



## Press release

For immediate release

Nov. 4, 2015

Contact: Amy Hanauer, 216.375.9274

## Online tools show how policies shape family budgets

Policy Matters Ohio and Columbia University's National Center for Children in Poverty today launched new online tools that show costs of basic family needs in Ohio and how work supports such as child-care assistance can make a difference.

Nearly one in four children in Ohio live in poverty, and sound policy is one of the most important tools for helping their families. The online tools help shed light on the real impact public policies have on average families.

The tools are:

- A Basic Needs Budget Calculator, which shows how much it takes for families to afford minimum daily necessities in seven Ohio communities. It also allows you to create customized results by changing assumptions about basic family expenses.
- A Family Resource Simulator, which illustrates the impact of “work supports” — such as Earned Income Tax Credits, Medicaid expansion and childcare assistance — on the budget of a hypothetical family.

The tools let policymakers, researchers, journalists and advocates calculate the resources different Ohio families need in different communities. Users can see how earnings and public policy changes help or hurt Ohio families. The tools are free at <http://nccp.org/tools/>.

“Poverty and inequality are very real problems for Ohio families, and we know that sound policy is one of our most important tools for helping low-income families with children to succeed,” said Curtis Skinner, director of family economic security at the National Center for Children in Poverty. “Testing the real-world impact that policy reform has on families is crucial to doing what's right and most effective. We're excited to work with Policy Matters Ohio to launch this new tool.”

Amy Hanauer, executive director of Policy Matters, said smart policy can make a huge difference in the lives of poor families. “Ohio has done a lot of things right -- establishing a state Earned Income Tax Credit, offering subsidized childcare, expanding Medicaid. These tools will help us understand how these reforms have helped and how further improvements could make a much bigger difference,” she said.

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*Policy Matters Ohio is a nonprofit, nonpartisan state policy research institute with offices in Cleveland and Columbus.*