

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, December 16, 2014

Contact: Hanna Greer, 614/525-5848
Tyler Lowry, 614/525-6630
Marty Homan, 614/525-5273

2015 FRANKLIN COUNTY BUDGET ADOPTED

Promotes job creation and community safety, provides health and human services and plans for the future

This morning, at their final meeting of the year, the Franklin County Board of Commissioners approved the operating budget for 35 county agencies which totals \$397.4 million and includes \$113 million for the County Sheriff's Office and just under \$15 million for community partners whose mission it is to address housing & economic development, health services, childhood development, safety and human services which are policy priorities for the County Commissioners. The 2015 All Funds Budget is \$1.4 billion.

Franklin County is the fastest growing metro county in the state, and is home to five Fortune 500 companies, 62 colleges and university campuses and the top ranked library, zoo and science center in the nation.

Furthermore, Franklin County is the only Ohio county to retain a double-Triple A bond rating and one of very few counties in the Midwest and throughout the nation with such ratings.

"2014 has been a year of great accomplishment and change and, of course, challenge; a year in which I have been honored to serve as Board President," said Commissioner Marilyn Brown during her introduction of the 2015 Budget. "We've worked hard to achieve these accomplishments and I'm proud that our position of financial security has allowed us to promote job creation, and community safety, and to provide health and human services and plan for the future."

The 2015 Approved Budget positions Franklin County to continue to deliver direct services upon which the growing population relies. Franklin County's largest service agency, the Department of Job and Family Services, will continue to administer billions (\$1.9 billion in 2014) for family health care assistance, helping hundreds of thousands of adults and children (289,000/month in 2014) each month. The agency will also be able to provide hundreds of millions (\$243 million in 2014) in food assistance to residents and families in the community.

In the coming year, Franklin County will continue to forge strong community partnerships. The 2015 Budget provides \$50,000 for the Charitable Pharmacy of Central Ohio to provide

prescription and non-prescription medicines to eligible resident and will continue new local food policy programs including the Columbus-Franklin County food action plan, and Veggie SNAPS, a collaboration with local Farmer's Markets to make fresh, healthy foods available to county residents, regardless of income limitations.

New collaborations in 2015 include \$200,000 to support a Maternal Instincts Program in Whitehall, a partnership with Heart of Ohio's Family Health Center, to increase access to prenatal care for women and reduce infant mortality. Also, additional investments in the work of the Affordable Housing Trust for Columbus and Franklin County are included in the County Budget next year, an additional \$200,000, an increase of 9.1-percent over current year, to encourage affordable housing and apartments for residents in overlooked areas of the County.

"This year's budget continues to build upon our core mission of keeping our community safe and secure, collaborating on good jobs, and securing our fiscal future," said Commissioner Paula Brooks. "Whether addressing the resilience of our future generations, or, strategically confronting our current economic, healthcare, and public safety needs, I am proud that through this budget, Franklin County continues its national leadership in energy, environment, and economic development, in protecting and nurturing our children and most vulnerable, and in assuring that **all** of our families enjoy a safe and secure future. This strategic approach assures that central Ohio will continue to grow and thrive."

Being able to adequately serve a growing population means ensuring sales tax collections remain strong. Nearly 65-percent of the County's 2015 General Revenue Fund will be supported by the sales tax. The 2015 Budget includes support for economic development initiatives such as Infrastructure Works in Franklin County, introduced earlier this year as well as additional programs focused on green energy and workforce development.

"Job creation, economic development and community safety remain our top priorities in the 2015 Budget," said Commissioner John O'Grady. "I also look forward to advancing and expanding upon our local food policy efforts already underway to address food insecurity in our community and strengthen linkages between consumers and producers as a long-term economic development strategy."

The 2015 Budget continues investments in Columbus-Franklin County Finance Authority, a partnership which has allowed the issuance of \$592 million in bond financing projects that will invest more than \$741 million and create 4,956 jobs in Central Ohio; Workforce Training Investment Grants (WITG) for businesses; and increases investments in current partners like Columbus 2020 and Experience Columbus which aim to strengthen Central Ohio's \$8.7 billion travel and tourism industry, employ 71,000 and offsets taxes for families by more than \$2,200.

The 2015 Budget also prioritizes community safety and planning for the future. Over 60 percent of the County's 2015 Operating Budget will be directed to support the operations of the County Sheriff's Office as well as the operations of the Courts. Next year, Franklin County will also undertake the construction of a new Public Safety Center to house the operations of the Sheriff and County Coroner on the County's west side because planning for future safety and security needs of the community are important endeavors for the Commissioners.

Because of an additional temporary sales tax being collected as the result of a rate increase approved in 2013, Franklin County will be able to cash finance the new Public Safety Center, estimated to cost \$200 million which will save the County \$100 million in avoided interest costs over the life of the facilities.

Finally, the 2015 Budget makes investments in Franklin County's children and young adults, too, providing funding for the Franklin County Pathways to Prosperity, Mechanic Internship Program, Youth Lemonade Day and internships program with Cristo Rey High School. Also included is funding for the Ohio Alliance for Arts Education's Artists-in-Schools and Transit Arts--that teach kids the beauty of art, creation and critical thinking.

The 2015 Budget was approved unanimously. A copy of the President's Budget Message can be accessed [here](#). The Franklin County Budget website is [here](#).

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