



## **Stop Predatory Landlords! Protect Renters Now!**

### **• Facts about rental housing**

- The number of renters is on the rise in Franklin County. Out of Ohio's 88 counties, no other has a higher ratio of renters than Franklin County. According to U.S. Census figures from 2019, 53% of homes are occupied by their owners, a rate that has been steadily decreasing. (*WOSU 89.7 NPR News Published May 24, 2022* )
- Rents are increasing faster than incomes, and the lowest income renters are being priced out of the market altogether. Columbus saw the fourth-highest rent increase in the country from February 2023 to February 2024. (*Channel 4 news*)
- For every \$100 increase in rent there is a 9% increase in homelessness. (*The Eviction Lab*)
- More than 24,000 households faced eviction last year (7% of households.) We expect a dramatic increase in evictions when the federal Emergency Rental Assistance funds are exhausted. (*Legal Aid Society of Columbus*)
- Renters in substandard housing are reluctant to report code violations because they don't have any options on where to go, and they fear retaliation. (*Legal Aid Society of Columbus*)
- Only one in four households that qualify for rental subsidy receives assistance. Most renters must find housing in the private rental market. (*The Affordable Housing Alliance of Central Ohio*)
- At least 47,000 affordable housing units have been lost due to increasing rents or removal from the inventory. (*The Affordable Housing Alliance of Central Ohio*)
- 20% of all homes sold in Columbus are now going to investors, many whom are out-of-state. And that's an 85% increase from the year before. This is unfairly driving up the cost of both home purchases and rentals. (*The Affordable Housing Alliance of Central Ohio*)
- An Arizona company called Progress Residential bought more than 200 houses in Franklin County between May 2021 and November 2022, according to a search of records with the Franklin County Recorder's office. People who rent from Progress frequently complain of shoddy repairs, little or no response to large or small maintenance requests, and excessive fees. (*NBC 4, January 23, 2023*)
- A Nevada-based corporation American Homes 4 Rent owns more than 2,100 rental homes in Columbus and nearly 2,000 more in Cincinnati. According to AMH's first quarter earnings report, the company highlights an increase in rent and other single-family property revenues of 11.7% to bring in nearly \$400 million for the first quarter of 2023. (*ABC 6, July 27, 2023*)

### **Solutions:**

1. City of Columbus Rental Registry: Cleveland, Akron, Athens, Sandusky, Bowling Green, Youngstown and Reynoldsburg have rental registries requiring property owners to provide their municipality with contact information before renting out any residential property. Most also require owners who live a certain distance from the property to designate a local agent the city can contact in case of an emergency. Rental Registries seek to hold owners and tenants accountable for the conditions of property, which is beneficial for blight mitigation. Rental Registries would also help local agencies better respond to complaints, violations and emergencies.
2. Systematic Pre-Rental Inspections: Many cities employ a pre-rental prior to a new tenant occupying the unit. The Pre-Rental Inspection ensures that the unit is safe and up to code. We are interested in the city of Columbus conducting pre-rental inspections in units where tenants are most likely to encounter unsafe living conditions.

