**DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE (DEI)**

**Quarterly Narrative Report**

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| Grantee Name: Minnesota Round 7 – Youth |
| Address: 332 Minnesota St. Suite E200 |
| City/State/Zip: St. Paul, MN 55101 |
| Grant Number : MI29688 |
| Date Report Submitted: 5/12/2017 |
| Report Period: January 2017-March 2017 |

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| **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. |
| **Disability Resource Coordinators:**  With the work plans and budgets approved in January, Minnesota’s Round 7 youth-focused DEI project was ready to begin enrolling participants. Both Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council and Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Programs, Inc. were able to hire on their Disability Resource Coordinators by mid-February. Leah Hastad is working for SWPIC, and Nancy Stensgard has joined the RMCEP team and she is already joined local CTICs, professional organizations as well as the youth Council (sub-committee of the Workforce Development Board). Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services decided to utilize the expertise of the DRC for Minnesota’s Round 5 Adult-focused DEI (Tera Brooks) and have her also serve as the DRC for Round 7. This has already proven to be extremely helpful for the new the DRCs as they can gain insight, best practices, and innovative strategies from Tera and the CMJTS team.  **Integrated Resource Teams:**  All three sites have been utilizing Integrated Resource Teams with participants when they are most practical for the individual. SWPIC noted that during one IRT meeting, that a participant presented about information he had researched about his disability and how it affects him on his best days and worst days at work. This youth was also a participant in the Project Search program operating in partnership with the local VRS office, SWPIC, the employer, and family members. SWPIC viewed this individual as a testament to the usefulness and importance of the Guideposts for Success. DRC Leah has also received mentorship from the round 5 DRC on how best to facilitate IRT meetings. This weaving of programmatic knowledge has led to Leah to quickly respond to the needs of individuals with disabilities.  RMCEP has begun the process to incorporate the IRTs into all WIOA programs. This method will allow CEP to build staff capacity among their counselors in order to provide better, more holistic services to clients as well as facilitate sustainable strategies after the round 7 grant has ended.  CMJTS has included the IRTs into their programming, and have held trainings for staff to facilitate those meeting without the DRC having to be present. Again, this is building long-lasting capacity building to better serve individuals with disabilities.  **Braiding Resources**  With regards to braiding resources, there were 18 of the 23 Youth DEI enrollees who were also co-enrolled in other programs. One youth was co-enrolled with the round 5 DEI project, 1 youth was co-enrolled in WIOA, and 16 were co-enrolled with Minnesota’s State-funded youth program: Minnesota Youth Program (MYP).  **Asset Development**  Minnesota’s state lead Cory Schmid has been working with the DRCs to ensure that they have access to resources and strategies for them to implement. In response to the DRCs asking for more resources on better serving youth of color and culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) individuals, Cory connected the DRCs to upcoming conferences, as well as connecting the DRCs to academic research on serving CLD youth and youth of color. These resources were intended to be disseminated throughout the established networks of the implementation sites.  A resource guide for youth with disability planning for competitive integrated employment was published in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Education and the DEI State Lead Cory Schmid. This publication was sent out to the local sites as well as posted on the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development – Office of Youth Development website.   |  | | --- | |  | |
| **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. |
| |  | | --- | |  |   A unique approach that Minnesota is able to implement is the fact that there is an overlap between the round 5 and round 7 DEI projects. Additionally, having Tera Brooks, and Leslie Wojtowicz from CMJTS serving as two of the 10 Ticket Ambassadors for the Ticket to Work program has allowed both RMCEP and SWPIC to have expert peers providing assistance as those sites work to become Employment Networks. With a program as intricate as TTW, it will be extremely beneficial to have Tera and Leslie as resources throughout this project. CMJTS has already had discussions with both the DRCs from SWPIC and RMCEP about establishing a 2-person “Ticket Team” to better work with ticket holders coming to the AJCs.  The DRCs and State Lead are establishing a quarterly in-person convening to go over best practices. This will be in addition to the monthly DRC calls. |
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| **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. |
| Given the intricateness of Employment Networks, we realize that there may be speed bumps along the way, and the State DEI lead and other staff will seek tout technical assistance on this issue as RMCEP and SWPIC move forward with becoming an EN.  One small hurdle that SWPIC and CMJTS are overcoming is making sure that the staff understand the differences between the Youth- and Adult-focused DEI projects. This should easily be overcome and will not be an issue once the round 5 grant has ended.  CMJTS is also addressing the issue of Ticket holders who live outside CMJTS’s region and wanting to assign those tickets through CMJTS’s EN. This is process that they are working through currently. |
| **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. |
| **Pre-ETS**  Notably at the State Level, the State Lead has been co-managing the Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) grant with Vocational Rehabilitation Services. The RFP process closed on April 28th, and the expected start date for the awarded grantees in July 1, 2017. This project will is available for the WDAs to solicit funding. If round 7 youth DEI sites are funded, this would be an excellent and unique opportunity for increased co-enrollments. This project is spurred by the success of the Pre-ETS pilot project operating in three sites across Minnesota. SWPIC is one of the site participating in the Pre-ETS pilot project.  **Apprenticeship**  CMJTS has generated over $60,000 in unrestricted funds to their agency due to their status as an EN. Rural CEP has generated $19,500 for January through March 2017.  The State Lead, Cory Schmid has joined as a contributing member to the PIPELINE Apprenticeship project operating out of the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI). The PIPELINE project is convening employers and other stakeholders to establish apprenticeships in Manufacturing, Health Care, Information Technology, and Agriculture. The manufacturing and IT apprenticeship programs are also going to have a youth offshoot. Cory has met with Steve Arrowood who is the lead on the Youth Career Connection piece of the PIPELINE project. They are in the very beginning phases of establishing youth apprenticeships in manufacturing and IT, so it is an opportune time for the State Lead to get involved with the project. With apprenticeships coming to the forefront on the national level, we feel as though it will be beneficial to not only have the three DEI sites looped in on the apprenticeship information but the other WDAs across the State of Minnesota. The Youth Career Connection project will also link up with the Minnesota Department of Education’s Youth Apprenticeship program to ensure that there are minimal duplications of services or implementation of failed strategies. Cory will continue to be involved with these conversations and molding of the Youth Career Connection project. This project is also particularly pertinent to the implementation sites as they have listed Manufacturing as a high demand field in their areas as well as IT being a high demand field in RMCEP’s region. It is a goal of the Minnesota Round 7 project to have more youth with disabilities enter into apprenticeship programs. |
| **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. |
| CMJTS is striving to enroll 2 participants, have the Guideposts for Success fully implemented into the youth plans, and complete an IRT meeting for all 20 enrollments.  RMCEP is planning to finalize policy/procedures/practices and begin enrollments into the DEI project. They are also building staff capacity by having youth staff attend WIP and SSA trainings through Virginia Commonwealth University. This will allow them to better serve youth with disabilities as they begin enrolling participants.  Begin discussions around youth joining an apprenticeship.  Monthly DEI calls were established, but after looking at long-range planning, we decided to return to the drawing board and find a better time that fits schedules.  Submit a modification for the DEI work plan and budget.   |  | | --- | |  | |

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