



Ohio Summit on Children

ACTION UPDATE ■ JULY 2009



BUDGET CUTS INCREASE NEED FOR SECOND SUMMIT ON CHILDREN

Among the many messages the recently adopted two-year state budget has for those working with families and children, there is a clear standout: we do not have the luxury of maintaining the status quo.

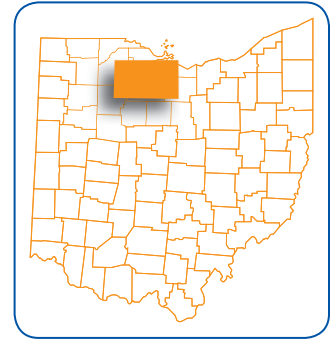
“These times require us to think differently about how state and local systems are organized to deliver services. All systems are being required to change the way children and families are served,” said **Steve Hanson**, manager of the Children, Families & the Courts Programs for the Supreme Court.

Hanson said county personnel express frustration at funding levels, but recognize that work on behalf of Ohio’s children is needed even in the face of tough economic times.

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COUNTY PROFILE | Seneca

The Ohio Summit on Children made such an impact on the Seneca County team members that they invited former foster child and motivational speaker Cedric Riley to address the local summit held last November. Although Riley was unavailable, the 40 participants of the local summit instead watched a video of his inspiring remarks.



Kathy Oliver, director of the Seneca County Department of Job and Family Services, said the Seneca County group admired the use of videotaped interviews with children at the 2008 state Summit to keep the overall focus on children. Oliver said the videos ensured attendees got the message that “this is not about me” and the “focus is on what’s best for kids.”

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2009 OHIO SUMMIT ON CHILDREN

Nov. 12

Activities begin with a reception at 5:30 p.m. followed by a dinner program at 6:30 p.m.

Nov. 13

Activities begin at 8:30 a.m. with adjournment at 4:30 p.m.

[REGISTRATION OPENS AUGUST 1](#)

COMING IN AUGUST TO THE WEB SITE

The Web site soon will feature updates to the Data Analysis Web pages, including:

- Federal review data on each county
- The CFSR program improvement plan
- Recidivism Analysis for each county
- Children remaining in care for extended care.

www.summitonchildren.ohio.gov/AttySvcs/cfsr/dataAnalysis after Aug. 12.

INCREASED NEED CONTINUED

“The message we are getting is clear: collaboration and shared vision are even more important in today’s economic climate,” he said.

“The 2009 Ohio Summit on Children becomes more vital than ever, providing a rare opportunity for local community representatives to come together at little to no cost to themselves or their agencies, and providing a forum for discussing and sharing creative approaches to meeting local challenges. The information gained will help counties assess the lay of the land, recognize how each system can modify current services, embrace new ways of doing business and build off collaborative opportunities,” Hanson said.


More than 50 counties have submitted team names for the Nov. 12 and 13 Summit thus far.

Summit planners established an abbreviated format for the event, reducing the burden employee absences might place on county and state offices already dealing with reduced staffs. The 2009 Summit begins with a reception at 5:30 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 12, followed by a dinner program at 6:30 p.m.

Overnight lodging on Nov. 12 for distance travelers will accommodate an early beginning and release on Friday, Nov. 13. The 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. schedule will pack a full day’s work with ample time for return travel.

Minimizing the financial burden upon participants remained a priority. Individual expense is limited to the costs of traveling to and from the event. Planners carefully sought funding from non-service sources to fully cover participants’ registration, lodging, parking and meal costs.

Planned Summit roundtable discussions include: leveraging local funds; maintaining a continuum of care in the current climate; and access to timely services. The Summit will allow participants to have informal dialogue with state leaders and to formally report on their local efforts to collaborate on children services.

Counties continue to submit plans on successes and challenges and the steps the state can take to support local efforts through policy decisions and potential new programs. The plans are available at www.summitonchildren.ohio.gov/countyplans. You can submit your plan or list of anticipated Summit participants by e-mail to summitonchildren@sc.ohio.gov or by fax to 614.387.9409. 

SENECA CONTINUED

The local summit was modeled after the 2008 Ohio Summit on Children in other ways, with introductions at the start, followed by group exercises to determine local priorities for children. Oliver, former juvenile Judge Paul Kutscher and Rebecca Herner, Court Appointed Special Advocates executive director, served as the hosts. Additional participants included representatives from other county agencies and the local school system.

Oliver labeled the local summit as “productive” with attendees providing good feedback indicating they learned a lot. She said participants appreciated specific allotments of time — rather than finding five minutes here or there between meetings — to really focus in on improving the environment for children in Seneca County. That’s also why the group found value in the state Summit, she said. “The (state) Summit allowed time to envision and time for ‘rich’ conversations.”

Herner added, “As for our summit, we also took participants out of their ‘comfort zone’ so they had a better feel for the children in the ‘system.’”

While planning is under way for another local summit this fall, committees are working on the action plan developed during the first one. In addition, a judge’s task force convened by new juvenile Judge Jay Meyer includes defense attorneys, prosecutors, probation officers, school officials, mental health providers and the Family and Children’s Council and meets monthly to address current issues involving children and propose solutions to challenges.

As for the next state Summit, Oliver said providing additional technical assistance resources would help local counties that continue to face funding challenges. She suggested something as simple as providing a directory of resources, such as foster-care contacts. 