



Montana Department of **LABOR & INDUSTRY**

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Annual Statewide Performance Report Narrative – PY 2019

Montana submits its WIOA Annual Statewide Performance Report Narrative for PY 2019 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 PY2019, Montana had two approved waivers.

Waiver of obligation of eligible training providers (ETPs) to collect and report on the performance data for all students in a training program, approved through June 30, 2020 - The Montana Department of Labor and Industry (MDLI) collaborated with our partners at the Commissioner of Higher Education office and the Office of Public Instruction to determine whether students entered the workforce after completing post-secondary education. Information gathered identified the degree/certificate programs the students completed; what industry they are employed in at a specific point in time; and their wages earned. This information gave MDLI the ability to compare those outcomes to WIOA participants in similar education and training programs to determine if their outcomes are comparable to regular students in post-secondary programs.

Waiver to allow the State Board to carry out the functions of the Local Board, approved through June 30, 2020 - Montana is a large geographic state with accompanying barriers related to service delivery in a remote setting, combined with minimal WIOA funds. The ability for the State Board to carry out the functions of the Local Board reduces the overhead that would be required to staff multiple boards, allowing Montana to maximize the funds available for direct services to individuals. It is the State Board’s intent to serve the largest number of individuals and this waiver makes it possible by leveraging funds in the most consistent and efficient manner.

Two approaches the state chose for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers performance indicator pilot:

Montana focused on all three performance indicators: Retention with the Same Employer; Repeat Business Customers; and the Employer Penetration Rate. Job Service Montana (JSM) staff recorded business contacts in the MDLI database. This practice resulted in a relatively smooth calculation of the pilot’s WIOA Effectiveness in Serving Employers performance indicators.

MDLI partnered with Adult Education (AE) and Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services (VRBS) to report the Effectiveness in Serving Employers in the MDLI database. Though only JSM and VRBS currently record business contacts in MDLI database, AE also has access to the MDLI database to report their services, so that MDLI can eventually report for the entire state.

To improve our WIOA performance indicators related to the effectively serving businesses, JSM worked to revamp marketing materials aimed at businesses, as well as improved training for field staff in business engagement. JSM efforts focused on value proposition—the benefits (not the features) business customers will receive from the services/programs provided by MDLI. It is imperative, as JSM engages with businesses, that every opportunity is taken to move from a general discussion with employers to one that is specific to their immediate and future workforce development needs.

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.

Efforts by MDLI to improve evaluative capacity and program knowledge across all workforce programs in the agency have continued. MDLI is in the process of implementing an evaluation of the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program as well as new virtual service delivery methods. Montana is a large, rural state with a well-dispersed population making in-person services difficult to access for some claimants. With the introduction of the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual service delivery has become even more critical to maintaining continuity of quality services for all Montanans. As such, MDLI is implementing a revised RESEA selection model to begin a Randomized Control Trial (RCT) study design of the program as well as the implementation of new techniques meant to enhance virtual service delivery. Currently, MDLI is implementing the evaluation design into its IT infrastructure so that RESEA participants can be selected into treatment and control groups for the evaluation. By testing, verifying, and improving virtual service offerings MDLI will be able to widen its customer base and ensure quality service delivery. An RCT has been chosen as the study design because it is the gold standard for evaluation. MDLI continues to report evaluation and performance results to the State Workforce Innovation Board (SWIB) and relies on SWIB board guidance for direction on future evaluation efforts.

MDLI continues to complete in-depth reports on workforce programs in the state. Every year MDLI updates its report on participants in the Montana Registered Apprenticeship Program (MRAP) to analyze program participation trends and apprentice outcomes. This has consistently identified positive program outcomes that demonstrate the value of apprenticeship while also providing information that can be used for continuous improvement within MDLI.

MDLI has produced reports on the labor market and labor force engagement to provide valuable information to JSM offices on employment opportunities and employment barriers. MDLI worked with the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis to survey employers on childcare as a barrier to worker

engagement. Childcare is becoming a significant barrier to employment for workers remaining out of the labor force and for dual-earner families. Montana also provided updates to the Montana University System on its supply and demand analysis of Montana's job market to help guide course planning for the universities and provide workers insight into in-demand occupations and educational opportunities at Montana's public colleges and universities.

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

MDLI completed an in-depth report on one of the state's workforce programs, providing descriptive information on participants and basic outcomes for MRAP. This annual report provides information on participant demographics as well as program participation trends that are valuable for program planning. The report is available publicly online.

Apprenticeship Report: <http://lmi.mt.gov/Portals/193/Publications/LMI-Pubs/Special%20Reports%20and%20Studies/Apprenticeship-Data-Report-2020.pdf>

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

In addition to an assessment of program and fiscal compliance, MDLI monitoring visits include a review of data entered into MDLI's Management Information System. Desk reviews and on-site visits are both utilized to evaluate participant records, gather data, and provide reports back to service providers. The MDLI monitoring team 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. While each site is typically monitored annually, this year there were scheduling disruptions as a result of the pandemic and the in-person visits that were scheduled in March-June, did not take place.

The SWIB is responsible for conducting independent, objective evaluations of One-Stop sites. The SWIB evaluates and certifies One-Stop sites no less than once every three years. The SWIB completed its recertification of Montana's One-Stop System on September 30, 2020.

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

Through an RCT evaluation of MDLI's 100% program that referred UI claimants to Job Service orientation services, MDLI found that the program had little to no effect on claimant outcomes. As a result, MDLI shifted resources from that program to the RESEA program. This has allowed a greater number of individuals to be served through the intensive services offered through RESEA. MDLI is now focusing evaluation activities on the RESEA program to develop innovative new service delivery methods and maximize the impacts of that program.

MDLI continues to improve the agency's access to program-related data in a variety of forms via dashboards and data accessibility tools. These tools provide visual analytics of labor market information and program activities to inform managers, workforce consultants, and other staff for decision-making

purposes and ease access to downloadable data on program activities to allow for improvement in monitoring and auditing, information sharing, and management decisions.

In the past year, Montana has been quick to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic by standing up new dashboards providing up-to-date economic information on jobless claims, unemployment, payroll jobs, and job postings. These dashboards provide statewide and local information that are valuable in planning and operations. These dashboards can be found at: <http://lmi.mt.gov/home/job-tracking>. MDLI has also continued improving data availability for case managers and program managers with new dashboards on program participation trends and outcomes. These are only available internally for MDLI staff but are of great use when managing caseloads and identifying areas of improvement.

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

During PY2019, the One-Stop Operator, MDLI economists, and the SWIB Director worked together to develop the initial steps in gathering customer satisfaction feedback from all Title 1B Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth participants who exited services each month. A letter, a customer satisfaction survey, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope were sent by mail to former participants the following month. The survey identified the provider and the program, allowing follow-up to both favorable and unfavorable responses. It also asked if additional services or information would be helpful and follow-up was provided for those requests, including referral to another provider. This year, processes were refined; and survey results shared more widely.

- The number of individuals who were provided customer satisfaction outreach and results; calculated in two ways:
 1. Rate (percentage) of surveys returned to surveys mailed:
 - PY 2019 – 88 surveys returned to 660 surveys mailed for a rate of 13.33%
 2. Percentage of participants who responded as – very satisfied, satisfied, and dissatisfied:
 - PY 2019 – Very Satisfied 81.82%; Satisfied 11.36%; Dissatisfied 3.41%; and No Response 3.41%

Service providers regularly elicit feedback from business partners and Wagner-Peyser customers related to hiring events, career and resource fairs, workshops, and virtual trainings.

A description of Montana’s continuous improvement processes for incorporating customer satisfaction feedback:

When a promising practice is identified through surveys, details are shared with all providers and WIOA program managers. Specific service-related kudos and suggestions are forwarded to the provider and the appropriate case manager. When a participant notes specific service deficiencies, the provider is

contacted for a detailed discussion of the feedback and options for improvement. MDLI's future goals include automation of the survey process.

Separately and in the spirit of continuous improvement, JSM recently contracted with the Spokane Workforce Council to provide training on gathering real-time customer feedback and how to implement needed changes based on that feedback.

Specific state performance measures or goals and progress toward meeting them:

MDLI has specific goals for each WIOA program to measure individual providers outside of federally negotiated performance measures. These goals are monitored on a quarterly basis and regular feedback is provided to service providers to ensure continuous improvement in service delivery to all participants across the state. The goals include cost-per-participant, amount spent on direct participant payments and outcomes to employment. The goals are reviewed by the SWIB, as well as MDLI management.

Performance deficiencies on the primary indicators of performance:

MDLI continues to improve WIOA reporting, striving for consistency in required performance-data entry. The changes and improvements in WIOA federal reporting are frequent, demanding staff time and funding. With its available resources, MDLI endeavors to adapt to the required changes and safeguard participant data.

MDLI was close to meeting all performance indicators for WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker, and Wagner-Peyser programs. WIOA Youth performance indicators are an area that MDLI continues to focus efforts to improve quality. Measurable Skills Gains and Credential Attainment Rate indicators are also an area of focus across all programs. Technical Assistance is being provided and will continue to be provided for all case managers to increase the quality of participant data.

To provide consistent support and foster their success, MDLI strives to provide case managers with performance data-related tools and training. During PY2019, MDLI committed to the development of a new electronic case management system to focus on the collection and uniformity of required information, eventually leading to a higher quality report of participant outcomes and the state's negotiated measures.

Common exit policy:

Montana has a common exit policy for Wagner Peyser; WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth; TAA; Veterans; and any National Dislocated Worker Grant. Once ninety days have lapsed since the client last received a countable service with no additional services planned, a date of exit can be determined. The exit date is retroactive to the last date of service and is not delayed, postponed or affected by self-service or information-only services or activities.

The state's approach to data validation and ensuring data integrity:

MDLI expanded on written procedures for data validation. The data validation requirements apply to:

- WIOA Core Programs and the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program; and
- Non-Core Programs:
 - National Dislocated Worker Grants (DWG)
 - Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG)
 - Monitor Advocate System – all requirements that apply to Wagner-Peyser Employment Services apply to this system.

Montana's Data Validation process consists of two main components - report validation (RV) and data element validation (DEV):

- RV - Report validation is accomplished by processing an entire file of participant records to check the accuracy of the state calculations used to generate the USDOL quarterly and annual performance reports submitted through the Workforce Integrated Performance System. In addition, the state conducts quarterly queries of the MIS database to report and correct errors or missing data found in participant records to ensure all applicable records are reported on accurately in quarterly and annual performance reports.
- DEV - The data element validation process is conducted quarterly using samples of Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) data to assess accuracy against source documentation for program exiters' files to ensure compliance with federal definitions.

MDLI's procedures also include the following:

- Record retention time frames based on Primary Indicator of Performance exit date; not the date that the client stops receiving Veteran, Wagner-Peyser, WIOA, or TAA services.
- Monitoring staff to provide service providers and program managers with a written summary of identified errors or missing data and a request to correct the inaccuracies.
- Program managers to provide technical assistance.
- Service providers to respond in writing when all inaccuracies and/or inconsistencies have been corrected.

MDLI's monitoring staff will attend data validation training annually. MDLI's Monitoring, Audits, Performance and Sanctions Policy details monitoring protocols, consistent with 2 CFR 200.328 to ensure program staff are following written procedures.

A review of program data that includes the United States Department of Labor's (USDOL) required elements will be conducted on a quarterly basis and the data validation process will be assessed annually for effectiveness.

Information on activities provided by state funds:

Become an Alum

There are approximately 120,000 Montanans who attended a Montana University System (MUS) institution but left before attaining a degree or credential. MDLI and the MUS have studied the

circumstances of these individuals and determined that most would benefit from upskilling through degree or credential completion.

To address this, in PY2018, MDLI's Job Service Missoula office partnered with the University of Montana on a pilot project called Become an Alum (BAA). This project sought to potentially re-enroll some of the 3,900 individuals who 1) left U of M in the past 5 years, 2) did not complete a degree at another institution, 3) are not currently enrolled at another institution, and 4) are still within commuting distance to the U of M campus.

Because of the initial success of Missoula's BAA efforts, JSM and local education partners in five additional locations initiated similar efforts in PY2019. These are works in progress, therefore data and outcomes will be reported in next year's narrative.

HELP-Link Program

Montana's Health and Economic Livelihood Partnership (HELP) Act provides workforce development opportunities for Medicaid eligible adults, ages 19 – 64 with an income less than 138% of the federal poverty rate. MDLI administers the workforce component of the HELP Act program, referred to as HELP-Link. The primary purposes of this program are to increase the earning capacity, economic stability, and the self-sufficiency of eligible participants and increase the number of individuals who purchase their own health insurance coverage and no longer require Medicaid coverage.

During PY2019, the HELP-Link program enrolled 471 clients; expending \$1,148,568. The average cost per participant totaled approximately \$2,438. Staff spent over 7,103 total hours working on this program with an average of 15 hours per participant.

The most common occupations pursued by HELP-Link participants are:

- Medical Related Occupations (CNA, Coding, and Registered Nurses, etc.)
- Technology and Computer Services
- Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers
- Cosmetology and Massage Therapists

MDLI implemented an Employer Grant Program to incentivize employers who hire and train HELP-Link participants with barriers to employment and/or increase participant earnings. These grants provided reimbursement to employers for qualified training expenses and/or for providing work supports to make jobs more stable.

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

Since WIOA's enactment in 2014, MDLI's Workforce Services Division (WSD) focused on the WIOA Hallmarks of Excellence. During PY2019, staff training and workforce development conversations continued to center around innovation and collaboration to respond to community needs; support for local and regional economies; integrated services; and continuous improvement. This year has been a challenge in many ways and some progress stalled or slipped backward. MDLI worked to regain

momentum and to take advantage of the vast and varied new opportunities presenting themselves as many seek to create new relationships and business models.

a) Serving Individuals with Employment Barriers:

Montana communities are unique, with available resources diverse and influenced by educational centers, culture, population, and accessibility. With 146,000 square miles of land (easily encompassing five or six East Coast states), Montana's geography might demand that citizens travel several hours one-way to access resources and/or support. The rural nature of much of Montana presents unique opportunities.

JSM offices are experienced and successful in reducing or removing all types of barriers. In many communities, JSM offices are the place to go for connections to all employment and training-related resources, as well as resources provided by any and all partner agencies within the region. Staff are knowledgeable about opportunities and, especially in smaller communities, know the individual to call to facilitate an easy and seamless connection; to leverage other services; and/or secure funding. These personal relationships between JSM staff and service providers are invaluable to those served regardless of the type of barrier.

In PY2019, MDLI maintained and supported various pathways to statewide offender re-entry efforts. In addition to working directly with offenders on barrier reduction and employability skills, local offices also facilitated job placements with local employers. For example, Bozeman's JSM staff partnered with the community detention facility to organize and facilitate meetings of local employers and soon-to-be-released offenders. These meetings led to employment, OJT opportunities, mentorships, and apprenticeships. Initially, meetings were in-person, but due to COVID-19, switched to a virtual setting.

JSM continues to partner with VRBS to maximize access to high-demand, quality careers for individuals with disabilities. Additionally, VRBS and their partners continue to include JSM staff in trainings designed to improve service to our customers with disabilities. AE is a valued partner and collaboration continues across the state.

Montana is home to seven Indian reservations and the state-recognized Little Shell Tribe of the Chippewa Indians. JSM staff clearly understand that barriers to education, employment, and training are often higher for citizens living on the reservations and that delivery of services to individuals and businesses is critical to those communities. JSM offices are well-positioned to deliver those services directly in the following locations:

- Blackfeet - Job Service Cut Bank and Job Service Great Falls;
- Crow - Job Service Billings;
- Confederated Salish & Kootenai of the Flathead - Job Service Polson;
- Fort Belknap - Job Service Havre;
- Fort Peck - Job Service Wolf Point and Eastern Montana Pathways;
- Little Shell Chippewa Tribal Capital - Job Service Great Falls;
- Northern Cheyenne - Job Service Miles City and Eastern Montana Pathways; and
- Rocky Boy - Job Service Havre.

Providing services on the reservations is an on-going effort. Some specifics include:

Job Service Great Falls

The City of Great Falls has the largest Native American population living away from tribal land, with a majority being Blackfeet, Fort Belknap, and Little Shell tribal members.

- Partners with the Montana United Indian Alliance to co-enroll in WIOA program and provide effective service to Native Americans and their families; and
- Joins meetings on the Blackfeet, Fort Belknap, and Rocky Boy Reservations as part of MDLI's active participation in the North Central Montana Veteran Service Providers group—a conduit to Native American Veterans residing in the service area.

Job Service Cut Bank

- Provides outreach services to the Blackfeet Reservation weekly and on an as-needed basis;
- Maintains quality working relationships with various Tribal departments and entities in Browning such as Blackfeet Community College, Housing, Tribal Employment Rights Office, and Blackfeet Manpower; and
- Delivers services to meet the unique needs of businesses and clients on the Blackfeet Reservation and partners in tribal community Job Fairs and educations events.
- One of JSM Cutbank's office staff serves as Vice Chairperson of the Blackfeet Manpower (Working Friends) Community Management Team.

Job Service Billings

- Provides monthly outreach to Little Bighorn College (Crow Reservation);
- Participates in Tribal College Fair at Little Bighorn College; and
- Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) provides monthly outreach to Crow Agency (Crow Reservation) and Lame Deer (Northern Cheyenne Reservation).

Job Service Wolf Point

- Collaborates with the Tribal Employment Rights Office in a hiring fair for the Sidney Sugars production season. Job Service Wolf Point and Sidney staffs share community resource information and educate attendees on transitioning from seasonal employment;
- Partners with the Warrior Center shelter for homeless Veterans to provide access to basic clothing, cold weather gear, transportation, food, job training funding, employment-related clothing, footwear and other employment-related resources and support, including connecting with services offered by the federal Veterans Service Officer; and
- Collaborates with area schools and Fort Peck Community College on various levels of employability education and providing access to grant-funded training opportunities.

Job Service Polson

- Staff serve on Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes' (CSKT) Workforce Enhancement Coalition committee, which is funded by a grant to help Native Americans find employment.
- Provides information, resources, and hosts workshops on job hunting, customer service, soft skills, and relevant career information;

- Partners with CSKT's Department of Human Resource Development to provide one-on-one assistance to fifteen clients registering online and searching for jobs remotely;
- Collaborates with Salish Kootenai College by enrolling students in grant-funded training programs, providing student employment services, as well as serving on advisory boards; and
- Collaborates with the CSKT Re-entry program and other Tribal agencies to assist participants with obtaining employment.

Job Service Miles City

- Collaborates with the federal Veteran Service Officer and Northern Cheyenne tribal representatives in expanding delivery of veteran and non-veteran services. This partnership has greatly increased the awareness of available services to both veterans and non-veterans. It's resulted in greater consistency of area service delivery, broadening the impact on a population of tribal members who were previously unaware of the array of services available to them.
- Partners with the Northern Cheyenne Adult Detention Center to educate inmates about post-release job readiness skills and resources. These efforts establish a working relationship between JSM staff and clients who are greatest-in-need of support to reduce recidivism by increasing employability.
- Participates in the Northern Cheyenne College Tribal Fair. Staff assisted students in researching summer employment opportunities and delivered and explained a wide variety of services.
- Provides Rapid Response services to enrolled Northern Cheyenne members laid off during the power plant closures in Colstrip. JSM staff assisted employers and impacted workers and collaborated with Unemployment Insurance staff, POWER Grant service providers, and other entities to ensure the best outcomes possible for all.

Job Service Havre

- Collaborates with Chippewa Cree Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) representatives to examine how combined services can better impact participants;
- Meets regularly with veteran representatives from Blackfeet, Fort Belknap, and Chippewa Cree reservations to discuss veteran needs and identify service strategies and resources;
- Partners with Rocky Boy Health Board on community mental health issues and participates in events such as the Mental Health First Aid Presentation;
- Partners with Chippewa Cree Tribe representatives on issues and opportunities associated with tribal and area poverty;
- Provides employment readiness training for Aaniih Nakota College students; and
- Prepared to attend the Stone Child College and Aaniiih Nakota College fairs, however, they were cancelled due to COVID-19.

The following tribes have been working with MRAP to create opportunities for individuals to increase their skill sets and meet the qualifications to become journey workers in their field:

- Rocky Boy Health Clinic in Box Elder – new registered apprenticeship program with six medical coder and biller apprentices. Partnered with the American Health Information Management Association for funding.
- Blackfeet Housing, Browning – new registered apprenticeship programs in plumber, carpenter, and HVAC apprenticeships.

- Fort Belknap Housing Authority – requested standards for a plumber apprenticeship program. Two current employees completed the program at Montana State University (MSU) – Northern in Havre and a local master plumber agreed to mentor them and provide oversight.
- Crow and Northern Cheyenne reservations – initial planning for housing maintenance technician, carpenter, and sheet metal registered apprenticeships. MDLI is also developing an associate degree program for the two local tribal colleges in conjunction with MSU -Northern for plumbers and electricians.

While COVID-19 disrupted all timetables, a schedule for related training instruction has progressed between MSU-Northern, Little Big Horn College, and the Apsaalooke Nation Housing Authority. Before the Governor’s State of Emergency Declaration in March, a leadership exchange took place, traveling from Havre to Crow Agency and from Crow Agency to Havre to finalize program offerings.

With emergency closures/restrictions currently in effect for several of Montana’s tribal nations, mitigation of COVID-19 risks will be the top priority. However, planning and preparation will continue. When the closures end, priorities will shift to recovery of local economies and employment of tribal members. Participating colleges include:

- Little Big Horn College;
- Aaniiih Nakoda College;
- Stone Child College; and
- Chief Dull Knife College.

The Jobs for Montana Graduates (JMG) model is offered across the state and includes nine schools (middle schools, high schools, and one tribal college) that serve a high percentage of American Indian students either on or near the reservation. The model supports Project-Based Learning to obtain the thirty-seven core competencies, employer engagement, and trauma-informed care to increase graduation rates and support workforce readiness. It fosters student’s retention and credential attainment. It offers participants the opportunity to learn, practice, and master the professional skills needed to become gainfully employed in the future.

During PY2019, JMG continued to work with Fort Peck Community College (FPCC) to support students in their career development; to understand and practice skills needed for employment; and to promote staying in school to obtain credentials for advancement in their career choices.

- The implementation was conducted in partnership with FPCC and JMG staff.
- An increased number of students participated; with completion rates growing from four to eighteen students.
- Each student created a Career Portfolio that included students speaking to potential employers; setting goals; and creating a plan of the path to the credentials needed for their career.
- Additional data will be collected for the upcoming year to evaluate how many participants stayed in school, obtained credentials, and obtained employment.
- These activities were supported by a grant that MDLI-JMG received from Strada Education Network.

JMG also partnered with the Montana Office of Public Instruction's Indian Education for All Program to help support students at schools on reservations that are not meeting the state benchmarks. In addition, JMG classes in Arlee, Lame Deer, Nashua, and Culbertson—communities on or near a reservation—participated in "Youth Entrepreneur" programming during PY2019. JMG will continue to encourage and support the practice of youth entrepreneurship.

During PY2019, JMG provided quality and comprehensive services to eligible participants. Individuals collaborated with case managers to create a long-term plan to assist with academics, work and life skills, and employment opportunities. JMG established and built relationships with local and regional employers and service providers. These partnerships allowed JMG to provide broader, more effective services to clients. JMG's partnership with WIOA Adult grew and participants benefited from all available services. The collaboration between JMG and WIOA Adult expanded participant access to referrals and resources and supports those seeking program services. Participants gained skills and created a plan to prepare to enter or reenter the workforce through additional training.

MDLI's Montana Career Information System (MCIS) is a key tool used to pinpoint a client's desired occupation. MCIS works in partnership with USDOL's Bureau of Labor Statistics and Employment and Training Administration to develop state and national labor market information for businesses, educators, government agencies, researchers, students, and other interested individuals. MCIS is also home to Montana's Career Resources, providing career development tools and information for elementary school students to Montana seniors. MCIS services are free and current information is available on-line.

JMG is also a service provider for the WIOA Youth Program in the Northwest region known as District 10 of the Montana Association of Counties (MACo). The counties in this region include Flathead, Lake, Lincoln, and Sanders. JMG provided out-of-school youth with opportunities to reconnect with their communities. Out-of-school youth were supported and encouraged to obtain the HiSET (High School Equivalency) and gain valuable job skills through Work Experience (WEX) or On-The-Job Training (OJT) activities. The overall goal is to assist clients with barriers to be successful and productive participants in our workforce.

Utilizing established employer and provider connections, JMG successfully provided necessary and appropriate services to a nineteen-year-old high school graduate with multiple barriers to employment, aiding his success in the WIOA Youth Program. His goals were to obtain a job as a welder and make enough money to live independently. Starting with low TABE test scores and a strong desire to work, the case manager and client used MCIS to assist the client to find an occupational match. The client's MCIS Assessments pointed toward occupations related to manual labor, fitting with his planned goal of becoming a welder.

In September 2019, the case manager met with the Human Resource Officer at Rocky Mountain Twist, a precision tool manufacturer in Ronan to discuss the WIOA Youth Program opportunities offered by Work Experience (WEX), Alternative Work Experience (Alternative WEX), and OJT. Rocky Mountain Twist was eager to build the relationship between JMG and their business to support employability training for clients in the program. The client is their first introduction to the WIOA WEX program. The business and the client found this relationship to be a win-win opportunity for both.

All JSM staff continue to prioritize services to veterans. The JVSG team continues to serve veterans with significant barriers to employment. The JVSG team has a long standing and successful partnership with the Veterans Affairs (VA), VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E), and a wide variety of veteran organizations and service providers throughout the state. Those relationships provide connections to all types of services and contribute to successful outcomes for those served. Montana has one of the highest per capita percentages of veterans and serving these individuals well is viewed as an honor.

JVSG-funded staff, integrated into JSM offices, are knowledgeable about VA services and preference, ensuring that each veteran has access to various opportunities and that the entire team contribute to their employment success. Appropriate referrals are made to services within the JSM office (including WIOA opportunities); and outside the JSM office as well. The WIOA case manager provides the appropriate assessment and career guidance necessary to prepare an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) with the client. The services are based on the individual's needs and the assigned case manager provides the appropriate services, i.e. resume development, referral for training, or a job referral. The final step of the initial meeting confirms an appointment date and time for a follow-up meeting within thirty days to track the veteran's progress to employment. This provides eligible veterans with the intensive and follow-up services they need to succeed in today's job market.

DVOP staff throughout Montana worked with Volunteers of America staff to develop a support network consisting of local area service providers. DVOP staff also worked with Veterans involved in the justice system, including locations with Treatment Courts.

JSM is the lead agency for Veteran Service Providers (VSP). DVOP staff organized and led most meetings of service providers in local communities. The meetings promoted communication between local, state, and other VSPs, keeping all parties current on issues facing veterans and the community; veteran-related events; and DVOP staff responsibilities and services offered. Depending on the location, meetings are held monthly, or quarterly. After March 2020, the meetings continued in a virtual format.

DVOP staff provided case management to Chapter 31 Veterans who are completing their education or training through the Chapter 31 Vocational Rehabilitation with the VA. Participants are referred approximately six months prior to completion on their education or training. DVOP staff contacted the Chapter 31 Veterans and worked with them individually to assist them to accomplish their employment goals.

b) Services to Business:

ABC Clinics

One of MDLI's business outreach efforts is the Assistance for Business Clinics (ABC). The ABCs partner with the local Chamber of Commerce to provide new and established businesses with updated information from MDLI, Montana Department of Revenue, Montana Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS), and Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve.

Previous ABCs were held in an in-person setting throughout Montana. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, PY2019 presented a unique opportunity to continue this important outreach effort in a virtual environment. MDLI quickly adapted by using a virtual presentation platform—Zoom. In partnership

with the Missoula Chamber of Commerce and the Missoula Job Service, the first virtual ABC clinic was held in May 2020. As the benefit of conducting these clinics virtually became evident, the decision to scale and continue virtually was made.

To do so, MDLI offered the clinic in conjunction with SafetyFestMT and opened the registration to businesses statewide. SafetyFestMT—a partnership between Liberty Mutual, Montana Contractors Compensation Fund, Montana State Fund, WorkSafeMT, and MDLI—provides support and resources to facilitate high-quality safety training to Montana’s workers at little or no cost. The SafetyFestMT opportunity set the foundation to provide virtual clinics in the future, in addition to in-person to reach an even greater business audience throughout Montana.

Incumbent Worker Training

In addition to local office activities which focused on tribal customers, promotion of Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) was conducted during PY2019. MDLI’s IWT Program Manager visited Billings, Lame Deer, Crow Agency, Wolf Point, and Poplar. The main purpose of the promotional tour was to connect with our tribal communities, primarily through the tribal college extension service agents or a locally-based non-profit and economic development community organizations with outreach capability. IWT staff made presentations to the following organizations who helped encourage participation from their community:

- Native American Development Corporation in Billings;
- Chief Dull Knife College Extension Services and People’s Partners for Community Development in Lame Deer (Northern Cheyenne);
- Little Bighorn College Extension Services and Plenty Doors Community Development in Crow Agency; and
- Great Northern Development Corporation in Wolf Point (Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes).
- Another tour was postponed and COVID-19 prevented additional outreach.

Business Engagement Registered Apprenticeship Bootcamp

A Business Engagement Registered Apprenticeship Bootcamp was offered to specific MRAP and JSM staff in the spring. MRAP and JSM staff who attended the bootcamp then worked collaboratively to share key takeaways with other MRAP specialists, MDLI leadership, and seventeen JSM offices. This collaboration and training resulted in awareness that working as a team across inter-agency departments has the potential to leverage funding and dramatically improve the services provided to businesses and individuals.

Vocational Rehabilitation

MDLI continued to drive business engagement efforts with one of its key core partners, Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services (VRBS). Monthly meetings set the foundation for discussing coordinated, aligned business outreach with the JSM and VRBS throughout the state. One of the coordinated business outreach efforts—Windmills Disability Awareness Training—equips business leaders with the knowledge, skills, and tools to create an inclusive workplace where all employees can thrive. Both JSM and VRBS have newly-trained Windmills instructors and continued to collaborate to bring this training to Montana employers via virtual “lunch and learns;” Job Service Employer Committee (JSEC) and Montana State Employers Council meetings; and other virtual training avenues. MDLI also presented at VRBS’s annual business services meeting and remains involved in their strategic plan.

Pandemic-related Resources for Businesses

As a result of the pandemic and the need to relay timely and valuable information to businesses across the state, MDLI facilitated new communication and information-sharing opportunities. In the early pandemic months, daily and then weekly videos were shared via the MDLI's website and social media platforms, passing along relevant information about federal and state resources; grant opportunities; and updates about unemployment insurance, etc. Additionally, several virtual employer town hall events were provided on a variety of valuable and timely topics. As evidenced by their consistent participation and engagement, the business community responded well.

c) Promising Workforce Development Practices:

Glendive JSEC

Glendive's Job Services Employers' Committee (JSEC) had an ongoing discussion about challenges related to recruiting and retaining highly-skilled professionals in Eastern Montana. The committee asked if Job Service Glendive would be willing to assist with solutions. Job Service Glendive partnered with Glendive's Chamber of Commerce, asking area Human Resource personnel and CEOs from large businesses to visit and discuss recruitment and retention solutions. Three focus areas were identified: collaboration on recruiting (products, prospects, and travel); attraction to the community (making Glendive more move-in-and-stay friendly); and deliberate connections. Based on these three areas, the group formed committees and worked on areas of improvement. For example, the recruiting group created a traveling Glendive suitcase—a small TV pre-loaded with photos of and videos about Glendive and a stand-up banner—which organizations may rent and take to different job or college fairs. The attracting team started a Glendive Ambassadors program. A business can request that an ambassador show perspective employees the town's attractions—a wonderful example of a partnership between multiple industries and agencies wanting to bring new or prospective employees to town and keep them engaged once they arrive.

Connections 101

MDLI partnered with Great Falls Public Schools' Career & College Readiness Center and Great Falls College-MSU to start a fourteen-week pilot program—Connections 101. Connections 101 is an integrated education and training bridge program that enables adult learners to develop the skills and strategies they need to succeed in college or the workforce while earning college credits and industry-recognized certificates. During the first six weeks, participants completed career exploration (including, but not limited to, MCIS, Myers-Briggs, career counseling, and work ethic-related behavior). This exploration assisted participants in choosing a career field and developing a pathway to achievement. During weeks seven through fourteen, students engaged in either an introductory course or work-based learning experience. The cohort started with 24 students and finished with 20. Participants, partners, and businesses saw impact and value in the pilot and the spring cohort was going strong until COVID-19 arrived.

POWER Grant

In 2017, MDLI applied for a USDOL National Dislocated Worker Grant (referred to as the POWER grant) to respond to workforce development challenges in Montana's coal country which progressed from a real concern about imminent closures and mass layoffs to an inability for coal businesses and

communities to find, hire, and retain skilled workers. During this time, the national policy climate around coal mining and power generation shifted greatly making it difficult to apply viable workforce solutions. When providing workforce solution funding, services, and support, MDLI's strategy is based on coal county's business and community input. MDLI competitively procured four service providers to provide job search assistance and retraining opportunities to eligible individuals should they be laid off. MDLI engaged four service providers (Dawson Community College, AFL-CIO, Chief Dull Knife Community College, and Miles City Community College) to conduct outreach in the area and other related employment and training services to laid off workers in the affected communities.

Based on changes in the dates of anticipated business closures or lay-offs affecting employers served by the grant, MDLI requested and received an extension of the POWER grant until December 31, 2020. There are 41 dislocated workers receiving assistance through the POWER grant and most are enrolled in CDL training or welding courses. Currently, MDLI and the service providers are working on a transition plan, so that services continue for enrolled workers, allowing them to finish their training by grant's completion date.

DWG Employment Recovery Grant

Montana applied for and received an Employment Recovery DWG Grant. The grant provides resources to states and other eligible applicants to respond to major economic dislocations, such as large, unexpected lay-off events that cause significant job losses. This grant provided resources with the flexibility to respond and recover from layoff events attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. Montana expects to serve approximately 115 individuals with this grant. General categories of services to be provided include, but are not limited to, job search, occupational training, and supportive services. MDLI focused on contact tracing training and utilization of on-line training courses. Because impacts to affected workers and business continued to evolve, this grant enabled MDLI to revisit and reexamine our service delivery focus and methods based on worker feedback about occupational interests and ensure workers are connected to employers based on local labor market conditions. Significant grant expectations are:

- Develop an effective awareness campaign (virtual and in person when appropriate) of the services provided under the DWG; identify employer workforce needs and get the word out to workers to prepare them to transition from UI benefits to current demand jobs. In addition, contact current UI claimants to assess current and future job prospects, interests, skills, and training needs, etc.;
- Negotiate on-line and virtual training services, starting with vendors like Coursera On-line platform - <https://www.coursera.org/>;
- Work with Montana Registered Apprenticeship Program (MRAP) to promote, invest in, and train a contact-tracing workforce; and connect to related technical instruction in the health apprenticeship program.

When recovery from COVID-19 occurs, the public workforce system will continue to serve as a vital conduit between supply and demand, offering understanding of and context for the current market; necessary and desired occupational competencies; and ultimately connecting talent with employment opportunities in Montana.

d) Integration Efforts:

JSM and MDLI's Unemployment Insurance Division (UI) made the most of opportunities to integrate as a result of the pandemic. In response to the sudden and drastic increase in UI claims, JSM staff received rapid training and UI system access to help thousands of claimants successfully. While the immediate crisis is, at least for now, behind us, JSM and UI continue a more collaborative approach and will use these lessons learned to develop an integrated business model further.

MRAP continues to have full-time specialists located in JSM offices, promoting apprenticeship and work-based learning collaboration as a workforce development strategy. Several MRAP specialists are former JSM employees. These individuals helped to close knowledge gaps between the two programs, making collaboration and coordination much easier.

MRAP and WIOA partners successfully identified opportunities to place WIOA-eligible job seekers into registered apprenticeships—an effective work-based learning approach that builds worker skills and establishes benchmarks and pathways to higher levels of employment and wages.

As employers continued to search for qualified employees in a tight labor market, the partnership between MRAP and JSM allowed MDLI to assist those employers to obtain a skilled workforce, coordinate outreach, and look for opportunities to replicate the model in additional communities.

In three locations, JSM continued as the operator of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Pathways Program through a contract with DPHHS. The purpose of the TANF program is to support families to be stable, able to work, and financially secure. In Missoula, JSM also continues to operate the SNAP Employment and Training and the Refugee Program. In all three locations, these programs consistently produced successful outcomes and, during PY2019, received accolades from DPHHS during the monitoring cycle.

e) Using Data to Inform Decisions:

Dashboards have been developed to track and present a visual representation of layoff and closure-related Initial Screening Contacts. Knowing where JSM has responded to layoffs and closures has helped make decisions about how/where to use formula Dislocated Worker funding and the recently awarded DWG funding.

JSM developed a client intake process for participants who may benefit from resources that help mitigate those barriers. After successful implementation of that manual intake process, JSM has continued to improve the tool, add relevant questions, and refine the process for use. This tool, built in an Access database, has also helped capture important information to effectively serve customers.

f) Using Technology to Assist Customers:

When COVID-19 arrived in Montana, MDLI enhanced services to rural areas by increasing virtual services. Individuals, hindered by the miles between communities, took advantage of services provided remotely. For example, technology assisted with continued RESEA service delivery, increasing appointment completion rates.

Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, MDLI maintained close ties with the Small Business Administration and economic groups across the state to gather current information. To share that information with businesses on a variety of pandemic and employment-related topics, MDLI started a weekly virtual town hall for a large group of employers. The town halls were archived on the MDLI website. After each presentation aired, extensive traffic visited the website's archives. In addition, a business communication team was formed to promote the comprehensive resources available to businesses as they navigated the early stages of the pandemic.

MDLI's LMI unit gave multiple presentations to business groups, providing several hundred businesses with both LMI and career information. MDLI also stood up a separate web page on the LMI site that displayed UI claim information, as well as relevant economic data and job postings. Finally, the team worked in concert with the Missoula Chamber of Commerce to stand up a separate website related to Career and Technical Education (CTE), so businesses could enter their business opportunities and high school students and their parents/guardians could view the data quickly and easily. The listings were more comprehensive than basic job postings giving background information on skills and/or training needed, apprenticeship opportunities, and related career pathways.

g) Successes:

Teach a Man to Fish Using the UI Filing Process

MDLI had great success using the UI filing process to incentivize individuals to stretch outside their comfort zone and become more comfortable with technology: learning how to set up and use e-mail; how to access and interact with a website (such as MontanaWorks); how to use their cell phone to access an e-mail account and do their bi-weekly filing; and best of all, to look for work and fill out on-line applications. The Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation's \$600/week Stimulus Benefit provided motivation to learn transferable job skills and build competencies. In some cases, it took JSM staff an hour and a half to guide claimants over the phone—step by step, page by page—but the confidence, experience, independence, and satisfaction claimants gained once the tasks were complete, boosted the individual's morale.

Cindy requested JSM's help after being laid off from her job as a greeter at McDonalds. Cindy has an intellectual disability, combined with no cell phone, no computer, no e-mail; and is unable to understand unemployment-related filing requirements. She has difficulty reciting dates, times, etc. After sending in three requests for UI to please call her and help her file her claim but receiving no response, JSM staff suggested that a trusted friend/family member with a computer assist her. Her sister called with Cindy present and JSM staff walked her through the MontanaWorks requirements, providing instructions for filing the UI claim. Staff followed up with the sister who reported that the claim was filed successfully.

OJT

The following success stories illustrate the power of the OJT program administered by JSM. Unemployed job seekers secured and completed paid training and local businesses found, trained, and retained excellent employees—resulting in a positive impact on multiple facets of Montana's economy.

JSM enrolled several clients with intellectual disabilities in OJTs—clients who likely would not have succeeded without this type of intensive support. JSM successfully placed clients who have severe

PTSD, traumatic brain injury, and autism with local employers; supporting them to adopt work protocols, learn soft skills, and develop specific job skills, all while realizing the immediate benefits of receiving a paycheck.

Many clients benefited from the supportive environment which offered a shared case management relationship with the client and employer, addressing any issues that arise and regarding them as a valuable learning experience. Through these partnerships, MDLI gained a much more intimate knowledge of business cultures and specific skill requirements.

After applying for several jobs and not being hired, Amy talked openly about her learning disability and asked for help interviewing. JSM staff coached her extensively, conducting mock interviews and advising her about appropriate topics to discuss in an interview. An OJT was developed with the local entity serving developmentally disabled individuals. Amy overcame challenges and remains successfully employed.

After suffering a traumatic brain injury, Pat had a hard time finding and keeping employment. JSM staff worked with a local feed store to develop an OJT for Pat. Throughout training, Pat and the employer experienced and overcame several challenges related to Pat's memory loss. Because his limitations have been accommodated, Pat remains employed.

When Tracy was laid off from her position at Senior Solutions, she attended a RESEA meeting and subsequently followed up; intrigued about the WIOA programs and other training opportunities. Initially, Tracy pursued an OJT with a Missoula-based law firm. The employer decided to forego the OJT contract, worried about the uncertain success of a Butte branch. JSM and Tracy continued to search for OJT opportunities in the Butte community. An employer offered Tracy a position that would allow her to use her current, dynamic skill set while learning new skills. Tracy was hired by the National Affordable Housing Network (NAHN) in Butte as a Housing Credit Counselor. After six months of OJT experience, Tracy earned her certification as a Housing Credit Counselor. Upon certification, she began working with clients in the nearby Anaconda area. Her OJT experience and subsequent certification allowed the Butte NAHN office to expand its services to the Anaconda, which had been underserved due to the lack of a certified counselor.

Tansi was laid off when the local ShopKo closed. Her work experience was limited to retail. JSM staff placed her in an OJT with a local optometrist in a professional office setting, which proved to be too much of an adjustment. JSM staff encouraged her to apply for a State job at the local Driver's Exam office and provided coaching assistance in the interview process. She was hired and loves her work, gaining a secure income with benefits, something she has not had in the past.

Toni, a recently divorced single mom with a solid work history in investments, was laid off due to COVID-19. JSM staff worked with a local Auto Dealership to develop an OJT in auto sales, something she had never done before. She loves the work, had great sales success, and the employer is extremely satisfied with her ability to learn a new career so quickly.

After being stabbed multiple times by a client and developing severe PTSD, Wendy left her job. There was an opening with a local feed store and while Wendy had experience keeping large animals, she had no retail or cashiering experience. JSM facilitated an OJT opportunity and Wendy has been training on the Point of Sale system, ordering product, inventory, and restocking. Wendy is flourishing and her confidence has been boosted. The employer feels she is a perfect fit for their needs.

A young, dislocated worker with a large family to support, Ted could not find steady work that paid enough to support his family. A local builder sought skilled carpenters and while this line of work appealed to Ted, he lacked the required skills. JSM staff talked to the employer about Ted and OJT. After interviewing Ted, the employer agreed that Ted was a good prospect. JSM staff helped the employer map out a training plan for Ted and he completed a highly successful OJT. Ted received raises and is bursting with pride in his new profession, bringing in pictures of the high-end homes that the company builds. Most recently, he shared the news that he purchased his first home. The employer stated that the OJT program helped to make up for the loss of productivity incurred while training a new employee and that he couldn't be more pleased with Ted's craftsmanship and work ethic.

Additional Success Stories:

Mick was laid off from a good-paying mining job in Washington; with a Washington TAA certification. He was able to find semi-local employment at a much lower wage and the RTAA program paid half of the difference between his prior and current wage. This took lots of coordinating with WA to accomplish due to differing forms and processes in each state.

Linda was laid off from the Montana Department of Transportation. She was able to obtain interim employment as a patient sitter at Marcus Daly Hospital, however she was not able to get enough hours to be self-sufficient. She was interested in obtaining her CNA license as she felt this would make her more marketable for full-time positions. She completed training at Bitterroot College and obtained her CNA license. She subsequently obtained a full-time position at Marcus Daly Hospital in the Med Surg Department.

Amber was employed part-time as a bartender making minimum wage. Co-enrolled in Title 1B Adult and Help Link, she completed the Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA) program at the Bitterroot College, receiving certification. She was also co-enrolled in Pathways and the WIOA Youth Program as well. Pathways split the tuition costs with JSM and WIOA Youth provided the scrubs and stethoscope and helped pay daycare costs. Amber did an Externship through the Subsidized Employment Program (SEP) with a local medical center. She was hired full time at that same medical center once her SEP was completed; at a starting wage of \$16.00/hour with benefits.

Mattea, a disabled veteran, was contacted by the University of Montana's BAA program, offering her an opportunity to return to education. She was also eligible for the Title 1B Adult Program. The BAA program worked extensively with Mattea, helping her with a training proposal and navigation through health issues. At her enrollment appointment, Mattea said that she could not follow through because her Veteran's Disability Status changed to 100%. After she discovered that her status was not 100%, Mattea enrolled for spring semester to pursue a degree in social work. She was referred to Disability Services for Students for extra support. She also received daily coaching and was encouraged to contact

VA VRBS reopen her case for financial support. Mattea is now supported by BAA and VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment, continuing with her coursework at the University of Montana.

Micheline, a Congolese refugee, initially started employment at TJ Maxx, followed by Missoula Alliance Church. Micheline enrolled in the Job Service Missoula's Pathways program, TANF, and SEP to increase her skills and abilities and find a job that matched her passions of helping others, especially those less fortunate. With the assistance of Pathways, Micheline gained CPR/First Aid certifications, improved her English language skills, linked to area resources, and improved her budgeting and financial skills. Micheline was placed in a SEP at Village Health Care as a hospitality aide and eventually moved into a position in dining services due to her ability connect with clients and her incredible personality. Micheline successfully completed her SEP employment and achieved her personal goal of working in the health care field helping others.

Challenges:

Montana effectively embraced COVID-19 challenges during this program year. MDLI acted nimbly and flexibly to adapt services to a remote delivery model. MDLI took advantage of its well-established community partnerships and business relationships, continuing to serve the citizens of Montana successfully. While extremely challenging, MDLI was able to leverage staff and resources to help meet the unprecedented unemployment claim surge.

Because Montana is a small-population state, the on-going challenge to be well-versed in all-things-state-government is real. This challenge demands that MDLI function as the face and customer service representative of government in local communities. MDLI pivoted to focus workforce development on the most critical issues facing communities, helping citizens navigate the UI system and business challenges suddenly brought on by the pandemic—a response which has been critically beneficial to Montana as a whole. MDLI continues to assess and meet these challenges as the landscape changes constantly in this pandemic. MDLI is re-inventing quality service delivery, to ensure the best possible outcomes for Montana's businesses, workforce, and the economy.

JSM will continue to address the effect of the pandemic on clients seeking skills training or completing job applications without access to electronic devices or internet connections. Adding to this challenge is the fact that JSM offices are currently closed to the public. Previously, clients without technology or the skills to navigate the same would have been served 1:1 and in person. Additionally, training opportunities were typically accessed in person. Finding alternatives is another test, however the solutions will positively affect workforce development efforts well into the future—with or without a continued health crisis.

Conclusion:

Montana's WIOA Annual Statewide Performance PY2019 Report Narrative details progress towards meeting its strategic vision and goals for its workforce system. MDLI conducted impact analysis using a randomized control trial to measure the effectiveness of workforce system services, specifically the 100% program. In addition, non-experimental analyses evaluated the effectiveness of the Montana Registered Apprenticeship Program.

Montana’s narrative describes PY2019 workforce development responses to pandemic-related loss affecting education, employment, and training in unprecedented ways and demanding remote service delivery and extraordinary integrated effort and perseverance. While MDLI and the SWIB understand that all states likely perceive the challenges faced by their workforce system are equally and distinctly daunting, they share a commitment to be forward-thinking, consider and use data in new ways, provide excellent customer service to career seekers and businesses, focus on continuous improvement, and continue to play an active leadership role in workforce development.