Montana OPI Special Education:
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST TRAINEESHIP

To apply, a potential candidate must meet the following basic criteria:

a. Must be a legal Montana resident.
b. Must be admitted to the Occupational Therapy Doctorate degree program at the University of Montana.

Potential candidates for the Occupational Therapist Traineeship:

1. A potential candidate will engage in an intake call with the Project Director to discuss the project in-depth. OPI OT Traineeship Applications are only available from the Project Director to a potential candidate post-intake conversation and following potential candidate sign-off indicating understanding of program parameters.

2. A completed application must be submitted, preferably at the beginning of Year 1 in a potential candidate's educational program. Applications are accepted at the start of Year 2 in a potential candidate's educational program. Applications are NOT accepted in Year 3 of a potential candidate's educational program.

3. A candidate admitted to the stipend program must enter into a legal contract with the Montana Office of Public Instruction for a period of 5 years. The contract will include the following:

    a. Approved candidates will receive tuition assistance of up to $3,000 per fiscal year of the 3-year program (a total of $9,000) pending that allowable expenses total the annual amount. Allowable expenses only include tuition and/or books.

        - The funds available are on a 'use it or lose it basis.' Each fiscal year, $3,000 is available if allowable expenses total that amount. No leftover funds can be transferred to the next year.
        - If selected for the project, the stipend is paid at the end of each academic semester after submitting the required reimbursement paperwork.
        - The stipend dollars are taxable income on both the state and federal levels. All successful stipend candidates will receive a 1099 statement for tax filing purposes. Tax debt is not a reimbursable expense for the Occupational Therapy Traineeship. Successful stipend candidates are solely responsible for any personal income tax debt they may incur because of this stipend program.

    b. Upon admittance to the Occupational Therapy Traineeship, a stipend candidate must maintain all standards of academics expected of them from the university and the program.

    c. Upon completion of the university program, stipend candidates are expected to give back 2-years of service payback to any public Montana K-12 system or Special Education Cooperative as an Occupational Therapist. After successful completion of the Montana OPI contract requirements over the 5 years, the candidate is released from their contract with the Montana OPI.

    d. Failure to successfully complete the OPI contract requirements results in default status on said contract. The stipend candidate will be required to pay the Montana OPI back the total amount spent on their behalf in a non-interest-bearing loan.

For further information, contact Annette Viciedo Young at ayoung3@mt.gov or 406-444-0299.