

**MEDA REMOTE WORKER WORKING GROUP**  
**DECEMBER 4, 2019**  
**10:00AM**

On the call: Anne Boothe, Sarah Calhoun, Jayne Morrow, Annmarie Robinson, Elisa Fiaschetti, Diane Smith, Mark Davis, Lisa Haas, Barbara Stiffarm, Paul Tuss, Tina Oliphant, Liz Moore, Russ Fletcher, and Gloria O'Rourke.

1. Welcome and Updates

- a. Anne welcomed everyone to the call and thanked them for their time. She provided a summary of the workshop discussion held in September, at MSU Northern.
  - Community internet and shared space.
  - ROI
  - Use location as a strategic advantage – how? Use high schools, higher ed, etc.
  - Need basic tool kit from business owner standpoint as well as employee standpoint.
  - Incentives – i.e., legislative bill that did not pass would have encouraged rural health care workers to Montana.
  - Overall education on remote work.
  - Bring together remote work partners – find the niche to connect
  - IT support
  - Better job search tools
  - Opportunities for face-to-face stakeholder meetings
- b. Jayne shared more about ROI which stands for Rural Online Initiative. Please see the MEDA [Remote Work](#) website for more information. ROI Program includes Application, Placement, Training, Skills, and Development. The purpose is to share awareness of remote work and increase remote work opportunities. <https://remoteworkcertificate.com/>
- c. MDLI creating MT Remote Work Website  
Prompted by the discussion in Havre, Montana Department of Labor and Industry has agreed to take on creating a website page dedicated to remote workers in Montana as well as providing state resources and templates. Special thanks to Kathleen O'Leary and Scott Eychner. They are structuring their work in 2 phases:

**Phase I (to be completed by early January)**

Create a page on the DLI website dedicated to remote workers; to be used as a resource for both interested workers and employers. It may include the following:

- Toolkit for workers/employers which details recommendations when entering the remote worker arena (Q&A, perceived roadblocks, State of Montana telework policy, Federal Telework guide, MT DLI internal policies/procedures regarding remote workers)

- How-To instructions on searching for remote worker opportunities in online job searches
- Templates/Sample Forms including Agency Telework Policy, Telework Employer/Employee Agreement, Safety and Security Checklist, Hardware and Software Inventory, Teleworker Self-Assessment, Supervisor's Telework Checklist
- Case studies/stories of successful remote worker relationships (instate, out of state, international, state employees, etc.)
- Resources (news articles, other templates, references to what works in other states, etc.)
- Contacts at local workforce service offices who may provide additional information

**Phase II (Requires participation outside DLI):**

Create links from other State of Montana websites to the DLI remote worker page  
 Share the work with stakeholders (MEDA, Montana Chamber, Local Economic Development organizations, etc. ) The site will need to be integrated into other sites and communication materials across Montana to get the word out.

d. Paul Tuss and Barbara Stiffarm Update

Paul shared information and discussions from his work in higher ed about Montana's remote work need. Paul encouraged everyone to stick with this work as it is very important in moving Montana's economy forward, especially with the challenging workforce situation.

Barbara noted companies are indeed seeking rural workers and this is an important shift for rural economies.

2. What are action items for MEDA?

- a. Possibly get on the agenda for the MEDA spring conference.
- b. Consider a best practices workshop prior to the MEDA fall conference.
- c. Explore incentives that are not hugely expensive.
- d. Prepare for the 2021 Legislative Session.
- e. Learn what the state wants (learn what other states have done and determine what fits for Montana)
- f. Explore funding opportunities universities can pursue.
- g. De-mystify remote work for Montana.
- h. Assist with the tool kit
- i. Form hubs in rural communities to be the feeder for larger communities/businesses seeking rural remote workers.
- j. Confusion is in abundance in the business community; a streamlined description and guidelines would be beneficial.
- k. Consider a webinar in conjunction with the tool kit.

3. Misc and next steps

- a. Who is not at the table? i.e., MT Hi-Tech Alliance
- b. Consider a meeting in February or March
- c. Remote work in technical areas such as agriculture, - select a specific sector and dig into it.
- d. Economic and social impacts of a digital workforce (perhaps Headwaters Economics)
- e. More stories from remote workers themselves; Anne would create a form to send out and/or place on the remote work page. A subcommittee is forming to gather stories and share.
- f. Hold a small group call on formation of the tool kit.