Ohio CASH
(Creating Assets, Savings & Hope)
What is Policy Matters?

Policy Matters Ohio is a non-profit, nonpartisan policy research organization founded in January 2000 to broaden the debate about economic policy in Ohio. Our mission is to create a more prosperous, equitable, sustainable and inclusive Ohio, through research, media work and policy advocacy.
What are assets?

- Income
- Savings
- Benefits/assistance
- Tax credits and deductions
- Education
- Affordable rental housing
- Housing/home equity
- Long-term savings, stocks, or bonds
- Access to safe and sound financial services

Assets move families beyond living paycheck to paycheck and give them tools to plan for the future. Getting by may require only a paycheck, but getting ahead requires a variety of assets, a financial safety net, education and health care.
Why assets?

- Assets matter economically, socially and psychologically.
- Asset-poverty rates and wealth gaps are worse than income poverty and distribution.
- Assets help to increase:
  - Household economic stability
  - Educational attainment
  - Economic mobility
  - Community stability
- Large-scale, inclusive asset building practices & policies must be established and funded to reverse income and wealth inequalities.
Why assets?

Assets matter, but their distribution is highly unequal.

• More than one-fifth of the population is “asset-poor.” These are people who do not own enough to survive three months at the poverty line if they lose employment; one in three households with children live in asset poverty

• About 51 percent of Americans do not have access to $2,000 in an emergency

• 14 percent of all households and 24 percent of minority households live in extreme asset poverty – meaning that they have zero or negative net worth

• Programs to establish assets help reduce that inequality

• For many, tax time is the largest paycheck all year
  • A good time to think about money is when you are about to get a lot of it
  • Even saving 25 percent of a tax refund can make a big difference
Why action ow?

- More than 25 percent of Ohioans are unbanked or underbanked.
- At least one in six Ohio families cannot afford adequate food.
- Roughly 20 percent of Ohio families do not claim the EITC, with an average tax refund of $2,000.
- The poorest of the poor (our clients) are losing hope and patience with the financial system.
- Resources are spread thin to provide service.
- There is limited space for: duplication, starting from scratch, and inaction.
Ohio CASH stands for Creating Assets, Savings and Hope, and is a project of Policy Matters. We provide a collaborative hub for asset building, income security, and consumer protection research and outreach. The overall goal of Ohio CASH is to improve the financial and economic conditions for low- and moderate-income families and communities. Only by building assets can we end the cycle of poverty.

Members of Ohio CASH are a wide array of groups including social service organizations, housing counseling groups, faith-based organizations, free tax preparation coalitions, financial institutions, and other coalitions. In a sense, it is a coalition of coalitions.
Ohio CASH programming

• Research and Evaluation
• Capacity building and training
• Public policy advocacy
• General awareness of financial and consumer issues
Foreclosure research

• Annual Ohio foreclosure report showed that in 2011:
  – There were 16 percent fewer foreclosure filings than in 2010
  – 8 percent of Ohio mortgages were 90 days past due or in foreclosure
  – More than 30 percent of all Ohio mortgages were “underwater”
Earned Income Tax Credit evaluation

• Franklin County EITC Coalition quick facts
  – In 2010-2011:
    • Filed 2,327 tax returns with EITC claims at no cost
    • Average fee-based preparer charges $300
    • Claims brought in more than $3.3 million to community
    • Survey found that most clients were African-American women
Capacity building

• Webinars
  – Purchasing Savings Bonds at Tax Time
  – Tax Challenges of Domestic Violence Survivors
  – Understanding the Asset building Continuum

• Financial Stability Toolkits
  – Client
  – Direct service provider
Public policy advocacy

- **HB 275 (passed and signed into law)**
  - Erodes the Consumer Protection Sales Act

- **SB 251 (in committee)**
  - Excludes for-profit debt settlement industry from Ohio Debtors Act

- **Ohio EITC**
  - Creates an Ohio refundable tax credit for working families based on a percentage of the Federal EITC
Where have we been successful?

• Programs
  – Funding for SAVE Now
  – Funding for the VITA program

• Policies
  – Regulating paid tax preparers
  – Reducing price and availability of tax and payday loans
  – Sustaining Recovery Act levels for the EITC/CTC

• Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
Join us!

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Contact Kalitha Williams to find out how your organization can GET ENGAGED!
Contact Us!

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