

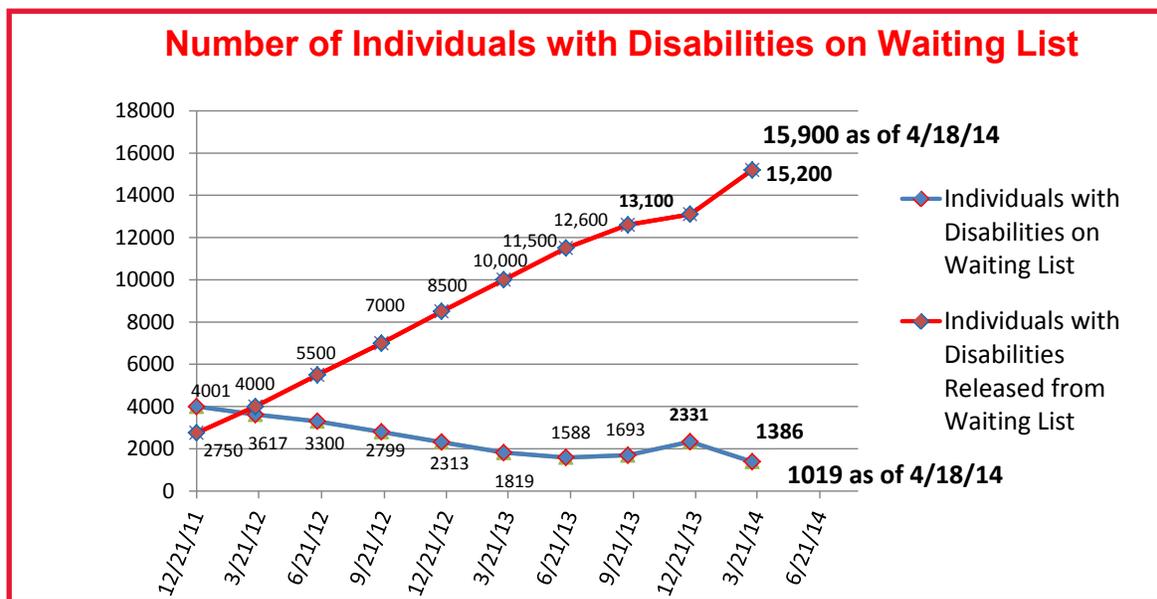
WEEKLY FOCUS

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.

Eliminating the Waiting List

We continue to make progress in our goal of eliminating the Waiting List. We released another 700 individuals from the Waiting List this week and have released nearly sixteen thousand individuals since we began this process three years ago. For individuals in this most recent release (applied for services on or before February 6, 2014), the average wait time was 3.4 months. That is down from 18 months in April 2011 and from 5.6 months in February of this year.

I am grateful for all of the hard work and dedication that has gone into this progress and look forward to celebrating the elimination of the Waiting List.



Commissioners' Focus: Efficient and Effective Outcomes

The Commission met this week as did the Program Planning Committee (the Budget Committee met last week). The Commissioners received updates on the feedback received at the VR State Plan Public Forums held this month, and the process for approving the State Plan, as well as updates from staff on key projects and metrics.

The Commissioners share the agency's focus on efficient and effective operation in order to achieve positive outcomes for those we serve. With this in mind, the Executive Team and staff are working closely with the Commission on effective tools to communicate agency progress on key initiatives. The goal is a more effective use of Commission and agency time with improved communication, both internal and external, resulting in a better understanding of information, tactics and goals.

It was great once again to see the professional and collaborative work of staff and Commissioners as we work toward our shared goals.

Employment First Initiative Shines

In case you missed it, I wanted to bring to your attention the positive front page article in the Columbus Dispatch this week highlighting the success of Employment First. It is exciting to see this program make a difference by helping individuals with disabilities find quality employment in jobs they enjoy, and with full benefits! Thanks to Scioto Downs, Pickaway County Board of Developmental Disabilities, and our counselors for the great work.



The Employment First initiative as a whole has seen excellent progress in a short period of time. Our internal metrics reflect this progress: caseloads now exceed 500 individuals with developmental disabilities and average time in application and eligible status are considerably less than program wide averages. Most importantly, nine individuals are already placed in employment, which is remarkable given that counselors were not hired until late October and all individuals served by the program are new applicants.

The Columbus Dispatch article can be read [here](#).

OOD Contracting Update

OOD is pleased to announce that full case service budgets have been funded for all contracting partners who have executed agreements and submitted their match checks to OOD. While we can all share in a collective sigh of relief as we gear up and intensify our efforts for the rest of FFY '14, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the admirable efforts of staff and partners. Thank you!

Throughout the extended contracting process, OOD has worked collaboratively with our partners to prevent service delays and disruptions to consumers. This was accomplished through a strategy of careful management of resources, the diligent efforts of OOD and contractor staff. OOD supports the continued efforts of our contracting partners by continuing to reimburse staff costs throughout the contracting process. Also provided are incremental case service budgets utilizing our internal resources and time limited funds. Finally, OOD staff employed a third strategy of working closely with contractors to monitor the authorizations issued against those temporary case service budgets and by instructing contractor staff to draft authorizations so OOD could continually ensure that case service dollars would be sufficient. These combined strategies ensured that consumers served through our contracting partners could be served without disruption.

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

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