

FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS

STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2025

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Brian Gage, Executive Director

Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority (AMHA) has served the families and communities in Summit County since 1938. I am proud of the legacy that AMHA has created in our community through its stewardship of the public housing and housing choice voucher programs. We are one of the few public housing agencies accredited by the Affordable Housing Accreditation Board and have consistently been recognized by HUD as a High Performer for decades. AMHA is not just about programs. What makes AMHA a great agency is the people, both the people that live in the housing we provide and the employees that continue to dedicate their lives to public service and making our community a better place.

Through the last five years we have made substantial progress in making Summit County a better place. We have assisted more families in the voucher program than we ever have in the history of the agency. We have helped hundreds of families become self-sufficient. We have prepared our children for kindergarten, and have taken care of the health and wellness of our seniors and families with disabilities. We created better and safer living and working environments by prohibiting smoking, installing carbon monoxide detectors and installing technology to improve the air we breathe.

Looking forward, we can proceed knowing that we have the experience, perseverance and wisdom to overcome any challenges we encounter and have a greater tomorrow. The community counts on us to ensure families peacefully enjoy their homes, and to ensure that we have the capital to maintain, sustain and improve their living environments for the long term. This five year plan not only highlights our passion for excellence, but also outlines our strategy for our programs, processes, people, and community. We strive to help all families overcome their obstacles and create equitable practices that become a "Foundation for Success".

BOARD OF TRUSTEES



John Fickes, Chair



Thomas Harnden, Vice Chair



Stephanie Norris, Trustee



Roberta Aber, Trustee



Marco Sommerville, Trustee

The Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority provides quality, affordable housing and services as a platform to develop people, property and community.

We envision a community that fosters individual development and growth through stable and affordable housing, empowering all to reach their full potential.

PEOPLE - We envision a community where all have access to health, education and employment opportunities to position themselves out of poverty.

PROPERTY - We envision a community where our investments in Summit County stabilize neighborhoods and increase housing opportunities.

COMMUNITY - We envision a community where minority and low-income families are treated equitably in their access to housing and services.

GOAL 1	Preserve and Expand Quality Affordable Housing
GOAL 2	Maintain Operational Excellence While Pursuing Innovation and Efficiencies
GOAL 3	Improve Resident Quality of Life
GOAL 4	Positively Impact Community Change

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PRESERVE AND EXPAND QUALITY AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Over half of the renters within Summit County pay more than 30 percent of their income towards rent. Currently, there are over 40,000 families waiting for either public housing or a housing choice voucher. AMHA has also identified that many housing units are suffering from deferred maintenance and a lack of comprehensive capital investment in our community. AMHA intends to pursue different ways of repositioning our real estate assets in order to repair and preserve our existing portfolio.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Preserve the Existing Housing Stock

- Pursue the repositioning of real estate assets to ensure their longevity.
- Strategically expend capital funding to complete construction projects on both public housing and local housing authority properties.

2. Increase the Number of Voucher Opportunities

- □ Seek additional vouchers through the Housing Choice Voucher program and other special programs.
- Expand the number of available landlords and communities to voucher holders.
- Strategically utilize project-based vouchers to meet local needs within the community.



MAINTAIN OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE WHILE PURSUING INNOVATION AND EFFICIENCIES

To achieve AMHA's goals and work within fiscal constraints, internal operations must be efficient and effective. We strive to be among the best performing housing authorities in the nation and are committed to sound management of our scarce resources. As stewards of public funds, we continually search for processes to improve efficiencies and implement cost effective practices. AMHA will prioritize taking innovative approaches to operations and management of federal programs as well as seek new funding streams to create an economy of scale to successfully and efficiently implement programs. We are passionate about our commitment to an inclusive workplace that values and promotes diversity.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Assess and Improve Agency Performance

- Seek to maintain our excellent record of clean audits, regulatory compliance on federal programs and implementation of industry best practices.
- Develop business processes that ensure compliance and streamlining in the context of a new safe operating environment, including updated standard operating procedures and a new business continuity plan.
- Expand the utilization of technology for efficiencies in operations to interact with applicants and employees, as well as electronic record retention and the use of remote video technology.

2. Improve Agency Communication Strategies

 Create an agency-wide communication plan to establish branding and consistency internally and externally.

3. Develop, Support and Maintain a High-Performing, Professional, Innovative and Sustainable Workforce

- Improve professional development opportunities, such as job training, mentoring and cultural competence programs that will enhance our knowledge across programs and in the community.
- Focus on improving employee health and wellness and provide opportunities for employees to make healthier lifestyle decisions.

4. Promote Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

 Foster a culture of DEI through employee recruitment, hiring, development and retention.



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IMPROVE RESIDENT QUALITY OF LIFE

By providing families with residential stability, affordable housing provides an ideal platform for delivering a variety of health and social services. Recent studies have shown that when families are provided with residential stability along with affordable housing there is positive impact on numerous life outcomes including education, health and employment. Through various partnerships AMHA will provide access to a variety of services to increase the educational opportunities for children, increase employment for residents, increase services to access health care and decrease the digital divide. These programs will not only help families and children achieve better life outcomes, but will also improve the surrounding community and benefit Summit County's economy.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1. Utilize Building for Tomorrow (BFT) to Support Service Programs and Expand Opportunities
 - □ Create infrastructure for long-term fundraising success to sustain services not funded by federal programs.
 - □ Align marketing messaging between AMHA and BFT.
 - Educate and train board members and volunteers how to communicate and raise money effectively for BFT.
 - Improve donor relations through coordinated donor communications.

2.Ensure Resident Housing Stability

- □ Assist with lease and program compliance that prevents eviction.
- Strengthen communication and supports between housing programs, resident services, participants and residents.
- □ Identify and address non housing basic needs of residents.
- □ Encourage and empower residents to strengthen communities.
- □ Enhance supports for special populations.

3. Enhance Resident Programming and Initiatives

- Support youth educational achievement that focuses on kindergarten readiness and after school opportunities.
- Support health and wellness initiatives that align with resident needs.
- **Expand workforce development and self-sufficiency initiatives.**
- Decrease the digital divide by increasing access to internet connectivity, affordable and reliable devices and education to improve the technical skills of our residents.



POSITIVELY IMPACT COMMUNITY CHANGE

There is strength in our differences, and these differences are crucial to fostering growth in both our organization and our community. AMHA will build support for equitable affordable housing as a key component of vibrant, sustainable communities through public information, engagement and advocacy that promotes affordable housing and supports the advancement of Summit County's low-income residents.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1. Expand Opportunities for Minority and Women Owned Businesses to Contract with AMHA
 - Recruit and build capacity of minority and women vendors to bid on AMHA contract opportunities.
 - Review cooperative agreements and other marketplaces to discern if products and services are available through minority or women owned cooperative vendors.
- 2. Increase Education on the Needs of Low Income Populations and Affordable Housing at Local, State and National Levels
 - Pursue leadership roles in state and national industry groups.
 - Continue to participate and contribute to legislative and regulatory efforts.
 - D Promote our own best practices.
- 3. Strengthen Community Partnerships to Improve our Ability to Better Serve our Client's Needs
 - Evaluate and pursue sustainable partnerships that directly relate to AMHA mission and goals.
 - Strengthen and deepen relationships that supports intentional cross system collaborations to improve life outcomes for lowincome people.







