

*Our country succeeds when everyone is given the opportunity to succeed. The grants we are awarding today will increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities by connecting them to job-driven training programs that provide them with the skills to compete for high-demand industry jobs.*

— Secretary of Labor  
Thomas E. Perez

## Background...

The unemployment rate of Americans with disabilities has steadily increased for decades. Hundreds of thousands of potential workers with disabilities have been unable to find employment, increasing their need for government benefits and limiting their ability to be economically self-sufficient and participate in their communities like their employed counterparts. Through a variety of pilot projects, the public workforce system has worked to more systematically address this issue.

These successful strategies provide great potential to assist unemployed and underemployed Americans with disabilities in finding gainful employment to improve their quality of life, reduce their need for supplemental government supports and, ultimately, allow them to strengthen and improve the workforce by becoming a more active part of it. The DEI, along with similar initiatives, supports these efforts by refining and replicating promising practices throughout the public workforce system.

## The DEI Design

The DEI comprises three primary components: cooperative agreements, technical assistance to the grantees and the public workforce system, and evaluation of the grantees' activities to measure their outcomes and impact on both the individuals and the system. The goal of the DEI is to improve the education, training, and employment opportunities and outcomes of youth and adults with disabilities (including individuals with significant disabilities) who are unemployed, underemployed, and/or receiving Social Security disability benefits.



It improves coordination and collaboration across multiple service delivery systems; builds effective state and local partnerships that leverage public and private resources; provides flexible opportunities and access to training and employment of individuals with disabilities (including significant disabilities); and creates systemic change.

A joint effort of the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), the DEI brings together local, state and Federal agencies, as well as community-based agencies and organizations to achieve its goals. Of particular note, the DEI requires that its grantees participate in the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work Program to improve the coordination of services to customers of the public workforce system who also receive Social Security disability benefits.

Since 2010, six rounds of projects have been funded for three-year periods to implement strategies to promote the employment of youth (ages 14-24) and adults (ages 18 and older) with disabilities, and individuals (ages 14 and over) with significant disabilities. Round One (nine) in 2010 at \$22 million; Round Two (seven) in 2011 at \$21 million; Round Three (seven) in 2012 at \$20 million; Round Four (eight) in 2013 at \$18 million; Round Five (six) in 2014 at \$15 million; and a sixth round (six) funded in 2015 at \$15 million.

## For More Information

For more information about the DEI, visit

[https://disability.workforce3one.org/page/tag/dei\\_project](https://disability.workforce3one.org/page/tag/dei_project) and

<http://www.dei-ideas.org>.

*The DEI "will improve the accessibility and accountability of the public workforce development system for individuals with disabilities [and] ...continue promising practices implemented by disability program navigators, including effective deployment of staff in selected States to...better serve individuals with disabilities and improve employment outcomes.*

- The Appropriation Committee Senate Report  
111-66 on H.R. 3292

## DEI Grantees

- \* Alabama (Round 4)
- \* Alaska (Round 1, 4 and 6)
- \* Arkansas (Round 1)
- \* California (Round 2 and 5)
- \* Connecticut (Round 4)
- \* Delaware (Round 1)
- \* Florida (Round 3)
- \* Georgia (Round 6)
- \* Hawaii (Round 2 and 6)
- \* Idaho (Round 4)
- \* Illinois (Round 1, 4 and 5)
- \* Indiana (Round 3)
- \* Iowa (Round 3 and 6)
- \* Kansas (Round 1 and 5)
- \* Louisiana (Round 3)
- \* Maine (Round 1 and 4)
- \* Massachusetts (Round 3 and 5)
- \* Minnesota (Round 3 and 5)
- \* New Jersey (Round 1)
- \* New York (Round 1, 4 and 6)
- \* Ohio (Round 2)
- \* Rhode Island (Round 3)
- \* South Dakota (Round 2 and 5)
- \* Tennessee (Round 2)
- \* Virginia (Round 1 and 4)
- \* Washington (Round 2 and 6)
- \* Wisconsin (Round 2)



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