

## **SUMMIT CAREER CENTER STEVENSVILLE CLASS BEGINS SEPT. 6; NEW MISSOULA CLASS BEGINS NOV. 1**

STEVENSVILLE, MONTANA—Summit Career Center is accepting applications for its fall program in Stevensville through August 23, with classes beginning September 6. The center is also launching a new program in Missoula November 1, with applications due no later than October 7.

The center opened in 2020 at Fort Owen Ranch to help adults ages 18-55 prepare for new careers. The free program typically runs six months and helps up-and-coming leaders grow personally and professionally.

The first six weeks of the program focus on personal skills to make sure participants are ready to work. “We teach them to be good, responsible, accountable employees,” says Jacqueline Stevens, director of development. This includes basics such as being on time and dressing appropriately for the job interview and workplace. Phase 2 provides career training in the individual’s field of interest. Coaching and evaluation are provided, along with mentoring from area business leaders and program graduates.

Jeremiah Ishman of Stevensville enrolled in the program last year at age 30 after seeing a flyer at a local laundromat. “I did a lot of career hopping in my life,” he says, working in construction, cooking, surveying, wildland firefighting, retail sales, and masonry. “I jumped into nearly every entry-level job there was. Summit Career Center got me out of my comfort zone. I was feeling kind of lost before that.”

The center’s staff pushed him to reflect on what he really wanted to do, Ishman says. “I knew I wanted to be an entrepreneur but never pursued it.” He started a design firm, Superior Graphics, and is a licensed realtor at Coldwell Banker; he will also manage locations for a movie production team this fall.

The center has graduated three groups of leaders since fall 2020. Their new careers include medical billing and coding, construction, veterinary assistant, HVAC, home inspection, AutoCAD, and medical administration. Stevens says, “We can accommodate just about any career interest, but it must be for jobs that are available.” In addition to opening the Missoula location this fall, Summit plans to increase outreach to local schools to help more young adults find their career paths.

Ishman now helps SCC with group mentoring and mock interviews, and attends Tuesday night “family gathering” dinners to “share my story, offer inspiration, and help the community. Offering a little positive affirmation is the best thing you can do for somebody,” he says. “They push you and give you a lot of confidence. Summit Career Center gave me, a small-town kid from Stevensville, an awesome opportunity. It’s never too late to take control of your own life.”

Summit Career Center is dedicated to serving Ravalli and Missoula Counties' most vulnerable individuals. The faith-based nonprofit was founded with help from the Fort Owen Ranch Foundation. It is also funded by the Gianforte Family Foundation, private donors, and other Montana nonprofit organizations. Its program is modeled on CrossPurpose, a Denver school with a similar mission and purpose.

SCC’s new Missoula program will be offered at the Valentine Community Center. Prospective student leaders should visit [summitcareercenter.org](http://summitcareercenter.org) to apply online. For further information, contact Jacqueline Stevens at 406.777.7232.

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