

LORAIN COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES

Mission: In partnership with the community, the staff, foster parents and volunteers of Lorain County Children Services are committed to the safety and well-being of abused, neglected and dependent children and will provide the highest quality protection, permanence and prevention services to children and families.

**ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 2019**



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE COMMUNITY

Lorain County Children Services' mission begins with "In partnership with the community..." In directing the work of our agency, we know that our children will succeed when the agency and its community partners work together. We value our relationships with both the child serving community and the community as a whole. On behalf of our staff, foster families and kinship families, we thank you for your commitment to creating and maintaining a strong foundation for all Lorain County families. I'd like to mention a few highlights from 2019.

OhioSTART (Sobriety, Treatment, & Reducing Trauma) is a children-services led initiative bringing together caseworkers, behavioral health providers and family peer mentors into teams dedicated to helping families recover from substance use disorders. It has been shown, when implemented with fidelity, to improve outcomes for both parents and children.

ASAP (Ohio Accelerated Safety Analysis Protocol) Prioritizes high risk cases that are reviewed by a trained case reviewer and the assigned caseworker to provide detailed review and analysis to support the team in making critical case decisions. These case management decisions will reduce risk and increase child safety during a very fast and high pressure intake time period.

Some children, however, need to stay someplace safe for a while. For those children, staying with a qualified, interested, and known person, like a relative or family friend, is the next best option to being able to stay at home. While most children who need to move in with relatives does so quite quickly, some children rely on our use of the **30 Days to Family initiative**. A dedicated caseworker deep dives into family connections to support moving children to relatives within 30 days of entering foster care if a relative was not initially discovered prior to the agency accepting custody from the Court.

For children who do need to stay with a foster family, Lorain County residents have contacted us to become foster parents at record levels. In fact, in 2019, it was the first time in several years that the number of new homes licensed exceeded the number of families who closed their license due to retirement or adoption. In addition to these very concrete initiatives that expanded the good outcomes our children already receive, our staff also focused on articulating our Core Values and developing a Practice Model. More on those initiatives can also be found in this report.

2019 was successful because the partnership between the agency, the families served and the robust safety net that exists in Lorain County. It is clear to me that the citizens of Lorain County continue to prioritize its children and families, assuring LCCS has the resources and collaboration needed so that all children are safe within family capable of seeing to the child's ongoing well-being.



"Protecting children from abuse and neglect is a team effort and we appreciate being on your team."

***-Kristen Fox Berki,
MSSA, LISW-S,
Executive Director***

ASSESSMENT SERVICES PROVIDED TO LORAIN COUNTY'S CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Referrals count the information received by mandated reporters and the general public.

Referrals are directed toward our Referral Specialists who, after a discussion with the person making the referral, determine if:

- The referral alleges child abuse or neglect (Screened in);
- The referral would be better managed by a different agency or organization (Information and Referral);
- It is a family calling for help for their children (Family in need of Services);
- It is a child with no available caretaker (Dependency); or,
- The allegations do not currently indicate child abuse or neglect but will be kept on file in case additional information is received (Screened Out.).

4,525 Total Referrals Received in 2019

Screened In Child Abuse and Neglect	1476
Information and Referral	548
Family in Need of Service	116
Dependency	21
Screened out (kept on file)	2364

Type of concern reported

(Screened In Cases)

**Some screened in cases will have multiple concerns reported.*

Screened in Emotional Maltreatment	50
Screened in Physical Abuse	758
Screened in Sexual Abuse	166
Screened in Medical Neglect	53
Screened in Neglect	830
Screened in Shaken baby	0
Multiple Allegation Reports	61

2019 Princess Ball fundraiser



CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE

Most children affected by abuse or neglect can safely remain at home with the appropriate services and case management activities provided by caseworkers and service providers. Some children however need to stay with relatives or foster families who can provide for the child while parents have the opportunity to correct the conditions that compromised the child's safety.

Kinship Care

Kinship care is when children who cannot safely stay at home, stay with relatives. Most often the courts grant relatives Temporary Custody and in some situations, children are placed in the TC of the agency but also live with kin. During 2019, 395 children spent at least part of the year in a kinship arrangement. Of those 395, 224 left kinship care when the court granted legal custody to the relative; 8 children were reunified with their parent, 2 children turned 18 and 161 continued to work toward permanency while in the temporary custody of kin.

Foster Care

When children need to stay with a different family and relatives (Kinship Care) isn't available, Lorain County's children can stay with a highly qualified foster parent.

On January 1, 2019, 124 children lived with a foster parent. During 2019, 74 children entered foster care and 88 children exited foster care. On December 21, 2019, 110 children lived with a foster family.

About Foster Caregivers

Lorain County residents can become foster caregivers through a rigorous licensing and training process. Foster parents are required to have 36 hours of training; complete a homestudy and have a thorough background check, including random drug screen before they can receive a license. Ongoing training and a updated homestudy are required on a continuing basis once licensed.

On January 1, 2019, 74 licensed foster families were available to care for children/sibling groups. During 2019, 24 additional homes were licensed and 13 homes closed their license. The reasons foster families closed their license include:

- They adopted the child they were caring for (5)
- They moved/transferred license (3)
- They retired from fostering (1)
- Their family situations changed (4)

30 Days to Family

During the initial assessment phase, caseworkers diligently work with parents to identify relatives or family friends that could assist in providing support to the parent or possibly care for the child/children if needed. This is a successful process for most situations in which children need to stay someplace else but for some children, the court grants the agency custody and the child comes in to foster care before we were able to discover a relative.

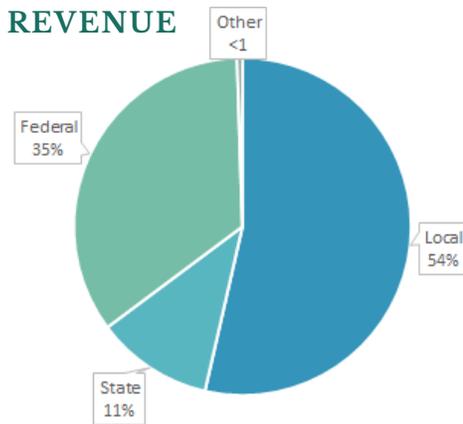
In 2019, the agency implemented a set of tools and protocols called 30 Days to Family. The goal is to have a caseworker attach to the child's case and do intensive search and engagement for relatives with the goal of having the child leave foster care for that relative's home within 30 days of the agency being granted custody.

In 2019 (partial year, May - December) all 9 children assigned to 30 Days to Family were able to be placed with a relative within the first month of foster care.

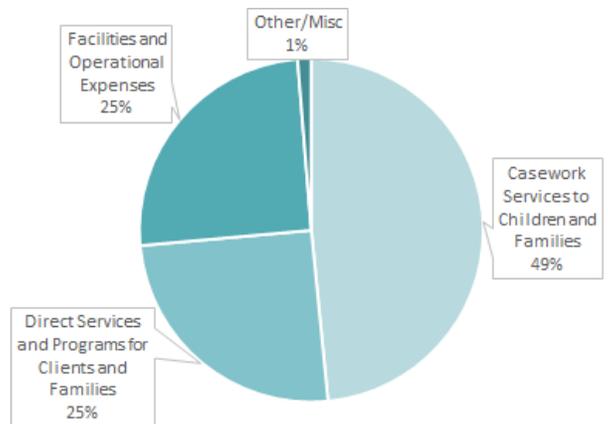
FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Lorain County Children Services is supported by federal, state and local taxes. The local tax dollars are received from a county-wide property tax levy, and account for not just the largest revenue source, but the most flexible revenue source assuring that LCCS is able to adjust to the changing needs of the community it serves.

2019 REVENUE



2019 EXPENDITURES



BAANC (Bikers Against Abuse and Neglect of Children) were one of dozens of community groups and businesses that sponsored children for Christmas

GOVERNANCE

A five member Board, appointed to four-year terms by the Lorain County Commissioners provide oversight for Lorain County Children Services.

Lorain County Children Services 2019 Board Members

- Melissa Fischer, Chair**
- Mallory Santiago, Secretary**
- Jeremy Cordes**
- Kenneth Glynn**
- Tracy Green**

CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVING SERVICE DELIVERY AND COMMUNITY ALIGNMENT

As part of the 2018-2020 Strategic Plan, Lorain County Children Services engaged staff and stakeholders in conversations to assure our values and work activities aligned with both the highest contemporary standards and our community's deeply held values for its children and families, especially those served by our agency. We re-committed to our shared values and

OUR VALUES

“DO THE RIGHT THINGS RIGHT, THE FIRST TIME, ON TIME, EVERY TIME, ONE CHILD AT A TIME.”

We believe children do best in a family / We believe a child should be better off because of our involvement / We believe we should be involved with a child only for as long as needed / We value the child as our client / We value keeping siblings together / We value maximizing resources to achieve the best outcomes we can for our children timely / We value being a trauma informed agency / We value seeing our children to ensure safety / We value acting with urgency on all reports of abuse and neglect / We value high- expectations for our staff, foster families, and volunteers to accomplish the best outcomes for our children that we can / We value independent and critical thinking / We value that every child deserves to safely grow up in a family where they are valued, protected and have the opportunity for life-long well-being / We value continuous improvement and accept change / We value our collaborative role within the community's safety net for children.

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took internal steps to make sure all staff had an opportunity to contribute to our shared values and understand how they are expressed through our day to day actions. They are not just our values - they are our community's values as well.

LCCS Practice Model

Being able to express our Core Values also means that we need our work to be guided by a Practice Model - a set of guiding principles that signifies the elements that are critical to achieving the best outcomes for our children, their families, and our community. This physical representation of our core values guides our daily interactions with the children and families in our community and reinforces the connection between policy and practice.

