



**Sheila M. Stearns**  
**President**

**The University of Montana**

# FY 2018 Federal Initiatives

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[www.umt.edu/research/fedrelations](http://www.umt.edu/research/fedrelations)*

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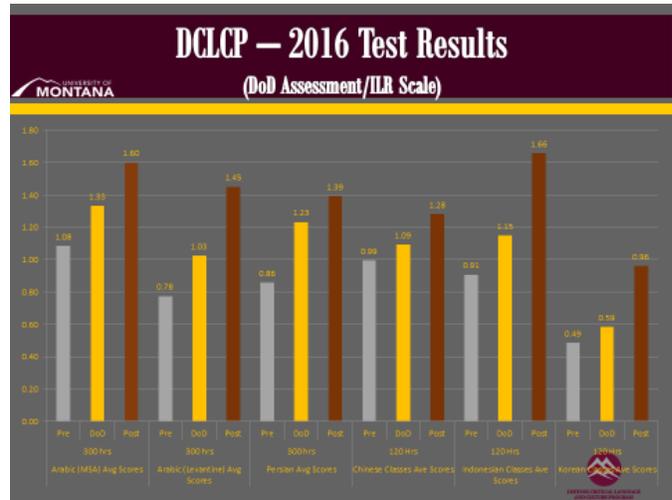
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## Defense Critical Language and Culture

The Defense Critical Language and Culture Program (DCLCP) provides intensive language and culture training for members of the Active Duty Military, the National Guard, Reserve and Intelligence Agencies utilizing a congressionally funded contract through the Defense Language and National Security Education Office (DLNSEO). DCLCP customers are primarily Special Operations Forces, Intelligence Agencies, and the National Guard. Currently training includes on-site (University of Montana) and synchronous on-line language courses in Arabic (MSA and Levantine dialect), Chinese, Dari, Indonesian, Korean, French, Persian and Pashto; as well as culture courses about the Middle East and East/Central Asia.

### Benefits of the Program

DCLCP courses are designed to enable students to learn languages and understand cultures of strategically significant nations at a time when bilateral and multilateral relations are increasingly complex. DCLCP provides students with language fluency and cultural awareness, essential elements of Counter-Insurgency Warfare, allowing them to conduct effective interaction in a variety of settings with heritage populations through language classes ranging from basic to advance. Each class is instructed by language and culture professors and is an accredited college course from the University of Montana. DCLCP is committed to adapting the content, length, location and timing of instruction and courses offered to fit the needs of military units and US government agencies. Department of Defense test results demonstrate DCLCP students' end of course fluency rates are among the best in the nation—fully 38% better than the DoD language fluency standard.



DCLCP has leveraged the academic capabilities of The UM and fully integrated our program to afford our DoD students the optimal academic experience that fortifies them with a deep cultural and area studies understanding of their region and its peoples as well as language fluency consistent with their diverse needs. Their accomplishments are validated with transferable college credit as well as the opportunity to combine their UM credits with those earned elsewhere and thereby earn a college degree.

### FY 18 Request

The University of Montana requests continued support from the Montana delegation to fully integrate the DCLCP into DOD language training activities, and to ensure that the quality of the training is considered in addition to price when DOD contracts for language and culture training services. To that end, and as a means to better prepare and reward our military members with earned college credit, the University requests Congressional language that encourages DoD and the service components, to include Special Operations Forces, to use accredited academic institutions as the preferred method of providing language and cultural training. The faster proficiency based turn time associated with civilian educational institutions will also yield DoD significant manpower dollar savings associated with the reduced time need to attain requisite fluency. (See blocks below for specific language)

## **FY 2018 Request - \$10 million**

**Project Title:** Defense Critical Language and Culture Program  
**Appropriation Bill:** Department of Defense  
**Service/Agency:** Office of Secretary of Defense  
**Account:** Operations and Maintenance, Defense Wide  
**Line #:** Line #120, Budget Area 4  
**Line Title:** Defense Human Resources Activity; Defense Language and National Security Education Office (DLNSEO)  
**Requested Amount:** \$10 million increase to President's Budget Request  
**Language:** Report

*"The Committee recognizes that, in partnership with universities across the country, the National Security Education Program provides critical college accredited training for service members and government officials in a number of languages and strategic cultures. In addition to amounts already made available by the Secretary, The Committee appropriates for each fiscal year, beginning with fiscal year 2018, \$10,000,000 to support the Language Training Centers of the Armed Forces and Civilian Employees of the Department of Defense."*

## **FY 2018 Request - \$4 million**

**Project Title:** Defense Critical Language and Culture Program  
**Appropriation Bill:** Department of Defense  
**Service/Agency:** Office of Secretary of Defense  
**Account:** Operations and Maintenance, Defense Wide  
**Line #:** Line #70, Budget Area 3  
**Line Title:** Special Operations Command; Specialized Skill Training  
**Requested Amount:** \$4 million increase to President's Budget Request  
**Language:** Report

*"The Committee notes the growing need for language and culture training for US Special Operations Forces engaged in counter terrorism operations. Additional funds are provided to conduct additional language and training instruction to close gaps identified in recent manpower surveys. Special emphasis shall be placed on quality of language education in addition to the price of training to ensure that warfighters retain language skills throughout their deployments, including preference for programs that provide college education credits."*

## **Contact Information**

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## Advanced Warfighter Physiology and Operational Readiness Program

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### Problem to be Studied

Air Force Special Operations and other military personnel frequently operate under highly stressful conditions in the field for extended periods of time. Human performance is a key factor in mission success and the mitigation of fatigue and cognitive errors, nutritional strain, and disorientation and confusion is particularly important. Current attempts to predict and measure operational human performance and mitigate injury are cost prohibitive, inaccurate, and unable to aid in decision making. Sensor technologies are constantly being developed to address this problem, but the incorporation of scientifically-backed software within the technology is inadequate.

The Montana Center for Work Physiology and Exercise Metabolism (WPEM) is working with Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) to develop and refine physiological algorithms that will provide measures of real-time human performance and operational readiness when accompanied with current and future sensor technologies. As part of the Trump Administration's focus on warfighter readiness, additional funding is needed in the following areas.

- Further develop and refine predictive algorithms using physiological and environmental measures by conducting field and laboratory studies with existing sensors.
- Collaborate with USAF to test algorithms' ability to predict performance and reduce injury within the US military.
- Partner with US Forest Service and DoD to implement predictive algorithms to improve performance and reduce injuries.

### Organizational Capabilities

WPEM is a research center on the University of Montana campus (Missoula), boasting two mobile laboratory setups, and a 3,550 square foot high-tech, state of the art facility, including an environmental chamber that can simulate nearly any location on earth. Since inception in 2007, WPEM has successfully conducted several studies for the DoD resulting in nearly \$10 million in funding. We have published over 50 peer-reviewed publications, and established working relationships with; US Air Force, US Army, US Navy, US Special Operations Command and the US Forest Service.



WPEM's recent work with the Air Force, Army, Office of Naval Research, and USSOCOM has led to the early development of predictive algorithms that will allow us to forecast physiological stress and identify individuals at risk for heat and/or cold related injury or reduced performance. The cooperative agreements in place across DOD and ongoing work with AFSOC enable WPEM to serve the U.S. military and other agencies to better understand the physiological demands during training and operational stress in every environment.

The University of Montana requests a \$5 million general increase to Air Force RDT&E Line #6 to develop and refine physiological algorithms that will provide measures of real-time human performance and operational readiness when accompanied with current and future sensor technologies.

## FY 2018 Request - \$5 million

**Project Title:** Advanced Warfighter Physiology and Operational Readiness Program  
**Appropriation Bill:** Department of Defense  
**Service/Agency:** Air Force  
**Account:** Air Force RDT&E  
**Line Title:** Human Effectiveness Applied Research  
**Line # and PE:** Line #6; PE 0602202F  
**Requested Amount:** \$5 million increase to President's Budget Request  
**Language:** Report

*"The Committee recognizes that physiological performance is a key factor in warfighter mission readiness. The Committee supports the Air Force's efforts to develop and deploy wearable and other sensor technologies to monitor the physiological condition of warfighters, but notes a capability gap to predict operational human performance and aid in decision making. A \$5 million general increase is provided to develop and refine physiological algorithms that will provide measures of real-time human performance and operational readiness when accompanied with current and future sensor technologies."*

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## Gender-Specific Physical Training to Optimize Operational Readiness

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### National Need

Starting in January 2016 the Department of Defense opened all military occupations and positions to women, without exception. The policy to fully integrate women into combat roles requires men and women to meet the same standards for combat jobs. As USSOCOM Commander, General Joseph Votel, commented in December 2015, "As USSOCOM moves forward with integration, the command will absolutely not lower, raise, or create multiple sets of standards for special operations. If candidates meet time-tested and scientifically validated standards, and if they have proven that they have the physical, intellectual, professional, and character attributes that are so critical to special operations - they will be welcomed into the special operations forces rank."



Proper military training is essential to developing skills and physical abilities to qualify for infantry, special operations and other combat positions now open to women. Military training practices need to catch up to the new female integration policy in order to better prepare the thousands of women in uniform to qualify for combat duties. Changes to military training need to be based on physiology research and experience. To that end, a more comprehensive inclusion of females in DOD sponsored research is needed to further the understanding of sex-differences and physiological stresses with training and operations. The research needs to be conducted now as more and more female soldiers come forward to pursue combat roles. The Army anticipates 140 new female soldiers will begin training in 2017 for infantry and armor jobs.

### Objective

The specific aim of this program is to determine and provide gender specific countermeasures to increase operational readiness through enhanced training adaptations while reducing the deleterious effects of operational stress and the associated increase in musculoskeletal and heat related injury risk. While operational specific stressors are integral to the training of the warfighter, even minor energy imbalances can disrupt menstrual health, protein synthesis and exercise performance. This may ultimately compromise skeletal muscle health and increase risks for musculoskeletal injury, disrupting training and reducing operational readiness.

WPEM will:

- Further develop and refine the Army's understanding regarding sex specific responses to exercise training and adaptive capacities to extreme operational environmental stress.
- Develop clear nutritional countermeasures to reduce negative protein balance and preserve skeletal muscle despite operational negative energy balance.
- Develop gender specific predictive models to forecast training adaptation timelines to optimize training response schedules and compliance.

### Organizational Capabilities

The Montana Center for Work Physiology and Exercise Metabolism (WPEM) is a research center on the University of Montana campus (Missoula). Boasting two mobile laboratory setups, and a 3,550 square foot high-tech, state of the art facility, including an environmental chamber that can simulate nearly any location on earth.

Since inception in 2007, WPEM has successfully conducted several studies for the DoD resulting in nearly \$10 million in funding. Our research efforts have resulted in over 50 peer-reviewed publications, and established working relationships with; US Air Force, US Army, US Navy, US Special Operations Command and the US Forest Service.



WPEM utilizes a state of the art research facility on the University campus and our mobile research labs to conduct translational research in extreme environments. This combination of efforts increases the capacity at which we can provide actionable data to teams and organizations within the operational environment.

Leveraging cooperative agreements with the U.S. Army Research Institute for Environmental Medicine (USARIEM) and the United States Forest Service (USFS) along with data share agreements with the Office of Naval Research (ONR) and collaborations with Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) and the Air Force Research Labs (AFRL), WPEM has unique capacity to serve the US military.

WPEM's recent work with the Air Force, Army, Office of Naval Research, USSOCOM, and the USFS has led to policy shifts to enhance training methodologies, field-feeding strategies, and reduce heat related injury risk. WPEM can access a wide range of study participants that mirror the physiological capabilities of elite warfighters while considering the potential implications of gender differences.

### **FY 2018 Request - \$5 million**

**Project Title:** Gender-Specific Physical Training to Optimize Operational Readiness  
**Appropriation Bill:** Department of Defense  
**Service/Agency:** Army  
**Account:** Army RDT&E  
**Line Title:** Medical Technology  
**Line # and PE:** Line #28, PE 0602787A  
**Requested Amount:** \$5 million increase to President's Budget Request  
**Language:** Report

*"The Committee notes the increasing number of females entering military training for infantry and other combat duties now open women as of January 2016. Proper military training is essential for all soldiers to meet the demanding physical, mental, and skill requirements for combat positions. A \$5 million increase is provided to conduct foundational physiological research that will inform Army training doctrine and practice to meet the needs of female soldiers and prepare them to qualify for military occupations previously restricted to men.*

### **Contact Information**

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## Wildland Fire Science Partnership

The Wildland Fire Science Partnership consists of the UM National Center for Landscape Fire Analysis (Fire Center), the Forest Service's Rocky Mountain Research Station, and the University of Idaho, and serves as a unique bridge between on-the-ground fire managers, fire science, and applied fire technology.

This national Partnership provides sophisticated science and technical expertise to support fire and fuels management and promotes ownership of new science and technology by land managers while providing the research community with exposure to current fire management practices.

### National Need

In 2015, there were 68,151 wildfires across the nation that burned 10,125,149 acres. By developing tools and technologies that provide better information, while educating and training a workforce excited and able to use this information, the Partnership is building an integrated national fire management organization that is gaining efficiency and saving money. As fire managers face challenges in an ever-changing environment, this work will help them use information, solve problems, and apply scientific knowledge to achieve scientifically-sound, cost-effective decisions more quickly and efficiently than ever before.

The Partnership will continue to expand the utility of remote sensing science, geospatial tools, and UAS applications to help natural resource and fire managers collect and share better fire intelligence. Additionally, the Partnership will continue to advance networking and remote monitoring technologies to improve situational awareness on wildland fire incidents and expand mobile computing tools to facilitate data flow at all levels of fire management, including cloud-based management systems that allow fire managers to better access and apply fire intelligence data.



### FY 2018 Request – \$3.0 Million

<b>Project Title:</b>	Wildland Fire Science Partnership
<b>Appropriation Bill:</b>	Interior
<b>Service/Agency:</b>	U.S. Forest Service
<b>Account:</b>	Forest and Rangeland Research
<b>Requested Amount:</b>	\$3 Million for Fire Science Research
<b>Language:</b>	Report

The FY 17 President's budget for the U.S. Forest Service included an allocation of \$3 million for Fire Science Research under the Forest and Rangeland Research account. The University of Montana requests support to provide the requested \$3 million again in FY 18, and the following report language to ensure that a portion of these funds are allocated to the Wildland Fire Science Partnership. This language is similar to what was included in the FY 17 Senate Interior Appropriations report.

*Wildland Fire Science Partnership – The Committee appreciates the work of the Wildland Fire Science Partnership and directs that \$2 million out of the \$3 million requested by the U.S. Forest Service for Fire Science Research within the Joint Fire Science program be used to study current wildland firefighting operations and the safety and health impacts of such operations on wildland firefighters.*

## Strategic investments

- Drone R&D has established a flight facility with a fleet of aircraft and sensors, test drones for use on wildfires, and trained pilots with regulatory authority to fly. Unmanned Aerial Systems reduce risks and costs of firefighting, and remote sensing technologies characterize fuels, fire behavior, and fire effects.
- Smart IT is in national use with five Fire Center information technology systems and firefighters are using smartphone apps to collect fire weather, predict fire behavior, and share intelligence. Such fire monitoring through extendable internet systems has resulted in information services linking firefighters via smartphones and tablets.
- Begun in 2004, Remote Monitoring continues through networks on two dozen national forests, parks, and other public lands.
- MOUs with four state, federal, and NGO partners are in place and demonstrate long-term commitments to Technology Development and Transfer, testing, and adoption.
- The Partnership possesses unparalleled Knowledge & Experience as staff average 200+ days per year on fire assignments, ensuring that Partnership perspectives are grounded in the current challenges of fire management.
- Fire Management in the new century requires Workforce Development efforts so that skilled employees are trained in resource management and knowledgeable in science, technology, and application development. As part of the Partnership, UM trains and educates future fire managers through innovative curriculum and learning experiences and works directly with collaborators listed below. UM offers new curricula and training, including a minor in Fire Sciences & Management and a Prescribed Fire Practicum, that has allowed 94 students to treat fuels on more than 9,000 acres

## Collaborators

National Forest Systems	National Parks	Local, State, and NGOs
Lolo Bitterroot Flathead Gallatin Bridger-Teton Beverhead-Deerlodge Caribou-Targhee Clearwater Nez Perce Gila Kaibab Lewis and Clark Okanogan-Wenatchee	Glacier Yellowstone Denali North Cascades Grand Canyon Grand Teton	The Nature Conservancy, GA Chapter Georgia Forestry Commission, Georgia Non-Game Div. Missoula County Headwaters Economics Missoula Fire Sciences Lab and four USDA Forest Service Research Stations: RMRS, Pacific SW, Pacific NW, and Southern Montana DNRC Fire and Aviation Management Bureau Eglin Air Force Base Blackfoot and Clearwater Challenges Montana Climate Office Montana Assoc. of Geographic Information Professionals Association for Fire Ecology Northern Rockies Fire Science Exchange Network / Joint Fire Sciences Program Montana/Idaho Airshed Group

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## Integrated Wildlife Analysis

### National Need

A growing number of species have been petitioned for listing as Threatened or Endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The decision to list or delist a species under the ESA is significant and often has far-reaching implications and it is imperative such decisions are based upon the best available science. For many species, the respective Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) member agencies have the best available data. However, it is difficult to compile and house data from various agencies and conduct range-wide species analyses that explicitly include the participation and input of biologists who collected the data.



### Addressing the Need

The Wildlife Biology Program at University of Montana (UM) recently developed tools to help WAFWA agencies more efficiently synthesize and analyze species data. These tools are leading to improved



population analyses of sage-grouse, wolverine, and mule deer, as examples. UM proposes a WAFWA-led process that would help facilitate collaborative data analyses spanning multiple state jurisdictions that allows state and federal agencies to determine species analysis priorities within existing structures such as the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), WAFWA, and Joint Ventures, and the committee structures nested within. This process respects data ownership and provides provisions for data oversight and security that would be established through data sharing agreements. It doesn't

require or prohibit participation by any WAFWA member agency, but instead creates a platform and workflow process that will improve our ability to accomplish collaborative data analyses spanning multiple states.

The UM proposal further sets forth a clear approach for involvement of WAFWA state wildlife agency biologists in a manner that is often lacking from other broad-scale species analyses. For example, at times in the past, data have been obtained by university or federal researchers via open records requests, and analyses have been conducted without involvement or support of the agency employees who collected the data. The latter approach can lead to suboptimal analyses by failing to incorporate the professional insights and expertise of agency wildlife biologists who have studied the species in the field.

### FY 2018 Request – \$2.0 Million

<b>Project Title:</b>	Rang-Wide or Regional Analysis of Species Data
<b>Appropriation Bill:</b>	Interior
<b>Service/Agency:</b>	Fish and Wildlife Service
<b>Account:</b>	Resource Management; Cooperative Landscape Conservation
<b>Requested Amount:</b>	\$2 Million above President's Request
<b>Language:</b>	Report

*The Committee recognizes that better tools and methods are needed to enable collaborative range-wide or regional analysis of wildlife species data spanning multiple state jurisdictions and provides \$2.0 million for an effort led by the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies to establish and evaluate a platform and workflow process to conduct range-wide species analyses that includes the participation and input of biologists and state agency representatives.*

Universities have historically played an integral role in helping support the science needs of state and federal wildlife agencies. Thus, this request does not infer an exclusive WAFWA relationship with UM as WAFWA has strong relationships with many universities. Rather, it recognizes WAFWA support of the UM model for collaborative species analysis, and the considerable technical expertise and analytical capability of faculty within UM's Wildlife Biology Program, which is consistently ranked as one of the top wildlife programs in the nation. Most recently, the Wildlife Biology Program at UM was ranked as the #1 wildlife program in North America by Academic Analytics, based on the accomplishments of its faculty.



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### Federal Contact

## Reinstatement of Year-Round Pell Grants

The Federal Pell Grant Program is the largest grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Education. Pell Grants, which do not have to be repaid, are a critical part of undergraduate college education financial planning for Montana families. Grant award amounts are determined based on expected family contribution, cost of attendance per institution, the student’s enrollment status, and whether the student attends for a full academic year or less. Students pursuing undergraduate degrees can apply for this need-based grant by filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

About 37% of UM students receive Federal Pell Grants.



Since 2011, students are eligible to receive Pell Grants only over two full semesters per academic year, rather than year-round. This limitation on Pell Grants has led to a significant decrease in enrollment at UM and, for some Montana families, eliminated a pathway to earn a college degree in four or fewer years.

### FY 17 Congressional Fix to Pell Grant

Congress recognized that changes are needed to the Pell Grant program. The Senate included the following report language in the FY17 Senate Labor Health and Human Services Appropriations Bill to restore year-round Pell grants. There was no corresponding language in the House bill.

*“Given the significant unobligated balances in the program, the projected balances going forward, and the significant improvement in the overall discretionary funding outlook for the program, the Committee recommendation restores and modifies a provision previously implemented from the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 allowing students to receive Pell grants year-round. This provision will allow a student who has exhausted their Pell grant award for the academic year, and wishes to enroll in additional coursework, to receive a Pell grant for an additional payment period during the academic year, traditionally the summer term. The total Pell grant a student may receive during an academic year, who is receiving an additional Pell grant under this provision, is capped at 150 percent of the maximum Pell grant award. Currently, full-time students and some part-time students exhaust their Pell grant award after two semesters or the equivalent. This expanded eligibility and flexibility for the Pell grant program will provide an incentive for students to take classes year-round and stay continuously enrolled. This will help students stay on track for graduation or accelerate completion of their program. This provision is expected to provide an estimated 1 million students an average additional Pell grant of \$1,650 for the 2017–2018 award year.*

*The Committee intends the expanded eligibility to be implemented in such a way to maximize flexibility for institutions of higher education and avoid unnecessary administrative burdens associated with the previous implementation of year-round Pell grants, while still ensuring the best interests of students. The Committee believes that this can be facilitated by issuing guidance on this expanded authority not later than 90 days after enactment of this act. The Committee strongly encourages the Department to implement this provision as soon as possible. The Committee also expects the Department to provide reliable data on the implementation of this provision.”*

### **FY 2018 Request – \$22.4 Billion + \$7.6 Billion in mandatory spending**

<b>Project Title:</b>	Pell Grants
<b>Appropriation Bill:</b>	Labor, Health and Human Services
<b>Service/Agency:</b>	Department of Education
<b>Account:</b>	Pell Grants
<b>Requested Amount:</b>	\$22.4 billion + \$7.6 billion in mandatory spending (same as FY 17 President’s Budget Request level)
<b>Language:</b>	Report

The University of Montana joins the higher education community, such as the American Council on Education (ACE), the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), and the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), in requesting reinstatement of year-round Pell Grants.

UM requests support from the Montana delegation to sustain the Senate report language on Pell Grants in the FY 17 Labor HHS Appropriations conference report. In the event of a FY 17 Full Year Continuing Resolution for the Department of Education, then the University requests that the report language restoring year-round Pell Grants be included again in the FY '18 LHHS Appropriations bill, and that the Pell Grant program cover 15 credit hours per semester as opposed to 12.

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## Successful Aging for Independent Living

There is a significant opportunity over the next decade for the Department of Health and Human Services to simultaneously lower health care costs and improve quality of life for the older adult and disabled population by embracing the rapidly growing shift to technology solutions for daily living. These solutions are poised to extend our ability to live independently into advanced age even in the face of declining physical and cognitive health.

The Successful Aging for Independent Living program (SAIL) will enable the University of Montana, the University of Missouri, the University of Maine and additional partnering campuses and community collaborators to harness technological advances that improve health, maximize community engagement, encourage productivity, and preserve independence among older Montanans and their families with an emphasis on rural, frontier, and tribal communities.



### Program Goals and Benefits

SAIL is aligned closely with Goal 3 of the U.S. Administration for Community Living priorities focused on supporting individual self-determination and control. Products under development at SAIL will support self-determination, control, and community integration among older adults and people with disabilities through the employment of innovative, nonobtrusive, cost-effective and stigma-free home-delivered technologies. SAIL product concepts and prototypes include adaptive equipment, wireless sensors, and simulation technologies that will enable older adults and people with disabilities to participate actively in community life while continuing to live safely and independently in their own homes. Goals for a federal initiative in this area include:

- Use federal grant resources to promote relationships between technology developers and public, private, and individual end-users that lead to validated solutions that target high-cost and high-priority challenges to older adult quality of life.
- Provide targeted funding for technology-based solutions that address the needs of traditionally underserved communities facing particularly severe economic and health challenges associated with the aging of their citizens, such as rural and tribal communities.
- Build research capability to critically evaluate the benefits of home and community-delivered technologies in order to inform federal policies and financial reimbursement strategies in this rapidly evolving arena.
- Catalyze through federal grant assistance, industry, university, state, and local partnerships dedicated to technology applications that will improve quality of life for aging populations while revitalizing the economic vitality of the communities in which they live.
- Evaluate funded projects and ability to scale up successful projects so they can have a national impact and improve the ability of all Americans to “age in place.”

### FY 2018 Request – \$10.0 Million

<b>Project Title:</b>	Successful Aging for Independent Living
<b>Appropriation Bill:</b>	Labor, Health and Human Services
<b>Service/Agency:</b>	Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Administration for Community Living
<b>Account:</b>	Disability Programs, Research & Services
<b>Requested Amount:</b>	\$10 Million above President’s Request
<b>Language:</b>	Report

The flourishing technology revolution in the United States is now poised to bring to bear a host of emerging products and devices in service to older and disabled Americans. Federal policies and programs need to embrace this opportunity to advance public policy objectives that aim to maximize quality of life while reducing social and health care program costs. Benefits of this technology and aging initiative include:

- Accelerated development and deployment of technologies that can reduce the costs accruing to federal programs that provide institutional and related long-term care services to older adults and persons with disabilities.
- Generation of research results that improve the ability to forecast the cost/benefit of employing aging-related technologies as part of federal financial assistance programs.
- Provision of effective and efficient services and programs in rural, frontier, and tribal communities that will maximize the safety and well-being of older adults while controlling, if not reducing, the cost of care that accrues to both the public sector and families.
- Decrease health care costs by preventing premature institutionalization and minimizing hospital readmissions through judicious use of technology including nonobtrusive monitoring systems.

The University of Montana requests a program increase to harness technological advances that improve health, maximize community engagement, encourage productivity, and preserve independence among older families with an emphasis on rural, frontier and tribal communities. We request a \$10 million in FY 18 and the following report language to ensure that funds are made available for this purpose. This language is similar to what was included in the FY 17 Senate LHHS Appropriations report.

*“National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research -- The Committee recognizes that there is a significant opportunity over the next decade for the Department to simultaneously lower healthcare costs and improve quality of life for the older adult and disabled population by embracing the rapidly growing shift to technology solutions for daily living. These solutions are poised to extend the ability to live independently into advanced age, and “age in place”, helping to bridge the “care gap” so that older and disabled adults might avoid nursing homes and other institutionalized care as long as possible, while also remaining connected to their families and communities.*

*“The Committee provides an increase of \$10 million to support research and activities that help older or disabled adults, including those in rural and tribal communities, to increase, maintain, or improve their functional capabilities. These funds shall be used to support increased investment in university research to harness technological advances that improve health, maximize community engagement, encourage productivity, and preserve independence among older individuals and their families. Special emphasis should be given to research projects that seek to develop technologies that allow for independent living, seek to address aging and disabled populations, and target rural, frontier, and tribal communities as they stand to benefit the most from home and community-delivered technologies that reduce isolation, increase safety and well-being, prevent falls and related injuries, and maximize mobility.”*

## **Regional Benefits**

The University of Montana’s Rural Institute for Inclusive Communities has engaged in community-based participatory research initiatives with rural- and frontier-dwelling individuals with disabilities since 1978. The Institute administers the federally-funded Research and Training Center (RTC) on Disability in Rural Communities, and co-leads the RTC on Community Living with the University of Kansas. Current research focuses on wellness and safety to promote aging-in-place through increased physical activity, fall prevention and community inclusion. Current projects support dissemination of evidence-based fall prevention (EBFP) programs and validation of these programs for use with special populations such as adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Newly-funded (FY2017) activities include: (a) an investigation of the use of assistive technology to decrease energy expenditure during activities of daily living (ADLs) to promote greater community participation; (b) the Wheels Across Montana program which provides adaptive trikes to four partners statewide, including the Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux tribes, to foster greater community engagement with physical activity; and, (c) state and national partnerships to disseminate evidence-base fall prevention practices and fall risk screening tools. Partners include the CDC, NCOA and APTA and state/local partners such as the MT DPHHS, MT Area Agencies on Aging, Governor’s Council on Aging, the Montana Gerontology Education Center, Missoula Coalition on Aging & Disability, the New Directions Wellness Center, and Missoula Parks and Recreation, among others.

Aging-focused research investigates applications of innovative technology and service patterns that improve health and community engagement outcomes of people with disabilities and older adults, with a particular focus on individual safety and fall prevention. Additionally, the Institute administers the state assistive technology grant program, MonTECH. The clinical resources of the Institute serve as a practicum and internship site for approximately 50 students each year, and as a faculty research resource for the Departments of Psychology, Communicative Sciences and Disorders, Social Work, Sociology, Health Economics; the Schools of Public and Community Health Sciences, Pharmacy, Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation, the Institute for Gerontology Education and the MSU-B School of Nursing. Tribal communities (13 sovereign indigenous nations on seven Reservations) in Montana are ongoing partners in the Institute's research and community service history. Telehealth partnerships are also being developed to promote greater consumer access across rural and frontier areas for health promotion, rehabilitation and successful independent living.

## Contact Information

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## Skilled Legal Advocacy for Montana Veterans

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The Montana Veterans Advocacy Clinic at the University of Montana, Alexander Blewett III School of Law, will offer pro bono legal advocacy to Veterans and their families in rural and urban communities across Montana, prioritizing claims that will provide Veterans and their families with sustaining income and working to grow the force of Montana attorneys prepared to serve the legal needs of Montana's community of Veterans.

### Clinic Benefits/Goals

- Provide excellent legal advocacy to Veterans across Montana who are seeking benefits and are unable to afford legal assistance.
- Serve Montana's rural Veterans through outreach and remote legal assistance.
- Train law students in veterans disability law and legal skills critical to providing excellent advocacy in complex administrative systems like the VA, inspiring them to serve Veterans in practice.
- Develop interdisciplinary partnerships with other units on campus—including Psychology, Social Work, and the Neural Injury Center—and other clinics at the School of Law to provide holistic assessment and advocacy in complex cases.

**Over 49% of Montana Veterans live in rural communities.**

Montana Veterans are intensely affected by gaps and barriers to direct legal assistance, according to a recent study on legal assistance in Montana. The study, commissioned by the Montana Supreme Court Access to Justice Commission, found that many of Montana's Veterans experience civil legal issues, but most are trying to resolve those issues without any assistance. Barriers to legal assistance included the cost of legal services for low and moderate income Veterans, and the prevalence of traumatic brain injury (TBI) and PTSD, both of which have symptoms that increase the need for legal services while discouraging Veterans from seeking that assistance. Montana's Veterans also need skilled legal assistance to navigate complicated systems so they can obtain critical benefits to which they are entitled.

**Montana's Veteran population is intensely affected by gaps and barriers to legal assistance.**

The Montana Veterans Advocacy Clinic will provide critically-needed pro bono legal services to Montana Veterans and their families. The Clinic will focus on cases that Montana Veterans Service Officers and private attorneys are unlikely to accept due to their complexity or the client's lack of income. A managing attorney on the School of Law faculty will work with a small group of support staff and students to assist Veterans with disability compensation claims before the VA, appeals to the Board of Veterans Appeals and the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, character of discharge determinations by the VA, and discharge upgrade applications and appeals. While training a new generation of attorneys to effectively advocate for Montanans who have heroically served the state and country, the Clinic will be filling the current gap in legal services available to Montana Veterans and their families.

**Montana has the second highest per capita Veteran population in the nation.**

## **FY 2018 Request -- \$500,000 out of appropriated funds**

**Project Title:** Skilled Legal Advocacy for Montana Veterans  
**Appropriation Bill:** Military Construction, Veterans Affairs  
**Service/Agency:** Veterans Affairs  
**Account:** Medical Services  
**Line Title:** Supportive Services for Veteran Families  
**Requested Amount:** \$320 million (same as FY '17 Senate Appropriation and \$20 million above FY 17 President's Budget)  
**Language:** Report

*“Legal assistance is one of the services provided to Veterans under the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF). Assistance with common civil legal issues can help Veterans avoid becoming homeless. As such, the Committee encourages the SSVF to work with grantees to expand their legal service offerings, particularly in rural states where access to private legal assistance can be limited. The Committee notes that university law schools are willing to work with Veterans on a pro-bono basis to provide legal assistance. This can result in additional benefits such as training law students in veterans disability law and legal skills critical to providing excellent advocacy in complex administrative systems like the VA, and inspiring next generation lawyers to serve Veterans in practice. Within funds provided, the SSVF shall establish one or more pilot projects to partner SSVF grantees with university law schools in rural areas to enhance legal assistance to Veterans.*”

## **Contact Information**

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## Continuing Projects of National Importance

### Agriculture and Related Agencies

- McIntire Stennis Cooperative Forest Research Program -- \$40.572 million  
The McIntire Stennis program provides support to state-certified Schools of Forestry across the U.S. The program is funded under the USDA's National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA). Funds are formula-based and must be matched on a one-to-one basis. Funds can be used for research and training across a broad variety of efforts including ecological restoration, catastrophe management, valuing ecological services, energy conservation, biomass and biobased materials, carbon sequestration and climate change, fostering healthy forests, and maintaining competitiveness in the forestry resource sector. These funds provide critical support to UM's College of Forestry and Conservation, founded in 1913 and one of the first programs accredited by the Society of American Foresters.

### Interior

- Forest Service/Joint Fire Science Research Program -- \$6.914 million (same as FY 16 enacted)  
Maintaining funding levels is critical as the program is designed to integrate multiple fire programs to give wildland fire managers new approaches, techniques, information and advanced tools to help them address rising fire suppression costs, deteriorating ecosystems, increasing fire hazards and other disturbances that affect water and environmental quality.
- Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit (CWRU) -- \$18.2 million (same as FY '17 budget request)  
UM houses the Montana Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit. Research emphases within the Unit include ecology and management of carnivores, applied landscape ecology, management of large game, interactions between forest management and wildlife, environmental influences on the demography and diversity of birds and related issues. CRUs generally have several positions assigned to a campus.

### Labor, Health and Human Services, Education

- Re-authorization of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 / Workforce Investment Act  
UM's RTC:Rural program currently receives funding from the National Institute of Disability Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), a division of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services within the Department of Education. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 required NIDRR to fund a rural center. This requirement does not appear in at least one draft of the Workforce Investment Act of 2012, leaving the potential for a rural center to appear at odds with the NIDRR's long-range plan. Including language to require a rural center will help ensure the UM RTC:Rural program receives NIDRR Funding

## **Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR)**

- NSF EPSCoR under CJS Appropriations -- \$170 million

Montana NSF EPSCoR is a statewide science infrastructure program funded by the National Science Foundation. EPSCoR builds capacity across the state in science and technology through investments in people, tools, and ideas. Montana currently has an NSF Track-1 EPSCoR of approximately \$4M per year to develop research infrastructure. The NSF EPSCoR program also funds Track-2 awards which include several NSF EPSCoR jurisdictions and recently announced a new Track 4 program. The state of Montana, with UM as the lead institution has a new Track 1 proposal before NSF EPSCoR which should be decided upon in February.

- NIH Institutional Development Award (IDeA) under LHHS Appropriations – 1% of NIH budget

The IDeA program is NIH's version of EPSCoR. There are two components to IDeA. One is the INBRE program which seeks to develop a network of researchers in the medical and biomedical fields and the other is the COBRE program which supports the development of research clusters. UM currently has a COBRE 3 award and was recently awarded a COBRE 2 award. UM recently submitted a COBRE 1 proposal to the NIH.

- DoD EPSCoR under Defense Appropriations

The Department of Defense EPSCoR program was eliminated in 2011. If the DOD reinstated their EPSCoR program, then UM would be eligible and competitive.