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**Online Chat About Assistance Available to Struggling Hamilton County Residents**

**Cincinnati (Feb. 2, 2008)** Hamilton County residents struggling with the high cost of gas, food, health care and other items can learn more about assistance available to them in a Feb 4 online chat with Hamilton County’s Department of Job and Family Services.

The chat is an opportunity to ask questions about public assistance programs. Many who are working but making lower incomes do not realize they are eligible for a debit card to help pay for food. Also, the elderly and many low-income children are eligible for health care assistance. And those in between jobs can receive cash assistance to help them back on their feet.

Jim Ashmore, a manager in Performance Improvement, will discuss Medicaid, food assistance, cash assistance and other programs from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Feb. 4.

To participate, visit [www.hcjfs.org](http://www.hcjfs.org) and click on the link posted under Today at HCJFS. Also, an e-mail will be sent to subscribers to the [HCJFS Update](#) newsletter with a link to the chat area.

“We know, in these difficult economic times, some are living on the edge and can benefit from our services,” said Moira Weir, director of the department. “We want to do our part to help this community.”

The chat is another attempt by the Department of Job and Family Services, which handles child support collection, child welfare and public assistance programs, to be more accessible and open to its consumers and the public at large. It follows recent moves such as stationing employees in neighborhood non-profits for easier access to services and establishing a Speaker’s Bureau to help educate the public on how the agency does business.

**About Hamilton County’s Department of Job and Family Services**

The Department of Job and Family Services administers federal, state and local programs for those in need. The Department helps with local child protection, elderly protection, child care, child support enforcement, workforce development, cash assistance, food stamp disbursement and Medicaid disbursement. Servicing Hamilton County since 1947, the Department helps hundreds of thousands each year and is accredited by the Council on Accreditation, an international, independent, not-for-profit child and family service accrediting organization.