



Minnesota

EMPLOYMENT
First

Summit II

**The Scorecard: A Progress
Report on Employment First
Performance in Minnesota**

Saint Paul, Minnesota
November 14, 2008

The Minnesota Employment First Coalition is:

- Minnesota APSE - The Network on Employment
- Minnesota Department of Education
- Pathways to Employment
- Minnesota Department of Human Services
- Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
- The Consumer Survivor Network of Minnesota
- Social Security Administration
- PACER Center, Inc.

More than 6,000 Internet downloads and 3,000 paper copies of ***The Minnesota Employment First Manifesto*** have been disseminated to interested parties since 2007. A PDF copy of this document can be obtained at www.mnapse.org

The Minnesota Employment First Coalition has adopted a value proposition crafted by a State Employment Innovations Leadership Team for the Minnesota National Training and Research Center (NTAR) Project.

The Minnesota value proposition is:

*We need everyone
in the workforce for
business to thrive and
communities to prosper.*

Introduction

On November 14th, 2008, The Minnesota Employment First Coalition hosted its **2nd Annual Employment First Summit** in St. Paul, Minnesota. This event was held by invitation only and featured a gathering of almost two hundred people throughout the State of Minnesota. The invited guests for **Summit II** shared one common focus- how to make integrated employment the first and preferred choice of youth and adults with disabilities in Minnesota.

The outstanding success of the initial **Minnesota Employment First Summit** held in Chaska, Minnesota on June 12, 2007 resulted in the development and wide distribution of a consensus report for change. *The Minnesota Employment First Manifesto* identified eight core recommendations to substantially increase integrated employment at competitive wages and benefits for Minnesotans with disabilities. Also, the Manifesto took direct aim at defining what *employment first* means as well as crafting a uniform definition of *employment* to be used as a statewide standard in measuring the competitive employment rate of Minnesotans with disabilities.

Since 2007, The Minnesota Manifesto has been a driving stimulus for collaboration and sustaining momentum among the champions of an employment first vision in our state. Indeed, one recommendation expressed unanimously by attendees at **Summit I** was the importance of keeping the dialogue going and working together toward a common purpose. For this reason, **Summit II** was structured to continue a successful formula of building *coalitions of the willing* from varied stakeholder groups to tackle well-documented barriers to employment access and success.

The **Summit II** event was organized by the Minnesota Employment First Coalition with two principle objectives in mind. First, our coalition recognizes the fundamental importance of tapping the leadership of private industries and businesses to drive sweeping changes in the employment rates of Minnesotans with disabilities. Therefore, the morning session of this event was dedicated to "business leadership" and identifying new policies and practices to support a business-based, employment first vision in Minnesota.

The afternoon session of **Summit II** was coined, "The Scorecard," and included a broader base of employment first stakeholders including federal, state and county agency leaders, self-advocates and family members, disability advocates, disability and employment service providers, secondary and post-secondary educators, residential providers, veterans representatives, community representatives, and others. The afternoon session was dedicated to a discussion on Minnesota's progress and measurable successes made with respect to core recommendations crafted following **Summit I**. The afternoon session then concluded with facilitated group discussions about the critical next steps to advance an employment first agenda in Minnesota to the next level.

Summit II

Business Leadership Session

The morning session of **Summit II** featured a business-to-business peer strategy. The fundamental goal was to engage the participation of Minnesota business leaders in our state employment first agenda. Business owners and senior managers from large, medium, and small companies throughout Minnesota were invited to bring a "demand-side" perspective to our mutual goals. The Coalition invited business leaders with a successful track record in the direct hiring and support of employees with disabilities. Business representatives without this practical experience were also invited to learn and participate.

The intent was to give experienced business leaders an opportunity to share their success stories. A number of these employers discussed their initial fears and doubts about hiring someone with a disability. Others shared how they incorporated strengths-based practices to employ the talents of job seekers with significant disabilities. Several corporate representatives shared their direct experiences in tapping the technical support they needed to recruit, hire, train, and support their employees with disabilities. Virtually all of the presentations identified the essentials of customized and supported employment and how strengths-based business practices can change what it means to be "qualified" in the workforce.

The business leadership session was introduced by *Bob Nikolai*, regional manager of Arctic Glacier Ice, a privately-held company in St. Paul, Minnesota with a long history of employing individuals with significant disabilities. *Dan McElroy*, Commissioner for the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) shared the overarching vision for the

inclusion of Minnesotans with disabilities in the state workforce and economic development objectives.



Dan McElroy addresses the Business Leadership Session



Neil Romano, Assistant Secretary for the Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) was the invited keynote speaker. Romano shared a video documentary that promoted the business case for the hiring of individuals with disabilities. He also challenged the assembled business leaders to consider the full range of possibilities and opportunities when widening employee recruitment strategies to include workers with disabilities.

Assistant Secretary Romano was followed by *Martha McMurray* from the Office of the State Demographer who made a brief presentation about the Emerging Workforce in Minnesota. Her presentation underscored the anticipated labor shortages in various business sectors in the coming years as the baby boomer population leaves the workforce for retirement. People with disabilities and other untapped labor pools were identified as potential resources to addressing forecasted labor shortages and maintaining workforce productivity.



Julie St. Marie

The underlying goal for the **Summit II** morning session was to challenge business leaders to consider serving as hosts of *mini-summits* to be scheduled with peer businesses from similar geographic locations throughout Minnesota or within specific business or industry sectors. The Coalition invited a panel of experienced employers to share their stories and make the business case for hiring youth and adults with disabilities. The corporate presentations were made by *Julie St. Marie* from Best Buy, *Deb Russell* from Walgreens, and *Rick Erredge* from the Veterans Administration. Each presenter highlighted his or her corporate vision to actively recruit job seekers with disabilities and integrate their talents in varied ways throughout the company.

The business leadership summit ended with a facilitated group discussion about the future role of the Minnesota business community in driving an employment first vision in the state. The idea of hosting local *mini-business summits* was discussed and a number of attendees expressed a willingness to host such events with technical support from the Minnesota Employment First Coalition. The shared goal is to increase the participation of small and large businesses in the employment of individuals with disabilities and allay employer fears through a peer business education strategy.

We anticipate business leaders from public and private companies will play a major role at these *mini-summits* at the local level. More appropriately, representatives from the "supply side" (i.e., employment service providers) will offer administrative support to these business leaders to assist with planning and running business *mini-summits* in urban, suburban, and rural areas of our state.

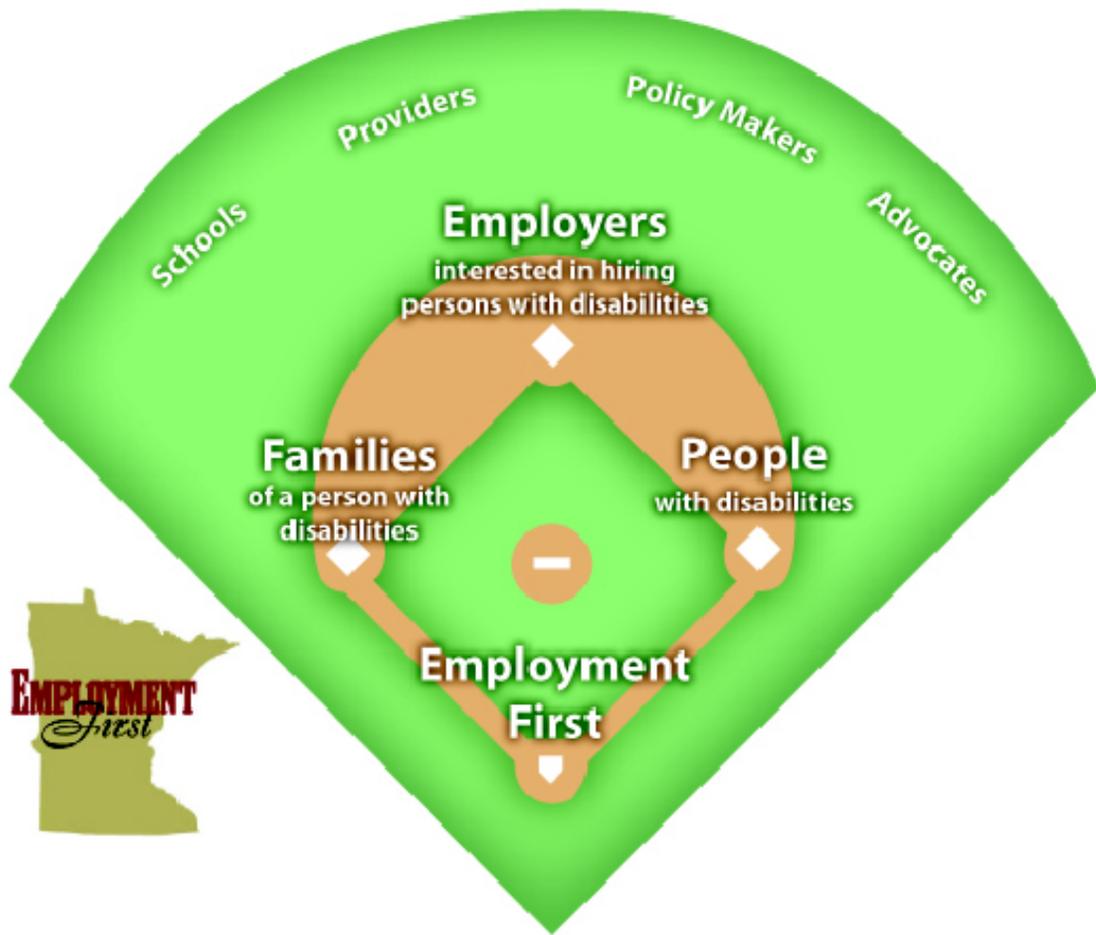


Summit II “Scorecard” Session

The afternoon session of Summit II was dedicated to bringing back attendees from the original Employment First Summit held in June of 2007. Core strategies for this session were divided into two parts. The first segment of the afternoon session was organized to share the progress and specific achievements made in Minnesota following Summit I. Hence, the theme of this session was titled "The Scorecard." The scorecard theme was supported by structured presentations from State agency and county leaders with highlights taken from an Employment First Policy Mini-Summit held in April of 2008. All presentation highlights were aligned with the overarching goals of the Minnesota Employment First Coalition (See Exhibit 1).

Exhibit I

EMPLOYMENT FIRST Scorecard



Consensus Recommendations	1st	2nd	3rd	Homerun
Establish Minnesota as a national leader.				
Continue an ongoing dialogue among Minnesota's Employment First champions.				
Launch an Employment First vision and public policy.				
Build on Minnesota's known & emerging strengths.				
Launch "Communities of Practice" locations.				
Develop training & technical assistance resources.				
Rebranding "Rehabilitation" in Language and Practices.				
Establish a statewide employment definition and data collection system.				

Reports from the Minnesota Employment First Policy Mini-Summit

On April 9, 2008, 25 leaders from federal, State, county agencies and 11 members from the Minnesota Employment First Coalition, gathered in St. Paul for an **Employment First Policy Mini-Summit**. The purpose of this mini-summit was to review the eight recommendations set forth in the Employment First Manifesto following **Summit I**, identify what represented agencies were already doing relative to the employment of people with disabilities as defined in the Consensus Report, and forge new partnership strategies to promote Minnesota as an Employment First State by the year 2013.

The mini-summit was facilitated by Ms. Carol Rydell and its principle goal was to reach a consensus concerning policy initiatives and critical activities essential to promoting Minnesota as an Employment First State. The mini-summit proceedings resulted in the grouping of four priorities:

1. Launching an employment first vision and policy in Minnesota;
2. Building capacities of local communities and forging successful collaborations that will result in service redesign, rebalancing of resources, and implementing new policies and practices to make integrated employment the first choice;
3. Establishing an effective Statewide strategy for training and technical assistance to support local communities in obtaining high quality, integrated employment outcomes; and

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4. Establishing a uniform definition of employment (as stated in the Manifesto) and using this definition to create a Statewide baseline to measure performance progress.

Federal, state, and county policymakers were invited to the **Mini-Summit** to report on specific agency policy initiatives, activities, and accomplishments. The purpose of this session was to establish accountability, communicate goals and progress with attendees, build upon existing strengths, identify remaining systems barriers and gaps in services, foster new collaborations among state employment first champions, and celebrate Minnesota's success as a leader in the national Employment First movement. More details about the Employment First Policy Mini-Summit and agency priorities are included for review in Appendix A at the end of this report.

The Scorecard Session:

How are we doing?

The following is a brief summary of notable employment first activities and achievements in Minnesota. For accountability purposes, we have aligned these highlights with specific consensus goals established at The Minnesota Employment First Summit in June of 2007.

1. **Establish Minnesota as a national leader.**

- The State of Minnesota was one of three states to receive a grant through Rutgers University's National Training and Research (NTAR) Project in 2008. NTAR is a national training and technical assistance initiative funded by the Department of Labor with a goal to improve competitive employment outcomes of adults with disabilities through demand-side business strategies and engagement of State Employment Innovations Leadership Teams.
- A project entitled "Minnesota as an Exemplary Employer" was launched to establish State government as a model employer of adults with disabilities. This project will showcase competitive and customized employment opportunities within State agency positions.
- The State of Minnesota is viewed as a leader in the national Employment First movement. The Minnesota Employment First Coalition has received numerous requests for information and technical assistance. More than 6,000 copies of The

Minnesota Employment First Manifesto have been downloaded from the Internet. Further, the paper document has been disseminated at national conferences and to all 50 states.

- It has been proposed that Minnesota serve as the host and site location of a national Employment First conference to be scheduled in the future.

2. Continue dialogue among Minnesota Employment First Champions.

- The Minnesota Employment First Summit has become an annual event to sustain a communications among employment first champions throughout the state.
- The Minnesota Employment First Coalition has hosted two annual employment summits, a policy mini-summit with federal, state, and county agency leaders, and a mini-summit with business leaders. Presently, there are plans to widen the circle of employment first champions with future employment first summits and training events.

3. Launch an Employment First vision and public policy.

- Minnesota does not as yet have an overreaching employment first public policy. However, some state agency policies are being overhauled and galvanized to promote the delivery of employment first practices and outcomes obtained by Minnesotans with disabilities (i.e., evidence-based practice supported employment in mental health).

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- Efforts are already underway to create greater flexibility in the use of existing funding resources to rebalance opportunities and meet the expressed needs of individuals with disabilities (i.e., review and restructuring of payment rates for services to adults with developmental disabilities).

4. Build on Minnesota's known and emerging strengths.

- Minnesota has many existing and emerging service system strengths. These include, but are not limited to:
 - Medical Assistance for Employed Persons with Disabilities (MA-EPD)
 - NTAR demand-side workforce and economic development strategies
 - Evidence-based practice supported employment projects for adults with serious mental illnesses
 - Occupational Communication Specialists (OCS) to support the integrated employment and communication support needs of youth and adults with significant hearing loss
 - Demonstration to Maintain Independence and Employment (DMIE) of adults with mental illness who are already in the workforce
 - Manufacturing Career Camps to introduce youth with disabilities to careers in manufacturing and other business sectors
 - Disability Benefits Planning 101: Tools to support job seekers with disabilities in understanding the impact of working on cash benefits and health care

- Minnesota State Extended Employment reimbursement incentives for providers to invest in integrated employment.
- Appendix A identifies a robust list of federal, state, and local agency policy initiatives and projects directed at improving job placement and integrated employment outcomes of adults with disabilities in Minnesota.

5. **Launch and support local community initiatives.**

- While no formal initiatives have been authorized or sanctioned, a number of communities are already working independently to establish "Community Action Teams (CATs)." Ramsey County, for example, is working to launch new policy initiatives and build a local coalition with all critical stakeholders. Ramsey County's goal is to make integrated employment the first choice of adults with developmental disabilities. A similar group is emerging in Anoka County to plan more effective transition outcomes for youth and young adults with disabilities to expand choices and integrated employment outcomes as the primary goal.
- Minnesota recently funded a new **Employment Training Services and Technical Assistance Center** to be operated by Griffin-Hammis Associates. The objectives of this center include the launch of an open RFP process to encourage the formation of five CATs over a two-year period beginning in 2009. The CATs will focus on building coalitions and working collectively to achieve measurable integrated employment outcomes and performance milestones. All five CATs will receive

training and technical assistance to support their project objectives.

6. **Develop training and technical assistance resources.**

- The new **Minnesota Employment Training Services and Technical Assistance Center** will be administered by Griffin-Hammis Associates. The Center will launch a rich array of strategies to address the training and technical assistance (T&TA) needs of various stakeholders including job seekers with disabilities. These plans include the funding and technical support of five CATs, development and launch of a T&TA website to share critical information and offer guidance, introduction of a nationally approved educational curricula for direct service practitioners, investment in webinars to expand customized employment and evidence-based supported employment practices to support job seekers with significant disabilities, and other multi-media strategies with timely topics and subjects for various customers and stakeholder groups.
- Other T&TA resources will be developed with national organizations and experts to insure Minnesota has access to the best resources and capacities possible outside the state.

7. **Re-brand "rehabilitation" to strengths-based language and practices.**

- A "Value Proposition Work Group" has been formed within the Minnesota NTAR Project to identify demand-side, strengths-based communication strategies. This group has already crafted a value proposition statement and is now working to identify

more effective media and communication strategies. The ultimate goal is to rebrand "rehabilitation" and promote systems change efforts so youth and adults with disabilities are automatically included within the Minnesota workforce and economic development efforts.

8. Establish a Statewide definition of employment and data collection practices.

- Minnesota is working at the state agency level to create interagency consensus and cooperation regarding the use of a uniform definition of "integrated employment" and standardized data collection practices. Progress has been achieved but there is still much work left to do.
- The Minnesota Employment First Coalition is also working with local communities to establish uniform data collection standards and provide a standard framework for improving integrated employment outcomes.

What's next?

The final segment of the **Summit II** afternoon session shined a spotlight on unfinished business and building a shared consensus regarding "What's next?" The session attendees were divided into smaller working groups and assigned a group facilitator and scribe to record all participants' views and recommendations. Each group was provided with a structured list of questions to solicit ideas and determine priorities. The questions used to facilitate group discussions are included in Exhibit 2.

Exhibit II



EMPLOYMENT FIRST *Action Plan*

1. What action will you take personally and/or in your organization in next month?	
2. Who will you collaborate with at the local level?	
3. What is your plan to share the Employment First Message?	
4. What tools/resources do you need from the Employment First Coalition?	
5. Next Steps by 2009	

The Next Steps: Tackling Unfinished Business

Based on outcomes and recommendations flowing from the Minnesota Employment First Policy Mini-Summit and 2nd Annual Employment First Summit II events, the Employment First Coalition has charted ambitious new steps for the future. These objectives include the following:

1. Plan and implement the 3rd Annual Employment First Summit

A 3rd Annual Minnesota Employment First Summit (**Summit III**) is being planned to support the informational needs of self-advocates and family members. The goal is to increase the knowledge of self-advocates and family members about emerging opportunities available through strengths-based, customized employment practices.

Summit III will be organized to support 250 self-advocates and family members with critical information and support so they can make informed decisions and choices about competitive employment in the workforce. Principles of effective school-to-career transition and demanding access to customized and supported employment practices will be emphasized.

2. Launch four business mini-summits in Minnesota

The Employment First Coalition will launch a minimum of four mini-business summits by the end of 2010. These business summits will be planned in response to high interest expressed by companies at the business leadership event held at Summit II. All mini-summits will feature a business-to-business peer model approach with

private industry serving as the hosts of each event. One business mini-summit will be conducted in the Twin Cities metropolitan area and one will be held in greater Minnesota. In addition, one summit will be planned within a specific business sector featuring high economic growth and job opportunities (i.e., precision manufacturers, health care, etc.).

3. Assist in Minnesota Training & Technical Assistance Needs

The Employment First Coalition will negotiate a collaborative partnership strategy with Griffin-Hammis Associates (GHA), a progressive training and technical assistance (T&TA) organization to address statewide and locally-based training initiatives fundamental to employment first practices. GHA was recently awarded a two-year contract by the State of Minnesota to support the learning needs of various stakeholder groups within the State. GHA has designed its T&TA strategy to align closely with core goals articulated in The Minnesota Employment First Manifesto. For this reason, a close partnership between The Employment First Coalition and GHA is a natural fit to meeting T&TA needs in Minnesota.

4. Support the Development of Employment First "Community Action Teams"

The Employment First Coalition will support the development of Community Action Teams to (CATs) insure local collaborations are organized to promote employment first policies and practices. We will encourage the development of CATs with the participation of local workforce centers, education, county agencies, disability and employment service providers, and other community resource agencies (i.e., mental health centers, residential providers) to better support the employability of

underserved disability populations. This includes, but is not limited to, CATs supporting youth in transition from school-to-careers, mental health treatment CATs serving youth and adults with serious mental illnesses (SMI), or CATs promoting expansion of integrated employment options for adults with developmental disabilities who are served in center-based programs.

5. Support Federal, State, and County Employment First Policy Initiatives

The Employment First Coalition will continue efforts of the Coalition in supporting broad systems-change policies and development initiatives within various federal, state, and county service systems. This includes active collaboration with agencies and organizations, integration of available resources and expertise, and alignment of efforts with projects working to achieve similar systems change goals and policy objectives. Many of these interagency collaborations and project initiatives are articulated in Appendix A at the end of this report. This means continuing to build on the strengths of Minnesota systems that expect, encourage, engage, and reward employment first practices. It also means modifying or eliminating policies and practices that discourage integrated employment as an outcome.

6. Implement a Uniform Definition of Employment and Data Collection Practices in Minnesota

The Employment First Coalition will continue to work with state and county policymakers to establish a standardized definition of "integrated employment." Our organization will promote the development of uniform data collection and measurement systems across workforce development and disability human service systems to accurately gauge the competitive employment rates of Minnesotans with disabilities. This will enable the State of Minnesota to establish benchmarks for improvement as well as better identify core priorities such as unserved or underserved disability populations.

7. Maintain a Focus on Employment First Practices in Secondary Education

The Employment First Coalition will continue to work with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and local schools to promote employment first practices leading to more effective outcomes of students to post-secondary education and competitive employment in the workforce. The best way to shape future outcomes of youth with disabilities in transition from school-to-careers is to redirect resources, energies, and efforts at the source. For this reason, The Employment First Coalition will establish new initiatives with MDE and schools to influence systems change goals, policies, and practices.

8. Refresh Existing Collaborations and Build New Employment First Alliances

The Employment First Coalition will align its core performance objectives with Minnesota APSE-The Network on Employment, and other organizations working toward a common purpose. This includes the formation of formal and informal collaborations with organizations, groups, and individuals who are partial to creating an employment first vision in Minnesota. The Employment First Coalition will also engage in educational outreach to build new alliances and widen the circle of employment first champions.

9. Continue Minnesota's Leadership Role in the Employment First Movement

The Employment First Coalition will work to sustain Minnesota in its leadership role in the national employment first movement. The Minnesota Employment First Coalition has presented at state and national conferences to build momentum and influence systems change efforts at federal, state, and local levels. Inter-state efforts are already well underway with sharing of information and building collaborations regionally with other Midwestern states including Wisconsin, Iowa, North Dakota, and Indiana. Also, we have shared Minnesota's progress with the states of Washington, Georgia, Tennessee, Florida, and Missouri.

Members of The Minnesota Employment First Coalition have recently authored a white paper on "Establishing a National Employment First Agenda." This paper will be issued and disseminated by National APSE-The Network on Employment. Finally, the Minnesota Employment First Coalition has proposed that Minnesota serves as future host and site location for a National Employment First Conference.

10. Launch a new corporation

We will explore launching a new private, non-profit 501 (c) (3) corporation dedicated exclusively to building an employment first vision, addressing critical policy issues and concerns, and promoting new practices to expand integrated employment opportunities and outcomes in Minnesota.

The corporation would be guided by a volunteer Board of Directors including many existing members of Minnesota's Employment First Coalition. The corporation would continue to champion employment first principles and practices across the fields of business and private industry, education, rehabilitation, workforce development, developmental disabilities, mental health, traumatic brain injury, deaf and hard of hearing services, social security, welfare, social services, comprehensive health care, disability and family advocacy, transportation, and varied community support systems. The corporation will view private industry as its principle customer and energies will be dedicated to increasing business demand for the talents and labor capacities of Minnesotans with disabilities.

This decision to explore incorporating is driven by a fundamental concern among stakeholders that no single organization in the State of Minnesota is fully dedicated to unifying coalitions and establishing collaborations across diverse disability, education, human services, workforce development, and business support systems to promote integrated employment as the first and preferred choice of youth and adults with disabilities.

Appendix A

The Minnesota Employment First Policy Summit: A Report on Agency Policies, Initiatives & Practices

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Rehabilitation Services

- National Technical Assistance and Research Center (NTAR) proposal to receive intensive customized assistance in connecting state disability employment strategies to demand-driven economic growth and sector strategies. Minnesota's proposal focuses on the manufacturing sector.
- Continue to develop the DEED Business Services Specialist (BSS) initiative - including the six VR BSS staff - to open the door to customized employment opportunities.
- Work with DHS to examine and transform the service delivery system for ongoing supports.
- Develop legislative testimony related to the needs to transform the supported employment system.
- Design of Extended Employment program to promote supported employment options over center-based employment.
- Developed the New Americans Project, with three staff with appropriate cultural and linguistic skills to serve recent East African immigrant refugees with disabilities.

Minnesota Department of Human Services, Disability Services Division

- With stakeholder input, develop and field test a payment structure for services and supports, including employment that span across programs and disability groups within the scope of DSD.
- Expand and define service provision and provider standards, including employment services under the Home and Community-Based Service (HCBS) waivers.
- Develop assessment processes for Medical Assistance state plan services and HCBS waivers that include the employment goals over the lifetime of an individual.
- Develop a self-directed personal care services option for MA beneficiaries.
- Cross agency policy development that will allow blending and braiding of funding streams.

Pathways to Employment, Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG)

- Develop Disability Benefits 101 for Minnesota, a web-based benefit planning tool that will help workers, job seekers, and service providers understand public benefits and how they are affected by work.
- Release Employment Service informational matrix to facilitate better understanding of program policies, identify their challenges, and connect the opportunities across DEED and DHS.

- Minnesota as an Exemplary Employer Project: A state employment initiative intended to increase the customized employment of Minnesotans in state government positions.
- Refine strategies that increase information and knowledge exchange:
 - Disability Linkage Line
 - Outreach for MA-EPD
 - Statewide Video Conferences
 - ★ 2007 Supporting Employment Innovations
 - ★ 2008 Series on Training & Technical Assistance topics

Minnesota Department of Human Services - Mental Health Division

- Collaboration and involvement with the Demonstration to Maintain Employment (DMIE) research project. Target population is adults who have a mental illness, are not disabled, are employed and on a MHCP program. This project will help identify strategies that are effective for a broader population.
- One of ten states to receive a Johnson and Johnson Supported Employment grant to implement the principles and practices of evidence-based supported employment in both the Voc Rehab and Mental Health provider communities. Six pilot sites are in operation.
- Ending Long Term Homelessness (Governor's Initiative) - Leadership group is examining the range of treatment and support services that are needed to assist those who are experiencing long term homelessness to find and maintain housing with supports as well as employment support options.

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- Implementation of peer specialists as a mental health provider for three community-based rehab services. Will encourage consumers who are trained and certified to become a provider of service and be reimbursed under Medicaid.
 - The Mental Health Division is monitoring employment as one of the client outcome measures across a range of community-based mental health programs as a proxy for treatment effectiveness.

Minnesota Department of Education - Special Education

- In collaboration with DEED (Rehabilitation Services) through a two year fiscal interagency agreement, twelve sites have been identified to increase the percentage of youth with disabilities receiving services from Rehabilitation Services.
- In collaboration with Career and Technical Education (Work-based Learning) and Rehabilitation Services we have provided eight regional work-based learning trainings.
- In collaboration with DEED, Pathways to Employment and PACER we have continued our efforts to resource map Minnesota using Project C3 (Connecting Youth to Communities and Careers) as a vehicle to do this.
- In collaboration with the Minnesota System of Interagency Coordination (MnSIC) will review, gather data and provide clarifications regarding primary responsibility for funding and service provision to youth with disabilities, ages 18-21.

Minnesota Department of Education, Career and Technical Education

- CTE and academic education must be integrated in a more comprehensive way.
- College and work readiness skills are one and the same.
- Each student needs at least some education or advanced training past high school whether 2-year college, 4-year university, industry certification, or advanced training through work.
- High schools and colleges should continue career and technical education programs and activities that have worked well.
- Career and technical education must be strategically placed within the broader vision, mission and goals for education and workforce development within the state of Minnesota.

Ramsey County Community Human Services, Developmental Disabilities Division

- Training with Case Managers on employment, case consults around employment & least restrictive environment and monthly internal newsletter highlighting employment issues and outcomes.
- Workshops/presentations to the County Board of Commissioners about increasing employment outcomes.
- Created an evaluation system to track employment outcomes for vocational programs.
- Limit increases in licensed capacity for center-based services.
- Partnership with 7 County Metro group to share employment service contracts.

Three federal agencies participated in the Policy Mini-Summit sponsored by The Minnesota Employment First Coalition. These agencies included:

Social Security Administration

- Implementing work Incentives, often called, employment support provisions, within the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) programs.
- The Ticket to Work Program offers SSA disability beneficiaries greater choice in obtaining the services they need to help them go to work and achieve their employment goals.

Internal Revenue Service

- The mission of the IRS is to provide American taxpayers top quality service by helping them understand and meet their tax responsibilities and by applying the tax law with integrity and fairness to all.

Federal Executive Board

- Forum for communication and collaboration among Federal agencies outside of Washington, D.C.
- The need for effective coordination and communication among the field activities of Federal departments and agencies is very clear.
- The National network of 28 Federal Executive Boards serves as the cornerstone for strategic partnering in Government.
- Invited representatives from The Minnesota Employment First Coalition to present on the topic of customized employment to the Federal Executive Board in 2008 to create awareness and increased job opportunities within federal government agencies.

Appendix B

Selected feedback from the Business Leadership Session at Employment First Summit II

- The Business Leadership Summit exceeded my expectations!
- Wow! The corporate initiatives shared by Best Buy and Walgreens were overwhelming.
- Enlightening testimonials. Good information and contacts provided.
- Very positive. Companies sharing what they do with other companies will help everyone.
- Engaging, enlightening, and energizing. All of the presentations were excellent.
- The examples and stories shared were great. Business-to-business approaches will work if you get the decision makers involved.
- What is my reaction? How far behind my organization is!
- Genuine, candid, and honest opinions were presented even when they had to offer opinions contrary to their company's policies.
- There is so much that a company can do. We are all faced with the same issues.
- I need to better acquaint myself with tools and contacts with people associated with employment first.
- I would like a copy of the videos presented.
- We need speakers to come and present opportunities to our company.

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- I would like to prepare an article for our trade publication to share opportunities with our members.

Selected Feedback from the Scorecard Session at Employment First Summit II

- We need business at the table.
- We need to share more success stories about people who are employed.
- We need other counties to follow Ramsey County and gather data which can lead to policy change.
- We need to elevate awareness about employment first.
- We need to increase the expectations of children with disabilities.
- In 2009, all of Minnesota will be resource mapped. This will be beneficial for youth in transition.
- More education needs to be done in the mental health area.
- Schools need to play an important part in employment. They need to track employment success following transition and create more partnerships in the community.
- Schools don't have enough time to build business partnerships effectively.
- We need to move employment first policy philosophy to policy. There needs to be more action than theory.
- Assistive technology can be a huge component toward employment and it can be done cheap.
- Failing to provide someone with employment is a failure!
- We need mental health to be seen and heard in the disability arena.
- Diversity Recruitment Resource vs. Hire Someone with a Disability? What approach works well with business?

We need better marketing strategies that use person first presentations.

- We need to rebrand SSB and focus on the strengths and skills of people using a more positive business marketing strategy.

This document was prepared with support from a Competitive Employment Systems-Medicaid Infrastructure Grant from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to Minnesota's Department of Human Services (Grant #1QACMS030325). The funds for this grant were authorized through the Ticket to Work-Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 (Public Law 106-170). Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance 93768.

