



# Medina Metropolitan Housing Authority Strategic Plan

2024 – 2026

## **Medina Metropolitan Housing Authority**

The Medina Metropolitan Housing Authority (MMHA) was established in 1953 as an independent political subdivision of the State of Ohio. We provide affordable, quality housing for eligible residents throughout Medina County. Our headquarters is centrally located at 850 Walter Road in the City of Medina.

We own or manage 16 properties (with one under construction in 2024) with more than 565 housing units and provide assistance to more than 700 other households. In addition, we have the Housing Choice Voucher Program, the Tenant Rental Assistance Program, Emergency Housing Programs, and Special Needs Housing Programs.

MMHA is governed by a five-member, publicly appointed volunteer Board of Commissioners. Board members are appointed by the Mayor of Brunswick, the Medina County Court of Common Pleas, the Medina County Probate Court, and the Medina County Commissioners. Board members serve five-year terms. MMHA has 37 employees.

Funding for MMHA services comes primarily from rental income, fees and federal housing subsidies. All MMHA properties and programs are self-sustaining.

## Our Leadership

### Board of Commissioners:

**Carol Lawler**

Chair

Appointed by the City of Brunswick

**Julie Batey**

Vice Chair

Appointed by Medina County Common Pleas Court

**J. Jeffrey Holland, Esq.**

Member

Appointed by the Medina County Probate Court

**Nick Hanek**

Member

Appointed by the City of Brunswick

**Scott S. Miller**

Member

Appointed by the Medina County Commissioners

### Key Staff:

**Skip Sipos**, Executive Director

**Gary Blake**, Deputy Director

**Rob Ebner**, Finance Director

**Kelly Parker**, Program Director

**Ed Witt**, Maintenance Director

**Jessie Kane**, Program Manager

**Piper Morgan**, Program Manager

**Aarika Newlon**, Housing Manager

# Our Vision, Mission and Values

## Our Vision

We envision a future where everyone has a safe, affordable place to call home, a sense of belonging, and a solid foundation for stability, self-sufficiency and success.

## Our Mission

We create and advocate for quality, innovative and diverse housing choices; we support those who face housing challenges with resources and opportunities; and we collaborate with partners who share our vision for stronger communities.

## Our Values

### 1. Pride of Purpose

We believe that everyone deserves a safe and affordable place to call home and that it is a privilege to serve those who face housing challenges. We are advocates for the individuals and families we serve and strive to help those outside MMHA understand and support our mission. We speak well of our clients, our colleagues and our organization, both internally and externally.

### 2. Customer Service Focus

We believe that each person who comes to MMHA has a unique life story and deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. We work tirelessly and creatively to find the best possible solution to meet their individual needs. We are kind, compassionate and patient, especially with those who have special challenges.

### 3. Quality Work and Continuous Improvement

We deliver our best in all that we do. Our reputation is important to us. We want to be known for being reliable, delivering consistently high-quality work and providing housing that is an asset to the community. We question old ways of working, and if there is a better idea, we are willing to change. We seek and provide opportunities for personal and professional growth.

### 4. Honesty and Integrity

**We tell the truth – always.** We share necessary and appropriate information, insights and advice frequently and constructively. We handle difficult situations with courage and candor. We question actions that are inconsistent with our values.

## **Our Vision, Mission and Values**

### **5. Leadership**

We share MMHA’s vision for the future and inspire others to join us in making it a reality. We set good examples and expect others to follow. We accept and delegate responsibility, seeking opportunities to develop others. We make timely, thoughtful decisions—and communicate them to others.

### **6. Professionalism**

We conduct ourselves with composure and confidence. We share knowledge with others so they can learn and grow. We respect our colleagues’ time by being responsive, prepared and organized. We are consistent and fair in our treatment of others.

### **7. Accountability**

We hold ourselves accountable—personally and as an organization--for delivering on our promises. When we make a mistake, we acknowledge and learn from it. We recognize our obligation to be good stewards of the resources we are given.

### **8. Working Together**

We believe that our clients and our community are best served when we work collaboratively – both inside and outside MMHA. We deliver more success through shared goals and mutual support. Within MMHA, we work across departments to improve processes, balance workloads and find solutions for clients. Outside MMHA, we seek partners who share our commitment to providing quality, diverse and innovative housing choices, and who can help us support those who face housing challenges with resources and opportunities.

### **9. Respect for Others**

We respect people for who they are and for their knowledge, skills and experience as individuals and colleagues. We express our appreciation for others and recognize their accomplishments. We value our people, encourage their development and reward their performance.

### **10. Inclusion**

We know it takes people with different ideas, strengths, interests and cultural backgrounds to make MMHA succeed. We encourage healthy debate and differences of opinion. We advocate for all voices to be heard and we intervene if someone else is being marginalized.

## Strategic Planning Process

The MMHA Board and executive staff embarked on a strategic planning process in 2023 with the intention of developing the Authority's third three-year 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 MMHA and local, state and federal funders, including the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD's strategic goals include:

- Strengthen the nation's housing market to bolster the economy and protect consumers
- Meet the need for quality, affordable rental homes
- Use housing as a platform to improve quality of life
- Build strong, resilient and inclusive communities

This strategic plan sets the overall direction for MMHA for 2024-2026. The plan was developed in support of the organization's mission and reflects our commitment to growth in Medina County—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 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. These strategies are interdependent and a shortfall in one area may affect others. Each strategic priority will be supported by goals and objectives.

The leadership of MMHA 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 Terms

**Strategic Priorities:** Strategic priorities are high-level topics or activities that MMHA 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 MMHA aims to achieve that evolve from the strategic priorities. They transform strategic priorities into specific performance targets that impact the entire organization. Goals can be qualitative or quantitative.

**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.

## Strategic Priorities for 2021-2023

**Strategic Priority 1:** We will develop and expand the availability of quality, affordable housing options throughout Medina County 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 support recent and future growth 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 vibrant communities.

## Strategic Priorities, Goals and Objectives for 2021-2023

**Strategic Priority 1: We will develop and expand the availability of quality, affordable housing options throughout Medina County 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: Preserve existing affordable housing while increasing inventory and housing choice for Medina County residents.**

### 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.
- Increase the number of Project Based Voucher contracts from the current two to six by December 31, 2026.
- 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 Medina County to identify current and future housing needs.

**Strategic Goal 1-2: 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.
- Be a willing partner when opportunities are available to leverage available property, financial resources, and community support to increase access to affordable housing, including units for seniors, the homeless, and individuals with mental illness, developmental disabilities and substance abuse challenges.

**Strategic Goal 1-3: Manage and maintain 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:

- Establish a Monthly Life Safety System Safety Inspection and Testing Procedure by December 31, 2024.
- Maintain standards for customer service that are supported through training, performance evaluation, and recognition.
- Average the completion rate of Routine Work Orders, as specified in Policy, to five

- business days throughout the duration of this Plan.
- 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.
  - Continue to assess resident satisfaction and use feedback to improve services.

**Strategic Priority 4: Develop a disaster readiness plan that includes strategies to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters and other emergencies.**

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:**

- Conduct a risk assessment that identifies potential disasters and hazards and the potential impact on lives and property.
- Provide training to staff in critical emergency response functions (e.g., incident command structure, direct aid to residents, applying for assistance, communications).
- Develop a response plan that includes processes for assessing the impact on residents and housing stock, the impact on MMHA business operations, and coordination with emergency responders, local government, HUD, and community organizations.
- Develop a recovery plan that includes processes for rehousing residents, rebuilding the housing portfolio, and restoring business operations.

**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: Provide financial assistance to eligible individuals and families through the federal Housing Choice Voucher program (Section 8).**

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:**

- Use the Authority’s participation in HUD’s Moving to Work demonstration project to create and implement customized solutions to local housing challenges.
- Strive to use the full allocation of housing vouchers available to Medina County and will seek new allocations of Vouchers as they become available.
- Increase average voucher utilization rates to 96% by December 31, 2024, 97% by December 31, 2025, and 98% by December 31, 2026.
- Continue outreach to property owners throughout Medina County to encourage participation in the voucher programs and to increase quality rental options.
- Increase the net number of participating landlords in the Section 8 program by 10% by December 31, 2026.

**Strategic Goal 2-2: Provide emergency housing assistance to eligible individuals and families through programs designed to prevent or alleviate homelessness.**

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:**

- Continue to address housing crises through effective case management services, and increased coordination with local government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and the business community.
- Make referrals and offer emergency financial assistance for housing-related needs in accordance with eligibility criteria and available funds.
- Provide housing assistance to individuals who are homeless and have disabilities through the Medina County Tenant-Based Rental Assistance program.
- Coordinate with the contiguous counties and those in Ohio’s Region 4 to establish consistent protocols to efficiently address the needs of the Region’s homeless.

**Strategic Goal 2-3: Construct and operate an Emergency Housing Shelter for homeless men, women and children in Medina.**

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:**

- Complete renovations at the facility designated for the Emergency Housing Shelter.
- Develop a plan for securing funds for the operation of the shelter from public and philanthropic sources.
- Create a new nonprofit organization to provide administrative oversight and operational guidance to the Authority regarding the operation of the Shelter.
- Operate the shelter with MMHA staff and with the assistance of local social service

organizations and other community agencies.

**Strategic Goal 2-4: Participate in planning, coordination and implementation of ongoing and new housing initiatives at local and state levels.**

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:**

- Continue to explore permanent supportive housing options in conjunction with community partners, including completion of The Lafayette in the City of Medina.
- Continue to explore new development initiatives in conjunction with Habitat for Humanity that combine Habitat’s homeownership model and the Housing Authority’s affordable rental programming; fully vet the potential collaboration on land owned by the City of Medina.
- Continue to assist the Medina Interfaith Coalition on Affordable Housing (MICAH) in its efforts to develop additional affordable housing units in Medina County; facilitate MICAH’s development plans to expand the Authority’s property management portfolio.

**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 MMHA.**

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:**

- Provide board members with a thorough orientation and ongoing education about the organization and about political and economic forces affecting affordable housing.
- Ensure that the board maintains its focus on the agency's key performance indicators.
- 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.
- Periodically review compensation, benefits, workloads, and the work environment to ensure the ability to attract and retain talented employees.
- Maintain a performance management system that ensures accountability, provides feedback and rewards outstanding results.
- Maintain the strong and positive relationship existing between the Authority and the labor union representing MMHA employees.

**Strategic Goal 3-3: Develop a leadership succession plan for the Executive Director.**

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:**

- Establish an Executive Search/Transition Committee.
- Outline the key steps and a timeline for the search, hiring, and leadership transition phases of the process.
- Identify critical projects to be completed prior to departure of current Executive Director.
- Ensure organizational sustainability through the transition.
- Develop a plan for onboarding for the new executive director that includes an orientation to the Authority, introductions to the organization and the community, and information and support necessary to settle successfully into the role.

**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:**

- Maintain strong financial position with sufficient unrestricted cash balance.
- Develop and maintain balanced annual budgets that reflect organizational priorities.
- Continue to evaluate metrics for financial performance and triggers for taking corrective action.
- Strive to maintain award from Auditor of State recognizing excellence in financial reporting in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and compliance with applicable laws.
- Minimize risk through strong internal controls.
- Demonstrate transparency and accountability by providing financial reports to MMHA Board, funders and others as appropriate.
- Close each month within 14 days of subsequent month through January 2027.
- Produce various annual Audit Reports without findings for CY 2023, CY 2024 and CY 2025.
- Meet annual reporting deadlines for HUD Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC) unaudited and audited submissions.
- Meet annual reporting deadlines for submitting all required audit and financial reports to the Ohio Housing Finance Agency and the Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing for each tax credit property in the Authority's portfolio.

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

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:**

- Maintain an average occupancy rate of 95% for all MMHA-managed properties through the duration of this Plan; occupancy rate is defined as a full month's billable rent per unit.
- Maximize administrative fee revenue through full utilization of vouchers.
- Continue to seek resources to aid residents who are delinquent in rent payments.
- Aggressively invest surplus cash to maximize income consistent with the Authority's Investment Policy.

**Strategic Goal 4-3: Seek new sources of unrestricted revenue.**

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:**

- Explore opportunities to acquire or develop income-producing assets consistent with the Authority's mission.
- Reduce dependence on federal resources by using the above-mentioned income-producing asset strategy to diversify funding sources.

**Strategic Priority 5: We will strengthen our internal operations to support recent and future growth by using technology wisely and making critical investments in our infrastructure.**

**Strategic Goal 5-1: Comply with local, state and federal regulations and MMHA 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 external policies and guidelines to ensure consistent compliance.
- Review, update and communicate MMHA policies and procedures.
- Update all Tenant Selection Plans to conform with HUD’s Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act of 2016 (HOTMA) by December 31, 2024.
- Update all Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing Plans for Tax Credit Properties by December 31, 2024.
- Continue implementation plan for creating no-smoking facilities.

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

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:**

- Engage in proactive work planning for high-volume functions using techniques consistent with Lean Six Sigma concepts.
- Follow record retention guidelines to ensure integrity and security of agency documents.
- Implement document imaging for all newly generated resident documents beginning with calendar year 2027.
- Implement new housekeeping standards for all MMHA managed properties by December 31, 2024.
- Update the Resident Handbook and Rules for each MMHA managed property by December 31, 2026.
- Update the MMHA Maintenance Policy by December 31, 2024.

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

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:**

- Identify critical processes that must be automated and provide relevant staff training.
- Migrate all repayment plans for property residents (past and current) from manual systems to PHA-Web computer-based processing by December 31, 2025.
- Increase the enrollment of residents in direct debit rent payment plans by 5% each year of this Plan.
- Develop plan to use document imaging for HCV program.
- Maintain MMHA website as a valuable resource for basic agency information.

**Strategic Goal 5-4: Demonstrate leadership in sustainability through environmentally friendly design and operations.**

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:**

- Maintain focus on building housing that incorporates energy-efficient materials, equipment and appliances; seek LEED certification when feasible.
- Encourage and support recycling at all MMHA facilities.
- Maintain environmentally friendly and fuel-efficient fleet vehicles.

**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 vibrant communities.**

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

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:**

- Engage the services of a communications consultant to establish a communications strategy for targeted audiences that promotes the positive impact of MMHA's properties and programs, and MMHA's commitment to ensuring the availability of quality, affordable housing.
- Maintain MMHA's high-profile role in the community homeless initiative and on other housing projects as an opportunity to promote the Authority's expertise and accomplishments.

**Strategic Goal 6-2: Use the MMHA website and selected social media platforms to provide information and build community awareness and support.**

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:**

- Maintain a robust website that meets the needs of existing and prospective clients and residents, community partners, landlords, vendors and other stakeholders.
- Prioritize website enhancements that add self-service options and that reduce the burden on staff to provide routine information.
- Explore opportunities to share MMHA news through social media as part of overall communications strategy.

**Strategic Goal 6-3: 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 throughout Medina County.
- Maintain MMHA's position 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.
- Encourage MMHA program participants to advocate for those who need affordable housing.