

Ohio

Single Family Housing Programs | Housing Preservation Grants

Housing Repair Grants Uplifting Ohio Community



L-R, Deanna VanMeter, USDA RD Ohio, Brock Sells, PICCA, Channin Carmean, PICCA, and Jonathan McCracken, USDA RD Ohio State Director outside PICCA in Circleville, Ohio. USDA Photo.

Helping Families, Changing Lives

For nearly 60 years the Pickaway County Community Action Organization (PICCA) has worked to improve the quality of life for families and individuals in Circleville, Ohio, and the surrounding area.

By offering programs and resources that address early childhood development, food insecurity, and veteran housing and employment support, PICCA touches the lives of many.

But programs require funding and Channin Carmean, PICCA's Energy Coordinator, must rely on grants and other outside sources to run her 11 programs.

This includes a program helping rural families address health and safety issues in their homes with funding for weatherization, insulation, and repairs. At a time when many rural families are struggling with access to safe, affordable housing, this program is making a difference. Without it, Channin believes many families would find themselves in dire situations.

"I think the population of homelessness would increase because these homes we go into have many people on fixed incomes who could not afford to make even minor repairs," said Channin. "These repairs help keep their homes safe and livable and ensures we can raise their quality of life."

Funds for this program come, in part, from USDA Rural Development's Housing Preservation Grant (HPG) program, which awards grants to qualified non-profit organizations like PICCA to assist income-eligible families in rural areas to repair or rehabilitate their homes.

In just the first half of 2024, with a boost from HPG funding, PICCA has helped nearly 50 families stay in their homes with projects from minor repairs to major rehabilitations.

"This really lets us go above and beyond, and we really appreciate the program," said Brock Sells, PICCA's Energy Auditor who does many of the home inspections to determine resident eligibility.

Housing Grant Makes a Difference to Ohio Family

Just off a rural road in Pickaway County Janie S. lives in a modest home - the yard filled with fruit trees, pets, and surrounded by open spaces.

Raised in Ironton, Janie bought the home 18 years ago when she moved back to Ohio from Texas. She envisioned it as a safe place for her and her daughter's family to live and be together.

But two years ago, Janie's daughter died unexpectedly, leaving her to care for and raise eight grandchildren, ages six through 18. Poor health, helping her grandchildren grieve their mother, and providing a stable, safe home environment weighed heavily on Janie, and she didn't know where to turn when her home began to show its age.

The home was slowly breaking down - a creaky door, a leaky roof, a drafty attic, and critical systems like heating, air conditioning, and a hot water heater were well beyond their expected lifecycle. It all adds up, and for Janie, it was overwhelming.

"Channin at PICCA has been my guardian angel," said Janie. "God works in mysterious ways and I'm glad I found her. They were the only ones to help, and I'm grateful."

But before PICCA could help, Janie first had to do some work of her own, clearing spaces inside her home and in the yard to ensure workers had safe access to areas where repairs were needed.

"Much credit goes to Janie as she did a tremendous amount of work in and around her home just to qualify for the assistance," said Channin. "She cleaned out areas and removed debris that would aid in the installation of the many systems to upgrade, weatherize, and insulate her home."

Once the house was inspected, ready and safe, local contractor Alek Stonerock, owner of Ark Energy, got to work.

Alek, who grew up nearby, weatherized the house and replaced doors, installed attic insulation, replaced the furnace, hot water heater, and sump pump in the basement, and installed an air conditioning unit and new ductwork.

Being from here, Alek said he felt the need to help and to give back to his community. "Life happens, but when you are able to help, you should," he said.

"I couldn't afford to do this by myself, and I heard about PICCA through a neighbor across the street," said Janie. "Sometimes it's hard reaching out for help, but I'm not giving up. How can I?"



L-R Brock Sells, PICCA, Deanna VanMeter, RD Ohio, Channin Carmean, PICCA, Janie, Jonathan McCracken, RD Ohio State Director, and Alek Stonerock, outside Janie's home in rural Ohio. USDA Photo.

Pickaway County – Housing Preservation Grant

Obligation: \$113,300

Obligation Date: September 28, 2023

Congressional: U.S. Rep. Brad Wenstrup (OH-02); U.S. Senators Sherrod Brown and J.D. Vance

Impact: Helped elderly, single rural homeowner provide a safe, healthy living environment where she could raise her eight grandchildren.