



Community Cupboards meet needs

By Dawn Whiteside
McKinney-Vento liaison

We have hundreds — maybe thousands — of community members who struggle daily to have enough food to feed their families. Although we have many programs within our community to help, the need is immense.

There are 21 outdoor food cupboards for those in need. Those who can are asked to visit one or more of these cupboards and add non-perishable food or toiletries. Items in greatest demand are cereal/toaster pastries, powdered/evaporated milk, crackers, soups, tuna fish, canned chicken and canned pastas.

There are a few ways that the Community Cupboards can be supported.

- Food and toiletries can be donated into any of the cupboards in Pickaway County.
- There are two drop-off locations where non-perishable food and toiletries can be

left and will be picked up by volunteers and distributed to the cupboards. The drop-off locations are Ashville Apothecary on Route 752 and Circleville Apothecary on North Court Street.

- More organizations/groups are needed to sponsor donation events to collect for the cupboards. These events can be within your organization with your employees and constituents or can be public food drives. Community Cupboard volunteers can assist with the planning and advertising of your donation events. To help or for more information, send an e-mail to commcupboards@gmail.com.
- Monetary donations also are appreciated. Community Cupboards is a all-volunteer operation and all donations go toward buying food and toiletries. To donate financially, make checks payable to BYC Housing Opportuni-



The Community Cupboard at the Pickaway County Family YMCA on Nicholas Drive is one of 21 Cupboards in the county. For a list of Community Cupboard locations, go to www.pickawayesc.com/McKinney-Vento.aspx.

ties (with Community Cupboards written in the memo section) and mail to: Pickaway County Board of Developmental Disabilities, 200 East High St., Circleville 43113.

Funds sought to provide affordable housing

Housing advocates released data recently revealing a dire shortage of homes that are affordable to low-wage families and urged state leaders to invest federal recovery funds to create more affordable housing.

The Gap report released jointly by the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO) and the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) shows a deficit of 254,545 rental units that are affordable and available to the state's 443,717 extremely low-income households. That equates to 43 affordable units for every 100 households.

Based on 2016-2020 Census data, the Gap report largely reflects pre-pandemic housing needs, which have grown more severe in the past two years. Rents skyrocketed in 2021, increasing by an average of 11



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percent in Ohio's largest cities.

COHHIO Executive Director Bill Faith called on state leaders to invest \$308 million of the \$5.6 billion that Ohio received from the American Rescue Plan Act to address the affordable housing shortage.

"We've released the annual Gap report for many years, but this is the first time Ohio has actually had the resources to do something about it," he said. "Our proposal is a perfect fit for these recovery funds. It would create affordable homes for low-wage

working families, seniors, people with disabilities, youth aging out of foster care, domestic violence survivors and other vulnerable Ohioans."

More than 200 companies and organizations are supporting COHHIO's affordable housing plan.

"Employees need a safe, decent, affordable home to raise healthy families and be productive at work," said Steve Stivers, president and CEO of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce.

Erica Mulryan, director of the Ohio Balance of State Continuum of Care, which oversees the homeless system in Ohio's 80 non-urban counties, said rising rents and the lack of affordable housing are making it more difficult to get people out of shelter and into permanent homes.

"Our agencies' rehousing programs depend on private

landlords to help get people out of homelessness. But it's getting harder and harder to find landlords who are willing to partner with us," she said. "Ohio's rural and suburban counties desperately need more affordable housing."

Although the federal government took unprecedented action to protect vulnerable renters during the pandemic, the assistance was temporary.

"The pandemic has made plain our nation's lack of a housing safety net," said Diane Yentel, NLIHC president and CEO.

For additional information go to <https://nlihc.org/gap/state/oh>.

This is an excerpt from a report by the National Low Income Housing Coalition. The full report can be accessed at <https://cohho.org/report-underscores-need-to-invest-in-affordable-housing-recovery/>.