



**Sunset Review Committee  
Testimony on behalf of Regional Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Councils  
June 11, 2024**

Good afternoon, Chair Wilkin, Vice-Chair Hillyer, and members of the committee. My name is Bryan Stout and I am with the Department of Children and Youth, administrative agents for the Ohio Children's Trust Fund and, by extension, the Regional Child Abuse and Neglects Prevention Councils. With me is Eric Gonzales of the Ohio Children's Trust Fund. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today on behalf of Ohio's eight Regional Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Councils.

Ohio Children's Trust Fund (OCTF), statutorily created in 1984, is dedicated exclusively to funding primary and secondary child abuse and neglect prevention programs and services. The mission of OCTF is to prevent child abuse and neglect through investing in strong communities, healthy families, and safe children. It is our vision that Ohio's children grow and thrive within empowered families and nurturing communities. OCTF also serves as the Ohio Chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America.

OCTF is a quasi-public entity governed by a board of 15 members representing a broad public-private partnership. Eight members represent the citizens of Ohio and are appointed by the Governor, four members are legislative appointees, and three members are agency directors (from the Ohio departments of Health, Children and Youth, and Mental Health and Addiction Services) or their designees.

OCTF is governed by Ohio Revised Code (ORC) sections 3109.13 through 3109.179. The core purpose of OCTF's activities within its six year strategic plan revolve around further enhancing OCTF's collaborations and partnerships, both on the local level and statewide level. A component of this work supports the coordination and implementation of Ohio's eight child abuse and neglect regional prevention councils which serve as Ohio's infrastructure for child abuse and neglect prevention at the local level. These councils and their duties are outlined in ORC 3109.171-3109.176. Ohio's eight regional child abuse and neglect prevention councils were established in statute in 2015 and serve as a key mechanism for service provision for OCTF. This investment annually approved and overseen by the OCTF Board equates to roughly 78% of OCTF's 1980 appropriation limit, which also includes the expenses to coordinate these councils through the regional prevention coordinators.

The OCTF Board approved revenue supporting these regional councils is derived from public dedicated funds received through vital statistic fees collected at the local level on certified copies of birth certificates, death certificates and divorce decrees and dissolutions (~\$4M annually reflected in 1980 Fund - state special revenue). The OCTF Board also receives additional federal funding through several sources. OCTF revenues from fees and grants are invested in prevention programs at the local and state level by providing funding to private and public entities to fund child abuse and child neglect prevention programs and services such as parenting education and support, which includes investments in the Triple P Positive Parenting Program and other evidence-based child maltreatment prevention models, youth mentoring services, and training for

caregivers and professionals regarding their role in preventing abuse and protecting Ohio's children.

Each regional prevention council consists of up to two (2) county prevention specialists appointed by each county's board of county commissioners. The OCTF Board may also appoint prevention specialists to the council. County prevention specialists bring a wealth of expertise to the regions, representing fields such as: children services, mental health and addiction, family and children first councils, healthcare, juvenile justice, education, disabilities, early care and education, and parents with lived experience. As of May 1, 2024, there were nearly 150 appointed council members across the state.

Each regional prevention council is also staffed by a community-based organization, which serves as the regional prevention coordinating entity. This organization, which is competitively procured by the OCTF Board, provides budgetary, procurement, and other related administrative functions of the council and council workgroups, including convening meetings and facilitating discussions for both the council and the workgroups for each region.

The councils are tasked with assessing the needs within their local communities and making decisions pertaining to which evidence-based and evidence-informed child maltreatment prevention services should be provided to Ohio's 88 counties. Through this effort, roughly \$4M is awarded annually through regional prevention plans, reaching nearly 5,000 parents, caregivers, youth and professionals on an annual basis, through approximately 15 different prevention program models.

Through the regional prevention councils, OCTF strives to ensure that the prevention programming approved and funded by the OCTF Board produces positive outcomes for children and families. These programs are supported by OCTF staff who provide grantees with one-on-one support and programmatic guidance on day-to-day operational questions as well as substantive programmatic expertise and technical assistance. Guidance and technical assistance is provided through ongoing individualized technical assistance, online webinars and in-person trainings.

With this information shared today, we recommend the continuation of the Child Abuse and Neglect Regional Prevention Councils. The regional prevention councils are comprised of leaders within their reflective communities, ensuring appropriate and responsive child maltreatment prevention services are provided to Ohio families before these families experience a crisis.

Chair Wilkin and members of the Sunset Review Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the OCTF regional prevention councils. I'd be happy to answer any questions.