

# Direct Connection

MISSOURI DIVISION OF  
DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES



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**CONNECTING WITH THE  
DIVISION OF  
DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES**

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Health

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Disabilities

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## Promoting Employment First

In the 25 years since the passage of the American's with Disability Act (ADA) in 1990, the employment rights of individuals with disabilities has continued to be affirmed and promoted. The U.S. Supreme Court's Olmstead ruling on June 22, 1999, upheld the right that community-based programs and services must be provided to individuals with disabilities. Additionally, the Olmstead Ruling requires that individuals be supported to perform everyday activities related to personal enrichment, pursuit of employment, economic independence, social interactions, and educational attainment.

President Obama declared 2009 as the "Year of Community Living" and tasked the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) with aggressive enforcement of rights protected in the ADA and the Olmstead Ruling. Since this declaration, there has been an alignment of Federal programs in affirming the rights of individuals with disabilities, DOJ enforcement in over 25 states, landmark decisions in countless states, and new federal mandates which fully affirm the rights of all. The passage of the Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Achieving a Better Life Experience Act (ABLE), and the publishing of the Community Setting Rule in Home and Community Based Waiver Services (HCBS) all occurred in 2014.

The importance of affirming employment rights is not just about upholding Federal law, US Supreme Court decisions, and CMS requirements but is about doing the right thing and valuing each person to live his or her own life fully – fostering self-determination, supporting families, individualizing supports, and promoting integrated community-based employment.

The Division of Developmental Disabilities began a statewide employment initiative in October 2008 that led to the development of the Employment First Policy in January 2011. This policy outlined the Division's commitment to enhancing employment options for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities and reiterated the Division's core belief that all individuals with developmental disabilities who want to work CAN work when given opportunity, training, and supports that build on an individual's strengths, skills, and abilities.

The Division promotes employment by enhancing collaboration, outreach, marketing, training, and technical assistance, and it strives for continuous quality improvement by regularly evaluating its practices, policies, and systems.

# Preparing for Success



Project | SEARCH

A new Project SEARCH program at Jefferson City High School is helping students with intellectual and developmental disabilities with successfully transitioning from school to the world of work. The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the Division of Developmental Disabilities, Vocational Rehabilitation, Jefferson City Public Schools, Lincoln University, Cole County Residential Services, and the Missouri Rehabilitation and Employment (MORE) Group brought their resources together to create new opportunities for transitioning students. As a result of this collaboration, seven students this past school year have been gaining work experience at Lincoln University.

Lincoln University Project SEARCH helped the students with discovering their career interests and locating internships through their senior year. The seven students worked in three unique work settings matched to their interests on the Lincoln University campus. Internships were completed at the library, cafeteria, student activities office, and at the buildings and maintenance departments.

The goal of Project SEARCH is for the students to develop employment skills, broaden their understanding of potential careers, and increase their self-confidence. Project SEARCH is designed to create early work experiences and challenge students to develop high expectations. Project SEARCH began in 1996 at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center when it chose to fill entry-level jobs with qualified people with disabilities. Today, Project SEARCH programs are in 300 sites in 43 states and four countries. There are currently six other Project SEARCH sites in Missouri.

## The Governor's Council on Disability Inclusion Awards

The Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) is currently accepting nominations for its 24<sup>th</sup> annual *Inclusion Awards*. The deadline for submitting nominations is December 15, 2015.

The *Inclusion Award* is presented annually to recognize and honor a Missouri resident, organization, business or state/local government division that represents excellence in leadership for the "best of the best inclusion practices."

Innovative universal design and assistive technology concepts that incorporate people with disabilities may also be submitted.

The nomination form and criteria are available at:  
<http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/inclwin.htm>

***"Always be on the lookout for the presence of wonder."***

– E.B. White





# Employment First, Employment for All

The United States Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), announced in October that Missouri was selected as a 2016 Core State for the Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (EFSLMP). The Missouri collaborative is represented by the Divisions of Developmental Disabilities, Behavioral Health, Vocational Rehabilitation, Workforce Development, and Special Education.

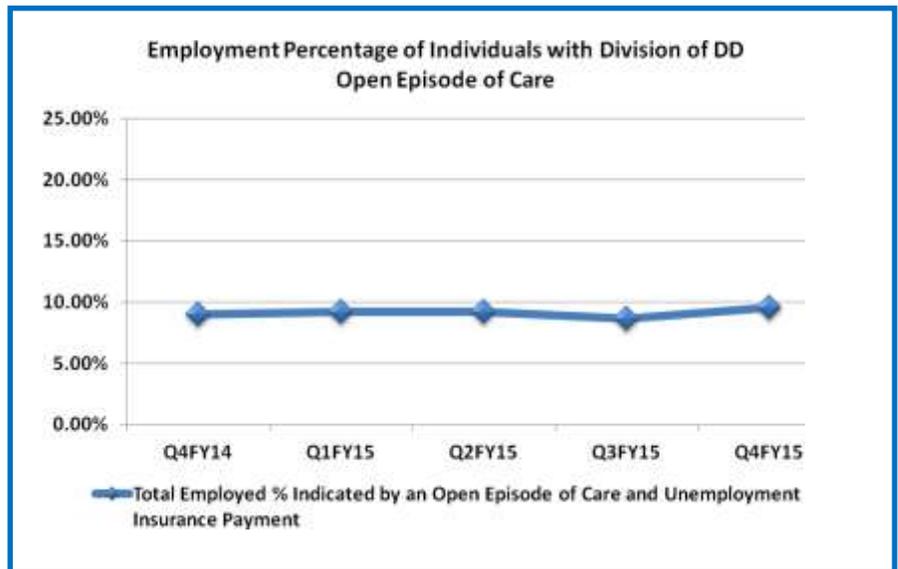
As a recipient of the EFSLMP, Missouri will receive approximately 300 hours of technical assistance in provider transformation to assist with developing a unified Missouri Employment First state plan and up to 200 hours of assistance with policy reform and funding alignment.

In the four years of the EFSLMP, ODEP has collaborated with 18 other states. Since its inception in FY 2012, the EFSLMP has provided intensive onsite and virtual technical assistance to cross-system state government teams to further their efforts to increase competitive, integrated employment outcomes for all individuals with disabilities.

## Employment in Action

Ron Stearman has worked with The Arc of the Ozarks and Employment Solutions for many years. He has touched the lives of many individuals through his job in detailing cars.

In the time Ron has been employed, he has learned a great deal, thrived with his ability to work hard, and made many people smile. Ron is making a difference in our community one vehicle at a time.



# Community Calendar

**March 23, 2016** – Save the Date – Supported Decision Making with Jonathan Martinis, Columbia, MO – More information will be posted on the MOAAIDD website: <http://moaaidd.org/>

## 2016 Mental Health Champions' Award Nomination

The Missouri Mental Health Foundation is accepting nominations through November 20, 2015, for the 9th Annual Mental Health Champions' Award!

The Mental Health Champion Award recognizes individuals living with a mental illness, developmental disability, or in recovery for substance abuse and who make a positive contribution to their community, exemplify commitment and vision, and whose actions have increased the potential for independence in others living with a mental health condition.

For information about the award and to nominate an individual, visit the Missouri Mental Health Foundation at: [http://www.missourimhf.org/?page\\_id=196](http://www.missourimhf.org/?page_id=196)

MISSOURI DIVISION OF  
DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES



Improving lives THROUGH  
supports and services  
THAT FOSTER self-determination.

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**Fostering Self-determination**



**Supporting Families**



**Facilitating Individualized Services and Supports**



**Developing Accessible Housing**



**Promoting Employment First**

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MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH