ARPA Rapid Retraining Program Policy

Background: The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) provides resources for Montana’s current, contracted workforce service providers to facilitate and support the short-term training of Montana citizens, impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, who seek employment and self-sufficiency. These resources promote and sustain accelerated job-training in high-demand, industry sectors.

Scope: This policy applies to current, contracted workforce service providers operating the WIOA Title I Adult program. This policy is effective November 15, 2021.

Policy:

Eligibility
To receive resources under this program, an individual must complete and sign the ARPA RR application:
- Being 18 years old or older;
- Eligible to work in the U.S.;
- Meeting Selective Service registration requirements (if applicable); and
- Earned no more than 250% of the Federal Poverty Limits in 2022 ($33,975):
  - As documented by the individual’s most recent, completed tax return.

Assessment
Interested participants must have a complete assessment to evaluate their skills and experience; their appropriateness for service; and their ability to benefit from short-term training.

Training Programs
Service providers and participants should focus on short-term occupational training. On-the-Job Training (OJT) and other targeted training programs cannot exceed 6 months in duration.

Resources should support training in:
- Targeted and demand industries and occupations including healthcare, information technology, manufacturing, construction, and leisure and hospitality; or
- Other local-area industries that can be justified based on career opportunities, self-sustaining wages, or the pandemic’s negative impact.

Training may include:
• Occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment and for training programs operated by the private sector;
• Skill upgrading and retraining;
• Entrepreneurial training;
• Customized training either individually or in a cohort conducted with a commitment by a business or group of business to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training;
• On-the-Job Training (OJT);
• Registered Apprenticeship or other programs that combine workplace training with related instruction.
• Priority of service should be given to socially disadvantaged individuals (i.e., Native Americans; senior citizens; low-income individuals; individuals with disabilities; veterans; foster youth; and formerly incarcerated individuals).

Allowable Costs
ARPA resources can pay for the following:
• The cost of training and related expenses; and
• Supportive Services detailed under Montana Labor & Industry (MDLI)’s Supportive Services Policy.

On-the-Job Training (OJT) is allowed. Wages will be reimbursed as detailed in the current OJT policy. For the purposes of ARPA funds:
• The OJT cannot exceed six (6) months; and
• The incentives listed in this policy’s Incentives section do not apply.

Unallowable Costs
• Expenses related to administrative and personnel costs are not allowable.

Incentives
• Individuals with a documented commitment from a business to be hired, with the understanding that they will successfully complete training via this program, are eligible for a living stipend of $500 per each set of 4 weeks they are in training, not to exceed 12 weeks (or a total of $1500):
  o 1-4 weeks – $500
  o 5-8 weeks – $1000
  o 9-12 weeks – $1500
• Businesses who commit to hiring an individual prior to training under this program are eligible for a $500 incentive when the individual completes training and starts work.

Administrative Requirements:
• $1 million will initially be allocated to current WIOA Adult providers per the existing allocation formula; with another $1 million available the following year.
• In the three areas where funds are split between two providers, this specific funding will be given as a 50/50 split with the option for one provider to offer the other a greater percentage if desired.
• Providers will be offered funding but can choose to decline it by a formal, written letter sent to MDLI.

Monitoring and Evaluation:
• Oversight and evaluation will be conducted by the Workforce Services Division’s Programs Unit and/or designee(s).

References:
• Montana’s One Stop ARPA Resources