



Montana

Office of Public Instruction

**Leveraging ESSER Funds - Virtual Conference
Broadband Improvement Project**

Prepare, Prevent, and Respond

August 9, 2022



Goals For This Session

- Understand broadband challenges facing Montana
- Understand ESSER and other funding solutions
- OPI System of Support
 - Survey current setting to provide transitioning support
 - Assist districts in securing feasible solutions
 - Operationally, Technically, and Financially feasible

Presenter: **Victoria Hoefler**, Broadband Project Management Specialist

What is Broadband?

- An “always on” internet connection that transmits data
 - Provides high-speed access with multiple technologies
 - Fiber, Cable, DSL, Satellite, Wireless (Wi-Fi)
 - 25 megabits per second (Mbps) minimum download speed
 - 3 megabits per second minimum upload speed
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- FCC Online: <https://www.fcc.gov/general/types-broadband-connections>
 - Tech Guide: <https://www.techguide.com.au/news/10-things-affecting-internet-speed>





Why is Broadband important?

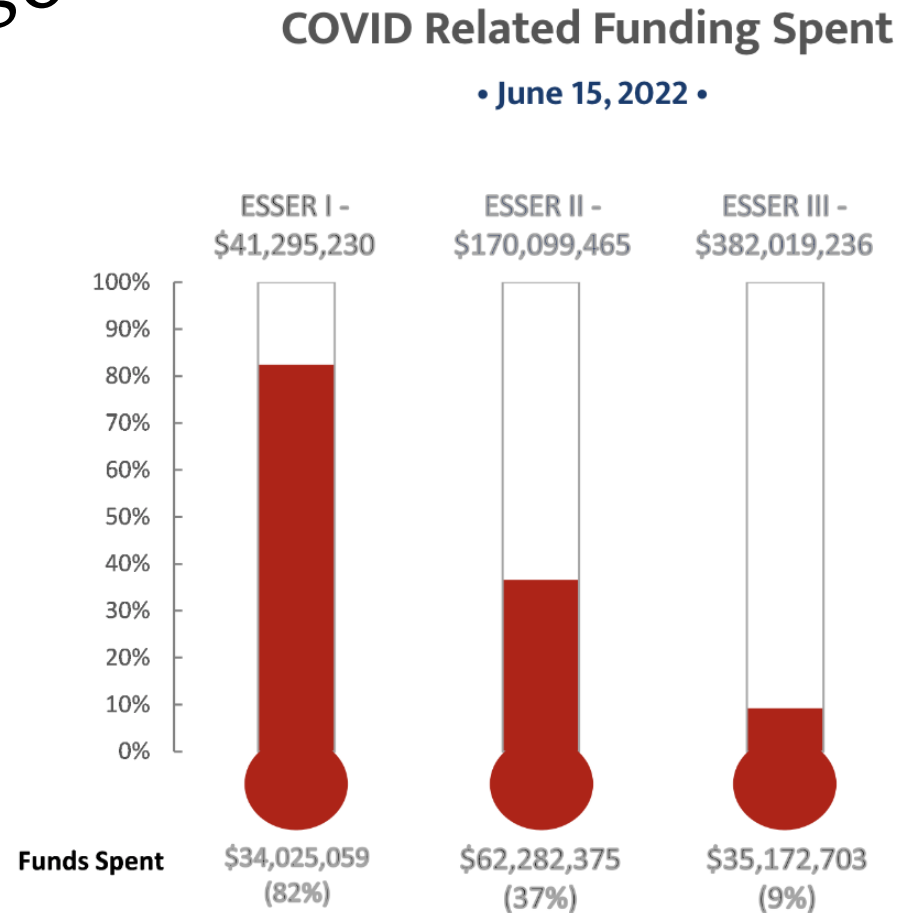
Montana Internet facts in 2022

- Montana has 135 internet service providers
 - nationally 2,500+
- Montana **ranks 46th** regarding Internet coverage, speed, availability
- Montana **ranked last regarding 1G access** (only 5.8% had access)
- **9 in 10 residents** can not purchase broadband at \$60 per month
- **8 in 10 residents** can not purchase fiber internet
- **During COVID schools were challenged to provide remote instruction**



ESSER Funds for Broadband projects

- ESSER I (CARES) allocation 2 years ago
 - 82% has been spent
 - Expires on September 30, 2022
 - No carry over
- ESSER II (CRRSA)
 - 37% has been spent, expires 2023
- ESSER III (ARP)
 - 9% has been spent, expires 2024
- Other funds for Broadband



Technology and Impacting Factors

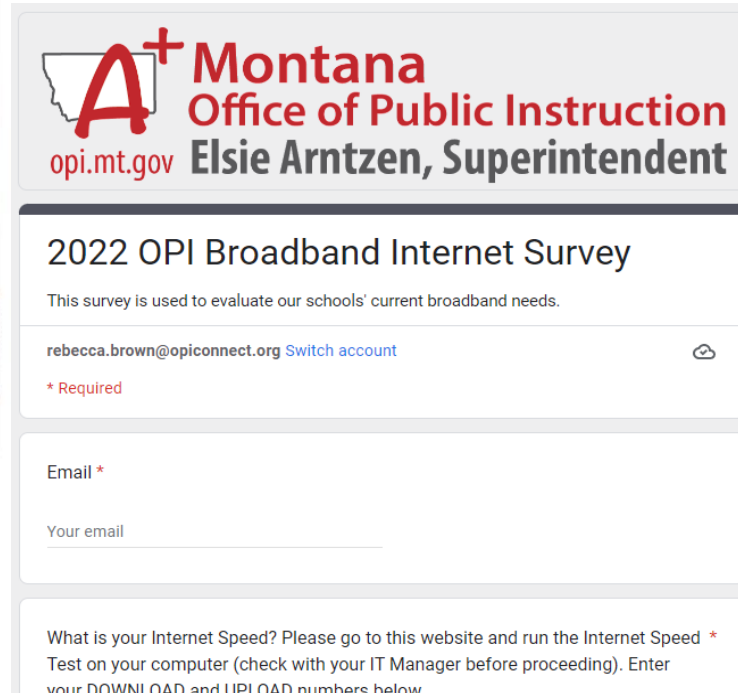
- Fiber, Cable, DSL, Satellite, Wireless (Wi-Fi)
- Availability, Reliability, Cost, Speed
- Hardware, Operating System, Server, Network Traffic, Router/Modem Location, Web Browser Software
- Malware/Viruses



Broadband Survey



Please send in your email responses to the 2022 OPI Broadband Survey found in the ESSER Compass or [HERE](#).

A screenshot of a web form titled '2022 OPI Broadband Internet Survey'. At the top is the Montana OPI logo and the text 'Montana Office of Public Instruction Elsie Arntzen, Superintendent'. Below the title is a description: 'This survey is used to evaluate our schools' current broadband needs.' The form includes a login field for 'rebecca.brown@opiconnect.org' with a 'Switch account' link. A red asterisk indicates a required field. Below is an 'Email *' field with the placeholder text 'Your email'. At the bottom, there is a question: 'What is your Internet Speed? Please go to this website and run the Internet Speed * Test on your computer (check with your IT Manager before proceeding). Enter your DOWNLOAD and UPLOAD numbers below.'

Wrap-Up & Questions

- Where do we want broadband to be in 2 years?
- What challenges have you encountered (past or present) with your internet or technology set up?
- Do you have a dedicated I.T. person in your location who can help with technical issues?





Resources at OPI.MT.GOV

Montana Office of Public Instruction



Welcome to the Office of Public Instruction

Superintendent Elsie Arntzen is proud to serve our Montana families, students, and teachers. **Families are the foundation of learning as our parents are our first teachers.** Our students are our most precious resource and the future of this great state. As a teacher of 23 years, the Superintendent knows the importance of quality educators in the classroom and is working to ensure Montana teachers have the flexibility needed to put our Montana students first.

The Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) is charged with the responsibility of providing technical assistance in:

- School Finance
- School Law
- Teacher Certification and Licensing
- School Accreditation
- Teaching and Learning Standards

The OPI staff administer a number of federally funded programs and provide a variety of information services, including the information systems necessary to assess student achievement and the quality of Montana's elementary and secondary school systems.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

MEET EXECUTIVE STAFF

OPI ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

SEE OPI PRESS RELEASES

ESSER



[Wendi Fawns](#)
ESSER/EANS Director

Wendi's grandmothers were elementary teachers and her parents' college professors. They shaped Wendi's passion for learning anywhere, anytime and in varied formats. Wendi has taught dyslexic readers in elementary schools and provided college/career program support to schools and families across Montana. Her career in social work, information technology, and education have centered around helping customers identify goals and gain the resources necessary to succeed. She holds a BA in Sociology with MIS focus and a MA in Education Leadership. She is a strong customer advocate, member of Rotary and P.E.O. International, and mother of a Montana high school teacher and Arizona college advisor.

406-437-8595



[Rebecca Brown](#)
ESSER Program Manager

Rebecca Brown is joining us from the Bozeman School District where she worked as an ICTE instructor, teaching Metals, Woods, and Auto shop classes. Rebecca holds a BS in Technology Education from Montana State University, Bozeman. She has just recently moved to Helena with her husband, cats, and parakeet. Born and raised in Montana, Rebecca feels nothing can beat a gorgeous Montana summer weekend spent camping and floating on the river.

406-444-0783



[Victoria Hoefler](#)
Broadband Data Specialist

Victoria Hoefler relocated to Montana from the Atlanta, Georgia area. Victoria's previous roles in Corporate America include IT Support, Project Management, B2B Client Support, Software Training and Copywriting. In her secondary job, Victoria serves as the Founder and President of a 501(c)(3) Charity bringing awareness to mental health needs of Military Veterans and better quality of life for Military Families. She is looking forward to identifying effective ways to improve broadband internet data in the school throughout Montana.

406-438-3601

Thank you!

For questions or additional information please contact:

ESSER Program Questions

Wendi Fawns at wendi.fawns@mt.gov or 406-437-8595

Rebecca Brown at rebecca.brown@mt.gov or 406-444-0783

Montana Broadband Questions

Victoria Hoefler at victoria.hoefler@mt.gov or 406-438-3601