

**2015-2016**  
**Employment First Outreach and Awareness Program**  
**Strategic Plan**

**I - Overview**

**Background**

**Section VII(7) of the [Executive Order 15-01](#) Requires:** “By January 1, 2014, ODDS and VR will develop an outreach and information education program for all persons in the ODDS/VR Target Population that explains the benefits of employment, addresses concerns of families and perceived obstacles to participating in employment services, and is designed to encourage individuals with I/DD and their families to seek employment services.” The purpose of this document is to update the original plan (published December 2013) to reflect targeted partnerships with stakeholders and advocacy organizations that may help in outreach activities.

**Acronyms**

“**I/DD**” means individual with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

“**ODDS**” means the Office of Developmental Disability Services under the Department of Human Services (DHS)

“**ODE**” means the Oregon Department of Education

“**VR**” means Vocational Rehabilitation

**Target Audience for Outreach & Education**

- All individuals with I/DD, including school-age youth and individuals working in sheltered workshops;
- Family members/Parents/Guardians of Individuals of all ages with I/DD;
- Employers (both public and private) and Workforce Systems;
- Staff, including local state offices, schools, CDDPs, and brokerages; and
- Service Providers

**Employment First Mission**

The Employment First policy states that work, defined as paid employment, in integrated jobs is the first and priority option in planning employment services for working-age adults and youth. Services should be planned using person-centered practices that identify an individual’s talents, skills, and interests. This information can help inform job options and career opportunities.

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The DHS Employment First team has partnered with a variety of stakeholders to develop a plan for successful implementation of the Employment First initiative and the Governor's Executive Order 13-04. The outreach activities and deliverables of these stakeholders shall be reflected in this plan, whenever feasible.

These partners include:

- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)
- Office of Developmental Disability Services (ODDS)
- Oregon Department of Education (ODE)
- Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities (OCDD)
- Family and self-advocacy organizations, such as Family and Community Together (FACT) and others, as needed

**Outreach and Awareness Plan Goals**

The Employment First Outreach and Awareness Plan will include efforts, whenever possible, of our partners and stakeholders. The overall vision for this plan is to address the benefits of working in the community and to communicate broadly and address perceived obstacles and barriers to employment.

- To increase general awareness in Oregon about the benefits of working in integrated, community jobs;
- Address the benefits of paid employment (working) versus not working;
- Address concerns and perceived obstacles to working;
- Encourage individuals with I/DD to seek employment services;
- Encourage family support of individuals with I/DD in their career or post-secondary goals;
- Educate and inform Oregon employers about the benefits of hiring individuals with I/DD; and
- Educate staff and service providers about employment services and benefits of employment for individuals with I/DD.

**II - Strategic Tools and Activities**

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## **1. Statewide Marketing Campaign**

Employment Awareness Slogan and Branding:

- Message platforms for Individuals, Families, Employers highlighting the importance and belief around employment: strong visuals and focused messaging will be important to success.
- Delivery of those messages through multiple avenues, including local media (paid and unpaid), billboards, PSAs, videos, social media, and direct outreach to local family advocacy organizations, business groups (such as Chambers), and more.
- Messaging tested with focus groups (to include employers, individuals with I/DD, parents), plus key stakeholders such as Family to Family Networks, FACT, others as needed.

Timeline: July 2014 through June 2015

## **2. Web/Electronic Media**

- Revised Employment First Website,  
<http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/employment/employment-first>  
Includes: Page for individuals and families with information, resources; Page for Employers with Resources, Testimonials.
- Revised VR web pages, particularly around youth. New site helping students/families locate local VR resources:  
<http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/vr/Pages/vr-offices.aspx>
- Revised ODE website on Transition, which is revised to be a “one-stop shop” for students with disabilities for resources related to transitioning youth with disabilities to adulthood in Oregon, <http://tcntransition.org/>

Timeline: Now and Ongoing

## **3. Weekly Messages**

- Weekly Email Messages from Statewide Employment First Coordinator to educate and inform field staff and providers and other stakeholders.

Timeline: Now and ongoing

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**4. Success Stories/Photos/Videos**

- Feature stories, print, photo and video, to highlight people with I/DD working in the community. Stories will cover all parts of the state, rural and urban, and feature a wide variety of people including people with very significant disabilities. Stories will highlight people working in the community in diverse jobs, with significant input from employers, coworkers, employment service providers, and field staff, when applicable. Stories will highlight the strengths of the individual.  
<http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/employment/employment-first/success-stories>
- Stories (written and video) will be shared through the following communication portals: Employment First weekly messages, homepage stories on EF website, social media including ODDS Facebook page, OCDD's Facebook page, and FACT's Facebook page.

Timeline: Ongoing

**5. Printed materials/brochures/manuals**

- Employment First general brochure, completed June 2014.
- VR/OCDD/Employment First: "Planning My Way to Work," a transition guide for students and families to plan path from school to work and adult life. Will be web and print-based.  
Timeline: Dec. 2014.
- FAQ No. 1: VR/ODDS for Field Staff, completed Feb. 2014. On Employment First website and sent as transmittal.  
<http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/employment/employment-first/Documents/FAQ%20Document%20No.%201.pdf>
- FAQ No. 2: Transition Services. Owner: ODE  
Timeline: 2015
- FAQ: Commonly Asked Questions about Employment for Individuals/Families. Owner: Employment First.  
Timeline: December 2014.

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**6. Training and professional development for staff/providers**

- DHS/ODE to continue to seek opportunities to present or participate in trainings or conferences that help educate field professionals on their role in educating consumers and families about integrated employment and tools/resources available.
  
- Develop and implement Communities of Practice for Services Coordinators and Personal Agents. One goal will be ongoing discussions about expectations regarding education and outreach activities. Owner: Training/Technical Assistance Workstream.  
Timeline: January-June 2015.
  
- 2014 trainings included:
  - VR/ODDS Supported Employment Trainings: Held August 2014.
  - ODE Educator Institute on Networking and Transition: Held June 2014.
  - Discovery/OTAC trainings: Held October-December 2014.
  
- 2015 trainings to include:
  - ODE Educator Institute on Networking and Transition, Round 2.  
Timeline: June 2015
  - VR/ODDS combo trainings, Round 2. Timeline: June 2015
  - Statewide forums with DHS and ODE leadership with field staff, field leadership, individuals and families to answer questions, address concerns.  
Timeline: January through May 2015.
  - Meet at the Mountain training for local Employment First teams statewide.  
Timeline: April 2015.
  - Employment First statewide conference for families/individuals  
Timeline: May 2015.

**Outreach Activities 2014-2015**

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The table below summarizes outreach activities for 2014 and 2015. Completed activities are marked with a C, ongoing activities are marked with an O, and planned activities are marked with a P.

#	Activity	Unit					
		Employment First	VR	ODDS	ODE	OCDD	
1	Revise EF website	x					C
2	EF Statewide Coordinator's Messages	x					O
3	Director/Leadership Messages to field, stakeholders		x	x	x		O
4	Updates at standing meetings with external stakeholders	x	x	x	x		O
5	Statewide Forums with leadership on Employment First	x	x	x	x		O
6	ODE Educator Institute on Networking and Transition				x	x	C
7	VR/ODDS Employment Trainings		x	x			C, O
8	Meet at the Mountain event	x	x	x	x	x	P
9	Develop and update FAQs for various stakeholders, including families, individuals, and field staff.	x	x	x	x		C, O
10	Transition Manual: "Planning My Way to Work" online and some print copies.	x	x		x	x	P
11	Video success stories	x				x	P
12	Print and online success stories with photos	x					O
13	Website feature stories	x		x	x		O
14	Promote stories and successes through social media (Twitter, Facebook)	x	x	x	x	x	O
15	FACT trainings for parents/families				x		O
16	Updates for partner communications	x	x	x	x	x	C
17	Statewide marketing campaign	x	x	x	x	x	P
18	Online/print materials for families/parents	x	x	x	x	x	P
19	Forums for families/individuals	x	x	x	x	x	P
20	Strategic communications to self-advocates	x	x	x		x	P
21	Outreach/ education about benefits of paid integrated employment to individuals in sheltered workshops	x		x		x	P