



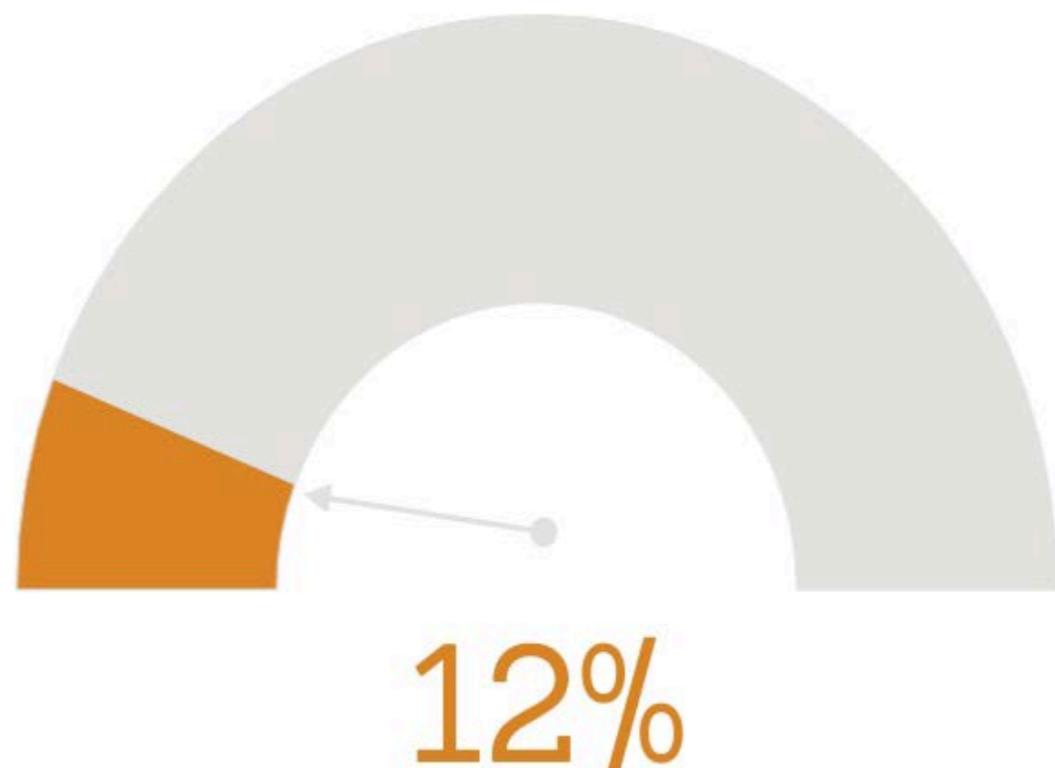
## Introduction

For many families, childcare is their most significant expense. In 2018, the average yearly cost of childcare for an infant in Ohio was more than the average annual rent (\$9,697 vs. \$9,391).<sup>556</sup> Full-time minimum wage workers in Ohio made \$17,264 in 2018. Childcare for an infant costs 56% of their annual income. The COVID-19 pandemic has only made childcare affordability and accessibility more difficult for many families. There are fewer childcare spots available, and they are more expensive.

When individuals, families, and communities face poverty and other forms of systemic oppression, they are more likely to experience violence. They also face more economic risk factors for intimate partner violence (IPV). ***The childcare affordability crisis in Ohio worsens all economic risk factors for IPV.***

## Affordability, Access, and COVID-19

### Childcare Affordability in the State of Ohio



Childcare is considered unaffordable if it is more than 7% of a family's income. By this standard, only 12% of all families in Ohio can afford childcare. High childcare costs affect almost all Ohio families, but they have the largest impact on low-income families.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made accessing and affording childcare even more difficult. Stay-at-home orders and business closure orders significantly limited the number of children that childcare centers could enroll. Most of these slots were dedicated to the children of essential workers.<sup>563</sup>

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

Several risk factors for IPV are related to economic and financial security. They range from personal factors to conditions affecting our entire society.

### Economic Risk Factors for IPV Perpetration

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

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



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Nationally, only one-sixth of eligible children receive public assistance for childcare costs

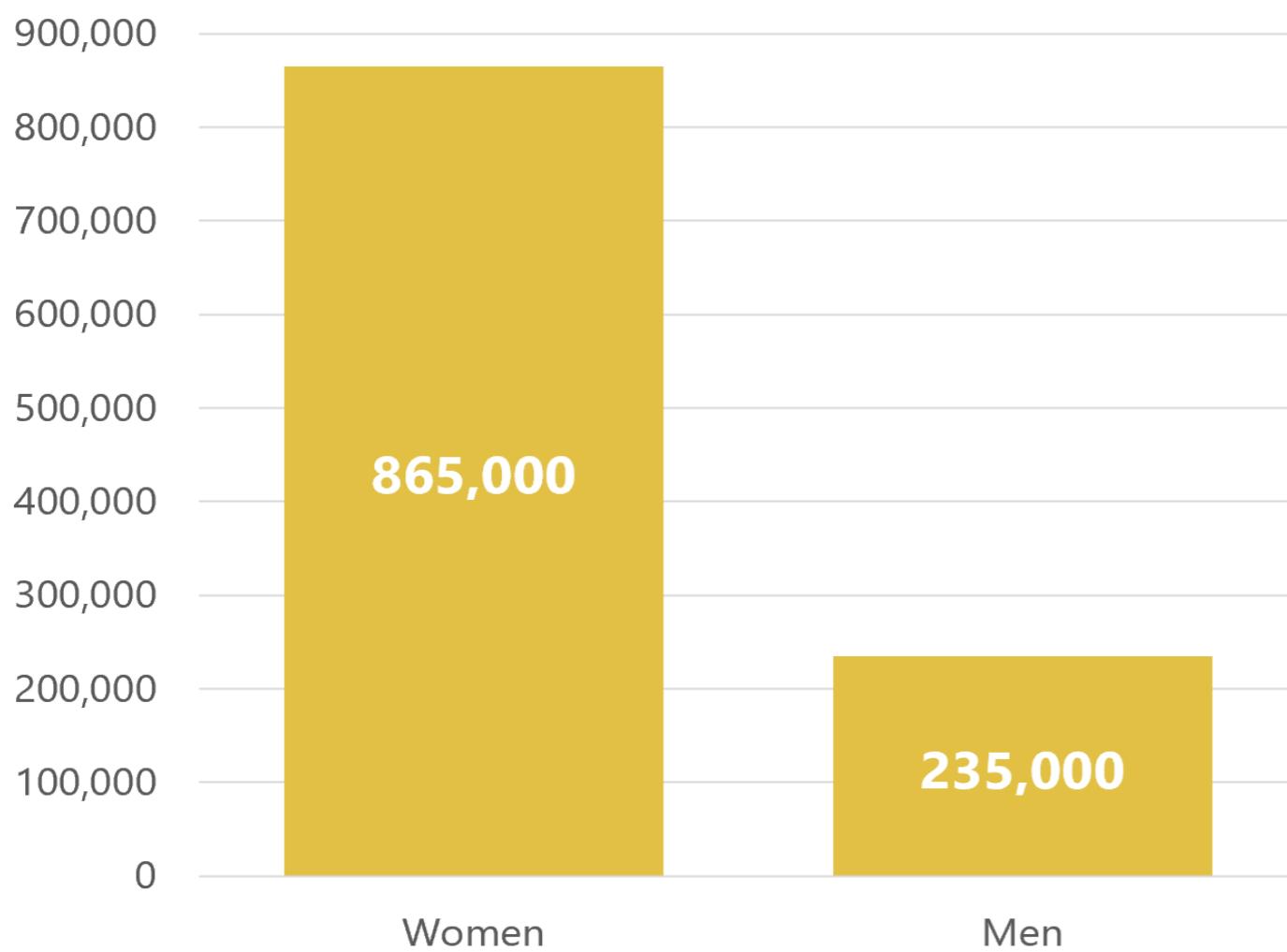
Childcare centers were not able to return to normal levels until August 2020. Many centers then chose to maintain lower numbers of children for health and safety reasons. Some centers that closed at the beginning of the pandemic have not re-opened.<sup>564</sup>

Fewer childcare spots make it much more difficult for parents to find care so that they can work. The spots that are available are more expensive because of the changes in child-to-staff ratios and the costs of cleaning and sanitizing.<sup>565</sup>

## Widening Inequality

Due to systemic sexism, women are more likely than men to stay home to care for children when they cannot afford childcare.<sup>560</sup> Although this decision is often the most economical in the short-term, it reduces women's long-term earning potential and widens the gender pay gap.

**Over 865,000 women in the U.S. left the labor force in September 2020 due to the pandemic, compared to only 235,000 men.**



Unaffordability of childcare also maintains class and race inequities. Many families from under-resourced communities cannot afford childcare or afford to not work and stay home with their children. This is especially true for families headed by single parents or low-income parents.

As a result, they are more likely to rely on informal forms of childcare, such as having a family member watch their children or placing them in an unlicensed setting. Children in informal childcare do not perform as well on cognitive tests when compared to children in formal childcare settings or those who are cared for by a parent.<sup>562</sup>

Children who are wealthy and/or white tend to receive care that better prepares them for future academic and economic success. Children in low-income families or Black and brown families may not receive this advantage.

## Conclusion

Childcare is unaffordable, especially for Ohio's most under-resourced communities. This was true before the pandemic and has worsened substantially since March 2020. Unaffordable childcare increases the likelihood of both perpetration and victimization of IPV.

***Making childcare affordable and accessible is a crucial component of increasing the financial stability of Ohioans and reducing IPV in our communities.***

## Barriers and Opportunities for Improving Childcare Accessibility

### Barriers

- Just 12% of Ohio families make enough money to afford the cost of childcare.
- Just 1/6th of eligible children receive a childcare subsidy nationally, indicating limited funding and/or high barriers to enrollment.
- Women are more likely to leave the workforce to care for children than men.
- There are many fewer childcare spots available to families during the pandemic and they are often more expensive than before the pandemic.

### Opportunities

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

## Policy Recommendations and Action Items for Improving Childcare Accessibility

Increase childcare subsidies and public childcare assistance

Improve the affordability and accessibility of childcare overall