

“Put Your Foot in to Fit in”

Kevin George is an OCDD New Opportunities Waiver (NOW) Participant and OCDD Employee



OCDD is committed to providing employment opportunities to people of all backgrounds, including the community we serve. Kevin George, who has worked for OCDD since July 2013, is an excellent example of that commitment.

Kevin is an OCDD New Opportunities Waiver (NOW) participant, which provides support for independent living and allows participants to live in their own homes or with their families in their own community. These services help him with grocery shopping, budgeting and transportation if needed. NOW has allowed Kevin to gain his independence by teaching him how to live on his own and become a part of the workforce. For example, Kevin aids OCDD with their document retention schedule by organizing files and removing outdated information.

“When Kevin first started at OCDD, he had a worker with him to make sure he could use the bus and get to work on time. Now he does all of that himself,” said Teresa Frank, an OCDD colleague. “To say I’m proud of him is an understatement.”

With the encouragement of his coworkers and OCDD Assistant Secretary Julie Foster Hagan, Kevin participated in and graduated from the Louisiana Developmental Disability Council’s (LaDDC) 2023 Partners in Policymaking Class, a national leadership training program for people with developmental disabilities and parents of young children with DD.



“It is important that people with developmental disabilities feel empowered to have a voice about topics important to them,” said Hagan. “Partners in Policymaking is specifically designed to amplify these voices and help advocates better understand legislative and governmental activities. Kevin has played an important role in our office by helping us to better understand what is needed to successfully support him in his employment goals, and I encouraged him to participate in the Partners class so he could extend that advocacy in other areas.”

“You have to put your foot in to fit in,” Kevin said when asked about his policymaking class. “I was nervous going in there and I thought I wasn’t going to fit in. But my classmates helped me get through the ups and downs. If it wasn’t for them I wouldn’t have made it.”

Kevin also currently sits on the LaDDC Transportation Committee, where he works with others to evaluate the accessibility of public transportation. Once the committee reviews accessibility, they then write reports that help guide future legislation for the intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD) community. Kevin hopes to use this experience to become a member of the full council one day. He is particularly interested in helping individuals with disabilities learn more about public transportation so they can become more independent and less homebound.

Kevin’s favorite part of working at OCDD and being part of the Transportation Committee is the confidence the experience has instilled in him. He wants others to realize they can find this confidence in themselves as well. When asked what advice he would give others facing similar challenges, Kevin said, “Prove to yourself who you are and stand on your own two feet.

Have good thoughts, and don’t let anyone say you can’t do it,” Kevin added. “God doesn’t want you to be invisible.”

To learn more about developmental disabilities, click [here](#).

To learn more about the services that OCDD offers the DD community, click [here](#).