Workforce Integration Task Force
Final Report to Governor John R. Kasich

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A Message from the Co-Chairs

December 30, 2014

Six short months ago, Ohio's General Assembly passed legislation creating the Workforce Integration Task Force. Requested as part of Governor John R. Kasich's Mid-Biennium Review, the task force was charged with gathering and analyzing data in order to make recommendations regarding barriers to employment and income parity for Ohioans who are deaf or blind. The goal is to better understand the current employment environment for deaf and blind communities, and as a result, develop effective strategies aimed at helping these citizens, like all Ohioans, reach their highest employment potential.

The pages that follow present the results of this important and foundational work. This report synthesizes the findings from surveys, focus groups and an exhaustive literature review. Task force members analyzed the results, discussed their own life and work experiences, and identified multiple recommendations.

To some extent, the task force's findings confirmed what many of us knew from our own experiences. Not only do employers have much to learn about workers with disabilities and how to effectively integrate them into Ohio's workforce, but Ohio's deaf and blind communities need greater access to career training and development. Perhaps the most encouraging finding, however, was that although barriers to employment exist, many of them can be reduced through increased awareness and engagement on the part of employers. This means we are in a position to make a significant difference in the lives of Ohioans who are blind, deaf, or deafblind.

Of course, this report represents just the first step. The next phase will require action on the part of employers and the disability community. We are grateful to the task force members for volunteering their time and energy to this important work, and look forward to seeing the results in the lives of the people we serve and the positive impact on Ohio's economy.

Cynthia C. Dungey, Director
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

Kevin L. Miller, Director
Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities

Ohio | Department of Job and Family Services

Ohio | Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities

Executive Summary

Background

House Bill 483 of the 130th Ohio General Assembly established the Workforce Integration Task Force (WIT) to be co-chaired by the executive director of the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency (OOD) and the director of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). The co-chairs were given authority to appoint the remaining task force members.

The task force was charged with making recommendations regarding how deaf and blind Ohioans "may be more fully integrated into the workforce to increase employability and income parity" and issuing a report to the Governor no later than January 1, 2015. Upon the issuance of its report, the task force ceases to exist.

Through a process of data and information gathering, a series of in person meetings, conference calls, and regular interaction and dialogue, the WIT worked together to produce this report. A fundamental theme emerged: the need for significantly greater and broader awareness and understanding of the issues facing Ohioans with disabilities; specifically those who are blind, deaf, and deafblind. Individuals who recruit, hire, train and retain employees too often lack an appropriate level of awareness and knowledge regarding the disability community. As a result, they may not provide the necessary services and communication, and instead inadvertently create barriers to employment and full community integration.

This work led the task force to identify the following barriers:

- A disconnect between Ohio employers' need for qualified and dedicated workers and the available talents, skills and abilities of blind, deaf, and deafblind Ohioans;
- The specific, tangible benefits of integrating individuals with disabilities into the workforce are not widely known or effectively and consistently communicated to employers;
- Employers often fail to understand, or appropriately plan for, the reasonable accommodations Ohioans with disabilities need upon entering the workforce;
- Employers act, or fail to act, based on misunderstandings and/or fears about performance, safety and liability issues related to hiring individuals with disabilities;
- Workforce integration services and programs available for Ohio employees and employers are not widely known or effectively and consistently communicated;
- State and federal programs inadvertently create disincentives to work through asset and income limits;
- Employers fail to adopt and implement uniform and quality standards for services offered to blind, deaf, and deafblind individuals;
- Ohioans with disabilities often lack critical vocational and career planning skills and the appropriate training opportunities to acquire them are not always widely available;
- Ohio's transportation system often lacks effective options and services for Ohioans with disabilities.

Ohio is well positioned to lead efforts to tackle these broad and often daunting barriers and challenges. Ohio can be a national leader in the education and training of employers and employees in the benefits of integrating individuals with disabilities into the workforce; ensuring that all employees and employers are aware of and sensitive to the challenges facing Ohioans with disabilities. We can also work to ensure that all services and programs provide truly equal access and necessary accommodations that enable a path toward employment and independence for all.

A focused campaign to position Ohio as a leader in this area would not only result in a significant increase in the number of blind, deaf and deafblind individuals employed, but it would boost morale, productivity and economic growth across the state's economy.

To start on a path towards achieving these goals, the task force makes the following recommendations:

1. OOD and ODJFS should work collaboratively to create, collect and communicate clear, uniform and comprehensive information to employers about integrating blind, deaf, and deafblind Ohioans into the workforce.
2. OOD and ODJFS should develop strategies to more effectively engage business leadership organizations and networks to facilitate business to business and peer to peer conversations on how best to address and reduce barriers to employment and income parity for blind, deaf, and deafblind Ohioans.
3. The state of Ohio should seek out ways to more effectively build a culture of inclusion and accessibility by including disability awareness in any required diversity and inclusion training programs; and through the development of mentoring and relationship-building opportunities.
4. Ohio should encourage and facilitate opportunities to connect blind, deaf, and deafblind Ohioans with employers and to connect employers interested in integrating individuals with disabilities into their workforce with those who have successfully implemented such integration.
5. All Ohio employers should commit themselves to developing standards and benchmarks for effectively serving individuals with disabilities in key areas including: communications and education; access and accommodation; and hiring and employment.
6. OOD should work with the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation (OWT) to coordinate a working group of related agencies and programs to develop a unified

plan to more effectively align state of Ohio employment and workforce programs and services for Ohioans with disabilities.

7. State and federal governments should explore ways to remove disincentives to work that result from income and asset limits for blind, deaf, and deafblind Ohioans.

8. The state of Ohio should ensure that pre-vocational and vocational training is available and accessible for blind, deaf, and deafblind Ohioans throughout the state.

9. Ohio should explore ways to better leverage the facilities, programs, and services available in order to create immersive and hands on training opportunities for blind, deaf and deafblind communities across the state.

10. Ohio should continue to pursue a more integrated and wider-ranging system of transportation for individuals with disabilities in both urban and rural areas and to explore options to reduce transportation as a barrier to employment for blind, deaf, and deafblind Ohioans.

Introduction

As noted above, House Bill 483 established the Workforce Integration Task Force (WIT) to be co-chaired by the executive director of the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency (OOD) and the director of the Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), who were given authority to appoint the remaining task force members.

The agency directors finalized the composition of the task force by adding seven members with diverse backgrounds and experience. The membership includes Ohioans from the deaf and blind communities; representatives from the business community, nonprofit organizations, and community leaders; and those with an academic background in disability issues. (*See Appendix A for biographies of task force members*).

Workforce Integration Task Force (WIT) Members

Kevin L. Miller, Co-Chair, Executive Director, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities
Cynthia C. Dungey, Co-Chair, Director, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
Deborah Kendrick, Independent Journalist
John Moore, CEO/Executive Director, Deaf Services Center
Dr. J.W. Smith, Professor of Speech Communication, Ohio University
Steve Brubaker, Chief of Staff, InfoCision
Sherry Williams, President and CEO, Prevent Blindness, Ohio Affiliate
Dr. Jamie McCartney, Coordinator, ASL/English Interpreting Program, Kent State University
Arlon Nash, Teacher, Springfield High School

Data and Information Collection

In preparation for the work of the task force, staff at OOD and ODJFS collected relevant data and information, as outlined in the enabling legislation, through a review of available literature, the development and deployment of a set of questionnaires/surveys, and by conducting focus groups throughout the state.

Given the timeframe and costs involved, it was not possible for WIT to conduct a large-scale professional survey focused on the data elements included in the enabling legislation. There are, however, surveys such as the *Current Population Survey* and the *American Community Survey*, conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, which provide high-quality relevant data.

Agency staff also developed informal surveys targeted for three groups: members of the blindness and deafness communities; employers; and service providers, advocates and parents. Staff conducted 17 focus groups, in six different regions of the state, with Ohioans who are

blind or deaf and working (or seeking work) to talk about barriers to employment and recommendations. (*Further details available in Appendix B*)

Task force members used this data, along with their own knowledge and experience, to identify the major barriers to employment and income parity for people who are deaf, blind, or deaf-blind.

Note on Terminology Used in this Report

In most surveys, people self-identify as deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired, or deafblind. These terms embrace any degree of vision or hearing loss that seriously affects an individual's ability to perceive information readily evident to someone who has usual degrees of vision and hearing. Our research ranged from those with mild impairments to those who have become blind or deaf due to illness or injury and, finally, to those born totally blind or deaf. For the purposes of this report, the terms "blind" and "deaf" include the entire range of vision and hearing loss.

It is also worth noting that the deaf community prefers to capitalize the term (i.e. Deaf). For consistency and uniformity, however, the phrase "blind, deaf, and deafblind" is used throughout this report to describe these individuals and communities.

Background

In order to place the WIT findings and recommendations into the appropriate context, it is helpful to review some of the underlying data:

- More than 250,000 Ohioans are blind or have a vision disability and more than 416,000 are deaf or have a hearing disability.[1]
- Disabilities are more common with age, but among Ohioans age 18-64, about 132,000 are blind or have a vision disability and about 159,000 are deaf or have a hearing disability. This is about 1.9 percent and 2.2 percent, respectively, of Ohio's 18-to-64 age population.
- Ohioans with disabilities are less likely to be in the labor force than those without disabilities.
    - Among Ohioans in the labor force, the unemployment rate for those who are deaf or have a hearing disability was about 13.3 percent and for those who are blind or have a vision disability, 18.9 percent.[2] The unemployment rate for all Ohioans in the labor force was 8.3 percent. [It is important to note that these figures do not include a large portion of Ohioans who are blind, deaf or deafblind who are underemployed or have abandoned the job search.]
- Earnings among individuals with disabilities tend to be lower. Median earnings for those with a disability were $18,341 compared to $30,074 for those without a disability.[3]

[1] American Community Survey 2011-2013 data.
[2] American Community Survey 2011-2013 data. These data are different from the unemployment statistics reported by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. They are, however, useful in showing differences between groups.
[3] American Community Survey 2011-2013 data.

- Data from Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities shows that among those using OOD's services, average hourly wages upon employment averaged $13.62 for those with a vision impairment and $13.57 for those with a hearing impairment, significantly below the average hourly wage of $20.76 for all occupations in Ohio.[4]
- According to the 2012 Cornell Report, income disparity for Ohio's full-time workers with a visual disability is more significant than for Ohioans with a hearing disability.
    - Median earnings for Ohioans with visual impairments are almost 25 percent lower than for individuals without a disability.
    - Median earnings for individuals with a hearing disability are almost equivalent to those without a disability. [Note: most people categorized as having a hearing disability developed hearing loss later in life, after already establishing careers prior to the onset of their disability.]

Key Task Force Findings on Barriers to Employment

WIT determined that the barriers to employment and income parity among blind, deaf, and deafblind Ohioans are symptoms of a larger issue: a fundamental lack of awareness and knowledge about individuals with disabilities, their culture, their strengths and weaknesses, the challenges they face, and the opportunities they can provide. This in turn fuels a lack of knowledge about the benefits of integrating these individuals into the workforce. Additionally, many blind, deaf, and deafblind Ohioans lack the necessary skills for developing a successful career path in today's economy and access to the training opportunities needed to acquire them.

Specific Barriers

The task force specifically identified the following important barriers:

- A disconnect between Ohio employers' need for qualified and dedicated workers and the available talents, skills and abilities of blind, deaf, and deafblind Ohioans;
- The specific, tangible benefits of integrating individuals with disabilities into the workforce are not widely known or effectively and consistently communicated to employers;
- Employers often fail to understand, or appropriately plan for, the reasonable accommodations Ohioans with disabilities need upon entering the workforce;
- Employers act, or fail to act, based on misunderstandings and/or fears about performance, safety and liability issues related to hiring individuals with disabilities;
- Workforce integration services and programs available for Ohio employees and employers are not widely known or effectively and consistently communicated;
- State and federal programs inadvertently create disincentives to work through asset and income limits;
- Employers fail to adopt and implement uniform and quality standards for services offered to blind, deaf, and deafblind individuals;
- Ohioans with disabilities often lack critical vocational and career planning skills and the appropriate training opportunities to acquire them are not always widely available;

[4] OOD wage data on successful job outcomes from October 2010 to May 2014. Ohio 2013 average hourly wage from the Occupation Employment Statistics program of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

- Ohio's transportation system often lacks effective options and services for Ohioans with disabilities.

Benefits of Workforce Integration

WIT identified a clear need for increased education and training targeted towards employers on the benefits, available incentives and services, and successful practices involved in recruiting, hiring and retaining Ohioans who are blind, deaf, or deafblind. Currently, too many employers lack even basic knowledge about how to recruit, hire and promote people with disabilities.

Many employers lack an understanding and awareness of the talents, skills and abilities of blind, deaf, and deafblind Ohioans and the disability community more broadly. As a result employers do not view this group of Ohioans as a resource and talent pool and so do not explore integrating these individuals into their workforce, despite an often-stated need for greater access to qualified and dedicated workers. Clearly, a disconnect exists between what employers need and want and what Ohioans with disabilities have to offer.

Similarly, employers do not have a clear understanding of the benefits of integrating blind, deaf, and deafblind individuals into their workforce. Experience shows that integrating individuals with disabilities into the workforce has a positive impact on business morale, productivity and profitability. Integration can bring higher retention rates, lower absenteeism and higher productivity. Individuals with disabilities have proven to be dedicated, conscientious, and highly productive workers when given the opportunity. Meanwhile, businesses frequently note the cost of high turnover and absenteeism and the need for qualified workers.

Educating employers on the benefits of workforce integration is critical to overcoming these knowledge gaps and barriers but too often information is fragmented across agencies and organizations; and across programs, services, and access points.

Reasonable Accommodations – Attitudes and Available Services

In 2011, researchers H. Stephen Kaye, Lita H. Jans, and Erica C. Jones examined attitudes among HR professionals and supervisors at companies that had been identified as resistant to hiring persons with disabilities [5]. Common reasons companies might not hire persons with disabilities included: the cost of accommodations, lack of awareness in how to deal with workers with disabilities and their accommodation needs, fear of being stuck with a worker who cannot be disciplined or fired because of a possible lawsuit, difficulty in assessing an applicant's ability to perform job tasks, concerns over supervisory time, concerns over work quality, lack of job candidates with disabilities, and a perception that workers with disabilities cannot perform essential job duties.

The surveys conducted for this task force validate these findings and indicate that the attitudes of those in hiring and management roles greatly impact the career opportunities for blind, deaf, and deafblind Ohioans. Employers who responded to the task force survey identify concerns about accommodations and safety as the number one reason they do not target deaf and blind applicants for

[5] Why Don't Employers Hire and Retain Workers with Disabilities? H. Stephen Kaye, Lita H. Jans, and Erica C. Jones http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10926-011-9302-8

employment. Employer concerns about medical, legal and safety issues also create reluctance or fear to address these topics.

In the survey of the deaf and blindness communities, employer attitude toward disability was overwhelmingly identified by job seekers as the number one barrier to employment (65%). In the survey of deaf and vision service providers, employer concerns for liability and safety ranked as the number one barrier (73.4%). In the employer survey, employers themselves highlighted concerns about liability and safety as a top concern (61.1%).

Employers also often fail to anticipate and plan for the necessary accommodations and services needed to effectively integrate their workforce. According to the Job Accommodation Network, many employers do not think about how they will support a person with disabilities until they encounter someone during the hiring process. As a consequence, these employers have little understanding of how to provide reasonable accommodations. This ad hoc rather than strategic planning is a barrier to employment and effective integration.

WIT focus group responses also indicated that employers are not sure how to best onboard people with disabilities and help them integrate into their company culture. For example, one focus group participant said, "You are in a position of continually having to teach other people about your disability."

The impact of these myths, fears, and misunderstandings can be significantly reduced as barriers to employment and successful workforce inclusion through focused education, awareness and training. There are many services currently available to help employers in this area. However, this requires a much wider distribution of information on available services and programs designed to help employers both understand the issue of accommodations and the resources available.

Disincentives to Work

The receipt of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) may also influence whether people pursue part-time or full-time employment. OOD consumers who attained employment but are still receiving SSI/SSDI benefits tend to work fewer hours and therefore earn less income from employment than people who are not receiving SSI/SSDI benefits. In addition, the average hourly wage of individuals that work more hours is higher than those who work fewer hours or part-time. Concerns about loss of benefits can be a barrier to employment and further exacerbate the income gap. State income or asset limits may create similar disincentives to work or to working full-time.

Inclusion and Accessibility

The attitudes and knowledge of those making decisions about the recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion of individuals with disabilities are critical, but peers and fellow employee attitudes are also an important element of successful workforce integration for blind, deaf, and deafblind Ohioans. A lack of awareness and sensitivity to the challenges Ohioans with disabilities face, the skills and talents they offer, and the accommodations they may require can create barriers and hinder effective workforce integration. A lack of direct relationships within and between employers when it comes to Ohioans with disabilities can also be a barrier.

Diversity and inclusion programs and training sessions are a common aspect of human resources departments and employer engagement activity. The issues surrounding disability, however, are not always included so an opportunity to raise awareness and remove barriers is missed.

Accessibility is also a significant barrier to employment. Whether it is getting to work on time, asking directions, filling out an application, or convincing an employer that you deserve a raise, access is an element that pervades all aspects of life as a member of Ohio's blindness or deafness community. Whereas a sighted or hearing Ohioan can be reasonably certain that spoken or written information will be available as a job seeker or as an employee, this is often not the case for those with vision or hearing loss. Even when information is ostensibly available, it is common to find low-quality products and services when accessing Internet content, Brailled materials or interpreters. This is why so many Ohioans who are blind, deaf or deafblind can become frustrated and possibly abandon a job search.

WIT members were able to point to examples, from employment advertising to the application process, where significant improvements could be made at little or no cost to the entities involved and yet result in improved services for the blind, deaf, and deafblind job seeker. WIT surveys and focus groups noted that trouble with access begins at the front door, or at the first webpage, with an often laborious sign-in process.

Barriers also include dauntingly bureaucratic testing language or position descriptions, minimum qualifications, and licensure standards that unnecessarily exclude Ohioans with disabilities. One example is the specific demand on many state job applications for a valid driver's license despite the fact that needing to drive is not an essential qualification for the position (a driver's license is likely being used simply as identification but no alternative is offered or listed). Another would be requirements for vision or hearing tests that unnecessarily exclude individuals with disabilities from positions where acute hearing or vision is not an essential function (e.g. requiring a hearing test for a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) or a vision test in order to be certified as a teacher).

Uniform and quality standards for services offered to blind, deaf and deafblind individuals is thus critical to their ability to find and retain employment. If these individuals can't access important information and services on an equally effective basis, or are unnecessarily exclude from the applicant pool, they will be at a competitive disadvantage.

Skills Training and Career Planning

It was once possible to be trained in a trade or specific skill and find employment in a specific industry and thereby acquire a long term, stable career. Individuals with disabilities frequently benefited from this available path to employment. The path to employment in today's job market, however, is often more complex and fluid and may require constant re-training to keep up with technology. Navigating the system and the frequent retraining can be a challenge for the blind, deaf, and deafblind communities. In order to be able to acquire in-demand skills, these individuals must have access to the training and career services available to the general public, in a location and format that is appropriate.

Focus group members expressed dissatisfaction regarding accessibility to the training and career services offered to their non-deaf or non-blind counterparts. Deaf attendees stated that they could not sign up for some services because service providers would not accept relay calls. When they were finally able to sign up for training, the training itself was not culturally accessible to them. Finally, they had difficulty obtaining reliable interpreting and extra time for tests.

Blind attendees could not access certain training programs because the written or electronic material was not accessible. Some attendees stated that they lack the basic computer skills to benefit from electronic information. Other attendees stated that electronic information may have been available, but the computer monitors were not large enough, or speech software was not available for their reading needs. All of this points to a need for both effective service standards and more widely accessible and available training options.

Transportation

In nearly every survey taken, and in every conversation about the challenges and barriers facing individuals with disabilities, transportation is at or near the top of the list. The lack of available and reliable transportation options is without a doubt a significant barrier to blind, deaf, and deafblind Ohioans finding and retaining employment.

Recommendations

Once the task force identified and outlined the above barriers to employment and income parity, the following recommendations were developed on how best to begin reducing and removing these barriers.

We are confident that implementing the recommendations that follow will spur job and income growth and community integration for individuals with disabilities across Ohio. By focusing on both the outstanding barriers to employment, and enabling long term career success, the recommendations will position Ohio employers to fill critical workforce needs and develop a more stable and productive workforce. Additionally, more people with disabilities will be able to achieve and retain employment, therefore not only reducing the draw on government services, but also allowing them to contribute to the economy and become more independent.

Recommendation #1: OOD and ODJFS Collaboration on Uniform and Effective Communication

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) and Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) should work collaboratively to create, collect and communicate clear, uniform and comprehensive information to employers about integrating blind, deaf, and deafblind Ohioans into the workforce.

Employers in Ohio need targeted outreach and educational material on how to recruit, interview, hire, retain, and promote individuals with disabilities. The information must also be made available to all workforce development programs in the State of Ohio so that employers receive accurate and uniform information. Workforce development staff should have training on the information so that Ohio

employers have the support they need regardless of the agency or program serving as the contact or entry point.

Topics that should be included:

- Information on Ohio's vocational rehabilitation program as well as the services offered to employers across all education, training and workforce programs.
- Availability of sensitivity and awareness training, mentorship programs, and on-the-job training opportunities.
- Economic incentives available to businesses that hire employees with disabilities.
- Technical assistance and continuing education to employers on reasonable accommodations.

The task force strongly believes that clearly articulating, and more effectively and uniformly promoting, the business case for hiring blind, deaf, and deafblind applicants, along with providing training on accommodations and liability concerns, is a critical step in removing barriers to employment and career success.

Recommendation #2: Business to Business Engagement

OOD and ODJFS should jointly develop strategies to more effectively engage business leadership organizations and networks to facilitate business to business, and peer to peer, conversations about reducing barriers to employment and income parity for blind, deaf, and deafblind Ohioans.

The Business Leadership Network (OHBLN)[6] is well positioned to play a role in engaging the business community on addressing barriers to employment for Ohioans who are blind, deaf and deafblind (and Ohioans with disabilities more broadly). The agencies should work with the membership of OHBLN on how best to strengthen and grow the reach and impact of business to business communications and programs.

OOD and ODJFS should also seek input and collaboration from organizations like the Ohio Chamber of Commerce (and local chambers of commerce), the National Federation of Independent Businesses Ohio chapter, the Ohio Council of Retail Merchants, and the Ohio Business Roundtable. These organizations, and others, need to be integrated into a statewide network that can discuss barriers to employment for Ohioans with disabilities, explore strategies and approaches to removing or reducing those barriers, and share the benefits of workforce integration for employers. In order to learn from and be mentored by those representing the cultures of blindness and deafness themselves, such a network should also invite participation by representatives from consumer organizations such as the National Federation of the Blind, Ohio Association of Deafblind, etc.

[6] The Ohio Business Leadership Network (OHBLN) is an affiliate of the United States Business Leadership Network (USBLN), a national organization that promotes the business imperative to include people with disabilities in the workforce using a business-to-business model. http://ohiobln.org/

Recommendation #3: Building a Culture of Diversity & Inclusion

The state of Ohio should seek out ways to more effectively build a culture of inclusion and accessibility by ensuring that disability awareness is included in any required diversity and inclusion training programs; and through the development of mentoring and relationship-building opportunities.

Some areas to explore would include:

Disability is Diversity

The state of Ohio is a significant employer and has the opportunity to be a role model on issues pertaining to integrating individuals with disabilities into the workforce. The state should therefor explore opportunities to more effectively build equality and accessibility into its workforce and culture.

As noted above, awareness and sensitivity to the challenges and opportunities faced by blind, deaf, and deafblind individuals by both employers and employees is an important element of identifying and breaking down barriers. Disability, however, is not always included in traditional diversity and inclusion training opportunities and programs which mean this awareness, knowledge and sensitivity may not develop or do so in a uniform and effective fashion. Ohio should look for ways to incorporate disability awareness and training into its larger diversity and inclusion policies, procedures, and training programs to ensure a basic and uniform level of knowledge for employees.

It is also worth exploring whether employees who are involved in workforce development, human resources, and policy development on issues surrounding these topics should complete more in-depth training in order to better understand the larger issues surrounding the recruiting, hiring and retaining of people with disabilities.

Mentoring

Mentoring is a potentially powerful tool in breaking down barriers and building relationships. Mentoring fosters increased awareness and knowledge about the disability community, the challenges people with disabilities face, and the skills and resources they offer while at the same time giving individuals with disabilities the opportunity to learn more about employers, and potential employers, and their job seeking peers and colleagues.

Both sides benefit through these relationships. Blind, deaf, and deafblind individuals would benefit from being mentored by both employer leaders and by peers in order to better understand what it takes to succeed in a given industry or career and what options are available, etc. Employers would benefit from being mentored in order to better understand the perspective of people with disabilities, their challenges, as well as their skills and talents. Direct connections between people make knowledge and awareness concrete and real in a way that basic training does not.

The focus groups confirmed the importance of Ohioans with disabilities themselves interacting with Ohio employers and sharing their experiences and expertise in workforce integration. “It’s a good idea

for groups to go to employers and show, not tell, what they can do even with a disability," noted a participant.

And according to the National Council on Disability, a survey of employers found that 59 percent rated mentoring as "effective" or "very effective" for reducing barriers to employment, or for advancement for people with disabilities in their organizations.

Affinity Groups

Affinity Groups, employer-sponsored entities comprised of employees who have shared interests and experiences and have at one time felt underrepresented in the workplace, are also worth exploring. Focus groups often indicated that the information and experience sharing that peers with similar disabilities provide are powerful tools in promoting independence and generating job satisfaction.

Ohio should develop mentoring and relationship-building opportunities within its workforce to further build a culture of diversity and inclusion and to foster effective integration of blind, deaf, and deafblind individuals.

Recommendation #4: Explore Ways to Connect Employers with Individuals with Disabilities

Ohio should encourage and facilitate opportunities to connect blind, deaf, and deafblind Ohioans with employers and to connect employers interested in integrating individuals with disabilities into their workforce with those who have successfully implemented such integration.

As noted above, mentoring is a potentially powerful tool to identify and remove barriers to employment and to create a culture of diversity and inclusion that fosters successful workforce integration. The State of Ohio can be a role model in this effort, but it should also encourage connections between blind, deaf and deafblind Ohioans with businesses seeking to more effectively integrate their workforce and help facilitate employer to employer mentoring and relationship building opportunities.

Employer to Employer Connections

Employers that hire people with disabilities are in the unique position to assist other businesses with the most effective approaches to the recruiting, hiring, and onboarding of employees with disabilities and are in a position to mentor one another to dispel myths, share trade strategies, and provide mutual support.

Some Ohio businesses such as Procter and Gamble already have disability mentoring projects underway and are enjoying success. Such companies should be encouraged to reach out to the wider business community to share their success and offer advice on effective implementation of similar programs and strategies. The OHBLN can also play a lead role in facilitating these connections.

Connecting with Businesses

As discussed above, Ohio's disability community would benefit from stronger connections and relationships with employers. If there are ways the State of Ohio can help connect blind, deaf, and

deafblind individuals with the business community it should take advantage of those opportunities. These direct relationships would strengthen the business community and foster greater employment and independence for Ohioans with a disability.

Task force conducted focus groups and the Employer survey also highlighted the fact that once one member of the blindness or deafness community is on-boarded with a given employer, that individual often paves the way by example, or by networking, for others to apply successfully. Like-disability and like-occupation networking is an effective support tool for this process, providing ongoing advice, creative ideas on accommodations and peer support.

Recommendation #5: Developing Standards for Services

All Ohio employers should commit themselves to developing standards and benchmarks for effectively serving individuals with disabilities in key areas including communications and education, access and accommodation, and hiring and employment.

A lack of clear and uniform service and accessibility standards is clearly a barrier to employment. Truly equal access to services, training, and information is critical to successful employment. Unfortunately, unequal access and low quality service is something frequently encountered by blind, deaf, and deafblind Ohioans seeking employment, retention and promotion.

Ohio employers should be encouraged to develop standards for serving Ohioans with disabilities and regularly reviewing their policies, procedures, and services to measure their success.

Areas for employers to consider when developing these standards and benchmarks include:

- Communications: All print, web based, and audio/visual information should be accessible to deaf and blind Ohioans (including quality captioning and interpreting).
    - Online job postings, applications, company information, and all state agency online presences should be in compliance with guidelines provided by the Web Accessibility Initiative to ensure accessibility to Ohioans who are blind or do not read conventional print.
- Access and Accommodations: Ohioans who are deaf and blind should be able to receive the same level of service as those who do not have disabilities:
    - Facility accessibility
    - Equal access and effectiveness for in person training and meetings
    - Available and knowledgeable staff
    - Clear policies/procedures for reasonable accommodations
- Hiring and Employment
    - Appropriate levels of awareness and sensitivity training for HR staff
    - Access and ease of use for applications, testing, interviews, etc.
    - Reviewing and removing unintended barriers created through unnecessary or overly specific qualifications, descriptions, or testing (i.e. State ID not driver's license, hearing and vision tests, etc.)

A commitment to developing standards and setting benchmarks will help identify barriers to employment and ineffective recruitment, hiring and onboarding processes and procedures.

In addition to ensuring that quality services are being provided and building a stronger and more effective workforce, this commitment will also generate significant goodwill among Ohio's disability community; a potentially impactful market segment for businesses.

Recommendation # 6: Working Group on Program Alignment

OOD should work with the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation (OWT) to coordinate a working group of related agencies and programs to develop a unified plan to more effectively align State of Ohio employment and workforce programs and services for Ohioans with disabilities.

The recently passed Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), is moving federal law toward unified state workforce development plans using specific standards and metrics to measure progress toward shared goals. The state of Ohio has already worked with stakeholders and local providers to develop a unified plan, which includes the Workforce Investment Act, Adult and Basic Literacy Education, and Carl Perkins funding. This recommendation will build upon that unified plan and will now include OOD's resources as required under WIOA. This addition will allow for better program alignment among agencies and ensure that programs are effectively working together to serve Ohioans with disabilities and that available resources are being leveraged and spent under the guidance of a statewide strategic plan. This alignment would also mean serving more people and doing so more effectively.

WIT saw a strong consensus when it comes to better cross-agency program and services alignment. Case after case was described in focus groups of those with visual impairments reliant on alternate transportation being shuttled from one office to another, and from groups of Ohioans who are deaf, arriving only to find a less-than-competent interpreter, and more often, no interpreter at all.

Particular collaboration suggestions focused on not only OOD and ODJFS collaboration and streamlining, but also efforts to include other agencies that commonly provide an array of services to people who are blind, deaf, and deafblind. These include, but are not limited to, the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles, the Ohio Bureau of Workers Compensation, the Ohio Department of Aging, the Ohio Department of Medicaid; and many law enforcement and criminal justice entities.

Better program alignment also gives an opportunity for the State of Ohio and other government entities to investigate cost-sharing and information-sharing options in the provision of accommodations to Ohio constituents. This also builds a natural support system for ensuring that agencies explore and consider the service standards suggested earlier in this report.

Building off the success of the state's current unified plan, this working group would be in a position to jump start Ohio's program alignment in anticipation of WIOA requirements. This will help ensure that all of Ohio's workforce and employment related programs and services are effectively serving blind, deaf and deafblind job seekers and the disability community more broadly.

Recommendation #7: Disincentives to Work

State and federal governments should explore ways to remove disincentives to work that result from income and asset limits for Ohioans who are blind, deaf and deafblind.

As discussed above, the receipt of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) can influence whether people pursue part-time or full-time employment.

OOD consumers who attained employment but are still receiving SSI/SSDI benefits tend to work fewer hours and therefore earn less income from employment than people who are not receiving SSI/SSDI benefits. In addition, the average hourly wage of individuals that work more hours is higher than those who work fewer hours or part-time.

Ohio policies, rules and regulations may have the same effect, since Ohioans who are blind, deaf, and deafblind are naturally worried about losing access to important benefits. Even if the employment opportunity affords a great income, some are reluctant to lose current income benefits for the possibility of greater future income.

These rules and regulations in effect create a barrier to effective employment and reduce income parity. Government at the state and federal level should explore ways to remove these disincentives and encourage employment without threatening benefits. In the long run, the benefits of successful employment will outweigh the cost of a transition period for benefits.

Recommendation #8: Access to Pre-vocational and Vocational Training

Pre-vocational and vocational training for Ohioans who are blind, deaf and deafblind should be available and accessible throughout Ohio.

Ensuring that job seekers of all ages not only acquire the skills and qualifications required for available and in-demand jobs, but also have the skills necessary to successfully navigate today's job market is a fundamental element of workforce development in Ohio. Like many without disabilities, however, individuals who are blind, deaf and deafblind often lack the soft skills and competencies needed to conduct a job search, network with potential employers, effectively interview, negotiate employment, and build a career.

In order to encourage and facilitate the acquisition of these skills, equal access and availability is critical. Ohioans who are blind, deaf, and deafblind should have access to the same vocational training, programs and services as Ohioans who are non-disabled.

OhioMeansJobs Centers

Survey data from Ohioans who are blind, deaf, and deafblind indicates that the second largest barrier to employment is a lack of available jobs. At the same time, employers indicate that their largest barrier to hiring people with disabilities is a lack of applicants. OhioMeansJobs centers stand in a unique position to bridge this gap between qualified workers and available jobs. Given this reality, a review of all OhioMeansJobs centers should be conducted to ensure that Ohioans who are blind, deaf, and deafblind have equal access to employment training and job seeking services.

Specific Training for Deaf and/or Blind Ohioans

Accessibility for deaf people goes beyond ensuring that sign language interpreting or captioning is available. Studies indicate that instruction from a person who can communicate directly with the deaf person is far more effective than instruction via a sign language interpreter. While interpreters are very valued in the deaf community, introducing a third person into a scenario will almost always dilute the timing, meaning, and effectiveness of communication. With this in mind, increased vocational services specifically designed for and targeting deaf and/or blind Ohioans should also be explored and encouraged.

Recommendation #9: Immersive and Hands on Training

Ohio should explore ways to better leverage the facilities, programs, networks, and services currently available in order to create immersive and hands on training opportunities for blind, deaf and deafblind communities across the state.

Some members of the task force emphasized that a residential or immersive training center is crucial for developing self-confidence, alternative skills and socialization needs. Specifically for those who lose vision as adults and therefore lack the auditory, tactile and literacy skills that blind children pick up naturally and through special education.

There is a strong network of Community Centers for the Deaf, vision centers, Deaf Studies and/or Interpreter Training Programs at universities, and other non-profit institutions across Ohio that provide specific services to the deaf and blind communities.

In the blindness community, however, a great loss was suffered in 2012 when Columbus-based Vision and Vocational Services (formerly Vision Center 1927-2008) closed down. Like other centers in Cincinnati, Toledo and Cleveland, this nonprofit served as a training, social and workshop employment center for low-vision needs in Central Ohio. Its closure left the Central Ohio region unserved. Given its central location, the population involved, and the connection to state government and other important resources, the need in Central Ohio is particularly acute. Short-term residential training centers for blind and visually impaired adults in such states as Maryland, Louisiana, Colorado, and others have documented the increased job acquisition and retention of adults who experience such immersion training in the independence and adaptive skills of blindness.

In the deaf community, no residential or immersive programs exist for adults in Ohio. The Comprehensive Program for the Deaf (housed at the Columbus Speech and Hearing Center) stopped providing residential services a decade or more ago and the Ohio School for the Deaf in Columbus serves K-12 students who live outside Franklin and contiguous counties. Deaf individuals often spend their entire lives within the hearing world. Ninety percent of deaf children are born to hearing parents, the majority of whom do not sign. With the mainstreaming of deaf students in schools, this results in deaf individuals with little to no interaction with peers, mentors and role models who are deaf.

Given the potential benefits of immersive and hands on education and training for independence, employment and quality of life, Ohio should explore ways to better leverage existing resources, facilities, programs, and services to create a statewide network of these type of training and educational opportunities.

Recommendation #10: Transportation

Ohio should continue to pursue a more integrated and wider-ranging system of transportation for individuals with disabilities in both urban and rural Ohio and to explore options to reduce transportation as a barrier to employment for blind, deaf, and deafblind Ohioans.

As mentioned in the barriers section above, in nearly every survey taken, and in every conversation, about the challenges and barriers facing individuals with disabilities, transportation is at or near the top of the list. The lack of available and reliable transportation options is without a doubt a significant barrier to blind, deaf, and deafblind Ohioans finding and retaining employment. It is a component of access just like those areas discussed above. It will have to be addressed in order to truly spur increased employment and income opportunities for Ohio's blind, deaf, and deafblind.

There are a number of ongoing activities and research on this topic being conducted by agencies and organizations throughout Ohio. Those projects should continue and will hopefully provide concrete recommendations for improvement.

A few areas for further consideration:

- Para-transit and other transportation related services and programs are often administered or funded at the county level. This creates barriers and complications for job seekers crossing county borders for employment.
    - Focus groups in the Cleveland area praised the region's transportation system which crosses county lines.
- Ride sharing companies like Uber and Lyft may provide options that were heretofore unavailable at least in urban areas.
- Employers seeking to expand their talent pool and integrate Ohioans with disabilities into their workforce should strongly consider the role of transportation in the needs of their employees.

    - Transportation vouchers, creative carpooling incentives, company-provided drivers or other accommodations may provide effective solutions to individual needs without having to undertake system wide changes.
- The states of Minnesota and Washington have the reputation as having the best transportation systems for the blind, deaf, and deafblind. They may provide models and examples for policy makers seeking to improve Ohio's system of transportation.
    - Members of the ODOT Transit Needs Study team also found that these two states (specifically Seattle and Minneapolis-St. Paul)) are models for effective transit services for all ridership. This demonstrates the finding that, when public transportation systems innovate for the general community, they are likely to positively impact riders with disabilities, including those who are blind, deaf, and deafblind.

Conclusion

In many respects, effectively integrating individuals who are blind, deaf, and deafblind into the workforce in order to achieve equality and opportunity is a complex and difficult task. It involves federal, state and local government entities and programs, businesses of varying scope, size and industry, and a diverse population with very different needs, cultures, and circumstances. In many cases, true integration will require upending longstanding ways of doing business, overcoming the communication challenges of reaching employers of every size and industry, and changing the way people see the world.

At the same time, the task is also a simple one. It involves raising awareness about the challenges and benefits of recruiting, hiring and promoting individuals who are blind, deaf, and deafblind, setting high standards for services, and creating a culture of diversity and inclusion within Ohio's workforce where everyone is welcomed and valued for their contributions to our communities and the economy.

If implemented, the above recommendations would position Ohio as a national leader in this effort. More importantly, taking concrete action on these recommendations would serve citizens better. It would create a more diverse and inclusive workforce, and spur employment, economic growth and a better quality of life for many Ohioans.

The impact on individuals who are blind, deaf, and deafblind would be significant:

- Increased independence, quality of life and career opportunities
- A welcoming and more inclusive work environment
- Greater accessibility to services and programs
- Opportunities for mentoring and leadership roles

Many of the recommendations will require determination and significant effort to enact. They will require a significant investment of time and resources. Some will involve a change in perspective and a willingness to be uncomfortable in order to learn and change.

In every case, however, the benefits of a more diverse and inclusive workforce far outweigh the costs.

Now is the time to act, to build a better state not only for individuals who are blind, deaf, and deafblind, and their families and communities, but for all Ohioans.

Appendix A: Workforce Integration Task Force Members

Steve Brubaker

Steve Brubaker began his career at InfoCision in 1985. In his current role as chief of staff, he is a member of the executive team and is responsible for HR, internal/external communications and manages InfoCision's legal and compliance departments. Brubaker is active in a number of professional organizations, including the Direct Marketing Association, Society for Consumer Affairs Professionals and Professional Association for Customer Engagement, formerly known as American Teleservices Association (ATA). He served on ATA's national board of directors over a period of two decades. In 2007 he was awarded the ATA's highest honor, the prestigious Fulcrum Award, in recognition of his extraordinary contributions to the call center industry. Mr. Brubaker also received the Simonetti Distinguished Business Alumni Award from The University of Akron in 2012 and The University of Akron Honors College Distinguished Alumni Award in 2014. Brubaker's blog at InfoCision.com provides timely and insightful recommendations for companies wishing to delight consumers with extraordinary customer service experiences.

Deborah Kendrick

Deborah Keefer Kendrick is an award-winning journalist, poet and technologist. Her newspaper column on disability rights has appeared in numerous newspapers since 1986, including the Cincinnati Enquirer, Columbus Dispatch and San Francisco Chronicle, among others. Kendrick also serves as senior features editor for AccessWorld, a technology news magazine for individuals who are blind or visually impaired published by the American Foundation for the Blind. Deborah has written the *Jobs That Matter* series of books for AFB Press, a series profiling a wide variety of blind and visually impaired individuals and the jobs they do. Her features, editorials and reviews have also appeared in numerous regional and national publications, including *Woman's Day*, *Parenting*, *Marriage and Family*, *St. Anthony Messenger*, and many others. She serves on a number of boards and councils, has three grown children, and lives in Cincinnati.

Jamie McCartney

Jamie McCartney has been a professional interpreter in Ohio for 21 years and an interpreter educator for 18 years. She is currently the coordinator for the American Sign Language/ English Interpreting Program at Kent State University. McCartney holds a doctorate in secondary education curriculum and instruction and a master's and bachelor's degree in technical education, all from the University of Akron. She also holds an associate's degree in interpreting/ transliterating for the deaf from Columbus State Community College. She has interpreted in a variety of venues, such as postsecondary, employment, medical, social services, deaf-blind and platform interpreting. She has also interpreted for Sorenson Video Relay Service, where she worked in the capacities of manager, director and video interpreter. McCartney is a member of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (RID), and the Ohio Chapter of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. She holds the following national certifications from RID: a certificate of transliteration, a certification of interpretation and a master-level national interpreter Certification.

John L. Moore

John L. Moore is the CEO/executive director of Deaf Services Center, Inc., a nonprofit organization committed to the needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals and their families throughout a 37-county service area. Moore earned a bachelor of science degree in government and history from Gallaudet University in Washington D.C. and a master's in public administration from Northeastern University in Boston. He has worked with local grass-roots organizations, as well as the public and private sector, and is currently the president of Community Shares of Mid-Ohio, where he works with 60 area nonprofits and is the first individual with a disability in this role. He

has been involved in various deafness and disability organizations and has an extensive range of experience in dealing with organizations, agencies and interest groups on the state and local levels.

Arlon Nash

Arlon Nash teaches at Springfield High School in Springfield, Ohio. Nash graduated from Bowling Green State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration. He also holds a master's degree in deaf education from McDaniel College in Westminster, Maryland. He is a member of the American Sign Language Teachers Association and holds a qualified certification. He is currently co-leader for the Clark County Deaf Community Organization. He also is involved as a leader in several organizations that promote leadership for the deaf and that support and cherish American Sign Language as the first and native language for individuals who are deaf.

J. Webster Smith

J. Webster Smith (J.W.) was born blind on March 9, 1959, in Chicago. Dr. Smith is a professor of speech communication in the School of Communication Studies at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in history and speech communication from Indiana University, his Master of Arts degree in speech communication from Purdue University, and his PhD from Wayne State University. He is a member of the National Communication Association, Central States Communication Association, National Federation of the Blind, National Federation of the Blind of Ohio (where he served as president from 2008 to 2012), and the National Association of Blind Educators. In addition, Dr. Smith has served as a member of the Ohio State Library Consumer Advisory Committee, the State Consumer Advisory Committee of Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (formerly known as the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission), and the Ohio Governor's Council on People with Disabilities.

Sherill K. Williams

Sherill K. Williams has served as president and CEO of Prevent Blindness, Ohio Affiliate (PBO) since 1986. Prior to joining the PBO staff, Williams served as national director of youth volunteers for the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation and as executive director of the Fairfield County, Connecticut chapter of the March of Dimes. She received her bachelor of arts in speech/communication from the University of Minnesota and a master's in public administration/health care administration from Pace University of New York. Williams is on the advisory board of GroundWorkGroup and is a member of the Ohio Association of Nonprofit Organization's Standards of Excellence Advisory Committee. Additionally, she serves as an advisor for the Ann Ellis Fund of The Columbus Foundation and is a founding member of the SOS (Save Our Sight) Coalition, Ohio Eye Care Coalition, Ohio Fireworks Safety Coalition and Ohio Aging Eye Public Private Partnership. She is a graduate of Leadership Columbus and served as a commissioner for the International Year of the Child Presidential National Commission in Washington, D.C.

Appendix B: Survey Data Focus Group Summary

Questionnaires

A single questionnaire was developed for both Ohioans who are blind/low-vision and deaf/hearing-impaired. This WIT constituent questionnaire was developed using both questions from other disability surveys and group input. The SurveyMonkey questionnaire was tested for screen readers (nonvisual audience), with each question containing an embedded video of an American Sign Language translation of the question. It was not possible to distribute the questionnaire randomly to constituents. Instead, 43 organizations were asked to direct constituents to the questionnaire website.

A second questionnaire was developed for Ohio employers. Since businesses can be difficult to survey, the questionnaires were distributed by business service representatives from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services using tablets at 11 job fairs around the state. In addition, a link to the questionnaire was on the employer portion of OhioMeansJobs.com.

Due to interest generated by the constituent survey, another SurveyMonkey questionnaire was developed for a third group, which was made up of service providers, advocates and parents.

Constituent Survey

- The constituent survey generated 427 useable responses. Overall educational attainment of the respondents was above average. About 40 percent of the respondents had a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 27 percent of Ohio adults 25 and older.
- Just over half the respondents were working or self-employed. Their hourly wages ranged from $4.58 to $52.64, with a median of $12.50 per hour. Some respondents reported annual wages, which ranged from $1,500 to $200,000. The median annual wage was $41,000. More than a third of the respondents were between ages 51 and 64, with earnings often higher than the average. Only 11 percent of the respondents said they had never worked.
- About 20 percent of respondents said they had turned down work or extra hours to keep their Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Supplemental Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits. This was more common among those not working.
- About 46 percent said their disability made it very difficult or impossible to find work or be self-employed. However, among those who had worked, only 18 percent said their disability made doing a job very difficult or impossible.
- The most commonly mentioned barrier to work was employer attitudes toward disabilities (65 percent). The second most commonly mentioned barrier was the availability of jobs (58 percent).

Employer Survey

- The employer questionnaire generated 162 responses. About 66 percent of respondents said they had experience hiring or recruiting persons with disabilities, of which about 76 percent had experience hiring persons with hearing or vision impairments.
- About 74 percent said the jobs for which they were currently hiring could be especially challenging for persons with hearing or vision impairments.
- Seventy-three percent mentioned the hearing or vision requirements of jobs as a challenge for persons with hearing or vision impairments; 61 percent said safety and liability issues were a concern.

- Among non-occupational challenges, lack of applicants (37 percent) followed by transportation (33 percent) were most commonly cited.

Service Provider, Advocate and Family Survey

- The third survey generated 84 responses. Sixty-three percent of respondents said they had worked with or assisted people with a vision or hearing loss for more than 10 years.
- About 45 percent of respondents said that 25 to 74 percent of their clients, associates or family members in the vision or hearing loss communities had turned down work to maintain SSI/SSDI benefits, a notably higher percent than reported on the constituent survey.
- The barrier to employment most commonly mentioned was employer attitudes toward disabilities (82 percent), followed by availability of jobs (79 percent). Service providers most commonly mentioned safety and liability issues (73 percent) as one of the business community's perceived challenges to hiring people with disabilities. Service providers most commonly mentioned accommodation costs (73 percent) as one of the business community's perceived non-occupational challenges.

Focus Groups

Staff from Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities conducted 17 focus groups at six locations around the state. The focus groups were divided among four types of constituents: visually impaired and working, visually impaired and not working, hearing impaired and working, and hearing impaired and not working. Topics included the vocational rehabilitation system and benefits, the search for work, the effect of a disability on independent living, life on the job, and recommendations.

Findings

The following is a summary of the focus group participants' views:

- Many focus group participants felt that because of their disabilities, they had been "put in a box" with regard to their career aspirations and choices. People expressed frustration about not getting "real jobs."
- Some Ohio vocational rehabilitation consumers "skip the border" to get services in other states. Many consider Ohio's vocational rehabilitation services underfunded and behind other states.
- Many participants felt that employer attitudes toward persons with disabilities prevented them from being considered for jobs. Many experienced the lack of reasonable accommodations, both on the job and during the application and interview process. Many of those in the deaf community said it was difficult to find good interpreters. Many of those in the reading-impaired community said reading/writing technology was often inadequate.
- Although technology could be a job barrier, most participants saw the value in learning new technologies for independent living and employment.
- Among those with job experience, many said they felt the need to prove themselves or explain their disabilities on an ongoing basis. Many said they were afraid to ask for reasonable accommodations or that they made their own accommodations. Social isolation was often a problem, especially for the deaf community.
- The need for inter- and cross-agency collaboration was mentioned often. Many said services do not work well together or could work together better.
- Many mentioned the need for a deaf commission similar to those in other states. Visually impaired participants mentioned the need for reliable public or private transportation.

Appendix C: Demographics and Analysis Guide

See separately attached Demographics and Analysis Guide.

2014

Workforce Integration Task Force

Demographics and Analysis Guide

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For questions regarding this report, please contact: Raivo Murnieks, Deputy Director of Performance and Innovation, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, at Raivo.Murnieks@OOD.ohio.gov *or 614-438-1254.*

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the Ohio Workforce Integration Task Force (WIT) members with data and information to support their decision-making and resulting recommendations to the Governor by January 1, 2015 as it pertains to Section 751.20 of Ohio H.B. 483, which was enacted into law on June 16, 2014. Specifically, the information in this report will inform the task force so that it can make recommendations regarding how those individuals may be more fully integrated into the workforce to increase employability and income parity:

- Number of individuals who are blind or deaf
- The average income levels for those individuals who are employed compared to those who are not employed
- Where those individuals are geographically located
- The number of those individuals who are employed and in what job categories they are employed
- Whether barriers to employment exist for those individuals

METHODOLOGY

There is no single accepted definition of disability. Different definitions and disability questions may identify different populations with disabilities and result in larger or smaller estimates. For consistency, the WIT data research subgroup determined that the most effective source of data to address Ohio specific information regarding the total number of individuals who are blind or deaf is through the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS).

The two ACS survey questions used to identify persons with vision and hearing disabilities are as follows:

Hearing Disability (asked of all ages): Is this person deaf or does he/she have serious difficulty hearing?

Visual Disability (asked of all ages): Is this person blind or does he/she has serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses?

Note that the Census Bureau / ACS refers to each of the individual types as "difficulty" while in this report the term "disability" is used. The terms "disability" and "impairment" are used in this report.

Further, to get the most accurate information of these individuals to be representative of all counties, the ACS 5-Year estimates are being used in this report. This data source will address the two elements of the number of blind or deaf and where they are geographically located. In addition, it aligns with the 2012 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). National level trend charts regarding overall disability employment and workforce participation trends provided in the 'Background' section of this report utilized Current Population Survey data as a source.

Research Publications

The Ohio Longitudinal Transition Study - Annual State Report Spring 2014
http://www.olts.org/state-reports/2014-state-report.pdf

2012 Vocational Rehabilitation Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (JAWS Accessible)
http://ood.ohio.gov/docs/internet-documents/rsc-csna-report-2012_final-jaws.pdf (Pages 56-78)

Disability Statistics – American Community Survey and Current Population Survey (Query Tool and Reports) www.disabilitystatistics.org – Query Tool
http://www.disabilitystatistics.org/StatusReports/2012-PDF/2012-StatusReport_OH.pdf?CFID–Ohio Report

Ohio Labor Market Information – Ohio Job Outlook 2020 Projections

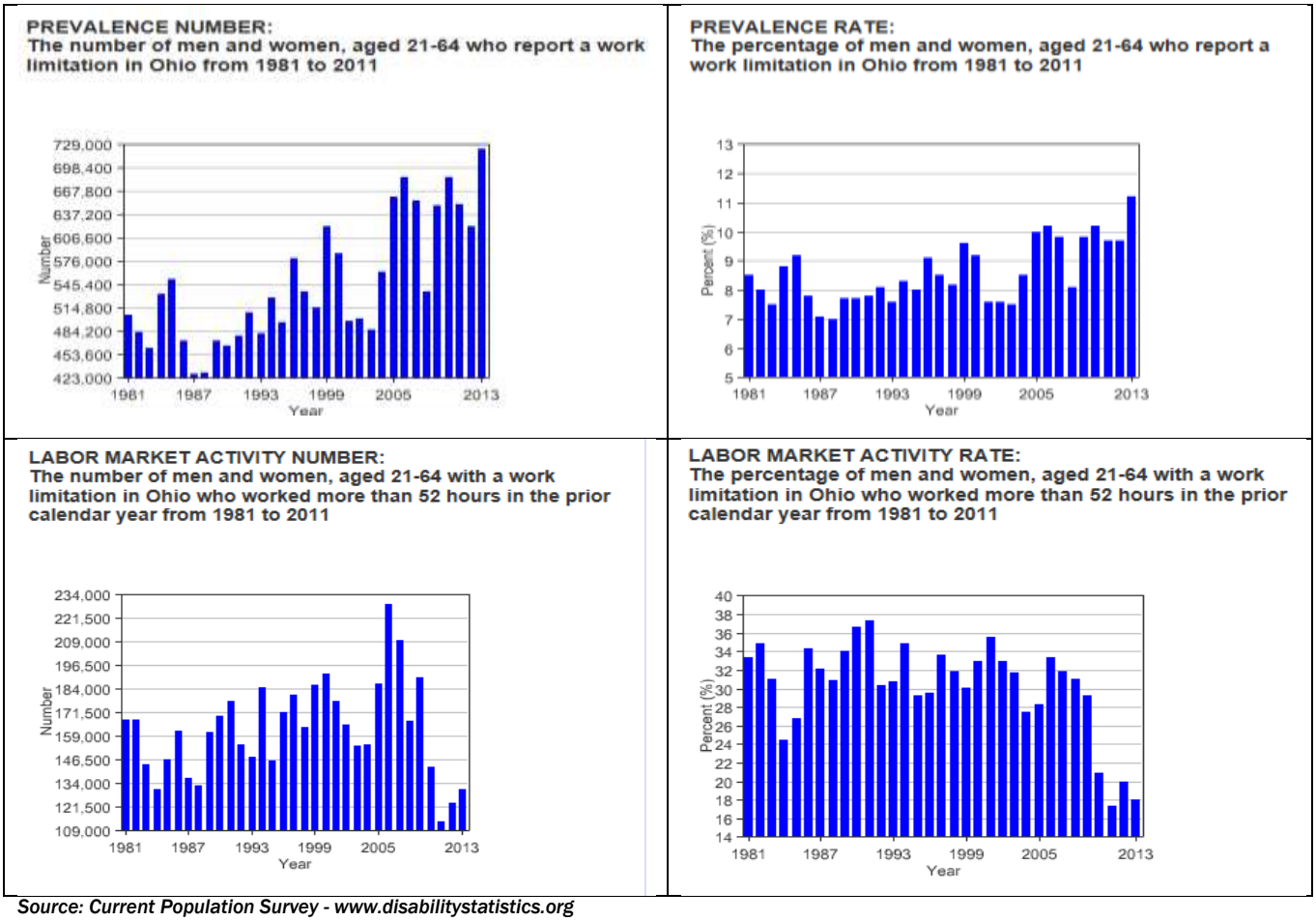
http://ohiolmi.com/proj/OhioJobOutlook.htm

BACKGROUND

Nationally, in 2013, 17.6 percent of persons with a disability were employed. In contrast, the employment-population ratio for those without a disability was 64.0 percent. The employment-population ratio was little changed from 2012 to 2013 for both groups. The unemployment rate for those with a disability was 13.2 percent in 2013, higher than the rate for persons with no disability (7.1 percent). The jobless rate for persons with a disability was little changed from 2012 to 2013, while the rate for those without a disability declined. (Source Bureau of Labor Statistics News Release PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY: LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS —2013 – June 11, 2014) *Note: The unemployment rate is the percentage of total workforce who are unemployed and who are actively looking for a paid job; this does not include individuals who are not actively seeking employment.*

Read more: http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/unemployment-rate.html#ixzz37ReM4RIt

Ohio Labor Market Participation Trends – All Disabilities



Source: Current Population Survey - www.disabilitystatistics.org

In the year 2011, an estimated 9.7 percent (plus or minus 1.3 percentage points) of civilian non-institutionalized, men and women, aged 21-64 in Ohio reported a work limitation. In other words, 651,000 out of 6,709,000 (or about one in 10) civilian non-institutionalized, men and women, aged 21-64 in Ohio reported a work limitation. The estimated percentage above is based on a sample of 2,975 persons who participated in the Current Population Survey (CPS).

In the year 2011, an estimated 17.1 percent (plus or minus 5.2 percentage points) of civilian non-institutionalized, men and women with a work limitation, aged 18-64 in Ohio worked more than 52 hours in the prior calendar year. In other words, 114,000 out of 667,000 (or about one in 6) civilian non-institutionalized, men and women with a work limitation, aged 18-64 in Ohio worked more than 52 hours in the prior calendar year.

In the year 2012, an estimated 10.4 percent (plus or minus 0.95 percentage points) of non-institutionalized persons aged 21 to 64 years with a disability in Ohio who were not working, were actively looking for work. While an estimated 11.0 percent (plus or minus 2.58 percentage points) with a visual disability and 14.4 percent (plus or minus 2.9 percentage points) with a hearing disability in Ohio who were not working, were actively looking for work.

Ohio Job Seeker Proportionality by Disability Type

Table XXIX. Relative Proportionality for Ohio: 2013

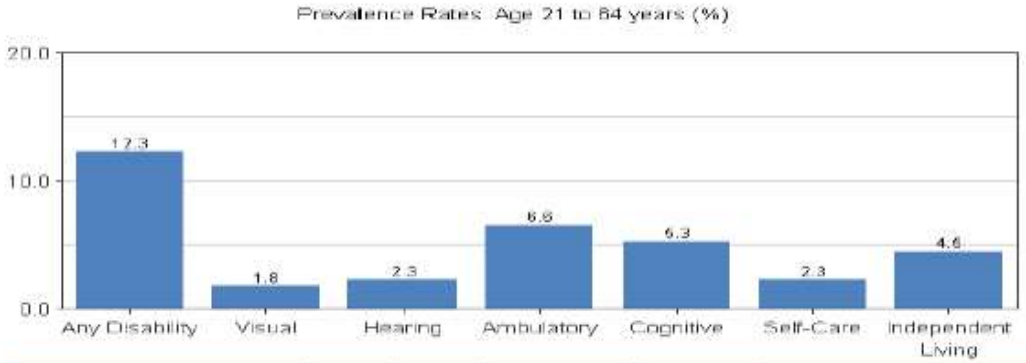
Impairment Category	Seeking Employment	Proportion of Total Seeking Employment	Served by RSC	Proportion of Total Served	Percentage Point Difference
Visual Impairment	23,504	10.4%	1,236	8.2%	-2.3
Hearing Impairment	16,810	7.5%	1,079	7.1%	-0.4
Communicative Impairment	12,357	5.5%	161	1.1%	-4.4
Physical Impairment	58,927	26.2%	3,732	24.6%	-1.6
Psychosocial Impairment	55,075	24.5%	5,327	35.1%	10.7
Cognitive Impairment	58,512	26.0%	3,625	23.9%	-2.1
Total	**225,185**	**100.0%**	**15,160**	**100.0%**	**NA**

Source: 2012 Vocational Rehabilitation Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

In Ohio, of the projected 225,000 individuals with a disability that are seeking employment, more than 40,000 individuals with a visual or hearing impairment are seeking employment. The table above demonstrates that the proportion of all Ohioans with disabilities estimated to be seeking employment, 10.4 percent are represented by those with a visual impairment and 7.5 percent are represented by those with a hearing impairment.

Ohio Prevalence Rates by Disability Type

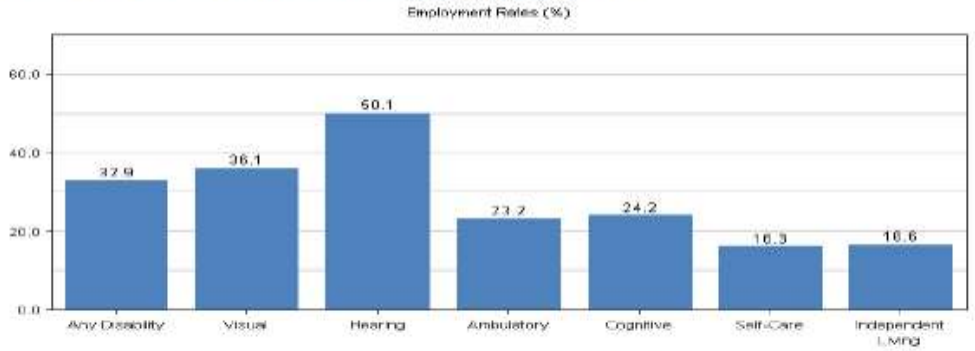
Prevalence of disability among non-institutionalized people ages 21 to 64 in Ohio in 2012



Disability Type	%	MOE	Number	MOE	Base Pop.	Sample Size
Any Disability	12.3	0.29	812,500	19,910	6,601,000	64,579
Visual	1.8	3.29	121,100	7,930	6,601,000	64,579
Hearing	2.3	0.13	154,500	8,950	6,601,000	64,579
Ambulatory	6.6	0.22	434,700	14,820	6,601,000	64,579
Cognitive	5.3	0.20	353,100	13,410	6,601,000	64,579
Self-Care	2.3	0.13	154,200	8,940	6,601,000	64,579
Independent Living	4.5	0.19	299,000	12,370	6,601,000	64,579

Ohio Employment Rates by Disability Type

Employment of non-institutionalized working-age people (ages 21 to 64) by disability status in Ohio in 2012

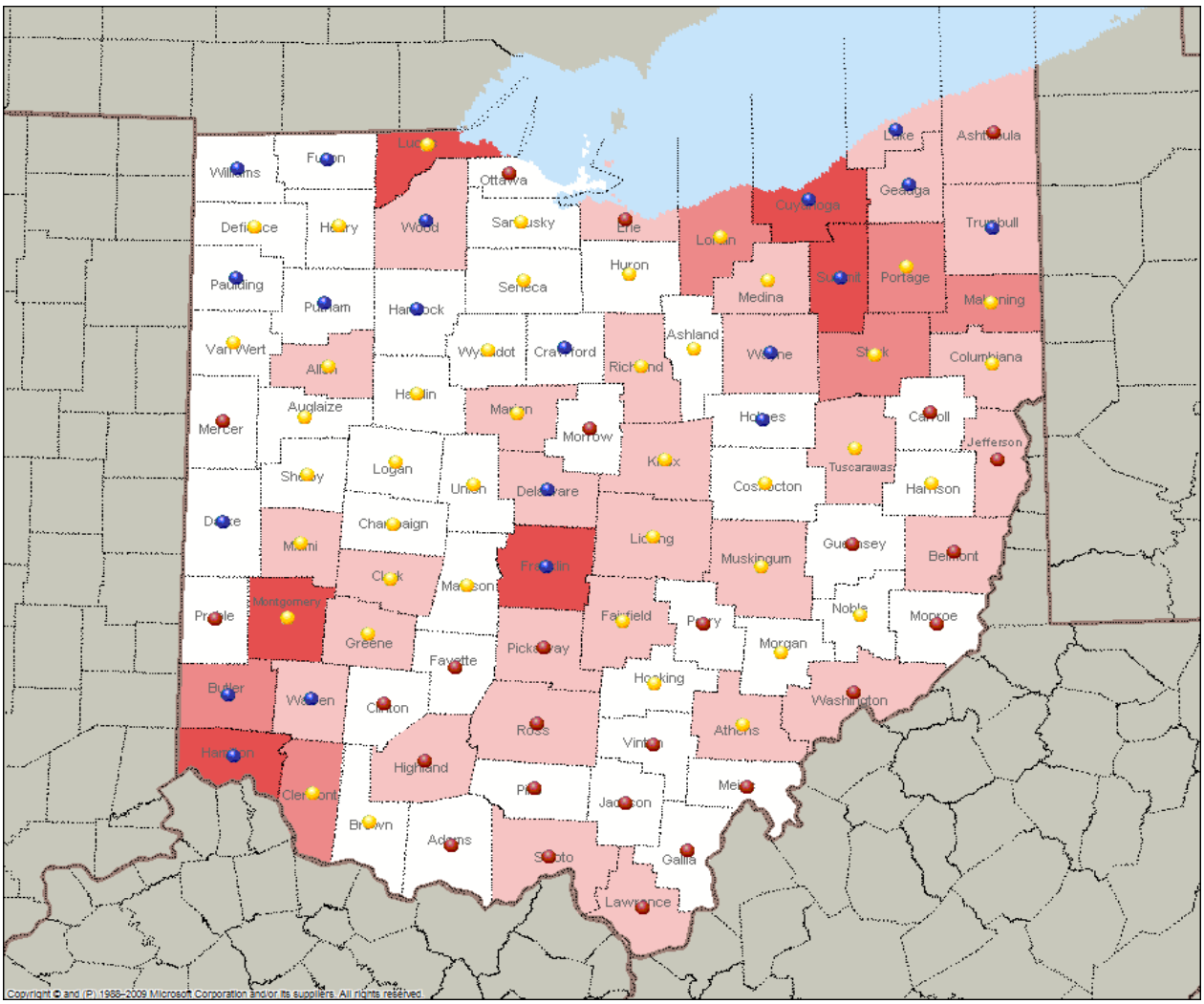


Disability Type	%	MOE	Number	MOE	Base Pop.	Sample Size
No Disability	77.2	0.40	4,470,700	37,750	5,788,600	56,194
Any Disability	32.9	1.19	267,000	11,700	812,500	8,385
Visual	36.1	3.16	43,700	4,780	121,100	1,232
Hearing	50.1	2.92	77,400	6,350	154,500	1,533
Ambulatory	23.2	1.47	100,800	7,240	434,700	4,447
Cognitive	24.2	1.65	85,400	6,670	353,100	3,690
Self-Care	16.3	2.15	25,100	3,630	154,200	1,615
Independent Living	16.6	1.56	49,700	5,090	299,000	3,184

In 2012, of working age Ohioans (21-64), the employment rate for individuals with a hearing disability was 50.1 percent and for those with a visual disability it was 36.1 percent.

Maps – Ohio County Disability Type Population and Prevalence Rates

Ohioans age 18-64 with a Hearing Disability - ACS 5-Year Estimate Total (n) = 157,951



Age 18 to 64 With a Hearing Difficulty

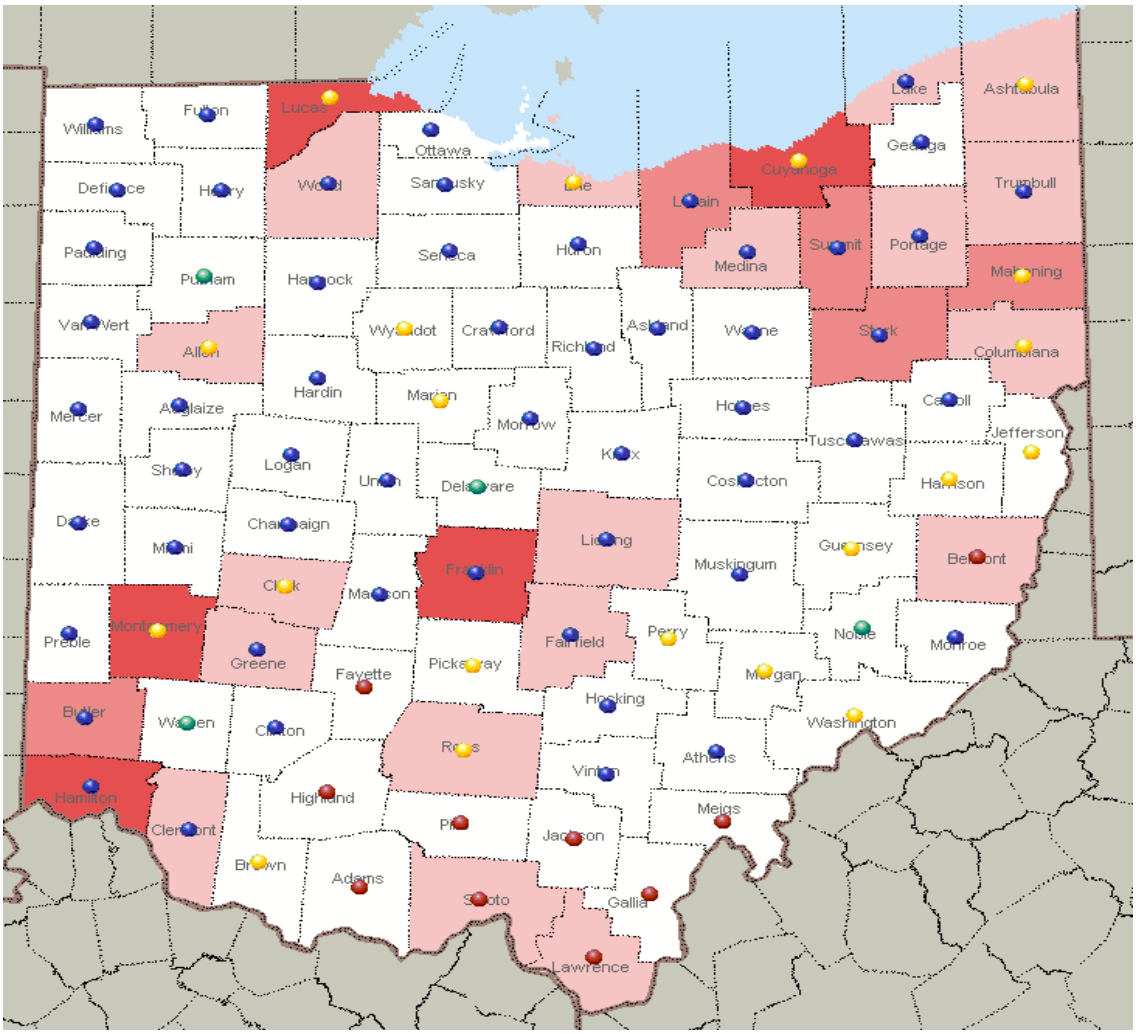
- > 5,000
- 2,501 to 5,000
- 1,001 to 2,500
- 0 to 1,000

% of Age18 to 64 With a Hearing Difficulty

- >, = 3%
- 2% to 2.9%
- 1% to 1.9%
- < 1%

According to the ACS, in 2012, there were almost 158,000 Ohioans with hearing disability. Counties in the southeast portion of the state tend to have a higher prevalence (3% or more) of their age 18-64 populations with hearing disability as compared to counties in the northwest and northeast. In the three largest metropolitan counties (Cuyahoga, Franklin, and Hamilton) the prevalence of hearing disability is between one and two percent.

Ohioans age 18-64 with a Visual Disability - ACS 5-Year Estimate Total (n) = 122,192



18 to 64 With a Vision Difficulty

- > 5,000
- 2,501 to 5,000
- 1,001 to 2,500
- 0 to 1,000

% 18 to 64 With a Vision Difficulty

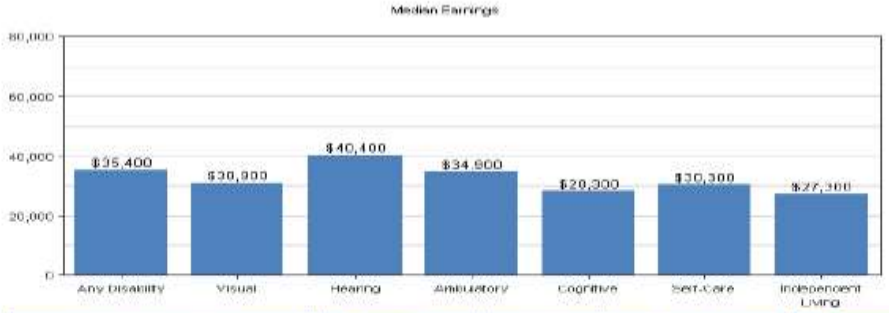
- >, = 3.0%
- 2.0% to 2.9%
- 1.0% to 1.9%
- < 1%

According to the ACS, in 2012, there were more than 122,000 Ohioans with a vision disability. Counties in the southern part of the state tend to have a higher prevalence (3% or more) of their age 18-64 populations with vision disability. The largest concentration in the numbers of individuals with vision disability is in northeast and southwest Ohio.

OHIO INCOME LEVELS AND INCOME DISPARITY FACTORS

Annual Earnings

Median annual earnings of non-institutionalized working-age people (ages 21 to 64) who work full-time/full-year by disability status in Ohio in 2012

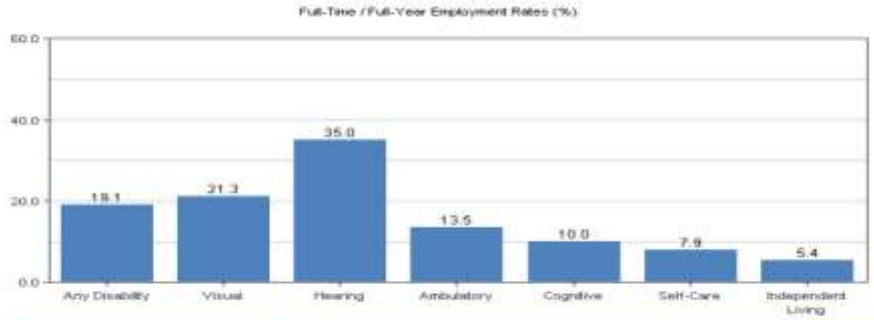


Disability Type	Median Earnings	MOE	Base Pop.	Sample Size
No Disability	$40,700	$460	3,302,000	31,917
Any Disability	$35,400	$1,780	155,000	1,511
Visual	$30,900	$4,320	26,000	247
Hearing	$40,400	$3,520	54,000	542
Ambulatory	$34,900	$3,010	59,000	564
Cognitive	$28,300	$3,000	35,000	324
Self-Care	$30,300	$6,730	12,000	125
Independent Living	$27,300	$5,120	16,000	172

Income disparity for Ohio's full-time workers with a visual disability is more significant than for those individuals with a hearing disability; their median earnings are almost 25 percent less than it is for individuals without a disability. Median earnings for individuals with a hearing disability are almost equivalent to those individuals without a disability.

Full-Time versus Part-Time Employment

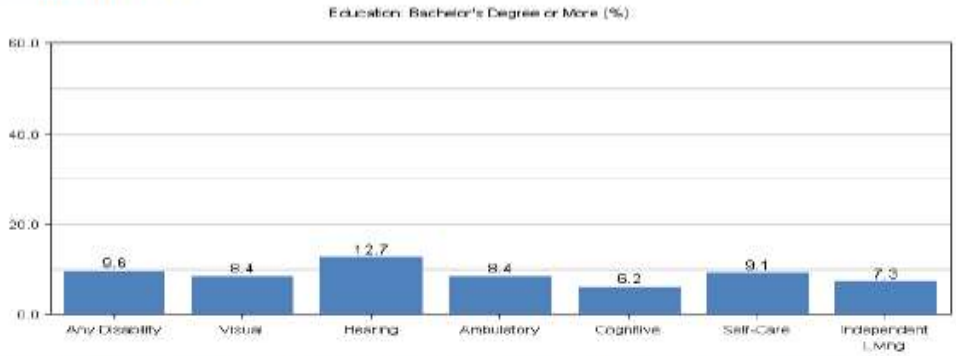
Full-Time/Full-Year employment of non-institutionalized working-age people (ages 21 to 64) by disability status in Ohio in 2012



Disability Type	%	MOE	Number	MOE	Base Pop.	Sample Size
No Disability	57.0	0.47	3,301,500	35,180	5,788,600	56,194
Any Disability	19.1	1.00	155,100	8,960	812,500	8,385
Visual	21.3	2.70	25,800	3,680	121,100	1,232
Hearing	35.0	2.78	54,000	5,310	154,500	1,533
Ambulatory	13.5	1.19	58,600	5,530	434,700	4,447
Cognitive	10.0	1.16	35,200	4,290	353,100	3,690
Self-Care	7.9	1.57	12,200	2,530	154,200	1,615
Independent Living	5.4	0.95	16,200	2,920	299,000	3,184

Income Disparity – Education and Full-Time v Part-Time Employment

Percentage of non-institutionalized working-age people (ages 21 to 64) with a Bachelor's degree or more by disability status in Ohio in 2012



Disability Type	%	MOE	Number	MOE	Base Pop.	Sample Size
No Disability	28.9	0.43	1,675,300	27,420	5,788,600	56,194
Any Disability	9.6	0.75	77,700	6,370	812,500	8,385
Visual	8.4	1.83	10,200	2,310	121,100	1,232
Hearing	12.7	1.94	19,600	3,200	154,500	1,533
Ambulatory	8.4	0.96	36,400	4,370	434,700	4,447
Cognitive	6.2	0.93	22,000	3,390	353,100	3,690
Self-Care	9.1	1.68	14,100	2,720	154,200	1,615
Independent Living	7.3	1.09	21,700	3,380	299,000	3,184

Table 1

Comparison of school attainment of D/HH individuals in 1972 and 2010.

EDUCATION LEVEL	1972[1]	2010[2]
No High School Diploma	53.3%	20.1%
High School Diploma	34.7%	33.0%
Some College	5.6%	23.5%
College Graduate	6.4%	23.3%

[1] From Schein & Delk (1974) p. 58.
[2] Calculated from American Community Survey (2010) using DataFerrett.

The table above is from an article from the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, titled 'The Effect of Education on the Occupational Status of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing 26-64 Year Olds' – by Gerard Walter and Richard Dirmeyer.

Literature documenting the economic status of deaf and hard-of-hearing persons in the United States has consistently indicated that these disabled persons are underemployed and earn significantly less than their hearing peers. In the last quarter of the 20th century federal legislation sought to eliminate discrimination based on disability, by requiring reasonable accommodations in school and in the workplace. One result of this legislation has been increased access by deaf and hard-of-hearing persons to colleges and universities in the United States. This paper reviews the literature on employment of persons who are deaf or hard of hearing and reports results using the 2010 American Community Survey. Results indicate that there have been significant gains in college attendance and graduation during the last third of the 20th century and those individuals who attain a college degree realize significant economic benefits, through increased employment and earnings, when compared with individuals who have not graduated. It also appears from this study that college graduation aids in reducing, but not eliminating, the gap between the earnings of deaf and hard of hearing persons who have a college degree and hearing persons who have a college degree.

OOD - Education, Income, and SSI/SSDI Benefits

Education Level and Hourly Wage/Hours Worked of OOD Cases Successfully Employed - October 2010 to May 2014

Education Level	Visual Impairments*					Hearing Impairments*					ALL*				
	Cases	% of Cases	Avg Hourly Wage	Avg Hours Week	Annual	Cases	% of Cases	Avg Hourly Wage	Avg Hours Week	Annual	Cases	% of Cases	Avg Hourly Wage	Avg Hours Week	Annual
ALL															
Master's degree or higher	117	10.1%	$23.2	31.3	$37,794	67	6.3%	$25.2	36.3	$47,639	405	3.2%	$21.0	32.9	$35,839
Bachelor's degree	222	19.2%	$16.0	33.9	$28,217	170	16.1%	$16.8	33.7	$29,444	1,321	10.4%	$14.4	32.2	$24,036
AA degree or VoTec Certificate	169	14.6%	$13.6	31.0	$21,924	158	15.0%	$14.1	33.3	$24,368	1,534	12.1%	$12.0	31.4	$19,563
Post-secondary education, no degree	196	17.0%	$11.7	31.7	$19,324	163	15.4%	$12.9	34.6	$23,229	1,759	13.8%	$10.5	29.8	$16,323
High school graduate or equivalency	369	31.9%	$11.0	32.0	$18,246	420	39.8%	$11.2	31.0	$18,016	5,635	44.4%	$9.1	27.3	$12,976
Elementary education (grades 1-8)	8	0.7%	$10.6	30.9	$17,002	4	0.4%	$14.0	31.3	$22,827	117	0.9%	$8.9	26.1	$12,090
Secondary education, no HS diploma	69	6.0%	$10.1	30.0	$15,811	58	5.5%	$9.8	28.7	$14,555	1,500	11.8%	$8.7	26.0	$11,795
No Formal Schooling	1	0.1%	$7.7	12.0	$4,805	3	0.3%	$8.1	33.3	$14,040	17	0.1%	$8.6	21.6	$9,648
Special Ed (completion or attendance	5	0.4%	$9.1	24.2	$11,464	13	1.2%	$8.1	24.5	$10,323	413	3.3%	$8.2	22.5	$9,599
Grand Total	**1,156**	**100.0%**	**$13.6**	**31.9**	**$22,613**	**1,056**	**100.0%**	**$13.6**	**32.5**	**$22,898**	**12,701**	**100.0%**	**$10.5**	**28.5**	**$15,583**
* excludes 'RSA Special Occupations and Miscellaneous' because includes Homemaker Cases															
SSI Allowed Benefits at Time of Case Closure															
Master's degree or higher	12	7.7%	$14.7	27.8	$21,249	5	4.2%	$18.1	28.4	$26,798	39	1.8%	$15.8	27.6	$22,760
Bachelor's degree	22	14.1%	$12.4	33.7	$21,728	18	15.0%	$13.8	31.9	$22,840	140	6.5%	$11.7	28.6	$17,394
AA degree or VoTec Certificate	14	9.0%	$10.0	25.4	$13,144	11	9.2%	$10.0	27.3	$14,138	126	5.8%	$10.2	26.8	$14,173
Post-secondary education, no degree	32	20.5%	$10.7	29.6	$16,463	8	6.7%	$9.4	28.4	$13,921	206	9.5%	$9.3	26.0	$12,552
Secondary education, no HS diploma	14	9.0%	$9.3	21.1	$10,170	13	10.8%	$9.4	25.3	$12,371	363	16.8%	$8.3	22.2	$9,630
Elementary education (grades 1-8)	2	1.3%	$7.9	16.0	$6,573		0.0%			$0	22	1.0%	$8.3	18.9	$8,135
High school graduate or equivalency	56	35.9%	$9.0	25.9	$12,068	59	49.2%	$8.5	26.8	$11,887	1,098	50.7%	$8.3	21.6	$9,279
Special Ed (completion or attendance	4	2.6%	$9.4	22.3	$10,890	6	5.0%	$7.9	19.2	$7,857	169	7.8%	$8.1	20.7	$8,694
No Formal Schooling		0.0%			$0		0.0%			$0	3	0.1%	$7.9	24.3	$9,996
Grand Total	**156**	**100.0%**	**$10.4**	**27.2**	**$14,655**	**120**	**100.0%**	**$10.0**	**27.3**	**$14,121**	**2,166**	**100.0%**	**$8.8**	**22.9**	**$10,506**
SSDI Allowed Benefits at Time of Case Closure															
Master's degree or higher	22	7.4%	$18.1	28.3	$26,628	2	1.0%	$10.7	36.5	$20,337	91	3.6%	$15.6	28.9	$23,487
Bachelor's degree	58	19.5%	$12.8	26.9	$17,937	24	12.3%	$13.9	29.8	$21,526	314	12.5%	$12.1	25.6	$16,104
AA degree or VoTec Certificate	55	18.5%	$11.5	24.4	$14,556	28	14.4%	$10.4	28.7	$15,581	385	15.3%	$11.2	24.9	$14,566
Post-secondary education, no degree	59	19.9%	$11.5	27.7	$16,601	28	14.4%	$9.6	26.3	$13,149	433	17.2%	$9.8	24.3	$12,357
High school graduate or equivalency	91	30.6%	$9.2	27.5	$13,146	103	52.8%	$9.3	24.8	$11,986	1,006	39.9%	$8.9	22.9	$10,585
Elementary education (grades 1-8)		0.0%			$0	1	0.5%	$7.9	15.0	$6,123	24	1.0%	$8.8	20.7	$9,509
Secondary education, no HS diploma	11	3.7%	$9.8	25.3	$12,865	7	3.6%	$9.5	26.7	$13,145	179	7.1%	$8.8	22.8	$10,428
Special Ed (completion or attendance)		0.0%			$0	2	1.0%	$8.1	22.5	$9,448	85	3.4%	$8.3	17.6	$7,553
No Formal Schooling	1	0.3%	$7.7	12.0	NA		0.0%			$0	5	0.2%	$8.2	19.2	$8,207
Grand Total	**297**	**100.0%**	**$11.5**	**26.8**	**$15,961**	**195**	**100.0%**	**$10.1**	**26.3**	**$13,776**	**2,522**	**100.0%**	**$10.0**	**23.8**	**$12,386**

***Note**: 40 (9%) Visually Impaired Cases and 33 (10%) of Hearing Impaired Cases received both SSI and SSDI benefits and are repeated in both tables.*

Not a Recipient of SSI / SSDI Benefits at Time of Case Closure															
Master's degree or higher	86	11.6%	$25.4	32.6	$42,972	60	7.8%	$26.3	37.0	$50,560	290	3.4%	$23.1	34.6	$41,475
Bachelor's degree	148	19.9%	$17.7	36.7	$33,700	134	17.3%	$17.6	34.4	$31,506	929	10.9%	$15.3	34.7	$27,618
AA degree or VoTec Certificate	109	14.7%	$14.8	34.3	$26,399	124	16.0%	$15.1	34.6	$27,111	1,074	12.6%	$12.3	33.9	$21,715
Post-secondary education, no degree	112	15.1%	$12.0	34.2	$21,407	131	16.9%	$13.7	36.5	$26,063	1,188	13.9%	$10.9	32.2	$18,306
High school graduate or equivalency	235	31.6%	$12.0	34.8	$21,802	275	35.5%	$12.3	34.1	$21,905	3,773	44.1%	$9.4	29.8	$14,562
Elementary education (grades 1-8)	6	0.8%	$11.5	35.8	$21,403	3	0.4%	$16.1	36.7	$30,723	77	0.9%	$9.1	29.6	$14,021
No Formal Schooling		0.0%			$0	3	0.4%	$8.1	33.3	$14,040	9	0.1%	$9.0	22.0	$10,335
Secondary education, no HS diploma	46	6.2%	$10.5	33.2	$18,218	39	5.0%	$10.1	30.8	$16,195	1,019	11.9%	$8.8	27.8	$12,776
Special Ed (completion or attendance	1	0.1%	$7.9	32.0	$13,146	5	0.6%	$8.4	31.6	$13,819	190	2.2%	$8.2	25.4	$10,864
Grand Total	**743**	**100.0%**	**$15.0**	**34.7**	**$27,054**	**774**	**100.0%**	**$14.9**	**34.7**	**$26,827**	**8,549**	**100.0%**	**$11.0**	**31.0**	**$17,712**

The tables above represent the subset of OOD served individuals who reported a visual or hearing impairment as their primary disability and who exited Ohio's Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program with a successful employment outcome, between October 2010 and May 2014. This data supports the summary findings of the Walter and Dirmeyer report.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) may also be contributing factors in income earned from a job and whether individuals pursue part-time versus full-time employment; i.e. of OOD consumers that attained employment but are still receiving SSI/SSDI benefits, tend to work less hours earn less income from their job, than individuals who are not receiving SSI/SSDI benefits. In addition, the average hourly wage, of individuals that work more hours, is higher than those who work less (part-time) hours; this further exacerbates the income gap.

SSI/SSDI Benefit Program Impact and Quick Facts

Fast Facts and Figures about Social Security,
http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/chartbooks/fast_facts/2013/fast_facts13.pdf

Table 2.
Social Security benefits, May 2014

Type of beneficiary	Beneficiaries		Total monthly benefits (millions of dollars)	Average monthly benefit (dollars)
	Number (thousands)	Percent		
Total	58,586	100.0	69,518	1,186.60
Old-Age and Survivors Insurance	47,581	81.2	58,568	1,230.90
Retirement benefits	41,381	70.6	51,849	1,252.96
Retired workers	38,441	65.6	49,939	1,299.13
Spouses of retired workers	2,293	3.9	1,499	653.55
Children of retired workers	647	1.1	411	634.74
Survivor benefits	6,200	10.6	6,719	1,083.68
Children of deceased workers	1,938	3.3	1,582	816.72
Widowed mothers and fathers	144	0.2	131	909.71
Nondisabled widow(er)s	3,859	6.6	4,820	1,248.87
Disabled widow(er)s	258	0.4	184	714.56
Parents of deceased workers	1	(L)	1	1,099.04
Disability Insurance	11,005	18.8	10,950	995.05
Disabled workers	8,947	15.3	10,250	1,145.60
Spouses of disabled workers	154	0.3	47	307.42
Children of disabled workers	1,904	3.2	653	342.98

SOURCE: Social Security Administration, Master Beneficiary Record, 100 percent data.

NOTE: (L) = less than 0.05 percent.

CONTACT: (410) 965-0090 or statistics@ssa.gov.

Table 3.
Supplemental Security Income recipients, May 2014

Age	Recipients		Total payments [a] (millions of dollars)	Average monthly payment [b] (dollars)
	Number (thousands)	Percent		
All recipients	8,384	100.0	4,741	536.75
Under 18	1,312	15.7	880	645.76
18–64	4,949	59.0	2,945	553.58
65 or older	2,122	25.3	916	430.44

SOURCE: Social Security Administration, Supplemental Security Record, 100 percent data.

a. Includes retroactive payments.

b. Excludes retroactive payments.

CONTACT: (410) 965-0090 or statistics@ssa.gov.

In the year 2012, of non-institutionalized Ohioans aged 21 to 64 years, an estimated 19.5 percent (plus or minus 2.61 percentage points) with a visual disability and 13.7 percent (plus or minus 2.00 percentage points) with a hearing disability received SSI benefits. ***(www.disabilitystatistics.org – ACS Supplemental Security Income query)***

Per the SSA's '2014 Red Book', http://www.ssa.gov/redbook/documents/TheRedBook2014.pdf, Ohio's 2014 SSI threshold eligibility amount is $36,063. The "threshold amount" is the measure that the Social Security Administration uses to decide whether earnings are high enough to replace SSI and Medicaid benefits. The threshold amount is based on:

The amount of earnings that would cause SSI cash payments to stop and
The average annual per capita Medicaid expenditure for Ohio.

If gross earnings are higher than the threshold amount an individual may still be eligible if they have:

Impairment-related work expenses (see **page 19 of 2014 Redbook**);
Blind work expenses (see **page 45 of 2014 Redbook**);
A Plan to Achieve Self-Support (see **page 22 of 2014 Redbook**);
Publicly funded attendant or personal care; or
Medical expenses above the state per capita amount.

OCCUPATIONS AND EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

OOD – Successful Employment Outcomes by Major Standard Occupation Code (SOC)

OOD Successfully Employed by Occupation*
October 2010 - May 2014

Major SOC Category Description	OOD Visually Impaired	Average Hr. Wage
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	280	$11.20
Sales and Related Occupations	81	$10.61
Education, Training and Library Occupations	79	$18.11
Production Occupations	76	$10.13
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occu	67	$9.43
Community and Social Services Occupations	66	$15.22
Management Occupations	63	$17.36
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	63	$9.17
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	54	$11.59
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	52	$23.77
Healthcare Support Occupations	48	$15.00
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	39	$15.76
Personal Care and Service Occupations	36	$9.62
Installation, Maintenance and Repair Occupations	36	$13.31
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occ	29	$16.49
Construction and Extraction Occupations	22	$15.55
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	21	$21.04
Legal Occupations	14	$31.27
Protective Service Occupations	11	$9.24
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	9	$21.77
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	5	$22.44
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	3	$31.13
Farming, Fishing and Forestry Occupations	2	$9.84
Grand Total	**1156**	**$13.62**

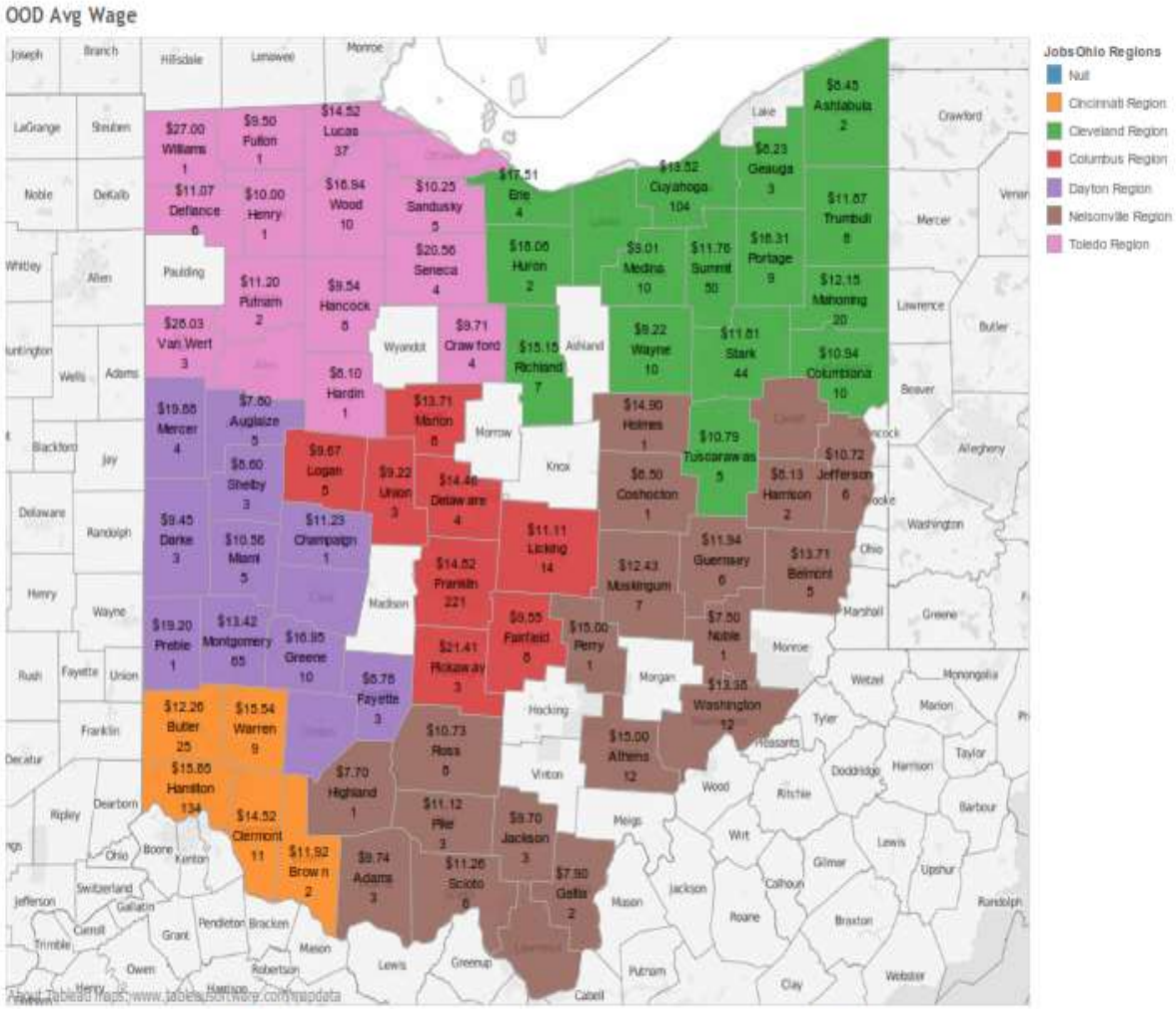
Major SOC Category Description	OOD Hearing Impaired	Average Hr. Wage
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	217	$11.31
Production Occupations	100	$11.65
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occu	75	$9.29
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	72	$13.22
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	64	$8.43
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	63	$22.23
Personal Care and Service Occupations	61	$9.52
Education, Training and Library Occupations	59	$19.06
Installation, Maintenance and Repair Occupations	51	$12.20
Sales and Related Occupations	49	$11.70
Management Occupations	41	$19.67
Community and Social Services Occupations	36	$14.69
Healthcare Support Occupations	34	$11.57
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occ	29	$15.48
Construction and Extraction Occupations	21	$16.89
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	19	$23.53
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	18	$25.01
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	16	$17.61
Protective Service Occupations	15	$19.73
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	7	$14.29
Legal Occupations	4	$12.35
Farming, Fishing and Forestry Occupations	3	$10.10
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	2	$16.54
Grand Total	**1056**	**$13.57**

* excludes 'RSA Special Occupations and Miscellaneous'

When evaluating where OOD has been traditionally successful in assisting individuals in finding a job, occupations that require less education have resulted in a higher volume of placements. However, those occupations pay significantly less than occupations requiring a technical or college degree.

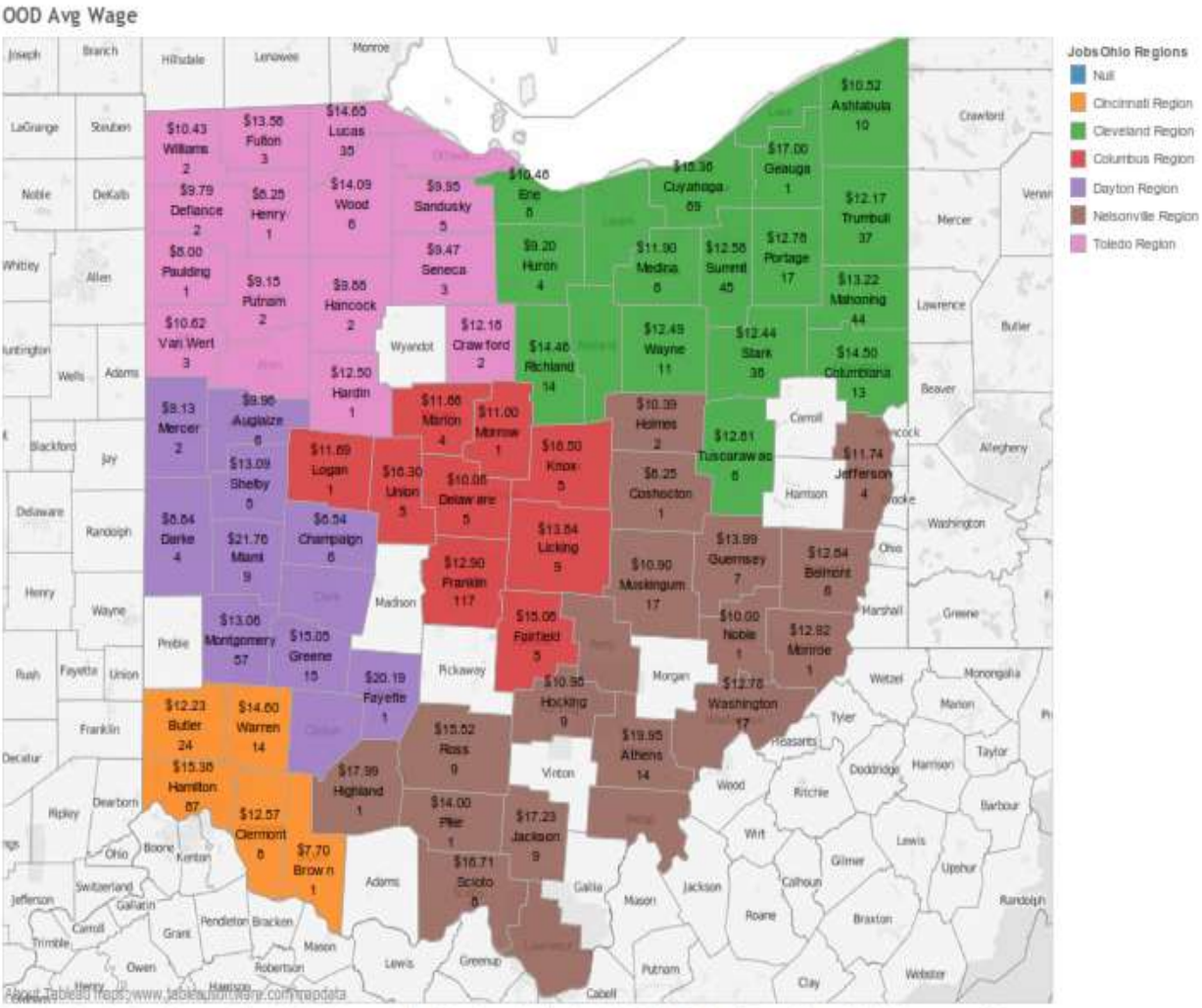
OOD – Successful Employment October by Jobs Ohio Regions (October 2010– June 2014)

Visually Impaired – All Occupations – Number Employed and Average Wage by County



Map based on Longitude (generated) and Latitude (generated). Color shows details about JobsOhio Regions. The marks are labeled by average of Employ_Hourly_Wage_Calc, County_Name and distinct count of Case_Master_ID. Details are shown for County_Name. The data is filtered on FY Successful Rehabs, Primary Disab and Occupational Title. The FY Successful Rehabs filter keeps Null, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014. The Primary Disab filter keeps Visual Impairments. The Occupational Title filter keeps 23 of 23 members.

Hearing Impaired – All Occupations – Number Employed and Average Wage by County



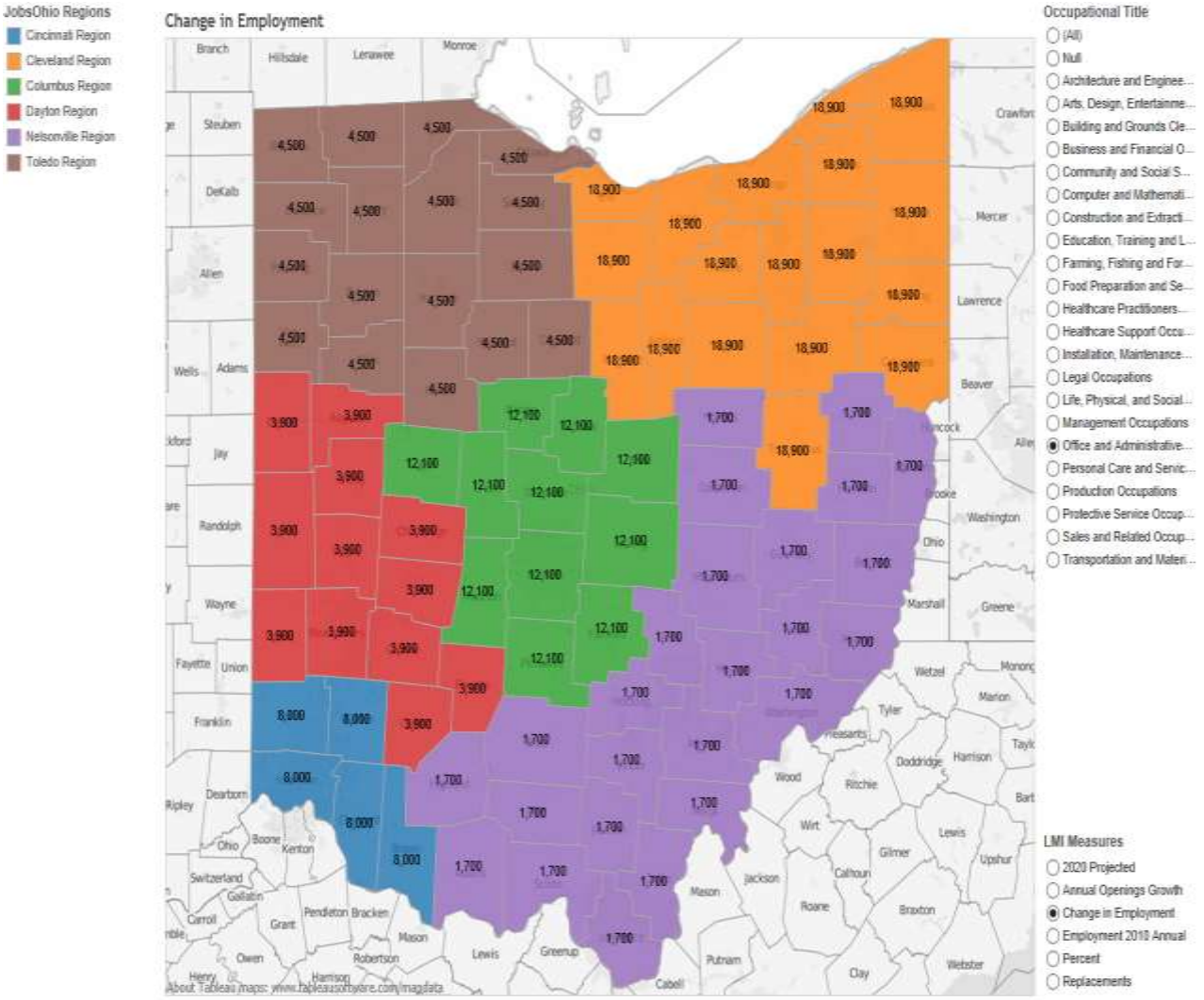
Map based on Longitude (generated) and Latitude (generated). Color shows details about JobsOhio Regions. The marks are labeled by average of Employ_Hourly_Wage_Calc, County_Name and distinct count of Case_Master_ID. Details are shown for County_Name. The data is filtered on FY Successful Rehabs, Primary Disab and Occupational Title. The FY Successful Rehabs filter keeps Null, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014. The Primary Disab filter keeps Hearing Impairments. The Occupational Title filter keeps 23 of 23 members.

Ohio's Labor Market Information and Projections

Employment projections are updated every two years by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services' Bureau of Labor Market Information. The projections are widely used for studying long-range economic and employment trends, planning education and training programs, and developing career information. The latest edition, http://ohiolmi.com/proj/OhioJobOutlook.htm, uses employment statistics through 2010 as a foundation to project employment conditions for the 10-year period ending in 2020.

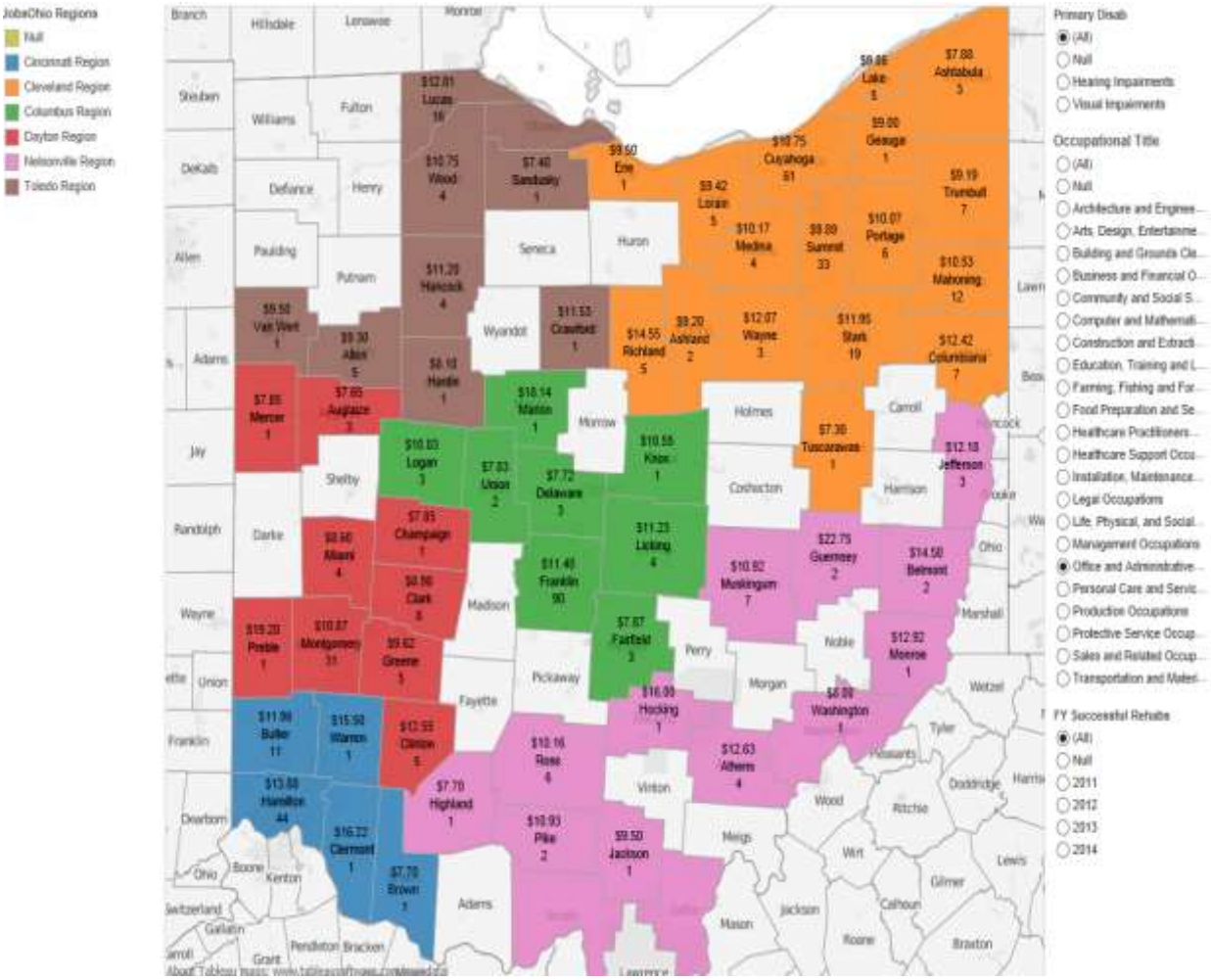
For Ohio's six JobsOhio Network Regions, the difference between 2010 and 2020 projected change in employment ranges from 25,000 in the Nelsonville Region to 186,100 in the Cleveland Region. The largest increase is projected in the Columbus Region, at 10.7 percent, followed by the Cincinnati Region at 10.3 percent. The Cleveland Region matched the statewide average for projected employment change at 9.3 percent. Regions where projected change fell below the state average were Toledo Region at 8.5 percent, Dayton Region at 8.3 percent, and Nelsonville Region at 7.5 percent.

From October 2010–May 2014, OOD has realized the greatest success in helping individuals with visual and hearing impairments find and retain employment in 'office and administrative support' occupations. The map below demonstrates the projected labor market change through 2020, that indicates an across the board increase in the number of jobs specific to this occupation, by Ohio region. *Note: Labor Market Information (LMI) occupation market change data is only available at a regional level, not by county, thus the numbers on the map represent the total number by region, not for each county.*



The map on the next page shows the county of residence of individuals OOD has assisted, with hearing and visual impairments, along with their average hourly wage specific to 'office and administrative support' occupations. Although the forecast LMI map indicates that more openings are projected in the Toledo Region versus the Dayton Region, the OOD data indicates that from October 2010-May 2014 that almost twice as many OOD served individuals with visual and hearing impairments were placed in the Dayton Region versus the Toledo Region. This is just one example of data analysis that is available to the Task Force and can be explored for each major occupation; especially those occupations that have resulted in successful employment outcomes.

OOD Average Wage -



BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

Barriers to employment for persons with a disability – Survey Statistics

MAY 22, 2013 - HTTP://WWW.BLS.GOV/OPUB/TED/2013/TED_20130522.HTM

"Half of the 23.1 million men and women with a disability who were not employed in May 2012 reported at least one barrier to employment. When asked to identify barriers they had encountered, most reported that their own disability was a barrier to employment (80.5 percent).

Persons with a disability 16 years and over who were not employed with a barrier to employment by age, sex, and type of barrier, May 2012

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Persons with a disability 16 years and over who were not employed with a barrier to employment by age, sex, and type of barrier, May 2012

Characteristic	Percent of total not employed with a barrier to employment by type of barrier							
	Loss of government assistance	Lack of job counseling	Employer or coworker attitudes	Need for special features at the job	Lack of transport-ation	Lack of education or training	Own disability	Other
Total, 16 years and over	4.2	5.7	7.9	10.3	11.7	14.1	80.5	18.0
16 to 64 years	5.0	7.0	9.7	12.3	14.3	16.5	83.5	15.1
65 years and over	2.6	2.6	4.1	5.9	5.9	8.6	74.1	24.4
Men	4.3	6.7	7.7	9.9	11.5	14.6	81.9	16.7
Women	4.2	4.8	8.1	10.7	11.8	13.6	79.5	19.1

NOTE: Percents may sum to more than 100 percent because persons with a disability were able to report more than one barrier to employment.

Other barriers cited included lack of education or training (14.1 percent), lack of transportation (11.7 percent), and the need for special features at the job (10.3 percent). A greater proportion of persons ages 16 to 64 reported a barrier to employment than those age 65 and over, perhaps reflecting the fact that older workers are, in general, less likely to participate in the labor force. Among persons with a disability age 25 and over, a smaller proportion of persons with a college degree who were not employed reported a barrier to employment than those with less than a high school diploma."

Barriers to employment for persons with a disability – Literature Review

Barriers to employment can be thought of as falling into three broad groups: personal, societal, and programmatic (O'Day, 1999).

Personal barriers are connected to the individual seeking work. These can include the person's disability or disabilities; lack of education or educational weaknesses; lack of work experience or marketable skills; lack of or poor social interaction and communication skills; lack of knowledge or motivation for a job search, and so on (O'Day, 1999). Some personal barriers may have roots outside of the individual. For example, students with disabilities may have received inadequate career guidance or negative feedback that which may later affect their abilities and motivation for a job search (O'Day, 1999; Riesen, Morgan, Schultz, & Kupferman, 2014). Those unsuccessful in the search for work may stopping looking for work and lose hope of finding work (O'Day, 1999).

A second group of barriers are societal (O'Day, 1999). These barriers are external to individuals or their disabilities and cannot be 'overcome' by the individual's own efforts. Societal barriers include negative public attitudes about disabilities, social stigma, discrimination, the lack of access to technology, and the lack of public transportation. Blind and visually impaired individuals may face issues with transportation. Local areas may not have adequate public transportation, work sites or work schedules may not be convenient to public transportation, and travel times may be prohibitively long (O'Day, 1999). Negative attitudes toward disabilities, including limited expectations about the ability to perform a job, are a commonly mentioned major barrier to finding and keeping a job. For example, McDonnall and colleagues (McDonnall, O'Mally, & Crudden, 2014) found that employers often have limited or no knowledge of how a blind or visually impaired person might perform routine job tasks. Participants in one study felt employers had difficulty in sorting out job qualifications from disabilities (O'Day, 1999). Those participants felt the need for accommodation was a barrier to employment, and participants that had been employed in the past had few or no accommodations.

Communication difficulties may be a major barrier for deaf workers, and they may be located with the individual, the employment site, and service agencies (Luft, 2000). Many deaf individuals rely on American Sign Language and are not fluent in English. This may limit the ability to take advantage of emerging technologies in the workplace. Luft (2000) identified six areas in which there could be communications difficulties in dealing with deaf workers: job training, socializing with coworkers, internal meetings, work-related social functions, receiving work instruction and supervision, and performance evaluation. Luft (2000) noted that those dealing with deaf workers need communication competency and cultural knowledge, particularly members of the Deaf Community.

Kaye, Jans, and Jones (2011) examined attitudes among HR professionals and supervisors at companies that had been identified as resistant to hiring persons with disabilities. Common reasons companies might not hire persons with disabilities included: the cost of accommodations, lack of awareness in how to deal with workers with disabilities and their accommodation needs, fear of being stuck with a worker who cannot be disciplined or fired because of a possible lawsuit, difficultly an assessing an applicant's ability to perform job tasks, concerns over supervisory time, concerns over work quality, lack of job candidates with disabilities, and a perception that workers with disabilities cannot perform essential job duties. Common reasons companies might not retain workers with disabilities included: lack of awareness as how to handle workers' needs, concern that workers with disabilities will become legal or financial liabilities, concern over the cost of accommodations, concerns over job performance, difficulty in assessing whether the worker can do the job, belief the person cannot do the jobs, and belief that workers developing disabilities become less dependable.

Cornell University's Employment and Disability Institute surveyed HR professionals about barriers to employment for people with disabilities (Erickson, 2013). Commonly mentioned barriers included a lack of qualified candidates, a lack of skills and training on the part of individuals with disabilities, and lack of related

experience. Other barriers included a lack of supervisor knowledge about accommodations and attitudes and stereotypes of those in the workplace. About 20 percent of those responding mentioned the cost of accommodations.

A third set of barriers are programmatic. SSI and SSDI policies and the perceptions and attitudes of SSA staff make it difficult for those receiving benefits to work or return to work (O'Day, 1999). Working too much may result in loss of benefits. When work affects benefits, it may take months for changes to be processed, which may result in over payments that must be repaid.

The U.S. General Accountability Office (2010) conducted a forum (which also used survey responses) on actions that could increase work participation for adults with disabilities. Responses focused on individuals with disabilities, employers, and Federal programs. In terms of individuals with disabilities, forum participants wanted policies that improved incentives for individuals with disabilities to work while strengthening supports and services on which they depend. Other suggestions include tax incentives to individuals and promotion of a team approach to help individuals stay at or return to work.

When it came to employers, participants in the GAO forum proposed two different policy approaches aimed at employers. One approach focused on an information campaign to raise employer awareness of the financial benefits (rather than legal responsibilities) of retaining employees with disabilities or returning them to work. Such a plan would be more accepted if it came from a well-known private research organization and not a federal agency or a non-profit working with persons with disabilities. Information on the financial benefits of retaining workers with disabilities should be distributed through a strategic and coordinated marketing plan. However, participants noted an information campaign alone might not be enough, that a campaign might have negative effects for individuals with certain disabilities, and the part information campaigns have had limited success.

A second employer approach would increase incentives to employers by increasing employers' financial responsibility for employees who exit the workforce. Employers who are less successful at retaining employees with disabilities might pay higher payroll taxes. Employers would be required to provide disability benefits for an extended period if employees' disabilities prevented them from performing their job duties. Participants noted this approach could create incentives for employees to avoid job candidates with greater risk of experiencing work disabilities, increased privacy concerned related to employer involvement in employee healthcare, and the difficulty in establishing experience-based payroll taxes for business.

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Luft, P. (2000). Communication barriers for deaf employees: Needs assessment and problem-solving strategies. *Work, 14*, 51-59.

McDonnall, M. C., O'Mally, J., & Crudden, A. (2014, May-June). Employer Knowledge of and Attitudes Toward Employees Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired. *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, 213-225.

O'Day, B. (1999, October). Employment Barriers for People with Visual Impairments. *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness, 93*(10).

Riesen, T., Morgan, R., Schultz, J., & Kupferman, S. (2014). School-to-Work Barriers as Identified by Special Educators, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, and Community Rehabilitation Professionals. *Journal of Rehabiliation, 80*(1), 33-44.

U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2010). *Highlights of a GAO Forum: Actions that Could Increase Work Participation for Adults with Disabilities.* Washington, D.C.

Workforce Integration Task Force – Data and Information Resources

Workforce Integration Task Force – Data and Information Resources

Source	Findings	Task Force Value
ACS 5 Year Estimates – Including Survey Definition of Disability Questions	All counties available; Employment status; Class of worker; Occupation; Industry; Commuting to Work; Educational Attainment; Earnings; Poverty Status	High
Ohio Labor Market Information http://ohiolmi.com/proj/OhioJobOutlook.htm	The Ohio Job Outlook includes industry and occupational employment projections for Ohio, the six regions of the JobsOhio Network	High
Social Security http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/2.00-SpecialSensesandSpeech-Adult.htm	Statutory definitions of blindness and deafness	High
Ohio Department of Public Safety http://bmv.ohio.gov/dl_vision_screening_areas.stm	Definition/guidelines of vision adequate for get drivers licenses	High
Ohio Vocational Rehabilitation Case Management System (AWARE)	Comprehensive Disability Type and County level information, including occupations, wages, education attainment, etc. for all successful closures for the past five years (this data is most reliable from October 2010).	High
RSA 911 2012 https://rsa.ed.gov/view.cfm?rsaform=ARR&state=OH&fy=2012&grant=H126A120052#skipnav	Income levels of those employed compared to those not yet employed. Source is from AWARE	High
Prevent Blindness http://www.visionproblemsus.org/	Vision Impairment Prevalence Rates by State. Some county information available.	High
2012 RSC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment - Ohio	Among other, includes discussion of barriers to employment.	High
November 2012 National Industries of the Blind survey based from Cincinnati www.nib.org/sites/default/files/NIB%20Hiring%20Manager%20Study%20(Releasable).pdf	Views of over 400 employers nationwide on their views of work barriers. *possibly* we can get Ohio-related results.	High
Bureau of Labor Statistics http://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2013/ted_20130522.htm Employment Data on vision loss population http://www.afb.org/info/living-with-vision-loss/blindness-statistics/adults/interpreting-bls-employment-data/1234	Barriers to Employment National Employment Data Pertaining to People with Vision Loss (16 Years of Age and Over)	High

Ohio Longitudinal Transition Study http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Special-Education/Resources-for-Parents-and-Teachers-of-Students-wit/Ohio-Longitudinal-Transition-Study-OLTS	Report on special education students after high school. Looks at higher education enrollment, training program, and competitive employment.	High
2013 Disability Statistics Compendium www.Disabilitystatistics.org	National and some state-by-state comparative statistics regarding employment, income such as SSI/SSDI, and cross-disability comparisons	Medium
BLS Household data (Based on CPS) http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/dissup.pdf	Employment status by demographics and disability status; employed persons by disability and occupation; disability status by industry; disability status by full v part time work; disabled non-institutional population employment; type of disability not available; state level data is not available	Medium
Social Security Administration 2014 RED BOOK http://www.ssa.gov/redbook/documents/TheRedBook2014.pdf Fast Facts about Social Security, 2013 http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/chartbooks/fast_facts/2013/fast_facts13.pdf	A summary guide to employment supports for persons with disabilities under the social security disability insurance and supplemental security income programs Fast Facts & Figures answers the most frequently asked questions about the programs SSA administers. It highlights basic program data for the Social Security (retirement, survivors, and disability) and Supplemental Security Income programs.	
Social Security – Income of Disabled Workers http://www.socialsecurity.gov/policy/docs/chartbooks/income_workers/di_chart.pdf		Medium
BLS - Veteran Population Survey	Presence of service connected disability employment data (counts); Not available at the state level.	Medium
Center for Instructional Supports and Accessible Materials (CISAM) http://cisam.ossb.oh.gov/FederalQuota.php	County-by-county district break-down of blind/low-vision learners age 5-HS graduation by geography and by preferred learning medium (Braille, large print, and audio.) American Printing house for the Blind http://www.aph.org/federal-quota/dist11.html annual reports.	Medium
Prevent Blindness Ohio http://ohiovisionproblems.preventblindness.org/common-causes-of-visual-impairment-and-blindness/	Offers county-by-county breakdown of blind/VI adults 40 and over.	Medium

Social Security, Congressional Statistics, December 2012 - Ohio http://www.socialsecurity.gov/policy/docs/factsheets/cong_stats/2012/oh.html	Breaks down SSI/SSDI blind recipients by congressional district.	Medium
National Federation of the Blind https://nfb.org/wtbw-main	Hundreds of nation-wide Individual stories/categories of those offering their career journey and advice.	Medium
American Foundation for the Blind Career Connect http://www.afb.org/info/living-with-vision-loss/for-job-seekers/12	Hundreds of mentors nation-wide with searchable data base of those offering their career journey and advice.	Medium
Rider survey draft report from ODOT; http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?ca=10846455-ddef-4cc4-bb7c-f491c6b3be28&c=31554ea0-b9aa-11e3-bfc5-d4ae52724810&ch=32c3abb0-b9aa-11e3-805a-d4ae52724810	5,500 respondents statewide, but not disability-related, on views regarding public transit. The majority of respondents have no other means of transportation.	Medium
Ohio Department of Health: Regional Infant Hearing Program legislative report http://www.helpmegrow.ohio.gov/~/media/HelpMeGrow/ASSETS/Files/Professionals%20Gallery/Infant%20Hearing/Infant%20Hearing%20Reports/2009%20RIHP%20Report.ashx	Number and location (9 geographic regions) of infants diagnosed with hearing loss in Ohio since 2004.	Medium
Ohio Department of Education	Has data related to the number of hearing and visually impaired children in Ohio, based on school district. This information may be very difficult to obtain based on the perceived notion that releasing this data may violate FERPA.	Medium
National Technical Institute of the Deaf: Annual Report http://www.ntid.rit.edu/sites/default/files/annual_report_2013.pdf	Report produced annually. Surveys recent alumni after graduation to look at income, employment information of Deaf graduates. Includes occupational group, gender, and ethnicity information.	Medium
National Technical Institute of the Deaf: Collaboratory on Economic, Demographic, and Policy Studies http://www.ntid.rit.edu/research/collaboratory *Richard Dirmyer, NTID Senior Institutional Researcher, 585.475.7227, rcdnvd@ntid.rit.edu*	Uses info from SSA, ACS, and DOE to define the status of the population of deaf and hard of hearing. Looks beyond NTID to look at access to postsecondary education and the occupational status of deaf/hard of hearing nationally. Also looks at ethnic distribution of deaf/hard of hearing.	Medium
The Effect of Education on the Occupational Status of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing 26-64 Year Olds. Rochester, NY:	Investigates income disparity between deaf/hard of hearing and hearing population	Medium

National Technical Institute for the Deaf, Rochester Institute of Technology. http://www.ntid.rit.edu/sites/default/files/effect_of_education_on_occupational.pdf	nationally.	
Gallaudet University: Annual Survey of Recent Graduates http://www.gallaudet.edu/Documents/OIR/Alumni%20Survey/Alumni_Survey_2011_12_Report_FINAL%2009162013.pdf	Report produced annually. Surveys recent undergraduate and graduate alumni after graduation to look at income, employment information of Deaf graduates. Includes occupational group information.	Medium
National Federation of the Blind https://nfb.org/images/nfb/publications/fr/fr19/fr05si03.htm	Philosophical definition of blindness	Medium
Ohio Medicaid	Medicaid has diagnosis codes. However, they are only primary diagnosis and will not capture multiple disabilities or impairments. They also tried looking at claims data but found that to be unhelpful.	Low
CHRR – WDQI	Of the data included in WDQI only ABLE data has disability type designation. No occupation data is available in CHRR at this time.	Low
Ohio Means Jobs - OMJ	Voluntary disability designation, type not available	Low
SCOTI – JVSG	If barrier to employment is disability, type is only captured in case notes, cases could have information about accommodations for work	Low
Bureau of Worker's Compensation	Work connected disability data only	Low
PepNet2 Research Brief: Employment data for adults who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing: http://www.pepnet.org/sites/default/files/employmentbrief_v5.pdf	Uses ACS data to draw conclusions about the employment status of deaf/hard of hearing nationally.	Low
NIH: NIDCD (Statistical Report: Prevalence of Hearing Loss in US Children)	Most reports look at hearing loss as a heterogeneous group. This report breaks out hearing loss based on severity.	Low
Effect of postsecondary education on the economic status of persons who are deaf or hard of hearing, *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*. http://jdsde.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2011/02/0	Investigates the economic impact of college education for d/hoh and specifically looks at SSDI data in relation to deaf/hard of hearing.	Low

2/deafed.enq060.full.pdf+html		
Change in Prevalence of Hearing Loss in US Adolescents. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 2010; 304(7): 772 DOI: 10.1001/jama.2010.1124	Prevalence of hearing loss has increased 30% from 1988 to 2006, with 1 in 5 children having hearing loss.	Low
Association of hearing loss with decreased employment and income among adults in the United States. *Ann Otol Rhinol Laryngol*, 2012 Dec; 121(12): 771-5	Study identifies differences in employment and wage income ($7,791) for those with hearing loss with economic impact.	Low
Prevalence of hearing aid use among older adults. *Arch Internal Medicine*, 2012; 172(3): 292-293. DOI: 10.1001/archinternmed.2011.1408.	1 in 20 adults (age 50-59) use hearing aids after being prescribed them, with any social, employment, and economic impact on families.	Low
The Impact of Untreated Hearing Loss in Household Income. *Better Hearing Institute*, 2005 Aug.	Hearing loss negatively impacts household income by $12,000, but the use of hearing aids can mitigate the effects of hearing loss by half. Broader economic impact is discussed.	Low
Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation: Interpreter data	Can provide data on where Deaf BWC recipients are, including occupational codes, by pulling data related to interpreter services.	Low

Note on CPS data: The Current Population Survey (CPS) is conducted monthly by the US census Bureau for the US Department of Labor to measure various workforce conditions (this is the survey used as the basis for the monthly unemployment rate). In 2008, a set of 6 disability related questions were added to the survey. However, disability type is not collected. CPS notes the following reason (which we may want to keep in mind when we are developing any possible surveys)

"Extensive research conducted as part of the effort to include disability questions in the CPS demonstrated that it is very difficult to accurately measure all persons with disabilities using only a few questions. In like manner, research has also shown that it would be difficult to accurately identify persons with a specific type of disability using only one question. For example, questions tested during the research process that were designed to elicit positive responses from persons with one type of disability were equally likely to identify persons with other disabilities as well. (Cognitive reports that show such results are available from the BLS upon request, and from the Census Bureau's 2006 ACS Content Test Report Series, report P.4 (PDF).) Given this research and the relatively small sample size of the CPS, data users are advised to avoid using the CPS for the purpose of identifying persons with specific disabilities."