

OPRA Policy Statement on the Employment First Initiative

The Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA) supports choice for individuals with developmental disabilities in all aspects of life. When it comes to employment, the opportunity to develop necessary skills and enter the job market in the community is not always a choice that is available for Ohioans with disabilities. OPRA supports efforts to create an Employment First Policy in Ohio prioritizing integrated, competitive employment as the first option for individuals with developmental disabilities.

The successful and effective implementation of an Employment First Initiative requires careful consideration and inclusion of the following components:

- 1) The process for creating and implementing an Employment First Initiative requires as much stakeholder and public inclusion and interaction as possible. Continued input from all parties is essential. In this case the process for transition to an Employment First environment can be as important as the outcome itself.
- 2) Current reimbursement rates do not incentivize integrated, competitive employment. A comprehensive look at how Ohio's DD system reimburses all options of Adult Day Service is merited with a particular emphasis on reimbursement rates that prioritize the desired outcomes.
- 3) Not every individual served benefits most from full-time integrated, competitive employment. Other options should remain as a viable alternative.
- 4) Baseline data should be established to capture a true percentage for persons with developmental disabilities who are in employment categories.
- 5) Existing local provider initiatives that promote integrated, competitive employment should be identified and replicated to the extent possible.