

Butler County Board of Commissioners
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BUTLER COUNTY WINS NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Butler County recently won eight national awards for exceptional achievement in county government from the National Association of Counties (NACo). NACo recognized one Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA) program, four Job and Family Services' (JFS) programs and three Department of Environmental Services' (BCDES) programs.

The winning program for the **CSEA** is:

- **Felony Non-Support Court:** Child support offenders are sometimes dealing with problems such as drug and alcohol addictions, lack of education or psychological issues that make it hard for them to meet their financial obligations. To deal with these problems, the agency created the "Felony Non-Support Court" in 2007. The court convenes once per week where representatives from the CSEA, Prosecutor's Office, Adult Probation, Community Behavioral Health and the Court of Common Pleas meet to decide the best treatment program for parents found guilty of criminal non-support. The court can order mental health counseling, alcohol or drug dependency programs, continuing education programs, guidance on finding employment and provide transportation services. Since the program's inception in 2007, **67** parents have entered into the program and the CSEA has collected more than **\$83,000** in support.

The winning programs for **JFS** are:

- **Contracted Center Staff Training:** To improve and/or maintain the quality of care standards for contracted child-care center staff, JFS created a quarterly "no cost" training program. The department's program gives caretakers the knowledge they need about a variety of topics such as child growth and development, disability awareness, redirecting behavior and how to communicate with parents. Since the program began in 2005, the participation rate has increased by **33%**.
- **Heart-to-Heart Connection:** To help Ohio Works First (OWF) recipients become successful in the workplace, JFS created the "Heart-to-Heart Connection" Program. OWF clients, who must work a minimum of 20 hours per week to maintain their eligibility, now have the opportunity to work alongside JFS employees. The employee acts as both supervisor and caseworker for the client, helping them learn skills critical for successful employment. These skills include proper dress, appropriate workplace behavior, job searching, interviewing, etc. Since the program began, **75%** of participants have either obtained a job or left the program to further their education or training.

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- **LifeSpan “Taking Care” Program:** To assist individuals that are living in their homes and needing personal care, LifeSpan offers a specialized training program for family caregivers. LifeSpan assists them in providing quality care, developing “employability” skills for the open job market and meeting their work requirements for JFS. The “Taking Care” Program provides a case manager to work with “temporary aid to needy families” recipients who care for a family member. The program’s goal is to train people so they can establish their home as a valid and safe workplace. As a result of the program, all training participants have been able to demonstrate safe care giving techniques.
- **Transformation Station:** The Transformation Station Program serves women and their children who live in a homeless or unstable environment. The goal of this program is to provide temporary housing for those who have a difficult living environment that prohibits them from self-sufficiency. Last year, 10 adults and 10 children entered into the program.

The winning programs for **BCDES** are:

- **Residential Recycling Programs:** BCDES has made significant improvements to its residential recycling programs over the past two years, making it easier and more convenient for residents to recycle. BCDES began offering long-term collection service for Freon appliances and electronics recycling and replaced its mobile recycling trailer with permanent 24-hour drop boxes located in 10 townships. As a result, citizen participation has increased, program costs have decreased and the county has diverted additional waste from area landfills.
- **Increased Collaboration & Public Involvement in Facility Planning:** In 2006, BCDES replaced an aging pump station with a new facility to meet the growing needs of the community. Before the project began, BCDES solicited stakeholders’ opinions regarding the design and construction. Without affect the operation or safety of the facility, BCDES constructed the Liberty Fairfield Pump Station to resemble a decorative stable and surrounded it with ornamental fencing. Feedback from stakeholders suggests the community is very pleased with how well the building blends in with the community.
- **New Miami Sewer Project:** Decaying infrastructure, increasingly stringent regulations and threats to public health and the environment made it crucial for New Miami to construct a new wastewater treatment plant. When cost projections came in higher than expected, BCDES offered to help by requesting funding and donating engineering and project management expertise. The county also administered the grants, built the plant and now owns and operates New Miami’s sewer system. Eligible families also received financial assistance to connect to the sewer system. By pooling resources, the project significantly improved the quality of wastewater service for New Miami residents. The \$14.5 million project brings state-of-the-art public sewer service to an area previously served by septic tanks and a leaky, outdated treatment system.

The NACo Achievement Award Program recognizes counties for creative and innovative program development and implementation, efficient administrative management of county agencies and responsible government to local citizens. Since the program’s inception, NACo has honored hundreds of county government initiatives across the nation that have generated professional, well-trained workforces, maintained cost effective measures and enhanced services to diverse populations to improve the overall quality of life.

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