

Employment First



In Erie County

Sept/Oct 2015

Volume 1, Issue 4

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Every October, National Disability Employment Awareness Month ([NDEAM](#)) is a time to celebrate the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities.

Across our nation workers with disabilities are making a serious contribution to businesses. Locally we have approximately 80 individuals served by the Erie County Board of DD employed in the community. This is a great start but we still have a ways to go. Nearly 90 individuals have expressed a desire to

work in the community and are currently seeking full or part time employment.

It is easy to focus on what someone cannot do especially when talking about finding work outside of a sheltered setting. NDEAM is about focusing on what someone can do.

We are trying hard in Erie County to share these "can do" stories with employers and the community. We recently captured personal stories in a short film called "Our

Employment Stories". This video premiered on September 19, 2015 at the Sandusky Artisans Center as a part of the Sandusky Film Festival.

It was a powerful experience hearing young adults confidently give their "I can" statements:

"I can write computer code", "I can work at the YMCA", "I can volunteer and give back", "I can go to college", "I can be a writer", "I can do and be anything".

This October, think about all the things you can do. Think about how you can raise awareness for workers with disabilities. Lets celebrate NDEAM!



Go to our Facebook page [Employment First of Erie County](#) and give your own "I can" statement for NDEAM!



Earlier articles have reviewed Spot 1 and 2 of the Path to Employment. In the coming months this section will look over Spot 3 and 4. Before looking at the last two spots that it is important to remember that the "Path to Employment"

Path to Employment -

Every person's path will look different

is a tool. No "spot" or definition is ever going to be able to fully reflect someone's goals, ambitions, work history or experience, or what they will achieve. It is almost silly to think the 800 people served by the ECBDD will fall neatly into 4 spots.

Families and individuals should take the path for what it is - a tool, a way to start the conversation about employment.

You can read more about the Path to Employment on our website eriecbdd.org

Where do you fall on the Path?

1. I have a job and would like a better one or to move up
2. I want a job! I need help to find one
3. I'm not sure about work. I need help to learn more
4. I don't think I want to work, but I may not know enough about it.

Ohio Employment First - Career Discovery

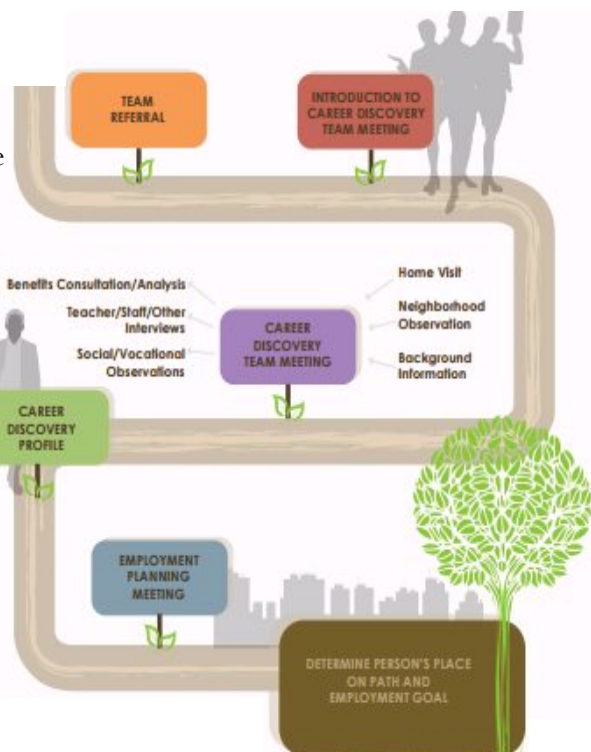
[Employment First was signed into rule in 2012](#) by Governor Kasich. A part of the rule includes defining different words or phrases.

Knowing the language and words of the Employment First rule may help you to feel more empowered when it comes to making employment decisions.

This month's definition is Career Discovery. "Career Discovery is a person-centered assessment and planning process that determines a job seekers preferences, interests, support needs/ accommodations and skills resulting in a Career Discovery Profile". The end

profile can be used in various plans or to help determine where someone falls on the Path to Employment.

Career Discovery uses a team approach to get to know the person in depth. The information gathering process includes a home visit, interviews, social and vocational observations and a benefits analysis. The finished profile will guide the team in finding the best possible community employment option for the person. Read more [here](#)



2015 ECBDD Award Nominations - Special Recognition!

- ★ The Erie County Board of DD has given out awards each year to recognize those in the DD community that work to serve and empower individuals we support. This year the ECBDD is thanked those partners at the first ever Opening Doors Awards Banquet.
- ★ This event was an opportunity to thank partners in the community that make our

work not just possible but successful.

Two new award categories were added to 2015: Employer and Community Employee of the Year.

The ECBDD received many great and moving nominations, it was very hard to select the recipients for the six awards but each of the award recipients are very deserving of this honor.

Congratulation to the 2015 ECBDD award recipients!

- Opening Doors Award: Sandusky Library
- Steve Lippert Award: Joe Casey
- Employer of the Year: Commons of Providence
- Employee of the Year: Thomas Beese Jr.
- Provider Agency: Embellished Scrapbook
- Direct Care Professional: Mark Weikle

Upcoming Events and Training Opportunity

NOW AVAILABLE - a how to guide to community employment for job seekers and families.

Ohio employment first has released a comprehensive toolkit designed for families and individuals. It is a guide on how to get a job. This resource is free and available online. Topics in

the toolkit include advocacy, benefits, job options, technology and apps, discovery and even a section for transition age individuals.

Please take the time to review this great resource at: jobguide.ohioemploymentfirst.org

Upcoming EVENTS

What do you mean there's no IEP in College? 10/06 6-7:30pm EHOVE Building A room 101

Join experts as they talk about the difference between high school and college for students with disabilities. Interactive hands on session for parents and students. This is an EHOVE "Hot Topic" event.



Benefits Analysis Now Available

"I want to work but what will happen to my benefits?" This is a common and very reasonable concern, which is why benefits analysis is an important service. The Clearwater COG (Council of Government) has hired Benefits Expert Dawn McDuffit to provide

benefits counseling to Erie and other Clearwater COG counties. Benefits Counseling is a great place to start if you are looking to start a new job in the community or hoping to work more hours. This service is free and open to those who receive board services.

Individuals and families looking to learn more about benefits analysis should talk with their Service and Support Administrator (SSA). Next issue we will talk about the new [benefits calculator](#) being launched by DODD.



Coming soon! Special transition counselors from OOD

Through the Transition Services Partnership with the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), 26 dedicated Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors will be embedded in career technical planning districts and other local education agencies throughout the state. Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) is in the process of hiring

new or assigning existing counselors to these positions. These counselors will collaborate with students with disabilities, their families, educators and

other local partners to provide person-centered vocational guidance, counseling and employment services. You can view a short OOD video explanation [here](#).

You can also read about transition services and tools on our website at www.eriecbdd.org or online at www.ohioemploymentfirst.com

The IEP must include employment goals related to competitive employment regardless of disability.



Family Corner - Family Information Network (FIN)

At the September meeting FIN hosted Katie Wolfe Whaley from the University of Kentucky to talk to group about how community employment works for someone with a significant disability, the role of provider, and questions to ask in selecting a provider.



October the group will discuss transportation options in Erie County. Join the next [FIN meeting](#) on 10/14/2015 from 6-7:30pm

Contact Megan at metzel@eriecbdd.org to be added to the reminder list. Can't make it to the next FIN meeting? Have questions about Employment First or other topic? Have a story to share? Please email EmploymentFirst@eriecbdd.org with any questions, ideas, or feedback!

Find us on Facebook!

Employment First of Erie County can now be found on Facebook! This is a quick and easy way to learn about upcoming events or opportunities. We currently have a full list of upcoming events, trainings and other activities. Go to www.employment1stofieriecounty.com or search Employment First of Erie County and like our page!



Employment First In Erie County

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Employment is not a
program, it's an outcome.

Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/Employment1stOfErieCounty

Check out the Erie County Board of DD website at www.ErieCBDD.org

You read our newsletter digitally on our website for a more interactive experience.

Feedback, questions, stories always welcome. Just email EmploymentFirst@ErieCBDD.org

Employment First in Erie County

From the Superintendent Carrie Beier

Our agency strives to empower people and their families while living, learning, working, and being a part of the community. We are committed to partnering to provide opportunities for employment and community integration for all individuals through person centered planning and supports. People will recognize possibilities, pursue opportunities, and achieve personal success as valued members within the community.



One person at a time. One success at a time.

**EMPLOYMENT
FIRST**