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The Monthly Newsletter of COHHIO, the
Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio

COHHIO Conference: Big Names, Bold Ideas, Timely Workshops



U.S. Senator
Sherrod Brown



Ohio State Rep.
Mike Foley



HUD Dep. Assist. Secy
Mark Johnston



U.S. Representative
Marcy Kaptur



Ohio Attorney General
Richard Cordray

Recent additions to the speaker and workshop lineups are shaping Housing Ohio 2009 into a powerhouse of ideas and energy; one befitting COHHIO's 15th year anniversary and one you can't afford to

miss! Register today at www.cohhio.org.

Plenary power. Monday's speakers *Sherrod Brown, Mike Foley and Marcy Kaptur* will offer context on pending federal and state legislation and how they will impact your programs. The Tuesday lineup features *Mark Johnston* giving insight into HUD's new strategies and *Richard Cordray's* plans and programs to battle foreclosures.

The Tuesday afternoon plenary slot will be devoted to a panel discussion on *Homeless Prevention Resources* and will be the first Ohio "conversation" on the topic since the guidelines were released in mid-March. Douglas Argue of COHHIO and Michelle Budzek of The Partnership Center will lead a full-conference discussion of the parameters of the statewide distribution of funds.

Workshop winners. We've added two on Tuesday. The first, *Facebook, Twitter and blogs, oh my!* is all about social networking. Hear from the experts who are revolutionizing the way nonprofits,

state agencies and advocates further their mission via social media tools. Come see if Facebook or Twitter accounts or a blog can benefit your organization and your efforts to both provide services to your clients and advocate on their behalf!

The second, *Ohio Rapid Re-Housing Grantees Workshop*, features representatives from Ohio's four HUD demonstration program awardees discussing their plans for implementation. Learn why Ohio is uniquely positioned to teach the nation about rapid re-housing programs.

An online brochure that details all the workshops is on our conference homepage. Don't delay – register today!

COHHIO's Housing Ohio 2009

April 20 and 21
Lobby Day April 22, 2009

Plenary Speakers:

Sen. Sherrod Brown
Richard Cordray, AG
Rep. Mike Foley
Rep. Marcy Kaptur
Mark Johnston, HUD

cohio.org/conference.php

Special thanks to our Lead Sponsor:



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FOR HOUSING

Release of Balance of State Continuum of Care 2009 CoC Application Process Plan and New Project Application

On March 17, 2009 the Balance of State Continuum of Care (BOSCO) Steering Committee released its process plan for the 2009 BOSCO Application to HUD's Homeless Assistance Programs. Every year the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides resources to communities around the country through these programs, and the Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) and COHHIO coordinate the process and prepare the application for funding for the BOSCO. The BOSCO 2008 application brought \$13 million into the state for

homeless services programming.

The 2009 CoC Application Process Plan, available on COHHIO's website at http://www.cohhio.org/fed_reg_2009.php, outlines the process and anticipated timeline for the 2009 CoC application and includes a New Project Application. Key dates and deadlines for the 2009 process include:

- April 3rd – APRs and E-Housing Inventory Charts due to COHHIO
- May 8th – New Project Applications due to COHHIO and ODOD

Amicus Brief Sign on Request

At the request of the Ohio Attorney General, COHHIO, Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation, Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies and others are working on an Amicus Brief that would oppose the Ohio Grocers' Association from obtaining an exemption from the Commercial Activity Tax (CAT) in a case pending at the Ohio Supreme Court.

Our argument is this: The CAT tax, as applied to grocers, generates significant General Fund revenue which supports critical social services programs and a safety net for low-income Ohioans.

We are asking other organizations serving

low-income Ohioans to sign on to the amicus brief with us. We have obtained pro-bono legal assistance from Squires Sanders to prepare the brief, which will be filed with the Ohio Supreme Court on April 6.

Each endorsing organization needs to submit a short description of their mission and constituencies served, and briefly explain their interest in the outcome of case.

Please contact Cathy Johnston at cathyjohnston@cohhio.org if you are willing to participate.

Renter Protection Bill Introduced in the U.S. House

On March 2, Representative Keith Ellison (D-MN) introduced H.R. 1247, The Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act of 2009. This bill is similar to the bill Mr. Ellison introduced in the 110th Congress, H.R. 5963.

H.R. 1247 would require the purchaser of a property at a foreclosure sale to notify any bona fide tenant 90 days prior to requiring the tenant to vacate the property. In addition, any bona fide tenant with a lease would have to be allowed to remain in the property until the end of the lease, unless the purchaser will occupy the property as a primary residence, in which case the tenant would still need to receive 90 days notice.

The bill also provides that a Section 8 assisted tenant may remain in place for the term of the lease, and requires the initial purchaser at foreclosure to assume the Section 8 housing assistance payment contract. In cases where the

owner cannot be identified or payment cannot be made to such owner, the public housing agency may use the Section 8 funds to pay the utilities on the property, if they were the responsibility of the owner, or for reasonable moving costs, including security deposits, or both.

Advocates have been urging the adoption of national tenant protection legislation in the case of foreclosures. National Low Income Housing Coalition (www.nlihc.org) estimates that 40% of families facing eviction are tenants and these families often have little or no notice before being evicted from their homes after foreclosure.

H.R. 1247 is cosponsored by Representatives Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY), Michael Capuano (D-MA), and Maxine Waters (D-CA). The bill has been referred to the House Committee on Financial Services.

Notes of Faith

from COHHIO's Executive Director

It's been an interesting couple of months at the Statehouse as House Democrats strive to find their majority party footing after a 14-year hiatus.

We're following three important bills in the House.

I wrote about Rep. Mike Foley's House Bill 3 – the foreclosure reform bill -- in last month's column. Certain provisions of the bill are gaining traction, including regulating servicers to reduce the incentive they currently have to push for rapid-fire foreclosures instead of loan modifications. Also being given attention by both parties is the foreclosure filing fee, which would ultimately be returned to communities through Housing Trust Fund grants and other community redevelopment efforts. Even the moratorium is finding approval in unexpected places.

I'm hopeful that solutions to our state's biggest problems can sail above party lines.

Renter protection legislation making its way through both chambers, is one of those solutions. HB 9 (Celeste/Foley) and SB 13 (D. Miller) would better protect the tens of thousands of tenants who, by no fault of their own, are upended because their landlords enter foreclosure. More than 30 percent of all Ohio foreclosures involve rental properties, and current law allows for tenants to be evicted after a sheriff sale with only a 3-day notice. Displacement costs of an estimated \$2,500 per renter family pose a staggering challenge to most, and puts additional strain on our social service safety nets.

HB 9 and SB 13 are bipartisan no-brainers; there's simply no reason NOT to support them. Specifically, the bills:

- Require landlords to inform new tenants that the home is in foreclosure
- Require landlords to provide current tenants with a notice within 60-days of when their homes enter foreclosure

- Convert existing rental agreements to month-to-month tenancy
- Transfer renters' security deposits from the previous owner to the purchaser

Banks may wring their hands at the rental agreement conversion, but their case is absurd in the face of innocent tenants being thrown onto the streets and homes and apartments abandoned simply because banks can't tweak their business model.

Both will likely be voted out of their respective chambers this month.

A tax reform initiative we've been working on for the better part of two years took a positive turn in February when the Ohio Supreme Court ruled on the 'income approach' for valuation of LIHTC properties in the state; that actual rents must be considered when establishing the valuation. This will likely result in an estimated \$16 million in lowered tax liabilities for LIHTC properties across the state. Credit goes to the Woda Group for taking the legal battle through the gauntlet. The effort was bolstered by an amicus brief that was supported by Ohio Capital Corporation, COHHIO, the Ohio Housing Council, the Ohio CDC and the Council for Rural Housing and Development of Ohio.

COHHIO will now work with the Department of Taxation on developing rules to guide County auditors on implementation of the new policy.

Finally, payday lending rears its ugly head – again. We're hoping Rep. Matt Lundy's (D-Elyria) bill will put a tight knot in the loopholes payday lenders are currently using to charge interest rates that make the outrageous 391% look reasonable by comparison. More about that next month.

Hope to see you at the conference! Be sure to register by visiting our website.



Bill Faith
Executive Director

Bill Faith



Thank you to Volunteers from Bishop Hartley H.S.

The Youth Empowerment Program would like to thank the volunteers from Bishop Hartley High School in Columbus who worked alongside YEP in mid-March for two days of service. The students helped spruce up the Volunteers of America Education Center with a little spring cleaning, a little painting, and a lot of education about the root causes of poverty and homelessness.

As part of the service project, Lindsay Gudesen of the VOA spoke about the services their agency provides and how youth can continue to make an impact.

YEP spoke with the Bishop Hartley students on the systemic causes of poverty, instability, and homelessness. The students left after providing a great service to the agency and gaining a deeper understanding of the issues.

YEP enjoys helping schools, churches and community organizations plan service learning projects. Please contact Nick or Angela at YEP to receive activities, discussion guides, and other resources to help your volunteers to grow in understanding and knowledge of the issues of homelessness and poverty.



Direct Energy Youth Leadership Awards

We would like to thank the 97 youths who applied for this year's Direct Energy Youth Leadership Awards. The YEP youth council is reviewing applications with final decisions to be made in early April. Nearly 40 Ohio cities were represented in this year's batch of applications. We received applications from youth involved with healthcare, education, and homeless youth agencies;

as well as family and adult homeless programs; colleges; employment, juvenile justice and foster care programs.

The four winners -- each receiving \$500 -- will be publicly announced at the COHHIO conference. There will be one middle school, high school, and post-secondary award winners, and one from any of the categories. Once again, thanks everyone and best of luck!



National Service Programs Get Big Boost!

Congress is currently working on legislation to increase the size and scope of national service programs. The House passed the Give Act in a 321-105 vote on March. The Senate passed its version, The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, 79-19 on March 26 (Senators Brown and Voinovich supported the bill). The President has signaled his support.

The expansion will increase service program spots by 175,000 individuals. National Service programs include Americorps, VISTA, NCCC, school based service learning programs, and SeniorCorps. Members traditionally dedicate a year of their life to working with

non-profit agencies, schools and other organizations in the community. Members mentor children and youth, develop new programs, assist in volunteer recruitment and training, and organize numerous service projects in return for a small stipend and money for school. We strongly encourage you to look into how your program can fit into the new efforts. Visit these websites for additional information:

- <http://www.nationalservice.org/>
- <http://www.serveohio.org/>
- <http://www.usaservice.org/content/home/>
- <http://www.americorps.gov/>



Just Say NO to Dollar Energy

By Dave Rinebolt, Ohio Partners for Affordable Energy



Ohio's community-based nonprofits know well the damage the economy is doing to families and children. Local nonprofits have developed low-cost mechanisms to ensure the maximum in benefits can be provided to our clients to help them through troubled times – financial, physical, and emotional. Community-based organizations also serve as advocates within their own communities and at the state and federal levels to ensure there are adequate resources to meet the sometimes overwhelming needs.

Ohio Partners for Affordable Energy (OPAE) represents a group of sixty community-based nonprofits, primarily community action agencies, that manage utility bill payment assistance programs such as HEAP and PIPP, and weatherization and energy efficiency programs. These programs are designed to help keep essential energy services affordable and help families stay connected.

OPAE and its members obtain the resources for the purposes through advocacy efforts and through partnerships with public and private sector organizations. OPAE has been particularly aggressive in its work at the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio to ensure affordable rates and developing funding sources for bill payment and efficiency efforts.

In the last six months, OPAE's advocacy has helped generate over \$5 million dollars to help customers up to 200% of the poverty line or families in crisis pay their utility. All seven major electric and natural gas utilities have committed resources that are currently being administered by a partnership between the Ohio Department of Development and community nonprofits that manage the Emergency Home Energy Assistance Program (E-HEAP) in all 88 Ohio counties. This approach permits local agencies to coordinate the electric and natural gas fuel fund dollars with E-HEAP and regular HEAP benefits, and other payment plans. It is efficient for the clients, creating a one-stop for energy assistance and minimizing administrative costs.

Advocates tend to ruffle feathers, and OPAE is no different. Recent litigation with American Electric Power (AEP) is a case in point. AEP has decided to punish OPAE for its advocacy by bringing in an out-of-state

nonprofit, Dollar Energy Fund, to manage a new fund; OPAE members are already operating a fund for the Company. Dollar Energy is attempting to recruit Ohio nonprofits to handle direct contacts with clients.

OPAE and its sixty members are asking Ohio nonprofits to boycott Dollar Energy Fund.

There are some obvious reasons for treating Dollar Energy as a carpetbagger.

- Dollar Energy will add another layer of administration which will reduce available benefits.
- Dollar Energy will only pay \$9 per 'correctly completed' application; a sum inadequate to pay intake workers a living wage and cover a nonprofit's costs.
- There is no money for computers, phones, desks, or other necessary equipment.
- Dollar Energy requires agencies to use a proprietary computer enrollment system which is incompatible with other database systems currently in use.
- There are no training stipends available.
- The funds will not be coordinated with other benefits and services that can improve the lives of the families we serve.
- Dollar Energy will be a lapdog nonprofit AEP can use to undercut our advocacy efforts on behalf of utility customers.

We hope you will join us in this boycott. If there wasn't a system already in place in Ohio to do this work, we would welcome a nonprofit that could add value and improve services to our clients. That is not the case with Dollar Energy. Adding another layer of administration and undercutting advocacy efforts should not be encouraged.

I know we all care first and foremost about our clients. Rest assured that we currently have funding from AEP to help its customers, so they won't be left out in the cold or stuck inside in the heat. If Ohio's nonprofits can stick together we can force AEP to work with local agencies to help their customers. Help us ensure Ohio's vulnerable families get all the benefits to which they are entitled.

Dave Rinebolt
Executive Director
Ohio Partners for Affordable Energy
www.ohiopartners.org

HWAP's \$135 Million Questions

Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP) is one of the beneficiaries of economic stimulus funds in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). The State of Ohio stands to receive around \$135M in HWAP funding. Federally assisted properties and LIHTC properties are eligible for HWAP assistance depending on the incomes of their tenants.

Here's a Q & A on the HWAP in Ohio from Thomas Andrews, Low-Income HWAP/EPP Specialist in the Ohio Department of Development's Office of Community Services.

1. Who is eligible?

Eligibility is based upon income of the household. As of April 1, 2009, the income guideline is 200% of the Federal Poverty Guideline. For a household of four (4) people, the maximum income level allowable is \$44,100.

2. How do property owners apply?

The application can be accessed here: <http://www.odod.state.oh.us/cms/uploadedfiles/CDD/OCS/Revised%20App.pdf>

The application is the same as that used for the HEAP program.

Applicants may also contact the local provider of service in their area. To find the name of the local provider, please access <http://www.odod.ohio.gov/> and click on the HWAP item located in the RESOURCES section to find the provider of service in your area.

3. What could qualify as weatherization in a multi-family unit or property?

Retrofits that may qualify as weatherization in a multi-family

building may include: insulation of the attic space, sidewalls, and basement/crawlspace areas; insulation of heating distribution systems (ductwork for forced air systems or hot water pipes for boiler systems); air sealing to reduce infiltration of outside air into the building; repairs of combustion appliances; change out of incandescent lighting to energy efficient lighting.

4. Is there a special energy audit? If so, who performs them and how much do they cost?

Depending upon the type of building, there may be a special energy audit performed. Buildings with 5 or more units that are centrally heated or building that are over three stories in height, require a multi-family building audit. The audit used in Ohio is called the EA-Quip audit (Energy Audit using Queens Information Package). We can provide a list of inspectors that have been trained in this audit. Any other type of buildings can be inspected using the Priority List for building types as listed in the State of Ohio's Weatherization Program Standards.

5. Can HWAP funds be used in conjunction with the new weatherization funds coming through HUD's Green Build Initiative?

It is our belief that HWAP funds can be used in conjunction with other funding sources, as long there is a clear distinction / transparency of the source of funds and the retrofit being completed.

Call for Housing Research Proposals on How Housing Matters to Families and Communities

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation recently announced a new competitive research grant program on How Housing Matters to Families and Communities. The goals of this program are to (1) determine through rigorous, empirical analysis if and how housing affects the well-being of families, children,

communities and their local economies and (2) translate research findings into policy-relevant insights to inform a new generation of affordable housing policies and programs.

For program guidelines, please visit www.macfound.org/housingmatters



Carol Galante Appointed HUD Deputy Assistant Secretary

Leader in affordable housing tapped to head multifamily housing programs

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan announced on March 23rd that President Barack Obama has appointed Carol Galante as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Multifamily Housing Programs at HUD. Galante is currently the President of BRIDGE Housing Corporation, the largest nonprofit developer of affordable apartments and homes in California, specializing in the development of family and senior affordable apartments, rental and ownership housing, and an

array of revitalization, transit-oriented, urban infill, and mixed-use/mixed-income developments.

As Deputy Assistant Secretary, Galante will be responsible for HUD's financing support for the development and preservation of privately-owned rental housing (a current portfolio of over \$58 billion) and will be integral to several new initiatives that promote sustainable development. For more on Galante, visit Newsroom on the HUD website.



Open House: Brainstorming Bright ideas for Housing the Nation NHC Blog Description

Open House is a new blog developed and maintained by the National Housing Conference (NHC) focused on the most current and critical issues in the affordable housing community. Each month the blog covers one topic for debate and discussion through postings and related dialogue from some of the nation's leading experts. Participants are able to engage in thought-provoking discussions on a range of topics and policies, with an emphasis on national-

level policies that will have both current and future impacts. Early blog topics will include foreclosure prevention and neighborhood stabilization, as well as the future of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. NHC welcomes readers from its broad membership and the industry – ranging from seasoned veterans to those new to affordable housing – to get involved and stay involved through this new and important channel of communications.

One in 50 U.S. Children Is Homeless

New Report Ranks 50 States and Urges Action To End Child Homelessness

Newton, MA – A new report released today by the National Center on Family Homelessness finds more than 1.5 million children are homeless annually in the United States—one in every 50 American children. America's Youngest Outcasts: State Report Card on Child Homelessness offers the first comprehensive state-by-state data on the status of homeless children and ranks the 50 states from top to bottom. Ohio ranks 20th. The report urges federal and state action to end child homelessness and

recommends how this can be done.

America's Youngest Outcasts documents the extent of child homelessness, describes the plight of these children, profiles and ranks the states, and proposes solutions. The report presents several national data sets in one place for the first time, offering the clearest snapshot of child homelessness to date. The complete report and a 16-page summary document can be downloaded at www.HomelessChildrenAmerica.org.





Lunch and Learn Series

Case Management for Supportive Housing

In the realm of supportive housing, services are the essential factors in securing, obtaining, and maintaining housing. Each session of the Lunch and Learn Series, "Case Management for Supportive Housing," will cover a different topic in depth to enable case managers to better serve their consumers.

The sessions scheduled for April and May are specifically targeted to programs that are working on two of the main outcomes for HUD Continuum of Care Projects: transitioning to permanent housing; and helping clients gain employment. All programs that are receiving HUD Continuum of Care funding are urged to participate in these two upcoming sessions.

Transitioning People from Transitional to Permanent Housing

- Reserve your Webinar seat now at:
<https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/393750704>
- To listen to training, please call 1-866-264-5089 on April 16th by 11:00 a.m. and enter conference code 9794328

Presenters: Ragan Claypool – WSOS Community Action, Becky Hammond Pickaway Community Action, and Sue Watlov Phillips – Elim Transitional Housing, MN

Date: Thursday, April 16, 2009

Time: 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM EDT

After registering you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the Webinar.

Strategies of Helping Homeless Persons Find & Keep Employment

- Reserve your Webinar seat now at:
<https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/992750625>
- To listen to training, please call 1-866-264-5089 on May 21st by 11:00 a.m. and enter conference code 9794328

Presenters: Debbie Becker and Sarah Swanson – Dartmouth College

Date: Thursday, May 21, 2009

Time: 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM EDT

After registering you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the Webinar.



Phone:
614-280-1984

Fax:
614-463-1060

E-Mail:
membership@cohhio.org

To update your contact info, please e-mail
tomrogers@cohhio.org

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AND HOUSING IN
OHIO**

175 South Third
Street,
Suite 250
Columbus, OH 43215

Suzanne Gravette Acker,
Editor, Writer

John O'Connor,
Erica Mulryan,
Contributing Writers

Tom Rogers, Layout