

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**New Electronic Payment Method Available for Cash Assistance Recipients**

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) today announced a new method for cash assistance recipients to receive their benefits. Starting Feb. 1, Ohioans receiving Ohio Works First and other cash assistance can choose to receive their benefits via the new Ohio EPPICard™. The Ohio EPPICard™ is a MasterCard® debit card that can be used at MasterCard member banks, ATMs and any retailers that accept MasterCard.

Previously, recipients could choose for their benefits to be issued through paper warrants or deposited directly into their checking or savings accounts. The Ohio EPPICard™ gives them a third option. Paper warrants will be phased out starting in August, when clients will be required, at application or reapplication, to choose either the Ohio EPPICard™ or direct deposit.

“By going to electronic payments for cash assistance benefits, we can provide recipients with their payments quicker and more securely,” said ODJFS Director Douglas Lumpkin. “Additionally, this effort will reduce costs to state and county agencies by more than \$750,000 in postage and administrative support.”

A voluntary enrollment period for the Ohio EPPICard™ will run from February through July 2009. For more information about the card or eligibility for cash assistance programs, call the county department of job and family services office. Contact information for county offices can be found at <http://jfs.ohio.gov/County/cntydir.stm>.