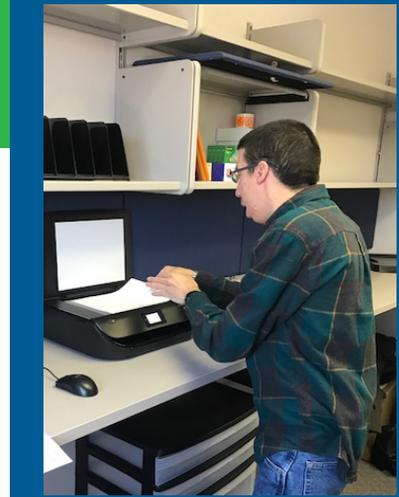


## Richard (Minnesota)



Richard is employed by H&L Mesabi as a part time assistant office manager, where he provides clerical assistance, maintains a digital parts library, manages outgoing mailers, and performs other important duties as assigned.

Richard began his path to employment by volunteering, where he gained a lot of valuable experience. However, Richard struggled to move out of volunteer positions and into paid work. His dream was to work in an office setting where he could put his skills to work to help others.

Through customized employment, Richard was able to find a job in the community. “What was most helpful in finding and keeping a job was a customized position that utilizes Richard’s strengths and also fills an important unmet need for the employer,” said Customized Employment Manager, Vicki Cochran, who worked with Richard and his supervisor at H&L to customize his position. “The fact that he is doing work that makes others’ job easier adds to his and his co-workers’ satisfaction.

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Richard enjoys having a job just like anybody else. Knowing that he does the job well and is appreciated for the work he does gives him great pride. He also enjoys being a part of his community and likes having a job close to home. “I like to stop for coffee when I walk home from work,” he says.

Richard was hired in his position because the employer believed he could do the work that no one else had time to do. What he did not expect was how much having Richard as part of the team would increase employee morale and add enjoyment to the work week. “I believe a diverse workforce, utilizing an individual’s skills and abilities, is an opportunity for our community to be richer and more fulfilling for all involved,” Director of Vocational Services, Raini Knaeble reflected.