



# Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline Speaker Series VIII

## Supporting Employees with Disabilities

Introductions

Brief Introduction to DLI and Dual-Training Pipeline

Description of Dual-Training Model

Short Overview of Americans with Disabilities Act

Six minute video to provide programmatic background and context

Important historical background, including history of Connect 700 Program

Connect 700 Components and How it works

Strategies to Build Success

Time for Questions

# About the Department of Labor and Industry

*DLI's **VISION** is to be a trusted resource, service provider and impartial regulator.*

*DLI's **MISSION** is to ensure Minnesota's work and living environments are equitable, healthy and safe.*

## **DLI Programs:**

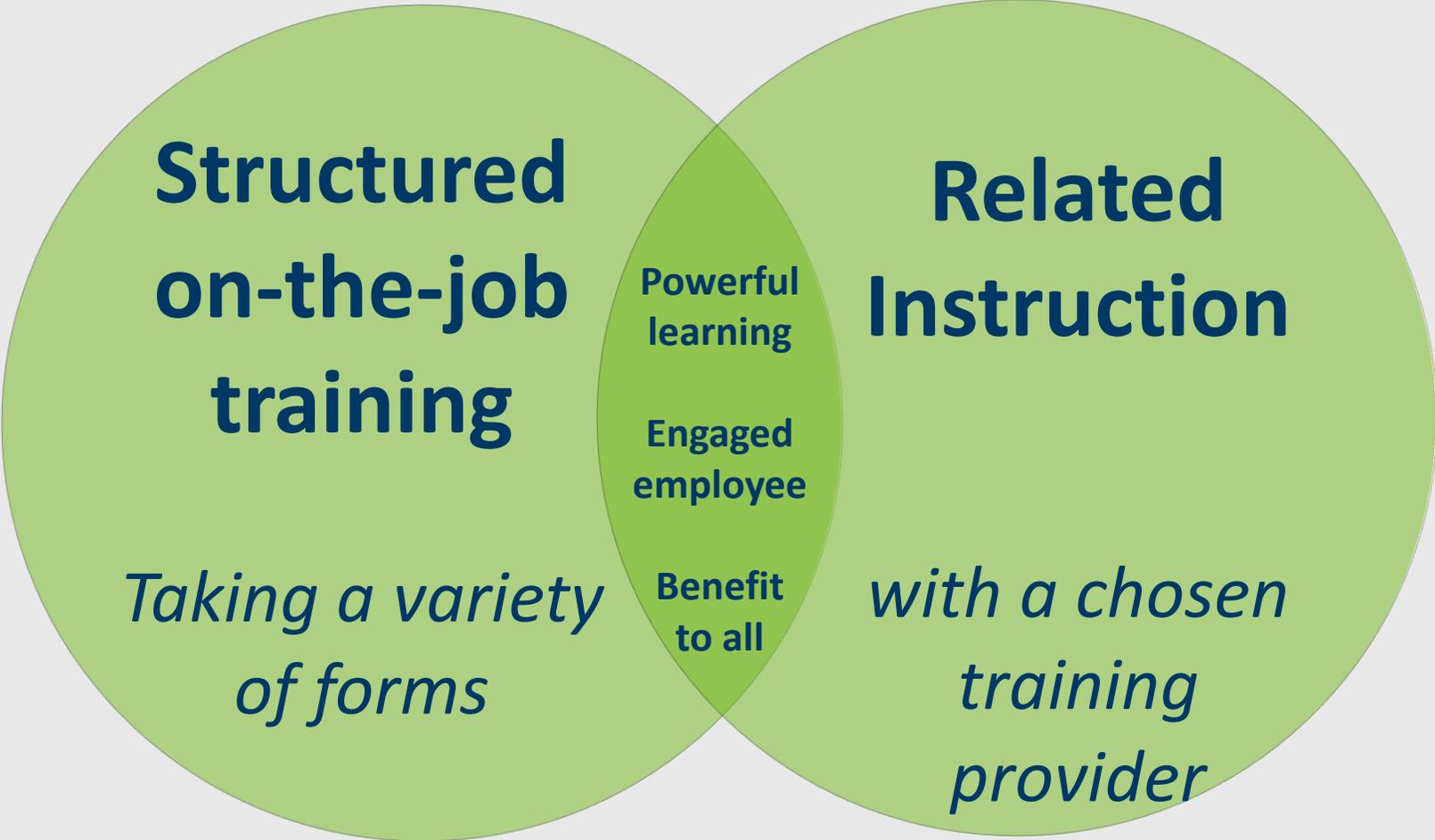
- Registered Apprenticeship
- Minnesota PIPELINE Program
- Youth Skills Training Program
- Child Labor Outreach and Compliance
- Workplace Safety Consultation
- Workers Compensation Administration
- OSHA Compliance
- Wage and Hour Compliance

# What is Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline?



- Source of support to employers to develop their own employment-based, dual-training programs
- An innovative approach to address current and future workforce needs in the key industries of **advanced manufacturing, agriculture, health care services and information technology**
- Private Investment, Public Education, Labor and Industry Experience

# Employment-Based Training



# Benefits of Employment-Based Training

## ■ Employers:

- Build and shape their own workforce
- Creates new skilled worker pipeline
- Workers produce as they train
- Improve productivity overall
- Reduce employee turnover

## ■ Workers:

- Employment
- Job Training
- Wages increase with progress
- Master in-demand skills
- Credentials





# Supporting Employees with Disabilities

Ken Rodgers | Disability Program Coordinator

# Overview of Americans with Disabilities Act

- Federal Law
- Prohibits discrimination of individuals with disabilities in employment
- Five titles:
  - Title I – Employment
  - Title II – State and local governments
  - Title III – Public
  - Title IV – Communication
  - Title V – Discrimination and Retaliation

# Brief Video: Utah's ASAP Program

- ASAP: Alternative State Application Process
- View the video here: [https://video.utah.edu/media/t/0\\_5wgip959](https://video.utah.edu/media/t/0_5wgip959)

# Great Resource: Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

- JAN: <https://askjan.org/>

# Important Historical Background

- FACT: The importance of hiring individuals with disabilities had been a part of Affirmative Action plans for years.
- FACT: Prior to the Pawlenty administration, the number of state employees with disabilities was collected and reported annually.
- FACT: In 2010, the portion of people with disabilities in state government was over 10 percent.
- FACT: By 2014, that portion had dropped to 3.0 percent.
- FACT: Among the general population in Minnesota, individuals with disabilities is believed to be between 15 and 20 percent.

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# Important Historical Background

- An analysis of language used in job postings identified that over 60 percent of job postings contained discriminatory language, such as:
  - Must have a valid MN Driver's license;
  - Must speak and write English;
  - Must be able to carry 50 pounds.
- In reality:
  - Must be able to get from point A to point B;
  - Must be able to communicate effectively;
  - Must be able to move items weighing up to 50 lbs. from point A to point B.

# Consequences

- Discriminatory language causes self-discrimination preventing an individual from applying for a job.
- People with disabilities are unable to be successful in the traditional competitive hiring process.

# Review of the Research

- Individuals with disabilities are:
  - Rarely absent;
  - Work harder;
  - Stay in job longer;
  - Want to work;
  - Improve overall morale in work unit;
  - Provide a different perspective when problem-solving;
  - Produce more consistent work product;
  - Improve agency's bottom line.

# Important Assumptions of Connect 700 Program

- Attention from the top needed to be re-established;
- Executive order the appropriate vehicle;
- Program seen as a reasonable accommodation to typical hiring process;
- Originally seen as an alternative to paper and pencil civil service exam;
- Program revised in 2014 with Governor Dayton's EO 14-14 and Governor Walz' EO 19-15 to provide increased state employment for individuals with disabilities.
- The target proportion of individuals with a disability in state government employment is 10 percent, under EO 19-15:  
<https://www.leg.state.mn.us/archive/execorders/19-15.pdf>

# How Connect 700 works

- Must meet eligibility;
- Must have a qualifying disability;
- Not successful in traditional hiring process;
- Complete application and have medical provider verify disability;
- Certificate issued once eligibility validated;
- Must meet minimum qualifications for job posting;
- HR interviews application to validate education, experience or other minimum qualifications;
- Non-competitive interview is required;
- 700 hour demonstration capacity.

# Set up for Success

- Include ADA coordinator from the start of the process;
- Weekly or bi-weekly check-ins with supervisor is a key strategy for success;
- Additional support can help the need for a reasonable accommodation;
- Supervisor must engage agency ADA coordinator for guidance and assistance;
- Supports or accommodations need to be in place as we would to support any employee;
- Weekly/bi-weekly check-ins continue until supervisor is satisfied person can do the job;
- Individual officially gets moved into probationary period of job.

# Set up for Success

- Establishing a trusting and supportive relationship is critical;
- Good, open communication is essential;
- Maintaining confidentiality and privacy about disability and accommodations is critical;
- Ending a Connect 700 appointment should never come as a surprise to the employee;
- Strong on-boarding process is critical;
- Identifying a mentor can be helpful.

# Set up for Success

- Do not assume you know how to support the individual with a disability.
- Ask them for what they need.
- Use your resources, such as an ADA coordinator.

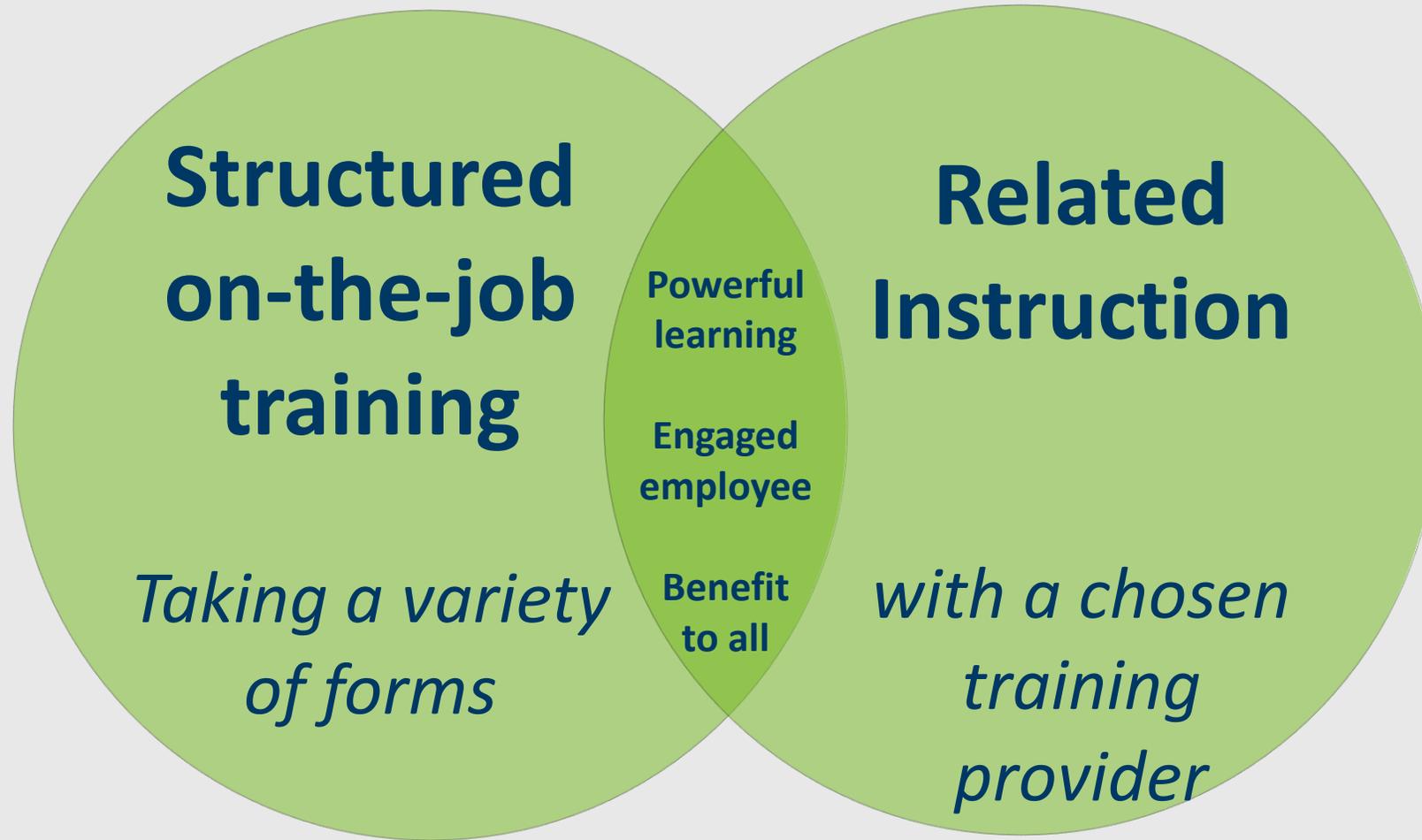
# These efforts are...

- not a handout, but an opportunity.
- A wonderful program to reach an untapped pool of qualified workers;
- Ways to help create a workforce that matches the demographics of the people in our state.

# Questions and Answers from March 12<sup>th</sup>

- Question: Does anyone review documents and qualification forms when hiring managers proceed with C700 applicants for non-competitive interviews, pre-probationary periods, probationary periods, etc.?
- Answer: MMB used to review the forms and approve agency's actions, but no longer do. Agencies' HR teams are expected to take action and maintain details and paperwork.
- Question: The examples of discriminatory language you shared were likely not intended to be discriminatory. Are there any resources that can help hiring managers think through language in postings?
- Answer: Possibly Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
- Additional answer that came up after the presentation: Teri Wheeler at MMB can help with this – [Teri.Wheeler@state.mn.us](mailto:Teri.Wheeler@state.mn.us). Her team has a list of inclusive language for job postings.

# Bringing it all back to Dual Training



# Creating a Better Company Culture through Dual Training

- Dual training helps to build a positive workplace culture.
- Creating a safe space to foster support of individuals with disabilities also creates a positive workplace culture.
- Actively working to improve your company's accommodation efforts will improve your overall company culture, helping to make your business a destination employer.

# Creating a Better Company Culture through Dual Training

Three ways that dual training supports all employees:

1. Employers who value dual training are helping employees to grow in their career. They show they care.
2. Dual training builds relationships through mentoring and cohort-based training. The more positive relationships you have in the workplace, the happier your employees will be.
3. Dual training promotes collaboration and listening to one another at work. The more open and supported the work environment, the better it can be for all employees.

# Thank You!



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