



Americans with Disabilities Act

Working Towards Equal Access Employment for People with Disabilities

Panel experts and Organizations: Self-advocates, DRO, BOLI, ODHS, APD/ EPD, ODC, DHEEC, WIPA, WIN, ABLE. ODDS

Date: July 15th, 2025

Agenda

- Session Introduction
- Panel Participant Sharing
- Questions and Answer Session
- Resource Pages Review
- Conclusion

Session introduction

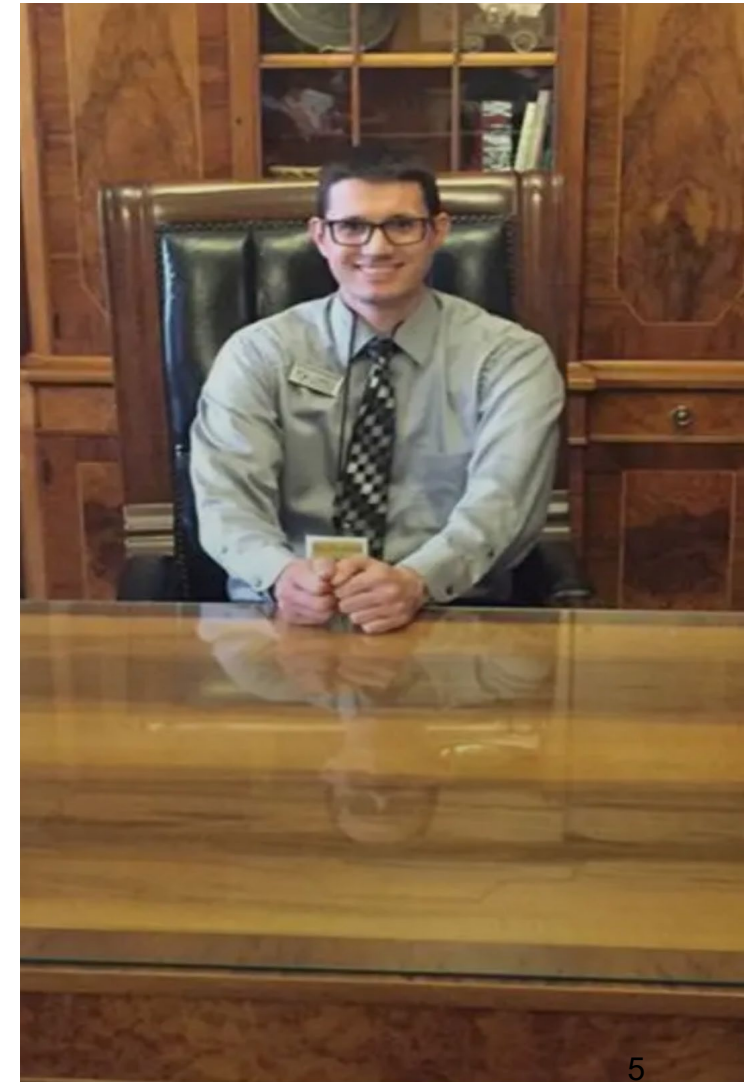
- As part of the American Disabilities Act's 35th Anniversary Celebration for today's presentation we have the opportunity to learn from people who experience a disability and have lived experience with working in Oregon. Additionally, we have several organizations joining us that assist with ensuring people who experience disabilities have the same rights as anyone else in their communities.
- We will learn from the experts, Self-Advocates sharing their experience in employment and how it has helped them live their lives how they want. We will hear about their work and benefits. We will learn why it is important that people who experience disabilities have access to organizations that help them to achieve their career goals while maintaining their benefits and assets.
- We will learn about organizations that help people with their employment goals and help them understand how to access accommodations, achieve their career goals and maintain their benefits and assets throughout their employment journey.

Panel representatives

- Self-Advocate, member of Oregon Self-Advocates Coalition and President of the Jackson County Self-Advocates – Eric Thompson
- Disability Rights of Oregon (Project Independence) – Corinne Schram
- Bureau of Labor and Industry –Ted Wenk
- Disability Rights of Oregon (Work Incentive Planning and Assistance) – Emily Ross
- Work Incentive Network- Katherine Thompson
- ODHS, Adults and People with Disabilities, Employed Persons with Disabilities Program - Kim Randle
- Oregon Disabilities Commission, Disability Health & Employment Equity Coalition member and Self-Advocate-Andrew Caruana
- ABLE Savings Plan - John Valley
- ODHS, Office of Developmental Disabilities - Melanie Hartwig, Cindy DeLashmutt and Jennifer Denley

Eric Thompson self-advocate

- President of the Jackson County Self-Advocates Association
- Oregon Self-Advocates Coalition- Sargent at Arms
- Rogue Community Credit Union Employee
- Writer
- Artist
- Runner-21 Marathons so far!



Disability Rights of Oregon (DRO)

Project Independence

Disability Rights Oregon helps people with disabilities with their disability-related legal issues in Oregon.

Our Vision

We envision a society in which persons with disabilities have equality of opportunity, full participation, and the ability to exercise meaningful choice.

Employment

- A job can give people the opportunity to achieve their dreams. We help empower individuals who are having difficulty getting or keeping a job because of disability-related barriers to protect and assert their rights.
- We can provide assistance to people requiring reasonable accommodations to maintain their jobs.
- We help Oregonians with disabilities who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and have a disability-related employment issue. We assist in eliminating the barriers SSI/SSDI recipients face in their efforts to begin work or return to work.
- We can help recipients of SSI or SSDI with services, benefits or accommodations directly leading to work, including:
 - Reasonable accommodation requests for the workplace
 - Reasonable accommodation requests for college, training programs and licenses that lead to work
 - Other disability-based legal issues that are barriers to employment, such as transportation and housing.

Oregon Bureau of Labor & Industries

BOLI

Protects employment rights, advances employment opportunities, and ensures access to housing and public accommodations free from discrimination.

Disability Rights

There are federal and state laws that protect people with disabilities against discrimination in terms, conditions or privileges of employment: the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which we are celebrating is one of these laws.

Equal pay

- Employees must get equal compensation for equal work regardless of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, marital status, veteran status, disability, or age.
- Employees with disabilities must receive the same benefits as employees without disabilities, if they are working the same job and work hours.

Plan for Work



Plan for Work is one of 74 Work Incentives Planning and Assistance or WIPA projects in the U.S., its territories, and the District of Columbia, providing **no cost** benefits counseling.

- Our goal is to enable Social Security beneficiaries to make informed decisions about work by helping them understand how work may impact benefits, and to support them in their journey to financial independence.
- **Plan for Work** services are available to people who are:
 - Ages 14 years to retirement, and
 - Receiving a Social Security disability-based benefit, and
 - Currently working or seriously considering work, and
 - Live in Oregon or Washington's southern counties of Benton, Clark, Cowlitz, Franklin, Klickitat, Lewis, Pacific, Skamania, Wahkiakum, and Walla Walla.

Work Incentive Planning and Assistance (WIPA)

This service is offered through Disability Rights of Oregon (DRO)

- **Information and Referral:** Providing information about work incentives and referrals to other relevant agencies.
- **Benefits Analysis:** Explaining work incentives and providing worksheets to show how work might affect benefits.
- **Work Incentive Planning:** Helping individuals develop a customized plan for managing their benefits while working.
- **Benefits Management:** Offering ongoing support and adjustments to help individuals maintain their employment and financial independence.
- In essence, these programs empower individuals with disabilities to make informed decisions about work by providing them with the knowledge and support needed to navigate the complexities of work incentives and benefits management.

Call the Ticket to Work help line at 1(866) 968-7842

Plan for Work—Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Program for Oregon
and Southern Washington

Disability Rights Oregon
511 SW 10th Avenue, Suite 200
Portland, OR 97205

(503) 323-9159
1(833) 438-7308 toll-free statewide

Email: pfw@droregon.org

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Work Incentives Network (WIN)

- The Work Incentives Network is an Oregon Department of Human Services program which offers benefits planning services to any Oregonian with a disability who wants to know how working will impact benefits including, but not limited to, Social Security benefits, Veterans' benefits, Medicare, and Medicaid.
- Our [website](#) contains information about how to refer, training opportunities, and more. For questions about our program or services, please make a referral via our website, contact us at 1-800-661-2571, or email win.refer@odhs.oregon.gov

Employed Persons with Disabilities Program

Presented by: Kim Randle

Aging and People with Disabilities (APD) Policy Analyst



History and statistics

- Began February 1999
- Intended to help individuals with disabilities maintain Medicaid coverage while working
- Steady growth since enactment
- Nearly doubled in past 10 years
 - August 2014 = 1740 participants
 - August 2024 = 3021 participants



Eligibility

- Disability only, not age
 - Determined by the Social Security Administration or ODHS
- Higher adjusted (earned income only minus deductions) income limit of 250% of the Federal Poverty Level
 - OSIPM = \$967
 - OSIPM-EPD = \$3,261
- Higher countable resource limit (\$5,000)
- Gross earnings up to \$6,607
- Employment

Participant Fee

EPD participants pay a monthly fee (Medicaid Buy-In)

- Based on **total** countable earned and unearned income
- Payment is required for eligibility

EPD participant fee standards – Effective March 1, 2025

Countable income	Participant fee
Under \$979	\$0
\$979–\$1,304.99	\$50
\$1,305–\$3,260.99	\$100
\$3,261 and above	\$150



Future Legislative Changes

A bill has been submitted for consideration in 2021, 2023 and 2025 seeking the following changes:

- Eliminate income limits
- Eliminate resource limits
- Expand lower age limit from 18 to 16
- Allow continued eligibility for medically improved individuals

None of the bills have made it past Ways and Means so far.

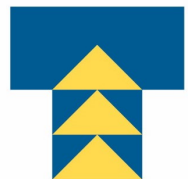
ODC Commissioner, DHEEC member and self-advocate

Oregon Disabilities Commission

- The Oregon Disabilities Commission (**ODC**) is a Governor-appointed commission that is administered by the Oregon Department of Human Services. ODC acts as a coordinating link between and among public and private organizations serving individuals with disabilities.
- The commission is composed of 15 members broadly representative of major public and private agencies who are experienced in or have demonstrated particular interest in the needs of individuals with disabilities. A majority of members are individuals with disabilities.
- The ODC mission is to secure economic, social, legal and political justice for individuals with disabilities through systems change.

Disability Health & Employment Equity Coalition (DHEEC)

- The Disability Health & Employment Equity Coalition of Oregon is a group of stakeholders personally invested in the health and prosperity of the disability community. Through state-level system and policy changes, we strive to create equity in health and employment so the disability community can thrive and prosper in health and wealth.
- DHEEC was the main advocacy group pushing SB20 which would have removed the income/asset limits from EPD.



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John.Valley@ost.state.or.us



OREGON ABLE
SAVINGS PLAN
oregon**ABLE**savings.com

Oregon Department of Human Services

Office of Developmental Disabilities Services

Benefits of Employment

- A paycheck which provides more choices, control and independence
- Opportunities to maintain skills and learn new ones
- Opportunity to teach and learn from others
- Integration, relationships and social connections in the community

How do I work and keep my benefits and resources?

- ODDS Employment Path Benefits Counseling Services
- ODDS Supported Employment Services
- ODDS Collaboration



Questions?

Please raise your hand or put your question in the chat.

- If there are questions, we do not get to we intend to provide a follow-up question and answer document.
- To explore these resources further please access the links in and at the end of this Power Point
- If you have any trouble accessing the links, right click on them and select open hyperlink from the drop-down menu to be taken to the page.
- Please put your full name and email address in the chat if you would like follow-up to your questions. Or want additional resources.

Resource websites

Disability Rights of Oregon

<https://www.droregon.org>

Disability Health & Employment Equity Coalition

<https://disabilityequitycoalition.org/>

Oregon Disability Commission

<https://www.oregon.gov/odhs/agency/pages/odc.aspx>

Oregon Self Advocacy Coalition

<https://www.askosac.org/>



Resource websites and contact links

Bureau of Labor and Industry

<https://www.oregon.gov/boli/pages/index.aspx>

Work Incentive Planning And Assistance - (DRO)

<https://www.ssa.gov/work/WIPA.html>

Ticket to Work Website: <https://choosework.ssa.gov/>

Work Incentives Network

<https://www.oregon.gov/odhs/providers-partners/win/pages/default.aspx>

ABLE Savings Plan

<https://oregonablesavings.com/>

Resources website continued

Adults and People with Disabilities, Employed People with Disabilities Program (EPD)

<https://sharedsystems.dhsoha.state.or.us/DHSForms/Served/de9029.pdf>

Oregon Employment First

<https://www.oregon.gov/odhs/employment-first/pages/default.aspx>

For information about Benefits Counseling through ODDS and Employment First in your area, please contact your Regional Community Liaison and Employment Specialist, link to map below.

<https://www.oregon.gov/odhs/employment-first/Documents/map-odds-regional-employment-specialists-en.pdf>

Power Points and additional resources from panelists and contacts are available. Please put your full name and email address in the chat requesting additional resources to receive them.

If you have any trouble accessing the links, right click on them and select open hyperlink or Open Link from the drop-down menu to be taken to the page.

Conclusion

- Every person has dreams and goals for their life
- Everyone has gifts and talents to share
- Being productive, providing for ourselves and saving for needs and wants is part of the human experience.
- All people need assistance at different times throughout their lives
- No one should be excluded from working toward a full and meaningful life due to hurdles and barriers they face.
- If we all work together in collaboration sharing our knowledge, experiences, processes and procedures we can ensure equity for everyone.
- We must ensure we are learning from the experts about what is needed to achieve a fulfilling life. These are the Self-advocates who live the journey everyday.
- This 35th Anniversary Celebration of the American with Disabilities Act is one step in continuing our momentum to making sure people who experience disabilities have the same rights as everyone in their communities.

Thank you!