



## BlueCross BlueShield of Montana

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Blue Cross and Blue Shield Awards \$75,000 Grant to Missoula Economic Partnership

Missoula, MT (November 27, 2023) – The Missoula Economic Partnership (MEP) is honored to be the recipient of a generous grant of \$75,000 from Blue Cross and Blue Shield Montana (BCBSMT) through their Big Blue Sky Initiative<sup>SM</sup>. The funding will significantly bolster MEP's ongoing efforts to create economic opportunities, foster stability, and, crucially, enhance the overall well-being of the Missoula community.

"This partnership reflects the deep connection between the health of our economy and the health of our community members," explained MEP CEO and President, Grant Kier. "MEP's focus on building a more resilient economy, including housing affordability and a well-trained workforce with access to good jobs, directly impacts people's mental and physical wellbeing. Conversely, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Montana's commitment to mental and physical well-being is foundational for our economic success. Our efforts are two sides of the same coin, and we are proud to be working more closely together."

The Big Blue Sky Initiative, driven by BCBSMT's steadfast commitment to holistic health, recognizes the integral connection between economic prosperity and the mental and physical health of individuals and communities. The grant underscores the belief that a thriving economy is instrumental in cultivating an environment where residents can lead healthier and happier lives.

"Small businesses are the backbone of the economy," said John Doran, Divisional Vice President of External Affairs at BCBSMT. "The work that MEP is doing is crucial to job growth and community satisfaction. We are proud to partner together to strengthen the workforce, stimulate the economy, and improve the broader health of the Missoula community."

The grant will enable the Missoula Economic Partnership to continue its vital work in supporting local businesses, fostering entrepreneurship, promoting job growth, and contributing to an environment of economic stability that, in the long term, underpins the health and wellness of the entire community. Specifically, the organization is a key partner in the **Clean Energy Workforce Coalition** which has launched a pilot program focused on building clean-energy career pathway awareness and non-traditional internships for low-income women and women of color, increasing access to family-supporting opportunities.

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### About Missoula Economic Partnership:

*The Missoula Economic Partnership (MEP) is a nonprofit organization committed to fostering economic development, creating job opportunities, and enhancing the quality of life in Missoula, Montana. Through innovative strategies and collaboration with community stakeholders, MEP strives to build a sustainable and vibrant economy that benefits all residents.*

### About Blue Cross and Blue Shield Montana:

*BCBSMT has been part of Montana for more than 80 years. We are a born-and-bred Montana company and are dedicated to serving the state with access to one of the world's leading health care companies. Our purpose is to make health care more affordable and accessible by driving innovation, building healthier communities, and delivering excellent service. Our community outreach efforts are a cornerstone of our business — a key aspect of our purpose to make health care more affordable and accessible for Montanans.*