



Testimony before the House Finance Committee

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House Bill 181 – Proponent

Chairman Edwards, members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 181 to modernize county recording procedures and fees in a way that will position our state to respond to rising levels of housing insecurity.

I want to thank joint sponsors Rep. Hillyer and Rep. Williams for including the Ohio Housing Trust Fund in the proposed changes to the county recording fees. The fee revenue that county recording offices collect have been divided equally between the counties since 2003, and we appreciate the sponsors' recognition that this precedent should be maintained as the legislature considers changes to the fee structure.

The Ohio Housing Trust Fund is the state's primary source of funding for homelessness and affordable housing services. Last year the OHTF supported homeless services for nearly 33,000 Ohioans; funded the repair of 2,344 homes, and helped finance the construction and rehabilitation of 788 units of affordable rental units.

OHTF funds help local programs: prevent and end homelessness for families with children and individuals struggling to overcome mental illness and addiction; repair and modify homes to keep low-income seniors and people with disabilities out of nursing homes, and provide gap funding to rehabilitate and develop affordable housing.

OHTF funding supports these efforts throughout Ohio. In fact, statute requires at least half of the annual allocation go to Ohio's rural communities. Here are just a few examples of competitive grants the OHTF awarded in 2022 (from the [OHTF FY 2022 Report](#)):

- \$926,200 for Findlay Hope House for the Homeless to provide rapid re-housing and homelessness prevention assistance to individuals and families with children in Crawford, Hancock, Hardin, Marion, Putnam, and Wyandot counties;
- \$342,200 for Lima Samaritan House to operate an emergency shelter for homeless women and families with children in Allen County.
- \$300,000 for Buckeye Regional Council to provide home repairs for senior and/or disabled homeowners at or below 50% of the Area Median Income in Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry and Washington Counties.
- \$200,000 for Area Agency on Aging District 9 to provide home repairs for senior and/or disabled homeowners at or below 50% of the Area Median Income in

Belmont, Carroll, Coshocton, Guernsey, Harrison, Holmes, Jefferson, Muskingum, and Tuscarawas Counties.

- \$300,000 for the construction of McArthur Gardens, 32 units of permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals with disabilities in Chillicothe;
- \$1.5 million for the construction of Depot Square II, 10 units of rental housing affordable to low-income families in Ironton.

The OHTF has the potential to address many of the housing challenges you hear from your constituents every day – families who can't find an affordable place to live, seniors who can't afford to maintain their homes, tenants who are facing eviction, and people who are struggling to escape homelessness. While the OHTF already provides critical funding to address these problems, the scale of housing needs simply dwarfs the resources that are currently available. Passing House Bill 181 in its current form would give the state more ammunition to address housing insecurity in your district.