



2024 Udac, Inc. Annual Report

Vision

To create a community where opportunity is accessible to individuals of all abilities, one person, one career, one opportunity at a time.

Values

Service - Respect - Dedication - Leadership
Excellence - Stewardship - Celebration - Teamwork

EXCLUDE

Executive Director Update



A Mission of Action

**Challenge Disability, Create Opportunity, Cultivate Success
Leading with Excellence in Disability Services**

Udac continues to be a nationally recognized leader in disability services. This year, our team earned several major honors:

- **APSE National Best Practice Award** for innovative, results-driven employment and community inclusion strategies.
- **Three-Year Accreditation from CARF International**, including a special commendation for our “outstanding and inclusive community program.”
- **Community Touchstone Award** from the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation (now Boreal Waters) for long-term community impact and leadership in belonging, opportunity, and resilience.

Udac’s programs blend innovation and best practices to promote independence, employment success, and strong community connections. We challenge the status quo by helping individuals move beyond service dependency toward meaningful work and active participation in the community.

Our 2023–2024 Performance Measures Report highlights progress in employment and community programs focused on personal discovery, skill building, volunteering, and growth in areas such as initiative, responsibility, problem-solving, and work ethic—preparing people for purposeful adult lives as valued community members.

Thank you for your ongoing support of our work and the people we are privileged to serve. ---- The Udac Team

For many young people, the transition from high school to adulthood can be daunting, filled with decisions about careers, independence, and building social connections. Amber stands out as a remarkable example of what is possible with determination and the right support. As a leader in the inaugural cohort of the Udac Business Internship at St. Mary’s Medical Center – Essentia Health, Amber demonstrated initiative and a strong desire for personal and professional growth, even as she started out reserved.

Guided by her Career and Life Coach and supported by Udac’s innovative business internship model, Amber embraced every opportunity to learn and develop new skills. Her commitment to continuous improvement and willingness to take on new challenges have been key to her success as a valued Essentia Health employee.



Amber Sandness

A MISSION OF ACTION

Udac brings its mission to life by empowering individuals with programs that promote independence, self-determination, and community inclusion. Through innovative employment services Udac offers unique employment exploration, development, and support programs such as:

- Exploring Community Careers program, which connects individuals with local businesses
- Udac Business Internship Program, providing paid internships that build confidence and career readiness

With Person-Centered Practices, Certified Benefits Counseling, and expert-led Career Development, Udac tailors every opportunity to each person's strengths and goals. This commitment breaks down barriers, builds fulfilling careers, and sets a national standard for excellence in disability services.



Patrick Watson

Work is more than just a job for Patrick Watson —it's a source of happiness, social connection, financial security, and self-sufficiency. After several years in a previous role, Patrick's desire for greater challenge and growth led him to accept an opportunity with Udac's Business Internship Model. This innovative approach to career development provided Patrick with the opportunity to expand his skills and pursue new goals.

With the support of Udac's Career and Life Coach, Patrick embraced his internship at St. Mary's Medical Center-Essentia Health where he quickly became a valued team member. His dedication is evident in the welcoming environment he creates, ensuring the cafeteria is clean, organized, and comfortable for both employees and community members. Patrick's commitment to excellence and his positive relationships with colleagues have helped him thrive in his new role.

Philanthropy & Corporate Sponsors

Grants	\$5.00-\$99.00	\$99.00-\$250.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Otto Bremer Trust• Nordling Family• Peter & Linda Pichette Fund• Olga B Hart Education Fund• Minnesota Department of Human Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roger Petry• Daryle Rock• Earl & Barbara Beaudin• Diane Nelson• Dennis & Georgette Larson• Karlyn Wargin• Sherri Pearson• Julie Visger	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deborah Good• Jeffrey Harty• Janet Sushil• Terry & Jennifer Carroll• Craig & Brenley Nelson• Jacob Stonesifer• Jon Welles• Katy Morgan• Erin O'Hearn-L'Allier• Lisa & David Goldberg• Tim Graves• Mike & Kim Dosan
\$251.00-\$500.00	\$1000.00-\$5000.00	\$40,000.00 +
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shanna McLaughlin• Thomas Dougherty• Steve Patronas• Joel Kolquist• National Bank of Commerce• Kim Brody	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bruce Berg• Ronda & Paul Bliss• Don & Jo Hoag• John & Ann Dahl• Wayne & Lola Aune	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• David and Karen Herman

Thank you for your support. Your generosity in supporting Udac's work is evident every day in the community of Duluth. You touch the lives of the people we serve by helping them become active members of the community. You give them the gift of employment and the security of knowing they are successful at work and at a job they love. Thank you!

Thank You!

Charles' journey began with a simple but powerful goal: "I want to be able to read." With this clear aspiration, Udac's Career and Life Coach provided personalized guidance, connecting Charles with the Duluth Adult Learning Center and focusing on essential skill development. Through his unwavering dedication and hard work, Charles not only achieved his goal of reading independently but also gained new confidence, enhanced problem-solving abilities, and expanded his career prospects.

Charles' success is a direct result of best practice strategies in IDD support—individualized coaching, community partnerships, and a commitment to lifelong learning and self-sufficiency. Udac's approach empowers individuals to see and pursue possibilities that may have once seemed out of reach. Receiving his reading certificate from his mentor and teacher, Ann Castellano, marked a significant milestone in Charles' journey. His story stands as a testament to the transformative power of education and community-based support, demonstrating how person-centered programs can unlock potential and foster meaningful independence.

Charles Flick



Thank You to our
Employment Partners



Create Opportunity - A Journey to Independence

Donnie Waksdahl at Minnesota Power

Donnie Waksdahl has always loved to work. For 18 years, he's been a dedicated employee, 13 years with the support of a traditional job coach who accompanied him daily—providing oversight and transportation through a 14c special subminimum wage program. While this model helped him get started, it didn't allow Donnie to fully explore his potential or build the independence he desired.

That began to change five years ago when Donnie partnered with Udac Career and Life Coaches and embraced the Udac Capable Adult - Personal Growth Model. Through personalized coaching, skill-building opportunities, and a focus on self-determination, Donnie began to unlock new levels of confidence and capability. He discovered strengths he hadn't tapped into before and set a clear goal: to become self-sufficient.

Today, Donnie is working independently and thriving in his role at Minnesota Power. He collaborated with his colleagues, in the Graphic Production area, to create visual aids that support his work—tools that empower him to complete his job without direct supervision. This initiative not only improved his workflow but also strengthened his relationships across the organization, showcasing his problem-solving skills and ability to contribute meaningfully.

Donnie's growth extends beyond the workplace. He now independently arranges his transportation to and from work, confidently calling for his own cab. This milestone reflects a deeper level of autonomy and self-reliance—hallmarks of the Udac model's success.

His proactive mindset is evident in how he handles challenges. When he encounters maintenance issues along his route, Donnie takes the initiative to report them to the appropriate department, demonstrating responsibility and ownership. His rapport with staff throughout Minnesota Power continues to grow, and his contributions are valued by colleagues across the organization.

Donnie's journey is a powerful example of what's possible when individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities are supported with dignity, purpose, and high expectations. Through Udac's best-practice approach—centered on individualized coaching and empowerment—Donnie has not only achieved independence but also become a respected and integral part of his workplace and community.



2024 FISCAL YEAR IN REVIEW



Revenue



- Program Services
- Grants
- Philanthropy
- Other

\$764,712.57
\$487,641.38
\$180,895.83
\$42,012.31
Total \$1,475,262.09

Expenses

\$978,608.41
\$89,051.94
\$159,725.58
\$60,019.48
\$144,726.48
Total
\$1,432,131.89

- Personnel
- Transportation
- Facility
- Operations
- Admin



UDAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS	LEADERSHIP ROLES	EMPLOYMENT
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Andrea Mistelske	Board Member	Team Viewer
Kevin Hagen	Asset Committee	National Bank of Commerce
Don Ness	Board Member	Executive Director, Ordean Foundation

Innovation Partners



Udac has received a grant from the Minnesota Department of Human Services to collaborate with the Minnesota Institute of Robotics and the Minnesota Institute on Community Integration (ICI) on an innovative project utilizing Socially Assistive Robots (SARs).

This project will use a Socially Assistive Robot (SAR) to advance independence in employment and/or assist in social interactions for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) for employment independence while decreasing reliance on one-on-one human resources.



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MISSION
to **CHALLENGE** disability
to **CREATE** opportunity
to **CULTIVATE** success

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