

WEEKLY FOCUS

Ohio | Opportunities for Ohioans
with Disabilities

Kevin L. Miller, Executive Director

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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.

Columbus DisAbility Job Fair a Huge Success



Hundreds of individuals with disabilities seeking employment, streamed into the Aladdin Shrine Temple Thursday afternoon, as part of OOD's 2014 DisAbility Job Fair. The first in a series of similar events across the state, the Columbus job fair was designed to connect businesses, who are hiring, to individuals with disabilities ready to work.

There were 35 businesses participating and more than 200 job seekers in attendance. The event was a huge success! The feedback was overwhelmingly positive

from both employers and job seekers. A number of the businesses in attendance felt that it was one of the strongest job fairs they have been involved with this year. Those seeking employment were thrilled to have access to so many quality employers in one place.

In addition to the afternoon job fair, morning educational training sessions were held for employers seeking information about the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities and integrating them into their work force. They heard presentations on assistive technology



(technology that allows individuals with disabilities to successfully participate and compete in today's workforce) and Windmills Training which explores the fears, biases and myths that create barriers in the hiring process.

Computers were also available on site for job seekers to find and apply for jobs online and utilize OhioMeansJobs.com.

This event provided great opportunities to both job seekers and employers. Employers were able to meet qualified, pre-screened, employment ready candidates and take advantage of the educational and training opportunities. Individuals with disabilities seeking employment were able to network with employers at one site, apply for jobs online, and develop valuable relationships and contact information.

I can't say enough about the hard work and vision of OOD staff. From area managers and supervisors, to counselors and administrative staff; from communications staff to the Business Sourcing Analysts, everyone was engaged and focused on making the event a success. Everyone's hard work and dedication showed in the success seen on Thursday's event.

Look for more detailed coverage of the job fair in next week's Weekly Focus.

Ohio Leading the Way on Business Engagement & Training



Director Miller welcomes employers to 2014 DisAbility Job Fair.

Job fairs are just one component of our renewed commitment to business engagement. Our regional Business Sourcing Analysts (BSAs) under the direction of Jon Hackathorn, Manager of Business Relations, are meeting with the business community across Ohio getting to know their workforce needs and addressing concerns or questions about hiring individuals with disabilities.

Education and training are an important aspect of this process. Whether it is questions about technology and reasonable accommodations, or fears about liability

and workforce integration, these issues need to be addressed, so that employers can be open to and excited about hiring individuals with disabilities.

One of the tools we use both internally and externally is the Windmills Training Program. This program is specifically designed to prepare employers to effectively evaluate, hire, supervise and retain individuals with disabilities as employees.



Employers actively engaged in Windmills Training.

Windmills can be an effective training tool for all levels of staff, in any size company. The training consists of fast-paced, 45-minute modules that compel participation and interaction. It teaches through action – not lectures. These applications are practical and can be immediately used on the job.

OOD has been using this training, and others, to help employers better understand how to integrate individuals with disabilities into their workforce and do so in a way that makes sense for their business. These efforts truly make a difference and create a lasting impression to those who participate.

In fact, Milt Wright (one of the creators of the Windmills Training Program and a nationally recognized speaker on employment and training programs) was at a national conference and heard from a colleague about the great work taking place in Ohio. He was kind enough to drop us a note of encouragement and say thanks for the work we are doing.

Businesses are finding more effective ways to meet needs and manage their workforce. Individuals with disabilities are connecting with employers, finding quality employment and seeing barriers to their long term success removed. It's exciting to know that what we do at OOD has impacted peoples' lives positively.

For more information or questions on stories in this publication, please call the Office of Communications at 614.438.1476.

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