

OPRA FRIDAY FIVE

News, Resources and Events for OPRA Members

JANUARY 3, 2025

Pre-voc and Employment Services: DODD recently shared with us the draft rules for the Group Employment and Basic Employment Skills Training (BEST) service proposals, which they aim to implement 7/1/25. [You can review the rule proposals here.](#) The most notable changes are as follows;

- **BEST:** This is a new rule/service that will replace the current Vocational Habilitation service. The rule/service now includes 'soft' timelines and outlines the process for DODD technical assistance. The rule also eliminates the current 'community' rate and replaces it with a group career exploration service (see next bullet).
- **Career Planning:** Adds a new 'Group Career Exploration' service/rate, which is intended to replace community pre-vocational services currently provided through 'community voc hab'. We strongly encourage members to review the new rate tables for comparison with their current program revenue from this service.
- **Group Employment:** Proposal introduces enhanced rate structure for small group services. The proposed rule also prohibits GES to be provided as a 'dispersed enclave' in a provider owned/controlled business, but still permits it to be provided as a 'mobile work crew' in such settings.

We are asking members to provide feedback to [Scott](#) by January 15th, but we will be discussing in-depth at next week's Day & Employment Services Committee meeting. We still have several 'sticking points' with this new proposal, but have had encouraging discussions with DODD and are hopeful the final proposals will be positive for providers while also accomplishing the state's policy goals. Please reach out to [Scott](#) with feedback or any questions you have.

OOD Updates: Our partners at OOD sent out a few updates this week, corresponding to the new fee schedule and change in calendar years. [This updated spreadsheet](#) shows what counties and services are eligible for the Critical Need Rate through BSVI. OOD also released an updated [Resume Standard Guide](#), which notably no longer requires personal addresses for job seekers. Finally, they shared [this updated Job Search Preparation Guide](#), which has been modified to include all of the new service names and descriptions from the new fee schedule.

Supported Decision Making Toolkit: APSI Ohio, Clearwater COG, and the Down Syndrome Association of Central Ohio are hosting a virtual event on Thursday, January 30 at 10:30 am to launch the Ohio Supported Decision-Making Toolkit. You will have the opportunity to join a breakout room to see the toolkit resources designed for target audience groups. You will also hear about how you can share the toolkit with anyone who can benefit from it. [More info can be found here.](#)

Minimum Wage: Ohio's minimum wage increased on Jan. 1, 2025, to \$10.70 per hour for non-tipped employees and \$5.35 per hour for tipped employees. The minimum wage will apply to employees of businesses with annual gross receipts of more than \$394,000 per year. [You can read more about the increases and find minimum wage poster here.](#)



In Case You Missed It...

Additional Updates From The OPRA Team and System Partners

Memo Monday: Click here to read this week's [DODD Pipeline](#), which features a 2024 DODD recap, new podcast episodes, January 2025 Waiver changes, opportunities to get involved and a video on strengthening your team.

Training Meeting: On January 13th and 14th OPRA will be hosting a member discussion regarding training needs and how OPRA can better provide valuable training resources. You can register for those discussions [here for the 13th](#) and [here for the 14th](#).

Tech First Feedback: Members of the OPRA team attended DODD's Technology First Advisory Committee weeks back. The meeting focused on a review of the last several years of remote and assistive tech services and then groups moved into recommendations and vision-setting for the future of tech services. If you have any feedback about Remote Supports or Assistive technology to share with the committee, please reach out to [Teresa](#) or [Scott](#).

OPRA invites you to submit session proposals for our 2025 Spring Conference, scheduled for May 29 & 30 at the [Hilton Columbus](#) at Easton (3900 Chagrin Drive, Columbus, Ohio). This year's focus is on advancing the business of delivering high-quality I/DD services through strategic leadership, operational excellence, and innovation.

Conference Theme: Building Great Providers. The OPRA Spring Conference emphasizes the importance of building "Great Providers" who:

1. Deliver Person-Centered, Outcome-Focused Services
2. Invest in and Support Qualified Staff
3. Cultivate Strong Leadership and Partnerships
4. Establish Strong Operational Foundations
5. Advocate and Innovate Continuously



The deadline to submit your session proposal is Friday, March 7, 2025.

If you have any questions, please contact Sonya Summers at ssummers@opra.org

Upcoming Events

1/7: OPRA Marketing & Communications Committee Meeting

1/14/25: Member Only Webinar: Understanding Policy Shifts in a Trump Administration

1/16: FREE Training: Administrative Oversight of HIPAA Compliance & Data Security

Click here for a full list of upcoming DODD training events

News & Resources

"Education and the Workforce Committee Call DOL's Drastic 14(c) Rulemaking "Inappropriately Rushed""

"Ohio's minimum wage is set to increase in 2025."

"Ohio elected leaders praise President Jimmy Carter for service to nation"

"Senator Collins' Autism CARES Act Signed into Law"

