



# Employment First *Update*

## Partnership for Employment First

The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities and \*Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission have begun a statewide job counselor initiative to expand community employment services for people with developmental disabilities. This opportunity allows the state to maximize resources to support more people on a path to community employment, build system capacity, and strengthen the relationship between the developmental disability and vocational rehabilitation systems in Ohio.

There are more than 30,000 working-age Ohioans with developmental disabilities who receive adult services. Most of these services take place in segregated settings, like sheltered workshops, adult day support programs, or enclaves. Through this statewide partnership, DODD and RSC anticipate that approximately 1500 adults, from each of the 88 counties in Ohio, will have opportunities to pursue community employment. Each county will receive referral allocations for the partnership, based on the number of individuals currently served in segregated settings.

Fifteen dedicated RSC counselors will engage individuals who are not currently served in integrated settings, with an average caseload size of 60. These RSC counselors will be an active part of the individual's team, providing personalized career planning that is based

on established supported employment competencies. Individuals with developmental disabilities will receive services designed to identify jobs that match their interests, strengths, preferences, and support needs. Benefits counseling will be a critical service, available for all individuals who receive public assistance, like SSDI, SSI or Medicaid.

To promote unified coordination of services and to maximize capacity, RSC counselors will be field-based, and able to meet with individuals in their community, including sheltered workshops. RSC counselors will provide guidance and counseling throughout the personalized career planning process, developing an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) to achieve each person's vocational goals, and monitoring services and progress. Counselors also will act as direct liaisons with County Board staff to ensure ease of referral, streamlined eligibility, assessment and planning processes, and regular connection with individuals served and their teams. It is anticipated that the counselors will be in place during October 2013, and ready to begin accepting new referrals by November.

A vital component of the partnership will include professional development activities for RSC counselors and service providers. An initial Web-based training curriculum will be established, based on content designed to meet the competencies needed for effective employment.

September 2013



### Kristen Helling

Employment First Project Manager  
Ohio Department of Developmental  
Disabilities, 614-466-6612  
Kristen.Helling@dodd.ohio.gov



### Local Leaders

#### Needs Assessment, page 2

Learn more about an assessment  
planning tool for local communities.

[www.ohioemploymentfirst.org](http://www.ohioemploymentfirst.org)



# Upcoming Events

**SELN Employment Innovations Series**  
Online, Oct 4 (3 p.m.)

**Ohio Disability Employment Initiative, Customized Employment Training Series**  
Various Locations,  
Through December 10

**OAAS and APSE Conference**  
Columbus, November 6-7

For more details on these events, visit  
[www.ohioemploymentfirst.org](http://www.ohioemploymentfirst.org)

Dale DiLeo, a well-known speaker, writer, consultant and advocate for people with disabilities, has been contracted with to design the Web-based training. Mr. DiLeo is Past-President of the Board of the Association for Persons in Supported Employment (APSE), and is the lead author of that organization's highly respected *Ethical Guidelines in Supported Employment*.

Through these trainings, staff will gain knowledge in supported employment philosophies, vocational profiling and career planning, marketing and employer engagement, job matching, and on-the-job training and supports. This approach will ensure sustainability by building system capacity through the development of highly-skilled professionals throughout the state. The Web-based training is expected to be available by mid-November.

Employment providers who are DODD-certified to provide *supported employment-community* or *integrated employment services*, and successfully complete the competency-based supported employment training, may apply for a waiver of CARF-accreditation to become an RSC

provider under this project. Since Waiver providers will provide the long-term follow-along supports once the RSC case is successfully closed, this dual certification will ensure continuity of service provision and lead to more successful transitions from time-limited to long-term supports.

Employment First requires a partnership with job seekers with disabilities, their families, employers, providers, government, and the community. Through this partnership, we can provide opportunities to make community employment a common reality.

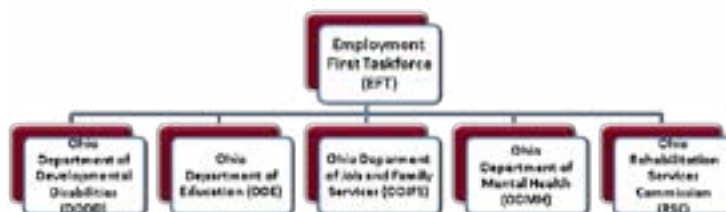
## Local Leaders Needs Assessment Available Online

Community planning teams can use the Employment First Needs Assessment Tool, developed by the Employment First Advisory Committee, to guide them through the planning process to address needs in six areas, including family/caregiver involvement, employer engagement, interagency collaboration and provider competencies and skills. Download the tool at [www.ohioemploymentfirst.org](http://www.ohioemploymentfirst.org).

## Employment First Taskforce and Advisory Committee Members.

### Advisory Committee

Advocacy & Protective Services Inc.  
Arc of Ohio  
Association of People Supporting Employment First  
Disability Rights Ohio  
Governor Kasich's Office  
Griffin-Hammis Associates, LLC  
Kent State University  
Ohio Association of Adult Services  
Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities  
Ohio Center for Autism & Low Incidence  
Ohio Department of Education  
Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities  
Ohio Department of Job & Family Services  
Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services  
Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council  
Ohio Disability Employment Alliance  
Ohio Provider Resource Association and other service providers



Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission  
Ohio Self Determination Association  
Ohio SIBS  
Ohio Superintendents of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities  
People First of Ohio  
The Ohio State University Nisonger Center  
University of Cincinnati University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities