



Stark County Job & Family Services

Human Services - Children Services - Child Support



2021 Annual Report

Stark County Commissioners reflect on 2021

The team at Stark County Job and Family Services does an outstanding job every day ensuring our most vulnerable residents, families and children have access to the services and assistance they need. Especially during these unpredictable times, the staff at SCJFS never wavers from providing remarkable service to the citizens of Stark County. The Board of Stark County Commissioners recognizes, appreciates and supports the dedication of the SCJFS staff.

Richard Regula, Stark County Commissioner

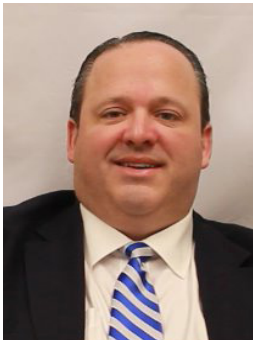


As we continue to move through the pandemic, Stark County Job and Family Services has been there to provide excellent service to our residents, protect our families and children, and help strengthen our community. The important work they perform would not be possible without a deeply committed and hard-working staff. Thank you for another year of dedicated service to Stark County!

Bill Smith, Stark County Commissioner

Stark County Job and Family Services continues to do an amazing job navigating the pandemic. As our community begins to recover and adjust to a new normal, we find that many households are still struggling with loss and hardship due to Covid-19. I am very impressed with how SCJFS has identified and addressed the unique needs of our residents during this time, introducing new programs and enhancing existing services to better serve those in need. JFS' commitment to our community has made a significant impact on the lives of so many in Stark County.

Janet Weir Creighton, Stark County Commissioner



Stark County has been fortunate to receive federal funding to help residents disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Job and Family Services has done an excellent job getting these funds to those who need them most, through programs such as the Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Program and the COVID-19 Back-to-School PRC Program. I commend our JFS team for continuing to make the people of Stark County their top priority!

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.

From the Desk of Our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to present you with the 2021 Annual Report. The following pages paint a picture of where we stand today, two years into a worldwide pandemic. There are signals of renewal throughout, as well as findings that may point to longer-lasting effects on our community. Overall, the data reveals a glimmer of recovery and a strong sense that we are working back to the world we knew before Covid-19.

Advances throughout 2021 enabled people to return to public life. The number of customers served in our CSEA lobby dropped significantly during the peak of the pandemic, falling from 11,288 in 2019 to 5,199 in 2020. However, in 2021 that number climbed back up to 5,814, indicating that people are once again becoming comfortable with in-person services.

The reopening of schools, care centers, and childcare facilities allowed mandated reporters, such as teachers and caregivers, to visibly identify and report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. Our Division of Children Services' Abuse Hotline received 6,510 reports in 2021, an increase from 6,122 in 2020. They also received 580 reports of elder abuse, up from 511 in 2020 and the highest number reported in the past five years.

We developed programs to offer temporary relief to families impacted by Covid-19. Our Division of Human Services implemented the Covid-19 Back-to-School PRC Program, funded by Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) dollars. The program helped 1,991 families and 4,262 children purchase school clothes for the 20/21 school year. They also operated the Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Program, administered through the U.S. Department of Treasury, to help families keep and obtain stable housing. To date, the program has paid out \$1,290,789 and allowed 685 renters to remain in their home.



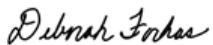
Child support participation increased, boosting financial security for Stark County children. Our Division of Child Support established support orders for 94.99% of their cases this year, a 4.62% improvement from 2020 and the highest percentage Stark County has ever achieved. Their performance earned recognition from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services' Office of Child Support for "Most Improved" in the Large County Category. Additionally, they completed their five-year participation in the Procedural Justice Informed Alternative to Contempt (PJAC) grant study, serving 1,505 non-custodial parents and collecting \$4,214,246 in child support.

We held in-person events to benefit foster children and families. Adhering to safety protocols and guidelines, our Division of Children Services celebrated youths in foster care for the first time since 2019 at the Rising Up Moving On (RUMO) graduation ceremony and Heart Gallery Art Exhibition. They also opened their doors to foster and adoptive parent recruitment efforts, such as open houses and information meetings, and participated in outreach activities at the Pro Football Hall of Fame and Hartville Marketplace & Flea Market.

Stark County Job and Family Services worked hard over the past two years to protect the health and safety of our employees and customers, allowing us to keep our buildings open throughout the pandemic and provide in-person services to those in need. We would not have been able to do this without our incredible staff, and I am truly grateful for their commitment to our community.

I would like to thank everyone who has supported our agency this year, including community partners, service providers, public officials, and the residents of Stark County. I look forward to continuing our important work together in 2022!

Sincerely,



Deborah Forkas, M.Ed
Executive Director



Human Services

Susan Lenigar, MBA
Deputy Director
Staff: 211

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 reflects the highest recipient count from 2021 data.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

51,922 individuals received food assistance. Based on the 2020 U.S. Census estimate of 374,853, this is about 1 of every 7 people in Stark County.

Medicaid

According to the Ohio Department of Medicaid:

105,193 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.

20,929 individuals received Medicaid for the aged, blind and disabled. This number includes approximately 4,358 individuals eligible only for Medicare Premium Assistance.

84,264 individuals received MAGI Medicaid.

Ohio Works First Cash Assistance

3,019 individuals received Ohio Works First (OWF) cash assistance.

407 work-required OWF recipients were referred into the Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) between January 1 and December 31, 2021. 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.

3,174 children cared for by publicly funded child care.

It is estimated that in 2021, the four major Human Services Division programs contributed over \$1 billion to the Stark County community. Local grocers, clinics, hospitals, and retailers benefited from these services:

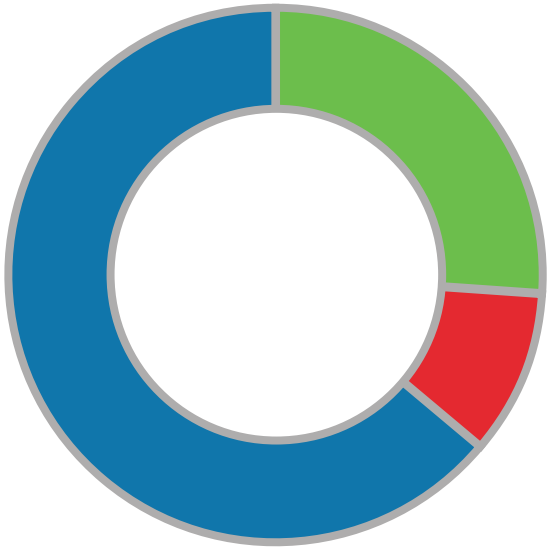
Medicaid Disbursements	\$885,922,673*
Total Food Assistance Disbursements	\$141,495,772
OWF Cash Assistance Disbursements	\$7,067,352
Child Care Assistance (approx.)	\$12,464,836

Percentage of Stark County population participating in selected public assistance programs based on an estimated population of 374,853*

Families below Poverty Level	13.2%	(1 in 7.3 people)**
Food Assistance Program	13.8%	(1 in 7.3 people)
OWF Cash Assistance	1.4%	(1 in 88 people)

*From Ohio Department of Medicaid

**From www.census.gov, April 2020 data



Wages & Benefits	\$12,621,155	64%
Program Costs	\$5,201,014	26%
Operating Expenses	\$2,073,392	10%

Children Services

Robert Myers , LISW-S

Deputy Director

Staff: 170

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 2021, 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

6510 calls to the Report Line resulted in 2,614 cases requiring assistance or intervention

Assistance

315 of the 2,614 cases resulted in basic assistance to families

Of these:

192 were calls of families in need of services

123 were calls about children who were determined to be dependent

Intervention

2,299 of the 2,614 cases required intervention, using one of the following approaches:

Traditional Response

435 (18.9%) of the 2,299 were responded to using the traditional response.

Of these calls:

- 15.0% calls reporting suspected neglect.
- 18.2% calls reporting suspected physical abuse.
- 66.0% calls reporting suspected sexual abuse.
- 0.8% 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 2021, 1864 cases (81.1% of the 2,299 cases) were responded to using the AR approach.

Ongoing Supportive Services

In an average month, 240 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.

- 121 Agency Foster Care
- 76 Purchased Foster Care
- 2 Group Home Care
- 8 Residential Placement
- 133 Kinship or Relative Home

Transitional Youth Services

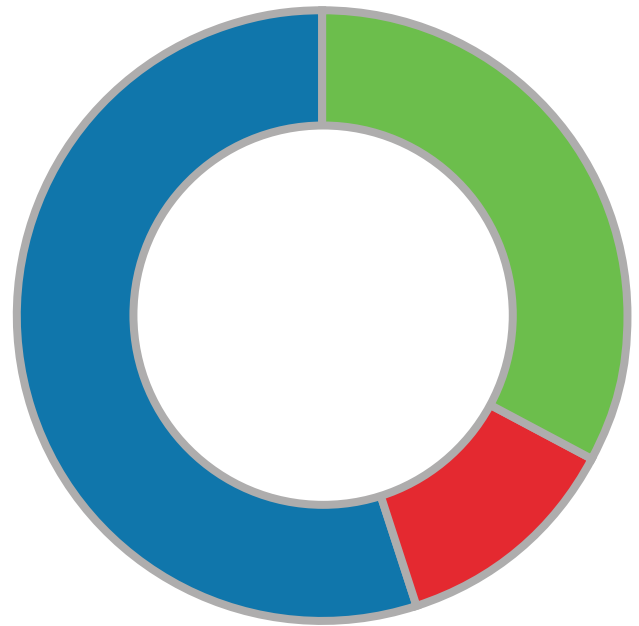
- 111 youth received independent living services
- 39 previously emancipated youth received services.

Foster Care/Adoption

- 127 licensed foster families (average per month)
- 61 finalized adoptions

Adult Protective Services

SCJFS contracted with Coleman Professional Services to provide services. In 2021, there were 580 new cases of elder abuse/neglect or exploitation.



Wages & Benefits	\$12,541,886	55%
Program Costs	\$7,672,048	33%
Operating Expenses	\$2,708,770	12%

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

- Community Health Workers for parents to reduce infant mortality thru the THRIVE Program
- Community Baby Shower for new parents in THRIVE.
- Father's Day weekend "Fishing Rodeo"
- Walk Your Child to School Day
- Parenting Time Orders
- Expungement/CQE Program
- "Day at the Akron Zoo" event

Number of Child Support Cases
28,000

Collections
\$56,565,146, and of this, \$1,655,265 was collected at payment window

Incentive Performance Categories FFY 2021	
Paternity Establishment	97.23%
Support Order Establishment	94.99%
Collections on Current Support	74.74%
Collections on Arrears	77.80%

Cost Effectiveness
\$11.25 collected for each operations dollar spent (state average: \$8.92)

Significant Statistics	
451	paternity cases scheduled for DNA testing
979	cases referred for Support Establishment
2,661	court hearings by Legal Department
50,848	phone calls received in Customer Service
5,814	customers seen in the CSEA Lobby

Stark County Child Support Receives State Award
The State Office of Child Support recognized our agency as "Most Improved Large County for Support Establishment" for finishing FFY 2021 with 94.99% of cases requiring a support order having a support order established.

BEES Federal Funding Received for Early Intervention Program

Stark County Child Support received a BEES grant (Building Evidence on Employment Strategies for Low-Income Families) for a very early intervention program to assist unemployed or underemployed non-custodial parents (NCPs) in brand new child support orders.

PJAC/New Directions in Child Support Grant

The final year of this \$2.29 million five-year Procedural Justice Informed Alternative to Contempt (PJAC) federal grant ended in September of 2021. We received approval to operate the program for an additional sixth year. The project is an alternative to civil contempt for non-custodial parents not making payments. Since October 2016, 82.33% of the participants have made support payments totaling \$4,214,246

Expungement/Certificate for Qualification of Employment (CQE) Program

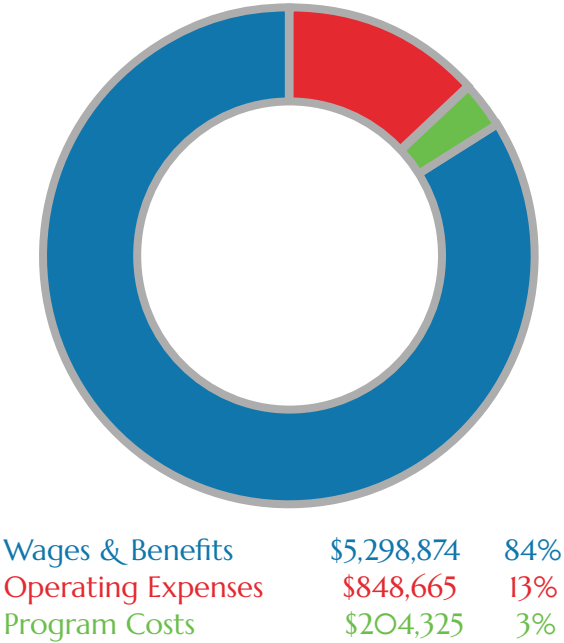
The CSEA, Community Legal Aid, and the Stark County Fatherhood Coalition collaborate on an Expungement/CQE program for parents with felony convictions who seek employment. Since services began, 175 expungements and 38 CQEs have been completed.

Parenting Time Order Program

The CSEA continued its 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.

Stark County Fatherhood Coalition Community Outreach

The CSEA is a key member of the Stark County Fatherhood Coalition, which encourages responsible fatherhood. Members recognize a parent’s emotional support of their child is equally important as their financial support. A number of in-person events, which were canceled in 2020 due to Covid -19, were held in 2021 including the “Fishing Rodeo”, “Day at the Akron Zoo”, “Community Baby Shower” with THRIVE Initiative, and “Fathers Walk Your Child to School Day”. Additionally, Facebook and Zoom were used to conduct virtual events, such as cooking and exercise classes for fathers and their children.



Agency Expenditures

Human Services Division

Wages	8,464,334
Benefits	4,156,820
Contracts	208,053
Countywide Indirect	110,431
Data Processing	5,047
FAET Participant Allowance	33,259
COVID-19 Relief	1,035,593
PRC/Auto Repair	34,044
PRC/Benefit Bridge	5,090
PRC/Job Related	23,285
PRC/Parenting Skills	171,933
PRC/SEP	46,200
PRC/Work Allowance	72,270
Reimbursements	
Special Projects/Dues	28,793
Rent/Utilities	292,625
Shared Costs	1,455,159
Supplies	21,835
TANF/CSEA Expungement	7,428
TANF Summer Youth	267,434
Transportation	
Medical/Healthcheck/PRS/SSI	3,420,262
Travel/Mileage/Education	35,667

TOTALS **\$19,895,561**

Children Services Division

Wages	8,507,509
Benefits	3,837,301
Wendy's Wonderful Kids	
Wages & Benefits	136,444
Mental Health & Recovery	
Services Wages & Benefits	60,632
Wendy's Wonderful Kids Contracts	12,421
Contracts	541,782
Shared Costs	1,361,904
Countywide Indirect	275,309
Purchased Foster Homes	2,560,281
Residential Treatment	480,719
Agency Foster Homes	1,264,147
Group Homes	187,690
Foster Children Clothing	130,180
Foster Children Medical	4,944
Adoption Services/Home Studies	25,050
Advertising/Recruitment	46,728
Bus Passes	39,750
Child Abuse Prosecution Unit	328,821
Communications	74,361
County Share Adoption Subsidy	311,902
Data Processing	19,349
Emergency Services	324,897
Foster Parent Training Stipends	22,870
Independent Living	234,251
Kinship Caregiver	155,328
Multi System	310,384
Best Practices	134,723
OHIO Start	34,907
Maintenance/Utilities	92,478
Membership Dues	3,096
Mileage	286,425
Miscellaneous	75,497
Non-Recurring Adoption	56,510
Office Supply	21,741

PASS	163,762
Primary Partner Program/PRT	2,017
Professional Liability Insurance	95,945
Public Records	36,678
Reimbursement	76,715
Rent	121,619
Service Review Committee	1,110
State Adoption Subsidy	700
Tax Settlement Fees	183,443
Travel and Training	21,285
Work Related Daycare	259,099

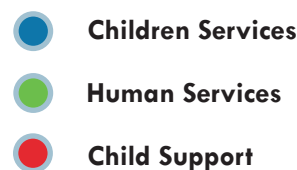
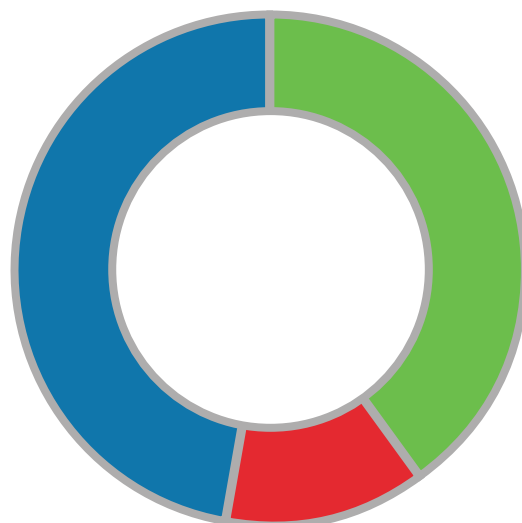
TOTALS **\$22,922,704**

Child Support Division

Wages	3,079,842
Benefits	1,496,230
BEES Program	
Wages & Benefits	134,168
New Direction Program	
Wages & Benefits	454,188
THRIVE Grant Wages & Benefits	134,445
BEES Program Contracts	11,015
New Direction Program Expenses	34,523
THRIVE Program Expenses	20,776
Countywide Indirect Costs	62,201
Data Processing	16,132
IV-D Contracts	133,682
Miscellaneous	58,647
Rent/Utilities	102,875
Shared Costs	609,202
Travel and Training	3,938

TOTALS **\$6,351,864**

2021 Agency Operating Totals by Division



Stark County Job & Family Services
2021 Total Expenditures
\$49,170,129

Stark County Job & Family Services

2021 Event Calendar

JANUARY

Fatherhood
Coalition Fitness

FEBRUARY

Fatherhood
Coalition Fitness

MARCH

National Social Work
Month

Fatherhood
Coalition Fitness

APRIL

Child Abuse Prevention
Month

Wear Blue Campaign

MAY

Foster Parent
Appreciation Month

JUNE

RUMO Graduation

Fatherhood
Coalition Facebook
Live Event

FC Fishing Rodeo

Community Baby Shower

JULY

Foster/Adoption
Informational meetings
(Remote via Zoom)

AUGUST

Child Support Awareness
Month

Foster/Adoption
Informational meetings
(Remote via Zoom)

SEPTEMBER

Community Walk for Redefining
Recovery

Father's Walk
Your Child to School Day

Fatherhood Coalition
Akron Zoo Event

OCTOBER

Fall Frolic Event
for Foster Parents

Halloween Party
at Dogwood Park

NOVEMBER

National
Adoption Month

Heart Gallery
Tour Kickoff

DECEMBER

Project KARE:
Gifts for Kids

Fatherhood Flame
Seminar

SCJFS attended community food banks from August through December.

Foster/Adoption Informational meetings (Remote via Zoom) & in person held January through November.

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, LSW-S
Deputy Director,
Children Services Division

Rob Pierson, MA
Deputy Director,
Child Support Division

County Commissioners

Richard Regula, Member

Bill Smith, President

Janet Weir-Creighton, Vice President

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.

John Petit
Chairperson

Chanda Coblentz
Vice Chair

Whitney Prather (Jan-Aug 2021)
Secretary

Deborah Forkas
SCJFS Executive Director

Jon Adland
Cynthia Burnell
Beth Butler-Turner
Raymont Johnson
Dawn Miller
Laura Moline
Evelyn Moore
Kay Port
Beverly Proctor-Donald
Gloria Sanders
Erica Wilson-Domer

Contact Information

Executive Offices

221 3rd Street SE
Canton, OH 44702

Human Services Division

221 3rd Street SE
Canton, OH 44702

Customer Service

330-451-8930

Customer Service/Application Line

1-844-640-6446

JOBS/Child Care

330-452-4661

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

