



FACT SHEET

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE (DEI)

DEI Objectives Align with Career Pathways Framework

- Build Cross-Agency Partnerships and Clarify Roles;
- Identify Industry Sectors and Engage Employers;
- Design Education and Training Programs;
- Identify Funding Needs and Sources;
- Align Policies and Programs; and
- Measure Systems Change and Performance

About DEI

This is the eighth round of funding. Since 2010, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has awarded grants to 55 projects in 30 states to improve education, training, and employment outcomes of youth and adults with disabilities totaling approximately \$139 million. DEI is jointly funded with the DOL's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and administered by the Employment and Training Administration (ETA).

Round VIII DEI Projects

Under this new round of funding, grantees will make more strategic use of a career pathways framework to improve training and employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)-funded employment and training services, in partnership with vocational rehabilitation, community colleges and other education entities, human service agencies, and business partners. The projects will drive improved coordination between the public workforce system and industry to help businesses meet their workforce needs by recruiting, hiring, and training individuals with disabilities.

DEI Strategic Approaches

Projects funded under DEI prepare state agencies to accomplish the high quality integrated workforce service envisioned by WIOA for people with disabilities. This round seeks to accomplish the following three overarching goals:

1. Increase access to and the participation of individuals with disabilities in WIOA-funded employment and training services, particularly those related to career pathways, in partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs; community colleges and other education entities; human service agencies; and business partners;
2. Improve training and employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities and support businesses; and
3. Increase the number of workforce entities functioning as Employment Networks (EN). An EN is an entity that enters into an agreement with the Social Security Administration (SSA) to either provide or coordinate the delivery of services to SSA disability beneficiaries.

Expanding Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities

- **Seamless Customer-Focused American Job Centers:** DEI strategies support WIOA's focus for excellent customer service from all walks of life. For example, the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach helps coordinate services and leverage funding across programs and systems to meet the needs of a job seeker with a disability. IRTs allow coordination to be maximized and duplication to be minimized with services.
- **Improved Coordination with Businesses:** Through facilitating employer engagement, DEI projects drive improved coordination between the public workforce system and industry to help businesses overcome barriers to recruiting, hiring, and training individuals with disabilities.
- **DEI Outcomes:** DEI strategies facilitate improvements in the delivery of services to individuals with disabilities through the public workforce system. The independent ODEP Evaluation of the DEI projects documents an increase in the enrollment of and service to individuals with disabilities at American Job Centers.

