

Promoting Disability Employment Awareness

Lead Agency Employment Liaison Meeting

October 1, 2026

- National Disability Employment Awareness Month
- Employment outcomes in Minnesota
- Employment First and benefits of work
- Strategies for talking about employment
- Liaison information and discussion

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- Beth Grube, Benefits Planning Coordinator
- Kristy Howe, Employment First Lead
- Denise Paul, Office and Administrative Assistant Senior



Celebrating Value and Talent
National Disability Employment Awareness Month

  **OFFICE OF DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT POLICY**
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

#NDEAM
dol.gov/odep 

Employment Outcomes

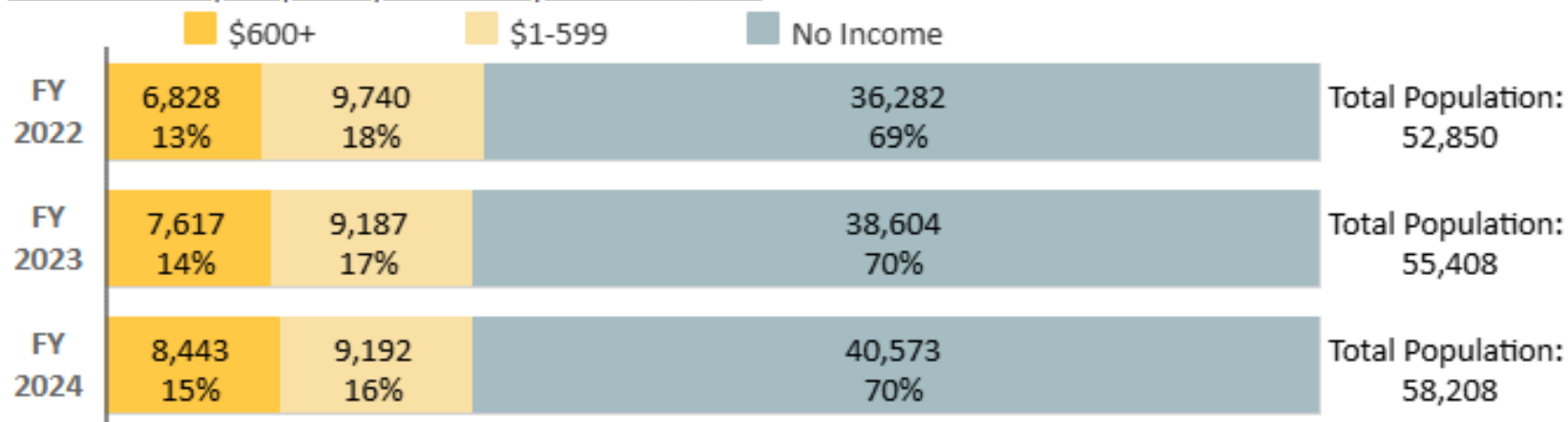
Employment First Data Dashboards / Minnesota Department of Human Services

Earnings

In FY 2024, **17,635** people (**30.3%**) of selected population had earned income. A change of **4.9%** from the previous year.

Of the **17,635** people working **8,443** earned **\$600+ per month** in FY 2024.

Number of people by Monthly Income****



Employment Benefits

- More money and all the things money can get you
- Better physical health
- Better mental health
- Community connections

Employment First

- [Minnesota Employment First Policy](#) means raising the expectation that all working age Minnesotans with disabilities can work, want to work, and can achieve competitive integrated employment; and each person will be offered the opportunity to work and earn a competitive wage before being offered other supports and services.
- Three core values ground the Minnesota Employment First Policy. These core values reflect that people with disabilities, including people who have complex and significant disabilities:
 - Want to work
 - Can be competitively employed or self-employed, earning at least the minimum wage and benefits
 - Should be fully integrated physically, functionally and socially within the workplace

**MAN WITH
DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITY
WILL NOT BATHE**



Employment as a solution



Rethinking What
Works:

Brian's Story

Brian's Story – MTI High Support Needs Pilot

Talking about work

The screenshot shows the Disability Hub MN website. The top navigation bar includes links for Chat, phone number (1-866-333-2466), Email, and Resources For Professionals. The main menu has categories like Top Topics, Your Options, Planning Tools, Family Resources, and Get Involved. On the left, a 'Work Toolkit' sidebar lists 'Prepare yourself', 'Supporting people', and 'Supporting people on waivers'. The main content area is titled '2 Not working, has concerns' and includes a breadcrumb trail: 'For Professionals > Work Toolkit > Supporting people > Not working, has concerns'. The text explains that people with disabilities want to work and enjoy the benefits of being employed, and provides information on how to open conversations about employment.

[Disability Hub MN - Not working, has concerns](#)

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[Disability Hub MN - Not working, wants to work](#)

The worksheet is titled 'STARTING THE CONVERSATION' with the subtitle 'Shifting the Focus to Employment'. It features a green icon of two people talking. The form includes a 'Name:' field and two questions with checkboxes: 'Tell me about past work you have done.' and 'What's your biggest question about work?'. The right side of the worksheet is labeled 'WORKSHEET' vertically.

[SELN-guidance-worksheet-starting-convo-.pdf](#)

Talking about work and benefits - 5 key messages

Disability Hub MN - Talk about work and benefits

Disability

HUB

MN

Chat is Offline | 1-866-333-2466 | Email

Resources For Professionals

Search

Top Topics ▾ | Your Options ▾ | Planning Tools ▾ | Family Resources ▾ | Get Involved ▾

assessment

- The importance of benefits planning
- Roles and responsibilities
- The training levels
- **How to talk about work and benefits**
- Agency strategies

2 Level 1 training: The basics

3 Level 2 training: Go deeper

How to talk about work and benefits

Work and benefits can go together! Here's help for talking to the people you support about work and benefits.

Here are five key things to know and communicate about work and benefits:

- Work and benefits can go together.
- All public benefit programs in Minnesota support work.
- People who work earn more money than those who don't - even if their benefits change.
- Some people with disabilities choose not to work, or limit how much they work, because they fear losing their benefits. Benefits should never be the reason someone chooses not to work.
- Benefits planning helps people see how work is possible, work to their full potential, save money and get ahead financially.



INFO FOR LIAISONS

Your role as liaison

- Employment First champion
 - Support informed choice in employment
 - Help people you support understand options
 - Replace old mindsets and biases
 - Understand and be able to explain/promote customized employment
- Support colleagues to do the same

Discussion:

- What common questions or concerns do you hear about community employment? How do you address them?
- What helps people see work as a solution to problems, instead of something that's added when problems have been solved?
- What messages are most important for people to hear about disability and employment right now?

Announcements

- Next meeting: December 3rd 10:00-11:00
- Office hours
- Today's presentation recording will be uploaded to [Disability Hub MN - Training archive](#), link will be sent out soon

Thank You!