

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE (DEI)

Quarterly Narrative Report

Grantee Name: Minnesota Round 7 Youth DEI
Address: 332 Minnesota St. Ste. E200
City/State/Zip: St. Paul, MN 55101
Grant Number : MI 29688
Date Report Submitted: November 14, 2019
Report Period: July 1, 2019 – September 30, 2019

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.

Minnesota's Round 7 Youth DEI project identified five main objectives to be achieved by the end of the grant (March 31, 2020). **Minnesota met or exceeded all five objectives stated in the initial proposal.** Below is an explanation for each objective outlining Minnesota's progress on meeting and achieving the five objectives

Objective 1: Strengthen partnerships and strategically align youth and adult career pathways systems to effectively serve youth with disabilities through multiple entry and exit points. **Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (SWPIC) is a SOAR (SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery Services) provider that assists individuals who are homeless or at risk of being homeless apply for SSI/SSDI benefits. Many individuals are denied SSI/SSDI benefits on their first application. The SOAR method has a significantly higher rate of success and allows individuals to become economically stable much quicker. For each submitted application, SWPIC is reimbursed for the services provided. This opportunity is also being explored by RMCEP and CMJTS as a way to sustain funding beyond the DEI grant and compliment the services offered by their respective Employment Networks and other workforce development programs. The SOAR opportunity compliments the robust menu of services already offered to customers. For example, SWPIC can assist with economic stabilization through SSI/SSDI, support employment through WIOA Youth/Adult, and eventually support customers to gradually transition off of public assistance benefits through the Ticket to Work program. Unique partnerships with County Social Services have increased through the implementation of the Round 7 Youth DEI grant. These partnerships facilitate referrals that help county and WDA staff meet the needs of youth with disabilities. Through the use of Integrated Resource Teams, partnerships with post-secondary college staff including Disability Services**

representatives, instructors, and college advisors have strengthened. SWPIC has received \$2,653 for providing SOAR services.

Objective 2: Build capacity of WDA staff to support at least 300 youth with disabilities to participate in career pathways system using the Guideposts for Success best practices framework and Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach. **As of September 30, 2019, the Round 7 youth DEI project has served 437 youth with disabilities. Of the individuals served, 227 (52%) attained work readiness or education goals; 91 (21%) earned academic or service learning credit; 107 (24%) obtained high school diploma, GED, certificate, or postsecondary degree; and 102 (23%) entered unsubsidized employment or military.**

Objective 3: Utilize innovative intergenerational approach to support successful outcomes for youth with disabilities participating in career pathways process system and programs. **The PACER Center is an integral part of Minnesota's strategy to emphasize parent and family support to help youth with disabilities achieve their education and employment goals. Parent and family workshops are informed by the Guidepost framework and provide resources to families who can make better informed decisions when working with their youth. Parents and families are also involved with Integrated Resource Team (IRT) meetings and support their youth when making decisions about education and career opportunities. The Guideposts for Success provide guidance to employment counselors, parents, families, and youth about the need for family involvement during the youth's transition to adulthood. The revised *Guideposts for Success 2.0* released in July 2019 provides updated guidance to aid in the transition to adulthood.**

Objective 4: Implement specific strategies to address the state's employment gap for culturally and racially diverse individuals. **Each WDA made it a priority to serve youth of color who have disabilities through the Round 7 DEI grant. The PACER Center's multicultural advocates have been helpful in providing guidance to employment counselors on how best to engage communities of color. Professional development opportunities are identified and the Disability Resource Coordinators participate. The goal is to increase cultural competency which, in turn, leads to higher quality service provision.**

Objective 5: Increase the state's number of employment networks (ENs) and the number of Social Security disability beneficiaries participating in career pathways programs. **All three implementation sites are operating as ENs as of January 2018. In total, over 30 tickets have been assigned across all three Employment Networks accounting for \$262,000 in unrestricted revenue. Each site views the potential revenue as an effective way to sustain the efforts of the DEI grant beyond the March 2020 end date. SWPIC received its first Ticket Payment in the July – September 2019 quarter. RMCEP is anticipating a \$10,000 payment in October/November 2019.**

Integrated Resource Teams:

Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services (CMJTS) employment counselors encourage participants at the collegiate level to convene IRTs and bring together college advisors,

instructors, and the disability services representative. Participants expressed that they better understood expectations and the supports that are available to them so they can succeed in a post-secondary setting. These IRT meetings help CMJTS staff align youth and adult career pathways.

Guideposts for Success:

The PACER Center completed the “Incorporating the Guideposts for Success into MN’s Personal Learning Plan Process.” This publication encourages the use of the Guideposts to conduct a needs assessment of individual youth that can help determine who beyond the youth and youth counselor should be members of an individual’s IRT. There are four scenarios that provide examples of how the alignment of WIOA elements and the Guideposts for Success can be implemented when working with youth with disabilities. The publication was reviewed by external experts as well as the Disability Resource Coordinators for each WDA. The publication was featured in September 2019 as a Promising Practice Brief on WorkforceGPS. To view the publication follow this link: https://mn.gov/deed/assets/learning-processes-guide_tcm1045-390463.pdf.

Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (SWPIC): The Disability Resource Coordinator modified the Youth Action Plan developed by the PACER Center for Minnesota’s Round 3 Youth DEI to incorporate the 14 WIOA Program Elements, allowable Pre-ETs Activities, and the five Guideposts for Success. The document assists employment counselors with aligning services across multiple programs. The document was featured in the September 2019 Promising Practice Brief on WorkforceGPS: https://disability.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/09/14/13/01/Disability_Employment_Initiative_DEI_Best_Practice_Series

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.

Partnerships:

CMJTS – In September, the DRC collaborated with VRS and provided Pre-ETS services to a transition program in Big Lake, MN called Connections. There were twelve youth who participated. The DRC met with the students every Monday and Thursday. The topics that were addressed included: self-advocacy, soft skills development, work readiness training, job search skills, career exploration, post-secondary exploration, resume development, interview skills, mock interviews, and a business tour.

CMJTS also frequently partners with VRS to support youth achieve employment goals. For example, oftentimes, CMJTS can assist with a work experience and VRS can assist with other services such as job coaching so a youth can be successful at work.

RMCEP partners with six Community Transition Interagency Committees (CTICs) in its region. The DRC has helped organize several parent workshop with speakers addressing Disability and SSI, guardianship, and other protections for transition age youth who are SSA beneficiaries. Various resources are shared at CTIC meetings with the intention that they will also be provided to youth and families at IEP meetings during the school year.

SWPIC – In September, SWPIC presented at a local CTIC group and share the services SWPIC provides with other local service providers that assist youth with disabilities transition to adulthood.

The DRC presented to the local Advisory council on Mental Health about the services SWPIC provides for individuals with disabilities. The DRC will attend the council meetings on a regular basis because it assists with further networking, referrals, and collaboration.

Sustainability of Best Practices:

Minnesota’s Round 7 Youth DEI website has been updated to reflect the best practices that have developed under the DEI grant. The website also includes quarterly reports that highlight the progress made under the Round 7 grant. The website will continually be updated through the end of the grant. After the grant has ended the website will be utilized as a reference tool for other WDAs in the state to assist in better serving youth with disabilities. The website can be found here: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/disability-employment-initiative/>

The annual report for PY 2018 is posted on Minnesota’s Round 7 Youth DEI website. The report provides an overview of the progress that was made during the 2018 program year. Topics including Integrated Resource Teams, Partnerships, Employment Networks, Capacity Building, and Sustainability are described. There are three success stories included that highlight the impact the Round 7 Youth DEI grant has had on participants. You can find the PY 2018 Annual Report here: https://mn.gov/deed/assets/youth-dei-annual-report_tcm1045-392403.pdf

PACER: Staff completed work on a short animated video for youth and families on career path options for the DEI project <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQtPxY1iFuY>. It is posted in several locations on PACER’s National Parent Center on Transition and Employment’s website.

Peer to Peer Technical Assistance: The Ramsey County, WDA 15 youth team has been on board for only a few months. DEED Youth Development team asked the three DEI implementation sites and the PACER Center to provide technical assistance to the new Ramsey County team. We asked the sites to provide technical assistance from the WDA perspective on the following topics: utilizing the Individual Service Strategy in program service delivery; overview of the 14 WIOA program elements; safeguarding and maintaining participant files; Youth Incentive Policy; utilizing Integrated Resource Teams in service delivery; Guideposts for Success 2.0 in service delivery; overview of the Personal Learning Plan (PLP) document developed by PACER Center. The meeting occurred on October 10th. The notes from the meeting can be found in the appendix of this report.

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.

The WDAs are receiving technical assistance from the American Dream Employment Network as it relates to Ticket to Work activities.

PACER: 98% of professional staff who have received DEI in-service training from PACER have indicated that they would feel comfortable calling on PACER if they need assistance on behalf of individual youth with disabilities. CareerForce (American Job Center) staff who have attended DEI trainings are now familiar with PACER as a source of information on disability issues and can contact us when questions arise.

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.

RMCEP – Leveraged resources has far exceeded the originally planned level of \$184,000. Through September 2019, \$509,657 has been leveraged from multiple programs to support work experiences.

SWPIC – Leah Hastad, the DRC for SWPIC was featured in the first DEI Seen and Heard Series on WorkforceGPS: <https://disability.workforcegps.org/resources/2019/09/12/20/46/DEI-Seen-Heard-series>

CMJTS – in September, CMJTS was notified that they were selected from 90 candidates to participate on the Disability and Employment eLearning Task Force. The Task Force convenes national, state, and local experts to assist with the development of eLearning tools to support the professional development needs of the workforce development staff in nearly 2,400 American Job Centers. The task force meets each month (via webinar) until April 2020. The goal is to develop innovative and cutting-edge services for individuals with disabilities.

Success Story - August is a WIOA OSY who has worked with RMCEP in different programs such as Youthbuild, DEI, and Minnesota Youth Program. August came to RMCEP back in July



of 2017. He was attending high school and was behind in his credits. After meeting with August, it was decided that Youthbuild would be a great option for August to earn the credits needed for graduation. August was also co-enrolled in the DEI program for additional support. August was able to graduate from high school in June 2018. After graduation, he was referred to the WIOA OSY program as he was very interested in completing welding training at Lynnes Welding. August was able to successfully finish the sixteen-week welding course. **It was a**

very special accomplishment for August as he was the first in his family to not only graduate from high school but go on to successfully complete post- secondary education. After August completed the training in April 2019, he struggled with what type of welding he wanted to specialize in. August, the Youthbuild coordinator, and I met and discussed his options. August decided to apply and was hired at Trail King in West Fargo as a welder. He was hired on at \$21/hour.

Employment Networks:

All three implementation sites continue to designate representatives from their agencies to complete the Benefits Coaches Training offered by the Minnesota Department of Human Services. The training is similar to the Certified Work Incentives Practitioner trainings offered through Cornell University and Virginia Commonwealth University but provide information on Minnesota Public assistance benefits and the impact that working has on those benefits. Staff who complete the training must maintain their certification by attending quarterly in-service meetings that bring together benefits coaches from all over the state. This training allows Ticket to Work staff to better assist Ticket Holders in accessing and managing all public assistance benefits they receive while also supporting employment goals.

Both **SWMNPIC** and **RMCEP** partnered with the Social Security Administration on an SSA Marketing pilot project to reach out to ticket holders in their respective regions. This project is intended to inform SSA beneficiaries about their ability to assign their Ticket if they are seeking employment options. SWMNPIC and RMCEP can leverage this opportunity to also explain other services that are provided through their respective agencies. The pilot project has helped each area increase ticket assignments.

CMJTS – The Development Manager spoke with staff from Colorado’s DEI project about Employment Network policies and procedures. Current processes were shared with the Colorado team.

Data Highlights:

16% - Hispanic/Latino
5% - American Indian/Alaska Native
3% - Black/African American

48% - Mental or Psychiatric disability
18% - Learning Disability
23% - Cognitive/Intellectual Disability

35% - Youth From Families Receiving Public Assistance
10% - Youth Receiving SSI or SSDI
6% - Foster youth
5% - High School Dropout
9% - Youth Offender
2% - Pregnant or Parenting Youth
61% - Basic Skills Deficient
2% - Homeless or Runaway

72% - Participated in Activities related to Guidepost 1
100% - Participated in Activities related to Guidepost 2
59% - Participated in Activities related to Guidepost 3
86% - Participated in Activities related to Guidepost 4
62% - Participated in Activities related to Guidepost 5 (Family Involvement)

40% - Participated in an Integrated Resource Team
52% - Attained work Readiness or Education Goals
21% - Received Academic Credit or Service-Learning Credit
24% - Obtained High School Diploma
23% - Entered military or unsubsidized employment
7% - Entered post-secondary education or vocational/occupational skills training

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.

PACER Center and RMCEP will set up three parent workshops that includes the MN Department of Human Services Disability Determination Services staff. The topic for the parent workshops will be SSI and Work.

PACER will disseminate information about the project, career pathways, and American job centers to families via the PACESETTER newsletter.

The three implementation sites will continue to grow their respective Employment Networks and increase outreach to individuals who are eligible to assign their ticket to an Employment Network.

APPENDIX

Peer to Peer Technical Assistance and Training Forum

Date: October 10, 2019

Location: 332 Minnesota St., Suite E200 St. Paul, MN 55101

DEED Staff: Kay Tracy, Cory Schmid, Larry Eisenstadt, and Steve Barker

Ramsey County Staff: Lisa Guetzkow, CJ Stanton, Rachael Molenaar, Julie Baker, Kenneth Cutler, Lisa Grottoden, and Tonya Yarbrough

Minnesota's Youth DEI implementation sites provided a peer to peer technical assistance and training session for the new Ramsey County Youth Team. The three DEI implementation sites had the opportunity to review the Ramsey County ISS prior to the forum.

Focus Areas:

1. Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council – Eriann Faris and Leah Hastad (DRC)

- Described how the Individual Service Strategy (ISS) is utilized in program service delivery to customers. https://mn.gov/deed/assets/iss-plan_tcm1045-326826.pdf
- Provided an overview of the 14 WIOA Program Elements and described the program element chart from local youth plan. The weblink to the program element chart can be found here: https://mn.gov/deed/assets/swpic-elements_tcm1045-407491.xlsx. The weblink to SWPIC's Local Youth Plan can be found here: https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wda6-youth_tcm1045-274692.pdf.

2. Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services – Leslie Wojtowicz and Tera Brooks (DRC)

- Provided guidance on safeguarding and maintaining participant files. https://mn.gov/deed/assets/cmjts-case-management_tcm1045-407490.pptx
- Discussed the use of the Youth Incentive Policy. The youth incentive policy states how case managers must record the amount and type of incentive and how the incentive relates to the goals outlined in the youth's ISS. Documentation must also be included in the participant file. The CMJTS Youth Incentive Policy can be found in the Local youth Plan: https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wda5-youth_tcm1045-274691.pdf.
- Provided an overview of local youth plan. https://mn.gov/deed/assets/wda5-youth_tcm1045-274691.pdf

3. Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Programs – Nancy Stensgard (DRC)

- Described the use of Integrated Resource Teams in service delivery. https://mn.gov/deed/assets/integrated-resource-teams-rmcep_tcm1045-407485.pptx
- Provided information and an overview of the Guideposts for Success 2.0. https://mn.gov/deed/assets/guideposts-success-2_tcm1045-407488.pdf

4. Pacer Center – Deborah Leuchovius

- Described how the Guideposts for Success can be implemented in program delivery. https://mn.gov/deed/assets/pacer-guideposts_tcm1045-407489.pptx

- Provided an overview of the Personal Learning Plan document developed by the PACER Center for Minnesota. https://mn.gov/deed/assets/learning-processes-guide_tcm1045-390463.pdf

5. Question and Answer Session

- Allotted time for Ramsey County staff to ask questions of the three DEI implementation sites.

6. U.S. DOL Technical Assistance Resources

- Refer to TEGl 21-16 for comprehensive information on WIOA Youth.
https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=7159
- Refer to WIOA Youth resources on WorkforceGPS:
<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDOL/bulletins/2669515?reqfrom=share>