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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“I AM...” Community Summit: Homelessness, Central Ohio’s Growth, and What It Will Take to Respond

- *Results show that median gross rent has increased by 34% in Central Ohio, compared with only 29% nationally. Decreases in rental availability are more than double the national average.*
- *Community leaders are invited to submit ideas to support greater access to affordable, permanent housing solutions to address systemic housing problems.*

COLUMBUS, OH, September 23, 2024—Since November 2022, Central Ohio’s Homeless Response System has been assessed for readiness, responsiveness, and resources. Focus Strategies, a national consulting firm, and RAMA Consulting Group have led the analytical process to assess and drive recommendations for the homelessness system. On October 8, 2024, the Community Shelter Board (CSB) will host a summit titled “I AM...Making Space, Creating Solutions, Disrupting Systems,” during which the findings of the assessment will be released. Designed to highlight the year-and-a-half work of the steering committee, the summit will address the need for sustained engagement from community leaders, business partners, neighborhoods, community members, and nonprofit organizations.

The I AM... Summit aims to drive systemic solutions to the substantial rise in homelessness and housing instability affecting thousands of people across the region.

The assessment uncovered significant findings, revealing that the destabilization of housing in Central Ohio has far outpaced the national average. The region’s median gross rent has increased by 34% from 2017 to the present, compared to only 29% nationally. Similarly, rental availability in Central Ohio has decreased by 40% since 2017, which is more than double the national average. Without intervention, homelessness is predicted to increase by as much as 86% in the next four years.

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Shannon Isom, President & CEO of Community Shelter Board, said, “The Steering Committee has worked diligently to study and deliver the community assessment recommendations from Focus Strategies. CSB is committed to collaborating with all stakeholders to embed these recommendations while striving for the resource sustainability of our housing and homelessness response system. We must anticipate the economic and demographic changes that will shape our strategies while also challenging the systems that perpetuate disparities. Ultimately, we are committed to developing solutions that enhance community well-being and fairness, advance racial equity, and ensure that every resident has access to safe, decent, and affordable housing.”

The summit will be held on October 8, 2024, from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Lincoln Theatre, 769 E Long St, Columbus, OH 43203. Registration is required and can be submitted [\[here\]](#). Community members, leaders, business owners, and state and local elected officials are encouraged to attend.

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About Community Shelter Board

Community Shelter Board leads a coordinated community effort to ensure that everyone has a place to call home in Columbus and Franklin County, Ohio. As the system leader for the prevention and response to homelessness in Central Ohio, CSB collaborates with service provider organizations in Franklin County to create a responsive network that ensures effective and ready use of community resources for people experiencing homelessness. Over the past 10 years, CSB’s system of care has housed more than 35,000 men, women, and children facing homelessness.

Community Shelter Board is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the City of Columbus, Franklin County Board of Commissioners, the State of Ohio, United Way of Central Ohio, Nationwide Foundation, American Electric Power Foundation, The Columbus Foundation, and many other public and private investors. Visit us at www.csb.org.