



**Testimony by Director David Goodman
Ohio Development Services Agency
Ohio Commission on Infant Mortality
April 28, 2016**

Chairwoman Jones, Chairwoman Kunze, and members of the Ohio Commission on Infant Mortality, thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding Ohio housing programs. My name is David Goodman, and I am the Director of the Ohio Development Services Agency.

The Ohio Development Services Agency has been entrusted with administering programs which create jobs and build strong communities. During my time at the agency, we have made accountability and transparency of taxpayer money a priority.

Working with our partners, we help revitalize downtowns, clean up old industrial sites, and implement energy efficiency measures for small businesses. We also provide communities with resources to move Ohioans from poverty to self-sufficiency. As Governor Kasich reminds us, we must provide opportunity for Ohioans to move out of the shadows and reach their full potential.

Community development is more than filling out a grant application and hoping the money rolls in. It's about working together to meet our shared challenges and come up with impactful and sustainable solutions. This does not happen without collaboration. Key to our work is partnerships with other state agencies, local governments, businesses, and community organizations.

At the Development Services Agency, we take a holistic view of housing in Ohio. Together with the Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA), we provide a comprehensive approach to improve access and availability of housing to low- to moderate-income Ohioans, as well as reduce the rate of homelessness.

Homelessness and Supportive Housing programs

Let me give you a few examples. In July 2015, a pregnant mother of three entered a homeless shelter in Cleveland. With no income but food stamps, she worked with Job and Family Services to establish income, enrolled her children in school and day care, and was approved for housing assistance. She went back to work and moved out of the shelter in October 2015, telling staff how excited she was to cook her first meal in her new home.

In Portsmouth, a couple and their three boys were living with their grandmother. When the property was sold, the family was forced to move. They turned to Scioto Christian Ministry, which operates a 25 bed shelter. Six days after entering the shelter, the mother was taken to the hospital and delivered a baby boy. Shelter staff worked to locate housing for the family and provided them with budget management and nutrition education.

These are just two examples of how the **Homeless Crisis Response and Supportive Housing** programs are helping Ohioans get back on their feet. In 2015, \$27.3 million in program funding went to nonprofit and local government agencies to operate emergency shelters, move Ohioans to permanent housing, and provide permanent supportive housing to homeless people with disabilities.

We also administer the **Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)** grant, which uses federal funding to improve housing for HIV-positive individuals and their families.

Affordable Housing Programs

In addition to those programs, the Development Services Agency also works with local governments and nonprofit organizations to rehabilitate, repair, and construct affordable housing for low-income Ohioans and provide homeownership and rental assistance.

The **Community Housing Impact and Preservation (CHIP)** program provides grants to eligible communities interested in undertaking housing-related activities. Muskingum County, for example, partnered with the city of Zanesville to use a CHIP grant to complete the rehabilitation or repair of 38 homes.

The **Housing Assistance Grant** helps fund home repairs to improve the health and safety of a home or to increase handicapped accessibility. In some cases, it may provide down payment assistance and homebuyer counseling. People Working Cooperatively, an organization in Southwest Ohio, received a \$600,000 Housing Assistance grant to provide emergency home repairs and handicapped accessibility modifications to homeowners in a five county region.

Our agency also administers a **Targets of Opportunity Grant**, which provides funding for a wide range of housing activities that don't fit into other programs. These grants are available to local governments, public housing authorities, and nonprofit organizations such as Habitat for Humanity of Ohio. Habitat divided its grant among 14 regional affiliates to construct or rehabilitate homes for families at or below 50 percent of the area median income.

Administration and Funding

For all of these programs, the Ohio Development Services Agency selects qualified providers through an annual competitive application process. Every year, we also convene a meeting of a Consolidated Plan Advisory Committee to review any new federal policy guidance and discuss trends and needs in communities prior to finalizing our Consolidated Plan. We hold an annual public hearing on housing needs.

The Development Services Agency ensures that grants are implemented within the rules of each program. Each grantee, however, determines their local priorities for service, based on the needs of the specific community.

The housing and homelessness programs we administer are funded through the Ohio Housing Trust Fund and dollars from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. We primarily provide resources to cities and counties outside the large metropolitan areas - most of the largest cities receive direct funding from the federal government for housing initiatives.

The Ohio Housing Finance Agency

I also serve as the Chairman of the Board of the Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA), which facilitates the development, rehabilitation, and financing of low- to moderate-income housing. OHFA helps first-time homebuyers, renters, senior citizens, and others find quality affordable housing that meets their needs.

You will hear more from OHFA later, but I wanted to tell you about my recent visit to one of our collaborative projects. Before the Governor's State of the State address, I had the opportunity to visit the Lancaster-Fairfield Community Action Agency, which operates the Rutherford House.

Once the Fairfield County Children's Home, the Rutherford House is now a 16-unit permanent supportive housing facility for families with special needs that are formerly homeless or at critical risk of becoming homeless. The Development Services Agency, OHFA, and local partners worked together to make this project happen.

The work the Lancaster-Fairfield Community Action Agency is doing to help Ohioans move from poverty to self-sufficiency is a big job. Housing is just one obstacle they may face. For that reason, the staff at the Community Action Agency talks with each person to identify their needs and find them the appropriate assistance. On-site, the agency operates the housing facility, a food and clothing pantry, and provides utility assistance and education programs for children and adults.

All of these resources are in one location – making it easy for residents to find the help they need.

As you can see, we don't do this work alone. Partnership is what makes these programs successful. I hope this testimony can serve as a broad overview of housing and homelessness programs available in the state of Ohio. Thank you again for the opportunity to offer testimony today. I would be happy to answer any questions.

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Development
Services Agency

John R. Kasich, Governor

David Goodman, Director



