



MINNESOTA

E1 MN Interagency Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes for September 16, 2021

Time: 9:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.

Location: Zoom Video Meeting

Advisory Committee Co-Chairs in alphabetical order:

- Natasha Jerde, Director, State Services for the Blind (DEED/SSB)
- Lesli Kerkhoff, Human Services Manager, Disability Services Division (DHS/DSD)
- Chris McVey, Director of Strategic Initiatives, Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DEED/VRS)

Membership and Stakeholder Representation on pages 2-3

Facilitation and Documentation: Holly Johnson, Lanterna Consulting, Inc. contracted through Management Analysis & Development, Minnesota Management and Budget

Advisory Committee Overview:

The **Interagency Employment First Advisory Committee** is a voluntary 14-member committee representing diverse stakeholders' perspectives from around the state including individuals and their families, support professionals, and advocacy organizations. The committee is an important part of a state agency partnership to fulfill the interagency agreement between Minnesota's Department of Employment and Economic Development and the Department of Human Services that was formalized in the September 2019 joint memorandum of understanding which can be read here:

<https://disabilityhubmn.org/media/hirdrm05/dhs-deed-mou.pdf>

The committee's role is an advisory role established as part of the agreement to assist and inform the interagency partnership in the complex work of creating a more seamless and timely employment support system for people on HCBS waivers seeking competitive integrated employment.

The committee will meet bi-monthly over the next 18 months to assist the interagency work in preparation for replacement of the current interim guidance and implementation of enhanced interagency services in summer 2021.

Meetings will be hosted on Thursdays from 9:00am to 12:00pm on the following dates:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| • May 21, 2020 -
Kickoff | • November 19, 2020 | • July 15, 2021 |
| • July 16, 2020 | • January 21, 2021 | • September 16, 2021 |
| • September 17, 2020 | • March 18, 2021 | • November 18, 2021 |
| | • May 20, 2021 | |

Best Source of Information: <https://disabilityhubmn.org/for-professionals/work/e1mn/>



E1 MN Interagency Advisory Committee

Membership attendance in alphabetical order:

Name	Stakeholder Representative Appointment	Attended	Did Not Attend
Jon Alexander	Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)	✓	
Tim Dickie	Minnesota Organization for Habilitation and Rehabilitation (MOHR)	✓	
Jessica Eggert	People receiving services & their families or supports	✓	
John Filek	Deaf Blind service provider		✓
April Ildvad – resigned Jan 2021	Broader stakeholder community (Mental health, brain injury specialist)		✓
Danielle Mahoney	University of Minnesota’s Institute on Community Integration	✓	
Alicia Munson	Advocacy organization for people with disabilities (The Arc Minnesota)	✓	
Jillian Nelson	Advocacy organization for people with disabilities (Autism Society of Minnesota / The Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities)		✓
Julie Peterschick	VRS Community Partners Committee (CPC), formerly known as VRS Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) Advisory Committee	✓	
Kristina Petronko	Client Assistance Project (CAP), Minnesota Disability Law Center	✓	
Yekaterna (Kate) Probert Fagundes	Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA) Metro Minnesota representative	✓	
Phyllis Reller	Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA) Greater Minnesota representative	✓	
Rita Wiersma	Association of Residential Resources in Minnesota (ARRM)		✓
Barb Ziemke	People receiving services & their families or supports	✓	



MINNESOTA

E1 MN Interagency Advisory Committee

DEED VRS/SSB and DHS staff attendance in alphabetical order:

Name	Agency and Responsibility	Attended	Did Not Attend
Beth Grube	Benefits Planning Coordinator for Disability Services Division (DHS)		✓
Amanda Jensen-Stahl	Program Specialist for Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DEED)	✓	
Natasha Jerde	Director of State Services for the Blind (DEED)	✓	
Leslie Kerkhoff	Human Services Manager, Disability Services Division (DHS)	✓	
Chris McVey	Director of Strategic Initiatives for Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DEED)	✓	
Ryan Merz	Employment Planning and Resource Coordinator for Disability Services Division (DHS)	✓	

Meeting Minutes for September 16, 2021

Meeting Objectives

Our objectives for the July 2021 Advisory Committee meeting are to:

1. Gather advisory members' feedback and impressions regarding how the first 2.5 months after E1MN launch have gone and advice moving forward for continued progress.
2. Provide a draft outline of a proposed E1MN regional meeting series for Q4 2021/Q1-Q2 2022 and gather advisory feedback on the content and mechanics for meeting design purposes.
3. Engage the committee in an open, respectful forum to discuss their experiences as an interagency advisory over the past 16 months and to gather their thoughts about what makes sense moving forward once the initial 18 months commitment is completed in November 2021.

Agenda Topics

1. Reflections on the First 2.5 Months Post Launch of E1MN
2. Designing Regional Meetings for Stronger Local Teams
3. Thinking About the E1MN Advisory Committee

MINNESOTA

E1 MN Interagency Advisory Committee

Welcome and Opening

The meeting was called to order at 9:00am by facilitator Holly Johnson who provided an overview of the meeting agenda.

Discussion

Agenda Item #1: Reflections on the First 2.5 Months Post Launch of E1MN	
60 minutes	Facilitated by Holly Johnson

Holly asked the advisory committee to provide their reflections on the first two and a half months since the replacement of the DHS interim guidance and the implementation of E1 MN on July 1, 2021. The committee responded using the four preparation questions that were sent in advance of the meeting.

Advisory feedback for the focus questions is documented below:

- 1.a.** What aspects of E1MN are you finding helpful and/or important to share with others? Who are you sharing the information with? e.g., staff, families, other stakeholders
- Most of our effort is focused on staff. As an advocacy organization, we are trying to help families understand what E1MN is and who it applies to. We are specifically focused on reaching the slice of the people with disabilities and their families that E1MN is designed for. We're also working to share information with the schools.
 - Schools need to be included in the loop.
 - We're trying to get the details out to county case managers. It's been challenging with all the other changes they are also absorbing at the same time.
 - I have been sharing the information, tools, and resources with our internal team members who field requests for support through individualized advocacy. Primarily, I've asked them to explore MyVault so they can be prepared to help support an individual or family with establishing an account and understanding the benefits.
 - We have been featuring information about E1MN in our biweekly public policy newsletter.
 - I haven't heard much from families in terms of questions at this point. I'm not sure how much they are aware of the changes.
 - Personally, there is so much to read, absorb and think about that I have found it is better to take it one section at a time and look at it more like puzzle pieces. I experience the FAQ as intense, and it appears to be written for professionals. I am concerned that it is a lot of information for individuals to process so I think there may be people in the deafblind community that won't use it. We need to find other ways to make this information more accessible for individuals and families.

E1 MN Interagency Advisory Committee

1.b. What responses are you getting? What are the biggest positives? What are the most frequent questions/points of confusion?

- I think county case workers, providers and VR counselors are really working to understand the details. I feel like the next leg of work is fine tuning the specifics and building understanding so that teams understand how to make the appropriate referrals in an individualized way vs trying to compartmentalize in a cookie cutter way for lack of a better word.
- It is not always a 'straight arrow' through the Engage, Plan, Find, Keep sequence. People can enter at different places in the process depending on their needs and may need to circle back to earlier phases. It can become extremely confusing for county social workers to understand what they are getting.
- There are some concerns regarding waiver billing for interpreters for the deafblind community.
- SSB provides time limited services while waivers are not time limited. There are very few dual enrolled providers who can provide work coaches with signing skills.
- 'Employment First' language is used beyond E1MN so we are working to clarify across the various applications and audiences to reduce confusion.
- We need more help creating clear rules and intentions to help staff and team members understand their roles and collaborate better.

1.c. Are you using any tools and resources from the Disability HUB website? If so, which ones and how are they working?

- We are using Charting the Life Course and DB101 for benefits calculations. Agreement from other members on the value of practical budgeting/benefits planning financial tools.
- We consistently refer people to Disability HUB, and share Charting the LifeCourse resources often.
- Kaposia has our own tools we are using.
- We are trying to raise more awareness of Disability HUB and MyVault. Schools have a high need for better understanding of these tools and resources.
- The Engage, Plan, Find, Keep (EPFK) framework is a good visual tool.
- We like the EPFK visual too however the services do not necessarily occur sequentially as depicted so it's important to help people understand the 'right services' are based on where the individual is at in their own employment journey. Agreement that employment services should always be person centered and tools should serve not lead.
- County case managers are feeling overwhelmed by the wide variety of tools and understanding when and how specific tools are used and by who.

E1 MN Interagency Advisory Committee

1.d. Are you developing any internal staff training? If so, what's the focus?

- We really appreciated the 'mini-conference' focused on Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) that was recently hosted by Alyssa Klein, VRS, and Lyndsey Horowitz, MDE. It would be great to make that available to other organizations/groups.
- Productive Alternatives is interested in creating a new referral form to better support the process. Other committee members – particularly providers and county case manager representatives - expressed a high level of interest in a form like this.

Agenda Item #2 : Designing Regional Meetings for Stronger Local Teams

40 minutes

Overview by Ryan Merz and advisory input facilitated by Holly Johnson

Ryan introduced the advisory committee to the interagency steering team's initial concepts and schedule planned for regional meetings in late 2021 through middle of 2022. The regional meetings will be conducted in five geographic regions that cover the entire state. They will be designed for disability employment service professionals including agency staff, county employed and county contracted case managers, community partner providers, and other key team members. Advisory members asked whether the sessions would include individuals participating in the services and their families. Ryan clarified that the regional meetings are being specifically designed with service professionals in mind.

After the overview of plans and desired outcomes, Holly invited the committee to provide feedback and engage in discussion using the six questions that were sent to the advisory in advance as part of the meeting preparation.

Advisory feedback for the focus questions is documented below:

2.a. One of our goals is to help regional/local areas build strong, self-sustaining collaborative networks for disability employment services. How can we use the regional meeting series to build and energize local collaborations?

- For local collaborations to work, it's crucial that case managers and VRS/SSB staff understand each other's roles. The responsibility range for county case managers can vary widely. For example, I have one case manager in Grant County and two in Pope County. That's it. With so few staff, they do it all - they are not siloed into one part of a job that they can focus on.
- Members agreed that it is important to include contracted case managers.
- Members asked if schools would be invited to these regional meetings and Ryan replied that this initial round of meetings will be designed for agency, county, advocacy, and service provider professionals. He agreed that while schools are important members on many student

E1 MN Interagency Advisory Committee

teams, they will not be included in this initial round of meetings. The steering team will discuss ways to include schools through other venues and future opportunities.

- I appreciate that you're planning accessibility features (ASL, CART) at each of the events and that you plan to make recordings of the sessions available.

2.b. Knowing we have limited time (~2 hours), what topics are most important to include?

- The Engage/Plan/Find/Keep framework and guidelines for referral.
- Discuss the need and value of flexibility in the flow that people can utilize the different services and then open the floor to providers to talk about how they make it work.
- From what I am hearing at the MOHR conference, a high priority would be ensuring that the county case managers are clear about E1MN - I think that should be the first priority for these meetings - at least for the first one - glad the meetings are being recorded for that reason.
- Discussion around exploration vs development on the waiver- there is overlap and there are questions on this. I also think a reminder of billing codes will be helpful.
- I think 2 hours would be challenging to offer breakout sessions but I love the idea of highlighting and giving examples of use and benefit.
- I like breakout groups - maybe ask people to weigh in.
- Thinking more about building local collaboration--it's going to be very difficult to do this over a 2-hour Zoom session where a lot of info is being provided. Maybe it should be a "homework" situation where a topic covered in the session is the importance of building partnerships with providers/VR/case managers in the areas served and encouraging those in attendance to reach out to the other agencies in their areas to schedule a meeting with partners to get to know them. You could share some tips like questions to ask during these meetings or important information to find out about other partners.

2.c. What issues or concerns do you think regions should collaborating on right now?

- The need for effective collaboration and greater availability and access to services is particularly high in Greater Minnesota where there are fewer providers to meet the needs.
- It will be important to highlight the high potential positive impact on program participants that E1MN promises and to articulate a high level of support for both employed and contracted case managers to encourage their participation in this 'training' when there are so many other expected and required trainings.

2.d. What best practices for collaboration and working together as a team could we gather/share?

- Understanding the differences between Exploration and Development Services including review of the associated coding changes would help effective collaboration.

E1 MN Interagency Advisory Committee

- On the topic of virtual technologies: members mentioned having challenges with WebEx and Microsoft Teams. There was wide agreement that Zoom seems to work best for large meetings. One member asked if it was possible to live stream on Facebook.
- Understanding the need for virtual meetings, members noted that in-person events are helpful for addressing language barriers.
- Interest was expressed in sharing contact information with those who attend the regional meetings so they can connect beyond the meetings.

2.e. What about input/demos on how to best utilize the HUB tools to support the teamwork?

- There are many providers who have not had a lot of exposure to the tools and best practices for service that we are discussing here or maybe have seen them across an email but don't have a clear idea of application. It would be helpful to provide an overview and follow up with the link to the disability hub and possibly follow up with another round of charting the lifecourse training that was offered a few months ago. Even staff that have taken it could benefit from a refresher. I had several staff take the training before launch but now that we are rolling services out it will probably have more applicability and be more impactful.
- Rolling out the tools, such as Charting the Life and benefits tools, with examples, will mean more to people now that services have been launched.

2.f. How can we build more equity into the meetings?

- I think advisory committee members need to make personal phone calls to underrepresented groups in our local areas. Here it would be to White Earth Reservation. I know they have Waiver Case Managers.
- Members agreed that it will take intentional outreach and relationship building to bring underrepresented communities into the collaboration networks and/or gain access into other existing cultural networks and collaborations.

Agenda Item #3 : Thinking about the E1MN Advisory Committee

40 minutes

Facilitated by Holly Johnson

For the final portion of the meeting, Holly facilitated advisory discussion focused on several aspects of the E1MN Interagency Advisory Committee. This voluntary 14-member advisory committee representing diverse stakeholders' perspectives was created, and is overseen, by the DEED-VRS/SSB and DHS interagency steering team as part of fulfillment of a September 2019 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the agencies.

E1 MN Interagency Advisory Committee

Over the past 16 months, the committee has met bi-monthly to assist the interagency work in preparation for replacement of the interim DHS guidance and implementation of enhanced interagency services that were effective July 1, 2021.

The role of the advisory committee as included in the application materials was to:

1. Provide strategic advice and consultation to the steering team on fulfilling the shared vision and agreements contained within the joint agreement.
2. Provide vital input on implementation of the agreement.
3. Identify opportunities to improve experiences and outcomes for people on waivers who seek competitive, integrated employment through the disability employment services addressed in the agreement.

With original committee terms concluding after the November 18, 2021 meeting, the interagency steering team is interested in hearing feedback on the advisory committee from its current members as it considers possible post launch supports that may be helpful for continued E1MN implementation progress.

Advisory feedback on the focus questions is documented below:

3.a. Revisiting the three roles (listed above) that the E1MN Interagency Advisory Committee was developed for, how did we do as a committee fulfilling each of the three roles?

- Bringing this committee together with authentic engagement gave our interagency team an important sounding board. Together with other stakeholder opportunities, like PIPEin and VIP, the Advisory Committee helped shape both broad and specific implementation design and preparations.
- I think you did a great job getting input from a variety of stakeholder groups.
- I thought we did well. I was so excited when Alex Bartolic (former DHS Director) mentioned the MOU. I agree it is the breaking down of silos.
- At the beginning I was not sure how it could all come together but my understanding grew as we continued working together. I believe we rolled up our sleeves and that our input will be beneficial to communities.

3.b. Reflecting on the last 16 months and 8 meetings of the committee so far...

- What were the highlights/most worthwhile aspects for you? What are you most proud of?
- Knowing what you know now, are there any changes that would have made this committee experience better/more effective for you?
 - It was very rewarding to be part of a 'defining chapter' that will impact people's lives for years to come. Through our conversations, I have a deeper appreciation for the complexity of how many things must come together.

E1 MN Interagency Advisory Committee

- I agree that this was a diverse group in terms of perspectives from within the service system. There are some big gaps in the groups regarding representation of diverse communities throughout our state, though. I suspect the feedback from the committee often missed meeting the unique needs of people in those communities.
- I would like to more fully understand how and where this advisory committee's input impacted the steering committee's work and decisions.
- It was refreshing being part of the positive legacy this group can leave if we really get it right. That is why I participated.

3.c. When you think about all the existing committees and workgroups associated with disability employment services (including but not limited to MOHR, Minnesota Council on Disabilities, Minnesota's Olmstead Subcabinet, etc.), what's unique about this committee in comparison?

- I'm seeing more effective collaboration among state agencies for the good of services.
- Beyond the theory, it feels good to be a part of a committee focused on true application, of making things better, that have direct impact on the quality of services.
- This committee impacts the way services are delivered which makes a huge difference. If we continue to provide input, a committee like this can also help adjust to the inevitable bumps in the road as implementation unfolds.

3.d. With E1MN up and running as planned and the original E1 MN Advisory Committee term coming to an end, the E1MN Steering Team is thinking about what's next. If a revised E1MN Advisory Committee moves forward, do you have input you'd like to offer on...

- Post launch, what could be the unique role/work of a revised committee, compared to other entities, moving forward?
- Thoughts on committee representation mix, size, term length, member expectations?
- Thoughts on logistics and process such as meeting frequency, length, platform, etc.?
 - I think moving forward the heavy lifting of informing and supporting the disability community in the rollout is going to be critical and will take time and repetition.
 - I would love to see a diverse group discuss ways to make tools/resources/information available to members of culturally specific communities across the state, how to leverage E1MN to promote inclusive and individualized employment supports among BIPOC who have disabilities and co-create a language access plan that could inform the work moving forward.
 - I agree we need to engage cultural communities and possibly schools too.
 - Possibly add a MN Choice representative to the committee.
 - Because we have only just begun to roll this out in the state, I expect there will be things coming up that will require flexibility to address issues as they come up and continue to break down any barriers.

E1 MN Interagency Advisory Committee

- I think it's important to gather input on what is working/not working and suggestions from the perspective of the groups we are representing including people with disabilities. This will mean greater accessibility and resources for accommodations.
- Add People of Color and tools for culturally specific communities.
- Develop a language access plan for key tools like the Vault and Disability HUB.
- Gather feedback on waiver services.
- I was pleased to see key players show up at the meetings; that is not always the case on other groups I've been a part of.
- It was helpful to have a neutral facilitator to create the environment so everyone could participate.
- Zoom worked well.
- Going forward, I think we need to really focus on the nitty gritty of implementation and gather information about what's happening at the front lines so we can problem solve, build competency, and make the most of opportunities.
- It would be a shame to lose this advisory group. I'm wondering if we need to add a few other agencies to the table – Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and the Olmstead Implementation Office (OIO) are two that come to mind.
- Consider shifting from bi-monthly to quarterly meetings now that E1MN has launched.

The steering committee thanked the advisory for their feedback and service. They will use the feedback to develop strategies for support of ongoing E1MN implementation efforts.

Meeting Recap

Topic 1: The advisory committee provided feedback on their observations and experiences after 2.5 months since DHS interim guidance was replaced and E1MN was launched on July 1, 2021.

Topic 1: The steering team provided an outline and schedule for E1 MN regional meetings for professionals who provide disability employment services for people with disabilities on waivers seeking competitive, integrated employment. The regional meetings are scheduled to occur late 2021 through mid-2022.

Topic 3: The advisory committee provided input to the interagency steering team regarding their experiences as members of the E1MN Advisory Committee as well as their thoughts on next steps following completion of the original 18-month committee assignment that wraps up year end 2021.

E1 MN Interagency Advisory Committee

Next Steps

1. Here is the link to the Engage, Plan, Find, Keep framework:
<https://disabilityhubmn.org/media/sqsbrsac/e1mn-efpk-framework.pdf>
2. For information on the upcoming regional E1MN collaboration events use this link:
<https://disabilityhubmn.org/news/kickoff-events-support-regional-employment-collaboration/>
3. For a one page Quick Reference Guide on HCPC codes for Waiver Employment Services, use this link: <https://disabilityhubmn.org/media/dheoe02y/waiver-employment-services-quick-reference-guid.pdf>
4. Information on E1 MN training can be found using this link: <https://disabilityhubmn.org/for-professionals/work/e1mn/e1mn-trainings-and-events/>
5. The E1 MN Frequently Asked Questions is available using this link:
<https://disabilityhubmn.org/for-professionals/work/e1mn/frequently-asked-questions/#article-start>
6. Information on supporting people on waivers can be found using this link:
<https://disabilityhubmn.org/for-professionals/work/supporting-people-on-waivers/>
7. A MyVault introduction video (3 minutes) as well as information on planning activities and tools can be found here: <https://disabilityhubmn.org/hub-tools/online-resources/my-vault/?id=1851>
8. To learn more about all the various team roles and responsibilities check out this link:
<https://disabilityhubmn.org/for-professionals/work/the-basics/roles-and-responsibilities/>
9. The final meeting of the E1 MN Interagency Advisory Committee will be on November 18, 2021.

Meeting Adjourned

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00p.m.

** End of document*