



Interagency Employment First Advisory Committee

Background

In September, 2019, the directors of the Department of Employment Economic Development (specifically Vocational Rehabilitation Services and State Services for the Blind, or DEED – VRS/SSB) and the Department of Human Services (DHS) agreed to work together to provide employment services for people with disabilities in a coordinated manner. The result of that agreement is a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that lays the framework for the joint effort. The work outlined in the MOU is being designed in partnership with stakeholders from across the system of employment supports, and it is expected to roll out new guidelines for more coordinated services the summer of 2021.

DEED and DHS will depend on the advisory committee to bring a broad range of stakeholder perspectives to their work as they implement the spirit of the agreement.

Advisory Committee Overview

The Interagency Employment First Advisory Committee will be a voluntary committee overseen by the DEED-VRS/SSB and DHS interagency steering team. The role of the advisory committee is to:

- Provide strategic advice and consultation to the steering team on fulfilling the shared vision and agreements contained within the joint agreement.
- Provide vital input on implementation of the agreement.
- 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.

The advisory committee also will help inform the work of related workgroups and broader stakeholder engagement efforts. Workgroups will be comprised of staff from DEED, DHS and the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). Workgroups will develop the processes, policies, tools, resources and training that will allow the joint agreements to be carried out, with input from the advisory committee as requested.

Member compensation

There will not be compensation or reimbursement for member expenses associated with participation. It is expected that members will have the full support of their respective organizations, if applicable, to participate on the committee.



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Committee Structure

The advisory committee is expected to include 13 representatives appointed by the co-chairs. To be considered for the committee, you must first complete the entire application form and submit it by **March 31, 2020**.

Membership

Six representatives from a broad base of key stakeholders

- Two people who receive HCBS waiver services and who receive or have received VRS or SSB (or their family members/support people)
- One deaf-blind service provider
- Two people from an organization that advocates for people with disabilities (excluding the stakeholder organizations listed below)
- One person who otherwise represents the broader stakeholder community

One representative from each of these seven stakeholder organizations - selected by the organization's leadership.

- Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)
- Association of Residential Resources in Minnesota (ARRM)
- Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA)
- Minnesota Disability Law Center – Client Assistance Project (CAP)
- Minnesota Organization for Habilitation and Rehabilitation (MOHR)
 - MOHR member organization must provide services both as a VRS Community Rehab Provider and as a DHS 245D waiver provider
- VRS Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) Advisory Committee
- University of Minnesota – Institute on Community Integration (UM ICI)

Chairs

Representatives from the state agencies will chair the advisory committee:

- Natasha Jerde, director, State Services for the Blind (DEED),
- Lesli Kerkhoff, human services manager, Disability Services Division (DHS)
- Chris McVey, director of strategic initiatives, Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DEED)

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Liaisons

Four workgroup liaisons will attend, as well:

- Jon Benson (DEED-SSB)
- Amanda Jensen Stahl (DEED-VRS)
- Ryan Merz (DHS-DSD)
- Lindsey Horowitz (MDE)

Vacancies

- **Committee vacancies:** If a member is unable to complete the term of membership, the co-chairs may fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term or leave the position open.
- **Organization representation.** If a member representing a specific organization leaves the organization during the term of membership, the co-chairs may request a new representative from the stakeholder organization.

Member expectations

- **Active participation in meetings:** Members are expected to attend meetings in person. Those who live a significant distance from the meeting location may participate by phone.
- **Adequate meeting preparation:** Members must be willing to review drafts or complete other supporting tasks between meetings.
- **Commitment to working together:** As champions of the MOU's implementation, members must help fulfill the shared vision and agreements listed within the MOU. They must actively represent the larger stakeholder community as well as any group they are directly representing, and engage with others to gather and present input to support the committee's work.
- **Anticipation of training and implementation support needs:** Members will provide launch and post-launch monitoring and support.

Shared values

Membership depends upon the following shared values:

- **Employment First:** The values and guiding principles found in [Minnesota's Employment First Policy](#) will serve as the foundation for the committee's work.
- **Person centeredness:** Committee members will embed person-centered principles in their work to help people move toward meaningful work that builds on their unique interests, strengths and talents.



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- **Collaboration:** Committee members will build coordinated and consistent communication, training and support.
- **Simplicity:** Committee members will develop a system that is easier to understand, implement and navigate.
- **Continuous improvement:** Committee members will engage with stakeholders, leverage promising practices, and use data to adapt efforts and improve outcomes.
- **Resource efficiency:** Committee members will use resources efficiently and within the bounds of federal guidelines and regulations.

Other ways to get involved

Broader stakeholder input will be critical in helping the MOU workgroups fulfill their responsibilities. These opportunities may involve in person events, surveys, conference calls, interviews, or other activities. If you are interested in hearing about these opportunities, please indicate so in the Interests section of the Advisory Committee application or fill out the **Professional Input Panel for Employment** application.

Additional Information

For additional information, email: dsd.employmentfirst@state.mn.us or contact:

Natasha Jerde, Director, State Services for the Blind

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
2200 W. University Ave., Suite #240, St. Paul, MN 55114
Email: natasha.jerde@state.mn.us Phone: 651-539-2272

Chris McVey, Director of Strategic Initiatives, Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
1st National Bank Building, 332 Minnesota St., Suite E200, St. Paul, MN 55101
Email: chris.mcvey@state.mn.us Phone: 651-259-7357

Lesli Kerkhoff, Human Services Manager, Disability Services Division

Minnesota Department of Human Services
P.O. Box 64967, St. Paul, MN 55164-0967
Email: lesli.kerkhoff@state.mn.us Phone: 651-431-2396