



# Montana Rural Veterans Outreach Pilot Project

**Goal:** Engage volunteers to reach out to veterans in rural Montana about employment services.

**Challenge:** Veterans may be unaware of the resources available to them or may be uncertain how to best navigate the system to access those resources.

**Background:** The U.S. Department of Labor and the Corporation for National and Community Service asked Montana to join Washington State in a pilot outreach project for rural veterans. WA State was the first state to utilize volunteers to contact veterans regarding employment. Both the Montana Department of Labor and the Department of Military Affairs agreed to participate with Job Service Offices taking the lead.

**Partners:**

- Montana Department of Labor & Industry (DLI)
- Corporation for National & Community Service Montana Field Office, (Senior Corps and AmeriCorps VISTA)
- Governor's Office of Community Service, ( AmeriCorps State)
- Montana Department of Commerce, Housing Division
- Office of Public Instruction, Veteran's Education
- Retired Senior Volunteer Programs (RSVP)
- Montana Legal Services Association AmeriCorps State & VISTA
- Montana National Guard, Yellow Ribbon Program
- Montana Veteran's Affairs

**Pilot Communities:** The Montana Rural Veterans Outreach Project will start in four communities: Helena, Kalispell, Hamilton, and Miles City. The Montana Department of Labor (DLI) identified 3,054 rural veterans who have not received a countable service for the past three years from a Job Service office. These veterans will be targeted for outreach calls by volunteers. Other communities -- Butte and Sidney - are also interested in participating.

**Volunteer Outreach:** RSVP will recruit volunteers, primarily veterans and/or family members of veterans to conduct outreach. Montana DLI will identify veterans in each pilot community. Through the Job Service, RSVP volunteers will contact the identified veterans, offer to discuss career and employment challenges, and if asked, share information about community resources available to them. Because successful employment is often linked to other quality-of-life issues, resource guides will be developed to assist volunteers in letting veterans know about other important services in their community. With the assistance of, national service volunteers -- RSVP, AmeriCorps and VISTA -- Montana Legal Services will update Veterans Resources Guides with local, state, and national contact info to increase awareness of benefits that Veterans might be entitled to receive.

## **For more information:**

### **State Job Service Contact:**

**Dan Bernhardt**, DLI, Veterans Program Manager (406)444-1630, [DBernhardt@mt.gov](mailto:DBernhardt@mt.gov)

### **Corporation for National and Community Service Contact - RSVP**

**Amy Busch**, CNCS, MT State Program Specialist, (406)449-5404, [abusch@cns.gov](mailto:abusch@cns.gov)

### **Phase I Pilot Locations:**

- Tri-County RSVP - serving Broadwater, Jefferson, and Lewis & Clark Counties  
Micky Brown, RSVP Director, (406) 447-1680, [micky@rmdc.net](mailto:micky@rmdc.net)
- Flathead County RSVP - serving Flathead County  
Sue Holst, RSVP Director, (406) 758-5712, [sholst@flathead.mt.gov](mailto:sholst@flathead.mt.gov)
- Miles City RSVP - serving Custer and Rosebud Counties and the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation  
Betty Vail, RSVP Director, (406) 234-0505, [rsvp05@midrivers.com](mailto:rsvp05@midrivers.com)
- Area VI RSVP – serving Lake, Lincoln, Mineral, Ravalli, and Sanders Counties and the Flathead Indian Reservation  
Sharon Bladen, RSVP Director, (406) 363-1102, [rsvp@montana.com](mailto:rsvp@montana.com)

### **Phase II Pilot Locations:**

- Richland/McCone RSVP - serving Richland & McCone Counties  
Idelle Badt, RSVP Director, (406) 433-2207 [ibadt@richland.org](mailto:ibadt@richland.org)
- Butte School Dist. RSVP – serving Silver Bow County  
Michele Brennick, RSVP Director, (406)533-2508 [brennickml@butte.k12.mt.us](mailto:brennickml@butte.k12.mt.us)

### **Community Service Contact:**

**Jim Auer**, Office of Community Service, Grants Coordinator,(406)444-5547, [jauer2@mt.gov](mailto:jauer2@mt.gov)

**Ed Higgins**, Montana Legal Services Association, Director of Community Development,  
(406)543-8343, [ehiggins@mtlsa.org](mailto:ehiggins@mtlsa.org)

