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Governor Bullock Announces Additional Coronavirus Relief Funds for Meat Processing, Nonprofits

MONTANA – Governor Steve Bullock today announced additional funding from the Coronavirus Relief Fund will be directed to the Montana Meat Processing Infrastructure Grant and Social Services Nonprofit Grant programs to fully address identified needs.

“The impacts of the coronavirus pandemic have drawn attention to challenges faced by our nation’s meat processing systems. And by addressing this complex issue here in Montana, we are building resilience to future supply chain interruptions in communities across the state,” Governor Bullock said. **“In-state meat processing facilities are critical for producers. Ensuring the proper infrastructure exists to provide them with reliable, value-added markets to sell their meat is essential to bolstering our food security, especially during these times.”**

Governor Bullock announced additional funds will be committed to the Montana Meat Processing Infrastructure Grant Program. The impacts of the pandemic have created challenges for meat processing systems across the country and supporting processing in Montana will help protect producers and consumers from future supply chain interruptions in communities across the state. Many processors have used the grants to invest in new equipment to increase their processing capacity and scale up their operations to meet an increased demand for local foods from Montanans who may have traditionally only bought their meat from grocery stores. This decreases the number of livestock shipped out of state for processing and puts more money directly into the pockets of Montana producers.

When the program originally accepted applications, it received an incredible amount of interest, and there was more demand than anticipated. Governor Bullock initially committed \$2 million to the program and added funding to the program to award \$7.5 million in grants. The Montana Department of Agriculture will review existing applications that have not yet been funded to determine additional awards through the program.

Governor Bullock also announced he is committing an additional \$25 million to nonprofits and issued new guidelines for nonprofits to seek another round of funding. Larger nonprofits have communicated that the first round provided stabilization but identified additional need to continue programming and services continue over the long term.

Eligible nonprofits can now receive up to 10 percent of their 2019 annual operating budget, or a maximum grant of \$150,000. Nonprofits must have an annual operating budget of at least \$20,000 to apply and submit a budget of proposed uses of grant funds and certify that funds will be used only for pandemic-related purposes. As many grantees did with the business stabilization grant, nonprofits may request less than what they qualify for.

The application will be available on September 15. Those who received a first round of funding will be contacted and invited to submit additional materials to be considered for the second round. New applicants will apply at covidrelief.mt.gov.

Over \$1 billion of \$1.25 billion in Coronavirus Relief Funds have been committed with over \$407 million of that awarded, including in grants to support nearly 12,000 Montana businesses and organizations. There are new applications being reviewed for accuracy and compliance in accordance with federal guidelines daily and additional funds are awarded daily. A transparency dashboard is available to provide information on which businesses dollars are going to, in every community of the state, at: <https://commerce.mt.gov/Montana-Coronavirus-Relief/Awarded-Grants>.