

# ATHENS COUNTY JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES

# OUR 2010 - 2011 ANNUAL REPORT

**Athens County Commissioners:**

Lenny Eliason, Larry Payne, Mark Sullivan

**Athens County Job and Family Services Director:**

Jack Frech

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# OUR YEAR

Athens County Job and Family Services suffered more devastating funding cuts during the 2011 fiscal year, but the agency still assisted thousands of Athens County families in numerous ways.



In the new state budget, our agency lost \$1.2 million in state and federal funding. With this most recent cut, Athens County Job and Family Services has now lost more than \$4 million in funding in the last three years.

The latest cut forced our agency to eliminate 25 positions, 18 of them through layoffs. Since 2009, our agency has dropped from 144 to 87 staff members through layoffs and attrition, a total loss of 57 positions. The loss of funding is affecting our agency's programs and services in several ways, including the following:

- The number of child support hearings have been cut in half from 1,100 per year to 550. This is resulting in delays in the enforcement and modifications of child support.
- The enrollment for the Hocking College retention program has been frozen.
- We are no longer able to assist clients with their Social Security disability applications. The agency helped 227 people become approved for SSI/SSD in the last year.
- Clients who are applying for assistance or requesting changes in their cases are facing more delays in having their cases processed. This at a time when applications for assistance continue to rise.
- These and other reductions in services are on top of numerous other changes forced by budget cuts in the last few years while poverty has been rising and the number of Athens County residents applying for benefits has continued to increase.

**But while the budget news was disheartening, plenty of positive things happened at the agency during the year, including the following:**

- Our Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) helped more than 1,000 area residents file their taxes.
- A new state website now allows Ohio residents to apply online for assistance.
- Our agency registered 1,175 people to vote.
- Our adult education program helped 71 area residents earned their GEDs. A few of the graduates shared their inspiring stories at our annual GED Graduation Ceremony in June.
- The Dateline NBC program on poverty in Ohio received an Emmy Award and the Friends and Neighbors Community Choice Food Center, which was featured in the program, received special recognition when the award was presented.
- Most importantly, even with all of the cuts, we still helped thousands of area residents get food for their families, pay for shelter, go to school, pay for child care, find work and take care of their families.



# OUR BUDGET

Our budget is a mix of state and federal money for a wide variety of programs. The largest program by far is the Medicaid program.



Ohio Works First	\$3,675,093.00
Disability cash assistance (aged, blind and disabled)	\$159,373.00
PRC	\$257,635.96
Food Assistance program	\$17,747,697.00
Medicaid	\$86,207,643.06
Contract Services	\$605,492.60
Administrative costs	\$1,546,797.66
Direct services	\$6,199,266.60
Child support enforcement	\$2,144,365.30
<b>Total spent in Fiscal Year 2011</b>	<b>\$118,543,364.19</b>

## CONTRACT SERVICES BUDGET

Athens County Children Services	\$35,000.00
Athens Farmers' Market	\$5,224.00
Health Recovery Services	\$50,909.60
Training program for child care providers	\$3,420.00
Tri-County Adult Career Center	\$8,475.00
Tri-County Mental Health	\$172,464.00
Retired Senior Volunteers Program/COAD	\$330,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$605,492.60</b>

# OUR PROGRAMS



## **Ohio Works First (OWF) – An average of 2,014 recipients per month**

OWF is Ohio's cash assistance program. The program is only available to families with dependent children, and they can only receive it for a total of 36 months. The major goal of the program, which has work requirements, is to help participants move toward employment. More than 60% of the recipients are children. The average number of monthly recipients increased by 84 people over the last year, continuing the trend of increases in the number of people receiving OWF in recent years.

## **Food Assistance Program – An average of 11,114 recipients per month**

Food Assistance benefits can be used to purchase food or food products intended for human consumption. This program also has work requirements. In Ohio, the benefits are issued through the Ohio Direction Card, an electronic benefits card. The average number of Athens County residents receiving Food Assistance each month increased by 1,046 in the last year, an increase of more than 10%. The number of Athens County residents relying on Food Assistance has been increasing steadily in recent years.

## **Medicaid – 11,425 clients receive Medicaid coverage each month**

The Medicaid program provides health care coverage for certain low-income and medically vulnerable individuals. Medicaid programs include coverage for families, children and pregnant women; aged, blind and disabled individuals; women with breast/cervical cancer; and individuals in institutional care. The average number of recipients per month in the previous year was 11,388.

## **Child Support Enforcement - Collected \$6,201,707 in support payments**

The program's goal is to ensure that all children are supported financially by both parents. Services include: location of non-custodial parents; paternity establishment; establishment and modification of child support orders; collection of child support payments and/or alimony; and enforcement of child support orders, medical support orders and alimony. The program collects support payments for more than 5,500 children each month.

## **Child Care Assistance – 225 Athens County children served by certified child care providers each month**

This program provides assistance to help Athens County parents/guardians who are working or in school pay for child care with a certified provider. The program provided a total of \$849,314 in child care assistance during the year. The child care staff also completed 121 home visits during the year.

## **Income Maintenance and Social Program Coordinator (SPC) Counseling - Helped 773 clients gain employment**

Income Maintenance employees and SPCs help clients with the different public assistance programs that our agency offers. The SPCs also assess clients to get them into the proper work, education and job training programs. Budget cuts in the last year forced layoffs all throughout our agency, including in the Income Maintenance and SPC staff. This has increased the wait time for clients talk to staff members to discuss their cases.

## **Disability Assistance – Average of 230 recipients each month**

This program provides a very small and time-limited amount of cash and/or medical assistance to disabled individuals who are not eligible for other assistance programs. Clients are only eligible to receive up to \$115 per month in assistance. The Disability Assistance program provided \$159,373 in assistance during the last year.



# OUR PROGRAMS

## **Prevention, Retention and Contingency (PRC) Program – Provided \$170,618 in assistance to Athens County families**

The PRC program provides emergency and short-term assistance for families with dependent children or a pregnant woman in the household. The need should be emergent, unforeseeable, and unavoidable. This program has been greatly reduced in the last two years due to state budget cuts.

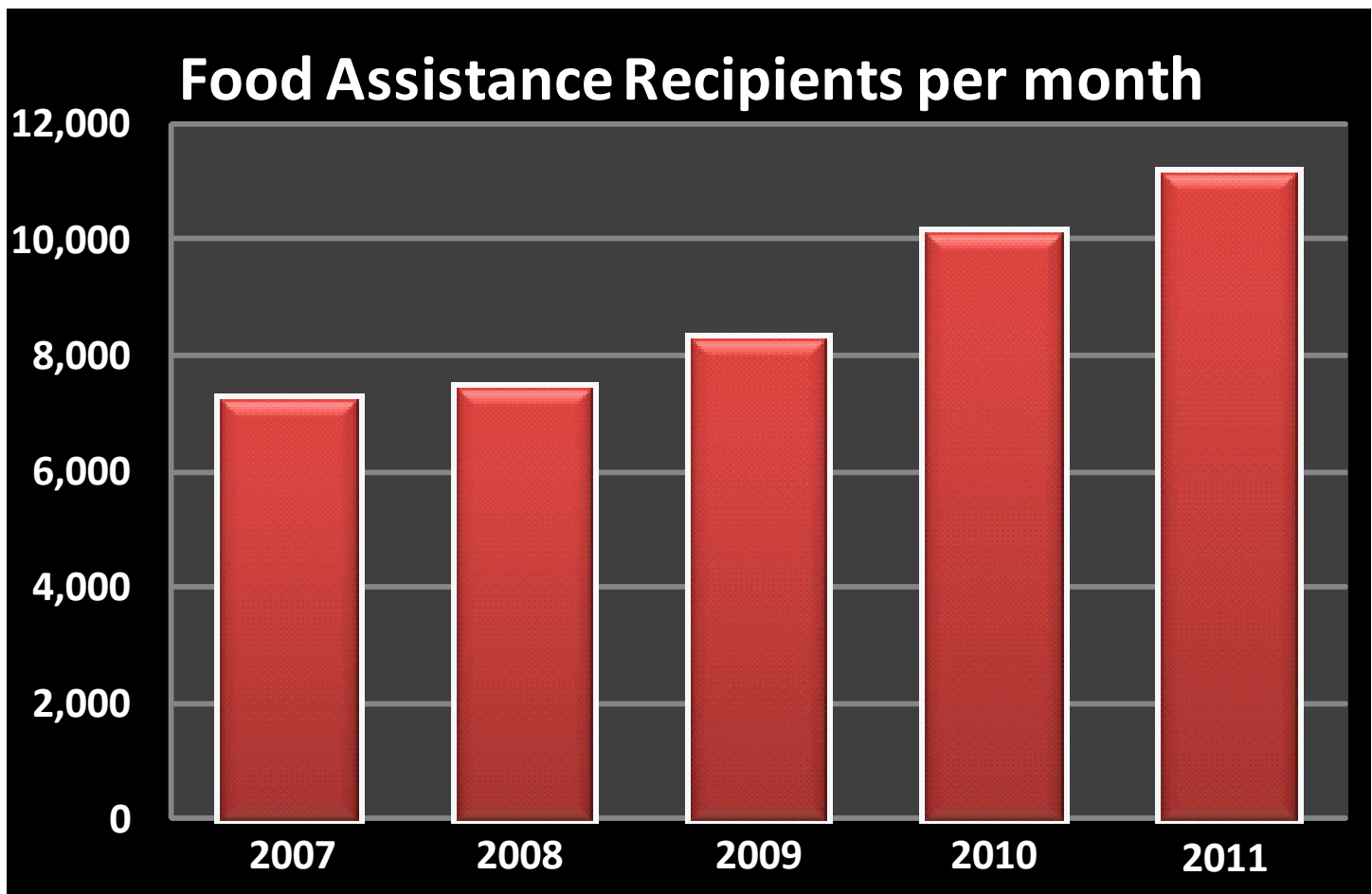


## **Emergency Food Line – Distributed 4,837 food boxes during the year**

The Food Line is responsible for screening telephone requests, determining eligibility, maintaining records and directing those in need to a food distribution site. The number of food boxes distributed by our agency increased by more than 800 over last year. Over the last three years, the number has increased by more than 1,700. The local food pantries we work with also report that they are seeing more people coming in for food every month.

## **Adult Protective Services – Took on 116 new cases this year**

Referrals for this program are taken from anyone having a reasonable cause to believe an individual who is age 60 or older is being abused, neglected or exploited. The intent of the program is to assist adults who are in danger of harm, unable to protect themselves and have no one else who is able to assist them. This program continues to see an increase in the need for assistance. This program assists senior citizens facing a wide range of issues. One problem that has seen a sharp increase in recent years is in the reports of senior citizens who are hoarding items in their homes until it makes their homes nearly unlivable.



# OUR PROGRAMS



## **Healthchek – 7,851 exams completed during the year**

Prevention and treatment services offered through the Medicaid program for children up to the age of 19. The goal of the Healthchek program is to help children to become healthy and stay healthy.

## **County Medical Services (CMS) – 1,580 referrals and 400 approvals for disability assistance**

This program provides limited medical benefits for clients who are waiting on disability determination from the Social Security Administration and have been approved by state reviewers for this disability program.

## **SSI case management – Received 196 new applications and 355 appeals, helped 227 clients become approved for SSI**

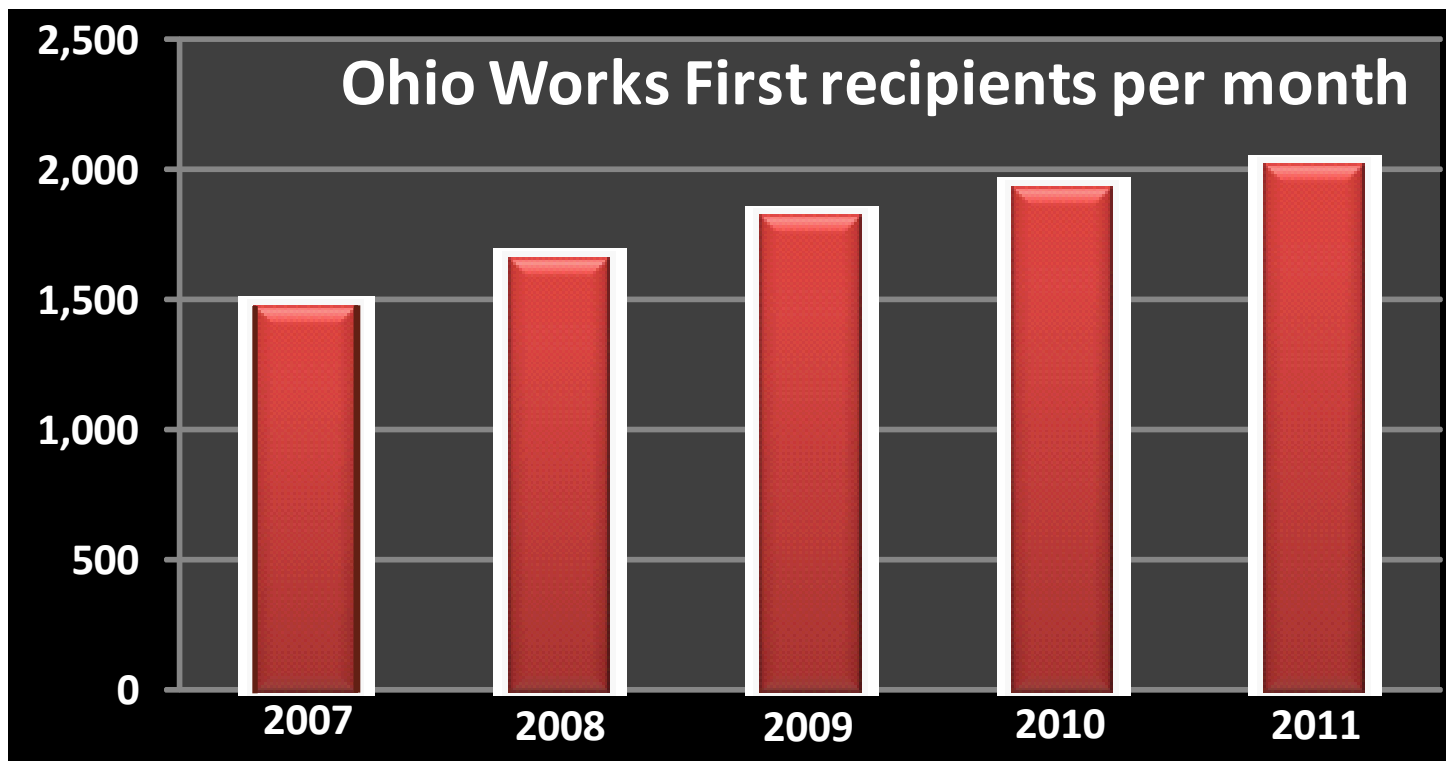
Assists individuals who are applying for SSI/SSD and helps them through the initial application process and the appeal process, if necessary. This program was eliminated at the end of the fiscal year due to budget cuts.

## **Homemaker Home Health Aide Program – Conducted an average of 191 home visits per month**

This program provides homemaker and home health aide services to clients who are 60 years of age or older. More than 100 people are on the waiting list for this program each month due to limited funding.

## **Transportation Services – 25,233 one-way transports made by staff or contract; 21,317 gas vouchers issued**

Transportation is available to and from medical appointments and social service agencies for recipients of Medicaid or Title XX (over age 60 and income eligible). Vouchers to cover gas expenses and bus tickets are also available for medical appointments. The gas vouchers that were issued equaled a total value of \$274,758.56.



# OUR PROGRAMS



## **Employment Services – Assisted 1,579 area residents, visited 267 employers and helped at least 190 Athens County residents become employed**

Our Employment Counselors assisted 1,579 individuals with their resumes and/or their job searches. The counselors meet with area residents individually and in group settings, and also update a Jobs Board that anyone can look at during regular business hours to search for work. During the year, 190 of the individuals who received assistance with their job searches reported that they found work. Others may have also found work but did not report it. The employment counselors and Work Station Director also meet regularly with local employers to discuss the job market and their employment needs.

## **Adult and Basic Literacy Education (ABLE) program – Helped 71 students earn their GEDs**

This program provides educational programs to adults who want to earn their GEDs. Educational services are offered at The Work Station and Tri-County Career Center. The ABLE program holds a graduation ceremony each spring for its graduates.

## **Workforce Investment Act (WIA): Adult and Dislocated Workers – Assisted an average of 71 people per month**

This program provides Athens County residents with employment and training opportunities to help them obtain a job or find a better job. Services include resume preparation, job search assistance, job placement assistance, initial assessments, and information on community services and programs. Due to limited funding, this program currently has a waiting list for Athens County residents to get into it.

## **Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth Services – Assisted an average of 71 people per month**

This program provides employment and training opportunities for low-income Athens County residents between the ages of 14-21. Enrollment is also limited in this program due to funding constraints.

## **Hocking College Retention Program - Assisted more than 800 students**

Our retention program allows eligible Hocking College students to receive Food Assistance benefits, and provides assistance to students who are accessing our services. We have an office at Hocking College so that we can best serve our clients on campus. We also refer students to other programs and services in the community.

## **Voter registrations – 1,175 Athens County residents registered to vote**

This includes 635 new registrations and 540 address changes for registered voters.





# OUR PROGRAMS



**Athens County Reentry Task Force** – Our agency helped found this community coalition, which is dedicated to assisting Athens County residents as they return from jail or prison in order to reduce recidivism and help the community. Thanks to grant funding the task force and our agency received, we now have two staff members working full-time on reentry issues and assisting area residents who are returning from prison or who have previously returned from prison. The Reentry Task Force holds monthly meetings and the members are working together in order to help ex-offenders transition back into society.

**Workshops** - The Work Station holds monthly workshops for area residents on a wide range of topics of interest to Athens County residents. Some workshops are targeted toward specific audiences such as ex-offenders, veterans, and grandparents who are raising their grandchildren, while others are beneficial to all area residents.

**Citizen Circle** - The Work Station hosts the monthly Citizen Circle meetings, which are held to provide support for ex-offenders. Representatives of several community organizations attend the Citizen Circle meetings to talk with ex-offenders about the challenges they are facing and to see how they can provide assistance.

**Tornado Recovery** - After a severe thunderstorm/tornado damaged hundreds of Athens County properties in the fall of 2010, Athens County Job and Family Services assisted with the recovery effort in several ways. Our agency helped to get the word out about where people could go for assistance immediately after the storm hit and then we assisted with the damage assessment reports for area residents. We also worked with state agencies that were providing assistance and set up office space for them at The Work Station so they could meet with area residents to see how they could provide financial assistance. Our agency also served on the Long Term Recovery Committee, which provided additional help to Athens County residents who were impacted by the storm. Shown on the right is a warehouse filled with items donated to the Long Term Recovery Committee to give to Athens County residents impacted by the storm.



**Fast and Free Tax Assistance Center – Helped more than 1,000 area residents file their taxes** Located in The Work Station, the Fast and Free Tax Assistance Center provides free online tax preparation assistance. The program utilizes IRS-certified volunteers to electronically file tax returns during tax filing season. Services are available to all Athens County residents filing basic returns. The program has had to cut back its hours in recent years due to state budget cuts.

**Job Fair** - The Work Station worked with One-Stop agencies from four other counties to sponsor a regional job fair held at the Athens Community Center in the spring. The local Save The Dream task force also participated in the Job Fair and provided information on foreclosure assistance to those in attendance. Nearly 400 area residents attended the Job Fair and spoke with employers from the region about job opportunities.



# HARDSHIPS OUR CLIENTS FACE



Throughout the last year, we have been asking our clients to write about some of the problems they are facing, in order to provide a better understanding of the many different challenges they are striving to overcome. Following are a few of the comments from our clients:

**"I am facing a lot of hardships right now. I currently am homeless and the cost of food is so much over what I receive with the food stamps. They do help, but you can still barely eat well all month. It would be nice if we could get an increase in food stamps and with cash assistance."**

**"Medical expenses are huge. Without assistance, my two children would be forced to go without medical attention when needed. Prices go higher on food and other items daily, making it hard to keep my family fed. I work full-time and so does my husband, but it is still hard to keep up with the daily demands such as food and diapers and gas."**

**"I am on SSI, and not in good health. I get \$122 on the 1st and \$472 on the 3rd. I am raising an 11-year-old boy and my 14-year-old granddaughter. I appreciate the help. Things are really hard."**

**"I cannot pay all of my bills, buy food and pay medical bills on what little income I have."**

**"Working minimum wage isn't enough for electric, water, and rent. Attempting to secure a second job is going very slowly. I have three herniated discs in my spine, two abscessed teeth and nine cavities, all of which are beyond my ability to afford. I can't afford a phone. All in all, from talking to friends and co-workers, I am lucky that this is all I face."**

**"I get food stamps and I work full time, but even working and getting assistance, it's still hard to feed three people and pay bills."**

**"I can't afford medical for me and my kids. Without the state's help we wouldn't have any. As far as the food stamps and money you help with, without it I couldn't keep a roof over my kids' heads or food in their bellies. I work hard at minimum wage and am thankful for what I do get, but I could always use more help."**



**Many area residents cannot afford to pay for funeral costs for loved ones. Shown above are volunteers from the Friends and Neighbors Community Choice Food Center digging a grave for a deceased neighbor whose family had no way to pay for a funeral.**

# CONTACT US:

**We currently have 87 employees who work in four buildings**

We receive an average of 12,346 calls and 4,643 visits to our offices each month.

## County Home Building

State Route 13, Chauncey

**Family Services**

(740) 797-2523 or 1-800-762-3775

**Child Support**

(740) 593-5046 or 1-800-436-8933

## Denver White Building

184 N. Lancaster St., Athens

(740) 592-4477 or 1-800-338-4484

## The Work Station

70 North Plains Road, The Plains

(740) 797-1405 or 1-877-351-0405

## Administrative Office

Connett Road, The Plains

(740) 797-2523 or 1-800-762-3775

## Athens County Job and Family Services Mailing Address:



**184 N. Lancaster St.**

**Athens, Ohio 45701**

**(740) 797-2523**

**1-800-762-3775**

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**Blog: [athensjfs.blogspot.com](http://athensjfs.blogspot.com)**

For additional information on our programs; publications and reports; additional statistics; data and more information on poverty and poverty-related issues, visit our website, [jfs.athenscountygovernment.com](http://jfs.athenscountygovernment.com), or contact our Community Relations Office at (740) 797-2523 or 1-800-762-3775.

Athens County Job and Family Services is an equal opportunity employer and service provider.

(11/11)