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**OHIO POVERTY SNAPSHOT:
1.5 MILLION PEOPLE REMAIN IN POVERTY, WITH 3.5
MILLION NEAR POOR**

***Many working families struggle to make ends meet, while threats to
SNAP, housing, and Medicaid could increase hardship***

COLUMBUS, OH - While poverty declined in Ohio from 14.6 percent in 2016 to 14.0 percent last year, large numbers of low-income households paid so much for rent that they had little left over for other expenses. More than half (56 percent) of Ohio residents earning less than \$20,000 were spending more than half their income on rent in 2017, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. More than one in three (38 percent) households earning up to \$35,000 were also spending more than half their income on rent.

These statistics are among the findings of ***Ohio Poverty Snapshot***, released by the [Ohio Women's Public Policy Network](#) (WPPN) and the [Coalition on Human Needs](#) (CHN).

Affording food is a problem for 13.7 percent of Ohio households. On the other hand, in part because Ohio has expanded its Medicaid program, the proportion without health insurance was 6.0 percent in 2017. While that was slightly up from the 2016 rate of 5.7 percent, it was down a significant 5.1 percent points from the 2013 rate of 11.1 percent. Ohio has made far more progress than states that did not expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act (those states average more than 12 percent uninsured).

"We must revamp our public policies at the state and federal level to make it easier for people to afford the necessities," said Erin Ryan, Managing Director of the Ohio Women's Public Policy Network. "It's very good news that more people in Ohio have health insurance compared with 2013, but wages are still too low, and women are still bearing the burden of extremely poor households. Policymakers in Washington and at the Statehouse must prioritize affordable access to health insurance, nutrition, and housing assistance so that families can lift themselves out of poverty and into the middle class."

A sizable majority of poor Ohio residents are working - 56 percent of households in the state include one or more people who worked at least part time. "People work when they can, but stagnating wages, unstable jobs, or health problems can prevent workers from being able to afford basic necessities at all times," said Deborah Weinstein, Executive Director of the Coalition on Human Needs. The Coalition has opposed federal proposals to deny housing, Medicaid or food assistance to people who do not work a certain minimum of hours that do not recognize or address the obstacles to stable work hours.

Looking beyond statewide poverty totals, ***Ohio Poverty Snapshot*** shows that communities of color, children, and people with disabilities continue to be disproportionately poor. 28.8 percent of African Americans and 26.8 percent of Latinos were living in poverty in Ohio in 2017, compared with 10.7 percent of non-Hispanic whites.

The snapshot found that children are more likely to live in poverty than any other age group. In Ohio, 20.1 percent of children lived in poverty in 2017. Among African American and Latino children, poverty rates are extreme: 42.1 percent of African American children and 34.3 percent of Latino children were poor in 2017, compared with 13.8 percent of non-Hispanic white children. For people with disabilities, more than one in five (22.1 percent) lived in poverty.

"The extreme level of poverty among children, and children of color in particular, is a national crisis," Weinstein said. "Our country declared a war on poverty 54 years ago. It is time we renewed this spirit of commitment."

Ryan added that women play an increasingly integral role in securing their families' livelihood: Women are the sole, primary, or co-breadwinner in roughly two-thirds (67 percent) of all families in Ohio. She said that 85 percent of African American mothers, 62 percent of Latina mothers, and 53 percent of white mothers are key family breadwinners.

"Yet women - particularly women of color - regularly face barriers to achieving economic self-sufficiency, including disproportionate representation in low-security and low-wage jobs," Ryan continued. "Women are more likely than men to remain at risk of economic insecurity at all stages of their lives - and single mothers, women of color, and elderly women living alone are particularly vulnerable to living in poverty."

Ryan said many anti-poverty programs are essential for Ohio women and their families. "Medicaid has long been a lifeline for women, particularly for low-income women, women of color, and women in rural areas of the country," she said. "In Ohio, women compose more than half (58 percent) of the state's Medicaid population, and nationally, Medicaid covers more than 50 percent of births, serving as a critical program to support maternal care and health outcomes for babies. And SNAP is especially critical for women, who make up 63 percent of adult program recipients. Imposing stricter requirements would be particularly harmful for women and their families who depend on the program to make ends meet."

To download the ***Ohio Poverty Snapshot***, go [here](#). To view the accompanying infographics, go [here](#).

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[*The Ohio Women's Public Policy Network*](#) (WPPN) is a coalition unlike any other group in the state. Formed in 2015 and convened by Innovation Ohio Education Fund, the Women's Public Policy Network brings together more than 30 organizations to collaboratively advance public policies that promote economic security and strengthen families.

[*The Coalition on Human Needs*](#) (CHN) is an alliance of national organizations working together to promote public policies which address the needs of low-income and other vulnerable populations. The Coalition's members include civil rights, religious, labor and professional organizations, service providers and those concerned with the well being of children, women, the elderly and people with disabilities.