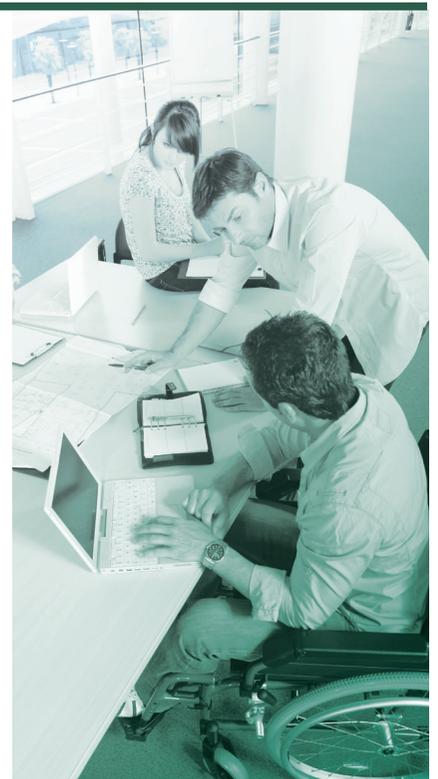


pennsylvania

# Employment First

STATE FISCAL YEAR 2017-18 **QUARTER ONE** UPDATES



*Quarter One = July, August, September 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**

The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) has completed the training with the service coordinators on life course trajectories. The annotated Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP) and the Individualized Education Program (IEP) were revised to include prompts for discussions with families about their children's future goals including work. These initial steps were completed and the work is now ongoing.

OCDEL issued Inclusion Guidelines in the fall of 2017. The purpose of these inclusion guidelines is to provide written guidance to assist Pennsylvania's early childhood programs as they continue to show progress and increase the number of children supported in inclusive settings. This philosophy is described perfectly through a direct quote from the guidelines: "Inclusion is not just a school issue. It's about preparing our children to become adults who are actively participating members of their communities. It is about participation of individuals with disabilities as equal and accepted members of society."

The guidelines, and other resources, can be found at [www.eita-pa.org](http://www.eita-pa.org), under "Topics of Interest," then "Inclusion."

### **Office of Vocational Rehabilitation**

OVR has expanded overtime opportunities for staff to be involved in activities and events that occur in schools outside of normal business hours. This includes events such as transition fairs/nights, open houses, back to school nights and IEP meetings. Engagement in parent support groups and Right to Education Task Force parent groups has been a standard activity.

OVR transition staff are also involved in local Transition Coordinating Councils, which offer trainings and outreach opportunities for parents. Statewide parent webinar trainings have been offered and completed at a number of cyber schools.

In addition, OVR has produced a six-minute Early Reach video to use with professionals, parents and students with disabilities to encourage the presence of Early Reach Coordinators in schools and promote the idea of employment and independence through OVR services.



### III. PRIORITY

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



#### **Office of Vocational Rehabilitation**

Early Reach continues to expand its service scope and delivery. Early Reach Coordinators have increased their presence in schools within the Commonwealth, delivering pre-employment transition services to students in group settings.

Coordinators are also attending IEPs on a regular basis. Early Reach teams have expanded by adding additional Early Reach Coordinators to the OVR staff complement. Early Reach Initiative is developing a pre-employment transition services curriculum for use in schools where Early Reach Coordinators deliver services, which can be adapted and modified to meet the needs of student ability levels.

OVR has three regional Section 511 Specialists providing career information and Referral sessions to individuals who are receiving sub-minimum wages in accordance with regulations set forth under Section 511 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA). For the program year ending

July 22, 2017, OVR staff completed a total of 989 sessions to 9,854 individuals who are being paid subminimum wage to inform those workers of available employment supports and services. OVR is active in providing sessions for the 2017-18 program year.

Experience the Employment Connection (EEC) 2017 successfully rolled out statewide. The final session was held on November 9, 2017 in Allentown.

The 2017 PA Community on Transition Conference: Pathways to Success – Transitioning into Tomorrow Together was held at the Penn Stater Conference Center and Hotel in State College on August 8-11, 2017. More than 30 conference sessions were presented by OVR staff, in collaboration





with our partners, particularly school districts, in promoting the successful transition of youth/young adults with disabilities to post-school outcomes of employment, post-secondary education and training, community participation and healthy lifestyles.

OVR issued updated guidance and a new Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) Provider Agreement that was effective on July 1, 2017 that designates what services are allowable under PETS, rates, and reporting requirements for PETS provider agencies. PETS guidance continues to be refined as we learn more about the intention of the PETS program from Rehabilitation Services Administration. OVR continues to enroll new providers using the PETS Provider Agreement and is working on additional collaborations using PETS funding.

### **Pennsylvania Department of Education**

The Bureau of Special Education (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. The Junior Summer Academy for students with visual impairments, including blindness was completed and successful; and the academy will occur again during the summer of 2018. Slight adjustments to the program delivery will occur after reviewing feedback from participants and individuals associated with this first-time event.

#### **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) approval of Advanced Supported Employment service, 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) 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.

DHS, OVR, and PDE are currently in the process of implementing a pilot data sharing agreement across eight school districts in Allegheny County. The goal of this pilot program is to help reduce delays and eliminate duplication.



#### V. PRIORITY

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



#### **Department of Human Services**

Under the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS), there are two memorandums of understanding (MOUs) between OMHSAS and OVR that are relevant to the Employment First Initiative. The first MOU focuses on increasing funding in order to expand service capacity and innovation. This MOU will pool resources from OMHSAS and OVR, which will allow OVR the ability to tap into federal dollars to support efforts outlined in the MOU. The revised projected timeframe of implementation is December 2017.

The second MOU between OMHSAS and OVR focuses specifically on trainings for Certified Peer Specialists (CPS). It includes the CPS training for deaf individuals, the CPS trainings for individuals who want to work with youth and young adults, as well as other specialized continuing education trainings that have been developed with university partners. Two training sessions were held in King of Prussia, PA on December 4-8, 2017 and December 11-15, 2017. The MOU, which allows OVR to increase funds to cover the CPS training and continuing education costs, was completed in June 2017. Two training vendors will conduct two 10-day trainings each over the next calendar year which will target candidates in the age range of 18-30 who want to become Certified Peer Specialists.



An additional veteran-specific Fairweather Lodge is now in operation in Erie, bringing the total to four veteran specific lodges in operation. Two additional lodges are in development, one in Clearfield County and one in Lackawanna County. The lodges are projected to be complete by December 31, 2018.

OMHSAS held a summit on October 24, 2017 for Pennsylvania's licensed assertive community treatment (ACT) teams, with a breakout entitled, "Increasing Employment Outcomes," which promoted employment in the 26 counties with ACT teams. The county plans have been reviewed and revisions have been received; the employment data will be compiled over the next few weeks.

Draft regulations to address the needs of youth and young adults ages 14-17 are in the internal review process. This is expected to be promulgated by December 2018.

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 were implemented on July 1, 2017.



A request for quotation (RFQ) created by ODP/OVR for an in-state contractor to oversee mini grants to transitioning providers was submitted to procurement for review in November 2017. The RFQ will be reissued in February 2018.

ODP and OLTL are currently in the process of negotiating a contract with Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) related to Benefits Counseling training. VCU would come to Pennsylvania in order to train and support two cohorts of individuals who would like to become certified in Benefits Counseling. The expected timeframe for implementation is March 2018.

By July 2017, two individuals from each state center will be trained in Discovery Services. By January 2018, two individuals will be



certified in Discovery Services.

OLTL continues to work on building capacity for all new employment services providers. There are currently 35 OLTL employment services providers. 21 providers are certified and 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). OLTL arranged 18 exam sites from April 2017 through May 2018. Two-hundred and sixty-eight people have taken the exam, and 195 have passed.

OLTL has created an online employment training module that was implemented in November 2017. Since implementation, 268 individuals have completed the training. Additionally, OLTL has conducted ongoing webinars for service coordinators and other stakeholders on topics such as PA Able, transportation, and housing. These webinars can be accessed via the OLTL training webpage.

OLTL continues to conduct a pilot program with four service coordination entities (SCEs). Each of the SCEs serves a large percentage 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.

### **Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)**

New ODP service definitions were implemented on 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.

### **Department of General Services (DGS)**

There were no referrals to BDISBO (Bureau of Diversity, Inclusion and Small Business Opportunities) this quarter from OVR, ODP, or OLTL.



## 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 P/FDS waivers, which allow individuals in residential settings to be authorized for transportation as a discrete service for the purpose of employment. These waiver amendments were implemented on July 1, 2017.

OLTL held two webinars related to transportation. These webinars took place on June 15, 2017 and June 29, 2017.

### Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) received applications for the Vanpool Incentive Program and is working with our Office of Chief Counsel to finalize grant agreements.

PennDOT currently has 18 facility projects for ADA sidewalk and restroom improvements. 13 projects are completed with the remaining five in construction or design. The projects are being completed at various roadside rest stops, driver license centers, district offices, and county offices.



## VII. PRIORITY

LEAD BY EXAMPLE:  
IMPROVE STATE CONTRACTS.



### Department of General Services

BDISBO has increased the number of certified disabled-owned businesses from six to seven this quarter.

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

DGS-Bureau of Procurement (BOP) IT Procurement has developed new language supporting the Executive Order which mandates the awarded contractor provide an accessibility plan to include assistive technology where applicable. The new language was made part of our invitation for bids (IFB) for IT Hardware and will be employed on an imminent solicitation for mainframes, servers, and storage devices.

Language follows: Accessibility Needs. The Commonwealth's Executive Order 2016-03, 2016-03 - Establishing "Employment First" Policy and Increasing Competitive Integrated Employment for Pennsylvanians with a Disability, states that Commonwealth employees with disabilities may require accommodations of assistive technology in order to perform the functions of their jobs. DGS and OA will further the objectives of providing appropriate accommodation and support through the contracts resulting from this RFP. Offerors must provide an accessibility plan and assistive technology for the various lots of this RFP, as applicable.

DGS BOP has conducted a review of all its non-IT statewide contracts and will begin to embed this language at renewals, re-bids, or in new solicitations, as applicable.

**Office of Administration**

The Pennsylvania Office of Administration (OA) is developing a draft overview to be routed consistent with identified timeframe in relation to determining a hiring goal for Executive Agencies.

Roll-out of the Recruit-to-Hire initiative is projected to occur in the first quarter of 2018. OA also released a new website design to [employment.pa.gov](http://employment.pa.gov) that is ADA compliant. In addition, to further best practices, OA and OVR are meeting to discuss the recruitment and retention of people with disabilities.

OA's Recruit-to-Hire program will incorporate best practices related to successful interview processes for individuals with disabilities. Through the Talent Management Office, OA is reviewing best practices to implement training that accommodates employees' disabilities. OA works with employees with disabilities and those who develop disabilities during their employment with the Commonwealth to provide accommodations in order to retain these qualified employees.



The commonwealth is committed to the development and implementation of a strategy which serves to most effectively enhance our ability to recruit people with disabilities. Dialogue continues among responsible parties. Federal and other states' programs related to the development of a hiring process that explicitly targets individuals with severe physical, psychiatric, and intellectual disabilities have been researched, and an overview of those practices is being developed.

Conversations have occurred between OA's Talent Management Office and OVR. Using the Government Service Intern job classification, OA and OVR will implement a program for summer 2018 in which OVR will supply qualified candidates with a disability for Commonwealth internships in Harrisburg. OVR will be responsible for funding the internships and making any reasonable accommodation that may be necessary within an agency for the internship. OA reviewed and updated the Disability-Related Training for supervisors and managers, as well as the Disability Awareness Training for non-supervisors. The expected launch of these trainings in learning solution (LSO) format is Feb. 12, 2018 and Feb. 20, 2018, respectively.

DGS and OA will further the objectives of providing appropriate accommodation support by working with disability accessibility experts to identify individuals to assist with testing accessibility specifications before being used widely, accepted, or purchased. Dialogue is occurring between the responsible parties to develop a strategy consistent with the stated goal.

The mechanics associated with the granting of non-standard work schedules as an accommodation have been reviewed and a strategy has been developed to enable the awareness of the workforce of such opportunities.

The equal employment opportunity (EEO) community received a presentation on the Shared Ride Program. Additional information on the Shared Ride Program can be obtained from the Agency Disability Coordinator. As needed, additional updates and briefings will be provided to the EEO and human resources community.



### IX. PRIORITY

#### EXPAND PRIVATE-PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS.



#### **Department of Human Services**

ODP and OLTL are currently in the process of negotiating a contract with Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) related to Benefits Counseling training. VCU would come to Pennsylvania to train and support two cohorts of individuals interested in becoming certified in Benefits Counseling. The expected timeframe of implementation is March 2018.



### XI. PRIORITY

#### COLLECT AND COORDINATE DATA.



#### **Pennsylvania Department of Education**

PDE released a PENN\*LINK to all local education agencies (LEAs) across the Commonwealth to provide clarity and descriptors to the data collection for Act 26. This PENN\*LINK was released May 31, 2017. The window for the collecting Act 26 data is now closed. The submission of data will be in early November.

#### **Department of Human Services**

OLTL continues to collect employment data through the use of their Participant Review Tool. The data from this tool is reviewed on an ongoing basis.

ODP continues to collect employment data through the use of their Individual Monitoring Tool. Data from this tool should be available by the end of the year.



