

The Road To Ohio's Recovery

July 2020

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services has played a central role in supporting Ohioans during one of the most difficult periods in our history, and we will continue to support employers, employees and families as our state's economy strengthens.

DELIVERING NEW FEDERAL PROGRAMS

One of three new federal programs under the CARES Act was Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). This program provides up to 39 weeks of benefits to individuals who have been partially or totally unemployed due to COVID-19, including many who historically have not qualified for unemployment benefits, such as self-employed workers, 1099 tax filers and those who lack sufficient work history. To administer the PUA program, ODJFS engaged Deloitte Consulting to develop and launch a new system in a record four weeks. So far, we have paid more than \$3.8 billion to more than 418,000 PUA claimants. The CARES Act also authorized a new program for the distribution of \$600 weekly payments, in addition to unemployment benefits.

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MORE THAN

\$3.8
BILLION

TO MORE THAN
418,000
PUA
CLAIMANTS

PROVIDING ESSENTIAL RESOURCES TO FAMILIES

Just as the need for unemployment benefits has skyrocketed, the economic challenges we now face have greatly impacted Ohio families. ODJFS is responsible for managing a number of programs that directly impact the lives of Ohio's families and children. These include foster care and adoption, child care, job training and employment services, food assistance, cash assistance, adult protective services and child support. Following are highlights of some recent accomplishments.

Ensuring safe, effective child care

Helping Ohioans return to work means helping them feel confident that their children are safe and well cared for during the day. Gov. DeWine made it a priority to ensure that professionals who were essential to protecting the public were able to access quality child care while hard at work protecting and caring for Ohioans.

From March through May, ODJFS licensed more than 2,400 pandemic child care programs serving more than 24,000 children of essential workers. In anticipation of child care programs reopening on May 31, ODJFS created two Post-Pandemic Provider Workgroups and developed a webinar training so providers could be informed of federal health and safety recommendations.

Ohio is using more than \$60 million in federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding to provide reopening grants to Ohio child care providers, including family child care programs, child care centers, and both publicly funded and private providers. We also posted a new resource on our website for families, titled "What Parents Should Know About Sending Children Back to Child Care." In addition, Ohio will fund a research project to study best practices for controlling the spread of COVID-19 in child care settings. Information gathered from the study will continue to inform child care regulations moving forward.

Increasing access to food

ODJFS received federal approval to operate a Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program, which is allowing us to provide \$254.5 million in food assistance to approximately 850,000 Ohio children who receive free or reduced-price meals through the National School Lunch Program.



In addition:

- We received federal approval to allow Ohioans who are eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to use their Ohio Direction cards to purchase food online through Walmart and Amazon and have groceries delivered, if they choose.
- Many other stores - including Giant Eagle and many Kroger stores - allow SNAP recipients to order groceries online and pay in the stores or at curbside.
- Four times in response to federal action during the pandemic, we issued mass payments totaling approximately \$80 million to as many as 480,000 SNAP-eligible households.
- We established streamlined processes that enable safe distancing and prepackaged food for pick up at the local food banks.

FROM MARCH
THROUGH MAY
ODJFS LICENSED
MORE THAN

2,400

**PANDEMIC
CHILD CARE
PROGRAMS**

SERVING
MORE THAN

24,000

CHILDREN

**PANDEMIC
ELECTRONIC
BENEFIT
TRANSFER**
PROGRAM
PROVIDES

\$254.5
MILLION

IN FOOD
ASSISTANCE TO

850,000
**OHIO
CHILDREN**

Serving children at risk

Teachers are mandatory child abuse and neglect reporters. ODJFS and the Ohio Department of Education provided awareness resources for teachers to utilize during remote learning. ODJFS is implementing Gov. DeWine's executive order to continue supporting young people emancipating from foster care who are not ready to transition because of the pandemic. The order also allows public children services agencies to work with residential agencies to establish temporary residential facilities for children in areas with capacity needs specific to the pandemic.

Thank you for partnering with us to ensure that Ohioans receive the help they need during this time. We look forward to working in tandem with you, our business partners. Rest assured, our team will do everything possible to serve the pressing needs of Ohio businesses as they restart their operations.

With gratitude,



Kimberly Hall
Director, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

