

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE

December 2013

Monthly Narrative Report

DEI State Project	Minnesota (Department of Employment and Economic Development)
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A. Ticket to Work/Employment Network (EN) Activities

Note: local level Ticket to Work EN activities are included in the local activity section below.

- The EN has 65 Tickets assigned: 61 Tickets assigned prior to the start of the DEI project and 4 Tickets through the DEI project. To date \$62,138 in payments has been made to the EN (from the pre-DEI Tickets). DRCs are in the process of identifying Ticket Holders with assignable Tickets, explaining TTW, and securing agreement from the Ticket Holders to assign the Tickets to the EN at the appropriate time.
- State Co-Lead participated in “The Impacts of 2008 Regulatory Changes on the Ticket to Work Program” webinar. (12/12/13)

B. State Level Activities

DEED

- State Co-Leads facilitated DEI Steering Committee conference call (changed from face-to-face meeting due to weather conditions) where the team discussed the results of the Needs Assessment Survey and other project updates. (12/4/13)
- State Co-Leads facilitated conference call with DEI implementation sites for information sharing and updates. (12/5/13)
- DEED’s DEI team participated in quarterly conference call with Gary Lewis, the DOL Federal Project Officer and discussed idea for modifying the grant to provide experiential learning opportunities to some DEI participants. (12/6/13)
- DEED DEI team members participated in Shared Vision for Youth State Team meeting and provided a project update. (12/11/13)
- State Co-Lead reviewed and approved Phase III work plans and budgets for the three implementation sites, providing an increase in the funding allocation for second year DEI activities.

PACER Center

ONLINE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- PACER downloaded the results of the online needs assessment conducted via Survey Monkey in November and submitted reports to MN DEI State Co-Leads in 4 formats, one report for each of the three regions and a report combining results from all 3 regions. The findings will be used to help frame discussion and plan future activities that can address the identified information and training needs. Some needs may be addressed collectively, while some activities may be aimed at addressing the needs of a particular region. Results were discussed on a 12/4/13 telephone conference of the MN DEI Steering Committee and very briefly on a 1/2/14 DRC telephone conference with MN DEI DRCs and representatives from PACER, NDI, and NCWD/Youth.

C. Local Level Activities

Minnesota Valley Action Center (South Central WSA)

- The DRC continues to work at identifying Ticket to Work holders. Local staff identified six ticket holders that are assigned to Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and three ticket holders that are not assigned (two have since been assigned to DEED/MVAC).
- The DRC assisted the Martin County Community Transition Interagency Committee (CTIC) to identify and contact a presenter for the parent/youth workshop on Work Incentives.
- The DRC is exploring Certified Work Incentives Counseling Training in 2014.
- DRC attended the CTIC meeting for the Mankato area and participated in planning for the CTIC/DEI workshops/trainings scheduled to take place in 2014. (12/2/13)
- DRC participated in DEI conference call with state co-leads and other DEI implementation sites. (12/5/13)
- DRC attended a Youth Intervention Program Association sponsored training, *LGBTQ Youth, What You Need to Know*. (12/6/13)
- DRC attended the CTIC/DEI training planning meeting for the Fairmont Area CTIC and assisted in planning the parent/youth workshops for 2014 (first will be held on February 20th and will educate parents and youth in the community about work incentives). (12/13/13)
- DRC attended an open house at the office of MN State Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing and spoke with local staff and learned more about resources available to youth who are deaf/hard of hearing. (12/11/13)
- DRC met with VRS/DEI rep and placement specialist to discuss employers and placement activities for youth in MVAC/VRS programs. (12/17/13)
- DRC facilitated Integrated Resource Team (IRT) meeting with VRS Case Manager, MRCI Case Manager, Special Education Teacher and youth. It was decided that the youth would work with MRCI for work experience during the remainder of the school year using a job coach for the first week or two. Transportation to and from the job site will be provided by the school. VRS and MVAC will provide other support services; MVAC will provide work readiness workshops, career counseling and a possible summer work experience. (12/19/13)
- DRC coordinated an American Sign Language interpreter to allow a deaf youth to participate in a work readiness workshop. (12/19/13)

- Throughout the month the DRC and youth counselors met with and enrolled 6 youth in DEI and held 4 IRT meetings. This brings the total number of youth being served through DEI to 37, with another 6 youth pending enrollment.
- DEI team finalized and submitted Phase III work plan to DEED.

Workforce Development, Inc. (Southeast WSA)

- DEI team continued brainstorming for collaboration on serving diverse populations and how to best utilize PACER and resources
- DRC participated in monthly conference call with other MN implementation sites. (12/5/13)
- DRC completed and submitted PHASE III work plan to DEED.
- DEI Youth began a work experience activity.
- DRC continued to work on developing IRT's and promoting *Guideposts for Success* (ongoing)
- DRC and partners planned additional meetings for collaboration.
- DRC worked with case managers on enrollment - total enrollment is 26.
- Case managers in Rochester collaborated with partners from Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and Southeast Minnesota Center for Independent Living (SEMCIL) in developing a brochure for shared services for youth with disabilities.

Rural MN CEP

- DRC met with five DEI candidates in Little Falls, MN. Completed DEI questionnaire and intake forms. All candidates made the decision to participate in the DEI enhanced services. RMCEP identified its first eligible MFIP participant who agreed to participate. (12/6/13)
- DRC and nine youth coordinators attended and completed the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP) Job Development Certification Course. This training will increase the capability to youth coordinators to not only develop diverse work training sites but also to increase their success in directly placing transition age youth. (12/9-12/18/13)
- Collaborative Individual Service Strategy (ISS) presented to DEI participant in Bertha during IRT meeting. (12/10/13)
- DRC met with DEI candidate in Osakis, MN. Completed DEI questionnaire and intake form. Candidate made the decision to participate in the DEI enhanced services. (12/10/13)
- DRC met with VR counselors in Thief River Falls, MN to discuss the DEI strategies, promote the idea of the consolidated ISS, and market the benefits planning fee for service initiative. (12/11/13)
- DRC met with DEI candidates in Verndale and Detroit Lakes. Completed DEI questionnaire and intake forms. Candidates made the decision to participate in the DEI enhanced services. (12/12/13)
- DRC met with three DEI candidates in Moorhead, completed DEI questionnaire and intake forms. Candidates made the decision to participate in the DEI enhanced services. Two of the DEI candidates also had Tickets to Work. Upon closure of VR cases, Tickets are anticipated to be assigned to RMCEP. (12/13/13)

- Collaborative ISS presented to DEI participant during IRT meeting in Pine River. (12/16/13)
- DRC met with DEI candidate in Park Rapids, completed DEI questionnaire and intake form. Candidate made the decision to participate in the DEI enhanced services. (12/17/13)
- DRC met with DEI candidate in Frazee, completed DEI questionnaire and intake form. Candidate made the decision to participate in the DEI enhanced services. (12/18/13)
- DRC met with DEI candidates in Chokio and Fergus Falls, completed DEI questionnaire and intake forms. Candidates made the decision to participate in the DEI enhanced services. (12/20/13)
- DRC met with DEI candidate in Wadena. Completed DEI questionnaire and intake form. Candidate made the decision to participate in the DEI enhanced services. (12/23/13)
- DRC presented collaborative ISS to DEI participants during two IRT meetings in Brainerd. (12/30/13)
- DRC met with DEI candidate in Brainerd. Completed DEI questionnaire and intake form. Candidate made the decision to participate in the DEI enhanced services. (12/30/13)
- DRC attended CTIC planning meeting for spring training: two trainings in a series starting with a presentation related to Autism Spectrum Disorder followed by how to use the Guideposts for Success to better serve individuals diagnosed with the disorder. (12/30/13)
- DRC presented DEI concepts and tools to the Detroit Lakes WorkForce Center staff to expand services to those who qualify within RMCEP's adult programs. (12/31/13)
- IRT met in Detroit Lakes to discuss current employment of a DEI participant in Detroit Lakes. Collaboration with Blue Sky Inc. and VRS lead to a discussion about expanding hours. DEI participant qualified for SSI and now has a Ticket to Work which is anticipated to be assigned to RMCEP for long term supports. (12/31/13)
- Rural MN CEP DEI Team submitted Phase III work plan to DEED.

PACER Center

MULTICULTURAL ACTIVITIES

- PACER staff worked with DRCs in South Central and Southeast WSAs to schedule informal focus groups with diverse youth and their families in December and January. Questions asked in the focus group are attached.
- A focus group of eight Hispanic participants was held in Rochester on 12/18/13: two young women and one young man in their early 20's, and five mothers of 18-21 year old sons. At least 3 of their sons had a learning disability diagnoses and received special education services. In general, the group had minimal information on workforce services and wanted more. One young woman, however, reported that she had previously tried to receive services and had a very negative experience.

After this meeting, PACER staff contacted Workforce Development Inc. (WDI) to share information about the group's desire for additional information. WDI staff expressed an eagerness to do some follow up activities after their DRC returns from parental leave in January. Tentative plans were made for PACER staff to meet with the DRC and other staff to discuss potential options.

- PACER staff traveled to Mankato on 12/26/13 to facilitate planning for a January 2014 focus group with Hispanic families of adolescents in the South Central region served by Minnesota Valley Action Council.

PACER's MN DEI IMPLEMENTATION SITE STAFF SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

- PACER staff has had informal discussions with Jayne Spain from the Department of Education about presenting on the *Guideposts for Success* to CTIC stakeholders in the Southeastern MN region. In addition, RMCEP's DRC also contacted PACER to present on the *Guideposts*. Firm dates for these presentations are not yet set.

PACER's MN DEI PARENT TRAINING ACTIVITIES

- As reported in PACER's November activity report, assigned **PACER staff continue working on the curriculum *Social Security and Benefit Planning for Transition-Age Youth***. However, because of staff vacations and the holiday break in December, the process did not advance significantly. A new draft of the curriculum should be available to share with State Co-Leads in late January or early February.
- No parent trainings for the MN DEI project were held in December.

PACER'S INDIVIDUALIZED INFORMATION, REFERRAL AND ASSISTANCE

- In December, PACER staff provided individual information, referral and assistance to six youth/workforce professionals who contacted the agency.

QUESTIONS FOR DEI FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Documenting the Need MN Four-Year Graduation Rates*

All Students: 77 Percent

White: 84 Percent

Communities of Color:

American Indian/Native American:	42 Percent
Asian/Pacific Islander:	72 Percent
Black:	49 Percent
Hispanic/Latino:	51 Percent
Economically Disadvantaged:	58 Percent
Youth with Disabilities:	56 Percent

**U.S. Dept. of Education (2010-11) Four-Year Regulatory Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates*

PURPOSE:

- Help WSAs better meet the needs of youth with disabilities from culturally diverse populations.
- *Assess* current efforts to reach to culturally diverse youth with disabilities reached by DEI Implementation Sites/WorkForce Service Areas; *increase* the numbers of diverse youth served by the DEI implementation sites, and ultimately *improve* employment outcomes for these youth populations (as outlined in the grant proposal).

Assessment Activities:

1. Help DEI Implementation Sites/WorkForce Service Areas determine if they are serving culturally diverse populations that are representative of their region. (See demographic data)
2. Help DEI Implementation Sites/WorkForce Service Areas learn about the needs of at-risk youth representative of their region's culturally diverse communities.
3. Help DEI Implementation Sites/WorkForce Service Areas explore and identify strategies that will help them serve diverse youth populations in their regions.
4. Work with DRCs to develop recommendations for their organizations.

Focus groups are one part of the assessment process.

Focus group questions:

1. What are barriers to employment for culturally diverse youth populations in your region?
 - a. High school completion?
 - b. Refugee status?
 - c. At-risk behavior
 - d. English proficiency?
 - e. Citizenship?
 - f. Discrimination?
 - g. Lack of training or certification?

- h. Literacy? Numeracy?
 - i. Lack of role models?
 - j. Family Expectations?
 - k. Other
2. What do you know about the services available from the DEI Implementation Site WSA?
 3. Have you had prior experience with this organization? What was your experience?
 4. What would make you check out the program or apply for services from this organization?
 - a. Translated materials?
 - b. Spanish or Somali speaking staff?
 - c. Staff from my cultural background?
 - d. Location?
 - e. Hours of operation?
 - f. Connections with my cultural community?
 - g. Other
 5. What role does your family play in helping you be successful at school, or to find a job?
 6. What do you think would be most helpful to you as you prepare for and find a good job, in a field you want that would pay enough to support a family?