2018

THE STATE OF OHIO

A story through statistics: How Ohio measures up
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**OHIO IS NOT KEEPING UP.** Through meaningful investments in education, infrastructure, and improving the quality of life for all Ohioans, we can create a better state for our children and grandchildren. There is no credible alternative that we’re aware of.

### HEALTH & HOME

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Ohio is below the national average.

### EDUCATION

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### ECONOMY & EMPLOYMENT

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### INEQUALITY

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Ohio is at or above the national average.
INTRODUCTION

OHIO CONTINUES TO UNDER-PERFORM THE NATION IN ALMOST EVERY WAY.

Too many mothers in Ohio put their babies to bed only to find them not waking up. Too many young adults are struggling to afford to go to college. Too many Ohioans continue to work long hours and are unable to get ahead. The data showcases that these individual – and often isolating – experiences are far too common.

THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT WE CAN IMPROVE THROUGH STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS.

State leaders need to invest in great public services that strengthen Ohio’s communities. In this year’s report, many data points improved over last year as a result of national economic growth. However, we will not be able to end hunger, reduce infant mortality, or make college affordable without new investments. There is just no way around the need to invest.

THE TAX CUT EXPERIMENT DID NOT SOLVE OHIO’S PROBLEMS.

Beginning in 2005, Ohio cut billions of dollars in tax revenue, and it did not bring new jobs or investment. Even during last year’s budget debate, as the national economy continued to improve, Ohio policymakers scrambled to pass a balanced budget as a result of a revenue shortfall.

Ohio is not alone. Kansas and Illinois recently passed tax increases to fund essential public services. Kansas’ business owner tax cut and income tax cuts never served as the ‘shot of adrenaline’ their Governor and tax cut advocates predicted. Instead they were forced to cut school funding drastically. Both Kansas and Illinois legislators worked in a bi-partisan fashion to pass tax plans that will better serve their states by allowing them to invest in great public services that will strengthen their communities.

THIS YEAR MARKS OUR THIRD STATE OF OHIO REPORT.

The Governor’s State of the State provides a perfect opportunity for Ohioans to step back and take an honest look at how we are doing as a state. The data presented in this report highlights the common struggles and opportunities for Ohioans in four sections — health & home, education, economy & employment, and inequality.

For each metric, we begin by sharing Ohio’s rank nationally, the definition of the terminology, and share the most basic graphs and statistics. This report helps to break down and summarize many other reports to begin to illustrate a holistic view of the state of Ohio. This year, a section was added to address the opioid epidemic in Ohio. Also, our infrastructure metric is focused on bridge maintenance as an example of infrastructure need. Infrastructure is a difficult issue to develop an honest apples-to-apples comparison between states. This is discussed in that sections narrative in more depth.

AS YOU READ THIS REPORT, REMEMBER WE CAN SOLVE PROBLEMS.

We have serious issues in Ohio that we believe can be solved. We can improve education, public health, and our economy by investing as a state to solve these problems. But Ohio will need to invest to build the type of community we all desire. Ohio can gain the needed revenue by closing unnecessary tax loopholes, modernizing our tax code, and raising income tax and business tax rates on those with the greatest ability to pay.

NOW IS THE TIME TO CHANGE COURSE AND ENSURE THAT THE STATE OF OHIO IS STRONG WELL INTO THE FUTURE, FOR EVERYONE.
HEALTH & HOME

As we look at Ohio’s infant mortality, hunger and other issues, it is clear that too many Ohioans do not have their basic needs met.

Most families are more concerned about paying bills and putting food on the table than any obscure economic talking point. This section’s metrics highlight the very real concerns that Ohioans face. Through smart and targeted public investments, we can help strengthen hard-working families and build a stronger Ohio.
Infant mortality

**Infant mortality is the death of children under one year.**

**LOOKING BACK**

Ohio continues to trail other states on the issue of infant mortality. Ohio’s infant mortality rate for post-neonatal births (death after first 28 days) declined last year as a likely result of investments into neighborhood safe sleep campaigns. After a safe sleep campaign, there is a drop of 22% in sleep-related deaths. While this is an important investment, it will not solve Ohio’s alarmingly high infant mortality rate. However, our neo-natal infant mortality rate (death in first 28 days) increased. Deaths that occur within the first few weeks of life often occur at the hospital and are often related to prematurity, birth defect, and other issues. Through strategic investments into maternal health and well-being, we can reduce these deaths as well.

**LOOKING FORWARD**

70% of infant deaths occur within the first 28 days. While the safe sleep campaign is important in reducing our infant mortality rate, it does not address the most major problems. Prematurity and delivery are complicated issues that involve genetics, socio-economic conditions, and much more. However, we know that the symptoms of poverty including lack of regular healthcare access, stress, manual labor, poor housing and nutrition, and other issues contribute to a higher infant mortality rate. As policymakers consider how to best invest to solve Ohio’s high infant mortality rate, they should also focus on the African American community that occurs at a rate 40% greater than whites (15.2 to 5.8). There is a correlation between the increased levels of poverty, stress, and a lack of access to healthcare that contribute to this racial inequality.
Hunger
Food insecurity (hunger) exists when a person is without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of nutritious food.

DESPITE SLIGHT IMPROVEMENTS IN 2016, HUNGER REMAINS AN ALL TOO COMMON REALITY IN OHIO. 14.8% OF OHIOANS STRUGGLE WITH FOOD INSECURITY — THAT IS 1.7 MILLION OF OUR NEIGHBORS.

LOOKING BACK
Hunger peaked in the aftermath of the recession at 16.9% in Ohio and 14.6% nationally. Since that time, the rate of hunger decreased to 14.8% in Ohio and 13% nationally. However, hunger rates remain higher both in Ohio (30% higher) and nationally (14% higher) than they were in 2004. While hunger is a symptom of other social issues such as poverty and access to nutritious food, it is also the cause of other social issues and costs - such as increased healthcare costs, difficulty to learn, decreased productivity at work, and much more. As Ohio looks to solve hunger, we cannot only address hunger as a symptom of poverty, but also as a contributing factor to a variety of other social concerns.

LOOKING FORWARD
Ohio’s hunger rate dropped in 2016 largely as a result of the national economy improving. However, natural economic growth will not be enough solve hunger in Ohio, because hunger will be a barrier to growth and success. To improve public health, education, and our economy, everyone should have access to nutritious food. Ohio needs to invest in an economy that works for all, including low-wage workers, and guarantee that their is access to nutritious food in low-income and rural communities. Investments into SNAP benefits at the federal levels, state investments into emergency food assistance, and food banks are essential tools to help families make ends meet during difficult times.

Too often, slight improvements lead to pre-mature celebration. Ohio shouldn't grow complacent with a 14.8% hunger rate. This level of hunger remains 30% higher than our rate of hunger in 2004. The result of hunger in Ohio is an estimated $6 billion healthcare bill. Compared to a cost of less than $900 million to end hunger in Ohio. Investing into the health and well-being of Ohioans not only makes ethical and moral sense, but fiscal sense as well.
Home foreclosure

The number of mortgaged homes where homeowners are unable to make their payments.

OHIO’S HIGH FORECLOSURE RATE CONTINUES TO SLOW OUR ECONOMY AND HURT OHIO COMMUNITIES AND FAMILIES.
1 IN EVERY 1,721 HOMES IN OHIO IS IN FORECLOSURE.
HOMEOWNERSHIP AND HOUSING STABILITY ARE CORNERSTONES OF THE AMERICAN DREAM.

LOOKING BACK

Neighborhoods hit hardest by the 2008 recession will likely never be the same again. Many homes were vacated and then fell victim to disrepair. Foreclosure rates remain high in Ohio, and these high rates hurt entire neighborhoods. Non-profit partners are using private and public investments into affordable housing to target neighborhoods like Linden in Columbus with a multi-year commitment to build or rehab 158 homes in one neighborhood. However with 54,000 families in unaffordable housing situations in Franklin county, 158 homes is only a drop in the bucket.9

The foreclosure crisis also reduced home values, and this led to neighbors losing the wealth they accumulated in their homes, sunk property taxes, and much more. These local communities continue to need state investment to allow them to recover. Homeowners in predominantly non-white communities lost more than 40% more wealth than the wealth lost in predominantly white communities.10

LOOKING FORWARD

While the foreclosure rate across the country recedes to pre-recession levels, there is much damage left in its wake. Even Central Ohio, one of Ohio’s hottest housing markets, has the 74th highest foreclosure rank out of 217 major markets.11 Ohio can continue to solve housing crisis by investing more resources into the Ohio Housing Trust Fund. These resources support safe, decent, and affordable housing in a cost effective and efficient manner. Likewise, Ohio’s housing wage of $15.00 compared to a national average of $21.21 should be seen as an asset to attract young families and others who want low-cost housing in a vibrant community.12 Local and state government investments into parks, museums, libraries, and high-quality education (on top of the investments into housing) are important centerpieces of those vibrant communities.
Overdose deaths

The number of residents per 100,000 that die each year from drug overdose.

Looking Back

Overdose deaths in the United States and Ohio have skyrocketed in recent years as a result of the opioid epidemic. In 2016, Ohio had over 4,300 individuals die as a result of overdose. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, doctors began to increase opioid prescriptions under the false assumption that they were not highly addictive. In 2017, Ohio’s two-year budget invested over $170 million to provide housing, treatment, and drug court services. This is in addition to recent changes in reporting procedures and standards for the medical use of opioids. Montgomery, Brown, and Butler counties have rates higher than 40 deaths per 100,000 people. These counties are more than double the national overdose rate.

For too long, addiction was treated as a criminal justice issue in Ohio. The opioid epidemic is transitioning public thinking in Ohio and nationally to focus on it more appropriately as a public health crisis.

Looking Forward

The Ohio legislature included notable new investments to fight the opioid epidemic through the 2018-19 budget. These investments will hopefully highlight effective strategies worthy of additional investment. Sparsely populated areas, such as Southeast Ohio, will require additional statewide investments to maintain proper medical facilities to provide appropriate healthcare. In addition to healthcare, Ohio must also continue to invest in the fallout of this epidemic. Foster care agencies are overwhelmed by the massive influx of children whose parents are struggling with addiction. Foster care and high levels of transition disrupt children’s education and stability, and increases the likelihood of poverty and homelessness in adulthood. The state must properly fund children’s services as well as other community supports to help families struggling with the mental health issue of addiction.
Health insurance

The percentage of the population in Ohio that has public or private health insurance.

LOOKING BACK
The work of President Obama and Governor Kasich made a difference in Ohio. The expansion of Medicaid in Ohio has allowed more than 700,000 Ohioans access to health insurance. Many of these individuals (43%) are working and 27% were diagnosed with a chronic health issue. In three years, Ohio’s uninsured rate has dropped in half as a result of the Affordable Care Act. Recent federal policy decisions will allow Ohio to maintain our Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). However, other policy changes, such as work requirements, may undermine the progress Ohio has made. Likewise, the repeal of the individual mandate at the national level will likely increase the premiums paid by people outside of the government health insurance system.

LOOKING FORWARD
Health insurance is only the first step in creating a healthy Ohio. Now, individuals must have access to quality care. Ohio’s aging population continues to put pressure on physicians and other medical professionals. It is estimated that the United States will have a shortfall of 12-31,000 primary care physicians by 2025. When time and distance separate a patient and a primary care physician, the quality of care goes down. In rural and urban communities alike, access to high quality healthcare remains an issue. Communities need state and national investment to get creative in connecting the newly insured with appropriate, high-quality care. Columbus is following the example of Cleveland in designing public transit options around healthcare with the recent creation of the CMAX line. This type of innovative thinking will be required by state and local leaders to continue to expand health care access in Ohio.

THE EXPANSION OF MEDICAID CONTINUES TO BENEFIT OHIO. THE NUMBER OF UNINSURED OHIOANS HAS BEEN CUT IN HALF SINCE 2014 — DOWN TO 5.6%.
Ohio's education system will only succeed with investments to guarantee an equitable and adequate education for every child from preschool through higher education.

These investments will allow Ohio to equip our students with the tools they need to succeed; especially students struggling with poverty.
High school graduation

The main metric used to track student achievement at public, 4-year high schools.

LOOKING BACK

Ohio’s graduation rate remains stagnant and in the middle of the pack while the national average continues to climb. Research attributes Ohio’s overall stagnation in graduation rates to the stagnant rates of disabled, ESL, and other students. Through the repeal of the property tax reimbursement, state revenue sharing, and other budget cuts, state policy has set up a new normal on the ground. Teachers are expected to do more with fewer resources when local property taxes are unable to meet the need. Many districts are cutting services or imposing fees to make ends meet.

Poverty continues to be a main drag on our K-12 education system. Students experiencing poverty are 5 times more likely to drop out than their classmates. In FY 2017, Ohio is spending the same amount as in 2002 (inflation adjusted), even though many educational costs associated with special education, poverty, and technology are more expensive today.

LOOKING FORWARD

Ohioans should not settle for mediocre graduation results, but our state leaders should drive to be at the top of the pack. To accomplish this, Ohio needs to invest in a great education for all of Ohio’s children. Despite efforts in Ohio to develop effective charter schools, the graduation data doesn’t support their effectiveness. Charter schools (excluding drop-out recovery schools) have a graduation rate of less than 45%. With continued inequality based on wealth, too many Ohio students will continue to fall behind. Not only do we need investments into education, but the wrap-around services that will allow students to thrive and be the next generation of great Ohioans.
College tuition

The average cost of a full-time education at Ohio’s public colleges and universities.

LOOKING BACK
Public colleges and universities are financed primarily by 1) state investment into systems of higher education and 2) tuition paid by students and their families. The rise in tuition is largely attributed to the states failure to invest in higher education. Since 2000, Ohio has cut state investment by more than 33% per student. Since the recession, Ohio cut funding by more than 15% per student. If Ohio had maintained funding levels we would be investing more than $1 billion into higher education. From FY 17 to FY 18, the state share of instruction (SSI) only increased by 0.11%. This is far below what is needed to maintain per student funding levels, let alone return to pre-recession funding levels. While some celebrate a lack of major cuts, we cannot accept a failure to invest in Ohio’s students as the new normal.

LOOKING FORWARD
The Ohio Department of Higher Education established a goal of 65% of working age people to have a degree or certificate by 2025. To make this happen, increased student loan debt is not a healthy solution with current national debt over $1.3 trillion. Instead of the continued over-reliance on student loans, Ohio should invest to strengthen our community colleges and public four-year schools. Community college students sometimes transfer to a four-year school, but also complete certifications and short-degree programs to prepare them for the workforce today. Expansion of the Ohio College Opportunity Grant (OCOG) will help many working individuals be able to return to school and complete a certificate or degree program to move up in their field. OCOG saw only a $4 million increase in last year’s budget – far below the need. Ohio should also identify ways to restore higher education investment to pre-recession levels. This will require a $1 billion investment.
Pre-k enrollment

3 & 4 year olds enrolled in a class providing educational experiences for children before Kindergarten.

LOOKING BACK
Ohio saw an $11 million cut in state support for early childhood education in the most recent state budget. During the 2016-17 school year, Ohio trailed 25 states for investment into preschool, including Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, North Carolina, Minnesota, and Colorado. These states recognize the value of early childhood education. Expanding preschool not only benefits a few families, but an economic return of 8 to 1 in the long run. Preschool not only benefits the students who attend in later grades, but the overall class. When all students walk into Kindergarten and First Grade ready to learn, the entire class can learn together.

LOOKING FORWARD
Ohio needs a large-scale investment to prioritize early childhood education. Stagnant and status quo funding will not help Ohio make the grade. Preschool improves a child’s readiness to learn in the early grades and detects and reduces the need for long-term special education services. In 2016, Cincinnati voters approved $15 million to guarantee preschool to every 3 and 4-year old in the city. Ohio should follow the lead of local communities with new investment. An investment of $168 million to bring us to par with Michigan. With preschool, experts already know what works, and many of those standards will become mandatory in 2020 through the ‘step up to quality’ system. Many small programs will struggle to meet the new and higher standards. Ohio should consider how to assist small programs rise to the level needed to meet the standards and achieve success.
Ohio continues to trail the nation with lackluster economic growth.

We could easily create meaningful opportunities and boost the economy in Ohio by investing in projects to repair our sewers, rebuild our roads, and much more.
Poverty

Poverty is defined as a family of four earning less than $24,600.

LOOKING BACK

Poverty remains a serious issue despite improvements to wage growth in 2015 and 2016. More than 1 in 5 of Ohio’s children continue to live in poverty.10 Ohio’s poverty rate only fell 0.2% from 2015 to 2016 (14.8% to 14.6%), and Ohio remains 15% above the national average of 12.7%. We have not yet reached our pre-recession rate of 13.1%, and the last time we were below 10% was in 2000 (9.8%).10 13.2% of Ohioans receive SNAP benefits (averaging less than $124 a month). This is down from a year earlier by more than 6%. SNAP is one of the key tools our government uses to fight poverty, but our decline in beneficiaries is falling faster than the decline in our poverty rate40 – leaving far too many families without the resources they need.

LOOKING FORWARD

Poverty can be alleviated with an economy that works for everyone. Despite a growing economy, the economic gains are not broadly shared. Moreover, 30% of households live at or below 200% of the poverty level in Ohio - a minimum estimate for self-sufficiency.41 Most families that experience poverty only are officially ‘poor’ for a short period of time, but they struggle to ever fully escape. Payday loans, missed credit card payments, delayed car maintenance, children lacking proper nutrition, and other realities often cause families to stay trapped in crisis. Investments into early childcare, a refundable earned income tax credit, increase food security, and housing stability would decrease childhood poverty by 60% and strengthen our entire state.42

1 IN 7 OHIO HOUSEHOLDS (14.6%) LIVE IN POVERTY. 30% OF OHIO FAMILIES ARE AT 200% OF POVERTY (LESS THAN $41,000 FOR A FAMILY OF 3) – A LEVEL OF INCOME THAT MAKES IT VERY HARD TO GET BY.
Median household income

Median household income is the halfway point of income. Half of households earn more, half earn less.

LOOKING BACK

There are multiple ways to look at wage growth. Average wage growth appears higher than median wage growth because the wealthiest individuals in Ohio and around the country continue to reap much of the benefit of economic growth and tax cuts. Median household income is not rising faster because the most common jobs – food service, health aides, retail sales, and more – do not pay wages above the current median. Ohio’s economy continues to struggle since the recession in 2001 and continues to struggle to replace the loss of many middle-income jobs. While our median income did rise in the past two years, our growth from 2015 to 2016 was much smaller than the national average ($683 annual increase compared to a $2,523 nationally).

LOOKING FORWARD

To grow Ohio’s median wage, Ohio will need economic growth. Ohio needs economic growth to be widely shared. Investments into education, infrastructure, and healthcare can create good paying jobs and be the foundation of a strong economy. While Ohio should not rely on large corporations for all economic factors, large corporations want these investments too. For example, Amazon specifically mentions k-12 science education, higher education, transit (including mass transit and bike lane infrastructure), and a high quality of life as characteristics to exist in any community that wants their new headquarters.
Unemployment

Unemployment is calculated by a ratio of people not employed who are in the labor force.

LOOKING BACK

Through 2015, Ohio’s unemployment rate ran below the national average. Since then the national economy has picked up steam, and Ohio’s unemployment rate has stagnated. As a result of this stagnation in Ohio’s job growth, Ohio’s unemployment ranking has plummeted into the bottom 10 of states. Ohio’s economy continues to struggle not only from the recession in 2008, but also from the 2001 recession. Unemployment rates, by themselves, are not necessarily a strong indicator of the health of an economy, because they may reflect growing labor force participation. However, Ohio is not seeing the level of job growth needed to reflect a resurgence of ‘disengaged’ workers re-entering the workforce.

LOOKING FORWARD

Ohio needs more months of job creation and people re-entering the workforce to really grow the economy. Current job growth will not be enough to reduce our unemployment rate below the national average, because Ohio continues to have a lot of slack in our labor force. Individuals who have been disconnected from the workforce for long periods of time are removed from the rolls of being unemployed. As these individuals re-enter the labor force, our unemployment number will remain high without large amounts of shared economic growth. To achieve this, Ohio needs to build an economy with living wage jobs. Investments into research and development, healthcare, technology access, and other industries that will hire people.

Ohio also needs to maintain a strong unemployment compensation system. Once a person loses their benefits, they are more likely to fall out of the workforce. Unemployment compensation, along with other benefits, promotes family stability during a time of crisis.42 Ohio’s legislature should strengthen the system to prevent the fund once again running out of money to assist Ohioans between jobs.
Job growth

The rate of new jobs added or subtracted from the economy.

LOOKING BACK

Ohio was hit hard during the 2001 recession with the loss of manufacturing jobs and has struggled to recover for a generation. Ohio still has not recovered our jobs peak reached in May of 2000 of 5.636 million jobs. From 2001-2005 of abysmal and negative job growth, Ohio passed a major tax package that cut state income taxes by 21%, raised the sales tax, and more – the main goal was to create jobs. Ohio followed up on this strategy in 2013, 2014 and 2015. But Ohio never saw the shot of adrenaline that some had hoped for. Ohio has seen belt tightening that squeezes education, anti-poverty efforts, and other important community investments. In 2017, the Ohio legislature reduced the budget by $1 billion as a result of anticipated revenue that never materialized.49

LOOKING FORWARD

Ohio needs to develop an economy that can co-exist alongside automation and the new economy. To do so, Ohio needs to invest in the fundamentals – a well-educated workforce, reliable infrastructure, and healthy communities. Not only will these investments improve the quality of life for Ohioans, but will also create jobs in education, public works projects, and healthcare.

While Ohio sits and waits on major employers like Amazon, just as many new jobs could begin by local Ohioans engaging in their local communities. The state should take steps to reduce student loan debt and expand health insurance options to create the freedom for families to be entrepreneurs and create new employment opportunities and strengthen Ohio.
Bridge maintenance

A structurally deficient bridge contains one or more structural defects that need attention.

LOOKING BACK

Ohio has many major infrastructure issues and structurally deficient bridges is just one metric where an apples-to-apples comparison could be drawn between the states for a ranking. However, most issues due to geographical size, population, and other factors make this type of comparison difficult. Some other major infrastructure issues include Ohio’s water supply, sewer systems, road quality, and access to broadband internet.

Also, a ranking of 19th, without explanation, create a false sense of success for the state. Ohio ranks 12th for the total number of bridges that are structurally deficient in the country. Over 900 of these bridges are on rural local roads. These are bridges that connect communities to a grocery store or hospital and will need state and federal investments for maintenance. In part because of this, 25 states have increased revenue by raising their gas tax since 2013.51

LOOKING FORWARD

Many people hope for a bi-partisan congressional compromise on infrastructure in 2018. A deal will only be beneficial to Ohio if the federal government invests into bridge and road projects with and without the potential to generate revenue for private investors. A bridge project in Cincinnati would likely be more appealing for investment than one in Greene County - even if the Greene County project is essential and important.

In addition to road and bridge infrastructure, Ohio must also consider new investments to protect water and expand Internet access. Ohio will need to invest more than $26 billion over the next 20 years in clean water infrastructure.52 Regardless of employment incentives, people will not want to live in a community if the water isn’t safe to drink. The state should also consider a new investment of $50 million to develop the infrastructure to meet the needs of 300,000 Ohioans who lack high-speed internet access.53
INEQUALITY

Characteristics such as race, gender, and age should not determine if we are in poverty or forced to struggle more than others. These metrics are meant only to highlight a few areas of inequality that exist in Ohio. There are many more examples that could be used and other areas of inequality that are not addressed here. We should aim to stamp out inequality in all its forms.
Poverty by gender

The gap between poverty of males and females.

LOOKING BACK

Women experience poverty in Ohio at a 66% greater than men (15% to 9%). While women are more likely than men to experience poverty in nearly every state, Ohio’s gap is double that of the nation. Poverty in Ohio continues to drag down our economy. Individuals in poverty are unable to purchase the essentials like food, school supplies, and medicine - not to mention long-term investments into retirement, business, or education.

The poverty of women also translates into higher rates of poverty for our children. Due to the high levels of poverty for women in Ohio, nearly 1 in 4 children between 0 and 4 years old will also experience poverty. Sometimes discrimination is very blatant and obvious and other times it is not. Ohio should consider all forms of discrimination that have led to our gender poverty gap.

LOOKING FORWARD

To address the inequality in men and women, Ohio should consider pro-family policies such as paid sick leave, and reasonable accommodations for women in the workplace when they become pregnant. While men are assuming more responsibility in the home, women still often are the primary caregiver of children. Likewise, this level of disparity between men and women further highlights the low pay of service sector jobs that were historically held by women. A refundable earned income tax credit (EITC) will reduce this disparity for hard-working women who are earning less than their male counterparts or are disadvantaged in the workplace, because they are expected to be the primary caregiver for the children.
Senior citizen hunger

The rate at which senior citizens experience hunger in Ohio.

LOOKING BACK
Ohio is an aging state and needs to identify ways to care for our parents and grandparents. In 2016, Ohio had the 14th highest median age of any state.\textsuperscript{57} It will remain vital to the health of Ohio communities and economy to guarantee that seniors can age and live with dignity. Sadly, nearly 300,000 seniors experienced hunger last year. Hunger often hits the most vulnerable populations in our communities – senior citizens, children, and the disabled. Children, for example, experience hunger at a rate of 1 in 5 – nearly 600,000 children.\textsuperscript{58} Local, state, and national investments are needed to guarantee that these populations have access to nutritious food.

LOOKING FORWARD
Growing old should not mean growing poor. The senior citizen social safety net receives investments from national, state, and local government. Programs like SNAP, Meals on Wheels, and local investments through senior citizen levies help provide meaningful opportunities by assisting with transit, enrichment, and a supporting community. Smart public investments into social safety net programs are essential to assist seniors age with dignity and remain active members of Ohio’s communities. The state of Ohio undermines these efforts when it eliminates property tax rollbacks or pass additional identification and reporting rules that can be confusing and disrupt effective support systems.

The state of Ohio also needs to think holistically about senior nutrition and health. Hunger often leads to high blood pressure, diabetes, and other serious health issues. The traditional Pre-packaged meal is not enough to keep seniors healthy. They need access to fresh fruits, vegetables, and protein for good health. In addition to providing resources through SNAP, food pantries, and meal programs, Ohio also needs to address issues surrounding accessibility by looking at issues such as public transit for seniors to access nutritious food.
Graduation rate by race

The gap between white and black students.

**LOOKING BACK**

The graduation rate inequality highlights the larger problem in Ohio regarding unequal opportunity for African Americans in Ohio. Ohio has a 26% gap between black and white students compared to a national average of only 13%. While education inequality exists in every state, it is worse in Ohio. In Ohio, 29% of African Americans live in poverty, compared to 10% of whites.60 Education is key to break the cycle of poverty, but as long as our funding fails to deliver an equitable and adequate public education, Ohio will continue to trail the nation. Historically, our urban districts have not funded basic education at the same levels as their suburban counterparts. For example, a 2013 report found that Dublin Schools (a suburb of Columbus) spent $1,600 more per student on basic education than Columbus did. In fact, the report found, eight suburban districts spent more than Columbus did on education.61 In 2017, the school funding formula should have allocated an additional $80 million to Columbus schools, but the state legislature failed to invest adequately to meet that goal.62

**LOOKING FORWARD**

To address racial inequality in Ohio, we should start with equitable and adequate funding of our public school system. We also need to develop systems to support families struggling in poverty. In the United States, kids in poverty are 5 times more likely to drop out than their wealthy neighbors.63 We have models in Ohio that already are showing signs of success in Cincinnati with wrap around services for families in or near poverty. Research shows us that if a child is hungry, worried about rent, or other very real concerns, they are unable to concentrate in school. Investments into preschool through high school, with wrap around services, will help students succeed and overcome the racial and economic inequalities that exist in our state.
Methodology

OUR QUICK REVIEW RANKING SYSTEM: THUMBS AND ARROWS

This report continues the use of our ‘thumbs’ in the executive summary section. A green thumb up represents Ohio in the top half of states and a down thumb means we are in the bottom half of states. We added arrows this year next to the rankings in the section headings. These arrows say whether or not our national ranking has increased or decreased since last year. We recognize that data is nuanced. In some areas we may be performing poorly but making improvements. That should be recognized.

WHY THESE METRICS

The data points selected from the hundreds of possibilities attempted to address issues that impact everyday Ohioans. People wonder if they’ll be able to afford a home, if our neighbors have enough to eat, and whether or not our children are getting the education they need to succeed. These statistics are by no means completely inclusive of all the intricacies of a particular issue. These metrics are intended to paint a big-picture view of Ohio.

Data can be used to shed a lot of light or to confuse and mislead the reader. For the metrics selected, we attempted to demonstrate the most basic definition with the most commonly used statistic for that metric. Definitions of the metric are incorporated into each page to explain as clearly as possible what we mean. For some metrics, Ohio and other states differ very slightly or changes indicated over time might be small. Most data sets we referenced indicated the level of statistical confidence and statistical significance in their footnotes. If you are looking for a more mathematical understanding of these data points, we encourage you to look to the original data sources for their analysis.

THE YEAR OF THE DATA

Because of calculation limitations, some annual data is released toward the end of the following year. So, while data may say it is from 2016, it is the most current data available. Other data sets are averages over a period of time (such as 2013 – 2015). This is often done to avoid statistical anomalies that can occur in a given snapshot. To the best of our ability, we compared similar time frames. Three main “years” are used in this data and mentioned throughout - fiscal year (e.g. July 1, 2015-June 30, 2016), calendar year (January 1-December 31), and school year (August-June).

AVOID BIAS THROUGH WEIGHTS

Other reports often will rank policy inputs or provide weighted influence to their preferred policies. The data used in this report is not weighted to give any advantage. The impact of weighting creates wildly varying scores and data, while the related policy approaches can be minor and sometimes unnoticeable. We want to honestly track the core metrics that will give us an idea of how Ohio is doing compared to the country. If you have suggestions for additional or different metrics or data we should use toward this end, please let us know.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We would like to thank the work put in by many individuals and organizations including:
One Ohio Now’s over 100+ endorsing organizations
Era Design
Endorsers

A
ACTION OHIO Coalition For Battered Women
AFSCME Ohio Council 8
AIR Inc.
All Aboard Ohio
America Votes Ohio
Asian Services In Action

C
Center for Working Class Studies – Youngstown State University
Children’s Defense Fund – Ohio
Church for All People
Cleveland Jobs with Justice
Cleveland Tenants Organization
Clintonville Beechwold Community Resources Center
Clintonville For Change
Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO)
Columbus Jobs with Justice
Columbus Metropolitan Area Church Council (MACC)
Common Cause, Ohio
Communications Workers of America (CWA)
Community Action Partnership of the Greater Dayton Area (CAP-Dayton)
Community Partners for Affordable Accessible Health Care (CPAAHC)
Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development (COAD)

D
Democratic Voices of Ohio

E
Ecumenical Communities for a Compassionate Ohio (ECCOHIO)
Education Service Center of Lake Erie West
Empowering and Strengthening Ohio’s People (ESOP)
The Empowerment Center of Greater Cleveland
Environmental Health Watch
Equality Ohio

F
Findlay Hope House for the Homeless, Inc.
Faith in Public Life
Forging Responsible Youth

G
Georgetown Federation of Teachers
Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless
Greater Hilltop Area Shalom Zone

H
Havar, Inc.
Hispanic Alliance, Inc.
The Hunger Network in Ohio

I
Innovation Ohio
IUE-CWA

L
Legal Aid of Southwest Ohio
LiveCLEVELAND!
Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry

M
Mahoning Valley Organizing Collaborative (MVOC)

N
National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Ohio Chapter
Neighborhood Solutions, Inc.
Northeast Ohio Alliance for Hope (NOAH)
Northeast Ohio American Friends Service Committee
Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless
Northern Ohioans for Budget and Legislation Equality (NOBLE)

O
Ohio AFL-CIO
Ohio Alliance for Retired Americans
Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies
Ohio Association of Free Clinics
Ohio Association of Professional Fire Fighters
Ohio Association of School Business Officials (OASBO)
Ohio Community Development Corporation (OCDC) Association
Ohio Civil Service Employees Association (OCSEA) Local 11/AFSCME
Ohio Coalition for Equity and Adequacy of School Funding
Ohio Communities United
Ohio Conference of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP)
Ohio Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
Ohio Conference on Fair Trade
Ohio Congress of Parents and Teachers (Ohio PTA)
Ohio Domestic Violence Network
Ohio Education Association (OEA)
Ohio Environmental Council (OEC)
Ohio Farmers Union
Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT)
Ohio National Organization for Women (NOW)
Ohio Organizing Collaborative (OOC)
Ohio Partners for Affordable Energy
Ohio Poverty Law Center
Ohio Public Transit Association (OPTA)
Ohio Retired Teachers Association (ORTA)
Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA)
Ohio Student Association
Ohio Voice
Ohio Voter Fund
Ohio Votes
Ohio Youth Voices
Organized Ohio
Over-the-Rhine Community Housing

P
People’s Empowerment Coalition of Ohio (PEC)
Policy Matters Ohio
ProgressOhio
Putting People First

R
Rahab’s Hideaway
Results Cincinnati
Results Columbus

S
Service Employees International Union (SEIU) District 1199
Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1

T
Tapestry
Toledo Jobs with Justice

U
UHCAN Ohio
United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1059
United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 75
The University of Akron AAUP
The University of Akron PTA

W
We are the Uninsured
We Believe Ohio
Working America

Y
The Youth Empowerment Program
INVESTING IN OHIO’S FUTURE.