

Family Employment and Support Services – 2008

The Family Employment and Support Services (FE/SS) Division provides economic support to over 22,700 households in Lorain County in need of financial assistance through cash, medical, and food stamp programs.

Ohio Works First (OWF)

The OWF program provides short-term, time-limited cash assistance and medical coverage to families while they develop skills leading to self-sufficiency. The three year lifetime limitation may be waived for those meeting Hardship criteria as determined by the Time Limit Extension Review Team; or those with Good Cause who may receive OWF cash for up to an additional 24 months after being off cash assistance for 24 months. Adults in one and two-parent households participate in work activities for 35 to 55 hours per week until employment and self-sufficiency are obtained.

Ohio Works First cash rolls increased by 12% last year. As of December 2008, ADCR and ADCI increased to 4,521 individuals receiving assistance, including 3,291 children. The ADCU program, two-parent households, increased to 305 receiving assistance, including 169 children. Hardship extensions were issued to 117 families. Good Cause exemptions were granted to 39 families.

Prevention-Retention-Contingency (PRC)

The PRC program served many families in Lorain County in 2008. A wide variety of assistance was provided for such items as: car repair, security deposits, first month's rent, work clothing, bus tickets, disaster assistance, work tools and others. The nature of PRC is to provide quick response to solutions to needs that might cause a family to lose employment or housing. In 2008, LCDJFS issued \$225,763.49 for these services. LCDJFS also provided other benefits through PRC in 2008 such as a Gas Card Program, School Shoes, School Supply Program, Summer Camps and After School/Teen Activities. For these programs, LCDJFS spent another \$1,622,090.76 for special services under PRC.

Medicaid

Medicaid is a Federal and State funded program for health care coverage for children, families, and the aged, blind and disabled. The scope of coverage includes prescription drugs, medical services including inpatient and outpatient care, and special equipment. The State contracts with several Managed Care Plans to deliver services in an effort to reduce costs and save taxpayer dollars, yet still provide quality health care services to eligible citizens. Medicaid works in conjunction with Medicare and private health insurance plans.

- Families receive benefits under several categories of Covered Families and Children Medicaid. There was a 5 ½% increase in this population with 39,382 individuals receiving medical coverage under these programs as of 12/08.
- Low-income individuals residing in the community and in approved nursing homes who meet stringent eligibility criteria also receive assistance through Aged, Blind or Disabled (ABD) Medicaid programs. Those receiving Medicare through the Federal government may receive assistance with Medicare costs through QMB and SLMB Medicare cost-sharing programs; and will qualify for Extra Help to assist with their Medicare Plan D Prescription Drug Program costs. There was a 3 ½ % increase in county residents receiving help under these programs last year.

The following groups received ABD Medicaid or Medicare cost-sharing help as of December 2008:

Aged	2,979	QMB	3,224
Blind	13	SLMB	1,050
Disabled	5,643	RSS	11

Of the above, an average 1,209 individuals resided in approved nursing homes or intermediate care facilities. An additional 882 received help through Waivers.

Food Assistance

Food Assistance is a federally funded program designed to subsidize family and individual income to purchase food necessary for maintaining good health. Lorain County continued to deliver these benefits with an exceptional degree of accuracy, meeting or exceeding strict Federal and State performance standards.

As of December 2008, there was a 6 ½ % increase in the number of individuals being assisted with 30,030 individuals receiving Food Assistance. The average issuance per person was \$124/month.

SSI Case Management

Disability Assistance recipients are helped through the SSI Case Management program with the SSI application and appeal process. SSI financial assistance from the Social Security Administration results in increased personal income and a cost savings to the Disability Assistance Program. Two-hundred-thirty-four individuals were served through this program gaining eligibility for SSI, with \$394,306 in SSI reimbursement to the Disability Assistance fund. Three-hundred-forty-seven individuals currently receive Disability Assistance of \$115 month pending SSI approval.

Investigation

The primary responsibility of the Investigative Unit is to investigate taxpayer complaints and allegations of welfare fraud by assembling the best available evidence including documents and accounts of witnesses. Claims were established on 2,009 cases totaling \$1,526,600 subject to collection. When indicated, fraud cases are referred to the Prosecutor's Office for possible legal action.

Claims Processing

The Claims Processing Unit pursues collection of OWF, PRC, Medicaid, Disability Assistance and Food Stamp overpayments. Referrals are made to the Investigative Unit for further action if a client fails to cooperate in making restitution or if an intentional program violation has been committed. In conjunction with Claims Processing, the Treasury Offset Program (TOP) assists in collection of delinquent Food Stamp and OWF accounts by diverting federal and state income tax refunds to the department. A total of \$725,400 was collected in 2008 through installment payments, grant and coupon reductions, lump sums, and TOP intercepts. Sixty-one individuals were disqualified from receiving future benefits for committing Intentional Program Violations.

Fifty-seven percent (57%) of all recipients are under age 18, or age 65 and older.

Social Services

Child Care

The Child Care Unit enables parents who are on OWF or income eligible and either employed or attending training to receive child care. This is provided at centers that LCDJFS contracts with or in certified child care homes. In 2008 there was an average of 2,471 families being served on a monthly basis. 2008 also saw an increase in the number of employed families receiving child care. Child Care provider workers certify and monitor approximately 170 type B professional providers throughout Lorain County.

HEALTHCHEK

The HEALTHCHEK Unit administers a federally mandated preventive health care program for children who are covered by Medicaid services. This unit strives to promote wellness and preventive health care by encouraging regular medical checkups for children and adolescents from birth to the twenty-first birthday.

Pregnancy Related Services

All Medicaid eligible pregnant women are eligible to receive Pregnancy Related Services from their medical providers and LCDJFS. These services include counseling, care coordination, and transportation. The number of pregnancies average approximately 500.

Non-Emergency Transportation and Employment Transportation

The NET Program assures non-emergency transportation for Medicaid recipients to services delivered by Medicaid providers.

This program allows clients to receive medically necessary transportation for dialysis, radiation, chemotherapy treatments, and other routine medical services. Clients can receive mileage reimbursement, bus tickets or passes for Lorain County Transit, limited ambulette services, or taxi services.

Employment transportation provides bus tickets or passes to work, training, or education for those on OWF assistance.

Information and Referral

The Information and Referral Unit (I&R) sees applicants for public assistance, providing them with information regarding the services and benefits of LCDJFS. If the applicant has needs not served by LCDJFS, the I&R Unit refers them to a wide variety of social services agencies in Lorain County. In 2008 the unit made approximately 5,051 referrals as a result of face-to-face interviews. Many more were made through telephone contact. The I&R Unit also sees applicants requesting PRC assistance and child care.



Adult Protective Services

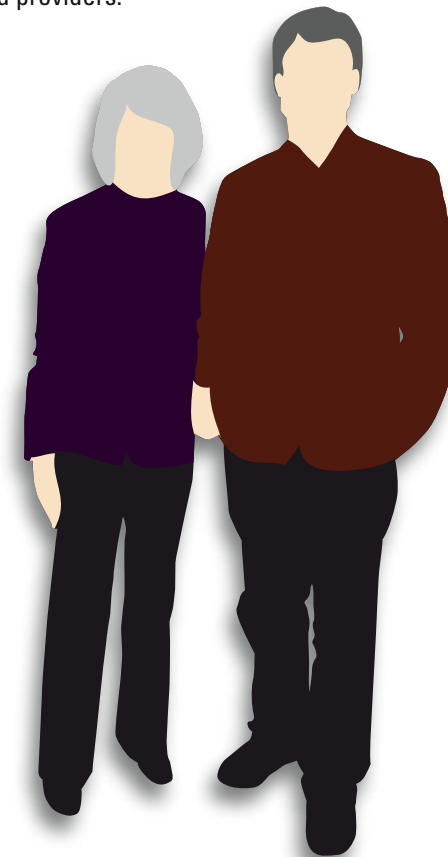
Lorain County Department of Job & Family Services is mandated to investigate all reports of elder abuse, neglect, or exploitation of individuals 60 and older. Adult Protective Services workers arrange a wide variety of social services directed toward eliminating or reducing the endangerment faced by at-risk older adults. Emergencies are investigated within 24 hours, and all other reports within three working days. The unit investigated 331 new reports in 2008 and maintained a monthly average of 86 clients receiving ongoing services.

Joining Forces

Joining Forces operates in conjunction with the Lorain County Joint Vocational School, and Lorain (Project GRAD and Gear Up sites) school systems. Social service workers based in the schools act as liaisons between the education system, families, and other community service agencies. They work with students who are at risk because of developmental, academic, or behavioral problems with the goals of improving the student's performance and helping parents support their child's efforts. Referrals to the program are made by parents, students, teachers, and other school staff. Parent University workshops are also held monthly to assist parents. There were a total of 1803 children and 1642 families served during the 2007-2008 school year.

Case Management

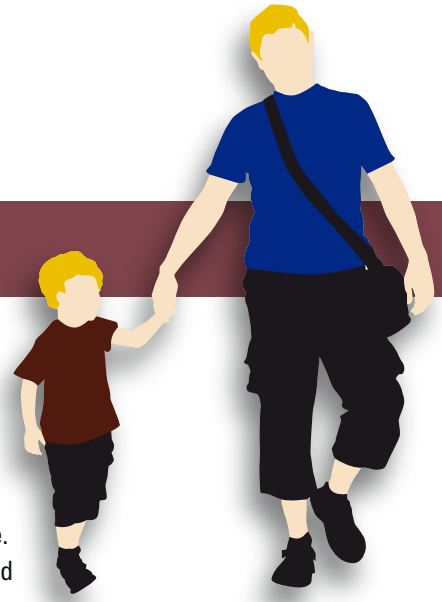
Case Management works with individuals and families who are struggling with multiple barriers to getting SSI and/or Medicaid. Clients are assigned a case manager to assess needs and advocate for them to receive SSI benefits. Case managers assist clients with referrals and transportation vouchers to doctors' appointments. Regular contact with these clients is maintained to ascertain that needed services and documentation needed to receive SSI or Medicaid services are obtained. In addition, case managers work with older adults who have unmet needs in coordinating and connecting them with needed services. Case managers also provide services to Lorain County Residents through outreach at Lorain County Health and Dentistry offices in Central and South Lorain.



OWF Employment and Training

In October 1997, Ohio's welfare reform law created the Ohio Works First (OWF) program. It became the temporary assistance program for needy families. All OWF adults and minor heads of households are required to participate in work activities which prepare them for self-sufficiency. Early employment is the emphasis for those who are job ready and short-term basic skills and job skill training is encouraged in order to prepare families for self-sufficiency within the three-year time limit. Individuals who do not find employment, must participate a minimum of 20-35 hours per week in a work activity. Stronger sanctions for non-compliance were created under the new law.

LCDJFS provides an array of services to provide OWF adult participants with skills needed in the world of work. LCDJFS has also entered into contracts with sub-contractors to provide employment services for OWF adult participants. LCDJFS has entered into partnerships with social services agencies in the county to help remove barriers to employment.



Child Support Enforcement

In 2008, the Lorain County Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA) administered over 31,000 child and spousal support orders. In the majority of cases, the obligors generally met their support obligations. However, in cases where an obligor failed to pay child support, the agency continued the practice of utilizing all allowable administrative enforcement techniques such as suspension of professional licenses, suspension of driver's licenses, seizing bank accounts, intercepting tax refunds, and taking passports. The agency continued to utilize judicial actions to collect child support as well.

During the latter part of 2008, CSEA began to face unprecedented challenges due to the harsh realities of the economic climate. Reduction in federal and state funding resulted in a loss of staff. In an attempt to off-set loss of staff, CSEA began working with the State Office of Child Support (OCS) and the Ohio Child Support Directors' Association (OCDA) to seek out innovative ways to use advanced technology.

Due to record numbers of individuals losing their jobs, CSEA experienced a tremendous increase in the number of obligors willing to participate in the "seek-work" program in 2008. (A trend which is expected to continue.) The "seek-work" program is run in conjunction with the Employment Network and is aimed at helping obligors find employment.

As we wait for the economy to rebound, CSEA continues to concentrate on collecting support for the families of Lorain County.

In July 2008, "cash medical" became a reality. Lorain County, like the other 87 counties in the state, scrambled to implement the changes wrought by the new laws. After various training sessions and a concentrated effort on the part of staff, the agency adjusted to this significant change. Basically, "cash medical" laws require a child support obligor to pay an extra amount each month unless the child/children are covered under a private primary care health insurance policy. In order to be liable for the payment, an obligor's income must be 150% or more of the federal poverty level.

In August 2008, the agency continued its yearly practice of holding an amnesty/out-reach program in conjunction with Child Support Awareness Month. This program permitted an obligor whose driver's license had been suspended for non-payment of child support to have it re-instated under relaxed conditions only during the month of August. As a result of the amnesty program, CSEA collected over \$134,000.00 for the families we serve.

Mission Statement

Lorain County Department of Job and Family Services is committed to promoting the dignity and self-worth of those in need. We believe that given a choice, people prefer self-sufficiency. It is our mission to maximize available community resources to support, encourage, and assist families and individuals in achieving their goals for self-sufficiency; to assist in elimination of barriers; and to respond to ever-changing needs in a progressive, caring, professional manner.

Lorain County Department of Job and Family Services

2008 Annual Report



Director:
Mary Lou Golski

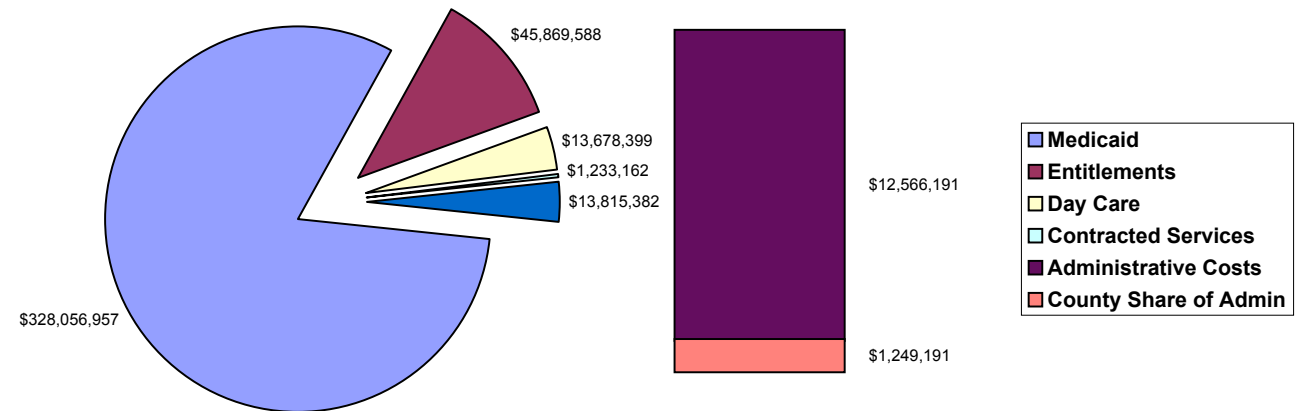
Commissioners:
Betty Blair, Ted Kalo, Lori Kokoski

A SNAPSHOT OF 2008

- In January and February 2008, in-house restructuring was completed in our Social Service division to better accommodate the needs of our Child Care population (providers and recipients), and to provide case management service to our recipients pending SSI benefits.
- Effective April 1, 2008, the Medicaid Buy In for Workers With Disabilities (MBIWD) program was implemented. This program allows eligible individuals with disabilities to receive Medicaid benefits. The individuals may pay a monthly premium to receive Medicaid health care coverage.
- Effective July 21, 2008, federal and state laws require all new or modified child support orders to provide some form of medical support of the child at all times. The new laws were created to ensure that cash is available to assist with the child's medical needs any time the child is not covered by private health insurance.
- Effective October 2008, Federal funding decreased 4.9%. The administration of the Medicaid and Food Assistance Program were impacted by this reduction.
- In 2008, there was an increase of 2,987 Assistance Groups receiving some form of Public Assistance (Medicaid, Food Stamps, Cash etc.).



2008 Expenditures by Category



Comparison of Expenditures: 2007-2008

