



## **2025** Annual Action Plan

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# 2025 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN GUERNSEY COUNTY BOARD OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

## I. Statement of Philosophy

The Guernsey County Board of Developmental Disabilities (GCBDD) defines its philosophy, as follows (Board Policy 4.01):

GCBDD believes in providing programs and services for each eligible individual with a developmental disability that will allow the individual to use his/her intellectual and physical abilities to their fullest. Self-sufficiency and independence is the goal for each individual. The service plan for each individual shall be based on a concept of self-determination and choice.

GCBDD believes that all people should be treated with dignity and respect. It is committed to educating the community to expand and encourage acceptance of individuals with developmental disabilities. Whereas, GCBDD encourages individuals to live as positive contributors to the community, by promoting programs designed to enable every individual to achieve the maximum development of his/her potential in the least restrictive, most appropriate environment.

From the above philosophy, GCBDD adopts the following Mission Statement.

**The mission of the Guernsey County Board of DD is to:**

- ENSURE** quality services that
- ENHANCE** the lives of individuals through
- EFFECTIVE** use of available resources.

**The Vision of the Board is:**

- \*People with developmental disabilities will lead self directed lives in their communities.
- \*GCBDD will be a benchmark by which other programs measure themselves.

**The Core Values of the Board are:**

Agility, Customer Driven Excellence, Focus on the Future, Focus on Results and Creating Value, Social Responsibility, Valuing Workforce Members and Partners, and Visionary Leadership.

**The Board's Funding Priorities**

As long as resources are available, the following are the Board's priorities for funding consistent with the requirements of Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 5123-4-01.

1. **Services to young children from birth to age six.**  
Special Instruction provided by an Early Intervention Specialist certified by GCBDD meeting the requirements of 5123:2-5-05 that are interest and strength based, using Play and Language for Autistic Youngsters (PLAY) Project and Sheldon and Rush evidenced based practices that are delivered in natural environments.
2. **Services to school age children.**  
GCBDD will provide technical assistance and training opportunities to professionals working in the county's public schools. Additionally, GCBDD has identified a priority of offering grants to the public schools in Guernsey County to assist in meeting the unique needs of children who are found eligible for County Board services thus providing value-added opportunities that are outside what IDEA requires of

public schools. During the 2024-2025 school year, we plan to continue to offer grants (service and mini) to the local school districts in Guernsey County.

**3. Medicaid Waiver Match.**

Medicaid is leveraged to secure federal funds that pay approximately 64.53% of the cost of transportation, adult services, residential supports and other services available through enrollment on the Level One, Individual Options, and SELF waivers. The amount of money determined by GCBDD to be available for a waiver match will dictate the number of waiver slots for which GCBDD applies. GCBDD will not request waiver slots for which no source of match is identified and committed. All waiver enrollment will be based off the waiting list needs assessment which determines if a person has an immediate, current, or no need. GCBDD is committed to not exceed enrollment of 5 Level One, 5, SELF, and 2 Individual Option waivers in 2025.

**4. Family Support Services.**

Described in GCBDD's Policy 8:00 Family Support Services. The GCBDD makes an annual budgetary allocation to FSS in an effort to continue unity of the family.

**5. Services that promote the transition of teenagers from school to adult life, including self-determination classes in public schools and life map exercises.**

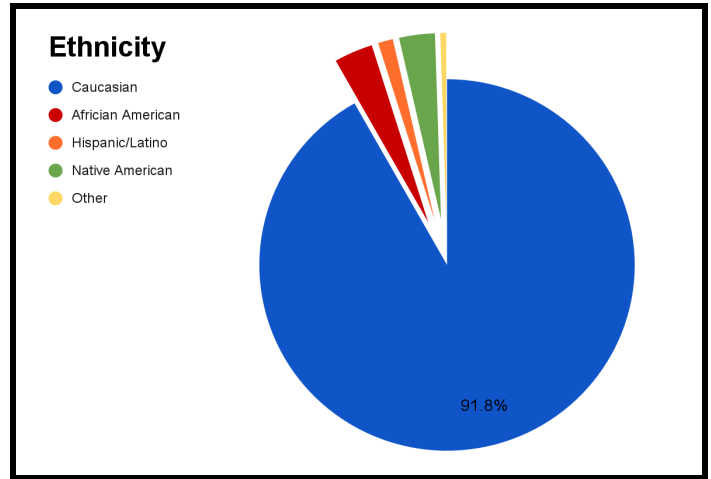
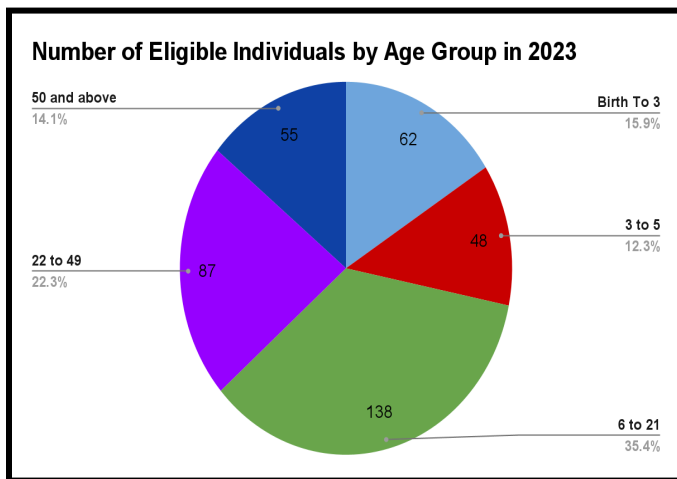
**6. Supported Living.**

Services to individuals not eligible for Medicaid waiver services due to their assessed level of care or ineligibility for Medicaid. GCBDD will authorize an annual allocation for these services. When the allocation is exhausted, no additional services will be authorized without Board approval.

GCBDD will support an increase in licensed capacity for any existing licensed providers in Guernsey County in the event of an emergency for only a specified length of time (not to exceed 60 days).

**Cultural Competency and Diversity**

Consistent with the Mission, GCBDD strives to ensure that people we serve have access to services provided by culturally competent staff with whom they communicate. GCBDD is located in south-eastern Ohio in rural Appalachia. The residents of the county are primarily English speaking. The ethnicity and age of the individuals we serve are:



GCBDD recognizes, respects, and responds to the unique and culturally defined needs of the various populations in our county. Employees of the Board must understand that cultural competency goes beyond race or language identifiers. It is the responsibility of all GCBDD employees and volunteers to generate and maintain work environments in which those we serve and their families, employees, volunteers, customers and vendors are respected, valued and welcomed. In compliance with its Equal Employment Opportunity and Prohibited Discrimination Harassment/Inappropriate Conduct Policies, GCBDD shall:

- Recognize that cultural differences are not limited to ethnicity, but may also include race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, military status, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity, protected veteran status, or other characteristics protected by law.
- Provide and support a work environment that is safe and free from all types of unlawful discrimination and harassment.
- Maintain a respectful service delivery network, free of offensive practices and conditions.
- Recognize each individual's unique value, contribution, and potential.
- Develop approaches/programs/services to meet the identified needs of each individual.
- Develop a diverse workforce which reflects the community.
- Orient and train GCBDD staff in the diversity of the individuals we serve.
- Recognize that discrimination is a violation of state/federal civil rights laws, including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act. GCBDD is committed to providing affirmative action and equal employment opportunities in all phases of employment through recruitment, retention and advancement of culturally diverse and qualified people and utilization of job-related criteria in making employment decisions.

GCBDD engages in the following initiatives to address cultural competency of the staff, organization, and community to meet the diverse needs of the people we serve:

- Identify cultural and language needs of those we serve through the discovery phase of person centered planning.
- Behavior Intervention Strategies training for all staff at orientation and direct care staff annually thereafter.
- Recruit providers through the state provider pool to address unique cultural differences.
- Early Intervention Developmental Specialists are trained in the PLAY project to advance child development for those children on the autism spectrum.
- Early Intervention Service Providers and Service Coordinators are trained in Sheldon and Rush evidenced based practice to use coaching techniques with parents as they assist their children in child development.
- Early Childhood Director and 2 Early Intervention Service Providers are trained in the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) to better serve the social and emotional health of children.
- Early Intervention is utilizing the use of technology as an option to serve families.
- All managers take courses relating to identifying and eliminating harassment and violence in the workplace.
- Early Childhood Director is trained in the Autism Diagnosis Education Project (ADEP)
- Every child enrolled in Early Intervention and Home Visiting will be enrolled in Dolly Parton Imagination Library
- All GCBDD staff are trained in person-centered thinking and Good Life approaches.
- GCBDD has staff available who can communicate using American Sign Language.
- GCBDD has made tele-psychiatry available.
- Modified diets and thickened liquids training for Providers by GCBDD Speech Language Pathologist and Healthcare Coordinator.
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Training for Providers by GCBDD Speech Language Pathologist.

- The GCBDD is committed to provide Autism training to law enforcement and fire departments either in person or through Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI). In addition, GCBDD is committed to providing First Responders and County Employees training/ information on other various topics.
- GCBDD along with the Guernsey County Sheriff's Office, Guernsey County Prosecutor's Office, Law Director's Office, Mental Health Board and the Cambridge Municipal Court have developed a process for DD and MH inmates for arraignment.
- SSA & EI/ HMG staff had Home Visitor Safety Training and Drug Awareness training with the Guernsey County Sheriff's Office.
- The GCBDD offered two ASL courses from July 2023 to June 2024. One beginner session, held in partnership with the Guernsey County Library, and an intermediate session, held at MOVE Staffing. More than 70 people participated in the sessions.
- The GCBDD website was updated to ensure ADA Compliance.
- In 2024, GCBDD was awarded a grant from the ADAMHS Board and was able to partner with Soul Bird Consulting for trauma training. Through this grant, more than 170 CB employees, family members, individuals, school personnel, first responders, and providers were able to attend 4 different trainings that focused on trauma.
- GCBDD contracts with East Central Ohio Educational Service Center for behavioral services to provide 1 Board Certified Behavior Analysis (BCBA) and 6 Registered Behavior Therapists (RBT) in 3 public schools.
- In 2024, Early Childhood Director and Speech Language Pathologist offered two baby sign language classes for the community.
- Messy Play Day is a community collaboration that brings new families to the GCBDD and Help Me Grow. Programs are offered for children 0 to 3 and school age children.

## **II. Organization**

GCBDD Board of Directors consists of seven members, five of whom are appointed by the County Commissioners (Steve Marvin, Michael Campbell, Dennis Harding, Jeremy Morrow, and Melinda Yerian) and two are appointed by the Probate Judge (Ashley Karlen and Brenda Caldwell). GCBDD works within a budget recommended to and approved by the Guernsey County Board of Commissioners. Major funding mechanisms include the following: local tax levies, subsidies from the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD), federal and state grants, Medicaid reimbursements and donations. A Superintendent, employed by GCBDD, is responsible for the operation of the GCBDD's programs, for recommending improvements to the facilities and employing qualified staff. GCBDD serves eligible individuals of all ages. Beginning in January of 2018, Muskingum County Board of Developmental Disabilities began to Contract with GCBDD for their Superintendent, subsequently sharing the GCBDD Business Manager in October of 2018. Starting in September of 2020, GCBDD began contracting with MCBDD for a shared Human Resources Director. In November of 2021, the Boards began sharing Community Relations/Special Projects Supervisor.

In 2023 the GCBDD received 116 infant and toddler referrals for Early Intervention. Additionally, 46 children and adults were newly enrolled for board services in 2023. Presently, GCBDD serves a combined total of 390 individuals from birth through adulthood.

### **A. Service and Support Administration:** (Previously called Case Management Services)

Service and Support Administration (SSA) supports children and adults with developmental disabilities, their families and guardians. They assist the individual in determining outcomes for their services and ways to reach those desired outcomes. SSA serves as the individual's primary point of coordination by working through many systems to attain appropriate assistance and/or support as needed in any life area. The SSA Department assists individuals with developing outcomes that are meaningful to them to help achieve the life they want. Part of this process is determining the important to/fors and helping them to establish fully integrated lives in their community. The choice of the individual provides the scope and direction to the SSA including Eligibility Determinations, Assessments, ISP Development, Budget for Services, Free Choice of Provider Process, Coordinating Services, Monitoring ISP Implementation, Designating Persons to Provide Daily Representation, and Emergency Intervention. As of September 1, 2024, SSA's worked with 328 individuals along with their guardians and/or families and providers in Guernsey County.

GCBDD is mandated to report cases of abuse, neglect or other Major Unusual Incidents (MUI's) to the Ohio DODD and in cases involving infants and children to the Guernsey County Children Services Board. The SSA files all initial reports for MUI's to the Ohio DODD and the Mid- East Ohio Regional Council (MEORC) completes an independent investigation for all cases. In cases of abuse, neglect, and misappropriation, MEORC works with local law enforcement and Guernsey County Children Services Board, then reports outcomes and makes recommendations to GCBDD. The SSA's then work with the individual, families and/or providers to establish preventative measures and provide follow-up for all MUI's. In 2023, there were 111 MUIs filed and as of September 1, 2024 there are 76 MUI's filed.

**B. Early Intervention Part C:**

Early Intervention Part C is a coordinated, community-based service that promotes family-centered programs for children from birth to three years of age and their families. The program focuses on the family as a whole. As of September 1, 2024, Early Intervention Part C program is providing services to 74 children, ages birth to three, and their families. In 2023, Early Intervention provided services to 121 children, ages birth to three, and their families. Early Intervention Part C provides health and developmental services so children can start school healthy and ready to learn. The Early Intervention Part C agreement provides Service Coordination and evaluations. It also provides early identification of children with developmental delays as well as information, guidance, and links to therapeutic interventions. During home visits, Service Coordinators provide the family with up-to-date information on child health, development, early infant stimulation and growth promoting activities. Service Providers complete developmental screenings for health, hearing, vision, nutrition, social/emotional health and overall development. Activities are held to promote family literacy and support parents as full partners in their child's education. The program's goal is to lay the foundation for later school success.

During SFY 23, Early Intervention conducted outreach at MVHC, WIC, Triple P parenting classes, and Ohio Health childbirth center. Early Intervention participated in a community baby shower event, touch a ruck, an annual reading festival, and an Early Head Start parent support group. Early Intervention held two Happy Messy Play and two baby sign language events. Outreach items purchased were Tote bags, pop it stress balls, and baby sign language books. Additionally 2 billboards were placed in Guernsey County.

**C. Early Intervention:**

"Developmental specialist" means a professional, certified by GCBDD in accordance with rule 5123:2-5-05 of the Administrative Code, trained to develop and implement strategies and interventions of special instruction identified in Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In Guernsey County, Developmental Specialists are trained in and utilize PLAY Project and Sheldon and Rush evidenced based practice during special instruction. As of September 1, 2024, the Early Intervention program providing services to 74 children ages birth to three. Early Intervention services are identified for each child and family through development of an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP). Early Intervention services are provided in the child's natural environment. Services provided by credentialed Developmental Specialists may include home visits, specialized instruction, coaching, child development information, and family support. The focus of the program is to assist the family in meeting the unique needs of their child and to assist the system in meeting its mandates through collaboration with other local agencies and providers within Guernsey County Family and Children First Council. GCBDD contracts with Southeast Ohio Rehabilitation Services for OT and PT. This gives Early Intervention access to a core team. Guernsey County's core team consists of Service Coordinator, Developmental Specialist, Speech Therapist, Occupational Therapist, and a Physical Therapist. In 2023, Early Intervention served 56 children ages three through five. The assessment and evaluation tool being used is the Battelle Developmental Inventory III which evaluates infants and children from birth through age seven.

The PLAY Project is a program that is designed to focus on the behaviors of children with Autism. It is a program that teaches parents to become better play partners with their child. The program teaches techniques and strategies to help engage parents and their child in an effort to help the child reach their potential and become better equipped to socially interact with family and peers. GCBDD is a licensed PLAY Project facility. As certified consultants and a licensed facility, the program consultants can work within the community (homes, schools and business) to provide knowledge and strategies to assist children with Autism. Two Developmental Specialists have completed the certification process and have become credentialed as PLAY Project consultants. Five families received PLAY Project services in 2023.

**D. Help Me Grow Home Visiting**

Home Visiting is a voluntary, home- based service offered at no cost to the family. Home Visitors offer information and support during pregnancy and empower parents with the skills, tools, and confidence to nurture the healthy growth of their child throughout the child's earliest years. Home Visiting is using the Healthy Families America Model which helps promote the child's well- being and prevent child abuse and neglect. Home Visiting is using the Growing Great Kids Curriculum. The Growing Great Kids Curriculum has parenting topics, child development, and parent-child activities. Target criteria to enroll into the program is prenatal to three months of age however, children can enroll up to 18 months with alternate criteria. Children and families can remain in the program for three years. 80% of the home visiting caseload will be target criteria while 20% will be alternate criteria. In 2023, Help Me Grow Home Visiting provided services to 19 families. As of September 1, 2024, the home visiting program is serving 20 families.

**E. Speech Therapy Services**

With the use of assistive technology and evidence-based practices, speech and language therapy services provide direct and indirect therapy as well as family education, support, and coaching to work toward the goal of functional communication development for children and adults with identified communication deficits. Speech services are currently serving children ages birth through five in their natural home environment through Early Intervention and school age children and adults with disabilities. Approximately, 23 individuals at a time receive this service throughout the year.

The goal of speech and language therapy services at GCBDD is to provide Early Intervention and/or give access to augmentative and alternative modes of communication to children and adults who do not use words to communicate or do not effectively communicate verbally in the community.

In 2024, our Speech Language Pathologist collaborated with two different Augmentative and Alternative Communication Companies (AAC) to evaluate four(4) individuals for dedicated speech generating devices. These four individuals are now going through the funding process and will be receiving dedicated speech generating devices selected to meet their communication needs.

**F. Public School Mini-Grants and Services to Schools**

Grants are awarded annually to school districts within the county to those districts serving county board eligible children for value-added supports that are outside the requirements of IDEA.

The service grant provides a behavior therapist for the four school districts with a behavior consultant who oversees those behavior therapists. These are provided at the public school district level. Additionally, training is provided for those teachers as well as costs related to attendance to the OCALI conference in November. This conference provides valuable information to teachers with children who have autism. During 2024, GCBDD awarded \$485,250 to schools under this grant.

Traditionally, equipment mini-grants are provided to school districts to purchase equipment used in instruction. Items purchased included informational materials, therapy equipment and a myriad of other instructional and behavioral tools and supplies. In 2024, the Board awarded \$24,434.68 in mini grants to Guernsey County school districts.

**G. Family Support Services:**

Family Support Services (FSS) provides assistance and financial support to families with members who are served by the County Board. This allows them to remain in their homes and experience enduring relationships with their family and friends who are committed to their welfare. In the previous program year, the Family Support Services program provided services to families. Family Support Services is considered a component of the individual planning process. The services/items included in the individual's plan must be related to the individual's documented delay or developmental disability. GCBDD will review and provide Family Support Services to all eligible families requesting the service. A maximum allocation for each family is board approved annually. The annual family support allocation for an eligible family shall not exceed \$500 per year for one family member. For families who have additional members, an additional \$800.00 may be allocated per year.

**H. Waiver and Supported Living Services:**

Waiver and Supported Living Services provide services and support to eligible individuals who need support to remain living in their community. We support individuals in the least restrictive settings to meet their needs and work to help people be served in integrated settings. In addition to low need respite services offered through Family Support Services, GCBDD provides residential, employment, and transportation services through Supported Living, Level One, Individual Options (IO), and Self-Empowering Life Funding (SELF) waivers. Currently, GCBDD serves 11 individuals in Supported Living, 36 individuals on the Level One Waiver, 29 on the SELF Waiver and 78 individuals on the Individual Options Waiver.

GCBDD maintains a waiting list for Medicaid Waiver and Support Living needs. Waiver enrollment is based upon immediate and current needs and enrollment will occur per rule. GCBDD is committed to examine the waiting list on a quarterly basis to determine new enrollment.

**I. Capital Housing:**

Our Board, in conjunction with Ohio Network of Innovation (ONI), have nine (9) homes in the community that were purchased with the assistance of State Capital Housing dollars. These make available housing with reduced rent to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. The Board maintains and makes improvements in these homes for safety, access, and economy. A comprehensive housing plan was completed for a complete report on all properties. In 2024, the Board applied to the State for rehab dollars to replace two roofs, to install siding, a ramp for accessibility and, finally, for sewer repairs. The total amount awarded was \$48,244.

**J. Transportation Services:**

Transportation services provide a specialized, safe, efficient, and coordinated transportation program for the GCBDD. A fleet of seven ( 7 ) Board vehicles includes, five (5) administrative vehicles, one (1) van and one (1) truck. This enables us to provide services and transportation to Board programs. In the interest of fiscal responsibility, we monitor the need for the number and type of vehicles necessary to provide service and support. Qualified maintenance personnel on site at our garage perform repairs and maintenance for these vehicles.

**K. Maintenance Services:**

Maintenance services provide a responsive, cost effective and coordinated maintenance program for GCBDD. Regular upkeep includes monthly maintenance of equipment, custodial work, grounds keeping, and basic repairs and are tended to by two (2) full-time maintenance staff. GCBDD property is prepared for all safety inspections made by the Fire Marshall at any time. Maintenance personnel are present or available whenever the program and/or campus is open to attend to staff needs and to address problems that may arise. They also tend to tasks regularly when the program is not in operation in order to minimize any interference with program operation or to ready the facility for normal operations.

In addition, the maintenance department provides normal home maintenance and repairs to the nine (9) community homes that GCBDD has purchased. Home inspections are done monthly to ensure safety and preventative maintenance so that all Board homes are cost effective. After-hour emergencies at the campus or the homes are fielded by maintenance staff.

**L. Special Olympics:**

Guernsey DD Athletic Booster is a non-profit local organization accredited through Special Olympics Ohio. This is provided as a service to all GCBDD eligible adult individuals residing in Guernsey County regardless of provider affiliation free of charge and is staffed by registered, certified and trained volunteers under the direction of the Special Olympic Coordinator hired by the Guernsey DD Athletic Boosters.

**M. Self-Advocacy:**

The GCBDD facilitates several self-advocacy groups for adults and transition-aged youth. All groups focus on teaching individuals with developmental disabilities the pillars of self-determination: dreaming, contribution and community, dignity and respect, choices, responsibilities, and relationships. Through these groups, individuals are acquiring self-advocacy skills to improve their lives. Individuals are learning to be active participants in the community, gaining resources, and exploring their interests and talents, ensuring that they are receiving services in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs. In 2023 and 2024 several individuals also participated in Self Advocacy retreats at Burr Oak and Synergy. A group of Self Advocates also attend Advocacy Day at the State House. At least annually, members from the groups will present their advocacy efforts to the board.



Self Advocacy sessions are also offered at day programs around the county.

The youth self-advocacy groups are held at Mid-East Career and Technology Center, Cambridge City Schools, East Guernsey Schools, and Rolling Hills Schools.

**N. Contracted Services:**

Contracted services are procured by GCBDD for needed services not directly provided by Board employees. These include: Adult Day Services, Non-Medical Transportation, and Community services, Speech, Physical and Occupational Therapy as well as clinical OT and PT; MUI Investigative services; Behavior Support services; Psychological services; Snow removal; lawn care; Human Resources services; Supported Employment; heating and cooling maintenance services; emergency stabilization/residential services for youth; and locally funded residential services (Supported Living contracts). The Human Resource Director obtains the credentials from each contracted service contract to ensure proper education is secured.

**O. Nursing/Health and Welfare Services:**

Nursing/Health and Welfare services are provided as necessary. The SSA/Healthcare Coordinator completes the required Nurse Quality Assessment Reviews (NQAR) and Human Sexuality Assessments as needed. Additionally, the SSA/ Healthcare Coordinator completes all self-administration assessments for tube feedings and insulin/ metabolic glycemc disorders. Training in CPR/First Aid instructions/AED will be provided on site at the programs campus. Training for GCBDD staff on the administration of Naloxone (Narcan) for opioid overdose will be completed for all staff.

**P. Behavior Support Services**

Behavior Support Intervention Strategies including positive behavior support, verbal de-escalation, and physical intervention training are provided initially to all new board employees and reviewed annually. Behavior Support training includes understanding human rights, identifying and implementing restrictive measures, and employee core responsibilities related to providing behavioral support.

**Q. Financial Management:**

Financial Management department's goal is to maximize the quality and quantity of services provided to each individual through efficient management of budgetary and departmental allocations, audits, Day Array and non-medical transportation waiver services, Medicaid Administrative Claiming (MAC) and Targeted Case Management (TCM) billing, contract negotiations, grants management, health and liability insurance, payroll, county, state and federal reporting, and retirement funding. In addition, the county board has completed and submitted the County Board Cost Projection as required by statute. This projection is for ten years and will assist the county board with future levy planning as well as implementing cost saving measures to extend the county board's levy cycle. Resources are maximized by accessing all avenues of funding; including state capital housing and federal grants including, Part C Early Intervention, HOme Visiting charges for services, and Title XX. GCBDD has again presented a balanced budget for 2024. In accordance with Ohio Rev. Code Section 5126.054(A)(1)(b), GCBDD has pledged funds to satisfy the nonfederal portion of Medicaid expenditures as is required by sections 5126.059 and 5126.0510 of the Revised Code. In November 2023, GCBDD pledged \$710,471 to satisfy calendar year 2024's annual non-federal match for authorized Medicaid services. GCBDD continues to monitor this liability regularly to ensure funds are sufficient to support such. GCBDD continues to refinance available resources from Supported Living and Adult Services. Note that, effective January 1, 2024, waiver rates were increased which will result in higher waiver match for 2025.

**R. Outreach/Communication:**

Each year, an Annual Report is developed to inform the public of our programs. Stories from individuals and families are shared to illustrate the importance of our services. These stories are also sent to media outlets and shared via social media.

An E-newsletter is published quarterly. It is emailed to more than 300 contacts and forwarded to county employees. It is also posted to the GCBDD Facebook for easy access. The newsletter includes updates on our programs and special events.

Social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and You Tube) are used frequently to communicate with the public and individuals served, about regular programs and services, as well as special events..

Special events are held throughout the year to enhance the lives of those with developmental disabilities. These events also help to raise awareness and inclusivity in the community. Inclusive events are: Candy Cane Hunt, a fishing tournament, and several Messy Play events.

Additionally, events for those served include family and individual photos, wiffle ball game, Slightly Spooky Walk, and Employment Breakfast.

Extensive outreach plans will be put in place for DSP Week (September), Developmental Disability Employment Month (October), and Developmental Disability Month (March).

#### **S. Employment Navigation**

The Employment Navigator (EN) assists in the transition process for young adults and with helping all others find gainful employment. Over the past year, we have created new initiatives to encourage and promote employment efforts. Additionally, the Employment Navigator works to recruit and maintain providers for employment support. The EN works closely with counselors from Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities through the Employment First Initiative and traditional referrals.

The Road to Employment is a spotlight that showcases the employment efforts of people who are working or developing the skills needed to find and maintain community employment. GCBDD's spotlights community partners and employers by highlighting them through the means of social media.

Knowledge Education Youth Success (K.E.Y.S.) is a two week program for ages 14-18 that focuses on transition services and career exploration. The methods include life skills, budgeting, resume building, time management, and interviewing skills. During the second week, the focus shifts to career exploration, and the participants get hands-on work experience at a variety of locations. In addition, college exploration is discussed for those looking at post-secondary education.

#### **T. Provider Support**

GCBDD has developed a network of provider support for new and existing certified providers. This includes regular meetings to discuss local, state, and federal topics. Additionally, recruitment activities are held to seek new providers in all service areas as needed. Our Provider Support offers assistance with the online application and helps providers prepare for compliance reviews. Upon the completion of a newly certified independent provider, our Provider Support meets with independent provider within the first 60 days to ensure the provider understands the ISP and responsibilities for mandated reporting.

The Board approved services in the Provider Support Product Catalog offered by the MidEast Ohio Regional Council. GCBDD will pay up to \$8,000 per year for training for providers.

#### **U. Appendix**

"Table of Organization" for the Guernsey County Board of Developmental Disabilities, showing the lines of authority, communication, and responsibility, is included with this report as **Appendix A**.

"Public Hearing Notice" for the Guernsey County Board of Developmental Disabilities, to obtain public comment and input on the proposed Annual Action Plan, is included with this report as **Appendix B**.

"How to Find Us"... directions to the Guernsey County Board of Developmental Disabilities from I-77 north or south and from I-70 east or west, is included with this report as **Appendix C**.

The Administrative office is located at 60770 Southgate Road, Byesville, Ohio and is open to the public Monday through Friday 7:00 am to 3:30 pm. For more information, visit <http://www.guernseycountydd.org>.

### **III. Assessment**

In March 2024, the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) reviewed the operations of and the services provided by the Guernsey County Board of Developmental Disabilities. The GCBDD was granted a three-year accreditation (highest available) with only one citation. In an effort to continually improve services and supports, GCBDD annually conducts a self-review to ensure they continually meet the standards for accreditation.

Based on input from the 2024 survey of consumers, families, providers, and staff, the GCBDD is a valuable and essential component in the continuum of services to individuals with developmental disabilities. Thus GCBDD commits to continuing to provide or contract for services in Help Me Grow, Early Intervention, school age, adult day array and employment services, waiver and supported living services, transportation, service & support administration, residential, and Special Olympics.

GCBDD continues to perform Quality Assurance Reviews and Nursing Quality Assurance Reviews for all individuals receiving residential services. These reviews address documentation, services provided, health and safety, wants and needs, and outcomes achieved. Additionally, the SSA provides continuous monitoring through listening and learning.

The Department of Children and Youth (DCY) reviews compliance of the Early Intervention program through the Early Intervention Data System (EIDS system). Completing a 45 day timeline, timely receipt of services, as well as transition to preschool timelines are monitored. Last year the Board passed with 100% compliance.

The Department of Children and Youth (DCY) completes an Annual Performance Report and Determination annually for Early Intervention. The report is compiled of compliance from the 45 day timeline, timely receipt of service timeline, transition to preschool timeline, parent survey responses, and child outcome summary ratings. Guernsey County Early Intervention meets requirements for the SFY23.

The Office of the Fire Marshal conducts visits to inspect the premises for safety and compliance. The safety of individuals and staff is of primary importance and is reviewed monthly at the Management Team meetings.

In 2020, DODD conducted a Self-Waiver review of Participants Directed Goods & Services; there were no findings reported.

GCBDD maintenance and SSA department conduct monthly house inspections. Annually furnace, air conditioning, and fire inspections are completed on all GCBDD buildings and homes.

The state auditor conducts or coordinates annual fiscal audits of all financial records and transactions conducted by GCBDD. The 2022 audit contained no citations or comments related to the GCBDD operations.

In 2024, all employees were trained in Crisis Prevention (CPI) and will be recertified every two years. All new hires will be certified within their first 90 days.

### **IV. Opportunities**

- Eligible individuals are currently choosing from 11 vocational habilitation or employment providers and 8 habilitative service providers.
- The Governor's Employment First Initiative has established that community employment is the priority. This initiative encompasses public school special education.
- We continue to maximize the operational efficiencies of our membership in the Midwest Ohio Regional Council of Government (MEORC COG). The Region 5 county collaborative project has re-designed several key processes.
- In 2018, Ohio Network of Innovation (ONI) was established in order to create a housing board to manage county owned properties.
- In 2023, Ohio Network of Innovation (ONI) started a payeeship program for Social Security benefits.
- In 2024, GCBDD contracted with Ohio Network of Innovation (ONI) for guardianship services.

- In January of 2018 the Muskingum County Board of DD entered into a shared agreement for the services of the Superintendent with Guernsey. In October 2018 MCBDD expanded their share request to include Business Manager. In the Fall of 2020, GCBDD entered into a shared agreement with MCBDD for the services of their Human Resources Director. In December 2021, MCBDD entered into a shared agreement with GCBDD for the services of Community Relations/Special Projects.
- In 2023, GCBDD purchased a building in downtown Cambridge for the future home of a “paint your own pottery” store.
- As GCBDD works to increase the community’s capacity to support and include people with developmental disabilities, the numbers and types of contractual relationships with both specialized and generic community agencies grow. As a result, our influence in the community grows and we continue to build capacity in the community to support people eligible for services.
- Our reputation in the community remains solid and the community survey data shows that the majority of the responders to our survey thought their tax dollars were being spent wisely.
- GCBDD offered service grants and mini grants to school districts in 2024, \$485,250 was awarded to public schools to assist with behavior therapy services and \$24,434.68 was awarded to assist with technology and adaptive equipment.
- GCBDD participates in provider recruitment activities on an ongoing basis based upon the needs of the individuals we support. Provider Support and the SSA Director meet monthly to determine needs and efforts around provider recruitment. Activities around recruitment of Shared Living providers and Employment providers have been a focus over the past 3 years.
- Club Sports is offered through the school districts. Currently the schools offer basketball and volleyball as options for students.
- Through the discovery process it was found that individuals express high interest in art. Beginning in 2020, GCBDD has held annual Art shows in the community. Beginning in 2023 the Board also had a display at the Salt Fork Arts and Crafts Festival.
- Ohio has developed STABLE Accounts for individuals and families to save money without affecting their Medicaid benefits.
- In 2016, the GCBDD established a scholarship fund for individuals eligible to receive services to assist in their post-secondary endeavors. In 2024, the scholarship award was \$4,024.00.
- The SSA’s meet with each newly certified independent provider within 60 days of the provider being selected to provide services. The purpose of these meetings is to make sure that the provider understands the ISP and the provider’s responsibilities and to make sure the provider has the contact information for the SSA and GCBDD.
- The GCBDD will begin offering online parent support groups through Facebook. The group will be monitored by GCBDD staff.
- In an effort to expand the applicant pool for SSA’s GCBDD is now accepting an Associate’s Degree with the requirement to obtain a Bachelor’s Degree within four years of employment. Additionally, the Position Description for Home Visitor was changed to require a minimum of HS Diploma, Associates preferred.
- GCBDD added the implementation of Home Visiting Services in the Early Intervention Department with the addition of three new Home Visitor positions to the Table of Organization.
- MEORC Crisis Intervention Grant- GCBDD is partnering with MEORC and other County Boards to provide Crisis Intervention Training per a grant from DODD. The training will be targeted to County Board Staff as well as providers. In 2024, three staff members received training in the area of behavioral intervention. Two staff members are now trainers for Crisis Prevention and Intervention (CPI) and one was trained in CONNECT.

## **V. Goals and Objectives for 2024-2026**

A Strategic Planning Process, involving Board Members, staff, individuals, families, guardians, volunteers, advocates, collaborative agencies and the community at large looked five years into the GCBDD’s future and identified the following goals and objectives to assure continued, high quality services to all enrolled in Board programs based on self-determination principles.

**GOAL #1:** GCBDD will improve methods for service delivery and identify gaps in services for infants, children and adults with developmental disabilities and their families.

**Objective 1-a:** Annually, each member of the management team employed by the GCBDD will have visited at least one similar program and have attended one meeting of their peers to compare and contrast training methods and/or service delivery methods.

**Objective 1-b:** GCBDD will continue to offer mini-grants to the schools in Guernsey County in an effort to provide needed equipment, technology, and services to students eligible for our services being educated in their home schools.

**Objective 1-c:** By December 2025, the GCBDD Speech Language Pathologist will evaluate and implement the appropriate form of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) such as, PECS, low-tech switches, low-tech communication boards, or speech generating devices for at least three(3) individuals with significant communication needs.

**Objective 1-d:** By December 2025, we will recruit two additional HPC, Shared Living, and Respite providers. We will focus our recruitment campaign through the use of social media and traditional media.

**Objective 1-e:** Quarterly, GCBDD will hold or partner with community allies for “get togethers” such as Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter events.

**Objective 1-f:** At least three times per year, members of a self-advocacy group will be asked to attend a Board meeting to discuss what the group is doing and to provide feedback to GCBDD regarding services offered.

**Objective 1-g:** In 2025, the Board will offer and promote training in LEAN, provider review readiness, NQAR, and Strategic planning. The Board has contracted for providers to access training through MEORC. The SSA Director will report quarterly on the use of these training dollars.

**Objective 1-h** By December 2025, new EI hires will be trained in the primary service provider approach to coaching.

**Goal #2:** The GCBDD will increase communication and educational opportunities for individuals, their families, staff, service providers and the community.

**Objective 2-a:** At least one time per year, the Business Office will present a summary of financial highlights which include results, trends, and any expected funding changes for the period.

**Objective 2-b:** Quarterly, the SSA Department will provide opportunities for agencies and independent providers to obtain training information, updates on state and federal guidelines and other relevant topics. Additional, employment focused provider meetings will be held quarterly to discuss unique issues for employment providers.

**Objective 2-c:** Monthly, GCBDD will update public service announcements for the radio. Articles will be submitted to the newspaper often to promote special events and inform the public of our services. Staff will appear on Talk of the Town to promote special events.

- Objective 2-d:** Annually, GCBDD will sponsor at least one staff person to attend the SYNERGY convention, and at least two consumers to attend the Self-Determination conference.
- Objective 2-e:** Monthly, GCBDD, led by Community Relations/Special Projects Coordinator, will facilitate self-advocacy group meetings. Focusing on charting a life course and covering the principles of self-determination.
- Objective 2-f:** Annually, GCBDD staff will complete training on BODD Works which will include, but is not limited to: review of the strategic plan, emergency medical authorization, outside employment, review of updated policies, individual rights, confidentiality, and due process, Ohio Ethics Law, bloodborne pathogens, emergency procedures, MUI procedures, Health and Welfare alerts, and the Ohio Abuser Registry.
- Objective 2-g:** GCBDD will commit to the Good Life Principles, and the Core Principle of Person Centered Planning and Self-Determination by having all staff trained in Person Centered Thinking and the Good Life. All new hires will receive training within their first 90-days of employment. Progress will be tracked through bi-annual review by the HR Director.
- Objective 2-h:** All new hires (within their first 90 days) will be trained on the Crisis Intervention training techniques curriculum.
- Objective 2-i:** By December 2025, The SSA trained in trauma informed care and trauma biographical timelines will complete at least one trauma timeline for an individual in services.
- Objective 2-j:** By December 2025, IT will have developed a mobile app to communicate events and activities.
- Objective 2-k:** By December 2025, EI service providers will take training on prematurity to address strategies for working with parents of premature babies.

**Goal #3:** The GCBDD will assure quality services to those individuals it serves.

- Objective 3-a:** Increase the number of individuals in supported and integrated employment to 40% of all eligible adults by December 31, 2025.
- Objective 3-b:** Annually, PLAY Project Consultants will utilize the use of PLAY with a minimum of five(5) children and families enrolled in the PLAY Project.
- Objective 3-c:** Annually by June 1 each department will submit accreditation readiness for their area to the superintendent secretary.
- Objective 3-d:** At least annually, GCBDD's Speech Language Pathologist will offer additional support and training to providers supporting individuals with communication and/or swallowing deficits.
- Objective 3-e:** The Information Technology Officer will conduct monthly meetings for staff instructing technology practices for the maintaining of Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA) information and confidentiality.

**Objective 3-f:** Quarterly, the Community Relations/Special Projects Supervisor will update GCBDD website to assure it is a clear and user friendly representation of the services we offer. It will function as a resource for people with developmental disabilities and their families. The resource page will be updated quarterly (links checked, new links added). Analytics will be monitored quarterly.

**Objective 3-g:** With the assistance of each department-head for their area, the HR Director/Records Manager will ensure department-heads submit their list of records for destruction by January 31st and that records are reviewed and destroyed if required by and in accordance with the current Records Retention Schedule annually by March 31st.

**Objective 3-h:** In an effort to streamline a meaningful and consistent onboarding process; by July 1, 2025 a revised electronic new hire orientation template/system will be implemented for all positions.

**Objective 3-i:** To aid in recruitment and hiring, GCBDD will seek two(2) internships annually.

**Objective 3-j:** In an effort to improve communication between staff and leadership, the HR Director will attend each departmental staff meeting monthly.

**Objective 3-k:** At minimum, 85% staff participation on the 2024 Employee Engagement Survey and improvement indicated by overall agreement in the areas of Compensation and Relationship Management.

**Goal #4:** The GCBDD will develop and implement plans and strategies for additional, alternative funding and resource acquisition to support its mission.

**Objective 4-a:** GCBDD will maintain a minimum of two years of match requirement for all Medicaid Services currently authorized. The amount for the next two years (with 3% assumed annual growth for year 2 is \$1,960,132.

**Objective 4-b:** Monthly, the SSA Director and SSA Supervisor will complete a TCM audit in order to ensure accurate reporting of services, timely reporting of services, and efficiencies of TCM documentation and billing.

**Objective 4-c:** By December 31, 2025, all Home Visitors will bill 67% of their time to Home Visits.

**Objective 4-d:** By March 2025, all SSA & EI staff will be trained in expectations for timely documentation. All documentation will be monitored monthly to ensure same day or next day documentation is occurring.

**Goal #5:** GCBDD will furnish and maintain adequate physical facilities and equipment to meet the needs for services and programming for individuals with developmental disabilities.

**Objective 5-a:** Annually, Administrative staff will inspect utilization of space for new and existing programs.

**Objective 5-b:** The Maintenance Supervisor will research the cost to purchase a ranch style home for individuals served by the Board.

**Objective 5-c:** By July 2025, the Maintenance Supervisor will continue to assess the current heating/cooling system and investigate the replacement of such for a system with digital controls and electronic valves to increase the cost efficiency of its operation.

**Objective 5-d:** By December 2025, the Maintenance staff, with assistance of and coordination with the contracted architectural firm, will have renovated the recently purchased Wheeling Avenue building for use as an employment venue for individuals served.

**Goal #6:** All components of GCBDD's three year plan will be completed.

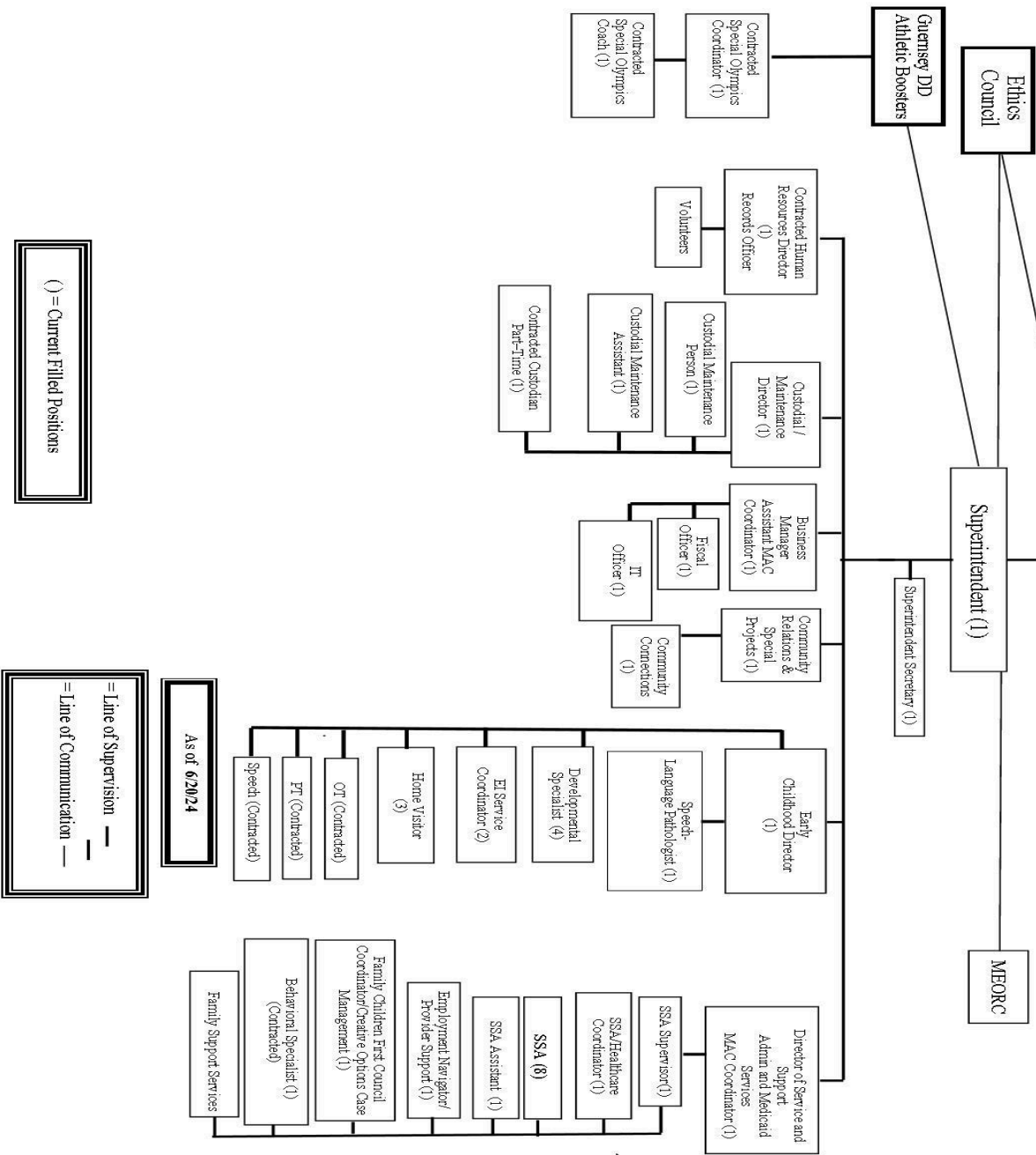
**Objective 6-a:** Quarterly, the objectives of the Annual Action Plan will be reviewed at the support staff meeting. The Administrative Assistant shall include the Annual Action Plan review quarterly as an agenda item for the management team meetings.

**Objective 6-b:** Annually, The Superintendent will complete an Outcome Performance Report to be presented to the GCBDD Board regarding the status of the Goals and objectives of the Annual Action Plan/Strategic Plan.



# Guernsey County Board of DD Table of Organization

Appendix A



( ) = Current Filled Positions

= Line of Supervision —  
 = Line of Communication —

As of 6/2024

Appendix B

The Administrative office is located at 60770 Southgate Road, Byesville, Ohio and is open to the public Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. The 24-hour emergency response telephone number is 740-260-3206. If this is a life-threatening emergency—call 911. To report Abuse-Neglect-MUIs Hotline number is 1-866-313-6733. The facility is completely accessible. Offices are closed on legal holidays. A copy of the calendar of operations is available upon request. For more information, visit <http://www.guernseycountydd.org>.

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(PLEASE ADVERTISE UNDER PUBLIC NOTICES: (10/15/24, 10/16/24, & 10/17/24)

**NOTICE**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

The Guernsey County Board of Developmental Disabilities will conduct a Public Hearing on its Annual Action Plan on Wednesday, December 4, 2023 at Guernsey County Board of DD. “The intent of the hearing is to obtain public comment and input on the proposed plan, including annual goals and objectives,” said Superintendent Kellie Brown. All attending will be allowed to make oral or written comments. Each person presenting oral testimony will have a limitation of fifteen (15) minutes.

- DATE:**                    **December 3, 2024**
- PLACE:**                   **Guernsey County Board of DD**
- TIME:**                    **10:00 A.M.-11:00 A.M.**

Copies of the proposed plan will be available prior to the hearing at the Guernsey County Board of Developmental Disabilities, 60770 Southgate Road, Byesville, Ohio 43723-9699.

Appendix C

**How to find us...**

**From Canton:**

I-77 South to I-70 West (Exit 44B)  
to Exit 178 (209-Cambridge)  
Left on 209 East approximately two miles  
GCBDD on left

**From Marietta:**

I-77 North to Exit 41 (Byesville)  
Left at Exit 41 (turns into 209 West)  
Approximately two miles  
GCBDD on right

**From Wheeling:**

I-70 West to Exit 178 (209-Cambridge)  
Left on 209 East, approximately two miles  
GCBDD on left

**From Columbus:**

I-70 East to Exit 178 (209-Cambridge)  
Right on 209 East, approximately two miles  
GCBDD on left

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/60770+Southgate+Rd,+Byesville,+OH+43723/@39.98315,-81.5640534,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x8837ca605a61758f:0x2279a0aa1391b2cf!8m2!3d39.9831459!4d-81.5618647>