



# Infrastructure Planning Grant Administration Guidelines and Application

## **Montana Coal Endowment Program**

August 2025

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# Application Guidelines

## Introduction

The Montana Coal Endowment Program (MCEP) is a state-funded program created in 1992 and is administered by the Department of Commerce. It was established to help solve serious health and safety problems and assist communities with the financing of infrastructure projects. The program helps local governments with infrastructure planning as well as constructing, upgrading, or repairing drinking water systems, wastewater treatment facilities, sanitary or storm sewer systems, solid waste disposal and separation systems, and bridges. These guidelines pertain to Infrastructure Planning Grants only. Instructions on how to apply for Project Grants (for construction), or Emergency Grants are contained in separate guidelines.

Grant funds are made available for MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grants through the legislative process on a biennial basis. Grant funds are not available for award until after the legislature passes, and the Governor signs the bill appropriating funding for the program, typically in the spring of odd years. Applications for Infrastructure Planning Grants will be accepted and are reviewed, ranked and awarded on a competitive basis at least twice during the two-year biennium to ensure that funding is awarded to the communities and projects with the greatest need and where the funds will make the greatest impact. Planning Grants will be awarded until all MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant funds have been allocated.

MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grants in the 2027 biennium will have a maximum grant amount of \$30,000 with a minimum match of 20% of the total project cost. This match may be reduced or waived if a local financial hardship has been granted. Match for MCEP Project Grants remains 1:1 for the 2027 biennium.

The MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant program encourages cities, towns, counties, tribal governments, and water and sewer districts to engage in long-range infrastructure planning, i.e., capital improvements plans and extension of service plans.

For the 2027 biennium, applicants can apply for one of the following:

- Water, wastewater, stormwater and/or solid waste system preliminary engineering report,
- One capital improvements plan, and
- One bridge system capital improvements plan or bridge preliminary engineering report.

These application guidelines explain how cities, towns, counties, water and sewer districts, and tribal governments can apply for MCEP financial assistance pertaining to Infrastructure Planning Grants.

If you have any questions regarding the “MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant Administration Guidelines and Application”, available technical resources and assistance, or other aspects of the MCEP program, please contact Community MT Division staff by phone at 406-841-2770 or email at [doccdd@mt.gov](mailto:doccdd@mt.gov).

## **Eligible Applicants**

- Eligible applicants for MCEP assistance include any:
  - Incorporated cities or towns;
  - Counties;
  - Consolidated government;
  - Tribal government (includes any federally recognized Indian tribe within the State of Montana);
  - County or multi-county water, sewer, or solid waste district; or

- An authority as defined in §75-6-304, MCA.
- Private water or sewer users' associations and irrigation districts are not eligible to apply for MCEP funds because they are not a public entity. To apply for MCEP funds, an association would first have to be legally created as a county or multi-county water and sewer district (pursuant to sections 7-13-22 and 23, MCA) before submitting an MCEP application.

Non-public entities are not eligible for MCEP assistance. Under Article V, Section 11 of the Montana Constitution, the Legislature is prohibited from making any appropriation for religious, charitable, industrial, educational, or benevolent purposes to any private individual, private association, or private corporation not under the control of the State.

- Counties are eligible to apply for an MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant to study problems and issues related to land subdivisions or areas of the county that are not yet served by a county water and sewer district or in proximity to a municipal water and wastewater system
- Cities and towns are eligible to apply for an MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant to study problems and issues related to land subdivisions or areas outside its boundaries to study the area for possible annexation or extension of services to the area.

## **Eligible Projects**

- Preliminary engineering reports to study the following:
  - Drinking water systems;
  - Wastewater treatment systems;
  - Sanitary sewer systems;
  - Solid waste disposal and separation systems; and
  - Bridges.

- Capital improvements plans
- Other activities with prior Commerce approval.

## Eligible Expenses

MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant funds can be used for the preparation of infrastructure planning documents such as preliminary engineering reports and capital improvements plans. Capital improvements plans must be comprehensive and developed in accordance with the most current version of the “[Capital Improvements Planning Manual](#)” developed by Commerce’s Community Technical Assistance Program. Other planning efforts that support the development of a capital improvements plan may be considered as eligible expenses on a case-by-case basis, with pre-approval from Commerce.

For preliminary engineering reports, project expenses eligible to be reimbursed by MCEP funds include any reasonable expenses incurred in the preparation of plans, studies, analyses, or research in the preparation of a preliminary engineering report as generally described in the most current “[Uniform Application for Montana Public Facility Projects](#)”, or the “[Preliminary Engineering Report Outline for Bridge Projects](#)”. In the preparation of a preliminary engineering report related to bridge projects, MCEP funds can be used to assess the condition of all bridges within the applicant’s jurisdiction.

The preliminary engineering report and capital improvements plan technical document guidelines are available on the [Commerce website](#).

Updates or addendums to preliminary engineering reports must be stand-alone documents. Reliance on previous preliminary engineering reports is discouraged. Submittal of multiple preliminary engineering reports for the same project may result in a reduced score during a MCEP Project Grant ranking process.



Reimbursement cannot occur until a contract between Commerce and the grantee has been fully executed.

## **Ineligible Expenses**

Costs incurred prior to the Governor's Award Letter are ineligible for reimbursement with MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant funds, but may be counted as match, if they are eligible match expenses. Eligible match expenses include costs of preparing MCEP or other grant applications, including responding to the statutory priorities, and costs incurred to begin work on the proposed Infrastructure Planning Grant project. Eligible match expenses may not be counted toward more than one Infrastructure Planning Grant award. Eligible match expenses may not be incurred more than one year prior to the submission of the Infrastructure Planning Grant application.

## **Procurement Requirements**

MCEP grantees should be prepared to provide information to Commerce about how they intend to procure, or have procured, grant administration or professional services in accordance with the federal or state procurement laws applicable to them, including, but not limited to, a copy of any advertisements and a copy of the request for proposals or qualifications.

Commerce strongly recommends the attorney for the local government review and approve the procurement procedures. Community MT Division staff are available to review procurement procedures as a technical service, but Commerce has no direct approval authority.

Additionally, if awarded funding, local governments must provide documentation demonstrating that requirements for procurement, insurance and other grant administration requirements have been met. See Section II of these guidelines for additional information.

## Match Requirements

Local governments must provide a minimum of 20% of the total project cost in matching funds.

Firm loan commitments or local cash reserves are acceptable forms of match. Grants or other cash contributions from local, state or federal agencies, programs or private organizations may also be considered acceptable forms of match. The entire match for the project must be firmly committed before MCEP funds are awarded, with documentation accompanying the application at the time of submittal. Except in the case of hardship match waiver, in-kind services such as labor performed by the employees of the applicant are not eligible as match.

In cases of extreme financial hardship and where very serious deficiencies exist that would affect the public's health or safety, an applicant may be eligible to receive a waiver of part or all of the match. However, the total amount requested cannot exceed the maximum MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant. Commerce will approve a MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant hardship match waiver if the applicant provides documentation showing other funds are not available and there will be serious public health and safety impacts if the project is not completed. Applicants must request a hardship match waiver in writing and include the justification with their application. Commerce may allow in-kind services to be used as part of the match in hardship waiver situations on a case-by-case basis.

In documenting financial commitment, the applicant must:

- Include the funding amount and source
- Include a brief description of the project use of funds and
- Use official letterhead or by official resolution by the governing body

Examples include:

- Letter of commitment from the agency or organization on official letterhead
- Copy of award letter from another agency or organization and
- A budget resolution from the local government

## Submitting an Application

The application process is competitive to ensure that the highest need and highest impact projects are funded first. Applications are processed based on the following conditions:

- Application deadlines are posted on the [Community MT website](#) and the [Grants and Loans Portal](#).
- Only complete applications will be processed and considered for award. The application must include:
  - A completed application form (Appendix A) including budget and detailed budget narrative;
  - Proposed implementation schedule (Attachment I).
  - Documentation showing the legal creation of the district (if a county water or sewer district);
  - Documentation showing the commitment of matching funds. If a match will be provided by grants not yet awarded, provide an explanation of the status of that funding. Completed commitments are required to be submitted when available; and if requesting a hardship waiver of match, a justification for the request;
- One applicant per project per biennium; applications to study the same system from multiple eligible applicants will not be funded.

Commerce will only provide reimbursement to local governments that are in compliance with the State's auditing and reporting requirements provided for in Section 2-7-503, MCA. If the local government has failed to conduct audits or submit reports as required by statute, or has received an adverse audit opinion or disclaimer from any state or

federal agency or authorized agent thereof, a grant will be tentatively awarded, but no funds will be released until the reporting requirements have been complied with, or if an audit is required before a financial report can be submitted, an auditor has been contracted with and the audit is scheduled. If one of these two actions have not taken place within one year of award, the grant award may be rescinded, and the funds may be released to award to another eligible applicant.

## **Review Criteria**

Applications will be reviewed and ranked by project category to be awarded funding based on the following criteria:

- Whether the proposed planning activity is intended to address an urgent threat to public health and safety or enable local governments to meet state or federal health or safety standards;
- The need for financial assistance to complete the proposed planning activity;
- Whether the proposed planning activity is intended to address issues of population and economic change;
- Whether the proposed planning activity supports the retention or creation of full-time job opportunities for Montanans, that provide the public facilities necessary for maintaining or expanding businesses, or that maintains or encourages expansion of the tax base;
- Whether the proposed planning activity represents the best possible long-term value for the applicant and the residents it serves and for the people of Montana;
- How recently has the applicant received MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant funding for similar planning activities and how many MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant applications the applicant has submitted in the 2027 biennium cycle; or if the applicant is new to planning and has not recently received an MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant.

- Applications to update, amend, or improve a preliminary engineering report for which the applicant has already received a MCEP Project Grant for that same project will be considered on a case-by-case basis, as funding allows.
- Commerce reserves the right to limit the amount of the grant to an amount appropriate to the scope of the planning project.

See Appendix A for a copy of the MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant application.

Applicants must submit one electronic copy of the application materials to Commerce through the [Grants and Loans Portal](#).

Please email [doccdd@mt.gov](mailto:doccdd@mt.gov) or call 406-841-2770 for additional assistance.

Electronic submission is preferred but you may also submit applications through mail or in person to:

Montana Department of Commerce  
Community MT Division  
Community Planning Program  
301 S. Park Ave., P.O. Box 200523 Helena, MT 59620-0523

## **Timing and Requirements**

Local governments that are awarded an MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant are expected to complete their report, plan, assessment or policy in a timely manner.

- A grant will be terminated if a grantee has not procured an engineer or planning professional within six months of a signed grant agreement, unless the grantee can demonstrate substantial progress in obtaining an engineer or planning professional.

- Grant contracts will not be extended past the completion date stated in the contract unless the grantee can demonstrate substantial progress and show good cause for extending the termination date.
- An applicant will not be awarded a new MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant for a planning activity [e.g. water, wastewater, stormwater, or solid waste system preliminary engineering report, capital improvements plan, bridge preliminary engineering report or bridge system capital improvements plan)] if it currently has a MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant open for a planning activity in the same category (e.g. an applicant will not be awarded a 2027 biennium planning grant for a water system preliminary engineering report if it has an open planning grant for a water system preliminary engineering report from a previous cycle). Awards for new MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grants for planning activities in the same category as a previous MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant award will not be made until all previous MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grants for activities in that category have been closed.

## Grant Administration

This section describes the specific requirements related to the administration of Infrastructure Planning Grants. These grants can only be used to fund work related to infrastructure planning. Successful MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant awardees must comply with the following administrative procedures and requirements. All procedures and requirements that the award recipient must comply with will be set forth in the grantee's contract with Commerce. Forms and templates are available on the [Community MT website](#).

The MCEP planning grant recipient is required to enter into a grant agreement with Commerce. Commerce will establish a termination date in the contract. Infrastructure Planning grant contracts will not be extended past the contract expiration date unless reasonable progress can be shown. A grant will be terminated if a grant recipient has not procured an engineer or professional services within six months of a signed grant agreement, unless the grant recipient can demonstrate substantial progress in obtaining an engineer or planning professional. Grant recipients must be in compliance with the State's auditing and reporting requirements provided for in section 2-7-503, MCA.

Additionally, if awarded funding, local governments must provide documentation demonstrating that requirements for procurement, insurance and other grant administration requirements have been met.

- A. Start-up requirements – All MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant recipients must satisfy the following requirements prior to contract execution with Commerce:
- Submit an updated budget
  - Submit an updated implementation schedule
  - Document firm commitment of non-MCEP funds
  - Attend a start-up call with Commerce

**B. Contract execution** – Prior to contract execution, the Community MT planning specialist will confirm in writing the following signatories, titles, and email addresses for:

- Contract signed (typically the chief elected official)
- Approved to form (typically an attorney; optional)
- Attest (optional)
- Contract liaison
- Additional contact(s) (individual(s) who are included in the contract routing process but are not signers; optional).

Commerce utilizes DocuSign to route and execute all contracts. It is important for all grantees to provide accurate contact information in a timely manner to avoid delays in processing. If there is a change in personnel requiring an update to the signatory list, please notify the Community MT planning specialist right away.

**C. Contract amendments** – Commerce may approve and execute a contract amendment on a case-by-case basis.

**D. Signature certification and depository forms** – The signature certification form, which authorizes several local officials to sign requests for payment, must be completed and submitted to Commerce before a request for reimbursement can be processed. At least two officials must sign each request for reimbursement. The designation of depository form will also need to be completed before any MCEP funds can be sent to the grant recipient. This form provides that the payment for a grant will be sent directly to the grantee’s designated bank account.

Both forms are available on [Commerce’s website](#) and are required with or prior to the first draw request.



- E. Expenses eligible for reimbursement – MCEP funds can be used for the preparation of plans, studies, analyses, or research in the preparation of a preliminary engineering report as generally described in the most current edition of the “[Uniform Application for Montana Public Facility Projects](#)”, or the “[Preliminary Engineering Report Outline for Bridge Projects](#)”, or a comprehensive capital improvements plan in accordance with the work plan as provided in the MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant application. A complete final planning product will be required to be submitted to Commerce at the conclusion of the Infrastructure Planning Grant.

Technical document guidelines are available on the [Community Planning Platform](#).

Infrastructure Planning Grant funds cannot be used as reimbursement for the preparation of a MCEP Project Grant application, but those preparation costs can be counted as match toward a MCEP Project Grant application.

- F. Reimbursements – MCEP Planning Grant recipients must execute a contract with Commerce before any funds can be reimbursed.

Payment for approved expenses under the grant contract will be on a reimbursement basis only.

Commerce will reimburse the MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant recipient a maximum of 50% of the total grant amount for incurred expenses within 30 days of receipt of an approved draft infrastructure planning document. A draft preliminary engineering report must generally address each item required in the preliminary engineering report outline as presented in the most current edition of the “[Uniform Application for Montana Public Facility Projects](#)”, or the “[Preliminary Engineering Report Outline for Bridge Projects](#)”. While it is not expected that the document will be complete, it must show that applicable items required for a preliminary engineering

report are being addressed and the engineer is proceeding toward the preparation of a complete and acceptable final product.

Commerce will reimburse the MCEP grant recipient the balance of the grant funds within 30 days of receipt of an approved final document for any additionally incurred expenses not claimed in the first payment. The final version must be complete and have been reviewed by Community MT staff. The final amount reimbursed will not exceed 80% of the total project costs. If the final project cost is less than specified in the contract, the final payment shall not result in reimbursement of MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant funds in an amount greater than 80% of the total project costs.

Grantees that plan to submit a MCEP Project Grant application should contact Community MT Division staff for guidance on environmental requirements, and other Project grant application requirements.

A request for reimbursement form (for Infrastructure Planning Grants) is used by MCEP grant recipients to request MCEP reimbursement of eligible project costs, which is available on [Commerce's website](#). The request for reimbursement form, along with a copy of detailed invoices (showing hourly rate breakdown by activity and employee, and at minimum containing the information required below) from the consultant, signature certification and designation of depository forms, and either the draft or final document, should be sent to Community MT staff.

Upon receipt, Community MT Division staff will review the request to ensure that the form is properly completed, invoices are adequate, and the planning document meets minimum requirements and is acceptable to Commerce. MCEP grant recipients will be notified if the draft or final document is found to be unacceptable for payment.

Invoices must be detailed and include the following information: services furnished, total hours worked for each item, amount being billed for each item, description of any other eligible reimbursement expenses incurred during the billing period, and dates of work performed. Commerce does not accept lump-sum invoices.

Documentation of the procurement process followed must be submitted prior to or as part of the initial request for reimbursement. Commerce will determine whether supporting documents for a request for reimbursement are sufficient and meet the requirements of the program. If the grantee fails to obligate expenses on or before the termination date of the grant contract, Commerce cannot reimburse the grantee Infrastructure Planning Grant award funds. All documentation and requests for reimbursement must be received by Commerce within 60 calendar days of contract termination.

- G. Reporting requirements and project monitoring – Grantees will be required to submit progress and expenditure reports in accordance with the requirements of the grant contract. Commerce reserves the right to perform site inspections to monitor the grantee’s compliance with the terms of the grant contract, including but not limited to verification of planning services performed and monitoring CDBG Planning Grant funds.
- H. Public’s right to know – Applications that are funded are subject to disclosure in response to requests received under the right to know provision of the Montana Constitution (Art. II, §9). Information that could reasonably be considered proprietary, privileged, or confidential in nature should be identified as such in the application.
- I. Compliance with laws – The applicant must certify on the application that the proposed Infrastructure Planning project complies with all state, federal, and local

laws, ordinances, and regulations, including any necessary environmental review and procurement requirements.

- J. Compliance with contract conditions – Commerce may require grantees to adhere to technical guidance documents and templates based on scope of project as applicable.

Commerce has guidance documents available for different planning grant deliverables. See the [Community Planning Platform](#) for guidance and model documents.

- K. Dissemination of information and technology transfer – Grantees will be contractually required to allow Commerce access to any facility or site associated with the planning project, and the ability to obtain, publish, disseminate, or distribute any and all information obtained from the planning project (except any data or information identified as confidential or proprietary), without restriction and without payment or compensation by Commerce.
- L. Grant duration and performance period – The reimbursement period will begin with the issuance of the Governor’s Award Letter, be solidified with contract execution, and terminate 60 calendar days after the reimbursement period ends. Commerce will consider, on a case-by-case basis contract extensions that necessitate a longer contract period, provided the grantee has demonstrated a good faith effort to complete the project on time and within the original budget. No requests for payment may be submitted for any costs or expenses obligated by the grantee for reimbursement before the Governor’s Award Letter and after termination of the grant contract. All MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant projects that have been awarded must be completed within the time frame specified in the executed contract.

- M. Return of funds – At Commerce’s sole discretion, the grantee will be required to and agrees it shall return to Commerce any and all funds that are determined by Commerce to have been spent in violation of the terms and conditions of the grant contract.
  
- N. Cost savings – In the event that expenses for an MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant projects are less than the project’s costs and grant award, Commerce may, in its sole discretion, authorize additional related planning efforts for the same facility to enhance the overall project or reduce the grant award accordingly.
  
- O. Grant closeout – Prior to final payment, the MCEP grant recipient must submit to Commerce a final complete document as stated above. The MCEP grant recipient must provide a certification to Commerce showing compliance with MCEP planning grant requirements (available on the [Commerce website](#)). The MCEP grant recipient must retain all project related records for a minimum of five years after the final closeout of the grant.

## Appendix A

### **MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant Application Form**

#### Authorizing Statement

I hereby declare under penalty of perjury (see 1-6-105) that the information included in this application and all attachments is true, complete, and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I further declare that, on behalf of (insert name of applicant), I am legally authorized to enter into an agreement with the Montana Department of Commerce if an MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant is awarded.

I further declare that (1) if an MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant is awarded, and if that grant is to be used to prepare a preliminary engineering report, then the preliminary engineering report will follow the format that meets the requirements of the “Uniform Preliminary Engineering Report for Montana Public Facility Projects” outline and will include a completed environmental checklist. (2) Or, if that grant is to be used to prepare a capital improvements plan, then the capital improvements plan will be comprehensive and in accordance with criteria acceptable to Commerce.

I understand that Commerce will only review the final preliminary engineering report in an attempt to ensure that the information presented in the preliminary engineering report meets the basic requirements of the “Uniform Preliminary Engineering Report for Montana Public Facility Projects” outline, and that Commerce will not certify the quality of the preliminary engineering report. I further understand that the review and approval of the content of the preliminary engineering report by Commerce does not guarantee that a subsequent application to MCEP for a construction project would result in the maximum number of points being assigned in the scoring of the engineering problem or design during the MCEP ranking process.

Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Title (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Applicant Information Summary

1	Name of applicant	
2	Mailing address	
3	Type of governmental entity	
4	Federal tax ID number	

### Contact Information Summary

**Chief elected official/authorized representative/primary contact person**

**Project engineer/architect, if applicable**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street/P.O. Box

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street/P.O. Box

\_\_\_\_\_  
City

\_\_\_\_\_  
Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
City

\_\_\_\_\_  
Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email

**Legal counsel/attorney**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street/P.O. Box

\_\_\_\_\_  
City                      Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email

**Grant/loan administrator, if applicable**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street/P.O. Box

\_\_\_\_\_  
City                      Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email

**Primary contact person, if different from CEO/authorized representative**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street/P.O. Box

\_\_\_\_\_  
City                      Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email

**Clerk/contract attester**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street/P.O. Box

\_\_\_\_\_  
City                      Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email

**Project Proposal Details**

**Type of Grant Applied For (check one)**

- Water, wastewater, stormwater, or solid waste system preliminary engineering report



- Bridge preliminary engineering report
- Capital improvements plan
- Bridge system capital improvements plan

### Proposed Budget

	<b>Source: MCEP planning grant</b>	<b>Source: Local match</b>	<b>Source: Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
Professional services				
Other (list details)				

Please provide a detailed budget description specifying how the budget will be spent including:

- An estimate for the number of hours required to complete the proposed planning activity,
- The estimated hourly rate for the services required to complete the proposed planning activity,
- And any other pertinent expenses relevant to the proposed planning activity.

**Applications without a detailed budget narrative will not be funded.**

### Hardship Waiver:

Are you applying for a hardship waiver for an elimination or reduction of the required match?

Yes

No

If so, provide an explanation justifying the granting of the hardship waiver including why other funds are not available, a description of the public health and safety impacts if the project is not completed, and what the applicant will be able to provide as a match (identified local funds and/or in-kind contributions).

### Proposed Implementation Schedule

Estimated start date of infrastructure planning activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated completion date of infrastructure planning activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Attach a proposed implementation schedule. This schedule should include the major milestones including field activities, draft report preparation and review, and final report preparation and submittal (see Attachment I).

### Proposed Planning Activity Description and History

For an MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant that is to be used to prepare a preliminary engineering report, provide a description of the project that is being proposed for construction after the preliminary engineering is completed (using separate sheets as necessary), and the proposed activities and work schedule in completing the preliminary engineering:

- A. The type of project;
- B. The project location (using maps and text); and
- C. A brief history of the system, and its known or presumed deficiencies;

For capital improvements plans provide a brief description of the plan that is being proposed and the types of infrastructure that will be evaluated and planned for. The

capital improvements plan must be comprehensive and should identify the current and future infrastructure needs of the jurisdiction. Include a proposed work plan and a proposed table of contents.

## MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant Award Criteria

A. Public health and safety—Is the proposed planning activity intended to address an urgent threat to public health and safety or to enable local governments to meet state or federal health or safety standards?

Yes—if “yes” provide documentation of the violation or warning from the appropriate agency (e.g. MDEQ, Environmental Protection Agency, etc.) and relevant standard that is being or is at threat of being violated.

No

B. Financial need—Are your water/wastewater user rates currently above, at, or below the state’s target rate? (Commerce assumes higher user rates reflect higher financial need; as the basis for the calculation of target rates, use the target rate calculation resource on the [Community MT website](#)).

Above target rate

At target rate

Below target rate

Anticipated rates at completion of project: \_\_\_\_\_

If you believe that the target rate calculated by Commerce is incorrect or does not adequately reflect the financial need of your community, please provide an explanation and include any appropriate documentation.

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C. Community change – How much has the population of the service area for the proposed planning activity changed, increased or decreased annually between 2010 and 2020 according to the U.S. Census ([use the tool provided by Commerce](#)).

- Change of 10% or greater
  - Change between 4-10%
  - Change between 0-4%
- 
- 
- 
- 

D. Economic impact – will the proposed planning activity result in the retention of existing full-time jobs, the creation of full-time jobs, or stimulate some form of economic development that increases the tax base?

- Retention of existing full-time jobs – approximately how many? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Creation of new full-time jobs – approximately how many? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Estimated increase in the tax base resulting from the completion of the proposed infrastructure improvement:
- 
- 
- 

E. Best long-term value – provide a brief explanation of why the proposed planning activity represents the best long-term value for the applicant and residents/users and for the people of Montana. Include a brief description of the following:

- How the proposed planning activity aligns with previous planning efforts
- How it was prioritized among the applicant’s planning priorities;
- Describe any citizen input and support for the proposed planning activity; and
- The activities that will take place (including the process to procure an engineer) and products produced.

**F. Recent MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grants or multiple applications in the 2027 Biennium—check the statement that applies:**

Applicant does not have an open MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant and has not been awarded an MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant in the past two biennium (past four years) AND is applying for only one MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant in this biennium (2027)

Applicant does not have an open MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant and has not been awarded an MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant in the past two biennium (past four years) AND is applying for more than one MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant in this biennium

Applicant is new to planning and has not received a recent MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant

## Required Attachments

- Documentation showing the legal creation of the district (if a county water and/or sewer district);
- Documentation (i.e. resolution or formal letter) showing the commitment of matching funds. If a match will be provided by grants not yet awarded, provide and explanation of the status of that funding; and
- Proposed implementation schedule (Attachment I).

# Attachment I

## Implementation Schedule

Task	Month / Year
<b>Advertisement for professional services</b>	
Publish request for proposals	
Select firm	
Execute agreement with firm	
<b>Major activities / milestones</b> Below are examples. Please change as necessary for the proposed project. *Please contact Community MT Division staff for relevant construction grant requirements if using the proposed project for future MCEP and/or CDBG grants.	
Review condition of existing systems	
Determine needs of community	
Prepare draft preliminary engineering report/capital improvements plan	
Hold public meetings/hearings as applicable	
Final preliminary engineering report submittal to Commerce	
<b>MCEP request for reimbursement</b>	
Submit draft report and request first request for reimbursement	
Submit final report and request final request for reimbursement	

## Appendix B

### **Sample Resolution to Authorize Submission of MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant Application**

Each application for MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant (MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant) funds must be accompanied by a copy of a resolution formally adopted by the applicant and authorizing:

- The submission of the MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant application in compliance with the MCEP Application Guidelines, and
- The applicant's chief elected official or chief executive officer to act on its behalf in regard to the application and to provide such additional information as may be required, and
- Local funding commitment

The resolution must also indicate the governing body's intent to commit to any funding for the project that will be provided by the applicant. The applicant must show a commitment from other grant sources or be willing to commit by resolution that they will cover the funds from other grant sources if those other grants are not awarded.

Applicants must have the legal jurisdiction and authority to finance, operate and maintain the proposed facility and, where applicable, must have the demonstrated financial capacity to repay any debt incurred. In all cases, the applicant assumes complete responsibility for proper financial management of the MCEP funds awarded to it and compliance with all State laws and regulations. Pursuant to Section 2-7-504, MCA, all MCEP recipients must be able to demonstrate that their financial management systems meet generally accepted accounting principles before Commerce will disburse MCEP funds for a local project.

Additionally, if awarded funding, local governments must provide documentation demonstrating that requirements for procurement, insurance and other grant administration requirements have been met.

See sample resolution on next page.



**Resolution No. (add number)****Authorization to Submit MCEP Infrastructure Planning Grant Application**

Whereas, the (name of applicant) is applying to the Montana Department of Commerce for financial assistance from the Montana Coal Endowment Program to (describe purpose of project);

Whereas, the (name of applicant) agrees to comply with all State laws and regulations and the requirements described in the “MCEP Administrative Guidelines and Application for Infrastructure Planning Grants” specifically, and those that will be described in the “MCEP Project Administration Manual” generally;

Whereas the (name of applicant) commits to provide the amount of matching funds as proposed in the MCEP application;

Whereas the (name of applicant) commits to provide any funding from other grant sources listed in the application budget if not awarded by those grant sources; and

That (name of chief elected official or chief executive officer), (title), is authorized to submit this application to the Montana Department of Commerce, on behalf of (name of applicant), to act on its behalf and to provide such additional information as may be required.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Attested: \_\_\_\_\_