

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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Contact: Tyler Lowry, Commissioners, 614/525-6630  
Hanna M. Greer, Commissioners, 614/525-5848

## **COMMISSIONERS FUND COMMUNITY HOUSING INITIATIVES**

Central Ohio home sales numbers continue to improve with more home sales in the first seven months of 2013 than in any year since at least 1995. With these improvements in the local housing market boosting the collection of transfer fees, the Franklin County Commissioners are able to make an additional investment in the Community Shelter Board and Affordable Housing Trust for Columbus and Franklin County. The commissioners have had a long-standing partnership with the Community Shelter Board and Affordable Housing Trust which share the county's collections from the permissive real property and manufactured homes transfer fee. Last Tuesday, the commissioners funded new initiatives totaling \$432,429 which aim to increase the availability of affordable housing for lower-income county residents and redesign the system to address local homelessness.

"These are great partnerships and great organizations," said Board of Commissioners President, John O'Grady. "Using the funds from real estate transactions for this project is appropriate, and we're happy to be able to help more county residents find affordable places to live."

The Community Shelter Board's project, a pilot called the Navigator program, is a centralized case management approach designed to move people out of shelter more quickly and into stable housing. Case managers called Navigators will work side-by-side with clients throughout their homeless crisis, linking them to employment and job training, support services, medical care and housing resources. Navigators will also work with people after they are housed to help them to maintain stable housing.

"In 2006 I worked along with the Board of Realtors to assure the Community Shelter Board and the Affordable Housing Trust would be able to address the housing needs of lower income families and individuals," said Commissioner Paula Brooks. "The Board of Realtors leadership in understanding the linkage between helping struggling families, and building a stronger central Ohio was evident. We are proud to see the real estate industry support ALL of our community, and we continue to work toward building a path into the middle class for everyone."

Commissioner Marilyn Brown said that, "Almost nothing is as important to fostering a strong, stable family than having safe, stable housing. The Affordable Housing Trust and Community Shelter Board do important work throughout our community to help struggling residents get back on their feet. It's an honor to be able to work with them to help Franklin County families."

"The Franklin County Commissioners have been at the planning table with us for the past two years to develop this new transformational model," said Michele Heritage, Executive Director of the Community Shelter Board. "They are helping lead the way by investing both financial and human resources toward ending homelessness for the most vulnerable citizens of our community."

The Affordable Housing Trust, created in 2001 in partnership with Franklin County and the City of Columbus, works to create and preserve affordable housing stock, support homeownership, and strengthen neighborhoods. The Trust is funded, in part, by Franklin County, and the increase in funding will allow it to expand its scope.

“This year we have seen record demand for financing,” said Affordable Housing Trust president, Steven Gladman. “The additional funding will allow us to be a part of the preservation of Sturbridge Green, an affordable rental housing community in Hilliard, and to develop Van Buren Village in Franklinton, a permanent supportive housing community.”

The Affordable Housing Trust has helped to secure homes for more than 4,000 local residents since 2001. The Franklin County Commissioners have funded both programs since 1999.

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