



# EMPLOYMENT CONNECTIONS

**A Division of the Lucas County Board of Developmental Disabilities**

## **Program Handbook**

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Suite C  
Toledo, OH 43614  
(419)381-3812**

**[www.employmentconnections-lucas.org](http://www.employmentconnections-lucas.org)**



**Thank you for choosing Employment Connections!** This handbook explains the services available from Employment Connections, and your rights and responsibilities when receiving services. Please take the time to read this book. If you have questions about the information in this book, ask your Employment Specialist.

Employment Connections is a CARF accredited organization. All staff and managers are certified through the Ohio Department of DD and are required to have background checks. Many of our staff are also Certified Employment Support Professionals (CESPs). All Employment Connections staff are required to participate in ongoing training, not limited to: supported employment, person centered planning, rights and responsibilities of people with disabilities, drug and alcohol abuse, ethics, and incident reporting.

### **Mission Statement**

Employment Connections vision is to support individuals to actively participate in their communities through employment.

### **Hours of Service**

Office Hours are Monday – Friday 8:00am-4:00pm

Based on individual need, Employment Connections staff are available 24 hours a day 7 days a week as needed to provide support to you in your place of employment.

### **Service Criteria**

**Entry Criteria** - We accept referrals for employment services from Opportunities for Ohioians with Disabilities (OOD) or County Board Service and Support Specialists (SSA). Funding for services is provided by OOD, County Funds, or other programs/grants as available. We are **unable** to provide services through Medicaid Waiver. To discuss Private Pay services, please contact our Community Employment Manager.

Upon receipt of a referral for services, an Employment Connections staff will contact you within 48 hours to make arrangements for an intake.

**Wait List** - Employment Connections provides services upon receipt of referral and we do not maintain a wait list for services. Any unforeseen delay in providing you with services within 10 business days of referral will be discussed on a case-by-case basis.

**Transition Criteria** - Transition between services offered by Employment Connections will be determined by your OOD Counselor or SSA. If you have questions or concerns regarding the services authorized, please contact your designated staff.

**Exit Criteria** - Case closure will occur after 90 days of independent successful employment or as determined by OOD or SSA. You or your OOD counselor may choose to change service vendors at any time. We respectfully request notice if you are planning to make a change in vendors so that we can ensure your case is properly transitioned. If your services are ended by OOD, you will receive notification from your

designated counselor per OOD guidelines. If there is a significant health or safety concern that prevents us from being able to provide you requested services, notice will be provided to you and your designated staff.

## **Pay**

Employment Connections payroll is contracted through Supplemental Staffing, you will need to provide required employment verification documents and ID prior to beginning any paid work services.

Pay for Work Trials, Community Based Assessments and Summer Youth Work Experience as authorized by OOD is in compliance with regulations of the United States Department of Labor. Paychecks are issued every Friday, 1-2 weeks following the first week of work. Social Security, Federal, State and City taxes are taken out of each paycheck. Rate of Pay is provided based on the current minimum wage. All checks will be mailed to the address on file unless other arrangements are made with the Community Employment Coordinator.

The amount earned may affect SSI benefits or Social Security Disability eligibility. It is your responsibility to report your earnings and any change in employment status to Social Security. If you need assistance to report your wages, please let your Employment Specialist know.

If your check is lost, contact the Supplemental Staffing at 419-866-8367.

## **Responsibilities When Receiving Services**

These rules are for the protection, safety, and well-being of each individual. Employment Connections follows State and Federal safety and health regulations. These rules must be strictly followed and individuals must act in a safe manner to avoid accidents. Failure to follow these rules or other directives which cause a health or safety risk, may result in suspension or removal from services.

1. Individuals must conduct themselves in a manner appropriate for the workplace.
2. Arrive prepared and on time.
3. Call your job developer or job coach when you are unable to arrive to appointments/work or if you will be late.
4. Maintain good hygiene and be clean and neat. For community employment services, follow the dress code as provided by your place of employment.
5. Respect your job developer / job coach, coworkers and supervisors.
6. Follow the directions of the job coach and supervisor.
7. Follow the work rules for your place of employment.
8. Report all unsafe working conditions to your job coach and supervisor.
9. No fighting or other acts or threats of violence are allowed.
10. Do not bring any kind of weapon to work. Weapons will be taken by management and criminal prosecution may occur.
11. Talk to your job coach or supervisor if you have a problem at work.
12. Do not possess or use illegal drugs or alcohol at work. Criminal prosecution may occur.

13. Smoke only in designated outside areas at designated times.
14. An individual may be excluded from work if they experience an off work injury or medical restriction that may result in an injury while working.
15. Theft of materials/products may result in removal from the program and criminal prosecution.

### **Employment/Enrollment Records**

Be sure to tell your Employment Specialist when there are any changes in the following:

1. Home address or phone number
2. Person to be notified in emergencies
3. Legal change in your name or guardianship
4. Change in employment status or schedule

### **Personal and Company Property**

Put personal belongings in areas assigned to you. Stealing company property or the property of other workers is not allowed. If personal property is lost or stolen, every attempt will be made by staff to locate the items. Employment Connections, Lucas County Board of Developmental Disabilities, and staff will not assume liability for the loss, damage or theft of clothing or property.

### **Health and Safety**

Please notify your Employment Specialist with any change to your health status that will affect your availability to participate in services or obtain employment.

A doctor's release to return to services without restrictions may be required after any significant injury, illness or medical procedure.

### **First Aid and Emergency Care**

All staff are trained in first aid and CPR and will provide care when needed. If there is a medical emergency, 911 will be called. If it is not an emergency, arrangements may be made with you and your team for further outside medical care.

### **Medication**

If you take medication during the work day and can do it independently, you should possess and administer the medication independently.

*Employment Connections staff are unable to provide or administer any over-the-counter or prescription medications.*

If you require assistance to possess and administer medications, please make arrangements with your team for a natural support or approved state health agency to provide you with needed assistance in the workplace.

**Confidentiality of Records**

All the information you provide for employment remains privately filed and locked. Only people working with you have access to your file. Outside agencies or professionals can only review your file with you or your guardian’s permission. You may review your file or retain copies upon request.

Records will only be released to those you authorize through LCBDDs release of information consent. You can withdraw permissions for any person or entity upon notification to your Employment Specialist.

**Complaint Procedure**

If you feel you are not getting fair treatment, talk to your Employment Specialist about the procedure for making complaints. If you are not happy with services, if you feel you have been treated unfairly, or believe your personal rights have been violated, you may register a complaint. Take your concern to your Employment Specialist, Community Employment Coordinator or Manager either in person or in writing.

If you need additional assistance, you may call:

- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities.....419-866-5811
- Service & Support Administration ..... 419-381-8320
- LCBDD Ombudsman .....419-385-5771

**Performance and Quality Improvement**

We are always actively seeking feedback regarding the services provided. You will have the opportunity to complete satisfaction surveys during transition between services and also at service exit. To learn more about our annual goals and performance visit our website <http://ec.lucasdd.info> .

## **Program Services**

Services are provided as authorized by your OOD Counselor or SSA. Not all individuals are eligible to receive all services, and services are individualized, person-centered, and based on desired employment outcomes. If you have questions regarding your eligibility for services please contact your OOD Counselor or SSA.

### **Pre-Employment Transition Services:**

#### **Job Exploration Counseling**

For school aged participants to learn more about various occupations, complete interest inventories and informational interviews with area employers. Students will set up account with Ohio Means Jobs and learn how to navigate and utilize the website. Services are provided in a classroom setting, group or individual.

#### **Work-Based Learning**

For school aged participants to learn and explore area businesses. Employer presentations, work-site tours, job shadowing, and on-site observation. Students will learn job skills for employment and have the opportunity to connect with mentors. Services are provided in both classroom and community settings, group or individual.

#### **Counseling on Post-Secondary**

For school aged participants information and exploration regarding various degree programs and credentials offered through community college, college or university. Information provided on college prep and how to succeed. Application process, federal aid and scholarships, and how to access disability services and accommodations in the classroom will be reviewed. Services are provided in a classroom setting, group or individual.

#### **Workplace Readiness Training**

For school aged participants to improve social skills and independent living skills. Classroom based activities will focus on professional and personal skills to ensure success in the workplace. Online job search, social media, and your internet "profile" will be reviewed.

#### **Instruction in Self-Advocacy**

For school aged participants to learn skills needed for greater independence. Students will learn about rights and responsibilities, how to request accommodations, services, and supports in the workplace. Practice of self-advocacy in various settings. Disability awareness and discussion how disability disclosure to employers~ who, what, when , how.

### **Employment Planning Services:**

#### **Career Exploration**

Career Exploration assists the job seeker in selecting an employment goal among several potential options. It allows the job seeker the opportunity to interact and observe people performing job tasks. The job seeker will have opportunities to conduct informational interviews, observe and shadow, and when possible, attempt actual job

tasks.

### **Community Based Assessment (CBA)**

Community Based Assessments provide information on a job seekers aptitudes, abilities, behaviors, and preferences or to determine if a specific employment opportunity would be a good match. The purpose of this service is to assess an job seekers strengths and needs, and to make recommendations for future programming. The individual will receive pay for the work experience activities. CBAs may be utilized to assist in identifying a vocational goal.

### **Benefit Analysis**

Benefits Analysis provides individuals with information on how participating in employment services and returning to work may impact benefits such as; Social Security Disability Insurance/Supplemental Income, Medicaid/Medicare coverage, Veteran's benefits, housing assistance, Medicaid Buy-In for People with Disabilities, food stamps, and other public assistance programs. Benefit Analysis also provides information on available work incentives.

### **Benefits Coordination**

Benefits Coordination assists the consumer in coordinating and resolving benefits issues such as, reporting income, applying for and documenting work incentives, and resolving over-payments.

### **Employee Development Services:**

#### **Summer Youth**

Summer Youth programs assist transitional youth (ages 14-22) to learn vocational skills and appropriate work behaviors in a competitive, integrated setting. Summer Youth Programs include an educational component to teach independent living skills, such as budgeting, time management, development of vocational interests, and job seeking skills training. The goal of this service is to prepare the individual for permanent, competitive, integrated employment and independence.

*Career Exploration* programs are designed for first time or younger participants who can benefit from job shadowing experiences. Career Exploration Programs focus on activities such as tours of businesses, discussion and presentations from employers, job shadows, etc.

*Work Experiences* are designed for older youth to teach work skills and develop a work history. Participants will be paid for hours worked. Work Experiences also facilitate learning of work skills, improving work behaviors, building on communication and interpersonal skills, or other vocational areas as identified by VR staff. We offer experiences in a variety of vocational areas, including but not limited to; janitorial, retail/stocking, agricultural, office/clerical, and food service.

#### **Job Readiness Training**

Job Readiness Training Programs provide transitional youth and adults with work experiences while at the same time, developing work skills and work behavior. Program services are provided in a community based, integrated work setting. Training is

conducted to facilitate learning of work skills, improve work behaviors and build on communication and interpersonal skills, to provide work experiences for individuals who have never or have not worked in a prolonged period, or other vocational areas as identified.

### **Work Adjustment**

Work Adjustment helps teach an individual to improve their vocational skills and improve work behaviors. Work Adjustment may be used to facilitate learning of work skills, improve work behaviors, build on communication and interpersonal skills, or other vocational areas as identified.

### **Personal Adjustment**

Personal Adjustment is a systematic, time-limited approach to teach individuals life skills which will enhance their employability and independence. Services may be utilized to address issues such as; work behavior, interpersonal skills, hygiene and grooming concerns, budgeting, childcare, time management, or other areas identified. The individual will learn new skills and coping mechanisms that will allow them to be successful on the job.

### **Travel Training**

Individuals are encouraged to use public transportation to get to and from work. An individual who is interested in using TARTA or TARPS, the public bus system, can receive individual instruction from a travel trainer. Training in pedestrian safety, bicycle safety, as well as studying for a temporary driver's permit, can also be provided.

## **Community Employment Services:**

### **Job Development:**

Job Development involves a systematic approach to identifying and contacting potential employers who may or may not have a posted position opening. Provider staff should work with the job seeker during the initial timeframe to develop a placement plan, which identifies specific responsibilities for the job developer and individual, lists specific positions and employers that the job seeker would like to pursue, and establishes the frequency and method of contact between the job developer and job seeker.

We assist job seekers to obtain integrated and competitive employment. *Job Developers* work with the job seeker to create an employment plan to achieve their desired employment goal. In person meetings will occur a minimum of weekly to seek employment through completion of applications and scheduled interviews. The job seeker is expected to be an active participant in their job search and may have responsibilities to complete in between scheduled contacts, including on-line job searches, following up with potential employers, and other tasks as determined in the employment plan.

### **Job Seeking Skills Training (JSST)**

JSST is designed to assist a job seeker to successfully identify and respond to potential job opportunities. Services include, how to locate job opportunities through the newspaper, online, job boards, and cold calling techniques. JSST provides education



and training regarding how to develop a job application template, résumé, cover letter, how to follow up with employers after completing an application or interview, how to address potential barriers such as breaks in employment history criminal convictions, and/or the need for reasonable accommodations, how to handle difficult interview situations, and the importance of and how to manage online profiles. After completion of JSST, the job seeker will have the skills and resources to assist in their job search or conduct a job search in the future as needed.

### **Employment Support Services:**

#### **On-the-Job Supports:**

##### **Job Coaching**

Job Coaching provides one-on-one instruction to individuals who have been hired by an employer to help individuals learn job tasks, develop natural and peer supports, and to adjust to the work environment.

The role of a *Job Coach* is to evaluate the work setting and develop a task list of job duties to train the new employee. Job coaches provide one-on-one support to assist the employee with learning the new job, experiencing the job tasks and understanding the employer's expectations. Job Coaches also provide training and support to the employer to support the training needs of the employee. Integration into the workplace culture and development of natural supports are also important functions of the job coach to assist in the employee's success.

##### **Job Retention**

Once the employee starts to become independent, the job coach will fade from the employment site. Once the coach has fully faded, we provide 90 days of job retention services to ensure that ongoing employment is sustained.

## Verification of Receipt of Employment Connections Program Handbook

I confirm I received a copy of the Employment Connections Program Handbook, which contains information regarding my rights and responsibilities when receiving services, confidentiality, who to contact with concerns or grievances, and information regarding available services.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Individual Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date