

Frequently asked questions...

Don't people with disabilities need special help to get and keep jobs?

Some people may need and benefit from traditional disability vocational services, but many are frustrated with delays and limited choices of providers. Vocational services often pay for assessments and initial services but do not provide for sustained support.

The Employment Outcome Project uses the same approach that non-disabled individuals use to get a job: the help and assistance of family and friends. The purpose of the project is to empower and reward those who already know and care for the person with a disability.

Who is eligible for the Employment Outcome Project?

Anyone who is at least 16 years of age and eligible for services from a County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (MRDD).

Can a person receive an Employment Outcome Grant and still go to a sheltered workshop?

This is a local decision. However, to be successful there must be commitment to make Employment Outcome an alternative to traditional sheltered employment. Individuals will still have access to other non-vocational services provided by the County Board of MRDD.

Can a person receive an Employment Outcome Grant if he or she already has a job?

Yes, especially if the person is coming from a vocational service that is time limited. Students coming from school-developed employment can use a grant to continue supports when school-provided services end. A person with a disability may also use an Employment Outcome Grant to get a new job.

Are job coaching and transportation services available?

Whatever is needed to make the employment successful can be paid for by project funds. However, these flexible dollars need to meet all of the employment-related costs. The goal is to use resources cost effectively. For example, the grant might pay a co-worker a little extra per day to help assist the person instead of paying for an outside job coach.

What credentials do I need to be an Employment Agent or to help someone start a Micro Enterprise?

Most importantly, you should know and care about the person with a disability. You need to believe in the person's potential. You must be willing to commit your time and energy without a guarantee of financial rewards. It is also helpful if you are an active member of the same community as the person with a disability.

Family and friends of people with disabilities, personal care providers, residential providers, businesses that employ eligible individuals and traditional vocational providers can all be Employment Agents. Employees of County

Boards of MRDD are not eligible to be Employment Agents.

What do Employment Agents do?

They manage the relationships and critical issues on and off the job that create opportunities for employment and maintain needed supports. This is not job coaching. It is working with the employer to use and reward supports and resources that already exist.

What documentation do I need to receive the commission?

Simply turn in the pay stubs of the person with a disability to the County Board of MRDD on an agreed schedule. There are no time sheets. There is also no pay until the person with a disability is paid. The more money the person with a disability earns, the higher the commission.

What if the person loses his or her job?

Help the person find another job. When the person starts receiving a paycheck, commissions start again.

What about disability benefits?

Before the person starts work, talk with someone from the County Board of MRDD or a benefits consultant. Usually, the person is better off financially with a job rather than just collecting benefit checks, even though disability checks may be reduced or eliminated. Medicaid benefits can be continued in many cases. It is especially important to have a benefits consultation if the person might be involved in a Micro Enterprise and work 80 hours or more per month.



Self-Determination Drives the Project

The Employment Outcome Project encourages people with disabilities and their families to take control of their employment and business opportunities. This goal goes beyond getting jobs; it creates sustained income for people with disabilities. There are two options in this project:

1. Employment Agent Commissions

An Employment Agent chosen by the person with a disability helps the person find a job. The agent receives a commission from the project—based on the person's wages:

- 50% wages for the first year,
- 40% for the second year,
- 30% for the third year and
- 20% for each year thereafter

There are no waiting lists, evaluations or readiness criteria. People with disabilities get jobs like everyone else, through family and friends. The difference is that agents earn commission based on their success.

2. Micro Enterprise Start-up Funds

Teams, made up of families, friends and care providers, help the person with a disability create a business based on the person's interests and talents. Most of these businesses, called Micro Enterprises, are small and use natural resources and supports in the community. The project also conducts two-day workshops to help teams get started.

Commission fees and start-up costs are limited to \$5,000 per year. The County Board of MRDD in which the person receives services and the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council provide these funds.

How do I get started?

If you received this brochure from your County Board of MRDD, they agreed to offer Employment Outcome Grants. They will help you to apply and make agreements with your Employment Agent or with your Micro Enterprise team.

If you received this brochure from some other source, call your County Board of MRDD and tell them you are interested in an Employment Outcome Grant.

If you need more information or schedules for Micro Enterprise workshops, please visit our web site:

www.mrdd.net

or contact:

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Photos on front cover show people with disabilities who are successfully employed. Bob Haas, Delaware County, obtained his janitorial job through an Employment Agent. Deanna Kirwin, Fairfield County, started her own business with Micro Enterprise start-up funds.

Designed by DD Council's Public Awareness Project, the AXIS Center, Columbus, Ohio.

Employment Outcome Project

A distinctly different alternative to traditional employment options for people with disabilities



Ohio
Developmental
Disabilities Council

