

# Breaking Ground

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

..... July 2004

## NATIONAL SAVE SECTION 8 CALL-IN DAY - Monday, July 19

You can save the Section 8 Housing Voucher Program in 3 easy steps! 1. Call the Congressional switchboard at 202-224-3121 and ask to be transferred to your Representative's office. (If you don't know who your representative is, you can find out by going to www.house.gov or www.senate.gov). 2. Ask to speak to the staff person that deals with housing issues. 3. Say: "My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm a constituent. The Section 8 housing voucher program is very important to me. Please talk to Representatives Hobson and Kaptur on the HUD Appropriations Sub-Committee and ask them to: - Restore the necessary \$1.6 billion to the Section 8 budget to ensure that the Section 8 Voucher Program is fully funded for all authorized vouchers. - Oppose the Flexible Voucher Program proposal and ensure that the Section 8 Voucher Program continues to target families with the greatest need. Thank you."

## Study Details Cuts in Local Housing Aid Caused by HUD Funding Change

Funding shortfalls in the Section 8 program resulting from a recent change in federal policies are causing widespread reductions in housing assistance to low-income families, seniors, and people with disabilities, new research finds. The Center of Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), the National Low Income Housing Coalition and the Council of Large Public Housing Authorities have gathered information from 190 state and local housing agencies in 35 states that are being forced to reduce the amount of rental assistance they provide and/or the number of people they help.

More than half of the 190 agencies are cutting costs by reducing the size of the subsidies they provide to families in the program, even families with little or no income. "This will make it harder - and in some cases, impossible - for these families to afford their current apartments," said Barbara Sard, director of housing policy at CBPP. "Some families will be forced to move into overcrowded and possibly unsafe apartments. Some may end up with no housing at all." In addition, nearly half of the 190 agencies are cutting costs by reducing the number of families in the program. Some agencies have been forced to cut off program assistance for families that have been depending on it to help pay the rent. More agencies may have to take this extreme step over the next few months.

The cost-cutting steps the housing authorities are taking in response to HUD's actions include:

- Raising rents charged to needy families, by reducing the amount of rent that a voucher can cover and/or by imposing minimum monthly rental charges on families with little or no income. These rent increases will force families to divert scarce resources from basic needs such as food, clothing, or transportation to pay the rent. Low-income elderly and disabled people on fixed incomes may find rent increases especially difficult to bear. Some voucher holders will no longer be able to afford their current apartments and could be forced to relocate to overcrowded or substandard housing. Some could end up in homeless shelters or on the street.
- "Shelving" vouchers that become available when families leave the voucher program, rather than giving them to families on voucher waiting lists. This reduces the overall number of low-income families assisted and could cause an increase in homelessness. In addition, some housing agencies have withdrawn newly issued vouchers from families that are still looking for an apartment. Many such families languished for years on a waiting list before receiving a voucher, only to have it taken away now, before they can use it.
- Cutting off assistance to some families currently relying on a voucher to help pay the rent. Some housing agencies have ended voucher assistance to some families. More agencies may have to cut off current participants before the end of this year.

The Section 8 voucher program is the nation's largest low-income housing program. It provides about 2 million households with vouchers that pay part of the cost of renting housing in the private market. Although Congress provided the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) with sufficient funds this year to continue supporting all vouchers now in use, HUD recently adopted a new method of distributing voucher funds to housing agencies that is leaving millions of dollars in appropriated funds unspent - and many agencies without the funds they need to maintain their programs. Ohio is not immune to these cuts.



According to the study, below is the impact to some local Ohio communities:

- Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority (MHA) - with 3,983 authorized vouchers, they are freezing issuance of new vouchers and reducing voucher payment standards. They are also reducing the number of bedrooms allowed and adopting admissions preferences for higher income families.
  - Athens - 698 vouchers - short funds to pay for 100 of their vouchers.
  - Bowling Green - 119 vouchers - expect a shortfall of \$30,000. Lowering payment standard.
- Proposed establishing minimum rent; considering freezing vouchers.
- Cincinnati - 7,748 - increasing minimum rent.
  - Cuyahoga - 13,502 - expects shortfall of \$8,800,000. Lowering payment standard and not allowing rent increases. May impose minimum rent. Froze issuance of turnover vouchers.
  - Lake - 1,358 - notified landlords they would not be accepting rent increases.
  - Lucas - 3,723 - lowering payment standard, increasing minimum rent, preferring higher income families for admission.

While the ongoing cutbacks in voucher assistance are the biggest in the program’s history, they are much smaller than the cuts that would occur over the next five years if the voucher funding reductions in the Administration’s 2005 budget are enacted. Under the Administration’s proposals, voucher funding for 2005 would be set about \$1.6 billion below the level needed to continue today’s level of services. Even larger cuts would come in later years; by 2009, the shortfall would be \$4.6 billion. In addition, the Administration is seeking to convert the voucher program to a block grant and sweep away federal rules that protect voucher holders, such as the rule that limits the share of its income that a family can be required to pay in rent.

If the proposed cuts are enacted and housing agencies dealt with them by helping fewer families, they would have to cut approximately 250,000 families from the program next year and 600,000 families - nearly a third of all participants - by 2009. For the full report, go to [www.cbpp.org/7-15-04hous.htm](http://www.cbpp.org/7-15-04hous.htm).

### HUD’s New Initiative to “Solve” Homeownership Issues

While HUD and the Bush Administration are attacking the core housing programs, including Section 8, HUD has proposed a new initiative. Thousands of families are facing losing their housing or having their rents increased because of the cuts being enacted by HUD and the Administration. The apparent “fix” is their new homeownership initiative that will provide 10 houses. According to HUD’s news release, “The President is committed to increasing homeownership and creating new homebuying opportunities for lower-income households,” said HUD Secretary Alphonso Jackson. “This pilot program will help accomplish his goal of creating 5.5 million new homeowners by the end of the decade while also promoting the value of homeownership counseling.”

The irony of this “new initiative” is truly remarkable. They slash the very basic housing assistance needed by low-income and homeless individuals and then offer a program that touts a noble goal with absolutely nothing to back it up. If HUD gives away 10 homes a year, that’s 550,000 years to reach their 5.5 million goal. In the meantime, Section 8, the most successful housing program in history, is being recklessly attacked. HUD identifies itself as “the nation’s housing agency committed to increasing homeownership, particularly among minorities; creating affordable housing opportunities for low-income Americans; and supporting the homeless, elderly, people with disabilities and people living with AIDS.” They might start by not pulling the rug out from under the very people they purport to serve.

**“He (HUD Secretary Jackson) might as well say cockadoodledoo, and take credit for the sunrise,” said Rep. Barney Frank.**  
(see article on next page)

## Secretary Jackson Doubts Rental Housing Shortage in Remarks

HUD Secretary Alphonso Jackson astounded housing industry representatives, housing advocates, and low-income people who heard him speak at the National Press Club luncheon on June 17 when he made the following assertion: "Rental housing is affordable and plentiful."

Mr. Jackson's remarks came as part of a speech titled, "Renewing America's Communities, Homeownership: Myth vs. Reality." Mr. Jackson spoke about the Administration's focus on increasing homeownership, especially among minority families, and suggested that those who express concerns about whether homeownership is the answer for everyone are playing to stereotypes. "I did not come here with a paternalistic and patronizing attitude," he said. Mr. Jackson emphasized the Administration's recently enacted American Dream Downpayment program and its Zero Down Payment initiative.

While the room was filled largely with HUD employees, Mr. Jackson received a handful of questions on the recent cuts to the housing voucher program that are leading housing authorities to consider terminating contracts with landlords. Referring to the title of his speech, Mr. Jackson said, "That is another myth. Nobody is facing evictions." He said that agencies facing funding problems had caused their own problems through overleasing, and that HUD is working with these agencies.

Mr. Jackson's address was preceded by a Kerry Campaign press conference at which Representative Barney Frank (D-MA) and former HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo criticized the cuts to the housing voucher program. "There is a tremendous housing crisis in this country and this administration is making it worse," said Cuomo. He said that any increases in home ownership in the past three years were triggered by lower interest rates, not by administration action. "He (Jackson) might as well say cockadoodledoo, and take credit for the sunrise," said Rep. Barney Frank.

## Groups Ask Secretary to Clarify Statement

Twenty-one national organizations sent a letter to HUD Secretary Jackson on June 30 to express dismay about his nationally broadcast June 17 statement that "rental housing is affordable and plentiful" in the United States. Mr. Jackson made the assertion in an address to the National Press Club that was carried on National Public Radio. "As the nation's highest ranking housing official, your statements about housing conditions in the United States have significant influence on the public's understanding and opinion of the U.S. housing market. We urge you to accurately represent what the data clearly show," the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC)-coordinated letter said. Several recent research reports that document the affordable rental housing shortage were enclosed with the letter. The organizations called upon the Secretary to clarify his statement. The letter and annotated references can be found at [www.nlihc.org/press/pr070104.html](http://www.nlihc.org/press/pr070104.html).

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## In Related News...Displacement Prevention Bill Introduced

A bill providing assistance to privately-owned, HUD-subsidized low and moderate-income housing was introduced June 24 by House Financial Services Ranking Member Barney Frank (D-MA) with 19 Democratic cosponsors. The Displacement Prevention Act of 2004, H.R. 4679, uses \$675 million in previously appropriated, but unused, housing funds to prevent the displacement of low and moderate-income people living in Section 221(d)(3) and 236 housing. According to a recent General Accounting Office (GAO) report, more than 193,000 residents of these properties risk losing their housing as owners are poised to finish paying off their HUD mortgages. Once these owners lose contractual connections to HUD, residents will lose any affordability restrictions currently in place. HUD's budget request specifically rescinds this \$675 million and channels it to other activities. Mr. Frank's bill will fund activities including property rehabilitation, assistance to facilitate purchases of at-risk properties by nonprofits, and annual payment assistance to help owners make up the difference between subsidized rents and comparable market rate rents. Owners would extend affordability in exchange for assistance. According to a press release from Mr. Frank's office, the bill is expected to "help stave off an emerging problem that could cause more than 100,000 low income families to lose their affordable housing by 2013."

**POINT OF VIEW by Sheila Crowley, NLIHC President**

Last Monday, I toured The Commons at Grant in Columbus, OH, a model of the country’s best housing for formerly homeless and other single people who rely on disability income or low wage jobs. It is a beautiful building in a great neighborhood that is home to 100 people, most of whom can afford to live there because project-based vouchers were committed by the Columbus Housing Authority as part of the financing that made the deal possible. City officials are justifiably proud of this housing. I was the bearer of the news that other developments that could replicate what they had done had come to a screeching halt as a result of HUD’s actions to destabilize the housing voucher program.

On Tuesday, I was in Des Moines, IA, where I was told by a state housing official that he was going to visit an owner of a manufacturing company whose business was doing so well that the owner wanted to add a third shift and go to a 24-hour operation. The problem was that there is not enough affordable housing in the community where the plant is to accommodate an expansion of his workforce. He wants the state to build more housing. The state official was going to tell him that the state was not in a position to provide housing for the plant owner’s workforce who he pays only \$8.00 an hour.

On Wednesday, I read about the Mayor of Washington, DC, announcing his 10-year plan to end homelessness that includes developing 6,000 units of supportive housing. He was joined by Philip Mangano, Executive Director of the Interagency Council on the Homeless. They made no mention that the DC Housing Authority was not issuing any turnover vouchers in order to cope with HUD’s FY04 voucher funding crisis.

On Thursday, I attended HUD Secretary Alphonso Jackson’s speech at the National Press Club and heard him say that “rental housing is affordable and plentiful” in the United States. My shock was minor compared to that of Mrs. Alberta Williams, who was sitting next to me. Mrs. Williams resides at N Street Village in DC, a transitional shelter for women. She is trying to find an affordable unit to rent in DC and has been on the voucher waiting list for five years. She had just learned that the DC Housing Authority would not be issuing any vouchers. Thursday was also the day that the U.S House of Representatives passed a \$140 billion corporate tax cut bill with apparently no regard for how much deeper it would drive the federal government into deficit and debt. *Reprinted from Memo to Members, National Low Income Housing Coalition.*

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**State of the Nation’s Housing Paints Bleak Picture for Lowest Income Households**

“Although the overwhelming majority of Americans are well housed, nearly a third of all households spend 30 percent or more of their incomes on housing and 13 percent spend 50 percent or more,” declares *The State of the Nation’s Housing 2004*. Furthermore, “crowding is on the increase, some 2.5 - 3.5 million people are homeless at some point in a given year, and nearly 2 million households still live in severely inadequate units.”

The report, released this week by the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University, states that “fully half of lowest-income households spend at least 50 percent of their incomes on housing.” These severely cost-burdened households “have little left over to pay for other basic necessities, spending just \$161 on average each month on food and \$34 on healthcare.”

Growing pressures on housing affordability lead the report’s authors to predict little improvement in this area. “Many of the low-wage jobs created by the economy do not pay enough for a household to afford (at 30 percent of income) even a modest one-bedroom rental anywhere in the country,” the report states. Seniors with “meager” retirement incomes “face heavy housing cost burdens on top of escalating healthcare costs.” Replacing or adding lower-cost units is difficult and costly due to “restrictive regulations and public resistance to high-density development.” And the ballooning of the federal deficit and growing calls to cut spending on social and housing programs make “prospects for additional income supports or housing subsidies . . . bleak.” The report is available at [www.jchs.harvard.edu/publications/markets/son2004.pdf](http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/publications/markets/son2004.pdf).

## Hate Crimes Against People Experiencing Homelessness in 2003

A new report by the National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH) uses press and shelter reports to document the persistent pattern of hate crimes and violence against homeless people in the United States. In addition, the report notes a growing trend in the mainstream media in which homeless people are used as the targets of exploitative or degrading humor.

The report, *Hate, Violence, and Death on Main Street USA*, is the fifth in an annual series tracking hate crimes against the homeless. In 2003, according to NCH's compilation of news articles and reports from homeless shelters, at least 70 violent acts – nine of them lethal – were committed against people experiencing homelessness. The report details each of these crimes in a month-by-month description, including instances where homeless people were beaten with baseball bats, shot, raped, stabbed, or set on fire. In the last five years, their research has documented 131 homeless people killed and an additional 150 made the victims of violent crimes.

Also included in the report is a month-by-month listing of hateful actions and speech directed at homeless people by radio stations, newspapers, and politicians. This trend towards using the homeless as targets of ridicule and abuse is exemplified by the five recent "bum videos," in which homeless people are promised food, money, or alcohol in return for performing dangerous and humiliating stunts. The videos are available at mainstream retailers, including Tower Records, Borders, and FYE. Other retailers, including Amazon.com, Best Buy, Target, Virgin Mega Stores, Barnes and Noble, and Blockbuster.com have stopped selling the videos following requests from NCH.

NCH closes the report by providing suggestions for action, including a proposal for a General Accounting Office (GAO) investigation on the extent of violence against the homeless and an examination of the perpetrators of these crimes. The report includes a sample resolution calling for this investigation, as well as examples of legislation proposed and enacted to combat hate crimes against people experiencing homelessness. The report is available from [www.nationalhomeless.org/hatecrimes](http://www.nationalhomeless.org/hatecrimes).

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## New Bill Would Assist People Reentering Communities After Prison

Representatives Rob Portman (R-OH), Danny Davis (D-IL), Stephanie Tubbs Jones (D-OH), Mark Souder (R-IN), Steve Chabot (R-OH), and Chris Cannon (R-UT) joined this week in introducing a new bipartisan bill, which promises to reduce recidivism, increase public safety, and help states and communities to better address the growing number of people reentering communities from prison. The "Second Chance Act of 2004" would authorize \$113 million to go toward a variety of re-entry programs offering assistance with jobs, housing, mental health and substance abuse treatment, and strengthening families. The bill includes a number of measures to focus on the housing needs of people leaving jails or prisons, such as: including housing activities like directly providing housing or assisting people in securing housing from the private market as eligible uses of program funds under the \$40 million competitive grant program.; requiring housing to be addressed in the strategic plan that each state receiving funding must develop.; incorporating housing as a performance outcome that each state receiving funding is required to monitor and report to the Justice Department; including the Department of Housing and Urban Development as a member of the new federal task force on reentry; and reestablishing authority to place federal prisoners in halfway houses and other residential situations during the latter part of their terms, and encouraging residential substance abuse treatment upon release.

Rep. Portman emphasized the bipartisan support of the bill for addressing the needs of communities and people returning from prison. "We are all fighting this fight together because we understand the stakes," he said. "Recidivism...deserves our attention." Rep. Davis echoed this sentiment, stating that the bill would "prevent continuous escalation of crime, drug use, poverty, hopelessness, helplessness."

For more information on the housing components of this legislation, see [www.endhomelessness.org/pol/auth/HsngHR4676.pdf](http://www.endhomelessness.org/pol/auth/HsngHR4676.pdf) For a summary of the bill prepared by Hill staff, see [www.endhomelessness.org/pol/auth/SumHR4676.pdf](http://www.endhomelessness.org/pol/auth/SumHR4676.pdf).

## HUD Issues Technical Correction on SuperNOFA

HUD has finally issued the technical correction to the SuperNOFA regarding the assembly order for this year's Continuum of Care. The following is taken directly from the Federal Register:

Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs, Beginning at Page 27495

On pages 27505, third column, section IV.B.1.b. is deleted and section IV.B.1.c. redesignated as section IV.B.1.b. and corrected to read as follows:

b. Assembly Order—Each Continuum of Care must submit the entire Continuum of Care application, with all of its parts, in a single package to HUD. There are three separate sections to a Continuum of Care submission: the Continuum of Care Exhibit 1; all applicant documentation; all project documentation. The application must be assembled in the following order:

(1) Continuum of Care Exhibit 1 section:

(a) 2004 Application Summary Form.

(b) Exhibit 1, the Continuum of Care plan with all required forms, including HUD-27300, Questionnaire for HUD's Initiative on Removal of Regulatory Barriers and any necessary references or documentation.

(2) Applicant Documentation section:

(a) SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance. An SF-424 is not included with each project. Each applicant must attach the following documentation to its SF-424:

(i) A typed list of all the applicant's projects by priority number order, project name and requested amount.

(ii) HUD-424-B Applicant Assurances and Certifications.

(iii) Documentation of Applicant Eligibility. Only applicants for new projects must include documentation of eligibility.

iv) Special Certifications for homeless programs, located in Attachment 8 of this NOFA:

—Applicant Certification

—Coordination and Integration of Mainstream Programs

—Discharge Policy (Only State and local government applicants)

Note: Each SF-424 must also include the applicant's DUN and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number. (Please see the General Section of the SuperNOFA for more information on obtaining a DUNS number).

(3) Project Documentation section:

Each project exhibit must be submitted in its priority list order with all required forms for that exhibit. The following certifications must be included after each project submission:

(a) Documentation of Sponsor Eligibility. Only sponsors for new projects must include documentation of eligibility.

(b) HUD-2991, Certification of Consistency with the Consolidated Plan;

(c) HUD-2880, Applicant/Recipient Disclosure/Update Report; and

(d) HUD-424—Supplement, Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants (for nonprofit applicants or sponsors only).

In addition to the assembly order outlined above, the technical correction also clarifies the circumstances under which HUD headquarters will use applications submitted to field offices (in the event that the application submitted to headquarters is incomplete or pages appear to be missing).

The technical correction also includes a revised project component/information/participant count/major milestones page for exhibit 3 (shelter plus care). If you or anyone in your continuum is submitting a new shelter plus care project this year, make sure they use the revised HUD 40076 CoC-3C.

**Newsbriefs...**

**In Big Win for Advocates, Budget Process Bill Defeated**

Social justice advocates had a victory on June 24 when the House defeated, by a vote of 146-268, budget process legislation that would have set harmful multi-year spending caps on discretionary spending. As expected, House Appropriations Committee Chair Bill Young (R-FL) led the charge against the bill, opposing writing spending caps into law. Mr. Young saw the caps as an intrusion on Congress' authority on spending matters. Members in favor of spending caps offered a number of amendments in an attempt to "improve" the budget process, including amendments to cap the growth of entitlement programs and to require pay-as-you-go offsets for discretionary spending but not for tax cuts. Representative Mark Kirk (R-IL) led the attempt to cap entitlement spending, but his amendment was defeated 120-296. Congress left the Capitol June 25 for its July 4 recess, and it is still unclear when the VA/ HUD appropriations bill will be considered. When Congress returns on July 6, Members will have only two weeks to work before adjourning for the six-week summer recess.

**Temporary TANF Extension Passes**

A temporary extension of the TANF welfare law passed both the House and Senate on June 22. Congress, still unable to pass a permanent TANF reauthorization bill, agreed to extend the program with no changes to current law until September 30, 2004. The good news for advocates is that the extension does not include the superwaiver language that had been included earlier in the year in a House measure. Such language would allow governors to waive federal laws and regulations related to the integration of various welfare and workforce programs, including housing and homelessness. The earlier Senate bill did not include housing in its superwaiver provision. With Congress planning to adjourn by October 1 to prepare for the elections, there will likely not be enough time to complete TANF reauthorization this session. In that case, lawmakers will have to vote on another extension to carry the program into the next Congress.

**New Website Focuses on Low-Wage Work Issues**

The Fairness Initiative on Low-Wage Work has launched a new website focusing on issues surrounding low-wage work. The website provides facts and figures on low-wage work, new research and reports, and regularly updated news clips showing how the media covers such issues. The website is coordinated by the Communications Consortium Media Center and includes resources contributed from a wide range of non-profits working on low-wage issues including ACORN, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the Economic Policy Institute, Good Jobs First, the National Partnership for Women and Families and the Institute for Women's Policy Research. The website can be viewed at [www.lowwagework.org](http://www.lowwagework.org).

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**Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio Membership**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Organization \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Individual:     \_\_\_\_\_ \$35 (Regular)             \_\_\_\_\_ \$75 (Benefactor)     \_\_\_\_\_ \$250 (Sustainer)  
                       \_\_\_\_\_ \$10 (Low-Income)             \_\_\_\_\_ Fee Waiver Requested  
 Agency (according to budget):  
                       \_\_\_\_\_ \$35 (\$100,000 or less)             \_\_\_\_\_ \$75 (\$100,001 - \$250,000)  
                       \_\_\_\_\_ \$125 (\$250,001 - \$500,000)             \_\_\_\_\_ \$200 (\$500,001 - \$1 million)  
                       \_\_\_\_\_ \$250 (\$1 million-\$1.5 million)             \_\_\_\_\_ \$300 (over \$1.5 million)

Please send your tax deductible check to COHHIO at 35 E. Gay St, Ste. 210, Columbus, Ohio 43215.

**Thank you for your support!**

**Rural Housing Program Gets Some Support**

The House Appropriations Committee passed its FY05 agriculture and related agencies spending bill on June 23. Due to the work of Representative James Walsh (R-NY), the Section 515 rural rental housing program was appropriated \$116.1 million, a relatively modest \$400,000 short of its FY04 funding level. During appropriations subcommittee mark-up of the bill on June 16, funding for the Section 515 program was cut to \$60 million, the amount requested by the President. According to the Housing Assistance Council (HAC), Mr. Walsh went to bat for the program at the urging of his constituents, including the New York State Rural Housing Coalition and the National Rural Housing Coalition. The Section 515 rural rental housing program is the Rural Housing Service's only construction program for very low income housing. HAC reports that Mr. Walsh was able to work with Representative Henry Bonilla (R-TX), Chair of the Agriculture and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, to include the Section 515 increase in Mr. Bonilla's manager's amendment, thereby limiting controversy over the spending increase during the full committee mark-up. It is unclear when the Senate will begin work on its agriculture spending bill.

**High Rates of Uninsured Individuals in Ohio**

Approximately 81.8 million Americans – one out of three people under 65 years of age – were uninsured at some point of time during 2002-2003, according to a report released recently by Families USA. The report found that more than one out of four people (27.8 percent) in Ohio under the age of 65 went without health insurance during the same period. The report, based mainly on Census Bureau data, showed that most of these uninsured individuals lacked coverage for lengthy periods of time. Almost two-thirds (61 percent) of Ohioans were uninsured for six months or more; and over half (50.6 percent) of the uninsured Americans were uninsured for at least nine months. The report's Ohio data points to the need to maintain and even expand Ohio's Medicaid coverage for low-income families and children. Three-fourths (76.2 percent) of Ohio's uninsured were in working families, according to the report. Families in Ohio with incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level were much more likely to be uninsured than families above 200 percent of poverty: To download the report, go to [www.familiesusa.org/site/DocServer/Ohio.pdf?docID=3694](http://www.familiesusa.org/site/DocServer/Ohio.pdf?docID=3694).

**Children's Defense Fund Report: 13 Million Children Face Food Insecurity**

The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) has released a report on the effects of child hunger and food insecurity—the lack of consistent access to enough food to ensure active, healthy living. CDF's report finds that hunger is leaving many of America's children behind, with effects that range from health problems to academic achievement delays and social difficulties. According to the most recent figures from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 13 million American children were food insecure in 2002; of these, 567,000 experienced food insecurity to such a degree that they went hungry. The recently released details of the President's 2005 budget proposal suggest that matters may only get worse. In many cases, programs that were spared from cuts in FY 2005 are cut in FY 2006, a pattern that will result in a reduction of much-needed services. In the President's proposal, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) would be cut by \$122 million in FY 2006, an amount of money that is enough to provide WIC food benefits to more than 20,000 children for a year, according to CDF calculations. WIC is a cost-effective federally-funded preventive nutrition program that provides nutritious foods, nutrition education, and access to health care to low-income pregnant women, new mothers, infants and children. Without this crucial assistance, low-income babies and children are at risk for the many negative health effects of malnutrition. The report can be found at [www.childrensdefense.org/familyincome/hunger.pdf](http://www.childrensdefense.org/familyincome/hunger.pdf).

**Healthy Families Act Introduced**

Over 59 million Americans do not have one paid sick day to care for themselves or a sick family member. That means nearly half of all private sector workers face a dilemma when a family member is sick - stay home to provide the necessary care and miss a day of pay or even lose a job, or leave a sick child home alone. Senator Kennedy (D-MA) and Representative DeLauro (D-CT) have introduced The Healthy Families Act. This bill would provide full-time workers with seven paid sick days a year to be used for their own medical needs or those of a close family member. In addition, part-time employees would receive a pro-rated share. To contact your legislator to cosponsor the legislation, go to [capwiz.com/npwf/mail/oneclick\\_compose/?alertid=5920646](http://capwiz.com/npwf/mail/oneclick_compose/?alertid=5920646). For more information, contact Deven McGraw at [dmcgraw@nationalpartnership.org](mailto:dmcgraw@nationalpartnership.org) or 202/986-2600.

**Urban Institute Develops New Web Resource on Housing**

The Urban Institute has dedicated a new section of its website to "Housing America's Low-Income Families: A Research Focus of the Urban Institute." This research contributes to the ongoing debate about how best to provide permanent housing for low-income families.

The Urban Institute researchers explain four key findings and provide a list of specific support resources. The main findings include:

- Affordable housing strategies must respond to local market conditions, but still serve the families who are in greatest need.
- The HOPE VI program should be continued, but with more attention to the challenge of relocating former residents.
- Housing voucher recipients are more likely than residents of public and assisted housing to live in low-poverty and racially mixed neighborhoods.
- Federal deregulation reforms and proposals are unlikely to hold the solution to today's housing policy challenges.

The website also includes a list of the Urban Institute housing research team and easy links for information on other housing topics. This web resource can be found at [www.urban.org/content/IssuesInFocus/HousingAmericasLow-IncomeFamilies/Housing.htm#about](http://www.urban.org/content/IssuesInFocus/HousingAmericasLow-IncomeFamilies/Housing.htm#about).

**Loss of Affordable Units Higher than Estimated**

In a recent report, the National Housing Trust (NHT) details the net and gross losses in HUD-subsidized rental units between 1995 and the present, finding that the loss in affordable housing units is substantially larger than previous estimates. The report, titled *Changes to Project-Based Multifamily Units in HUD's Inventory Between 1995 and 2003*, first totals the number of units in both years receiving assistance under three programs: Section 8 project-based rental assistance, Section 236 and Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation. The authors note that some of the loss in project-based subsidized housing units was compensated by an increase in tenant-based assistance in the form of housing vouchers. While these figures show a total gain of between 221,000 and 237,000 tenant-based vouchers, the decrease in project-based units was greater, leading to a net loss of federal housing subsidies of 74,464. The report is available at [nhtinc.org/documents/PB\\_Inventory.pdf](http://nhtinc.org/documents/PB_Inventory.pdf).

**Blueprint to End Hunger Unveiled**

National anti-hunger organizations unveiled a blueprint to cut food insecurity in half by 2010, and end hunger in the U.S. by 2015. The report indicates that in order to achieve this goal, a strong political commitment will be necessary. The blueprint includes goals for each level of government, school and community organizations, nonprofit groups and for individuals. The activities to end hunger for state and local government officials include:

- Reducing the complexity and stigma of applying for food stamps;
- Expanding nutrition program outreach efforts to underserved populations; and
- Using the flexibility in the food stamp program to offer transitional food stamps to families leaving welfare without requiring an additional application.

To review the Blueprint and all of the recommendations, visit: [www.frac.org/Blueprint to End Hunger.pdf](http://www.frac.org/Blueprint%20to%20End%20Hunger.pdf).

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**COHHIO's Predatory Lending Hotline - 877-228-1645**

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**Do you currently receive *Breaking Ground* by mail?  
If so, please switch to email delivery.  
To switch: email Susan Francis at COHHIO at  
[susanfrancis@cohhio.org](mailto:susanfrancis@cohhio.org).**

## Dayton Predatory Lending Ordinance Struck Down in Court of Appeals

The Montgomery County Court of Appeals has upheld the lower court decision striking down the Dayton Predatory Lending Ordinance. Dayton v. Ohio, Montgomery Co. Court of Appeals CA 20120.

In a 41 page opinion focusing in large part on the inconsistent Ohio Supreme Court precedent in the area of preemption of city ordinances, the Court found that the Dayton ordinance was an exercise of police power that conflicted with a general law of Ohio, HB 386 [which mostly enacted the already existing provisions of the Federal Homeownership and Equity Protection Act, and therefore prohibits little predatory lending activity that wasn't already prohibited.] whether you used the "head on collision" or "conflict by implication" standard for saying what was a conflict. "Rather than leap into the conundrum [of inconsistent decisions] we will apply the [head on collision] test in a straight forward manner. As a matter of common sense (something that should be welcome in the law but is sometimes absent) we believe the conflicts are such that Dayton's ordinance must be invalidated."

The Court found the Ohio Predatory Lending Law did not intend loans made at rates below the HOEPA "trigger levels" to be considered high cost loans, and "Accordingly we agree with the trial court that Dayton's ordinance impermissibly conflicts with state law on the same subject. We stress that this does not mean Dayton is precluded from acting in the field; it simply means that any ordinance must be tailored in a way that it will not conflict with state legislation on the subject."

Earlier, the Court noted certain differences between the ordinance and state law in other provisions such as the points and fees trigger, balloon payments and mandatory arbitration. "Unquestionably, the ordinance and statutes conflict. The issue then is whether the conflicts are permissible." Is the Court's opinion limited to where the ordinance and state law are different triggers for "covered" or "high cost" loans, or are loan terms (balloon payments) that are mentioned in 386 outside the city's power, or are any loan terms (like arbitration clauses) outside the city's power even if they don't appear in 386? The court implies that there is something the city could do that does not conflict with 386. What if anything might that be?

It also struck down the part of the law that lenders who made such loans were disqualified from doing business with the City. It said the City could choose who it contracts with, but "Dayton does not need to pass an ordinance to that effect, particularly where the clear intent is to accomplish indirectly what cannot directly be done."

The Court also read the Legislature's statement about preempting the field as "mere expressions of non-binding opinion" which a Court could agree with or ignore.

Similarly, it upheld the Trial Court's holding that the law was of statewide concern because if predatory lenders could not ply their trade in Dayton they would go elsewhere and do more predatory lending there. The court found this was a matter of common sense, and that any error in this was harmless, since its finding was based on police powers and not local self government. "As a final matter the trial court's remarks did not insult the people of Dayton. Predatory lending is a serious problem, for Dayton as well as other communities. However Uniform Legislation is a better way to solve the problem than having conflicting requirements at the state and local level. If the current predatory lending law needs stronger or more effective provisions, the legislature should address the problem, as a matter of public policy. And, as we stressed, Dayton is not precluded from acting, so long as conflict with state statutes can be avoided."

What the state legislature should do and what it will do, may be two different things.

The decision is available at [www.sconet.state.oh.us/rod/documents/2/2004/2004-ohio-3141.doc](http://www.sconet.state.oh.us/rod/documents/2/2004/2004-ohio-3141.doc).

By Stan Hirtle, Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Dayton

## Burdens on Homeowners Increase

Two recent reports from Fannie Mae – one focusing on middle income families, the other on urban minorities – highlight growing affordability problems for homeowners in the nation’s largest cities. Beginning this year on the national level, a median-income household will no longer qualify for a mortgage on a median-priced home. In addition, while minority households experienced growth in homeownership rates over the past decade, the percentage of these homeowners with severe affordability problems jumped dramatically.

The first report, *Homeownership Affordability in Urban America: Past and Future*, examines past and predicted trends in affordability for selected large metropolitan areas as well as the nation as a whole, finding that a first home is affordable for median-income buyers in only three out of 11 cities. It also gauges affordability for people working in four middle-class occupations – as teachers, firefighters, nurses, and police officers. At the national level, teachers, firefighters, nurses, and police officers cannot afford a median-priced home without a second income in the family.

The second report, *A Tale of Two Cities: Growing Affordability Problems Amidst Rising Homeownership for Urban Minorities*, addresses affordability problems for minority homeowners in the nation’s 25 largest cities. The report, using decennial census data, finds that by 2000, 12.5 percent of Latino homeowners and 14.1 percent of black homeowners had severe affordability problems; in Los Angeles and New York, more than 20 percent of black and Latino households were paying half their incomes for housing.

Both reports are available from Fannie Mae’s website, *Homeownership Affordability in Urban America: Past and Future* at [www.fanniemae.org/programs/pdf/042904\\_housing\\_affordability.pdf](http://www.fanniemae.org/programs/pdf/042904_housing_affordability.pdf) , and *A Tale of Two Cities: Growing Affordability Problems Amidst Rising Homeownership for Urban Minorities* at [www.fanniemae.org/programs/pdf/census/notes\\_14.pdf](http://www.fanniemae.org/programs/pdf/census/notes_14.pdf). A Tale of Two Cities is part of Fannie Mae’s Census Note series.

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## Housing Trust Fund Request for Proposals

The Office of Housing and Community Partnerships (OHCP) within the Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) will distribute approximately \$13.5 million of the Ohio Housing Trust Fund through the Housing Assistance Request for Proposals (RFP) Program. The RFP submission deadline is 5 pm on September 2, 2004. Applicants must submit one original and three copies of the application to OHCP, 77 South High Street, 24th Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215.

Applicants may choose one of the following methods to obtain a copy of the application and guidelines:

- 1) obtain a copy of the application via email attachment (Microsoft Word 97) by emailing Brent Merriman at [bmerriman@odod.state.oh.us](mailto:bmerriman@odod.state.oh.us);
- 2) download a copy from the ODOD website at [www.odod.state.oh.us/webforms](http://www.odod.state.oh.us/webforms); or
- 3) contact OHCP at 614/466-2285. Applicants are encouraged to read the guidelines and application thoroughly since there are several changes in the application format and terminology.

Questions regarding the HTF RFP process should be directed to Mary Ervin, Patrick Hart, Peggie Janotka or Bob Johnson at 614/466-2285.

The Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH) will be providing some match funding. Use of ODMH funds must involve those activities which are needed to support a person with a severe mental disability or serious emotional disturbance, and their family. The support may be needed by the person and family, and may currently be lacking in the system and environment. ODMH funds will be targeted for projects that assist individuals and families to obtain permanent housing and to activities which do not constitute Medicaid-eligible services. A letter of request for match must be sent in to ODMH by August 9, 2004. For more information, contact Susan Thompson at ODMH at [thompsonsk@mh.state.oh.us](mailto:thompsonsk@mh.state.oh.us) or 614/466-4332

## Top Five Risks to Eligible Voters in 2004

1. VOTER REGISTRATION PROBLEMS
2. ERRONEOUS PURGING
3. PROBLEMS WITH THE NEW ID REQUIREMENT
4. DIFFICULTIES WITH VOTING SYSTEMS
5. FAILURE TO COUNT PROVISIONAL BALLOTS

### 1. VOTER REGISTRATION PROBLEMS

These problems include citizens who apply to register to vote through the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) or other agencies under the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) but whose applications have not been properly forwarded to or acted on by registrars; incomplete voter lists at polling places; and voters going to the “wrong” polling place due to inadequate communication of polling place locations or because they have moved within a jurisdiction.

#### SOLUTIONS

- Ensure that voter registration applications at DMV and other agencies are transmitted and acted on in a timely manner by voter registration authorities.
- Application forms that have eligibility information included (name, age, residence and citizenship) should be accepted.
- Maintain communications on Election Day between each polling place and the registrar’s central office.

### 2. ERRONEOUS PURGING

In addition to troubles in getting on the registration rolls, many voters will find they have been erroneously removed from the list. In the 2000 election, hundreds of eligible Florida citizens were mistakenly identified as felons and were removed from registration lists because of flawed data and a faulty data matching process.

#### SOLUTIONS

- Provide timely notice to the voter before any person is purged so that corrections can be made.
- Do not purge voter rolls close to Election Day.
- Ensure that any list of potentially ineligible voters is screened and checked for accuracy before it is used.

### 3. PROBLEMS WITH THE NEW ID REQUIREMENT

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) requires that first-time applicants who register by mail present ID prior to voting on Election Day unless the state has already verified their identity. While HAVA says that the application of the new requirement must be “uniform and non-discriminatory,” many states have yet to establish mechanisms for ensuring uniform and non-discriminatory application. New procedures can lead to confusion and, ultimately, wrongful disenfranchisement on Election Day. The new requirement opens the door to unequal and discriminatory treatment.

#### SOLUTIONS

- Educate voters on the ID they should bring to the polling place.
- Train poll workers on the proper rules for non-discriminatory application of ID requirements.
- Recruit and train bilingual poll workers to assist limited English proficient voters.
- Ensure that voters who do not bring ID can cast a provisional ballot that will be counted if they are eligible to vote.

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**Visit the COHHIO web page at [www.cohhio.org](http://www.cohhio.org)  
for more voter registration information.**

4. DIFFICULTIES WITH VOTING SYSTEMS

Unfamiliarity with a voting system on the part of voters, election administrators or poll workers can lead to confusion on Election Day. Most jurisdictions will not be switching to new voting machines in 2004 so many voters will vote on the same systems that they used previously. This means that we can expect the same types of problems as we saw in 2000: confusing ballot design, machines that don't work and votes that are never counted.

SOLUTIONS

- Educate voters on how to operate the voting systems they will face on Election Day.
- Train poll workers how to properly operate their voting systems and how to courteously assist voters in using the machines.
- Institute management safeguards and testing of all machines.

5. FAILURE TO COUNT PROVISIONAL BALLOTS

Provisional ballots are intended as a safeguard for voters whose eligibility is in question on Election Day, including those whose voter registration is in doubt, who may have been erroneously purged, or who have ID problems (See items 1, 2 and 3). HAVA requires that provisional ballots must be counted if the voter is eligible to vote. However, some election officials have chosen to apply standards for counting provisional ballots that are unrelated to voter eligibility. In a recent Illinois primary, one jurisdiction rejected 93 percent of the provisional ballots cast. Most were rejected because poll workers failed to notify voters that they had to cast these votes in their assigned precinct, according to the county's interpretation of state law

SOLUTIONS

- Provide a "federal" provisional ballot so that no voter is disenfranchised from voting in the Presidential, Senate, or House of Representative races because that voter went to the "wrong" polling place.
- Ensure that voter eligibility rather than administrative convenience is the test for counting each provisional ballot.
- Set a statewide, uniform, non-discriminatory process for issuing and counting provisional ballots.
- Provide transparency to ensure that the public knows how many provisional ballots were issued in each jurisdiction on Election Day and to ensure that the process for counting provisional ballots is open to public scrutiny.

This list was compiled by The League of Women Voters and the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights

**Election Law Training for Nonprofits**

To clarify what 501 (c)(3) organizations can and cannot do in an election season, the Alliance for Justice will host one-hour web-based trainings on Monday, July 19 at 2 pm ET and Monday, July 26 at 2 pm ET. The trainings will cover the rules for election-related activities including candidate elections, voter guides, voting records and candidate debates and forums. Participants will need a computer with internet access and working computer speakers. Questions will be taken through an online chat mechanism, but not through voice, so a microphone is not needed. Registrants will receive email instructions on how to log in to the training. Registration is \$30. Register at [www.afj.org/nonprofit/workshops\\_events/index.html](http://www.afj.org/nonprofit/workshops_events/index.html). With questions regarding technology, contact Tim Mooney at [tmooney@afj.org](mailto:tmooney@afj.org). With questions regarding registration, contact Ann Allegra at [aallegra@afj.org](mailto:aallegra@afj.org). Or call AFJ at 202/822-6070.

## Know Your Rights - Ohio Voters' Bill of Rights

You have the right to vote – it’s the law, and you have the proof in your hands! You’ll notice letters and numbers after each of your rights listed below- those codes tell lawyers and poll-workers where to find the actual Ohio statute that protects your right to vote! These rights are guaranteed to properly registered and qualified voters. You have the right to bring this bill of rights with you into the polling area. If you feel your rights have been violated, please call the Election Protection lawyer hotline toll free - 866-OUR-VOTE.

1. On Election Day, each polling place opens at 6:30 A.M. and closes at 7:30 P.M. If you are in line when the polls close, you have the right to vote. Ohio Code § 3501.32(A) (2003)
2. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE without presenting any identification after the election officials have verified your signature. If you are unable to sign the register, you may still vote after you present proper identification to verify your identity. §3505.18
3. If your name is not on the list of registered voters or you are a first time voter who registered by mail and you do not have identification and you did not include a copy of your identification with your application, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE BY PROVISIONAL BALLOT. Help America Vote Act of 2002, 42 US.C. § 15482
4. If you have moved within the same precinct or changed your name, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE at that same assigned polling place. § 3503.16 (B)(1)
5. If you have moved within the same county or moved from one precinct to another and changed your name, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE at the polling place in the precinct in which you currently live, at a site designated by the Board of Elections or by an absentee ballot. §§ 3503.16 (B)(2), (G)
6. If you have moved to a different county, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE at a site designated by the Board of Elections or by an absentee ballot if you are unable to appear in person. §§ 3503.16 (C), (G)
7. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE without the five-minute time limit as long as one other machine is not in use or no one is waiting in line. § 3505.23
8. If you make a mistake and “spoil” your paper ballot, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO RECEIVE ANOTHER BALLOT AND VOTE. You cannot receive more than three ballots. § 3505.23
9. If you cannot read or write, are blind or otherwise disabled, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REQUEST SPECIAL ASSISTANCE from anyone, except your employer, an agent of your employer, or an officer or agent of your union. § 3505.24
10. If your polling place is inaccessible to you due to a handicap, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE with assistance from within the vehicle that brought you to the polling site or at the door of the polling place. § 3501.29(C)
11. If you have been convicted of a felony and released from prison, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE after re-registering, even while you are on probation or parole. If you are in jail, you have the right to vote by absentee ballot if you have been sentenced to a misdemeanor or are awaiting trial on a felony or misdemeanor charge. §§ 2961.01, 3509.02
12. You have the right to vote without being intimidated or forced to vote for someone you do not wish to vote for. §§ 3599.06, 3599.01(A), 3599.05

*YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO TAKE THIS BILL OF RIGHTS INTO THE VOTING BOOTH WITH YOU.*

From - Ohio Guide to Voter Assistance and Advocacy: From Registration to a Ballot that Counts

## NCRP Examines Philanthropic Grantmaking of Politically Conservative Foundations

The National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP) conducted a year-long examination which details the effective philanthropic strategies that 79 conservative foundations have used to support the activities of 250 public policy-oriented right-wing think tanks at the federal, state, and local levels. The report, *Axis of Ideology: Conservative Foundations and Public Policy*, examines 79 conservative foundations and their grants to nearly 350 archconservative policy nonprofit organizations between 1999 and 2001.

“Conservative foundations are brazen and confident in their grantmaking to advance a conservative political agenda, constituting a vital component for financing the right wing policy juggernaut,” said NCRP executive director Rick Cohen. “These conservative foundations know how to mobilize resources for their ideological causes and they do it well, to the detriment of the constituencies and populations that are not served by their nonprofit clients’ assault on civil rights, tax equity, affirmative action, gay and lesbian rights, and so many other concerns of ordinary Americans.”

Jeff Krehely, NCRP’s deputy director and the lead author of *Axis of Ideology*, outlined the key findings of the study, saying, “Our research both confirms and advances the conclusions NCRP researched in 1997 on several fronts. Conservative foundations are far more likely to provide their grantees with flexible core operating support and long-term funding, they focus their grantmaking on a small number of grantees with an eye toward investing in and sustaining existing politically conservative policy centers, and they fearlessly support and promote organizations that lobby their conservative ideas aggressively in state capitals and in Washington.”

“The importance of these research findings in a political election year cannot be overstated,” Krehely noted. “Are more liberal, more progressive charitable foundations prepared in any way to mobilize their billions in philanthropic resources to promote a different conception of American society based on tax equity, civil rights, and social justice?”

Among the major findings of NCRP’s *Axis of Ideology* report are the following:

- From 1999 through 2001, the 79 conservative foundations made more than \$252 million in grants to nonprofit public policy organizations.
- The top conservative foundation givers were the Sara Scaife Foundation (\$44.8 million), the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation (\$38.9 million), the John M. Olin Foundation (\$17.4 million), the Shelby Cullom Davis Foundation (\$13 million) and the Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation (\$12.2 million).

- Multi-issue public policy think tanks got 46 percent of the grants, followed by 10 percent for education-oriented policy centers and 10 percent for conservative policy centers devoted to legal advocacy.

- The largest recipient locales for conservative foundation public policy grantmaking, in rank order, were the District of Columbia, Virginia, California, Delaware, New York, Michigan, Indiana, and Texas.

- The 10 largest recipients of conservative foundation grants between 1999 and 2001, in rank order, were the Heritage Foundation, the InterCollegiate Studies Institute, George Mason University (the Mercatus Center), the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, Hillsdale College, Citizens for a Sound Economy Foundation, Judicial Watch, the Free Congress Research and Education Foundation, the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, and the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research.

- The priority issue emphases of the conservative foundations’ public policy grantmaking were general public policy, education policy (for example, promoting school vouchers and charter schools), legal advocacy, grants for ideologically conservative academic centers, social issue advocacy (focusing on family, women, and gay/lesbian issues), nonprofit infrastructure, religion, and defense/security.

- The conservative foundations continue to be extremely focused in their grantmaking, concentrating on building and sustaining a small group of grantees through commitments of long-term core operating grants.

- Unlike most foundations, these conservative foundations are confident and aggressive in making grants available to nonprofits that will actively lobby lawmakers, challenge laws and regulations in the courts, and broadcast conservative ideas and ideologies.

- A core group of foundation and grantee leaders serve on several foundation and grantee boards of directors, and contribute millions of dollars to Republican candidates for public office.

NCRP’s Cohen added, “We cannot applaud the political ideas these conservative foundations promote, but the successes of these foundations are remarkable, as they continue to frame the policy agenda and pose a challenge to progressives around the nation about how to energize and capitalize public policy addressing social justice concerns. If you add corporate charitable grantmaking to the grants of these conservative foundations, you have a unique, extraordinarily powerful, and little understood financial infrastructure undergirding the right wing political dominance that currently exists in the White House, Congress, the Supreme Court, and many state legislatures.

An executive summary of *Axis of Ideology* is available at <http://ncrp.org/PDF/AxisofIdeology-ExecutiveSummary.pdf>.

## Corresponding with Congress

Sending your correspondence to members of Congress in a way that will get their attention is a fundamental concern of all public charities wanting to influence public policy. Recent changes related to electronic mail, faxes, and websites have modified how correspondence is received in Congress and therefore, what is the best way, currently, to send correspondence.

You can get information on corresponding with individual Senators at [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) and individual House members at [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov). Fax numbers, postal mail addresses and how to contact the legislator by email are available through those sources. All members of the Senate and House may be reached by telephone through the main Capitol number, 202/224-3121, although that number is often busy.

While the means by which correspondence is delivered to Congress has changed in recent years, how to compose an effective message has not. Following are changes that can make an important difference in getting your message heard, on time. Also included below are some tips about how to effectively state your message.

### Postal Mail

In 1998, the last year for which information is available, House offices received 40 million pieces of mail and the Senate received 35 million. The competition for having attention paid to your letter is intense. In addition, postal mail now takes ten days and sometimes even as long as two months to arrive because of the time involved in the radiation process applied to all postal mail, growing out of the recent anthrax/ricin threats. The sheer volume and slow movement of postal mail makes it a less attractive but still important means of corresponding. Obviously, you wouldn't use postal mail if you were writing about an issue that might come up for a vote in the next few days or even the following week. Still, a carefully written postal letter that does not appear to be a form letter (which is often part of a campaign) will get serious attention if it is from a Representative's district, a Senator's state, or relates to a Member's committee assignment. Postal letters usually demonstrate a greater amount of effort on the part of the sender than some other means of communication and the more obvious the effort the more seriously the communication is taken.

### Faxes

There is growing evidence that faxes are the best way to correspond with Congress. Congressional offices check the fax machine regularly throughout the day and faxes are passed on to the legislative correspondent who will draft a response. Email, on the other hand, often is checked only several times a week. If you are corresponding on an issue that is coming up within a short period of time, to be safe, send a fax.

### Email

About 20 percent of the mail received by Congress is postal, 20 percent is faxes and 60 percent email. By May of 2001, Congress was receiving a million email messages a day. While the email total is impressive, Congressional staff raise the same questions about it as some other forms of mass correspondence. Much of the email that is programmed through websites can usually be easily identified as motivated by the same kind of effort backing junk mail. "Click and send" messages that come in volume through websites have the same "markings" as post cards or bulk mail and don't get the personal attention given to correspondence that is not programmed.

Emails, even click and sends, will be answered but are much less likely to be seen by the Congressperson's own eyes. However, if the attempt is to show large numbers of people care about the issue, it still may be useful to the lobby campaign. Despite the questionable importance that may be assigned to email by Congressional staff, many activist organizations use it because it is less expensive than faxes, organized telephone efforts and preprinted postcards or paper action alerts. Also email can get the word out instantaneously to the grassroots and generate almost immediate responses to Congress. And that speed may be essential given that congressional agendas often change.

Organizations are learning that like traditional forms of communication, email campaigns should be used sparingly, focusing on the right time, targeting information to the right audience, and insuring that the emails come from the right sources. They have recognized that spammed email messages to Congress are usually ignored. On the other hand, these groups have reported very impressive results from well-directed email alerts.

Congress has recently placed a number of restrictions on email. For example, you can no longer send email to a House member if you do not live in that House member’s congressional district. House members have established filters through an email service program that forces the sender to indicate where the sender lives. This affects, for example, being able to email members of a congressional committee because people who may want to communicate with committee members on an issue the committee is considering may not be from any of the congressional districts represented by the committee members. There is not a similar filter program for all offices in the Senate although individual Senator offices use a variety of means to filter out unwanted email.

**Message Content**

While knowing what means to use to deliver your message is important, the crafting of the message content is essential. Here are some tips from congressional staff regarding what is mostly likely to get attention and move your message along in a congressional office.

1. State in the first sentence your position on the issue in question.
2. State what action you would like the legislator to take and tell how the enactment of the legislation will affect you or your organization.
3. Demonstrate that you know the issue and feel strongly about it.
4. Tell a personal story that relates to the legislation.
5. Make sure that your information is accurate.
6. Highlight a novel issue to get more attention.
7. Avoid sending correspondence that can be easily identified as programmed.
8. Legible, handwritten letters get attention.
9. Postcards get little attention unless they are handwritten and legible.
10. Always provide a return address on both the communication and the envelope. Envelopes often become detached from the correspondence. Also, include the date.
11. If you would like to invite your Congressperson to your function, make the request in writing several months in advance. Follow up by phone with the Member’s scheduler.

**One Last Word on Corresponding with Legislators**

If the response you get does not answer the question you asked, it’s perfectly acceptable to correspond back by to the legislator, state that the response didn’t answer your question, restate your question and ask politely but firmly for an answer.

*Reprinted from Charity Lobbying in the Public Interest - Educating charities about the important role lobbying can play in achieving their mission. Some of the information regarding postal mail, faxes and email was taken from Congress and the Internet by James A. Thurber and Colton C. Campbell, 2003.*

## Resources

### TRAININGS

- August 11 - *Clinical Supervision*, Ohio Community Corrections Association, Columbus. This six hour seminar is for anyone who is currently offering supervision in a clinical setting or anyone interested in becoming a clinical supervisor. The goals for this seminar are to develop a professional role as a supervisor and to learn how to guide the supervised through the transformation of principles into practice. RCHs and CEUs for Counselors and Social Workers will be offered. For more information contact Lusanne Green at 614/252-8417.
- September 14 - *Lead Risk Assessor Refresher*, Office of Housing and Community Partnerships, Ohio Department of Development, Newark. Provides certified risk assessors with a review of the Lead Inspector/Risk Assessor training and update participants regarding Ohio's lead abatement laws and regulations. \$50 . For more information, visit the OHCP web site at [www.odod.state.oh.us/cdd/ohcp](http://www.odod.state.oh.us/cdd/ohcp) and select "Lead-Based Paint Issues" or contact Betsy Giffin at [bgiffin@odod.state.oh.us](mailto:bgiffin@odod.state.oh.us) or 614/466-2285.
- September 29 - October 1 - *Community Development: A Civil Right*, Ohio CDC Association Annual Conference, Cleveland. For more information, contact Celia Elkins at [celkins@ohiocdc.org](mailto:celkins@ohiocdc.org) or 614-461-6392.
- November 3-5 - *What's Next?: Exploring New Adventures*, 2004 Ohio Housing Conference, sponsored by the Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing and the Ohio Housing Finance Agency, Columbus. For more information, visit [www.occh.org](http://www.occh.org) or [www.homebuyerohio.com](http://www.homebuyerohio.com).
- Ohio University Executive Leadership Institute, Athens. October 5-8 - *Leading with Vision, Value and Strategy*. November 4-5 - *Strategic Triangle in Depth: Leading Change*. Spring 2005 - *Courage and Compromise in Public Leadership*. For more information, visit <http://oueli.voinovichcenter.ohio.edu/>.

### PUBLICATIONS

- *Experiences of Battered Women in Ohio: A Community Focus Group Report*, Ohio Domestic Violence Network. The focus groups were conducted to determine who women who had been battered were talking to about their experiences of abuse and how service providers were responding to survivors of domestic violence and their children. Available at <http://odvn.org>.
- *Housing Discrimination Study*, U.S. Department of HUD. Represents the most ambitious effort to date to measure the extent of housing discrimination in the United States against people based on their race or ethnic group. Available at [www.huduser.org/publications/hsgfin/hds.html](http://www.huduser.org/publications/hsgfin/hds.html).
- *New Freedom Commission Publishes Paper on Housing and Homelessness*. The President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health is charged with identifying policies that could be implemented at the Federal, State and local levels of government to maximize the utility of existing resources, improve coordination of treatment and services, and promote successful community integration for adults with serious mental illness and children with serious emotional disturbance. The commission's 15 subcommittees, which were established to examine specific aspects of mental health services are used to offer recommendations for improvement. Recently the Housing and Homelessness Subcommittee published a Background Paper. To access a copy of their recommendations, click on [www.mentalhealthcommission.gov/papers/Homeless\\_ADA\\_Compliant.pdf](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov/papers/Homeless_ADA_Compliant.pdf)
- *Affordable Housing Policy Review series*, National Housing Conference (NHC). Describes a variety of private-sector initiatives to promote neighborhood revitalization and affordable housing development. The report, which grew out of a series of roundtable discussions with business and community leaders, highlights Employer-Assisted Housing (EAH) programs. NHC finds that EAH benefits employers, employees, and communities by stabilizing the workforce, lowering commute times, and increasing investment in local neighborhoods. *Private Sector Partnerships: Investing in Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization* looks at EAH programs in Chicago, Milwaukee, Seattle, and Portland in which employers help families afford downpayment and closing costs when buying a home located near their workplace. These cities contain several models of EAH, including affinity programs, corporate giving programs, and forgivable loan programs. EAH benefits are growing in popularity; Fannie Mae, which provides technical assistance to more than 600 employers that offer the benefit, notes that three-quarters of employers with EAH programs started them within the past four years. The report also showcases several other private-sector partnership initiatives, including the Phillips Partnership in Minneapolis and the City Heights redevelopment initiative in San Diego, which successfully revitalized troubled neighborhoods, and the statewide Commonwealth Housing Task Force in Massachusetts, which formulated housing policy. All three of these projects involved new levels of cooperation between businesses, nonprofits, and governments. The report details how the entities successfully organized resources and information from different sources and built bridges across public agency jurisdictions. Available at [www.nhc.org/PrivateSectorFinal04.pdf](http://www.nhc.org/PrivateSectorFinal04.pdf).

WEB PAGES

- *Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) database.* It has recently been updated with data on projects placed in service through 2001. The database contains information on nearly 20,700 projects and more than 1,041,000 housing units placed in service between 1987 and 2001. The database includes project location, number of units and low-income units, number of bedrooms, year the credit was allocated, year the project was placed in service, whether the project was new construction or rehab, type of credit provided, and other sources of project financing. In addition, the database is geocoded, which enables researches to look at the geographical distribution and neighborhood characteristics of tax credit projects. Available at [www.huduser.org/datasets/lihtc.html](http://www.huduser.org/datasets/lihtc.html).

- *State-By-State Directory to Low-Income Benefit Programs, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.* The directory contains information on state-administered low-income benefit programs for convenient web access. Among the programs included are Food Stamps, Medicaid, SCHIP, Child Care and TANF. The directory includes links to official state websites, which may offer descriptions of each program, application forms, eligibility screening tools, and policy and procedure manuals used by state agency caseworkers. (The extent to which such resources are available varies from state to state). To view the directory, go to [www.cbpp.org/1-14-04tanf.htm](http://www.cbpp.org/1-14-04tanf.htm).

FUNDING

- *Hasbro Children's Foundation.* Funds programs that improve the emotional, mental and physical well-being of children from birth through age twelve and their families. Programs should be innovative direct service programs in the areas of health, education and social services. For more information, visit [www.hasbro.org/hcf](http://www.hasbro.org/hcf).

- *Tiger Woods Foundation.* Focuses on underserved children and families with health and welfare. One-year grants to nonprofits based primarily in urban area. For more information, visit [www.twfound.org](http://www.twfound.org).

- *SAFECO.* Focus on improving and creating neighborhood parks and gathering places; neighborhood beautification and clean-up projects; serve learning projects that create or enhance community assets; and community festivals that attract diverse audiences. For more information; visit [www.safeco.com/safeco/about/giving/grants.asp](http://www.safeco.com/safeco/about/giving/grants.asp).

- *Ethel Louise Armstrong Foundation.* Funds programs for adults with disabilities in the areas of education, advocacy and the arts. For more information, visit [www.ela.org](http://www.ela.org).

- *Humana Foundation.* Focus on Cincinnati for education, community development, arts and culture, health and human services and international projects. For more information, visit [www.humanafoundation.com](http://www.humanafoundation.com).

- *All Kids Foundation.* For serving economically disadvantaged and at-risk children and their families. Main focus is center-based childcare. For more information, visit [www.4allkids.com](http://www.4allkids.com).

- *Andrus Family Fund.* For successful transitions for children from foster care to independence and community reconciliation projects. For more information, visit [www.grantstation.com/insider.asp](http://www.grantstation.com/insider.asp).

- *Jewish Fund for Justice.* Supports nonprofits working to alleviate the root causes of poverty and the disenfranchisement of low-income people in the United States. The Fund supports community-based organizing and advocacy that promote leadership development and build community self-sufficiency in order to strengthen the impact of low-income people on the public debates over issues affecting their lives. For more information, visit [www.grantstation.com/insider.asp](http://www.grantstation.com/insider.asp).

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## Bureau of Workers' Compensation to Offer Training

The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation's (BWC's) Division of Safety & Hygiene Training Center invites Ohio employees and employers to attend one or more (up to eight) half-day workshops on a variety of occupational safety and health topics. Workshops will be held Nov. 1-5, 2004, at the Ohio Center for Occupational Safety & Health (OCOSH) in Pickerington (east of Columbus). Four concurrent sessions on industrial hygiene, construction, ergonomics, industrial safety, and safety culture issues will be presented by BWC safety and health consultants. Continuing education units (CEUs) will be awarded for each workshop. Additional information is can be found on the Division of Safety & Hygiene Training Center's web page at: [www.ohiobwc.com/employer/programs/safety/SandHEducation.asp](http://www.ohiobwc.com/employer/programs/safety/SandHEducation.asp). Look for the link titled Crossroads of safety & health: half-day safety and health workshops.

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## COHHIO's Vehicle Donation Program

COHHIO can now accept vehicle donations. This program is an easy way to support COHHIO's work. Donated vehicles may include cars, trucks, motorcycles, boats, or RV's. This program has been made possible through a partnership with the Volunteers of America of Central Ohio. Contact Susan Francis at COHHIO for more information at [susanfrancis@cohhio.org](mailto:susanfrancis@cohhio.org) or 614-280-1984.

How to Contact...

**NATIONAL**

- Corporation for Supportive Housing:** [www.csh.org](http://www.csh.org)
- National Alliance to End Homelessness:** [www.endhomelessness.org](http://www.endhomelessness.org)
- National Coalition for the Homeless:** [www.nationalhomeless.org](http://www.nationalhomeless.org)
- National Community Reinvestment Coalition:** [www.ncrc.org](http://www.ncrc.org)
- National Low Income Housing Coalition:** [www.nlihc.org](http://www.nlihc.org)

**President Bush** - 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20500; 202/456-1414; 202/456-2461 (fax); [president@whitehouse.gov](mailto:president@whitehouse.gov)

**Senators Voinovich & DeWine** - United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510  
Voinovich - 202/224-3353; 202/228-1382 (fax); [voinovich@voinovich.senate.gov](mailto:voinovich@voinovich.senate.gov)  
DeWine - 202/224-2315; 202/224-6519 (fax); [senator\\_dewine@dewine.senate.gov](mailto:senator_dewine@dewine.senate.gov)

**Representatives** - United States House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515; 202/224-3121

**STATE**

- Governor Taft** - 77 South High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215; 614/466-3555; 614/466-9354 (fax)
- Ohio Senate** - State House, Columbus, Ohio 43266-0604; 614/644-5466 (fax-R); 614/644-1982 (fax - D)
- Ohio House of Representatives** - 77 South High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215; 614/644-9494 (fax)

Legislative Directories are available by contacting us: COHHIO - 35 East Gay Street, Suite 210, Columbus, Ohio 43215-3138; 614/280-1984; 614/463-1060 (fax); [www.cohhio.org](http://www.cohhio.org).

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- Paula Jenkins, HMIS Support Coordinator - [paulajenkins@cohhio.org](mailto:paulajenkins@cohhio.org)
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- Spencer Wells, Tenant Outreach Coordinator - [spencerwells@cohhio.org](mailto:spencerwells@cohhio.org)
- Jeannette Welsh, Housing + Services Coordinator - [jeannettewelsh@cohhio.org](mailto:jeannettewelsh@cohhio.org)

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**Newsletter of the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO)**  
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COHHIO is a coalition of organizations and individuals committed to ending homelessness and to promoting decent, safe, fair, affordable housing for all, with a focus on assisting low-income people and those with special needs.