



Stark County Job & Family Services 2020 Annual Report

Children Services

Child Support

Human Services



The Stark County Commissioners reflect on 2020

Covid-19 has presented us all with many challenges. In a time like this, the programs and services of Stark County Job and Family Services are vital to the wellbeing of our community. The Commissioners recognized this early on and committed to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for SCJFS workers and their clients. We installed a Covid-fighting bipolar air ionization system, enhanced cleaning and sanitizing efforts, and worked closely with the City of Canton Health Department to follow all safety guidelines and recommendations. I would like to commend the SCJFS staff and administration for their hard work and sacrifice through the pandemic. They have kept their doors open to the public, successfully navigated an increased need for assistance, and identified future needs of our residents as we continue the fight against Covid-19. The people of Stark County are very fortunate to have an organization like SCJFS working hard for them every day.



Richard Regula, Stark County Commissioner

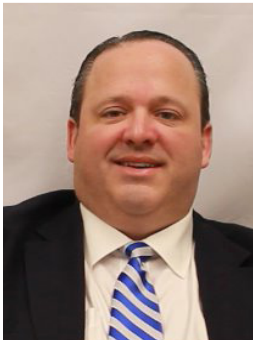


When 2020 began, who would have thought it would turn out as it did? The pandemic was something we needed to get our arms around quickly, to understand how to maintain our health, serve the public, and provide much needed services in the best way possible. I believe we all learned a great deal about the pandemic, how to cope with it, keep our health, and serve the public in an exemplary way. I would like to congratulate the staff of Stark County JFS for continuing to provide essential services to the residents of Stark County, despite the risks and challenges of Covid-19. We have found, once again, how strong and committed we can be when the chips are down. Thank you for your service and dedication to our community, especially to those who count on you most.

Bill Smith, Stark County Commissioner

Stark County Job and Family Services has done a tremendous job overcoming the hurdles presented by the pandemic. As a people-focused agency, their ability to communicate with and help the public was greatly challenged in 2020. However, JFS staff persevered by prioritizing a healthy working environment, developing protocols to safely continue in-person customer service, and utilizing online tools such as Zoom and social media to host meetings and events. Kudos to Executive Director Deborah Forkas and her team for ensuring that essential services and programs were available to our community through this difficult time.

Janet Weir Creighton, Stark County Commissioner



It is certainly an understatement to say that the year 2020 was an “unprecedented” year that was full of unexpected challenges brought about by the global pandemic. However, despite having to make the difficult transition out of and then safely back into our buildings, our JFS Team rose to the occasion and continued to serve the Stark County citizens, who continued to depend on us, with professionalism and diligence. I greatly appreciate our entire JFS Team for the important work you do!

Brant Luther, Esq., Stark County Administrator



Our Mission

To partner with our customers, community and other service providers to protect children and vulnerable adults, stabilize and strengthen families, and encourage self-sufficiency and personal responsibility.

Dear Friends,

In my career, I have never experienced a year like 2020. The global pandemic was unexpected and overwhelming. As the world shut down, our daily lives were challenged and the community suffered: closed businesses and schools, eliminated jobs, cut wages, scarce childcare, and increased mental health issues.

We distributed nearly \$80 million more in assistance during 2020, than 2019. The Division of Human Services saw a 56% increase in food assistance disbursements and 13% increase in the number of residents receiving Medicaid assistance. Consequently, these funds made their way back into our local economy during a time when they were desperately needed, benefitting our grocers, clinics, hospitals, and retailers.

Using Prevention, Retention, and Contingency (PRC) funds, the Division of Human Services successfully implemented a Covid-19 emergency assistance program. PRC is operated with federal dollars from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The program provided a one-time payment of \$350 to assist with immediate needs during the pandemic. Approximately 1,447 residents were able to be approved, which resulted in over \$500,000 going into the Stark County community.

Throughout this year, we were introduced to new and more effective tools for communication. The Division of Children Services developed innovative strategies to recruit new foster and adoptive parents by building a social media presence to engage families, utilizing Zoom and Microsoft Teams to host events, and partnering with local organizations and media groups to publish online content.

The crisis gave us the opportunity to look to the future and strengthen current procedures. In 2020, the Division of Child Support secured a federal grant for the “Building Evidence on Employment Strategies for Low Income Families” (BEES) program. Funds will pay for a project manager, two case managers, employment services, and parenting classes in fiscal year 2021. They were also awarded the title of “Most Improved County for Paternity Establishment” by the State of Ohio for finishing the year with a 98.46% paternity establishing percentage.

As we adjust to living in the age of Covid-19, I am optimistic that the community will recover and come back stronger than ever. Our agency is grateful to the Stark County Commissioners for taking the necessary steps to keep JFS offices safe and healthy during this difficult year. Most importantly, I would like to thank our staff for working through the pandemic to maintain our mission and provide essential services to the children, vulnerable adults, and families of Stark County.

Sincerely,



Deborah Forkas, M.Ed
Executive Director



Human Services

Susan Lenigar, MBA
Deputy Director
Staff: 219

Human Services provides:

- Food Assistance (FA) Program, which is issued to the Ohio Direction Card for food purchasing assistance
- Ohio Works First (OWF) cash assistance
- Medicaid for the aged, blind and disabled
- Nursing Home Medicaid and Home & Community Based Services (HCBS) waivers
- Medicare Premium Assistance programs
- Medicaid for families, pregnant women, children and expansion adults
- Non-Emergency Transportation (NET)
- At-Risk Pregnancy Services
- HealthChek
- Breast & Cervical Cancer Project
- Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS)
- Child Care programs

The following data is based on most current numbers available as of December 2020.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

54,247 individuals received food assistance. Based on the 2019 U.S. Census estimate of 370,606, this is about 1 of every 7 people in Stark County.

Medicaid

According to the Ohio Department of Medicaid:

98,337 individuals received Medicaid assistance. Assistance programs included Medicaid for the aged, blind and disabled, and the Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) programs, which cover families, children, pregnant women, and adults with Medicaid expansion.

20,113 individuals received Medicaid for the aged, blind and disabled. This number includes approximately 4,358 individuals eligible only for Medicare Premium Assistance.

77,731 individuals received MAGI Medicaid.

Ohio Works First Cash Assistance

4,260 individuals received Ohio Works First (OWF) cash assistance.

568 work-required OWF recipients were referred into the Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) between January 1 and December 31, 2020. CCMEP is meant to provide more intensive service and support to young adults, ages 16-to-24, as they work to become employable and/or self-sufficient. SCJFS partners with OhioMeansJobs in facilitating the program.

3,742 children cared for by publicly funded child care.

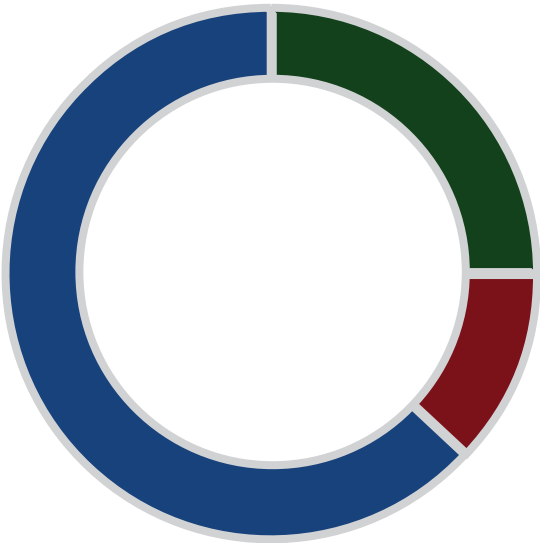
Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic Food Assistance disbursements rose approximately 56% from 2019. Child Care disbursements fell by 38.5% due to center closures in April and May.

It is estimated that in 2020, the four major Human Services Division programs contributed over \$960 million to the Stark County community. Local grocers, clinics, hospitals, and retailers benefited from these services:

Medicaid Disbursements	\$845,628,658*
Total Food Assistance Disbursements	\$100,392,151
OWF Cash Assistance Disbursements	\$8,617,403
Child Care Assistance (approx.)	\$10,220,833

Percentage of Stark County population participating in selected public assistance programs based on an estimated population of 370,606*

Families below Poverty Level	13%	(1 in 7.5 people)**
Food Assistance Program	14.6%	(1 in 7 people)
OWF Cash Assistance	1.1%	(1 in 87 people)



Wages & Benefits	\$12,249,473	63%
Program Costs	\$4,859,781	25%
Operating Expenses	\$2,330,811	12%

*From Ohio Department of Medicaid

**From www.census.gov, July 2019 data

Children Services

Robert Myers , LISW-S

Deputy Director

Staff: 181

The Children Services Division serves the county's children at risk of abuse or neglect, and their families. Children Services is legally responsible for taking, and investigating, reports of child abuse, neglect and dependency; and acting to protect children at risk of harm.

The Division also takes reports of suspected abuse, neglect and/or exploitation of adults age 60 and older. In 2020, SCJFS contracted with Coleman Professional Services to provide these services.

Children Services recruits and trains foster and adoptive families, prepares children for adoption, arranges for post-adoption services to families, and provides independent living skills for older teens.

Report Line

6,122 calls to the Report Line resulted in 2,762 cases requiring assistance or intervention

Assistance

331 of the 2,762 cases resulted in basic assistance to families

Of these:

197 were calls of families in need of services

134 were calls about children who were determined to be dependent

Intervention

2,431 of the 2,762 cases required intervention, using one of the following approaches:

Traditional Response

456 (18.8%) of the 2,431 were responded to using the traditional response.

Of these calls:

16.5% calls reporting suspected neglect.

15.2% calls reporting suspected physical abuse.

66.7% calls reporting suspected sexual abuse.

1.6% calls reporting suspected emotional maltreatment.

Alternative Response

Alternative Response (AR), an approach that provides for a second, or alternative, pathway of response to reports of alleged abuse/neglect, was initiated in April 2012. In 2020, 1975 cases (81.2% of the 2,431 cases) were responded to using the AR approach.

Ongoing Supportive Services

In an average month, 225 families received case management and supportive services.

Children who could not remain safely in their own homes were provided placement services.

Below are the average number of children per month in each type of placement setting.

- 119 Agency Foster Care
- 71 Purchased Foster Care
- 2 Group Home Care
- 9 Residential Placement
- 131 Kinship or Relative Home

Transitional Youth Services

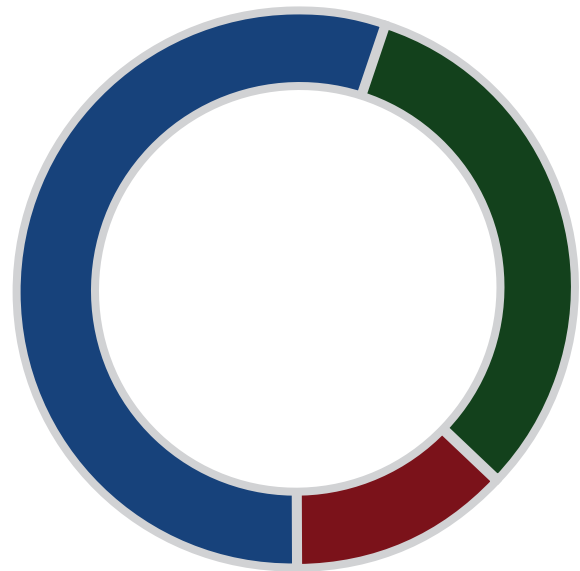
- 110 youth received independent living services
- 22 previously emancipated youth received services.

Foster Care/Adoption

- 136 licensed foster families (average per month)
- 53 finalized adoptions

Adult Protective Services

SCJFS contracted with Coleman Professional Services to provide services. In 2020, there were 511 new cases of elder abuse/neglect or exploitation.



Wages & Benefits	\$12,528,887	55%
Program Costs	\$7,128,353	32%
Operating Expenses	\$2,852,403	13%

Child Support

Rob Pierson, MA
Deputy Director
Staff: 81

Child Support provides services which include:

- Establishing paternity and support
- Issuing medical support orders
- Modifying/enforcing support orders
- Monitoring support payment collection/disbursement
- Helping non-custodial parents comply with support orders and overcome employment barriers

Community Outreach

- Documentary *Daddy Don't Go* showing for teens
- National Reading Day/Alliance, Canton, Massillon City Schools
- Community Baby Shower for new parents in the THRIVE Initiative
- Virtual Walk Your Child to School Day
- Parenting Time Orders
- Expungement/CQE Program
- Canton Art Museum Event

Number of Child Support Cases

29,500

Collections

\$59,062,636, and of this, \$1,702,341 collected at payment window

Incentive Performance Categories

Paternity Establishment	98.46%
Support Order Establishment	90.37%
Collections on Current Support	73.55%
Collections on Arrears	77.83%

Cost Effectiveness

\$11.35 collected for each operations dollar spent (state average: \$8.92)

Significant Statistics

420	paternity cases scheduled for DNA testing
1,170	cases referred for Support Establishment
2,630	court hearings by Legal Department
77,167	phone calls received in Customer Service
5,199	customers seen in the CSEA Lobby

Right Path for Fathers Partnership Grant

Right Path continued as an early intervention program in 2020 assisting low income non-custodial parents who are unable to comply with their support order. Funding from the Sisters of Charity and matching federal dollars allowed Right Path to refer individuals to programs at Goodwill and Early Childhood Resource Center for employment and parenting classes. The employment class gave non-custodial parents the ability to find a job, the parenting class gave the non-custodial parent the desire to find employment.

PJAC/New Directions in Child Support Grant

A \$2.29 million, five-year Procedural Justice Informed Alternative to Contempt (PJAC) federal grant, awarded in 2016, funds an alternative to civil contempt for non-custodial parents not making payments. Case conferences are held with both custodial and non-custodial parents and PJAC provides services to overcome barriers for non-payment of support, including programs to assist parents seeking employment. Since this project began 71.8% of the participants in PJAC have made support payments totaling \$2,622,851. These cases before coming into the project were not making payments and were on a pathway to court for contempt.

Expungement/Certificate for Qualification of Employment (CQE) Program

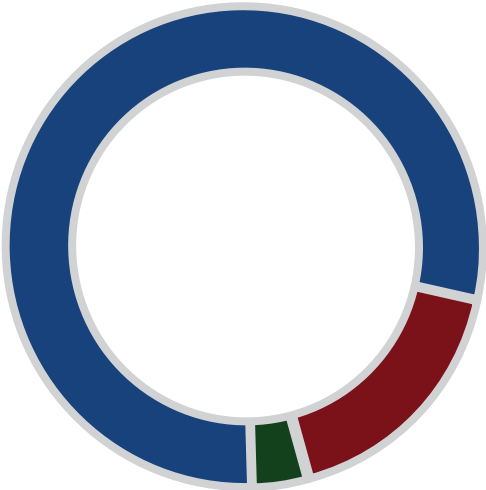
CSEA, Community Legal Aid, and Stark County Fatherhood Coalition collaborate on an Expungement/CQE program for parents with felony convictions who seek employment. This program works to remove criminal conviction barriers, since services began in August 2014, 145 expungements and 37 CQEs have been completed.

Stark County Fatherhood Coalition Community Outreach

CSEA is a key member of the Stark County Fatherhood Coalition, which encourages responsible fatherhood. Members recognize a parents’ emotional support of their child is equally important as their financial support. The Fatherhood Coalition sponsored the Canton Museum of Art Father/Child event, National Reading Day, a community baby shower with THRIVE, and a documentary screening at the Multi-County Attention Center. Due to the pandemic, many events were held virtually, including Fathers Walk Your Child to School Day. Seven annual events were cancelled.

Parenting Time Order Program

The CSEA continued its THRIVE grant funded Parenting Time Order program in partnership with Community Legal Aid. Services are free for qualifying parents. This is the only CSEA program in Ohio that helps non-custodial parents establish and enforce parenting time orders in court.



Wages & Benefits	\$5,015,341	79%
Operating Expenses	\$1,114,251	17%
Program Costs	\$251,249	4%

Agency Expenditures

Human Services Division

Wages	8,305,093
Benefits	4,190,843
Contracts	222,256
Countywide Indirect	77,503
Data Processing	2,454
FAET Participant Allowance	2,895
COVID-19 Relief	506,800
Work Bus Passes/Fuel Cards	2,745
PRC/Auto Repair	64,591
PRC/Job Related	20,576
PRC/Parenting Skills	220,164
PRC/SEP	59,600
PRC/Work Allowance	140,245
Reimbursements	
Special Projects/Dues	8,932
Rent/Utilities	279,418
Shared Costs	1,616,643
Supplies	9,593
Renovations	1,184
TANF/CSEA Expungement	15,506
Transportation	
Medical/Healthcheck/PRS/SSI	3,585,680
Travel/Mileage/Education	32,569

TOTALS **\$19,365,289**

Children Services Division

Wages	8,412,747
Benefits	3,982,055
Wendy's Wonderful Kids	
Wages & Benefits	127,565
Mental Health & Recovery	
Services Wages & Benefits	60,653
Wendy's Wonderful Kids Contracts	15,245
Contracts	669,289
Shared Costs	1,533,504
Countywide Indirect	242,139
Purchased Foster Homes	2,559,797
Residential Treatment	770,090
Agency Foster Homes	1,119,529
Group Homes	173,436
Foster Children Clothing	132,745
Foster Children Medical	3,261
Adoption Services/Home Studies	50,485
Advertising/Recruitment	69,936
Bus Passes	62,440
Child Abuse Prosecution Unit	328,821
Communications	66,299
County Share Adoption Subsidy	339,135
Data Processing	27,371
Emergency Services	270,414
Foster Parent Training Stipends	29,798
Independent Living	81,038
Kinship Caregiver	128,071
Multi System	145,232
Maintenance/Utilities	80,475
Membership Dues	21,037
Mileage	291,745
Miscellaneous	78,412
Non-Recurring Adoption	51,799
Office Supply	28,443
PASS	248,914
Primary Partner Program/PRT	592

Professional Liability Insurance	97,857
Public Records	32,627
Reimbursement	55,166
Rent	129,582
Service Review Committee	3,138
State Adoption Subsidy	2,400
Tax Settlement Fees	208,178
Travel and Training	30,714
Work Related Daycare	240,687

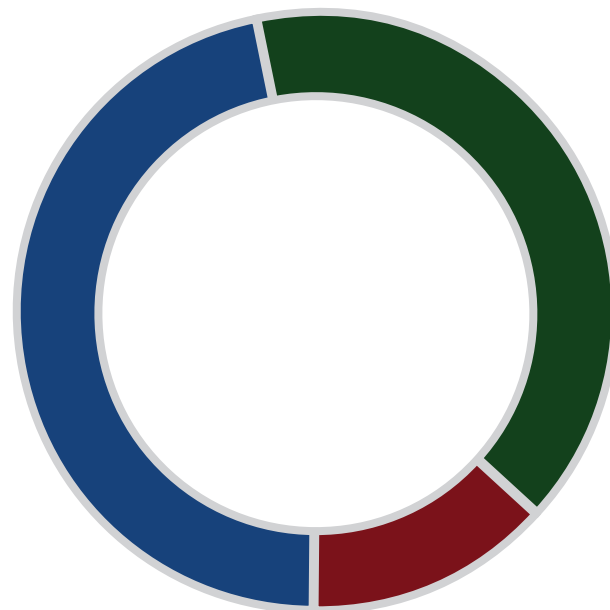
TOTALS **\$23,089,239**

Child Support Division

Wages	3,001,816
Benefits	1,536,510
Right Path Program	
Wages & Benefits	63,185
New Direction Program	
Wages & Benefits	556,863
THRIVE Grant Wages & Benefits	139,638
Right Path Program Contracts	44,575
New Direction Contracts	46,618
THRIVE Program Contracts	9,461
Countywide Indirect Costs	56,216
Data Processing	7,746
IV-D Contracts	125,657
Miscellaneous	79,029
Rent/Utilities	98,995
Shared Costs	661,277
Travel and Training	527
Renovations	472

TOTALS **\$6,428,586**

2020 Agency Operating Totals
by Division



- Children Services
- Human Services
- Child Support

Stark County Job & Family Services
2020 Total Expenditures
\$48,883,114

Stark County Job & Family Services

2020 Event Calendar

JANUARY

National Reading
Day Event

Art for Health
& Healing

FEBRUARY

Documentary *Daddy
Don't Go* showing for
teens

MARCH

National Social Work
Month

APRIL

Child Abuse Prevention
Month

Wear Blue Campaign

MAY

Foster Parent
Appreciation Month

JUNE

RUMO Graduation

Foster/Adoption
Informational meetings
(Remote via Zoom)

JULY

Foster/Adoption
Informational meetings
(Remote via Zoom)

AUGUST

Child Support Awareness
Month

Foster/Adoption
Informational meetings
(Remote via Zoom)

SEPTEMBER

Virtual Father's Walk
Your Child to School Day

Fatherhood Coalition
THRIVE Community
Baby Shower

OCTOBER

Fall Frolic Event
for Foster Parents

Drive Through
Trunk or Treat

NOVEMBER

National
Adoption Month

2020 Virtual
Heart Gallery

DECEMBER

Project KARE:
Gifts for Kids

Children's Network
Holiday Party

Foster/Adoption Informational meetings
(Remote via Zoom) held September through December

Executive Team

Deborah Forkas, M. Ed
Executive Director

Jerry Coleman, JD
Assistant Deputy Director,
Legal Services Division

Brian Kandel, MBA
Deputy Director, Finance

Susan Lenigar, MBA
Deputy Director,
Human Services Division

Kelly Lockhart, M.Ed, LSW
Deputy Director,
Human Resources & Support
Services

Robert Myers, LISW-S
Deputy Director,
Children Services Division

Rob Pierson, MA
Deputy Director,
Child Support Division

County Commissioners

Richard Regula, President

Bill Smith, Vice President

Janet Weir-Creighton, Member

County Administrator

Brant Luther, Esq.

Planning Committee

The Stark County Family Services
Planning Committee provides
recommendations to Stark County
Job and Family Services for the most
effective and efficient delivery of
service.

Cynthia Burnell
Chairperson

John Petit
Vice Chair

Erica Wilson-Domer
Secretary

Deborah Forkas
SCJFS Executive Director

Jon Adland
Chanda Coblenz
Raymont Johnson
Dawn Miller
Laura Moline
Evelyn Moore
Kay Port
Whitney Prather
Beverly Proctor-Donald
Gloria Sanders

Contact Information

Executive Offices

221 3rd Street SE
Canton, OH 44702

Children Services Division

402 2nd Street SE
Canton, OH 44702

Child Abuse/Neglect Report Line:
330-455-KIDS

Foster/Adopt
330-451-8789

Child Support Division

221 3rd Street SE
P.O. Box 21337
Canton, OH 44701

Customer Service
330-451-8930

Human Services Division

221 3rd Street SE
Canton, OH 44702

**Customer Service/Application
Line**
1-844-640-6446

JOBS/Child Care
330-452-4661

