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**Federal cuts threaten ability of CDCs to respond to community needs**  
*Funding helps thousands of ordinary Ohioans achieve their aspirations*

COLUMBUS, OH - Across Ohio, thousands of people are acting on their aspirations for a better place to live, work and do business. For the moment – but perhaps for not much longer – Ohioans are tapping into the resources of community development corporations and their partners in ordinary and extraordinary ways to help themselves - and their neighbors.

For example:

- ◆ Pinked slipped from her corporate job in the Columbus area, Robinette S. feared she would lose her Westerville condo. Not sure where to turn, she took a friend's suggestion to attend a State Treasurer's conference last summer - and got a great tip. Soon the young professional was talking to a HUD-certified housing counselor at Homes on the Hill Community Development Corporation in Columbus– and got the advice she needed to keep her home.
- ◆ Laurie M. needed stability for her three school-aged children as she was rebuilding her life after a divorce and a need to re-enter the workforce in a different capacity. Needing to move but wanting to keep her children in Pickerington schools, she received housing assistance from the Lancaster-Fairfield Community Action Agency last year. She was able to purchase a rehabbed home and receive down payment assistance with the help of two federally-funded programs, keeping her mortgage payments slightly under rent. This spring she received her master's degree in business administration and is working on her Ph.D. in global education at The Ohio State University. Lancaster-Fairfield CAA says HOME and CDBG-funded programs are making a tremendous difference for people such as Laurie and her children.
- ◆ Without the efficient use of CDBG funds, the Collinwood neighborhood in Cleveland's Far East Side would not have a new Save-A-Lot grocery store, its Waterloo Arts District would have many foreclosures instead of quality rehabbed homes and the Slovene Home for the Aged would not have been able to expand care and hire more employees. Jeff Sass, administrator for the Slovene Home for the Aged, can discuss how Northeast Shores Development Corp helped his facility expand. North Shores has leveraged about \$280,000 per year in CDBG funds to deliver \$3.8 million in investment in this working-class community.

"Ohio's community development corporations empower people and grow communities," said Nate Coffman, executive director of the Ohio CDC Association. "Our members connect public and private investment to projects and programs that improve the places where people live, work and visit. They bring economic progress by working with people and groups who are making decisions about their block, town or region – and help them prosper.

"But today, their ability to help ordinary people help themselves – which helps every one of us - is threatened by the prospect of severe budget cuts on the federal level," Coffman said. "Ohioans and their communities are going to suffer as a result."

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Consider this:

- ◆ Congress is considering severe cuts to the Community Development Block Grant program, a powerful resource for states, cities, towns and rural areas to rebuild local economies, create jobs, strengthen public infrastructure and improve the quality of life for millions of low- and moderate-income Ohioans. The program supports housing, economic development, neighborhood revitalization and other community development projects. A recent national study said the \$3.95 billion CDBG funds distributed last year to 1,163 communities in all 50 states resulted in the creation of 120,000 jobs and \$10.7 billion in Gross Domestic Product.
- ◆ The Housing Counseling Assistance Program has been zeroed out in the Congressional budget proposal, despite having bipartisan support since 1968 for its invaluable guidance to homeowners, including the elderly, first-time homebuyers, homeowners facing foreclosure or needing rental assistance.

“During this time of high unemployment, funding for the CDBG program has never been more important,” Coffman said. “Over the years, many studies have shown this program works – it provides a return on investment, creates jobs and helps solve problems in communities of all sizes. That helps everyone in Ohio.”

In addition, Coffman noted the elimination of housing counseling funds comes with a big price. “The housing market’s collapse has touched virtually every sector of the economy,” he said. “We know that when homebuyers and homeowners are educated and counseled, rates of foreclosure and delinquency fall well below average. To end a successful program at this critical time will harm many communities across Ohio.”

The Ohio CDC Association’s vision is the creation of a community development environment that comprehensively improves life opportunities for all residents.

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Additional examples of how Ohioans are using the resources of community development corporations and the federal funds they administer:

- ◆ In Toledo, Stacy M., a single mother with a disability, needed an accessible home for her family of three. She found it last year near the new Sherman Elementary School, where United North/Toledo was building homes, as well as near the new Chase and Woodward High Schools. The \$5.5 million project, funded through tax credits and federal HOME funds, allows Madden and 23 other families to purchase their homes after 15 years. Vested in her neighborhood, Madden is currently taking classes and making sure the local carry-out store keeps its lot clean.
- ◆ Thanks to federal HOME funds – and a personal commitment to end his addictions - Louis C. now has a home in his Cincinnati neighborhood. Last December, Louis moved into Jimmy Heath House – a 25-unit renovated apartment building serving homeless people with a history of substance abuse. Clough was among the first tenants to move into the \$4.2 million facility developed by Over-the-Rhine Community Housing.
- ◆ In Youngstown’s Idora neighborhood, community member Kevin H. closed on a “green” rehabbed home this month, thanks to his contacting the Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation (YNDC). Last year, YNDC bought the foreclosed property from Fannie Mae and rehabbed it using Enterprise Foundation’s Green Communities Criteria and Mahoning County LEAP Healthy Home Standards.
- ◆ Meanwhile, neighbors Beverly C. and Willie T. expanded their yards with the eight side lots they received through YNDC’s Lots of Green program. Lots of Green has turned 115 formerly vacant parcels to community gardens, side lots, pocket parks, native plantings, other green spaces and an Urban Agricultural Demonstration Site.
- ◆ The investments are paying off – a developer is planning to build a full-service grocery store that will play a key role in the redevelopment of this south side neighborhood, thanks to the initiative of its residents in tapping into YNDC’s resources.