



Coalition on Homelessness
and Housing in Ohio
COHHIO

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Raid Housing Program for the Poor and Give it to County Recorders? “Unacceptable.”

COLUMBUS – An amendment to the Senate’s version of the budget bill released yesterday would take millions from a fund that provides housing for poor, elderly and disabled Ohioans, and funnel it to county recorders offices for “general purposes.”

Bill Faith, Executive Director of the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO) called the amendment “unacceptable” and “contrary to Governor Kasich’s budget, which was framed around doing no harm to the most vulnerable in these times of economic uncertainty.”

"It makes no sense to take money from a program that helps grow our stagnant housing industry, stimulates our struggling economy, and serves increasing numbers of poor people and give it to county recorders to beef up their local bureaucracies," Faith said. "This move does not square with Governor Kasich's framing of the budget to do no harm to the most vulnerable and it does not pass the smell test among advocates for the poor."

The Ohio Housing Trust Fund is a 20-year-old flexible funding source that serves the critical housing needs of homeless people, low-income senior citizens, people with disabilities, military veterans and working families.

The amendment would give 10 percent of the Fund – or about \$10 million over the biennium – to county recorders offices. Faith said the move would have a net negative impact on the state’s economy. “Think about it: \$5 million used by the Trust Fund is leveraged into \$45 million through public/private partnerships that bring new dollars into local economies,” he said. “\$5 million to the county recorders might result in a few new clerk hires, but it won’t move the economy forward while helping our most vulnerable citizens.”

A recent economic impact report conducted by the real estate research firm Vogt Santer Insights, indicated that in its 20 years, the Ohio Housing Trust Fund has fueled Ohio’s economy by an estimated \$2.6 billion with associated earnings of over \$829 million for almost 32,000 workers.

The Ohio Housing Trust Fund began in 1991, the year after voters approved a constitutional amendment making housing a public purpose. In 2003, the legislature approved a dedicated funding stream from the Housing Trust Fund Fee. Today, the OHTF balance fluctuates year to year based on the economy, but funds are appropriated at \$53 million annually to homelessness and affordable housing initiatives throughout the state. Half or more of all allocations go to rural counties.

Programs and projects supported by the OHTF include homelessness programs, youth shelters, affordable housing development projects, home repair, rehab and energy savings projects, Habitat for Humanity of Ohio, support services to help those in need stay in their homes, and service coordination for seniors.

The Trust Fund creates housing-related jobs, leverages working capital to bring federal and private dollars into local communities, and impacts all 88 counties, with half or more of its allocations going to rural counties.