

## ---Special Edition on Supported Employment---

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## From Your President...

### Which came first, self-determination or employment?

For over 20 years we have known that employment was critical to adults with developmental disabilities and that the continuum of traditional services kept people with the most severe disabilities in the most segregated settings. We realized in the 80's that we didn't need to get

anyone "ready" for employment in the workshop anymore, that the most effective training occurred in the community where people would use the skills.

The articles in the Winter 2004 TASH Journal revisit an article from twenty years ago by Steven J. Taylor, on the shift needed to integrated services for individuals with developmental disabilities.

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Project SEARCH offers unique employment options. See p. 7 for article.

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A national survey of rehabilitation providers (Metzel, D. S., Boeltzig, H., Butterworth, J. and Gilmore, D.) shows that only 26% of adults with developmental disabilities in employment are in individualized community jobs and those in non-work activities has increased 47% from 1991 to 2001 (Sullivan, Boeltzig, Metzel, Butterworth and Gilmore). According to Jan Nisbet, Director of the Institution on Disability we are stuck in the continuum and Supported Employment has become just one more program.

This bothers me. When we know what Supported Employment can do for individuals, it should not be included as just another option in an array of choices. I'm afraid that in our commitment to move to self-determination we could perpetuate the continuum by offering choices to individuals of the array of services instead of helping individuals craft a meaningful life. Tom Nerney's name has become synonymous with self-determination. In his handbook, Guaranteeing the Price of Freedom: Through Redefining Quality and Creative Individual Budgeting, he states, "Sometimes we become confused about the purpose of self-determination: enabling individuals with disabilities to achieve a meaningful life deeply embedded in our communities. Some of the confusion arises from substituting the means to self-determination with the purpose. For example, hiring one's own support, controlling expenditures, are means (or tools). If these means do not result in the person 'achieving a meaningful life,' then self-determination is in danger of becoming another program that does nothing to elevate the status of individuals with disabilities within our community."

We know that Supported Employment elevates the status of individuals with disabilities. And adults should have the responsibility to generate income if they have the ability. With the funding issues we are currently facing, this becomes even more critical. According to the Ohio Access 2004, Governor Taft's Strategic Plan to Improve Long Term Services and Supports to People with Disabilities, every Ohioan should have an opportunity to learn and lead, earn and succeed. Age and disability should not be barriers to a meaningful quality of life. (For the entire report go to link [www.ohioaccess.ohio.gov](http://www.ohioaccess.ohio.gov))

"How long can we afford, as a state, to continue to relegate people with disabilities to not paying taxes, to not contributing to the economy of the state, to not buying goods and services that stimulate the economy?" (D.D.)

However, I think we need to focus on community jobs for people because it will help people have a quality life. And, because that is what we do best in adult services. We train people to gain skills and independence. Perhaps we have been distracted by a few things in the field. Let's make sure employment remains a priority for adults with developmental disabilities and not just an option.

*"Work is important not just because it provides a paycheck, but because it defines who we are and what we do with our lives. No one should be denied that sense of identity, especially Americans with disabilities". --Roy Grizzard*

**Visit the OAAS website at**

**[www.oaas.org](http://www.oaas.org)**

## ODDC Funding Promotes Creative Employment Opportunities

It is the mission of the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council (ODDC) to create change that improves independence, productivity and inclusion for people with developmental disabilities and their families in community life. To fulfill our mission, ODDC funds grants that initiates systems change. In the area of employment, the ODDC has funded grants that provided people with disabilities opportunities to produce income in non-traditional ways.

Council recently funded the Employment Outcomes and Micro-enterprise grant. This grant has been successful in allowing people with disabilities to have more income by expanding the array of employment options offered by county boards of MR/DD to people with disabilities and their families.

The arts can provide another non-traditional employment option for people with disabilities that increases income and possibly small business/micro-enterprise ownership. People with disabilities often miss opportunities to participate in the arts let alone make money from their artwork.

The ODDC's Funding for the Arts program has provided two years of funding to help emerging artists with disabilities move to a higher level of artistic career development.

Ohio organizations that have a commitment to promoting artists with disabilities were funded to assist artists with disabilities develop the materials and skills necessary to begin marketing their art

for profit.

Specific grant activities include:

- Art shows and traveling exhibits;
- Hiring folk artists to assist in the artistic process and exhibit coordinators;
- Purchase of equipment: to produce musical loops and tunes for sheet music, materials for framing and packing, visual art supplies such as paints brushes, canvas;
- Jury fees, gallery fees, slide production, travel to sell artwork in other states;
- Professional development awards to artists with disabilities to expand their careers;
- Advertising and business cards.

The ODDC has provided small grants to 13 organizations. These grants have been successful in increasing the income of artists with disabilities. Many of the grants made more money for people with disabilities than the amount of the initial grant award! In addition the organizations, many of which are county boards of MR/DD, were able to expand and improve their art programs. All of these efforts allowed the public to become aware of artists with disability and their abilities.

The ODDC hopes to continue to expand the opportunities for artists with disabilities in Ohio. Each year ODDC will select grantees through a competitive application process.

The application for Funding for the Arts 2005 will be available May 2, 2005 from the council's office at (614) 446-5205 or from the website at <http://ddc.ohio.gov>.

For more information contact Leslie Paull at the ODDC.

## Employment Outcome Project

The Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council's *Employment Outcome* project helps people with disabilities and their families take control of their employment and business opportunities. The project has two options: Micro Enterprise and Commissioned Employment Agent. Funding for these options comes from a combination of local funds from County Boards of MRDD and grant funds from the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council.

Since 2001, the project has assisted 26 individuals in starting their own business and 14 individuals to secure employment through Employment Agents who were paid a commission based on the earnings of the person with a disability.

The project conducts approximately four Micro Enterprise workshops in Ohio each year. The two-day workshops are hosted by a County Board of MRDD whose clients, families and staff attend at no cost. Individuals from other counties may attend for a modest registration fee of \$35 each. To sponsor a workshop a county must have already started at least one Micro Enterprise business and commit to have at least four prospective Micro Enterprise teams attend.

Micro Enterprise startup grants can be awarded up to a maximum of \$5,000 per eligible business owner. The County Board of MRDD must commit to fund 50% of the startup cost and 50% is matched by the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council grant. Counties designated as poverty counties are only required to provide 25% of the startup costs.

Employment Agent commissions are paid to agents chosen by the person with a disability to help them find a job. The agent receives a commission paid through the County Board of MRDD from matched funds from the county and the DD Council grant. The commission is based on 50% of the 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 the agent (who might be the family member or friend) earns a commission based on his or her success.

For more information please contact Robert Morgan, Project Manager, Employment Outcome, 191 Somerset Road, Delaware, Ohio 43015, by phone 740-272-1658, or email [rmorgan@mrdd.net](mailto:rmorgan@mrdd.net).

The following are recent businesses that have started through a Micro Enterprise grant:

Mike DeZarn loves music, parties and being with people. Mike has combined these interests in his Disc Jockey business he calls *M.S. Entertainment*. Mike's experience includes five years of mixing and recording his own C.D.'s. Mike Master assists Mike DeZarn in his business.

Mr. Master brings 14 years of music experience and a strong desire to support individuals with disabilities. Mike DeZarn is pictured with Carol Buckner (left), Butler County MRDD marketing representative and Darcy Smith (right), Income Links Micro Enterprise trainer at the Hamiltonian Hotel. Carol arranged for Mike to perform at no cost to the hotel. Darcy helped Mike to promote his business with the hotel and customers. Mike had a very profitable night from tips. Mike has also had a number of paid performances.



Kim Vermillion shows off her soap gift baskets with the support her parents. Kim makes her own scented soaps and sells her baskets at craft shows and through special orders. She is designing a brochure and making flyers to distribute at local businesses. Kim has generated hundreds of dollars of income with her new business and made many new friends along the way. Knox County MRDD is very proud of Kim, her business and supportive parents and has featured Kim in their newsletter and calendar as well as providing the matching funds for the grant.

The headlines of the Sunday Times–Sentinel read, *“Plan for Success – Farm products provide for independent lifestyle”*. It tells the story of the success of Alban Salser, a man of many talents and interests who has created a multi faceted business that reflects the agricultural character of his Meigs County community. Alban made arrangements with a local family to raise goats, exotic chickens and sheep on their farm. The couple enjoys having someone manage the animals to keep their farm active for their grandchildren’s visits. Alban has a place to keep his goats that he milks to make soap that he sells at various events. Alban also sold a painting of a Phoenix rooster shortly after taking a local art class.

Agricultural Micro Enterprises have been very successful especially in rural areas where traditional industry and



employment options may not be available. Chris Layh and Laura Stewart of the Meigs County Board of MRDD were key supporters of Alban and his business. Meigs County MRDD was only required to provide a 25% match for the grant as it qualified as a poverty county.



Sylvia Wigal is the youngest person to start a business with a Micro Enterprise grant at the age of 11 years old. Sylvia raises and sells feeder calves. She won a blue ribbon at the 2004 Delaware County Fair for her dairy calf named *Loudmouth*. Sylvia also won the 2004 Self-Advocate of the Year Award from the Delaware County Board of Developmental Disabilities. Her family supports Sylvia but when it comes to 4-H competition she must do her own work. Her sister and brother helped her write the business plan for her Micro Enterprise grant. The experience that

the Wigal children have received through their 4-H program resulted in one of the best written business plans ever received. Sylvia used part of the grant to purchase the pictured ATV with hand controls which allow Sylvia, who has spina bifida and uses a wheel chair, to haul hay, feed and other supplies to the animals. With the dump bed, she can also clean stalls and load manure for fertilizing fields. She used part of her grant to purchase more calves. Sylvia's business was featured in the Spring 2005 Ohio DD Quarterly.

### **Clinton County Names New Adult Services Director**

It is my pleasure to introduce myself as the new Adult Services Director in Clinton County. My name is Dave Ross and I come to Clinton County from Wheelersburg, Ohio. I have spent the past twenty years working at the Scioto County MRDD program, sixteen of those years as an adult services manager/administrator.

I am very enthused about the opportunities that I see here for the adult program based in the Orion Center and I am impressed with the knowledge and dedication of the staff. I look forward to my wife and two children relocating into the area in the near future. I also look forward to getting to know the families and other stakeholders that make Clinton County MRDD and the Orion Center a vital part of the community.

### **Adult Services Director Appointed in Geauga County**

In October 2004, Theresa Lynn was appointed as the Director of Adult Services for the Geauga County Board of MR/DD. Theresa began her career in the field of mental retardation in 1985 as a direct care staff member for a residential provider. While working on her masters degree at Kent State University, she continued in the residential field where she became a QMRP and eventually the Program Director of an ICF/MR in northeast Ohio. In 1996, Theresa became a Workshop Manager for the Trumbull County Board of MR/DD and was named that program's Director of Adult Services a short time later. She became the Superintendent at the Warrensville Developmental Center in 2000 where she served in that capacity for 3 years.

## Project SEARCH: An Innovative Career Development Program for People with Disabilities

Project SEARCH strives to help people with disabilities achieve to their fullest potential and improve their quality of life through meaningful employment. The program, centered at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, has garnered national recognition for high success rates and innovative practices. Most recently, Project SEARCH was awarded the U.S. Department of Labor's 2004 New Freedom Initiative Award. Key features of the unique Project SEARCH model include:

- Collaboration of education, industry and rehabilitation services
- Innovative adaptations
- Non-traditional jobs
- On-site job training and retention services
- A Business-centered approach

### *The History of Project SEARCH*

For Project SEARCH, a "business-centered approach" means that the employer has been fully integrated in, and central to, the development and operation of the program from its inception. The program, initiated at Cincinnati Children's in partnership with Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development, and Hamilton County MR/DD, began to take shape in 1996, when Erin Riehle (now Co-Director of Project SEARCH) was working as the director of the hospital's Emergency Department. She

was having trouble finding reliable help to stock ER supply shelves and, while running errands outside of work, noticed people with developmental disabilities bagging groceries. She wondered if this might be a solution to her staffing problems, as well as a way for the hospital to act on its commitment to productive and fulfilling adult lives for its patient population.

She made a few fortuitous calls to Great Oaks and Hamilton County MR/DD, and was connected with Susie Rutkowski, who is now Project SEARCH Co-director, and Jennifer Linnabary, who is now Project SEARCH's Employment Coordinator.



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### ***Project SEARCH Program Offerings***

Currently, Project SEARCH is operated as a partnership between Cincinnati Children's and Great Oaks, with financial assistance from Hamilton County MR/DD. Project SEARCH encompasses five distinct program offerings:

- Project SEARCH Adult Employment Program: Comprehensive employment, job retention, and career advancement services for adults with disabilities. Project SEARCH provides on-the-job support, such as job coaching, adaptations and accommodations, orientation, final task definitions, and travel training; and maintains employment through on-site follow-along and career advancement assistance.
- Project SEARCH High School Transition Program: A one-year, worksite-based program for students with significant disabilities in their last year of high school. Students spend their entire school day in the workplace where they learn employability and independent living skills in an onsite classroom, and rotate through three to four work experiences at various work sites over the course of the year. Complete immersion in the workplace facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction and on-the-job training and support. The particular benefits of the program include intensive workplace exposure, innovative adaptations, and continuous feedback from teachers, job coaches and managers during the training period and beyond.
- Project SEARCH Healthcare Training Program: Customized short-term training for adults with significant barriers to employment such as major economic disadvantage or physical and/or learning disabilities.
- Project SEARCH Vocational-Education Clinic: Provides vocational and career counseling to Children's Hospital patients (ages 14 and older) with chronic illnesses, traumatic injuries,

rehabilitation issues, or other disabilities. The goal of the clinic is to generate a plan that addresses the patient's vocational, educational, training and employment goals with a focus on achieving the most independent level of employment possible. Eligibility and referral services to the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission and other community and educational agencies are also offered.

- Program Replication and Dissemination: Tours, individualized consultation, and group workshops to provide the framework for program replication.

### ***Plans for Program Expansion***

Replication and dissemination of Project SEARCH methodology and practices is a high priority for the program. In the past five years, three Project SEARCH satellite locations have been added in the Greater Cincinnati area (Clinton Memorial Hospital, Provident Bank/National City, and Mercy Hospital-Western Hills). These satellite locations are managed through Cincinnati Children's and Great Oaks. In addition, Project SEARCH has been successfully replicated statewide and nationally in independently operated programs within eleven hospitals or healthcare systems (in Toledo, Marietta, East Liverpool, and Akron, Ohio; in Covington, Kentucky; and in Seattle, St. Louis, Atlanta, Vancouver, WA, and Nashville). Project SEARCH plans to continue growing through local and national replication, and through a recently initiated statewide expansion effort in which Project SEARCH High School Transition Program sites will be placed in 18 new workplaces throughout Ohio over the six years starting in 2006.

For more information contact Erin Riehle at 513-636-2516, or go to <http://www.cincinnatichildrens.org/ps>



## Proposed Supported Employment Rule Defines SE as a Waiver Service

Rule 5123: 2-9-13 “HCBS waivers – supported employment” is a new rule being proposed for adoption that specifies the service definition for supported employment as a waiver service and sets forth certification standards required for providers of SE services to individuals enrolled in HCBS waivers administered by ODMRDD. In the past, supported employment was only available through the individual options waiver, with no ODMRDD rule governing the service. This rule expands supported employment services to the Level One and Community Access Model waivers.

### Definition Highlights

The definition of supported employment services contained in this rule mirrors CMS template language as follows:

“Supported employment services” means services which consist of paid employment for persons for whom competitive employment at or above the minimum wage is unlikely, and who, because of their disabilities, need intensive ongoing support to perform in a work setting. Supported employment is conducted in a variety of settings, particularly work sites in which persons without disabilities are employed. Supported employment includes activities needed to sustain paid work by individuals receiving waiver services, including supervision and training...”

The definition further specifies that payment will be made only for the adaptations, direct supervision and training required by individuals receiving waiver services as a result of their disabilities, and will not include payment for the supervisory activities rendered as a normal part of the business setting. The definition also excludes payments for incentive payments paid to an employer, subsidies that are passed through to users of supported employment programs, or payments for unrelated vocational training that is not directly related to an individual’s supported employment program.

Also contained in the definition is the requirement that documentation be obtained stating that supported employment services are not otherwise available under the Rehabilitation Act or the Education for All Handicapped Children Act.

Lastly, the definition of supported employment includes a statement indicating that the cost of transportation is now included in the rate paid to providers of supported employment services.

### Highlights of Provider Certification Requirements

The rule specifies general requirements for all certified providers, standards and requirements for initial certification of individual providers and agency providers, standards and requirements for continuing certification of individual providers and agency providers, defines formal training and continuing education training requirements and allows currently certified providers one year to comply with the proposed rule.

All certified providers (individuals and agencies) are required to: participate in the individual’s ISP meetings in accordance with applicable sections of the Revised Code; perform tasks and duties according to the individual’s ISP; recognize changes in the individual’s condition and behavior as well

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as safety and sanitation hazards, record them in the individual's written record and report them to the SSA; and document all services provided.

In addition to ensuring the health and welfare of individuals receiving supported employment services, both individual providers and agency providers must: (1) submit an application to become a certified provider, (2) must assure that individual providers or employees of agency providers are at least eighteen years of age and have a high school diploma or GED, and (3) individual providers and employees of agency providers must assure/demonstrate at least one year of paid experience providing supported employment services or related services, or show evidence of the successful completion of thirty contact hours of formal training in supported employment services or related services. (NOTE: the requirement that employees of agency providers must meet (3) above was inadvertently left out of the proposed rule. This requirement will be re-inserted into the rule prior to the public hearing).

Written assurances must be provided to ODMRDD by individual providers and agency providers indicating that the applicant complies with the initial and ongoing requirements for: criminal background check, abuser registry, nurse aide registry, certification in CPR, training related to incidents adversely affecting health and safety, training in individual rights, prevention of incidents adversely affecting health and safety, transportation, behavior supports, substitute coverage, medication administration and performance of health care tasks, individual needs, ISP compliance, coordination of services, provider eligibility, and ongoing training. The rule also outlines the requirements that an agency providing supported employment services hire a chief executive officer or person responsible for administration, and specifies the responsibilities of that individual.

### **Training Requirements**

Training requirements are also specified in the rule. "Formal training" is defined as "training in supported employment or related services topics..." "Related services" means "services similar to supported employment services, including job development and placement, job training, and follow-along and are designed to prepare an individual for employment, place an individual in employment and ensure the individual maintains employment." Individual providers and employees of provider agencies must have 30 contact hours of formal training for initial certification, and eight hours of continuing education/training every year after initial certification. Continuing education/training shall be designed to enhance the skills and competencies of the provider/employee of agency provider relevant to their job responsibilities.

Current individual and agency providers certified as individual options waiver providers on the effective date of this rule will have one year to comply with the provisions of the proposed rule.

ODMRDD plans to continue discussions over the next year to refine the definition of supported employment contained in this rule, and to make the rule more responsive to the needs of individuals receiving the services, as well as to those individuals and agencies that provide supported employment services.

A copy of the proposed rule is available on the Register of Ohio web site at <http://registerofohio.state.oh.us>. The proposed rule is also available on the department's web site at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us>. Questions about the proposed rule can be directed to Katina Karoulis at (614) 466-2755 or by email at [Katina.Karoulis@dmr.state.oh.us](mailto:Katina.Karoulis@dmr.state.oh.us).

## State Use Statute Update

By: Mike Mehalik, Adult Services Director, Jefferson County Board of MRDD

Proposed changes to the State Use Law are moving forward. The Ohio Department of MR/DD (ODMR/DD), as part of the budget bill, has introduced legislation that will make sweeping changes to the State Use Law. Because of the sweeping changes contained in the legislation there will be an 18-month phase in period to allow a smooth transition.

The Alliance of Ohio Workcenters (Alliance), representing all the major associations, has been actively involved in attempting to assure that the new law will improve the program. The Alliance is supporting the legislation, but believes that close attention needs to be paid to a few remaining issues. Probably, the biggest concern is the adequacy of administrative funding to allow for specialized services that may be needed by Workcenters. ODMR/DD and the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) has assured the Alliance that this issue can be addressed during the rule writing process that will be occurring over the next six months. It is clear that the Alliance and Workcenters in general will need to be on top of the rule writing process to make sure this concern and other potential issues are addressed to our satisfaction.

### Major Changes

As proposed, the bill would eliminate the State Use Committee and the need for a Central Non-Profit Agency (currently OIH). The State Use Committee, staff and OIH would be phased out during the transition period that would end by June 30, 2007.

The State Use Program would transfer from ODMR/DD to DAS. DAS would create an office that will be known as the Office of Procurement from Community Rehabilitation Programs. Current general revenue funding received by ODMR/DD will be transferred to DAS to fund the office. DAS will also charge .75% administrative fee for all services and products purchased through the program.

The Office of Procurement from Community Rehabilitation Programs will perform a variety of functions including the following: certify eligible Workcenters, certify agents of Workcenters, develop a list of Workcenter products and services, prepare an annual report, develop and recommend rules to the director of administrative services, monitor procurement practices of government ordering offices, and assure fair market price.

The definition of fair market price would also change. The statute describes fair market price as a price that is “representative of the range of prices that an ordering office would expect to pay to procure the item in the marketplace.” If the government ordering office orders an item registered on the procurement list and a fair market price has been established, that is the price the government ordering office will pay. If not on the list or on the list without a fair market price being established, the government ordering office may negotiate with one or more Workcenters to reach agreement on a price. The negotiated price will become the fair market price. If the ordering office and Workcenter are unable to reach agreement, the Office of Procurement from Community Rehabilitation Programs may establish a fair market price or release the ordering office from the requirements of the State Use Law.

The statute permits the Office of Procurement from Community Rehabilitation Programs to certify any entity to serve as an authorized agent of a Workcenter. Authorized agents can provide centralized business facilitation, act as a distributor of supplies and services, and/or provide marketing,

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administrative, and other services related to sales. DAS will consult with Workcenters prior to entering into contracts with such authorized agents.

### Concerns of the Alliance

The Alliance has a few concerns with the proposed statute, but is making every effort to address them as the process moves forward. A decision had to be made to support or oppose the legislation at the last Alliance meeting. The decision was made to support the legislation and try to address the last few concerns through the administrative rule process. Director Ritchey and Robert Jennings attended the meeting and made a number of good points supporting the position of moving forward. Probably, the most important point was that DAS is positioned much better than ODMR/DD to make the program grow. The State Use Program has experienced very little growth since the move to ODMR/DD and ODMR/DD has limited ability to do anything about it. DAS has the ability to monitor compliance and pressure other state agencies to follow the law.

- ***Funding for Needed Services***

The number one concern of the Alliance is the .75% administrative fee that DAS will charge for all purchases through the program. This is the standard fee that DAS charges to government ordering offices for all purchases. Members of the Alliance feel that the .75% is not adequate to enable DAS to contract for other services that may be needed by Workcenters. Examples of other services that may be needed by Workcenters are marketing, sales, and new product development-especially small Workcenters with limited financial resources.

The Alliance's preference would have been for this issue to be addressed in the statute. Attempts to make this happen were unsuccessful. Current plans are to try to address it as the administrative rules are developed. It is the intent of the Alliance, to try through rule, to allow for some additional percentage to be used for specialized services that may be needed by Workcenters. The current 6% commission rate is probably out of reach but a lesser amount may be possible.

Once permitted by rule, any increase will also need approval from the Office of Budget and Management (OBM). Jeff Westoven from DAS has told the Alliance it has been his experience with OBM that such a request could be approved if appropriate justification is provided.

- ***Competition among Workcenters***

Competition among Workcenters is another concern of the Alliance. Part of DAS's job is to make sure that ordering offices are receiving the best price possible. Obviously, this could, at least in theory, lead to a great deal of competition among Workcenters. Members of the Alliance are not concerned about fair competition, but there needs to be a level playing field. In most set-a-side programs, profit is the over riding factor in bidding on any job. This is not necessarily true with Workcenters. Having available work, at times, competes with profit margin in the disability world. Workcenters that have significant financial resources could bid a job unfairly and without profit if in need of work. The proposed legislation gives DAS the authority to regulate competition if necessary. The rules that are developed in this area need to be monitored closely.

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- ***Fair Market Price***

Fair market price needs to be monitored closely. Under the current system, fair market price is established before the commission mark-up. In essence, the commission is an additional charge. Under the new proposed legislation any mark-up is part of the fair market price. This is a significant change. If a Workcenter wants to contract with a company like OIH for sales, it is going to be important to remember that the bid price is going to include the commission charge. The bid price with the commission charge included must be “representative of the range of prices that a government ordering office would expect to pay.”

- ***Voice of Workcenters***

Some members of the Alliance feel that there is a need for Workcenters to have a voice in Columbus advocating for Workcenters and the State Use Program in general. Under the current system OIH has been perceived as that entity, but it is doubtful that will be the case in the future. One suggestion is that the Alliance hires an administrator or agent who could represent Workcenters in Columbus. The administrator or agent could also work on improving the flow of information to Workcenters from the Alliance and assist DAS in communicating to all concerned. It is very true that it is difficult for the Alliance members to stay on top of all the issues with quarterly meetings. It is also problematic for the Alliance Board to properly give direction to such an administrator with only quarterly meetings. It is an interesting thought but would take a tremendous amount of commitment from members of the Alliance Board. It is unknown, at the current time, if funding could be diverted from the administrative fees collected by DAS for that purpose.

- ***Chances for Passage***

As far as the Alliance knows, there is not opposition to the legislation. From all indications OIH is on board and satisfied with the legislation. With the support of ODMR/DD and DAS and little or no opposition from the disability industry or state government the statute is likely to be passed and signed into law.

### **Questions or Concerns**

If you have any questions or concerns please contact your association’s representative to the Alliance or Jim Brown at Windfall Industries.

Jim is the current president of the Alliance and would be more than willing to answer any question or address any concerns that you may have.

Jim’s phone number is 330-334-4491.

