

Licking County Board of Developmental Disabilities

Administrative Policy Manual

Policy: Employment First

Board Approved: 11/13

Revised:

Reviewed: 2/17

Section 4.13

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Research and experience demonstrate that adults with developmental disabilities are largely unemployed. As a result people are impoverished and may be socially isolated. National trends in best practice supported by the federal Americans with Disabilities Act, Ohio Statute (ORC 5123.022) and Ohio Administrative Code (5123:2-2-05) require local Boards of developmental disabilities to focus support planning and resource allocation in ways that improve employment outcomes for people with developmental disabilities. The Licking County Board of Developmental Disabilities, hereinafter referred to as the Board, believes that employment in the community workforce is the preferred outcome for working age men and women with developmental disabilities.

DEFINITIONS OF Relevant TERMS

- A. "Benefits analysis" means information provided to individuals about the impact of work on public assistance programs, including but not limited to, social security disability insurance, supplemental security income, Medicaid/Medicare coverage, Medicaid buy-in for workers with disabilities, veteran's benefits, housing assistance, and food stamps.
- B. "Integrated setting" means a setting typically found in the community where individuals interact with persons who do not have disabilities to the same extent non-disabled persons in comparable positions interact with other persons. "Integrated setting" includes employment settings in which employees interact with the community through technology.
- C. "Natural Support" is a support that is not paid. Natural supports can include but are not limited to family members, neighbors, significant others and community members who share interests with the person they are supporting. Natural supports shall be documented in the ISP.
- D. "Working age" means at least eighteen (18) years of age.
- E. "Community Employment" means full or part-time work in the competitive labor market in an integrated setting and for which payment is at or above the minimum wage but not less than the customary wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by persons who are not disabled.
- F. "Supported Employment Services" means intensive, ongoing supports that enable participants for whom competitive employment at or above the minimum wage is unlikely absent the provision of supports, and for whom, because of their disabilities, need supports to perform in a regular work setting.
- G. "Vocational Habilitation" means services designed to teach and reinforce habilitation concepts related to work including responsibility, attendance, task completion, problem solving, social interaction, motor skill development and safety.

The Board commits to support each person to pursue his or her own unique path to work, a career, or contribution to and participation in community life. Regardless of the challenges posed by their disabilities, persons eligible for Board services will be afforded opportunities to pursue employment.

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The Board, in conjunction with its community partners, will focus available resources to help people develop their employment potential and raise awareness in the business community about the contributions that people with developmental disabilities make in the workforce.

The Board's strategic plan shall include benchmarks for increasing the number of persons of working age who are employed. Specifically, the Board will promote employment by:

- Coordinating the work of state and local community partners so that statutory responsibilities to eligible students are fulfilled, beginning at age fourteen (14).
- Developing interagency agreements which define responsibilities and identify resources for services to transition age students.
- Introducing parents and students to Ohio Department of Education transition planning requirements at age thirteen (13).
- Collaborating with local school districts and other required partners in transition planning required by the Ohio Department of Education at age fourteen (14).
- Supporting transition planning and Individual Education Planning (IEP) with the use of person centered processes for discovery and career exploration. The results of these activities should identify the student's unique strengths, interests, abilities, preferences, resources and desired outcomes as related to employment and support specific IEP outcomes and strategies related to employment.
- Referring students aged fourteen (14) and older to the State agency named Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities to secure financial support for vocational evaluation, work assessments, work experience, job development, job coaching, and other employment preparation services for which the student may be eligible.
- Assuring that all students participate in work experience by the time they turn eighteen (18) years of age.
- Arranging for a benefits analysis so that students and families have information on the impact of work on entitlement programs such as supplemental security income (SSI), social security disability insurance (SSDI), Medicaid, Medicare, and Medicaid buy-in, housing assistance, food stamps and other programs the student may be eligible for as a young adult.
- Expecting and encouraging families, friends, and others in an individual's circle to actively assist Employment Services staff in seeking, securing and retaining employment.

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- Connecting with the business community in a way that promotes the hiring of persons with developmental disabilities.
- Using available resources and programs that promote employment and incentivize employers to hire people with developmental disabilities.
- Assuring that individual support plans identify a path to employment and, when necessary, helping people evaluate and assess the financial impact of unemployment.
- Assuring that service plans clearly identify alternatives to employment, including traditional adult day care and vocational habilitation, and the rationale for these services based on assessed and expressed needs, and professional evaluations.
- Increasing education and awareness efforts that disseminate information to eligible people, their families, schools, employers, and providers of services about resources and opportunities that facilitate employment.
- Providing training and technical assistance to local providers of employment services.