

**Date:**  December 12, 2018

**To:**  Governor’s Workforce Development Board Members

**From:** Equity Committee to address Disparities for Individuals with Disabilities in Training and Employment

**Subject:** Executive Summary and Disability Equity Committee Recommendations\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

In June 2017, GWDB leadership and staff organized and convened the Disability Equity Committee with the following mission and vision:

*Our mission* is to identify strategies to make informed, actionable and measurable solutions to address disparities in training and employment.

*Our vision* is an equitable Minnesota where barriers to meaningful employment for individuals with a disability are eliminated and where employers support inclusion and provide comparable wages to align with an individual’s ability.

The committee developed a work plan centered on goals to 1) Align policies and systems within relevant state agencies, 2) Target state funding resources, and 3) Develop successful strategies to accomplish integration.

The committee’s work has culminated in the following strategies, which are being presented to the GWDB for approval:

**Recommendation 1**

Support continued funding from the Minnesota State Legislature to support individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible for services through Vocational Rehabilitation Services at the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

**Recommendation 2**

DEED, as the administrative agency under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, provide opportunities for training and professional development for all state and partner staff that provide workforce services at CareerForce Locations. Staff will be trained to better serve individuals with disabilities. Vocational Rehabilitation Services staff will serve as consultants to assist in the development of training.

**Recommendation 3**

DEED provide guidance for developing teams across all WIOA Titles as applicable\* and service providers to better serve individuals with disabilities. This guidance should include best practices and evaluation from the U.S. Department of Labor’s Disability Employment Initiative in Minnesota. DEED shall continue to provide status reports to the GWDB Disability Equity Committee on a quarterly basis.

**Recommendation 4**

Support additional youth funding with a priority to serve youth with disabilities. The committee recommends funding increases in state programs, and aligning those programs with the WIOA mandate for Vocational Rehabilitation Services to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services to all students with disabilities in Minnesota.

**\* WIOA Titles**

Title I: WIOA Adult, Youth and Dislocated Worker (DEED)

 Title II: Adult Education & Family Literacy Act (Minnesota Department of Education)

 Title III: Job Service (DEED)

 Title IV: Vocational Rehabilitation Services & State Services for the Blind (DEED)