

9 POLICY CHOICES TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR BLACK WOMEN IN OHIO



Too often the consequences of bad public policy harm Black women more than other groups. By crafting public policy to specifically benefit Black women, Ohio's leaders can improve economic conditions, health outcomes, and overall well-being for Ohioans of all races and genders.

1 Raise the minimum wage

An initiative petition now collecting signatures for inclusion on the ballot this year would raise Ohio's minimum wage to \$15 per hour by 2026. That would help 1.56 million working Ohioans, of whom 44.2% are Black.

2 Create a state Child Tax Credit and improve the state EITC

Black families are disproportionately represented in the 40% of Ohio families with the lowest incomes — a group completely left out of recent state income tax cuts. Targeted tax credits use the tax code to help people who need it most.

3 Raise pay for childcare providers and workers

By increasing reimbursement rates for providers of publicly funded childcare, legislators allow providers to raise pay and improve working conditions.

4 Expand access to SNAP, modernize WIC, and support Ohio's food banks

Ohio has the resources necessary to make sure everyone has plenty of healthy food. SNAP, WIC and food banks are how we do it.

5 Increase financial support for Black women throughout the medical professional pipeline

Expand access to the Ohio College Opportunity Grant — the state's only need-based student financial aid. Make public college free for low- and moderate-income in-state students. Expand loan forgiveness to encourage Black and brown medical students in primary care, nursing, psychology, psychiatry, and other specialty areas.

6 Interrupt cycles of reincarceration and respect basic human dignity

Ensure people in Ohio's jails and prisons can access medical treatment, behavioral health resources, and mental health supports. With approval from the legislature, Ohio can apply for a waiver of Medicaid's "inmate exclusion" which, if granted by the federal government, would allow many more imprisoned people to access the care they need.

7 Build relationships with Black women and the organizations they lead

Hire more Black women —and pay them equitably — in positions from which they can influence policy design and implementation, including government agencies and advisory boards. Policies to reduce the cost of education or alleviate education debt, greater unionization, and equal opportunity hiring policies can support these goals.

8 Craft policy to improve health equity

Prioritize equitable outcomes in policy agendas for communities of color, conduct impact assessments of proposed policy to ensure equitable outcomes for communities of color, tailor policies to meet the needs of communities of color, and strategically allocate resources and funds to advance equity.

9 Stop criminalizing Ohioans experiencing mental health crises

Expand crisis services that explicitly include statewide non-police alternatives to crisis response. Increase state funding for local care response programs and give funding priority to health-first crisis response.

For more, read Policy Matters' [Black women can thrive in Ohio](#) report.