

GREAT PROVIDER SERIES

Advocacy at OPRA | Always Be Advocating | NDEAM

Community

One of the greatest resources providers have is other providers. OPRA's District Representatives act as connectors and guides to other members of the provider community.

Advocacy

Now is the time to get to know your policy makers. Learn what district you're in and who represents you at the Statehouse.

Resources

Great providers access information and networks. DODD offers Service Delivery Documentation Templates. Available for a wide variety of services, these templates help ensure providers meet requirements.

Experiences

Great providers invest in their personal and professional growth. Check out OPRA's education calendar for a list of upcoming opportunities.



Advocacy at OPRA

Providers play a vital role in advocating for the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities. They are on the front lines, witnessing firsthand the impact of policies and funding on services, quality of care, and workforce stability. Advocacy is how providers turn that experience into actionable change, ensuring that legislators and decision-makers understand the realities of the field.

In August and September, providers from across Ohio came together for OPRA's Advocacy Army training (pictured above). Advocacy Army equips providers with the knowledge and tools to navigate legislative processes, build strong relationships, and communicate their needs effectively. This training focuses on critical areas like state and federal advocacy, the intricacies of the legislative and budget processes, and creating a narrative that resonates with policymakers.



Always Be Advocating

As providers, advocacy is more than a task—it's a responsibility we carry in every interaction. Whether we're engaging with policymakers, families, or the community, we must seize every moment to elevate the importance of our work, highlight the critical role of direct support professionals (DSPs), and champion the needs of individuals we serve.

Providers and DSPs are the backbone of quality care, and their voices matter. By consistently advocating for better resources, policies, and recognition, we can ensure that the services we provide not only meet but exceed the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities.

Let's make advocacy part of our everyday conversations, because every opportunity is a chance to make a difference. **Always be advocating**—it's how we strengthen our field and improve lives.

Pete Moore, *President & CEO*

A well-informed, unified provider voice can shape the future of services, from ensuring appropriate funding for home- and community-based services to addressing DSP shortages and promoting policies that empower individuals with disabilities to live fulfilling lives. Advocacy doesn't just influence policy; it safeguards the quality of life for the people providers serve every day.

As part of a broader strategy, the OPRA team attended ANCOR's 2024 Policy Summit & Hill Day, amplifying Ohio's advocacy efforts at a national level. Events like these allow providers to collaborate, build networks, and advocate on the national stage, addressing critical issues that impact the field nationwide.

For more about advocacy at OPRA, contact Christine Touvelle, Director of Advocacy.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Every October, we celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). NDEAM was established through decades of advocacy by individuals and organizations pushing for equal rights and opportunities for people with disabilities. This advocacy led to the creation of laws like the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and policies that promote inclusive workplaces. Each year, NDEAM has a unique theme, with the 2024 theme, "Access to Good Jobs for All," focusing on continuing efforts to break down barriers in employment and ensure meaningful opportunities for workers with disabilities across all industries.

For more about Day & Employment Services, contact Scott Marks, Vice President.