

# Breaking Ground

The Monthly Newsletter of the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio

..... March/April 2003

## House Passes Budget Bill...Now it is Up to the Senate

On Wednesday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, the Ohio House of Representatives passed its version of the state's 2004 – 2005 biennial budget. By a margin of 53-46, the House approved \$48.7 billion in spending, including \$88 million in general revenue funds (GRF) for Ohio's Housing Trust Fund. While the House ultimately did not include the increase in the recording fee in their version of the budget, there are strong indications that the Senate will reconsider the issue.

Governor Taft did include in his Executive Budget, a proposal for permanent and dedicated funding for the Housing Trust Fund by doubling the county recordation fee. While we were supportive of this proposal which would generate \$100 million or more over the next two years, we were disappointed that the Governor also included a proposal that would eliminate all general revenue funds from not only the Trust Fund, but from the state's key homeless and housing line items such as the Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing and CDC Grant Programs. The House version of the budget did not restore the funding for these line items. Instead the House budget includes the same language as in the Administration's proposal, which allows the Department of Development to use a portion of the Housing Trust Fund to fund these activities. Representative Joyce Beaty (D-Columbus) offered an amendment to restore funding for these line items, but it was tabled on a party-line vote.

Key Housing Programs	<u>Projected</u> <u>SFY 02-03</u>	<u>Executive</u> <u>Budget</u> <u>SFY 04-05</u>	<u>House</u> <u>Budget</u> <u>SFY 04-05</u>
638 Ohio Housing Trust Fund	\$44.5	\$80-\$100	\$88
497 TANF Housing Program	\$11.7	\$0	\$0
<u>OHFA Affordable Housing Loans</u>	<u>\$28.8</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$85</b>	<b>\$80-\$100</b>	<b>\$88</b>
440 Emergency Shelter Grant	\$4.7	\$0	\$0
406 Transitional Housing for the Homeless	\$5.5	\$0	\$0
<u>431 CDC Grant Program</u>	<u>\$3.6</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$13.8</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$98.8</b>	<b>\$80-\$100</b>	<b>\$88</b>

While not what we are asking for, the House version of the budget is better than many feared it would be. Given that several other state programs were either dramatically cut or completely eliminated by the House, the fact that we received \$88 million for the state's homeless and housing programs is a testament to the value of our collective advocacy efforts. If housing advocates had not spoken up, we would have left the House in far worse shape.



Going into the final weekend before the House was scheduled to vote the budget out, the recordation fee proposal was still on the table, as was an effort to restore funding for the state's key homeless and housing line items. On Saturday, April 5<sup>th</sup>, we learned that there was a move in the House Finance Committee to drop the recordation fee proposal and fund the Trust Fund with state GRF dollars. On Sunday April 6<sup>th</sup>, Bill Faith from COHHIO testified as to the importance of dedicated funding for the Housing Trust Fund and the importance of funding all of homelessness and housing line items. As it turned out, Faith was the last witness to appear before the Committee.

Over that weekend, several members said that there were those in the Republican Caucus that were promoting "a moratorium on funding the housing programs" for the next two years until another way to fund the programs could be found.

On April 8<sup>th</sup>, the House Finance Committee voted to accept an Omnibus Amendment (a large amendment, which in this case included 119 separate amendments), which removed the recordation fee as a permanent and dedicated funding source and instead funded the Housing Trust Fund with \$88 million in state GRF.

On April 9<sup>th</sup>, after hours of floor testimony, the House approved its version of the state's 2004 – 2005 biennial budget. In an interesting twist, only 48 of the House's 62 Republican members voted for the budget bill...the remaining five votes were cast by Democrats.

After talking to a number of legislators, it is apparent that they had heard from constituents regarding the value of the state's homeless and housing programs. One legislator said that for every letter she received against the recording fee, she had 25 supporting it. Without this push, there is little doubt that housing would have been just another program cut by the budget knife.

While we are pleased with housing's overall position in the state budget process thus far, we believe that it is likely that the Senate will reconsider the proposal to provide dedicated funding for the Housing Trust Fund and to restore funding for the line items. On April 24<sup>th</sup>, the Senate Finance Committee will hold a hearing on the 2004 – 2005 biennial budget for the Department of Development. Senate insiders have indicated that the Senate needs to free up General Revenue funds to help fill holes left in the House version of the budget. The Housing Trust Fund is on the short list of where funds could be freed up and replaced with the recording fee.

While the budget won't be finalized until the end of June, our best opportunity to restore both the recordation fee as well as the line items will be before mid-May. While we are very optimistic that we can prevail in the Senate, one thing is certain...if we are to win, it will be with your help.

Please stay tuned to future editions of *Breaking Ground* or visit the Housing Trust Fund Campaign section of the COHHIO web page at [www.cohhio.org/campaign/HTFcampaign.html](http://www.cohhio.org/campaign/HTFcampaign.html) for updates and next steps regarding Senate strategy.

**\* \* \* Action Needed \* \* \***

**Please write your State Senators with the following message:**

- 1) Follow the Governor's lead and restore the recordation fee**
- 2) Remove the \$50 million annual cap**
- 3) Restore the housing line items**

**Please send your letters by May 10.**

**Letters can be sent to: Statehouse, 65 East State Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215.**

(Contact information and a draft letter are available at [www.cohhio.org](http://www.cohhio.org))

**Answers To Issues Raised By the County Recorders**

The County Recorders Association took a position against the recordation fee. The following is our response to some of the arguments by the County Recorders against the increase in the recording fees to provide dedicated funding for the Housing Trust Fund.

1. The Housing Trust Fund is a state program and it would set a precarious precedent to use a traditional county-based fee as a funding source. **RESPONSE:** Recording fees have always been set by the state legislature. Currently the recording fees, in addition to operating the recorders offices, support a variety of needs at the county level. Historically, the state has used various fees collected at the county level to address issues such as domestic violence, legal services, the victims of crime fund, the childrens trust fund and state public defender services to just name a few.
2. Counties are facing financial difficulties, so to relegate an additional administrative responsibility to the counties is an undue burden. The county recording fees are used to offset the operations of the recorders offices and they do not have the funding to handle the administration of the proposed fee. **RESPONSE:** In most counties the recording fee more than offsets the costs of operating the recorders offices with the excess going to the county general fund. No funds currently collected through the recordation fee would be taken from local communities. The administrative processing will experience nominal change. The proposed increase would apply in the same manner that the existing fees are applied. To further alleviate any potential burden, the proposal allows for one percent of the increase to cover administrative costs at the county level. This Committee could consider increasing the administrative fee for the recorders in the first year, to help offset the administrative costs when the office systems have to be adjusted.
3. The total amount of recording fees collected fluctuate for year to year based on economic factors, so it would not provide a stable funding source for the Housing Trust Fund. **RESPONSE:** The revenue generated from the fee increase will vary from year to year; the Trust Fund could hold some funds in reserve to help offset the volatility from year to year. In good years, revenue will be held back to help keep the Trust Fund stable in tough years. In addition, since the Trust Fund is now being asked to fund all the state housing programs, it is essential to have adequate funding from the doubling of the recordation fee. These are basic safety net programs that we cannot let go unfunded.
4. The public would view the fee increase as unfair and blame the county recorders for the increase. **RESPONSE:** The proposed increase is minimal when considered in the larger scope of real estate transaction costs. According to the Legislative Budget Office, the average cost will be \$15.38 per transaction. Most people agree that is a negligible increase in the overall costs of real estate transactions. The fee increase does not result in exorbitantly higher cost for consumers.
5. The advocates for the Housing Trust Fund are trying to avoid oversight by the General Assembly in advocating for the recording fee increase. **RESPONSE:** The General Assembly will continue to have an important role in the success of the OHTF. Not only will the General Assembly continue to set the appropriation level as part of the biennial budget process, but also state statute requires that the State Controlling Board must approve every project funded through the Trust Fund. The Trust Fund has a high level of oversight from the General Assembly and the fee increase will not alter that oversight

For more information, contact COHHIO at 614/280-1984 or [cohhio@cohhio.org](mailto:cohhio@cohhio.org).

## Bob Taft's split-level housing

By Michael Douglas, Akron Beacon Journal associate editor

Bob Taft called the day "very sad and very painful." On Wednesday, the governor ordered \$142.5 million in spending cuts necessary to balance the state budget by the end of June. School districts scrambled to cope, knowing that the impact of reductions so late in the school year will be magnified.

At state universities, presidents and their aides are familiar with the drill, and still puzzled by how willfully legislators fail to grasp the importance of higher education in fueling the state economy. Taft blamed those legislators, his fellow Republicans in the majority. His aim was true. Republicans rejected modest tax increases (even a temporary levy) to close the gap.

Lawmakers declared loudly that the governor shouldn't reduce spending on schools. They didn't suggest where he might find the money to make up the difference. Nice work if you can get it. You get to proclaim your allegiance to popular causes, kids and less government. Taft must deal with the reality of two and two equaling four.

At the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio, they know the Statehouse mentality well. Bill Faith, the executive director, has been waiting 13 years for governors and lawmakers to establish a steady source of funding for the Ohio Housing Trust Fund. At last, he may get his wish starting in July with the new two-year state budget.

That said, Faith spotted the strings attached to this bit of cheer in an otherwise bleak budget season. Housing advocates may gain the certainty they've long wanted. They also recognize the achievement may serve as cover for budget cuts elsewhere that would put many vulnerable Ohioans in jeopardy of losing basic shelter.

The state would catch a glimpse of the early 1980s, when Ohio offered little to the needy by way of assistance in obtaining decent housing. Gov. Richard Celeste presided as the state started an emergency shelter program and permitted the formation of community development corporations. He put together a commission to address the larger problem. The panel discovered a constitutional ban against the state lending or borrowing money for housing.

By 1990, an issue appeared on the statewide ballot that would reverse the prohibition. Celeste and George Voinovich (who would capture the governor's office that year) both endorsed the measure. Voters gave their overwhelming approval, making housing a public purpose, creating the Ohio Housing Trust Fund.

The trust fund had a clear purpose: It would serve as a catalyst for various housing initiatives, often providing small yet critical amounts of money, the funds that close deals, from new home construction to home repairs for the elderly to assistance with down payments for working families with lower incomes. What the fund lacked was a source of money.

Committees convened. They reached the same conclusions: The fund should have \$50 million a year, and the money should come from an increase in the fee charged by county recorders for handling mortgages, liens, deeds and the like. George Voinovich proposed as much in his budget plan eight years ago. The legislature rejected the ideas.

The trust fund has not been empty. Money from the general revenue fund has been directed its way, \$44.5 million the past two years. All told, the trust fund has routed \$160 million to housing initiatives since 1992. That sum has been used to leverage \$850 million in private and other public money. More than 317,000 Ohio households have been helped. In Summit County, organizations such as Access Inc., H.M. Life Opportunities Services and the East Akron Development Corp. have provided temporary rent assistance, emergency utility payments and single-family homes.

Bill Faith shrewdly surveyed the rugged budget landscape and decided to try again for an increase in the recorder's fee, a reliable stream of money in uncertain times. His pitch? The state would reap savings in the general revenue fund. Gov. Taft embraced the trade. He has proposed doubling the recorder's fee, from roughly \$15 on average to \$30, generating \$40 million or so a year for the housing trust fund.

Estimates are the increased revenue would allow Summit County to triple its investment in helping residents improve, find or keep a home. Still, the \$40 million falls short of what the experts said Ohio needed more than a decade ago. For their part, lawmakers have warmed to the Taft plan (a novel turn). Happy ending?

The next budget challenge (a likely deficit of \$3 billion in the coming biennium) has the governor and others clutching dimes and nickels. If the housing trust fund finally would realize its goal, other aspects of the housing safety net would be shredded.

In this instance, Taft has chosen to cut unwisely. His budget calls for eliminating separate line items for emergency shelter grants (\$4.7 million over two years), transitional housing for the homeless (\$5.5 million) and grants for community development corporations (\$3.6 million). Unclaimed state funds (\$28 million) would be applied to the overall bottom line, removing another source of financing for housing needs.

In the end (higher recorder's fee and all), the state would spend less on housing aid for the disadvantaged and homeless. That hardly fits the definition of compassionate (conservative, liberal or otherwise) in a fragile economic time.

Bob Taft has been almost eloquent in stressing the community obligation to assist the most vulnerable Ohioans. He appears on the verge of achieving what has eluded the state for years. How cruel then to combine the triumph with a blow to the working poor and homeless. The amount of money represents loose change in a budget of \$49 billion.

Yet by one estimate, the diminished resources would mean as many as 100 families in Summit County turned away at shelters and other housing programs.

Michele Colopy, the executive director of the Summit County Housing Network, has unearthed words the governor might wish to consider. Robert A. Taft, the late senator and the governor's grandfather, once explained: "Every family must have a decent home in which to live. The character of that home determines more than anything else the character of family life, the conditions in which children grow up and the attitude of people toward the community and the government."

Quite an investment.

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### **Housing Ohio 2003 Attracts 500 Participants**

COHHIO's 2003 Annual Conference, held last month in Columbus, was a stunning success! Nearly 500 people from across the state, including emergency shelter providers, transitional housing providers, permanent housing providers, not-for-profit and for-profit housing developers, fair housing advocates, homeless service providers, state and local government officials, and financial institutions joined together to learn about housing related issues and to help set an aggressive agenda for the future. The conference line-up featured a kick-off by Bill Faith, COHHIO Executive Director, as well as plenaries by Dr. Peter Dreier from Occidental College in Los Angeles and Joe Weisbord from Housing First! in New York. The conference also served as a forum for the initial release of recommendations from the Director's Affordable Housing Task Force.

The conference was designed around several different tracks, all of which represented current projects being undertaken by COHHIO. These tracks included affordable housing development and preservation, ending homelessness, poverty issues, homeless children and youth, permanent supportive housing, legal issues in housing, and discharge planning. Of the feedback received to date, participants seemed to appreciate the content of the conference and described it as both informative and thought provoking.

A special thanks to this year's conference co-sponsors. Without their support and that of the participants, the conference would not have been successful. Our sponsors included: Charter One Bank, Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing, National City Bank, Bank One, Fifth Third Bank, Corporation for Supportive Housing, Enterprise Foundation - Cleveland, Fannie Mae, Provident Bank, RLJ Management, AARP, Enterprise Foundation - Columbus, National Affordable Housing Trust, National Church Residences, National Housing Trust, Nationwide Insurance Companies, Neighborhood Properties, Rockford Homes, U.S. Villages, The Wallick Company, Woda Development, Federal Home Loan Bank, Association of Ohio Philanthropic Homes, Columbus Housing Partnership, Community Housing Network, Continental Laundry Systems, Council for Rural Housing Development in Ohio, Episcopal Diocese of Ohio, Finance Fund, Huntington Bank, Ohio Association of Realtors, Ohio Home Builders Association, Squires, Sanders & Dempsey, Cleveland Housing Network, The Provident Companies, and Wesbanco.

*In case you missed it, COHHIO's 2004 Annual Conference will be held on April 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> at the Hyatt on Capital Square in downtown Columbus.*

## Ohio Voters Believe it is Important for the State to Maintain Funding Levels for Human Services at Current Level

AARP Ohio recently released the results of a survey, "Maintaining Health and Human Services with Diminishing Resources: a Survey of Ohio Voters." The telephone survey was conducted between February 3 and 15, 2003 with a random sample of 1,000 Ohio voters age 18 and older. The survey results found that Ohio residents support the state maintaining current levels of funding for human services, even if they are not personally eligible for those services. Ohio voters appear to implicitly believe in a social compact between the individual and state government, believing that the individual and the government should share the costs of human services. They believe that the state has certain responsibilities to assist both individuals and those who are economically disadvantaged obtain key human services.

Highlights of the survey include:

- Nine in ten (89 percent) Ohio voters age 18 or older say it is important to them that the state of Ohio maintains current levels of funding for human services. Eighty-six percent of respondents say it is important for Ohio to maintain current levels of funding that help people obtain human services, even if they are not currently personally eligible for these services.
- Six in ten (59 percent) Ohioans think the costs of human services should be shared between the individual and the government. Moreover, 70 percent of respondents support the cost of human services being fully paid by the state for households living below the poverty line.
- Ohio voters support finding ways to generate additional revenues if the money would be spent on specific health and human services:
  - Eighty-eight percent support providing food to local hunger programs and housing assistance to low-income working families, the elderly, and the disabled.
  - Eight-seven percent support helping low-income working families pay for child care and protecting and treating children who have been abused.
  - Eighty-two percent support maintaining the delivery of health and community-based long-term care services.
- Ohioans support raising money to avoid cuts in funding for state human services. The majority of respondents support:
  - adding a temporary surcharge on the income tax for households with annual incomes above \$200,000 (72 percent);
  - increasing the tax on liquor (71 percent);
  - closing loopholes and exemptions (71 percent);
  - increasing the tax on beer and wine (71 percent);
  - increasing corporate income taxes (69 percent);
  - increasing the cigarette tax by \$.45 to \$1.00 (63 percent); and
  - increasing the sales tax rate on items currently taxed, except for food and over-the-counter medications (52 percent).
- Ohio voters are likely to accept an increase in taxes or other fees in order to maintain the current funding levels for specific types of human service programs. At least eight in ten Ohio respondents are likely to accept increases for:
  - protecting and treating children who have been abused (88 percent);
  - helping older adults and the disabled remain in their homes instead of a nursing home (86 percent);
  - providing housing assistance to low-income working families, the elderly, and the disabled (83 percent); and
  - providing mental health counseling for emotionally disturbed children (81 percent).

Survey respondents were asked to consider how likely they are to accept increases in taxes or other fees in order to maintain current funding levels for human services programs. **When asked about housing assistance, eighty-three percent of respondents were likely to accept tax or fee increases to maintain current funding levels.**

The report is available at [www.research.aarp.org](http://www.research.aarp.org).

## Preliminary Survey Results Grim

In an effort to assess the need level of shelters and supportive housing providers throughout the state, COHHIO's Ending Homelessness Work Group surveyed the 118 ESG (Emergency Shelter Grant) and SHH (Supportive Housing for the Homeless) grantees. Of the 69 ESG grantees, 53 (77 percent) have responded to the survey. While of 49 SHH grantees, 28 (57 percent) have responded. The preliminary results of the survey are as follows.

ESG grantees in urban areas report a 16 percent increase in shelter usage between 2001 and 2002. Rural shelters report a 45 percent increase between 2001 and 2002. Data from January and February 2003 shows urban and rural shelters have had to turn away many individuals due to a lack of resources. The statistics from January and February 2003 further suggest that increases in shelter usage, particularly in the rural areas, are likely to continue.

Similarly, SHH grantees saw an increase in the number of households they are serving. Data from those who have responded to the survey reveals the number of households served in urban areas from 2001 to 2002, increased by 10 percent. Statistics submitted by rural providers point to a 13 percent increase during the same time frame. The January and February 2003 statistics reveal that, like shelters, SHH providers have had to reject individuals for lack of resources. This data further suggests that the number of households needing assistance is rising at an alarming rate.

The grantees were further polled on the impact proposed budgetary cuts would have on their ability to operate. Preliminary findings paint a disappointing picture. Even though more than half of the ESG grantees who responded to this survey indicated that ESG comprises less than one-half of their budget, most stated that even a minor cut in their ESG funding (10 percent) would result in cuts to services and personnel. This impact was even more pronounced in the rural communities. Likewise, even though more than half of the SHH grantees who responded to this survey indicated that SHH comprises less than one-fourth of their budget, most stated that even a minor cut in their SHH funding (10 percent) would result in cuts to services and personnel. Many SHH grantees indicated that more severe cuts would result in the elimination of their transitional housing programs. For more information, contact Jeannette Welsh at COHHIO at 614/280-1984 or [jeannetewelsh@cohhio.org](mailto:jeannetewelsh@cohhio.org).

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## Supreme Court Strikes Blow Against Affordable Housing

In a decision handed down late last month, the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled unanimously against a non-profit housing developer in an anti-NIMBY case. The *City of Cuyahoga Falls v. Buckeye Community Hope Foundation* involved a nonprofit organization attempting to build apartments for low- and moderate-income families in Cuyahoga Falls. The city, in which 99 percent of the residents are white, used racial stereotypes in a voter referendum campaign designed to overturn a decision to approve the project. While voters eventually rejected the plan by a 3-to-1 margin, the Ohio Supreme Court invalidated the referendum because its use violated the state Constitution.

The developer (Buckeye Community Hope Foundation) eventually secured new financing and built the project, which has been fully occupied since 2000. The case decided by the U.S. Supreme Court last month involves Buckeye's claim for financial and other damages incurred over three years as the validity of the referendum was tested in state court.

The Supreme Court's unanimous ruling amounts to a tacit endorsement of the referendum as a tool of NIMBYism and a stinging rebuke to affordable housing developers nationwide. The Court wrote: "There is nothing procedurally defective about conditioning the right to build low-income housing on the outcome of a popular referendum." Community opponents can now install and use referendum processes as an additional tool to delay or stop construction of affordable housing.

For affordable housing developers already stretched thin trying to secure zoning approval through local commissions and city councils and struggling to assemble multiple sources of financing, the specter of having to defend hard-won gains through a highly politicized referendum may be enough to discourage them from trying to build anywhere they encounter the slightest resistance. The Supreme Court's decision will make it even more difficult to address the nation's affordable housing crisis.

For additional information, visit <http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/01-1269.ZS.html>

NEWS BRIEFS

Fair Housing Month

April is Ohio Fair Housing Month and National Fair Housing Month. By observing Fair Housing Month, communities can demonstrate a commitment to keeping the door of equal opportunity open; pledge to vigorously enforce fair housing laws to assure equal treatment of all Ohioans; and provide citizens with the knowledge that everyone has a real opportunity to live in decent, affordable housing. Questions regarding Fair Housing Month should be directed to Joyce Hill, Office of Housing Community Partnerships, in the Ohio Department of Development, at 614/466-2285 or at jhill@odod.state.oh.us.

Interagency Council on Homeless Has New Chair

HUD Secretary Mel Martinez has passed the Council Chair position to Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson. The transition marks the first time in the Council's 16-year history that anyone other than a HUD Secretary has chaired the Council. As part of the meeting, Thompson released HHS's Comprehensive Plan to End Chronic Homelessness, "Ending Chronic Homelessness: Strategies for Action." The plan is designed to reshape the department's programs to meet the Administration's goal of ending chronic homelessness in 10 years. The plan is available at http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/homelessness/strategies03/index.htm.

Budget Underfunds Vouchers by 137,000

A new analysis that the Administration's fiscal year 2004 budget proposal for housing vouchers would leave 137,000 vouchers unfunded, including many that are likely to be in use. A report by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities shows that the underfunding is a result of several factors including HUD's expectation that the average cost of a voucher will be lower than most analysts believe, and a decision to fund only a certain percentage of vouchers, instead of funding all of the vouchers that can be used under current law. The Administration's proposal would grant HUD the authority to waive almost any regulation dealing with the voucher program. It would also impose a minimum rent of \$50 for any household except those headed by an elderly member or a person with a long-term disability. The minimum would apply regardless of any hardships such as job loss, death in the family, or short-term disability. The analysis also shows that 2004 is the first budget in many years that did not request a significant amount of new vouchers. The request included only 5,500 new vouchers for persons with disabilities who are displaced from public housing, and only if there are funds available after all other renewal vouchers have been funded. For a copy of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities analysis, see www.cbpp.org/3-27-03hous.pdf.

Welfare Reform and Housing

HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research has released a report investigating the repercussions of welfare reform on recipients of housing assistance. *Impacts of Welfare Reform on Recipients of Housing Assistance: Evidence from Indiana and Delaware* uses data from the study of welfare reform and housing in those two states as indicators of more general patterns of the connections between welfare reform and housing assistance. According to 2001 HUD and HHS (Department of Health and Human Services) data, about 30 percent of families on welfare receive federal housing assistance (Section 8, vouchers, and public housing). When assessing the impact of welfare reform on welfare recipients with housing assistance, the study finds that welfare reform increased earnings and employment, decreased TANF and food stamp payments, and increased the rate of families moving to "self-sufficiency." The report also finds that when those welfare recipients who receive housing assistance are exposed to welfare reform, the length of time spent living in public housing or using vouchers has a direct impact on their employment, earnings and future need for welfare assistance. The evidence suggests that the longer time a welfare recipient lives in public housing or uses vouchers, earnings and job stability increase while need for welfare decreases. From these key findings, the report indicates that welfare reform increases employment and earnings of welfare recipients who received housing assistance. Additionally, the report's non-experimental analysis suggests that additional time in housing assistance may increase recipients' employment and decrease need for welfare. This analysis highlights the importance and benefits of housing assistance in the lives of welfare recipients. For a copy of the report, visit www.huduser.org/publications/commdev1/welfare\_reform.html.

NEWS BRIEFS continued

Lifetime Television to Raise Awareness About Youth Homelessness

On April 7, Lifetime premiered the Lifetime Original Movie, Homeless to Harvard: The Liz Murray Story, with encore presentations to follow throughout the month of April. The movie, which is based on a true-life story, will be accompanied by an educational campaign to increase awareness about the issues and solutions of homelessness and promote youth empowerment. As part of this campaign, the National Alliance to End Homelessness and Girls Inc. have partnered with Lifetime to develop the Homeless to Harvard educational toolkit, which includes factsheets and activities to facilitate discussion. To request a toolkit, contact Mishaela Duran at NAEH at mduren@naeh.org. For more information regarding the movie, visit www.lifetime.com.

New Subcommittee on Substance Abuse and Mental Health

The U.S. Senate has created a new subcommittee to work on substance abuse and mental health issues. The new subcommittee will be part of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP). It will have jurisdiction over any legislation covering the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA). The Chairman of the subcommittee will be Ohio Senator, Mike Dewine.

HUD Launches Program to Create More Barrier-Free Housing

A U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development initiative recently announced will allow homebuilders, developers, architects and designers to have access to the latest training and technical guidance on how to comply with accessible design and construction requirements of the Fair Housing Act. HUD has dubbed its comprehensive campaign, which includes formal training, a web site and a technical guidance resource center, Fair Housing Accessibility FIRST. For more information, visit www.fairhousingfirst.org.

Cincinnati Takes Steps to Become Less Segregated

According to a November 2002 report of the U.S. Census Bureau, Cincinnati is the sixth most segregated city in the country. Taking aggressive steps to change that image, the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority has recently bought and built homes in surrounding Hamilton County as a way of giving low-income residents, many of whom are African-American more choice about where to live. But suburban lawmakers and residents have begun to resist, some openly campaigning to save decrepit, inner-city public housing units from the wrecking ball as a means of stopping the movement into the suburbs. Eleven suburbs have rejected federal housing and community development funding, which requires affirmative efforts to further fair housing, rather than accept low-income units. For more information, contact Donald Troendle, CMHA, at 513/721-4580. Reprinted from The Nimby Report, National Low Income Housing Coalition, March 2003.

The Ohio Community Development Finance Fund is accepting applications for the following programs:

- PreDevelopment Program - provides community-based nonprofits funds for "soft costs" of specific projects.
- PreDevelopment Section 8 Program - provides zero-interest loans to nonprofits that wish to pursue ownership and/or management of Section 8 properties.
- Economic Development Grant - provides community-based nonprofits with funds for construction/equipment for economic development and commercial revitalization projects.
- Linked Deposit Fund - a tool/product that is used to reduce the interest rate on permanent financing and provides community-based nonprofit developers access to affordable financing from local lenders for housing and economic development projects.
- Child Care Capital Fund - available to Head Start agencies, and is a resource for the financing of real estate projects.

Applicants must be a member of the Finance Fund. Detailed information about products and programs is available at www.financefund.org. Potential applicants are encouraged to call the Finance Fund to discuss their project with a Program Associate before submitting an application at 614/221-1114.

## Resources

### EVENTS

*April 24 - Fair Housing Awards, Luncheon and Workshop Series, Northeast Ohio Fair Housing Alliance, Mentor.* For more information, contact Kasey Greer at 216/621-5397 or [kgreer@cuyahogaplan.org](mailto:kgreer@cuyahogaplan.org).

*April 25 - Legal Strategies to End Homelessness: The Right to Housing, National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty and Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions, Washington, DC.* For more information, visit [www.nlchp.org](http://www.nlchp.org).

*April 28-29, National Low Income Housing Coalition Annual Housing Policy Conference, Washington, DC.* For more information, visit [www.nlihc.org](http://www.nlihc.org).

*Building Doctor Clinics.* The Ohio Historic Preservation Office is offering eight two-day free clinics: May 1-2 - Canal Fulton; May 29-30 - Marietta; June 12-13 - Toledo; June 26-27 - Germantown; July 10-11 - Bryan; July 31 - August 1 - Lynchburg; August 28-29 - Cincinnati; and October 23-24 - Centerville. The clinics are designed to help solve common old building problems and help owners make informed repair and improvement decisions. Old buildings are defined as structures built before 1950. Each clinic begins with a seminar about roof repair, window replacement, alterations, and additions. The next day the building doctors tour ailing buildings within five miles of the host community to examine problems and prescribe cures. Interested participants must register to attend a clinic or request a visit by the building doctors. Contact OHPO at 800/499-2470 or visit their web page at [www.ohiohistory.org/resource/histpres/programs/builddocregistration.html](http://www.ohiohistory.org/resource/histpres/programs/builddocregistration.html).

*FIRSTLINK Spring trainings, Columbus.* FIRSTLINK is offering several trainings and workshops in April and May. Topics include - Grantwriting, How to Start a Nonprofit, Basic Website Design, Building a Communication Foundation, Effective Speaking, Nonprofit Organization and a Volunteer Management Series. For more information, contact William McCulley at FIRSTLINK at 614/221-6766, ext. 123 or at [training@firstlink.org](mailto:training@firstlink.org)

*October 15-17 - Ohio Housing Conference, Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing and the Ohio Housing Finance Agency, Hyatt Regency, Columbus.* For more information, contact Kelly Jo Marks at [kmarks@kjmpr.com](mailto:kmarks@kjmpr.com) or Michael Pooley at [mpooley@odod.state.oh.us](mailto:mpooley@odod.state.oh.us).

### PUBLICATIONS

The Ohio Legal Rights Service (OLRS) has recently produced a three-part publication entitled: *The Housing Guides: The Report on Housing; Information on Housing; and Advocating for Housing.* The guides are designed to help people with disabilities who need housing and housing information. The housing guides' primary purpose is to impart self-advocacy skills to people with disabilities and their family members. To receive a free copy of *The Housing Guides*, visit [www.state.oh.us/olrs](http://www.state.oh.us/olrs) and select "Publications" or call 800/282-9181 or TTY 800/728-2553.

*America's Best and Worst Lenders: A Consumer's Guide to Lending in 25 Metropolitan Areas, National Community Reinvestment Coalition,* ranks banks, thrifts, mortgage companies and credit unions on the percentage of home purchase and refinance loans they made to minorities, women and low- and moderate-income borrowers and neighborhoods. For a copy, contact Rachel Maleh at NCRC at 202/628-8866 or at [rmaleh@ncrc.org](mailto:rmaleh@ncrc.org).

*Alone Without A Home: A State-by-State Guide to Laws Affecting Unaccompanied Youth, National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty and the National Network for Youth.* The resource offers a guide to legal trends and state and territorial statutes and makes policy recommendations relating to: definitions of child, youth and runaway; youth in need of services; status offences, including running away, truancy and curfews; emancipation; rights of youth to enter contracts; definitions and consequences of harboring runaway youth; and services and shelters for unaccompanied youth. Also included are summaries and legal citations for relevant laws in each state. For more information, visit [www.nlchp.org](http://www.nlchp.org).

*A Guide to Federal Housing and Community Development Programs for Small Towns and Rural Areas, Housing Assistance Council.* The updated guide summarizes key facts, indicates important details like what income levels a program can serve, and tells readers where to find more information. The guide is available at [www.ruralhome.org](http://www.ruralhome.org). Printed copies are available for \$7 each.

*Women and Housing: A Status Report, McAuley Institute.* Families headed by women represent a growing segment of American households. Compared to the number of households headed by men that face high costs and low-quality housing, women-headed households disproportionately have housing problems. For more information, visit [www.mcauley.org](http://www.mcauley.org).



**NATIONAL LOW INCOME  
HOUSING COALITION/NLIHC**

Come to NLIHC's Annual Housing Policy Conference and Lobby Day in Washington this April 28 & 29 to learn, to educate, to network, to organize, to celebrate, and to make a difference. More information and online registration at [www.nlihc.org](http://www.nlihc.org) or call 202 662-1530, ext 245.

*Holes in the Safety Net: Mainstream Systems and Homelessness, Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation.* The report reveals research and insights on how mainstream systems - publicly funded systems that serve low-income people - can be improved to better serve those eligible for their care and hence play a major role in preventing and ending homelessness. The report includes examples of strategies that have been implemented at the state and national levels to break down the barriers of such systems in serving people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The report provides data on the effectiveness and outcomes of these initiatives where possible and suggests ways philanthropic organizations can play a role in further progress to be made. To view the report, go to [www.SchwabFoundation.org/article122.html](http://www.SchwabFoundation.org/article122.html).

**FUNDING**

*Candle Foundation.* Makes grants up to \$10,000 for specific projects or programs in community investment, and hunger and homelessness. Visit [www.candle.com/www1/cnd/portal/CNDportal\\_Channel\\_Master/0,2938,2683\\_2933,00.html](http://www.candle.com/www1/cnd/portal/CNDportal_Channel_Master/0,2938,2683_2933,00.html).

*Lowes Charitable and Educational Foundation.* Accepting proposals for community improvement initiatives in communities served by Lowe's Home Improvement stores. Visit [www.lowes.com](http://www.lowes.com) and type "Charitable" in the Search feature.

*Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program.* The Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Services (VETS) is providing grants to provide employment, training, supportive services and assistance to veterans experiencing homelessness. Application deadline is April 21, 2003. For more information, visit [www.access.gpo.gov/su\\_docs/fedreg/a030305c.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fedreg/a030305c.html).

*Strengthening Access and Retention Cooperative Agreements, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.* Up to 14 cooperative agreements are available to help improve client access to and retention in substance abuse treatment. The funding is designed to promote the "No Wrong Door" approach to treatment by providing access to treatment for persons with substance abuse disorders, as well as consistent communication and collaboration among service providers and use of evidence-based treatment practices. Application deadline is May 12, 2003. For more information, visit [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov).

**AWARDS**

*Governor's Awards for Excellence in Housing and Community Development, Office of Housing and Community Partnerships (OHCP), Ohio Department of Development.* OHCP presents the awards annually to acknowledge innovative programs, projects and policies implemented using OHCP-awarded federal and state funds. The nomination form is posted at [www.odod.state.oh.us/cdd/ohcp](http://www.odod.state.oh.us/cdd/ohcp). Submission deadline is June 6, 2003. Questions should be directed to Les Warner at 614/466-2285 or at [lwerner@odod.state.oh.us](mailto:lwerner@odod.state.oh.us).

*Bollinger Foundation.* Provides financial assistance to families of economic development, community development, and public housing workers. Financial assistance is available for the education and support of children who have lost a parent or guardian. Attention and consideration is given only to families where the deceased or surviving parent or guardian worked in the field of public housing, community development, or economic development. Submission deadline is May 27, 2003. For more information, visit [www.iedconline.org/BollingerFoundation/index.html](http://www.iedconline.org/BollingerFoundation/index.html) or contact John Dolan at 202/223-4745.

**JOBS**

*Regional Housing Development Director, Mercy Housing System, Cincinnati.* Provide overall direction for the housing development projects in the region including identifying new development opportunities, project feasibility assessment, supervising project developers, and assisting them with on-going project management and development activities. Qualifications: Education - master's degree in economics, planning or related field preferred or equivalent experience; Experience - minimum of six years experience in planning, housing development or related field required. Successful completion of at least five multi-family/senior/special needs housing development projects required. One to three years of supervisory experience required. For more information, contact Stan Keasling at 916/414-4427 or visit their web page at [www.mercyhousing.org](http://www.mercyhousing.org).

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**Worry-Free Advocacy Workshop in Cleveland on April 29**

The Alliance for Justice is presenting a workshop to help nonprofit organizations comply with the rules governing lobbying and election-related activity. Although nonprofit organizations know that they need to speak out on policy issues at the federal, state, and local levels, some have trouble understanding the laws that govern that advocacy work. This day-long workshop, sponsored by the Alliance for Justice along with the National Council of Nonprofit Associations, the Ohio Association of Nonprofit Organizations, and the League of Conservation Voters, will explain how nonprofits can maximize their advocacy while staying within the law. The workshop will be held in Cleveland on April 29 from 8:30 to 4:15 pm at the Cleveland Foundation Conference Center (1422 Euclid Ave., Suite 1300). A \$30 registration fee covers lunch and all materials (including a copy of the Alliance's book "Being a Player: A Guide to the IRS Lobbying Regulations for Advocacy Charities"). Register online at [www.allianceforjustice.org/nonprofit/worryfree.html](http://www.allianceforjustice.org/nonprofit/worryfree.html).

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Do you currently receive *Breaking Ground* by mail?  
If so, please switch to email delivery. To switch,  
email Susan Francis at COHHIO at  
[susanfrancis@cohhio.org](mailto:susanfrancis@cohhio.org).

## Order The Updated 2003 COHHIO Directory of Services

COHHIO's *Directory of Services*, a listing of non-profit housing organizations and homeless service providers in Ohio, is now available. The Directory is organized by county and lists over 900 programs that serve homeless Ohioans as well as provide housing and economic development opportunities for other low-income families and individuals. The Directory includes organizations that provide emergency shelter, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, health and mental health care, shelter for youth and victims of domestic violence, fair housing counseling, housing development expertise and permanent housing.

If you are interested in purchasing a copy of the COHHIO Directory of Services, please complete the order form below and return with payment to COHHIO.

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Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ copy/copies of the Directory of Services at \$15.00 per copy or \$35.00 for three copies (cost includes handling and postage).

Total Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Send Directory To:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to COHHIO, and mail with this form to: 35 East Gay Street, Suite 210, Columbus, Ohio 43215-3138; (614) 280-1984. Federal Identification No.: 31-1189029

### Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio Membership

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Individual: \_\_\_\_\_ \$35 (Regular) \_\_\_\_\_ \$75 (Benefactor) \_\_\_\_\_ \$250 (Sustainer)  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$10 (Low-Income) \_\_\_\_\_ Fee Waiver Requested

Agency (according to budget):  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$35 (\$100,000 or less) \_\_\_\_\_ \$75 (\$100,001 - \$250,000)  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$125 (\$250,001 - \$500,000) \_\_\_\_\_ \$200 (\$500,001 - \$1 million)  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$250 (\$1 million-\$1.5 million) \_\_\_\_\_ \$300 (over \$1.5 million)

Please send your tax deductible check to COHHIO at 35 E. Gay St, Ste. 210, Columbus, Ohio 43215.

Thank you for your support!

## AmeriCorps Welcomes New Members and a New Leader

### Welcome to Gwen, the new AmeriCorps Leader

We would like to welcome our new AmeriCorps Staying Home Program Leader, Gwendolyn Garth. Gwen served her first year of AmeriCorps with the Cleveland Mediation Center working at homelessness prevention. In March, she relocated to Columbus to take the AmeriCorps Leader position. Her responsibility will be to provide leadership to the first year Members, as well as to the thirteen second-year Members. We look forward to a great year with Gwen on board here at COHHIO.

### Welcome to COHHIO's 2003 AmeriCorps Members

Because of the "Enrollment Pause", our January start-up was delayed until March. We appreciate the patience and the dedication of the Members to hold on during this difficult period. At this time, we would like to WELCOME them! Their names and their agencies in which they work are as follows:

**Access, Inc., Akron**

Jaime Beadnell, Jennifer Powell, Barbara Purdum

**Bridging The Gap, Cleveland**

Sabrina Otis, Thomas Lewis, Paul Morris, Janice Cherkes

**Catholic Charities, Norwalk**

Amy Hayes

**Cleveland Mediation Center**

Linda Matthews, Tabatha Walton

**Community Action Program of Mansfield**

LaTanya Rainey

**Council for Economic Opportunities in Greater Cleveland**

Tina Ward

**FOCUS, Toledo**

Larry Heard, Jeremy Wood, Edith Grant

**Good Works, Inc., Athens**

Thomas Ryan-Hirst

**Harbor Light, Cleveland**

Wendy Rigo, Henry McCullough, Daniel Pierce

**Hope House, Findlay**

Mary Lantz

**Liberty Center, Fremont**

Paula Oliver

**Lutheran Social Services, Lancaster**

Regina Jones

**Ottawa County Transitional Housing, Inc., Port Clinton**

Cori Crawford, Amanda Gresh

**Ottawa Residential Services, Inc., Port Clinton**

Angela Gerbick

**Portage Area Transitional Housing, Ravenna**

Kim Lambert, Heather Miller, Laura Mann

**RESTOC, Cincinnati**

Anthony Gendrew, Angela Best

**Rural Appalachian Housing Development, Glouster**

Michael Broderick, Caroline Frech, Sarah Plesset, Timothy Stephens, Ron Toth

**The Other Place, Dayton**

Ross Cunningham, Trudy Goldsmith

**Tri-County Community Action Agency, Nelsonville**

Christopher Malcolm

**WSOS Community Action Commission, Fremont**

Robin Cover, Adrienne Skabina, Michelle Bradford, Wendy Ohler

**YWCA - IHN of Columbus**

Burhan Dahir

How to Contact...

**NATIONAL**

**National Coalition for the Homeless:** [www.nationalhomeless.org](http://www.nationalhomeless.org)

**National Community Reinvestment Coalition:** [www.ncrc.org](http://www.ncrc.org)

**National Low Income Housing Coalition:** [www.nlihc.org](http://www.nlihc.org)

**President Bush** - 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20500; 202/456-1414; 202/456-2461 (fax); [president@whitehouse.gov](mailto:president@whitehouse.gov)

**Senators Voinovich & DeWine** - United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510

Voinovich - 202/224-3353; 202/228-1382 (fax); [voinovich@voinovich.senate.gov](mailto:voinovich@voinovich.senate.gov)

DeWine - 202/224-2315; 202/224-6519 (fax); [senator\\_dewine@dewine.senate.gov](mailto:senator_dewine@dewine.senate.gov)

**Representatives** - United States House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515; 202/224-3121

**STATE**

**Governor Taft** - 77 South High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215; 614/466-3555; 614/466-9354 (fax)

**Ohio Senate** - State House, Columbus, Ohio 43266-0604; 614/644-5466 (fax-R); 614/644-1982 (fax - D)

**Ohio House of Representatives** - 77 South High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215; 614/644-9494 (fax)

Legislative Directories are available by contacting us: COHHIO - 35 East Gay Street, Suite 210, Columbus, Ohio 43215-3138; 614/280-1984; 614/463-1060 (fax); [www.cohhio.org](http://www.cohhio.org).

COHHIO Staff

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Susan Francis, Communications and Development Coordinator - [susanfrancis@cohhio.org](mailto:susanfrancis@cohhio.org)

Gwen Garth, AmeriCorps Leader - [gwengarth@cohhio.org](mailto:gwengarth@cohhio.org)

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**Newsletter of the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO)**

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COHHIO is a coalition of organizations and individuals committed to ending homelessness and to promoting decent, safe, fair, affordable housing for all, with a focus on assisting low-income people and those with special needs.