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pennsylvania

# EMPLOYMENT FIRST

**UPDATE**

STATE FISCAL YEAR

**2017-18 QUARTER THREE**

QUARTER THREE = JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER 2018



★ **SUCCESS STORY** ★

## Summer Internship Program

The 2018 summer internship program for students with disabilities had a very successful inaugural year, with positive feedback and appreciation from participating agencies and interns. The Office of Administration (OA) and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) partnered to place 18 college students in 15 agencies and delivery centers to provide students with meaningful work experience and the opportunity to see the many rewards of working in public service. The program concluded on August 10, 2018. Below are a few comments from participating offices:

“Just a note to tell you how much help ST has been in the short time she’s been with us. I asked her for help for two major projects: verifying testing in LIMS and HERDS for NPIP participants on a spreadsheet, and proofreading/correcting formatting for the 240 page LPAI plan. She willingly attacked both projects, asked questions when she needed clarification (NPIP is complicated, as we all know), and completed each project within a couple of weeks. I didn’t have to follow up with her or monitor her work in any way. And she’s so pleasant to work with. Thanks for sending her our way, and please let her know how much we appreciate her.”

— *Comment from staff within the Department of Agriculture.*

“Thanks for the opportunity to host an intern this summer. My intern, WM, is a very nice, young man. He is eager to learn and take on responsibilities. He spent the first couple of weeks learning about all of the aging services and programs that the Department of Aging has to offer. He had the opportunity to spend time shadowing some of our care managers at a local Area Agency on Aging and spend a day at a local senior center to see how our programs and services directly impact the lives of older Pennsylvanians. He currently is assisting us with developing training for care managers and developing a resource guide for Alzheimer’s Disease and related dementias. This student fits in nicely with our team, and we’re so glad to have him.”

— *Comment from staff within the Pennsylvania Department of Aging.*

“My intern, JB is a kind individual with a great work ethic and excellent customer service. I can tell that he cares about completing the task at hand in a timely manner and correctly. He is a joy to work with, fits in well with our team, and is doing a great job.”

— *Comment from staff within the Conservation and Environment Human Resources Delivery Center .*

### **The interns also voiced positive feedback about their experiences:**

“Please allow me the opportunity to say thank you to the OVR Summer Internship Program Team for developing such a rewarding program like the OVR Summer Internship for me and my colleagues. Thank you for giving me a chance to serve, learn, gain experience, and build networks while making friends and meeting new people. Thank you once again.”

— *Comment from an intern who worked within the Department of Human Services*

“I am humbled by the opportunity and very grateful for the appreciation. It means a lot to me that the work I complete is helpful in some way, and I will continue to put forth my best effort.”

— *Comment from an intern who worked within the Department of Agriculture*

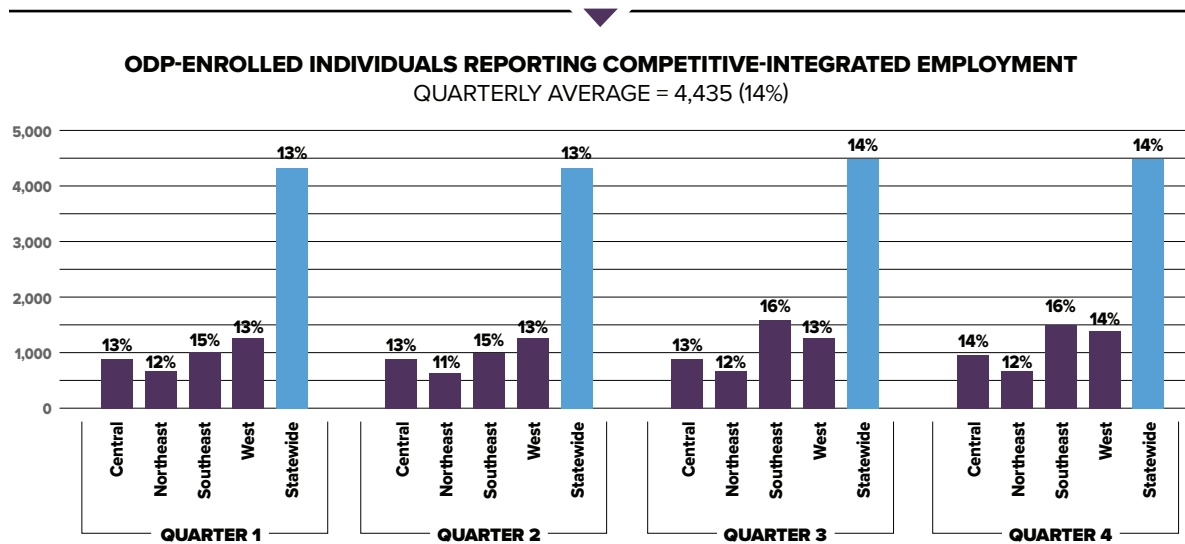
★ DATA ★

## Office of Administration (OA)

The updated disability-related training for employees and supervisors that recently launched has a current completion rate of 73.7 percent.

## Department of Human Services' (DHS)/Office of Developmental Programs (ODP)

ODP now has a complete set of monitoring data obtained from individuals' responses during supports coordinators' monitoring visits. The graph below is a compilation of answers to Individual Employment Monitoring Question No. 1: "Is the individual working in a competitive-integrated job?" The data covers calendar year 2017; quarters reflect calendar-year months.



\* Note: All counts are duplicated to capture changes in employment status over time.

## DHS/Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL)

	2016-17	2017-18	Percent change
Percentage of children receiving the majority of their Early Intervention (EI) services in an early childhood environment (headstart, PreK, preschool)	55.65	59.32	+3.67
Percentage of children receiving the majority of their services in their homes.	9.26	9.41	+0.15
Total percentage of children in inclusive environments	64.91	68.73	+3.82
Percentage of children receiving the majority of their Early Intervention services in a special education class or separate school	25.19	22.69	-2.50



★ DATA ★

## **Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT)**

To date, PennDOT has completed 20 facilities projects with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) benefits to enhance accessibility. Five additional projects are in progress.

★ UPDATE ON EMPLOYMENT FIRST PRIORITIES ★



### **DHS/ODP**

- In February 2018, as part of the Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (EFSLMP) employer engagement focus area, representatives from OVR business services, ODP, the Dauphin/Cumberland/Perry Employment First coalition, and the Office of Long-Term Employment participated in a business roundtable with Pennsylvania businesses, transportation representatives, a representative from the Business Leadership Network (BLN), and the Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE). The goal of this business roundtable was to connect and encourage future collaboration between pennsylvania businesses that have the goal of hiring people with disabilities with agencies that can provide them with talent who are a good match for their businesses. OVR business services representatives, ODP staff (including county representatives,) and the Office of Long-Term Living (OLTL) continue to discuss best practices in employer engagement in an effort to make the process of hiring people with disabilities as simple and seamless as possible for employers.

- ODP obtained a complete set of employment monitoring data (from the answers received from individuals during supports coordinators' monitoring visits) and compiled a condensed report in March 2018 that was shared at regional forums in April and May 2018.

### **DHS/Office of Long-Term Living (OLTL)**

- Data research was conducted to identify the status of 275 OLTL participants, aged 18-21, in an effort to provide early outreach in relation to competitive integrated employment.
- Between January 2017 and May 2018, Pennsylvania scheduled and held a total of 33 Certified Employment Support Professional Exams (CESP).
- As of May 2018, Pennsylvania had a total of 417 CESPs.
- Beginning May 2018, OLTL expanded their Employment Champion Pilot from four to eight service coordination entities.

★ **UPDATE ON EMPLOYMENT FIRST PRIORITIES** ★



**DHS/Office of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS)**

- OMHSAS and OVR have developed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the purpose of providing additional funding for increased service capacity and innovation. OVR has begun using the funds from the MOU to help youth and adults with serious mental illness (SMI) and serious emotional disturbance (SED) move toward employment.
- DHS is looking into the ability to submit a Medicaid state plan amendment to add psychiatric rehabilitation services (PRS) as a Medicaid-reimbursable service in both managed care and fee-for-service programs. PRS is a service that focuses on a variety of life domains, including employment. An initial meeting was held in March 2018 with other DHS offices to discuss moving PRS to a state plan service.
- State agencies should continue to promote the Fairweather Lodge, a model that requires lodge members to develop a business and subsequently assign each member one aspect of the business for which they will be responsible. As part of this, OMHSAS will continue to expand the Fairweather Lodge model within its publicly funded services. The national Fairweather Lodge board meeting was held in Harrisburg in March 2018, where Pennsylvania's Veteran Fairweather Lodge consultant reached out to a provider with a large VA hospital in their county about opening a Veteran-specific lodge. Lebanon County's first Fairweather Lodge was opened in early-Spring 2018 and is currently operational. A training lodge toolkit is in the process of being created to serve as a standardized manual to aid staff in preparing individuals for lodge life.
- OMHSAS will continue to encourage county mental health administrators to increase the use of evidence-based supported employment services. A webinar on the role of vocational specialists was held in April 2018 for the Assertive Community Treatment team leaders and vocational specialists.
- OMHSAS will continue to collect baseline data on individuals in the behavioral health system who are in competitive-integrated jobs for the purpose of identifying and implementing future program and policy improvements. OMHSAS has begun collecting annual employment data on individuals in the behavioral health system in order to perform trend analysis over the coming years. The next round of data is being gathered in the Human Services Block Grant county plans and will be available in December 2018.

★ **UPDATE ON EMPLOYMENT FIRST PRIORITIES** ★

**Department of General Services (DGS)**

- The Governor's issuance of Executive Order 2015-11: Diversity, Inclusions, and Small Business Opportunity in Procurement charged DGS to create programs that support small and small diverse businesses in state contracting. The definition of "small diverse" was expanded to include disabled business owners. As small diverse businesses, they can receive technical assistance, training, and support in navigating commonwealth contracting from the Bureau of Diversity, Inclusion, and Small Business Opportunities (BDISBO). BDISBO continues to conduct training and outreach to grow the pool of small disabled business owners to inform them of state contracting opportunities. Currently, there are eight verified small disabled business owners within the database. These businesses include procurement types for goods, services, and information technology. BDISBO did not receive referrals this quarter from OVR, ODP, or OLTL.
- Effective February 2018, DGS implemented a new procurement policy change to transition from the default issuance of invitation for bids (IFBs) low-bid award to request for proposals (RFPs) to increase the best-value methodology and increase contracting opportunities for small and small diverse businesses. This policy change became effective on July 1, 2018. The number of awarded contracts resulting from RFPs in which BDISBO scored small and small diverse businesses has increased from 120 procurement contracts and five construction contracts in fiscal year 2016 to 128 procurement contracts and 16 construction contracts in fiscal year 2017, which is expected to increase as BDISBO continues to acquire data.
- The professional design application process was revamped for a more transparent procurement process and to promote increased utilization of small and small diverse businesses.
- The Agency Liaison Program was initiated to identify executive level employees representing each agency under the Governor's jurisdiction to lead efforts in collaboration with BDISBO to increase the utilization of small and small diverse businesses within their respective agencies. The agency liaisons are tasked with providing small and small diverse business strategic plans to BDISBO by September 2018. The agency liaisons meet quarterly with BDISBO staff.
- BDISBO has issued a statewide disparity study. The study is being conducted to determine the disparities within the marketplace and state contracting. A report of final recommendations is expected by the end of August 2018.
- A survey was sent to 1,100 automobile repair service providers to identify potential BDISBO (including disabled owned) eligible partners. DGS is attempting to obtain statistics on new participants.

**Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE)**

**• Summer Academy for Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired**

- > The Summer Academy for Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired is an excellent example of collaborative venture between PDE's Bureau of Special Education (BSE), PA Training and Technical Assistance (PATTAN), Penn State University, and OVR. This academy was offered to high school students who are blind or visually impaired and are preparing for post-secondary education, which leads to employment. The program was held at Penn State's University Park campus and approximately 20-23 students attend each year.

## ★ UPDATE ON EMPLOYMENT FIRST PRIORITIES ★



> The Summer Academy focuses on building students' current skills and enhancing their independence. This three-week experience concentrates on skills within the educational expanded core curriculum, including daily activities, orientation and mobility, self-advocacy, networking, career and vocational exploration, social interaction, and enhancing assistive technology skills. Students reside in a dormitory on campus, participate in a college class, and eat in the campus dining hall. These skills increase the likelihood of student success when they

attend postsecondary educational opportunities after high school.

- > The Summer Academy meets the goals of Employment First as it raises the expectations of employment goals for children with a disability at an early age and works with parents and publicly funded programs to shift expectations towards this goal, and prepares young people with a disability to become working adults with a disability.

### • **Artificial Intelligence and You: Camp for High School Students on the Autism Spectrum**

- > In July 2018, seven students registered for Artificial Intelligence and You: Camp for High School Students on the Autism Spectrum that was scheduled for August 6-9 in State College. Held during the National Autism Conference, this four-day program provided college-bound high school students who are on the autism spectrum an opportunity to explore coding and artificial intelligence through hands-on learning.
- > The camp aligns with Employment First goals by raising the expectations of employment goals for children with a disability at an early age and preparing young people with a disability to become working adults with a disability.

### • **Updated Special Education Regulations**

- > On July 12, 2018, the State Board of Education updated Pennsylvania's special education regulations to replace the term "mental retardation" with "intellectual disability." While the term "intellectual disability" has become widely used by educators and advocates over the past decade, the term "mental retardation" was a remnant of previous federal regulations. By replacing this out-of-date term, the commonwealth turned a page on eliminating discriminatory, archaic language from the regulatory framework.
- > These changes align with the governor's Employment First goal for agencies to review, identify, and change policies to align with Executive Order 2016-03.

### **Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT)**

- PennDOT has executed agreements with Enterprise Rideshare and the Centre Area Transit Authority (CATA) as part of a Vanpool Incentive Program announced last year to create



## ★ UPDATE ON EMPLOYMENT FIRST PRIORITIES ★

vanpools across the state that would provide a lower-cost alternative for people to commute to work. Through the program, PennDOT will continue to invest up to \$1 million annually, and the opportunity is open to government entities, non-profit entities, and transportation companies.

- > Enterprise's \$301,800 grant is helping to create up to 100 vanpools, varying in size from seven- to 15-passenger vans. Enterprise has started 30 new vanpools so far and is working to start others.
- > CATA's \$40,800 grant is for seven vanpools with vehicles ranging from 10- to 15-passenger vans. The vanpools have started and have a destination in or near State College.
- Ecolane is fully implemented as of February 2018. This means that all systems (except Port Authority and SEPTA who have their own software) are using the same scheduling software. PennDOT is working with the vendor to implement the call-ahead feature. Many customers can schedule online using the Find My Ride website.
- PennDOT received a federal grant for \$1.1 million (Rides to Wellness) that will help to develop an online application that will link directly to Ecolane. The department plans to use part of this funding to do public awareness about the paratransit programs that are available to seniors and persons with disabilities.



### **Department of Labor & Industry (L&I)/OVR**

- Through OVR and OA's Summer Internship Program for College Students with Disabilities, 18 college students were connected to paid, 12-week employment opportunities at 15 commonwealth agencies/offices.
- > OVR recruited for the program through outreach videoconferences to our vocational rehabilitation counselors, visits to our district offices, recruitment letters to potential student candidates, and social media targeted marketing.
- > More than 55 qualified candidate applications were received. OVR and OA interviewed candidates, and 18 individuals were selected for participation in the program.
- > Participants received a starting salary of \$13.23/hour to start and \$13.56/hour after July 1.
- > Students were placed in agencies and positions that closely align with their college majors and career interests.
- > Interns have completed work in areas that includes: developing an Amazon Alexa skill to allow citizens to report malfunctioning traffic lights in the city of Harrisburg; drafting management directives; completing research for social media policies; completing lean analyses; creating webpages; and investigating elder abuse cases.



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