

Other Ideas - ARPA List

Agency	Cost	Idea	Description	Category:
Ag	50,000,000	Montana Agriculture Resiliency Program - to address Local Produce and Protein Production / Distribution	<p>The Department of Agriculture proposes the creation of the “Montana Agriculture Resiliency Program” We propose a three-tiered approach that addresses food supply interruption and distribution through the administration of a grant program.</p> <p>This is still an ongoing issue due to COVID. Interruption of the food supply chain was one of the most profound consequences of the pandemic, and remains a real threat today. Existing weaknesses in the food supply chain are precisely what we are addressing in our grant program.</p> <p>Our grants will address three areas of vulnerability: Distribution, Processing and Storage. Each of these areas can be secured with additional funding for infrastructure. For example, cattle were not able to be slaughtered in Montana thus resulting in a need for additional on farm storage and more meat processing facilities. Potatoes could not be processed resulting in many pounds of potatoes being buried rather than shipped or processed. By increasing the agricultural infrastructure we are securing the food chain.</p>	Business Assistance
Commerce	20,000,000	Workforce Recovery Grants	<p>A one stop shop for businesses to apply for a grant to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hire/rehire - Train workers - Tech grants for remote working <p>Program will use current Big Sky Trust Fund and Primary Business Sector Workforce Training program infrastructure to stand up and manage the grant using existing grant application and management systems and internal controls. Would be eligible for health care facilities to train healthcare employees. Businesses would have to document keeping the employees a minimum of 6 months to receive full funding from the grant.</p>	Workforce
Commerce	50,000,000	Business Assistance Grants	<p>Similar to the Business Stabilization Grant that was provided with CARES funds - this grant would target businesses such as live music venues, movie theaters, restaurants, main street businesses, gyms and other businesses at have continued impact from COVID-19. Program would use existing infrastructure and internal controls from Business Stabilization grant program. 10 temporary FTE needed for processing and administration.</p>	Business Assistance
Commerce	5,500,000	Bed Tax	<p>Backfill Bed Tax lost revenue reimbursement to all statutory recipients (will need to be part of Revenue Replacement Discussion)</p>	Revenue Replacement
Corrections	350,000	COVID-safe workspaces	<p>Staff are currently sharing workspaces - need to address for safe work environment relative to COVID - to create individual cubicles - 100 cubicles x \$3,500/cubicle</p>	Admin
Corrections	500,000	PPE	<p>PPE - Agency Wide & Contract Facilities - \$500,000 for 1 year</p>	PPE
Corrections	250,000	Prison Keyless Entry for Tracking	<p>Montana State Prison - Full Entry System to track employees throughout facility for contact tracing for COVID</p>	COVID Related
DLI	unknown	Return to Work Bonuses	<p>Studies indicate that some Americans who are out of work due to the pandemic earn more with enhanced unemployment than they did through their prior employment or normal wages. This could potentially be addressed through Return to Work bonuses - granting funding to employers, who could then offer hiring bonuses in order to get new employees in the door. Idaho offered a similar program. Cost could be scaled based on funds appropriated.</p>	Workforce
DLI	4,683,000	Administration - UI claim backlog, fraud prevention, appeals and temporary staff for tech support	<p>UI Backlog: \$3 million - 75 temporary staff currently working to process and adjudicate UI claims. Significant backlog identified related to the COVID pandemic. Current funding will not allow for increased staffing. \$3 million would allow us to double the amount of temporary staff for approximately 6 months. This would help us more quickly get benefits out to Montana citizens.</p> <p>UI Fraud: \$1.5 million - Additional resources in the form of both staff (to research potentially fraudulent claims and to coordinate with financial institutions for the potential return of funds) and technology would be very useful. Fraud prevention helps us to maintain a healthy balance in the UI Trust Fund, which helps to keep tax rates low for employers.</p> <p>UI Appeals: \$75,000 Increased UI claims lead to an increase in UI Appeals.</p> <p>Temporary Tech Support: \$108,000 needed for temporary tech staff expedite the rollout of IT changes due to COVID. Includes switching desktops to laptops and moving workstations to better accommodate distancing and/or a more remote workforce.</p>	Admin

DLI	5,250,000	Training for people partially on Unemployment	Offer training funds to people normally working full time that are on reduced hours and collecting some unemployment - a group who wouldn't otherwise be eligible for training funds. In Feb 2021 = about 1750 people. In theory many are likely in service-type jobs so this would give them a chance to get into something else, AND maybe do so while they have some time to do it. Program would expand on the existing infrastructure of the HELP LINK program to folks on UI. Assumes average per worker training cost of \$3500 x 1500 workers = \$5.25 million	Workforce
DMA	300,000	VA Cemeteries Equipment upgrades	Due to COVID-19 related burials at our 3 State Veterans Cemeteries, there is a need for the following equipment upgrades, Mini Excavator, CHEVROLET SILVERADO 3500 Dump Truck w/ Plow, Bobcat Compact Excavator, Sod Cutter, 580 Super L (Backhoe), 3 Ground fuel tanks (500 gal each, Diesel & Unleaded)	COVID Related
DMA	140,000	Youth Challenge - Temporary Remedial Teaching staff	Due to COVID, many students lag behind in reading and math. Two temporary remedial teachers would help student get caught up	COVID Related
DMA	25,000	Youth Challenge - Teaching technology equipment	Due to COVID the use of smartboards has increased. The purchase of Ben Q Boards (smartboards) would allow MYCA to teach utilizing improved smart boards	COVID Related
DMA	150,000	2-year warehouse lease for PPE	Lease from the MT Guard for PPE acquired during the COVID pandemic	PPE
DMA	75,000	Cleaning and Sanitizing	Reaction to COVID highlighted cleaning and sanitizing procedures that were or need to be implemented to fully comply with state and local recommendations during a pandemic. This funding will purchase necessary sanitizing equipment and supplies including the installation of UV lights and sanitary spray devices in the air handling units	COVID Related
DMA	150,000	Staff	Request for staff to support federal COVID funding-related temporary business process changes. 2 temporary staff for one year.	Admin
DMA	200,000	System updates & Contracted assistance	For COVID, WebEOC is used to submit and track resource requests. The system was developed in 2011 and needs to be updated to reflect the current needs of emergency management in order to be used as a virtual coordination system that can be used across agencies for COVID. Funding will update the system to integrate situational assessment tools to be used during a response. This includes integrating GIS.	Admin
DOT	1,600,000	Permanent & Portable Variable Message Signs	Over the last year our variable message signs have been used extensively to deliver COVID related messages to the public and to provide directions to testing and vaccine locations.	Communication
DOT	1,200,000	Mobile workstations for Engineering staff	MDT engineering design staff do not have equipment for mobile work scenario - Most are working at home now and took their larger PC workstations home. Need is for high end laptops that will allow for computing power to complete design work and enable design staff to work in a mobile scenario to work remotely due to COVID 19.	Admin
DPHHS	unknown	Nursing Home Supplemental Payment	Continue \$40/bed per day supplemental payment after March 3, 2021. \$3.45 million per month - total cost could be scaled on the number of months these funds are provided.	Provider Assistance
DPHHS	4,000,000	Healthcare Infrastructure Grants	Investment in infrastructure for Children's Mental Health Bureau providers to serve frontier communities, including telehealth infrastructure and vehicles. (approx \$250,000 to each MHC)	Healthcare
DPHHS	15,000,000	Direct Care Wage Increase	Direct Care Staff Wage Increases for Non-State Healthcare Providers	Workforce
DPHHS	3,000,000	Medicaid Rate Study	Comprehensive Medicaid rates studies	Healthcare
DPHHS	400,000	Grants to Area Agencies on Aging Food Programs	Restock meal containers, plastic silverware, napkins at senior centers to offset increased use during public health emergency	COVID Related
DPHHS	3,000,000	Foster Care Supports	Continuing to pay foster parents a monthly stipend of \$150/child after March 3, 2021 through July 1, 2021 would be appropriate.	Provider Assistance
DPHHS	8,000,000	Provider Revenue Replacement	Supplemental payment for Developmental Disabilities Program and Children's Mental Health Bureau providers for loss of revenue. As of 9/30 providers had demonstrated a loss of revenue.	Provider Assistance
DPHHS	150,000	Disability Telework Training Assistance	Provide technical assistance and training to employers who are adjusting to a teleworking world, specifically on equipment and technology for people with disabilities. Provide TA and training to eligible employers that have workers who perform essential work that require technology accommodations and accessibility assessments to ensure job retention. This program builds on existing infrastructure of similar program implemented in 2020 with CARES funding.	Workforce
Livestock	772,000	COVID Diagnostic Testing Equipment	The Montana Veterinary Diagnostic Lab (MVDL) conducts animal diseases testing services for Montana's livestock producers. The equipment requested is equipment that can be used to test for coronaviruses including the COVID19 strain. This lab could be used to increase testing capacity in the state and be used as ongoing testing infrastructure for the state.	COVID Testing Capacity

MSL	3,800,000	Internal wiring and wireless access points in Montana libraries	In addition to "last mile" broadband infrastructure, libraries require internal connections to support highspeed broadband access including sufficient cabling, modern routers, and wireless access points. A 2019 study conducted by Saddle Peak Technologies and Simmons University revealed that 70% of Montana's libraries have routers five years old or older and some hardware is more than 10 years old. This funding request would provide an average of \$30,000 for Montana's 116 libraries to upgrade internal wiring, routers, wireless access points and managed wireless services. Leveraged Resources: Funding would maximize Montana libraries' \$165,000 annual investment in internet services for the 4 million annual Montana library visitors. COVID has forced people to work, learn, access telehealth, etc. online and libraries have provided critical internet services to address these needs. Libraries are challenged to provide adequate broadband for a variety of reasons including outdated internal connections that must be replaced. As directed through ARPA, these kinds of expenditures are allowable expenses to support COVID recovery. This would be a one-time cost to upgrade infrastructure.	IT Access/Broadband
MSL	240,000	Newsline	Fund services that provide Montana newspaper recordings to blind and low vision Montana COVID - Newspapers are sources of critical information in times of emergency. For Montana's blind and low vision citizens, Newsline was the only avenue for emergency information. During the pandemic, blind and otherwise print-disabled Montanans were shut out of vital information. NFB Newsline provides immediate emergency information that cannot be found in an accessible format anywhere else. Currently funded as OTO in HB 2 with General Fund as a pilot; opportunity to extend the pilot from 2-4 years with ARPA funds	Communication
MSL	1,200,000	Hot Spot Lending Program	Increase statewide hot spot lending program capacity offered through local libraries COVID has forced people to work, learn, access telehealth, etc. online. Using CARES Act and GEER funds the State Library procured mobile wifi hot spots that libraries lend to their patrons. Hot spots with unlimited data plans were procured through State term contracts through Verizon, T-Mobile and Nemont. More than 800 hot spots are currently in circulation in 44 counties. The last of current funds expire September 30, 2021. Addition funds will allow the program to continue for 2-3 more years. Our intent is to make hot spots available in all 56 counties. The hot spot lending program is a band aid until reliable broadband solutions are enacted. Of note: A Missoula County vaccination site is using on of our hot spots to provide wifi for record keeping.	IT Access/Broadband
Supreme Court	166,059	Courthouse, courtroom and tech modifications	Contracts with health providers for health checks and rapid testing during trials, and off-site costs associated with jury voir dire.	COVID Related

*List reviewed by OBPP - compiled based on preliminary reviews and will be contingent upon final guidance confirming appropriate use

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