



15th Annual Habitat for Humanity State Conference

Marriott Northwest Columbus

5605 Blazer Parkway

Dublin, Ohio

Plenary Sessions | Thursday November 7

10:00 A.M. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Led by Kenneth Oehlers, Board Chair, Habitat for Humanity of Ohio

10:30 A.M. Unleash the Power of Storytelling: Turning Your Mission into a Movement

Led by Kiersten Hill, Director of Nonprofit Solutions, Firespring

Are you ready to supercharge your affiliate's impact and make your good go further? Join Kiersten Hill for an exhilarating mainstage session where we'll dive into the heart of storytelling for Habitat for Humanity—one of the most powerful tools at your disposal. In this dynamic and engaging presentation, we'll explore various storytelling models that can elevate your organization's narrative and drive deeper connections with your audience.

We'll journey through real-life examples of storytelling in action, demonstrating how compelling stories can inspire, engage, and mobilize support. We'll also tackle the ethical considerations crucial to crafting authentic and respectful stories that honor the experiences of those we serve.

Get ready to leave this session with a toolkit of actionable strategies that you can implement right away to foster a culture of storytelling within your organization. Whether you're new to storytelling or looking to refine your approach, Kiersten will set the stage for an inspiring conference experience. Together, let's turn your mission into a movement and make your good go further!

12:30 P.M. Lunch

Habitat's Brand: Evolving our Most Powerful Asset

Led by Dianne Bernez, VP Strategic Communication and Marketing

Workshop Session One | Thursday November 7 | 1:30 P.M.

Up your Game with Charityproud: A CRM Platform Built for Habitat

Led by Rachel LeFebre, Senior Client Account Manager, Charityproud

Want to exceed your fundraising goals and maximize constituent engagement? Learn how Charityproud, the all-in-one CRM built for Habitat affiliates, can boost productivity at your organization. Charityproud is designed to help affiliates manage donors, volunteers, events, grants, and partner families all in one easy-to-use platform. This session will include a deep dive into the features included in Charityproud and tips on data management best practices.

WHO: Partnering with your Local Land Banks for more Affordable Housing

Led by Sam Filkins, VP, Area Development Foundation of Knox County and Terry Schulz, Executive Director, Habitat for Humanity of Knox County

Welcome Home Ohio (WHO) is a new affordable housing program passed by the Ohio Legislature in 2023, providing \$150 million, mostly to municipalities and Land Banks, to create affordable housing opportunities across Ohio. In this panel presentation, we will explore some of the unique and creative ways Habitat affiliate leaders have already started working with their local land banks, as well as representatives from the Ohio Department of Development and Land Banks to help you learn what questions to ask, ideas to get your land bank on board, and pitfalls to avoid as we anticipate another round of RFPs, and potential future continuation of the program.

Accessing Capital Markets for Affiliates: Fundamentals and Benefits

Led by David Gura, Managing Director, Habitat Capital, Habitat International

Continued increases in the cost of land and building materials have dramatically increased the need for U.S. affiliates to access the capital and secondary markets. This session will provide a general overview of the various capital markets options available...Habitat's Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) and Habitat Capital (HCap). Participants will learn how to appropriately evaluate debt and secondary market opportunities and understand how this financing can increase annual production.

Level up your Advocacy with Creative and Tangible Tactics

Led by Habitat for Humanity International's Government Relations and Advocacy Office

The Cost of Home campaign demonstrated the power of Habitat's unified voice in creating change. Habitat for Humanity is increasing its commitment to policy and systems change through our advocacy initiative, Habitat Voices in Action. Attendees will delve into the tactical elements of integrating advocacy into our work and exploring the wealth of tools, resources, and guidance designed to support these efforts. This session will also showcase innovative and effective advocacy tactics, from community mobilization to policymaker engagement and beyond. Attendees will leave with the knowledge and strategies to build and embed a robust advocacy plan within their affiliate.

The Ask: Creating Opportunities for Investment & Tackling Objections

Led by Kenneth Oehlers, Executive Director, Habitat for Humanity of Southeast Ohio

In this session, attendees will learn from a panel of affiliate leaders how they approach asking donors to invest in their affiliate and how they handle objections. Attendees will have time to practice making an approach for funding and handling an objection as well as hear feedback from other participants in the session. Attendees will leave with new approaches and ideas to ask for support in their local communities.

Construction Roundtable: Sharing Best Practices

Led By Cody Rutter, Habitat for Humanity of SEO and Erik Lambert, Habitat for Humanity-MidOhio

Learn and share best practices in construction program and project management in this facilitated discussion. Operational topics include: budgeting and scheduling practices and tools, staffing structures, contracting practices, construction project management software options and process efficiencies. Come prepared with your questions as well as your own ideas and success stories to share.

Ohio ReStore Council Annual Meeting

Led by Josh Cobbs, VP of Retail-Habitat for Humanity-MidOhio

The Ohio ReStore Council, formed in 2010, provides an effective forum to communicate and network with ReStores in Ohio. Membership on the council is open to any ReStore in Ohio, and the annual meeting is open to the public. This is a great opportunity for ReStore leaders to share best practices and elect their leadership team for the coming year.

Workshop Session Two | Thursday November 7 | 3:30 P.M.

A Decade Later-Lessons Learned about the TED Talk on Overhead

Led by Kiersten Hill, Director of Nonprofit Solutions, Firespring

March of 2013, Dan Pallotta sent a wave throughout the nonprofit world with his TED talk, The Way We Think About Charity is Dead Wrong. But the real question is, what has changed? When it comes to running your organization, most nonprofits feel pressured to do as much as possible with as little as possible. Donors still scrutinize nonprofits, wondering what percentage of their gift actually goes toward the “cause.”

How do we capitalize on the conversations of the past decade and continue to change the narrative.

Join us in this session and discover:

- What is the overhead myth and why does it matter?
- The impact of underinvestment.
- How to flip the script and move conversations beyond admin.
- Marketing efforts provide the best ROI to help you move the needle.
- How to convince donors and funders of the value in capacity building and overhead

Building a Sustainable Future while Preserving the Past

Led by the Ohio Department of Development’s Division Leaders

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) offers tax credits that can help Ohio households transition to cleaner energy consumption and save money on energy expenses. This credit is available for the installation of new doors, windows, insulation, and heat pumps. Attendees will also learn more about the Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP) provides eligible Ohioans with assistance to improve the energy efficiency of their homes and reduce their energy consumption. Leaders from the Ohio Department of Development will provide an overview on the IRA and HWAP with the goal of improving the quality of our planet and the living conditions of Ohioans.

Cultivating Cultures of Inclusion: Strategies for Volunteer Programs

Led by Habitat for Humanity International Staff

This session focuses on creating and maintaining inclusive environments within volunteer programs. Participants will learn the importance of fostering a culture where everyone feels valued, heard, and included, regardless of their background. We will explore best practices for promoting inclusivity through case studies and group activities, such as implementing equitable recruitment processes, providing ongoing DEI training and ensuring diverse representation in decision-making roles. Attendees

will leave with a comprehensive understanding of creating an inclusive volunteer program that reflects and serves the community.

Bringing our New Brand Messaging to Life

Led by Dianne Bernez, VP of Strategic Communications and Marketing-Habitat International

In this workshop, participants will gain insight into the personas (groupings of similar consumer segments) which we identified as part of our brand research. and which have driven the development of new messaging. You'll hear how our new narrative themes provide space for your affiliate to customize and learn how to apply this messaging across various supporter touchpoints in breakout groups".

Repair Roundtable: What's Working and Best Practices

Led by Habitat for Humanity Affiliate Leaders

Join this interactive session to share and learn from 25 other Habitat for Humanity Affiliates that are serving their communities through critical home repairs. This session will provide valuable information on how to effectively manage a successful repair program. Attendees will leave with a roadmap to complete repairs and report outcomes ahead of the ARPA completion deadline of December 21, 2025.

Construction Innovations: Building with Modular

Led by John Litten, Habitat of Greater Cleveland, Steve Peel, Champion Homes, and Gene Mulligan, Community Rebuilders

Gifted with generous ARPA funds through the City of Cleveland, GCHFH & CEO John Litten were presented with the wonderful challenge of building 50 new homes within a three-year span. While much of this is and will be accomplished the "traditional" Habitat way, they also needed to seek swift ways to increase production, maintain quality and do so in a way that wouldn't increase staffing in an unsustainable way. Thus began their experiment to build 19 modular homes, working with national modular builder Champion/Skyline, a local general contractor in Gene Mulligan (Gene do you prefer the company here?) and former GCHFH Construction Director Jerry Smith. The project will single handedly more than triple the number of modular homes in the City of Cleveland. With nine completed and set so far this fall and ten more nearly finished, come hear from John, Jerry, Gene and Steve about how it is going, what worked, what didn't and much more.

Art vs Science-How to Drive your ReStore Business Forward

Led by Josh Cobbs, VP, Retail Management, Habitat for Humanity-MidOhio

Join an engaging conversation on the importance of using data to help drive decisions within the ReStore around store layout, merchandising and signage. This session will discuss local, regional and national business trends within the thrift industry and how to apply these trends to the business to make well-informed decisions. Participants will be engaged and leave with a better understanding of to how to use different datasets to improve their overall store performance, and budgeting process.

Plenary Sessions | Friday November 8 | 9:00 A.M.

9:00 A.M. 10 Qualities of Extraordinary Leaders

With Joel Kessel, Executive Coach, Kessel Strategies

10:00 A.M. Together We Build...A Collaborative Approach for the Future

Led by Ryan Miller and Quinton Babcock, Habitat Ohio

Workshop Session Three | Friday November 8 | 10:30 A.M.

Peer Leadership Group Experience

Led by Joel Kessel, Kessel Strategies

Imagine a year from now, nothing has changed within your organization. How would you feel? What would the board think? How would it affect your staff, volunteers, and fundraising? Ultimately, how would it impact your organization's mission and the people it serves? According to a recent Stanford Survey on Leadership and Management in the Nonprofit Sector, 52% of nonprofit executives struggle to scale effectively due to weaknesses in strategic thinking, encompassing mission, strategy, impact evaluation, insight, and courage. Join fellow Habitat for Humanity affiliate leaders in a 90-minute, in-person peer group discussion aimed at helping you tackle challenges, exchange ideas, and receive valuable feedback to enhance your impact.

Beyond Good Intentions: Dismantling Saviorism in Volunteer Work

Led by Habitat for Humanity International Staff

In this session, attendees will critically examine the concept of saviorism and its detrimental impact on community engagement efforts. Through guided discussions and reflective exercises, we will explore how well-meaning actions can inadvertently perpetuate harmful power dynamics and undermine the very people volunteers aim to help. Attendees will learn to recognize and dismantle these behaviors, fostering more authentic and empowering forms of support that respect and elevate the agency of all community members.

Resources and Strategies for Habitat in Rural Communities

Led by Habitat for Humanity International Staff

Join us for a review of existing resources available to support Habitat work in U.S. rural communities. This session will provide an overview of current resources available to affiliate operating in rural areas, including rural-focused funding opportunities, capacity building, advocacy, and HFHI staff positions dedicated to rural support. Recent successes and innovations will bring these resources and opportunities to life and inspire attendees with tangible results. The session will conclude with an interactive segment...your insights and experiences are invaluable as we work together to build stronger, more resilient rural communities.

FHLB Cincinnati: More than AHP

Led by Connor Creaghead, Housing Financial Analyst, FHLB Cincinnati

The Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB) of Cincinnati plays a vital role in supporting affordable housing and economic development initiatives throughout Ohio, as well as Kentucky and Tennessee. FHLB Cincinnati offers a range of flexible programs to help our member financial institutions and housing partners build strong communities. Many HFH affiliates may be familiar and/or active users of our Affordable Housing Program (AHP), our largest and most impactful program. However, there are a variety of programs that HFH affiliates can be utilizing to help make positive impacts in their respective communities. Please join FHLB Cincinnati in this session to learn more about our programs and how they can best be utilized.

The Nuts and Bolts of the Sing

Led by Carrie Mano, Single Family Tax Credit Section Chief, Ohio Housing Finance Agency

The Single-Family Tax Credit program leverages public-private partnerships to increase the inventory of affordable, single-family housing for Ohio's growing workforce. The program provides \$50 million a year for four years to fill the financing gap to develop or substantially rehabilitate housing in Ohio. The tax credit is calculated as the difference between the total development cost of the project and the aggregate appraised market value of all dwellings in the project. The Ohio Housing Finance Agency is a long-standing partner of Habitat and is excited about opportunities to partner in the future.

Unlocking Public Policy Solutions for Home Affordability

Led by Habitat for Humanity International's Government Relations and Advocacy Office

Gain a deeper understanding of public policy solutions to increase home affordability and acquire resources and tools to identify and advocate for impactful policy solutions that meet the individual needs of your community. This workshop will showcase real-world examples of successful advocacy, highlight innovative policy solutions from the Habitat network, and share valuable resources. With opportunities for peer learning and a dedicated Q&A segment, attendees will learn how to leverage the new Voices in Action platform and share their own experiences.

Koinonia in the 21st Century

Led by Habitat for Humanity International Staff

How do our roots inform how we advance affordable housing in the U.S. today? The idea that became Habitat for Humanity first grew from the fertile soil of Koinonia Farm, a community farm founded by farmer and biblical scholar, Clarence Jordan. The times have changed, the build site locations have grown in number, but the very real change comes about with Habitat's unwavering commitment to partnership housing and racial equity. Join this engaging session offered for the very first time in Ohio!