

## **Jobs office in Fairfield County is losing 52**

Agency to cut posts May 1 because of drop in state funds

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**BY MARY BETH LANE**

### **THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH**

LANCASTER, Ohio -- More newly jobless people are seeking help from the Fairfield County Job and Family Services office, but there will be fewer workers to respond and longer waits.

The agency is laying off 42 workers and leaving 10 more jobs vacant. The cuts eliminate about 20 percent of the staff.

The reductions are needed to align the county office's budget with reductions at the state level. The office expects to receive \$2.4 million less in state money in the fiscal year that begins July 1, said Director Michael Orlando.

County Commissioners Judy Shupe and Jon Myers voted yesterday to approve the budget-reduction plan that Orlando proposed, including the layoffs. Commissioner Mike Kiger voted against it, saying he wanted more time to study the plan.

The layoffs take effect May 1. Employees have been filled with anxiety awaiting word about their fate, Orlando said.

The public will suffer, too, said the agency's community-services director, Laura Holton.

Fewer employees will mean longer waits for people who want to qualify for food stamps, Medicaid health insurance and cash assistance, Holton said.

The office's help desk has been reduced, along with some computer-training sessions and other job-readiness training.

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