

WEEKLY FOCUS

Ohio | Opportunities for Ohioans
with Disabilities

Kevin L. Miller, Executive Director

June 27, 2014

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.

FFY 2013 Rehabilitation Services Administration Monitoring Report

On Wednesday, we received the final FFY 2013 Monitoring Report from the U.S. Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). We have worked closely with the RSA during the monitoring process and responded promptly to the issues raised in the draft report that we received last October. The Executive Team and staff worked diligently to address each of the findings raised and are gratified to see that the majority of the findings have been resolved, and will require no further action. Additionally and most importantly, there will be no service interruptions for the individuals we serve.

There are two findings requiring a corrective action plan (CAP) in order to update the RSA on our plans and progress and we had already begun implementing the necessary actions to address them. The required CAP will be developed over the next 45 days, in conjunction with the RSA, to reflect actions already taken including those in the process of being implemented.

Mid-Biennium Budget Review and Workforce Integration Task Force

Last week Governor Kasich signed this year's Mid-Biennium Budget Review (MBR), a comprehensive piece of legislation that makes budget revisions and policy reforms across state government during the second year of the biennium. The MBR allows the Governor and his Cabinet to find savings in their operations without having to wait the usual two years between budgets. It also offers an opportunity to propose a number of significant changes that reform outdated policies, end duplicative or inefficient programs, close tax loopholes, cut bureaucracy and make the best use of available technologies. Some reforms in this year's MBR include: tax cuts for all Ohioans, reforms aimed at strengthening our education system, and policies to provide better

treatment and support to Ohioans struggling with drugs and mental illness.

The MBR was introduced in the Ohio House of Representatives (House) in early March as House Bill (HB) 472. The proposals were later divided and introduced as 14 separate bills in order to facilitate legislative consideration. HB 483 served as the general appropriations legislation of the MBR. After much debate and discussion, HB 483 was passed by both the House and Senate the first week of June and signed into law by the Governor last week.

One of the provisions impacting OOD included in HB 483 was the creation of a "workforce integration task force" for individuals who are deaf and/or blind to be co-chaired by the Executive Director of OOD and the Director of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). The task force is required to present a final report with recommendations to the Governor no later than January 1, 2015.

Although the effective date for this legislation is September 15, 2014, staff from both agencies has been collaborating to outline the work of the task force, beginning to explore possible data sources and other necessary resources, and building a schedule for completing the report. Directors Dungey (ODJFS) and Miller have been and will continue to meet on a frequent basis to begin preparation for the official work of the task force this fall.

Both agencies are committed to preparing a quality report that will serve as a resource for policy makers as they seek to better serve individuals who are deaf and/or blind.

The Scorecard Work Group

The Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) Scorecard Work Group met this week to present the final CRP Scorecard draft to the Executive Team. As noted in the June 6 *Weekly Focus*, the Work Group, consisting of

two OOD managers, two OOD subject matter experts and ten CRPs from rural, urban, small and large organizations statewide, was established in March 2014 and tasked with developing recommendations to fairly and consistently evaluate providers. Over the last few months the Work Group developed a draft CRP Scorecard, scorecard definitions, and scorecard process documents which were presented to the Executive Team on Wednesday.

Work Group participants noted during the presentation that there was a great deal of apprehension about the project at the beginning but effective communication and the professionalism of the group helped overcome many of the challenges.

Randy E. Strunk, Executive Director of Ikron Corporation, stated:

“The CRP Scorecard work was truly a collaborative process between providers and OOD staff. Although there were several challenges in addressing design, data collection, and the development of an initial scorecard, the Work Group, along with feedback from many community providers, was able to work through the questions and concerns to deliver a useful evaluative tool for consumers and CRP counselors.”

With a wide variety of perspectives and opinions involved, an open and collaborative process was critical to the group’s success.

David Volak, Executive Director Step By Step Employment and Training, stated:

“This endeavor was established and implemented with transparency and mutually effective collaboration in mind. I am very appreciative of the opportunity to provide input to OOD on behalf of the CRPs.”

Even when there was disagreement among the group, everyone appreciated the commitment and hard work involved in delivering a draft scorecard in the given timeframe.

Kelly Manns, Assistant Director, Evaluation and Training Services, Ohio Valley Goodwill, stated:

“It was a consensus building process. It is certainly not a finished product and there are still issues surrounding data collection that need to be resolved. But the OOD and the working group worked as hard as possible to make it as fair a process as possible considering the number of vendors and providers involved.”

I appreciate all of the hard work and dedication that went in to this working group by staff and providers. It is exciting to see this type of collaborative work between state government and local service providers with the aim of better serving individuals with disabilities in our communities.

Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA) Employment First Committee

Earlier this week I was happy to attend the initial Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA) Employment First Committee meeting. It was great to see OPRA President Mark Davis, Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) Director John Martin, Columbus Goodwill CEO Margie Pizzuti, and a host of service providers and organizations committed to integrated community employment for individuals with developmental disabilities.

I had the opportunity to highlight the role of OOD in the Employment First initiative, discuss some of the success so far, the challenges ahead, and thank those in attendance for their commitment to this important project.



Director Miller (center) addressed the OPRA Employment First Committee meeting.

OOD Commissioners Seek Award Nominations

The OOD Commissioners are seeking nominations for two awards that are presented to honor the service of individuals who significantly contribute to assisting individuals with disabilities.

Ben Bonanno Disability Advocate Award:

OOD has established the Ben Bonanno Disability Advocate Award to honor outstanding advocacy accomplishments by non-employees of OOD. Ben Bonanno was a former OOD Commissioner and an unwavering advocate. The Ben Bonanno Disability Advocate Award recognizes a person whose advocacy efforts have significantly improved the employment possibilities of Ohioans with disabilities in a manner that is consistent with OOD’s mission. The deadline date for submitting nominations is July 25, 2014.

Denise Joanne Weisenborn Service Award:

The Denise Joanne Weisenborn Service Award honors non-employees of OOD who provide outstanding services to Ohioans with disabilities to make their participation in society more meaningful. This award has been established in memory of Denise Weisenborn,

who served as an OOD Commissioner from 1997 to 2006. The deadline date for submitting nominations is July 25, 2014.

The Nomination Forms can be found on OOD's website at: <http://ood.ohio.gov/ood-home/about-us/ood-commissioners/commissioners-awards>.

Forms can be e-mailed to Shirley Marchi at shirley.marchi@ood.ohio.gov or mailed to Shirley Marchi, Community Relations Liaison, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, 150 E. Campus View Blvd., Columbus, OH 43235. Questions may be directed to Shirley Marchi at 614.438.1477 or e-mail.

Operation Feed Final Report



The Operation Feed Campaign has ended and the Mid-Ohio Foodbank picked up the collected food from the 150/400 buildings this week. Our final statewide totals are 1,403.31 lbs. of food and \$4,680.97 in financial donations.

This gives us a combined total of 20,127.19 meals, surpassing our goal of 15,405 meals!

Thank you to all staff that participated in our events and contributed to this worthy cause. A special thank you goes to everyone who helped organize events which helped OOD exceed its goal for this year's Operation Feed Campaign. Thanks, also to Ray Rhone, DDD Professional Relations Officer, for his leadership during the Campaign.

No Weekly Focus for July 4th

Note: The *Weekly Focus* will not be published next Friday, July 4, but will return the following Friday, July 11.

Have a happy and safe Independence Day!

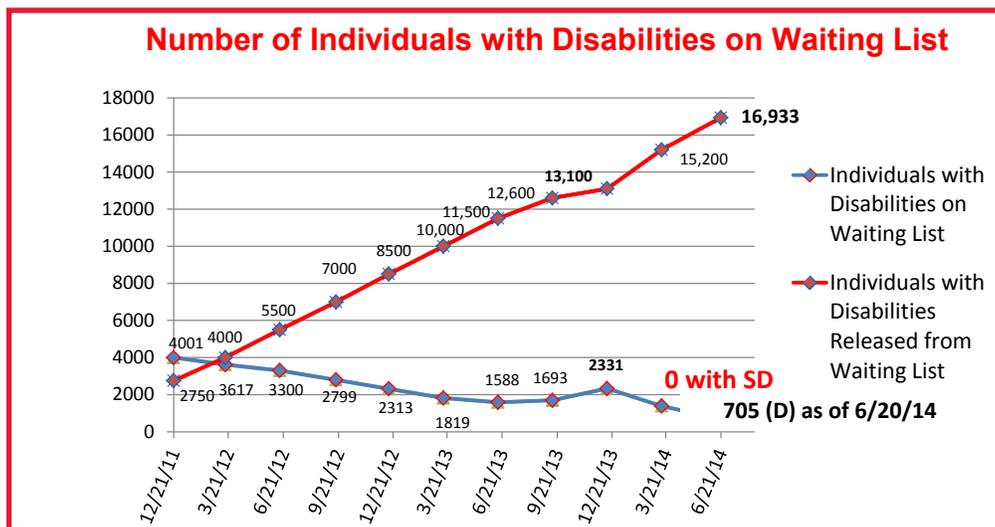
Training Held on the Medical and Psychosocial Aspects of Disabilities

This week counselors, caseload assistants and coordinators benefited from two days of training focused on the Medical and Psychosocial Aspects of Disabilities. This training, led by Dr. W. Scott Forbes, is part of the requirements for staff involved in vocational rehabilitation for individuals with disabilities.



Dr. W. Scott Forbes (standing) leads the discussion on the medical and psychosocial aspects of disabilities.

During the two days, participants were trained to identify the major disability related factors to be considered in rehabilitation planning for persons with disabilities and the possible functional limitations and vocational implications of disability types. Specific disability types were discussed including musculoskeletal system, sensory system (deafness, blindness), nervous system, respiratory system, cognitive and mental illness disabilities. Participants worked specific disability case studies in groups, to determine the specific disability types and functional limitations present. They were provided with resources to help them better understand the relevant psychosocial and medical aspects of disabilities.



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