DARKE DD
2025-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN

2026 Fall Update

SUSTAINABILITY

- Continuing to monitor waiver costs and future projected costs following 2 years of provider rate increases; trend in Spring of 2025 showed a 22.5% increase in local authorized costs; **statewide trends in Fall 2026 show a 39% increase in authorized units per person and a 73% increase in authorized unit costs, creating a potential for unsustainable impacts to county boards across Ohio**
- Continued efforts to increase the number of agency providers and independent providers willing to serve individuals in Darke County; 19 new independent providers and 5 new agency providers were added in 2024; 7 new independent providers and 7 new agency providers were added in 2025
- Continue to promote the use of assistive technology in homes to meet service needs; 21 individuals utilized remote technology in 2024; 26 individuals utilized assistive technology in 2025
- Continue outreach efforts to increase the number of employers who hire people with developmental disabilities – 7 new employers were added in 2024; 9 new employers were added in 2025
- Updated the Board philosophy and mission statement in October 2024 to be more simplified and contain plain language to be easier to understand
- Continue to use an internal Fun Bunch committee to increase staff morale and improve internal culture. Fun Bunch hosted numerous lunch opportunities for staff to connect and engage with each other
- Updated staff pay ranges in Fall of 2024 to align with current pay scales of like entities to remain competitive in the field; **reviewed staff pay ranges in Fall of 2026 to ensure all ranges are still competitive in the market**
- Added vision insurance for staff 1/1/25 with the board paying a portion of the monthly premium to remain competitive in the market with employee benefits; ended the Board premium payment 12/31/25 due to health insurance increase
- Christy Eley continues to serve on the statewide Business Leadership Team (BLT), serving as a regional representative; selected as BLT secretary in June 2025; **selected as Vice President of BLT in September 2026**
- Continue payments to the Darke County Educational Services Center for the Anthony Wayne Early Childhood Center transition. Final payment will be made in January 2027 with the transition completed in June 2027
- Christy Eley, Business Services Director, completed the OACB Executive Development Program in November 2024; this course is required to obtain a Superintendent certification in the future

- Continue to utilize talent management assessments in lieu of performance evaluations for staff who have completed their probationary period. Identifying areas of interest to match staff with desired positions in the future
- Christy Eley, Business Services Director, presented at the March 2025 Darke County Chamber of Commerce Human Resource Council meeting with nine employers about "The Best Kept Secret in the Workplace - Individuals with disABILITIES"
- Mary Baker, Early Intervention Developmental Specialist, completed training in May 2025 and is now certified as a PLAY Project Consultant to serve children with autism
- Welcomed Leslie Acton and Tatiania Jay as new Board members on the Board of Directors, effective January 2025
- Joseph Badell and Christy Eley presented at the OACB Spring Conference in May 2025 to share how the business office and SSAs in Darke County collaborate on waiver financial planning
- Tonya Clark and Christy Eley attended the OACB Budget Symposium in August 2025 to participate in discussion about Funding the Future of DD services
- Superintendent Clark and Eric Lee, IT/PR Specialist, attended the 2nd annual Accessible Ohio conference in August 2025 to learn about accessible websites
- Macy Thompson, senior social work student at IU East, job shadowed staff in August 2025 to learn about services to people in Darke County. Macy is a 2022 Tri-Village graduate
- Darke DD staff participated in training from Sharon Emerick with Emerick Consulting about fostering relationships with truthful and encouraging communication, using de-escalation techniques, and how to have tough conversations
- Superintendent Clark will serve as a mentor to new Wyandot County Superintendent Amy Myers starting in September 2025 and Christy Eley began mentoring new Business Manager Kari Eckard from Logan County in July 2025 to assist them with learning their new roles
- Superintendent Clark was invited to participate in the Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA) Fall Partnership Forum in September 2025 to brainstorm with DD professionals about financial sustainability and the future of the DD system in Ohio
- Gwen Tinkle, Board President, Tonya Clark, Christy Eley and Leslie Zimmers attended the OACB Annual Convention in November 2025; Christy Eley presented at the conference on Targeted Case Management (TCM) productivity
- Louie Masso-Rivetti, Medicaid Services Manager, participated in the state Medicaid Services System (MSS) pilot in November and December 2025 to test the new state system and provide feedback prior to the launch in January 2026
- The Darke DD Board voted to abolish two (2) full-time DD staff positions, effective April 3, 2026, due to financial projections
- Christy Eley was selected in March 2026 to serve on the statewide workgroup to discuss sustainability options for Early Intervention services in Ohio
- Tonya Clark was asked to serve on the Funding the Future Concept 9 statewide workgroup in April 2026 to create outcome-based provider payments

- Gwen Tinkle, Tonya Clark, Joseph Badell, Leslie Zimmers, and Christy Eley attended the OACB Spring Conference in May 2026 to stay informed on the latest developments in the field

ADVOCACY AND EMPOWERMENT

- Continue using the tools from Charting the Life Course as needed across all sectors of services Sue Huston continues to train new staff and conduct other trainings with constituents as needed
- Continue to promote technology and remote supports for all people to promote independence while still addressing personal care needs in the community
- Continue partnership with Darke County Metropolitan Housing Authority for housing, housing assessments and future needs
- Continue to visit school districts across Darke County each spring to meet with elementary school students to promote inclusion, acceptance and kindness for all
- Gwen Tinkle, Board Member, elected to serve a 2-year term as a statewide at-large representative on the Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities Board of Trustees, beginning 1/1/2025. This is the first Board member from Darke County to serve on this statewide board.
- Superintendent Clark continues to serve as the Region 2 Superintendent representative on the OACB Board of Trustees and presented at the OACB Convention in December 2024 in a track called "Building Bridges – Creating Effective Relationships for DD Advocacy", sharing the many relationships built with local leaders and elected officials in Darke County
- Sue Huston, Community Connections & Advocacy Coordinator, along with 4 advocates, presented to a group of church representatives in March 2025 to provide information about how to interact with a person with a disability
- Advocates spoke at the Greenville Rotary meeting in March 2025 and March 2026 about acceptance and inclusion for people with disabilities
- Advocates met with leaders from the City of Greenville in March 2025 to discuss changes to Greenville Transit System (GTS) service area and the exclusion of the Jaysville facility. Advocates were able to negotiate a one-month extension to allow time to seek alternative transportation options
- Advocates shared an update on the Tiger radio station Community Ties program in June 2025, March 2026, and July 2026 about recent activities and upcoming events
- Sue Huston and several advocates presented to a community group at the New Madison Library in September 2025 about how to interact and talk to people with developmental disabilities
- Sue Huston and 4 advocates attended the Synergy Conference at Kalahari Resort in Sandusky, Ohio in October 2025 to network with others and learn about how to be strong advocates

- Advocates and school-age SSAs participate in Disability Days at both Tri-Village Schools (January 2026) and Bradford Schools (February 2026) to highlight how people with disabilities navigate the world differently
- Held an informational workshop in April 2026 with attorney Derek Graham on Supported Decision Making and Guardianship with approximately 30 attendees
- Aktion Club celebrated its 10-year anniversary in May 2026
- Aktion Club changed names in June 2026 to Outreach and Advocacy in Action (OAA) and will continue with similar membership and service projects
- Hosted the regional advocacy meeting in Darke County in July 2026, bringing over 100 individuals together for summer games behind our building

COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT

- Utilized the full $550,000 in ARPA Grant funds to complete 15 community accessibility projects in Darke County by December 31, 2024. Efforts continue to promote these projects in 2025 which include universal changing tables, ramps, door access controls, accessible pathways, a sensory room and adaptive equipment.
- Provided a tour of the sensory room to Aaron Messenger with the City of Vandalia in March 2025 as they want to duplicate our content and set up in a sensory room in their city soon
- Continue to increase the following on the agency Facebook page to increase awareness; 1,987 followers in 2021 to 4,600 followers in September 2025; 4800+ followers in March 2026; 5100+ followers in September 2026
- Continue to send the Darke DD Connect monthly summary of activities to increase awareness; paused this monthly summary due to changes in staffing in April 2026
- Birchwood Training Center usage continues to grow as word continues to spread about the space – this has created awareness for people and groups who may not be familiar with Darke DD and the services provided
- Superintendent Clark was chosen to participate in the 2025 Leadership Darke County class to build new relationships and potential partnerships; Superintendent Clark continues to serve as an ambassador with the Darke County Chamber of Commerce
- Joseph Badell, Community Services Director, continues to serve on the Business Advisory Board for Greenville Career Tech Supply Chain Management class
- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) partnership highlighted in the January 2025 OOD Works Newsletter for the accessibility projects completed in partnership with Accessible Ohio. This article was also featured in the February 2025 edition of the DODD Pipeline newsletter
- Met with Greg Billing with Darke County Visitor's Bureau/Main Street Greenville office in March 2025 to brainstorm about how to promote accessibility and inclusion in Darke County in the upcoming Darke County Visitor's Guide; the new 2026-2027 Darke County Visitor's Guide, released in August 2026, includes a display ad promoting accessibility projects including changing tables, swings, sensory room, pen readers and electric cargo bikes.

- Celebrated Developmental Disability Awareness Month in March 2025 with a Proclamation signing by the Darke County Commissioners and a two-page, color display in the March 16th edition of the Early Bird newspaper. Proclamation article featured on OACB Facebook page as kick-off event for DD Awareness Month statewide
- Completed refreshing the agency website by updating videos, photos and content in April 2025; completed an audit of the website in February 2026 and applied necessary updates to ensure compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) by April 2026
- Downtown Greenville businesses and the City of Greenville helped promote Autism Acceptance Month by displaying blue lights and turning the city fountain blue in April 2025 and April 2026
- Wall of Why display installed in Birchwood Training Center in May 2025 to highlight people living their best lives in Darke County; added more pictures to the Wall of Why in November 2025
- Hosted the annual Family Fun Night community event at Darke DD facility for over 300 people in June 2025 as an outreach effort for the community; received a $750 grant from Greenville Rotary to provide Kona Ice at the event; Christy Eley & Tonya Clark worked a shift at the Rotary Trailer serving lemonade shake-ups at the Darke County Fair as grant recipient
- Partnered with Aktion Club to host a Block Party at South Park in July 2025 with over 200 people in attendance
- Provided a portable changing table and tent at the Gathering at Garst event in July 2025 to promote accessibility and inclusion for festival participants
- Continued to participate in the Darke County Fair with an informational booth in the coliseum in August 2025 and August 2026 to promote services and partnerships with employers and providers
- Sponsored the annual Hearts of Darke Livestock show at the Darke County Fair in coordination with the Darke County Junior Fair Board in August 2025 and August 2026, where 20 individuals with disabilities were able to show a goat, lamb or rabbit
- Wayne Theatre hosted the first sensory friendly movie night in August 2025 with over 50 people in attendance; sensory friendly movies continue to be offered monthly
- Received a $1,000 grant from the Darke County Foundation in August 2025 to purchase sensory bags for law enforcement and first responders; bags were filled by Advocacy members and distributed in December 2025
- National Disability Employment Awareness Month was recognized in October 2025 with a news release published in area media outlets to spread awareness
- Joseph Badell, Community Services Director, was chosen to participate in the 2026 Leadership Darke County class to build new relationships and potential partnerships
- Celebrated Developmental Disability Awareness Month in March 2026 with a Proclamation signing by the Darke County Commissioners on March 2nd and a two-page, color display in the Early Bird and Daily Advocate newspapers

- Tonya Clark was asked to join the Darke County Chamber Board of Directors in April 2026 and serve as the chairman of the Chamber Ambassadors
- Participated in the Career Fair at Greenville High School in April 2026 to inform and educate students about careers in the DD field and working with people with developmental disabilities
- The Darke County Parks placed a portable restroom on the bike path near our building in May 2026, creating an accessible restroom for those attending softball events
- Combined 3 summer events into one creating Summer Bash. Partnered with Crème de la Creme to provide a food truck rally, summer concert and games for families at the Greenville City Park on July 11, 2026.
- Christy Eley and Gwen Tinkle attended the State of the County luncheon in July 2026 to learn county updates from Commissioner Matt Aultman
- Received grant funding from Greenville Rotary and Darke County United Way in July 2026 to install a sensory wall in the agency lobby and sensory items in the early intervention playroom. Tonya Clark and Christy Eley worked a shift at the Rotary trailer serving lemonade shake-ups at the Darke County Fair as grant recipients.

PROVIDER & PARTNER SUPPORT

- Darke DD continued outreach efforts with agency and independent providers to foster a strong partnership to support people living in our community
- Partner with the Academy to provide training to all providers at no cost; this program will continue in 2025 by offering 5 classes in Darke County with additional opportunities available in surrounding counties as well; Academy trainings still offered in Darke County in 2026 with providers assuming the cost
- Continued partnership with Greenville City Schools for Project LIFE to support the path to employment for youth
- Worked collaboratively with the Darke County Educational Service Center to provide a family resource room in Birchwood Training Center and computers for people to access websites, job applications, support services applications, school forms, etc. The space is also utilized to provide support for families that are involved in kinship care and providing parenting class opportunities
- Ongoing efforts continue to promote and recruit direct support professionals to work for agencies or become independent providers; ongoing assistance from WestCON to coach providers through the certification process and ensure compliance - 19 new independent providers and 5 new agency providers were added in 2024; 7 new independent providers and 7 new agency providers were added in 2025; moratorium issued by the Ohio Department of Medicaid in May 2026 halting any new provider applications until November 2026
- Discussed non-medical transportation options with Phoenix Medical Transport and iCare Transportation as potential transportation providers
- Superintendent Clark served as a panelist at the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) Accessible Ohio Workshop in June 2025 in Mason, Ohio to share

information about the partnership between Darke DD and Accessible Ohio to complete the accessibility projects in Darke County using ARPA funds

- Joseph Badell continues to meet with provider partners to build relationships and answer questions – has met individually with 5 providers in 2025
- Met with Dr. Rahaf Alta'any with the Rural Residency Program through Darke County Family Health in August 2025 to discuss services for people with developmental disabilities and the benefits and challenges in a rural area
- Met with Dr. Parker with Family Health in October 2025 regarding Autism resources as Dr. Parker is newly trained in diagnosing Autism in our area
- Jessica Shaffer, school-age SSA, attended a session in November 2025 on Ohio's Mobility Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS) to learn about mental health response services and 988 hotline
- Hosted a training by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) for all Medicaid service providers in November 2025 to assist with proper documentation and billing practices
- Joseph Badell assisted Mercer DD prepare for their DODD Accreditation by facilitating a mock SSA Roundtable in January 2026
- **Joseph Badell met with day service providers in Darke County in July and August 2026 who were billing the community rate for day services to ensure compliance with DODD guidance on acceptable community integration activities necessary to bill the community rate**

Updated September 2026