

# DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY PLAN SUMMARY

## VISION

To guide the State of Utah in facilitating increased availability, accessibility, and affordability of high-speed internet for the benefit of all Utahns.

## GOALS & OBJECTIVES

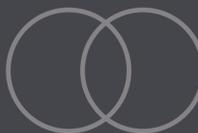
- 1 Expand broadband to unserved and underserved areas throughout the state.
- 2 Identify and mitigate obstacles and barriers preventing broadband expansion.
- 3 Support internet service providers (ISPs) in navigating federal funding requirements.
- 4 Maximize funding to provide the most value to unserved and underserved communities.
- 5 Encourage expansion of broadband to community anchor institutions.
- 6 Strengthen Utah's economy for new and existing business opportunities.

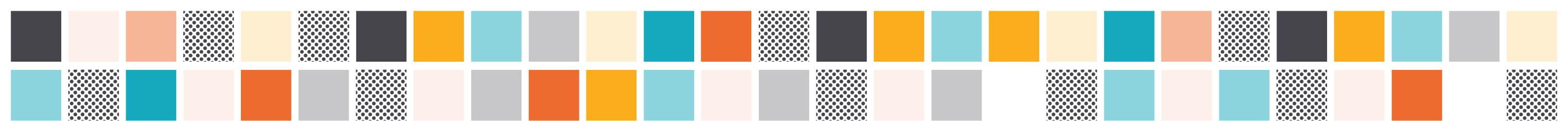
**The Utah Digital Connectivity Plan** serves to meet the requirements of the BEAD Program and also outlines goals and priorities to provide a framework for statewide broadband expansion.



To view the full plan scan the QR code or visit [connectingutah.com/digital-connectivity-plan](https://connectingutah.com/digital-connectivity-plan)

## KEY STRATEGIES

- |  |  |
|--|--|
|  <p>Establish priorities for statewide broadband grant program utilizing Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program funds, while verifying/challenging the existing availability coverage maps</p> |  <p>Create workforce recommendations for subgrantees to adopt as part of BEAD funding</p>   |
|  <p>Prioritize deployment of fiber optics everywhere where costs are feasible and utilize wireless technologies in other areas where locations are more dispersed or challenging</p>                            |  <p>Work with ISPs to implement cybersecurity measures</p>  |
|  <p>Prioritize the establishment of public/private partnerships through sharing of resources</p>   |  <p>Develop BEAD-specific checklists and guidelines to distribute to all applicants</p>  |
|  <p>Ensure no overlaps of funding programs are awarded to the same areas</p>  |  <p>Analyze the threshold for ISPs to recoup construction costs and set a variable threshold for high-cost and extremely high-cost areas, based on location density</p> |
|  <p>Work with the Department of Transportation and ISPs to close middle mile gaps through program funds or sharing of infrastructure</p>  |  <p>Codify state coverage of non-E-rate for anchor institutions</p>   |
|  <p>Coordinate closely with ISP leaders, organizations, and companies on deployment challenges</p>  |  <p>Work with state and local agencies and chambers of commerce to disseminate program specifics</p>  |
|  <p>Collaborate with federal, state, and local agencies; Tribal Nations; and other entities regarding permitting challenges and create a recommendations and benefits guide</p>                               |  <p>Develop programs promoting digital literacy and device availability</p>   |



# ASSET INVENTORY

## BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT

Utah Department of  
Transportation (UDOT)



Approximately

**3,000  
miles**

of middle mile  
fiber optic  
infrastructure  
along state-  
owned highways

Utah Education and  
Telehealth Network  
(UETN)



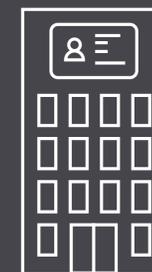
Connecting

**1,900+**

locations including schools,  
libraries, health care facilities,  
museums and zoos

Utah Department of  
Technology Services (DTS)

Connecting state-owned institutions



Municipal open-access  
broadband networks

**20+**



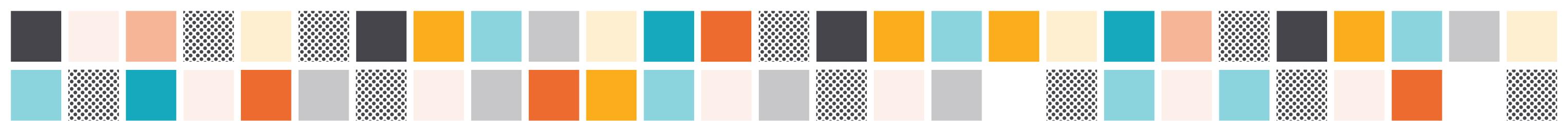
municipalities offering open access  
fiber broadband networks

Internet service  
providers (ISPs)

**47**

fixed broadband providers





# ASSET INVENTORY

## BROADBAND ADOPTION

# 95.6%

of Utah households have access to broadband internet (speeds of 25/3 Mbps+)



### Programs to promote broadband awareness, literacy and education:

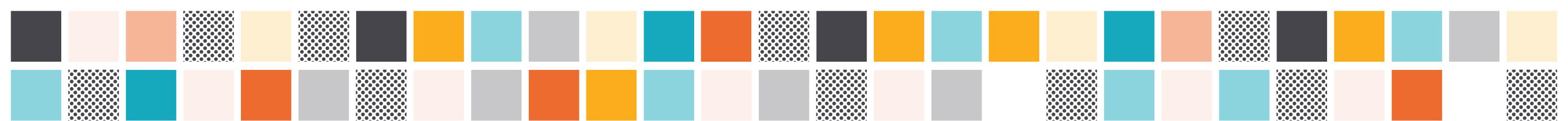
- 1:1 devices for K-12 students
- Public computer labs
- Advertisements/awareness campaigns for affordability programs
- Digital skills training classes



*Are you aware of any broadband or digital access projects, plans, or initiatives underway?*

*Let us know in the Asset Inventory section of the feedback form!* →





# ASSET INVENTORY

## BROADBAND AFFORDABILITY

### Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

Discount up to

**\$30/month**  
**(\$75 for Tribal households)**



on home internet plan and one-time \$100 towards a device.

### Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Lifeline Program

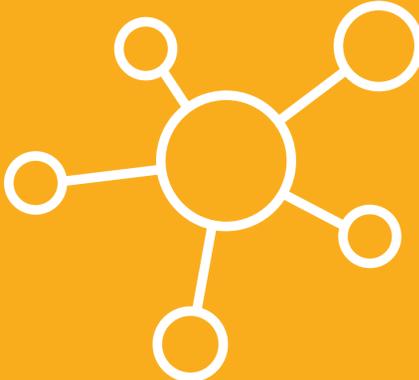


**\$9.25/month**

discount on telephone service, broadband internet service, or bundled voice-broadband packages. Utah provides an additional **\$3.25 per month**.

### Utah Universal Service Fund (UUSF)

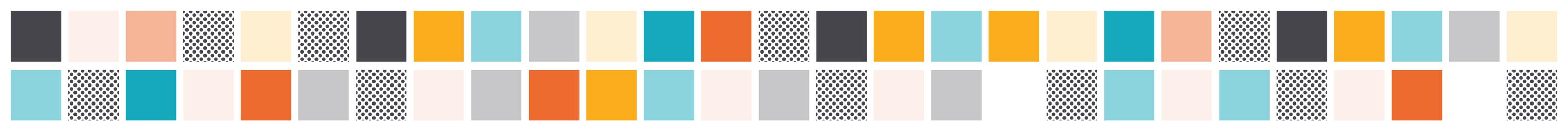
Supports programs that advance and maintain telecommunication networks and services in rural areas.



### E-Rate (Schools and Libraries Universal Service Support Program)

Helps schools and libraries obtain discounted broadband.





# ASSET INVENTORY

## BROADBAND ACCESS

### Public Wi-Fi networks

**62**

libraries

**48**

schools



**8**

UDOT locations

**2**

parks

**1**

post office

### Library Wi-Fi and hotspot loan programs

All state, county, and city libraries offer free Wi-Fi connectivity.

Approximately

**75%**

of libraries have free hotspot devices available for check-out.



### Transit Wi-Fi

UTA buses and trains  
K-12 student school buses



### Mobile wireless access

Provides strong coverage areas across the state



*Are you aware of any broadband or digital access projects, plans, or initiatives underway?*

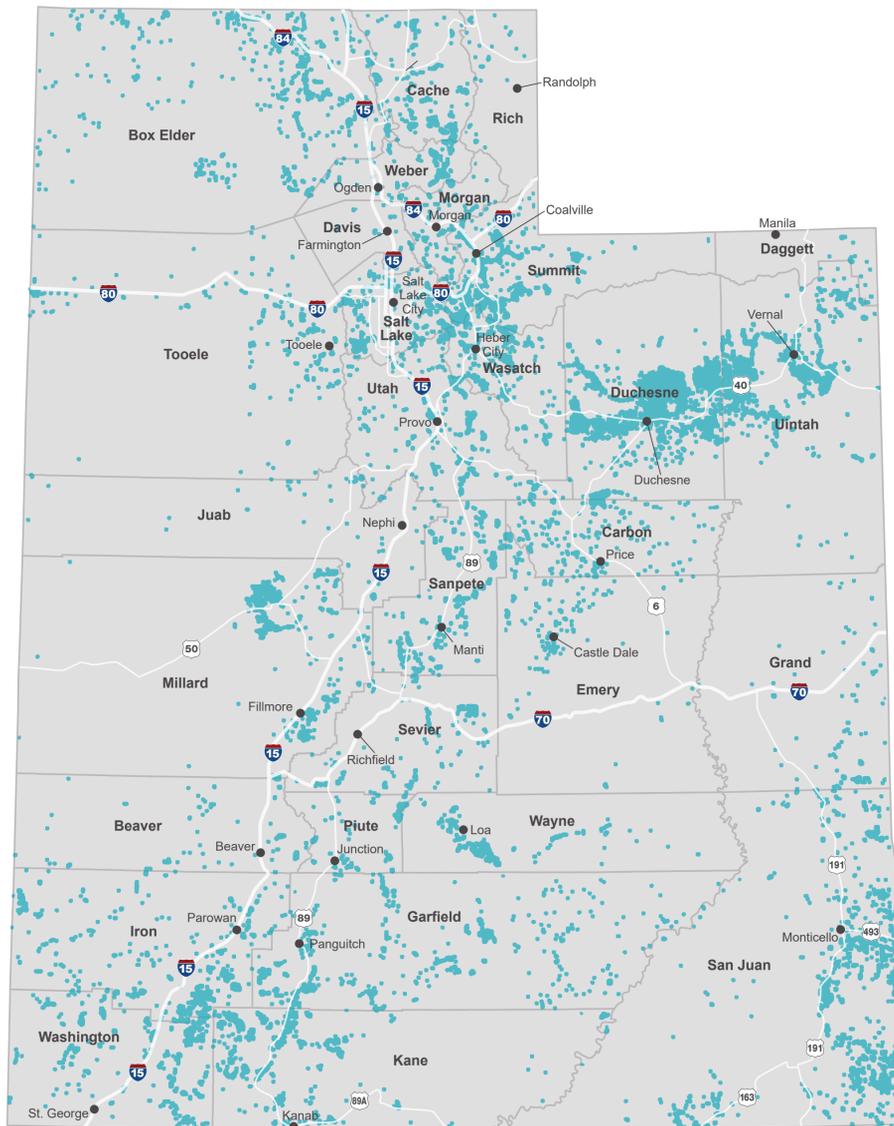
*Let us know in the Asset Inventory section of the feedback form!*



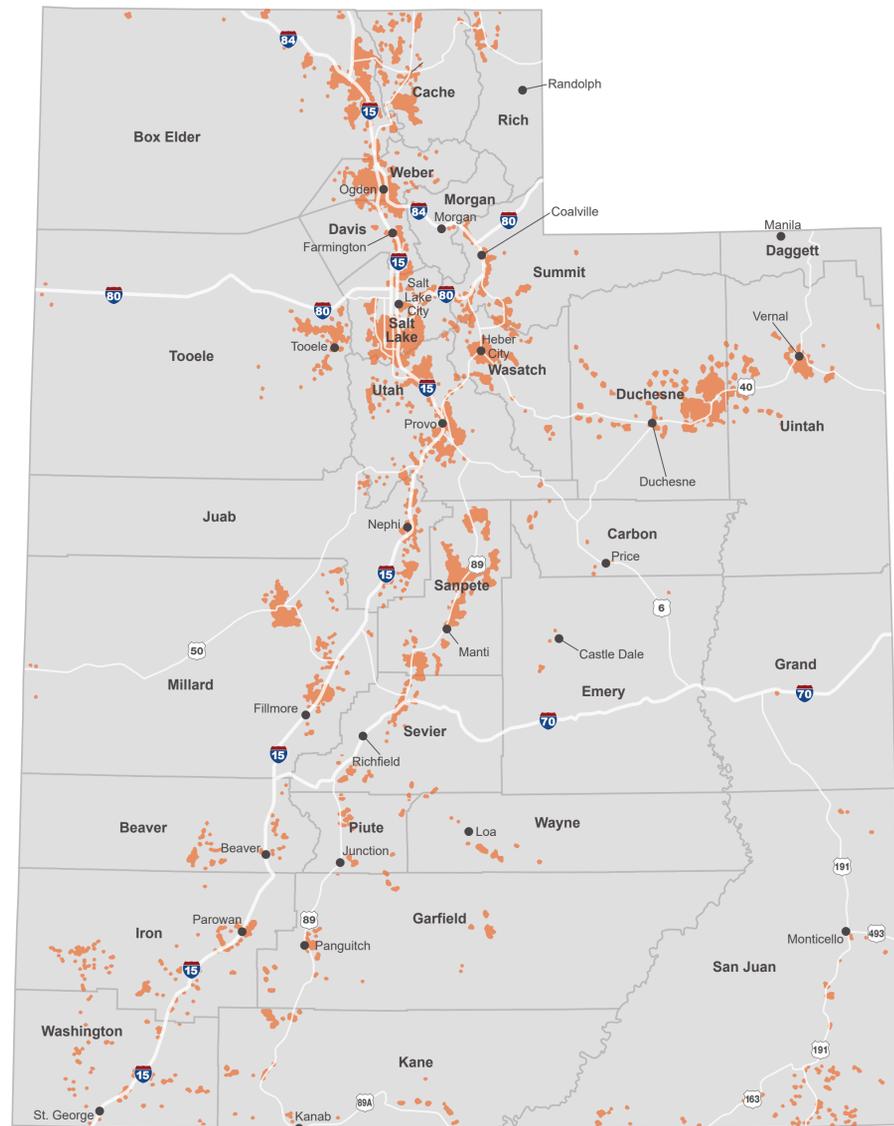
# NEEDS AND GAPS

## BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT AND ACCESS

Approximately 41,531 unserved locations\*



Approximately 27,820 underserved locations\*



\*Numbers generated from FCC Broadband Availability Map subject to change.

## FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (FCC) MAPS

Submit a challenge to the FCC Map



[fcc.gov/BroadbandData](https://fcc.gov/BroadbandData)

What can be challenged?

### Locations

- A broadband serviceable location (BSL) that is missing from the data
- Information is incorrect, such as the address, geographic coordinates or unit count for the location

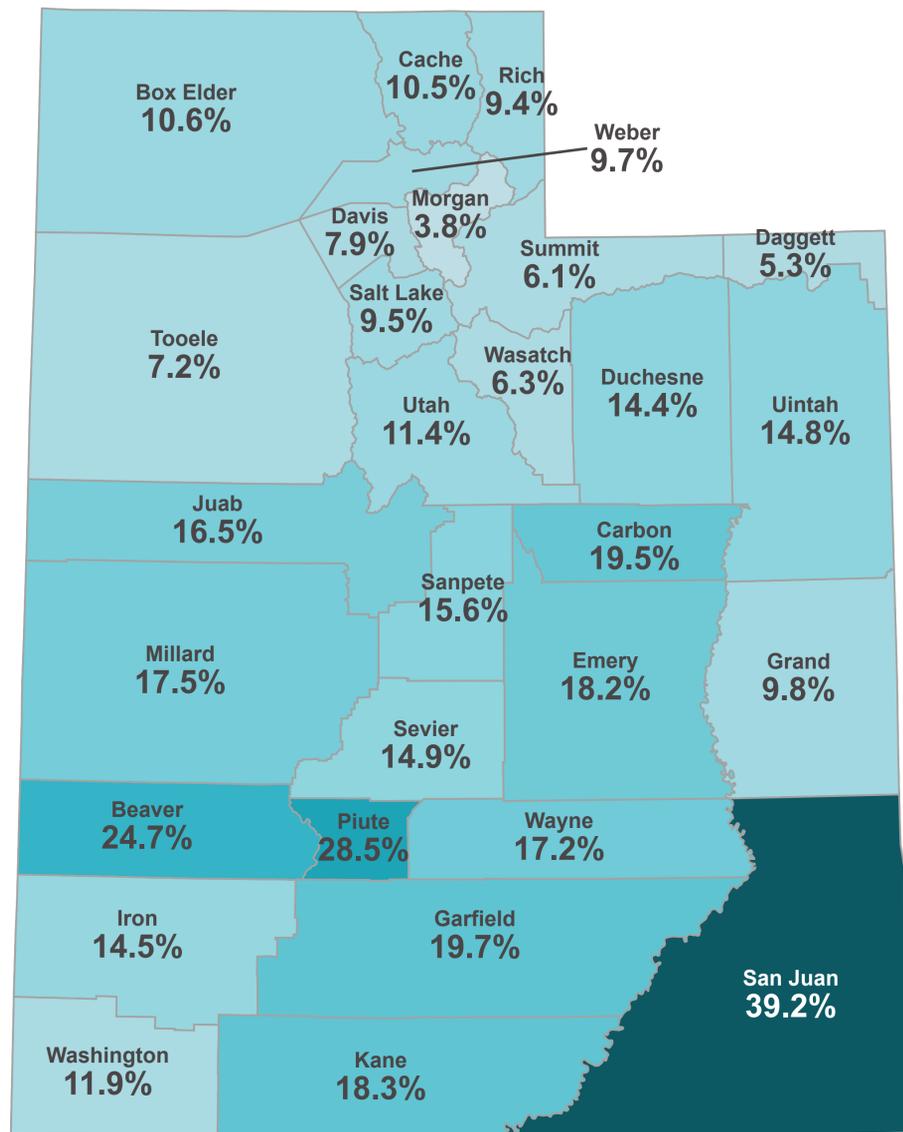
### Broadband availability

- Broadband services and technologies (if any) listed for a location are incorrect
- Available broadband service speeds listed for a location are incorrect

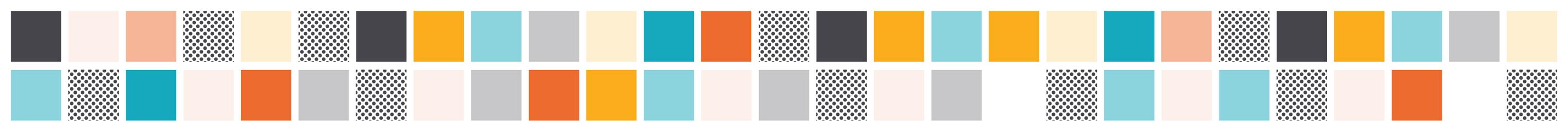
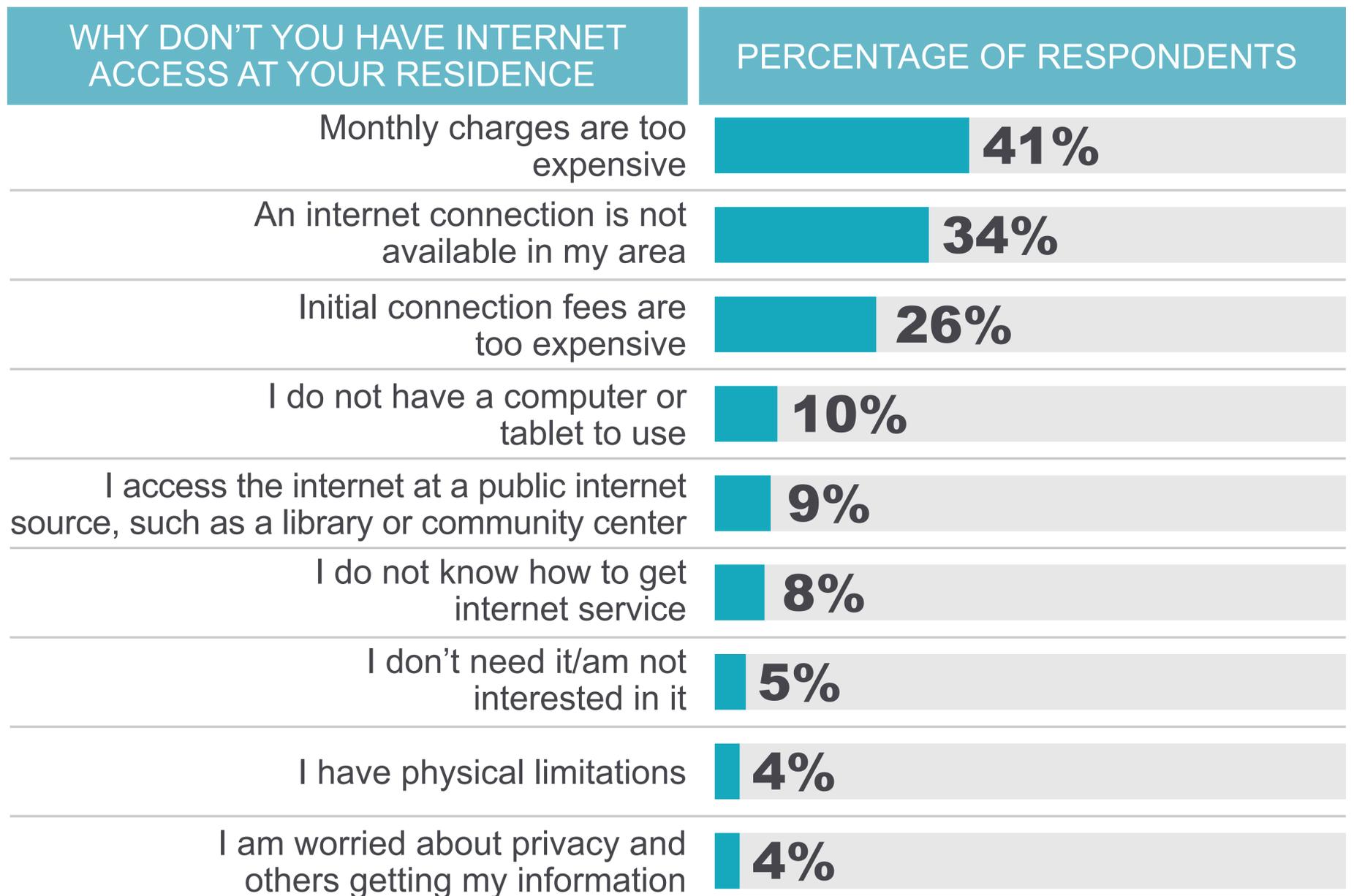
# NEEDS AND GAPS

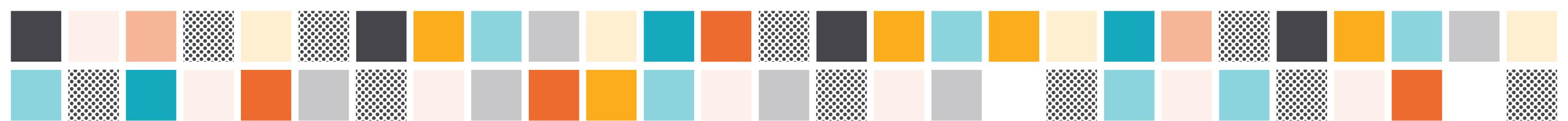
## BROADBAND ADOPTION

Percentage of households without an internet subscription



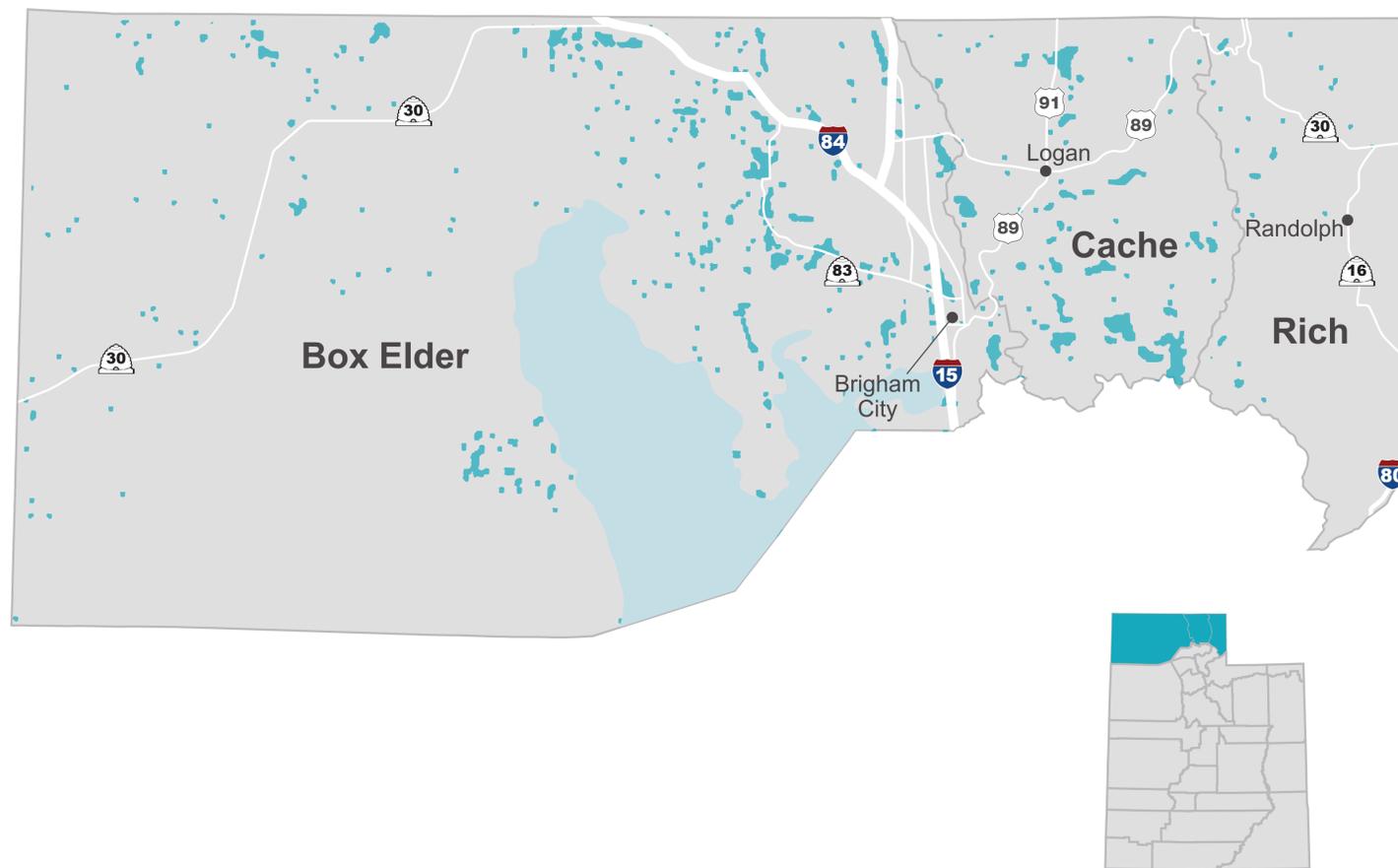
## CONNECTING UTAH RESIDENT SURVEY RESULTS



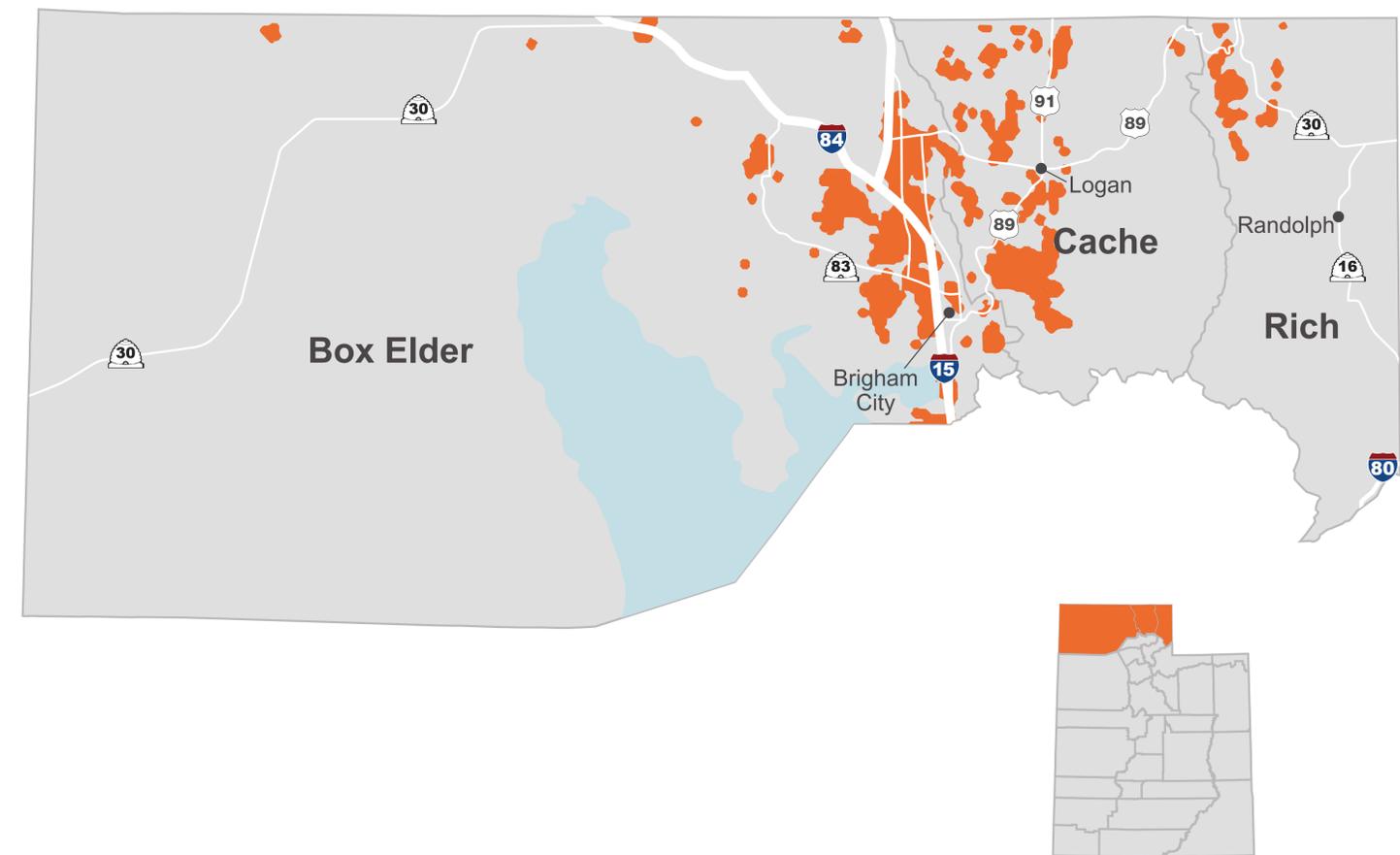


# BEAR RIVER ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS (BRAG)

## UNSERVED



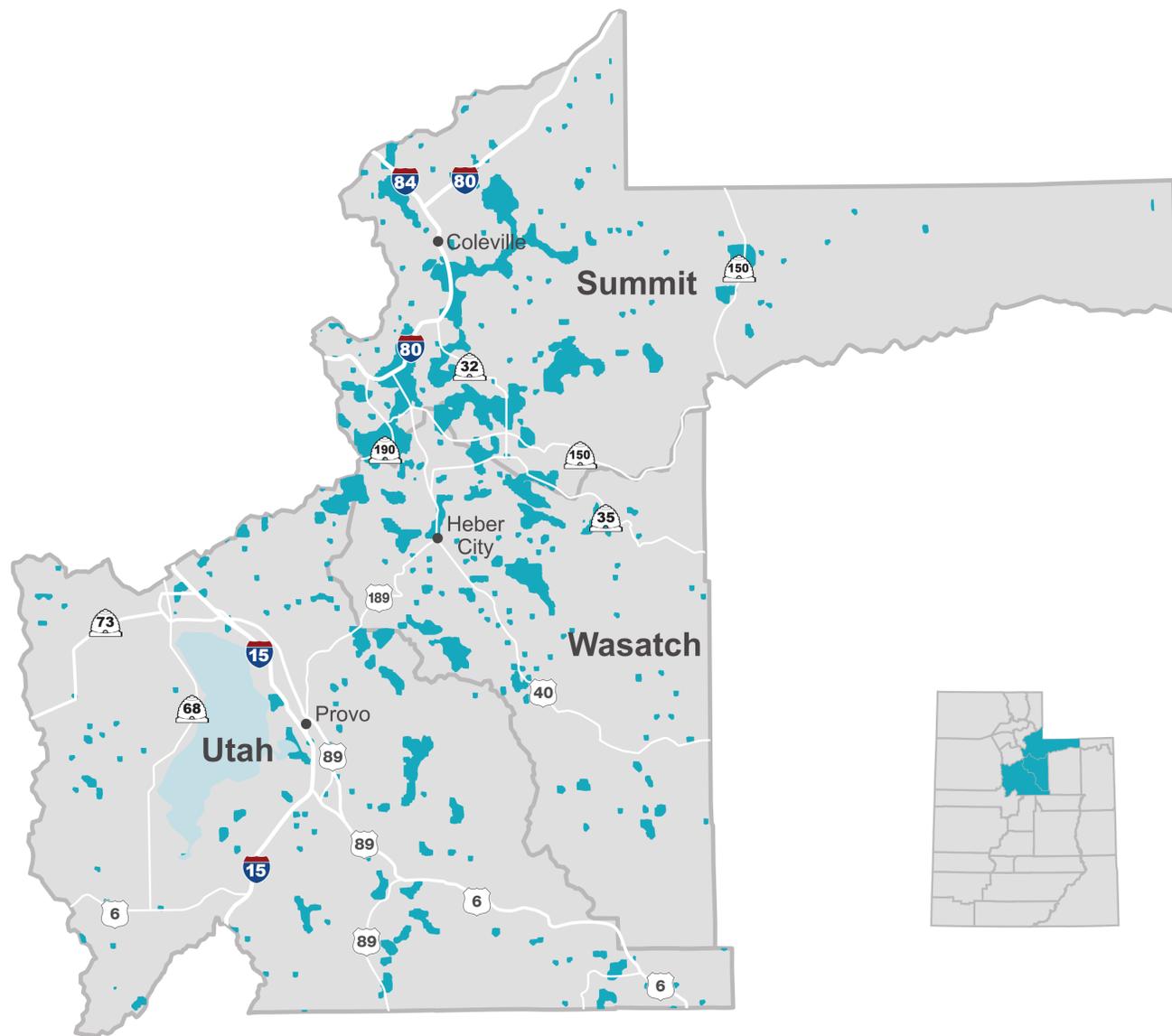
## UNDERSERVED



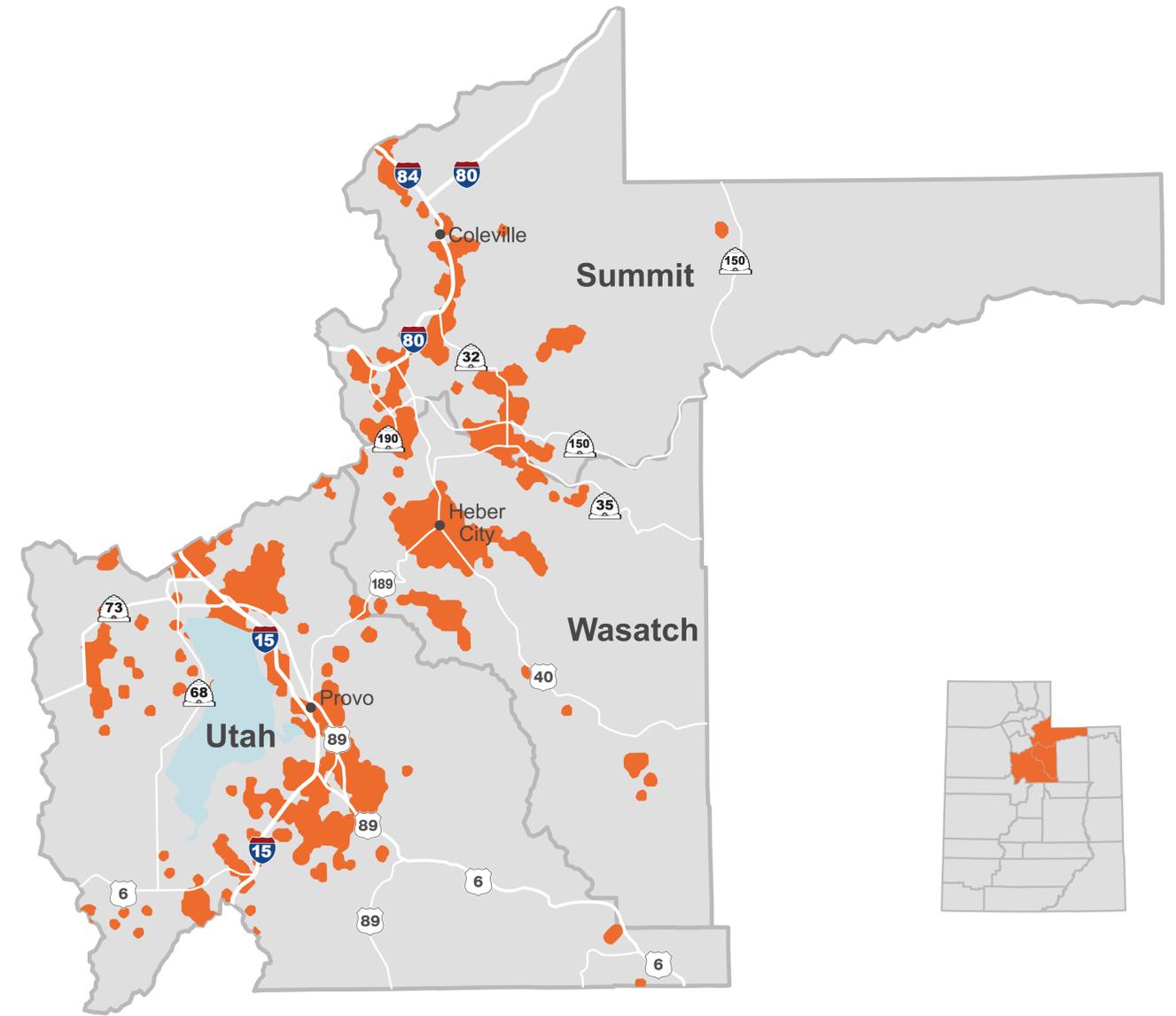


# MOUNTAINLAND ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS (MAG)

## UNSERVED

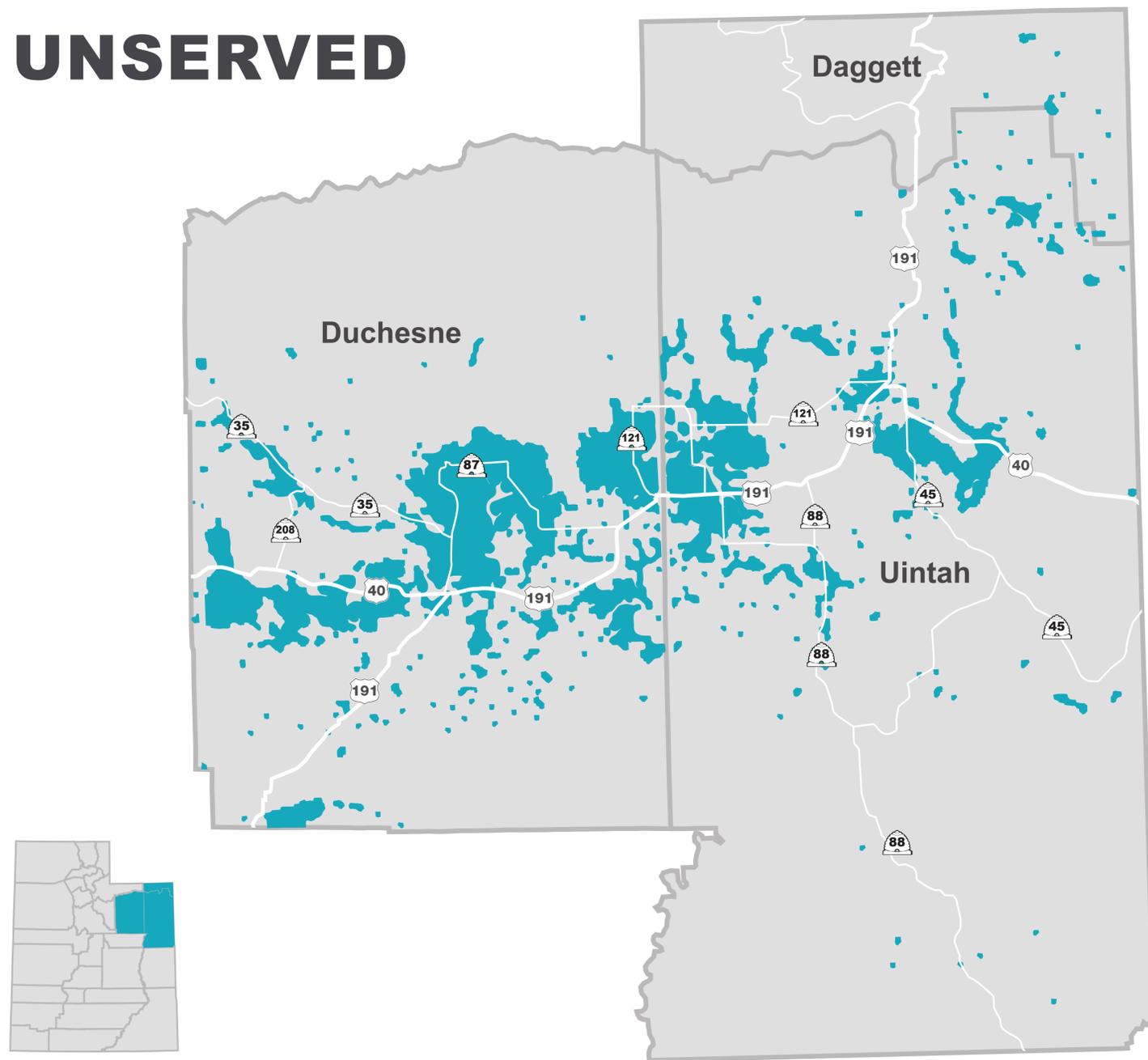


## UNDERSERVED

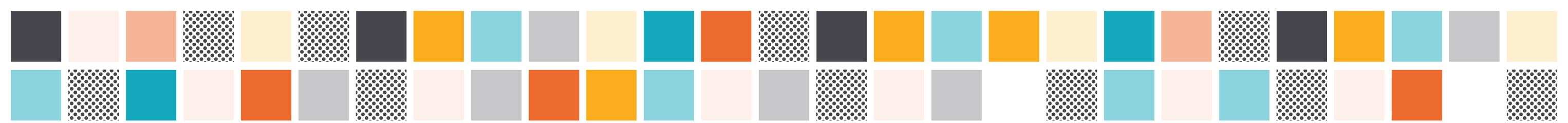
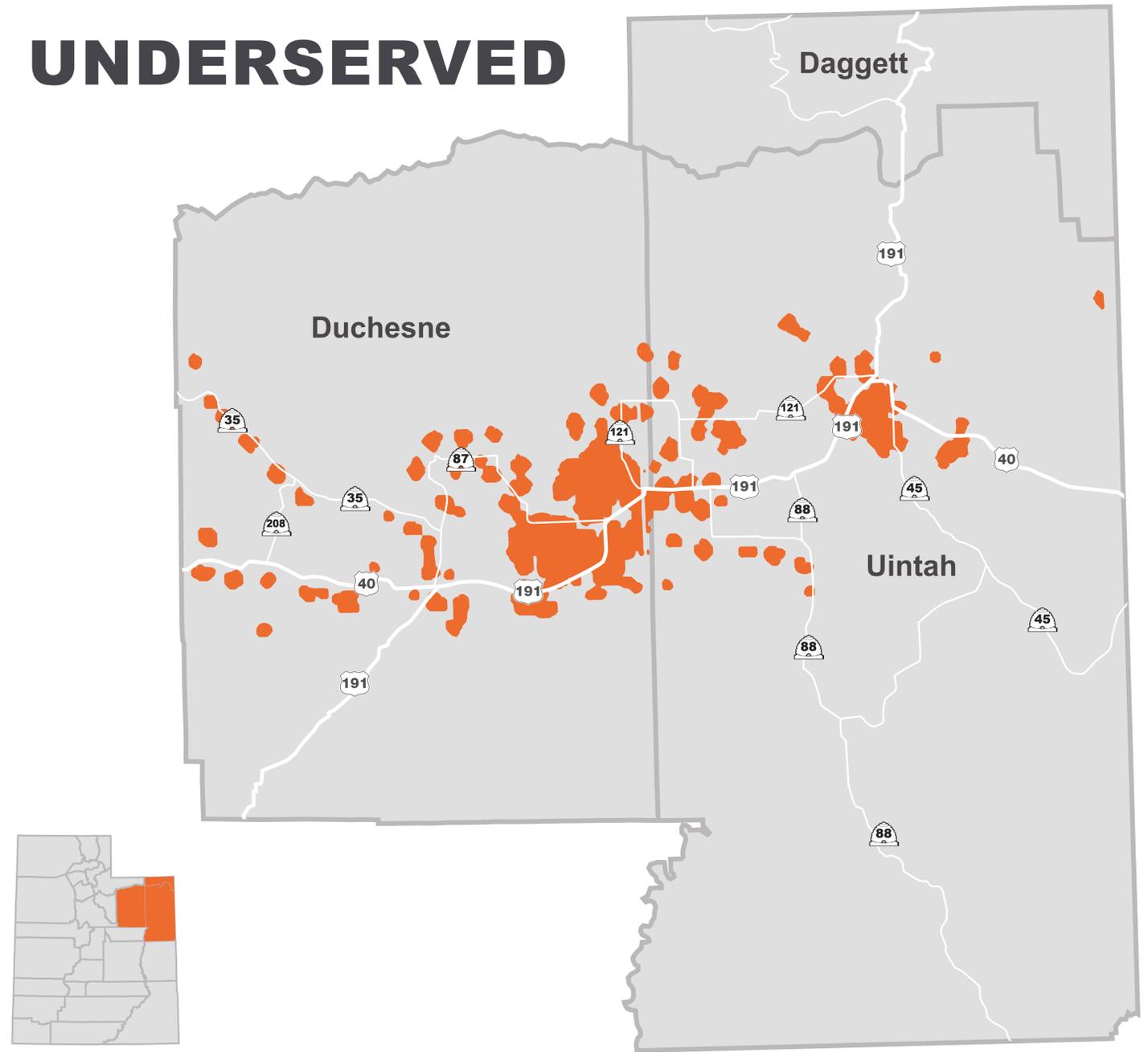


# UINTAH BASIN ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS (UBAOG)

## UNSERVED

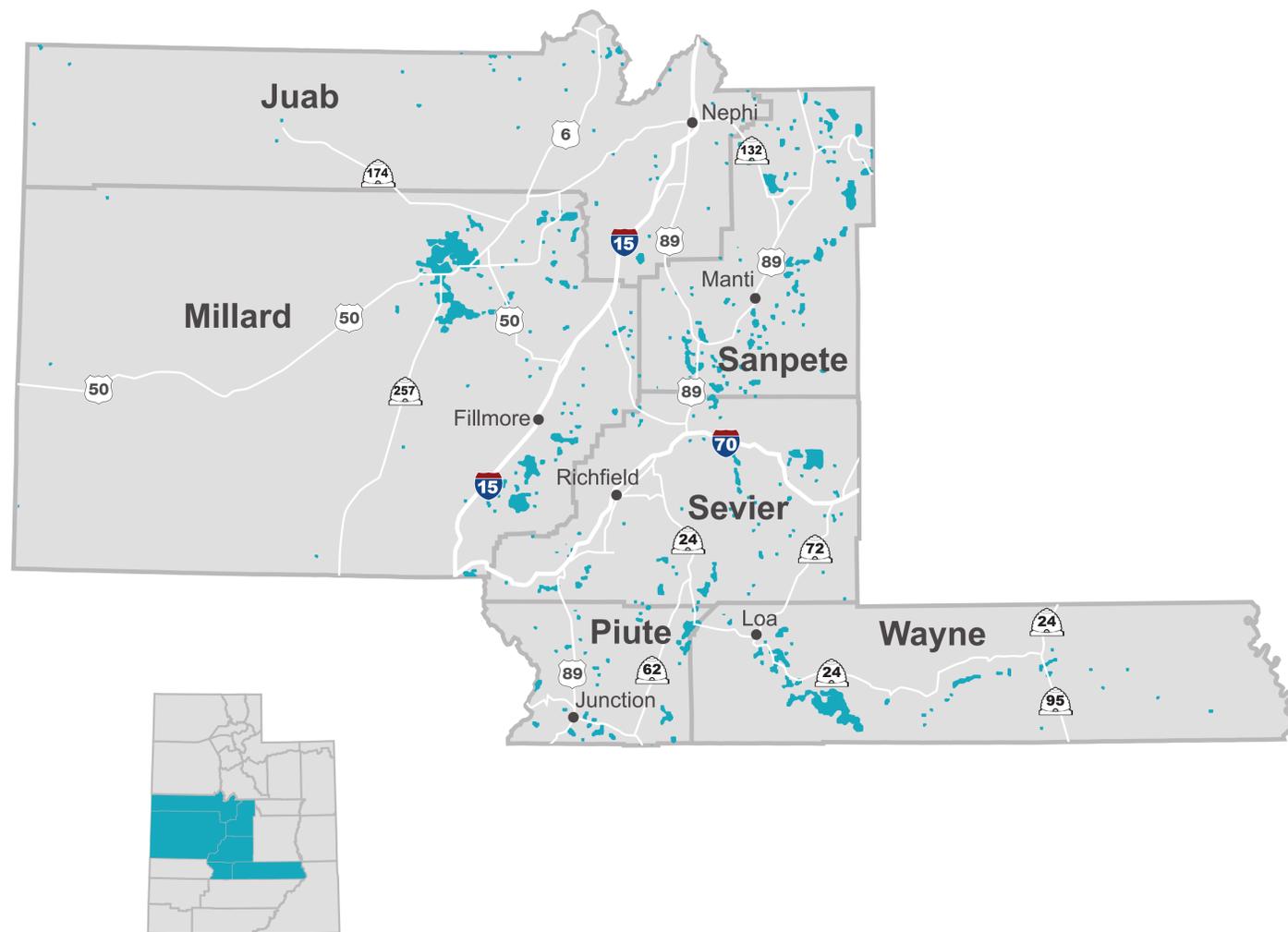


## UNDERSERVED

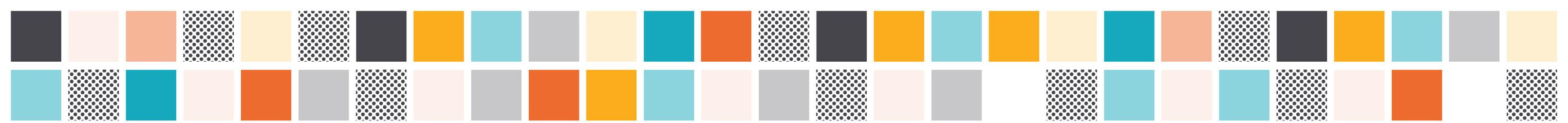
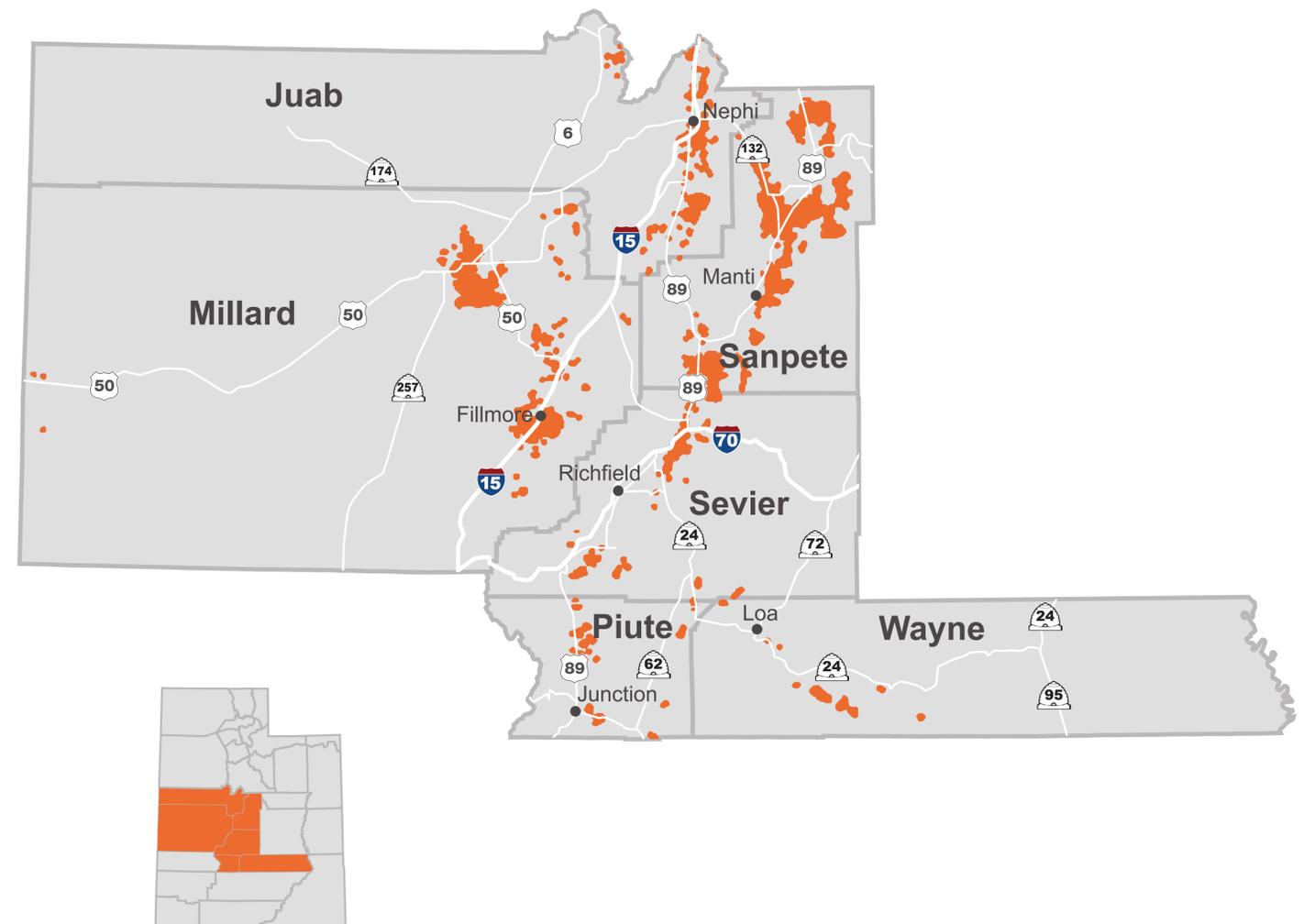


# SIX COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

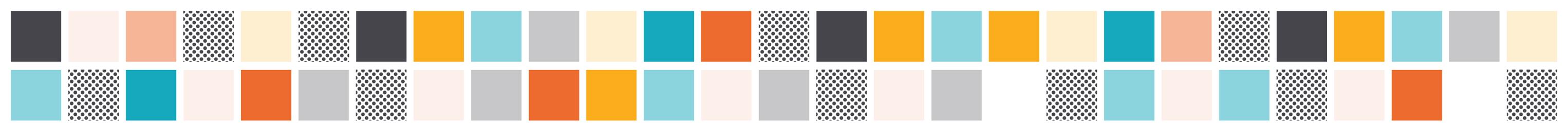
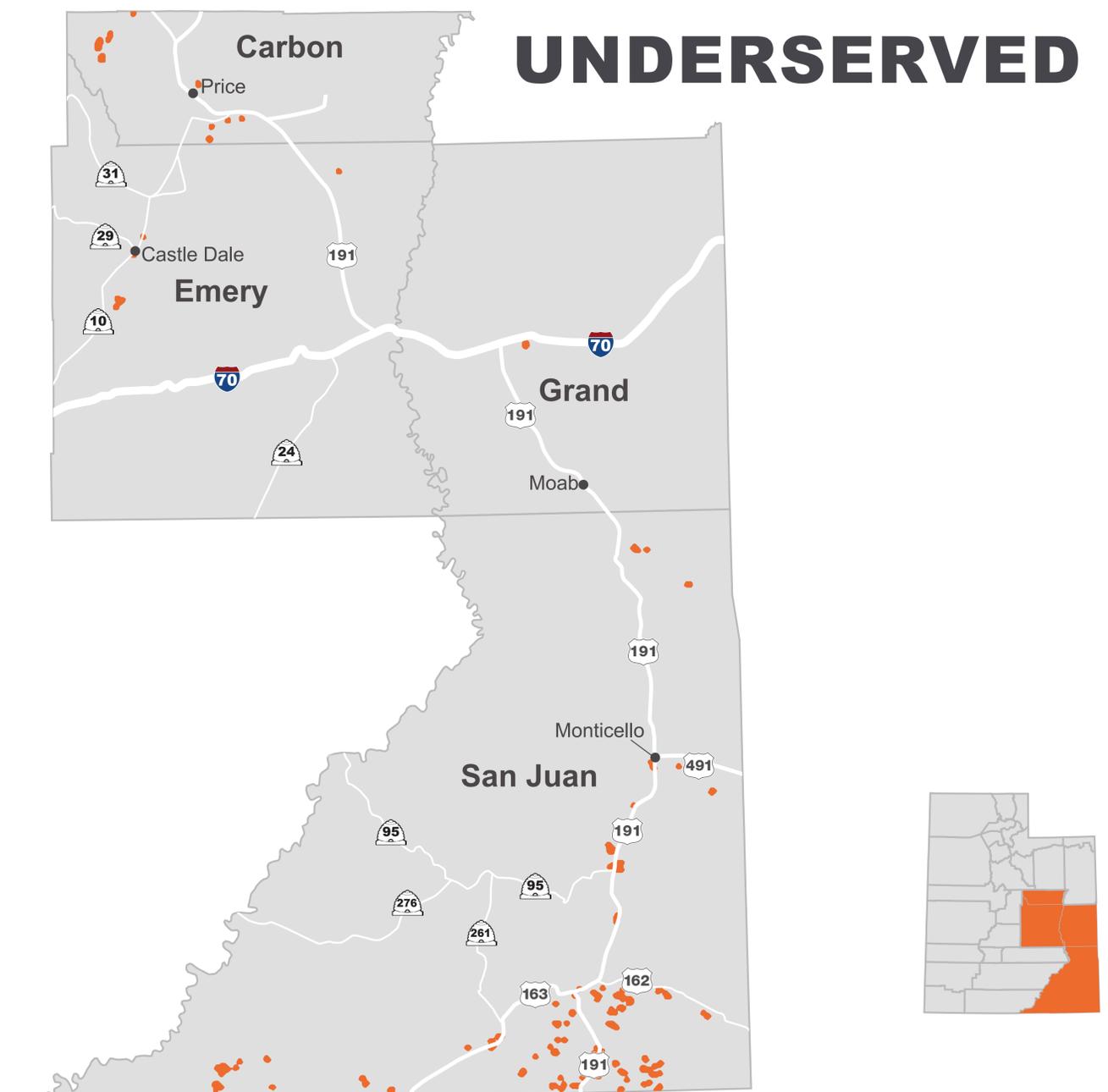
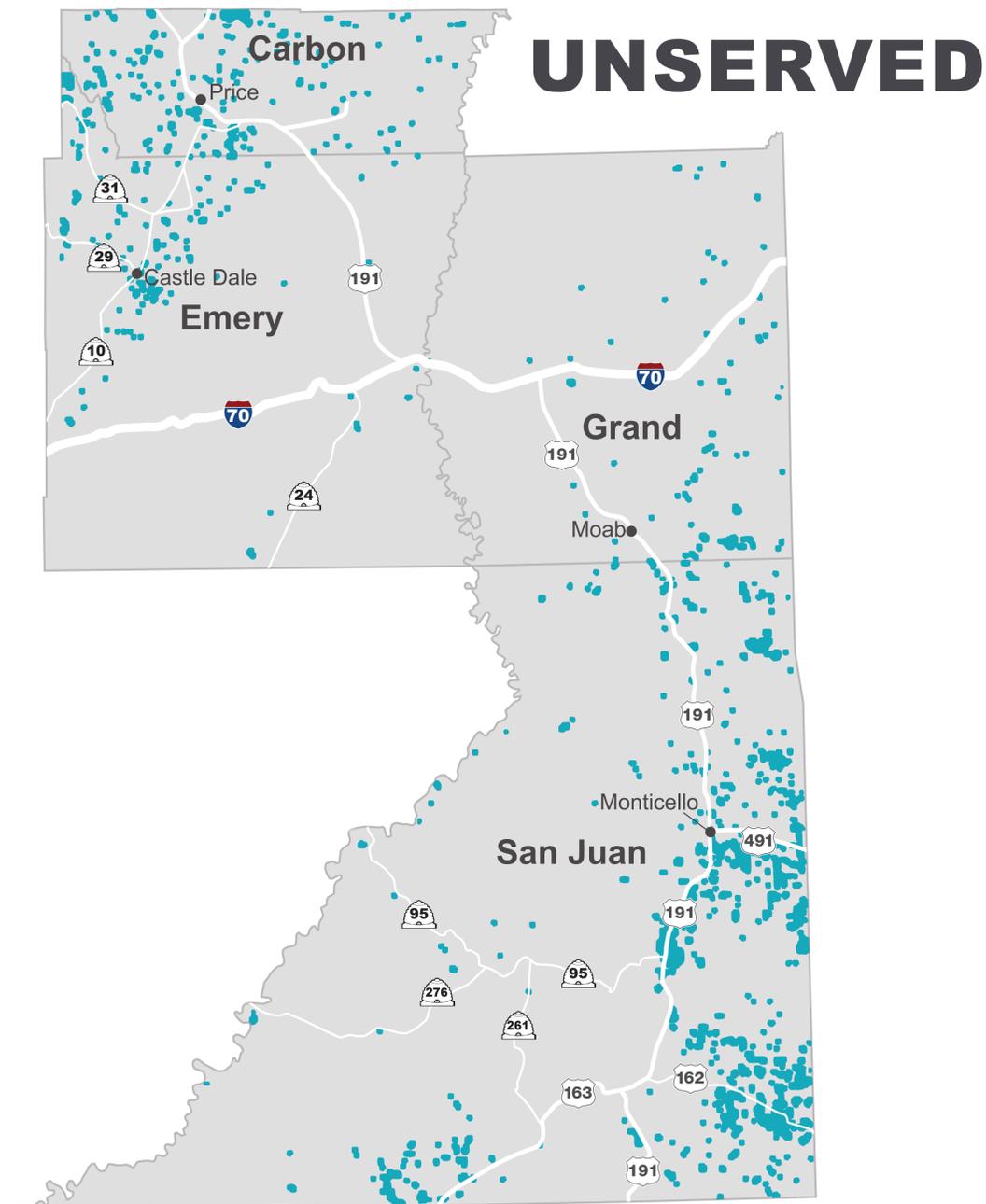
## UNSERVED



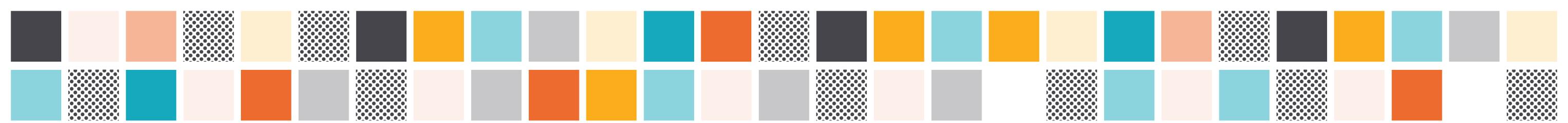
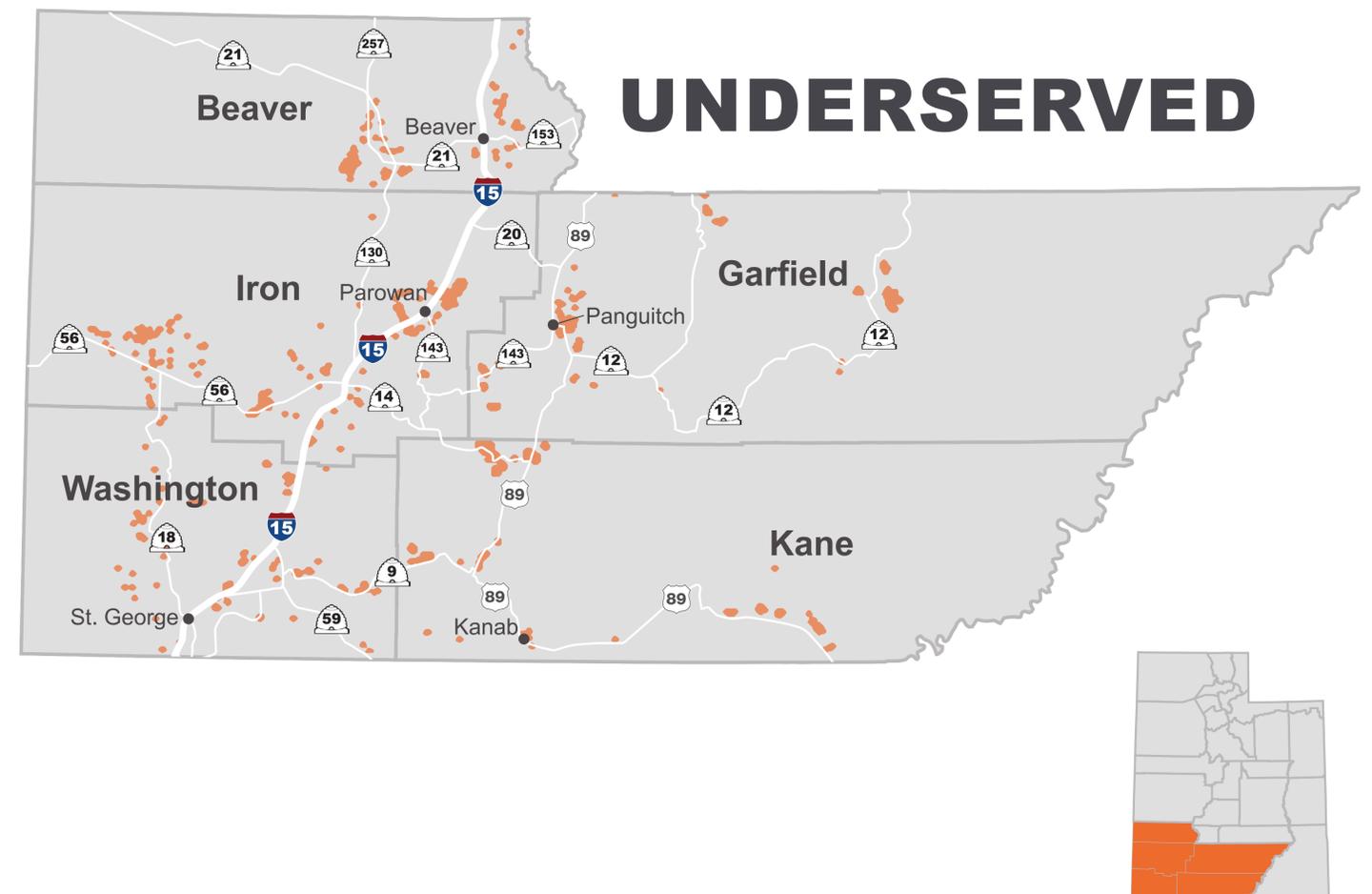
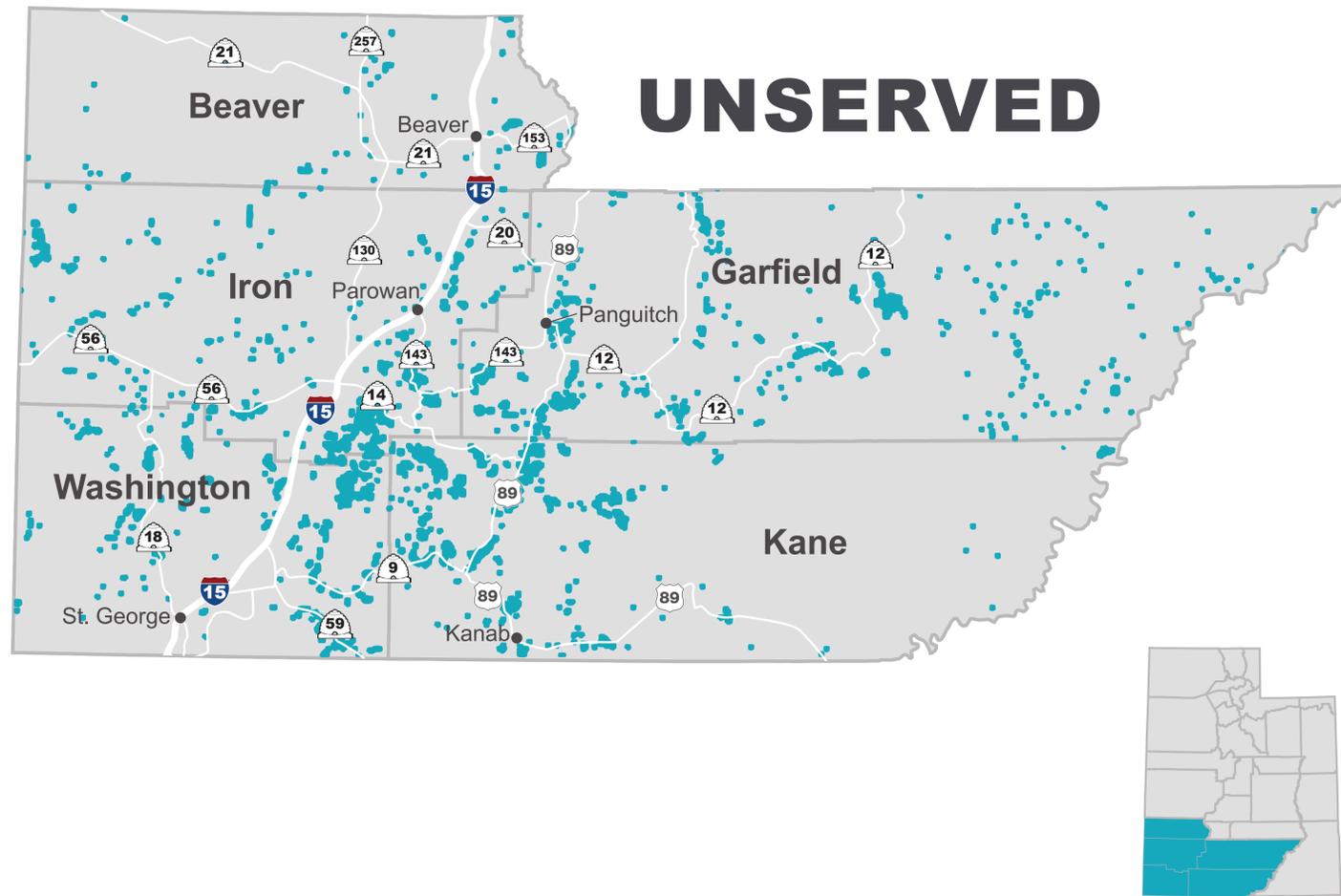
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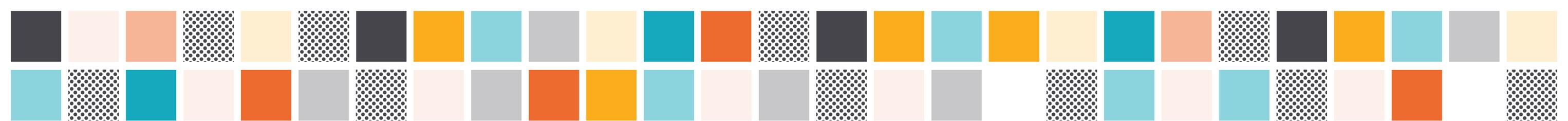


# SOUTHEASTERN UTAH ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS (SEUALG)



# FIVE COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS





# NEEDS AND GAPS

## BROADBAND AFFORDABILITY

### Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

**50,979**

Utah subscribers, estimated **22.8%** participation rate of eligible households

.....

**Utah ranks 5th** in the lowest amount of ACP subscribers per capita in the U.S.

### Connecting Utah Survey

Of 1,283 resident survey responses,

**\$75/month**

was the reported average internet subscription cost.

.....

Respondents without an internet connection would be willing to pay an average of **\$53/month** to have internet access at home.

### Lifeline

**27,066**

Utah subscribers, estimated **12%** participation rate of eligible households

*Provide feedback on the Needs and Gaps section of the plan here* →



# OBSTACLES AND BARRIERS

## COST OF DEPLOYMENT

- Geography/topography
- Maintenance costs
- One mile of infrastructure can be up to five times more expensive in rural Utah than in urban Utah.

## PERMITTING OR REGULATORY CHALLENGES

### Time-consuming

Staff availability, environmental clearance processes, etc.

### Expensive

Increased management, application fees, etc.

## WEATHER AND CLIMATE

- Construction season limited to March through November
- Damage to infrastructure from natural disasters such as avalanches, floods, earthquakes and severe weather events

## THIRD PARTY INFRASTRUCTURE APPROVAL

### In Utah there are:

- 40 utility pole owners
- 1,300+ canal companies
- 8 railroad companies

Approval process can be lengthy and expensive

Some fees charged by these entities have increased over 1,000% in the past 2 years.

## LABOR FORCE CHALLENGES

- Size of skilled labor force
- Demand for skilled labor

## LACK OF SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE

- Auxiliary backhaul or middle mile pathways needed to prevent outages
- Electrical power needed to power communications equipment for wired and wireless technologies

## SUPPLY CHAIN CONSTRAINTS

- Still recovering from the COVID pandemic

## CYBERSECURITY THREATS

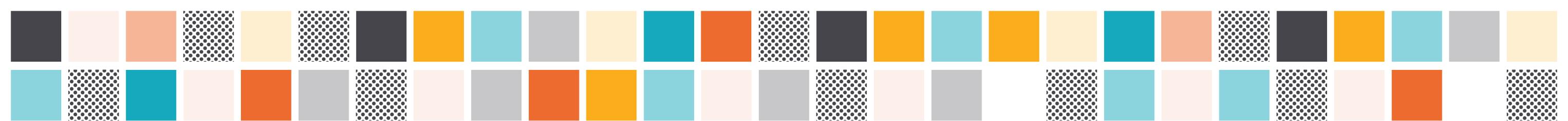
- In 2020, Utah had 4,926 victims of cybercrime (50% increase from 2019) and \$47,113,946 in losses (1.4% increase).

*Have you had any experiences with obstacles and barriers to broadband expansion?*

**We want to hear from you!**

*Provide input on the Obstacles and Barriers section of the plan here*





# IMPLEMENTATION

## INITIAL PROPOSAL

- An Initial Proposal will be developed based on the data and input gathered
- The Initial Proposal will detail specific project recommendations and priority areas
- Statewide Challenge Process in fall 2023

## CONTINUED STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- Notify the public of broadband deployment efforts led by the Utah Broadband Center (UBC)
- Partner with private entities to maximize broadband deployment funding
- Continue collecting feedback on needs, gaps, obstacles, and barriers
- Develop and share tools to empower greater broadband access, affordability, and availability

## PRIORITIES

- Fiber optic technology prioritized over wireless

### *Location priorities*

**1.** Unserved  
(no access or less than 25/3 Mbps)

**2.** Underserved  
(less than 100/20 Mbps)

**3.** Community anchor institutions  
(with less than 1 Gbps)

### *Increase awareness of and access to:*

- Affordability programs
- Workforce training programs

*Provide feedback on the Implementation section of the plan here*



# TIMELINE\*

\*subject to change

## LEGEND

Step

Objective

Strategy

## Statewide Digital Connectivity Plan

### Identify unserved/underserved Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs)

Utilize Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Fabric data

### Collect data

Collaborate and gather data from ISPs and agency partners

### Validate data

Challenge FCC data; validate with speed tests

## Implementation

### Project construction

Review engineered plans and costs from subgrantees

### Project auditing

Submit semiannual report to National Telecommunication and Information Administration (NTIA)

BEAD Program  
Timeline

Jun '22 –  
Aug '23

Jun '23 –  
Dec '23

Jan '24 –  
Dec '24

Dec '23 –  
Dec '24

Jan '25 –  
Jan '28



## Initial Proposal

### Determine network deployment type

Establish a high-cost threshold for fiber vs. fixed wireless service

### Identify and prioritize middle mile needs to reach unserved areas

Determine which middle mile routes are still needed to reach unserved areas

### Group unserved homes in project areas

Identify geographical challenges, middle mile access, and typical project size

### Establish subgrantee process for BEAD funding

Develop scoring criteria for the entire subgrantee process

### Validate data

Set up a statewide challenge process

## First Grant Round

### Implement the selection process

Accept and review sub-grantee proposals

## Final Proposal

### Determine subgrantees for BEAD funds

Review and select subgrantee applications off scoring criteria

### Address any remaining unserved homes not included in subgrantee applications

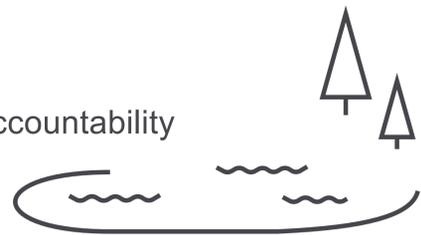
Negotiate with subgrantees to expand proposed areas or look at alternative methods to reach all unserved

### Award and gather required information from subgrantees

Review project timeline, workforce, environmental, and planning documentation

### Develop the audit process

Determine processes for oversight and accountability



# State Digital Equity Plan

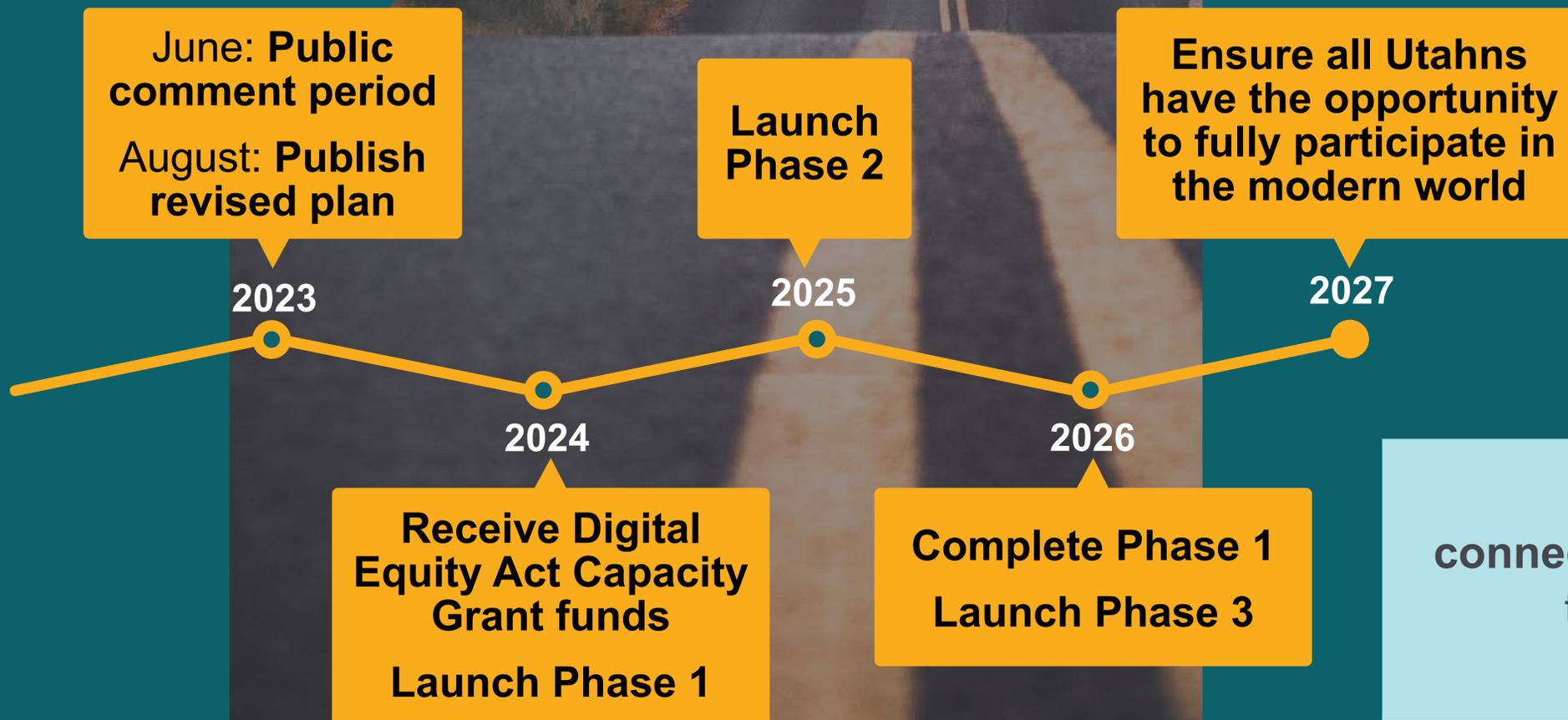


a component of  
the Utah Digital  
Connectivity Plan

## OUR VISION

To realize a connected Utah where all are invited to fully participate in the modern society through access to affordable high-speed internet, reliable devices, and training to safely achieve digital independence.

## IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE



Scan the QR code or visit [connectingutah.com/digital-connectivity-plan](https://connectingutah.com/digital-connectivity-plan) to access the full Digital Equity plan and share your feedback

Utah's plan relies on five strategic goals. Each category includes specific actions the Broadband Center and its partners will implement as we work together to invite everyone to fully participate.

## Project Key

-  RFP process
-  Partnership
-  Grant
-  Long term
-  Outreach

### COORDINATE PEOPLE

Create a digital inclusion community of practice.



Maximize discoverability of programs and resources with a central directory.



### BUILD INDEPENDENCE

Create multiple pathways for digital independence through flexible programs that fit the diverse needs of Utah residents.



Support the expansion of existing digital skillbuilding programs at community-based organizations.



Prioritize the online accessibility of public services and resources, and support alternative methods of access.



### SUSTAIN PROGRAMS

Ensure longevity by prioritizing support for projects with a high likelihood of ongoing local investment for sustainable program maintenance.



Maximize the responsible use of diverse funding sources to minimize reliance on Digital Equity Act funds.



Highlight digital inclusion as a core service already present in the missions of many stakeholder organizations.



### EXPAND DEVICES

Maximize local resources by standardizing programs that recycle, refurbish, and redistribute existing devices.



Support innovative efforts to broaden the impact of device lending and public computer access in K-12, higher education and library settings.



Encourage basic cybersecurity resources or education to be tied to all device distribution programs.



### INCREASE OPPORTUNITY

Define true affordability for covered populations and incorporate this recommendation into the state's minimally acceptable affordable internet plan for BEAD projects.



Solidify existing outreach efforts to inform communities about affordable internet options, and establish coordinated ongoing outreach.



Support coordination between ISPs, qualifying entities (state, federal, tribal agencies), and community-based organizations to increase ACP adoption.



# UTAH DIGITAL EQUITY RESOURCE GUIDE INITIATIVE

ENGAGE. CONNECT. EMPOWER.

*Join us in mapping Utah's digital equity resources!*

Contribute to our community-driven effort to identify and showcase digital equity resources in Utah. Help us bridge the digital divide and create a more inclusive future.

Scan the QR code to submit your entries to Utah's Digital Equity Resource Guide.

[connectingutah.com/resources](https://connectingutah.com/resources)



## Make a Difference:

- Share your organization's initiatives.
- Collaborate to solve problems.
- Empower your community to thrive in the digital age.

## Get Involved:

- Map your digital equity resources.
- Foster collaborations and connections.
- Contribute to Utah's Digital Equity Resource Guide.

*Together, let's connect Utah!*