

# State of Montana's Entrepreneurship Ecosystem

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Entrepreneurs span across the state of Montana, but access to resources and community are fragmented, and isolated in urban centers. The geographic size of Montana, combined with the rural nature of much of the state, creates unique challenges for entrepreneurs in accessing the resources they need to succeed.

## Understanding Montana

Montana offers a unique entrepreneurial landscape, with a mix of urban hubs and rural communities. Bozeman serves as the primary hub for entrepreneurship in Montana, with a concentration of resources, funding, and community support. As we leave Bozeman, there is a significant drop-off in resources and support in other urban centers, and that drop-off becomes even more pronounced for rural communities, where access is often limited or non-existent.

Most rural communities have a single regional economic development corporation (EDC) that serves as the primary resource for entrepreneurs.

## Statewide Resource Averages (Scale 1-5)

Category	Statewide Avg	Urban Avg	Rural Avg
Economic Development	3.1	4.1	2.1
Accelerators	1.8	2.6	1.1
Incubators	1.4	1.9	1.0
Events	1.5	2.1	1.0
Education	1.9	2.7	1.3
Funding	1.9	2.9	1.1

## Population Access to Entrepreneurial Resources

<b>7.74%</b>	<b>25.03%</b>	<b>21.38%</b>	<b>45.85%</b>
Good Access	Moderate Access	Poor Access	Untracked
Bozeman only 57,894 direct 30,087 via spoke	Urban hubs 230,983 direct 53,675 via spoke	Rural hubs 177,870 direct 65,266 via spoke	521,458 residents not tracked in hub model

### Good Access Bozeman

Bozeman is the only hub in the state considered to have good entrepreneurial resources, giving direct access to 57,894 residents. The quality of resources is spurred by the presence of MSU, which provides a strong talent pipeline, research partnerships, and a culture of entrepreneurship.

### Moderate Access Patchwork Communities

Most of Montana's urban hubs (populations greater than 30,000) have a moderate offering of resources. They tend to have a few strong resources, but lack the depth and breadth needed to support a thriving ecosystem. Most resources are centered around a higher education institution or an economic development organization.

### Poor Access Rural Hubs

All rural hubs (populations less than 30,000) have poor access to entrepreneurial resources. These hubs tend to have a single EDC as the primary resource for the entire region. The greater distances spoke communities must travel increases the necessity for quality hybrid or remote resources.

## Hub Breakdown

Each hub is scored across six categories on a scale of 1-5. A score of 5 reflects the strongest offerings in the state; a score of 1 reflects no resources in that category.

Hub	Pop.	Econ Dev	Accel.	Incub.	Educ.	Events	Fund.	Score	Grade
Bozeman	57,894	5	5	5	4	4	5	4.7	A
Missoula	78,204	4	4	3	2	3	3	3.2	C
Kalispell	31,296	3	3	1	3	3	3	2.7	C
Billings	121,483	5	2	1	1	3	3	2.5	C
Helena	34,729	4	1	1	3	2	2	2.2	D
Great Falls	60,013	4	2	1	1	2	2	2.0	D
Butte	35,480	4	1	1	1	2	2	1.8	D
Havre	9,204	3	1	1	1	2	2	1.7	D
Lewistown	6,204	2	2	1	1	1	1	1.3	F
Dillon	4,242	2	1	1	1	2	1	1.3	F
Miles City	8,407	2	1	1	1	1	1	1.2	F
Glasgow	3,169	2	1	1	1	1	1	1.2	F
Glendive	4,760	2	1	1	1	1	1	1.2	F
Sidney	6,031	2	1	1	1	1	1	1.2	F
Polson	5,631	2	1	1	1	1	1	1.2	F

## Methodology

This report is based on data collected by the Montana Foundry team, and is intended to be a snapshot of the current state of Montana's entrepreneurial ecosystem, not a comprehensive directory of every resource in the state.

**Data Collection and Scoring:** We identified 15 regional hub cities across Montana based on population size, economic activity, and local input. For each hub, we collected data on entrepreneurial resources across six categories: economic development organizations, accelerators, incubators, entrepreneur events, access to education, and access to funding. Each hub was scored on a scale of 1-5 based on the quantity and quality of resources available.

**Population Data:** Data was retrieved from the Montana Department of Commerce population dashboard, which contains data from the U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates Program.