



Introduction

Welcome to HireGround! Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities produces this bimonthly newsletter expressly for our VR professional audience. We hope that these stories, best practices and practical tips will be of value to you as we continue our relationship and work with participants. Our goal is achieving quality employment, independence and disability determination outcomes through our integrated services, partnerships and innovation. For questions, content suggestions, or comments on this newsletter, please contact: Elizabeth.sammons@ood.ohio.gov. Thanks in advance for sharing this information as appropriate. Thanks, too, to more than 100 loyal readers who provided thoughts and guidance for future issues in our December survey.

Disability Community Opportunities/Announcements

Attention transition youth! Applications are now open for Ohio’s Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) being held August 2-6. YLF is a five day leadership training program for 11th and 12th grade high school students with any type of disability, sponsored by the Ohio Governor’s Council on People with Disabilities (GCPD) and OOD. Student delegates learn about choosing a career, the history of disability as a culture, available technology and resources, and self and systems advocacy. They are introduced to professionals with disabilities and have an opportunity to develop their own “Personal Leadership Plan” to reach goals in education, employment and the community. Applications and additional information can be found online at <http://www.gcpd.ohio.gov/YLF>.

Modular aluminum ramps are available for Ohioans currently on Medicaid through the Ohio Temporary Ramp Project. The project seeks to serve people in need of an accessible entryway to safely return home from a nursing home or rehabilitation facility. General questions can be directed to: Emily.VanBuren@medicaid.ohio.gov. Other contacts available include: Toledo’s Ability Center NW OH, Independent Options, Inc. for SW Ohio, Mobile for Central Ohio, LEAP for NC Ohio, or Services for Independent Living; SIL, Tri-county Independent Living Center, Western Reserve Independent Living Center for NE Ohio and SE Ohio, and Area Agency on Aging Region 9.

The Ohio Department of Health announces **The Ohio Hearing Aid Assistance Program (OHAAP)**, to purchase hearing aids for families with children under age 21 with permanent hearing impairments. (Note: According to a

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representative of this program, people over age 21 who are on Medicaid may receive hearing aids every four years.) Families with incomes at or below 400 percent of the federal poverty guidelines are eligible for the program. Families should contact participating OHAAP providers at: <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhprograms/cmh/hearaidasst/OHAAP%20Providers.aspx>

Per recent FCC regulations, **those with hearing loss may receive an Internet-based CapTel phone free of charge** by submitting a Third Party Certification of Eligibility. It must be signed by a hearing health professional confirming that the applicant has a hearing loss and would benefit from IP-based Captioned Telephone Service in order to communicate effectively over the phone.

(NOTE: Third Party Certification ONLY applies to CapTel models that are Internet-based (i.e., that include an "i" in their model number, such as the CapTel 840i and CapTel 2400i). Certification does not apply for: CapTel 840 / CapTel 800 / CapTel 200. For more information or to download the form, see <http://captel.com/thirdparty.php#sthash.iNRmXghM.dpu>

Scholarships Corner

Word to the wise: most of the below disability-specific scholarships recur annually; the HG editor humbly suggests that you save these for future reference or put the deadlines on your calendar.

Deadline February 18: 50 \$2,000 U.S. scholarships for students diagnosed with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, assistance for an undergraduate program at an accredited college, university, trade school, technical school or vocational school: <http://www.shireadhscholarship.com/US/default.aspx>

Deadline February 18: Google Lime Program, providing scholarships and networking retreats for computer science students with disabilities: <http://www.limeconnect.com/opportunities/page/google-lime-scholarship-program>

Deadline March 1: American Council of the Blind offering various national scholarships to



See "From Designing Walls to Making Pictures for Those Walls" for more information about Andrew Reach's Bits In Pieces Exhibition.

students who are blind/legally blind. For details, see: <http://acb.org/scholarship>

Deadline March 1: ASCLA Leadership & Professional Achievement Award for students with disabilities needing services or accommodation while studying library science: <http://www.ala.org/ascla/asclaawards/asclacentury>

Deadline March 1: TPA Scholarship Trust for Deaf/Hearing- Impaired recipients. For devices, treatments, or specialized education, speech classes, note takers, interpreters, etc.: <http://www.tpahq.org/scholarshiptrust.html>

Deadline March 13: AG Bell Association, with scholarships for oral deaf students earning a bachelor's, master's, or doctorate: <http://www.agbell.org/Document.aspx?id=266>

Deadline March 31: National Federation of the Blind offering thirty merit-based scholarships, worth from \$3,000 to \$12,000. Focus on academic excellence, community service, and leadership. Details at <https://nfb.org/scholarships#main-content>

Deadline May 1: Organization for Autism Research offering various scholarships including Schwallie Family Scholarship Program: <http://researchautism.org/news/otherevents/Scholarship.asp>

Deadline May 8: For those whose colleges have an ASL Honor Society, from American Sign Language Teachers Association, scholarships for students focusing on ASL, Deaf Studies, Deaf Education, or Interpreting: http://www.aslhonorsociety.org/Honor_Society_scholarship.html

Undergraduates on PELL grants apply for the Gilman Scholarship to study abroad; various deadlines; students with disabilities particularly invited: <http://www.iie.org/Programs/Gilman-Scholarship-Program>

Are We There Yet? What the Workforce Integration Task Force has to say on Barriers and Opportunities in Ohio's Deafness and Blindness Communities

By Elizabeth L. Sammons

Editor's note: The Workforce Integration task force was charged with making recommendations regarding how deaf and blind Ohioans "may be more fully integrated into the workforce to increase employability and income parity" and issuing a report to the Governor. In our last issue, you may recall reading a few comments from the employer survey with mixed views regarding employees who are deaf or blind. The final report has now been released to the Governor. Here is an overview of how this report was put together, including the barriers to employment and recommendations highlighted from the research.

Findings were based on three branches of research: analysis of already-published census information and other surveys; 3 surveys that OOD and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) publicized (to employers, the deafness and blindness community and service providers,) and 17 focus groups of Ohioans with vision or hearing loss around Ohio. A fundamental theme emerged; the need for significantly greater and broader awareness and the understanding of the issues facing Ohioans with disabilities. This work led the task force to identify the following barriers:



See "From Designing Walls to Making Pictures for Those Walls" for more information about Andrew Reach's "Model Citizen."

- A disconnect between Ohio employers' need for qualified and dedicated workers and the available talents, skills and abilities of blind, deaf, and deafblind Ohioans.
- The specific, tangible benefits of integrating individuals with disabilities into the workforce are not widely known or effectively and consistently communicated to employers.
- Employers often fail to understand or appropriately plan for the reasonable accommodations Ohioans with disabilities need upon entering the workforce.
- Employers act, or fail to act, based on misunderstandings and/or fears about performance, safety and liability issues related to hiring individuals with disabilities.
- Workforce integration services and programs available for Ohio employees and employers are not widely known or effectively and consistently communicated.
- State and federal programs inadvertently create disincentives to work through limited assets and income.
- Employers fail to adopt and implement uniform and quality standards for services offered to blind, deaf, and deafblind individuals.
- Ohioans with disabilities often lack critical vocational career planning skills, and the appropriate training opportunities to acquire them are not always widely available.
- Ohio's transportation system often lacks effective options and services for Ohioans with disabilities.

To start on a path towards achieving these goals, the task force makes the following recommendations:

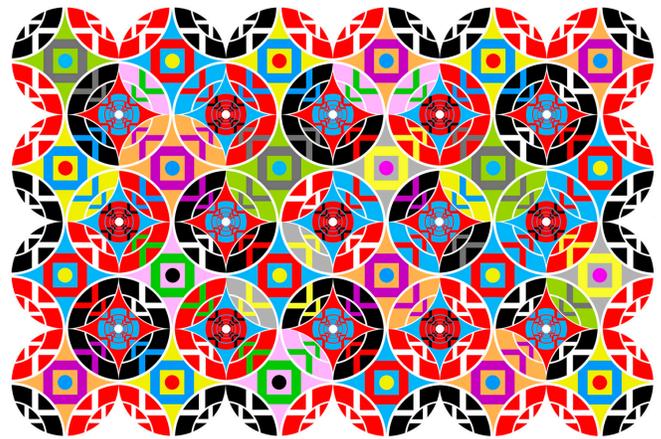
1. OOD and ODJFS should work collaboratively to create, collect and communicate clear uniform and comprehensive information to employers about integrating blind, deaf, and deafblind Ohioans into the workforce.
2. OOD and ODJFS should develop strategies to more effectively engage business leadership organizations and networks to

facilitate business to business and peer to peer conversations on how best to address and reduce barriers to employment and income parity for blind, deaf, and deafblind Ohioans.

3. The State of Ohio should seek out ways to more effectively build a culture of inclusion and accessibility by including disability awareness in any required diversity and inclusion training programs through the development of mentoring and relationship-building opportunities.
4. Ohio should encourage and facilitate opportunities to connect blind, deaf, and deafblind Ohioans with employers and to connect employers interested in integrating individuals with disabilities into their workforce with those who have successfully implemented such integration.
5. All Ohio employers should commit themselves to developing standards and benchmarks for effectively serving individuals with disabilities in key areas including: communications and education; access and accommodation; and hiring and employment.
6. OOD should work with the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation (OWT) to coordinate a working group of related agencies and programs to develop a unified plan to more effectively align State of Ohio employment and workforce programs and services for Ohioans with disabilities.
7. State and federal governments should explore ways to remove disincentives to work that result from income and asset limits for blind, deaf, and deafblind Ohioans.
8. The State of Ohio should ensure that pre-vocational and vocational training is available and accessible for blind, deaf, and deafblind Ohioans throughout the state.
9. Ohio should explore ways to better leverage the facilities, programs, and services available in order to create immersive and hands on training opportunities for blind, deaf and deafblind communities across the state.

Ohio should continue to pursue a more integrated and wider-ranging system of transportation for individuals with disabilities in both urban and rural areas and to explore options to reduce transportation as a barrier to employment for blind, deaf, and deafblind Ohioans.

HireGround hopes to continue reporting progress on the above recommendations as they make their way from paper to action. To read the entire report including executive summary and appendixes, see: <http://www.ood.ohio.gov/Portals/0/News%20and%20Press%20Releases/Workforce%20Integration%20Task%20Force%20Report%20FINAL%2012302014%20Web.pdf>



See "From Designing Walls to Making Pictures for Those Walls" for more information about Andrew Reach's "Getting Up."

Social Security, SSI, and Medicare News You can Use for 2015

With thankful acknowledgement to Lauren McLarney, manager of governmental affairs; National Federation of the Blind from NFB's monthly newsletter, the "Braille Monitor," December, 2014. Also for Ohio-specific references, to Kendra Burford, OSHIIP Community Liaison, Ohio Department of Insurance.

SSDI and Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

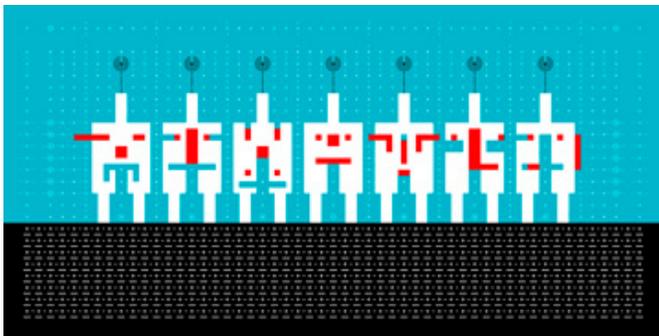
In 2015, a 1.7 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) came for both SSI and SSDI beneficiaries. Payment amounts for SSI are as follows: individuals, \$733 a month; couples,

\$1,100 a month. The SSI program continues its asset limits of \$2,000 for individuals and \$3,000 for couples.

2015 Student Earned Income Exclusion: Monthly amount is \$1,780, maximum yearly amount, \$7,180.

Anyone may continue to earn up to four quarters of SSDI/retirement coverage in 2015; 1 quarter of coverage will be credited for earnings of \$1,220 and 4 quarters for annual earnings of \$4,880, regardless of when in the year this is earned.

Trial Work Period Limit amount increases by \$10 to \$780 in 2015. In cases of self-employment, a trial work month can also be used if a person works more than eighty hours, and this limitation on hours worked will not change, unless expressly adjusted. For SSDI beneficiaries, the monthly earnings exemption is referred to as Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA). This is the limit used to determine if someone is earning enough income that he/she may be deemed ineligible for benefits; calculated as monthly income before taxes minus any unearned (or subsidy) income and any impairment-related work expense deductions. 2015 SGA increases from \$1,070 monthly to \$1,090. Blind SGA increases to \$1,820.



See "From Designing Walls to Making Pictures for Those Walls" for more information about Andrew Reach's "Seven Model Citizens."

Medicare Deductibles and Coinsurance

Medicare Part A coverage provides hospital insurance to most SSDI beneficiaries. The coinsurance amount is what a Medicare recipient pays for any hospital stay. Medicare then pays the hospital charges above the coinsurance amount. The Part A hospital

inpatient deductible increases from \$1,216 to \$1,260 in 2015. There is still no charge for hospital services within a benefit period of up to sixty days.

Medicare Part A remains free for most people on SSDI, and Medicare Part B coverage remains at \$104 monthly. This is normally automatically deducted from one's SSDI or retirement check. Those who become ineligible for SSDI can continue to receive Medicare Part A coverage premium-free for at least 93 months after the end of a trial work period.

Programs That Help with Medicare Deductibles and Premiums

Low-income Medicare beneficiaries may qualify for help with payments through two programs - the QMB (Qualified Medicare Beneficiary program) and the SLMB (Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary program). Under QMB, states pay both Medicare Part A (Hospital Insurance) and Part B (Medical Insurance) premiums, deductibles, and coinsurance expenses. Under SLMB, states pay only the full Medicare Part B monthly premium. If a consumer thinks he/she might qualify but has not filed for Medicare Part A, contact Social Security to find out more on the programs and financial eligibility. The 2015 Federal Poverty Levels used to update the Medicare Savings Programs are as follow: (includes \$20 disregard). All Resources are: \$7,260 – Individual, \$10,930 – Couple.

- QMB: \$1,001 – Individual \$1,348 – Couple
- SLMB: \$1,197 – Individual \$1,613 – Couple
- QI: \$1,345 – Individual \$1,813 – Couple

Further information about filing for Medicare is available from any Social Security office or by phone: (800) 772- 1213. For more information about either program, call the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) at (800) 633-4227, or see <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/ContactCMS>.

Qualifying Limits for Dual Eligible (Medicare and Medicaid)

Single person: income \$663/month; resources \$1,500; Married couple: income \$1,120/month; resources \$2,250

Several Medicare Savings Programs pay the Part B premium. Below is a link with the current income and resource guidelines. For more information or to apply for a Medicare Savings Program, call OSHIIP at 1-800-686-1578, visit a local DFS office or download the application at: <http://www.insurance.ohio.gov/Consumer/OSHIIP/Documents/MedSavProg.pdf>

MSP Application: <http://medicaid.ohio.gov/Portals/0/Resources/Publications/Forms/ODM07103fillx.pdf>

Sidebar:

For 2014-2015 comparison tables and additional details, please refer to <http://www.ssa.gov/news/press/factsheets/colafacts2015.html>

The link below leads to many of Social Security's publications in audio format. If the publication is not available in audio, a request can be made for large print, CD or Braille. <http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/alt-pubs.html>

"How Medicare Covers Diabetes" includes facts on supplies and services under Medicare. Click here for all the details, straight from Medicare <http://www.medicare.gov/Publications/Home.asp?version=alternate&browser=Netscape%7C5%7CWindows+7&Language=English&pagelist=Home&comingFrom=13>

Do you know the four criteria to get home health care from Medicare? Read/download Medicare's booklet on home health care coverage: <http://www.medicare.gov/Pubs/pdf/10969.pdf>

From Designing Walls to Making Pictures for Those Walls

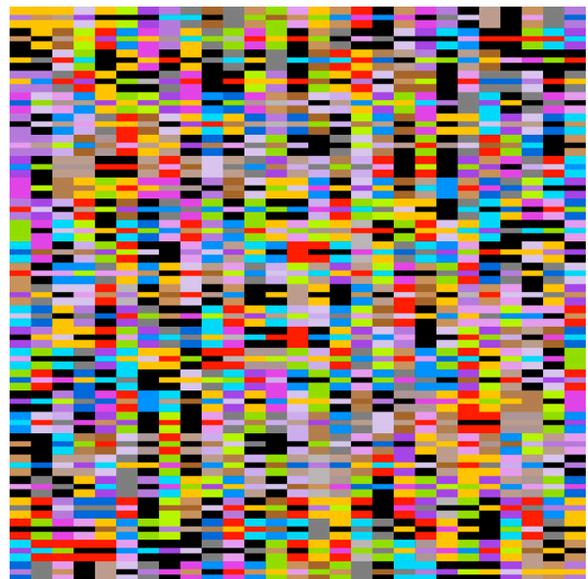
By Andrew Reach, Architect turned Artist

Until 2004, I was a practicing architect, with work ranging from private homes and businesses to my last project, The Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum at Florida International University in Miami. After becoming disabled, I rechanneled my creative energies from architect to fine artist. Now as I contemplate what it means to be human in today's technological world, I embrace technology to help me have a voice. Making art is an important part of my therapeutic daily regimen that keeps me

balanced both physically and spiritually. With Epson large format fine art digital printers, I make limited edition prints on paper and canvas. When I first learned of 3D printing, it occurred to me that here was a medium where I could produce sculpture without physicality, thus giving me a new avenue of creative expression. Like a building, my works have an underlying structure, sometimes not obvious, but always there.

For the last two years, I have been a participant of OOD's customized employment and the Personal Care Assistance (PCA) program. This provides 35 hours a week of the physical assistance and household tasks I need to keep my home studio running and keep me healthy. It has made life far easier, both logistically and financially. PCA allows me, like other participants who are employed or self-employed, to continue active work.

I'm excited about my current exhibit in Cleveland, which runs through February 15; you're welcome to attend! I also want to see my work continue to appear in health care centers to provide some channels of contemplation for others in crisis or recovery.



See "From Designing Walls to Making Pictures for Those Walls" for more information about Andrew Reach's "Pixel Bar 2."

Sidebar:

Andrew's current public exhibit runs to February 15 at 15813 Waterloo Road, Cleveland, OH. For details, see: www.marianeartproject.com

If you have consumers or know others with disabilities who are interested in any form of the arts, share this website full of Ohio opportunities, in which Andrew has also participated through the ADAP program or artists with disabilities: <http://www.vsao.org/programs>

Calls for art, JOBS, commission announcements, workshops, exhibition announcements, etc. can be found on Ohio's Individual Artist Opportunities Database at: <http://www.oac.state.oh.us/search/IndividualArtistOpportunities/SearchArtistOpportunities.asp>

For more on the PCA program, see: www.ood.ohio.gov/Programs/Personal-Care-Assistance

Self-Employment Cases: Some Secrets to Success

By Connie Spruill

Editor's note: Connie is Micro-Enterprise Consultant for the Small Business Development Center in Columbus. She has worked around the globe with micro-enterprise programs specializing in dislocated workers and women. Here are some best practices based on her 38 years in counseling startups and growing businesses.



Connie Spruill

The success stories I have experienced contain elements of teamwork and thinking outside the box. But just what makes the difference for the ones that workout? For me it is partnering with OOD counselors who understand the power of teamwork. Here are some tips from our collaboration.

First, when a business consultant and counselor work as a team where everyone has defined roles and responsibilities, consumers witness a scenario of setting the stage of participation as part of the team.

If consumers don't follow through on their part, consequences are implemented; a good

lesson for them to remember in business life. Counselor and consultant alike need to stay fully engaged with consumers, taking ownership of their respective parts of the process. Meanwhile, the counselor needs to stay accessible to the business consultant behind the scenes to answer questions and guide towards better understanding both consumers' disability and ability to best fit business strategies.

The more primary research consumers conduct on the industry/market, the more confident they become in their choice for their business. It's good to take consumers on "field trips" to see how a particular business operates. Sometimes this opens other doors to a smaller niche to investigate. Such research also helps identify "a value proposition" like an elevator speech, a message to convey to a prospective client. The three points in the value proposition statement cover relevance, quantified value and unique differentiation. This site provides full details on how to create a Value Proposition: <http://conversionxl.com/value-proposition-examples-how-to-create/>.

Early on, the consultant should take consumers through a mock spreadsheet to help identify the cost of operating the business and then match the number of hours and sales required to break even. It is important to see that no monies can be put into a business person's pocket until expenses are accounted for. This can be a deal breaker, but it's not always the end of the story. One consumer decided against a workout gym requiring long hours and not breaking even until the second or third year. She then opted for an Italian ice cart which required working only in the summer, with twice the money she would have made running a gym.

I always recommend reading materials for consumers, stories of ordinary people including those with disabilities who started micro-businesses and grew them into million dollar companies. When I think someone needs some special encouragement, I have gone so far as to assign certain chapters to report back.

Last but not least, new business owners often need reminding that the consultant is there for as long as needed. However, moving to regular business support means they have to take charge, asking for help themselves.

Sidebar:

Do you have consumers pondering Self-employment? This resource may answer some of their questions: http://development.ohio.gov/bs/bs_bus_faq.htm

For details on Columbus' Small Business Development Center, see <http://www.sbdccolumbus.com/>

Developments in Transition Youth: Not Just for Summer Anymore

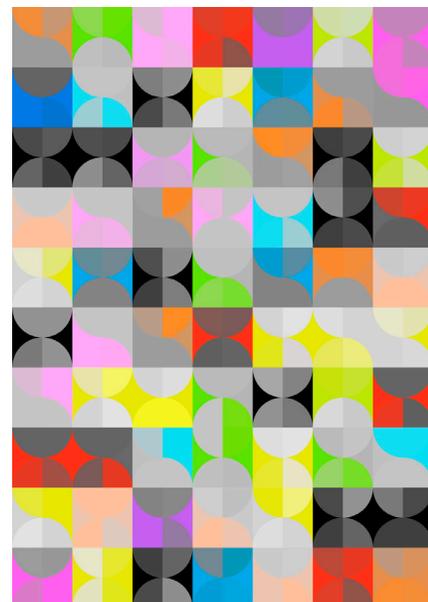
By Julie Hance, OOD Human Services Program Administrator

Like many projects that begin with on-the-job training, serving our youngest consumers still in high school sometimes raises more questions than answers. That is why a team lead by OOD Project Manager Julie Hance coordinated materials and regional trainings starting last August. The goal was offering technical guidance and support to the field around service provision and the new transition procedure. "Not that the new transition procedure replaces other VR policies and procedures," Julie says, "but it provides a one-stop place on all aspects of the transition process." To make the document more user friendly, the new procedure follows the same flow of casework from referral, development and education to case closure. It also outlines typical Progressive Career Development, including established benchmarks, designed to prepare transition age youth for successful employment outcomes. Adding the benchmarks will help to ensure that next steps are based on data driven decisions.

A few aspects stand out from former practices. Since youth are being engaged in services earlier, starting at age fourteen, there is increased opportunity and time for youth to participate in career exploration activities such as job shadowing or other career research

not always provided in school. Additionally, job development and job coaching are now more flexible. For example, if a consumer uses connections through school, family or other community partners to obtain employment, support through job coaching may be authorized at that point, even if it is not for permanent placement. Also, if students succeed in a summer work experience or otherwise increase their work skills, they may now participate in summer job development. "Consumers now have greater opportunities to build their resume through summer jobs and other supportive experiences that will provide a wider array of opportunities for high school youth upon graduation," Julie says.

The new procedure also emphasizes the ideas of outreach and interagency collaboration. Research shows that outcomes for transition youth improve when agencies coordinate services and funding. This requires OOD counselors being in close contact with the school districts they serve, along with the youth's transition team. Authentic community-based work experiences provide one example. When OOD staff and other transition personnel effectively coordinate services, the work experiences of transition youth prepare them for the skills needed for post-



See "From Designing Walls to Making Pictures for Those Walls" for more information about Andrew Reach's "Quadrans Circuli 4."

secondary employment settings. Education and outreach activities may include increasing the understanding to students, parents, and school personnel of OOD's role in the transition process. When everyone understands what role each party plays in the provision of transition services, one sees higher rates of success as youth enter adulthood.

Many have asked about how Employment First relates to transition age youth. Even though there is not a specific Employment First Caseload for transition age youth, many who were previously unserved will be engaged in services through the assigned liaison to their school. "The Employment First philosophy and practices including person-centered planning will be applied to transition age youth," Julie explains.

The new procedure will be reviewed annually. Current work is underway to develop templates for summer youth experiences to align with benchmarks in the new procedure. Additionally, OOD is linking services with predictors of success, which requires some alterations of the coding in AWARE.

Labor Market Information: What's Really Out There?

By Lewis R. Horner, Ph.D., ODJFS Office of Workforce Development

The monthly Labor Market Review: This publication summarizes monthly changes in the workforce (people) and industry (jobs) for the state and 13 metropolitan areas in Ohio. Some of the data is seasonally adjusted, some is not. It is important to know how to think about each kind of information. These reports come out 3-4 weeks after the month covered: <http://ohiolmi.com/ces/LMR.pdf>



Lewis R. Horner, Ph.D.

Office of Workforce Development also releases long-term (10-year) employment

projections for the state, covering its six Jobs Ohio regions, (Southwest; Northeast; Central; West; Southeast; and Northwest) and the eight largest metropolitan areas. These are forecasts of future employment needs based on industry trends. We do industry and occupational projections, and we suggest these long-term employment projections for career planning purposes: <http://ohiolmi.com/proj/OhioJobOutlook.htm>

We also compile short-term (2-year) employment projections, but only at the statewide level, containing both industry and occupational data. Since this report is more sensitive to small changes in the economy, it's generally more useful for people looking for job placement in the near future. This report is updated every year; the current report covers the 2013 to 2015 period. <http://ohiolmi.com/proj/ShortTerm.htm>

We track online job ads monthly for Ohio and the six Jobs Ohio regions. While these give an idea of what the job market is like now, users should be aware that the data have limitations. This website provides a snapshot of the overall online job ad situation for the previous month. The second report, which rates occupations in more detail, is also available at this link: <http://jfs.ohio.gov/owd/omjresources/jobpostingtrends.stm>

Office of Workforce Development has just published Workforce Analysis reports for each of the six Jobs Ohio regions. These reports contain descriptive information, as well as regional demographic and economic characteristics, including trends in population, employment, educational levels, unemployment rates, income, projections, in-demand occupations and more. The reports can help workforce and economic development professionals make informed policy decisions and are available online at: <http://ohiolmi.com/wa/waJobsOhio.html>

Note: Be ready as Dr. Horner will give us some specific practices and more details in future issues on each of these reports.

Signing Up on OhioMeansJobs: Let's Start at the Very Beginning

By Nate Fernandes, OOD Public Information Officer

Imagine a virtual place to take assessments, search for jobs, and find out what kind of jobs are in demand, all from a home or local library. Well, there is such a place and it's called OhioMeansJobs (OMJ). (In this Hire-Ground series, we'll visit various parts of the OMJ website and see how to use it throughout the life of an eligible individual's case, not just at the point of job readiness.)



Nate Fernandes

We start at the very beginning, "a very good place to start" as some fans of "The Sound of Music" would say. After opening an internet browser to: <http://www.ohiomeansjobs.com>, users will notice a few valuable items to check out before registering. These include a captioned, eight-minute video explaining how OhioMeansJobs works. Next, users may select the "Get Started" link to begin the registration process.

Then come questions... and more questions. OMJ will first ask if the user is a veteran, K-12 student, unemployment compensation claimant, ODJFS client, college student, or an individual with a disability. Answering these questions leads to links for additional information, should users wish to explore further. For example, the K-12 link directs readers to the website designed for transition students (these specific subsections will be highlighted in future articles).

Users also have the option to bypass such questions and simply click the "Get Started" link to register without identifying any of these categories, and for now, let's begin at this registration process.

An e-mail address is necessary for registration; (free services like Gmail or Yahoo are adequate) plus a password containing a combination of upper and lower case letters, at least one number and one symbol such as !, \$, etc. Next, users must agree to the terms of the website by checking a box. Additionally, a name and address are required to service the account, but users may elect to hide this information on the resume employers see.

Subsequently, users are asked for some additional information such as military status, gender, ethnicity, and employment situation. The reason for asking about the employment situation is ensuring that those currently receiving unemployment benefits are registered on OMJ, as required by Ohio law.

OMJ also explores computer proficiency. Can users use e-mail, browse the web, or produce spread sheets? It's important to check the box for any current skills.

One notable required question is, "Do you require special workplace accommodations?" If users select "Yes", they must specify accommodations. Note: an employer will not see the answer to this question in a user's profile. OOD is working with Workforce Development to ensure this is clear when someone registers.

Some final career-related questions appear next, including desired job title, career level (entry level to executive), legal status to work in the U.S., willingness to relocate or travel as part of a job, any degrees or security clearances and any Work Keys test scores.

Once this information is complete, use the "Create Account" link, and the user is set. Don't forget, if any questions arise, a user may take advantage of the "live chat feature" during regular business hours for quick, personal support. This feature is screen reader accessible.

We have now concluded the registration process. Next time, we will take a look at some of the assessments offered by OMJ and how they may assist in creating an individualized plan for employment.

Insights from Ohio Fiscal Professional Steve Tribbie: Independent Audits

Many of OOD's partners expend \$500,000 or more in federal funds in a given fiscal year. When partners reach this threshold, they are required to undergo a Single Audit, often referred to as an A-133 Audit (A-133 being the OMB Circular that describes this



Steve Tribbie

process). Here are a few common mistakes that OOD will identify in an audit report:

Failure to submit the required audit package timely – Partners sometimes neglect to provide OOD with a copy of the audit package received at the conclusion of an A-133 audit. Partners are required to do so within a certain timeframe, and OOD also pursues this requirement as part of the Advanced Documentation Request provided at the onset of an audit. Partners are to submit the A-133 report to OOD within the earlier of 30 days after receipt of the auditor's report, or nine months after the end of the audit period, unless a longer period is agreed to in advance by OOD or a different period is specified in a program-specific audit guide.

Failure to contract with a competent independent auditor – A-133 audits must be conducted by a qualified individual who is not an employee of the partner's organization. This helps ensure objectivity and reliability in the audit report.

Improper charging of non-Single Audit (A-133) costs to OOD contracts – If a partner meets the expenditure threshold for an A-133 audit, the cost of that audit should be allocated across all of the programs audited. If OOD's program is not included in that review, no portion of the cost of the A-133 audit should be charged to the OOD contract. Additionally, if a partner does not meet the expenditure threshold for

an A-133 audit but instead hires an auditor to conduct a financial audit, no portion of the cost of that audit should be allocated to the OOD contract. This is viewed as a cost of doing business, since such activity would be necessary to remain compliant with the law, even without the OOD contract.

At Your Fingertips: (A Few Additional Resources and Features)

This website gives all alternate forms of transportation in Ohio, broken down by county. <http://www.apta.com/resources/links/unitedstates/Pages/OhioTransitLinks.aspx#a6>

Find opportunities at Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency engaging millions of Americans in service through Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/>

Learn more about yourself and developing a list of your "invisible skills" with this blog, "How to Use Your Transferrable Skills to Make Yourself Irresistible to Employers": <http://blog.brazencareerist.com/2014/03/26/use-transferrable-skills-make-irresistible-employers/?utm>

This guide has information about government agencies and organizations that can help you find an affordable place to live. You will also find information about rental assistance programs, assisted living facilities and modifying your home to make it accessible: <https://www.disability.gov/resource/disability-govs-guide-housing/>

Often people with hearing disabilities need to ask for an accommodation for effective communication in health care. Using this free link, you can create a card to use in these times or in an emergency, to show people and explain the accommodation you prefer for effective communication: http://healthbridges.info/?p=759&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+wpa_health_information+%28Western+Pennsylvania+Health+Information%29

Calendar of Disability Community Events

February 10-12: **Ohio Educational Technology Conference**, Columbus Convention Center, Columbus, OH; largest state educational technology conference in the country: <http://s19.a2zinc.net/clients/etechohio/OETC2015/public/Calendar.aspx?ID=1810&sortMenu=103000>

February 17-20: **Celebrating Connections Early Childhood Conference**, Charleston, WV. CEU's available: http://www.wvearlychildhood.org/Conference_Registration_Information.html

February 19-21: **Ohio Audiology Conference**, Airport Embassy Suites, Columbus, OH. Free for student volunteers! <http://ohioacademyofaudiology.com/events/ohio-audiology-conference/>

March 2-7: California State University, Northridge (CSUN) Center on Disabilities, **30th Annual International Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference**, San Diego, CA: <http://www.csun.edu/cod/conference/>

March 9-11: **Ohio Association of Community Health Centers (OACHC) 2015 Annual Conference**, Columbus, OH: http://www.ohiochc.org/events/event_details.asp?id=478042&group=

March 19-21: **Ohio Speech Language Hearing Association Convention**, Columbus, OH: http://www.ohioslha.org/e_convention.htm

March 30-31: **Conference on Opiates and Other Drugs**, Hyatt Regency in Columbus, OH: <https://www.facebook.com/events/962588217091806>. Also, http://www.oacbha.org/docs/Ohio_2015_Opiate_Conference_Registration_Packet.pdf to view the registration packet, and http://mms.oacbha.org/members/evr/reg_event.php?orgcode=OACB&evid=10491771 to register.

April 10-25: **DisArt Festival**, Grand Rapids, MI. Includes independent films, fashion, dance, more. See updates on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/DisArtFestival>

April 13-14: **OSU's Multiple Perspectives Conference**, including public lectures, student posters and CEU's. See three free Public Events. <http://ada.osu.edu/conferences.htm>

April 16-19: **American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), 2015-95th Annual Conference & Expo**, Nashville, TN: <http://www.aota.org/conference-events/annual-conference.aspx>

May 14-16: **National Federation of the Blind STEM2U**, Columbus, OH, COSI; blind youth learning opportunity: <http://www.blindscience.org/nfb-stem2u>

Thanks and So Long

I want to thank each person who wrote or was interviewed for these articles, all of whom voluntarily gave of their time and wisdom. If you have suggestions, a success story or best practice from your work, please email Elizabeth L. Sammons, Hire Ground coordinator at: Elizabeth.sammons@ood.ohio.gov.

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