



# Ohio Job and Family Services Directors' Association

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*Joel Potts, Executive Director*

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## The Ohio Senate Finance Workforce Subcommittee Testimony

House Bill 64

Joel Potts, Executive Director

Ohio Job and Family Services Directors' Association

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Chairman Beagle, Ranking Member Williams, and members of the Senate Finance Workforce Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Joel Potts and I am the Executive Director of the Ohio Job and Family Services Directors' Association (OJFSDA.)

OJFSDA represents the local county agencies that provide one of the largest health, human service and workforce systems in the nation, with one in four Ohioans receiving assistance from our agencies each year. County Department of Job and Family Service (CDJFS) agencies are responsible for administering programs to the state's most economically vulnerable citizens. Systems operated through the local agencies include cash assistance, food assistance, childcare, Medicaid (including long-term care, children's health insurance and services to aged, blind and disabled), adoption, adult protective service, child protective service, foster care, refugee services, local workforce initiatives and child support programs.

There are numerous provisions in the budget that would have an impact on local operations and services to the clients we assist. Other county associations and local officials have testified regarding several aspects of the bill, including the need for additional financial support for child welfare, child support and adult protective services; as well as the negative financial impact of the elimination of the Tangible Personal Property Tax on the child protection system. OJFSDA fully supports their positions and requests for increased investments.

I would also like to highlight a few important investments in the budget OJFSDA supports. They include:

**Increased funding for Adult Protective Services** – The proposed budget would fund APS at \$3.5 million annually, which is the largest state investment in history for this program and an annual increase of \$3 million.

**Increase in Child Welfare Investments** – The bill includes \$3.2 million additional dollars per year for public children services agencies. These dollars would be used as match dollars to draw down \$9.6 million each year for federal Chafee dollars and Title B Part 2 funding.

**Child Care** - The Executive budget proposes to increase eligibility for individuals entering the system from the current 125 percent of the federal poverty level to 130 percent. The state also plans to extend eligibility for child care for those in the program from 200 to 300 percent of the federal poverty level, to assist clients as their incomes increase. Proposed program changes also include new initiatives to help recover fraudulent payments to providers, as well as provide ODJFS the authority to suspend providers who have been proposed for adjudication.

**Local Support for Eligibility System Implementation** – The budget proposes up to an additional \$7.2 million annually to assist counties with the complexities of implementing the new Ohio Benefits eligibility system. These funds are necessary to provide caseworkers with the training and resources to perform the required increase in work resulting from operating two separate eligibility systems. These funds are one-time investments to cover the costs associated with the increased work and conversion of cases to Ohio Benefits. Successful implementation of Ohio Benefits is expected to result in future efficiencies, decreasing the need for these dollars on an ongoing basis.

**Efforts to Simplify and Automate Eligibility Determinations** – The Executive Budget proposes to consolidate the two processes currently in place for disability determinations into one. Under this plan, Ohio will seek a state plan amendment to adopt criteria authorized in section 1634 of the Social Security Act that would allow for a single disability process to be used for the first time in Ohio. Streamlining and simplifying this process will make it easier for clients and caseworkers to navigate the system and better access services.

**Transition Additional Income-Tested Programs to Ohio Benefits** – The budget proposes the further development and implementation of the new Ohio Benefits eligibility system to include many income-based health and human service systems including Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Food Assistance, Child Care and Women, Infants and Children (WIC). Successful conversion and implementation will significantly simplify Ohio's public assistance programs, making it easier for clients to access programs and freeing up caseworker resources to provide more person-centered assistance.

Over the past several weeks you have heard from many witnesses regarding the needs of many programs within the county job and family service system. I would like to focus my remarks on the Governor's proposal for "Welfare Reform 2.0" included in two areas of House Bill 64. They include provisions altering the county prevention, retention and contingency program, as well as Section 305.190, which would create the Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program.

Prior to my work at the Ohio Job and Family Services Directors Association, I spent fifteen years at the state department of job and family services as the state's welfare reform policy administrator. My primary responsibility was the development and implementation of Ohio's current welfare reform program. I was fortunate to work with Governor Voinovich and the legislature to develop the bipartisan landmark legislation which created Ohio's original welfare reform program in the early 1990's, which served as one of the models for the ultimate federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciling Act of 1996, which created the TANF program. I also spearheaded the legislative efforts to create Ohio's existing program; fully implementing TANF in the state.

During that time I spent several years working with Congress, the National Governor's Association, American Public Human Services Association, National Conference of State Legislators and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on welfare reform issues and have had the opportunity to see first-hand many successful state and national programs.

Over the past eight years I have worked for OJFSDA and worked hand-in-hand with the local agencies to provide public assistance services. During this time I have gained valuable experience and an understanding of the significant complexities and challenges facing the poor and local agencies in delivering services.

No one knows the need, or the importance to streamline, simplify and modernize our system more than the counties. We see first-hand every day the burdens placed on clients and the system by unnecessary bureaucracies and the inflexibility of the system. We also have been struggling with the need to replace the existing antiquated eligibility system which has hamstrung caseworkers for more than thirty years. We strongly support the goal of addressing poverty through work and support the Governor's efforts to break down silos while simplifying and streamlining services through case management. We know that the best chance most individuals trapped in poverty will have to improve their economic status is through employment. There is much government can do, should do, and needs to do to support work and lift individuals and families out of poverty and to become self-reliant and reduce dependency on government programs.

In order to change the system, it is important to understand the complex nature of the programs administered through the local job and family service agencies. It is also extremely important to know the nature of the existing silos.

Local agencies currently administer programs for three federal agencies:

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**
- U.S. Department of Labor**
- U.S. Department of Agriculture**

We also receive direction and oversight from five different state entities:

- Ohio Department of Job and Family Services**
- Ohio Department of Medicaid**
- Ohio Department of Administrative Services**
- Governor's Office of Health Transformation**
- Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation**

We utilize several major computer systems including:

- CRIS-E** (the Client Registry Information System – Enhanced – Ohio's main public assistance eligibility system)
- Ohio Benefits** (the new eligibility system under construction, currently administer Medicaid eligibility and eventually will replace CRIS-E)
- SACWIS** (Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System)
- Sets** (Child Support Enforcement Tracking System)
- e-Ohio Means Jobs** (Ohio's main workforce system)

Counties administer over one-hundred funding streams which must be balanced over five different fiscal cycles (federal fiscal year, state fiscal year, calendar year, multi-year and special program periods such as short-term grants.) They include:

- Income Maintenance (IM) Control - Regular
- IM Control - Medicaid
- Medicaid Enhanced State
- Adult Protective Services
- State Operating

- Non-TANF Disaster Funding
- TANF Disaster Funding
- Child Community & Protective Services
- Child Protective Services
- TANF Administration
- TANF Regular
- TANF Earnings/Collections
- TANF Work Allowance Reduction
- Title XX base
- TANF Title XX TANF
- Food Assistance Employment and Training (FSET/FAET)
- Refugee Services
- Refugee Cash & Medical Services
- Child Care 1
- Child Care 2
- Child Care Administration
- Child Care Non-Administration
- TANF Subsidized Employment Program (SEP)
- Quality Control
- Ohio Human Services Training System (OHSTS -Title XX)
- Food Assistance Department of Development
- Food Stamp Stimulus
- Help Me Grow
- Student Intervention
- TANF Replacement
- Katrina Title XX
- TANF Summer Youth
- Child Welfare Levy Funding
- Human Services Levy Funds
- "Other" Levy Funds (APS)
- State Child Protection Allocation (SCPA)
- Feisel Allocation
- Adopt Ohio Kids
- MEPA (Multi-Ethnic Placement Act Funding)
- Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month Activities
- State Adoption Incentive Program
- Connect the Dots
- Youth Advisory Board
- ESAA (Employment Security Administration Account) - State Match
- Chafee State Match
- Chafee - federal
- IV-B
- IV-B Administration
- IV-B Adoption

- ESSA Preservation
- ESSA Preservation Administration
- ESSA Reunification
- ESSA Reunification Administration
- Kinship Permanency (KPIP) - TANF
- Child Welfare Caseworker Visits
- Caseworker Visits Administration
- Child Support Enforcement Administration (CSEA) Fund
- CSEA State Match
- Supplemental State Child Support Funding
- CSEA Incentives
- Office of Child Support (OCS) Incentive Match Reduction
- Stimulus Incentives
- Targeted Assistance Grant
- Family and Children First
- Children Trust Fund
- System of Care Grant
- Protect Ohio
- Caseworker Visitation
- Caseworker Visitation Administration
- TANF IV-B Administration and Training
- Title IV-E Administration and Training
- Adoption Assistance
- Post Adoption Subsidy (PASSS)
- Access Visitation Grants
- APS Capacity Grants
- APS Innovation Grants
- Mandated Share

Workforce Investment Act (WIA) - Funding Source:

- Adult
- Adult PY13
- Adult PY14
- Adult FY15
- Total Adult
- Dislocated Worker (DW)
- Dislocated PY13
- Dislocated FY14
- Adult under DW FY13
- Dislocated FY15
- Adult FY14 under DW FY14
- Administration
- Admin Adult PY13
- Admin DW PY13
- Admin Youth PY13
- Admin Adult FY14

- Admin DW FY14
- Admin Adult PY13
- Admin DW PY13
- Admin Youth PY13
- Admin Adult FY14
- Admin DW FY15
- Youth
- Youth PY13
- Youth PY14
- National Employment Grants (NEG – Employment and Training)
- Ohio Means Jobs (OMJ Branding)
- Rapid Response SFY 14 - FY12

County agencies also administer over 100 programs which collectively serve one of every four Ohioans each year. A partial list of programs includes:

**Medicaid Categories:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Coverage for children under age 19 (used to be SCHIP) | Individuals   |
| Coverage for Ribicoff kids                            | Medicare Premium  |
| Coverage for Foster Care kids                         | Family Planning   |
| Coverage for pregnant women                           | Breast and Cervical Cancer                                      |
| Coverage for parent or caretaker relative             | Medicaid Buy-In   |
| AEMA - alien emergency medical assistance             | Help Me Grow  |
| "Group 8" or "Medicaid Expansion Group"               | Healthchek  |
| DA - Disability Assistance                            | Deemed Newborns   |
| Medicaid for the Aged                                 | 1619 a & b individuals (earnings preclude them from SSI)        |
| Medicaid for the Blind                                | Nursing Home Medicaid   |
| Medicaid for the Disabled                             | Transitional Medicaid   |
| Presumptive Eligibility                               | RSS - Residential State Supplement                              |
| QMB - Qualified Medicare Beneficiary                  | Medicaid Transportation   |
| SLMB - Specific low-income Medicare Beneficiary       | Passport  |
| QI - 1 - Qualified Individuals                        | Ohio Home Care Waivers  |
| QWDI - Qualified Disabled Working                     | MR + IO + Level 1 waivers + child waivers+ A4 carve out waivers |
|   | MR/DD waivers   |
|   | Non-Emergency Medical Transportation                            |
|   | Fraud   |

**Refugee Services:**

- |                            |                         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Refugee Cash Assistance    | Refugee Social Services |
| Refugee Medical Assistance | Refugee Resettlement    |

**Public Assistance:**

OWF cash assistance  
OWF child-only  
OWF two-parent families  
OWF employment/work participation  
TANF Summer Youth  
TANF work support  
Food Assistance  
Food Assistance Employment and

Training  
Emergency Food Assistance  
Alien cash assistance  
LEAP - Learning Earning and Parenting  
Fraud  
Able Bodied Adults Without  
Dependents Work Program  
Voter Registration  
Disaster Assistance

**Child Support**

Location Services  
Paternity Establishment  
Establishment of a Support Order  
Interstate/Intergovernmental Cases  
Medical Support

Change to a Child Support Order  
(Review and Adjustment)  
Enforcement of an Order  
Collections and Disbursement  
Termination of Support  
Termination of Services

**Child Welfare/Adult Protective Services**

Kinship  
Foster Care  
Adoption Assistance  
Child Protective Services  
ESSA - Emergency Services Assistance

Independent Living  
Child Abuse and Neglect  
TANF Title XX Social Services  
Differential Response  
Adult Protective Service

**WIA**

WIA Youth  
WIA Dislocated Workers  
WIA Adult  
National Emergency Grants

Veterans Services  
Rapid Response OWIP (Ohio Works  
Incentive Program)  
Ohio Works Incentive Program (OWIP)

**Child Care**

Transitional Child Care  
Regular Child Care  
Protective Child Care  
Special Needs Child Care  
Homeless Child Care  
Step-up-to Quality  
Monitoring Services

With all these programs, all these funding streams, direction from state and federal agencies and all these mainframe computer systems it is important to know that county agencies are not responsible for writing a single rule. The turf, inflexibility of the system, the built-in barriers and bureaucracy are born at higher levels and passed on to local agencies. County agencies are responsible for understanding the complex rules and systems and assist clients navigate the various programs. It is our primary duty to ensure clients receive everything they are entitled to and ensure program integrity.

For my twenty-plus years of experience in developing, implementing and administering job, health and human service programs in Ohio, county agencies have clamored for simplified and streamlined systems. We are pleased with actions already underway (including Medicaid reforms, the development of the new Ohio Benefits eligibility system and work of the ODJFS Office of Human Service Innovation) but much more needs to be done if we want to see major movement towards a simplified welfare reform system.

Success will require state Information Technology (I.T.) systems that work and are in place to support the case management efforts.

Focusing on the 16-24 year olds is the right place to start. Often these individuals have multiple barriers; including education, low job skills, housing, transportation, behavioral health, felony records, medication dependency, etc.

Counties need to be provided time to develop systems starting with this population and once a program is developed and functioning, pursue expanding the mandated population.

We need realistic time frames to develop strategies, build capacity, train workers and establish metrics and measure performance before expanding to the full JFS eligible population.

Successful case management will require local flexibility and personal responsibility.

Successful strategies to reduce poverty will take time and success will often be achieved through incremental steps.

Technology will be a critical component to success. Case managers will need access to multiple eligibility systems in order to provide comprehensive case management. Currently, I.T. systems within JFS do not talk to each other.

Ideally, I.T. systems should be integrated but at a minimum, systems must be accessible to both the client and the case manager.

**Budget Ask Regarding Person-Centered Case Management:**

1. Provide meaningful timeframes to implement the new case-management approach
2. Focus on 16 to 24 year olds in first phase and ensure successful implementation and establish baselines for performance before expanding to larger populations

3. Provide state and local input and oversight in the development, implementation, measurement and performance of the program

The budget also contains multiple provisions which would significantly impact the Prevention, Retention and Contingency Program (PRC). Ohio's PRC program was developed in the mid-1990's and is a cornerstone to our welfare reform program. The program reinvents traditional welfare programs through the reinvestment of welfare dollars at the local level, utilizing a business franchise model that allows person-centered case managed assistance to prevent dependency through a strategic outcome-focused model.

Under the old/traditional approach to welfare, counties were limited to the extent to which they could provide the most needed support to their clients. The old system was reactive; responding to the needs of the client after their situation had become drastic. The PRC system is proactive, looking forward to prevent dependency and strategically intervene when the investment of resources can forestall the potential for long-term welfare reliance. The PRC program also provides for contingent needs, helping families with one-time urgent problems that could, if left unintended, result in harm to the family.

As proposed in the executive budget, the state would seize control of much of the PRC program, diverting resources away from local case managers and limit our ability to holistically address the needs of the family. Not only would this impair our ability to serve the needs of the client, it would also have negative impacts to programs and services provided throughout the local JFS system including child welfare, workforce development, transportation, GED-assistance, English as Second Language, before and after school programs, housing, food assistance and public assistance eligibility work.

Since the beginning of the recession, counties have experienced dramatic cuts to local budgets of over fifty-percent of pre-recession funding, while the number of clients we now serve has doubled. The negative impact to the PRC program over the past eight years has been severely felt in every community and resulted in the loss of hundreds of worthy programs which were providing invaluable assistance to help families gain and retain employment and lift out of poverty. The PRC changes proposed in the budget are well-meaning but will further erode this vital program while at the same time adversely impacting all TANF funded services at the local level.

**Budget Ask for the PRC Program:**

1. OJFSDA requests the provisions currently outlined in the executive budget be removed from the bill. The person-centered case management program being championed by the Governor and supported by the Association may be achieved without any changes to the existing program.

We look forward to working with the Administration and General Assembly to develop and implement Ohio's next major effort to reform welfare programs. The person-centered case management program may be an important component of success if all parties can work together on the common goal to help lift Ohio residents out of poverty through work.

Finally, I would like to add that the Ohio Job and Family Services Directors' Association is a member of Advocates for Ohio's Future, a statewide coalition of over 475 organizations that promotes health and human services budget and policy solutions so all Ohioans live better lives.

As a coalition member, OJFSDA supports the policy platform of Advocates for Ohio's Future: investing in our state's most valuable resource, our people, by ensuring that all Ohioans are safe, have good jobs, and can afford the basics.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions and look forward to working with you to finalize a budget which meets the needs of the citizens we serve.