



## **MEDA BEAR Working Group Conference Call**

**June 24, 2015**

**9:00am – 10:00am**

**On the call:** Marissa Hauge, Stillwater County Economic Development; Chris Wilhelm, MDLI/IWT; Katie Weaver, Park County – MSU Extension and Economic Development; Lori Gilliland, MDOC/SBDC; Carley Markum and Angie McDonald, Missoula Job Service; and Mike and Gloria O'Rourke.

### **Minutes**

#### **1. Introductions and Brief Review of Purpose**

Introductions were made and Gloria briefly reviewed the purpose of this working group which is to grow and strengthen the Montana BEAR Program across the state. Gloria made note of the BEAR listserv, website, BEAR forum, and thanked everyone for joining the Working Group.

#### **2. Process Re-Visit**

Gloria described the interruption in the current process of storing data for BEAR Teams. It was noted that the participants in the Main Street Montana Project Report emphasized the need to reduce barriers between agencies and programs, and to share information, removing possible duplication of services. The re-visit of the BEAR Team data process will encourage lower costs and sharing of information when possible.

#### **3. BEAR Round Up Plans**

The BEAR Working Group participants felt that holding webinars and conference calls would serve Montana BEAR Teams better at this time, rather than holding an in-person BEAR Roundup event. Topics would include exploring existing BEAR models across Montana, WebGrants training, IWT Refresher, BEAR Refresher, BEAR Team activities, etc.

#### **4. Training Needs**

Gloria reminded everyone that she and Mike are available either via webinar or in person to conduct a BEAR training, refresher course, or organize presenters for a specialized business topic. Several on the call said their teams are in the process of rebuilding so a webinar would be helpful and will contact MEDA as needed.

#### **5. BEAR Team Activities**

**Rural BEAR:** Marissa reported Stillwater County BEAR partners with Chad Moore, in Billings, Big Sky Economic Development to meet the needs of rural businesses in the area. This branch of the Billings program is called Rural BEAR and is used by Stillwater, Carbon and Sweet Grass Counties.

**Livingston BEAR:** Katie reported the Livingston BEAR Team has some common themes arising throughout their BEAR visits. Because of this, the Livingston BEAR Team will expand its resource services and offer small group training.

**Missoula BEAR:** Angie and Carley shared that Warren Vaughan (Bozeman BEAR Director), recently visited their team and shared multiple ideas from what is working in Bozeman. As a result, Missoula implemented some of the practices and is using them with the Missoula BEAR process.

**Kalispell BEAR:** It was noted that Mike Jackson is retiring from Kalispell Job Service but will serve as the BEAR Team Meeting Coordinator for the Kalispell Chamber on a part-time basis.