

WEEKLY FOCUS

Ohio | Opportunities for Ohioans
with Disabilities

Kevin L. Miller, Executive Director

December 19, 2014

The mission of the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency is to ensure individuals with disabilities achieve quality employment, independence and disability determination outcomes through integrated services, partnerships and innovation.

Wrapping Up a Great Year at OOD



As we head into the holiday season, I want to take a moment and say thank you to everyone who made 2014 such a successful year here at OOD. Thank you, first and foremost, to our amazing staff. Also, I want to extend my appreciation to our provider partners across the state, our state agency partners, the Ohio General Assembly, and to Governor Kasich, who has provided critical leadership and support the last four years.

I am proud to say that we have made significant progress in 2014. We have not only served more individuals, we have done so at lower cost and in a timelier manner without sacrificing service standards or quality. We have written more employment plans, moved more people into job ready status, and achieved more quality outcomes. All of these improvements mean greater opportunities for individuals with disabilities in Ohio. We couldn't have done it without you.

We have accomplished a great deal in 2014 but I am confident this is just the beginning. I am excited about 2015 and the great things we can accomplish together.

Have a safe and joyous holiday season!

Note: There will be no *Weekly Focus* next week or the following week (Friday, December 26 and Friday, January 2) so look out for our next issue on Friday, January 9.

OPPORTUNITY AWARDS



From left to right: OOD Northwest Area Manager Curt Morman and President Rachel Wixey of Rachel Wixey & Associates.

From left to right: Scioto Downs Human Resources Manager John Walker, OOD Business Relations Manager Jon Hackathorn, and Scioto Downs General Manager and Vice President Troy Buswell.

From left to right: Shoppers World Manager Bill Jones and OOD VR Supervisor Beth DeMarco.

As we began to re-energize and refocus our business engagement activities, it became clear that we needed a better way to recognize and highlight Ohio companies committed to providing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The Opportunity Awards, launched last month, is a business recognition program designed to accomplish this.

These awards seek to recognize companies at various levels: from those who have just begun to recruit, hire, and retain individuals with disabilities, to those with a proven track record of integrating individuals with disabilities into their work force.

The Annual Awards include:

- The Creating Opportunity Award: recognizes companies who have recently begun hiring individuals with disabilities.
- The Committed to Opportunity Award: honors companies with a proven commitment to integrating individuals with disabilities into their workforce.
- The Champion of Opportunity Award: acknowledges companies that have gone "above and beyond" and who serve as statewide examples of what it means to provide quality employment opportunities and increased independence for individuals with disabilities.





From left to right: BurgerFi General Manager Mo Awadella and OOD Job Developer Briana Bailey.

From left to right: OOD Business Sourcing Analyst Kelly Jordan, OOD Southeast Area Manager Bob Nicholson, Piada Manager Joe Quesada, and OOD Canton Supervisor Marc Manheim.

Following the announcement of the 2014 award winners in November, Business Sourcing Analysts have been delivering the Creating Opportunity Award certificates to recipients all throughout Ohio. All Committed to Opportunity Award honorees received a letter of recognition thanking them for their commitment.

Lastly, I look forward to personally presenting awards to the Champion of Opportunity Award awardees in the coming weeks. For a listing of the 2014 recipients of these awards please visit our website at

<http://www.ood.ohio.gov/Employers/Opportunity-Awards>

We extend our appreciation again to all the award recipients for their commitment and leadership. Expanding employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities helps grow Ohio's economy and strengthens our communities.

OOD Commissioners Meetings

The OOD Commissioners returned to Central Office on Wednesday for their regular meetings. The Program Planning Committee met to discuss and review OOD's business initiatives, the VR State Plan, changes with the Independent Living/Older Blind program, and other business (the Budget and Audit Committee met last week). The full commission then convened later that afternoon for staff reports on OOD's budget, legislative items, and the Youth Leadership Forum; and to hear reports on the work of the earlier committee meetings.

As we approach the end of 2014, I also want to once again thank the commissioners for their hard work and dedication. The agency and the individuals we serve benefit greatly from their service.

Erik Williamson Named NCDDD President



Deputy Director Erik Williamson was recently named President of the NCDDD.

Erik Williamson, Deputy Director of the Division of Disability Determination (DDD), was recently named President of The National Council of Disability Determination Directors (NCDDD). The mission of the NCDDD is "to provide the highest possible level of service to persons with disabilities, to promote the interests of the state operated Disability Determination Services and to represent DDS Directors, their management teams and staffs."

Congratulations Erik, for this recognition and for your leadership in Ohio and nationally.

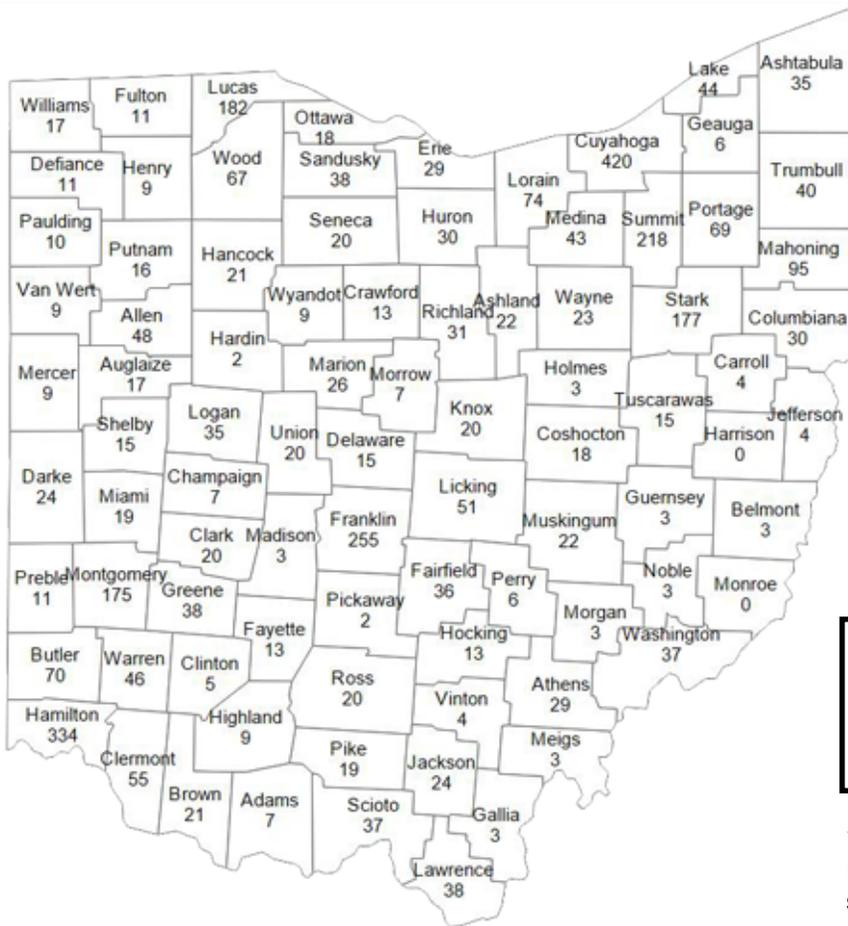
Governor's Council on People with Disabilities (GCPD)

The Governor's Council on People with Disabilities (GCPD) also met this week. Assistant Executive Director Bill Bishilany stopped by to share his background and experience, OOD's vision for 2015, and to discuss how the agency can continue to partner with the council to improve employment outcomes for Ohioans with disabilities. Council members also heard presentations from Derek Mortland from the Center for Disability Empowerment and Paul Jarvis from the Development Disabilities Council. GCPD is scheduled to meet again in February.



Assistant Executive Director Bill Bishilany stopped by the GCPD meeting to discuss future partnership with OOD.

Individuals in Job Ready Status by County



Total Statewide:
3,574

* Job Ready Status Individuals have received Vocational Rehabilitation services and are ready and seeking employment.



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