



**SURVEY OUTCOME**  
**Three-Year Accreditation**



# **CARF** **Survey Report** **for**

# **Linking Employment, Abilities and Potential**

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### **Organization**

Linking Employment, Abilities and Potential (LEAP)  
1468 West 25th Street  
Cleveland, OH 44113

### **Organizational Leadership**

Melanie M. Hogan, M.Ed., Executive Director

### **Survey Dates**

February 23–25, 2005

### **Survey Team**

Gail M. Leiby, Administrative Surveyor

Michael Mamot, Program Surveyor

### **Programs/Services Surveyed**

Community Services: Community Integration  
Community Services: Community Transition Services

Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job Development  
Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job Supports  
Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job-Site Training  
Employment Services: Employment Skills Training Services  
Employment Services: Employment Transition Services

### **Previous Survey**

February 13–15, 2002  
Three-Year Accreditation

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## **Survey Outcome**

**Three-Year Accreditation**  
**Expiration: February 2008**

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## **SURVEY SUMMARY**

**Linking Employment, Abilities and Potential (LEAP) has strengths in many areas.**

- The mission and services offered by LEAP clearly reflect a person-first environment and a conscious effort to remove barriers to inclusion. Persons served are treated with dignity and respect and are given every opportunity for independence through involvement in the communities of their choice.

- Stakeholders, including persons served, families, staff members, employers, and funding and referral sources express a high degree of satisfaction and confidence in the leadership of LEAP and the quality of services provided.
- Accessibility issues and the removal of barriers for persons with disabilities are not just tasks for the organization, they are the focus of the mission and inherent to service delivery.
- The organization is complimented for producing attractive, meaningful brochures portraying persons with dignity and telling the story of not only the forward thinking founder of LEAP but also the current array of services promoting independence.
- The leadership of LEAP is complimented for developing an information management system, including a well-developed outcomes measurement, along with several other key reports to plan for the future of the organization. The management team members realize the importance of feedback from persons served and other stakeholders in the modification of services and have communicated these results to many audiences in an understandable fashion.
- The organization is complimented for developing a secured web address for the dissemination of information to both staff members and board members. This is a great example of keeping the information flowing in a timely manner, thus facilitating progressive business practices for the improvement of services.
- The rights of persons served by the organization are well written and presented in an understandable manner, accommodating various disabilities and ethnicities.
- LEAP keeps safety a priority for persons served, staff members, and volunteers. First aid and fire suppression equipment are readily available, and there are a number of certified personnel at every location to handle minor emergencies. The organization has done a good job of writing and practicing all types of emergency drills, preparing persons served and staff members to handle crisis situations.
- The commitment, professionalism, and longevity of many of the staff members are great indicators of consistency in service delivery. The complete belief in the mission of the organization along with these other qualities assist personnel in focusing on producing positive outcomes for persons served. The commitment made by the leadership to recruit and hire persons with disabilities is a visible testimony to the commitment to the removal of barriers and implementation of the mission of LEAP.
- The organization is complimented for significantly increasing both services and revenues over the last year. Pursuing grant funding and fund development are also part of the leadership's plan to maintain fiscal stability.
- Kudos are given to LEAP for the attendant training and state-tested nurse assistant training program. From the comprehensive curriculum to the professional instructors, this is a program to be proud of. The placement rate following completion of the program is impressive, and the self-worth that is gained by the participants of this program is outstanding. Whether students are working in a nursing home, in a group home for persons in mental retardation/developmental disabilities (MR/DD) residences, or for individuals, the training program equips the students not only with technical skills but also with the humanistic approach to dignity and respect of persons needing their assistance.

- It is apparent from observations and interviews that a deep respect and mutual appreciation exist between persons served and those providing services. In fact, a number of former persons served are now employed by LEAP. Clearly, the concept of walking in another person's shoes is applied and lived everyday.
- It is noted that not only does the organization outline its grievance procedure in its handbook but it also makes mention of an informal conflict resolution method. This has contributed to the fact that no formal complaints have been filed in the current tenure of accreditation.
- An informative handbook has been developed that outlines services. It also provides an introduction to the philosophy of LEAP. It is very useful in conveying vital information to new persons about to enter services.
- A new individual service plan (ISP) format has recently been adopted uniformly throughout all service areas. This format is one page, concise, and person centered. It allows for a good methodology to track long-term goals through short-term objectives. Records of persons served are well maintained and organized. One example of this is the two files for persons in Job Links. One addresses the requirements of the vocational rehabilitation department, and the other has information not required but utilized solely by LEAP. All information is neatly filed and easy to access.
- Many persons with challenging barriers to employment have found jobs that matched their particular preferences and strengths and that were in proximity to their residences. A wide range of employment vocations have been made available to persons served. The Job Links services provide an excellent vehicle to help high school students transition to work. Services are initiated in the freshmen year and follow persons until employed. Excellent relations have been developed with the local schools, which have greatly enhanced efforts to help persons served.
- Persons receiving community integration services who were interviewed consistently stated that services have greatly improved the quality of their lives. Funding sources reported that a unique relationship exists in that persons will be supported until they are ready to leave services, regardless of funding. The makeup of the persons who work at LEAP greatly contributes to this atmosphere. Persons served are provided the necessary support to have the courage to face the rest of world and know they have something to contribute.

**In the following areas Linking Employment, Abilities and Potential demonstrates exemplary conformance to the standards.**

- The organization is commended for developing the Doris Brennan Center for Disability Education and Advocacy, which provides personal, community, and systems advocacy. The center assists individuals in learning self-advocacy skills and convening advocacy groups using volunteer and peer mentoring in several program areas. The potential for this collection of services in one center is tremendous and an asset for the Cleveland area residents.
- The organization is highly complimented for living its mission as evidenced by the significant number of staff members and over 50 percent of the board of directors being persons with disabilities, several of whom were once recipients of services from LEAP.

- The benefits planning, assistance, and outreach services and the Doris Brennan Center for Disability Education and Advocacy are excellent and knowledgeable resources for informing persons about securing and retaining public assistance for which they may be eligible.

**Linking Employment, Abilities and Potential should seek improvement in the areas identified by the recommendations in the report. Suggestions given do not indicate nonconformance to standards but are offered as consultation for further quality improvement.**

On balance, LEAP is a provider of services to youth and adults with disabilities, offering quality programs and services in a manner in which dignity and respect are paramount. The mission of the organization clearly reflects a person-first environment that promotes individuals with disabilities to experience life without barriers. Through the passion of the dedicated staff members, this organization, controlled by persons served, provides services in fifteen counties in the northern region of Ohio. The innovative and progressive approach used in service delivery produces positive outcomes for persons served. The attendant training and benefits planning and assistance and outreach projects are clear examples of the organization being responsive to a need expressed by persons served and offering a means of self-sufficiency for many individuals. The community employment and Job Links programs assist both youth and adults with acquiring employment based on strengths and preferences. The Doris Brennan Center for Disability Education and Advocacy is a newly developed entity providing community and systems advocacy in an effort to make changes in the lives of persons with disabilities. The level of satisfaction from persons served, staff members, community employers, and other stakeholders remains at a high level.

The organization demonstrates a commitment to quality in all of its programs and services and is applauded for using the CARF standards as guidelines for continuous quality improvement. There is every confidence that the organization will strive to address the areas of nonconformance without hesitation.

Linking Employment, Abilities and Potential has earned a Three-Year Accreditation. The leadership, governance board members, staff members, and persons served are recognized for the outstanding efforts they have made in pursuit of accreditation. Congratulations are extended to all involved with the organization for serving persons with dignity and respect.

## **SECTION 1. BUSINESS PRACTICES**

### **Criterion A. Input from the Persons Served**

#### **Principle Statement**

CARF-accredited organizations continually focus on the expectations of the persons served and other stakeholders. The standards in Criterion A direct the organization's focus to soliciting, collecting, analyzing, and using input from persons served to create services that meet or exceed the expectations of the persons served, the community at large, and other stakeholders.

## Key Areas Addressed

- Ongoing collection of information from a variety of sources
  - Annual analysis and integration into business practices
  - Leadership response to information collected
- 

## Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

## Exemplary Conformance

### A.2.d.

The organization is commended for developing the Doris Brennan Center for Disability Education and Advocacy, which provides personal, community, and systems advocacy in an effort to implement local and state policy changes to make services and opportunities accessible to individuals with disabilities. The center assists individuals in learning self-advocacy skills and convening advocacy groups using volunteer and peer mentoring in several program areas. Information and referral services, peer mentoring, and disability determination assistance are a few of the services available at the center. Collaboration and coordination with other services is also a focus of the center in order to provide complete wrap-around services needed for independent living. The potential for this collection of services in one center is tremendous and an asset for the Cleveland area residents.

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## Criterion B. Accessibility

### Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations promote accessibility and the removal of barriers for the persons served. Standards in Criterion B focus on identifying the key components of accessibility to address.

### Key Areas Addressed

- Written accessibility plan(s)
  - Status report regarding removal of identified barriers
  - Requests for reasonable accommodations
- 

## Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

## Exemplary Conformance

### B.4.

The organization is highly complimented for addressing issues concerning accessibility in every program every day through the stated mission of LEAP. The organization lives its mission as evidenced by the significant number of staff members and the fact that over 50 percent of the board of directors are persons with disabilities, several of whom were once recipients of services from LEAP. The mission, values, and expectations of the organization are based in the reality of barriers

to inclusion and the elimination of those barriers, thus contributing to the development, delivery, and improvement of services. This is an outstanding quality of the organization and could serve as an example for other service providers.

### **Consultation**

- The organization has done a good job of identifying barriers to inclusion for persons served in several categories, such as employment, transportation, communication, and attitudes. It is suggested that an annual status report be written to document the progress made to eliminate the identified barriers. In addition, consideration could be given to addressing the physical barriers of the hallway doors in the administrative offices.
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## **Criterion C. Information Management and Performance Improvement**

### **Principle Statement**

CARF-accredited organizations share and provide the persons served and other interested stakeholders with ongoing information about their actual performance as a business entity and their ability to achieve optimal outcomes for the persons served through their programs and services. CARF-accredited organizations are committed to continually improving their organizations and service delivery to the persons served. The dynamic nature of continuous improvement in a CARF-accredited organization sets it apart from other organizations providing similar services. Information is collected and used to manage and improve service delivery.

### **Key Areas Addressed**

- Information collected, analyzed, and used to address critical customer needs
  - Accurate and consistent information collection
  - Proactive performance improvement
  - Performance information shared with all stakeholders
  - Written technology and system plan
- 

### **Recommendations**

There are no recommendations in this area.

### **Consultation**

- There are a great number of success stories occurring throughout the services of LEAP that could be shared with the community. Personal anecdotes and statistics gleaned from the outcomes reports could provide useful information to the stakeholders and the community at large. The newsletters, annual reports, and other forms of communication can be further used for the sharing of this vital information with persons served, families, funders, and other stakeholders strengthening their confidence in LEAP.
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## Criterion D. Rights of Persons Served

### Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations protect and promote the rights of the persons served. This commitment guides the delivery of services and ongoing interactions with the persons served. Organizations identify and address the unique and specific cultural and diversity issues of the persons served to ensure and support engagement in their individualized service plans.

### Key Areas Addressed

- Meaningful communication of rights
  - Commitment to diversity
  - Policies promote rights of persons served
  - Complaint, grievance, and appeals policy
  - Annual review of complaints
- 

### Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

### Consultation

- Confidentiality is held in high regard at LEAP. However, the offices allow for little privacy. Although there are some meeting rooms available, many workstations are located in one room. Phone conversations are easily heard by anyone in the proximity of any workstation. Whereas LEAP has a very open and engaging atmosphere, this situation might compromise confidentiality. It is suggested that improved partitions or some other method be developed to improve greater barriers between workstations.
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## Criterion E. Health and Safety

### Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations maintain accessible, safe, and clean environments through both external and internal safety reviews and personnel commitment to this philosophy.

### Key Areas Addressed

- One annual external inspection
- Self-inspections twice a year
- Emergency procedures, including evacuation, tested/analyzed annually
- Annual demonstration of personnel competency
- Access to emergency first aid resources

- Competency of personnel in safety procedures
  - Defined system for reporting/reviewing critical incidents
  - Transportation requirements, if applicable
- 

### **Recommendations**

There are no recommendations in this area.

### **Consultation**

- As the organization continues to grow and develop, it is suggested that consideration be given to the facility's usage. Although the spaces are currently accessible, it is crowded with the administrative offices; the Doris Brennan Center for Disability Education and Advocacy; Job Links; benefits planning, assistance, and outreach services; and community employment all housed in one space and the Attendant Skills Training programs housed in space provided in an apartment building. There is a concern with confidentiality for persons served when several staff members share office space.
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## **Criterion F. Human Resources**

### **Principle Statement**

CARF-accredited organizations demonstrate that they value their human resources. It should be evident that personnel are involved and engaged in the success of the organization and the persons they serve.

### **Key Areas Addressed**

- Adequate staffing
  - Verification of background/credentials
  - Recruitment/retention efforts
  - Personnel skills/characteristics
  - Annual review of job description/performance
  - Policies regarding students/volunteers, if applicable
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### **Recommendations**

There are no recommendations in this area.

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# Criterion G. Leadership

## Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations identify leadership that embraces the values of accountability and responsibility to the individual organization’s stated mission. The leadership demonstrates corporate social responsibility.

## Key Areas Addressed

- Leadership structure
  - Leadership guidance
  - Corporate responsibility
  - Corporate compliance
- 

## Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

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# Criterion H. Legal Requirements

## Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations comply with all the legal and regulatory requirements of federal, state, provincial, county, and city entities.

## Key Areas Addressed

- Review of legal reports
  - Synopsis reports of litigation, allegations, malpractice, or violations of ethical codes
  - Compliance with all legal/regulatory requirements
- 

## Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

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# Criterion I. Financial Planning and Management

## Principle Statement

CARF-accredited organizations strive to be financially responsible and solvent, conducting fiscal management in a manner that supports their mission, values, and annual performance objectives. Fiscal practices adhere to established accounting principles and business practices. Fiscal management covers daily operational cost management and incorporates plans for long-term solvency.

### **Key Areas Addressed**

- Budget(s) prepared, shared, and reflective of strategic planning
  - Financial results reported/compared to budgeted performance
  - Organization review
  - Fiscal policies and procedures
  - Quarterly review of service billing records, if applicable
  - Review of fee structure, if applicable
  - Annual outside review/audit, if applicable
  - Written risk management plan
  - Adequate insurance coverage
  - Policies regarding safeguarding funds of persons served, if applicable
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### **Recommendations**

There are no recommendations in this area.

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## **SECTION 2. STANDARDS FOR QUALITY INDIVIDUALIZED SERVICES**

### **A. Individual-Centered Service Planning, Design, and Delivery**

#### **Intent**

Improvement of the quality of an individual's services requires a focus on the person and/or family served and their identified strengths, abilities, needs, and preferences. The organization's services are designed around the identified needs and desires of the persons served, are responsive to their expectations, and are relevant to their maximum participation in the environments of their choice.

The person served participates in decision making and planning that affects his or her life. Efforts to include the person served in the direction or delivery of those services are evident. The service environment reflects identified cultural needs, practices, and diversity. The person served is given information about the purposes of the organization.

#### **Key Areas Addressed**

- Services are person centered and individualized
- Persons are given information about the organization's purposes and ability to address desired outcomes

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## Recommendations

### A.10.b.(2)

It is recommended that, when goals are established within the ISPs, they be written in a manner that allows for some form of measure. One way this can be accomplished is by completing the statement: “By [a certain date], the following [measurable action to be achieved] will be accomplished.”

### Consultation

- It is suggested that, when using the newly established format for ISPs, a person’s disability or barriers to full inclusion be clearly and consistently identified on the document.

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## B. Records of the Persons Served

### Intent

The organization maintains complete records and treats all information related to persons served as confidential.

### Key Areas Addressed

- Complete, confidential records are maintained

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## Recommendations

### B.3.b.

Although releases of information are widely used at LEAP, one form is used for all needs and is signed at the time of admission for the coming year. This amounts to a blanket release. LEAP is urged to adopt a practice of only utilizing releases of information for specific purposes and only with those entities from which it needs information. For example, a separate release of information should be filed for each entity that states the purpose of the release. If additional information is sought, then a new release should be developed.

### Exemplary Conformance

#### A.7.

#### A.16.

The benefits planning, assistance, and outreach services and the Doris Brennan Center for Disability Education and Advocacy are excellent and knowledgeable resources for informing persons about securing and retaining public assistance for which they may be eligible. Indeed, many persons have first become aware of the public benefits for which they might qualify through these two valued services. Also, persons served are given opportunities to enhance their advocacy skills through a variety of trainings and supports, thus empowering them to speak out on their needs and general change within our society needed to provide better accommodations.

## SECTION 3. STANDARDS FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

An organization seeking CARF accreditation in the area of employment services provides individualized services to achieve identified employment outcomes.

The organization maintains its leadership role in the employment sector of the community by designing and continually improving its services based on input from the persons served, input from employers in the local job market, and results of the organization's outcomes management system. The provision of quality employment services requires a continuous focus on the persons served and the personnel needs of employers in the organization's local job market.

### A. Employment Services Principle Standards

The standards in this section assert basic practices and capabilities that should be demonstrated by any organization seeking accreditation in the area of employment services.

#### Key Areas Addressed

- Goals of the persons served
  - Personnel needs of local employers
  - Community resources available
  - Economic trends in the local employment sector
- 

#### Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

#### Consultation

- A job board has been developed in community employment. It is suggested that similar resources be developed in the Job Links department, such as a binder that could be used to display the successful placements that have been made, with proper releases by the subjects. A binder would be portable and allow the employment specialists to take it to the schools where they meet with persons served.
  - Job development is taking place in community employment as well as Job Links. Whereas there is some coordination, such coordination could be greatly enhanced through the sharing of a database so that the employment specialists do not duplicate efforts. Job development is a very difficult task. Coordination of efforts in terms of tools, techniques, and support could go a long way to maintaining morale of the employment specialists. It could likely result in more efficient outcomes.
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## C. Employment Transition Services

Employment transition services are a coordinated set of activities provided to a student for a time-limited period as defined by the local school districts and funding sources. Employment transition services are integrated, systematic services for the student and his/her family provided through a jointly planned approach involving broad-based community collaboration, linkages, advocacy, and natural supports.

Services are designed within an outcome-oriented process that promotes movement from school to post-school activities.

### Key Areas Addressed

- Integrated, employment-oriented services for students and their families
  - Jointly planned approach with community collaboration and linkages
  - Outcomes such as postsecondary education, vocational training, and integrated employment
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### Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

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## G. Employment Skills Training Services

Employment skills training services are organized formal training services that assist a person seeking employment to acquire the skills necessary for specific jobs or families of jobs.

### Key Areas Addressed

- Formal training services
  - Skills, attitude, and work behaviors development/reestablishment
- 

### Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

### Consultation

- As with the community employment program, the skills training program could communicate with stakeholders, funders, employers, and potential persons served about the success stories found in this program in order to increase referrals to this program.
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## **I. Community Employment Services**

Community employment services assist a person seeking employment in choosing, obtaining, and retaining integrated employment in the community.

The following categories of service descriptors are available under Community Employment Services:

- Job Development
- Job Supports
- Job-Site Training

### **Key Areas Addressed**

- Integrated employment choice
  - Integrated employment obtainment
  - Integrated employment retention
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### **Recommendations**

There are no recommendations in this area.

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## **SECTION 4. STANDARDS FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES**

An organization seeking CARF accreditation in the area of community services assists the persons and/or families served in obtaining access to the resources and services of their choice. The persons and/or families served are included in their communities to the degree they desire. This may be accomplished by direct service provision or linkage to existing generic opportunities and natural supports in the community.

### **A. Community Services Principle Standards**

The standards in this subsection assert basic principles that should be demonstrated by any organization seeking accreditation in the area of community services.

#### **Key Areas Addressed**

- Access to community resources and services
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#### **Recommendations**

There are no recommendations in this area.

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## D. Community Transition Services

Community transition services are integrated, community-oriented, systematic services for students and their families provided through a jointly planned approach, involving broad-based community collaboration, linkages, advocacy, and natural supports.

Community transition services are planned and coordinated for multiple outcomes.

### Key Areas Addressed

- Integrated, community-oriented services for students and their families
  - Jointly planned approach with community collaboration and linkages
  - Outcomes such as postsecondary education, vocational training, and community participation
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### Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

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## E. Community Integration

Community integration is designed to help persons to optimize their personal, social, and vocational competency in order to live successfully in the community. Activities are determined by the needs of the persons served. The persons served are active partners in all aspects of these programs.

Community integration provides opportunities for the community participation of the persons served. The organization defines the scope of these services based on the identified needs and desires of the persons served.

### Key Areas Addressed

- Opportunities for community participation
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### Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this area.

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# PROGRAMS/SERVICES BY LOCATION

## **Linking Employment, Abilities and Potential**

1468 West 25th Street  
Cleveland, OH 44113

Community Services: Community Integration  
Community Services: Community Transition Services

Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job Development  
Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job Supports  
Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job-Site Training  
Employment Services: Employment Transition Services

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## **Attendant Training**

11607 Euclid Avenue  
Cleveland, OH 44106

Employment Services: Employment Skills Training Services

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## **LEAP Branch Office - Lorain County**

2100 North Ridge Road  
Elyria, OH 44035

Community Services: Community Integration

Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job Development  
Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job Supports  
Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job-Site Training

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