



# Advocates for Ohio's Future

## Preparing for the End of COVID-19 Supports

### Critical Support Needed to Avert Crisis at the End of the Federal Public Health Emergency

Since January 2020, a number of COVID-related enhanced benefits, waivers and program flexibilities have held families together, helped keep them safe and supported their most basic needs, at a time when an unprecedented pandemic raged outside their homes and made going to work a health risk. When the federal Public Health Emergency expires, these flexibilities and expansions will end causing a **COVID Cliff**, where families still fighting to gain stability will face the end of enhanced Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, the redetermination of the full Medicaid caseload for the first time in over two years, resumed federal student loan payments, and more.

This significant and sudden loss of basic needs supports will be a major hit to household budgets and lead to confusing and stressful times for families and individuals. Ohio and the nation are on the brink of an economic downturn while inflation continues to rise. **Advocates for Ohio's Future urges the Ohio General Assembly and Governor Mike DeWine to consider the following immediate investments to ensure the state, local agencies, providers and impacted Ohioans are prepared for the unwind and to mitigate the impact of the COVID Cliff.**

### Immediate Investment: \$331.5 Million

#### Ohio Foodbanks: \$183 Million



Ohio's foodbank network is already facing incredible need, from inflation, supply chain issues, low donations, and more. This support is vital to ensure foodbanks across Ohio are prepared to meet increased demand following reductions in SNAP benefits, rising operating costs and workforce shortages.

#### County Job & Family Services: \$25 Million



County Job and Family Services (CJFS) offices, who process eligibility for most public benefits in Ohio, are already strained by workforce shortages and unsustainably high call volume, which will only increase at the end of the PHE. This funding will support CJFS offices as they process an unprecedented number of cases in a short time.

#### In-Person Assisters: \$23.5 Million



When Ohioans receive notices about benefits changes and undergo the Medicaid redetermination process, our in-person assisters will be their first line of support. This funding would support:

- In-person health insurance enrollment assisters
- Legal Aid Services
- A public outreach campaign to inform benefits recipients of changes

#### Direct Service Nonprofit Support: \$100 Million



Throughout the pandemic, nonprofits across Ohio have been on the front lines helping communities weather the pandemic. Ohio's direct service nonprofit network has been pushed to the brink while rising operating costs and workforce issues become more challenging.



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### Pandemic Emergency Supports Timeline

As COVID-related program flexibilities, waivers and enhanced benefits begin to unwind in the coming months, Ohioans and their families face a season of continual losses and program changes. Without additional, immediate investment and action by the state, many Ohioans will face even greater challenges in meeting their basic needs, returning to work and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic.

**December 15, 2021:** Final Child Tax Credit (CTC) payment to eligible families. In 2021, 1.2 million Ohio families received an average of \$442 per month.

**May 16, 2022:** Expected 60-day notice of non-renewal of federal PHE from Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Ohio Department of Medicaid begins eligibility redetermination activities.

**June 1, 2022:** Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) benefits for K-12 students expire for 2021-2022 school year. This school year, 126,500 children received \$69.2 million in benefits.

**June 30, 2022:** Absent congressional and administrative action, all national child nutrition waivers expire on June 30, 2022. Waivers expiring include:

- Use of Seamless Summer Option (SSO) to offer school meals to all children at no charge, regardless of area or individual eligibility based on household income
- Other waivers for out-of-school-time meals (whether afterschool, during summer vacation, or during pandemic-related closures), including non-congregate waivers to allow for grab-and-go meals through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

**July 1, 2022:** OhioRISE, Ohio Medicaid's program for multi-system youth, goes live

**July 15, 2022:** Expected end of federal PHE by HHS, or 90 day extension through October 13

- End of Medicaid enhanced federal match agreement (eFMAP), Medicaid redeterminations begin
- Assuming state emergency declaration remains in place, final SNAP Emergency/Maximum allotment for all households issued within 30 days. As of April 2022, 705,231 Ohio households were receiving \$121 million in EA benefits per month.
- End of expanded eligibility for SNAP for college students
- Vaccine Emergency Use Authorizations expire, impacting COVID treatments and vaccines
- End of telehealth and telemedicine waivers for some Medicaid and Medicare services.

**August 31, 2022:** Federal student loan payments, collections on defaulted loans, and interest accrual resumes. As of September 2021, 1.8 million Ohioans have \$62.5 billion in federal student loan debt, with a national average monthly payment of \$460.

**October-December:** Remaining Ohio Medicaid Next Generation program transitions implemented on staggered basis.