

2010-2011 Biennium Budget Citizens’ Report Card

This Citizens’ Report Card has been issued by Advocates for Budget Legislation Equality (ABLE). ABLE is a coalition of organizations and individuals committed to protecting health and human service line items in the State Budget and involving grassroots people in decisions that affect their lives.

ABLE developed a platform that included specific objectives in regards to critical needs areas for Ohioans including healthcare, childcare, elderly care, housing, and basic needs. The scores in this report card reflect the extent to which these objectives were met. ABLE members also believe that a fair system of taxation is necessary for the State of Ohio to collect enough revenue to maintain adequate levels of funding for health and human service line items. The report card includes some cuts made late in the budget process that were not reflected in ABLE’s platform, but which hurt the delivery of needed services and low-income Ohioans in particular. ABLE’s objectives in regards to revenue are also evaluated in this Citizens’ Report Card.

The goals in ABLE’s budget platform are to: Expand access to services; Protect public health, safety and welfare and meet basic needs; and Preserve and restore revenue. ABLE’s biennium budget platform is attached.

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Biennium Budget: 2010-2011

Organizations participating with ABLE include: Organize! Ohio, Merrick House, May Dugan Multi-Service Center, UHCAN Ohio, the Cleveland Catholic Diocese Social Action Office, The Community Partners for Affordable Accessible Health Care, The Empowerment Center of Greater Cleveland, Stop Targeting Ohio’s Poor, United Clevelanders Against Poverty, Neighborhood Family Practice, The AIDS Task Force of Greater Cleveland, Bellflower Center, Mental Health Services for Homeless Persons, Cleveland Tenants Organization, Recovery Resources, Lutheran Metro Ministries, West Side Community House, Early Childhood Enrichment Center, and We are the Uninsured. Policy Matters Ohio acts as an advisory organization to this coalition.

CHILD CARE

GRADE: D

<i>Goals</i>	<i>Pass/Fail/Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Maintain Early Learning Initiative (ELI) at FY 2008/2009 Funding level.	FAILED	Program has been eliminated.
Maintain eligibility for childcare vouchers at 200% of the FPL.	FAILED	Eligibility was reduced to 150% of FPL.
Assist daycare centers that accept childcare vouchers by increasing reimbursements rates to childcare centers to 65% of prevailing rates and include 31 days off per child in a year to cover child absences and holidays.	FAILED	Reimbursement rates were reduced and no changes regarding 31 days off per child per year.
Maintain Full-Time reimbursement rate at 25 hours per child per week.	PASSED	Full-Time hours remain at 25 hours per child per week.

HEALTHCARE

GRADE: C

<i>Goals</i>	<i>Passed/Failed/Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Increase eligibility for family Medicaid coverage and medical benefits for adults without dependents up to 200% of the FPL.	FAILED	This was not considered throughout the budget process. However, parents with incomes up to 90% of the FPL now have redetermination every 12 months instead of every 6 months.
Provide adequate resources for an effective communication system for Food Stamps, Medicaid and cash assistance participants.	FAILED	Departments will actually move backward in providing effective service to consumers as budget cuts will require significant reduction in staff. This will result in overloaded workers and an inability to process and maintain assistance requests in a timely and effective manner.
Maintain Medicaid eligibility for SCHIP at 300% of the FPL and eligibility for pregnant women at 200% of the FPL.	PASSED	SCHIP eligibility is at 300% starting 7/1/2009.
Maintain the Medicaid buy-in for children whose family income is above 300% of FPL and the buy-in for adults with disabilities.	PASSED	There was no change to this in the FY 2010-11 biennium budget.
Eliminate prescription co-pays under Medicaid.	FAILED	This was not considered.
Restore full funding for adult services categorized as optional including dental, vision, podiatry and psychological.	INCOMPLETE	Funding has been maintained, however, it is reliant on results of a court case involving tobacco settlement money, making its future uncertain.
Restore Free Clinics and Federal Qualified Health Centers funding to the 2008/09 budget level.	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	Free Clinic funding was cut while FOHC funding remains the same.
Improve Disability Medical Assistance (DMA) for Ohioans who are medication dependent and not eligible for Medicaid.	FAILED	Eliminated program.
Maintain at least current level of Mental Health and Addiction services throughout the state.	FAILED	\$111 million cut to mental health and a 30% cut to addiction services.

INDEPENDENT LIVING

GRADE: F

<i>Goals</i>	<i>Pass/Fail/Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Restore Independent Living Council line item to \$450,000 per year.	FAILED	Reduced to \$250,000 per year.

ASSISTANCE FOR SENIORS

GRADE: F

<i>Goals</i>	<i>Pass/Fail/Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Expand assistance for elderly Ohioans able to remain in their homes by funding community based services at the FY2004 level adjusted for inflation.	FAILED	Senior Community Services were cut from \$19.9 million to \$11.8 million over the biennium, a 41% cut.
Increase funding for PASSPORT.	FAILED	The funding was cut. Waiting lists are expected to have as many as 10,000 people statewide.
Restore funding for Adult Protective Services to \$12.4 million over 2 years.	FAILED	Funded at \$425,872 for FY2010 and \$406,670 for FY2011, total \$832,542o over the biennium.

PRESERVE AND RESTORE REVENUE

GRADE: F

<i>Goals</i>	<i>Pass/Fail/Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Roll back personal income tax cuts that took effect over the past 2 years.	FAILED	This was not seriously considered during the budget process.
Restore the 7.5% tax rate on income over \$200,000.	FAILED	This was not seriously considered during the budget process.
Rein in unnecessary tax breaks and close tax loopholes.	FAILED	This was hardly considered during the budget process.
Means test the Homestead exemption for higher-income seniors.	FAILED	This was not seriously considered during the budget process.
Retain and strengthen the corporate franchise tax.	FAILED	This was not seriously considered.
Use the rainy day fund to maintain services.	PASSED	ABLE lobbied to use rainy day funds in order to prevent cuts in FY 2009
Establish a State Earned Income Tax Credit.	FAILED	This was not seriously considered.

FOOD

GRADE: B

<i>Goals</i>	<i>Pass/Fail/Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Increase funding for Second Harvest Food Banks statewide to \$34 million over the biennium.	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	Increased funding to \$24 million over the biennium.

CASH ASSISTANCE

GRADE: F

<i>Goals</i>	<i>Pass/Fail/Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Develop a fund to assist low-income Ohioans in obtaining mandatory identification documents.	FAILED	Fees for Driver’s License and Birth Certificates were raised, making it more difficult for low-income Ohioans.
Restore funding for General Assistance programs eliminated in the 1990s.	FAILED	This was not considered during the budget process.
Increase Benefit Bank funding to \$3 million per year.	FAILED	Funding remains the same as FY2009.
Boost payments to kinship care providers to \$300 per child per month.	FAILED	No change in payments to Kinship care providers.
Restore \$10 million Kinship Permanency Incentive line item.	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	Cut line-item to \$5 million/year.
Restore \$3 million line item for Ohio Navigator Program.	FAILED	This was not considered during the budget process.
Increase monthly cash assistance base by \$100 and adjust it annually for inflation.	FAILED	This was not considered during the budget process.
Maintain Adoption Assistance at \$300 per month.	FAILED	Reduced assistance to \$235 per month.
Establish 5-year cash assistance eligibility state-wide and restore eligibility to those who have reached the 3-year time limit.	FAILED	This was not considered during the budget process.
Remove fee increases on essential living items such as driver’s license and birth certificates.	FAILED	This was not seriously considered during the budget process.

HOUSING

GRADE: F

<i>Goals</i>	<i>Pass/Fail/Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Expand access to affordable housing by removing the funding cap for the Housing Trust Fund by allocating 100% of the recordation fees.	FAILED	This was not considered throughout the budget process.