



# News Release

Franklin County Board of Commissioners | Office of Public Affairs | (614) 525-3322

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Franklin County Family Empowerment Day More than Effort to Collect Child Support** *Over 500 residents attend job fair, receive free legal assistance, community service referrals*

More than just an event to recognize national Child Support Awareness Month, the goal of Franklin County's Family Empowerment Day and Resource Fair is to connect both custodial and non-custodial parents to job opportunities, education and training, parenting assistance and community resources to help their children succeed.

Over 500 residents attended the event held on Wednesday at St. Stephen's Community House that provides legal guidance on issues of custody and visitation, as well as referrals financial counseling and work training, and a job fair.

Ninety-three non-custodial parents met with Franklin County Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA) staff to start the process to Withdraw Capiases, 89 met to have driver license reinstatement – 22 licenses were reinstated onsite, and over \$1100 in child support payments was collected.

Family Empowerment Day is part of the Commissioners' "Investing in our Next Generation" initiative - a year-long examination of the estimated \$343 million in total investments that County agencies will make in youth and child-oriented programs in 2012, and how these agencies and programs can work better together to increase their impact on Franklin County's young people.

"Dependable child support makes a real difference in managing food, shelter, clothing, and medical expenses," said Commission President Paula Brooks. "Though we have seen dramatic budget cuts from the Statehouse and from Congress, Franklin County and our community partners have been aggressive in seeking new tools to empower families and help our community's children reach their God-given potential."

Community partners and social service organizations that participated in the event include the Central Ohio Workforce Investment Corporation (COWIC), Columbus State Community College, Franklin County Children Services and Domestic Relations and Juvenile Court, the Legal Aid Society of Columbus, among many others.

"I want to thank and encourage all of the parents that attended the Empowerment Day activities," said Commissioner Marilyn Brown. "Just by being there, they made a difference in their life, the lives of their children, and the life of our community. Empowerment Day is a great tool to help parents help themselves and their family."

Commissioner John O'Grady said, "Children need parents who are engaged and reliable. Events like Family Empowerment Day are great ways to access community resources to address barriers that may be keeping you from seeing your kids or getting a job to support them."

"When individuals are empowered, families are empowered and our community is stronger," said Domestic Relations and Juvenile Court Judge Elizabeth Gill.

Stephanie Hightower, President and CEO of the Columbus Urban League, said "Our role in this community is to support family stabilization and empowerment. Family Empowerment Day is that opportunity for single fathers and single mothers in our community, to come together on that goal, for the future of our children and our communities."

Family Empowerment Day is a collaboration of the Franklin County Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA), the Columbus Urban League, and St. Stephen's Community House, and is held each August as a local celebration of Child Support Awareness Month.

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