

December 13, 2013

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 through integrated services, partnerships and innovation.

Team Returns from Meeting with RSA in Washington

As you know from last week's *Weekly Focus*, OOD sent a team to Washington, D.C. to meet with the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) this week. Returning late last night, the team initially reports that their meetings were productive.

Even as OOD receives technical assistance and guidance on third-party cooperative arrangements from RSA, we continue to stress the value that state and local partnerships bring to providing services to individuals with disabilities. We cannot emphasize enough that OOD is committed to ensure that our model of providing services is fully compliant with Federal Code.

As we move forward with RSA, I will continue to keep everyone informed and up-to-speed on actions being taken as we move toward the issuance of RSA's Final Monitoring Report. We are cautiously optimistic on a path that can allow for minimal disruptions in service to individuals being served by the program.

Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation Starts the Year Strong

The Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities' (OOD) Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR) continues to make improvements that benefit individuals with disabilities in Ohio. Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2014 is off to a great start and I am pleased to provide you a glimpse at the current successes.

Since October 1, 2013 through November 30, 2013, VR counselors and VRP3 coordinators have processed 181 more applications, written 30 more plans, and helped 292 more individuals obtain employment and independence compared to a year ago at this time, an increase of 83%.

Additionally, each month we evaluate how long it took a consumer to learn of their eligibility for the VR program. At the end of FFY 2013, of all decisions made in the year, it took an average of 72.8 days and with a continual monthly trend showing the time to make

the determinations steadily decreasing. This trend continues to show a decrease with the average time between application to eligibility for decisions made in November 2013 at 56.7 days.

These are great trends that we are seeing as we embark on a new fiscal year. I want to thank everyone involved in this great start and trust that with hard work and dedication to assisting individuals with disabilities, we will see them continue.

Update from the Ohio Statehouse

The Ohio House of Representatives adjourned its final session of the first half of the 130th General Assembly on Wednesday. The Ohio Senate had previously completed its final session earlier in the prior week. OOD has and will continue to be very active monitoring the activity at the Statehouse. HB 59 (state operating budget) was the most significant legislation for OOD this past year. It included a funding increase of \$2.5 million dollars and changed the agency's name.

What to expect in the next session: The Mid-Biennium Budget Review will be our agency's primary focus. The Mid-Biennium Budget Review is legislation to make budget revisions and corrections for the second year of the biennium. OOD is currently working on finalizing our agency's budget proposal request to the Office of Budget and Management. We look forward to working with the Ohio General Assembly to further our agency's goals and help individuals with disabilities find employment and live independently.



Ohio Statehouse

OOD Holiday Food Basket Results

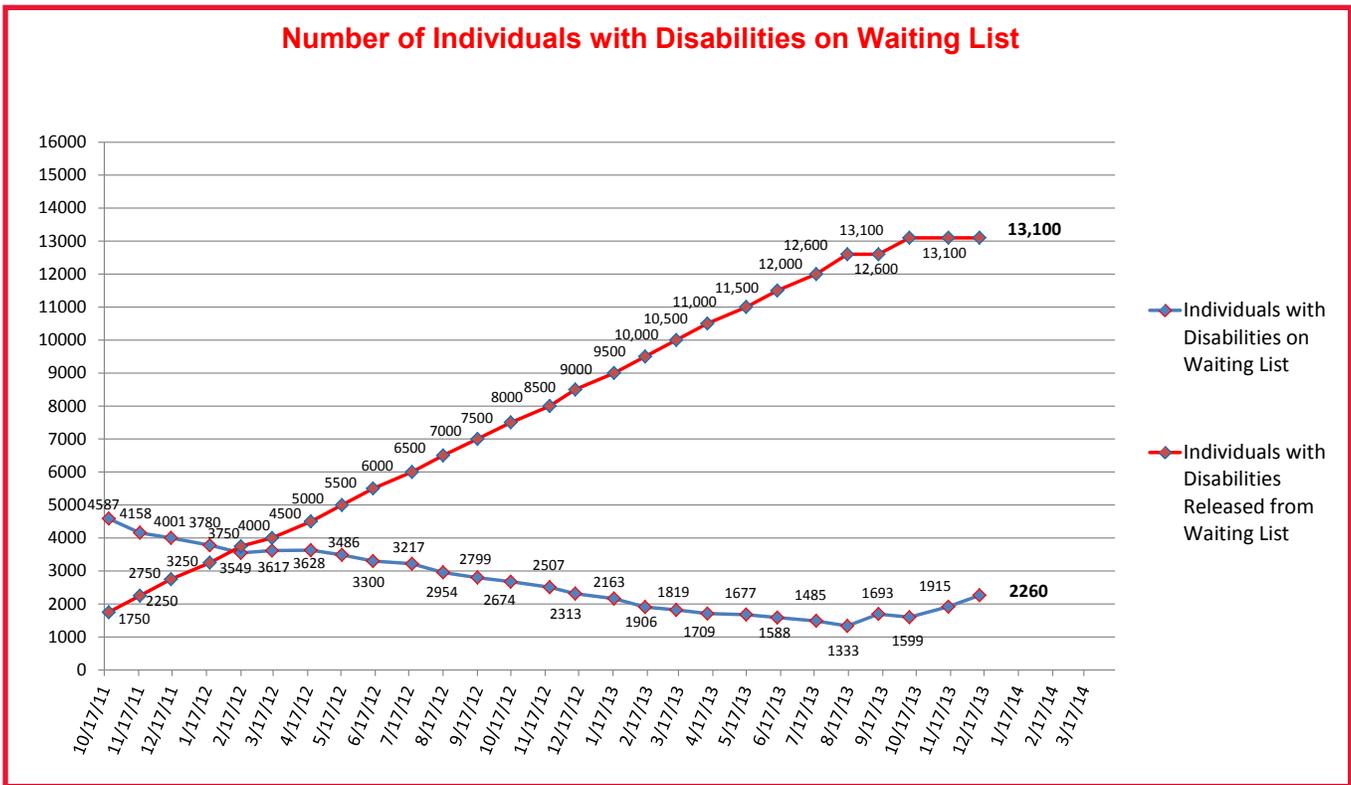


The BVR/BSVI Director's Advisory Group (DAG) and the DDD DAG would like to thank you for your generosity and support this Holiday Season!

OOD raised **\$1,989.12** and **650.82 pounds** of food for Ohioans in need

this holiday season. That is over **8,607.3 meals** for hungry families across Ohio!

Thank you for supporting the Mid-Ohio Food Bank's Holiday Food Basket Campaign...because no one should go hungry!



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

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