

The Arc of Pennsylvania  
Advocacy & Policy Virtual Conference  
June 8, 2021 – 10:15am – 11:00am

***“Preparing for the 21st Century Workforce: Where Does PA Stand Now in Employing People with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities”***

Steve Suroviec, Chair  
Zach Hicks, Commissioner  
PA Employment First Oversight Commission

# Our Presenters Today

- Zach Hicks

- Employed as usher at Hershey Chocolate World
- EFOC Commissioner
- The Arc of PA Board Member
- Lives independently in own apartment – Hershey, PA
- Spokesperson, Special Olympics



- Steve Suroviec

- President & CEO, Achieva (disability advocacy/service org.)
- EFOC Chair
- Former: ODP Dep. Sec., OVR Exec. Dir., The Arc of PA Exec. Dir.
- Lives near Pittsburgh, PA; originally from Erie



# Today's Presentation

## Reminder – What is...

- Why Employment First?
- Employment First - Defined
- Act 36 of 2018
- PA Employment First Oversight Commission

## How is Pennsylvania Doing?

- EFOC's 2<sup>nd</sup> Report issued in October 2020
- State agencies' 3-Year Plan updates
- What's next, etc.

## What is the EFOC Recommending?

## What Can The Arc Do?

- As individual advocates
- As local chapters

# Why Is Employment Important?

Zach's story...

- Money
- Independence
- Community engagement/participation
- There's dignity in all work
- Social events / family get-togethers – “What do you do?”

# What is Employment First?

## Employment First

Competitive-integrated employment is the **first consideration and preferred outcome** for all working-age (18-64) people with disabilities in publicly-funded programs (education, employment, training, long-term supports and services, etc.)

## Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)

CIE is work in an **integrated setting** (i.e., typical workplace where most employees are people without disabilities) and the employee earns **competitive wages** (at least minimum wage - what everyone else is paid for the same job)

# What is Act 36 of 2018?

- Establishes “Employment First” policy for the Commonwealth
- Duties and responsibilities of state agencies
  - Coordinate efforts and collaborate; develop clear outcome expectations; complete an assessment of progress and make information publicly available; outreach and training
  - Review policies relating to payment of service provider, *“to align payment policies with the requirements of Employment First. Financial incentives, when allowable under federal rules for employment services, shall be granted to providers who support the placement and continued employment of IWD in CIE.”*
  - Employ people with disabilities in no less than 7% of the overall state workforce
  - 3-year plan with specific policies and implementation dates
  - Annual report to the General Assembly
- Creates Disability Cabinet
- Creates the Employment First Oversight Commission

# What is the Employment First Oversight Commission?

- Establishes measurable goals and objectives governing the implementation of Act 36
- Tracks the measurable progress of public agencies in implementing Act 36
  - State agencies shall fully cooperate with and provide data and information to assist the commission in carrying out its duties.
- Issues annual report by October 1 of each year
  - Detailing the progress made on each of the measurable goals and objectives during the preceding fiscal year.
  - Recommendations to the governor and the General Assembly for effective strategies and policies needed to support the implementation of Act 36

# Who is on the EFOC?

- Commissioners (most are Governor appointed – some appointed by leaders in General Assembly)

Steve Suroviec (Chair)

Dale Verchick (Vice Chair)

Josie Badger (Secretary)

Mary Hartley (Immediate Past Chair)

Amiris Dipuglia

Richard Edley

Cindy Duch

Heidi Tuszynski

Vince Loose

Steve Pennington

Paul Stengle

Donna Partin

Zach Hicks

Susan Tomasic

Vacant (Senate Majority Leader appointment)

Vacant (Senate Minority Leader appointment)

# 2020 Report EFOC

- Measurable Goals
- Objectives
- Recommendations

Access the first and second reports and state reports and plans online: enter words 'Employment First Pennsylvania' in your browser or go to:

<https://www.dli.pa.gov/Individuals/Disability-Services/employment-first/Pages/default.aspx>



# Data: Working-Age Adults with Disabilities Across State-Funded Services

## Individuals Employed & Using Department of Human Services Programs

- **3%** (3007/102214) Office of Long Term Living Waivers (OLTL includes CHC)
- **40.1%** (364674/896190) Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS)
- **16.6%** (7136/43113) Office of Developmental Programs Waivers

## Individuals Employed as a Result of Department of Labor and Industry (OVR only)

- **24.2%** (7485/30937) number of people who were employed in plan status through the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

## Students Employed using Department of Education and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

- **2.8%** (3065/109228 transition-age [14-21] special education students) summer/part-time jobs and graduates with job.

# Some of the Commission's Measurable Goals

# Measurable Goals that Relate to the Intellectual Disabilities, Autism and Developmental Disabilities (ID/A/DD) Population

1. By 2022, 30% of working age individuals (18-64) who are on an ID/Autism waiver (enrolled with ODP) will have Competitive Integrated Employment (14% was recorded by ODP in 2018 Comprehensive Employment Report)<sup>23</sup>

In June of 2019, ODP provided data to the Commission showed that 16% of all working age (18-64) year-olds in the ID/Autism Waivers, enrolled with ODP and were working in competitive-integrated employment. That number went up 1% during the first 6 months of the program year.

**Seventeen (17%) of all working age (18-64) individuals in the ID/Autism Waivers were working in Competitive Integrated Employment. (data is as of 2019 calendar year end)**

## Measurable Goals that Relate to the Intellectual Disabilities, Autism and Developmental Disabilities (ID/A/DD) Population

2. By 2022, 3000 more individuals (ID/Autism) who have an employment goal in their ODP ISP will be receiving employment services.

In one year, 535 more individuals with Intellectual Disabilities and/or Autism who have an employment goal in their ODP ISP are receiving employment services.

### **Number of Individuals with an Employment Goal Receiving Employment Services (continued)**

	December 31, 2018	December 31, 2019
Number of Individuals with an Employment Goal on Their ISP	13,052	13,505
Number of Individuals with an ODP Employment Service	4,744	5,279

## Measurable Goals that Relate to the Intellectual Disabilities, Autism and Developmental Disabilities (ID/A/DD) Population

3. 100% of all referrals to OVR through Pennsylvania's 511 efforts (persons requesting to leave sheltered workshops) will achieve Competitive Integrated Employment within 1 year. High Priority

- 9/9 persons were in status referral, applicant, and trial work experience
- 6/6 in counseling and guidance
- 33/33 in training

4 people have Competitive Integrated Employment.

## Measurable Goals that Relate to the Intellectual Disabilities, Autism and Developmental Disabilities (ID/A/DD) Population

4. Continue trend to annually decrease segregated employment by a minimum of 10%.<sup>25</sup> Map by county, the total number of individuals served by state and local dollars in competitive integrated employment services versus number of people in facilities services (14c) segregated settings.

4,401 (working age 18-64) were served by ODP funded 14c [subminimum wage workshop] segregated employment services in the fall of 2019. This represents 10% of working age people supported by ODP. In all 5,027 Individuals (all ages) in ODP are served in workshops. Note regarding 2019 Report: ODP and OVR had to work out duplication of workshop numbers last year and these were not available to the Commission for the report. The 2019 program year number, 5,027 should be the baseline for ODP funded individuals in measuring reduction in 14c going forward.

**In one year, the number of Prevocational Service locations listed by ODP decreased by 6 facilities.**

There are opportunities to support people in CIE who are currently in sheltered workshops.

# A Few Other Goals Worth Mentioning...

#6 – By 2022 20% of all high school graduates (senior year up to age 21) receiving transition services from PDE, OVR and/or ODP **will be competitively employed** in an integrated setting **within 3 months of graduation** (in 2018, only 58 students were competitively employed according to Act 26 data)

#7 100% of graduating students with an IEP will **either have** CIE and/or post-secondary placement **or have a plan in place** with OVR and ODP or OLTL-funded program that guarantees access to appropriate and continuous services for CIE and/or post-secondary placement. (no data available on this)

#8 Each year, the Commonwealth will steadily increase access to competitive-integrated public and private employment **for high school students with disabilities** with funding and/or support from either OVR or PDE (e.g., work-based learning experience or a job with job coaching or other supports). First year goal 2000; 2<sup>nd</sup> year 2500; 3<sup>rd</sup> year 3000. (no data available)

#10 – Annually increase the number of **CHC participants who have CIE** by 200.

# Objectives 2019 and 2020

- Establish a Customer Feedback System (Across Systems)
- Survey (individual and families) Plans for the Future
- Create Real Cross Agency Collaboration and Coordination
- Data Reporting - Publicly Available Dashboard
- On-Time Delivery Measurement (i.e., how fast does someone get services once they ask for help)

# EFOC October 2020 Report Recommendations

1. LBFC should study need for Hiram G. Andrews Center; possibly redirect funds
2. State and county agencies increase and align financial incentives
3. Back up Employment First policy with funding (OVR waiting list? Career Links)
4. In Behavioral HealthChoices, fund employment under value-based purchasing; employment is a social determinant of health
5. Greater sense of urgency in OLTL for Community HealthChoices
6. End “fear of working” (education campaign; benefits counseling; MAWD reforms)
7. State government hiring – OA should convene experts to implement reforms
8. Strategy to increase labor participation rate for PWD; publish data with other mainstream labor data
9. Education Department should require each school district to have full time and highly qualified Transition Coordinator
10. More innovation in the Workforce Development system (Labor and Industry)

# State Agencies / 3-Year Plan

- Act 36 of 2018 requires the Office of the Governor to submit an initial three-year plan to the General Assembly, outlining specific policies and strategies commonwealth state agencies will adopt to implement the Employment First Act and ensure individuals with disabilities have the opportunity to achieve economic independence through competitive integrated employment.
- Act 36 of 2018 also requires the Office of the Governor to submit an annual report to the General Assembly every year by January 30.

# State Agencies / 3-Year Plan Progress Report – Published January 2021

The report is very comprehensive and detailed; the following 3 items were highlighted for 2020:

- DHS updated the programs and services offered by ODP and OLTL to address the COVID-19 pandemic, including providing retainer payments to providers
- L&I, in partnership with DHS and PDE, and several other agencies created a new website focused on Employment First. The website is available at: <https://www.dli.pa.gov/Individuals/Disability-Services/employment-first/Pages/default.aspx>.
- PDE and OVR continued their work establishing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) that allow the agencies to formally collaborate on improving vocational and career preparation for all Pennsylvania students with disabilities

Link to report: [file:///C:/Users/ssurovic/Downloads/2021%20EF%20Annual%20Report-updated\[1\]\[1\]%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/ssurovic/Downloads/2021%20EF%20Annual%20Report-updated[1][1]%20(1).pdf)

# Discussion: What Can You Do to Increase Employment (both as individual advocates and as chapters of The Arc)?

1. Attend Local Employment Coalitions or Transition Coordinating Councils
2. Approach businesses directly – volume vs. one person at a time; diversity efforts; make the “business case” (largely untapped, quality talent pool), not charity
3. Approach school districts directly
4. Advocate with ODP, OVR, and OLTL for adequate rates
5. Promote culture change - don't allow fear to keep people with disabilities from exploring work
6. Continue to educate families and Supports Coordinators
  - Informational outreach (training) for SCs - they're the gatekeepers in the HCBS systems!

# Discussion: What Can You Do to Increase Employment (both as individual advocates and as chapters of The Arc)?

7. Tell your story – why is employment important to you or your family member; advocate with elected officials
8. If your chapter is not an employment provider, consider becoming one; offer CIE services (job development, job coaching, discovery, etc.); or, partner with a provider in your area to promote it
9. Revisit goals in the ISP or IEP; reconvene the ISP or IEP team
10. Consider remote options – are there jobs that can be performed at home (e.g., call centers, etc.)

Thank you!

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