



PRESS RELEASE
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ODJFS can do more to stabilize Ohio families

Governor Mike DeWine and Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) have taken steps to get resources to families dealing with financial hardship and insecurity due to the economic slowdown. [A new brief from Policy Matters Ohio](#) identifies further measures DeWine and ODJFS can take to make sure all Ohioans can make ends meet.

“Everyone, no matter where they live or what they look like, needs stability and security,” said Policy Matters Researcher Will Petrik. “The pandemic has been challenging for people who were already struggling to get by, especially for Black Ohioans and people with low incomes, who are more likely to work in jobs without paid sick time or health care benefits. State leaders can make sure all Ohioans can put food on the table and pay the rent as we all do our part to flatten the curve. One way policymakers can do that is to tap into resources from the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.”

Under TANF, the federal government grants money to the states for supporting families with children experiencing poverty. Governor DeWine already signed an executive order to use \$4.7 million of TANF funds to support the Ohio Association of Foodbanks and an additional \$1 million to the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO) to ensure homeless shelters have resources. ODJFS also made an additional \$10 million in TANF available for one-time, emergency assistance to help parents with low incomes pay for immediate needs, such as clothing, rental assistance, auto repairs, and training needs. People in Franklin County claimed the \$1.5 million in emergency funds the state provided the county in just 24 hours.

Ohio’s “TANF Sustainability Fund Balance” had over \$545 million at the start of State Fiscal Year 2020, according to ODJFS. Petrik said these funds can provide support for families with low incomes and emergency needs. He called on ODJFS and the DeWine administration to:

1. Allocate \$250 million among counties to provide one-time emergency payments up to \$500 to a minimum of 500,000 families.
2. Increase cash assistance by \$100 a month to support the health and safety of children and families experiencing poverty.
3. Suspend barriers that block people from receiving aid like time limits and reporting requirements that force people to prove they are working or attending school.
4. Allocate \$35 million to rehouse families on the brink of homelessness.

“Even as we flatten the COVID-19 curve, we have a long road to flattening the curve of economic insecurity across the state,” Petrik said. “The DeWine Administration has taken important steps to help people with low incomes. It can use the TANF reserve to go further.”