

Ohio Interagency Work Group on Autism
State Fiscal Year 2022 Annual Report • July 2022

SUPPORTING OHIOANS WITH AUTISM

ACROSS AGENCIES, ACROSS THE STATE, ACROSS THE LIFESPAN



Ohio

Interagency Work
Group on Autism



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Message from Leadership 4
- Background 5
- Get a Good Start 6
- Obtain Needed Services 8
- Need Map..... 9
- Develop Skills to Succeed..... 10
- Strengthen Support Along the Way..... 12
- Help Others Understand 14
- Live Well 16
- Sustain the Future 18

MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

We know the past few years have been filled with uncertainty and fear for many. We are living through a public health emergency and a direct care crisis. We have shifted, paused, and regrouped but never lost sight of our shared goal – for people with disabilities and their families to live their best lives for their entire lives.

To realize that goal, we must continue to coordinate and collaborate our efforts – the very charge of the Interagency Work Group on Autism (IWGA). The IWGA is a model in Ohio and beyond, proof of what is possible when partners have a common agenda, shared activities, and continuous communication.

This year, the IWGA hosted a series of forums to hear directly from people with autism and their families. We learned more about their everyday experiences, gained insight into strengths and challenges, and used this information to create an enhanced vision of what's possible. These conversations were powerful and have set a course for the future.

The pages that follow highlight the accomplishments of the IWGA in State Fiscal Year 2022, but more importantly, they showcase the power of partnerships. This is not work that can be accomplished alone. We are proud and humbled to serve and lead together and look forward to moving Ohio closer to our goal!



KIMBERLY HAUCK, Director
Ohio Department of
Developmental Disabilities



REGINALD FIELDS, Chair
OCALI Advisory Board

A Note About Language

The terms “person with autism,” “person with ASD,” “autistic person,” “autistic,” and “person on the autism spectrum” are used interchangeably throughout this document. Some members of the autism community prefer one term, while others prefer another. The IWGA respects the different opinions within the community on the use of this language and does not intend to endorse any preference. In addition, the terms “autism” and “autism spectrum disorder (ASD)” are used interchangeably throughout this document unless otherwise noted.

BACKGROUND



Ohio's Interagency Work Group on Autism (IWGA) was created in state law "to improve the coordination of the state's efforts to address the service needs of individuals with autism spectrum disorders and the families of those individuals." (ORC 5123.0419)

The IWGA meets monthly and utilizes a collective impact framework to accomplish its work. Members include:

- Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (Lead Agency)
- OCALI (Convener)
- Ohio Department of Education
- Ohio Department of Health
- Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
- Ohio Department of Medicaid
- Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities

Foundational to this work is the voice of individuals and families. The IWGA seeks input from people with autism and families through annual surveys, stakeholder engagement at meetings, and OCALI's advisory board.

Pursuing Quality Lives is updated bi-annually and serves as the IWGA's common agenda. The following report summarizes IWGA efforts during State Fiscal Year 2022.



GET A GOOD START

Identification and diagnosis can happen at any age and should occur at the first suspected signs.

Targeted Priorities and Highlights of Accomplishments:

1. Culturally relevant outreach to families

- a. The University of Cincinnati University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCUCEDD) is home to Ohio's "Act Early Initiative," including the state team. Over the past year, the Act Early Team has partnered with Ohio's promotoras de salud (community health workers) to conduct outreach to the Latinx community, distribute materials, and provide training to support Spanish-speaking families in developmental monitoring.
- b. Ohio's Act Early Team also recruited five social media influencers to conduct culturally relevant outreach to families. These influencers connected caregivers to materials to promote health growth and development of children birth to 5. This resulted in nearly 90,000 social media impressions and 1,000 visits to the website.
(Facebook: @ActEarlyOhio • Instagram: actearlyohio)
- c. With support from the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition Collaborative, the Ohio Department of Education's (ODE) Office for Exceptional Children is leading a state cross-agency initiative entitled Establishing Families as Partners in the Secondary Transition Planning Process. In SFY22, professionals across Ohio received training in:
 - Universal Design for Family Engagement
 - Valuing Families
 - Evolution of Disability
 - Implicit Bias
 - Cultural and Linguistic Diversity
 - Authentic and Necessary Conversations

2. Capacity building specific to screening and diagnosis in the medical community

- a. The Act Early Team has supplied primary care providers across Ohio with the Center for Disease Control's "Learn the Signs. Act Early" materials to share with caregivers at well child visits. Toolkits

contain an age specific book for 1- to 3-year-olds and are available in English and Spanish. To date, over 1,700 toolkits have been distributed.

- b. The Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule Second Edition (ADOS-2) is a formal assessment tool used to observe, document, and inform professionals in diagnosing autism spectrum disorder. A training on the ADOS-2 Toddler Module was held in January 2022. This training was open to existing ADEP (Autism Diagnosis Education Project) teams, qualified team members, medical partners, and teams getting ready to launch/restart and was facilitated by clinical staff from Vanderbilt's TRIAD program.
- c. Ohio Early Intervention and OCALI's Center for the Young Child (CYC) partnered to offer professionals working with families and young children at risk and/or suspected of autism spectrum disorder, training on early identification. The series provided information, resources, and tools professionals can use to help identify autism earlier. The series of 4 webinars was attended by over 200 professionals across Ohio.

3. Capacity building specific to screening and identification in the educational community

- a. OCALI's Autism Center hosted the Educational Identification of Students with ASD Training Series virtually for the 2021—2022 school year. This introductory training series, with 10 two-hour sessions is designed for school-based evaluation teams that want to learn about the process for educational identification of students with ASD.
- b. The Autism Internet Module (AIM) "Assessment for Identification" was updated in 2022 and has been accessed by nearly 2,500 people this fiscal year. The module provides answers to commonly asked questions about the autism assessment process, including: identifying the main reason(s) early identification is important; identifying the most important factor(s) to consider in selecting a professional to conduct an autism assessment; describing the differences and similarities between diagnosis and eligibility; defining camouflaging and how it might impact autism assessment.
- c. OCALI's InspirED – The Earlier the Better! session was the most viewed session of the year. Over 150 people tuned in. The Early the Better! allowed



professionals to gain a deeper understanding of ASD diagnosis and educational eligibility determination, insight into differences in presentation of ASD in boys and girls, and considerations for making decisions about services and supports.

Educational Identification: Ongoing Efforts

In partnership with the Ohio Department of Education and OCALI's Autism Center, the IWGA worked with stakeholders from around the state to develop "Myths and Misconceptions in the Educational Identification of Autism." This new resource addresses the most common misunderstandings in the educational identification of autism.

The IWGA also issued a survey asking education professionals to identify the areas of greatest need or concern for future training. Respondents said:

1. Understanding the core characteristics of autism.
2. Helping district/building leadership teams understand and support the educational identification of autism.
3. Identifying autism in girls.



OBTAIN NEEDED SERVICES

Individuals with ASD should have access to high-quality services.

Targeted Priorities and Highlights of Accomplishments:

1. Access to quality early care and education

- a. The [Autism Internet Module “Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Guide for Early Interventionists”](#) (formerly known as ASD-4-EI) has been updated and accessed by nearly 1,300 professionals. The module provides early interventionists a better understanding of ASD to feel equipped and confident to provide the highest quality of service, care, and support.
- b. The CYC developed a [“Suite of Resources for Early Childhood Professionals.”](#) This suite includes the following training: This Child, Each Child Will Grow and Learn; We Can Do This, Right Where We Are; and Responding to Trauma and Supporting Resilience. These trainings were accessed by over 1,000 early care professionals this fiscal year. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services is now requiring all providers to take these modules to meet their training requirements.
- c. In addition to the Suite of Resources, the CYC offered a variety of training around evidence-based practices, including Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT). The training delivered an overview of PRT and the motivational procedures to help children with autism spectrum disorder increase their communication while decreasing disruptive and challenging behaviors.

2. Areas of disparity or disproportionality, including rural areas of the state and “service deserts”

- a. OCALI’s CYC offered training in the use of TELE-ASD-PEDS. This module provided an overview of the TELE-ASD-PEDS tool which is designed for use by providers and families during a telehealth assessment for autism. The TELE-ASD-PEDS tool allows providers to walk families through tasks with their child while professionals observe the possible presence of autism symptoms.

- b. In partnership with the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD), OCALI launched [Multi-Disciplinary Comprehensive Assessment Teams \(MCAT\)](#) to build capacity throughout the state. This group of experts from multiple disciplines meet on a weekly basis to hear from local teams who need assistance supporting youth with co-occurring conditions and their families. The MCAT provide recommendations, interventions, and connections to resources that help the local team and family address the needs of the child, including physical health, mental health, social health, education and trauma history.
- c. DODD also launched a pilot program utilizing StationMD to expand healthcare access and improve outcomes. [StationMD](#) is a specialized telemedicine physician service dedicated to people with developmental disabilities. In less than six months, the pilot has served over 2,200 people with a goal of 5,000.

3. Co-occurring conditions, specifically mental health and autism

- a. Through a DODD grant, OCALI established the [Multi System Navigation Center](#). This center is home to Multi-System Youth and Family Regional Coaches who will provide in-home support to families who have children with co-occurring mental illness and intellectual or developmental disabilities and their families. The Coaches assist families with assessing the root cause of behavioral challenges. In addition, coaches assist families in implementing recommendations provided by the MCAT and DODD technical assistance teams.
- b. DODD and Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services (OMHAS) created the [System of Care ECHO](#) (Extension of Community Healthcare Outcomes) for multi-system youth. In SFY22, ECHO was expanded to offer sessions weekly. Each session includes a brief didactic and a case presentation from a local team that is heard by a panel of clinicians with expertise in trauma, psychiatry, pediatrics, autism, parent peer support, and systems of care, as well as individuals across child-serving systems. The intent is to build capacity for those who are supporting multi-system youth across the state.



- c. OHMAS and DODD have also partnered to host a series of seven live webinars on best practices in supporting people who have both a mental illness and an intellectual/developmental disability (MI/IDD). Topics include: IDD for Direct Support Professionals, Pharmacological Management, and Service and Support Administrator and Case Managers in the DD/MH Systems.



DEVELOP SKILLS TO SUCCEED

Life skills develop and change as an individual grows. Skill development is a continuous need throughout an individual's life.

Targeted Priorities and Highlights of Accomplishments:

1. People with autism increasing self-advocacy, self-determination, and "soft" skills.

- a. OCALI's [Lifespan Transitions Center](#) (LTC) released additional [Take 5](#) videos aimed at supporting adults with autism, including a two-part series focused on alternatives to guardianship and two videos specific to parenting with autism.
- b. Ohio's Developmental Disabilities Council awarded funds to Ohio F2F (Family to Family) to establish the Ohio Supported Decision Making Network. Current efforts include working with physicians on concerns related to the expert evaluation required by probate courts when applying for guardianship, revision of IEP language of guardianship/age of majority to include information/education about supported decision making (SDM), and the development of a curriculum to be shared with families, educators, and Developmental Disability professionals to insure understanding of the continuum of SDM.
- c. In January 2022, DODD offered a two-part series on the rights of people with disabilities. "Human Rights: Ohio and Beyond" focused on people's rights and how they connect to quality of life. "Protecting And Promoting Rights: Ohio Action Steps" offered specific tactics to help organizations support people to exercise rights.

2. Educators receiving support and training in personalized learning and differentiated instruction that is culturally relevant.

- a. Over the past year, OCALI has updated or added 10 Autism Internet Modules:
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Guide for Early Interventionists (Formerly known as ASD-4-EI)
 - Differential Reinforcement
 - Language and Communication
 - Modeling
 - Overview of Social Skills Functioning and Programming
 - Restricted Patterns of Behaviors, Interests, and Activities
 - Screening across the Lifespan for Autism Spectrum Disorders
 - Social Skills Groups
 - Social Narratives
 - Video Modeling
- b. OCALI's Autism Center offered a seven-part series on Executive Functioning. This series included a deep dive into executive functioning and provided educators with classroom management strategies to support all learners. The series has had more than 1,600 views.
- c. With the support of the Office of Early Learning and School Readiness and the Ohio Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) Network, the Early Childhood PBIS Workgroup created a statewide network of demonstration sites featuring PBIS within early childhood settings. The demonstration site project promotes implementation of PBIS specific to the unique context of early childhood, while aligned with Ohio's school-age PBIS initiative. The 16 demonstration sites are strengthened by State Support Team (SST) members who are providing coaching.



Autism Internet Modules

Coming Summer 2022

- New: Cognitive Behavioral Instructional Strategies
- New: Music Mediated Intervention
- Updates: Autism and Medication
- Updates: Cognitive Differences
- Updates: Comprehensive Program Planning
- Updates: Customized Employment
- Updates: Home Base
- Updates: Preparing Individuals for Employment
- Updates: Social Supports for Transition-Aged Individuals
- Updates: The Employee with Autism
- Updates: The Incredible 5-Point Scale
- Updates: Visual Supports

3. Ohioans building knowledge of and capacity for using technology to increase independence and quality of life.

- a. In April of 2022, DODD's [Technology First Rule](#) went into effect. The rule requires County Boards of Developmental Disabilities and Intermediate Care Facilities to adopt policies that address technology. The rule seeks to increase the capacity for use of technology, ensure that technology is explored and documented throughout assessment and planning, and used to the greatest extent possible to support outcomes and improve quality of life.
- b. DODD expanded their [Technology Ambassador Network](#) to include an additional person with a disability, a family member, and a direct support professional. These 8 Tech Ambassadors have been selected statewide to discuss how they use Supportive Technology at home, at school, at work and in the community. Tech Ambassadors share their personal experiences through peer-to-peer mentoring sessions
- c. In addition to awarding grants to providers for "[innovative technology solutions](#)," DODD also launched the [Internet Assistance Project](#). The Internet Assistance Project provides funding to eligible county boards of developmental disabilities to support the boards in providing internet assistance to people with developmental disabilities.



STRENGTHEN SUPPORT ALONG THE WAY

Family is the most important, consistent, and instrumental influence in a child's life. A strong base of support is important.

Targeted Priorities & Highlights of Accomplishments:

1. Families learning strategies to support and advocate for their family, including how to navigate systems and funding sources.

- a. a. DODD's Ohio Family Network (OFN) provided information and tools to support families in understanding their needs and options. Families learned new things, increased perspectives, and were helped to navigate through different experiences or decisions that need to be made. OFN provided information and tools on the following, as well as many others:
 - Growing Family Resilience
 - Charting the LifeCourse
 - Families at the Center of Connected Communities
 - Parenting with Success: The COVID Edition
 - Building Inclusive Communities
 - Leadership Academy
- b. The Ohio Employment First Taskforce (EFTF) and its member agencies developed a cross-agency professional learning experience designed for local professionals working to prepare, involve, and empower families of students with disabilities as they transition from secondary education to adulthood. In addition to the training, the EFTF developed "It Starts With Families," a guide designed to support local professionals serving individuals and their families to become familiar with the research around family engagement and understanding their unique needs. The guide and training were designed to support local professionals serving individuals and their families to:
 - become familiar with the research around families,
 - learn how to better design family engagement strategies to reach all families, and
 - build trust, rapport, and successful partnerships with families through culturally responsive practices.

- c. In addition to "It Starts with Families," the EFTF added webinars to its successful series, "The Journey." This series is designed to enhance the transition process and practices of County Board of Developmental Disabilities School transition staff as they plan "the journey" with youth, families, and agency partners. Webinars specific to families included: "Exploring the Myth of Hard-to-Reach Families: Maximizing Family Partnership Through Intentional Communication"; "Practices to Enhance Family Engagement", and "'What I Wish I Knew Then': Parent Perspective Following High School".

2. Families being included in policy discussions and decisions.

- a. Ohio families have been central to the development and implementation of OhioRISE ((Resilience through Integrated Systems and Excellence). Families are members of Medicaid's OhioRISE Advisory Council and related working groups. In addition, family feedback and input was gathered through a series of "listening sessions", and Aetna Better Care of Ohio, the managed care partner for OhioRISE, has established a Family Advisory Council to continue to gather feedback and hear from families going forward.
- b. Using the LifeCourse Framework as a foundation, the IWGA hosted a series of virtual community discussion forums throughout SFY22. Each forum began with the question, "What is your vision for Ohioans with autism?" Attendees discussed what would make the vision possible along with Ohio's strengths and challenges. The forums were attended by people from across that state: autistic Ohioans, their families, and community partners (educators, service providers, advocacy organizations, community members). A survey was also developed for people who could not attend the virtual forums. Feedback from these forums and surveys was used to update the IWGA's targeted priorities outlined in Pursuing Quality Lives 2022.
- c. ODE's Early Childhood State Leadership Team, Family Engagement Subcommittee is developing engagement guides for families and professionals. The documents will assist families and districts in navigating the special education landscape in early childhood. Additionally, the guidebooks will provide



multiple resources for families and educators to use. To date, family and educator surveys have been completed and the Family Engagement Subcommittee is proceeding with compiling the information and resources. Draft sections of the guides will be presented at OCALICONLINE 2022.

3. Families having access to in-home supports, respite, crisis services.

- a. OhioRISE is a new, specialized managed care program that focuses on children and youth who have complex behavioral health and multisystem needs. OhioRISE will provide the following behavioral health services:
 - i. Intensive and Moderate Care Coordination
 - ii. Improved Intensive Home-Based Treatment (IHBT)
 - iii. In-state Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTFs)
 - iv. Behavioral Health Respite
 - v. zprimary Flex Funds
 - vi. Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS)
- b. Ohio's Family Network provided families with day-to-day tangible items to assure families' needs were met and they have what they needed to make daily lives possible and successful. Some of these tangibles included:
 - i. Activity Boxes
 - ii. Take a Break Program
 - iii. Resource Fair
 - iv. Autism Help Desk
 - v. Mom Self-Care Kits
 - vi. COVID-19 Financial Assistance Program
 - vii. Adopt a Family
- c. Through a grant from DODD, OCALI is developing and implementing a network of Multi-System Youth and Family Regional Coaches. Coaches provide in-home support to families who have children with co-

occurring MI/IDD, and their families, and are the hands-on support for families to help identify and implement proactive positive strategies and support families in accessing resources and implementing the strategies.

Ohio Family Network

DODD's Ohio Family Network (OFN) continues to leverage the knowledge, diversity, and strengths of people with developmental disabilities, their families, and siblings, along with public and private resources, to establish services that were deeply integrated with neighborhoods and local communities. The overarching goals of OFN are:

1. People with developmental disabilities, as well as their families and siblings, are: empowered and increase engagement in their family and community, not defined by a disability, better able to navigate the service systems, and supported by each other and the broader community so they can provide ongoing and lasting support.
2. Family Networks facilitate increased connectivity between organizations within the community and are representative, including people typically underserved.
3. Communities value, include, and support people with developmental disabilities as well as their families and siblings.
4. The lives of people with developmental disabilities include community connection, belonging, and opportunities for future employment and education.

HELP OTHERS UNDERSTAND

It is imperative that professionals and community members recognize and understand the characteristics of ASD to serve, support, and empower individuals and their families.

Targeted Priorities & Highlights of Accomplishments

1. Outreach to community partners

- a. In SFY22, planning resumed for an accessible Ohio State Fair. OCALI partnered with the Fair to offer another “Sensory-Friendly Morning,” with the lights lowered and the sound turned down. Fairgoers had the opportunity to ride the rides with no flashing lights or music, play the mid-way games with the sounds turned down, visit the Fair’s many educational activities, take a break in the OCALI Quiet Room, and explore the many activities in the shade of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Park.
- b. DODD’s Ohio Family Network offered “Families at the Center of Connected Communities”, a series for families of people with ID/DD to learn tools and techniques to build a social network in the family’s life. This can reduce social isolation and bring the person with ID/DD and families’ gifts into the community by implementing an engagement project together with other citizens.
- c. In recognition of Autism Awareness Month, the Ohio Department of Administrative Services (DAS) organized a panel of parents as part of their “Perspectives Series.” Nearly 100 state employees attended the in-person event. It was also live streamed on The Ohio Channel with 150+ viewers online.

2. Outreach to employers

- a. In January 2022, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) launched the Inclusive Employer Handbook webinar series. The five-part series provides information and resources to help employers recruit, hire, and retain employees with disabilities and best practices to foster an inclusive workplace. The Handbook series was inspired by OOD’s Inclusive Employer Toolkit, a free web-based resource that helps employers recruit, hire, and retain employees with disabilities and foster an inclusive workplace. In addition to

the Inclusive Employer Handbook series, OOD produced webinars guiding digital accessibility and accommodations, best practices for cultivating the talents and skills of employees with disabilities, the benefits of hiring college graduates and students with disabilities, and best practices for identifying essential functions of positions and writing disability-inclusive job descriptions. During SFY2022, OOD’s live webinars reached more than 1,390 attendees.

- b. Beginning in May 2022, OOD’s Business Relations Team hosted the first in a series of five Inclusive Employer Roundtables. A group of more than 25 Employer Partners representing various industries throughout Ohio has committed to participating in the series. The Roundtables offer participating employers the opportunity to network with peers, share resources, participate in thoughtful discussion, and formulate strategies to achieve their organization’s disability inclusion goals. Sessions will occur quarterly and correspond with the topical areas in the Inclusive Employer Handbook and Toolkit.
- c. To further support their efforts to create and foster a workplace inclusive of individuals with disabilities, OOD’s Business Relations Team provided 46 customized trainings for employers across Ohio. OOD’s Worksite Accessibility Specialist provided 14 Worksite Accessibility Consultations to Ohio employers.

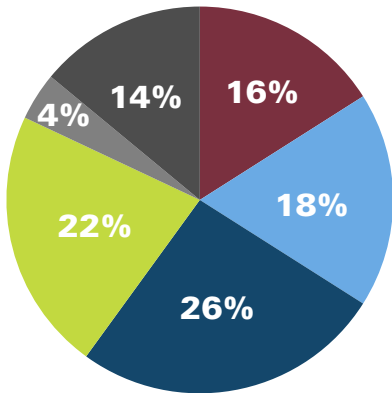
3. Outreach to the medical community

- a. OCALI’s Office of Policy partnered with the Ohio Association of Health Plans (OAHP) to offer “Improving Outcomes for People with Disabilities,” a series of webinars aimed at increasing the confidence and competence of medical providers. The series was developed with input from people with disabilities, family members, researcher, and medical providers. To date, nearly 200 people from Ohio and beyond have registered for these webinars.
- b. DODD broadened its outreach to the medical community, leveraging the expertise of Drs. Laura Sorg, MD and Julie Gentile, MD, MBA. The doctors share information regularly through “medical moments” and “mental wellness”, and co-authored “Intellectual Disability Psychiatry: A Primer for PCPs” in The Ohio Family Physician magazine.



c. In addition to the support they provide families, the Ohio Department of Health's (ODH) Parent Consultants work across the 40+ programs within the Bureau of Maternal, Child, and Family Health to offer a parent perspective and voice. Parent consultants strive to make sure all ODH efforts are family-centered, community-based, and culturally sensitive.

Improving Outcomes Registrants



- Clinicians (doctors, nurses, specialists)
- Higher Education (students, educators, administrators)
- Caseworkers, Care Coordinators, Social Workers, Community Health Workers
- Program Administrators, Directors, Executives
- Allied Health (Dental Hygienists, OT, PT, Speech)
- Other



LIVE WELL

Knowing how to network and navigate available community resources is fundamental to developing and sustaining effective supports for a successful future.

Targeted Priorities & Highlights of Accomplishments:

1. Information and education specific to employment supports

- a. Under the leadership of DODD, OCALI is developing training curricula, materials, tools and resources related to DODD's new and modified adult day, employment and transportation services and rules with an emphasis on tailoring materials to people with I/DD and their families. Training and technical assistance content areas include: foundational materials communicating Adult Day Services array, Basic Employment Skills Training, Self-directed Transportation, Career Planning, Benefits Analysis, Adult Day Support, Group Employment Support, Individual Employment Supports, Assistive Technology and Employment First.
- b. As part of "The Journey" series, the EFTF offered "Creating the Perfect Storm: Developing Meaningful Vocational Experiences for Youth with Complex Needs." The webinar explored the importance of starting early, the relationship between work experiences and self-determination, and making the experiences intentional and authentic leading to paid employment. Attendees gained insights into the importance of collaborating with families and community agencies for successful employment outcomes.
- c. The EFTF developed a series of webinars called "Fear Factor." The series confronts many of the common fears about losing benefits due to employment opportunities. Season 1 included information on Maintaining Critical Services and Supports, SSI, SSDI, and Medicaid Buy In for Workers with Disabilities.

2. Information and education specific to post-school options (education, training, etc.)

- a. "The Journey" series also included a webinar on "Using our MAP to Guide Transition-Aged Students in their Journey to Achieve Post-School Outcomes". In this webinar, one Multi-Agency Planning (MAP) team, shared the tools and resources they use to collaborate and empower youth and young adults with disabilities in their transition from school to adulthood.
- b. OOD has expanded its network of providers offering Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). There are now over 100 Pre-ETS providers, including school districts and career centers across the state. In 2021, over 2,000 students with disabilities were referred for Pre-ETS – up from 1,647 the previous year. The Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children provides funds to assist schools in becoming a Pre-ETS provider and will soon release a new video highlighting this exciting work in one of Ohio's local school districts.
- c. Between June and August 2022, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD), in conjunction with the Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council (OSILC) and Centers for Independent Living, hosted five, in-person, Youth Leadership Forums for nearly 50 students in Columbus, Cleveland, Toledo, Dayton, and Canton.



3. Information and education specific to community resources including housing and transportation

- a. In November 2021, DODD issued "Ohio's Plan to Increase Independent Living Options for People with Developmental Disabilities." The primary focus of this plan is independent, integrated housing options, that are covered by a lease, in settings that are chosen, and where there is a clear separation between the delivery of services and the housing. The plan lays out DODD's goals and strategies to increase independent living.
- b. OCALI's LTC developed several "Take 5" videos specific to community resources, including "Residential Options in the DD System", "Affordable Housing." These short videos review a topic, concept or idea about transition and adult life planning, service and support for those assisting youth and adults with disabilities and provide five take-away resources for each of the webcasts to help extend learning and support implementation of new knowledge or sharing of valuable ideas.
- c. DODD has been working with a broad group of stakeholders to improve and expand services for adults, including transportation services. This work led to the development of a new service called, "self-directed transportation." Self-directed transportation enhances a person's independence and is available around the clock, including weekends and holidays, to accommodate scheduled and on demand transportation needs. This service allows a person to travel independently.



SUSTAIN THE FUTURE

Thoughtful planning and coordination is necessary to uphold broad, but connected, service systems that are responsive to individuals with ASD and their families.

Targeted Priorities & Highlights of Accomplishments:

1. **“Adult life” as a focus of transition (i.e., healthcare, housing, transportation, not only education/employment)**
 - a. ODH has included an increased focus on transition in its Title V Block Grant Work. Specifically, they have set a goal of increasing the percent of Ohio’s adolescents with special health care needs, ages 12 through 17, who received services necessary to make transitions to adult health care by 10%. This effort includes:
 - i. Working with adult and pediatric medical providers to assure knowledge and awareness of transition
 - ii. Working with partners to increase the number of adult providers that serve CSHCN population and participate in transition planning
 - iii. Working with partners to assure family and teen knowledge and support regarding transition
 - iv. Supporting children’s and adult hospital systems in the same geographic area to conduct pilot transition projects
 - v. Identifying social determinant barriers in medical transition and require transition planning model to address
 - b. Hosted by OCALI’s Lifespan Transitions Center, “The Journey” series included a webinar on Whole Person Transition, recognizing the transition to adult life requires planning for more than just postsecondary education and employment. Using Charting the LifeCourse, the webinar discussed how Charting the LifeCourse can be used as a guide to look at all aspects of a student’s life and how to identify resources and supports to achieve desired outcomes.
 - c. DODD’s [2022 Innovation Series](#) honored the relationships created among people being supported and people providing the supports, and how

innovation is created and sustained by using those relationships and shared experiences to make the system more responsive and person-centered. The Series started April 5, 2022, with a virtual launch, and then the next five weeks live, in-person Innovation Labs across Ohio featured stories and examples of how relationships drive innovation locally. The Series ended May 17, 2022, with a celebration of some of the best stories and relationships that have allowed innovation to happen across the state, with roundtables and reflections by providers, families, and people being supported.

2. **Coordination of assessments, plans, and services—across settings, service sectors, and the lifespan**

- a. Over the past two years, DODD has been working with stakeholders to develop the [OhioISP](#) (Individual Service Plan). The OhioISP format is the same no matter where you are in Ohio. People moving throughout the state will have the same plan format and experience the same planning process no matter what county they live in or what provider(s) they choose. With a consistent plan for all Ohioans with developmental disabilities, providers, even if they offer multiple services or operate in multiple counties, will have a single plan to learn. No matter where they work or what services they provide, direct support professionals (DSPs) will know exactly where to find the information they need about the people they serve and the supports they are providing.
- b. With leadership from Governor DeWine’s Children’s Initiative, the Ohio Department of Medicaid in partnership with state child-serving agencies and the Praed Foundation created an [Ohio-specific Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths \(CANS\)](#) tool and Decision Support Model. The Ohio CANS has been developed for broad application across multiple systems, including youth involved in child protection, developmental disability, department of youth services, and mental health and addiction. This ensures youth only need to go through one assessment across multiple providers. Ohio’s Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health Center of Excellence (COE) has trained over 1,300 people in the Ohio CANS.



- c. The Employment First Taskforce launched the Early Planning Pilot, recognizing that collaboration and planning for a person's success as they transition into adulthood is critical, and the earlier families and partners begin thinking about what adulthood may look like, the more prepared young people are for what lies ahead. The Early Planning Pilot helps teams engage in these conversations earlier – in elementary school – to support students to reach their post-school goals. The pilot offers resources for both elementary school parents and teachers to foster simple conversation to create a plan to best prepare children for their transition into adulthood.

3. Long-term planning for families

- a. a. Ohio is increasing its use of the LifeCourse Framework and tools – which includes a focus on planning for both the person with a disability and their family across the lifespan. There are now 18 LifeCourse Ambassadors throughout the state. These Ambassadors have received extensive training in LifeCourse, and are integrating concepts, language, and materials in their roles to enhance policies, practices, and capacity building opportunities, and helping families plan for the long term.
- b. b. The LifeCourse Framework was used in developing DODD's OhioISP. Specific questions were added to the OhioISP assessment which will allow families, people with disabilities, and their teams to plan for the future. For example, "What is the person's plan for life beyond employment? Does the person need to maintain a certain level of financial security to ensure quality of life during retirement? Are they living in a situation that is conducive to aging or financially feasible once in retirement? Do they have end of life plans in place, or would they want to begin planning for their end of life wishes? Consider if the person's community, culture, religion, etc. will affect retirement and end of life planning."
- c. c. Many family organizations around the state have continued or expanded efforts to equip families with the information they need for long term planning. OCALI and the Autism Society of Central Ohio offer a Special Needs Planning Workshop covering information on Stable accounts and discretionary

trusts. Through a grant from Ohio's Developmental Disabilities Council, Hamilton County Developmental Disabilities Services has been offering "The Future is Now" to people across the state. The multi-part series hosted online via Zoom is designed to help older caregivers and their family members with a disability make plans for the future. Throughout the series, families get help to create a letter of intent, a non-legal document that captures family desires and goals for the future. Creating a letter of intent can help families gain peace of mind that comes with having a plan. Each session offers an opportunity to learn about important topics: hopes, dreams, and worries for the future; future living arrangements; expanding personal networks; supports for older caregivers; maximizing public benefits (SSI/SSDI/Social Security); keepers of the dream.

Supporting Ohioans with Autism Across Agencies, Across the State, Across the Lifespan

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