

Breaking Ground

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

..... March 2005

Bush Administration Chooses Tax Cuts Over Funding Basic Programs

As the numbers from the Bush Administration’s 2006 federal budget proposal are examined, it is clear that tax cuts for the wealthy are a priority while funding basic safety net programs are not. In addition, Congress is preparing to act on spending cap legislation. This means that federal funding limits on housing and other programs could be set soon. These caps are not only for 2006 but good through 2010. The White House funding proposal strikes a major blow to low-income working Americans. If Bush's version of the budget is adopted there will be an \$18 billion cut in domestic programs in 2006 leading to an eventual cut of \$214 billion by 2010 according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. It has taken advocates some time to figure these numbers out because the White House Office of Management and Budget failed to give Congress or the news media information on the proposed spending on most domestic programs beyond the coming year. Here’s what you can do. 1) Send a letter to your Representative telling them to protect housing programs in the President’s budget proposal. 2) Send a letter to Senators Voinovich and DeWine thanking them for expressing their support for CDBG in a “Dear Colleague” letter. And finally, check back to the COHHIO web page often for updates at www.cohhio.org.

Rally Scheduled to Protest Taft’s State Budget Cuts

A statewide rally is scheduled for April 12 to protest Taft’s budget proposal to cut social service programs and to offer tax cuts that will benefit the wealthy. The rally will be held at the Statehouse from 11:00 am - 2 pm on April 12th. Plan to join with other Ohioans who believe that important programs and services such as health care, hunger, senior services and the disabled must be preserved in the state budget. Transportation is being organized in the major Ohio cities. For more information, contact Cathy Johnston at cathyjohnston@cohhio.org or 614-280-1984. Check the COHHIO web page regularly at www.cohhio.org for updates on the rally, as well as analysis of the state budget.

Materials to Fight TEL (Tax & Expenditure Limits)

In addition to the TEL talking points posted on the COHHIO web page (www.cohhio.org), you can also download the endorsement form to oppose TEL. TEL places an artificial cap on local and state spending, which would dramatically limit state investment in education, health care, services for seniors, environmental protection, libraries, economic development activities and many other public services that improve the quality of life for all Ohioans. You can also see a list of organizations that have signed the endorsement form. As of February 20th, there were nearly 370 organizations that had endorsed. For more information on TEL, contact Cathy Johnston at cathyjohnston@cohhio.org or 614-280-1984.

COHHIO Annual Conference and Legislative Action Day - April 4-6, 2005

COHHIO’s Annual Conference and Legislative Action Day are scheduled for April 4-6 at the Hyatt on Capitol Square in Columbus. The conference will include keynote speakers, including Greg Palast, who is known for his award-winning investigative reports for BBC television and for his New York Times bestseller, *The Best Democracy Money Can Buy*. Palast has been a guest on *Politically Incorrect*, CSPAN’s *Washington Journal*, and does regular investigative reports for BBC’s *Newsnight*. His writings have appeared in such publications as *The Washington Post*, *Harper’s*, and *The Nation*. The conference also will offer several workshops of interest. The conference brochure is available on the COHHIO web page at www.cohhio.org. COHHIO’s Legislative Action Day on Wednesday, April 6 will be somewhat different than past years. We are planning on concentrating our efforts on the state Senate. Also, legislators will not be attending the breakfast. So individual appointments are more vital this year. We urge you to schedule an appointment with your State Senator from 10 am -3 pm on April 6th. Specific housing talking points will be available closer to the event. For additional information or to coordinate efforts in your community, contact Cathy Johnston at cathyjohnston@cohhio.org or 614-280-1984.



Federal Banking Regulator Walks Away from Responsibility

The Office of Thrift Supervision (OTS) recently struck a blow against the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA). It issued a final rule implementing its proposal to allow large thrifts with assets above \$1 billion to design their own CRA exams. Lending must count for 50 percent of the total grade, but the other 50 percent can be any combination of lending, investment, and services. As a result, large thrifts can eliminate their service and investment tests. The OTS issued this ruling despite receiving 4,000 comments in opposition. It received only 200 letters from the industry and not all of those letters were in support. Twenty eight members of Congress and 45 Mayors opposed the proposal. No letters from elected officials were in support of the proposal. For more information, visit www.ncrc.org.

Ohio Elections Officials Testify Before Federal Panel

On February 23, the U.S. Election Assistance Commission convened a public hearing at The Ohio State University's Moritz College of Law. Among others, Secretary of State J. Kenneth Blackwell and Michael Vu, Director of Cuyahoga County Board of Elections, provided testimony on Ohio's provisional balloting procedures leading up to the election, as well as on Election Day. There were sharp distinctions in their accounts. While Secretary Blackwell reported that Ohio's provisional balloting process should be viewed as a national model, Director Vu countered Ohio's process was confusing and not a model for other states. Director Vu then laid out a five point plan for improving provisional balloting in the state. For more information, visit www.zwire.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=14024133&BRD=1698&PAG=461&dept_id=21849&rfi=6.

HUD Revises FY 2005 Fair Market Rents and Income Limits

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has revised the Fair Market Rents (FMRs) for Fiscal Year 2005 for a limited number of areas. FMRs determine the level of assistance that local housing authorities can provide to families and individuals who use Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers or other low-income housing programs. According to HUD, the FMRs released "still use the FY2004 FMRs, but several areas have been updated on HUD random digit dialing surveys and additional data files by commenters." HUD also recently released median family income and income distribution estimates for fiscal year 2005. The estimated median family income for the U.S. for FY 2005 is \$58,000. "Extremely low income," or 30 percent of the median (nationwide), works out to a single person making approximately \$8.70 per hour working full-time all year. For complete information on HUD's final revised Fair Market Rents, see www.huduser.org/datasets/fmr.html and <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-3814.htm>. For full information on HUD's FY 2005 income limits, see www.huduser.org/datasets/il/il05/index.html.

House Reorganizes Appropriations Subcommittees

Accepting a proposal by new Appropriations Committee Chair Jerry Lewis (R-Calif.), the House of Representatives has disbanded the Committee's VA-HUD and Independent Agencies Subcommittee and two other panels. The Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, which controls spending for USDA rural housing, is not affected. HUD's spending bills will now be combined with those for the Transportation and Treasury Departments. So far, Senate Republican appropriators have not made corresponding changes. If the Senate keeps the current appropriations structure, passage of annual spending bills will become much more complicated. Rep. Joe Knollenberg (R-Mich.) is chair of the new Transportation-Treasury-HUD Subcommittee and John Olver (D-Mass.) is ranking member. Ralph Regula is the only Ohio representative serving on the House Committee. Chairs and Democratic ranking members on other housing panels are expected to remain the same as in the last Congress.

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.

National Housing Trust Fund Update

The American Bar Association (ABA) House of Delegates has approved the Commission on Homelessness and Poverty’s policy recommendation to support the National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF). The Commission and the ABA Governmental Affairs Office will now begin lobbying in support of the NHTF on Capitol Hill. The ABA will send letters of support of the NHTF to Capitol Hill and also visit members of Congress. In its recommendation, the ABA supported the NHTF with three essential points included: that the NHTF be sufficiently funded, targeted to those at or below 30 percent of AMI (area median income), and not serve as a substitute for or diminish other federal programs. The ABA is a welcome and powerful addition to the strength of the NHTF Campaign, which now has over 5,380 endorsers. For more information, visit www.nhtf.org.

Funding Offered for Manufactured Housing

As part of Innovations in Manufactured Homes (I’M HOME), a new initiative to help manufactured housing residents build assets, the Corporation for Enterprise Development is soliciting proposals from organizations to use manufactured housing in their communities. A 1:1 match is required. Concept papers, the first step in the application process, are due April 15. Details and the RFP are at www.cfed.org/go/imhome/. Questions can be e-mailed to imhome@cfed.org.

Treating People with Co-Occurring Disorders

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has released a new protocol for providing substance abuse treatment for people with co-occurring disorders (COD). The protocol advises the following when working with homeless people with COD: address the housing needs of clients; help clients obtain housing; teach client skills for maintaining housing; work closely with shelter workers and other provider services to the homeless; and address real-life issues in addition to housing, such as substance abuse treatment, legal and pending criminal justice issues, Supplemental Security Insurance/entitlement applications, issues related to children, and healthcare needs. The protocol also noted the importance of housing and discharge planning. To order a copy of “Substance Abuse Treatment for Persons with Co-Occurring Disorders: Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) 42,” go to: <http://store.health.org/catalog/productDetails.aspx?ProductID=16979>. An online version will be available soon.

HUD Programs in 2005

HUD has published *Programs of HUD*, which provides descriptions of the Department’s major mortgage, grant, assistance, and regulatory programs. Each description includes the nature of the program, applicant eligibility, legal authority, administering office, information source, and current activity status. Available at www.huduser.org/whatsnew/ProgramsHUD05.pdf.

Strategies for States to Promote Affordable Housing

A report from the National Governor’s Association outlines six basic strategies for combining affordable housing with state economic development policy for Governors who wish to make housing a priority in their state. The strategies discussed include: coordinating programs and resources; proactively linking housing and development policies; promoting redevelopment of older neighborhoods; reducing the regulatory costs of housing development; implementing zoning reform to promote affordable housing; and building community and family stability through housing initiatives. Available at www.nga.org/center/divisions/1,1188,C_ISSUE_BRIEF^D_7528,000.html.

Survey Finds Communities are Struggling to Meet Hunger and Homeless Needs

The National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness has published the results of a survey entitled “*Communities in Crisis: A Survey of Hunger and Homelessness in America.*” The survey found that the number of people experiencing hunger and homelessness is increasing rapidly, while at the same time government funding for services to meet the needs of this population has been steadily decreasing, resulting in a deficit of resources to provide assistance to needy Americans. The survey of 900 emergency food and shelter providers found that in the past year 74 percent of agencies surveyed reported an increase in requests for food assistance while 65 percent reported an increase in requests for shelter. Available at www.nscanh.org/hunger.asp?id2=15761.

2005 Appropriations Cuts 83,000 Vouchers

This year's appropriation for the Section 8 Housing Voucher Program will result in the loss of nearly 83,000 vouchers, according to analysis from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. The appropriation law, enacted in December, created a funding formula based on the number of vouchers that were in use during the summer of 2004, adjusted for inflation and tenant protection vouchers (which replace other types of HUD housing assistance). HUD recently sent a letter to Public Housing Authorities saying that they would fund 96 percent of that formula. To view the analysis, go to www.cbpp.org/2-11-05hous.htm.

Gentrification Not Just an Urban Experience

Rural gentrification is a growing concern, according to a report from the Housing Assistance Council (HAC). Moreover, the report indicates that gentrification has different causes and affects in rural places than in urban centers. The study finds that rural counties are experiencing increased population due to immigration and an increase of housing production, but a decrease in affordable housing and an increase in housing need among low-income residents. *They Paved Paradise...Gentrification in Rural Communities* can be found at www.ruralhome.org/manager/uploads/Gentrification.pdf.

Online Calculator of Family Resources

The National Center for Children in Poverty at Columbia University has developed a *Family Resources Simulator* that enables users to enter household characteristics including location, employment status, eligibility for subsidies, health insurance costs, and child care expenses, to calculate estimated expenses, proportion of family income from different sources, and eligibility for various benefits at different income levels. Available at www.nccp.org/modeler/modeler.cgi.

Come Home Project

Come Home is a national missing person's locator program sponsored by Project Jason. Posters are placed at homeless shelters, soup kitchens, and other locations where homeless persons gather. Twice per month, a new poster is produced and this information relayed via email to Come Home participants nationwide. For more information, visit www.projectjason.org/comehome.html.

SuperNOFA Registration Process - Begin Now

If you plan to apply for HUD funding in 2005, your organization must go through a registration process and submit all applications electronically. This multi-step process can take from a few days to a few weeks to complete. It's a good idea to register now to avoid delays in your application process. To submit a HUD application, an organization must go through the following steps - identify or secure an organizational DUNS Number at www.dunandbradstreet.com or 866-705-5711; register with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR), which takes three days to receive CCR registration; register with Credential Provider for a Username and Password to securely submit an application, which takes approximately two weeks to receive; and register with Grants.gov, which will provide an e-mail confirmation. Each applicant must also download and install PureEdge Viewer (free software) available at Grants.gov to complete and submit applications electronically. More detailed information on the electronic submission process is available at www.grants.gov/getstarted. You can also call the Help Desk at 800-518-Grants. The Housing Assistance Council (HAC) is also organizing an online training to assist groups through the process. Information available at www.ruralhome.org. This requirement does not apply to the McKinney-Vento (Continuum of Care) Programs.

COHHIO Mailing List Updates Continue

Thank you to everyone that took the time to provide mailing list updates for our database. If the changes are not yet reflected with this mailing, we are working diligently to get all the updates entered into our database. We have already made over 1,500 updates within the past few weeks, and should have the rest made within the next few weeks. Thanks for your time in helping us keep our records up-to-date!

COHHIO's Vehicle Donation Program

COHHIO can now accept vehicle donations. This program is an easy way to support COHHIO's work. Donated vehicles may include cars, trucks, motorcycles, boats, or RV's. This program has been made possible through a partnership with the Volunteers of America of Central Ohio. Contact Susan Francis at COHHIO for more information at susanfrancis@cohhio.org or 614-280-1984. page 4 of 6

Calendar

- March 30 - April 1 - Courage and Compromise in Public Leadership, Ohio University Executive Leadership Institute, Athens. For more information, visit <http://oueli.voinovichcenter.ohio.edu/courage/index.html>.
- April 7 - Intellectual Property & Legal Issues, Center for Nonprofit Excellence, Akron. \$49. For more information, visit www.cfnpe.org/.
- April 7-8 - Promises & Pitfalls: As Consumer Finance Options Multiply, Who is Being Served and at What Cost?, Federal Reserve System, Washington, DC. For more information, visit www.bos.frb.org/commdev/conf/system/2005/promises.pdf.
- April 12 - Rally at the Statehouse, Columbus. Save Our Services - Empower Your Voice and Be Heard. 11 am - 2 pm. Join with other Ohioans who believe that important programs and services such as health care, hunger, senior services and the disabled must be preserved in the state budget. Transportation is being organized in the major Ohio cities. For more information, contact Cathy Johnston at cathyjohnston@cohhio.org or 614-280-1984 or visit www.cohhio.org/alerts/FlierforRally.pdf.
- April 13 - Columbus Coalition for the Homeless Annual Membership Meeting. For more information, visit www.columbushomeless.org.
- May 2-3 - National Low Income Housing Coalition Annual Housing Policy Conference and Lobby Day, Washington, DC. For more information, visit www.nlihc.org.
- May 4 - Advanced Board Training, Center for Nonprofit Excellence, Akron. \$25. For more information, visit www.cfnpe.org/.
- May 5 - OANO 11th Annual Conference, Columbus. For more information, visit www.oano.org.
- May 12 - Pricing Nonprofit Services, Center for Nonprofit Excellence, Akron. \$49. For more information, visit www.cfnpe.org/.

FIRSTLINK has announced their 2005 Spring Training Classes. More information is available at www.firstlink.org/public/professional/spring2005.php.

2005 COHHIO Annual Conference
Save the Date
April 4-6, 2005
Hyatt on Capital Square, Columbus
Get the conference brochure at www.cohhio.org.

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!

How to Contact...

NATIONAL

- Corporation for Supportive Housing:** www.csh.org
- National Alliance to End Homelessness:** www.endhomelessness.org
- National Coalition for the Homeless:** www.nationalhomeless.org
- National Community Reinvestment Coalition:** www.ncrc.org
- National Low Income Housing Coalition:** www.nlihc.org

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

Senators Voinovich & DeWine - United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510
Voinovich - 202/224-3353; 202/228-1382 (fax); voinovich@voinovich.senate.gov
DeWine - 202/224-2315; 202/224-6519 (fax); 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-Republicans); 614/644-1982 (fax - Democrats)
- 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.

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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.

Mailing address and email updates should go to susanfrancis@cohhio.org.