

WEEKLY FOCUS

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

Biennial Budget Outreach and Communication Continues

As the biennial budget process continues in the Ohio General Assembly, we are working to keep our stakeholders, partners and staff informed about both the process and our priorities for this budget. We have held conference calls and meetings with a number of key associations and organizations to brief them on the budget and its impact. We are holding calls and presentations for OOD staff today and will be reaching out to any remaining partners in the coming days.

I will continue to meet with legislators and strive to keep you informed as the budget process plays out.

State of the State Address in Wilmington February 24

As noted last week, Governor John Kasich will be delivering the State of the State Address in Wilmington on Tuesday, February 24th. Along with a number of other state agencies, we will be participating in events in Wilmington prior to the Governor's speech.

- We will be partnering with the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) at a morning event highlighting our Employment First Partnership and its success in moving individuals into integrated community employment.
- A business engagement event will be held at the Clinton County OhioMeansJobs Center that will include Windmills Training, as well as interviews and job matching for individuals in Job Ready status with local businesses.
- OOD staff will be joining the Ohio Board of Regents (Regents) for a tour of the Laurel Oaks campus of the Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development. After lunch and the tour, we will be breaking off from the Regents to learn more about the Career X program at Laurel Oaks, a career exploration and employability program for individuals with disabilities.

I am excited about the opportunity to see the impact these programs are having in the Wilmington area and to meet the great people doing the work every day.

Employment First Partnership Training

Last week, OOD staff new to the Employment First (EF) Partnership, participated in a two-day training held at Central Office. Julie Hance, OOD Employment First Project Lead and Joe Kowalski, Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) Employment First Project Manager led this initiative alongside Dale DiLeo, Director/Consultant of the Training Resource Network (TRN) who provided training focused on community inclusion for persons with disabilities.

SUCCESS BY THE NUMBERS

**EMPLOYMENT
FIRST** 

1,617 individuals served
185 competitive job placements
100+ individuals successfully employed

The first day focused on supported employment and national perspective, an Ohio Employment First overview, provider competencies for successful job placements, and waivers supported employment. The second day emphasized Person-Centered Planning processes and documentation, supported employment updates and best practices, case studies, and small group activities.

Training on Person-Centered Planning included:

- Strengthening the voice of the person, and those who know the person best
- Actively searching for a person's skills and competencies in the context of community life

- Using ordinary language and images, rather than professional jargon

The case studies and the small group exercises explained the above principles for individuals with low incidence disabilities, as well as those with complex medical and behavioral needs. The goal of the training was to help staff become more proficient in providing a personalized discovery process in order to gather information about an individual's strengths, interests, abilities, preferences, resources, and desired outcomes as it relates to community employment.

Every Person. Every Talent. Every Opportunity.

Since the inception of the Employment First Partnership, we have engaged over 1,617 individuals with disabilities along with making 185 competitive placements. With this model our success rate and our cost per case are lower and we have been able to add caseloads which has allowed an increase in counselors from 15 to 25 and is extremely promising for the future. The executive budget supports the continuation of the program and has increased funding in year two of the biennial budget. A job well done to staff who have made this new initiative a success!

Second Annual Mini-Job Fair Results in Job Offers



Scioto Downs Racino held its Second Annual Mini-Job Fair and offered three OOD job seekers full-time jobs.

Last week, Scioto Downs Racino held its Second Annual Mini-Job Fair with over 10 people from the Pickaway and Madison County Boards of Developmental Disabilities in attendance. This mini-job fair created an opportunity for individuals with disabilities to network and explore the career opportunities available within Scioto Downs Racino. Scioto Downs Racino, which

was recently awarded the Creating Opportunity Award for beginning the process of hiring and integrating individuals with disabilities into their workforce, made full-time job offers to three OOD job seekers. Each of these job seekers represented different funding sources within OOD: Employment First BVR (Madison County), Bridges to Transitions Program (Pickaway County), and BVR (Pickaway County).

It's so exciting to see qualified candidates matched with quality employment opportunities. All three individuals will begin orientation/training next week as well as be assigned their work schedules. These positions are fully equipped with 31 working hours plus fringe benefits, paid time off (15 days), medical/dental/vision insurance, and a 401K plan with a 2% employment match program along with free lunch during assigned breaks.

The success of this event is highlighted by the fact that six OOD job seekers who attended last year's event, and received full-time job offers, are still employed at Scioto Downs Racino.

Congratulations once again to all three individuals who secured employment at the Second Annual Mini-Job Fair! We wish you the best of luck in your new positions.

American Red Cross Blood Drive



Last Thursday, OOD held its annual blood drive in the Learning Center of the 400 Building. Employees were encouraged to sign-up and donate blood to the American Red Cross helping to supply Central Ohio's Blood Bank.

Agency employees were allowed to wear jeans and were provided paid time off during their working hours in order to participate in this charitable event. One blood donation can save up to three lives and it only took participants between 30-75 minutes. OOD donated 29 units of blood which translates to 87 lives that could be saved by employees who took time to donate to a great cause.

Thanks to everyone who attempted to donate and donated blood. We appreciate your time and effort! Our next blood drive will be held Thursday, May 28. If you would like to receive more information on volunteer activities and opportunities with the American Red Cross, please feel free to visit their page at www.redcross.org/

