**STATE OF MONTANA**

**DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION**

**Governor Steve Bullock**

**John Lewis, Director**

**9-1-1 GRANT PROGRAM**

**APPLICATION GUIDELINES**

**For 2020-2021 Biennium**

**A. INTRODUCTION**

**1. Statement of Purpose**

The 9-1-1 grant program is a state-funded program created by the 2017 Legislature. The program’s legislative purpose is to support the implementation, operation, and maintenance of 9-1-1 systems, equipment, devices, and data.

**2. Program Funding**

A fee of 25 cents a month per access line on each subscriber in the state is imposed for the 9-1-1 grants. Telecommunication providers collect the 25 cents a month from their subscribers in their monthly billing for services. The providers are required to remit all collected 9-1-1 fees to the Montana Department of Revenue on or before the last day of the month following the end of each calendar quarter. The Department of Revenue then deposits the remitted funds into the 9-1-1 grant program account.

It is estimated that approximately $3 million annually will be collected and deposited in the 9-1-1 grant program account. All funds will be available for grants to be awarded to private telecommunications providers, local and tribal governments that host certified public safety answering points.

**3. Program Contact**

Rhonda Sullivan, 9-1-1 Program Manager

Montana Department of Administration, 9-1-1 Grant Program

1400 8th Avenue

P.O. Box 200113

Helena, MT 59620-0113

Phone: (406) 444 - 2420

Fax: (406) 444 - 0165

Website: <http://sitsd.mt.gov/PublicSafetyCommunications>

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**B. PROGRAM GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

**Certified PSAP**-

**Department** – Montana Department of Administration

**Grant Start Date** - Typically, the effective date of the grant contract is the date that the application is approved by the Department. However, in exceptional cases, the Department may consider an earlier start date if formally requested by the applicant and a rationale for the request is submitted and approved by the Department.

**Private Telecommunications Provider** – A wireline provider that is a public utility, a cooperative telephone company, or any other entity that provides telephone exchange access services in Montana or a wireless provider that is an entity that is authorized by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to provide facilities-based commercial mobile radio service within Montana.

**PSAP** – Public safety answering point

**C. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

Eligible applicants include:

* Private telecommunications providers;
* Local governments that host a certified PSAP; and
* Tribal governments that host a certified PSAP

**D. ELIGIBLE USES OF FUNDS**

The types and uses of grant funds awarded to eligible applicants include:

* emergency telecommunications systems plan(s);
* project feasibility studies or project plans;
* the deployment, implementation, operation, maintenance and purchase of 9-1-1 systems, infrastructure, equipment, devices, and data; and
* the purchase of services that support 9-1-1 systems.

*Note: Costs incurred by the grant recipient for administration of a grant are not eligible for reimbursement with state 9-1-1 grant funds.*

**E. APPLICATION PROCEDURES**

***It is important that applicants not incur costs or obligate funds which are intended to be reimbursed by a 9-1-1 program grant prior to the grant start date. Expenses incurred by applicants prior to a grant start date are expenses incurred at the applicant’s own risk.***

In addition to the Application Form **(Appendix A)**, the applicant may provide the following information:

**Affidavit for Trade Secret Confidentiality (Appendix B)**. Once information is submitted to the Department, the information is subject to the public’s right to know pursuant to Article II, Section 9 of the Montana Constitution. Prior to any potentially confidential information being submitted, please contact the 9-1-1 grant program for more information concerning the department’s affidavit for trade secret confidentiality.

**F. APPLICATION REVIEW & GRANT AWARDS**

**The Department, in consultation with the 9-1-1 Advisory Council, will consider all submitted applications and award grants to eligible applicants.**

**Grant Applicant Preference**

In awarding grants, preference will be given to applications in the following order of priority:

1. Applications from eligible private telecommunications providers or by eligible local and tribal government entities that are working with a private telecommunications provider; and
2. Applications from eligible local and tribal government entities.

*Note: Local and tribal government applicants should provide a detailed description of “working with a private telecommunications provider” to aide in the assignment of an application’s statutory preference. The description should include “how” and “why” the parties are collaborating.*

**Grant Award Funding Level Criteria**

Grant award amounts will be determined utilizing the following criteria:

1. **Completeness and effectiveness of the application**. The application must be complete and fully address the requirements in the application form and clearly describe the fulfillment of grant award criteria;
2. **Support of a 9-1-1 system or service**. The extent to which the proposed project supports planning, implementation, operation, or maintenance of 9-1-1 systems, 9-1-1 services, or both;
3. **Local support for the project**. Local support demonstrated by letters of support for the project and application.
4. **Project duration**. Projects that require two years or less to complete are preferred.
5. **Number of applications submitted**. It is preferred that applicants submit only one application per grant application cycle.
6. **Cost estimate**. Applications that include a detailed cost estimate, with supporting documentation, that provide a clear justification for the grant funds requested are preferred.
7. **Equipment/system lifecycle**. Applications for the replacement of equipment or system that is at or near “end of life or support” are preferred.
8. **Amount of grant funding requested**. Applications that request less than 33% of the total amount of funding available are preferred.
9. **Statewide 9-1-1 Plan**. Applications for needs that are identified in the Statewide 9-1-1 Plan are preferred.

*Note: The department, in consultation with the 9-1-1 Advisory Council, reserves the right to award funding to eligible applications that deviate from the stated criteria on a case-by-case basis.*

**Application Submittal and Deadlines:** Applications must be submitted (postmarked if using mail) by the application cycle close date. Applicants can submit the application, with all attachments to the 9-1-1 grant program:

9-1-1 Grant Program

1400 8th Avenue

P.O. Box 200113

Helena, MT 59620-0113

***Email:*** rsullivan@mt.gov

**G. POST GRANT AWARD PROCESS**

1. **Award Letter** – Upon the department director’s approval of funding awards an award letter will be transmitted to the applicant notifying them of a grant funding award or notice of the application not being approved for funding. If awarded funding, this will be followed by correspondence from grant program staff identifying any terms and conditions of that commitment.
2. **Grant Agreement (Contract)** – An agreement between the department and the grant awardee will be developed and distributed for execution. The grant agreement will include the performance criteria necessary for grant funds to be expended and released. A grant award recipient must execute and return the grant contract within thirty (30) days of receipt of the final contract. All projects need to be ready to proceed within ninety (90) days from receipt of the final executed contract.

*Note: Grant agreements will be executed for a two-year period with an option to renew for an additional year(s) depending upon the grant recipient’s performance.*

1. **Disbursement of Funds** –The department requires approved documentation verifying eligible costs incurred by the grant award recipient. The department reserves the right to request further documentation when, in the exercise of its judgment, such documentation is needed to confirm contract performance.

Once all start up activities are completed, and the project has reached Release of Funds status, the following items must be submitted in order to request funds:

Request for Payment Form signed and dated by the authorized representative;

* Project Progress Report detailing progress towards achieving project milestones that were described in the application as well as describing any difficulties encountered in working towards these milestones; and
* Approved documentation verifying eligible costs were incurred;
1. **Award withdrawal -** The department reserves the right to withdraw a commitment of any program grant funds for projects that have:
	1. Not provided all requested contract information within 30 days of the date on the Notice of Award, and/or;
	2. Not returned the grant contract to the department within 30 days of receipt of the final contract, and/or
	3. Are not ready to proceed within ninety (90) days of receipt of the final contract.
2. **Record Keeping**

The grant recipient must maintain full and accurate records with respect to the grant funding and must ensure adequate control over the records of related parties in the project. The department requires access to such records, as well as the ability to inspect all project work, invoices, materials, and other relevant records at reasonable times and places. The grant contract requires the applicant to furnish, upon the department’s request all data, reports, contracts, documents, and other information relevant to the project.

1. **Ongoing Reporting**

The grant contract specifies a periodic reporting requirement for the project. Additionally, to assist the department with program performance reporting, the grant recipient may be required to provide annual project updates for 3 years after the close of the contract.