



April 15, 2021
Ohio House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee
Second Hearing: HB 145

To Chair Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona, Ranking Member Liston, and Members of the Ohio House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee:

On behalf of the Ohio Association of Foodbanks, I am providing written testimony today in support of Ohio House Bill 145, which would expand publicly-funded childcare initial eligibility to 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

The statewide hunger relief network that we represent – including 12 regional foodbanks and 3,600 food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and other hunger relief programs – is mandated to serve households with incomes at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

- Even before the pandemic, about [one in three people in Ohio](#) lived in households eligible for foodbank services. It may surprise you to know that [research by Feeding America](#) indicates that half of the people who seek services from Ohio foodbanks are not eligible for SNAP benefits (which, in Ohio, have a gross income eligibility limit of 130 percent of federal poverty). **Half of the people we see come through our food lines earn slightly too much to be eligible for federal food assistance, and slightly too much to be eligible for publicly-funded childcare, which currently has the same initial eligibility of 130 percent of poverty.**
- What's more, more than one in three people (37 percent) that access foodbank services in Ohio live in households with incomes above 185 percent of poverty, making them ineligible for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and reduced-price school meals. **More than one in three people we see come through our food lines earn slightly too much to be eligible for child nutrition programs, and too much to be eligible for publicly-funded childcare.**

Workers with children – especially working mothers – are faced with a benefits cliff that forces them out of critically important work support programs like SNAP, WIC, and publicly-funded child care, leaving them with more out-of-pocket expenses for basic needs like food and challenged to afford the child care services that allow them to maintain employment.

The Ohio Association of Foodbanks supports efforts to expand access to support for basic needs and services for working families, many of whom are incredibly food and resource insecure despite hard-earned wages. We urge the committee to support HB 145 and to explore other opportunities for leveraging federal funding and investing state revenue in expanding initial eligibility for critical public benefits programs to counter the benefits cliff that leaves too many low- and moderate-income households in our food lines.

Sincerely,

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