



Coalition on Homelessness
and Housing in Ohio
COHHIO

EMBARGOED DATA UNTIL 12 NOON (ET) DECEMBER 12, 2006

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 12, 2006

For more information contact:

Suzanne Gravette Acker, Communications & Development Director, COHHIO

Phone number (614) 280-1984

suzannegacker@cohhio.org

OHIO FAMILIES MUST EARN \$12.31 AN HOUR TO AFFORD A TWO-BEDROOM APARTMENT

Ohio's high cost of housing highlighted in 2006 housing affordability report

WASHINGTON, DC – According to a report released today, the Housing Wage for Ohio is \$12.31. The Housing Wage is the hourly wage a family must earn – working 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year – to be able to afford rent and utilities in the private housing market. This represents an increase of almost 20% since 2000.

“Each year, decent and affordable homes become more and more elusive to low-income and average Ohioans,” said Bill Faith, executive director of COHHIO. “Facing cold winter months and high energy bills, the *Out of Reach 2006* Report foreshadows the difficult choices thousands of Ohioans will be required to make during the holiday season.”

Faith said that the ever-climbing Housing Wage is further evidence of the need to lift the cap on the Ohio Housing Trust Fund (OHTF), a 15-year-old funding source that expands housing services and improves housing conditions for needy Ohioans. Currently the fund is capped at \$50 million; yet each year the new recording fees generate between \$65 and \$70 million. For the past three years, the revenue difference of \$15 to \$20 million was sent to the state general fund.

“Lifting the cap would allow Ohio’s low- and moderate-income population, already burdened by increased living costs and reduced employment opportunities, find the relief necessary to rebound into more stability in society,” said Faith.

The *Out of Reach 2006* report was jointly released by the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), a Washington, DC-based housing advocacy group, and COHHIO.

According to the report, the average Ohio renter earns approximately \$10.81, which is \$1.50 less than the hourly wage needed to afford a modest unit. Working at the minimum wage, a family must have 2.4 wage earners working full-time – or one full-time earner working 96 hours– to afford a modest two-bedroom apartment.

An estimated 44 percent of Ohio’s renters do not earn enough income to afford a two-bedroom unit at the Fair Market Rent. “Because growing numbers of Ohioans are unable to afford decent housing, said Faith, “we need a much stronger response from state government in increasing money available from the Ohio Housing Trust Fund.” The first step in the right direction, he said, is to lift the cap on the OHTF.

Faith also supports a national funding source to support additional affordable housing initiatives. “As Ohio’s Housing Wage increases for renter households and budgets become tighter and tighter within the state, we are also seeing more and more families falling out of the ranks of affordability nationwide”, said Faith. “The federal government needs to step up its focus on addressing housing affordability and should establish a National Housing Trust Fund.”

-30-

To download the Ohio MSA and County Data, visit
[http://cohhio.org/pdf/Out of Reach 2006 Report.pdf](http://cohhio.org/pdf/Out_of_Reach_2006_Report.pdf)

For additional information, visit <http://www.nlihc.org/oor2006/>

Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio
175 S. Third St. Suite 250
Columbus, Ohio 43215
Fax: (614) 463-1060