

Ohio foreclosures still at crisis level Cuyahoga County, with 12,285, remains highest

By David Rothstein

Housing foreclosures remain at historically high levels in Ohio. Urban counties continue to lead the state in foreclosure filings, even as smaller and less urban counties are experiencing larger growth rates. In 2010, the number of new filings grew in 30 of Ohio's 88 counties; 24 of those counties had populations below 100,000.

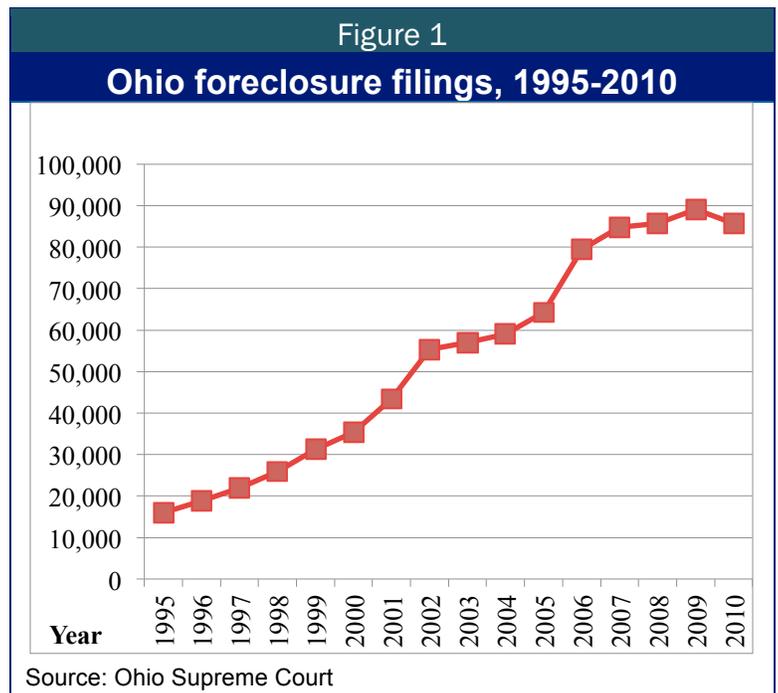
Foreclosures stabilizing at peak levels

Statewide, foreclosure filings slightly declined in 2010 with 85,483 new filings, a 4 percent decrease from 2009. Compared to 2000, when Ohio had 31,229 new foreclosures, this is a 142 percent increase. The latest numbers indicate that there was one foreclosure filing for every 59 housing units in the state last year.

Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New foreclosure filings in Ohio totaled 85,483 in 2010; • There was one foreclosure filing in 2010 for every 59 housing units; • One in three mortgage holders owes more than home's value; • One in six mortgage holders is delinquent or in foreclosure.

Figure 1 shows that since 1995, the number of filings has at least quadrupled in 81 of Ohio's 88 counties and has more than quintupled statewide. While new foreclosures have slowed in the past few years, new filings are stabilizing around a peak of 80,000 or more each year.

The result is that Ohioans are drenched, with nearly one in three owing more on their homes than current market value. This adds up to more than 630,000 Ohio mortgages "under water" and ranks Ohio fourth in the total number of home mortgages with negative or near-negative equity. As a share of all Ohio mortgages, more than 28 percent are in this situation, ranking Ohio 9th in the country. The loan-to-value ratio in Ohio is more than 76 percent, meaning that Ohio mortgage holders, in total, have less than 25 percent ownership in their home mortgages.



Foreclosures continue to plague urban areas

- **Cuyahoga County remains at the epicenter of the foreclosure crisis.** For the fifth year in a row Cuyahoga County topped the list of foreclosures per 1,000 people (10.05) and overall new foreclosure filings (12,825).
- **While rural counties are facing more foreclosures than past years, urban counties still carry the brunt of new filings.** The 10 biggest urban counties accounted for 60 percent of filings in Ohio last year but represented only 53 percent of the population.
- **Court mediation, housing counseling, and outreach by community groups have slowed foreclosure filings.** Working with a HUD counseling group or the court system dramatically increases the likelihood of a successful mortgage workout.

The huge number of homeowners with mortgages in delinquency and default is likely to trigger new foreclosures for years to come. In Ohio, 9.1 percent of all mortgages are delinquent or in default but not yet in foreclosure. Additionally, homeowners who are under water make up an increasingly large portion of Ohio's mortgage market and are more likely to be hit by foreclosure. Figure 2 shows that Ohio's high percentage of mortgages under water put Ohio in 4th place among all states.

