

Tips for re-entering the workforce post-55

ASHLEY NERBOVIG

Mature workers looking for employment don't need to camouflage as the younger generation in their resumes.

"When you talk about tips for people, we tell them to emphasize the value of being a mature worker," said Bob Davis, an employment specialist with Easterseals-Goodwill Northern Rocky Mountain Inc.

In January, Easterseals-Goodwill began managing the Senior Community Service Employment Program in Montana. The program offers training opportunities to low-income adults aged 55 and older who want to re-enter the workforce.

Workers who are older than 50 can sometimes worry that ageism will hurt them when applying for jobs, Davis said. But, he thinks society is starting to "embrace older workers a little bit more."

It is important to stress the average benefits of a mature worker, which include an excellent work ethic, rich life experience and a commitment to stay in one job for more than a couple of years, Davis said.

Technology also shouldn't hinder someone re-entering the workforce, Davis said.

"We've found people learn new technology in their 60s, their



70s and their 80s," he said.

Through the Senior Community Service Employment Program, people can get on-the-job training at nonprofits, community organizations and in government offices, including tribal governments. The federal and state grants that fund the program pay the trainee's minimum wage during that time.

The program itself is a huge benefit to communities that can have an extra employee without

having to find the money themselves, said Tina Johnson, assistant vice president of workforce development and behavioral health for Easterseals-Goodwill Northern Rocky Mountain.

"It is a huge community enhancement," Johnson said.

For people who don't qualify for the Senior Community Service Employment Program, missoulaclasses.com hosts the resources of the Lifelong Learning Center, which is part of the

Missoula County Public Schools' Adult Education Division. The center offers courses in the medical field, office administration and business management.

A generationally mixed workplace is a benefit for all, Davis said.

"Having younger and older workers brings diverse perspectives and a broader range of experiences that really benefits the employer," he said.