



# Transforming Ohio for Growth

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*Stronger. Together.*

## **HUMAN SERVICES INNOVATION**

### ***Helping Ohioans Rise Up and Out of Poverty and Into Jobs***

Governor John R. Kasich established the Office of Human Services Innovation in fall 2014 to help bring badly needed reforms to the state's human services programs.

The new office is working with state and local agencies and stakeholders to pursue a better-coordinated, person-centered human service system that will help Ohioans get a job, succeed at work and prevent or move out of poverty. This budget will help turn those reform ideas into the reality of a more effective, more efficient system that gives taxpayers the value they deserve and low-income Ohioans the future they need.

**Targeting Those With Highest Rates Of Unemployment:** A strategy to strengthen services and work supports for Ohioans starts with a focus on teens and young adults, ages 16 to 24, where early intervention can have the greatest impact in breaking the cycle of poverty by preventing it.

**Focusing On People, Not Programs to Help Ohioans Move Up and Out Of Poverty:** The budget seeks to end the siloed, fragmented approach that for far too long has tried to treat the collected "symptoms" of poverty instead of seeking a cure for the underlying challenges that needy Ohioans face. The budget starts fixing this by allocating existing federal and state funding to create the framework for a comprehensive case management and employment initiative. The initiative will provide unique collections of services around individuals based on their needs and better support them as they move up and out of poverty. The goal is to expand this approach to all Ohioans on public assistance.

**Removing Barriers to Moving Up:** The lack of access to affordable and quality child care remains one of the biggest barriers to work. Furthermore, the loss of subsidized child care once a family's income grows above 200 percent of the federal poverty level (approximately \$3,298 a month for a family of three) is one the most detrimental benefit "cliffs" working poor encounter as their economic situations improve. Softening the impact of these types of "cliffs" removes a significant disincentive to economic advancement for the working poor and the budget does that by raising the income limit for initial child care eligibility and allowing families to keep subsidized child care longer as their incomes gradually increase. Families would instead have their child care subsidies phased out gradually until their income reaches 300 percent of the federal poverty level, or approximately \$4,948 a month for a family of three.

**Bottom Line:** The budget begins laying the foundation needed to move Ohio's disjointed array of human services and workforce programs into a better-coordinated, person-centered approach to support low-income Ohioans as they move up and out of poverty. By focusing first on teens and young adults, factors that contribute to life-long poverty can be addressed before they become insurmountable. In addition,

addressing the child care benefit “cliff” removes one of the biggest barriers to employment for the working poor.

