



Field/District Office:

Notice of Funding Opportunity Number: L23AS00269

Project Submission Dates and Times:

Project Title: Montana/Dakotas BLM Geology Youth Opportunity

Maximum Available Funding in FY23: \$125,000

BLM has determined a \$720 weekly stipend equal to \$18.00 per hour is reasonable (GS-5 equivalent pay). Stipends above this amount must justify in budget narrative any increase needed.

Project Background Information: Mineral development is an important land use within the BLM's multiple-use mandate. Various precious metals, limestone, phosphate, coal, sand, and gravel are being mined or have been mined in the past on and under lands managed by Montana/Dakotas BLM. In communities across Montana and the Dakotas, mining provides jobs, economic activity and important commodities that are essential to maintain a high quality of life. The minerals on Federal lands are divided into three categories, each subject to different laws and regulations:

1. Locatable, which are subject to the Mining Law of 1872, as amended, include gold, silver, copper and other hard rock minerals.
2. Leasable minerals, such as coal and a host of other commodities, are subject to various Mineral Leasing Acts.
3. Saleable minerals, such as sand and gravel that are essential to construction and road building, are subject to the Materials Act of 1947, as amended.

Post-1981 mining operations with no viable operator are considered abandoned mines. The BLM's Abandoned Mine Lands and Hazardous Materials Management Program supports the U.S. Department of Interior's (DOI) goal of protecting lives, resources, and property, and improving the health of landscapes and watersheds. The BLM Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) program is responsible for cleaning up sites determined to be hazardous to human health, to the environment, or those which present physical safety hazards to the public. Plan decisions in the Resource Management Plan mandate a systematic, ongoing inventory of these past and present mines as part of federal regulation and public safety.

Project Objective: BLM Montana /Dakotas has an opportunity to introduce youth to careers in the BLM under the Abandoned Mines and Solid Minerals Programs, specifically geology. BLM has Geologists on staff at various offices and would like to provide work experience to youth for their career and educational benefit. This will be accomplished by providing participants with opportunities to gain experience, learn about public lands, further their understanding and appreciation of mineral resources, and pique their interest in Geologic Resource Management careers. From this they will gain an increased appreciation and understanding of our public lands and of the value of public service, and are likely to become life-long advocates for those values. This opportunity will be focused on Abandoned Mine Land monitoring by travelling to reclaimed AML sites to verify that the physical closures with gates have not been vandalized or that backfilled closures have not re-opened. They will complete monitoring forms depicting the condition of the sites and update related Geographic Information System (GIS) information. They will learn about encapsulation of mine waste by travelling to repositories to verify fence condition, erosion occurrence, water quality, vegetation coverage and weeds and complete a form depicting condition of the repository and necessary items that need maintenance. Afterwards, they will update the GIS information and include monitoring dates and conditions. For Locatable, Leasable and Saleable program work, participants will coordinate with operators to schedule site inspections for exploration, development and mining operations. Travel with BLM Geologist to perform site inspections, complete inspection form and update GIS database

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entries. They could also perform or assist in reclamation Bond estimates. This project would be especially appropriate for a student that is studying geology or a recent graduate and will provide opportunities to enhance basic career skills such as organization, writing, detail, and communication, well as field skills including the use of GPS equipment and maps, field note methods, and experience with GIS software. Previous experience with any or all of these skills would significantly enhance the student experience.

BLM Montana/Dakotas would like to host positions in the following BLM office locations:

1. Dillon, MT
2. Butte, MT
3. Miles City, MT
4. Billings, MT
5. Belle Fourche, SD

Exact position descriptions and logistical considerations would be determined by available funding, available staff to oversee a position. A work plan specific to each office location will be developed in collaboration between local BLM staff and the assistance agreement recipient. If additional funding becomes available, additional positions and locations in Montana/Dakotas BLM could be added in future years over the duration of the assistance agreement.

Work Schedule: Monday – Friday, generally 8 AM to 5PM, for 12 weeks to one year, with flexible start/end dates in May-June/August-September. Weekends might be required, but would be a rare occurrence. Some travel to other locations requiring camping or overnight stays may also be required.

Qualification Requirements: This opportunity is suitable for recent graduate youth or youth working towards an undergraduate or graduate degree in geology or geoscience-related discipline. As stated in the duties this opportunity will require time outdoors and field work that is often under somewhat rigorous physical conditions in potentially hazardous environments involving mine waste, operating equipment, grizzly bears, rattlesnakes, etc. Applicants must also meet the following criteria: 1). Pass a DOI security background check.

Housing: Agency cannot provide housing but may be able to assist in locating appropriate clean housing. A maximum monthly housing stipend per individual of \$250 may be allowable.

Vehicle Needs: A personal vehicle is NOT required for the position but is strongly encouraged as it makes the applicant's days off much more enjoyable and provides easier access to housing, shopping, laundry facilities, etc. Some of the BLM offices are miles from the nearest airports or big city amenities.

Other Project Considerations:

Food: The Applicant is responsible for their own meals.

All Supplies: All supplies and equipment for work activities will be provided by the BLM.

Training Requirements: The applicant will need to complete Defensive Driver training prior to using a Government supplied vehicle. Other safety training, such as First Aid/CPR or Hazardous Waste and

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Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) may also be required as part of job duties. The local BLM geologist will provide training during the employment suitable to the tasks at hand.

Travel: The Applicant will be required to travel to the assigned BLM office. The BLM will provide a vehicle for official use in conducting daily field work.

Duties: The successful applicant will assist the Field or District Office Geologist with the BLM's minerals and abandoned mines programs, which covers hundreds of thousands of acres of public land and mineral estate. Numerous opportunities exist for both field work and office work. Field work includes surveys, sample collection, and monitoring of abandoned mine and mineral resources both for management purposes. Office duties will largely consist of data entry, data analysis, report writing, and development of geological education materials

Field work will be conducted largely in Montana, including the Rocky Mountains, although other priorities may arise as the season progresses. Some work may also be completed in Eastern Montana and South Dakota in the high plains and Black Hills areas. Methods consist of hiking pre-determined target areas within the management area while closely examining existing conditions of abandoned mines, repositories of mine waste and existing mining operations. When sites are inspected, they will be documented using notebooks, standard format field forms on paper or using tablet computers, GPS, and digital photography and assessed as to their performance with pre-determined goals. In the office, duties will consist of entering data into a GIS-type database. Assistance in the development of environmental analysis and inspections are key, with the goal of obtaining the knowledge of a working Geologist within the BLM.

The participant will work out of specific BLM facilities in various locations as indicated above. Each project will have a specific work plan developed and will be coordinated by a local BLM Geologist and/or manager. Fieldwork will be done in a remote backcountry setting and requires strenuous exertion. Weather and terrain conditions may be extreme (e.g. heat, cold, thunderstorms, mountaneous terrain, steep badlands).

Project workplans and expected outcomes will be defined specific to each duty location and will be focused on reporting and/or updating database information for the number of sites visited and data collected for each site.

BLM's Involvement: There will be substantive BLM programmatic involvement by BLM professionals that will work on a regular basis with the participant on projects and also be providing project orientation and hands-on training. BLM will have the right to intervene by modifying the project management plan, if project is not staying on schedule, technical issues arise, etc. In addition, BLM and recipient will meet weekly to discuss progress and track project outcomes; review any training needs; and then make a decision what direction to take in finalizing project or move to the next phase.

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BLM Program Contact:

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Applicants are encouraged to refer to the full program announcement number L22AS00269 posted on Grants.gov for all program requirements and applicable terms and conditions. Recipients selected for awards will be required to adhere to those requirements should an award be made.