

Agency Director

Mary Lou Golski

Lorain County Commissioners

Ted Kalo
Lori Kokoski
Matt Lundy

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 everchanging needs in a progressive, caring, professional manner.



Contact Us:

Lorain County Job & Family Services
42485 N. Ridge Rd.
Elyria, OH 44035-1057

Phone: (440) 323-5726 or
(440) 244-4150

Child Support: (440) 284-4401 or
1-800-808-2991

Fax (440) 323-3422
TTY/TDD: (440) 284-4125
Website: www.lcdjfs.com

Hours:

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
7:30 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.
Tuesday
7:30 a.m. - 6:15 p.m.

We are located on North Ridge Road,
Rte. 254, just west of Elyria Avenue on
the south side of the street.

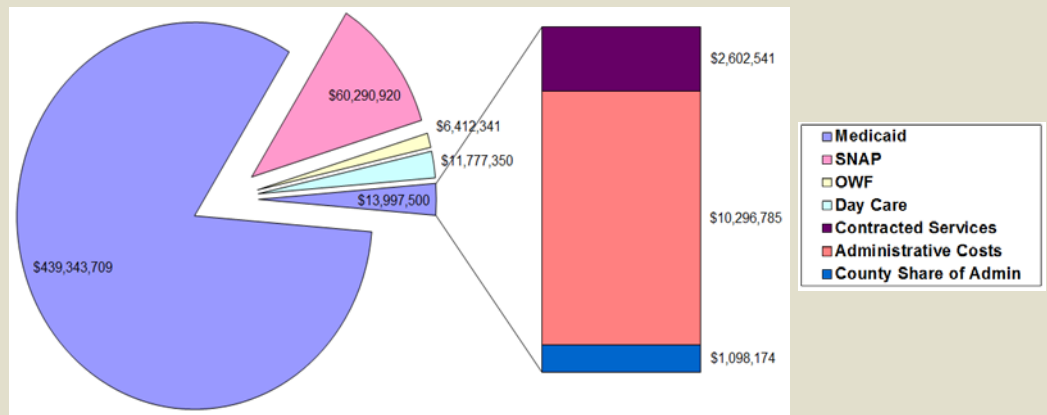
Lorain County Job & Family Services

2014 Annual Report

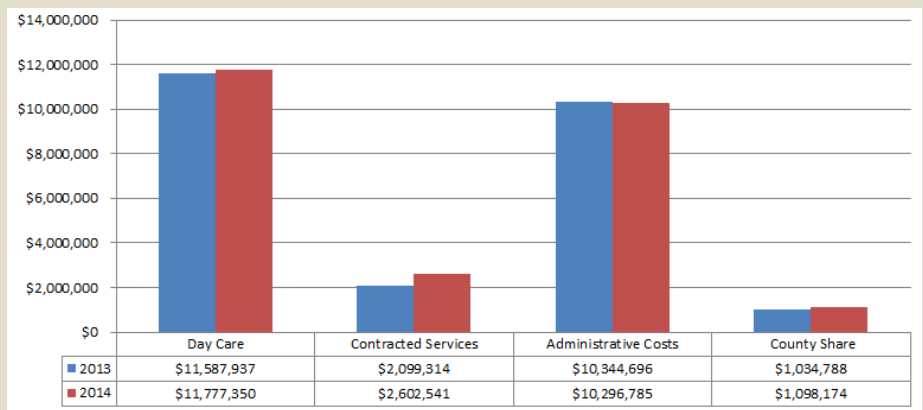
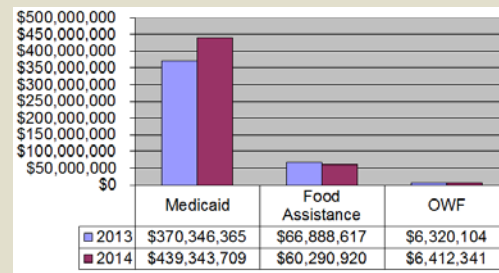
Snapshot of 2014

- Beginning in January 2014, eligibility for Medicaid was extended to adults with an annual income up to 138% of the Federal Poverty Level. Lorain County approved over 12,000 applications as a result of this extended coverage.
- Our In-House Work Experience Program began in June, 2012. WEP provides OWF cash assistance recipients an opportunity to acquire skills necessary to obtain employment. A total of 653 individuals logged 13,548.55 hours of participation in the program.
- The Child Support Enforcement Agency collected \$37,393 through an amnesty program held in 2014 and completed 185 license reinstatements.
- In 2014, our agency delivered 3,125 voter registration forms to the Board of Elections.
- Lorain County again administered the Ohio Fuel Fund. We assisted 725 families who were behind on their Ohio Edison electric bills. The total funds issued were \$187,200.
- The Income Maintenance Call Center averaged 18,643 phone calls per month in 2014. The total number of clients seen in the main lobby averaged 6,767 per month. The phone operator also assisted with logging mail and placing long distance calls for a monthly average of 1,412 actions.
- The Lorain County Claims Processing/Investigation Unit was recently awarded recognition by the State of Ohio for Excellence in Claims Management for 2014.

2014 Expenditures by Category



Comparison of Expenditures: 2013-2014



Family Employment and Support Services - 2014

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

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. We have found many individuals are mostly concerned with obtaining healthcare coverage. Medicaid Extension is meeting that need, which has resulted in a decrease in the number of individuals applying for the \$115 monthly grant. Only fifty-five individuals were served through this program gaining eligibility for SSI, with \$67,774 in SSI reimbursement to the Disability Assistance fund. This is a 52% decrease from the year prior. Two hundred four individuals currently receive Disability Assistance pending SSI approval. Most of these individuals had been approved for DA prior to the Medicaid Extension and are awaiting final review of their SSI.

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 3,203 cases, totaling \$4,218,749 which is subject to collection. Upon review of evidence and specific criteria cases may be 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 Assistance and OWF accounts by diverting federal and state income tax refunds to the department. A total of \$1,456,495 was collected in 2014 through installment payments, grant and coupon reductions, lump sums, and TOP intercepts. One hundred twenty-three individuals were disqualified from receiving

future benefits for committing Intentional Program Violations with their claims totaling \$240,125.

Lorain County received two Director's Awards for Excellence in Claims Management for 2014. Both awards were for being the Leader in Benefit Recovery and Claims Established in Food Assistance in Ohio.

Ohio Works First (OWF)

The OWF program is a work performance program to earn cash assistance. OWF provides short-term, time-limited cash assistance 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 must 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 4.25% in 2014. ADCR and ADCI increased to

2,857 individuals receiving assistance, including 2,458 children. The ADCU program, two-parent households, increased to 52 individuals receiving assistance, including 30 children. Hardship extensions were issued to 23 families. There were no Good Cause exemptions in 2014.

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 strive to deliver these benefits with accuracy, while meeting or exceeding strict federal and state performance standards. Lorain County was not included in a waiver from the Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents requirement, which is a three month time limit of eligibility during a 36 month span. Individuals between the ages of 18-50 years old must have a work activity or meet an exemption in order to qualify for Food Assistance.

Lorain County saw a 5% decrease in Food Assistance for the year. Lorain County has 40,802 individuals receiving Food Assistance averaging \$125/month per household member.

Medicaid

Medicaid is a federal and state funded program for health care coverage for children, adults, families, aged, blind and disabled. The scope of coverage includes prescription drugs, medical services including inpatient and outpatient care, family planning services 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. In Lorain County, 63,828 individuals are covered by one of the available Medicaid plans, an 11% increase from the year prior. The first year for the Medicaid Extension was 2014; it provides Medicaid coverage for the age group of 18-64 years without having to meet specific requirements of a disability or residing with a minor child. Applications were received from 22,834 individuals in this age range in 2014. Of those applications, 12,325 were approved, a rate of 54%. In working with a new system, we have faced system glitches and how to work through them, and client/customer confusion over the difference between the Federal Market Place and Medicaid Extension. Many of those applicants had submitted several applications over a timeframe, sometimes up to seven in one day. Rest assured, 46% of the applicants were not denied coverage, but their duplicate applications were.

Case Management

Case Management works with identified individuals and families who are struggling with multiple barriers in following through with the process of applying for SSI and/or Medicaid. Those individuals are assigned a case manager that will assess the barriers, and give guidance throughout the application processes. They work towards obtaining the medical records required to determine the disability, coordinate doctor's appointments and transportation services as needed. We currently have 78 cases pending the disability determination process.

Child Care

The Child Care Unit enables parents who are on OWF or income eligible, and either employed or attending school or training to receive child care. This care is provided at licensed centers or in certified child care homes.

In 2014, there was an average of 1,656 families being served on a monthly basis. Child Care provider workers certify and monitor approximately 123 Type B professional providers throughout Lorain County.

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 or passes for Lorain County Transit, ambulette services or taxi services. A total of 1,090 clients are using this service.

Information and Referral

The Information and Referral Unit (I & R) sees individuals who have needs that are not met by public assistance programs. If the need can't be resolved with agency resources, they work with other social service agencies in the county to help coordinate assistance. In 2014, the unit assisted 946 individuals which resulted in 1,026 referrals to other organizations. In addition, the unit processed applications for the Fuel Fund, which assisted families with payments towards their electric bills. There were 725 households that benefited from the program, with a total of \$187,200 being applied towards past due bills.

Adult Protective Services

Lorain County Department of Job & Family Services is mandated to investigate reports of elder abuse, neglect, or exploitation of individuals sixty 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 339 new reports in 2014. Ongoing case management is provided for those at-risk clients who require it.

Joining Forces

Joining Forces operates in collaboration with the Lorain County Joint Vocational School. A full-time social service worker provides supportive services for 9th and 10th graders, including classroom presentations focused on social skills and character education. The social service worker works individually with students who are at risk because of developmental, academic, or behavioral problems, acting as a liaison between the school, family, and community based agencies. The goal of Joining Forces is to help students succeed at JVS, and to help parents support their child's efforts.

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. In Lorain County, nearly 600 women are able to utilize this service each month.

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 their twenty-first birthday. Currently approximately 30,000 children are receiving these services in Lorain County.

Prevention - Retention - Contingency (PRC)

Effective July 2009, the budget crisis and a reduction of dollars sent to the county resulted in the suspension of the PRC program. The Gas Card Program had been the exception, and operated through July 31, 2014.

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.

The focus was, and continues to be: prepare families for self-sufficiency within the three year time limit. All OWF adults and minor heads of households are required to participate in work activities which prepare them for self-sufficiency.

LCDJFS provides support and training venues to assist our clientele in overcoming barriers to employment, allowing them to rejoin the work force, and regain their self-sufficiency. We have

entered into contracts to provide employment services for OWF adult participants. Some of our contracted services include:

Common Ground/First Step Program, Vocational Guidance Services/Welfare Out, Retention Kept Program, Goodwill Industries/Goodwill Work for Success: Job training, placement, retention, and EI Centro/Business English and Work Experience Program.

Federal law requires most able-bodied adults enrolled in the Ohio Works First cash assistance program to participate at

a minimum, 30 to 35 hours per week in an approved work activity. Failure to comply, results in a sanction for the household.

States must show that at least 90 percent of adults in two-parent households, and at least 50 percent of all adults are working the required number of hours. Non-compliance by the state results in a potential federal penalty.

Child Support Enforcement

The CSEA has approximately 31,000 open cases to enforce and is ranked as a "metro" county.

Modification

The average number of requests for modification of a child support order is 1,836, an average of 83 active cases per worker. This unit also reviews cases in which the obligee receives public assistance every 36 months.

Establishment

This unit is responsible for the establishment of paternity and child support orders. They also handle genetic testing when appropriate. There is an onsite phlebotomist. These caseworkers process requests for genetic testing and/or support orders.

Enforcement

Each caseworker has approximately 1,700 cases. While this number is large, a new call center began in August of 2014. Experienced enforcement staff now answer phone calls as a full-time job leaving more time for the other caseworkers to administer their caseloads. They monitor the orders and attempt to use various enforcement strategies if the obligor is not making regular payments. The initial technique is the suspension of a defaulting obligor's driver's license. The second step is a referral to the Prosecutor's office for

contempt of court. If all else fails, the case may be referred to the Prosecutor for a charge of felony non-support.

CSEA has the ability to intercept federal and state tax refunds. Specialized workers can intercept lump sum payments from an employer, garnish workers compensation payments and divert money from bank accounts of defaulting obligors.

Fiscal

Made up of data entry, audit and payment corrections sections, the work produced by data entry is very time sensitive. Every entry produced via the Domestic Relations Court and the administrative hearing officers must be entered into the Support Enforcement Tracking System (SETS). Audit requests come from the court and other sources such as state hearings.

Administrative Hearing Officers

CSEA employs one full time hearing officer. The modification supervisor and administrator also conduct some hearings. The hearing officers establish paternity and support orders and conduct various other administrative hearings.