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# CIDS

## County Information and Data Service

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SEPTEMBER 24, 2010

### DATES TO REMEMBER

OCTOBER 1, 2010	CCAO PUBLIC SAFETY & CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE, CCAO OFFICES, COLUMBUS
OCTOBER 6, 2010	CCAOSC NATURAL GAS PROGRAM BOARD OF PARTICIPANTS MEETING, CCAO OFFICES, COLUMBUS
OCTOBER 12, 2010	CCAO METROPOLITAN & REGIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, CONFERENCE CALL
OCTOBER 13, 2010	CCAO PUBLIC SAFETY & CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE, CCAO OFFICES, COLUMBUS
OCTOBER 13, 2010	CCAO GENERAL GOVERNMENT & OPERATIONS COMMITTEE, CCAO OFFICES, COLUMBUS
OCTOBER 13, 2010	CCAO HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE, CCAO OFFICES, COLUMBUS
OCTOBER 13, 2010	BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CHALLENGES – 2 <sup>ND</sup> WEDNESDAY SEMINAR SERIES, CCAO OFFICES, COLUMBUS
OCTOBER 14, 2010	CCAO AGRICULTURE & RURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, CCAO OFFICES, COLUMBUS
OCTOBER 14, 2010	CCAO TAXATION & FINANCE COMMITTEE, CCAO OFFICES, COLUMBUS
OCTOBER 14, 2010	CCAO JOBS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE, CCAO OFFICES, COLUMBUS
OCTOBER 22, 2010	CCC/EAPA REGIONAL MEETING TUSCARAWAS COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITOR'S BUREAU, TUSCARAWAS COUNTY (NEW PHILADELPHIA)
OCTOBER 25, 2010	CCAO/OSU EXTENSION REGIONAL SEMINAR, FINDLAY INN & CONFERENCE CENTER, HANCOCK COUNTY (FINDLAY)
OCTOBER 26, 2010	CCAO/OSU EXTENSION REGIONAL SEMINAR, SHISLER CONFERENCE CENTER, WAYNE COUNTY (WOOSTER)

OCTOBER 27, 2010 CCAO/OSU EXTENSION REGIONAL SEMINAR, OLDE DUTCH RESTAURANT, HOCKING COUNTY (LOGAN)

OCTOBER 29, 2010 CCAO/OSU EXTENSION REGIONAL SEMINAR, SPRINGVIEW GOVERNMENT CENTER, CLARK COUNTY (SPRINGFIELD)

DECEMBER 5-8, 2010 CCAO/CEAO ANNUAL WINTER CONFERENCE AND TRADESHOW, HYATT REGENCY, COLUMBUS

## ASSOCIATION NEWS

### 2010 GENERAL FUND, ALL FUNDS AND TAX RATE SURVEY

CCAO in conjunction with OSU Extension has prepared a survey to gather general fund, all funds and tax rate (increase/decrease) information to help CCAO's policy team prepare for next year's legislative deliberations on the State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2012 – 2013 biennial appropriations bill. In light of the budgetary shortfall facing the state in the next biennium, CCAO needs to gather accurate general fund and all fund data that demonstrates the efforts of counties to manage county budgets in a time of declining resources.

A printable copy of the survey will be emailed to each county commissioners' clerk and each county administrator next week. Each commissioners' clerk and county administrator will receive an electronic version of this survey from Brad Cole, Managing Director of Research, which was created in cooperation with Debby Lewis in the Program Development and Evaluation Unit of OSU Extension. The printable copy of the survey is intended to help commissioners' staff prepare answers to survey questions prior to responding to the electronic survey which will be emailed next week with a link to the electronic survey document. Coordination between commissioners' clerks and county administrators will be necessary to assure that **only one** electronic survey response is submitted back to CCAO from each county.

In order to have sufficient time to compile the data from the electronic survey, CCAO asks each county to respond to the electronic survey **by Friday, October 15. The email that you receive next week will contain a link for you to access the survey online.**

If you have questions regarding the survey content, please contact Brad Cole at (614) 220 – 7981 or [bcole@ccao.org](mailto:bcole@ccao.org).

If you have questions about the functionality of the online survey, please contact either of the following: Debby Lewis, Interim Leader, Program Development and Evaluation, OSU Extension (614) 292 – 5089 or [lewis.205@osu.edu](mailto:lewis.205@osu.edu) or Kim Bahnsen, Program Coordinator, Program Development and Evaluation, OSU Extension (614) 292 – 0179 or [bahnsen.8@osu.edu](mailto:bahnsen.8@osu.edu).

### PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CCAO CODE OF REGULATIONS (BYLAWS)

Earlier this year, CCAO President Paula Brooks appointed a Bylaws Review Committee to perform a review that is required every five years by our Code of Regulations. Members of the Committee included the following county commissioners: Co-Chairs Kerry Metzger (Tuscarawas) and Ted Kalo (Lorain), and Committee members Doug Corcoran (Ross), Ed Humphrey (Clermont), Daniel Troy (Lake), Marilyn Reid (Greene), and Penny Traina (Columbiana).

The Committee has recommended to the Board of Trustees to adopt a variety of changes to the CCAO Bylaws. The proposed changes are linked to an article on the front page of [www.ccao.org](http://www.ccao.org). As you will see

when you review the proposed changes, many of the recommended changes are simply language changes to Bylaws and to change the name of the current Board of Trustees to a Board of Directors.

In addition, the Committee has made the following substantive changes to the Bylaws:

- To clarify that active members of CCAO will include any elected county executive and all of the members of the legislative authority of a county that adopts a county charter or an alternative form of county government, in addition to all members of a board of county commissioners.
- To specify that voting at the annual or any special meeting of CCAO will be by an official representative of each county.
- To specify that each board of county commissioners shall, by resolution, designate the official voting representative and an alternate. In the case of a county that has adopted a charter or alternative form of county government that has an elected executive, the official voting representative and alternate shall be designated by the elected executive. In the case of a county that has adopted a charter or an alternative form that has an appointed county executive, the official voting representative and alternate shall be designated by the county's legislative authority, by ordinance or resolution.
- A quorum at the annual meeting is changed to eliminate the current requirement that one-third of the members must be present.

Before the Board adopts the proposed amendments to the Bylaws, CCAO wants to give all Commissioners and the Summit County Executive and County Council the opportunity to comment on the proposed amendments. If you have any comments or concerns, please call either of the co-chairs, Kerry Metzger at (330)-365-3240 or [Metzger@co.tuscarawas.oh.us](mailto:Metzger@co.tuscarawas.oh.us) or Ted Kalo (440) 329-5000 or [tkalo@loraincounty.us](mailto:tkalo@loraincounty.us) or CCAO Executive Director Larry Long at 614-221-5627 or [llong@ccao.org](mailto:llong@ccao.org) no later than October 22.

#### CORONER'S LIABILITY CASE RESOLVED IN FAVOR OF COUNTIES

This case began as a suit by the Albrechts against the Clermont County Coroner alleging that the Coroner's practice of retaining tissue, organs and forensic samples necessary for medical analysis following the autopsy of their deceased son without their consent violated their Constitutional property rights. Class action status was requested to expand the case to include all Coroners in the state of Ohio and all autopsies they had ordered or performed.

Recognizing the state-wide implications of the case, CCAO and CORSA undertook the defense, partnering with the fine attorneys at Isaac, Brant, Ledman and Teetor. Hamilton County having recently settled a similar case for \$5,000 per offending autopsy, the financial exposure for all Ohio counties was estimated at \$90M.

After more than four years of litigation in both Federal Court and the Ohio Supreme Court, we are pleased to report that we have won. CCAO and CORSA stepped up to take legal action to protect county government and the citizens we serve from a financial threat that would have disproportionately rewarded the class action attorneys who instigated this case, at the expense of county budgets.

#### CCAO PUBLIC SAFETY & CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE – OCT. 1; SPEAKERS ATTENDING FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.

The CCAO Public Safety and Criminal Justice Committee Co-chairs Bob Proud (Clermont) and Nick Kostandaras (Summit) have scheduled a meeting to be held on Friday, October 1 at 10:00 a.m. at the CCAO

offices, 209 E. State Street, in Columbus. Lunch will follow the meeting. Materials concerning the two meeting agenda items were e-mailed to committee members.

1) **Ohio Justice Reinvestment Project** - At the request of Governor Strickland, legislative leaders and chief justice, the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center is conducting an analysis of the state's criminal justice system in order to provide policy options to assist the state in reducing spending on corrections and reinvesting those savings in strategies to increase public safety. The initial report's key recommendations would impact both county probation offices and community corrections programming choices and are of major interest to commissioners. **The speakers are traveling from Washington, D.C. to present information on the Justice Reinvestment Project to the Committee and to gain input from commissioners regarding the various aspects of the report. Your attendance is important!**

2) **Indigent Defense Client/Case Management System** - This system is being proposed by the State Public Defender's Office and was initially discussed at the Committee's last meeting. The CCAO Board of Trustees has specifically asked the Committee to make a recommendation to them regarding this matter.

Please RSVP to confirm your attendance by e-mailing Janet Erwin, CCAO Administrative Assistant, at [jerwin@ccao.org](mailto:jerwin@ccao.org).

#### COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CHALLENGES; 2<sup>ND</sup> WEDNESDAY'S SEMINAR – OCT 13

CCAO will be hosting "County Behavioral Health Challenges" – the seventh in a series of "Second Wednesday's" seminars – on Wednesday, October 13 at the CCAO Offices, 209 East State Street, in Columbus.

Learn from experts the financial challenges facing County Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Boards as they provide mental health and substance abuse prevention, treatment and support services in an era of limited resources. This program will feature the role of behavioral health boards in the community, the cost savings to county and other governments resulting from effective behavioral health programs, the funding crisis that Ohio's Behavioral Health Boards have experienced and the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities (OACBHA) proposed solution to this funding crisis.

The seminar will begin sharply at 9:30 a.m. and will conclude promptly at 12:30 p.m. Registrations will be accepted only by email. Seminar information is posted on our website at [www.ccao.org](http://www.ccao.org). Coffee will be served during the morning and lunch will be on your own. Best of all, no registration fee will be charged! To register, contact Janet Erwin, CCAO Administrative Assistant, at [jerwin@ccao.org](mailto:jerwin@ccao.org).

#### REQUESTS TO CCAO NOMINATING COMMITTEE DUE NOVEMBER 3

Last week, Kerry Metzger, Tuscarawas County Commissioner and CCAO Nominating Committee Chair, sent each county commissioner a memo detailing CCAO nominating procedures for 2010.

The Committee will nominate individuals for the offices of president, first vice president, second vice president, secretary and treasurer. It will also recommend seven members to serve two year terms on the CCAO Board in 2011 and 2012.

The seven members whose terms to the Board expire this year include: Tim Brown (Wood), Kim Edwards (Ashland), Greg Green (Hocking), Margery Paeltz (Brown), David Pepper (Hamilton), Roger Tackett (Clark), and Ron Widener (Miami).

The nine members appointed by President Brooks whose one year term to the Board expires at the end of this

year include: Steve Arndt (Ottawa), Sam Bassitt (Allen), Mike Crabtree (Scioto), Pete Gerken (Lucas), Peter Lawson Jones (Cuyahoga), Ted Kalo (Lorain), Ula Jean Metzler (Pickaway), Bob Peterson (Fayette), and Tommy Thompson (Delaware).

The CCAO Nominating Committee Request Form and Candidate Questionnaire must be submitted by **November 3, 2010** to:

- 1) Kerry Metzger, Tuscarawas County Commissioner, 125 E. High Street, New Philadelphia, OH 44663-2573 or you may e-mail your form to [Metzger@co.tuscarawas.oh.us](mailto:Metzger@co.tuscarawas.oh.us) and
- 2) Mail a copy to CCAO, 209 E. State Street, Columbus, OH 43215, in an envelope marked: NOMINATING COMMITTEE – ATTENTION: KATHY DILLON or you may email your form to [kathydillon@ccao.org](mailto:kathydillon@ccao.org)

Additional forms may be obtained by contacting Kathy Dillon at (614) 221/5627 or on the CCAO Web Page at [www.ccao.org](http://www.ccao.org).

### CCAO METROPOLITAN & REGIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

CCAO Metropolitan & Regional Affairs Committee Co-Chairs David Pepper, Hamilton County Commissioner, and Irene Shapiro, Summit County Council Member, have scheduled a conference call on Wednesday, October 12 at 1:00 p.m. Committee members should contact Kathy Dillon, CCAO Office Manager & Boards' Liaison, at (614) 220-7998 or [kathydillon@ccao.org](mailto:kathydillon@ccao.org) for more information.

### **OTHER ASSOCIATION NEWS**

#### JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES MODERNIZATION—WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?

As the CCAO staff travels across the state we have noticed increased interest and questions on the issue of how our job and family service departments will be impacted by the “double whammy” of reduced funding and expanding caseloads. According to the Ohio Job and Family Service Directors Association:

- Food assistance caseloads are up 54 percent in the past three years.
- The Ohio Works First caseload is up 34 percent during this same period.
- Medicaid has grown by 30 percent and it should be noted that it is projected that SCHIP will add another 79,000 children during the next 18 months and under national health care reform it is estimated that an additional 525,000 Ohioans will qualify for Medicaid in 2014—a growth of 25%.

On the other hand, an increased demand for assistance has not resulted in increased service dollars. In fact, during this period of caseload growth county JFS agencies have experienced unprecedented cuts.

- Income Maintenance – 45 percent reduction since 2007
- \$128 million annual loss in TANF
- Total loss in funding of 40 percent since the start of the recession

At the same time, CDJFS's have 3,250 fewer employees since the beginning of the recession. This results in 6,760,000 fewer service hours available to operate the local system and help meet the needs of the residents of counties.

In addition, it is clear that major challenges confront us in all areas, but especially in human services, given the looming \$8+ billion state budget deficit for the next two years beginning next July. CCAO staff has heard all types of rumors, concerns, and questions including: Will there be regional agencies? How are counties sharing services? Is privatization an answer? Are call centers on the horizon, and for what programs? What opportunities exist for more collaboration and cooperation among counties? How will the shared service cost base be affected?

Much of this is just that—rumors and ideas that may be discussed but for which there is very little substance at this time. But that is not to say that we can continue to do business the way we have in the past. CCAO is glad that the Ohio Job and Family Service Directors Association has been working on the issue of modernization now for some time. Attached to this issue of the CIDS are three articles written by Joel Potts, Executive Director of the Ohio Job and Family Service Directors Association, that address the issue of human service modernization. We hope you will take the time to read them. They provide an excellent framing of the issue we will all be confronting as we move forward into the 129<sup>th</sup> General Assembly and a new state budget.

## **COUNTY ACTIVITIES**

### CUYAHOGA COUNTY COMMON PLEAS COURT RULES COUNTY RECORDER WILL NOT FINISH TERM

Visiting Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Judge James R. Sherck ruled on September 20 that the new charter county government adopted by the voters of Cuyahoga County in the November 2009 General Election was constitutional. Ohio Attorney General Rich Cordray and the Cuyahoga County Prosecuting Attorney's office had also taken that position. Cuyahoga County Recorder Lillian Greene filed a lawsuit contending that the new county government charter violates the Ohio Constitution by invalidating the 2008 election of those officials whose positions will be abolished. In addition, Greene's request to have taxpayers pay her legal fees was denied.

Sherck concluded that the county positions of treasurer, engineer, clerk of courts, sheriff, coroner, and recorder are not "constitutional offices" because they were not written into the state constitution. They are not protected like the offices of state auditor, attorney general, and governor. The new charter government, which begins in January 2011, abolishes all county elected positions except those of prosecutor and judges and replaces them with an elected executive and 11 council members. The new charter government will appoint successors, at which time the elected officials must leave office. Cuyahoga County votes on November 2 to elect the county executive and county council.

For more information on the transition to charter government in Cuyahoga County go to <http://www.ccao.org/LibraryArchives/2ndWednesdaySeminars/tabid/411/language/en-US/Default.aspx>. Scroll down to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday Seminar information on the transition.

### RICHLAND COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES ANNOUNCES \$1 MILLION IN TAX RELIEF

Richland County Children Services (RCCS) announced it will not collect \$1 million in local property tax revenue in 2011, allowing taxpayers to keep more of their own money during tough economic times. It's an unprecedented step in the 126-year history of the agency, which depends on a mixture of federal, state and local tax dollars to fund its child protective operations.

The agency projects it will end 2010 with about a \$6 million surplus, the result of disciplined financial practices dating back over the last eight years. In 2002, the agency was in a precarious financial position. Since then, annual agency expenses have never exceeded revenues. Financial experts have told the RCCS board the agency should maintain 51 percent of its estimated \$8.3 million annual operating budget in a cash reserve. The agency can forego the \$1 million in tax collections in 2011, meet its responsibilities under state law and still maintain sufficient reserve, according to agency executive director Randy Parker.

RCCS has two 10-year, voter-approved one-mill local tax levies, which generate a combined \$3.2 million annually. One of these was first approved in 1958, was replaced in 1984 and has been renewed twice in 1994 and 2004. The other was first approved in 1989 and was replaced in 1999. It was renewed in 2008.

The Children Services board approved a resolution Monday asking the Richland County Commissioners to request the county budget commission not to collect the \$1 million in 2011. All three Commissioners praised RCCS for the move and unanimously approved the plan. For more information, contact Carl Hunnell, Communication Supervisor, Richland County Children Services, at (419) 774-4101 or [hunnec@odjfs.state.oh.us](mailto:hunnec@odjfs.state.oh.us).

## **STATE ACTIVITIES**

### EMS CERTIFICATIONS TO EXPIRE ON BIRTHDAY IN 2011

HB 1 authorized the Ohio Board of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to establish a common expiration date for individuals holding more than one active certification issued by the Division of EMS. Beginning on January 1, 2011 this date will be the certification holder's birthday, which makes it easier for the certificate holder and their employer to have only one date to remember for all certifications. Renewals will be handled at the same time through the EMS web page.

The amount of continuing education hours needed to renew may also change with the move in expiration dates. For those certification holders whose Ohio EMS certification period is shortened, the continuing education required will be reduced. The continuing education requirements will remain the same for individuals whose certification expiration date is extended beyond their current expiration date. Continuing education requirements are posted on the Division of EMS web page at [www.ems.ohio.gov/ems\\_rulesEFD.stm](http://www.ems.ohio.gov/ems_rulesEFD.stm). If you have any questions, contact the Division of EMS at (800) 233-0785 or (614) 466-9447.

### ODH LAUNCHES AWARENESS CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT PRESCRIPTION DRUG OVERDOSES

The Department of Health announced the kickoff of an educational campaign aimed at preventing "unintentional prescription drug overdoses" around the state. The initiative, with a special focus on Southern Ohio where the highest levels of prescription drug abuse have been reported, includes the development of regional coalitions, radio and TV ads, and employer and high school outreach efforts, among others.

Officials report that "unintentional drug poisoning" became the leading cause of injury death in Ohio in 2007, and the problem grew 350% from 1999 to 2008. The campaign will have a special focus in Adams, Cuyahoga, Jackson, Ross, and Vinton counties where the state has tracked "rapidly increasing" drug use and abuse incidents. More information on the campaign is available at [www.healthyohioprogram.org/diseaseprevention/dpoison/p4p.aspx](http://www.healthyohioprogram.org/diseaseprevention/dpoison/p4p.aspx).

## CONFERENCES/SEMINARS

### OHIO SAFETY CONGRESS & EXPO 2011

Plans are under way for the Bureau of Workers' Compensation's (BWC) annual "Ohio Safety Congress & Expo." This year's safety congress will feature more educational offerings, continuing education units and vendors. Mark your calendar for March 29 to 31, 2011 so you can attend the Ohio Safety Congress & Expo at the Greater Columbus Convention Center, 400 North High Street, in Columbus. There is no registration fee – attendance is free for all Ohio employers. Additional information will be available at [www.ohiobwc.com](http://www.ohiobwc.com).

## ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINIONS

### SYLLABUS

2010-023

1. Payments to members of the board of health of a general health district under R.C. 3709.02(B) are health district expenses to be paid out of the district health fund established by R.C. 3709.28 and pursuant to the procedures set forth in R.C. 3709.31.
2. Members of the board of health of a general health district who are considered to be county employees by the Internal Revenue Service may continue to serve on the board of health and receive compensation pursuant to R.C. 3709.02.

### SYLLABUS

2010-024

1. Pursuant to R.C. 339.06(F), a board of county hospital trustees may borrow money from a bank, savings and loan association, or savings bank. A board of county hospital trustees is not authorized to borrow money from a port authority or a private loan company that is not a bank, savings and loan association, or savings bank.
2. Pursuant to R.C. 339.06(C), a board of county hospital trustees may sell its accounts receivable to an entity that is in the business of collecting on such accounts. (1962 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 3199, p. 631, overruled.)

## CLASSIFIEDS

### COMPUTER OPERATIONS MANAGER

The Auglaize County Commissioners are currently accepting resumes and cover letters for the position of Computer Operations Manager; an unclassified, FLSA exempt, full-time position. Interested candidates must have a minimum of Bachelor's Degree in computer sciences, management information systems, or other related discipline, plus two years computer system or network administration experience. In cover letter, please identify your applied knowledge of the following: Active Directory, Exchange, Virtualization, Cisco VOIP, DHCP/DNS, Cisco Network Equipment, Linux, and Knowledge of Scripting. Resumes and cover letter accepted at the office of Auglaize County Commissioners, 209 S. Blackhoof St, Room 201, Wapakoneta, OH 45895 or at [commissioners@auglaizecounty.org](mailto:commissioners@auglaizecounty.org) until 4:00 p.m., **October 1, 2010**. Minimum pay \$57,000. EOE.

#### CLASSIFIED ADS

CCAO publishes the County Information and Data Service (CIDS) weekly. Classified ads will be published free of charge as a service to counties. Ads will run for two weeks if space is available. Ads will also be published on the CCAO website at [www.ccao.org](http://www.ccao.org). When submitting your ad to CCAO please provide a link to the job posting online and a deadline. Please provide a copy of the classified ad by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday of each week. Transmit the copy to Mary Jane Neiman, CCAO Public Relations Associate, by e-mail at [mjneiman@ccao.org](mailto:mjneiman@ccao.org)





# Ohio Job and Family Services Directors' Association

37 West Broad Street, Suite 1120 ♦ Columbus, Ohio 43215

*Joel Potts, Executive Director*

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September 3, 2010

## Is Change Inevitable?

The Ohio Job and Family Services Directors' Association has been heavily engaged in modernization discussions and efforts over the past 18 months with more committees, legislation and budget initiatives likely in our near future. With any major change comes anxiety, fear, uncertainty, anger, frustration, challenges, the likelihood of more work and resistance. It is not an uncommon question at the association lately of "Why are we pursuing all these changes?" A fair question and the answer must be understood and thoroughly examined in order for us ultimately to be successful in our efforts.

It is no surprise to anyone that the nation and state are going through a severe economic crisis. Unemployment is up, incomes are down, jobs are scarce and those that are available often pay significantly less than previous employment opportunities in the community, and with fewer benefits. Bankruptcies, debt and foreclosures are all at record levels. An increase in the severity of cases in the child welfare system as well as massive requests for child support modifications, most resulting in less dollars for children, are credited to the current economic situation.

The economic impact to the county job and family service public assistance benefit system is also abundantly clear.

- Food assistance caseloads are up 54 percent in the past three years
- The Ohio Works First caseload is up 34 percent during this same period (from March of 1993 to January of 2008, Ohio did not experience a single period where our cash assistance caseload increased more than two consecutive months. Our caseloads have steadily increased since 2008, with one period experiencing 16 of 18 months of caseload growth.)
- Medicaid has grown by 30 percent (including one in seven adults, one in three children and nearly one-half of all births in Ohio)

Note:

- SCHIP will add a projected 79,000 Ohio children in the next 18 months
- National healthcare reform will add an estimated 525,000 individuals to Ohio roles in 2014, a 25 percent growth
- Unemployment is at 10.3 percent, well above the national average

An increase demand for assistance has not resulted in increased service dollars. In fact, during this record caseload growth period and the worst economic climate since the Great Depression, county JFS agencies have experienced unprecedented cuts.

- Income Maintenance – 45 percent reduction since 2007
- \$128 million annual loss in TANF
- Total loss in funding of 40 percent since the start of the recession

## Is Change Inevitable?

Page 2

CDJFS's have 3250 fewer employees since the beginning of the recession – which results in 6,760,000 fewer service hours available to operate the local system and help meet the needs of the communities

We are about to enter a new biennial budget period, which will need to address the worst budget shortfall in state history.

Projections vary but in general, the state faces an \$8 billion shortfall. Ohio operates a \$51 billion annual budget so cuts would greatly reduce state expenditures (which generally bring in billions in additional federal revenues.) Furthering the difficulties for budget crafters, seventy-five percent of the state budget is generally deemed “untouchable” – primarily funding for education, certain healthcare programs and prisons. (\*The loss of federal stimulus funding could effect the **current** state fiscal year, including a cut of \$170 million in enhanced TANF funding.)

To likely compound problems/issues facing the CDJFS, consider:

- 1/3 of clients being served at the agency are new to the system and we are likely to be working with these caseloads long after the recession is over
- 34 percent of Ohio's children now live in single parent households, a 10 percent increase in the past decade
- 19 percent poverty rate for the state (a 19 percent increase in the past few years, three-times the national average growth)
- The types of job losses are not likely coming back, reducing family incomes, effecting retirements and benefits
- In the past 10 years, job losses nationwide were 1.7 percent – in Ohio the job loss has exceeded 10.9 percent
- An unsustainable child care system with demand expected to accelerate as economy improves

Under any scenario, we are facing more work with increased demand for services and will have fewer resources to address the problems. The current economic situation, coupled with a dramatic reduction in resources, dictate that we must respond to meet the challenges facing us.

No one is in a better position to understand the challenges facing our communities and in a better position to serve the citizens of the state than we are. With decades of experience, a well trained and competent staff, facilities located in the community already serving the overwhelming majority of low income families and individuals and a built-in infrastructure, we are well positioned to serve the state.

Status quo is not an option. Wishing and hoping things will get any better will not make the problems go away. Assuming or expecting a massive influx of funding to increase staff and upgrade the CRIS-E system is not probable. For the association to not look at ways to modernize the system, identify efficiencies, improve services, and support our clients and workers, would be irresponsible.

This is why OJFSDA has made modernization a top priority. The time is now for us to identify who we are and what we are to become. Our citizens are counting on us, needing us, to be the leaders in the modernization of the JFS service delivery system.

It will not be easy and it will not always be fast. But with our collective efforts, in the end, it will be right, just and better for all we serve.



# Ohio Job and Family Services Directors' Association

37 West Broad Street, Suite 1120 ♦ Columbus, Ohio 43215

*Joel Potts, Executive Director*

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September 10, 2010

## Continuing the Modernization Discussion

As highlighted in last week's news letter, change is coming. Who ultimately decides what changes, when they will occur and outside influences (such as funding, increased demand for services and public pressure) are all factors which will help determine the future of JFS service delivery system and many of these issues will be outside of our control. In order to be relevant to the conversations and be a part of positive change, now is the time for us to be leaders and more clearly identify who we are and what we are to become.

A major factor in determining what the future holds will be our ability not just to perform required functions, but to perform them **well**. It's hard to argue against change when others can make a case for doing things better, whether that means faster, more effectively, cheaper or in the client's best interest. There is no question that unprecedented budget cuts and historic caseload increases have negatively affected our ability to provide the kinds of services we would like, or need, to offer. As our budget testimony has shown over the past two years, budget cuts and caseload increases has hampered our ability to affectively serve the community. Despite that, county agencies are serving more Ohioans than at any time in our history and with significantly fewer financial resources. We are performing at a higher level than anyone would have thought possible just a couple of years ago.

But the challenges will continue to grow as the economy limps along. Can we continue to effectively administer all the programs we are currently operating and meet all the state and federal requirements? Can we continue to meet the timeliness requirements? With record demand for state hearings, can the current system continue to meet the federal requirements to provide a timely hearing process? How much worse does the disability determination process have to get for clients that are in dire need of help? How will we be able to double the number of TANF adults in work participation programs to avoid sanctions? Are children safe? How will we be able to ensure program integrity? Where is the breaking point? County agencies are not the only ones struggling with these questions and seeking solutions. State and federal agencies are asking these questions as well, as are legislators, the clients, the media and the public.

County agencies are diligently working to address these issues and position us to serve the public into the future. Workgroups are in place reviewing fiscal, information technology and policy issues. OJFSDA and ODJFS continue to build strong collaborative efforts aimed at improving the system and enhancing services to Ohioans negatively impacted by the recession.

County and state partnerships have already resulted in streamlining many of the programs we administer. Moves towards phone interviews and 12 month certification periods have already shown positive results in reducing the traffic in agencies. Expanding simplified reporting for Food Assistance cases, the creation of the universal profile and development of the on-line application will also help to streamline the system and reduce time necessary to serve clients. These actions should help free up caseworker time to focus on the more complex issues of eligibility determination and provide improved customer service. These changes also are having a positive impact to families, meaning struggling parents don't have to secure child care services or bring the children along to unnecessary agency meetings (including in many cases utilizing public transportation.) The conveniences to families also reduce costs to the system for child care and transportation, as well as allow parents to work and not take time away from employment opportunities to meet paperwork requirements.

## **Continuing the Modernization Discussion**

Page 2

Modernization talks and efforts will continue. Counties will continue to meet the challenges and serve the community. Agencies will identify where we are performing well and identify areas for improvement. And all parties will strive to provide a viable, safe, effective, efficient system while maintaining program integrity and operate as good shepherds of the public trust.

Our county agencies and workers earn our respect and admiration every day for providing unprecedented services through this economic calamity. More will be asked and expected of all of us and our modernization efforts must compliment the services we provide and enhance our abilities to be more effective with the extremely limited support we receive. Modernization efforts are not meant to devalue what we do but are aimed at enhancing our ability to serve.



# Ohio Job and Family Services Directors' Association

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## **Blazing a Trail**

Whether in the public or private sector, technology has both made possible and created the necessity to modernize services in nearly every aspect of business, and on a scale never seen before.

Technology has also increased the speed of transformation. Laptop computers that were considered state-of-the-art just 18 months ago are obsolete today. Cell phone equipment is updated on an even faster track, with major market changes occurring every 6 months.

Consumers are savvier and expect far more for less. The public (whether consumers, the media, elected officials or voters) expect and demand government act more like the business world and provide more efficient services and in a similar manner to what is available in the private sector.

This is becoming more obvious in the local agencies as the recessions drags on and more people new to the system apply for services. It is hard to explain to someone that a few months earlier could have entered an auto dealer and within a matter of minutes been determined eligible for a car loan and trusted to drive off a lot with a \$20,000 automobile, that they now must wait as much as 30 days to determine if they are really poor enough to receive a few hundred dollars of food assistance.

In the public sector, the technology revolution is also coinciding with a severe budget crisis that shows no signs of improving in the near future. Government entities are under increased pressure to reduce costs while expected to provide services on a massive scale never before experienced.

Clearly in Ohio our service delivery systems, including computer enhancements, have not kept up with the changing economy and needs for enhanced services. We now must look for ways to utilize our skills, experiences and workforce, as well as enhance technology opportunities, to keep pace with the demands on the system. It is unfortunate that we did not take advantage of system upgrades when resources were more readily available, but the reality is we did not. But the need is here now and now we must respond to the call for better services with dwindling resources.

In order to remain competitive, systems need to be customer friendly, easy to access and be available to the clients where they are and when they need them. Many public and private industries have blazed a trail and gone through notable modernization efforts in recent years to meet this expectation. Others have failed to recognize the changing environment and have paid a severe price for their short-sightedness.

Several years ago the banking industry looked at their service delivery model and saw major changes on the horizon. Historically all banking was done in person and required individuals to make regular trips to the bank, wait in long lines and required the maintenance of significant paperwork. Banking was a time and labor intensive effort on both the bank employees and customers.

Despite momentous pushback, banks moved towards a new delivery system, allowing on-line banking, kiosks and phone assistance. Many were resistant to the change at first and feared trusting ATM transactions and scanning documents without personal contact. Over time this attitude has changed and now most banking is done very differently than a short generation ago.

## **Blazing a Trail**

Page 2

Banking options continue to be available locally whether it be for personal service or for 24 hour access to ATMs. With their modernization efforts they did not eliminate the need for banks in the community. What they changed were the options and focus on when consumers utilized their service and under what circumstances.

Grocery stores have also gone through some important transformations in recent years. When stores first implemented self-scanners, consumers were slow to utilize the machines but as customers become more familiar with the system, the longest lines in stores now tend to be self-checkout aisles. This has helped speed up the check out process while reducing overhead and keeping consumer costs lower.

Remember the old days when gasoline stations were considered "full service"? There was tremendous resistance to the idea that customers could, or should, pump their own gas. But when stations began offering cheaper gas, even by a few cents per gallon, consumers quickly adapted to the new way of doing business and it is now rare to find a full service station.

Banks, grocery stores and gasoline stations continue to be mainstays in the communities. The needs for all of these services continue to grow and these entities have responded to the record demand by upgrading their systems to provide a quality service in more efficient and effective manners.

Government systems have also been going through transitions to utilize enhanced technology to improve access and maintain services.

The Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) embarked on the idea several years ago to allow motor vehicle registration by mail. The idea initially received widespread condemnation from the BMV workers and deputy registrars as potentially opening the system to massive fraud and eliminating the importance of customer service. However, public pressure and legislative calls for upgrading the system resulted in Ohio's forced move to allow consumers the option to utilize mail-in or online services. For anyone that can remember life before this change, the need to renew vehicle registration used to be a major ordeal, requiring time off work, potentially hours in long lines and the constant concern that you would not have all the required documentation which would necessitate the need for a second visit to simply pay for your license tags. Along with this change, consumers were also allowed the option to continue to utilize the same license plate for years at a time, reducing costs and making it easier for consumers. Local BMV offices are still available but a trip to the BMV is now much shorter and accesses to services have been greatly enhanced by their modernization of the system. By reducing lines, keeping costs down (Ohio continues to have one of the lowest license fees in the nation) and improving customer service, a trip to the BMV is now seen as a positive experience. Not many would have said that a few years ago.

The Social Security system is going through similar transformations which are being thrust upon the JFS system. Long lines, delayed eligibility determinations, budget cuts and massive bureaucracies leave consumers overwhelmed and under impressed with the system. Social Security has upgraded their systems and now allows on-line applications, enhanced computer services and call center capabilities to speed up the process and keep costs down.

Not all industries have responded well to the rapidly changing world and increased expectations for services. The U.S. Postal Service is desperately trying to stay afloat utilizing a centuries' old system that is becoming too costly to administer. While consumer expectations are for six day a week mail delivery, the cost of maintaining this type of system is increasing at a rate unsustainable through the purchase of stamps. Every incremental increase in the cost of stamps results in a decrease in utilization of postal services. Additionally, most consumers now have

## **Blazing a Trail**

Page 2

ready access to the internet with e-mail and social networking opportunities which allow the transfer of important documents, photos and the sharing of information in an immediate process. The Postal Service is now trying to make billions in budget cuts and define itself in this new world of technology and private sector competition.

The record industry failed to recognize the significance and importance of computer technology in the purchase of music. Record companies fought the on-line music world and believed, incorrectly, that music lovers would still want to purchase entire CD's instead of just individual songs for their MP3 players. They also failed to recognize the potential cost savings of doing significant online business. The result has been the near complete elimination of record stores as they have been unable to maintain a music market. Music sales are at a record level (no pun intended) but the primary provider of services for 50 years is now all but out of business.

It will be interesting to see how the book industry now responds to the utilization of electronic books. Borders Bookstores have already filed bankruptcy. Barnes and Noble announced last month that they now sell more electronic books than paper books and they are planning a major reorganization which will result in the closing of many stores throughout the United States. Unlike Borders, Barnes and Noble has embraced the e-book concept and now offers their own version of the computer and offers e-books at significantly discounted rates.

Generally, those that are the first to recognize change and opportunity are in the best position to control their own destiny. With decades of experience and 20,000 qualified workers, our destiny is in our own hands. The county modernization efforts will result in the types of efficiencies and effective programming changes needed by our clients.

Modernization efforts and technology changes should not be feared but respected. These efforts can help us provide a better opportunity for the clients we serve and the communities in which we live in.

Henry Ford once said there are two types of people in this world, those that say they can and then those that say they can not...they are both right. We can, and will, be successful and the job and family service system of the state of Ohio will be better for our efforts.