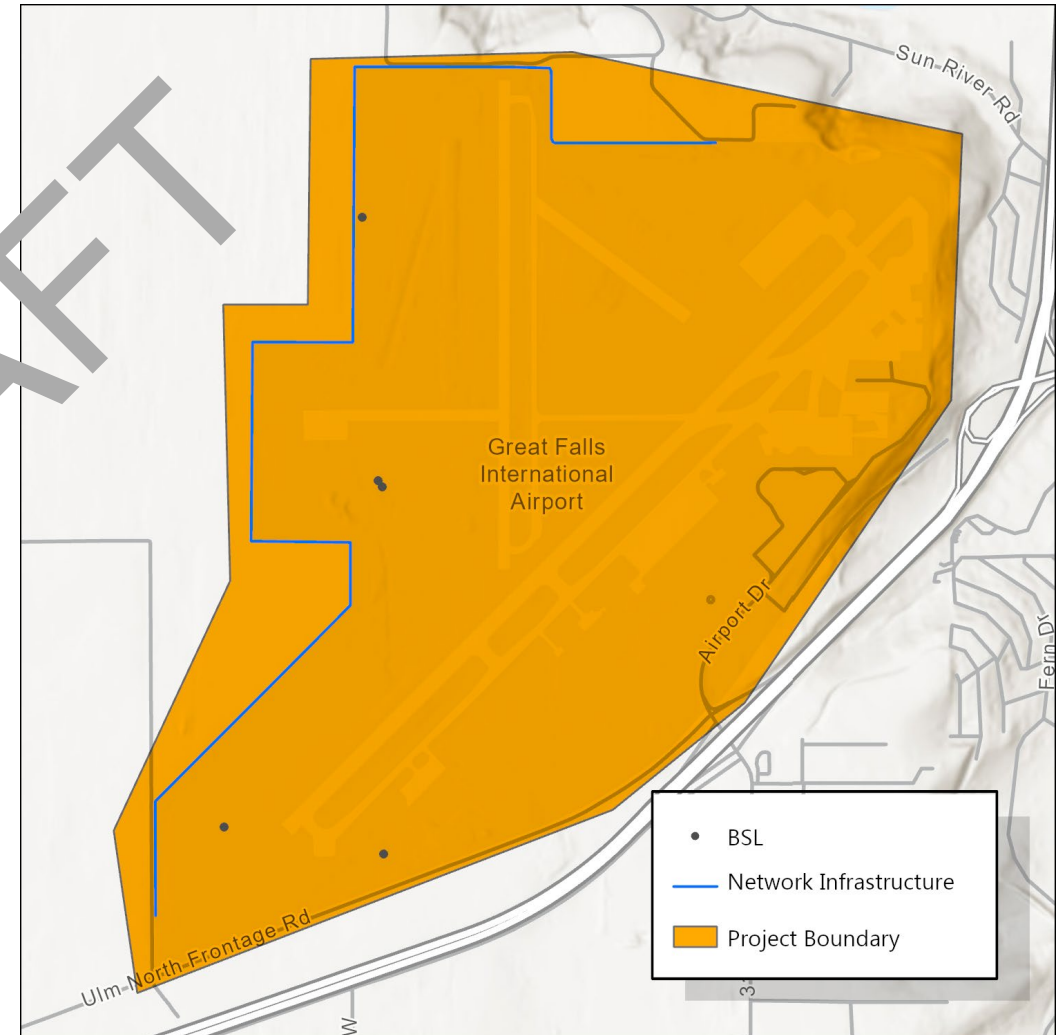
Overview: KDS – Cascade County Airport 1

Project details:

Score:	81
Grant request:	\$232,200.00
Match amount:	\$58,050.00
Total cost:	\$290,250.00
Fiber miles:	8
BSLs served:	6

Key Community Locations:

Great Fall International FAA (*public safety*)



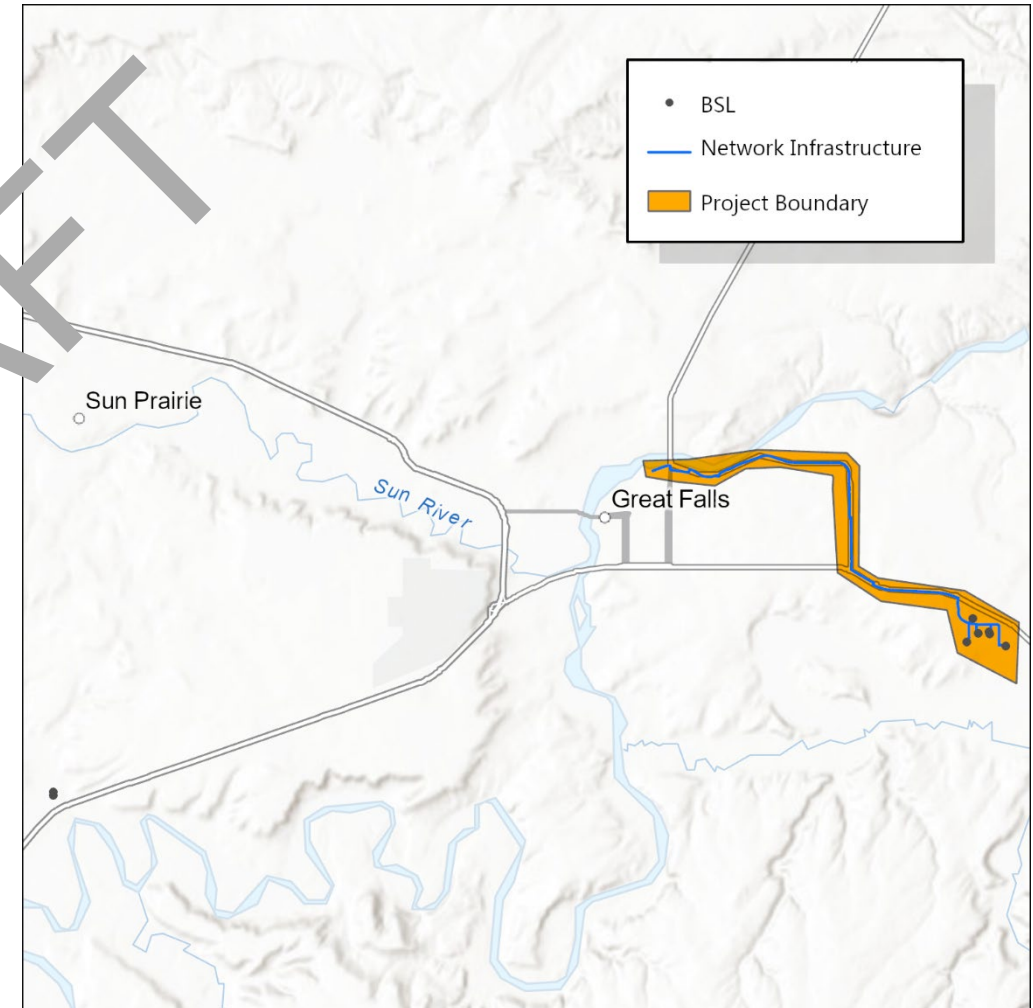
Overview: KDS – Cascade County Foothills 1

Project details:

Score:	81
Grant request:	\$571,887.00
Match amount:	\$144,000.00
Total cost:	\$715,887.00
Fiber miles:	9
BSLs served:	8

Key Community Locations:

Public safety location supporting Malestrom AFB



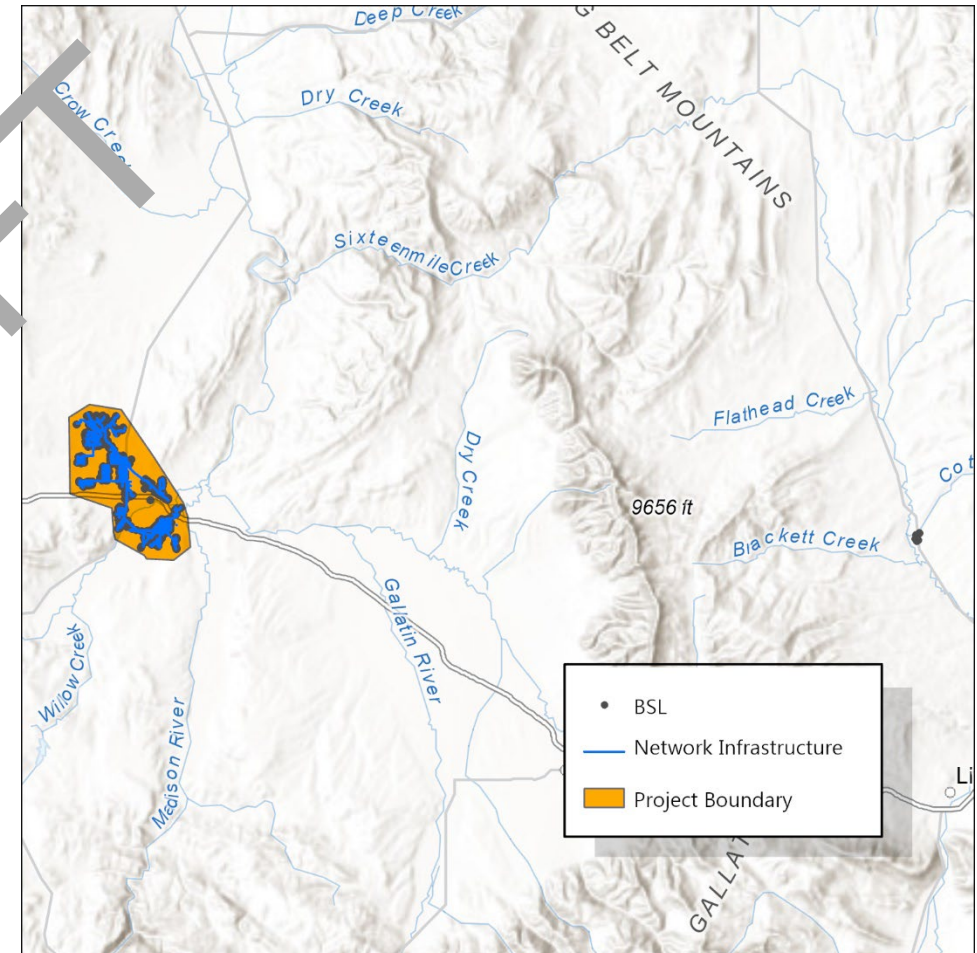
Overview: Gallatin – Three Forks

Project details:

Score:	74
Grant request:	\$9,996,981.15
Match amount:	\$3,332,327.05
Total cost:	\$13,329,308.20
Fiber miles:	85
BSLs served:	1,425

Key Community Locations:

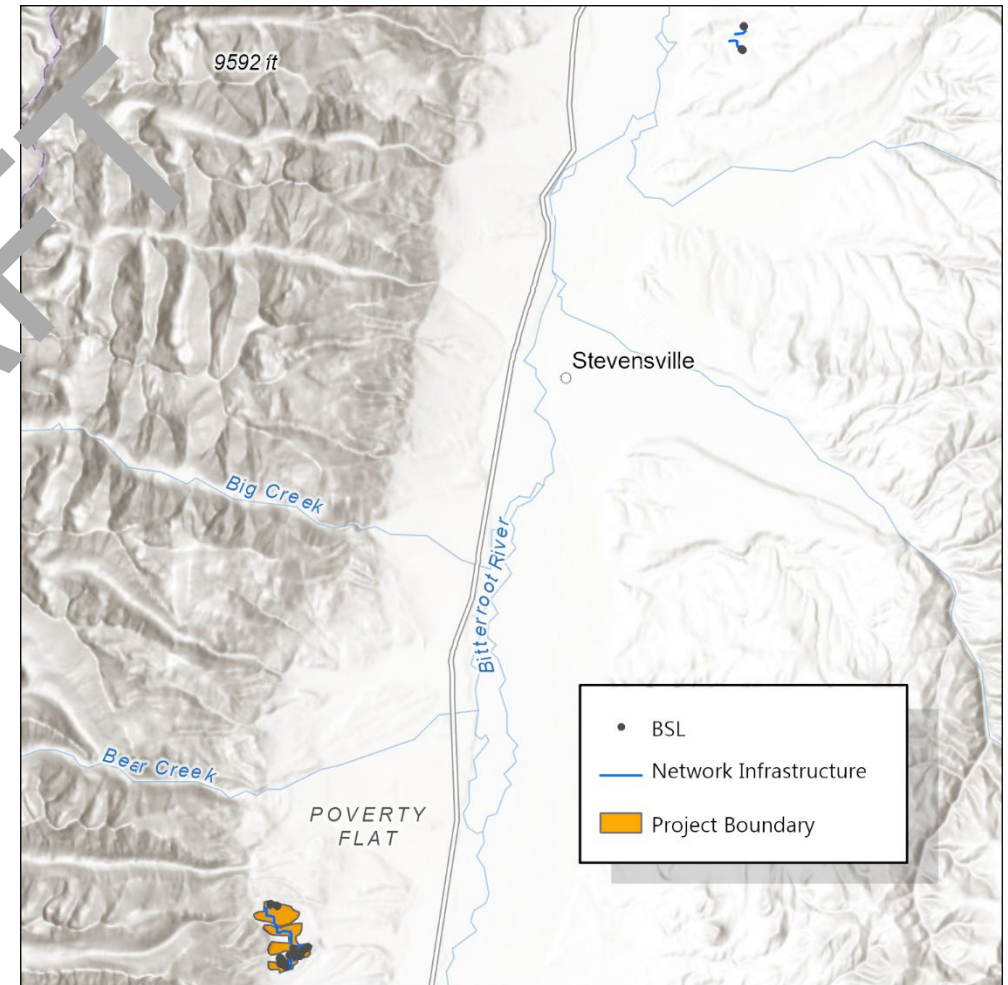
Clyde Park City Fire Department



Overview: Grizzly Broadband – Ravalli 3

Project details:

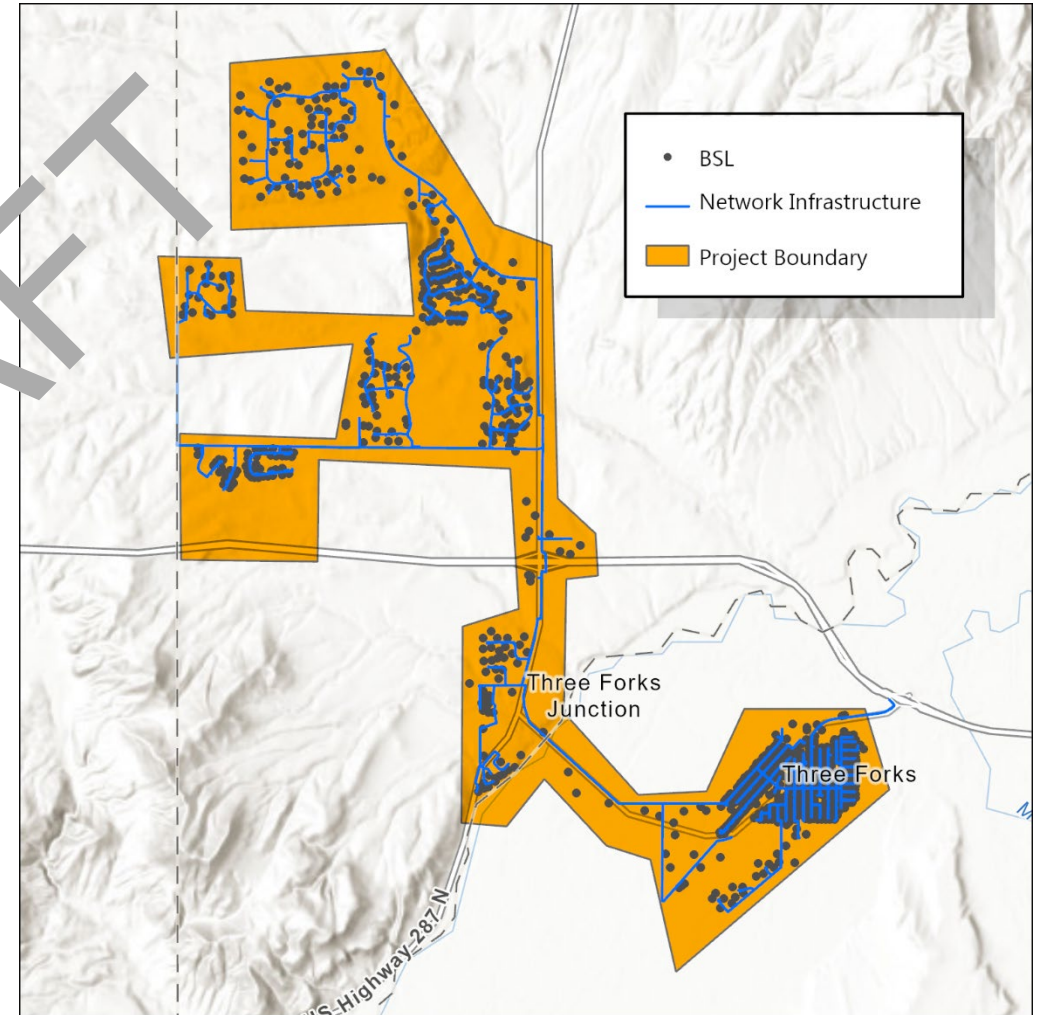
Score:	69
Grant request:	\$412,024.94
Match amount:	\$103,012.67
Total cost:	\$515,037.61
Fiber miles:	4
BSLs served:	20



Overview: Visionary Broadband – Gallatin

Project details:

Score:	51
Grant request:	\$2,527,206.09
Match amount:	\$1,304,691.00
Total cost:	\$4,219,042.09
Fiber miles:	49
BSLs served:	1,284



ARPA Program Next Steps

DOA seeks approval from the CAC to reallocate \$16.2 million in ARPA funding to the 5 identified projects as new awards

At least \$1.8 million in ARPA funding remains to be reallocated

- DOA is not expecting additional defaults
- If any remaining projects come in under budget, additional ARPA funds will be available to be reallocated

Treasury will allow Montana to directly amend existing ARPA award contracts to reallocate the remaining funds by adding additional eligible BSLs to those projects

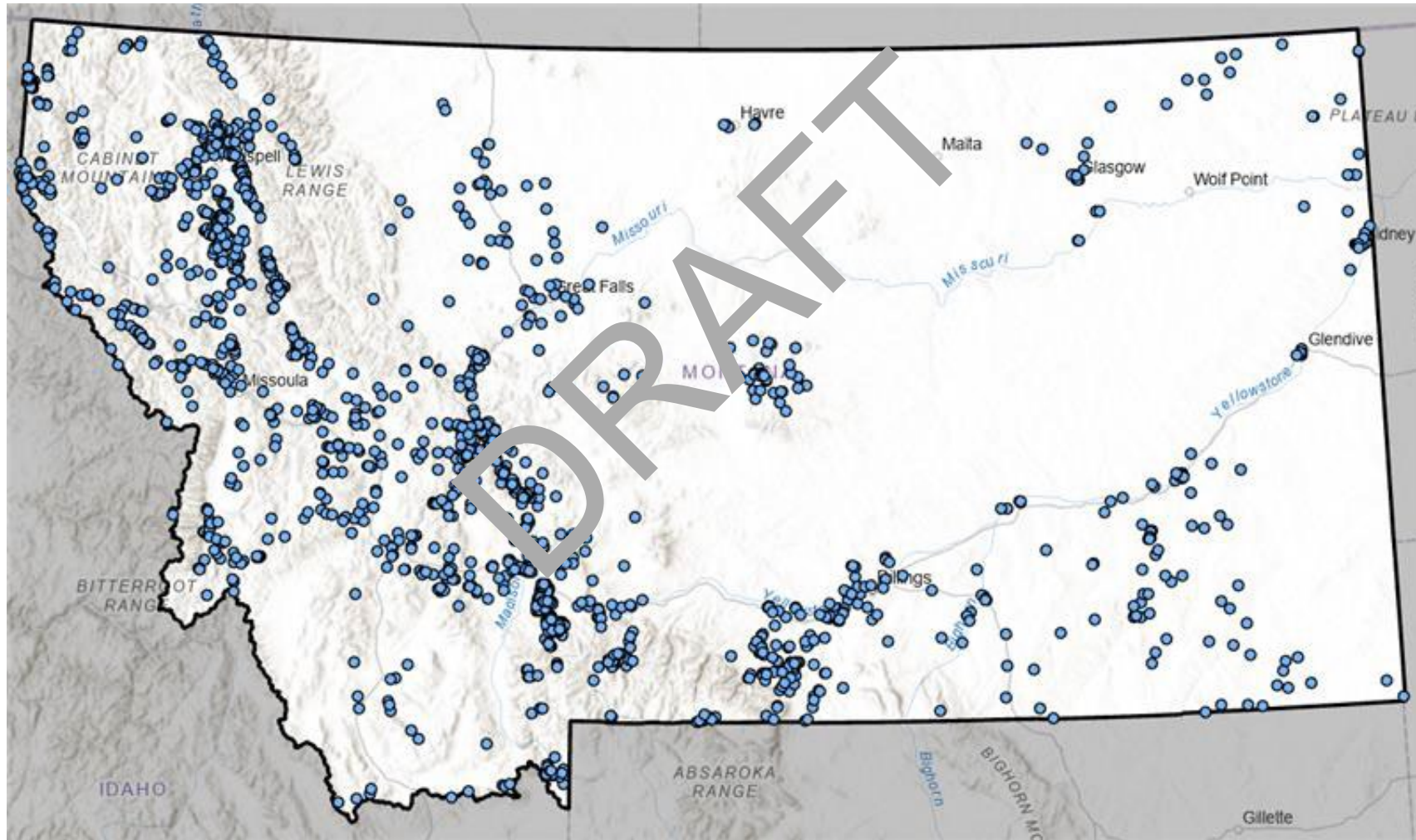
- This is a process that other states are implementing to expend grant dollars
- Treasury has advised against further rounds of subgrantee selection due to program time constraints

DOA seeks approval from the CAC to reallocate any remaining program funds at its discretion through the amendment of active ARPA award contracts

- DOA would use a structured framework for this outreach that prioritizes projects with substantial completion and high-performing ARPA program awardees



Remaining Eligible Locations



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Public Comment