

LWV Ohio Statehouse Day – April 9, 2014

LWVO Lobbyist Report

The Housing Trust Fund

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The Ohio Housing Trust Fund, a primary funding source for low and moderate income housing and homeless programs, survived the biennial budget process last year and received full funding—up to the level allowed by an appropriations cap. The allowable \$53 million per year will provide local organizations with the means to serve the critical housing needs in their communities. The creation of the trust fund back in 1991 and securing a dedicated funding stream in 2003 were both supported by LWV Ohio.

Because housing needs continue to outstrip funding, there is an ongoing need to remove or raise the cap that limits the amount of money from the funding stream (a portion of the recordation fee paid to county recorders for real estate transactions) that goes to the trust fund; any money beyond the cap goes into the state's general revenue fund. There may be some activity in this area during the mid-biennium review (MBR) now underway.

The Housing Trust Fund is administered by the Ohio Development Services Agency (formerly the Ohio Department of Development), Office of Community Development. It supports a range of housing needs, including emergency shelter, construction, rehab and repair, handicapped accessibility modifications, rental assistance and down payment assistance and financial counseling for formerly homeless families. Funds are allocated based on recommendations by a 14-member advisory committee, and are targeted toward helping low-income Ohioans.

A study of the economic and job creation impact of the trust fund was commissioned by the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO) in 2011; the study found that “each dollar of OHTF awards results in an overall impact of \$14.54 because the awards attract other funds and their collective infusion into the regional economy results in direct, indirect and induced expenditures in many industries.”

You can see how your county has benefited from the trust fund by going to www.development.ohio.gov/cs/cs_hf and looking at Beneficiaries by County. Just click on your county on the state map for a listing of organizations, programs and dollar amounts.

The Message: Housing needs are still critical as Ohio continues to recover from the recession. Be aware of the housing programs in your county funded by the Housing Trust Fund, and advocate for their support.