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Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) Now in all of Ohio's 88 Counties

*County-State Collaboration Key to Implementing System that Better Protects Children
and Reduces Demand on Caseworkers*

Columbus- A new casework management system, to be used by child welfare workers across the state, is now operating in all 88 Ohio counties. Implementation of the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) began in Muskingum County August 7, 2006 and was completed last week as Cuyahoga County became the final county to join the system.

"It has been a pleasure and a privilege partnering with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) to pilot the SACWIS system," said David Boyer, Director of the Muskingum County Public Children Services Agency. "This system provides the best tools available to child welfare professionals and our partners to meet our mandates for protecting children."

"ODJFS met us more than halfway," said former Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services Director and current Cuyahoga County Administrator Jim McCafferty. "The roll out of Cuyahoga County is a true testament to the people at ODJFS and Cuyahoga County. We continue to be committed to helping upgrade SACWIS in order to make it even better"

SACWIS is the nation's first fully web-based system designed to help county caseworkers and managers with several functions including eligibility, case management and the administration of adoption, foster care and child protection cases. The system allows a caseworker to track a child across county lines and is accessible 24 hours a day to more than 6,000 county caseworkers as they work to support and improve the safety, permanency and well-being of Ohio's children and families. Ohio's SACWIS also boasts the nation's most comprehensive reporting environments.

"SACWIS is better now than it was when we started using it," said Franklin County Children Services Director Eric Fenner. "SACWIS allows us to share information with other Ohio child welfare agencies so we can help each other fulfill the mission of keeping children safe."

"The counties have worked extremely hard with the state to get SACWIS where it is today," said Crystal Ward Allen, Executive Director of the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO). "A lot of credit needs to go to the county and project staff for their hard work and the results speak for themselves."

Ohio joins 27 other states currently using SACWIS. The system, which supports cases from intake to closure, is accessible to workers anywhere Internet access is available and includes alerts and

reminders which will help in day-to-day case management. Several Ohio county public children services agencies were actively involved with the design and testing of the system. The federal government paid for half of the system's cost.

One of the remaining tasks in the Ohio project is the roll out of the financial component, which could take up to 18 months due to the complexity of this part of SACWIS. Only 14 counties are currently using at least some components of the system's financial module.