



ABOUT THE OHIO HOUSING TRUST FUND

The Ohio Housing Trust Fund is the primary source of state funding for homelessness and affordable housing services. The OHTF typically provides approximately \$65 million each year throughout Ohio's 88 counties to help support: homeless shelters and supportive housing operations; home repair and accessibility modifications for low-income homeowners, and rental housing development and rehabilitation.

History: After voters approved the constitutional amendment on Ohio Housing Assistance in 1990 (Article VIII, Section 16), the General Assembly passed implementing legislation creating the Ohio Housing Trust Fund with broad bipartisan support. In the early years, the legislature funded the OHTF using a variety of sources while working to identify a permanent funding stream. Three separate study committees convened by Governor Voinovich, Governor Taft, and the legislature itself all issued the same primary recommendation: create a Housing Trust Fund Fee that mirrors the county recorder fee so that revenue collected by recorders is divided 50-50 between counties and the OHTF. That proposal was adopted through legislation with strong bipartisan support in 2003.

OHTF Administration: State statute targets OHTF resources toward Ohio's neediest populations: at least 75% of the funds must help people at or below 50% of area median income with a preference for those below 35% of the area median income. State law also requires at least half of OHTF funding be awarded to rural areas.

A broad range of organizations can apply for OHTF resources, including nonprofits and private businesses. OHTF dollars are administered by the Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) and allocated based on recommendations by a seven-member advisory committee representing various real estate, lending, housing, and local government sectors.

ODOD makes awards based on a competitive application process for OHTF funding for homelessness and home repair services. The agency funds a wide range of local agencies, including Area Agencies on Aging, Community Action Agencies, local Habitat for Humanity chapters, and homeless shelters. Ohio Housing Finance Agency also invests OHTF dollars into housing development and community revitalization projects.

Funding Source: Housing Trust Fund Fee revenue, which is 50% of all recording fees collected, fluctuates from year-to-year based on the housing market. Annual OHTF fee collections have ranged from a high of \$73 million in fiscal year 2005 to a low of \$43 million in FY 2019. The FY 2024-2025 biennial budget set the appropriation authority for the OHTF up to \$65 million a year.

Human Impact: Local agencies use these dollars to create housing opportunities that greatly improve the lives of Ohioans living in precarious and unhealthy circumstances. In FY 2023, \$55 million in OHTF funds went to:

- Provide emergency shelter to 43,088 individuals experiencing homelessness, including seniors, children, and people with disabilities;
- Provide supportive housing for 2,473 formerly homeless households;
- Prevent homelessness for 2,180 households;
- Provide rapid rehousing to get 1,602 households quickly out of homelessness;
- Repair and modify 1,685 homes to keep low-income seniors and people with disabilities out of nursing homes, shelters, and other institutions, and;
- Develop and rehabilitate 305 affordable rental units.

Economic Impact: The OHTF has a positive impact on Ohio's economy. The \$45 million allocated during the most recent year leveraged \$167 million from banks and other private financing, local governments, and federal sources. In total, each dollar allocated generated \$9.55 in economic activity for Ohio based on analysis by OHFA. The OHTF created and supported 3,176 jobs annually.

Housing Need: Ohio has had a serious and growing affordable housing shortage for years, as the cost of rent has increased much faster than incomes for people working in low-wage jobs. Nearly 708,000 Ohioans spend over half their income on rent, according to OHFA's most recent Housing Needs Assessment. Ohio currently has a shortage of about 267,000 affordable units available to extremely low income renters.

Outlook: The OHTF is the state's only consistent source of funding to address homelessness and create housing access to the lowest income Ohioans living in rural, suburban, and urban areas throughout the state. High interest rates have greatly decreased fee revenue flowing into the OHTF in recent years, and county recorders' shift to digital and online document recording systems creates even greater uncertainty for future OHTF fee revenues. Diversifying revenue for the OHTF will reduce housing instability for vulnerable Ohioans – homeless families, women at risk of infant mortality, people with disabilities, and seniors who want to remain in their own homes.