



Extended Employment Program for People Living With Serious Mental Illnesses (EE-SMI)

What is EE-SMI?

The Extended Employment Program for People with Serious Mental Illnesses (EE-SMI) helps people living with serious mental illnesses find and maintain a job. EE-SMI provides individualized support to help people find employment, on-going training to help people be successful in their jobs and assistance to employers to make reasonable accommodations for their employees with serious mental illnesses. Individual supports offered through EE-SMI include: job coaching, coordination of support services, job placement and money management. The program also works with employers to encourage hiring people with mental illnesses.

How is EE-SMI funded?

The program is a collaboration between the Department of Human Services and the Department of Employment and Economic Development. EE-SMI received slightly less than \$1.3 million in funding during the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

Who uses EE-SMI?

EE-SMI is designed to assist people with serious mental illnesses who want to work. There are currently 19 EE-SMI projects across 53 counties throughout Minnesota. Last year, EE-SMI served 1,353 people who worked a combined total of more than 254,000 hours, earning over \$2,000,000.

Why is EE-SMI important?

There are a number of barriers preventing people with mental illnesses from finding steady employment including: stigma and discrimination, lack of transportation, fear of losing health benefits and inadequate vocational services. Most people with a serious mental illness want to work. Recent research has found that 70 % of adults with a serious mental illness would like to have a job and 75% of people using mental health case management are either looking for work or not in the labor force. Despite this strong desire to work, only about 15% of people with serious mental illnesses are employed.

The EE-SMI program utilizes evidence-based practices designed to support an individual's recovery while providing them with the education and supports they need to be successful at their job. The program works in collaboration with employers to help them understand the needs of employees with serious mental illnesses and make whatever accommodations are necessary.

Despite the program's success helping thousands of Minnesotans with serious mental illnesses find work, EE-SMI has faced over \$300,000 in budget cuts the last several years. Minnesota cannot afford to continually lose funding for EE-SMI. EE-SMI is a crucial resource for many people living with mental illnesses who want nothing more than to work and earn a living.

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