

Newsletter - August 2024

WBLC Update

Two weeks ago, over thirty WBLC members and guests gathered in Helena for a four-day strategic planning retreat held at Carroll College. A big thank you to everyone who joined and to AMB West and EdChoice for making the retreat possible!



We successfully crafted a plan to guide the next three years of the Collaborative. We also connected as a team, learned from one another, confirmed the role of WBLC, set goal posts for our path ahead, and identified some long-term priorities. We worked hard, yet took time to build new relationships and strengthen old ones through fun activities. Attendees enjoyed the Gates of the Mountains boat tour, engaged in friendly competition through our own version of a lawn games summer olympics, hiked on Mount Helena, and savored flavors from local restaurants and breweries.

We are proud of the attendees for fully engaging in the retreat, having some difficult conversations, being open to new ideas, and contributing passion and insight to the project. Thank you!



Collaborative Partner News

The Work-based Learning Collaborative includes 30 partner organizations that cover the gamut of work-based learning from the student, employer, and educator perspectives, as well as direct-service, capacity, and policy levels. We are proud to share highlights of our WBLC partners - state agencies, industry associations, colleges, high schools, and nonprofit organizations.





Jobs for Montana's Graduates (JMG)

Upon graduation from Polson High School 2 years ago, Max started an electrician apprenticeship program. However, Max discovered early in the program that becoming an electrician was not the career path for him. So Max and his JMG Case Manager (Heather Merritt) began working intensely to discuss and explore other options.

Together they reviewed his previous career assessments and did a crosswalk with available job openings in the Polson/Ronan area. Max was interested in a position with the Lake County Sheriff's department so JMG coordinated a 5-week work experience for him. Through the JMG WIOA Alternative Work Experience activity, Lake County was reimbursed for Max's wages and fringe costs. After his JMG work experience, Max was hired as a full-time Lake County Detention Officer, making over \$22/hour, and he's very happy with his new career path.

Jobs for Montana's Graduates (JMG) provides middle school and high school curriculum that teaches employability and life skills, increases student engagement, and helps students prepare for work or post-secondary education. JMG seeks to empower Montana students with the skills and support they need to stay in school, graduate, and successfully transition from school into employment, post-secondary education, certification, or armed forces to achieve economic independence.

Montana Manufacturing Extension Center (MMEC) - Apprenticeship Success!

Late last year, a local company – working in partnership with MMEC and the Montana Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) – chose to be the first in the state to offer the Certified Manufacturing Apprenticeship, and twelve employees signed up to participate. Many of the participants completed the necessary coursework and training within four months. The company promoted one of the apprentices immediately. All that have completed 2,000 hours of work after passing the final exam have received their apprentice certificate from the State of Montana. In summary, these employees finished the program with state and national credentials, a pay raise, and one promotion!

Based on these results, the company immediately opened a second apprenticeship opportunity. Not only did seven new employees sign up, but apprentices from the first group agreed to serve as mentors to provide moral support and share their manufacturing knowledge. Read more [here](#).



DEPARTMENT OF
**PUBLIC HEALTH &
HUMAN SERVICES**

DISABILITY MENTORING WEEK (OCTOBER 14-18, 2024)

Each October we celebrate the value and talent workers with disabilities add to America’s workplaces and economy
“Access to Good Jobs for All” (dol.gov/odep)
#NDEAM



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informational interview?**

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Survey

You can also contact

Jacob Kuntz
jkuntz3@mt.gov
(406) 890-5624

Cheri Reed-Anderson
creed@mt.gov
(406) 202-8830



KNOWLEDGE NUGGET

During the strategic planning retreat last week, we heard from a panel of young adults who participated in work-based learning experiences. ***They loved learning about work at work.*** Their advice to employers? Host work-based learning opportunities such as internships so you can infuse new energy into your workplace and touch the lives of youth. They also appreciated the patient, thoughtful, passionate, and supportive adults in the workplace who trained and supervised them.



News You Can Use

[Voices of Indigenous Educators Series](#)

This interview series explores the intersection of Indigenous ways of learning and competency-based education (CBE). Through these conversations with Indigenous educators, the Aurora Institute and the Liber Institute aim to create a space for meaningful storytelling, celebrate resilience and innovation in Indigenous education, and inspire more inclusive, culturally responsive educational approaches.

[Resources for Youth Apprenticeships](#)

The Urban Institute is out with several new publications and tools that can support youth apprenticeship program leaders and their partners. Here are a few of our favorites:

- [How—and Why—Employers Can Expand Youth Apprenticeship Programs](#)
- [Onboarding Youth Apprentices](#)
- [Where Could Apprenticeship Take You? Game \(made with Opportunity America\)](#)
- [Master Mentor Challenge \(made with Opportunity America\)](#)

[Building Better Internships](#)

“Learning by working is essential to successfully connecting education to a career.

The data tell a compelling story: Undergraduates who complete a paid internship have higher-paying jobs after graduation. “Building Better Internships” looks at data from the National Survey of College Internships, administered by the University of Wisconsin in partnership with Strada. It examines the reasons students seek internships, common barriers they face in securing them, and how their experiences connect to career goals.”

[The “Great Misalignment” of Credentialing Options and Labor Markets](#)

In half of U.S. labor markets, at least 50% of all middle-skills credentials now offered are not aligned with projected employer demand. In their latest report, *The Great Misalignment: Addressing the Mismatch Between the Supply of Certificates and Associate’s Degrees and the Future Demand for Workers in 565 U.S. Labor Markets*, the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce finds that there is a significant mismatch between the credentials offered by regional education and training providers and what employers are looking for. [Check out the data tool to learn more about alignment in your region.](#)

[College to Jobs Map](#)

Are colleges graduating students with degrees that match the regional worker growth? How do the distribution of workers and graduates vary by race and gender? Explore these questions and more with the [College-to-Jobs Map](#).

The tool allows users to dive into regional labor market changes and discover college graduate and workforce information. The map draws the connection between colleges, economic mobility, and regional economic development—presenting the graduate supply and labor demand challenges to building a prosperous and inclusive workforce.

[K-12 Teacher Apprenticeship Program Map](#)

Since the first national program was registered in 2022, Registered Apprenticeships for the K-12 Teacher occupation continue to launch across the country. Programs are often supported by Educator Registered Apprenticeship (ERA) Intermediary. ERA Intermediary paves the way for state and local education agencies, offering guidance and support in building solid apprenticeship programs. The interactive map highlights the number of programs, current apprentices, and completed apprentices, as well as the type(s) of sponsors in the state.

[Work-based Learning Data and CTE Policy](#)

Montana State University professor Carly Urban partners with Thomas Goldring to examine work-based learning (WBL) with a focus on a particular aspect of WBL that has received little research attention to date: the collection of WBL data under Perkins V and how those data are being used to inform CTE policy. Montana is one of five states Urban and Goldring examined.

[The Future of Good Jobs: Projections through 2031](#)

[Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce](#) released [The Future of Good Jobs: Projections through 2031](#), which finds that economic opportunity will increasingly favor workers with higher levels of education and training. The report forecasts the number of good jobs for workers ages 25–64 and finds that 85 percent of good jobs will go to workers with some form of postsecondary education and training by 2031.



Questions? Contact:
Gabrielle Eklund Rowley
WBL Collaborative Director
growley@ReachHigherMontana.org
406-422-6809
or visit wblmt.org.

Work That Matters

Work-based learning (WBL) opportunities span a continuum from workplace tours to apprenticeships (and many models in between).

In addition to building employability skills, WBL experiences help students develop **meaning** from their classroom learning and explore **purposeful** career opportunities. Employers who intentionally cultivate **belonging** in the workplace for young workers can gain access to future workforce talent. The Montana Work-Based Learning Collaborative works to promote belonging, meaning, well-being, and purpose for all young Montanans by building capacity for high-quality WBL experiences.

There are components of work-based learning in the K-12 education system, the postsecondary education system, and the public workforce system – but no single entry point for students or employers to access them. Our work to improve coordination among agencies and WBL partners benefits Montana’s emerging workforce and Montana’s businesses.

Sent to: info@reachhighermontana.org

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