# MICAH: Employment support funding example

The following example is one of the many “success stories” that show how through collaboration, state and federal funds can be used together in creative ways to help people with disabilities achieve competitive, integrated employment. Minnesota’s departments of Education, Employment and Economic Development and Human Services worked together to develop these examples. They act as roadmaps for how to use different agency services to help people achieve their preferred employment outcome.

People with disabilities, their families and professionals can use stories like Micah’s to stimulate conversations and ideas about employment. As you work with various partners across the state, you can use these examples to help create more coordinated, innovative plans.

Please note: The example here is based on a true Minnesota story, but we changed some of the details to protect the identity of the person involved.



## His story

At 16 years old, Micah started asking for a job. His school connected him with Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS). Unfortunately, this was long before Minnesota became an Employment First state, and it was determined that Micah couldn't be employed competitively due to his disability. His case was closed with VRS. He graduated from high school and started receiving day training and habilitation (DTH) services inside a centered-based day program for adults with disabilities. There, he earned subminimum wage based on his production. Due to limitations with using his hands, his productivity rates were low. He earned just $0.37 per hour.

## Team approach

Micah is tenacious. He consistently asked for a job outside the “sheltered workshop,” and, yet, no action was taken. At 31 years old, Micah had an informed-choice conversation about employment. He again expressed an interest in work. This time, the county updated his community service and support plan to support his competitive, integrated job goal. Micah reapplied for VRS services and was eligible. With support from his VRS counselor, Micah connected with a Disability Benefits 101 ([http://DB101.org](http://db101.org/)) benefits specialist to learn how work would impact his benefits. When Micah learned that he would make more money working than on benefits alone, he was even more inspired to find a job. At the same time, Micah, his VRS counselor and county case manager agreed that employment exploration, including customized employment strategies through waiver-funded Supported Employment Services [SES], would help him define a job goal.

## Success

Once he completed his employment exploration, Micah worked with VRS to secure a job. Micah visited local technology companies. During a tour at a large technology retail store, a manager saw Micah's job skills and asked him to return to meet the other managers. From those conversations, Micah was offered a part-time job working 25 hours per week earning $11 an hour. Micah receives four hours a week of SES through the waiver for ongoing job support.

Now that Micah is employed he no longer attends the sheltered workshop. In Micah’s free time, he works toward improving the lives of others with disabilities through the use of creative technology.