



LCDJFS E-Newsletter

Fall 2010

A newsletter from the Lorain County Department of Job & Family Services

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Online Self Service Web Application

By **Natalio Rodriquez**
Program Administrator

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services is currently developing an ODJFS Self Service Web Application. Implementation is planned for mid November. This web application will permit applicants to complete and submit a Job & Family Service Application for Benefits electronically. It will also provide current recipients the ability to electronically report changes on their active case. ODJFS has been working on the project for nearly a year and is currently in the testing phase.

Once the new web application goes live, potential applicants can apply and current recipients can report changes at <https://ODJFSbenefits.ohio.gov>. These applications and reported changes will be delivered through the State's E-Gateway system. Counties will receive the information in real time and be able to review and copy the information into our CRIS-E system.

This self service web application will be a great benefit to those who cannot come to the office, due to many different reasons, and for those who find the local CDJFS telephone lines busy. For those people who do not have access to a computer at home, there are places in the county who provide free access to computers, such as, LCCC, the public libraries and various social service agencies.

TANF Subsidized Summer Employment Program for Youth

By **Natalio Rodriquez**
Program Administrator

A summer employment program for low-income youth was offered in Lorain County by the Jobs and Family Services Department. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services received the funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Emergency Contingency Fund for this employment program.

LCDJFS contracted with the Lorain County Workforce Development Agency to operate the program. WDA handled the application and interview process. LCDJFS determine TANF eligibility of the applicants. WDA arranged the job sites, placements and monitoring of the participants.

A total of 181 youth, ages 16 – 24 were hired with most starting employment on June 14, 2010. There were 31 employers who participated. All the employees needed to provide was supervision and handle the time sheets. The payroll was handled and paid through WDA.

The program ended on August 27, 2010. Since all of these summer workers had some connection to LCDJFS, we heard a few success stories. A few of our older youth did such good jobs with their employer sites, they were offered permanent employment.



Investigations/Claims Processing

By David Schramm
Investigation Supervisor

Overpayments can occur in all public assistance programs and when they do, it is up to the investigations/claims processing unit to process collection on them.

There are three types of over issuance of benefits the agency is required by law to recoup, agency error, inadvertent household error, and intentional program violations.

Agency error or *AE* is obviously when an error is made by the agency in processing a case causing an over issuance of benefits. Although this error is not the fault of the assistance group, collection, by law, must be pursued.

Inadvertent house hold error or *IHE*, is an overpayment of benefits caused by action or inaction of a household to accurately report, as required by law, their circumstances, causing an overissuance of benefits. This over issuance of benefits is not considered criminal but rather a mistake by the household reporting timely changes in there household circumstances.

Intentional program violations or *IPV*'s are an overissuance of benefits caused by the household's willful or intentional with holding of information that would knowingly cause an negative change in a households benefits. These actions can be considered criminal. Actions taken by the agency in an effort to collect on these overpayments range from pursuing an administrative disqualification hearing to pursuing legal action thru the court of common pleas.



Payments are received on claims either by cash payment, recoupment of like benefits or by withholding federal and state tax returns via *STOP* (state tax offset) and or *TOP* (federal tax offset). Repayment of claims from tax offset is only done on claims that are delinquent in payment of 30 days or more.

Often times we receive “**tax payer**” complaints. This is when a member of the community offers information regarding a case, where they feel the person is frauding. The informants name is kept confidential. Pertinent information is gathered which can lead to an investigation. Many reports are to inform us of both parents living in the home, unreported jobs, purchases of luxury items, selling of food stamp cards for cash, etc.... The more detailed the complaint the easier it is for us to investigate. Cases where benefits of \$5,000 or more are found to be issued by frauding the system are sent to the prosecutor's office. Recently we have had 2 convictions, and are working on several more. Investigation and documentation of these cases can take several months that could eventually result in a conviction. To report potential fraud, call our fraud line at 440-284-4268. Identity of the caller is kept strictly confidential.

Lorain County Job and Family Services investigations/claims processing unit on average processes 2,000 claims per year totaling in excess of \$2,000,000.00 in overpayments.

2010 Amnesty Program

By Ann Eckstein, Child Support Administrator

During the month of September, 2010, CSEA conducted an Amnesty Program to allow child support obligors who had their driver's licenses suspended for non-payment of support to regain driving privileges. The price was one month's worth of child support and, if at all possible, information regarding new employment. We collected also \$90,000.00 as a result of the program.

The auditors hired by the county made two audit findings against CSEA. However, we are happy to report, both were incorrect.



State Hearings

By David Schramm, Investigation Supervisor

State hearings are a process that allows recipients to oppose the actions or lack of action taken by the agency regarding their benefits.

Upon approval, denial, or change in benefits a letter notifying individuals the action taken on the case is issued. If there is a disagreement with the action taken on the case the individual is encouraged to contact the agency for an explanation, if at that time they disagree with the action they may ask for a county conference or state hearing. This may be done by completing the state hearing request on the letter they received or by calling the agency.

Hearings are usually scheduled within 30-60 days after the request date. Majority of hearings are conducted at our local office, however if requested prior to the hearing date the hearing may be conducted over the phone. During the state hearing, the agency and the head of the case, or their authorized representative testifies the facts of the case. Evidence may be submitted to the hearing officer by both sides to assist in making the decision. Decisions are rendered within 70 days, usually less. Both the county and the individual are sent a copy of the decision. If it was found that the county needs to follow up with the case or make corrections it must be initiated within 15 days of the decision and completed no later than 90 days.

If the individual is in disagreement with the hearing officer they may ask for an administrative appeal. The decision rendered by the administrative appeal is final.

As an agency, Lorain County Job and Family Services approximately 1,600 hearing requests per year. Majority of these requests are resolved by county conferences. Our Quality Specialist reviews the case, contacts the individual explains the decision and clears up any misunderstandings or mistakes on the case. If there is still disagreement regarding the case, the state hearing is conducted.

Contact LCDJFS

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Hours of Operation:
7:30-4:15 Mon, Wed, Thurs, Fri
7:30-6:30 Tue

