

Medina County service organizations seek levy funding

Updated Jun 10, 2019; Posted Jun 10, 2019



Medina County Job & Family Services is one of three county organizations teaming up to support a request for a new levy. (Sean McDonnell, special to cleveland.com)

By [Sean McDonnell - special to cleveland.com](http://seanmcdonnell.com)

MEDINA, Ohio -- Three human services organizations in Medina County are asking the county commissioners to place a 1-mill property tax levy on the November ballot.

Medina County's Office for Older Adults (OOA); the Alcohol, Drug Addiction & Mental Health Board (ADAMH); and Job and Family Services (JFS) are all requesting funding from the single levy, which is projected to generate approximately \$5 million annually.

OOA Director Laura Toth said about \$2.5 million of that would go to JFS, \$1.5 million to ADAMH and \$1 million to OOA.

Toth said none of the organizations currently receives levy money, and that most of the groups' funding comes from the state and national levels. For the OOA, Toth said the state

and federal funding has stayed the same, but the number of services provided by the organization keeps growing, along with the number of people served.

“The population of seniors and just the county in general continues to grow,” Toth said.

She said 22 percent of the county population is 65 or older, and that number is expected to grow to 31 percent in the next 10 years.

Toth said her organization currently provides 38,000 home-delivered meals to seniors throughout the county, along with 8,000 rides through its transportation services. According to OOA’s 2017 budget, it spent \$205,508 on providing home meals for seniors and \$76,000 on transportation.

Toth said she expects the levy to do well if put on the ballot, noting that a recent survey the organization conducted showed that 68 percent of people who took it would vote for the levy. She also said the commissioners received it well when the groups presented it.

“They hear from their constituents,” Toth said. “It has been very well supported.”

ADAMH Board Executive Director Phillip Titterington said his organization is dependent on federal and state funding, which can be unpredictable each year. The funding can also be earmarked for set purposes, limiting what ADAMH can use it for.

“You’re at the mercy of the state and the federal budgets,” he said. “Plus, especially as you go with the federal, there’s a lot of restrictions. You get the funding, and you have to fund their priorities.”

The ADAMH board has a projected budget deficit for the next fiscal year, Titterington said, because of the unpredictability of state and federal funds. He said the local levy would give the organization more stable and flexible funding.

“Local (funding) is the most flexible and can be used for specific needs to Medina County,” he said.

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