



WISCONSIN BOARD FOR PEOPLE
WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Let's Get to Work Project Request for Proposals

Youth with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD) experience some of the lowest rates of employment of all student groups, both nationally and in Wisconsin. A recent Wisconsin study found only 16% of students with I/DD had paid employment outside of facility-based settings (Carter, et. Al., 2010). Contrast that to the employment of youth without disabilities in the same communities, who experienced a nearly 66% rate of employment in the same time period. This low employment rate continues into adulthood, where only 9-14% of people with developmental disabilities participating in Wisconsin's long-term care system are engaged in community-based, competitive-wage employment.

Many barriers contribute to this challenge. The Let's Get to Work project is designed to support schools and communities seeking to improve the integrated, community-based employment of youth with I/DD. By focusing on the assets of schools and communities, elevating community expectations, and expanding opportunities for youth while still in high school, this project will allow up to four schools to use a set of specific strategies that include generous funding and on-the-ground coaching and technical assistance.

What is the goal of this project?

The overall goal of this project is to increase the number of transition-age youth with I/DD who are participating in integrated, community employment in Wisconsin and nationally.

What do we mean by integrated employment?

Integrated Employment refers to working for a competitive wage in a community-based job (i.e., a job that is *not* based in a separate facility and/or that pays sub-minimum wages). The employment must be in a work setting where, to the extent the employment typically involves interaction with others, the interaction is predominantly with co-workers or business associates who do not have disabilities or with the general public.

What do schools get from these grants?

To help school teams carry out promising approaches for supporting youth with disabilities more fully in their schools, workplaces, and communities, we will

award up to four grants that start February 1, 2012, and have the option of continuing on a step-down payment basis for up to three years.

These grants offer:

Funding

Each grant recipient will receive a grant not to exceed \$20,000 in the first year. Schools will be evaluated for possible continuation grants for the 2012-2013 school year. These funds are designed to support the development and implementation of integrated employment activities in your school and community.

Coaching Team (Technical Support)

Each grant recipient will be expected to work closely with a Coaching Team that includes a variety of content experts and project partners. The Coaching Team will provide training and technical assistance to assist schools in carrying out their project within their school and community. Implementation strategies that can include job development, working with businesses, job carving, fading supports and natural supports, will be available through on-site coaching. In addition, community-based training and other supports will be available to support grant recipients. All four school sites will be expected to participate in a regular learning collaborative designed to ensure that shared learning is happening throughout the project. A designated person from each school site will also be expected to take part in the projects Consortium group that guides the overall project. The technical support offered to each school in the project for one year is worth \$16,000.

Who can apply?

Any Wisconsin high school that works with transition age youth with I/DD, ages 15 to 17. More than one school district may collaborate on an application. ***Students with I/DD include students with autism, intellectual/cognitive disabilities, multiple disabilities and any other student who would qualify for the long term care system as an adult.*** It is expected that a successful applicant will actively involve the following stakeholders throughout the process:

- Youth with disabilities
- Youth without disabilities
- Families
- Broader community (e.g. employers)
- At least one parent

Other team members might include community rehabilitation programs, extracurricular club sponsors, coaches, guidance counselors, school psychologists, recreation program sponsors, youth program leaders, volunteer coordinators, faith-based leaders, and others involved in youth efforts in your community.

What activities does this project include?

The project will provide resources and supports so schools can implement evidence-based practices and test the efficacy of potential systemic and policy changes that ultimately lead to increased opportunities for youth with disabilities to achieve competitive, integrated employment in their community. These intervention strategies focus heavily on expanding the experiences, opportunities, and relationships that all youth with I/DD need to develop while still in school to prepare them for adulthood and the world of work. With that in mind, the intervention will include the following activities:

- **Identify a minimum of five participating students** with I/DD based on the following documented disabilities: intellectual/cognitive disability, multiple disabilities, autism and any other student who would qualify for the long term care system as an adult.
- Initiate **person-centered planning** with selected youth and their families starting at age 15, to identify strengths, interests, career goals, and direction for course of study and extra-curricular/volunteer involvement while in high school.
- Develop a **school-wide opportunity mapping team** of students with and without disabilities, special and general education teachers, guidance counselors, and any others with interest in identifying the opportunities that exist through the school and community for all youth, as well as the paid and natural supports youth with disabilities might need to participate. (Schools will be provided with an established mapping tool and training/coaching as needed.)
- Initiate a **community action team** to support youth employment, as well as elevate awareness and expectations about integrated, community employment for youth with I/DD using the World Café/Community Conversations model (theworldcafe.com). (Schools will be provided with a toolkit for hosting a World Café/Community Conversation and receive training/coaching as needed).
- Allow and support selected students to take a full range of **general education classes and participate in extra-curricular activities and community volunteer/youth leadership activities** as they relate to the students' interests and career goals.
- Identify and connect youth to **paid and volunteer work experiences with appropriate supports**, including natural and fading supports that align with student interests and strengths, and are exclusively community-based.
- Connect students and their families to **information on post-secondary and career options, work incentive benefits counseling, and community activities**, starting no later than age 15.
- Agree to participate in bi-monthly (six per year) **Learning Collaborative** for team leaders to share their successes and problem solve with each other.
- Agree to administer project specific **attitudinal surveys** and participate in **project evaluation** to document efficacy of intervention strategies.

- Agree to work closely with **Coaching Team** (technical assistance) at least once per quarter.
- Participate in the **Consortium** that steers the overall Let's Get to Work grant (quarterly meetings).
- Inform youth and their parents about the **services offered by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Department of Health Services** so the family can decide if they should be invited to the Individualized Education Program meeting.

What are school/community teams committing to?

- Adherence to the set of intervention strategies that will be provided to your team.
- Implementation of your proposed project activities at your site; must continue through the summer months for a full 12-month year.
- Regular contact and collaboration with the Coaching Team.
- Agree to work with us as we seek to evaluate the impact of project activities on youth with disabilities in their school. This may involve being periodically interviewed by our project staff, having some project activities videotaped (with student and parent permission, of course), and sharing feedback through surveys or other avenues.
- Development of an end-of-year report detailing the activities you have implemented, the impact these activities have had on youth with disabilities, and future plans to continue or expand their project.
- Full participation in the Learning Collaborative and Consortium.

What outcomes should we aim toward?

The two main outcomes of the project include:

- 1) Increases in integrated, community employment rates of youth with I/DD;
- and
- 2) Changes in stakeholder attitudes about the employability of youth with I/DD.

Therefore, strong proposals will include specific outcomes related to your school's capacity in the areas detailed above. For example:

- At least X youth will participate in community-based, integrated employment.
- X youth will participate in at least one general education course.
- The number of youth with disabilities in our school participating in one or more extracurricular or club activities will increase by X%.
- The number of youth with disabilities engaging in volunteer or service-learning experiences will increase by X%.
- At least X% of youth, families, and school staff will report increased knowledge and understanding of employment options after high school.
- Participating communities will have an increased understanding of the value of including youth with disabilities in community activities.

Critical dates and selection process

- The call for proposals will be disseminated beginning **November 18, 2011.**
- Question & Answer call **3:30 pm on December 13, 2011. Call toll-free, 866-390-1828 and enter code: 4752477.**
- Applications are due by **4:30 pm on January 17, 2012.**
- Award notifications will be released **February 1, 2012.**
- First Learning Collaborative call **February 14, 2012.**
- Let's Get to Work Consortium meeting **mid to late February, 2012.**

Applications will be reviewed by committee and ranked based on selection criteria that include:

- Planning team membership
- Level of school and community involvement
- Strategies to connect youth to employment and other opportunities
- Ideas for project sustainability after funding ends
- Geographic diversity

Additional Questions?

Please submit all questions electronically to Jenny Neugart at Jennifer.neugart@wisconsin.gov.

Applications should be returned to (electronic submissions preferred):

Jenny Neugart, Project Coordinator
WI Board for People with Developmental Disabilities
201 W. Washington Ave, Ste 110
Madison, WI 53703
Jennifer.neugart@wisconsin.gov

Carter, E. W., Trainor, A.A., Cakiroglu, O., Swedeen, B., & Owens, L.A. (2010). Availability of and access to career development activities for transition-age youth with disabilities. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 33(1), 13-24.*

Let's Get to Work Project Application

Application should include:

1. A written response to the questions below (not to exceed 10 single spaced pages total);
2. A work plan/timeline (see attached);
3. Letter(s) of support from school administration demonstrating support of your participation in this project, if selected;
4. A detailed budget.

Typical expenses might include the following: teacher buy out time to attend trainings (be sure to budget for quarterly Consortium meetings in Madison; team members are strongly encouraged to attend); registration, food and mileage reimbursement for state and national trainings (may include youth and parents); costs for hosting community awareness events; outreach activities.

It is expected that equipment costs would not exceed \$1500. Equipment costs should be clearly explained and should focus on technology that incorporates Universal Design for Learning (UDL) concepts.

Grant funds cannot be used to pay youth stipends to cover typical fees such as club dues or to supplant staff time in the summer months.

Lead Applicant:

Project Leader/Champion:

Address:

Telephone:

E-mail address:

1. List the members of your team and their roles within your school or community (e.g. principal, general education teacher, employer, etc.). Please include a plan for how you will continuously draw in the broader community.
2. Please describe your current successes *and* challenges when it comes to employment of youth with I/DD in your school and community.
3. Based on the requirements of the project, please describe why you think your school is ready to take on this project. At a minimum, please be sure to specifically address the following areas:
 - a) access to the general education curriculum,
 - b) access to extra-curricular activities,
 - c) your capacity to find integrated, competitive employment for youth with I/DD and,
 - d) a plan for providing summer employment to youth participants,
 - e) a plan for putting together a community action team.

4. What types of support (e.g. technical assistance, information, resources) do you anticipate needing to carry out this project successfully?
5. What supports and resources can you expect to receive from your school and community?
6. What are your expected outcomes? Be sure they are specific and measurable.
7. How will you measure the impact of your project on youth with disabilities in your school? On others in your school and community (e.g., families, educators, peers, employers, etc.)?
8. What ideas do you have that might sustain increased integrated employment opportunities for youth with disabilities in your school and community beyond the grant funding.
9. What ideas do you have for sharing your results with your community?

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WI Board for People with Developmental Disabilities
201 W. Washington Ave, Ste 110
Madison, WI 53703

**Let's Get to Work Project Workplan
2011-2012**

Lead Applicant Name:

Project Leader/Champion Phone/Email:

Detailed Activities

Outputs/ Deliverables

Timeline

Expected Outcomes

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