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# BUDGET BITE: FOOD AND HOUSING SECURITY

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In Ohio, over 1.69 million people struggle with hunger and food insecurity, including over [500,000 children](#). The state has also seen a troubling increase in the number homeless babies and children in the last five years. In order to build an Ohio where everyone can live with security and dignity, all Ohioans need access to nutritious food and stable, affordable housing. While the two-year budget passed by the House did not make the necessary investments to move Ohio in this direction, the Senate now has an opportunity to do so.

### WHY ACCESS TO FOOD AND STABLE HOUSING MATTERS

Children who experience housing instability and food insecurity are more likely to face toxic stress and [have poor educational, health, and employment outcomes](#). On the other hand, research shows that when children have access to stable housing and nutritious food, they have [better health](#), perform better [at school](#), and have more [economic opportunity](#).

### THE GROWING NEED IN OHIO

Too many Ohioans experience food and housing insecurity, because Ohio’s low-wage job market doesn’t pay enough to support thousands of working families. For instance, six of Ohio’s 10 most common jobs [pay too little to feed a family of three](#) without food assistance. As the cost of food, housing, child care, and healthcare continue to rise, more low-wage workers need support from local foodbanks to get by. The Ohio Association of Foodbanks reports a growing demand for food assistance and has seen a [25 percent increase in seniors at food pantries](#) in the past four years.

The two-year budget submitted by the governor and passed by the House provide no increase for foodbanks. Once inflation is considered, the 2020-21 allotment will be worth less than what was provided in the last budget. Each of the line items listed below provide funding for the foodbanks to purchase and distribute food.

House-passed State Budget			
Foodbank Assistance			
Fund	FY 2018-19	FY 2020-21	% Change
Ohio Association of Foodbanks - TANF	\$34,099,002	\$34,100,000	0.0%
Title XX transfer - TANF	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000 *	0.0%
Food Bank Assistance	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$39,099,002</b>	<b>\$39,100,000</b>	<b>0.0%</b>

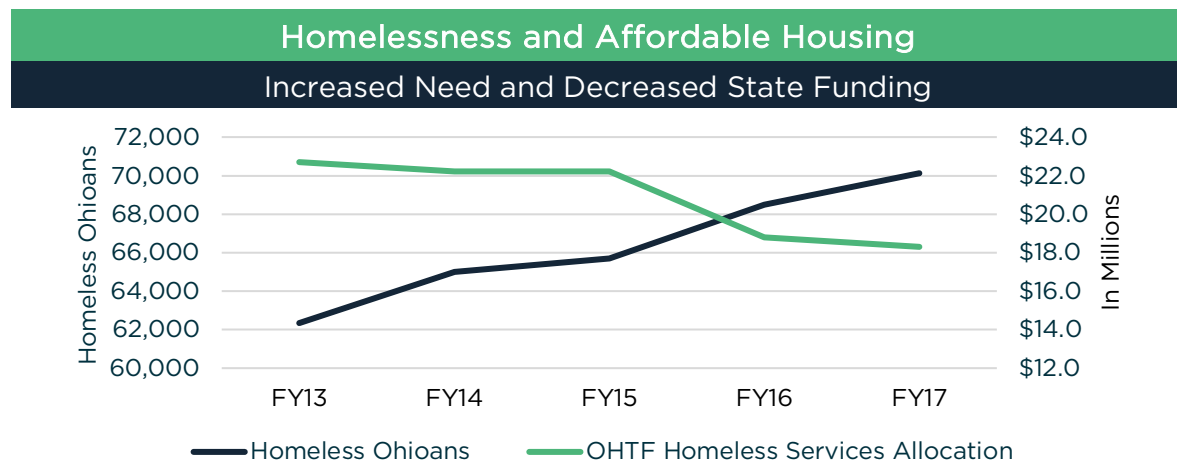
Source: Substitute Bill Adopted by House Finance - [Appropriations Spreadsheet](#); ODJFS TANF Program Services Framework for SFY 2020-21. \* FY 2020-21 Title XX transfer estimate based on SFY 2018-19 grant agreement between the Ohio Association of Foodbanks and ODJFS.

An additional \$20 million over the biennium for the foodbanks is needed to meet the increased need for food and nutrition assistance.

Homelessness has also spiked dramatically in Ohio and the state needs more affordable housing. A recent report by the National Low Income Housing Coalition highlighted that just [42 affordable rental units](#) are available for every 100 low-income tenant households in Ohio. Furthermore, according to the Ohio Housing Finance Agency, between 2012 and 2017:

- Total homelessness in Ohio [increased 20% to over 70,000](#);
- Children’s homelessness increased 25% to nearly 21,000; and
- The number of homeless babies increased 53% to nearly 3,000 infants (under age 1)

The chart below highlights the increasing need for affordable housing and decreasing funding for homeless services from the [Ohio Housing Trust Fund](#) (OHTF), which provides financing for affordable housing projects across the state. OHTF receives a share of the fee collected by county recorders on property and mortgage transactions. The recession took a significant toll on revenue for the Trust Fund, decreasing support from \$73 million in fiscal year 2005 to \$45 million in fiscal year 2018. The fee needs to be modernized and increased to expand access to safe, stable, affordable housing.



Source: Ohio Housing Finance Agency (increase in homeless Ohioans), available at <https://bit.ly/2RE9pjE>, accessed on May 20, 2019. Ohio Development Services Agency (OHTF Homeless Services Allocation),

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Since food and housing insecurity lead to increased healthcare costs and harmful consequences for child development and learning, investments in basic human needs now will save money in the long-term and expand basic human dignity in our state.

We urge the Senate to:

- Increase Ohio’s investment in foodbanks across the state by \$20 million over the biennium in the TANF Maintenance of Effort line. This will purchase over 50 million pounds of healthy food to feed hungry Ohioans; and
- Modernize the county recorder fees to generate additional funding for the Ohio Housing Trust Fund to provide more Ohioans with stable, affordable housing.