



Report to the Community

2016



MISSION



Policy Matters Ohio, a nonprofit policy research institute, creates a more vibrant, equitable, sustainable and inclusive Ohio through research, strategic communications, coalition building and policy advocacy.



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Dear friends;

A friend calls me “the passionate wonk” and I confess to both. Sure, my day job consists of devouring statistics, editing reports or working with our great staff and partners to fund schools or green cities. But the wonky parts of the work are all part of a larger quest to make Ohio more sustainable, more inclusive, more equitable. And I’m grateful to you for making it possible.

Hanging over my desk are a dozen or so quotes that inspire, amuse, or just keep me plugging away. One recent addition may be the oldest of all, a mash-up of thoughts from ancient sources: “Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world’s grief. Do justly, now. Walk humbly, now. Love mercy, now. You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it.”

The work is sometimes daunting. It’s a marathon but each step along the way makes a difference. Making sure many thousands more Ohio families get help with childcare or pre-K is a step. Helping more low-income Ohio students pay for college is a step. Being one of many groups that got \$1.5 billion restored to our communities’ public schools is a step. Each of those changes was something that you supported and that one of our phenomenal researchers wrote about, built coalitions around, and worked with allies to win.

We haven’t completed the work and we definitely won’t abandon it. We have amazing funders who agree that our staff does magic with limited resources. We have terrific allies: young people forging their way in this tough economy, scrappy advocates fighting for great libraries and social services, dedicated parents seeking to give their children the brightest futures. And we have a staff of passionate wonks who wake every day ready to deliver on our vision of an economy that works for all of us: one report, one press release, one legislative meeting at a time.

This report fills you in on some of our recent fights and triumphs. Thank you for supporting this work. We simply couldn’t do it without you.

Best, Amy Hanauer, Executive Director



Dear friends;

When I retired as executive director of the George Gund Foundation in 2003, I vowed to focus on photography, gardening, and spending time with the young people in my life. But there was one organization I had to stay involved with: Policy Matters Ohio.

The Gund Foundation gave Policy Matters its first foundation grant in 2001 and it’s one of the best investments we ever made. The staff is as hard-working as they come and they get results, often from policy makers who don’t agree with them.

Their research, communications, strong coalition-building and fierce advocacy shift the conversation. The work garners excellent press coverage everywhere from the *Toledo Blade* to the *New York Times*. Their staff spearhead great partnerships to protect workers, lift poor children, and help families. They make policy better for those who can’t hire lobbyists – students, workers seeking the next rung on a career ladder, families in our inner cities and in forgotten pockets of Appalachia.

A story illustrates the point. One Cleveland mother we interviewed finished community college and got a job offer at \$11.89 an hour – giving her an annual salary (\$24,765) just over the state cutoff for help with childcare for her two toddlers. Without aid, she’d have so little left after childcare bills that she couldn’t cover rent, food, and other essentials.

With help from allies like you, Policy Matters improved eligibility so her family could get help. Our groundbreaking report described the problem; we partnered with advocates, businesses and parents; and we forcefully worked with lawmakers from both parties.

Now more employers can find workers and more babies are well cared for while their parents work. But Ohio remains the ninth-stingiest state for childcare. That’s not good enough. Policy Matters continues, with your support, to fight for childcare and other basics that let families, neighborhoods and businesses thrive.

We hope you enjoy this report on our last year of activity. You help Policy Matters win better jobs and stronger communities. We’re grateful for your partnership.

Sincerely, David Bergholz, Board Chair



Policy Matters 2015 - at a glance

Improved Ohio policy to ensure more childcare, better senior services, stronger school funding, more financial aid, and more support for working families.

> 150

published reports, testimonies, and blogs that generate discussion about how to create an Ohio economy that works for all of us.

> 100

presentations in schools and community centers, at national conferences and local meetings, and even at a TEDx event.

> 400

television, radio and print stories about our work and a growing presence on social media.



Launched Policy Matters blog.



Built and supported coalitions that promote great public services, support pathways out of poverty, fight for sustainable communities, and push for a fair economy.



AMY HANAUER



Amy Hanauer giving a TEDx talk. (top)

Hannah Halbert (fourth from left) poses with Senator Sherrod Brown and the Ohio Workforce Coalition. (bottom)

Policy Matters exposes and blocks bad policy while pushing good policy forward. In 2015, Policy Matters worked toward fair taxes, good jobs, worker rights, smart training, and opportunity for all.

PROTECTING BENEFITS YOU'VE PAID FOR:

In November 2015, we learned about House Bill 394 – an assault on unemployment compensation that would make our system one of the stingiest in the country. The bill was initially fast-tracked but we raised concerns and worked with coalition partners to generate media outrage and reverse momentum on the bill, which is now being reworked.

STOPPING WAGE THEFT:

Working with phenomenal allies at the Cincinnati Interfaith Workers' Center, we provided testimony and research support to Ohio's first municipal ordinance protecting workers from employers who don't follow labor law. Low-wage and immigrant workers in particular can be victims of labor law violations when they are paid less than the minimum wage, not paid overtime, or not paid for all of the hours they work.

BETTER WAGES:

Our research on how raising the minimum wage would assist workers helped spur grassroots campaigns to consider higher minimum wages. The research builds toward a future statewide effort that labor and community leaders want to spark.



Amy Hanauer speaking on the State of Working Ohio on The Ohio Channel. (top)
Kalitha Williams at a press conference about the Earned Income Tax Credit. (bottom)

Policy Matters promotes adequate and fair taxes to support the schools, neighborhoods, communities, and infrastructure we all need.

A BETTER BUDGET:

We put forth a people-centered, community-centered vision of where investment is needed. A *Budget That Works* describes funding needed to support Ohioans in the slow recovery, setting a tone for what advocates should request. Our post-budget summary of changes looks back over the decade, helping coalition partners understand long-term evisceration of funding.

STRONG INFRASTRUCTURE:

Our research on attacks on local government funding helped lead to no further cuts and a slight increase to libraries.

FUNDED SCHOOLS:

Our work helped bring \$1.5 billion more in funding to Ohio's public schools, an 8% increase in the two-year budget for 2016 and 2017 compared to the prior two-year budget period. Legislators also put in place new rules for accountability in charter schools, something Policy Matters has researched and put on the agenda since 2010.



HEALTHY OHIOANS:

In 2015, the executive budget proposed reducing Medicaid coverage for prenatal care, breast and cervical cancer treatment, and family planning for some poor women. Policy Matters joined others in strong protest. By the end of budget discussions, eligibility was restored for the cancer treatments and prenatal services (though not for family planning). Struggling seniors will see the first significant increase in over two decades for adult protective services, funding of \$2.6 million a year. Based on our analysis of needs, a coalition continues pressing for \$20 million a year. Finally, 670,000 Ohioans now have ongoing access to healthcare because the legislature retained Medicaid expansion, something we and many others supported with strong analysis.



SMART, PROGRESSIVE, FAIR TAXES:

We scored defensive and offensive wins on fair taxes in a tough climate. Governor Kasich proposed an income tax cut of 23% in 2015. Our strong analysis framed the discussion and in the end, he got less than a third of that—about a 6% cut in the state income tax. The Governmental Accounting Standards Board for the first time will require state and local governments to publish costs of some tax breaks, a big positive that we suggested. The House also unanimously passed a bill creating a permanent review committee to regularly examine Ohio's 128 tax breaks. This progressed further than past attempts and Policy Matters is the main analytical voice behind it.



Policy Matters supports investments in transit, renewable energy, conservation and other smart solutions that create jobs and support communities.

WEATHERIZATION:

Weatherizing homes creates jobs now, reduces energy use, lowers utility bills, and improves our housing stock. Our 2015 research showed how Ohio's freeze of its energy-efficiency standards reduced home weatherization. We suggested ways to get back with the program.

FRACKED-UP DEBATES:

When Donald Trump claimed in an October 2015 Republican debate that Ohio's economy was soaring because of fracking, we nearly choked on our popcorn. Our clarification (our economy isn't soaring and fracking isn't helping) gained us national coverage in a Politifact story on this fracked-up claim.

TRANSIT:

For years, we've done research showing how Ohio underinvests in mass transit, putting us in the bottom five nationwide in state resources devoted to transit. Now our friends at the Ohio Organizing Collaborative have launched a Cleveland transit coalition to advocate better transit policy.

GREENER COMMUNITIES:

Two of our fabulous summer interns released studies showing how investing in transit and in greening blighted properties could improve our communities and create jobs. We're happy to be shaping the next generation of researchers who are using their analytical skills to articulate a better vision for Ohio.



Cincinnati Bike Share Program

Policy Matters suggests reasonable regulations to help families earn and save, build assets, avoid unfair loans, and build a better future for themselves and their children.

EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT (EITC):

Policy Matters Ohio runs Ohio’s Creating Assets, Savings and Hope (CASH) coalition. Together with Ohio CASH members, we led Ohio’s efforts in the successful national campaign to make the federal EITC and child tax credit improvements permanent. This included Congressional meetings, phone calls, letters, op-eds, and social media work. Over 400,000 Ohio working families will continue to receive credits that help them take care of their basic needs because of this amazing policy win, which Ohio’s Senator Sherrod Brown helped lead. Policy Matters also helped launch the 2015 Ohio Free Tax Services Map, an interactive map that featured over 330 sites where low-to-moderate income Ohioans could get their taxes filed free of charge.



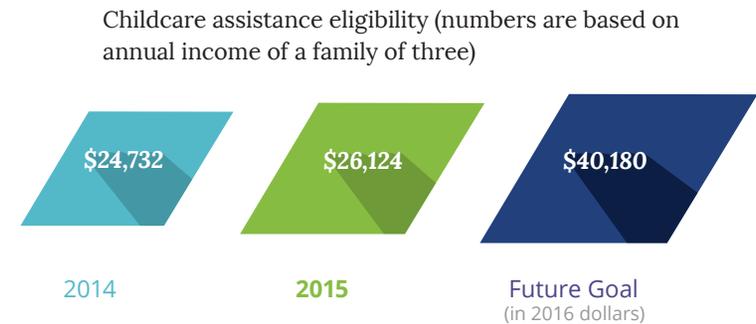
UNDERSTANDING FAMILY NEEDS:

Policy Matters released the Family Resource Simulator in partnership with Columbia University’s National Center for Children in Poverty. This online tool shows how work supports such as childcare assistance or EITC can make a difference in an Ohio family budget.

AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE:

Childcare expenses can make it impossible for some low-income parents to work or to save much money if they do work. In 2014 in Ohio, families earning more than 125% of the poverty level were unable to initially qualify for assistance with childcare, making us the sixth-worst state in the country. That meant a parent of two who earned more than \$24,732 could not have gotten help!

Policy Matters described this issue in a groundbreaking report. In response, the legislature raised eligibility slightly (to \$26,124 for a family of three) and made some other positive changes. We continue to work with advocates in Cleveland, Columbus and the Mahoning Valley to win further improvements – we hope eventually to secure assistance for families of three earning up to about \$40,000 (in 2016 dollars).



REGULATING PREDATORY LENDING:

Ohio CASH, and its coalition of advocacy organizations, led several activities supporting a strong rule to regulate payday lending. Last April the Ohio House tacked on an amendment to their version of the budget that would have expanded payday lending in Ohio. Ohio CASH met with several members of the Senate Finance Committee to raise concerns and lawmakers removed the provision.

2015 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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 Kamla Lewis
 Renuka Mayadev
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 Earl Pike

Jeff Rechenbach
 Pari Sabety
 Baldemar Velasquez
 Graham Veysey
 Doug Wang

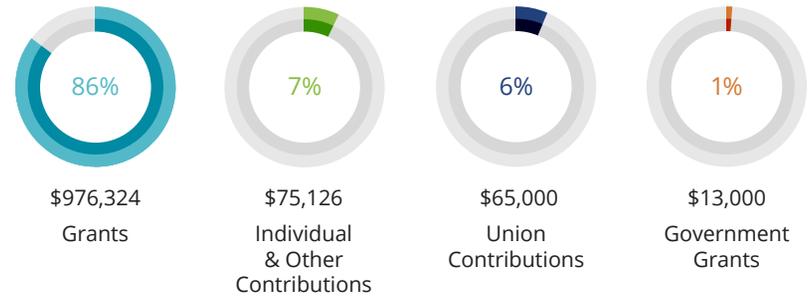
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Policy Liaison
 Amy Hanauer
Executive Director
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Research Fellow
 Daniel Ortiz
Outreach Coordinator
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Policy Liaison
 Amanda Woodrum
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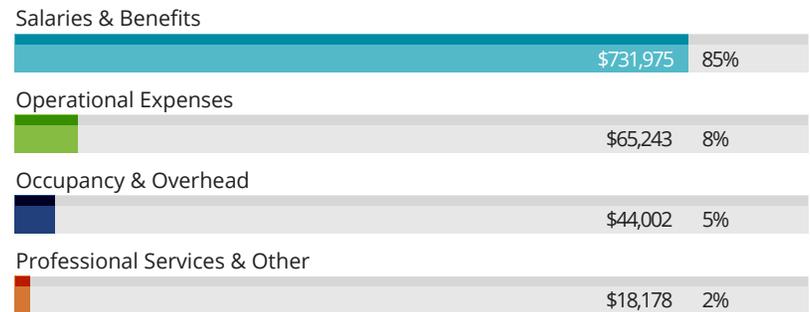
2015 INTERNS

Winter/Spring 2015
 Brant Duda
 Madeleine Kim
 Kathleen Shaver
 Michael Vrabel
 Sam Whipple
Summer 2015
 Marcia Brown
 Jackson Garrity
 Connor Lang
 Max Mauerman
 Spencer Murray
 Lucki Ratsavong
 Andrew Slivka
 Nate Steinberg
 Tabitha Wilbur
 Sophia Zupanc
Fall 2015
 Stacey Slagle
 Nathan Weems, Esq.

2015 FINANCIALS



Total Revenue: \$1,129,450



Total Expenses: \$859,398

We are very grateful to the following individuals for joining Policy Matters in our important work in 2015. With you by our side, we will continue to fight for an economy that works for all.

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 Susan Alcorn
 Richard and Sherry Aronson
 David Ashenhurst
 Herbert Asher
 Roldo Bartimole
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 Rebecca Brady
 Barbara Brothers & Lawrence Haim
 Kathryn Brown
 Jane Buder Shapiro
 Paul Burstadt
 Linda Butler and Dr. Steve Nissen
 Beth & Steve Cagan
 Rachel Cahill
 Gerald Carlisle
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 Vivienne & Thomas Conlon
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 Marci Lu
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 Renuka Mayadev
 Joan McGuire
 Louise & Edward McKinney
 Eben "Sandy" McNair
 Donald McPherson
 David and Sarah Megenhardt
 Shuray Merriweather
 Benjamin Miladin
 Ariel & Huxley Miller
 Jeffrey Miller
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 Robert Moore
 Lana Moresky
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 Patricia Moss
 Susannah Muskovitz
 Anita Myerson
 Christopher Napierala
 Kirk Noden
 Betsie Norris
 Mary Ellen Nose
 Mary O'Shea
 John & Carolyn Olive
 Louisa Oliver
 Col Owens
 Averil Paskow
 David Patton
 Richard Peery
 Eleni Pelecanos-Matts
 Elizabeth Perl
 Jane Peterson & Philip Star
 Diana Petrauskas
 Raymond Pianka
 Earl Pike & Elizabeth Klein
 MaryAnn Player
 Liz Powell
 Thomas & Theresa Pretlow
 Gay Quereau
 Robert & Judith Rawson
 Norman Robbins
 James Rokakis

Joy Roller
 Reginald & Barbara Routson
 Pari Sabety
 Sybille Schomerus
 Dallas Schubert
 William & Dallas Schubert
 Connie Schultz
 John & Ann Schuster
 Christine Seibert
 Annette Severiens & Brett Himes
 Gregory Shaughnessy
 Charles Sheketoff
 John Sherburne
 James Shin
 Fareed Siddiq
 Pat Simons
 Michael Smalz
 Catherine Smythe Zajc & John M. Zajc, Jr.
 Judy Spring
 Frances Strickland
 Nicole Thomas
 Carol Toutant
 Meryl Johnson
 Annette Tucker Sutherland & Mark Sutherland
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 Piet van Lier & Martha Loughridge
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 Stephen Zinn
 John Zipp

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AHS Foundation	International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
Big Fun	Keystone Research Center
Bruce and Erica Greer Family Foundation	Lonnie and Bette Hanauer Charitable Fund
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities	Mahoning Valley Organizing Collaborative
Chandra Law Firm, LLC	Mt. Sinai Health Care Foundation
Char and Chuck Fowler Family Foundation	NextGen Climate America, Inc.
Charles M. & Helen M. Brown Memorial Foundation	Oberlin College
Cleveland Foundation	Office of Cuyahoga County Executive
Columbia University - National Center for Children in Poverty	Ohio Alliance for Retired Americans Educational Funds, Inc.
Communication Workers of America	Ohio Association of Public School Employees
Community Shares of Mid Ohio	Ohio Civil Service Employees Association
Consumer Federation of America	Ohio Education Association
Doll Family Foundation	Ohio Federation of Teachers
Economic Policy Institute	Ohio Organizing Collaborative
Ed Fire Advocacy Fund - Patriots for Change	Podl Family Fund
Elana Steinberg Fund	R. Strategy Group LLC
EMA Foundation	Raymond John Wean Foundation
Emerald Cities Collaborative, Inc.	Richard Shatten Memorial Fund
Enterprise Community Partners	Saint Luke's Foundation
Environmental Health Watch	United Auto Workers
Ford Foundation	United Way of Greater Cincinnati
George Gund Foundation	Women's Fund of Central Ohio
Greater Cleveland Community Shares	Working Poor Families Project

Thank you!

Creating an economy that works for
...everyone

Vibrant
Inclusive
Equitable
Sustainable



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