



**MONTANA WORLD
AFFAIRS COUNCIL**

2024

ANNUAL REPORT

BRINGING THE **WORLD** TO MONTANA AND **MONTANA** TO THE WORLD



**PREPARED BY:
NIKKI GEISZLER &
LAURIE SMITH**



A WORD FROM THE COUNCIL

I truly believe our mission of *bringing the world to Montana and Montana to the world* has never been more critical. Our programs start the conversation about what's going on in the world and how it impacts us in even our most rural communities. Progress, after all, begins with a conversation.

This past year has exceeded our expectations as we have had record breaking participation in all of our youth programs. We doubled our numbers for our 2nd annual EconoQuest conference in Bozeman growing the program from 190 students from 6 schools to 410 students from 15 schools. Our 19th annual Academic WorldQuest Conference in Missoula was the largest local competition in the country as well as in HISTORY with 460 students in attendance from 27 schools.

In addition to our student conferences, we traveled nearly 4,000 miles across the state with distinguished speakers visiting 50 classrooms while organizing 27 community programs including expanding our Distinguished Speaker Programs into Billings.

We are hoping you are as inspired as we are by this organization and could not do it without your continued support.

NIKKI GEISZLER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Teacher Testimonies:

“Being a title 1 school, we find (Academic WorldQuest) an invaluable experience for our students to learn more about the world around them. With our population being 100% Native Americans, it was also comforting for our students to see others like themselves represented in the competition.”

Paul Condon, Principal at Hays Lodge Pole High School

“The first year we attended, I had one 18 year old boy start crying at the end of a dinner. He told me he had never traveled outside of Montana and to meet someone from Estonia and hear her stories, made him realize how much he wanted to see the world. These are the kinds of experiences we cannot provide students with in a traditional school setting, I am so grateful the World Affairs Council has found ways to quite literally bring the world to my students.”

Jena Burke, teacher at Sentinel High School

ECONOQUEST

EconoQuest is an international economic literacy program that provides students with a unique opportunity to engage with local companies and government leaders about economics, international trade, and career opportunities. **We are honored Governor Greg Gianforte declared October Economic Education Month and have bi-partisan support from Montana Senators Jon Tester and Steve Daines.**

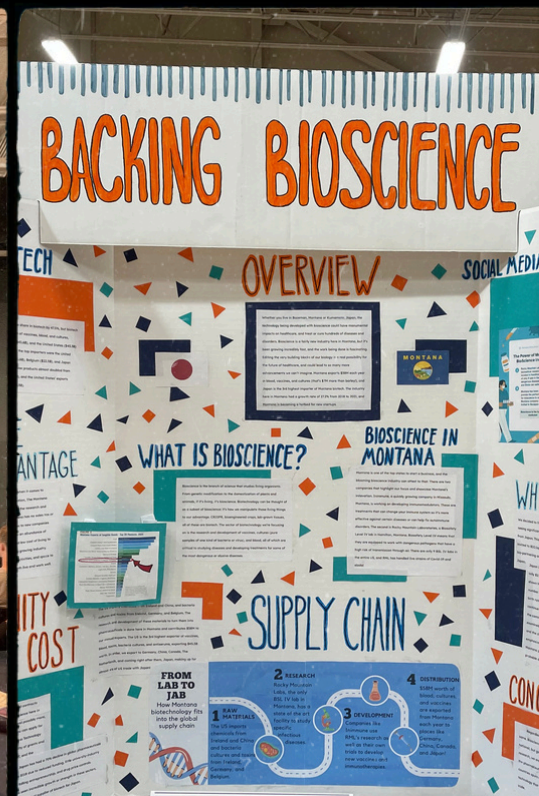


“When I started to mention EconoQuest to my students there was one student in particular who jumped at the idea. She had never gone farther than 50 miles from town. However, after her initial excitement dissipated her first statement was "I probably can't afford to go". By telling her that everything was paid for, this student was able to tour a museum, listen to former ambassadors, hear from Japanese students, and share contact information with an international instructor who joined our group for lunch during the conference. I can't thank you enough for opening the door to possibilities for my students.”

-Kiah Nisly, Teacher at Hamilton High School

“From an educational perspective, the content is so good that I even used the EconoQuest project in class because it aligns nicely with state content standards and was a relevant and interesting way for students to learn about the Montana economy and its place in the world. Thank you!”

-Aaron Kurschner, Teacher at Lockwood High School



410 STUDENTS WENT THROUGH THE ONLINE PROGRAM

135 STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN PERSON CONFERENCE



ACADEMIC WORLDQUEST

This year marked the 19th Academic WorldQuest (AWQ) in Montana. The Montana AWQ program is widely recognized as one of the nation's best: being the largest in the country, the only multi-day conference, and completely free to all schools—offering scholarships to schools to help cover the cost of transportation, lodging, and substitute teachers. **The 2024 AWQ competition was the largest competition in World Affairs Council HISTORY with 106 teams.**

We started off the conference on Sunday evening with United We Eat creating an experience like no other where students and teachers got to taste authentic dishes from 7 different refugee chefs while listening to Helena Mayor Wilmot Collins tell his refugee story.

The next 2 days were filled with dynamic speakers, African dancing, “Buidling Friendship” Arabic Language Mosaic art project, student to student global conversation with South Korea and the 100 question trivia competition where our winning team gets to go to an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. to compete at the national conference. The winning team hailed from Gardiner, MT. **The DC grand prize is sponsored by the Dennis & Phyllis Washington Foundation.**



Academic WorldQuest by the Numbers

106

School Teams

460

Students

19

Counties

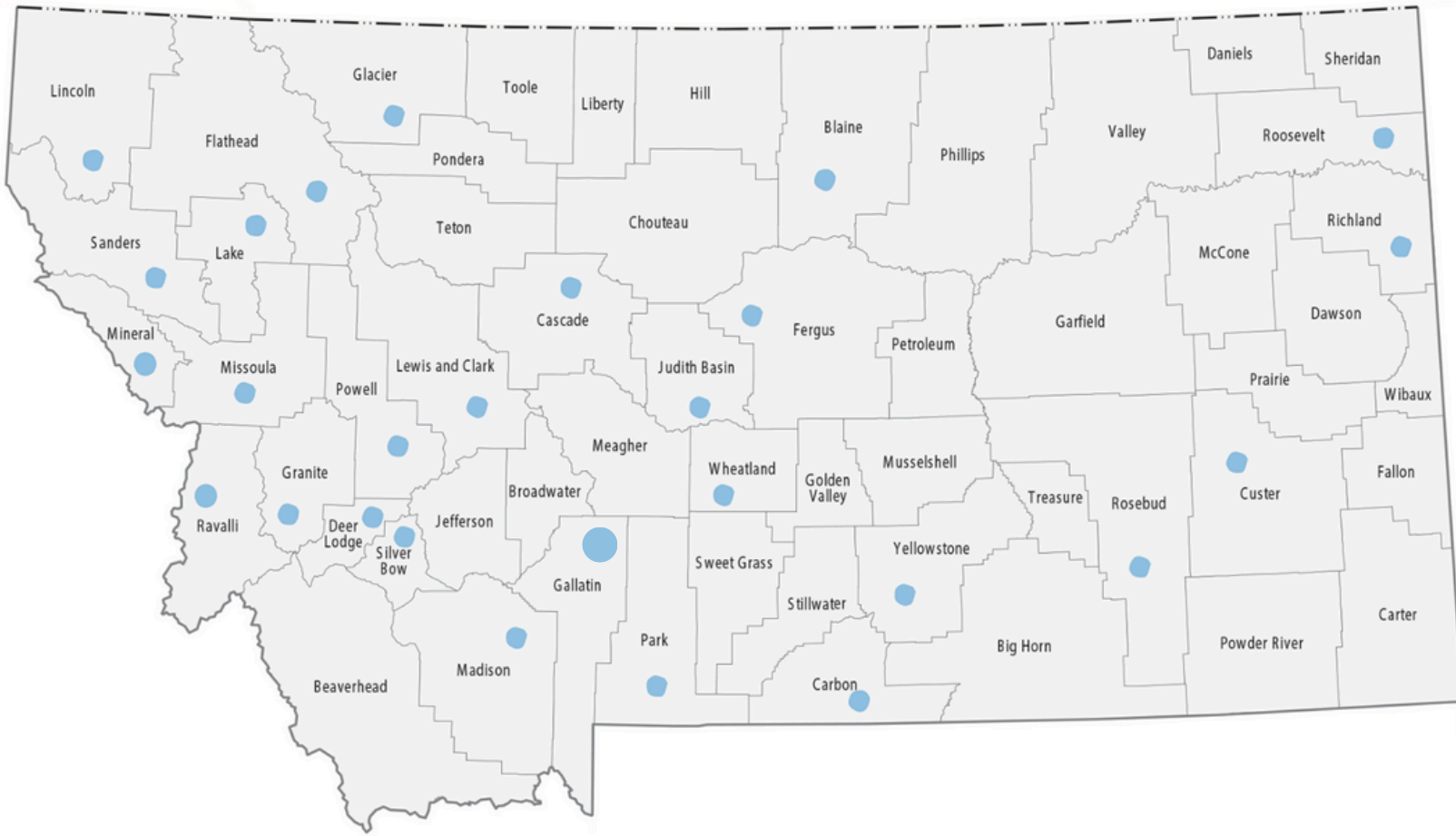
BRINGING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

“When I was in school, I grew up in one of the poorest counties in Montana and as a result had very limited opportunities for learning outside of direct school instruction. The opportunities that did exist centered on science and math, leaving nothing for someone like me, passionate about social studies and learning about the world and the humans in it. The Council does an excellent job of reaching out to communities like the one I grew up in and allowing students with economic limits to learn about the world when they otherwise might be unable to do so. MWAC calls, emails, and travels to literally every rural corner of the state to get schools involved in their programs; that dedication to the least supported districts is honorable.”

-Velita Rholl, Teacher at Hellgate High School

Pictured here is the “Building Friendship” Arabic Language Mosaic that was completed during Academic WorldQuest. Groups of students from 27 different schools each completed a tile that was later put together and showcased in Arts Missoula Gallery.





A GLOBAL MONTANA

“Montana World Affairs Council programs help Montana’s students **explore** the world without leaving the state. They provide an interdisciplinary lens to international issues and challenge students to think **critically and propose solutions.**”
 - Logan Aytes, Teacher at Gallatin High School

21,275

miles traveled since June 2023 by the Council or students attending programming

78%

of students were from title 1, rural or reservation schools in 2023-2024 school year

9

reservation schools were impacted by our programming

2,556

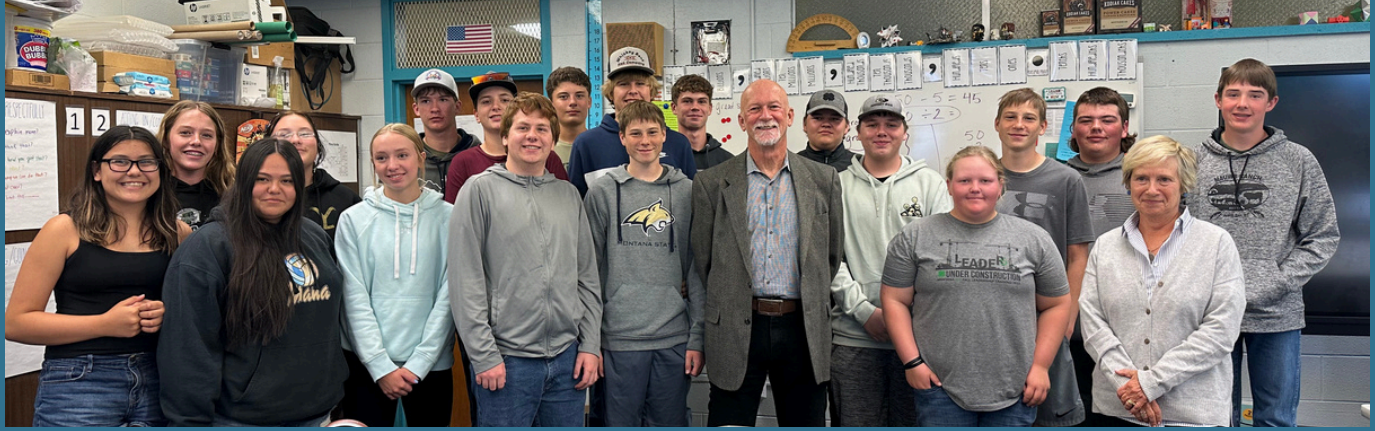
students were visited by distinguished speakers in 50 school visits

1,658

students participated in the 2024 International Careers Week

1,284

students attended the AWQ Conference or were visited by AWQ speakers at their school



DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER PROGRAMS

This year we expanded our Distinguished Speaker Programs into Billings with Ambassador (ret) Richard Boucher discussing China's significant influence in economic and geo-political affairs. Additionally, we hosted community programs in Missoula, Bozeman, and Helena with speakers such as Carol Giacomo speaking on Misinformation, Disinformation and Montana's Ambassadors discussing current events and why global issues matter to Montana. **DSP is sponsored by Dennis & Phyllis Washington Foundation, Clearwater Credit Union, Humanities Montana, and Stockman Bank.**

VIRTUAL EXCHANGE

The 3rd annual virtual exchange between Montana and Ireland classrooms brought over 200 students together over 4 sessions to work on a project to learn about one another's culture and community.

COUNCIL ON THE RADIO

Our President Emeritus Bob Seidenschwarz hosted 45 radio programs reaching over 25,000 people in Western Montana on a variety of international issues that impact us most.

GLOBAL EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR NECOLE KILLICK - LAMBERT, MT

Necole teaches Spanish, Reading, and Library at Lambert High School. She brings 8-10 foreign exchange students to Lambert each year. She plans a culture day each year, which aims to enrich students understanding of other cultures. Necole's international awareness and education have and continue to inspire those around her. **The GEOTY award is sponsored by Dr. Ed & Janet House.**

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

In September 2023, Ambassadors (ret) Robert Loftis and Marcie Ries spoke to communities and students about "Diplomacy in a Changing World." Over the span of 4 days, we traveled 734 miles visiting 6 rural and urban schools in Judith Gap, Harlowton, Moore, Hobson, and Bozeman and communities in Helena, Bozeman, and Missoula. Of the 6 schools we visited we had classrooms of 50 all the way down to Judith Gap High School with 5 high school students.

INTERNATIONAL CAREERS WEEK

Our 2nd annual virtual International Careers week was a huge success with growing our live audience from 300 to 1,658 students who engaged with 20 speakers about their international careers over 4 days. Speakers discussed with students how they got into their careers and what their daily life entails while answering Q&A with students. Some of the careers featured: Marine Biologist, CIA, National Geographic Videographer, United Nations, Photonics, Anime, Volcanology, and many more!



Financial Summary

Fiscal Year 2024 includes July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

FY2024 Income

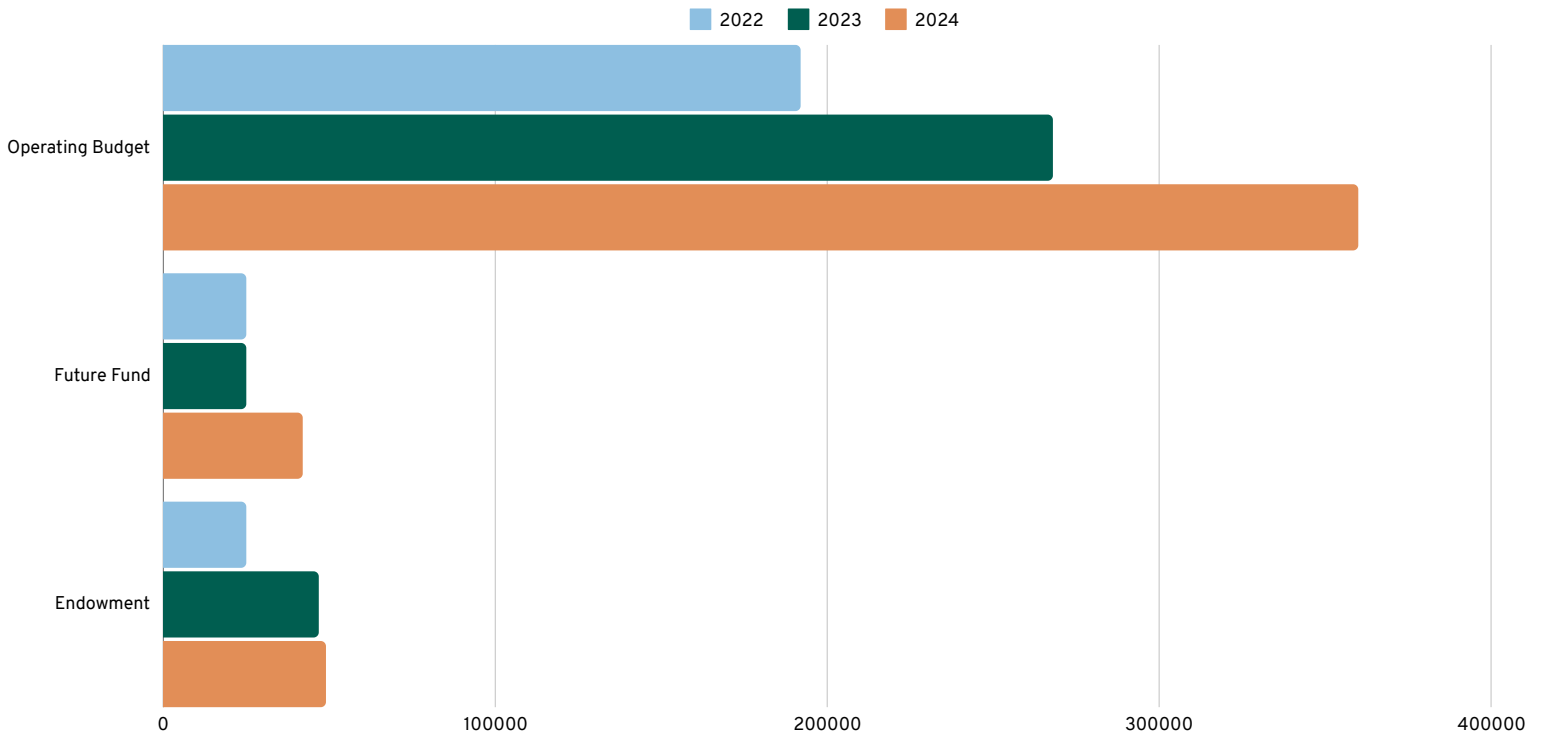
Grants/ Sponsorships	\$218,556
Fundraiser Events	\$91,000
Membership/ Donations	\$43,300
Total Support	\$352,856

FY 2024 Expenses

Program Expenses	\$215,746
Operating Expenses	\$97,143
Fundraiser Expenses	\$28,400
Outreach and Development	\$19,126
Total Expenses	\$360,415

Financial Growth

We are growing to ensure we can always bring the world to Montana and Montana to the world.



Thank you to our members and sponsors, whose contributions sustain the Montana World Affairs Council's mission to provide high quality international programming to our Montana students and communities.

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