

John O'Grady

Since first elected to the Franklin County Board of Commissioners in November 2008, John O'Grady has strived to make Franklin County one of the best communities in the nation for living, working, visiting and doing business. To do this, he takes a “hand-in-glove” approach to economic development, community development and social services, seeing their link as critical to the success of each.

Over the last several years, John has taken a leadership role in economic development initiatives such as the investment in a sustainable model for Nationwide Arena, the re-development of the Westside near the new Hollywood Casino, and a 2011 trade mission trip to India to attract foreign direct investment in Central Ohio. In 2012 and 2013, Commissioner O'Grady pushed the County's Economic Development team to pursue innovative funding opportunities such as the Workforce Training Grants (WIT-G).



These grants were approved by the Commissioners for IBM, Quantum Health, Sid Tools and Allied Mineral to train and retain workers. Commissioner O'Grady also encouraged the creation of a new Economic Development program that advances the Commissioners' core policy goals of job creation and economic development, building on existing county programs, and increasing funding for strategic partners. This program will be launched in 2014. All of these projects create jobs, attract tourism and improve the quality of life for Franklin County residents.

While development projects grow the resources of Franklin County, John remains focused on maintaining a strong community base. One of his main priorities in this area has been to bolster the local foods system to improve the health and wellbeing of residents and encourage sustainability through community gardening and local small business growth. In 2011, John joined his fellow Commissioners and Columbus Mayor Michael B. Coleman, in cooperation with The Columbus Foundation, to create a Community Gardens Grant fund. Grants have been awarded every year since to support organizations with new and existing community gardens in the City of Columbus and throughout Franklin County.

Another of John's community development priorities continues to be responding to the needs of vulnerable communities. For example, in 2009, he established the Somali Work Group, an ongoing collaboration between numerous county agencies, courts, and community organizations tasked with identifying the needs of Franklin County's immigrant communities and developing effective government responses to these needs.

He also recently joined the Greater Columbus Infant Mortality Task Force which aims to reduce the rate of infant mortality in Columbus/Franklin County by nearly 40 percent, from the 2011 benchmark rate of 9.8 infant deaths per 1,000 live births to 6 per 1,000, and cut in half the racial disparity gap between

white and black infants. This mission connects with and enhances work supported by ongoing investments of the Board of Commissioners in Nationwide Children's Hospital's Ohio Better Birth Outcomes (OBBO) initiative.

John's leadership in these areas has been recognized at the state and national level. He served previously as Vice-Chair and currently as Chair for the General Government & Operations Committee and as a member of the Metropolitan & Regional Affairs Committee for the County Commissioners' Association of Ohio (CCAO). He is also a member of the steering committee of the Large Urban County Caucus for the National Association of Counties (NACo). Through his involvement with these associations, John engages with leaders, in our region and beyond, in the discussion of solutions for community issues. He promotes shared government services and cooperative purchasing contracts among communities as a way to reduce the cost of government, and whenever given the opportunity, he looks for and promotes big ideas and new strategies that will make Franklin County stronger.

John is also involved in the fields of health, education, and domestic relations. He served six years on the Board of Trustees of the Epilepsy Foundation of Central Ohio and served five years on the Institutional Biological and Chemical Safety Committee at Nationwide Children's Hospital. John was the founder of the Hearts Over Clubs Charity Fund, a non-profit organization that benefited the families of heart disease victims, and in 2012 became an Ambassador for The American Heart Association. He is an honorary board member of Kid's Voting, Central Ohio, and an active sponsor of programs that promote hands-on educational experiences for young people. John has also been supportive of the Columbus Coalition Against Family Violence and their efforts to stem the incidences of domestic violence.

Prior to serving as Commissioner, John worked as an administrator in the State Treasurer's office, owned his own business, and served two four-year terms as the Clerk of Courts for the Franklin County Common Pleas Courts and the 10th District Court of Appeals. As Commissioner, he was selected in both 2010 and 2013 by his fellow Commissioners to serve one-year terms as Board President. John is the youngest of 12 children of former Ohio Democratic Party Chairman Pete O'Grady. John and his wife, Pamela Hykes O'Grady, are the proud parents of four children: Elizabeth, Jack, Patrick and Erin. He is a lifelong member of the Catholic Church.