

Coalition of Provider Organizations' Statement in Opposition to Rate Decreases



Creative Goal Solutions customers at Powell's Books

authored and prepared by

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Executive Summary

We are a coalition of licensed provider organizations that provide innovative, quality services to hundreds of Oregonians with intellectual disabilities. Small provider organizations like ours have significantly contributed to the successful system of person-centered services created through the brokerage system. Proposed rate decreases negatively impact our small businesses and threaten our survival. We strongly oppose a rate decrease.



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Statement in Opposition to Rate Decreases

Although the K-plan and associated brokerage changes are intended to increase revenue which supports Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities, the proposed provider organization rate decrease will paradoxically reduce both the number and the quality of service providers. The proposed cuts must be stopped.

We are a coalition of licensed provider organizations that provide innovative, quality services to hundreds of Oregonians with intellectual disabilities. Small provider organizations like ours have significantly contributed to the successful system of person-centered services created through the brokerage system. Proposed rate decreases negatively impact our small businesses and threaten our survival. Rate decreases will result in

- Loss of services for hundreds of Oregonians with disabilities
- Loss of jobs for dozens of working Oregonians
- Decreased presence of people with disabilities in our communities
- Drastically decreased options for brokerage customers



We urge the immediate halt of implementation of rate decreases and support a rational, equitable, and research-based methodology for setting fair rates that includes dialogue with all major stakeholders.

The economic strain of the proposed rate reduction could result in closure of many small provider organizations that already operate under tight financial constraints. The detrimental impact of rate cuts on small organizations in particular would negatively impact the variety and quality of service options for Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Rich opportunities for flexible, self-directed, community-based services are the result of the work and commitment of small provider organizations such as ours that offer a wide range of individualized opportunities to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Our services consistently set the trend for shaping innovative programming based on customer goals and needs, and are among the most highly sought-after services within the brokerage system, not only for their quality and type, but because they are highly cost-effective.

Service coordinators and service providers have invested over a decade of collaborative labor to set up one of the best service systems for adults with intellectual disabilities in the country. Wouldn't it be a shame to risk the loss of these high-quality and cost-effective services for hundreds of Oregonians with disabilities, cause the loss of jobs for dozens of working Oregonians, take steps backward toward fewer service options, and reduce community participation of individuals with disabilities when it is our mutual goal to continually improve opportunities?

We realize that efforts to comply with K-plan requirements are intended to increase access to services, but we emphasize that the current proposal to decrease rates for provider organizations will have the exact opposite effect. It is urgent that the proposed cuts are stopped and that years of collaborative and creative efforts between brokerages, small provider organizations, families, and Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities not be needlessly jeopardized. Any changes to current rates should be geared to cultivate the growth of small provider organizations, not remove high-quality and progressive options for Oregonians with disabilities.

The State of Oregon is known for our progressive policies. Collectively, we are on the right track to create healthy, well-functioning communities that value diverse members, including individuals with intellectual disabilities. Don't allow misplaced cuts to disrupt our progress towards an inclusive Oregon.

Signed,

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Statement Supporting Community Inclusion

Small group community inclusion services provide **exceptional opportunities** for Oregonians with intellectual disabilities to gain skills and participate in their communities, yet these valuable programs are threatened by proposed cuts.

Diverse, flexible, and effective, small group community inclusion services are one of the most sought-after services, with most programs having long waiting lists. Small group community inclusion services:

- Offer a high quality service model with real-life experiences in the community
- Are cost-effective services for the customer and cost-effective for the State
- Provide skills training for people with and without disabilities, contributing to increasing natural supports, reducing the need for services, and building communities

Proposed cuts could eliminate providers' ability to offer these important services.

Small group community inclusion services and the corresponding payment structure are unique in the brokerage system. Most services for adults with intellectual disabilities are day programs where activities take place at a center and charge a flat daily rate. These programs generally operate at a 1:7 or 1:8 staffing ratio. One alternative to site-based programs is individualized support through independent contractors. But this type of service often lacks opportunities for peer socialization and has a relatively high hourly rate. Small group community inclusion offers a unique balance of access to the broader community coupled with opportunities for peer relationships, and carries the additional benefit of stretching customers' funding.

Small group community inclusion services are cost-effective. The specific way small group community inclusion supports are billed to the brokerages is called *prorating*. With prorating, the hourly rate, specified by state guidelines, is divided evenly between the participants in a group. Prorating results in doubling or tripling the number of service hours customers will receive. For example, brokerage customers contracting with On-the-Move and Creative Goal Solutions simultaneously get a great service model and significantly extend their brokerage dollars.

Whereas prorating is extremely cost-effective for customers, it actually poses a financial disincentive to the service provider offering small group community inclusion. In this payment structure, professional supports provided to groups are paid equally to those provided to individuals, with no rate adjustment commensurate with the additional work. For example, On-the-Move could serve eight customers at a 1:1 staff-participant ratio on a given day and earn the same income as serving 24 customers at a 1:3 ratio. But providing service for 24 individuals takes appreciably more time, resources, and organizational effort than for eight individuals. Not only is more skilled supervision necessary when providing support to groups of participants, but hours of additional administrative work are required such as communication with families and personal agents, maintenance of accounting records for each individual's expenditures and balance, ensuring adequate completion of all customer goals, submission of individualized monthly progress reports for every brokerage participant, and other overhead expenses. Despite the substantially larger workload and expenses incurred, there is no corresponding hourly rate increase from that of a provider working with a single individual. This is shown in Table 1. Working within such tight financial constraints has posed ongoing challenges for small group community inclusion providers.

Table 1. A comparison between rates for a site-based program, a small group community inclusion program, and an independent contractor providing community inclusion. The comparison reflects the financial disincentive to provide small group community inclusion services.

Service	Rate	Cost to customer's brokerage (hourly)	Cost to customer's brokerage (daily)	Income for provider (daily)	Income for provider (hourly)
five hours of small group community inclusion at 1:3 ratio	27.28/hr prorated	9.09/hr	45.47/day	136.40/day	27.28/hr
five hours of site-based program with 1:7 ratio	43.88 flat rate	8.78/hr	43.88/day	307.16/day	61.43/hr
five hours of 1:1 community inclusion with an independent contractor	24.02/hr	24.02/hr	120.10/day	120.10/day	23.72/hr

Whereas the cost to the State per person served is relatively equal between facility-based supports and community inclusion (approximately \$9 per hour per person), the organization providing community inclusion receives a hugely different cumulative hourly rate-- \$27.28 compared to \$61.43. The current payment structure encourages site-based program ratios (1:7 or 1:8) and independent contractor ratios (1:1 ratio), and discourages small group community inclusion. We advocate for a re-assessment of small group community inclusion rates, and firmly support a rate increase. We are in opposition to the proposed rate decrease and its threat to the existence of our community inclusion programs.

Small group community inclusion services are offering a new paradigm for support services, shifting services from a site into the community where skills acquisition for Oregonians with and without disabilities are mutually facilitated. Until the year 2000 when The Fairview Training Center (previously known as the State Institution for the Feeble Minded) closed its doors, Oregonians with disabilities spent entire lives removed from family and society, subject to physical and chemical restraints and forcibly sterilized under Oregon's eugenics policy. Although legislation, advocacy, and principles of self-determination have drastically improved the lives of Oregonians with disabilities, the general population's residual fear and ignorance resulting from a history of segregation make it imperative to remedy the past wrongs committed against Oregonians with disabilities. The answer is community inclusion.

Customers' increased ability to be active and productive community members are outcomes that encourage the community to give more recognition to the valuable contributions made by diverse individuals with disabilities. Community members' acquisition of knowledge about disability and diversity issues helps to change attitudes regarding perceptions of human difference, and build the confidence of all community members in their ability to participate in a diverse society are complementary outcomes. In our daily community inclusion activities, in all sectors of Portland, both our customers and those nondisabled community members with whom we interact are shattering historic trends of prejudice and segregation.

Small group community inclusion services are in high-demand for brokerage customers seeking to improve employment readiness, build social skills, gain community safety skills, and maintain a healthy, active lifestyle. Meaningful community experiences such as volunteering, interacting in integrated settings, and having access to diverse age-appropriate activities set a strong foundation on which adults with intellectual disabilities can develop skills toward independent living and competitive employment. Proposed cuts endanger this invaluable service category.

Even without the proposed cuts, current rates for the unique service of small group community inclusion services are inadequate to the expenses incurred. A proposed rate *decrease* is a hardship too severe for small organizations to bear. The rate decrease must be halted in favor of a fair market value for small group community inclusion services. To accomplish this, a new rate and re-categorization of small group community inclusion services may be necessary.

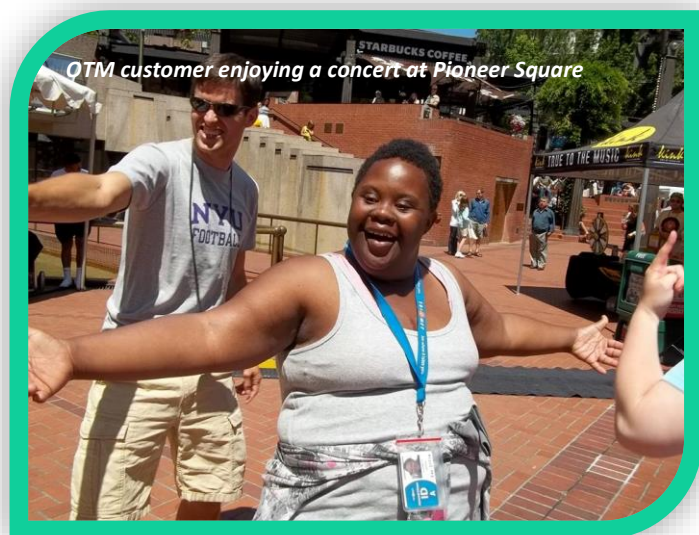
The exceptional opportunities offered through small group community inclusion services are too valuable to be lost by proposed cuts. Do not endanger Oregon's small businesses!

Signed,

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Creative Goal Solutions' Position Paper

PURPOSE: This position summary was developed in response to the proposal to cut Provider Organization rates and in response to the need to define and fund small group community inclusion as a unique service.

Summary of Our Services

We provide almost all of our services in a group setting and *all* of our services take place in the community, with our office merely serving as a meeting place and a place to complete administrative work. There are several advantages to this model:

- Customers learn from each other.
- Customers create social bonds with peers.
- Rates are prorated, thus the services are more budget friendly.
- Customers are better able to maintain their health. (We average about two miles per day walking.)
- Customers learn in a natural environment (the community) instead of in an artificial one (a facility).
- They are exposed to places and activities that they have never experienced.
- Our community learns how to interact with people with disabilities and witnesses their capabilities and contributions, thus reducing stigma and discrimination.

Recreation-focused program. Currently, our program includes a recreation-focused option through which we support customers to experience a wide variety of activities, such as trips to museums, zoos and aquariums, hikes, live music, dance lessons, bowling, basketball, community center activities, festivals, community-based art classes, and urban neighborhoods. They are provided a balance of structured activities and the opportunities to “fill in the blanks” by suggesting additional activities each day. We use public transportation, affording them the opportunity to learn to navigate their greater communities. We also strengthen friendships by helping friends design their own special excursions. Within the recreation-focused program, there is a nightlife options which facilitates access to activities like karaoke, social dancing (like salsa), live music, trivia, and stand-up comedy. Consistently, customers of all ages have told us that they have never before had access to these types of activities.

Volunteer program. Additionally, we have a volunteer-focused program. We've partnered with seven sites (The Rebuilding Center, SCRAP, Hoyt Arboretum, Impact NW, Zenger Farms, Bike Farm, and Free Geek) to offer customers the support needed to gain skills and confidence while giving back to their community through volunteerism. During any given week, our customers contribute over 50 hours to local organizations. They work right alongside community members, showing their fellow volunteers all that they are capable of.

Vocational program. We are currently developing a program to promote self-employment for adults with disabilities. If our financial stability improves, we are looking to launch it late summer.

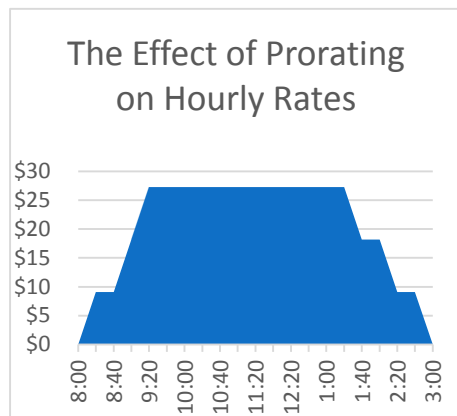
Independent living program. We also provide focused, individualized skills training to help customers achieve their goals of independent living.

Barriers to Financial Sustainability within the Group Model

There is a strong disincentive to providing services in a group setting, as discussed in the *Provider Organization Coalition Paper*. For Creative Goal Solutions, the most pertinent issues include:

- Staggering arrival and pick-up time result in a lower income per hour because of pro-rating (*see chart below*)
- Administrative time and expenses for supplies and liability insurance is greatly increased (*double or triple in the case of time and supplies*)
- Due to prorating, “no-shows” create difficulty in managing customers' budgets, resulting in unstable customer schedules and/or overbilling and non-payment of services provided. *If a customer's budget and schedule are predicated on a 1:3 ratio and they are in a group of peers who frequently “no-show”, they may more often be receiving 1:1 or 1:2 services, thus making it very difficult to manage their budget.*





Effect of Prorating on Hourly Rates

This chart visually demonstrates a common result of prorating which effectively reduces the rate of pay. Most of our customers take LIFT, a door-to-door transportation service which is allowed to give our customers as much as an hour window from their scheduled time. In case a customer comes at the tail end of these windows, we must schedule staff for 7 hours for a 5-hour planned day. If the staff is alone for the first 20 minutes, with one customer for the next 20 minutes and the third customer arrives 20 minutes late, then it takes over an hour to begin bringing in the full rate. A similar effect can be seen at the end of the day. **Based on this effect, the \$27.28 hourly rate is reduced to \$20/hour worked by the staff.**

Financial Summary

We are currently looking for ways to diversify our funding to improve our financial stability. **If the 17.5% proposed cut goes through, we will have to close shortly after the implementation of the new rate unless we receive alternative funding to supplement the loss.**

Our current situation: December 2012-November 2013

Annual Income (rounded) \$185,000

Annual Expenses (rounded)

- Payroll and payroll tax \$148,000
- Rent \$10,200
- Cell phones \$4,320 (an expense that does not exist for facility based programs)
- Insurance \$5,000
- Employee gifts and perks \$2,000
- Supplies \$4,800
- Subscriptions \$1,200 (website, online software)
- Durables (furniture, computers, etc.) \$3,000
- Employee training \$1,800
- Total expenses \$180,320

Net income during this period was less than \$5,000. This income is purposed for the covering the owner's salary and reinvesting in the research and development of new programming. As it stands, we are remaining in business through the owner accruing personal debt. We plan to convert to a non-profit to enable us to fundraise, but that is not expected to cover the discrepancy.

Payroll

Employees do not make the level of pay commiserate with their education, skill, ability and the work that they do. Currently, all regular and on-call employees have completed higher education

- Two have associates or almost-completed Bachelors' degrees
- Three have completed Bachelors' degrees
- Three are pursuing masters' degrees, and
- Three have one or more masters' degrees.
- Additionally, they have a wealth of experience and ongoing training in the field and are very skilled at what they do.

Because of the high-quality of the staff I have hired, we are able to safely and effectively engage, support and teach our customers to accomplish things that others never thought possible. **We work with many customers who were "kicked out" of facility-based programs due to behavioral issues. However, we have been successful with each of them through our unique strategies, highly-qualified staff and through the increased happiness and satisfaction that these customers experience by being active and engaged in their communities.**

Pay:

You will see below that our staff pay structure leaves nothing to be trimmed. It is at the rate commiserate with facility-based organizations which rarely require the level of education, experience and expertise that Creative Goal Solutions has sought.

- Director \$30,000 (through accrual of debt—see above)
- Program Manager \$30,000
- Median Skills Trainer rate: \$13.73
- Median Support Assistant rate: \$11.30

As you can see from finances, I have no ability to pay raises, jeopardizing my ability to retain these highly skilled employees. **In light of the challenges, why do I do this? I do this because I believe that our unique services empower our customers and strengthen our community.**

Conclusion

Creative Goal Solutions provides high-quality, highly-valued and effective services. **The proposed rate of \$22.50 per hour is financially unsustainable for our model of service and must be stopped.** Additionally, group services must be recognized as a unique model with additional time and cost demands. Consequently, it should be reimbursed at a rate commiserate with the overhead costs.

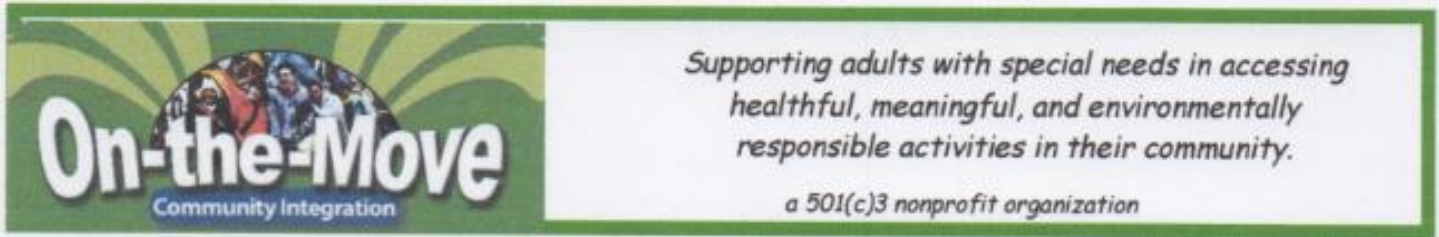
Sincerely,

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On-the-Move's Position Paper



January 4, 2014

On-the-Move Community Integration, a licensed provider organization and award-winning nonprofit, stands in opposition to the proposed State of Oregon brokerage rate decreases that would severely impact small provider organizations.

Although the K-plan and associated brokerage changes are intended to increase revenue that supports Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities, the proposed provider organization rate decrease will paradoxically reduce both the number and the quality of service providers. The proposed cuts must be stopped.

Proposed rate decreases will result in

- Loss of services for hundreds of Oregonians with disabilities
- Loss of jobs for dozens of working Oregonians
- Decreased presence of people with disabilities in our communities
- Drastically decreased options for brokerage customers

On-the-Move urges the immediate halt of implementation of rate decreases and supports a rational, equitable, and research-based methodology for setting fair rates that includes dialogue with all major stakeholders. On-the-Move and other small provider organizations have significantly contributed to the successful system of person-centered services created through the brokerage system. Wouldn't it be a shame to risk the loss of high-quality and cost-effective services, jeopardize the jobs of working Oregonians, and reduce community participation of individuals with disabilities when it is our mutual goal to continually improve opportunities?

Any changes to current rates should be geared to cultivate the growth of small provider organizations, not remove high-quality and progressive options for Oregonians with disabilities.

Sincerely,

Molly Mayo, MS Special Education

Executive Director



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About On-the-Move

A young grassroots nonprofit, OTM was created to combat the social isolation experienced by adults with developmental disabilities, to promote the inclusion of these individuals in the Portland community, and to increase public awareness of disability/ diversity issues. Starting in 2007 with the founder and a few clients, OTM has grown exponentially due to its innovative service model and progressive philosophies, serving approximately 100 Portland residents with intellectual/ developmental disabilities annually in community inclusion activities, free reading classes, and Socializing Colorfully program (which supports the unique group of individuals with disabilities who are persons of color).

OTM builds communities that embrace the dignity and worth of all people while simultaneously considering our environmental impact, setting the standard for a new model of social service agencies that are built around principles of sustainability. While OTM clients with intellectual disabilities receive help obtaining equal access to community life in the Portland area, non-disabled community members gain exposure to and understanding of individuals with disabilities and differences through their increased participation and community presence. OTM's work to increase social appreciation for human differences through modeling the celebration of diversity has gained us the reputation of being a true Portland original.

The high demand for the quality and type of our services has resulted in an extensive waiting list for our program. You can read testimonials about On-the-Move on www.greatnonprofits.org, reviews from customers and families that make On-the-Move one of only six Portland nonprofits earning the 2013 Great Nonprofits Award. Grants from Meyer Memorial Trust, Equity Foundation, Southeast Uplift/ City of Portland, and the Director's Choice Award from the Heller Foundation demonstrate the ability, integrity, and commitment of On-the-Move to our mission of full inclusion of individuals with differences. On-the-Move has twice been named in the Top 100 Green Businesses to Work For in Oregon, is certified to the highest level of sustainability practices by the Portland Sustainability at Work Program, and earned the Guidestar Exchange Gold Level of Nonprofit Transparency. In October On-the-Move's leadership in equity and sustainability earned the Sustainable Business Portland Innovation in Sustainability: Equity Award. You can learn more about On-the-Move at:

www.onthefmoveonline.org

facebook.com/onthefmovecommunity

<http://greatnonprofits.org/org/on-the-move-community-integration>

<http://sustainablebusinessoregon.com/articles/2013/11/sbo-awards-2013-a-closer-look-at-equity.html>

<http://www.guidestar.org/organizations/26-0322213/move-community-integration.aspx>

<http://www.portlandoregon.gov/sustainabilityatwork/article/461098>



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Trellis' Position Paper

Provider Organizations (PO) perform valuable services to adults with disabilities in Oregon. Trellis is one of the small provider organizations serving clients in the Portland Metro Area. Like Domestic Employees (DE) and Independent Contractors (IC) we offer one to one services with clients. However, as a Provider Organization we offer more. Our focus on people, process and outcomes makes certain that brokerage customers receive the best possible assistance in accomplishing their goals. This is achieved by selecting and training the right staff, delivering an extra layer of accountability between the provider and client, and offering the client more comprehensive services due to our ability to work collaboratively as a team. Therefore, a provider organizations ability to render higher quality services qualifies them for a rate increase in the contracted payment rather than the proposed 17.5% rate reduction.

Trellis focuses on providing the best possible care to its clients by hiring the right staff. Being a skills trainer is not an easy job, and not everyone can do it well. With this in mind, we carefully screen applicants to find high quality skills trainers who have the right skills set, education, and personality. We look for those who are organized, flexible, educated, compassionate, and kind; not just those who pass a criminal history check. The majority of the employees have a bachelor's degree and several are working towards their masters. A small PO is only as good as its staff; so as a small business owner it is in the best interest of the company to hire competent and responsible employees, otherwise growth is impeded.

Once a staff member is hired, Trellis provides a high quality service through a three part process: training, supporting and accountability. As a PO, we have to ensure quality and this means we focus on training for new staff. They go through a 90 day trial period where they shadow other staff, work through any questions and are supported by the director and lead skills trainers. This gives us an opportunity to know if the new employee meets up to company standards. Not everyone does and Trellis has had to let go of several nice individuals because they did not have all the necessary qualities. This is another benefit of a PO; our ability to offer another provider quality check to ensure people with disabilities are receiving high caliber providers.

Another part of our process is the support that staff receive from the Director and Lead Skills Trainers. Unlike a DE or IC, when there is an emergency or the skills trainer needs additional help problem solving, they have the support needed. Instead of turning to the PA and adding additional work to their caseload, the Trellis team can work together to solve the problems. If the issue becomes a crisis, then the PA is brought in. For example, a client notified Trellis' Director at 5pm on a Friday that he would be homeless by Sunday. The PA could not be reached and the client's family member was unable to pay for or provide safe housing. Even though the county crisis line was contacted, there was not any city resources available to prevent this client from becoming homeless. Trellis stepped in and paid for the client's hotel and food. On Monday morning, the PA was contacted, but unfortunately, was unable to locate any resources to assist this client. So, Trellis found a church willing to donate financial support to help him stay several more days in the hotel. He stayed in a hotel for 5 days. During the client's hotel stay, we were also able to help the client find clothing through a donation center, since he had next to nothing. The provider alone could not have helped this client but using the resources from the agency we were able to prevent a vulnerable individual from literally wandering the streets of Portland. While this was an extreme situation, Trellis staff and clients are consistently supported to deliver quality services.

In addition, to being well supported Trellis skills trainers also work well independently. To ensure this, we have a process in place to increase accountability. Like a DE or IC, we work with our clients in their home or in the community. Unlike a DE or IC, each skills trainer has to have invoices and progress notes completed on a weekly basis. These are checked by the Director and Lead Skills Trainers to make sure that the clients have been worked with. They know what is going on with all the clients and if a client was not worked with, the staff member will be contacted to find out why. If there are important changes in a client's life, for example, a hospitalization or a parent is ill or dies, the Director informs the PA about what is happening, so they can also be up to date with their customer. All of this to ensure that each client is getting the best possible care. This process also helps the PA stay updated on any client changes before the invoices are due.

Our clients are our number one priority and through the above processes we have in place we are able to match them with providers who can meet their diverse needs and challenges. By having a staff with a variety of personalities means we are able to provide services to many people in brokerage services. One of the ways we are able to provide comprehensive services is to organize events and gatherings between other Trellis staff and clients. Even though we mainly work 1:1 with clients, Trellis staff plan small group activities together. Our small groups is where we see positive change happening with our clients. By meeting with others regularly in the community, in an integrated setting, lives are changed. One of our success stories is a client who had a dual diagnosis; DD and schizophrenia. She could not work with most people and had to be really encouraged to meet with others. After a long time, she started to become comfortable with the other staff and clients, who she looked forward to seeing. She began to take pride in her appearance and was conscientious of her behavior, which before had been volatile and at times very rude. While working with her as an IC, I could not provide her with the safe social situations she needed until Trellis started. Meeting with others and building trust with more than just her provider was part of her growth. Our PO is a team supporting our clients, not just one DE/IC working with one client.

We are focused on outcomes and helping clients reach their self-determined contract goals. Many of our clients want and need to work on their communication skills, appropriate behaviors in the community and building relationships with others. In other situations some clients would not go out into the community if they did not have a skills trainer. Having a provider organization offers them the opportunities to meet with others in a safe environment in the community in an integrated setting. They are able to build trust with others because they see the same people being kind to them and modeling positive behaviors. Many of our clients want to be in a dating relationship but so many have fears about how to go about this. We tell clients that Trellis is not a dating service but we do work with women and men who can meet together in a supportive environment to

get to know each other better. Through these small group activities we can coach our clients on what not to say and reinforce positive social interactions.

Another benefit to clients is due to our ability to work collaboratively as a team, we are able to give clients uninterrupted services and continuity. If a DE or IC goes on vacation or quits services will stop for a period of time. But if a PO skills trainer goes on vacation or is unable to work with a client, then a staff or the director can step in and assist the client. If a skills trainer leaves or discovers they may not be a good match for the client, another provider can begin to work with the client without having a break in services. This also helps keep the workload of the PA down because they would not have to set up interviews and rewrite contracts.

In conclusion, the small group of Portland Provider Organizations are providing high quality service to hundreds of Portland citizens. I have shown the benefits clients receive by working with a PO instead of a DE or IC. But provider organizations operate a business that depends on a fair rate from the state. As a business we are responsible to pay business taxes, employee taxes, worker's compensation, liability insurance, and many other business expenses but also a livable wage for educated employees with high standards. As of January 1, 2014, Portland businesses have to pay sick leave to its staff. For every 30 hours worked in Portland, 1 hour is built in for sick leave. Other businesses can pass this cost onto the consumer. However, we cannot. To decrease the rate the state pays by 17.5% would be detrimental to our businesses that already run an extremely tight budget. There is no room in a \$22.50 rate to pay these expenses and the city of Portland's sick leave time. What type of business can charge \$22.50 an hour? One would be hard pressed to find a business with educated staff in a skilled position being paid such a low rate. I propose not a rate cut but a rate increase. Increasing our rates means we can continue to provide high quality care by hiring educated and qualified staff, provide additional training, and staying innovative. We can't continue to change and evolve in a positive and effective way if we are operating on so little. If rates are cut, other Provider Organizations will not be able to open, limiting the choices for adults with disabilities. By reducing the rate, we will have to make cuts throughout our budget and this could include what we pay staff. DEs will now be paid \$13 an hour and have benefits, which we could not provide and compete with because the rate we are paid is far too low to offer this. Yet our staff quality and accountability is superior. The state has now forced us into an unfair disadvantage. It almost appears as if they are forcing us out of business. I think careful consideration should be made about what is important for the DD community and how their services are implemented. They deserve the quality skills trainers that PO's can offer. We have been a state that prides itself on being self-determined and these cuts do not support that belief.

Testimonials

Creative Goal Solutions

To all to whom it may concern: My name is Matthew Burk and my nickname is Save The Music I'm 27 years old and am from Southeast Portland. After my graduating High school I had no routine and started to gain weight and become down on my luck. I started to attend a Day program that is now no longer in business where we would be in center all day watching movies, playing video games, playing board games, and play on the computer. After the program closed for the past 2 years I've been attending Creative Goal Solutions or (CGS) I like the format where we meet at the office and board mass transit and go to different places like Fazio Farm, The Old church for a lunch time concert, The Rose Garden up near the zoo, the zoo, and the Game room down at PSU among other cool places. My favorite part of the program is that being a boy from SE Portland I get to see the other parts of the city that I never knew existed. If cuts were to be made I'm not sure what I would do. Without CGS I would go back to being a couch potato and having no routine.

We feel very fortunate to have Creative Goal Solutions program for our son Brandon Russell. Without your group, Brandon would be cooped up in the house (while on break from school) with very little to do since his interest are limited. Brandon has shown independence when he is out in the community with us and we feel it has a lot to do with your program. We look forward to Brandon being part of your program in the future.

You all have moved mountains with Tina. Since starting, she had become a much more positive person. She comes home every day with a smile on her face.

I am the mother of a 27 year old with developmental disabilities. Prior to attending your program 2 years ago, my son was disengaged from his community. His father and I both work full time and are unable to take much time away from work to accompany him on regular and special outings during the weekdays. Once high school was over his routine was gone and he became very bored and lacked interest in outside activities. This brought weight gain along with a bit of depression.

The center based program he attended prior to Creative Goal Solutions was good in that he was around others during the days he attended. Unfortunately it provided little to no outside community activities. There was nothing special about the program. I likened it to a daycare center.

Since attending CGS, he has shown much improvement. We believe this to be a directly related to attending outings to places that "regular" people go. I don't think many people who are not affected by developmental disabilities understand the secluded life of a young person with disabilities and what they face day in and day out. My son is certainly aware of that fact that he does not drive. He knows that taking Tri-Met Lift is different that taking the actual bus. He knows that his brother is able to come and go on his own and that is different for him. He wants to volunteer and be engaged with his community. Just because he has a disability doesn't mean he doesn't have worth. He prides himself on helping those whose problems are greater than his.

CGS has given my son the opportunity to be around others, to travel with supervision, to take part in community activities. Every penny afforded to CGS and other programs like yours is valuable to those who need your services.

Creative Goal Solutions has been a wonderful addition to my sister, Ann's life. After Ann's long-time boyfriend passed away, she found herself a bit lost without the everyday social interaction she had grown used to. CGS has given her a fun and active social outlet. She loves the staff and other clients, and loves traveling all across the area to so many fun and new activities. The staff do a great job of taking a very diverse group of people, with diverse needs and skills, to a very wide range of events and places. Ann has learned to expand herself beyond her regular scheduled routine. We are so thankful for CGS!

On-the-Move Community Integration

I was blown away by the unique mission of On-the-Move to integrate those with special needs within the community of Portland with a focus on ecology or environmental awareness. I appreciate that the staff here at On-the-Move is dedicated to the mission and to the participants in every way, helping with communication, creating a great close knit community and fostering talent and creativity with all the participants.

My daughter has been coming to On The Move for 5 years. She loves it. Its her /life line/connection to the community, freinds, creative activities. She has a family here. Don't know what she/ we would do without On The Move.

On-The-Move provides absolutely unique, ground-breaking opportunities for adults disabilities. Their recipe is actually quite simple: get folks out in the community where they can volunteer and have fun! By volunteering in environmentally conscious and socially just activities, On-The-Move participants gain social skills and a source of real pride at making a worthwhile contribution to their community. But just as important, if not more so, the community comes to know and really appreciate a group of joyful souls that they may have overlooked. Diversity increases with every smile. Every time I visit On-The-Move, I think to myself, "Shouldn' t I be having this much fun?" Wow.

It's fun, you meet new friends, you meet new staff. When you know everyone better you can socialize with them. Some of my favorite things are walking on the water front, Tanner Springs park, the park blocks. We care for the chickens, count their eggs and give them fresh hay when we volunteer at the Oregon Food Bank Learning gardens. Sometimes we pet the chickens. I volunteer in the solar waffle cart and help run the business and serve customers. The snowshoe trip was fun. I went on the men's camping trip, it was nice for everyone to come along, we made a nice fire. I've been coming here for almost 4 years.

On the Move is simply an incredible organization. The staff and volunteers strive to enrich the lives of participants through community immersion activities; while also increasing community awareness around issues that impact people diagnosed with developmental disabilities. As a volunteer I am inspired consistently by On the Move. In a society that often responds with judgement and cruelty to those that are impacted by a developmental disability diagnosis, On the Move serves as a safe haven that not only acknowledges the value of each participant, but also fights for their right to be respected and treated with dignity in all areas of their lives.

Trellis

I think small provider organizations are a very important option for our customers. They offer customers opportunities to socialize with others who enjoy similar activities in small groups while they receive necessary supports and supervision. Because of the connections my customers have made through these provider organizations, they have been able to more independently build friendships, increase social skills, and even network with others about housing and job resources available in the community.

These organizations offer safe and cost effective methods for our customers to participate fully in their community and their loss would severely limit our customers' opportunities to maintain independent, productive, and healthy lives.

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On-the-Move News Articles

PORTLAND BUSINESS JOURNAL

D WINNERS 2013
 AT BUILDING A GOOD COMMUNITY MEANS PROVIDING EQUAL CHANCES FOR EVERYONE TO LEARN AND SUCCEED

Move makes everything better

It's hard to imagine a more heartwarming, and, yes, equitable, nonprofit than On-The-Move Community Integration. On-The-Move's formal mission is something like this: The group helps connect adults with special needs to healthy, meaningful and environmentally responsible recreation opportunities in urban and natural areas around Portland. It specializes in "small group community inclusion activities" that encourages participants to contribute something, anything, to the greater good.

It operates as a small and scrappy nonprofit that seeks to enhance communities "through the fuller participation of individuals with differences."

Informally, On-The-Move enriches the lives of its participants and virtually everyone else that encounters its workers and clients. For starters, On-The-Move expands the reach of special-needs adults by taking them to exterior spots. Participants do meet at an office space but quickly move into the community, into parks and urban forests and to waterways and festivals and the like.

The groups aren't large. One staff member on average works with two participants. That allows the program to provide more natural interactions with those they come across as they're cavorting outside, as opposed to what On-The-Move calls a "field trip" dynamic that can occur with higher ratios.



ON-THE-MOVE

Molly Mayo's group promotes many outdoor activities.

2013
 On-the-Move Community Integration

Columbia River PDX

Green Living

A Practical Journal for Friends of the Environment

On-the-Move Community Integration

On-the-Move, one of the few programs of its kind in the Portland area, was founded in 2007 to combat the social isolation experienced by adults with disabilities. The participants with the Southeast-based nonprofit organization (and "Oregon Business 100 Best Green Companies") volunteer throughout our community, and recently shared a station with the Green Living Journal staff at the Muddy Boot Festival.

The Portland metro area is filled with volunteer opportunities all year long. And while many of us are able to step up and help, there is always a need for more. So, On-the-Move participants do their part as often as possible, volunteering everywhere from the Oregon Food Bank Learning Garden, Depave, and the Oregon Zoo, to local fairs, festivals, and animal shelters. These volunteer activities make On-the-Move incredibly unique by helping to fill voids and contribute to Portland's community spirit.

But not too many people are aware that those with disabilities can and do fill many of these much-needed volunteer positions. In fact, most adults with special needs possess greater competency levels than they are given credit for, and offer great potential to contribute to our community. Because On-the-Move is a community-based program as opposed to a site-based program, you'll see groups out and about all year long. Ready and willing to lend a helping hand? You bet!

In addition to On-the-Move's community service ethic, the organization will be utilizing community volunteers for a new reading program that will be open to all adults with disabilities. The reading classes, funded in part through a grant from the Meyer Memorial Trust, will help individuals with special needs to improve their reading skills.

So, if your company or organization is in need of volunteers, or you wish to volunteer, On-the-Move may be just right for you!

For more information, please contact:
 info@onthemoveonline.org or call 503.287.0346.



SBO Awards 2013: A closer look at Equity ace On-the-Move's outdoor programs (Photos)

By Andy Giegerich

Sustainable Business Oregon editor



Meaningful relationships between On-The-Move staff, participants, and community members are created every day. One staff member on average works with two participants, which allows the program to provide more natural interactions with those they come across. Click through for more shots of how On-the-Move brings its clients into a bevy of outdoor recreational activities.

As we prepare for today's Innovation in Sustainability Awards, one company, a champion of helping the developmentally disabled learn about outdoor endeavors, firmly grabbed SBO's attention.

On-The-Move Community Integration increases the horizons of special-needs adults by taking them to the great outdoors. They visit parks, urban forests, waterways, festivals and even shake their hips during noon-time concerts at Pioneer Courthouse Square.

On-the-Move and on the go: [*How a cool program utilizes the great outdoors*](#)

The idea is that the participants get away from the structured and, at times, restrictive environments provided by other facilities that work with the developmentally disabled population.

In preparing for this year's SBO's Awards ([you can still get tickets here](#)), we asked honorees to share stories about their industry or personal heroes. Here's how Molly Mayo, On-The-Move's executive director, responded:

“The collective voices of scientists, environmental activists, and advocates for social change continually influence and renew my work at On-The-Move. Sound decision-making around environmental issues has the added benefits of steering good social practices and promoting community health, creating a cycle of actions that benefit people, animals and the planet.”

Click through on the photo above for a glimpse at how On-The-Move spends its time enriching the lives of both its clients and, undoubtedly, everyone they encounter.

Source: <http://sustainablebusinessoregon.com/articles/2013/11/sbo-awards-2013-a-closer-look-at-equity.html>

Coalition of Provider Organizations

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