



Welcome to HireGround!

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) produces this bimonthly newsletter expressly for our VR professional audience. We hope that these stories, best practices and practical tips we share 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.

Introduction

If you are a very careful reader, you'll notice that I added a word to our opening paragraph in this issue of HireGround. Without looking at a former issue, can you guess which word? Well, it is "integrated." I think I took it out several months ago just because it sounded a little heavy in the sentence. However, a colleague pointed out earlier this summer that while we focus intensely as an agency on "employment, independence and disability determination outcomes," somehow "integrated" often gets lost in the shuffle. As a result, we're looking at social integration in the workplace in this issue. What if you have a visible disability that immediately makes you "different"? Likewise, what about times when invisible disabilities create differences but you decide to use them as your strength? How does one artist convey integration in her pictures? You'll find that most of these observations go far beyond the 90-day closure period, and, they're good to think about as participants develop their careers.

Disability Community

Opportunities/Announcements

Annual Schedule of Letters to Medicare Beneficiaries

Most annual mail beneficiaries receive about their coverage (from Medicare, Social Security and related health care plans) starts arriving in September. Some mailings go to everyone with Medicare; like the "Medicare & You" handbook. Many mailings, however, go to people in specific situations, such as, people who have Extra Help with Part D costs or those whose plans are ending. Many of the letters are color-coded. This chart is a handy way to have all the information about beneficiary mailings at your fingertips. <http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Prescription-Drug-Coverage/LimitedIncomeandResources/Downloads/2014Mailings.pdf>

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OCIS to OhioMeansJobs

Now that your transition consumers are back in school, remember that the Ohio Department of Education's Ohio Career Information System (OCIS) became part of OhioMeansJobs. Nothing saved in OCIS portfolio accounts was accessible after June 30. However, to access OCIS information and for more career tips, see via OhioMeans Jobs these sites:

For those still in high school, <https://jobseeker.k-12.ohiomeansjobs.monster.com/seeker.aspx>

For post-school career planning, <https://jobseeker.ohiomeansjobs.monster.com/login.aspx?redirect=https%3a%2f%2fjobseeker.ohiomeansjobs.monster.com%2fexploreit%2fcareerplan.aspx>

Medicare Part D Premiums to Stay Low Next Year

Find announced premiums and other details for Medicare prescription drug plans in 2015. This Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) web page shows everything you wanted to know about Part D for 2015 plus past years: http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Health-Plans/MedicareAdvtgSpecRateStats/Ratebooks-and-Supporting-Data.html#main_content

Adaptive Design for youth

Adaptive Design is a nonprofit that provides tailor-made furniture for children with disabilities. Design students and volunteers use cardboard to build pieces that will accommodate a child's specific needs. For example, a girl with low muscle tone could not sit upright without being propped in between an adult's legs. To help her sit upright and read a book independently, the company made her a legless chair that looked like a sled with a back and attached a mesh strap. Then she was able to join her classmates in the reading circle without anyone's aid. The solutions provided by the company are inexpensive and adaptable to a multitude of disabilities.

Full Story: Using Cardboard to Bring Disabled Children Out of Exile of Wrong Furniture, New

YorkTimes, July 29, 2014: <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/30/nyregion/using-cardboard-to-bring-disabled-children-out-of-the-exile-of-wrong-furniture.html?ref=nyregion>

New currency readers coming to blind/visually impaired community

Currency readers are now available, providing independent access to bills in circulation, while future banknotes containing a tactile feature are being developed (expected out by 2020). Users can have this information spoken out loud or through ear buds. Of interest to those with hearing impairments, the machine can also be set to emit vibrations or tones instead of speaking the information out loud. Patrons of National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) or those wanting to become an NLS patron can call 1-888-657-7323 to pre-register to get a currency reader when the National program rolls out in January 2015. People other than NLS patrons must submit an application, signed by a competent authority who can certify eligibility. The form required can be downloaded from www.bep.gov. Those registering now will be on the list for the first shipment of readers to go out in January. Here is a link to more information on the currency reader: <http://www.bep.gov/uscurrencyreaderpgm.html>

For those who would like to learn more about what the government is doing to insure that the blindness community has independent access to the information on U.S. currency, the government will now provide email updates. Visit the web site of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing at <http://www.bep.gov/> and sign up to receive updates by email.

Preparing for NDEAM

Held in some form each October since 1945, National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is a campaign that raises awareness about disability employment issues and celebrates the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities. The U.S. Department of Labor has announced the 2014 official theme of

National Disability Employment Awareness Month: "Expect. Employ. Empower." For more information, including specific ideas for how organizations can participate, visit <http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam/>

Pictures Integrate Art and Disability in "Charlottesville"

Artwork by Charlotte McGraw

Information courtesy of Cody F. Miller I, Resident Artist of Goodwill Art Studio & Gallery

Charlotte McGraw has created her own integrated city in pictures. "She creates characters who live in the fictional 'Charlottesville' - everyone there has been an outcast somewhere else and once they arrive are given a job, etc. It's more about Identity and inclusion, and fighting isolation. Her work is stunning."

VSA Arts Director Erin Hoppe



Sally Choo-Choo has two passions in life; styling hair and dancing, which she does simultaneously.

However, it took many years of practice. The townsfolk were surprisingly patient and given large discounts when their hair was butchered beyond repair. Mayor Charlotte was the first in town to sport a mullet, which caused a fad; soon a full three-quarters of the town followed suit, grandmothers and rabbis included. Sally was so busy she wore out 10 pairs of dancing shoes. Her Salon, "Choo-Choo's," has now expanded its services to include auto detailing and retro cuts.

"Charlottesville is a town for people who can have a voice about their lives. Awhile back, I really didn't have a choice in what happened to me in my life."

(Artist Charlotte McGraw, as quoted in The Columbus Dispatch)

http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/life_and_entertainment/2010/02/21/2_CHARLOTTESVILLE_ART_02-21-10_E6_69GK1GE.html



Leroy is one of the oldest residents of Charlottesville. His smile has been known to make townsfolk laugh and babies cry. Mayor Charlotte appointed him as town historian, a job he takes quite seriously. He is present at every town meeting, constantly reminding people that Charlottesville never does the same thing twice. In his considered opinion, this makes the town the most wonderfully mysterious place in the whole wide world.

Charlotte is one of the artists featured in the Goodwill Art Studio & Gallery. The Studio is an innovative fine arts program serving over 80 artists with disabilities and other barriers. The program offers opportunity for creative self-expression, improved self-esteem, increased life satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment through encouragement and collaboration with professional artists. Artists like Charlotte have gained recognition through exhibitions

in local galleries, Goodwill Art Studio & Gallery exhibitions, the Goodwill Columbus website, and social media. Sales of artwork provide income for artists and help to continue this programming. <http://www.artsinohio.com/organization/goodwill-art-studio-gallery>

Charlotte's Facebook page link: <https://www.facebook.com/ArtistCharlotteMcGraw>

Broad and High YouTube with Charlotte discussing more details about her work: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ipUJ_xBVwKE

Behind the Lines with an Invisible Disability

Due to both the impending end of his probationary period at work and because of his desire to stay "behind the lines," this writer prefers to remain anonymous. His perspective on safeguarding an invisible disability on the job while integrating into the workforce is one that we can learn from, with gratitude, for his willingness to share.

In the ten years that I have lived with a diagnosis of bipolar disorder, I have survived excruciating mishaps, jettisoned life goals, gained personal insight, discovered special talents, defiantly revived dreams, and transformed myself many times over. Both career-oriented and temporary jobs comprise my piecemeal track record of employment over the last decade. I



The Youth Leadership Forum's formal portrait taken on the steps of the Ohio Statehouse (see "One Youth Leadership Forum Participant Fits In!")

had dreamt of working in the federal service since childhood, and I lucked into my present role by leveraging resources that I gained as a former VR consumer.

I am in a unique position professionally, since I fell into a great opportunity to positively influence others who carry invisible disabilities, as well as their health care providers. My position as an administrative clerk for the Veterans Health Administration is rich with intrinsic rewards, providing invaluable learning experiences and functioning as a springboard for my coveted federal service career. Working at a medical center with an acute psychiatric unit offers me the chance to go "behind the lines" to support others with conditions like bipolar disorder. My own inpatient psychiatric experience has given me a powerful lens to expose the true sufferings of these individuals who ache for emotional solace.

I am proud of my bipolar experience, and having harnessed it for my betterment, it remains a very intimate part of my identity. Yet, I also realize that my condition exists in all facets of my life – work included. I actively apply my unique experience and perspective to manage challenges at work that are non-issues for your average employee (including my need to schedule frequent appointments with my health care providers during work hours). Still, disclosure of my disability to my employer has not been necessary, as I have not required alternate reasonable accommodations to optimize my functionality. I elect not to inform my colleagues of my disability, as they are generally not part of my personal support network. Keeping my independence at work sometimes means that I isolate myself of my own volition, and that is a personal choice which I confidently make for myself. I am lucky that my work fulfills my calling to be of service to others in their time of need. I am more so honored to be present "behind the lines" to support others with invisible disabilities. This, my vocation, bolsters my life outside of work, wherein I cultivate my appreciation for the arts, undertake social opportunities of my liking, pursue athletic goals, and develop my musical aptitude. Although work is just one means to

my end of a well-rounded and fulfilled lifestyle, I would flounder in piecing together all the other facets without it.

Sidebar

Review 10 Tips for Managing Mental Health in the Workplace, specifically as part of the recovery process from a mental illness. These tips include making time for yourself, developing a routine, surrounding yourself with positive people, and understanding that nothing is perfect. To view more, see: https://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=Top_Story&template=/contentmanagement/contentdisplay.cfm&ContentID=167471&title=10%20Tips%20for%20Managing%20Mental%20Health%20in%20the%20Workplace

See “Tips for Applying for federal Jobs Non-Competitively as a Person with a significant Disability, Sample Schedule A Letters, Writing a Federal Resume, Navigating USAJOBS (OPM Video)” and more at: <http://www.dot.gov/drc/employment-people-disabilities>

Regardless of your situation, many people share things in common with your life circumstances. Browse this A to Z listing of over 500 e-communities of people facing similar life challenges, medical conditions, and mental health issues with the goal of information sharing and support. <http://www.dailystrength.org/support-groups>

Options for Medicare Supplemental Coverage

Adapted with permission from “The ACB Braille Forum,” vol. 53 no. 2, August 2014

by Ron Pollack, with additions from Kendra Burford, Ohio Department of Insurance

Medicare health coverage is fairly comprehensive. But if you need a lot of care, Medicare can leave some significant out-of-pocket costs. That’s why most people have some kind of supplemental insurance to help. Choosing a supplemental plan that makes sense is not always easy. Here are some tips.

What are the types of supplemental coverage? About a third of people with Medicare have supplemental insurance from a former

employer. If you are lucky enough to have this type of coverage, it is probably your best option. Be careful if you ever decide to drop it — you may not be able to get it back. People with low incomes may qualify for the state Medicaid program (and other related programs) that cover Medicare premiums and prescription drug costs.

If you don’t fall into these categories, you may want to consider buying a Medicare Advantage plan. Medicare Advantage plans are available for people under age 65, with the exception of Ohioans with End-Stage Renal Disease.



Bus ride to the Ohio Statehouse (see “One Youth Leadership Forum Participant Fits In!”)

Medicare Advantage may pay for a certain amount of Medicare deductibles and co-insurance. However, it does not usually offer additional services, so it will not pay for an item or service that Medicare does not cover such as prescription drugs.

What are Medicare Advantage plans? Medicare Advantage plans are run by private insurers that contract with Medicare to provide all Medicare benefits. Many of these plans include prescription drug coverage, and some also offer extra services not covered by traditional Medicare. Medicare Advantage plans usually have provider networks that limit the choice of doctors and hospitals. They also have rules about what you pay out-of-pocket that differ from the rules for traditional Medicare. Sometimes these rules are beneficial and can protect you from high out-of-pocket costs. For example, a Medicare Advantage plan may have a low co-payment for office visits. But

sometimes you may pay more for a service if you have a Medicare Advantage plan, compared to traditional Medicare.

When can I enroll? Normally you can enroll in a Medicare Advantage plan only during Medicare's annual open enrollment period, which runs from October 15 to December 7. Once you pick a Medicare Advantage plan, you must stick with it for the whole year (unless you qualify for a special enrollment period).

Note 1: A recent memo from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) reminds Medicare Advantage plans about their responsibility to provide all information in alternate formats with the following requirements: "all organizations must ensure that all plan materials and information (not just those required by CMS), including those produced or distributed by contracted providers, be made available in alternate formats (e.g., braille, large print, and audio) to individuals with disabilities, upon request."

Note 2: Unlike many states, Ohio does not require companies to sell Medigap policies to people under age 65, so it can be tough. Therefore, for now, no companies sell such plans in the state.

Sidebar

For more questions, the Ohio Department of Insurance (ODI) offers the Ohio Senior Health Insurance Information Program (OSHIIP) hotline as a resource at 800-686-1578 and at www.insurance.ohio.gov. ODI also has a free Guide to Medicare Supplemental Plans. It is available at the above website or by calling the hotline.

This website lists OSHIIP-sponsored events coming this fall in each Ohio county to help people evaluate their Medicare plans: <http://www.insurance.ohio.gov/Consumer/OSHIIP/Documents/MedicareCheckUp.pdf>

Replay this Welcome to Medicare Webinar including a useful (and accessible) slide show here. To listen to the audio replay through October 14, call 1-888-203-1112, passcode 374445789. <http://insurance.ohio.gov/Consumer/OSHIIP/Documents/2014Med101.pdf>

One Youth Leadership Forum Participant Fits In!

By Megan Zahneis

Editor's note: Megan attended this year's Youth Leadership Forum (YLF), a four-day summer training program for high school juniors and seniors with disabilities from around Ohio. She has just started her senior year. In her own words, "I spent a lot of my childhood



Megan Zahneis

surrounded by doctors, nurses, and therapists instead of kids my own age, and so tended to spend a lot of time alone. I developed a love of reading and writing, and I enjoy doing public speaking, advocacy work, and anything that allows me to help inspire others with my story." In her YLF wrap-up speech below, you will learn more about YLF. Note the focus on fitting in and on finding mentors.

I've never been away from home for an extended period like this without my family, so I was pretty scared to even come to YLF. Of course, I was excited - my interview at my school in the spring went really well - but my nerves overtook me, which was a predicament my family saw coming. So my dad drove me up to Columbus, because we all knew that if my mom and I got in that car together, we'd both be bawling before we even reached the interstate!

The other thing I'll admit to being nervous about before I came to YLF was the social aspect of things. Here I was in a brand-new city with absolutely no one I knew. I was terrified that YLF would be a repeat of one of those scenes we've probably all seen play out at school...the awkward lunch-table moment where you have no idea where to sit.

YLF isn't like that. I found that I was totally fine with sitting down for lunch with a table full of

strangers. My thinking was, if they're wearing one of those infamous YLF T-shirts, they must be kind of okay.

That's the thing about YLF. It's all about the people. Without Donna (Foster-Sillanpaa) and Bri (Riffle) and Larry (McCartney), without the peer mentors and staff members, without the nurses and PCAs, without the session leaders and special guests like Dr. Sauer and Miss Sammons, without us delegates, and without the support of places like the Arc of Ohio, the Butler County Board of Developmental Disabilities, the Governor's Council on People with Disabilities, and Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, YLF just wouldn't be complete.

So when you get all these people in a room together, there's never a shortage of good times to be had, whether it was the trip to the Statehouse, swimming or playing wheelchair basketball, watching "Darius Goes West," engaging in heated debates while playing Apples to Apples, or the dance (with a bonus visit from the fire department after someone saw smoke in the laundry room!).

We learned about advocacy and leadership from the talented session leaders and panelists, and from our small group counselors, but I'd argue that we as delegates learned even more from each other. The way I see it, everyone attending this Forum has a story, one that can inspire others and push them to do more. That's something that can never be underestimated.

For the first time in my seventeen years, I didn't have to worry about being "different." The truth is, we're all different here at YLF. And I actually felt like I



Fun times at the Youth Leadership Forum!

belonged this week. Who cares if I needed someone to cut up my food sometimes, or that I accidentally called the PCA waking me up one morning "Mom?" (Sorry, Kelsey!)

To paraphrase one of my favorite authors, I "fell in love (with YLF) the way you fall asleep: slowly, and then all at once." So I hope everyone here can see how many dividends their hard work has paid off. Especially Donna, Larry and Bri - could you please stand up so we can applaud you guys one more time?

So as I prepare to go back home, a few thoughts come to mind. Firstly, to my mom and dad, the food here is absolutely amazing (especially the desserts), so just to warn you, my culinary standards were set pretty high this week!

The other thing all YLF parents should know is that we're going to have a lot of sleep to catch up on. We were at breakfast by 7:30 every morning and lights out wasn't until 11p.m., but we all stayed up past that because - at least for me - I never wanted my days at YLF to end.

That's saying something from the girl who was, this time last week, holing up in the house and begging my parents to let me stay and binge-watch Netflix instead of going to Columbus.

If you want to read more of Megan's personal writing, see her blog at: www.writerkid.wordpress.com.

Note: The Ohio Governor's Council on People with Disabilities sponsors the Ohio Youth Leadership Forum for students with disabilities each summer for high school juniors and seniors. It is funded through state and private donations and is free to all participants. Applications requiring recommendation letters and open interviews will be available in January at: <http://www.gcpd.ohio.gov/>

Sidebar: some mentoring resources

To learn more about the National Mentoring Partnership, including a searchable index by zip code, see: www.mentoring.org

For resources and discussion on utilizing mentoring programs, or even creating one of your own, see The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth: [www.http://www.ncwd-youth.info/](http://www.ncwd-youth.info/)

For resources from Connecting to Success on leveraging technology in mentoring programs and the use of e-mentoring applicable to teachers, sight coordinators, mentors/employers, liaisons, and students, see: <http://ici.umn.edu/ementoring/mentors/default.html>

This article shares research and advice on youth with disabilities who may be participating in mentoring programs, when program managers and mentors may be unaware of how disabilities affect mentoring relationships: <http://www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=704>

Learn about parent mentoring resources and more from The Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities: http://www.ocecd.org/parent_mentor.php

This guide, "Friends: Connecting People with Disabilities and Community Members" includes specific activities in creating a plan to connect people and build relationships. It is designed for agency staff, but it can be used by parents, support coordinators, teachers, people with disabilities, and others: http://ici.umn.edu/index.php?products/view_part/579/



The Youth Leadership Forum's 'fun' portrait taken on the steps of the Ohio Statehouse.

What's New with Disability Hiring in Federal Contracts?

Editor's note: This March, the U.S. Department of Labor implemented new Rules changing regulations on Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. To recap, disability

questions have become a new category as part of annual reporting, applying to contractors with a federal contract/subcontract of \$50,000 or more and 50 or more employees. Here are some updates as follow-up to our January article, courtesy of L. Scott Lissner, ADA Coordinator and 504 Compliance Officer, The Ohio State University:

"I think the underlying initial goal from the administration was to establish what proportion of your workforce should at minimum be identified," Scott says. The current system is all about data and reporting, not the aspirational target of 7% of people in the workforce reporting having a disability. Awareness has gone up, which Scott estimates as "at least one third of the intent." Most federal contractors are well on their way to collecting good data and asking questions. Resulting from the regulations, disability disclosure rates appear to be inching up, especially after hire. "The big test we'll see about a year from now, when companies have to ask their existing workers whether they've acquired a disability that they want us to know about," he adds. According to Scott, at OSU, more requests have been coming from administrative and professional-level employees now, as opposed to maintenance or other labor.

"The ultimate goal is mainstream integration," Scott says when looking at the number of job applicants. "I don't expect that you guys (VR) will ever be out of business, (...) but I would like to see more disability being mentioned in Columbus Weekly" (as opposed to disability-focused publications.)

Additionally, Scott reports a change in thinking about what a "reasonable accommodation" can be, transforming from visible, environmental or technological modifications, to innovation demanding creative thinking on the part of management. "We've been on a trend line for a while about psychological communications on the spectrum, that kind of disability requests. Resulting, people are sometimes receiving flexible schedules and other accommodations that translate out to addressing anxiety or stress." In other words,

the intended target is turning towards people whose accommodations are more about management practice and communication and policy modifications, less about physical environment or technology. "The issue is that it requires people to be thoughtful and reflective." This diversifying how to make different kinds of reasonable accommodations in the minds of decision makers may be the most important realm the new guidelines address. Scott puts this in humorous terms, "When a monitor blows, I can buy a new one; when a manager blows, I can't go replace them."

Sidebar: some additional resources for employers

Learn more from contractors' need perspectives on issues related to the new additions to Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act, including effective outreach and recruitment of individuals with disabilities and veterans, reasonable accommodations in the workplace, promoting self-identification as an individual with a disability or a veteran, and other relevant topics. <http://www.dol.gov/ofccp/regs/compliance/Resources.htm>

Employers have many legitimate reasons for conducting criminal background checks, from mitigating the risk of workplace violence and negligent hiring lawsuits to reducing employee theft. Those that reject candidates based solely on convictions or arrests, however, face a different kind of threat: <http://www.crainscleveland.com/article/20140726/SUB1/307279998/employers-adjust-criminal-background-check-methods>

About 22 percent of the U.S. workforce is employed by a federal contractor or subcontractor. Now those workers and their employers have new options for asking questions and checking the status of complaints. Some new web tools allow you to submit a question to the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) and check questions or complaint status: <http://kb.dol.gov/DOLFlowQuestions?agency=OFCCP>

Are we there yet? What Deafness and Blindness Groups around Ohio have to say on Workplace Integration

by Elizabeth L. Sammons

Some people cannot hide a disability on the job, and in those cases, integration takes on a different slant. As part of research for the Workforce Integration Task Force instated by Governor Kasich last spring, OOD and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) held 17 two-hour focus groups involving deaf, blind and deaf/blind participants in six Ohio cities in July and August. One of the lines of questioning revolved around "What is life like as a person with a disability at work?" Here is a mosaic of some notable quotes excerpted from these dialogues.

"I understand there are a lot of things out there for us, but we have to get through a lot of things to get where we want to be." (Columbus)

"I don't want anybody to give me anything. I want someone to give me a chance." (Cleveland)

"It's a ballet act, of balancing disclosure and nondisclosure." (Cincinnati)

"People at school were saying I could see, since I have cute handwriting." (Columbus)

"It's a struggle, since I can use my voice. Many don't believe I am really deaf. Or they forget. It's exhausting always lip reading/listening. People think I'm not paying attention." (Akron)

"You are in a position of continually having to teach other people about your disability. It's exhausting, but important. You become a kind of ambassador." (Akron)

"If one deaf person succeeds in a job, that person paves the way for future hires." (Portsmouth)

"Sometimes employers are skeptical, because they put you in the same box as other blind people who have not been successful." (Akron)

"You always feel like the spotlight is on you, even when it isn't." (Cincinnati)

"I feel the conflict between actual work accomplishments and accidental spotlight on the disability." (Cincinnati)

"I'm 'fresh meat' on the job; initial excitement about learning ASL, then people just ignore me." (Toledo)

"People at work shy away from a disabled colleague, or else they pity them unnecessarily." (Akron)

"I am left out, lonesome, frustrated, people talk behind my back. When I try to join conversations, it gets short and simple." (Toledo)

"But there are also some wonderful people, including a boss providing an occasional interpreter, such as for monthly meetings. Typing/writing things. Asked to be sure I knew unfamiliar words." (Columbus)

"We can work best by doing team work according to each person's abilities." (Columbus)

"The thing in attitude is how many times you are willing to get back up when life strikes you down, including disability-related situations." (Akron)

Internal Controls: Insights from the desk of Ohio Fiscal Professional Steve Tribbie

A system of internal controls comprises all of the processes and procedures used by the partner to expend funds and to document those expenditures. This is often referred to as a system of checks and balances within the accounting process. An effective system of internal controls



Steve Tribbie

is one of the overarching requirements for proper management and oversight of federal funds. When evaluating partners' systems, OOD often identifies issues in four areas:

Lack of segregation of duties – Accounting procedures should involve multiple people at various stages to ensure that no single person has complete responsibility for the accounting process.

Lack of proper authorization for payments of goods or services – Supervisory positions should have authority to approve purchases for other positions.

Failure to maintain an accounting system that includes extractable general ledger for each program that receives funding – Partners need to be able to isolate expenditures of funds under an OOD contract and separate them from expenditures under other funding sources.

Lack of policies and procedures – Internal controls are defined in written policies and procedures. A lack of such documents implies insufficient control over the use of funding. This raises significant concerns from OOD's perspective.

OOD encourages all partners to review their systems of internal control and make improvements where necessary to address organizational performance and governance issues, especially as they relate to financial and accounting practices.

For additional information on internal controls, an excellent resource is the Committee of Sponsoring Organization's (COSO) at <http://www.coso.org/>.

COSO has developed an Internal Control Framework that provides a context and basis for forming systems of internal control. The Framework includes multiple layers to address all aspects of internal control, including the Control Environment, Risk Assessment, Control Activities, Information & Communication, and Monitoring.

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

September TV Series examining Life during Transition, Disability Scoop, Aug. 18, 2014: <http://www.disabilitycoop.com/2014/08/18/tv-series-transition/19592/>

See this webinar from the Center on Knowledge Translation for Employment Research originally recorded in July. The session covers cancer-related workplace issues, employment laws, and how supervisors and human resources managers can help employees with cancer and their colleagues maintain a productive, supportive workplace environment: <http://www.kter.org/ktactivities/webcasts/159>

Audrey Demmitt offers some great ideas on finding rides when you can't drive: <http://www.visionaware.org/august14news-16>

This feisty blog reminds us to "fight shame with history" as we consider disability integration: <http://longmoreinstitute.wordpress.com/2014/09/02/fighting-shame-with-history/#content>

The Department of Labor (DOL) has launched a Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) resource page that includes summaries of the law and key implementation dates. The DOL will soon begin writing regulations to implement the new law and has just announced a series of webinars to engage the public around development of these regulations: <http://www.doleta.gov/WIOA/>

Calendar of Disability Community Events

Artist portfolio development workshops will be held in Lakewood (October), and Columbus (November). Stay tuned for upcoming locations and times at <http://www.vsao.org/>.

The Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging's fall schedule: <http://www.coaaa.org/coaaa-professional-education.php>

With a deadline of October 14, the Secretary of Labor invites interested parties to **submit nominations for people to serve on the Advisory Committee on Increasing Competitive Integrated Employment for Individuals with Disabilities.** <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2014/09/12/2014-21834/advisory-committee-on-increasing-competitive-integrated-employment-for-individuals-with-disabilities#main>

October 21-22: **Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA) Fall Conference** at the Embassy Suites Hotel/Dublin, will celebrate the organization's 40 Year Anniversary. The Conference offers an opportunity to learn about the latest issues facing providers, and hear from first-rate speakers. More information is at <http://www.opra.org/>.

October 24-26: **American Council of the Blind statewide Ohio conference**, Cincinnati, OH. <http://www.acbohio.org/convention/index.html>

October 27: **OOD Job Fair near Cleveland;** Holiday Inn, 6011 Rockside Rd., Independence, OH 44131. For questions, jon.hackathorn@ood.ohio.gov

October 30: **OOD Job Fair in Toledo;** 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. – Stranahan Theatre Great Hall, 4645 Heatherdowns Boulevard, Toledo, OH 43614. For questions, jon.hackathorn@ood.ohio.gov

October 31: 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., **Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging Senior Living Festival**, Veterans Memorial, 300 W. Broad St., Columbus, OH. <http://www.coaaa.org/index.php>

October 31-November 2: **National Federation of the Blind statewide Convention**, Worthington, OH. www.nfbohio.org

November 6-8: **Division on Career Development and Transition annual International Conference "Transition Rocks!"** at the Renaissance Cleveland Hotel, Cleveland, OH. www.dcdt.org

November 7-8: **Ohio Adult Sibling Conference (SIBS)** at Columbus Airport Marriott Hotel, Columbus, OH. <http://www.ohiosibs.com/>

November 12: **OOD Job Fair in Portsmouth;** 342 2nd St., Portsmouth, OH 45662. For questions, jon.hackathorn@ood.ohio.gov

November 12: **HOME Choice Conference** "Making the Journey - Empowerment, Inclusion, Community!" at Hilton Columbus Downtown, Columbus, OH. Register by October 22. <http://www.homechoicecac.org/home-choice-conference.html>

December 3-5: the **Ohio Association of County Boards (OACB) Annual Convention** at the Hilton Columbus at Easton, Columbus, OH. In addition to a full schedule of informative presentations and sessions, OACB will present annual awards – during the three-day event. Details and registration coming soon at <http://www.oacbdd.org/>

February 17: **Global Access (faith-based) Conference** from Joni and Friends, Westlake Village, CA. <http://globalaccessconference.org/>

Thanks, so long, and what's coming up?

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, HireGround coordinator at: Elizabeth.sammons@ood.ohio.gov.

Elizabeth L. Sammons
HireGround Coordinator

Interviewees, designers and authors:

Anonymous contributor
Kendra Burford
Diane Koren
Brigid Krane with logo design
L. Scott Lissner
Cody F. Miller I
Ron Pollack
Steve Tribbie
Megan Zahneis