



LCDJFS E-Newsletter

Spring 2007

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

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Director Notes

Mary Lou Golski, Director

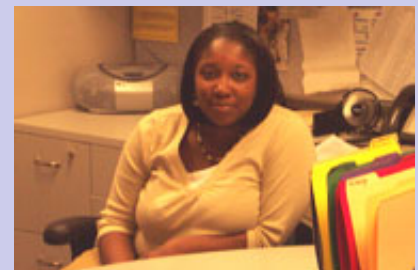
On March 16, 2007 Governor Strickland presented his proposed state fiscal year budget for 2008-2009. Here are some of the highlights:

- No new taxes or fees.
 - New General Revenue Funds total only \$400 million for the biennium.
 - Governor cut over \$700 million from state agencies.
 - TANF increases in child care provider rates, increasing child care eligibility to 200% of poverty, additional dollars for Help Me Grow, child protective services, and adoption subsidy, school readiness enrichment increase, and during the second year OWF grant increases.
 - Child Support general revenue funds to replace the lost match of federal incentive dollars due to the DRA.
 - Medicaid expands eligibility for children up to 300%, pregnant women at 200% and parents at 100% of poverty.
 - Provide Medicaid buy in for children at 300% of poverty.
- Increase rates for providers and inpatient hospital services.
 - Increase Passport slots. Child Care market rate increase, harmonize eligibility for child care, early learning and public pre-K at 200% of poverty. Child Protective Services increased funding.

PROJECT GRAD LORAIN HOSTS FIRST SCHOLARS' RECEPTION

Latoya Caver-Jackson
Joining Forces Supervisor

Project GRAD Lorain will host its first Scholars' Reception for the 2007 Class of Southview High School Seniors on Tuesday, May 22, 2007, at the Spitzer Conference Center located on the campus of Lorain County Community College. In the first of many Scholar receptions to follow, about 120 Seniors will be awarded medallions to wear at graduation that will signify they have met all requirements and will receive a \$4,000 scholarship to attend a university of their choice. This event is a celebration to honor Senior Project GRAD students and their parents. There will be many esteemed representatives present at the reception from throughout the state to recognize the accomplishments of these students.



Project GRAD is a non-profit school-community collaborative that is successfully enhancing the instructional quality and culture of at-risk students. The mission of Project GRAD is to ensure a quality public school education for all children so that high school graduation rates increase and students are prepared to enter and graduate from college. Joining Forces provides the social component for Project GRAD so that social needs are met for both students and parents.

Gift Card Giveaway

Natalio Rodriquez
Administrator

LCJDFS decided to administer their most desired PRC benefit, School Clothes Gift Cards. This program was absent in 2006 after running 4 straight summers. This year would be a little different. Instead of mailing the gift cards to eligible families, a letter (voucher) was mailed giving the recipient instructions on how to obtain the gift cards.

LCJDFS had a lot of leg work to do to make this program a success. Request for proposals were issued and bids were submitted. Contracts were awarded to JC Penny and Target to purchase \$150 gift cards for children ages 5 through 17 attending school. Using the January 2007 payroll, LCDJFS determined there were 10,731 children ages 5 through 17 receiving food stamps or OWF cash assistance in Lorain County. LCDJFS would make sure each of those eligible children would receive a gift card as long as they were attending school.



It was very simple what the recipients of the letters need to do to get the gift cards:

- They had to retain the original letter and show it for eligibility.
- The Adult who must also be the case name must show a current and valid picture ID. This would identify the person in receipt of the letter as the responsible person of the case.
- For each child identified as eligible on the letter, the person presenting the letter had to show valid and current school documentation. We accepted a school issued Photo ID, a current report card, or a current letter from the school verifying the child's enrollment and attendance.

LCJDFS mailed out a total of 5,789 letters of eligibility. The first pick-up day was Saturday, March 3 for the city of Lorain only. There were 2,676 blue colored letters mailed to eligible households in the city of Lorain. LCDJFS used an Administrative Staff of 38 employees to greet and service people. The eligible public started to line up at the doors before 6:30 am and the line hugged along the building and out to the road by 7:45 am when the doors opened early for business. If a person had all their documentation, they were serviced quickly and were given the choice of which gift card they wanted for their children. As the day ended, almost 2,000 letters were returned for gift cards. This was a successful and rewarding day. We even made telephone calls to JC Penny and Target who told us their stores were packed with shoppers.

Saturday, March 10 went as smoothly as the weekend before. This Saturday saw Elyria and the rest of the county pick-up gift cards. There were 2,613 green colored letters mailed to eligible households in Elyria and the rest of the county and 1,850 letters were returned for gift cards. People remarked how quickly the process took and showed much gratitude for the gift cards. This group of people must of heard from their friends about the easy process because a steady stream of people walked through the doors all day. There was not a giant mass of people packing the parking lot waiting to get inside.

The last Saturday Gift Card Pick-Up takes place on March 24. Anyone with the original green or blue letters can come to the office to pick-up the gift cards. Also, there were 500 letters mailed to children receiving OWF cash only benefits that will come in on this day to receive cards.

LCJDFS will still honor the gift card letters through April 20, 2007. We have been notified by parents that they cannot come on any of the Saturdays to get the gift cards. These callers have been told that after April 2, they can come to the office on any day up to April 20 to receive the gift cards. After this date, we will evaluate how many cards remain and more than likely, look at the February 2007 payroll to determine eligibility for any new families receiving food stamps and/or OWF cash benefits.

CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENT INFORMATION

Dolores Ack
Child Support Administrator

All payments are processed by the Ohio Child Support Central (CSPC) in Columbus. Over one million checks from obligors and employers statewide are processed each month. There are several methods for both making payments and receiving payments of the support obligation. The following information provides each party on the support order the various options available for paying and receiving support.

OBLIGEE

Soon after your case is entered into the SETS computer system, you will receive notice that **you must choose** to receive payments through direct deposit to your checking or savings account or to the E-Quick Pay MasterCard. If you fail to choose the method by the deadline, you will automatically receive the E-Quick Pay MasterCard.

OHIO CSPC Direct Deposit

Support payments can be deposited directly to your checking or savings account. All you need to do is complete the direct deposit form and mail it in, or call **1-888-965-2676**, or you can e-mail your request to www.state.oh.us/odjfs/ocs.

OHIO E-Quick Pay MasterCard

This fast, safe, and efficient method applies support payments directly to a MasterCard debit card issued by the state. As payments come in, they are applied to the card, which can be used at thousands of purchase points or to obtain cash at banks or ATM machines. To request an enrollment form, call toll free, **1-888-965-2676**.

To report a lost or stolen card, or for other inquiries about your E-Quick Pay card, call toll free, **1-800-503-1283**.

Payment Information on Line

You can obtain the last payment date, date payment was processed and the total due on the order by going to www.odjfs.ohio.gov/ocs.

PIN Reset Information

Call the Office of Child Support-Bureau of Customer Service at **614-387-5505** or **1-800-686-1556**; **FAX 614-995-7159**.

OBLIGOR

There can be a time lapse of several weeks from the date the new order is filed by the Court or CSEA and the date your case is entered in the SETS statewide computer system. The CSEA enters your new order in SETS within three (3) business days from receipt of the order.

Payments on a New Order

You need to ensure that payments are made to CSEA or CSPC beginning with the effective date of the order, even though your case may not yet be entered in the SETS computer system and you did not get a bill. **By law, payments made directly to the obligee are considered a gift.** If payments are missed, you may enter **default**, which has consequences (see Default fact sheet).

Cash Payments

Cash payments may be made in person at the Lorain County CSEA Payment Office at 42485 North Ridge Rd, Elyria, Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm. While payments are recorded in our office, they are processed and applied to the obligee's account by CSPC in Columbus. Any person can make a payment for you, as long as they can provide your SETS case number or social security number and the order number.

Payment by Mail

Your payments should be sent to:
Ohio Child Support Payment Central
P.O Box 182372
Columbus, OH 43218-2372

Electronic Payments On-line

You can make child support payments on line at www.expertpay.com
Expert Pay payments can be made using MasterCard ONLY at this time.

Family Employment Support Services Call Center

Marian Slovak
Program Administrator

As a means of improving Customer Service and Payment Accuracy, our agency is implementing a Call Center / Change Report Center for families receiving cash, medical and food stamp benefits. Call Centers / Change Report Centers are highly recommended by staff at USDA, Food and Nutrition Service, Midwest Region as a means to better serve the public with a higher degree of accuracy. The purpose of our call center is to:



- Provide a system whereby clients speak with an actual person
- Assure client questions and issues are being handled in a timely manner
- Eliminate voicemail
- Aid in timely processing of reported changes

Our Call Center/ Change Report Center was piloted in May – October '06 for 5,300 families. We will soon have 9,400 families enrolled. Clients calling a caseworker involved in the Call Center are able to reach a Customer Service Specialist to report their changes, or inquire about their case. Customer Service Specialists have been trained to answer routine questions including whether a case has been authorized or not, and are able to schedule necessary appointments with the appropriate caseworker.

All calls for caseworkers in the Call Center go into a phone bank and are answered in the order received by the first available Customer Service Specialist. When all Customer Services Specialists are busy, incoming calls are put in a queue with a distinctive message advising their calls will be answered shortly. Customer Service Specialists record all incoming calls in a written database for monitoring purposes.

Changes reported to the Call Center are forwarded to designated staff to insure benefits are adjusted timely based on the reported change. In addition, Change Report Staff are responsible for adding newborns to medical coverage within five days of receipt of notification of the birth of the child, process Work Activity sanctions to be in compliance with federal and state regulations, as well as follow through on reported employment per the W4 New Hire Wage Match.



Messages are forwarded to the caseworker of record when changes are being reported on pending benefits, or the client has a question the Customer Service Specialist is unable to resolve. For the month of February '07, the Call Center handled 3,947 calls. Of those, 31% resulted in messages being forwarded to caseworkers, 57% were handled by the Customer Service Specialists, and 12% involved reported changes that were processed by the Change Report Staff.

Our Call Center is open 7:45 – 4:15 p.m. Monday through Friday, and is closed on weekends and holidays. An additional 8,700 families and individuals will be added once fully implemented later this year.

Job & Family Statistics For Lorain County

Families receiving on-going cash assistance			
Jun. 2006	Sep. 2006	Dec. 2006	Mar. 2007
2,274	2,104	2,026	2,061

Disabled individuals receiving on-going cash assistance			
Jun. 2006	Sep. 2006	Dec. 2006	Mar. 2007
324	318	293	324

Individuals receiving health insurance through Healthy Start/Healthy Families Medicaid			
Jun. 2006	Sep. 2006	Dec. 2006	Mar. 2007
37,538	37,829	37,608	37,095

Aged, Blind or Disabled individuals receiving health insurance through Medicaid			
Jun. 2006	Sep. 2006	Dec. 2006	Mar. 2007
8,063	8,091	8,107	8,137

Individuals receiving food stamps.			
Jun. 2006	Sep. 2006	Dec. 2006	Mar. 2007
27,231	26,856	27,041	26,722

Disabled individuals receiving Nursing Home or Home and Community-Based Service Waivers assistance.			
Jun. 2006	Sep. 2006	Dec. 2006	Mar. 2007
2,054	2,057	2,072	2,044

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, Thurs, Fri
 7:30—6:30 Tues

