

EMPLOYMENT FIRST

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) is the state agency that empowers Ohioans with disabilities through employment, disability determinations, and independence. It is accomplished through its Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR), Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired (BSVI), and Division of Disability Determination (DDD). A fourth area is the Division of Employer and Innovation Services (EIS), which is responsible for establishing and maintaining partnerships with employers.

What is the Employment First Partnership?

The Employment First (EF) partnership between Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) and the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) is designed to increase community employment outcomes for adults with developmental disabilities. Employment First counselors work with local county boards of developmental disabilities to identify and help individuals move from non-integrated settings into competitive integrated employment where they can earn a competitive wage and work alongside people without disabilities.

Employment First Partnership Model

- Funds 30 vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselors and 5 work incentives consultants (WIC) who specialize in work incentives planning.
- Works to plan, match, and support individuals in their employment goals.
- Enhances collaboration between county board staff, VR counselors, individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, and other local partners to provide person-centered vocational guidance and counseling and individualized employment services.
- Increases the number of dually certified providers by OOD and DODD to ensure streamlined transition from VR services to long-term supports.

Who is Eligible to Participate?

DD-eligible adults who are currently in non-integrated settings, express a desire to work in the community, and need support to obtain employment which may include identifying career options and employment opportunities.

What Types of Services are Provided?

The partnership utilizes person-centered career planning and provides a full range of individualized, vocational rehabilitation services designed to meet individuals where they are on their unique path to employment. During the person-centered

career planning process, certified work incentives consultants who specialize in work incentives planning will be available to help explain the potential impact of work on benefits like Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), medical insurance, housing and food assistance, and work incentives that may be available to support the path to financial independence.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services May Include

- Job development services that lead to successful, long-term job matches.
- On-the-job supports, including job coaching and follow-along services leading to job success.
- Coordination of long-term follow-along supports once OOD successfully closes the case.

For More Information

Visit www.ohioemploymentfirst.org; www.ood.ohio.gov (search Employment First) or e-mail at employmentfirst@dodd.ohio.gov.

Programs provided by Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) are funded, in whole or in part, with federal grants awarded by the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

For purposes of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program, including Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), OOD received 78.7% of its funding through the DOE VR grant. In Federal fiscal year (FFY) 2019, OOD received \$99,548,657 in federal funds. Funds appropriated by the State covered 21.3 % of the total costs, or \$26,942,648. Of these federal funds, \$14,932,299 is set aside for Pre-ETS.

For purposes of the Supported Employment (SE) Program, the DOE SE grant funded 90% of the costs for the Supported Employment for Youth with a Disability Program up to the grant amount and 100% of the costs of regular Supported Employment program costs up to the grant amount. In FFY 2019, OOD received \$297,857 for SE Youth with a Disability and State appropriated funds paid a small amount more than the remaining 10% or \$33,192 of the total costs. In FFY 2019, OOD received \$297,857 in regular SE grant funds.

For purposes of the Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who are Blind (OIB) Program, the federal grant received from DOE in FFY 2019 paid 90% of the total costs incurred under the program. In FFY 2019, OOD received \$1,153,208 in federal grant funds. Funds appropriated by the State paid over the 10% required match or \$130,000 of the total costs incurred under the OIB program.

For purposes of the Independent Living (IL) Program, the federal grant received from HHS paid 90% of the total costs incurred in FFY 2019. In FFY 2019, OOD received funding of \$640,571. Funds appropriated by the State paid 10% or \$71,175 of the total costs incurred under the IL Program.

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities

150 East Campus View Blvd., Columbus, OH 43235

Mailing Address: 400 East Campus View Blvd., Columbus, OH 43235

800-282-4536 toll-free

ood.ohio.gov

OODWorks.com

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