

**EMPLOYMENT FIRST OUTREACH AND AWARENESS EDUCATION PROGRAM**  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**

**Purpose/Objective:**

**Per Section VII(7) of the Executive Order 13-04, OUTREACH AND AWARENESS**

**Requires:**

By January 1, 2014, ODDS and VR will develop an outreach and information education program for all persons in the ODDS/VR Target Population (as defined in 1 and 2 below) that:

- Explains the benefits of employment,
- Addresses concerns of families and
- Addresses perceived obstacles to participating in employment services and
- Is designed to encourage individuals with I/DD and their families to seek employment.

**Target Population:**

The Target Population for this Strategic Plan is as follows:

1. Working age individuals with I/DD who receive sheltered workshop services on or after July 1, 2013. Working age individuals are adults with I/DD between the ages of 21 and 60, individuals with I/DD who are younger than 21 and who are no longer receiving public school services, and those with I/DD over 60 who choose to continue employment;
2. Transition aged individuals with I/DD who are found eligible for ODDS or VR services. For the purpose of this provision, transition age means (1) at least 16 years of age for VR services and at least 18 years of age for ODDS services, and (2) no older than the date two years after an individual has ceased receiving public school services in the Oregon secondary schools;
3. Families of transition aged individuals with I/DD who are found eligible for ODDS or VR services; and
4. Families of working age individuals with I/DD who receive sheltered workshop services on or after July 1, 2013.

**Acronyms:**

“I/DD” means individual with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

“ODDS” means the office of Developmental Disabilities Services under the Department of human Services.

“ODE” means the Oregon Department of Education

“VR” means the Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program (also referred to as OVRS)

**Phase 1 Plan (January 1, 2014.):**

Phase 1 reflects the initial outreach and awareness educational products, activities and strategies that DHS (Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Office of Developmental Disabilities Services) and the Oregon Department of Education will have in development or made available as of

12/30/2013

**EMPLOYMENT FIRST OUTREACH AND AWARENESS EDUCATION PROGRAM**  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**

January 1, 2014. The intent is that this body of work becomes the initial foundation of an outreach and awareness educational program that DHS and ODE will continually improve and build upon.

**I. Individuals**

- a. **Proposed Message(s):** Everyone can work, given the right support, and work has many benefits. The Department of Human Services has adopted an Employment First Policy and, consistent with that policy, employment in fully integrated work settings will be the first option explored in service planning for all working age and transition age individuals with I/DD.
- b. **Strategic Tools:**
  - i. Public relations messaging campaign – funded by VR. This entails a public awareness-building campaign featuring a slogan and “myth-busting” messages centered on the value of employment for people with I/DD. These messages will be used in radio and print pieces, as well as social media.
  - ii. Transition Manual – funded by VR and created by the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities. This newly developed manual is designed to target individuals, families and professionals who are assisting the individuals in navigating across ODE, VR and ODDS. It will be made available in a variety of ways included printed copies, electronic media such as CD’s, and posted on webpages for viewing and downloading.
  - iii. DHS-Office of Developmental Disabilities website on Employment First- [http://www.dhs.state.or.us/dd/supp\\_emp/initiative.html](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/dd/supp_emp/initiative.html) which includes:
    1. Supported Employment Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), including:
      - a. The benefits of employment.
      - b. Addressing concerns of individuals.
      - c. Addressing perceived obstacles to participating in employment services.
    2. Success Stories of individuals who have secured community based employment.
  - iv. DHS- Vocational Rehabilitation website for individuals with disabilities - <http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/vr/Pages/services.aspx>. This page provides:
    1. Frequently Asked Questions about what VR services are.
    2. How individuals with disabilities can access services.
    3. Link to benefits planning information and resources.
  - v. Oregon Department of Education website for Transition aged youth with disabilities transitioning to adulthood.-<http://tcntransition.org/> Provides a variety of employment resource information for transition youth and their families.
  - vi. Access to benefits counseling through VR. Provides information and education to individuals about how employment may or may not impact their benefits.
  - vii. Individuals accepted to ODDS services or prior to the development of an initial Individual Support Plan will be provided a copy of the Employment First Policy and an explanation of its service planning and monitoring implications. They will also be provided with an initial list of resources available for further reference.

**EMPLOYMENT FIRST OUTREACH AND AWARENESS EDUCATION PROGRAM**  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**

**II. Families**

- a. **Proposed Message:** Employment is a win-win for everybody, and everyone must raise their expectations of who can work.
- b. **Strategic Tools:**
  - i. Public relations messaging campaign – funded by VR. This entails a public awareness-building campaign featuring a slogan and “myth-busting” messages centered on the value of employment for people with I/DD and their families. These messages will be used in radio and print pieces, as well as social media.
  - ii. Transition Manual – funded by VR and created by the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities. This manual is designed to target individuals, families and professionals who are assisting the individuals in navigating across ODE, VR and ODDS.
  - iii. DHS-Office of Developmental Disabilities website on Employment First-  
[http://www.dhs.state.or.us/dd/supp\\_emp/initiative.html](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/dd/supp_emp/initiative.html)
    1. Supported Employment Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
      - a. The benefits of employment.
      - b. Addressing concerns of families.
      - c. Addressing perceived obstacles to participating in employment services.
  - iv. DHS- Vocational Rehabilitation website for individuals with disabilities –  
<http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/vr/Pages/services.aspx>. Provides Frequently Asked Questions about what VR services are and how individuals with disabilities can access services.
  - v. Oregon Department of Education website for Transition aged youth with disabilities transitioning to adulthood.-<http://tcntransition.org/>. Provides a variety of employment resource information for transition age youth and their families.
  - vi. Families upon initial acceptance to ODDS services or prior to the development of an initial service plan will be provided a copy of the Employment First Policy and an explanation of its service planning and monitoring implications. They will also be provided with an initial list of resources available for further reference.

**III. Field Professionals (e.g., Services Coordinators, Personal Agents, Vocational Counselors, Educators)**

- a. **Proposed Message:** Professionals play a key role in helping to educate and inform individuals and their families about benefits of employment, addressing concerns of families, and helping to break down and dispel perceived obstacles to participating in employment services.
- b. **Strategic Tools:**
  - i. Frequently Asked Questions document that provides field professionals better guidance in how to help an individual or individual’s family navigate services across VR and DD.
  - ii. Employment First website with WiSE (Washington Initiative for Supported Employment) created for training and technical assistance purposes.  
<http://employment-first.org/>
    - a. A resource list provided on the Employment First/WiSE website.  
<http://employment-first.org/resources/>.

12/30/2013

**EMPLOYMENT FIRST OUTREACH AND AWARENESS EDUCATION PROGRAM**  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**

- b. Regular messages about ongoing issues, training information, and other useful information through the Message section of the Employment First/WiSE website. <http://employment-first.org/messages/>.
- c. A guide to Employment First teams in Oregon. <http://employment-first.org/local/>.
- d. Training and webinar opportunities for professionals in the field are available at: <http://employment-first.org/calendar/>.
- e. Existing resources will be forwarded to Services Coordinators and Personal Agents to facilitate their discussions with individuals around employment expectations, policy, and supports to achieve their goals.

**Phase 2 Plan ( January 1, 2014 through June 30, 2014):**

Phase 2 reflects the outreach and awareness educational products, activities and strategies the DHS (Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Office of Developmental Disabilities Services) and the Oregon Department of Education intends to develop, engage or implement over the course of this time period.

**I. Individuals**

**a. Strategic Tools:**

- i. Enhance the design and content of and maintain a user-friendly, comprehensive website for Employment First that acts as a consumer guide to accessing services and teaching about supported employment initiatives and tells inspirational stories (through video, photos and storytelling) of successfully employed individuals and their families. This website will act as a clearing house for all employment-related I/DD information. It will include a Resource page with links to DD, VR, OCDD, ODE and other useful services. All materials listed below this will be included or linked to on this website.
- ii. Create an Employment Planning Guide for young adults with I/DD and their families similar to the *School Days to Pay Days* guide created by Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services.  
[http://www.communityinclusion.org/pdf/DDS\\_booklet\\_F.pdf](http://www.communityinclusion.org/pdf/DDS_booklet_F.pdf). And/or,
- iii. Create a Roadmap for Employment similar to the *Roadmap for Support Services* developed by the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities.  
[http://ocdd.org/images/uploads/Roadmap\\_to\\_Support\\_Services\\_4-30.pdf](http://ocdd.org/images/uploads/Roadmap_to_Support_Services_4-30.pdf)
- iv. Develop social media platforms specific to Employment First that best meet the needs of the population. This may include LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter, as well as a blog on the Employment First website that provides regular news from the Employment First team, as well as handy information. These social media sites will partner with existing resources, such as the ODDS Facebook page and the DHS Twitter page, to amplify messages.
- v. DHS/ODE (possibly Employment First Teams) host local community forums/trainings for individuals and families about the importance of employment.
- vi. Engage Oregon Self-advocate Coalition to set up mentor networks for consumers.
- vii. Coordinate with national affiliations such as Supported Employment Leadership Network, National Association of State Developmental Disability Directors Services

12/30/2013

**EMPLOYMENT FIRST OUTREACH AND AWARENESS EDUCATION PROGRAM**  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**

to identify effective outreach and awareness educational materials/programs being developed and implemented in other states, by other organizations and across the country targeted to individuals with I/DD and their families.

**II. Families**

**a. Strategic Tools:**

- i. Create a parent handbook similar to Delaware's *Early Start to Supported Employment Parent Handbook* - [http://dhss.delaware.gov/ddds/files/esse\\_parent\\_handbook\\_6\\_2012.pdf](http://dhss.delaware.gov/ddds/files/esse_parent_handbook_6_2012.pdf)
- ii. Develop portal on the Employment First website with helpful information and common myths or concerns of family members, including:
  1. A "Family/Advocate Corner" where an individual can have information, resources and educational material specifically targeted to consumers and families.
  2. Family member stories of individuals who have secured community based employment.
- iii. Coordinate with Family to Family Networks across Oregon to develop accessible educational and informational materials for transition aged youth with I/DD and their families.
- iv. DHS/ODE (possibly Employment First Teams) host local community forums/trainings for individuals and families about the importance of employment
- v. Engage family to family networks to set up family mentorships
- vi. Coordinate with national affiliations such as Supported Employment Leadership Network, National Association of State Developmental Disability Directors Services to identify effective outreach and awareness educational materials/programs being developed and implemented in other states, by other organizations and across the country targeted to individuals with I/DD and their families.

**III. Field Professionals (e.g., Services Coordinators, Personal Agents, Vocational Counselors, Educators)**

**a. Strategic Tools:**

- i. Create flyers, brochures, and other accessible educational and informational materials for field staff to give to individuals they are serving. Materials can be hard copy or electronically accessible on websites.
- ii. Create accessible booklet series for individuals and families based on what stage individual is at on their path to employment to address:
  1. The benefits of employment.
  2. Frequently asked questions.
  3. Concerns of individuals or families.
  4. Perceived obstacles to participating in Integrated employment services.
- ii. Coordinate with Employment First teams to host local trainings.
- iii. DHS/ODE to seek opportunities to present or participate in trainings or conferences that help educate field professionals on their role in educating consumers and families about integrated employment and tools/resources available. Examples of trainings include: DHS statewide annual service coordinator/personal Agent Conference;

12/30/2013

**EMPLOYMENT FIRST OUTREACH AND AWARENESS EDUCATION PROGRAM**  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**

Statewide Annual Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Inservice; Annual Conference of Oregon Special Education Administrators (COSA).

- iv. Develop and implement a Communities of Practice for Services Coordinators and Personal Agents; one goal will be ongoing discussions about expectations regarding education and outreach activities.

**IV. Stakeholders (i.e., provider organizations, Statewide Councils )**

**a. Strategic Tools:**

- i. Coordinate with provider organization associations and statewide councils (Oregon Rehabilitation Association and Community Provider Association of Oregon, VR job developer network of providers, Association of Providers for Supported Employment Services, Oregon Supported Employment Center of Excellence, State Rehabilitation Council, State Independent Living Council) to create:
  - 1. Accessible flyers and other accessible educational and informational materials for provider organizations to give out to individuals and family members, promoting community based employment for individuals. Materials can be hard copy or electronically accessible on websites.
  - 2. Links to provider organizations on the DHS/ODE websites who provide Community Based Supported Employment.

**Phase 3 Plan (July 1, 2014, and June 30, 2015):**

This phase reflects future outreach and awareness educational products, activities and strategies the DHS (Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Office of Developmental Disabilities Services) and the Oregon Department of Education intend to develop over the course of this time period.

In order to make long-term system change, DHS and ODE recognize it is imperative to plant the seeds for employment with individuals and families early. Therefore, it is DHS and ODE's goal to enhance and expand their outreach and awareness education program to include children under the age of 16 years of age and their families. Additionally, DHS wishes to also engage the local business community in its efforts to educate and inform individuals, families and the business community at large about the importance of integrated employment for youth and adults with I/DD.

**I. Individuals**

**a. Strategic Tools:**

- i. Statewide media and marketing campaign aimed at getting individuals to actively engage with the services and supports created, and driving them to the newly designed website from Phase 2. This campaign may include a broad array of print and online communication, aimed specifically at getting individuals with I/DD to the website and engaging with the site, and with the newly created social media pages so that communications can be ongoing and consistent.
- ii. Coordinate with Family to Family Networks across Oregon to develop accessible educational and informational materials for school aged children (under age 16 years) with I/DD and their families.

12/30/2013

**EMPLOYMENT FIRST OUTREACH AND AWARENESS EDUCATION PROGRAM**  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**

**II. Families**

**a. Strategic Tools:**

- i. Coordinate with Family to Family Networks across Oregon to develop accessible educational and informational materials for families of school aged children (under age 16 years) with I/DD.

**III. Schools-**

**a. Strategic Tools:**

- i. Coordinate with ODE and local schools across Oregon to develop accessible educational and informational materials for school aged children (under age 16 years) with I/DD and their families.

**IV. Field Professionals (e.g., Services Coordinators, Personal Agents, Vocational Counselors, Educators)**

**a. Strategic Tools:**

- i. Continue to identify training/conference opportunities -DHS/ODE to seek opportunities to present or participate in trainings or conferences that help educate field professionals on their role in educating consumers and families about integrated employment and tools/resources available.

**V. Stakeholders (i.e., provider organizations, Statewide Councils)**

**a. Strategic Tools:**

- i. Continue to coordinate with provider organization associations and statewide councils (Oregon Rehabilitation Association and Community Provider Association of Oregon, VR job developer network of providers, Association of Providers for Supported Employment Services, Oregon Supported Employment Center of Excellence, State Rehabilitation Council, State Independent Living Council) to create:
  1. Accessible flyers and other accessible educational and informational materials for provider organizations to give out to individuals and family members, promoting community based employment for individuals. Materials can be hard copy or electronically accessible on websites.
  2. Links to provider organizations on the DHS/ODE websites who provide Community Based Supported Employment.

**VI. Business Community at Large**

**a. Strategic Tools:**

- i. Media outreach on success stories, which promote the value of hiring an individual with I/DD. These “hometown” stories can be pitched to local print and TV media to show inspirational stories of specific individuals who have found success working at a particular business.
- ii. Social media sites, particularly LinkedIn, can serve as networking sites between Employment First and businesses, creating opportunities for job boards and job groups for I/DD individuals.

**EMPLOYMENT FIRST OUTREACH AND AWARENESS EDUCATION PROGRAM**  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**

- iii. Marketing campaign, including print, web, and other communications avenues, aimed at businesses that shows the benefits and values of employing individuals with I/DD. This campaign will be business-specific and may include a specific slogan and message aimed at the concerns and goals of the business community.
- iv. Directly engaging the business community through such avenues as trade associations and chambers of commerce.

**Assessment and Quality Improvement:**

DHS and ODE will examine their Outreach and Awareness efforts annually, at a minimum, reporting results in the end of year report to the Statewide Employment Coordinator and statewide Policy Group. Strategies will be edited and revised as needed.