

# DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE (DEI)

## Quarterly Narrative Report

Grantee Name: Minnesota Round 7 Youth DEI Partners for Youth
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City/State/Zip: St. Paul, MN 55101
Grant Number : MI29688
Date Report Submitted: 2/13/18
Report Period: 10/1/17-12/31/17

**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.

In all three implementation sites, the Integrated Resources Teams (IRTs) are youth driven. The Disability Resource Coordinators assist the youth participant with identifying individuals who can provide supports for the participant. For example, Rural MN Concentrated Employment Programs (Rural CEP), has 48 enrollments and 44 of those youth have had at least one IRT. Some of the IRT partners that have been involved include: probation officers, mental health professionals, county case workers, foster parents, Youth Build coordinators, and personal care attendants. The most recent data shows that 40% of all DEI participants have received at least one IRT.

The PACER Center, Minnesota Round 7 Youth DEI's State-level TA provider has been integral in aligning the *Guideposts for Success* and Minnesota's DEI objectives. PACER has a draft publication titled, *Guide on Incorporating the Guideposts for Success into MN's Personal Learning Plan Process* which includes a section on the importance of the Integrated Resource Team approach. The document encourages the use of the *Guideposts* to conduct a needs assessment that will help determine who should be members of an individual's IRT. PACER's expertise has been leveraged by the three implementation sites to identify innovative approaches to engage parents and families in the IRT process. This document is located in the appendix to this report.

Minnesota has required that the three implementation sites report the number of youth that have received services or have completed activities that align with each of the five

Guideposts. The data shows that:

**82%** - Participated in activities related to Guidepost 1 (School-Based Preparatory Experiences);

**96%** - Participated in activities related to Guidepost 2 (Career Preparation and Work-Based Learning Experiences);

**73%** - Participated in activities related to Guidepost 3 (Youth Development and Leadership);

**76%** - Participated in activities related to Guidepost 4 (Connecting Activities);

**69%** - Participated in activities related to Guidepost 5 (Family Involvement and Supports).

In addition, the LDRCs, with assistance from the PACER Center, have been training staff on how to align the Guideposts with the 14 elements of WIOA. This has facilitated more co-enrollments in WIOA for the three implementation sites. The most recent data shows that **38% of DEI participants are co-enrolled in WIOA Youth or Adult** and **55% are co-enrolled in the State-funded Minnesota Youth Program (MYP)**. By co-enrolling, the implementation sites are able to braid funds to serve youth who have significant barriers to employment. Attached as an appendix to this report is the ISS/Youth Action Plan document used by Southwest MN Private Industry Council (SWPIC) uses when working with DEI participants. Note that this document allows staff to quickly identify which WIOA elements as well as which of the five Pre-ETS activities align with each Guidepost. The Youth Action Plan was developed by the PACER Center for Minnesota's Round 3 Youth-focused DEI project. By incorporating the Guideposts, Minnesota is insuring that youth receive quality services that will set them up for long-term success.

**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.

One of the implementation sites under Minnesota's Round 5 and Round 7 DEI projects, Central MN Jobs & Training Services (CMJTS) has developed a Disability Resource Coordinator Level I and Level II trainings. This curriculum was adapted from trainings developed by Alaska's DEI project. The LDRC and the Development Manager at CMJTS has provided the DRC Level I training to all of their staff. This has allowed CMJTS to have all frontline staff along with youth and adult counselors trained in order to better work with individuals with disabilities. CMJTS has conducted the Level I training for SWPIC staff members. This training series has been identified as a best practice, and will continue to be developed through the Round 7 Youth DEI project. In addition, Minnesota is seeking Technical Assistance and Training (TAT)

funds from the U.S. Dept. of Labor to further develop the Level I and Level II trainings and train staff outside of the DEI implementation sites. If funding is secured, Minnesota will be working closely with CMJTS and Maher & Maher to design and develop a training curriculum that will benefit WDA and Wagner-Peyser staff at the local level. By implementing this training series, Minnesota anticipates the number of individuals with disabilities served under WIOA will increase.

The PACER Center is also being utilized by the implementation sites to identify future webinars and trainings. Rural CEP in particular is working with PACER to develop Transition and Career Pathways related workshops. These workshops will be in-person, live-streamed, and archived. These resources will be shared with WDAs that are not participating in the Round 7 DEI project. PACER is also working on developing a webinar related to working with transition-age youth who have mental health related disabilities. The idea to develop a webinar with a mental health focus was prompted by the data trends Minnesota is seeing. For example, 41% of DEI participants were identified as having a “mental or psychiatric disability.” Given the prevalence of these youth in the Round 7 DEI project, Minnesota is responding by identifying how resources, partnerships, and trainings can be leveraged to better serve youth and families with young adults who have mental health needs.

**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.

All three of the Round 7 implementation sites have officially become Employment Networks. CMJTS has been an established EN for a number of years and have generated a Ticket Revenue of \$90,000. Rural CEP has generated over \$142,000 in Ticket revenue since assigning their first Ticket as part of DEED’s EN in September 2013. Rural CEP and SWPIC have signed on with the American Dream Employment Network (ADEN) and those two sites have been receiving technical assistance and training through ADEN. This was a goal of Minnesota’s Round 7 DEI project and it was achieved as planned, during the first year of the grant.

**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.

Southwest MN Private Industry Council was awarded a Pre-Employment Transition Services grant in July 2017, has hired a new Pre-ETS coordinator, and the LDRC has been working closely with this individual to work with students with disabilities. This project has been a great connection with the DEI grant as well as for fostering strong

partnerships with VRS staff, at the state and local level.

PACER Center has published a new document titled: *The Path to Independence: Mobile Apps to Support Transition-age Youth*. This document lists free and low-cost mobile apps that are available to support transition-age youth with disabilities as they embark on their journey towards post-secondary education, job training, employment, and independent living. It is available online at: <http://www.pacer.org/transition/resource-library/publications/NPC-59.pdf>. This document is also attached with this report as part of the appendix.

A significant accomplishment for the Round 7 Youth DEI is achieving Minnesota's goal to increase the number of employment networks in the state. This will also help lead Minnesota's efforts to increase the number of Social Security Disability Beneficiaries in career pathways programs. Currently, 8% of participants are receiving SSI or SSDI.

Highlights from the most recent data (1/1/-2017 - 12/31/2017):

131 total participants served. This is higher than expected after the first year and Minnesota is still on track to achieve its goal of serving at least 300 youth over the course of the grant.

35% - Female Participants

27% - Youth of Color (Increase from previous reporting period)

47% - Basic Skills Deficient

18% - Youth from Families Receiving Public Assistance (This is bolstered by Minnesota's TANF Youth Innovation Project. This is an interagency project between Minnesota's Departments of Employment and Economic Development and Human Services.)

9% - Dropouts

8% - Foster Youth

8% - Youth receiving SSI or SSDI

8% - Youth Offenders

2% - Homeless/Runaway Youth

55% co-enrolled in the Minnesota Youth Program

38% co-enrolled in WIOA Youth/Adult

Success Story:

Trever began meeting with SWPIC in 2016 and was a junior in high school. He met with SWPIC staff on a monthly basis through its outreach to schools project (state-funded Minnesota Youth Program). He started working with the janitorial staff at the high school in August 2016 through a work experience sponsored by SWPIC and with the help of the Pre-ETS grant. Trever completed a 16 credit welding certificate program offered through his high school by Minnesota West Community College and funded by the Disability Employment Initiative grant through SWPIC in November

2016. He graduated from high school in June 2017 and started a welding work experience in July 2017 at a local welding business. In January of 2018 Trever began full time, unsubsidized employment with the local welding business. Trever did apply for SSI shortly after he graduated high school and has a disability that would qualify him for disability income, but because of the additional training and employment support he received, Trever is now able to support himself through full-time employment.

**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.

1. Rural CEP and SWPIC will assign new ticket holders to their employment networks.
2. Design and develop DRC Level I and Level II training in tandem with CMJTS and Maher & Maher.
3. Increase enrollments in the DEI project.
4. PACER Center will develop webinars and trainings based on feedback from the three implementation sites.
5. The State lead has been working with State Services for the Blind and will be coordinating a professional development and technical assistance meeting in March, 2018. This meeting will be held at Blind Inc. (<https://www.blindinc.org/>) in Minneapolis. Blind Inc. is a National Federation of the Blind training center that provides employment and life skills trainings to blind and visually-impaired adults and youth. Blind Inc. is also co-located with the Minneapolis location of the National Federation of the Blind. Minnesota's DRCs from both the Round 5 and Round 7 DEI projects will go on a tour with Blind Inc. staff to learn about the services that are offered and how Blind Inc. can be a resource for the DRCs. The State Lead toured Blind Inc. in the August 2017, and identified the organization as a great opportunity for professional development and a way to increase the knowledge of AJC staff to better work with blind/visually-impaired individuals.
6. On March 15<sup>th</sup>, the State Lead will attend a training for State Services for the Blind staff. The State Lead will present information about the services levels to individuals with disabilities. In addition, the State Lead will be there to help identify how to increase partnerships with AJCs and State Services for the Blind.