



**Employment First Oversight
Commission
FY 15 Annual Report
(July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015)**

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Employment First Oversight Commission FY 15 Annual Report

Employment First Legislation (H.B. 319) Overview

Delaware's Employment First Act (H.B. 319) was signed by Governor Markell on July 16, 2012. This legislation promotes the right that all persons with disabilities have the opportunity for competitive employment and establishes the Employment First Oversight Commission (hereafter referred to as "Commission") under the State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD).

The Act recites that it is the policy of this State that competitive employment in an integrated setting shall be considered its first and priority option for people who are of working age, including people with disabilities. All State agencies that provide services and support to persons with disabilities shall follow this policy and ensure that it is effectively implemented in their programs and services. Competitive employment means work in the competitive labor market that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis in an integrated setting and for which a person with a disability is compensated at or above the minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by persons without disabilities.

The bill also requires State agencies to coordinate and collaborate efforts to ensure that State programs, policies, procedures and funding support competitive employment opportunities. In addition, the bill requires State agencies, whenever feasible, to share data and information across systems in order to track progress toward full implementation of this Act. Finally, State agencies are encouraged to adopt measurable goals and objectives to promote assessment of progress in implementing this Act.

HB 319 also establishes the Employment First Oversight Commission (EFOC) under the purview of SCPD. Membership includes four (4) people with disabilities appointed by the Legislature; Delaware Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (DelARF); Division of Industrial Affairs; Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR); Department of Education (DOE); Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS); Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS), and the Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC). A membership list is provided in Appendix I. Duties of the Commission include reviewing measurable goals and objectives submitted by each relevant state agency to ensure implementation of this Act; tracking the measurable progress of state agencies in implementing this Act; and preparing an annual report detailing progress and identifying barriers to achieving outcomes along with effective strategies and policies that can help realize the employment first initiative. State agencies are required to fully cooperate with the Commission in providing data and information to assist the Commission in carrying out its duties.

The following is a highlight of EFOC activities in FY 15.

Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (EFSLMP) & Vision Quest Initiatives

During the beginning of FY 15, EFOC finalized its work with the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) Vision Quest Initiative which resulted in Delaware's development of a Communication Plan regarding the engagement of families and persons with disabilities in Employment First efforts. A copy of this Plan can be located in Appendix II.

Subsequent to its work on the Vision Quest Initiative, EFOC primarily acted to provide input and perspective regarding the EFSLMP and related Vision Quest initiatives. Delaware was one (1) of fifteen (15) core states that was selected to participate given that its application embodied a strong investment in systems change efforts that will result in increased community-based, integrated employment opportunities for individuals with significant disabilities. The state lead on this initiative is Dan Madrid, DVI Division Director and EFOC Vice-Chair. The following is a federal overview of the initiative which is consistent with EFOC objectives.

A critical priority for the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), is to invest in systems change efforts that result in increased community-based, integrated employment opportunities for individuals with significant disabilities. This priority reflects growing support for a national movement called *Employment First*, a framework for systems change that is centered on the premise that all citizens, including individuals with significant disabilities, are capable of full participation in integrated employment and community life.

Under this approach, publicly-financed systems are urged to align policies, service delivery practices, and reimbursement structures to commit to integrated employment as the priority option with respect to the use of publicly-financed day and employment services for youth and adults with significant disabilities. ODEP defines integrated employment as work paid directly by employers at the greater of minimum or prevailing wages with commensurate benefits, occurring in a typical work setting where the employee with a disability interacts or has the opportunity to interact continuously with co-workers without disabilities, has an opportunity for advancement and job mobility, and is preferably engaged full-time. Many states have formally committed to the *Employment First* framework through official executive proclamation or formal legislative action.

ODEP recognizes that many states desire to align their efforts to support individuals with disabilities toward an *Employment First* approach, but may not yet possess the capacity, experience or technical resources necessary to lead and facilitate such change. To address this need, ODEP has initiated the Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (EFSLMP), a cross-disability, cross-systems change initiative. EFSLMP is providing a platform for multi-disciplinary state teams to focus on implementing the *Employment First* approach with fidelity through the alignment of policies, coordination of resources, updating of service delivery models, to facilitate increased integrated employment options for people with the most significant disabilities.

The objectives of the EFSLMP are to:

- Provide mentoring, intensive technical assistance (TA) and training from a national pool of subject matter experts and peer mentors to core states as they transform existing policies, service delivery systems, and reimbursement structures to reflect an *Employment First* approach;
- Facilitate virtual training and knowledge translation on effective practices;
- Facilitate dialogue on shared experiences related to effectuating *Employment First* policies and practice;
- Link participating states with current Federal initiatives that are focused on promoting state-level systems-change conducive to *Employment First* objectives; and
- Evaluate the impacts of the investments in state *Employment First* systems change efforts over time to identify common challenges faced by State governments and validate innovative strategies and effective practices that lead to the successful implementation of *Employment First* objectives.

The following represents goals, objectives and outcomes regarding the EFSLMP initiative during FY 15.

Capacity Building – Plan a series of training sessions regarding Employment First that focuses on its concepts, and evidence-based practices in self, supported, and customized employment. During FY 15, Subject Matter Experts (SME) Virginia Selleck and Rick McAllister collaborated with the Core State Lead, Dan Madrid, with input from EFOC, to schedule the trainings. The target audience is mid to senior level managers within community rehabilitation programs and state agencies. Overall, the goal is to increase the number of Delawareans with disabilities that are employed in the community and transition out of workshops. Another key objective is decreased reliance on sheltered workshops, day habilitation and other segregated outcomes, replaced with increased placements into integrated employment with emphasis of employment services that are reflective of effective practices (customized employment, individual supported employment services and self-employment). Three workshops have been scheduled for July and September 2015.

Provider Transformation – Develop a strategic restructuring/transformation plan of the State-run sheltered workshops. SME Nancy Gurney, representing the Office of Disability Employment Policy under the EFSLMP to the State of Delaware, conducted an on-site assessment of the state's two (2) sheltered workshops in June 2015. Dan Madrid coordinated the tours and discussion sessions which were also attended by EFOC members. The following provides a summary of the reports.

The reports note that the areas included in the assessment relate to the Business Enterprise operated by the Delaware DVI and the sheltered workshop operated by the Delaware Psychiatric Center (DPC). All services assessed are operated in a segregated state hospital setting which dates back 100 years.

The first report focused on the Delaware Industries for the Blind and the strategic direction for this sheltered workshop is to look at it as a business with the State Use Contracts and the Ability

One Contracts. The goal has been to make it profitable and then move it to a community based provider to operate. The organization has created standard employee manuals and personnel policies consistent with standard business procedures. The State needs to determine a clear direction for integrated services in line with their Olmstead Settlement. All services paid for by the state should be provided in integrated community settings.

There were very few customers involved in work during the tour. This is either an indication of lack of work or a positive movement of persons served into the community therefore not needing the services. Overall impression is there is not enough real work to maintain any of the work training options on the campus. You cannot train work when there is not consistent work to do. Training should be provided in a community employment site. The campus is an old state hospital that should have closed years ago. The State has done a very good job of moving persons from the State Hospital Campus to the community. They should proceed in transformation of work services into the community. The common theme communicated by stakeholders is that this campus is viewed by the community as a very old institution for psychiatric patients. The services provided on campus should be moved to an appropriate community integrated site integrated with workers in the trade. It was reported that persons live in the community and drive to the campus for work. Community integration includes both living and working in the community.

The report notes that the services are clearly over staffed and significant funding losses have incurred since FY 2010. In addition to the cost accounting/loss of funds, there is no allocation of building costs, utilities, administrative supports, unemployment payroll taxes, equipment depreciation provided to this business enterprise. If these expenses were included the losses would be higher than those reported. The continued cost performance would indicate that the State is significantly subsidizing this enterprise and the question to be asked is why. One positive is that Delaware has retained a business executive from the SCORE program to assist in the business modeling and financial issues.

The report also provides the following supplemental operational recommendations:

- Economic Development Funds may be used if the business enterprise is sold to be operated by a C corp.
- Delaware should consider in their strategic direction in the Employment First Grant whether they wish to continue with the Ability One Contracts. The Ability One contracts continue to require 75% of persons with disabilities. It was discussed at the consult to inquire if Ability One will consider a lower percentage of persons with disabilities.
- Culture issues regarding the continuum of service support for persons with visual impairment. It is appreciated that persons have an agency they can trust from birth to earth that is not experienced by other persons with disabilities. How to integrate the services and maintain the continuum of care is a problem to be addressed by the State and Stakeholder Groups. It should be considered that this business enterprise is creating a dependency on the state rather than creating independence for persons with visual impairments.

- Another significant issue to consider is the stigma of persons living in the community and continuing to come to the old institution to work. The Stakeholders communicated that the campus is viewed as the state institution for persons with severe psychiatric disorders.

The second report relates to the employment services at DPC. The strategic direction for this sheltered workshop has been to provide work training for persons with mental illness. Observations and recommendations from the report are as follows:

- Strategic direction for the housing programs has moved to community sites; however, the work has remained on the segregated campus. This is an inconsistent strategic direction.
- Design a strategic deployment plan for the integration of all employment services into the community using VR as the primary referral upon admission to the hospital with employment an integral part of the treatment plan starting on day one not starting at discharge.
- The State needs to determine a clear direction for integrated services in line with their Olmstead Settlement. All services paid for by the state should be provided in integrated community settings.
- The strategy which was used with the greenhouse operations to transfer the operations to a community provider didn't change the operations to meet competitive placement or community integration. It just changed the entity operating the services.
- There were very few customers involved in work during the tour. This is either an indication of lack of work or a positive movement of persons served into the community; therefore, not needing the services on campus.

The site-visit included a "tour" of the Woodshop, Food Service Kitchen, Work Training Services, C.A.R.E. Custodial Crew, Work Activity Center and Dental Clinic. The overall impression from the report is there is not enough real work to maintain any of the work training options on the campus. You cannot train work when there is not consistent work to do. Training should be provided in a community employment site. The campus is an old state hospital that should have closed years ago. The State has done a very good job of moving persons from the State Hospital Campus to the community. They should proceed in transformation of work services into the community. The common theme communicated by stakeholders is that this campus is viewed by the community as a very old institution for psychiatric patients. The services provided on campus should be moved to an appropriate community integrated site integrated with workers in the trade. It was reported that persons live in the community and drive to the campus for work. Community integration includes both living and working in the community.

Other observations and recommendations are as follows:

- The services are clearly over staffed.
- The state is significantly subsidizing this enterprise and the question to be asked is why.
- The operations are really a function of services used by the hospital. It is unclear whether there is any measurement of the cost benefit of providing these services to the hospital.
- Number of persons placed in competitive community employment last year was three.
- The outcome measurements should be realigned to integrate Employment First.

- Staff training on the ADA and Olmstead Compliance is needed.
- Another significant issue to consider is the stigma of persons living in the community and continuing to come to the old institution to work.

Performance Measurement – Develop recommendations for Employment First data collection and standardization. This is consistent with the Commission’s FY 14 strategic priority to develop and implement a system for collecting accurate data related to tracking the progress of integrated and competitive employment that is consistent across all agencies. SMEs Corey Smith and Rick McAllister were solicited to gather and review requested State agency program data as it relates to Delaware’s current employment first measures. In addition, the SMEs issued recommendations and best practices on metrics for employment first. Data has been collected from DDDS, DSAMH, DVR and DVI. A workgroup will be established under the commission to move forward with implementation of the conversations that will need to occur with state agencies regarding the data gathered thus far and possible data/metrics to gather in the future.

EFOC may consider using some of the data metrics provided by the LEAD Center (http://employmentfirst.leadcenter.org/delaware#quicktabs-states_big_screen=1) to assist in establishing measures, benchmarks and objectives. Some of the key metrics are the following:

- Percentage of working age people who are employed (all disabilities).
- Percentage of SSI recipients with disabilities who work relative to total SSI recipients with disabilities.
- Percentage of all state mental health agency consumers served in the community who are employed.
- Percentage of youth who are no longer in secondary school, had IEPs in effect at the time they left school, and were enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within one year of leaving high school.

The LEAD Center is a collaborative of disability, workforce and economic empowerment organizations dedicated to improving employment and economic advancement outcomes for all people with disabilities. The LEAD Center is funded by the Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor.

Policy/Funding Alignment – Develop a cross-system state agreement on resource braiding and service coordination, and policy & funding alignment. A training is scheduled for September 2015. This goal was revised in June 2015 to include a marketing plan focusing on unemployment of persons with disabilities as a public health priority. Research shows that persons with disabilities have only 36 percent employment participation which leads to a 23 percent poverty rate which leads to a 40 percent higher rate of reporting health issues as fair or poor. In addition, people with disabilities have three times the rate for diabetes, heart attacks, heart disease, depression and stroke. There is an obvious correlation with unemployment/underemployment of people with disabilities and related health disparities; however, there is also a link to increased impact on societal health care costs. EFOC collaborated with the Center for Disabilities Studies (CDS) at its May 2015 to address this issue since CDS has a grant in this context and has issued relevant reports which can be located at the following links:

- <http://www.gohdwd.org/documents/healthequityplan0215.pdf>
- <http://www.gohdwd.org/documents/pha0215.pdf>

EFOC will continue its collaboration with CDS as needed regarding the research linking health outcomes and employment of persons with disabilities to better inform public policy and the work of EFOC/EFSLMP. In addition, consistent with the aforementioned revision to this goal, SME Abby Cooper will assist Delaware in developing a marketing plan focusing on unemployment of persons with disabilities as a public health priority. Conference calls and a site-visit are planned for Summer/Fall 2015.

Employment First Educational Video – This was a continuation of the Vision Quest FY 2014 priority to develop a video which demonstrates the value of people with disabilities being employed in competitive integrated working environments. It is part of the Delaware Communication Plan (Appendix I). It is intended to reach a wide audience including persons with disabilities, family members, providers and policymakers. This was in collaboration with the Department of Health & Social Services and the video was near completion at the end of FY 15 with a release involving the Governor planned for FY 16. A link to the video can be located at: <http://scpd.delaware.gov/efoc/welcome.shtml>

Vision Quest – Develop policy recommendations for the PROMISE (Promoting Optimal Mental Health for Individuals through Supports and Empowerment) program. The PROMISE program targets individuals with behavioral health needs and functional limitations to offer an array of home and community-based services (HCBS) that are person-centered, recovery-oriented, and aimed at supporting beneficiaries in the community. PROMISE will help improve clinical and recovery outcomes and reduce unnecessary institutional care through better care coordination, and thereby also reduce the growth in overall program costs. SME Virginia Selleck will be working directly with the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health in developing contracts, training manuals, policies and procedures that incorporate best practices in mental health employment supports. During her time in consulting with Delaware, Ms. Selleck will be conducting site visits/training in Fall 2015 focusing on employment supports as a critical component in psychosocial rehabilitation.

Governor's Proclamation

EFOC solicited the Governor's Office to issue a proclamation in observance of National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The Governor and Lieutenant Governor signed a proclamation in October 2014 and it was displayed at Dover Air Force Base Annual Luncheon which recognizes achievements of persons with Disabilities. A copy of the Governor's Proclamation is located in Appendix III.

Marketing & Public Education Committee – The Committee collaborated with Delaware Department of Technology & Information (DTI) and the Government Information Center (GIC) to develop a more comprehensive website (<http://scpd.delaware.gov/efoc/index.shtml>) under SCPD specifically for EFOC and other Employment First related information. Highlights of the website now include sections containing the following:

- Success stories currently on the Welcome Page.
- Feedback Form which notes that EFOC is not a direct service agency but, as part of its oversight function, wants to solicit feedback from Delaware citizens on how well the public policy is working, identify the public officials best able to address issues brought to its attention, and route messages accordingly.
- The Employment First Movement.
- Annual Report

EFOC certainly appreciates the work of its Committee, DTI and GIC.

The Committee also developed an Information Card which highlights “When Everyone Works Everyone Wins!” and describes aspects of HB 319. A copy of the information card is located in Appendix IV.

Amendments to State Use Commission and Program

EFOC began monitoring the progress regarding draft amendments to the State Use Commission and Program. The State Use Law Commission has taken the lead in drafting the bill in response to engagement with the Legislature’s Joint Sunset Committee. The draft bill is an update of the original statute. It has three major changes in terms of the provisions:

- The incorporation and establishment of a central nonprofit agency (CNA) as a body that can act as an administrative entity for state use contracts. Many other states have elected a similar model, which benefits smaller subcontractors.
- The composition of the SULC which is antiquated and not reflective of the current needs of the system.
- Though not reflected in the statute, the proposed regulations would open the program to private businesses that employ people with disabilities at a minimum of 75% of direct labor for service based contracts and 50% of direct labor for product-based contracts. The prior standards only permitted nonprofit agencies with CARF accreditation to participate with a 75% minimum of direct labor for both types of contracts.

EFOC will continue to monitor this issue in FY 16 and may comment on a final draft if needed. The Commission believes that the fundamental purpose of the State Use program is aligned with the spirit and intent of the Employment First Act. In addition, monitoring of this Program is consistent with past EFOC collaboration in FY 14, with DelARF and Government Support Services, which clarified work opportunities for persons with disabilities that are associated with set aside classifications in the State Use Program.

Other Highlights

Kyle Hodges (SCPD Director and EFOC Staff) and Dan Madrid attended the APSE (Association of People Supporting EmploymentFirst) Pre-Conference Session in Philadelphia on June 22, 2015.

Some EFOC members and Staff periodically participated in ODEP monthly Community of Practice calls and Core-State Lead calls to learn about best practices in the Employment First context and monitor the EFSLMP, respectively.

EFOC monitored the implementation of Delaware's Pathways to Employment program. Pathways to Employment is a program designed to support low-income teens and young adults with disabilities in Delaware who want to work. The program helps participants get prepared for work, find jobs, and succeed in the workplace. More information can be located at: <http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dsaapd/pathways.html>

Delaware Employment First Oversight Commission Membership and Active Participants

Mr. Dan McGannon, Chair
Labor Law Enforcement Administrator, Dept. of Labor, Division of Industrial Affairs

Mr. Dan Madrid, Vice-Chair
Director, Division of Visually Impaired

Ms. Deborah Bradl
District Administrator, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Ms. Andrea Guest
Director, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Ms. Marissa Catalon
Director of Day Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities Services

Ms. Patricia Maichle
Director, Developmental Disabilities Council

Dale Matusevich
Education Associate, Transition Services, Dept. of Education

Ms. Cindy Sterling
Director of Employment Services, Service Source (Representing DelARF)

Dr. Nick Fina, Person with a Disability
Member of the Public Appointed by the Legislature

Mr. Emmanuel Jenkins, Person with a Disability
Member of the Public Appointed by the Legislature

Dr. Ronald Sarg, Veteran with a Disability
Member of the Public Appointed by the Legislature

Mr. Lloyd Schmitz, Person with a Disability
Member of the Public Appointed by the Legislature

Ms. Sandy Reyes
Employee Relations Administrator, Office of Management & Budget

Ms. Laura Strmel
Delaware Community Coordinator, Certified Employment Support Professional, St. John's Community Services

Ms. Ellen Coulston
Parent

Ms. Janet Berry
Executive Director, BlindSight Delaware

Ms. Melissa Martin
POW&R Assistant Director, Autism Delaware

DELAWARE COMMUNICATION PLAN

Overview

The state's implementation of engaging families and persons with disabilities in Employment First efforts calls for a clear and consistent communications/marketing (MarCom) plan. This plan will be across state and local non-profit agencies that serve families and individuals with disabilities.

The Delaware Employment First Mar/Com Plan proposes to:

- Enable families and job-seekers to learn the benefits of Employment First;
- Reduce misinformation and confusion around integrated employment;
- Raise expectations in relationship to persons working in integrated employment within the community;
- Increase collaboration and messaging of state agencies and non-profit provider networks and understand expectations;
- Change behaviors, attitudes and thoughts about the employment of people with disabilities;
- Provide accurate information in regards to Social Security benefits in order to reduce fears concerning loss of benefits; and
- Increase jobs for people with disabilities in the most integrated work environments.

The Delaware Employment First Mar/Com Plan will:

- Provide a vision, and guiding principles across state government, provider and family networks to align Mar/Com policies and resources to focus on specific performance-based impact;
- Develop Mar/Com agreements or MOUs with state/nonprofit family engagement entities;
- Develop work plan and shared agreements across government and provider agencies;
- Conduct discovery on the needs of families and individuals with disabilities (customer focus) to better engage in available resources and services that promote employment;
- Identify role of state agencies and local provider network in promoting Employment First opportunities;
- Identify the core "call to action";
- Identify behaviors, attitudes and thoughts about employment and disabilities across partners;
- Develop brand identity for state and target audience;
- Identify key differentiators that help people change (decrease dropout rate, increase attrition rate);
- Identify what is working, where are the gaps, and where the state needs to go to increase family engagement and integrated employment for people with disabilities;
- Develop Employment First Playbook for Marketing/Communications;

- Provide professional development re: Employment First Mar/Com to schools, districts, parents, state and non-profit agencies to increase family engagement.

This plan recognizes that participating state agencies with varying missions and different operational structures are committed to expanding Employment First in the State of Delaware. Consequently, **each agency will focus on the components of the communications plan that applies to them with the intention of a consistent message being given to families and individuals with disabilities** throughout the state to increase the integrated employment of people with disabilities.

External Communication

This communications plan will offer several approaches that each agency may modify to suit its needs to keep families and job-seekers informed about Employment First: These approaches include:

- **Use of social media**
 - In order to meet the needs of its stakeholder groups, state agencies must be proactive in incorporating social media strategies. At a minimum, states should regularly update their websites with relevant resources regarding the advancement of Employment First (i.e., employment stories; parent interviews of employed workers; Social Security Benefits Planning Calculator; etc.) incorporating photos, graphics, or captioned videos aimed at families regarding work incentives, individuals working, etc.
 - Develop approved, consistent messaging to be tweeted at weekly intervals to families.
 - Develop Influencer messaging to friends and families and agencies associated with integrated employment strategies.
 - Develop marketing and social media toolkits that can reside on each agency's website.
 - Captioned videos of individuals working on each agency's website.
 - Samples of what can be included in IEPS during Transition that will encourage the expectation of employment at or before graduation.
- **Media Releases.** Work with public information officers statewide to ensure that at least one public interest story about Employment First is pitched to the media quarterly.
- **Use of Conferences.** Every employer, transition or mental health conference should address the impact of integrated employment. Panelists should include individuals with disabilities and their employers.
- **Speakers Bureau.** Work with public information officers, community engagement staff and nonprofit agencies to identify individuals with disabilities who work in integrated employment positions, their family members and their employers who would be willing to go out to family engagement organizations, school transition events, employment fairs, or

employer-related events to talk openly and honestly about the benefits and the challenges of integrated employment.

- **A Clearinghouse Employment First Website.** Help to populate one website where information on competitive integrated employment in Delaware would be available for individuals with disabilities, their families, nonprofit agencies and employers.

Audiences, Messages, Delivery

Communications about engaging families and persons with disabilities in Employment First efforts must target both internal and external audiences. The plan contains two key parts with draft messages and tools to accommodate an array of outreach efforts

Internal Audience: Agencies' Workforce

- **Key Messages**
 - It is this agency's expectations that all persons in Delaware regardless of the level of disability deserve the opportunity for competitive employment
 - Employees must share the same message
 - If employees need additional information to consistently give the approved message they need to request additional support and information from their supervisor
 - Supervisors will understand Employment First and will be able to provide their staff with information and resources.

External Audience: Families and individuals with disabilities

- **Key Messages**
 - Individuals are always better off working competitively in the community.
 - Services are available to assist in the transition to integrated competitive employment that fits your lifestyle.
 - Workplaces and their employees also benefit from the skills and talents that individuals with disabilities bring to their jobs.

Internal Communication

Agency Directors need to communicate with employees that the state's expectation is that both individuals with disabilities and their families will understand the integrated employment is the preferred path with state dollars. It is their responsibility to support families and individuals with disabilities in acquiring the information they need to feel comfortable in pursuing that path. The draft message to employees will be modified depending on the agency and the current barriers they face with families.

Delivery: Ensure that employees receive the message in a format that allows easy saving or printing. E-mail is the most sustainable choice, but an agency may choose the method that best meets its needs. Other choices:

- Accessible materials that are 508 compliant. Are you using large print? Are your videos captioned?
- Hard copies that use a variety of photos and images to convey the benefits of Employment First.
- Newsletter publications
- Intranet or electronic bulletin board postings
- Physical bulletin boards

In-person meetings provide an effective way to communicate with any number of employees. They also allow two-way dialogue. Use in-person meetings to the greatest extent possible, in combination with other delivery methods.

External Communication

Website Updates

Letter to Families and job-seekers on:

- The resources available to them; what information they can find on the different agencies websites.
- Who to contact with questions.

STATE OF DELAWARE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR



STATEMENT
IN OBSERVANCE OF
NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

Whereas, the month of October has been designated as "National Disability Employment Awareness Month" to increase the public's awareness of the contributions and skills of American workers with disabilities; and

Whereas, disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals with disabilities to live independently, enjoy self-determination, make choices, contribute to society, and fully experience the economic, political, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of American society; and

Whereas, family, friends, and members of the community can play a central role in enhancing the lives of people with disabilities, especially when the family and community are provided with essential support services, and employers are aware of the capabilities of the people with disabilities so that they are engaged in competitive work and inclusive settings; and

Whereas, the most effective way to increase awareness during "National Disability Employment Awareness Month" is through everyone's active participation in community activities and the willingness of us all to recognize and acknowledge each individual's contributions; and

Whereas, one of Delaware's leading goals is to provide individuals with disabilities the opportunity and support to make informed choices and decisions; pursue meaningful productive lives; contribute to their family, community, and State; have interdependent friendships and relationships with others; and achieve full inclusion in society.

Now, Therefore, We, Jack A. Markell, Governor,
and Matthew Denn, Lieutenant Governor,
do hereby proclaim October 2014

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

and encourage all citizens and employers to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities, and to advance its important message that people with disabilities are equal to the task throughout the year.



Jack A. Markell

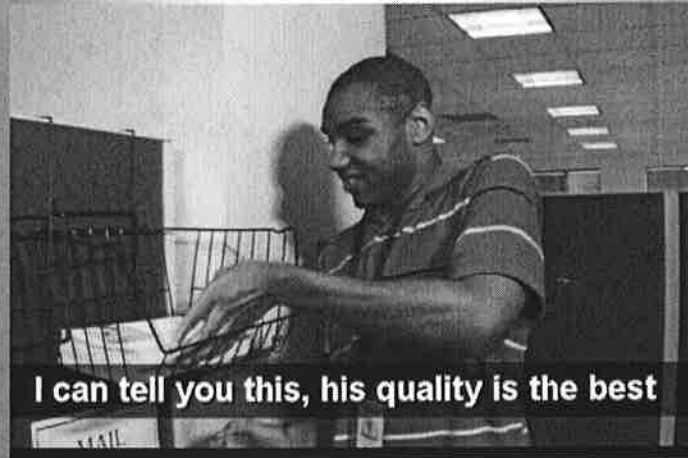
Jack A. Markell
Governor

Matthew Denn

Matthew Denn
Lieutenant Governor



DEmployment First



When **Everyone** **WORKS** **Everyone Wins !**

What Does Employment First Mean ?

In July, 2012 Governor Jack Markell signed the Employment First Act into Law establishing a new priority within state government for those agencies serving people with disabilities in ensuring that competitive employment in an integrated setting is the first and priority option when offering or providing services to persons with disabilities who are working age [14 or older].

DEmployment First

Who does it impact?

"All state agencies that provide services and support to persons with disabilities."

Who does it not impact?

"Nothing in this Act shall be construed to require any employer to give preference to hiring persons with disabilities."

What does it require?

Coordination among applicable state agencies to ensure that "state programs, policies, procedures, and funding support competitive employment in integrated settings for persons with disabilities who are of working age." The Act also encourages state agencies "to adopt measurable goals and objectives to promote assessment of progress in implementing this Act."



Where do we begin?

The Employment First Oversight Commission, under the purview of the State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD), can provide technical assistance in reviewing employment programs and services to assist agencies with their efforts in complying with the new law. Please contact SCPD at (302) 739-3620 to begin the process or with any questions regarding DE Employment First.

Delaware, leading the way to increased employment opportunities for Delawareans with disabilities.