



INTERSECTING PANDEMICS:

The Impact of Intimate Partner Violence,
COVID-19, and Wage and Worker Supports
Equity in Ohio an Environmental Scan

Why prevention?

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a widespread public health problem that harms millions of people each year and costs the U.S. economy billions of dollars annually.^{1,2} While it is imperative that our society help survivors find freedom, peace, and justice after experiencing violence, everyone would be better served by stopping violence before it starts. Prevention avoids the long lasting mental and physical consequences of violence. ODVN seeks to prevent the perpetration of IPV. Individuals are targeted for IPV victimization often because they are marginalized and made vulnerable by oppressive systems, including poverty, racism, sexism, transphobia, homophobia, xenophobia, and ableism. Until these systems are dismantled and stop making people vulnerable to IPV victimization, prevention that focuses on victimization will only shift the burden of victimization to the most marginalized.

Why economic justice?

When individuals are economically unstable or insecure, they are at a higher risk of perpetrating IPV. Furthermore, when the communities they live in face high levels of poverty and unemployment, this increases their risks. Finally, the United States is unique among wealthy nations for our high levels of income inequality, increasing the risk of IPV perpetration across our nation.³ Each of these risk factors have become more widespread and severe in the wake of COVID-19 and its economic devastation.

What is ODVN doing?

ODVN is committed to improving the financial stability and security of Ohioans by increasing wage equity and other worker supports (WOWS). ODVN's WOWS work is focused on increasing public awareness about the impact of inequity and weak wage and worker support policies on IPV and strengthening connections between organizations that can create positive change.

ODVN is working with partners to increase the synergy between partners focusing on wage equity and worker supports to center economic stability for those Ohio families and communities in the margins. The four (4) objectives of the WOWS work are 1) Increase engagement of broad-based partners & networks willing & able to work on wage equity issues; 2) Increase public education & attention on wage inequity & other worker supports; 3) Increase public education about the impact of income inequality on Ohio families and communities; and 4) Shift organizational practices of ODVN partner organizations related to wage equity & other worker supports.

ODVNs Wage Equity & Other Worker Supports Objectives

- **Increase engagement of broad-based partners & networks willing & able to work on wage equity issues**
- **Increase public education & attention on wage inequity & other worker supports**
- **Increase public education about the impact of income inequality on Ohio families and communities**
- **Shift organizational practices of ODVN partner organizations related to wage equity & other worker supports**

How should we decide which policies to pursue?

The first step in improving the economic security of Ohioans to prevent IPV is to understand the factors that impact their financial security. A comprehensive analysis of these factors can then be used to identify barriers to and opportunities for change. The ten (10) areas that impact Ohioans economic security analyzed in this document are: employment, industries, wages and wealth, labor policies, government programs, health, housing and transportation, childcare, education, and the criminal justice system.

Ohioans who face the most marginalization have the most barriers to economic stability and security across the 10 areas reviewed in this document. Current wage equity policies focus on people who are well educated, middle-class, white, straight, cisgender, and/or able-bodied. These policies will not end intimate partner violence in Ohio because people with these identities do not have the most risk factors for experiencing violence. Policies intended to create wage equity and otherwise support workers to end intimate partner violence must center the needs of the most marginalized to be the most effective.

Poverty ***does not*** cause IPV and none of the data presented here are meant to suggest this. Rather, the same systems and policies that create poverty also create the circumstances that put people at risk for perpetrating IPV. Only by changing these systems and policies can we reduce the risk factors and IPV. ***Prevention efforts must focus on the community and systems levels, rather than focusing on individuals and relationships, to be effective and long lasting.*** By focusing on systems and policies, we can create a positive effect for millions of Ohioans, particularly those most harmed by historical and ongoing oppression and marginalization.

Unemployment, Underemployment, & Labor Force Attachment

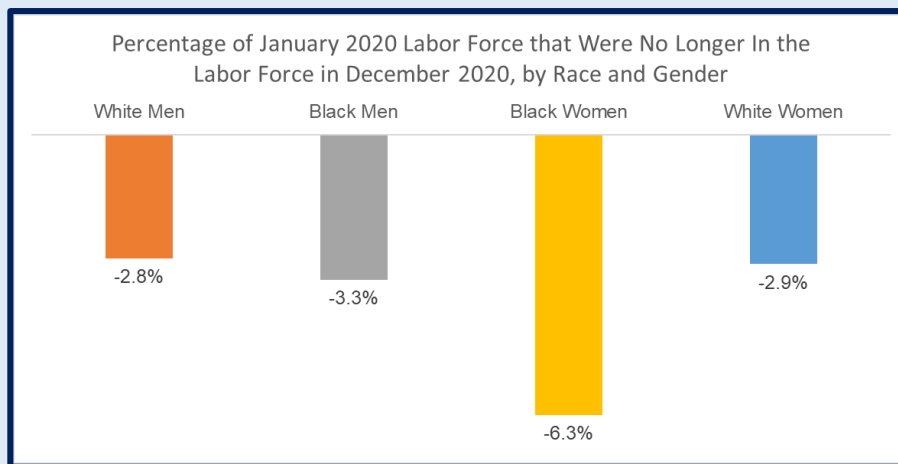
Diminished economic opportunity (often measured by high unemployment rates) is a major risk factor for IPV perpetration. People who are under economic stress because they cannot find a job or cannot find one that allows them to adequately support themselves and their families are more likely to commit violence than people who are sufficiently employed.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, unemployment rates were near record lows, especially for marginalized groups, but Ohioans were both underemployed and detached from the workforce at extremely high rates.^{4, 5, 6} Large numbers of Ohioans either could not find full-time work or were no longer trying. Wages had seen little growth over several decades.⁷ The minimum wage had fallen by 28% in the five decades since its peak in 1968.⁸ As a result of these factors, low levels of unemployment did not reliably translate into lower poverty rates in Ohio.^{9, 10}

The pandemic has only worsened the employment situation, especially for Black workers and particularly Black women. While it is too early for reliable state-level

data, national data suggest that Black workers are facing higher rates of underemployment and labor force detachment than white workers, especially if they work in service industries.¹¹

High levels of underemployment and labor force detachment, combined with the threat of future unemployment, decrease families' financial stability and security, and increase societal income and wealth inequalities. These economic drivers raise the risks of IPV perpetration, particularly for Black Ohioans who already faced higher levels of poverty and economic instability.



Barriers: Unemployment, Underemployment & Labor Force Detachment Barriers

- Increasing employment in Ohio does not lead clearly to lower poverty rates.
- Women, and particularly Black women, face unique barriers to maintaining employment during the pandemic.¹²
- Industries with high rates of involuntary part-time work had larger job losses in April 2020, jeopardizing the financial security of already vulnerable people.¹³
- Future COVID-19-related shutdowns may cause spikes in unemployment, underemployment, and labor force detachment, particularly for marginalized workers. Fear of such shutdowns may cause stress even while people are employed.

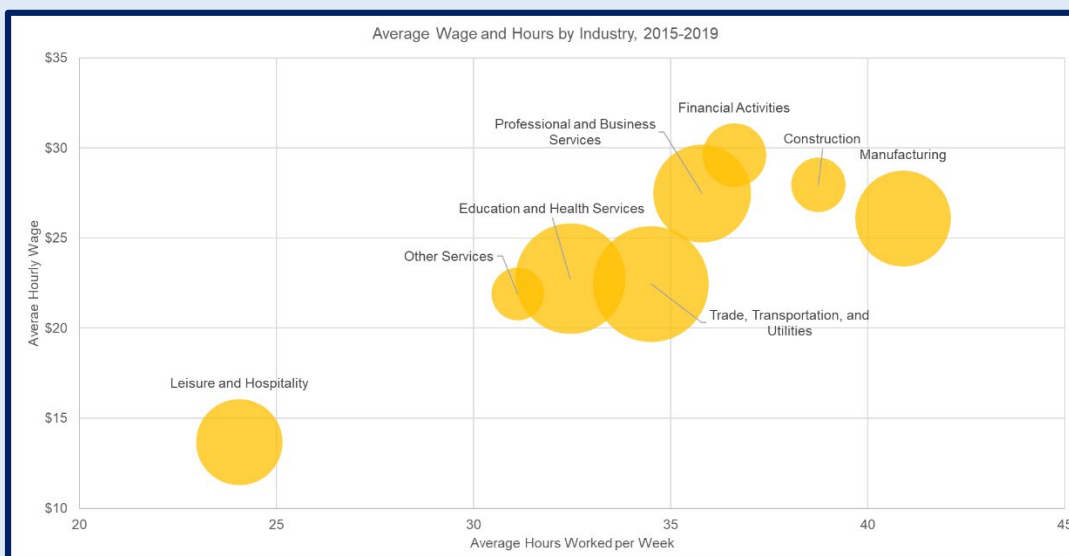
Opportunities: Unemployment, Underemployment & Labor Force Detachment Barriers

- Prior to the pandemic, the U.S. and Ohio unemployment rates were very low, although they were higher for marginalized people.¹⁴
- White women have made substantial gains in returning to the workforce after the initial stay-at-home orders and business closures.¹⁵
- Maintain fiscal stimulus, especially extended unemployment benefits and supplemental federal payments will mitigate the income disruption from job loss and help families to survive until a new job is found.
- Increased wages would make Ohio workers more secure. Advocates should work through all available means to increase Ohio's minimum wage including public policy efforts and worker empowerment through union organizing.



Industries: From Manufacturing to Service

Over the last 50 years, Ohio's economy has changed from being manufacturing-based to being service-based.¹⁶ Public policy, especially federal trade policy, has played a significant role in this shift. The newly created service jobs are not comparable to the manufacturing jobs they replace in terms of weekly pay. Service jobs pay less and are more likely to force workers to work part-time involuntarily.¹⁷ Workers in growing sectors were more vulnerable to job loss at the onset of COVID-19 than workers in manufacturing. Industry-based differences in pay fall largely along gendered and racialized lines, with marginalized people being generally overrepresented in lower paying industries.¹⁸ Marginalized families already face more risk factors for intimate partner violence, and largescale trends in Ohio and across the U.S. have the potential to exacerbate these risks and cause more violence. The families of workers who cannot find high paying work are at an increased risk of experiencing IPV due to increased financial strain. When factories close, the resulting unemployment, poverty, and stress in the community can raise everyone's risk of experiencing all forms of violence.



NOTE: THE SIZE OF EACH CIRCLE REPRESENTS THE NUMBER OF WORKERS IN THAT SECTOR IN 2019

While some firms are returning manufacturing jobs to Ohio, and federal trade policy can help, the state is limited in the policies it can implement to bring manufacturing jobs back. Jobs in growing industries can be strengthened to better support workers, their families, and their communities. By increasing the wages and other worker supports of these new jobs, policy makers can decrease the likelihood of experiencing violence for all Ohioans.

Barriers: From Manufacturing to Service

- Well-paying manufacturing jobs are being replaced with lower paying jobs in education and health services and leisure and hospitality.
- Jobs in growing industries offer fewer hours per week than manufacturing, often with less predictable scheduling that makes planning for childcare difficult, particularly for single parents.
- Growing industries were more severely affected by pandemic-related unemployment.
- Black workers have low representation in the four best paying industries.

Opportunities: From Manufacturing to Service

- Ohio had positive statewide job growth prior to the pandemic, although this growth was unevenly distributed across the state.
- Trade Adjustment Assistance has been a crucial economic support for workers who lost their jobs in the manufacturing industry due to globalization.¹⁹

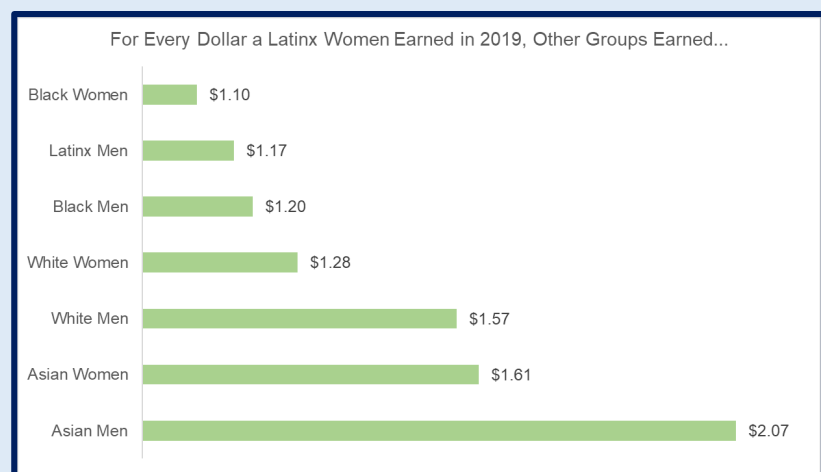


Wages and Wealth

Sufficient wages are the main way families can achieve economic security. For many families, though, particularly Black families, the jobs available to them simply do not pay enough money to get by. Low wages exacerbate longstanding and deep-rooted race and gender wage and wealth gaps, further raising the risk of violence in Ohio's already-marginalized communities. Ending IPV will require employers pay sufficient wages for their employees to support themselves and their families and policymakers take steps to close the wage and wealth gaps.

Minimum wage, subminimum wage, and low wage work are key features of Ohio's labor market. Forty-two percent of working women and 32% of working men in Ohio earn \$13.05 or less per hour.²⁰ These workers are disproportionately people of color, are more likely to be single parents, and generally have lower educational attainment.

People of color and women's overrepresentation in low wage work leads to racial and gender wage gaps. Across the U.S., men consistently earn more per hour than women, and Asian and white workers earn more than Black and Latinx workers.²¹ These wage gaps are related to gender and race expectations and discrimination that impact what industries a person has access to, how much the jobs in those industries pay, how many hours a week they work, and the likelihood of being hired and promoted. Wage gaps contribute to the wealth gaps and have the potential to exaggerate the already extreme differences in wealth between white and Black families.²²



The coronavirus pandemic and subsequent recession threaten to increase low wage workers' exposure to risk factors for violence. Low wage workers were more likely to become unemployed due to the pandemic.²³ If they retained their job, they were more likely to be classified as an "essential worker".^{24,25} Low wage working women and people of color were especially likely to be employed in public-facing roles that increased their risk of exposure to the virus.

Prior to the pandemic, Ohio's lowest paid workers were already in a precarious position. Many lived at or near the poverty line and some faced predatory, hostile, and discriminatory workplace practices. The pandemic has only made it clearer that their situation is untenable and leads to the economic risk factors for violence that we seek to address.

Barriers: Wages and Wealth

- All but one of Ohio's ten most common jobs pays poverty or near-poverty wages.²⁶
- Black families have a median net worth 1/10th that of white families and this difference has accumulated over generations.²⁷
- Wage and wealth gaps are driven by systemic, societal-level factors including racism and sexism that cannot be addressed with relatively easy or singular policy solutions.

Opportunities: Wages and Wealth

- Ohio's minimum wage is higher than the federal minimum wage and is indexed to inflation, although the difference is not substantial relative to other states.
- Efforts to raise the minimum wage are growing across the country, as are efforts to end the lower tipped minimum wage.
- Congress has passed historic levels of fiscal stimulus directed to individuals, businesses, and state and local governments. Benefits are limited and more is needed.



Labor Policies

Economic stability is about more than take-home pay. It also depends on benefits, particularly paid sick and family leave. Separate policies must also address hostile and discriminatory workplaces. Families are at a higher risk for IPV when their other work-related needs beyond wages are not met. Worker supports including paid sick and family leave, meaningful antidiscrimination policies and oversight, and unions, **can prevent IPV by increasing Ohioans' economic stability.**

Low wage workers in Ohio have little access to paid leave.²⁸ For most low wage workers, a medical emergency can force the difficult choice between their health and their paycheck. Emergency paid leave policies set forth by the federal government have done little to expand access to leave because they categorically exclude most workers and are not permanent programs.²⁹

Similarly, Ohio workers have several statutory protections from workplace discrimination. Protection from discrimination is rare, however, with only 13% of claims in 2018 resulting in relief for the worker.³⁰ The Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC), the government agency tasked with addressing discrimination claims, is understaffed and underfunded. The lack of resources makes it difficult for the EEOC to adequately address even a portion of the claims they receive.³¹

Union membership provides significant benefits to workers, particularly marginalized workers, but union membership rates are declining, both nationally and in Ohio.³² This is due in part to the shrinking of the manufacturing industry, where workers are unionized at relatively high rates.³³ Some politicians have also tried to implement policies in recent decades to further reduce the power of unions. The most recent attempt in Ohio, Senate Bill 5, was defeated by Ohio voters in 2011.³⁴

Wages are only one aspect of employment. Ohio workers need support including adequate benefits, protection from discrimination, and the ability to organize into unions. The coronavirus pandemic heightened these needs, particularly around paid leave. Without adequate worker supports, families are likely to experience economic stress and insecurity that are risk factors for IPV.



Barriers: Labor Policies

- Only a quarter of even the highest paid workers have access to paid family leave. Only 4% of the lowest wage workers have access to paid family leave.³⁵
- Between 55 and 83 percent of Ohio workers cannot access paid leave under the temporary federal program.³⁶
- Temporary paid leave from the federal government expired at the end of 2020 and has not yet been renewed.³⁷
- The EEOC has a significant backlog in discrimination claims, coupled with declining staff and funding.³⁸
- Racial discrimination claims have a lower success rate than discrimination claims in general.³⁹
- Union membership is decreasing due to macroeconomic trends and low political will to foster growth.

Opportunities: Labor Policies

- For the first time, emergency federal paid leave policies for the pandemic included part-time and contract workers, as well as recent hires.⁴⁰
- Most full-time workers have access to paid sick days, although this is heavily concentrated among workers who have higher wages.⁴¹
- Workers have statutory protection from workplace discrimination.
- The U.S. Supreme Court recently ruled that LGBTQ workers are protected from workplace discrimination.⁴²
- Ohio has higher unionization rates than the national average.⁴³



Government Programs

Wages are the primary source of income for Ohioans, but they are not the only way that families make ends meet. Several government programs supplement families' finances and can make a substantial difference in reducing economic stress and the likelihood of violence. Financial assistance can mean the difference between living in poverty or not. For example, in 2012, SNAP (food stamps) alone kept 10.3 million Americans out of poverty.⁴⁴ Understanding the role of the public safety net and governmental anti-poverty programs is critical to ODVN's goal in improving Ohioans' financial stability to prevent violence.

Five cash or cash-equivalent governmental programs are available to workers



and families living in or near poverty: The Earned Income Tax Credit, the Child Tax Credit, SNAP (food stamps), WIC, and TANF (welfare). Unemployment Insurance, while nominally available to all Ohioans, provides the largest benefit to middle and high earners. Together, these programs make up a substantial portion of the safety net for

Ohioans. While there are some strong aspects to these programs, eligibility rules and benefit levels prevent them from helping families achieve financial security. Ohio's public safety net can be strengthened to better alleviate poverty and therefore prevent violence.

Barriers: Government Programs

- Benefit levels for most government programs are low, reducing their efficacy in reducing poverty.⁴⁵
- Many government programs exclude families who need assistance but make just slightly too much.⁴⁶
- Programs often have confusing and arduous application and renewal processes, leading the most vulnerable people to miss out on benefits for which they are eligible.⁴⁷
- Food insecurity remains an issue in Ohio, both for SNAP recipients and for those who do not qualify but still face economic insecurity.
- Ohio's EITC is not refundable, reducing its ability to address poverty.⁴⁸
- The structure of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF or welfare) program as a state administered block grant program makes it susceptible to patterns of discriminatory rules, particularly against poor Black families.^{49,50}
- Changes to make Unemployment Insurance more accessible are temporary, require Congress to reauthorize them regularly, and lapsed in 2020 for several months.⁵¹
- Many low wage workers are not eligible for Unemployment Insurance, both typically and during the pandemic.⁵²

Opportunities: Government Programs

- Ohio has a state level Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).⁵³
- The federal EITC and Child Tax Credit lifted 10.6 million people from poverty in 2018.⁵⁴
- Ohio's SNAP (food stamps) coverage is very high, indicating relatively easy access.⁵⁵
- Emergency federal expansions to Unemployment Insurance in 2020 included more workers than ever before, providing necessary security for millions of families across the country.



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Health

Physical and mental health can have a large effect on economic stability and security and therefore IPV perpetration. Poor health can make it more difficult to find or maintain employment and can also lead to large medical bills that strain a family's finances. This is especially true for families of color, low-income families, LGBTQ families, and families whose members have a disability. Improving public health in Ohio can prevent IPV by reducing a common financial burden that leads to increased risk factors for intimate partner violence perpetration.

Ohioans, in general, have poor health (table 1).^{57,58} Good health and access to health insurance and care are critical for economic stability and security. When individuals face mental and physical health concerns, they may struggle to find and maintain employment. They may also need to take time from work to manage their health. If they are low-income, it is likely that they will not be paid for taking time off to manage their health.

TABLE 1

Selected 2019 Ohio Health Measures: Ranked Compared to Other States & Washington DC			
Measure	Ranking	Measure	Ranking
Drug overdose deaths	50	Poor oral health	42
Child in household with smoker	48	Adult obesity	41
Child immunization	46	Adult insufficient physical activity	40
Infant mortality	44	Cardiovascular disease mortality	39
Adult smoking	44	Excessive drinking	37
Premature death	43	Adult diabetes	37
Life expectancy	42	Suicide deaths (out of 50)	20

NOTE: DATA IS FROM THE HEALTH POLICY INSTITUTE OF OHIO

Marginalized Ohioans, including people of color, women, low-income people, and LGBTQ individuals, face more significant barriers to good health than other Ohioans.^{59,60,61} We can see this disparity in prevalence rates for diabetes and depression, in access to mental health treatment, in abortion access, and in health insurance coverage. Statistics are not typically collected in an intersectional manner, but what we know about the Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) suggests that Ohioans who have multiple marginalized identities, such as low-income Black women, will face the most substantial barriers to maintaining good health. The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened all aspects of health in Ohio, including mental health and addiction, since March 2020.

Barriers: Health

- The Social Determinants of Health that create much of the health disparities discussed above are long standing and difficult to address quickly, such as systemic racism.
- Low-income workers are unlikely to have paid sick days to care for their health.
- The pandemic has worsened Ohioans' mental health, leading to increases in depression and anxiety as well as suicide and drug overdose deaths.⁶²
- Pandemic-related closures have made substance use disorder treatment and mental health treatment more difficult to access.
- The Ohio Legislature has created several barriers to abortion access over the last 10 years, including a six-week abortion ban bill in 2019.⁶³
- Six percent (6%) of Ohioans are still uninsured, despite Medicaid expansion.⁶⁴

Opportunities: Health

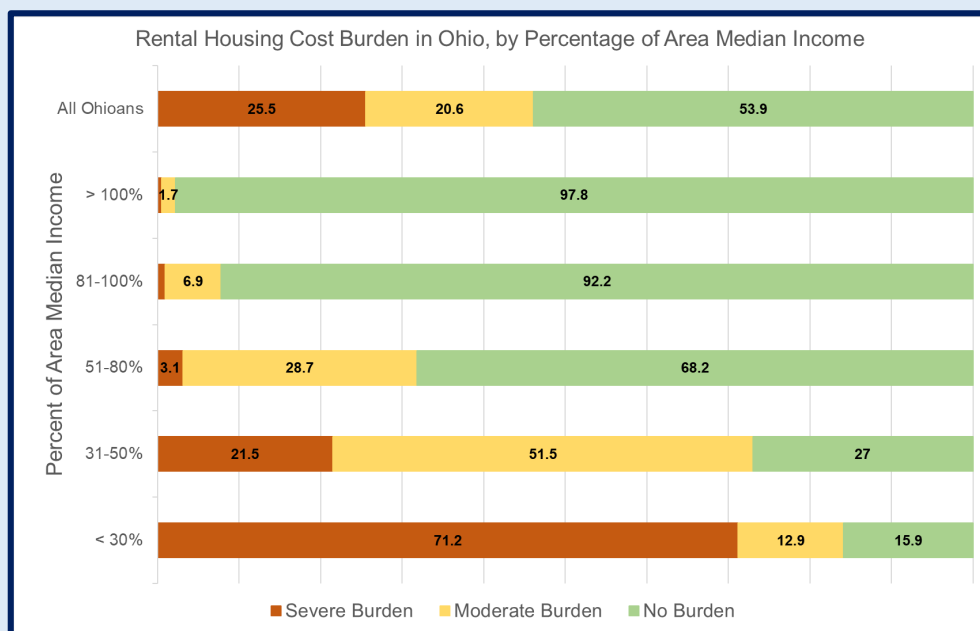
- Access to mental health treatment is higher in Ohio than nationally.⁶⁵
- Black women have the lowest rate of drug overdose deaths in the state despite the other health barriers and SDoH they face.⁶⁶
- Ohio's insured rate is higher than the national average due to Medicaid expansion.⁶⁷



Housing and Transportation

Intimate partner violence and homelessness affect women cyclically, where experiencing one raises the risk of experiencing the other.⁶⁸ ODVN's wage equity efforts seek to break this cycle by reducing the likelihood of a family experiencing either homelessness or IPV through increasing their economic security.

Housing is typically a family's largest expense, making affordable housing a key aspect of ensuring financial stability for Ohioans.⁶⁹ Affordable housing is hard to come by in Ohio. For every 100



extremely low-income families, there are only 44 affordable rental units in the state. When families have to spend large portions of their income on housing, this limits how much they can spend on other necessities, like food and clothes. High housing costs also increases families' risk of eviction and homelessness. Historical and current racist policies put Black families at a greater risk of facing housing unaffordability, eviction, and homelessness than white families.^{70,71} Black people are overrepresented in the homeless population in Ohio.⁷²

The coronavirus pandemic and the ensuing recession have exacerbated housing insecurity across the country. A survey from the summer of 2020 found that a quarter of Black and Latinx renters were unable to pay the previous month's rent on time due to the pandemic.⁷³ The CDC issued a nationwide moratorium on evictions, but housing advocates fear that there will be a surge of evictions as soon as the moratorium expires.⁷⁴

Transportation represents another major expense for most households. Low-income Ohioans and Ohioans of color often rely on public transportation to get to work and meet their other needs. The state of Ohio does not appropriate much money to public transit.⁷⁵ Instead, federal and local money primarily fund public transit, potentially creating disparities in access across the state. For low-income families living in areas with underfunded or non-existent public transportation, can mean the difference between being able to take a better paying job across town or not. Lack of transportation should not be a barrier to economic stability in Ohio.

Barriers: Housing & Transportation

- Over 2/3rds of extremely low-income households spend more than 50% of their income on housing, whether they rent or own.⁷⁶
- There is a dearth of affordable housing across the state.⁷⁷
- Black Ohioans are more likely to be housing insecure, evicted, and homeless.
- Not enough money is appropriated to housing assistance at the federal level to meet the needs of low-income Ohioans.⁷⁸
- Ohio ranks 45th for state funding of public transportation.⁷⁹



Opportunities: Housing & Transportation

- The CDC's eviction moratorium covers all low-income renters in the country.⁸⁰
- The Ohio Legislature recently raised the amount it allocates to public transportation.



Childcare

Intimate partner violence is more likely to happen when families and communities are under economic stress, when people cannot work, and when poverty is widespread. The cost and accessibility of childcare in Ohio has a substantial impact on each of these risk factors. When families cannot afford childcare, or when they cannot find a childcare spot for their child(ren), it raises the risk of violence and widens societal gender, racial, and class inequities.

Childcare has a two-fold effect on families' economic stability and security. First, childcare is expensive. The Economic Policy Institute estimated that full-time, year-round care for an infant in Ohio in 2018 was more expensive than the average annual rent (\$9,697 vs \$9,391).⁸¹ This is despite heavy reliance in the industry on a female-dominated workforce that is among the lowest paid in the state.⁸² High childcare costs can make families susceptible to financial catastrophe, similar to unaffordable housing.

When families with two parents face such astronomical childcare costs, they often face a difficult economic decision. They can both work and pay for childcare or just one can work and the other cares for the children at home.⁸³ Two-parent households should not be put in a position to decide between their short-term and long-term economic stability.

Single parents don't have the options available in two-parent households. They are more likely to rely on informal childcare, such as having a family member watch their children or placing them in an unlicensed setting.⁸⁴ Single parents are disproportionately low-income and women of color. When high childcare costs force them to use informal childcare, their children begin life at a disadvantage relative to other children.⁸⁵ Such a cycle maintains class and race inequities because children who

Over 865,000 women in the U.S. left the labor force in September 2020 alone, compared to 235,000 men.⁹⁰

are wealthy and/or white receive care that prepares them for future academic and economic success whereas children in low-income families or Black and brown families may not receive this advantage. ***Formal childcare should not be so expensive that it is not attainable for single parents and other marginalized families.***

The coronavirus pandemic has worsened a second major crisis around childcare: access. Fewer childcare spots make it much more difficult for parents to find care so they can work. Moreover, the available spots are more expensive because of the changes in child-to-staff ratios and the costs of cleaning and sanitizing.⁸⁶ Low-income parents who cannot afford to pay more for childcare, particularly public-facing workers who are women of color, have been left without options

for their children during a recession.

High childcare costs and low access, in combination with virtual schooling, have forced women out of the workforce.⁸⁷ More families than ever either cannot afford childcare or cannot find it, meaning that a parent, typically a mother, is pressured to leave the labor force to care for her children.⁸⁸ This is true in two-parent homes and in single-parent homes despite the obvious economic hardship created when a single parent is unable to work.⁸⁹ Over 865,000 women in the U.S. left the labor force in September 2020 alone, compared to 235,000 men.⁹⁰ While this decision may be necessary to ensure their children's wellbeing, mothers leaving the workforce will likely have a significant negative impact on their careers and their families' economic stability in both the short- and long-term, particularly in single-parent homes.

Barriers: Childcare

- Only 12% of Ohio families make enough money to not be cost burdened by childcare.⁹¹
- Just one-sixth of eligible children receive a childcare subsidy nationally, indicating limited funding and/or high barriers to access the program.⁹²
- Women are more likely to leave the work force to care for children than men.⁹³
- Childcare slots have dropped drastically during the pandemic and they are often more expensive than before the pandemic.^{94,95}

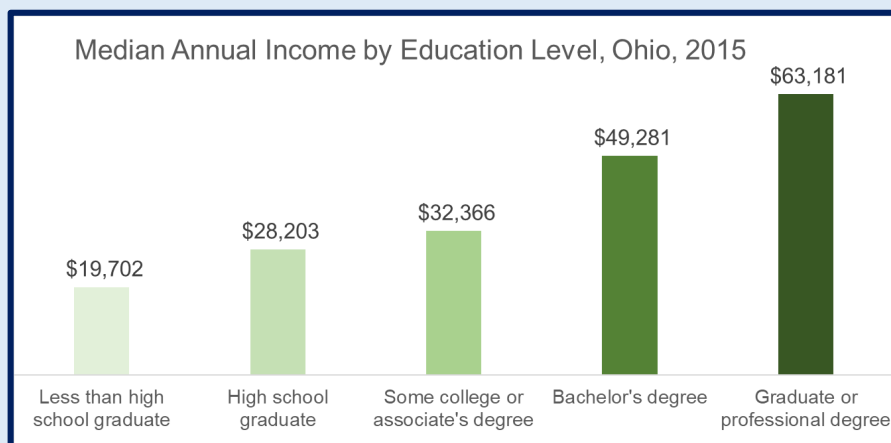
Opportunities: Childcare

- There is a federally funded, state-run benefit program to help low-income families afford childcare.⁹⁶
- Ohio spends a larger-than-average portion of its TANF block grant on childcare.⁹⁷



Education

Increasing access to education can prevent IPV by improving individuals' and families' economic situations. People with more education have lower unemployment and higher wages than people with less education. Access to education is highly dependent on race and class, particularly in Ohio where the current school funding system has been ruled unconstitutional because it favors wealthier districts.^{98,99} Ensuring equitable access to education, from kindergarten through higher education, can reduce racial and class inequities in our society and prevent IPV.



Students of color have less access to high quality education at all levels. In Ohio, this begins with our unconstitutional school funding system that provides more money per pupil in schools in wealthier areas. Poorer students typically need more resources from their schools to achieve the same level of academic success as wealthier students. Race- and class-based gaps in educational attainment are likely to grow due to the coronavirus pandemic and the transition to virtual learning. Marginalized students have less access to the resources they need to succeed, including Wi-Fi, computers, and parents' or caregivers' time.^{100,101}

Inequality persists into adulthood and is most severe for students of color. Black students are less likely to complete high school, enroll in college, and complete a degree.¹⁰² When they do complete a bachelor's degree, they are more likely to have taken on debt and their debt is larger than their peers.¹⁰³ On average, Black adults earn less money than white adults, even when they are similarly educated, and are more likely to be unemployed, in part due to differences in educational attainment.¹⁰⁴ Education is less accessible to Black students and the effects are felt throughout the lifespan.

Education alone does not create economic stability and security, but it can be an important component. Inequities in education can create many of the risk factors for IPV described throughout this environmental scan. These risk factors will disproportionately fall on Black and low-income Ohioans.

Barriers: Education

- Ohio's school funding system has been ruled unconstitutional 4 times in the last 24 years, and it has not been fixed legislatively.
- The pandemic forces schools to balance community health with student education and students, particularly marginalized students, are predicted to feel the effects for the rest of their lives.
- Black students are more likely to take on student loan debt and less likely to finish a degree, making their debt a more substantial barrier to economic stability.¹⁰⁵

Opportunities: Education

- Nationally, Latinx students have substantially lower amounts of student loan debt than average.¹⁰⁶
- Ohio lawmakers have recently proposed changes to the public school funding system.



The Criminal Justice System

Over 3.5% of Ohio's population over the age of 16 is involved with the criminal justice system, either through incarceration or through supervision programs like probation and parole.^{107,108} Justice system involvement can have significant impacts on economic stability, not just for the involved individuals but also for their families and communities. Black Ohioans are overrepresented in the criminal justice system (43% of incarcerated population vs. 13% of state population). This overrepresentation is not due to a higher rate of crime. It is due to targeted laws and because the entire criminal justice system, from policing through sentencing and incarceration, is more punitive towards Black people.¹⁰⁹ The negative financial effects of the justice system are concentrated in Black communities, increasing their collective risk of experiencing IPV.

Bail: When people cannot afford bail, they are separated from their families and communities, they cannot work, and they are more likely to lose their jobs. They may also face extreme economic hardship when they are released because bills like rent and car payments do not cease when someone is incarcerated. People of color are disproportionately impacted by the cash bail system because they tend to have less money to pay for bail, both individually and within their communities. Additionally, people of color are arrested and incarcerated at higher rates than white people due to racial discrimination and bias within our legal systems.¹¹⁰



Court fees: On average, families pay around \$13,607 in court-related costs for an individual who is incarcerated.¹¹¹ This amount was more than 75% of the annual income of a full-time minimum wage worker in Ohio in 2020. Being arrested and facing criminal charges places an immediate and substantial financial burden on families.

Loss of earning potential: After incarceration, individuals have less access to jobs, with an average unemployment rate over 27%.¹¹² Formerly incarcerated Black people between 35 and 44 have much higher unemployment rates (43.6% for women, 35.2% for men). The jobs they do have access to pay less than the jobs available to individuals who have not been involved with the criminal justice system.¹¹³ They are also often denied access to public benefits that would provide support for them and their families.¹¹⁴ Finally, incarceration impacts individuals' ability to find stable housing. Prison Policy Initiative reports that individuals who have gone to prison once experience homelessness at a rate nearly 7 times higher than the rest of the public.¹¹⁵

Generational impacts: A child with an incarcerated parent or parents is more likely to drop out of school, get involved in violent behaviors, or be part of the foster care system.¹¹⁶ Each of these outcomes increases that child's likelihood of becoming involved with the criminal justice system themselves and makes them more likely to experience poverty, economic instability, and IPV as an adult.

Barriers: Criminal Justice System

- Involvement with the criminal justice system has a cascading effect on individuals and families, extending from high expenses before incarceration to diminished earning potential after incarceration including generational effects.
- Due to the many systems involved and the generational scope of the effects of incarceration, lessening the economic burden of criminal justice system involvement will require substantial efforts across systems and over time.

Opportunities: Criminal Justice System

- The Chief Justice of the Ohio Supreme Court supports reducing the use of cash bail due to its disproportionate impact on people living in poverty.¹¹⁷
- Ohio's public employers (state and local governments) are prohibited from asking applicants about their criminal history on written job applications, although this information can be gathered later in the hiring process.¹¹⁸
- New legislation prohibits state licensing bodies, such as those that license barbers and cosmetologists, social workers, or nurses, from denying an initial license to an applicant based on an unrelated and non-violent criminal conviction.¹¹⁹



WOWS ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN CONCLUSION

The Ohio Domestic Violence Network is working to end intimate partner violence perpetration through increasing economic stability and security at all levels of the social ecology, particularly through changes at the systems level. Specifically, our works seeks to reduce these risk factors for intimate partner violence perpetration:

- **Societal income inequality**
- **Neighborhood poverty**
- **Diminished economic opportunities**
- **High unemployment rates**
- **Individual economic stress**

ODVN's environmental scan analyzed data from Ohio and across the country to identify potential opportunities for and barriers to change that would reduce these risk factors. The goal of the environmental scan is to create a list of recommendations for policy makers and partnering advocacy organizations to improve the economic wellbeing of Ohioans. This scan examines multiple facets of economic security, and addresses ten (10) specific areas: employment, industries, wages, labor policies, government programs, health, housing and transportation, childcare, education, and the criminal justice system.

Taken together, these ten (10) facets of economic stability and security support a conclusion that will not be surprising to most people working for social change: **Ohioans who face the most marginalization have the most barriers to economic stability and security.** Current wage and labor laws prioritize people who are well educated, middle-class, white, straight, cisgender, or able-bodied. These policies will not end IPV in Ohio because people with these identities do not have the most risk factors for experiencing violence. Policies intended to create wage equity and otherwise support workers to end IPV must center the needs of the most marginalized to be the most effective.

Poverty does not cause intimate partner violence and none of the data presented in this environmental scan are meant to suggest this. Rather, the same systems and policies that create poverty also create the circumstances that put people at risk for perpetrating IPV. Only by changing these systems and policies can we reduce the risk factors and end intimate partner violence.

Prevention must focus on the community and societal levels, rather than individuals and relationships, to be effective and long-lasting. By focusing on systems and policies, we can create a positive effect for millions of Ohioans, particularly those most harmed by historical and ongoing oppression and marginalization.

A substantial amount of work is needed to end IPV perpetration. No one policy or organization will be enough. It will take the long-term coordinated efforts of many Ohio advocates and organizations promoting changes related to work, health, education, the criminal justice system, and many other systems to end this long-standing and worsening public health crisis. Our goals are ambitious, but this ambition is necessary given the impact of intimate partner violence on Ohioans.

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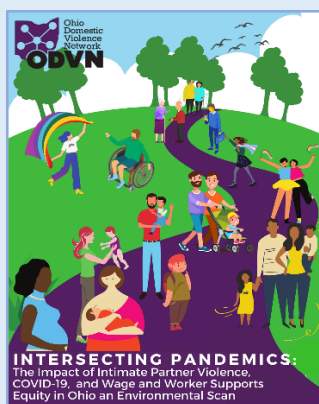
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Executive Summary Design by Sandra Ortega, PhD
Published April 21, 2021**



The authors would like to thank the Wows Workgroup partners for their contributions to the Environmental Scan.

