

JFS Planning Committee
February 24, 2026 @ 9:00 a.m.
CCDJFS Community Room

Members Present: Tom Andrews, Chaney Nezbeth, Roger Sikorszky, Kimberly Steele, Steve Ullom, James Ford, Lori Colian, Marie Williams, Brian Brown

Guests: Courtney Amendola

Meeting Called to Order/ Quorum Established

Chaney welcomed members and called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.; quorum was established.

Approval of Minutes

There were no additions, subtractions, or corrections. Lori motioned to approve November minutes; Tom seconded. Motion carries.

Adoption of Agenda

There were no corrections, additions or deletions to the agenda. Marie motioned to adopt agenda; Roger seconded. Agenda adopted.

Introduction of Guests

No new guests.

Reports

a. Ohio Means Jobs – Mary Ann

Mary Ann was not in attendance.

b. CCDJFS TANF Program Reports – Courtney

In review of the SNAP numbers for October, November, and December, Courtney noted the Government shut down in these numbers. OWF was lower – as workers reopened and reestablish benefits for clients. Over issuances are predicted but not yet confirmed. Childcare – if schools choose to accept children under the publicly funded childcare (PFCC) rather than only early childhood education (ECE) this is where you will see the influx in those numbers. Some schools are opting to allow those PFCC children because families are not permitted to choose ECE over PFCC unless the school has accepted PFCC.

Medicaid Payments increased in October. Annual open enrollment is in November which creates a high case load volume during that time. Applications approved and denied – again noted the decrease in November due to the Federal Government shutdown. There are no concerns with timeliness. The Public Assistance workers are processing cases for federal marketplace as well as the private sector, which creates an influx in applications doubling and tripling the caseload.

Non-emergency transportation overall declined from the first calendar quarter to the fourth. Those miles and expenditures are dependent on the distance driven.

The highest assistance areas for PRC were the shoe program in October (until funding was halted), utilities, diversion cash, gas vouchers, and housing and rent, which had a high spike in December due to the amount of rent applications that were approved.

Adult Protective Services received 36 referrals in October, 28 in November, and 37 in December. The number of investigations decreased then increased, with 16 in October, 11 in November, and 18 in December. Of all investigations conducted, 10 involved neglect, 20 involved self-neglect, 17 involved exploitation, and 8 involved physical or emotional abuse. At the end of December 2025, there were 22 open and active cases and a total of 53 guardianships.

Courtney reported more recent changes to the ABAWD work requirements under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act – it removed the exemption for dependents under the age of 14. Individuals who previously had dependents under this age are now required to meet the work requirement to continue receiving SNAP benefits. The changes also expanded the ABAWD age requirements extending them to 18 – 64, with limited exemptions. Ages 61 – 64 population have raised expectations to work off assistance. Chaney confirmed The Way Station has had an influx in workers working off assistance.

Old Business

None

New Business

a. Nominating Report

A handout with the slate of officers was distributed. Tom and Rachel manage the nominating committee. Lori is the next chair, but the committee needs a vice chair. The vice chair is needed for when the chairperson is not present to run the meeting, in which case is the function of the vice chair. Jim Stitt volunteered as he has not yet been an officer.

b. Election of Officers

Chairperson: Lori Colian Columbiana County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board

Vice-chair: Jim Stitt, Family Recovery Center

Secretary: Rachel Ketterman, Department of Job and Family Services

Brian motioned to elect the 2026 Slate of Officers; Roger seconded. Officers elected. No discussion.

The new officers' roles will be effective at the May meeting.

Members' Comments

Rachel noted The SNAP "Big Beautiful Bill" changes the funding match from 50 percent federal and 50 percent state to 25 percent federal and 75 percent state, resulting in a 25 percent loss of federal funding and a projected \$350,000 SNAP deficit. A hiring freeze has been implemented in Public Assistance, leaving the department down eight positions. Two PRC eligibility positions are currently vacant, and duties have been divided and absorbed within the OWF unit. There is no remaining

capacity to absorb. The department is working to reduce costs wherever possible to address the deficit. As of June 30, 2026, a \$66,000 deficit is projected, which can be covered by the Public Assistance savings account. While the \$350,000 shortfall could be covered temporarily, it is not sustainable long term.

CCAO is actively working to make counties whole, though covering remaining costs may fall to the commissioners. Title XX can be used to drive RMS through plug codes, which may provide some flexibility to reduce the \$350,000 deficit; however, this will require a lot of work from Courtney and the management in her division. TANF contracts and PRC services may also need to be reviewed, including hours and potential reductions. With anticipated turbulence in the coming year, this committee's guidance will be needed to determine the most effective allocation of available funds.

Ohio's statewide SNAP error rate is just under 7 percent. If the rate does not fall below 6 percent, counties will be required to pay food assistance to the communities. Columbiana County maintains a very low, if not zero, error rate due to the quality assurance position, which reviews all cases, while some larger counties report error rates as high as 30 percent. Federal funds cannot be used for layoffs without submission of a formal plan. A reduced work week has been considered. A furlough is limited to 10 business days and would yield approximately \$100,000 in savings. Moving to a 30-hour work week could potentially offset the deficit but may increase the SNAP error rate.

Tom suggested the possibility of placing it on a levy. Rachel added that no other JFS agency currently has a levy. It would need to be a new levy, as the PCSA levy written in 1998 cannot be modified. Ongoing revenue would be required. Columbiana County would likely not approve a levy to support food assistance. SNAP is a voluntary program, and states are not required to participate; two to three states have withdrawn from administering the program. Tom offered his assistance if needed. Local food banks are experiencing increased utilization.

Brian reported that their church shed has been very busy, distributing about 5,000 pounds of clothing free to the community. In Lisbon, Pastor Brian Davis is launching a spiritually based addiction support meeting at the Fellowship Hall, planned for the second Tuesday.

Roger reported that youth programs are full, with the exception of Head Start, which has a vacant position. Overall, programs are going well. Housing remains uncertain, which will impact three properties.

Lori reported that \$22 million in crisis services funding for fiscal year 2026 is being significantly reduced, with a \$11 million cut statewide. MRSS services are expected to help fill the gap; however, it is unclear where the remaining funding will be allocated.

Chaney reported that The Way Station property purchase for East Palestine is complete. The building layout was reversed; the upstairs chapel has been renovated, and the basement remains open. They have partnered with a nonprofit serving seniors and launched a winter walking program in the basement, open to anyone 18 and older, with agility stations available.

Faith United Meals, a collaboration of five churches, is launching a Monday – Friday Meals on Wheels cooking program for East Palestine. They will lease basement space and are just awaiting inspection to begin cooking.

The overall goal is to help families transition out of poverty by supporting small start-up businesses. They can lease space at a low cost for up to one year. The program will partner with other organizations to provide required curriculum and support services, including payroll, HR, business tools, employee development, and leadership training. Interest is strong, particularly from bakers. OMJ may have funding available for training, and Chaney will follow up; Jack may also have insight.

The meeting adjourned at 9:44 a.m.

The next JFS Planning Committee meeting will be held May 26, 2026, at 9 a.m. JFS