Policy Matters Ohio

STATEMENT

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"Business friendly" policy hasn't moved the needle for Ohioans

Census data indicate federal cuts will jeopardize critical services for Ohio families

Today, the U.S. Census Bureau released data from the 2025 American Community Survey (ACS). The data allow state- and local-level analysis of federal policies' impacts on everyday Ohioans. Data became available only after a six-week delay to accommodate federal rule changes. Policy Matters Ohio Executive Director Hannah Halbert issued the following statement:

"The latest data from the Census Bureau reinforce what we've long known: Ohio's leaders are not creating policy that benefits everyday Ohioans. Despite billions of dollars in tax breaks for corporations — including a budget-busting incentive for data centers — working Ohioans aren't seeing the benefits of Ohio's much-celebrated 'Top State for Business' ranking.

"Instead, our schools are badly underfunded, our childcare system remains in crisis, and looming cuts to Medicaid and SNAP threaten even the most essential public services. It's long past time for legislators to change course and put everyday Ohioans at the center of their policy decisions. The upcoming Lame Duck session, and the coming state budget negotiations are both opportunities to do so, by shoring up the systems that support Ohioans' economic security, especially in light of federal threats."

Key statewide findings include:

- Ohio's median household income — the "typical" income at the exact middle of the statewide scale, with half of all households making more and half less — was just $74,804: nearly $5,000 less than it was a quarter century ago adjusted for inflation — and nearly $10,000 less than national median in 2025.
- Compared to 2024, more Ohio families were living below the extreme poverty level required to qualify for Ohio Works First Cash Assistance — just $13,325 annually for a family of three in 2025. Despite that increased need, the average amount of assistance fell from $3,866 to $2,860.

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

- 12.4% of Ohioans were living below the Federal Poverty Level last year ($26,650 for a family of three). Over 400,000 of them were children. More than 250,000 were over 65.
- 835,924 Ohioans were uninsured last year, 53,298 more than in 2024. Next year's data will reveal whether this is the beginning of a trend brought on by delayed-action cuts to federal funding.

"These poverty and health insurance figures do not reflect the full impact of last year's federal budget, once publicized as the 'One Big Beautiful Bill.' However, the data will be a helpful benchmark for tracking the future effects of the law's massive cuts to programs Ohioans depend on. More than 100,000 rely on cash assistance; 1.3 million on SNAP; and over 2 million on Medicaid, with 897,000 under the age of 19."