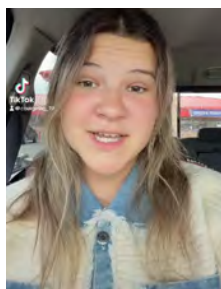


July 2026

Collaborative Partner News

The Work-based Learning Collaborative includes 35 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. Find the list of the WBLC members [here](#)!



A Day in the Life: Work-based Learning Experience

Angelea Gast, a Carroll College student in Helena, Montana, takes us along on her day at a veterinary clinic in Helena. Her work-based learning experience is giving her real-life, hands-on insight into a veterinary career while helping her build professional skills.

[Watch the video!](#)



Coffee Connect: Exploring Career-connected Learning

Join these workshops for higher education staff and faculty to gain actionable strategies to strengthen career-connected learning opportunities for your college students. The three-part series dives into competency-based learning, advising, and coordinating internships. [Register here.](#)



October 13-14, 2026

Fairmont Hot Springs

Explore innovative strategies to strengthen the healthcare workforce! Don't miss keynote speakers Lisa Walden of Good Company Consulting and Hollis Salway of Denver Health who will discuss generational differences in the workplace and the power of engaging youth and young adults in talent pipelines. The conference is on October 13-14 at Fairmont Hot Springs. [Register now!](#)

Data: Just the Beginning of the Conversation

The WBLC collects data from young people, educators, and employers across Montana to better understand perspectives and experiences around career-connected learning. We then use this information to inform our work. This data is available online on the [WBLC Data Dashboard](#) so partners and the public can use it for planning and programs. Ian Beagles, WBLC Data Analyst, presented 2026 data updates last month. Watch these presentations at your convenience:

- [Employer satisfaction data presentation](#): view [slide deck](#)
- [High school data presentation](#): view [slide deck](#)
- [College student data presentation](#): view [slide deck](#)

Job Site Ready Across Montana

In May, [Accelerate Montana](#) partnered with the [Montana Department of Corrections](#) (DOC) to deliver two hands-on construction trades workshops at the Riverside Correctional Facility in Boulder, Montana. The training reached 19 inmates and was offered through Accelerate Montana's Job Site Ready Mobile Training initiative, which brings construction trades workforce programming to communities across the state.

Over two days, trainees learned foundational construction trades skills including marking and measuring, power tool use, hand tool use, job site safety, carpentry basics, framing, and more: all while building two sheds.

"The DOC is dedicated to helping ensure the success of the people under our care when they return to Montana communities. Opportunities like the one provided by Accelerate Montana's Job Site Ready Mobile Training Initiative provide the technical and soft skills necessary for them to obtain employment when they leave prison," says DOC Director Eric Strauss.



If you are interested in bringing training to your community, please reach out to [Katherine Booher](#).

Future Ready Toolkit Available!

The [Montana University System \(MUS\) Future Ready K-12 Toolkit](#) is live and ready! This guide offers information and resources for K-12 schools to use in developing postsecondary credit and career opportunities outlined in the STARS Act (HB 252 of the 2025 legislative session). This toolkit also aims to support school district leadership in establishing infrastructure that will allow for growth in dual enrollment, workforce training, and industry recognized credentials to high school students. [Check out the Future Ready Toolkit.](#)

Miles Community College Offering New Career-connected Learning Course

The new [Miles Community College](#) course Introduction to Health Professions (Allied Health: Medical Support (AHMS) 129) gives students a real-world introduction to healthcare careers. Students explore careers in nursing, imaging, administration, and public health among others. They learn legal and ethical responsibilities in healthcare while also learning how their strengths and values align with various career options. Importantly, students experience real healthcare environments through job shadowing. This dual enrollment online course is open to both high school and college students.

Montana, RDO Launch New Skilled Trade Apprenticeship Program

RDO Equipment Co. has formalized a Registered Apprenticeship pathway with the [Montana Department of Labor & Industry](#) to train heavy equipment service technicians across the state. "Service technicians are more in demand in Montana than ever before," said Sarah Swanson, Commissioner of Labor & Industry. "I am so pleased to see our employer partners recognizing the value of Registered Apprenticeships in building talent pipelines that help grow their businesses while strengthening our labor force."

RDO Equipment Co's Service Technician Registered Apprenticeship program is an entry-level opportunity that provides training and on-the-job mentorship over the course of three to four years, leveling employees up to a Service Technician III capacity at the end of the program. Apprentices receive direct instruction from John Deere University, 6,000-8,000 hours of paid work alongside an experienced mentor technician, and a validated credential recognized across the U.S. [Read full story here.](#)

Opportunities

Job opportunity: High School Counselor/Work Based Learning Coordinator, Park High School in Livingston, 2026-27 school year. [See position description and application details here.](#)

Volunteer opportunity: The student-created nonprofit Helena Health Science Alliance is looking for a Vice-president. [See position description here.](#) Questions? Interested? Contact [Charlie](#).



Events

Join the 8th Annual STEM Summer Institute at MSU in Bozeman, MT August 3-5, 2026. You'll leave the STEM Summer Institute with up to 15 OPI professional development units (or option for MSU non-degree



grad credit) and next steps to create powerful, STEM learning experiences for students in your program! [Check it out.](#)

Listen

Listen to the [Work Forces podcast](#) that asserts career readiness belongs at the start of a student's college experience, not the end. Laura DaVinci and Robert McGuire discuss the Career Readiness Imperative in Gateway Courses.



Listen to a [new podcast episode](#) from **Good Things from Lemonada** with Laura Burger, from the Annie E. Casey Foundation and PAYA youth council member, Chris Grant as they discuss how youth apprenticeship opens doors to opportunities.

News You Can Use

[Workforce Pell: A State Playbook for Implementation](#)

[Employers Report Four Indirect Benefits of Youth Apprenticeship](#)

[State Policy Conditions for Dual Enrollment](#)

JFF's new interactive dashboard reports on state adoption of 12 policy areas that strengthen student access to high-quality dual enrollment experiences.



[What Counts as Learning? Two Schools Are Rewriting the Answer](#)

[The biggest expansion of federal scholarship money in 50 years is at hand — and almost nobody is ready for it](#)

[Federal Dual Enrollment Data Collection & Recommended Policy Change](#)

[Connected and Thriving: Youth Apprenticeship and Opportunity Youth](#)

Many youth apprenticeships are Registered Apprenticeship programs. High-quality youth apprenticeship programs are designed with the developmental needs of young people in mind, which makes them particularly well suited for meeting the needs of opportunity youth and other young people who need extra support.

[Opportunity Youth Break into Hollywood Through Youth Apprenticeship](#)

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) is learning about work, at work and is a key component of career-connected learning.

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.



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Reach Higher Montana, 7 West 6th Ave. Ste. 516, Helena, MT 59601, United States