

**Workforce Innovation Fund**

**The TANF/SSI Disability Transition Project Putting San Diegans to Work  
Proposal Abstract**

Applicant:	San Diego Workforce Partnership, Inc
Lead applicant city/state:	San Diego, CA
Area to be Served:	San Diego County, California
Project Name:	The TANF/SSI Disability Transition Project Putting San Diegans to Work
Total Funding Request:	\$6 Million
Project Type:	B
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Description of Proposed Project Certain marginalized populations often may not have the opportunity to secure employment in the competitive marketplace. Accessing employment and training opportunities, especially those that lead one into higher skilled/higher wage jobs, with stable career pathways often proves to be challenging. Recent projects implemented by the San Diego Workforce Partnership (SDWP), have revealed common difficulties between Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients and adults living with disabilities. Both populations face difficulties in securing stable employment, both are uncertain about the stability of their family earnings if anything happens to reduce or eliminate their public benefits, and both face stigma—real and perceived—in the workplace.

One proven strategy to place marginalized populations on a pathway to independence is stable employment. However, there are challenges at many levels for TANF recipients and people with disabilities seeking employment, especially competitive employment. One of the most

perplexing is systems-level challenges, such as the lack of alignment between social services, treatment, and workforce services.

In its report “The TANF/SSI Disability Transition Project: Innovative Strategies for Serving TANF Recipients with Disabilities”, the social policy research firm, MDRC, describes a Ramsey County, Minnesota Pilot Program which was developed with the express purpose of finding better paths to employment for TANF recipients with disabilities and their families. The pilot initiative, known as Families Achieving Success Today (FAST), implemented evidenced-based practices of the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model for supported employment services as well as motivational interviewing techniques. San Diego plans to replicate this project and expand it to improve employment services for both TANF recipients and people living with disabilities. Through this expansion, San Diego will improve the alignment of service delivery systems between the County of San Diego Health and Human Services, Department of Rehabilitation, and the San Diego Workforce Investment Board. Improvements will include the adoption of team based case management including treatment and employment services, benefits counseling, and increasing employment opportunities within the business community.

Description of Proposed Evaluation Strategy SDWP will implement a randomized controlled trial with around 1000 participants, half of whom will be assigned to a treatment group. These numbers offer statistical power beyond what was achieved in Ramsey County. Additionally, San Diego will assess a variety of baseline and outcome variables in order to better investigate the impacts of the intervention and increase understanding of the needs this population faces.