



# Montana Department of LABOR & INDUSTRY

## **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Annual Statewide Performance Report Narrative – PY 2017**

Montana submits its WIOA Annual Statewide Performance Report Narrative for PY 2017 to the Secretary of Labor in accordance with the “WIOA Common Performance Reporting-OMB Control No. 1205-0526.” This report serves as a complement to the WIOA Annual Statewide Performance Report (ETA 9169).

**Waivers**—During PY 2017, Montana did not have a waiver in place.

**Two approaches the state chose for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers performance indicator pilot**—Montana chose all three Effectiveness in Serving Employers performance indicator options. Montana’s results are Retention with the Same Employer for the 2nd and 4th quarters after exit date - 23.7 percent; Employer Penetration Rate – 10.2 percent; and Repeat Business Customers Rate – 30.5 percent. For several years, Job Service Montana staff who provide business services recorded all their contacts with businesses in the Montana Department of Labor & Industry (MDLI) database. This practice allowed for a relatively smooth transition to calculation of the pilot’s WIOA Effectiveness in Serving Employers performance indicators.

Under WIOA, MDLI partnered with Adult Education (AE) and Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services (VRBS) to report the Effectiveness in Serving Employers for all three partner programs. AE and VRBS have access to the MDLI database to report their services, so that MDLI can report for the entire state.

**Include brief descriptions of:**

**a) current or planned evaluation and related research projects, including methodologies used;**  
**b) efforts to coordinate the development of such projects with WIOA core programs, other state agencies, and local boards. For the sake of thoroughness, a) and b) are combined throughout the descriptions below.**

MDLI has continued efforts to improve evaluative capacity and program knowledge across all workforce programs in the agency. Currently, MDLI is in the process of data collection for an evaluation of the department’s 100% program. The 100% program is a complementary program to the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program. It provides UI claimants, not selected for RESEA, with an orientation to the services and assistance available from Job Service Montana offices. The evaluation intends to determine the program’s impact on unemployment duration, utilization of UI benefits, and rates of benefit exhaustion. To do so, a randomized selection process was established to select a random treatment group of 100% participants who will be compared to the unselected control

group. For future evaluation projects, MDLI began consultation with the State Workforce Innovation Board (SWIB) to solicit input and advice on priorities and topics.

**c) a list of completed evaluation and related reports and links to where they were made accessible to the public electronically;**

Over the past year, MDLI completed in-depth reports on two of the state’s workforce programs.

- The first report was completed for Montana’s HELP-Link program. The HELP-Link program provides workforce training to Medicaid enrollees, with the goals of improving their long-term employability and reducing their reliance on Montana Medicaid. The program was modeled on the RESEA and WIOA Adult programs, so the lessons learned from the HELP-Link report can be used to inform RESEA and WIOA Adult activities as well. The HELP-Link report finds improved employment and wage outcomes for program participants, with those receiving more intensive services experiencing the greatest improvement in their workforce outcomes.
- The second report details evaluation of the Montana Registered Apprenticeship Program (MRAP), which has become a focus for MDLI’s workforce development activities due to the valuable apprenticeship training model. The report provides important information on program growth, outcomes for workers participating in apprenticeships, and room for improvement.
- A third report on labor market outcomes of graduates from Montana colleges and universities was developed to gain greater understanding of the supply and demand for specific occupations, degree programs, and postsecondary certificate fields. This college report informs target occupations for worker trainings in all MDLI workforce programs.

A copy each report is available to the public at:

- HELP-Link: <http://lmi.mt.gov/Publications/PublicationsContainer/help-link-2018-annual-report>
- Apprenticeship: <http://lmi.mt.gov/Publications/apprenticeship-works-for-montana>
- College Report: <http://lmi.mt.gov/Publications/PublicationsContainer/meeting-state-worker-demand>

**d) State efforts to provide data, survey responses, and timely site visits for Federal evaluations**

MDLI monitoring visits include a review of data entry into MDLI’s management information system and program compliance and fiscal compliance monitoring. Desk reviews and on-site visits are both utilized to evaluate participant records, gather data, and provide reports back to providers. Each site is visited/monitored annually. MDLI monitoring gathers information necessary for data performance reporting and provides program managers with the information needed to plan appropriate technical assistance and comprehensive on-going training to case managers.

The SWIB evaluates and certifies One-Stop sites no less than once every three years. The SWIB team is responsible for conducting independent, objective evaluations of One-Stop sites. In support of the goal of continuous improvement, each certified site will provide an annual report to the SWIB detailing progress toward pursuit of higher standards set forth in the certification criteria.

**e) Continuous improvement strategies utilizing results from studies and evidence-based practices evaluated**

MDLI is currently working to improve the agency's access to program-related data in a variety of forms via dashboards and data accessibility tools. These tools will serve two purposes: 1) to provide visual analytics of labor market information and program activities to inform managers, workforce consultants, and other staff for decision-making purposes; 2) to ease access to downloadable data on program activities to allow for improvement in monitoring and auditing, information sharing, and management decisions. Completed work by MDLI includes enhanced tools for extracting participant records for data monitoring and a data dashboard providing information on job seeker, posting, and WIOA program trends at local Job Service Montana offices around the state.

**Describe the state's approach to customer satisfaction, which many include such information used for one-stop certification, in accordance with 20 CFR 678.800**

MDLI continues to work on its approach to customer satisfaction, including the methodology to gather customer feedback and incorporate the feedback to improve its service delivery processes. The SWIB completed its certification of Montana's One-Stop System on September 26, 2017. The board respects the use of customer satisfaction information as an area for continuous improvement for the One-Stop Operator. The SWIB continues to work with the One-Stop Operator to develop a strategy to consistently survey customers; record and analyze the results; and apply customer satisfaction feedback to its continuous improvement processes.

As part of the process to collaborate on customer satisfaction and data collection, the SWIB sponsored a summer workshop for all service providers, including Vocational Rehabilitation and Adult Education, to facilitate discussion about coordination of services, business engagement, and to develop strategies to prioritize customer satisfaction in the public workforce system. The SWIB will continue working with the One-Stop Operator to coordinate annual workshops and an on-going, consistent approach to customer satisfaction, coordination of services, and business engagement.

In addition to working with the One-Stop Operator, the SWIB is working with economists at the MDLI to develop a comprehensive survey for all participants to analyze customer satisfaction. In addition to using customer satisfaction as a measure of success, the board is also working with economists to develop additional metrics to ensure best practices and safeguard the tools and resources customers need for effective employment outcomes.

**Progress made in implementing sector strategies and career pathways**

Due to the rural nature of Montana, MDLI approached sector partnerships both regionally and locally. MDLI adapted models to support the unique geography of Montana. For the initial phase of sector partnership implementation, MDLI is focusing on WIOA business engagement outcomes as indicators of success.

MDLI started by sharing the success of Montana's initial sector partnerships: a small rural partnership in Gardiner, adjacent to Yellowstone National Park, focused on tourism and the Greater Gallatin Valley

Manufacturing Partnership (GGVMP) representing the larger urban area of Bozeman and Gallatin County.

To expand sector partnerships, MDLI hosted a Sector Partnership Bootcamp (May 2018 in Billings, MT) to introduce the concept of sector partnerships and to train potential regional conveners on the development and launch of sector partnerships. Convener teams representing the state's five economic regions and made up of workforce development partners (WIOA core partners – Adult Education, Job Service Montana offices, and Vocational Rehabilitation), educators, training providers, and economic development partners participated. As part of the convener training, MDLI's Research and Analysis Bureau provided detailed labor market data and trained regional teams on analyzing data and developing a process for selecting high-demand industries for sector partnership engagement. Regional convener teams presently receiving technical assistance include a rural Eastern Montana team reviewing labor market information; and teams in Butte and Missoula.

In addition to the Sector Partnership Bootcamp, MDLI trained a team in the Nextgen Sector Partnership Model and now provides technical assistance to sector partnership conveners. To date, sector partnerships have been launched in Great Falls (retail) and Billings (IT). Currently, there are sector partnerships active or in development in four of Montana's five economic regions.

MDLI's Work-Based Learning (WBL) Director coordinates MDLI's career pathways strategy and implementation of the Montana WBL Continuum. To reduce duplication of efforts and assist with consistent messaging and resource development, the WBL Director also facilitates cross-agency discussions and knowledge-sharing. In partnership with Montana's Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, MDLI included the development and exploration of Pre-Apprenticeships/Apprenticeships on the state's competitive grant applications. WBL staff regularly attend and participate in the Office of Public Instruction's Interagency Pathways committee. A WBL team facilitated community engagement meetings, traveling to communities and listening to community leaders, local business associations, K-12 and higher education leaders, and individual businesses to learn of best practices for local engagement, business and education partnerships, development of work experiences for youth, and career pathways development.

#### **Specific state performance measures or goals and progress toward meeting them**

Because of MDLI evaluations, strategies are in place to improve program outcomes. Following a previous evaluation of provider-level spending and program participation and outcomes, MDLI implemented provider-specific goals on July 1, 2016 after consultation with the SWIB. State-wide consistency in spending, improved employment outcomes, and understanding of how program delivery affects outcomes for individuals is a SWIB and MDLI priority.

WIOA Adult program providers have specific goals focusing on cost-per-participant, amount spent on direct participant payments (payments for training and supportive services), and outcomes to employment. The WIOA Dislocated Worker program providers have two goals - Rapid Response service provided to new enrollments and employment outcomes. The WIOA Youth program providers' goals focus on cost-per-participant, In-School/Out-Of-School expenditures, WEX expenditures, and outcomes for employment or training. Measurable Skills Gains for each Youth provider are tracked, as well as the

amount of funding spent on direct participant payments. MDLI has noticed an improvement in spending and outcomes for providers since we implemented the goals.

### **Performance deficiencies on the primary indicators of performance**

There were four primary indicators of performance where Montana did not meet target. The negotiated credential rate for WIOA Dislocated Worker was 63 percent and Montana 's rate was 57.9 percent. The negotiated Youth Employment/Education/Training 2nd Quarter After Exit rate was 64.9 percent. Montana's rate was 54.2 percent. The negotiated credential rate for WIOA Youth was set at 59.6 percent and Montana's rate was 21.1 percent. The Wagner-Peyser Employment 2nd Quarter After Exit rate was negotiated at 70.9 percent. Montana's rate was 68.9 percent.

MDLI continues to improve WIOA reporting, striving for consistency in required performance data entry and the related training of case managers. The changes and improvements in WIOA federal reporting are frequent and demand staff time and funding. With its available resources, MDLI endeavors to adapt to the required changes and integrate improvements to safeguard successful participant outcomes.

A factor to consider in the deficient Youth credential rate: Case managers were not instructed to complete the required fields in MDLI's management information system and therefore MDLI could not capture credentials properly. Technical assistance was provided and continues monthly for all case managers, not simply Youth case managers. MDLI's efforts are focused on collecting the required information in the management information system so that we report credentials and measurable skill gains for youth properly.

Employment/Education/Training is the 2nd Quarter After Exit is also an area where MDLI is providing technical assistance to Youth case managers, ensuring that information collected in our management information system results in an accurate report of outcomes. The Dislocated Worker credential rate was close to the negotiated rate. Nonetheless, MDLI continues to stress to case managers the importance of recording appropriate information in the management information system, which will result in a state report of all credentials and measurable skills gains earned by participants.

The Wagner-Peyser Employment 2nd Quarter After Exit rate was also close to the negotiated rate. MDLI is implementing processes and system changes that will facilitate more active case management of participants to improve their employment outcomes.

### **The state's approach to data validation and ensuring data integrity**

Montana is also using the service provider goals, set in 2016 and noted above, to ensure data integrity. All Youth program participants are reviewed quarterly for the quality of case-management and data entry in MDLI's management information system; with technical assistance provided as necessary. MDLI is committed to one-on-one, quarterly assistance to bolster Youth outcomes. As a component of MDLI's monitoring process, data entry standards relevant to Adult and Dislocated Worker program participants are reviewed annually. After the monitoring report is issued, technical assistance is provided as necessary.

### **The state's common exit policy**

Montana has a common exit policy for Wagner-Peyser, WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker, WIOA Youth, TAA, VETS, and any National Dislocated Worker Grant. Once ninety days have lapsed since the client last received a countable service with no additional services planned for the future, a date of exit can be determined. The exit date is retroactive to last date of service and is not delayed, postponed, or affected by self-service or information-only services or activities. A copy of MDLI's Program Participation and Exit Policy is available to the public at:

- <http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/Portals/56/Documents/WSDPolicy/Program%20Participation%20and%20Exit%20Policy.pdf?ver=2018-10-01-115022-173>

### **Rapid Response activities and layoff aversion**

Montana utilized Rapid Response by funding Incumbent Worker Training activities to provide services to businesses and individuals directly impacted by the downturn in the coal industry. Unpredictable, changing dynamics at Colstrip's mine and power plant affect the community's businesses and residents almost daily. A general announcement of closure occurred, but workers have not received a layoff date.

Through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process, MDLI contracted for participant services and awarded three contracts to four service providers. Service providers have struggled to provide services under this grant, because individuals have yet to meet the definition of a Dislocated Worker. Therefore, Rapid Response funds provide proactive training to workers during the transition from jobs in the coal industry to new opportunities. MDLI also contracted with a research company to do in-depth economic research in the coal industry and provide that information to the state.

Rapid Response funds are being used by Power Grant service providers to provide training in the medical field and to host information sessions to help identify training needs. Power Grant service providers are also working with their local Job Service Montana staff on referrals to other workforce development programs.

Rapid Response funds support Job Service Montana workshops for businesses and laid-off workers—an information pipeline to workforce development opportunities. MDLI expects this partnership, created in the last few months, to continue as a proactive measure in the future. Once a layoff is announced, Job Service Montana offices also conduct Initial Contact Screenings. This is an opportunity for Job Service Montana staff to reach out to the business and begin a service relationship. During an Initial Contact Screening, Job Service Montana staff collects information about the business; the number of layoffs; and whether the layoff is permanent or temporary.

### **National Dislocated Worker Grants (DWGs) awarded to or within the state and how those funds are coordinated with state rapid response activities and dislocated worker programs, as well as how the DWGs fit in with state co-enrollment policies**

While co-enrollment can be a challenge in some states, all Montana's DWG participants are co-enrolled in the formula Dislocated Worker program. Because there is a Trade petition certified for TAA enrollees, Weyerhaeuser funds are used to support TAA participants. Most TAA participants who also have a

DWG are co-enrolled. In the event these grants end, services for those participants will continue. MDLI notes that seventy-five percent of dislocated workers are co-enrolled in another program, a rate that the agency strives to maintain, improve, and/or duplicate across all DWG programs through Job Service Montana staff training.

Rapid Response workshops were provided for Montana's state agencies who alerted their local Job Service Montana office of an impending layoff. Each employee affected by the layoff received information on the Dislocated Worker program and the Montana RIF from the agency's human resource representative. The RIF grant served six individuals to help them obtain employment, receive training for a new occupation, or relocate for work.

Coordination of the Power Grant and Rapid Response's layoff aversion activities occurs through workshops, training, and information sessions on workforce development activities. Power Grant service providers facilitate services at the employer's location or a convenient alternative. For example, an Emergency Medical Training (EMT) course is scheduled for Colstrip's Southeastern Montana Development Corporation office.

**Promising practices, lessons learned, and success stories that focus on serving employers, communities, and individuals with barriers to employment**

In PY 2017, Montana spent 86% of WIOA Title I Youth funds on out-of-school youth; exceeding the 75% out-of-school youth spending requirement. Montana's success in meeting the 75% out-of-school youth spending requirement is due in part to the relationships and partnerships developed between providers of the WIOA Title I Youth program, WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy program providers, local Job Service Montana offices, juvenile probation, housing services, and the TANF Pathways program. The cooperation, coordination, and close proximity of these programs to one another led to an increase in referrals of harder-to-serve, disconnected youth to the agencies that are prepared to assist them. Butte Action, Inc., a WIOA Youth program provider, attributes their success in serving out-of-school youth to their organization's collaborative efforts with their local school district, the local Job Service Montana office, juvenile probation, foster care, and TANF Pathways. Outreach to youth extends throughout the six counties served by the youth provider who also maintains a referral system established with the WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy program providers, the local Job Service Montana office, juvenile probation, housing services, the TANF Pathways program, and foster care. This practice allows for a more streamlined process to ensure the highest quality of service and is relatively common throughout the state's youth programs.

Most youth program providers note that they are fortunate to have collaborative relationships within their referral networks to find youth who could greatly benefit from services. Butte Action, Inc.'s housing service advocates work diligently to ensure they are reaching homeless or potentially homeless youth. In addition to establishing housing services, advocates often refer to WIOA youth program providers to deliver a more comprehensive level of assistance. The providers' youth advocates work with a variety of outside agencies, attend a variety of community meetings with providers serving like populations, and serve on boards focused on increasing youth career pathways and long-term academic opportunities. Additionally, the WIOA Youth program providers consistently established relationships with new businesses that participate in the work experience program. The program providers partner with multiple businesses/employers to participate in the providers' board meetings. In some areas of

the state, local businesses/employers meet with youth participants to discuss their pathway to success as well as barriers encountered and conquered. These meetings offer participants the opportunity to ask employers questions regarding career pathways as well as inquire about potential career opportunities.

Out-of-school youth also receive services to attain their diploma and gain work experiences through programs other than the WIOA Title I Youth Program. Helena's Career Training Institute was awarded a YouthBuild grant from the US Department of Labor in September 2017. After a few months of planning and recruiting applicants, program services started on January 3, 2018. The grant provides funds to serve 62 at-risk youth over a three-year period. Thirty-one students started the 2018 YouthBuild Helena program. YouthBuild targets services at high school dropouts. The following chart illustrates program demographics:

- 9 female, 22 males
- 65% ages 16 or 17; 35 % 18 or older
- 77% high school dropouts
- 45% offenders (11 youth/3 adult)
- 87% basic skill deficient
- 55% with a documented disability
- 84% unemployed at enrollment

There are five components of YouthBuild: education (HiSET preparation), construction skills training, case management, life/work readiness skills, and community service. YouthBuild is a nine-month, comprehensive, full-time program.

- 68 percent successfully completed YouthBuild
- 68 percent students completed OSHA 10
- 81 percent of students trained in First Aid/CPR
- 14 students received a national Certificate of Work Ethic Proficiency (A Game)
- 5 students earned a Home Builder's Institute Carpentry Pre-Apprenticeship Certificate
- 3 students earned a Montana Department of Labor and Industry Carpentry Pre-Apprenticeship Certificate
- 83 percent students improved literacy and/or numeracy scores
- 6 students attained a HiSET or diploma
- Service projects at Restore, Grandstreet Theatre, Helena Community Gardens, South Hills Community Bike Trail, Scratch gravel Hills litter cleanup, and filling sandbags during the Helena Valley flood emergency
- Students worked on three Helena Habitat for Humanity houses
- Field trips included on-site visits to IBEW, Carpenters, Helena College, Operating Engineers, and Boeing

The Jobs for Montana's Graduates (JMG) and the WIOA Youth Program continue to provide quality and beneficial services to eligible participants in the Montana Association of Counties (MACo) District 10 service area; specifically, in the northwest Montana counties of Flathead, Lake, Lincoln, and Sanders counties.

JMG and the WIOA Youth Program's primary goal is to increase focus on the participants' long-term academic, occupational learning, and employment opportunities. Participants in MACo's District 10 are encouraged and supported to stay in school, re-engage in school, and complete occupational training through Work Experience or On the Job Training (OJT). JMG and the WIOA Youth Program assists individuals with multiple barriers who otherwise might not have the opportunity to succeed and become a productive participant in our workforce.

JMG and the WIOA Youth Program successfully aided participants with both physical and emotional disabilities, assisting their connections with employers and providers who are willing to train them in industry-specific occupations. For example, JMG and the WIOA Programs recently assisted an individual to achieve a personal goal of becoming a funeral home attendant. By creating a relationship with an area employer, JMG and the Youth Program supported the participant's paid work experience. Upon completion of the work experience, the youth needed further training. The employer agreed to hire the participant and to take part in OJT. The intention is to support the participant's progress to an eventual transition into an apprenticeship, leading to long-term employment and self-sufficiency.

Creating and fostering valuable partnerships with local and regional employers and service providers has allowed JMG and the WIOA Youth Program to provide broader and more effective services to our participants. Conversations are on-going with foster care facilities in MACo District 10 to introduce the JMG and WIOA Youth programs. In partnership with a local teen homeless shelter, a participant with no means of financial and emotional support received services. These relationships offer youth education, training, and employment—hope for a brighter future. JMG and the WIOA Youth Program encourage co-enrollment in other programs, safeguarding greater opportunity for youth participants.

The Montana Registered Apprenticeship Program (MRAP) and WIOA partners continue efforts to identify opportunities to place WIOA-eligible job seekers into registered apprenticeships. Recently, MRAP staff developed a screening tool for both apprenticeship staff and Job Service Montana staff to review a potential apprentice's eligibility for WIOA services prior to their registration in the apprenticeship program. For example, after dislocation from his previous employment, a new apprentice was identified by MRAP staff as possibly WIOA-eligible. A referral to Job Service Montana determined he was eligible for financial assistance to pay for instruction relevant an electrician's apprenticeship. Currently, the apprentice is actively progressing in his apprenticeship program. MRAP staff also assist employers with OJT contracts.

Job Service Montana and MRAP made progress in coordinating and communicating with both individuals and businesses. MRAP program specialists include Job Service Montana staff in visits to sponsors; conducted to understand program and processes. Job Service Montana staff initiate conversations with businesses to share apprenticeship leads. To address the possibility of WIOA–Apprenticeship co-enrollment, MRAP and Job Service Montana are testing ways to do more deliberate pre-screening of potential apprentices to determine if they may be eligible for WIOA funding. The assigned MRAP program specialist for that area reaches out to a potential apprentice with a request to complete a pre-screening form. The completed form is provided to Job Service Montana staff for follow up.

Livingston's unique Work-Based Learning (WBL) Pilot Program was developed via a private/public partnership which includes MDLI, Montana State University Extension (MSUE), AMB West Community

Fund (formerly the Arthur Blank Foundation), and the Livingston School District. Industry and business partnerships drive and inform the pilot program with support from the community. The WBL program started with the 2017 Freshman class and will follow them through their senior year. The WBL continuum guides the experiences that will fully inform the students' post-secondary options. Community and industry are deeply involved in the development of activities, projects, and events that provide Park High School (PHS) students real-time exposure and connection to post-secondary career futures. The WBL Team create industry- and academia-informed career pathways which support a successful transition from high school to post-secondary options, leveraging and aligning academic, industry, and public resources to help advance knowledgeable graduates into the future. Through thoughtful design and implementation of this program, the goal is to replicate this model across the state via expertise from MDLI, MSUE, PHS, and business and industry.

The Incumbent Worker Training Program, state-sponsored and available to employers with fifty employees or less, partners with other state programs and agencies to improve training opportunities for Montana workers. In addition to the training offered by numerous local and national-level trainers and utilized by employers, this program leveraged resources available through the Montana Department of Commerce, the Montana Registered Apprenticeship Program (MRAP), and the Montana Manufacturing Extension Center (MMEC) as a part of the Montana University System. As a result of MDLI's focus on continuous improvement, the application process for this grant opportunity was streamlined and is accessible via an online platform shared with several Montana agencies.

MDLI continues with its effort to serve businesses effectively through the "Assistance for Business Clinics." MDLI plans and organizes these events annually. Day-long clinics provide businesses with compliance requirements, resources, and access to a subject-matter expert on a variety of topics including workers' compensation claims, the Stay at Work/Return to Work Program, independent contractors, revenue withholdings and e-services, labor market information, wage and hour regulation, and safety regulations. On average, fifteen clinics are conducted across the state, with approximately 700 businesses participating annually. Attendees have the option of receiving CPA, Legal, or Human Resource Continuing Education Credits.

MDLI's Job Service Operations Bureau reached out to WIOA partners providing business services at the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services' Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services and Montana Office of Public Instruction's Adult Education Program. Both agencies were invited to record their business services in MDLI's management information system and received related training. Both agencies also received training on recording data necessary document the progression from transactional to transformational services. Until more robust systems are in place, this collaborative documentation allows partners to work together to ensure businesses receive the benefits of the WIOA workforce development system.

MDLI, WIOA partners, Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services' Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services, and the Office of Public Instruction's Adult Education collaborated to plan, organize, and host a successful gathering of service providers. This was the second year that Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services, and Adult Education providers from throughout Montana assembled to receive training, share promising practices, and participate in break-out groups by service delivery area to update and plan collaborative efforts on business engagement.

In PY 2017, attainment of a credential through WIOA's Dislocated Worker Program resulted in positive outcomes for reemployment and economic security for the following participants:

Jason, a 12-year employee at a ranch and cattle operation, lost his position as manager and his housing benefit when the property and business sold. He moved in with his parents. In his sparsely populated community of Sheridan, MT, employment prospects were good if Jason obtained a CDL. Jason completed his CDL training and began work for A.M. Wells Co.; employment benefits include health insurance, retirement, and paid leave.

After her lay-off from Foothills Community Christian School as a technology teacher, Jessica enrolled in the WIOA Dislocated Workers program; seeking assistance with the costs to complete her bachelor's degree in elementary education and gain stable employment. She completed her BA in May of 2018, obtaining employment in August as a 4th grade teacher for Great Falls Public Schools.

A female veteran graduated Magna Cum Laude with a BA in Diesel Technology and Certificate in Applied Science in Welding and now works as a welding instructor at Montana State University-Northern. She was also selected to present at the Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations WANTO in Havre.

Kevin moved from Maryland to take a job as an engineer for a local energy company. Shortly after he started work, the business closed. Unable to find an engineering job locally earning comparable wages, he received a job offer from a Maryland company. He requested and received assistance to relocate to Maryland. He is now employed as the company's Senior Electrical Engineer.

After a fire destroyed the SK Fingerjoint plant, Dustin was unemployed. Dustin successfully completed On-the-Job-Training (OJT) with a local contractor. He co-enrolled in an apprenticeship and in the HELP-Link program. He also received assistance to purchase the required tools. He continues to receive WIOA assistance with the cost of his apprenticeship courses.

Faith, a widow with two children living in the home, received assistance to travel to an interview and with the cost of the LICSW test through the Association for Addiction Professionals (NAADAC). Faith received an offer of full time employment as a school therapist and needed to obtain her candidate license with the State of Montana Board of Behavioral Health. WIOA Dislocated Worker funds assisted with the cost of the application fee. Faith works as a school therapist at Ronan School District's Pablo Elementary.

Melody, a widow, was laid off her job as a collection agent—her sole means of financial support. Unable to find employment without further training, Melody was eligible for the Trade Adjustment Assistance and Dislocated Worker Programs. She completed MCIS career assessments and discovered an interest in medical office work. Because of her low math skills, Melody was referred to Adult Basic Education. When she completed her certifications, she needed to find employment right away and went to work for Northwest Traffic Control earning \$32.00 an hour. Melody is saving money to pay her bills and build savings, so she can look for medical office work when the highway construction season ends.

After working for her employer for almost ten years, Deann was laid off from her dental assistant position in December 2017. Job Service Montana staff collaborated with Deann on a plan to realize her dream of becoming a hairdresser. WIOA Dislocated Worker funds paid Deann's tuition for beauty school

in Miles City. Deann is on track to graduate and will take her state boards shortly. In January 2019, she will start her new career at a local salon.

Two employers, one federal and one local, welcomed veterans into their organizations; offering the new employees successful transitions and employment outcomes. Both veterans benefited from the time workforce development staff invested to understand and individualize their personal and professional goals—Douglas, a disabled veteran with physical and mental disability barriers, received assistance from a Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist to complete training in cyber security, identify his strengths, and develop a strong resume and interviewing skills. He obtained a job with the US Secret Service's IT security division. Shanel, a disabled veteran with mental health and stress barriers, completed Vocational-Rehabilitation training as a teacher in November 2017. Following graduation, she received extensive assistance with employment preparation tasks such as mock interviews, resume writing and interview techniques and presentation. Shanel obtained a full-time teaching position at Fairview High School.

### **General Employment Barriers**

On May 1, 2018, Job Service Montana offices implemented a new client intake process designed to capture the data elements required for Wagner-Peyser participants. Based on client responses to questions, the process allows Wagner-Peyser staff to effectively support a successful employment outcome by identifying barriers to employment more quickly; connecting the job seeker to resources which may help mitigate those barriers; and sharing current job referral suggestions. The new client intake process has greatly increased the number of individuals who receive intensive, one-on-one assistance more promptly at the beginning of their service relationship.

### **Challenges faced by the state workforce system**

As required under WIOA, Montana worked to implement an Infrastructure Cost-Sharing Agreement between the required WIOA partners. When the state started planning with the various partners, MDLI met partner reluctance due to ongoing funding constraints felt across all the programs. Fortunately, by January 2018, MDLI came to a consensus between partners and implemented the required cost-sharing.

Unfortunately, since that time, partners who are not internally operated by MDLI have moved out of One-Stop Centers across the state citing the inability to financially contribute to infrastructure. In some cases, they moved to a home-office structure. In other cases, they had their own infrastructure in place and could frequent the state's One-Stop Centers without contributing financially. In those cases, the partners were forced to choose one location over another. Other partners found cheaper office space than the space offered through a shared-cost methodology.

In the past, MDLI was able to work with partners using an informal agreement that allowed in-kind, cost-sharing of staff. This agreement worked well—bringing partners together and serving customers in a shared capacity. Under the Infrastructure Cost-Sharing requirements, this in-kind, cost-sharing of staff is no longer permitted. The unfortunate reality is that while shared infrastructure was created to bring partners together, it has, instead, driven partners apart. MDLI continues to try to utilize partner relationships where we can and coordinate services to the best of our ability. Nonetheless, MDLI struggles with the realities of the formal Infrastructure Cost-Sharing requirement.

In conclusion, Montana’s WIOA Annual Statewide Performance PY 2017 Report Narrative details state progress towards meeting its strategic vision and goals for its workforce system. MDLI conducted impact analyses that measure the effectiveness of workforce system services, including experimental analysis such as evaluation of the state’s 100% program and non-experimental, i.e. the HELP-Link program. MDLI’s qualitative and quantification analyses of cost-per-participant, direct participant payments for training and supportive services, and employment outcomes led to subsequent consultation with the SWIB to develop state-wide consistency in provider-specific goals for Adult and Dislocated Workers and Youth participants. In this narrative, MDLI describes current workforce development initiatives such as sector strategies and career pathways. In addition, the narrative notes an improvement in accessibility to the agency’s program-related data by providing visual analytics of labor market information and program activities, using study results to inform decisions. The narrative includes Job Service Montana’s implementation of a new client intake process designed to identify and mitigate barriers to employment more quickly. While MDLI understands that all states likely perceive that the challenges faced by their workforce system are uniquely daunting, we share a commitment to research methodologies relevant to evidence-based and emerging practices that assist MDLI to make sound decisions about improving performance outcomes for job seekers and employers.