

W News from THE WALLACE GROUP

P.O. Box 21303, Eagan, MN 55121
3750 Pilot Knob Road, Eagan, MN 55122
(651) 452-9800 (651) 452-3504 fax

ProAct, Inc.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For further information, contact:

Heather Deutschlaender, ProAct, Inc., 651-289-3163, heatherd@proactinc.org

Aaron Hustedde, The Wallace Group, 651-452-9800, aaron@wallacegroup.com

STATE GOVERNMENT INNOVATION AWARD GOES TO ‘WAY TO WORK’ PROGRAM THROUGH PROACT IN DAKOTA COUNTY WHICH PLACED PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN COMPETITIVE JOBS

Nonprofit was key to finding jobs for 32 thus far in collaboration with DEED/Voc Rehab Services, Dakota County Social Services and Minnesota Department of Human Services

“Way to Work,” a Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation Services program in partnership with ProAct, Inc. in Eagan, county and state level human service agencies was named for a 2017 Minnesota State Government Innovation Award. The effort helped place people with disabilities in competitive jobs.

“Our employment specialists were dedicated and passionate about this pilot project,” said ProAct Employment Manager Heather Deutschlaender. “We are excited as we continue to place more people in jobs and help them reach their goals.” The unique arrangement brought vocational rehabilitation services counselors in-house at ProAct for intensified efforts to find employment for individuals with disabilities. These worked with ProAct employment specialists and vocational specialists to rapidly engage people in job searches that best matched their interests.

Way to Work assisted 94 such individuals at ProAct, placing 32 in competitive jobs. Thirty-two others are actively engaged in community based job searches and 21 are developing their career plans.

Way to Work wins state award/page two

“They are earning an income and paying taxes, and are consequently less dependent on federal and state benefits than before,” according to the state award announcement. Wages for these individuals now range from \$9.50 to \$11 per hour. “The best part about this project is that it is a win-win for employers and our individuals,” said Deuschlaender.

Way to Work accepted applicants at ProAct through June of 2017, but the best practices learned through the program are expected to continue here, and through the statewide service delivery system administered by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development and its Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. A video about the project is viewable at vimeo.com/227624636

ProAct is headquartered in Eagan and has additional operations in Red Wing, Zumbrota and in Hudson, Wis. Its mission is to provide person-centered services that enhance the quality of life for people with disabilities in the areas of employment, life skills, and community inclusion.

More about the State Government Innovation Awards: <http://sgia.umn.edu/>

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