

Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2024



**Department of
Developmental
Disabilities**

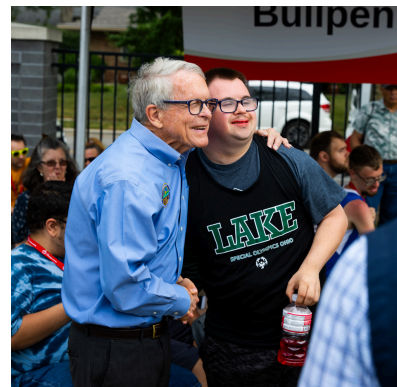


Table of Contents

From Director Kim Hauck	3
DODD Leadership Team	4
DODD Strategic Plan	5
Frequently Used Acronyms	6
By the Numbers	7
Rate Increases and Supporting DSPs	9
Waiver Redesign Initiative	10
ARPA Funding and Projects	12
Universal Changing Table Efforts	13
OhioISP	14
Housing	14
Supporting Families	15
Supporting Youth with Complex Needs	16
Technology First Initiative	18
Employment First Initiative	19
Fiscal	20

From Director Kim Hauck

As we reflect on the past year, it is with great pride that I present the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) Annual Report. This report not only highlights our achievements and challenges but also celebrates the resilience and accomplishments of those we serve.

Throughout the year, our dedicated team of professionals worked with people with lived experiences, family members, county boards, providers, community partners, and others to ensure every person has access to quality care, support, and opportunities.

In this report, you will find stories of triumph, testimonials of gratitude, and insights into our ongoing initiatives. Together, we are making a meaningful difference in the lives of Ohioans with developmental disabilities.

Thank you for your support and commitment to our shared mission.

Kim Hauck

Director, Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities



DODD Leadership Team



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DODD Strategic Plan

The DODD FY24/25 Strategic Plan focuses on seven key components of Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC):

1. Support to Families
2. Integrated Supports
3. Advocacy and Engagement
4. Safety and Security
5. Healthy Living
6. Daily Life and Employment
7. Community Living

This framework outlines the department’s goals for supporting people with developmental disabilities and their families in all areas of their lives. These themes are reflected throughout this Annual Report.



“ People with developmental disabilities deserve opportunities, a reliable workforce, and an accessible state to live, learn, work, and succeed in.

- Governor Mike DeWine

”

“ Ohio is the heart of opportunity. DODD is committed to working with those we serve, their families and support teams, county boards, and providers to ensure all people have access to those opportunities.

- Director Kim Hauck

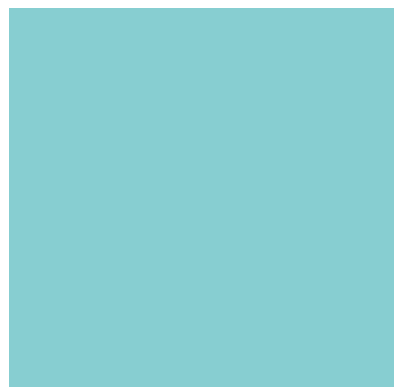
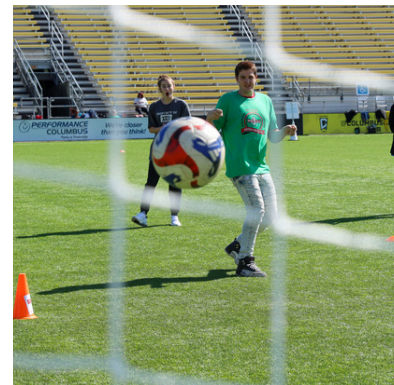
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Frequently Used Acronyms

Throughout this Annual Report, you will see the following acronyms used:

- ARPA** | American Rescue Plan Act
- CtLC** | Charting the LifeCourse
- DD** | Developmental Disability
- DC** | Developmental Center
- DODD** | Department of Developmental Disabilities
- DSP** | Direct Support Professionals
- FY24** | Fiscal Year 2024 (July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024)
- HCBS** | Home and Community-Based Services
- ISP** | Individual Service Plan
- ICF** | Intermediate Care Facility
- MCAT** | Multi-Disciplinary Comprehensive Assessment Team
- SSA** | Service and Support Administrators



By the Numbers

25%

increase in the number of people in an individual competitive job since 2019.

\$3.2 million

invested in supportive technology in FY24.

21,255

active, approved, or submitted OhioISPs in Salesforce.

1,964

people were provided DODD training and technical assistance regarding health and welfare topics.

113

high school students from 20 schools learned the needed skills to begin a career in direct care through the DSP-U program.

4,987

people using HCBS and ICF services were enrolled in the DODD Telehealth Project in FY24.



117

people received crisis stabilization from DODD's eight Developmental Centers.

1,866

students on IEPs and 504 plans were tutored by Learning Aid Ohio.

2,566

initial provider applications approved by DODD.



INITIATIVES & PROGRAMS

Rate Increases and Supporting DSPs

Thanks to focused and powerful advocacy, the FY24/25 budget recognized Ohio’s DD system’s most pressing issue: having enough direct support professionals (DSPs) to meet the needs of people with developmental disabilities. The budget addressed this issue by investing a historic \$1.3 billion into provider rates so DSPs can be paid more.

When Governor DeWine took office, rates supporting wages for DSPs were an average of \$11.12 per hour. Since then, Governor DeWine, Director Hauck, and the Ohio General Assembly invested the largest amount in the history of Ohio’s DD system to raise wages to an average of at least \$18 per hour.

In this investment, Ohio recognizes the value of DSPs and the value of those they support.

Across the state, the investment is making an impact on the lives of Ohioans with developmental disabilities. Increases in rates have helped with the retention of critical staff supporting people with developmental disabilities.

“ ViaQuest has seen a decrease in our year-over-year vacancy rate for DSP hires of more than 50%. Our open positions have decreased since December 2023 by 53%. I cannot overemphasize how the rate increase has positively impacted what we do. This is a game changer for the individuals we support, their families, and our teams that support them. ”

- Beth Dunning, Vice President of Residential Services at ViaQuest Residential Services, on the impact of increased rates

DODD is working with providers to collect required data on the rate increases. That information will be shared with the Ohio Legislature in FY25 to show the impact of these increases for DSPs and those they support.



Waiver Redesign Initiative

To better meet the needs of people with developmental disabilities and their families, DODD continued working with partners on the Waiver Redesign Initiative. The initiative consists of projects, including the review of Appendix K flexibilities, Waiver Modernization Project, and Blueprint for Adult Day and Employment Services Project.

DODD worked with families and other stakeholders to review important flexibilities allowed under Appendix K. A significant flexibility and change for Ohio's DD system allowed parents to be paid providers for their minor children. Another flexibility provided options for families who provide Shared Living. DODD heard from many families that these options have made a positive impact and have been invaluable. Governor DeWine and Director Hauck saw the value of these options provided to families and the importance of continuing them.

Starting January 1, 2024, these flexibilities were made into permanent service changes. In Ohio, family members now have the option to provide paid support to their minor child with extraordinary needs. Shared Living families now have the option to have a break through another provider providing services on the same day and the ability to be paid for Homemaker Personal Care instead.

The Waiver Modernization Project aims to streamline the assessment process so that people with developmental disabilities have greater flexibility in creating individual budgets for the services they choose. This will be accomplished by creating a single budgeting assessment, updating targeted services and rates, and improving reimbursement processes.

In FY24, the Waiver Modernization Project focused on four main areas:

- **Creating a single assessment to create individual budgets:** Explored assessment tools used in other states to determine if there is an alternative to the Developmental Disability Profile and Acuity Assessment Instrument that would better assess the needs of people served and their families.
- **Streamlining the billing process for providers:** Talked with providers and analyzed data to determine if there are alternative rate models that would simplify billing for Home and Personal Care (HPC) services provided in congregate settings.

Waiver Redesign Initiative Continued

- **Funding county board waiver services:** Collaborated with a workgroup of county board superintendents and finance managers to improve how counties and the state can fund the waivers.
- **Making Remote Supports more available and Shared Living more responsive:** Worked with people served, families, providers, and SSAs to identify improvements to these services.

Over several months, DODD and the Departments of Medicaid and Aging engaged stakeholders for feedback leading up to the expiration of Appendix K flexibilities. The agencies developed administrative rules and received approval from Ohio legislative and federal government.

Adult Day and Employment Services have evolved rapidly in Ohio in the past few years. DODD convened a representative group of planners called the Blueprint Workgroup to identify ways to improve Adult Day Support and transportation services, and strengthen competitive integrated employment outcomes.

In FY24, Blueprint work implemented the Adult Day Service (ADS) Quality Pilot and the Employment Services Quality Readiness Project by supporting 99 Adult Day Service providers and 43 employment service providers through funding infrastructure, building capacity, and developing staff training. The purpose of these projects is to see if investing in quality and offering incentives can help improve ADS waiver services and outcomes for people who need them, especially those with complex needs, and improve the quality of employment services.

Visit
dodd.ohio.gov
for Waiver
Redesign project
updates.



ARPA Funding and Projects

DODD allocated \$56 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) funds across Ohio. These funds aim to enhance opportunities and support for Ohioans with developmental disabilities and their families through several key project areas.

These project areas include:

- Supported Decision Making
- Mentorship Program
- Ohio Leadership Academy
- Waiver Redesign
- Training Content
- DSP Workforce Support
- Multi-System Youth Waiver Pilot
- Innovative Tech Infrastructure
- CtLC Resource Expansion

DODD accepted applications for \$14.9 million of the \$56 million to distribute for county administered projects that expand HCBS waiver services. All 67 counties that applied received funding. These projects reflect DODD's commitment to improving the quality of life for people with developmental disabilities in Ohio by providing resources and support for greater community accessibility, integration, independence, and overall well-being.

Examples include:

- \$2.5 million: Empowering people with developmental disabilities to live and engage independently
- \$7 million: Improving infrastructure to make communities more accessible
- \$4.4 million: Adding universal changing tables in public places
- \$600,000: Creating more community experiences for people with developmental disabilities
- \$220,000: Ensuring conferences and meetings are inclusive
- \$140,000: Increasing outreach efforts to unserved and underserved populations



“ These investments are truly going to make a difference for people with developmental disabilities and their families by giving them more access to the communities where they live. ”

- Governor Mike Dewine

Universal Changing Table Efforts

To have inclusive communities, Ohio communities must be accessible.

In FY24, Ohio invested \$4.4 million in ARPA funds toward universal changing tables. This priority initiative allowed more people to enjoy community activities and engage with all that Ohio has to offer.

Many people with lived experiences, their families, and organizations have advocated for more universal changing tables and accessible restrooms. Their advocacy continues to make an impact across Ohio and the nation.

Universal changing tables can now be found in more than 50 Ohio locations including rest areas, fairgrounds, airports, museums, zoos, and more!

“ Our campaign began with our sons, Matthew and Aiden, and quickly spread through the developmental disability community and beyond. We have advocated for many years, spreading awareness and resources and we are so thankful that Director Hauck, Governor DeWine, and the Ohio General Assembly heard us and grasped the mission so that real change can occur in Ohio. ”

- Kim Boulter and Jennifer Corcoran, leaders of Changing Spaces Ohio



OhioISP

The implementation of the OhioISP established a consistent assessment and planning process across the state to support people with developmental disabilities to live, learn, love, work, play, and pursue their life aspirations.

The OhioISP places the needs of the person receiving services at the center of the planning process. The person leads the process by making choices, setting goals, and deciding how they want to live their life.

Regional teams provided personalized outreach and support to county boards and intermediate care facilities (ICFs) for OhioISP onboarding and implementation. DODD has developed numerous job aids and resources to support teams with person-centered planning. All waiver recipients and people residing in ICFs were required to have plans entered into DODD's online system by June 30, 2024.



“ I also like making friends and things and my dreams and goals are to go and be on my own and just be an average dude on the street just doing dude things. ”

- Jeremy, pictured with his SSA, David, on the left discussing how the OhioISP helped their conversations

Housing

The Community Capital Assistance program, otherwise known as CCA, provided funding to county boards and non-profit organizations for the purchase, construction, and/or renovation of community housing for persons with developmental disabilities. In FY24, the program invested more than \$13.8 million in 281 projects across Ohio. This assistance helped 53 counties renovate and make accessible 236 homes and helped to acquire and develop 45 new homes for community living.

The Rental Assistance Program assisted 266 people in 35 participating counties with helping make their rent more affordable.

Supporting Families

DODD is committed to working with statewide partners to ensure families have the resources and connections they need to support their loved ones. Here are some of the collaborations and initiatives from FY24:

- Working with OhioSIBS and their Sibshops initiative, DODD helped empower siblings of people with developmental disabilities through connection and community. OhioSIBS worked with 19 county boards of developmental disabilities to develop Sibshops programs that supported more than 80 children.
- DODD’s Ohio LifeCourse Nexus team, along with the Family Resource Network of Ohio, implemented the CtLC philosophy and framework in multiple ways. The team strives to ensure that Ohioans eligible for developmental disabilities services have increased opportunities and can pursue their life aspirations through state-of-the-art planning, innovative technology, and integrated supports that focus on the talents, interests, and skills of each individual and family.
- Bringing Fathers Forward, a DODD workgroup of Ohio stakeholders, collaborated to explore the experiences of fathers of children with developmental disabilities and what could be done to better support them. The workgroup developed resources and supports for Ohio’s fathers and also awarded the Down Syndrome Association of Northeast Ohio \$40,000 to expand the “Pathways for Pops” program to support fathers of children with all developmental disabilities throughout all of Ohio.



DODD partnered with the Ohio Family Network (OFN) to provide resources, networking, and services to more than **6,000** families through OFN partners: Autism Society of Greater Akron, Autism Society of Northwest Ohio, Down Syndrome Association of Central Ohio, The Family Leadership Network of Starfire, The Center for Disability Empowerment, and Milestones Autism Resources.

Supporting Youth with Complex Needs

Youth with complex needs are children who require services from more than one child-serving system, including children services, developmental disabilities, mental health and addiction, and juvenile justice. DODD, along with other state agencies, local county boards of developmental disabilities, and provider agencies across the state, are committed to supporting these youth and their families through programs and initiatives such as the following:

Multi-Disciplinary Comprehensive Assessment Team (MCAT) and Regional Family Coaches

The MCAT project is a partnership between the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI) and DODD. It is one of the department’s efforts to intervene early to help keep youth in their homes and communities. This is an opportunity for local teams to present challenging situations to a clinical team comprised of experts from multiple disciplines, including a psychologist, primary care physician, psychiatrist, occupational therapist, speech and language pathologist, and trauma and autism experts. The team has specific expertise with youth who have a mental illness and intellectual/developmental disabilities. After a youth is presented to the MCAT team, the family will be provided with a family regional coach who will assist the family in carrying out the MCAT recommendations. The regional coach will assist families by providing hands-on, in-home support, sharing how to implement specific interventions.



Keeping Families Together (KFT)

To enable youth with complex behavioral needs to remain with their families, DODD awarded approximately \$2.8 million in state subsidy funding, known as KFT funding, to provide respite and other services and support to families. DODD awarded funding to 52 county boards that submitted proposals for training and incentives for providers, home furnishings and repairs, recreational items, parent training and coaching, and respite.

Youth Waiver Pilot

DODD is exploring a more intensive waiver service through the development of a pilot program. The goal of this project is to create a waiver service that is better suited to serving youth and adults with complex needs. Work began in Mahoning County in 2024. DODD will collect data to guide the construction of this service and statewide implementation.

Youth Respite

Through the U.S. Department of Education, the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund, and a partnership with the Ohio Department of Workforce and Education, up to \$2 million in grant funding was made available to county boards to expand access to respite services. The goal of this project is to increase the capacity for and utilization of planned, therapeutic respite and/ or intensive in-home supports to prevent or reduce out-of-home placements, prepare for successful returns home for youth in out-of-home residential settings, and improve outcomes for youth who have developmental disabilities and complex behavioral health needs and their families.

Intensive Behavior Support Rate Add-On (IBSRAO)

DODD has continued expanding the IBSRAO project to allow ICFs to receive enhanced reimbursement for providing youth short-term, intensive behavioral support. Currently, two ICF providers deliver this service across six small residential settings, operating a total of 26 beds. These providers serve identified youth with dual diagnoses of mental illness and intellectual disability, who are also eligible for ICF services. They often present challenging behaviors that are difficult to manage in their home environment.

Technology First Initiative

The Technology First initiative aims to help people learn more about using technology to improve their quality of life and how they can experience more independence and personal freedom.

Recognizing the importance of technology in the lives of people with developmental disabilities, the FY24/25 budget established a new DODD Technology First line item to launch grants and projects ranging from Innovative Technology Solutions to Regional Technology Hubs.

More than \$3 million was invested in supportive technology in FY24. This funding financed projects, including supporting providers interested in developing remote support services as a part of their service delivery and funding assistive technology for people living in ICFs.

The initiative also supported a Remote Support/Assistive Technology Spring 2024 training series, with over 300 service and support administrators (SSAs) and other stakeholders attending each of the four trainings in the series.

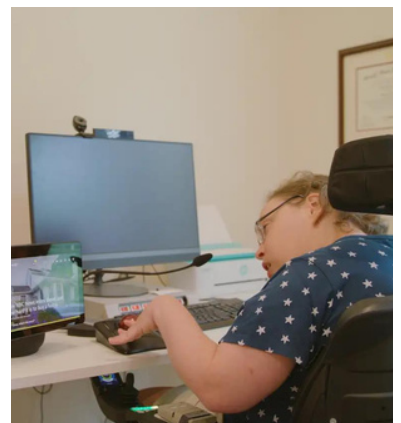
People in all **88** counties used remote support and assistive technology services.



Assistive Tech helps provide personalized support for daily tasks, such as a cellphone application that reminds someone to stay on task at their job, or appliances with automatic shut-off features.



Remote Supports uses two-way communication in real time, so a person can communicate with their providers when they need them and be more independent at home.



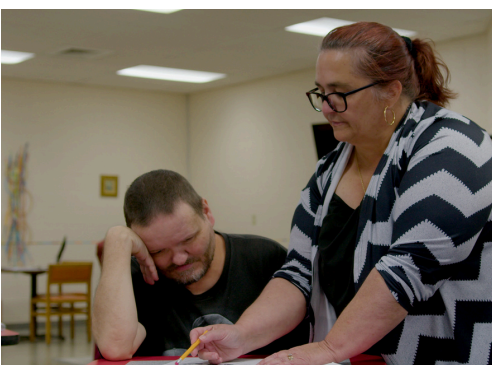
Employment First Initiative

Employment First is a philosophy that presumes that all Ohioans can and should have opportunities to work in the community. It values diversity and strengthens our workforce by including and valuing all people, regardless of disability. Since 2019, the Employment First Initiative supported a 25% increase in Competitive Integrated Employment. This means more people with developmental disabilities are finding meaningful jobs in Ohio.

With support from the Employment First Taskforce, the Establishing Families as Partners in Secondary Transition learning series continued in FY24. The learning series equips targeted groups of cross-agency professionals from local schools and education centers, county boards of developmental disabilities, mental health providers, counselors, supervisors from Opportunities from Ohioans with Disabilities, and anyone providing service and support to transition-age youth with disabilities with the tools and resources needed to support transition planning.

The 2024 Innovation Series included six webinars focusing on employment, technology, transition to adulthood, supporting people with significant needs, plans, and outcomes. The series concluded with an in-person Innovation Summit attended by more than 170 people with lived experiences, family members, providers, county board, and Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities staff.

Works4Me, a federal five-year grant awarded to Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, increased the number of providers involved in the project from three to 13, statewide. The DODD Works4Me Project Manager supports providers, county boards, families, businesses, and people served with information and access to the project.

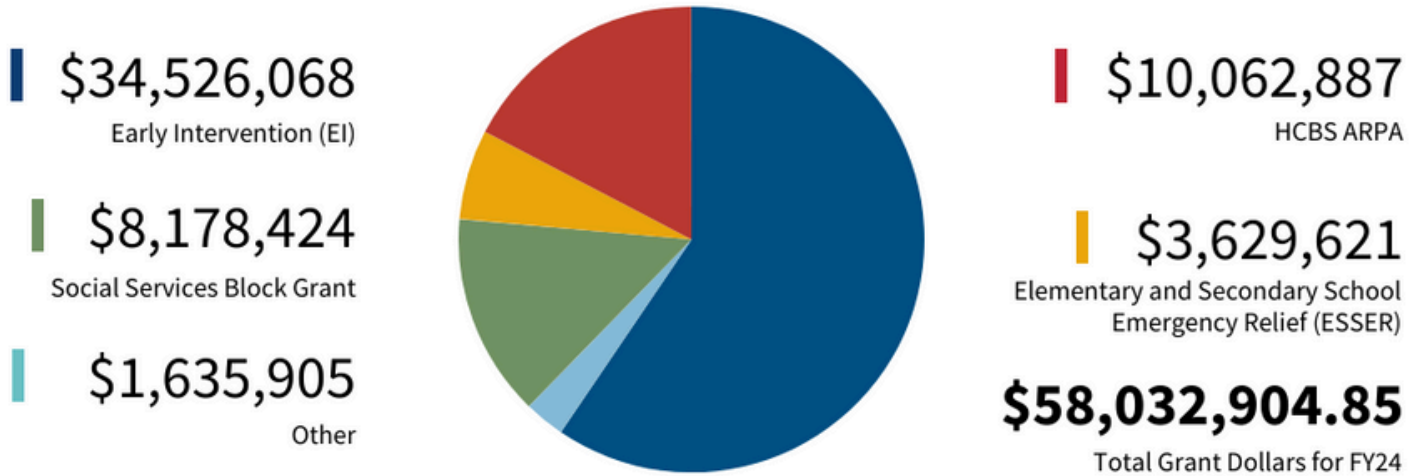


“ There are opportunities for them and the doors are open. It’s endless opportunities. ”

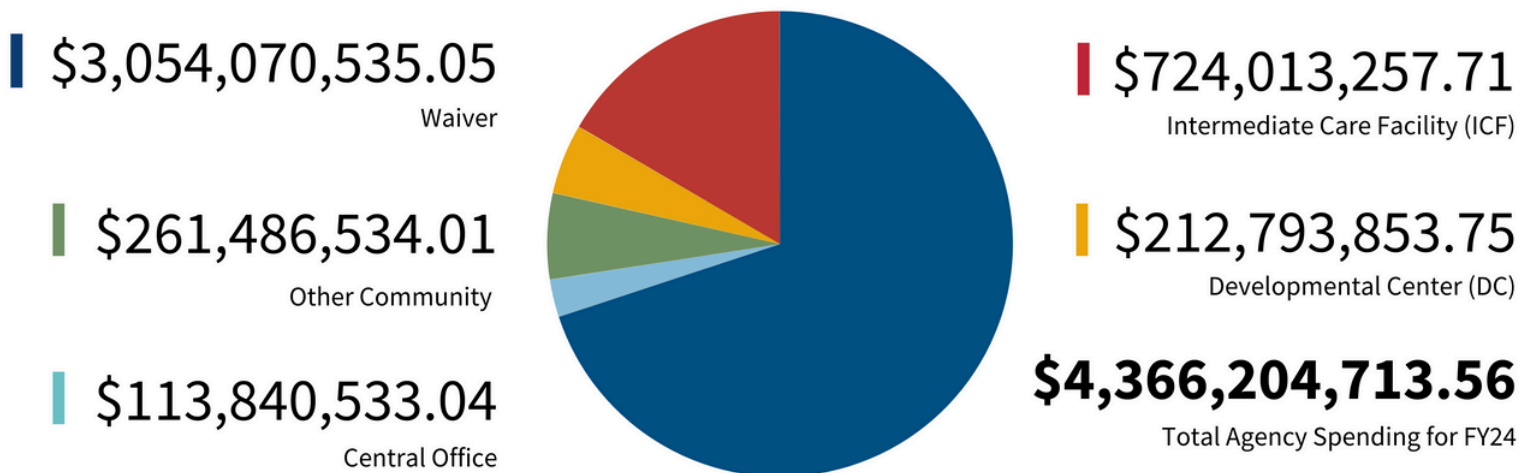
- Laurie, pictured to the left, an instructor at Lott Industries, working with a participant of the Works4Me program

Fiscal

FY24 Grant Dollars



FY24 Agency Dollars Spent





Thank you!

The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities is thankful for our partners across the state, including people served, their families, providers, county boards, advocacy groups, direct care providers, legislators, and more. These partnerships truly make a difference in the lives of the people with developmental disabilities.

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