

12-29-16

To: Employment First stakeholders

From: Acacia McGuire Anderson, Statewide Employment First Coordinator

Re: [Employment First](#): Looking back at 2016

(Please forward to your local partners & stakeholders)

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I just wanted to take a moment to wish you all a wonderful holiday season from the DHS Employment First and ODDS employment team. I also wanted to take this opportunity to look back at the hard work and many accomplishments achieved throughout our employment system in the past year. I know that these accomplishments would not be possible without the hard work of service coordinators, personal agents, VR counselors, employment providers, individuals, families, advocacy groups and internal staff, among many others.

Here are just a few accomplishments from 2016:

- Began implementation of the [Lane v. Brown settlement agreement](#);
- Published Employment First [data reports](#) which showed increases in supported employment for people with I/DD and increases in people getting into plan and getting jobs with VR;
- Launched a rural stakeholder work group that came up with a list of suggestions for the statewide system;
- Continued implementation of [Home and Community Based Services](#) regulations and provider assessments;
- Issued new transformation grants for providers;
- Launched new [innovation grants](#) to help increase capacity statewide;
- Continued the work of capacity-building initiatives such as [Seamless Transition](#) and [Project Search](#);
- Published the 2016 [Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement Plan](#);
- Started the Peer to Peer Mentoring Project in collaboration with the Oregon Self Advocacy Coalition and the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities;
- Launched a new [20 Hour Standard for Planning](#) policy and continued outreach throughout the state on this policy; and

- DHS collaborated with the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) on the [Better Employment Success Together](#) (BEST) trainings held statewide.

Thank you for all your tireless work and for helping to improve employment services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We are hearing every day about the work that you are doing and how it is making positive changes in the lives of Oregonians. I wish you all a peaceful and joyful 2017.

~ Acacia