When Working Isn't Enough
Wages and Public Benefits in Ohio

The Ohio Workforce Coalition asked The Center for Community Solutions to investigate wages, public benefit eligibility, and benefit uptake by occupation. This report is a summary of that work. The findings will be released in a series of briefs that highlight low-wage work across Ohio and in several sub-state regions. This research was made possible with support from the National Skills Coalition, Deaconess Foundation, and Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce. For more information, visit www.ohioworkforcecoalition.org.
Racial Disparities

Low wages in high demand jobs disproportionately impact Black workers in Ohio. Across the state, Black workers are overrepresented in nine of the ten occupations reviewed for this report. The greatest over-representation is in Home Health Aid Occupation where 36% of workers are Black (12% of the Ohio Labor Force is Black). Over-representation in low-paying occupation contributes to disparities across a range of indicators including earnings. The only occupation in which Black workers are under-represented is Assemblers and Fabricators and then, only by 2%.

Methodology

Multiple data sources were used to develop the occupational profiles. The Governor’s Office of Workforce Transformation provides Ohio’s Top Jobs List which details information about the wages, current, employment, growth potential and current openings for occupations across the state. For purposes of this analysis, we selected occupations that had both low wages and either high current openings, growth potential or high current employment. We then examined the wages for these occupations with data provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Wage data paired with the eligibility guidelines for receiving SNAP allows for a deeper understanding of where along the pay scale a person can be working full time and still be eligible for benefits. American Community Survey data was utilized to analyze the over-representation of either Black or white workers specific occupations.
Occupations with wages low enough that workers qualify for public benefits results in the state subsidizing employer wages and benefit offerings. Higher wages and better conditions in these high demand, essential occupations would improve economic conditions for individuals and families; would help employers attract and retain talent; and would save state funds.

**KEY FINDINGS FROM 10 OCCUPATIONS**

**Highest Projected Growth**

Home Health Aide has the highest projected growth of all occupations in Ohio and also...
- the highest rate of over-representation of Black workers. Black workers compose 12% of the Ohio Labor Force and 36% of Home Health Aide workers.
- the highest rate of workers receiving Medicaid at 42%. Thirty-two (32%) of Ohio’s Home Health Aides receive SNAP.
- income that only increases 31% between the lowest to the highest wage percentiles.

**Most Current Openings**

Manufacturing Laborers, Freight and Material Movers has the highest number of current openings and also...
- 17% of all Laborers, Freight and Material Movers were enrolled in SNAP
- 21% of Laborers, Freight, and Material Movers were enrolled in Medicaid
- 30,574 Ohioans work as Assemblers and Fabricators and 10% are enrolled in SNAP and 16% were enrolled in Medicaid.

**Highest Current Employment**

Fast Food and Counter Workers has the highest current employment at 119,970 and also...
- at $22,260, the lowest median income of all occupations
- the second highest percentage workers receiving Medicaid at 35%
- the third highest percentage of workers receiving SNAP at 23%
Policy Priority: Policy makers must ensure quality jobs and workplaces so those who are working can make ends meet.

With historically low rates of unemployment, competition for workers is intense. As we point to low rates of unemployment, we must also consider key details if we are to make good policy decisions:

1. Across Ohio 12% of working-age individuals living under 125% of the federal poverty level are working full-time, year-round. That’s $16,100/year for single person and $33,125 for a family of four. Additionally, 37% of those under 125% of poverty are working part-time or less than full-year.

2. Historically, 70% of those under 200% of federal poverty level are working ($25,760 for single Ohioan and $53,000 for family of four).

3. Decreases in unemployment do not impact everyone proportionately. Ohio’s unemployment rate in the most recent quarter reviewed (Q4 2022) was 4.2%: white unemployment was 3.6% and Black unemployment was 7.7%. The only time the Black unemployment rate was significantly less than double the white unemployment rate was during the Great Recession.

4. At least 4 million jobs or 78 percent of jobs in Ohio pay less than $33.89/hour [3] which is the Ohio living wage for 1 adult with 1 child according to the MIT Living Wage Calculator.

What this means is that there are a lot of Ohioans showing up for work each day and still not getting by. Some fill the gaps with opportunities in the gig economy, some can access public benefits like SNAP and Medicaid, and others rely on networks of community and family to make ends meet. Conditions are worse for older and younger Ohioans and non-white Ohioans.

While we consider the implications of work requirements, we must also make sure that those who are and will be working can make ends meet.

3. The rate for Blacks is over double that of whites and this gap has existed since the U.S. Bureau of Employment Statistics started tracking Black unemployment rates in 1972.
Policy Priority: Ohio must do better to provide publicly available data with demographic information across programs and indicators.

Although copious amounts of data is collected through benefit applications of Ohio residents, very little of that data is available to the public for analysis and very little tracks demographic data across indicators. Even less is available from employers that receive public funds for education and training of their workers. The variation among administrating agencies, applications and required fields results in a lack of data cohesion related to participation in benefit programs.

1. ODJFS provides monthly reports on Ohio Works First, SNAP and Publicly Funded Childcare. The information provided includes the number of households and active members for caseloads by county and the number of adults and children enrolled in a program by county. What it does not provide is the race, ethnicity, gender, household size, employment status or income.

2. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides a data dashboard with state and county level data regarding housing vouchers. The data report includes things like units leased, housing vouchers used, and financial information. It does not however include any detail about the individuals using the vouchers.

3. The Women Infant and Children (WIC) program provides caseload data by fiscal year and includes the number of women, infants and children enrolled in the program and some financial data related to the total spending of the program. No aggregate data is available of the participants race, ethnicity, income or employment status.

4. There is no publicly available data related to who is receiving utility assistance in Ohio.

Medicaid is an exception to the norm in terms of aggregate data reporting in Ohio. The Ohio Department of Medicaid provides an Annual Enrollment Dashboard that includes demographics available for the state and each county. Enrollment information can be filtered by race, ethnicity, gender, age group, and program type. It does not include employment status or income.
BENEFIT ENROLLMENT

Percentages of workers each occupation enrolled in SNAP or Medicaid

[Bar chart showing percentages of workers in various occupations enrolled in SNAP or Medicaid, with specific data points for each occupation.]

Source: Public Use Microdata Sample, 2021
OCCUPATION FACT SHEETS
A guide on how to read the fact sheets

This section details how much the workers in this occupation make at both the highest and lowest levels of wages.

![Wages Chart]

$23,230 is the median annual salary and $12.52 is the mean hourly wage for childcare workers in Ohio.

- A single person with one child earning less than $23,806 would be income eligible to receive SNAP benefits.
- A single person with two children would qualify for SNAP at the 75th percentile wage for this position.

82% of the labor force in Ohio is white and 12% is Black. Black workers are overrepresented in this occupation.

This section shows the percent of Black and white workers in the entire Ohio labor force and compares it to the ratio of Black and white workers for the specific occupation.

82% of the workforce is white and 17% is Black.

78% White workers
17% Black workers
12%

This section includes the rankings of the occupation by the Governor’s Office and includes the current openings, current number of Ohioans employed and the projected growth of the occupation.

![Rankings]

- #20 Job Openings
- #31 Current Employment
- #68 Projected Growth

American Community Survey, 2021

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Governor’s Office of Workforce Transformation
Early Childhood
Childcare Worker

Wage for Childcare Workers in Ohio, by Percentile
The percentile wage estimate is the value of a wage below which a percent of workers fall. At the 90th percentile wage, 90% of Childcare Workers earn less than $16.30

<table>
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<th>WAGES</th>
<th>10TH</th>
<th>25TH</th>
<th>70TH</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hourly</td>
<td>$9.35</td>
<td>$10.49</td>
<td>$13.95</td>
<td>$16.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>$19,450</td>
<td>$21,810</td>
<td>$29,020</td>
<td>$33,900</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

$23,230 is the median annual salary and $12.52 is the mean hourly wage for childcare workers in Ohio

A single person with one child earning less than $23,808 would be income eligible to receive SNAP benefits

A single person with two children would qualify for SNAP at the 75th percentile wage for this position

82% of labor force in Ohio is white and 12% is Black.

Black workers are overrepresented in this occupation.

A higher share of Black childcare workers are eligible for public benefits than their white peers. Even at the 75th income percentile, workers in this job who support two or more people are likely to qualify for benefits.

RANKINGS

#20 JOB OPENINGS
Job Openings in Ohio
5,461 jobs

#31 CURRENT EMPLOYMENT
Current Employment in Ohio
35,625 jobs

#66 PROJECTED GROWTH
Projected growth in Ohio
85 jobs
Early Childhood
Preschool Teachers

Wage for Preschool Teachers in Ohio, by Percentile
The percentile wage estimate is the value of a wage below which a percent of workers fall. At the 90th percentile wage, 90% of Preschool Teachers earn less than $22.03

<table>
<thead>
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<th>WAGES</th>
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<th>90th</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hourly</td>
<td>$10.93</td>
<td>$11.53</td>
<td>$17.19</td>
<td>$22.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>$22,740</td>
<td>$23,980</td>
<td>$35,760</td>
<td>$45,830</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$29,890 is the median annual salary and $15.40 is the mean hourly wage for preschool teachers in Ohio

A single person with one child earning less than $23,808 would be income eligible to receive SNAP benefits

A single person with two children would qualify for SNAP at the 50th percentile wage for this position

82% of labor force in Ohio is white and 12% is Black.

Black workers are overrepresented in this occupation.

82% (average all occupations)

White workers 78%
Black workers 12%

A higher share of Black preschool teachers are eligible for public benefits than their white peers. This job is in the top 20 percent for projected growth in Ohio. Preschool teachers earning close to or slightly more than the median income may experience the benefit cliff.

RANKINGS

#66 JOB OPENINGS

Job Openings in Ohio
1,747 jobs

#70 CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

Current Employment in Ohio
15,839 jobs

#51 PROJECTED GROWTH

Projected growth in Ohio
105 jobs
Food Service
Fast Food and Counter Workers

Wage for Fast Food and Counter Workers in Ohio, by Percentile
The percentile wage estimate is the value of a wage below which a percent of workers fall. At the 90th percentile wage, 90% of Fast Food and Counter Workers earn less than $13.77

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WAGES</th>
<th>10TH</th>
<th>25TH</th>
<th>70TH</th>
<th>90TH</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hourly</td>
<td>$9.27</td>
<td>$10.28</td>
<td>$11.18</td>
<td>$13.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>$19,280</td>
<td>$21,370</td>
<td>$23,260</td>
<td>$28,650</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$22,260 is the median annual salary and $11.24 is the mean hourly wage for fast food and counter workers in Ohio

A single person with one child earning less than $23,808 would be income eligible to receive SNAP benefits

A single person with two children would qualify for SNAP at the 90th percentile wage for this position

82% of labor force in Ohio is white and 12% is Black.

Black workers are overrepresented in this occupation.

82% (average all occupations)

Black workers

82% of all landscapers and groundskeepers were enrolled in SNAP

35% of Black workers receive benefits

23% of all fast food workers were enrolled in Medicaid

56% of Black workers are enrolled in Medicaid or another medical insurance related to low-income or disability status

A higher share of Black fast food and counter workers are eligible for public benefits than their white peers. Even at the highest income percentile, workers in this job who support two or more people are likely to qualify for benefits.

82% of labor force

RANKINGS

JOB OPENINGS

Job Openings in Ohio
(unknown)

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

Current Employment in Ohio
(unknown)

PROJECTED GROWTH

Projected growth in Ohio
(unknown)
Food Service
First-line Supervisors, Food Prep and Serving Workers

Wage for Food Service Supervisors in Ohio, by Percentile
The percentile wage estimate is the value of a wage below which a percent of workers fall. At the 90th percentile wage, 90% of Food Service Supervisors earn less than $24.25

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WAGES</th>
<th>10TH</th>
<th>25TH</th>
<th>70TH</th>
<th>90TH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hourly</td>
<td>$11.52</td>
<td>$13.97</td>
<td>$19.20</td>
<td>$24.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>$23,970</td>
<td>$29,060</td>
<td>$39,940</td>
<td>$50,440</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$32,550 is the median annual salary and $17.54 is the mean hourly wage for food service supervisors in Ohio

A single person with one child earning less than $23,808 would be income eligible to receive SNAP benefits

A single person with two children would qualify for SNAP at the 10th percentile wage for this position

82% of labor force in Ohio is white and 12% is Black.

Black workers are slightly overrepresented in this occupation.

82% (average all occupations)

82% 12% 14%

White workers Black workers

A higher share of Black food service supervisors are eligible for public benefits than their white peers. While workers at the lowest pay percentile of this occupation are likely eligible for benefits, those earning at or above the median pay are not likely to be eligible.

RANKINGS

#13 JOB OPENINGS
Job Openings in Ohio
6,385

#26 CURRENT EMPLOYMENT
Current Employment in Ohio
39,614

#23 PROJECTED GROWTH
Projected growth in Ohio
191 jobs
Food Service
Food Preparation Workers

Wage for Food Prep Workers in Ohio, by Percentile

The percentile wage estimate is the value of a wage below which a percent of workers fall. At the 90th percentile wage, 90% of Food Prep Workers earn less than $17.34.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WAGES</th>
<th>10th</th>
<th>25th</th>
<th>70th</th>
<th>90th</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hourly</td>
<td>$9.83</td>
<td>$10.21</td>
<td>$14.46</td>
<td>$17.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>$20,450</td>
<td>$21,230</td>
<td>$30,080</td>
<td>$36,060</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$24,320 is the median annual salary and $12.64 is the mean hourly wage for food prep workers in Ohio.

A single person with one child earning less than $23,808 would be income eligible to receive SNAP benefits.

A single person with two children would qualify for SNAP at the 50th percentile wage for this position.

82% of labor force in Ohio is white and 12% is Black.

Black workers are slightly overrepresented in this occupation.

82% (average all occupations)

Projected growth in Ohio (unknown)

Job Openings in Ohio (unknown)

Current Employment in Ohio (unknown)

RANKINGS
Healthcare Support Staff
Home Health Aide

Wage for Home Health Aides in Ohio, by Percentile
The percentile wage estimate is the value of a wage below which a percent of workers fall. At the 90th percentile wage, 90% of Home Health Aides earn less than $14.42

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>10th</th>
<th>25th</th>
<th>70th</th>
<th>90th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hourly</td>
<td>$10.71</td>
<td>$11.05</td>
<td>$13.89</td>
<td>$14.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>$22,280</td>
<td>$22,990</td>
<td>$28,990</td>
<td>$29,990</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$24,000 is the median annual salary and $12.70 is the mean hourly wage for home health aides in Ohio.

A single person with one child earning less than $23,808 would be income eligible to receive SNAP benefits.

A single person with two children would qualify for SNAP at the 75th percentile wage for this position.

82% of labor force in Ohio is white and 12% is Black.

Black workers are overrepresented in this occupation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>White workers</th>
<th>Black workers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36%</td>
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</table>

A higher share of Black home health aides are eligible for public benefits than their white peers. Even at the 75th income percentile, home health aides who support two or more people are likely to qualify for benefits.

RANKINGS

#5 JOB OPENINGS
Job Openings in Ohio
9,025 jobs

#13 CURRENT EMPLOYMENT
Current Employment in Ohio
56,510 jobs

#1 PROJECTED GROWTH
Projected growth in Ohio
1,725 jobs
Healthcare Support Staff
Nursing Assistant

Wage for Nursing Assistants in Ohio, by Percentile
The percentile wage estimate is the value of a wage below which a percent of workers fall. At the 90th percentile wage, 90% of Nursing Assistants earn less than $17.98

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentile</th>
<th>Hourly</th>
<th>Annual</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td>$11.49</td>
<td>$23,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th</td>
<td>$13.89</td>
<td>$28,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70th</td>
<td>$17.44</td>
<td>$36,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90th</td>
<td>$17.98</td>
<td>$37,400</td>
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</table>

$29,840 is the median annual salary and $14.34 is the mean hourly wage for nursing assistants in Ohio

A single person with one child earning less than $34,800 would be income eligible to receive SNAP benefits

A single person with two children would qualify for SNAP at the 25th percentile wage for this position

82% of labor force in Ohio is white and 12% is Black.

Black workers are overrepresented in this occupation.

82% (average all occupations)

RANKINGS

#6 JOB OPENINGS

Job Openings in Ohio
8,814 jobs

#8 CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

Current Employment in Ohio
68,537 jobs

#11 PROJECTED GROWTH

Projected growth in Ohio
358 jobs
## Manufacturing Laborers, Freight, and Material Movers

### Wage for Laborers, Freight and Material Movers in Ohio, by Percentile

The percentile wage estimate is the value of a wage below which a percent of workers fall. At the 90th percentile, 90% of Laborers, Freight and Material Movers earn less than $22.90.

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hourly</td>
<td>$11.39</td>
<td>$14.06</td>
<td>$18.41</td>
<td>$22.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>$23,680</td>
<td>$29,240</td>
<td>$38,830</td>
<td>$47,630</td>
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</table>

Bureau of Labor Statistics

### National Median Wage

$34,050 is the median annual salary and $16.75 is the mean hourly wage for labor, freight, and material movers in Ohio.

A single person with one child earning less than $23,808 would be income eligible to receive SNAP benefits.

A single person with two children would qualify for SNAP at the 10th percentile wage for this position.

82% of labor force in Ohio is white and 12% is Black. Black workers are overrepresented in this occupation.

### RANKINGS

- **#1 JOB OPENINGS**
  - Job Openings in Ohio: 17,626 jobs
- **#8 CURRENT EMPLOYMENT**
  - Current Employment in Ohio: 119,583 jobs
- **#2 PROJECTED GROWTH**
  - Projected growth in Ohio: 600 jobs
Manufacturing
Cutting, Punching and Press Machine Setters, Operators

Wage for Cutting, Punching and Press Machine Setters, Operators in Ohio, by Percentile

The percentile wage estimate is the value of a wage below which a percent of workers fall. At the 90th percentile, 90% of Machine Setters and Operators earn less than $24.71

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hourly</td>
<td>$14.15</td>
<td>$14.67</td>
<td>$22.57</td>
<td>$24.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>$29,440</td>
<td>$30,510</td>
<td>$46,950</td>
<td>$57,110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$39,890 is the median annual salary and $19.18 is the mean hourly wage for Ohio machine setters and operators

A single person with one child earning less than $23,808 would be income eligible to receive SNAP benefits

A single person with two children would qualify for SNAP at the 10th percentile wage for this position

82% of labor force in Ohio is white and 12% is Black.

Black workers are overrepresented in this occupation.

82% (average all occupations)

RANKINGS

#60 JOB OPENINGS

Job Openings in Ohio
1,773 jobs

#60 CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

Current Employment in Ohio
17,639 jobs

#219 PROJECTED GROWTH

Projected growth in Ohio
-128 jobs

A higher share of Black machine setters and operators are eligible for public benefits than their white peers. Only those earning at the lowest levels of this occupation are likely eligible to receive benefits.
### Manufacturing Assemblers and Fabricators

#### Wage for Assemblers and Fabricators in Ohio, by Percentile

The percentile wage estimate is the value of a wage below which a percent of workers fall. At the 90th percentile, 90% of Assemblers and Fabricators earn less than $24.21.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hourly</td>
<td>$11.50</td>
<td>$14.23</td>
<td>$21.71</td>
<td>$24.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>$23,930</td>
<td>$29,610</td>
<td>$45,150</td>
<td>$50,350</td>
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</table>

*Bureau of Labor Statistics*

$36,980 is the median annual salary and $17.87 is the mean hourly wage for Ohio machine setters and operators.

A single person with one child earning less than $23,808 would be income eligible to receive SNAP benefits.

A single person with two children would qualify for SNAP at the 25th percentile wage for this position.

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82% of labor force in Ohio is white and 12% is Black.

Black workers are underrepresented in this occupation.

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"A higher share of Black assemblers and fabricators are eligible for public benefits than their white peers. Only those earning at the lowest levels of this occupation are likely eligible to receive benefits."

### RANKINGS

#### #38 JOB OPENINGS

Job Openings in Ohio

2,726 jobs

#### #31 CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

Current Employment in Ohio

30,574 jobs

#### #228 PROJECTED GROWTH

Projected growth in Ohio

-504 jobs
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research started with a grant from the National Skills Coalition. This grant allowed the Ohio Workforce Coalition to convene a group of state advocates interested in exploring how state policy can advance racial equity across Ohio. Together with the Coalition and Ohio's Business Leaders United affiliates, this group met to discuss how to tackle racial equity across workforce and public systems in Ohio. Specifically, we explored how we might better understand conditions for low-wage workers in Ohio in a specific set of occupations -- what wages are they earning, what public benefits are they eligible for, and what policy priorities might help Ohio leaders ensure that work, works.

This report is the first in a series that will be released on Ohio Workforce Coalition's website: www.ohioworkforcecoalition.org. Future work will highlight specific occupations, regional nuances, and the racial disparities across the data.

Thank you to the following individuals who offered insights, critiques, and direction to this work. This work does not represent the opinions of any specific individual or organization but the work of each of these smart, committed, and tireless advocates has informed the Coalition's thinking and we are grateful.

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