



Athens County Children Services



**Annual Report
to the community**

2017

A Message from our Executive Director



On behalf of the ACCS Board of Directors and dedicated staff, it is my pleasure to present the 2017 Annual Report to the Community, which highlights the protective services and innovative programs we provide to address the increasing challenges faced by the children and families of Athens County.

Ohio is ground zero in the nation with respect to the impact of the Opiate crisis. You can see the crisis reflected in the pages of this report and in our bottom line. In 2017 ACCS continued to see an increasing number of children in foster care during the year, with longer stays, and record increases in placements costs.

In recent years the number of children in foster care across the state of Ohio has increased 20%, from 12,000 to more than 15,000. In 2017, ACCS had 183 children in foster care, a number that has steadily increased by more than a third, or 36%, over the past five years.

Statewide placement costs in recent years have risen by 17% from \$275M to \$321M. By comparison, Athens County placement costs nearly doubled, from \$1.5M to \$2.4M in 2017.

Clearly, opiates are not the only drug impacting our families and children, but there are several unique differences that make this drug particularly damaging to children and families. According to Case Western Reserve University, opiate addiction has a more rapid onset of addiction and incapacitation.

Opiate addiction affects the developing child and parent differently than other addictive processes. The ability of a parent to attune and attend to the child is significantly impacted by this rapid onset illness. Attachment and bonding is disrupted resulting in more trauma and a range of higher needs and behavior challenges for children. This translates into greater service needs and higher costs when it comes to child protective services.

The needs are urgent, and the community relies on its child protection system to respond. As a director, I see how fortunate we are to have the enduring commitment and professionalism of our staff, our Board, our foster parents, and provider community. I am also greatly concerned about the wear and tear of the Opiate crisis on all concerned. The partnership we have with the community is the linchpin of our resiliency in managing through these challenging times.

We simply could not do this important work without the strength of the backing from the Athens community for our mission, our agency, and the vulnerable children and families of Athens. Thank you, sincerely.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catherine Hill".

Catherine Hill, MSW, LSW
Executive Director



Intake & Assessment

ACCS is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. On weekends, holidays and after hours, we utilize a beeper service with a caseworker as the first responder and a supervisor as back-up. A Family Violence Investigator is contracted through the Sheriff's office, housed in the Intake unit and also is assigned to sexual abuse cases and severe physical abuse cases. The investigator is responsible for making referrals to the Prosecuting Attorney's office on potential criminal matters.

In 2017 ACCS had 1768 referrals of abuse or neglect.

- ***517 were screened in for assessment***
- ***46 referrals involved drug-impacted infants***
- ***includes 765 children***



Alternative Response Supervisor, Donna Robison, left, at the Champions for Children Breakfast.

Alternative Response

Alternative Response (AR) allows ACCS to provide a different approach for lower-risk cases. AR acknowledges that families are the best experts for their own situations. AR connects families to community organizations and service providers to address and resolve concerns as they arise. Identifying concerns early and working with families as equal partners can alleviate the stresses that often lead to abuse and neglect. This approach helps sustain families and prevents foster care placements.

In 2017 the AR team worked with 270 families including 582 children.

Family Services

Our Family Services unit provides ongoing services when a case needs more extensive intervention or a longer term to resolve family concerns. The families served by this unit have complex needs and are often involved with Juvenile Court, either through an order that requires the family to work with the agency while their children remain in their home, or the court has determined it is unsafe for the children to remain home, and have placed the children in the temporary custody of the agency. Reuniting and restoring families is the Family Services' primary goal.

In 2017 Family Services worked with 111 families including 228 children.

"I love working with ACCS. The support we receive from every level of the agency is amazing." - ACCS Foster Parent



Family Services staff at the Champions for Children Breakfast.

Family Support

The Family Support unit consists of parent mentors, family support caseworkers, and transportation workers. The unit provides family time and transportation services to families whose children are living in kinship or foster care.

Members of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority pose with Family Support Caseworker, Karyn Armstrong, and dozens of hand-made blankets the sorority made for our children in care.



In 2017 Family Support

- ***Worked with an average of 25 families a month***
- ***Worked with a total of 117 children***
- ***Monitored 1663 visits between children and their birth families***
- ***Provided 1392 transports to the families and children working with the agency***

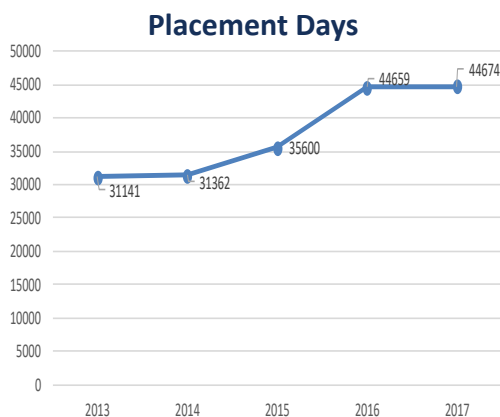
Foster Care and Beyond

The ACCS Placement unit manages all child placement-related services. This includes recruiting, training, licensing, and maintaining a dedicated group of foster homes to care for children in agency custody. The agency continuously recruits new foster parents needed for sibling groups, children and youth of all ages in all Athens County school districts. Our Life Skills Caseworker is assigned to all school age foster youth to assure the best possible educational and independent living outcomes for all children and youth.

In 2017 ACCS had custody of 183 children throughout the year.

Supported by:

- 39 licensed foster homes • 8 new foster homes
- 37 kinship homes providing care for 57 children



In addition to having more children in foster care in 2017, the number of days they stayed in care increased as well. The cost for children in care ranged from \$24 to \$420 per child, per day, depending on the child's specific needs.

ACCS Foster Parents, Peggy and Ed Price, were the 2017 Foster Parents of the Year Award winners.



The ACCS Placement team at the annual Foster Parent Appreciation banquet in May.

"Being able to help these kids is an amazing privilege and we are very grateful for this opportunity. I know our county is one of the better ones to be working with."
- ACCS Foster Parent

Permanent Families

Permanency is a sense of stability, support, and connection most of us take for granted. It is a vital component for lifelong well being. Our primary goal is to restore and reunify children with their birth families whenever possible. A child may be placed in the permanent custody of ACCS by the juvenile court if a parent willingly surrenders, abandons a child, or is unable to adequately address safety factors in the home.

In 2017 ACCS

- Was awarded permanent custody of 26 children
- Finalized the adoptions for 18 children
- Ended the year with 34 children available for adoption



Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK), funded by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, is a grant-funded regional partnership that allows for a dedicated, full-time recruiter to do evidence based, child focused recruitment for adoptive families for children in permanent custody. Our WWK recruiter serves Athens, Washington, Perry, Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs and Gallia counties.

In 2017 ACCS' Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiter worked with 16 children in our region.

The ACCS Adoption unit hosted a pool party in July for adoptive families in Athens County.



ACCS has a unique caseworker position that provides post adoption services to families in Athens County that have finalized adoptions (public, private, kinship, or international). This is a voluntary program in which the worker can provide support in areas such as crisis management, behavioral management, and referral to services. In 2017 there were 505 contacts with adoptive families made by this worker.

Quality Services

In order to assure the best possible outcomes for children and families, the Quality Assurance (QA) unit is responsible for training staff and monitoring compliance with administrative rules. The QA unit facilitates important case review meetings for ACCS, parents, and partner agencies to measure progress and plan services. In 2017, Athens was one of 15 Ohio counties participating in the Federal Child & Family Services Review.

In 2017 Quality Assurance facilitated 599 case reviews.

Regional Training Center

The Southeast Ohio Regional Training Center (SEORTC) is hosted by ACCS and is one of eight sites of the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program sponsored by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. The SEORTC provides high-quality, family-centered, competency-based training to staff and caregivers of public child welfare agencies in 13 surrounding counties.

In 2017 SEORTC

- Hosted 137 workshops that were attended by 1370 child welfare professionals for a total of 945 total training hours.
- Hosted 185 foster parent trainings that were attended by 2619 foster parents for a total of 651 total training hours.

The Nationwide Opiate Epidemic Impacts Children In Our Community

Ohio leads the nation in opiate addiction issues.

Among the 100,000 cases entering Ohio's child protection system annually, families dealing with opiate or other drug abuse consume the most resources.

In addition to the increase in number of children in our care, the number of days children stayed in our care went up as well.

183 children spent a cumulative total of 44,674 placement days in our custody.

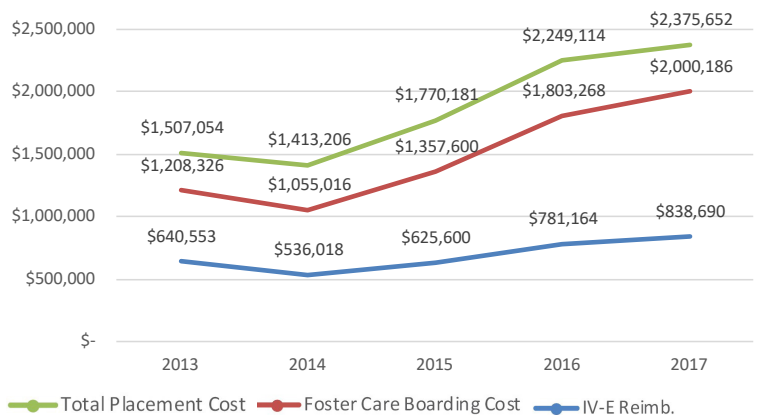
The costs for children in care in Athens County range from \$24 per day to \$420 per day.

Athens County spent a record \$2,375,652 in placement costs in 2017.

Athens County

Substance abuse was a factor in 75 (56%) of the 134 total Family Services/Alternative Response ongoing cases. 46 referrals in 2017 involved drug-impacted infants.

Placement Cost & Reimbursement



In the Spring of 2017, ACCS was awarded a grant through the Ohio Attorney General's Office. Ohio START (Sobriety, Treatment, and Reducing Trauma) is a program to provide intensive trauma counseling and other services for the children who have been victims of abuse and neglect because of parental drug use. Additionally, this program provides specialized drug treatment for the parents of the children referred to this program. The specialized treatment includes certified Family Peer Mentors that serve as recovery supporters to work with children services caseworkers to provide intensive case management to the parents in recovery from drug addiction.

School Outreach

School Outreach seeks to strengthen families and promote positive school relationships to enhance student school success.

In 2017 the School Outreach team

- ***Received 4697 referrals for services***
- ***Provided service to all 5 Athens County school districts and provided 11,909 direct units of service***
- ***Hosted 239 group support sessions***
- ***The 10th Annual PB&J Project served 3093 children***
- ***Referred 1456 children for additional services***

The young ladies in the Trimble Girl Power group gathered at the Honey for the Heart studio for a tour.



The PB&J Project at Alexander Elementary! Thanks to CFI, our team was able to offer fresh produce to families too.

The Ohio University Combat Veterans Club pose with School Outreach staff at The Plains Elementary. This donation was used to purchase school supplies.



In the Community

ACCS sponsored a number of community events in 2017, including Kidfest, Lace Up For Kids, and the Santa Tree Project. ACCS staff and volunteers also participated in a number of community events, including the annual Athens Area Stand Down, the Ohio University Homecoming Parade, the Paw Paw Festival, Kids Day at the Athens County Fair, Wear Blue Day and more.

In 2017 ACCS

- ***Provided Santa Tree gifts to over 1261 children***
- ***Sent over 250 children back to school with new shoes through the Lace Up for Kids project***



ACCS Mascot, Ted D. Bear, poses with several of our community volunteers at Lowe's Family Safety Day in September.

ACCS' Volunteer & Intern program continued to grow in 2017. These future professionals served in every unit of our agency and worked in prevention, casework, public relations and administration.

In 2017 the Volunteer & Intern program ended the year with 106 volunteers.

- ***Our volunteers gave 750 volunteer hours, valued at an estimated \$17,670, to the community****
- ***Supervised 18 interns from 7 different majors***

****<https://www.nationalservice.gov/vcla/research>***

ACCS Intern, Isaiah Polk, prepared and maintained the garden in the summer of 2017. Our Visitation Center harvests vegetables from the garden and uses them in meals prepared for families during their visits.



2017 Financial Summary

Executive Director

Catherine Hill, MSW, LSW

Deputy Directors

Otis Crockron, MBA
Finance and Operations

Sheila Shafer, MA, LSW
Programs

2017 Athens County Commissioners

Charlie Adkins
Chris Chmiel
Lenny Eliason

2017 Board Members

Nancy Schell, Chair
Linda Main Clark
Chris Innis
Barry Oches
Shelley Lieberman
Dave Diggle
John Sole
Timarie Francis
Jenny Shadik

Beginning Balance	\$1,208,316
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2017 Revenues

Local Operating Levy	\$4,291,831
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Federal Funds	\$2,881,112
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State Funds	\$685,030
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*Other Local Funds	\$2,277,765
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Total Revenue	\$10,135,738
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2017 Expenditures

Employee Salaries	\$2,886,833
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Employee Healthcare and Benefits	\$1,552,544
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Placement Care	\$2,375,652
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Clothing, Food, and Transportation	\$180,209
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Health-Related Expenses for Children	\$139,505
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Building, Supplies, & Contracted Services	\$386,136
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Community Education & Staff Training	\$72,984
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Other Expenditures	\$604,099
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Total Expenditures	\$8,167,961
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Ending Balance	\$3,176,092
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Athens County Children Services staff and board greatly appreciate the continued support of the Athens community. The primary funding source for Athens County Children Services is a 3 mill ten-year property tax levy approved by the voters in 2015 and a 2 mill ten-year property tax levy approved by the voters in 2010. These operating funds are vital for ACCS to be responsive to the ever-changing needs of the children and families of Athens County.

*Figure includes \$2.1 million from a capital reserve account that was rescinded and funds transferred due to an unprecedented rise in placement costs.

2017 in Numbers

- 1768 referrals of abuse and neglect
- 228 children worked with Family Services
- 183 children in custody during 2017
- 4697 referrals to School Outreach caseworkers
- 18 adoptions finalized
- 39 licensed foster homes
- 3093 children were given PB&J, bread and canned goods as part of the Peanut Butter & Jelly Project
- 57 children were in kinship care
- 1261+ local children received Santa Tree gifts
- 1663 visits with families in our visitation center
- 106 community volunteers
- 50+ organizations set up at Kidfest
- 599 case reviews
- 250 + children received new tennis shoes at Lace Up For Kids



ACCS Board Chair, Nancy Schell, Executive Director, Cathy Hill, and Intake Supervisor, Laura Bobo, discuss issues concerning children and families at WATH 970 AM in October.



In March, The Friends of Children Services hosted the 3rd Annual Superhero & Princess Ball at the Athens Community Center.

Protecting Children, Strengthening Families, Securing Futures

Athens County Children Services
18 Stonybrook Drive
P.O. Box 1046
Athens, OH 45701
Phone: 740.592.3061
Fax: 740.593.3880
athenschildrenservices.com

To report child abuse or neglect:
M-F, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm
Please call 740.592.3061

After-hours or emergencies:
Please call 1.866.863.7373



ACCS leadership and staff had the opportunity to connect with other child protective services professionals from across the state at the annual conference for the Public Children Services Association of Ohio.



Athens County
Children Services