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ODJFS Collaboration Wins Second National Award

COLUMBUS, OHIO – The departments of job and family services in seven Ohio counties have banded together to share case work, improve customer service and save money. Called Collabor8, the program allows Ohioans in any of the seven counties – Delaware, Hancock, Knox, Marion, Morrow, Sandusky and Wood – to call one toll-free number to apply for cash, food and medical assistance.

In honor of this work, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) has received the "Recognition Award for Excellence in Human Services Technology" from IT Solutions Management for Human Services, an association of state human services agencies.

Last year, ODJFS and Collabor8 received a best in category award from the National Association of Counties.

"Collabor8 counties use a single virtual call center, which allows employees to share case work across county lines. This makes it easier for individuals to speak to a caseworker and apply for services, and it reduces the number of trips an individual must make to his or her county department of job and family services," said ODJFS Director Michael Colbert. "I want to thank the state and county employees who worked so hard to build this system. Thanks to their hard work, Ohio is delivering public assistance faster and far more efficiently."

A video describing Collabor8 in detail is available online: http://www.youtube.com/user/OhioJFS

ODJFS is working with counties across the state to streamline and modernize Ohio's public assistance programs. Recently, the Hocking, Ross and Vinton county departments of job and family services merged to become the South Central Ohio Job and Family Services, and the Paulding and Defiance county departments merged to form the Defiance/Paulding Consolidated Department of Job and Family Services. Other counties have begun sharing resources and expertise as a way to reduce costs and improve service.

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