



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Child Welfare Worker Appreciation Week

ODJFS Funding Expansion of Children Services Fellowship Program to Athens, Fairfield, Morrow, Preble, Scioto, and Warren Counties

COLUMBUS, OHIO – As part of Child Welfare Worker Appreciation Week, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) Director Matt Damschroder announced today that the agency will provide more than \$540,000 over the next year to expand the Ohio Child Protective Services Fellowship Program for college students interested in becoming child protective services workers. The program launched last year in Allen, Ashland, Auglaize, Crawford, Hancock, Huron, Ottawa, Putnam, Sandusky, Seneca, Williams, and Wood counties. This year, it also will be offered in Athens, Fairfield, Morrow, Preble, Scioto, and Warren counties.

“This fellowship program is an excellent pathway for college students with a passion to serve children and families,” Damschroder said. “We are happy to expand it so more young people can take advantage of it. Fellows will gain meaningful paid work experience and mentoring opportunities in a field that is very much in demand.”

The Wood County Department of Job and Family Services was instrumental in creating the program to help local agencies with caseworker recruitment and retention. Wood County is part of Workforce Area 7, which includes 43 counties across the state.

“This project is the perfect example of how innovation at the local community level paired with resources and technical know-how at the state level – specifically ODJFS – results in effective, measurable results to our most pressing problems,” said John Trott, executive director of the Greater Ohio Workforce Board, which represents Workforce Area 7.

The expanded Child Protective Services Fellowship Program will employ up to 30 college students at any given time. Participants will earn \$15 an hour for up to 20 hours a week while learning specific child protective services competencies. The experience will allow them to complete the required state Caseworker Core training while job-shadowing experienced workers. They also will meet monthly with a fellowship coordinator, who will monitor their progress and provide mentoring. Those interested in learning more should email Fellowship Coordinator Jennifer Whiting at Jennifer.Whiting@jfs.ohio.gov.

“This is a great opportunity for college students in these counties who are interested in gaining real-world experience in the children services field,” said Kara B. Wentz, director of the Ohio Department of Children and Youth. “Working under the guidance of a skilled mentor, they can see whether a career in children’s services might be for them.”





Mike DeWine, Governor | Jon Husted, Lt. Governor | Matt Damschroder, Director

Ohio has approximately 2,160 caseworkers serving children and families, down from over 3,000 in 2020. For more information about children services careers, including links to open positions, visit OhioMeansJobs.ohio.gov/childrenservices.

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The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services manages vital programs that strengthen Ohio families. These include job training and employment services, unemployment insurance, cash and food assistance, child care, child and adult protective services, adoption, and child support services.

