

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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*Statewide Coalition releases Policy Recommendations for Rebuilding Ohio communities in the wake of COVID-19 economic fallout.*

**COLUMBUS, OH** (October 5, 2020) – Today, the Rebuilding Ohio Coalition released a platform of state policy recommendations for Ohio’s working families, businesses, neighborhoods, and downtowns.

This statewide Coalition represents over 325 community and economic development nonprofits that serve hundreds of small businesses and thousands of families. The Coalition has issued this platform because of the potential it holds for regrowing local economies, stabilizing families, and building resilient communities as the COVID-19 crisis continues.

“We have come together because we know from previous economic downturns that Ohio’s downtowns, neighborhoods, businesses, employees, and residents are foundational for rebuilding Ohio’s communities and local economies,” said Nate Coffman, Executive Director of the Ohio CDC Association, and spokesperson for the Rebuilding Ohio Coalition.

Members and supporters of the Rebuilding Ohio Coalition have proven experience advocating for state policies that support local leaders in creating vibrant, competitive, places where Ohioans want to live, work, and play.

“Ohio’s most distressed communities need access to capital and other resources to weather the current crisis and move into sustainable recovery. We adhere to a holistic approach of community development rooted in strong partnerships illustrated by this coalition: a commitment to growing our Main Streets, supporting Ohio’s families, and carefully stewarding resources to maximize impact,” said Diana Turoff, President and CEO of Finance Fund Capital Corporation.

The Rebuilding Ohio platform offers a series of policy recommendations for state policymakers, which focus on three policy areas:

- I. **EMPOWER OHIO’S FAMILIES THROUGH HOUSING, FINANCIAL STABILITY, AND FOOD SECURITY.** Working families are especially hard hit by the pandemic; the Coalition’s seven recommendations provide a comprehensive approach that stabilizes families and improves the quality of life in marginalized communities.
  
- II. **FORTIFY OHIO’S SMALL BUSINESSES AND MAIN STREETS.** Ohio’s cities and towns are all unique, thanks to their local businesses and merchants, as well as their beautiful downtowns and commercial corridors in. The Coalition’s four recommendations help local leaders retain and support local businesses and the heart of their communities.

**III. STEWARD RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY AND BUILD LOCAL CAPACITY.** With so few resources available and need so great, it is imperative that every dollar is stretched to the maximum. The Coalition offers three commonsense recommendations to ensure communities use state and federal investments strategically and building expertise at the same time.

“For decades, we have helped entrepreneurs realize their dreams of self-sufficiency and independence through business ownership. Many of our clients are people of color and originally from abroad. Their restaurants and other businesses are what give Ohio’s cities and towns their character. We believe this platform provides tools to protect their livelihood, their homes, and their families,” said Inna Kenny, President of ECDI.

“Our Main Street Program has assisted dozens of communities—large and small—bring back their downtowns. We cannot allow COVID-19 to undo the hard, good work that has breathed new life into Ohio’s historic buildings or local businesses,” said Joyce Barrett, Executive Director of Heritage Ohio.

“Affordable housing, vibrant neighborhoods, accessible amenities, and flourishing small businesses are all critical for the success of the residents we serve,” said Peg Moertl, President and CEO of Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing.

“Stable families and stable neighborhoods are the other side of the coin for a resilient community. These policy recommendations comprehensively ensure that we do not leave behind vulnerable Ohioans,” added Nathan Miner, Executive Director of the NeighborWorks Collaborative of Ohio.

“The effects of COVID-19 are having disproportionate impacts across our communities and across the state, but no one is untouched. Providing support to the most vulnerable residents, businesses, and neighborhoods helps all Ohioans,” said Stephanie McHenry, Vice President of Government Relations & Strategy for Cleveland Neighborhood Progress.

“We believe more organizations will add their support to this pragmatic list of state policies and programs. These are all necessary tools for stabilizing Ohio places and helping Ohioans in every corner of the state thrive,” said Alison Goebel, Executive Director of the Greater Ohio Policy Center.

To learn more about the Rebuilding Ohio Coalition and its platform, follow Twitter @OhioRebuild; visit: [rebuildingohio.org](http://rebuildingohio.org), or contact Nate Coffman at (614) 461-6392 (o), (216) 854-6465 (m) or [ncoffman@ohiocdc.org](mailto:ncoffman@ohiocdc.org).

#### **About Ohio CDC Association**

The Ohio CDC Association is a statewide membership organization that fosters vibrant neighborhoods and improves the quality of life in all communities through advocacy and capacity building of our member agencies. OCDCA's vision is the creation of a community development environment that comprehensively improves life opportunities for all Ohioans.

#### **About Cleveland Neighborhood Progress**

Cleveland Neighborhood Progress is leading the revitalization of Cleveland’s neighborhoods. It impacts the community by providing financial support, training and capacity building efforts to community development corporations (CDCs), supporting and performing placemaking activities to improve

residential, commercial and greenspace properties, and delivering economic opportunity programming to ensure city residents can thrive where they live.

**About ECDI**

ECDI, a statewide SBA lender, started in Columbus in 2004 before expanding to Cleveland in July 2012, Akron in November 2014 and Cincinnati in January 2018. ECDI also has Field Offices in Toledo and Canton. ECDI is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest US SBA intermediary microlender, and has a mission to invest in people to create measurable and enduring social and economic change.

**About Finance Fund Capital Corporation**

FCAP is a nonprofit certified community development financial institution. FCAP forms public-private partnerships with financial institutions, investors, charitable foundations, community organizations and federal, state, and local government partners to provide flexible capital and technical assistance in support of job creation, affordable housing development, and economic development in low- to moderate-income communities.

**About Greater Ohio Policy Center**

Greater Ohio Policy Center (GOPC) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization with a mission to improve Ohio's communities through smart growth strategies and research. Our vision is a revitalized Ohio. We undertake original research and analysis, develop pragmatic policy recommendations and advocacy strategies, and deploy our convening power to meet the needs of Ohio's local change-makers. We operate statewide.

**About Heritage Ohio**

As Ohio's official historic preservation and Main Street organization, Heritage Ohio fosters economic development and sustainability through preservation of historic buildings, revitalization of downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts, and promotion of cultural tourism.

**About NeighborWorks Collaborative of Ohio**

The NeighborWorks Collaborative of Ohio is a statewide, non-profit organization focused on creating sustainable and affordable housing opportunities for Ohioans. Through its member organizations, over 150,000 individuals and families have benefitted from programs and services in the last 10 years, resulting in stronger communities, thriving local economies and a substantial positive impact on Ohio's economy.

**About Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing**

OCCH is a nonprofit financial intermediary based in Columbus, Ohio that works with private and public developers to create affordable housing opportunities using the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program. Since 1989, OCCH has invested more than \$4.75 billion in the construction, rehabilitation, and preservation of affordable housing; creating economic opportunities, stable communities, and empowering those most in need.

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