



# BULLETIN

Helping Ohioans Move, Expanding Choice

Summer 2012, Volume 4, Issue 2

## CONTRIBUTING ORGANIZATIONS

Access Center for Independent Living  
Achievement Centers for Children  
Advocacy and Protective Services (APSI)  
AARP  
American Association of Service  
Coordinators  
Amerigroup  
Assistive Technology of Ohio (AT Ohio)  
Autism Society of Ohio  
Bittersweet Inc.  
Brain Injury Association of Ohio  
Brethren Care Village  
Buckeye Community Health Plan  
Cerebral Palsy Association of Ohio  
Coalition on Homelessness and Housing  
in Ohio  
Creative Housing Corporation  
Definitive Home Health Care  
Delaware Creative Housing  
Easter Seals of Ohio  
Episcopal Retirement Homes, Inc  
Family Services Council of Ohio  
Good Samaritan Hospital  
Greater Dayton TRA  
Heritage Day Health Centers  
Housing and Urban Development (HUD)  
Heritage Health Care Services  
Housing Leadership Institute  
Legislative Services Commission  
Linking Employment, Abilities and  
Potential (LEAP)  
Long Term Care (LTC) Ombudsman  
Program  
Mercy Saint John's Center  
Miami Valley In-Ovations, Inc.  
Midwest Care Alliance  
National Alliance on Mental Illness  
of Ohio  
National Church Residences  
Ohio Academy of Nursing Homes  
Ohio Advocates  
Ohio Alliance for Direct Support  
Professionals  
Ohio Assisted Living Association  
Ohio Association Adult Caregivers  
Ohio Association of County Behavioral  
Health Authorities  
Ohio Association of County Boards of DD  
Ohio Association of Superintendents of  
County Boards of DD  
Ohio Board of Regents  
Ohio Association on Area Agencies  
on Aging  
Ohio Capitol Corporation for Housing  
Ohio Centers for Independent Living  
- CILS  
Ohio Conference of Community  
Development Organizations  
Ohio Council for Home Care and Hospice  
Ohio Department of Aging  
Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug  
Addiction Services  
Ohio Department of Development  
Ohio Department of Mental Health  
Ohio Department of Developmental  
Disabilities  
Ohio Department of Transportation  
Ohio Dietetic Association  
Ohio Health Care Association  
Ohio Council for Home Care  
Ohio Hospital Association  
Ohio Housing Authority Conference  
Ohio Housing Authority Finance  
Ohio Jewish Communities  
Ohio Job and Family Services Directors  
Association  
Ohio Legal Rights Service  
Ohio Office of Budget and Management  
Ohio Olmstead Task Force  
Ohio PATHS  
Ohio Provider Resource Association  
Ohio State University-Public Policy,  
Assistive Technology  
Ohio United Way  
Rehabilitation Service Commission  
RHC, Inc.  
Sarah Care Adult Day Services  
Service Employees International Union  
- SEIU 1199  
The Ability Center  
The Advocate of Not-For-Profit Services  
for Ohioans (AOPHA)  
The Success Group  
Wright State University - School of  
Medicine

And, all consumers and families who  
have participated

## Local Housing and Services Cooperatives Moving Forward

By Leslie J. Sawyer, HOME Choice Statewide Outreach Coordinator

HOME Choice Local Housing and Services Cooperatives (LHSC) are moving forward toward achieving goals regarding the development, expansion and strengthening of local and regional disability advocacy efforts and addressing the most significant barriers to successful independent community living for older adults and people with disabilities.

An LHSC is defined as a broad-based group of persons working to address the community living needs of individuals with disabilities, including the provision of affordable housing, service and transportation supports, to enable or enhance successful independent living.

LHSC is a key balancing and system reform initiative made possible through the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) Money Follows the Person Demonstration Grant's enhanced federal funds. This grant's funding helps enable the successful transition of individuals with disabilities from institutions to the community and achieve a balanced system of providing long-term care services and supports.

Ohio's 11 Centers for Independent Living (CILs) were invited to serve as lead agencies for the development of the cooperatives in their respective state regions and receive funding to support their efforts through subgrants from ODJFS. Cooperatives are operational at four participating CILs, which means they have developed project plans with objectives, outcome measures, benchmarks and timelines; held one to two advisory group meetings for each cooperative; and have conducted or scheduled a regional training forum for the public.

The participating CILs are the Center for Independent Living Options in Cincinnati, Linking Employment Abilities and Potential in Cleveland and Lorain, Tri-County Independent Living Center in Akron, and Western Reserve Independent Living Center in Warren. Each of these CILs has elected to build three cooperatives to address barriers in housing, home modifications and assistive devices, personal assistance services, and/or transportation.

Four other CILs are just getting started with the initiative and will develop one cooperative each to address home modifications. These CILs include the Ability Center of Greater Toledo, Services for Independent Living in Euclid, the Access Center for Independent Living Inc. in Dayton, and the Mid-Ohio Board for an Independent Living Environment in Columbus.

The exciting work of these cooperatives brings together advisory groups comprised of many local and regional stakeholders representing diverse networks and constituencies. The stakeholders are providing a wealth of knowledge and expertise to their advisory groups, thinking creatively and coming up with out-of-the-box potential solutions to address complex problems, such as how to meet the need for affordable, accessible and timely transportation. Also, CIL staff are meeting with their counterparts across the state to share project plans, challenges and possible solutions to these barriers.

Individuals or organizations interested in joining a cooperative affiliated with one of the four participating CILs should contact that CIL.

## HOME Choice Updates

### SSI Ohio Project Helps Ohioans Access Benefits More Quickly

By Leslie J. Sawyer, HOME Choice Statewide Outreach Coordinator

The SSI Ohio Project, implemented by the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO) and supported by Money Follows the Person balancing initiative funds, has improved the procedure for completing applications for SSI/SSDI benefits. The project helps process applications for benefits more quickly and with fewer problems.

The project was developed by the Interagency Council on Homelessness and Affordable Housing. It expands the Ohio Benefit Bank (OBB) to include SSI and SSDI benefits and places specialists who are uniquely trained using the best practice SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Retention methodology throughout Ohio communities to help disabled individuals obtain needed benefits.

The SSI Ohio Project assists adults who are homeless or at-risk, and living with a mental and/or physical disability, to access SSI/SSDI benefits to achieve financial stability. The SSI Ohio Project is important for individuals interested in transitioning from an institutional setting to a community environment through HOME Choice because it helps speed up the process to access their SSI/SSDI income, which landlords often require to move into housing.

COHHIO has administered the SSI Ohio Project since it started in June 2008. Since then, the program has accomplished its goals of expediting the SSI/SSDI application process, reducing barriers in that process and increasing the number of first-time SSI/SSDI benefit recipients who have a disability and/or are homeless.

Currently, there are 21 full-time SSI Ohio Project specialists in 20 urban and rural community sites who are using the efficient SSI/SSDI OBB online service to process applications for benefits.

To learn more about the SSI Ohio Project and see the location of project sites, visit COHHIO's website at [http://www.cohhio.org/programs/ssi\\_2011](http://www.cohhio.org/programs/ssi_2011).

MFP has enabled the expansion of project sites and increased the number of specialists to perform this important work. COHHIO will announce additional project sites on July 1, 2012.

### Introducing . . . Laurie Damon, HOME Choice Community Living Administrator

Laurie Damon has been with the HOME Choice program since it was in the planning stages. She came to the program with the experience of the Ohio Access Success Project, Ohio's first nursing facility transition program. Laurie has been with that program since 2003.

During the planning stages of HOME Choice, Laurie participated on the Marketing Committee and continued to work on HOME Choice in various roles since it went live in October 2008.

Laurie is currently a HOME Choice community living administrator (CLA), and she continues to manage the Access Success Project. As a CLA, she provides help to transition coordinators and case managers with cases for persons age 22 through 59 with physical or developmental disabilities.

Laurie helps with case-specific technical assistance and training, problem-solving, checking on the status of an applicant's eligibility for HOME Choice and for Medicaid, assisting with a beneficiary's HOME Choice service planning, and connecting beneficiaries to state plan Medicaid services. She also interfaces with HOME Choice's fiscal administrative agency, JEVS.

Laurie began her career with ODJFS in 2000 in the Bureau of Long-Term Care. Prior to that she worked for the Ohio Department of Health in the Bureau of Child and Family Health Services (CFHS) where she worked with CFHS grantees and made recommendations to the director on Certificate of Need applications.



L-R: Joni Janowiak, Laurie Damon

## Welcome to Our New Intake Coordinator: Joni Janowiak

Joni Janowiak joined the HOME Choice team as an intake coordinator in May. In addition to managing the workflow of incoming and outgoing HOME Choice paperwork, she is an initial point of contact for beneficiaries and nursing facility staff who are seeking information about the HOME Choice program and application process.

Prior to this, Joni worked as the franchise permit fee designee for the ODJFS Bureau of Long-Term Care Services and Supports' Disability and Aging Policy Section. Before that, she worked in the ODJFS Office of Family Assistance as a human service specialist, interpreting public assistance policy for statewide inquiries. Joni also worked at the Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services as a total case manager and training supervisor. She graduated from The Ohio State University.

## New Level of Care Rules Mark Completion of Phase 2 of Front Door Project

By Tonya Hawkins, Balancing Policy Manager

The Front Door Stakeholder Group, which seeks to improve the entry point or "front door" of Ohio's long-term services and supports (LTSS) system for beneficiaries, has completed Phase 2 of the Front Door Project. The work products from Phase 2 are four new Medicaid level of care (LOC) rules, which became effective on March 19, 2012. The new rules:

- o Include an LOC definitions rule that is intended to clarify and simplify Medicaid LOC terms and definitions
- o Serve as the foundation to further Ohio's efforts to create a "no wrong door/single-entry point" approach for beneficiaries to receive LTSS.

ODJFS and ODA conducted training webinars during March. The new rules, a presentation and a recorded webinar can be downloaded from the ODJFS HOME Choice website at <http://jfs.ohio.gov/ohp/consumers/HOMEChoice.stm>.

## Ohio Presents on Collaborative Efforts with Ohio's Veteran Administration at Minimum Data Set 2012 National Conference

By Terry Moore, MDS Section Q Statewide Manager

As part of the Minimum Data Set (MDS) 2012 National Conference held in St. Louis, Missouri, on March 9, 2012, MDS Section Q Manager Terry Moore presented on Ohio's collaborative efforts with Ohio's Veterans Administration (VA) colleagues. Approximately 1,350 people participated in the conference.

While the collaborative effort between Ohio Medicaid and the Ohio VA is in its infancy, the two groups have identified the need for effective outreach and are developing ways to help Ohio's military service men and women navigate the VA and Medicaid eligibility systems and explore resources available through HOME Choice and other special projects funded by the Ohio departments of Aging and Mental Health.

The talking points from the presentation can be found online at <http://totalsolutions-inc.com/nationalconference/documents.php>.

## Housing News

### Housing Collaborations Show Promise

By Adam Anderson, HOME Choice Housing Grant Coordinator

Collaboration. It's a word that is used so often, it's easy to become cynical. We often tout our collaborative efforts with other agencies and local stakeholders, only to see them retreat into siloed endeavors.

It's exciting, then, to be able to highlight some of the housing collaborations HOME Choice is spearheading. As a Medicaid agency that cannot pay for housing itself, ODJFS must seek creative partners to find ways to create housing across the state.

Some recent notable housing collaborations include:

- Ongoing work with Lucas and Hamilton counties to fill 160 total Non-Elderly Disabled Type-II Vouchers. Through a continued partnership with the Metropolitan Housing Authorities, multiple transition coordinators and case managers, Ohio has out-performed many other states in terms of filling the vouchers.

- Work with the Office of Health Transformation and National Church Residences to explore new assisted living facilities that also qualify for HOME Choice. These units, including buildings in Cuyahoga Falls and Chillicothe, will continue to provide options for senior HOME Choice participants.
- The continued partnership between HOME Choice and Ohio Housing Financing Authority, and their commitment to help consumers make their homes more accessible through their Housing Investment Fund. System reform is created by providing \$625,000 to help Centers for Independent Living across the state purchase modular ramps.

These three initiatives are only a few of HOME Choice’s many “irons in the fire.” We continue to look for partnerships that will help serve Ohioans who want a place of their own to call home.

## Behavioral Health News

### Revamping a Housing Locator for the Mental Health Population

By Andrew Sokolnicki, MFP Mental Health Liaison

HOME Choice is more than just a program to provide disabled individuals greater access to community supports and services; it also is a facilitating agent to complete significant Medicaid reforms and spur cross-agency partnerships. One such project to revamp a housing locator is in the early planning stages.

The Ohio departments of Aging, Mental Health and Job and Family Services are finalizing a plan to revamp the Department of Aging Adult Care Facility Housing Locator. The departments plan to make the locator more robust through an investment in computer hardware and an enhancement of the website’s functionality. The plan also includes private property owners who would like to market their adult care facility openings to behavioral health consumers.

To ensure that the listings are as up-to-date as possible, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) will coordinate the information management. A project model outlining how NAMI will manage this task is being developed.

The goal is for the enhanced Long-Term Care Consumer Guide to provide up-to-date listings and information on geographically close supports and services. This will allow both providers and consumers to better match housing locations to an individual’s needs. Future ideas for the housing locator include adding a geo-mapping function to make the website more user-friendly.

Partial funding for this locator comes from rebalancing dollars from the departments of Aging and Mental Health and from Money Follows the Person (HOME Choice)

## HOME Choice Success Stories

### Mara Allen on Her Own Now

By Annegela Wendel, RN, Community Living Specialist/HOME Choice Specialist



Mara Allen

My name is Annegela Wendel and I work for CareStar as a HOME Choice case manager. I have had the pleasure of having Mara Allen as one of my HOME Choice beneficiaries. Mara is a true HOME Choice success story.

She had abdominal surgery that resulted in complications and delayed wound healing. When Mara was discharged from the nursing facility, she transitioned into The Lakewoods apartment complex. Mara was provided home health nursing services from Fidelity Healthcare until her wound healed.

Mara uses behavioral health resources in the community by seeing a case manager from Eastway Behavioral Healthcare each month. Mara also utilizes HOME Choice services by working with community support coach Debbie Goldberg at the Access Center for Independent Living.

Mara says she takes advantage of local food pantries as additional food resources and uses the Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority if her mother or daughter are unavailable to assist her with transportation. Mara enjoys shopping with her mom and daughter, playing bingo and visiting the library in her spare time. Mara, who has been with the HOME Choice program for almost a year, says she truly values the benefits of community living.

## Dennis Frinkle Maximizes HOME Choice's Transition Benefits

By Tiera Rachel, LPN, CareStar HOME Choice Specialist

My name is Tiera Rachel, and I have been a CareStar HOME Choice Specialist for the HOME Choice program for almost a year. Although I have had the opportunity to meet various individuals through the HOME Choice Program, one particular individual stands out to me as a success: Dennis Frinkle.

Dennis is from Michigan but moved to Ohio as a result of chronic illness. He was admitted into a nursing facility in Gibsonburg because he needed 24-hour care and rehabilitation. While in the nursing home, Dennis had two major surgeries and lost 123 pounds thanks to the nursing facility's weight loss program.

When Dennis recovered and was ready to transition to the community, he was introduced to the Ohio HOME Choice program.

Although transitioning into the community was stressful for Dennis at first, he found success with the assistance of the HOME Choice team. Dennis met with a transition coordinator who helped him find housing. The transition coordinator also assisted Dennis with purchasing household goods necessary for independent living.

In his new apartment, Dennis relied on the support and assistance of the HOME Choice specialist, community support coach, independent living skills trainer and social worker provided by HOME Choice. Together, they helped Dennis with emotional support and guidance.

At times, Dennis calls the HOME Choice specialist to talk him through an anxious point in his day. Because Dennis is not familiar with Ohio, he depends on the community support coach to assist him with locating nearby community resources. Dennis's community support coach helped him to connect to a local weight loss program to continue with his weight loss. Dennis says that initially he found it difficult to open up to the HOME Choice social worker, though he is now able to communicate with her. Dennis states that the social worker has provided emotional support and direction to help him through one of the most complicated times in his life.

The independent living skills trainer has been essential to Dennis in re-learning to live independently and guiding him while making all of his own choices. Dennis has used the HOME Choice specialist for directing him to resources, emotional support and connecting with HOME Choice services.

Dennis says that the HOME Choice program services have been a crucial part of his success.



Dennis Frinkle

## Meet an Amazing Couple: Katherine and Joe Jenkins

By Jennifer Kucera, Transition Coordinator, Services for Independent Living Inc., Cleveland



Katherine and Joe Jenkins

My name is Jennifer Kucera and I am a transition coordinator at Services for Independent Living in Cleveland. Although I have assisted many beneficiaries in the HOME Choice transitioning process, I learn new things every day and I get to meet some of the most interesting people! I would like to share a story about two awesome individuals.

I met Katherine first. I went to the nursing home, as usual, for our first meeting. When I got there I thought it was a little odd that a man was in her room because at most nursing facilities, rooms are not coed. But not this one! I introduced myself to Katherine and she quickly introduced me to the man in her room – her husband! "Wow," I said. "How cool! Tell me the story."

They told me they met at the nursing facility and they knew they wanted to be together. "I'm blind and Joe helps me with the things I can't do for myself," Katherine explained. They were married at the nursing facility and went to a downtown Cleveland hotel for their honeymoon. Joe bought Katherine a decorative cane for her wedding present.

Katherine will tell you her full name over and over again, saying it sounds so nice having Joe's last name! After our first meeting I asked if I could be Joe's transition coordinator in addition to Katherine's. Both Katherine and Joe thought this would

make it the easier for them to transition together. Joe went to work right away to find them a place to live. I connected them with transportation so they could obtain birth certificates, background checks, photo IDs and financial statements.

Afterward, we met at the apartment complex Joe found and I helped them complete the necessary paperwork. Joe had located a place close to the nursing home so he and Katherine could visit the friends they made while they were residents!

When the lease was finalized, we went shopping for furniture and then for other supplies at Wal-Mart. Joe went to the apartment daily before he was discharged so he could set everything up just right for Katherine.

On moving day, everyone at the nursing facility was so happy for them! Katherine told me that they even gave Joe cooking classes. (Joe confided that he was a great cook before the classes!) Katherine said that Joe had made a surprise breakfast for her one day at the nursing facility and she said it included the best eggs and potatoes she ever had.

When you meet Joe and Katherine, you definitely can feel the love they have for one another! They work great as a team, helping each other if one of them falls short. I have been to visit them several times since they left the nursing facility.

Together, they overcome their difficulties. When I leave their apartment I cannot help but have a smile on my face. I wish them nothing but the best of luck!

## News for Providers, Transition Coordinators, Case Managers and SSAs

### Transition Coordinator: Raquel Reyna, Easter Seals Northern Ohio

By Susan E. McKinley, Consumer Relations Coordinator



Easter Seals began its history with transitioning beneficiaries from nursing facilities to homes in the community even before HOME Choice was developed. This, and the fact that Easter Seals helped develop HOME Choice, made it natural for the organization to become a transition coordinator for the program.

Prior to HOME Choice, Easter Seals served as the transition coordinator for the Ohio Access Success Transition project, a small demonstration grant that provides up to \$2,000 to eligible beneficiaries transitioning from a nursing facility to a home in the community. Although on a smaller scale than HOME Choice, Access Success provided Easter Seals and the state of Ohio with invaluable experience in transitioning beneficiaries.

Last year, after wrapping up its work with the Ohio Access Success Project, all of the Easter Seals serving Ohio signed on with ODJFS to be transition coordinator providers for the HOME Choice transition program. There are five regional Easter Seals in Ohio. This article focuses on Easter Seals Northern Ohio's Toledo office, and one of its transition coordinators, Raquel Reyna.

Raquel Reyna serves as one of two home care coordinators with Easter Seals of Northern Ohio. Her position includes transitioning HOME Choice beneficiaries. She shared her experiences with HOME Choice and helping beneficiaries find housing and settle into new homes. Although she has not been a transition coordinator for long, she has five transitions under her belt.

Raquel said she has not found it difficult to locate housing for her beneficiaries. Her experience is they are very motivated. "They are eager and want to move. They have already looked at apartments and are ready to go," she says. Three of her beneficiaries returned to existing homes, one found an apartment in about two months and one found one an apartment in about a week. Three of them moved to Elyria and the others, to Milan. The homes are out there, Raquel contends, if people dig for them.

When asked what service she wishes beneficiaries would utilize more, she said community support coaches. Because many people lose community living skills after extended stays in long-term care facilities, Raquel stresses to each of her beneficiaries to take advantage of that unique HOME Choice benefit.

Raquel has found that her consumers share a trait: Each lived average lives in the community until they experienced a life-changing event, such as a stroke or the onset of a mental health issue. They went into a facility for rehabilitation but could not leave due to lack of equipment or home modifications.

“Each one has a different story,” she says. “Each one seems more eager than the other and all are willing to do a lot of the transition work on their own. Their stories are now behind them.”

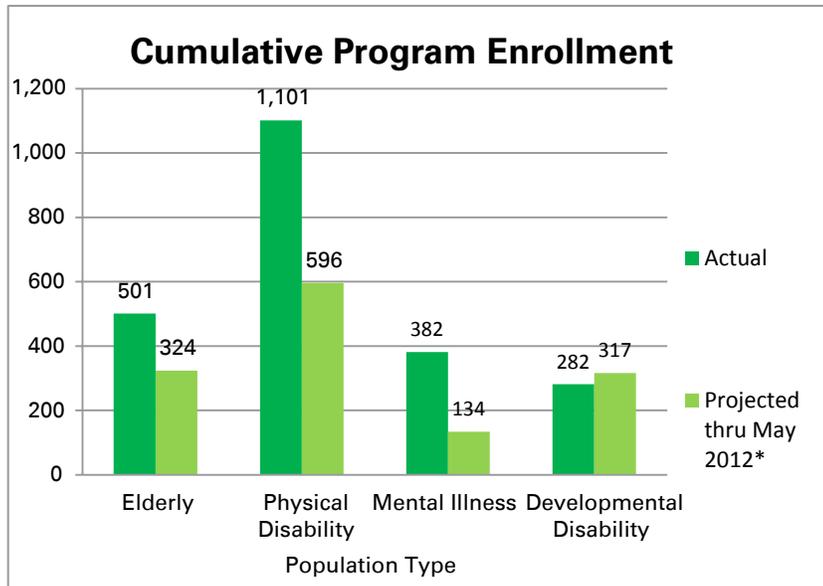
In addition to Raquel’s responsibility with HOME Choice transitions, she is Easter Seals of Northern Ohio’s home health coordinator. She has about 30 home health clients and also schedules state-tested nurse’s aides.

Raquel says she truly loves her work as a HOME Choice transition coordinator and looks forward to resuming it after she returns from maternity leave.

## HOME Choice Statistics

### HOME Choice Enrollment Continues to Grow.

The table below reflects an increase in enrollment of 31 percent since the Winter-Spring 2012 issue of the *HOME Choice Bulletin*.



\* **Note:** MFP federal funding has been extended through calendar year 2016. As a consequence, projected enrollment figures have been updated. The figures above reflect the updated projections for the first four months of the new enrollment period.

### HOME Choice Statistics (as of June 19, 2012)

- Individuals Enrolled: 2,266
- Individuals Applied: 5,728
- Active Transition Coordinators (TC): 132
- Total Active Providers (Including TCs): 526
  
- Referral Sources (of those who have applied):
  - » Self: 292
  - » Family: 67
  - » Friend: 56
  - » Physician: 4
  - » Nursing Facility: 3,183
  - » Hospital: 50
  - » Immediate Care Facility—Mental Retardation: 95
  - » Community Agency: 772



» Minimum Data Set:	115
» Pre-Admission Screening Resident Review:	7
» Long-Term Care Ombudsman:	126
» Centers for Individual Living:	26
» Other:	883
» Not Reported:	52

## HOME Choice Referrals Welcome

The HOME Choice program accepts referrals from any source. If you know anyone living in a facility who is interested in transitioning into a community setting, please call the ODJFS HOME Choice Intake and Care Coordination Unit toll-free at 1-888-221-1560 or fax an interest form to 1-614-466-6945. Interest forms and other information can be found at <http://jfs.ohio.gov/OHP/consumers/HOMEchoice.stm>.

## Share News with the HOME Choice Bulletin!

Please share the HOME Choice Bulletin with your HOME Choice beneficiaries. Ask them if they would like to be featured in the "Success Story" section. If you know of a HOME Choice success story or if you would like to submit some interesting or helpful information, please contact Susan McKinley at 1-888-221-1560 or [Susan.McKinley@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:Susan.McKinley@jfs.ohio.gov).

## Need a Trainer or Presenter?

If you would like to have a HOME Choice trainer or presenter attend an upcoming event, please call Leslie Sawyer, the HOME Choice Statewide Outreach Coordinator, at 1-888-221-1560.



Helping Ohioans Move, Expanding Choice  
Ohio's Money Follows the Person (MFP)  
Demonstration Project  
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## HOME Choice Vision Statement

**Ohioans who need long-term services and support . . .**  
Get services and supports they need in a timely manner  
In settings they want from whom they want,  
And if needs change, services and supports change accordingly.

The HOME Choice Bulletin is a newsletter for anyone interested in Ohio's Money Follows the Person HOME Choice Transition Program. It provides updates, statistics, and other information about the status and progress of Ohio's HOME Choice Program four times a year.

Please contact [mfp@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:mfp@jfs.ohio.gov) if you have comments, information to share, or would like to be added to the HOME Choice Bulletin email distribution list.