

Recommendation #3

Increase Employment



Building Capacity for Benefits Counseling

Strategy #11 - Build provider capacity for the benefits counseling service. Provide training and technical assistance to supports coordinators to increase awareness of how benefits counseling might inform individuals, self-advocates, and families about options to work without losing benefits.

In February of 2020, ODP expanded provider qualifications for the Benefits Counseling service to include the Work Incentives Practitioner certification from Cornell University.

In 2022, ODP contracted with Cornell University to deliver the Work Incentives Practitioner certification program to Pennsylvania providers.

Benefits Counseling, continued

ODP covered the cost of the certification program and credential for 50 people (up to two staff persons per provider).

Providers were selected using a competitive application process.

First class of 25 learners started in May of 2022. Second class of 25 learners started in October of 2022.

As of January 2023:

- 8 people fully credentialed
- 34 people with provisional credential (have passed exam)
- 8 people in the process of taking the exam

Strategy #2 - Strengthen state and local interagency collaboration to support individuals and self-advocates to transition into competitive integrated employment upon graduation.

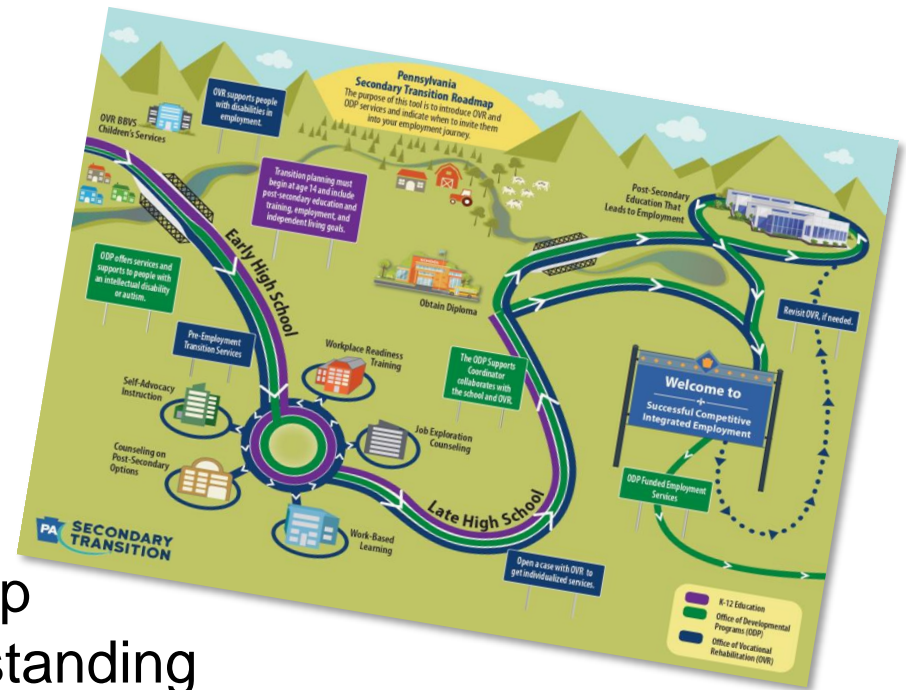
In 2022, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), and the Office of Developmental Program (ODP) worked collaboratively to launch #Connecting4Employment.

The mission of this group is to **equip interagency professionals to work together effectively to seamlessly** support transition age youth with disabilities on their competitive integrated employment journey.

Updated Resources for Professionals

The #Connecting4Employment team worked on an update to the Secondary Transition Roadmap and developed a [5-part video series](#).

These resources are meant to help professionals gain a better understanding each of their roles in transition planning and how working together can lead to better outcomes for individuals with disabilities.



Secondary Transition Pre-Conference

In August of 2022, the Department of Education, OVR, and ODP facilitated the #Connecting4Employment event at the Secondary Transition Pre-Conference.

Representatives from regional and local partners of each system were invited to attend.

Purpose of Event:

- Introduce updated and new resources
- Build collaborative working relationships
- Examine areas of secondary transition at a local level that need improved
- Create an action plan

Ongoing Work

Virtual events held in October of 2022 for each region

Targeted technical assistance provided by the Department of Education, OVR, and ODP for teams that needed additional support.

Virtual events in March are forthcoming

Teams will share their progress on their action plans at the Secondary Transition Pre-Conference in 2023

ODP Employment First Report

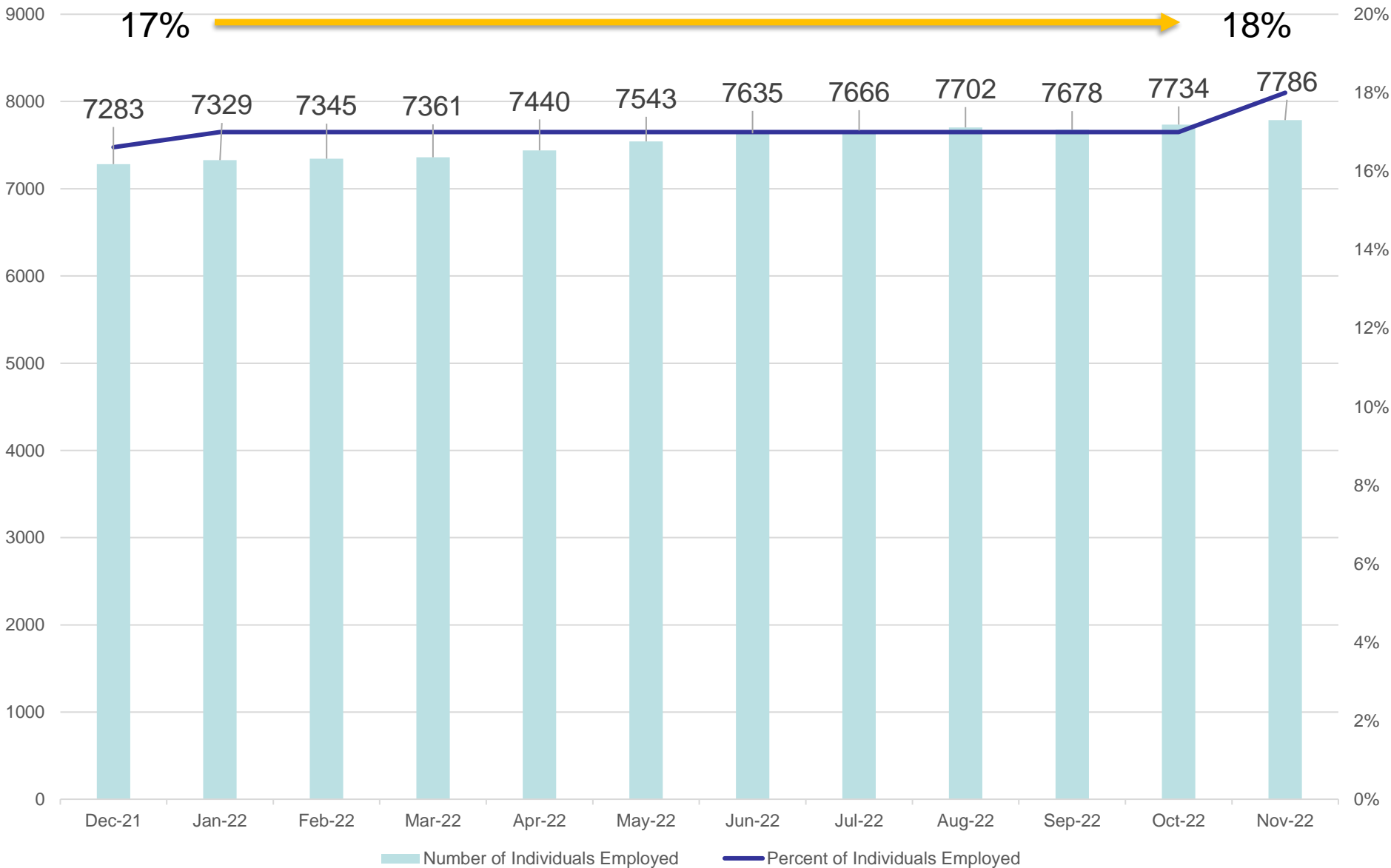
Strategy #7 - Routinely publish data on employment services, work, and wages.

ODP Employment First Report will be published in February of 2023.

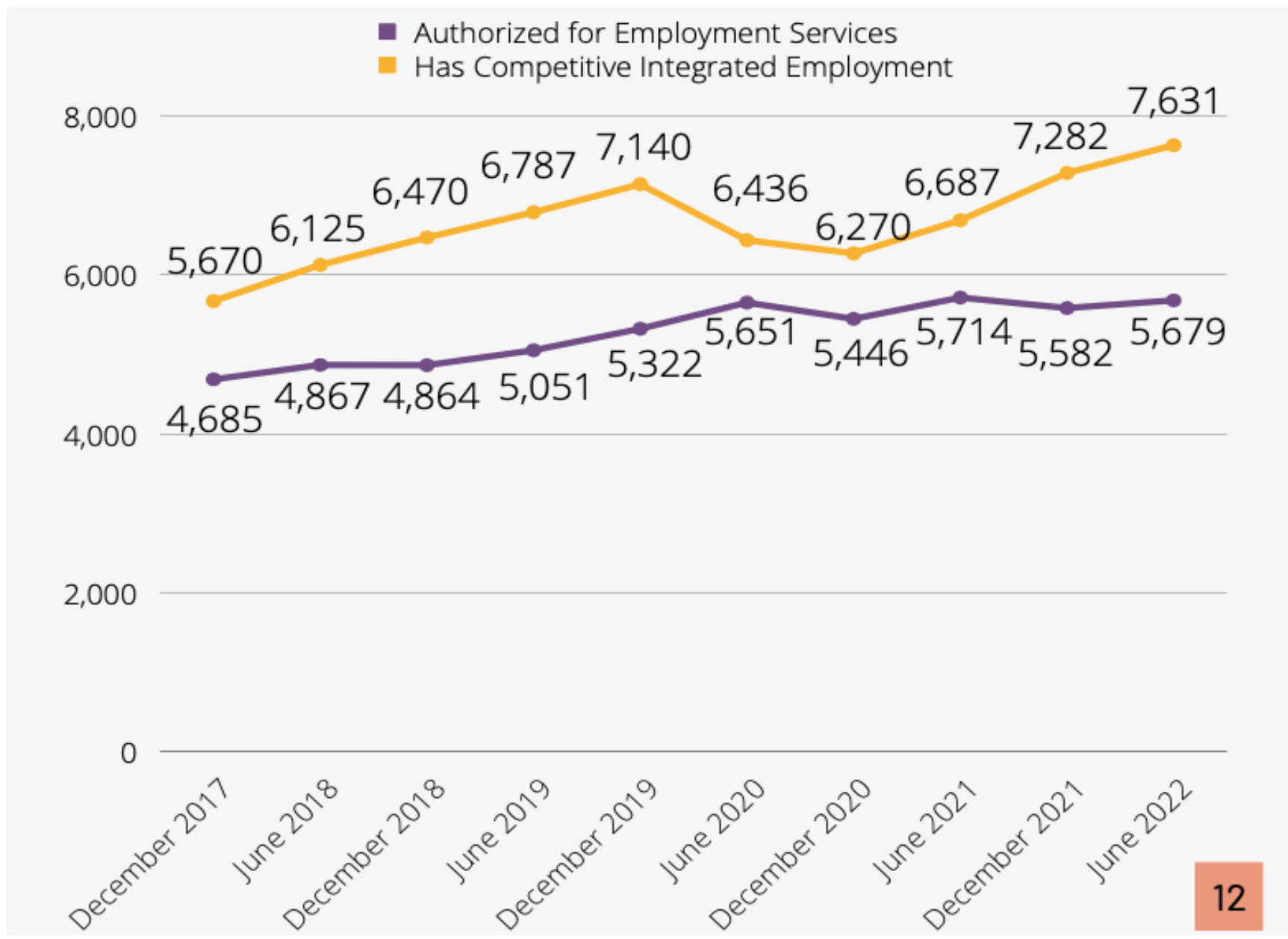
Fully accessible version will be available online.



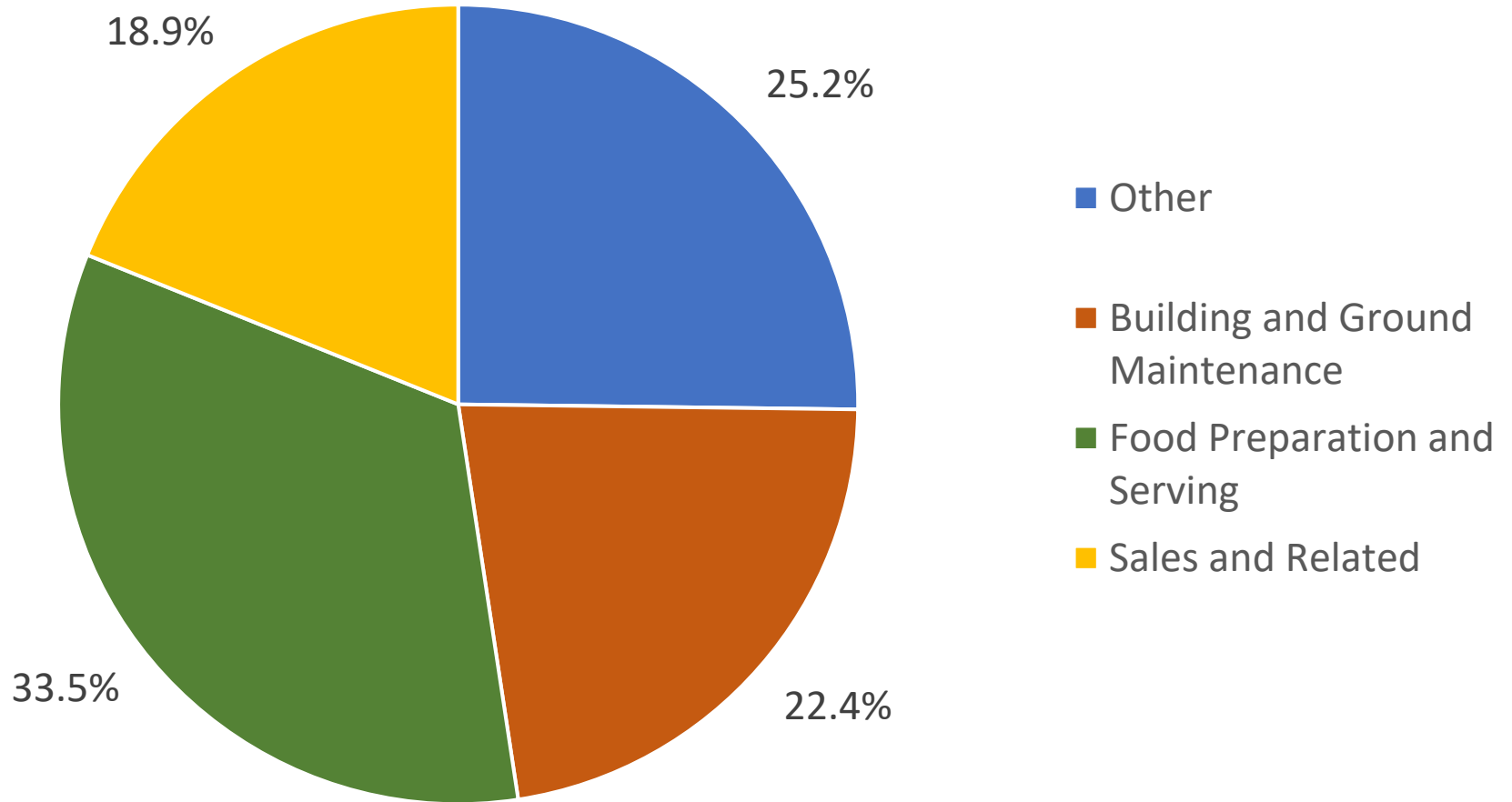
Number and Percent of Individuals Ages 18-64 Enrolled with ODP that have Competitive Integrated Employment



Number of People Authorized for Employment Services and Number of People with Competitive Integrated Employment



Most Common Job Categories for Individuals of All Ages with Competitive Integrated Employment During Some Point in Calendar Year 2022



Subminimum Wage

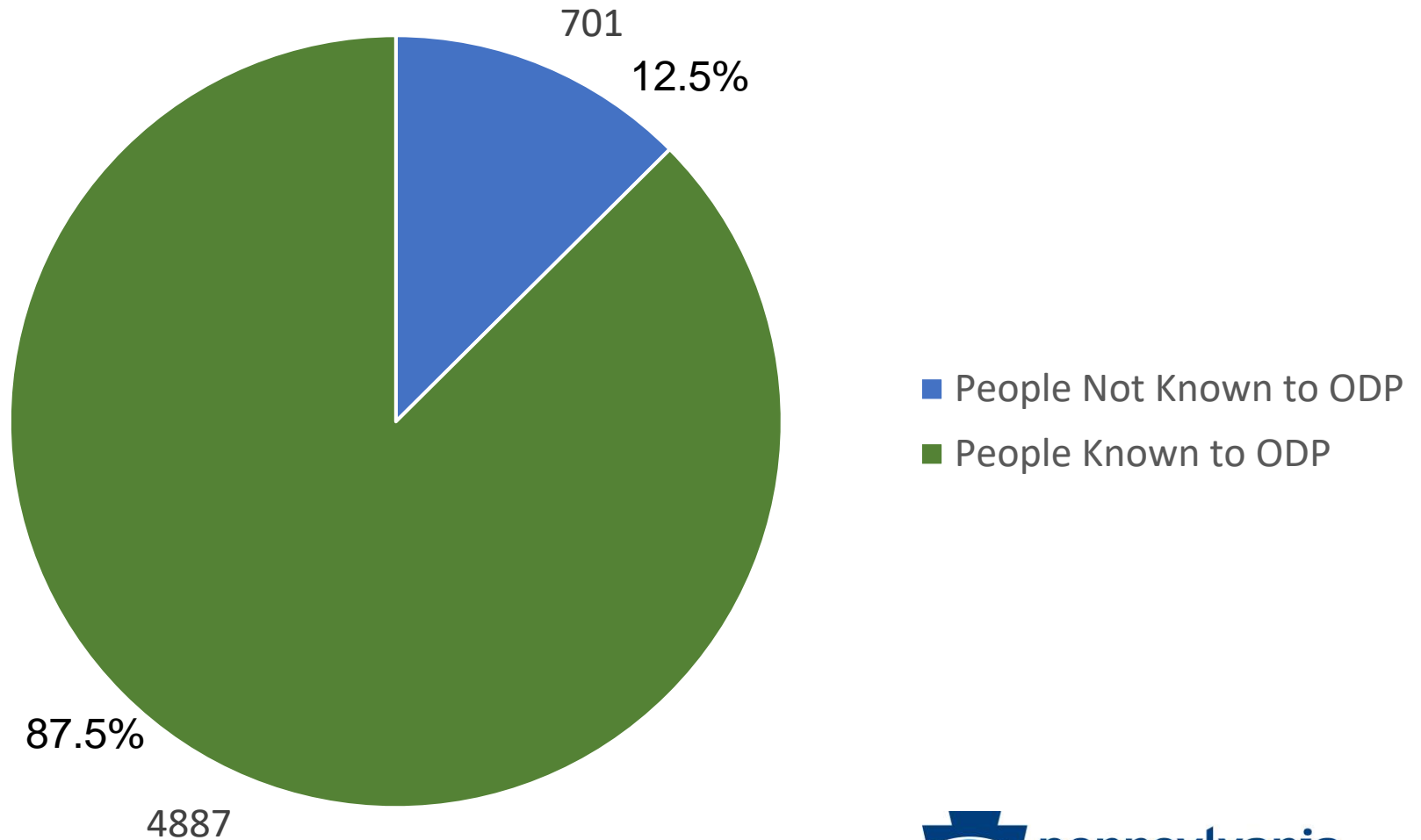
The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) must meet at least annually with all people that are employed at subminimum wage to provide career counseling and information.

Through the ODP/OVR Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the first exchange of this data occurred in 2022.



Subminimum Wage Baseline Data

People Receiving Subminimum Wage in Fiscal Year 2021-2022



Baseline Data, continued

4,887 people receiving subminimum wage represents 7.8% of all people funded through ODP.

In 2019, the Pennsylvania Employment First Oversight Commission created a measurable goal to annually decrease segregated employment by a minimum of 10%.

Racial Equity

New *Everyday Lives* Strategy

Recommendation #3 – Increase Employment

Disseminate county level employment reports that include comparisons by race to Administrative Entities and local employment coalitions. Engage employment leads and coalitions in discussion about racial disparities and support adoption of local strategies to address the disparities.

What are we trying to accomplish?

- Encourage the analysis of data on a county level as to determine if racial disparities exist related to:
 - Competitive integrated employment for people with disabilities enrolled with the county
 - Delivery and outcome of services that support competitive integrated employment
 - Identification of competitive integrated employment goals
- Technical assistance and discussion to identify strategies to obtain additional information and address disparities, if found

About the Data

Each county/joinder will receive a unique, confidential report with data by race in the following categories:

- Number and percent of people:
 - enrolled with the county ID program/AE
 - with competitive integrated employment
 - with authorized employment services
 - with an employment goal in their ISP
- Unemployment rate
- Census data

A comparison of statewide data will be included

Timelines and Next Steps

- Goal is to disseminate county-level reports to county ID/A directors via email in February of 2023
- Directors will be encouraged to share the reports with their employment lead, other key county personnel, and their employment coalition.
- ODP regional employment leads will engage the counties in discussion and provide technical assistance, as needed.
- Data for all counties/joinders will be provided to the Employment First Oversight Commission.