



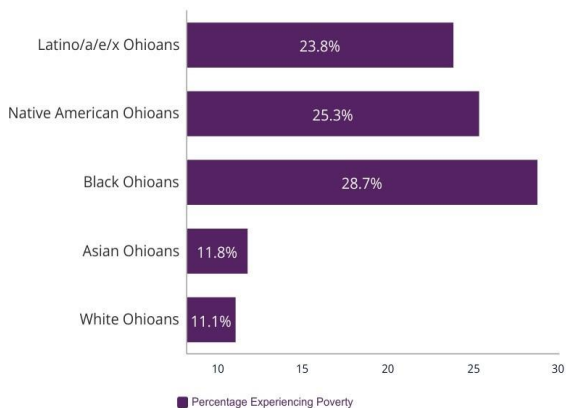
Intersecting Pandemics: Graphic Executive Summary



In 2021, ODVN published *Intersecting Pandemics: The Impact of Intimate Partner Violence, COVID-19, and Wage and Worker Supports Equity in Ohio an Environmental Scan*. The report examines the interconnected conditions and systems throughout the State of Ohio that can modify risk factors for the perpetration of intimate partner violence (IPV). **Reducing risk factors is a crucial component** of violence prevention. Overall, the goal of the environmental scan is to **provide policy makers and advocacy organizations facts and recommendations** to improve the economic wellbeing of Ohioans and reduce IPV.

When **individuals are financially unstable or insecure**, they are at a **higher risk** of perpetrating IPV. **When the communities** they live in face **high levels of unemployment and poverty** as well as limited access to housing and transportation, **risk factors increase**. Economic **risk factors for IPV perpetration** have become more **widespread and severe in the wake of COVID-19** and its economic devastation. Due to systemic racism, the **COVID-19** pandemic has **disproportionately impacted communities of color**, particularly Black and brown communities, by worsening existing disparities.¹²

Percentage of Ohioans Experiencing Poverty in 2019



Often, **individuals are targeted** for IPV victimization because they are **negatively impacted by oppressive systems** such as poverty, racism, sexism, transphobia, homophobia, xenophobia, and ableism. By **focusing on systems**, we can create **positive change for millions of Ohioans**, with an emphasis on those most harmed by historical and ongoing oppression.

Poverty does not cause intimate partner violence (IPV). Rather, the same conditions that create poverty also create the risk factors for IPV.

Risk factors are conditions that make negative outcomes, like IPV perpetration, more likely. Risk factors are not destiny. Reducing risk factors is the key to prevention.

Several risk factors for IPV are related to economic and financial security. They range from personal factors to societal conditions.

Economic Risk Factors for IPV Perpetration

- Societal:** Income inequality
- Community:** Neighborhood poverty, diminished economic opportunities, high unemployment rates
- Relationship and Individual:** Economic stress

Strengthening household financial security and strengthening economic supports for workers and families are two ways to reduce risk for IPV perpetration in Ohio.

Key Areas for Ohioans Economic Security

Employment	Industries
Wages & Wealth	Labor Policies
Government Programs	Health
Housing & Transportation	Childcare
Education	Criminal Justice System

References can be found at <https://www.odvn.org/intersecting-pandemics/>

Employment

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



Industries

Industry-based differences in pay fall largely along gendered and racialized lines, with people from under-resourced communities being generally overrepresented in lower paying industries. Under-resourced families already face more risk factors for IPV. Largescale trends in Ohio and across the US have the potential to increase these risks and contribute to 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.



Wages and Wealth

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



Labor Policies

Economic stability is about more than just take-home pay. It also depends on benefits, including paid sick and family leave. Policies must also address hostile and discriminatory workplaces. Families are at a higher risk for IPV when their other work-related needs and wages are not met. Worker supports including paid leave, meaningful anti-discrimination policies and oversight, and unions can prevent IPV by increasing Ohioans' financial stability. Without adequate worker supports, families are likely to experience economic stress and insecurity that are risk factors for IPV.



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 IPV. Financial assistance can mean the difference between living in poverty or not. Understanding the role of the public "social safety net" and governmental anti-poverty programs is critical for improving Ohioans' financial stability to prevent violence. Ohio's social safety net can be strengthened to better alleviate poverty and prevent IPV.



Health

Physical and mental health can have a large impact on economic stability, security, and 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. The impact of poor health and the financial burden of healthcare costs is especially significant for families of color, low-income families, LGBTQIA+ families, and families whose members have a disability due to health disparities in under-resourced communities. Improving public health in Ohio can prevent IPV by reducing a common financial burden in the form of medical debt and healthcare costs that lead to increased risk factors for IPV perpetration.



Housing and Transportation

IPV and homelessness affect individuals cyclically, where experiencing one raises the risk of experiencing the other. Housing is typically a family's largest expense, making affordable housing a key aspect of ensuring financial stability. Racist policies put Black families at a greater risk of facing housing unaffordability, eviction, and homelessness than white families. 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 needs. However, public transit is underfunded in the State of Ohio, which negatively impacts under-resourced communities.⁵⁵⁰



Childcare

IPV 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 has a substantial impact on each of these risk factors. When families cannot afford childcare or find a childcare spot for their child(ren), it raises the risk of violence and widens societal gender, racial, and class inequities. The pandemic-induced recession has left low-income parents who cannot afford to pay more for childcare without options. This lack of options disproportionately affects front-line workers who tend to be women of color.



Education

Education alone does not create economic stability and security, but it can be an important component. Increasing access to education can prevent IPV by improving individuals' and families' economic situations. Access to education is highly dependent on class and race in Ohio where the current school funding system has been ruled unconstitutional because it favors wealthier districts.^{241, 242} Ensuring equitable access to education can reduce racial and class inequities in our society and prevent IPV.



Criminal Justice System

Justice system involvement can have a significant impact 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. 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.⁶⁰⁹ The negative financial effects of the justice system are concentrated in Black communities, increasing their collective risk of experiencing IPV.



Policy Recommendations & Action Items

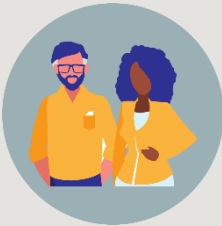
The environmental scan demonstrates that Ohioans who are the most under-resourced have the greatest barriers to economic stability and security. Current wage and labor laws prioritize people who are well-educated, middle class, white, straight, cisgender, and able-bodied. These policies will not end IPV because people with these identities do not have the most risk factors for experiencing violence. Policies intended to create wage equity and support workers to end IPV must center the needs of the most under-resourced to be the most effective.



Expand eligibility and access - and reduce barriers - to programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Unemployment Insurance, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Medicaid and Medicare, Social Security, Social Security Disability Insurance, Supplemental Security Income, Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), and the Child Tax Credit.



- Raise the minimum wage and eliminate the tipped minimum wage.
- Increase protections and enforcement against wage theft.
- Strengthen protections against predatory lending.



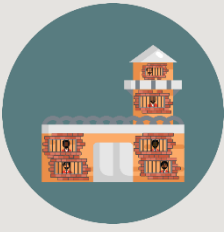
- Expand and guarantee paid family and medical leave for all workers.
- Implement and enforce comprehensive anti-discrimination policies.
- Expand union protections including union organizing and labor rights.



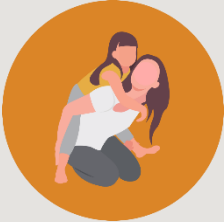
- Increase affordable housing and funding for public housing and rental assistance.
- Increase funding for public transportation and infrastructure.



- Eliminate the wealth-based school funding system based on property taxes, implement an equitable school funding system for education in Ohio, and increase public school funding.
- Implement developmentally appropriate, comprehensive, and inclusive sex education in Ohio schools.
- Provide student loan forgiveness and debt relief.



- Pass policies to eliminate the school-to-prison pipeline. Examples include evaluating and reducing school suspension and expulsion as disciplinary practices, implementing trauma-informed practices, eliminating zero tolerance policies, and restricting referrals to law enforcement and the criminal justice system.
- Institute criminal justice reform to reduce mass incarceration and racial disparities in the system. Examples include sentencing reform and cash bail reform. Cash bail reform efforts must protect survivors of domestic violence and other forms of interpersonal violence.



- Improve the affordability and accessibility of childcare overall.
- Increase childcare subsidies and public childcare assistance.



- Ensure accessibility and affordability of health insurance and access to care for all Ohioans.
- Develop restorative, rehabilitative responses to substance misuse grounded in harm reduction. Increase funding for prevention and substance misuse treatment initiatives.
- Protect and expand access to abortion care as well as reproductive and sexual healthcare.
- Address racial disparities in maternal and infant mortality, as well as racism in healthcare overall.
- Declare and recognize racism as a public health crisis.

These policies will be most effective when implemented together, through a holistic approach. To empower and uplift our most under-resourced populations and eradicate IPV, we must undertake comprehensive systems-level change to create more equitable conditions for all Ohioans and build safer, healthier communities.