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October 2018

Employment First: Outcomes and Successes

When people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) work in their communities, everyone succeeds. With the right job and supports, everyone can work.



Kelsey works at Burger King in Klamath Falls. It is her first paid job in the community.

Oregon's Employment First policy was crafted with stakeholders and advocates in 2008. The policy states that community jobs are the first priority in planning employment services for working-age adults and youth who experience I/DD.

Oregon's Employment First initiative is a collaboration between the Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS), Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), and the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), along with stakeholders and local teams.

Background

People with I/DD who work in the community have more choice and control over their lives. Working helps increase financial independence, build skills, teach and learn from others, and connect with the community.

According to National Core Indicators data, about 85 percent of people with

I/DD do not have paid work in the community. However, about 45 percent of those not working would like a job in the community

Good for businesses: Businesses that hire people with disabilities say that having employees with disabilities improves the workplace and is good for business. Employers say that people with I/DD are some of their most committed employees.



Simon Date, executive director of the South Columbia Chamber of Commerce, with employees Betty Knod and Cody Epperly.

“This is an untapped workforce. What I tell employers is, ‘You will have a dedicated and committed employee and all you may have to do is make a few accommodations.’” — *Simon Date, Executive Director, South Columbia Chamber of Commerce*

Required by federal policies: Medicaid requires services to be integrated in the community through its [Home and Community Based Services](#). The U.S.

Department of Justice issued

guidance that the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) applies to employment and day services. The federal [Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act](#) (WIOA) places priority on integrated employment for people with disabilities accessing services through VR.

The [Lane v. Brown](#) settlement also has specific requirements that Oregon must decrease the number of people in sheltered workshops and increase the number of people in community employment.

About this document: This report will highlight some of the outcomes and successes achieved toward the goal of increasing community jobs for people with I/DD. All the numbers included in this report are from the upcoming Fall 2018 Employment First Data Report and other reports on ODDS clients for State Fiscal Year 2018 (July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018).

Vocational Rehabilitation



When people with I/DD are seeking work, they often start by going to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). A VR counselor helps a person find a good job fit by doing an assessment and writing a plan for the person. The person and their team, including the VR counselor, chooses a job developer who works with the person to go out in the community and find a good job match.

The number of people with I/DD seeking VR services has dramatically risen. In 2012, 1,921 people in ODDS services had an open case in VR. Today that number is 4,847.

In 2012, there were 274 people with I/DD who closed VR with jobs. In 2018, 684 people with

Pictured, left to right: VR I/DD Counselor Pennie Hartley, employee Linda Akagi, and job coach Alexander Raines with UCP. Linda got her first job at age 62 as a research assistant at Portland State University in the Universal Design Lab, where she helps test technology to help people like her with communication barriers. VR counselor Pennie said she was determined to help support Linda in her goal of community employment. "I said, 'This is the file she is going to get a job.'"

I/DD closed VR with jobs in the community.

VR continues to make progress helping people with I/DD get and maintain community jobs.

To learn more, go to the ODDS [fact sheet](#) and [video](#) that tells more about how job development works.

ODDS Outcomes



Lorenzo (left) works as a dietary aide at Regency Village in Prineville. His job coach Kari Clark helps him to be successful in his job and communicate with his supervisor. He now works 20 hours per week and helps train other dietary aides.

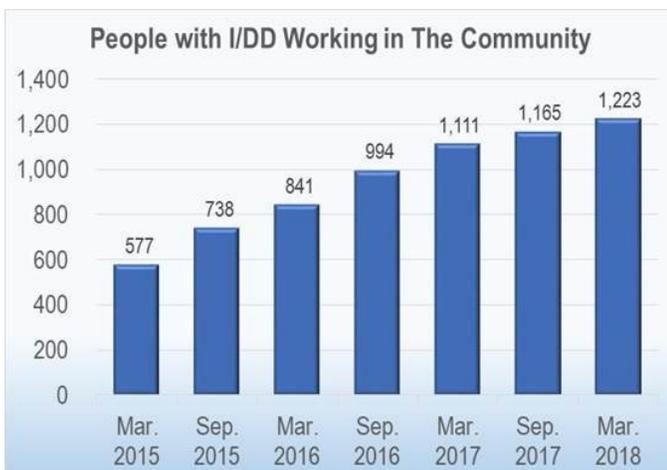
Sometimes when a person with I/DD starts a new job, they might need help from a job coach. A job coach is someone who supports the person at his or her job. This might include things like creating visual aids, making checklists, or making sure the person knows how to communicate with their supervisor and coworkers.

When someone is working with the help of a job coach, this is called Supported Employment. According to data from ODDS, 1,223 people were working in community jobs with supports in March 2018. This is a 10 percent increase from 1,111 people the previous year.

Of the 1,223 people working in community jobs with supports, 319 people worked 20 hours or more. This is a 21 percent increase from the previous year. On average, people working in jobs with supports are making \$11.43 per hour.

Job coaching is meant to be a service that eventually goes away as a person feels more comfortable and knows their job. However, some people may have more significant support needs and sometimes they need job coaching for more time.

Many people are able to do their job independently and ask their coworker or supervisor for help when needed. Everyone has questions or need assistance at times, and people with disabilities are no different.



To learn more, go to the ODDS [fact sheet](#) and [video](#) that tells more about how job coaching works.

Community Inclusion



Susan sorted hangers in the sheltered workshop at Albertina Kerr for many years. After the provider closed its sheltered workshop, they helped Susan find a job at Davis Wright Tremaine law firm in downtown Portland, with the assistance of a DHS Transformation Grant. Susan now works 20 hours per week in a job she loves, as a hospitality clerk. Susan is responsible for stocking the firm's seven kitchens located on four different floors of the Wells Fargo building. She makes coffee, stocks pantries, does dishes, and makes sure the kitchens and break rooms are presentable.

Many advocates, families and individuals believe that people with disabilities are healthiest and happiest when they are fully integrated into their communities.

As Oregon moves in the direction of full community inclusion, there has been an emphasis on moving away from “sheltered workshops,” or facilities where people work mainly with other people with disabilities, often making less than minimum wage. Lane v. Brown Settlement Agreement also requires a decrease in the number of people in sheltered workshops.

In March 2013, there were 2,806 people in sheltered workshops (the highest number recorded in the current data system). In March 2018, there were 664 people in sheltered work. This is a 76 percent decrease.



Oregon continues to assist providers in transforming their services to be community-based and support people in obtaining individual, integrated jobs in the community. Medicaid rules require that all services be community-based by March 2019.

Transition-Age



Ross, 21, works 20-30 hours per week as a school bus driver in La Grande. YTP Specialist Corey Ackerman at La Grande School District helped develop the job for Ross, after learning he has a special love of buses. YTP helped Ross get through the training he needed, and now he loves his job as a driver at Mid-Columbia Bus Company.

Young people are more likely to find a job as an adult if they have work experiences while in school. More young people with I/DD are getting the chance to experience working in the community while they are in high school. In Oregon, many young people enter what are called “transition programs,” or programs designed to help a person transition from school to the adult workforce. These programs help with life skills such as grocery shopping, meal planning and budgeting, but also include community work experiences.

Oregon’s VR, Office of Developmental Disabilities Services and Department of Education collaboratively issued a Request for

Applications in 2017-18 to build capacity for summer work experiences for students with disabilities. The three agencies leveraged funds and recruited community-based organizations to run these work-based learning experiences across the state. In the summer of 2018, more than 300 students with disabilities were served by more than 23 community providers. More than 100 of those students participating experience were students with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Program locations range from urban settings in Eugene, Salem and Portland to rural areas such as Pine Eagle, Vernonia and Central Point. All of these work experiences were paid and located in integrated settings in the community.

In Oregon, 274 transition-age students with I/DD got a job with supports in 2018, up from 255 in 2017.



Brody works at his first paid job, at Baker Sanitary Service in Baker City. YTP Specialist Janie Radinovich-Brose (right) developed the job for Brody while he was in his senior year. She took him to more than 10 employers in his local area and discussed what he was looking for in employment. He chose Baker Sanitary Service because, as he said, "I like things being where they belong." His mother Amy (left) said work has given Brody new confidence and broadened his horizons. "He texts me now; that's new," she said. "And we have something to talk about at the dinner table. We both talk about how our day at work went."

designing and delivering employment services for students with disabilities.

Oregon also has the [Youth Transition Program](#) (YTP), which serves 2,176 students with disabilities (not just those who experience I/DD) in 120 school districts in Oregon. YTP helps prepare students for a community job after school, or for college or another technical program. In 2017, YTP successes included 62 percent of those who exited the program had jobs upon exit. They were working an average of 26 hours per week at an average wage of \$10 per hour. Another 15 percent were in post-secondary education or training.

The Oregon Department of Education's (ODE) Post Schools Outcome Data from 2017 shows some significant improvement for the I/DD population. For instance, in 2017, 35 percent of students surveyed reported attending job training, school or education program in the 12 months after leaving school, compared to 26 percent in 2016. The number of school-leavers working 20 hours or more also increased, from 40 percent to almost 52 percent in 2017.

Oregon VR and the Oregon Department of Education continue to collaborate on the Transition Technical Assistance Network. In 2018, the network added three additional staff, titled Transition Network Facilitator/Pre-ETS Support personnel. These positions are embedded in three regional Education Service Districts (ESDs) and work to support the TNFs and Pre-ETS Coordinators in areas of high density and large rural counties. This team is working to improve Oregon's systems of

What's Next?



Oregon DHS Employment First is engaged in many innovative projects aimed at increasing provider capacity as well as building supports and services for people with I/DD. Some of the projects include:

Project SEARCH

Project SEARCH is an internship training program for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Nationally, about 75 percent of Project SEARCH interns become employed in the community at 16 hours or more per week, far above the national employment rate for people with I/DD.

In Oregon, there are three

sites funded by DHS: Albertina Kerr leads a program at Kaiser Permanente Sunnyside Medical Center, provider Pearl Buck at PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center in Springfield, and Community Access Services has a program with the City of Portland. Project SEARCH students train in 9-month unpaid internships and rotate three times within that time, allowing them to try jobs in a variety of departments. The instructor and skills trainers stay on site with the students.

Albertina Kerr is in its fourth year of Project Search and is currently running three sites: Kaiser Sunnyside Hospital, Kaiser Westside Hospital and Embassy Suites at the Airport. Pearl Buck is finishing its second year of Project Search. They have grown to two sites at PeaceHealth at the hospital's request.

Community Access Services began its first year with Project Search at the City of Portland. Five interns worked at the Portland Water Bureau and the Bureau of Environmental Services

from September 2017-May 2018. A presentation informing Portland City Commissioners of the results was held Aug. 2, 2018 at Portland City Hall. Two of the interns were hired as full-time employees by the city of Portland. Another has taken a job at a local car dealership. Two other graduates are in job development with VR. Portland City Commissioners pledged their support to becoming a model employer hiring employees with I/DD.

Employment Outcomes System

Oregon recently launched a redesigned Employment Outcomes System website. The site, at oregoneos.org, is a platform for collecting data on the job outcomes of people with I/DD who are receiving employment services from ODDS. People and their families can find providers and make choices based on services offered via the EOS website.

The EOS website allows providers to enter capacity for job coaches, job developers and Discovery. This new function can be entered and updated by providers at any time – even daily. SCs, PAs, and VR counselors can now quickly find a list of providers in their area that offer specific services. They can use the comparison functions to compare different providers in their area and see which ones, for instance, have more people in integrated jobs, or have capacity for Discovery.

The website allows users compare employment data, languages that providers are able to serve other than English, capacity, and outcomes from multiple providers to help make an informed decision.

Employment First Road Map

The Employment First Road Map Project helps a person with I/DD and their family explore their journey through the service system. By answering a series of questions, the platform builds an individualized guided path. At the end of the session the user should have a better understanding of the supported employment system as it applies to their situation. In addition, they have the option to print or save a version of their personal road map: user-specified information such as contact information for their local CDDP, brokerages, VR branch office, school YTP program, and information about any of the employment services they expressed interest in during their time on the website.

The vision is for this tool to be useful to people doing their own research on supported employment services, to be used in a guided way with their case management entity, and as a training tool for staff to see how the system parts fit together.

The fully functional website is expected to be released at the end of 2018.

State as Model Employer

The Oregon Department of Human Services, in coordination with the Department of Administrative Services and the Oregon Department of Education, and with the support of SEIU, started the State as Model Employer program to help remove some of the barriers that people with I/DD face to work in state jobs.



(Left to right) The DHS IRMS team includes (left to right): Ken Sirmans, Drew Meriwether, Joe Cook, Joyzanne Gretzinger, Lauren Doak, DeWayne Wuerch, Ryan Lutz, and Ted Stevenson. These eight employees do scanning, data entry and document preparation.

The State as Model Employer program allows hiring managers in any state agency to direct-appoint a person with I/DD who is receiving services from the ODDS into specific pre-approved positions. The hiring manager can work with their local VR branch to identify potential job candidates who might meet the criteria for the position.

The list of pre-approved job classifications for direct placements is online at: <https://go.usa.gov/xPC8E>

Several programs at DHS have already hired employees through this process. Kevin Rodli was hired as an office assistant in Human Resources' Shared Services team. He works 40 hours per week filing personnel and medical files, as well as scanning and photocopying.

The DHS/OHA Imaging and Records Management Services (IRMS) unit hired eight employees through the State as Model Employer program. The work of all members of the team, which includes data entry and document preparation specialists, is essential to keeping data from Medicaid providers, Oregon Health Plan consumers, and other customers, flowing.

More information on the State as Model Employer Program is available on this [fact sheet](#).

This Employment First Outcomes and Successes report is available online with links accessible at the Employment First website under "Documents and Publications" at: <http://iworkwesucceed.org>