Cuyahoga County Employment & Family Services
and Cuyahoga Support Enforcement Agency

Report to The Community
January Through December 2011
Mission

To promote economic self-sufficiency and personal responsibility for families by providing a broad range of quality services
Message from the Interim Directors

2011 was a momentous year for CSEA and EFS as both groups embarked on a journey toward a new and merged organization. We took two fine public service agencies and began constructing one organization with the goals of greater cost-efficiency and improved customer service. It’s sort of like taking 1 plus 1 and reaching for a sum of 3.

We welcomed the Cuyahoga County Fatherhood Program as it joined CSEA this year. The program encourages fathers to take financial responsibility for their children and promotes strong family relationships. Fathers who are engaged with their children are more likely to fulfill their family obligations. The seventh annual Fatherhood Conference took place in June with over 500 participants.

During Child Support Awareness Month (August), we offered a driver’s license amnesty program and presented our annual StreetFest celebration for families and children, with the displays and assistance of over forty community agencies.

Improvements to customer service were a strong focus this year, with the creation of secure on-line form submissions, production of YouTube educational videos, a lobby kiosk, and the expansion of on-line chat technology. Our outreach program continued its high school and community engagements. And, we continued to explore case management strategies to maximize support collections.

Ohio child support programs serve over one million children, more than any other government program, except public education, and these programs are very cost-effective in collecting $6.57 ($7.45 in Cuyahoga) for every $1 spent. In single-parent households, child support is a significant source of income.

EFS focused on several improvements to services. High capacity and high quality customer service options made it easier for customers to access benefits. Community Engagement with our partners throughout the County, which enabled EFS to extend its reach, provide resources and serve many more families. Green Operations (Automation) through the E-Gateway online application and the OnBase Scanning System. Operations have been made more efficient through the Electronic Child Care Information System for caretakers and parents.
One example of EFS improvement to our service delivery model was in partnership with the State, customers gained access to apply for benefits, report changes, maintain eligibility, and look up case status. This was made available to customers through the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services E-Gateway on-line application. This can be done anywhere that a customer has access to the internet. EFS created easy access to benefits applications through dedicated computer terminals in each of the five Neighborhood Family Service Centers (NFSC’s). The terminal is connected to a wireless network; applications are then processed through the State’s eGateway system. It is no longer required to meet with a caseworker.

Also in 2011, the State established a waiver of the face to face interview requirement for Food Assistance benefits. Families applying for benefit assistance as well as reapplying for benefits can make an appointment for an in-person interview or a telephone interview. With the on-line application and the telephone interview, new benefit applicants can complete the entire eligibility process without ever coming in to the Neighborhood Family Service Center office.

Another improvement in the EFS service delivery model was the OnBase Scanning System. There are self-scanning stations conveniently located at three of the NFSCs which allow families to scan their documents without having to make an appointment with a caseworker.

In June 2011, EFS converted to the State’s Electronic Child Care Information System. The system captures application information, determines childcare eligibility, tracks authorization information, and supports case updates and redeterminations. The new system requires caretakers to record attendance using a swipe card to check children in and out of care. Swipe cards were mailed to all caretakers/parents in December.

In August 2011, the State of Ohio was notified that it did not meet the federal mandated 50% participation rate for families in receipt of cash assistance. As a result, the state is facing a multi-million dollar sanction, and was required to construct and implement a correction active plan. Each county was required to submit their own compliance plan to the state. Cuyahoga County’s plan for SFY2012 was submitted to the state in November of 2011, included; a revision of strategies, service delivery model changes, and specialized work processes designed to support Cuyahoga’s efforts to meet the mandated 50% All Family and 90% Two Parent rates in 2012.
EFS Benefits Programs

Individuals in Receipt of Medicaid

- Children in Receipt of Medicaid: 37%
- Adults in Receipt of Medicaid: 60%
- Unknown: 3%

Households in Receipt of Food Assistance

- Cleveland: 60%
- Suburbs: 37%
- Unknown: 3%

Children in Receipt of Subsidized Child Care Benefits

- 2008: 19,514
- 2009: 18,616
- 2010: 18,651
- 2011: 17,033
Ohio Works First (OWF) Caseload

PRC Utilization by Category
PRC for 2011 2,214,586.02

Source: MIS PRC reports

Contingency 1,727,275.06
Diversion 137,953.83
Emergency 75,068.89
Prevention 162,714.26
Retention 111,573.98

PRC for 2011
2,214,586.02

Source: MIS PRC reports
The Earned Income Tax Credit EITC

Cuyahoga County EITC Coalition Free Income Tax Preparation Results

Customer Satisfaction at EFS in 2011

In order to measure and improve the quality of service provided to our customers, (EFS) hired an outside vendor to conduct a satisfaction survey via telephone, among a random sample of customers who had a reapplication process with their caseworker, across each Neighborhood Family Service Center.

Fifty interviews per center were completed quarterly, for an annual total of 1,400 surveys. The survey reported data on key areas affecting customers’ overall experience at 81.9%. Their level of satisfaction with front door staff performance was 91%, caseworker overall satisfaction was 90.7% and customer relations specialists satisfaction was 90.2%. Satisfaction with telephone access to caseworkers was 76.6% and leaves room for improvement. The EFS website was highly rated for helpfulness at 89.9%
Community Education and Outreach

- The Speakers Bureau conducts education and outreach sessions informing the community about Medicaid, Food Benefits, Child Care and other EFS programs. In 2011, 56 presentations were completed by EFS, targeting communities who had the greatest increase in need of family supports due to the economy. CSEA conducted 90 presentations in 2011.

- The Kids Health Mobile (KHM) is a community outreach van that goes into the neighborhoods to health fairs, festivals and events distributing information and materials to residents in need. In 2011, KHM staff were at 82 events, serving over 10,000 residents.

- EFS is part of the Cuyahoga Earned Income Tax Coalition (EITC), assisting customers with federal income tax preparation, and facilitating education on the EITC availability for eligible families; a special tax benefit for working people with low or moderate incomes. For every dollar spent operating the Coalition, $26 flows into the local economy.

- Under the National Voter Registration Act, EFS provides voter registration services to all individuals who visit an NFSC to apply for assistance, re-certify benefits or to notify of an address change. At EFS, 19,195 voter registration cards were collected in 2011.

- The Polaris Career Center and EFS host an Annual Career Fair in the spring, in collaboration with Westshore Neighborhood Family Service Center (NFSC) and Employment Connection. The goal is to foster the development of a competitive and productive workforce by annually bringing together 100 employers with job openings, looking to hire community residents for living wage jobs and careers.

- Family and Children First Council, of which EFS and CSEA are community partners, promotes a collaborative system of care emphasizing coordination across a continuum of family-centered, neighborhood-based, culturally competent services to ensure the well-being of every child, and to preserve and strengthen families in their communities. Invest in Children (IIC) strives to ensure that all children in Cuyahoga County reach their full potential, nurtured by families sensitive to their needs and supported by a community committed to their success. Help Me Grow (HMG) is a program for expectant parents, newborns, infants, and toddlers, which provides health and developmental services so that children start school healthy and ready to learn.

- The Home Heat and Weatherization Task Force develops a utilities assistance strategy by coordinating and implementing initiatives to educate and increase access for low income residents on home energy and weatherization programs and related services; local events include Utilities Resource Fair and Training Workshops. The Prevention Retention Contingency (PRC) Program assists residents with emergency utilities assistance.

- The Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition helps bring about public and private policy-based changes that foster an all-around healthier food system. The Coalition has based its work on assessments of how food can impact the health of individuals, communities, the economy, and the environment. EFS partners with the Cleveland Foodbank's Ohio Benefit Bank Program to increase access of residents to benefits programs.

- The Fatherhood Initiative, whose purpose is to have every father in Cuyahoga County have a productive positive relationship with his children because FATHERS MATTER.
As the two agencies went through the merger, this chart shows all of our CUSTOMERS, and how many were served by both EFS and CSEA.
Assets for Independence (AFI) is a demonstration program established to investigate new strategies for helping low-income families become economically self-sufficient. What makes the Ohio program unique is the focus on non-custodial parents (Obligors) who are usually the fathers in a child support case. This program provides Obligors the opportunity to develop knowledge about effective practices and strategies to assist them with overcoming barriers to manage their debt, increase their credit scores and pay their child support obligations.

A good portion of IRS refunds were intercepted and record-breaking collections were made. Total collections for child support for the month of March totaled $25,392,528. This surpassed the previous collection record by over four hundred thousand dollars. IRS collections were slightly more than $5.8 million. This exceeds the previous record by eight hundred fifty thousand dollars.

The CSEA disbursed approximately $2 million in cost recovery for public assistance cases. This disbursement is also a new record.

Medical allocations average fifteen thousand dollars per month. February’s medical allocation was over forty thousand dollars… yet another record.

The first CSEA video premiered on YouTube on July 25th. The topic for the first video was Termination of a Child Support Order. The second video shot in 2011 was for driver’s license reinstatement.

In recognition of Child Support Awareness Month, during the month of August the CSEA offered a Driver’s License Amnesty program to those who had their driver’s license suspended for failure to pay child support. The program ended on a successful note with over $177,794 collected and 513 driver’s licenses reinstated.

The CSEA posted online forms for our clients that are electronically submitted directly to the agency. The forms are on a secure web site to ensure strict confidentiality. We believe we are the first CSEA in the state to offer these types of secure online forms.

The Call Center expanded its use of social media to offer clients another way to communicate with the CSEA. BoldChat is a social media software platform that engages clients in live chats, where they can ask private, case specific questions online and receive answers quickly from a Call Center customer service representative. The Call Center offers live chats five days a week, three hours a day. In 2011 a total of 2,862 chats took place. BoldChat is offered through CSEA’s web site and Facebook.

The economic challenges that plague the country will continue to impact CSEA in terms of collections on current support and collections on past due child support. Once the country experiences higher rates of employment, parents will be able to begin to fulfill their child support obligation.
CSEA
Federal Performance Indicators

Our child support program provides services to help ensure that children receive the financial and medical support they are legally entitled to and deserve. By working with both parents, the program seeks to establish support orders and maintain consistent support payments. Research has shown that when support payments are ongoing, noncustodial parents are more involved in the lives of their children, which results in better outcomes for the children.

The Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) measures each state’s effectiveness in the child support program by looking at key performance indicators. The federal government then awards each state monetary rewards based on its performance in each category and on the total dollar amount collected for the program. The Ohio Office of Child Support then forwards a portion of its reward to each county based on how the county performed on the federal indicators.

The federal indicators are measures of the primary functions of the child support program:

1. **Paternity Establishment:** Evaluates the Agency based on the number of paternities we establish for children born out of wedlock in Cuyahoga County.

2. **Support Order Establishment:** Measures the effectiveness of the Agency in establishing monetary child support awards for families in our caseload.

3. **Current Support Collections:** Measures the percentage of monies collected and disbursed to families compared to the total amount of child support monies due to families.

4. **Collection on Arrears:** Measures the percentage of child support cases in our total caseload that received a child support payment toward arrears due to families.
Paternity and support order establishment are the strongest categories for the Cuyahoga Support Enforcement Agency.

CSEA jumped a full percentage point in paternity establishment and a whopping three points in support order establishment from 2010 to 2011.
Current support collections and arrears collections.