

Memorandum

TO: Economic Transition, Stabilization & Workforce Development Commission
 FROM: Laurie Esau, Commissioner, DLI
 DATE: September 8, 2021
 SUBJECT: Rapid Retraining Program

Overview:

The Montana Department of Labor & Industry proposes the Rapid Retraining Program. This Program intends to do two things with these one-time-only funds.

1. Utilize the existing state network of contracted workforce program operators to quickly disperse money to local communities. These funds will be used to conduct and support short term training needs and offer Montana citizens impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic the opportunity to reestablish their self-sufficiency.
2. Support expansion of an accelerated job-training model developed via a public-private partnership currently operating in Missoula. These funds will help address Montana’s economic recovery from COVID-19 by designing, launching, and sustaining industry-led workforce training programs in high demand sectors.

For the purposes of this Program and both projects, rapid retraining and short-term training both refer to that which can occur in three months or less.

Targeted and demand industries and occupations are those that have high labor or technical skill demands, that offer expanded career opportunities, that provide self-sustaining wages, and/or that were negatively impacted by the pandemic.

Allocation Request and Deadlines:

- \$10,000,000, allocated per HB 632 for Rapid Retraining Job Training (Section 12(2)).

Total	2 Projects		4 Disbursements	
\$10M	\$4M	Rapid Retraining funds to existing workforce providers	\$2M	\$1M to HHS and \$1M to DLI contracted workforce providers immediately
			\$2M	\$1M to HHS and \$1M to some providers one year after initial disbursement
	\$6M	Accelerate Workforce Training	\$5M	For identification of short-term training needs, course development, delivery, and final report
			\$1M	For paid-training wage subsidies for participating businesses

Structure:

- \$4M will be distributed to existing state workforce program operators (WIOA Adult, TANF Pathways, SNAP E&T).
 - \$2M would be distributed immediately via a supplemental allocation
 - Funds will be focused on (but not limited to) short term worker training for jobs in targeted and demand industries and occupations.
 - Preference/Priority will be given to underserved and underrepresented labor pools and/or individuals with arranged employment commitments.
 - An additional supplemental allocation of \$2M may be made again in SFY'23.
 - This portion of the program will be co-administered with DPHHS.
 - 1 FTE will be added to coordinate between DLI, DPHHS and other related workforce operators and programs.

- \$6M will focus on expanding the University of Montana-ATG/Cognizant “Accelerate MT” model as a template to identify and create up to 10 industry-driven and MUS-partner-delivered short-term occupational trainings focused on jobs that pay or provide a pathway to at least \$50,000/year.
 - Funds will cover costs to research and identify high wage, high demand jobs that are achievable via basic skills, relevant to Montana’s post-pandemic economy, and offer high wages and/or career advancement opportunities.
 - Funds will provide workforce “scholarships” that will lower or eliminate program costs for students/workers and employers.
 - Funds will also be used to offset the cost of a paid-training wage for trainees.
 - The Program will be structured so that even if the training is non-credit bearing to start, students/workers can “translate” that learning into credit later and use those credits toward certificates and/or degrees.
 - * *OCHS will seek to leverage HB2 funds in support of this Program.*

Eligibility:

- Existing (already under contract) state workforce program operators are eligible for Rapid Retraining supplemental allocation funds. Those funds will leverage existing workforce program eligibility criteria with allowances for additional or alternative criteria to be used based on demonstrated/documentated individual and economic labor-force-connected impacts.
- Identified project partners are eligible for Accelerate Workforce Training Funds. Those funds will be restricted to activities that accomplish and support the identification, development, delivery, and report-out of up to 10 specific short-term occupational training courses and cohorts.

Application and Verification:

- Funds for existing providers will be awarded per a supplemental allocation.
- Funds for the Accelerate Workforce Training project will be awarded as project milestones are reached.

Equity:

- Underserved and underrepresented labor pools are those that traditional programs struggle to fully engage at the same rate due to employment challenges that are at least perceived to be harder to overcome or address.
- They include but are not limited to minorities, women, Native Americans, individuals with disabilities, individuals with criminal backgrounds, individuals with substance use disorders, foster youth, etc.
- Existing state workforce programs already require priority be given to underserved and underrepresented groups and individuals. This Program will adhere to and hopes to build on those existing requirements.

Performance Metrics:

1. Workforce Provider Funds
 - a. Number individuals enrolled
 - b. Number started training
 - c. Number completed training
 - d. Number employed post-training
 - e. Training by type
 - f. Employment by type
2. Accelerate Workforce Training Funds
 - a. Jobs vs Job training needs report
 - b. (up to) 10 new accelerated job training courses development and delivered
 - c. Number individuals trained
 - d. Number hired
 - e. Number retained

Recommendation:

DLI recommends the Commission allocate \$10,000,000 in Rapid Retraining Program funds to 1) enroll more people in workforce training programs and 2) expand industry-driven accelerated workforce training courses.