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# **State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Success Stories: Habitat for Humanity of Ohio**

By: Jessica Mendieta

The State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) program provides unprecedented opportunities for charitable nonprofits to secure vital funding to overcome challenges caused or exacerbated by the pandemic. Yet, charitable organizations have not received their fair share of these funds – less than 5% of total SLFRF spending – and the deadline for governments to obligate any remaining funds is rapidly approaching. With this and other articles, the National Council of Nonprofits is highlighting successful advocacy stories that, we hope, will inspire nonprofits to identify and pursue these funds in their local communities. In this article, we lift up Habitat for Humanity of Ohio and the \$25 million investment secured from the state of Ohio as an advocacy and development success story.

## **The SLFRF Advocacy Timeline**



[Habitat for Humanity of Ohio](#) first learned about SLFRF in early summer of 2022 from the Government Relations team based in the District of Columbia, which identified the many ways in which local affiliates are eligible for SLFRF. Soon after, Habitat of Ohio started contacting state legislators and the Governor's office to determine the best path forward to secure funding. Not a lot of SLFRF information, especially around nonprofits' eligibility, had reached the legislators at that point. So, Habitat for Humanity of Ohio turned to the State Office of Budget and Management (OBM) to clarify any doubts.

The Ohio OBM is the office leading and managing the state's reporting on SLFRF. Its [2024 Report](#) included information on the use of funds, equitable outcomes promoted, and project categories. Once Habitat for Humanity of Ohio received acknowledgment from OBM that charitable nonprofits were eligible, the organization was able to return to the legislators with a proposal. The issue they identified is the affordable housing shortage, specifically workforce housing, in the state and the role SLFRF could play in creating more housing opportunities for working families in rural areas.

Habitat for Humanity of Ohio took advantage of legislative recesses to invite legislators to their facilities and utilized other settings to communicate challenges and proposed solutions. Those meetings resulted in many legislators supporting the goal of addressing the workforce housing shortage, especially in rural areas. By January 2023, Governor DeWine signed into law an American Rescue Plan Act spending bill that included the following:

- \$15 million for new home construction to include rehabs of existing homes
- \$9 million for a critical home repair program for seniors and individuals with disabilities
- \$1 million for the creation of a statewide Habitat for Humanity apprentice program

Ryan Miller, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of Ohio issued the [following statement](#) upon enactment of the legislation:

“The Ohio legislature understands the struggles of Ohioans to find affordable and available housing, and they are committed to finding real

housing solutions in the next general assembly.... We are grateful our lawmakers see this one-time investment of ARPA dollars will lead to a long-term investment in communities and people throughout Ohio. We also look to build upon our 20-year relationship with our friends at the Ohio Department of Development as we partner with them on this important Habitat housing initiative.”

## **About Habitat for Humanity**

[Habitat for Humanity](#) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit housing ministry. All across America, individuals and families struggle to find affordable places to live. Habitat seeks to remedy this injustice by providing low-income people the opportunity to realize their dreams of homeownership. The organization was founded on the conviction that every man, woman, and child should have a simple, durable place to live in dignity and safety, and that decent shelter in decent communities should be a matter of conscience and action for all. Habitat welcomes volunteers and supporters from all backgrounds and serves people in need of decent housing regardless of race or religion. Habitat for Humanity partners with people in local communities, and all over the world, to help them build or improve a place they can call home. Habitat homeowners help build their own homes alongside volunteers and pay an affordable mortgage. Habitat for Humanity works in more than 70 countries and have helped more than 59 million people improve their living conditions since 1976.