



LCDJFS E-Newsletter

October 2005

A newsletter from the Lorain County
Department of Job & Family Services

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Director Notes

Mary Lou Golski, Director

The State FY 2006-2007 budget process was long and contentious. From the CDJFS point of view this budget's results were, on the whole, positive including the following:

- Legal responsibility for civil service was not dumped on the counties.
- TANF funding remained constant.
- \$96 million per year was added in state GRF match for county administration of Food Stamps and Medicaid.
- A 10% grant increase in OWF.
- \$10 million for county based TANF demonstration grants.
- Limited state diversion of child support incentives from \$5 million to \$1.5 million.
- Increased child care rates to 65th percentile and required new market rate study.
- Restored 10% cap on co-payments for child care.
- Transitioned from Head Start Plus to the Early Learning Initiative, kept eligibility determination at the CDJFS and defined the 15 day time limit as beginning when all required documents are received.
- Restored the Local Government Funds to SFY 2005 levels, avoiding a 20% cut.

Mary Lou

Hurricane Katrina Evacuees

Marian Slovak

As of September 29th, twenty-seven families, couples, and individuals who evacuated from Hurricane Katrina devastated counties and parishes were able to receive financial assistance through our agency. These families and individuals came to our county because of their ties to the community, having grown up in this area, or having family members who still reside here.

The local Chapter of Red Cross referred individuals to our agency for assistance, and although many did not qualify for our normal programs, we were able to assist through two specialized programs established by the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services for Katrina Evacuees.

All Katrina evacuees were able to receive a one-month maximum food stamp benefit for the month of September regardless of any income they may have had. We will be able to offer this same benefit in October if other Katrina evacuees come to our county at that time.

In addition, a cash grant of \$500 was issued to all adults without minor children, and \$1500 to families with children under the age of 18 years. These funds were available to those with income at or below 200% of the federal poverty level, and can be available to those who apply through 12/31/05.

Along with the rest of the community, we welcomed the opportunity to assist those who were devastated by this natural disaster.

Mandatory Managed Care

Marian Slovak
Program Administrator

Managed Care Update:

Lorain County has returned to Mandatory Managed Care status effective June 1, 2005.

Families receiving Medicaid coverage under the Covered Families and Children Medicaid program, also known as Healthy Families/Healthy Start, needed to select a managed care plan, or were assigned a plan effective August 1, 2005. Managed Care applies to Medicaid cards with the category of MA C, MA P, MA T and MA Y.

Upon approval, newly authorized Medicaid recipients receive a letter from ODJFS regarding mandatory enrollment and advising they must choose a Managed Care Plan. A copy of "A Consumer's Guide to Choosing a Managed Care Plan" is enclosed which provides information about the two managed care plans that are available.

The two plans are CareSource and QualChoice. Those who do not select a plan, will have a plan assigned to them by the state-contracted Selection Services Center, *Automated Health Systems*.

Consumers:

Consumers may call the Medicaid Hotline at 1-800-324-8680 or the Selection Services Center at 1-800-605-3040 to receive additional information and assistance in making a choice.

Once assigned, families may opt to change plans within the first 90 days of enrollment. After initial enrollment, plans can be changed once per year during Open Selection month. Open Selection Month will be in January for Lorain County. Consumers would contact the Medicaid Hotline or Selection Services Center to make these changes.

Selection of a plan, or any changes regarding managed care are handled at the state level by state-contracted staff. Staff at the local office must refer consumers to the Medicaid Hotline or Selection Service Center for assistance.

Providers:

Medical providers may be interested in contracting with one or more Managed Care Plans. Medicaid providers who are not currently under contract with CareSource or QualChoice may contact the MCP for additional information.

CareSource – contact Caylette Acy at 210-839-1001.

QualChoice –contact Dianne Miller at 440-54-3256.

If the healthcare provider does not contract with the member's MCP, the services will not be reimbursed by the MCP or ODJFS unless the service is an emergency. Providers are advised to ask members for a copy of their MCP member identification card at each visit and/or verify eligibility prior to providing services, (except in emergency).

Document Imaging Update

Joe DeTillio
Assistant Director

It has been several years since we began the document imaging process. In that time we have entered information for approximately 35,478 Income Maintenance cases.

At the beginning of this year we started the back file project where we are scanning the full case records attached to the 35,478 cases. We were able to design the system so that the scanning station can automatically read the case number off of a CRIS-E screen print and attach all associated documents to the original case that is already in eRims.



At this time we have scanned over 4,000 batches associated with the back file project. We are now attempting to pick up more of the backfiling cases by adding additional staff to prepare the cases and to scan the cases. We are also in the process of purchasing a high speed scanner to assist in the backfiling project.

The Document Imaging Unit is doing very well. They are processing high volumes with an extremely low error rate. The new technology is very good, but there are still glitches in the system from time to time, which at times causes frustration for all staff involved with document imaging.

We hope that with some of the recent fine tuning, that the system will run smoother and all required staff will utilize the eRims system.

Limited English Proficiency Policy

Joe DeTillio
Assistant Director

Persons who cannot or have difficulty speaking or understanding the English language are protected against discrimination based on national origin. If clients are hard of hearing or cannot speak or understand English well enough to communicate with the Lorain County Department of Job and Family Services, we will provide an interpreter at no cost. We may also be able to provide oral or written translation of documents.

Based on the 2000 Census as well as historical knowledge, Lorain County has a substantial Hispanic population. Therefore, Lorain County Department of Job and Family Services has had a need to have staff that have Spanish capability. We have recently added to the number of workers that have this capability. Some of these workers have Spanish caseloads to better serve the population.

Due to the substantial Hispanic population there are a number of forms in Spanish. One difficulty is that the CRIS-E is only in English and going through the interactive interview process is quite cumbersome for the Spanish speaking population. We have

recently created a home-study program for our WEP clients, and we were able to get them in Spanish. Currently Lorain County Department of Job and Family Services has 24 Spanish speaking staff out of approximately 300 total staff.

Historically we have not experienced any other language group of any substantial size in Lorain County. We have experienced the need for other languages, but on extremely rare occasions. When these situations arise we have been able to handle them with our staff. With our current staff, we are able to interpret/translate Spanish, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Ukranian, Korean, Greek, Slovak, Russian, Polish, Czech., and Sign Language.



Special TANF/PRC Expenditures in 2005

Natalio Rodriquez
Program Administrator

There were many happy low income children in Lorain County who benefited from some special programs initiated with state TANF Incentive dollars and other funds received by LCDJFS. Three of these programs targeted school age children between the ages of 5 and 17. This is the 4th year for the Back-To-School shoes and school supply program and the 2nd year for the school clothes program.

This year's program was a big venture that included 10,068 children who were mailed all three gift cards on July 27, 2005. This year's program grew to include all children ages 5 to 17 participating in the Food Stamp program. We did not forget those OWF child only cases who the protective payee is a grandparent, aunt, uncle or a custodial parent. Those children received the gift cards too. LCDJFS spent 2.4 million dollars on the 2005 Back-To-School Program. Each of these students received \$250 to get ready for school. Each child received a \$150 gift card to purchase school clothes, \$50 gift card to purchase school shoes, and a \$50 gift card to purchase school supplies.

Our children were able to shop at J.C. Penny's and Target for school clothes, Payless Shoe's for school shoes, and Drug Mart for school supplies. These companies gave us discounts on the amount of gift cards that were purchased. So with the savings we purchased additional cards.

When all was done, we clothed 10,068 children, bought school supplies for 10,278 children and put shoes on the feet of 11,488 children. As the school doors opened across Lorain County, there were a lot of nicely dressed kids ready for school.

But our spending did not stop there. We put together a Summer Camp program for children between the ages of 5 and 12. There were an abundance of sites available in Lorain County for the children to attend. Camps were provided at Little Lighthouse School in Lorain, The Linden School in Elyria, Earth Camp at

Common Ground in Oberlin, and Horizon Activities Centers who collaborated with 3 other organizations, Neighborhood House Association, Boys and Girls Club and Catholic Charities to provide 11 sites for camp. The kids saw nature up close, went swimming, took many field trips, visited water parks, and did an array of activities. LCDJFS spent close to \$400,000 on this program serving 898 children.

LCDJFS funded an After-School Program from January 1, 2005 through June 30, 2005. The program actually closed when each participant's school closed for summer vacation. Each eligible student was able to attend an After-School Site for two hours when their school was out for the day.

Horizon Activities Center collaborated with 3 other organizations, Neighborhood House Association, Boys and Girls Club and Catholic Charities, to provide 11 sites in three large cities in Lorain County for the After-School Program. LCDJFS spent \$500,000 for this service which provided a structured environment for children with age appropriate activities, tutoring and homework assistance along with a snack. The program served 646 children ages 5 to 14.

The last special program funded by LCDJFS is a Gasoline Card Program for working OWF and Food Stamp adult recipients. At the FS recertification or OWF reapplication interview, the Income Maintenance Workers determine if the adult recipients of the household are eligible for a \$100 Speedway Gas Card. The adult must be employed and be in their current employment at least 4 weeks. Each adult in the Assistance Group can be eligible for the gas card if they are meeting the criteria. Each adult is eligible for 2 gas cards in 2005, one every 6 months. 3000 gas cards were purchased for a \$300,000 price tag for the program. This has been a very successful and well enjoyed program by our customers.

The 2005-2006 budget year may bring yet another round of special programs funded by LCDJFS. We are currently meeting to see what funds are available and what programs may be on the short list for funding.

Lorain County CSEA Call Center

Dolores M. Ack
Administrator



In its continuing efforts to improve customer service, the Lorain County Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA) began operating its Customer Call Center in April 2004.

Callers to the Call Center are able to complete their call at first contact. Much of the frustration of calling investigators only to get voice mail is a thing of the past, as well as the frequent customer voice mail when calls were returned.

Customers receive a short menu of 6 options and upon selection, are connected to an agent who responds to their need. The Call Center agents are Investigators who have staggered daily 2-3 hour shifts taking incoming calls which are automatically routed on a round-robin basis. Employers, attorneys, other agency staff and difficult calls are forwarded to Customer Service agents.

Outside customers calling the CSEA on other agency phone lines have calls directly linked to the Call Center. Internal county phone calls can still be directed to the individual workers extension.

One of the objectives of the Call Center is to enable workers to have uninterrupted time to work on cases during the non-scheduled hours. Since most CSEA business is transacted by phone, during the protected time, no phone calls are received and clients are generally seen only by appointment. This arrangement has resulted in increased productivity by investigators who complete their many referrals to the Court and Prosecutors, as well as work on the many monthly SETS alerts and reports.



The following statistics cover the period 9/1/04 - 8/31/05:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Total
Avg # of calls per day	528	517	464	490	436	2435

	Establishment	Enforcement	Modification	Customer Service
Avg calls / week	281	1508	268	378
% of calls	12%	62%	10%	16%
Agent Hours (Tues-Fri)	2.0	3:15	2:45	Full Time

Average Number of calls per month = 10,470
Average Number of calls per year = 126,620

* On Mondays and Days after Holidays, this time is increased to 4 hrs and 15 minutes

CSEA goal is to answer at least 80% of our calls within 2 minutes keeping our call abandonment rate to a minimum. Agents strive to keep the length of calls to an 8 minute maximum with the more in-depth calls being handled by Customer Service.

Job & Family Statistics for Lorain County

Families receiving on-going cash assistance

Dec. 2004	Mar. 2005	Jun. 2005	Sep. 2005
2,111	2,120	2,189	2,232

Disabled individuals receiving on-going cash assistance

Dec. 2004	Mar. 2005	Jun. 2005	Sep. 2005
276	331	351	288

Individuals receiving health insurance through Healthy Start/Healthy Families Medicaid

Dec. 2004	Mar. 2005	Jun. 2005	Sep. 2005
39,744	39,983	40,020	40,220

Individuals receiving food stamps

Dec. 2004	Mar. 2005	Jun. 2005	Sep. 2005
26,352	27,241	26,704	26,857

Individuals receiving employment-related training assistance

Dec. 2004	Mar. 2005	Jun. 2005	Sep. 2005
847	808	717	N/A

Disabled individuals receiving Nursing Home or Home and Community-Based Service Waivers assistance

Dec. 2004	Mar. 2005	Jun. 2005	Sep. 2005
2,079	2,080	2,073	2,072

Aged, Blind or Disabled individuals receiving health insurance through Medicaid

Dec. 2004	Mar. 2005	Jun. 2005	Sep. 2005
7,843	7,961	8,008	8,014

Case Management

Lucy Wanderi
Case Management / I-R Supervisor

Case Management is a program of Lorain County Department of Job and Family Services, designed to work with OWF families who are struggling with multiple barriers to getting jobs and retaining those jobs.

These families struggle with multiple issues, such as chronic poverty, substance abuse, child abuse, domestic violence and/or mental and physical health problems. It is the belief of LCDJFS that given a choice, everyone would prefer to be self-sufficient.

In order for this goal to be achieved, the identification of the barriers that affect OWF families and their children need to be established. That's where the Case Managers come in.

They work in close collaboration with ESC's through monthly contacts. We have four Case Managers who interview and assess the needs of OWF families in the office and at the client's home. They assist with job skills, education, child care, transportation, etc. Regular contact with these families is maintained to ascertain that needed services are obtained, needs are being met and barriers to job retention are overcome.

Case Managers also serve Lorain County residents through visits to five outreach sites in La Grange, Oberlin, the Haven Center, Lorain Catholic Services and Timberlake Town Homes in Avon.

At these sites, Case Managers help residents with information regarding OWF cash, food stamps, Medicaid and Child Care. They make referrals to Help Me Grow, Services for Grandparents raising Grandchildren, Employment and Training Network, Adult Protective Services, and various other services.

Contact LCJFS

42485 North Ridge Road
Elyria, OH 44035-1057
Phone: 440-323-5726
Fax: 440-323-3422
TTY/TDD: 440-284-4125
Child Support Office: 440-284-4401
Hours of Operation:
7:00—4:30 Mon, Wed, Thur, Fri & 7:30—6:30 Tues

