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Task Force to Address Workforce Challenges for Deaf and Blind Individuals

Governor Kasich Requested Group Gather and Analyze Employment and Wage Data; Report Due January 1, 2015

COLUMBUS, OHIO – Governor John R. Kasich has charged a task force with gathering data and making recommendations regarding the employment challenges for individuals who are deaf or blind. The Workforce Integration Task Force, created as part of the Mid-Biennium Review (MBR) process at the request of the Governor, will meet September 24, 2014, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the offices of Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency (OOD).

“Our work will give us an opportunity to expand awareness and break down barriers to employment for individuals who are deaf or blind,” said Kevin Miller, OOD Executive Director. “The task force brings an impressive group of people together to address potential solutions to unemployment and wage disparity. I am confident the report will be a valuable tool for policy makers.”

The nine-member task force, co-chaired by Director Miller and Cynthia C. Dungey, director of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), will gather and analyze data regarding income levels and employment barriers for individuals who are deaf or blind and make recommendations on how to more fully integrate these individuals into the workforce. A final report is due to the Governor by January 1, 2015.

“As the state’s economic recovery continues, the recommendations from this task force will help ensure that Ohioans who are deaf and blind benefit from the improving job market and are able to secure meaningful employment,” Director Dungey said.

Along with the agency directors, the task force is made up of seven members with diverse backgrounds and experience. Included are individuals from the deaf and blind communities, representatives from the business community, nonprofit organizations, community leaders, and those with an academic background in disability issues. [Please see attached “Workforce Integration Task Force Members” for details.]

Governor Kasich proposed the creation of the task force as part of the administration’s second-year budget reform package known as the MBR, and it was included in HB 483. The provision creates the task force within OOD and tasks it with collecting data related to the income levels of individuals who are deaf or blind, their employment status and geographic location, and identifying barriers to their employment. No appropriations were included with the task force; as a result, the provision had an effective date of September 15, 2014. Upon the issuance of its report, the task force sunsets.

OOD is the state agency responsible for assisting individuals with disabilities to live independently, gain meaningful employment or receive disability benefits through the Social Security Administration. www.ood.ohio.gov

Workforce Integration Task Force Members

Steve Brubaker

Steve Brubaker began his career at InfoCision Management Corporation in 1985. In his current role as Chief of Staff, he is a member of the Executive Team and is responsible for HR, internal and external communications, and manages InfoCision's legal and compliance departments. Brubaker is a member of a number of professional organizations, including the American Teleservices Association (ATA). He served on ATA's national board of directors for more than a decade and is active in the ATA Self-Regulatory Organization (SRO). In 2007 he was awarded the ATA's highest honor, the prestigious Fulcrum Award, in recognition of his extraordinary contributions to the call center industry. Mr. Brubaker also received the Dr. Frank L. Simonetti Distinguished Business Alumni Award from The University of Akron in 2012 and the University of Akron Honors College Distinguished Alumni Award in 2014.

Deborah Keefer Kendrick

Deborah Keefer Kendrick is an award-winning journalist, poet, and technologist. Her newspaper column on disability rights has appeared in numerous newspapers since 1986, including the Cincinnati Enquirer, Columbus Dispatch, San Francisco Chronicle, among others. Kendrick also serves as senior features editor for AccessWorld, a technology news magazine for individuals who are blind or visually impaired published by the American Foundation for the Blind. Deborah has written the *Jobs That Matter* series of books for AFB Press, a series profiling a wide variety of blind and visually impaired individuals and the jobs they do. Her features, editorials, and reviews have also appeared in numerous regional and national publications including *Woman's Day*, *Parenting*, *Marriage and Family*, *St. Anthony Messenger*, and many others. She serves on a number of boards and councils, has three grown children, and lives in Cincinnati.

Jamie McCartney

Jamie McCartney has been a professional interpreter in Ohio for 21 years and is currently Coordinator for the ASL/ English Interpreting Program at Kent State University. McCartney holds a Doctorate in Secondary Education: Curriculum and Instruction and Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Technical Education from the University of Akron. She has interpreted in a variety of settings and worked in a variety of venues, such as post-secondary, employment, VRS, medical, social services, Deaf-Blind, and platform interpreting. She has also interpreted for Sorenson Video Relay Service since 2005, previously holding the capacities of manager, director, and Video Interpreter. McCartney is a member of the Ohio Chapter of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (OCRID) and the national organization, the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID). She holds national certification from that organization: Certificate of Transliteration (CT), Certification of Interpretation (CI), and National Interpreter Certification- Master Level (NIC-M).

John L. Moore

John L. Moore is the CEO/Executive Director of Deaf Services Center, Inc. (DSC), a non-profit organization committed to the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals and their families throughout a 27 county service area. Moore earned a Bachelor of Science in Government and History from Gallaudet University in Washington D.C. and his Master's in Public Administration from Northeastern University in Boston. He has worked with local grass-root organizations as well as the public and private sector in his role and is currently the President of Community Shares of Mid-Ohio, the

first individual with a disability in this role, where he works with 60 area non-profits. He has been involved in various deafness and disability organizations and has an extensive range of experience in dealing with organizations, agencies and interest groups on the state and local levels.

Arlon Nash

Arlon Nash teaches at Springfield High School in Springfield, Ohio. Nash graduated from Bowling Green State University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration and holds a Master's Degree in Deaf Education from McDaniel College in Westminster, Maryland. He is a member of The American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA) with Qualified Certification. He is currently co-leader for the Clark County Deaf Community Organization and is involved as a leader in several organizations that promote leadership for the deaf and that support and cherish American Sign Language (ASL) as the first and native language for individuals who are deaf.

J. Webster Smith

J. Webster Smith (J.W.) was born blind on March 9, 1959 in Chicago, Illinois. Dr. Smith is a professor of Speech Communication in the School of Communication Studies at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in History and Speech Communication from Indiana University, his Master of Arts degree in Speech Communication from Purdue University, and his PhD from Wayne State University. He is a member of the National Communication Association, Central States Communication Association, National Federation of the Blind, National Federation of the Blind of Ohio (where he served as president from 2008-2012), and the National Association of Blind Educators. In addition, Dr. Smith has served as a member of the Ohio State Library Consumer Advisory Committee, the State Consumer Advisory Committee of Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (formerly known as the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission), and on the Ohio Governor's Council on People with Disabilities.

Sherill K. Williams

Sherill K. Williams has served as president and CEO of Prevent Blindness Ohio (PBO) since 1986. Prior to joining the staff of PBO, Williams served as national director of youth volunteers for the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation and as executive director of the Fairfield County, Connecticut chapter of the March of Dimes. She received her -Bachelor of -Arts in Speech/Communication from the University of Minnesota and a Master's in Public Administration/Health Care administration from Pace University of New York. Williams is on the Advisory Board of GroundWorkGroup, and is a member of the Ohio Association of Nonprofit Organization's Standards of Excellence Advisory Committee. Additionally, she serves as an advisor for the Ann Ellis Fund of The Columbus Foundation and is a founding member of SOS (Save Our Sight) Coalition, Ohio Eye Care Coalition, Ohio Fireworks Safety Coalition and Ohio Aging Eye Public Private Partnership. She is a graduate of Leadership Columbus and served as a commissioner for the International Year of the Child Presidential National Commission in Washington, D.C.