

# DLI AGENCY PRESENTATION

S F Y 2 0 2 4



Montana Department of  
LABOR & INDUSTRY



A scenic mountain landscape at sunset or sunrise. The sky is filled with dramatic, orange and yellow clouds. In the background, a range of rugged mountains is visible. The foreground shows a steep, forested slope with evergreen trees. A dark blue rectangular box is centered in the middle of the image, containing white text.

*The Montana Department of Labor & Industry exists to empower Montanans through work and opportunity.*

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# Letter from the Commissioner



## Montana Department of LABOR & INDUSTRY

Dear Montana Legislature,

On behalf of the Montana Department of Labor & Industry, I am honored to present our 2024 Annual Report, which outlines the remarkable work of our agency and the pivotal role we play in the lives of Montanans.

Under Governor Gianforte's leadership, our state's economy is robust, with wages on the rise and unemployment at historic lows. In 2024, employment totals hit 560,000, with an increase of over 11,000 jobs in two years. The average annual wage has grown to over \$57,000 in 2023, marking an inflation-adjusted increase of 0.8%.

The past year brought both opportunities and challenges. A significant undertaking for our team was responding to multiple, large layoffs in the state. The summer saw the closure of Pyramid Lumber and Roseburg Forest Products in Western Montana, impacting hundreds of workers. Shortly after, Sibanye-Stillwater announced layoffs affecting over 600 workers in Columbus.

In response, our team swiftly engaged with management, workers, and unions, orchestrating the largest Rapid Response in state history. We facilitated unemployment benefits applications, resume workshops, and job placement services. Additionally, we secured federal funding to aid in re-employment efforts tailored to workers' professions and preferred location.

A significant stride in our outreach was the creation of the Office of the Tribal Liaison, aimed at fostering relationships with tribal leaders and communities while respecting sovereignty and addressing workforce equity. This initiative was bolstered by hiring a Native American Youth Outreach Coordinator to enhance services in tribal schools.

As the legislative session begins, I extend my gratitude to our elected officials for their dedication to Montana. Our team is eager to collaborate in enacting legislation that will continue to support businesses, workers, and families across our state.

Best Regards,



Sarah Swanson, Commissioner  
Montana Department of Labor & Industry



# Montana Economy: Year in Review

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

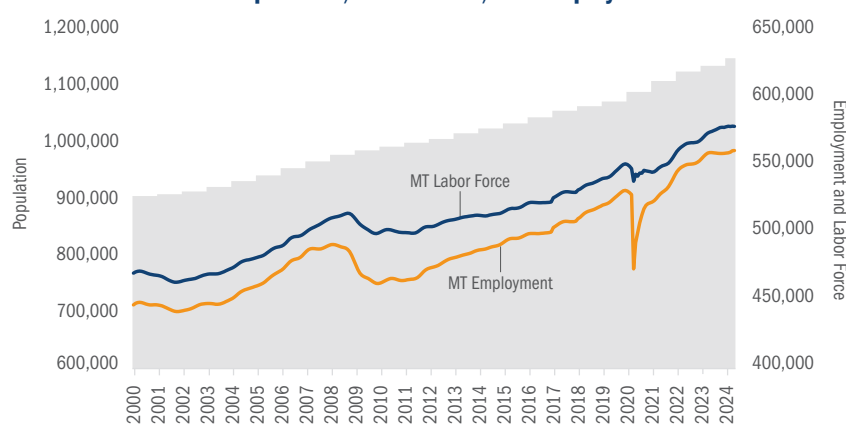
Montana's economy has continued its strong expansion over the last two years, capitalizing on a quick rebound from the recession to reach record highs in employment and maintain historic lows for unemployment. **Total employment surpassed 560,000 in Montana in 2024, adding over 11,000 jobs from 2023 through 2024.** Critically, the state's labor force growth is keeping pace with nearly 15,000 workers joining the labor force over the same period, allowing sustained employment growth while low unemployment rates persist.

Importantly, these are good-paying, family-sustaining jobs: in 2023 and 2024 Montana added roughly **30,000 new jobs paying \$50,000 per year or more.**

## COMPETITIVE JOB MARKET

The Montana labor market continued its steady expansion in 2023, adding 8,700 jobs for a growth rate of 1.6%. This growth represents a return to more sustainable growth for the state, following two years of rapid growth exiting the pandemic. Job growth continued in 2024, adding another 2,800 jobs through the first half of the year. **From the start of 2020 through the first half of 2024, total employment has grown by 5.9%, over 30,000 jobs – ranking Montana 8th fastest among states.**

Montana Population, Labor Force, and Employment Growth



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Montana DLI, Local Area Unemployment Statistics. U.S. Census Bureau, and MT Census and Economic Information Center (CEIC) Projections

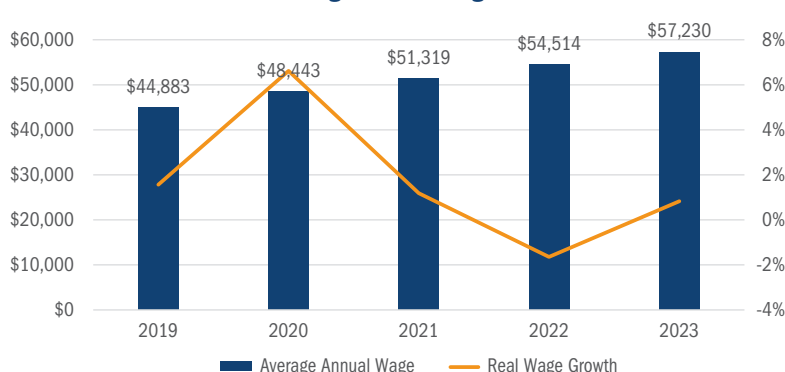
## UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

In 2023, the labor force grew faster than employment for the first time post-pandemic, easing the state's historically tight labor market. **Over 10,000 workers were added to the Montana labor force in 2023, ranking the state 15th in the nation for fastest growth at 1.8%.** As a result of this influx of new workers, the unemployment rate ticked up slightly in 2023 to 2.9% from a record-setting low of 2.7% in 2022. Figure 2 shows the unemployment rate in Montana compared to the U.S. over the last twenty years. In 2024, much needed workers continue to enter Montana's labor market. The unemployment rate has continued to trend upward but remains below the historical average and national rate.

## STRONG WAGE GROWTH

Along with the rest of the nation, Montanans faced high inflation in 2022, creating challenges for Montana households. In 2023, strong wage growth in Montana began to chip away at the impacts of rising prices. The average annual wage for Montana workers rose to \$57,230 in 2023, an inflation adjusted wage gain of 0.8% over the year (the 6th fastest among states). **Montana is one of only two states where wage growth since 2020 has outpaced inflation.**

Montana's Average Annual Wage and Real Wage Growth



Source: U.S. BLS and MTDLI, QCEW and CPI-U

# Montana Economy: Year in Review

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### WIDESPREAD JOB GAINS

By the end of 2023, all of Montana's industries except for the information industry, had recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Montana's 2023 job gain numbers are driven by Montana's largest industries, with over half of job gains coming from healthcare, trade, and leisure activities.

Montana industries with particularly fast growth in 2022 and 2023 include professional services, construction, and leisure activities. Professional services were the fastest growing industries in 2023, added over 1,100 jobs for a rate of 4.1%, continuing to show growth in tech businesses and the leveraging of remote work opportunities. Healthcare added over 2,300 jobs in 2023 and was the second fastest growing industry at 3.1%. Strong demand for housing and residential has made construction the fastest growing industry since 2019, adding nearly 6,800 jobs (22.7% growth) since 2019.

### ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT

Montana's economic expansion in recent years owes much to the entrepreneurial spirit of its residents.

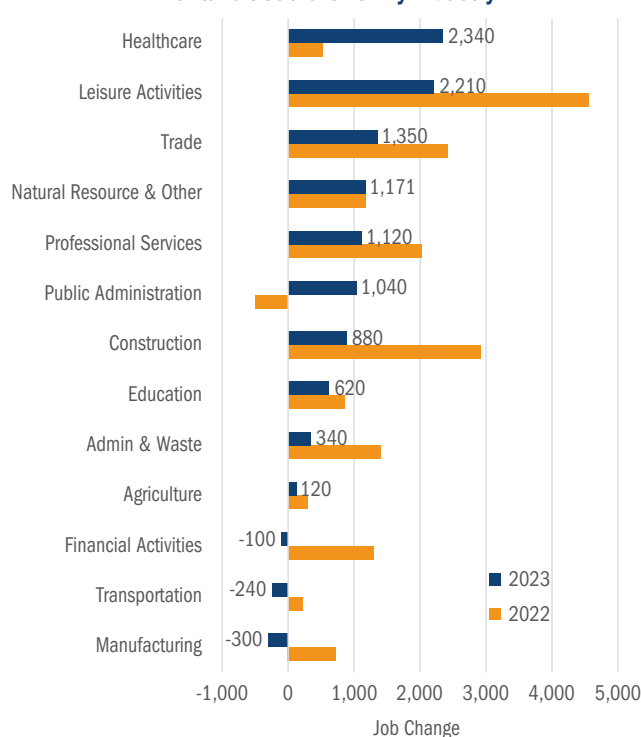
**Montana ranks 3rd nationwide for the percentage of individuals engaged in self-employment, with nearly 30% of the workforce operating their own businesses.** Self-employment

income is a significant portion of Montanan's personal income, accounting for nearly 10% of personal income in 2023.

Montana's entrepreneurial environment fosters job creation and creates new opportunities for employment at the new business establishments being formed around the state. In 2023, the state recorded 5,470 new businesses, maintaining high levels of new business creation. Nearly half of these new establishments were in the professional and

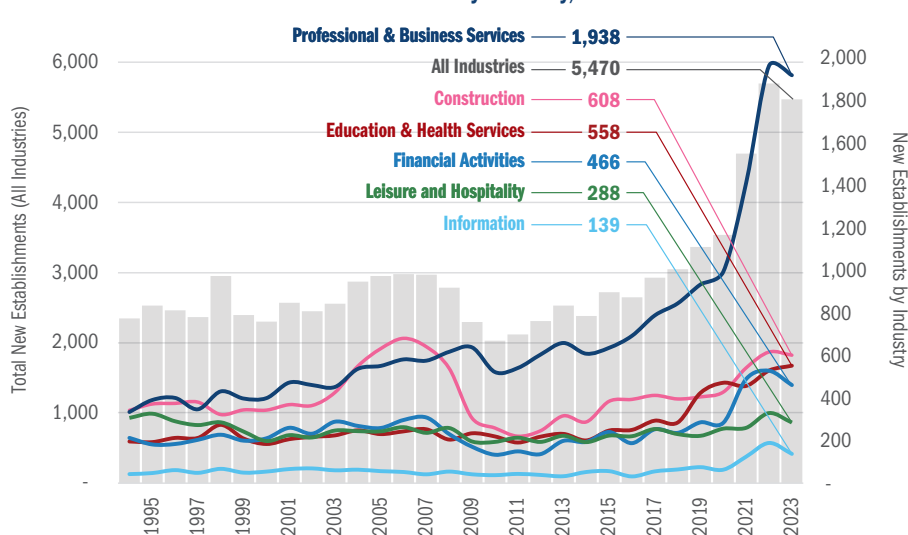
business services sector, which added 1,938 establishments in 2023. This sector's growth is partly due to the influx of teleworkers. The construction and financial activities sectors also saw significant growth over the past two years, driven by increased demand for housing, real estate, and financial services.

Montana's Job Growth By Industry



Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages. Natural Resources & Other includes mining, utilities, information and management

Montana's New Establishments by Industry, Selected Industries

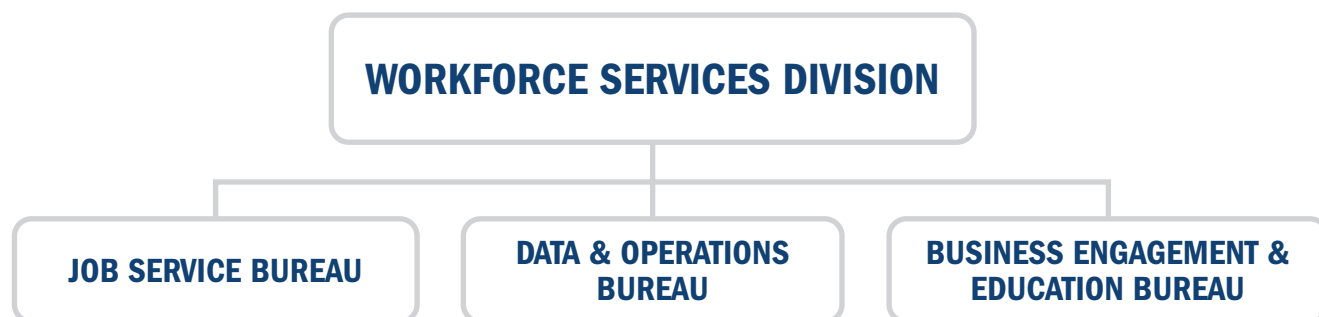


Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Business Employment Dynamics, Age and Size Tables

# Workforce Services Division



**THE WORKFORCE SERVICES DIVISION** connects Montana workers with employers, helps them understand the job market, and offers skills development and job search assistance. WSD serves businesses, job seekers, educators, students, and the public by providing resources and fostering connections in workforce and economic development.



## OVERVIEW

The Workforce Services Division (WSD) coordinates and guides the delivery of workforce development services to communities through a network of 18 Job Service offices across the state. WSD operates Registered Apprenticeship and Jobs for Montana's Graduates programs. The Division gathers, analyzes, and explains labor market and career information used at the national and state level by businesses, policymakers, and educators. WSD incorporates recommendations from the State Workforce Innovation Board responsible for federal workforce program oversight and strategic guidance.

In recent years, WSD adapted to meet the changing needs of Montana's workers and businesses. A 2022 comprehensive review identified communication barriers and data silos that limited efficiency. In response, WSD reorganized into three functional bureaus: Job Service Montana, Data and Operations, and Business Engagement and Education. This structure supports data-driven strategies to improve service delivery while achieving efficiencies in staffing and program execution.

Building on these efforts, WSD continues to refine its approach to support Montana's workforce. In July 2024, the Division opened a new Job Service location in Lame Deer, increasing its footprint to 18 brick-and-mortar offices. This expansion ensures local access to job-seeker and business services and enhances DLI's ability to serve southeast Montana.

In 2024, WSD launched the first phase of a new computer system to improve case management, reporting, and data quality. The system includes customer and business portals, increasing access to WSD's services and advancing efforts to drive innovation and operational excellence.

## WSD Snapshot

**1,012**

**1,012 WORKERS** received assistance for training or other supportive services needed to obtain better jobs through programs like WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth.

**1,300**

Jobs for Montana's Graduates (JMG) provided career training to over **1,300** high school students across **34** high schools, **19** middle schools, **2** colleges, and through the WIOA program.

**103/282**

Training dollars were awarded to **103** different Montana-based businesses and non-profits to train **282** individuals through the Incumbent Worker Training program, averaging \$1,589 per worker trained.



# Montana Registered Apprenticeship

## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT



**THE MONTANA REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM** partners with union and non-union sponsors to establish registered apprenticeship programs across the state. A registered apprenticeship program provides the on-the-job and classroom training required to meet the national requirements for an industry-recognized certificate through a curriculum customized to meet the employer's needs.

## OVERVIEW

The Montana Registered Apprenticeship Program (MRAP) is an essential component of Montana's workforce development system. Apprenticeship couples on-the-job training that keeps workers in the labor force with classroom training that meets the national requirements for an industry recognized credential. For many trades like electrical, plumbing, and carpentry, apprenticeships are the primary mode of training. Efforts to expand apprenticeship opportunities are leading to programs in new fields including registered nurses, childcare providers, radiologic technicians, and computer programmers. In 2024, the MRAP is on track to train approximately 3,300 workers in over 60 high-demand occupations - a record high and more than double the number of active apprenticeships just 10 years ago.



## BUSINESS SPONSORSHIP

Businesses are active partners in developing and administering an apprenticeship program, helping identify key proficiencies in program design and administering on-the-job training to participants. The apprenticeship training model delivers skills customized to meet the employer's needs. Over 70 new businesses became sponsors in 2024, for a total of 698 Montana businesses that are training their employees using a registered apprenticeship program. The MRAP has grown in popularity among non-construction industry businesses which make up 15% of sponsors. About 28% of all new business sponsors since 2019 have come from outside the construction industry. Eligible businesses receive a tax credit for sponsoring an apprentice.

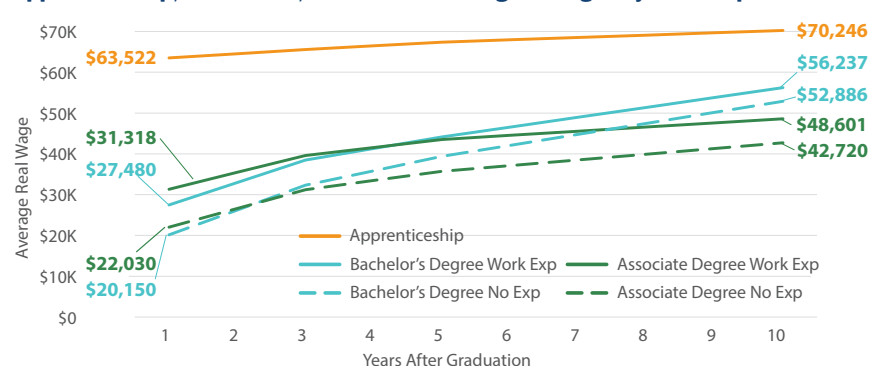
## WIDESPREAD PARTICIPATION

Apprenticeships help retain skilled workers in Montana. The Montana Registered Apprenticeship Program has trained over 13,700 apprentices in more than 110 occupations since 2000. In 2024, 45 Montana counties had active registered apprenticeship programs training local workers. Most (85%) of MRAP completers work for a Montana employer for five years after completing their program.

## EARNINGS

After completing a registered apprenticeship, the participant receives a national industry-recognized credential. An average of 302 apprentices completed their programs each year for the past 5 years. In almost every occupation, apprentices are making above entry-level wages one year after completion, with many earning above the average occupational wage. One year after graduating from their program, apprentices earned an average wage of \$69,000, well above Montana's 2023 statewide average wage of \$57,230.

**Apprenticeship, Bachelor's, and Associate Degree Wages by Work Experience**

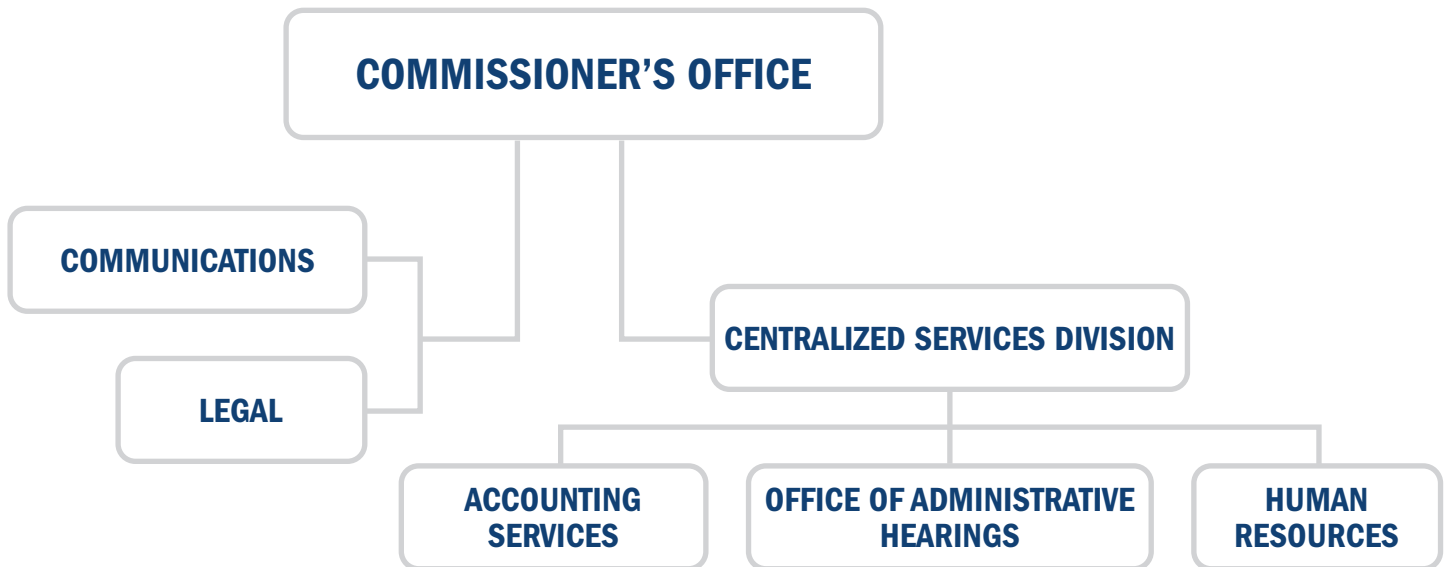


Source: MTDLI, OCHE, RMC, CC, UP and apprenticeship graduate data wage match. Wages reflect average real wages reported in 2021 dollars using the CPI-U. Apprenticeship includes all degree types. Work experience defined as working at least two quarters per year in the five years prior to graduation. All apprenticeship completers have work experience.

# Centralized Services Division



**THE CENTRALIZED SERVICES DIVISION** provides necessary support in the areas of human resources, legal, communications, accounting, and budgeting to the Department's divisions and administratively attached entities. The Office of Administrative Hearings is also housed within this division.



## CSD FUNCTIONS

The Commissioner's Office and the work units attached to it provide leadership and support services to the Department's various divisions. Work units attached to the Commissioner's Office include the Communications Office and the Office of Legal Services.

The Accounting Services and Human Resources are housed in the Centralized Services Division. The Accounting Services provides accounting, budget, payroll, and purchasing support to the Department's various divisions. Human Resources provides assistance with recruitment, performance management, and labor relations.

The Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) is attached to the Centralized Services Division. OAH holds impartial administrative hearings and provides dispute resolution services in unemployment insurance cases, wage and hour claims, public employee collective bargaining, unfair labor practices cases, state employee classification appeals and grievances, uninsured employer disputes, professional and occupational licensing appeals, and human rights complaints. OAH receives approximately 1,350 cases for hearings per year.

## Fiscal Consolidation

The fiscal functions of the agency have been consolidated under the CSD umbrella. The consolidation was designed to improve internal controls within the areas of agency budgetary performance, fiscal accuracy and accountability, and overall fiscal risk mitigation. The agency's efforts are reflected in the full reconciliation of the agency's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund and an anticipated clean audit review from the U.S. Department of Labor. During the next biennium further analysis will be completed to determine if other fiscal operations should be appropriately consolidated within CSD.

# State Workforce Innovation Board



**STATE WORKFORCE INNOVATION BOARD** advises the Governor on statewide workforce development strategies that maximize the state's education, training, and employment resources in support of economic development. State Workforce Innovation Board is an industry-led board providing recommendations on policies, priorities, and projects to strengthen the Montana workforce system.

## OVERVIEW

Under the leadership of Commissioner Swanson, the State Workforce Innovation Board (SWIB) has increased its attention to strategic planning and coordination of the state workforce system to increase efficiency. Industry leaders express a desire to engage in workforce development strategies in Montana, but expect clear metrics and outcomes in a timeframe that meets the urgency of current labor market shortages in the state. The SWIB is stepping up to be the facilitator of efficiency, prioritization and communication among workforce partners. SWIB is focused on developing a statewide strategic framework for workforce development, increasing awareness of successful career preparation and training programs happening in local areas, coordinating state agencies for improved collaboration, and improving the overall performance of contracted workforce providers in meeting clearly defined metrics and outcomes.

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## 2024 Highlights

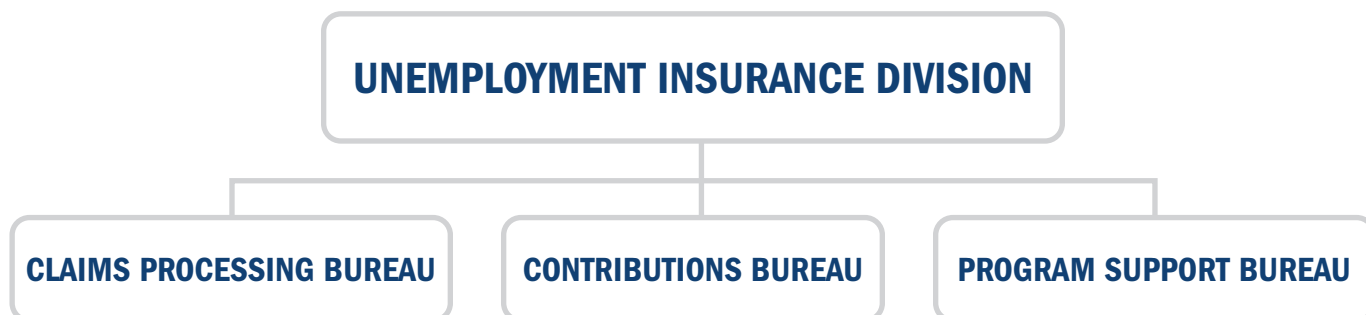
- Supported workforce development strategies to build Montana's growing photonics and optics sector.
- Assisted MT DLI in rapid response efforts to the Stillwater Mine layoffs by bringing industry partners together to develop career transition training programs, in conjunction with Montana's two-year colleges.
- Established a sanctions policy to hold contracted service providers accountable for delivering results in career training program using taxpayer dollars.
- Provided letters of support to multiple local workforce initiatives seeking federal funding.
- Presented at conferences across the state including the Montana Economic Developers Association, Big Sky Bright Futures Summit, and OpTEC.
- Participated in multiple cultural exchange events focused on education and workforce.
- Supported business attraction events to grow Montana's economy through new investment in the state.



# Unemployment Insurance Division



**THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE DIVISION** provides short-term economic relief to eligible workers from a fund financed by employers. This program not only lightens the burden of unemployment upon the worker and the worker's family, but also helps local communities maintain a stable workforce and economy.



## OVERVIEW

Montana's Unemployment Insurance Division (UID) is focused on providing high-quality customer service and benefits to individuals who have lost work.

The Claims Processing Bureau has offices in Helena and Billings. Claims Processing staff assist customers who cannot complete an online claim, answer questions over the phone and by email, and process state, federal and multi-state claims. Bureau staff determine monetary eligibility, investigate and adjudicate claim issues, and determine employer chargeability. Claims Processing provides UI expertise for Lower-Level Appeals, Rapid Responses (when large layoffs occur), and Assistance for Business clinics.

The Contributions Bureau is responsible for UI employer registration, contribution rate assignments, tax and wage report collections, wage revisions, and employer audits. Recently UID consolidated all its collections functions and imaging into this bureau. Contributions include field representatives in Great Falls, Missoula, Kalispell, Bozeman, Billings, and Helena who perform audits and provide employers assistance in filing quarterly wage reports.

The Program Support Bureau (PSB) manages federal and state reporting, management and business analysis, system testing, and security roles. PSB also houses an array of quality control and other functions such as: Claims Investigation, UI Appeals Board, required federal auditing functions such as Benefits Accuracy Measurement, Benefits Timeliness and Quality, Tax Performance System, plus standalone programs such as Disaster Unemployment Insurance, Extended Benefits, labor dispute claims, and information sharing. This bureau also works alongside CSD on Trust Fund Projections, Fiscal Notes, and other legislative tasks.

The Fraud Unit is administratively attached to the director. Though not a bureau, the mission and workload to protect taxpayer dollars from criminals has grown exponentially since the pandemic. As technology advances quickly, so has the sophistication of fraud. ID theft, fraudulent document creation, employer fraud, hijacking of claims, social engineering, AI, and other vector threats are now always at our doorstep. This unit works tirelessly with all the tools at their disposal to fight fraud.

# Unemployment Insurance Division

## MONTANA'S UNEMPLOYMENT SYSTEM ENVIRONMENT

### A Modern Unemployment Insurance Benefits System

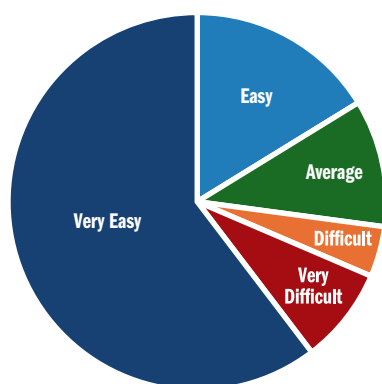
UID went live with their new consolidated tax and benefits system, Montana's Unemployment System Environment (MUSE), in 2023, after a record setting modernization period of 14 months, accomplished at a fraction of the cost other states spent modernizing legacy UI systems.

Live for over a year, with outstanding vendor support, increased stabilization and enhancement has occurred to increase the performance of MUSE, with over 1,750 System Change Requests completed. Coupled with large amounts of training, this effort has positioned Montana's UI program in a better situation to serve the public now and into the future.

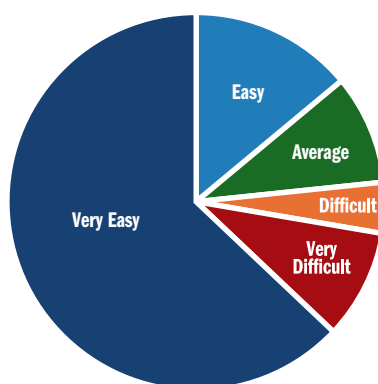
UID partnered with a consulting group to examine the Department in its entirety, with the goal of mapping and identifying process and organizational changes to better fit new technology and create a better customer experience.

To date, MUSE customer satisfaction surveys indicate a positive trajectory:

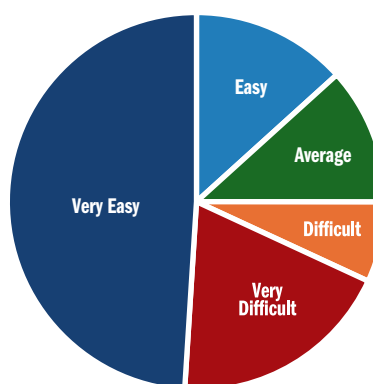
#### Benefit Claim Filing – 4.2 out of 5



#### Payment Request – 4.2 out of 5



#### Request for Information – 3.7 out of 5



### MUSE Improvements

- New Features and screens for claimants to view the status of their claim and any associated benefit issues (Claim Status Tracker, Benefits History Control).
- Running duplicate check logic for claimants reporting laid off issues inaccurately for the same employer, reducing repetitive and confusing employer information requests.
- Improvements for employers to limit which of their authorized web profiles receive notifications about information requests.
- Automated the processing of claim reviews, reducing a significant number of claims that would previously pend for manual review.
- Claims pending initial ID verification are pulled from employee work queues until cleared. Subsequent ID verifications allow employees to continue work so the claim is ready to process after verification.
- Improved system-adjudication: Reduce the number of issues needed to have a user review if the system has all the information necessary for determination.

### EXPANDED CAPABILITIES

51% of claimants are using a mobile device to complete weekly payment requests. Taking less than 3.5 minutes to complete.

### ELECTRONIC REQUESTS

88.5% of claimants are completing information requests electronically.

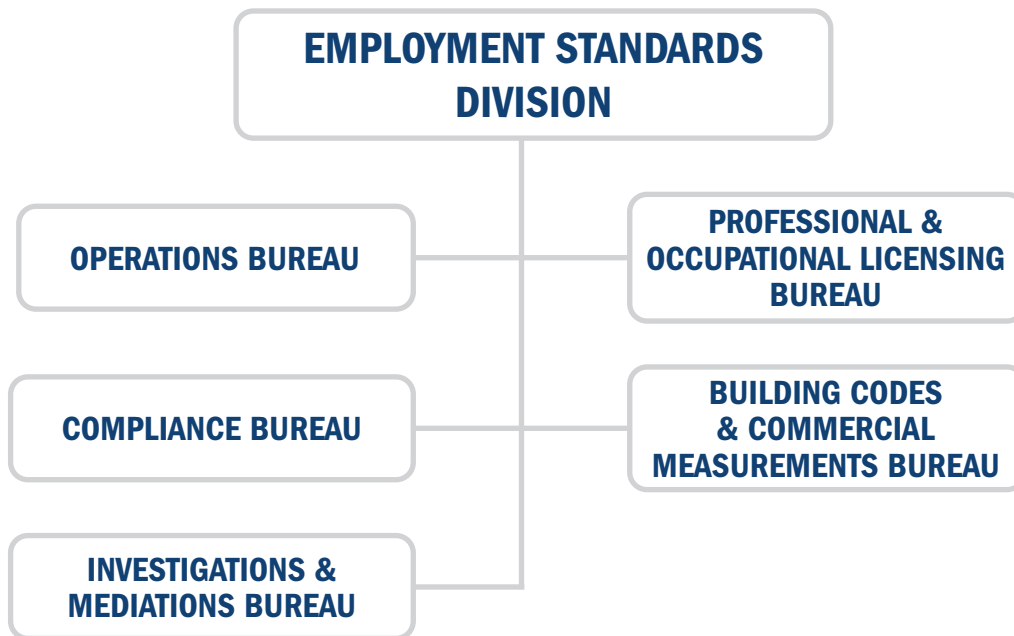
### PERFORMANCE STATS

99% of system response time is less than 1 second.

# Employment Standards Division



**THE EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS DIVISION** is responsible for a wide array of programs and processes designed to educate, protect, and guide businesses, workers, and consumers. The composition of the Employment Standards Division includes the Professional Licensing Bureau, Building and Commercial Measurements Bureau, Investigations and Mediation Bureau, Compliance, Workers Compensation, and Investigations Bureau.



## OVERVIEW

The Employment Standards Division (ESD) interfaces with a significant share of the state's population in the delivery of services offered to employers, employees, consumers, and the public. The division, with direct input from stakeholders, establishes and enforces minimum building and other life safety codes. The division provides licenses, inspections, testing, and certification of all weighing or measuring devices used in commercial transactions. Licensing of professional and healthcare workers that fall under the purview of the 29 licensing boards are administered by the division. Additionally, the division works cooperatively with employers and employees on administering workers compensation, human rights, safety and health, wage and hour programs, and resolves disputes through informal investigation and mediation.



# Employment Standards Division

## BUREAU SUMMARY

### PROFESSIONAL LICENSING BUREAU

The Professional Licensing Bureau provides administrative services for 29 administratively attached licensing boards, 14 department programs, and one advisory council. Across the various professions, the bureau administers more than 190 individual license types. The bureau provides license application processing services to over 170,000 registrants and licensees. For each licensing board, the bureau is responsible for ensuring transparency of board activities through the public meeting process. Compliance with workers compensation laws is another area the bureau supports through its issuance of independent contractor exemptions, contractor registration, and registers home inspectors.

### BUILDING CODES AND COMMERCIAL MEASUREMENTS BUREAU

The Building and Commercial Measurements Bureau is responsible for establishing and enforcing minimum building codes. Building Codes include commercial building, accessibility, plumbing, electrical, mechanical, energy, elevator, and boiler. The Bureau consults with two advisory councils: the Building Codes Advisory Council and the Underground Facility Protection Program Advisory Council. Further, the Bureau inspects, tests, and certifies all weighing and measuring devices used in commercial transactions, and operates the State Metrology Laboratory.

### OPERATIONS BUREAU, COMPLIANCE BUREAU, WORKERS' COMPENSATION

The Compliance Bureau, Operations Bureau, and Workers' Compensation Section work together to support programs for Workers' Compensation, Wage and Hour, Prevailing Wage, and Collective Bargaining. Staff register necessary entities, conduct compliance inspections, perform payroll audits to educate employers, investigate non-compliance, and provide resolution services. They collect data on workers' compensation claims, assist in resolving disputes, mediate benefit disagreements before cases reach the Workers' Compensation Court, and oversee medical fee schedules.

Staff deliver free safety education through SafetyFestMT, offer OSHA 10-hour courses, provide mine safety training, and offer onsite safety consultations. They investigate safety complaints and serious accidents in public entities, inspect coal mines and public worksites, and help employers comply with state and federal safety regulations.

### INVESTIGATIONS AND MEDIATION BUREAU

The Investigation and Mediation Bureau contains four sections: Dispute Resolution, Wage and Hour, Compliance, and Human Rights.

Dispute Resolution provides mediation for Workers' Compensation claims, Uninsured Employers Fund penalties, and wage disputes. It manages public sector collective bargaining, including trainings, elections, and labor practice investigations. The Wage and Hour section handles wage payment practices, child labor laws, prevailing wages, MMSERA, investigates complaints, and determines employment status. Compliance addresses complaints regarding licensed or unlicensed practices, monitors licensee compliance, and enforces Board orders. Human Rights investigates discrimination under state and federal laws, offering outreach and mediation services.

### HUMAN RIGHTS BUREAU

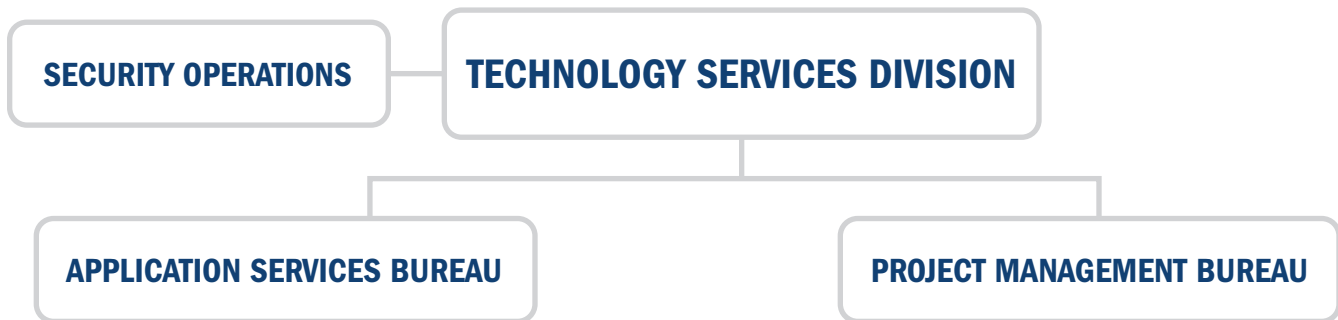
The Human Rights Bureau investigates complaints under both state and federal discrimination laws. The Bureau received approximately 5,000 calls and approximately 1,000 were given an intake appointment to discuss whether there was a viable complaint. The Bureau opened 451 complaints for investigation — mediating 132 cases.

The Bureau responds to calls from employers, business owners, educators, and housing providers seeking information to ensure compliance with the law. The Bureau's mediators resolve approximately 80% of cases, saving businesses, individuals, and Montana's courts significant time and financial resources.

# Technology Services Division



**TECHNOLOGY SERVICES DIVISION** provides reliable, secure, and sustainable information and technology services, enabling the delivery of efficient and effective services to Montanans. In collaboration with all DLI divisions, TSD proactively seeks opportunities to continuously improve the Agency's ability to holistically engage citizens by leveraging innovative and relevant digital solutions.



## OVERVIEW

The Technology Services Division (TSD) supports DLI divisions, staff, and Montana citizens by managing IT assets and ensuring devices are properly set up and secure. TSD oversees System Security and Risk Management, collaborating with state partners to ensure compliance with policies and protect systems and data. Additionally, TSD is responsible for developing, enhancing, and supporting systems and applications to meet DLI's needs while optimizing and automating processes to improve operations for Montana citizens and businesses.

## Services Functions of DLI Supported by TSD:

The goal of the Technology Services Division is to support the development and maintenance of the Department's IT systems to ensure usability, reliability, and security for employees and customers.

DLI created a centralized organizational structure for IT focused on efficiencies and service, while reducing duplicative costs and improving coordination across the entire Department.

- Provides services and support in system security, security of operations and risk mitigation for continuous monitoring while implementing controls, and data sharing agreements.
- Support the Unemployment Insurance Program which provides short-term economic relief to eligible workers.
- Ensure Montana employers understand the labor market and have a skilled and ready workforce. These services also provide information so Montana workers understand the job market, have access to skills development opportunities, and job search assistance services.

Reduced technical debt and varying technologies; continuing to leverage and expand our presence in the Accela Permitting and Licensing Application, Montana's Unemployment System Environment (MUSE), and ServiceNow platforms for Work Force Applications.

- Provides DLI an effective mechanism to recruit and train skilled staff to support DLI systems, while being resilient to changing needs, priorities, and staffing levels.
- Implemented IT Asset Management processes and procedures for managing Device and Software licenses, reducing waste, overage, and risk to DLI.
- Deployed Work Force Case Management and started the build for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) system and External Client Portal.

# Technology Services Division

## SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

- Moved our Business Licensing and Permitting platform to be cloud hosted and our MUSE into the AWS hosted Cloud.
- Currently engaged in an e-Stop development effort, putting the legacy DOR e-Stop application in the Accela Platform.
  - This will leverage the existing DLI Accela support and expertise to build and maintain this multi-agency portal.
- Partnering with the Department of Agriculture to develop and modernize a new licensing process to track licensing and education for Pesticide Licensing in the Accela Platform.

### **PUBLIC FACING MONTANA'S UNEMPLOYMENT SYSTEM ENVIRONMENT (MUSE)**

- New Features and screens for claimants to view the status of their claim and any associated benefit issues (Claim Status Tracker, Benefits History Control).
- Running duplicate check logic for claimants reporting laid off issues inaccurately for the same employer, reducing repetitive and confusing employer information requests.
- Web message improvements:
  - Added informational descriptions and links to claimant handbook for self-service.
  - Send email confirming DLI has received the message and given time to respond.
  - Directly link web message to benefit issue in question for internal adjudicators.
- Ability to print out Information Request submissions on both Claimant Center and eServices for Employers (this was available through web browser but now creates templates for record keeping).
- Okta – seasonal claimants do not have to go through the registration process again.
- Positive public feedback on new websites – average of 4.4 out of 5 stars for ease of use.
- Expanded capabilities – 51% of claimants are using a mobile device to complete weekly payment requests. Taking less than 3.5 minutes to complete.

### **INTERNAL MONTANA'S UNEMPLOYMENT SYSTEM ENVIRONMENT (MUSE)**

- Automated the processing of claim reviews, reducing a significant number of claims that would previously pend for manual review.
- Job Attachment – questions up front on the initial claim now instead of a separate information request, and defaulting to allow unless an employer informs DLI differently.
- An estimated monetary will only get finalized once the claimant passes ID Verification allowing full 21 days for adjudication of claim-sourced issues.
- FAST Identity Verification Services (FIVS).
  - No longer send submissions to FIVS if claimant hasn't updated a meaningful attribute. Ex. Updated address but receive payments through ACH.
- Claims pending initial ID verification are pulled from employee work queues until cleared. Subsequent ID verifications (from payment method updates) allow employees to continue work so the claim is ready to process after verification.
- Benefit Issue bundling - help streamline adjudicator workflow.





*"Building genuine relationships with Montana's eight tribal nations is essential for fostering economic and job growth, ensuring Native communities are not only participants but leaders in their economic development."*  
~ Commissioner Swanson ~

# Office of the Tribal Liaison



**OFFICE OF THE TRIBAL LIAISON** was established in alignment with Commissioner Swanson's vision to respect sovereignty, build trust, foster relationships, and address barriers to equitable workforce opportunities within Montana's tribal communities. Initially intended to provide guidance to DLI staff when working with sovereign tribal nations, the Office evolved into a proactive force for collaboration and innovation.

Montana's tribal nations are diverse, comprising 13 tribes across seven land-based reservations governed by eight sovereign tribal nations. These communities manage robust workforce development programs, but systemic barriers—such as limited access to resources, low labor force participation, and geographic isolation—hinder progress. The Office of the Tribal Liaison is a bridge between MTDLI, state programs, and tribal entities fostering mutual education and collaboration to promote equity and nondiscrimination in workforce development.

In its first year, the Office of the Tribal Liaison has achieved significant milestones, creating a ripple effect of positive change for tribal communities and the state workforce agency:

- **Collaboration and Joint Ventures:** The Office has facilitated grant-writing partnerships with tribal nations, enabling shared funding and resources for workforce initiatives.
- **CDL Certification Initiative:** Partnered with the Fort Belknap Tribal College to repair their semi-truck, develop a curriculum, and hire an instructor. This initiative enables tribal members across three reservations to earn CDL certifications, addressing a critical workforce need.
- **Driver's Education Program:** In collaboration with Tribal Education Departments, the Office is developing a young adult driver education program to address gaps in tribal school districts where driver's education is often unavailable.
- **Expanded Job Service Access:** Responding to the Northern Cheyenne Nation's concerns about the distance to Job Service offices, DLI opened a new office within the Tribal Council building.

Through the Tribal Workforce Roundtables, MT DLI programs and tribal leaders engaged in meaningful dialogue, fostering a deeper understanding of shared goals and opportunities. Key outcomes include:

- Identifying resource-sharing opportunities to maximize impact.
- Developing a shared vision for workforce development that respects tribal sovereignty.
- Enhancing communication between tribal leaders and state workforce agencies, which strengthens relationships and builds trust.

In Fall 2024, the Office grew to include a Tribal Youth Engagement Coordinator, envisioned as a tribal member who authentically understands the experience of growing up on a reservation. The Coordinator focuses on building relationships with tribal youth and ensuring their voices are integral to workforce initiatives.

Another critical focus is engaging tribal youth directly. Data from 2023 revealed that 82% of tribal youth remain in their communities after high school, underscoring the importance of localized career development. In response, the Office expanded its outreach to middle and high schools, with initiatives such as a Poster Series. The series showcases inspiring stories of tribal members who successfully pursued non-traditional pathways, encouraging young tribal members to follow in their footsteps. By emphasizing relatable role models and tangible successes, the posters aim to inspire youth to explore careers in trades, apprenticeships, and other opportunities that align with their community and personal aspirations.

# Governor's Office of Community Service



**THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICE** administers AmeriCorps funding and recognizes community volunteerism among citizens of all ages and backgrounds. GOCS encourages organizations to involve young Montanans in volunteer opportunities. AmeriCorps service members and community volunteers transform lives and landscapes throughout Montana.

**serve**montana  
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

## THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICE, SERVE MONTANA

In the Treasure State, neighbors serve neighbors. The spirit of service is core to our identity. Created in 1993 through the Montana Community Service Act (MCA 90-14-1), GOCS administers federal funding and provides specific training and technical assistance for AmeriCorps State programs in Montana. Federal funding is provided by the Corporation for National and Community Service, dba AmeriCorps, an independent federal agency. In partnership with other entities, GOCS promotes volunteerism through ServeMontana awards for outstanding community volunteers, Youth Serve Montana scholarships for high school seniors who have volunteered in their communities and plan to attend higher education in Montana, and Gift of Life activities to promote organ donor registration and honor families of organ donors.

**\$161,250 GENERAL FUND**

SUPPORTING

**6.5 FTE**

GENERATING

**\$3.30 Million in AmeriCorps  
Federal Funding**

AND

**\$1.79 Million in AmeriCorps  
Education Awards**

## AMERICORPS IN MONTANA

**2023 Accomplishments as of 9/30/24**

- **2,190** veterans and veteran family members served.
- **47,643** income-eligible Montanans received access to legal information.
- **94** miles of rivers and trails treated.
- **3,592** Montanans over 55 years served.
- **20,248** individuals received training and education.
- **2,487** community volunteers engaged in service by AmeriCorps State members.

## AmeriCorps in Montana: *A Snapshot*



### FY23 AmeriCorps State Programs



GOCS also administers AmeriCorps State planning grants, and promotes AmeriCorps National, Seniors, NCCC, and VISTA programs across Montana.

### AmeriCorps Service in the Last Year

**154**

AmeriCorps State  
Members

**184,837**

Hours Served

**99**

Service Locations

AmeriCorps State members provide intensive, results driven service to meet the pressing needs of Montana.

Since 1994 more than **10,000** AmeriCorps members have served more than **11** million hours in Montana.

**SINCE 1994, \$27.7 MILLION IN AMERICORPS EDUCATION AWARDS  
HAVE BEEN EARNED AND \$15.5 MILLION SPENT IN MONTANA!\***

\* Some subrecipients operate programs that continue through December 2024 and will report final data in January 2025.

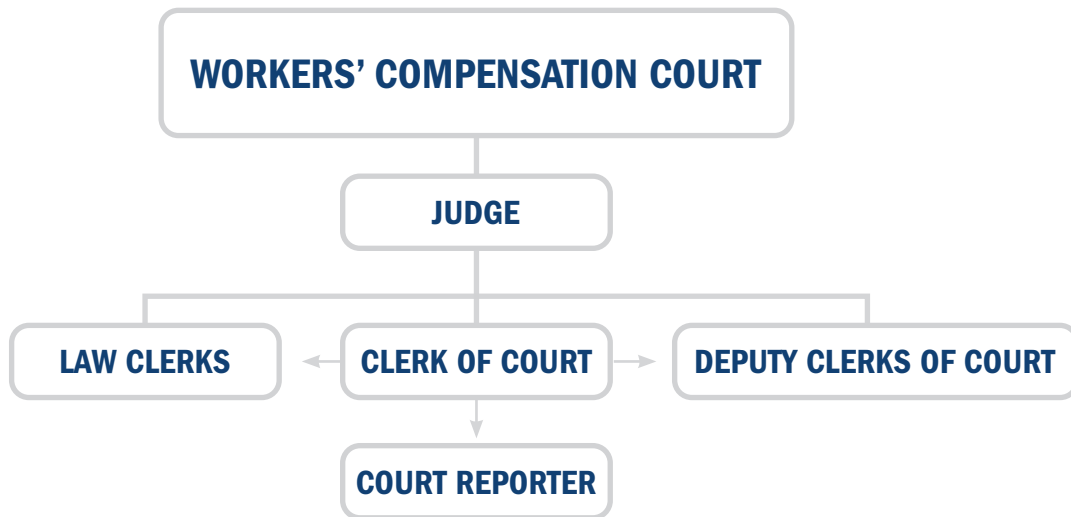
For more information visit the Governor's Office of Community Service at [serve.mt.gov](http://serve.mt.gov)



# Workers' Compensation Court



**THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION COURT** is administratively attached to DLI. WCC provides a fair, efficient, and effective forum for the resolution of disputes arising under the Montana Workers' Compensation Act and the Occupational Disease Act.



## HISTORY OF THE COURT

The 44<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly created the Office of the Workers' Compensation Court (WCC) on July 1, 1975, to provide an efficient and effective forum for the resolution of disputes arising under the Workers' Compensation Act, § 39-71-101, MCA, et seq., and the Occupational Disease Act, § 39-72-101, MCA, et seq. Subsequent Legislatures have increased the Court's exclusive jurisdiction to include matters such as disputes involving independent contractor exemptions and enforcement of the Department of Labor & Industry's investigatory powers.

## JURISDICTION

Except for specified regulatory matters, the Court has original jurisdiction over issues arising under the Workers' Compensation Act and the Occupational Disease Act. The Court's exclusive jurisdiction extends to disputes involving independent contractor exemptions under both the Workers' Compensation and Unemployment Insurance Acts, civil penalties for theft of workers' compensation benefits, and the two-year return to work preference specified in section 39-71-317(2), MCA. Trials are conducted statewide in five cities. All proceedings and hearings before the Court are governed by the appropriate provisions of the Montana Administrative Procedure Act. The Court is bound by common law and the statutory rules of evidence, including the Montana Rules of Evidence. In workers' compensation regulatory matters over which the DLI has original jurisdiction, the Court acts as an appellate court, conducting a judicial review. The rules of the Court can be found in the Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) at 24.5.301, et seq.

# DLI Customer Services: Year in Review

STATE FISCAL YEAR 2024

## EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS DIVISION

### PROFESSIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING

- Renewed **94,499** healthcare and occupational licenses
- Processed **22,795** new applications
- Processed **670** public complaints filed against licensees
- Completed **51** investigations ordered by boards and programs
- Conducted approximately **2,502** continuing education audits and certification audits for **95** license types
- Conducted **463** audits on licensees who renewed expired licenses on over **53** license types
- Organized and staffed **94** board meetings across **29** licensing boards and advisory councils
- Completed **5,984** inspections of businesses and licensees for statutory compliance
- Oversaw the Montana Prescription Drug Registry, which maintains over 5.3 Million prescriptions in the database and averages nearly **127,000** prescription history searches per month
- Over **70%** of prescribers and pharmacists located in Montana are registered to search the database

### BUILDING CODES & MEASUREMENTS

- Issued **1,136** commercial building permits
- Performed over **48,887** building code inspections
- Issued **11,392** operating certificates for boilers and elevators
- Licensed **29,537** weighing (scales) and measuring devices (meters)
- Tested **15,461** measuring devices, including retail gasoline and diesel dispensers, bulk fuel and propane trucks, and wholesale meters at the petroleum refineries and pipeline terminals
- Tested **9,645** weighing devices, including grocery store scales, livestock scales at ranches and auction yards, belt and hopper scales used by coal mines, highway truck scales, and grain elevators
- Registered **220** service technicians to install/repair commercial weighing and measuring devices
- Performed calibrations for **29** companies in the State Metrology Lab, which allowed them to install/repair commercial weighing and measuring devices in support of Montana businesses

### HUMAN RIGHTS BUREAU

- **451** complaints were filed for investigation
- Mediated **132** complaints

### ONSITE COMPLIANCE

- Completed **36** mine inspections

### PREVAILING WAGE

- Conducted **15** claim investigations
- Collected **\$54,845.61** in wages, penalties and fringe benefits distributed to Montana
- Conducted **128** on-site visits at public works/prevailing wage projects and completed **44** public contract payroll reviews

### INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS

- Approved **13,054** new exemptions and retain **25,395** active registrants

### WORKER'S COMPENSATION

- Mediated **747** Workers Compensation Claims

### WAGE AND HOUR

- Paid **\$119,641** through the self-audit process
- Issued **663** wage determinations
- Collected **\$521,274.01** in wages and penalties
- Mediated **33** Wage and Hour Disputes

### CONTRACTOR REGISTRATION

- Approved **7,154** new contractor registrants and retain **12,821** active registrants

### HOME INSPECTORS

- Approved **111** new home inspector registrations and retain **161** active registrants

### OUTREACH

- HRB conducted **24** outreach events (**10** of those involved outreach to Native Americans)
- Conducted **16** mine classes for mandatory training, attended by **222** mine class students
- Completed **46** OSHA 10-hour classes for **608** students

### COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

- Conducted **25** Collective Bargaining Elections
- Investigated **7** Unfair Labor Practice Complaints
- Conducted **31** Interest Based Bargaining Training for Public Sector Organizations
- Mediated **32** Public Sector Collective Bargaining Disputes

# DLI Customer Services: Year in Review

STATE FISCAL YEAR 2024

## WORKFORCE SERVICES DIVISION

- Job Service Montana and the WSD Business Engagement team provided services to **4,406** businesses
- **1,012 WORKERS** received assistance for training or other supportive services that they needed to obtain better jobs through programs like WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth
- Job placement for Adult and Dislocated programs was **66% - 70%** in SFY2024. Median quarterly earnings after leaving the program were over \$8,000 for the Adult program and over \$9,00 for Dislocated Worker
- The ARPA Rapid Retraining training program assisted **550** individuals through short-term training geared towards quick reemployment into high quality jobs, investing over \$800,000 directly into skills upgrades and career progression for participants
- Montana Registered Apprenticeship Program had over **700 SPONSORS AND 3,300 APPRENTICES** active in the program
- Jobs for Montana's Graduates (JMG) provided career training to over **1,300** high school students across **34** high schools, **19** middle schools, **2** colleges and through the WIOA program
- Training dollars were awarded to **103** different Montana-based businesses and non-profits to train **282** individuals through the Incumbent Worker Training program, averaging \$1,589 per worker trained. In SFY24, businesses from the manufacturing and healthcare industries received the most awards
- The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment program provided reemployment services to **2,283** UI claimants
- Job Service Montana provided in-person services to **15,323** people
- **1,557** of Montana's in-person clients were veterans
- In 2024, WSD served nearly **1,400** veterans and certified **994** business requests for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit

## UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE DIVISION

### CLAIMS PROCESSING BUREAU

- Filed **36,166** UI claims
- Answered **43,122** calls
- **33,810**, web messages received
- **26,675** unemployed workers paid benefits

### CONTRIBUTIONS BUREAU

- Covered **54,848** employers and **563,714** employees
- Registered **7,471** new employers
- Received **176,434** quarterly payments
- Processed **2.34 million** wage records
- Received **\$156,754,492** contributions

### FRAUD UNIT

- Total Submissions **92,881** into MUSE System
- Identity Theft stopped **31,021**
- Identity Theft accounted for almost **34%** of submissions

### PROSECUTION

- **31** charges were filed

### RAPID RESPONSE EVENTS

- **22** unique events serving **783** laid off workers



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