**State De-Funds Successful Summer Youth Employment Program!**

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) has decided there will be zero funds for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) **Summer Youth Employment Program** after August of 2016.

The impact of this decision will be far reaching through-out the state’s larger metros and especially damaging for the nearly 2,000 Montgomery County Youth about to begin another year of Summer Employment and Job Readiness Training. State Funding of $45 Million was removed from the State TANF Spending Plan, at the same time the State has an estimated $150 million TANF surplus balance. Counties across Ohio will no longer be issued additional monies to give the Youth work experience, which is important for the growth of our future workforce. In Montgomery County additional local funds were added for 2016 to help achieve the highest level of success in preparing our regions 14-18 year olds. Montgomery County provides:

* Summer Employment for nearly 2,000 Youth at up to 500 different employers throughout the county. Over half of them are 16 and under and it’s likely their only option for employment – and they will miss out on developing job readiness skills so critical to gaining employment after high school.
* Employers in the region not only receive a compensated part-time employee for the summer, they also get support in mentoring the youth with a case manager/job coach. It’s a win-win for both the student and the employer and the youth are at an age where this employer-employee relationship is critical in developing life skills.
* 95% of the youth in the program the past 3 years have been African American and socially or economically disadvantaged. This program has provided needed guidance for this group and provides them meaningful income while giving them a sense of direction. There is no better program that teaches the fundamentals of responsibility and provides actual work experience – this is how we develop future pipelines of workforce for industry sectors that are struggling to find job ready candidates to fill jobs.
* Personal growth. Developing life skills. Exposure to careers. Education on career opportunities. Being responsible employees. These are a few of the things that our youth tell us they get from our program – some of them don’t have the opportunity to learn this anywhere else and our businesses need them to be prepared for the workforce.
* Investing in our Youth to help them get Job Ready costs $ 1,296 per Student for the 8 week summer program. Looking ahead for those who never find meaningful employment – the annual cost for public assistance for a family or 2 for Cash and Food Assistance $ 8,882. There is no better return on investment and this program is critical to an important segment of our future workforce – our Youth.

What do we need to do from here? 10,000 Youth across the state are in the same situation as our Youth in Montgomery County. Contact your local State Senator or State Representative – Tell them “**Put the funding back into the TANF Summer Youth Employment Program**” and contact **Governor Joh Kasich’s Office at 614-466-3555** to let them know you do not approve of this administrative decision and that you support the TANF Summer YouthWorks Program.