

News Release

Six states receive nearly \$15M in grants to expand employment opportunities for people with disabilities

WASHINGTON – Despite their ability to occupy a variety of jobs, people with disabilities only account for 19.8 percent of the workforce, have more than double the unemployment rate compared to the general population and continue to face barriers finding work. To improve employment opportunities for adults and youth with disabilities, the U.S. Department of Labor today announced grants totaling \$14.9 million as part of the **Disability Employment Initiative** to six states.

“America works best when we field a full team, and that means making sure that everyone has access to opportunity in our dynamic economy,” said **U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez**. “The grants we are awarding today will help to strengthen partnerships that ensure employers know that it is what people with disabilities CAN do that matters most.”

This is the seventh round of DEI funding. Since 2010, the department has awarded grants of more than \$123 million through the initiative to 49 projects in 28 states to improve education, training, and employment outcomes of youth and adults with disabilities. More information on the DEI is available [here](#).

DEI funds help refine and expand workforce strategies proven to be successful, and enhance inclusive service delivery through the public workforce system. Improvements include increasing the accessibility of **American Job Centers**, training front-line AJC and partner staff, and increasing partnerships and collaboration across numerous systems critical for assisting youth and adults with disabilities in securing meaningful employment.

Grantees of this year’s awards will use the funds to:

- Improve employment outcomes and increase the number of individuals with disabilities who earn credentials.
- Provide more and diversified job-driven training opportunities.
- Facilitate academic and employment transition among youth.
- Incorporate flexible approaches to designing and providing training and supportive services, including customized employment strategies to help jobseekers with significant disabilities.
- Build effective community partnerships and collaborations across multiple service delivery systems and the effective blending and braiding of resources.
- Promote more active engagement with the business sector.

The grants align closely with the Obama administration’s **job-driven training principles** by requiring multiple workforce and disability service providers, educational institutions and businesses in each state to collaborate extensively to promote the employment of persons with disabilities in career pathways.

Grant Recipient	Award
State of California Employment Development Department	\$2,500,000
Connecticut Department of Labor	\$2,500,000
State of Idaho	\$2,500,000
Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development	\$2,500,000
Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development	\$2,500,000
Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation	\$2,472,986
Total	\$14,972,986

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