



THE FOCUS

March 2017 Vol. 5 No. 7

Hot Topic

Stay the Course... A Unique Historical Opportunity

Supported Employment and Inclusion are a bipartisan issue. The governors of 50 states have supported Employment First. We have stories of private and public businesses from across the nation that hire people with disabilities. With roots in civil rights and its subsequent legislation, our professions as employment professionals and advocates exemplify the intricate interplay of civil rights, government policy and funding. The line of **universal equity** in the workplace and in education runs from Willowbrook in New York and Henry's Turkey Farm in Iowa to **real jobs for real wages**. We now face a unique opportunity to support the historical charge in our work to access employment for ALL of our citizens. As the new administration moves forward, we must vigilantly attend to:



- ⇒ Reach changes in policy with the Department of Labor, Human Services, Education, and Veterans Affairs
- ⇒ Changes in how governors view the use of federal funds
- ⇒ Changes in the standards for education and best practice supported employment
- ⇒ The regulation of minimum wage both for workers with disabilities and workers who support them
- ⇒ Changes in the allocation of services, Medicaid, and social security

[Continued on page 2](#)

About Oregon APSE

Our mission is to promote equitable, integrated employment of people with disabilities that recognizes their contributions as community members.

We represent the Oregon chapter of the national Association of People Supporting EmploymentFirst. [APSE](#) is the only national organization with an exclusive focus on integrated employment and career advancement opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

As of March 2017, we have 109 members!

[Join Oregon APSE](#)

We look forward to joining with like-minded Oregonians! To become a member, click on the "Join" link or email:

oregonapse@gmail.com



Check out our new website

www.oregonapse.org

Hot Topic continued...

We must continue to place people with disabilities in real jobs for real wages and to uphold the framework of supports and policies that promote supported employment and inclusion.

Debra McLean, Oregon APSE Board

Block Grants



At the federal level, with the recent change in administration, there is a great deal of discussion about block granting Medicaid. So, what does this mean?

First it's important to understand that Medicaid is currently an entitlement service. If an individual meets certain criteria, they qualify for Medicaid and the federal government and the state government share the cost of the services that the individual receives. For individuals with disabilities, this means both medically related services and long term care services such as job coaching.

In the discussion about block grants, there are two different ways block granting could work. The first would be to cap the total amount a state receives for all Medicaid programs. This cap would be set based on current spending and be adjusted annually based on inflation or another national index. However, historically medical costs increase at a higher rate than the indexes being proposed. In addition, if there is an economic

downturn and more people require Medicaid, the states would struggle to meet the additional need without any additional participation from the federal government.

The second methodology being considered has the federal Medicaid contribution capped on a per individual basis. While this would help in an economic downturn, it would still limit the federal contribution as medical costs increase faster than the inflation rate.

The bottom-line is that block grants are designed to limit and, over time, reduce the level of federal assistance to states for medical and long term services for people with disabilities. Over time, that reduction will be larger and larger. Disability services in Oregon are already stretched in many areas. Reduction in federal funds will only exacerbate this issue.

Dan Peccia, Oregon APSE Board

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If you have thoughts regarding these stories, or any other HOT Topics, please send them to oregonapse@gmail.com with the Subject: Hot Topic.

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A Cool Life

~The **Cool Life** column showcases stories that demonstrate individuals with disabilities successfully employed by community businesses. Have a story? Send an email to: oregonapse@gmail.com

As the new Executive Director of the Oregon Self-Advocacy Coalition (OSAC), Gabrielle Guedon hit the road running. She is hiring staff, connecting with OSAC members, and developing presentations for *Meet at the Mountain* and the *national APSE conference*. Previously, Gabrielle worked as a Peer Mentor for OSAC, an Employment Outreach Specialist for Community Vision, Inc. and a Grooming Assistant for Lexidog. Alongside her other jobs, Gabrielle has continued to provide respite care for her mother's foster home for children with disabilities. In all her jobs, she has drawn on her excellent people and advocacy skills.

Working has given Gabrielle the opportunity to make major life changes. She moved out of her mother's home and lives independently in a new home that she is purchasing. She has also obtained a driver's license and is buying a car. When out and about in Portland, many are familiar with seeing Gabrielle with her service dog, Buddy. Gabrielle states, "He's a great guy and loves to make new friends." In her spare time, Gabrielle enjoys canning, couponing and camping.

Keep your eyes open and your ears opened as we will be hearing more as Gabrielle translates OSAC's vision into action that positively affects the lives of self-advocates and transition students across the state.



Gabrielle Guedon,
Executive Director of OSAC
(Photo: contributed by Gabrielle)

Stories inside The FOCUS

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***Follow the discussion on the
[Oregon APSE Facebook page!](#)***

Did you know?

Oregon APSE continues to collect data provided by Oregon's Employment First team. With the WIOA, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Oregon is now gathering data on transition-age youth, ages 14 to 24. Here is some initial data in comparison to all ODDS data. Students are working and have comparable wages to others supported by ODDS. Small group employment is included in the data with individual jobs. We do want to continue to steer towards the goals of 20 hours per week of competitive, integrated employment along with minimum wage or above. There are 196 transition-aged youth working in individual, supported employment as of the September 2016 EOS data.

In addition this data shows, there were 994 people working in supported employment. The average wage for people was \$10.10 per hour, working 12.2 per week.

Data provided by
ODDS—Employment
First Team

Guess... Who is our Mystery Member?

Our Mystery Member has presented at several APSE national conferences and the 2016 Regional Institute. His advocacy at State policy meetings and at the Capitol, in Salem, makes him a familiar face across the State of Oregon. He is a strong voice for integrated employment and the closure of sheltered workshops. His directness and biting sense of humor makes sure that those in the room hear his message. He was one of the recipients of the **2016 TASH Marc Gold Employment Award** for his role in Lane v. Brown.



([Go to page 10](#) to reveal the
Mystery Member's identity.)

Check out Oregon APSE's new website

www.oregonapse.org

Employment Counts for Target Population in September	
Population	Competitive Integrated Employment* (CIE)
Total ODDS Population	994
ODDS Transition-age (14-24)	224
Hours for Target Population in September 2016 EOS Data	
Population	CIE Avg. Hours
Total ODDS Population	12.2
ODDS Transition-age (14-24)	12.5
Wages for Target Population in September 2016 EOS Data	
Population	CIE Avg. Wage
Total ODDS Population	\$ 10.10
ODDS Transition-age (14-24)	\$ 10.04
*Individual Supported Employment is same as Competitive Integrated Employment	

Board Talk



Nicholas Von Pless

Nicholas Von Pless is Co-President of the Oregon APSE chapter, and is the Supported Employment Manager at Community Access Services from the Gorge to the Coast, Oregon. *He has been an APSE Board member for three years.*

Stay the Course...

Thank you so much for reading **THE FOCUS**. Serving previously as your Membership Chair, I'm honored to start 2017 as Oregon APSE's Co-President alongside Tara Asai. I am very interested in hearing from you about how we can continue supporting dialogue, programming, and advocacy that supports our work throughout Oregon.

THE FOCUS theme is "Stay the Course," and with this winter's crazy, crippling weather, and an increasingly polarizing and discriminating federal administration, we must keep both hands on the wheel. I have been a Direct Support Professional, Job Developer, Job Coach, and (currently) Program Manager, and I know we can all pitch in to continue changing lives, fighting for civil rights, and making our communities inclusive, safe, and thriving.

In these past weeks, I have been nourished standing among the crowd at the Women's March; in meetings with small and large employers; planning with city government; and advocating alongside our county and state leaders. While there is uncertainty on a national level, Oregon continues to move forward. We are still building on the landmark settlement of Lane v. Brown. A Peer-to-Peer Mentorship program is taking off to encourage and guide those who wish to lead a productive life away [Continued on page 13](#)

Oregon APSE Governing Board

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Ryley Newport, At Large

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Get Involved!

To volunteer for the APSE 2017 National Conference, Board sub-committees, or to be considered for the Board of Directors, contact

oregonapse@gmail.com

Our elections for new Board members occurs after the Annual Meeting (in the fall).

Please keep your information [up to date](#).

Newsletter Editors

Tara Asai, Paula Johnson, Debra McLean, Nicholas Von Pless, Dan Peccia and CJ Webb

Upcoming Events

Washington Transition Conference

Three Rivers Conference Center
Kennewick, WA
March 28, 2017

— — —

Meet at the Mountain IV – Trek to the Top!

Sunriver, OR 97707
April 5-6, 2017
(April 4 evening—for advocates and families)



APSE CESP™ Exam

For Exam Application and upcoming Exam Opportunities

Bend, Oregon

Applications due by May 8,
2017

May 23, 2017 (9a-12p)

Portland, Oregon

Applications due by June 4,
2017

**June 19, 2016 (9a-12p and
1pm-4pm)**

Around the State

Charting the Course, a few words from the Transformation Captains

By Roger Hassenpflug



The Transformation Grant process set sail in uncertain waters and the voyage remained choppy for quite a while. As we enter Phase 2, the seas have cleared a bit with wind and course becoming more predictable, the K Plan and the billing system being less puzzling now. For example, Lane v. Brown was settled; the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (W.I.O.A.) is being implemented; Home & Community Based Services (HCBS) and the Department of Justice have issued clarifying memos, and all of those policy shapers lay out enforceable expectations for movement from segregated services to highly integrated, community based outcomes that emphasize jobs.

What have we learned so far? This is an enormous, complex undertaking that faced resistance and disbelief at the onset. The primary objective was community-based jobs for people who had been in segregated services and few organizations developed many. But there was progress in acceptance of the course, skill building, culture and brand change and, in the best case scenarios, new jobs for individuals long left waiting.

What is the difference between organizations that were more successful and those that continue to struggle? Our observations are:

- 1) unshakeable commitment and belief from leadership that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) currently segregated can successfully hold meaningful jobs in typical, varied community businesses;
- 2) leadership that expects and insists on follow-through and outcomes;
- 3) a shift in thinking and language to the business world;

Around the State continued...

- 4) getting the right, trained, productive staff to crew the ship;
- 5) a financial commitment to invest in the process through the learning curve; and
- 6) taking leadership in helping community partners and stakeholders work together.

We begin Phase 2 wondering how we can help organizations get started and master the work faster. We also share concern about the future rate system, expectations and changes implemented by the new administration, the impact of legislative decisions, etc. But we know we can make this voyage together safely with all hands on deck, trained, and ready to work.

~

By Cesilee Coulson



As the initial project organizations complete their maiden voyage, it is clear the experience gained on the journey is beginning to transform the Oregon service delivery system to one that emphasizes community employment.

Within the Service Provider (SP) pool supported by WISE, 69 people obtained jobs, meeting the project criteria. Facility-based employment decreased by 233 people. All in all, it was a very successful maiden voyage. Now, the next critical journey lays ahead.

The crew will need to rely on each other as the course increases in difficulty. The conditions ahead will require:

- ***An approach of flexibility and innovation.*** This means the service system will need policies, funding and rules that allow for entrepreneurial approaches rather than only standardized approaches. For SPs, this means a focus on creating a unique and flexible strategic plan to address changing organizational culture and systems. For consultants and trainers, there must remain an emphasis on a flexible approach that responds to the changing circumstances of SPs. [Continued on page 8](#)

Upcoming Events

2017 National APSE Conference

Portland, Oregon

June 20-22, 2017 with
Pre-conference and Students
for APSE on June 19th

[Click here for information](#)

Social Event hosted by Oregon APSE and WISE – Portland, Oregon

A special event to include a walk through downtown Portland and a program featuring employees, employers, music, food and drink.

More details will come out soon. **Check our website**

www.oregonapse.org

June 20, 2017

7:00 to 10:00pm

Employment Advocacy Day

Look for upcoming information
May 22, 2017

Community Summit 2017

Wenatchee, WA

June 13-15, 2017

Around the state continued...

- ***Focusing available resources on the destination.*** It is important for all crew members to not get lost in procedural improvements before shifting resources to identify jobs. The focus of the entire crew - staff, board, and regulatory agencies - must remain on outcomes: finding and retaining jobs to ensure that the boat lands at its planned port of call.
- ***Making no assumptions while en route.*** For example, a frequent assumption is that once a person finds a job of their choice and receives proper training and follow-up, the job is secure or permanent. It is, of course, not true: jobs are not forever. State agencies and decision-makers must create and/or protect ongoing supports that can quickly respond to a person's changing employment situation and/or a person's desire for career growth.

As we set course for the second leg of the journey, the crew will build on the success of the maiden voyage while knowing that quality transformation takes time, focus and the united effort of stakeholders at all levels.

~

After hearing from the Technical Assistance Captains, we are featuring two transformation organizations that have special projects.

Pearl Buck Community Services – Charting the Course to Successful Employment

By Paula Johnson, Oregon APSE Board

As part of their transformation strategy, Pearl Buck Center in Eugene implemented a

Project SEARCH program at PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend in Springfield. This program is based on the successful workforce development program for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities that was established in 1996 at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center.

The PeaceHealth program is of particular interest because nine of their ten interns came directly from the Pearl Buck sheltered workshop. They began their program in September 2016 and have made tremendous progress since that time. While Pearl Buck Center is experiencing positive transformation changes as an organization, the Project SEARCH participants are greatly impacted by their total immersion in a business environment. The following passage was written by the interns after just two months at the medical center. It exemplifies the transformation that many individuals experience once they become active in their communities.

"We have learned a lot of things since we started this program. Some of the things are what the skills trainers have taught us. Things like how to shake hands, how to find our way around the hospital, how dinner plates have gotten bigger over the past 20 years, and how to make goals for ourselves.

We have learned a lot of things from our co-workers, too. The people in this hospital have been very helpful and have made our time here fun and useful. We have learned how to be better team mates and co-workers. We have learned that taking initiative is [Continued on page 11](#)

Welcome Aboard!

By Paula Johnson

The APSE National Conference will be held in Portland June 19-22. This conference brings together more than 1,000 community leaders, businesses, and individuals with disabilities from across the country and around the world to network and discuss state-of-the-art strategies to ensure equitable employment for all citizens with disabilities. The APSE Conference is the only national conference focused solely on the advancement of Employment First.

This year there is a unique opportunity for you to invite employers to attend the conference. There will be sessions on Wednesday, June 21, specifically designed for employers such as:

- ◇ Legislation affecting hiring practices
- ◇ Busting Myths: Liability/Risk Management
- ◇ How employers can support career advancement for employees with disabilities
- ◇ Public Sector hiring
- ◇ How managers can support their staff/teams on integrating a diverse workforce that includes people with disabilities

There is also an opportunity for you to learn from employers at the Pre-conference on Monday, June 19, at a session that will be presented by local employers. Corporate hiring managers will discuss the importance of a truly diverse workforce and will speak to direct experience hiring and retaining employees with disabilities and their

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Employment Specialist Corner

supports (if applicable) every day. Panelists will discuss how having a workforce that includes workers with disabilities has improved the company's bottom line and enriched the workforce environment.

Panelists will discuss how they would like to work with disability service providers, transition personnel and potential employees with disabilities to improve the recruiting, on-boarding and retention processes. This will be an interactive session with attendees to determine what businesses need from the support providers and how to replicate disability inclusion at businesses that have not done so in the past.

In addition, there will be a luncheon on Wednesday where the national awards for Small, Medium, and Large Employers will be presented. This is another great opportunity for you to engage your employers and for them to learn more about the national Employment First movement.

Local employers are being identified who can present on the above topics as well as the practices that they have implemented with local provider partners. If you would like to recommend an employer to participate in a session as a speaker, please contact Paula Johnson at Paula.Johnson@cchmc.org.

~ If you have ideas for the Employment Corner, please contact Oregon APSE at oregonapse@gmail.com. Subject: The Focus newsletter

An Update about Lane v. Brown ...

Behind closed doors, the Independent Reviewer and lawyers are negotiating details of the settlement with little news of major developments. More Oregonians with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities (IDD) are getting jobs, a peer mentoring project has launched, schools and family networks are engaging in Employment First, the transformation of sheltered workshops is steady, but painstakingly slow, and providers are working feverishly to keep the pace. This is mostly good news.

However, looking deeper, many especially those with challenging support needs who require customized jobs, are not getting employed. With competing demands created by the K Plan, Services Coordinators and Personal Agents have little time to learn the specialized details of employment in order to competently advise their customers. People have Career Development Plans but they rarely have the individual attention that was sought through *Lane v. Brown*.

Providers are trying hard, but for the vast majority, turnover and the lack of training beyond the basics keeps their staffing at a precarious place. This seriously undermines their ability to provide services to those with the most challenging support needs. For the experiences and well-respected providers, customers are often waiting months. And, this is on top of the wait time to get the necessary paperwork through the County, Brokerage, and Vocational Rehabilitation.

Oregon APSE is concerned with the progress of the implementation of Lane v. Brown and integrated employment. Thus, we invite our readers to share stories of what is happening in their communities. [Continued on page 11](#)

~

Written by Tara Asai, Oregon APSE Co-President, January 2017

Meet Mystery APSE Member



Ross Ryan

Ross receiving the 2016 Marc Gold Employment Award from TASH.



***Follow the discussion on the
[Oregon APSE Facebook page!](#)***

... and Congratulations, Oregonians!

Note from Lane v. Brown Expert Witness

TASH honored Steven Schwartz and Cathy Costanzo from the Center for Public Representation, Ross Ryan, Class Member, and Bob Joondeph from Disability Rights Oregon for their work in *Lane v Brown*. The honorees received the esteemed Marc Gold award at the annual TASH conference held in St. Louis, Missouri in December 2016. This award honors the contribution of Marc Gold, both to the disability field and to TASH. It is presented to leaders in the field who have made outstanding contributions to increasing access to competitive, integrated employment for people with significant disabilities. The honorees litigated the *Lane v. Brown* class action, along with legal partners, US Department of Justice, Miller, Nash, Graham and Dunn, and Perkins Coie, LLP, challenging the unnecessary segregation of over 3,000 Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities who were in sheltered workshops and thousands of youth at risk of segregation upon leaving high school. There were many collaborators in the case, including people with disabilities, family members, OR APSE, Plaintiffs, United Cerebral Palsy, and other community associates.

This case was the first in the nation to directly hold that the ADA applies to employment settings and requires States and other public entities to provide employment services in integrated settings rather than in segregated sheltered

workshops. In crafting the remedy, the vision is for all Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities to have access to the same opportunities and choices as Oregonians without disabilities.

The Landmark Settlement Agreement raised expectations for people with disabilities to work in real jobs for real pay, by requiring that integrated employment be compensated at minimum wage or better; that individuals have supports that allow them to work at least 20 hours/week; and that they receive the same pay, benefits, interactions with co-workers, and opportunities for advancement, as people doing the same or similar work who do not have disabilities.

Guest Contributor and
Executive Director, Georgia Advocacy
Ruby Moore

Oregon APSE is looking forward to seeing you at the National APSE Conference in Portland. Oregon APSE and WISE are sponsoring a walk to celebrate employers on June 20. See [Events](#)—page 7. APSE's new logo is being revealed this month.



Around the State continued...

important. We have learned how to do our jobs and how to be independent. All of these things will help us to be better employees and that is important when we get real paying jobs.

We are also learning that it is hard to be an adult. We have to get up really early to catch the bus to get to work. We have to pay attention to what we are doing and saying. We have to come to work every day, no excuses. We have to follow the rules like everyone else. We have to be responsible. It's hard, but we can do it.



When we were invited to apply for Project SEARCH we were afraid of leaving Pearl Buck Center. We didn't want to leave our friends. We didn't know what to expect. We didn't think that we would fit in. We thought that it would be hard to work with strangers. We are learning that there are people who want to help us and want to see us do good and be successful. We are learning that we don't have to be afraid. We are learning that we can do more than people think we can and even more than we thought we could ourselves."

We are learning that we like to work. We like to hear how well we are doing. We like being around other people who are different from us, but not that different. We are learning that the things that we were afraid of aren't really all that scary. We are learning that we have to give things and people a chance. We are growing. We still have a lot to learn, because the program isn't over yet. We can't wait to see what else we learn and who else we will meet."

~

MV Advancement – The Next Adventure to Successful Employment

By Ryan Waddell and IP team



MV Advancements (MVA) (formerly Mid-Valley Rehabilitation) began supporting people in customized community employment in the 1980's. By late 2014, we served 73 people in one of two sheltered employment locations. To meet the challenges of the transformation process, MVA formed a transformation committee, which implemented several key changes to the organization. In July 2015, the organization relaunched as MVA with a strong focus on improving opportunities in community integration and individual employment. MVA also restructured several management roles and added the new position, the Director of Employment Services; MVA continues to add capacity in the Individual Placement (IP) department by hiring employment specialists and job coaches. All employment specialists train for CESP certification.

MVA has realized many successes during its transformation process. In addition to hiring a new Executive Director in July of 2015, with support from our [Continued on page 13](#)

Around the State wrap-up

transition consultant and our management team, our Board of Directors recognized the importance of transformation and they fully support the organizational changes. The IP team has become more creative in job development. And the MVA Employment Specialists are active in various local business groups for advocacy and networking opportunities. MVA has hosted several “Community Forum” events to share information and answer questions from families about Employment First.

MVA made the strategic decision not to just close the door on people but to be thoughtful and create opportunities and grow capacity in the IP team. As MVA looks to the future, we will continue adding capacity in the IP department to serve growing workloads. We are partnering with school transition programs to help transition-aged students start preparing to enter the workforce. We are always looking for new ways to enrichment program opportunities. At MV Advancements, we are passionate about people and our vision statement serves as our guide:

“Adults experiencing disabilities are fully supported to be involved in their communities, developing meaningful relationships, at work, at home and at leisure.”

~

~THE FOCUS ***Around the State*** column features stories from Oregon APSE members and friends that illustrate Oregon’s pioneering spirit from various regions of the state. If you have a story, please contact us at: oregonapse@gmail.com

Board Talk wrap-up

from sheltered workshops. We keep hearing great stories of customized employment and above-average earnings for proud, supported employees across the state.

I hope you have it on your radar to join us at two exciting upcoming conferences. In April, Meet at the Mountain in Sunriver will provide two days for our Employment First colleagues to share what’s working and what needs to happen. In June, Oregon APSE is thrilled to host APSE’s National Conference in Portland. This will be an amazing opportunity to demonstrate Oregon’s ability to lead, and provide conversation, training, and celebration with our peers from across the country who are answering the same questions. You might be surprised by what’s happening elsewhere, and I hope you’ll bring back all that knowledge to your teams and your daily work.

I’m determined to stay the course, and I hope you’ll join me. We’re stronger together. Even as storm clouds gather and fog our path, I know Oregonians share many of the same values and that we are fierce in keeping what works and forging ahead with what’s right. On behalf of Oregon APSE, thank you for all that you do. I hope that you’ll reach out – for resources, for success stories, for anything. Let’s stay connected.

Warmly,
Nicholas Von Pless, Co-President, Oregon APSE

Please visit our new website:

www.oregonapse.org