



Update

In This Issue:

- Collection of Overpayments
- Ohio's Unemployment Rate Drops
- Collabor* Update Pilot Program About to "Go Live"
- Dramatic Drop in Teen Birth Rates
- Latest Work Participation Numbers
- Loss of Unemployment Compensation in January 2012 May Effect Over 70,000 Ohioans
- Nursing Home Meeting
- PCSAO Releases Progress Report
- Federal Update
- News Clips
- Job Postings
- Upcoming Meetings & Events

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Collection of Overpayments

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services notified counties in March of this year of changes in federal regulations that would allow the state to reach back more than ten years to collect overpayments for public assistance benefits. Prior to this year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibited the collection of old debts attributed to overpayments through the Tax Offset Program (TOP) and therefore the state did not pursue debts older than a decade.

With the removal of the federal provision, the state has implemented changes to the TOP program to add old debts of more than ten years. Three weeks ago former public assistance recipients began receiving notices of the need to repay the overpayment or be subject to offsets which could include federal tax refunds, federal salary and retirement pay and social security. 14,000 notices were sent statewide to individuals owing overpayments of more than ten years. An additional 8,000 Ohioans were notified of the potential collection for debts less than ten years old. The total amount owed through the TOP policy is in excess of \$26 million. It should be noted that these debts are for overpayments which are the result of agency or client errors and not the result of fraud.

The USDA policy states that individuals owing repayment prior to June 12, 1999, must be re-notified of their debt with a 60-day notice, to be mailed by ODJFS, and that clients be notified of their due process rights. In addition, the individual shall be informed that that can avoid referral to TOP if one of the following occurs during the 60 day period:

- The individual repays the debt;
- The individual enters into an acceptable repayment plan for debts greater than \$500, paying \$500 and signing an agreement to repay the balance in regular payments; or,
- The agency determines during the course of a requested review that the debt is not subject to collection through TOP (for example, the debt is not delinquent).

Since the letters were mailed from the state, county agencies have fielding hundreds of calls from concerned individuals wanting to discuss their case. Responding to inquiries has been extremely difficult in many instances with cases dating back further than the CRIS-E system. Newspapers from across the state have also highlighted this change in policy, as well as clients impacted by the extended look-back period. Numerous advocate organizations have raised significant concern with the program to the state; include legal aid entities at the state and local level.

ODJFS has been in contact with these organizations, OJFSDA, individual clients and county directors. We will keep you informed when new information about the TOP program is available or of changes are made to the policy.

Ohio's Unemployment Rate Drops

The unemployment rate for the month of October has been reported at 9 percent, down from the 9.1 percent in September. The nine percent state rate matches the national rate for the month. Overall, ODJFS reports that 526,000 Ohioans are currently unemployed.

Collabor8 Update – Pilot Program About to “Go Live”

The Collabor8 modernization project has been in the developmental stage for more than a year with county and state officials spending countless hours preparing for the virtual call center project. Wood and Knox Counties will be the first counties to start full operations the first week of December. Delaware, Hancock, Marion, Morrow and Sandusky Counties will roll out after the initial counties are operational.

The multi-county collaborative has received lots of media attention lately, with the Columbus Dispatch (link to story below) featuring the project in a front page story. The story was picked up by numerous papers and media outlets which generated further news and comments from counties throughout Ohio. Governor Kasich also commented on the project upon his seeing the Dispatch story and sent the following Tweet to his followers, “Great to see so many Ohio counties teaming up to share services and reduce costs.”

The eyes of the state are on Ohio counties as we look to ways to modernize our systems and improve service delivery. Most counties and districts are involved in some modernization efforts and collectively our labors will pay off to improve our system and enhance services. The leadership being shown by the counties is greatly appreciated and respected by the public, our clients, the media and elected officials. Best of luck to Collabor8 as they move towards completion of their project.

<http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2011/11/06/seven-counties-merge-offices.html>

Dramatic Drop in Teen Birth Rate

The teen birth rate in the United States dropped dramatically in 2010, showing a nine percent decline. This is the steepest decline registered in more than 60 years and the national rate is the lowest on record. According to just released data, the teen birthrate in 2010 was 34.3 births per thousand, a significant improvement from the record year of 1991 of 61.8 births per 1,000. Overall the birthrate has dropped 55 percent since its peak.

For those of us in the business of serving the poor, this reduction in teen births is welcome news. Problems for families associated with teen and unplanned pregnancies include poverty, school dropout rates, abuse, neglect and welfare dependency.

Latest Work Participation Numbers

ODJFS has released the most recent work participation rate numbers for Ohio. The rate for September, 2011, has been reported at 32.65 percent, a very modest increase from the August rate of 31.22 percent. The next report will be for the October month which will be the most critical measure in determining whether or not the state and counties will achieve federal compliance with the law and avoid sanctions through our corrective action plan. As we are all aware, beginning October 1, the start of the federal fiscal year, counties must achieve a 50 percent all family rate and 90 percent two-parent rate.

Other trends noted in the state release of the September data includes:

- The number of unassigned assistance groups continues to drop -from 4456 in July 2011 to 3708 in September 2011 (a 16.78% improvement)
- The number of assistance groups assigned to alternative work also continues to decline from 3873 in July 2011 to 3562 in September 2011 (an 8 percent improvement)
- The number of assistance groups not meeting the rate has declined from 23,627 in July 2011 to 22,387 in September 2011 (An improvement of 5.24 percent)

Loss of Unemployment Compensation In January 2012 May Effect Over 70,000 Ohioans

As a result of the long standing economic issues the nation is currently facing, many unemployed people have continued to receive unemployment for multiple years. They are commonly referred to as the 99'ers. According to information from ODJFS, they estimate that the number of unemployed Ohioans who will exhaust their long term unemployment benefits in the next six months will be over 201,000 if Congress fails to act on extending benefits for the long term unemployed. Over 70,000 Ohioans will exhaust their UC benefits in January 2012 alone. This is more than the total number of people who lost their benefits in all of 2011.

Attached is a letter that ODJFS will be sending out to those nearing the end of their allowable unemployment benefits. The letter lists the resources available to these folks including Food Assistance, Medicaid and perhaps OWF for those with minor children.

Nursing Home Meeting

ODJFS, OJFSDA and representatives from various nursing home organizations met this week to discuss ongoing training needs. The state has been reviewing requests from the association and nursing homes to update written guidance materials for nursing home eligibility and to develop training for county workers.

This is the second meeting conducted by ODJFS on this topic with several more planned in the coming months. John McCarthy, ODJFS Medicaid Director, has been instrumental in leading the conversations and making this a priority for the JFS system. The loss of administrative funding, local resources in staffing (through attrition, retirement and lay-offs), added complexity of the program and increased demand for services necessitate the need for significant training and guidance materials.

A draft training document has been developed by the state and we are working with them to develop training opportunities which may include a centralized training for all counties, regional trainings and sessions at the OJFSDA annual conference. OJFSDA is extremely appreciative of the state efforts and leadership on this needed support.

PCSAO Releases Progress Report

The Public Children Services Association of Ohio has released their annual Progress Report ([2011 PCSAO Thanksgiving Progress Report](#)) which demonstrates the good work of our sister association and the hard working counties in serving our most vulnerable children.

The report highlights many of the exciting and positive trends in the child welfare system and PCSAO, including:

- **Strengthening the focus on Safety and Permanency**, including Differential Response, use of the CAPMIS Toolkit, Family Search and Engagement, Permanency Roundtables and more
- **Success at the Federal level** with renewed Title IV-E ProtectOhio Flexible Funding Waiver, and Title IV-B reauthorization at current funding
- **Available, timely and accessible ROM and BIC Data** so agencies can track performance outcomes and target scarce workforce and fiscal resources
- **Ongoing research efforts for evidence-based** practice and ensuring wise resource investment
- **Continued success with local voters** for local children services levies – 3 ½ years of 100% passage

Good job to all involved in the child welfare system. The importance of what you do and need in the community cannot be overstated.

Federal Update

The Congressional "Super Committee" failed to reach consensus to reduce the federal deficit and now Congress and the President prepare for across the board cuts of \$1.2 trillion over the next ten years, starting in January 2013. These cuts are to be split evenly between defense and discretionary spending.

How these cuts will be implemented, by what amount and specifically which discretionary programs have yet to be decided. Some programs are "exempt" from the mandate while others in our system are subject to, and likely to, be reduced.

The following information concerning potential future cuts has been provided by Tom Joseph, Waterman and Associates, and National Association of County Human Service Administrators (NACHSA) Washington Representative. Tom is an excellent representative for counties in Washington and a strong advocate on behalf of NACHSA. His experience and insights are greatly appreciated. Tom notes:

The potential cuts to federal programs amount to about nine percent across all discretionary programs but they would not occur until January 2013, leaving 13 months for Congress to find a way to avoid them. There are still questions about which programs would be exempt from sequestration. What is known is that the following programs are protected.

Protected Programs

TANF

Child nutrition programs (with the exception of special milk programs) Child care entitlement to States (75-1550-0-1-609);

Commodity supplemental food program;

Food stamp program (SNAP);

Medicaid

SSI

WIC

Foster Care (IV-E)

Family support payments to states (75-1501-0-1-609) (this refers to child support, but there are conflicting provisions of earlier law, that OMB has not clarified)

Programs that are likely to be subject to across the board cuts (they have not been identified (as yet) by OMB as being exempt), include:

Programs Likely to be Subject to Sequestration

Promoting Safe and Stable Families

Child Care Development Block Grant

Social Services Block Grant

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act

Substance Abuse Block Grant

Mental Health Block Grant

Community Health Centers

Community Services Block Grant

Child Care and Development Block Grant (discretionary funds)

Clearly the budget discussions in Washington will have an impact on the state and counties. Securing federal funding will be a top priority of OJFSDA as well as our sister associations. We will be working closely with Tom through NACHSA and all counties are strongly encouraged to continue your membership with the national association and take an active role in the federal lobbying effort.

News Clips

The following articles are from publications around the state of Ohio

Drugs Used for Psychotics Go to Youths in Foster Care

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/21/health/research/study-finds-foster-children-often-given-antipsychosis-drugs.html?_r=1&ref=us

Wanted: Anyone who can qualify

<http://news.cincinnati.com/article/20111120/BIZ/111200334/Wanted-Anyone-who-can-qualify?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|News>

Single moms in poverty here reflect national data

<http://news-herald.com/articles/2011/11/20/news/nh4746915.txt>

Ohio going back more than 10 years to recover welfare money

<http://www.bucyrustelegraphforum.com/article/20111117/NEWS01/111170307/Ohio-going-back-more-than-10-years-recover-welfare-money>

Ohio slower to recoup jobs, study says

<http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/business/2011/11/15/ohio-slower-to-recoup-jobs-study-says.html>

Even in a land of abundance, hard times leave many people in need

<http://www.crainscleveland.com/article/20111114/BLOGS02/111119924>

Poor and unequal – Toledo Blade Editorial

<http://www.toledoblade.com/Editorials/2011/11/14/Poor-and-unequal.html>

New Way to Tally Poor Recasts View of Poverty

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/08/us/poverty-gets-new-measure-at-census-bureau.html?ref=us>

Opinion: Time for action on childhood hunger

<http://news.cincinnati.com/article/20111122/EDIT02/311220050/Guest-column-Time-for-action-on-childhood-hunger>

Survey finds health, not safety, kids' biggest risk

<http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2011/11/16/health-not-safety-kids-biggest-risk.html>

Benefit errors slam jobless: Those paid too much have to pay state back

<http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2011/11/20/benefit-errors-slam-jobless.html>

Columbus daycare provider investigated

<http://www.10tv.com/content/stories/2011/11/22/columbus-daycare-provider-investigated.html>

A program that helps youths find jobs

<http://news.cincinnati.com/article/20111123/EDIT02/311230098/A-program-helps-youths-find-jobs?odyssey=mod|newswell|text|FRONTPAGE|p>

Middletown's Job and Family Services closes office to save money

<http://www.middletownjournal.com/news/middletown-news/middletowns-job-and-family-services-closes-office-to-save-money-1288617.html>

Helping neighbors in their time of need

<http://www.the-news-leader.com/news/article/5126968>

JFS agencies not merging

<http://www.the-daily-record.com/news/article/5120761>

Job and Family Services to receive back pay

<http://www.the-daily-record.com/news/article/5126300>

Welfare roundup reaches way back to collect overpayments

<http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2011/11/16/welfare-roundup-reaches-way-back.html>

JOB POSTINGS

INTERNAL and EXTERNAL POSTING

JOB TITLE: Administrative Secretary (full time)

POSTING DATE: Tuesday, November 22, 2011

DEADLINE TO APPLY: Tuesday, December 6, 2011

DEPARTMENT: Job and Family Services
ADDRESS: 449 S. Meridian Street, Ravenna, Ohio 44266
APPOINTING AUTHORITY: Portage County Board of Commissioners
CORE HOURS: Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
SALARY RANGE: \$13.80 - \$15.98/hr.
VACANCIES: 1

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

Possession of an Associates Degree in Public or Business Administration and a minimum of three (3) years experience providing clerical/administrative support to a higher level of management is required. Ability to type 55 w.p.m. as demonstrated through testing. Must possess a valid Ohio driver's license and maintain continuing eligibility under the existing County driver eligibility standards.

JOB DESCRIPTION:

Provide direct secretarial and clerical support to PCDJFS Director, Asst. Directors and Administrators including but not limited to: screening telephone calls; opening and categorizing mail; maintaining appointment and travel schedules; receive, greet and direct visitors to the Director's office. Prepare correspondence, meeting minutes, agendas, memos, tables and graphs; create forms for administrative use; prepare internal, state and or county mandated reports. Assist in special projects to include public speaking engagements and assignment to committees/boards as needed. At the direction of the Director, serve as liaison between Directors and media, government officials and agencies, agency personnel and the general public providing information regarding agency programs, procedures and operations.

* APPLICATIONS MAY BE PICKED UP - 6TH FLOOR OF THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING or

** DOWNLOAD A COUNTY APPLICATION ON-LINE AT: www.co.portage.oh.us

SUBMIT A COMPLETED COUNTY APPLICATION FORM WITH COVER LETTER TO:

PORTAGE COUNTY HUMAN RESOURCES
449 S. MERIDIAN STREET, 6TH FLOOR
RAVENNA, OHIO 44266

Portage County is an equal opportunity employer (EOE)

Child Support Staff Attorney

The Fairfield County Job and Family Services, Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA) seeks a self-starter to fill an entry-level position as a full-time Staff Attorney/Special Assistant Prosecutor. Responsibilities will include representing the CSEA in civil and criminal prosecutions, administrative and civil establishment of paternity, establishment of support orders and modifications, and preparation of motions, briefs and other legal documents. Readiness for a substantial caseload and excellent people skills are a must. The position involves a degree of professional autonomy in handling cases. Experience in child support issues and/or litigation is a plus. Applicants must be admitted to the Ohio Bar and be in good standing. The annual salary is \$38,792. Applicants should go to <http://mss.co.fairfield.oh.us/> and complete an online application and attach a resume and cover letter by December 16, 2011. All applications must be submitted on line. **NO PHONE CALLS PLEASE.**

VACANCY AT ASHLAND COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES 15 West 4th Street Ashland, Ohio 44805

To be considered for this position you must submit the following by:

Friday, December 2, 2011

- ✓ **Completed Civil Service Application**
- ✓ **Current Resume**
- ✓ **Cover Letter**

*Ashland County Department of Job and Family Services is an Equal Opportunity Employer
Agency required acceptable driving record and clean background check.*

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- Completion of one year of technical training in personnel / human resources practices, human relations, employee or labor relations, public administration, business administration or similar field.
- Or one course or six months experience in business mathematics, one course or six months experience in typing or keyboarding or word processing, one course or six months experience in office practices and procedures, on course or six months experience in human resources/personnel, and one course or six months experience in employee or labor relations.
- **Or education, training and/or experience in an amount equal to the Minimum qualifications stated above.**

UNUSUAL WORKING CONDITIONS / HAZARDS

- The position requires no unusual effort. The work is mostly sedentary. The incumbent works in an office setting where the probability of injury is low. Normal safety precautions such as avoiding trips and falls are required.

Agency requires a valid Ohio Driver's license, acceptable driving record, negative drug test and criminal background check.

POSITION DESCRIPTION		ASHLAND COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES		COUNTY OF EMPLOYMENT Ashland DIVISION OR UNIT: Administration					
USUAL WORKING TITLE OF POSITION Administrative Assistant - Confidential		POSITION NO. & TITLE OF IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR 10000.0 County JFS Administrator / Director							
NORMAL WORKING HOURS (Explain unusual or rotating shift) FROM: 8:00 AM TO: 4:00 PM (M,W,Th,F) FROM: 7:30 AM TO: 6:00 (Tues)									
PCN: 10009.0 Title: Administrative Assistant – Confidential Class: 10131	%	JOB DUTIES IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE							
	40%	Assists administration with administrative tasks and assumes responsibility for non-routine administrative tasks; schedules meetings; independently prepares correspondence, memoranda and reports for administrator's review and / or signature; serves as a liaison between administrator and other interested parties (staff, clients, public) as needed or as directed; answers telephone; completes special projects and assignments; updates manuals; provides clerical support in labor-management meetings, investigations and corrective actions; maintains notes of confidential meetings, corrective action and management meetings; assists in the management of programs; coordinates the resolution of customer complaints with proper supervisor or department; maintains office in administrator's absence.							
	40%	Prepares and processes various personnel forms and related documents(i.e. evaluation forms, position descriptions, tables of organization, personnel files); processes and maintains files relating to human resources (I.e. health insurance forms, mandatory training files, I-9 forms, investigation files, public records logs); receives and reviews employment applications; schedules and conducts preliminary interviews; answers inquiries; assists in recruiting, interviewing and training; conducts orientation for new employees; updates and maintains record of employee training; provides clerical support to supervisory staff as assigned.							
	15%	Using various computer software programs, prepares typed copy (correspondence, reports, minutes of meetings, tables, graphs, charts, newsletters, pamphlets and/ or contracts) from rough written copy, oral instruction or dictation. Proofs copies and makes corrections; performs general clerical duties (distributing mail, copies, gathers and distributes information); prepares forms; arranges conferences and makes travel arrangements.							
	5%	Supervises temporary clerical staff and/or student help; responds to public records requests; maintains bulletin boards; develops new office procedures; attends training and, other duties as assigned.							
List Position Numbers and Class Titles of positions supervised. If more than eight, list titles only. Student Help Intermittent Clerical Staff		<table border="0"> <tr> <td>_____ Director's Signature</td> <td>_____ Date</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____ Employee's Signature</td> <td>_____ Date</td> </tr> </table>				_____ Director's Signature	_____ Date	_____ Employee's Signature	_____ Date
_____ Director's Signature	_____ Date								
_____ Employee's Signature	_____ Date								

INTERNAL and EXTERNAL POSTING

JOB TITLE: PCSA AIDE (full time)

POSTING DATE: Wednesday, November 9, 2011

DEADLINE TO APPLY: Wednesday, November 23, 2011

DEPARTMENT: Job and Family Services

ADDRESS: 449 S. Meridian Street, Ravenna, Ohio 44266

APPOINTING AUTHORITY: Portage County Board of Commissioners

CORE HOURS: Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

SALARY RANGE: \$9.98/hr.

VACANCIES: 1

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

High School diploma or GED required. Must possess a minimum of two (2) years experience in an office setting working with the public. Must possess a valid Ohio driver's license in accordance with County policy and motor vehicle liability insurance.

JOB DESCRIPTION:

Performs variety of clerical support functions to assist the Children Services staff in their case management duties. Includes typing of routine correspondence with prepared text on standard forms, reports or in computer programs; processing of reports; sorting cases, case materials or mail; distribution of files, material or mail; typing envelopes and mailing correspondence. Creating & mailing packets of informational and applicant materials. Schedules or reschedules appointments. Performs case research & follow-up contacts to assist customers, providers &/or staff. Provides phone & reception coverage by operating switchboard, screening calls & referring callers to appropriate personnel or takes message; greets customers & general public in person & on the telephone; interviews to ascertain needs on phone & in person. Makes appropriate referrals. Provides back up transportation services for customer to & from service providers. Assists in supervision of adolescents in performing community service duties.

* APPLICATIONS MAY BE PICKED UP - 6TH FLOOR OF THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING or

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RAVENNA, OHIO 44266**

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Upcoming Meetings and Events

NOVEMBER

24 *State Holiday: Thanksgiving*
30 Columbus District Directors

Office Closed
Lancaster

10:00 am

December

2	District Directors Meeting	<u>Conference Call</u>	9:30 am
5	Legislative Committee	OJFSDA	9:30 am
6	Canton District Directors	Stark CDJFS	10:00 am
15	Executive Committee Meeting	OJFSDA	9:30 am
15	Metro Directors Meeting	OCDA	1:00 pm
15	Southwest District Directors	Greene CDJFS	9:30 am
16	General Session & Luncheon	Crowne Plaza	9:30 am
16	Annual Banquet	Crowne Plaza	12:00 am
20	Child Care Committee	South Opportunity Center	Cancelled
22	Northwest District Directors	Hancock CDJFS	9:30 am
26	<i>State Holiday: Christmas</i>	Office Closed	





Department of Job and Family Services

John R. Kasich, Governor

Michael B. Colbert, Director

Dear Claimant:

According to our records, you may be nearing the end of allowable unemployment compensation benefits. If you have not yet been able to find employment, please know that the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services remains committed to assisting you during your time of need. As you continue your job search efforts, please keep the following resources in mind:

Ohio Means Jobs

Remember that you can access thousands of job opportunities at <https://OhioMeansJobs.com>. Through a partnership with Monster.com, <https://OhioMeansJobs.com> gives job seekers free access to tens of thousands of job openings, including full-time, part-time, contract, internship and temporary work. You can use Ohio Means Jobs to learn about upcoming recruitment events, and search for jobs by a variety of filters, including company names, occupational titles, location and salary requirements.

One-Stop Centers

Please continue to visit your local One-Stop Center for help with such things as resume development, career planning and job searching. One-Stop Centers match job seekers with businesses looking to hire workers, and help laid-off workers learn new skills and find new jobs. You can go to your local One-Stop to find out if you might be eligible for training assistance, Trade Adjustment Assistance, adult education services or apprenticeship opportunities. To find the One-Stop Center nearest you, go to <http://jfs.ohio.gov/owd/wia/wiamap.stm>.

My Next Move

The U.S. Department of Labor recently launched a new Web site that may be helpful to you: <http://www.mynextmove.org>. My Next Move lets you search for new careers and take an assessment to give you a better idea of jobs you might enjoy doing. It also includes information about job openings, apprenticeships, and education and training programs.

Additional Assistance

You may be eligible for food assistance, Medicaid or – if you have a minor child in your home – cash assistance. For more information or to apply online, go to <https://odjfsbenefits.ohio.gov/>. You could also go to your county department of job and family services or visit your local Benefit Bank site. A list of county agencies can be found at <http://jfs.ohio.gov/County/cntydir.stm>. To find a Benefit Bank location near you, go to <http://www.ohiobenefits.org/> or call 1-800-648-1176.

If you have concerns about your ability to pay your mortgage, go to <http://savethedream.ohio.gov/> for more information about Ohio's foreclosure prevention assistance. If you pay child support in Ohio and have not already inquired about a possible support order adjustment, contact your local child support enforcement agency (CSEA). To find the CSEA in your county, call 1-800-686-1556 or visit <http://jfs.ohio.gov/County/cntydir.stm>.

In addition, we are pleased to announce that another valuable resource is available: a new Web site called <http://ohioheretohelp.ohio.gov/index.stm>. This is a comprehensive tool for unemployed workers in Ohio. It contains job search assistance and information about a wide variety of services related to money, food, housing and other topics.

If you have any questions about this letter, please call 1-877-852-0010 or send an e-mail inquiry through the feedback form at <https://jfs.ohio.gov/feedback/ouc/index.asp>.

Sincerely,

Michael B. Colbert
Director

30 East Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
jfs.ohio.gov

An Equal Opportunity Employer and Service Provider