



# Things that We Can All Do to Address the Affordable Housing Crisis in Ohio

## 1. Keep vigilant and keep those organizations that are fighting the good fight alive.

- a. Assist with advocacy by volunteering with groups addressing poverty in Greater Cleveland including the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless. A complete list of partners is at [www.neoch.org](http://www.neoch.org).
- b. Support NEOCH, Cleveland Tenants Organization, the state Coalition COHHIO and other poverty organizations with your memberships.
- c. Keep up to date on what is happening with housing and social service organizations. Encourage church and civic organizations to support organizations that work on long term solutions to the affordable housing crisis, poverty, and homelessness. Serving meals is great, but we eventually need to get around to solutions.
- d. Write to your federally elected official and tell them you want them to work on solving the affordable housing crisis. They do listen to those calling. The Federal government needs to develop a Housing Policy to move everyone living in the United States into housing.
- e. Volunteer for those organizations that are actually attempting to solve the problems of poverty in Greater Cleveland beyond the emergency services of shelter and food.

## 2. Fight NIMBYism!

A small vocal minority, because of fear, often oppose services or affordable housing that assist those with a low income especially homeless people from living in their neighborhood. Those that want to see homeless people and those with extremely low incomes find housing stability need to stand up and provide a counter to the Not In My BackYard (NIMBY) crowd. Ask every local elected official, what they are doing to build and develop housing that is affordable in their community?

## 3. Spread the message on a regional level!

Homeless people come from around the region. We all understand the high cost of housing. Many are forced into Cleveland because that is where all the emergency services are located. The rising rents and inability to find safe decent housing is a regional problem.

- a. Write to your local government official (including Cuyahoga County) and ask them how they are addressing the housing needs of those that are facing poverty. Ask your local government if they are spending their Community Block Grant money on addressing the high cost of housing.
- b. Write to newspapers and television news outlets and ask them why they are not covering the shame of our urban communities that do not provide adequate housing for their citizens. Why do we build palaces and playgrounds, but we do not address the housing crisis?

## 4. Urge landlords in your community to accept people with housing vouchers.

Those attempting to climb out of poverty are faced with the reality that very few landlords will accept vouchers outside of the City of Cleveland. It is harder to pick yourself up by your bootstraps in an area that is decimated by poverty. If we all make an effort, the number of families living in poverty will decrease.

## 5. Talk to the experts!

When you are volunteering or traveling downtown, talk to our homeless citizens and find out that they are not to be feared. If you are uncomfortable with talking to people, read the *Cleveland Street Chronicle* (formerly the *Homeless Grapevine*), which has many stories written by homeless people.

## 6. Talk about poverty with family and friends!

Pass along your knowledge about poverty and homelessness. Talk about solutions and political positions with family and friends especially those who follow a conservative agenda. Remember a small investment of the reported federal surplus in housing could significantly reduce the number of people forced into shelter because they cannot find affordable, decent housing.

## 7. Make Time to Be a Leader.

For the advanced advocate, stop being a part of the choir, and run for office. Go to meetings, run for elected offices. The time is right to speak up. Don't be afraid people will listen to a fresh perspective.