Policy Matters Ohio

SUMMARY

April 7, 2026

Time for a higher minimum wage

- Ohio's minimum wage increases with inflation. Its current value ($11/hr) is the equivalent of $6.85 when Ohio voters amended it into the state constitution it in 2006. Assuming 2% inflation, Ohio's non-tipped minimum wage won't reach $15 until 2034. Tipped workers would not see a $15 minimum wage until decades later, in **2064.**
- Ohio's minimum wage is too low to get by in any of Ohio's 88 counties; even where cost-of-living is lowest (Scioto county), a person who's paid minimum wage would have to work full-time for 20 months to cover just one year of expenses.
- Ohio's minimum wage is too low to raise a family: An Ohioan working full-time, year-round, for minimum wage is paid just $22,880. That is $4,440 below the federal poverty level for a family of three.
- Voters in other states—including Florida, Nebraska, and Missouri — have passed ballot initiatives that will increase their state's minimum wage to $15 an hour by 2027.
- Labor markets can handle minimum wages up to 60-70% of the median wage without negative economic impacts. If Ohio set its minimum wage at 67% of the 2025 state median wage, it would be $16.60 an hour.
- Raising Ohio's minimum wage to $15 by 2030 would mean 321,500 Ohio workers would get a direct pay raise, and another 295,200 would indirectly benefit as employers increase wages near the wage floor.
- Across all workers, a minimum wage increase to $15 per hour by 2030 would translate into an average wage increase of $1.62 an hour or $2,298 a year for affected workers who work full-time year-round. The lowest-paid workers — disproportionately women and people of color — would see the greatest benefit.
- Higher wages lead to greater employee retention; increased costs for employers are at least partially offset by reduced costs for training replacement workers.
- The pay boost low-wage earners would receive more than makes up for the small increase in everyday costs.
- Eliminating the subminimum wages for tipped workers, young people, and people with disabilities will combat inequality and poverty.