



Wayne Metropolitan Housing Authority Strategic Plan

FY 2023 - 2025

Approved by Board of Commissioners:
March 29, 2023

Message from the Wayne Metropolitan Housing Authority Board of Commissioners and Executive Director

To Our Community:

We are pleased to present our Strategic Plan for FY 2023-2025, which will guide our work in the coming years. We are building on a proud history of service to Wayne County and surrounding communities and look forward to providing high-quality, affordable housing options for our residents.

We will continue to look for ways to meet the growing need for affordable rental units, especially for families. We will provide education and support to individuals and families who are seeking opportunities to become homeowners. We will seek opportunities to be a partner with local government, businesses and other organizations to develop housing that meets the varied needs of our community.

We will examine our internal operations and make investments in our infrastructure to ensure that we continue to provide the high level of service our community expects and deserves. Finally, we recognize our role in being an advocate for safe, high-quality affordable housing. We will increase our efforts to tell the story of how Wayne Metropolitan Housing Authority positively impacts the community and look for ways to increase the public's understanding of the critical role that housing plays in creating vibrant, thriving communities.

On behalf of the Board of Commissioners and staff of Wayne Metropolitan Housing Authority, we thank you for your interest and for your support of our work.

Sincerely,

Debra A. Catlett
Executive Director

Robert M. Talcott, Jr.
Chair, Board of Commissioners

WMHA Board of Commissioners

Robert M. Talcott, Jr., Chair

Appointed by Wayne County Probate Judge in January 2014

Scott D. Morgan, Vice-Chair

Appointed by Wayne County Commissioners in December 2020

Crystal Amstutz, Board Member

Appointed by Mayor of Wooster in May 2013

Lisa K. Reichert, Board Member

Appointed by Wayne County Common Pleas Court in July 2022

Kattie Robison, Board Member

Appointed by Mayor of Wooster in January 1997

Debra A. Catlett, Secretary Ex-Officio

Robert Reynolds, Legal Counsel

Wayne Metropolitan Housing Authority

Wayne Metropolitan Housing Authority (WMHA) located in Ohio and was founded in 1969 to help and assist families with housing opportunities within Wayne, Holmes and Ashland Counties. WMHA provides stable, decent, safe and affordable housing to many low and moderate-income families and individuals.

Headquartered in Wayne County, Ohio the WMHA office is located in the heart of downtown Wooster, Ohio. In addition to managing housing units owned by the WMHA or other entities, WMHA manages and administers several rental assistance programs. WMHA collaborates with several local agencies including The Counseling Center of Wayne and Holmes Counties (CCWH), Community Action of Wayne, and Medina (CAWM), Wayne County Job & Family Services, OneEighty Inc., the Wayne County Board of Developmental Disabilities, the City of Wooster, Wayne County and many others.

WMHA is governed by a five-member, publicly appointed volunteer Board of Commissioners. Board members are appointed by the Mayor of Wooster, the Wayne County Court of Common Pleas, the Wayne County Probate Court, and the Wayne County Commissioners. Board members serve five-year terms. *WMHA has 30 employees.*

Mission, Vision and Values Statements

Our Mission: WMHA strives to create a safe space encouraging personal growth and self-sufficiency by providing sustainable housing opportunities and guidance for people with diverse needs through multiple programs and partnerships.

Our Vision: We envision a future where everyone has affordable, quality housing that offers a foundation for stability, self-sufficiency, and success.

Our Values:

- **We strive to make a difference every day.** We are dedicated to the WMHA mission and come to work every day inspired to do our best work and to make a positive impact. There is no more important work than helping our clients achieve their goals.
- **We never forget that we are helping people.** There are real people behind every application and case file. We care about our clients and provide them with a safe space to share their needs, their hopes, and their fears. We work with urgency to help them realize what's possible. We treat everyone with the kindness and decency we all deserve.
- **We consider the feelings of others.** We know that our processes can be frustrating, confusing, and even challenging at times. We have all been there, so we show empathy and act with humility. We are all human and we show respect for our clients, our coworkers and our community members.
- **We believe in good communication.** We value clear and concise communication that is delivered in a timely manner. We are good listeners. We ask and answer questions directly.
- **We act with integrity.** We conduct ourselves in a transparent and trustworthy manner that earns the respect of our colleagues, our clients and the community. We tell the truth, treat all with decency and keep our promises.
- **We never stop learning, improving and innovating.** No one has all the answers. We believe that good ideas and solutions can come from anywhere—and we make sure that we use the best ideas—no matter who it comes from. We share our knowledge with others and learn from our successes and challenges.
- **We are better when we work as a team.** Everyone is valuable and contributes to our collective success. We do better work when each person feels included, valued and respected. We never forget to celebrate our shared successes.
- **We all make mistakes—and we own them, together.** We are responsible for making decisions, solving problems, and taking actions that contribute to achieving our mission. We bring problems to the forefront so we can all contribute to finding solutions.

- **We use our resources wisely.** We take seriously the stewardship of the resources that have been entrusted to us. We strive to use our time, our skills and our funds efficiently and effectively. We hold ourselves accountable through timely and transparent reporting.
- **We connect with our community.** We are a knowledgeable resource, a trusted partner and an advocate for those we serve. We cannot be successful without the support of the community—and without our support of other community organizations and initiatives.

WMHA Programs

Public Housing Program: Public Housing includes properties owned and managed by WMHA supported with federal funds from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and designed to benefit eligible low-income families, seniors and persons with disabilities. WMHA operates 224 public housing units in Wayne County.

Housing Choice Voucher Section 8 Program: The Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) provides rental assistance to help low-income persons afford decent and safe rental housing. The HCVP Programs is funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and administered by WMHA in Wayne, Ashland and Holmes counties.

Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS): FSS is a program designed to promote economic self-sufficiency among participating families. By helping families develop skills, education and self-confidence, the FSS program can assist families in changing their overall financial status. Eligible families are connected with appropriate supportive services and resources in their communities in order to move the family toward economic self-sufficiency. Services may include: housing, childcare, education, job training, counseling, budgeting, transportation and mental health and/or substance abuse counseling.

Community Housing Impact and Preservation (CHIP) Program: In 2014, the City of Wooster, City of Orrville and Wayne County teamed up as a partnership to apply for and obtain funding for the CHIP Program. The grants are funded through Ohio Development Service Agency (ODSA) and administered by the Wayne Metropolitan Housing Authority. The CHIP program includes:

- **Down Payment Assistance/Rehabilitation Program:** Down Payment Assistance/Rehabilitation Program assists eligible households who are currently renting and wanting to become homeowners. The program offers a deferred (interest-free) loan for a down payment, closing costs and rehabilitation assistance to eligible low-to-moderate income households. This loan is 85% forgiven over a period of time between 5-15 years with a 15% recapture. This program requires HUD Certified Homeownership classes.
- **Home Repair Program:** This grant program is designed to assist eligible low-to-moderate income homeowners to make emergency or non-emergency repairs that are considered Health and Safety concerns according to the program's rules and regulation. The grant covers single projects such as septic repairs, leaking roofs, heating systems, etc. This grant is available as long as funding allows.

- **Private Owner Rehabilitation Program:** This program helps homeowners with rehabilitating single-family homes. A single rehabilitation may entail several projects, such as plumbing upgrades, roof repairs, removal of lead-based paint, siding, electrical upgrades, and other repairs needed to eliminate health and safety concerns according to program rules and regulations.
- **Rental Rehabilitation Program:** The Rental Rehabilitation Program is designed and made available to landlords who agree to rent to tenants earning less than 80% of area median income, and rent the unit at fair market rent.

Special Use Housing: The Wayne Metropolitan Housing Authority partners with others in the community to provide housing opportunities for those with special needs.

WMHA has purchased a number of properties specifically for use by clients of the Wayne County Board of Developmental Disabilities (WCBDD). Many of these properties are group home settings with 24-hour on-site care. Use of client family contributions, Capital Assistance Funds from the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, and low interest loans through the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Office have made it possible to build, purchase, and/or renovate these homes to provide appropriate housing adapted to those special needs. WMHA also acquired a six-unit licensed group home that provides long-term housing in a family setting for six female clients of the WCBDD.

Strategic Planning Process

The WMHA Board and executive staff embarked on a strategic planning process with the intention of developing a plan that would identify strategic priorities and align the efforts of all those involved in supporting the organization's mission. The plan reflects the strategic priorities of WMHA and local, state and federal funders, including the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

This strategic plan sets the overall direction for WMHA for FY 2023-2025. The plan was developed in support of the organization's mission and reflects our commitment to growth in Wayne County and surrounding communities—in programs and services, in visibility and awareness, in leadership capacity, and in financial strength and stability. The plan also reflects our commitment to collaboration with other organizations to meet the housing needs of our citizens.

The critical issues that were considered during the development of this plan included:

- What is WMHA's proudest achievement of the last year or two?
- What organizational strengths can WMHA use to build on for the future?
- What are WMHA's stakeholders (employees, residents, partners, community) asking for? How can WMHA best meet their needs?
- What, if any, pandemic-related changes in WMHA's programs and/or operations should be continued?
- What are the top opportunities on which WMHA should focus its efforts? Opportunities may be related to programming, funding, operations or awareness/visibility.
- What new skills and/or resources does WMHA need to move forward on existing and/or new projects?
- Are there any internal barriers that could keep WMHA from achieving its goals?
- What, if any, external barriers are a challenge for WMHA to overcome?

The duration of this strategic plan is expected to be three years, depending on shifting internal priorities, external factors and the pace and success of implementation. Successful implementation of the strategies described in this plan will be challenging but will have a positive impact on WMHA and the community. Each strategic priority will be supported by goals and objectives.

The leadership of WMHA is committed to executing this strategic plan in the best interests of the community. We will develop annual operations plans to guide the implementation of the strategic plan and key indicators that reflect our progress toward meeting specific performance targets.

Definition of Strategic Planning Terms

Strategic Priorities: Strategic priorities are high-level topics or activities that WMHA wants to particularly encourage and promote over the long term. These priorities will guide budget and resource allocations decisions.

Strategic Goals: Strategic goals are the milestones that WMHA aims to achieve that evolve from the strategic priorities. They transform strategic priorities into specific performance targets that impact the entire organization.

Strategic Objectives: Strategic objectives identify the approaches or activities that will be carried out to achieve the strategic goals.

Annual Operations Plans: The strategic priorities, goals and objectives identified in this Strategic Plan are intended to be high level and relevant for the next two to three years. The successful implementation of the plan will rely on the development of annual operations plans that include annual goals and specific, measurable objectives. The operations plans also identify individuals or groups accountable for the achievement of objectives, performance indicators and desired outcomes.

Strategic Priorities for FY 2023-2025

Strategic Priority 1: We will develop and expand the availability of quality, affordable housing options throughout our service area by growing and preserving properties that meet the needs of low- to moderate-income residents and individuals with special housing needs.

Strategic Priority 2: We will connect eligible individuals and families with resources for affordable housing, and within program guidelines we will make referrals to community resources to meet other economic, educational and social needs.

Strategic Priority 3: We will develop and maintain effective leadership and a high-performing workforce.

Strategic Priority 4: We will build financial strength and sustainability through accountability, revenue growth and diversification.

Strategic Priority 5: We will strengthen our internal operations to increase efficiency by using technology wisely and making critical investments in our infrastructure.

Strategic Priority 6: We will increase our public visibility and the community's understanding of our services and our impact, and we will advocate for affordable housing as a key component of thriving communities.

Strategic Priorities, Goals and Objectives for FY 2023-2025

Strategic Priority 1: We will develop and expand the availability of quality, affordable housing options throughout our service area by growing and preserving properties that meet the needs of low- to moderate-income residents and individuals with special housing needs.

Strategic Goal 1-1: Provide financial assistance to eligible individuals and families through the federal Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8).

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- Meet or exceed program standards for Section 8 Management Assessment Program.
- Strive to use the full allocation of housing vouchers available to WMHA.
- Improve outreach to property owners to encourage participation in the voucher program and to increase the quality of rental options.

Strategic Goal 1-2: Help families achieve financial independence through the Family Self-Sufficiency program.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- Handle enrollment and administration for FSS program participants.
- Identify and implement strategies to encourage program enrollment, retention and completion.

Strategic Goal 1-3: Assist HCV voucher holders in achieving home ownership.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- Ensure that all eligible HCV holders have the opportunity to participate in the Home Ownership Program.
- Provide education, credit counseling and other services to support Home Ownership program participants.

Strategic Priority 2: We will connect eligible individuals and families with resources for affordable housing, and within program guidelines we will make referrals to community resources to meet other economic, educational and social needs.

Strategic Goal 2-1: Manage our properties so they are safe, efficient to operate, good neighbors, attractive assets to their neighborhoods and places where people want to live.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- Offer a variety of affordable housing options that provide choices that enhance the quality of life for individuals and families at all stages of their lives.
- Develop and implement methods for assessing resident satisfaction.
- Establish and implement standards for customer service that are supported through training, performance evaluation and recognition.
- Establish guidelines and structures that support resident involvement in property-level governance.

Strategic Goal 2-2: Preserve existing affordable housing while increasing inventory and housing choice for residents of Wayne County and surrounding communities.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- Monitor and access opportunities from local, state and federal entities that could increase resources for the development of new properties.
- Meet agency-wide maintenance standards for all properties; at a minimum, our standards will meet HUD's Uniform Physical Condition Standards.
- Continue to evaluate each property to determine its maintenance and modernization needs and long-term viability as part of the annual capital needs plan and budget.
- Use U.S. Census data for Wayne County and neighboring communities to identify current and future housing needs.

Strategic Goal 2-3: Be a leader in forming strategic partnerships that lead to the maximum leveraging of financial, human and organizational resources.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- Build on existing collaborations with local governments, nonprofit organizations and business leaders to develop solutions to existing and emerging housing needs, including seniors, the homeless and individuals with mental illness or developmental disabilities.
- Develop partnerships to address the critical shortage of rental units for low- to moderate- income families.

Strategic Priority 3: We will develop and maintain effective leadership and a high-performing workforce.

Strategic Goal 3-1: Support a Board of Commissioners that provides leadership, governance and oversight of WMHA.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- Review and revise the WMHA by-laws as necessary to meet changing organizational needs.
- Create a culture of inquiry and accountability within the board.
- Ensure that the board maintains its focus on the agency's key performance indicators.
- Provide board members with a thorough orientation and ongoing education about the organization and about political and economic forces affecting affordable housing.
- Support, direct and evaluate the executive director.

Strategic Goal 3-2: Recruit, retain, recognize and reward motivated and talented employees.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- Ensure that the staff reflects the skills and competencies needed to achieve the organization's mission.
- Create individual staff work plans that identify performance expectations and developmental goals.
- Maintain a performance management system that ensures accountability, provides feedback and rewards outstanding results.
- Periodically review compensation and benefits to ensure the ability to attract and retain talented employees.
- Maintain succession plans for executive and management positions to ensure continuity.

Strategic Priority 4: We will build financial strength and sustainability through accountability, revenue growth and diversification.

Strategic Goal 4-1: Ensure sound fiscal practices.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- Develop and maintain balanced annual budgets that reflect organizational priorities.
- Establish metrics for financial performance and triggers for taking corrective action.
- Minimize risk through strong internal controls.
- Demonstrate transparency and accountability by providing financial reports to funders and others as appropriate.

Strategic Goal 4-2: Increase revenue and reduce expenses through efficient and effective management of resources.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- Maintain a high occupancy rate for WMHA-managed properties.
- Maximize administrative fee revenue through full utilization of all units.

Strategic Priority 5: We will strengthen our internal operations to increase efficiency by using technology wisely and making critical investments in our infrastructure.

Strategic Goal 5-1: Comply with local, state and federal regulations and WMHA policies.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- Ensure that staff and board members maintain up-to-date knowledge of regulatory issues through publications, training and networking opportunities.
- Regularly review policies and guidelines to ensure relevance and consistent compliance.
- Review, update and communicate WMHA policies and procedures.
- Achieve/Maintain rank of high-performing housing authority through HUD.

Strategic Goal 5-2: Improve internal processes and performance.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- Examine distribution of work assignments and reporting structure to ensure equitable workloads and optimal productivity.
- Ensure that work assignments align with staff skills.
- Provide training to develop higher skill levels.

Strategic Goal 5-3: Make full use of available technology.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- Ensure that in-process technology upgrades are completed and fully utilized.
- Identify critical processes that must be automated and provide relevant staff training.
- Acquire equipment and software needed to facilitate document imaging for staff and program applicants.
- Use WMHA website as a resource to reduce calls for basic agency information.

Strategic Priority 6: We will increase our public visibility and the community's understanding of our services and our impact, and we will advocate for affordable housing as a key component of thriving communities.

Strategic Goal 6-1: Communicate WMHA's role in local, state and national housing policy and development.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- Establish a communications strategy for targeted audiences that promotes the positive impact of WMHA's properties and programs, and WMHA's commitment to ensuring the availability of quality, affordable housing.
- Ensure that board members and management staff have timely and appropriate communication tools to convey key organizational messages.
- Generate goodwill for WMHA through presentations to civic groups, service organizations and others.

Strategic Goal 6-2: Advocate for quality, affordable housing as a part of vibrant, sustainable communities.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- Cultivate close relationships with government, nonprofit and business leaders to ensure mutual understanding of housing issues in Wayne and surrounding counties.
- Position WMHA as a resource for high quality advice, data and information on housing and related topics.
- Develop leaders who can articulate the importance of quality, affordable housing.