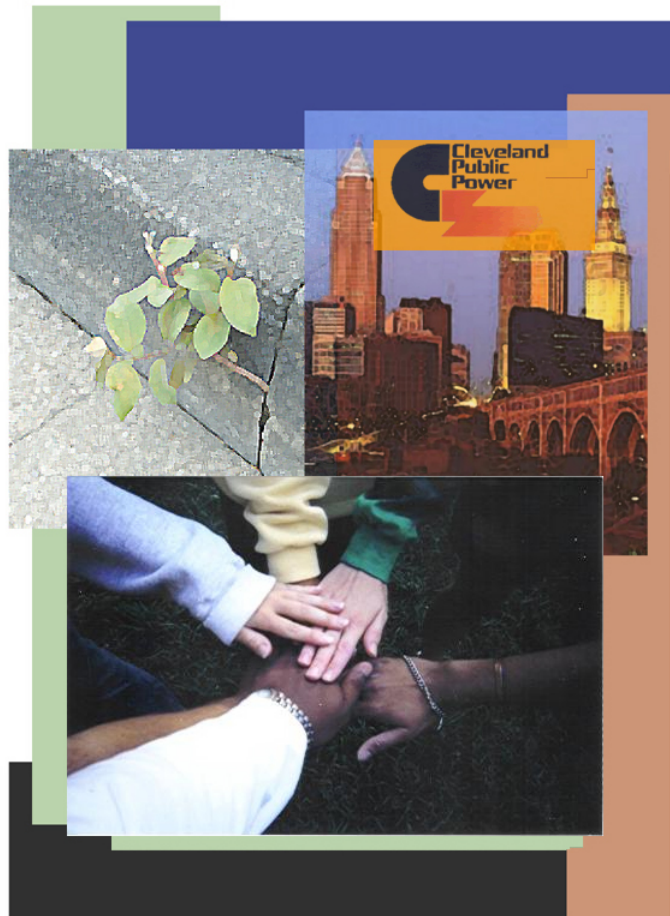


# THIS IS WHAT DEMOCRACY IN OHIO LOOKS LIKE!

OHIO'S DEMOCRATIC/SELF-DETERMINATION "INFRASTRUCTURE"



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## Introduction

From the local to the global, the ability of people to govern themselves is under assault, which will intensify over the next four years. Some of the major sources of this attack are:

- Business corporations looking to make huge profits by converting what once had been “public” to “private” (“privatization,” though a more descriptive term would be “corporatization”), including traditional public assets like water and sewer systems, roads, police and fire protection, airports, hospitals, and schools.
- Individuals looking to increase their power, status, and/or privileges by concentrating decision-making from many hands (*We the People* and government) to few (their own).
- A culture that reinforces notions that public policies are too complicated for ordinary people to understand (thus leaving policy making to experts); that distracts public attention away from self-determination toward the trivial and inane; that worships “the market” as the route to financial and economic salvation which is not to be regulated or controlled; that define certain arenas (economic in particular) as outside the scope of public input; that continues to erase memory of any/all historical examples of citizen control and definition of their lives; that equates anything that is “public” as being inefficient, wasteful, decrepit, and dangerous and anything “private” as efficient, modern and safe; and that keeps people separated to learn from one another and organize to (re)assert meaningful changes.
- Continual legal and constitutional definitions that further “enclose” and redefine “public” arenas as other “p” words: “private,” “property,” “proprietary,” “privileged” — and thus beyond the reach of public planning, public shaping, and public evaluation.
- A national government that under the guise of “terrorism” has given itself permission to stifle dissent, intimidate dissenters, and interrupt efforts of self-determination.

But there is another side to this – a democratic/self-determination culture or “infrastructure.” Alternatives to corporations, corporate governance and elite control exist in our communities and across the state.

Scores of documents, policies, institutions, structures and groups reflecting inclusiveness are in place – examples where those who are affected by decisions and policies have a legitimate role in the shaping and making of those decisions...or could if we made the effort. They are where *We the People* have a voice...or could have a real voice if we merely flexed our self-determination muscles.

Many of these documents, policies, institutions, structures and groups are built on the notion of *the commons*, broadly understood historically as any set of resources (i.e. land, water, air) that a community recognizes as being accessible to any member of that community. Implied is that every member of the community with equal access to *the commons* has a voice in managing or maintaining them.

Not all of these examples are “governmental,” some are grassroots created and maintained alternative initiatives bypassing corporate and/or top down government versions of the same function. In the midst of dysfunctional, nonfunctional, undemocratic and/or corrupt state or corporate structures, these alternative grassroots initiatives represent “parallel” institutions that currently coexist with state or

corporate power but could over time assume greater legitimacy, if not substitution, if they become more effective in fulfilling the needs of people and communities.

All together, this is what democracy in Ohio looks like!

Some of these examples are unique to Ohio, most are not. They are meant to inform and/or remind us what we may too often take for granted – that documents, policies, institutions structures and groups exist that are, once were, or for the very first time can become democratic/self-determining. When we fail to use them or be involved in them, they will wither and die. By not being aware of them, they surely will be manipulated, eliminated or replaced by shells or shams controlled by corporations, top down government and/or the power elite.

The examples listed below are in no way equally “inclusive” or “democratic” – some, in fact, might quite rightly be argued to be at the moment not very inclusive or democratic at all. There are varying degrees of self-determination here, some more so on paper than in practice, some more so depending on the place, condition, and people involved. But all have democratic “openings” or possibilities. Where social change energies should be placed is a separate strategic question. They also reflect a basic human reality – institutions or structures, no matter how democratically constructed or configured, never alone ensure democratic outcomes. The commitment to and will of people in creating and nurturing authentic self-determination may be most important of all – the force needed to drive a wide and deep wedge into even the narrowest organizational democratic crack.

This directory is not meant to be useful primarily from a “consumer” perspective (i.e. in answering the questions, "Where's the nearest food coop?" or "Is there a public radio station in my town?"), but rather from a democracy/self-determination perspective. That is, it seeks to raise public awareness of the value of democratic/ self-determination openings that still exist or could exist with investment of individual and/or collective activist energies. It also strives to emphasize the importance of working for democratic social change through creating or nurturing alternative organizations and policies and also pursuing the democratization of existing laws, constitutions, policies, practices, and organizations. Finally, the goal of this directory is to stimulate awareness of and actions addressing the multiple threats to what are deemed “public” and available for common use by the constant and cancerous corporate and top-down governmental encroachment in the name of “privatization” or “corporatization.”

Democracy/self-determination is not just aims but processes, not just ends but also means. Listed are examples of both – documents, policies, institutions, structures or groups actually reflecting democratic/self-determining values and principles and/or calling for them, even if the callers are not themselves the perfect practitioners.

This directory in many ways reflects and speaks to the need for what is called a “Solidarity Economy” – the growing global movement of people and organizations seeking a new framework for social and economic development based on the principles of social solidarity, cooperation, egalitarianism, sustainability and economic democracy that puts people and the planet before private profits and power. A national organization working in this direction worthy of support is the US Solidarity Economic Network, <http://www.ussen.org>

There is no presumption that this list is exhaustive. Huge gaps exist beyond our limited awareness. It’s an ongoing work in progress, meant and, in fact, expected to be amended by readers. Please send additions, feedback, challenges and critiques to [gcoleridge@afsc.org](mailto:gcoleridge@afsc.org).

This is what democracy in Ohio looks like!

## Community

### **Block Clubs**

Block clubs are neighborhood-based organizations of residents who work jointly for social, economic and political improvements. They often operate in a democratic model with program decisions determined by a majority vote of its residents and leaders determined through elections.

Block clubs exist in numerous communities across Ohio.

Examples:

South Akron neighborhood Council, Akron  
<https://www.facebook.com/South-Akron-Neighborhood-Council-Block-Club-245468822141752/about/>

South of Lorain Block Club, Ohio City  
<https://www.facebook.com/SoLoBlockClub/>

Lakeland Block Club, Lakewood  
<http://lakelandblockclub.wixsite.com/labc>

### **Community Land Trusts**

A community land trust (CLT) is a democratically controlled nonprofit organization that owns real estate in order to provide benefits to its local community - and in particular to make land and housing available to residents who cannot otherwise afford them.

CLTs have been established in different kinds of communities, with different kinds of projects meeting different community needs, but they share some important features, including a distinctive approach to the ownership of real estate and a distinctive approach to community-based governance.

Examples:

Renting Partnerships  
<http://www.rentingpartnerships.org/>  
Homeport, Columbus  
<http://www.homeportohio.org>

614-221-8889

Community Land Cooperative of Cincinnati  
<http://communitylandco-op.org>

513-721-2522

Land Trust Program of the Neighborhood Housing Services of Greater Cleveland  
<http://www.nhscleveland.org/buy-a-home/land-trust-homeownership/>

216-458-4663

Yellow Springs Home, Inc., Yellow Springs  
<http://yshome.weebly.com/>

937-767-2790

Additionally, there are 25 non-profit land trusts across Ohio (covering all 88 counties), which actively work to conserve land through a variety of means.

Coalition of Ohio Land Trusts (COLT)  
<http://www.ohiolandtrusts.org>

419-833-1025

### **Copwatch**

Copwatches are all-volunteer groups focusing on monitoring police actions and non-violently asserting people's rights. They are based on the idea that watching the police is a crucial initial step in the process of organizing. Copwatches don't interfere in police activity or to physically resist police misconduct. The hope of many is that mass awareness of police violence will lead to fundamental change in community policing. Copwatches exist in numerous Ohio communities.

Ohio Cop Watch Facebook page  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1643993799160834/>

Anonymous Akron Ohio Official Copwatch  
<https://www.facebook.com/anonymousakronhiocopwatch/>

Ohio Copblock  
<http://ohiocopblock.org/>

### **Free Clinics**

A free clinic is a medical facility providing a range of free or low-cost health care services to low-income persons with no health insurance.

Services may include primary care, including prevention, chronic care, dental and pharmacies.

Free clinics are non-profit, independent entities with local Board of Directors. Staffing are professionals who volunteer their services.

The Ohio Association of Free Clinics has 55 free clinics serving 31 counties in Ohio. List of members at:

<http://www.ohiofreeclinics.org/>

### Free Spaces

A free space is an arena where people meet for public talk and actively contribute to addressing public problems. Several components define a free space: a comfortable physical, social, and cultural place, a participatory and inclusive environment, a forum where debate and dialogue occurs, a setting possessing a feeling of community and a place possessing the potential for forming larger public networks and vision. In free spaces, citizens can learn group identity, self-respect, public skills, and the value of cooperation.

Example:

Akron Community Foundation Meeting Room  
345 W Cedar St, Akron  
330.376.0202  
<http://www.akroncf.org/Nonprofits/UseOurFacilities.aspx>

Cuyahoga County Public Library Meeting Room  
<http://www.cuyahogalibrary.org/Services/Meeting-Rooms.aspx>

### Public Hospitals

Public hospitals are operated by a government (city, city-county, county, district or state), which receives government funding to provide medical coverage in general and medical care free of charge to the poor and uninsured. Public hospitals are closing due to bankruptcy at a much faster rate than private hospitals, due in part to the increasing number of uninsured

patients. Several former public hospitals in Ohio over the last several years have been sold to investor-owned, for-profit corporations.

There are 18 public hospitals in Ohio.

Adams County Regional Medical Center  
230 Medical Center Dr.  
Seaman, OH 937.386.3400  
<http://www.acrmc.com/>

Berger Hospital  
600 N. Pickaway St  
Circleville, OH 740.474.2126  
<http://www.bergerhealth.com/>

Community Memorial Hospital  
208 Columbus St  
Hicksville, OH 419.542.6692  
<http://www.cmhosp.com/>

Fayette County Memorial Hospital  
1510 Columbus Ave  
Washington C.H, OH 740.335.1210  
<http://www.fcmh.org/>

Highland District Hospital  
1275 N High St  
Hillsboro, OH 937.393.6100  
<http://www.hdh.org/>

Hocking Valley Community Hospital  
601 State Route 644 N  
Logan, OH 740.380.8000  
<http://www.hvch.org/>

Memorial Hospital of Union County  
500 London Ave  
Marysville, OH 937.644.6115  
<http://memorialohio.com/>

Mercer County Joint Township Community Hospital District (Mercer Health)  
800 W Main St  
Coldwater, OH 419.678.2341  
<http://www.mercer-health.com/>

The MetroHealth Medical Center  
2500 Metrohealth Dr.  
Cleveland, OH 216.778.7800

Morrow County Hospital  
651 W Marion St  
Mount Gilead, OH 419.946.5015  
<http://www.morrowcountyhospital.com/>

The Ohio State University Hospital  
East  
181 Taylor Ave  
Columbus, OH 614.257.3000  
<https://wexnermedical.osu.edu/locations-and-parking/university-hospital-east>

The Ohio State University Arthur G. James  
Cancer Hospital  
460 W 10<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Columbus, OH 614.293.5066  
<https://cancer.osu.edu/about/locations/the-james-cancer-hospital-and-solove-research-institute>

Paulding County Hospital  
1035 W Wayne St  
Paulding, OH 419.399.4080  
<http://pauldingcountyhospital.com/>

Pomerene Hospital  
981 Wooster Rd  
Millersburg, OH 330.674.1015  
<http://www.pomerenehospital.org/>

Rehabilitation Hospital at Heather Hill  
12340 Bass Lake Rd  
Chardon, OH 440-285-4040  
<http://www.heatherhillcare.com/>

University of Toledo University Medical Center  
3000 Arlington Ave  
Toledo, OH 419.383.4000  
<http://www.utoledo.edu/>

Wooster Community Hospital  
1761 Beall Ave  
Wooster, OH 330.263.8100  
<https://www.woosterhospital.org/>

Wyandot Memorial Hospital  
885 N Sandusky Ave  
Upper Sandusky, OH 419.294.4991  
<http://www.wyandotmemorial.org/>

## Public Libraries

Public libraries are physical spaces containing collections of books, periodicals, DVDs/videotapes, artwork, audiotapes/CDs, microfilm/microfiche and access to computer databases and the internet.

These collections are often used by people who can't afford or choose not to purchase such materials themselves, ensuring equal access to information regardless of income, race, nationality, religion, or physical ability. Meeting spaces are also available for free or at a nominal charge to the public and to local groups. Public libraries are funded and maintained often by a city, county or other public institution with open meetings. Funding comes through government and public levies in addition to service fees.

List of Ohio Public Libraries

<http://www.publiclibraries.com/ohio.htm>

## Makerspace

Makerspaces are community centers with tools. They combine manufacturing equipment, community, and education for the purposes of enabling community members to design, prototype and create manufactured works that wouldn't be possible to create with the resources available to individuals working alone.

These spaces can take the form of loosely-organized individuals sharing space and tools, for-profit companies, non-profit corporations, organizations affiliated with or hosted within schools, universities or libraries, and more. All are united in the purpose of providing access to equipment, community, and education, and all are unique in exactly how they are arranged to fit the purposes of the community they serve.

Makerspaces represent the democratization of design, engineering, fabrication and education. They are a fairly new phenomenon, but are beginning to produce projects with significant national impacts.

From <http://makerspace.com/>

## Examples

CHAMP, Canton  
1414 Whipple Ave NW  
330.485.3429

<https://wiki.hackerspaces.org/CHAMP>

SynHAK, Akron

48 S Summit St

330.591.3111

<https://wiki.hackerspaces.org/Synhak>

BuildMore Workshop, Dublin

6196 Wilcox Rd

614.467.0035

<http://www.buildmoreworkshop.com>

Columbus IDEA Foundry

The largest Makerspace on the planet

421 W State St

614.653.8060

<http://www.columbusideafoundry.com>

Dayton Diode

<http://www.daytondiode.org>

660 Milburn Ave, Dayton

937.210.9115

Makers' Alliance

Shaker Heights/Cleveland

3558 Lee Rd, Shaker Heights

<http://www.makersalliance.org>

Science Builders Group, Vincent

<http://www.kingscience.info/MakerSpace.htm>

The Manufactory, Cincinnati

12055 Mosteller Rd

513.771.3605

<http://themanufactory.us>

## Repair Cafes

Repair Cafés are free meeting places where you'll find tools and materials to help make any needed repairs on clothes, furniture, electrical appliances, bicycles, crockery, appliances, toys, etc. You will also find repair specialists such as electricians, seamstresses, carpenters and bicycle mechanics to help.

Visitors bring their broken items from home. Together with the specialists they start making their repairs in the Repair Café. It's an ongoing learning process. If you have nothing to repair, you can enjoy a cup of tea or coffee. Or you can lend a hand with someone else's repair job. You can also get inspired at the reading table – by leafing through books on repairs and DIY.

From <http://repaircafe.org/about-repair-cafe/>

There doesn't seem to be a Café anywhere in Ohio (yet) – although there are online references to a possible one in Newark, Ohio.

## Cooperatives

A cooperative is a unique form of business known as user-owned, user benefiting and user-controlled. Benefits from the cooperative are returned to the members/patrons based on their use of the cooperative during the year. A cooperative is democratically controlled by their members/patrons through a one-member/one-vote policy. Members/patrons own the cooperative through their financial investment in the business.

Examples:

Heritage Cooperative

11177 Twp. Rd, Mansfield

877.240.4393

<http://www.heritagecooperativegrain.com/>

Sunrise Cooperative

703 OH-53, Freemont

419.334.8931

<https://www.sunriseco-op.com/>

Green City Growers,

5800 Diamond Ave, Cleveland

216.268.0200

<http://www.evgo.com/gcg/>

## Bicycle

There are at least 8 bicycle coops in Ohio. Members of each coop to differing degrees decide policies and programs as well as benefit from them. Programs include bike repair and maintenance classes and cycling safety information,

Examples:

Toledo Bikes

1114 Washington St

419.386.6090

<http://www.toledobikes.org/>

Ohio City Bike Co-op (Cleveland)

1840 Columbus Rd

216.830.2667



<http://www.ohiocitycycles.org>  
 Third Hand Bike Co-op (Columbus)  
 979 E 5<sup>th</sup> Ave  
 614-299-2984  
<http://thirdhand.org/joom/>  
 Athens Bike Coop  
 30 First St  
 513.226.1379  
<http://athensbikeco-op.blogspot.com>  
 Village Bicycle (Bay Village)  
 303 Cahoon Rd  
<http://www.villagebicycle.org>  
 MoBo Bicycle Coop (Cincinnati)  
 1415 Knowlton St  
<http://mobobicyclecoop.org>  
 Bicycles for All (Dayton)  
 201 E 6<sup>th</sup> St  
 937.985.2004  
<https://www.facebook.com/BicyclesForAll>  
 Summit Cycling Center (Akron)  
<http://summitcycling.org>  
 200 S Main St (Lock 3)  
 330.431.6698  
 Oberlin Bike Coop  
 154 Main St  
 44.775.5351  
<http://oberlinbicyclecoop.tumblr.com>

## Electric

There are 24 electric distribution cooperatives based in Ohio and another, Midwest Energy Cooperative, based in Cassopolis, MI, serves a small group of consumers in the Fulton County area. The 25 co-ops combined serve more than 380,000 homes and businesses in 77 of Ohio's 88 counties. This combined service territory covers about 40% of Ohio's land area, including a majority of the state's rural sections. Unlike investor-owned utilities that must balance the interest of the consumer with that of Wall Street, electric cooperatives provide services solely in the interest of the member.

Examples:

Adams Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
 SR 125, PO Box 247, West Union  
 937-544-2305 <http://www.adamsrec.com>  
 Buckeye Rural Electric Cooperative Inc.

4848 State Route 325, Rio Grande  
 800.231.BREC (2732)  
<http://www.buckeyerec.com>  
 Butler Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
 3888 Stillwell Beckett Rd, Oxford  
 513-867-4400 <http://www.brecnet.com>  
 Carroll Electric Cooperative Inc.  
 350 Canton Rd NW Carrollton 800.232.7697  
<http://www.cecpower.coop/>  
 Consolidated Electric Cooperative. Inc.  
 5255 SR 95P.O. Box 111 Mt Gilead  
 419-947-3055 <http://www.consolidated.coop/>  
 Darke Rural Electric Cooperative Inc.  
 1120 Fort Jefferson Ave Greenville  
 937-548-4114 <http://www.darkerec.com>  
 Firelands Electric Cooperative Inc.  
 One Energy Pl, New London  
 419-929-1571 <http://www.firelandsec.com>  
 The Frontier Power Company  
 770 South 2nd St, Coshocton, OH  
 740-622-6755 <http://www.frontier-power.com/>  
 Guernsey-Muskingum Electric Cooperative Inc.  
 17 S Liberty St New Concord  
 740-826-7661 <http://www.gmenergy.com>  
 Hancock-Wood Electric Cooperative Inc.  
 2451 Grant Rd, North Baltimore,  
<https://www.hwe.coop/> 800-445-4840  
 Harrison Rural Electrification Association Inc.  
 RR6, PO Box 502 Clarksburg, WV 26301  
 304-624-6365 <http://www.harrisonrea.com>  
 Holmes-Wayne Electric Cooperative Inc.  
 6060 SR 83, Millersburg  
 330-674-1055 <http://www.hwecoop.com>  
 Paulding-Putnam Electric Cooperative Inc.  
 401 McDonald Pike, Paulding  
 800-686-2357 <http://www.ppec.coop>  
 Pioneer Rural Electric Cooperative Inc.  
 344 W US 36, Piqua  
 937-773-2523 <http://www.pioneerec.com>  
 South Central Power Company  
 2780 Coonpath Rd, Lancaster  
 740-653-4422  
<https://www.southcentralpower.com/>  
 Country Rural Electric Cooperative Inc.  
 200 County Rd K-2., Malinta 419-256-7900  
<http://www.tricountyelectriccoop.coop>  
 Union Rural Electric Cooperative Inc.  
 15461 State Route 36, Marysville  
 937-642-1826 <http://www.ure.com>  
 Washington Electric Cooperative Inc.

440 Highland Ridge Rd, Marietta  
740-373-2141 <http://www.weci.org>

The 25 electric distribution cooperatives serving members in Ohio get their electricity from Buckeye Power, Inc. (BPI, <http://www.buckeyepower.com>). It is a generation and transmission cooperative established by Ohio's rural electric co-ops to produce and transmit electric power for the member systems throughout the state. BPI owns two of the three coal-fired generating units in the Cardinal Station, located about seven miles south of Steubenville at Brilliant, Ohio.

## Employment

Employee cooperatives are business organizations owned and operated by employees. Since decisions are made democratically, compensation and working conditions are more just than those made within business corporations.

Example:

The Evergreen Cooperatives in Cleveland (Evergreen Laundry, Green City Growers and Evergreen Energy Solutions).  
540 E 105<sup>th</sup> St  
216.268.5399  
<http://www.evgo.com/>

## Food

There are more than a dozen food coops in Ohio. They are owned and controlled by members, who also benefit financially, often based on the level of their involvement.

Examples:

Bexley Natural Food Co-op  
508 North Cassady Ave., Columbus  
614-252-3951  
<http://bexleynaturalmarket.org>  
Clintonville Community Market  
200 Crestview Road, Columbus  
614-261-3663

<https://www.facebook.com/ccmcoop/>  
The Delaware County Community Market  
222 E William St, Delaware  
740.610.0091

<http://www.dccmc.com/>  
Good Food Co-op  
62 Pyatt Street, Youngstown  
330-747-9368

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Good-Food-Co-Op/>

Kent Natural Foods Co-op  
151 E Main Street, Kent  
330-673-2878  
<http://kentnaturalfoods.org>

New Life Food Club  
155 E. Thruston Blvd., Oakwood  
937-275-6031

<http://newlifefoodclub.tripod.com>  
Phoenix Earth Food Co-op  
1447 W Sylvania Avenue, Toledo  
419-476-3211

<http://www.phoenixearthfoodcoop.com/index.php>

Wooster Natural Foods  
138 E. Liberty St., Wooster  
330-264-9797

[http://woosternaturalfoods.blogspot.com/p/home\\_26.html](http://woosternaturalfoods.blogspot.com/p/home_26.html)

## Health Care

### *Health Insurance Purchasing Cooperatives (HIPCs)*

Health insurance purchasing cooperatives allow small businesses, typically operating within the boundaries of a particular state, and small municipalities to band together to negotiate for improved health insurance coverage for employees.

While some HIPCs have been successful, some studies indicate that they face substantial barriers to offering their members better prices on health insurance. This is attributed to a variety of factors: state regulation that sets standards for premiums limiting the cost savings that can be negotiated; disinterest in, or, in some cases hostility among health plan providers toward the cooperatives; ability to attract only

the smallest employers; and inadequate economies of scale—the co-ops are too small to leverage sufficient negotiating power.

Example:

The Council on Smaller Enterprises (COSE, <http://www.cose.org>), Cleveland, is a purchasing co-op for area businesses, provides its small business members with access to 25 different health plans and allows employers to offer five (5) to its employees. The co-op estimates it saves small businesses some \$45 million annually in premium costs.

There is also health “sharing” programs where a monthly “premium” goes directly toward the expenses of another member.

Example:

Liberty Health Share, Canton  
4845 Fulton Dr. NW  
855.585.4237

## Housing

There are numerous forms of intentional community residential living characterized by a high level of social cohesion and cooperation, often with a strong egalitarian focus. There are at least 32 such varied communities in Ohio. <http://www.ic.org/directory/listings/?cmt-country=United%20States&cmt-state=Ohio>

### Cohousing

Cohousing is a type of collaborative intentional community housing where residents actively participate in the design and operation of their own neighborhoods.

Cohousing residents are consciously committed to living as a community. The physical design encourages both social contact and individual space. Private homes contain all the features of conventional homes, but residents also have access to common facilities such as open space, courtyards, a playground and a common house.

Example:

Akron Cohousing Community

<http://www.cohousing.org/Akron%20Cohousing%20Community%3B%20formerly%20Benediction%20S>

### Communes

Another form of intentional community living, communes are collective living arrangements where most resources are shared, there is little or no personal property (as opposed to communities that only share housing) and decisions are made either democratically or through consensus.

Ohio has a rich history where such “utopian” communities once existed. One good resource describing communes in Ohio is *Creating A Perfect World: Religious and Secular Utopias in Nineteenth-Century Ohio* by Catherine M. Rokicky (review at <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=7058>)

Current examples:

Nature’s Path Eco-community, Columbus  
4857 Kingshill Dr. Apt 118  
614.388.9083  
<http://evolving-into-ecocentrism.blogspot.com/>  
Wicoti Mitawa, Conneaut  
<https://www.facebook.com/wicotimitawa>  
The Midden, Columbus  
<http://themidden.wordpress.com>

Additionally, there are numerous monasteries across the state where members of various religious orders live together.

### Student Housing Cooperatives

Rental housing where resident students collectively decide their living arrangement.

Examples:

The Homestead at Denison University  
1385 North St., Granville  
<http://homestead.denison.edu>  
Kent Cooperative Housing, Inc.  
330-547-8547

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Kent-Cooperative-Housing/121396431283347>  
Oberlin Student Cooperative Association (OSCA)  
Wilder Hall rm. 402  
135 W. Lorain St., Oberlin  
440-775-8108  
<http://oberlin.edu/osca>  
The Vine Co-op, Athens  
21 Elliot St., Athens  
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Vine-Co-op/212463622177393?sk=info>

### **Tenant Unions**

Organizations centered on places where people pay rent to live. If enough people belong to a union they can lobby landlords and apartment owners for improved housing conditions, maintenance and repair work, and possibly lower rents. They rely on the threat of "rent payment removal" in a way similar to how labor unions rely upon the threat of "labor removal."

Examples:

Cleveland Tenants Organization  
5700 Broadway, Cleveland  
(216) 432-0617  
<http://www.clevelandtenants.org/>  
Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio  
175 S. Third St. Ste. 580, Columbus  
(614) 280-1984  
<http://www.cohhio.org>

### **Democratic Legacy**

Ohio's democratic and self-determination history is part of its infrastructure. During Ohio's 200-plus years, people, organizations and movements have contributed a rich democratic tradition. Talks, written texts, organizations, campaigns and social movements are part of Ohio's democratic legacy. The Abolitionists, Suffragettes, Locofocos, Populists, Knights of Labor, farmers, workers, immigrants, former slaves, indigenous peoples, organizers of Utopian communities, urban dwellers and many others struggled for an authentic voice in the

shaping of public policies and/or created their own structures and institutions to address their own needs. They all serve today as inspirations and learning tools for crafting our own inclusive institutions, structures, documents and policies.

There are a great number of resources describing this vast yet often ignored democratic/self-determination history of Ohio One is *Citizens over Corporations, A Brief History of Democracy in Ohio and Challenges to Freedom in the Future* by the Northeast Ohio American Friends Service Committee, <http://afsc.org/akron>

### **Economics / Money**

#### **Bartering**

Bartering is a form of trade where goods or services are exchanged for a certain amount of other goods or services, i.e. there is no money involved in the transaction. It can be bilateral or multilateral as trade.

Informal bartering exists everywhere across Ohio.

A more formal current barter system exists at <http://craigslist.org>, a website listing many products, housing, etc. both for sale and for barter. The national site is organized by state. There is even a section for cities. Among the Ohio cities listed are Athens, Akron/Canton, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Columbus, Mansfield, Toledo, and Youngstown.

#### **Credit Unions**

A credit union is a co-operative financial institution that is owned and controlled by its members, generally through the election of a Board of Directors. Only a member of a credit union may deposit money with the credit union or borrow money from it. The character of a borrower is often deemed to be the most important factor in deciding whether or not to make a loan. Credit unions can be connected to a workplace, place of worship, occupation, or to a specific geographic community.

There are 334 credit unions in Ohio with more than 750 office locations.

<http://www.creditunionsonline.com/ohio-credit-unions.html>

## Freecycle

The Freecycle Network is made up of many individual groups across the globe. It's a grassroots and entirely nonprofit movement of people who are giving (& getting) stuff for free in their own towns.

The Network provides individuals and non-profits an electronic forum to "recycle" unwanted items. One person's trash can truly be another's treasure!

The Freecycle Network is open to all communities and to all individuals who want to participate. Freecycle groups are moderated by local volunteers from across the globe that facilitates each local group - grassroots at its best!

There are 127 Freecycle groups across Ohio. For a list, go to

<https://www.freecycle.org/browse/US/Ohio>

## Local Currencies

A local currency is a currency not backed by a national government, and is intended to trade only in a small area. These currencies are also referred to as "community currency" or "complementary currencies".

During the 1930's, twenty-nine Ohio cities and counties, issued their own "depression scrip," locally printed money used for payment by government to individuals and businesses and honored by government. These communities included Ada, Akron, Berea, Bryan, Cincinnati, E. Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, Dayton, E. Liverpool, Fostoria, Geneva, Lakewood, Lewisburg, Lorain, Lucas County, Maple Heights, Martins Ferry, Newark, Portsmouth, Shaker Heights, Springfield, Steubenville, Summit County, Toledo, Van Wert and others. In some

cities and counties, businesses also issued their own currencies.

More recently, community groups issued their own local currencies: in Akron (sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee, AFSC), Cleveland, Columbus, and Kent. These systems were very participatory with members involved in the monitoring of the issuance and circulation of currency and the types of services and products offered.

## Time Dollars / Time Banks

Time Dollars/Banks are a time-based currency where one hour helping another earns one Time Dollar.

With Time Dollars/Banks, everyone who gives can earn, and everyone has something to give. I help you, you help another, and that person helps another. Soon there is a web of caring, a new network of support. For those who are well off as much as those who are poor, Time Dollars/Banks bring a new quality of community to daily living.

Examples:

Athens Time Exchange

<http://athenstimeexchange.blogspot.com>

Care and Share Time Bank (Columbus)

93 W. Weisheimer Rd., Columbus

614-439-4768

<http://www.hourworld.org/bank/?hw=1057>

Cleveland Time Bank

3167 Fulton Rd., Ste. 303 Cleveland

216-961-9073

<https://hourworld.org/bank/index.htm?hw=1078>

Cleveland Area Resource Exchange (CARE)

2342 Chandlers Ln., Olmstead Falls

440-391-9942

<https://hourworld.org/bank/index.htm?hw=1058>

Cleveland Heights Time Bank

3218 Hyde Pk. Ave., Cleveland Heights

831-402-7227

<https://hourworld.org/bank/index.htm?hw=1208>

Crooked River Alliance of Time Banks (NE Ohio)  
<http://crookedriver.timebanks.org>  
Service Hours and Resource Exchange (SHARE)  
Butler County  
<https://hourworld.org/bank/index.htm?hw=1007>  
Time Bank Mahoning Watershed  
1559 Warner Rd., Hubbard  
330-716-2722  
<https://hourworld.org/bank/index.htm?hw=1042>

## **Education**

### **Homeschools**

An educational alternative where children are educated at home and in the community, as contrasted to compulsory education where students receive education in institutions, whether a public or privately run school.

Parents home school children across Ohio

Homeschool world, <https://www.homeschool.com/groups/OH.html>

### **Parent-Teacher Associations**

Voluntary organizations of parents and teachers of students within a particular school who seek to improve the overall welfare of the school and students. Historically, advocacy and organizing by PTAs across the country led to creation or enforcement of kindergarten, child labor laws, immunization, the school lunch program and after school programs.

PTAs exist across Ohio.

Ohio PTA: <http://www.ohiopta.org>

### **Public Schools**

A public school is a school that is financed and run by government and does not charge tuition fees in which children attend.

Most public schools are overseen in Ohio by publicly elected school boards, which initiate, oversee and evaluate policies (i.e. curricula, funding, teaching) governing public schools within each local school district. Due to serious funding crises in some communities over the years (exacerbated by loss of funding from corporate tax breaks), the power and authority of school boards have been taken over either by Mayors or the State of Ohio. The Ohio Board of Education is composed of members both elected and appointed (by the Governor).

There are 611 public school districts in Ohio.

### **Private Schools**

Private schools, also known as independent schools or non state schools, are not administered by local, state or national governments; thus, they retain the right to select their students and are funded in whole or in part by charging their students tuition, rather than relying on mandatory taxation through public (government) funding; at some private schools students may be able to get a scholarship, which makes the cost cheaper, depending on a talent the student may have e.g. sport scholarship, art scholarship, academic scholarship etc.

### **Charter Schools**

A charter school is a school, which receives public funding but operates independently. Some charters (non for-profit corporate) are run by one or more individuals with a particular academic focus.

### **Student Organizations**

Many student organizations at the high school and especially college/university level function democratically and have worked or are working for a greater voice of students in their academic settings and the world around them. Student organizations have been at the center of many recent national and international efforts to improve social, economic and political conditions – from ending wars, Apartheid in South Africa,

corporate and sweatshops in the underdeveloped world, to expanding global justice, human rights, and environmental sustainability.

Student organizations of this kind are on many college and university campuses and in some high schools across Ohio.

## **Employment**

### **Employee Ownership**

Employee-owned firms are generally a model of ownership where the corporation is owned in part or whole by the employees who work for it. Employees are usually given a share of the corporation after a certain length of employment or they can buy shares at any time. A 100% employee-owned corporation is entirely owned by its employees and thus shares are not sold on public stock markets. Employee owned corporations often adopt profit sharing where the profits of the corporation are shared with the employees. These types of corporations also often have boards of directors elected directly by the employees.

In the USA, employee-owned corporations are often created through Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs).

The Ohio Employee Owned Network is composed of 81 employee owned companies across the state. <http://www.oeockent.org/>

Examples:

ACRT, Inc., American Roll Formed Products, Appleton, Bardons and Oliver, Bollin Label Systems, Brainard Rivet Company, Buckeye Corrugated, Burt Manufacturing, a Division of Thybar Corporation, Carbo Forge, CareStar Inc., Cedar Bay Construction, The Chilcote Company, Cole + Russell Architects, Columbia Chemical Company, ComDoc, Inc., Contract Sweepers and Equipment, Cornwell Quality Tools Company Dave Fox Remodeling, Delta System, Inc., Die-Matic Corporation, Dimco-Gray Company, DLZ

Corporation, EBO Group, EMI - Equipment Merchants International, Ever-Roll Specialties, Falcon Foundry, Falcon Industries, Fastener Industries, Inc., Fireline, First Merit Bank NA, GBS Corporation, Gledhill Road Machinery Company, Goldsmith & Eggleton, Gutknecht Construction Co., Inc., The Great Lakes Construction Co., The HDH Group, Janotta & Herner, Jet Rubber Co., J.B. & Company, Joseph Industries, Inc., J.R. Holcomb & Co., Kemner-Iott Agency, Kraft Fluid Systems, Inc., Libby, Perszyk, Kathman, Inc., Lockery Manufacturing, Mantaline, Maryland Brush Company, McDonald Steel, McIlvaine Trucking, The Mosser Group, New Product Innovations, Ohio Valley Supply Company, The Oswald Companies, Palmer-Donavin, The Paquin Company, Paul J. Ford and Company, Perry Corporation, Prentke Romich Company, Producers Service Corporation, Project & Construction Services, Quincy Castings, Inc., Rable Machine, Inc., Reliable Castings, Reuther Mold & Manufacturing Company, Riesbeck Food Markets, Inc., R.J. Martin Electrical Contracting, The Ruhlin Company, Select Machine, S.G. Morris, Smith & Schaefer, Software Solutions, South Texas and Lone Star Drywall, Specialty Equipment Sales, Star Leasing, Stow Glen Retirement Village, Technology Imaging Services, THT Presses, Voto Manufacturer's Sales, The Will-Burt Company, Xtek, YSI, Inc.

The Ohio Employee Ownership Center (OEOC) is a non-profit, university-based program established in 1987 to provide outreach, information, and preliminary technical assistance to Ohio employees and business owners interested in exploring employee ownership. The OEOC provides ownership training on a single and multi-company basis to existing employee-owned firms and is funded by grants from the Ohio Department of Development, private foundations, dues from firms belonging to Ohio's Employee-Owned Network, income from training contracts and donations. For more information, visit <http://www.oeockent.org/>.

### **Unions**

Trade unions are associations of wage-earners who choose to come together for the purposes

of negotiating with employers for better working conditions, wages and benefits; to strike and resist lockouts, and to engage in political activities. Trade unions in Ohio date back to as early as 1802. Working Ohioans have come together in unions to educate, advocate, organize, strike, and form political parties for better pay, benefits and working conditions, improve social conditions, reduce corporate power and rights, and increase the political influence of working people.

The major statewide labor groups are:

Ohio AFL-CIO  
500 Front St. #700, Columbus  
614-224-5245  
<http://ohafclcio.org>

United Autoworkers Region 2B  
161 Woodlands Dr., Maumee  
419-893-4677  
<http://www.uaw.org>

Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
District 1199  
1395 Dublin Rd., Columbus  
216-566-0117  
<http://www.seiu1199.org>

A comprehensive list can be found at:  
<http://www.unions.org/unions/ohio/35>

## **Food / Agriculture**

### **Buying Clubs**

A buying club is most often made up of a small group of families or households in search of a better or more economical way of purchasing food or merchandise. Decision-making is often collective.

Buying clubs exist all over the state in both urban and rural areas.

### **Community Gardens**

Collective use, often in urban areas, of either

public or privately owned lots for gardening. Community gardens exist all over the state.

### **Community Supported Agriculture**

Community supported agriculture (CSA) is where a group of individuals buy seasonal shares of a farmer's produce. In essence, they have a stake in the farm. The farmer's fresh fruits and vegetables are normally delivered each week to a location where each "buying group" then further divides the food into individual shares. CSA's support organic farming, permaculture and biodynamic farming methods for sustainable agriculture. Decision-making is often democratic by the CSA stakeholders or "share" owners. Go to <http://www.localharvest.org/csa/> or <http://www.ec-ohio.com/csa/> for more information.

Examples:

Ashbrook Farm  
10089 Bartholomew Rd., Chagrin Falls  
440-337-9557  
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Ashbrook-Farm/163771897315267>

Basket of Life Farm  
14309 S. Boone Rd., Columbia Station  
440-476-2722  
<http://www.basketoflifefarm.com>

Boulder Belt CSA  
3257 U.S. 127 N., Eaton  
937-456-9724  
<http://www.angelfire.com/oh2/boulderbeltcsa/>  
CSA at Crown Point  
3220 Ira Rd., Bath  
330-668-8992,  
<http://crownpt.org>

### **Farmer's Markets and Farm-to-Consumer**

There are many farmer's markets and farm-to-consumer options throughout Ohio, in both rural and increasingly urban communities. The following sites include some examples as well as searchable listings of markets and farms by county.

City Fresh



<http://www.cityfresh.org>

Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association

<http://www.oeffa.org>

Ohio Farm Bureau

<http://ourohio.org>

## Free Food

Sharing of free food, most of which is donated.  
Decisions are made collectively.

Examples:

Food Not Bombs is a movement of autonomous collectives that make decisions based upon consensus. They collect and cook soon-to-be-discarded food and share it for free with whoever is hungry, as a statement against over-consumption and violence.

A list of Food Not Bombs groups in Ohio is at  
<http://www.foodnotbombs.net/ohio.html>

## Municipal Ownership

Many communities across Ohio directly control the operation of basic services used by citizens. Decisions regarding service features, costs, service area, equipment, improvements, response to complaints, etc. are decided by the public via municipal public hearings and/or decisions made by publicly elected officials (often councilpersons and mayors). Such services are increasingly in Ohio and across the country (which has been the case around the world under the guise of “Structural Adjustment Programs” or “SAPs”) being “privatized”/“corporatized” (meaning being sold off or contracted to for-profit business corporations) to supposedly increase efficiency, raise municipal revenues, increase services, reduce waste, diminish the size of government, among other reasons. The truth is that many corporate-contracted services have resulted in less service, greater cost, and more citizen complaints. Municipal services controlled publicly by municipalities are ultimately accountable and responsible to the public and elected officials. Corporations providing these same services are ultimately accountable to

their stockholders/shareholders.

Examples of basic services provided/owned by municipalities in Ohio:

**Transportation** – Buses, rapid transit trains, roads, bike paths

**Police** -- (although some neighborhoods, business districts, and newer housing developments augment public security with private security services).

**Fire** – At one time, fire departments were private and only responded to calls from “paid members.”

**Water** – including sewer systems ... and often trash / recycling pickup

**Energy** – There are 86 public power communities in Ohio. American Municipal Power-Ohio, <http://amppartners.org>, is a nonprofit providing generation, transmission and distribution of electric power and energy to 81 of these member communities. The AMP-Ohio Board of Trustees consists of 16 communities; each designates its own representative to the board. Eight of these trustee communities are selected by their fellow public power communities in each of eight service areas of the organization. The other eight are elected at large.

AMP-Ohio has 86 member communities:  
<http://www.amppartners.org/about/member-list>

Amherst, Arcadia, Arcanum, Beach City, Blanchester, Bloomdale, Bowling Green, Bradner, Brewster, Bryan, Carey, Celina, Cleveland, Clyde, Columbiana, Columbus, Custar, Cuyahoga Falls, Cygnet, Deshler, Dover, Edgerton, Eldorado, Elmore, Galion, Genoa, Georgetown, Glouster, Grafton, Greenwich, Hamilton, Haskins, Holiday City, Hubbard, Hudson, Huron, Jackson, Jackson Center, Lakeview, Lebanon, Lodi, Lucas, Marshallville, Mendon, Milan, Minster, Monroeville, Montpelier, Napoleon, New Bremen, New Knoxville, Newton Falls, Niles, Oak Harbor, Oberlin, Ohio City, Orrville, Painesville,

Pemberville, Pioneer, Piqua, Plymouth, Prospect, Republic, Seville, Shelby, Shiloh, South Vienna, St. Clairsville, St. Marys, Sycamore, Tipp City, Toledo, Versailles, Wadsworth, Wapakoneta, Waynesfield, Wellington, Westerville, Wharton, Woodsfield, Woodville and Yellow Springs.

**Hospitals** – also ambulance services

### **Parks**

**Cable Services** – Wadsworth and Lebanon are the only 2 municipally owned systems in Ohio. After Wadsworth won its system, the corporate cable providers pressured the state legislature in 1999(?) to prohibit any further community-owned systems.

**Fiber optic networks** – Cleveland owns maybe the most extensive fiber optic network of any urban area in the nation.

## **News / Information**

### **Alternative and Low Power FM Radio**

There are many programs on commercial or public radio stations that are outside the “mainstream” of the corporate media and its biases, censorship and profit motives.

Examples:

Radio Free Akron, WMVU 96.9FM, Akron

<http://www.radiofreeakron.org/>

America’s Work Force, WERE-AM, Cleveland

<http://awfradio.com>

Voices and Choices, WRUW, Cleveland

[http://www.wruw.org/guide/show.php?show\\_id=109](http://www.wruw.org/guide/show.php?show_id=109)

Low power FM stations (LPFMs) are a forum for nonprofits, schools, churches, community centers, farmworker organizations, unions, environmentalists, and just about anyone else who wants to amplify their message.

There are currently 56 licensed LPFM stations in Ohio

<https://transition.fcc.gov/fcc-bin/fmq?state=OH&serv=FL&vac=3&list=2>

Additionally, there have been 16 construction permits granted for new stations.

<https://transition.fcc.gov/fcc-bin/fmq?state=OH&serv=FL&vac=4&list=2>

### **Alternative TV**

Programs on either commercial, public television, or cable public access television stations which is outside the “mainstream” of the corporate media and its biases, censorship and profit motives.

Examples:

UnCommonSense TV, Dayton

<http://www.ustvmedia.org>

### **Newsletters / Magazines**

Regularly printed publications produced by an organization or individual distributed to subscribers and/or to the general public.

There are hundreds of newsletters and magazines printed and distributed by groups and individuals across Ohio.

### **Public TV / Radio**

Television and radio stations receive funding from the public – both from individuals through donations and fees and from government (state and federal) funding. Licenses are issued to non-profit organizations, universities, or municipal or state governments. Public TV and radio produce some of their own programming; however, a major portion of programming derives from national sources. Citizens have direct input via communication connected to their memberships and indirectly via pressure on local public TV/radio boards or public officials approving funding and terms for programming and operations.

Examples of Public TV:

WVIZ/PBS Channel 25 Cleveland, OH  
WOSU-TV 34 Channel 34 Columbus, OH  
ThinkTV16 / WPTD Channel 16 Dayton, OH  
PBS 45 & 49 Channel 45 Kent, OH  
CET Channel 48 Cincinnati, OH  
WGTE/Channel 30 Channel 30 Toledo, OH  
WBGU/ Channel 27 Bowling Green, OH  
WOUB/ Channel 20 & WOUC/ Channel. 44  
Athens, OH

#### Examples of Public Radio:

WOUB-AM Athens 1340  
WOUB-FM Athens 91.3  
WOUC-FM Cambridge 89.1  
WOUH-FM Chillicothe 91.9  
WVXC-FM Chillicothe 89.3  
WGUC-FM Cincinnati 90.9  
WVXU-FM Cincinnati 91.7  
WCPN-FM Cleveland 90.3  
WOSU-AM Columbus 820  
WCBE-FM Columbus 90.5  
WOSE-FM Coshocton 91.1  
WDPR-FM Dayton 88.1  
WGDE-FM Defiance 91.9  
WOUL-FM Ironton 89.1  
WKSU-FM Kent 89.7  
WGLE-FM Lima 90.7  
WOSV-FM Mansfield 91.7  
WOSB-FM Marion 91.1  
WKRJ-FM New Philadelphia 91.5  
WMUB-FM Oxford 88.5  
WOSP-FM Portsmouth 91.5  
WSKV-FM Thompson 89.1  
WGTE-FM Toledo 91.3  
WVXM-FM West Union 89.5  
WCSU-FM Wilberforce 88.9  
WKRW-FM Wooster 89.3  
WYSO-FM Yellow Springs 91.3  
WYSU-FM Youngstown 88.5  
WOUZ-FM Zanesville 90.1

#### **Web/Facebook/Blogs (Ohio-Specific)**

***Web sites and/or Facebook pages dealing with issues of fundamental democracy/self-determination***

Move to Amend Ohio Network

Seeking a US Constitution declaring that only human beings, not corporations, possess inalienable constitutional rights and that political money does not equal to political speech. There are 16 affiliate/partner groups across Ohio. Ten communities have passed either council resolutions or ballot initiatives calling on Congress to pass a US Constitutional Amendment

<https://movetoamend.org/ohio>

<https://www.facebook.com/MovetoAmendOhio>

#### Ohio Community Rights Network

Works to elevate the rights of people, their communities and nature above the claimed "rights" of corporations. Several communities have passed ballot initiatives asserting the rights of people and communities over the rights of corporations concerning gas drilling and other related issues.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Ohio-Community-Rights-Network/273875832784226>

#### ***Sites dealing with alternative, Ohio-specific, news and analysis***

#### Plunderbund

<http://www.plunderbund.com>

[https://www.facebook.com/Plunderbund?ref=br\\_tf](https://www.facebook.com/Plunderbund?ref=br_tf)

#### ***Blogs***

Websites where items are regularly posted and displayed in reverse chronological order. Blogs may comprise text, images, and links to other web sites, video, audio and files. Blogs are increasingly important vehicles for direct citizen communication and for conveying information and analysis not contained in the corporate press.

#### Examples:

#### Northeast Ohio AFSC

<http://northeastohioafsc.wordpress.com>

#### Create Real Democracy

<http://createrealdemocracy.wordpress.com>

## Political / Legal

### **Committees, Boards. Commissions**

Groupings of citizens that suggest, plan, monitor and/or evaluate governmental functions on housing, transportation, police, prisons, health and other issues at the municipal and state levels. These bodies are either appointed by elected representatives, courts or agency staff, or elected by voters. Sometimes, openings are filled by whoever wants to volunteer.

### **Elections**

Voting is the mechanism used to directly elect/unselect candidates for Governor, Mayor, County Commissioners, State Senators and Representatives, City Councilpersons, Auditors, Law Directors, Judges, Attorney General, Sheriffs, Prosecutors, and many other positions as well as to pass/fail levies and other ballot issues. Individuals may also run for office as the barriers to gain ballot status is in some cases relatively low.

Elections alone do not make a democracy. The election process today at the state and in many municipalities is fraught with numerous undemocratic and perverse characteristics. Usurpation of political and economic decisions by corporations, regulatory agencies, and unelected federal judges based on undemocratic provisions of the US Constitution and their bestowal of Bill of Rights and other protections to corporations weaken the power of individuals to even indirectly affect outcomes and, thus, reduce the meaningfulness of elections.

A more democratic alternative to elections is direct citizen involvement in decision-making. But elections are more democratic than appointments (advocated by some for Ohio Supreme Court justices) and individuals who come to their position by bloodline or status (royalty).

### **Juries**

Judicial decision-making by citizens, compared to a single judge. Juries listen to evidence, deliberate and make decisions collectively. Under the guise of “tort reform,” legislatures have weakened the power and authority of juries to make decisions regarding innocent and guilt, financial awards and punishment. A “jury of ones peers” is considered to be one of the benchmarks of a civil society.

### **Municipal Charters**

Municipal charters are local “constitutions” spelling out the powers, rights and privileges of government and citizens within that municipality -- to the creation of municipal structures/departments, to the powers to pass ordinances, to the frequency and rules governing elections, etc. Specific charter provisions are shaped by the wills and wishes of public officials and citizens. Legislatively or executive-initiated charter changes can only be enacted after a popular vote. Citizens can initiate charter changes (including additions and deletions) via “citizen initiatives” which requires a certain number of signatures to place proposed measures on the local ballot. Charter provisions must adhere to state and federal laws. Home rule provisions of the state constitution permit certain municipalities to adopt their own charters.

### **Courts**

Citizens have certain rights under state law to intervene in lawsuits to assert citizen perspectives. Under state law, citizens may also initiate taxpayer lawsuits to check misuse of government funds and procedures.

### **State Constitution**

Ohio’s Constitution, first developed and approved in 1802 and amended in 1851, 1912 and 1951, contain many sections affirming the rights of people to govern themselves and the

powers to control and define private (namely corporate) power.

### **1802 Ohio Constitution**

#### Article VIII – Bill of Rights

*Sec 1.* That all men are born equally free and independent, and have certain natural, inherent and unalienable rights, amongst which are the enjoying and defending life and liberty, acquiring, possessing and protecting property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety; and, every free, republican government being founded on their sole authority, and organized for the great purpose of protecting their rights and liberties and securing their independence to effect these ends, they have at all times a complete power to alter, reform or abolish their government, whenever they may deem it necessary.

*Sec 4.* Private property ought and shall ever be held inviolate, but *always subservient to the public welfare*, provided compensation in money be made to the owner.

*Sec 19.* That the people have a right to assemble together, in a peaceable manner, to consult for their common good, to instruct their Representatives, and to apply to the Legislature for a redress of grievances.

*Sec 27.* That every association of persons, when regularly formed within this state, and having given themselves a name, may, on application to the legislature, be entitled to receive letters of incorporation...

*Sec 28.* To guard against the transgression of the high powers, which we have delegated, we declare, *that all powers, not hereby delegated, remain with the people. (emphasis added)*

### **1851 Ohio Constitution**

The portions of the 1851 Constitution with the greatest impact upon corporations are contained in Article VIII and Article XIII. Section 4 of Article VIII deals primarily with prohibiting the state from colluding with corporations, while Section 6 places similar limits on local governments. Essentially, these sections prohibit the gift or loan of state credit “to, or in aid of, any individual, association or corporation

whatever” and forbid the state to ever “become a joint owner, or stockholder, in any company or association in this state or elsewhere, formed for any purpose whatever.” Article XIII consists of seven sections placing general limits on the exercise of corporate power. Most significant are Sections 2 and 3 which reinforce the notion that corporate powers and identity exist only to the extent provided for by law; Section 4 states that “[t]he property of corporations...shall forever be subject to taxation, the same as the property of individuals,” and Section 7 precludes the state from “authorizing associations with banking powers” unless such a measure is passed by the people in a general election.

### **1912 Ohio Constitution**

Several changes to strengthen democracy were agreed to and subsequently approved. Citizens to bypass the legislature in the direct creation or revocation of laws adopted the initiative and referendum as methods. Municipal home rule, permitting communities of 5000 or more in population to govern themselves, was also adopted. Public service corporations opposed home rule, seeing it as a device encouraging municipal ownership of utilities.

### **State and Local Government**

State government is an administrative unit smaller than a federal, national or central governments allowing those who reside within that state the opportunity to administer the people, land and assets through the creation of a state constitution and passage of laws and rules. By being decentralized from a federal, national or central government, state government is in theory more effective at addressing unique concerns to Ohioans. State elected representatives are also in general more accessible to the public than federal/national representatives.

Local governments are administrative units smaller than state government. They, too, often have the power, though less than the state government, to create constitutions (called charters) and pass certain laws addressing

unique concerns of those localities. Local elected representatives are more accessible all things considered to the public than state elected representatives.

## **Public Spaces**

Arenas where the public still has access to meet, assemble, organize and/or exercise free speech.

Examples:

Public buildings (city halls, community centers, county buildings, libraries, federal buildings, sports facilities)

Sidewalks

Parks

Waterways

Shorelines

Roads

Garages

Some of these spaces over the years have become “enclosed” (transformed from public to private) or public access has been effectively denied with the advent of shopping malls, private roads within gated communities, privatized shorelines, and exorbitant costs/terms to secure permits to rally in parks or march on public streets.

## **Social Action/Change Organizations**

Virtually every non-governmental organization mentioned in this document engages in activities to preserve or expand self-determination in one or more ways. There are hundreds of other groups that also contribute to Ohio’s democratic/self-determination “infrastructure.”

Some groups are more formalized non-profits with paid staff and offices while others are informal collections of people who on their own time and dime work for social improvement via creating their own alternative structures or who work to create a legitimate “seat at the table”

when decisions influencing their lives and communities are at stake.

The latter may take the form of changing faces (by elections), laws or regulations on any number of issues (by advocacy/lobbying) or fundamental ground rules (local/state charters or amending the US Constitution).

All approaches are needed. None can be ignored -- especially as assaults continue by the power elite and corporations to limit public spaces -- from physical, to economic, to political.

It took intentional time, energy, focus and commitment to create Ohio’s democratic/self-determination “infrastructure.” It didn’t happen by magic on its own.

Ohio’s physical infrastructures (i.e. roads, bridges, sewers, dams, etc.), need constant attention to prevent crumble and collapse. The same goes with our democratic/self-determination “infrastructure.”

Now is the time to maintain and expand it. Let’s get to work!

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