

POLICY MATTERS OHIO

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Public sector employs significant portion of Ohioans Women and African Americans more likely to be employed in public occupations

Jobs in public administration or the public sector are extremely important to the economy. They deliver services that Ohioans need. When unemployment is high, these jobs become more important because struggling families have a greater need for good schools, social support, public transportation, libraries and other services that are provided by the public sector. Further, when unemployment is high, a more stable public sector prevents a deeper downward spiral in our economy.

The services that public workers provide benefit all Ohioans. In addition, Ohioans from every demographic group work in public sector jobs. More than 700,000 Ohio workers are employed by the public sector, including more than 300,000 men and more than 400,000 women. While more than 15% of all Ohio adults workers are employed by the public sector, some demographic groups are more likely to be in these positions. Compared to that 15.4% of all adult workers, 17.6% of adult women and 18.5% of adult black workers worked in public administration in Ohio in 2008-10.

Nationally, 16.9% of all adult workers, 19.9% of adult women and 21.2% of all adult black workers worked in public administration in 2008-10.

Public sector workers, Ohio and US, 2008-2010 pooled data					
United States					
		All workers		Black workers	
		Number of workers	Percent	Number of workers	Percent
Men & women	All sectors	119,311,958	100.0%	13,358,849	100.0%
	Public employment	20,132,766	16.9%	2,836,977	21.2%
Adult men only	All sectors	61,356,614	100.0%	5,981,513	100.0%
	Public employment	8,599,877	14.0%	1,095,075	18.3%
Adult women only	All sectors	57,955,344	100.0%	7,377,336	100.0%
	Public employment	11,532,889	19.9%	1,741,902	23.6%
Ohio					
		All workers		Black workers	
		Number of workers	Percent	Number of workers	Percent
Men & women	All sectors	4,616,970	100.0%	445,552	100.0%
	Public employment	709,731	15.4%	82,591	18.5%
Adult men only	All sectors	2,301,662	100.0%	202,863	100.0%
	Public employment	302,050	13.1%	34,269	16.9%
Adult women only	All sectors	2,315,308	100.0%	242,689	100.0%
	Public employment	407,681	17.6%	48,322	19.9%

Source: Economic Policy Institute analysis of Current Population Survey data

Public administration is defined in this analysis as working in the occupation entitled "public administration" or as working in the public sector. We used Current Population Survey data of the U.S. Census to determine how different demographic groups are distributed among different occupations and sectors. We pooled three years of data to get an adequate sample size for Ohio.

Restricting collective bargaining is likely to lead to lower wages for some public sector workers. Such wage reductions would hurt Ohio's economy by reducing spending. While all demographic groups are likely to be harmed by such reductions, there is reason for concern that many African-American and female workers may suffer disproportionate damage.

Policy Matters Ohio is a non-profit, non-partisan policy research institute dedicated to a more prosperous, equitable, inclusive and sustainable Ohio. We are grateful to Jin Dai of the Economic Policy Institute and Sylvia Allegretto of the Institute for Research on Labor and Employment at the University of California, Berkeley, for assistance with data.