



OPWDD “Community Dialogues”: A conversation with stakeholders about community inclusion and the expansion of employment and meaningful community activities for people with developmental disabilities

OPWDD will convene community dialogues to solicit input from families, providers and self advocates on strategies that are being considered as part of a plan to increase employment and meaningful community activities for people receiving OPWDD services.

In the 1999 Olmstead Decision the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that states, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), have an obligation to provide services to individuals with disabilities in the “most integrated setting appropriate to their needs”.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice the “most integrated setting” is defined as a setting that enables individuals with disabilities to interact with non-disabled persons to the fullest extent possible. Integrated settings are those that provide individuals with disabilities opportunities to live, work, and receive services in the greater community, like individuals without disabilities. Integrated settings are located in mainstream society and provide individuals with disabilities the opportunity to interact with non-disabled persons to the fullest extent possible.”

OPWDD is developing a plan to increase opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to engage in employment and meaningful community activities that are consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act. It is important that this plan also addresses the needs and concerns of parents, self advocates and providers. The following concepts are under consideration as elements of the OPWDD Transformation Employment Plan:

1. Multi-Year Strategy-Employment transformation will happen in one or two years. It will take several years and will include time to identify a person’s employment interests and abilities, develop their job readiness skills, identify a job in the general workforce that matches those skills and

abilities and include non work activities that create opportunities for community inclusion.

2. Assessment -Vocational assessments and discovery will be used to identify a person's interests and skills, and to identify the supports they will need to become successfully employed in the general workforce or to engage in meaningful community activities.
3. Alternative Business Models- Opportunities will exist for providers to obtain information about alternative business models that create employment opportunities in integrated settings and technical assistance will be available to providers that need help changing their business model.
4. Retirement Options-Supports will be available for people who chose to retire and participate in non-employment activities.
5. Community Inclusion- Options will be available for people who do not want to be employed in the general workforce and for people who want to supplement employment with other types of community inclusion activities.
6. Volunteering- Volunteer and other community activities will be supported as ways to prepare people for employment.
7. Maintaining Relationships-As people become employed in the general workforce, supports will be available to keep them connected to their social networks, friends and peers.
8. Transportation-Strategies will be explored to address the challenges associated with transportation.
9. Benefits Planning- Supports will be available to individuals and families so they have accurate information about the impact a job may have on their benefits.
10. Peer Mentoring- Peer mentoring will be utilized as a way to encourage people to explore the possibility of employment in the general workforce.
11. Staff Retraining-Opportunities will exist to support direct support professionals as they work with people to obtain and maintain employment in the general workforce.
12. Self-employment- Strategies will be explored to increase self employment opportunities.
13. Getting More People Hired- Strategies will be explored to partner with the business community and to encourage them to hire people with developmental disabilities.

OPWDD urges self-advocates, family members of people with developmental disabilities, providers, advocates, and other interested parties to participate in the community dialogues and provide input on the concepts that will be included the OPWDD Transformation Employment Plan and to specifically provide feedback on the following:

1. Feedback on the concepts under consideration for the Transformation Employment Plan.
2. Recommendations on additional concepts that should be considered in the Transformation Employment Plan.
3. Recommendations on additional ways to support people in obtaining and maintaining employment in the general workforce, including supports for people with complex medical and/or behavioral health needs.
4. Recommendations on additional ways to provide information and engage in continued dialogue with stakeholders.
5. Recommendations on additional ways to support providers seeking to create employment opportunities consistent with the U.S. Justice Department definition of “integrated settings”.

REGISTRATION

Registration to attend the community dialogues is required. Please call the regional contact person to register, as conference room space is limited. When you register, please indicate whether you are planning to attend only, or attend as a speaker. Speakers must limit their comments to three (3) minutes and bring three (3) copies of their written statement. Locations and contacts for registration are listed below.

Written comments may also be submitted to:

Tonya Obey

OPWDD

44 Holland Avenue

Albany, NY 12229

or via email at Tonyamaree.Obey@opwdd.ny.gov

For general information about the community dialogue, please contact

OPWDD's Division of Person Centered Supports:

Phone: (518) 473-9697

Fax: (518) 473-0054

To register for the community dialogues and to reserve a time to speak, obtain more information or directions to the community dialogue locations, or to arrange for a special accommodation, please call the regional contact person for the hearing location at the telephone number listed below.

Videoconference Locations and Contact Information

1. Region 1

Tuesday, September 17, 2013
8:00am-12:00pm

and Friday, September 20, 2013
10:00am-2:00pm and 4:00pm-7:00pm

Western NY

West Seneca DDSO
1200 East & West Road
West Seneca, NY 14224
Contact: Mary Beth Blodgett
(716) 517-2151

Rochester

Finger Lakes DDSO /Monroe Developmental Center
620 Westfall Road, Rochester, NY 14620
Room 25 Leaf
Contact: Rebecca Scott
(585) 241-5766

2. Region 2

Wednesday, September 18, 2013
12:00pm-4:00pm

and Friday, September 20, 2013
10:00am-2:00pm and 4:00pm-7:00pm

Syracuse, NY

Central NY DDSO
187 Northern Concourse, North Syracuse, NY 13212
Regional Training Center
Contact: Sandy Smith at (315) 473-6371

3. Region 3

Thursday, September 19, 2013
12:00pm-4:00pm

and Friday, September 20, 2013
10:00am-2:00pm and 4:00pm-7:00pm

Schenectady

Capital District DDSO
500 Balltown Road
Schenectady, NY 12304
Building 3, Conference Room 2
Contact: Karen Francisco

