



**For Immediate Release
March 5, 2009**

Contact:
Amy Hanauer, Policy Matters Ohio
216-361-9801
ahanauer@policymattersohio.org
Roberta Garber, Community Research Partners
614-224-6917, ext. 100
rgarber@communityresearchpartners.org

Principles for Recovery Spending Address Targeting, Openness, Accountability

Policy Matters and Community Research Partners ask Ohio policymakers to sign on to principles to guide spending

With billions of dollars in federal Recovery Act spending coming to Ohio, Policy Matters Ohio and Community Research Partners urged state policymakers to invest in programs that will give struggling low-income families and unemployed workers new opportunities to succeed economically.

The groups asked Governor Strickland and Ohio legislators to ensure that stimulus money helps stabilize the economy and benefits those hurt most by the recession. Spending should be done openly, efficiently and with accountability.

“With unemployment in Ohio at 8.8% and increasing, we have to make sure that the state focuses stimulus spending to maximize benefit to those who most need assistance,” said Roberta Garber, Executive Director of Community Research Partners.

“We have to use these funds to create both long and short term economic advances for Ohio workers,” said Policy Matters Executive Director Amy Hanauer. “This crucial federal legislation can create good jobs that will rebuild and stabilize our communities and economy.”

To ensure that dislocated workers are positioned for the jobs created by the federal stimulus package, a focus on job training and smart linkages is critical. Hanauer and Garber emphasize that resources must be targeted to distressed urban and rural communities, since these are the areas most harmed by the recession.

“Low-skilled workers have significantly higher unemployment rates than the rest of the workforce,” Garber said. “The Recovery Act gives the state an opportunity to create pathways for these workers to move ahead, by providing training and jobs linked with new health care, green industry, housing, and infrastructure investments.

They agree that the public must carefully track spending. “This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reinvest, put Ohioans back to work, and emerge with a more sustainable and prosperous economy,” Hanauer said. “We want to understand the results.”

Policy Matters Ohio and Community Research Partners call on state leaders to embrace and apply the ideas presented in a newly released document, Principles for State Implementation (attached), developed by the national Working Poor Families Project and endorsed by 20 national nonprofit organizations. The principles call for states to direct Recovery Act spending to:

- Create jobs that pay a family-supporting wage and provide critical benefits such as health insurance.
- Ensure that a portion of jobs created go to people with low skills and low incomes, to give them a chance to advance economically.
- Invest in infrastructure projects in distressed communities often overlooked in public works decisions and ensure that residents of those communities are given a chance to work on the projects.
- Support training programs for low-skilled and dislocated workers, carefully linked to high-growth sectors of the economy.

The principles also call for states to ensure efficiency and accountability by:

- Allocating spending to meet specific goals, including job creation and preservation.
- Using a competitive process, where applicable, in awarding contracts to increase fairness and maximize choice.
- Requiring contractors and agencies to report regularly on how the stimulus funds are being spent and measure their progress in achieving specific goals.
- Closely coordinating spending among state and local agencies to ensure efficiency.
- Adjusting state policies to take advantage of all federal stimulus funds, including expanded aid for unemployed workers; increasing outreach to ensure eligible Ohio receive federal benefits such as child care and food stamps.

For more information on the Working Poor Families Project, its Principles for State Implementation, and a list of organizations endorsing the principles, go to www.workingpoorfamilies.org.

Policy Matters Ohio is a non-profit, non-partisan policy research institute dedicated to creating a more fair, prosperous and sustainable economy. For more, see www.policymattersohio.org.

Community Research Partners is a unique nonprofit research and evaluation center based in Columbus, Ohio. CRP is the Ohio lead agency for the national Working Poor Families Project and the convener of the Ohio Workforce Coalition. For more information see: www.communityresearchpartners.org, and www.ohioworkforcecoalition.org.