



The Cuyahoga County Health And Human Services Levy

Funding vital lifelines for abused children, vulnerable seniors and hundreds of thousands of Cuyahoga County residents facing critical needs

What is “Health and Human Services (HHS)?”

Every year, more than 400,000 people from more than 200,000 families access Cuyahoga County’s health and human services system. Cuyahoga County’s financial support for these services comes primarily from two countywide health and human services property tax levies. Nearly 80% of these dollars are used to provide services to five groups with critical needs:

- Children who are at risk of abuse and neglect
- People with mental illnesses or an addiction
- People with serious health issues
- Victims of crime
- Senior citizens and people with disabilities

Why is an HHS levy increase needed?

There are four main reasons Cuyahoga County needs more funding for health and human services:

1. POVERTY

- Cleveland is the second-poorest major city in the country.
- One out of five Cuyahoga County residents lives in poverty—which for a family of three is an income of \$21,330 or less.
- Unlike much of the country, poverty in Cuyahoga County has increased since the Great Recession and is 34% higher than the national rate.

2. OPIOIDS

- The rate of opioid-induced deaths in Cuyahoga County is two-and-a-half times the national average. In the City of Cleveland, it is nearly five times the national average.
- Since 2016, opioid addiction among parents has caused the number of children in foster care or under protective supervision in Cuyahoga County to grow by nearly 70%—nearly 1,500 additional children.

3. DEMOGRAPHICS

- More Cuyahoga County residents are now over the age of 60 than under the age of 20.
- Neonatal infant mortality in Cuyahoga County in 2017 was worse than it was in Mexico, Libya, and Lebanon. The rate for African American babies was worse than in Iraq, North Korea, Iran, and Syria.
- Several age groups of Cuyahoga County residents, including infants, working-age adults, and older adults ages 65–74, have mortality rates that are higher than the state average.

4. STATE AND FEDERAL DISREGARD

- Successive federal and state administrations have reduced their contributions to the health and human services safety net.
- The State of Ohio’s funding for children’s services has remained the lowest in the nation, even as the number of children in government custody has grown.

The Proposed Health and Human Services Levy

On the March 2020 Primary Election ballot, Cuyahoga County voters will be asked to consider a **replacement property tax levy of 4.7 mills to fund health and human services in Cuyahoga County**. If passed, this levy would **increase the millage rate by 0.8 mills** from the current rate of 3.9 mills. The new millage rate would be effective from 2021–2028.

Passing this levy would **cost property owners roughly \$41 more a year for every \$100,000 in property value—a little more than 11¢ per day**.

It would generate **an additional \$35 million in annual health and human services funding**.

How will passing the HHS Levy help?

Passing the HHS levy will ensure current critical services continue AND will fund investment in targeted, interconnected areas that will amplify the impact of our health and human services efforts, help reduce long-term needs and costs, and provide us with measurable, accountable results. Four critical areas for additional HHS investment are:

CRITICAL INVESTMENT AREAS	GOALS
Infants and Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Saving Babies' Lives• Protecting At-Risk Children• Preventing the Long-Term Effects of Childhood Trauma• Preparing Children for School
Mental Health and Addiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Treating More Patients• Building a Continuum of Care for Recovery• Helping People Become Healthier and Find Homes
Public Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Turning Young People Away from Violence• Diverting People from Jail into Treatment• Preparing Productive Opportunities for People Re-Entering Society
Older Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helping People Age In Place• Increasing Food Security• Connecting Seniors with Caregivers• Promoting Strength and Independence

The Cuyahoga County Health and Humans Services levy need YOUR support

Cuyahoga County's health and human service levies are **PRACTICAL INVESTMENTS** in strengthening the resilience of our economy and our communities, and in reducing future economic and social costs.

IN THE LONG RUN, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES INVESTMENTS SAVE MONEY. As Debbie Read, the Chair of Greater Cleveland Partnership's Government Affairs Council in 2018 said, "The dollars collected [for health and human services] provide a significant social safety net to help reduce higher costs to taxpayers for untreated needs." Underfunding these efforts – and walking away from those in need—increases our risk of more costly future problems in our justice system and hospital emergency rooms.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES INVESTMENTS BENEFIT ALL OF US. Chronic medical conditions and diseases don't discriminate. Traumatic injuries can happen to everyone. We all age. And economic upheavals can affect any of us. Our local economy and our communities gain from helping people bounce back from these challenges so they can build better lives for themselves and their families.

Proposed annual spending breakdown of levy's new revenue

Ten million dollars of the additional annual revenue from the proposed health and human services replacement levy has been proposed for maintaining existing services.

ANNUAL ALLOCATION	EIGHT-YEAR ALLOCATION	AGENCY	PURPOSE
\$5,000,000	\$40,000,000	Cuyahoga County's Health and Human Services Division	To cover the cost of inflation. Without setting aside these funds, the health and human system would be forced to cut an average of \$5 million in services every year, after the first year of the new levy.
\$5,000,000	\$40,000,000	Cuyahoga County's Health and Human Services Division	To offset HHS expenditures that the County had been forced to pay for from its General Fund. This allocation will allow the County to maintain its current level of services without having to drain General Fund dollars away from other priorities.

The remaining \$25 million has been proposed for investment in efforts to spur innovation and reduce long-term costs.

ANNUAL ALLOCATION	EIGHT-YEAR ALLOCATION	AGENCY	PURPOSE
\$5,100,000	\$40,800,000	The Cuyahoga County ADAMHS Board	\$2 million to restore \$1 million in spending cuts and bolster mental health crisis services including suicide prevention and addiction/mental health emergencies. More funding/staffing will allow 1,000 more people annually to get in-person assessments and will reduce wait times for those sessions. With better staffing, more people seeking crisis help will be able to get in-person assessments. Shorter wait times for those sessions can be life-saving. \$3.1 million for Residential Assistance Program – which had spending cuts in 2018 – to provide housing for adults with severe mental illness. No new clients have been able to use this program due to spending cuts.
\$2,000,000	\$16,000,000	Cuyahoga County's Department of Senior and Adult Services	To eliminate waiting lists & serve additional seniors through the Options program, providing meals, hiring additional Family Service Aides and Geriatric Assessment Specialists, and expanding senior transportation
\$725,000	\$5,800,000	The Family & Children First Council	To implement crisis coordination, expand the out-of-school program in additional neighborhoods, and grow our Families and Schools Together (FAST) program.
\$5,000,000	\$40,000,000	Invest in Children	To maintain the expansion our Universal Pre-Kindergarten program and the number of slots available for children.
\$6,000,000	\$48,000,000	Cuyahoga County's Department of Children and Family Services	To implement a Kinship Care program with extended-family members. Kinship Care is the most desirable of out-of-home placement options offering the greatest level of stability, allowing children to maintain their sense of belonging and enhance the child's ability to identify with family culture and traditions.
\$1,000,000	\$8,000,000	Cuyahoga County's Department of Job and Family Services	To hire additional caseworkers to further reduce the wait times for those seeking Public Assistance benefits
\$2,500,000	\$20,000,000	Development of a New Diversion Center	To provide mental health and addiction treatment and lower both the jail population and recidivism by diverting people from jail into community-based services.
\$2,175,000	\$17,400,000	Housing Stability Services	To ensure families, young adults, and single adults move from emergency shelter and homelessness in to permanent housing and help them remain stably housed through supported employment and focused interventions.
\$250,000	\$2,000,000	Cleveland Rape Crisis Center	To restore lost Federal Victims of Crime Act funding.
\$250,000	\$2,000,000	The Cleveland Adoption Network	To support efforts to help children who need them find permanent families.

All of these proposed allocations would need the approval of Cuyahoga County Council and the County Executive before they could be implemented.