



Apprenticeship Connections

A Resource for State Apprenticeship Expansion Grantees

Table of Contents

[Resources](#)

[Spotlight on Mississippi](#)

[Spotlight on Montana](#)

[Apprenticeship in the News](#)

Resources



[Case Studies on Recruiting and Retaining Women in the Trades](#) - DOL equity partner Chicago Women in Trades (CWIT) recently released [case studies](#) on three Women's Committees, looking at their work to support the recruitment and retention of women in the construction trades. This and many other resources to support women in trades can be found on CWIT's [website](#).

[Iowa's New Apprenticeship Website](#) - Iowa launched a new [Earn and Learn website](#) to encourage Iowa employers and job seekers to explore apprenticeship opportunities. The site helps employers understand how apprenticeship works, the value it brings to their business, and resources available to help them get started; and shows job seekers how apprenticeship can lead to a successful career.



Spotlight on Mississippi: Learning Tour Sparks Ideas and Excitement

With interest in apprenticeship up, it's no surprise that numerous state delegations - Colorado, Kentucky, Washington, and South Dakota, to name a few - have crossed the Atlantic to observe and learn from seasoned apprenticeship experts in Switzerland and Germany. But as states' efforts to advance apprenticeship have matured, states are also finding ample learning opportunities with their peers on this side of the Atlantic.

In February and early March, Mississippi used Apprenticeship Accelerator Grant funds to support peer learning visits to three states: North Carolina, South Carolina, and Wisconsin. The goal was to help Mississippi leaders more fully envision the possibilities of apprenticeship, explore what might work in Mississippi, and flesh out a strategic plan. Mississippi staff looked for states with a similar culture, a strong relationship with community colleges, robust youth apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities, and significant experience in apprenticeship occupations outside of the skilled trades.

Once Mississippi identified target states, they sent letters of inquiry that outlined learning questions they wished to explore. Most states responded quickly and affirmatively, and joined Mississippi for a conference call to identify dates and develop an itinerary. Mississippi then invited partners from workforce, education, chambers of commerce, employers, tribal organizations, the Mississippi National Guard, foundations, and community-based organizations. Each visit lasted 1.5 days, with teams of about eight people meeting with workforce and community college leaders, touring apprenticeship programs, interviewing employers and apprentices, and debriefing over meals.



Mississippi is grateful to the host states for all they learned. Staff observed numerous strategies they want to import to Mississippi, such as tremendous community college flexibility in South Carolina, military apprenticeships in North Carolina, and strong tribal community involvement in Wisconsin. But the "biggest takeaway," says Gloria Mwase, Project Consultant with the Mississippi Community College Board, was that the tours "gave our employers a vision for how this could look in Mississippi." For instance, a representative from the Mississippi Hospital Association joined the South Carolina tour. Though they were only able to visit a manufacturing apprenticeship, "she ended up totally fired up and thinking through how it could be applied in healthcare. If you've never seen apprenticeship, you don't get the power of it."

If you'd like more information, please contact Project Manager Deeneaus "D" Polk at dpolk@mccb.edu.

Spotlight on Montana: Nearly Doubling the Approved Occupations List

Over the past 18 months, State Apprenticeship Expansion grantees have worked hard to live up to their grant name, expanding outreach, the number and types of apprenticeship occupations, the number and diversity of apprentices, and frameworks that support continued growth. Montana is one such success story, with 35 new apprenticeship occupations - an 83% increase since the start of the grant. What's behind this quick and significant expansion?

New Partnerships Aimed at Growth

- *Regional strategic planning events.* Montana brought together businesses and community colleges to talk about skill needs and how to address them. Something that came up over and over again? How to make unskilled workers fully skilled - a need that apprenticeship is designed to address.
- *Harnessing partner networks.* Montana developed and delivered an Apprenticeship 101 session to a broad range of partners to build awareness and buy-in. Mark Lillrose, State Supervisor of Registered Apprenticeship, emphasizes the importance of this step. "Take time and be present with all your workforce development partners. I cannot stress this enough. Once they understand the value of



apprenticeship, they produce a ton of leads and do a ton of free marketing."

- *Peer visit to Colorado.* Montana took a delegation of business owners and apprenticeship, education, and workforce development partners to Colorado to meet with their apprenticeship leaders. They saw manufacturers using apprenticeship, community colleges supporting related technical instruction, and workforce development organizations bringing partners together. As a result, says Lillrose, "It gave everyone a vision. And anytime you can have employers talking to employers, it's a win." Today, each employer from the delegation is establishing apprenticeships.
- *Industry equity partner incentives.* Montana partnered with AHIMA to provide incentives for new healthcare apprenticeships, including curriculum, help with registration of apprentices, and an additional credential to go along with the Certificate of Completion. Healthcare occupations now make up 16 of Montana's 35 new occupations.

Leadership in State Government

- *Tax credits.* The Montana legislature approved a business tax credit of \$750 per apprentice (\$1500 for veterans) for each year of an apprenticeship. The state also used child care funding to offer incentives for child care development specialist apprentices, mentors, and employers, which, along with reinvigorated outreach, resulted in 23 new sponsors and 46 apprentices.
- *Targeted grant investments.* Montana partnered closely with community colleges, using SAE funds to pay for the development of shared curriculum where there were gaps (e.g., medical coding).
- *Government apprenticeships.* Montana's Governor's Office brought together government leaders to figure out how to expand apprenticeship opportunities within state government. Two apprenticeships have been approved with many more in the works, including building code inspector, game warden, police officer, IT positions, paralegal, corrections guard, dispatcher, and apprenticeship field rep.

Improvements within the Apprenticeship Office

- *Streamlined approval process.* Montana is an SAA state with an advisory state apprenticeship council. Responsibility for approving apprenticeship standards is delegated to the Montana Department of Labor and Industry.
- *More effective employer engagement.* Growing familiarity with apprenticeship and its flexibility has enabled staff to shift from a "here's what it looks like" approach to a flexible, customer-driven "what skills do you need for proficiency?" approach. As a result, employers buy in more quickly and many of Montana's new apprenticeships are competency-based or hybrids.
- *Improved procedures.* Montana developed a Procedures Manual with input from all apprenticeship staff, which built deep familiarity with processes while providing clarity around them. A shared drive allows staff to identify work being done with any employer or occupation, helping everyone avoid duplication and build on what's in place.

Want more details? Please contact Mark Lillrose at mlillrose@mt.gov.

Apprenticeship in the News

[Can Apprenticeships Train the Workforce of the Future? States Hope So.](#)

[German Apprenticeships: Made for America](#)

[Michelin and Greenville County Schools Celebrate Launch of Youth Apprenticeship Program](#)

[Will Minnesota's Worker Shortage be Eased by Apprenticeships?](#)

[California Plan will Help Low-Income Women Train for Construction Jobs](#)



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