

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?**

One major root cause of homelessness is mental health and substance use disorders. As a PhD nurse researcher, I know that we can have better outcomes for people with substance use disorders and mental health diagnoses when we approach them with compassion and provide access to evidence-based care. An example of my work on this subject is my bill to pilot a remote substance use disorder treatment program. This program is targeted at ensuring people have access to medication assisted treatment and support for substance use disorders. By increasing access to quality behavioral health services, mental health diagnoses and substance use disorders can be addressed before they spiral into a situation that could lead to homelessness. I am committed to continuing my work in the legislature to address the gaps in mental health and substance use disorder treatment.

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?**

Part of how I want to address the housing needs of our rural communities is through prioritizing these communities and allocating adequate resources to begin addressing the lack of affordable housing. Furthermore, by increasing wages, we can make housing affordable for more rural communities, many of which have high rates of people working on minimum wage.

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?**

Yes, I support the funding of the OHTF because it provides support to local governments and agencies who help with affordable housing and homelessness. As for how to provide such funding, I think that a key priority of the legislature should be to provide for those who need the most support. Currently, our budget spends millions of dollars on special projects that are great, but not exactly life or death. I propose taking some of that funding and shifting it over to make sure OHTF is funded.

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.