

Athens County Job and Family Services



2011 - 2012 Annual Report



To The Athens Community:

The economy has been hard on Athens County. The nation's and region's economic problems have made an already challenging situation even worse. Jobs and needed services have been lost. People are hurting.

In the face of these hardships, I continue to be amazed at the resilience of spirit and compassion of our fellow citizens. Family members and neighbors are pulling together to help each other. Agencies like ours have had to work even harder to deal with the rising community needs and dwindling resources.

These problems are not unique to Athens County, but I am becoming increasingly aware that the commitment to care for each other may be. Thank you, Athens County, for your continued compassion and support!

Jack Frech

Director of the Athens County Department of Job and Family Services

**Athens County Job and Family Services is led by the Athens County Commissioners:
Lenny Eliason, Larry Payne, Mark Sullivan**

and

Athens County Job and Family Services Director Jack Frech

(740) 797-2523 1-800-762-3775

<http://jfs.athenscountygovernment.com>



Athens County

Life is difficult for many of the 64,769 residents of Athens County. More than 30% of the residents live at or below the poverty level, which means that a family of four is living on an annual income of at or below \$23,050, or an individual is living on an annual income of at or below \$11,070.

The poverty rate here is more than twice as high as the state average, which is 14.2%.

In addition, nearly 18% of all Athens County residents live at or below 50% of the poverty level, which is an annual income of just \$11,525 for a family of four, or \$5,535 for an individual.

Currently, nearly 21% of all Athens County residents are enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) each month through our agency. Formerly known as Food Stamps, SNAP is not designed to provide enough food to feed a family for a month, but instead provides about 3/4 of the food that most families need in a month. In Athens County, families and individuals receive an average of \$267 per month in Food Assistance benefits. Benefit levels vary depending on how many people are in a household.

Only around 3% of all Athens County residents receive cash assistance through the Ohio Works First (OWF) program due to its stringent eligibility guidelines and requirements. A family with three eligible recipients can receive up to \$450 per month in cash assistance, and the benefit levels change depending on how many eligible recipients live in a household.

In Ohio, approximately 60% of all welfare recipients are children who do not live with their parents. These are often children living with grandparents, although many live with other relatives.

By comparison, in Athens County, just over 27% of all welfare recipients are children who are living with grandparents or other relatives.

Also, in Ohio, just over 8% of all OWF cases involve two-parent households. In Athens County, just over 31% of all OWF cases involve two-parent households.

Due to the nation's and region's economic problems in recent years, our agency has seen a sharp increase in the number of people who apply for and receive services from our agency. At the same time, budget cuts have forced large decreases in our staff, the elimination of several programs and the scaling back of several other programs.

This has led to increased wait times for Athens County residents who need assistance with their food, medical or financial needs, as well as clients who need assistance with their child support cases.

Our agency has 85 staff members who work out of four buildings. We receive an average of 12,324 calls and 3,858 visits to our offices each month. Our employees have very high caseloads, and they work very hard to provide assistance and help to local families and individuals in need.



Our Budget

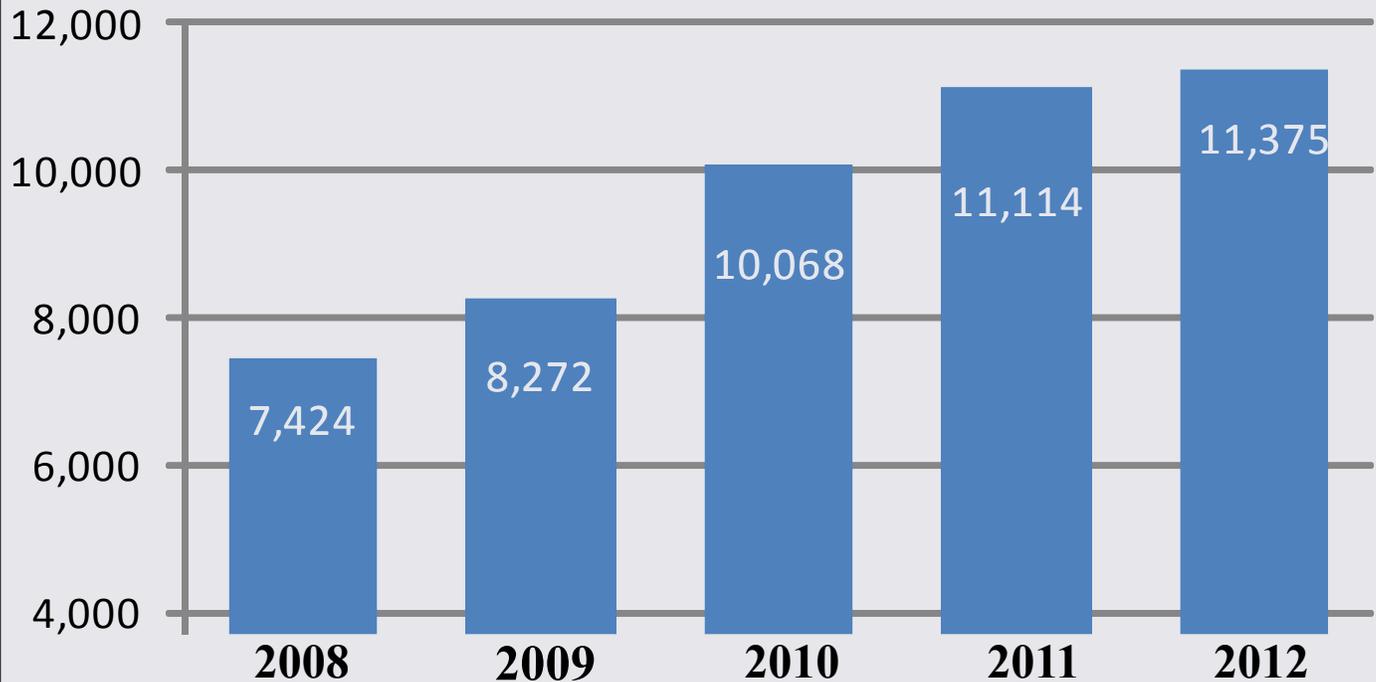
Our budget is a made up of a mix of local, state and federal funds used for a wide variety of programs designed to help families and individuals in need. The largest amount of funding is spent on the Medicaid program.

Ohio Works First	\$3,759,418.00
Disability cash assistance (aged, blind and disabled)	\$121,524.46
Prevention, Retention and Contingency program	\$236,529.01
Food Assistance program	\$17,834,955.00
Medicaid	\$90,571,021.79
Contract Services	\$1,135,148.46
Administrative costs	\$1,775,479.25
Direct services	\$5,157,728.52
Child support enforcement	\$2,366,245.19
Total spent in Fiscal Year 2012	\$122,958,049.68

Note: The Contract Services portion of the budget goes toward funding for several important programs and services, including:

- Transportation services to assist Medicaid clients traveling to and from doctors appointments and social service appointments.
- The summer youth employment program administered by the Hocking-Athens-Perry Community Action Program (HAPCAP).
- A Work Experience Program coordinated by HAPCAP to provide work and job training opportunities for public assistance recipients in Athens County.

Average Number of Food Assistance Recipients per month in Athens County in the last five years



Our Programs

Ohio Works First (OWF) – An average of 1,996 recipients per month

OWF is Ohio's cash assistance program. The program is only available to families with dependent children, and they can only receive it for a total of 36 months. The major goal of the program, which has work requirements, is to help participants move toward employment. The maximum amount that a family of two can receive in cash assistance each month is \$368. The maximum monthly allotment for a family of four is \$555. Our number of cases stayed relatively stable compared to the previous year.

Food Assistance Program – An average of 11,375 recipients per month

Ohio's Food Assistance is part of the federal government's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Formerly known as Food Stamps, this program provides benefits that can be used to purchase food or food products intended for human consumption. In Ohio, the benefits are issued through the Ohio Direction Card, an electronic benefits card. Benefit levels vary depending on the number of people in a household, and recipients must meet certain work requirements. The average monthly benefit per household in Athens County is \$267. The average number of Athens County residents receiving Food Assistance each month increased by 261 compared to the previous year. The number of Athens County residents relying on Food Assistance has been increasing steadily in recent years.

Medicaid – 12,225 clients receive Medicaid coverage each month

The Medicaid program provides health care coverage for certain low-income and medically vulnerable individuals. Medicaid programs include coverage for families, children and pregnant women; aged, blind and disabled individuals; women with breast/cervical cancer; and individuals in institutional care. The average number of recipients per month increased by 800 compared to the previous year.



Our Programs

Child Support Enforcement - Collected \$6,298,440 in support payments

The program's goal is to ensure that all children are supported financially by both parents. Services provided include: location of non-custodial parents; paternity establishment; establishment and modification of child support orders; collection of child support payments and/or alimony; and enforcement of child support orders, medical support orders and alimony. The program collects support payments for more than 5,500 children each month.

Income Maintenance and Social Program Coordinator (SPC) Counseling - Helped 916 clients gain employment

Income Maintenance employees and SPCs help clients with the different public assistance programs that our agency offers. The SPCs also assess clients to get them into work, education and job training programs designed to help them become self-sufficient. During the last year, 916 clients reported gaining employment.

Adult Protective Services – Took on 111 new cases this year

Referrals for this program are taken from anyone having a reasonable cause to believe an individual who is age 60 or older is being abused, neglected or exploited. The intent of the program is to assist Athens County adults who are in danger of harm, unable to protect themselves and have no one else who is able to assist them. This program continues to see an increase in the need for assistance.

Prevention, Retention and Contingency (PRC) Program – Provided \$236,529

in assistance The PRC program provides emergency and short-term assistance for families with dependent children or a pregnant woman in the household. The need should be emergent, unforeseeable, and unavoidable.



Our Programs

Child Care Assistance – 225 Athens County children served by certified child care providers each month

This program provides assistance to help Athens County parents/guardians who are working or in school pay for child care with a certified provider.

Emergency Food Line – Distributed 5,200 food boxes during the year

The Food Line is responsible for screening telephone requests, determining eligibility, maintaining records and directing those in need to a local food distribution site. The number of food boxes distributed by our agency increased by more than 350 over last year. Over the last two years, the number has increased by more than 1,150. The food pantries we work with report that they are seeing more people coming in for food every month.

Disability Assistance – Average of 215 recipients each month

This program provides a very small and time-limited amount of cash and/or medical assistance to disabled individuals who meet income requirements, do not have more than \$1,000 in resources, and are not eligible for other assistance programs. The maximum monthly benefit is \$115 for individuals and \$159 for households with two people. The Disability Assistance program provided \$121,524 in assistance during the last year.



Our Programs

Healthchek – 6,433 exams completed during the year

Prevention and treatment services offered through the Medicaid program for children up to the age of 19. The goal of the Healthchek program is to help children to become healthy and stay healthy.

County Medical Services (CMS) – Completed 1,544 referrals and 327 approvals for disability assistance

This program provides limited medical benefits for clients who are waiting on disability determination from the Social Security Administration and have been approved by state reviewers for this disability program.

Homemaker Home Health Aide Program – Conducted an average of 175 home visits per month

This program provides homemaker and home health aide services to clients who are 60 years of age or older.

Transportation Services – 26,242 one-way transports made by staff or contract; 20,328 gas vouchers issued

Transportation is available to and from medical appointments and social service agencies for recipients of Medicaid or Title XX (over age 60 and income eligible). Vouchers to cover gas expenses and bus tickets are also available for medical appointments. The gas vouchers that were issued equaled a total value of \$258,797.82.

Job Fair - The Work Station worked with the One-Stop agencies from Meigs and Perry counties to hold a regional job fair at the Athens Community Center in the spring. Nearly 400 area residents attended the Job Fair and spoke with employers from the around region about job opportunities. Several of the employers were hiring, and a large number of people who attended the Job Fair reported to us that they found work through the contacts they made at the event.



Our Programs

Employment Services at The Work Station – Assisted 1,770 clients, visited 267 employers and helped at least 240 Athens County residents become employed

Our Employment Counselors assisted 1,770 individuals with their resumes and/or their job searches in the last year. The counselors meet with area residents individually and in group settings, and also update a Jobs Board that anyone can look at during regular business hours to search for work. During the year, 240 of the individuals who received assistance with their job searches reported that they found work. Others may have also found work but did not report it. The employment counselors and Work Station Director also meet regularly with local employers to discuss the job market and their employment needs.

Workforce Investment Act (WIA): Adult and Dislocated Workers – Assisted an average of 103 people per month

This program provides Athens County residents with employment and training opportunities to help them obtain a job or find a better job. Services include resume preparation, job search assistance, job placement assistance, initial assessments, and information on community services and programs. Due to limited funding, this program currently has a waiting list for Athens County residents to get into it.

Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth Services – Assisted an average of 62 people per month

This program provides employment and training opportunities for low-income Athens County residents between the ages of 14-21. Enrollment is also limited in this program due to funding constraints.



Our Programs

Adult and Basic Literacy Education (ABLE) program – Helped 49 students earn their GEDs

This program provides educational programs to adults who want to earn their GEDs. Educational services are offered at The Work Station and Tri-County Career Center. The ABLE program holds a graduation ceremony each spring for its graduates.

Voter registrations – 889 Athens County residents registered to vote

This includes 499 new registrations and 390 address changes for registered voters.

Athens County Reentry Task Force – Our agency helped to start this community coalition, which meets monthly and is dedicated to assisting Athens County residents as they return from jail or prison. The goal of the task force is to reduce recidivism and help the community. In addition, our agency has one staff member who is working full-time on reentry issues and assisting area residents who are returning from prison or who have previously returned from prison.

Workshops - The Work Station holds free workshops on a wide range of topics of interest to Athens County residents. Some of the workshops are targeted toward specific audiences such as ex-offenders, veterans, and grandparents raising their grandchildren, while others are beneficial to all area residents.

Citizen Circle - The Work Station hosts the monthly Citizen Circle meetings, which are held to provide support for ex-offenders. Representatives of several community organizations attend the Citizen Circle meetings to talk with ex-offenders about the challenges they are facing and to see how they can provide assistance.

Comments from our clients

- “After losing my job and exhausting my unemployment benefits, I have been unable to find a job. My wife had to retire early because of health issues from her job, where we got our insurance benefits. So at the age of 61, we have to depend on my father-in-law for food and shelter. We have no insurance to cover some pretty serious health issues. We both do without medications we need because we can’t afford to buy it. So we have no income, no insurance and maybe no food. We aren’t old enough to receive Social Security or Medicare, so what happens to us now?”
- “I don’t have any medical insurance. I need surgery to have a tumor removed from my stomach.”
- “We always run out of food at the end of the month. Food prices are way too high now-a-days.”
- “My husband and I do not qualify for Medicaid. My husband has a full-time job, but it is barely enough to cover utility bills, mortgage, property taxes and household expenses. Now that gas prices are so high, we cannot afford car repairs and normal maintenance. My husband and I are both in poor health and cannot afford the medications, procedures and surgeries that would ease some of our pain.”
- “My husband has a broken back and other health problems. He has a lot of doctors’ appointments and takes a ton of meds. We have a broken down truck and three children, 17, 15 and 12 still at home. I need to be at home to care for my husband.”
- “I’m a single parent to three children who are all in school. My kids’ father is currently not paying child support. I do work, but I am still in need of the help I get through Job and Family Services when it comes to my medical for myself and my kids, as well as the food assistance. I wish it was so much easier to make an absent parent, no matter where they live, pay child support. I work 6 days out of 7 just to be able to pay my bills. Now, with the rise of gas prices, that adds on to my monthly bills. I try my hardest to make sure my kids are healthy.”
- “Well first I had a good job, but when they found out I had a felony, the job ended. I got my felony expunged, but now it’s hard to find a job. I’ve got 2 kids to take care of and no money to pay bills. I need cash assistance and am still looking for work full time. I am willing to work.”
- “I fractured my leg, ripped my tendons, which caused my job loss. Now my three children and I are homeless with no income to sustain a living.”
- “I am currently receiving Ohio Works First. I am staying with family members because my income isn’t enough to pay the rent and all the utilities. There’s me, my husband and my two children. I believe the OWF should be raised at least so you could pay bills and your rent. The Food Stamps I believe should go a little higher, due to if you need something at the end of the month you can’t get it, cause when you went to the grocery store you spent your Food Stamps.”

Contact us:

County Home Building

State Route 13, Chauncey

Family Services

(740) 797-2523 or 1-800-762-3775

Child Support

(740) 593-5046 or 1-800-436-8933

Denver White Building

184 N. Lancaster St., Athens

(740) 592-4477 or 1-800-338-4484

The Work Station

70 North Plains Road, The Plains

(740) 797-1405 or 1-877-351-0405

Administrative Office

Connett Road, The Plains

(740) 797-2523 or 1-800-762-3775

Athens County Job and Family Services Mailing Address:

184 N. Lancaster St.

Athens, Ohio 45701

(740) 797-2523

1-800-762-3775



E-mail: jfs@athenscountygovernment.com

Website: jfs.athenscountygovernment.com

Blog: athensjfs.blogspot.com

Facebook: Athens County Job and Family Services

Twitter: Athens County JFS

For additional information on our programs; publications and reports; additional statistics; data and information on poverty and poverty-related issues, visit our website, jfs.athenscountygovernment.com, or contact our Community Relations Office at (740) 677- 4258 or 1-800-762-3775.

Athens County Job and Family Services is an equal opportunity employer and service provider.

(11/12)