

DATABYTE: CLOSING OHIO'S AFFORDABILITY GAP FOR EXTREMELY LOW-INCOME RENTERS

BY DEVIN KEITHLEY

A new report from the National Low Income Housing Coalition highlights a supply shortage of housing units that are affordable and available to renters at the lowest income levels. Here in Ohio, there were only 189,172 rental units in 2020 that were both affordable and available to the state's 443,717 extremely low-income (ELI) renter households*—or 43 units for every 100 ELI renters—leaving a deficit of 254,545 units.

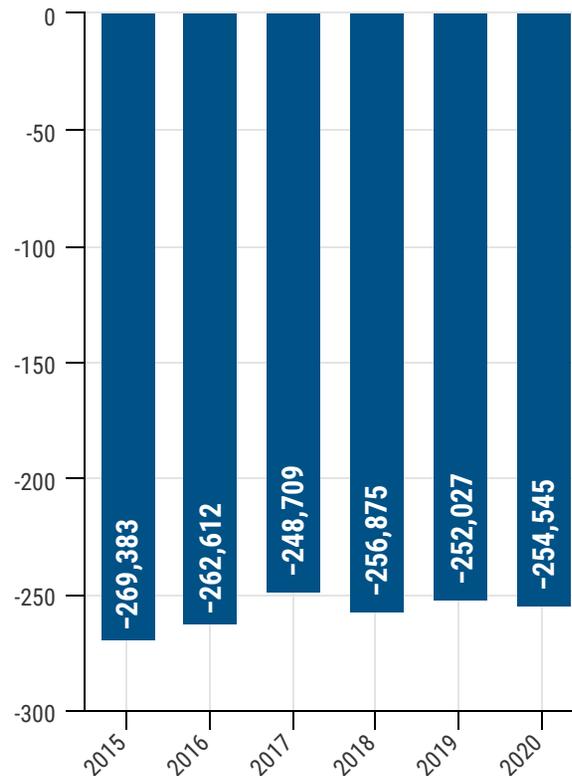
The affordable housing gap for ELI renters in Ohio has been shrinking, but at a very slow pace. Since 2015 there has been a net deficit reduction of 14,838 ELI units. Although new affordable housing can be created or existing affordable units made available to ELI renters, this is typically countered by the loss of affordable housing due to dereliction, rent increases, or occupation by households at higher income levels. At this net rate, it would take Ohio 86 years to close the affordable housing gap for ELI renters.

Ohio's ratio of 43 affordable and available units to every 100 ELI renters is less severe than the national ratio (36/100), with thirty states having a smaller supply than Ohio relative to their number of ELI renter households.

The private market alone cannot meet this demand, especially as the number of ELI renters continues to grow and developers continue to face new challenges, such as the recent rising cost of building materials. Large-scale and sustained public investment—through programs such as the Housing Tax Credit, the Ohio Housing Trust Fund, and the Housing Choice Voucher—is critical. Furthermore, pending legislation at the state and federal levels providing additional resources for affordable multifamily housing would create other important pathways to overcoming these challenges and closing the affordable housing gap.

* ELI is defined as those with incomes at or below the federal poverty level or 30% of area median income, whichever is greater. Affordability is based on the common standard that households should not spend more than 30% of their income on housing. Rental units are both "affordable and available" to renters in a specific income group if the gross rent meets the 30% affordability threshold and they are either available for rent or occupied by households with incomes at or below the defined income level.

Deficit of Rental Units Affordable and Available to ELI Renters (in Thousands)

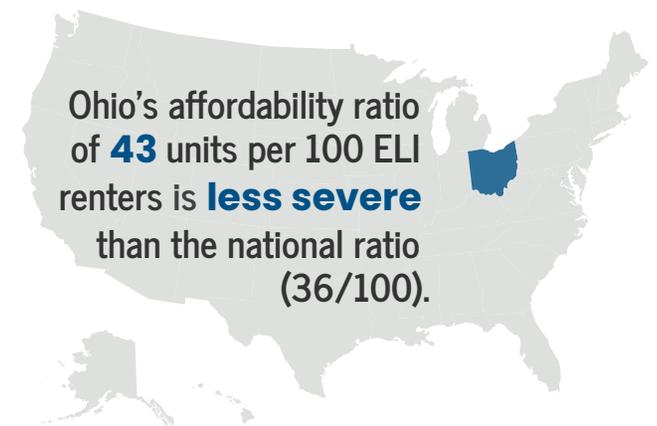


In 2020 there was a deficit in Ohio of **254,545** units **affordable** and **available** to ELI renters, a net deficit reduction of 14,838 units since 2015. At this rate, it would take **86 years** to close the gap.

Questions? Contact the Office of Housing Policy at research@ohiohome.org



For every **100** ELI renters in Ohio, there are only **43** units that are both **affordable** and **available** to them.



Source: *The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes*, April 2022, National Low Income Housing Coalition (based on the 2020 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample File)