



**Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee**  
Edward Stockhausen, Senior Vice President of Advocacy and External Affairs

**Substitute House Bill 96**

May 14, 2025

Chair Manchester, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Weinstein, and members of the Senate Government Oversight Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today. My name is Edward Stockhausen, and I lead advocacy and external relations at Cleveland Neighborhood Progress. Our company is a local community development intermediary that does three things: We empower neighborhood-based nonprofits to lead development in their communities, we have a development subsidiary that leads major project across the City of Cleveland, and we have a lending arm that helps entrepreneurs grow their contracting companies and build their projects.

We are also a member of the Ohio CDC Association, and today I am here on behalf of all these organizations to ask that the Committee remove language eliminating the Ohio Housing Trust Fund in the House-passed version of the budget.

The Ohio Housing Trust Fund is the primary state funding source for housing programs. Given the current housing crisis, the legislature should act to strengthen the fund – not dismantle it. Language inserted into the budget would allow counties to retain recording fee revenue—the sole funding source for the Trust Fund—and spend it at their discretion, with no requirement that it be used for housing services for low-income Ohioans. This change would have a devastating effect on development projects in rural, suburban and urban communities across the state.

Cleveland Neighborhood Progress works with 17 neighborhood-based nonprofits, and all of them focus on improving the supply and quality of housing in the communities they serve. They provide emergency home repairs service to seniors, they make homes and apartments accessible to people who need modifications to stay or move into homes, and they help bring new units of rental and for-sale properties online. In Fiscal Year 2024, those neighborhood-based organizations:

- Acquired over 100 homes for purposes of rehabbing, correcting code violations, and returning them to the private market;
- Referred 1,501 households to home repair programs and completed an additional 370 home repairs on their own;
- Managed over 1,500 units of affordable housing;
- Invested almost \$5 million into home repairs;
- And bring an additional \$35 million for other real estate projects that make their communities better places to call home.

As these numbers demonstrate, our network of neighborhood-based partners are part of the solution to Ohio's housing crisis – and one of the tools they rely on the most is financing from the Ohio Housing Trust Fund.

That is why, on behalf of the network of neighborhood-based nonprofits doing housing work in Cleveland, we ask that you remove this provision from the budget and restore the Ohio Housing Trust Fund. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.