

Murray Ridge Center

Lorain County Board of Developmental Disabilities

2023 Strategic Plan Progress Report (Draft)



Review of Progress on the 2023 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 26 LCBDD-eligible individuals will be placed in a job that meets the definition of community employment*</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><i>*Definition is included in OAC 5123-2-05</i></p>	<p>Thirty-nine individuals were placed in jobs that meet the definition of community employment in 2023. Of those, 20 were placed through the Murray Ridge Supported Employment (SE) Program, and 19 were placed by other providers.</p> <p>Thirty-two of the 39 (or 82% of the) individuals placed in jobs that meet the definition of community employment retained employment for at least 90 days.</p> <p>Eighteen of the 20 (or 90% of the) individuals placed through the Murray Ridge SE Program retained employment for at least 90 days. Fourteen of the 19 (or 74% of the) individuals placed by other providers retained employment for at least 90 days.</p>

- **Continue to actively participate in quarterly meetings of the Regional Transition Network, which has established the following objectives:**
 - **Identify key components of successful transition planning for students with disabilities**
 - **Collaborate to determine strategies and methods for transition that can be brought back to participating organizations for use**
 - **Provide updates from the Ohio Department of Education (ODE)**

LCBDD staff, including the SE Director, attended quarterly meetings of the Lorain County Employment First Transition Team, which is coordinated by the State Support Team. The following 2023 activities demonstrated how the stated objectives were addressed:

- Several LCBDD Service and Support Administrators (SSAs) presented at one of the quarterly meetings on LCBDD services and eligibility.
- A Transition Roundtable was held at Lorain County Community College (LCCC) to create connections, support student transitions, and share information about the wide variety of health sciences career options available to students.

- The Regional Transition Network director sent out weekly emails to team members which provided updates from ODE, shared resources on best practices for transition services, and made members aware of any new resources or upcoming trainings that may be of interest to them.
- **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 Developmental Disabilities (DD) to obtain community employment and to resolve any duplication of effort.**
 - 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 Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) worked as a team to support students aged 16 and older through transition and with efforts to obtain community employment. This collaboration has reduced duplications of effort.
 - Through active engagement with resources made available by the State Support Team through the Regional Employment First Transition Team, LCBDD staff, including both SSAs and SE staff, were exposed to employment strategies and philosophies that local school district personnel were 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.
- **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 2023 budget for community employment marketing was \$34,720.00. 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 10 months out of the year. One spot utilized testimony from an employer who shared its positive experience employing individuals with DD. Other spots described the placement process and job coaching, highlighted the fact that these services are provided at no charge to employers, and made employers aware of potential tax savings by employing people with disabilities.
 - Radio interviews were provided as a part of the broadcast package. People with DD who were looking for work and those who had recently found work were interviewed to share their experiences. Also, staff shared information about invisible disabilities and how they impact employment. Another interview highlighted consumers who had been at their jobs for 20 or more years.
 - Print media and radio were utilized to promote Disability Employment Awareness Month in October.

- Throughout the year, 26 Lorain County bus benches featured competitively employed individuals and their employers.
- **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: (1) information regarding all individuals on their caseloads who have 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 are submitted to and maintained in a spreadsheet by SSA clerical staff.
 - Based on the data collected through the established tracking mechanism, in 2023, 26 eligible individuals were referred to the OOD by SSAs. Ten of these individuals obtained employment and maintained it for at least 90 days.
- **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. Twelve individuals in the Murray Ridge Supported Employment Program were served through the OOD/Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) partnership in 2023, generating more than \$60,000 in income for LCBDD.
- **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 weaknesses of consumer job interviews from the previous week in order to identify strategies for future success.
 - The Marketing/Job Placement Specialist visited the Workforce Development Agency bimonthly and attended several regional job fairs. This helped with the identification of local employers who were hiring, as well as what positions were available. It also allowed the employers to put a face to the placement programs serving people with DD.
 - The SE Director and applicable staff attended multiple webinars on employment and career planning for people with DD and imparted the information to applicable staff members. One training, also attended by local employers, discussed invisible disabilities in

the workplace. Other trainings attended by LCBDD staff included creating a workforce culture that supports disability disclosure, building and leveraging employee resource groups, supporting people with significant needs, and using technology to support people with disabilities in the workplace.

- The Marketing/Job Placement Specialist provided potential and existing employers with a flyer on tax incentives for hiring people with disabilities. Rising wage rates made these tax incentives more accessible than in the past.
- **Maintain on-going 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 engaged in cold calling and visited the Lorain County Workforce Development Agency on a bimonthly basis to check for job leads and to see if there were any new programs that could benefit job seekers. Additionally, she attended several job fairs in Cuyahoga County and one at the Lorain County Workforce Development Agency. These job fairs also facilitated contact of multiple providers of employment services with one another, so that they could share leads on job openings that they would be unable to fill.
- **Maintain relationships with a variety of civic organizations/chambers of commerce/service clubs that could lead to employment opportunities for adult consumers.**
 - The Marketing/Job Placement Specialist, in order to identify leads on community employment opportunities, continued to attend meetings of the North Coast Chamber of Commerce, the Lorain County Chamber of Commerce, Power of More (a conglomerate of several local chambers of commerce), and the Lorain County Manufacturing Council.
- **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. Interestingly, one of the two individuals who did not meet his 90-day placement goal quit after receiving a paycheck and realizing his pay was going to negatively impact his benefits, even working part-time. This is a new phenomenon due to rising pay rates and something considered before accepting a job offer.
- **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) exploring transportation pilot projects. The plan was updated in December 2023 utilizing data from surveys of transportation needs, which, in part, came from individuals with developmental disabilities, including Murray Ridge Program participants. One significant new goal is to improve resources and access to places of employment. Another is to explore more pilot projects over the next five years.

- The Transportation Advisory Committee met quarterly in 2023. Over the next few years, the city of Lorain will be adding several fixed routes throughout the city. With the ability to connect with already existing LCT fixed routes, program participants living in Lorain should have significantly better access to public transportation. There will be five routes that will operate for free.
- Move Lorain County also maintains a Lorain County Transportation Guide on the Move Lorain County website, which lists area transportation providers.
- **Systematically track and document circumstances 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 recorded on a monthly basis, with regard to all individuals on their caseloads who were 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 were in the MRAS Program, VPSs reported 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 entered the information in a tracking spreadsheet.
 - Based upon data collected through the established tracking mechanisms, in 2023 there were four occasions in which an LCBDD-eligible individual was unable to accept a job offer due to lack of transportation. Additionally, in four cases, an LCBDD-eligible individual did not pursue community employment opportunities in which they were interested due to lack of transportation.
 - In 2023, based upon data collected through the established tracking mechanisms, one LCBDD-eligible individual lost a job due to lack of transportation options.
- **Facilitate utilization of the new waiver service Participant Directed Transportation as a way for eligible individuals to access community work sites and opportunities.**
 - In 2023, five LCBDD-eligible individuals utilized the new waiver service Participant Directed Transportation to access community work sites.
- **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 2023, the SSA Department continued to utilize the Ohio Individual Service Plan (OISP), a statewide Individual Service Plan (ISP) format, and the assessment built into the OISP for service planning. Questions designed to assist eligible individuals in making decisions about their paths to community employment are integrated into the OISP assessment tool.
- **Provide education to the SSA staff on the mental health agencies in the county that provide support to individuals to obtain community employment. Invite these agencies to SSA staff meetings to share information about their agencies and services.**
 - During April and May of 2023, information was shared with the SSA staff about the Nord employment program, Gathering Hope House, and Catholic Charities of Lorain County. Additionally, these agencies were invited to attend SSA staff meetings; however, due to staffing and scheduling conflicts, these presentations did not occur.
- **In order to facilitate awareness of local employment resources, host a meeting for eligible individuals, and their families and guardians with the Workforce Development Agency, vocational rehabilitation agencies, and mental health agencies in the county that provide support to individuals in obtaining community employment.**
 - In August of 2023, the SSA Department hosted a meet and greet at LCCC, where eligible individuals and their families/guardians were given the opportunity to meet with representatives from OOD, NORD Employment Services, and Gathering Hope House to learn about supports related to obtaining community employment.

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

- 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.**

 - Throughout 2023, the engagement of eligible individuals in socially valued roles and activities was regularly spotlighted in the agency newsletter, 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 2023, SSA staff continued to utilize the DODD-prescribed ISP process to complete person-centered assessments and develop ISPs, which involves planning for community-based services that will assist individuals to work toward desired outcomes. Through the OISP assessment questions, SSA staff and eligible individuals' teams identified desired outcomes, support strategies to achieve those outcomes, and specific community 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 2023, three agency providers of Adult Day Services initiated in Lorain County services, which included community integration. There were numerous newly certified Independent providers in 2023 (approximately 29). 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.
- Facilitate utilization of the new waiver service Participant Directed Transportation as a way for eligible individuals to access community places and opportunities.**

 - Throughout 2023, 18 LCBDD eligible individuals utilized the new waiver service Participant Directed Transportation to access places in their community. Five of these individuals primarily used the service to get to and from work, while three others used it to get to

and from volunteering opportunities. Additionally, two individuals primarily used the service to travel to and from college classes.

- **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. Develop a database of community-based activities, locations, and contacts for SSA referral and linkage.**
 - 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, interests, and desires. This included identification of both in-person and virtual groups and activities.
 - The Provider Compliance and 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. The PCRSs also maintained a database of community-based activities available electronically to SSA staff to share with eligible individuals.
- **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.**
 - Throughout 2023, a multitude of SSA Department staff attended trainings related to the promotion of community membership and natural supports provided by Milestones, the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI), Ohio Association of County Boards Serving People with Developmental Disabilities (OACB), DODD, Connecting for Kids, and We Thrive. The SSAs who attended the trainings presented the highlights to the entire SSA Department.

The provision of MRAS in integrated community settings continues to be a priority and grew significantly in 2023, despite a decreasing number of MRAS program participants.

	Data collected from January 1 - December 31, 2022	Data collected from January 1 - December 31, 2023
Number of times individuals in MRAS participated in activities away from the Opportunity & Vocational Centers (OVCs) other than work and volunteer activities coordinated by the SE Department	4640	6132
Number of groups of Adult Program participants that were involved in community-based activities (other than work or volunteering facilitated by the SE Department)	988	1255
Number of times Murray Ridge Adult Program participants with severe medical, behavioral and/or physical challenges participated in community-based activities other than work.	2604	3539

- **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 2023, 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.**
 - Habilitation Managers were assigned at each OVC to work with staff and program participants to plan services away from the OVCs. The Proposal for Community-Based Services Form addresses equity 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 in 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 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 focused 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 2023, staff responsible for planning community-based services continued to use the Interest Areas Database to assist individuals in planning 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 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 researched and shared information about community locations where program participants might enjoy spending time without incurring significant expense. In 2023, 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 2022	Data collected from January 1 - December 2023
Number of no-cost community-based group activities provided	781	948
Number of low-cost community-based group activities provided	207	307

- **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.**
 - MRAS continued to follow the established system to identify and communicate with 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 also be delivered in community settings, and that all OVC attendees should have opportunities for community-based services. This system aims to maximize the integration of individuals into their communities. In 2023, MRAS was able to deliver all requested services away from the OVCs.
- **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 2023, 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 2023, such notifications were not necessary because MRAS was able to address all identified desired outcomes that involved the 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 2023, MRAS program participants engaged in community-based volunteering for one business with which MRAS had not previously collaborated: LaGrange Global Methodist Church and their Mats Matters Program.
- **Continue to facilitate service clubs at each OVC, and sustain/expand the Acts of Giving Back Program through MRAS.**
 - Service Club meetings were held throughout 2023, and participation continued to increase. The following table shows the number of "Acts of Giving Back" performed in 2020 - 2023. During 2020 and 2021, the number of Acts of Giving Back was significantly less than it had been previously due, in part, to the pandemic. In 2022-2023, the number of Acts of Giving Back increased significantly.

	January 1 – December 31, 2020 (Jan through March)	January 1 – December, 2021 (picked back up in Sept-Dec)	January 1 – December, 2022	January 1 – December, 2023
Number of "Acts of Giving Back"	47	42	159	202
Number of program participants that participated in "Acts of Giving Back"	66	32	83	88

- Some on-going Acts of Giving back in 2023 included:
 - 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 & Vocational Center (EOVC) volunteered to help clean areas of the city of Elyria with the group "Bash That Trash".
 - 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.
 - Oberlin Opportunity & Vocational Center (OOVC) attendees held a stuffed animal donation drive. Stuffed animals collected were given to children who have experienced tragedy in their lives.

- **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 2023, 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. Offering a variety of activities demonstrates a commitment to creating an inclusive environment where everyone has the opportunity to participate.

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

- 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 those who do not have DD. In 2023, some weekly community-based activities that enabled program participants to interact meaningfully with people without 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.

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

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

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

 - Through the utilization of the OISP assessment section, which includes questions about self-advocacy, SSA staff developed individualized supports to assist eligible individuals with developing and/or improving self-advocacy skills. 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, SSAs wrote the specific self-advocacy supports indicated into ISPs, including utilizing technology to assist with self-advocacy.
- Assist interested individuals to develop and include in their service plans desired outcomes related to self-advocacy.**

 - As identified through the OISP annual assessment process and on-going monitoring throughout the year, SSAs assisted interested individuals in developing and including desired outcomes related to self-advocacy in their service plans. Desired outcomes included support strategies to reach the desired outcome and identified a specific person to assist with each support strategy.
- 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 these services in their OISPs.
 - The SSA Manager responsible for advocacy events and the PCRSSs also maintained a list of all eligible individuals who attended advocacy events arranged by LCBDD throughout the year.
- Identify and participate in training opportunities for developing/encouraging self-advocacy in people with DD, and identify/arrange for related supports.**

 - Throughout 2023, the SSA Department attended numerous training opportunities by Milestones, OCALI, We Thrive, OACB, DODD, and the Ohio Self Determination Association

(OSDA) on self-advocacy topics such as developing friendships, community connections, being safe at home, technology, internet safety, and transition to adulthood. 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 2023, the SSA Department continued to provide information about self-advocacy to providers of Residential and Adult Day/Employment Services. The SSA Department met with three of the Adult Day/Employment Providers and two Residential Services providers to discuss self-advocacy and assist in developing programming. The SSA Department also provided on-going information related to self-advocacy programming and support to all Residential and Adult Day/Employment 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.**
 - In 2023, the SSA Department offered advocacy events through grant dollars provided by the Myrtle's Endowment Fund of the Community Foundation of Lorain County. In March of 2023, approximately 20 eligible individuals attended a cooking class at LCCC hosted by the Culinary Institute. The class focused on basic cooking essentials and provided a way for citizens with disabilities to advocate for an independent life. Individuals learned how to chop vegetables, handle raw chicken properly, and use grilling techniques. After preparing the meal, eligible individuals and guests all sat down to enjoy the feast. The numerous benefits of cooking, from learning new skills to boosting self-confidence and bringing people together, were evident at the event. There were six additional cooking classes held throughout 2023, with approximately 20 eligible individuals attending each session.
 - Throughout the year, individuals from various Adult Day Programs attended six Self-Defense classes through Tracy's Karate Studio using the above-referenced grant money. 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 34 people at the Synergy Conference on October 4th to 6th, 2023. Twenty eligible individuals and 14 '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. The mission of the Synergy Conference is to create collaborative experiences that drive change.
 - Using the above-referenced grant money, a luncheon was held with Elyria Mayor Frank Whitfield to discuss advocacy and politics. Mayor Whitfield addressed ways to become involved in the local community through politics and community meetings. This event was held in September 2023 at the Valley of the Eagles in Elyria. While enjoying their meal, eligible individuals discussed community issues important to them with the Mayor. Approximately 45 people 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.**
 - The Murray Ridge Speaks Up! self-advocacy group continued to meet on a monthly basis in 2023. Topics covered at the meetings included self-advocacy, Project STIR, the Synergy Conference, vacationing, stressful situations participants need assistance with, the 2023 election results, speaking up for oneself, and the EOVC transition. 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.

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

Goals	Expected Outcomes
Reduction of waiting list for Home- and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Medicaid waivers	More individual/family needs will be met through community-based alternative services v. HCBS waivers
Reduction of waiting list for supports in semi-independent living arrangements	A minimum of 50 people will be enrolled on HCBS waivers
Expansion of the provision of support and information to assist families to meet caregiver challenges	<p>Family caregivers will be assisted to handle care giving challenges</p> <p>Growth in services will be fiscally sustainable, and will not jeopardize the continuation of the Early Intervention Program or Murray Ridge School</p>

- 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 by families caring for members, including children, with DD.**

 - The LCBDD Alternative Services List was reviewed and updated quarterly to include new resources and updated contact information. In 2023, the list was updated to include additional categories and specific details about the services provided by the listed entities.
- Enroll a minimum of 40 additional individuals on locally-funded Level I Waivers, and 10 additional individuals on locally-funded Individual Options Waivers.**

 - This objective was met by the end of 2023.
- Continue implementation of the DODD standardized waiting list assessment for each individual on the county’s waiver waiting list and each individual requesting waiver services, and update the list based on the results of the assessment.**

 - Throughout 2023, the SSA Department completed initial (standardized) waiver waiting list assessments as requested by the individual, guardian, or representative, as well as annual reviews and updates for individuals already placed on the Lorain County Waiver Waiting List. All assessment results were submitted to DODD, which maintains and updates each county’s waiver waiting list.
- 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.**

 - Using Supported Living funds, SSA increased 'Apartment Supports' (supports for individuals living by themselves) within the parameters of the established budget. During 2023, two additional people were served in the 'Apartment Supports Program'.
- Reduce Family Support Services co-pays for families whose LCBDD-eligible member is not enrolled on a Medicaid waiver.**

- Effective January 01, 2023, Family Support Services (FSS) co-pays for families whose LCBDD-eligible member is not enrolled on a Medicaid waiver were changed, as follows:

FSS – Cost Sharing/Eligible Individual is Not on Medicaid Waiver	
Family Support Services Federal Taxable Income Sliding Fee Schedule	
Family's Total Federal Taxable Income	Co-pay for Goods and Services
\$48,260 or Less	0%
\$48,261 to \$62,261	10 5%
\$62,262 to \$79,762	30 20%
\$79,763 to \$99,999	50 35%
\$100,000 to \$125,000	75 50%
\$125,001 and Higher	100 70%

The changes were responsive to feedback that lower co-pays were desired by families, particularly those without access to waiver-funded respite/supports. Additionally, with the change, no Lorain County family that lives with an LCBDD-eligible family member that is not enrolled on a Medicaid waiver faces a 100% co-pay (i.e. ineligibility for FSS funds).

- **Recruit and hire a 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 met in April of 2023.
- **Within the resource capacity of three dedicated full-time equivalents (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.**
 - In 2023, the SSA 'behavior team' consisted of three FTEs for five months of the year and two FTEs the rest of the year. The SSA 'behavior staff' worked directly with approximately 109 individuals and teams to identify and implement support strategies for implementation in family homes. In doing so, 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 2023, the behavior support staff also worked with numerous youths assigned to OhioRise, the Ohio Medicaid program for multi-system youth. LCBDD behavior staff, as OhioRise team members, participated in weekly or bi-weekly meetings, assisted in OhioRise plan development, developed and modeled in-home supports, attended trainings, and continued to learn the benefits associated with OhioRise.
 - The behavior staff connected three families to the DODD Keeping Families Together (KFT) grant to repair damages to the home caused by multi-system youth.

- The behavior support staff referred numerous individuals for technical assistance programs for addressing damaging behaviors of youth and adults, including DODD technical assistance, the Multi-System Youth Comprehensive Assessment Team (MCAT), and Extension for Community HealthCare Outcomes (ECHO). Each of these programs includes a meeting of professionals to review the individual's current situation and history to provide a list of recommendations to the team.
- Additionally, the behavior support staff assisted families of eligible individuals in getting 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.
- In 2023, a new "hot spot" 30-day crisis bed was created through the Lorain County Integrated Services Partnership with Bellefaire. The behavior support staff worked collaboratively with the Bellefaire staff to develop in-home supports to model the support strategies implemented at the Bellefaire facility.
- **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.**
 - The SSA Department continued to provide information through a variety of means to connect families and other caregivers to virtual and in-person trainings. The trainings were provided by external entities and were generally free to all who attended. The trainings in 2023 covered a wide variety of topics, including connecting with Managed Care, de-escalation techniques, caregiver respite and mental health, communication challenges, planning for transitions, developing and maintaining schedules in the home, technology supports for individuals and caregivers, and social skills.
 - Through funding provided by the DODD KFT grant, the SSA Department offered Behavior Intervention Team Services training for families with multi-system youth to train families on how to proactively and reactively address verbal and physical aggression. This training was provided for 8 families throughout 2023.
 - The SSA Department provided information about Medicaid managed care and the benefits of a managed care coordinator specifically with regard to medical care coordination, medical transportation, and Applied Behavior Analysis.

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

Goals	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>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 and Supported Employment 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>Enhanced satisfaction of 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 service individuals with intensive medical/health-related and behavior support needs</p>

- **Advertise the need for providers. Connect potential providers with SSA management contact to explain services and the DODD certification process.**
 - The PRCs discussed the need for providers in Lorain County at each advocacy event and while attending conferences and informational events. Two providers of Adult Day Services were connected with the SSA Director early in 2023 based on the PRCs staff sharing this information. One of the providers built a building in Lorain and started providing services in August of 2023.
 - The SSA Manager responsible for provider support met with a multitude of individual providers and about a dozen agencies interested in serving eligible individuals of Lorain County.
- **Engage in targeted provider recruitment using strategies including, but not limited to:**

- **For Residential and Adult Day Support (ADS) Providers That Are Willing to Serve Individuals with Intensive Medical/Health-Related Needs:** Make available to providers of Medicaid waiver-funded Adult Day Array Services and/or locally-funded Adult Day Services up to 30% reimbursement of their costs (salaries, benefits, contracts, etc.) for the provision of nursing services/nursing availability in day services sites. 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. Host a provider fair specific to providers that are willing to provide (Homemaker/Personal Care) HPC or Day Services to Lorain County residents with DD who have intense medical/health-related needs, specifically needs for g/j- tube assistance, insulin and suctioning, through HCBS waiver programs.

 - LCBDD developed and circulated/offered to all providers of day services in Lorain County an agreement under which providers of Medicaid waiver-funded Adult Day Array Services and/or locally-funded Adult Day Services could receive up to 30% reimbursement of their costs (salaries, benefits, contracts, etc.) for the provision of nursing services/nursing availability in day services sites.
 - Targeted recruitment of residential and ADS providers willing to serve individuals with intensive medical/health-related needs occurred throughout 2023. One new residential provider agency (Ozell) was identified in 2023, and by year-end was actively serving Lorain County residents in group and individual settings. Additionally, in 2023 two families referred individuals to work with their (adult) children with intensive medical needs, and LCBDD PCRSSs assisted these individuals to successfully complete the certification process and initiate services. One newly identified ADS provider (Empowered) was by year-end actively serving Lorain County residents with intensive medical/health-related needs. Empowered was located in Lorain, and provided nursing services on-site and while traveling out in the community; this provider utilized the LCBDD nursing services subsidy. Empowered is planning to open a second site in Avon in 2024.
 - In August of 2023, the LCBDD SSA Department hosted a provider fair meet-and-greet at LCCC where eligible individuals and their families/guardians were given the opportunity to meet with potential providers of residential and day services, including providers that were willing/able to serve individuals with intensive medical needs.
- **Residential and Adult Day Support Providers That Are Willing to Serve Individuals with Intensive Behavior Support Needs:** Maintain/update a listing of providers willing to serve Lorain County Individuals with intensive behavior support needs. 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. Host a provider fair specific to providers that are willing to provide HPC or Day services to Lorain County residents with DD who have intensive behavior support needs, specifically those with physical aggression and a history of elopement, through HCBS waiver programs.

- An LCBDD PCRS maintained and updated a listing of providers willing to serve Lorain County individuals with intensive behavior support needs, including those with autism, physical aggression and histories of elopement.
- Targeted recruitment of residential and ADS providers willing to serve individuals with intensive behavior support needs occurred throughout 2023. Two new (to Lorain County) ADS provider agencies (Empowered and Life Out Loud) were by year-end actively serving Lorain County residents with intensive behavior support needs. Additionally, two new (to Lorain County) residential provider agencies (Ozell and Thrive) were identified, and by year-end were actively serving Lorain County residents with intensive behavior support needs in either group or family settings.
- In August of 2023, the LCBDD SSA Department hosted a provider fair meet-and-greet at LCCC where eligible individuals and their families/guardians were given the opportunity to meet with potential providers of residential and day services, including providers that were willing/able to serve 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 2023. For the second year in a row, the SSA Department contacted employment providers, including OOD providers, working in surrounding counties to discuss the need for providers of employment support in Lorain County. During 2023, LCBDD SSA staff developed relationships with five new (to Lorain County) employment services providers (You Belong, Oakleaf, Hope Works, Ability Works, and Koinonia) that, by year-end, were actively providing employment support to individuals in Lorain County. The majority of the services provided by these agencies were related to Individual Employment supports, such as career development, job placement, and job coaching.
 - In August of 2023, the LCBDD SSA Department hosted a provider fair meet-and-greet at LCCC where eligible individuals and their families/guardians were given the opportunity to meet with potential providers, including providers that were willing to provide employment services to individuals with DD in Lorain County through HCBS waiver programs.
- **For Providers of Foster Care: At each informational and training session for independent providers, discuss the need for certified Adult Foster Care providers, and later 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. 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.**

- LCBDD PCRSs discussed the need for foster care providers at each provider group training session, as well as with each independent provider during the DODD certification process. As individual providers expressed interest, the providers were connected with the SSA Manager responsible for foster care. No new providers of this service were identified in 2023.
- It was determined, based on discussions with Lorain County foster providers, that offering medication delegation classes in the evenings or on weekends would not increase the number of foster providers in the county that are delegated to administer medication.
- **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 21 Medicaid waiver recipients for whom there was no available provider that was (or had expressed an interest in) operating in Lorain County. In many of these cases, no such provider was available as a result of staffing shortages and the families' need to have a flexible schedule. Prior to and during the pandemic, there was a staffing shortage, and it remained a concern in 2023. The services being sought by the 21 individuals were mainly HPC, Community Respite for minors, and Non-Medical Transportation (NMT).
 - Ultimately, due to the statewide search process, willing, able, and acceptable providers were identified for all but five of the 21 Medicaid waiver recipients. As of the end of 2023, the SSA Department was continuing to search for a provider of HPC and Community Respite for the remaining five people.
- **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.**
 - Based on the data collected in 2023, a service provision that no provider operating in, or with an expressed interest in operating in Lorain County was willing and able to provide was Adult Day Support at a 2:1 ratio for an individual with significant behavior needs. There was one individual who had an unmet need for this service in 2023. The SSA staff, on behalf of this individual, conducted a thorough search of providers in Lorain County and surrounding counties. Unfortunately, the SSA was not able to locate a willing provider for this person with a need for 2:1 staffing while attending Adult Day Services. The eligible individual does have 24-hour HPC staff in his residential setting to meet his needs. The SSA will continue to work to locate a provider to meet the individual's needs.
- **In discussion with/recruitment of providers of Day Array Services, provide information about the expressed unmet needs/desires relative to Adult Day Supports and Supported Employment, respectively.**

- SSA Management and the PRCs discussed unmet needs of LCBDD-eligible individuals with all Day Array Service providers in the county. Numerous ADS providers expanded in 2023, and eight Independent providers became certified to deliver Non-Medical Transportation in 2023.
- **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. Numerous Independent providers of HPC and NMT successfully provided services in this manner to two or three individuals at a time through the Level One and Individual Options Waivers. These providers coordinated the services based on the day provider location, friendships, desired outcomes, and likes and interests of the individuals served.

Strategic Objective: Improve the understanding of technology solutions for LCBDD-eligible individuals and caregivers. Increase the number of LCBDD-eligible individuals utilizing technology solutions.

Goal	Expected Outcomes
Increase and promote, as appropriate, the use of technology by eligible individuals to increase independence and enhance quality of life	Increased awareness by eligible individuals and their support teams of potential 'technology solutions' Increased use of technology solutions to support the achievement of desired outcomes by eligible individuals

- Throughout the initial and ongoing-person-centered assessment and planning process, technology solutions will be explored and documented, and, to the greatest extent possible, used to support the outcomes in an individual service plan.**

 - In 2023, SSA staff addressed the need for assistive technology through the person-centered assessment and development of ISPs. Through the utilization of the OISP assessment, which includes questions about technology, SSA staff developed individualized supports to assist eligible individuals with identifying areas in which use of technology might replace some reliance on human assistance. The questions within the OISP provided teams with a clear picture of what eligible individuals were capable of and what supports were needed. Based on the OISP annual assessment process and on-going monitoring throughout the year, SSAs assisted interested individuals to develop and include in their service plans supports related to the use of assistive technology and remote supports.
- Provide information and training opportunities to LCBDD staff to increase their level of knowledge, skill, and comfort related to the use of technology solutions and assessing how technology may help meet needs or achieve outcomes.**

 - Throughout 2023, the SSA Department TECH Team members attended trainings on individualized assessment of the potential for various technology to meet needs of/provide solutions for those served by LCBDD. The trainings were hosted by OSU Nisonger Center, Ohio Tech Ambassadors, OCALI, OACB, and DODD. The TECH Team shared the information from the training sessions with all SSAs during staff meetings and through TECH referrals.
- Provide information and training opportunities to individuals served and their families, providers of services, and community partners (e.g., local schools, mental health agencies, area agencies on aging, county departments of job and family services, public transit authorities, local vocational rehabilitation centers, and employers) to expand awareness and use of technology solutions by individuals served.**

 - Through the annual person-centered planning process and ISP development, SSAs worked with teams to provide eligible individuals with information about technology solutions.
 - In 2023, the SSA Department offered a Technology Fair funded by grant dollars provided through the Myrtle's Endowment Fund of the Community Foundation of Lorain County. At the Technology Fair, various information sessions were held for eligible individuals, their

support staff, and community partners to learn about all types of technology available to assist with enhancing independence. The fair consisted of a diverse group of technology vendors, self-advocates, and tech ambassadors from around Ohio who discussed and demonstrated technology. Additionally, participants had the opportunity to take home information about the gadgets and technology viewed to encourage further discussion and possible utilization. Approximately 40 eligible individuals and their families attended the event.

- **Through the person-centered planning process, assist eligible individuals with identifying and accessing technology options to reduce reliance on caregivers, and increase independence; increase technology utilization by at least 65 eligible individuals.**
 - In 2023, the SSA Department increased technology usage by 58 eligible individuals. The SSA TECH Team assisted in initiating technology solutions for 46 individuals through referrals from the assigned SSA. Twelve eligible individuals initiated use of remote supports to reduce reliance on caregivers in group settings. During the year, LCBDD-eligible individuals increased independence by initiating use of a variety of assistive technology; examples included reader pens, medication dispensers, wearable GPS devices, doorbell cameras, smart speakers, and seizure detectors.
- **Provide information and opportunities for eligible individuals, families, and providers to experience the technology suite, a fully functioning apartment where various assistive technologies can be tested and experienced.**
 - Due to limited availability of the emergency suite for overnight stays, individuals had limited opportunities to experience the suite overnight. Numerous individuals and their families toured the suite to experience the technology, from remote supports to the smart microwave. The SSA TECH Team provided demonstrations of the technology outside of the suite at the SSA office and the individuals' homes.

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 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 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 2023, SSA staff met with each newly certified independent provider within 60 days of the provider being selected to provide services to an individual. The purpose was to confirm that the provider understood the ISP and their responsibilities, as well as to ensure they had contact information for the county board. These meetings were conducted either virtually or in person.

Other: Early Intervention

- In 2023, in order to address increasing referrals for Early Intervention (EI) Services, LCBDD will hire two additional Developmental Specialists.**

 - In 2023, two new Developmental Specialist positions were added to the LCBDD EI Team. One of these positions was filled in June of 2023, and the other was filled in August of 2023.