

W E E K L Y F O C U S

The mission of the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission is to ensure individuals with disabilities achieve quality employment, independence and disability determination outcomes through integrated services, partnerships and innovation.

RSC Holds Community Forums Across Ohio

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State Plan for federal fiscal year 2013 was up for discussion in community forums held this week in Columbus, Cincinnati, Athens, Toledo and Cleveland. In each community, the questions for discussion were: What are the most important things RSC can do to improve employment outcomes for people served by the VR program, and What should RSC consider as the State Plan is developed?



The VR State Plan is an annual requirement for funding from the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), which must be submitted by July 1 for the October 1 federal fiscal year. Before the plan goes to RSA it must be approved by RSC Commissioners, who will formally consider the proposed plan at their May 30 meeting.

The VR State Plan is a comprehensive document providing RSA with assurance that the Ohio State Plan will operate in accordance with federal requirements. Other sections of the submission from RSC to RSA cover:

- Statewideness and waivers of statewideness
- Collaboration with state and local agencies
- Personnel development
- Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment
- Reports of progress
- Order of Selection
- Cooperative arrangements
- Minority outreach
- Supported employment



In addition, collaboration and coordination of Ohio's workforce investment system with examples such as:



- Memos of Understanding with local One Stops
- Participation on local Workforce Investment Boards
- Partnerships with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) to implement new programs related to the Ohio Benefit Bank and the HOME Choice Program
- Collaboration with ODJFS on the new Disability Employment Initiative Grant
- Increased collaboration with JobsOhio
- Partnership with the Department of Mental Health to prepare Certified Peer Support Specialists
- Partnership with the Department of Aging to implement Chronic Disease Self-Management training for VR consumers

- Collaboration with the Ohio Department of Veterans Services and other state agencies to provide VR services to veterans with disabilities
- Collaboration with the Office of Workforce Transformation to provide training and data for RSC staff on Ohio's available jobs and workforce projections
- Interagency agreement with the Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children
- Staff training in rehabilitation technology



Annual Service Estimates:

- Individuals with Most Significant Disabilities will continue to be served without a wait
- Individuals with Significant Disabilities will be served but with a wait under Order of Selection
- Service is based on resource availability, with the 2013 goals of serving more consumers, continuing to reduce the waiting list and eventually eliminating the list
- RSC will continue to cut administrative spending to maximize direct service to individuals with disabilities
- RSC will continue to leverage state and local funds to draw maximum federal funds for the VR program

The momentum from 2012, when the waiting list was cut for the first time since 2009 and when many strategic partnerships were established, has been built upon to enhance the 2013 plan and provide Ohioans with disabilities a better overall experience in their effort to find employment opportunities.

Better Insight on the Social Security Disability Determination Process

Chief of Staff Brenda Cronin and I spent some time this week observing a crucial stage of the Social Security Disability Determination process that is not part of our responsibilities at RSC. We watched the appeals process at the Office of Adjudication and Review (ODAR) where cases were being heard by Administrative Law Judge John Allen.

We have been deeply involved in the first step of the Social Security Disability Insurance process through our work with the Division of Disability Determination (DDD) and know well the challenges that heavy workloads place upon Adjudicators and the entire support system at DDD. But this was our first chance to see how the RSC work comes into play when Judge Allen is called upon to make a decision. It was time well spent for Brenda and myself, and we both see why our colleagues at DDD have also made observational visits to the Administrative Court.

DDD and ODAR offices work closely together on these visits because we both believe it is important to improve understanding of how decisions are made at this level of appeal and how our work in DDD is part of that process. This insightful opportunity is something we hope to continue in the future. In addition, DDD processes over 2,200 requests for medical and psychological consultative examinations for the judges, providing additional evidence for their decisions.

Recovery-2-Work Best Practices Shared by Ohio Council

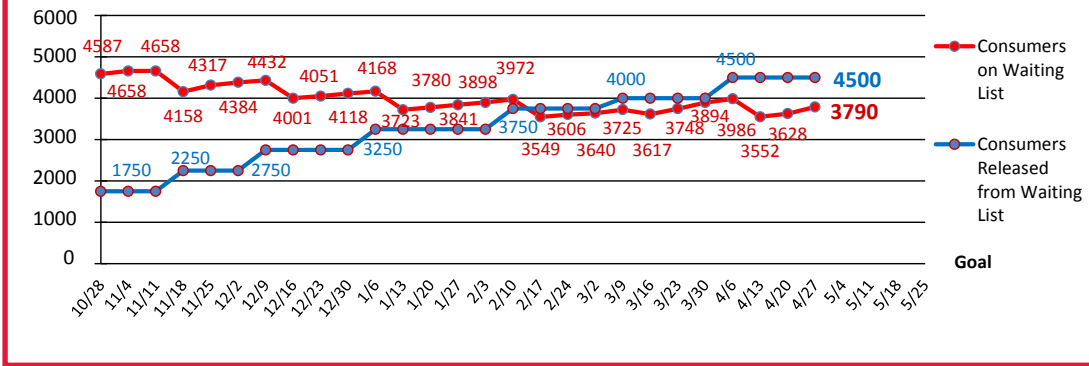
The Ohio Council of Behavioral Health and Family Service Providers (The Ohio Council) is an important partner with us in the fight against opiate addiction. In the year since we've teamed with the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities (OACBHA) and the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services (ODADAS) in the Recovery-2-Work program, a number of best practices have emerged.

The Ohio Council members, on the frontlines in the war against the opiate epidemic which prompted creation of the Recovery-2-Work program, have been instrumental in detailing those best practices from the experience of members and then sharing the most successful tactics across the state. That was the purpose of an Ohio Council gathering this week at RSC Headquarters.



With the 2012 Opiate Summit: Miles Traveled-Miles Ahead, set for next week in the Columbus Convention Center, where a thousand attendees will gather for sessions devoted to our joint vision that treatment works, people recover and recovering people work—these best practices will have a forum for distribution.

Number of Consumers on Waiting List



For more information or questions on stories in this publication please call Shirley Marchi, Community Relations Liaison, at 614.438.1477.

Produced by the Office of Communications, May 4, 2012.

