

Ottawa County Job and Family Services 2018 Annual Report

Stephanie M. Kowal, Director

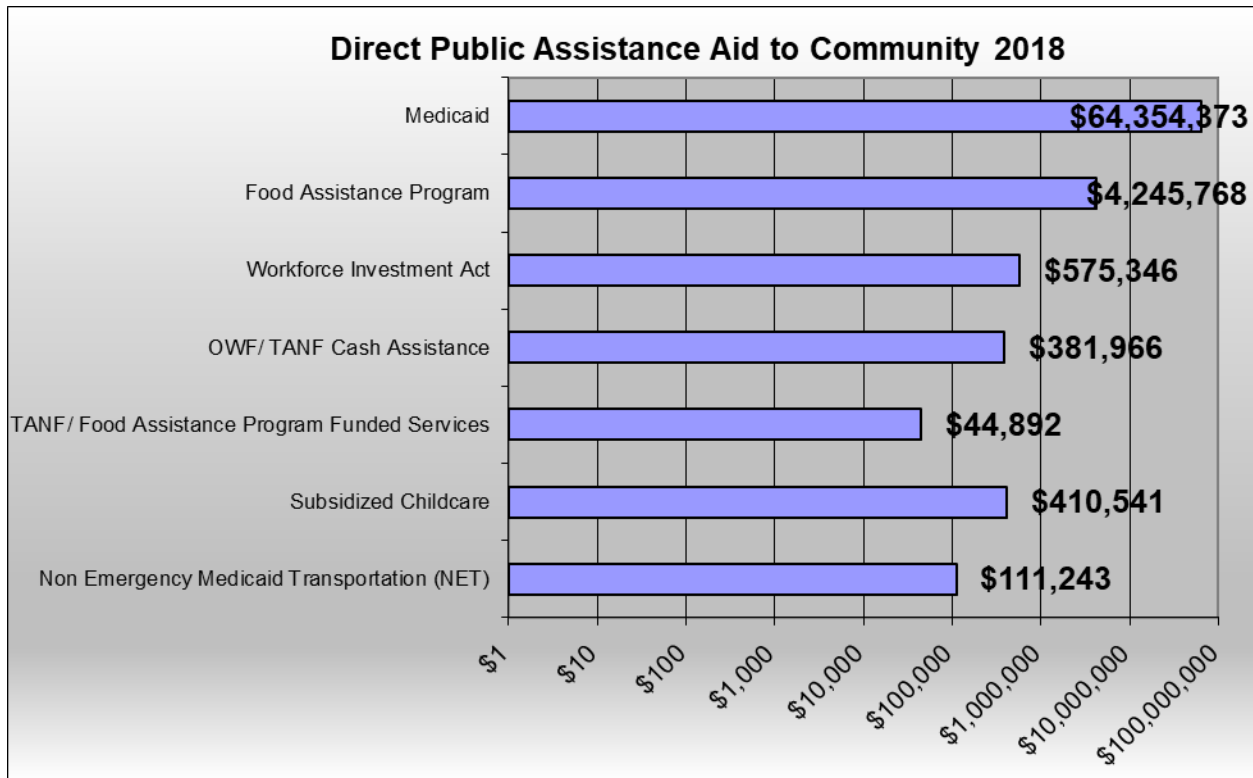
The Ottawa County Department of Job and Family Services, administers Federal, State and County Public Assistance, Child Support, Children and Adult Protective Services and Workforce Development programs. We are located in the Ottawa County Resource Centre at 8043 W. SR 163, Suite 200, in Oak Harbor. Over the course of 2018, 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 \$75 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 43 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 2811 times throughout the year. The Workforce Development program expended \$575,346 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 Income Maintenance (IM) Department administers the four major public assistance programs: Supplemental Nutrition 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 *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 to families in 2018 was \$4,245,768. The number of individuals benefiting from the Food Assistance Program averaged about 3,130 per month.



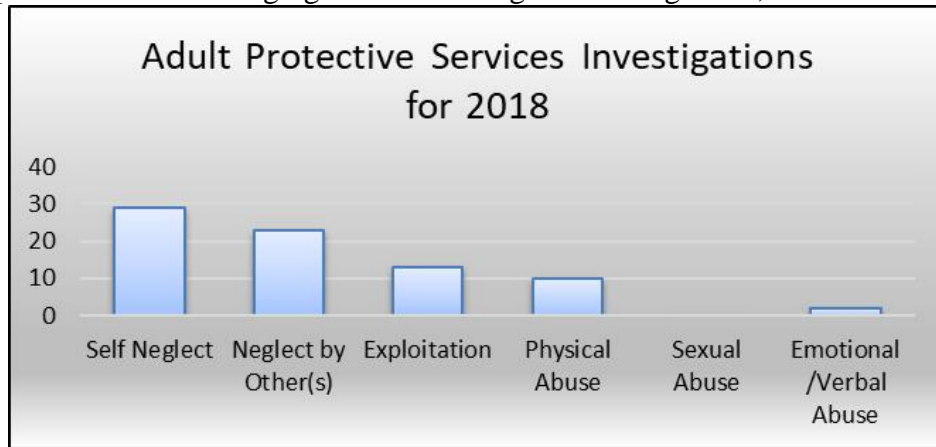
Cash Assistance, or the Ohio Works First (OWF/TANF) is a monthly cash assistance program for families with minor children and an income below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level. Many times, this provides additional help to grandparents and other extended family members, who have taken young children into their home. OWF benefits totaled \$381,966 for 2018 with an average of 5 adults and 147 children who received this financial resource each month.

Subsidized Childcare provides much needed support to low income families trying to achieve self-sufficiency through employment and/or job training programs. Over the course of the year, 128 children received quality childcare that aided their educational and emotional development. At the same time, \$410,541 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 2018 was \$64,354,373, and the average number of Ottawa County Residents benefiting from this medical insurance program was 7,181 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 then set up repayment options. In 2018, the Ottawa County unit recovered \$21,787 in benefits, including client repayments (\$10,937), benefit reductions (\$2,286) and seizure of tax refunds (\$8,564).

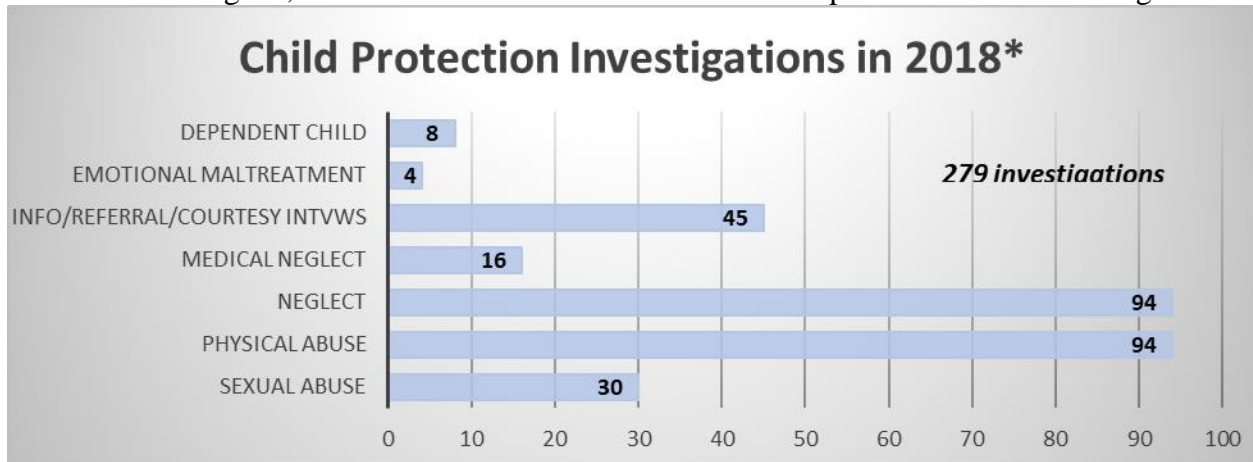
The Family, Adult and Children Service Unit provides a variety of services designated to ensure the safety and well being of children and seniors by promoting healthy family relationships, preserving the integrity of the family unit and promoting self-sufficiency. The unit provides services ranging from abuse/neglect investigations, 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 70 investigations in 2018.

In 2018, the Family, Adult and Children Service Unit conducted 279 investigations of alleged child abuse or neglect, of which 180 utilized the Alternative Response method of investigation

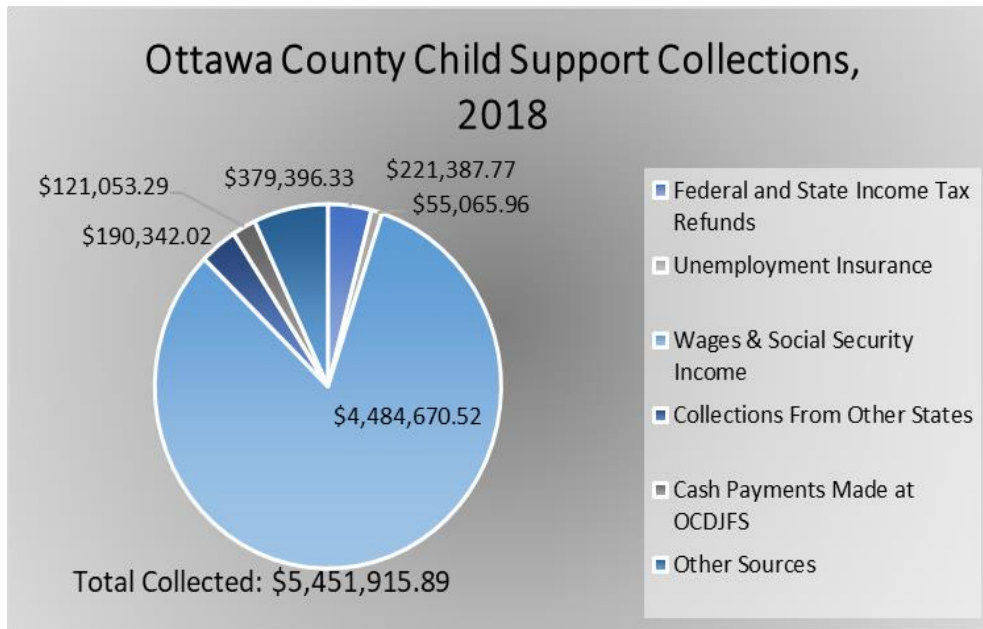


* Note that reports often included multiple allegations within same report

and service delivery, 45 families were provided information and referral to other service providers, and 61 were traditional investigations of severe physical or sexual abuse. Over the course of 2018, there were 51 children in the custody of the agency, and over \$1.5 million was provided in foster care, adoption assistance, and other family supportive services to a multitude of families in Ottawa County. Ottawa County expanded resources to address opiate addiction and its impact on children and families, through the Ohio Sobriety Treatment and Reducing Trauma (START) program, through the Ohio Attorney General's Office. Through this program,

the agency will work closely with behavioral health providers, family peer mentors and families, to ensure child safety and assist with sobriety.

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 2018, the Ottawa County CSEA was responsible for an average of 2133 active cases per month and collected \$5,451,915.89 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. Additionally, federal dollars were brought into Ottawa County through partnerships between the Child Support division, Ottawa County Juvenile Court and the Ottawa County 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, and www.ohiomeansjobs-ottawacounty.com.