

RevUp Montana – Update: Board of Regents 9.16.15

RevUp is a \$25 million dollar workforce initiative focused on catalyzing systemic reforms that help address the skills gap and reduce the cost of career and technical education. The RevUp consortium is led by Great Falls College MSU in partnership with 12 other colleges, with the focus on nine areas of occupational emphasis as well as student support strategies. Not every college is engaged in every initiative. 2,150 students (1,308 participants in programs and 842 students receiving coaching) of our 3,419 goal have been trained to date, roughly 40% of the way through the project's enrollment period. Another 807 students have been impacted through changes to developmental math at several colleges.

1 Programmatic Shifts

RevUp has catalyzed several programmatic reforms within each targeted occupation (welding, fabrication, industrial maintenance, machining, industrial electronics, commercial drivers, energy technology, diesel technology and entrepreneurship).

1. **Aligned learning outcomes** across colleges to provide:
 - a. More seamless student transfer,
 - b. more consistent output into the labor market, and
 - c. an efficient pathways towards occupational specialization (perhaps, at another college).
2. Embedded **industry-recognized credentials into** 40 programs, improving students ability to demonstrate obtainment of specific skills in addition to earning educational credentials
3. Partitioned CAS and AAS programs into semester-length “tiers” - provides off-ramp into labor market after one semester (students earn a **Certificate of Technical Studies (CTS)**)¹

Considerations:

- Biennial fee approval is a major limitation to creating credit bearing programs at the speed of business. Consider providing colleges **more flexibility in applying fees** to new workforce programs.
- Articulation agreements adopted between colleges to ensure transfer opportunity sustained
- Colleges award standalone CTS at each semester of programs (i.e. CTS I, CTS II, etc.)
- Industry-recognized credentials institutionalized across state

2 Workforce Navigators

RevUp has enhanced the opportunity to employ a Workforce Navigator (WFN) at each consortium college. WFNs are college employees spending significant time helping serve clients of local MT DLI Job Service sites. WFN are charged with recruiting, retaining and placing RevUp participants². Initial indications on their “**case management**” approach is having significant and positive impacts on recruitment, retention, completion and placement³ (and help achieve MT DLI outcomes). Initial analysis indicates **significant ROI** for WFNs⁴.

Considerations:

- Work with MT DLI to institutionalize WFN positions as state-wide support in key workforce programs.

¹ Located at 11 of 13 RevUp Montana consortium colleges

² There is significant difference in how each WFN approaches and implements their job duties.

³ WFNs collaborate to help place students in other communities where large demand exists.

⁴ Rudimentary analysis indicates financial average impact at roughly \$120K/year/institution.



3 Alignment with Montana Department of Labor

The TAACCCT grant initiative is intended to catalyze closer working relationship between DOL and DOE at both the federal and local levels. RevUp is seeking to “zipper” MT DLI and the 2-year colleges to create **one unified workforce development system** in the state. The intent is increased efficiency through alignment of priorities, strategies, referrals, and programmatic funding streams, social supports, etc. across both systems. RevUp is achieving this by:

1. Funding 13 Workforce Navigators (WFN) who serve both a college and their local Job Service.
2. Helping support the new jointly-funded Director of Industry-driven Workforce Partnerships, Kirk Lacy. His focus, in part, will be on facilitating the creation of **apprenticeship pathways** with (a) existing union programs, and (b) competency-based programs at colleges.
3. Catalyzing coordination and implementation of **sector partnerships** in manufacturing/energy sectors in four target and three light-target regions. RevUp will also help institutionalize communication between the sector partnership efforts into the Governor’s Mainstreet Montana manufacturing Key Industry Networks (KIN).
4. Co-joining efforts of the Governor, MT DLI and OCHE to produce a **Talent Supply and Demand Dashboard** that provides an analysis of alignment of workforce supply and demand at the local and state-wide level.

4 Post-employment System

Current conditions in the state (full employment + significant anticipated worker shortage) create a significant challenges for employers and should drive greater demand for programs that can up-skill current employees. RevUp is also beginning to explore opportunities and existing gaps in the state’s “post-employment” worker development system by:

1. Conducting a **gaps analysis** of existing and anticipated short-term, post-employment training across the state. The feasibility of a break-even collaborative model of delivery (2-year colleges, MT DLI, etc.) will also be explored.

Considerations:

- What is the feasibility of a unified post-employment training system that makes use of existing resources of 2-year colleges, MT DLI and private training partners (i.e. any company calls one number to identify an institution/business that can meet their need to up-skill current workers)? *Given the current economics and anticipated worker void – will this be as important to the state as pre-employment training programs?*

5 Course Sharing

RevUp aims to provide systemic efficiencies by allowing students seamless access to specific hybrid and online courses available from other institutions. Delays in implementation of this initiative have accompanied key lessons that have included: (a) understanding the ramifications of NWCCU’s new substantive change policy on the steps and fees necessary to implement, (b) gaining consistent consensus on how to operationalize a financially sustainable course sharing model, and (c) exploring ways the model being created can be easily scaled, paving the way for course sharing between institutions in the future.

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