

## Ottawa County Job and Family Services 2022 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 to residents, employees and businesses in the county. We are in the Ottawa County Resource Centre at 8043 W. SR 163, Suite 200, in Oak Harbor. Over the course of 2022, the Agency partnered with the State of Ohio, to provide a variety of resources our residents can use to apply for benefits, obtain information on the status of individuals' cases, and ensure financial support of their children. 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.

The Ottawa County Department of Job and Family Services was the conduit for over \$97 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 3.9% of the total budget. The 47 staff of this agency are invested in ensuring the safety net services are provided to our community members.

**Workforce Development** provides services to residents and businesses. This was done through a combination of federal funds including the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

(formula funds and demonstration grants), H1B Rural Healthcare Demonstration Grant, and Temporary Aid to Needy Families. Through coordination with economic development resources, Workforce Development aided in upgrading the skills of 72 job seekers. The program assisted businesses with forty-nine On-the-Job Training contracts and nine Incumbent Worker Training projects, totaling \$159,647. 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 2000 times throughout the year. Total workforce investments of training and employment related supportive services for layoff aversion clients, employer upskilling, job seekers and those just entering the workforce exceeded \$1.1 million.

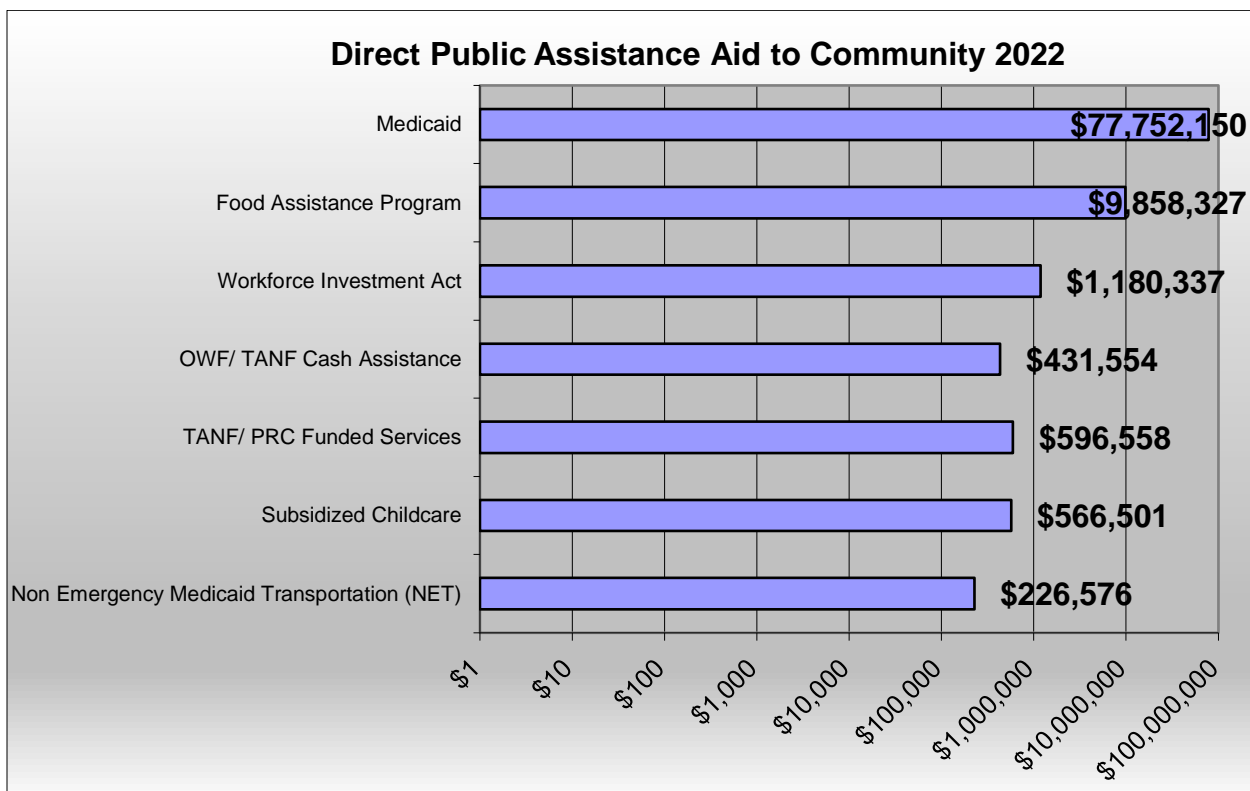


WHEN IT COMES TO SECOND CHANCES, OTTAWA COUNTY KNOWS ALL TOO WELL THE IMPORTANCE: AFTER COMING OUT OF REHABILITATION IN 2020, CR\* CAME TO OTTAWA COUNTY DJFS FOR WORKFORCE HELP. HE HEARD ABOUT A PROGRAM THROUGH A TRUCK DRIVER TRAINING PROVIDER BUT WAS APPREHENSIVE DUE TO HIS STRUGGLE WITH ADDICTION AND FELONY LEGAL ISSUES. HE WAS APPROVED FOR THE WORKFORCE PROGRAM, COMPLETED HIS CDL A TRUCK DRIVER TRAINING, OBTAINED HIS LICENSE AND TODAY DRIVES OVER THE ROAD EARNING \$75,000 ANNUALLY. HIS LIFE HAS DRASTICALLY CHANGED, HIS MENTAL HEALTH IS STABLE, HE HAS A STEADY AND RELIABLE INCOME AND HAS BEEN CLEAN AND SOBER.

\*Client CR's name withheld for privacy

**The Income Maintenance (IM) Department** administers the four major public safety net service programs to our residents: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Medicaid, Subsidized Childcare, and Cash Assistance. 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.

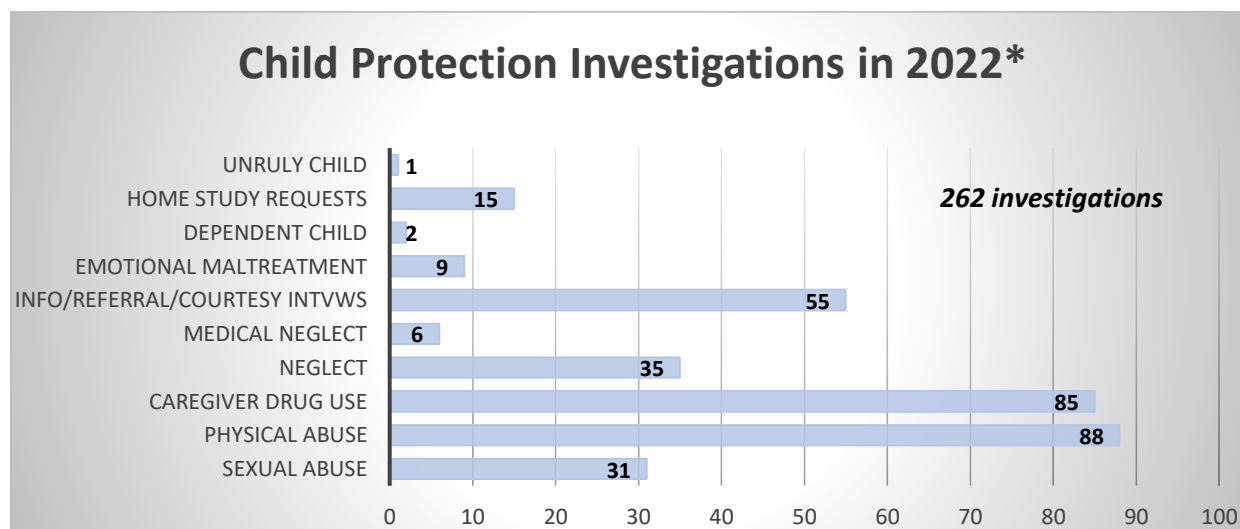
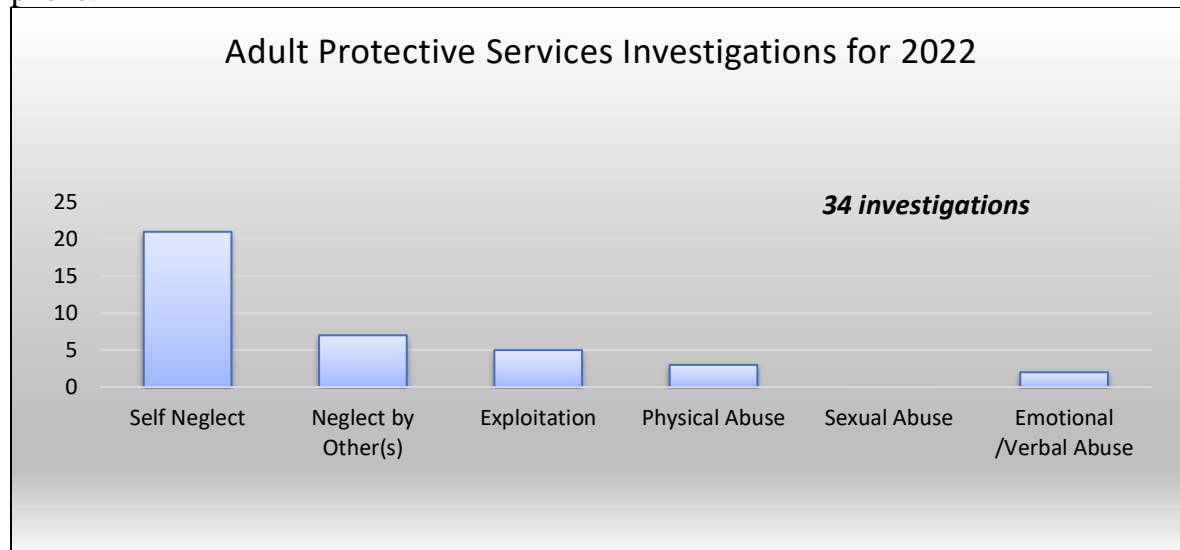
Benefits for the *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program* are used to supplement an eligible individual's or family's budget for food and nutrition, using an Electronic Benefit Transfer card. The total amount issued in 2022 was \$9,858,327 to 2,942 adults and 1,923 children. This is in addition to Pandemic SNAP benefits that have been issued by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services directly to children receiving Free and Reduced Meals through their local school system.



*Cash Assistance*, or the 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. Often, this provides the only financial assistance that grandparents and other relatives have available to help when they take young family members into their home. OWF benefits totaled \$431,554 in 2022 to 197 children and 9 adults.

*Medicaid* is health insurance for individuals and families that meet income eligibility criteria. Over the course of 2022, the total amount of Medicaid benefits issued was \$77,752,150 to 8,225 Ottawa County residents. As part of our services, individuals receiving Medicaid can get help with transportation to and from their medical appointments. In 2022, Ottawa County contracted to provide 2613 individuals with trips to and from essential mental and physical health services.

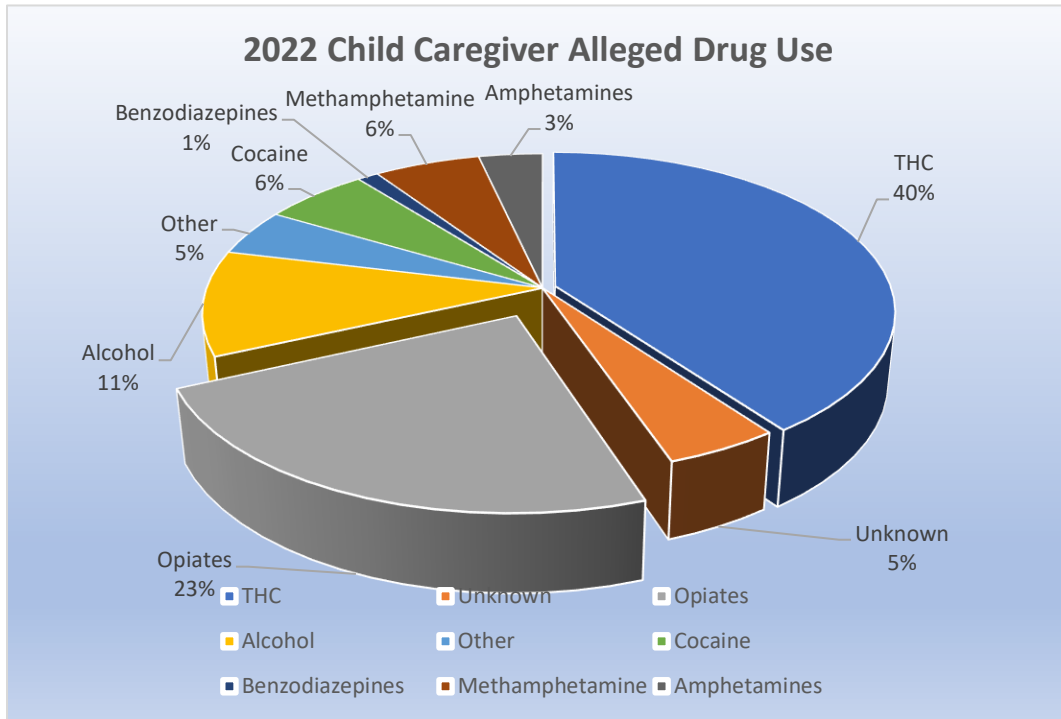
**The Family, Adult and Children Service Unit** provides a variety of services designated to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and seniors by promoting healthy family relationships, preserving the integrity of the family unit and promoting self-sufficiency. The unit provides services ranging from abuse/neglect investigations, 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.



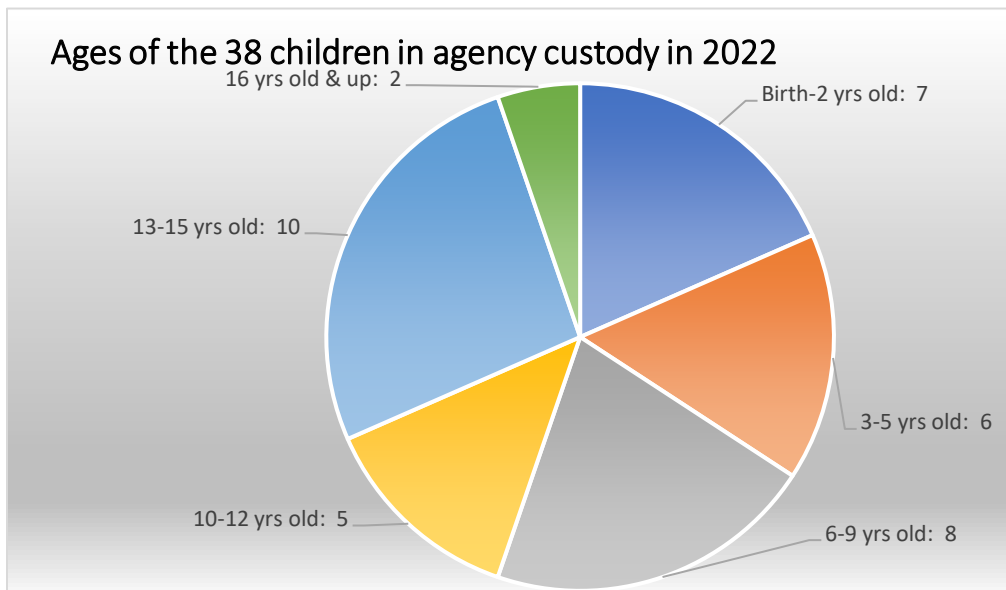
\* Note that reports often included multiple allegations within same report

In 2022, the agency investigated 34 reports of elder abuse and 262 reports of child abuse or neglect. One of the factors that contributes to risk for vulnerable populations like children and the elderly, is inappropriate use of drugs and/or alcohol. Fifty-eight (58) of the child protection investigations included *allegations* of drug or alcohol use by the caregivers (see below). This

does not include other substances that were identified through drug screens done through the course of an investigation or ongoing case.



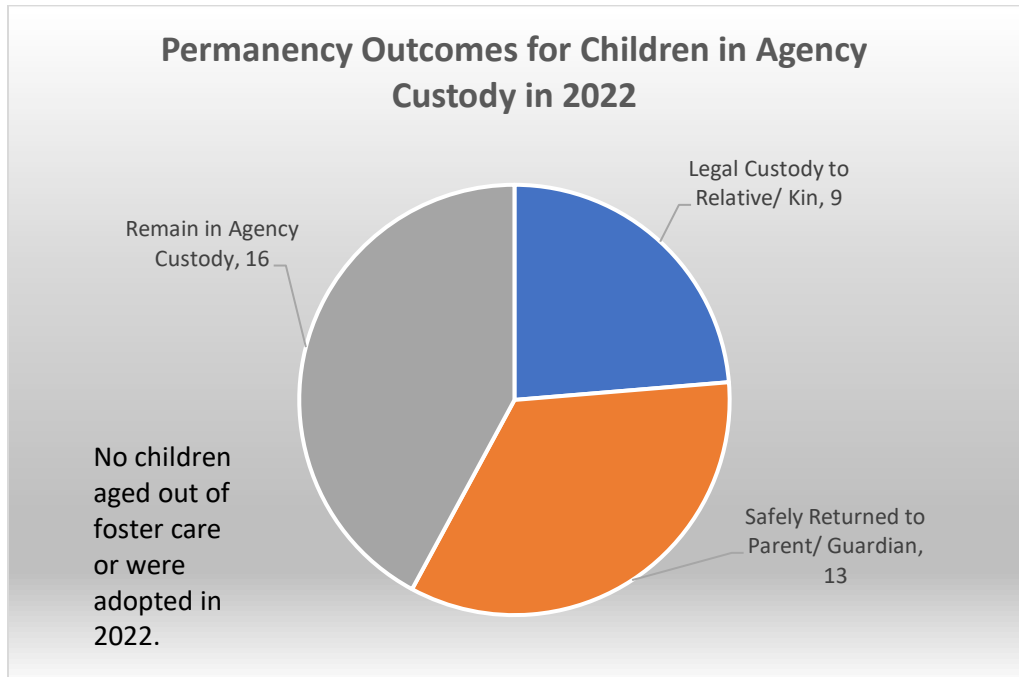
When children are not able to safely remain in their homes, the agency is responsible for taking over their custody. Over the course of 2022, there were 38 children in the custody of the agency,



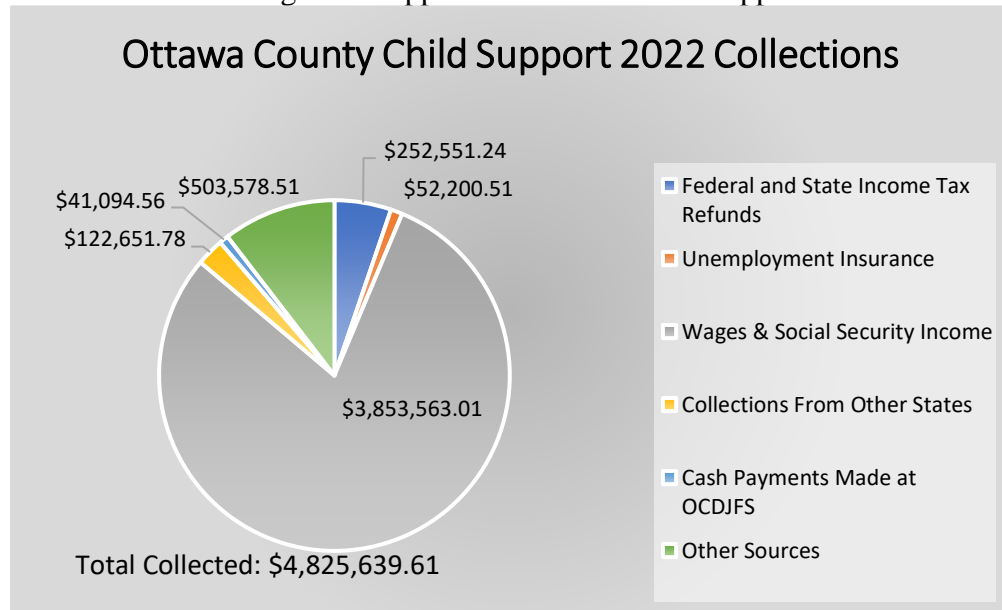
placed with relatives, foster parents, group homes or into residential treatment. The total spent on those services was just over \$1.8 million, and included payments to kinship families, foster homes, adoption

assistance, and other family supportive services. Foster care is a frightening experience to children, as they often move into the homes of caring but unknown people. In Ottawa County, over half of the children in the agency's custody in 2022 were safely placed with caring relatives or family friends while the agency worked with their parents to prepare them to safely care for

their children in the future. Additionally, of the 38 children in agency custody, 57% were able to safely return to their parents, relatives or were adopted by loving families by the end of 2022.



**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. Financial support of a common child is one of the



surest ways to ensure a family is self-sufficient. 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 2022, Ottawa County was recognized for a third year in a row as the Highest Performing Small County, as the agency collected over 80% of current child support owed for the year. The Ottawa County CSEA was responsible for 1,651

active cases and collected just over \$4.8 million in child support payments for the year. The agency continues to administer an Access Visitation Grant from the Federal Office of Child Support, to assist in the operation of Joyful Connections. This supervised visitation and exchange center allows children to maintain a healthy relationship with both parents, in a neutral and safe environment. Additionally, federal dollars were brought into Ottawa County through partnerships between the Child Support division, Ottawa County Juvenile Court, Prosecutor's Office and Sheriff's Office.

For more details on programs offered through the Ottawa County Department of Job and Family Services, check us out at [www.ottawacountyjfs.org](http://www.ottawacountyjfs.org), and [www.ohiomeansjobs-ottawacounty.com](http://www.ohiomeansjobs-ottawacounty.com).