

Agency Director
Barbara Tamas

Lorain County Commissioners

Michelle Hung
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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.

Contact Us:

Lorain County Job & Family Services
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Elyria, OH 44035-1057

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(440) 244-4150

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Website: www.lcdjfs.com

Hours:

Monday through Friday
7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

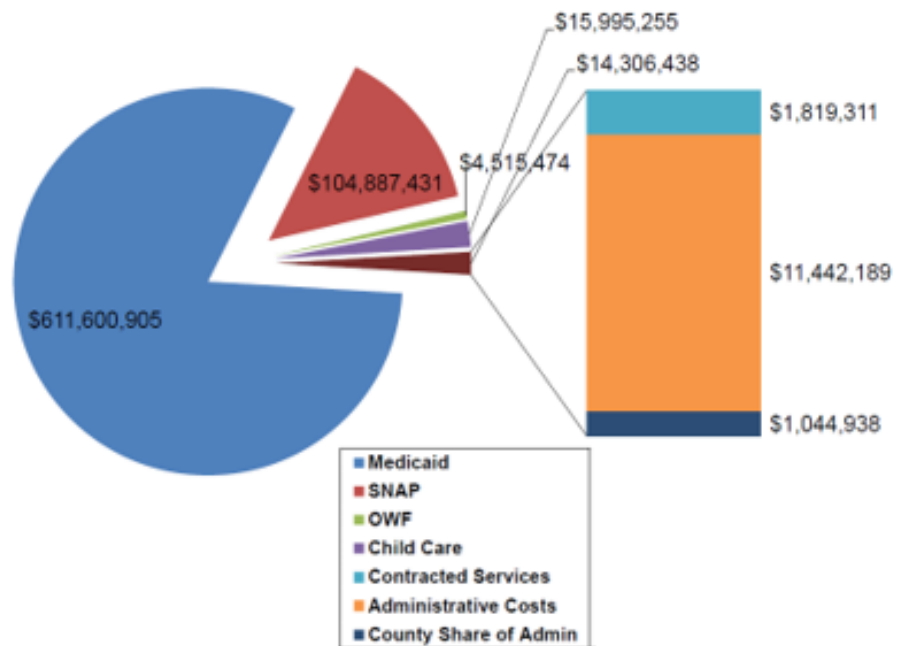
Lorain County Job & Family Services

**2021
Annual Report**

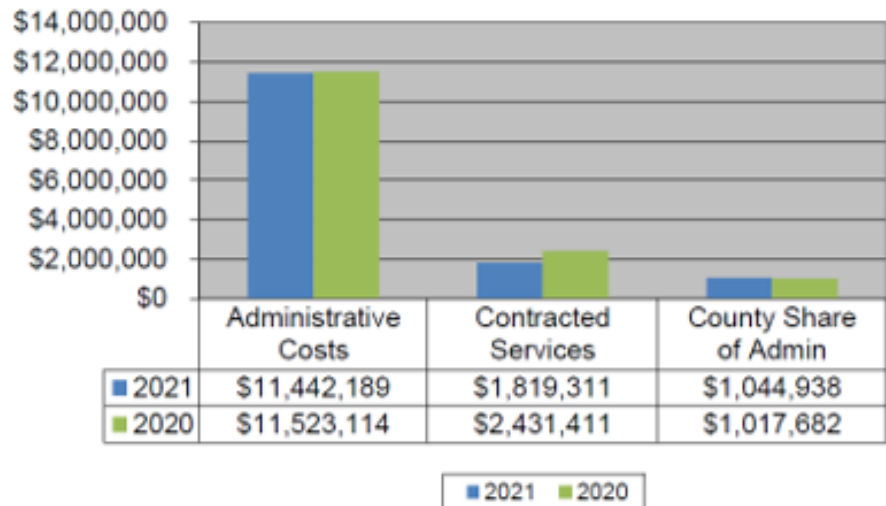
Snapshot of 2021

- The Income Maintenance Customer Shared Service Call Center logged 125,860 calls in 2021, an average of 10,488 phone calls per month.
- 20,098 of those calls were specifically to apply for new benefits, 23,500 to complete a reapplication and 60,271 were customer service inquiries.
- In all, the average answering speed was 6.7 minutes with a 16.3-minute handling time.
- In 2021, our staff approved 4,459 applications for SNAP and 14,774 for Medicaid.
- Our overall SNAP timeliness ranged from 91.83% to 97.56%.
- In 2021, our agency delivered 1,775 voter registration forms to the Board of Elections.

2021 Expenditures by Category



Comparison of Expenditures



Family Employment and Support Services - 2021

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.

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 \$932,338.34 was collected for SNAP, \$64,856.15 for TANF, and \$16,432.00 for Medicaid for a total of \$1,013,626.49 applied to claims in 2021.



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. New claims were established on 197 cases, totaling \$885,543 which is subject to collection.

Thirty-nine individuals were disqualified from receiving future benefits for committing Intentional Program Violations with their claims totaling \$182,252.

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.



In 2021, an average of 1,002 households (48 adults, 1,576 children) received OWF cash assistance with an average of 34 Work Eligible Individuals required to meet the work participation requirements. Hardship extensions were issued to 4 families. There were no Hardship Extensions requested nor Good Cause exemptions in 2021.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

SNAP 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. Individuals between the ages of 18-50 years old must have a work activity or meet an exemption to qualify for SNAP.

In 2021, the monthly SNAP issuance averaged 8.7 million dollars in benefits each month with a total of 37,997 individuals receiving assistance (20,891 adults and 17,106 children). A total of 4,459 SNAP applications were approved for benefits this year.

Medicaid

Medicaid is a federal and state funded program for health care coverage for children, adults, families, and those who are aged, blind, or 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.

During the Public Health Emergency individuals remained on Medicaid, with continued eligibility. The average number of Medicaid recipients for the year was 58,145, which is an increase of nearly 22,000 individuals. A total of 14,774 Medicaid applications were approved.

Emergency Rental Assistance

During the height of the pandemic, millions of Americans faced deep rental debt and fear of evictions and the loss of basic security. The Emergency Rental Assistance program made funding available to assist households that were unable to pay their rent or utilities. Two separate programs were established: ERA1 provided up to \$25 billion under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 and ERA2 which provided up to \$21.55 billion under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. Lorain County received \$9.28 million for ERA1 and approximately \$7.3 million for ERA2. In 2021, \$6,913,150.39 was paid to assist 1599 households with their rent and utilities.

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. There were 195 individuals who received case management services.

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 childcare provided at licensed centers or in certified childcare homes.

In 2021, an average of 1,157 families, 2,611 children were authorized to receive Publicly Funded Child Care. Licensing workers completed 137 home inspections of Type A & B providers. There was an average of 69 certified and active providers throughout Lorain County, 62 of which are Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) rated.

Non-Emergency 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 passes for Lorain County Transit. A total of 767 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 2021, the unit assisted 1,649 individuals which resulted in 4,741 referrals to other organizations.

Prevention – Retention – Contingency (PRC)

LCDJFS operate a PRC funded program that provides benefits and services to Lorain County families who qualify to help overcome immediate barriers and stay self-supporting. The purpose of the program emphasizes the need for individuals to participate in employment and training activities, prevent loss of employment due to lack of transportation, or helps meet an emergent need which, if not met, threatens a family's safety, health, or well-being. In 2021, the program assisted 195 families.

Three contracted services were funded using PRC-TANF dollars. Contracted agreements with Boys & Girls Club of Northeast Ohio, El Centro of Lorain, Horizon Educational, Little Lighthouse, and Tower Educational Consulting Group covered the cost of educational summer camp for 335 youth ages 6-15. The summer camps focused on activities to avoid summer learning loss with an emphasis on career exploration as well as field trips to parks, museums, and other recreational activities. We also contracted with Big Brothers Big Sisters, Boys & Girls Club, Horizon Educational, and Tower Educational to cover the cost of Mentoring & Tutoring for 148 TANF-eligible youth.

Additionally, a Back-to-School clothing program provided a backpack filled with clothing and shoes for the 2021-2022 school year to 3,405 children in receipt of either SNAP or TANF benefits.



Joining Forces

Joining Forces operates in collaboration with the Lorain County Joint Vocational School. Two full-time social service workers provide supportive services for 9th – 12th graders, including classroom presentations focused on social skills and character education. The social service workers work 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.

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.

Adult Protective Services

Lorain County 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 576 allegations in 2021. Ongoing case management is provided for those at-risk clients who require it.

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 to 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 contracted with Harbor to provide employment services for OWF and SNAP participants.

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

Modification

The Modification unit handles thousands of review requests per year. Investigators in this unit answer calls from clients daily as well as managing caseloads, reviewing tax documents, and running child support guidelines. The review process may take anywhere from 30 - 120 days for completion. The average number of support orders that are modified each year are approximately 1,250 – 1,400.

Establishment

This department consists of two units that are responsible for establishing paternity and support orders for the collection of child support in an administrative capacity and through the judicial system by working closely with the County Prosecutor's office. Investigators have regular contact with clients through the call center calls in order to gather information necessary to process cases for location of absent parent, to determine paternity, or to establish support orders. Investigators also work with an onsite phlebotomist to conduct genetic testing for establishing paternity orders.

The Lorain County CSEA administers and enforces collection upon an estimated 31,000 cases. The Agency is ranked as a "large" county in the State of Ohio.

In 2021, Lorain County CSEA was recognized by the State Office of Child Support for Most Improved in Paternity.

Enforcement

This department consists of four enforcement units. Investigators in three of the four units manage approximately 1,800 cases. The fourth unit is the CSEA enforcement call center. Experienced enforcement staff exclusively answer phone calls while maintaining a small non-IV-D caseload which allows other investigators to manage higher volume caseloads. They monitor the orders for payment compliance and use various enforcement tactics to enforce the collection efforts within the bounds of State law pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code.

CSEA has the ability to intercept federal & state tax refunds, and work bonuses. Specialized workers can intercept lump sum payments from an employer, garnish workers compensation payments and seize bank account funds.

Fiscal & Data Entry

These units consist of data entry clerks, auditors, bookkeeper, and payment accuracy accountants. All work produced by these two units is very time sensitive. Legal documents pertaining to child support and/or spousal support produced from the Lorain County Domestic Relations Family Court and the administrative hearing officer must be entered into the Support Enforcement Tracking System (SETS). Fiscal maintains and updates financial corrections, monitors and releases payments, balances spreadsheets, works reports, sets impounds, balances budgets, and conducts audit requests from the court, parties, attorneys, or the state.

Administrative Hearing Officers

CSEA employs one full time hearing officer. The Hearing Officer establishes and issues paternity determinations, administrative support orders, and conducts other necessary administrative hearings.