



LCDJFS E-Newsletter

February 2005

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

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Director Notes

Mary Lou Golski, Director

In 2005 Lorain County Job and Family Services will be initiating a quarterly e-newsletter highlighting our various programs, services and statistical data. We feel by providing more information about the agency on a regular basis the community will be better informed. With e-newsletter technology we will be able to update you with the latest statistical information that many request when writing grant proposals or tracking trends. Should you have a particular request for information we will be glad to highlight that program or service in our next edition – just contact us using the contact information provided on the last page of this publication. Administrating over fifty programs can be a daunting challenge in itself but with this new technology we feel this will give us an opportunity to help you better understand the challenges we face on a daily basis. All my best to you in 2005!



Job & Family Services Statistics for Lorain County

The number of families and individuals being helped by our programs continued to grow in 2004. Quarterly statistics for each of these areas will be updated in future issues.

Disabled individuals receiving Nursing Home or Home & Community-Based Service Waivers

Mar. 2004	Jun. 2004	Sep. 2004	Dec. 2004
2,040	2,033	2,043	2,111

Families receiving on-going cash assistance

Mar. 2004	Jun. 2004	Sep. 2004	Dec. 2004
2,040	2,033	2,043	2,111

Individuals receiving health insurance through Healthy Start/Healthy Families Medicaid

Mar. 2004	Jun. 2004	Sep. 2004	Dec. 2004
38,398	38,538	39,100	39,744

Individuals receiving employment-related training assistance

Dec. 2003	Mar. 2004	Jun. 2004	Sep. 2004
645	647	658	771

Individuals receiving food stamps

Mar. 2004	Jun. 2004	Sep. 2004	Dec. 2004
25,489	25,861	26,078	26,352

Disabled individuals receiving on-going cash assistance

Mar. 2004	Jun. 2004	Sep. 2004	Dec. 2004
273	253	261	276

Aged, Blind or Disabled individuals receiving health insurance through Medicaid

Mar. 2004	Jun. 2004	Sep. 2004	Dec. 2004
7,613	7,735	7,809	7,843

LCDJFS's Personnel

Lorain County Department of Job & Family Services is a combined agency comprised of Job & Family Services and the Child Support Enforcement Administration. We currently have a total of 303 employees. The largest department is the Family Employment Supportive Services (FE/SS) area with a staff of 141. CSEA, our second largest department, has a staff of 74. Fiscal and the Shared departments have 44 employees each.

During 2004 we hired 38 new employees and promoted 24. The largest number of new hires (23) and promotions (10) were in the Income Maintenance area. Child Support hired 4 and promoted 6 employees; Social Services hired 4 and promoted 3; and the Fiscal/Shared area hired 7 and promoted 5.



Administrative Personnel—Front: Dolores Ack, Sue Goins, Mary Lou Golski, Marian Slovak; Back: Natalio Rodriquez, Jeff King, Joe DeTillio

Although staff turnover is a reality statewide for local Jobs & Family Service Agencies, our turnover rate in Lorain County has improved in recent years. Here's a summary of our Turnover Rates for the last 5 years:

2000	10.44%
2001	15.93%
2002	10.18%
2003	8.36%
2004	8.36%

A total of 26 employees left the agency during 2004. Eight of these retired, 12 resigned, 1 was terminated and 5 were probationary removals.



Child Support News

Dolores Ack
CSEA Administrator

Performance Incentive Earnings

The CSEA's performance Incentive report card has arrived, with performance scores which will partly determine the county's allocation for 2005.

The federal government has established an 80% performance target in order to receive 100% of potential earned incentive dollars. The CSEA program performance is evaluated in five areas: establishment of paternity, establishment of support orders, collection on current support, collections on arrearages, and the cost effectiveness of the collection program. As one of 10 metropolitan counties with large caseloads, our county shares some of the problems which prevent large counties from achieving the state and federal standards. Some of those problems include depressed economies and higher unemployment, lower staff to caseload ratios, higher percentages of imprisoned obligors who cannot pay, etc. The State recognizes that demographics play a role in the numbers and percentages. Counties that do not meet the requirements are required to demonstrate some improvement from year to year.

Lorain County's Paternity establishment rate of 84.78% exceeds the state's 80% target. Lorain County is one of 3 Metro counties to meet this requirement. As of September 30, 2004, Lorain County's caseload was 29,984, with the number of paternities established as 13,858, a 788 increase from 2003. This compares to Mahoning County's caseload of 30,760 and paternity establishment rate of 68.37%; Stark County with a caseload of 34,756 and rate of 71.15%; Butler County, with a caseload size of 25,687 and rate 89.85%; and Summit County, with a caseload size of 51,151 and rate of 77.13%.

Lorain County's establishment of support orders improved 1.58% in Fiscal Year 2004, to 73.82%. This rate compares favorably with the rate of other similar sized counties, such as Mahoning 53.83%, Stark with 63.56%, Summit with 72.99%, and Butler with 76.79%. Only two of the metro counties met the state criteria.

The rate of current support collected in Lorain County was 67.00%, slightly under the statewide rate of 67.88%.

Arrears collections were at 63.83%, slightly below the statewide rate of 66.34%.

Lorain County exceeded the federal and state requirement for cost effectiveness. This category is based on the ratio of dollars collected per dollar spent. A ratio of \$5.00 and above earns 100% incentive. Lorain' ratio was \$11.14.



2004 State Roundup of Delinquent Obligor - Lorain is #1

Lorain was first in the state with the number of individuals who were arrested or turned themselves in when Lorain County and 39 other counties participated in a November 2004 roundup of parents who were delinquent in paying their court-ordered child support. We improved on our performance in 2003, when we were second in the state.

This year, there were 55 arrests or individuals who turned themselves in. Lorain County Assistant Prosecutor Kim Gillette, CSEA Supervisor Sandy Campana, and Sheriff's Deputy Tom Gillette worked together to prepare over 250 warrants for individuals who failed to make over \$2,000.00 in court ordered payments to over 300 Lorain County children and also failed to appear for court ordered hearings.

The Lorain County Sheriff's Department coordinated activities with law enforcement departments in other Lorain County communities to ensure delinquent parents were apprehended. Cooperation from these law enforcement agencies has been a critical component of this coordinated effort.

Lorain County Domestic Relations Judges Bazinski, Boros, and Lilly and their staffs held court hearings at which fines and sentences were set. The maximum sentence in a criminal non-support case is 18 months in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

Family Employment Supportive Services Division

Marian Slovak,
Program Administrator

Processing applications for public assistance benefits, and ongoing benefit maintenance for families and individuals in need is the responsibility of the Family Employment Supportive Services Division. Units are specialized by program areas to maximize service delivery for clients. Programs include:

Ohio Works First and Disability Financial Assistance - cash programs;

Medicaid - medical assistance programs for families including Low-Income Families, Healthy Families, Healthy Start, Transitional, 4 Months medical; and individuals including community Medicaid for aged, blind or disabled, Spend down Medicaid, Disability Medical Assistance, and nursing home and Home and Community-Based Services Waivers;

Low - income Medicare assistance programs;

Food Stamp program.

Each program is governed by a magnitude of regulations and requirements, oftentimes with conflicting rules complicating service delivery.

During July 2003 - June 2004, an average of 64 staff members and 9 supervisors were responsible for ongoing maintenance of an average 18,938 cases for families and individuals. Each case represents a family unit receiving benefits under one or more categories of assistance.

Currently, one unit is dedicated to low-income working families in need of cash assistance, Ohio Works First; six units are dedicated to families in need of medical assistance programs and food stamps; two units provide medical and food stamps to adults without dependent children; and one unit handles nursing home and waiver Medicaid programs.

According to agency records, there were 9,953 Lorain County families and individuals filing initial applications for benefits July 2003 - June 2004. In addition, over 26,273 redetermination reviews as required by program rules were completed.

State records reflect our staff redetermined assistance 105,814 times during that same time period, with several families having several adjustments made to their benefits to account for changes in their personal circumstances. Changes in employment;



receipt of other benefits such as unemployment compensation and Social Security benefits; additional household members all impact eligibility. 102,055 of those were processed timely according to Ohio Department of Job and Family Service standards, with a timeliness performance measurement of 96.45%. Applications and changes are to be processed within 30 days to be considered timely. During April - June 2004 time frame, timeliness of application processing improved to 97.54%. Ongoing efforts are being made to further improve this performance.

Applications for assistance are available in our main lobby, located under the clock tower, on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. and on Tuesday from 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Or call (440)323-5726 or 244-4150 to request an application be mailed.

Social Services: Child Care Unit

Sue Goins
Social Service Administrator

The Child Care Unit at LCDJFS is always busiest in the fall, and this year was no different. An unusually high number of new applications came in as school and new jobs started and summer programs for children wound down.

Adding to this seasonal increase, however, was a new program this year called Head Start Plus. Although part-time Head Start has been around in Lorain County for a long time through the Lorain County Community Action Agency, beginning in July, 2004, Head Start Plus became operational. This allows age-appropriate children (typically 3-5 years old) to receive full-day care if their parent(s) is working and is eligible for subsidized child care services through LCDJFS.

In Lorain County, both Lorain County



Community Action Agency and Horizon Activity Centers offer Head Start Plus. Clients interested in this program must apply for child care benefits through LCDJFS. This has resulted in even more new applications this fall, as well as switching children who were already enrolled in child care to the new Head Start provider.

TANF funding is also available for children attending the traditional part-day Head Start program at Community

Action. However, these families must make application at LCDJFS and be determined eligible as well---another source of increased applications.

The addition of Head Start services to our array of providers has not been an easy transition. New clients and agencies have been unfamiliar with our rules and eligibility requirements, the state changed some eligibility standards in mid-stream, child care workers have been deluged with requests all at one time, etc.

The three agencies involved in Head Start in Lorain County, LCDJFS, Community Action, and Horizon Activity Centers, have worked diligently to get Head Start Plus operational and to get the children enrolled in the programs. Although we have all experienced growing pains in dealing with this new program, we remain committed to quality child care in Lorain County.

Jobs Program

Natalio Rodriquez,
Program Administrator

Low-Income families living in Lorain County and in need of cash assistance can apply for the Ohio Works First (OWF) program. This program is now time limited. A person can only received OWF for 36 months, then must be off cash assistance for 24 months before they can request an additional 24 months of cash assistance. The first priority for minor heads of households and adults participating in the program is to work which includes going to work everyday you are assigned, satisfying the job requirements and developing marketable skills. If a person is not employed, they need to complete high school or receive training for an occupation in order to qualify for employment.

To be able to participate in OWF, the minor head of household or each adult member of household must enter into a written self-sufficiency contract with LCDJFS. Each self-sufficiency contract shall include the household's plan to achieve the goal of self-sufficiency and personal responsibility. They must cooperate with the assigned work, developmental, or alternative activities available through the agency.

LCDJFS has contracted various services to help a person develop skills to obtain employment and become self-sufficient. For the 7/03 to 6/04 budget year, the following contracts were available:

Goodwill - This agency worked with the hard to serve, lower functioning participants needing soft skills training. They provided on site classes and On-The-Job Training in their Workshop. There was job placement services along with retention services.

Pathways - This hard and soft skills training service was provided by the Employment Network in collaboration with Lorain County JVS. Participants spend two months in a classroom environment. There was also Job Shadowing with employers.

Fast Track GED - This is fast pace GED instruction only available for participants who scores rather high on the TABE Locator Test. Students attend 5 days a week, 7 hours a day. Some homework is given. The afternoon sessions include resume writing, soft skills training, and talks from employers.

Fast Track ESOL - This is a 5 day a week, 7 hour a day program of learning English. With Lorain County having a large population of Spanish Speaking



residents, the language barrier must be overcome before a person can be successful in the marketplace. The afternoon sessions deals with learning English language use in the job market, along with resume writing, etc.

Common Ground - This three day session of self exploration is conducted in a nature setting. Participants deal with themselves, look at themselves, see the barriers that exist in their lives and what it will take to overcome these barriers. The participants in this program come from the Pathway's Program.

Career Counseling - This counseling is one on one in the hope that guidance to self sufficiency can be achieved.

The above are contracts of services paid for by LCDJFS. There are numerous agencies that provide free services to the Job Participants. Recovery Resources provides drug and alcohol assessments and counseling, The Employment Network offers computer job search, resume writing, career counseling, testing and many services free of charge, and The Nord Center provides mental health services. This is only a small fraction of agencies that provide free services.

LCDJFS' conducts a two month Job Search Class to any Job Participants who needs this assistance. This job search activity does resume writing, interviewing techniques, cold call employer job search, and many more activities along with actual job search in the community.

A comprehensive vocational assessment is completed with all participants to measure skills, interests, aptitudes and abilities. The Assessment results are used by the LCDJFS' Vocational Counselor and the Employment Services Counselor to evaluate the participant's potential for new training, the appropriateness of the career choice, and the ability to perform the job goal with current level skills. The testing material includes the TABE Survey, TABE Locator and COPS-Career Occupational Preference System.

Prevention, Retention, and Contingency Program

Natalio Rodriquez,
Program Administration

The Prevention, Retention, and Contingency Program, also known as PRC, is a very important program which provides short term, emergent assistance to families in Lorain County. Even with today's budget crunch, Lorain County Department of Job & Family Services finds it important to operate a program which can provide vital services to low income, needy families.

For the budget year 7/1/03 to 6/03/04, LCDJFS spent \$195, 755.14 on services such as car repair, rental deposits and first month's rent, utility bills, home repairs, appliances, work clothing, short term educational expenses, and job related expenses. We are the only agency in Lorain County that helps a person with car repair. Each category of assistance has specific criteria a person must meet and total household income cannot exceed 150% of poverty.

In the hope of helping additional low income families in Lorain County, on June 1, 2004, LCDJFS raised the poverty level to 175%. There is no doubt that this boost has helped families in Lorain County. Applications were up this past summer.

During 7/1/03 - 6/30/04, 2,434 families applied for PRC assistance.

Applications for PRC assistance are available at Lorain County Department of Job & Family Services, 42485 North Ridge Road, Elyria, Ohio, 44035 on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and on Tuesday from 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. A face to face interview is required.

Contact LCDJFS

42485 North Ridge Road
Elyria, Ohio 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 Tue