



2023 Annual Report

A Year of Community.



Providing children, adults and families
an effective support system to assist in obtaining
self sufficiency and a safe, stable, healthy living environment

www.portagecounty-oh.gov/jfs | 449 S. Meridian St. Ravenna, OH | 330-297-3750

FROM THE DIRECTOR



Kellijo Jeffries, PhD, MSW, LSW

Portage County Job and Family Services was dedicated to increasing staff levels in 2023. At the end of December, we closed the year with 191 employees, ten more employees than the prior year.

Our Child Support Division established support on 94.39% of our cases, which is a record number. Our Public Assistance Division consistently met the 90% Medicaid unwinding standard, and we were notified at the end of December that Portage County would receive a best practice incentive where our Child Protective Services Division increased comprehensive visitation standards by 12%.

Our team hosted Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Director Matthew Damschroder. During his visit, we highlighted the programs and services provided by our agency. We also emphasized some of the challenges, such as limited flexible funding to support the transportation needs of the clients we serve, additional support needs at OhioMeansJobs Center for residents' challenged with reaching state representatives with Unemployment Compensation questions.

In 2023, I joined several Public Children Services Association of Ohio trustees and many other local and state partners at the newly created Children Services Placement Working Sessions. The sessions are being facilitated by Director Kara Wentz of the newly created Department of Children and Youth. Topics of focus include the need to secure stabilization services within communities, expediting the processing of Multi System Youth applications, and addressing the workforce challenges within all interconnected systems.

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from the Director continued...

Our team facilitated or participated in a number of community initiatives to build awareness and to increase support around the needs of the Portage County residents, such as the first Kids Summit, the first Community Transportation Forum, and job fairs hosted by OhioMeansJobs specific to connecting drivers with employers. Job and Family Services recently secured additional agency space to expand visitation dates and times for families working with Child Protective Services. The agency hosted the best Presents for Kids Campaign ever, where each child in foster care received six gifts at Christmas as a result of the overwhelming generosity from Portage County residents.

We closed 2023 administering the Healthy Aging Grant provided by the Ohio Department of Aging, which makes one-time supportive services available to seniors 60 plus through June 30, 2024, to best meet their health and wellness needs.

Portage County Job and Family Services is dedicated to our mission to provide children, adults, and families an effective support system to assist in obtaining self-sufficiency and a safe, stable, healthy living environment.



PUBLIC ASSISTANCE



Providing families of Portage County with assistance in applying and securing benefits

**REBECCA ABBOTT,
ADMINISTRATOR**

The Public Assistance (PA) Division accomplished several goals and worked hard to serve the residents of Portage County in 2023. First, we successfully transitioned from working with several other counties through Shared Services to handling only Portage County phone calls. We also met the SNAP timeliness mandate of 95% or above nearly every month of the year. The PA team put in extra hours to work through the volume of cases associated with the unwinding of the public health emergency. We met and exceeded the benchmark rate of 90% of Medicaid renewals completed during all countable months in 2023. In addition, our transportation team grew from 2 full-time drivers to 3 full-time drivers and 1 part-time driver. The transportation team worked closely with our vendors and drivers to provide safe, reliable, and timely transportation throughout the year. Finally, the PA team began a bimonthly collaboration with the Haven of Portage County to offer on-site support to the Haven's clients who are applying for assistance and updating their cases. Despite ongoing challenges, the PA team continues to work together to ensure customer service remains a top priority. In 2024, we will continue to work through processing cases to meet standards set as part of the ongoing unwinding of the public health emergency. We look forward to serving Portage County residents and providing timely and accurate benefits as well as excellent customer service. Thank you to the PA team for all their hard work and dedication throughout the year!

37,992

TOTAL CALLS RECEIVED

593

AVG MONTHLY NUMBER
OF OWF RECIPIENTS

567

AVG MONTHLY NUMBER
OF CHILDREN RECEIVING
SUBSIDIZED CHILDCARE

10,203

INTAKE
APPOINTMENTS

36,438

AVG MONTHLY NUMBER
OF MEDICAID RECIPIENTS

\$218+k

OVERISSUED BENEFITS
RECOVERED

846

AVG MONTHLY
CLIENTS SEEN AT
RECEPTION DESK

13,947

AVG MONTHLY NUMBER
OF FOOD ASSISTANCE
RECIPIENTS

NET:

614 MONTHLY VENDOR TRIPS

409 MONTHLY JFS DRIVER RIDES

322 MONTHLY GAS CARDS

CHILD AND ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Assuring the children and elderly of Portage County
are living in a safe, healthy, stable
living environment

KAYLYN KANE, ADMINISTRATOR



The Child and Adult Protective Services Team worked diligently to serve and protect the Children, Elderly, and Families of Portage County in 2023.

2023 was a year of reflection and growth for the Child and Adult Protective Services Team, but we maintained focus on the Best Interest of Children, Elderly, and Families despite workforce challenges and the placement crisis. To assist with maintaining our focus on Best Interest, we collaborated to define our division's values.

The Portage County Child and Adult Protective Services Values consist of:

- **Relationships:** We believe it is possible to honor relationships and keep children and elderly safe.
- **Trust:** We believe families develop trust when we are honest and inclusive in the decision-making process.
- **Village:** We believe in slowing down and gathering the village.
- **Support:** We believe in supporting each other's growth, self-awareness, and self-care.

CHILD
AND ADULT
PROTECTIVE
SERVICES
VALUES



The Child and Adult Protective Services Team onboarded 18 new staff members in 2023 and created a new Support Services Team. This team consists of Clerical, Legal Specialists, SSW2- Case Aids, SSW2- Visitation Aids, and the FTM Facilitator. Preparations started in late 2023 to create a new Family Engagement Center where we will facilitate visits between children and families as we strive toward reunification.

Portage County Job & Family Services was awarded a Best Practice Incentive for Most Improved in relation to the composite visitation score of all required face-to-face visits with children and parents from October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023.

Portage County Job and Family Services' Adult Protective Services has played an active role in the evolution of Portage County's new Senior Support Team.

CHILD AND ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES



3,397

OF CHILD ABUSE AND
NEGLECT REPORTS
RECEIVED IN 2023

808

OF SCREENED IN
CHILD PROTECTIVE
SERVICES CASES

137

TOTAL CHILDREN THAT
ENTERED CUSTODY IN
2023

133

TOTAL # OF CHILDREN
THAT LEFT CUSTODY IN
2023

36

OF CHILDREN
AWAITING ADOPTION
AT END OF 2023

4

OF FINALIZED
ADOPTIONS IN 2023

7

YOUTH IN CARE THAT
SUCCESSFULLY GRADUATED
HIGH SCHOOL

1

OF FAMILIES THAT
GRADUATED FROM
OHIO START PROGRAM

10

AVG # OF CHILDREN
PLACED IN RESIDENTIAL
TREATMENT PROGRAMS
PER MONTH

\$464+k

AVG MONTHLY COST OF
PLACEMENT FOR CHILDREN
IN CARE OF PCJFS

\$5.5+m

TOTAL PURCHASED PLACEMENT
COSTS FOR CHILDREN IN
CUSTODY OF JFS

712

OF ADULT ABUSE AND
NEGLECT REPORTS
RECEIVED

194

OF SCREENED IN ADULT
PROTECTIVE SERVICES
CASES IN 2023

\$126+k

TOTAL FUNDS SPENT ON
SUPPORT SERVICES FOR ADULT
PROTECTIVE SERVICES CASES

CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

Aiding in the healthy development of children
across Portage County by assuring children
receive the financial support of both parents

LISA FAY, ADMINISTRATOR



The dedicated Child Support Division team spent 2023 using their remarkable talents and skills to fuel the agency's efforts to help families. The Child Support team was diligent and worked collaboratively to achieve goals of establishing paternity, child support, and medical support orders. They also demonstrated an exceptional effort and commitment to ensuring families have the support they need by modifying and enforcing these orders.

Through the Child Support team's hard work and commitment, they have achieved notable accomplishments and made significant contributions to the agency's mission of assisting families in obtaining self-sufficiency and a safe, stable, healthy living environment. In federal fiscal year 2023, the Child Support Division established support orders for 94.39% of all Portage County cases. We also established paternity on 99.54% of our cases.

In 2024, the Child Support team will be working to develop policies and implement new rules to allow caretakers the ability to receive child support more efficiently.

8,805

CHILDREN SERVED

\$19.9+m

TOTAL SUPPORT DISTRIBUTED



7,748

OPEN CHILD
SUPPORT CASES

207

MODIFIED CHILD SUPPORT
ORDERS

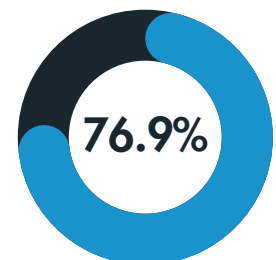
3,148

CLIENTS SEEN AT
RECEPTION DESK

13,041

CALLS RECEIVED IN
CUSTOMER SERVICE

Current Support



**COLLECTED CURRENT
SUPPORT OF ALL CASES**

“Without a sense of caring,
there can be no sense
of community.”

Anthony J D'Angelo





Assisting local job seekers and employers with their job search needs

**MANDY MINNICK,
ADMINISTRATOR**

In 2023, the workforce continued to grapple with a shortage crisis. The scarcity extended across nearly every industry, amplifying the need for creative solutions. The OhioMeansJobs Portage County (OMJPC) Center saw an increase in traffic for universal services, as well as a notable increase in Individualized Training Accounts (ITA) for in-demand industries. In addition to administering the typical WIOA services for both youth and adults to assist employers with their workforce needs, OMJPC also focused on several creative programs. An increased demand for an OMJPC presence in local high schools resulted in the assignment of one Case Manager to the WORKS program with a focus of fostering a pipeline of future job-ready students. Through the purchase of TransferVR, the WORKS program can now offer virtual reality career exploration and training.

OMJPC simultaneously increased the caseload of our pilot Benefit Bridge program to over 50 cases. This surpassed the goal of 40 cases set for us by the state. The RESEA program offered services to nearly 400 participants receiving unemployment to assist with reemployment. The CCMEP program continued to serve youth holistically, while always looking for gaps in services to better support their needs. The work activity team connected over 50 SNAP/TANF individuals with job placements and served nearly 800 families with supports through PRC. An ongoing partnership with KSU through 2023 brought another successful Manufacturing Internship Program. Hope Town continued to be served through Grant 3 funding helping successfully connect those in recovery to employment opportunities.

The mission at OMJ is to connect job seekers with employers in the community through all of our programs and services. OMJ offers one case manager that focuses specifically on the employer needs. In partnership with the Portage Development Board, they received over 6,000 services including job fairs and hiring events.

Moving into 2024, OMJ will continue to focus on administering workforce services and programs that connect both of our customers—employers and job seekers.



OhioMeansJobs®

Portage County

A proud partner of the
American Job Center network

OHIO MEANS JOBS



OhioMeansJobs

Portage County

A proud partner of the
American Job Center network

362

FIRST TIME OMJ
CUSTOMERS

1,862

TOTAL OMJ CUSTOMERS

3,955

TOTAL OMJ CENTER
SERVICES

\$165+k

TOTAL SUPPORTIVE SERVICE
DOLLARS SPENT ON OMJ
PROGRAMS

17

HIRING EVENTS

6,527

TOTAL NUMBER OF
BUSINESS SERVICES

51

BENEFIT BRIDGE CASES
AT END OF 2023

34

TANF JOB PLACEMENTS

24

AVG # OF SNAP ET
PARTICIPANTS EACH
MONTH

121

AVG # OF INDIVIDUALS
IN ADW PROGRAM EACH
MONTH

789

TOTAL PRC APPLICATIONS
PROCESSED

368

NUMBER OF RESEA
INDIVIDUALS SELECTED
FOR SERVICES

4.2%

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE -
HIGHEST OF 2023 (JANUARY)

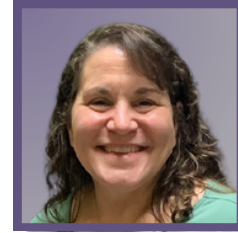
3.0%

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE -
LOWEST OF 2023 (NOVEMBER)

BUSINESS SERVICES & FISCAL DIVISION

Assuring the agency funds are allocated correctly while furthering the mission of Portage County Job & Family Services

SUE BRANNON & VANESSA BEARD, ADMINISTRATORS



The Business Services & Fiscal Division had a productive year despite being riddled with multiple changes. After 36 years of service and commitment to Portage County Job and Family Services, Administrator Sue Brannon submitted her letter of resignation where she retired in January 2024. Proactive efforts were initiated in 2023, and Vanessa Beard joined this team as the new administrator in this division. The division was able to once again pass the Job & Family Services portion of the Auditor of State Annual Audit. The program evaluator and accountants worked diligently to modify our contract monitoring processes, and the team supported the entire agency with supportive services such as onboarding staff, maintaining payroll, processing invoices for all divisions of the agency, and employing efforts to streamline our adoptions. Great teamwork and dedication ensure that the employees of JFS are supported and that the residents and community partners of Portage County receive timely and quality service delivery. Our valued community partners make it possible for JFS to meet the mission of our agency.

\$15,618,247.31	PUBLIC ASSISTANCE OPERATIONAL BUDGET
\$15,081,992.62	PUBLIC ASSISTANCE EXPENDITURES
\$3,547,711.02	CHILD SUPPORT OPERATIONAL BUDGET
\$3,151,942.20	CHILD SUPPORT OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURES
\$11,868,097.61	CHILD & ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES OPERATIONAL BUDGET
\$10,914,953.33	CHILD & ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES EXPENDITURES
\$1,829,480.73	OHIO MEANS JOBS OPERATIONAL BUDGET
\$1,678,221.99	OHIO MEANS JOBS OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURES
\$32,863,536.67	TOTAL OPERATIONAL BUDGET
\$30,827,110.14	TOTAL EXPENSES



Community.
The heart of what we do.

"I'm so proud to work amongst servant leaders dedicated to our community."

- Brian Boykin, Assistant Director

Encouraging families.
Providing emergency assistance.
Promoting family stability.
Establishing support.
Protecting Portage County children & seniors.
Help attaining & retaining employment.
Connection to resources.



2023



PORTAGE COUNTY JOB & FAMILY SERVICES

449 S. MERIDIAN ST. RAVENNA, OH 44266 | 330-297-3750

WWW.PORTAGECOUNTY-OH.GOV/JFS

DIRECTOR

KELLIJO JEFFRIES, PHD, MSW, LSW

KELLIJO.JEFFRIES@JFS.OHIO.GOV | 330-297-2226

PORTAGE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

ANTHONY J. BADALAMENTI

SABRINA CHRISTIAN-BENNETT

MIKE TINLIN

PORTAGE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

MICHELLE CROMBIE

CHILD AND ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

449 S. MERIDIAN ST. RAVENNA, OH 44266

24 HR. ABUSE/NEGLECT HOTLINE 330-296-CARE

ADOPTION 330-297-3690

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE | ADMINISTRATION

449 S. MERIDIAN ST. RAVENNA, OH 44266 | 330-297-3750

CHILD SUPPORT

449 S. MERIDIAN ST. RAVENNA, OH 44266 | 330-297-3791

OHIO MEANS JOBS PORTAGE COUNTY

253 S. CHESTNUT ST. RAVENNA, OH 44266 | 330-296-2841

AGENCY IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER AND SERVICE PROVIDER.