



**Testimony of Bill Beagle, Executive Director Ohio Housing Finance Agency House
Government Oversight & Reform Committee**

May 6, 2025

Chairman Manchester, Vice Chairman Brenner, and Ranking Member Weinstein, and members of the Ohio Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee my name is Bill Beagle, and I am the Executive Director of the Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA).

Thank you for allowing me to present the agency's fiscal year 2026-2027 budget request, and for the opportunity to highlight OHFA's housing programs.

For more than 40 years, OHFA has served as the state's housing finance agency and has become a respected and trusted leader in the affordable housing industry. The Agency relies on its industry partnerships to assist homebuyers, renters, and populations with special housing needs. The work we do creates or sustains more than 27,000 jobs and contributes \$4.5 billion to the state's economy.

Our mission statement, "We open the doors to an affordable place to call home" provides focus for our daily work.

At OHFA, we use federal and state resources to finance housing for low-and moderate-income Ohioans. The programs we administer develop, preserve, and sustain affordable housing throughout the state.

A 15-member board, appointed by the Governor and the leaders of the legislature, approves and oversees the non-payroll budget, operations, and programs of OHFA. The board consists of the Directors of the Ohio Department of Commerce and Ohio Department of Development, and nine public members who represent various stakeholder groups and are appointed by the governor to staggered six-year terms, subject to Senate confirmation. In the past month, we have add four new members to the Board, two from each legislative chamber.

OHFA's payroll is the agency's sole line item in the operating budget and is funded entirely by user fees, administrative reimbursements, and federal program support. No General Revenue Funds are used for operations, and all other elements of the agency's budget are subject to review and approval by the OHFA Board. Our ability to maintain optimal staffing levels while hiring talented people is critical in our ability to meet the state's growing housing needs.

Over the past two years OHFA has seen significant increases in applications for its multifamily housing programs and homebuyer assistance programs. In order to provide quality customer service to applicants and reduce our reliance on temporary staff, OHFA



is asking for an increase in our Fiscal Year 2026 and 2027 appropriation request to hire the additional staff needed for program administration.

OHFA is requesting an appropriation of \$19,759,058 for fiscal year 2026 and \$20,484,830 for fiscal year 2027. These numbers represent the minimal amount of funding needed to efficiently and effectively achieve the agency's mission and goals for the next biennium.

These numbers are an updated request from what the House passed in HB 96. We have discussed this updated request with many of you on this committee and we hope we can have your support.

Making Homeownership Possible

We are proud to help Ohioans achieve the American dream of homeownership. To give you an idea of the Ohioans we're helping, the average age of an OHFA homebuyer is 31. They have a median income of \$70,317, and a 714 FICO score. The average sale price of the home is \$189,165.

The single-family housing market remains competitive, and interest rates remain at 6 to 7%. These market conditions continue to make our homebuyer programs attractive to first-time homebuyers. To date, we have closed \$900 million in loans, and we are on track to surpass \$1 billion in loans by the end of the fiscal year. To provide context for this volume, last year, we processed more than 6,000 loans. All told, at the end of fiscal year 2025, we closed nearly 4,500 loans, totaling more than \$800 million.

Developing Single-Family Housing

While our down payment assistance programs provide pathways to homeownership, we also recognize there is a housing shortage for Ohio's growing workforce. The state Single-Family Housing Development Tax Credit was created in the last budget and provides OHFA with \$50 million a year in tax credits over four years to support the development of single-family homes.

To date we have reserved credits for three separate developments totaling \$2.1 million in tax credits, constructing a total of 43 homes. We continue to work with the housing industry to increase awareness of the program and look forward to seeing new homes in communities in the coming years.

Supporting Workforce Housing

As Ohio continues to grow, so do our housing challenges. We work to identify innovative and sustainable strategies that provide renters and homebuyers with a wide range of safe, affordable, and quality places to live. Our dedicated staff maintain high standards of customer service and technical expertise as we partner with local governments, private developers, and nonprofit organizations to provide housing solutions to communities throughout Ohio.

One of the tools we use is the Ohio Low-Income Housing Tax Credit. Established in the last budget, it is paired with the federal 4% Low-Income Housing Tax Credit to finance

the development of affordable rental housing that would not otherwise been constructed. The program was funded with \$100 million in tax credits a year, for four years.

Ohio's state tax credit mirrors the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, which originated during the Reagan administration. It focuses on the public-private partnership model rather than one where the government builds and operates public housing. The federal government allocates a limited number of tax credits to states based on population. Housing finance agencies, like OHFA, are responsible for determining which project applications receive tax credits. Developers then sell the tax credits to investors such as banks and insurance companies. This generates cash used as equity for the construction phase of the housing development, and also reduces the investor's tax liability for the life of the credit.

This program and the Ohio Low-Income Housing Tax Credit are OHFA's primary ways we help fund the construction and preservation of affordable rental housing in Ohio.

We received 22 applications totaling more than \$190 million in tax credit requests in the first year of the state program. After scoring the applications, the Agency reserved \$87.5 million of the \$100 million in tax credits, which will create 859 new affordable rental apartments throughout Ohio.

One of these developments is Emerald Place in Lancaster. A new housing development with 216 units, it will include a mix of one, two, three and four-bedroom apartments and common area amenities including a community room and fitness center. The development has received full support from the city of Lancaster due in part to the need for new high-quality affordable housing.

In December, OHFA announced 14 developments were selected to submit final applications for Fiscal Year 2025 Ohio Low-Income Housing Tax Credit funding, utilizing the full \$100 million in tax credits as well as \$12.5 million carried over from the previous fiscal year. These developments will create 1,022 new, affordable apartments in many regions of the state.

Five of these 14 developments are regarded as rural development and they received Ohio Housing Trust Fund dollars on top of the state tax credit. Without this source of additional capital these five applications would not be financially feasible.

From a new senior housing community in Steubenville, to two new developments in Athens, and new housing developments in Franklin County to support the workforce at Intel and Anduril Industries, these new affordable apartments are providing Ohio's growing workforce quality housing.

OHFA also has a team dedicated to ensuring these developments are compliant with program guidelines and remain safe, quality housing for years to come. We hold property owners and managers accountable on their agreed upon obligations to the residents. In Fiscal Year 2024, OHFA conducted 402 physical inspections at developments throughout Ohio.

OHFA is committed to administering its programs with a high standard of excellence and customer service that makes a difference in the lives of Ohioans.

We know you're hearing about housing in every corner of your district. We look forward to working with the General Assembly and Governor DeWine to solve the state's housing challenges. We also hope to be a resource for you and invite you to join us in creating an Ohio where everyone has a safe, decent, and affordable place to call home.

Thank you again for this opportunity. I would be happy to address any questions you may have.