



# IN COMMON

## *Information for the Common Good*

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*The Ohio Department of Education, Division of Career, Technical, and Adult Education*

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*The Ohio Department of Development*

*The Ohio Board of Regents*

*The Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services*

*The Ohio State University Extension*

*and*

*Ohio Department of Natural Resources*

*Common goals...*

*Common customers...*

*Common needs...*

*Common challenges...*

### **Communication Is the Key To Washington County Partners Success**

Communication is the key to a successful partnership according to Dewayne Poling, the current Chairperson of the Washington County Partners and Adult Program Director for the Washington County Career Center. "We talk to each other and are willing to work with each other. Our partners always put everything out on the table, and work for the benefit of the clients," states Mr. Poling. Open communication is fostered with monthly meetings of partners, semi-annual legislative forums, and annual workshops of all the employees of participating organizations. But communication between partners does not stop with official meetings; partners work together between meetings by referring clients to each other and sharing resources.

Washington County Partners formed in 1993, drawing membership from previous networking groups such as Jobnet and monthly agency lunches. To maintain a balance of power between members, each year a different Partners' member assumes the role of chair. Members are responsible for carrying out Partners initiatives within their own organization. Partners members represent a variety of organizations including: Washington-Morgan Community Action, Marietta City Schools, Ohio Bureau of Employment Services, Bureau of Ser-

#### **Common Good State Team Welcomes New Members**

The addition of two new members to the Common Good State Team will increase the team's ability to promote interagency collaboration at the state and local level. **Sally T. Prouty**, Chief, Division of Civilian Conservation, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, joined the team at its April meeting. Sally works with Civilian Conservation Corps camps located throughout the state of Ohio. Earlier in the year, **Christopher J. Reis**, Field Services Supervisor, Office of Community Services, Community Development Division, Ohio Department of Development became a State Team member. Chris is involved with Community Action Agencies throughout the state. The **Need to Know** section on page 3 features information about the programs with which Sally and Chris are involved.

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**Washington County Partners (Continued)**

vices for the Visually Impaired, Washington State Community College, Washington County Department of Human Services, Washington County Career Center, Family and Children First Council, and the Marietta Chamber of Commerce.

In an innovative approach to linking with legislators, Washington County Partners sponsor semi-annual legislative forums. These are typically attended by the Washington County state senator and representatives, as well as, an aide from the U.S. senator's office. They are presented in a round table format in which each Partners member and visiting legislator has the opportunity to briefly present their concerns. Common topics include welfare reform, One Stop and the Workforce Investment Act. After the round table presentations, the meetings break-up into informal discussion. To promote the forums, the Partners' chairperson works with various legislative offices to select mutually convenient dates. Forums are scheduled on Friday afternoons when legislators generally return to their constituencies. To facilitate open discussion, the press is not invited. The legislative reception of these forums has been so positive that in February of 1998 Partners was invited to hold a legislative forum at the State House.

Another very successful new program developed by the Washington County Partners is "JUMP Ahead in the Workplace," a job readiness workshop. During this one-day workshop, Zonta International of Marietta and the Environs members and Partners members presented topics such as resume writing, interviewing, and dress for success. The program was open to the public and promoted through Partners members. For more information on this program, contact Mary Kern, Director, Adult Basic and Literacy Education at (740) 374-6548.

As part of its on-going commitment to cross-training staff and informing the public, Partners is currently planning the fifth annual training seminar to be held August 25 & 26, 1999. A new topic to be addressed this year is Orientation to Nontraditional Occupations for Women (ONOW). Other topics are likely to include special needs, personal health, use of the Internet, and Department of Human Services concerns. Over 100 employees of participating organizations are expected to register for this event to be held at the Washington State Community College.

In recent years, the Washington County Partners organization has shifted from primarily a case management approach to a broader community approach. Formerly, Partners worked to identify and assist families that would benefit from the joint efforts of its members. However, Partners' members soon realized that by applying their collective energies to the broader community, they could have greater impact.

## **Reprint of Section 108. Local OBES/ODHS Integration Initiatives (Proposed Budget Language)**

*(The following article is reprinted from Section 108 of HB283—Biennial State Budget)*

In anticipation of the merger of the Ohio Department of Human Services (ODHS) and the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services (OBES) into the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, and as part of the implementation of the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA), local integration initiatives may be established jointly by OBES and ODHS in fiscal year 2000 or 2001. In one or more of the initiatives, a local workforce development board may be created and appointed by local elective officials to replace the current existing service delivery areas (SDAs) - private industry council (PIC), the job service employer committee, and the county human services planning committee, and to serve as the federally required workforce investment board if the area qualifies. In serving in that capacity for the aforementioned boards, the workforce development board shall provide direct oversight of the funding and operations of programs such as the Ohio Works First Program, Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA)/(WIA) Programs, and other State of Ohio employment and training/workforce development activities carried out by the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services and the local county department of human services. The initiatives may be expanded to include surrounding counties with the approval of local elected officials and the Directors of the Ohio Department of Human Services and the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services.

In addition to these oversight functions, the workforce development board, through the State of Ohio and local partners, shall provide planning and coordination related to all vocational, educational and employment and training programs requiring coordination under the WIA within the county. The local board of county commissioners or other local elected officials shall perform the administrative functions for the local initiatives and provide monthly information to the Directors of ODHS and OBES concerning the operational issues, services, finances, and performance measures that must be correctly addressed for successful implementation of the Workforce Investment Act.

**The Common Good Web Site:**  
**<http://literacy.kent.edu/CommonGood/>**

## Need to Know

### Community Action Agencies for Common Good

Community Action Agencies (CAA) make excellent Common Good partners. Currently, 53 CAAs cover all of Ohio's 88 counties. In 1997, this network of agencies administered \$355,528,403 to alleviate the problems of poverty in Ohio's communities. This makes Ohio second in the nation in the amount of resources developed by its community action network. Local CAA Boards draw from three different interest groups: one-third of the board members are agency clients, one-third of the board members are local commerce representatives, and the remainder of the board members are county commissioners. This means that every county commissioner in Ohio is on a CAA board. Ohio's Community Action Agencies attribute their success to their unique ability to conceptualize, develop, and implement comprehensive solutions to problems of poverty. In order to be geographically close to the people they serve, CAAs typically have multiple program centers or outreach offices. The greatest number of CAA projects are in the nutritional services category that includes a network of food cooperatives and food pantries. But, the fastest growing CAA funding category is housing. In the last five years, CAA has decreased the level of funding for energy assistance and employment.

One of the Community Action Agencies sources of funding is Community Services Block Grants (CSBG). These grants represent only about 5% of CAAs total funding, but, unlike most grants, CSBG provide flexible dollars for communities to implement locally determined service programs. These funds are often used by CAAs to leverage other program dollars and to support administrative costs of programs. The CSBG Act authorizes the disbursement of funds for a broad range of services including education and training, employment, income management, housing, emergency services, nutrition, and linkages. Local Community Action Agencies establish priorities for the block grants based on assessed needs. Last year, the largest category of CSBG expenditures was emergency services, followed by linkages with other programs.

Community Services Block Grants are administered by the Office of Community Services that is housed within the Community Development Division of the Ohio Department of Development. Funding for the CSBG originates from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Families and Children. Ohio's share of federal allocations for CSBGs has increased by approximately 50% since 1982 when the grant program was initiated.

For more information about the Community Action Agencies, Community Services Block Grants, Office of Community Services, or a directory listing the Community Action Agency nearest you, link with the Office of Community Services website at <http://www.odod.ohio.gov/cdd/ocs>.

### CCC Powers Young Peoples' Life Changes

Another potential CG partner in workforce development efforts is the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The CCC employs and trains young people while preserving and enhancing Ohio's natural resources. The 'power' CCC puts behind the changes in young peoples' lives does not come from circular saws and electric drills, although young people do learn how to use heavy machinery. Instead the 'power' comes from the self-discipline, self-confidence, problem-solving skills, leadership skills learned while employed by CCC. In 1998, the Ohio CCC was one of 13 corps nationally selected to participate in the Corps-to-Career initiative that is funded by the Dewitt Wallace Reader's Digest Fund. Through this project, the ODNR CCC will enhance its ability to —

- Target emerging employment and educational opportunities in local communities
- Prepare corps members for these opportunities
- Secure actual placements
- Deliver post-placement services to bolster retention and promote continued career growth
- Track and reinforce the progress of graduates for a year or more
- Access new funding sources to sustain the endeavors

To achieve its objectives, the CCC needs assistance from employers and educators and service providers in the following areas: advisory council representatives, competency testing, GED and vocational classes, community college placement, case management and job coaching, and job placement and post-corps support.

Corps applicants must be between the ages of 18 and 24, unemployed, and a resident of the State of Ohio. Work opportunities may include restoring historical structures, constructing nature trails, rebuilding after natural disasters, or developing new recreational facilities. Not only do corps members learn to use power tools, but they also gain employability skills such as job-hunting, first aid, and CPR. All this is accomplished in Ohio's great outdoors.

If your Common Good team is interested in connecting with a CCC in your local area, call (614) 265-6423, or visit the Ohio CCC website located at: <http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/odnr/ccc>.

## Ohio Department Administrators

Since January 1999, a number of changes have occurred in leadership of Ohio Departments. Below is a list of individuals currently heading state agencies represented on the Common Good State Team.

- C. Lee Johnson, Director  
Ohio Department of Development
- Susan T. Zelman, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education
- Joan Lawrence, Director  
Ohio Department of Aging
- Samuel W. Speck, Director  
Ohio Department of Natural Resources
- Jacqueline Romer-Sensky, Director  
Ohio Department of Human Services
- James J. Mermis, Administrator  
Ohio Bureau of Employment Services

## RESOURCE CORNER

Are you looking for information about improving the quality of life in small communities and rural areas? Click on the Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC) website at <<http://ext.msstate.edu/srdc/pubs/welintro.htm>> for an in-depth analysis of selected rural welfare reform issues, provided in the SRDC Information Briefs at the website. These expansive essays shed light on the host of challenges and opportunities that face governments. Topics such as, "The Drive to Work: Transportation Issues and Welfare Reform in Rural Areas," and "Building Assets and Economic Independence Through Individual Development Accounts," are explored in detail.

Another useful website sponsored by the Welfare Information Network is located at <<http://www.welfareinfo.org/>>. The Welfare Information Network is a clearinghouse for information, policy analysis, and technical assistance on welfare reform. The site features hot topics, a calendar of welfare related meetings and events, WIN publications, opportunities for comments on federal regulations, and litigation related to welfare reform.

### Common Good State Team Sponsors Successful Events

In its efforts to promote interagency collaboration at the state and local levels, the Common Good (CG) State Team sponsored two events in the Spring of 1999. Nearly 200 people attended the first, "Understanding the Workforce Investment Act: A Day with John Chamberlin," that was held March 12, 1999 at the Ohio Historical Society. Chamberlin, who is known for his ability to translate complex legislative information into practical knowledge, did not disappoint his audience. His informal presentation style was augmented by his ability to bring in examples from many states and communities. The event was cosponsored by the Ohio Board of Regents, a Common Good State Team partner, and participants included state agency staff, representatives of local Common Good teams, and community college personnel.

On May 7, 1999, the CG State Team hosted "Seeking Collaborative Solutions to Local Linkages - Fitting the Pieces Together," at Camp Mary Orton. The event was designed to help local teams work more effectively by strengthening existing partnerships, incorporating new partners into a group, and fostering collaborative working relationships. Over 50 people representing five established local Common Good Local Linkage Teams, a new local linkage team, the CG State Team, and the OBES WIA Team participated in the event. After a pancake breakfast with Chris Cakes, the Camp Mary Orton Leadership and Challenge Center staff led groups in problem-solving and team-building initiatives on the campground. Positive outcomes from the day included the reorganizing of one local linkage team and the initiation of a new team in Sandusky County that is being organized under the leadership of the Quilter CCC Camp.

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