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Linking Employment, Abilities and Potential

OVERVIEW INFORMATION

The mission of **Linking Employment, Abilities and Potential (LEAP)** is to advance a society of equal opportunity for all persons, regardless of disability.

AGENCY OVERVIEW

LEAP provides information, education, training, employment, and independent living services and promotes social change to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities. LEAP provides community-based programs and services that reach six counties in Northeast Ohio. Persons with disabilities are referred for services which are funded by several different agencies and organizations. Program costs are based on established fee schedules or on the services provided. Please contact us for further information regarding eligibility, referral process and fees.

OVERVIEW OF SERVICES

INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES

GOAL: To facilitate the development and achievement of independent living goals selected by individuals with significant disabilities to assist them in functioning more independently in family, work, and community settings

Community Living

- **Advocacy** efforts work to support the civil rights of individuals with disabilities. We work on behalf of individuals as well as helping people find their voice. Advocacy supports an individual's ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate or assert his or her own interests, desires, needs, and rights.
- **Independent Living Skills Training** provides a variety of life skills assessments, classes, and training sessions that help people with disabilities improve their ability to live more independently and participate more fully in community life.
- **Nursing Home Transition Services** assist people who wish to move from long-term care facilities back into the community. LEAP is a designated provider in Ohio's HOME Choice program.
- **Community Support Coaching/ Peer Support** provides education and assistance to individuals with disabilities by helping them make informed and independent choices, setting and achieving personal goals, addressing multiple barriers, identifying options and creating solutions.

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Community Inclusion

- **Quantum LEAP Program** provides socialization and recreational opportunities for people with disabilities in partnership with local community recreation programs.
- **Quantum LEAP Plus Program** provides work/life skills remediation and enrichment classes as part of a community integration and inclusion program. The program fosters self-discovery, creative learning, and self-expression. Courses provide an interactive, safe environment for students to reflect on their emotions and experiences, encouraging individuality, self-esteem, healthy interpersonal relationships, and creative problem solving. Training includes personal management, interpersonal skills, community access, resource management, job search skills training, and employment preparation. Services address barriers to community participation including access to housing, transportation, health care, income supports, assistive technology, and personal care assistance.
- **The Personal Care Assistance** program assists persons who employ personal care assistants in self-direction and establishing guidelines for their PCAs, maintaining employer-employee relationships, managing payroll and tax processes, and addressing employer-related concerns.

CONTACT: Cheryl Gorham, Independent Living Services Director, 216.696.2716, cgorham@leapinfo.org

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

GOAL: To promote independence and self-sufficiency for youth and adults with disabilities through employment.

Competitive Employment Services

- **Planning, Assessment, and Training** provides a wide range of services designed to help individuals with disabilities prepare for and engage in gainful employment consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.
- **Job Development, Placement and Retention** assists the consumer in obtaining employment that matches their strengths, abilities, vocational interests, and personal needs and preferences, as well as the needs of the local labor market. Services include making contacts with employers and identifying potential job leads to help an individual with a disability find a job. Specific tasks may include assistance with completing applications, sending resumes and cover letters, and following up with employers; accompanying the individual to appointments; reinforcing interviewing skills; requesting accommodations; and negotiating hiring. LEAP also educates employers on hiring incentives, reasonable accommodations, worksite modifications, accessibility, and understanding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Customized Employment Services

- **Customized Employment** is a flexible process designed to personalize the employment relationship between a job candidate and an employer in a way that meets the needs of both. It is based on a customized match between the strengths, conditions, and interests of a job candidate and the identified business needs of an employer. Customized employment uses an individualized approach to employment planning and job development. Customized employment consumers may also choose to pursue self-employment.

Supported Employment Services

- **Supported Employment** assists people with significant disabilities by providing individualized supports over a period of time that enable them to develop work skills and choose the kind of job they want and to become successful members of the workforce. LEAP believes that all individuals, regardless of the nature or extent of their disabilities, should have the opportunity and support needed for employment. Supported employment opportunities are in community based settings that include persons with and without disabilities. Services include locating and/or modifying meaningful jobs in the community, providing individualized training and services at the job site, and ongoing support.

YOUTH TRANSITION SERVICES

GOAL: To assist high school students with disabilities in making a successful transition from high school to employment and adult community life

Job Link School-to-Work Transition

- A year-round, school-to-work transition program that has been recognized by the National Youth Employment Coalition, Job Link operates in two high schools in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. Combining on-the-job training at local businesses with community-based, work-related instructional activities, the program instills attitudes, behaviors, and skills needed to obtain and retain employment. Students discover their potential, plan for the future, and become contributing members of the community.

BUSINESS SERVICES

Business Services are offered to companies to proactively strengthen and diversify their workforce by engaging the largest untapped labor pool in the country. LEAP assists businesses in gaining greater insight into the economic advances that can be achieved by hiring people with disabilities. LEAP also assists companies in complying with the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other federal regulations.

CONTACT: Julia Donovan, Employment Services Director, 216.696.2716, jdonovan@leapinfo.org

ACCESS TO BENEFITS AND RESOURCES

GOAL: To provide assistance in accessing services and resources related to disability and to provide education about, access to, and assistance with benefits that help people with disabilities acquire stable and adequate financial resources.

- **Information and Assistance** is a help line that connects callers to information, resources, services and programs helping to make it easier for persons with disabilities, family members, caregivers, and friends to get the support they need. Supports include access to accessible housing and transportation, income supports, assistive technology, adequate health care, and other basic needs that are barriers to independent living and employment.
- **Benefits Navigation and Assistance** helps individuals navigate the maze of public benefits, and provides information and education about disability determination and benefits eligibility. *Disability Benefits Application, Enrollment, and Appeals Assistance* helps people with disabilities apply for and enroll in various benefits programs and provides information and assistance with Social Security reconsideration appeals. *Disability Benefits Analysis* provides one-on-one consultation to Social Security beneficiaries and their families.

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PUBLIC POLICY, EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

GOAL: To conduct activities to increase the capacity and value of community options to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

LEAP advocates for legislation and policy changes to support the full inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of community life.

The Community Education program provides speakers who can address a range of disability-related topics for businesses, providers, public officials, advocates, families and individuals.

CONTACT: Melanie Hogan, Executive Director, 216.696.2716, mhogan@leapinfo.org

**Eligibility, funding and availability of these services vary by program.
Please call for more information.**