

## Investing in Ohio's Most In-Need Children

As the father of eight and grandfather of 24, family is central to Governor Mike DeWine's beliefs and values. Tragically, too many Ohio families have been separated because they are unable to access the care their children need to be healthy. As a result, parents must make the unfathomable decision to relinquish the custody of their child.

During his first days in office, Governor Mike DeWine directed the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to provide a one-time, \$3 million investment to address the unmet needs of multi-system youth who were at risk of criminal justice involvement and/or custody relinquishment. The flexible funds help locals meet the needs of families and are currently available to communities.

The Ohio operating budget supports Governor DeWine's goal of keeping families together by:

**Investing \$20 million in crisis stabilization services.** The state operating budget invests \$11.5 million over the biennium to provide flexible funding for crisis stabilization services that help meet the needs of individuals and families, as they arise. Local communities can use these funds to provide supports and services not covered by Medicaid. In addition, the budget invests in crisis infrastructure development by directing \$9.2 million to Ohio's county mental health and recovery boards. These funds will be used to develop standardized and quality crisis access. These funds can be used to create mobile response teams and address gaps in Ohio's crisis service network.

**Investing \$4 million to improve care coordination and provide support for families with children in crisis through the Strong Families, Safe Communities program.**

The Strong Families, Safe Communities program is designed specifically for children who present a risk to themselves, their families, or others because of a mental illness or developmental delay. Many children who are at risk are not engaged in treatment programs and may not be known to the community until a crisis unfolds. Care coordination and crisis intervention services can quickly stabilize a child's health. Support for these families will reduce the risk of harm and help the family remain together.

**Investing \$4.4 million through the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities** to provide tele-psychiatry, respite services, and increase provider capacity to support the families of youth with complex needs. These investments are designed to prevent or reduce out-of-home placements for youth, prepare families for a successful return home after out-of-home placements, and improve overall outcomes.

**Investing \$28 million in additional services for individuals with autism spectrum disorder.** The newly-funded services will work to keep children with their families and prevent the need for out-of-home care.

**Investing \$4 million to provide individualized services and supports to children with multi-system needs and their families.** The Cabinet's Family-Centered Services and Supports project provides non-clinical assistance for children, up to age 21, who are challenged with multiple needs and their families. These funds are appropriated to local Family and Children First Councils to coordinate care for children who may not have access to Medicaid. Since its inception, approximately 96 percent of children served by Family-Centered Services and Supports have been able to remain in their homes, rather than enter institutional care or custody of a public agency.

**Investing \$18 million in multi-system youth innovation,** to serve children with complex needs who may be at risk of custody relinquishment. These funds will provide families and children with the services they need to get healthy and remain in their own homes and communities.

Ohio's operating budget also makes targeted investments in services to support multi-system youth who have been separated from their families:

**Investing \$25 million to provide services to multi-system youth in Ohio's public children services agencies or who are at risk of entering children services.** For too many Ohio children, child welfare has become the place of last resort when they can't access needed services within their own communities. The care that multi-system youth require is often expensive, and room and board are not covered by insurance. Ohio's operating budget supports Governor DeWine's goal to allocate additional funding to ensure multi-system youth within public children services agencies and youth who are at risk of entering them can receive the care they need.

The operating budget also supports Governor DeWine's commitment to providing additional support to young people as they transition out of foster care by:

**Investing an additional \$11.4 million over the biennium to support transition-aged youth exiting foster care.** Ohio's Bridges program is available to young adults who are transitioning from foster care to adulthood, who are ages 18 to 20. The program provides guidance, support, and services tailored to children's unique needs. Through regular meetings with Bridges representatives, participants develop goals, learn skills, and access services from employment and education to health care and household maintenance. All services are designed to help former foster youth become successful, self-sufficient adults.

Governor Mike DeWine has tasked the Ohio Family and Children First Cabinet Council – which is comprised of his Directors of Aging, Developmental Disabilities, Education, Health, Job and Family Services, Medicaid, Mental Health and Addiction Services, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, Rehabilitation and Correction, Youth Services, and Budget and Management – with coordinating the investments above to provide a safety net for Ohio's most at-risk children and families and ensure they receive the supports they need.

