



THE FUNDING EXCHANGE, INC.

Proposal Narrative Sample

PASSPORT TO SUCCESS

The University of Montana-Missoula College of Technology (COT), in partnership with the Gearing Up Project of Women's Opportunity and Resource Development, Inc. (WORD), seeks funding from the Carl Perkins Reserve Program to continue an existing transitional education and job training program called the Passport to Success Project (PSP) which is now in its ninth month.

The Passport to Success Project (PSP) in FY 03 will prepare teen and adult women, especially those with dependent children, living in low-to moderate income households, for entry into high-skill, high-wage careers through the attainment of one and two-year degrees at the College of Technology.

The Passport to Success Project was implemented in 2001 to address the attrition and isolation which rural low-income women experience in predominantly male academic and work environments. The Passport to Success Project is comprised "Of outreach, assessment, educational and core services, mentoring, peer and internship placement." In FY'03, the proposed PSP will serve 20 new participants, and will continue to serve up to 10 participants currently enrolled, for a total target of 30 participants.

Other Passport to Success partners and affiliates include WORD's Future's Project, the Missoula YWCA, the Missoula Job Service, Missoula County Public Schools Adult Basic Education (ABE), Missoula Office of Public Assistance, Missoula Area Economic Development Corporation (MAEDC), and the Montana Contractors' Association (MCA).

The PSP uses the Missoula Area Workforce System's long-standing excellent service coordination to provide a seamless system of educational and support activities to the project's target population. All PSP partners require

documentation to ensure that those with the greatest need are the primary recipients.

The PSP's primary objectives will be to:

- (1) improve educational outcomes for up to 30 teen and adult rural low-income women who are recruited from Missoula County and adjacent rural counties
- (2) increase comprehension and mastery of COT core course requirements through individualized mentoring and academic support
- (3) provide technical skill development through hands-on experience and internships, while simultaneously involving local employers in the project to further expand future employment opportunities.

The Passport to Success Project (PSP) will continue to provide the following core services designed for the target population:

- (1) individual case management to reinforce program retention
- (2) placement in skill-specific mentoring and peer support networks
- (3) referral into support services and curricula
- (4) referral to individualized computer tutoring as needed
- (5) individual skills assessment opportunities and a platform for peer group identification and teambuilding, and
- (6) placement of participants in new job shadows and internships in high technology, and other nontraditional high-wage workplaces.

Evaluation of the project will include quantitative and qualitative measures of the attainment of challenging state established academic, vocational and technical proficiencies and skills; achievement or retention of 2.0 GPA or above; enrollment in nontraditional certificate programs; and successful placement in job shadows and internships in nontraditional occupations.

Research shows the targeted population is more likely to stay in school and succeed when a support network is available (on and off campus) that includes mentoring and peer team building in addition to more traditional offerings such as remedial courses. Combined with job shadowing and internships, the proposed continuation of this newly initiated program offers students a Passport to Success.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM OR NEED

Despite media attention, employment and unemployment numbers, it is really income that drives our standard of living and reflects our general well being. The economic benefits of a post-secondary education remain high. Jobs are requiring higher basic skill levels, including better reading and communication skills.

Modern employers are demanding workers with higher skill attainment. College graduates, in general, have higher median earnings than those with less education. The income of those with a college degree increased throughout the 1980's and 1990 's. The highly technical jobs of the future may not always be tied to four-year degrees, however. Post-secondary educational opportunities come from a variety of sources, including community colleges, technical colleges, and apprenticeship programs. The key principles here are customer choice and high quality educational and training opportunities designed toward high skill, high wage positions.

State of Montana Five Year Plan

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Montana's welfare reform program (formerly FARM), recognizes the need for support services beyond academic assistance to move recipients from welfare to employment. Most counties in Montana place a two-year time limit on college activities, which may not be enough time for displaced homemakers, teen parents or low-income women with dependent children who are trying to balance school, work and family.

The Passport to Success Project (PSP) seeks to address and ameliorate destabilizing elements interfering with the successful education and vocational training of low-income women in the Missoula area and surrounding rural areas. The PSP is the only nontraditional support program available to the service area's TANF recipients. Agencies serving this population are part of the project's partnership and have been a constant source of referrals to the Gearing Up Project since welfare reform in 1996.

Addressing High Drop-Out Rates with a Support Network

Low-income female college or vocational students typically enter school during transitional or vulnerable stages in their lives. They must juggle the demands of their families in addition to the demands of school with limited financial and psychological resources. Research shows that this population is more likely to stay in school and succeed when a "quality of life" support network is available on and off campus that includes mentoring and peer-team building, in addition to more traditional offerings such as remedial courses'. All quality of life" support network of this nature is a key component of the Project. The PSP partners have

worked successfully with this population for many years, and will draw upon their experience to achieve this proposal's goals.

There is an acute need in the rural areas surrounding Missoula for the kind of support system the Passport to Success Project offers to low-income participants to enroll and stay in school, to learn employable skills in nontraditional employment fields, and to obtain and keep better-paying jobs. These rural areas experience high unemployment and poverty rates, and little in the way of vocational training.

The Passport to Success Project will conduct outreach to and serve special population students from Missoula city and county and adjacent rural counties, primarily Mineral, Sanders, Lake and Ravalli. Many potential rural participants face transportation barriers that make it difficult to attend school in Missoula. We will rely on our relationship with WORD to deliver a seamless system of organized support activities for rural participants. We will address rural residents' barriers to participation by providing them with support services to assist with emergency expenses related to transportation and childcare, which may prevent them from being stable students.

Poverty in Montana

According to the most recently available statistics, Montana ranks 47th in the nation for per capita income and 49th in average wages (U.S. Census Bureau; U.S. Department of Labor). The latest Regional Economic Information System Report (2002) shows that Montana ranks last (51st including the District of Columbia) in Annual State Personal Income. The 2000 U.S. Census shows that Montana ranks 3rd highest in the nation for Multiple-Job Holders. Montana's rate of poverty is high (15.7%) compared to the national average (12.7%), and the number of Montana's children who live in poverty is currently 22.1% compared to 18.6% nationally (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). Members of the PSP targeted population are among the state's poorest citizens, especially those residing in Mineral County (unemployment 10.3%) and Sanders County (unemployment 12.4%). In Missoula County, 17.3% of children ages 5-17 live in poverty, according to the Montana Department of Commerce website (2001 demographic estimates).

Women make up 50% of Montana's workforce, yet only 10% work in higher paying jobs -typically associated with post-secondary education -which pay an average weekly wage of \$624, compared to the state average of \$435.71 (ES-202 Report, Bureau of Research and Analysis, Montana Department of Labor and Industry, 2002). Most of the state's women are employed in "pink collar" jobs in traditionally female roles in the retail and service sectors, creating a dramatic disparity between women's wages in traditional and nontraditional occupations in the state.

Annual wages for service jobs typically held by women in the target population average \$11,577 and retail jobs average \$16,929; compared to jobs in the electronics industry which average \$48,271 (Montana 2000, Annual Labor Market Planning Information, Bureau of Research and Analysis, Montana Department of Labor and Industry, 2000). One study of the empirical literature suggests that any postsecondary education results in increased earnings. Even those who do not complete degrees earn about 5-7% more for each year's worth of college credit, whether they attend a two-year or four-year college program'.

Education and poverty recent research, including that presented in the Five Year State Workforce Investment Plan for 2000-20005, shows that access to post-secondary education and training is essential to helping low-income families earn an income sufficient to meet essential needs. The old adage "to get a good job, get a good education" is more true today than at any time since WW II. Higher educational attainment is strongly associated with higher earnings, lower unemployment, and reduced child poverty. Attainment of higher education greatly impacts the economic stability of families headed by women living at 150% or less of the poverty level, the target group for this project.

Nationally, women with an associate's degree earned \$6,414 more a year in 1998 than women with only a high school diploma (\$28,337 compared to \$21,963), and earned nearly twice as much as women who have not finished high school (\$15,847). Women with a bachelor's degree earned \$7,031 more than women with an associate's degree (\$35,408 compared to \$28,337). In addition, women with some college spend far more time employed (76% of weeks over a four-year period) than women without a high school diploma (only 49% of weeks over the same period).

While higher education attainment is clearly in the best interest of low-income women and their families, this population drops out of college at a high rate. At the University of Montana-Missoula College of Technology, entering women freshmen are better prepared academically and do better during their first semester than their male counterparts, yet their graduation rate is dramatically less than their male peers. For example, in 1999, 77% of women freshmen had GPAs of 2.0 or higher at the end of their first semester compared to 60% of their male counterparts.

In spite of consistently higher GPA scores, women drop out at a much higher rate than their male counterparts. In fall 1997, 276 women entered OT as freshmen and only 28% had graduated by the summer of 2000. In contrast, or the same time period, 190 men entered COT as freshmen and 42% of this group had graduated by summer 2000. (COT measures graduation rates by viewing student performance over the course of three years, since such a large

percentage of the student body takes longer than 2 years to complete their degrees)

Addressing Women's Specific Needs

Women in the target group have poor college retention rates due in large part to the many roles they fill in addition to that of student. They are far more likely than their male counterparts to drop out of school due to stresses in the home, including the difficulty of balancing family, school and work, domestic violence, financial strains (especially for single parents), problems that their children are experiencing or problems finding reliable child care, and isolation. For example, in the Passport to Success Project's first year, a single mother without a car was spending hours in the public transit system just getting her children to childcare and herself to school-precious hours that were needed for studying and completing school assignments.

To be successful, programs that serve this population must address personal barriers and stresses in addition to offering more traditional remedial education courses and other academic supports such as tutoring. Remedial courses alone do not provide a sufficient "bridge" to occupational or academic success for women in the target group.

Gearing Up was able to meet participants' needs in the first year of the Passport project by tapping into community resources. For example, after running a simple advertisement requesting a donated car "for a single mom with a dependent child attending the College of Technology," four older cars were donated and the best of the four was given to the student in need. Gearing Up was also able to secure free repairs and six months of free insurance.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Passport to Success Project includes components designed to address personal and family barriers to successful college and job retention for low-income women. One important component is the development of a peer support network. Women with close friendships and an extensive support system are more likely to succeed in college. Women in the target group typically have poor support systems in their personal lives and may be very isolated. Peer relationships help break isolation and create a bond that can be critical to this population's success. Peer support allows participants to come together for mutual support, and to share the trials of balancing school, work and family responsibilities. Buddy systems build solidarity. At the first PSP Peer Support meeting last year (Sept. 2001), participants were able to begin the process of developing support among themselves. They shared advice about managing home and school tasks, and housing problems. Participants were quoted as saying, "I wish this had been available a long time ago," and "Thank you, I needed this."

Low self-esteem and unrealistic expectations further obstruct success for this group. Data gathered by numerous researchers studying women welfare recipients suggest that most of the women in the target group will have experienced one or more severe crises that contribute to low-self esteem, such as domestic or sexual violence, homelessness, or persistent poverty. In addition, most will not associate school with a positive self-image, but rather, with negative experiences from past poor performance or dropping out, as a result of which they may not view themselves as capable of succeeding in college. This attitude often carries over into work and career contexts.

Additionally, these women may expect to be passive recipients of knowledge, since this is the pedagogical approach used in most elementary and high school classrooms and the only approach with which they may be familiar. They are likely to hold stereotypical impressions of college teachers, envisioning them as the all knowing experts who pour wisdom into the heads of their students. When they take classes for the first time and hear instead that they must think for themselves, that there are no clear right or wrong answers, and that the purpose of a college education is to ask the right questions rather than find the right answers, they may feel confused, frustrated, and perhaps even "cheated". Students must be encouraged to develop their internal locus of control.

Successful approaches to these problems must empower participants to make personal choices and help change their self-image, thereby creating self-directed learners. Our project meets this challenge by implementing several components that are successful models for improving women's self-esteem and assertiveness. For example, we employ the empowerment model of case management. The case manager's role is to provide information, resources and support. The case manager reviews the student's progress, solicits the student's input, offers options for action and elicits commitments for action from the student. This model encourages program participants with a history of dependence upon others, as a result of domestic abuse or poverty, to begin viewing themselves as the primary decision makers in their lives - a necessary step to becoming a self-directed learner.

In addition, we ask participants to help create the structure and content of the project's Peer Support network component. They have a role in the project's development and they are viewed as important to its success, as well as important to the success of their peers. This approach can improve self-esteem and indirectly contribute to their transition from passive to self-directed learners and wage earners.

Integrating Young Women Into the Project

The 2003 project will recruit teen parent participants as well as adult women. This special population has needs that are best met by staff with expertise in teen

developmental stages and the multiple barriers that place this population at high risk for education failure. For that reason, we will refer teen parent participants to WORD's Futures Program for case management and related services.

These may include attendance at support groups with teen parent peers, parenting classes especially designed for teen parents, and teen leadership development activities. Teen parent participants will also be integrated into the project's regular activities, providing opportunities for adult women enrolled in the program to serve as older role models.

Addressing Attrition in Nontraditional Job Training

The Passport to Success Project encourages participants to enroll in the College of Technology's programs that are most likely to lead to high-skill, high-wage careers.

These include Computer and Information Technology, Electronics Technology, Diesel Equipment Technology, Heavy Equipment Operation, Building Maintenance Engineering, Welding Technology, and Recreation Power Equipment Repair. Women are currently under-represented in these programs, and when women do enroll, they drop out at a much higher rate than their male peers do. For example, 13 men and 4 women began the Electronics Technology Program in the fall of 1998. After four semesters, 9 of the 13 men were still enrolled, but only one of the four women.

Groundbreaking research conducted by Carol Gilligan and others shows that women are more likely to assert themselves, ask questions and participate in classrooms where they are a majority. For this reason, and to address the isolation that women experience in a predominantly male academic environment, the project's partners will have the ability to offer special workshops as needed, in spaces such as the woman-centered environment at the Missoula YWCA.

The Internship Connection

Because most women have had little direct exposure to the kind of hands-on skill building that will increase their confidence in the high-skill, high-wage workplace, Passport to Success links participants to employers early in their academic careers through the implementation of a Job Shadowing/Internship component. The Passport to Success Project recruits employers from the business community to be job shadow and internship sites, matching participant needs with employer needs. This component serves to engage employers in the project, in addition to providing participants with important direct work experience.

Participants will be placed in job shadows and internships with local high-skill, high-wage employers that provide them with hands-on experience in their chosen fields. Gearing Up has established a partnership with the Missoula Area Economic Development Corporation (MAEDC) for the purpose of involving community business leaders in the project. MAEDC will provide the project with the names of employers who may be interested in student interns, and advise Gearing Up regarding successful, mutually beneficial partnerships with the business community.

At the time of the Passport project budget shortfall, Passport to Success was poised to place and follow several of its current participants in part-time jobs that reflect their field of study at the COT. With support from the Carl Perkins Reserve Program, we can pursue the job shadow placements and internships arranged and waiting for current and future PSP participants.

Summary of Recipients' Ability to Support Project

The Passport to Success Project's community partnership and planned components and activities create a comprehensive model that incorporates recognized Best Practices to provide a seamless system of organized educational activities for those seeking to improve their Vocational and Technical Education, and for employers and vocational programs seeking to provide improved access and success for low income women. The PSP has the potential to become a Best Practice program in its own right.

A recent study commissioned by the National Governors Association, Center for Best Practices, and conducted by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, found that low-income students, primarily those transitioning from welfare to work, face competing demands from work, family, and school; lack support networks; and have inadequate support services such as child care or transportation. The study spoke to the importance of improving motivation in this target group and recommended several of the components we have already successfully implemented, and would like to continue, as Best Practices for college retention for the target population and in the target nontraditional field".

THE PASSPORT TO SUCCESS PARTNERS AND AFFILIATES

1. WORD

Women's Opportunity and Resource Development, Inc. (WORD) was formed in 1986 to provide innovative programming that assists low-income women and their families in achieving long-term economic self-sufficiency. WORD serves individuals with the greatest financial need, primarily low-income families, displaced homemakers, single mothers and parenting teens. WORD provides

direct services, advocacy, economic development, affordable housing, and policy development throughout Montana with a primary emphasis in Missoula.

WORD has been the recipient of several large federal grants, including three Demonstration Projects, and has successfully initiated several complex projects quickly and effectively. For example, from 1992-1995, WORD received funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, to develop a Demonstration Project for coordinated, collaborative services to prevent homelessness. WORD was one of only 30 grantees funded through this initiative and one of only 20 to receive fourth year funding in 1996.

As part of that initiative, WORD developed the Family BASICS Program, which is still in operation. Through this Demonstration Project, WORD developed the At Risk Housing Collaborative that has been instrumental in establishing Missoula's Continuum of Care for the Homeless and which continues to meet regularly to address homelessness and affordable housing issues.

WORD currently operates five programs, including HomeWORD, a support corporation. WORD's funding comes from multiple sources in the public and private sectors and its annual budget is \$1.5 million. Within WORD, several interlinked structures exist for decision-making: the WORD Board of Directors, comprised of a representative sampling of community members and former WORD program participants; the HomeWORD Board of Directors, with 51% of its directors appointed by WORD; and the WORD Management Team, comprised of all program directors and the WORD fiscal manager. All significant decisions regarding administrative and fiscal management of this proposal will be reviewed by the WORD Board of Directors and the WORD Management Team.

WORD's bookkeeper and fiscal manager are responsible for all disbursements, accounting and record keeping functions and fiscal grant reporting. The fiscal manager's operations are in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practices, Government Auditing Standards, and the provisions of O:Y1B Circulars A-122 and A-133. Since 1988, an outside audit firm has performed WORD's annual audit. WORD has always received an unqualified audit.

2. Gearing Up

Implemented in 1990, the Gearing Up Project is a nontraditional employment training program serving low-income women, primarily public assistance recipients, with the greatest financial need. Gearing Up provides case management, resource and referral services, support services, peer support networks, mentoring, and prevocational training with the goal of assisting women in entering high-skill, high-wage non-traditional careers. It provides job

placement and retention assistance following training. Gearing Up tailors its diverse training program to meet Montana's changing labor market.

Over 350 women have graduated from the project since its inception. The average entry-level wage of its graduates is over \$10.00 /hr. When multiplied by family members who benefit from Gearing Up's programs, the number of beneficiaries is in the hundreds, and the whole community benefits. The Gearing Up Project has a history of collaboration with labor unions, whose representatives have participated as trainers for Gearing Up workplace readiness training, worked with Gearing Up to develop new and ongoing hands-on occupational training opportunities, linked Gearing Up trainees to apprenticeships, and assisted in job development and placement for Gearing Up graduates.

Last year (2001), Gearing Up fulfilled its second one-year grant award from the U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau, WANTa (Women in Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Occupations) Program. The primary objective of the WANTa project was to reduce barriers to employment and increase retention of women in nontraditional occupations by providing technical assistance to employers and labor unions that enhance opportunities and improve the work environment for 131 women. Gearing Up successfully partnered with three regional agencies -Career Training Institute in Helena, Career Transitions in Bozeman and Montana Peaks in Kalispell-to extend the geographic reach of the WANTa services.

Most high skill, high wage jobs meet the definition of nontraditional employment for women (where women comprise less than 25% of the workforce). Gearing Up's extensive experience in creating successful programs that move low-income women into nontraditional employment is easily applicable to the Passport to Success Project.

3. Futures

The Futures Program is a comprehensive teen family support program that offers intensive case management, education counseling, job readiness training, parenting education and leadership development to pregnant and parenting teens to help them achieve economic independence. Futures works with teen parents to set education and career goals and reduce high-risk behaviors. Through its PREP Program, teens are provided with the support needed to attain academic knowledge and technical skills that lead to high skill, high wage employment. As part of this proposal, the Futures Program will provide PREP Program services for up to five teen parent PSP participants each year to ensure their success in the postsecondary and workplace environments.

4. The University of Montana-Missoula College of Technology

The College of Technology has been a leader in vocational education services for many years. To improve student retention, COT established its Academic Support Center, which assists students in assessing career goals, developing effective study skills, and coping with problems associated with post-secondary vocational education. Academic Support Center staff conduct outreach to Missoula vocational service agencies as well as agencies from the surrounding rural area. Its services are offered both prior to and following enrollment in the College. The College of Technology has found this approach to be invaluable in improving outcomes for low-income, disadvantaged students.

Passport to Success participants will be able to take advantage of the services offered through the Academic Support Center. As part of this proposal, the COT will offer an Intermediate Algebra course for students in its Electronics Technology and Computer Technology Programs, targeted to students in those programs who are enrolled in the Passport to Success Project.

5. YWCA of Missoula

The YWCA of Missoula has provided critical services to women and children since 1911. Its Computer Education Program offers a comprehensive series of computer classes that take the beginning student from computer basics to advanced computer applications. The YWCA also operates the Pathways Program, which provides direct services to adult and child victims of domestic and sexual violence; the Transitional Housing Program, which provides affordable housing and case management to homeless families; and the Children's Program, which provides services to children from violent homes. Virtually all of YWCA's clients are members of the population targeted for Passport to Success Project services, and its programs will be an important referral source for the project.

6. Adult Basic Education Program

The Missoula Public Schools Adult Basic Education Program (ABE) is recognized as a leader in adult education in Montana. ABE offers academic testing such as the TABE test and instruction in reading, writing, math, English as a Second Language, study skills, GED preparation, career preparation, and short-term vocational training. The Missoula Even Start Program and WORD's Teen Family Resource Center are co-located with ABE in a converted school on the city's bus line. The facility is open four evenings a week to accommodate the needs of participants who are employed or attending school during daytime hours. The project's partners have many years of experience in developing and implementing successful programs that serve the target group, which speaks to our capacity to meet the proposal's objectives.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

The University of Montana-Missoula College of Technology, WORD's Gearing Up Project, WORD's Futures Program, and the Missoula YWCA form the primary partnership for the Passport to Success Project. Other supporting and cooperating agencies and organizations include the Missoula County Public Schools Adult Basic Education Program, the Missoula Job Service, the Missoula Office of Public Assistance, the Missoula Area Economic Development Corporation and the Montana Contractors Association.

All partners are members of the Missoula Area Workforce System Community Management Team, and will use that system's long-standing, successful service coordination as a model for seamless service delivery. All of the partners assess applicants and require documentation to ensure that those with the greatest financial need are the primary recipients of service.

The University of Montana-Missoula College of Technology will administer Passport to Success Project and the Gearing Up Project of WORD will provide programmatic development and oversight. The Gearing Up Director supervises the Program Coordinator who is responsible for planning, coordinating and implementing project activities, in consultation with the Director and project partners.

The Passport to Success Program Coordinator is responsible for coordinating communication between all of the project's partners. She ensures that the participants and partners are aware of the project's special events and workshops by notifying them through mailings, phone calls and emails. She provides updates about the project to the other partners' direct service staff at the Community Management Team's monthly meetings, which all project partners attend. In addition to CMT monthly meetings, all will convene Passport to Success Partner meetings each quarter specifically designed to keep all partners informed of progress and to make changes as needed.

Project partners support the Passport to Success Project's plan and have agreed to provide the services described below. (Please see attachments for letters of support.) As stated above, all project partners are familiar with each other's programs and referral processes. To date, the system currently in place for exchanging program information and making referrals has worked well, and we will continue to use it for the activities of this proposal.

The activities below summarize each partner's role in the Passport to Success Project's service delivery system:

Gearing Up: The Gearing Up Project is responsible for recruiting, assessing, enrolling and serving project participants; organizing, coordinating and implementing special events (such as the Women In Information Technology Forum); developing and presenting workshops that address interests and issues identified by participants; coordinating participant peer support networks and buddy systems; recruiting mentors from the community and establishing mentorship's for participants; recruiting employers to participate in the project's internship program; community outreach; and project evaluation.

Futures Program: Teen parent participants (up to age 21) will be referred to the Futures Program for case management and its extensive array of services. Teen parents have additional challenges and special needs that are best served through a program designed specifically for them. We anticipate serving up to five teen parent participants that may form the basis of a peer support group and benefit from the experience offered by the Futures program.

Missoula YWCA: The Program Coordinator will consult with the YWCA's Computer Instructor regarding any participants who are struggling with basic computer applications that are required for completion of their college degree. The YWCA Computer Instructor will help determine if individual instruction or lab time at the smaller YWCA Computer Lab will address their particular weaknesses and will help to develop a plan for building skills or tutoring. Also, participants with a history of domestic or sexual violence may be referred to the YWCA's support groups.

The University of Montana-Missoula College of Technology: Participants who are struggling academically are referred to COT's Academic Support Center for tutoring and academic advising. COT also offers a new Intermediate Algebra course for 10 project participants (5 each year) who are enrolled in the Electronics Technology Program or Computer Technology Program and whose COT entrance assessments show a need for additional math instruction. An Electronics Program Instructor teaches this course.

In addition to the project's partners, we work closely with the Missoula Job Service to coordinate service provision. The Job Service is a primary referral source, since many of the project's participants are enrolled in the TANF *Work* Program.

Following completion of their college programs or during summer breaks, participants are referred to the Job Service for job search assistance, including one-on-one resume assistance, application assistance and interview coaching; job matching and placement; or to use the Resource Center, which includes classified ads and use of a fax machine, copy machine, and phone.

The Missoula Office of Public Assistance is also an important referral source, and we coordinate services closely with its TANF Coordinators. Referrals flow both

ways: we refer participants to OPA if they are eligible for basic needs services that would help them succeed in college.

We will also work closely with the Missoula Area Economic Development Corporation (MAEDC) for the purpose of involving community business leaders in the project. MAEDC will provide the project with the names of employers who may be interested in student interns.

CONCLUSION: A WORKABLE MODEL

The Passport to Success Project is the only combined nontraditional mentoring, educational support and internship-placement program in the project's geographical service area, and one of the few vocational training programs to link graduates to high wage jobs available in Montana's labor market. It is also the only partnership program in the service area providing educational support and mentoring services to keep low-income women in school and increase their chances of retaining quality employment. The success of the Passport to Success Project's first year, despite federal and state budget shortfalls, and the continued, demonstrated need for the project, sustains the project partners' confidence in continuing the program.