

EMPLOYMENT FIRST

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to set forth the Board's commitment to implementing the State of Ohio's Employment First Initiative in Holmes County.

Policy:

A. Definitions

1. "Benefits analysis" means information provided to individuals about the impact of earning wages on public assistance programs including but not limited to social security disability insurance, supplemental security income, Medicaid/Medicare eligibility, Medicaid buy-in for workers with disabilities, veteran's benefits, housing assistance, and food stamps.
2. "Community employment" means competitive employment that takes place in an integrated setting.
3. "Competitive employment" means full-time or part-time work in the competitive labor market in 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 person who do not have disabilities.
4. "Employment services", regardless of funding source, means:
 - a. Career Planning: individualized, person-centered employment planning and support that provides assistance for individuals to achieve or advance in competitive integrated employment. Components include assistive technology assessment, benefits education and analysis, career discovery, career exploration, employment plan, job development, self-employment launch, situational observation and assessment and worksite accessibility.
 - b. Group Employment Support: Service and training provided in regular business, industry, and community settings for groups of two or more workers with disabilities in an enclave or mobile work crew. Activities include person-centered employment planning, work adjustment, job analysis, training and systematic instruction, job coaching, and training in planning/arranging/using transportation.
 - c. Individual Employment Support: individualized support for an individual to maintain competitive integrated employment including activities such as job coaching, on the job training on assistive technology, integration into the job setting, and incidental personal care and assistance on the job

- d. Vocational Habilitation: services that provide learning and work experiences, including volunteer work, where the individual develops general skills that lead to competitive integrated employment such as communicating with supervisors/coworkers/customers, workplace conduct and dress, following directions, attending to tasks, workplace problem solving skills, workplace safety, and mobility training.
5. “Integrated setting” means a setting typically found in the community where individuals with developmental disabilities interact with individuals who do not have disabilities to the same extent that individuals in comparable positions who do not have disabilities interact with other individuals, including in employment settings in which employees interact with the community through technology.

B. Employment Services Shall Be Directed Toward Community Employment

1. Every individual with a developmental disability is presumed capable of community employment. Community employment is the desired outcome for every individual of working age who received services from the Board.
2. In its strategic plan, the Board will outline and periodically update its strategy and benchmarks for increasing the number of individuals of working age engaged in community employment services.
3. The Board will collaborate with workforce development agencies, vocational rehabilitation agencies, and mental health agencies in the county to support individuals to obtain community employment.
4. The Board will collaborate with school districts in the county to ensure a framework exists for individuals approaching completion of a school program or services, such that the Board and school districts in the county use similar methods to support students with developmental disabilities to obtain community employment. The Board shall identify and attempt to resolve any duplication of efforts.
5. The Board will disseminate information to individuals served, families, schools, community partners, employers, and providers of services about resources and opportunities, including Medicaid buy-in and other work incentive programs that facilitate community employment.
6. The Board will collect and submit to the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (Department) individual-specific data regarding the cost of non-Medicaid employment services, employment outcomes for individuals who receive non-Medicaid employment services, and employment outcomes for individuals who do not receive paid employment services but who are engaged in competitive employment or community employment.

C. Person-Centered Planning Process

1. Each individual of working age who has a Service and Support Administrator and each individual approaching completion of a school age program or services shall participate in an individualized planning process to identify an individual's strengths, interests, abilities, preferences, resources, and desired outcomes as they relate to community employment. The process shall begin with a review of available information to determine what additional information and what supplemental situational and/or other formal or informal evaluations are needed.
2. For individuals who receive public assistance, the importance of obtaining a benefits analysis shall be emphasized to enable the individual to make informed decisions regarding employment. Resources available for obtaining a benefits analysis shall be identified for the individual prior to job development.
3. The person-centered planning process shall include identification and documentation of:
 - a. The individual's place on the path to community employment:

Path 1: The individual is already engaged in community employment and needs support for job stabilization, job improvement, or career advancement;

Path 2: The individual expresses a desire to obtain community employment but is not currently employed and needs support to obtain employment or identify career options and employment opportunities;

Path 3: The individual is unsure about community employment and needs support to identify career options and employment opportunities and the economic impact for the individual of the decision to work; or

Path 4: The individual does not express a desire to work and needs support to learn more about careers and employment opportunities and the economic impact for the individual of the decision not to work.
 - b. If on Path 1 or 2, the individual's desired community employment outcome.
 - c. If on Path 3 or 4, the activities that will occur to advance the individual on his or her path to community employment.

- d. Clearly defined activities, services, and supports necessary for the individual to achieve or maintain community employment, job improvement or career advancement.
4. The results of the person-centered planning process, including the individual's desired outcomes as they relate to community employment, will be integrated into the individual plan or individual service plan.
5. The results of the person-centered planning process will be reviewed at least once every twelve months and whenever a significant change in employment, training, continuing education, services, or supports occurs or is proposed.

D. Requirement for Providers

1. Providers of employment services shall submit to each individual's team at least once every twelve months, or more frequently as decided upon by the team, a written progress report that demonstrates that services provided are consistent with the individual's identified community employment outcome and that the individual receiving services has obtained community employment or is advancing on the path to community employment. The progress report for each individual participating in prevocational services will describe progress on achievement of desired outcomes as set forth in the individual plan or individual service plan.
2. Providers of employment services will collect and submit to the Department individual-specific data regarding employment services and employment outcomes including but not limited to type of services provide, how individual obtained employment, hours worked, wages earned and occupations.
3. Providers of employment services will disseminate aggregate data regarding employment services and employment outcomes including but not limited to type of services provided, how individuals obtained employment, hours worked, wages earned, and occupations, to individuals seeking employment services and others upon request. The data shall be disseminated in a manner that does not disclose confidential information regarding individuals receiving employment services.

Legal References: O.R.C. 5126.05
O.A.C 5123:2-2-05

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