



MINNESOTA – Incorporating Youth Guideposts for Success

The Challenge: Youth with disabilities often face complex challenges in transitioning from school to employment and economic self-sufficiency. American Job Center staff need targeted resources that support youth with disabilities to successfully transition from school to postsecondary education, employment, and independent living.

The Strategy: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) outlines a broad youth vision that supports an integrated service delivery system and provides a framework through which states and local areas can leverage Federal, state, and local resources to support youth. To build on this vision, the Minnesota Disability Employment Initiative (MN DEI) project historically used the elements identified in the Guideposts for Success as a framework to support its everyday work. As background, the Guideposts, developed by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth, identify educational and career development interventions to promote employment success of all youth, including youth with disabilities. Against this national tool, both the Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights (PACER) and the MN DEI youth project, sought to develop a more state-focused guide to help better support Minnesota's workforce system to help youth with disabilities meet their career goals. Together, they established a goal to integrate a more targeted framework to help MN youth program case managers integrate the Guideposts in not only the assessment process, but also in a youth's Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

The Implementation Plan: To implement the above strategy, both the PACER Center and MN DEI developed a resource product titled [*Incorporating the Guideposts for Success in Minnesota's Personal Learning Plan Process*](#). This resource provides case studies that are a combination of real-world experiences faced by MN DEI local Disability Resource Coordinators (DRCs) and other practitioners using resources in the state. The tool defines key terms and key strategies such as Individualized Learning Plans, Integrated Resource Teams, and Career Pathways. There is also technical assistance shared on how to apply Guidepost elements to out-of-school youth.

Beyond the strong content provided, [*Incorporating the Guideposts*](#) was purposely designed to include easy to read tables and worksheets for ease of reference by the user. For instance, the WIOA Program Elements Table breaks down each WIOA element and pairs it with a specific corresponding Guidepost element; a table for each Guidepost breaks down potential activities by type and person/agency responsible; and A Youth Action Plan worksheet was developed that can be used to help break down each Guidepost element combined with providing individualized and clear direction.

DEI Success Story: Cory Schmid, MN DEI project's state lead, shared that "Implementation of [*Incorporating the Guideposts for Success into Minnesota's Personal Learning Plan Process*](#) has helped make the job of assisting youth in WIOA programs much more effective and clear". To help illustrate, the following is a story about Trever, a 17-year junior in high school with Autism and a WIOA Youth customer from the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council local American Job Center DEI demonstration site. The road map to his success is outlined below against each of the Guideposts as a guiding framework:

- *Guidepost 3 - Youth Development and Leadership*: Trever met with American Job Center staff beginning in 2016 on a monthly basis to receive mentoring and monthly support.
- *Guidepost 1 - School-Based Preparatory Experiences*: Trever started working with the janitorial staff at his high school starting in August of 2016 through a work experience sponsored by the American Job Center with the help of a Pre-Employment Transition Services grant. In November 2016, Trever successfully completed a 16-credit welding certificate program offered at his school high school in partnership with Minnesota West Community and Technical College and the AJC. Trever graduated from high school in June of 2017.
- *Guidepost 2 - Career Preparation and Work-Based Learning Experiences*: Trever started his welding work experience in July 2017 at CW Welding in Vesta, MN to build on his certificate in welding.
- *Guidepost 4 - Connecting Activities*: In January of 2018, Trever began full time, unsubsidized employment with CW Welding. Trever also connected with other agencies in the area in which he received support from a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and an Independent Living Specialist. This additional support in collaboration with the American Job Center helped Trever reach his employment goal.
- *Guidepost 5 - Family Involvement and Supports*: Throughout this process, Trever's mother was engaged with the school and others in the support system.

Overall, Leah Hastad, DEI DRC Coordinator observed that the combination of the implementation of [*Incorporating the Guideposts*](#) as a road map combined with Trever's commitment to do the work helped him achieve his education and employment goals. Today, Trever does not feel he needs to rely on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) because he is able to support himself through full time employment in a high demand field.

Key Career Pathway Elements:

- Design Education and Training Programs
- Identify Funding Needs and Sources
- Align Policies and Programs
- Build Cross-Agency Partnerships and Clarify Roles

Additional Resources on this Topic:

- [National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth \(NCWD/Youth\)](#): NCWD/Youth assists state and local workforce development systems to better serve all youth, including youth with disabilities and other disconnected youth. It serves as a source for information, strategies and solutions around transition and workforce development for youth with disabilities.
 - [Guideposts for Success](#): The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth has identified Guideposts for Success based on what research tells us that all youth need to transition to adulthood successfully. The Guideposts provide a statement of principles; a direction that will lead to better outcomes for all young people; and, a way to organize policy and practice.
- [WorkforceGPS Disability and Employment Community](#): An online resource destination for the American Job Center network, people with disabilities, and employers. In addition, this is a resource for all key stakeholders who partner with the workforce system to provide services and programs to people with disabilities and other barriers to employment.
 - [Youth with Disabilities](#): Check out the resources to support workforce professionals and others to help ensure that youth with disabilities and their families have access to services that can facilitate a seamless transition during the formative years of development.
- [Integrated Resource Team \(IRT\) Information and Resources](#): This page provides an overview of the IRT.
- [WorkforceGPS Youth Connections Community](#): An online resource for public workforce system staff and partners who serve youth. This site provides a central community for youth workforce practitioners and stakeholders to access technical assistance tools, and share knowledge and expertise with peers.
- [WorkforceGPS Career Pathways Community](#): An online resource that helps workforce development leaders, practitioners, and policymakers expand state and local career pathways efforts. The collection of resources will enhance knowledge, skills, and expertise in building effective career pathways systems
- [Kickstart Your ILP Toolkit](#): This guide can help Kickstart an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) by addressing five key questions to help you get started.