

OPRA FRIDAY FIVE

News, Resources and Events for OPRA Members

JANUARY 30, 2026

Career Clusters Toolkit: Earlier this week, OOD held their quarterly provider stakeholder meeting, where they recognized Director Miller's 15 years of leadership at the agency, introduced new BVR Assistant Deputy Director, Kelly Rodriguez, and reviewed performance and case spending data from the past quarter. Additionally, Deputy Director of Employer Innovation Kristen Ballinger introduced the 'Career Clusters' toolkit. The resources are adapted from the national Career Cluster framework and is intended to help job seekers discover "high-demand, well-paying careers that align with your interests and strengths." [Click here to access the toolkit](#). Reach out to [Scott](#) with any questions.

Federal Funding: Congress is in the final stretch of negotiations to fund the federal government ahead of the January 30 funding deadline, with many appropriations bills already completed in the House. Senators and the White House have reached an agreement to fund most departments through the end of the fiscal year while providing a short-term extension for the Department of Homeland Security to allow additional discussion on terms for that agency's funding. If both chambers approve the pending package soon, it would avert a disruption in federal operations. [Click here to read the latest](#).

GES/BEST: At this week's meeting of the Waiver Workgroup, DODD shared that CMS will not allow a key provision of the Basic Employment Skills Training (BEST) to move forward as proposed. CMS has rejected the 'tiered' proposal in BEST, which would have allowed people 50 years and older to remain in the service free of time limits or monitoring. DODD still intends to move forward for implementation on July 1st of what will need to be a reworked rule proposal. We hope to see the latest rule draft soon and will be discussing the proposal, including the proposed enhanced Group Employment Supports rate at next week's Day Array Committee. [Click here to see the most recent rule drafts](#), not yet including any updates due to this CMS decision. Please reach out to [Scott](#) with questions or feedback ahead of next week's committee meeting.

Attestation Forms: Amendments to rule 5123-2-02 "Background Investigations for Employees" is projected to go into effect on February 19th. We have gotten questions from members on when attestation forms will be updated to comply with the new rule. [DODD expressed the current form, which can be found here](#), is and will still be compliant with the updated rule. They also shared they expect to release an updated template within the next few weeks as well.

EVV: The Ohio department of Medicaid hosted their EVV Stakeholder meeting this past Monday, January 26th. The agenda mostly focused on guidance for implementation within Dept. of Aging services. [Click here to download the slides from the meeting](#). You can reach out to [Christine](#) with any EVV-related questions.

SAVE THE DATE • March 4, 2026 • Ohio Statehouse



In-person registration is full, but you can still register to participate virtually in this year's Developmental Disability Advocacy & Awareness Day. [Click here to learn more and/or register for the virtual event](#).



In Case You Missed It...

Additional Updates From The OPRA Team and System Partners

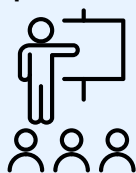
Memo Monday: Click here to read this week's [DODD Memo Monday](#), which is the 'lightest' MM since the time we've been doing this newsletter! It includes an update on DD Day Registration and DODD Office Hours for County Boards regarding updates to the Remote Tech rule.

Call for Celebrations! In 2026, we're excited to close out our Friday calls with member celebrations, ending each call on a positive note and a bit of good news. If there's something you'd like Pete or the team to celebrate during a Friday call, we'd love to hear it! This could include retirements, milestones, big events, great stories, birthdays, or any other moments worth recognizing. Please email [Scott](#) with the subject line "OPRA Celebrations" and let us know what you'd like us to celebrate.

CALL FOR SPEAKER PROPOSALS!!

Deadline to Submit is Monday, February 16, 2026

Cleveland is the city where rock & roll found its name—and where greatness is celebrated every day. Just steps from the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, OPRA's 2026 Great Provider Summit invites you to Get Ready for Greatness. Join us as we turn up the volume on what it takes to lead in the next era of I/DD services—through strategic leadership, operational excellence, workforce investment, and advocacy that shapes the future of our field. OPRA invites you to submit session proposals that are practical, forward-thinking, and equipped with concrete tools and strategies to help providers reach Hall of Fame-level impact and performance. [Click to submit!](#)



sedgwick

Sedgwick Ohio is refreshing its brand beginning February 2, 2026—with an updated logo and the same trusted name and service members know. Sedgwick completed a corporate rebrand last spring, and the Ohio brands will transition after private employer group campaigns conclude on Friday, January 30, 2026. OPRA members may begin seeing the updated Sedgwick logo in communications and on OPRA's website in the coming days. [Click here to download the February safety article on the OSHA Injury Tracking Application \(ITA\) and what employers should know.](#)

Upcoming Events

2/2: OPRA CEO & CFO Network

2/4: Just Culture 101

2/5: Day Array Committee

Click [here](#) for a full list of upcoming DODD training events

News & Resources

“Democrats and Trump strike government funding deal as shutdown looms”

“The Hidden Health Risk: Understanding Loneliness”

“Case for Inclusion January 2026 Report: The Looming Impact of Funding Cuts”

“Medicaid Group VIII Work and Community Engagement Requirement Communications Partner Packet”



OPRA Month at a Glance

Here's What's Happening This Month at OPRA

February 2nd: CEO/CFO Network - Spend some time networking with your peers in your area and throughout the state.

February 4th: Just Culture 101 - Learn about the upcoming OPRA Learning Collaborative.

February 5th: Day Array Committee - Hosting our regular guests, Discussing BEST/GES and a special presentation.

February 12th: Tech Town Hall - “Ted Talk” Style Presentations on Innovative technology Approaches.

February 18th: Residential Resources Committee - The Latest in Hot Topics in Residential Waiver and ICF Services

February 19th: Health Care Committee - Hosting guests from Ohio Special Olympics and KSU Podiatry

February 26th: District 7 Virtual Meeting



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