

NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION

You Are Part of a System

Written by the Institute for Human
Services for the Ohio Department
of Job and Family Services and the
Ohio Child Welfare Training Program

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Overview

In this article we will explore the role of the federal government, the State of Ohio, and Ohio's 88 counties in designing, funding, monitoring, and operating the system in which you work. We will also review the administrative arrangements for Public Children Services Agencies (PCSAs) allowed under Ohio law.

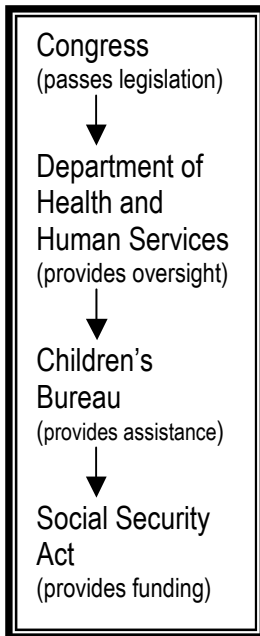
Federal Oversight, State-Supervised, and County-Administered

The phrase, “federally funded, state-supervised, and county-administered” is often used to describe how things work in Ohio. Let’s take a moment to see what that means.

Delivering services to people in need relies heavily on the cooperation of federal, state and local government agencies. A majority of Ohio programs have the following hierarchy:

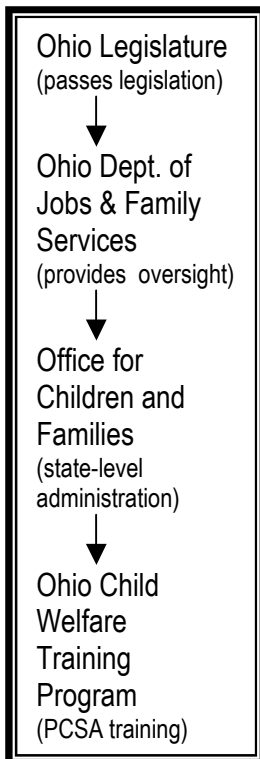
Federal Oversight:

- The federal government plays a role in program creation, design, operation, and oversight by creating programs and authorizing funding.
- Congress passes legislation, signed into law by the President that creates programs and authorizes funding.



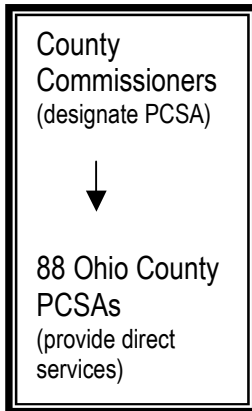
- Many programs are funded by a combination of federal funds and matching state funds.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is the principal agency for protecting the health of all Americans and providing essential human services.
- The Children's Bureau (CB) assists States in the delivery of child welfare services designed to protect children and strengthen families. The agency provides grants to operate a range of child welfare services, including child protective services (child abuse and neglect), family preservation and support, foster care, adoption, and independent living.
- The Social Security Act contains the primary sources of federal funds available to states for child welfare, foster care, and adoption activities. These funds include *non-entitlement authorizations* (determined through the annual appropriations process) and *authorized entitlements* (the federal government has a binding obligation to make payments to any person or unit of government that meets the eligibility criteria established by law).

State Supervision:



- The Ohio General Assembly passes legislation that is signed into law by the Governor that creates Ohio's version of the federal programs and authorizes state matching funds.
- The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) oversees program implementation at the local level through writing policy, monitoring operations, and collecting and distributing funds.
- The Office for Families and Children (OFC), a division of ODJFS, is directly responsible for state-level administration and oversight of programs that prevent child abuse and neglect; provide services to abused/neglected children and their families (birth, foster, and adoptive); license foster homes and residential facilities; license child care homes and facilities; and investigate allegations of child and adult abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Additionally, OFC operates the **Ohio Child Welfare Training Program**, which provides training to public children services agency workers, foster parents, and adoption assessors.

County Administration:

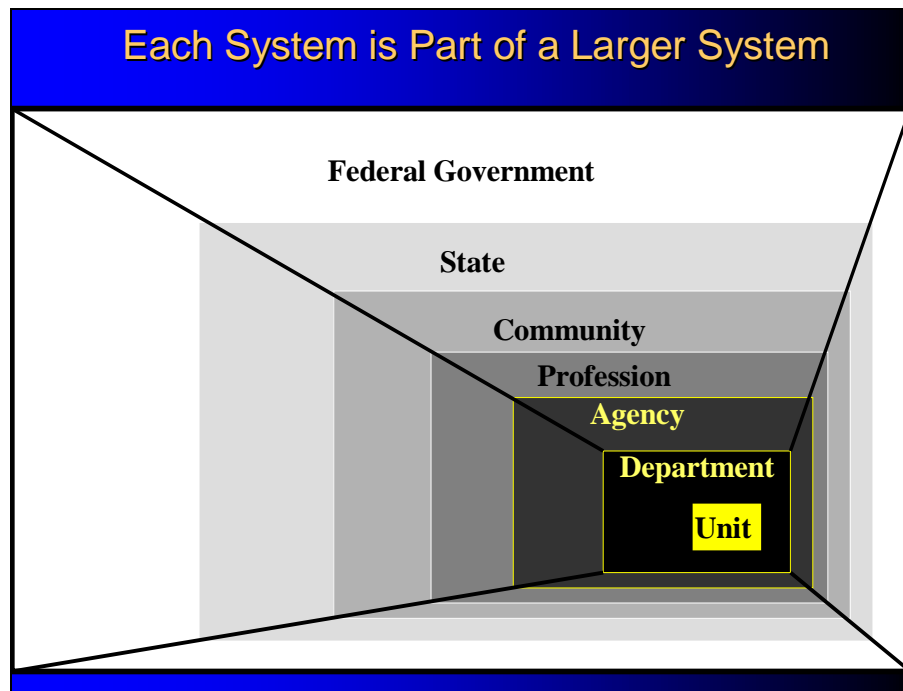


- Public Children Services Agencies (PCSA) were created by Ohio statute, and the local governing body or county board of commissioners determines their structure. Some PCSAs are located within the administrative body of the County Department of Job and Family Services (CDJFS). Some PCSAs are separate Children Services Boards (CSB).
- In Ohio, child welfare services (e.g., child protection, foster and kinship care, adoption, independent living) are provided by 88 PCSAs that provide direct services to children and families.
- PCSAs are designated by law to be the sole county agencies charged with investigation of allegations of child abuse and neglect. County commissioners can designate any private or government entity within the state to serve as a county's PCSA.
- County agencies actually implement job and family services programs financed in part by the federal and state government and supervised by the State of Ohio.
- County agencies set their own policies with federal and state laws, regulations, and guidelines. Section

You Are Part of a System

You are part of a system. In fact, you are part of many systems, including your unit, department or division, agency, community, profession, state child welfare system, and the federal child welfare system.

Each system is part of a larger system:



The federal government passes laws; the state legislature writes and passes statutes that enact those laws for Ohio; the ODJFS promulgates the rules that direct counties in how to implement the laws locally; and county PCSAs develop procedures that translate rules into everyday practice. Local juvenile courts can have profound influence on child welfare practice and frequently set parameters by interpreting laws in each county. Even division's or department's goals and objectives may add emphasis or priority, and professional standards add yet another level of practice guidance.

Material for this article was adapted from the Overview Orientation CD ROM developed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, the Ohio Job & Family Services Orientation, (2000) by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, as well as from information developed by Tim Johnson, Montgomery County Children Services Board.