

Sept. XX, 2021

Dear Gov. DeWine and Members of the Ohio General Assembly,

The recent economic upheaval, combined with rapidly increasing housing costs, have put many of our neighbors in precarious circumstances. Even before the pandemic, nearly 400,000 Ohio households were spending over half their income on rent, and that number has surely increased during the past year and a half.

Ohio's \$5.6 billion allocation of State and Local Fiscal Recovery (SLFR) funding provides an unprecedented opportunity to address housing insecurity. **We, the undersigned organizations, call on Gov. DeWine and the General Assembly to make a one-time investment of SLFR funds to preserve and increase the supply of affordable rental homes in Ohio.**

We propose investing at least \$391 million in SLFR funding in the following capital initiatives. This proposal was developed in accordance with the State's guidance that SLRF funds be used for one-time investments that bolster existing infrastructure without increasing ongoing operating costs, and must be obligated by Sept. 30, 2024 and fully expended by Sept. 30, 2026. While there may be other worthy programs that fit these criteria, any housing-related allocation of SLFR funding should, at minimum, include the following:

- \$150 million in gap financing through Ohio's housing tax credit programs to develop up to 1,000 units of permanent supportive housing to serve survivors of human trafficking and domestic violence, chronically homeless individuals with severe behavioral health challenges;
- \$150 million in gap financing to leverage the 4% housing tax credit and Multifamily Bond programs to develop and preserve up to 5,000 rental units that are affordable to lower-income Ohioans;
- \$45 million over three years to rehabilitate more homes for low-income homeowners through the CHIP program, and expand home repair and accessibility modifications through the Housing Assistance Grant Program to keep seniors and Ohioans with disabilities in their own homes;
- \$15 million to fund one-time capital projects that increase housing opportunities for homeless youth;
- \$12 million to expand the FUSE Initiative to house justice-involved Ohioans in five additional counties, and;
- \$6.75 million to expand the Healthy Beginnings at Home pilot for families at risk of infant mortality to four additional counties;

Other SLFR fund investments of at least \$12 million that should be considered include:

- Creation of a state-administered landlord risk mitigation fund to attract and retain more property owners willing to rent to individuals with disabilities and other challenges;

- Housing supports for people with developmental disabilities, which could include Smart Home investments to equip homes with technology needed to increase safety and self-sufficiency, and funding to build or purchase youth respite home facilities, and;
- Capital funding to preserve small permanent supportive housing properties, service enriched housing, and class 2 and 3 residential facilities.

We support this proposed one-time investment of Ohio's SLFR funds because it will create jobs and reduce state and local spending on other publicly-funded systems, such as hospitals, courts, schools, jails, homeless shelters, and foster care. In addition, it will significantly increase the supply of affordable homes for our most vulnerable neighbors – people with disabilities, low-income seniors, domestic violence survivors, youth aging out of foster care, and families at high risk of infant mortality.

Sincerely,