

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Regarding Changes to Community Connections Programming in Recent Years

Why are plans now focused on enjoying local adventures instead of taking big trips like we used to, such as visiting Kings Island, LaComedia or attending big concerts?

Several factors guide this shift. First, outings to distant locations require ticket purchases in advance. In 2024, the Miami County Board of Developmental Disabilities updated its business processes, removing the option to pre-purchase tickets or accept reimbursement from people served for these costs. As a taxpayer-funded agency, Ohio Revised Code shapes how we use funds. In the past, donations covered staff tickets for such trips. Second, traveling far from Miami County raises safety concerns, like injuries, vehicle breakdowns, or accidents. Past close calls led us to focus on closer, safer options. For those who value these outings, a chat with your SSA can spark a plan to make them happen in other ways.

What keeps me or my loved one from attending as many activities as we used to?

Years ago, a bigger team took larger groups into the community, much like today's Adult Day Services model, where providers guide big groups on outings. In March 2014, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid set a rule: county boards of developmental disabilities, like MCBDD, had to separate direct care from case management (SSA) services. By 2018, MCBDD privatized adult programming (RT Industries) and stopped billing Medicaid for adult direct services. Since then, recreational programming evolved to complement, not compete with, provider services. Most outings now include 4 people or fewer per staff member.

What leads to some activities being repeated in a month, and what prevents offering more variety?

As noted earlier, smaller groups join community outings. When an activity gains popularity, we schedule it multiple times in a month to include different groups.

Why does it appear there are fewer activities offered than before?

While we focus on hiring and training new staff, we have prioritized employee hours on offering Special Olympics activities, which are not typically listed in the newsletter, while also keeping more popular activities on rotation. Special Olympics activities offer participants many benefits and opportunities to learn and grow. By focusing on those activities, we are supporting individuals to live a healthy life while helping people increase their physical exercise. It also allows more people to participate and always results in new friendships along the way. Participating in Special Olympics activities can build a community of support for people with disabilities, as they often look forward to participating because they feel part of a new community they helped create. We view Special Olympics as helping people build skills that can benefit them in life, such as working on a team, respecting others and being accountable for their actions. These skills translate to all facets of life.

What causes the Community Connections Newsletter to come out one month at a time, and what makes it different from before when I had more time to plan?

We plan to return to bi-monthly or quarterly newsletters. Right now, recruiting, hiring, and training new staff shapes our process. Scheduling activities in smaller batches offers flexibility as we grow our team. Soon, we expect to plan and share activities further ahead.

What prompts the Community Connections Newsletter to be shared only electronically now, and is there a plan to resume mailing it to everyone?

Switching to an electronic format proved effective for most, so we intend to keep it digital. Some prefer a printed copy by mail, and we gladly provide that. Tell us or your SSA if you want one, and we'll send it your way.