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**Hamilton County Department of Job and Family Services Wins Four  
2009 National Achievement Awards from National Association of Counties**

**Cincinnati (June 15, 2009)** Hamilton County's Department of Job and Family Services was awarded four 2009 achievement awards from the National Association of Counties for innovative programs that contribute to and enhance county government.

The association recognized 500 innovative programs from around the nation, including 13 in Ohio.

"To have four of the 13 programs recognized in our state housed in this one agency is a tremendous achievement," said Moira Weir, director of the county's Department of Job and Family Services. "This is a testament to our dedication to continuously find new ways to help the citizens of Hamilton County to a better place in life."

The four programs chosen as Achievement Award winners are:

- **Library Initiative:** A new service designed to ease the application process for public assistance. County residents can now drop off verification any documentation needed to receive agency services at any of the 41 libraries operated by the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County. This saves the applicant time, gas money and the aggravation of traveling down town. It also relieves stress on crowded lobbies at a time when JFS is experiencing a large increase in business. In one year, more than 3,500 residents have taken advantage of this new service.
- **Everyday Heroes:** A public-private venture to increase the number of foster parents, the Everyday Heroes campaign depicted foster parents as "Everyday Heroes" in television, radio and billboard advertisements. The campaign generated more than 500 referrals and brought in nearly 100 new foster homes. Increasing the number of local foster homes decreases the chance children will be sent out of county, enabling them to stay close to their neighborhoods, friends, family members, etc. This is better for their long-term success. The collaborative that resulted from the campaign is ongoing.
- **REAL (Responsible, Effective, Accountable and Loving) Dads:** A program that provides counseling, job coaching and child support information to fathers who are at risk of failing to financially and emotionally support their children. Many young fathers in the county do not provide financial or emotional support to their children due to a lack of employment experience and deficits in life management skills, such as parenting and responsible decision-making. REAL Dads, operated with Lighthouse Youth Services, helps eliminate barriers to

employment and engagement with the child. In three years of the program, 72 fathers have successfully graduated.

- **Sheriff Commissary Account Seizures:** JFS partnered with the Hamilton County Sheriff's Department to increase collections on current child support and arrears, especially on cases where orders are hard to enforce due to the non-custodial parent being in and out of jail. The two organizations work together to seize money from the commissary accounts of parents who are delinquent on child support payments. So far, more than \$33,000 has been collected.

The National Association of Counties will list a summary of the programs in its Model Programs database. The winning counties also will be recognized at the association's annual conference in Nashville on July 26.

#### **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.