

To improve state and local level coordination among employment and training programs and build effective community partnerships to better serve individuals with disabilities and improve employment outcomes.

Since 2010, the United States Department of Labor (DOL) has awarded over \$95 million to thirty-seven projects within twenty-six states under the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) to improve education, training, and employment outcomes of youth and adults with disabilities by refining and expanding already identified successful workforce strategies. The DEI is jointly funded and administered by the DOL's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP).

DEI projects build upon the Disability Program Navigator initiative by hiring staff with expertise in disability and workforce to serve as Disability Resource Coordinators (DRCs). Starting in 2014, DEI grantees will increase the participation of adults and youth with disabilities in existing career pathway systems and programs implemented in the American Job Centers (AJCs). The DEI is helping to support career pathways systems and programs to develop job-driven innovative, integrated, flexible, and universally-designed service delivery strategies that effectively increase the participation of individuals with disabilities in the workforce system.

Overview

- ✦ DOL has entered into three-year cooperative agreements with twenty-six states to implement exemplary employment services to individuals with disabilities in the workforce system. Funded in:
 - **2010**—Alaska, Arkansas, Delaware, Illinois, Kansas, Maine, New Jersey, New York and Virginia
 - **2011**—California, Hawaii, Ohio, South Dakota, Tennessee, Washington and Wisconsin
 - **2012**—Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Rhode Island
 - **2013**—Alabama, Alaska, Connecticut, Idaho, Illinois, Maine, New York and Virginia
 - **2014**—California, Illinois, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and South Dakota
- ✦ Projects focus on adults or youth in order to develop and refine replicable models.
- ✦ DRCs are hired at the local workforce area level.
- ✦ DEI states or individual sites become Employment Networks for beneficiaries under the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work program.
- ✦ Independent evaluation will be conducted using quantitative and qualitative data from grantees.

DEI Strategic Approaches

- ✦ **DEI Strategic Service Delivery Components** - The first four rounds (funded between 2010 and 2013) focus on implementing *Partnerships and Collaboration* plus two or more DOL practices and strategies identified as critical elements to improve employment outcomes of youth and adults with disabilities.
- ✦ **DEI Career Pathways Model** - DEI Projects funded in 2014 support job-drive approaches in career pathway systems and programs to equip youth and adults with disabilities with the skills, competencies, and credentials necessary to help obtain in-demand jobs, increase earnings, and advance their careers.
- ✦ **All DEI Projects** focus on:
 - Developing collaborative partnerships across multiple service delivery systems;
 - Blending and braiding of funds;
 - Providing flexible opportunities to persons with disabilities for training and employment; and
 - Creating systemic change.

For additional information visit:

https://disability.workforce3one.org/page/tag/dei_project