



Disability Employment Initiative Partners for Youth Career Pathways

Minnesota's youth-focused Disability Employment Initiative (MN DEI) is an innovative partnership among key youth-serving stakeholders dedicated to increasing the number of youth with disabilities, ages 14-24 served through Minnesota's youth workforce system. This project builds upon the two previous DEI grants Minnesota has received.



For more information on MN Youth DEI project and how youth can become involved, please contact:

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Collaboration

MN DEI will promote effective collaborations between community-based organizations, workforce and disability organizations which will lead to improved opportunities and outcomes for youth with disabilities. Project partners include the Karen Organization of MN, Minnesota Migrant Council, PACER Center, Minnesota's Department of Employment and Economic Development, and local workforce agencies: Rural MN Concentrated Employment Program (Rural CEP), Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services (CMJTS), and Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (SW PIC).

Increasing Staff Capacity

MN DEI will increase the capacity of Minnesota's youth workforce system to serve youth with disabilities, especially those from culturally diverse communities as well as individuals experiencing additional risk factors such as poverty, homelessness, teen parents, and involvement in juvenile justice. In addition, MN DEI will align adult and youth career pathways and identify family members of youth participants that may qualify for workforce training programs thus creating a multigenerational model to service provision.

Disability Resource Coordinators

MN DEI's disability resource coordinators (DRCs) will identify and facilitate resources so youth with multiple barriers to employment can be better served by the state's workforce system.

Integrated Resource Teams

The Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) are an innovative approach to serving youths with disabilities. The IRT meetings are youth-driven and are used to coordinate services for the individual in order to help youth reach their goals. Typically workforce, educational, community based agencies are present at the IRT meetings.



Individualized Planning

MN DEI will help youth with disabilities make successful transitions to college and careers by using the *Guideposts for Success* as a framework to guide service delivery. This model served as a best practice during Minnesota's previous youth-focused DEI grant (2012-2015).

Expanding use of Benefits Counseling

MN DEI will expand and promote benefits counseling so youth with disabilities and their families understand the impact of employment on Social Security benefits (such as SSI). The project also will expand the number of Minnesota Workforce Centers that are Ticket to Work Employment Networks.

Counties Served by MN DEI

Rural CEP: *Becker, Beltrami, Cass, Clay, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Douglas, Grant, Hubbard, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomon, Morrison, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, Todd, Traverse, Wadena, Wilkin*

Contact: Nancy Stensgard

NancyS@rmcep.com or 218-847-0716

CMJTS: *Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, Mille Lacs, Pine, Renville, Sherburne, Wright*

Contact: Tera Brooks

tbrooks@cmjts.org or 763-710-0999

SW PIC: *Big Stone, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Jackson, Lac Qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Rock, Swift, Yellow Medicine*

Contact: Leah Hastad

LHastad@swmpic.org or 507-706-0199

The MN DEI project will serve an estimated 300 youth with disabilities throughout the 42 month grant period.

The Guideposts for Success

Based on decades of research, *The Guideposts for Success* help identify what all youth, including youth with disabilities, need to make the move from school to adulthood successfully. They are rooted in high expectations and the understanding that a youth with a disability is a youth first, and a youth with a disability second. The five *Guideposts for Success* are as follows:

1. **School-Based Preparatory Experiences:** What are youth getting from educational settings and programs that help build skills for adulthood?
2. **Career Preparation and Work-Based Learning Experiences:** How are youth being given opportunities to learn about and try different career options so they can make an informed choice about their future?
3. **Youth Development and Leadership:** How are youth being given opportunities to be mentored, to learn about themselves, and given chances to lead so they can direct their own futures?
4. **Connecting Activities:** How are young people and their families being connected to programs, services, and activities that help them get the supports needed to live in the community?
5. **Family Involvement and Supports:** How are families being given information that empowers them to help their youth make the move to employment, postsecondary education, and community living?

For more information on a wide variety of topics related to *The Guideposts for Success*, please visit the **National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth** web site at:

www.ncwd-youth.info.

This material is available in alternative formats, such as large print, Braille, or audio tape. TTY or MN Relay 711. Minnesota DEI is an equal opportunity employer and program. MN DEI is funded by the United States Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration and in cooperation with the DOL's Office of Disability Employment Policy.