



# Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless

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## Press Release

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## Homeless Coalition's Future Uncertain

The Board of Trustees of the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless (NEOCH) is asking for help from our friends and partners in our collective mission to end homelessness. We need the support of community leaders now as never before.

For 18 years, NEOCH has struggled for social justice and worked to ensure the safety of those who experience homelessness. We have taken on the Herculean task of preserving housing, expanding access to health care and social services, creating living wage jobs, and preventing the criminalization of homelessness. NEOCH's programs have provided legal assistance, voicemail, and housing services, and have given the homeless a voice in the media and in the halls of government.

Because of the Coalition's work, only one individual has died on the streets of Cleveland in the past four years, and hundreds of affordable housing units have been preserved. NEOCH is the only organization that keeps the public and media informed about the issues and the problems associated with life without a home. We have witnessed 20 straight years of increases in homelessness. Last night alone, 4,000 people in greater Cleveland grappled with the effects of homelessness. The need for advocates for the homeless is greater than ever.

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Unfortunately, even as the ranks of the homeless have increased, it has become increasingly difficult to attract financial support for NEOCH's mission. Despite efforts by the Board and staff to develop new and diversified funding sources, financial support for NEOCH fell more than 35% between 2004 and 2006. We currently face an additional 23% decline in revenues for 2007.

NEOCH Board members are committed to finding a way to preserve the organization and to continue to provide essential services to homeless people. Without an increase in funding, however, NEOCH cannot continue to serve its vital function in the community. We need a commitment both to resolve this immediate problem and to provide consistent long-term support for our mission. The next few weeks are critical to the future of the Coalition and a time for the community to determine if they value our advocacy and programs. As we meet with elected officials, and corporate and foundation leaders, we ask members, partners, friends, and all who share our concern for those impacted by homelessness for their thoughtful consideration and assistance.