

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FRANKLIN COUNTY CELEBRATES CHILD SUPPORT AWARENESS MONTH

Agency, Partners to hold Empowerment Day Resource & Job Fair on August 21st

This month, Franklin County is joining counties from across the country by recognizing August as Child Support Awareness Month. In Ohio, the theme for this year is "Support is Key," as the child support program is based on the fundamental belief that children deserve financial support, and that if children truly are our future, then it is imperative that the child support program aid in the healthy development of children, including the emotional and financial support of both parents.

"As we mark Child Support Awareness Month here in Franklin County, I want to remind parents that 'Support is Key,'" said Commissioner John O'Grady. "Supporting your children by making regular and timely child support payments contributes to their wellbeing and helps to ensure their basic needs are being met."

Aside from public education, the child support program touches the lives of more children and families than any other public program. In fact, in Franklin County, the Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA) serves over 100,000 children, one in four in the county.

"Parents have both a legal duty and moral responsibility to support their children," said Commissioner Paula Brooks. "It's especially critical that all of our children receive the resources owed by parents, to allow them to develop into productive citizens."

The child support program ensures parents financially support their children when they are living apart and provides many important services, which include establishing the legal relationship between children and their parents, collecting child support for families, and enforcing court orders and health insurance coverage.

Franklin County CSEA has a caseload of 75,500 cases and collects approximately \$180 million a year in support of children. In 2012, CSEA staff established paternity for 2,175 children; established 3,781 support orders; modified support on 2,509 cases; and responded to over 350,000 walk-in and telephone inquiries.

"I very much appreciate the great work of our CSEA staff in the face of significant federal budget cuts," said Commissioner Marilyn Brown. "They have experienced increased caseloads, but continue to deliver outstanding service in support of our community's children."

In 2010, the US Congress allowed the federal performance incentive match to expire, which equates to \$4 million a year loss in revenue for Franklin County CSEA. Commissioners have subsidized CSEA operations with \$1.5 Million in local funds to keep layoffs from occurring, but staffing levels have decreased five percent.

Despite these cuts, Franklin County CSEA is the highest performing metro county in collection of arrears (past due child support), and the third-highest performing metro county on current collections. CSEA also

outperforms the state average for dollars collected for every dollar expended by 61%, currently collecting \$11.78 for every dollar expended.

“I’m very proud of our staff here at the agency, we have really tried to take a new approach to how we go about our business of collecting child support,” said Susan Brown, Director of Franklin County CSEA. “We have worked very hard identifying and working with community partners to take a holistic approach to child support. Our annual Empowerment Day Resource & Job Fair is a culmination of these partnerships.”

Joining Franklin County CSEA to host the 2013 Empowerment Day Resource and Job Fair on Wednesday, August 21st from 2-7 p.m. at Franklin County Veterans Memorial are the Franklin County Veterans Service Commission and the Central Ohio Workforce Investment Corporation. Thirty local employers and 60 community service agencies are registered to attend this event.

Parents are encouraged to bring their résumé, meet with area employers, learn about community resources available to them and their family, and can receive child support and legal assistance from attorneys and staff. Parking and admission are FREE! Visit Support.FranklinCountyOhio.gov for information, including a list of employers participating in the Job Fair.

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