

STATE OF MONTANA

JOB DESCRIPTION

Montana state government is an equal opportunity employer. The State shall, upon request, provide reasonable accommodations to otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities.

Job Title: Economist

Position Numbers: 36118

Location: Helena

Department: Transportation

Division and Bureau: Fiscal Services Division / Revenue Services Bureau

Section and Unit: Alternative Funding Section

Job Overview:

This position is responsible for performing economic analysis. Responsible for developing methods and procedures to analyze and forecast transportation economic impacts; conducting economic analyses and research to assist in determining what alternative funding sources will ensure future needed revenues; critically reviewing and evaluating Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) activities to ensure consistency with federal and state requirements; and researching industry practices. This position reports to the Alternative Funding Section Supervisor and does not manage others.

Essential Functions (Major Duties and/or Responsibilities):

Economic Research and Analysis / Alternative Funding Services - 70%

Level 2.1

- Reviews draft documents for data accuracy; ensures data is presented in clear and concise manner for public review; assists in development of transportation plans, programs and projects; and develops web site content for public communication.
- Performs ongoing process and project tracking for transportation studies, plans, projects, and programs.
- Provides technical expertise for general economic requests.
- Research and analyze economic circumstances to establish baseline data for the development of transportation and economic forecasts. Analyzes and evaluates data to

determine relevant factors affecting the interrelationships between transportation and economic development.

- Requests, receives, and analyzes data and communicates the analyses to direct supervisor. Leverages sampling techniques, statistical and forecasting models, and econometrics methods in analyzing data.
- Evaluates the nature and availability of baseline data and research objectives, parameters, and relative project priorities to determine the most appropriate methodologies. Researches, analyzes, and establishes this baseline data for the development of MDT revenue forecasts.
- Research and recommend guidance and processes for transportation and/or economic programs.
- Conducts and coordinates transportation studies in response to needs and priorities of the division(s), MDT, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, local and state planning personnel, and others. This involves researching, analyzing, and applying new methodologies for specific studies; conducting and coordinating data source identification, compilation, and analysis; and developing and presenting reports of findings and recommendations. May include charts, spreadsheets, tables, and other aids.
- Develops networks of professional contacts to support research and analysis.
- Ability to anticipate problems, issues, and potential legislative actions and react appropriately.
- Evaluates resources, needs, and costs for transportation projects.
- Assembles and compiles data from a number of resources and performs various analyses.
- Collects, formats, and reports on data elements relating to alternative funding sources to better prepare MDT for future revenue needs.
- Participates in quality control efforts to ensure that data meets the needs of the section, bureau, and division.
- Manages the data collected, understands transportation concepts and provides technical support for internal and external programs or project meetings and committee meetings.

Level 2.2

- Synthesizes complex, abstract, and often unrelated statistical information in order to conceptualize and implement new innovative theories.
- Reviews proposed highway projects to identify links to regional and statewide economic development plans.
- Uses and designs economic models used to evaluate effectiveness of potential transportation improvement projects. Requires incorporation of highly advanced technical software applications, such as TransCAD or REMI, designed to integrate planning and GIS data structures for facilitating the use of GIS technology and data in economic forecasting.

- Critically reviews and evaluates MDT activities to ensure consistency with federal and state requirements.
- Supports TranPlanMT implementation using various tools and analysis techniques to determine the relative importance and value of contrasting transportation characteristics as they relate to performance and operation of the transportation system in Montana.
- Participates in updates of TranPlanMT, as needed.
- Provides technical and analytical economic services to MDT leadership.
- Develops methodologies and conducts research to find appropriate models for statistical forecasting.
- Evaluates and assesses the impacts of proposed legislation with economic implications.
- Develops position papers, reports, studies, special reports to meet the MDT's needs.
- Researches and analyzes data and information to establish a baseline for the development of forecasts, models and other analysis.
- Develops methods and procedures to analyze and forecast impacts of multiple scenarios, policy proposals, and proposed projects.
- Interprets and applies economic, population, land uses, and traffic projections.
- Queries and analyzes data and develops project-specific statistics; troubleshoots and resolves data or program output discrepancies; and draws conclusions and makes recommendations.
- Develops and analyzes MDT expenditure projections and revenue forecasts to promote efficient use of Highway State Special Revenue funds while maximizing the Federal-aid program using knowledge of programmatic goals, objectives, grant plans, historical spending patterns, emerging industry and economic trends, and electronic statistical forecasting techniques.
- Research, analyze, and apply new methodologies to implement comprehensive and complex transportation-related studies. The results of this technical research are documented in technical and customized reports to be used by MDT in formal settings.
- Develop benefit-cost-analysis (BCA), as necessary, for grant applications.
- Works with leadership to identify, research, analyze, and rank alternative funding options for the agency to possibly pursue to ensure MDT has needed revenues to continue mandated operations.
- Independently translate large amounts of technical information, data, and reports into concise documents that outline budget and policy options, impacts, and recommendations for presentation to leadership.
- Analyzes and integrates revenue and expenditure information, state and federal statutes, and financial data to identify issues for legislative consideration, including creation of policy options to resolve those issues.

- Works closely with MDT program/project staff, leadership, and external stakeholders and partners to gather necessary information, understand project needs, and develop compelling application narratives.
- Designs informational publications and other input mechanisms to help identify transportation issues, needs, and public concerns.
- Represents, communicates, and defends agency position and policies in various settings.
- Evaluates legislative proposals that may impact MDT.

Level 2.3

- Plans, manages, and oversees MDT economic research studies.
- Develops economic models to study relationships between projected MDT revenue and expenditures. Advises MDT leadership on the nature and reliability of projected revenues and expenditures.
- Conduct policy research and advises leadership and other MDT staff regarding the impact of new, revised, or proposed transportation-related legislation, taxes, services, and regulations.
- Initiates, formulates, plans, executes, and presents conceptually integrated economic studies to MDT leadership. Proposes policies, solutions, and recommendations for solving these economic and operational problems.
- Applies and adapts various software packages to simulate, evaluate, report, and present economic research.
- Maintains and reports transportation information on Montana and other national, state, and local trends and their implications on MDT.
- Performs risk management and mitigation and provides issue resolution and escalation.
- Writes and presents reports for leadership on economic issues and budgetary implications of economic trends.
- Leads and manages research projects. Plans, assigns, monitors, and coordinates work of other staff engaged in gathering, compiling, analyzing, reporting, and presenting economic or demographic data.
- Acts as lead for research or other special projects, which includes using appropriate research methods, developing literature reviews, conducting research, and writing and editing final reports.
- Applies and adapts various software packages, such as AI, to simulate, evaluate, report, and present alternative funding research to leadership.
- Develops position papers, reports, studies, and special reports requested by the Legislature or for other agency needs.

Grant Development & Project Oversight – 25%

Level 2.1

- Manages low risk transportation projects, programs, and/or processes. This may include tracking grant applications and researching and understanding federal and state policies and regulations.
- Coordinates with internal and external stakeholders on grants, programs, special projects, and plans conducted within the bureau and section.
- Initiates external communications in support of activities, plans, studies, programs, projects, and grants monitored in the bureau.
- Identifies potential federal grant opportunities that align with MDT's mission, goals, and objectives.
- Cultivates and maintains relationships with MDT program/project staff.

Level 2.2

- Assists program management with identifying and pursuing grant opportunities, including applying for grant and legislatively-directed funds.
- Drafts potential legislation related to new alternative revenue funding sources.
- Obtains draft application approval through review by key stakeholders, including MDT project, district, and financial staff and leadership.
- Develops initial grant application project budgets to be reviewed by MDT budget and federal funding staff and leadership review.
- Develop position papers, reports, studies, special reports to meet the division's needs.
- Creates detailed grant application proposals that clearly articulate the project's objectives, methods, budget, and anticipated outcomes, including gathering and analyzing information from various sources and ensuring the narrative is clear, persuasive, and aligned with the grant program's guidelines.

Level 2.3

- Oversee the entire grant application process, including compiling necessary documents and data, developing the grant application, meeting deadlines, and submitting applications.
- Manage reoccurring and cyclical grant submission processes. This includes working with and coordinating with internal and external stakeholders, preparing grant applications, and reviewing and providing information as needed or requested.
- Establishes and adjusts project priorities, negotiates and establishes deadlines, and reviews work products to determine the overall adequacy of the approach, concept, and technical adequacy of the information.

Other Duties - 5%

Performs a variety of other duties assigned by the supervisor or FSD management in support of the Department missions and objectives.

Supervision

The number of employees supervised is: 0

The position number for each supervised employee is: n/a

Physical and Environmental Demands:

- This position works in a typical office environment.
- Occasional travel within and outside the state.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (Behaviors):

- Establishes productive, collaborative working relationships with co-workers, leadership, and customers.
- Ability to extract insights from large transportation datasets, identify trends, and interpret complex findings for a non-technical audience.
- Skilled in creating models to forecast traffic demand, revenue, economic impacts, or budgetary needs.
- Producing clear reports and presentations that translate technical analysis into actionable recommendations.
- Considers and understands the impact that standard job-related information will have on others and situations before relating data.
- Creative and forward-thinking problem solver.
- Able to coordinate several projects and work duties at once.
- Resolves issues and completes work within set deadlines.

Minimum Qualifications (Education and Experience):

The required knowledge and skills are typically acquired through a combination of education and experience equivalent to a bachelor's degree in Economics, Business Administration, Mathematics, Statistics, or a related field.

Level 2.1: This position requires a minimum of 1 year of related experience.

Level 2.2: This position requires a minimum of 2 years of related experience.

Level 2.3: This position requires a minimum of 3 years of related experience.

Certifications, licensure, or other credentials include: n/a

Alternative qualifications include: Any combination of additional related work experience and education equivalent to the minimum qualifications.

Special Requirements:

☐ Fingerprint check

☐ Valid driver's license

☐ Background check

☐ Other; Describe

035 Union Code

Safety Responsibilities

The specific statements shown in each section of this description are not intended to be all inclusive. They represent typical elements and criteria considered necessary to perform the job successfully.

Signatures

My signature below indicates the statements in the job description are accurate and complete.

Immediate Supervisor	Title	Date
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Administrative Review	Title	Date
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My signature below indicates that I have read this job description.

Employee	Title	Date
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Human Resources Review

Job Code Title: Economist 1 & Economist 2 Job Code Number: E31011 & E31012

My signature below indicates that Human Resources has reviewed this job description for completeness and has made the following determinations:

☐ FLSA Exempt

☒ FLSA Non-Exempt

☒ Telework Available

☐ Telework Not Available

☐ Classification Complete

☐ Organizational Chart attached

Human Resources:

Signature

Title

Date