Minnesota’s Olmstead Plan at DHS
Enabling a Brighter Future
Summer 2018 update

The last quarter of 2017 and the first two quarters of 2018 saw the continued implementation of Minnesota’s Olmstead Plan and significant accomplishments toward people with disabilities living, learning, working and enjoying life in the most integrated setting. Stories from around Minnesota include:

28th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act celebration

The Minnesota Council on Disabilities hosted the 28th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Thursday, July 26, 2018, at the Science Museum of Minnesota.

This year’s theme was ADA and Mental Health: Removing the Stigma. The event brought together the disability community to celebrate the rights guaranteed under the ADA. The ADA establishes protections to people with disabilities and ensures equal opportunity for access to businesses, employment, government programs and services, and telecommunications.

Innovative services help with direct care staffing shortages

Individualized Home Supports, a new service to support people living in their own homes, launched July 1.

This service includes training and direct support to enhance the person’s participation in the community, maintain the person’s health/safety needs, and support household management skills. This service incorporates the use of remote support (phone calls, text messaging, etc.) as well as in-person support. This service is one among multiple innovative services being developed to respond to current direct care staffing shortages and the needs of people living in greater Minnesota.
Respite grant helps foster independence

Children with autism spectrum disorder and their families are benefiting from grants funded by the Legislature to develop and fund respite options for families. Innovative solutions have ranged from a Friday night date night for parents with child care provided to camping.

Mary is a creative young woman on the autism spectrum who lives with her parents in Maplewood. Mary’s story provides one example of how these grants offer an opportunity for community engagement and respite for the family.

Since graduating from a transition program four years ago, Mary has had fewer opportunities to connect with people who share her interests. When Mary learned that Justus Venturing, a St. Paul-based outdoor adventure group, was planning a camping trip to the Boundary Waters in July, she and her parents saw it as an opportunity for her to get away, gain independence and meet new people. The expense would have been too much to cover on their own, so Mary’s family was awarded funding through the ASD Grant to cover trip expenses for Mary and her support staff.

Over the four-day trip, Mary described the experience this way, “It made me feel more confident in my ability to make decisions for myself. Everyone was very nice to me. I felt safe and loved.” This increased confidence is translating into Mary’s sense of what is possible in life. She is currently writing a novel series, entitled “Henriette,” about a 15-year-old girl with autism who is trying to find her place in the world. She hopes to self-publish her first book in December. Mary is also considering starting her own business as a way of putting her creative talents to work and taking control of her future.

Pictured: Mary (right) with her support staff, Malaine (left), during the boundary waters trip

Working together to decrease the use of restraints

A recent meeting about behavioral supports for a young Minnesota girl with disabilities resulted in a significant decrease in the number and duration of manual restraints of the girl.

The goal of the meeting was to find ways to decrease the use of restraints based on person-centered positive support strategies. The discussion included staff who work directly with the girl. Staff shared their role in supporting the girl, what they like and admire about her, what they think works best in supporting her and what their concerns are.

Participants also included the management staff of the girl’s service provider and representatives of a DHS volunteer advisory committee that ensures providers and support teams investigate the cause of self-injurious behavior.

The ideas generated led to an updated assessment and positive support plan. Since the meeting, manual restraints decreased from 75 in November to one in December with the average duration of restraint decreasing from seven minutes to one.
New employment services launch July 1

Minnesota added three employment services to our home and community-based services (HCBS) waivers on July 1, 2018.

Many people with disabilities want an opportunity to be part of the general workforce but don’t see how it’s possible or aren’t given the resources they need to work. Minnesota works to help people with disabilities find competitive, integrated employment. Therefore, Minnesota added three new services to the Developmental Disabilities, Community Alternative Care, Community Access for Disability Inclusion, and Brain Injury waivers:

- **Employment exploration services**: Community-based services that introduce people with disabilities to employment options and allow them to explore their options through work experiences. This service helps people to make an informed choice about working in competitive, integrated employment.
- **Employment development services**: Individualized services that help people find competitive, integrated employment or attain self-employment.
- **Employment support services**: Individualized services and supports that help people to maintain community employment in an individual or group arrangement.

DHS supports an Employment First approach. Employment First means raising the expectation that all working age Minnesotans with disabilities can work, want to work and can achieve competitive employment, and each person will be offered the opportunity to work and earn a competitive wage before being offered other supports and services. Information about the services are available at the Employment First web page.

Micro grant boosts entrepreneur’s lawn, snow service

Josh “Schultze” Schultz has been mowing grass, shoveling and snow blowing for as long as he can remember – over 15 years in fact. Last summer, he decided to make it a career by founding Schultze’s Lawn and Snow Service.

“I’ve had other jobs that I’ve done and it didn’t seem to work out,” Schultz said. “I just decided that it was a good idea to start up my own business, be my own boss.”

One of the first steps for any aspiring entrepreneur is securing the capital necessary to launch the business, something Schultz has invested plenty of time in.

With some help from staff at Lifeworks, an organization serving people with disabilities, Schultz applied for a grant through the Minnesota Microgrant Partnership, which is administered by The Arc Minnesota and funded by the Minnesota Department of Human Services. The program is designed to support people with disabilities who have financial barriers to achieving their goals. In Schultz’s case, his dreams of being an entrepreneur were held back by his need for viable equipment.

After receiving a $500 microgrant, Schultz purchased a new leaf blower that he expects will make a big difference in the efficiency of his work.

Schultz has other dreams and plans for his business, including purchasing other equipment, marketing and expanding, all the while ensuring jobs are done with quality and care.

“I love being my own boss,” Schultz said.

Learn more at arcminnesota.org/minnesota-microgrant-program
Building self-sufficiency while saving money

A Disability Hub Options Counselor helped a person maintain health insurance, while at the same time assisting the person reach their goals of becoming more self-sufficient.

Vocational Rehabilitation initially referred the person for Work and Benefits Consultation through the Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) pilot project. The services received included education and assistance on work incentives for Social Security Disability Insurance, Medical Assistance for Employed Persons with Disabilities (MA-EPD), Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) accounts and Individual Development Account accounts. The person also received information about the $20,000 asset limit for MA-EPD and how to save money and work.

The Hub Work and Benefits Planner worked with the person over a year to assist with employment goals. The person transitioned jobs over time and eventually started working full-time and worked themselves off of SSDI benefits. The Options Counselor provided counseling and referrals to address the person’s needs and to help the person save (through an ABLE Account), all while continuing to maintain eligibility for MA-EPD.

The Olmstead Plan

In Minnesota, people with disabilities are more and more living, learning, working and enjoying life in the community. This means people with disabilities can build and maintain relationships with their family and friends, live more independently, work at regular jobs and participate in community life. In other words, people with disabilities lead lives that are meaningful to them.

The Olmstead plan is our state’s roadmap to help make that happen for more people. The plan is built on three connected ideas:

• **Individual choice.** The Olmstead Plan will pave the way for Minnesotans with disabilities to express their preferences for how they choose to live, learn, work and engage in community life, while receiving the supports they need.

• **The right services.** For people with disabilities, services must be appropriate to their needs, reflect their life choices and enable their participation with nondisabled persons to the fullest extent possible. The goal of Olmstead is not to close programs. However, like any competitive marketplace, people with disabilities will ultimately make the call as to what programs and services are successful.

• **Person-centered practices.** Professionals involved in a person’s life must share power with the individual and recognize everyone as whole people with unique strengths, assets, interests, expectations, cultures and goals.

For more information and the complete Olmstead Plan, visit [mn.gov/dhs/op/](https://www.mn.gov/dhs/op/)
Department of Human Services
651-431-4300

Attention. If you need free help interpreting this document, call the above number.

For accessible formats of this publication or additional equal access to human services, write to dsd.responsecenter@state.mn.us, call 651-431-4300, or use your preferred relay service. (ADA1 [9-15])