

The background of the entire page is a photograph of two women sitting at a round white table. One woman, with blonde hair and a patterned shirt, is pointing at a laptop screen. The other woman, with dark hair and a brown top, is looking at the screen. The laptop is open on the table. In the background, there is a bookshelf with several books and a large window looking out onto a green landscape. The text 'ACCELERATE MT' is overlaid on the top left of the image.

ACCELERATE MT

DEVELOPING FLEXIBLE WORKFORCE TRAINING PROGRAMS

A Practical Guide for Montana Based Training Partners

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INTRODUCTION

This toolkit provides strategies and best practices for creating adaptable workforce training programs to meet the needs of Montanans, with a focus on rural, Indigenous, and youth populations. By addressing challenges unique to these communities, such as limited access to resources and diverse cultural contexts, training programs can empower individuals and foster economic growth.

FROM THE LEARNERS

"Honestly, I thank God for the program. I thank the state for the program. I mean, the program was the starting point to get everything on track and lined up for me. So I think that it's an awesome opportunity. And the more people that feel like they need a different career path or anything, you can start over at any age. It's the way to go."

-Leonard Hilton, Structural Welding Program Trainee

"And I'm amazed at that whole circle of life that I've seen happen in such short time and the job offers out there are just consistent and always there's so much opportunity in this business to do other things that I'm just really glad that I've been able to experience already several different types and parts of the field in the industry of trucking and really found a place where I believe I've kind of found my niche and where I'm comfortable and really proud of what I work and what I do and have a bright future in it."

**-James TenNapel,
CDL Program Trainee**

I mean, I'm a mom of five kids, so I'm tied down a lot, and I just like having the easy on the go. I feel with life now, everybody's kind of mobile and on the move, so the more tied down that you are not with a program, I think it really helps open up the capabilities of bringing people from all over the place. And I think it's better overall. 100% I would take online course over and over and over again just because of the flexibility. And that's, like I said, a big thing I think nowadays in today's world is flexibility.

**-Deborah Rouse,
EMT Program Trainee**

UNDERSTANDING EMPLOYER NEEDS

1

Leverage Data Dashboards:

Utilize tools like the Montana Department of Labor and Industry's dashboards to identify in-demand skills and industries. However, keep in mind that data dashboards may not always accurately reflect the realities of small or rural communities due to limited data samples or underreporting, which can obscure local trends and needs.

These include:

- ✓ [Job Posting Dashboard](#)
- ✓ [Labor Force Participation Dashboard](#)
- ✓ [Weekly Unemployment Dashboard](#)



2

Engage Key Partners and Community Stakeholders:

- ✓ Engage community leaders for localized insights.
- ✓ Conduct surveys or in-community discussions to identify employment challenges and opportunities.
- ✓ Collaborate with employers to validate workforce gaps.
- ✓ Employer Engagement
 - Use direct discussions to understand training needs, including:
 - Difficult-to-fill positions.
 - Missing skills in candidates.
 - Training methods and incentives offered by employers.
- ✓ Explore multi-employer training opportunities to maximize impact and resource use.



ASSESSING TRAINEE INTEREST

Assessing Trainee Interest

Focus on both recruitment and workforce upskilling needs for current employees, as well as cross-skilling key stakeholders:

- 1 High Schools: Partner with Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs to gauge student interest in career pathways and connect them to future workforce opportunities.
- 2 2-Year and Tribal Colleges: Collaborate with workforce groups and employers to align training programs with both local employment opportunities and upskilling needs for current employees.
- 3 Community Organizations: Engage potential trainees by partnering with groups like Boys & Girls Clubs, local nonprofits, or other community-based organizations to broaden outreach efforts.
- 4 Job Services & Tribal Employment Rights Organizations: Leverage their resources for career exploration, training referrals, cross-skilling opportunities, and funding support for trainees and employees.
- 5 Vocational Rehabilitation Services: Ensure training programs are inclusive, accessible, and tailored to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities, supporting both recruitment and workforce diversification.



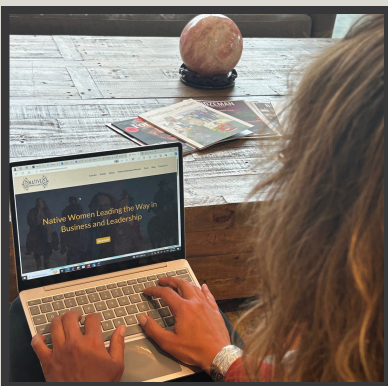
Educating Trainees

- Inform potential trainees about job outcomes and career pathways.
- Use community partners to assist with trainee recruitment and outreach.

DESIGNING EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS

Core Components

- 1 Knowledge Acquisition: Provide foundational concepts and terms for new employees and existing employees to new roles.
- 2 Hands-On Practice: Offer a safe environment to practice skills.
- 3 Skills Application: Include on-the-job learning to reinforce training.



Modular and Stackable Learning

- Offer short, stackable training modules to:
 - Accommodate participants' multiple roles in their communities.
 - Enable quick entry into the workforce while providing opportunities for further skill development.

SUPPORTING LEARNER SUCCESS

Addressing Barriers

1

Timing:

- Align training schedules with community priorities (e.g., harvest seasons, ceremonies).
- Offer evening or weekend sessions for accessibility.



2

Cost:

- Provide financial support through employer sponsorships, grants, and partnerships with programs like [WIOA](#) and [TERO](#).

3

Childcare and Transportation:

- Offer childcare stipends or on-site options.
- Deliver training locally to reduce travel barriers.



4

Cultural Appropriateness

- Incorporate Indigenous knowledge systems and employ Indigenous trainers.
- Acknowledge cultural values, traditions, and sovereignty in program design.

SUPPORTING LEARNER SUCCESS CONT.

Addressing Barriers


5

Information On Job Outlook:

- Provide clear, localized data on career pathways, job demand, and earning potential to help trainees see the long-term value of their efforts.
- Highlight opportunities for advancement, job stability, and transferable skills that align with community and individual goals.

Commercial Driver's License Training - Missoula College

[LEARN MORE](#)

[NOW ENROLLING](#)

About the Course

Missoula College Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training program teaches drivers wishing to refresh their skills with the basics of truck driving as well as equipment knowledge, Department of Transportation (DOT) rules and regulations with an emphasis on safety and prepares them for a Montana Class A License.

The American Transportation Research Institute found the commercial driver shortage is a growing concern in the trucking industry and with over a quarter of truck drivers over the age of 55, it's projected that at least 890,000 new drivers will be needed during the next decade.

If you have a passion for driving, love job independence and financial security, start your training now and build a career in one of many truck driving jobs that are available today.

Local driving jobs are starting at \$22-\$25 per hour. Over the road/ highway starting at \$25-\$35 per hour! Possibility of a sign on bonus included with an agreement when made with a company!

Varies [®]	In-Person	\$48,000	Open Enrollment
Cost of Course	Course Location	Starting Salary Estimate	Start Date



6

Awareness:

- Develop targeted marketing strategies to ensure learners, businesses, and employers are aware of the training programs.
- Use culturally appropriate messaging and outreach channels, such as social media, local radio, community events, and partnerships with Indigenous leaders or organizations, to effectively promote the offerings and their benefits.

DELIVERY MODELS

Accessibility

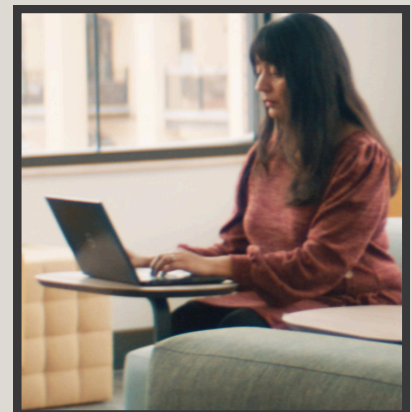
- Use hybrid models like the **flipped classroom*** approach to balance independent and in-person learning.
- Ensure digital equity by addressing broadband limitations with local internet solutions or mobile units.

Accountability

- Implement cohort-based learning to foster peer support and accountability.
- Provide **success coaching**** to guide trainees through the program.

Stackability

- Design programs that allow participants to build on initial skills over time, leading to long-term career growth and retention.
- Design learning sprints so learners get hands-on experience throughout a program instead of at the end.
- Issue **digital badges***** for learning completed to certify skills acquired and validate competencies learned.



***Flipped Classroom Approach** - In a flipped classroom, learners review materials such as videos or readings on their own before class, freeing up in-person sessions for interactive, hands-on activities like discussions, group work, or problem-solving. This method encourages active engagement and deeper understanding of the material.

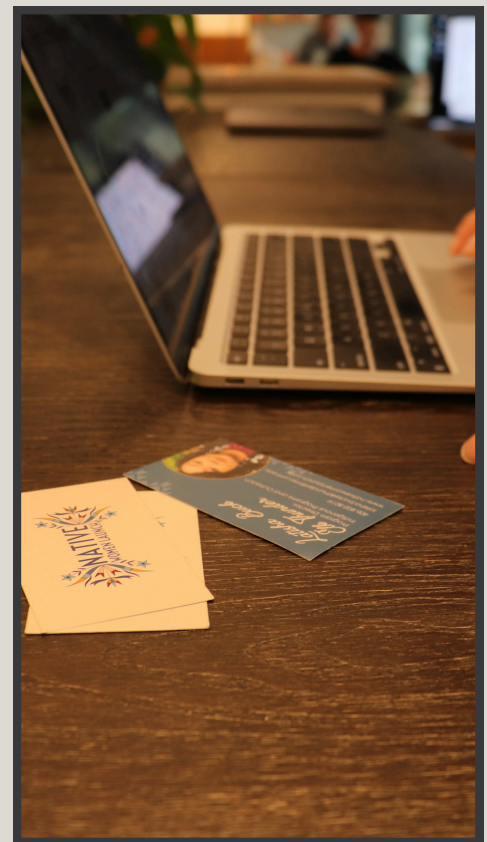
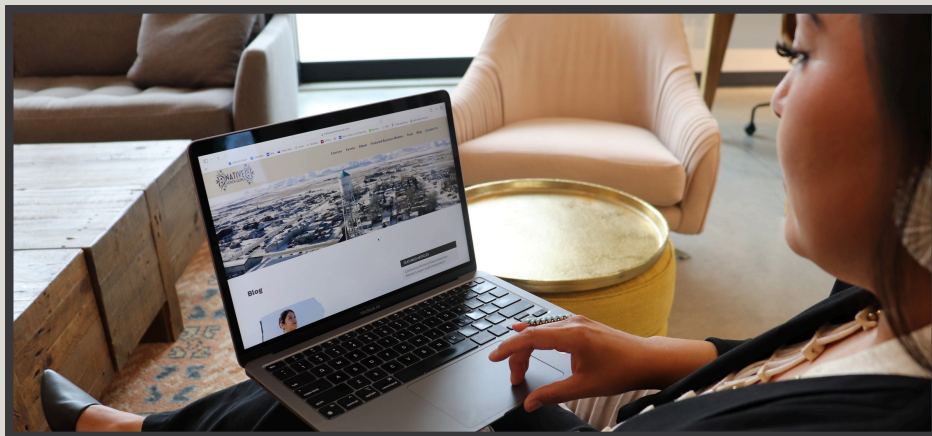
****Success Coaching** - A success coach works with learners to ensure they have the resources and tools to be successful in completing their training and helps them transition into their job placement.

***** Digital Badges** - A digital badge is an online credential that recognizes a learner's achievements, skills, or competencies, which can be showcased on a resume or LinkedIn profile to enhance professional visibility.

MEASURING IMPACT

Key Metrics

- Measure enrollment and completion, skills acquisition, employment rates, and job retention.
- Deliver pre and post-surveys, measure trainee satisfaction and skill application in current job.
- Track long-term career advancement.



Continuous Improvement

- Regularly evaluate program outcomes and gather feedback from trainees and stakeholders to refine offerings.

THANK YOU FOR READING THIS TOOLKIT

Flexible workforce training programs are essential for meeting the diverse needs of Montana's rural, Indigenous, and youth populations. By emphasizing adaptability, accessibility, and cultural appropriateness, these programs can foster sustainable economic development and empower communities. For further support, contact Accelerate Montana's workforce development team.

The development of this toolkit is supported by



NEED MORE INSIGHT & SUPPORT?

DON'T HESITATE TO REACH OUT!



@Accelerate Montana

