



**Testimony before the Senate Finance Committee**  
**Amy Riegel, COHHIO Executive Director**  
**HB 96**  
**June 5, 2025**

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on the biennial budget (House Bill 96).

My name is Amy Riegel, the Executive Director of COHHIO, a coalition of organizations and individuals committed to ending homelessness and to promoting decent, safe, fair, affordable housing for all, with a focus on assisting low-income and special needs populations.

**We want to express our gratitude to you for removing the House's amendment that would have upended the Ohio Housing Trust Fund. We are extremely grateful for your leadership on this issue.**

As you know, the Ohio Housing Trust Fund is the primary source of state funding for local homelessness and affordable housing programs. The House's language would have severely undermined Ohio's ability to respond to the affordable housing crisis. Thank you for responding to the many witnesses who testified before this committee about how the state's oversight of the Trust Fund helps to make Ohio a better place for all people to work and live.

The Senate took significant steps last session to address Ohio's affordable housing shortage by creating new housing programs and establishing the Senate Select Committee on Housing. One of the committee's recommendations was to strengthen oversight of the Trust Fund.

The Ohio Department of Development administers the Trust Fund with very modest (4%) administrative costs. ODOD facilitates collaboration among organizations like local Area Agencies on Aging, Habitat for Humanity affiliates, Community Action Agencies, and homeless services providers across multiple counties to deliver critical housing services in rural regions. The House's proposal to surrender oversight to each individual county would create redundant bureaucracies at the local level and could leave some counties unfunded and unserved.

ODOD invests Trust Fund dollars strategically to facilitate regional collaboration and leverage other separate federal, local, and private funding sources to maximize the state's investment. Each \$1 from the Trust Fund leverages \$3.71 from federal Low-

Income Housing Tax Credits, federal HOME dollars, local governments, and private financing, and creates [\\$9.55 in overall economic activity](#) for Ohio.

The Ohio Housing Trust Fund has a 30+ year track record of investing these funds responsibly and effectively, with the flexibility necessary to respond to specific and emerging housing issues where they are most needed. And it does this all without impacting the General Revenue Fund.

Thank you for your leadership in recognizing that the Housing Trust Fund supports so many critical efforts to keep your most vulnerable constituents stably housed.