

Questions for state candidates

1. Homelessness

On any given night, nearly 11,000 Ohioans are experiencing homelessness—sleeping outside or in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program. **What should the state do to help end homelessness?**

As a social worker, I can speak very intentionally to this issue. Homelessness is a symptom of a society that is not providing a social safety net for its people. I believe in safer and healthier communities, which means providing basic resources, including affordable housing and fair wages; equitable access to high-quality medical and mental health resources; and ensuring that the environment people live in is healthy and free from violence. These factors all contribute greatly to homelessness, and by addressing these root causes, we can end homelessness in Ohio.

2. Housing Challenges in Rural Ohio

Although millions of Ohioans throughout the state have trouble paying their rent or mortgage, housing insecurity in rural areas is often overlooked. Resources for rural communities have decreased while housing issues have increased significantly. **How would you address the housing needs of our rural communities?**

When I talk about affordable housing, there are multiple points to address.

Affordability: Affordable housing means housing that people can live without spending so much money that they struggle to afford other basic necessities. One way to address the affordable housing problem in rural areas is to provide good job opportunities. If people have steady and solid pay, they will be able to pay rent or qualify for a better mortgage loan.

Access to loans: I will advocate for increasing access to low-interest housing loans for low-income, first-time, or even late-in-life home buyers who are looking to downsize but for whom the cost of moving is out of reach.

Supply investment: We must support an increase in housing supply for those who purchase housing independently and for those who are eligible for housing subsidies or vouchers. Intentionality should be brought to supporting home builders and landlords who are located within the state and maintain a connection with the local communities.

3. Ohio Housing Trust Fund (for state candidates only)

The Ohio Housing Trust Fund (OHTF) is the number one source of state funding for local affordable housing development and homelessness programs in the state. Each OHTF dollar generates over \$8 in economic activity. The OHTF has been historically funded through a 50-50 split with county recorder's fees, but revenues have declined in recent years. **Do you believe the state should ensure sufficient revenue for the OHTF? If so, how?**

The state should absolutely ensure sufficient revenue for the OHTF. Without the OHTF we will see agencies and municipalities struggle to provide key services that keep people housed. I can't think of a better way to take care of our neighbors than to allocate existing resources to increase affordable housing and reduce homelessness.

4. Additional Comments

Feel free to include any additional comments you may have about ways the state/federal government can reduce homelessness and/or expand access to affordable housing in Ohio.

There needs to be a concerted effort towards finding safe and affordable housing, and temporary housing for families with children.

I will advocate strongly in favor of increasing Ohio's social safety net to support holistic financial stability for our citizens, which will reduce major social issues such as poor health outcomes, unsafe neighborhoods, and access to basic needs such as housing.