

# EMPLOYMENT FIRST

## What is the Employment First Partnership?

The Employment First (EF) partnership between Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) and the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) is designed to increase community employment outcomes for adults with developmental disabilities. Employment First counselors work with local county boards of developmental disabilities to identify and help individuals move from non-integrated settings into competitive integrated employment where they can earn a competitive wage and work alongside people without disabilities.

## Employment First Partnership Model

- Funds 30 vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselors and five caseload assistants (CA) who specialize in work incentives planning.
- Works to plan, match and support individuals in their employment goals.
- Enhances collaboration between county board staff, VR counselors, individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, and other local partners to provide person-centered vocational guidance and counseling and individualized employment services.
- Increases the number of dually certified providers by OOD and DODD to ensure streamlined transition from VR services to long-term supports.

## Who is Eligible to Participate?

DD-eligible adults who are currently in non-integrated settings, express a desire to work in the community, and need support to obtain employment which may include identifying career options and employment opportunities.

## What Types of Services are Provided?

The partnership utilizes person-centered career planning and provides a full range of individualized, vocational rehabilitation services designed to meet individuals where they are on their unique path to employment. During the person-centered career planning process, caseload assistants who specialize in work incentives planning will be available to help explain the potential impact of work on benefits like Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), medical insurance, housing and food assistance, and work incentives that may be available to support the path to financial independence.

## Vocational Rehabilitation Services May Include

- Job development services that lead to successful, long-term job matches.
- On-the-job supports, including job coaching and follow-along services leading to job success.
- Coordination of long-term follow-along supports once OOD successfully closes the case.

## For More Information

Visit [www.ohioemploymentfirst.org](http://www.ohioemploymentfirst.org); [www.ood.ohio.gov](http://www.ood.ohio.gov) (search Employment First) or e-mail at [employmentfirst@dodd.ohio.gov](mailto:employmentfirst@dodd.ohio.gov).

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