

Policy Matters' 2022-23 State Budget Review

The state budget is an important way Ohioans come together to tackle big challenges, like ensuring all our kids are prepared to succeed, our communities are safe, and our sick neighbors get care.

And we did! Teachers, parents, and students pushed lawmakers to finally pass the Fair School Funding Plan so all kids, no matter where they live or what they look like, have what they need to learn. And we pushed lawmakers to increase funding for public child care, so more parents can go to work knowing their kids are safe and cared for.

But with an influx of funding from the federal government, state lawmakers had a chance to build a foundation of shared prosperity for all Ohioans. Instead, most chose to hand out more of our public resources in the form of tax cuts that mostly benefit the wealthiest people and tax breaks for corporations. That decision will make it difficult for lawmakers to sustain and strengthen funding for foundational public programs that make all our lives better.

Before the 2022-23 budget process began, Policy Matters Ohio made a slew of recommendations to lawmakers about how to expand opportunity and shared prosperity for all Ohioans, no matter where they live, how much money they have, or what they look like. Our budget wrap takes a deep dive into where lawmakers stepped up to care for all Ohioans and the too many places where they either made no improvement or went in the wrong direction. For a quick take, check out our budget matrix below.

Program	Our vision	Progress	Changes in the budget
Revenue	All Ohioans contribute their fair share; the wealthy and corporations pay what they owe.	No progress; profound harm	Lawmakers gave away \$2 billion, mostly to the wealthy via tax cuts. They also committed hundreds of millions of dollars in future public resources via special interest tax breaks.
K-12 education	All Ohio children go to schools with enough resources to set them up for success.	Good progress but dangers remain	Lawmakers passed the Fair School Funding Plan to fix Ohio's unconstitutional school funding formula, but with no commitment to it beyond the current 2-year budget period. They ended use of local school levy funds for charter and private schools but expanded state funding for privatized education by hundreds of millions of dollars. This is problematic because many have for-profit management, many have poor outcomes, and all drain resources needed for excellent public schools in every ZIP code
Higher education	Every Ohioan who wants to pursue higher education can afford to do so.	Inadequate progress	Lawmakers continued to underfund classroom teaching through the "State Share of Instruction." Ohio's public colleges and universities will actually lose money when accounting for inflation. Lawmakers boosted funding for the need-based aid program, the Ohio College Opportunity Grant, but not enough to put higher education within reach for all Ohioans who want it. They increased the per-student allotment by \$500 a year.
Medicaid	Ohioans who are paid low wages or are unable to work remain covered. New mothers have better coverage.	Good progress but dangers remain	The budget preserves Medicaid expansion and increases funding to fight infant and maternal mortality. Lawmakers also maintained funding to reduce lead poisoning. However, the post-pandemic redetermination of Medicaid eligibility may cause thousands who need coverage to be dropped from enrollment.
Public health	Every Ohioan lives in a healthy community served by a strong public health agency.	Good progress	The Ohio Department of Health's budget of \$1.15 billion in 2022 and \$888.8 million in 2023 is \$648 million (47%) larger over the biennium than in the last 2-year budget, mostly from federal emergency response dollars. But it's not just one-time federal money: Lawmakers increased state funds in the agency's budget by \$70 million (36%) over the biennium. The funds will expand Medicaid coverage for women with breast and cervical cancer; boost resources to reduce infant mortality; help youth experiencing homelessness, and more.
Mental health & addiction services	Ohioans with mental illness or substance use disorder get the treatment they need.	Good progress	Overall, lawmakers authorized \$2 billion over the 2022-23 budget for mental health and addiction services, an increase of \$254.4 million or 16.1%. Federal funds primarily fueled the increase, but lawmakers also added \$127.8 million in state funds, up 14.6%. The Department of Medicaid will dedicate almost \$1 billion in 2022-23 for coordination of behavioral health care and for the Ohio RISE program, to assist families and children with the most severe behavioral needs, who are served through multiple systems.
Lead abatement	Ohio's kids are safe from lead poisoning.	Some progress but dangers remain	Lawmakers added \$5 million in the 2022-23 Ohio budget to mitigate lead poisoning, bringing dedicated funding for lead abatement, assessment and mitigation to \$25 million. They also continued a tax credit for lead abatement. The budget also directs more funds to the Department of Health for lead abatement programs. The Ohio Department of Medicaid preserved funding for the SCHIP Lead Program at \$10 million: half the level that advocates requested. Lawmakers failed to take measures that would have enabled the state to enforce better lead-safe work practices.
Program	Our vision	Progress	Changes in the budget
Infant & maternal mortality	All babies and mothers survive and thrive.	Good progress	With direct spending of \$281.1 million to prevent infant and maternal mortality, the 2022-23 budget restores last year's budget cuts and adds new funding. The largest share is Medicaid funding for maternal mortality reduction and programs to help mothers and babies thrive. Lawmakers also increased the Help Me Grow and Early Intervention home visiting programs by \$27.3 million (20.9%). They boosted the Ohio Minority Health Commission's successful Infant Mortality HUB Grants to \$6.7 million, an increase of \$2.7 million or 39.8%, and increased the Infant Vitality Program in the Department of Health, which supports initiatives to reduce infant mortality, by \$16.6 million, up by 125.6%.
Aging	All Ohio seniors can age with dignity and comfort.	Good progress	Lawmakers appropriated about \$10 million a year for Senior Community Services, an increase of 49%, and \$5.7 million a year for Adult Protective services, a boost of 46% over the two year budget period. They also provided a badly needed increase in home health care reimbursement rates, intended to boost pay and stabilize the home health care workforce.
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	All Ohio families have enough to make ends meet.	Inadequate progress	The TANF budget plan calls for full spending on services, but it has not fully utilized funds in recent budgets, stashing money in savings rather than using full funding to help Ohioans in need. Lawmakers didn't increase monthly cash assistance payments to children and families.
Housing	All Ohioans have a safe, affordable place to live.	Inadequate progress	Although many Ohioans can't afford housing and some urban areas are rapidly gentrifying, the budget provided no additional funding for the Housing Trust Fund.
Food & nutrition	All Ohioans have enough to eat.	Inadequate progress	Advocates called for \$45 million per year to support food banks across the state. Lawmakers appropriated \$36.6 million for 2022 and \$24.6 for 2023 to support food banks and emergency food assistance for children, adults and families.
Kinship care	All children whose families are in crisis get the care and support they need to be healthy and secure.	Inadequate progress	Lawmakers funded the new Kinship Support Program at \$64.5 million over two years. However, lawmakers are still providing far less support to kids placed with relatives (kinship families) compared to kids place in licensed foster care settings. Lawmakers also didn't increase support for the thousands of kinship families outside the child welfare system.
Child care	All Ohio families who need it can afford high-quality child care.	Inadequate progress	Lawmakers raised initial eligibility for publicly funded child care to 142% of the federal poverty level (\$31,183 or \$14.99 an hour for a family of three). Yet child care is still unaffordable to many Ohio families. Lawmakers also removed requirements for child care providers that serve publicly funded children to improve quality over time and be rated as high quality by 2025.
Local government	All local governments have the resources they need to deliver key services to residents.	No progress	Lawmakers actually cut revenue sharing from 1.68% of the General Revenue Fund to 1.66%. Municipalities must refund commuter tax to those who worked from residences in another city during the pandemic, hurting the finances of an estimated 85% of communities.
Public transit	All Ohioans can access safe, reliable public transportation whenever they need it.	No progress	The budget holds transit funding at \$70 million a year. Lawmakers should allocate more than twice that level to fully serve Ohioans.
Stemming domestic violence	Domestic violence survivors have the support they need to live in safety.	Good progress	Lawmakers boosted support through federal coronavirus relief funds, but those funds expire. In the new budget, lawmakers boosted biennial funding from just under \$2 million to \$7.5 million through the Attorney General's Office — a dramatic increase, but not enough to cover the recent loss of federal funding.
Protecting paychecks	Every Ohioan is fully paid for all the hours they put in on the job.	No progress	Because of inadequate state funding, Ohio still only has five enforcement officers to protect working people from wage theft and other labor law violations.
Minority health Strikeforce	All Ohioans can live healthy, fulfilling lives, regardless of their race.	Inadequate progress	The Minority Health Strike Force laid out 34 recommendations, but lawmakers failed to implement most of them. Lawmakers addressed seven of the 16 Policy Matters prioritized: addressing financial aid, reducing mass incarceration, stemming the crisis in Black infant and maternal mortality, increasing eligibility for child care, increasing funding for lead abatement, expanding broadband to un- and under-served communities and households, and enacting the Fair School Funding Plan.
Broadband	Every Ohioan can participate in the 21st-century economy, and access remote health care, education and other benefits of high-speed internet service.	Good progress	The legislature appropriated \$250 million in state and federal funds to lay the groundwork for broader connectivity.