

Review of 2020 Progress on 2019-2021 Strategic Plan

Strategic Objective: Increase the number of LCBDD-eligible individuals of working age engaged in community employment

Goals/Benchmarks	Outcomes
<p>A minimum of 22 LCBDD-eligible individuals will be placed in a job that meets the definition of community employment every year, between 2019 and 2021</p> <p>90% of LCBDD-eligible individuals who are placed in a job that meets the definition of community employment will retain the job for at least 90 days</p> <p>75% of LCBDD-eligible individuals who are placed in a job that meets the definition of community employment will maintain the job for one year or more</p>	<p>29 individuals were placed in jobs that met the definition of community employment in 2020.</p> <p>27 of the 29 individuals placed in community employment retained employment for at least 90 days (93%).</p> <p>18 out of 32 individuals placed in 2019 in non-seasonal community employment retained employment for at least one year (56%). Two lost jobs due to incarceration, and two lost jobs due to their employers losing the contract that provided their jobs; discounting these, the 1+-year retention rate would be 69%.</p>

◆ **Continue to coordinate and take a leadership role on the Lorain County Employment First Transition Team, which has established the following goals:**

Establish a baseline measurement of employment outcomes of youth in Lorain County, including information about the services, education, support, etc. received while in school and immediately after

Building upon the identified strengths and resources of Lorain County and the Ohio Employment First Process, create a plan that outlines a process of awareness, training and communication to support higher expectations for community employment for youth with DD in Lorain County, with a focus on all stakeholders (families, students, schools, DD system employees, OOD representatives, service providers, etc.)

Identify a continuum of options for youth with DD to prepare and support these youth to engage in community employment

This committee is comprised heavily of local school district personnel and chaired by an employee from the Educational Services Center (ESC). Due to the pandemic resulting in in-person learning being suspended for a large part of the year, only one meeting was held in 2020 (January). It is anticipated that this committee will resume in 2021. (The ESC position that heads up this team/committee was vacated mid-2020, and remained vacant throughout the remainder of the year.)

- ◆ **Through on-going participation on the Lorain County Employment First Transition Team, take steps to ensure that LCBDD and local school districts use similar methods to support students with DD to obtain community employment, and to resolve any duplication of effort**

Due perhaps to the ESC employee in charge of the team being new, SSA was not informed of/invited to the January, 2020, meeting of the Employment First Transition Team. The school districts, families, SSA Department, and staff from Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) did work as a team to support students ages 16 and older with transition activities and efforts to obtain community employment. This collaborative work has reduced duplications of effort.

- ◆ **Update and execute a strategic, targeted plan to create community-based integrated employment opportunities for adult consumers utilizing a team of Supported Employment staff; include strategies for evaluating the human resource needs of local employers, approaching specific employers, and making employers aware of the benefits of hiring people with disabilities**

The Supported Employment (SE) team continued (with the exception of mid-March through mid-May of 2020) to meet weekly to review placements, analyze terminations for lessons learned, identify backfilling opportunities, review situational and community-based assessments, and evaluate strengths and weakness of consumer job interviews, in order to identify strategies for future success.

No local job fairs were held in 2020 due to the pandemic.

The Supported Employment Director and applicable staff attended multiple webinars on Employment and Career Planning for people with developmental disabilities and imparted the information to applicable staff members. Topics included COVID-19 safety protocols for those currently employed or looking for a job, coordination of transportation supports, employment for transitioning youth, quality service indicators, job coaches in the workplace, and others.

Additionally, extra job coaching was provided in 2020 to some whose job duties changed due to COVID-19. For instance, grocery store workers had to be trained on sanitizing shopping carts.

- ◆ **Include in the LCBDD budget a line item for community employment marketing, and identify specific strategic expenditures designed to highlight the competencies of people with DD in the workforce, and the benefits of hiring people with DD (e.g. 'bus bench campaign,' radio spots, radio interviews with employers/consumers, etc.)**

The 2020 budget for Community Employment Marketing was \$36,530.00. Through this budget, 27 Lorain County bus benches featured competitively employed individuals and their employers, and contact information for the Murray Ridge Supported Employment Department. Radio spots highlighting the competencies of people with DD in the workforce and the benefits of hiring people with DD were aired on WOBL/WDLW ten months out of the year. Also, as part of the radio advertising package, eleven radio interviews were conducted to highlight the benefits of hiring people with DD. Two employers and five consumers participated in the interviews. (Consumers pursuing community employment participated in mock interviews live on the air to let them practice their interviewing skills and make potential local employers aware of their skill sets.) Print media and radio were utilized to promote Disability Employment Awareness Month in October of 2020. A line item (of \$18,530.00) for Community Employment Marketing was included in the agency's 2021 budget. Bus bench advertising will no longer be utilized.

- ◆ **Facilitate the meetings/activities of a Community Employment Advisory Committee consisting of local business leaders from diverse industries (food service, manufacturing, retail, local government, not-for-profits) that will meet quarterly to develop best practices with regard to providing community employment services and placing consumers in competitive jobs**

The Community Employment Advisory Committee met only once (remotely) in 2020, due to the pandemic and there being a substantial period of time when individuals were not seeking employment. Advisory Committee members were kept apprised of developments as job seeking activities resumed. The committee will meet again quarterly in 2021.

OOD provided on-line training for employers on the benefits of hiring people with disabilities and the benefits of having job coaches in the workplace. These training opportunities were sent to members of the Advisory Committee and employers listed in our database.

- ◆ **Maintain ongoing contacts with a variety of businesses and industry representatives to promote community employment placements**

Our Marketing/Job Placement Specialist maintained a database of industry representatives and contacts at a variety of businesses. The Marketing/Job Placement Specialist contacted people on this list, as well as people listed on job boards and in 'help wanted' advertisements. She also did cold calling. Any networking events she would have attended were canceled due to the pandemic. One business hired multiple consumers to assist with making face shields.

- ◆ **Solicit agency staff/supporters for job leads**

This solicitation was not done in 2020 due to the pandemic and due to a temporary decrease in the number of individuals seeking competitive employment. This solicitation will be resumed in 2021.

- ◆ **Develop relationships with a variety of civic organizations/chambers of commerce/service clubs that could lead to employment opportunities for adult consumers**

Murray Ridge Marketing/Job Placement staff continued to attend virtual meetings of the North Coast Chamber of Commerce, the Lorain County Chamber of Commerce, the Power of More (an association of many local chambers of commerce), the Lorain County Manufacturing Council, and the Lorain County Safety Committee for the purpose of developing leads for community employment opportunities.

- ◆ **Continue partnering with Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) to assist identified individuals who want community employment by working with the OOD counselors to provide intensive placement services**

The Supported Employment Department continued working with the OOD counselor by tracking those services listed within each individual's employment plan for which it was the identified facilitator, and meeting regularly (remotely) with the counselor to discuss the effectiveness of the plan. The Supported Employment team also met weekly to discuss newly referred individuals and their employment histories, if any, in order to assist with the development of effective employment plans. In 2020, due to most of the meetings being virtual and less work being done at group employment sites, Adult Program Instructors (APIs) were often available (which is not normally the case) to participate in SE team meetings; they provided specific and valuable information about job

seekers. Vocational Placement Specialists communicated information from the SE team meetings to the OOD counselor and reviewed progress and issues for those already employed.

The plan is to remotely include APIs in SE Team meetings as much as possible going forward.

◆ **Utilize lessons learned from community employment dismissals and voluntary terminations to increase the likelihood of successful future community employment placements/job retention**

Job losses were analyzed so that the reasons for each individual's job loss could be taken into consideration when facilitating future employment opportunities. For instance, one individual quit because she didn't like working alone. Prior to that, she worked at a group employment site for many years with a large group. Now, the Supported Employment Department pays special attention to situations where an individual is moving from an environment where he/she is working with many peers to one where there are few peers or none.

◆ **Actively participate in the development and promotion of MOVE, Lorain County's Coordinated Transportation Plan which, if funded, would develop and implement a mobility management program, and create pilot projects to increase the availability of affordable public transportation services**

The Director of Vocational and Transportation Services serves on a committee which developed a coordinated transportation plan for Lorain County. The goals of the plan are to increase awareness of and access to transportation options for Lorain County residents by: (a) increasing understanding and awareness of transportation needs; (b) coordinating transportation options to meet needs; and (c) building sustainable and healthy communities.

The Transportation Advisory Committee met virtually three times in 2020 and updated the Coordinated Transportation Plan. A survey was conducted to assess unmet transportation needs in Lorain County. Nearly 60% of respondents identified themselves as having a disability. There were more respondents that said they needed transportation to doctor appointments and to the grocery store than respondents indicating that they needed transportation to work.

In 2020 a decision was made to in 2021 establish sub-committees, to include a Workforce Transportation Group to address the needs of employers in Lorain County and assist them with obtaining a diverse, yet reliable group of employees –this could increase economic development opportunities for Lorain County and provide more transportation options for people looking for employment who lack transportation.

◆ **Systematically track and document occasions on which lack of transportation precluded a community employment opportunity for an LCBDD-eligible individual, or resulted in job loss for an LCBDD-eligible individual**

In 2020, the Supported Employment Department worked on Career Development with five individuals for whom no job that would require transportation to work would be a feasible option (due to lack of natural supports for transportation).

◆ **Consider additional investment in the provision of work-related transportation when natural supports are unavailable**

It was determined that the SE Department will actively assist the HR Department to recruit drivers available at times when lack of transportation to community job sites precludes/ threatens job placements.

◆ **Refer individuals, as appropriate, to the OOD/DODD job placement partnership through which technical assistance is given and providers of employment support receive funding**

In 2020 the SSA Department continued to make referrals to the OOD/DODD partnership, through which funding and technical assistance is made available to providers of community employment services. 30 such referrals were made.

◆ **Continue to implement and enhance an assessment and service planning protocol for assisting eligible individuals to move forward on their paths to community employment**

The SSA Department continued to utilize the Discovery & Individual Needs Assessment (DINA) to assess the individual's place on the path to employment and plan for services. The SSA Department updated the annual assessment tool based on guidance provided by DODD, and provided service plan outcome development training specific to assisting individuals to move along their paths to community employment.

◆ **Seek guidance from DODD consultants on: (1) best practices for assessment and service planning to assist eligible individuals to move forward on their paths to community employment, (2) how to access and interpret statewide data on community employment of people with DD, (3) which providers have had the greatest success with assisting individuals with DD to achieve desired community employment outcomes**

This guidance was sought from DODD in 2019.

◆ **Develop and begin collecting data on a metric that measures whether or not post-secondary school employment matches the job preferences identified by eligible individuals during the secondary school transition process**

This metric was implemented in October of 2019. The occupational preference data is collected at age 16 (or when first assigned as a transition student), at the time of graduation, and four years post-graduation.

◆ **Post information about transition-related education opportunities in which LCBDD participates, or which it provides, on the LCBDD website**

Murray Ridge did not sponsor or participate in any transition-related events in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, we did post information on Facebook about any available virtual transition planning events. Examples of these virtual programs included: programs from the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI), workshops from Milestones Autism Resources, and programs from OOD. We also posted extensively on Facebook about our agency's "Knowing My Rights" self-advocacy video series, which provided valuable information about life skills for older students preparing to transition.

Strategic Objective: Within resource constraints, ensure/assist eligible individuals to receive services in the most integrated settings appropriate to their needs

Goals	Expected Outcomes
<p>Address the CMS requirements related to community-based, integrated service delivery</p> <p>Increase the amount of time that all interested Adult Program participants spend receiving community-based day services</p> <p>Identify more community places where individuals with DD may enjoy spending extended periods of time without incurring significant cost</p> <p>Arrange for eligible individuals to receive community-based services that help them enjoy themselves, progress toward desired outcomes, engage actively with people (other than paid staff) who do not have DD, and play valued roles within the community</p>	<p>Increased provision of Murray Ridge Adult Services in integrated community settings</p> <p>Continued engagement of LCBDD-eligible individuals in volunteering and other valued activities in their community</p> <p>Increased participation by LCBDD-eligible individuals in desired, community-based activities with the assistance of Medicaid waiver providers and other assistance, including natural supports</p> <p>Improved ability of Service & Support Administrators to assist with identification of specific community-based services desired by eligible individuals, and linkage of these individuals with providers that are well-equipped to provide these services</p>

In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, community-based services were not provided to attendees of the Murray Ridge Opportunity & Vocational Centers (OVCs) after their initial closure as of Monday, March 16th. Although community-based employment services were provided throughout 2020, when the OVCs reopened on a limited basis in 2020, community-based services in Individual Service Plans of those who attended the 'Restart Program' were temporarily suspended. For this reason, the data on services provided to OVC attendees outside of the OVCs covers only the period January 01, 2020, through March 13, 2020.

The data below, from the 2019 Strategic Plan Progress Report, reflects the increase in the provision of community-based services to those who attend Murray Ridge OVCs.

	Data collected from January 1-December 31, 2018	Data collected from January 1- December 31, 2019
Number of times individuals in Murray Ridge Adult Services participated in activities away from the OVCs other than work and volunteer activities coordinated by the SE Department	3,666	7,334 (This is a <u>100%</u> increase relative to 2018)
Number of times Murray Ridge Adult Program participants with severe medical, behavioral and/or physical challenges participated in community-based activities other than work	1,685	3,807 (This is a <u>126%</u> increase relative to 2018)

The table below compares data from 2018, 2019, and 2020, for the months of January, February and March (1-13). The information shows that the increases in community-based activity that occurred in 2019 (the first year of our current 3-year strategic plan) were sustained until the OVC closure in 2020.

	2018 January, February and March 1-13	2019 January, February and March 1-13	2020 January, February and March 1-13
Number of times individuals in Murray Ridge Adult Services participated in activities away from the OVCs other than work and volunteer activities coordinated by the SE Department	977	1,364	1,360
Number of groups of Adult Program participants that were involved in community-based activities (other than work or volunteering facilitated by the SE Department)	195	330	360
Number of times Murray Ridge Adult Program participants with severe medical, behavioral and/or physical challenges participated in community-based activities other than work.	354	730	696

- ◆ **Continue to have a management or professional-level employee work, on at least a monthly basis, with each Murray Ridge Adult Program participant who has a desired outcome involving day support away from the OVCs to identify and arrange for the delivery of indicated/desired services in community places**

From January of 2020 through March 13, 2020, Murray Ridge Adult Services continued to assign a Program Manager from each OVC to work directly with program participants to plan services outside the OVCs. During this timeframe, the assigned Program Managers met one-on-one with each consumer who had a desired outcome that required day support away from the OVCs. When meeting with each consumer, they discussed what interests the consumer had and where he/she would like to go in the coming month. The information shared at the meetings was included on Desired Outcome Documentation forms, and used as the basis for arranging individual services in community places.

- ◆ **Assign a professional-level or management employee to work with the staff and program participants in each OVC area to plan services away from the OVC for Individuals assigned to the area**

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the assigned Program Managers continued to work with OVC staff and program participants to plan services away from the OVCs. When possible, services that could, but did not necessarily have to be, delivered away from the OVCs, were provided in community settings.

- ◆ **Continue to use, for planning of services to occur outside of the OVCs, Proposals for Community Based Services Forms to identify proposed destination(s); interests, individualized support strategies, and desired outcomes to be addressed, for each person to receive services, at/en route to the destination(s); how those to receive the community-based services were/will be involved in planning the proposed community-based activities; how these activities may enable Adult Program participants to interact meaningfully with people (other than paid staff) who do not have DD; and how the proposed activities may foster relationship building and engagement within the broader community - subsequent to delivery of community-based day services, support staff will document occurrences/outcomes relative to what was addressed on the Proposal Forms**

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, during the months of January, February and March 1-13, 2020, the Proposal for Community-Based Services Form continued to be used to assist staff in planning for services to occur outside of the OVCs. The form requires the identification of the community destination the consumers will go to, as well as the interests, desired outcomes and support strategies that will be addressed for each consumer when he/she receives services at (or on the way to) the destination. The following factors are systematically considered through the use of the form: (1) whether or not the destination lends itself to addressing each consumer's identified interests, support strategies, and desired outcomes; (2) whether or not existing staff coverage will be adequate for all consumers at the OVC (after associated staff are redeployed) if the identified group of consumers leaves the OVC and spends the planned amount of time at/traveling to the destination; (3) being equitable in providing all consumers with opportunities for community-based services; (4) how the consumers will be involved in planning/organizing the activity; (5) who, other than paid staff and consumers, will/might be involved with the activity; (6) how the activity may foster relationship-building between consumers and community members; and (7) how the activity is expected to help consumers to engage within the broader community. After each community-based activity, staff documented the occurrences/outcomes relative to what occurred during the delivery of day support away from the OVC.

- ◆ **Systematically, using the searchable database of individual interest areas of Murray Ridge Adult Program participants, assist individuals served to plan community-based activities of interest with other Adult Program participants who have common interests; in so doing, plan for adjustments to staffing within/arrangement of the OVCs such that it will meet the needs of those receiving center-based services while others receive community-based services**

During the months of January, February and March 1-13, 2020, staff responsible for planning community-based services continued to use the Interest Areas Database to assist individuals to plan community-based activities with other Adult Program participants who have common interests. They also met with the Recreation staff to set up groups based upon common interests. Adult Program managers planned for staffing to meet the needs of those receiving center-based services while others received community-based services.

- ◆ **Establish a committee and through it work to address barriers to successful planning and delivery of community-based services within the Adult Program, including factors related to the cost of some community-based activities, communication/coordination with residential caregivers, and uncertainty about availability/approval for use of collective resources needed for community-based service delivery**

The assigned Program Managers, the Quality Assurance Manager PT, Recreation Specialists, the Recreation Manager and the Director of Adult Programs were members of a committee that was

established to address barriers to successful planning and delivery of community-based services. This committee had a kick-off meeting with the superintendent in early 2019. Some identified barriers included the cost of some community-based activities, the challenge of coordinating community-based services with employment services, the challenge of ensuring that residential caregivers sent items necessary for community-based activities on days when they were to occur, and consumers changing their minds about leaving the OVCs at the last minute. It was noted that when consumers who had planned to participate in community-based activities were unprepared or unwilling to participate on the day of the activity, other consumers could (if willing and prepared) participate instead. Identification of more no-cost activities was identified as having the potential to increase the number of program participants able to participate in community-based activities without advance notice, and also to resolve issues related to consumers/caregivers forgetting to bring what's needed for planned activities away from the OVCs. The committee met several times in 2019, and identified strategies to address the challenges were carried forward into 2020.

◆ **Continue to research and disseminate information about community places where LCBDD-eligible individuals may enjoy spending time without incurring (significant) expense**

Staff and the Quality Assurance Manager PT continued to research and share information about community locations where program participants might enjoy spending time without incurring significant expense. In 2020, Murray Ridge Adult Services staff were asked to focus on identifying community locations where community-based activities could occur at no cost.

The below table compares data from January through March 13 in 2018, 2019 and 2020. From January to March 13, 2020, five new locations with no-cost were added to the MRAS Locations Database. The number of no-cost community-based activities in 2020 increased by 24% as compared to the same timeframe in 2019, and by 113% as compared to that timeframe in 2018.

	2018 January, February and March 1-13	2019 January, February and March 1-13	2020 January, February and March 1-13
Number of no-cost community-based group activities provided	131	225	279
Number of low-cost community-based group activities provided	66	98	80

◆ **Establish and implement a formal protocol for the use of resources at the disposal of Murray Ridge Adult Services (vehicles; Area staff; 'supplemental staff,' including those assigned to the Seniors Program; nurses, etc.) for community-based service delivery; the protocol will be designed to maximize community-based day services using existing resources, and provide equitable opportunities for those who are interested in community-based day support, while diligently assisting those with desired outcomes that must be addressed away from the OVCs to experience/work towards those outcomes**

The committee to address barriers to providing community-based services met to establish and implement protocols for the use of resources such as vehicles, staff, and nurses, in order to maximize community-based services and to provide equitable opportunities for those interested in

community-based services. In 2020 each OVC’s Seniors Program included individuals that were not seniors in community-based services, if there was interest. The Program Managers maintained a tracking system to ensure that all consumers were offered community-based services.

The data below, from the 2019 Strategic Plan Progress Report, reflects the increase in offerings (i.e. an opportunity was offered, but may not have been accepted) of community-based services to those who attend Murray Ridge OVCs.

Number of offerings of community-based services in 2018	Number of offerings of community-based services in 2019
5,616	11,025 (This is a <u>96% increase</u> relative to 2018)

The table below compares data from 2018, 2019, and 2020, for the months of January, February and March (1-13). The information shows that the increases in offerings of community-based activity that occurred in 2019 (the first year of our current 3-year strategic plan) were sustained until the OVC closure in 2020. (It is noted that COVID concerns impacted community-based activity by early March, 2020.)

	2018 January, February and March 1-13	2019 January, February and March 1-13	2020 January, February and March 1-13
Number of offerings of community-based services	January: 507 February: 600 March: 265 Total: 1,372	January: 897 February: 888 March: 361 Total: 2,146	January: 924 February: 871 March: 361 Total: 2,156

◆ **Expand capacity for community-based support through Murray Ridge Adult Services by strategically identifying ways to use more ‘Area staff,’ and be less reliant on the use of ‘supplemental staff’ for community-based service delivery**

During the months of January, February and March 1-13, 2020, the involvement of ‘Area OVC staff’ in delivery of community-based service continued to be a focus. Each Recreation Department staff member was paired up with an ‘Area’ staff member for provision of community-based services.

◆ **Continue to implement and refine a system for identifying and communicating to Program Specialists when Murray Ridge Adult Services has reached its capacity for assisting those served to experience/work toward desired outcomes that require receipt of day services away from the OVCs**

In 2020, Murray Ridge Adult Services continued to follow the established system to identify and communicate to Team Leaders when Adult Services had reached its capacity for assisting those served to experience/work toward desired outcomes that require receiving day services away from the OVCs. The system takes into account that services that can be provided in the OVCs should be delivered in community settings as well, and that all OVC attendees should have opportunities for community-based services, regardless of what their desired outcomes are.

◆ **When Murray Ridge Adult Services has reached its capacity for assisting eligible individuals to experience/work toward desired outcomes that require receipt of day services away from the OVCs, during the person-centered planning process, notify the teams of individuals who have such desired outcomes that Murray Ridge Adult Services**

is unable to facilitate the desired outcomes - in such cases, assist with the identification of alternative providers/facilitators of the impacted desired outcomes

During 2020, the Quality Assurance Manager PT continued to receive notice of MRAS OVC program participants who had desired outcomes that required support outside of the OVCs. He managed and maintained a list for each OVC, and kept Team Leaders informed of capacity levels so that during the person-centered planning process, Team Leaders could notify the team if Murray Ridge Adult Services was unable to facilitate the desired outcomes. In these cases, the SSA, the eligible individual, and the team worked to identify natural supports, community supports, residential supports or a new day provider able/willing to provide the necessary assistance.

◆ **Continue to facilitate service clubs at each OVC, and sustain/expand the Acts of Giving Back Program through Murray Ridge Adult Services**

During January, February and March (1-13), 2020, the Quality Assurance Manager PT continued to meet monthly with each OVC's Service Club. Consumers participated in many community service projects. Some examples included: creating and delivering Valentine's Day cards with meals for Meals on Wheels recipients and for residents of local nursing facilities; collecting magazines to donate to an organization that sends them overseas to members of the armed forces; collecting and sorting plastic shopping bags which were donated to Lagrange United Methodist Church, where they were weaved into mats for the homeless; creating loomed hats that were delivered to cancer patients at local hospitals; and assembling hardware kits for Sleep in Heavenly Peace, which builds beds for children in need of a bed.

-In 2020, from January thru March 13:

- consumers from all three OVCs and Supported Employment continued to volunteer every Wednesday at the Friendship Animal Protective League (APL). Consumers assisted with cleaning the facility and also enjoyed spending time petting and socializing with the animals.
- program participants consistently volunteered at the Habitat for Humanity Restore, where each week consumers volunteered to sort and shelve clothing items.
- consumers from the Lorain OVC (LOVC) volunteered to unload, sort and shelve food at several food pantries, including the one at Lorain St. Mary's Church.
- consumers from the Oberlin OVC (OOVC) volunteered at Oberlin Community Services, and also continued to assist at the Oberlin Senior Center by preparing and serving hot lunches.
- consumers from the OOVC helped to assemble hardware packages for the local Sleep in Heavenly Peace organization, which builds beds for local children in need.
- consumers from the Elyria OVC (EOVC) helped to clean the Elyria First Methodist Church.
- consumers from all three OVCs made holiday and other seasonal cards to deliver to nursing facilities throughout the county.
- consumers from Supported Employment volunteered at the Avon Lake Library.
- consumers from OOVC volunteered at Welcome Nursing Home, assisting residents with craft projects.
- consumers from LOVC continued to deliver Meals on Wheels on a weekly basis to elderly residents.
- the EOVC developed a "Buddy System" with residents at the Life Care Center of Elyria, where consumers paired up with residents to socialize.
- EOVC program participants continued to volunteer at the Food Pantry at the Trinity Lutheran Church.
- LOVC consumers volunteered at the Good Neighbor Thrift Store in Avon Lake.

- ◆ **Prior to taking consumers to community places, continue to meet with them to discuss hazards/challenges that they might encounter at their destinations, and how the challenges can/will be addressed**

In 2020, during the months of January, February and March (1-13), Murray Ridge Adult Services assisted program participants to discuss what hazards/challenges might be encountered at their community destinations and how the challenges might be addressed. These meetings were documented on the Proposal for Community-Based Services Forms.

- ◆ **Identify and offer through Murray Ridge Adult Services a variety of activities that promote community access and social skills development. These activities will be designed for and made available to Adult Program participants with all types and levels of abilities and disabilities**

During the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, Murray Ridge Adult Services Department staff (with the help of the Speech & Language Pathologist and Agency Information Systems staff) developed and implemented a Virtual Adult Day Support (VADS) program for remote training and activities, with an emphasis on social skills training that promoted community social skills development. A total of 112 service recipients were able to participate in VADS.

- ◆ **Identify and promote community-based activities that enable people with DD to interact meaningfully with people who don't have DD**

In 2020, Adult Services staff, Program Managers and the Quality Assurance Manager PT continued to promote community-based activities that enabled people with developmental disabilities to interact meaningfully with people who do not have DD. In 2020, during the months of January, February and March (1-13), community-based activities that enabled program participants to interact meaningfully with people who do not have DD, and that took place on a weekly basis included: volunteering at the Friendship APL; delivering meals for Meals on Wheels; crocheting with seniors at the Columbia Station Library; volunteering at the Good Neighbor Thrift Store, the Welcome Nursing Home, and the Avon Lake Library; and meeting with the Elyria Seniors for lunch.

- ◆ **Attend staff meetings at each OVC to address and report on progress with the above objective, and to solicit related suggestions from Adult Program staff**

This activity, which is implemented by the Quality Assurance Manager PT, did not occur in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- ◆ **As person-centered plans are developed, facilitate the identification of community activities and places that will help individuals achieve/work toward desired outcomes, and participate actively in community life**

In 2020, the Individual Service Plan development process continued to include planning for community-based services and the identification of community activities that would assist individuals to achieve/work toward desired outcomes. With Individuals served, the SSA staff and eligible individuals' teams identified the desired outcomes, the support strategies to achieve the desired outcomes, and specific community places where the support strategies might be delivered.

From mid-March of 2020 through the end of the year, SSA staff, through person-centered planning process, assisted individuals to identify virtual community activities that were engaging and that supported the achievement of desired outcomes. Due to COVID-19, many individuals chose not to engage in in-person community activities.

◆ **Encourage and assist waiver enrollees to identify the providers that are best equipped to support them to access desired experiences within the community**

Throughout 2020, through the person-centered planning process, SSAs provided information about certified providers that were able to address individual needs/requests, either in-person in the community or through virtual programming. SSAs educated eligible individuals and their advocates about barriers to and providers of community-based activities, so that eligible individuals were able to determine which providers were best able to support them to access desired experiences within the community.

◆ **Provide Information and referral that assists LCBDD-eligible individuals to participate in desired, community-based activities; explore and encourage the use of natural supports and community resources for this purpose**

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the majority of community-based activities were unavailable. Additionally, many eligible individuals were not able to follow the COVID-19 guidelines related to mask wearing and social distancing in the community. In 2020, SSAs researched and worked to provide eligible individuals with information about community-based activities and virtual community activities related to their likes, interests, and desires. SSA staff educated eligible individuals about resources needed to participate in virtual and in-person community activities during the COVID pandemic.

◆ **Identify and participate in training on the facilitation of support in integrated settings and community membership, and the promotion of relationships and natural supports that reduce the reliance of people with DD on formal/paid services**

Numerous SSA Department staff members took part in virtual trainings related to the promotion of community membership and natural supports. Among these trainings were those presented by organizations including Milestones, the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence, the Ohio Association of County Boards of DD, and various parent groups. Participating staff members shared the information from the trainings with the entire SSA Department. Facilitation of support in integrated settings, community membership, and the promotion of relationships and natural supports that reduce the reliance of people with DD on formal/paid services will continue to be a focus in 2021.

◆ **Communicate in a variety of ways to the local public about the value of people with DD as co-workers, volunteers, citizens, neighbors and friends**

Early in 2020, efforts to limit the amount of newsletter space devoted to consumers engaged in center-based social activities continued, with an increased amount of newsletter space (at least 1-2 stories per issue) devoted to stories featuring consumers engaged in hobbies, volunteering to address various community needs, and contributing through community-based jobs. As the pandemic arrived and limited the amount of consumer community involvement, efforts were still made to communicate to the local public the value of people with DD as co-workers, volunteers, citizens, neighbors and friends. Bi-monthly 'Consumer Profiles' in the newsletter continued to illustrate for readers the many ways consumers are active in their communities. One newsletter feature described two consumers who displayed and sold their artwork in the community, and another story told of a consumer helping promote her family's candle business by doing an on-line video tour. Additionally, a story published early in the pandemic described how a Sheffield Lake neighborhood paid tribute to a consumer by organizing a 'drive-by' birthday party in order to show their love for their neighbor with DD. Whenever appropriate, stories about consumers being fully engaged in their community were also shared through other media, including Facebook posts, agency spots on local radio, and stories placed in the local news media.

Strategic Objective: Promote self-advocacy by individuals served by LCBDD through the person-centered planning process, activities, and community connections

Goal	Expected Outcomes
<p>Enhance the assessment/identification of beneficial self-advocacy supports for LCBDD-eligible individuals</p> <p>Increase provider awareness/competencies relevant to the provision of self-advocacy support</p> <p>Sustain and expand opportunities for eligible individuals in Lorain County to receive training in and exercise self-advocacy</p>	<p>Increase in self-advocacy skills of individuals with developmental disabilities in Lorain County</p> <p>Identification of those individuals who are interested in (increased) participation in advocacy activities</p> <p>Increased participation of individuals with developmental disabilities in Lorain County in advocacy activities</p>

◆ **Ensure that service plans developed within the SSA Department include individualized supports to assist with improvement of self-advocacy skills**

Based on the probing questions added to the DINA in 2019, in 2020 SSAs identified more person-centered supports to assist eligible individuals to improve self-advocacy skills. The specific questions within the DINA provided teams with a clear picture of what the individual’s capabilities were in terms of self-advocacy, and what self-advocacy-related supports needed to be written into the service plan.

◆ **Assist interested individuals to develop and include in their service plans desired outcomes related to self-advocacy**

Based on the eligible individual’s interests and desires, SSAs continued to work with teams to develop detailed desired outcomes related to self-advocacy. These, along with associated strategies were included in ISPs.

◆ **Identify consumers interested in participating in advocacy activities; ensure that supports necessary to achieve this are included in the person-centered plan of each of these individuals**

Through the person-centered planning process, SSAs identified individuals interested in participating in self-advocacy activities, and included supports necessary to achieve this in their ISPs. SSAs shared virtual self-advocacy opportunities with individuals throughout 2020.

◆ **Identify and participate in training opportunities on self-advocacy of people with DD, and identifying/arranging for related supports**

Several SSAs participated in virtual trainings on self-advocacy related to employment, technology, transition and communication. Staff presented information from these trainings to the entire SSA Department. Information from the trainings was used to assist eligible individuals to identify needed supports.

- ◆ **Provide self-advocacy support information to providers of Residential and Adult Day/Employment Services in Lorain County. Develop and begin collecting data on a measure or measures of provider competency relative to supporting self-advocacy, including an assessment of competencies related to LCBDD's provision of related information**

The SSA Department provided information to direct care staff of Residential and Adult Day services related to self-advocacy to support eligible individuals. The department created and shared educational videos on self-advocacy with all providers in Lorain County. Competency metric development and data collection will occur in 2021.

- ◆ **Offer periodic group training/information sessions on self-advocacy (with external consultants, as available) for LCBDD-eligible adults and their advocates/family members**

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the SSA Department shared available virtual advocacy opportunities with all eligible adults and their advocates/family members. The SSA Department also developed and created a video series promoting self-advocacy related to the rights of people with developmental disabilities. The series included LCBDD-eligible adults sharing life advocacy stories related to specific rights. The series consisted of eight short videos covering topics including medical and mental health services, vocational training, housing, making decisions, nutrition, advocacy, bullying, sexuality and citizenship. The videos were released over a period of several months starting in October. (Four of the videos were released in 2020.) Each video was released through a virtual meeting which included a viewing of the video, a discussion about the rights addressed in the video, and a discussion of how to advocate for those rights. Additionally, participants discussed life examples and things learned through those life examples. Eligible individuals, advocates/family members and providers participated in these meetings.

The presentation of the video series will be completed in 2021, and all videos will be posted to the Murray Ridge website. Additionally, the SSA Department will be providing on-site training of Adult Day and Residential providers utilizing the videos.

- ◆ **Disseminate information on the Ohio Self-Determination Association regional meetings and local self-advocacy groups to LCBDD-eligible adults and DODD-certified providers that serve individuals in Lorain County**

As available, information about regional and state Ohio Self-Determination Association (OSDA) meetings was disseminated to eligible individuals in Lorain County. Additionally, OSDA hosted a CommUNITY Virtual Film Fest, and information about this event was shared by LCBDD. All OSDA meetings in 2020 were held virtually. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, there were no STIR trainings, and the Synergy conference was cancelled.

- ◆ **Continue to support Murray Ridge Speaks Up; to facilitate monthly Self-Advocacy training and meetings; to conduct quarterly Consumer/Employee Committee meetings at each OVC; to invite, encourage and assist OVC attendees to make suggestions about the Adult Program; and to carefully review all Adult Program participant suggestions, and act upon them to the extent practicable**

In January of 2020, members of the Murray Ridge Adult Services self-advocacy group Murray Ridge Speaks Up! met at all three Opportunity & Vocational Centers (OVCs). At the Oberlin OVC, there were five new members; at this center, current members of Murray Ridge Speaks Up! provided information

on: what self-advocacy is, how to make choices and decisions, knowing your rights and responsibilities, and problem solving. Topics discussed in January at the Lorain and Elyria OVCs included Healthy Habits, and making good food/drink choices.

In February, the Murray Ridge Speaks Up! members from all three OVCs came together for their annual planning meeting.

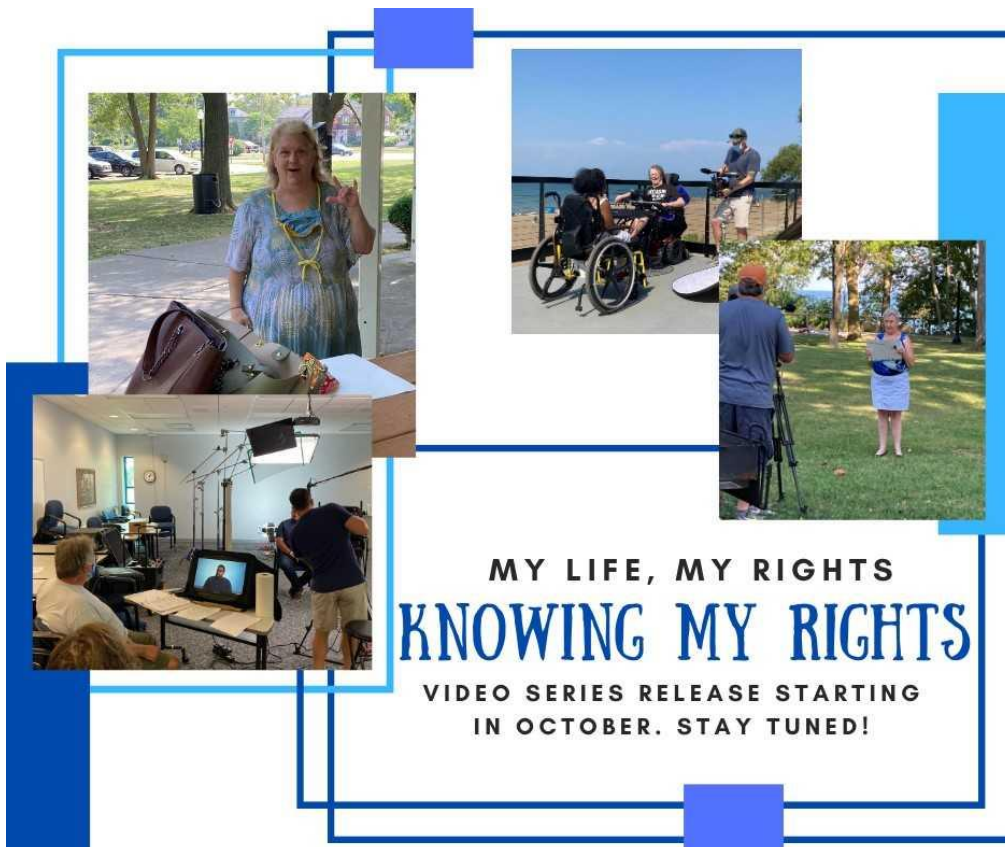
Due to COVID-19 restrictions, in June of 2020, Murray Ridge Adult Services began facilitating remote self-advocacy meetings. MRAS reached out to individuals trained in STIR (Steps Toward Independence and Responsibility) to help them get set up to participate virtually from their residences. Virtual meetings were conducted by the consumers and staff that had received Project STIR training.

Topics that were covered in 2020 virtual meetings of Murray Ridge Speaks Up! included: updates on COVID-19 and maintaining your safety, knowing your medical rights, coping with depression during COVID-19, how to register to vote and absentee voting, shopping online, decision making, and changes in the community enclave/work sites due to COVID-19.

Consumers also participated in the SSA Department's Self-Advocacy video series entitled "Knowing My Rights." Murray Ridge Adult Services cancelled the regular Consumer/Employee meetings due to COVID-19.

◆ **Consider arranging/sponsoring Project STIR training for additional Individuals served (and their identified 'allies').**

Due to COVID-19 Project STIR trainings did not occur in 2020.



MY LIFE, MY RIGHTS
KNOWING MY RIGHTS
VIDEO SERIES RELEASE STARTING
IN OCTOBER. STAY TUNED!

In 2020, Murray Ridge's SSA Department developed a self-advocacy video series entitled "**Knowing My Rights.**" One video was released every few weeks via a 30-minute interactive Zoom session. The first video, entitled "Vocational Training and Citizenship" was released on October 14, followed by videos on Respect and Choices, Mental and Medical Health, Wellness and Nutrition, Living Conditions, Sexuality, Bullying and Change, Decision Making and Advocating for Yourself. All presentations were promoted via Facebook and posted on the agency's website.

Strategic Objective: Reduce the number of eligible individuals in the county waiting for services

Goal	Expected Outcomes
Reduction of waiting list for HCBS Medicaid waivers Reduction of waiting list for supports in semi-independent living arrangements Expanded provision of desired support to eligible individuals Expansion of the provision of support and information to assist families to meet caregiver challenges	More individual/family needs will be met through community-based alternative services v. HCBS waivers A minimum of 110 people will be enrolled on HCBS waivers (during 2019-2021) Family caregivers will be assisted to handle caregiving challenges Growth in services will be fiscally sustainable, and will not jeopardize the continuation of the Early Intervention Program or Murray Ridge School

- ◆ **Hire a Part-Time Provider Compliance/Resource Specialist who will have, as one of two primary roles, responsibility for identification of and user-friendly communication about community-based alternative services as well as targeted provider recruitment**

This objective was met in 2019; however, in 2020 the position was changed from part-time to full-time. The full-time Provider Compliance/Resource Specialist was hired in March of 2020, at the beginning of the pandemic.

- ◆ **Post information about self-advocacy events and resources on the LCBDD website**

As event information became available, the information was posted on the Agency website under one of two links on the home page – events sponsored by Murray Ridge (listed on the home page calendar) or a separate link to “Upcoming Events Not Sponsored by Murray Ridge Center.” Any such information was also posted on the Murray Ridge Facebook page. Extensive promotion was done via the agency’s monthly newsletter, as well as on Facebook, regarding SSA’s eight-part video series on self-advocacy entitled “Knowing My Rights.”

- ◆ **Based upon research and a comprehensive review of related resources, update the LCBDD Alternative Services List that includes resources needed/desired by county residents with developmental disabilities (DD) and by families caring for members, including children, with DD**

The LCBDD Alternative Services List was reviewed and updated in the summer of 2020.

- ◆ **Enroll (in 2020) a minimum of 55 individuals on locally-funded Level I (LI) Waivers**

Fifty-four individuals were enrolled on (locally funded) Level I Waivers in 2020. (One individual was enrolled on a Level I Waiver in 2019.)

- ◆ **Enroll (in 2021) a minimum of 45 additional individuals on locally-funded LI Waivers, and 10 individuals on locally-funded Individual Options Waivers**

This strategic objective was exceeded and accomplished ahead of schedule, in that thirteen individuals were enrolled on the Individual Options Waiver in 2020; three had "immediate need" and ten were enrolled based on "current need." Also, in 2020, forty-five additional Level One Waivers were allocated to eligible individuals with "current need," and the enrollments are on track to be completed in 2021.

◆ **Initiate Supported Living services for individuals on the waiting list for Supported Living services in semi-independent living arrangements, as budgeted dollars for Supported Living become available**

During the pandemic, many individuals on the waiting list for Supported Living in semi-independent living arrangements stated that they were not ready to make a move and/or initiate formal services. While those who indicated a future need for this service remained on the waiting list, in 2020, sixty-seven people were removed from the waiting list for Supported Living in semi-independent living arrangements. Three new individuals were provided with this service in 2020.

◆ **Consider increased funding for the reduction of the waiting list for Supported Living services in semi-independent living arrangements**

During the 2021 budget process, the adequacy of the 2020 budget amount for Supported Living in semi-independent living arrangements was analyzed and determined appropriate for the next year.

◆ **Within the resource capacity of two dedicated FTEs, implement in-home behavior analysis and support through SSA positions dedicated (in whole or in part) to in-depth analysis of maladaptive behavior causation and correlation; this is designed for application within the homes of families caring for eligible individuals, and related consultation may also be made with day care centers/school personnel - Note: similar assistance may be provided within the context of the Early Intervention Program**

The SSA Behavior Support staff worked directly with approximately 90 individuals and teams in 2020 to identify and implement behavior support strategies for implementation in individuals' homes. This involved consultation, observation, and assessment. The need for this support was amplified during the pandemic; as many individuals struggled with the change in routine and State mandates, Behavior Team members worked with families and support staff to implement positive proactive strategies. The Behavior Team provided numerous tools to assist families with adapting to COVID, including creating social connections through technology and implementing new schedules in the home. The Behavior Team assisted 25 individuals and families by working with the school team to identify the supports needed for transition from home to school and vice versa. This was critical during COVID, as students were forced to adapt to learning virtually or through a hybrid of remote and in-person instruction. The Behavior Support staff provided techniques, tools, and tips to families to work through this difficult time. Additionally, the Behavior Support staff assisted families with connecting to Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) services, and ensured the team was working as a unit to address the behaviors.

◆ **Assess need/desire for and affordability of expanded capacity for in-home behavior analysis and support**

During the budget process, the need for an increase in staff to assist with in-home behavior support strategy development was considered. It was determined that the needs of eligible individuals could be met with staff levels remaining the same for calendar year 2021.

◆ **LCBDD staff, to include Behavior Analysts, SSAs, Developmental Specialists (who serve the 0-3 population) and other professionals, as applicable, will continue to offer and expand periodic trainings/information sessions for families and other caregivers on topics of expressed interest (e.g. toilet training, puberty, self-advocacy)**

The SSA Department provided information through handouts and by connecting families with free virtual training provided through external entities. Training covered a wide variety of topics including understanding/communicating about COVID-19, keeping busy at home, activities/training on mask wearing and social distancing, virtual learning, technology, mental health and caregivers, puberty, sexual relationships, grant funding, stress during the pandemic and communication challenges.

Strategic Objective: Recruit sufficient providers of services to meet the needs of eligible individuals receiving services in Lorain County

Goal	Expected Outcomes
<p>Ensure that there are willing and able service providers for each HCBS waiver recipient served by LCBDD, including individuals with intensive needs</p> <p>Ongoing awareness of unmet needs/desires for providers/information on providers to support LCBDD-eligible individuals</p> <p>Provision of user-friendly, readily accessible information about providers/resources desired by LCBDD-eligible individuals and known to LCBDD</p> <p>Recruitment/identification of more providers to meet unmet needs/desires of LCBDD-eligible individuals and their families</p> <p>Secure providers willing to commit to implementation of person-centered plans</p> <p>Targeted recruitment of Adult Day Support and Supported Employment providers capable of effectively addressing the desired outcomes of LCBDD-eligible adults</p> <p>Ensure that an acceptable and appropriate foster home (shared living option) is readily available for each eligible individual requiring emergency placement, if adult foster care is appropriate for and desired by the individual</p>	<p>Increased availability of service providers, including providers of Participant-Directed Services to meet the needs of waiver recipients served by LCBDD</p> <p>Improved access to desired resource information by LCBDD-eligible individuals and their families; improved ability to compare resource/provider options</p> <p>Increased access to desired providers/resources by LCBDD-eligible individuals and their families</p> <p>Increased ability for waiver recipients to find providers of preferred person-centered plan provisions</p> <p>Enhanced satisfaction by some LCBDD-eligible individuals with Adult Day Support and Supported Employment services</p> <p>Increase in the number of residential and day service providers in Lorain County that are willing/able to serve individuals with intensive medical/health-related and behavior support needs</p> <p>Increase in the total number of readily available foster homes</p>

◆ **Hire a Part Time Provider Compliance/Resource Specialist who will have, as one of two primary roles, responsibility for identification of and user-friendly communication about community-based alternative services as well as targeted provider recruitment**

This objective was met in 2019; however, in 2020 the position was changed from part-time to full-time. The full-time Provider Compliance/Resource Specialist was hired in March of 2020, at the beginning of the pandemic.

- ◆ **Create and include on the LCBDD website a searchable database of providers that can meet support needs of Lorain County residents with DD (including any providers of summer camps/recreation)**

This objective was addressed in 2019, and the created database was in use in 2020.

- ◆ **Add a link to the LCBDD website about the need for providers. Connect potential providers with an SSA contact who will explain services needed, and the DODD certification process**

Due to COVID-19 and the need to focus on other tasks, this objective was not met in 2020. However, in 2020 the Provider Compliance/Resource Specialist did reach out to all certified providers working in Lorain County and interested providers wishing to work in Lorain County to discuss needs of eligible individuals.

- ◆ **Engage in strategic targeted recruitment of: (1) Providers of SELF Waiver Participant-Directed Homemaker/Personal Care (PDHPC) Services, (2) Residential and Adult Day Support Providers Willing to Serve Individuals with Intensive Medical/Health-Related Needs, (3) Residential and Adult Day Support Providers Willing to Serve Individuals with Intensive Behavior Support Needs, (4) Providers of Supported Employment, (5) Providers of Remote Technology and Support, and (6) Providers of Foster Care**

Targeted recruitment efforts were a struggle in 2020 due to COVID-19, and the focus was on residential support staff.

Education was provided to HPC-certified providers working in Lorain County regarding the SELF Waiver and the need for SELF Waiver providers of in-home supports. Several HPC agency providers became PDHPC certified in 2020. Additional recruitment activities will occur in 2021.

Targeted recruitment of Adult Day Support Providers willing to serve individuals with intensive medical/health-related needs did not occur due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, many people with significant health issues were not leaving home due to concerns about contracting COVID-19. Additional recruitment activities will occur in 2021.

Targeted recruitment of Adult Day Support Providers willing to serve individuals with intensive behavior support needs did not occur due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many individuals with significant behavior support needs were not leaving home, as many were unable to follow COVID protocols related to mask wearing and social distancing.

SSA Department staff that work with transition-age youth and OOD on a regular basis continued to speak with providers about the need for DODD-certified employment providers, and the DODD certification process. Supported Employment provider recruitment will continue throughout 2021.

Throughout 2020 the utilization of technology to stay connected with family/friends/school led to targeted recruitment of technology vendors to work with individuals in Lorain County. The SSA Department TECH Team is familiar with, and has worked with, DODD-certified TECH vendors who provide remote technology and supports throughout the state of Ohio. The TECH Team connects providers with individuals/families/advocates, as requested, through the SSA Tech Referral Process. Information about technology and supports, and vendors of these services is provided through on-going communication from DODD, the TECH Team, and DODD-sponsored trainings.

As discussions were held with providers seeking DODD certification, SSA management and the Provider Compliance/Resource Specialist discussed the need for providers of foster care. One new foster care provider was identified in 2020. Recruitment strategies will continue throughout the strategic plan period.

- ◆ **For each Medicaid waiver recipient for whom there is no willing and able provider with a previously expressed interest in operating in Lorain County that is acceptable to the waiver recipient, given required consent, promptly conduct a statewide search for a willing, able and acceptable provider**

Statewide provider searches were conducted on behalf of 31 Medicaid waiver recipients for whom there was no willing/able provider who had expressed an interest in operating or was already operating in Lorain County. Approximately half of these situations were the result of staff shortages. As Day Programs closed due to COVID, or were allowed to serve significantly fewer people, in 2020 HPC and respite providers were in high demand. There was a provider shortage with respect to HPC providers prior to the pandemic, and throughout the pandemic this became a greater concern. SSA staff were able to locate agency and independent providers through the state-wide search process. Once the search was completed, willing, able, and acceptable providers were identified for all but one of the Medicaid waiver recipients; at the year's end, the SSA Department was still searching for a provider this person.

- ◆ **Incorporate into the provider database a web-based system through which LCBDD is able to post a profile for certified providers to view and indicate if they are interested in serving the individual - this mechanism will also allow SSA staff to notify providers when a new profile has been posted, and providers will be able to indicate on the website whether or not they are interested in serving the individual based on his/her profile**

The SSA Department, and all agency and independent providers were trained on the new provider portal database, iData, in October and November of 2020. Implementation of the database occurred on December 1, 2020. A convenient link to the new provider portal database was added in a prominent location on the home page of the Agency website.

- ◆ **Keep a running record of ISP provisions that providers with a current expressed interest in operating in Lorain County are unwilling to implement; evaluate this running record, and identify: (1) the types of services that providers currently operating in the county have been unwilling to provide, and (2) the circumstances under which and number of instances in which no provider that is on record as being interested in operating in Lorain County is willing/able to provide HCBS waiver services (This information will be used in the design and execution of provider recruitment strategies.)**

One service plan provision that no provider in Lorain County was willing to deliver was Waiver Nursing for an individual who needed intensive pediatric nursing with trach and vent care.

To address this situation, several statewide searches were conducted through emails, phone calls, and face-to-face interviews. Unfortunately, SSA staff was not able to locate a willing/able provider, and is continuing to work with nursing colleges, nursing agencies and hospitals to seek out nurses willing to become certified to provide pediatric nursing services through DODD.

- ◆ **In discussion with/recruitment of providers of Day Array Services, provide information about expressed unmet needs/desires of eligible individuals in Lorain County relative to Adult Day Supports and Supported Employment, respectively**

When limited Day Array Service providers reopened in June and July, SSA staff shared information about expressed needs relative to their respective caseloads. SSA management discussed needs and desires of eligible individuals in Lorain County relative to employment services and community-based activities. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, many Adult Day Array providers limited the services being provided, and the State limited the number of eligible individuals that could be served at one time.

- ◆ **Actively discuss with providers the unmet desire for and cost-effectiveness of providing group social/recreational opportunities for children and adults with DD, and of providing community-based group activities for people with DD; support providers interested in providing these group services by helping to communicate the (potential) availability of the services to eligible individuals/their families, and providing other assistance, as needed**

The SSA Department educated independent and agency providers about providing group social/recreational opportunities. This was extremely difficult to implement in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There are a couple of independent providers that successfully provided services in this manner to two individuals at a time. The providers grouped consumers and coordinated the services based on likes, interests, and desired outcomes of the individuals served.

- ◆ **Establish a committee to address strategies for identifying/facilitating the development of providers of transportation, including accessible transportation, that are available/affordable to Lorain County residents with DD/their families**

A committee was established in 2019 consisting of SSA staff, Community Employment staff, Adult Day Service Staff and Administration. The committee met and identified barriers to transportation, as well as strategies to address transportation needs. The committee discussed transportation options for different parts of the county, and the cost of these options. The committee did not meet in 2020 due to COVID-19. In 2021, the committee will continue to meet to further explore options, and to develop an informational handout on transportation services available throughout Lorain County.

- ◆ **LCBDD will continue to provide Early Intervention Services (for eligible infants and toddlers ages 0-3), Supportive Home Services, Supported Employment Services, and an Adult Day Program**

All of the above-listed services were provided until mid-March, 2020. During the pandemic, LCBDD provided the above-listed programs and services, with the exception of Supportive Home Services, within the constraints associated with COVID-19.



Strategic Objective: Meet with each newly certified independent provider within sixty days of the provider being selected to provide services to an individual, for the purposes of confirming that the provider understands the individual service plan and the provider's responsibilities, and ensuring that the provider has contact information for the county board

Goal	Expected Outcomes
Follow SSA procedure provisions requiring that SSAs meet with each newly certified provider within sixty days of the provider being selected to provide services to an individual, for the purposes of confirming the provider understands the individual service plan and the provider's responsibilities, and ensuring that the provider has contact information for the county board	<p>Each newly certified independent provider will be promptly aware of and understand his/her responsibilities as outlined in individual service plans</p> <p>All certified independent providers will have needed contact information for the county board</p>

- ◆ **Follow SSA procedure provisions requiring that SSAs meet with each newly certified provider within sixty days of the provider being selected to provide services to an individual, for the purposes of confirming the provider understands the individual service plan and the provider's responsibilities, and ensuring that the provider has contact information for the county board**

SSA staff met with each newly certified independent provider within 60 days of the provider being selected to provide services to an individual eligible for services from the Lorain County Board of DD, for the purposes of confirming that the provider understood the ISP and the provider's responsibilities, and ensuring that the provider had contact information for the county board. The meetings were held virtually throughout 2020 (after mid-March) due to COVID-19.