

# DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE (DEI)

## Quarterly Narrative Report

Grantee Name: Minnesota Round 7 Youth DEI Partners for Youth
Address: 332 Minnesota St. Ste. E200
City/State/Zip: St. Paul, MN 55101
Grant Number : MI29688
Date Report Submitted: 11/15/2018
Report Period: 7/01/2018-9/30/2018

**Summary of Grant Progress:** Describe the status of your state's implementation of the grant against the DEI workplan. Include major activities that address grant requirements (e.g., Integrated Resource Teams, Asset Development, Customized Employment, Self-Employment, Blending and Braiding Resources, or Guideposts to Success, as applicable). If grantees have nothing to report, that should be specified.

Minnesota's Round 7 Youth DEI project identified five main objectives to be achieved by the end of the grant life. **Minnesota will meet or exceed all five objectives by December 2018.** Below is an explanation for each objective outlining Minnesota's progress on meeting and achieving the five objectives

**Objective 1:** Strengthen partnerships and strategically align youth and adult career pathways systems to effectively serve youth with disabilities through multiple entry and exit points. **Each of the WDAs participating in the Round 7 DEI project co-enroll participants in WIOA Youth or WIOA Adult programs as necessary. This allows services to be provided to participants to meet their needs and support their education and employment goals. The WDAs have also strengthened partnerships with local Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and increased co-enrollments, especially for individuals with significant barriers to employment. In alignment with objective 5 of this grant, the three WDAs have also increased their capacity to serve individuals who are SSDI beneficiaries. The PACER Center has also increased partnerships with the three WDAs and has supported the work of the WDAs by providing parent and family trainings in each of the WDAs.**

**Objective 2:** Build capacity of WDA staff to support at least 300 youth with disabilities to participate in career pathways system using the Guideposts for Success best practices framework and Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach. **As of September 30, 2018, the three WDAs enrolled a combined 273 youth participants. Minnesota will have over 300 youth enrolled in the Youth DEI project by the end**

**of December 2018.**

**Objective 3:** Utilize innovative intergenerational approach to support successful outcomes for youth with disabilities participating in career pathways process system and programs. **The PACER Center is an integral part of Minnesota's efforts to leverage parents and families in supporting youth with a disability to achieve their education and employment goals. Parent and family workshops provide resources to families who can make better informed decisions when working with their youth with a disability. Parents and families are also involved with Integrated Resource Team (IRT) meetings and support their youth when making decisions about education and career opportunities.**

**Objective 4:** Implement specific strategies to address the state's employment gap for culturally and racially diverse individuals. **Each WDA made it a priority to serve youth of color who have disabilities through the Round 7 DEI grant. The PACER Center's multicultural advocates have been helpful in providing guidance to employment counselors on how best to engage communities of color. Professional development opportunities are identified and the Disability Resource Coordinators participate. The result is to increase cultural competency which, in turn, leads to higher quality service provision.**

**Objective 5:** Increase the state's number of employment networks (ENs) and the number of Social Security disability beneficiaries participating in career pathways programs. **All three implementation sites are operating as Employment Networks as of January 2018. In total, nearly 20 tickets have been assigned across all three Employment Networks accounting for nearly \$220,000 in ticket revenue. Each site views the potential revenue as an effective way to sustain the efforts of the DEI grant beyond March 2020.**

**DATA HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Youth of color – 25%
- Physical or Chronic Health condition – 9%
- Mental or Psychiatric Disability – 42%
- Learning Disability – 15%
- Cognitive/Intellectual Disability – 27%
- Foster Youth – 4%
- Youth Offender – 9%
- Basic Skills Deficient – 57%
- Co-enrolled in WIOA Youth or Adult – 38%
- Co-enrolled in Minnesota Youth Program – 60%
- Participated in Integrated Resource Team – 52%
- Participated in activities related to Guidepost 1: 81%
- Participated in activities related to Guidepost 2: 100%
- Participated in activities related to Guidepost 3: 69%

- Participated in activities related to Guidepost 4: 82%
- Participated in activities related to Guidepost 5: 67%

PACER’s draft publication, Guide on Incorporating the Guideposts for Success into MN’s Personal Learning Plan Process, includes a section on the importance of the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach. The document encourages the use of the Guideposts to conduct a needs assessment that can help determine who beyond the youth and youth counselor should be members of an individual’s IRT. PACER staff worked on a second draft of the publication, Guide on Incorporating the Guideposts for Success into MN’s Personal Learning Plan Process, to address comments made by reviewers of the first draft. The new draft includes several new fictional case study scenarios which were reviewed for appropriateness by the DRCs at the September 27 quarterly meeting of the DEI Project. These case studies will be integrated into the draft which will then be ready for a second review by DEED staff and outside reviewers in the next quarter. **This document is attached to the end of this report.**

Use of IRTs continue to be a best practice among Minnesota and the Workforce Development Areas (WDAs). IRTs have become especially helpful when youth with multiple service providers are seeking services through one of the WDAs. Recently, Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Programs (RMCEP) have seen more IRTs incorporating county social workers because of an increase of youth with disabilities on county waivers participating in the DEI project and WIOA career pathways programs.

RMCEP fosters relationships with the Community Interagency Transition Committees (CTICs) in their area. RMCEP is involved with seven unique CTIC groups. These CTIC meetings allow the DRC to share information about the programming offered through RMCEP with parents, youth, and special education teachers and administrators. The DRC also facilitates speakers who provide the CTIC participants with information on programs and benefits that may be able to help them support youth with disabilities.

**Development and Implementation of Effective Practices and Program Model**

**Strategies:** Identify any innovative strategies the state has undertaken or implemented to achieve DEI objectives. If grantees have nothing to report, that should be specified.

WDAs increased partnerships with local Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to serve individuals who are currently on the VR waitlist. This increased partnership will allow individuals, both youth and adults with disabilities to be able to receive services that will allow them to achieve their education and employment goals. Currently, Minnesota’s VR is in the process of developing a “universal release form” which will allow for a better facilitation of co-enrollments between VR and WDAs across the state.

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development’s Office of

Youth Development, in partnership with the three DEI implementation sites responded to a Request for Proposals from the Minnesota Department of Human Services to serve individuals who have a county waiver, are eligible to receive a county waiver, or are on a Federal setting level 3 or 4 Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The focus of the grant opportunity is to help individuals with more significant disabilities achieve competitive integrated employment. The Office of Youth Development should know by the end of December if the proposal will be funded. The grant will build on the work of Minnesota's youth DEI project and will allow the implementation sites to focus more efforts on serving youth with more significant disabilities. Working with individuals on waivers is also viewed as a potential future revenue stream because many of the services that are provided under the DEI project could be reimbursed by waiver services after the DEI grant has ended. The project with DHS would help lay the foundation for the implementation sites to better engage with youth with county waivers.

Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council signed up to take part in a marketing pilot program with American Dream Employment Network and SSA. SSA previously released the names and contact information to EN's of benefit recipients. They got away from this practice but are starting this again through a marketing pilot. PIC signed up and will receive a list of names and numbers of up to 300 individuals to call in three months that are receiving SSI or SSDI and have attempted work in the last 2 years. This will be a great marketing opportunity and a potential avenue to assign more tickets to the EN.

CMJTS currently has a VISTA volunteer on board. One of their goals is to assist CMJTS' Ticket Team in the development of marketing and outreach materials to promote and grow the program. The Ticket to Work (TTW) Team will be participating in a benefits coach training which will take three weeks to complete and includes 16 self-paced online modules and instructor led webinars. Staff will be educated on the foundations of benefits coaching.

The DRC at RMCEP rolled out a three-part all staff "touch of TTW," starting with the SSA "Meet Ben" dvd, followed by the TTW Staff Guide, and ending with a review of Workforce GPS Info Graphics: "Customer Flow Scenarios" and "Youth Customer Flow Scenarios." These materials will be viewed together in the context of each Team's weekly meetings and follow up questions or comments will be relayed back to the DRC so additional training or one to one coaching can be designed. Resource rooms at all eight locations have a Ticket to Work feature section with posters, pamphlets and booklets from SSA and revolving FAQ sheets to provide current and relevant information to SSA participants and anyone walking into the resource room.

The Disability Resource Coordinator from RMCEP presented for the Workforce GPS webinar: Ticket to Work: An Aligned Mission with WIOA held on Sept. 12, 2018. DRC prepared a portion of the webinar slide deck to share Minnesota's experience and decision to become an EN Provider Affiliate model of an Employment Network. Following the presentation, RMCEP was contacted by two organizations across the US to provide additional details about our process of becoming an EN and providing Ticket

services. One of these was a Workforce Center from California. The other was a private firm seeking to become an EN from New York. We remain available to encourage other Workforce Centers from across the nation to consider becoming an EN.

**Key Issues and Technical Assistance Needs:** Identify any specific barriers, lessons learned, or opportunities during implementation of DEI strategies in your state. If grantees have nothing to report, that should be specified.

**Follow-up to Gary Lewis (FPO) Desk Review:**

Minnesota has re-emphasized to the implementation sites and the PACER Center that they must adhere to the creative commons license when producing publications and documents under the Round 7 DEI project. Minnesota added the language into Minnesota's DEI Policy which can be found here: [https://mn.gov/deed/assets/youth-disability-employment-initiative-policy\\_tcm1045-335803.pdf](https://mn.gov/deed/assets/youth-disability-employment-initiative-policy_tcm1045-335803.pdf). Also, in response to this finding, Minnesota also incorporated a question into the DEI monitoring guide that addresses the creative commons issue. The subgrantees were notified in an email that they must follow the creative commons license and they were provided with the language that must be included on documents produced under the Round 7 DEI.

**Attached to this report is the Personal Learning Plan document developed by the PACER Center which reflects that creative commons language.**

**Significant Activities, Accomplishments, and Success Stories:** Describe significant activities, accomplishments, and/ or success stories on the implementation of the Career Pathway elements or how different systems are working together to benefit the customer. If grantees have nothing to report, that should be specified.

**TRAINING FOR DISABILITY RESOURCE COORDINATORS:**

Minnesota held two in-person meetings with all three of the implementation sites as well as the PACER Center. The first meeting was held in July. At that meeting, Emily Saed, the Executive Director for the Minnesota Foundation for Student Organizations (MNFSO) provided information about how the implementation sites can connect with teachers who are advisors for student organizations. These student organizations include: Future Farmers of America (FFA), Business Professionals of America (BPA), and SkillsUSA. These organizations receive a portion of their funding through Carl D. Perkins Funds and provide youth with opportunities to gain technical and employability skills. With the Congressional reauthorization of Perkins V funds and the shift to common outcomes and definitions with WIOA and Wagner-Peyser, it is imperative that Minnesota's Workforce System is aware of partnership opportunities in order to achieve desired outcomes.

As part of her role as the Executive Director for MNFSO, Ms. Saed is a certified poverty coach. Ms. Saed provided a training to the meeting attendees on how to identify poverty, the mindset of individuals in poverty, and strategies to best communicate with and support individuals who are in poverty.

The other in-person meeting was held at the end of September. At the meeting, a representative from the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) who provided training to the DRCs and PACER Center staff on DB101 in Minnesota. The website has been significantly updated in the last year and new tools have been incorporated to allow individuals to more efficiently manage the benefits they receive. DB101 is a helpful tool that DRCs and employment counselors can utilize when working with individuals receiving public assistance.

The DHS representative also presented information on a Benefits Planning Training designed for practitioners who work with individuals who have a Ticket to Work and other public assistance benefits. The training had only been available to Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent Living Counselors, but it has been opened up to Minnesota's Round 7 DEI Project DRCs and other relevant staff members at the three sites. Once completed, staff will receive a certification for completing the training and in order to maintain the certification, staff have to participate in certain activities and work with clients. This training will allow the three implementation sites to better address the needs of individuals with disabilities who receive public assistance.

The meeting also brought in a representative from DEED Vocational Rehabilitation who is currently tasked with identifying ways that the Workforce Center system can alleviate the VR client waitlist. In doing so, the VR representative provided the DRCs with information on the number of individuals on the waitlist in their respective areas. VR was able to break down the information further and identify how many youth 14 through age 24 are on the waitlist. VR also discussed possible strategies to better facilitate referrals between VR and the implementation sites. There are also a number of individuals on the waitlist who are Social Security Beneficiaries and have a ticket to work, but because they are waiting for services, they are not utilizing their ticket. Given that all three implementation sites are Employment Networks, VR and the three sites may be able to facilitate customers assigning their ticket to one of the DEI sites' employment network if the customer so chooses.

The State Lead presented to a group of Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers and CTE administrators about the youth programs such as WIOA Youth, the Minnesota Youth Program, and the Disability Employment Initiative project and how they can better work with the Workforce System to help support youth transition to postsecondary education and/or employment.

The State Lead presented on best practices in serving youth customers (with and without disabilities) to Wagner-Peyser and Job Service staff at a division meeting. The presentation utilized the Guideposts for Success as the foundation for working with youth who come through the doors of American Job Centers.

SWMNPIC assisted and participated in two Career Expos in September. One was held at Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall and the other was held at MN West in Worthington. Area High School students had the opportunity to visit with

employers from around the area. This event was a collaboration between area employers, colleges, universities, Southwest Minnesota Workforce Council and Southwest West West Central Service Cooperative.

The Disability Resource Center at SWMNPIC was a presenter at the Southern Minnesota Professional Development Day on Disability 101. This is a biannual meeting including workforce center staff from all of Southern Minnesota. The LDRC also presented on The Disability Employment Initiative and SWMNPIC Employment Network to the Chief Elected Official Board and the Work Investment Board.

**SUCCESS STORY:**

Jacob is a student at Wabasso High School, and was encouraged to contact the SW MN Private Industry Council (PIC) to learn more about the work experience program. Jacob loved to help the janitorial staff after he was done eating lunch until his lunch period was over. The janitors sincerely appreciated Jacob's assistance and thoroughness. In June 2016, Jacob was provided a work experience through PIC's work experience program as an assistant janitorial staff at Wabasso High School. Jacob was very shy when he first started the PIC work experience program and now has learned to open up to others. Jacob also shared that his job at the school has taught him responsibilities, and a better understanding of what it is like to have a job rather than simply just helping out. He is proud about his ability to advocate for himself and the new skills he has learned through his work experience responsibilities. During his time with the program, Jacob was able to obtain his driver's license and earn academic credit for his involvement in the work experience program. Jacob's future plans are to further study in Business at either Alexandria Technical College or Southwest Minnesota State University.

**Short-term Grant Goals (three - six months):** Describe plans and activities covering the next three to six months that address the workplan and objectives of the grant.

On October 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, the PACER Center arranged a parent information event in which a representative from the ABLÉ National Resource Center presented information to parents and families about ABLÉ accounts. PACER has also invited a representative from the Minnesota Department of Human Services who works on [Minnesota's ABLÉ plan](#) options and structure. The event on the 23<sup>rd</sup> will be held in person at the PACER Center as well as live streamed via PACER's website (<https://www.pacer.org/workshops/>). On the 24<sup>th</sup>, the representative from the ABLÉ National Resource Center will be providing an informational session geared toward direct service professionals. Minnesota's DRCs are invited and encouraged to attend both sessions.

As follow up to the U.S. DOL desk review, all of Minnesota's Round 7 DEI implementation sites' contracts were completed at the end of October. The work plans and budgets are geared toward the final year and a half of the grant.

Staff from the three implementation sites will complete a Benefits Counseling training developed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS). This training will cover topics related to Minnesota-specific benefits that individuals with disabilities can receive. The training also discusses how various types of public benefits relate to each other and how they can be best leveraged to serve individuals with disabilities. The training comes with a certificate issued by DHS and must be renewed on a yearly basis. All participants will be required to join bi-monthly calls that convene Center for Independent Living Staff and Vocational Rehabilitation staff from around the State of Minnesota. The training will take approximately one month to complete. This training is similar to Certified Work Incentive Practitioner's certification process, but has a Minnesota-specific focus.

PACER staff are working with staff from the Great Lakes ADA Center to present a professional training for DRCs and WorkForce Center staff on a technology topic in 2019. Date is tentatively set for January 2019.



# Minnesota Disability Employment Initiative Data Summary

IDENTIFYING INFORMATION			
Minnesota Round 7 Youth DEI		Contact: Cory Schmid	
Phone #:		E-mail Address: cory.schmid@state.mn.us	
Time Period for Report (Cumulative): July 1, 2018 through September 30, 2018			
PARTICIPANT SUMMARY INFORMATION (CUMULATIVE)			
Total Participants Served		273	<b>Percentages</b>
Gender	A. Male	177	65%
	B. Female	96	35%
Age	A. 14 – 15	44	16%
	B. 16 – 17	132	48%
	C. 18	54	20%
	D. 19 – 21	33	12%
	E. 22 - 24	10	4%
Ethnicity / Race	A. Hispanic/Latino	45	16%
	B. American Indian or Alaska Native	12	4%
	C. Asian or Pacific Islander	4	1%
	D. Black or African American	10	4%
	E. White	237	87%
Primary Disability	A. Physical/Chronic Health Condition	24	9%
	B. Physical/ Mobility Impairment	5	2%
	C. Mental or Psychiatric Disability	115	42%
	D. Physical and Mental Impairment	5	2%
	E. Vision-Related Disability	1	0%
	F. Hearing-Related Disability	3	1%

	G. Learning Disability	42	15%
	H. Cognitive/ Intellectual Disability	75	27%
	I. Did Not Disclose	3	1%
Education Level	A. 8 <sup>th</sup> grade or under – 11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	215	79%
	B. 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade Completed, No Diploma	6	2%
	C. High School graduate or equivalent	50	18%
	D. Post-Secondary Education	2	1%
Other Demographics	A. Limited English Proficient	1	0%
	B. Youth From Families Receiving Public Assistance	91	33%
	C. Youth receiving SSI or SSDI	27	10%
	D. Foster Youth	12	4%
	E. High School Drop-Out	9	3%
	F. Youth Offender	25	9%
	G. Pregnant or Parenting Youth	3	1%
	H. Basic Skills Deficient	156	57%
	I. Homeless or Runaway Youth	3	1%
	J. Not Employed at Program Enrollment	167	61%
<b>PROGRAM SERVICES, ACTIVITIES, AND OTHER RELATED ASSISTANCE</b>			
A. Participated in Activities Related to Guidepost 1: School-Based Preparatory Experiences		222	81%

B. Participated in Activities Related to Guidepost 2: Career Preparation and Work-Based Learning Experiences	272	100%
C. Participated in Activities Related to Guidepost 3: Youth Development and Leadership	189	69%
D. Participated in Activities Related to Guidepost 4: Connecting Activities	225	82%
E. Participated in Activities Related to Guidepost 5: Family Involvement and Supports	183	67%
F. Participated in Integrated Resource Team (IRT)	142	52%
G. Co-Enrolled in WIOA Youth or Adult	103	38%
H. Co-Enrolled in MYP	165	60%
<b>INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE</b>		
A. Attained Work Readiness or Education Goals	71	26%
B. Received Academic Credit or Service Learning Credit	35	13%
C. Remained in School or Dropout Returned to School	34	12%
D. Obtained High School Diploma, GED, Certificate or Degree	34	12%
E. Entered Post Secondary Education, Vocational/Occupational Skills Training, or Apprenticeship	9	3%
F. Entered Military or Unsubsidized Employment	28	10%
<b>CUSTOMER SATISFACTION</b>		
A. Number of participants rating experience as "Excellent"	17	49%
B. Number of participants rating experience as "Very Good"	15	43%

C. Number of participants rating experience as "Average"	2	6%
D. Number of participants rating experience as "Below Average"	0	0%
E. Number of participants rating experience as "Poor"	0	0%
F. Total Number of Surveys Completed	35	