

**Business & Industry  
Involvement**

Big Sky Pathways Coordinators and their partners in area high schools meet to refine, revise, and develop pathways to various careers throughout the school year.

To ensure that pathways lead to viable career opportunities, employers in each region provide input regarding:

- Skill sets that employers need;
- Job openings that will be available;
- Opportunities for internships or apprenticeships; and
- Courses and programs needed to fulfill emerging industry needs.

Employers always stress the importance of:

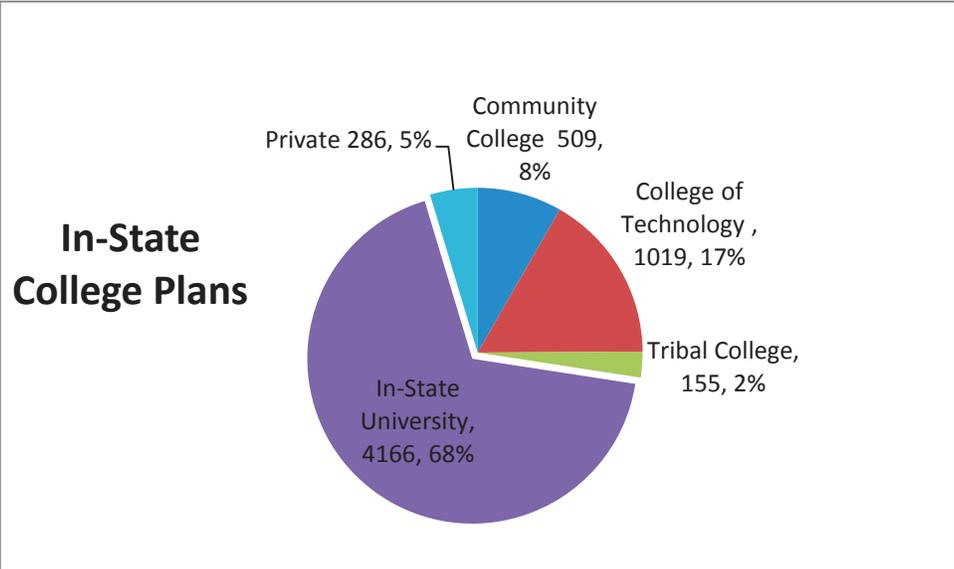
- Work Ethic
- Adaptability
- Teamwork
- Communication Skills
- Critical Thinking



# Big Sky Pathways: Who Benefits?

Over a period of twelve years, the Montana University System Writing Assessment, administered by the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education to as many as 8,000 students in a year, collected data about college plans of Montana’s juniors. The graph below, generated by 2012 data, is typical of the results from each of those years, although the number of students headed to Montana’s “colleges of technology” (so named until after the 2012 test was administered) grew each year. In 2003, only 8.7% the test-takers intended to go to a college of technology. Students who plan to attend one of Montana’s two-year colleges represent those most interested in a Big Sky Pathway—a career pathway focused on career and technical education.

This pie chart represents the 81% of juniors who marked they plan to attend college after leaving high school. Even the 30% who indicated they hope to go “out of state” marked an in-state choice, as well.



Currently, about 61% of Montana’s high school graduates actually attend college; with fewer than 41% entering the MUS, the majority in the universities. Between 2010-15, about half of the students enrolling in Helena College were “traditional” (younger than 25). Of those, 65% enrolled in transfer degree programs (AS) and 35% in AAS and CAS programs.

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## Helena College

### 2011-12 Pathways

#### Health Science

LPN/RN

#### Architecture/Construction

Construction Technology

### 2013-2014 Pathways

#### Business and Finance

Small Business Mgmt

Accounting

#### Transportation

Automotive Technology

#### Advanced Manufacturing

Welding

Computer-Aided Manu-  
facture

### 2014-2015 Pathways

#### Law, Security, Public

#### Safety, Corrections and Security

Fire and Rescue

Legal Support Specialist

Criminal Justice

#### Information Technology

Computer Programming

Network Administration

# Programs of Study Define a Pathway

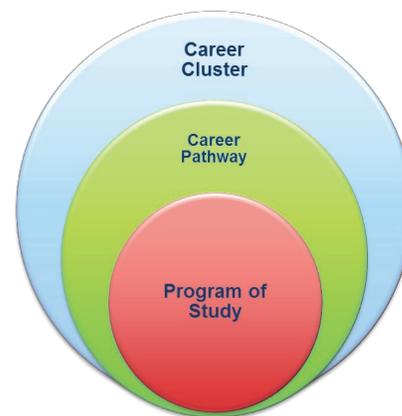
Considering the overall data, fewer than 10% of Montana's high school students are initially interested in pursuing pathways to two-year technical programs. Yet, the nation has a critical need for employees in these high-demand, high-skill, high-pay careers.

Undecided students can postpone selecting pathways to future careers by entering transfer programs or earning general education credits as they find their directions. This may result in fulfilling and successful careers, or it may simply result in the accumulation of debt.

With **Pathways and Programs of Study**, students can take the most efficient routes to high-demand careers, beginning with recommended high school courses, taking advantage of advanced learning opportunities that accelerate the process of earning valuable credentials, and studying college curriculum. The technical programs emphasized by Big Sky Pathways Coordinators use current labor statistics, ensuring that students will earn credentials in areas with job growth.

Big Sky Pathways seeks to increase the number of students who will benefit by following a suggested Program of Study. Pathways Coordinators are committed to achieving this goal.

Contact:  
Jan Clinard  
Helena College University of Montana  
1115 North Roberts, Helena MT  
406-447-6951  
[jan.clinard@umhelena.edu](mailto:jan.clinard@umhelena.edu)



First, students should select the "Career Cluster" (like Business or Manufacturing) most suitable to their interests and abilities.

Then, students should examine the **Programs of Study** posted on Helena College's Big Sky Pathways website:  
[http://www.umhelena.edu/admissions\\_enrollment/careerpathways.aspx](http://www.umhelena.edu/admissions_enrollment/careerpathways.aspx).

For information about Pathways to other Montana colleges snap this QR Code:

