

Job and Family Services 2017 Annual Report

Stephanie M. Kowal, Director

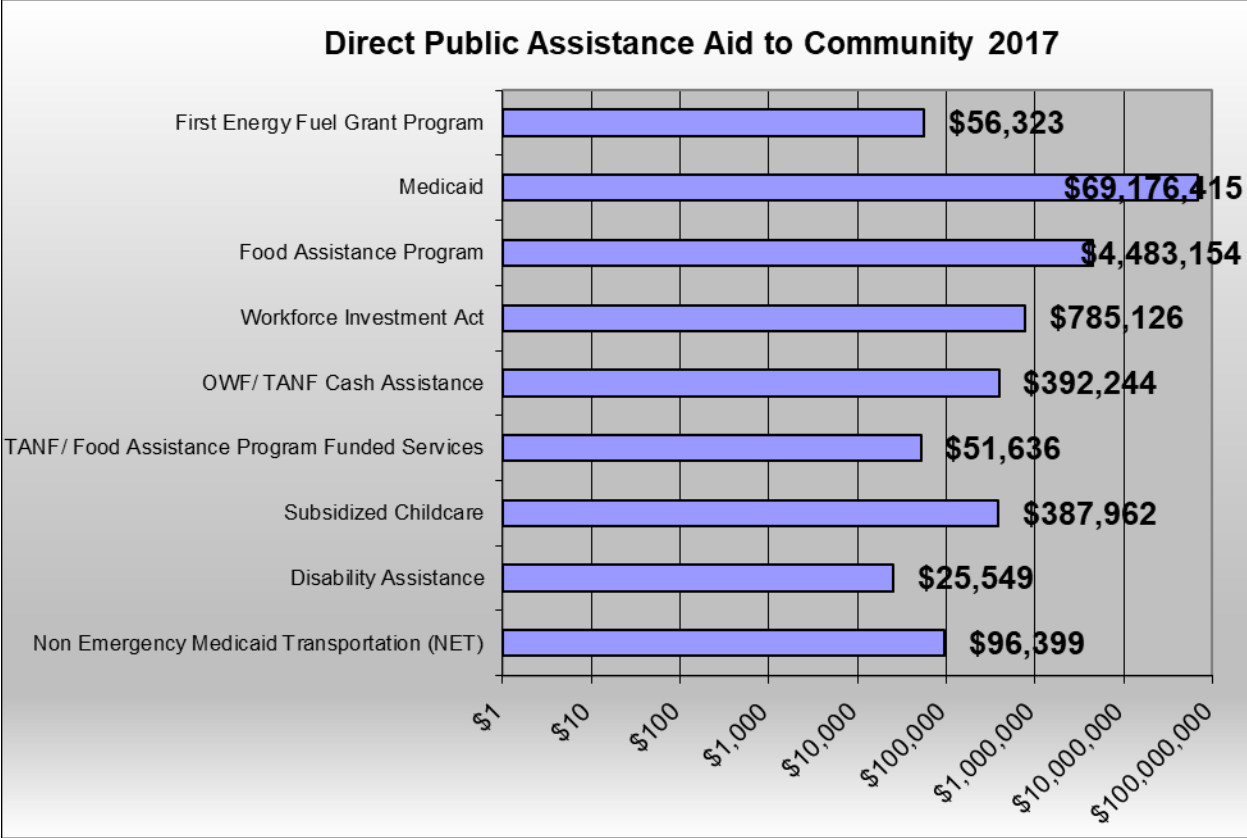
The Ottawa County Department of Job and Family Services, administers Federal, State and County Public Assistance, Child Support, Children and Adult Protective Services and Workforce Development programs. We are located in the Ottawa County Resource Centre at 8043 W. SR 163, Suite 200, in Oak Harbor. Over the course of 2017, the Agency partnered with the State of Ohio, to provide a variety of sources our residents can use to apply for benefits, obtain information on the status of individuals' cases, and the ability to check for balances on child support case. Additionally, while the number of individuals utilizing services from the agency has increased, much of our work may be provided by internet, phone or mail, rather than requiring individuals to incur the expense of travel to and from the agency to apply for help.

The Ottawa County Department of Job and Family Services was the conduit for over \$80 million in federal and state aid, and child support payments, that benefited the families and residents in Ottawa County. These funds were spent primarily in local grocers, physician and other medical offices, long term care facilities, businesses and other vendors and providers in and around Ottawa County. The administrative cost to provide these safety net services was 3.4% of the total budget. The 42 staff of this agency are invested in ensuring the safety net services are provided to our community members.

Workforce Development provides services to local residents and businesses. This was done through a combination of federal funds including the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and Temporary Aid to Needy Families. Through coordination with economic development resources, Workforce Development aided in upgrading the skills of job seekers and the workforce of Ottawa County businesses. Services that benefited job seekers more directly include resume writing, career counseling, job matching, employment testing, training and supportive services for employment. Youth and adults utilized job search services in the OhioMeansJobs Ottawa County center over 3600 times throughout the year. The Workforce Development program expended \$785,126 on training and employment related supportive services for layoff aversion clients, job seekers and those just entering the workforce. Work Activity and Youth programs also assisted in educational attainment, transportation, work ethic, work experience, parenting, summer employment and independent living skills to area youth and adults. The Work Activities program has provided area businesses, schools, and social service agencies with volunteers and subsidized summer employment totaling over 3,000 hours of service.

The Income Maintenance (IM) Department administers the four major public assistance programs: the Food Assistance Program, Medicaid, Subsidized Childcare, and Cash Assistance, as well as a Benefit Recovery unit. The mission of the IM department is to see that every eligible person in Ottawa County receives the services they are entitled to in a prompt, professional and efficient manner.

Benefits for the *Food Assistance Program* are used to supplement an eligible individual's or family's budget for food and nutrition, using an Electronic Benefit Transfer card. The total amount issued to families in 2017 was \$4,483,154. The number of individuals benefiting from



the Food Assistance Program averaged about 3,362 per month.

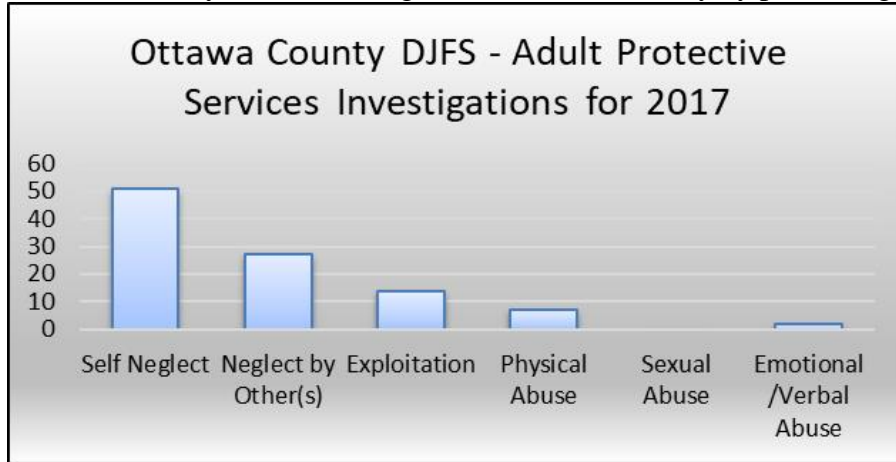
Cash Assistance has two categories. Ohio Works First (OWF/TANF) is a monthly cash assistance program for families with minor children and an income below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level. Many times, this provides additional help to grandparents and other extended family members, who have taken young children into their home. OWF benefits totaled \$392,244 for 2017, with an average of 8 adults and 155 children who received this financial resource each month. The second category of cash assistance, Disability Assistance (DA), is assistance for single individuals who have been declared disabled but are not yet receiving Social Security, and ended in 2017. DA assistance for 2017 totaled \$25,549, with a monthly average of 16 individuals.

Subsidized Childcare provides much needed support to low income families trying to achieve self-sufficiency. In 2017, 108 children received quality childcare that aided their educational and emotional development. At the same time, \$387,962 was paid in childcare payments to assist their parents in gaining and retaining employment.

Medicaid has undergone several changes with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, including expanded health care eligibility low income adults. The total amount of Medicaid benefits issued in 2017 was \$69,176,415, and the average number of Ottawa County Residents benefiting from this medical insurance program was 7,363 per month.

The *Benefit Recovery and Fraud* program utilizes data matching and fraud reports to identify individuals who have received benefits for which they were not entitled, and set up repayment options. In 2017, the Ottawa County unit recovered \$89,438 in benefits, including cash repayments (\$20,218), benefit reductions (\$23,874) and seizure of tax refunds (\$45,346).

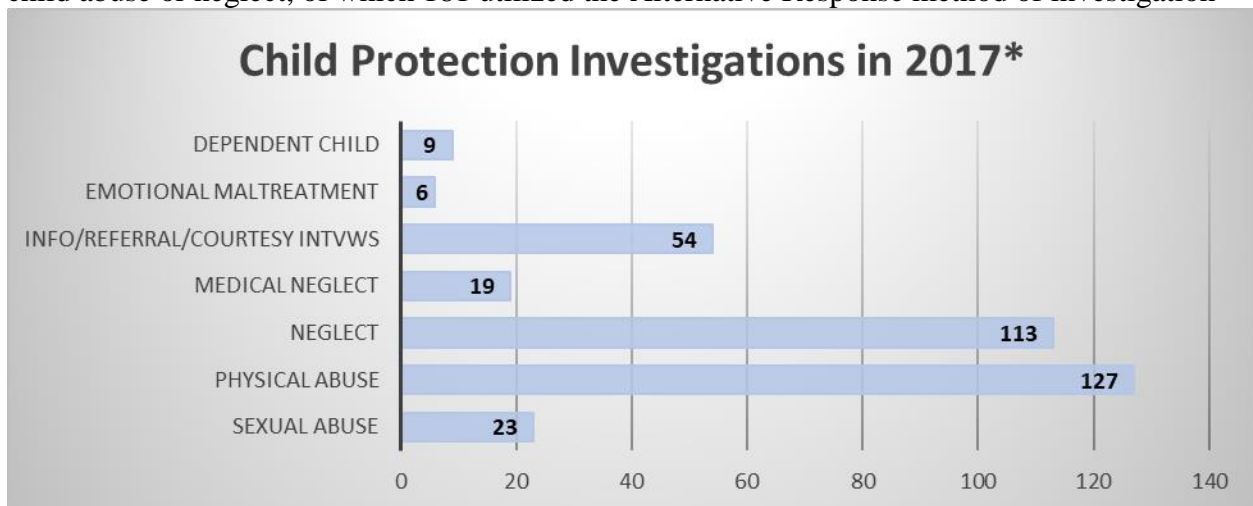
The Family, Adult and Children Service Unit provides a variety of services designated to ensure the safety and well being of children and elderly by promoting healthy family



relationships, preserving the integrity of the family unit and promoting self-sufficiency. The unit provides services ranging from abuse/neglect investigations, subsidized childcare, emergency assistance programs, voluntary protective services,

protective supervision (ordered by the Court), substitute (foster) care and adoption to those children who are abused, neglected or dependent. Confidential complaints of child and/or elderly abuse or neglect are received in person, in writing or by phone. Through a partnership with several organizations in the community, there has been an increase in awareness of elder abuse (age 60 and older) issues, and the agency conducted over 92 investigations in 2017, a 30% increase over the previous year.

In 2017, the Family, Adult and Children Service Unit conducted 291 investigations of alleged child abuse or neglect, of which 181 utilized the Alternative Response method of investigation

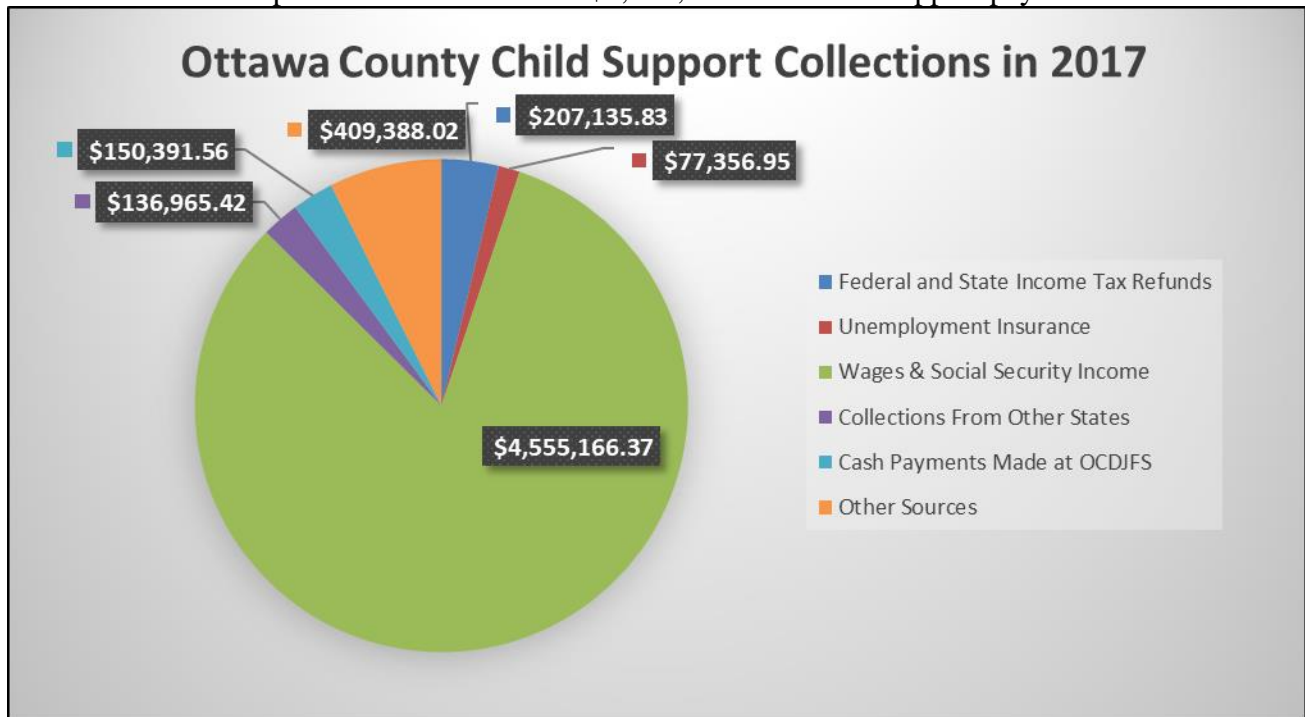


* Note that reports often included multiple allegations within same report

and service delivery, 37 families were provided information and referral to other service

providers, and 73 were traditional investigations of severe physical or sexual abuse. Over the course of 2017, there were 42 children in the custody of the agency, and over \$1.4 million was provided in foster care, adoption assistance, and other family supportive services to a multitude of families in Ottawa County. Additionally, Ottawa County was extremely pleased to give four children a forever home, and finalize their adoption into loving families.

The Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA) provides numerous services including the establishment of paternity and child support orders, medical insurance or cash equivalent orders, location services, enforcement and collection of child and spousal support orders, and adjustment and review of existing child support orders. The CSEA provides services for individuals who have a child support case that was established in Ottawa County. It does so by working with businesses and other agencies in Ohio and around the world, in order to collect and distribute financial support for children. In 2017, the Ottawa County CSEA was responsible for an average of 2300 active cases per month and collected \$5,536,404.59 in child support payments for the



year. Payments come from a variety of sources, including wages, Social Security income, Unemployment Insurance, Federal and State Income Tax refunds, and payments made at the agency. For a third grant cycle, the Agency has secured a grant from the Federal Office of Child Support, to assist in the operation of Joyful Connections, a supervised visitation and exchange center, which allows children to maintain a healthy relationship with both parents, in a neutral and safe environment.