

## HISTORY OF COVA

### COVA Programs

Services can be divided among three categories: career preparation, career initiation and career advancement.

**Transition Youth Services** – COVA's experienced professionals work with youth ages 16 to 22 to achieve independent living. Our programs include Aftercare (to help youth who are transitioning from foster care), CHOICE (vocational training for high schoolers with barriers to successful transition into work) and Independent Living Skills Assessment (evaluations of youths' ability to live on their own).

**Career Development** – From assessment to skill and confidence building, COVA works toward satisfying long-term employment suited to each individual.

**Benefits Consultation** – COVA provides assistance to those who want to become or stay employed by determining how benefits will be affected by earned income.

**Rehabilitation Readiness** – This course offers participants a structured, counselor-led class to identify needs, barriers, skills and other issues related to returning to work.

**Resource Center** – Staff-facilitated, walk-in computer center with Internet access. Open to all local residents.

**Services for Employers** – COVA's expertise brings qualified, skilled employees to the work force with the support of COVA training and staff.

### COVA's Mission

COVA is the central Ohio region's leader in vocational rehabilitation services for people with mental illnesses and other disabilities that pose a barrier to employment. We serve nearly 3,300 clients and 250 employers each year.

A private, nonprofit agency founded in 1982, COVA's mission is to assist and support the community in overcoming mental, emotional and other challenges to a productive life, focusing on employment, economic stability and life skills.

### COVA: A History

**1982-83** Serv-A-Co Inc. is formed as a subsidiary of Netcare Corp. • Supported janitorial employment program begins with grant from Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission

**1984** Serv-A-Co receives first of COVA's many CARF Accreditations

**1986** Serv-A-Co becomes the first provider of vocational services for ADAMH Board of Franklin County and separates from Netcare  
• Offices move from Sullivant Ave. to Town St.

**1987** Name changes to COVA • COVA introduces supported employment

**1989** COVA moves to 29 E. 5th Ave.

**1993** COVA begins program for youth with emotional problems (CHOICE)

**1994** Pathways Program begins (Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission and ADAMH funding)  
• COVA begins Benefits Consulting Services • COVA opens Job Place at 5th Ave & High St.

**1997** COVA expands consumer base beyond mental illness to include people with physical and other disabilities • Columbus Public Schools partners with COVA to expand vocational program for Alum Crest H.S. students

**1998** COVA forms partnership with Ohio Job & Family Services opening door for participants transitioning from welfare to work

**2001** COVA receives Social Security Administration grant to expand Benefits Consulting services to 37 Ohio counties

**2002** COVA acquires new facility in Clintonville, moves to 3770 N. High St. • Franklin County Children Services contracts with COVA for Youth Services

**2004** Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services grant funds coordinated services with COVA, Concord Counseling Services and Columbus Housing Network

**2005** COVA establishes Rev. Harold Brown Award established Employee of the Year • COVA opens second office to serve Delaware & Morrow counties • Medicaid billing begins through Concord Counseling Services • Staff Innovation Award created • Careers for the Future receives initial funding from U.S. Department of Education • COVA's Careers for the Future program honored with U.S. Department of Labor New Freedom Initiative Award

**2006** Lilly Reintegration Award honors Careers For the Future • Central Ohio Workforce Investment Corp. funding established for Careers For the Future • Collaborations formed with On My Own, Career Works & BenePlan

**2007** Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission honors COVA as organization of the year • Supported Employment Transition program begins • Summer Youth Services program begins with COWIC funding • COVA relocates Delaware offices to 27 W. Winter St. • Lilly Reintegration Award honors COVA's Benefits Consulting • Columbus Foundation awards grant for Forensic Peer Training Program feasibility study

**2008** COVA leads central Ohio Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative and begins pre-release vocational programming in six prisons for those with mental illness • Benefits Consulting program expands into 63 Ohio counties • Pathways II begins with expansion of COVA vocational services to Fairfield County

**2009** COVA wins three-year UnitedWay grant • Photovoice project empowers nine participants to fight stigma through words and photos • COVA helps form the Central Ohio Supported Employment Collaborative