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### ***OOD Honors Huntington Bank for Efforts to Hire Individuals with Disabilities***

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) recently recognized Huntington Bank as a Champion of Opportunity Award winner for their commitment to hiring individuals with disabilities.

The Champion of Opportunity Award honors companies that have gone above and beyond in their commitment and who serve as statewide examples of what it means to provide quality employment opportunities and increased independence for individuals with disabilities. This award represents the highest award that OOD presents to the business community.

“Huntington is a great organization and a great partner,” said OOD Executive Director Kevin Miller. “They consistently demonstrate strong resolve to remove barriers to employment for people with disabilities. October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month and Huntington is leading by example in making inclusion part of their culture.”

At the October 17<sup>th</sup> award presentation, Huntington CEO Steve Steinour said, “Huntington has a purposeful commitment of going above and beyond in all our endeavors. Our bank will continue to remove obstacles and enhance employment procedures, with the goals of maximizing hiring opportunities for well qualified individuals with disabilities.”

OOD assisted Richard Smith in finding employment at Huntington as a customer service representative. "This honor means a great deal to me and my fellow employees," said Smith. "Huntington is an organization that places action behind its guiding principles. Our bank consistently demonstrates determination to remove barriers in hiring of colleagues with disabilities.”

Huntington serves as a model for other organizations as well. They have been deliberate in sharing best practices for hiring and retaining employees with disabilities with other businesses through their involvement with the Ohio Business Leadership Network.

The Opportunity Awards are part of OOD’s annual business recognition program and highlight Ohio companies committed to providing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The awards recognize companies who have just begun to recruit, hire and retain individuals with disabilities to those with a proven track record of integrating individuals with disabilities into their workforce.

OOD is committed to engaging and educating Ohio businesses on the benefits of recruiting, hiring and retaining individuals with disabilities. Working with Ohio employers, OOD matches job seekers with specific openings and provides needed assistance and training.

*OOD is the state agency responsible for assisting individuals with disabilities to gain meaningful employment, to live independently or receive disability benefits through the Social Security Administration. [www.ood.ohio.gov](http://www.ood.ohio.gov)*