



## Statewide Montana - Accelerate Rapid Training (SMART) Program

### Program Overview

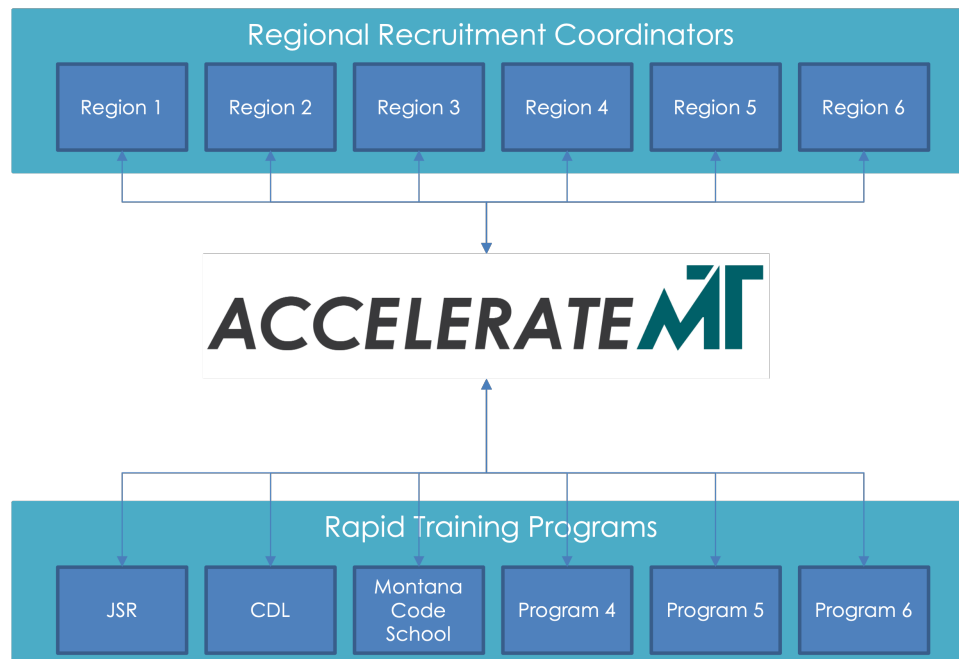
In order to address the significant workforce and skills shortages in multiple industries across the State of Montana, Accelerate MT proposes the Statewide Montana - Accelerate Rapid Training (SMART) program which will seek to train up to 5,000 new or upskilled employees to enter or advance Montana's workforce over the next two years.

Accelerate MT is ready to accelerate the expansion of existing workforce training programs and develop or adapt additional trainings to meet needs for entry level, high skilled and management positions across Montana's priority industries.

The SMART program will deploy three components designed to facilitate statewide participation and impact:

- A. Regional Recruitment Coordinators:** Deployed in up to 10 agreed upon locations around the state, and including a specialist committed to indigenous trainee recruitment and workforce development, these professionals will lead all efforts to recruit candidates and work with local/regional employers to match the trainees to employment opportunities across priority industries in their area. The coordinators will manage all direct-to-candidate recruiting and work with external partners to create a consistent pipeline of candidates. They will plan and manage activities to facilitate candidate placement including hiring events, and industry sponsored cohorts. Accelerate Montana's experience with other rapid training programs has shown that successful programs need proactive marketing and outreach to potential trainees and hands-on trainee career advising allied to proactive engagement with employers that are seeking to hire trainees graduating from the program.
- B. Regional Training Delivery Partners:** The program would partner with MUS institutions, Tribal Colleges, private colleges and High Schools to promote and deliver training programs around the state. Partnerships would encompass providing resources to assist with training promotion and delivery, as per partner institution preference. Such resources and activities might include.
  - a. "Train the trainer" for local faculty/instructors
  - b. Local career services outreach and case management support
  - c. Support of trainee onboarding to the online components training programs
  - d. Support for delivery of required in-person or hands-on components of the training programs
  - e. Support with employer outreach and participation.
- C. Statewide Coordination:** Accelerate MT would provide statewide coordination to optimize deployment of resources with respect to marketing and employer outreach and ensure best practice trainee case management and training delivery. Accelerate MT would also provide the Department of Labor & Industry and Department of Commerce with real-time statewide tracking and reporting of training and job placement metrics.

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## Potential Industry Rapid Training Programs

Outlined below are several existing training programs as well as programs that could be rapidly developed to respond to signals Accelerate MT has identified with respect to significant workforce needs and skills gaps.

In addition to these programs Accelerate MT can work with other education and training institutions across the State to connect trainees and employers to training programs that are responsive to demonstrated trainee interest and employer needs.

1. **Job Site Ready:** The Job Site Ready (“JSR”) micro-credential is a job-preparedness program designed to equip learners with the work experience and essential skills to start an entry-level job in the Construction trades.
2. **Commercial Driver’s License:** Offers an ideal learning environment for new truck drivers to develop driving skills in a commercial vehicle and prepares the student to obtain their Class A Commercial Driver's License.
3. **Montana Code School:** Front-end and Back-end developer bootcamp options available via 18 week, online part-time programs that prepare individual for entry level software developer and related career pathways in QA, customer support, product management etc.
4. **Cyber Montana:** Cyber Montana has a series of rapid training delivery models to serve Montana businesses. Specialized bootcamps delivered remotely and leading to Department of Defense (DoD) and industry-recognized certification for cybersecurity information assurance (IA) credentials have been developed to “upskill” the existing IT professional workforce. National Security Association/Department of Homeland Security (NSA/DHS) recognized rapid-training remote certificate programs have been developed to build a workforce of entry-level cyber professionals. Team-based cyber incident response training sessions using the Montana Cyber Range have been developed for training teams of cyber incident responders.

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5. **Career Readiness:** Following the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) competencies, this micro-credential will prepare learners to enter the workforce with appropriate employability skills that will navigate their ability to successfully apply for a job and perform in the workforce. These competencies include: Critical Thinking/Problem Solving, Oral/Written Communication, Teamwork/Collaboration, Digital Technology, Leadership, Professionalism, Career Management, and Global Fluency. Successful candidates receive a digital badge.
6. **Tech Career Foundations:** packaging a portfolio of technology certificate options including Google, AWS, Salesforce etc., with career readiness skills.
7. **Management Essentials:** A portfolio of micro-courses designed to help workers progress into, or raise their skills, in team and business area management. COVID and new technologies have driven dramatic changes in business models, working practices and employee expectations requiring managers to develop new or enhanced skills in areas of communications, project management, innovation, leadership and HR/workplace culture.
8. **Manufacturing Certificate:** Bootcamp training for manufacturing processes including lean and quality assurance using remote delivery technology and content approved by the Montana Manufacturing Extension Cooperative (MMEC).
9. **Customer Service Essentials:** Building on a successful [program delivered](#) in the Summer of 2021 with Glacier Country Tourism, Accelerate Montana could deploy a Customer Service Essentials training program to help employees across multiple industries develop effective customer service skills in an environment where workforce shortages are placing additional demands on frontline workers.
10. **Accelerated Nursing:** The Accelerated Nursing track is designed for those who have earned a baccalaureate or higher degree in a non-nursing field and are looking for new opportunities. Students in this track build on their previous degree(s) to achieve a second bachelor's degree that would enable them to become a Registered Nurse.
11. **Food Service Essentials:** Public and worker safety program involving food safety training, knife skills safety training, sanitation safety training, workplace skills, and alcohol service training. Completion of food service essentials training program leads to *SafeServ* certification, and industry standard endorsed by the Montana Restaurant Association and a legal requirement for all Montana food and alcohol service establishments.
12. **Behavioral Health:** Short-term training to address the crisis of behavioral health professionals prepared to address the many challenges in serving children and developmentally disabled adults.

## Program Funding:

Accelerate MT proposes a flexible funding model that would deliver industry specific training cohorts (ranging from 5-50 trainees per cohort, depending on program) around the state based on demonstrated trainee interest and employer needs. Program costs are in two categories:

- A. **Program Set Up, Promotion & Coordination: (\$1.5m per Year).** These costs encompass initial program setup plus annual costs of the regional training recruitment coordinators (10 FTEs), resources to local institutions to support program promotion and delivery readiness, e.g., train

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the trainer (10 institutions at \$25,000 each) and statewide program marketing, coordination and reporting (2.0 FTE).

- B. Training Delivery: (Up to \$3.75m per year – up to 2,500 trainees at an average of \$1,500 per course).** These funds would cover online course fees, “hands on” instruction and trainee case management support costs across multiple programs. Training funds would be deployed to industry specific training programs, regions/communities and training institutions based on demonstrated trainee sign ups and employer commitments.

Accelerate MT requests up to 80% funding of the Rapid Training program. The balance of training delivery would be covered by training fees payable by the trainee. We would work with local employers to encourage and implement the use of various incentives to encourage or facilitate trainee participation, including scholarships, tuition loans from local banks/credit unions, tuition reimbursement, and interview, apprentice or job guarantees. This might also include, subject to Department of Commerce guidance, the recently announced ARPA Workforce Training Grant Program that provides up to \$3,000 per eligible employee.