

# DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE

November 2013

## Monthly Narrative Report

<b>DEI State Project</b>	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). A handful of additional Ticket Holders with assignable Tickets have been identified; DRCs are in process of 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 Workforce EN call hosted by the Operations Support Manager (OSM). (11/21/13)

### B. State Level Activities

#### DEED

- State co-lead distributed the Needs Assessment Survey developed by PACER Center to the three implementation sites with a two-week timeframe for response. (11/1/13)
- Report for the quarter ending September 30 was submitted to DOL. (11/13/13)
- DEED Staff visited third implementation site, Rural MN CEP, to review the progress of the project and provide technical assistance. (11/18/13)
- State DEI Co-Leads participated in the DEI Youth Grantee Update webinar. (11/19/13)
- State Co-Lead prepared planning documents for implementation sites to receive second allocation of funding.

#### PACER Center

##### ONLINE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- Online needs assessment developed in October 2013 was conducted and results were disseminated to steering committee members for discussion at a December 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

## C. Local Level Activities

### Minnesota Valley Action Center (South Central WSA)

- DRC met with a youth and the Vocational Advisor to give information on the Ticket to Work Program. The Ticket was assigned to MVAC/DEED EN. The DRC assisted youth to contact *Work Incentives Connection* for answers to basic questions regarding current paid work experience and SSI benefits. A full Benefits Analysis will be scheduled at a later date.
- DRC met with a MRCI representative and youth for a follow-up Integrated Resource Team (IRT) meeting. Youth was given more information about the *Track to Success* program offered by MRCI. The youth decided to take this opportunity to increase their work skills and soft skills. (11/1/13)
- DRC assisted a youth in Gaylord with Ticket to Work. The youth assigned the Ticket to MVAC/DEED EN. (11/4/13)
- DRC assisted a youth to get connected to the Work Incentives Connection to answer basic questions and to start the process of getting a Benefits Analysis completed. (11/7/13)
- DRC provided information regarding DEI to PICE Interns (Partners in Career Exploration Program) from Minnesota State University-Mankato Student Counseling Program. These interns will be working with youth in area schools as they transition out of high school. (11/13/13)
- Attended Ticket to Work TA Office Hours hosted by NDI. (11/13/13)
- DRC attended the DEI Partnership and Collaboration webinar hosted by NDI. (11/14/13)
- DRC attended a CTIC meeting in Fairmont and assisted in planning for CTIC's DEI training activities. (11/15/13)
- DRC contacted Social Security Area Work Incentive Coordinator and PASS Specialist Joani Werner with request for her to provide a workshop about the benefits of working and the PASS program. This workshop will be for parents and youth in the Fairmont area schools. (11/15/13)
- DRC met with Tom Rivers from MRCI regarding *Bridge to the Future* summer training program for youth with disabilities. (11/18/13)
- DRC met with Claudia Johnson from ARC housing services to exchange program information and updates. (11/18/13)
- DRC arranged PACER Workshop on assistive technology, held at MVAC for staff. (11/20/13)
- DRC met with Goodwill Easter Seals staff to discuss services and brainstorm ways that the two agencies can collaborate to serve DEI youth in this community. (11/27/13)
- Throughout the month, 9 youth were enrolled in DEI and 3 IRTs were held. There are 11 youth pending DEI enrollment at this time.
- DRC has been traveling in the nine county region to meet with Vocational Advisors, youth and community partners.
- DRC was invited to participate in planning activities for Mankato Area CTIC DEI workshops to be scheduled in the next few months.
- Two IRT meeting were held and one was a follow-up to a previous IRT. These IRTs resulted in the youth and family making needed connections with providers and in one case a better understanding of the needs/goals of the youth. There might be follow-up

IRT meetings with both of these youth in order to be sure all resources are made available to the youth.

### **Workforce Development, Inc. (Southeast WSA)**

- DEI team did significant planning to address issues of diversity and homelessness in youth who are eligible or enrolled in DEI grant. Working with Judy Moses from PACER Center to create a regional workshop regarding this issue.
- DRC continued to work on IRT's and promoting *Guideposts for Success*.
- DRC and partners planned additional meetings for collaboration.
- DRC worked with case managers on enrollment.
- DRC enrolled one youth in the DEI project (total now enrolled 21).
- DRC reviewed and signed DEI Youth Action Plans and reviewed paperwork in all areas.
- DRC attended CTIC meeting and presented CTIC role in Freeborn County (11/20/13). This group is planning a Transitions Fair in Freeborn County in the spring.
- DRC had several lengthy conversations with VRS staff to develop partnerships in SE MN.
- Case Managers in Rochester helped to plan and attended the CTIC – Transitions Fair at Rochester Community and Technical College (11/12/13).
- Case Managers in Rochester participated with VRS and SE MN Center for Independent Living (SEMCIL) in developing a brochure for shared services.
- DRC worked with PACER Center staff to begin planning Cultural Diversity Parent meetings.
- DRC, VRS staff, MFIP staff and SEMCIL staff participated in an IRT meeting for a Freeborn County DEI participant.

### **Rural MN CEP**

- DRC and the Moorhead Youth Coordinator met with two DEI candidates. Completed DEI questionnaire and intake forms. Both candidates decided to participate in the DEI enhanced services. IRTs established. (11/1/13)
- DRC and the Detroit Lakes Youth Coordinator met with a DEI candidate along with the youth's IEP teacher and parents. Completed DEI questionnaire and intake forms. Candidate decided to participate in the DEI enhanced services. IRT established. (11/4/13)
- DRC contacted the Adult Basic Education Coordinator in Moorhead to refer a pending Ticket assignment into English as a Second Language Course. (11/4/13)
- DRC and the Alexandria Youth Coordinator met with a DEI candidate in Glenwood, MN. Completed DEI questionnaire and intake form. Candidate decided to participate in the DEI enhanced services. IRT established. (11/5/13)
- DRC and the Alexandria Youth Coordinator attended a CTIC meeting to discuss DEI-funded, CTIC-sponsored training for families and teachers on the *Guideposts for Success*. The plan is to conduct two trainings in 2014 in the Alexandria area. (11/12/13)
- The DRC and Brainerd Youth Coordinator attended a CTIC meeting in Brainerd to discuss future trainings in the area on *Guideposts for Success* and family training. (11/12/13)
- DRC and the Wadena Youth Coordinator met with foster parents of three potential DEI candidates to introduce the DEI to the guardian in Bertha. The foster parents agreed to set

up meetings with all three candidates and the youth coordinator set up meetings at the school with the IEP teacher and the foster family for November 26<sup>th</sup>. Completed DEI questionnaire and intake forms. All three candidates made the decision to participate in the DEI enhanced services. IRTs established. (11/13/13, 11/26/13)

- DRC conducted staff training on the DEI principles and Ticket to Work program in Alexandria to allow for in-depth questions and brainstorm how the WorkForce Center can best support the DEI. Attendees included Adult and Youth WIA coordinators, MFIP case managers and resource room staff. (11/14/13)
- DRC presented a *Guidepost*-centric career plan for DEI participant in Moorhead with the Youth Coordinator from that area. Youth and parents will look over the proposed plan and the IRT will meet one more time to finalize. Youth will start work training after the first of the year. (11/15/13)
- DRC conducted two-hour Q&A with VRS Team in Wadena. Over 20 counselors received additional information regarding DEI, the advantage of working with RMCEP as an EN, and the expanded opportunities for collaboration. This meeting identified misconceptions about RMCEP's role in working with persons with disability, barriers that need to be addressed to expand collaborative efforts in the future, and opportunities to blend and braid resources for shared outcomes. (11/18/13)
- DRC and the Youth Coordinator from Brainerd established IRT in Brainerd for a freshman college student. Integrating KeyTrain into IEP for the purpose of taking the National Career Readiness Certificate. Participant is already on a worksite working 10 hours per week after school. (11/18/13)
- DEI team (DRC, Director of Operations, Operations Specialist and Agency Planner) met with John Olson from the State DEI Team to go over data collection and expected outcomes for the initiative. (11/19/13)
- DRC presented an explanation of RMCEP's Work Incentive Practitioner services to VRS Team in Wadena. (11/20/13)
- DRC and the Wadena Youth Coordinator met with two DEI candidates in Menahga. Completed DEI questionnaire and intake forms. Both candidates made the decision to participate in the DEI enhanced services. IRTs established. (11/22/13)
- DRC scheduled a presentation as part of Crookston VRS team meeting set for December 11<sup>th</sup> to discuss Work Incentive Practitioner services and conduct a Q&A similar to what occurred in Wadena on November 20<sup>th</sup>.
- A collaborative outreach workshop with PACER Center was conducted at the Pelican Rapids Multicultural Center with a targeted population of Somali transition-age youth and their families. The DRC, Detroit Lakes Youth Coordinator, WIA Adult Coordinator, and Detroit Lakes Team Leader all participated. (11/25/13)

### **PACER Center**

- Deborah Leuchovius, Sean Roy and Judy Moses presented information about the MN DEI Project Partners for Youth at the November 12 PACER staff meeting, attended by 60 PACER staff. Slides from the MN DEI overview PowerPoint (developed for the October 10<sup>th</sup> training in Little Falls) were used and staff received copies of the Project overview handout previously developed by PACER. Staff were informed of the three WSA implementation sites and encouraged to internally refer appropriate families and youth to Sean and Judy for eventual referral to the appropriate DRC.

- A list of zip codes corresponding to each WSA implementation site has also been posted on PACER's internal OfficeNet to help PACER staff determine if a caller resides within the 3 DEI implementation regions. This information is also being integrated into PACER's database so that when staff enter contact information for youth and family callers, addresses within selected zip codes will be identified as located within a DEI region.
- Assigned **PACER project staff continue working on the curriculum *Social Security and Benefit Planning for Transition-Age Youth***. Although the basic outline and information of the PowerPoint presentations being developed for parent training has remained the same, PACER staff are working on including notes so that it can be used by other presenters. It is also being reviewed for readability by additional staff. In addition, PACER publication staff will be involved in formatting the curriculum. PACER will be sharing a new draft of the curriculum with State Co-Leads in January.

### **MULTICULTURAL ACTIVITIES**

- PACER staff worked with DRCs in each region and representatives of diverse communities in WSAs 2 and 8 to schedule informal focus groups with diverse youth and their families in December and January. A focus group of Somali youth was held in Pelican Rapids (RMCEP region) on November 25. Fifteen individuals (4 young women, 10 young men, and a father of one of the young women) attended. In addition there were four observers from the WorkForce Center, 2 high school teachers, and 1 volunteer from Lutheran Social Services, the center that hosted and helped to organize the event. A summary of the discussion is under development. Some issues that emerged were that the youth were generally not aware of services available through RMCEP, although 1 young woman called twice in September and left messages that were not returned. It is also interesting to note that youth felt what would help them the most was encouragement from parents. Youth also noted that one barrier to accessing postsecondary education that result in career-related credentials is interest payment on student loans as Islamic religious beliefs do not allow them to pay interest. They also spoke to discrimination and loss of hope when refused employment.
- A focus group with Hispanic families of adolescents in the Rochester area is being arranged for December 18th, prior to the Christmas holiday. Discussions have begun with the DRC in WSA 7 regarding arrangements for a focus group with Hispanic youth and families in early 2014 as well.

### **ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY TRAININGS**

- The final Assistive Technology (AT) session for Mankato was held November 20<sup>th</sup>. Seven individuals attended. Feedback to the presentation was positive.

### **PARENT TRAININGS & ASSISTANCE**

- No parent trainings for the MN DEI project were held in November. In November, PACER staff assisted 5 individuals (3 parents, 2 education professionals) in the MN DEI/Partners for Youth WSAs by providing them with information and individual assistance about employment and Social Security Benefits and work incentives over the phone, via email, or in person.