

Hunger Network in Ohio



Faith
Advocacy
Network

Advocacy Guide for the Faith Community

www.hungernetohio.com





Who we are:

The Hunger Network in Ohio (HNO) is a statewide faith-based organization that believes we can end hunger in Ohio by addressing the root causes of poverty through advocacy.

Why hunger? Hunger is an issue that many faith communities are already addressing through charity. HNO believes it is an effective starting place for conversations about advocacy and justice because most people already acknowledge hunger as an issue and it quickly can bridge into other issues such as the environment, housing, healthcare, inequality, jobs and discrimination.

FEED PEOPLE TODAY

Emergency food programs provide immediate assistance families in need.

EDUCATE TO END HUNGER

A high quality education is key to addressing poverty and hunger.

We are supported through partner judicatories, member congregations, and grants. We are especially grateful for the financial support of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Advocacy and ELCA World Hunger.

Partner judicatories include:

Northeast, Northwest, and Southern Ohio Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Eastern and Western Conferences of the United Methodist Church

The Ohio Diocese and Southern Ohio Diocese of the Episcopal Church

The Central Southeastern Association of the United Church of Christ.

BUILD AN ECONOMY THAT WORKS FOR ALL

The economy should provide fair wages and protect against exploitation.

BUILD HEALTHY HOMES & COMMUNITIES

We need a wholistic approach to 'community' to end hunger.

Overview

This publication will offer people of faith a starting place for advocacy and justice work within their faith community. The goal of this guide is to help people of faith have a resource to **'take the next step'**. This guide seeks to answer common questions raised by people of faith about advocacy. Our hope is that this guide answers many questions that people have when considering advocacy and justice work. There are many ideas, concepts, and strategies that are not included in this guidebook, because this is designed to be an introduction.

This guide uses faith language, but should be accessible to organizations of conscience that do not identify as faith-based as well. We also use hunger themed examples throughout this book, but hopefully the ideas and concepts will be applicable to whatever issue you are most passionate about.



The guide is divided into three sections

Section 1: Our Faith Community

- Faith & Advocacy
- Engage Your Community
- Rethink Service
- Facts on Hunger and Poverty

Section 2: Understand the System

- Creating Systemic Change
- Understand Power
- Messages that Work
- Storytelling
- Partisanship

Section 3: Engagement Strategies

- Ohio Government
- Learn about Legislator
- Writing
- Internet & Calls
- Meetings
- Hosting

The final pages of the guidebook include links to additional resources and Ohio legislative maps.

What is advocacy?

Advocacy is simply speaking up to those in authority with and on behalf of the community. Many people talk about lawyers or social workers advocating for clients, and that is one form of advocacy. Their advocacy, on behalf of their clients, is extremely important. However, in this guide we will focus on advocacy around public policies that impact our communities. Most of our work is focused on the state level, but the advocacy discussed in this guide can be used with local school boards, city councils, congress, and even the President of the United States.

What is public policy?

Public policy are the rules and laws that are passed by school boards, city councils, state legislators, and congress. Policy are also the administrative actions take by school administrators, mayors, governors, and presidents. Some of the most important public policy decisions focus on how we spend our shared resources through public budgets and appropriations.

Are churches allowed to do advocacy? YES!

All non-profit entities can engage in advocacy and educate the community and elected officials about issues like hunger, environmental damage, inequality, and other injustices in the world. Mission team leaders, clergy, and others are often more knowledgeable on hunger and poverty than elected officials. Advocacy can range from letter writing during a worship service, visiting elected officials, and more direct action protests.

Faith and Advocacy

It's about Right Relationship

Religious traditions are filled with calls to advocacy. God entrusted humanity with certain power and authority in the earth to be good stewards (Genesis 1:26). God calls humanity to live in right relationship with one another and with creation (Genesis 4:9; Matt 25). However evil, sin, and our own shortcomings have disrupted our call to be in positive relationship with one another. Sometimes individuals argue and need to restore right relationship amongst themselves, and sometimes it is the community that is broken. God called Moses to advocate to Pharaoh to dramatically shift the economic and cultural reality of Egypt by ending the slavery of the Hebrews (Exodus 3). Through advocacy, we can strive to make sure all of our neighbors have their daily needs met (Matt 6:11). Christians pray weekly, in the Lord's Prayer, for God to provide our daily bread. But as Martin Luther explains in the Small Catechism, we should read this to mean much more than just bread, but all we need for daily sustenance. This includes 'good government'. Just like we feed somebody when they are hungry, we should advocate to the government to make sure everyone benefits from the blessings of the community and that everyone is treated fairly and justly.



God has blessed our world with enough food for everyone, but many go hungry. Why? Because we are not living out our call to be in right relationship with one another and God's creation. We hoard food, we create food deserts, we focus inward instead of on the community. Forgive us. The great commandment - to love our neighbors as ourselves - manifests itself throughout most world religions. It is not enough to pray for those who are hungry, or to provide the scraps from our table. Those who experience injustice want justice. As a loving neighbor, we are called to act and to seek that justice with them.

People ask, 'But doesn't God want us to do charity?' Yes, God wants us to do charity because injustice exists in the world. That doesn't mean we are not supposed to also work for justice. God loves those who are hungry and oppressed just as much as those who feed the hungry. Most people in line at a food pantry would rather be in line at a grocery store with the means to purchase their own food. 'The poor' were not placed here so that the wealthy congregations have a Sunday evening service project. To be in right relationship with those experiencing hunger means that we should address the root causes of the injustice.

A few helpful scripture passages

Deuteronomy 16:20 Job 5:15-16
Jeremiah 22:3 Amos 5:24

Psalms 50:6 James 1:27 Proverbs 31:8-9
Matthew 25:40 Luke 11:41 2 Corinthians 8:13-15

Isaiah 1:17 Isaiah 56:1
Galatians 6:2 Revelation 22:1-7

What additional verses would you add in?

How has your faith called you to advocate for justice?

Engage Your Faith Community

A few simple steps to design a plan in your congregation.

1. Learn together: Set up a Bible study, book club, or sermon series about a topic. Ask the question, 'What is God calling us to do?' Begin with an issue (like hunger) where the congregation already is engaged in some way.

2. Engage experts: Invite service providers, those with lived experiences, policy experts, advocates, and others already doing the work to speak to your group. Invite them to share their experiences within your congregation.



3. Solutions-oriented research & education: What needs to change in the world in order to solve hunger in your community? What will address the root causes of the problem? Talk with partners on what solutions they are working on and introduce those to the congregation. We are the people of God together! Be sure to reach out and engage those directly impacted by an issue.

4. Plan & execute: Identify who has the authority to solve the problem (school board, city council, state legislature, Congress, etc.) and develop strategies to engage them. Here are a few ways:

- Build awareness in the congregation and community
- Phone calls to legislators
- Hand written letters to legislators
- Youth/child art projects about an issue
- Invite legislators to attend worship or to volunteer at a food pantry
- In-person meetings with your legislators
- Letter to the editor of your local newspaper
- Organize a rally or walk to raise awareness

5. Celebrate: This is a marathon not a sprint. Sometimes conversations about justice are difficult, but our faith calls us to wrestle with what God is calling on us to do as a community. Celebrate the small victories and reach out to HNO for new ideas and support!

What barriers do you see within your local faith community/congregation to do more justice-oriented work? How can you overcome those barriers?

Rethink Service

Can we really make a difference in the long-term? Yes

Often our community service projects focus on making sure the volunteers have an enjoyable time doing service, and we forget to ask if we are helping or hurting others through our efforts. We need to rethink our volunteer and charity efforts if we want to make a big difference in the world.

A few tips:

- 1. Ask about needs, don't assume:** Ask what partner agencies actually need. Often, donations of money go much farther than donations of goods or food that may have storage costs.
- 2. Break down barriers:** Encourage your congregation members to interact with those receiving services. Serving dinner at a family shelter? Bring a stack of coloring books and your kids so they can color together. Sit and eat with the community. This allows everyone to enjoy each other as children of God. Encourage your members to learn something from the other community.
- 3. Incorporate learning:** Prior to a volunteer event, study scripture and the world to understand the issue. We need to learn more about the causes. After the event, do reflection and devotion about what people saw and experienced.
- 4. Incorporate advocacy:** Have members at a meal (both your congregation and the community being served) write letters to legislators on the issue or have community conversations about a social issue.
- 5. Re-orient service:** Focus service on building community and raising awareness instead of providing 'something'. Use volunteer opportunities as a stepping stone toward active citizenship that will lead people to address the systemic and underlying issues.
- 6. New partnerships:** Consider partnering with a faith community that is theologically, racially, and culturally different than yours. When you enter as equals, it can break down further barriers.
- 7. Be open to others serving you:** Being in right relationship with others requires us to be open to being served and serving. Be open to serving side-by-side and allow others to bless you with their gifts and talents.



What is one service project you think you could modify to be more justice-oriented?

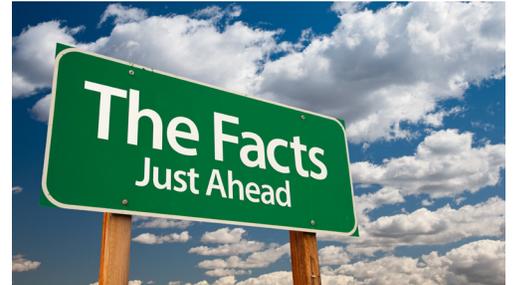
Statistics on Hunger and Poverty

Facts matter. But be cautious with data overload.

Statistics can be a powerful tool in making your case to your congregation or to a policymaker. However, statistics should be used sparingly. They will not 'win the argument' in most cases.

Use statistics to:

- **Draw people in:** A shocking statistic or big number will grab people's attention.
- **Connect your story to the world:** Your personal story is relevant as an example to the larger issues.
- **Correct the Record:** Use a statistic to quickly set the record straight and move back to your issue.



A few Effective Statistics:

- 1 in 3 Ohio households in Ohio are living on the edge or in poverty and are not able to make ends meet without assistance.
- More than 80% of households struggling to get by (on less than 200% of the federal poverty level) are working.
- An Ohioan needs to earn, on average, \$15 an hour to afford a 2-bedroom apartment. The average renter only earns \$12.87.
- 14.8% of Ohioans experienced food insecurity in 2016. Ranking Ohio 39th. This is an increase of 16.5% since 2006's rate of 12.7%.
- More than 1 in 5 kids struggle with hunger. Monroe County has the highest rate of childhood hunger with a rate of nearly 30%.
- Ohio food banks saw a 20% increase last year in senior citizens needing assistance.
- In Ohio, African Americans experience a rate of hunger more than 142% greater than European Americans. (22.5% to 9.3%)
- The counties with the most poverty in Ohio are Athens, Scioto, Adams, Jackson and Pike Counties. The lowest poverty rates in Ohio are in Delaware, Putnam, Warren, and Medina.
- A lack of stable nutritious food leads to health problems such as high blood pressure, obesity.

What other statistics do you find helpful?

How to Create Systemic Change

Do Something!

To create change in the world... The first step is to do SOMETHING! Even if our efforts fall short, at least did something.

Our charity efforts just aren't enough to solve the root causes of social problems in our community. We engage in charity because evil exists in the world and we feel compelled to be merciful to those suffering today. However, this is no substitute to our call to address the underlying causes of problems.



Okay, I'm ready to go! What do I need to remember?

Listen: Engage in intentional listening to your community (and those outside your community). Listen to where God is calling you. Listen to others who agree and disagree with you to help you understand other people's views better.

Determine your assets: Time, meeting space, transportation, people, stories, influence, and experience are assets. Use your assets to support the cause of justice. If you have extra cash, that's an asset too.

Organize: Seek out diverse relationships with those who are struggling with injustice. Join an organization, attend a community forum. Continue to listen. We are always stronger together. Look inside and outside your faith community for partners.

Plan: Develop a plan of action with others. Letters, phone calls, meetings, awareness campaigns, rallies, etc. In your plan, start with what you want to see changed and work backwards. The goal is not to hold a training, the training is a step toward a goal.

Be prepared: Do not wait for tragedy to hit to talk about an issue and begin organizing. Begin the conversations now. With any scripture passage ask yourself, what is God doing for us and what is God calling us to do to show love to our neighbor.

Tension & urgency: We need to create a sense of urgency, if it is not already felt, to encourage others to action. Advocating for justice requires change, and we are all uncomfortable with change. Constructive tension is sometimes required.

What one action step will you take in the next 2-4 weeks?

Understand Power

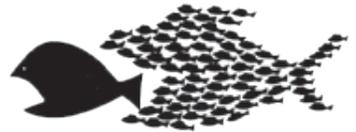
The old adage is true - "absolute power corrupts absolutely." But we each have power. Power corrupts when we forget that the ultimate power rests with God and not us. But God has blessed us with different skills, talents, and opportunities to use our power to serve.

When we organize together, and use our power collectively, we can do great things.

We have power through our faith to witness to the love of God for the world. We must use all that we have in service to God, which includes our power. Religious leaders have power through their title of Reverend, Rabbi, Deacon, Father, Iman, Sister, team leader, etc.



Everyone has some type of power. As citizens we are the government in the United States, and have the ability to vote, petition the government, and advocate for our shared values. Even those who can't vote still have the right and responsibility to speak about these issues. When we choose to not exercise our power for justice, we are accepting and supporting the status quo.



Types of Power

People Power: We have power through our numbers. If every faith community had just one person who wrote a letter and made a phone call to their elected officials, it would be transformative.

Moral Power: When a religious institution speaks, people listen. We have a moral authority to speak for justice.

Power through Relationship: Faith leaders are community leaders. We all serve on boards, committees, and have the opportunity to speak to groups of people every week. Use these relationships to advance social justice.

Power through Wealth: Wealth is more than just money. Time off, space, materials, such as a kitchen or church van, give us wealth to use toward justice.

Power through Education: Our formal education matters, but so do our experiences. We have wisdom from our relationships, our experiences dealing with injustice, and our formal education. Use these to tell a convincing story.

Power through Humility: Some of the most effective leaders for justice laid themselves out and became vulnerable. We see this through non-violent resistance during the civil rights movement, Daniel in the Lion's den, and Jesus taken to the cross.

What ways do you have power and how can you use it to advance justice?

Develop a message that works!

When in Rome, speak as the Romans

Communication is a two way street. An effective message allows your intent to be understood by others, and it allows you to set the direction of the conversation. A good message will build off of 'cultural common sense' - or ideas that are generally agreed upon in the community.

Examples:

"We need an economy that works for all."

"A child in Ohio should not go to bed hungry at night."



Tips for communicating your passion:

- 1. Begin with core values:** Begin with a value statement that is universally agreed upon. Freedom, hardwork, community, right relationship are values that are accessible to most people. Build your argument from there.
- 2. Speak with moral authority:** As people of faith, we need to remind legislators and others that we speak with a moral authority. Unlike many advocates, we are not there to 'get something'. Your primary message should always be hopeful for the future.
- 3. Speak about what you know:** Relate an issue of public policy back to something you can speak personally about.
- 4. Don't get sucked in:** Know what your primary message is, and always pivot back to that. Others may disagree with you based on stereotypes. Don't get sucked into these arguments about individual decisions. We are focused on the institutional injustice.
- 5. Shift the Conversation back to your message:** Don't get trapped in their box.

Language for your message:

- Hardworking people are hungry
- Children and seniors are hungry
- People choose between food, rent, and medicine
- There are not enough good paying jobs in my community
- As a person of faith, everyone deserves their daily bread
- We need to help meet the basic needs first
- Government needs to create a level playing field

Words to avoid in conversation

- Drugs
- Lazy
- Welfare
- Big Government
- Ineffective and inefficient government
- Moochers, scammers.

What is your positive message that you could use in your congregation?

Power of Storytelling

Stories are powerful for your message because they humanize the issue.

Clergy know the power of telling a good story during a sermon. The same is true in advocacy. When telling a story, remember to frame your story intentionally to advance your core values. Public narrative should drive and inspire people to act with you. This method of storytelling is borrowed from Marshall Ganz at the Kennedy School of Government. A public story contains three elements:

Story of Self: Why you were called to what you have been called to. Illustrate why you are passionate about an issue.

Story of Us: What your constituency, community, organization has been called to its shared purposes, goals, vision.

Story of Now: The challenge this community now faces, the choices it must make, and the hope to which “we” can aspire.

Example: (Self) When I was in high school and college, I volunteered a lot. We would go in and serve a meal and leave. We felt good about ourselves. But my views changed on one Sunday morning. I went to serve breakfast at a local church with a group of college students. Instead of serving we were told to sit and be in conversation with people. This made me very uncomfortable and nervous. I wondered, ‘what good would it be to eat with people? I am better on dishes.’ But then I remembered the story of Mary and Martha. I sat with a young man, not much older than me, who was homeless. He was very open about his mental health and how he was unable to afford medication while in art school. As a result his life spiraled out of control and he was forced to drop out and he lost his housing. He carried his portfolio with him and continued to draw beautiful expressions of our world. I connected with him on a human level. I realized that service meant more than putting food on a plate. (Us) As the church, we are called to love our neighbor, and sometimes we need to sit and listen to their story. We need to be in relationship with them. We need to recognize their humanity. Scripture tells us that we are not fed by bread alone, so why do we try and feed others only with physical food? (Now) People also need to be fed with justice. We need to look at the institutional and structural problems in our world if we truly are to love our neighbor. We can do this by organizing, advocating, and speaking out on about the underlying issues. But first we must be in relationship with one another.



What is your story?

Our Governmental System

Advocacy needs to occur at many levels. Below get the facts on the governmental systems that impact us.

Local Government:

Ohio has 88 counties, and most counties have 3 county commissioners. They establish budgets for the sheriff, parks, and many social service agencies such as aging, mental health, and child welfare. In addition to counties, Ohio has a variety of township, city, and village structures. Ohio also has 611 public school districts.



State Government in Ohio:

The State of Ohio has five statewide executive elected offices - Governor (and Lt. Gov.) Auditor, Treasurer, Secretary of State, and Attorney General. Each holds different administrative responsibilities. For example, the Secretary of State is essential in voting rights. These positions are elected to four year terms during even year and can serve two terms. (2014, 2018, 2022).

The Ohio Legislature has 2 chambers - the House and the Senate. The Ohio House has 99 members elected to two year terms and the Ohio Senate has 33 members, each elected to four year terms. Each Senate district is comprised of 3 House districts. You can serve a maximum of 8 years in a row in each chamber. Many legislators 'hop' back and forth between chambers. Half of the Senate is up for re-election every two years. The Ohio legislature is in session traditionally in the spring and fall from Tuesday through Thursday.

Ohio also elects seven State Supreme Court justices and has a series of appellate and local court systems.

Federal Government:

Like all states, Ohio has two U.S. Senators. Currently serving are Senator Rob Portman (Republican) and Senator Sherrod Brown (Democrat). Based on population, Ohio has 16 congressional Representatives. See the Congressional district map in the back of this guide.

Passing Legislation: "I was only a bill..."

Legislation in Ohio is passed the same way at the state level as it is at the federal level. Bills are introduced into the House or the Senate (budget bills begin in the House) and the bills are assigned to a committee and sometimes a sub-committee. In Ohio, committees often hear public testimony on proposed legislation where anyone can come in and testify. Contact an advocacy organization or the committee chair for a hearing schedule. Committees will modify the bill and refer it to the full chamber. The Full chamber will then vote to pass it, sending it to the other chamber for the process to begin again. Once both chambers have passed the bill, a conference committee is appointed to iron out any differences. The bill is then sent to the Governor for a signature or veto. If you want to make a difference on legislation, it is important to know where it is in the process and strategize around it.

The most important piece of legislation passed in Ohio occurs every two years - the Ohio budget. Under Ohio's constitution, the Governor must normally make a budget proposal in late January/early February of odd numbered years (2017, 2019, 2021) and then the House begins hearings. The House will hold hearings until the Spring break (the week before and after Easter). Upon return, the House will vote to send the budget to the Senate which will pass their version by the middle of June. The Governor must sign it by June 30th, because the Ohio fiscal year begins on July 1st of each year.

Partisanship

Understand it, but avoid it.

Faith communities, and other non-profit organizations, are not allowed to engage in partisan politics. But we should understand the dynamics of partisanship so that we can better understand the motivations of other organizations and elected officials.

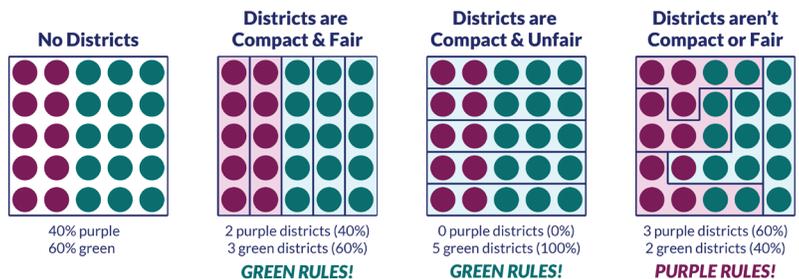
Is Ohio politically conservative or liberal?

Neither, Ohio is very moderate along the ideological spectrum. However, our call to feed people isn't liberal or conservative, it's the moral thing to do.

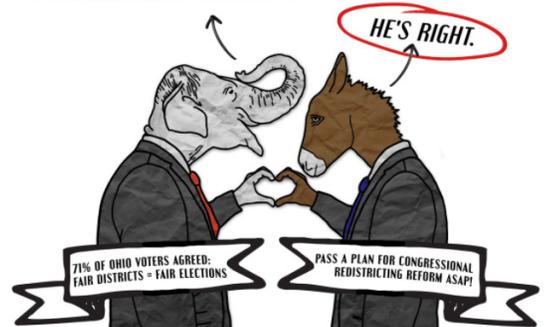
What is Gerrymandering?

Every 10 years, legislative districts are re-drawn throughout the country to keep roughly an equal number of people in each district. However, if maps are unfairly drawn with the intention to benefit one party, the results may not be fair. The new maps will be drawn for the 2022 election.

Ohio voters passed a statewide referendum to improve the map drawing process for the Ohio statehouse, but we have not passed one to improve congressional redistricting. Republicans have a 12-4 majority in the Ohio delegation to Congress, and super majorities in both State legislative chambers because of the drawing of gerrymandering. When a district is safe for a political party, elected officials need to worry more about primary challengers instead of the general election, forcing candidates to the extreme of their political party. Competitive districts lift up more moderate candidates with bi-partisan appeal who will look to represent the district more than a partisan ideology.



GEORGE VOINOVICH CALLED CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING REFORM "THE SIMPLEST WAY TO GET WASHINGTON MOVING AGAIN."



Can I advocate for my position if my representatives are in the political minority?

Whichever party is in the minority has substantially less power than the party in the majority - even if only by one seat. The majority party holds all committee chairs, and decide what will receive hearings and votes. Often, to win an issue, you need a 'majority of the majority' not just a majority of the legislature. The Speaker will often prevent a bill from coming to the floor for a vote if his party isn't supportive.

The minority party still has influence. While they have less influence than the majority party, the minority party can still introduce legislation, offer amendments, raise concerns and ask questions during committee hearings. Make sure they know what you think, too.

Advocate to the chair and ranking minority member of the committee. Identify what committee is hearing or will hear the issue you care about and schedule meetings with the committee chair and the ranking minority member of that committee.

Partner with other faith communities. Find a congregation in the area of the legislator and ask them to accompany you to the meeting or set it up for you. If you can develop urban/suburban/rural partnerships you will be very effective.

Adopt messaging that works for them, not you. Don't quote Elizabeth Warren to Republicans or Ronald Reagan to Democrats. If the elected officials prioritizes education, talk about hunger from an education perspective.

Identify people in the majority who support your position. Use these individuals to rally others in the majority to support your cause.

Learn about your Legislator

Knowledge is power!

Your legislators are human beings. That might seem obvious, but we often forget the importance of connecting with them on a human level. Know basic information about them to help foster a relationship. When you first meet a legislator in person, bring up any common experiences you share. Are you both members of the same faith tradition? Do you both coach little league? Does a member of your congregation serve on the Chamber of Commerce with the member? These connection points are more valuable than all the policy research in the world.

How to Do it?

The first step is to identify who your State Representative and State Senator are. You can do that at bit.ly/FindOhioLeg. Afterward, go to the member directory at Ohiohouse.gov and OhioSenate.gov and look them up under the member directory. Most of these questions can be answered there. In addition to the questions below, glance at bills they sponsor, read their blog or newsletters to idne

What do you know about your Representatives

	Ohio House	Ohio Senate	Congressional Representative
Name & party			
Hometown			
Committee memberships/ leadership positions			
Career			
Family Status			
Alma maters			
Previous elected offices held			
Faith Tradition/Congregation			
Community organizations			
Other notable information			

Write your Legislator

Hand written letters continue to be one of the best ways to influence legislators.

Helpful tips to write a letter to your legislator

1. Identify yourself as a constituent and person of faith.

My name is Pastor Jane Doe, and I serve First Lutheran of Anytown, OH.

2. Identify the issue you care about.

I write to you today because there are too many hungry kids in Anytown.

3. Express a common and shared value.

It is immoral that so many hard-working families are struggling with hunger.

4. Use a story to make it real.

Last week, I learned that one of our families is watering down their child's milk to make it last longer, because they don't have enough money from their multiple jobs to make ends meet).

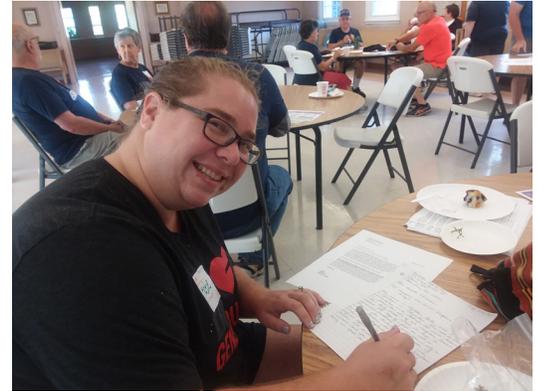
5. Use statistics sparingly.

This family is not alone, more than 1 in 5 children in Ohio will experience hunger this year.

6. Always include what you want them to do.

Please support the proposed expansion of cash assistance in HB 12345. This is the type of hand up many hard working families need to overcome small barriers that can quickly spiral out of control).

7. Be respectful. You don't need to be a policy expert. Legislators need you to advise them and educate them.



Write a letter to your local newspaper.

These letters are also read by legislators and encourage more public debate and discussion on an issue important to you among policymakers, within the community, and on social media.

When writing a letter to a newspaper editor here are some helpful tips:

1. **Find your local newspaper:** hungernetohio.com/letters-to-the-editor Every paper has different rules and procedures

2. Take your time to make sure it is clear and concise. Advocacy takes more than 30 seconds sometimes.

3. Letters should be 200- 250 words (depending on the paper).

4. Include your correct contact information; the papers often verify your identity.

5. Emphasize why this matters to you as a person of faith.

Sample Letter to the Editor: *As a Deacon in the ELCA and as a member of the Hunger Network in Ohio, I join other people of faith in urging the Ohio Senate to provide additional funding to the Ohio Association of Foodbanks. As a faith-based advocacy network, we at the Hunger Network in Ohio firmly declare that all people deserve 'their daily bread.' More than 70% of the food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters in the Ohio Association of Foodbanks network are operated by faith-based organizations and volunteers. More than a quarter of the food at our local food bank comes from the state-funded Ohio Food Program and Agricultural Clearance Program. It provides foods like cabbage, potatoes, peanut butter, eggs, beef stew, apples and tomatoes – foods that are expensive to purchase at retail cost and aren't often donated. We do this work because we believe that all Ohioans should have the dignity of healthy and nutritious food. Our congregants donate their time, talents, and treasure to assist those who are struggling. In a state budget of nearly \$70 billion, we can and should invest a modest \$25 million per year in emergency hunger relief. I ask the members of the Ohio Senate to restore and expand on Ohio's commitment to eliminate hunger in our communities.*

The Internet & Phone

Some engagement is better than no engagement. But much of our 'activism' online isn't as impactful as we would like it to be. Engage online absolutely, but don't allow it to end there!

Social Media:

Social media offers a chance for the public to hear what legislators are thinking, and respond to them directly. But it can also suck a lot of time of trying to wade through it all. Here are some helpful tips for social media.

Online Petitions:

Many petition sites are just a method to gather email addresses. Sign petitions sponsored by groups and organizations you know and trust.



General Do's of Social Media

- Tag legislators on social media.
- Like and Follow them to know what they are working on.
- Engage their posts by liking, sharing or making one comment.
- Engage credible advocacy groups like Hunger Network in Ohio.

General Dont's of Social Media

- Get in long-winded debates with others
- Post articles from uncredible sources
- Spam legislators social media
- Post offensive content or insult people

Email:

Email can be the quickest way to get in touch with legislators, but they also receive a lot of it.

- Make sure your subject line is a clear positon (Please support funding for Ohio foodbanks)
- If you are using an organizations online form to send the email, edit the sample subject and text to increase the likelihood it will be read.
- Quickly identify yourself as a person of faith
- Be brief.
- If you use a email form, know what site you are working through (Hunger Network is a credible site!)

Phone:

- You can call the Ohio legislator at 1-800-282-0253 and ask to be connected to your Representative or Senator.
- There is nothing wrong with calling AND sending an email.
- Identify the speci c issue you are calling about
- Clearly state your position
- Thank the staffer for their time. They are not your enemy.
- Staffers normally make tallies of phone calls 'for' and 'against' on an issue.

Sample phone call:

Hi, my name is Jane Doe and I live in Anytown, Ohio. I am calling to support an amendment to the Ohio budget to expand funding for our food banks. As a person of faith, I believe we need a public commitment to help everyone receive their daily bread. Our congregation volun- teers regularly at the Greater Cleveland foodbank and it is an effective and ef cient operation to help people who are hungry get food. Does Representative Smith support increased fund- ing of \$5 million a year for our food banks? (Leave them a chance to answer) Thank you for your time, please pass along my thoughts to the Representa- tive and feel free to contact me with additional questions.

Meet Your Legislator

We need to be in right relationship with them as well.

Meetings with your state legislators can occur in Columbus or in the home district. Ohio Legislators are typically in Columbus Tues. - Thurs. during the months of active sessions (Jan. - May and Sept-early Dec.). Election calendars will interfere with this general rule.

Why do we meet with them? It's about building right relationship. They need to see your face and know your thoughts.

To set up a meeting with your legislator:

1. Call the Statehouse at 1-800-282-0253 or look up their number at ohiohouse.gov/members and ohiosenate.gov/directory
2. When you call, you will speak with an aide. Identify yourself as a constituent and a person of faith. They will want to know the meeting topic.
3. Pick a date that works for you and the legislator in-district or at the Statehouse (House member offices are across the street from the Statehouse in the Riffe Center).
4. Schedules are flexible and you might meet with an aide in Columbus. The Riffe Center requires ID to enter, bags are subject to search.
5. In-district meetings can be held at the legislators office (if they have one) or over coffee. Or invite them to your church!



What to expect in a meeting

Legislative meetings in Columbus may feel very rushed. Sometimes they ask a lot of questions, other times they just take notes and listen.

Have a plan. Prepare handouts beforehand to leave behind with the legislator (often a nice folder with short summaries works well). Know what you want to say and who in the group will say it before going into the meeting. Legislative aides are valuable allies. Don't feel bad if you meet with an aide. Their opinions matter to the legislator!

10 Steps for a Great meeting

1. Begin with conversation that connects you and the legislator - did you both attend the same college? Kids at the same school?
2. Have everyone introduce themselves and their faith community.
3. Identify the issue you are there to talk about. "Today we are here to talk to you about hunger issues."
4. Share a personal story "I care about hunger, because..."
5. Reference one or two facts or statistics in the printed materials, but don't dwell on them. They can read the details on their own time.
6. Directly tell the legislator what they can do. "Because of this, we would like you to vote for/against..."
7. If they haven't interjected their opinions, ask them what are their thoughts on the proposal.
8. If the legislator says they are supportive, ask them what you can do to support them in moving the legislation forward.
9. You don't need to be a policy expert. If they ask a question and you can't answer it say so, and follow up with them afterward.
10. If they try to re-frame the issue, be respectful but push them back into your message, not theirs. (see messaging page above.)

BONUS! follow-up with a positive thank you card. Advocacy requires us to be in right relationship with legislators and this can take time to build up the relationship. Even if the meeting doesn't go as you hoped, know that it was a step.

Invite Legislators

It's our court, they will have to play by our rules

Faith communities can sponsor events that feature elected officials and engage them in dialogue on important issues. Whenever you have a public event with an elected official, you may also consider inviting the media to attend. But think through your objectives of the event/meeting and whether or not the media will be helpful to your goals.

Candidate Forum: Prior to an election, a congregation may invite candidates to attend an event and provide them an opportunity to present themselves to the community. How do you set up this event?

1. Invite all the candidates for a specific office (ie. everyone running for mayor) or everyone running for office that November. Ask for RSVP's by a specific date, but be flexible if others join or drop out. If only one party shows up, that's okay as long as you made a good faith attempt to invite everyone. It is best to invite through a written invitation, with follow-up email and phone call.
2. Host something your congregation likes to do with candidates in conjunction, such as a chili cook-off or pasta dinner. You can also add in fun requirements for candidates, such as wearing a silly hat or that they bring canned food donations to your local pantry. .
3. Provide candidates a chance to share their 2-3 minute time. Also allow Representatives of local ballot issues (such as a school or senior citizen levy) to speak as well.
4. Require the candidates to answer a question on hunger, poverty, racial tensions, discrimination or something else going on. Broad questions such as 'how will you reduce hunger in our community?' are very much acceptable questions.
5. You are also allowed to invite the media to attend and cover the event.

Invite an elected official: You do not need to worry about partisanship if you invite an elected official to participate in your worship time or in a service project. Schedule a time with their office and be clear with them on the expectation and plan. Sometimes an elected official will be happy to just attend and participate, other times they may want to speak. You could provide them time during an education hour or 5 minutes at the beginning of worship to address the group.

Also invite them to volunteer with your congregation at a local meal site. Elected officials don't often get to see the hard work already going on and the growing poverty that exists. Work with the local social service providers to make sure their staff is able to answer questions about the services already provided and the gaps that exist.





So What now?

As mentioned at the beginning of this guide, this is only the beginning, an introduction to advocacy. We hope to update and add to this guidebook in the months and years to come as we all continue to grow and learn about creating long-term and systemic change. But we cannot wait to have all the knowledge to begin to do something now. We all have probably done something - we have liked a group on facebook, we have donated to a cause we support, but it is time to take one more step. The line below is imprecise, and at different times and with different legislators, different strategies may be more or less impactful than others. But in general, can you take one more step?



What step will you take?

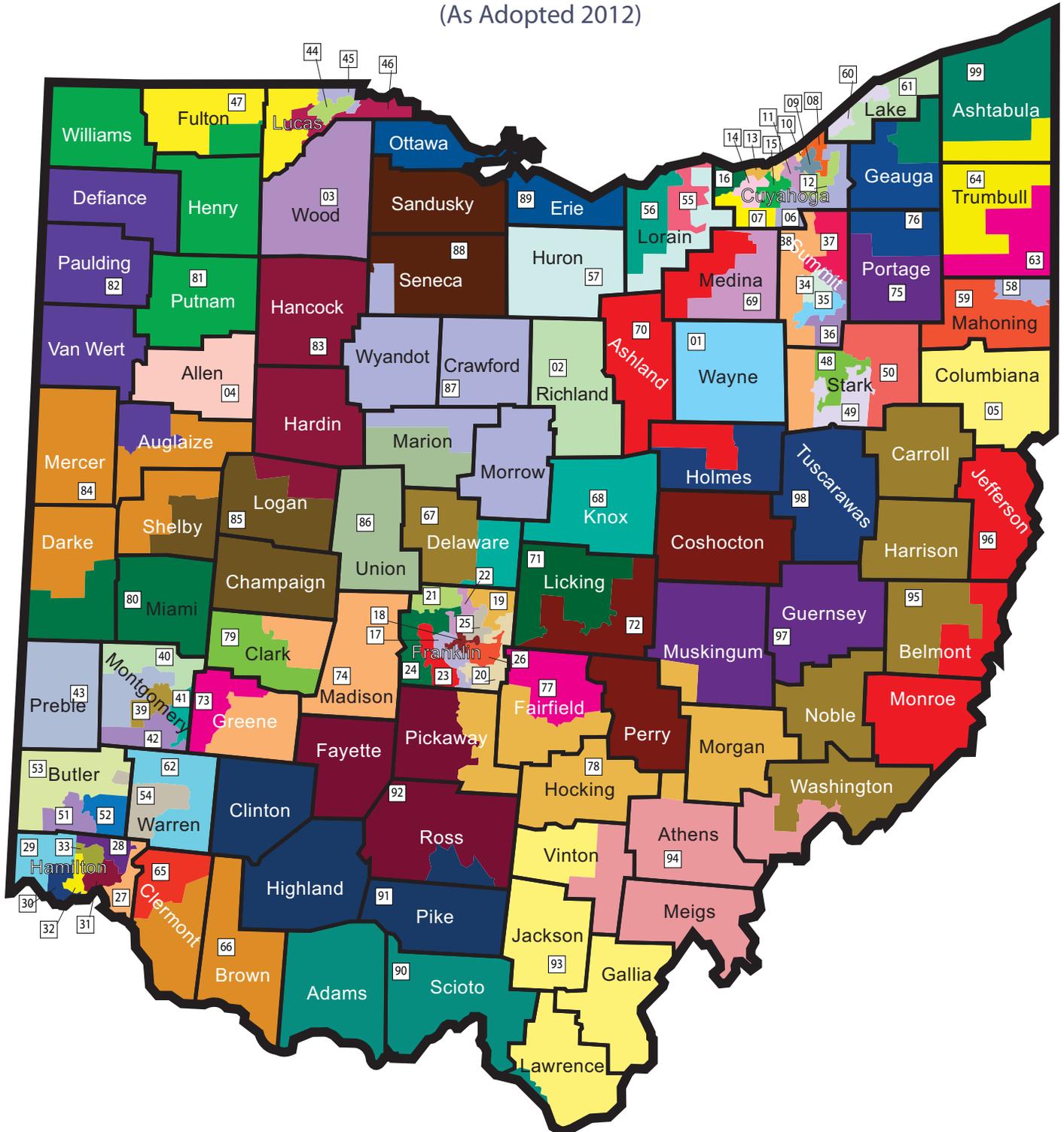
Jon Husted

Ohio Secretary of State



Ohio House Districts 2012-2022

(As Adopted 2012)



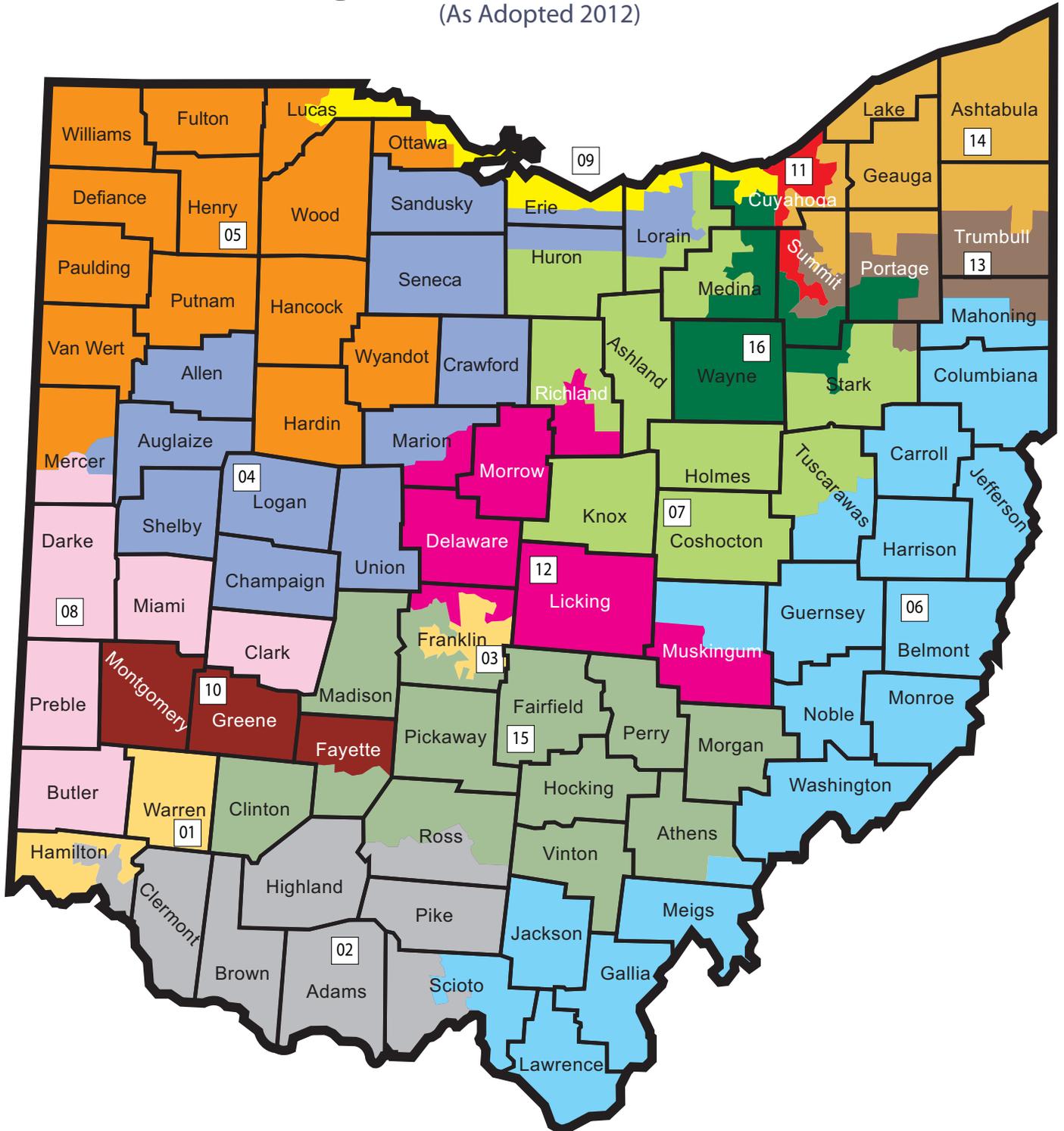
Ohio Senate Districts 2012-2022

(As Adopted 2012)



Ohio Congressional Districts 2012-2022

(As Adopted 2012)



Additional Resources

Contact information:

Ohio House of Representatives	www.ohiohouse.gov	1-800-282-0253
Ohio Senate	www.ohiosenate.gov	1-800-282-0253
Ohio Governor	www.governor.ohio.gov	(614) 466-3555
Senator Sherrod Brown	www.brown.senate.gov	(202) 224-2315
Senator Rob Portman	portman.senate.gov	202-224-3353

Congressional Representatives

Steve Chabot (R. 1st)

chabot.house.gov
(202) 225-2216

Bob Latta (R. 5th)

latta.house.gov
(202) 225-6405

Marcy Kaptur (D. 9th)

kaptur.house.gov
(202) 225-4146

Tim Ryan (D.13th)

timryan.house.gov
(202) 225-5261

Brad Wenstrup (R. 2nd)

wenstrup.house.gov
202- 225-3164

Bill Johnson (R. 6th)

billjohnson.house.gov
(202) 225-5705

Mike Turner (R. 10th)

turner.house.gov
202) 225-6465

David Joyce (R. 14th)

joyce.house.gov
(202) 225-3307

Joyce Beatty (D. 3rd)

beatty.house.gov
202-225-4324

Bob Gibbs (R. 7th)

gibbs.house.gov
(202) 225-6265

Marcia Fudge (D. 11th)

fudge.house.gov
(202) 225-7032

Steve Stivers (R. 15th)

stivers.house.gov
(202) 225-2015

Jim Jordan (R. 4th)

jordan.hous.gov
(202) 225-2676

Warren Davidson (R. 8th)

davidson.house.gov
202) 225-6205

Pat Tiberi (R. 12th)

tiberi.house.gov
(202) 225-5355

Jim Renacci (R. 16th)

Renacci.house.gov/
(202) 225-3876

Additional Resources:

Hunger Network in Ohio
Bread for the World
Ohio Association of Foodbanks
Map the Meal Gap
One Ohio Now
US Dept. Agriculture
US Census
ELCA
Faith in Public Life

www.hungernetohio.com
www.bread.org
www.ohiofoodbanks.org
map.feedingamerica.org/
www.oneohionow.org
bit.ly/2016hungerdata
bit.ly/2016povertyreport
elca.org/advocacy
www.faithinpubliclife.org

Faith and hunger advocacy resources (Ohio)
Faith and hunger advocacy resources (National)
Data, policy hunger resources, (Ohio)
National data map, county, state, congressional district
State budget advocacy, annual report 'State of State'
Annual data on hunger
Annual data on poverty
National Lutheran Advocacy Office
Advocacy, organizing, message development, media, faith

www.hungernetohio.com
September 2017