

## **Memorandum of Understanding on Transition of Students with Disabilities to the Workforce**

**Office of Developmental Disabilities Services  
Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Services  
Oregon Department of Education  
Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities**

**Vision:** Through strong agency collaboration, youth with disabilities will leave school with integrated, community employment or a post-secondary education plan.

### **1. Recitals and Purpose**

- 1.1 Nationally, many individuals with disabilities are significantly unemployed or underemployed upon leaving school, compared to their peers who do not have disabilities.
- 1.2 Preparation for integrated, inclusive employment, for individuals with disabilities should begin early in a child's life and extend through transition from school to post-secondary education or the workforce.
- 1.3 Together with Executive Order No. 13-04, this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) recognizes that, while the State cannot guarantee jobs, Oregon starts with the presumption that everyone can be employed in an integrated setting in a community-based job. This MOU is based on the principle that, to the extent services and supports can be made available, any person can be employed. Oregon is not guaranteeing anyone a job, but with significant additional resources, Oregon is optimistic that all persons with IDD will have an opportunity to obtain integrated employment.
- 1.4 Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR), Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS), Oregon Department of Education (ODE) and the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) share a common responsibility, philosophy and goal of increasing the number of transition age youth with disabilities who successfully transition from school to work or post-secondary education.
- 1.5 Therefore, to support and increase the number of students with disabilities transitioning from secondary schools to integrated, community based employment or post-secondary education, VR, ODDS, ODE and OCDD enter into this memorandum of understanding.

### **2. Definitions**

- 2.1 **Employment:** Full or part-time work in integrated, community settings, consistent with industry standards, that is based on the individual's skills and interests.
- 2.2 **Employment Services:** Services provided by ODDS or VR that are intended to assist a person with disabilities to choose, get, learn, and keep work in an integrated setting. Employment

services shall be individualized, meaning that services shall be individually planned, based on person-centered planning principles and evidence-based practices, where applicable.

2.3 Transition Services: A coordinated set of activities for transition-age students (as defined under Section II.2.b of Executive Order No. 13-04) with intellectual or developmental disabilities that (1) is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the student to facilitate the student's movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adults services, independent living, or community participation; (2) is based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests; and (3) includes (A) instruction; (B) related services; (C) community experiences; (D) the development of employment and other post school adult living objectives; and (E) if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation; and (4) may be special education, if provided as specially designed instruction, or related services, if required to assist a student with a disability to benefit from special education.

### **3. Parties**

3.1 VR assists individuals to identify their strengths, skills, interests and abilities as well as vocational goals and develops individualized plans of employment to address the identified employment barriers. VR also provides and purchases goods, services, aids and devices in support of individualized plans for employment.

3.2 The ODDS provides supports and services to children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Eligible individuals and their families can access service coordination, generic and specialized services to provide the support, including appropriate employment support, based on the individual needs of the person, to be able to live independent, productive lives integrated within their community.

3.3 The ODE implements public education policies for eligible students with disabilities birth through transition services at age 21. ODE is responsible for ensuring education services are provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which includes planning and implementing transition services for students with disabilities.

3.4 The OCDD is an agency authorized under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (DD Act) to "engage in advocacy, capacity building and systemic change activities" for people with developmental disabilities. 42 U.S.C. 15001(b)(1). OCDD is committed to increasing transition and employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities.

#### **4. Agreement Goals**

- 4.1 Youth with disabilities will leave school with a post-secondary education plan, or integrated, inclusive employment at minimum wage or greater so they may enjoy the positive benefits of having a job.
- 4.2 Establish a state level work group, called the Transition Agency Coordinating Team (TACT) to address systems, policy and funding issues that impede the continuous provision of transition services by ODDS, VR and ODE and align policy and practice from the state to local level;
- 4.3 Increase by joint efforts and coordinated services, the number of youth who make a successful transition from school to paid employment or postsecondary education;
- 4.4 Foster innovation in program design and service delivery across agencies;
- 4.5 Build system sustainability by intentional resource direction and management, and program design;
- 4.6 Develop and utilize a common communication strategy to share information with stakeholders; and
- 4.7 Establish roles and strengthen collaboration and coordination between each party to this memorandum of understanding when serving youth with disabilities, so that individuals and their families may experience seamless, non-duplicative, and transparent services.

#### **5. Mutual Responsibilities of the Parties**

- 5.1 Participate in, and develop governance structure for, the TACT leadership group aimed at improving transition to employment outcomes in integrated, community settings for youth with disabilities;
- 5.2 Work collaboratively to design a coordinated service system that will produce positive employment outcomes and engage services, case managers, brokerage personal agents, school districts, vocational rehabilitation, youth with disabilities, families, employers, service providers, workforce system and other stakeholders at the local level;
- 5.3 Identify and implement effective best practices to achieve the priority goals and outcomes of this agreement, increased funding, leveraging and co-investment strategies;
- 5.4 Align policy and practice at the state and local level, including by participating in the Policy Group as defined in Executive Order No. 13-04 in order to achieve the goals of the Executive Order, and provide recommendations for policy and legislative changes to address gaps and barriers in the system that prevent successful transition;

- 5.5 Implement coordinated transition services at the local and state level;
- 5.6 Complete service system mapping to determine gaps in transition services and implement a plan to eliminate those gaps;
- 5.7 Build capacity across the systems that interact with youth with disabilities to effectively address problems and implement innovative programs to create positive employment outcomes for youth with disabilities;
- 5.8 Create common metrics that each party to this agreement to collect and share. These metrics will track the number of youth engaged in employment during school and up to age 24, number of youth engaged in post-secondary education, and youth and family satisfaction during school and up to age 24;
- 5.9 Share responsibility for publication, dissemination, and explanation of this agreement, as well as any accompanying materials;
- 5.10 Identify and disseminate information about transition services, employment services, effective practices, training and funding strategies that create positive employment outcomes to agency staff, partners, families, individuals, and public and private stakeholders;
- 5.11 Support Employment First groups, which include providing technical assistance to school districts and counties, disseminating information, and participating in staff development activities;
- 5.12 Develop and provide common trainings and professional development opportunities to improve transition and employment results for youth with disabilities. These trainings shall develop core competencies, skills and expectations of agency employees and staff;
- 5.13 Provide directories of resource information to all collaborating agencies, including descriptions of services and supports and contact information that can be linked and used on separate or mutually designed websites. The resources should include name and location of VR offices, brokerages and local contact information for schools;
- 5.14 Develop and distribute to other agency partners to this agreement: notices, memorandums and other information that relate to transition to employment for people with disabilities; and
- 5.15 Give timely notice to other agency partners to this agreement of proposed rule amendments relating to youth transition services. Implicit in this notice is the opportunity for the partner agencies to comment on the proposed rule amendments.

## 6. Individual Party Responsibilities

6.1 In addition to the mutual responsibilities listed in Section 5 of this agreement, ODE agrees to do the following:

- A. Share data, within the bounds of confidentiality, of students with disabilities regarding transition services and outcomes;
- B. Advise school districts to invite, with parent and student (when appropriate) consent, appropriate representatives from any system connected with the youth such as VR and ODDS to IEP transition meetings;
- C. Provide Oregon schools with a contact list for VR and ODDS to encourage the identification of a school district or school building contact person needed for VR/ODDS collaboration;
- D. Encourage educators, parents, and youth to participate in county Employment First Groups;
- E. Encourage networking and collaboration among ODE, VR and ODDS, educators, parents, and youth; and
- F. Cooperate with the VR, ODDS, and OCDD in their efforts to improve consistency and level of engagement in the transition process.
- G. Designate a location for a VR liaison counselor in each school district and/or school building.

6.2 In addition to the mutual responsibilities listed in Section 5 of this agreement, VR agrees to do the following:

- A. Gather employment outcome data regarding the students who receive transition services under this agreement and to share that information with ODE, ODDS, and OCDD;
- B. Advise VR staff to attend, with parent and student (if appropriate) consent, IEP meetings to provide employment information, technical assistance, case consultation, and information/referral as needed; and
- C. Designate a liaison counselor to each school district and/or school building identified by ODE.

6.3 In addition to the mutual responsibilities listed in Section 5 of this agreement, ODDS agrees to do the following:

- A. Provide available employment data regarding individuals in long-term employment situations, and encourage and promote collaboration in transition planning between schools districts, ODDS and VR.
- B. Advise residential and foster care service providers about the importance of participating at IEP/IPE/ PCP(Person Centered Plan) meetings for individuals who they support, and encourage the individual's full participation during the meetings;
- C. Contribute information to the Oregon Employment First website to keep stakeholders and the public informed about collaborations and networking activities between agencies; and

6.4 In addition to the mutual responsibilities listed in Section 5 of this agreement, OCDD Agrees to do the Following:

- A. Continue to support Oregon Family Networks to give families the support and information resources to envision a future for their child that includes employment or post secondary education.
- B. Continue to support Person Centered Planning by training plan facilitators who are engaged and qualified to assist families and youth with disabilities create effective transition goals.

**7. Agreement Revisions**

7.1 The parties agree to formally review this agreement every two years.

7.2 The parties agree to revise this agreement as necessary.

7.3 This agreement supersedes and replaces the agreement executed on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of March 2013. The agreement executed on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of March 2013 is of no effect.


**8. Resolution of Conflicts**


8.1 Parties intend to work together to resolve disputes.


**9. Consistent with Executive Order**

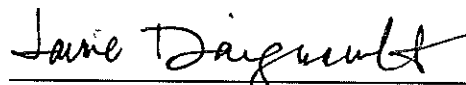
9.1 This Memorandum of Understanding shall be read as consistent with Executive Order No. 13-04.

Dated this 16th day of May, 2013.

  
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 Sarah Drinkwater, Interim Asst. Superintendent  
 Oregon Department of Education

  
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 Stephaine Parrish Taylor, Administrator  
 Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

  
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 Patrice Botsford, Director  
 Office of Developmental Disability Services

  
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 Jaime Daignault, Executive Director  
 Oregon Council on  
 Developmental Disabilities