



The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities

Ohio's Path to Employment First

A summary of Ohio's Employment First Initiative and Future Plans



February 2014

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Meaningful work has significant benefits for all working age adults, including people with developmental disabilities. People with developmental disabilities have the right to make informed decisions about where they work, and to have opportunities to obtain community jobs that result in greater earnings, better benefits, improved health and enhanced quality of life. In addition, meaningful employment offers individuals with developmental disabilities the opportunity to bolster self-esteem, expand their network of natural supports, make friends, and demonstrate their professional abilities in a public setting. These benefits all contribute to the diversity of our workforce and enrichment of our community.

-Employment First Taskforce Common Principles

Introduction

Historically, people with disabilities, and particularly developmental disabilities, have experienced unemployment, underemployment, and poverty at rates that far surpass their peers without disabilities. Additionally, people with disabilities are less likely to find steady or satisfying employment.

“Employment First,” the idea that competitive employment in an integrated setting should be the priority outcome for people with disabilities, is a national movement that continues to gain momentum. Governor John Kasich signed the Employment First Executive Order in March 2012, making Ohio one of 26 states with an official Employment First policy or legislation. A policy sets the direction, but will not alone improve employment outcomes for people with developmental disabilities. Successful implementation of Employment First requires a multi-pronged approach and a long-term commitment to systems change.

A comprehensive approach must focus on key strategies; all designed to work synergistically to impact a service structure that better supports people to achieve community employment and directs more resources toward that preferred outcome. These steps include:

- Alignment of state and local policies, procedures and planning across multiple agencies (schools, county boards, vocational rehabilitation, mental health, and workforce development) to improve community employment outcomes,
- Skill development for providers to better support people with disabilities in integrated settings,
- Realignment of funding structure to direct more resources to community employment,
- Increased access and availability of ongoing supports and services for people to achieve community employment,
- Improved preparation of youth and adults, including employability skill development,
- A strong focus on person-centered planning to discover a person's interests and talents to inform vocational goals,
- Engagement with businesses and strengthened awareness of community members about the capabilities of workers with disabilities, and
- A method to track progress on achievements to hold the system accountable.

Ohio's Path to Employment First is a summary of the activities that have been implemented since the Executive Order was signed, the long-range planning that has taken place with broad stakeholder input, and the future planned activities to support the ongoing paradigm shift in our culture to one that truly recognizes and embraces the contributions and capabilities of people with developmental disabilities.

History

Ohio's developmental disability service delivery system has long recognized the importance of employment for individuals and their families. In fact, Ohio currently ranks 8th nationally, per capita, regarding the number of individuals served in integrated community settings. *The National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes; Butterworth, Hall, Smith, and Migliore.*

In 2011, the Department of Developmental Disabilities partnered with the Ohio Developmental Disability Council to become a member in the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN). The SELN is a cross-state cooperative venture of state intellectual and developmental disability agencies that are committed to improving employment outcomes for youth and adults with developmental disabilities.

In October 2011, the SELN completed its Findings and Observations Report of the Ohio developmental disabilities system, summarizing the results of a comprehensive assessment process using input gathered from a broad stakeholder group. As a result of this report, stakeholders determined that a concerted Employment First effort was necessary in Ohio and recommended a Governor directive.

Ohio launched its Employment First Initiative by Governor Kasich's Executive Order in March 2012 (Executive Order 2012-05K). The Executive Order required state cabinet level agencies from the Ohio

Departments of Education, Medicaid, Job and Family Services, Mental Health and Addiction Services, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency and the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities to partner in the development of a coherent strategic plan identifying each agency's responsibility and contribution to having employment be the primary expected goal for working age adults with developmental disabilities. The Governor's Executive Order charged the Taskforce with collaborating, coordinating and improving employment outcomes, and to identify best practices, effective partnerships, sources of available federal funds, opportunities for shared services among existing providers and county boards of developmental disabilities, and the means to expand model programs, to increase community employment opportunities for those with developmental disabilities.

Ohio has already shown preliminary success in improving employment outcomes for people with developmental disabilities. In the six-month Employment First status report, DODD set a goal of increasing community employment by 10% or 7,727 adults by June 30, 2014. As of the end of December 2013, 7,626 adults were classified as engaged in integrated employment services, or an increase of 8.5%.

Statutory Support for Employment First

EMPLOYMENT FIRST FOUNDING STATUTE (ORC 5123.022)

Many statutory changes that support the Employment First Initiative took place in 2012. First, the founding statute for Ohio's Employment First policy was approved and placed in Ohio Revised Code (ORC 5123.022), stating that employment services for people with developmental disabilities shall be directed at community employment. In July 2013, the Employment First Statute language was further enhanced, clarifying that community employment means competitive employment in an integrated setting, and also that all people with developmental disabilities are presumed capable of community employment.

INCREASE IN SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT-COMMUNITY RATE (ORC 5123:2-9-15)

In order to incentivize more DODD-certified providers to offer integrated employment support services, the reimbursement rate for the Medicaid HCBS Waiver service, Supported Employment-Community, was increased from \$24/hour to just over \$40/hour. The previous rate was not reflective of the actual costs of providing the service.

NEW TRANSITION PLANNING REQUIREMENTS IN IEPs (ORC 3323.011)

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) also affected statutory language changes in support of Employment First through Senate Bill 316. Changes to ORC 3323 changed requirements for Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for transition-age youth to begin the transition planning

process at age 14, and required appropriate measurable post-secondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to competitive employment in an integrated setting.

EMPLOYMENT FIRST LINE ITEM

The state budget for FY 2014-15 created a line item to implement Employment First activities to be funded with \$3 million per year for each year of the biennium.

Federal Landscape

The past few years have seen increased scrutiny placed on how and where people with disabilities receive day and employment services. Among this increased attention are federal policy changes and legal actions.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (DOJ)

In June 2013, the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) and the state of Rhode Island entered into an interim settlement agreement in response to allegations by DOJ that the state had violated Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Supreme court's ruling in *Olmstead v. L.C.* through its administration and operation of its day activity services system, including employment, vocational and day services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The DOJ is currently involved in litigation with the state of Oregon, claiming the state's alleged failure to provide employment and vocational services to persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs, violates the ADA, because the state plans, structures, and administers its system of providing employment and vocational services in a manner that delivers such services primarily in segregated sheltered workshops, rather than in integrated community employment.

CENTERS FOR MEDICARE AND MEDICAID SERVICES (CMS)

In their September 16, 2011 Informational Bulletin on integrated employment services, a technical assistance guide for states that utilize Home and Community Based (HCBS) 1915 (c) Waivers, CMS clarified that prevocational services are not an end point, but a time-limited service for the purpose of helping someone obtain competitive employment. The Bulletin also explained that Waiver funding is not available for the provision of vocational services delivered in facility-based or sheltered work settings, where individuals are supervised for the primary purpose of producing goods or performing services. A new service definition for career planning was also introduced, which is a focused, time-limited service engaging a participant in identifying a career direction and developing a plan for achieving competitive, integrated employment at or above the state's minimum wage. This service can be utilized to develop a career plan for an individual transitioning from a sheltered workshop to integrated employment.

In January 2014, CMS published a final rule to change HCBS waiver provisions to convey expectations regarding person-centered plans of care and to provide characteristics of settings that are home and community-based. According to this new regulation, home and community-based settings are integrated in and support full access of individuals receiving Medicaid HCBS to the greater community, including opportunities to seek employment and work in competitive integrated settings, engage in community life, control personal resources, and receive services in the community, to the same degree of access as individuals not receiving Medicaid HCBS. CMS is currently working with stakeholders to clarify expectations of this new rule for day activity services, and additional guidance will be forthcoming.

HIRING REQUIREMENTS FOR FEDERAL CONTRACTORS

The federal government recently revised Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act to improve the historically low employment rate for people with disabilities. The new law includes requirements for employers who have contracts with the federal government that exceed \$10,000 to take affirmative action to hire, retain and promote qualified individuals with disabilities. The law establishes a 7% goal across all job groups within a company and requires annual data collection to track progress. This law is enforced by the Employment Standards Administration's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) within the U.S. Department of Labor.

Ohio's Current Activity

The Governor's Employment First Taskforce and an active Advisory Committee, a diverse group of stakeholders representing public and private organizations, are working together to operationalize activities and recommendations aimed at creating a culture that values the contributions of people with disabilities in the workplace and incentivizes competitive integrated employment. Employment First accomplishments to date include:

EMPLOYMENT FIRST WEBSITE

DODD launched an Employment First Web site at <http://www.ohioemploymentfirst.org> in March 2013, which provides a central location to find information related to the initiative. The Web site hosts information about benefits counseling, transition planning tools, newsletters, videos and fact sheets, opportunities for training and events, and will eventually host data results.

EMPLOYMENT FIRST CONFERENCE

Ohio's inaugural Employment First Conference took place on June 4 and 5, 2013, generating a great deal of interest in the statewide work of Employment First. The Conference provided a platform for multiple stakeholders from a variety of backgrounds to interact, and allowed visibility to the efforts for community employment to a large, diverse group.

TASKFORCE COMMON PRINCIPLES

Employment First Taskforce members meet monthly to implement the steps outlined in Common Principles, a document that outlines the roles and responsibilities of each Taskforce agency. Common Principles directs the Taskforce agencies to conduct an examination of existing funding, policies, practices and roles and responsibilities at a state and local level that support or hinder the community employment of Ohioans with developmental disabilities in order to maximize the use of existing resources and funding streams for services, and emphasizes coordination of services at the local level through collaboration. The document can be found on the Employment First Website at http://ohioemploymentfirst.org/up_doc/EFCommonPrinciplesSigned.pdf

TRANSITION FRAMEWORK TRAINING

The Framework is a results-oriented process that leads to individual community employment outcomes for youth with developmental disabilities. It promotes a system of practices at the state, regional, and individual levels that is outcome-focused, person-centered and agency neutral. Regional multi-agency teams across Ohio are collaborating to examine their local resources, create action plans, and take steps to implement the practices represented in the transition framework. Transition Framework tools can be downloaded from the Employment First Website at http://ohioemploymentfirst.org/view.php?nav_id=54

EMPLOYMENT FIRST LOCAL LEADERS

The Employment First Advisory Committee's training plan for providers took a unique approach to professional development planning by asking local communities to apply to be selected as Local Leaders teams. Seven teams were selected, and include members from various agencies: county boards of developmental disabilities, self-advocates, family members, employment providers, employers, vocational rehabilitation staff, educators, and others. For the past several months, these teams have received facilitation assistance to complete a needs assessment. They will use the information learned to develop a local professional development action plan, and create a local interagency agreement. This approach was selected to facilitate the collection of valuable information about the identified needs from a diverse selection of counties, representing multiple demographic and geographic backgrounds to be used to develop a statewide professional development plan.

PARTNERSHIP FOR EMPLOYMENT FIRST

The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities and Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency, are partnering in a statewide initiative to expand community employment services for people with developmental disabilities. The partnership allows the state to maximize resources to support more people on their path to community employment, build system capacity, and

strengthen the relationship between the developmental disability and vocational rehabilitation systems in Ohio. Fifteen vocational rehabilitation counselors are expected to engage 1500 working-age adults who are currently served in segregated settings, and are an active part of the job seeker's team, providing personalized career planning and development that is based on established supported employment best practice. Four caseload assistants are in the process of obtaining Community Partner Work Incentives Counselor (CWIC) certification to expand availability of benefits planning and work incentives counseling for the job seekers.

A critical component of the Partnership is a comprehensive professional development plan which includes Web-based competency-based supported employment training. To date, more than 800 provider staff have successfully completed the training, provided free-of-charge by the state. In-person trainings, held regionally, will reinforce key concepts taught through the online course with a focus on employer engagement and on-the-job supports throughout 2014.

EMPLOYMENT FIRST OUTCOME TRACKING SYSTEM

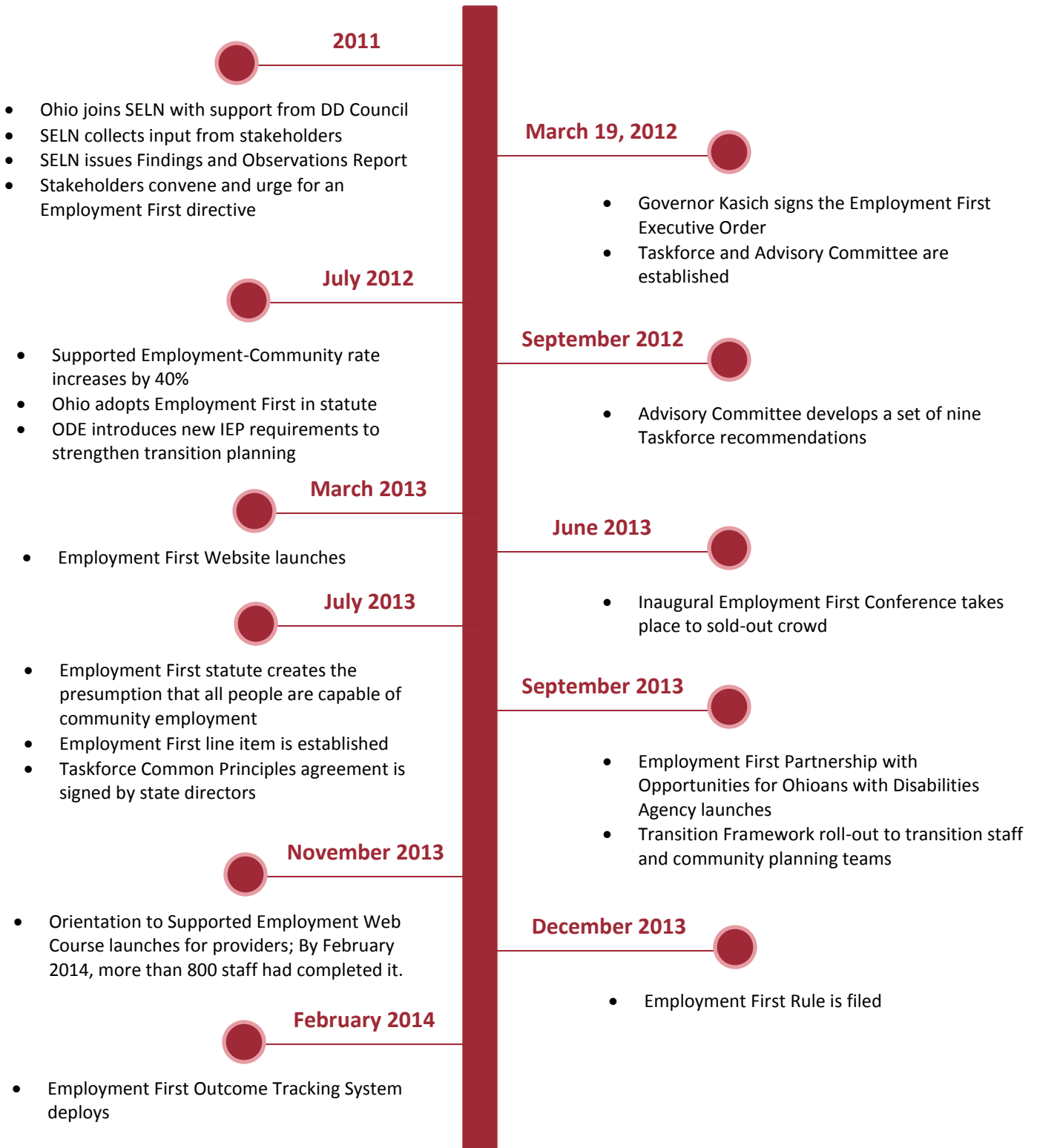
A new employment data collection system is targeted to launch in early 2014. The Employment First Taskforce and Advisory Committee recommended that a statewide data collection system be built to capture employment outcome data for all people in employment services. Providers and county boards report on individual-specific employment services utilized, locally-funded services provided, industries hiring individuals, hours worked and wages earned by individuals. Reporting will take place as individuals apply for services and then at least annually, or as status changes occur. The system was developed under the guidance of Dr. Robert Cimera, the nation's leading expert in the monetary costs and benefits of vocational employment programs for people with disabilities. The information collected will be analyzed to identify policies and practices that lead to successful employment outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities.

EMPLOYMENT FIRST RULE

DODD has filed a new stand-alone Rule (5123:2-2-05) to implement the Employment First policy of the state which is expected to take effect in early 2014.

The proposed Employment First Rule will ensure all individuals with developmental disabilities have opportunities to be engaged in community employment. The rule outlines a person-centered planning process for all working-age adults that identifies strengths, interests and abilities, and identifies a person's place on the path to community employment. The rule also directs county boards of developmental disabilities to implement an Employment First policy at the local level that sets measurable benchmarks for success. County boards are also directed to collaborate with schools and other agencies to improve employment outcomes, and share information about work incentives with people served.

Timeline of Current Activities



Priority Findings from Needs Assessment

As mentioned previously, the Employment First Advisory Committee utilized a non-traditional approach to developing a statewide professional development implementation plan for Employment First. Seven multi-agency community planning teams representing 12 geographically and demographically diverse counties engaged for several months in an intensive needs assessment process. A DODD-provided facilitator worked with these teams to analyze their current system to identify gaps using a standardized needs assessment tool designed by the Advisory Committee. The needs assessment tool asked teams to consider six distinct topical areas (Family/Caregiver Involvement, Interagency Collaboration, Improving Preparation for Youth and Adults, Person-Centered Planning, Provider Competencies and Skills, Employer Engagement), and to prioritize needs based on existing or lacking resources and priority for change. The valuable information gathered through this process is being used to shape the statewide professional development implementation plan for Employment First. DODD and the Employment First Taskforce and Advisory Committee greatly appreciate the many hours of work and effort that our community planning teams contributed to this process. Priority findings that were identified statewide are summarized below. Planned action step tables can be found in the Appendix.

Family Caregiver Involvement	1. Families and Caregivers need education and support about community employment as a viable and desirable outcome. 2. Families and Caregivers need information about benefits counseling and work incentives.
Interagency Collaboration	1. Agencies need a system for ongoing communication, information sharing and networking. 2. Agencies need a policy to facilitate co-planning for community employment for youth/adults.
Improving Preparation for Youth and Adults	1. Agencies need assistance to provide meaningful opportunities for all youth and adults to explore career options. 2. Agencies need assistance in identifying and implementing evidence-based practices, including customized employment.
Person-Centered Planning	1. Staff need skill development in facilitating person-centered planning approaches 2. Agencies need policies in place that promote or require person-centered planning

Provider Competencies and Skills	1. Many providers do not share the belief that all individuals with developmental disabilities can work. 2. Agencies need skill development in developing personalized career profiles and natural supports facilitation.
Employer Engagement	1. Agencies do not use business-to-business communications to recruit employers 2. Agencies do not use effective marketing tools that focus on the strengths of the workforce

Planned Activities

PROJECT: TRANSFORMATION

Public and private providers often express a strong desire to take the necessary steps to transform from facility-based to integrated services, but are often frustrated in determining how best to do so. Through this initiative, national subject matter expert consultants will provide facility-based provider agencies with technical assistance in the process of transformation from segregated to integrated services. Selected provider agencies will learn fiscal transformation strategies designed to better include competitive and integrated employment options as a viable and sustainable funding stream. This technical assistance will be a combination of on-site and phone/Web-based consultation. As part of this consultation, an organizational assessment will be conducted for each participating agency, leading to a transformation plan tailored to meet their needs. Funding will be based on achievement of milestones, including reimbursement for contracting with a subject matter expert for technical assistance, and development and implementation of a transformation plan.

FUNDING SYSTEM RE-DESIGN

Ohio's current funding system does not incentivize integrated services, but Ohio's developmental disability system is committed to developing a new service model based on a system that supports informed choice, community integration, and competitive employment for individuals with developmental disabilities. In order to accomplish this, DODD will contract with a policy and systems change expert to provide guidance and technical assistance in the re-alignment of Ohio's Medicaid HCBS service systems. The contractor will work with a statewide stakeholder group to compare Ohio's funding structure with other states, develop recommendations for Ohio's funding system re-design, develop potential funding models, service definition revisions for all adult day services, provider qualifications and rate methodologies that support integrated employment and day services.

EMPLOYMENT FIRST TASKFORCE ACTIVITIES

The Employment First Taskforce Common Principles includes the following point of agreement: “We shall review information and data provided from local community planning teams (or other sources) to identify successes and address barriers to community employment.” In order to address many of the identified priority areas from the Local Leaders community planning teams, the Taskforce will mutually develop a resource manual for local field staff that includes: models for co-planning, with examples of how to co-plan and a sample policy, a navigation tool for families and SSAs from a multi-agency perspective, adoption of common definitions for the terms “person-centered planning” and “self-determination”, and develop a fact sheet that describes the various state and federal policies that direct person-centered planning (IDEA, CMS, VR, etc.). This guidance will be disseminated to county boards, schools, providers and other local agencies.

FAMILY AND JOB SEEKER SUPPORT

Job seekers and their families will be supported through the development of an interactive electronic toolkit about the supported employment process, benefits planning and available work incentives like Medicaid Buy-In. An online lesson for job seekers and their families about community employment, and the supported employment process will be created, job seekers will be provided with leadership development in self-advocacy, and mentors will be supported to be ambassadors of Employment First. An online family forum feature will be hosted on the Employment First Website so families and job seekers have an opportunity to share information and resources about community employment. Families and job seekers will have access to Web-based benefits planning tools that are customized for Ohio.

COMMUNITY AND EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT SUPPORT

Established and new community planning teams will be supported in strengthening interagency collaboration; local business advisory groups will be established to promote hiring of people with developmental disabilities. Established and newly-formed job development networks will receive technical assistance and guidance in establishing relationships with employers from national experts.

PROVIDER SUPPORT

Public and private providers and other agencies will be supported in helping more people transition to integrated employment and day services through Web-based and in-person training and technical assistance; topics to include career planning and discovery, and Web-based training, resources and tools on how to develop authentic work experiences. Providers will receive guidance in how assistive and rehabilitation technology can be an important tool to help individuals with complex needs access employment.

PERSON-CENTERED PLANNING SUPPORT

The Employment First Website will host dynamic and interactive person-centered planning tools to assist in identifying an employment outcome from assessment data and developing a customized plan to integration. Web-based and in-person training for providers, educators and other professionals will be provided on how to use the tools, and a video of a typical person-centered planning session for families and job seekers will also be produced.



Conclusion

Ohio's Path to Employment First represents a cogent statewide implementation plan that addresses the priority areas identified through input from local community planning teams. It provides targeted support for educators and professionals who serve transition-age youth with developmental disabilities, job seekers and their families, developmental disability service providers, agency professionals, community members and business leaders. Taskforce state agencies will partner in the development of guidance to facilitate interagency collaboration. Technical assistance will be offered for public and private organizations to develop a plan for transformation to integrated services. Stakeholders will play a critical role in re-designing Ohio's funding system to fully support and incentivize integrated employment and day services.

A systems change effort like Employment First requires multiple strategies working in synergy. Simultaneous application of these activities throughout the state will ensure our system is prepared to

provide opportunities for youth and adults with developmental disabilities to seek employment and work in competitive integrated settings and be fully integrated in community life. People with developmental disabilities have the right to make informed decisions about where they work, and to have opportunities to obtain community jobs that result in greater earnings, better benefits, improved health and enhanced quality of life. In addition, meaningful employment offers individuals with developmental disabilities the opportunity to bolster self-esteem, expand their network of natural supports, make friends, and demonstrate their professional abilities in a public setting. These benefits all contribute to the diversity of our workforce and enrichment of our community.

Employment First Planned Activities Timeline

Jan-Feb 14	Mar-Apr 14	May-Jun 14	Jul-Aug 14	Sep-Oct 14	Nov-Dec 14	Jan-Feb 15	Mar-Apr 15	May-Jun 15
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Taskforce activities to facilitate
interagency collaboration

Funding System Re-design

Provider Supports

Person-Centered Planning Supports

Family and Job Seeker Supports

Community and Employer Engagement Supports

Provider Transformation Technical Assistance

Resources

State Employment Leadership Network (SELN): www.seln.org

National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC): www.nsttac.org

Governor Kasich's Employment First Executive Order (Order 2012-05K):

<http://www.governor.ohio.gov/Portals/0/pdf/executiveOrders/Executive%20Order%202012-05K.pdf>

Employment First Founding Statute (ORC 5123.022): <http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/5123.022>

HCBS Supported Employment-Community (ORC 5123: 2-9-15):

<https://doddportal.dodd.ohio.gov/rules/ineffect/Documents/5123-2-9-15%20Effective%202012-07-23.pdf>

Transition Planning Requirements in IEPs: <http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/3323.011>

Rhode Island Interim Settlement Agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice:

<http://www.justice.gov/iso/opa/resources/7802013613134111197274.pdf>

Oregon Findings Letter from the U.S. Department of Justice:

http://www.ada.gov/olmstead/documents/oregon_findings_letter.doc

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Information Bulletin for Integrated Employment Services, September 16, 2011: <http://downloads.cms.gov/cmsgov/archived-downloads/CMCSBulletins/downloads/CIB-9-16-11.pdf>

CMS Final Rule for Home and Community-Based Services:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2014/01/16/2014-00487/state-plan-home-and-community-based-services-5-year-period-for-waivers-etc-medicaid-program>

Final Rule for Section 503 of the Rehab Act hiring requirements for federal contractors

<http://www.dol.gov/ofccp/regs/compliance/section503.htm>

Ohio Employment First Website: www.ohioemploymentfirst.org

Taskforce Common Principles:

http://www.ohioemploymentfirst.org/up_doc/EFCommonPrinciplesSigned.pdf

Transition Framework Tools: http://www.ohioemploymentfirst.org/view.php?nav_id=54

Local Leaders Needs Assessment Tool:

http://www.ohioemploymentfirst.org/up_doc/Local_Leaders_Needs_Assessment-Electronic.docx

Partnership for Employment First: http://www.ohioemploymentfirst.org/view.php?nav_id=56

Employment First Rule (5123: 2-2-05):

<https://doddportal.dodd.ohio.gov/rules/ineffect/Documents/5123-2-2-05%20New%202013-11-22.pdf>

Appendix: Needs Assessment Priorities and Action Steps

Topical Area One: Family Caregiver Involvement

1. Families and Caregivers need education and support about community employment as a viable and desirable outcome.
2. Families and Caregivers need information about benefits counseling and work incentives.

Action Step	Output
Develop electronic toolkit for families about the supported employment process and work incentives available in Ohio like Medicaid Buy-In	Toolkit for families will be available on the Employment First Website and in a published format. Will include a series of checklists for job seekers and families along the lines of "what are we looking for in a provider," and "what should I be asking our SSA about employment." Also includes Web-based tools for benefits planning that are customized for Ohio.
Online lessons for job seekers and families about community employment	Web course to be developed and hosted on the Employment First Website. Lessons will include success stories, and an introduction to benefits planning, including where to go for more information.
Provide leadership training for job seekers to develop peer mentors	Job seekers will be supported to make informed decisions about community employment, community inclusion, self-advocacy and self-determination. Job seekers will receive support to become ambassadors for Employment First.
Family forum on Employment First Website	Add family page to Employment First Website with forum capability for families to share stories and gather information

Topical Area Two: Interagency Collaboration

1. Agencies need a system for ongoing communication, information sharing and networking.
2. Agencies need a policy to facilitate co-planning for community employment for youth/adults.

Action Step	Output
Taskforce develops models/template for co-planning policy	Local agencies to receive guidance on being part of a multi-agency co-planning team
Taskforce develops examples/models of sharing information across agencies – case studies	Local agencies to develop and promote models; specific interagency agreements around data sharing, braiding/blending of funding
Navigation tool for families and SSAs from a multi-agency perspective	A tool that outlines the resources available to families from community partners will be developed and disseminated to families and SSAs
Use county EF policies to promote networking/collaboration	Include guidance to the field about promoting multi-agency collaboration in Employment First policies developed by county boards

Technical assistance on community planning team organization and support	Development of and support for additional regional multi-agency teams throughout the state
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Topical Area Three: Improving Preparation for Youth and Adults

1. Agencies need assistance to provide meaningful opportunities for all youth and adults to explore career options.
2. Agencies need assistance in identifying and implementing evidence-based practices, including customized employment.

Action Step	Output
Develop technical assistance resource on how to develop authentic community-based work experiences	Agencies who provide transition (school to work; workshop to work) services, including schools and providers will have access to resources and information from a variety of sources
Training for agencies on evidence-based practices like supported employment and customized employment	Regional training through Employment First Partnership with OOD have already been established and will continue through 2014
Transition Framework	Training and Technical Assistance to Local Leaders teams and other selected groups throughout the state on the multi-agency planning process
Fact sheet for parents about the transition process	Work with OCALI to develop this tool that families of transition-age youth can refer to when involved in the transition process from school to work.

Topical Area Four: Person-Centered Planning

1. Staff need skill development in facilitating person-centered planning approaches
2. Agencies need policies in place that promote or require person-centered planning

Action Step	Output
Taskforce adopts a common definition for the term "person-centered planning" and "self-determination."	Common definition created and disseminated to all county boards, schools, providers and other local agencies; what person-centered planning is, who is involved in the process, and what is the expected outcome
Develop a fact sheet that describes the various state and federal policies that direct person-centered planning (IDEA, CMS, VR, etc.)	Fact sheet to be posted on Employment First Website and distributed all county boards, schools, providers and other local agencies to promote importance of this critical process
Professional development in person-centered planning facilitation for identifying an employment outcome from assessment data	Local agencies will have access to assessment and planning tools and techniques for the person-centered planning process, including information about the Employment First rule.
Produce video of a typical person-centered planning session for families	Employment First Website will host a video demonstrating a person-centered planning session, including examples of

and job seekers	providing informed choice, conflict resolution, discussion of goals and appropriate services and supports
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Topical Area Five: Provider Competencies and Skills

1. Many providers do not share the belief that all individuals with developmental disabilities can work.
2. Agencies need skill development in developing personalized career profiles and natural supports facilitation.

Action Step	Output
Training and TA for segregated provider staff to develop skills to deliver integrated services	Provider staff currently working in segregated environments will learn skills to provide services in community-based and integrated employment settings, including specialized topics such as career planning, career development, discovery, supporting self-determination, etc.,
Training for providers in marketing, on-the-job supports and natural supports facilitation	Web course and regional training through Employment First Partnership with OOD have already been established and will continue through 2014
Consultation with occupational therapists and rehab tech engineers about assistive technology	Providers will gain awareness about assistive and rehabilitation technology strategies and techniques to serve individual with more complex needs, including an overview of worksite accessibility

Topical Area Six: Employer Engagement

1. Agencies do not use business-to-business communications to recruit employers
2. Agencies do not use effective marketing tools that focus on the strengths of the workforce

Action Step	Output
Develop local business advisory groups throughout Ohio	Public and private providers will receive support in connecting with local business leaders to develop business advisory groups to support hiring of people with developmental disabilities.
Training for providers on effective business-to-business marketing for job development	Web course and regional training through EF Partnership with OOD have already been established and will continue through 2014
Establishment of and support for coordinated job development networks throughout the state	Agencies to receive training/TA on establishing relationships with employers and ongoing support to maintain a coordinated job development network.
Training on Section 503 for providers – how to support employers to meet OFCCP	Partner with OOD to disseminate existing information about the Rule requirements