Our Mission is to serve people with disabilities working in agriculture who want to:

• Continue living independently
• Increase quality of life
• Maintain a productive life on the farm
Ohio’s Employment First Executive Order

**Signed in March 2012**

- Employment First Task Force
  - Department of Developmental Disabilities
  - Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities
  - Department of Medicaid
  - Department of Education
  - Mental Health and Addiction Services
  - Department of Jobs and Family Services
  - Developmental Disabilities Council
- Employment First Advisory Committee
FOUNDATION of Ohio Employment First Partnership

Agency Neutral

Person Centered

Outcome Focused
Person-Centered Planning

Community Membership

Community Employment

Priorities
Real Culture Shift

• All people with disabilities are presumed capable of community employment

• No more asking “Can you work?” but instead “What are you good at?”

• No more asking “Do you want to work?” but instead “Where do you want to work?”

• Working is the norm – not the exception
Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities
Employment and Community Life Engagement
Project Manager Map

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Building Independence through Agriculture
February 26, 2019

Keynote: Growing a new crop of farmhands
Eric Metzger, Director of Integration and Advocacy - Hamilton County Board of Developmental Disability

Mason Bailey, Employee of Madison Tree, Adaptive Equipment user, valued employee

Nathan Beck, Employment Navigator and Manager - Hamilton County Board of Developmental Disability
Building Independence through Agriculture  
February 26, 2019

Applied solutions of employing individuals with cognitive disability in agricultural and horticultural settings

Rudy Moyer, Horticultural Manager – Pegasus Farm  
Beth Snyder and Jennifer Hardacre, Co-founders - The H.A.R.D. Acre Farm  
Doug Sharp, Executive Director - Lettuce Work
Building Independence through Agriculture
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Resources and Training
Jessie Green, Program Director, Nisonger Center, TOPS program - Certifications and educational training
Jacqueline Kowalski, Extension Educator Summit County – Horticultural task training guides
Rob Seideman Executive Director, Brianne Wilkerson, Program Director – May We Help
Building Independence through Agriculture
February 26, 2019

Employment First
Tom Hess - Employment and Community Life Engagement
Project Manager, Ohio Department of Developmental
Disabilities

Connecting employers and job seekers
Eric Metzger, Director of Integration and Advocacy, Hamilton
County Board of Developmental Disability
Building Independence through Agriculture
February 26, 2019

Opportunities and Obstacles:
Implementing a model for your community
Lisa Pfeifer, Dee Jepsen, Laura Akgerman, Randy Joseph - Ohio AgrAbility
Objective of our Last Session:
Find Meaningful Work in Agriculture and Horticultural Activities

• Gardening
• Animal care
• Property upkeep
• Customer service
GARDENING
ANIMAL CARE
PROPERTY
UPKEEP
INDIVIDUAL TALENTS
CUSTOMER SERVICE
• Balancing production with individuals in mind
• Active engagement of “farmers”
• Using prior experience and adapting that to a new vocation
Urban perspective VS Rural perspective
• Staffing and Training
• Modifying a simple task to the community of workers
Agriculture Training Programs

• Farm training programs envisioned to develop small farms and social enterprises.

• Goal: Train workers for farm and greenhouse jobs.
Need for training resources

- Most clients and/or job coaches didn’t have farm, garden or greenhouse experience.

- Basic training resources not available.
Job aids

• In 2013, a list of 35+ tasks was created.

• Tasks were based on day-to-day operations for basic vegetable farm.
Job aids

First two created:

• Seeding trays
• Harvesting broccoli
Project delay

• OSU Extension personnel shifted offices.

• Hattie’s Gardens unexpectedly closed in late 2017.
SO.............

- OSUE partnered with Let’s Grow Akron, Master Gardener Volunteers, and Rainbow Farms.

- Pared down the number of job aids needed to those that would be accomplished by client.
Lessons learned

• There are many ways to complete farm tasks. How do you pick one way?

• Careful timing needed to stage photos.
Training Task Guides

- Now in final editing phase
- Ohio farms and horticultural groups are pilot testing
- Will be available in fall 2019
Thinning plants
Why do you need to thin plants?

Some types of seed are very small and it is very easy to accidently plant many more than are needed. When this happens it is important to thin the plants (remove the extra) so that the remaining plants have enough room to grow properly.
Get directions for thinning plants from your supervisor

Listen carefully to learn:

How much space the plants need to grow - how much do you need to thin the plants?
Thinning plants Detail Cards

• How much space do the plants need to grow? How much space do you need to clear between plants?

• How do you remove the extra plants (pull, dig up, cut)?

• What to do with the plants you remove from the ground
Tools and equipment you need to thin plants

No special equipment is needed but a ruler or measuring tape, trowels and/or scissors may be used.
Wash your hands right before you start working

Wash hands with running water and soap for at least 20 seconds

Use a clean towel to dry hands
Check your instructions

Review the instructions on the Thinning Plants Detail Cards before you begin working
Gather your equipment

Carry the sharpened hoe or tool end down by the ground

Do not carry the hoe with the sharp end up in the air
Go to the plant bed you need to thin, and measure the area between plants

• Check your Detail Cards to see how space you need between plants (growing space)
• Determine what plants will stay, and what plants need to be removed
Remove the extra plants

• Remove the extra plants from the growing space

• Extra plants can either be dug, pulled out or cut out
Now the plants have room to grow

• Once you have removed the extra plants there should be room for the remaining plant to grow
Finish thinning plants

• When you are finished thinning plants, take all the tools and equipment you used back to the storage area or workshop
• Clean the tools and harvest containers
• Put away all of the harvest containers, tools and supplies you used in the storage area or workshop
Thank You

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