

Annual Report



**Opportunities for
Ohioans with
Disabilities**

2025-2026

Director's Message

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Moments after taking the oath of office, Governor Mike DeWine set a bold vision for Ohio by signing [Executive Order 2019-03D](#), designating Ohio as a Disability Inclusion State and a Model Employer of Individuals with Disabilities. This vision continues to guide our mission: ensuring every Ohioan with a disability has access to the support, training, and opportunities needed to thrive at work and in the community.

In Federal Fiscal Year 2025 and State Fiscal Year 2026, OOD advanced this mission with record-breaking results. We received 9,885 referrals through [OODWorks.com](#)—more than double the previous year—reflecting stronger partnerships and streamlined access to services. Vocational Rehabilitation services reached over 46,000 Ohioans, including more than 22,000 young people, an 8.8% increase from the prior year.

Since Governor DeWine's administration began, OOD has served 9,000 more individuals—a 24% increase—while credentials earned rose 34% and median wages climbed 58%.

Over the past eight years, Ohio has consistently ranked among the top three states for serving youth with disabilities under 16. Last year, 71.1% of youth and adults in training programs made measurable skill gains—ranking OOD fifth nationally and exceeding the U.S. average by nearly 19 percentage points.

Accessible Ohio (AO) continues to expand disability inclusion statewide:

- 476 partnerships established
- 744 accessibility consultations delivered
- 68 accessibility enhancements implemented

The second annual AO Conference and Expo brought together 350 participants for dynamic speakers, interactive sessions, and an accessibility showcase—strengthening collaboration and innovation.

Our reporting aligns with federal fiscal year requirements due to funding sources. Vocational Rehabilitation programs receive substantial federal grants administered by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Our Division of Disability Determination (DDD) is completely funded by the Social Security Administration (SSA).

Last year, DDD processed disability claims for more than 151,000 Ohioans, surpassing SSA's workload target by more than 2,400 determinations.

Thank you to Governor DeWine, Lt. Governor Tressel, the General Assembly, the OOD Council, our partners, and every Ohioan with a disability. Your support drives our progress. Join us in building a disability inclusive Ohio—visit [OOD.Ohio.Gov](#), subscribe to our newsletter, or follow us on social media (@OhioOOD).

Sincerely,



Kevin L. Miller
Director



About OOD

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities

OOD is the state agency that empowers Ohioans with disabilities through employment, disability determination, and independence. This is accomplished through the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR), Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired (BSVI), the Division of Employer and Innovation Services (EIS), and the Division of Disability Determination (DDD).

OOD works with partners in business, education, and nonprofit organizations to facilitate individualized employment plans for Ohioans with disabilities; helps Ohio companies recruit and retain employees with disabilities; and is the sole agency in Ohio that administers the determination of benefits for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) programs in Ohio.

Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation

BVR provides services to eligible individuals with disabilities to assist them with obtaining and maintaining competitive integrated employment. BVR works with adults seeking to enter the workforce or retain a job, and with youth, beginning at age 14, to assist them as they transition from high school into college and/or the workplace.

Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired

BSVI provides services to improve employment and independent living outcomes for individuals who are blind or have low vision beginning at age 14. BSVI also partners with Ohio's Community Centers for the Deaf and Centers for Independent Living.

Division of Employer and Innovation Services

EIS works to raise awareness of OOD's mission with the business community to promote a talent pool of job-ready candidates and support businesses in hiring and retaining individuals with disabilities. Through Accessible Ohio, staff consult with Ohio businesses, venues, attractions, and communities to identify barriers and establish goals for accessibility. EIS is also instrumental in the development and implementation of the agency's strategic plan, performance management, and coordination of Lean Six Sigma process improvement initiatives.

Division of Disability Determination

DDD, in agreement with the Social Security Administration (SSA), determines medical eligibility for Ohioans who apply for Social Security Disability benefits (Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income). It is federally regulated and receives 100 percent funding from SSA. The Social Security and Supplemental Security Income disability programs provide benefits to people who meet the guidelines set by SSA.

Quick Facts & Metrics

What OOD Has to Offer

OOD's Vocational Rehabilitation programs help Ohioans with disabilities get and maintain employment, including:

- Career counseling for finding and keeping a job
- Job training and practical work experiences
- On-the-job support and accommodations
- Assistance with resume writing and job interviews
- Financial support for various expenses related to education and training programs, transportation, work attire, tools, and equipment necessary to eliminate employment barriers

How Long Does It Take?

Because of the personalized nature of Vocational Rehabilitation support, timelines can vary significantly, with some individuals finding employment in just weeks!

For adult participants ages 22+, it takes an average of 6.1 months to get a job when receiving Vocational Rehabilitation services.*

For participants ages 14–21, it takes an average of 21.9 months to get a job when receiving Vocational Rehabilitation services. Many are students simultaneously pursuing a degree or credential and often need more time to build job skills due to limited work experience.

Employer Partnerships

OOD collaborates with around 1,000 employer partners to facilitate the recruitment, hiring, and retention of workers with disabilities, helping to enhance workforce diversity and strength.

How Much Will I Make?

The amounts below show the median earnings of participants at the end of receiving Vocational

Rehabilitation services.*

Participants with a four-year degree or beyond can expect to make around \$22.00 per hour.

Participants with a two-year degree or beyond can expect to make around \$17.00 per hour.

Participants with an industry-recognized certificate/credential can expect to make around \$16.00 per hour.

Participants with a high school diploma can expect to make around \$13.00 per hour.

Supporting a More Accessible Ohio

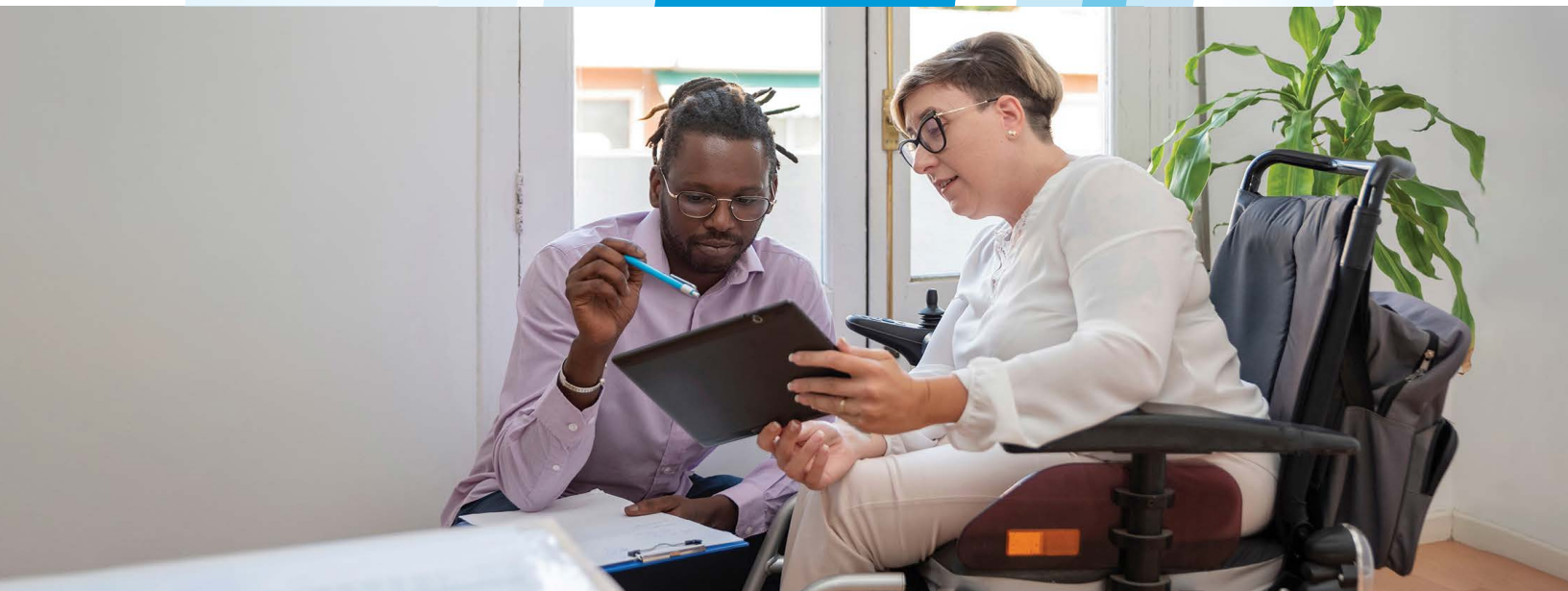
The Accessible Ohio team has established 476 partnerships, provided 744 consultations, and supported 68 accessibility enhancements, including accessible doors and seating, sensory areas, and universal changing tables.

Eligibility Decisions

The Division of Disability Determination processes applications for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI), ensuring accurate eligibility decisions for Ohioans, with an initial accuracy rate of 99%.

**OOD Vocational Rehabilitation participants getting a job during Federal Fiscal Year 2025 (October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025).*

Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation



Overview

The Bureaus of Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Visually Impaired worked with more than 46,000 Ohioans with disabilities in their pursuit of meaningful work and independent lives. This was 3,722 more individuals compared to the previous year, an 8.8% increase. More than 22,000 of these Ohioans were young people.

Through career counseling, goal setting, and tailored support, the bureaus helped individuals overcome barriers to employment. Collaborating with approximately 300 Vocational Rehabilitation providers statewide, these services facilitated the removal of obstacles to finding or maintaining employment.

Getting Results

OOD's Vocational Rehabilitation services, including the Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired, are getting results for Ohioans with disabilities. Of individuals who engaged with services, 59.2% are still employed one year after exiting, positioning OOD ninth best in the nation. Among those enrolled in training programs, 52.1% earned a credential, ranking Ohio ninth best nationally. An outstanding 71.1% of individuals in training programs made measurable skill gains toward earning a credential. This ranks OOD fifth in the nation and exceeds the national average by 18.9 percentage points.

In FFY 2025, OOD received a record 9,885 referrals through [OODWorks.com](https://oodworks.com)—more than double the 4,783 referrals

BVR Program Highlights | FFY 2025

- New applications for Vocational Rehabilitation services totaled 21,863
- Eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation services was determined for a total of 20,640 individuals
- The average timeframe from application to eligibility was 24.3 days, significantly faster than the federal requirement of 60 days
- A total of 16,143 new Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs), personalized written plans outlining individual employment goals, and the services to reach those goals, were created
- Vocational Rehabilitation assisted 5,665 individuals in the achievement of successful employment outcomes

submitted in Fiscal Year 2024. Nearly half (46%) of these referrals were submitted on behalf of participants, reflecting strong partnerships and a more streamlined process to connect individuals with OOD services.

Serving Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities

OOD helps young people with disabilities acquire the necessary skills and support to enter the workforce successfully. Young people with disabilities or other barriers to employment may face unique challenges in transitioning from school to work. OOD provides services such as career counseling, job training, and support services tailored to their individual needs, empowering them to achieve independence and self-sufficiency. With early engagement and targeted assistance, these programs can maximize the potential for young people to lead fulfilling and productive lives.

The Broadcast Educational Media Commission (BEMC), in collaboration with OOD, the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (DEW), and ThinkTV, launched a video series in September 2025 titled “[Get Ready! Get Set! Keep Going!](#)” This resource is designed specifically for Ohio students with disabilities, providing important information to help them jumpstart their careers and navigate their unique career pathways. For parents, educators, and students, understanding the resources available is crucial for preparing for life after high school.



In FFY 2025, OOD assisted 22,318 young people with disabilities through programs and partnerships, including the Ohio Transition Support Partnership, career-technical education, Pre-Employment Transition Services,

Summer Youth Work Experiences, and Ohio College2Careers.

Ohio Transition Support Partnership

The Ohio Transition Support Partnership (OTSP), which began in 2015 with the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce, ensures that students ages 14-21 with disabilities have access to OOD’s Vocational Rehabilitation services. OTSP serves students with disabilities as they move from school to postsecondary education (education or specialized training after high school) or the workforce. These services are geared toward making the transition to the working world smoother by addressing the specific needs and challenges that individuals with disabilities may encounter during this important phase of life. Last year, a total of 6,386 students participated in OTSP to work toward their employment goals.

Career-Technical Education

Over the last year, OOD focused on increasing services to students with disabilities enrolled in career-technical education in Ohio. These students benefited from help through OOD for individualized work experiences, assistive technology, tools, licensure/certification fees, work clothing, and job placement in their chosen field.

In FFY 2025, OOD served a total of 1,867 students with disabilities enrolled in career-technical education.

Pre-Employment Transition Services

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) give students with disabilities the tools to explore careers, understand workplace expectations, and build essential skills like self-advocacy and leadership. From job exploration counseling to workplace readiness training, Pre-ETS guides students ages 14-21 in exploring careers that align with their interests and preparing for successful future employment. In FFY 2025, OOD served a total of 3,532 students through Pre-ETS.

To strengthen these efforts, OOD partnered with OCALI to provide a comprehensive Pre-ETS curriculum available online at no cost to service

providers. This collaboration ensures consistent, high-quality resources across all five Pre-ETS categories, supporting providers in delivering effective instruction and guidance to students. By offering the curriculum at no cost, OOD and OCALI have expanded access to adaptable, standards-based tools that help students build confidence, develop workplace skills, and prepare for successful transitions into employment.



On March 6, 2026, OOD and several partners hosted the 10th annual Five-County Transition Expo at Southern State Community College in Hillsboro, Ohio for more than 160 students.

Summer Youth Work Experiences

Summer Youth Work Experiences provide opportunities to explore careers and gain on-the-job training. These paid work-based learning experiences help students build confidence and learn essential skills at jobs in their local communities. Youth are assigned to work sites based on their interests and abilities, and safeguards are in place to promote health and safety. While working at job sites, students receive support from a job coach and earn minimum wage.

In the summer of 2025, in collaboration with 812 distinct employers and 73 Vocational Rehabilitation providers, a total of 3,097 students with disabilities participated in summer work experiences.

Watch our [Summer Youth Work Experience video](#) to see how the program impacts students with disabilities across Ohio.



Oscar Pine participated in a Summer Youth Work Experience at COSI.

Building Confidence: Discover Summer Work Experiences for Students with Disabilities

Watch this video to see how OOD's Summer Youth Work Experiences empowered thousands of Ohio students with disabilities to build skills, confidence, and real-world work experience through supportive, paid opportunities across the state.

Watch more
[@OhioOOD videos](#)

Mia Crawley

Finding Her Place:
Mia Crawley's Journey to Success



Project SEARCH

Mia Crawley wanted meaningful work experience and a welcoming place to build her skills as she prepared for life after high school. With support from OOD and training through Project SEARCH Hilton Easton, she gained confidence, explored career options, and received job coaching that helped her succeed in the OhioHealth Riverside Methodist Hospital kitchen. Now she thrives as a kitchen utility worker, enjoying her independence and making a positive impact.

Career Tech X

During the summer of 2025, OOD partnered with the Pickaway-Ross Career Technical Center and the Lorain County Joint Vocational School to launch Career Tech X (CTX), an interactive career exploration pilot for rising 9th and 10th-grade students. CTX introduces students to multiple high-demand career pathways through short-term rotations in Career Technical Education labs. This four-day experience gave students with disabilities the opportunity to engage directly in practical, skills-based activities that helped them explore career options aligned with their interests and strengths. The pilot supports OOD's mission to promote early career exploration and foster work-readiness skills development.



Students participate in engaging activities at Career Tech X 2025.

Ohio College2Careers

Ohio College2Careers (Ohio C2C) is currently available at 64 colleges and universities. Ohio C2C counselors assist students with disabilities



Watch a video about
[Ohio College2Careers](#)



Devan Beadle successfully navigated his education at Owens Community College and transferred to the University of Toledo, overcoming challenges related to autism and sensory processing disorder to excel in theater and maintain a job while pursuing his career goals.

with career exploration and counseling, assistive technology, resume and interview preparation, and job placement. OOD's Career Development Specialists connect college students with disabilities to internships and permanent employment opportunities.

OOD counselors can also work with students with disabilities at any credentialing program, college, or university.

In FFY 2025, OOD served a total of 3,074 college students with disabilities through Ohio College2Careers.

OOD is dedicated to empowering students with disabilities as they pursue higher education and build meaningful careers. Together, we're creating strong pathways for success for students with disabilities in Ohio.

Employment First Partnership

The Employment First Partnership between OOD and the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) continues a statewide initiative to expand community employment services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. OOD Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and regional Work Incentives Consultants work with local county boards of developmental disabilities and dually-certified providers to support eligible individuals who are interested in competitive integrated employment, including adults transitioning from facility-based settings (e.g., workshops).

Through the partnership, provider agencies, schools, families, businesses, and people with developmental disabilities across Ohio have all worked together to create opportunities and pathways for integration, independence, and full community participation. Additionally, this allows Ohio to maximize resources to support more people on their path to community employment, build system capacity, and strengthen the relationship between the developmental disability and vocational rehabilitation systems.

In FFY 2025, OOD served a total of 12,587 Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities who were also eligible for county board services.

Works4Me Program Works for Equity

With Governor DeWine's support and a five-year federal grant awarded to OOD, Works4Me will help 1,450 individuals with disabilities move out of subminimum wage employment and into competitive integrated jobs.



With support from Lake County Board of Developmental Disabilities and OOD, Tom received support that led to a job at Chick-fil-A, which had been his goal for years.

Through enhanced career development, work incentives planning, paid community-based experiences, and wraparound services, Works4Me will continue to help remove barriers for people with developmental disabilities who are employed at subminimum wage or considering employment at subminimum wage.

OOD is collaborating with DODD, other state agencies, and local entities to ensure Works4Me



Wesley Demond Arnett

Wesley's Big Step Forward: A Works4Me Success Story

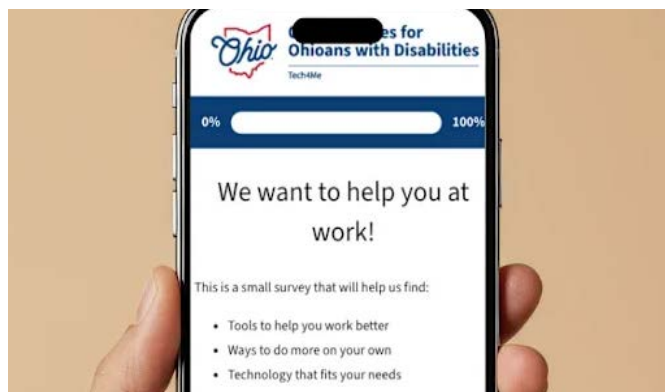
Watch this video to see how Wesley Demond Arnett turned a Works4Me job experience into meaningful, competitive employment—showing how OOD, dedicated providers, and supportive employers are opening doors to independence and bigger possibilities for people with disabilities.

Watch more
[@OhioOOD videos](#)

empowers adults with disabilities to successfully complete activities leading to competitive integrated employment.

The Ohio State University Nisonger Center, DODD, and OOD partnered to deliver the Works4Me Assistive Tech Roadshow—a statewide, hands-on experience demonstrating how assistive technology supports workplace success for people with developmental disabilities. The roadshow offered in-person opportunities to explore innovative tools, engage with experts, and discover practical solutions that enhance independence on the job. Attendees visited themed demonstration booths, created personalized solutions, and entered a technology raffle. Running April 2 through June 10, 2026 with stops across Ohio, the roadshow welcomed individuals with disabilities, families, service providers, employers, and community partners.

Tech4Me, launched in May 2026, is an easy-to-use online tool that helps individuals identify the assistive technology that can best support them at home, in the community, or on the job. It offers a guided survey, clear explanations, and direct connections between individuals, providers, and OOD to determine the equipment or supports that promote greater independence.



Works4Me is entering its fourth year of implementation. In FFY 2025, a total of 20 providers helped to increase the availability of Works4Me services to Ohioans with developmental disabilities. A total of 148 participants received Works4Me services in FFY 2025.

Employment Support for People with Behavioral Health Conditions

OOD assists individuals with behavioral health conditions, including mental health and substance use disorders, to find competitive integrated employment that is aligned with their strengths, interests, and goals. Employment is an important part of recovery and offers a variety of benefits, including increased income, independence, self-confidence, a sense of purpose, meaningful involvement in their communities, greater access to medical benefits, and positive social connections.

In FFY 2025, OOD served a total of 15,782 Ohioans with mental health and/or substance use disorders.

Individual Placement and Support

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is an evidence-based supported employment practice that helps people with serious mental illness or co-occurring substance use disorders work in competitive jobs related to their preferences. OOD assists eligible individuals with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining competitive jobs related to each person's unique strengths, priorities, abilities, experiences, and interests. Individuals served through IPS benefit from the collaborative efforts of mental health agencies and OOD.

In FFY 2025, a total of 24 IPS partnerships, which include community mental health and substance use treatment providers throughout the state, delivered services to a total of 794 participants.

OOD Jobs for Recovery

OOD Jobs for Recovery is a partnership that assists Ohioans with disabilities who are participating in specialized court dockets to attain, maintain, or advance their careers. Consistent employment helps Ohioans in recovery stay on a positive path, increase their independence and income, and engage meaningfully in the community. OOD staff are active members of specialized docket treatment teams and help individuals with employment limitations due to mental health conditions

and/or substance use disorders. These staff attend court proceedings and treatment team meetings to ensure the rapid engagement of each participant in career counseling, job placement, and retention services. They also help address employment barriers, such as transportation, tools and licenses for employment, and interview and work clothing/shoes.

OOD Jobs for Recovery provides employment support for individuals served through certified specialized dockets in the following counties: Allen, Ashtabula, Butler, Clinton, Cuyahoga, Franklin, Highland, Hocking, Lucas, Mahoning, Scioto, Summit, Tuscarawas, and Warren.

In FFY 2025, a total of 221 Ohioans successfully completed the OOD Jobs for Recovery Program, working through their recovery and finding employment.



Lindsey McClay from Portsmouth faced personal challenges, including anxiety, depression, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). With support from OOD, she obtained her Medical Assistant Certification from Phlebotomy Plus and entered the medical field as a clinical medical assistant.

Division of Policy and Partnerships

The Division of Policy and Partnerships within

OOD centralizes key functions to effectively navigate the growing partnership landscape while ensuring policies support access to services and quality employment outcomes for Ohioans with disabilities. This division manages crucial aspects of OOD's operations, including Vocational Rehabilitation policies, training, provider relationships, interagency partnerships, collaboration with the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), and coordination with the OOD Council. By streamlining these responsibilities, the division aims to strengthen OOD's collaborative approach, enhance policy implementation, and ultimately improve services for Ohioans with disabilities.

Peer Navigator Program

[The Peer Navigator program](#), launched in 2023, matches current OOD participants with available paid, intermittent roles to support counselors and handle a slew of administrative tasks. From managing the front desk and calling participants to remind them of appointments, Peer Navigators are bridging the gaps in customer support while learning new skills and exploring career opportunities. The program is a huge asset for OOD staff as well as other OOD participants, who appreciate working with someone who has been in their shoes.

Two successful Peer Navigators, Ruby Gibbons and Megan Newsome, pictured on the next page, gained valuable work experience in the program while also building their confidence. After completing the program, Ruby accepted a role as a Patient Guest Services Assistant at Cleveland Clinic Mercy Hospital, while Megan was hired on full-time at OOD as a Customer Support Specialist.

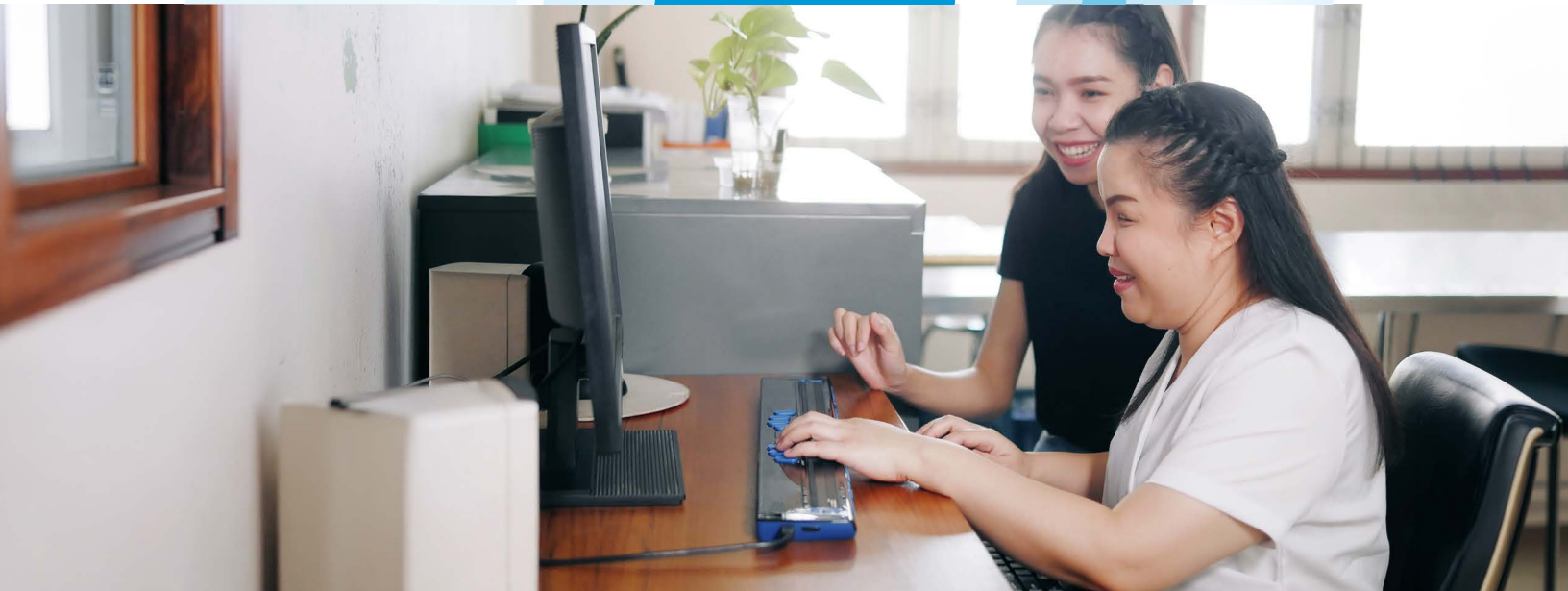
Ruby and Megan

OOD's Peer Navigator Program
Equips Participants with Valuable
Job Skills and Confidence



Left: Ruby Gibbons. Right: Megan Newsome.

Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired



Overview

The Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired (BSVI) assists eligible people, beginning at age 14, who are blind or have low vision, by providing direct, personalized services to assist them in finding and retaining meaningful work and personal independence. In FFY 2025, BSVI received 1,158 applications for services.

Partnering to Assist Individuals Who are Blind or Have Low Vision

OOD partners with three sight centers, located in Toledo, Cincinnati, and Cleveland, as well as other stakeholder groups and partners throughout the state, to provide programs and services to enhance independence, education, career, and support opportunities for Ohioans with vision loss.

In September 2025, BSVI was honored with the Help Is in Sight Award from [Hadley](#). This distinguished recognition celebrates individuals and organizations that make a significant impact in the lives of people with vision loss. The award affirms BSVI's ongoing commitment to accessibility and empowerment.

Over the last year, BSVI staff presented at the state conventions of both the American Council of the Blind of Ohio and the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio (NFB of Ohio). Attendees learned about BSVI, and staff learned from presenters at each convention.

BSVI Program Highlights | FFY 2025

- Services were provided to 2,389 individuals who are blind or have low vision and seeking to find or retain meaningful work
- Services were provided to 3,180 individuals who are Deaf, hard of hearing, or DeafBlind and seeking to find or retain meaningful work
- The Independent Living Older Blind program assisted 1,061 individuals in meeting their independent living goals
- OOD's mobile services unit participated in 110 community events statewide, delivering a total of 372 services to Ohioans in 31 counties

OOD and NFB of Ohio offer a [searchable database of resources for individuals who are blind or have low vision](#). With 17 categories of information (e.g., accessible technology, advocacy, employment resources, and independent living), users can search for resources based on topic or name. Families and professionals can go to one place to find the resources and information they need at the OOD and NFB resource webpage.



Trey Prentice, who has low vision and autism, successfully navigated his journey to employment with support from the Sight Center of Northwest Ohio, Lucas County Board of Developmental Disabilities, and OOD.

Getting the Word Out

Through sponsorships with OOD and other agencies, the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) offers NFB-NEWSLINE, a free audio news service, providing access to more than 500 publications, job listings, newspapers, and more. OOD Works e-Newsletters are added to NFB-NEWSLINE weekly to help listeners stay up-to-date and promote OOD services.

Voicecorps is a reading service for people who cannot read due to medical conditions. Volunteers read aloud newspapers, print publications, and shopping flyers. Individuals who cannot read print because of a disability, including Ohioans who are blind or have low vision, are eligible for Voicecorps services. In addition to reading print materials, the program schedule features service organization highlights, including interviews with BSVI staff.

Partnering with Community Centers for the Deaf

OOD provides personalized services to assist Deaf, hard of hearing, and DeafBlind people in

gaining and maintaining meaningful work and personal independence.

In addition to offering walk-in office hours with public access to videophones, the Community Centers for the Deaf (CCDs) provide independent living skills training, interpreting and communication services, advocacy, and peer support to the Deaf, hard of hearing, DeafBlind, and DeafDisabled communities.

In FFY 2025, OOD established its first full-time liaison role dedicated to supporting CCDs. This initiative strengthened data tracking within the shared case management system, formalized partnership with the Ohio 811 Program, expanded collaborations with state programs such as Medicaid, and secured Mental Health First Aid certification. Collectively, the CCDs achieved 97% of their performance benchmarks, reflecting significant progress in service integration and community engagement.

Throughout the year, CCD staff delivered 8,997 hours of targeted support services—a 199% increase from the previous year—to 1,432 individuals across 60 counties. In addition, CCD staff responded to 550 requests for information and referrals, helping Ohioans who are Deaf and strengthening local communities statewide.

Beyond direct services, CCDs expanded outreach through presentations, trainings, and community events, reaching 15,130 people—a 37.5% increase from last year. These efforts helped Ohioans learn more about the Deaf community and American Sign Language (ASL), fostering greater awareness and inclusion across the state.

OOD and the Community Centers for the Deaf offer a [searchable database](#) of more than 450 resources for this low-incidence disability group. With 40 categories of information (e.g., Deaf culture, domestic violence, employment, housing, sign language, substance use, and youth services), families and professionals can search for resources based on their location, resource type, or organization name.

Ohio Deaf Literacy Partnership

Launched in the fall of 2018, the Ohio Deaf Literacy Partnership (ODLP) provides adult basic literacy education to individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing through a partnership between OOD, the Ohio Department of Higher Education, the Ohio School for the Deaf, and the Delaware Area Career Center's Aspire program.

In FFY 2025, ODLP served 10 students, advancing its mission to empower individuals through essential language skills. The program fosters independence, enhances access to education and employment, and addresses critical literacy gaps—including for New Americans navigating dual language acquisition in English and ASL.

House Bill 144—Keith's Law

On October 20, 2025, [Ohio Governor Mike DeWine signed House Bill 144 into law](#). This important legislation enables first responders to have information shared by individuals with disabilities when responding to countywide 9-1-1 calls.

Keith's Law modifies the existing Communication Disability Law by broadening the scope of the voluntary statewide registry to include individuals diagnosed with various disabilities, not just communication disabilities. Now, individuals diagnosed with a disability, along with parents or legal guardians of minors with disabilities, can submit a disability verification form. This information will be included in a database that is accessible to countywide 9-1-1 systems in counties that choose to participate. It is designed to inform local law enforcement officers, emergency medical personnel, and firefighters that an individual they may interact with has a disability when responding to a 9-1-1 call.

In the [OOD Works Podcast episode 58](#), Representatives Brian Lorenz and Gary Click, along with Keith Jesse, whose personal experience inspired [House Bill 144—Keith's Law](#), discuss how they got involved and their thoughts on the law and its impact on Ohioans with disabilities.

For additional information, to complete the form, and to find answers to frequently asked questions, please visit ood.ohio.gov/HB144.



Left to right: Janae Myers, Legislative Aide for Rep. Click; Rep. Gary Click; Keith Jesse, proponent for the bill and for whom Keith's Law is named; Governor DeWine; Brendan Garret, proponent for the bill; Rep. Brian Lorenz; Julia Garrett, proponent for the bill; and Ben Nettles, Former Legislative Aide for Rep. Click.

Communication Card to Help Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Individuals Communicate with Law Enforcement

OOD also continues to promote a [communication card that helps individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing](#) communicate with law enforcement. In partnership with members of the Deaf community, the Ohio Department of Public Safety's Traffic Safety Office, statewide law enforcement partners, and OOD, the communication card is available to download onto a phone or printed and stored inside a vehicle, wallet, or purse. It includes various pictures that Deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals can point to in order to help them more easily communicate during interactions with law enforcement.

The communication card also displays icons of common violations and provides tips for law enforcement to help officers effectively communicate with those who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

Carl DeForest

Carl's Journey to Becoming a Police Officer

Carl DeForest became a police officer despite numerous obstacles and challenges. He said, "I'm proud to be the first Deaf police officer in Ohio, the first Afro-American Deaf police officer in the United States, and the third Deaf police officer in the entire country."



OOD Mobile Services Unit

Since July 2024, OOD has operated its mobile services unit, an innovative initiative designed to deliver no-cost screenings and essential services across Ohio. This program reflects OOD's commitment to ensuring that individuals in underserved and vulnerable communities have access to critical resources that support both personal well-being and career success.

In FFY 2025, OOD staff and the mobile services unit participated in 110 community events statewide, delivering a total of 372 services to Ohioans in 31 counties. Services included free vision screenings, interview and work attire fittings, uniform fittings for job readiness, mock interviews to build confidence, and on-site employment interviews with local employers offering immediate job opportunities.



Allison Meloy, OOD Vision Services Program Manager, talks with a GuardCare participant in front of OOD's mobile services unit.

One example was the GuardCare event on August 9–10, 2025, at the Trillium Event Center in Bucyrus. This collaboration among the Ohio Department of Health, Ohio National Guard, Crawford County Public Health, OOD, and local partners provided no-cost health services such as dental exams, immunizations, and behavioral health support. OOD's mobile unit and staff were on site to assist individuals with disabilities and share information about OOD services.

OOD invites organizations and community partners to collaborate with the Mobile Services Unit for future events. Learn more at the [mobile services unit webpage](#).

Accessibility and Inclusion at the Ohio State Fair

The Ohio State Fair continued to advance its commitment to accessibility and inclusion in 2025 through its ongoing partnership with Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD). Held from July 23 to August 3, the Fair strived to provide an environment where every visitor could fully participate and enjoy the experience.



In 2025, OOD's mobile services unit returned to the fairgrounds as a central resource for accessibility information and support. The Fair introduced two new quiet rooms—one located in the Voinovich Livestock and Trade Center and another at the Celeste Center during concerts—offering spaces designed for individuals with sensory needs. Complimentary mobility device charging stations, universal changing stations, accessible picnic areas, and service animal relief areas were available. Guests also benefited from free use of Aira for real-time visual assistance, audio descriptions for select exhibits, and a dedicated sensory-friendly morning. Families were welcomed with an accessible playground, and individuals with mobility challenges were offered discounted electric scooter rentals through OOD's Accessible Ohio program.

In partnership with OOD, the Fair significantly expanded ASL interpretation services to ensure individuals who use ASL could fully experience its diverse programming. Interpreted events included daily comedy and magic shows, educational sessions, cooking demonstrations, and acrobatic performances, as well as major attractions such as the Opening Ceremony, the

Sale of Champions Livestock Auction, and all ticketed concerts in the WCOL Celeste Center. The number of ASL-interpreted shows increased by more than 100 percent from 2024, with over 300 shows and events featuring interpretation.

OOD's Business Enterprise Program

OOD's Business Enterprise (BE) Program provides entrepreneurial careers in vending services by licensed operators who are legally blind. The program currently has 70 licensed operators managing businesses in food service and vending throughout Ohio. BE Operators manage cafeterias, convenience stores, snack bars, and vending machines in state and federal buildings and highway rest areas, where licensed operators have priority under the Randolph-Sheppard Act and the Ohio Revised Code. The program also operates at state universities, colleges, and county buildings.

In May 2026, OOD proudly supported the 2026 BE Program Statewide Conference, which brought 106 participants together at Mohican State Park for learning, collaboration, and industry updates. The conference highlighted national trends, expert presentations, and outstanding achievements across the program, reflecting OOD's commitment to strengthening opportunities and celebrating excellence within the BE community.



Michael Colbrunn with the National Association of Blind Merchants was the keynote speaker at the 2026 BE Program Statewide Conference.

In FFY 2025, the BE Program expanded to include Stark State College. Additionally, the program launched in six new state property locations and improved services at one federal property.



Pictured: A child learns to spell his name in sign language from Mitchell Bensman, OOD Motor Fleet Coordinator Specialist, at the Ohio State Fair.

Fun for Everyone: 2025 Ohio State Fair Celebrated Accessibility

The Ohio State Fair honored tradition, offered top-notch entertainment, provided education, maintained strong agricultural roots, and showcased Ohio—all while prioritizing disability inclusion.

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The program also replaced 313 machines, contributing to the modernization of 30 facilities. These changes have resulted in a 6% increase in average vendor earnings and a 12% increase in median income from FFY 2024 to FFY 2025.

Personal Care Assistance Program

Many people with severe physical disabilities require assistance in activities of daily living so that they can go to work, look for a job, or participate in training for a job.

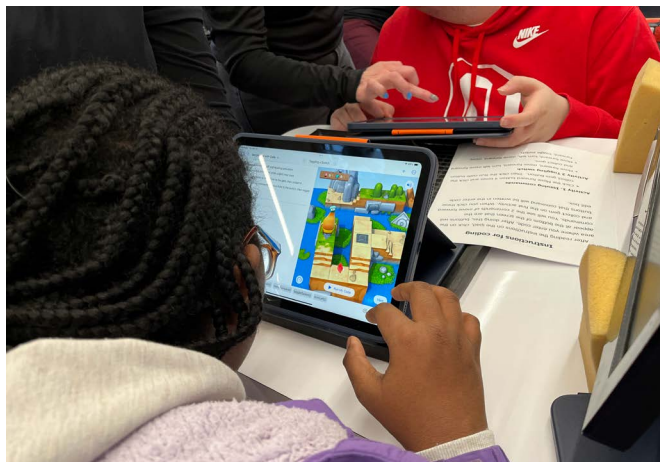
The Personal Care Assistance (PCA) Program provides partial funding to these individuals so they may hire personal care attendants and be as independent as possible.

In FFY 2025, the PCA Program served a total of 113 individuals. Of these individuals, 80% were competitively employed, 10% were looking for competitive employment, 9% were attending a training program to prepare for competitive employment, and 1% were self-employed.

Services for Students at the Ohio State School for the Blind and Ohio School for the Deaf

Services were provided for students at the Ohio State School for the Blind (OSSB) and the Ohio School for the Deaf (OSD) through a dedicated Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor at each school. These counselors provide vocational counseling, work experiences, skills training, and job placement assistance to help students transition to college and employment after graduation. In FFY 2025, OOD served a total of 111 students at the two schools.

Building on this commitment to student success, OOD also partnered with the Ohio State University Extension 4-H Mobile Design Lab to host a series of collaborative STEAM events at OSSB. These hands-on activities introduced students to science, technology, engineering, arts, and math in accessible ways, promoting academic enrichment and future career pathways while showcasing the services available through OOD.



Three images above: OSSB and OSD students engage in STEAM coding activities in November and December 2025.

Brian Rust

Brian Rust: From Educator to Entrepreneur



Episode 57 of the OOD Works Podcast features Brian Rust, an educator and entrepreneur who turned the challenge of declining vision into an opportunity for success. A proud graduate of the Ohio State School for the Blind, Brian shares how he expanded his career in physical education to become a BE Operator.

Division of Employer and Innovation Services



Overview

In the Division of Employer and Innovation Services (EIS), the Business Relations Team fosters strategic partnerships with employers to address their hiring needs. Their services include organizing virtual and in-person hiring events, providing disability etiquette and awareness training, and assisting in improving workplace accessibility.

OOD collaborates with around 1,000 employer partners to facilitate the recruitment, hiring, and retention of workers with disabilities, offering education and resources to create inclusive workplaces that benefit from the contributions of a workforce with a broad range of skills and abilities.

Ohio is leading the way through the Accessible Ohio program, the first of its kind. This program provides a statewide, coordinated effort to support accessibility and inclusion for Ohioans with disabilities. Accessible Ohio supports businesses, communities, attractions, and venues in prioritizing accessibility from the start, promoting inclusiveness, and ensuring everyone can experience Ohio equitably.

EIS Program Highlights | FFY 2025

- Hosted virtual and in-person hiring events across the state, facilitating interviews for job seekers and students with disabilities to connect one-on-one with employers
- Hosted the 10th annual Five-County Transition Expo, connecting more than 160 high school students with 17 employers, colleges, universities, and community partners
- Hosted 10 webinars for 2,788 attendees to foster community and workplace inclusion of Ohioans with disabilities
- Established partnerships with businesses, communities, venues, and attractions and provided consultations for partners to identify accessibility barriers, establish goals for accessibility, and share information about possible funding sources
- Advanced continuous improvement by applying Lean methods to key processes and facilitated Yellow Belt training for 15 staff

Hiring Events and National Disability Employment Awareness Month

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is a campaign held every October to celebrate the many contributions of America's workers with disabilities and raise awareness regarding the employment of people with disabilities. In October 2025, OOD hosted five statewide hiring events during National Disability Employment Awareness Month, resulting in 509 interviews, 326 job seekers served, 51 employers conducting interviews, and 10 same-day job offers. Three additional job fairs brought together more than 100 employers, strengthening connections to disability-inclusive workplaces and underscoring the year's theme, "Celebrating Value and Talent." These events highlight OOD's ongoing commitment to expanding meaningful employment opportunities for Ohioans with disabilities. Watch the [2025 NDEAM wrap-up video](#) to see the impact firsthand.



Governor's Inclusive Employer Award: Cleveland Guardians Baseball and the City of Cincinnati

In October 2025, Governor DeWine and OOD announced that Cleveland Guardians Baseball and the city of Cincinnati were the 2025 Governor's Inclusive Employer Award winners for their outstanding commitment to supporting individuals with disabilities in the workplace.

Governor DeWine's Executive Order 2019-03D established Ohio as a Disability Inclusion State and a Model Employer of Individuals with Disabilities, and H.B. 110 created this annual award to recognize inclusive employers during National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM).



Pictured with OOD Director Kevin Miller are Cleveland Guardians' Paul Dolan, Allison Kwan, and Matt Grimes (top left), along with city of Cincinnati Manager Sheryl Long and Human Resources Director Latisha Hazell (bottom right).

Cleveland Guardians and City of Cincinnati Awarded the Governor's Inclusive Employer Award

In this video, learn how Governor DeWine and OOD honored the Cleveland Guardians and the city of Cincinnati for creating accessible, welcoming workplaces where all Ohioans can thrive.

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Both the Cleveland Guardians and the city of Cincinnati integrate accessibility into their workplace culture and community engagement. The Guardians advance hiring and public representation through partnerships with disability organizations and highlighted their efforts at the Accessible Ohio Conference & Expo. The City of Cincinnati embeds inclusive hiring and training practices across its workforce of more than 6,600 employees, ensuring HR staff receive disability etiquette and best-practice training. Both organizations actively support hiring OOD job seekers and participate in events promoting disability inclusion.

CareSource also earned recognition as an Ohio Inclusive Employer by scoring more than 80 points on its application.

Watch a [video about the award](#) presented to the Cleveland Guardians and the city of Cincinnati.



OOD-Team Ohio Skills Based Career Fair

Throughout June 2026, OOD partnered with the Department of Administrative Services' Team Ohio to host five career fairs in each of OOD's service areas. HR recruiters from nine State of Ohio agencies conducted 128 interviews with 94 OOD participants for permanent employment opportunities. Job candidates participated in interview preparation services and established profiles on [Careers.Ohio.Gov](#) in advance of the event. An onsite application station was available for candidates who interviewed to easily apply for open positions.

Additional Hiring Events

In addition to the NDEAM hiring events, OOD facilitates virtual and in-person hiring events throughout the year to connect its employer partners with OOD's pool of qualified candidates. These events may be interviews arranged with one Employer Partner, several employers within a specific industry, or a job category, such as work-from-home opportunities. OOD also hosts "OOD Hiring Days," which are targeted half-day hiring events held quarterly in each area of the state. These events take place onsite at an employer location, an OOD office, or virtually.

Ohio Vocational Apprentices Program

OOD developed the Ohio Vocational Apprentices Program (OVAP) for students and adults with disabilities to assist them in gaining access to state government employment. The goal of this program is for apprentices to secure permanent employment in state government upon completion of the apprenticeship.

OOD partners with state of Ohio agencies, statewide elected officials, and the Ohio General Assembly to identify their workforce needs and develop apprenticeship opportunities that align with the job and educational goals of OOD-eligible participants. OOD assists participants in applying and interviewing for the apprenticeship, completing the onboarding process, and receiving any needed on-the-job support. Through the program, OOD funds all wages for the apprentices, up to \$16.50 per hour, 25 hours per week, for a maximum of 1,000 hours.

In SFY 2025, OOD funded 43 vocational apprenticeships for individuals with disabilities served by OOD to create a strong recruitment pipeline for permanent employment. Since its launch, 53 apprentices have been hired into permanent employment with state agencies.

Webinar Series Promoted Community and Workplace Inclusion

OOD continued a webinar series to help communities and employers support disability inclusion. With an audience of 2,788 attendees, the webinar series corresponded with Governor DeWine's Executive Order 2019-03D, which established Ohio as a Disability Inclusion State and Model Employer of Individuals with Disabilities, OOD's Inclusive Employer Toolkit, and the Governor's Inclusive Employer Award criteria.

Topics included All About Sensory Inclusion, Disability Inclusive Workplaces: Inclusive Leadership, Disability-Inclusive Workplaces: Attracting Diverse Talent, Disability-Inclusive Workplaces: Retaining Diverse Talent, All About Disability Etiquette, All About Funding for Accessibility and Accommodations, Understanding Disability: Chronic Conditions, Understanding Disability: Temporary Conditions, Practical Steps for Document Accessibility, and ADA Series: Dispelling Common Misconceptions.

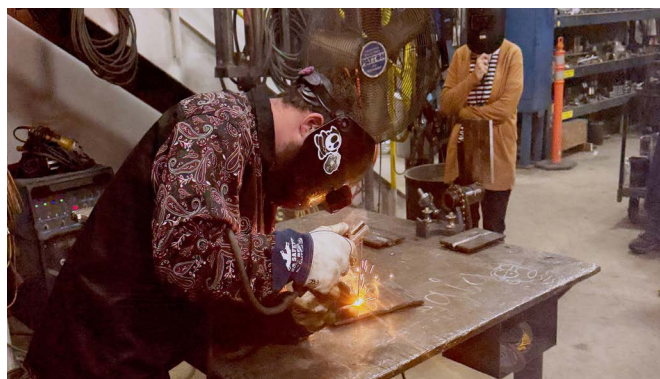
In-Demand Jobs Week 2026

During In-Demand Jobs Week (May 4–8, 2026), OOD led statewide events engaging 314 participants, families, educators, community partners, and staff. An additional 118 organizations—including employers, training programs, union apprenticeships, government agencies, and community resource partners—joined five major events showcasing Ohio's strong and growing job market.

The statewide celebration highlighted Ohio's top jobs and industries under the theme "Reach Your Full Potential." A key feature was the Construction & Skilled Trades Expo in Canton, where 23 exhibitors offered hands-on demonstrations and career exploration for students and adults. Activities included drone piloting, trade-specific demonstrations, and direct engagement with apprenticeship and training providers. To see the event in action, watch the [Construction & Skilled Trades Expo video](#).

OOD also hosted career exploration activities across the state, including welding

demonstrations at Elite Welding Academy, an apprenticeship information session and training center tour with the Akron Area Electrical JATC, and a healthcare-focused mini expo with employers and training partners. Additional events, such as the Lorain County Career Expo and an apprenticeship information panel, further connected participants with industry experts and in-demand career pathways. Collectively, these events strengthened partnerships and highlighted opportunities across Ohio's workforce.



An individual at Elite Welding Academy demonstrates welding techniques during a 2026 In-Demand Jobs Week event.

Accessible Ohio Empowers Inclusive Experiences for All

Launched in July 2023, the Accessible Ohio (AO) program partners with Ohio's businesses, communities, venues, and attractions statewide to support their accessibility goals.

Ohio is at its best when everyone, including Ohioans with disabilities, is empowered to experience all our great state has to offer. Building upon Governor DeWine's commitment to Ohioans with disabilities, AO encourages us to prioritize accessibility from the start, promote inclusiveness, and ensure everyone can experience Ohio in an equitable way.

In SFY 2026, the AO team expanded from four to five regional AO Specialists who are available to consult directly with local partners to help identify barriers in their programs, services, and environments, and then help them establish goals for accessibility and inclusion. AO services also include training and resources to assist our

partners with navigating their responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act, identifying ways to make environments accessible, and providing effective, reasonable accommodations. Watch a [video to discover more about Accessible Ohio](#).

Accessible Ohio Feedback Forum

OOD invited stakeholders to share their ideas at the AO Feedback Forum held on September 24, 2025. Participants offered feedback as OOD shared updates about the program and continued efforts to make Ohio more accessible and inclusive for all.

Accessible Ohio Consultations

In SFY 2026, AO Specialists established 229 partnerships with businesses, communities, venues, and attractions in Ohio. They provided 384 accessibility consultations, delivered 68 training sessions for more than 4,800 attendees. They conducted five regional workshops for 147 attendees.

AO supported organizations across all regions of the state in strengthening accessibility and inclusion. Here are some examples: AO's consultation with the North Fairfield Improvement Group led to significant park upgrades, including a new paved walking path and sidewalks connecting key amenities, dedicated accessible parking, accessible swings, and poured-in-place surfacing for the accessible swing area. Dunham Tavern Museum leveraged a grant identified through AO support and is currently installing accessible picnic seating to expand inclusive outdoor experiences for visitors. The Ohio Star Theater enhanced its guest experience by offering sensory kits informed by its AO consultation. Capital University deepened its commitment to sensory inclusion after attending an AO regional event, subsequently hosting its own workshop, developing sensory-friendly strategies for move-in day, and redesigning its sensory room using insights gained from AO.

OOD celebrated Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD) on May 21, 2026 by featuring a message from Julie Wood, AO Manager, who highlighted how the program has continued turning accessibility recommendations into real, statewide action. The [GAAD video](#) showcases progress such



Luke Buckberrough, Glidance Co-Founder and Head of Growth, walks alongside Richard Payne, President of the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio, as Richard tests the Glide navigation device during the Accessible Ohio Conference & Expo.

Highlights from the 2nd Annual Accessible Ohio Conference & Expo

Watch this recap video to experience how leaders, innovators, and communities from across Ohio came together at the Accessible Ohio Conference & Expo to showcase real progress in accessibility, share powerful stories, and highlight the momentum driving a more inclusive Ohio.

Watch more
[@OhioOOD videos](#)

as sensory-friendly spaces, communication boards, accessible trails, and inclusive playgrounds, reflecting the growing vision of an Ohio where accessibility is the standard.

Accessible Ohio Conference & Expo

OOD proudly hosted the second annual Accessible Ohio Conference & Expo at The Ohio State University Fawcett Center in Columbus on August 14, 2025. This transformative event brought together approximately 350 participants, including Ohioans with disabilities, their families, employers, and representatives from both public and private sectors. Attendees also included Accessibility Showcase exhibitors, presenters, panelists, and OOD staff.

Highlights from the Conference:

- Inspiring Leadership: Governor DeWine and OOD Director Kevin Miller delivered powerful remarks underscoring Ohio's commitment to accessibility and inclusion.
- Keynote Address: Accessibility advocate Sam Sepah shared a compelling vision for a more inclusive future.
- Expert Panel Discussion: "Accessibility in Ohio's Professional Sports Venues" featured leaders from major sports organizations, including the Cincinnati Reds, Cleveland Cavaliers, Cleveland Guardians, and Columbus Blue Jackets, offering insights into accessibility in entertainment spaces.
- Educational Sessions: Engaging presentations covered a wide range of topics, equipping attendees with practical tools and knowledge.
- Accessibility Showcase: Live demonstrations highlighted innovative products and services designed to enhance accessibility.

Throughout the event, participants shared personal stories that illustrated how Ohio is emerging as a national leader in accessibility.

The conference fostered collaboration, innovation, and a shared commitment to creating an Accessible Ohio.



Sam Sepah, keynote speaker, addresses participants of the Accessible Ohio Conference & Expo.

Watch the [video recap](#) of this inspiring event and explore how to join the movement toward accessibility.

Lean Process Improvement

The agency utilizes LeanOhio's continuous improvement, Lean, and Six Sigma methodologies to enhance services for government customers and Ohio citizens.

During the past year, Lean strategies were utilized to analyze processes related to Social Security reimbursement and Work Incentives Consultant referrals. Additionally, a Lean Six Sigma project is currently in progress to optimize job placement services, aiming to better allocate resources, deliver more effective support to individuals with disabilities, and increase the number of qualified referrals to OOD's Employer Partners.

OOD demonstrates its commitment to excellence by providing comprehensive training in fundamental Lean and Six Sigma principles to all newly appointed supervisors, managers, and program staff. In 2025, 15 OOD employees completed a two-day Yellow Belt training course. Additionally, six staff members participated in Camo Belt training facilitated by LeanOhio and are actively engaged in their process improvement initiatives.

Division of Disability Determination



Overview

Decisions on whether Ohioans are eligible for Social Security disability benefits are crucial for people looking to create a dependable foundation for their lives. Staff at OOD's Division of Disability Determination (DDD) understand those needs and the importance of quickly processing cases and delivering accurate decisions.

DDD processes applications made to the Social Security Administration (SSA) for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Case adjudication is performed by a team of claims examiners, support personnel, disability specialists, and medical/psychological consultants. They work together to assess medical and employment factors to determine whether an applicant meets the federal eligibility criteria for disability and/or blindness.

In FFY 2025, DDD's adjudicators completed 151,580 determinations for new applications for disability benefits and ongoing disability reviews.

These results demonstrate DDD's commitment to meeting and exceeding expectations, as well as its ongoing dedication to supporting the needs of Ohio's citizens.

DDD Program Highlights | FFY 2025

- Made 151,580 determinations, exceeding SSA's overall workload goal of 149,111
- Completed initial case processing in an average of 90 days, significantly faster than the national average of 190 days
- Maintained a cost per determination of \$556.78, well below the national average of \$707.15
- Achieved an initial decisional accuracy rate of 99% by the end of FFY 2025
- Managed 149,671 calls through the Customer Service and Development Unit, providing timely support and assistance to Ohioans

Advancing Adjudication Quality

In December 2025, OOD hosted the SSA Disability Adjudication Response Team (DART), which was created to engage directly with Disability Determination Services (DDS), gain a deeper understanding of the processes, learn best practices, and collaboratively identify opportunities where targeted resources and support can drive meaningful outcomes.



From left to right: Orlando Rogriguez, DDD Assistant Deputy Director; Mary Davis, Disability Adjudication Disability Program Administrator; Jaime McVay, DDD Assistant Deputy Director; John Lo, Disability Adjudication Strategic Assistance; Joshanna Stone, Disability Adjudication Strategic Assistance; Sara Von Kennel, Disability Adjudication Strategic Assistance; David Stepp, Disability Adjudication Portfolio Executive Lead; Kimberlyn Price, DDD Deputy Director; Glenda Cheek, Office of Quality and Review; Darin McCoy, DDD Assistant Deputy Director.

Compassionate Allowances

Compassionate Allowances are a way to quickly identify diseases and other medical conditions that, by definition, meet SSA standards for disability benefits. These conditions primarily include certain cancers, adult brain disorders, and several rare disorders that affect children. The initiative helps DDD reduce waiting time to reach a disability determination for individuals with the most serious disabilities.

Military Casualty/Wounded Warrior

Military Casualty/Wounded Warrior claims receive priority handling and expedited processing of disability claims from SSA. These claims involve any current or former member of a military service who sustained an illness, injury, or wound while on active-duty status on or after October

1, 2001, and allege a physical and/or mental impairment, regardless of how the impairment occurred, or where it occurred.

Cooperative Disability Investigations Unit Savings

The mission of the Cooperative Disability Investigations Unit is to resolve questions of fraud in SSA's disability programs. This supports the strategic goal of ensuring the integrity of the Social Security programs, with zero tolerance for fraud. This mission is accomplished through the combined skills of DDD staff, SSA staff, including those with the Office of Inspector General, and state and local law enforcement. The unit investigates individual disability beneficiaries and claimants, and identifies lawyers, doctors, translators, or other third parties who facilitate disability fraud. The results of these investigations are presented to federal and state prosecutors for consideration of prosecution.

Podcast on Understanding Social Security Benefits for Children

In [episode 60 of the OOD Works podcast](#), Robert Fenn and Brandon Smith, Public Affairs Specialists with SSA, explained how SSI and SSDI operate, what changes occur at age 18, how family income and assistance with housing or food can influence payments, and practical strategies to prevent overpayments and maintain benefits.

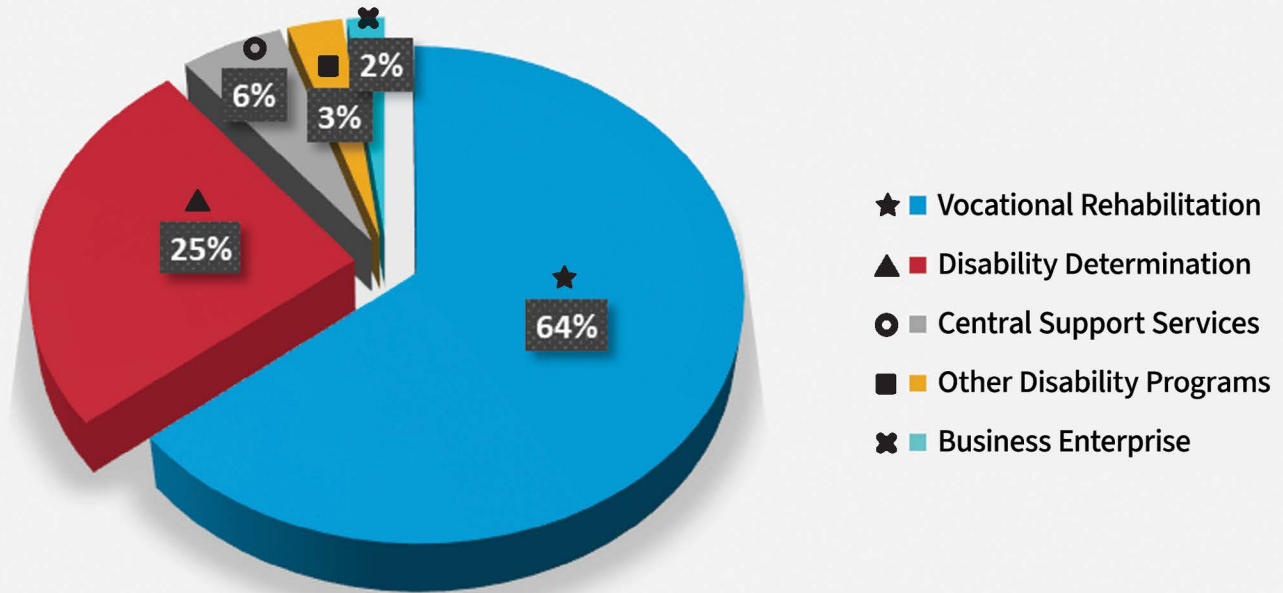


From top to bottom: Robert Fenn and Brandon Smith.

Federal Fiscal Year 2025

October 1, 2024 - September 30, 2025

Use of Funds by Program



Use of Funds	Amount	Percent
Vocational Rehabilitation	\$206,313,425	64.1%
Disability Determination	\$81,075,946	25.2%
Central Support Services	\$18,047,839	5.6%
Other Disability Programs	\$9,623,348	3.0%
Business Enterprise	\$6,629,331	2.1%
TOTAL	\$321,689,890	100.0%
Sources of Funds	Amount	Percent
Federal Resources	\$267,319,760	83.1%
General Revenue Funds	\$38,823,299	12.1%
State and Local Partnerships	\$12,100,227	3.8%
DUI License Reinstatement	\$2,472,510	0.8%
Business Enterprise	\$974,093	0.3%
TOTAL	\$321,689,890	100.0%

Performance Progress

Vocational Rehabilitation Program				
Metric	2022 FFY	2023 FFY	2024 FFY	2025 FFY
Applications	16,733	18,698	21,918	21,887
Eligibility Decisions	15,831	17,885	20,795	20,639
Average Days from Application to Eligibility Decision	23	21	22	24
New Employment Plans	12,093	13,693	16,234	16,185
Participants active during the reporting period (Eligible + Served)	34,235	36,898	42,342	46,063
Total Closures with Employment Outcome	5,294	5,040	5,238	5,665
Average Hours per Week	27.2	27.4	27.4	28
Average Wage	\$14.44	\$15.70	\$16.61	\$17.74

Disability Determination Program				
Metric	2022 FFY	2023 FFY	2024 FFY	2025 FFY
Disability Determinations	139,725	151,288	158,144	151,580
Cost per Case - OOD	\$592.00	\$553.54	\$548.23	\$880.74
Cost per Case - Region*	\$671.00	\$674.15	Not Available	\$1,019.05
Average Cost - OOD Regional Ranking	2nd	1st	Not Available	2nd
Initial Determinations	82,501	100,986	Not Available	94,417
Days to Process Initial Determinations	100	109.2	102.5	89.9
Overall Accuracy Initial Determinations	95.80%	96.90%	Not Available	97.40%
Rate of Favorable Initial Determinations	38.40%	37.80%	36.30%	33.90%



Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities



OODWorks.com



800-282-4536



info@ood.ohio.gov



150 E. Campus View Blvd.
Columbus, OH 43235



Follow us: @OhioOOD



Programs provided by Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) are funded, in whole or in part, with federal grants awarded by the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). For purposes of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program, including Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), OOD received 78.7% of its funding through the DOE VR grant. In federal fiscal year (FFY) 2025, OOD received \$177,897,297 in federal funds. Funds appropriated by the state covered 21.3% of the total costs, or \$48,147,553. Of these federal funds, \$26,684,595 is set aside for Pre-ETS. For purposes of the Works4Me Program, OOD received 100% of its funding through the DOE Disability Innovation Fund grant. In FFY 2025, OOD received \$1,793,225 for this Program. For purposes of the Supported Employment (SE) Program, the DOE SE grant funded 90% of the costs for this Program up to the grant amount and 100% of the costs of the regular Supported Employment Program up to the grant amount. In FFY 2025, OOD received \$446,137 for SE Youth with a Disability, and state-appropriated funds paid the remaining 10%, or \$49,571 of the total costs. In FFY 2025, OOD received \$446,137 in regular SE grant funds. For purposes of the Independent Living Services Older Blind (ILOB) Program, the federal grant received from DOE in FFY 2025 paid 90% of the total costs incurred under the Program. In FFY 2025, OOD received \$1,129,124 in federal grant funds. Funds appropriated by the state paid the 10% required match, or \$125,458 of the total costs incurred under the ILOB Program. For purposes of the Independent Living (IL) Program, the federal grant received from HHS paid 90% of the total costs incurred in FFY 2025. In FFY 2025, OOD received \$640,682 in federal grant funds. Funds appropriated by the state paid the 10% required match, or \$71,187 of the total costs incurred under the IL Program.