




**State of Louisiana**  
Department of Health and Hospitals  
Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities

**MEMO**

DATE: June 1, 2011 OCDDWSS-ADM-1-001

TO: Human Services Authority/District Developmental Disability Directors  
OCDD Regional Office Administrators/ Assistant Administrators  
OCDD Central Office Program Staff  
EarlySteps Regional Coordinators  
OCDD Supports and Services Center Administrators

FROM: Julia Kenny, Assistant Secretary 

RE: Employment First Initiative Position Statement

The Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) is launching an Employment First Initiative, effective July 1, 2011. Louisiana is one of 23 states participating in the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN), a joint initiative of the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services.

People with disabilities are standing up and demanding systems changes that allow for greater opportunities for economic self-sufficiency, with employment being the key to making that happen. OCDD is partnering with such agencies as LA Workforce Commission, LA Rehabilitation Services, Medicaid, Office of Behavioral Health, Department of Education, The Developmental Disabilities Council, the Advocacy Center, LSU Human Development Center and LA Economic Development, to name a few. These agencies are part of a larger consortium known as Work Pays, a group of agencies, consumers and businesses collaborating and working to improve the lives of people with disabilities through promoting employment for all people with disabilities.

**The OCDD official position statement on Employment First:  
Employment will be the primary outcome for all persons receiving OCDD services who are of working age. Employment is characterized by typical jobs with competitive compensation that are fully integrated into the workplace. A more thorough implementation statement with further detailed definitions, desired outcomes and operational procedures will be released as they are finalized.**

We are looking forward to your full cooperation and support. To learn more about the Employment First Initiative please visit <http://www.seln.org/about>. If you have any comments, questions or would like to become involved in this initiative, please contact Rosemary Morales, OCDD Program Manager, at 225-342-8901 or [rosemary.morales@la.gov](mailto:rosemary.morales@la.gov).

JK:akd

Copy: BHSF Waiver Assistance and Compliance