

On the Job Training / Supportive Services Program (OJT/SS) Overview 2022

Based on 2022 Statement of Work (SOW)

A. Project Title

Montana Department of Transportation On-the-Job Training / Supportive Services (OJT/SS) Program

B. Contact Person(s)

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C. Purpose Statement

The construction industry in Montana is expected to grow the fastest of any industry in the state and Montana does not have enough emerging workers to fill these positions. To fill this gap, the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has received **\$57,243** in Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) OJT/SS funding to provide support to Montana programs that recruit, educate and train minorities, women, and disadvantaged individuals (“target population”) in the highway construction industry.

D. Statement of Problem

Through MDT’s discussions with Contractors and Tribal Employment Rights Offices (TERO) on Montana’s Indian Reservations, we have identified a shortage of qualified CDL drivers, heavy equipment operators, and laborers for highway construction projects on or near the reservations. As indicated in the Geographic Locations section of this SOW, several regionally significant highway construction projects are anticipated on or near reservations. MDT’s OJT/SS SOW targets the problem of high unemployment rate on Montana’s Indian Reservations to address the shortage of workers for current and upcoming projects.

This Project specifically addresses the following priorities:

- Targeting areas with high rates of unemployment. The unemployment rates on Montana’s reservations range from 6.5% to 14.5% (2020) well above the not seasonally adjusted national unemployment rate of 5.9% (2020).
- Encouraging increased participation of the target population. This program is tailored toward minorities and women.
- Providing career pathways that support the movement of targeted populations from initial or short-term employment to sustainable careers.
- Addressing gaps in areas with current or projected workforce shortages in fields related to highway construction.

E. Amount

For fiscal year 2021/2022, the State DOT (MDT) received **\$57,243** for their On-the-Job Training / Supportive Services proposal.

F. Needs Assessment

The Montana Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act Combined State Plan for Program Years 2020-2023 (“Montana State Plan”), indicated Montana’s continued economic job growth is threatened by a shortage of workers due to approximately 20% of Montana’s labor force being over 65 years of age and within ten years of retirement. Montana has experienced steady employment growth yet has few young adults entering the workforce. Thus, it concluded that there are simply not enough emerging workers in Montana to make up for the expected retirements of the baby-boomer population.

The Montana Department of Labor & Industry’s Montana Planning for the Future: Montana’s Employment Projections 2020 to 2030, projects Montana’s construction industry to continue growing. The report states that “Truck drivers have the highest demand...” with approximately 780 openings per year over the next ten years. First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades are expected to add 390 openings annually. Construction Equipment Operators are projected to add 380 openings a year. Electricians, who may be apprenticed, are anticipated to add 350 openings a year. Although the construction industry is seeing less of an impact due to COVID than other industries, the generally volatile nature of the construction industry will contribute to continued growth. It also identified construction as one of the “...fastest growing industries in Montana through 2027.” It projects the expected retirement of nearly 1/5 of the state’s workforce within the next ten years to impact all industries, including construction. The State Plan identified the need to (1) prioritize higher-paying, higher-skill occupations, (2) utilize the Registered Apprenticeship Program because most in-demand jobs are apprenticeable, and (3) prioritize work-based experience for students during the schooling years for in-demand skills and abilities. It has shown that demand for the construction field is filled primarily through apprenticeships and career and technical education.

Correspondingly, MDT Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Years 2021-2025 identifies future transportation projects. The execution of these projects is contingent upon multiple factors including federal and state funding availability. These projects consist of, but are not limited to, reconstructions, rehabilitations, resurfacing, and bridges. Qualified skilled workers in the areas of heavy equipment, truck driving, and laborers are most needed to complete these and future highway construction projects.

Contractors and TEROs are sharing similar statistics to the state employment data that indicates Montana is experiencing a shortage of highway construction workers. To meet the needs of a trained workforce for upcoming construction projects, it is vital for MDT to continue with administering the federal OJT/SS program through successful partnering with approved on-the-job training programs designed to increase the training opportunities for

women, minorities, and disadvantaged individuals who have been historically underrepresented in the highway construction industry.

G. Program Goals & Objectives

MDT's OJT/SS Program Goals are:

1. Recruit and enroll at least 20 members of the target population to earn at least one industry-recognized credential and documented experience in the highway construction industry.
2. Within one year of enrollment, at least 16 will successfully complete the program and receive at least one industry-recognized credential.
3. Place at least 13 individuals of target population program participants who successfully complete the program in the highway construction related jobs.

MDT's OJT/SS Program Objectives are:

1. Provide comprehensive and detailed reporting on enrolled participants beginning on the first day of coursework and in all quarterly reporting, as outlined in section P.1.
2. Provide comprehensive and detailed reporting of participants enrolled and completing the OJT/SS program and credentials earned in quarterly and final reports, as outlined in section P.1.
3. Provide analysis of actions and track graduates as follows:
 - a) Provide an analysis of actions taken to enroll participants in further OJT/SS program or career opportunities and report actions during the semi-annual on-site assessment(s) and in the final report, as outlined in section P.1.; and
 - b) Track graduates for a minimum of one calendar year following completion of the program and report results during the semi-annual on-site assessment(s) and in the final report, as outlined in section P.1.

H. Scope of Work Narrative with Timetables / Milestones / Services Narrative and Timeline for Activities/Services

The OJT/SS program will include programmatic components that will enable the participants to gain and improve in the knowledge, skills, abilities, credentials, and career placement opportunities in the highway construction industry. The OJT/SS program will encompass the following:

1. Education and training in a truck driving, heavy equipment operation, and/or other highway construction program.
2. Provide participants with industry recognized certifications and/or credentials that will enable them to secure an apprenticeship or full-time/part-time jobs in the highway construction industry.
3. Include program performance measurements that include or exceed those contained in this OJT/SS Overview.

4. Identify partnerships established with key industry personnel, companies and organizations, and describe how partnerships benefit career placement activities.

MDT is soliciting qualified contractors to recruit, train, and place individuals within the highway construction industry. The successful contractor(s) will have 1 year for individuals to gain industry-recognized credentials and experience and to gain employment. The timeline for the aforementioned activities and services are outlined in this Overview under the sections entitled: Performance Period, Evaluation and Monitoring Plan, Budget Proposal & Financial Requirements, and Final Deliverables.

I. Budget Proposal & Financial Requirements

Based on the Needs Assessment, federal regulations, and the intent of the program, MDT has prioritized Personnel Salaries, Fuel Supplies, Equipment, Materials, and Parts as the line item categories to receive the majority of the OJT/SS federal funding. These categories are most critical to goal success and program intent when considering the needs and barriers in Montana. Contractors will be required to restrict expending OJT/SS federal funding to these categories only. While these categories are somewhat specific, reasonable flexibility within these categories can be exercised; however, the expenditures must logically fit and meet the intent of the program. This breakdown is an estimate of anticipated statewide costs and may vary.

Line Item	FHWA Funds Requested	In-Kind Contributions	Funding Purpose	Total Cost
Personnel Salaries	\$9,600	Contractor resp.	One FTE Employee	\$9,600
Fringe Benefits	\$1,643	Contractor resp.	Insurance for one FTE	\$1,643
Fuel Supplies	\$11,500	Contractor resp.	Equipment/Truck Fuel	\$11,500
Equipment	\$11,500	Contractor resp.	Hardhats/Vests/Tools Misc.	\$11,500
Materials & Parts	\$11,500	Contractor resp.	Classroom/ Jobsite Misc.	\$11,500
Maintenance/Repairs	\$11,500	Contractor resp.	Equipment/I.T. Upkeep	\$11,500
Totals	\$57,243	Contractor resp.		\$57,243

1. In-Kind Donations

MDT encourages each potential contractor to utilize all available avenues for funding in support of the program. While funds that supplement the federal OJT/SS allotment are not required, these funds typically position contracting entity to deliver a more comprehensive and successful OJT/SS program.

2. Budget Expenditures

MDT requires all OJT/SS contractors to include billing statements with the quarterly reports and the final report. Billing statements will include the following information necessary to support the expenditures:

- a) All administrative costs, including staff time, will show names of employees and number of hours worked during the billing period;

- b) Fringe benefits should detail what is included in the benefit package and the dollar expended for each benefit;
- c) Receipts and/or invoices will be required for all fuel, equipment, materials, parts, maintenance and repair expenditures related to federal-aid funding expenditures;
- d) A brief narrative will be required for each expenditure; and
- e) Timesheet records must be maintained for the life of the Contract plus three years.

MDT also requires that all OJT/SS Contractors include a final budget statement within the Final Report, due within thirty days of the close of the contract.

J. Geographic Location, Target Groups, & Emphasis Areas

MDT’s STIP indicates upcoming projects and is located on our website:

https://mdt.mt.gov/publications/docs/plans/stip/2021stip_final.pdf. The document lists Regionally Significant Projects, which are summarized below. Of the 13 projects listed, 12 of them are either located on or near one of Montana’s seven Indian Reservations.

Project Name	Scope	Letting Date (FFY)	Estimated Cost (Construction)	On or Near Reservation
Ronan – North	Reconstruct	2022	\$14,100,000	On Reservation
US 93 – Ronan (Urban)	Reconstruct	>2025	\$26,100,000	On Reservation
Mountainside to MP 133	Reconstruct	>2025	\$15,500,000	Near Reservation
KBP - US 93 to Airport Road	Reconstruct	>2025	\$18,100,000	Near Reservation
Russell St - Dakota to Mount	Reconstruct	>2024	\$29,300,000	Near Reservation
US-93 N - Post Creek Hill	Reconstruct	>2025	\$23,800,000	On Reservation
Belt - N & S - Phase 3	Reconstruct	2021	\$23,200,000	> 1 hour from Reservations
Bainville – East	Reconstruct	>2025	\$26,100,000	Near Reservation
Billings Bypass - Five Mile Rd to US 87	Reconstruct	>2025	\$15,600,000	Near Reservation
Billings Bypass - RR O’Pass	Reconstruct	2023	\$17,900,000	Near Reservation
Billings Bypass - Johnson Ln Intch – RR O’Pass	Reconstruct	2024	\$8,400,000	Near Reservation
Billings Bypass - Johnson Lane Interchange	Reconstruct	2022	\$39,800,000	Near Reservation
I-90 Yellowstone R - Billings	Bridge	2021	\$69,200,000	Near Reservation

Since these projects with multiple hiring opportunities are located either on or near a reservation, MDT’s OJT/SS Program will target minority populations, women, and disadvantaged individuals. By implementing programs where trainees gather industry-recognized credentials, it provides a trained workforce for upcoming projects and secures a steady stream of labor for the construction labor pool.

K. Strategic Partnerships

MDT has two program staff that provide oversight to the OJT/SS Contractor(s) to ensure the goals and objectives of the program are met. Staff coordinate with the Contractor(s) on at least a quarterly basis, which includes a review of quarterly reports. Staff also conduct a minimum of one on-site review with the Contractor(s). If concerns arise, MDT staff will work with the contractor(s) to either implement measures or remove barriers to help the Contractor achieve the outlined goals. MDT staff will meet with the FHWA Division Office to discuss progress throughout the contract and will forward quarterly reports to the FHWA Division Office. See the Evaluation and Monitoring Plan section for further details on MDT's project management plan.

L. Project Management

MDT has three program staff that provide oversight to the OJT/SS Contractor(s) to ensure the goals and objectives of the program are met. Staff coordinate with the Contractor(s) on at least a quarterly basis, which includes a review of quarterly reports. Staff also conduct a minimum of one on-site review with the Contractor(s). If concerns arise, MDT staff will work with the contractor(s) to either implement measures or remove barriers to help the Contractor achieve the outlined goals. MDT staff will meet with the FHWA Division Office to discuss progress throughout the contract and will forward quarterly reports to the FHWA Division Office. See the Evaluation and Monitoring Plan section for further details on MDT's project management plan.

M. Project Personnel, Resources, & In-kind Contributions

MDT Office of Civil Rights staff will include involvement from the Bureau Chief (Megan Handl) and EEO and Compliance Specialist (Chris Ferguson). Megan has 8 years of experience in OJT program management. Chris has over 15 years of experience in program management, workforce development and job-readiness skills that can be tailored to needs identified by OJT/SS recipients and their partners.

MDT will work collaboratively with the qualified Contractor(s) to ensure success of the program and will encourage each potential contractor to utilize all available avenues for funding in support of the program.

N. Performance Period

The performance period for successful contractor(s) will be for one year, from **September 1, 2022 through August 31, 2023**.

O. Performance Measures

MDT will use the following performance measurements as compared to the goals and objectives to determine success of the OJT/SS Program:

1. Tabulation of number and percent of target group participants by ethnicity and gender enrolled each academic or programmatic quarter;
2. Number of target population members completing training, program, and/or certificate course track;
3. Number of target population members that complete their training, program, and/or certification course track and their success in securing apprenticeship, full-time, part-time jobs in highway construction-related careers; and
4. Results of semi-annual on-site assessment(s) reviews.

The performance measures will be reported in the quarterly and final reports. The Final Report will include a determination if the goals and objectives were met, lessons learned, and a summary of how the OJT/SS Program affects other entities and programs.

P. Evaluation and Monitoring Plan

As outlined below, MDT's evaluation and monitoring plan will require the OJT/SS Contractor(s) to submit quarterly reports and the final report to the MDT OJT/SS Program Manager. MDT will conduct at least one on-site review of the Contractor(s). With MDT's involvement with the Contractor(s), we are able to provide more services or assistance if issues or concerns arise that may indicate they will be unable to achieve their goals.

Contractor Performance Assessments

1. MDT will assess Contractor performance by the review of quarterly reports, semi-annual on-site assessment(s), and the final report. These assessments will analyze the Contractor's performance in attaining the established goals, objectives, and intent of the OJT/SS program and contract.
2. The OJT/SS program Contract ("Contract") may be terminated for two or more poor Contractor performance assessments and/or for a pattern of failure to attain established goals and objectives. Contractors will have the opportunity to respond to poor performance assessments.
3. MDT will make a final decision to terminate Contractor's Contract based on:
 - a) assessment and any related information;
 - b) response; and
 - c) severity of any negative performance. The Contractor will be notified of Contract termination as outlined in the agreed upon Contract. Contractor's prior performance assessments may be considered in future solicitations.

Q. Final Deliverables

Contractors will prepare written quarterly progress reports and a final report to document achievement of work tasks, any adjustments needed, and budget expenditures. The Final

Report will document achievement of goals and objectives, lessons learned, and a summary of how the OJT/SS Program affects other entities and programs within the highway construction industry.

R. Section 508 Standards of the Rehabilitation Act

In addition to Disability Accommodation language in MDT's standard contract language, MDT also includes a clause that states "Contractor acknowledges that no funds may be expended for the purchase of information technology equipment and software for use by employees, program participants, or members of the public unless it provides blind or visually impaired individuals with access, including interactive use of the equipment and services, that is equivalent to that provided to individuals who are not blind or visually impaired."