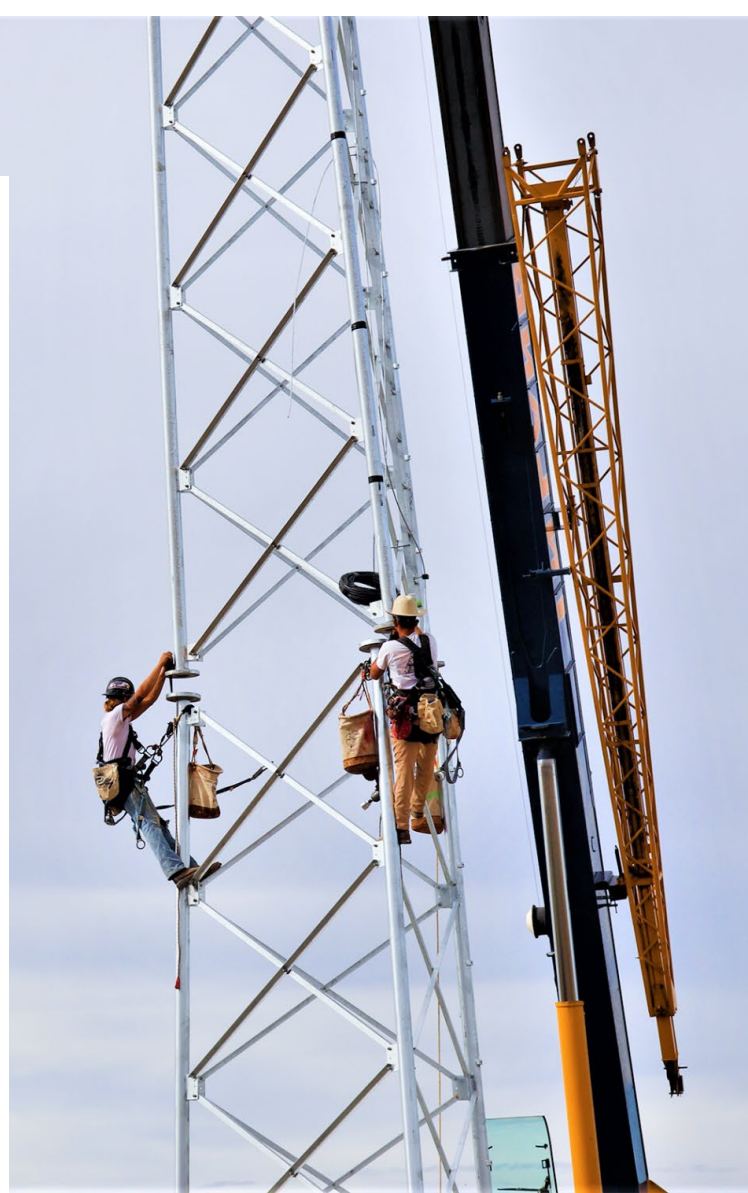


Idaho Capital Projects Fund Performance Report 2024



JULY 2024

State of Idaho
Idaho Office of Broadband
Idaho Commission for Libraries



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STATE OF IDAHO

Program Information

Federal Award Identification Number (FAIN): CPFFN017

Start Date: February 4, 2022

Program End Date: December 31, 2026

Actual CPF Funds Allocated: \$125,000,000

Executive Summary

The Idaho legislature has taken many steps to improve broadband access in the state focusing primarily on rural areas where limited access to high-speed internet disadvantages Idahoans. Expansion of broadband throughout rural Idaho is seen as critical for several reasons namely economic and business growth, educational opportunities, increased access to telemedicine, and improved public services and emergency response.

Formed in 2020, the Idaho Office of Broadband (IOB) was created to help Idaho communities improve broadband infrastructure in support of improving distance learning, remote work, access to telehealth, and ensuring communities have reliable internet access. The IOB is housed within the [Idaho Department of Commerce](#) and works closely with the [Idaho Broadband Advisory Board](#) (IBAB).

In 2021, the Idaho Legislature passed [House Bill 127](#), establishing the IBAB, consisting of three members from the Idaho House of Representatives, three members from the Idaho Senate, and three members appointed by the Governor. The IBAB was tasked with the authority to determine which broadband projects are undertaken with grant money and creating a statewide broadband plan to structure, prioritize, and disperse connectivity grants to areas of the state that are most in need. With this purview, the IBAB developed and released the [Idaho Broadband Strategic Plan](#), which supports the Board's vision that Idahoans have access to affordable and reliable broadband infrastructure.

The IOB, with guidance and approval from the IBAB, established the Idaho Capital Projects Fund (CPF) grant program, [approved by the U.S. Department of Treasury](#). The objective of the competitive grant program was to fund projects that build reliable broadband infrastructure to areas lacking access to internet with speeds of at least 100/20 Mbps fund and assist with or improve distance learning, telehealth, telework, economic development and public safety.

Of the 105 project applications received, 18 projects were awarded \$120,000,000 grant dollars. The CPF funded projects are distributed throughout the state and meet all [federal CPF requirements and criteria](#), improving internet connectivity in unserved and underserved locations. "These awarded projects are another important step in furthering the Idaho Broadband Advisory Board's mission of ensuring that all Idahoans have access to affordable and reliable internet," Idaho Broadband Advisory Board Chair, Representative John Vander Woude said. "These projects will connect homes and businesses across the entire State." A list of awarded projects can be found [here](#).

To date, thirteen of Idaho's CPF grantees have started projects and received reimbursement for completed project milestones.

Idaho has also been engaging in the establishment and implementation of the BEAD Program and leveraging the data gleaned from the CPF application and challenge process to inform mapping and decisions going forward. The IOB's goal and objective is to leverage all funding sources, CARES Act, ARPA, BEAD and state funds, to connect 100% of Idahoans to fast, reliable and affordable internet.

Uses of Funds

Idaho CPF Grant Program

A portion of the funds not used for sub-recipient grants was used to develop, administrate, and provide staff for the administration of the grant application process. The application for the Capital Projects Fund (CPF) opened on June 18, 2023, and closed on July 16, 2023.

Application Process

Prior to the grant application opening, the IBOB and Commerce staff worked to outline the CPF draft guidelines for the CPF program under the oversight of the IBAB, which were released on April 27, 2023, initiating stakeholder meetings across the state which the IOB received feedback and comments. The IBAB and IOB incorporated these comments into the [final CPF grant guidelines](#), which were published on May 18, 2024 after IBAB approval.

Applications were created using the questions that were given in the Idaho CPF grant guidelines in an online application portal and GIS portal was created to coincide with the written application. Public notice was given that the application had opened via various media streams, news releases, social media, and direct outreach to stakeholder mailing lists.

All applications, challenges and rebuttals were posted online for public review and analysis via the Idaho CPF GIS portal (Figure 1). This allowed for a competitive grant application process and transparency for all stakeholders and potential grantees. It also provided internet service providers (ISPs) the opportunity to challenge other applicants; however, the IOB specifically encouraged ISPs to discuss and resolve challenges amongst themselves.

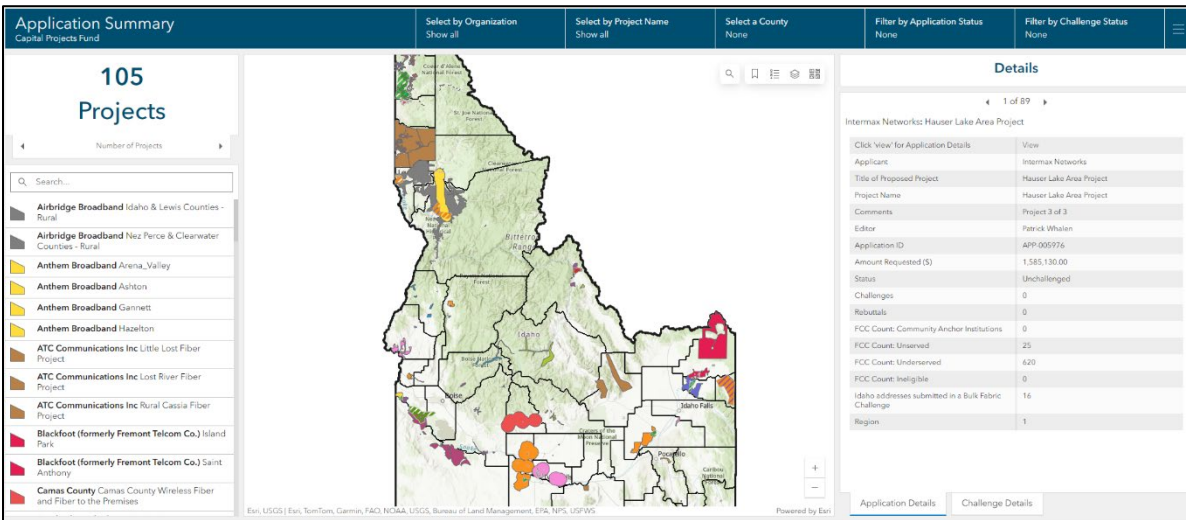


Figure 1. Application summary page within the Idaho CPF GIS portal created by Computer Aid Inc GIS Analyst contractors Sarah Lawrence and Jackie Reader, where applicants and stakeholders accessed application documents, challenge process and documents, and see a visual representation of the proposed project areas.

Idaho CPF GIS Portal

Computer Aid Inc GIS analyst contractors, Sarah Lawrence and Jackie Reader, were utilized to develop the CPF grant GIS portal under the guidance of the IOB and the Idaho Office of Information Technology Services. Using the FCC's National Broadband Availability Map (Version 2 from

December 2022), the Idaho CPF Mapping Tool and Mapping Companion was created to coincide with the grant portal applications. Applicants were directed to work with the GIS team to outline their proposed project areas in the GIS portal. The application documents were then linked within the GIS portal under the relevant project layer. Proposed project area challenges and challenge rebuttals were then processed using the GIS portal.

Grant Application Scoring

Applications underwent an initial compliance eligibility review by the Idaho Department of Commerce staff. Eligible projects then proceeded to be reviewed, scored, and prioritized by a grant review committee comprising representatives from the Idaho Department of Commerce, Idaho State Board of Education, Idaho Department of Transportation, Idaho Commission for Libraries, and Idaho Office of Emergency Management. Reviewers were instructed to

- a) be consistent in their scoring across all applications,
- b) score within the guidelines of the given scoring matrix, and
- c) give a brief justification for below-average scores.

Projects that scored 80% or higher, including bonus points, were prioritized for CPF grant awards, subject to final approval by the Idaho Broadband Advisory Board. This structured approach helps ensure that CPF funding is allocated to projects that best meet the program's objectives and deliver maximum benefit to communities across Idaho.

The IOB established an extensive scoring matrix to evaluate grant applications for the Capital Projects Fund (CPF) which was made available in the Idaho CPF grant guidelines. This matrix included various criteria and factors to assess each project's merit and alignment with the CPF program goals. Each criterion in the scoring matrix carried a specific weight or point value, contributing to an overall score for each grant application. Components of the scoring matrix included:

1. **Project Impact and Benefits:** Assessing how the project will improve internet access and connectivity in unserved and underserved areas, and the extent to which it will benefit communities in terms of economic development, public safety, telehealth, telework, and distance learning.
2. **Technical Feasibility:** Evaluating the feasibility of the proposed broadband infrastructure deployment, including the technology to be used, coverage area, and expected performance.
3. **Budget and Cost-Effectiveness:** Reviewing the proposed budget to ensure it is realistic and cost-effective in achieving the project's goals within the allocated CPF funding.
4. **Community Support and Engagement:** Considering community involvement and support for the project, including letters of support from local stakeholders, community organizations, and potential end-users.
5. **Scalability and Sustainability:** Assessing the project's potential for scalability and long-term sustainability, including maintenance plans and the ability to expand or upgrade the infrastructure in the future.

6. **Innovation and Partnership:** Recognizing innovative approaches or partnerships that enhance the project's effectiveness or efficiency in delivering broadband services.
7. **Equity and Inclusivity:** Ensuring that the project addresses equity concerns by targeting underserved populations and promoting digital inclusion.
8. **Environmental Impact:** Considering any environmental impacts associated with the project, such as construction activities or technology choices, and mitigation measures.

Bonus points were given for applicants who could clearly articulate how the proposed project:

1. Connects locations in Idaho where students and educators do not have reliable access to broadband as defined as speeds less than 100/20Mbps as well as libraries, schools, and institutions of higher learning without access to fiber broadband infrastructure defined as 1Gbps/1Gbps.
2. Connects a greater number of locations at the most economical cost.
3. Is Idaho based/headquartered in Idaho and/or is using Idaho labor for the construction of the broadband infrastructure project.
4. Addresses and enhances public safety and/or cybersecurity.
5. Offers an affordable monthly broadband service plan for customers in the proposed project area.
6. Includes the connection of unserved Community Anchor Institutions and/or government facilities without access to 1Gbps/1Gbps symmetrical (fiber) or 200Mbps/200Mbps symmetrical (fixed wireless) service.
7. Serves 80% or more unserved locations.
8. Provides dark fiber and/or broadband infrastructure to government facilities for government usage (includes fiber/broadband infrastructure, but not services).

Awarded Projects Overview

The IBAB awarded \$120 million in CPF funding to 18 broadband projects across Idaho (Figure 2). These projects aim to connect over 30,000 homes and businesses, enhancing internet connectivity in unserved and underserved areas.

The funded projects are expected to support various critical needs such as distance learning, telehealth, telework, economic development, and public safety, aligning with [federal CPF criteria](#).

Awarded Projects

The scoring matrix helped to highlight the projects that showed a greater commitment to improving broadband infrastructure to underserved and unserved locations in Idaho by improving access to broadband infrastructure for Idahoans (Figure 3). These projects expect 1285.36 miles of fiber to be deployed, 27976 locations to be served, and create 10 middle mile infrastructures. Five projects will be County Government owned, two co-operative, and eight will be private.

To date, thirteen of Idaho's 18 CPF projects (Figure 4) have started, but are less than 50% complete, and \$20,058,545.27 has been disbursed for completed project milestones.

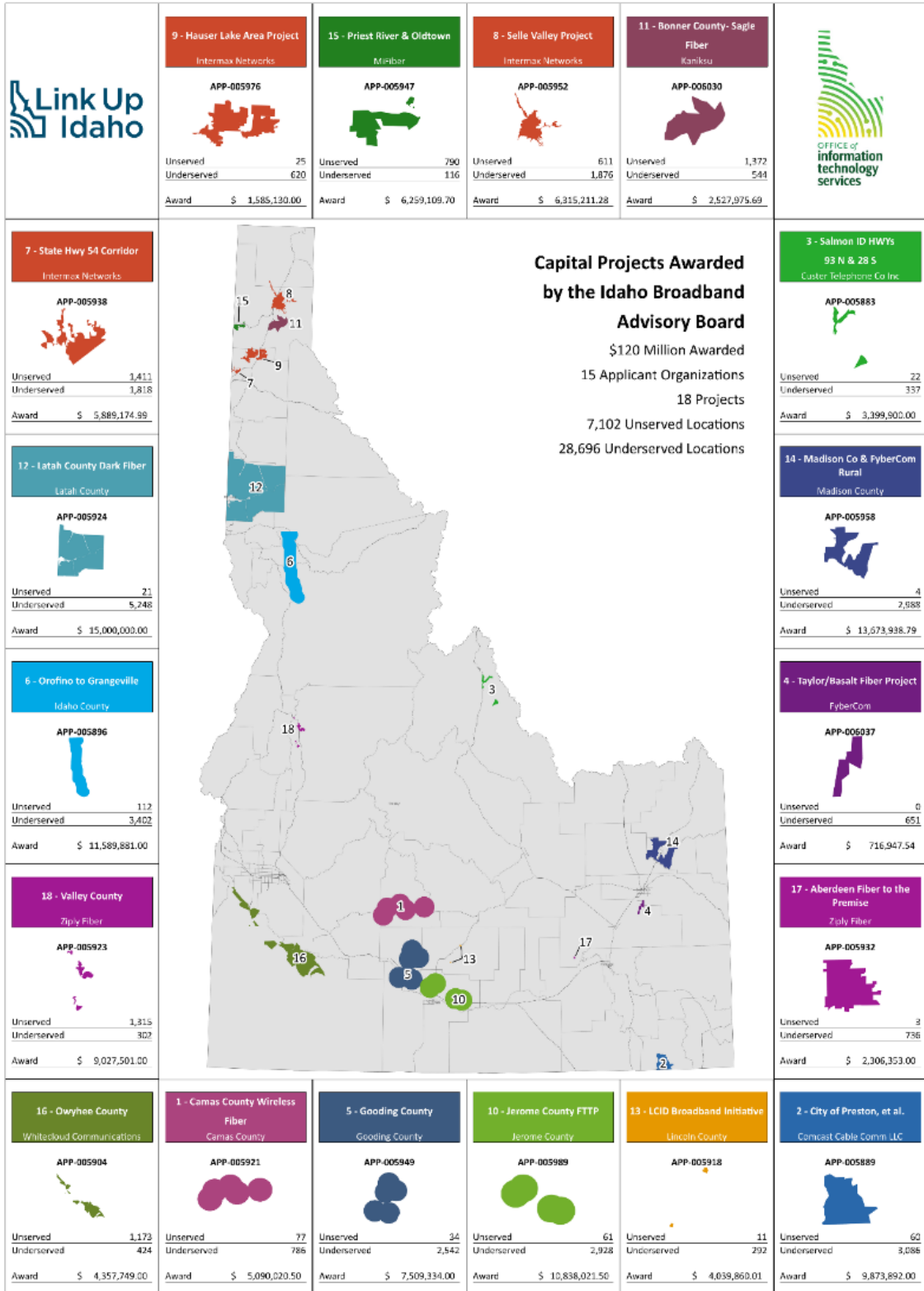


Figure 2. Awarded Idaho CPF projects. These projects aim to connect over 30,000 homes and businesses, enhancing internet connectivity in unserved and underserved areas. Full-sized image available [here](#).

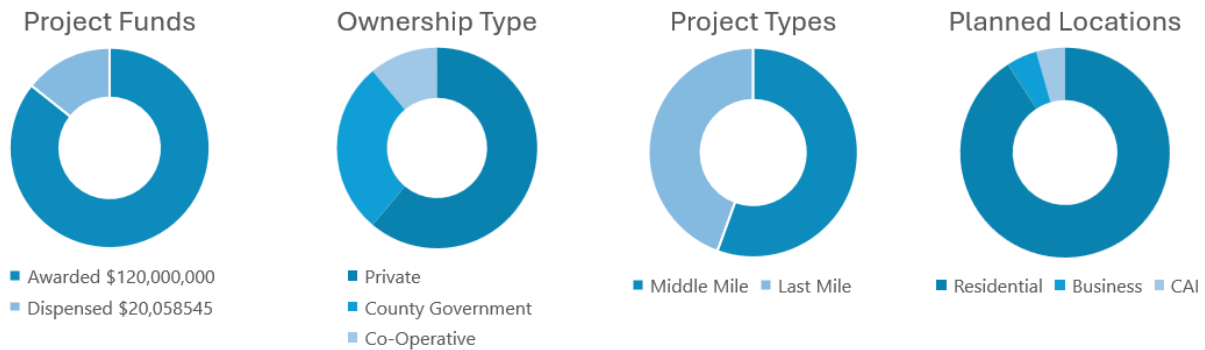


Figure 3. Awarded project details. Future reports will outline the effectiveness and impact of the projects.

| Organization | Project Name | Amount Awarded |
|----------------------------------|---|-----------------|
| Custer Telephone Cooperative Inc | Salmon Idaho Hwys 93 North Fiber and Hwy 28 South Project | \$3,399,900.00 |
| Comcast Cable Communications LLC | City of Preston, City of Franklin and Surrounding Area | \$9,873,892.00 |
| Idaho County | Orofino to Grangeville Fiber Optic Conduit Project | \$11,589,881.00 |
| Whitecloud Communications | Owyhee County | \$4,357,749.00 |
| Lincoln County | Lincoln County, ID (LCID) Broadband Initiative- Phase 2- Fiber to the Premi | \$4,039,860.01 |
| Camas County | Camas County Wireless Fiber and Fiber to the Premises | \$5,090,020.50 |
| Ziply Fiber | Valley County Fiber to the Premise | \$9,027,501.00 |
| Latah County | Latah County Dark Fiber Network | \$15,000,000.00 |
| Ziply Fiber | Aberdeen Fiber to the Premise | \$2,306,353.00 |
| Intermax Networks | State Hwy 54 Corridor Project | \$5,889,174.99 |
| Kaniksu | Bonner County – Sagle Fiber (FTTX) for speeds up to 2.5 Gbps | \$2,527,975.69 |
| MiFiber | Project Last Mile- Priest River & Oldtown | \$6,259,109.70 |
| Gooding County | Gooding County Wireless Fiber and Middle Mile Fiber | \$7,509,334.00 |
| Intermax Networks | Selle Valley Project | \$6,315,211.28 |
| Madison County | Madison County and FyberCom Fiber Initiative | \$13,673,938.79 |
| Intermax Networks | Hauser Lake Area Project | \$1,585,130.00 |
| Jerome County | Jerome County Fiber to the Premises & Fiber Fed Fixed Wireless. | \$10,838,021.50 |
| FyberCom | Taylor / Basalt Fiber Project | \$716,947.54 |

Figure 4. Idaho CPF awarded 18 projects to 15 applicants with the largest award being \$15,000,000. Projects are distributed throughout the state.

Project Highlights

MiFiber – Priest River & Oldtown

MiFiber received an award of \$6,259,109.70 to connect 992 locations covering 51.04 miles with fiber. The project is broken up into two phases and covers two geographically separate areas, the City of Priest River on the north side of the Pend Orielle River as well as the south side of the Pend Orielle River in Bonner County. The MiFiber team dove into implementing this project as soon as the contract was executed.



Figure 5. IOB Project Manager Krista Baker on a MiFiber site visit learning how to splice fiber in the field.

Kaniksu Internet – Bonner County; Sagle Fiber

This project received an award of \$2,527,975.69 to connect 2100 locations covering 85 miles with fiber. Kaniksu began using CPF funds for this project on 3/1/2024 purchasing materials and necessary fiber electronics. They have developed a cooperative effort with the local electrical co-op and share trenches for some work where they are also burying power lines, practicing “dig-once” initiatives.

Idaho County

The Idaho County CPF is a project sponsored by Idaho County; however, is foundational for all of Idaho’s Region 2; which consists of Idaho, Lewis, Nez Perce, Latah and Clearwater counties. This project is built on the foundation of DIGB2 (District 2 Interoperability Governance Board – responsible for public safety and Emergency/Disaster Management) and has been backed and heavily supported by all 5 counties as well as the cities of Orofino, Nezperce and Grangeville in north central Idaho.

This is a middle-mile project that will provide fiber from Orofino to the City of Nezperce (where last mile connections will be provided to all in Nezperce proper) to Grangeville. The middle mile will connect into existing middle mile infrastructure to the north in Orofino. To the south, this CPF project will be connected to the IRON/IIG middle mile that was recently funded using Idaho Broadband Fund dollars. This will complete a much-needed north Idaho to south Idaho internet communications path.

PROMOTING EQUITABLE OUTCOMES AND ADDRESSING CRITICAL NEEDS

The Idaho Office of Broadband (IOB) has made addressing equitable outcomes and critical needs a strategic and mandatory component of the Idaho CPF grant program. This is demonstrated through the implementation of the Idaho CPF (Capital Projects Fund) grant guidelines, grant scoring matrix, and grant bonus points. The IBAB has identified key priorities which serve as identifiable metrics for critical need and equity. The priorities are:

1. **Targeting Underserved Areas:**

- The CPF projects focus on areas that are underserved, particularly in lower socio-economic areas or populations with evidence of lacking or inadequate connectivity.
- Projects are designed to close gaps in existing broadband service, aiming to provide reliable, wired connections where they are currently lacking.

2. **Avoidance of Duplication:**

- Locations within the CPF project footprints were confirmed to ensure they did not overlap with areas already covered by existing federal funding commitments. This approach prioritizes areas with genuine gaps in service, thereby avoiding duplication of efforts and funding.

3. **Requirement for Comprehensive Coverage:**

- Internet service providers awarded CPF projects are mandated to connect every broadband serviceable location within the defined project area, as identified by the FCC National Broadband Map. This ensures comprehensive coverage within targeted regions.

4. **Community Engagement and Digital Skills Training:**

- As construction commences in these targeted areas, the Idaho Office of Broadband (IOB) collaborates with newly established county broadband committees and internet service providers.
- Their focus is on increasing awareness and promoting digital skills training opportunities within the community. This initiative aims to enhance broadband adoption and usage among residents and businesses.

Overall, these metrics underscore the IOB's commitment to closing digital divides and promoting equitable access to broadband services across Idaho. By targeting underserved areas, using a rigorous evaluation process, and fostering community engagement, the CPF projects aim to maximize their impact on local economies, education, healthcare, and public safety through improved connectivity.

LABOR PRACTICES

Idaho CPF projects are making significant strides in boosting local employment and supporting workforce development. The projects are currently in various stages of permitting and design, and construction with an emphasis on using Idaho-based labor for engineering, ISP partnerships, and subcontracting. As the projects move fully into construction, future reports will be able to provide clearer data on specific methods of labor provisions and practices.

Prioritizing Local Hires & Workforce Development

As of now, all but one project prioritizes local hires. Beyond job creation, grantees are actively involved in workforce training and development. For instance, Comcast implements on-the-job training programs that enable technicians to advance from entry-level to more complex roles in network installation services. They also have initiatives such as Grow to Code, an apprenticeship program designed to support the career growth of frontline employees into entry-level software engineers. Comcast also supports ongoing skill development through programs like tuition reimbursement, enhancing their workforce's capabilities and career trajectories.

Additionally, Idaho CPF grantees value the contributions of local contractors who play vital roles in network construction, operations, and maintenance. This collaborative approach not only supports local economies, but also strengthens their operational capabilities.

Overall, through job creation, training programs, and strategic investments, grantees are not only advancing infrastructure projects in Idaho, but also nurturing a skilled and resilient workforce poised for future growth and innovation.

Compliance Measures

As a condition of the CPF award, Grant Recipients contractually agreed to comply with all applicable federal statutes, regulations, and executive orders, including but not limited to, applicable statutes and regulations prohibiting discrimination in programs receiving federal financial assistance, all applicable federal environmental laws and regulations, and any other applicable laws and required federal and state provisions of the projects funded by the Capital Projects Funds.

Federal Davis-Bacon Act prevailing wage rate requirements apply to the recipients who were awarded \$5,000,000 or more dollars and grant recipients are mandated to ensure that capital projects incorporate strong labor standards, including project labor agreements and community benefits agreements that offer wages at or above the prevailing rate and include local hire provisions.

Grant Recipient's contractual obligations, in regard to CPF requirements, include but are not necessarily limited to:

- American Rescue Plan Act of 2021;
- 31 C.F.R. Part 35;
- The Capital Projects Fund guidance, including any updates or changes thereto (“**Treasury Guidance**”);
- The Capital Projects Fund Frequently Asked Questions, including any updates or changes thereto (“**Treasury FAQ**”), which at the time of the publication of the grant agreement was last updated as of July 19, 2021;
- 2 C.F.R. 200, Appendix II, stating all contracts made by a subrecipient in excess of \$100,000 that involve employment of mechanics or laborers must include a provision for compliance with certain provisions of the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act, 40 U.S.C. 3702 and 3704, as supplemented by Department of Labor regulations (29 C.F.R. Part 5).

- Any other specific grant award requirements set forth in any grant Agreement or other similar document between the State of Idaho and federal government governing the use of ARPA funds or applicable to Projects receiving ARPA funds.

Additionally, under the Idaho CPF Agreement, Grant Recipients must ensure current and future compliance with the following:

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d *et seq.*), as amended, which prohibits exclusion from participation, denial of benefits of, or subjection to discrimination under programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance, of any person in the United States on the ground of race, color, or national origin, as implemented by the Department of the Treasury Title VI regulations at 31 CFR Part 22 and other pertinent executive orders such as Executive Order 13166, directives, circulars, policies, memoranda, and/or guidance documents.
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 *et seq.*) which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex under federally assisted education programs or activities;
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. §§ 12101 *et seq.*) which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability under programs, activities, and services provided or made available by Eligible Entity and local governments or instrumentalities or agencies thereto, as well as public or private entities that provide public transportation;
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. § 794), and Department of Commerce implementing regulations published at 15 C.F.R. Part 8b, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of handicap under any program or activity receiving or benefiting from federal assistance;
- The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§ 6101 *et seq.*), and Department of Commerce implementing regulations published at 15 C.F.R. Part 20, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of age in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance;
- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000e *et seq.*, which provides that it is an unlawful employment practice for an employer to discharge any individual or otherwise to discriminate against an individual with respect to compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Note in this regard that Title VII, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e-1(a), expressly exempts from the prohibition against discrimination based on religion "a religious corporation, association, educational institution, or society with respect to the employment of individuals of a particular religion to perform work connected with the carrying on by such corporation, association, educational institution, or society of its activities;" and
- Any other applicable non-discrimination law(s). Application requirements, award terms, and conditions do not impose civil rights and nondiscrimination law compliance requirements on Indian Tribes or Native Entities beyond what would otherwise apply under federal law.

- Executive Order 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (65 Fed. Reg. 50121), which seeks to improve access to federally assisted programs and activities for individuals who, because of national origin, have Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Denying a person access to its programs, services, and activities because LEP is a form of national origin discrimination prohibited under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Department of Treasury’s implementing regulations.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The IOB and the digital equity program hosted broadband 101 sessions, focus groups and roundtables across the state. These meetings were coordinated with the County, cities, libraries, ISP’s, business partners and/or the local Chamber of Commerce and were open to the public.

IOB Project Managers regularly meets with all CPF grantees to ensure the facilitation of conversations regarding SHPO, grant compliance, permitting, easements, available resources and relationships with cities, counties, tribes and the State as a whole.

Key takeaways from the six regions across the state:

Region 1

Communities prioritize enhancing quality of life and securing a prosperous future for residents. Communities recognize the crucial role of broadband in facilitating education, healthcare (especially telehealth services), and economic development. Digital connectivity is essential for the younger generation accustomed to technology and the older residents requiring telehealth facilities.

The residents expressed a clear need to preserve the region’s unique way of life and cultural values. This includes the cherished slower pace of life and the deep-rooted community ties. Affordability is a dominant concern, with reservations about government initiatives like the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). Some community members proposed a statute against deploying 5G and wireless internet. To address these challenges, a collective emphasis has been placed on community engagement, education, and collaborative efforts to tap into grant funding opportunities.

Region 2

Northern Idaho community members engaged in a fruitful discussion to determine their critical priorities for broadband expansion. The emerging consensus highlighted three top priorities: public safety, healthcare, and economic development. Community members place a high emphasis on broadband expansion in the areas of public safety, healthcare, and economic development for several compelling reasons.

Public safety is paramount, and broadband connectivity facilitates real-time communication and data-sharing capabilities for first responders. Timely access to critical information and effectively coordinating emergency responses are vital for residents’ safety and well-being, especially in northern Idaho’s remote and rural areas where traditional communication methods may be less reliable. Healthcare is a pressing concern in the region, and broadband expansion is viewed as bridging the healthcare divide. The ability to provide telemedicine services and exchange health information electronically becomes essential, particularly in areas with limited access to healthcare facilities. Improved broadband access enhances healthcare delivery, making medical services more

accessible and convenient for residents, ultimately leading to better health outcomes. Economic development is a shared aspiration among community members in northern Idaho. They recognize that broadband expansion catalyzes economic development, attracts businesses, creates job opportunities, and drives innovation. In an increasingly digital world, robust broadband infrastructure is a prerequisite for businesses to thrive, making it a strategic focus for communities aiming to bolster their economic prospects.

Region 3

Discussions highlighted several important issues regarding broadband expansion. One key point was open-access networks and how they relate to education, healthcare, and residents. This model, which involves a community-owned network shared by various internet service providers, was discussed as a potential solution to enhance competition, and improve service quality. Many saw this as a viable approach to address longstanding broadband challenges, such as the need for provider diversity and network efficiency. The concept was also viewed as a catalyst to invigorate the market, leading to better service offerings and increased customer satisfaction. Region 3 participants also emphasized the need to address underserved and unserved areas. Some areas still need help accessing reliable and high-speed internet.

There was the opinion that more distinction of broadband requirements for resort towns and areas with a high density of vacation homes is needed. In these places, internet demand fluctuates with tourist seasons, but existing infrastructure needs to meet these variable needs adequately. Feedback indicated a need for a more detailed understanding of residency patterns—distinguishing between permanent and temporary residents—to effectively plan broadband expansion that caters to the community’s diverse and sometimes seasonal demands. This may also need to be addressed during the challenge process.

Region 4

Community priorities for broadband expansion were focused on improving access to services, with a particular emphasis on education/skill training, healthcare, and public safety. Recognizing that reliable and high-speed internet access is fundamental to modern healthcare delivery, residents expressed that they would like telemedicine services accessible to all residents. Additionally, there was a theme of conversations regarding the need to enhance educational opportunities and enable remote learning to bridge the digital divide among students. This region stated that broadband is essential for skill development and workforce training, and residents want this access to broaden their skills. Lastly, the community’s strong desire for broadband expansion is driven by the need to empower first responders with real-time communication and data-sharing capabilities, which play a pivotal role in safeguarding the well-being of residents in this region.

Region 5

Community priorities primarily focused on enhancing access to various services, specifically on education and skill development, healthcare, and public safety. Recognizing the critical role of reliable high-speed internet access in modern healthcare delivery, residents in this region have expressed a strong desire for telemedicine services to be readily available to all community members.

There has been a recurring theme in discussions about the need to improve educational opportunities and facilitate remote learning, primarily to address the digital divide among students. Residents in this region firmly believe that broadband access is essential for skill development and workforce training, and they are eager to expand access to broaden their skills and opportunities.

Finally, the community's robust support for broadband expansion in Region 5 is rooted in the aspiration to empower first responders with real-time communication and data sharing. These capabilities play a pivotal role in ensuring the safety and well-being of residents throughout this region.

Region 6

Three key areas emerged as community priorities: healthcare access, education, and economic development. Southeast Idaho's residents recognize the critical need to improve healthcare access through broadband expansion. They see that reliable high-speed internet is indispensable for bridging the healthcare gap in their region of our state. Telemedicine services and the electronic exchange of health information are becoming increasingly vital to aging residents, particularly in regions with limited access to healthcare facilities. By enhancing broadband access, Southeast Idaho would elevate healthcare delivery, making medical services more readily available and convenient for its residents, which, in turn, will lead to improved health outcomes.

Education also takes center stage in this region's priorities. Southeast Idaho's community members believe broadband expansion is essential to ensure access to quality education for all residents. With the increasing reliance on online learning and digital resources, a robust broadband infrastructure is vital for students of all ages. Southeast Idaho seeks to provide equal educational opportunities, empower its workforce with the necessary skills, and promote lifelong learning, fostering individual growth and community development by prioritizing broadband expansion.

Economic development remains a shared aspiration among community members in southeast Idaho. They acknowledge that a robust broadband network is fundamental to attracting businesses, creating job opportunities, and nurturing innovation in today's digital world.

IDAHO COMMISSION FOR LIBRARIES

Program Information

Program Plan CPF_GP-000322

Start Date: March 2023

End Date: December 2026

Funds Allocated to this Program: \$3,518,323

Executive Summary

The Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL), an agency of the State of Idaho, is expanding the capacity of community facilities by using Capital Project Fund (CPF) resources to award grants to libraries for expansions, remodels, and construction projects. With these funds the libraries will better serve their communities by jointly and directly enabling work, education, and health monitoring. The ICfL awarded grants to fifteen subrecipients throughout the state in August 2023. The libraries have all initiated their grant projects and reported on their progress quarterly. In addition to subawards, the ICfL contracted with a library consulting group to provide webinars, office hours, and in-person training to the subrecipients in a variety of areas directly related to the remodel or construction of new library spaces. The grant awards, subrecipient progress, and the training provided to grantees all align with the approved project plan and timeline for Idaho's 1C Multi-Purpose Community Facility portion of the CPF award.

Use of Funds

The total budget allocated to Idaho's 1C Multi-Purpose Community Facility program is \$3,518,323. The bulk of the funds (\$3,350,000) are planned for subgrants. In addition to the subgrant program, \$168,323 will be used for administration of the program, to include providing technical assistance to grantees.

The ICfL launched the Facilities Improvement Grant program for subrecipients in 2023. The application process included two steps; a formal Letter of Intent form followed by a full application. The Letter of Intent form allowed the ICfL to determine if each organization and associated project would meet the minimum requirements to qualify for the grant. Forty-seven interested libraries submitted Letter of Intent forms requesting \$16,259,634 in total. Only one library did not qualify for the grant program. Qualified libraries could then submit a full application. Thirty-nine libraries submitted full applications requesting over \$13 million.

The selection criteria for this highly competitive grant included the grant objectives and requirements set forth by the U.S. Department of the Treasury. Of particular importance for this funding source was the need for projects to be substantially completed by August 2026, to address a critical community need, and to jointly and directly enable work, education, and health monitoring. The review committee for the grant was comprised of ICfL staff and a director from an Idaho public library (not applying for the grant). Libraries were scored according to a rubric, and final selection of the projects was based on a number of factors, including the total score and how well all criteria were met. To distinguish between viable projects with similar scores and quality, additional

consideration was given to geographic representation and distribution of projects throughout the state.

In August 2023, a total of \$3,258,800 was awarded to fifteen libraries in amounts ranging from \$4,800 to \$500,000. The awarded libraries are located throughout the state and are situated within a breadth of community types. The subaward projects range in size, scope, and complexity, but all focus on improving or expanding the public library spaces, or access to the spaces, which will jointly and directly enable work, education, and health monitoring.

During the reporting period ending June 30, 2024, funds totaling \$1,742,925 were disbursed to subrecipients. Two highlighted subrecipient projects are listed below.

St. Maries Public Library

The St. Maries Public Library was awarded \$500,000 to enclose a 1,300-square foot open-air daylight basement that will be used as meeting space. It will include ADA-compliant restrooms and a kitchen. The library described the space in the following way.

The proposed new meeting space will be a flexible multi-use space, which can be divided into smaller spaces. It will be able to accommodate concurrent meetings in much more private spaces for caseworkers, job services counselors, workforce trainers, health screeners, vaccinations, etc. It will be a space that is much more welcoming than any space is presently and will be available all day rather than sometimes having to schedule when other activities are not occurring in the library.

The library reported the project status as 66% complete in June 2024. The cement for the foundation is in place and an exterior wall encloses the space. The contractors installed the electrical system, the plumbing fixtures and all the doors, including an exterior exit door. A sump pump for the new room was installed, as were stairs leading from the main floor. The library selected the paint and carpet. The contractors were in the process of installing the drywall. Additional engineering work is required to shore up existing footing discrepancies. The library anticipates completing the expansion in late



The exterior of the St. Maries Public Library building during its 2024 expansion.



The interior of the St. Maries Public Library building during construction.



The interior of the St. Maries Public Library building during construction.

summer or early fall 2024.

Garden City Public Library

The Garden City Public Library's award of \$92,000 will be used to remodel an existing space to create two ADA-compliant private study/telehealth meeting spaces. While the library serves a city population of around 13,000 people, private rooms have never been available to the community. With the grant funds, the library will enclose two study/work rooms with glass walls and doors. The rooms will be separated with an opaque wall. The rooms will include heating and cooling, along with a connection to the building's fire detection and suppression system.



6 Rendering showing new stu

7The interior of the Garden City Public Library. Two rooms will be constructed in the space shown.

During the reporting period, the library hired an architect to design the rooms and approved a design. They also solicited construction bids, selected a contractor, and obtained building permits. The anticipated start date for construction is August 1, 2024.

In addition to subawards, the ICfL used \$71,841.23 in Capital Projects Fund resources for administrative purposes to provide technical assistance to subrecipients. Library Strategies was hired to produce a series of eight webinars for grantees to attend. The webinar series was designed by library professionals with extensive expertise in the area of library construction and expansion. They provided technical details, training, and advice for libraries embarking on a building project. Series titles included:

- Webinar 1: Remodels, Rebuilds & Expansions 101
- Webinar 2: Needs Assessment
- Webinar 3: Public & Private Funding
- Webinar 4: Architects, Contractors & Bidding
- Webinar 5: Construction Administration
- Webinar 6: Moving & Reopening
- Webinar 7: Case Study Spotlight 1 – Renovating and Redesigns
- Webinar 8: Case Study Spotlight 2 – Fundraising for Capital Projects

Library Strategies was also contracted to provide online office hours for subrecipients to attend where they could ask questions surrounding construction projects in libraries. Additionally, the Library Strategies team provided a one-day in-person training to grantees and additional libraries on the topic of library facilities construction and improvement. Funding was also used to offset attendance for participants (hotel stays were covered directly with a room block, and mileage was reimbursed at the state rate).

During the next reporting period (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025) the ICfL anticipates spending a smaller amount of administrative funds to provide technical guidance and conduct site visits. Subrecipients will continue to provide quarterly progress reports. It is anticipated that the remainder of the currently awarded subgrant funds will be disbursed by the end of the reporting period.

Promoting Equitable Outcomes and Addressing Critical Needs

The ICfL is addressing critical needs and promoting equitable outcomes through the Facilities Improvement Grant subaward program. Applicants to the program were asked to demonstrate that there was a critical need in their community and that their projects would be addressing that need. The program application defines a critical need in the following way.

Communities with a critical need for the project include those that do not currently have access to the resources or services that would be provided by the proposed project, whether because of the physical absence or insufficiency within the community, or because access to the resources/services are not affordable, resulting in impediments to participation in work, education, and health monitoring.

The funded grant projects will improve access for the historically underserved populations in Idaho, including groups living in rural areas, those living near or below the poverty line, English language learners, and people with disabilities. Libraries receiving the grant demonstrated through their applications that their communities had (1) needs brought about by, exacerbated by, or made apparent by the COVID pandemic; (2) a lack of resources in community related to work, education, health, or related services, and; (3) specific needs of underserved, historically disadvantaged, or vulnerable populations. They also described how their library facilities were not currently able to meet those critical needs due to facilities that are limited in size, scope, or functionality. Additionally, they successfully demonstrated that their proposed projects would help meet the stated needs of their communities.

While projects are still currently underway, we anticipate positive outcomes for Idaho's underserved communities when the new library facilities become available to the public.

Labor

Multipurpose community facility projects in Idaho are following the U.S. Department of the Treasury's guidance by hiring local labor. Most of the projects are small enough in scale that local labor and contractors are the most practical and cost-effective sources for completing projects.

The ICfL grant agreement signed by subrecipients included the following text communicating the U.S. Department of the Treasury's preferences for labor practices:

Strong Labor Practices in Construction - Guidance from US Department of the Treasury. It is important that investments in capital projects be carried out in ways that produce high quality infrastructure, avert disruptive and costly delays, and promote efficiency. Projects funded by the Capital Projects Fund must comply with all applicable federal laws and regulations, and with all requirements for state, local, and Tribal laws and ordinances to the extent that such requirements do not conflict with federal laws.

While the federal Davis-Bacon Act prevailing wage rate requirements do not apply to projects funded solely by the Capital Projects Fund program, except for Capital Projects Fund-funded construction projects undertaken by the District of Columbia, the U.S. Department of the Treasury encourages recipients to ensure that capital projects incorporate strong labor standards, including project labor agreements and community benefits agreements that offer

wages at or above the prevailing rate and include local hire provisions, not only to promote effective and efficient delivery of high-quality infrastructure projects but also to support the economic recovery through strong employment opportunities for workers. Using these practices in construction projects may help to ensure a reliable supply of skilled labor that would minimize disruptions, such as those associated with labor disputes or workplace injuries. Treasury further encourages recipients to prioritize employers (including contractors and subcontractors) without recent violations of federal and state labor and employment laws as a further measure that may minimize project disruptions and delays.

Among other requirements contained in 2 C.F.R. 200, Appendix II, all contracts made by a subrecipient in excess of \$100,000 that involve employment of mechanics or laborers must include a provision for compliance with certain provisions of the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act, 40 U.S.C. 3702 and 3704, as supplemented by Department of Labor regulations (29 C.F.R. Part 5).

Further, the U.S. Department of the Treasury encourages recipients to prioritize in their procurement decisions employers who can demonstrate:

- Their workforce meets high safety and training standards, including professional certification, licensure and/or robust in-house training;
- Prioritization in hiring of local workers and/or workers from historically disadvantaged communities;
- Direct employment of their workforce, or policies and practices in place to ensure contractors and subcontractors meet high labor standards; and
- No recent violations of federal and state labor and employment laws.

Community Engagement

The ICfL polled public libraries in 2021 about telehealth capacity and received responses indicating there was a critical need for this type of service in addition to the work being done with education and workforce development. The ICfL also has regular contact with public library directors, boards, and staff and continuously monitor needs in the community. Additionally, library statistics are collected every year from Idaho's libraries, giving a snapshot of the library landscape and the communities served across the state.

When the ICfL Facilities Improvement Grant application opened as part of this program, the initial requests totaled over \$16 million. With less than \$3.5 awarded, there is still an unmet need within the state for increased and improved spaces and services.

Civil Rights Compliance

The ICfL is in compliance with the legal requirements relating to nondiscrimination and nondiscriminatory use of Federal funds. Subrecipients receiving Capital Projects Funds were required to agree that they were also in compliance with the civil rights laws listed by the U.S. Department of the Treasury as part of the CPF program.