

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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YMCA and ODJFS to provide free memberships to foster and kinship families

COLUMBUS, OHIO –The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) announced today that it has partnered with the Ohio Alliance of YMCAs Foundation (Ohio YMCA) to provide free memberships for certified foster homes and approved kinship caregivers who meet certain eligibility criteria. Bridges participants and their children are also eligible.

“This is a wonderful opportunity for our resource families and the youth in our Bridges program,” ODJFS Director Matt Damschroder said. “Not only will these families be able to enjoy the benefits of exercise, but they will also be able to spend time together, enjoying the fun recreational activities our Ohio YMCAs have to offer.”

Half the cost of the memberships is paid for by ODJFS. The remaining cost, for at least one year, will be covered by an Ohio YMCA grant.

“The addition of this grant means that qualified families will have one year of free entry into Ohio YMCA facilities,” said Damschroder. “For many, this will be the first time these youth have ever had access to these types of facilities.”

To be eligible, certified foster homes must provide the YMCA a copy of the family’s current JFS 01213, “Notice of Approval for Foster Home,” showing the family is currently certified as a foster home. They must also provide a letter from the family’s recommending foster care agency on that agency’s letterhead. It must indicate the family is in good standing with the agency/state of Ohio and either the family has had at least one foster care placement within the past 18 months, or the family is a newly certified foster home within the last six months.

To be eligible as an approved kinship home, families must provide a letter from the agency that approved the family on the agency’s letterhead indicating the family is in good standing with the agency and that they have a current kinship child placed in the home.

Bridges is a program designed to help former foster youth transition to adulthood. To be eligible, Bridges participants must provide a copy of the participant’s Bridges Voluntary Participation Agreement showing the participant is enrolled in Bridges and a letter from the Bridges grantee on the grantee’s letterhead indicating the participant is currently enrolled in Bridges.

“Ohio’s 162 YMCAs are excited to partner with Governor DeWine to offer memberships to Ohio’s foster families, approved kinship caregivers, and Bridges program participants,” said Ohio Alliance of YMCAs Executive Director Beth Tsvetkoff, Esq. “YMCAs are dedicated to supporting the spirits, minds, and bodies of Ohio families. From youth wellness programs, youth sports, before and after school care, summer day and resident camp, and much more, Ohio Ys offer a variety of opportunities for kids to learn and grow.”





**Department of
Job and Family Services**

Mike DeWine, Governor
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor
Matt Damschroder, Director

**News
Release**

As part of the grant, the Ohio Alliance of YMCAs Foundation will pay/reimburse YMCAs 50% of the cost of an annual family membership for certified foster homes and kinship caregivers who meet this criteria up to \$500,000 and 50% of the cost of an annual individual or family membership for Bridges participants in Ohio who meet the criteria up to \$78,000.

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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.

