

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT

Suggested

Quarterly Narrative Report

The information that DEI projects provide in the ETA Narrative Report template helps to track grantee actual performance outcomes in relation to the negotiated goals on a quarterly basis. For each reporting period, it would be helpful if grantees could provide cumulative information for each quarterly update.

Grantee Information	
Grantee Name: Minnesota Department of Employment & Economic Development	
Address: 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200	
City/State/Zip: Saint Paul, MN 55101	
Grant Number : DI – 23803-12-75-A-27	Report Period: 01/01/13-03/31/13

Status of Grant Implementation and Progress To-Date

For this grant reporting period, please provide the status of implementation of the Strategic Service Delivery Components that your project is implementing to include: a. current status; b. challenges, and c. notable activities:

- Integrated Resource Team Approach:**

a. Current status:

MN's three Implementation Sites have greatly advanced the development of their respective Integrated Resource Team's during this quarter. Laying the foundation for implementation of IRT's convened around a specific youth and his/her needs in 5 *Guidepost areas* through initial contact and communication with state and local partners, PACER drafted a Guideposts-based youth planning tool that can be utilized by DRC's, youth counselors and IRT's.

Activities include:

MNVAC (WSA 7) coordinated a meeting of staff from Vocational Rehabilitation Services, State Services for the Blind, Mankato Area CTIC members, District #77 Transition Staff, MRCI, WorkforceSource, and Steps, Inc. Information was shared about DEI and the organizations in attendance were given an opportunity to share what services they provide to youth. All parties were excited about the prospect of working together more closely and agreed to participate in the IRT process when appropriate.

In addition to the above mentioned organizations, MNVAC's DRC also established a list of community contacts to approach for their possible future participation in the Integrated Resource Teams.

RMCEP (WSA 2) collaborated with likely IRT members from Rural MN CEP, PACER, Vocational Rehabilitation and DEED.

WDI (WSA 8) received confirmation that local CTIC members will participate as IRT members and provide outreach to other prospective members such as Vocational Rehabilitation, State Services for the Blind and WorkForce Center staff.

The Project Lead continued development of state level partnerships that will prove advantageous to the local Integrated Resource Teams and recruitment of multi-cultural youth. They include; MN Dept. of Human Resources, Social Security Administration, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, State Services for the Blind and DEED's Workforce Development division.

b. Challenges:

MNVAC has found that they are not able to fully engage all appropriate IRT members until which time DEI participant enrollment occurs. They are contacting all possible members with the understanding they may need to connect with additional prospects based on the individual needs of the youth.

RMCEP needs to continue to connect with teachers in Douglas, Stevens, and Pope Counties along with portions of Todd and Otter Tail counties in order to gain better access to students and possible IRT members within the schools.

Interim DRC's did an outstanding job of advancing the development of IRT's until the full-time DRC's were hired in March. Even more progression in this area is expected as each site was fully operational at quarters end.

c. Notable activities:

The February networking meeting conducted by MNVAC (described within "current status" summary above) is an excellent example of an innovative approach to building IRT membership. It provided an opportunity for interested parties to understand how their customers can benefit from MN DEI and it allowed MNVAC to begin the development of their DEI Resource Map.

RMCEP's Board of Directors approved a proposal that allocates a portion of MN Youth Program (MYP) funds for use to support the DEI project year round. MYP funds are generally used for summer programming. Local VR Manager Steve Jacobs and DEI DRC Greg Kaiser agreed to mutually support each other efforts by securing an increased number of VR customers into RMCEP's WIA program. This was further supported by Terry Janes, Director of Operations, Rural MN CEP.

During this quarter PACER began work on revising and updating a *Student Profile* form developed by a previous MN project to facilitate cross-agency collaboration around the needs of the individual youth. This tool utilized the *Guideposts for Success* to ensure a comprehensive wraparound approach to meeting individual needs of each youth. In addition to reviewing this document staff also studied the content of service plans utilized by each Implementation Site to avoid duplication of intent.

- **Guideposts for Success**

- a. Current status:**

Project Lead and Implementation Site staff were fortunate to receive *Guidepost for Success* training while attending the National Meeting in D.C. MN DEI team members gained technical assistance from subject matter expert Curtis Richards and NDI staff person DJ Ralston during a workshop entitled “Youth Guideposts for Success”. How the IRT approach, along with the other DEI delivery components help connect youth to the workforce development system was described as were strategies to develop linkages with schools, special education directors and transitional/career counselors. Because of the National Meeting workshop opportunity, Implementation Sites began to develop DEI project guidelines that incorporated *Guidepost* elements while anticipating continued training in this area during the upcoming months.

- b. Challenges:**

It should be noted that *Guidepost* instructional materials created by the MN DEI project will be provided to NDI/NCWD for their review and will be shared for others use. While not necessarily a challenge, careful planning will be taken to avoid duplicating technical assistance provided by NDI, NCWD/Youth and PACER on this topic. NDI and NCWD will continue to oversee MN’s efforts in this area.

- c. Notable activities:**

RMCEP has written *Guideposts for Success* into their 2013 Youth Plan and their DRC is pursuing local *Guidepost* training for RMCEP’s entire youth staff division. Planning for incorporating *Guideposts*-based case studies and other *Guideposts* activities into future DEI DRC Roundtables as well as progression of the draft of *Guideposts*-based youth planning tool, as previously mentioned, are additional notable activities during this quarter.

- **Partnerships and Collaboration:**

- a. Current status:**

Strong partnerships between agencies at the state and local levels provide a strong foundation for the MN DEI project. Addressing MN’s achievement gap and recruitment of multi-cultural participants is at the forefront of the work being done via these successful partnerships. Local areas also have a solid history of interagency collaboration from which to strengthen their DEI partnerships. Leveraging resources for the benefit of all parties included in these partnerships is critical and will be helpful to sustaining the MN DEI project. Active outreach, education and relationship building with local employers have also fostered a healthy partnership base at the local level. Additionally, webinars such as NDI’s “State Level Partnerships and Collaboration” have been beneficial to the MN DEI project. DRC’s speak highly of these training opportunities.

MNVAC revised their WorkForce Center Memorandum of Understanding to include language on access to assistive technology and career information within the Resource Area, as well as connecting youth job seekers with disabilities to the DRC for assistance with program access and applications. The DEI networking event that MNVAC hosted will be instrumental to DEI success within their WSA.

WDI initiated orientation of DEI activities to three CTIC’s, three Adult Basic Education Programs and two Vocational Rehabilitation Managers.

RMCEP has established relationships with many of the partners that will provide the core services to DEI participants, some of which include; VR, Special Education Instructors, housing advocates, MAHUBE-OTWA, Legal Services Advocacy and CTIC's.

b. Challenges:

The MN DEI project has not encountered any partnership challenges. A rich history of cross-sector engagement in the MN's workforce service delivery system has paved the way for continued alignment of missions within a wide-array of systems. These alignments will surely compliment the DEI project and produce rich employment and educational opportunities for DEI participants.

c. Notable activities:

The MN DEI project is proud of the fact that critical partnerships are in place to positively affect the education, training and employment outcomes of DEI participants. Strong partnerships with Vocational Rehabilitations Services, the Social Security Administration, the MN Dept. of Education, the MN Dept. of Human Services, MN State Colleges and Universities (MNSCU), as well as numerous other entities have allowed the project to draw upon existing resources to launch a concerted effort to serve youth with disabilities in MN's three implementation areas. MN's DEI Steering Committee is in place and proving to be instrumental in the facilitation of the DEI elements. Minnesota's Shared Vision for Youth (SVY) Committee is an additional inter-agency resource that has provided input and guidance to the MN DEI project. See:

http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/All_Programs_Services/Office_of_Youth_Development/Minnesota_Shared_Vision_for_Youth_Activities/index.aspx for contact information.

Implementation Sites were provided with their local Community Transition Interagency Team (CTIC) contact information to foster the development of the partnership that will provide a strong foundation for the local DEI Integrated Resource Team.

Obstacles/Barriers to Grant Implementation, if applicable:

A major barrier to moving forward with the Ticket to Work aspect of the project is the lack of information currently available to the EN on Ticket holders. The DEED EN was approved under the new Workforce Payment Agreement process on 3/28/13 (the EN had previously been under a Blanket Purchase Agreement). DEI project staff initially were advised by Maximus that it was not necessary to complete suitability as a Payment Agreement EN. We later learned that in order to have access to the information to truly manage the EN activities through the secure provider portal, we would need to complete the full suitability clearance process. Suitability documentation was forwarded to SSA on 5/3/13 and we are still waiting for a determination. In the meantime, we have no access to information on the status of tickets that were previously assigned to the EN under the Blanket Purchase Agreement.

Other Significant Accomplishments:

The MN DEI Project held the inaugural meeting of the DEI Steering Committee. Originally scheduled for March 5, it was delayed until April 11 due to winter weather conditions in early March. The Minnesota Department of Education hosted the meeting that was attended by members representing Vocational Rehabilitation Services, the Social Security Administration, PACER, DEED, and the Minnesota Department of Education. They provided guidance in regard to implementation matters and expressed their thoughts regarding a project mission statement, marketing materials and future DEI Roundtable topics. The next DEI Steering Committee meeting was scheduled for June 26, 2013.

The MN DEI website was further developed during this quarter. Presently, the site contains links for each Implementation Site and has pages for DEI resources, DEI partners, and DEI quarterly and monthly reports.

See http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/All_Programs_Services/Office_of_Youth_Development/MN_DEI/index.aspx for more information.

The DRC's were hired in the three Implementation Sites (WSA #8 hired in January; WSA #2 and WSA #7 hired in March). Each site posted a job announcement and interviewed several qualified candidates. The "interim" DRC's helped the new staff transition to the DEI project and helped to construct the IRT's.

Local Phase I Work Plans/Budgets were approved by DEED on February 11, 2013. Funding was issued to the local Implementation Sites through the NGA process the week of February 11. Local sites received customized Financial Status Reports which are submitted to DEED on a monthly basis.

DRC's and Project Lead attended the National Meeting in March. This intensive learning experience proved beneficial for all Minnesota DEI project participants, as well as the Local Workforce Board member, Roy Harley, who was able to take advantage of ODEP's generous offer to attend the meeting.

Applied and received approval for Minnesota's Ticket to Work employment network payment agreement to be transferred from DEED to the DEI Project (applied in February and approved in March).

Constructed multiple ways for DRC and Project Lead interfacing to occur. Conference calls initially took place bi-weekly but are now scheduled on a monthly basis. DEI DRC Roundtables are held monthly and e-mail correspondence occurs 3-5 times per week. A Monthly Events Calendar is written and posted on the MN DEI website to help track learning opportunities and other DEI Project happenings.

The MN DEI Project took advantage of NDI's program expertise and advice in regard to the withdrawal of Minneapolis as an Implementation Site. Careful planning work was done to make certain MN's project would be successful in meeting participant numbers while providing the local sites with the resources to do so.

A Phase II Work Plan, Budget and Participant Plan were drafted with guidance from

ETA/DOL and NDI staff. NDI advised the MN DEI Project in regard to program matters and ETA/DOL staff reviewed the Plan package. Release of the Phase II Work Plan package was scheduled to occur in early April.

Local Community Transition Interagency Team (CTIC) deliverables were developed for work that will begin June 1, 2013. Identification of CTIC's that will partner with DEI Implementation Site Integrated Resource Teams occurred and appropriate connections were made.

For this grant reporting period, please describe the development of any DEI products and/or materials (include electronic copies as separate attachments with your report, if available):

The Minnesota DEI website was further developed during this quarter. Please see http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/All_Programs_Services/Office_of_Youth_Development/MN_DEI/index.aspx for more information.

The DEI Monthly Events Calendar was constructed. See the Minnesota DEI website for a link to this monthly calendar.

Short-term Grant Goals (three - six months):

- Release of Phase II Work Plan package,
- Approval of Phase II Work Plans/Budgets,
- Release of Phase II funds,
- Release of Control Site Work Plan and Budget,
- Approval of submitted Control Plans,
- Release of Control Site funds,
- Completion and approval of DEED's DEI revised Scope of Work & Budget
- Construction of DEI Monitoring Guide,
- On-site monitoring of Implementation Sites
- TtW/EN technical assistance and guidance for local Implementation Sites
- Creation of NDI approved family training curriculum,
- Creation of NDI approved *Guidepost*-based youth assessment tool,
- Creation of NDI approved MN DEI brochure,
- Creation of NDI approved MN DEI poster for project marketing purposes,
- Continued development of MN DEI website,
- Continued development of DEI Steering Committee membership,
- DEI Orientation by federal partners, facilitated by MN DEI staff,
- Creation of MN DEI Newsletter and publication/posting of first edition

Outstanding Questions:

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