



PRESS RELEASE
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Budget Bites: Support programs that support work

Education and training for SNAP recipients and Medicaid help Ohioans earning low wages stay in the workforce

Policy Matters Ohio released two Budget Bites today that call on Ohio lawmakers to support working people by protecting funding for the state's largest health insurance program and improving education and training programs for people who use food assistance.

Medicaid covers [3 million](#) Ohioans, including 1.2 million children and around 400,000 elderly or disabled people. Working people covered by Medicaid report that having insurance keeps them healthy and makes it easier for them to hold a job. In his executive budget for 2020-2021, Governor DeWine proposes several new programs to be funded through Medicaid including increased home visiting for new mothers and babies and more lead screening for children. Even though he's confined by declining federal funding and caps on state spending, DeWine finds ways to fully fund important programs like Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and Medicaid expansion, Policy Matters Senior Project Director Wendy Patton said.

"We need to scrap the spending caps that tie our lawmakers' hands," Patton said. "We could be helping more people stay healthy so they can go to work and contribute to their communities. Instead, we're choosing between funding important programs and investing in Ohio's health."

Six of Ohio's 10 most common jobs pay so little that a person supporting a family of three would need help from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to afford food. Ohio requires many adult participants meet work requirements to qualify and the federal government puts an additional time limit on benefits for so-called able-bodied adults without children. Those Ohioans must participate in employment and training for at least 20 hours per week or are limited to three-months of food assistance. The Federal SNAP 50/50 program provides matching dollars to states that offer voluntary, high-quality education and training programs for SNAP participants. Project Director Hannah Halbert says Ohio could be leveraging millions in federal dollars to help SNAP participants secure better paying jobs.

"Too many of Ohio's SNAP recipients participate in mandatory work programs that aren't effective and don't help them move out of poverty in the long term," Halbert said. "Ohio policymakers have shown a strong interest in improving these programs. They can and should do so in the 2020-2021 budget by expanding our SNAP 50/50 program."

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

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