

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**February 20, 2020**

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### **\$1 Million Investment to Help Stabilize County Children Services Agencies**

COLUMBUS, OHIO – The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) will invest nearly \$1 million in an Emergency Response Fund to help county children services agencies struggling with historically large caseloads, caseworker burnout and turnover, and unprecedented challenges caused by the drug epidemic.

“The current biennial budget made historic investments in children services to help Ohio’s communities respond to this complex combination of challenges,” said ODJFS Director Kimberly Hall. “The Emergency Response Fund will allow us to quickly implement additional, targeted strategies to assist county agencies during times of immediate need or crisis, such as a large-scale staff turnover, child fatality, documented performance concerns, or other emergencies.”

The investment will fund the creation of a three-person Emergency Response Team, which can nimbly respond to county agencies in crisis by offering intensive training and technical assistance in the short term. To help with long-term needs, the fund may also be used for statewide caseworker recruitment and retention efforts and other capacity challenges that counties may face, such as home study assessments for foster and adoptive parents.

On any given day in Ohio, more than 16,000 children are in the custody of a children services agency, a 30% increase since 2011. Ohio Governor Mike DeWine has prioritized children touched by the foster care system with targeted investments, an [executive order](#) that elevated foster care priorities in Ohio, and the creation of a Children’s Services Transformation Advisory Council. Earlier this month, the Council released its [Initial Findings Report](#), summarizing feedback received during 10 regional foster care forums held across the state. The Council will issue its final recommendations to the Governor by Summer 2020.

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*The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services manages vital programs that strengthen Ohio families. These include job training and employment services, unemployment insurance, cash and food assistance, child care, child and adult protective services, adoption, and child support services.*

