



Advocates for Ohio's Future

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Budget Solutions for a Safe, Healthy and Thriving Ohio

Targeted, smart investments in Ohio's human services—including food assistance, health care, early education, behavioral health, long-term services and supports, housing and child welfare—promote and support a productive workforce.

Advocates for Ohio's Future Values:

- **Ohio:** Ohio should be a great place for all Ohioans to live and work. Ohio's budget and public policy priorities can make Ohioans more competitive, create good jobs, increase opportunity for all Ohioans, and make Ohio's economy stronger.
- **Community:** Healthy people build strong communities. Health, human services and early education benefit all Ohioans and are fundamental building blocks of healthy, thriving communities.
- **People and Families:** When people have essential human resources – things like food, housing, health care, education, child care and transportation – all Ohioans can live better lives.
- **Participation:** Our diversity, our belief in democracy, and our efforts to find common ground make Advocates for Ohio's Future strong, credible, and durable.

AOF FY 16-17 Budget Priorities:

- **Establish person-centered work preparation and supports** to prepare Ohioans to acquire and maintain quality jobs, so they can support themselves and their families. Our goal is to establish a person-centered program to help Ohioans transition from low- wage earnings to self-sufficiency by providing the skills and supports they need to succeed in the workforce (refer to page 1).
- **Invest in programs that support working families.** Unfortunately, a job does not always mean a living. Ohio needs to promote upward mobility in the workforce and a smoother transition to self-sufficiency by incrementally raising the eligibility of child care over the next four years, starting with a raise to 144 percent of the federal poverty level in 2016, and by making the 10 percent state Earned Income Tax Credit refundable (refer to page 3).
- **Build and strengthen Ohio's direct service workforce** – the people providing care for individuals who need assistance with activities of daily living. We support better outcomes of care, improved health of the general population, more efficient use of resources, and a sustainable wage for direct service workers (refer to page 5).
- **Ensure the safety of older Ohioans in every county.** We support the allocation of \$20 million per fiscal year in the 2016-17 biennial budget for Adult Protective Services to ensure that older adults in all counties are safe from neglect, abuse and exploitation (refer to page 6).

We also support our partner organizations in these priorities:

- **Improve permanency outcomes for abused and neglected children** by increasing funding for county Public Children Services Agencies through the State Child Protection Allocation (SCPA) by \$20 million per fiscal year. This will restore funding to 2009 levels (refer to page 7).
- **Support critically important housing projects and programs** when revenues decline by creating the Ohio Housing Trust Fund Reserve, to be used in years when HTF revenues fall short of \$50 million (refer to page 8).
- **Provide healthy food for millions of Ohioans** by increasing funding for the Ohio Food Program and Agricultural Clearance Program to \$20 million per fiscal year over the 2016-17 biennial budget (refer to page 9).
- **Continue extended health care coverage** through the Ohio Medicaid Program that maintains, without barriers or cuts, an affordable, obtainable, comprehensive benefit package for low income Ohioans (refer to page 10).
- **Develop language that provides oversight, accountability, and timelines for implementation of behavioral health system reforms** to safeguard behavioral health service access and capacity, rebuild system infrastructure, and address workforce challenges (refer to page 11).



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SFY 16-17 Budget Priorities: Additional Detail

Person-Centered Work Programs

Proposal: Establish person-centered work preparation and supports to prepare Ohioans to acquire and maintain quality jobs, so they can support themselves and their families.

- The Administration proposed what they call a “person-centered work program” to focus those in the 16-24 age range to try to create better circumstances and behaviors before these young people lose hope and initiative.
- AOF recognizes that the only way out of poverty is a job. We also recognize that a job by itself is often not enough, that low-wage employment must be coupled with support services, including child care, earned income tax credit (EITC), food assistance and Medicaid, in order for workers and their families to achieve economic stability.
- Counties need to have adequate resources to maintain an acceptable ratio of case workers to clients that enables in-depth assessment and ongoing individualized case management.
- A person-centered work program will prepare Ohioans to support themselves and their families by meeting the following outcomes:
 - *Stabilize low income Ohioans.* Make sure Ohioans are able meet their basic needs, including food, housing, health care, child care, transportation, and education.
 - *Make Ohio more competitive.* Strengthen Ohio’s workforce by ensuring that working families become healthy, successful and independent in the new economy.
 - Provide in-depth assessments for new applicants and redeterminations to determine disabilities, barriers to employment, and need for social service and employment assistance.
 - Ensure that in-person assistance and informative technology (IT) training is available to help individuals meet requirements of Ohio Means Jobs and other systems.
 - Create guidelines for “conflict free” case management that separate client placement decisions from providers.
 - Create more work experience program slots for clients that are not ready for private sector employment, coupled with intensive case management for a long-term placement strategy.
 - Reinvest Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) resources into Prevention, Retention, and Contingency (PRC) and other work-support services.
 - Support work readiness certification and prior learning assessment to provide formal credits and certification for previous work and volunteer experience.
 - Allow Ohio Works Incentive Program (OWIP) participation by non-profits and workforce intermediaries in regions where workforce boards choose not to implement the program.

- *Align and integrate programs and resources to address barriers to participation in the community and the economy.* Different people face different barriers, whether it's a lack of education and skills, re-entering society as an ex-offender, or dealing with mental illness or addiction. Counties need to have connectivity with other resources and services to help individuals address these issues. Counties also need incentives to use a person-centered approach to support program participants.
 - Create a “no wrong door” referral system in every county.
 - Identify and invest in workforce intermediaries to grow capacity to support individuals in job training and education, and support successful long-term job placements.
 - Incentivize regional workforce strategies based on industry sectors.
 - Align workforce programs by integrating Ohio Works First (OWF) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) with the joint workforce plan for Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE), Perkins, and Workforce Investment Act (WIA).
 - Standardize rules for job training and job development in order to maximize resources and reduce duplication.

Work Supports/Transitional Benefits

Proposal: Invest in programs that support working families. Ohio needs to promote upward mobility in the workforce and a smoother transition to self-sufficiency by incrementally raising the eligibility of child care over the next four years, starting with a raise to 144 percent of the federal poverty level in 2016, and by making the 10 percent state Earned Income Tax Credit refundable.

- Child Care:
 - Pay in many of Ohio's largest job categories is so low that workers need assistance to cover child care.
 - At 200 percent of poverty, a single parent of two needs a 10 percent raise to avoid the child care cliff and to prevent harm to the family budget.
 - *Expand continuous eligibility for child care from 13 weeks to 12 months.* Unforeseen changes in parents' employment status should not derail a child's access to high quality child care. Nor should a parent's job search or education be hindered as a result of terminated child care. Parents can easily lose child care eligibility for no fault of their own. The low wage job market is unpredictable. Retail stores reduce staff during slow periods. Restaurants change employee hours. Temporary jobs disappear. The largest categories for case closure in public child care is due to job loss. Parents have 30 to 90 days to find employment or they lose child care services. Today's volatile job market often makes it difficult - if not impossible - for parents to find work within the allowed timeframe. Terminated child care makes it difficult for parents to continue their search for work.
 - *Permit parents to enter and re-enter the child care program at any income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL).* Ohio has the 48th lowest level of initial eligibility at 125 percent of the FPL. Families can remain in Ohio's child care program up to 200 percent of the FPL, but if there is an interruption - such as job loss - parents must start again at 125 percent of the FPL. Even if parents worked hard and managed to earn an income above 125 percent of the FPL before losing their job, they cannot consider an equal paying position if they want to qualify for child care.
 - *Develop a system that allows families to choose part- or full-day child care based on their work schedules.* Parents should not have to turn down full-time employment because of policies that limit child care to half day slots.
 - We recommend that as part of their case management, that parents enrolled in other work support programs are also made aware of subsidized child care.
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC):
 - Founded in 1975, the federal EITC is our nation's most effective antipoverty program.
 - The program has traditionally had bipartisan support and rewards work, because only families with earned income can claim the credit.
 - 963,000 Ohioans get the federal EITC, which delivers \$2.3 billion to Ohio's families and communities.
 - Ohio's EITC is currently nonrefundable. The federal credit and most state EITCs are refundable, which ensures that working poor families are rewarded for work and the refund helps them meet their basic needs.
 - A 10 percent refundable credit with no cap would help over 855,000 families with an average refund of \$226. Working poor Ohioans deserve a state EITC that is large enough to make a difference in their lives.

- Families in every Ohio county claim the federal EITC, with a bigger share of tax filers from rural counties than from urban counties claiming the credit.
- The credit helps working mothers increase work hours and earnings.
- More than 2.5 million Ohioans, including more than 1.1 million children, are in families eligible for the federal EITC, according to the Brookings Institution.
- The EITC only goes to workers. Top industries where federal EITC-eligible Ohioans work include health care (14.9 percent), retail (14.0 percent), accommodations and food service (12.9 percent), manufacturing (12.6), and administrative services (8.4 percent).
- The federal EITC was, in part, designed to eliminate some of the disproportionate impact of payroll taxes on low- and middle-income working families. Likewise, the state credit should address the disproportionate impact of sales and property taxes on Ohio's working families.

Direct Service Workforce

Proposal: Build and strengthen Ohio's direct service workforce. We support better outcomes of care, improved health of the general population, more efficient use of resources, and a sustainable wage for direct service workers.

- The harsh reality for too many workers is that a job does not always mean a living. While Ohio is in the midst of an economic recovery, over the last ten years the median family income in Ohio has declined 13 percent.
- While Ohio's families are bringing in less money, the costs to support a family – food, housing, child care, health care, education, utilities, and transportation - have gone up.
- According to the US Department of Labor, direct care jobs are the #1 (community setting) and #4 (institutional setting) jobs in demand.
- Direct care staff earn low wages, often cannot afford benefits and have high turnover.
- The average wage for direct care staff is below 100 percent of the Federal Poverty Level for a family of 3.
- Many of Ohio's direct care staff live in households receiving some form of public assistance.
- Direct care staff turnover is between 47 percent (developmental disabilities) and 61 percent (private duty home care).
- A three-pronged approach is recommended:
 - Increased wages for direct care workers, achieve an average wage of \$15.00/hour.
 - System reform that shifts the focus from activities to outcomes with savings from efficiencies reinvested in the direct care workforce.
 - Improved worker satisfaction and lower turnover rates.

Adult Protective Services

Proposal: Ensure the safety of older Ohioans. We support the allocation of \$20 million per fiscal year in the 2016-17 biennial budget for Adult Protective Services to ensure that older adults in all counties are safe from neglect, abuse and exploitation.

- The 2014-2015 state budget allocated \$500,000/year in state general revenue funds to support county APS systems. That amounted to less than \$550 to more than \$50,000 per year to each county based on a state distribution formula. As a result, availability of services are dependent primarily upon local funding.
- 39 counties lack full time APS staff.
- 46 out of 88 counties received less than \$3,000 per year in the SFY 2014-15 budget.
- Reports to APS rose by almost 60% since 1989, but state funding fell by more than 80%.
- Elder abuse is a silent epidemic: by one estimate fewer than 1 in 8 cases are reported.
- An estimated 1 in 10 elderly Americans is abused or neglected every year, often at the hands of family members, caregivers or others entrusted to protect them, according to the National Center on Elder Abuse.
- Last year in Ohio, self-neglect cases made up nearly half of the reports (6,393), followed by neglect by others (3,196), exploitation (2,132), emotional abuse (1,010), physical abuse (851) and sexual abuse (26).
- The number of reports don't show the whole problem, as victims often are unable or afraid to tell police, relatives or friends because of illness or fear of being harmed or removed from their homes.
- In 2012, more than \$14 million in Social Services Block Grant money was used to pay for elder-abuse investigations.
- Many Ohio counties have tax levies that support senior services, but few use that money to fight the mistreatment of seniors.
- The number of caseworkers available for adult protective services in the state has shrunk substantially, from 630 at its height in the early 1990s to about 250 today.
- While an increase in funding is proposed, the proposed allocation of \$30,000 per year per county is not enough to make sure that full quality APS is available to seniors in every county in Ohio.

Child Welfare

Proposal: Improve permanency outcomes for abused and neglected children by increasing funding for county Public Children Services Agencies through the State Child Protection Allocation (SCPA) by \$20 million per fiscal year.

- Ensure permanent, lifelong families and connections for abused and neglected children to reduce poverty and positively impact the federal permanency indicators.
- Restore funding lost in 2009 in the State Child Protection Allocation by \$20 million per fiscal year to county Public Children Services Agencies:
 - \$8.8 million allocated in the amount of \$100,000/county to all 88 counties as an increased base investment by the State.
 - \$11.2 million allocated to all 88 counties via the SCPA formula as an increased investment in permanency efforts for abused and neglected children.
- Pursue policy and resources for multi-system youth:
 - Create a study group to examine the issue of multi-system youth including current costs and outcomes, and to present a plan with recommendations to serve these youth more appropriately.
- Address the physical and behavioral health needs of children and families, including focusing on trauma and parental addiction, to help more families stick together.

Housing

Proposal: Support critically important housing projects and programs when revenues decline by creating the Ohio Housing Trust Fund Reserve, to be used in years when the Ohio Housing Trust Fund (OHTF) revenues fall short of \$50 million.

- House Bill 339 was passed to establish the OHTF. The OHTF was designed to support a wide range of projects to help address homelessness and support the development of quality affordable housing options around the state.
- At least half of the funds were and still are required to benefit Ohio's rural communities.
- The OHTF operated without consistent funding until 2003, when the Legislature created the trust fund fee. Collected when documents are recorded at the county recorder's office, the trust fund fee created a permanent, dedicated revenue source for the OHTF.
- Currently, the trust fund is structured so the first \$50 million collected each year goes to the OHTF and any amounts collected above that amount are retained by the state General Revenue Fund.
- In the past several years, revenues from the trust fund fees have been erratic – from a low of \$39.6 million in state fiscal year 2009 to a high of \$73 million in SFY 2005. During SFY 2013 and 2014, \$53.7 million and \$49.1 million were collected respectively.
- The statutory change included in H.B. 64 would help stabilize OHTF funding volatility by creating a Housing Trust Reserve Fund. If the amount of OHTF fees received during a year exceeds \$50 million, any additional fees up to \$15 million will be deposited into the Housing Trust Reserve Fund. Once the reserve fund reaches \$15 million, any additional OHTF fees will return to the state General Revenue Fund.

Food and Nutrition

Proposal: Provide healthy food for millions of Ohioans by increasing funding for the Ohio Food Program and Agricultural Clearance Program to \$20 million per fiscal year over the 2016-17 biennial budget.

- We support the request that the Ohio Senate support and adopt an amendment to provide an additional \$2,750,000 in each year in Amended Substitute H.B. 64, bringing the current proposed funding to \$20 million per year in both 2016 and 2017.
- The Ohio Association of Foodbanks, Ohio's largest charitable response to hunger, represents 12 Feeding America foodbanks and 3,300 member charities. Collectively our statewide network served over 2 million different Ohioans last year – more than 1 in 6 of our friends and neighbors.
- The association operates two critical food programs, the Ohio Food Program and Agricultural Clearance Program. These programs are successful public/private partnerships which benefit the state's economy by: driving purchases of agriculture and commodity foods; benefiting farmers, who have an outlet for products from their farms that might otherwise go unused; and benefiting hungry Ohioans, who might otherwise not have access to high-quality, wholesome foods grown or raised right here in our state. The state funding provided for foodbanks from the state of Ohio are spent directly on food and related purchases, many paid directly to Ohio farmers.
- The Ohio Food Program and Agricultural Clearance Program prevents waste, reduces loss for farmers and growers, increases and sustains employment in Ohio, and represents the most nutritious food in foodbank warehouses. This investment will save the State millions in short- and long-term health expenditures, increasing human capital and our ability to meet the challenge of a global economy.
- This request for \$20 million a year represents an individual allocation of less than \$0.83 per person, per month served through the foodbank network, but it would deliver more than 56 million nutritious meals per year to those in need. The ability of the Ohio Association of Foodbanks to secure and ship food in bulk and their partnerships with farmers and food producers positions them to achieve dramatic cost-effectiveness in healthy food purchases.
- The Governor's executive budget HB 64 as-introduced provided \$14.5 million per year in support to the Ohio Association of Foodbanks. This represents flat funding as contained in fiscal years 2014 and 2015 budget.
- The Ohio House of Representatives provided its support for critical hunger relief by accepting an amendment that provides an additional \$2,750,000 in each year in Amended Substitute H.B. 64, bringing the current proposed funding to \$17.25 million per year in both 2016 and 2017.

Medicaid

Proposal: Continue extended health care coverage through the Ohio Medicaid Program that maintains, without barriers or cuts, an affordable, obtainable, comprehensive benefit package for low income Ohioans.

- Ohio's Medicaid program is a key work support. A healthy workforce is a productive workforce.
- Working women, whose income may fluctuate due to seasonal demand, temporary jobs, plant closure, and other churning in the low-wage labor market, may move between Medicaid and the private insurance Marketplace. It can take up to a month and a half to switch from Medicaid to the Marketplace. A pregnant woman would lose access to prenatal care, putting increasing the risk of premature birth and infant mortality.
- Pregnant women up to 200 percent of the FPL need Medicaid coverage, because:
 - Ohio has one of the worst infant mortality rates in the nation.
 - Prenatal care reduces premature births and poor birth outcomes, including infant death.
 - Prenatal care costs a fraction of the cost of care for premature babies who spend months in neonatal intensive care units and may suffer from a lifetime of disabilities.
 - High-risk, low-income women on Medicaid can receive intensive care coordination to improve birth outcomes.
 - Pregnancy does not trigger a special enrollment period that would allow an uninsured woman to enroll in the Marketplace outside the brief annual Open Enrollment period.
 - Some low-income women are not eligible for Marketplace subsidies because of the so-called "Family Glitch," if their husband receives employer coverage and has access to family coverage, even if only the employer subsidizes only the employee's share and the family coverage is unaffordable.
 - Not all women are aware that affordable coverage is available through the Marketplace.
- Family Planning Waiver:
 - Family planning allows safe spacing of pregnancies, which improve birth outcomes.
- Breast and Cervical Cancer Program:
 - Now covering 130 women being treated for breast and cervical cancer.
 - Without this program, these women would battle cancer without health insurance – putting them at risk for far worst outcomes.

Behavioral Health

Proposal: Develop language that provides oversight, accountability, and timelines for implementation of behavioral health system reforms to safeguard behavioral health service access and capacity, rebuild system infrastructure, and address workforce challenges.

- The SFY 16-17 budget proposes a modernized and expanded array of behavioral health services; continued investment in recovery supports, including housing, employment, and prevention; and a partnership between Ohio Mental Health and Addition Services (MHAS) and Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) to improve behavioral health services in the criminal justice system, all of which offers a path for rebuilding Ohio's behavioral health system.
- The proposed MHAS budget allocations continue an approach of targeted investments to fill gaps in service delivery, including approximately \$48.7 million in new or re-purposed funds for treatment and recovery supports. These resources combined with \$58 million in Medicaid covered treatment services available from expansion are a significant investment.
- Successful implementation is likely to require additional resources to address infrastructure, service capacity, and workforce challenges that have existed for years and may be challenging in a budget neutral environment.
- If additional resources are made available, we recommend they be allocated to MHAS line item 336421, Continuum of Care Services.