

October 18, 2013

Ohio Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities

Kevin L. Miller Executive Director

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.

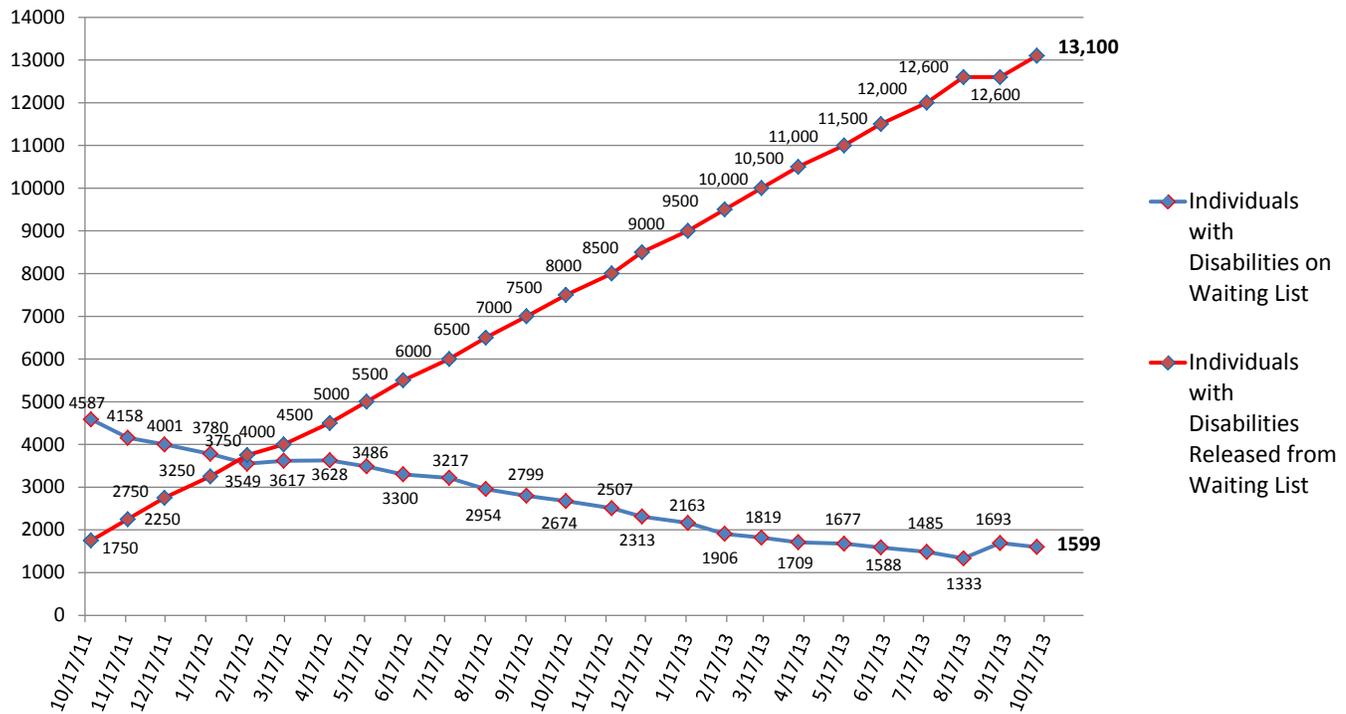
Wait List Sees Reduction Once Again

The Order of Selection Waiting List saw 500 individuals with significant disabilities (SD) removed from the List who had applied for services on May 31, 2013 or earlier. The average wait time between applying for services and being released from the Waiting List for these individuals was an average of 5.2 months – down significantly from an 18 months average wait time in April of 2011.

These individuals are now listed as eligible for services and will be contacted by a VR staff member to move forward. We have released a total of 13,100 consumers from the Waiting List since April 2011.

The elimination of the Waiting List remains a focal point for OOD. We appreciate all of the hard work that has been accomplished to reduce the Waiting List and we look forward to the day we can report that it has been eliminated.

Number of Individuals with Disabilities on Waiting List



NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

Because

We Are EQUAL

to the Task



National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Each October is recognized as National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). NDEAM is a national campaign that raises awareness about disability employment issues and celebrates the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities. The national theme for 2013 is "Because We Are EQUAL to the Task."

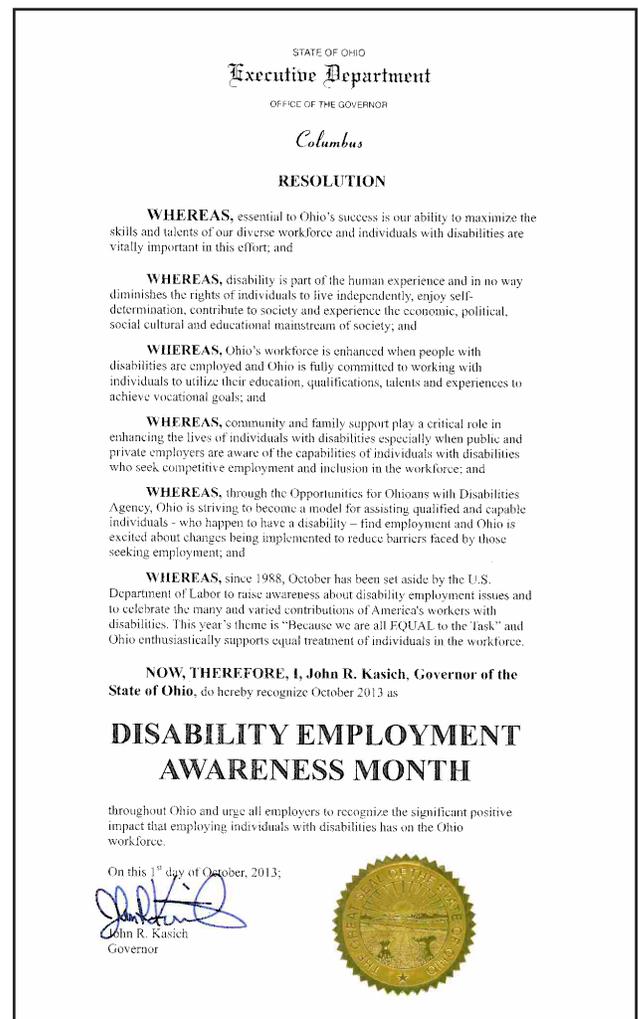
NDEAM's roots go back to 1945, when Congress enacted a law declaring the first week in October each year "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." In 1962, the word "physically" was removed to acknowledge the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. In 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month and changed the name to "National Disability Employment Awareness Month." Upon its establishment in 2001, the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) assumed responsibility for NDEAM and has worked to expand its reach and scope ever since.

Governor John Kasich recently signed a Resolution recognizing NDEAM in Ohio and calling employers to action on this important topic. At the *DisAbility Jobs Summit* last week, I spoke of the important mission we have at OOD to raise awareness about disability employment issues and how we must continue to work hard to help employ people with disabilities.

Employment First Kickoff in Canton

Canton was the last site of the Employment First Kickoff events that have been taking place around Ohio. These events, co-hosted by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) and OOD, have been well attended and have brought attention to the Employment First Initiative.

The event in Canton allowed DODD and OOD to jointly announce the partnership to provide practical job support for 1,500 working-age adults with developmental disabilities throughout Ohio. The partnership is made possible



through funding in the 2014-2015 state budget signed in June by Governor John Kasich. It supports assisting individuals in obtaining employment in their communities outside of sheltered workshops or segregated programs.

The Employment First Initiative was launched by Governor Kasich in 2012 to increase job opportunities for people with developmental disabilities and required state agencies to align policies and programs to support community employment. With this partnership, DODD and OOD have teamed up to create a job counseling/job placement support network for individuals with developmental disabilities in all Ohio counties. DODD will provide funding for counselors employed by OOD and each of those counselors will serve only individuals with developmental disabilities in sheltered work settings to find integrated employment in the community.



Director Miller addresses the Employment First Kickoff in Canton.

OOD Hosts State Representative Denise Driehaus



Corey Dorsey, DDD Document Delivery Technician, talks with State Representative Denise Driehaus (D-Cincinnati) (center) and Director Miller (right).

State Representative Denise Driehaus (D-Cincinnati) visited OOD this week in order to familiarize herself with the various duties OOD carries out on a daily basis.

Erik Williamson, Deputy Director, Division of Disability Determination (DDD), Stephen Wilson, OOD Legislative Liaison, and I met with Representative Driehaus and briefed her on OOD operations and guided her on a brief tour of the 400 Building.

As part of this meeting, we took the opportunity to discuss the federal government shutdown and its impact on operations of DDD.

We were happy to host Representative Driehaus and help clarify OOD's mission and goals. We look forward to working with her on legislative issues in the coming months that may impact individuals with disabilities.

CCC Update

As OOD approaches the final days of the Combined Charitable Campaign (CCC) for 2013, we continue to race towards our goal of \$79,812! Our agency has raised nearly \$74,000! We are so close; and even though the campaign ends soon, we will continue holding fundraising events and collecting pledge forms for several weeks and all of that money will go towards our goal. So, it is not too late to go online and make that pledge.



The Lakewood BVR Office held an Ugly Shirt Day for CCC.

DDD held their Annual Silent Auction this week and made about \$650. DDD also held a 3-Point Shoot Out which was fun and competitive and raised around \$70. Staff at the 150 building is holding a Books, Bakes and Bucks event today. The Craft and Vendor show is Tuesday, October 22 at the 400 building, and it's a great place to start your holiday shopping.

Let's finish strong and continue helping those in need! We thank each and every one of you for your generosity throughout this campaign. If you have any questions, please contact Heidi Block at 614-438-1967 or Roschelle Holcomb at 614-438-1966.



The Pancake Breakfast (above) and the Talent Show (right) were successful fundraising events for CCC.



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

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