

Local Interagency Agreement

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Medina County Employment First Interagency Agreement for Transition Youth

I. Statement of Need

In January 2014, a multi-agency team in Medina County convened to develop a plan of support and service that would assist youth with developmental disabilities to successfully enter community employment as they transition from their educational careers. A needs assessment, completed as part of the initial steps of the teaming process, identified the need for improved coordination and communication among and between agencies and organizations in Medina County. Identified action steps to address this need included the development of an Interagency Agreement between key partners in Medina County.

Federal and state regulations ensure that students with disabilities are provided a free, appropriate public education while of school age, thus entitling them to the necessary services and supports while in school identified under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004). As students with disabilities transition from school and enter adulthood, a variety of services may be available to them from agencies such as Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD), The Medina County Board of Developmental Disabilities (MCBDD), the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). Some students may have a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); however, they do not receive special education services. These youth may also require assistance from community agencies upon exiting the school system. Services and eligibility requirements for those services vary from agency to agency, making it difficult for students and their families to make a smooth transition from secondary school to adulthood.

II. Purpose of Agreement

This agreement between Local Education Agencies (LEAs)/school districts in Medina County, the local area office of the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD), the Medina County Board of Developmental Disabilities (MCBDD) and other community agency partners, is designed to clarify the relationships between these entities.

The purpose is to assist students, their parents and the various stakeholders in Medina County in understanding their roles and responsibilities in relation to provision of transition services, this Employment First Interagency Agreement for Transition Youth constitutes a formal commitment from all local community partners that seek to improve communication, coordination and services for students with disabilities transitioning from school to adulthood. We strive to establish a common understanding regarding the roles, policies, and procedures related to providing transition services and supports to students with disabilities transitioning from secondary school to adulthood.

III. Mission Statement

This agreement was facilitated through the Medina County Transition Team (MCTT) which includes the required stakeholders for this Interagency Agreement. In addition, the mission of the MCTT and the outcomes of this agreement align. Both strive to collaboratively promote services.

The mission of the Medina County Transition Team (MCTT) is to collaboratively promote services for youth and young adults with disabilities, to drive their transition from school to adulthood through meaningful employment and community involvement.

IV. Authority and Scope

Department of Education: Transition services are mandated under IDEA Section 300.154(a) (B), under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended Section 101(a) (11) (D), and under the Ohio Department of Education's State Operation Standards, 3301-51-07. The transition process for students with disabilities in Ohio begins at the age of 14, and continues until the student exits the school system.

Department of Developmental Disabilities: The DODD Employment First Rule creates the expectation that County Boards of Developmental Disabilities will collaborate with school districts to implement a framework that ensures the use of similar methods in supporting youth with developmental disabilities and to reduce duplication of efforts.

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities: OOD provides VR services to eligible students to assist young people in reaching the employment goals identified in their approved Individual Plan for Employment (IPE). The IPE drives the services that OOD provides to transition youth.

V. Employment First Overview

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 represents a strategic plan designed to facilitate the full inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace and community. Under the Employment First approach, community-based, integrated employment is the first option for employment for youth and adults with developmental disabilities. Strategies to achieve Employment First include:

A. ***Statewide Coordination and Collaboration.*** These efforts make it possible to change policy in order to create pathways that lead to community employment. All state agencies providing supports and services to Ohio's individuals with developmental disabilities are required to align policies and procedures to support community employment and fulfill the Employment First requirement that community employment is the preferred outcome for working-age adults.

B. ***Common Language.*** We shall adopt the following common definitions:

- a) "Community employment" means employment that is competitive and takes place in an integrated setting.
- b) "Competitive employment" means full-time or part-time work in the competitive labor market in which payment is at or above the minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage and level of benefits paid by employers for the same or similar work performed by persons who are not disabled.
- c) "Integrated setting" means an employment setting typically found in the community where individuals interact with persons who do not have disabilities to the same extent non-disabled persons in comparable positions interact with other persons. "Integrated setting" includes employment settings where employees interact with the community via technology.
- d) Section 511 of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) applies to youth 24 years old or younger and is intended to ensure youth with disabilities have every opportunity to pursue competitive, integrated employment. Sub-minimum wage is prohibited. Individual exceptions are only permitted through processes outlined in Section 511.
- e)

C. ***Shared Belief.*** Signees of the Medina County Employment First Interagency Agreement agree that community employment should be the first option for all working age adults and transition-age youth with developmental disabilities. Employment First is a philosophy of service that presumes that all Ohioans with developmental disabilities can and should have opportunities to work in the community.

D. *In Support of the Above Goal*, Signees of the Medina County Employment First Interagency Agreement for Transition Youth agree *to the* following:

- a) We shall develop, approve and implement cross-agency tools and processes to share information as appropriate in order to prevent duplication in eligibility, enrollment, assessment and planning.
- b) We shall develop a consistent message around skills and competencies of service providers (including educators) that must be fostered across systems, including training and technical assistance of evidence-based practices in the form of webinars, informational literature and/or in-person trainings. Target outcomes will include building capacity to support effective transitions to employment in the community.
- c) We shall review information and data provided from local community planning teams (or other sources) to identify successes and address barriers to community employment.
- d) We shall serve, or appoint a representative to serve, as members of the Medina County Employment First Transition Team and agree to actively and consistently participate, and to provide leadership and oversight of this systems change effort. Participation can/may include providing feedback and regular updates from your organization; attendance at meetings; maintaining active email correspondence; hosting meetings; or additional contributing actions.

VI. Terms of Agreement

- a) Plan implementation date, 10/3/16
- b) Subsequent revisions and/or reviews of the Plan will be made as necessary, but at a minimum of once every two years.
- c) Changes to this Plan may be made by agreement of affected parties, with the revisions mailed to all parties. In the case of changes in statute, the changes will be incorporated into the Plan and all parties notified of the changes.

VII. Termination of Participating/Commitment

In the event that an agency is unable to continue participation or commitment to this agreement, notification shall be made to participating agencies.

IX. Signatures:

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

BLACK RIVER SCHOOLS, Superintendent/Designee

Date

BRUNSWICK CITY SCHOOLS, Superintendent/Designee

Date

BUCKEYE LOCAL SCHOOLS, Superintendent/Designee

Date

CLOVERLEAF LOCAL SCHOOLS, Superintendent/Designee

Date

HIGHLAND LOCAL SCHOOLS, Superintendent/Designee

Date

MEDINA CITY SCHOOLS, Superintendent/Designee

Date

MEDINA CO. CAREER CENTER, Superintendent/Designee

Date

MEDINA COUNTY SCHOOLS' ESC, Superintendent/Designee

Date

WADSWORTH LOCAL SCHOOLS, Superintendent/Designee

Date

PROVIDER AGENCIES/SERVICES

GOODWILL INDUSTRIES, Designee

Date

INTERVENTION FOR PEACE, Designee

Date

KOINONIA, Designee

Date

MEDINA CO. BD. OF DEV. DISABILITIES, Superintendent/Designee

Date

MEDINA CREATIVE ACCESSIBILITY, Designee

Date

REM Ohio, Designee

Date

SHC/THE ARC OF MEDINA COUNTY, Designee

Date

WINDFALL INDUSTRIES, Designee

Date

VIAQUEST, Designee

Date

ADDITIONAL AGENCIES/SERVICES

MEDINA CO. ALCOHOL, DRUG ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH (ADAMH) BOARD, Designee	Date
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MEDINA COUNTY JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES (MCJFS), Designee	Date
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MEDINA COUNTY TRANSIT, Designee	Date
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OPPORTUNITIES FOR OHIOANS WITH DISABILITIES, Designee	Date
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Addendum A

2014-2016 Accomplishments

1. The Team increased the collaborations between school districts and adult services in Medina County.
 - The Interagency Agreement was put into place on 10/3/14 with the following mission statement:
 - The mission of the Medina County Transition Team (MCTT) is to collaboratively promote services for youth and young adults with disabilities, to drive their transition from school to adulthood through meaningful employment and community involvement.
 - This agreement was facilitated through the Medina County Transition Team (MCTT) which includes the required stakeholders for this Interagency Agreement. In addition, the mission of the MCTT and the outcomes of this agreement align. Both strive to collaboratively promote services. This agreement is to be renewed in 2016.
2. The Team facilitated creation of the Medina County Leadership Business Advisory Board that accomplished the following:
 - A marketing plan to communicate with businesses within the county.
 - Action steps for collaborations of job developers for a single point of contact for businesses.
3. The Team shared trainings regarding issues that surround transitional youth and Employment First. Examples include the following:
 - WIOA (*Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act*) benefits coordination, OOD services, and summer programs.
4. The Team developed a resource guide for transitional youth.
5. The Team implemented the *ACORN Project - The ACORN Project identified a select group of students and families to track and collect information regarding services to transition youth. Over the past 18 months, transitional services have developed into a common practice within schools. The families and students were receiving the services identified in the Employment First concept, and as we communicated with families, it was apparent that transitional services were readily available within the high school setting. Of the seven students and families identified, four are receiving vocational services from OOD, as well as the school system. The ACORN project will continue to track the students initially identified as they move into post high school vocational settings. At this time, the group has decided to refocus efforts on identifying middle school students and the transitional youth services available at this level.
6. The Team facilitated development of an agency neutral pamphlet for mapping of available transitional youth services.
7. The Team is developing a FANS (Friends and Neighbors Support) Network through SHC/ARC of Medina.
8. The first record breaking Summer Information Fair was held in February of 2016, having the highest participation, numbers, and referrals for OOD summer work

Addendum B

2016-2018 Goals

1. Communication
 - a. Increase information sharing and reduce barriers to sharing of information between organizations.
 - b. Gather and disseminate info to all stakeholders
 - c. Increase and retain participation from additional organizations/stakeholders
2. Systems Change
 - a. Analysis of regulatory changes as they relate to Medina County
 - b. Promote beginning transition services at a young age (13-14).
 - c. Identify gaps in services as they currently exist.
 - d. Provide agency neutral guidance on path to employment.
3. Employment
 - a. Develop collaborative group among job developer in Medina county
 - b. Comprehensive exposure to employment outcomes and services in Medina
 - c. Education to employers and community.

