



OHIO JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES DIRECTORS' ASSOCIATION

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

614-221-3688

House Finance Committee

House Bill 33 | Interested Party Testimony

April 19, 2023

Joel Potts, Executive Director, Ohio Job and Family Services Directors' Association

Chairman Edwards, Vice-Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Sweeney, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss two matters related to county departments of job and family services that we encourage you to consider in the House budget process.

Clarification Amendment

First, I wanted to take the opportunity to discuss a clarification amendment we have worked out with the Ohio Department of Medicaid and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services as it relates to the funding that county departments receive to conduct Medicaid eligibility and redeterminations.

Language in our normal GRF line item for local program support, 600522, was added to the bill largely due to the addition last year of ARPA funds to assist counties in conducting Medicaid redeterminations over the next year as we return to normal operations following the public health emergency. We understand the intent behind this language and have worked with ODM and ODJFS to clarify the language and preserve its intent while not unintentionally making local operations more bureaucratic.

If the amendment is not adopted, counties will be forced to operate in a less efficient manner.

Of the current appropriation for county JFS departments, our amendment addresses the amount of core operating allocation that ODM may designate to be performance-based incentives. We asked the Administration to clarify this amount in the language so that counties can plan operations for the upcoming state fiscal year and understand how much they will receive up front, and how much will be provided later based on performance.

Again, ODM and ODJFS have agreed to this clarification amendment. The amendment requires no additional appropriations or resources.

Legislative Priorities: Program Integrity and Employment & Training

As we have spoken with many of you throughout the budget process thus far, it was clear there are two main areas of focus in our system that the legislature seems to have interest in: maintaining program integrity and strengthening current employment and training programs for individuals on SNAP. As a result, two amendment recommendations emerged to address these priorities, **both of which could draw down a dollar-for-dollar federal match.**

1. **SNAP Employment and Training:** This is an existing program mandated by the federal government. The program is designed to help unemployed and underemployed SNAP recipients address barriers to finding and keeping employment that will enable them to become self-sufficient. We recommend a \$10M per year GRF increase of dedicated funding in the family assistance – local (600-521) line item. This funding will draw down an additional dollar-for-dollar match making for a total investment of \$20M per year focused on workforce development for SNAP recipients.

2. **Fraud Prevention:** This investment would bolster the brand-new allocation made in the last budget for fraud prevention, detection, and investigation so that every county has at least one full-time equivalent worker focused on program integrity. Currently, counties receive \$2.5M per SFY statewide toward fraud detection and investigation in the family assistance – local (600-521) line item. This funding is distributed via a population-based formula. We recommend building on the success of this funding so that each county can receive an allocation significant enough to fund one full-time equivalent fraud worker in addition to their current allocation. With a 1 to 1 federal match, this would be a modest new GRF investment of \$3.52M per SFY, bringing the total allocation to \$6.02M per SFY. This investment would yield dividends in ensuring program integrity, which protects the safety net for those who truly are eligible.