



The Assurance Network Strategic Plan

a division of Ability Work, Inc.

2016-2018



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Introduction

The Assurance Network a division of Ability Works, Inc., is a new service approach (January 2016), the result of an Integrated Community Supports grant from The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). The State is interested in proactively supporting DODD service providers in working towards a more inclusive model of care that allows individuals with disabilities more robust opportunities to seek employment and be served in integrated settings. This new approach creates a service delivery model concerned with promotion, support, and developing opportunities for service “on-demand.”

The commitment to coordinate on-demand services for transportation, homemaker personal care, and respite using current independent providers, residential providers, agency provider, and the development of new certified direct care workers would:

- ❖ Increase opportunities in the community for competitive employment
- ❖ Allow flexibility for last minute transportation arrangements due to working schedules
- ❖ Support individuals who have challenges accessing transportation options
- ❖ Decrease use of inefficient services and lower cost
- ❖ Improve quality of services received through a rating system
- ❖ Provide increase opportunities to connect with the community
- ❖ Bridge a gap in current service delivery
- ❖ Demonstrate the impact of increased community integration

It is important to reflect that these benefits underpin the aims and objectives outlined in this Strategic Plan 2016 – 2017. The aspiration is to take forward a creative and dynamic integrated approach that can deliver services on demand and increase freedoms people have to be a part of their community.

Context

Research evidence shows that all people, regardless of abilities, should have access to, choice of, and an opportunity to participate in a full range of community activities. On January 16, 2014, the United States Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) published 42 CFR 441.301(c) (4)-(6) in the Federal Register, which details new requirements that settings must meet in order to be eligible for reimbursement for Medicaid HCBS provided under sections 1915 (c), 1915 (i), and 1915 (k) of the Social Security Act.

In *Olmstead v. L.C. ex rel. Zimring*, (“*Olmstead*”) the United States Supreme Court held that it is discrimination to deny people with disabilities services in the most integrated setting



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appropriate. Accordingly, the Court found that individuals with mental disabilities are entitled to live in the community, whenever appropriate, and to receive treatment there, rather than in institutions. The Court reached its conclusion by relying on the non-discrimination provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The Court's reasoning, that institutionalization of people with disabilities who are capable of living in the community may constitute unlawful discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), may serve as a model for a similar recognition under international human rights law.

Organizations like Disability Rights of Ohio (DRO) and the Center for Public Representation (CRP) believe that individuals with disabilities are trapped in institutions or are at risk of institutionalization because of Ohio's illegal service system. The Department of Developmental Disabilities has submitted a 10 year transition plan to help transiting individuals out of institutions to community options, however, DRO states that state funding for community options are limited. As of March 31, 2016 DRO filed a class action lawsuit against the state of Ohio, including the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, The Ohio Department of Medicaid, and Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities.

After many discussions with CMS, the Ohio departments of Developmental Disabilities and Medicaid have learned that CMS is unlikely to grant the additional five years for Ohio to come into compliance with the requirement to deliver all waiver services in integrated, community-based settings. However, if Ohio is unable to achieve compliance by 2019, CMS will work with Ohio to develop an alternative compliance plan and related timeline. All providers are encouraged to evaluate their service delivery models and to continue to make changes as soon as possible.

There is a problem that is vexing to proponents of community integration – a well-intentioned but nerveless inflexible planning rubric for resources available to persons with developmental disabilities. In short, a person entitled to Medicaid-funded dollars, must plan their entire year at the beginning of the annual funding cycle in order to receive services. No one else, not one other citizen of this county, operates that way. While changes can be made to these annual resource plans, the timelines inherent in those changes prohibit individuals from leading a barrier free life. In short, the very system that is intended to provide freedom is itself limiting freedom of choice, freedom of lifestyle and freedom for folks to change their minds.

The opportunity is to provide greater community engagement by more individuals thus supporting positive connections to service providers, building relationships and community cohesion. The challenge is to increase access to transportation, grow the number of respite providers, and improve access for community engagement opportunities.



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In this Strategic Plan you see objectives that will maximize opportunities to deliver on key outcomes such as expand pool of providers, increase customer outreach, support community life and the career discovery process. This is a plan that tackles the key issues around evaluating barriers, issues and individuals with complex need, which will undoubtedly set the framework for integrated community supports for the next five years. The Assurance Network is well placed to make a significant contribution to the successful implementation of this very important policy initiative.

Going Forward

The Assurance Network is taking on the challenge because we are passionate about connecting individuals to service providers, providing greater community engagement, and opportunities to build social capital and gain competitive employment. We want to contribute to building a better service program by promoting and supporting community integration as a vehicle for positive social change. We believe that community integration programs involve a team approach that can include the client, family members and caregivers, community members, health care and educational professionals, community organization staff, and governmental agency staff, among others. Not only can they help improve the lives of people with Intellectual Disabilities, but they help enrich the community by ensuring that each member is as independent as possible.

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The Assurance Network believes that:

- ❖ The Assurance Network **connects** individuals to service providers “on-demand.”
- ❖ The Assurance Network helps individuals engage in their **community**.
- ❖ The Assurance Network creates **opportunities** to build social capital and gain competitive employment.

Our Vision:

People with Disabilities and Credentialed Providers will connect to meet on-demand service needs through a communication center for improved access to the community.

Our Mission:

To increase access to transportation providers, grow the number of respite providers, and improve access for community engagement opportunities.



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Guiding Principles:

- ✓ **Inclusiveness** – we recognize that diversity is strength and will seek to involve all people, as active participants in their community.
- ✓ **Quality** – we will strive for excellence in the delivery of our services and activities.
- ✓ **Responsive** – we will strengthen the efforts of providers and individuals to meet the needs of community engagement and make a difference.
- ✓ **Connected** – we will work with all stakeholders through local, regional, and state cross-sectoral links and partnerships to enhance each individual's steps towards independence.
- ✓ **Safety** – we will ensure each provider of our network meets or exceeds quality standards to deliver services.
- ✓ **Accessible** – we will provide fair and open access to our provider opportunities and support for individuals served.
- ✓ **Respect** – we respect the right of people with disabilities to receive treatment in the community rather than in institutions.
- ✓ **Forward looking** – we recognize the need to expand these services statewide, and nationwide.
- ✓ **Impact focused** – we believe that success is measured by outcomes, and will seek to deliver results that benefit both individuals, providers, and the community.

The Assurance Network is a dynamic new service system that promotes and delivers community integration across Erie, Huron, and Ottawa counties. To achieve our vision we have identified three strategic aims and in support of these a number of strategic objectives underpinned by a set of outcomes.

Strategic Aims & Objectives

The Assurance Network believes that by connecting services through an on-demand request system, individual can have access to competitive employment and social engagement in their community on their schedule.

Strategic Aim One:

Develop, and begin of a plan, that includes communication and outreach strategies and the support and participation of key stakeholders groups, that will result in the transformation of the service delivery of the individuals' day and employment services.



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Strategic Objectives:

1. Provide a strategic and operational understanding of The Assurance Network with Erie, Huron, and Ottawa counties.
2. Promote the value of connecting People with Disabilities and Credentialed Providers to meet on-demand service needs through a communication center for improved access to the community.
3. Establish a coordinator for each county for Market Development.
4. Train SSA's in each county to support community life and the career discovery process.
5. Inform and market The Assurance Network to The Clearwater Council of Governments to engage providers.
6. Expand pool of providers through information meeting and trainings in each county with 3-4 different geographical locations and times.
7. Increase customer outreach with individuals through information family meetings in each county with 3-4 different geographical locations and times.
8. Work with organization and communities such as RISE, Regional Incubator for Sustainability and Entrepreneurship.
9. Develop the Marketing Plan, logo, website, social media, and news media to increase awareness of the benefits and opportunities of The Assurance Network.
10. Create a Marketing analysis plan for ROI.
11. Develop a road map document that outlines the strategies utilized to accomplish The Assurance Network.

Outcomes

- Increase providers by 50%.
- Increase individual's use of the network by 10%.
- All Stakeholders endorsing and supporting improved access to the community.

The Assurance Network believes that our contribution to building a better service program will promote and support community integration as a vehicle for positive social change.

Strategic Aim Two:

Develop a process improvement plan for service delivery, people development, and a quality product that will result in the transformation of the service delivery of the individuals' day and employment services.



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Strategic Objectives:

1. Develop operational procedures for The Assurance Network call center.
2. Create a script for every call, glitch and issue for the call center.
3. Create manuals and maps for each position.
4. Create a positions chart for The Assurance Network.
5. Create memorable experience “touch points” for each call received.
6. Develop job descriptions and hire call center staff.
7. Develop accountability, incentives and enforcements for management of job duties and protocol for not following the systems.
8. Provide training, metrics, benchmarks & infrastructure for each position.
 - a. SMART method: standards should be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely.
9. Develop a daily “huddle” to evaluate barriers, issues and individuals with complex needs.
10. Develop a survey for quality and delivery satisfactions for customers and providers.
11. Obtain testimonials from customers and providers.
12. Generate loyalty by providing a quality service delivery system.
13. Develop a procedure for handwritten letters of appreciation.

Outcomes

- Increase integrated community employment and an individual’s community integration,
- Increase staff competencies and quality customer service.
- Track progress on each customer use of the Career Discovery Process.
- Increase utilization of braided funding supports.

The Assurance Network believes in creating opportunities to build social capital and gain competitive employment.

Strategic Aim Three:

Create a sustainability plan that continues to break down barriers for individuals to engage in their community. Develop a fiscal analysis of cost associated with the changing of this business model. Develop a road map to be given to the Department of Developmental Disabilities.

Strategic Objectives:

1. Analyze data outcomes, metrics and response feedback from customers to develop a “technology” proprietary web based marketplace to facilitate services.
2. Analyze fiscal cost associated with the development of investors, or creating a partnership with a collaborating agency, or continue to expand service statewide under Ability Works Inc.
3. Meet with RISE, Regional Incubator for Sustainability and Entrepreneurship to discuss options



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for sustainability.

4. Develop a road map to be given to the Department of Developmental Disabilities.
5. Continue to expand service statewide.

Outcomes

- Achieve and sustain standards of organizational excellence.
- High (80%) satisfaction levels of service users.
- Improved staff knowledge and skills.
- High (80%) satisfaction levels of providers of the service within the network.
- Achievement of financial stability for growth.
- Final Road Map due to DODD by July 31, 2017.
- Access participation result to proceed with expansion by March 31, 2017.

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