



**MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM**  
**Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education**

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TO: Two-Year Task Force

FROM: Arlene Parisot, Director of Workforce Development

RE: Current Projects: Workforce Development

To follow up on recent discussions of the Two-Year Task Force, staff in the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education have pursued several initiatives to garner supplementary funding for support of workforce training in the two-year sector.

1. Governor's Discretionary Funds – Department of Labor and Industry

The Workforce Development Unit (OCHE) has entered into an agreement with the Montana Department of Labor and Industry, Statewide Workforce Programs Bureau to transfer \$80,000 to the Workforce Development Unit to build an infrastructure that leads to helping reduce the shortage in the health care field. This agreement states:

Utilizing a current model for delivery of a statewide health care program (surgical technician), the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, Workforce Development Unit would provide the management of the above mentioned funds for the development of a statewide education program to be accessed both on-line and on local campuses across the state. The program(s) to be developed will focus on the critical workforce shortage area of radiology technology and, as feasible, concentrate on other critical areas such as medical coding. This model would involve establishing partnerships with medical facilities to provide such resources as clinical lab sites, clinical supervision and, when viable, a monetary contribution

2. Governor's Discretionary Funds – Montana Department of Commerce

The Department of Commerce's Workforce Training Grant makes available a total of \$800,000 to Montana businesses for incumbent worker job training for existing and new employees.

The Workforce Development Unit (OCHE) is working in collaboration with the St. Vincent Hospital Foundation to submit an application to retrain a pool of incumbent healthcare workers into career areas such as nursing, surgical technician, and radiology technician. The St. Vincent Foundation will submit the application on behalf of St. Vincent Hospital in Billings and St. James in Butte. The Workforce Development Unit and two-year institutions will provide the training plan for the designated programs. The grant award would provide approximately \$200,000 (\$5,000 per position to be reimbursed to employer upon completion of training and employment in new position).

3. Workforce Investment Act Section 503 Incentive Grants

Based upon success of Perkins, Title I of WIA (MJTP), and Title II Adult Education in meeting or exceeding performance levels, Montana is expected to qualify to submit an application for the Incentive Grant. Potential funds: \$750,000 or more.

Arlene Parisot, Perkins administrator, met with the eligible partners to discuss a joint project for submission to the U.S. Department of Labor. The partners agreed to adopt a career pathways approach to workforce development based on regional clusters. The

percentage of funds for each partner would be determined upon approval of the grant. This application requires consultation of the State Legislature as well as approval by the Governor, the eligible agency for adult education, and the eligible agency for vocational and technical education.

Each partner has preliminarily agreed to the following activities:

- Perkins: coordinate career pathways in two-year institutions based on a clusters approach; identify gaps in training needs; and design statewide delivery of programs.
- Adult Education: request investment in infrastructure; identify and train the unprepared adult; and provide career counseling.
- Montana Job Training Partnership: provide Soft Skills training; identify potential students; and provide transitional services.

4. Career Clusters Initiative. Under the direction of the Workforce Development Unit (OCHE), a team of five individuals, representing two-year institutions and a secondary career center, was selected to attend the Clusters Debut in Charleston, South Carolina. The team has since been meeting via conference call on a monthly basis to discuss process for introducing the clusters concept. The following activities represent the efforts up to date:

- The Two-Year Conference was the vehicle to introduce the Clusters approach to faculty and administrators.
- The Director of Workforce Development, Arlene Parisot, met with John Cech (team member) and the Greater Yellowstone Business and Education Council to discuss the clusters initiative for the Billings area. This council, chaired by the Publisher of the Billings Gazette, Mike Gullede, identified six clusters as relevant to Billings and surrounding area. A lead stakeholder was selected to energize and mobilize the stakeholders in each cluster. The expected outcomes of this initiative are to develop new linkages, partnerships and training opportunities.
- Arlene Parisot (OCHE) and Jim Wenderoth (team member from UM-Missoula College of Technology) provided technical assistance on clusters for the faculty of the UM-Missoula College of Technology. The Montana Tech College of Technology plans to duplicate the strategy implemented in Billings to further the clusters initiative and to engage business and industry.

5. National Governors' Association Policy Academy on Workforce Development the Next Generation

Montana was one of six states chosen to participate in the academy. The states are: Idaho, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, Ohio, and Virginia. Montana's major goals are to:

- organize workforce development around industry clusters by organizing cluster associations and establishing cluster skill centers;
- increase the use of two-year education institutions for workforce training and supporting innovative delivery systems that provide for continuous learning.

Members of the "away" team include: OCHE (Arlene Parisot), DOLI (Wendy Keating, Ingrid Childress and Gary Warren), DPHHS (Hank Hudson and Joel Mathews) Chamber of Commerce (Webb Brown), local government (to be determined), and OPI Adult Education (David Strong or designee). There are other members to be included as the "home" team. NGA provides expenses for five individuals. The first meeting is to be held in Washington D.C, March 20-22, 2003.

Pc: C. Krause, J. Scott