

**Economic Transformation and Stabilization and Workforce Development Advisory Commission
Public Comments**

Number	Opened by	Created	Short Description	Description
CS0002174	Bryan Warwood	08-02-2021 07:24:58 AM	ARPA Comment - Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce Development - Bryan Warwood	Created from: ARPA Public Comments - Child care is a fiscal challenge for many in our work force. Even if daycares have reopened with limited staffing capabilities after COVID, the cost of daycare has now pushed many Montanans out of the work force. A good use of the ARPA funds would be to help families with the cost of day care, and to help daycare providers pay and maintain qualified employees. These efforts will help get Montanans back into the workforce .
CS0002446	James Thaden	08-06-2021 11:42:59 AM	ARPA Comment - Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce Development - James Thaden	Created from: ARPA Public Comments - Dear Commission Members: Along with Montana’s network of CRDC’s and many members of MEDA, I am writing to express strong support for the proposed \$40 million investment into an ARPA funded Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) program to be administered by the Montana Department of Commerce. Our organization, Lake County Community Development corporation (dba Mission West Community Development Partners), are ardent supporters of this proposal. For the past 25 years our organization has supported community based economic development in Lake, Mineral and Sanders Counties. We are a Montana CRDC with RLFs funded through the U.S. Treasury CDFI program, the USDA IRP Program and the U.S. Department of Commerce (EDA). We currently have \$4,004,783 of loans outstanding to over 75 small businesses in the region we serve. The small business loans and technical support we provide are vital to the local economy of our 3-county region. Nearly 20 years ago our very successful, local revolving loan program was originally capitalized by the Montana CDBG program. Without this bold support from the State of Montana, our fledging organization would not have been able to gain the traction needed to eventually leverage Montana’s seminal RLF investment into our much larger portfolio of state and federally supported RLF loans and grants. We believe a Montana Department of Commerce-administered RLF program will quickly, efficiently and fairly deploy ARPA funding through a rapid response that takes full

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advantage of the experience and expertise of the network of locally implemented RLFs that are currently working throughout Montana. By utilizing the already-established RLF network in Montana, we are confident you will accomplish the intended use of ARPA funding to quickly deploy the funds, while at the same time maximizing the impact of the ARPA investment by funding existing programs which multiply the impact of this generous investment over time. As the history of our organization clearly demonstrates, State funded RLF programs do indeed compound exponentially over time. The benefit to the citizens of Montana derived from an RLF program is literally perpetual. Few, if any, other forms of State funded community economic investment can make this claim.

Thank you for considering this generational investment in a revolving loan fund program for Montana.

This program has enormous potential to accelerate our region’s economic recovery from the devastating impact of Covid 19. We strongly support the proposal and anxiously look forward to participating.

Jim Thaden
Executive Director
Mission West Community Development Partners
407 Main Street
Ronan, MT 59864
(406) 676-5904

www.missionwestcdp.org

CS0002317	Julie Foster	08-04-2021 05:18:01 PM	ARPA Comment - Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce Development - Julie Foster	Created from: ARPA Public Comments - Dear Commission Members: I am writing to request your strong support for a proposal by the Administration to use ARPA funds to develop a robust revolving loan fund (RLF) program to be administered by the Montana Department of Commerce. An RLF program will be an excellent use of funds these funds as Montana continues to work to create a stronger, more resilient and diverse
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economy as we emerge from the pandemic.

Businesses are not yet seeing a return to normal. The post-pandemic time has brought a different set of extreme challenges to businesses in Montana; a lack of work force, no housing available even if a person can pay the much higher cost, and a lack of supplies. Businesses are cutting hours in match the workforce that they are able to get. New processes for doing business are now necessary for the post-COVID economy. Cash that was planned for investment to capture opportunity has been spent reacting to COVID-19 and now reacting to post-COVID. Most businesses need access to readily available gap funding, which will reduce the risk to their main lenders, the banks. RLF's cannot solve all of these problems, but can reduce the impacts through our services, and we can help business weather this storm too. Businesses need to rebuild cash reserves, re-establish their ability to borrow (without government assistance), and return to their dependable revenue trends, i.e. steady state.

A Commerce-administered RLF program should be designed that will put to full use the many RLF's that are in local communities throughout the state. The state has invested in training, software, and seed funding for most of these RLF's over a long period of time. Because of the state's long-term investment in our RLF's we are ready to accept funds, and we have long standing processes in place to be responsible underwriters, to track the funds, and to ensure the most effective and highest return on investment for the business, the state, and the taxpayers. The local RLF's assist businesses with loan applications, and leveraging funds to their fullest, and we have an excellent record of success. Additionally, many of the RLF organizations provide businesses with planning help and many types of technical assistance. We have years long relationships with lenders in the community, with the business owners, and other partners.

For years' local economic development organizations, and regional organizations have operated RLF programs in every corner of Montana. A \$40 million investment into this ARPA RLF program will significantly add to our state's ability to stabilize its economy and provide the right financing to businesses that will, in turn, retain and create jobs, expand our tax base, and enable the entrepreneurs of Montana access to the capital and other resources necessary to emerge strong.

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RLF funds are currently available in most of our communities. Investment in a RLF program with ARPA funds will help ensure that both urban and rural Montana will benefit. An example of this is Ravalli County Economic Development’s RLF program that has loaned more than \$4 million in 34 loans to businesses of many kinds. During the great recession we made a loan to a local manufacturer that could not get financing anywhere else. That manufacturer lived to see another day and now employees more than forty people and is the fourth largest in the nation, in their industry. But for our RLF, this business would no longer exist.

RLF’s by their nature continue to provide economic benefit for years to come. When the state and the federal government need assistance getting their programs out to the businesses that will use them, the agencies turn to the local development organizations. Please, wisely use the resource partners that the state had cultivated and turns to all the time.

Thank you for considering this investment in a revolving loan fund program for Montana, now and for our future.

Sincerely
Julie Foster
Ravalli County Economic Development Authority
(406) 375-9416

CS0002280	Paul Tuss	08-04-2021 10:50:22 AM	ARPA Comment - Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce Development - Paul Tuss	Created from: ARPA Public Comments - Dear Commission Members: I am writing to urge your strong support for a proposal by the Administration to use ARPA funds to develop a robust revolving loan fund (RLF) program to be administered by the Montana Department of Commerce. An RLF program is an outstanding use of these funds as Montana works to create a stronger, more diverse economy as we emerge from the economic stagnation caused by the global pandemic.
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A Commerce-administered RLF program should be designed to take full advantage of the many RLFs that are currently working throughout Montana to help businesses start-up or expand. For decades, non-profit regional and local economic development organizations have operated RLF programs in every corner of Montana and have been key in helping grow our state’s economy and keeping our Main Streets vibrant.

A proposed \$40 million investment into this RLF program will significantly add to our state’s ability to provide financing to businesses that will, in turn, create jobs, expand our tax base and assure that Montana’s entrepreneurial community has the resources it needs to flourish. By utilizing already-established RLF administrators in Montana to invest in solid job-creating projects, you are smartly using existing resources to maximize the impact of this investment, minimizing administrative burden on the State of Montana and assuring quality underwriting standards.

A significant investment in an RLF program with ARPA funds also assures that both urban and rural Montana will benefit, as existing RLF funds are currently utilized in every corner of our state in communities of every size. An example of this is Bear Paw Development’s own RLF program, which currently has more than \$6 million invested in approximately 70 businesses of every type in communities spread throughout our rural area of northern Montana.

Additionally, funding for this RLF program will continue to positively impact our economy for decades to come, as the very nature of revolving loan funds is that they continue to be re-lent to new business ventures as loans are repaid, thus creating a perpetual source of funding for business start-ups and expansions in our state.

Thank you for considering this generational investment in a revolving loan fund program for Montana.

CS0002371	Stephen Walter	08-05-2021 01:07:42 PM	ARPA Comment - Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce	Created from: ARPA Public Comments - Dear Commission Members: I am writing to urge your strong support for a proposal by the Administration to use ARPA
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Development - Stephen
Walter

funds to develop a robust revolving loan fund (RLF) program to be administered by the Montana Department of Commerce. An RLF program is an outstanding use of these funds as Montana works to create a stronger, more diverse economy as we emerge from the economic stagnation caused by the global pandemic.

A Commerce-administered RLF program should be designed to take full advantage of the many RLFs that are currently working throughout Montana to help businesses start-up or expand. For decades, non-profit regional and local economic development organizations have operated RLF programs in every corner of Montana and have been key in helping grow our state's economy and keeping our Main Streets vibrant.

A proposed \$40 million investment into this RLF program will significantly add to our state's ability to provide financing to businesses that will, in turn, create jobs, expand our tax base and assure that Montana's entrepreneurial community has the resources it needs to flourish. By utilizing already-established RLF administrators in Montana to invest in solid job-creating projects, you are smartly using existing resources to maximize the impact of this investment, minimizing administrative burden on the State of Montana and assuring quality underwriting standards.

A significant investment in an RLF program with ARPA funds also assures that both urban and rural Montana will benefit, as existing RLF funds are currently utilized in every corner of our state in communities of every size. An example of this is Montana West Economic Development's own RLF program, which currently has more than \$6.5 million invested in approximately 65 businesses in Northwest Montana. It's a great program that has bridged the gap to help new business owners keep it local and also to help increase employment in the Flathead Valley. Montana West has helped over 439 businesses over the last 20 years with our RLF funds. Having a fund that we can continue to use and grow our fund base would be key to helping more people out.

Thank you for considering this generational investment in a revolving loan fund program for Montana.

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CS0002323	Tim Guardipee	08-05-2021 08:12:02 AM	ARPA Comment - Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce Development - Tim Guardipee	<p data-bbox="930 199 1398 224">Created from: ARPA Public Comments -</p> <p data-bbox="930 269 1268 293">Dear Commission Members:</p> <p data-bbox="930 342 2003 509">I am writing to urge your strong support for a proposal by the Administration to use ARPA funds to develop a robust revolving loan fund (RLF) program to be administered by the Montana Department of Commerce. An RLF program is an outstanding use of these funds as Montana works to create a stronger, more diverse economy as we emerge from the economic stagnation caused by the global pandemic.</p> <p data-bbox="930 557 2026 724">A Commerce-administered RLF program should be designed to take full advantage of the many RLFs that are currently working throughout Montana to help businesses start-up or expand. For decades, non-profit regional and local economic development organizations have operated RLF programs in every corner of Montana and have been key in helping grow our state's economy and keeping our Main Streets vibrant.</p> <p data-bbox="930 771 2026 1008">A proposed \$40 million investment into this RLF program will significantly add to our state's ability to provide financing to businesses that will, in turn, create jobs, expand our tax base and assure that Montana's entrepreneurial community has the resources it needs to flourish. By utilizing already-established RLF administrators in Montana to invest in solid job-creating projects, you are smartly using existing resources to maximize the impact of this investment, minimizing administrative burden on the State of Montana and assuring quality underwriting standards.</p> <p data-bbox="930 1055 2026 1256">A significant investment in an RLF program with ARPA funds also assures that both urban and rural Montana will benefit, as existing RLF funds are currently utilized in every corner of our state in communities of every size. An example of this is Bear Paw Development's own RLF program, which currently has more than \$6 million invested in approximately 70 businesses of every type in communities spread throughout our rural area of northern Montana.</p> <p data-bbox="930 1304 2003 1399">Additionally, funding for this RLF program will continue to positively impact our economy for decades to come, as the very nature of revolving loan funds is that they continue to be re-lent to new business ventures as loans are repaid, thus creating a perpetual source of</p>
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funding for business start-ups and expansions in our state.

Thank you for considering this generational investment in a revolving loan fund program for Montana.

CS0002354	Paul Reichert	08-05-2021 11:43:41 AM	ARPA Comment - Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce Development - Paul Reichert
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Created from: ARPA Public Comments -

Dear Commission Members:

I support the idea to use ARPA funds to develop a robust \$40 million revolving loan fund (RLF) program to be administered by the Montana Department of Commerce. An RLF program is an outstanding use of these funds as Montana works to create a stronger, more diverse economy as we continue to navigate the global pandemic.

For decades, non-profit economic development organizations like Prospera have operated RLF programs that have helped dozens of companies secure financing in small towns across Montana. A Commerce-administered RLF program can take full advantage of existing economic development organizations that already have working relationships with businesses to put these funds to work in Montana through local business development efforts.

A proposed \$40 million investment into this RLF program will significantly add to our state’s ability to provide financing to businesses that will, create jobs, expand our tax-base and strengthen Montana’s entrepreneurial community.

A significant investment in an RLF program with ARPA funds also assures that both urban and rural Montana will benefit. In fact, Prospera’s RLF program has supported businesses in nearly every community in our region with RLF business loans in Big Sky, Three Forks, Belgrade, Livingston, Bozeman, Gardiner, Clyde Park, Emigrant, and places in between.

A new ARPA funded RLF program will continue to positively impact our economy for decades to come, as RLF funds are lent to local businesses and the revolved funds “stay local”. RLFs are by design a perpetual source of funding for business start-ups and expansions in Montana.

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Thank you for considering my comments and I hope you will support this generational investment in a revolving loan fund program for Montana.

Paul Reichert, Executive Director
Prospera Business Network

CS0002625	Tina Oliphant	08-06-2021 03:40:26 PM	ARPA Comment - Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce Development - Tina Oliphant
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Created from: ARPA Public Comments -

Dear Commission Members:

This letter is presented to express the strong support for a proposal by the Administration to use ARPA funds to develop a \$40 million revolving loan fund (RLF) program to be administered by the Montana Department of Commerce. As an economic developer in rural Montana (Libby, MT,) access to capital is a scarce resource for our underserved area. I believe a revolving loan fund is a logical use of ARPA funds with the added benefit of continuing into perpetuity. These loans roll over (paid back), thereby generating future generations of value for our economy.

A Commerce-administered RLF program should be designed to take full advantage of the many RLFs that are currently working throughout Montana to help businesses start-up or expand. These local RLFs are well managed to serve the mission of local development organization – they are building of our economies. Strong relationships with our partner banks are in motion to support and disperse these funds for business projects in our communities.

Thank you for considering this generational investment in a revolving loan fund program for Montana.

Tina Oliphant, Executive Director
Lincoln County Port Authority

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CS0002618	Kelcie Bates	08-06-2021 12:51:22 PM	ARPA Comment - Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce Development - Kelcie Bates	<p data-bbox="930 199 1398 224">Created from: ARPA Public Comments -</p> <p data-bbox="930 269 1268 293">Dear Commission Members:</p> <p data-bbox="930 341 2003 509">I am writing to urge your strong support for a proposal by the Administration to use ARPA funds to develop a robust revolving loan fund (RLF) program to be administered by the Montana Department of Commerce. An RLF program is an outstanding use of these funds as Montana works to create a stronger, more diverse economy as we emerge from the economic stagnation caused by the global pandemic.</p> <p data-bbox="930 557 2024 725">A Commerce-administered RLF program should be designed to take full advantage of the many RLFs that are currently working throughout Montana to help businesses start-up or expand. For decades, non-profit regional and local economic development organizations have operated RLF programs in every corner of Montana and have been key in helping grow our state's economy and keeping our Main Streets vibrant.</p> <p data-bbox="930 773 2024 1006">A proposed \$40 million investment into this RLF program will significantly add to our state's ability to provide financing to businesses that will, in turn, create jobs, expand our tax base and assure that Montana's entrepreneurial community has the resources it needs to flourish. By utilizing already-established RLF administrators in Montana to invest in solid job-creating projects, you are smartly using existing resources to maximize the impact of this investment, minimizing administrative burden on the State of Montana, and assuring quality underwriting standards.</p> <p data-bbox="930 1053 2024 1255">A significant investment in an RLF program with ARPA funds also assures that both urban and rural Montana will benefit, as existing RLF funds are currently utilized in every corner of our state in communities of every size. An example of this is Great Northern Development Corporation's own RLF program, which currently has more than \$2.7 million invested in approximately 30 businesses of every type in communities spread throughout our rural area of 6 counties in northeastern Montana.</p> <p data-bbox="930 1302 2003 1401">Additionally, funding for this RLF program will continue to positively impact our economy for decades to come, as the very nature of revolving loan funds is that they continue to be re-lent to new business ventures as loans are repaid, thus creating a perpetual source of</p>
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funding for business start-ups and expansions in our state.

Thank you for considering this generational investment in a revolving loan fund program for Montana.

CS0002279 Karl Johnson 08-04-2021 10:41:15 AM ARPA Comment - Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce Development - Karl Johnson

Created from: ARPA Public Comments -

Hello,

I would like to encourage the Commission to prioritize local food system resiliency when considering how to spend these funds. The pandemic has surely highlighted how our dependence on international markets is risky and that having food security and sovereignty provided by our State's producers is vital.

I also believe that supporting regenerative agricultural practices is important and funding to stimulate this growing segment of our agricultural economy is imperative to being resilient in the future. Our soil health is the key to the long-term success of our Montana Farmers.

Thanks!

CS0002318 Christopher Coburn 08-04-2021 05:41:46 PM ARPA Comment - Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce Development - Christopher Coburn

Created from: ARPA Public Comments -

I'd like to voice my support for the use of ARP funds to incentivize affordable housing development in our communities, and for grants to ag producers working on innovative solutions to bolster local food production and distribution.

Taken together, these investments will work to strengthen the health and wellness of communities across the state - something desperately needed as we continue to navigate this pandemic.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

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CS0002297	Judy Stinchcombe	08-04-2021 12:15:02 PM	ARPA Comment - Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce Development - Judy Stinchcombe	<p>Created from: ARPA Public Comments -</p> <p>Paradise Valley NEED for workforce Housing! As a resident of Paradise Valley, my husband and I wanted to go out for dinner last night, We drove to the first restaurant Emigrant Outpost and it was packed, with 3 workers (one being a bar tender) rushing around trying desperately to serve people, There was a sign at the bar to please have patience with their servers as they were short staffed. We left and drove to the next restaurant Follow Yer Nose BBQ and they were closed - only open now from Thurs-Sun due to staff shortage, We then drove to the third restaurant - Chico Hot Springs, and it was packed, and we were told it would be over an hour for our food due to staff shortage. We then drove to the Forth Restaurant , Pine Creek Lodge, and they were closed, We drove into Livingston, and stood in an hour line for a burger at Marks in and Out, Many restaurants in Livingston are only open a few days a week or closed. We are business owners and residents of Paradise, and we cant get service/food, What must our tourist be thinking and going through, I doubt they will ever be back. We need Workforce Housing in Paradise Valley so bad. Please approve The proposal by Workforce Homes LLC.</p> <p>Thank you Judy Stinchcombe.</p>
CS0002303	Paddy Fleming	08-04-2021 01:22:49 PM	ARPA Comment - Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce Development - Paddy Fleming	<p>Created from: ARPA Public Comments -</p> <p>Provide training grants to individuals who are interested in obtaining a manufacturing job.</p> <p>Grant would be to pay for one year subscription to Tooling U unlimited on-line training.</p> <p>Please see https://www.toolingu.com/catalog</p> <p>Cost is \$950 dollars/year and gives an individual access to over 500 on-line manufacturing training classes that are from beginner to advanced.</p> <p>The Montana Manufacturing Extension Center (MMEC) can provide free guidance and assistance with job hunting to the individual at no additional cost.</p>

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CS0002327	Elisabeth Epley	08-05-2021 09:02:39 AM	ARPA Comment - Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce Development - Elisabeth Epley	<p data-bbox="932 196 1398 224">Created from: ARPA Public Comments -</p> <p data-bbox="932 269 1360 334">Support for Revolving Loan Program Dear Commission Members:</p> <p data-bbox="932 380 2018 545">I am writing to encourage your support for a proposal by the Administration to use ARPA funds to develop a robust revolving loan fund (RLF) program to be administered by the Montana Department of Commerce. An RLF program is an outstanding use of these funds as Montana works to create a stronger, more diverse economy that will benefit Montanans for years to come.</p> <p data-bbox="932 591 2018 831">\$40 million investment into this RLF program will significantly add to our state's ability to provide financing to businesses that will, create jobs, expand our tax base and assure that entrepreneurs have the capital needed to grow their business. By utilizing already-established RLF administrators in Montana to invest in solid job-creating projects, we avoid "reinventing the wheel" and use existing financial infrastructure to maximize the impact of this investment, remove the administrative burden on the State of Montana and keeps government smaller.</p> <p data-bbox="932 876 2018 1042">A Commerce-administered RLF program should be designed utilize as many of the RLFs that are currently working throughout Montana to help businesses start-up or expand. For decades, non-profit regional and local economic development organizations have operated RLF programs in every corner of Montana and have been key in helping grow our state's economy and keeping our Main Streets vibrant.</p> <p data-bbox="932 1088 2018 1185">A significant investment in an RLF program with ARPA funds provides both urban and rural Montana benefit since existing RLF funds are available throughout the state in communities of all sizes.</p> <p data-bbox="932 1230 2018 1365">Because these funds "revolve" and the money stays in the local communities this RLF program will continue to positively impact our economy for decades to come. The revolving loan funds will continue to be re-lent to new business ventures as loans are repaid, thus creating a perpetual source of funding for business start-ups and expansions in our state.</p>
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Thank you for considering this generational investment in a revolving loan fund program for Montana.

Sincerely,
Beth Epley
Executive Director
Eastern Plains Economic Development Corporation

CS0002654 Andrea Davis 08-09-2021
02:30:09 PM ARPA Comment -
Economic
Transformation,
Stabilization &
Workforce
Development - Andrea
Davis

Created from: ARPA Public Comments -

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for the service you’re providing on this subcommittee. I serve as the Executive Director of Homeword. Homeword supports the recommendation put forth by the Montana Department of Commerce to provide gap financing for affordable housing developments impacted by COVID-19. Homeword uses sustainable methods to strengthen Montana communities by teaching homebuyer education and financial skill building and creating safe, healthy homes people can afford. Over the last 27 years we’ve developed 1,319 homes at 32 properties in 13 Montana communities that are home to 2,000 Montanans. We have also provided over 17,500 Montanans with homebuyer and financial education through our homeownership center. COVID-19 exacerbated an already challenging formula for developers like Homeword to produce deed restricted affordable housing properties at the rate they are needed for Montana communities. Everything from supply chain and labor disruptions to lagging verification processes for leasing to qualified renters, developers had to shoulder the burden of increasing costs of construction and project financing.

By nature, these projects operate with incredibly tight margins. We have gotten very creative yet absorbing increased costs from materials, labor and financing threatens the property’s viability over the long term. We stand behind the recommendation of providing this gap financing in the form of grants. Homeword can illustrate in five (5) different project scenarios how we have exhausted alternative cost cutting techniques, increased the amount of debt the projects can viably withstand and invested earned developer fees back into the projects to see them through to completion.

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The Department has thoughtfully proposed how to proceed utilizing the framework from existing housing programs the state currently administers. This proposal gets intended funds to necessary projects and will deliver nearly 1,000 qualify, affordable homes to Montana’s workforce, seniors and persons with disabilities. Montana’s real estate markets are more out of reach today for everyday Montanans than we have ever witnessed before.

We strongly support this funding recommendation. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration!

CS0002109 Jon Clarenbach 07-29-2021 10:26:31 AM ARPA Comment - Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce Development - Jon Clarenbach

Created from: ARPA Public Comments -

There needs to be funding for local agriculture. This is a vital and growing part of Montana's ag economy. We need to build food resiliency locally by supporting Montana's small farmers and ranchers while keeping those dollars in our local economies and achieving a great return on the investment. The pandemic exposed our dependency on an national food system that is broken. We need to instead focus locally and build food resiliency using Montanans not focus on the export markets.

Put the money towards on-farm infrastructure and equipment upgrades such as greenhouses, cold-storage, marketing and promotion, specialized delivery vehicles, retail storefronts, food safety enhancements, and other projects that enable the increased production and distribution of locally marketed foods.

CS0002137 Judy Edwards 07-30-2021 10:51:07 AM ARPA Comment - Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce Development - Judy Edwards

Created from: ARPA Public Comments -

Under the category of Value Added Agriculture, please continue to support the department's 3 tier approach with the Montana Agriculture Resiliency Program, As the USDA just did a Value added grant program focused mainly on marketing, we need to make sure more than marketing is offered through the Montana grants and include ranching infrastructure described in the Resiliency strategies.

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CS0001985	Raymond Porter	07-22-2021 08:49:02 PM	ARPA Comment - Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce Development - Raymond Porter	<p>Give the money directly to county governments, proportional to population, with no restrictions.</p> <p>The longer we spend deciding what to do with the money, the longer we suffer. It is absurd that in the middle of a labor shortage we have paid professionals in government creating oddly complex and hard to follow rules on how to spend relief money. Give it to local government and let local solutions benefit communities.</p>
CS0001999	Wired Wild West	07-23-2021 12:27:04 PM	ARPA Comment - Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce Development - Wired Wild West	<p>I am a Master Electrician who runs his own electrical contracting business. We are short on the trades across the country. I would like to see the Workforce Act pay wages for a new employee who wants to apprentice with a Master in order to receive a Journeyman's license. The apprentice would have to sign on with the State's apprenticeship program so records are kept, but the wages during the time would be paid for by the Act.</p> <p>Jim Rogers, Master Electrician</p>
CS0002000	Wired Wild West	07-23-2021 12:33:31 PM	ARPA Comment - Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce Development - Wired Wild West	<p>I am a Master Electrician who runs his own electrical contracting business. We are short on the trades across the country. I would like to see the Workforce Act pay wages for a new employee who wants to apprentice with a Master in order to receive a Journeyman's license. The apprentice would have to sign on with the State's apprenticeship program so records are kept, but the wages during the time would be paid for by the Act. Thank you for this opportunity to comment on use of funds.</p> <p>Jim Rogers, Master Electrician</p>
CS0001997	Bennett Cawthon	07-23-2021 11:08:33 AM	ARPA Comment - Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce Development - Bennett Cawthon	<p>I would like to voice my support for allocating the funds to the Montana Ag Resiliency Program. This program will enable producers, including myself (Streamline Farms) to expand our current facilities, offering the fastest growing county in Montana with fresh, year-round lettuces as well as high-paying stable jobs in the agricultural community. The use of funds will have an extremely tangible impact for our community and bring with it an immensely positive impact that will reverberate in the community for decades to come.</p>

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CS0002001	madelein owen	07-23-2021 01:22:16 PM	ARPA Comment - Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce Development - madelein owen	<p>I've lived in Montana for over twenty years and during that time I've done a number of jobs and my comment is this: education needs to be considered a vital supplement to, not a replacement for on the job training. Many workers I know have to sacrifice a good education in order to be able to pay the bills.</p> <p>Quality of life here needs a major overhaul. Many folks are suffering from addiction and depression, for which an entire industry has been created. I think that diverting these matters from the legal system in favor of better support and education for employers could resolve this. Improving infrastructure around public transportation and family/medical leave would also be highly effective. I have witnessed many untrained, undereducated workers injure themselves and are unable to take time off for treatment, then fall prey to addiction and the system that profits off of it. This can all be prevented if people have access to better food, housing and healthcare in a dignified manner that allows them self stewardship.</p> <p>Housing should be looked at in terms of ownership rather than providing more affordable rentals. Corporations prey on public housing and communities suffer as a result. Home ownership is a foundation for development of all these issues in addition for us to stimulate agricultural growth in our communities.</p> <p>I think a major key to integrative solutions will be making Montana more tech savvy, working on our internal systems and making sure everyone that wants or needs to can communicate effectively using them. Many Montanans work hard, but not as many work smart. There is a way we can move forward without losing our values as long as we stay open minded and willing to take risks for innovation. We face challenges other areas of the country do not, and as a result we must be willing to try different ways of creating solutions.</p>
CS0001980	Ray Brown	07-22-2021 03:41:28 PM	ARPA Comment - Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce Development - Ray Brown	<p>Please allow some local flexibility with the creation of economic development programs. There's a myth generated by some urban economic developers that rural and urban development can be addressed in the same silo. This is incorrect on so many levels. While our problems are similar by definition (workforce development, workforce housing) the primary causes of and solutions to these problems will be nowhere near the same. In Sanders County, our available workforce is hovering at around 300 individuals. 38% of my population is 65 years or older. 13% are veterans, second only to Lincoln County. Our</p>

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				workforce development problem is not the same as Billings or Bozeman. Our programs will need to be narrowly focused but should have a significant impact if we are given the freedom to create our own solutions.
CS0002053	Gary Matson	07-27-2021 10:33:03 AM	ARPA Comment - Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce Development - Gary Matson	Re: August 12 meeting of The Economic Transformation and Stabilization and Workforce Development Advisory Commission, meeting, Allocation of funds. Worker shortage: Provide local governments with funding to survey businesses and identify whether causes are wage scale, training, or other and collaborate with these businesses in identifying solutions. Housing shortage: Provide incentives to contractors/developers for constructing "affordable" housing through appropriate design and lot sizes and through efficient construction. Childcare shortage: a) Enable specialized childcare training in state colleges and universities; b) Subsidize childcare costs for families with earnings so low that childcare is unaffordable.
CS0001990	Don Woods	07-23-2021 09:59:09 AM	ARPA Comment - Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce Development - Don Woods	We are based in Charlo in the Mission Valley. We are finding success in manufacturing pole mounts for solar panels, but we face a shortage of workers. Probably our biggest hindrance is available affordable housing. Even finding a Montanan to move to our area is very difficult due to this problem. The Montana Manufacturing Extension Center has great programs, but we are limited by the housing market. We are rural, about an hour north of Missoula and an hour and a half south of Kalispell. Please don't forget about us in these smaller communities.
CS0002006	Jonathan Slyker	07-23-2021 11:09:24 PM	ARPA Comment - Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce Development - Jonathan Slyker	Weigh the benefits and risks of converting coal power plants to run on SMRs. Retrofitting them could be a way to add new jobs and industry as well as making them run on a source of clean, "green" energy. So long as it's done right. We need to look to the future and stop this fossil fuel nonsense that's obviously bad for our state and the world. It's a finite resource. Why wait for the inevitable? Be on the forefront of innovation instead of fighting against the tide constantly. Change can be a good thing. It's the one constant in life. I know my area code is from Massachusetts, but I've lived here for 6 years. No matter where I live, I just want people to be better off and to improve the world in which we reside. Thanks.

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CS0001988	Tom Britz	07-23-2021 09:31:05 AM	ARPA Comment - Economic Transformation, Stabilization & Workforce Development - Tom Britz	<p>Without question, the #1 issue is Affordable Housing, particularly in the fast-growing counties such as Gallatin and Flathead. I am in Whitefish, and there are (truly) thousands of individuals who would love to move here, live and work here, but the cost (and availability/rental inventory, which has remained at less than 1% vacancy), is a massive barrier. The #2 issue is child care and the Kalispell Chamber has done a good job presenting the facts at community events. But somebody has to do something about it...and the two are related....Affordable Housing and Child Care. Too many Mom's are out of the work force. #3, I am glad to see an allocation for Value-added Agriculture Infrastructure, but I want to make sure that the restrictions/requirements are not just that as a grower/farmer. Example, we used to grow a crop here in Montana (hops...we were the first commercial hop grower in the state, back in 2013). We no longer grow hops, but rather, we offer global marketing and distribution for other growers. We have been contemplating bringing in a laboratory for on-site analysis (rather than outsourcing the specific application out-of-state), and costs are a barrier. We are also looking at adding very specific CO2 super-critical extraction capacity here in-state, but again installation and startup operating costs knock this down on the priority list. I mention those specifically because they are real, we have studied it, they would employ technically skilled Montanans, and while it is value-added for Agriculture (analysis and processing), the difference is that we are not the grower/producer. Just make sure when you do your criteria, that you do not limit it to growers/producers of the agricultural commodity. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.</p>
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