



Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities

Mike DeWine
Governor
Kevin L. Miller
Director

Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired
Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation
Division of Disability Determination

November 13, 2019

The Honorable Mike DeWine
Governor
Riffe Center, 30th Floor
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215-6117

The Honorable Betsy DeVos
Secretary of United States Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Governor DeWine and Madam Secretary DeVos:

On behalf of the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) Council, I am pleased to present our 2019 Annual Report. The OOD Council was established in 2018 and held its first meeting on August 15, 2018. Therefore, 2019 represented the first full calendar year of operation of the Council.

The OOD Council conducted four regular meetings and two subcommittee meetings this year. At the four regular meetings, council members developed and implemented bylaws and participated in training about Ohio Sunshine Laws and ethics. The Council became a member of the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC). The Council established two committees, one to develop input into the state plan and the other to develop this annual report. OOD Council members attended the NCSRC spring and fall conferences to learn more about their roles and responsibilities as Council members. In addition, all Council members received training from the Vice President and Treasurer of NCSRC at our August 2019 meeting. These were all important accomplishments this year that were necessary to lay the foundation for an effective Council.

With this foundational business complete, Council members have increased their participation in OOD's vocational rehabilitation (VR) related events. Council members have attended local Participant Focus Groups, held quarterly throughout the state, where OOD gathers input from individuals with disabilities and the public in general regarding the VR program. Council members also participated in OOD's DisAbility Job Fairs specifically held for OOD job seekers during National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October. In 2019, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine's Executive Order called for all state of Ohio employees to receive disability etiquette training. The OOD Council chair and vice-chair participated in the video developed to train state of Ohio employees. To show our support and collaboration with the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) Ohio affiliate, one Council member also presented at the NFB conference.

At each OOD Council meeting, the OOD Director, Vocational Rehabilitation deputy directors, and Employer and Innovation Services deputy director provide up-to-date reports of current vocational rehabilitation projects, new initiatives and partnerships, and business relations. Information is also shared regarding the feedback received from the local Participant Focus Groups and the results of OOD's customer satisfaction surveys. OOD Council members have provided additional feedback to OOD leadership in response to the information shared at Council meetings.

As noted above, the Council established two subcommittees this year to facilitate the accomplishment of their responsibilities to provide input into the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined State Plan and complete the OOD Council Annual Report. Council member recommendations for the state plan included creating a stronger process to evaluate customer satisfaction, improving the information available to individuals and families to support their informed choice of providers, and using internship opportunities to assist individuals with disabilities in obtaining employment. The OOD Council Annual Report subcommittee compiled information about the accomplishments of the Council this last year to draft this letter for the full council to approve for submission to the Governor and the US Department of Education.

This year was a time for growth. I thank my fellow Council members who have dedicated their time over the past year to learn, participate, ask questions, advocate and advance vocational rehabilitation. We look forward to continuing to assist OOD in implementing Ohio Governor Mike DeWine's 2020-2021 budget priorities and strategies outlined in Ohio's combined state plan.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Peters, Th.D.
OOD Council Chair

c: OOD Council Members
OOD Director Kevin Miller

Attachments: OOD Annual Report
OOD Council Member Roster

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