



EMBARGOED UNTIL 3 P.M., MAY 25, 2016

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Affordable Housing Out Of Reach for Low-Income Families in Ohio

Report Demonstrates Need To Expand Ohio Housing Trust Fund

Ohioans need to earn at least \$14.45 an hour in order to afford rent for a basic, two-bedroom apartment, according to a report jointly released Wednesday by the National Low Income Housing Coalition and the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio.

Every year the Washington, DC-based research and advocacy organization's *Out of Reach* report includes the updated Housing Wage, which illustrates the gap between what renters earn and what rents actually cost in every county and metropolitan area in the U.S.

"Ohioans' earnings have stagnated for years, but housing costs continue to rise. A single parent earning minimum wage would have to work 71 hours a week all year round to afford a two-bedroom apartment. And many low-wage jobs are part-time with schedules that vary from week-to-week, so it's not even possible to work that much," said Bill Faith, executive director of the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio. "This explains why we're seeing homelessness among working families."

The Housing Wage is an estimate of the full-time hourly wage that a household must earn to afford a basic apartment at fair market rent without spending more than 30% of income – the federal standard for housing affordability.

The report shows that even one-bedroom apartments in every county in Ohio are unaffordable for households surviving on the state minimum wage of \$8.10/hour. Fifty-five percent of minimum wage earners are at least 25 years old and typically have jobs in childcare, food services, hospitals and retail.

While housing costs fall most heavily on low-income Ohioans, increasing rents are also becoming burdensome for middle-income earners. The typical renter in Ohio earns \$12.17/hour, which is \$2.28/hour less than the hourly wage needed to afford a modest two-bedroom apartment in Ohio.

"The Out of Reach data reflect a grim reality across the nation. There is no place in the United States where a minimum wage worker can afford a two-bedroom apartment," said

Diane Yentel, president and CEO of the National Low Income Housing Coalition. “We as a nation must respond by investing in affordable housing for the lowest income households in America. The new national Housing Trust Fund is a critical solution, but it must be significantly expanded to address the need.”

Rather than wait for Congress to address the growing need for affordable housing, Ohio policymakers can act now to expand access to housing for homeless veterans, pregnant mothers at high risk of infant mortality, disabled Ohioans, foster youth and other vulnerable populations.

“As we approach Memorial Day, we see that we’re making steady progress toward eliminating homelessness among veterans because of a bipartisan agreement to invest significant resources to stop this national disgrace,” Faith said. “If we make a similar commitment to other vulnerable Ohioans, we eliminate homelessness for them too.”

COHHIO is calling for a significant expansion of the Ohio Housing Trust Fund, which supports hundreds of anti-homelessness and affordable housing programs throughout the state.

“The Ohio Housing Trust Fund has been a lifeline for chronically underfunded programs that have served more than one million Ohioans experiencing homelessness during its 25-year history. Moreover, every dollar the trust fund invests in affordable housing development generates a nearly \$15 return to the overall economy,” Faith said.

“Substantially expanding the trust fund would put a real dent in homelessness, which would reduce state spending on health care, schools, jails and courts, and it would help grow the Ohio’s economy,” he added.

For additional information:

NLIHC/COHHIO *Out of Reach 2016* Report: <http://www.nlihc.org/oor>

Ohio Housing Trust Fund Advocacy: http://cohhio.org/advocacy/issues_track

Ohio Housing Finance Agency’s Housing Needs Assessment:
<http://ohiohome.org/news/documents/2016-HousingNeedsAssessment.pdf>