



JOHN R. KASICH
GOVERNOR
STATE OF OHIO

FINDING NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO FIGHT POVERTY

Reforms on Many Fronts Have Given a Hand Up to Help the Poorest Among Us

Poverty continues to be a challenge that faces states across the nation. Both nationally and in the Buckeye State, approximately 14 percent of the population lives in poverty. Addressing this challenge requires promoting opportunity, and Governor John. Kasich has aggressively worked to tackle reforms that will help Ohioans reach their full potential and help those most in need. These reforms have gone a long way towards helping the poverty rate continue to go down throughout the Kasich Administration. Since 2011, Ohio's poverty rate has dropped from 16.4 percent to 14.6 percent.

REFORMING WELFARE TO HELP THOSE TRAPPED IN A CYCLE OF POVERTY

- **Helping People Move Up and Out Of Poverty:** Ohio is ending the siloed, fragmented approach that for far too long has tried to treat the collected "symptoms" of poverty instead of seeking a cure for the underlying challenges that needy Ohioans face. By allocating existing federal and state funds to create a comprehensive case management and employment initiative, Ohio is providing services based on each individual's unique needs, including an emphasis on obtaining a GED or high school diploma or its equivalency, occupational skills training, and mentoring. The initial focus is on youth, ages 13 to 24, where early intervention can help break the cycle of poverty.
- **Improving Access to Childcare:** The lack of access to affordable, quality childcare can be one of the biggest employment barriers for low-income parents. The loss of subsidized childcare once a family's income grows above 200 percent of the federal poverty level (approximately \$3,460 a month for a family of three) was one of the most detrimental benefit "cliffs" working poor encounter as their economic situations improve. Ohio allocated additional funds over the next year to soften the impact of these types of "cliffs" and to remove copays for families with incomes at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level. Families now have their child care subsidies phased out gradually until their income reaches 300 percent of the federal poverty level, or approximately \$5,190 a month for a family of three.

CREATING A STRONG ECONOMIC CLIMATE FOR SUCCESS

Gov. Kasich believes that the best anti-poverty program is a job. There are so many problems that are solved simply by getting and keeping a job. It restores personal confidence, strengthens the family and contributes to a more meaningful life. Economic growth is not an end unto itself. Economic growth provides the means to lift people up and out of the shadows and create real opportunity for success – to realize the American dream. Since Gov. Kasich took office, Ohio has provided \$5 billion in tax relief and improved Ohio's economic climate with more than 550,000 new private-sector jobs.

- **Helping Minority Small Businesses Grow:** For the fourth consecutive year, Ohio exceeded the goal of its Minority Business Enterprise program by purchasing 21.63 percent of eligible goods and services through certified minority-owned businesses, while spending nearly \$270 million. Established in 1980, the MBE program's goal is for state agencies to set aside 15 percent of their annual purchases for certified minority-owned businesses.

- **Helping Small Businesses Grow and Create Jobs:** As governor, John Kasich continually worked to help small businesses grow by eliminating income taxes for virtually all small businesses. As a result, Ohio has achieved eight consecutive years of record business creation.
- **Strengthening Workforce Development:** Gov. Kasich continues to revamp Ohio's workforce training system to better prepare Ohioans for the in-demand jobs in the fastest-growing areas of the economy so everyone has the ability to participate in the state's ongoing recovery.
- **Cutting Taxes for Low-Income Ohioans:** Under Gov. Kasich's leadership, Ohio created a new Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) in 2013 for low-income Ohioans and doubled it in 2014 to provide a benefit equal to 10 percent of the federal EITC, earning significant praise from low-income advocates who had been working for decades to achieve such tax relief. Ohio also significantly increased the state income tax personal exemption for low- and middle-income residents to help them keep more of their money and lowered income tax rates by 16 percent to benefit all Ohio taxpayers.

REFORMING THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Under Gov. Kasich's leadership, Ohio leads the nation in taking a common sense approach to restoring Ohio citizens who made a mistake in their past and are eager to live their lives as hard-working, contributing members of the community. Ohio's recidivism rate is 30.7 percent.

- **Sentencing Reform:** In his first year in office, Gov. Kasich signed laws to reduce crime by encouraging the diversion of first-time, non-violent offenders to intensive rehabilitative programming in a community setting, away from the corruptive influence of career criminals within the state's prison system. The law seeks to prepare inmates for productive societal re-entry.
- **Collateral Consequences:** Gov. Kasich signed cutting-edge legislation to reduce crime in Ohio, decrease offender recidivism, increase public safety, strengthen families, and expand job opportunities for Ohioans with a non-violent felony or misdemeanor conviction through a certificate issued by the local court that can offer proof to employers that an individual has been rehabilitated also allowing the opportunity for felons to obtain occupational and professional licenses. This effort addressed collateral consequences that long existed beyond the direct sentence resulting from a crime, an important step toward increasing job opportunities for Ohioans who paid their debt to society and wanted to change their lives.
- **Giving Felons a Second Chance:** Gov. Kasich asked Ohio's state agencies to remove from its employment applications a requirement or box that asked applicants to disclose whether they have a prior criminal conviction. In 2015, the governor signed legislation requiring all public employers to remove the checkbox from their applications.

STRENGTHENING K-12 EDUCATION TO IMPROVE ACHIEVEMENT

Ohio has made great strides in reforming education and keeping kids excited about learning. Under Gov. Kasich's leadership, Ohio is investing record funding for K-12 education to help ensure that schools have the resources to succeed. Ohio is now identifying and reaching out to the most at-risk kids and has given school districts the ability to craft unique plans for these students that chart a path to their high school diploma.

- **Inspiring Young Minds through Mentorship:** To better connect Ohio's communities with schools, Gov. Kasich launched Community Connectors to bring together families, community organizations, faith- or values-based

organizations, businesses and others to support schools and mentor students. Since its inception, Community Connectors projects have provided mentoring opportunities to more than 116,000 students across Ohio.

- **Expanding Early Childhood Education:** Gov. Kasich has significantly increased funding for early childhood education, tripling the number of preschool opportunities for economically disadvantaged children.
- **Ensuring Students Read at Grade Level:** To help ensure that Ohio's younger students have the reading skills they need to succeed later in school – and in life – the Kasich Administration developed the Third Grade Reading Guarantee to ensure better reading intervention and monitoring plans. With this improvement Ohio is putting an end to the social promotion of 3rd graders who can't read. In the most recent year, 95 percent of 3rd graders were promoted to 4th grade.
- **Expanding Access to Career Technical Education:** Gov. Kasich made technical and vocational education available to students beginning in the 7th grade to give more students a jumpstart on career education.
- **Reducing Student Drop-Outs:** To help more students who are at risk of dropping out of school stay in school and get their high school diplomas, Gov. Kasich provided ways to identify these at-risk students earlier in their school careers and then devise alternative strategies that better engage them. Today, school districts are working on new strategies to more effectively identify students at risk of dropping out, connecting them with tailored career counseling, and creating new, alternative pathways to diplomas.
- **Helping Adults Without Diplomas Get Back on Track:** As many as one million Ohio adults lack a high school diploma. After the age of 22, adults were no longer eligible for traditional high school diplomas, so Ohio, working with community colleges and career centers created initiatives to help adults earn credits toward a high school diploma while pursuing job training that leads to industry-recognized credentials. Today, more than 1,300 adults have taken advantage of this option.
- **Linking Students with Businesses to Earn Credit for Work Study:** While time in the classroom is invaluable, Gov. Kasich knows that the best way to prepare Ohio's students for their future careers is to partner in-class education with real-world experience in the workforce. Ohio is now working to connect students with those in businesses in their community, allowing them to earn credit by demonstrating skills learned during work opportunities.
- **Helping More Students Start Down a Path Toward College:** Gov. Kasich has significantly strengthened opportunities for high school students to earn college credit to help them get an affordable jump start on college and careers.

MODERNIZING MEDICAID

Ohio's Medicaid reforms over the past five years have been recognized nationally for helping to reduce costs, improve health outcomes, and improve care coordination. When Gov. Kasich took office in 2011, Ohio Medicaid was growing at an unsustainable rate, more than 10 percent annually. Through an aggressive package of reforms, under Gov. Kasich's leadership annual program growth slowed from 8.9 percent (2009-2011) to less than two percent by the end of the Administration. Ohio's reforms in Medicaid made it possible to extend coverage to 700,000 lower-income residents. Extending coverage has helped keep working Ohioans in jobs and create a ladder up and out of public assistance for low-income residents.

- **Cutting Ohio's Uninsured Rate in Half:** Ohio's uninsured rate was cut nearly in half, from 17.3 percent in 2012 to 9.3 percent in 2017, primarily as a result of Medicaid expansion.

- **Holding Medicaid Per Member Cost Growth Below 3.0 percent:** Ohio has been able to hold growth in Medicaid per member costs to 1.38 percent in 2016 and 4.5 percent in 2017 (much of the increase in 2017 is related to investments in services for people with developmental disabilities)
- **Converting Veterans from Medicaid to the Veterans Benefits They Earned:** Ohio has made contact with more than 20,000 Ohio veterans who requested information about Medicaid coverage. Of these veterans, nearly 75 percent were not receiving federal Veterans Administration (VA) benefits and were referred to their local veteran services office to better understand the benefits they have earned.
- **Ohio Leading the Nation in Prosecuting Medicaid Fraud:** Investigations of health care providers billing taxpayers while neglecting or defrauding Medicaid patients has grown more than 2.5 times in Ohio since 2010 and led to 110 convictions last year, more than any other state.
- **Providing Mental Health and Addiction Care:** John Gov. Kasich prioritized helping individuals with mental health and addiction by increasing funding for services and extending Medicaid coverage to approximately 500,000 individuals needing behavioral health treatment. Medicaid has also worked to redesign behavioral health benefits and improve care coordination.
- **Prioritizing Home and Community Based Services:** When Gov. Kasich took office, Ohio was spending more of its Medicaid budget on high-cost nursing homes and other institutions than all but five states, and Ohio taxpayers were spending 47 percent more for Medicaid long-term care than taxpayers in other states. Under Gov. Kasich's leadership, Ohio has aggressively "rebalanced" Medicaid long-term care spending toward less expensive home and community based services. Ohio Medicaid's HOME Choice program recently completed its 10,000th community transition, far exceeding the original goal set in 2008 of transitioning 2,000 individuals out of institutional settings and into home and community alternatives.

CARING FOR THE VULNERABLE

Gov. Kasich has made it a priority to help the most vulnerable citizens.

- **Improving Behavioral Health Resources for Young Children:** The impact of poverty and trauma on young children can have a lasting effect on their emotional and academic well-being. To help address these issues, Ohio applied best practices and provided \$5 million to train staff and develop support plans for children in need; make Early Childhood Mental Health Counselors available to children, teachers and early childcare staff; create a hotline for acute problems; and make an early childhood counselor available for site visits within 48 hours of a request to conduct observations.
- **Helping People with Developmental Disabilities Get Jobs:** Gov. Kasich launched an initiative to increase meaningful employment outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities.
- **Strengthening Support for Those with Mental Illness and Addiction:** Ohio is a leader in supporting recovery housing, investing significant resources to establish new safe places for those struggling with addiction with nearly 1,000 new beds statewide.

