

The Office of Human Services Innovation

- Fifty years after President Johnson declared a War on Poverty, more than 1.8 million Ohioans (16.4 percent) remain poor.¹ Some programs like Social Security reduced poverty without eroding personal responsibility, but others like Aid to Families with Dependent Children provided a benefit without connecting families to work opportunities or encouraging self-sufficiency.
- The federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 was a strong move in the right direction, emphasizing temporary assistance and work. Unfortunately, the full potential of the Act was never achieved – it created a positive vision for providing assistance in a holistic way, but in practice many services remain uncoordinated to this day.
- The 2014 Mid-Budget Review (MBR) creates the Office of Human Services Innovation within the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (JFS) to align programs that assist Ohioans prepare for life and the dignity of work. The Office will establish clear principles to guide reforms, clearly identify problems to be addressed, and make an inventory of all existing state and other human services programs and resources.
- Later this year, the Office will submit recommendations to the Governor to coordinate services across all public assistance programs to help individuals find employment, succeed at work, and stay out of poverty; revise incentives for public assistance programs to foster person-centered case management; and standardize and automate eligibility determination policies and processes for public assistance programs.
- The JFS Director will convene and coordinate the activities of the Office with assistance from the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents, and Directors of the Governor’s Offices of Workforce and Health Transformation.
- The JFS Director also will convene external stakeholders to align around activities that strengthen individuals, families and communities.

¹ *The Ohio Poverty Report*, Development Services Agency (February 2013).