

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?** To effectively address homelessness in Ohio, the state should implement a multifaceted approach that includes increasing affordable housing options, expanding access to mental health and addiction services, and enhancing support systems for low-income families. Investing in permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing programs can provide stability for those in need. Additionally, fostering collaboration between local governments, non-profit organizations, and community stakeholders can facilitate the development of comprehensive services tailored to the unique needs of the homeless population. By focusing on prevention, support, and long-term solutions, Ohio can make significant strides toward ending homelessness.

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?** To address the housing needs of rural communities in Ohio, it is essential to prioritize the development and funding of affordable housing initiatives specifically tailored to these areas. This can be achieved by increasing state and federal investment in rural housing programs, incentivizing private developers to build affordable units, and promoting the use of innovative housing solutions such as modular homes. Additionally, enhancing access to financial assistance programs for low-income families and increasing outreach efforts to raise awareness about available resources can help combat housing insecurity. Collaborating with local organizations and community leaders to identify and address specific housing challenges will ensure that solutions are effective and sustainable for rural residents.

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 generate over \$8 in economic activity. The OHTF has been historically funded through a 50-50 split with county recorders fees, but revenues have declined in

recent years. **Do you believe the state should ensure sufficient revenue for the OHTF? If so, how? Yes, the state should ensure sufficient revenue for the Ohio Housing Trust Fund (OHTF) to maintain and expand its critical role in supporting affordable housing and homelessness programs. This can be achieved by diversifying the funding sources beyond the current reliance on county recorder fees, which have proven to be unstable. The state could consider implementing a dedicated percentage of specific tax revenues, such as real estate transaction taxes or property taxes, to create a more stable funding stream. Additionally, advocating for increased state budget allocations and exploring public-private partnerships can enhance resources available for the OHTF. Ensuring consistent and robust funding will help maximize the economic impact of each dollar invested and address the pressing housing needs of Ohioans.**

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.