



pennsylvania

# Employment First

STATE FISCAL YEAR 2016-17 **QUARTER FOUR** UPDATES



*Quarter Four = April, May, and June 2017*

**II. PRIORITY**

RAISE THE EXPECTATIONS OF EMPLOYMENT GOALS FOR CHILDREN WITH A DISABILITY AT AN EARLY AGE. WORK WITH PARENTS AND PUBLICLY FUNDED PROGRAMS TO SHIFT EXPECTATIONS TOWARD THIS GOAL.

**Department of Human Services (DHS)**

The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) has scheduled trainings with service coordinators throughout the commonwealth during July and August 2017. This training will give the service coordinators the tools needed to discuss employment and positive life course trajectories with parents during Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings. This goal will be met by September 1, 2017.

OCDEL's Inclusion Policy Announcement was released to OCDEL stakeholders as final on June 26, 2017.

**III. PRIORITY**

PREPARE YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY TO BECOME WORKING ADULTS WITH A DISABILITY.

**Department of Labor and Industry**

As of June 1, 2017, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) has completed 749 Career and Information sessions throughout the commonwealth, and included 8,553 participants. This is directly connected to Section 511 and helping individuals become more informed about vocational rehabilitation services and supports that are available to them to pursue competitive integrated employment. All 14c corporations within Pennsylvania will have had contact from OVR for Career and Information sessions by July 22, 2017.



OVR will also conduct 15 regional Experience the Employment Connections between September and November 2017. These sessions will be team focused between staff at OVR, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and DHS. Discussions will be centered on how federal rules and laws have created challenges, and how solutions to those challenges can be implemented between partners.

OVR is still on track for implementing the revised Supported Employment Policy in fall/winter 2017. This revision will include guidelines for Discovery and Customized Employment. Phase II of the pilot includes Erie, Pittsburgh, Altoona, York, Allentown, and Norristown district offices. Staff training on Discovery and Customized Employment was provided via video conference on June 13, 2017. All OVR offices are now able to provide Discovery and Customized Employment Services.

Design and development of the Commonwealth Workforce Development System functionality are currently underway in preparation for implementation and training on the new Supported Employment policy for both OVR staff and providers targeted for fall 2017.



### **Pennsylvania Department of Education**

The Bureau of Special Education (BSE) has developed a training to be held with the Intermediate Unit Transition Training and Consultation Staff (TACS) in early August 2017. This training will delve into how the ideas of competitive integrated employment can be incorporated into the development and implementation of IEPs. The TACS in return will share this information with their member districts throughout the next school year. BSE, via the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN), has assisted in the development of the Jr. Summer Academy for students with visual impairments, including blindness, which began on June 21, 2017. BSE/PaTTAN provided training to the staff that will be working with the students throughout the week.

**IV. PRIORITY**

TRANSITION STUDENTS FROM SECONDARY EDUCATION TO ADULT LIFE. GIVEN THE SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENT OF PUBLIC RESOURCES PREPARING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY TO BE PRODUCTIVE ADULTS, ALL STATE AGENCIES MUST BE COMMITTED TO EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES, INNOVATION, AND SEAMLESSNESS WHEN STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK.

**Department of Human Services**

The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) received federal approval for its Consolidated and Person/Family Directed Support (P/FDS) waiver renewals to include the following, effective July 1, 2017: (1) Advanced Supported Employment service definition, which is a new service that will encourage more providers to participate in provisions of Discovery and Customized Employment via an outcomes based payment model. ODP and the Arc of Pennsylvania have been collaborating on the Discovery Initiative in an effort to train nationally certified Discovery consultants throughout the state. (2) Addition of Benefits Counseling to the waivers. ODP and the Office of Long Term Living (OLTL) are working to secure a contract for Certified Work Incentive Counselor training. (3) Expansion of the P/FDS waiver prioritizing school graduates for enrollment and exempting employment services from the \$33,000 cap on services.

**Department of Labor and Industry**

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Customized Employment. Phase II of the pilot includes Erie, Pittsburgh, Altoona, York, Allentown, and Norristown district offices. Staff training on Discovery and Customized Employment was provided via video conference on June 13, 2017. All OVR offices are now able to provide Discovery and Customized Employment Services. Design and development of the Commonwealth Workforce Development System functionality are currently underway in preparation for implementation and training on the new Supported Employment policy for both OVR staff and providers targeted for fall 2017.

OVR will conduct Summer Academies during the summer of 2017. Summer Academies are aimed at providing students with disabilities an opportunity to experience college life and learn about their unique needs in order to transition into post-secondary training programs. OVR will also support “My Work Initiative,” which is a paid work experience project, through the use of OVR’s On the Job Training Wage Reimbursement program. This program is currently available for high school students in Allegheny County. 300 students will work with 50 local municipalities in Allegheny County and gain work experience in various occupational industry clusters. This program will be replicated in other local municipalities by summer 2018.



#### V. PRIORITY



ASSIST ADULTS WITH A DISABILITY  
IN GETTING AND KEEPING A JOB.



#### Department of Human Services

The Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services’ (OMHSAS) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been approved and is in the procurement process. The purpose of the MOU is to fund increased service capacity and innovation. OVR will use these funds for training and certification



to increase the number of certified peer specialists (CPS), including additional sub-specializations for young adults and older adults, and increase pre-employment services and employment opportunities for youth and young adults with serious mental illness and/or emotional disturbance. The time frame has been extended due to revisions and approvals by both OVR and DHS. The Certified Peer Specialist (CPS) training for individuals who are deaf and use American Sign Language as their main form of communication will be held prior to the end of the calendar year. This is a new training activity for a specialized population which has required ongoing adaptations based upon input from stakeholders. The curriculum to train CPS to work with youth and young adults has been developed, and the trainings are available on an ongoing basis.



Three veteran specific Fairweather Lodges were developed in this fiscal year and are currently operational, plus two more are in development. Staff from Hiram G. Andrews Center (HGAC) went to DuBois in January 2017 to observe a training lodge and view its curriculum. Evaluation of putting a training lodge at HGAC is in process and the OMHSAS Fairweather Lodge workgroup will visit HGAC later this year. The county plans are now in the review process. When all of the plans have been reviewed, the employment data will be compiled as the baseline information to utilize for planning purposes.

Draft regulations to address the needs of youth and young adults ages 14-17 who would benefit from PRS are in the internal review process.

ODP's service definitions to support the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) home and community-based services (HCBS) rule that will support community participation and competitive integrated employment are on target. Regional Provider "Transformation Bootcamps" were provided in collaboration with OVR. 50 provider agencies attended. A request for proposals (RFP) was developed by ODP/OVR for an in-state contractor to oversee mini grants to transitioning providers. The RFP is due for posting in July 2017.



OLTL is currently working to build capacity for all new employment services providers, especially in the northwest and southwest areas of Pennsylvania. There are currently 32 OLTL employment services providers. 18 providers are certified; 14 providers are following a corrective action plan. The corrective action allows prior employment services providers (supported employment and pre-vocational services) to work towards meeting the requirements of the new employment services while continuing to provide services to participants. New employment services require the certified employment support professional certification (CESP). Two Hundred individuals have taken the exam, 133 have passed and 28 exams have not yet been scored. In addition to those arranged by the National Association of People Supporting Employment, OLTL added an additional five exam sites in Pennsylvania.

OLTL has created an online employment training module that will soon be deployed. Since October 2016, OLTL's training contractor conducted regional instructor led Service Coordination Training. Employment as a goal and related services were added as part of this training.



Additionally, OLTL has conducted ongoing webinars for service coordinators and other stakeholders. These webinars can be accessed via the OLTL training webpage. OLTL is also currently conducting a pilot program with four service coordination entities (SCEs). Each of the SCEs serves a large amount of OLTL HCBS participants. OLTL has designated an "Employment Champion" at each of the four SCEs, and has asked them to assist OLTL in working closely with the SCs at their agency and the participants that are interested in working and are considered to be "job ready." The intention is to assist each participant with moving forward with their work goals.

### **Department of Labor and Industry**

Dedicated Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors continue to provide vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with an intellectual disability (ID) and/



or autism. At a recent collaboration meeting, OVR provided an update on closed and open cases for customers with ID and/or autism that received an array of paid services between July 1, 2016 and May 9, 2017.

ODP Service Definitions will be changing as of July 1, 2017 to provide greater flexibility to meet the needs of each individual. OVR will work with the “team” (Individual, Family, Supports Coordinator, Service Provider, Employer, etc.) to determine how individuals’ needs can be met through a “coordinated schedule of services.”

The MOU between OVR and DHS has moved from draft stage to the Comptroller’s Office. The estimated total amount of the MOU remains at \$235,000. OMHSAS and OVR have identified that individuals with deafness and hard of hearing impairments are in need of CPS support. The MOU outlines a plan for providing support. The first CPS training for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals will take place in November 2017. OMHSAS and OVR received positive feedback from the pilot. The plan is to discuss ways of bringing the need for youth and young adults CPS training under pre-employment transition services. Individuals with serious mental health impairments historically have the lowest outcomes for successful integrated employment. Attention must be given to youth early on, in the form of support through a peer specialist. A training for the east, west and central parts of the state will be scheduled by December 2017.

## VI. PRIORITY



**TRANSPORTATION. FOR INDIVIDUALS TO SUCCEED ON THE JOB, THEY NEED RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION TO GET TO AND FROM WORK, ON TIME, EVERY TIME.**



### **Department of Human Services**

ODP received federal approval of its Consolidated and Person/Family Directed Support (P/FDS) waivers which allow individuals in residential settings to be authorized for transportation as a discrete service for the purpose of employment.

OLTL held a transportation webinar on June 29, 2017.



### **Pennsylvania Department of Transportation**

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) recently accepted applications for a Vanpool Incentive Program that will create vanpools across the state that would provide a lower cost alternative for people to commute to work. Applications were due June 30, 2017.

The program will invest up to \$1 million annually and is open to government entities, nonprofit entities, and transportation companies. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible vanpools would be eligible for a monthly subsidy up to \$1,200 per van and would be eligible for an ongoing \$400 per month subsidy after the third year. Participants would also be eligible for state investments to cover the cost to convert a van to be ADA accessible.

To qualify for the program, entities must create a new vanpool that has not operated previously to or from the identified destination or origin point. The vanpool must also have at least an expected 60 percent occupancy; five riders for seven-person vans; seven riders for ten-person vans; nine riders for twelve-person vans (including ADA) and eleven riders for fifteen-person vans.

To ensure proof of membership, vanpool riders will pay a minimum of \$25 per month, with the final cost determined by providers.



### **VII. PRIORITY**

LEAD BY EXAMPLE:  
IMPROVE STATE CONTRACTS.



### **Department of General Services**

Since going live with the new Diversity, Inclusion, and Small Business Opportunities (DISBO) category for disabled-owned businesses on July 1, 2016, The Department of General Services (DGS) has verified certifications for six small business that qualify. Thus far, these businesses have not yet successfully competed for a contract or subcontract. Efforts to recruit additional disabled-owned businesses are ongoing.



**VIII. PRIORITY****LEAD BY EXAMPLE: REDUCE BARRIERS  
TO COMMONWEALTH EMPLOYMENT.****Department of General Services**

Responsibility for information technology (IT) procurement transferred from the Office of Administration (OA) back to DGS on July 1, 2017. DGS will work to incorporate the recommendation into the specifications and evaluation process for future technology procurements.

**Department of Labor and Industry**

OVR is working with Workforce Development to continue last year's internship model with a focus on youth with disabilities, as well as, exploring opportunities to place students with disabilities in the Conservation Corps. Roll out of the recruit to hire initiative is projected to occur the first quarter of 2018. OVR will also conduct a staff information session on August 23, 2017, to introduce staff members to accessing the opportunities for non-civil service working positions within the commonwealth. The commonwealth is currently implementing the first phase of its One Human Resources (HR) initiative which creates a comprehensive enterprise recruit to hire program. In the roll out of this program, the commonwealth will be employing best practices for the recruitment and retention of people with disabilities, inclusive of utilizing current intern positions to expose post-secondary students with

disabilities to commonwealth employment. OVR has arrangements to support wages paid in the form of a reimbursement. OVR's arrangement and agreement document has to be approved by OA and the Legal Department.



### Office of Administration

OA has reviewed and confirmed that its current employee on-boarding process is accessible. OA reviewed and updated the "Disability-Related Training for Supervisors & Managers", completed a draft of web-based disability awareness training which will be required for managers and supervisors and a version available for all Commonwealth employees. Such training initiatives will be deployed following the restructuring of the HR delivery centers. Standard procurement language addressing disability accessibility has been developed which is now being utilized in procurements.



### IX. PRIORITY

EXPAND PRIVATE-PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS.



### Department of Human Services

OLTL continues to work with OVR, ODP, and numerous OLTL stakeholder groups and professional organizations on the "Employment First" Initiative.



### XI. PRIORITY

COLLECT AND COORDINATE DATA.



### Pennsylvania Department of Education

PDE released a pennlink to all local education agencies (LEAs) across the commonwealth to provide clarity and descriptors to the data collection for Act 26. This pennlink was released May 31, 2017. The window for collecting this data from school districts is open and responses from LEAs are beginning to populate the database.



