

Inspiring Young Minds under the Big Sky: A Technology and Science Camp for Youth

Background: Recent, NASA awarded an educational grant to ExplorationWorks, Montana's Big Sky Education, NASA's Exploration Space at Exploration Works in Helena. This project promises to provide educational outreach to rural students throughout Montana and expands the ability of ExplorationWorks to provide science and technology programs targeted at our most valuable natural resource: Montana's youth. This coupled with Montana's changing economy and potential for new and emerging careers related to environmental restoration and reclamation, energy conservation, health sciences, research and alternative energy development create a timely opportunity to reach out to youth to inspire them to seek careers in science and technology.

Concept: Host a two-day science camp in collaboration with ExplorationWorks Museum of Science and Culture in Helena. The camp will provide exhibits, interactive workshops and experiential activities that facilitate learning and exploration of selected topics that inspire curiosity and interest in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) related careers.

Activities will be used to link the importance of science and math to career opportunities in those fields. Camp activities could include topics such as green technology, energy, robotics, conservation, space education or life sciences. Guest speakers relating their educational background and interests might include teachers, physicians, engineers, researchers or astronauts.

Additional activities might include information on post-secondary opportunities for technology and science in Montana and the career opportunities available in Montana and the region.

Target Audience: At-risk youth, ages 14 to 21, enrolled in Workforce Investment Act Youth programs from throughout Montana, with a special emphasis on recruiting young women and minorities to attend the camp.

Potential Partners: Governor and First Lady Schweitzer's Math and Science Initiative, ExplorationWorks, Montana Department of Labor and Industry, Office of Public Instruction, Commissioner of Higher Education, Student Assistance Foundation, Montana's WIA Youth providers.

Logistics: Seek conference housing at Carroll College in student dormitories, as well as accessing meals at the food service on campus. WIA providers will be responsible for transporting youth and providing the appropriate number of chaperones.