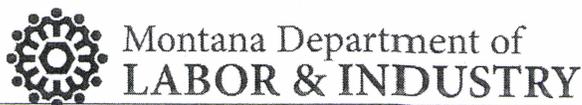


# Memorandum



TO: Children and Families Interim Committee  
FROM: Montana Department of Labor & Industry  
CONTACT: Annie Glover, [aglover@mt.gov](mailto:aglover@mt.gov), (406) 444-1654  
DATE: March 7, 2016  
SUBJECT: HELP Act Workforce Program

The Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) received an information request from the Children and Families Interim Committee on the Montana HELP Plan Workforce Program, HELP-Link. This memo answers specific questions posed by the committee, and the attached document provides further background on the HELP-Link program.

DLI will be providing a detailed report to the HELP Act Oversight Committee on March 22. This report will include additional information on barriers to employment, services provided, and referrals made to participants.

## **1. The number of people to whom DLI has mailed information about the ability to participate in the workforce programs**

DPHHS has sent a letter that includes information about the HELP-Link workforce program to every Montana HELP Plan participant. DLI will send letters to all participants that will include detailed information about the program components and a program brochure in April. This letter will be sent after the ARM process is complete and we are able to provide specific program details, such as what constitutes “active participation,” to participants.

Since the program launch in January, we have focused on recruiting HELP-Link workforce participants through outreach to community organizations who provide services to low income Montanans. Job Service Offices host local Community Management Teams (CMTs). CMTs exist to coordinate and align services at the local level; membership includes private workforce providers, colleges, housing providers, HRDCs, and Offices of Public Assistance. We have presented this program to the full CMTs in Helena, Butte, Miles City, and Glasgow, and we have included CMT members in our HELP-Link staff trainings in Kalispell, Missoula, Great Falls, Havre, Billings, and Bozeman. This outreach will continue as we believe that in-person referrals are the most successful method of outreach and education for this program.

## **2. The number of people who have completed the initial assessment**

1529 Montana HELP Plan participants have completed the initial HELP-Link online survey assessment. 178 have completed the initial appointment, which activates their participation in the program. DLI follows up by email to remind people who have taken the online survey that they need to come in for an appointment to become an active participant.

### 3. The number of people who have undertaken reportable activities, broken down by the four categories – job search, workforce information, career guidance, and intensive services

The chart below details the reportable services for active participants as of March 7, 2016. Some participants receive more than one reportable service within each category, so the category totals may not be the same as the sum of the individual services. Every active participant receives Labor Market Information (Labor force supply and demand) and Intensive Services at a minimum at their first appointment. Intensive services are individualized assessments and employment planning.

Service Category	COUNT
<i>Career Guidance</i>	9
Career Assessment Inventory	1
Career Interest Inventory	1
Interest Profiler - Onet	1
Montana Career Information System Assessment and Profile	8
<i>Job Search Services</i>	89
Application Instructions & guidance including ATS	15
Assistance with job matching	19
Cover Letter Assistance	12
Interview Tips & Guidance	12
Job Development	2
Job Seeker Workshops	7
Resume Assistance *	51
<i>Workforce Information Services</i>	178
Job Identification of high growth / high demand	6
Labor force supply and demand	178
Short and long term projections	4
<i>Intensive Service</i>	178
<b>Total Active Participants with a Service</b>	<b>178</b>



# HELP-link

The Montana HELP Plan Workforce Program

## Connecting Healthy Workers to Brighter Futures

HELP-Link is a free workforce program that HELP Act Medicaid enrollee may access at anytime through local Job Service Offices and online via [www.jobs.mt.gov](http://www.jobs.mt.gov).

### HELP-Link participants will:

1. Receive a confidential employment assessment
2. Work one-on-one with an experienced Job Service Employment Specialist to create an Individual Employment Plan (IEP)
3. Receive up-to-date labor market information about high demand jobs in their area
4. Access work search, career readiness, and subsidized training services
5. Connect to additional community referral resources to help overcome barriers to employment

HELP-Link is supported by the statewide Job Service network housed under the Department of Labor & Industry umbrella. Job Service has physical offices in: Anaconda, Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Cut Bank, Dillon, Glasgow, Glendive, Great Falls, Hamilton, Havre, Helena, Kalispell, Lame Deer, Lewistown, Libby, Livingston, Miles City, Missoula, Polson, Shelby, Sidney, Thompson Falls, and Wolf Point. Job Service staff provides services in all 56 counties. HELP-Link participants unable to travel will also be able to access services via phone or internet.

Participation in the workforce program is not mandatory for HELP Act Medicaid participants. However participants do have an incentive to join HELP-Link if they have not paid insurance premiums and face Medicaid disenrollment. DLI will prioritize reaching and providing services to participants who are facing disenrollment. DLI will also reach out to all HELP Act participants to encourage participation in HELP-Link opportunities either independently or through joint communications with DPHHS and the TPA.

## Overview

In April 2015, Governor Steve Bullock signed the Montana Health and Economic Livelihood Partnership (HELP) Act into law. Sponsored by Senator Ed Buttrey (R-Great Falls), the HELP Act is Montana's bipartisan solution to expand Medicaid through the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Unlike any other state's Medicaid Expansion plan, the HELP Act codifies a unique partnership between the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) and the Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) to streamline subsidized healthcare and targeted workforce development into a collaborative approach to improving Montanans' lives through wellness and economic self sufficiency.

## Legislative Guidance: SB 405

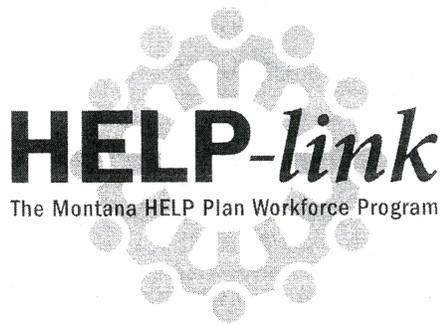
The legislative guidance for HELP-Link is provided in SB 405 Sections 14-17. Specifically, this plan meets the requirements outlined in section 14(2)(c) which states, "The purpose of sections 14-17 is to create a collaborative effort between the department of labor and industry and the department of public health and human services to establish a comprehensive plan for coordinating efforts and resources to provide workforce development opportunities."

SB 405 lays out several objectives that HELP-Link has been designed to meet. These objectives are laid out in section 14(3), which states that "the department of labor and industry shall implement a workforce development program that:

1. Focuses on specific labor force needs within the state of Montana;
2. Has the goal of reducing the number of people depending on social programs, including the HELP Act program; and
3. Increases earning capacity, economic stability, and self-sufficiency of program participants so that, among other benefits, they are able to purchase their own health insurance coverage.



Montana Department of  
**LABOR & INDUSTRY**



## Participant Profile

HELP-Link participants are diverse and represent a variety of workforce demographics. They may be:

- Employed in a job that does not provide health coverage. These participants may benefit from assistance with a search for a higher paying job with benefits or access to training for a high demand field in their community.
- Working in the labor force and underemployed.
- Dropped out of the labor force entirely due to being unable to work for health reasons, are providing care for children or aging relatives, or other circumstances.
- Recently unemployed.
- Unemployed long enough to become frustrated and disengaged with an active job search.

## High Demand Healthcare Jobs

In section 14(1)(e), SB 405 states that "an opportunity exists to match individuals who need self-sustaining employment with the jobs the economy needs, including newly created healthcare jobs." To fulfill this specific request, DLI will coordinate with HealthCARE Montana ([www.healthcaremontana.org](http://www.healthcaremontana.org)) to recruit and guide HELP-Link participants into new opportunities for healthcare training provided in this grant. DLI is also in the process of building a new Healthcare Registered Apprenticeship program; this program will be a new opportunity for HELP-Link participants to earn a wage while learning on the job in a new healthcare profession.

