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#### Employment First StateMentoring Program (EFSLMP)

Person-Centered Thinking and Person-Centered Planning was a top strategic goal in 2017. Training was required for all VRS staff in fall of 2017. University of Minnesota Institute on Community Integration trainers were contracted to help staff understand the values-based concepts and incorporate client-centered practices in services we provide in accordance with WIOA, the Olmstead Plan and Employment First policy. Tools and techniques were introduced and practiced in the training. To further knowledge, skills and abilities in Person-Centered practices, a Community of Practice consisting of VRS staff will launch in December 2017. The purpose will be to create a culture of continuous improvement, construct processes, policy and guidance that are person-centered, and utilize online coursework available through the University of Minnesota for ongoing training. (Page 255) Title IV

### Customized Employment

- DEED’s VRS will ensure, as appropriate, that students with disabilities that are seeking subminimum wage employment and who have applied for VR services are determined eligible or ineligible for VR services; have an approved IPE; receive pre-employment transition services; and receive appropriate reasonable accommodations and appropriate supports and services, including supported and customized employment services, that assist in obtaining and maintaining a competitive integrated employment outcome. (Page 211) Title IV

- VRS along with a key Community Rehabilitation Provider is developing a Minnesota centric Customized Employment Training and pursuing ACRE (Association for Community Rehabilitation Educators) certification for the training participants. This training will include hands on learning opportunities for Discovery Assessment and Job Development portions of Customized Employment. Each participant will also receive mentoring from VRS & CRP staff who are certified by one of the key CE training entities that provide certification. The goal of this Customized Employment Training is to assist placement professionals develop an understanding of CE and demonstrate proficiency in providing Discovery and Job Development. The training is also essential for Program Managers, Rehabilitation Area Managers who supervise staff who are providing CE services. (Page 216) Title IV

Customized Employment. VRS has partnered with ProAct, Inc. and Occupational Development Center, WIOA Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC), and the Youth Technical Assistance Center (Y-TAC) to provide Marc Gold & Associates’ Customized Employment Training in Minnesota through June, 2018. Two cohorts began in 2017 that include 24 VRS placement professionals, counselors, RAMs and supervisors, along with community partner staff. Participants attend nine full days of certification training building skills to personalize the employment relationship between a job candidate and employer. (Page 228) Title IV
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There are three specific strategies that VRS will play an active role in:

1) Promulgate changes to the State Rule governing Extended Employment, ending admissions to non-integrated and sub-minimum wage programs and shifting the state funding to integrated employment,

2) provide technical assistance to non-integrated employment programs to design new business models that lead to competitive employment in the most integrated setting, and

3) provide information about effective employment strategies, such as supported and customized employment, that make competitive employment possible for individuals with complex and significant disabilities. (Page 249) Title IV

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Braiding/Blending Resources

Moreover, the DEI has helped Minnesota to build the capacity of WDA staff to increase the number of youth with disabilities participating in career pathways programs by implementing an Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach as well as incorporating the Guideposts for Success best practices framework into service delivery. This success has prompted the development of a guide on incorporating the Guideposts for Success into Minnesota’s Personal Learning Plan (PLP). The guide was developed to assist WDA staff when working with youth with disabilities who have a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The guide provides suggestions for integrating the Guideposts for Success into student ILP activities for both in-school and out-of-school youth. For more information on the DEI and the guide on incorporating the Guideposts for Success into Minnesota’s PLP, see the Disability Employment Initiative weblink: https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/disability-employment-initiative/ (Page 77) Title I

4. Work with Department of Human Services (DHS) in the Olmstead interagency workgroup focused on blending and braiding funding that allow access to extended services for the long term supports needed for customers desiring employment. Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) is currently working with DHS on developing an interagency agreement between DHS, VRS, and SSB for providing services to those customers who require long term supports. SSB does not see the high volume of customers who require extended services that VRS sees,
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although the interagency agreement will apply to SSB. (Page 319) Title IV

**DEI/Disability Resource Coordinators**

- Disability Employment Initiative- Partners for Youth Career Pathways - Minnesota is currently managing a $2.5 million, 42-month DEI grant funded through the U.S. DOL’s Employment and Training Administration and the Office of Disability Employment Policy. This grant allows Minnesota to strengthen partnerships and strategically align youth and adult career pathways systems to effectively serve youth with disabilities through multiple entry and exit points. In addition, the DEI has allowed Minnesota to expand the number of Employment Networks in the state which will help increase services to Social Security disability beneficiaries participating career pathways programs.

Moreover, the DEI has helped Minnesota to build the capacity of WDA staff to increase the number of youth with disabilities participating in career pathways programs by implementing an Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach as well as incorporating the Guideposts for Success best practices framework into service delivery. This success has prompted the development of a guide on incorporating the Guideposts for Success into Minnesota’s Personal Learning Plan (PLP). The guide was developed to assist WDA staff when working with youth with disabilities who have a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The guide provides suggestions for integrating the Guideposts for Success into student ILP activities for both in-school and out-of-school youth. For more information on the DEI and the guide on incorporating the Guideposts for Success into Minnesota’s PLP, see the Disability Employment Initiative weblink: https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/disability-employment-initiative/ (Page 77) Title I

- Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) Career Pathways — Beginning in 2014 and recently extended, Minnesota’s DEI project supports job—driven approaches in career pathway systems and programs to equip youth and adults with disabilities (including individuals with significant disabilities) with the skills, competencies, and credentials necessary to help them obtain in—demand jobs, increase earnings, and advance their careers. Three Local Workforce Development Areas operate career pathways in manufacturing, health care, and information technology sectors. Disability Resources Coordinators work to strengthen partnerships with Vocational Rehabilitation, disability agencies, and employers and modify career pathway education and employment for individual success. The GWDB Disability Equity Committee is evaluating these three projects to develop recommendations that will result in better services and outcomes to individuals with disabilities not served under Title IV. Two primary recommendations are being considered to replicate and build state-wide capacity; 1. Navigators and local teams are key to developing sustainable strategies and 2. Nationally recognized training that is Minnesota designed and implemented. (Page 79-80) Title I

**Financial Literacy/Economic Advancement**

- SGA Project: the Institute on Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts — Boston has received RSA funding to demonstrate effective strategies to assist SSDI beneficiaries
achieve income above the substantial gainful activity (SGA) level. Minnesota VRS is one of the demonstration sites. At time of enrollment, the SSDI beneficiary is assigned a counselor, placement specialist and financial specialist. Eligibility for services is presumed within three days and the Employment Plan is developed within 30 days of application. VRS has partnered with the DLL to provide financial counseling in VR offices. RSA funding was used to provide the benefits planners with financial literacy training so that in addition to benefits planning the financial specialists can provide assistance with improving credits scores, paying off credit card debt, and developing savings plans. It is hoped that the combination of rapid engagement and financial planning services will lead to better outcomes. Although the SGA Project does not receive any Medicaid funding, the financial specialist positions would not have been possible without the initial collaboration with the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant. (Pages 285-286) Title I

School to Work Transition

The Guideposts for Success, a best practices framework that was developed by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD) is utilized to ensure that all youth, including those with disabilities are successful when transitioning to adulthood. The Guideposts for Success constitute five tenets that align closely with WIOA goals and outcomes. These five tenets are: school preparation, youth development and leadership, career preparation, connecting activities, and family involvement. When a youth has received services or has had experiences that align with the Guideposts tenets, the youth is more likely to transition to adulthood successfully. For more information on how the Guideposts are being incorporated into the Round 7 Disability Employment Initiative follow this weblink: https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/office-youth-development/special/disability-employment-initiative/ (Page 152) Title I

Goal 2: Increasing Pre-Employment Transition Services

VRS, schools, and the VR Community will focus on increasing vocational exploration and work based learning experiences for high school students with disabilities. (Page 236) Title IV

Goal 2: Increasing Pre-Employment Transition Services VRS, schools, and the VR community will focus on increasing vocational exploration and work based learning experiences for high school students with disabilities.

Strategic Priorities

A. Develop strategies to implement the Pre-ETS requirements stipulated in WIOA

Action: Track required and authorized services and monitor expenditures and fiscal impact

Progress achieved: VRS delivers pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) through counseling staff (VR eligible persons) and contracts (VR potentially eligible persons). An Employment Plan is developed and services are tracked.

VRS issued nine fee for service contracts in July, 2017 to vendors to provide required services to VR potentially eligible people. Requests for Proposals are currently being developed to expand
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the availability of Pre-ETS services within the Twin cities metropolitan area and northwestern Minnesota. (Page 254) Title IV

C. Increase the number of work based learning experiences prior to graduation for VR eligible students in high school

Action: Establish a baseline and track the number of VR students with paid and unpaid work based learning experience prior to graduation.

Progress achieved: Service codes have been developed and implemented to track Pre-ETS purchased services. (Page 254) Title IV

With the new emphasis on Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), SSB will continue to work with traditional partners to promote these models and facilitate effective implementation of emerging school-to-work efforts. The activities detailed below are designed to facilitate outreach and referral efforts to transition-age students who are blind or visually impaired. The goals of this ongoing involvement by the counselor in the education of a student, beginning as early as age 14, are to enable a student to live independently before leaving a school setting, have a greater understanding of relevant employment options, and develop self-advocacy skills. (Page 279) Title IV

All transition students are expected to have an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) that aligns with their Individualized Education Program (IEP). The development of the IPE is expected to be within 90 days of eligibility and the job goal is one that this projected for the student. Work and career exploration must be part of the IPE. (Page 283-284) Title IV

A transition assessment tool guides counselors and teams about each student’s skill level in activities of daily living and identifies skill training needed for moving on to post-secondary life. This transition assessment has been instrumental in the development of concrete plans and strategies that can be woven into the students IPE and IEP. This results in a genuinely coordinated effort between schools and VR. Counselors are working with IEP teams to encourage the use of postsecondary options for students to take entry level college classes while still in high school. This gives students an opportunity to try out their technology, braille, and self-advocacy skills prior to attending college full time. (Page 316) Title IV

To provide an additional resource to parents of high school students, SSB has contracted with PACER, a parent advocacy group knowledgeable in the IEP and transition process. PACER advocates create materials, facilitate workshops for parents and students, and conduct surveys on parent satisfaction. (Page 316) Title IV

**Career Pathways**

- **Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) Career Pathways** — Beginning in 2014 and recently extended, Minnesota’s DEI project supports job-driven approaches in career pathway systems and programs to equip youth and adults with disabilities (including individuals with significant...
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disabilities) with the skills, competencies, and credentials necessary to help them obtain in-demand jobs, increase earnings, and advance their careers. Three Local Workforce Development Areas operate career pathways in manufacturing, health care, and information technology sectors. Disability Resources Coordinators work to strengthen partnerships with Vocational Rehabilitation, disability agencies, and employers and modify career pathway education and employment for individual success. The GWDB Disability Equity Committee is evaluating these three projects to develop recommendations that will result in better services and outcomes to individuals with disabilities not served under Title IV. Two primary recommendations are being considered to replicate and build state-wide capacity: 1. Navigators and local teams are key to developing sustainable strategies and 2. Nationally recognized training that is Minnesota designed and implemented. (Pages 79-80) Title I

DEED meets its ongoing obligation not to discriminate on the basis of disability by developing system wide policy and procedure initiatives that comply with Section 188 of WIOA. These policies include physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology and materials to serve the needs of customers with disabilities. (Page 127) Title I

Apprenticeship

There are several opportunities for activities to be aligned and enhanced with the core programs. Training is needed for staff to understand the appropriate activities and career pathway opportunities for recipients within a system where job search and job placement have been primarily seen as the core activity. We need to continue to better understand how career pathways models including; work-based learning, apprenticeships, and skills training can be implemented to align with the needs of industry. Development of employer-led sector partnerships allow for opportunities for jobseekers with a priority to address the disparities gaps in race, disability, disconnected youth, and gender opportunities. This being said, it has been critical for providers to understand the regional sectors in demand. (Page 69) Title I

Core Responsibility 1 — Develop employer outreach activities to establish, maintain, and facilitate regular contact with employers to promote employment and training opportunities for the benefit of Veterans. Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Develop job opportunities for Veteran job seekers through outreach efforts with Minnesota employers: job development phone contacts, in person employer visits, and participation in job fair activities on behalf of Veterans. 2) Communicate and coordinate with Business Services Representatives in the local AJC to facilitate and promote job opportunities for Veterans, especially those with significant barriers to employment. 3) Promote the "Veteran Friendly Employer" initiative to all businesses contacted. 4) Encourage employers to employ Veterans utilizing apprenticeships and OJT programs, State and Federal dislocated worker programs, and GI Bill benefits. 5) Maintain current information on employment and training opportunities. 6) Monitor Federal Contractor Job Listings (FCJL) and Vet Central job orders for Veterans using the WFC, or on the DVOP caseload. 7) Provide contacts and job leads to DVOPs. (Page 447) Title IV

Work Incentives and Benefits

Collaboration Grants to Provide Independent Living Services: Since 2008, the VRS/IL
collaboration has served Minnesotans with the most significant disabilities who require both vocational rehabilitation and independent living services to meet their goals for working and living in the community. In FFY 2017 VRS dedicated $1.2 million in SSA program income to fund benefit coaches who are housed in every VRS office. The benefit coaches provide benefits and financial planning services for eligible consumers who are receiving SSI and/or SSDI Social Security benefits. This funding continues and expands the services previously provided by the SGA Project, a RSA funded demonstration project to improve employment outcomes for SSDI beneficiaries. (Page 204) Title IV

Ticket to Work Employment Networks: VRS, State Services for the Blind and SSA co-host periodic meetings of the Employment Networks to provide staff training, updates on Ticket to Work procedural changes, and to promote Partnership Plus job retention services after VRS/SSB case closure.

The SGA Project: In 2017, Vocational Rehabilitation completed a two-year model demonstration project designed to provide SSDI beneficiaries information and support to develop an employment plan that maps out a pathway to achieve employment above Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA). The SGA Project utilized a rapid engagement approach in which eligibility is determined within three days, Transferable Skills and Labor Market Information are provided and Benefits Planning and Financial Education are initiated within seven days. Within 30 days of application, the IPE and a Placement Plan are developed. A benefits analysis is completed within eight weeks of application if needed. As a result of positive feedback from Treatment Team clients and staff, Minnesota has expanded the project statewide using a combination of SSA program income and state funding. (Page 205) Title IV

Statewide Collaboration VRS collaborates with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), Department of Human Services (DHS), and county and local service providers to offer statewide supported employment services. VRS is a partner in several state-level agreements that provide long-term supports. During development of an employment plan, VRS counselors and other service team members help consumers to select supported employment services that meet their needs. They identify which services will be provided by VRS, as well as the source of long-term supports in the community. VRS provides time-limited supports for up to 24 months, but an employment plan may be amended if additional time is needed to achieve job stability. The primary funding resources for long-term supports in the community following VRS case closure are county case managers, the VRS Extended Employment Program, DHS Medicaid-waiver funded services, and the Social Security Administration’s Impairment-Related Work Expense exclusions and Ticket to Work funding for persons on SSI and/or SSDI. (Page 213-214) Title IV

About 40 percent of VRS applicants receive SSA benefits. VRS was instrumental in establishing the Work Incentives Connection, a SSA funded program of Goodwill Industries that provides work incentives planning and assistance for consumers.

SSA, VRS and State Services for the Blind co-host periodic meetings of the Employment Networks. In addition to providing in-service training, the meetings provide an opportunity to...
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learn more about the services offered by each Employment Network to assist consumers make informed choices when selecting a vendor for employment services and/or on-going job retention services. The current focus of this group is to expand the use of Ticket to Work funding to provide ongoing job retention supports, to promote the use of PASS Plans, and to ensure the continuation of benefits planning services as people transition from VRS services to job retention services. (Page 250) Title IV

SSDI and SSI Beneficiaries: SSA and VRS continue to co—host bi-annual meetings of the Employment Networks Ticket—to—Work funding is used to supplement Supported Employment funding or to provide continued job retention services beyond the 90 days VRS typically provides. Benefit coaches have been added to each office to ensure beneficiaries fully understand the impact income will have on benefits. (Page 261) Title IV

SGA Project: the Institute on Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts — Boston has received RSA funding to demonstrate effective strategies to assist SSDI beneficiaries achieve income above the substantial gainful activity (SGA) level. Minnesota VRS is one of the demonstration sites. At time of enrollment, the SSDI beneficiary is assigned a counselor, placement specialist and financial specialist. Eligibility for services is presumed within three days and the Employment Plan is developed within 30 days of application. VRS has partnered with the DLL to provide financial counseling in VR offices. RSA funding was used to provide the benefits planners with financial literacy training so that in addition to benefits planning the financial specialists can provide assistance with improving credits scores, paying off credit card debt, and developing savings plans. It is hoped that the combination of rapid engagement and financial planning services will lead to better outcomes. Although the SGA Project does not receive any Medicaid funding, the financial specialist positions would not have been possible without the initial collaboration with the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant. (Page 285-286) Title IV

**Employer/Business**

Current business services involve a high degree of employer engagement. From those represented on the local workforce development boards, participating on training advisory groups with postsecondary education, employers provides direction to business services in Minnesota. Community engagement is a growing area of activity, as we work to address disparate impact among people of color, individuals with disabilities and disconnected youth. This presents a unique opportunity to bridge the divides of cultural differences and work place expectations. One recent example includes a workshop for employers to support their development of cultural competence in attracting and retaining a diverse quality workforce. A better understanding of the needs of employers and communities can lead to customer-centered design of services that benefit both job seekers and employers. (Page 41) Title I

**Data Collection**

C. VRS will lead and convene Placement Partnerships focused on developing, maintaining and strengthening relationships among VRS, VR Community Partners and Employers
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Action: The VRS Placement Specialist team will develop and disseminate a quarterly report on the major activities and outcomes for active placement partnerships

Action: Work with partners to implement WIOA Common Performance Measure 6 focused on effectiveness in serving employers

Progress achieved: The Disability Employment Resource (DER) was developed to support business engagement. The initiative helps businesses meet their workforce goals by employing people with disabilities in competitive integrated positions, while employment professionals learn more about how to align their placement goals with business needs.

The DER curriculum improves business engagement by delivering information to bridge the gap between business and human services, dispelling myths that can prevent employers from considering people with disabilities, helping human service professionals understand the business perspective, providing tools for starting and building relationships, and connecting businesses with information and resources to help them succeed. (Page 258) Title IV

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The designated State unit’s plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students….

• Outline services and documentation requirements set forth in section 511 of the Rehabilitation Act, as added by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), with regard to youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment.

• Provide assurance that neither the SEA nor the LEA will enter into an arrangement with an entity holding a special wage certificate under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act for the purpose of operating a program under which a youth with a disability is engaged in work at a subminimum wage. (Page 207) Title IV

• DEED’s VRS and MDE’s Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions will work together with LEAs to ensure that outreach and identification of students with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment in order for them to receive counseling and information and referral related to competitive integrated employment.

• DEED’s VRS will ensure, as appropriate, that students with disabilities that are seeking subminimum wage employment and who have applied for VR services are determined eligible or ineligible for VR services; have an approved IPE; receive pre-employment transition services; and receive appropriate reasonable accommodations and appropriate supports and services, including supported and customized employment services, that assist in obtaining and maintaining a competitive integrated employment outcome.
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- DEED’s VRS and MDE’s Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions will provide LEAs the required processes and forms to document the required actions specified under WIOA for all students with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment. (Page 211) Title IV

- DEED’s VRS will ensure that all students with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment receive documentation of the required actions specified under WIOA within 45 calendar days of completion of the required actions.

Assurance related to WIOA Section 511 and 34 CFR 397, Limitations on use of subminimum wage

In accordance with 34 CFR 397.31, MDE’s Special Education and Career and College Success Divisions, through the MDE Career Technical Education Program approval and expense approval process, will ensure that neither the SEA nor LEAs enter into a contract with an entity, as defined in WIOA 34 CFR 397.5(d) for the purpose of operating a program under which a student with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage. (Page 212) Title IV

3. Ensuring applicants fully understand the benefits of competitive integrated employment. As part of the intake process, emphasis is placed on competitive integrated employment. Individuals who are not pursuing competitive integrated employment are referred to other resources, including the Senior Services Unit, which can assist them in meeting their independent living needs. Career counseling and information and referral services on competitive integrated employment is provided to individuals in subminimum wage and extended employment, as well as to youth seeking subminimum wage employment. WDU’s intake counselor is responsible for providing this service to these individuals, consistent with the new 511 requirements. (Page 319) Title IV

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**Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination: Section 188**

Prior to awarding a grant, a DEED conducts a risk analysis. In addition, in the early part of each year sub—grantees complete an electronic assessment and a fiscal monitoring guide. These assessment tools provide a sweeping array of information, in such important areas as:

- How sub—grantees will serve and provide priority services to veterans

- Policies regarding sub—grantee conflict—of—interest processes

- The longevity of key directors and/or stakeholders

- Sub—grantee customer complaint processes and physical and program accessibility

- Sub—grantee accounting procedures, positive cash flow, third—party audit reports, review of debt ratio, including federal and state tax debt (Page 107) Title I

DEED meets its ongoing obligation not to discriminate on the basis of disability by developing
system wide policy and procedure initiatives that comply with Section 188 of WIOA. These policies include physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology and materials to serve the needs of customers with disabilities.

The Determining the Location of a Minnesota WorkForce Center policy requires that the “The WFC location will be accessible to all populations including individuals with disabilities.” The Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity is the final authority in determining if a location meets the accessibility criteria to be certified as a WorkForce Center.

The Minnesota WorkForce Center System Certification Standards policy provides guidance on the implementation standards for the equal access obligations under WIOA. WorkForce Centers must be universally accessible to all populations including but not limited to various racial and ethnic groups, persons for which English is not their first language, ex—felons, people who are homeless, Veterans, various age groups, different genders, and individuals with disabilities.

PROVIDE ARCHITECTURAL ACCESSIBILITY FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

The WorkForce Center System provides integrated program services through the development and maintenance of an accessible environment. All facilities open to the public as well as administrative offices must be accessible to and useable by the broadest population. All partners are covered by Title II of the ADA and the equal opportunity and nondiscrimination elements of Section 188 of WIOA and, therefore, are subject to the same set of standards.

Affiliate WorkForce Centers are required to provide full access and opportunities to all job seekers including serving individuals with disabilities. Physical locations, services and programs must comply with Section 188 of WIOA and provisions of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended.

DEED will work closely with Affiliate WorkForce Centers to have them provide an annual assessment on architectural and programmatic accessibility for individuals with disabilities. A review schedule for Affiliate WorkForce Centers will occur during Program Monitoring Visits.

• The Minnesota WorkForce Center System Certification Standards discussed earlier identifies both physical and programmatic accessibility requirements. Customers with disabilities must be able to participate and benefit from the services available in the WorkForce Center System, as do all customers. In addition to the site accessibility standards, the Policy identifies the following requirements:
  • Development of an evacuation and safety plan
  • Notice displayed and available in alternate formats upon request
  • Inclusion of tag lines
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- Identification of Minnesota Relay
- Availability of accommodation and modifications
- Staff knowledge of assistive technology
- Use of auxiliary aids and services
- Community resources
- Complaint processes. (Page 129) Title IV

Accessibility has been a central focus for the web development team. DEED’s accessibility resources in the Vocational Rehabilitation Unit as well as staff at State Services for the Blind continue to be involved in any webpage updates ensuring accessibility for the blind and visually impaired, as well as users who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing, or who have mobility impairments, and those with cognitive and reading disorders. DEED’s web development team strives for accessibility that extends beyond minimum compliance. If, however, users are unable to access information, they may request information in alternate formats and it will be provided in a timely manner. (Page 130-131) Title I

Vets

- Service in WorkForce Center System — The state’s WorkForce Center system provides the full array of labor and employment services to veterans around the state. Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPs) provide eligible veterans with employment services such as job matching and referral to posted job openings, vocational and career guidance, labor market information, plus workshops on resume preparation and conducting effective job searches. DVOPs also refer eligible and qualified veterans to appropriate WIOA-funded training programs and discretionary initiatives, as well as registered apprenticeship programs throughout the state. Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVER) specialize in promoting veterans to employers, educating one-stop partners on current law, changing regulations, and the value veterans bring to an employer.

- Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) — DVOP and LVER staff are funded through the JVSG and fulfill all responsibilities mandated by the grant programs. Services include the provision of intensive case management services to Chapter 31 Veterans, disabled veterans, homeless veterans, economically or educationally disadvantaged veterans, and veterans with "significant barriers to employment" as defined by the Department of Labor. (Page 78-79) Title I

In Minnesota, estimates indicate that a little over 1%, or 4000 Veterans per year will experience homelessness, or struggle with other life crises edging them toward homelessness. Of those 4000 Veterans, 27% have returned from service in Iraq or Afghanistan, and over 30% are disabled Veterans. Approximately 15% of Veterans served that are homeless are women Veterans. Many are single with children to care for.

DVOP staff works closely with Minnesota’s HVRP grantee, Minnesota Assistance Council for
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Veterans (MACV). In addition to referring clients between our two agencies, we also collaborate with them on 3 StandDown events across the state each year and provide a liaison (LVER) to provide business contacts and help with some of their client-focused events. (Page 442) Title IV

Core Responsibility 1 — Develop employer outreach activities to establish, maintain, and facilitate regular contact with employers to promote employment and training opportunities for the benefit of Veterans. Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Develop job opportunities for Veteran job seekers through outreach efforts with Minnesota employers: job development phone contacts, in person employer visits, and participation in job fair activities on behalf of Veterans. 2) Communicate and coordinate with Business Services Representatives in the local AJC to facilitate and promote job opportunities for Veterans, especially those with significant barriers to employment. 3) Promote the "Veteran Friendly Employer" initiative to all businesses contacted. 4) Encourage employers to employ Veterans utilizing apprenticeships and OJT programs, State and Federal dislocated worker programs, and GI Bill benefits. 5) Maintain current information on employment and training opportunities. 6) Monitor Federal Contractor Job Listings (FCJL) and Vet Central job orders for Veterans using the WFC, or on the DVOP caseload. 7) Provide contacts and job leads to DVOPs.

Core Responsibility 2 — Advocate on behalf of Veterans seeking employment and training opportunities with business, industry, and community-based organizations. Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Contact community leaders, employers, labor unions, training programs, and Veterans organizations. 2) Promote Veterans priority of service in employment and training programs. 3) Maintain current information on employment and training opportunities. 4) Plan and participate in job fairs to promote services to Veterans, and encourage participating employers to become a "Veteran Friendly Employer." 5) Promote licensing and certification assistance and training opportunities for Veterans using training providers and credentialing bodies. 6) Work with unions, apprenticeships programs, and business community to promote employment, On the Job Training (OJT), apprenticeships and other available training opportunities to employ Veterans. 7) Establish and maintain contact with National Guard, Reserve Family Readiness Groups and Family Assistance Centers in the assigned area. Provide education and information regarding DEED Vets employment services, WorkForce Centers, and Beyond the Yellow Ribbon events. (Page 447) Title IV

8) Assist employers with special job accommodations for disabled Veterans. This position works closely with community leaders, Tasks for this responsibility will include: 1) Facilitate and maintain the provision of labor exchange services by local WFC staff to Veterans including the identification of SBE Veterans, proper referral to a DVOP, or in the absence of the DVOP, to the individualized career services provider, and referral to vocational counseling, testing, job search assistance. 2) Provide job development and employer outreach on behalf of Veterans, with a focus on Veterans with an SBE being case managed by a local DVOP. 3) Coordinate or conduct job search assistance and networking workshops in conjunction with employers. 4) Provide Labor Market Information (LMI) to employers. 6) Work with DEED Veterans Chapter 31 Program Coordinator and Veterans Affairs (VA) regarding Chapter 31 clients. 7) Refer Veterans
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to the Department of Labor (DOL)/Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) partner as needed to assist with reemployment rights issues covered under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) law. 8) Assist employers with special job accommodations for disabled Veterans. (Page 448) Title IV

Mental Health

The Minnesota Youth Program (MYP) provides short—term, contextualized and individualized training services for at—risk youth, ages 14 to 24. Coordinated at the local level by the Workforce Development Boards/Youth Committees, MYP eligibility criteria is more flexible (inclusive) than the WIOA Youth Program. MYP serves an extremely disadvantaged group of young men and women: participants have multiple challenges such as substance abuse, criminal records, mental health issues, and cognitive learning limitations, in addition to being poor. The Higher Education Career Advisors Pilot Project (HECAP) funded by the Minnesota State Legislature provides funding to focus on assistance to high schools through career exploration and helps students see connections between their education and future careers. HECAP builds on the work of local workforce. (Page 88) Title I

- DEED’s VRS will provide outreach to the following school staff to identify students in need of pre-employment transition services and/or vocational rehabilitation services: teachers/case managers, work coordinators, guidance counselors, school nurses, 504 coordinators, school social workers, alternative learning center staff, principals, school mental health coordinators, and school psychologists. (Page 211) Title IV

The Minnesota General program has a long history of innovative collaboration with the State Mental Health Authority. This includes VR representation on the State Mental Health Planning Council and the newly formed State Behavioral Advisory Council. The two agencies have also collaborated to implement, sustain and expand the evidence based practice of supported employment, Individual Placement and Support. Starting with 4 local partnerships between mental health and employment providers in 2006, the IPS provider network in Minnesota, funded in part with state appropriations dedicated to IPS, has expanded to 29 IPS programs (partnerships between mental health agencies and employment services agencies) in 47 of Minnesota’s 87 counties. Minnesota VR and Mental Health agencies are partners in the National IPS Learning Community. (Pages 219-220) Title IV

IPS collaboration. Vocational Rehabilitation Services in the mid-state region was recognized with a Minnesota Social Services Association award for partnering in an IPS community collaboration with Functional Industries, Wright County Health & Human Services and Central MN Mental Health Center. Each agency brought their own mental health expertise to the table to support employment, therapy, and case management. This collaboration helps people with serious mental illness work in regular jobs, not jobs set aside for people with disabilities. Mental health practitioners not only help their clients consider employment but also provide employment specialists with their mental health expertise to assist with the individualized job search. (Page 228) Title IV

Funding for supported employment, within which Title VI Part B funds play a relatively small
Minnesota (MN) WIOA Matrix

part, is governed by myriad federal and state laws and rules covering many categories of services. For example, a network of private, not-for-profit organizations, licensed by the Department of Human Services Disability Services Division, provides day training and habilitation services that may include supported employment. People with mental illness may receive work-related support through the State Comprehensive Mental Health Act. In these instances, each county determines the level of service that will be provided. (Page 247) Title IV

VRS, through state-funded extended employment services, provides ongoing work supports to approximately 5,100 individuals in Supported Employment annually. Many of these individuals received time-limited vocational rehabilitation services prior to entering supported employment. Part of Minnesota’s supported employment funding is dedicated to extended supports for persons with serious and persistent mental illness. VRS and the Department of Human Services Mental Health Division collaborate on Individual Placement and Support (IPS) projects to promote innovation in service delivery, including supported employment services, for this population. The projects are designed to provide functional assessment, individualized career planning, job skill acquisition, job placement, job development, and non-time-limited supports necessary to maintain and advance in employment. All recipients of grants under these projects are required to demonstrate collaboration with counties, the local community support program, VRS, and providers of employment services such as CRPs, regional treatment centers, and community mental health centers. (Page 263) Title IV

RTW/SAW

No disability specific information found regarding this element.

*All enclosed information is cited directly from final state plan as of June 30, 2019

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