

**POST-SUMMIT PLANNING FORM
TO BE COMPLETED BY AUGUST 1, 2008**

Email to summitonchildren@sc.ohio.gov or fax to 614-387-9409

COUNTY NAME: **ATHENS**
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As they relate to the *safety, well-being and permanent home environments* for children in your county, please complete the following:

WHAT ARE THE TOP FIVE STRENGTHS AND/OR RESOURCES IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

1. Long-term history of effective inter-agency cooperation and collaboration.
2. An independent children services agency.
3. A reasonable amount of client intervention services in treatment foster care and the mental health system.
4. Positive efforts to bring together the university community with service organizations on behalf of individuals living in an Appalachian culture.
5. Genuine concern for children, families, and individuals who are economically stressed and live with limited resources.

WHAT ARE THE TOP FIVE CHALLENGES FACING YOUR COMMUNITY?

1. Poverty – highest in the state. One out of every two individuals is affected by poverty in the community.
2. The availability of illegal drugs on affordable terms.

3. Lack of middle class and/or blue collar employment with reasonable salaries & benefits. The middle class is the cornerstone of economic stability and is virtually non-existent in Athens County.

4. Lack of health insurance benefits for adults, not only effects the medical health of individuals, but prevents them from accessing much needed mental health and substance abuse treatment. This can spiral into an inability to provide for the safety, well-being and permanent homes environments for children.

5. Deterioration of the traditional family model and its potential to negatively effect the stability of the children in the home.

WHAT ARE THE TOP FIVE MOST NEEDED SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES?

1. Families must have a minimum standard of living that at least meets their basic needs for shelter, health care, food, and most importantly JOBS.

2. Economic development in poor, rural communities that produces livable, sustainable wages & benefits. Without sustainable industry, this community cannot attract business and commerce. The State of Ohio needs a rural, economic plan, and tourism is not the answer.

3. Transportation. Athens County does not have a county bus system. Essential services, including grocery stores, are located as far as 15 miles away from someone's home. Access to any basic service is limited without a vehicle.

4. Substance abuse and mental health treatment for parents. FASD (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome), autism, MRDD, and behavioral health care treatment for children, especially those without access to adequate medical insurance.

5. Family support systems that help parents choose appropriate caregivers for their children, mental health and parenting services, and education programs for everyone regardless of age.

WHAT ACTION STEPS WILL BE TAKEN LOCALLY TO DEVELOP NEEDED SERVICES OR ADDRESS LOCAL CHALLENGES?

1. Continue inter-agency collaboration. Explore economic development opportunities. Re-enact the social service-mental health hotline, non-emergency service system through 2-1-1.
2. Continue the local, state, and national efforts of *Don't Turn Away Ohio* – a system to transform poverty and meet basic needs.
3. Continue legislative work on the establishment of a health care system for all Ohioans.
4. Continue to develop local, collaborative responses to family needs including the establishment of service systems located within smaller communities, programs that utilize family support and group processes, and are client-driven services families and individuals need who access them.
5. Continue legislative advocacy. Athens County has strong client advocates in poverty, child welfare, mental health, community action, and family systems. We need to continue to “go up the road” on behalf of our community.

BEYOND FUNDING, WHAT ACTION DOES THE COUNTY NEED FROM THE STATE TO HELP THE COUNTY ACHIEVE ITS ACTION PLAN?

How can we do anything without funding?!

Actions and events currently moving forward in Athens County:

1. T & TA on developing 2-1-1.
2. Support for inter-agency collaboration among Job & Family Services, the University, Mental Health, Family & Children First, Community Action, Children Services, Juvenile Court, local communities, the schools, the Early Childhood community, physicians, et al, to streamline and create access for clients, identify gaps in services, and attempt to solve overwhelming problems with limited resources.
3. Continued review of funding streams to be sure they mesh well and do not impede progress for clients and agencies.
4. Legislative action to resolve the poverty issues facing our families, including adequate jobs, health care, and a plan to meet the basic standard of living for all Ohioans.