



Testimony for the Senate Finance Committee
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Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Burke, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on the critical importance of the Ohio Housing Trust Fund.

Enterprise is a national housing and community development nonprofit that improves communities and people's lives by making homes affordable. Over 35 years, Enterprise has created nearly 585,000 homes, invested \$43.6 billion, and touched millions of lives. We are proud members of the Home Matters to Ohio coalition.

Home Matters to Ohio is a coalition of organizations, from various sectors across the state, who understand that Ohio is facing a growing housing crisis. 1 in 4 Ohio renters – this means working families, seniors, veterans and other vulnerable populations - are paying more than half of their income toward housing. They are forced to make toxic trade-offs between a roof over their heads, medicine, food, and more. Bottom line: Thousands of Ohioans are struggling to afford decent, safe homes and the numbers only continue to increase.

The Ohio Housing Trust Fund is the state's primary and most significant resource for safe, decent, affordable housing. The Trust Fund has a more than 25-year history of reducing homelessness, repairing homes, and building affordable homes.

For example, in Cuyahoga County, the Trust Fund supports the Housing First Initiative. Housing First provides apartments and services for our most vulnerable residents – long-term homeless and disabled seniors, veterans, those struggling with mental illness and addiction, and more. Before Housing First, residents lived on the streets or in the shelters for months or even years. Housing First has resulted in an 73% reduction in long-term homelessness and an estimated \$6 million annual cost savings to our community. Thanks in large part to resources like the Trust Fund, Cuyahoga County is on pace to functionally end long-term homelessness by the end of 2020.

Despite these proven successes, the Trust Fund remains flat-funded while need continues to grow. Models like the Housing First Initiative prove that when we invest in homes through the Trust Fund, we are supporting the success of other state priorities like reducing costs in health care, homeless shelters, and the criminal justice system.

Expanding the Trust Fund not only fights homelessness and expands access to housing for all Ohioans – it is also an investment toward solving our state's most difficult problems.

Thank you for your consideration. Enterprise Community Partners, and the Home Matters to Ohio coalition, are available to answer any questions at mmcdermott@enterprisecommunity.org.