



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## **State budget should increase support for communities and children**

Programs that help build strong communities haven't been getting the investment they need to benefit all Ohioans. Between 2006 and 2018, local governments [lost](#) \$1.4 billion a year, adjusted for inflation. Ohio provides so little funding for child care that many working parents can't afford quality child care for their children. In two budget bites released today, Policy Matters Ohio called for the state to restore funding for these critical areas.

Ohio's cities, counties and townships are residents' main points of interaction with the government. Many services other states provide are delivered locally in Ohio, but funded jointly with the state. The state sharply cut its share of funding over the past eight years. Governor Mike DeWine's 2020-2021 budget proposal provides some new funding: for indigent legal services, which provides court appointed attorneys to represent accused people who cannot afford a lawyer, and for child protective services, which have been stretched thin due to growing numbers of parents struggling with addiction. The gas tax increase passed in the Transportation Budget will send new funding to local governments for road and bridge repair. Policy Matters Senior Project Director Wendy Patton says these are positive developments but not enough to reverse years of neglect.

"The final budget passed by the General Assembly must protect proposed new investments in essential local services," she said. "Legislators should also restore the state's local government revenue sharing program so local communities can rebuild and better serve residents."

Policy Matters also calls on state lawmakers to pass a budget that expands access to high quality, affordable child care and helps centers pay employees a living wage. In Ohio, only [parents making less than 130% of the poverty level \(\\$27,024](#) for a family of three) can access public support for child care; [only Michigan and Indiana make it harder to qualify for support](#). The average child care worker makes less than \$10 an hour. DeWine's budget proposal includes more federal and TANF funding to improve the quality of child care and raise reimbursements for providers who meet the state's quality standards. The budget also indicates that the eligibility level may rise to 150% of the Federal Poverty Level (about \$32,000 annually for a family of three), but provides no new state dollars to support this increased access for public child care aid.

"We need to make sure families can afford a safe place to care for their children, and that the people giving the care are paid fairly," said Policy Matters researcher Will Petrik. "If Ohio increases support for child care, centers will be able to pay their workers more, which means better quality care and reduced turnover. DeWine's proposal takes positive steps, but we should raise eligibility to 200% of poverty."

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*Policy Matters Ohio is a nonprofit, nonpartisan state policy research institute.*

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