

A History of Linking Employment, Abilities & Potential (LEAP)

1981 LEAP is incorporated as a consumer directed and controlled 501-(c)-3 corporation. Provider of lift van service until 1984. Began providing pre-employment guidance and mentoring for hard to place individuals with disabilities, and offered employer awareness on hiring people with disabilities.

1986 Corporate Partnership with Employers: Established partnership to encourage businesses to support LEAP and its mission.

1988 Career Focus: Prepared persons with disabilities who have never been employed, or long-term unemployed to enter the workforce.

1989 Attendant Training Program: An individualized, hands on program designed to train persons with disabilities who are interested in working in the home health care field as a home health aide, attendant, or personal care provider.

1990 Community Partnership: Provided employers with information on incentives to hiring people with disabilities, understanding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), assisting employers in accommodating persons with disabilities, and matching employer needs with appropriate candidates with disabilities.

Lorain County Towards Employment: Opened an office in Lorain County and began providing Career Focus, Social Security information, job seeking skills, and job placement services.

1991 Lorain County Independent Living: Staff persons with disabilities provide assistance to their peers through individual and/or group sessions, and information and referral on topics such as housing, peer support, attendant services, and transportation.

1992 Job Placement: Job seeking skills training, job development, job placement, job coaching, follow along services, and employer education.

1993 Travel Buddies: A joint program with Paralyzed Veterans of America-Buckeye Chapter, to train individuals with disabilities to use the accessible mainline lift equipped buses of the Regional Transit Authority, and provide sensitivity training for transit personnel.

1994 Job Link: Employment related services are provided to high school students with disabilities in partnership with Cleveland Municipal Schools. Job Link assists students in the successful transition from school to work, and adult community life.

Independent Living Program: LEAP was recognized by the State of Ohio as a provider of Independent Living services in Lorain and Erie Counties.

1995 ASPIRE: Achieving Success Through Productivity, Independence, Resourcefulness and Empowerment: Life skills training geared toward community integration, to disabled Veterans at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center through 2-way video, and interactive distance learning.

Community Employment: Expanded Job Placement into a program providing job seeking skills training, job development, job placement matching employers with qualified job seekers with disabilities, and job coaching to ensure job retention.

1996 Social Security Consultation Services: Social Security benefits consultation provided for consumers and their families. In-service training and workshops offered for all audiences.

Assistance provided to individual consumers to decide upon and write a Plan for Achieving Self Support (PASS) that meets the requirements of the Social Security laws.

1997 Women with Disabilities Information, Education and Support Program: Assisting women with disabilities who encounter significant barriers while trying to function in community and family life, to address and cope with gender-specific issues.

1998 Center for Independent Living status awarded to LEAP through a grant from the US Department of Education. LEAP becomes one of seven Independent Living Centers in the State of Ohio. Lorain County office becomes a satellite location.

Legislative Education and Information Advocacy Program: Training to individuals with disabilities and family members to become active advocates, working on behalf of improved options for persons with disabilities, and to promote systems change leading to greater inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of society.

1999 Community Employment Program: Expands into Lorain and Erie counties expanding the services available through the Lorain County satellite office.

2000 Attendant Training Program: Begins offering State Tested Nurse Assistant Certification training.

Benefits Planning, Assistance and Outreach (BPAO): Awarded a Social Security Administration 6 year grant to provide Social Security disability benefits consultation to consumers in 15 counties.

2001 Job Link: Receives the prestigious, PEPNet Award. Job Link is one of only 60 youth employment/development programs selected by PEPNet in the previous six years for recognition, from an international applicant pool.

Education and Advocacy: Disability related education offered to businesses and other community organizations; Personal advocacy with consumers and family members and systems advocacy to protect the civil rights of people with disabilities; Information and Referral services.

2002 Low Vision Program: Independent living services offered to individuals over the age of 55 in Lorain or Erie counties who have low vision.

2003 Disability Determination Assistance: Assisting individuals who are applying for, or appealing denials from, Social Security or other disability related benefits programs.

2004 The Doris Brennan Center for Disability Education and Advocacy: Community Education; Personal and Systems Advocacy; Information and Referral, Disability Determination Assistance; Independent Living assessment and skills training; Peer Support.

2005 Advocating for Public Policy Change (APPC): LEAP becomes one of seven APPC sites in the State as part of the Doris Brennan Center.

High School /High Tech (HS/HT): LEAP becomes one of four HS/HT locations in the State, preparing youth with disabilities for careers in math and science, as part of the Job Link program.

Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC): LEAP partners with Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging to develop the state's pilot ARDC.

2006 LEAP Receives the Ohio Association of Nonprofit Organizations' (OANO) Standards for Excellence Certification recognizing nonprofits for outstanding community

programs and service. Agencies receiving certification have achieved excellence in: Mission and Program, Governing Body, Conflict of Interest, Human Resources, Financial and Legal, Public Accountability, Fundraising, and Public Policy.

LEAP Receives the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's Freedom to Compete Award: The award is given to employers, organizations, or other entities that have demonstrated results through best practices in promoting fair and open competition in the workplace, and have implemented a specific practice that has removed barriers that hinder free and fair workplace competition and has increased access, inclusion, and/or promotional opportunities for qualified workers.

LEAP Celebrates 25 Years of Providing Service in the Community

LEAP's Board changes Mission Statement and LEAP logo

2007 Assistive Technology Center opens to increase the use of technology by persons with disabilities to enable each person to live, learn, work and play in the community of their choice

Public Policy Center opens to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families through strengthened public policies through strengthened public policies for equal access

Quantum LEAP: A socialization/recreation program for persons with developmental disabilities residing on Cleveland's East side.

LEAP's youth program changes the name to Youth Transition: which includes Job Link and High School / High Tech

LEAP's Attendant Training Programs changes their name to the Center for Personal Assistance – and move into larger office space

2008 LEAP receives the Department of Labor's New Freedom Initiative Award: The award is given to non-profits, small businesses, corporations and individuals that have demonstrated exemplary and innovative efforts in furthering the employment and workplace environment for people with disabilities.

2009 LEAP becomes a Home Choice Transition Coordinator assisting individuals in moving from nursing homes to community based living

Benefits Enrollment Center: LEAP partners with Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging to become one of ten national Benefits Enrollment Centers

Urban Youth Works: LEAP targets underserved youth for life skills and employment training using ARRA funding

Summer Youth Training program: doubles in size with ARRA award

Community Employment Program receives ARRA funding to address employment barriers, and provide vocational skills training and job placement services

2010 LEAP enters a year of transition and transformation with the support of consultants, volunteers and foundations