

# WEEKLY FOCUS

**Ohio** | Opportunities for Ohioans  
with Disabilities

Kevin L. Miller, Executive Director

July 25, 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.*

## Twenty-Fourth Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act



Americans with Disabilities Act  
July 26, 1990 - July 26, 2014

Tomorrow marks the twenty-fourth anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). President George H.W. Bush signed the legislation into law on the White House lawn on July 26, 1990. At the time, ADA represented the world's first comprehensive declaration of equality for people with disabilities.

At the signing ceremony, President Bush remarked:

"Three weeks ago we celebrated our nation's Independence Day. Today we're here to rejoice in and celebrate another 'independence day,' one that is long overdue. With today's signing of the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act, every man, woman, and child with a disability can now pass through once-closed doors into a bright new era of equality, independence, and freedom."

The ADA bans discrimination in the areas of employment, state and local government, public accommodation, and telecommunications.

Celebrations have been held throughout the country this week marking the anniversary and plans are already underway to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary in 2015.

Take a moment to celebrate the progress we have made in increasing access, independence and equality for individuals with disabilities. We have come a long way, but there remains much to be done.

## Business Engagement Training

Throughout the month of July, staff and CRP's have been attending Business Engagement Training. Topics covered during the training included the Business Engagement Process, Central Ohio Work Place Initiative Grant, SOC coding in AWARE, the Job Related Services Procedure, OhioMeansJobs, and the Job Developer Pilot Program. Overall, the training provided VR Staff with updated information and requirements so OOD can successfully move forward in a consistent manner.

This was the first opportunity many had to learn about the newly released Job Related Services Procedure which will become effective on August 1. The procedure provides guidelines for counselors and coordinators to use as they are helping eligible individuals obtain employment. It also provides guidance for counselors/coordinators to work collaboratively with job developers to ensure the timely placement of job seekers into employment. Based upon the questions that were asked during the training, a FAQ is being developed to assure



Bob Nicholson, SE Area Manager (standing, left) and Jon Hackathorn, Business Relations Manager (standing, right) lead the discussion at the Business Engagement Training.

that OOD counselors/coordinators have the information needed to positively impact services and successfully implement the procedure.

Participants also had the opportunity to learn about the OhioMeansJobs website. Presenters highlighted the site, including labor market data and the employment opportunities, and demonstrated how it could be helpful to OOD consumers as they are working towards their employment goals.

Participants also learned more about the Job Developer Pilot Program. The pilot utilizes in-house job developers to increase OOD's rehabilitation rate, reduce the cost per outcome, reduce the time to employment, and increase the wage rate. The job developers will provide both job development and job seeking skills training to eligible individuals. This is a one year pilot program with the official start date for the pilot at full implementation (estimated, October, 2014). During this pilot, OOD counselors will identify eligible individuals with disabilities who are job ready, on caseloads from the four identified teams for referral to the Job Developer. Guidance was also provided in the Job Related Services procedure about how to utilize the in-house job developers.

## New Employee Orientation

On Thursday, New Employee Orientation was held for nine new employees representing locations across the state, from Lakewood and Toledo to Central Office and the 400 building. Kathy Boss, Human Resources (HR) Training and Organizational Development Manager; Abbie Frase, Training Officer; and Gwen Edwards, Training Specialist of HR staff lead the orientation which helps new employees understand the policies, procedures, and culture of OOD.

The orientation sessions, which are held monthly, include a True Colors assessment, a tool that helps individuals better understand their personality traits and behavioral tendencies; review of equal opportunity employment (EEO) and sexual harassment policies; a benefits presentation; overviews from the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR), the Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired (BSVI), the Business Enterprise Program (BEP), and the Division of Disability Determination (DDD); and a Disability Awareness presentation.

I always make sure to stop by these orientations and take time to interact with those joining the agency. This week Assistant Executive Director Bill Bishilany and I were able to welcome the new employees and discuss the vision and mission of OOD. It was a great opportunity to answer questions and help attendees understand both agency expectations and the potential growth and success they can experience working at OOD.

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

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