



Employment First *Update*

Where Are We Now? Taskforce Update

The one-year anniversary of Ohio's Employment First initiative is fast approaching. On March 19, 2012, Governor John Kasich signed an executive order declaring Ohio an Employment First state. The work that has been accomplished since that time reinforces the state's commitment to transforming the culture of Ohio's developmental disability system to ensure community employment becomes the expected outcome for all working-age adults.

The Governor's executive order established an Employment First Taskforce, which is comprised of representatives from the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (ORSC), Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD), the Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH) and the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services (ODJFS). The Taskforce meets monthly to discover ways to align policies and procedures to streamline the process for people with developmental disabilities to access employment services. Interagency agreements are being developed to identify the roles and responsibilities of

each agency and develop universal tools for eligibility, assessment, planning and services.

An Advisory Committee, made up of various stakeholders, including self-advocates and family members, representatives from county boards, private providers and other agencies who serve people with developmental disabilities, also meets regularly. The Advisory Committee implements the recommendations of the Taskforce.

Based on suggestions from the Advisory Committee, the Taskforce reviewed and approved nine recommendations that support the achievement of meaningful community employment for people with developmental disabilities. The recommendations include:

- State level interagency agreement between the Taskforce agencies
- Transition framework of best practices to support the movement from school to work
- Employment First Website
- Data collection platform
- Training plan for providers of services
- Communication plan for stakeholders
- Creation of common language across state agencies
- Revisions to Adult Services Rule
- Corporate/Business engagement

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Upcoming Events, Page 2

Check out our upcoming events, speaking engagements and taskforce deadlines.

www.ohioemploymentfirst.org

**EMPLOYMENT
FIRST** 

The Governor's budget proposal for the biennium continues to support Employment First and seeks to:

- Create common definitions across all Taskforce agencies for the terms: community employment, competitive employment and integrated setting.
- Create the presumption that all individuals with developmental disabilities of working age are capable of community employment unless an assessment establishes otherwise.
- Require county boards to implement an Employment First policy, set benchmarks, and establish a list of employment supports from most to least integrated.
- Include a new Employment First line item: \$1,000,000 per year for two years.

Employment is an Outcome

Employment First is more than a slogan. It's not a fad or a trend, or even a program. Employment First is an outcome. Employment First says that we should first look at employment as an option before all others. Community employment should be an expectation for all people with developmental disabilities and something that society doesn't think twice about.

Employment First is about removing barriers that exist in our system to support individuals to work in the community. It's about opportunity - providing the supports needed to make more money, work more hours, and contribute more to society. Everyone has employable strengths and can work in the competitive labor force with the right measure of support and in jobs well-matched and sometimes customized to their interests and abilities.

People with disabilities should have the opportunity to make an informed choice about employment, including where they want to work and what they want to do. Employment First does not mean Employment ONLY or FORCED employment.

Relevant Data

Data from National Core Indicators tells us that 50% of Ohioans with a developmental disability want a job in the community, but only 12% actually have one. And only 18% are receiving services and supports as part of their individual plan to obtain employment.

We have to do better.

-Kristen Helling

Upcoming Events

Employment First Website Launch, March 8

Ohio Association of Developmental Disabilities Professionals Annual Conference, Mohican State Park, March 9, 9 a.m.

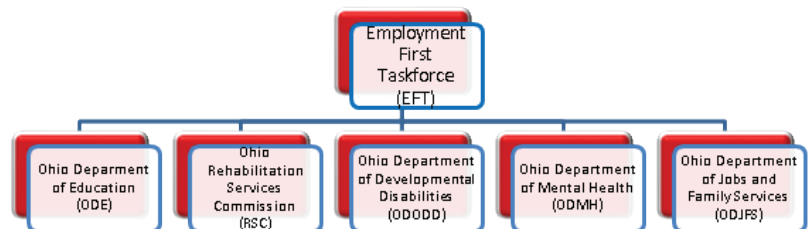
Hamilton County Developmental Disabilities Services Employment First Futures Forum, Cincinnati, March 27, 1 p.m.

Employment First Conference
Embassy Suites, Dublin, June 4,5, Registration Opens March 18

Employment First Taskforce and Advisory Committee Members.

Advisory Committee

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



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