

# Ohio's Legislative One-Pagers: Using Technology to Simplify Housing Advocacy at the Local Level

**Ohio Housing Finance Agency**  
Legislative Advocacy: State Advocacy

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### BACKGROUND

As a leader in affordable housing policy, the Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) aims to provide timely information to the state's congressional delegation and members of the Ohio General Assembly on critical housing issues. As legislation that directly affects OHFA's ability to carry out its mission is considered, it is essential that legislators understand OHFA's community impact and who among their constituents are benefiting from OHFA programs.

For many years, OHFA produced a printed Congressional Report that provided an overview of the Agency's rental housing, homeownership, and foreclosure prevention programs for each of Ohio's congressional districts. The report described OHFA's local community impact and included stories on affordable housing developments specific to each federal district in Ohio. While this report was a useful tool for OHFA's Director of Legislative Affairs in meetings with congressional staff and advocacy groups, it was static, limited in scope, and not useful to legislators in the Ohio Statehouse.

In 2018, OHFA's Office of Housing Policy improved this report by creating an informational one-pager for each of Ohio's congressional districts as well as for each Ohio Senate and Ohio House of Representatives districts. The result was 148 one-page reports that included district-specific data on OHFA's cumulative impact and housing needs, and provided demographic profiles on recent OHFA homebuyers and Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) residents. These individual legislative reports were also available for download in PDF format from OHFA's website. The first round of legislative one-pagers were published at the start of 2019, to coincide with the beginning of the new legislative session.

OHFA and its Office of Housing Policy built on the success of the 2019 legislative one-pagers by updating the design and the data for the most recent legislative session beginning in 2021. The Legislative Reports now include housing need indicators that identify the most relevant housing issues for each legislator. To help dispel negative stereotypes about the population living in LIHTC housing, the resident profile has been replaced with a demographic picture of low-income renters in the district, including a selection of local jobs with salaries that would make those workers income-eligible for LIHTC (Figures 1 & 2). Lastly, to make the data in these reports even more accessible to legislators and the public, OHFA now provides a new and innovative series of interactive district maps at all three levels (Figures 3 & 4).

### PROCESS

Beginning with the 2019 legislative reports, the Office of Housing Policy collaborated with OHFA's Communications and Marketing team to develop a template for the one-pagers. Using Venngage, a web-based application for creating graphics, the Housing Policy team was able to design a standard template that could be easily updated with district-specific content. The basic structure of each one-pager includes four main parts: OHFA's Impact, Housing Needs, OHFA Homebuyers, and Low-Income Renters. Photographs of OHFA homebuyers and renters are used to give the one-pagers a more human connection. Each one-pager also includes the name and official headshot of that district's current legislator, a small locator map of the district, and an agency overview.

The section on OHFA's Impact includes the cumulative number of homebuyers assisted, affordable rental units built or preserved, mortgage holders helped to avoid foreclosure, and blighted/vacant homes demolished within the current boundaries of the legislative district. Cumulative multifamily unit counts are broken out visually with a half pie chart by priority need category.

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Early on, OHFA staff communicated with statewide housing partners who work closely with the state legislature to better understand which issue areas were most important for their advocacy work. These conversations were essential to the development of the Housing Needs section of the one-pager, which includes three text-based infographics chosen from a menu of 11 issue areas: Affordability Ratio, Eviction Filings, Homeless Students, Homeownership Gap, Lead Hazard, Older Adults, Price-to-Income Ratio, Rent Increases, Severe Mortgage Burden, Severe Rent Burden, and Veterans. The data in this section comes from publicly accessible federal sources such as the American Community Survey (ACS) and the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Ohio-specific datasets from other state agencies, and proprietary data sources such as IPUMS USA and CoreLogic. In collaboration with OHFA's Outreach and Engagement and Legislative Affairs offices, three issue areas were selected for each legislator based on known interest or geography.

The profile of OHFA homebuyers in each district is based on OHFA data on recent borrowers, including median age and income, average home loan and FICO® Score, race/ethnicity, marital status, and gender. In the 2019 reports, the profile of LIHTC residents was based on OHFA data on the demographics of tenants, which are reported by property owners. Due to the nature of how these data are collected, as well as the small sample size in some districts, a decision was made to replace this section in the 2021 reports with a profile of low-income renters—those with incomes at or below 60% of area median income (AMI)—who are generally eligible for LIHTC. Demographic information includes age, gender of householder, and number of renters, based on analysis of ACS Public Use Microdata Sample data from IPUMS USA. Income and rent limits based on the 60% AMI threshold for a family of two are also included, along with a selection of jobs with geographically-based salaries that would make those workers income eligible for LIHTC. This last piece is meant to help dispel the common myth that low-income renters do not work, as well as to illustrate that even with a job in healthcare or education, for instance, a single paycheck may not be enough to afford decent rental housing for a single parent.

In addition to collecting and analyzing both internal and external data for these sections of the report, OHFA researchers had a challenge with the legislator names and headshots. The short window of time between Election Day and the start of the legislative session made it necessary to gather candidate names and headshots before Election Day, monitor election results, and then update the images and names of the winners. Temporary photographs of candidates were then replaced with official headshots released following the start the legislative session.

After the lengthy process of fact-checking the data, Housing Policy staff entered all the content into the Venngage templates and produced 148 individual PDF documents, making them available for download from OHFA's website. To make the information in these legislative reports even more accessible, Housing Policy staff created a series of interactive maps of Ohio's legislative districts at all three levels using Tableau data visualization software. A set of Tableau maps had been created in 2019 for the first round of legislative reports, however the sheer amount of data proved challenging, and the use of lengthy drop-down menus to include all the metrics made the maps cumbersome. For the 2021 edition, the maps were simplified by putting the data in Tableau's Tooltips, making use of a software update that allows for the inclusion of small data visualizations within the Tooltips, which change as the user hovers from one district to another. While no comparison could be tracked for previous printed reports, page analytics show that the legislative one-pagers have been viewed 441 times and the maps have been viewed 212 times from Dec. 2020 to April 2022 (Figures 5 and 6). This innovative change in map and data visualization design has made the new interactive maps easier to use and the data within much more accessible.

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### IMPACT

Through the creation of two innovative tools—the individualized one-page legislative reports built from a single web-based template and the online interactive maps that pack valuable information in a simple easy-to-use format—OHFA is doing important work to drive statewide affordable housing advocacy. Comprehensive housing data is now easily accessible—on a local level—to legislators, housing partners across Ohio, and the general public. These tools are replicable for other HFAs looking to forge relationships and build coalitions with legislators and housing advocates in their states, easy to use, and easy to implement. By collaborating with both OHFA staff and outside housing partners who work closely with legislators, the Housing Policy team was able to tailor these tools to the specific audience, effectively promoting the Agency's work and keeping policymakers well-informed of the most important housing issues in Ohio.


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## VISUAL AIDS


Figure 1: Sample legislative one-pager (Front)





### 3RD OHIO SENATE DISTRICT

Sen. Tina Maharath

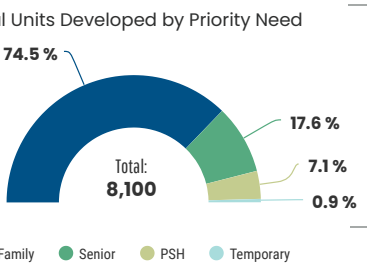


#### OHIO HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY

**ABOUT OHFA**  
 The Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) is an independent state agency dedicated to ensuring all Ohioans have a safe and affordable place to call home. OHFA uses federal and state resources to provide housing for low- to moderate-income households through the financing of fixed-rate mortgages, as well as funding the development and preservation of affordable rental housing. At the state level, OHFA relies on two crucial sources of funding: an allocation from the Ohio Housing Trust Fund to supply gap financing for rental housing projects and the capacity to issue Housing Development Loans using Unclaimed Funds from the Ohio Department of Commerce. These resources and programs produce stronger, healthier Ohio communities and stimulate economic activity by supporting more than 5,700 jobs and contributing over \$870 million a year to the state's economy.

### OHFA'S IMPACT IN THE 3RD DISTRICT

Rental Units Developed by Priority Need



**Total: 8,100**


- Family
- Senior
- PSH
- Temporary

- 11,324** Homebuyers Assisted
- 8,100** Affordable Rental Units Built or Preserved
- 837** Mortgage Holders Helped to Avoid Foreclosure
- 222** Blighted and Vacant Homes Demolished


#### OHFA HOMEBUYERS IN THE 3RD DISTRICT

Median Age	Median Income	Average Home Loan	Average FICO® Score
<b>32</b>	<b>\$54,668</b>	<b>\$157,355</b>	<b>708</b>

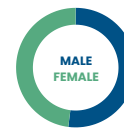
Race & Ethnicity Breakdown




Marital Status Breakdown



Gender Breakdown





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Figure 2: Sample legislative one-pager (Back)

## HOUSING NEEDS IN OHIO'S 3RD DISTRICT


### Homeless Students

959 K–12 students or 15 per 1,000 enrolled at public schools in the 3rd lack a permanent address or place to sleep at night.




### Price-to-Income Ratio

The average home price in the 3rd is \$207,798, or 2.5 years of family income for the average potential homebuyer.

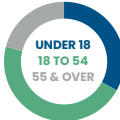




### Homeownership Gap

There is a 37-percentage-point gap between white and Black homeownership rates in the 3rd—68% and 31% respectively.




### LOW-INCOME RENTERS IN THE 3RD DISTRICT

<p>All Members of Household by Age</p> 	<p>Number of Low-Income Renters</p> <p>66,992 All Household Members    32,905 Households</p>	<p>Heads of Household by Gender</p> 
<p>Average Age</p> <p>33 All Members of Household    48 Head of Household</p>	<p>Income &amp; Rent Limits</p> <p>\$37,440 Max. Income    \$936 Max. Rent</p> <p><small>60% AMI, Family of 2</small></p>	<p>Select Local Jobs (and their average salaries)</p> <p>Customer Service Reps (\$37K)              Medical Admin Assistants (\$36K)              Forklift Operators (\$35K)</p>



Sources: OHFA internal data (as of June 30, 2020); 2018 State and District Fact Sheets, A Call to Invest in Our Neighborhoods (ACTION) Campaign; IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota; Income Limits, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; Supreme Court of Ohio Case Management System; American Community Survey One- and Five-Year Estimates; Ohio Department of Education (public data request, based on 2019–2020 school year data); Real Estate Analytics Suite, CoreLogic; Occupational Employment Statistics Survey, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Notes: PSH = Permanent Supportive Housing, AMI = Area Median Income. An asterisk (\*) indicates 0%. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding. All estimates based on 2019 data unless stated otherwise. See our [website](#) for additional notes.



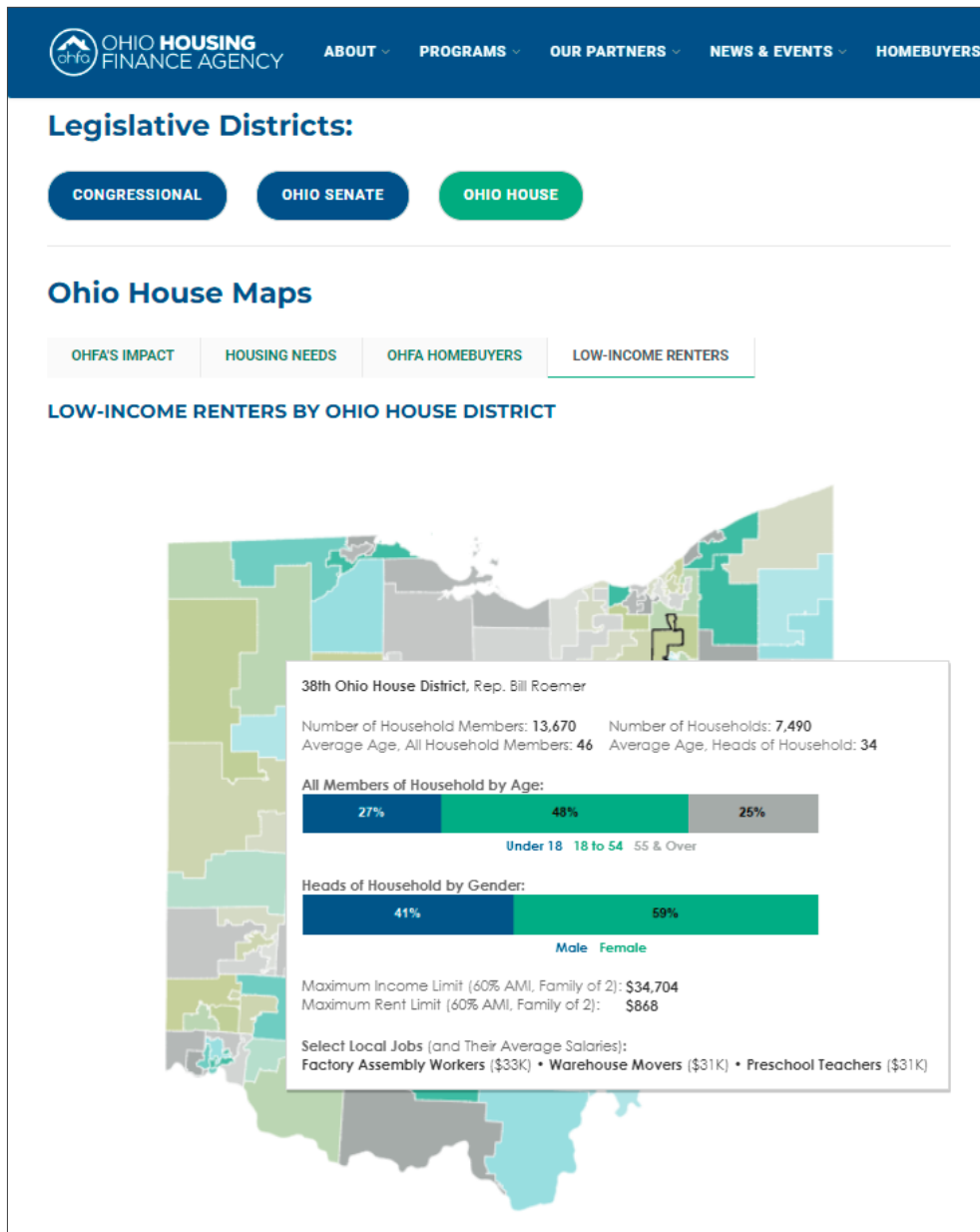
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 Guy Ford, Director of Legislative Affairs

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Figure 3: Screenshot of [interactive map](#)

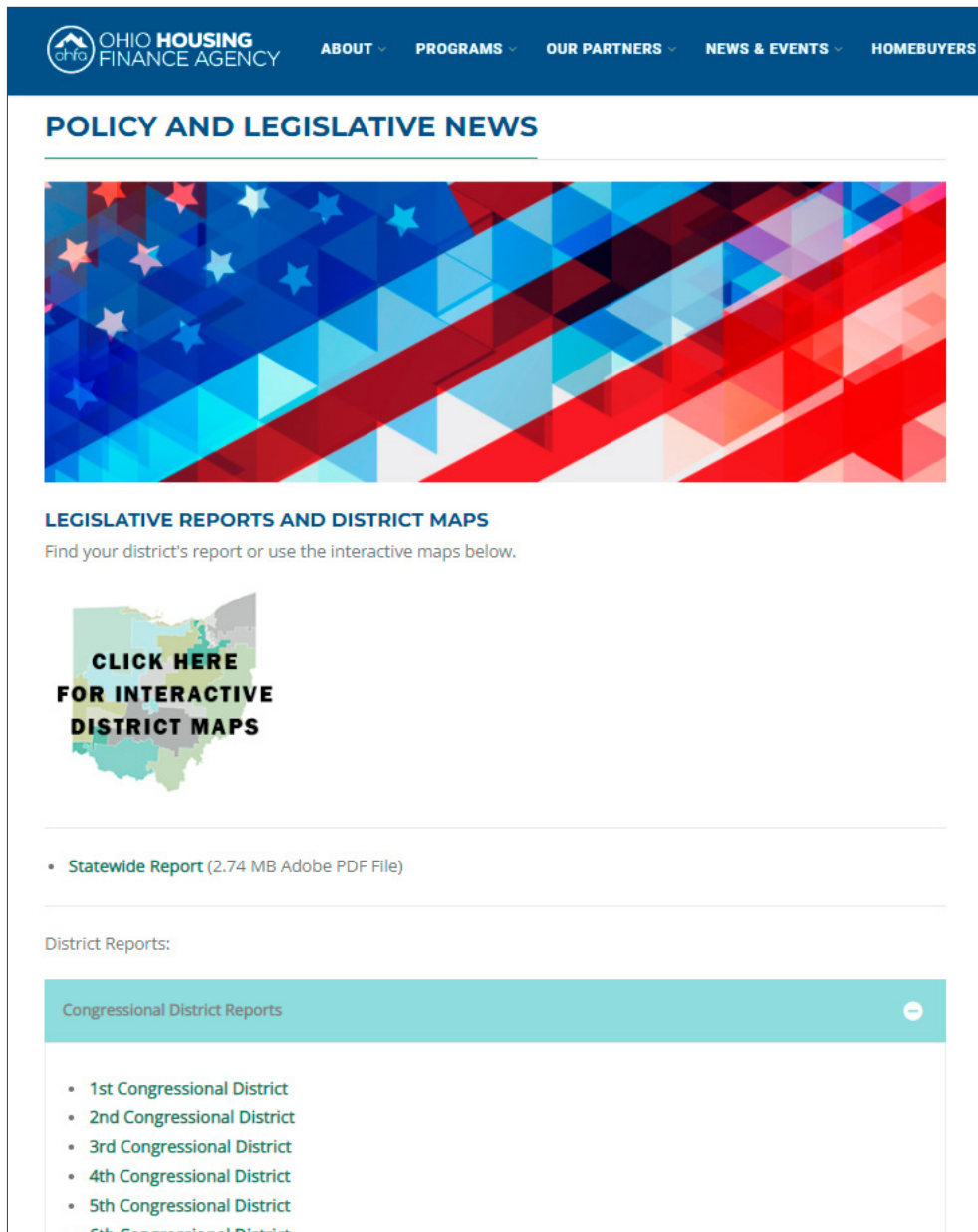


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Figure 4: Screenshot of [webpage](#) with downloadable PDFs



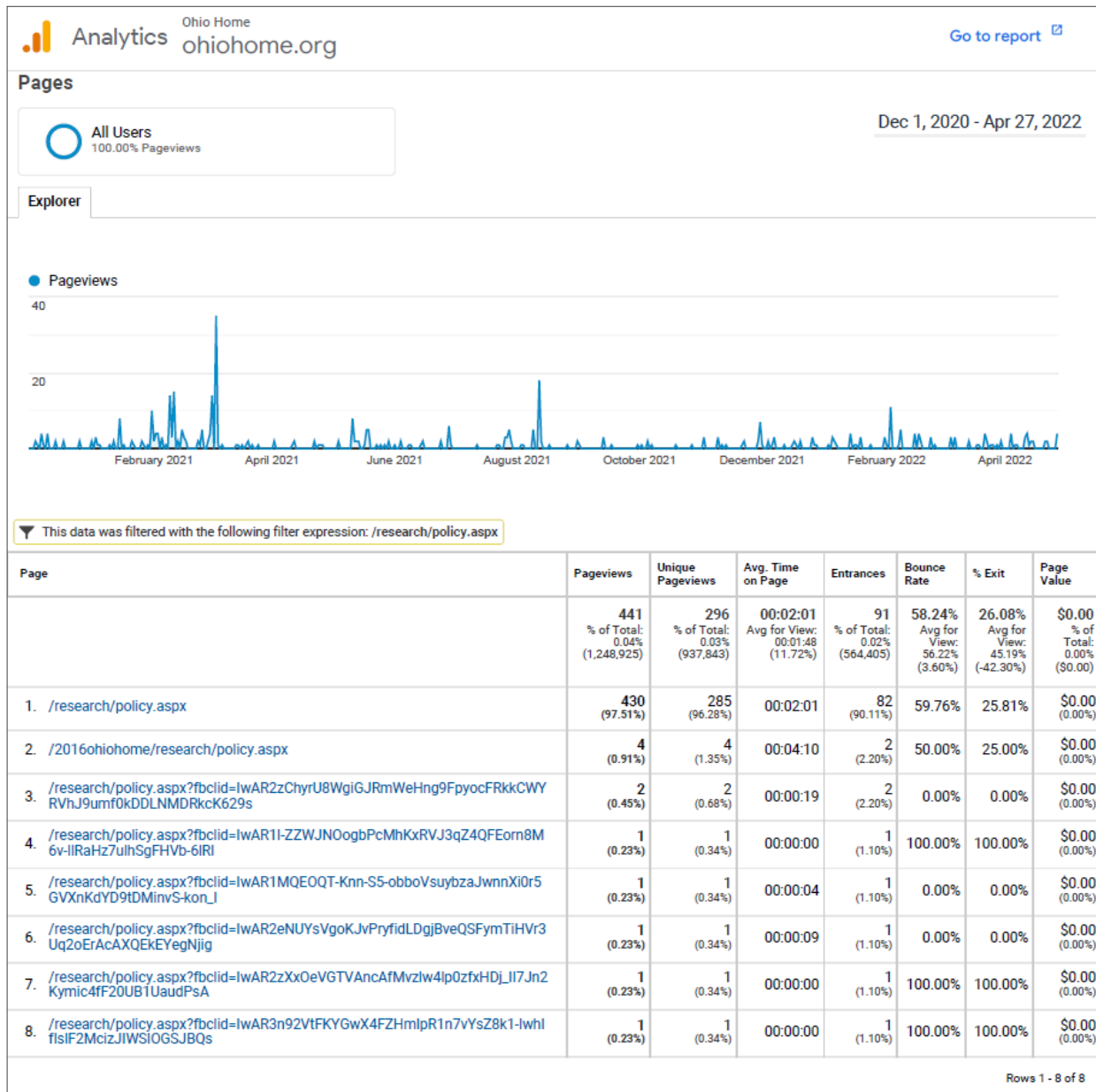


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Figure 5. Page analytics for legislative one-pagers



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Figure 6. Page analytics for maps

