



Communication Plan 2013

SITUATION SUMMARY

Ohio launched the Employment First initiative by Governor's Executive Order and the state budget in 2012. The Executive Order created a task force to review policies and programs and make recommendations for improvement. The Task Force membership is: DODD, ODE, ODJFS, ODMH and RSC. There is an Advisory Committee within the task force, which includes a broad membership of professionals working within various portions of the DD system. Most of the stakeholders serving in the Advisory Committee also participated the prior year in a comprehensive review and analysis of Ohio's DD System, conducted as part of DODD's recent membership into the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN). This comprehensive review, along with agency data, provided much of the research that identified how effective Ohio's current Community Employment programs are and what types of policy or structure changes are needed for improvements.

In October 2012, the Task Force submitted Employment First recommendations to Governor Kasich. Included in the recommendations is a goal to create a communication plan, and communication workgroup has now been formed within the Advisory Committee.

COMMUNICATION PLAN SECTIONS

- I.) Communication/Public Relations Goals
- II.) Audiences
- III.) Messages
- IV.) Research Needed
- V.) Planning: Objectives and Strategies (organized by audience)
- VI.) Execution or Implementation: Tactics and Tools (also organized by audience and strategy)
- VII.) Timetable for Execution/Implementation
- VIII.) Budget
- IX.) Evaluation
- X.) Plan updates and continuation

I. COMMUNICATION/PUBLIC RELATIONS GOALS

- Position Employment First as well-known initiative and priority for the state of Ohio.
- Eliminate barriers to choosing community employment by educating individuals and DD System staff on benefits programs.
- Influence county boards, providers and sister agencies to support and create policies, infrastructure and programs that increase the number of individuals with DD who actively seek and work in integrated, community employment settings.
- Change expectations among individuals with DD and their families that community employment is part of their lives; and is a valuable part of an individual's ability to feel integrated into the community, live independently, and build purpose and self-esteem.
- Increase employers' understanding and awareness of individuals with DD as capable, dependable employees; as well as their interest and desire in serving as productive team members.

II. AUDIENCES (SEE ATTACHED GRID FOR MORE EXPLANATION)

- Individuals and families
- DD County Board Superintendents
- SSAs
- Providers (CB providers, private providers)
- County JFS Offices and One Stop Centers (centers' functions include employer education)
- Schools, School Boards and Education Service Centers (Transition Coordinators, School Administrators , Principals)
- Employers (employers, employment agencies, employer trade groups)
- General Public

III. MESSAGES

Community employment is employment that is competitive and takes place in an integrated setting.

Employment First is a priority for the state of Ohio as a statewide initiative to expand community employment opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Recent national data shows that more than 50 percent of working-age adults with developmental disabilities would like a job in the community, while only 18 percent have that as a planned goal in their service plans.

Ohio does not adequately provide opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities to choose and seek community employment rather than sheltered employment. Nearly three times as many individuals are served in sheltered settings rather than community employment. We have to do better.

Employment First Provides more value to businesses and communities by providing more access to dependable and qualified employees.

Community Employment enhances individuals' self-determination and offers opportunities for greater wealth and leads to a better quality of life.

More opportunities for community employment allow individuals to have more flexibility in how they live their lives; and enable individuals to pursue jobs that match their talents, skills and interests.

Audience	Primary Channels (Ways they can be reached best)	What We Want Them to Do or Know by the end of the Year
Individuals and Families	DODD Family Advisory Council, Ohio Coalitions, OSDA, People First, Arc of Ohio, County Boards, MH Centers, Providers, JFS Offices, DD Council, Direct*, Ohio Employment First website, Family and Children First Council, Benefits Analysis Team	Be more aware of Employment First (as a state priority, as an opportunity). Be more aware of how to find information and support related to community employment. Have increased understanding of MBI and other benefits available.
Providers of Services	OPRA, DODD, DD County Boards, website, Regional Networks developed through training by Employment First projects, Family and Children First Council, Benefits Analysis Team	Be aware of, understand and embrace Employment First.
DD County Board Superintendents	DODD, direct, website	Increase Support , promotion and implementation of Employment First.
DD SSAs and related staff	DODD, direct, website, Benefits Analysis Team	
Schools (Boards, Principals, Transition Coordinators, Guidance Counselors)	ODE, Education Regional Teams, DD County Boards, Family and Children First Council, State Support Team Transition Council	*Must capture with Transition team and discussion. Also capture objectives.
RSC Local Networks	RSC	Have access to materials and tools for promoting Employment First.
JFS County Boards and One Stop Centers	ODJFS, Direct	Increased Awareness of Employment First. Increased understanding of how to educate families on MBI benefits. *ODJS has fact sheets, materials and scripts on MBI, as well as a training infrastructure.
Employers (including employee placement service companies)	RSC, BLN, DD County Boards, Employer Trade Groups (such as Chambers and Associations), website, Family and Children First Council	Increased awareness of and acceptance of Employment First.

*Direct means there is expectation there is contact info and ability to directly correspond or interact, such as e-mails or presentations/training.

Note: We anticipate learning more about which channels (and additional channels) of reaching audiences are most functional and productive.

IV. **RESEARCH NEEDED:** We have excellent research from SELN within our system. Do we have, or do we need, additional employer attitude research to evaluate our opportunities with that audience?

Formal Research Needed	Sources of Information	Rationale
Secondary: Identify and 'catalog' all known relevant materials and training networks that can be utilized.	Members of Advisory Committee and Taskforce agencies, other professionals in the field, websites and publications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To have a working contact list, general calendar of opportunities, and reach of existing resources or networks that are relevant to Employment First. To collect and vet materials that are compatible with Employment First goals and philosophy.
Secondary: What we know about employers' attitudes and understanding.	Project Search, Griffin Hammis, SELN report	Identify what we already know (and don't know) on employers' awareness of; attitudes toward; comfort level with; willingness to hire individuals with DD. Explore attitudes and personal comfort level as well as perceived financial and accommodation barriers. Also explore whether they know about DODD, RSC, BLN or any other structure already, and what they think they know. Look for reasons/tipping points/awareness ideas that would make them know more, be open to hiring. <i>*Be able to use key information for incorporating into messaging and training plans.</i>
Survey or other direct research: What is known, understood, and needed in the counties/communities. *This idea overlaps with a similar goal of the training committee. Committees will coordinate implementation.	County Boards and Providers	What do they know about Employment First; awareness of and attitude toward; successes and best practices; barriers to implementing; education needed; communication needed; influences to change; future expectations for population served; employer landscape

V. **PLANNING: OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES**

Audience	Objectives	Strategies
ALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By June 30, 2013, make Ohio’s Employment First initiative more visible to all publics. • By June 30, 2014, successfully “tell the story” that Employment First is a culture transformation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information and resources on Employment First Website. • Garner media coverage on Employment First Recommendations, policy changes, system practices and successes. • Develop written, verbal and visual “stories” that reinforce the cultural shift of looking at Community Employment differently.
Individuals and families who are able and of age to work in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By June 30, 2014, increase the number of students with developmental disabilities entering community employment by 10%, to 165 individuals. • By June 30, 2014 increase the number of working-age adults with developmental disabilities in community employment by 10%, to 7,727 individuals. • By Dec 31, 2013, reduce barriers to employment by increasing awareness of MBI benefits, so that 100% of the eligible population has access to information and /or has been reached at least once. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use videos, articles, websites to generate enthusiasm by sharing and publishing success stories. • Educate on benefits and how to enroll. • Educate individuals on how to engage providers/county boards/support staff in helping people learn more about their Employment First options.
County Board Superintendents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By mid-April 2013, every superintendent will have received information on inter-agency agreements on Employment First. • By the end of 2013, every superintendent will have in place an active Employment First program /or complete strategic plan for implementing. • By the end of 2014, we will increase to 80% the percentage of superintendents who express an attitude that Employment First is a best and necessary practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enlist a network of influential/early adopter supers to encourage other superintendents and county board staff to support Employment First implementation. • Educate County Boards on how to implement effective community employment programs. • Encourage and promote superintendents and county boards that do well and implement best practice employment programs. • Utilize agency directors to Influence opinion by showing unified state leadership support and expectation of policies and programs that support Employment First • Utilize DODD program leaders to educate superintendents and county board staff on developing effective programs and overcoming barriers of resources and individual /family resistance.
SSAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By end of 2013, 100% of SSAs will have been informed or trained that community employment should be an opportunity addressed in every ISP. • By June 30, 2014 increase the number of working-age adults with developmental disabilities in community employment by 10%, to 7,727 individuals. • By end of 2014, 100% of SSAs will have received information/materials/training on benefits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate county boards on how to implement effective employment programs. • Educate SSAs on requirements in rules and law. • Educate SSAs on how to overcome personal barriers and attitudes. • Inform SSAs on benefits

Audience	Objectives	Strategies
Providers (CBs and private providers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By end of 2013, 100% of known providers will have received information on Employment First policies, best practices and benefits information. • Be March 2013, all providers will receive communication on Rule change on Rate and reporting requirements (with details on where, when and how to submit info). • As needed, and promptly, providers will receive details about additional policy or statute changes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of and Educate employment service providers on Employment First expectations, barriers to employment, and implementation of services. • Keep reporting requirements top of mind for data collection needs
County JFS Offices and One-Stop Shops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By end of 2014, 100% of local JFS offices will have received materials on benefits information for DD audiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct training sessions or presentation sessions for local offices. • Develop a guide on how to explain benefits in one-to-one conversations.
Transition Coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By June 30, 2013, develop a database of coordinators. • By June 30, 2014, increase the number of students with developmental disabilities entering community employment by 10%, to 165 individuals • By Sep 30, 2013, 100% transition coordinators should have received materials on best practices for supporting students, as well as information on the training plans/schedules. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop videos explaining Employment First and key points. • Develop written materials • Conduct training sessions • Conference
School Administrators, Guidance Counselors and Principals, Special Ed Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By June 2013, 100% of schools, school superintendents and principals will have received material on Employment First and information about the requirements for IEPs 	Increase awareness of Employment First as a priority cultural shift
Medical Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be discussed in next communication committee 	TBD
Employers/Trade Groups Representing Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness of employability of individuals with DD and be open to hiring. • Decrease concerns about employment barriers and costs. • Develop tools and training to help counties develop partnerships and relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop materials for employer awareness. • Provide training and consultation tools to help counties build partnerships with and engage employers (Training Committee)

VI. EXECUTION (IMPLEMENTATION)

Audience	Strategy	Message	Tactics/tools
ALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information and resources on Employment First Website. • Garner media coverage on Employment First Recommendations, policy changes, system practices and successes. 	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch Ohio Employment First Website/links from all agencies • Create talking points and media kit • Identify key Employment First spokespeople and their roles. • Develop media talking points and suggestions for county boards/supers. • Press releases on recommendations, successful programs, policy changes.
Individuals and families who are able and of age to work in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of success stories to generate enthusiasm for community employment. • Educate on benefits and how to enroll. • Educate individuals on how to engage providers/county boards/support staff in helping people learn more about their Employment First options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community employment is employment that is competitive and takes place in an integrated setting. • Community Employment enhances individuals' self-determination and offers opportunities for greater wealth and leads to a better quality of life. • More opportunities for community employment allow individuals to have more flexibility in how they live their lives; and enable individuals to pursue jobs that match their talents, skills and interests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a workshop/conference on benefits (conference trains staff too) • Develop testimonial videos featuring staff, individuals, and employers on the value of community employment. • Gather and develop success story videos showing how quality of life is improved for individual in community employment. • Gather written testimonials and photos for website and publications. • Develop a training presentation and training schedule for benefits. • Develop a brochure on benefits. • Develop video with conversation to individuals on how to talk with support staff and begin exploring employment.
Superintendents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate County Boards on how to implement effective community employment programs. • Enlist a network of influential/early adopter supers to encourage other superintendents and county board staff to support Employment First. • Promote county boards that do well and implement best practice programs. • Influence opinion by showing unified state leadership support and expectations • Educate superintendents and county board staff on developing effective programs and overcoming barriers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community employment is employment that is competitive and takes place in an integrated setting. • Employment First is a priority for the state of Ohio as a statewide initiative to expand community employment opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities. • Ohio does not adequately provide opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities to choose and seek community employment rather than sheltered employment. We have to do better. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct Three Regional Training Meetings on benefits. • Develop Talking points/ presentation kits; • Create speaker/ spokesperson list and availability of each; • Create a calendar of speaking opps or visit schedules; • Publish and promote a 'best-practice county' list on Website, in Pipeline and through a press release. • Develop an Employment First "state priority" video, showcasing coordination among all state agencies, for websites • Develop Employment First testimonial video scripts for each agency to use for their director website videos • Develop and pitch Op/ed pieces for local media outlets on the value of making programs available in community.

Audience	Objective	Message	Tactics/Tools
SSAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate county boards on how to implement effective employment programs. • Educate SSAs on requirements in rules and law. • Educate SSAs on how to overcome personal barriers and attitudes. • Inform SSAs on MBI benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community employment is employment that is competitive and takes place in an integrated setting. • Community Employment enhances individuals' self-determination and offers opportunities for greater wealth and leads to a better quality of life. • More opportunities for community employment allow individuals to have more flexibility in how they live their lives; and enable individuals to pursue jobs that match their talents, skills and interests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct Three Regional Training Meetings on benefits. • Develop one-pagers or fact sheets on Employment First requirements. • Develop an SSA guidebook on the interagency agreements and interagency policy alignments, complete with key state and local contacts. • Develop an SSA FAQ sheet • Develop materials on how to explain benefits one-to-one. • Publish 4 Pipeline articles with interviews from SSAs on how they encourage and facilitate successful employment endeavors with individuals.
Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of and Educate employment service providers on Employment First expectations, barriers to employment, and implementation of services. 	All Plus specific messaging guided by training committee's research and evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop/conference • Conduct Three Regional Training Meetings on benefits.
Local JFS Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate on MBI and how to make people aware. 	All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop materials on how to explain benefits. • Conduct training/presentation sessions.
Transition Coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of Employment First and state expectations. • Educate on interagency agreements and policy changes related to Employment First. 	All Plus specific messaging guided by Transition Committee's planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct trainings and presentations • Provide materials and guidelines
Schools Administrators and Principals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of and garner support for Employment First preparation. 	All Plus specific messaging guided by Transition Committee's planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide materials and information
Employers/ Employer Trade Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of • Raise awareness of DD System (CBs). • Increase perception of a ready and capable workforce. • Decrease concerns about barriers to providing supports 	Employment First Provides more value to businesses and communities by providing more access to dependable and qualified employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide materials • Provide tools and trainings for counties/communities to help them build partnerships

VII. TIMETABLE

P = Planning
D= Developing
E= Execution

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Research												
Secondary: Identify and capture existing training networks and relevant written materials		D	E									
Secondary Research Evaluation to Capture Relevant Messaging and Gaps, Employer Audience	P	E										
Survey (CBs/Providers)	D	E										
Tactics/Tools												
Employment First Overview Speech Shell and Presentation Template		E										
Employment First Website	D	D E										
Media kit	D	E										
Identify Spokespeople	E											
Press Release on Recommendations		E										
Press Release on Website Launch			E									
Press Releases: Major Policy Announcements												
Press Releases: 2013 Budget/Adopted							E					
Press Releases on Successes												
Conference	P	P	D	D	D	E						
Testimonial Videos		P D	E									
Gather Success Story Videos	P	E										
Develop Success Story Videos	P	P	D	D	D	E						
Written Testimonials	P	E										
Photos (gather for website)	P	E										
Training Presentation: Benefits	DE	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Brochure: Benefits	P	D		E								
SSA Video: How to enthuse individuals and families			P	D								
Regional Training Meetings												
Talking Points: Employment First	D											
Speaker List: Supers		D										
Presentation Calendar		P	D									
Press Release: Best Practice Counties		DE										
Pipeline Extra: Best Practice Counties		DE										
Local Op Ed Articles			DE			DE			DE			DE
Guideline Doc: 3-5 Best Practices to Special Publication or Video: Top 4-5 Counties		D										
Fact Sheets: Employment First Overview; EF Requirements	D	E										
SSA Guidebook: Interagency Agreements and Rules/Policies on Employment First												
SSA and JFS Guide: explain Benefits												

IX: Evaluation

Measurement for each objective shall be evaluated (e.g., objective met; objective met partially; etc)

X: Plan Updates and Continuation

The Department of Developmental Disabilities, as the lead agency of the Employment First Task Force, shall assume responsibility for ensuring an annual communication plan is coordinated and updated.

While the original plan operates on a calendar year, the subsequent years' updates and reviews shall operate on a fiscal year to accommodate budget planning. The update, review of the communication plan will be completed Dec 31 of each year.

At the end of calendar year 2013, this plan will continue through the end of the fiscal year (June 30, 2014), with tactics added to the calendar as needed.