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## PRESS RELEASE

### MDI Awarded \$25,000 to Expand Workforce Development Program

MINNEAPOLIS, July 26, 2017 – MDI, a non-profit organization committed to an inclusive work environment for individuals with disabilities, has been awarded \$25,000 from the [Minnesota State Division of Academic and Student Affairs](#). This grant will be used to provide training, which focuses on personal and professional skill development, through the program Work Skills 101. This program offers participants with and without disabilities the opportunity to learn marketable skills from each other in an integrated setting.

“Integrated learning is a true innovation in the field, it aligns with the state’s overall shift away from non-integrated settings and opportunities toward inclusive, community-based options,” said MDI Director of Employment Services, Jeanne Eglinton. “MDI is regarded as a successful social enterprise model of inclusive employment; however, the implementation of an integrated training program takes this concept to a new level.”

Work Skills 101 aligns with statewide workforce development efforts. As increasing numbers of baby boomers age out of the workforce, new jobs open up requiring higher levels of soft skills and training, it’s incumbent upon stakeholders, such as MDI, to prepare for this transition by encouraging and nurturing all workers. Work Skills 101 will help build a new pathway for individuals, with and without disabilities, to improve their skills and move ahead in the workplace, benefiting both the individual, the employer, and the community.

“When someone improves or increases their soft skills, there are more options of better jobs and better wages available, ultimately allowing for employees to be self-sustaining with less reliance on government benefits,” said Eglinton. “The future is enhanced by our ability to provide the next generation of workers with what they need to be successful in school and in life and to support a dynamic workforce.”

Work Skills 101 has been successfully delivered at MDI in Cohasset and Hibbing this year. Next steps will include hiring a program trainer, along with conducting the third round of Work Skills 101 in the Twin Cities. Long term goals include partnering with schools and educators to replicate the program throughout Minnesota.

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#### About MDI

[MDI](#) is a leader in manufacturing corrugated standard and custom plastic packaging solutions, production assembly, and environmental services. Through a Social Enterprise model, MDI creates self-sufficiency by providing meaningful work in an inclusive environment, with nearly half of the workforce comprised of people with disabilities. Headquartered in the Twin Cities, with additional locations in Hibbing, Grand Rapids, and Cohasset, MDI offers an unparalleled customer experience, while providing high quality products and services to businesses and organizations.

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