



**Opportunities for Ohioans  
with Disabilities**

**John R. Kasich, Governor**

**Kevin L. Miller, Executive Director**

# ANNUAL REPORT

FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2015

STATE FISCAL YEAR 2016

# OPPORTUNITIES FOR OHIOANS WITH DISABILITIES

## Message from the Director

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities' (OOD) approach to business is anything but usual. Our agency works hard to implement innovative strategies to ensure people with disabilities can achieve success. These strategies: Business Engagement, Employment First and Lean Six Sigma, have caught the eye of several states and we've been delighted to share our story and accomplishments with them.

OOD strives to be a leader in employer engagement and leadership. This was recently recognized when the Poses Family Foundation invited two of our Business Engagement staff to Missouri to teach business leaders and Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation staff about our successful model. OOD's participation in this strategy session was an opportunity for us to share insights and best practices to help the Missouri team identify challenges and develop a plan to achieve their programmatic goals.

The Employment First Partnership, with the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities is now a model for other states. In October, OOD was host to 10 delegates from Minnesota VR Services, Developmental Disabilities, and other partners to gain a deeper understanding of the success we have achieved. A month after the visit, which included trips to visit employers and county board partners, Minnesota launched a similar pilot in Dakota County. A Minnesota Star-Tribune article about the pilot included the following quote, "We came back from Ohio very, very excited and said, 'We can do this here!'"

OOD actively follows a Lean Six Sigma methodology to improve processes resulting in better customer service and outcomes. By adhering to this disciplined, data-driven approach, the Division of Disability Determination has been recognized as the most effective unit in our seven-state region. Representatives from 12 states have visited Ohio to learn more about our performance success and understand how we implement the standard principles of Lean in our approach to disability determinations.

All of this came about due to the hard work and dedication of our staff and partners; and through the support of Governor John Kasich and the Ohio General Assembly. We highlight these accomplishments not to pat ourselves on the back, but because we want to share the positive impact it has on thousands of Ohioans, their families and communities.

What is even more exciting is that I know we can do even better in the year to come. We will continue to challenge ourselves to reach higher and accomplish more. It is our hope that this report garners your confidence in our ability to be good stewards of your tax dollars. Ohioans with disabilities deserve nothing less.

Kevin L. Miller  
Executive Director



*Kevin L. Miller*  
*Executive Director*

# OPPORTUNITIES FOR OHIOANS WITH DISABILITIES

## Who We Are

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) is the State of Ohio agency that partners with Ohioans with disabilities to achieve quality employment and an independent life. We also are charged with making disability determinations for Ohioans applying for Social Security disability benefits.



*Central Office staff participates in 10 Million Steps to Prevent Falls on Falls Prevention Awareness Day 2015.*

OOD achieves these outcomes through three program areas: the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR), the Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired (BSVI) and the Division of Disability Determination (DDD).

Independence for all Ohioans with disabilities is the mission that unites all aspects of our work. OOD works with partners in business, education and non-profit organizations to facilitate individualized employment plans for Ohioans with disabilities; helps Ohio companies recruit and retain employees with disabilities; and is the sole agency in Ohio that administers the determination of benefits for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

The following is an overview of the accomplishments of these programs over the past year.

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## Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation

### **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act**

The enactment of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act has brought about several important changes for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program. This includes closer alignment of the VR program with Ohio's workforce system; a welcomed change that we believe will increase employment opportunities for Ohioans with disabilities. Additionally, Director Miller was appointed to the Governor's Executive Workforce Board and the VR State Plan has been incorporated into Ohio's Combined State Workforce Plan.

### **Ohio Transition Support Partnership**

In 2015, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) launched the Ohio Transition Support Partnership. This collaboration between the Ohio Department of Education and OOD, is focused on improving post-school outcomes for students with disabilities, beginning at age 14. The Ohio Transition Support Partnership is helping students with disabilities get a head start on becoming job ready and better prepared with the skills necessary to be successful in today's workforce.



*Director Kevin Miller, David Hoff and Dr. Robert Baer at the OTSP kickoff & training event in September 2015.*

We are realizing significant benefits since the inception of this partnership. OOD is serving more youth between the ages of 14 to 18 and connecting with youth at a younger age. In the first half of federal fiscal year 2016, the number of student applicants between the ages of 14 to 18 increased nearly 41 percent and the number of student applicants between the ages of 14 to 15 increased 106 percent.

The Ohio Transition Support Partnership (OTSP) funds 26 counselors and 13 caseload assistants who will serve more than 3,300 students with disabilities statewide. To date,

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they have already written nearly 1,400 Individualized Plans for Employment, of which 142 students have already obtained competitive integrated employment.

## **Employment First Partnership Serving as a Model for Other States**

Since October 2013, the Employment First partnership between Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) and the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD), has been expanding community employment services for people with developmental disabilities. Employment First counselors and regional work incentives consultants work with local county boards of DD, to support individuals who are interested in moving from facility-based settings to community employment. They can earn a competitive wage and work alongside their peers without disabilities. Since the launch of this partnership, more than 3,556 job seekers with developmental disabilities have applied for VR services and more than 2,648 Individualized Plans for Employment have been written. As a result, 900 individuals have obtained competitive, integrated employment, and of those, 700 have successfully sustained an employment outcome.



*Director John Martin, DODD; Gary Coleman, Kroger Marietta store manager; Melanie Brown, Kroger employee; and OOD Director Kevin Miller during the 2016 State of the State*

Since the launch of the partnership, OOD has significantly expanded access to VR services for individuals with developmental disabilities. In fact, in the two years since the inception of the program, OOD has seen a 52 percent increase in the number of individuals with developmental disabilities that have applied for services. The results being achieved are even more impressive. From Federal Fiscal Year 2013 to 2015, OOD counselors have increased the number successful placements from 465 to 1007, a 117 percent increase.

In October 2015, the State of Minnesota sent a 10-person cross systems delegation to Ohio to learn about the partnership agreement and they launched their pilot program on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. Other states have also inquired about the program in an effort to replicate the success achieved here in Ohio.

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## Program Performance Metrics – Federal Fiscal Year 2015

METRICS		FFY 2011	FFY 2012	FFY 2013	FFY 2014	FFY 2015	Change FFY 11 v FFY 15
Financial	COST PER SERVED (Annual In Plan Only - Case Services)		\$3,555	\$3,378	\$2,800	\$2,760	-22.4%
	COST PER EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME (Life of Case Expenditures)		\$10,190	\$10,152	\$9,773	\$8,786	-13.8%
Case Processing	WAIT LIST	4,364	2,236	1,393	704	0	-100.0%
	RELEASED FROM WAIT LIST (Significant Disabilities & Disabilities)	1,750	5,250	5,600	4,333	697	17,630 Total
	AVERAGE TIME TO ELIGIBILITY DECISION (Days from Application)	92	77	73	48	36	-61.0%
	ELIGIBILITY DECISIONS MADE	15,122	16,274	17,086	17,016	17,887	18.3%
	APPLICATIONS PENDING	4,727	5,425	3,315	1,990	1,607	-66.0%
	SERVICE PLANS WRITTEN	6,467	10,015	10,838	12,014	12,875	99.1%
	TIME TO REHABILITATION (Months from Application)	23.9	28.5	27.3	25.3	22.8	-4.6%
ELIGIBLES and SERVED	30,377	36,523	39,503	39,214	38,820	27.8%	
Outcomes	TOTAL REHABILITATIONS	3,373	3,510	3,714	4,580	5,562	64.9%
	REHABILITATION RATE	44.7%	45.0%	40.2%	41.2%	44.0%	-0.7% points
	AVERAGE WAGE	\$11.11	\$10.58	\$10.27	\$10.07	\$10.34	-6.9%

## Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired

### Hiring Ohioans with Disabilities: A Toolkit for Employers, Managers and Human Resource Professionals

Ohio employers needed a clear, consistent and practical resource that outlines how best to tap into the skilled and motivated workforce individuals with disabilities represent. Hiring Ohioans with Disabilities: a Toolkit for Employers, Managers and Human Resource Professionals, was produced by OOD and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to meet this need.

This new interactive toolkit makes it easier for Ohio employers to recruit, hire and retain qualified workers with disabilities. Employers can download the toolkit to learn about the following topics and more:

- Best practices from Ohio's top employers
- Tax incentives for hiring workers with disabilities
- Free sources of consultation and assistance
- Making reasonable workplace accommodations

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- Offering more flexible work arrangements
- Interacting with people with disabilities
- Recruiting and accommodating veterans with disabilities
- Using job coaches to help workers with disabilities
- Managing disability leave
- Accommodating service animals in the workplace

## Disability Awareness Training

In 2015, OOD, in partnership with the Department of Administrative Services' (DAS) Human Resources Division, offered disability awareness training to human resources administrators and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) officers from state agencies. The sessions focused on the role human resources and EEO personnel can play in reducing barriers during the application and employment process.

Among other training activities, groups participated in a brainstorming session called Pick a Disability. This involves a hypothetical situation of selecting one disability to take on for the rest of one's life and choosing another disability to avoid at all costs. Participants voice their perceptions of the selected disabilities, which reveal thinking and knowledge patterns around specific physical or invisible limitations.

This Pick a Disability module is one of 12 that are part of a program known as Windmills; a training focused on the attitudes and perceptions we hold of people with disabilities and how these affect interactions in the workplace.

OOD's Business Engagement Unit provides Windmills training to employers around Ohio, upon request.

The interactive program enhances awareness of cultural diversity, examines personal attitudes and biases toward people with disabilities, and provides information to better understand the Americans with Disabilities Act.



*James Clinkscale, Diversity & Inclusion Manager, and Kelly Jordan, Business Sourcing Analyst, conduct training.*

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## **Commercial Driver's License Exemption**

For the first time, Ohioans who are deaf or hearing impaired have the opportunity to obtain their Commercial Driver's License (CDL) thanks to collaboration between state agencies.

OOD partnered with the Ohio Department of Public Safety's Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) and Office of Criminal Justice Services to develop a protocol which allows individuals who acquire a hearing exemption waiver issued by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), to test for a Commercial Driver's License.

A process to obtain a hearing exemption waiver was instituted at the federal level. BMV, with the support of OOD, took the proactive step of developing and implementing Ohio test procedures with the permission of FMCSA.

In addition, BMV and OOD are creating a video with American Sign Language (ASL) that explains the requirements and testing process. The video will be available through both the BMV and OOD websites so individuals, driving schools and employers can learn about the licensure process.

## **Removing Barriers to Employment – Driver's License Requirements**

Another significant barrier to employment, identified through the work of the Workforce Integration Taskforce (WIT), was requiring a driver's license within the State of Ohio Jobs application process, even for jobs that do not require driving as an essential function of the position. Requiring this information effectively prevented applicants from submitting a completed job application. This barrier has now been removed and applicants are no longer required to provide driver's license information in order to submit a job application, except for jobs that actually have a driving requirement.

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## Deaf, Blind and Deaf-Blind Literacy and Independence

Giving the deaf, blind and deaf-blind community more equal footing when it comes to literacy and training opportunities continues to be a priority for OOD. New innovative trainings were implemented in 2016.

In partnership with the Ohio School for the Deaf, OOD organized a two-week basic Braille and independent living program called DoDots, which ran June 12-24, 2016. Attendees participated in a full agenda that included Braille lessons, an introduction to guide dogs and other instructions.



*Bryan Grubb, DoDots volunteer, demonstrates tactile sign language.*

## An Emphasis on Business Engagement

### DisAbility Job Fairs

In October 2015, OOD hosted four regional job fair events (in Columbus, Independence, Maumee and Cincinnati) that connected 850 individuals with disabilities to 170 employers. The events also featured training for employers seeking to more effectively integrate individuals with disabilities into their workforce. To date, more than 340 individuals were hired as a result of making connections with employers at these job fairs.



*Disability Job Fairs attracted many employers and job seekers in Maumee.*

OOD's Central Ohio Workplace Initiative, funded by the Poses Foundation, has continued to be a very successful business engagement model for directly sourcing OOD jobseekers to participating employers.

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In 2015, Poses continued to fund Ohio's model, and based on our success, OOD was permitted to expand business engagement efforts statewide, thus increasing the number of participating employers. In fact, the Poses Foundation has cited Ohio as the national model for other VR agencies seeking to obtain Poses funding; Texas, Missouri, Kentucky, California, Indiana and New York have all been in contact with Ohio to discuss implementing a similar business engagement model in their respective states.



*Disability Job Fairs attracted many employers and job seekers in Independence.*

## Ohio Serving as a Model for Business Engagement

### Ohio Business Leadership Network Reaches 100 Members

Since 2011, OOD has made engaging Ohio employers a priority of its strategic plan. One result has been the growth of the Ohio Business Leadership Network (OHBLN) from 20 member businesses to more than 100 member businesses.

Achieving this business engagement milestone was celebrated this year. This peer-to-peer business organization provides employers with information and resources about how best to recruit, select, train and retain a workforce that includes individuals with disabilities.



A list of the 100 OHBLN members can be found on the OOD website: [ood.ohio.gov](http://ood.ohio.gov) along with a video from Ohio Lieutenant Governor Mary Taylor [vimeo.com/169094598](https://vimeo.com/169094598) congratulating the OHBLN for reaching this milestone.

OHBLN is an affiliate of the U.S. Business Leadership Network which represents 51 chapters and more than 5,000 employers across the United States. In 2014, Ohio was honored with the Outstanding Affiliate of the Year Award for its work to help businesses hire more workers with disabilities. Ohio has one of the largest and most active affiliates in the country.

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## Business Enterprise Program

The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) provides entrepreneurship opportunities to persons who are blind or visually impaired. This past year the BEP invested the additional appropriation awarded by the General Assembly to remodel the Oliver Ocasek Building in Akron, the Rhodes State Office Tower cafeteria, and the Micro Market at the Department of Taxation.

In addition, with the permission of the Ohio Department of Transportation, OOD began remodeling interstate rest area vending structures. OOD's Business Enterprise also instituted a program-wide initiative to modernize vending operations. This included the placement of electronic payment systems on vending machines and installing Business Enterprise branding throughout the state.

These projects and accomplishments promote the continual business growth of those who are blind and visually impaired.



*Vending Machines at Washington State Community College display the new BEP branding.*

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## Division of Disability Determination

### Exceeding Federal Goals

The Division of Disability Determination (DDD) completed a very successful federal fiscal year (FFY) 2015, exceeding its goals in every category. DDD served 191,607 Ohioans which exceeded its budgeted workload of 184,400 by 7,207 cases. This also exceeded the stretch goal (a target beyond the budget workload set by the Social Security Administration (SSA) based on regional and national factors) of 189,537. This was accomplished with a net accuracy of 100 percent.

OOD has researched Social Security Administration (SSA) reports and at no other time has the division sustained overall net accuracy levels this high.

Other accomplishments worth noting:

- DDD has the lowest cost-per-case ratios in the Chicago Region and one of the highest Productivity per Work Year (total number of cases processed divided by the number of work years funded)
- The Hearings Unit increased the number of hearings by 14 percent, while decreasing the associated travel costs by 82 percent. This played an important role in the overall cost of the unit decreasing by 3 percent while the number of clearances achieved increased by 5 percent
- DDD also identified \$40 million in fraud detection



*DDD Assistant Deputy Director and Lean Six Sigma Black Belt, Tom Melfo with LeanOhio Camo Belt recipients left to right: Rita Gram, Jaime McVay, Justin Helinski and Cyndal Glass.*

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## OOD Continues to Lead on LeanOhio

### LEANOhio

The Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) has been on the forefront of operationalizing Lean Six Sigma within state government. Since the inception of Lean Six Sigma in 2011, OOD has successfully implemented 10 transformation projects resulting in improved process times of 93 percent, a reduction in process steps of 60 percent, eliminated 75 percent process delays, and reduced customer backlogs by 76 percent. These improvements also contributed to an increase in business partnerships, elimination of the wait list for VR services, and increase in job outcomes for the jobseekers served by OOD.

November 2015 saw the grand opening of OOD's Performance and Innovation Center. This newly created space is designed to enhance collaboration in the problem-solving process. Kaizen events and other Lean-powered improvement projects can take place in this area dedicated to process improvement. OOD has a growing network of employees who have participated in trainings sponsored by LeanOhio and is proud to be able to make this unique resource available to other agencies.



*Tom Terez from LeanOhio speaks at the grand opening of OOD's new Performance Innovation Center.*

For the Center's grand opening, OOD had the privilege of hosting LeanOhio's quarterly meeting. OOD's Executive Team and leadership staff welcomed more than 65 people, included several agency directors, the LeanOhio Team, members of the statewide Lean Network, and others committed to streamlining state government and making government operations more efficient. During the month of April 2016, representatives from the State of Washington's Department of Enterprise Services -- Office of Lean Transformation and Cardinal Health visited to learn more about Ohio's and OOD's experience with LEAN Six Sigma and, in turn, they shared their own experiences.

The mission of LeanOhio is to make government services in Ohio simpler, faster, better and less costly. This is accomplished by applying continuous improvement methods such as Lean and Six Sigma. Ohio's state agencies are cutting red tape, removing inefficiencies, improving customer service and achieving measurable results.

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## Federal Fiscal Year 2015 Financials

<b>Use of Funds</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Vocational Rehabilitation	\$ 125,321,325	57.2%
Disability Determination	72,521,518	33.1%
Central Support Services	11,188,744	5.1%
Other Disability Programs	6,030,542	2.8%
Business Enterprise	3,967,883	1.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 219,030,012</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<b>Sources of Funds</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Federal Resources	\$ 190,578,851	86.9%
Business Enterprise	1,188,298	0.5%
General Revenue Funds	15,711,070	7.2%
DUI License Reinstatement	3,100,000	1.4%
State and Local Partnerships	8,800,000	4.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 219,378,219</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Note* - Figures based on the 16-month Federal Fiscal Year of October 1, 2014 through January 31, 2016.

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## State Fiscal Year 2016 Financials

<b>Use of Funds</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Vocational Rehabilitation	\$ 125,256,987	54.3%
Disability Determination	78,687,735	34.1%
Central Support Services	11,219,392	4.9%
Other Disability Programs	13,194,485	5.7%
Business Enterprise	2,436,331	1.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 230,794,930</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<b>Sources of Funds</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Federal Resources	\$ 221,581,155	82.5%
Business Enterprise	2,450,172	0.9%
General Revenue Funds	16,250,884	6.1%
DUI License Reinstatement	3,099,971	1.2%
State and Local Partnerships	25,121,044	9.4%
	<b>\$ 268,503,226</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Figures based on June 30, 2016 Budget Status Report

*Note* - The above figures are actual expenditures for the 12-month period ending June 30, 2016



## Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities

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