

Weekly Focus

Ohio | Opportunities for Ohioans
with Disabilities

Kevin L. Miller, Executive Director

January 24, 2014

The mission of the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency is to ensure individuals with disabilities achieve quality employment, independence and disability determination outcomes through integrated services, partnerships and innovation.

Employment First: Initial Placement Achieved



This week saw another milestone crossed in the Ohio Employment First initiative.

We are pleased to announce that we have our first successful placement through our Employment First partnership with the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). The consumer was hired full time at a local nonprofit agency in a custodial position.

Employment First is a statewide initiative to assist individuals with developmental disabilities find employment. The Employment First Initiative continues to move forward, and DODD and OOD remain partners in helping to shape the direction.

Governor John Kasich officially launched Ohio's Employment First Initiative when he signed Executive Order 2012-05K on March 19, 2012. This Executive Order established statewide collaboration and coordination by creating the Employment First Taskforce and Advisory Committee, and made community employment the preferred outcome for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Employment First is more than an Executive Order; it is a philosophy that says service providers in Ohio should assist people with disabilities to first look at community employment that is competitive and integrated as an option before all others. We are pleased that the first person is now hired and the momentum of this initiative is gaining speed. As of today, there are 190 individuals who are in the process of receiving services to help them leave the DODD system and enter full time employment.

We know that this initiative is important because obtaining a job is far better, and leads to a more enriched and independent life, than someone collecting benefits. For example, the person placed this week who collects the maximum Social Security Supplemental Security Income amount, over 30 years, will collect \$259,560.

Now, this same person who works in community employment will earn, over a 30 year career, nearly \$567,840 if the salary is never adjusted up for raises or cost of living increases.

Employment First's overarching goal is to ensure that community employment should be an equal opportunity for all people with disabilities and something that society doesn't think twice about. People with disabilities should have the opportunity to make an informed choice about employment, including where they want to work and what they want to do.

Excitement about Employment First is growing and we are delighted to be part of the movement.

Governor's Council on People with Disabilities Meets

The Governor's Council on People with Disabilities (GCPD) met this week to conduct their regularly scheduled business meeting.

Present at the meeting were several new appointees that Governor John Kasich recently made to the GCPD. Kevin Reardon of Hilliard, Josh Hahn of Columbus, Rob Glenn of Worthington, and Christine Huggins of Marietta participated in their first meeting.

GCPD Chairman Matt Sauer opened the meeting and, after hearing from the new members, immediately focused on steps to prepare for the next Youth



GCPD Member Bob Thurman (left) welcomes new member Kevin Reardon.

Leadership Forum (YLF) that is scheduled to take place August 3-7, 2014. The YLF event is a signature event of the GCPD that invites youth who have disabilities to come learn about leadership and qualities that they can develop that will help them as they transition to the next stage of life.

The meeting continued with updates from their standing committees which are the Education Committee, Employment Committee, and Legislative Committee. The GCPD received an update on OOD activities regarding employer engagement and the OOD 2014 Strategic Plan. OOD Legislative Liaison Stephen Wilson provided a brief legislative update on bills making their way through the Ohio General Assembly.

The next GCPD meeting is scheduled for March 4-5, 2014.

Summer Youth Work Experience Guidelines

OOD held a meeting with Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) to review the Summer Youth Work Experience Guidelines for 2014. The upcoming summer will provide two tracks for individuals, a career exploration or a work experience.

Career Exploration programs are designed for first-time or younger participants who can benefit from job shadowing experiences. These programs should focus on activities such as tours of businesses, discussions and presentations from employers, job shadowing, etc. Career Exploration Programs will be 15 hours per week, with at least two hours of that being an educational component.

Work Experiences are designed for older participants to teach valuable work skills and develop a work history. Work Experience Programs will focus on work activities and CRP staff will provide the participant with an assessment at the start of the service to develop benchmarks and identify training goals. These work experience programs may be used to facilitate learning of work skills, improve work behaviors, build on communication and interpersonal skills, or other vocational areas as identified by VR staff. Work Experience programs will be 20 hours per week. The first week of the program shall consist of a twenty (20) hour educational class.

More information on this program and how to apply will be coming soon.

Ohio Vendors Representative Committee Meets

The Ohio Vendors Representative Committee (OVRC) met recently to discuss items related to the Business Enterprise Program at OOD.

I received good feedback from this meeting and I look forward to our ongoing collaborative efforts and discussion of areas that we may be able to, collectively, provide better service. We appreciate our relationship with OVRC and look forward to future meetings.

Governor Kasich Travels to Medina

Governor John Kasich is planning to deliver his 4th State of the State Address in the city of Medina. He delivered his first address at the Ohio Statehouse and followed that up with going to Steubenville and Lima for his next addresses.

The Governor's office said he plans to hold the annual address the evening of February 24 at the Medina Performing Arts Center.

RSA Monitoring Report Update

OOD continues to work with the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to make adjustments that were recommended in our RSA Draft Monitoring Report. While RSA has yet to issue their final report, we are not delaying implementing some changes that have been recommended.

As an update to the status of contracts, OOD is working to finalize FFY'13 administrative and case service budgets. OOD started running the age-off process on January 23, and this will provide the final numbers for all case service budgets (i.e. Time Limited Funds). The OOD Contracts Staff will be working to schedule individual contract phone conferences to finalize budgets and review deliverables over the next few weeks. Our goal is to have all the contracts reviewed and fully executed by the end of February. Match checks will be due as soon as possible once the contract is fully executed and it is OOD's preference that due to current circumstances the match amount be made in full.

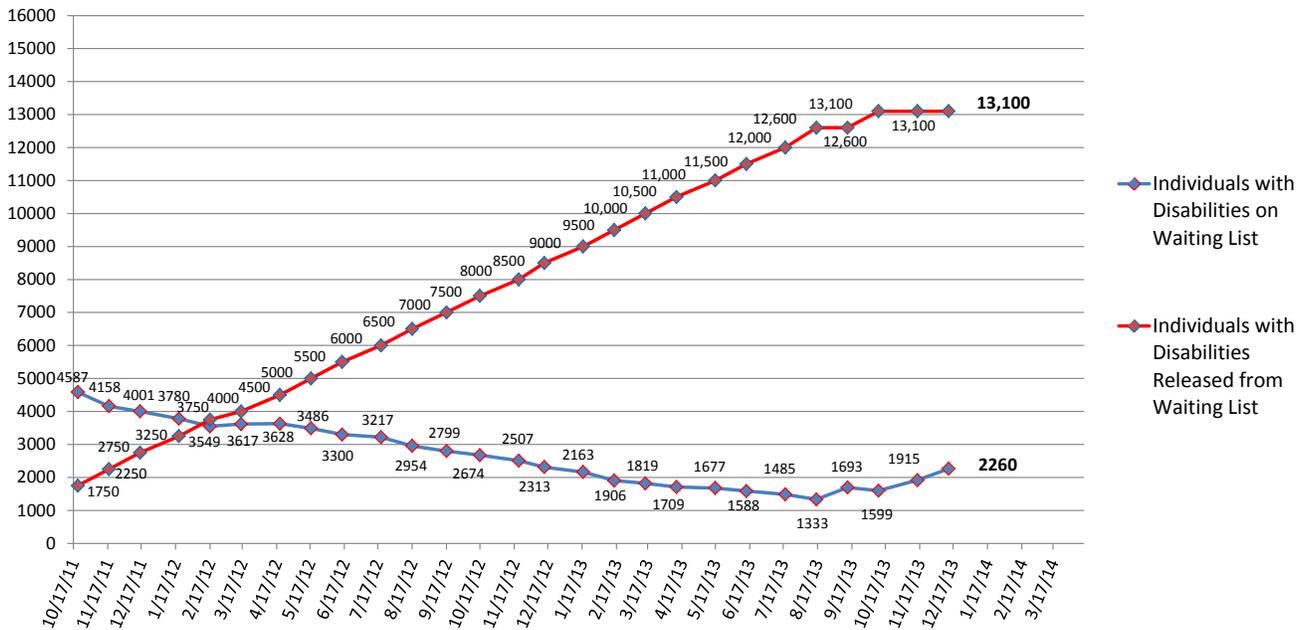
We look forward to working with everyone over the next few weeks to finalize FFY'14 contracts.

DDD Receives Awards

Last week, we proudly recognized the Quarterly Award recipients at DDD. Unfortunately, one person was omitted from the list. Lauren Poore, Clerk 3, was also a recipient of the Quarterly Award and inadvertently left out of the story. Please join me in congratulating Lauren on receiving this recognition award.

This week it was also announced that the FastTrack Unit was awarded the Associate Commissioner's Citation, and Liz McNany, Professional Relations Officer won the Deputy Commissioner's Citation. These awards continue to reflect the hard work and dedication of the DDD staff. I am proud of the work that is being done on behalf of Ohioans by DDD.

Number of Individuals with Disabilities on Waiting List



For more information or questions on stories in this publication, please call the Office of Communications at 614.438.1476.

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