## WHERE WE STAND
Our top Priorities for Public Funding - Overview

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Housing Justice means individuals and families have ample access to safe, stable, and affordable housing that meets their needs. Housing justice results in ample opportunities for people of color to build wealth. And housing justice means the link between geography and opportunity—a legacy of our country’s commitment to residential segregation and discrimination—is severed. YWCA Columbus experience as a housing provider, and the experiences of BIPOC in the housing market, show we have a ways to go.

Consider this:

- The demographic most at risk for and from evictions are those under the age of 18. Children make up the largest group of homeless or at-risk for homelessness. Because of this, every other area of their life is impacted. This risk increases for children of color, especially Black and Indigenous children, because their parent(s) are the most likely to face evictions. Ohio ranks 8th in the nation in the segregation of Black and white residential areas.

- In Franklin County, 3 out of 4 families in homeless shelters are Black, compared to the overall Black population of 22%. At the YWCA Family Center shelter, almost 80% of heads of household identity as a person of color.

- Black homeownership in the central Ohio region is 33.4%, whereas the national average is 53.6%.

- In Ohio, nearly 400,000 households spend over half their income on rent.

For the housing market to be equitable and competitive, Black Americans will need support to overcome historic discrimination. Funding for more affordable housing, homeownership opportunities, and equitable community development, along with more rigorous and enhanced fair housing and fair credit protections, would all advance housing justice and alleviate the difficulties BIPOC renters and homeowners face in the housing market.
Access to affordable and quality child care impacts both the child and the family. In the midst of an ongoing pandemic, Ohio families are struggling more than ever with the rising cost of childcare, and women in particular are suffering under the acute “double shift”. For example, nationally, surveys find that 1 in 4 women are considering downshifting their career as a result of COVID, likely because of complications around school/childcare. This regression in women’s equity in the workplace is being called a “she-cession,” with devastating losses predicted to women’s equity, loss of economic output, and delaying workforce development efforts across the board. The average cost of center-based care in Ohio is $10,009 per year, rivaling that of college tuition. For many, this provides a significant challenge, especially single parent households.

**Consider this:**

- In Central Ohio, there are three times more single female-headed households (11.8% of all households) than single male-headed households (3.9%). Thirty-three percent of Black households have a female head of household with no husband present. Almost 40 percent of Indigenous families are single female-headed households with no husband present. Single parent households are disproportionately low-income; there are 73,974 single female-headed households in Central Ohio, with over 15,000 female headed households with children who are poor.

- In Franklin County, 59% of 3-4 year olds are not enrolled in preschool. These children are missing out on important socioemotional development, and parents may feel impacts on ability to maintain employment, or full-time employment.

Now is the time to invest in childcare, and build a beneficial infrastructure to meet the needs of the State’s most vulnerable. Affordable and high quality childcare will support educational outcomes for children, creating long-term impacts for their academic success and later workforce success. The state could, for example:

- Increase the eligibility floor for TANF applicants from 130% of the Federal Poverty Line to 200% FPL.

- Require a pre-tax child care savings account to be a benefit provided by all employers to all employees.
It is well-documented that one’s zip code can predict one’s life outcomes along a range of indicators, including those that are health-related. While race is not a social determinant of health, racism is. Historic segregation, marginalization, and discrimination in housing, education, employment, and the healthcare system negatively impacts Ohio Black residents’ quality of life compared to their white counterparts.

The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on the Black population is only the most recent example of a long history of medical disenfranchisement and health inequities.

For example:

- In Ohio, Black residents make up 14% of the population, and account for 18.1% of hospitalizations and 10.9% of COVID deaths.

- The latest research on COVID-19 shows that the US lost a whole year of life expectancy; for Black people, life expectancy is nearly 3 times worse, and 2 times worse for Latinx people.

The state of Ohio should adopt this stance as well, and then move swiftly from declaration to action by applying a racial equity lens to the programming and resourcing of all health-systems—including mental health—so that historically marginalized Ohioans can receive better access to health and healthcare.
Civil unrest as a response to police brutality took on new urgency in the summer of 2020. Ohio is not immune from calls for reform; in December of 2020, within the space of three weeks, two Black men were shot and killed by law enforcement in Columbus. Racialized violence and lack of trust in the policing institution are well-documented and not surprising: Black Americans are disproportionately impacted by issues that place them in higher interaction with the police, such as the school-to-prison pipeline, segregation into communities that lack sufficient resources to meet basic needs (like housing, food, or employment), and well-documented implicit biases operating within the criminal legal system.

- As of 2016, Black Ohioans made up 13% of the population, but 34% of the prison population.
- In Ohio, as of 2019, there were 20,988 Black male prisoners and 970 Black female prisoners.
- A study commissioned by the City of Columbus found that between 2014 and 2017, Black people faced twice as much force by police than white people.
- While 80% of white residents in Columbus stated that they felt the police were doing a good job, only 61% of Black residents reported the same.

Policing and community safety can be done differently. For example, shifting the responsibility for mental health emergency calls from armed police officers to social workers and other mental health professionals better ensures appropriate responses with reduced potential for harm. Properly resourcing mental health and public health systems, including the decriminalization of mental health challenges, and exploring options for de-militarizing police forces are all important steps for reducing harm.
Digital connection and broadband use is now integral to participating in society. From education, to workforce development and gender equity, to health care access, digital equity touches every aspect of social justice issues. Traditionally treated as a rural connectivity issue, the pandemic has highlighted the digital divide that exists even within our urban communities. The importance of digital access has only increased in the midst of the pandemic, and will continue to be important for access even as we begin to emerge from the acute crisis of the pandemic.

- A national survey found that 51% of Latinx and 46% of Black households access internet solely through their phones, with no home broadband. For schooling, studies show that for low-income students, whose schools were closed due to the pandemic, 43% were doing homework on a cellphone.

- New data from the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center shows that patients are much more likely to keep their telehealth appointments, with patient fuel savings amounting to $1.1 million.

- 64% of Columbus households without broadband access earn under $35,000.

- Residents living in Franklinton, Linden, the South Side, and Eastland area are those with the least access.

- Research in a neighborhood on the Near East side found that 26% of households use cellphones to access the internet at home; and about 40% do not have access to reliable, fixed internet.

Investments from the State into public broadband infrastructure will help bridge the gap between those with access and those without. Regulating the industry as we do with any utility would ensure affordable access for those without stable access today.

**Nationally,**

43% of low-income students are doing homework on a cellphone.

64% of Columbus households without broadband access earn under $35k.
PAY EQUITY
Historically, women face discriminatory wages in all sectors, with women of color further marginalized by job and wage discrimination. In Central Ohio, women’s full-time earnings ratio is 81 cents on the dollar.

Consider:

• Pay equity is also a racial justice issue; women of color are more likely to face a higher disparity in wage and wealth.

• In 2015, the gender pay gap was 84% in Franklin County, 79% in Pickaway County, 78% in Madison County, 76% in Fairfield County, 76% in Licking County, 70% in Union County, 69% in Delaware County.

IN OHIO, OVER A 40-YEAR CAREER, BLACK WOMEN LOSE $718,000 AND LATINA WOMEN LOSE $791,400 COMPARED TO WHITE, NON-HISPANIC MEN

White women in Central Ohio were making 50% more than that of Black and Hispanic women. Because of historic discrimination, non-white women face more barriers to work than white women, and all women face more barriers than white men.

Workforce development policies with a race and gender intersectional focus, as well as working with the private sector to better facilitate closing the wage gap will greatly benefit all Ohioans and improve the Ohio economy for all.

LIVING WAGE
Living wage is defined as “the hourly wage an individual in a household must earn to support his or herself and their family, with the assumption that they are the sole provider and working full time.”

Consider:

• The living wage in Franklin County for one adult with 0 children is $14.39. However, currently, minimum wage does not meet the needs of residents of central Ohio.

IF THE MINIMUM WAGE WAS RAISED TO $15/HOUR, AN APPROXIMATED $8.7 BILLION COULD BE TAKEN HOME BY WORKERS AND INJECTED INTO THE STATE’S ECONOMY

A living wage would allow for female-headed households, especially for women of color, to provide opportunities for their families to succeed and thrive.

• Female headed households are more susceptible to low wages, workplace discrimination, lack of access to opportunities, etc. A living wage is one way to equalize the field, and provide a foundation for economic and social stability.

Should the State of Ohio raise its current minimum wage from $8.55 to $14.39, the State can make significant progress in the economy, women’s workforce development, and racial equity. However, it is important to emphasize that a living wage is not enough. As housing prices soar and affordable housing becomes difficult to acquire, Ohio workers must earn $15.25 to afford a basic two-bedroom apartment. Adopting a promise to increase minimum wage until it meets these requirements is a necessary direction to make progress for central Ohio.
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