

Review of Progress on the 2022 Strategic Plan

Strategic Objective: Increase the number of Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities (LCBDD)-eligible individuals of working age engaged in community employment.

Benchmarks	Outcomes
<p>A minimum of 24 LCBDD-eligible individuals will be placed in a job that meets the definition of community employment*</p> <p>Ninety percent 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><i>*definition is included in OAC 5123-2-05</i></p>	<p>Fifty-seven individuals were placed in jobs that meet the definition of community employment in 2022. Of those, 26 were placed through the Murray Ridge Supported Employment (SE) Program, and 31 were placed by other providers.</p> <p>Forty-seven of the 57 (or 82% of the) individuals placed in jobs that meet the definition of community employment retained employment for at least 90 days.</p> <p>Twenty-two of the 26 (or 85% of the) individuals placed through the Murray Ridge SE Program retained employment for at least 90 days. (One person moved out of the area shortly after being hired, and one person left his position for a job opportunity with significantly better pay and hours; discounting these two individuals, the rate rises to 92%.) Twenty-four of the 31 (or 77% of the) individuals placed by other providers retained employment for at least 90 days.</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 developmental disabilities (DD) in Lorain County, with a focus on all stakeholders [families, students, schools, DD system employees,

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (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.

Currently, the Lorain County Employment First Transition Team is coordinated by the State Support Team. The following 2022 activities demonstrate a continued leadership role of LCBDD on the Lorain County Employment First Transition Team:

- LCBDD participated in a Lorain County Resource Fair in March. LCBDD representatives were there to discuss how to obtain services.
- LCBDD participated in a transition networking meeting with representation from the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) to discuss Employment First and DODD resources and services. LCBDD representatives were there to discuss services and intake.
- LCBDD participated in the Educational Path to Independence and Community (EPIC) workbook training. The EPIC workbook is a resource tool to empower students to take a leadership role in their transition planning.
- LCBDD participated in the Charting the Lifecourse Framework series which supports and empowers visioning and planning for the future.
- **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.**
 - ⊖ Through active engagement with resources made available by the State Support Team through the Employment First Transition Team, LCBDD staff, including both Service and Support Administrators (SSAs) and SE staff, was exposed to employment strategies and philosophies that local school district personnel was also exposed to; this is expected to promote the use by LCBDD and local school districts of similar methods to support students with DD to obtain community employment. LCBDD and local school districts were able to participate in a variety of trainings about ways to support youth who are in transition planning and desire community employment.
 - ⊖ LCBDD SE staff participated in Strategies for Meaningful Student/Youth/Young Adult Engagement on State and Local Teams, which was presented by the Youth Engagement Transition Initiative. The purpose of the Youth Engagement Transition Initiative is to provide state and local interagency team members with strategies and resources to meaningfully engage students, youth, and young adults in transition team meetings and related activities.
 - ⊖ The Service and Support Administration (SSA) Department continued to meet with local school districts to support students with DD through the process of obtaining community employment. The school districts, families, SSA Department, and staff from OOD worked as a team to support students age 16 and older through transition and with efforts to obtain community employment. This collaboration has reduced duplications of effort.

- **Utilizing a team of SE staff, update and execute a strategic, targeted plan to create community-based, integrated employment opportunities for adult consumers. 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 SE team continued 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 from the previous week in order to identify strategies for future success.
 - The Marketing/Job Placement Specialist attended several local job fairs, as well as four meetings of the LCCC (Lorain County Community College) Transitions Job Network (although this group subsequently disbanded). These events help us identify local employers who are hiring, as well as what positions are available. It also allows the employers to put a face to our placement program.
 - The SE 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 employer spotlights, supporting employers, employment navigation, provider role in workforce development, and the pathway to and beyond graduation.
 - A new aspect of the plan in 2022 involved the SE Director attending and inviting local employers (several of which attended) to the OOD Inclusive Employer Handbook training series, which included information on becoming an inclusive employer: recruiting, hiring, and supporting employees; workplace accommodations and accessibility; and ways to create a disability inclusive workplace.
- **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 2022 budget for community employment marketing was \$35,607.00. Through this budget,
 - 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. Several spots utilized testimonials from employers who shared their positive experiences employing individuals with DD. Other spots described the placement process and job coaching, and, additionally, highlighted the fact that these services are provided at no charge to employers.
 - Radio interviews were provided as a part of the broadcast package. In the interviews, both employers and program participants highlighted the benefits of hiring people with DD. Consumers pursuing community employment participated in mock interviews live on the air to practice their interviewing skills and make potential local employers aware of their skill sets.

- Print media and radio were utilized to promote Developmental Disabilities Employment Awareness Month in October of 2022.
 - Twenty-six Lorain County bus benches featured competitively employed individuals and their employers, as well as contact information for the Murray Ridge SE Department.
- **Maintain ongoing contacts with a variety of businesses and industry representatives to promote community employment placements.**
 - The LCBDD 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. Although most local employment collaboratives had disbanded since COVID, in 2022 Cuyahoga County still had one and the LCBDD Marketing/Job Placement Specialist attended its meetings.
- **Develop relationships with a variety of civic organizations/chambers of commerce/service clubs that could lead to employment opportunities for adult consumers.**
 - The LCBDD Marketing/Job Placement Specialist continued to attend meetings of the North Coast Chamber of Commerce, Lorain County Chamber of Commerce, Power of More (a conglomerate of several local chambers of commerce), and the Lorain County Manufacturing Council for the purpose of developing leads for community employment opportunities.
- **Continue partnering with OOD to assist identified individuals who want community employment by working with the OOD counselors to provide intensive placement services.**
 - The SE Department continued working with the OOD counselors by providing and tracking those services listed within each individual's employment plan for which it was the identified facilitator and meeting regularly with the counselor to discuss plan efficacy. The SE 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. Vocational Placement Specialists (VPSs) then communicated information to the applicable OOD counselor and reviewed progress and issues for those already employed. Seven individuals were served through the OOD/DODD partnership in 2022, generating more than \$50,000 in income for LCBDD.
- **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 individual job loss could be taken into consideration when facilitating future employment opportunities. A good example of lessons learned was that having a relaxed attendance policy in group employment can lead to attendance issues for program participants who subsequently get a community employment job. Now, attendance is addressed at group employment sites, and program

participants who are hired into a community employment job are counseled on attendance expectations before their first day of work.

- **Continue to actively participate in the development and promotion of Lorain County's Coordinated Transportation Plan to identify community resources for transportation and mobility, understand the gaps and unmet needs within those resources, and determine the approach to addressing those gaps and unmet needs, particularly with regard to people with disabilities.**
 - The Director of Vocational and Transportation Services serves on a committee that 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) explore transportation pilot projects. The plan was updated in December of 2022 utilizing data from surveys of transportation needs, which, in part, came from individuals with developmental disabilities, including Murray Ridge Program participants.
 - The Transportation Advisory Committee met quarterly in 2022. One area of emphasis was getting feedback from Lorain County Transit riders on their experiences using transit and how they could be improved. However, transit expansion remains unlikely.
 - A Lorain County Transportation Guide was developed and is available on the Move Lorain County website, which elucidates general transportation guidelines and lists area transportation providers. Outside of Lorain County Transit, however, these options are too expensive to utilize to get to work on a routine basis.
- **Systematically track and document occasions in which lack of transportation precluded a community employment opportunity for an LCBDD-eligible individual, or resulted in job loss for an LCBDD-eligible individual.**
 - SSAs systematically record on a monthly basis, with regard to all individuals on their caseloads who are not in the Murray Ridge Adult Services (MRAS) Program, instances of (1) occasions in which lack of transportation precluded a community employment opportunity, and (2) occasions in which lack of transportation resulted in job loss; the data recorded by SSAs is submitted to and maintained in a spreadsheet by SSA clerical staff. With regard to individuals who are in the MRAS Program, VPSs report at weekly meetings of the SE Department instances of (1) occasions in which lack of transportation precluded a community employment opportunity, and (2) occasions in which lack of transportation resulted in job loss; the SE Director then enters the information in a tracking spreadsheet.
 - Based upon data collected through the established tracking mechanisms, in 2022 there were four occasions in which an LCBDD-eligible individual was unable to accept a job offer due to lack of transportation; each occasion involved a different individual. Additionally, in two cases, LCBDD-eligible individuals did not pursue community employment opportunities in which they were interested due to lack of transportation.
 - In 2022, based upon data collected through the established tracking mechanisms, one LCBDD-eligible individual lost a job due to lack of transportation options.

- **Consider additional investment in the provision of work-related transportation when natural supports are unavailable.**
 - Three intermittent drivers were hired for SE. Intermittent drivers regularly transported 18 individuals to community employment jobs and four people to group employment sites.
 - SSAs promoted the use by Medicaid waiver recipients of transportation from Independent Providers and through Self-Directed Transportation. Approximately 20 individuals utilized transportation services from Independent Providers, and 10 people utilized Uber cards through Self-Directed Transportation. LCBDD covers the non-Federal share of the cost of many Medicaid waiver services.
- **Continue to implement and enhance an assessment and service planning protocol for assisting eligible individuals to move forward on their paths to community employment.**
 - In 2022, the SSA Department initiated the implementation of the Ohio Individual Service Plan (OISP), a statewide Individual Service Plan (ISP) format, and utilized the assessment built into the OISP for service planning. Questions designed to assist eligible individuals with making decisions about their path to community employment are built into the OISP assessment tool.
- **Refer individuals, as appropriate, to OOD and the Workforce Development Agency of Lorain County. Track the submission and outcome of these referrals by SSA.**
 - SSAs systematically record on a monthly basis, with regard to all individuals on their caseloads (1) who has been referred to OOD or the Workforce Development Agency of Lorain County (programs through which funding and technical assistance are made available to assist referred individuals with exploring and obtaining competitive employment) and (2) the outcome of the referral; the data recorded by SSAs is submitted to and maintained in a spreadsheet by SSA clerical staff.
 - Based on the data collected through the established tracking mechanism, in 2022, 29 eligible individuals were referred to the OOD. Seventeen of these individuals obtained employment and maintained the employment for at least 90 days.
 - There were no referrals made to the Workforce Development Agency of Lorain County in 2022.
- **Provide education to the SSA staff on the Workforce Development Agency of Lorain County, vocational rehabilitation agencies, and mental health agencies in the county that provide support to individuals in obtaining community employment. Invite these agencies to SSA staff meetings to share information about their agencies and services.**
 - During May, June, and July of 2022, information was shared with the SSA staff about the Workforce Development Agency of Lorain County, Nord employment program, HOPE Works, Ohio Means Jobs, and BVR in Lorain County. Additionally, the Workforce Development Agency of Lorain County, Nord employment program, and HOPE Works attended SSA staff meetings to personally share information about their agencies.

- **Host a meeting for individuals, families, and guardians with the Workforce Development Agency of Lorain County, vocational rehabilitation agencies, and mental health agencies in the county that provide support to individuals in obtaining community employment, in order to learn about the services and supports provided by each agency.**
 - Unfortunately, due to scheduling conflicts, this meeting did not occur in 2022 and is planned for 2023.

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

Goals	Expected Outcomes
Address Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) requirements related to community-based, integrated service delivery Support/enhance community activities and membership of people with developmental disabilities in the county	Provision of MRAS in integrated community settings, as desired/feasible and in consideration of COVID-related safeguards Continued engagement of LCBDD-eligible individuals in volunteering and other valued activities in their community

The provision of MRAS in integrated community settings continues to be a priority, and in 2022 increased to a per participant level higher than the pre-pandemic (2019) per participant level.

	Data collected from January 1 - December 31, 2021*	Data collected from January 1 - December 31, 2022
Number of times individuals in MRAS participated in activities away from the OVCs other than work and volunteer activities coordinated by the SE Department	1689	4640
Number of groups of Adult Program participants that were involved in community-based activities (other than work or volunteering facilitated by the SE Department)	416	988
Number of times Murray Ridge Adult Program participants with severe medical, behavioral and/or physical challenges participated in community-based activities other than work.	1020	2604

*During 2021, the pandemic significantly impacted the provision of community-based services to those who received MRAS in LCBDD's Opportunity and Vocational Centers (OVCs).

- **Continue to have a management employee meet, on at least a monthly basis, with each MRAS 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.**
 - During 2022, MRAS continued to assign a Habilitation Manager from each OVC to work directly with program participants to plan services outside the OVCs. During this timeframe, the assigned Habilitation 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 his/her interests 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.

- **For MRAS, assign a 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.**
 - In 2022, the assigned Habilitation 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. The Proposal for Community-Based Services Form addresses being equitable in providing all consumers with opportunities for community-based services, regardless of whether or not they have a desired outcome/ISP provision that requires this.
- **For planning of services to occur outside the OVCs, continue to use 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 forms.**
 - 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) how the consumers will be involved in planning/organizing the activity; (3) who, other than paid staff and consumers, will/might be involved with the activity; (4) how the activity may foster relationship-building between consumers and community members; and (5) 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.
- **Prior to taking MRAS participants 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.**
 - MRAS concentrated on assisting 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 Proposal for Community-Based Services Forms prior to departing for community places.
- **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 they will meet the needs of those receiving center-based services while others receive community-based services.

- During 2022, 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. Adult Habilitation Managers planned for staffing to meet the needs of those receiving center-based services while others received community-based services; the Proposal for Community-Based Services Form addresses 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. Challenges related to providing services outside the OVCs to groups of individuals who normally are served in separate areas within the OVCs include (1) the need for training of staff to work in community settings with consumers with whom they are not normally assigned to work, and (2) managing the changes to staff-consumer ratios in the areas from which staff are pulled to deliver services outside the OVC; such challenges have been effectively addressed through on-going troubleshooting with direct care staff, and emphasis on the importance of being flexible and creative in order to provide meaningful Adult Services in community places.

- **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 2022, MRAS staff continued to focus on identifying safe community locations where community-based activities could occur at no cost.

	Data collected from January 1 - December 2021	Data collected from January 1 - December 2022
Number of no-cost community-based group activities provided	343	781
Number of low-cost community-based group activities provided	71	207

- **Continue to update, refine and implement a system for identifying and communicating to Program Specialists when MRAS 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 2022, MRAS continued to follow the established system to identify and communicate to Team Leaders when MRAS 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 acknowledges 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.

- **When MRAS 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 MRAS is unable to facilitate the desired outcomes. In such cases, assist with the identification of alternative providers/facilitators of the impacted desired outcomes.**
 - During 2022, 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 he kept Team Leaders informed of capacity levels so that, during the person-centered planning process, Team Leaders could notify the team if MRAS was unable to facilitate identified desired outcomes; fortunately, in 2022 such notifications were not necessary because MRAS was able to address all identified desired outcomes that involved provision of day services outside the OVCs. Had this not been the case, the SSA, the impacted eligible individual, and the team would have worked to identify natural supports, community supports, residential supports, or a new day provider able/willing to provide the desired assistance.
- **Continue strategically to locate and approach organizations and/or businesses in the local community that desire/are willing to take on multiple volunteers with DD.**
 - In 2022, MRAS program participants engaged in community-based volunteering for one business with which MRAS had not previously collaborated: Your Turn Consignment.
- **Continue to facilitate service clubs at each OVC, and sustain/expand the Acts of Giving Back Program through MRAS.**
 - During 2022, Service Club meetings were resumed and saw increased participation. The following table shows the number of “Acts of Giving Back” performed in 2019 - 2022. During 2020 and 2021, the number of Acts of Giving Back were significantly less than they had been previously due in part to the pandemic. In 2022, the number of Acts of Giving Back increased significantly. In comparing the 2022 data to the (pre-pandemic) 2019 data, it is important to recognize that the number of OVC attendees in 2019 was nearly twice the number of OVC attendees in 2022.

	January 1 – December 31, 2019	January 1 – December 31, 2020 (Jan through March)	January 1 – December, 2021 (picked back up in Sept-Dec)	January 1 – December, 2022
Number of “Acts of Giving Back”	245	47	42	159
Number of program participants that participated in “Acts of Giving Back”	193	66	32	83

- Some on-going Acts of Giving back in 2022 included:
 - Starting in February of 2022, program participants from all three OVCs volunteered on Wednesdays at the Friendship Animal Protective League (APL); there, they assisted with cleaning the facility, and they were also able to enjoy petting and socializing with the animals.
 - Attendees of the Elyria Opportunity and Vocational Center (EOVC) volunteered to help clean areas of the city of Elyria with the group “Bash That Trash”.
 - EOVC Adult Program participants volunteered at the Elyria Public Library’s Annual Book Sale.
 - Attendees of the Lorain Opportunity & Vocational Center (LOVC) volunteered with the Amherst Office on Aging and delivered ‘Meals on Wheels’ on a weekly basis to elderly residents.
 - LOVC attendees volunteered at the Good Neighbor Thrift Store in Avon Lake.
- **Identify and offer through MRAS 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.**
 - Throughout 2022, activities that promote community access and social skills development were made available to Adult Program participants with all types and levels of abilities and disabilities.
- **Identify and promote community-based activities that enable people with DD to interact meaningfully with people who don't have DD.**
 - In 2022, MRAS staff, Habilitation Managers, and the Quality Assurance Manager PT continued to promote community-based activities that enabled people with DD to interact meaningfully with people who do not have DD. In 2022, some weekly community-based activities that enabled program participants to interact meaningfully with people who do not have DD included volunteering at the Friendship APL, delivering meals for “Meals on Wheels”, crocheting with seniors at the Columbia Station Library, and volunteering at the Good Neighbor Thrift Store.

Number of times an OVC attendee, while receiving community-based services through MRAS, had a documented meaningful interaction with a person who did not have DD			
January 1- December 1, 2019	January 1- December 31, 2020	January 1- December 31, 2021	January 1- December 31, 2022
2,734	496	324	755

- **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.**
 - In early 2022, SSA continued to provide information for a segment of the Agency newsletter to spotlight eligible individuals and their relatable activities, achievements, likes, etc. Additionally, engagement of eligible individuals in socially valued roles and activities were regularly spotlighted on social media and in local radio spots.

- **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 2022, SSA staff continued to complete the implementation of person-centered ISPs, which involves planning for community-based services that will assist the individuals to work toward outcomes that they desire. Through the implementation of the OISP and the assessment questions, the SSA staff and eligible individual's team identified desired outcomes, the support strategies to achieve the desired outcomes, and community specific places where the support strategies may occur.
- **Encourage and assist waiver enrollees to identify the providers that are best equipped to support them in accessing desired experiences within the community.**
 - In 2022 the staffing crisis impacted the SSAs' ability to identify providers of service. SSA staff made significant efforts to recruit Agency and Independent providers. There were numerous newly certified Independent providers in 2022 (approximately 23). Through the annual person-centered planning process and throughout the year, the SSAs provided information about certified providers that were able to meet identified needs in-person in the community. SSAs educated eligible individuals and their advocates about the provider shortage and providers' availability, so that the eligible individuals were able to determine which providers were best able to serve them and support them in accessing 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.**
 - Through the annual person-centered planning process and throughout ISP span years, SSAs continued to work with teams to provide eligible individuals with information about community-based activities related to their likes, interest, and desires; this included identification of both in-person and virtual groups and activities. The Provider Compliance Resource Specialists (PCRS) distributed a monthly calendar of activities, which was made available throughout Lorain County to providers and SSAs for sharing with LCBDD-eligible individuals.
- **Identify and participate in training on the 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.**
 - Throughout 2022, a multitude of SSA Department staff attended trainings related to the promotion of community membership and natural supports that were provided by Milestones, the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI), Ohio Association of County Boards Serving People with Developmental Disabilities (OACB), DODD, OOD, the Ohio Self Determination Association (OSDA), and We Thrive. The SSAs who attended the trainings presented the highlights to the entire SSA Department.

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 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.**

 - In 2022, the statewide OISP was implemented. SSA staff developed individualized supports to assist eligible individuals with improving self-advocacy skills with the help of the assessment section of the OISP, which includes probing questions about self-advocacy. The questions within the OISP provided teams with a clear picture of what eligible individuals were capable of and what supports should be written into the service plan. Based on the answers to the assessment questions, the SSAs wrote the specific self-advocacy supports indicated into ISPs.
- **Assist interested individuals to develop and include in their service plans desired outcomes related to self-advocacy.**

 - SSAs assisted interested individuals to develop and include in their service plans desired outcomes related to self-advocacy during the planning phase of the OISP and ongoing discussions throughout the year.
- **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, the SSAs identified individuals interested in participating in self-advocacy activities and wrote these services into their OISPs.
 - The SSA Manager responsible for advocacy events and the PCRSs also maintained a list of all eligible individuals who attended advocacy events sponsored by LCBDD throughout the year; the purpose was to ensure that these people were individually invited to subsequent self-advocacy events.
- **Identify and participate in training opportunities on self-advocacy of people with DD, and identifying/arranging for related supports.**

- Several SSA staff participated in trainings provided by Milestones, the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI), OACB, and the Ohio Self Determination Association (OSDA) on self-advocacy related to community engagement, abuse, human trafficking, technology and communication. Those who attended presented information from the training sessions to the SSA Department, and this information was used to assist eligible individuals in identifying and accessing needed supports.
- **Provide self-advocacy support information to providers of Residential and Adult Day/ Employment Services in Lorain County.**
 - Throughout 2022, the SSA Department continued to provide information about self-advocacy to providers of Residential and Adult Day/Employment Services. The SSA Department met with six of the Adult Day/Employment Providers to discuss self-advocacy and assist in developing programming. The SSA Department also provided information related to self-advocacy programming and support to Residential Services providers that supported eligible individuals in group settings.
- **Offer periodic group training/information sessions on self-advocacy (with external consultants, as available) for LCBDD-eligible adults and their advocates/family members.**
 - Throughout 2022 the SSA Department shared information on in-person and virtual advocacy opportunities with eligible adults and their advocates/family members. Additionally, LCBDD PCRSs offered monthly small group training sessions on a variety of topics related to self-advocacy.
 - In 2022, the SSA Department offered advocacy events through grant dollars provided by the Myrtle's Endowment Fund of the Community Foundation of Lorain County. In June of 2022, an advocacy workshop was held with Alex Sheen from "Because I Said I Would" for adults with developmental disabilities to learn and practice advocacy skills. Approximately 75 individuals attended the event. During the presentation attendees learned about the importance of making promises and how if a promise is written down/kept with you, you are more likely to keep your promise.
 - Throughout the second half of the year individuals from various Adult Day Programs attended Self-Defense classes through Tracy's Karate Studio. Mike Dancull from Tracy's Karate Studio worked with small groups of individuals to learn valuable self-defense moves as well as verbal techniques to thwart attacks from others.
 - Using the above-referenced grant money, LCBDD funded the attendance of 20 people at the Synergy Conference on October 5th, 6th, and 7th, 2022. Ten eligible individuals and 10 'sponsors' attended this energizing advocacy event. Synergy is a three-day event where eligible individuals, family, support staff and professional staff join together to grow and learn.
 - A technology fair was held in October of 2022 at Valley of the Eagles. This event was for eligible individuals and their support people to learn about all types of technology available to assist with enhancing independence. In attendance was a diverse group of vendors, self-advocates, and tech ambassadors from around Ohio, there to discuss and display technology. Approximately 75 LCBDD-eligible individuals/their family members attended the event.

- **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.**
 - The meeting notices were disseminated when the information was available.
- **Continue to support Murray Ridge Speaks Up; to facilitate monthly self-advocacy training and meetings for interested MRAS recipients; to conduct quarterly Consumer/Employee Committee meetings at each OVC; to invite, encourage, and assist OVC attendees to make suggestions about the program; and to carefully review all Adult Program participant suggestions, and act upon them to the extent practicable.**
 - In 2022 the Murray Ridge Speaks Up! self-advocacy group continued to meet virtually and began in-person meetings. The group continues to meet on a monthly basis. Topics covered at the meetings in 2022 included: self-advocacy, project STIR, Synergy Conference, living independently and/or with roommates, stressful situations, attending community events, food choices, and speaking up for oneself. The participants have provided Murray Ridge Speaks Up! with suggestions that have contributed to the overall self-advocacy experience. The program has received much positive feedback from participants and continues to be well-attended.
- **Facilitate a self-advocacy group for any and all LCBDD-eligible individuals and, in so doing, learn about how this works in counties where the county board of DD facilitates such groups.**
 - Throughout 2022 the PCRS team invited eligible individuals with an interest in self-advocacy to attend advocacy gatherings, with the intent of developing/facilitating a Lorain County self-advocacy group for all LCBDD-eligible individuals. However, a limited number of individuals attended these gatherings, and they showed no interest in a self-advocacy group. The SSA Department will revisit this in the future.

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	More individual/family needs will be met through community-based alternative services.
Reduction of waiting list for supports in semi-independent living arrangements	A minimum of 30 people will be enrolled on HCBS waivers.
Expansion of the provision of support and information to assist families to meet caregiver challenges	Family caregivers will be assisted to handle caregiving challenges. Growth in services will be fiscally sustainable.

- **Hire an additional Full-Time Provider Compliance/Resource Specialist who will have, as one of two primary roles, responsibility for identification of and effective communication about community-based services and targeted provider recruitment. See also Provider Recruitment Section.**
 - This objective was met in 2022.
- **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 DD and families caring for members, including children, with DD.**
 - The LCBDD Alternative Services list was reviewed and updated quarterly throughout 2022.
- **Enroll 25 additional individuals on locally (county board)-funded Level I Waivers, and 5 additional individuals on locally (county board)-funded Individual Options Waivers.**
 - This objective was completed by the end of 2022.
- **Initiate Supported Living (SL) services for individuals on the waiting list for SL in semi-independent living arrangements, as budgeted dollars for Supported Living become available.**
 - Using Supported Living funds, SSA increased 'Apartment Supports' (supports for individuals living by themselves) within the parameters of the established budget. During 2022, four additional people were served in the 'Apartment Supports Program'.
- **Develop/implement a standardized assessment of individuals on the county's waiting list for SL in semi-independent living arrangements, and update the list based on the results.**
 - This objective was not met in 2022.
- **Hire an additional Full-Time SSA/Behavior Analyst to provide in-home behavior support analysis and support to individuals and families by completing in-depth analysis of maladaptive behavior causation and correlation. This will increase the resource capacity to three dedicated FTEs.**

- This objective was not met in 2022 because there were no applicants for the position.
- **Within the resource capacity of three 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.**
 - In 2022, the SSA 'behavior team' continued to consist of two full-time equivalents (FTEs). The SSA 'behavior staff' worked directly with approximately 116 individuals and teams to identify and implement support strategies for implementation in family homes. In so doing, the behavior staff provided consultation, observation, and assessment. Additionally, the behavior team members worked with families and support staff to implement positive proactive strategies, and they personally demonstrated the strategies when necessary. The behavior support staff provided techniques, tools, and tips to families to assist with challenges related to behaviors.
 - In 2022, the behavior support staff also worked through the implementation of OhioRise, the new Ohio Medicaid program for multi-system youth. LCBDD behavior staff, as OhioRise team members, participated in meetings, attended trainings and learned the benefits associated with OhioRise.
 - Additionally, the behavior support staff assisted families of eligible individuals to get connected to therapies (Applied Behavior Analysis, In-Home Behavior Therapy, Occupational Therapy for sensory issues, and Speech Therapy), technology, support groups, and other resources; and ensured that the team was working as a unit to address behaviors.
- **LCBDD staff, to include Behavior Analysts, SSAs, Developmental Specialists (who serve the 0-3 population), and other professionals will continue, as applicable, to offer and expand periodic training/information sessions for families and other caregivers on topics of expressed interest.**
 - The SSA Department provided information through a variety of means to connect families and other caregivers to virtual and in-person trainings. The trainings were provided through external entities and were generally free to all who attended. The trainings in 2022, such as "Charting the Life Course" provided by Families Supporting Families, covered a wide variety of topics including communication challenges, planning for transitions, developing and maintaining schedules in the home, technology supports for individuals and caregivers, and puberty.

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 Home- and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waiver recipient served by LCBDD, including individuals with intensive needs</p> <p>On-going awareness of unmet needs/desires for providers, or 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 most provisions of person-centered plans</p> <p>Targeted recruitment of Adult Day Support (ADS) and SE providers capable of effectively addressing the desired outcomes of LCBDD-eligible adults</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>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>

- **Hire an additional Full Time Provider Compliance/Resource Specialist who will have, as one of two primary roles, responsibility for identification of and effective communication about community-based services and targeted provider recruitment. See also Waiting List Reduction Section.**

- This objective was met in 2022.

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

- This was completed in 2022.

With regard to the next objective, it is important to note that targeted recruitment efforts were a struggle in 2022 due to the continued staffing crisis. Many residential and day services providers struggled to hire and maintain staff. Additionally, independent providers struggled to complete the new DODD provider certification application process.

- **Engage in targeted provider recruitment using strategies including, but not limited to:**

- For **SELF Waiver/Providers of Participant Directed Services (HPC)**: Host a meeting for all HPC providers currently working in Lorain County (Agency and Independent) to discuss need for SELF Waiver providers and provide education on the SELF Waiver. Host a meeting for all individuals interested in becoming a certified waiver provider to discuss the need for SELF Waiver providers and provide education on the SELF Waiver. Contact IO and Level One certified providers directly to discuss need for SELF Waiver providers and provide education on the SELF Waiver. Connect SELF Waiver enrollees/their families with interested providers through the assigned SSA. Work with SELF Waiver enrollees/their families to identify friends and family members who may want to become certified Independent Providers under the SELF Waiver, and assist these potential providers with the certification process and the DODD financial management agent process through Morning Sun. Host a meeting for all interested providers with Morning Sun, the DODD financial management agent, to discuss the hiring and billing process, provider documentation requirements, and provider payment.
 - In 2022, the PCRS team continued to provide education to Homemaker/Personal Care (HPC) certified providers working in Lorain County about the Self-Empowered Life Funding (SELF) Waiver and the need for SELF Waiver providers for in-home supports. In August of 2022, in collaboration with GT Independence (formerly Morning Sun), an information session was held for potentially interested providers to learn about the SELF Waiver, certification, and billing. This session was held for certified providers, both Agency and Independent, as well as individuals interested in becoming certified. SSAs assisted eight Independent providers to become certified as providers of Participant Directed HPC.
- For **Residential and Adult Day Support Providers That Are Willing to Serve Individuals with Intensive Medical/Health-Related Needs**: Contact surrounding county boards to inquire about providers serving individuals with intense medical/health-related needs, specifically g/j- tube assistance and suctioning. Contact these providers to develop a listing of those willing to provide services in Lorain County and any willing to serve Lorain County residents, but only in their contiguous/base county (Erie, Medina, and Cuyahoga). Connect Individuals with unmet intensive medical needs/their families with interested providers. Work with Individuals with intensive medical needs/their families to identify friends and family members who may want to become DODD-certified providers and assist these potential providers with understanding the waiver, the benefits of the job, and the certification process.
 - Targeted recruitment of residential and ADS providers willing to serve individuals with intensive medical/health-related needs occurred throughout 2022. Based on a request from family members, one person became certified as an Independent provider to work with individuals (two in one home) with health-related needs. The new provider has informed the SSA Department that she will only be working with the family members of those who recruited her. No new Agency providers of residential services were identified to serve individuals with intensive medical needs. Recruitment efforts will continue in this area. One new ADS provider was identified and is actively serving Lorain County residents with intensive medical/health-related needs. However, the provider is located in Strongsville, Ohio and does not plan to open a site in Lorain County. SSAs have informed families seeking this type of service about the new provider. Recruitment efforts will continue in this area.

- For **Residential and Adult Day Support Providers That Are Willing to Serve Individuals with Intensive Behavior Support Needs**: Contact surrounding county boards to inquire about providers serving individuals with intensive behavior support needs, specifically with physical aggression and a history of elopement. Contact these providers to develop a listing of those willing to provide services in Lorain County and any willing to serve Lorain County residents, but only in their contiguous/base county (Erie, Medina, and Cuyahoga). Additionally, inquire with these providers about their experience with/interest in working with individuals with autism. Connect Individuals with unmet behavior support needs/their families with interested providers. Work with Individuals with intensive behavior support needs/their families to identify friends and family members who may want to become DODD-certified providers, and assist these potential providers with understanding the waiver, the benefits of the job and the certification process.
 - Targeted recruitment of providers willing to serve individuals with intensive behavior support needs occurred throughout 2022. Unfortunately, no new ADS provider was identified. Recruitment efforts will continue in this area. A new residential provider, Limitless, was identified early in the year; through the provider selection process, SSAs connected individuals needing intensive behavior support with the provider. In 2022, this provider served five individuals with intensive behavior support needs.
- For **Providers of Employment Support**: Contact OOD providers currently providing services in Lorain, Cuyahoga and Erie Counties to discuss the need in Lorain County for HCBS waiver providers of employment services, and the waiver provider certification and billing processes. Invite employment providers with current HCBS waiver certification and listed on the DODD website as interested in serving individuals in Lorain, Erie and/or Medina Counties or the West side of Cuyahoga County, to meet and discuss the need in Lorain County for providers of employment services. Host a provider fair specific to providers that are willing to provide employment services to individuals with DD in Lorain County through HCBS waiver programs.
 - Recruitment of providers of employment support occurred throughout 2022. The SSA Department contacted employment providers working in surrounding counties to discuss the need for providers in Lorain County. SSA staff developed relationships with three new (to Lorain County) employment services providers during 2022. The majority of the services provided related to individual employment supports, such as career development, job placement, and job coaching. SSA Department staff continued to speak with OOD providers about the need for DODD certified employment providers and the DODD certification process. Recruitment efforts will continue in this area.
- For **Providers of Remote Technology and Support**: Ask SSA staff to identify individuals who may benefit from remote supports and invite those specific Individuals/their families to a meeting with remote support providers. As requested, connect providers directly to individuals/families through the assigned SSA to evaluate needs and provide recommendations. Invite remote support providers to be present at provider fairs specific to providers who meet various needs that may be addressed through remote support.
 - In October of 2022, the SSA Department held a technology fair which featured more than a dozen technology vendors that provide a variety of services, including remote support.

Throughout 2022, the SSA Department worked diligently with technology vendors to provide education to SSA staff and families about technology resources and supports.

- The SSA Department TECH team is familiar with and has worked with the DODD-certified TECH vendors who provide remote technology and supports throughout the state of Ohio. The TECH team continues to connect providers with individuals/families/advocates as requested through the SSA Department tech referral process. The SSA TECH team continued to provide education to SSAs about technology supports. Information about providers, technology, and support is provided through ongoing communication from DODD, the TECH team, and DODD sponsored trainings.
- For **Providers of Foster Care: At each informational and training session for independent providers, discuss the need for certified Adult Foster Care providers and follow-up with those who express interest. Utilize currently accessible methods that incur no additional cost to inform the community of the need for Adult Foster Care providers without children or pets. If deemed necessary, formally advertise for Adult Foster Care providers without children or pets. Arrange for medication delegation classes in the evenings or on weekends, if it is determined that this will increase the number of foster providers in the county that are delegated to administer medication.**
 - As discussions were held with providers seeking DODD certification, SSA management and the Provider Compliance/Resource Specialist discussed the need for foster care providers. No new providers of this service were identified in 2022. Recruitment efforts will continue in this area.
- For each **Medicaid waiver recipient for whom there is no willing and able provider with a previously expressed interest in operating in Lorain 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 for 38 Medicaid waiver recipients for whom no provider that was (or had expressed an interest in) operating in Lorain County was available. In 20 of these cases, no such provider was available as a result of staffing shortages. Prior to and during the pandemic there was a staffing shortage, and this became an even greater concern in 2022. As eligible individuals sought to return to activities outside of the home, Non-Medical Transportation (NMT), Individual Employment, HPC, and respite providers were in high demand.
 - Ultimately, due to the statewide search process, willing, able, and acceptable providers were identified for all but one of the 38 Medicaid waiver recipients. As of the end of 2022, the SSA Department was continuing to search for a provider of State Plan Nursing and Waiver Nursing for the remaining person.
- **Keep a running record of 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. Use this information in the design and execution of provider recruitment strategies.**

- A service plan provision that no provider operating in, or with an expressed interest in operating in Lorain County was willing and able to provide was Waiver Nursing. There was one individual who had an unmet need for this service in 2022. The SSA staff, on behalf of this individual, conducted several statewide searches through emails, phone calls, and face-to-face interviews. Unfortunately, the SSA staff was not able to locate a willing provider for this person with a need for pediatric Waiver Nursing. In 2022, SSA staff also worked 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 the expressed unmet needs/desires relative to Adult Day Supports and SE, respectively.**
 - SSA Management and the PRCs discussed unmet needs of eligible individuals in the county with all Day Array Service providers. Numerous ADS providers expanded in 2022; however, due to the staffing crisis, providers found it difficult to meet the needs of all individuals.
- **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 provided information to Independent and Agency providers about providing group social/recreational opportunities. In 2022, there were numerous Independent providers of HPC and NMT that successfully provided services in this manner to two or three individuals at a time through the Level One and IO Waivers. These providers coordinated the services based on day provider location, friendships, desired outcomes, and likes and interest of the individuals served.

Activity/outcome to be included in the county board strategic plan, per Ohio Administrative Code: 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 (1) confirming that the provider understands the individual service plan and the provider's responsibilities and (2) ensuring that the provider has contact information for the county board.

Goal	Expected Outcomes
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 ISP 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 ISPs</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 that the provider understands the individual service plan and the provider's responsibilities, and ensuring the provider has contact information for the county board.**

 - In 2022, SSA staff met with each newly certified independent provider within 60 days of the provider being selected to provide services to an individual, 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. These meetings were held virtually or in person.