STATEHOUSE REPORT

Published by: County Commissioners Association of Ohio

209 East State Street • Columbus, Ohio 43215-4309
Phone: 614-221-5627 • Fax: 614-221-6986 • www.ccao.org

October 3, 2014

Final recs on adult protective, children services funds made

Earlier this week, two statutorily-created workgroups charged to make recommendations on how to invest one-time funds of $10M into the adult protective services system and $6.8M into the children services submitted their final recommendations to Cynthia Dungey, Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services (ODJFS) director.

ODJFS has submitted requests to release the funds to the state's Controlling Board, which will convene to consider those and other state agency requests on October 20.

Adult Protective Services – Final Report and Recommendations

As reported last week, the adult protective services committee has recommended $4.4M be made available to all 88 counties for "planning funds." Counties who have already taken the steps set forth by ODJFS in terms of APS planning, or who commit/undertake the steps, can receive up to $50,000.

A competitive innovation fund of approximately $3M will be created to incentivize multidisciplinary collaborations, and the remainder of the dollars will fund one-time core training for APS workers, the creation of a statewide database and reporting mechanism for APS, and a statewide APS hotline.

Guidance and additional information from ODJFS on these initiatives, including the planning funds and innovation funds, will be made available in coming weeks.

The workgroup will continue to meet with the goal of identifying core minimum services that should be provided by the state and counties in APS programming, in part toward making recommendations for increased state APS funding in the next biennial budget.

Children Services – Final Report and Recommendations

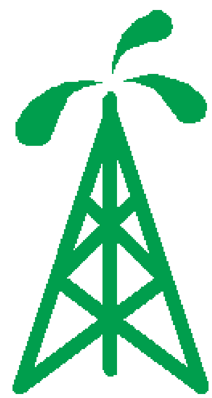
The ODJFS Director has submitted a Controlling Board request that will create a competitive innovation and efficiency fund, to which public children services agencies (PCSAs) can make application.

PCSAs can expect to receive guidance and additional information from ODJFS on applying to the fund by the end of October.

The recommendation was one of four that the state captured for the workgroup's final report during the course of workgroup conversations around needed investments into the child welfare system. The other three short-term recommendations submitted for consideration for short-term investments in the report include funding technology upgrades for counties such as iPads for caseworkers, investing the funds in counties' alternative response capabilities (services intended to help keep children in their own home, when safe), and also funding a foster care gap analysis to be conducted by ODJFS.

For additional information, please contact CCAO policy analyst Laura Abu-Absi at labu-absi@ccao.org.

Dispatch says HB 375 severance tax proposal not good enough



In an editorial in its Monday, September 29, 2014, edition, the Columbus Dispatch suggested that the people of Ohio deserve a better share of the wealth coming from the state's oil and gas bearing shale and that Ohio's severance tax rate should be closer to the rates in just about every other state with a shale-drilling industry.

The editorial notes that the House passed version of HB 375 lowered the initially proposed 2.75 percent rate for the severance tax to 2.5 percent and then added so many deductions and credits that oil-and-gas producers could end up paying less under the bill than they currently do. The editorial states that should the bill not pass "That will be no loss: the bill was so weak as to be worse than none at all."

The editorial goes on the indicate that, "There is no credible case to be made against a more-reasonable severance tax." Although there are suggestions that a higher rate or even a fair rate could kill the shale industry in Ohio, drillers go where the oil and gas are. There are significantly higher taxes in neighboring states, including Pennsylvania and West Virginia, but shale exploration hasn't slowed in those states.

The editorial sites the report issued by the Ohio Business Round in April which concluded that the originally proposed tax of 2.75 percent when combined with other taxes levied on drillers, would yield total taxation equal to 3.1 percent of their sales. This rate is 63 percent below the average of seven states included in the analysis. Currently drillers in Pennsylvania pay the equivalent of 6.3 percent of their sales in taxes and in West Virginia they pay 11.3 percent of sales. In Ohio, however, the current tax package amounts to just 1.5 percent of sales.

The editorial urges the oil and gas industry to stop balking and start working on an acceptable severance-tax package or they may find themselves looking at a ballot issue to raise the tax beyond even the governor's expectations.

Bill Introductions

SB 367 **INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES** (Kearney, E. , Lehner, P.) To replace "mental retardation" and similar terms with "intellectual disability" and similar terms, to specify that an intellectual disability is a form of developmental disability, and to amend the version of section 2101.24 of the Revised Code that is scheduled to take effect on March 20, 2015, to continue the provisions of this act on and after that effective date.