

PROGRESS REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

In 2023, the Lake Metropolitan Housing Authority has ramped up its focus on growing affordable housing opportunities across Lake County. In early 2023, Lake MHA finished its housing assessment for Lake County. The findings indicate a severe shortage of affordable housing options, particularly in the western areas of the county, and a continued decline in housing opportunities for housing choice voucher recipients. In addition, the housing deficit among seniors, the disabled, and homeless families and individuals has emerged as an immediate need. As a result, Lake MHA procured partnerships with two co-developers to assess land opportunities in Lake County for possible new construction of affordable housing through Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and mixed financing. These opportunities will focus on the development of housing for middle to low-income families, Housing Choice Voucher recipients, and Seniors. In addition, Lake MHA has developed preliminary plans to extend additional project-based housing opportunities for seniors, veterans, and the disabled. It is expected that these plans will be completed in 2024 with hopes to begin issuing Request for Proposals sometime in early 2025.

In September of 2023, Lake MHA and the Fair Housing Resource Center co-sponsored an event at Lake Erie College to discuss the affordable housing shortage in the community and to offer community partners an opportunity to share their programs and services with tenants, landlords, and the general community. In 2023, Lake MHA successfully opened the landlord incentive program offering cash incentives for first-time landlords and damage assistance for those who qualify. Lake MHA is currently planning similar events in 2024 to motivate property owners and landlords to consider partnering with Lake MHA. These events will also be dedicated to spurring synergies and collaboration among our key stakeholders and partners in addressing the housing shortage across the county.

Strategic Direction No. 1: Promote an environment of safety and security for the residents of Lake MHA.

Objectives:

- A. Invest dollars in security and protective services for residents and employees.
- B. Identify ways to secure parking lots to decrease the potential for crime and the presence of parking violators while maintaining adequate parking for our residents and employees.
- C. Maintain continued strong partnerships with local police departments.

Progress:

- A. Lake MHA continues to fund upgrades to its security surveillance at all Multifamily-owned properties. Parking lots including general areas around the building and all interior common areas, hallways, and laundry rooms have full 24-hour surveillance.
- B. Adequate security and parking at Woodlawn Homes remain a concern for residents. Lake MHA has completed its review and has determined that upgraded security cameras are required to ensure the safety of residents. Lake MHA is seeking to procure LPR video surveillance (license plate reader) that will feed data in real-time to Painesville City Police. Installation of LPR surveillance is expected to be installed at the other property locations later this year.

- C. Lake MHA continues to foster strong partnerships with the Painesville and Willoughby City Police Departments. In 2023, Lake MHA and the Painesville City Police Department worked to increase patrol and presence at Jackson Towers. Lake MHA will also continue to seek opportunities to procure the services of local police through increased patrol and presence at all properties.

Strategic Direction No. 2: Preserve the current Lake MHA portfolio of affordable housing.

Objectives:

- A. Complete the disposition of the remaining 25 Public Housing units.
- B. Invest available capital reserves in critical housing repair and restoration projects.

Progress

- A. Lake MHA has reached an agreement with Regional Economically Affordable Housing and expects to complete the sale of Parkview Place and the disposition of the 25 remaining Public Housing units by the close of the current fiscal year.
- B. Lake MHA has completed the repair and restoration of the exterior façade and the spalling concrete at Jackson Towers. The Woodlawn Homes waterproofing project has also been completed. Lake MHA is currently seeking bids to replace the fire alarm systems at both Washington Square and Jackson Towers.

Strategic Direction No. 3: Seek opportunities to expand into new areas of affordable housing and supportive services.

Objectives:

- A. Identify a housing project to initiate under the housing authority's non-profit affiliate, Reach 4 Home.
- B. Continue to seek partnerships with existing property owners who may benefit from property management services provided by the housing authority.

Progress:

- A. Lake MHA has relocated most of its remaining Public Housing tenants and is now securing the funding to convert the remaining 25 Public Housing units in Willoughby into low-rent market-rate apartments. The completion of this project will provide low-income to middle-income families with more choices of affordable housing in areas having greater access to economic opportunities. Lake Metropolitan has established an expansion of our housing programs under the auspices of the housing authority's non-profit affiliate, Reach 4 Home.
- B. Lake MHA is currently reevaluating the merits of its plans to offer property management services amidst inflation in supply and administrative costs. Lake MHA has developed language in the 2023

Administrative Plan to provide property owners with financial incentives to lease up Housing Choice Voucher holders. These incentives are geared to create stable partnerships while also increasing housing options for low and extremely low-income families.

Strategic Direction No. 4: Provide healthy and supportive living environments through policy and partnerships.

Objectives:

- A. Seek partners to support the Housing Authority's goal to assist Lake County elderly/disabled with aging in place. By 2030, it is estimated that 1 in 3 residents will be 60+.
- B. Work to strengthen partnership and collaboration with the Lake County government and Fair Housing Resource Center, Inc. in support of our shared goal to affirmatively further fair housing.
- C. Seek out opportunities to collaborate with Lake County community partners to provide housing opportunities for individuals living with disabilities.

Progress:

- A. The overwhelming majority of older adults prefer to age in place by remaining in their current homes or communities. Lake MHA will continue to seek ways to assist our residents.
- B. Lake MHA continues to affirmatively further fair housing to ensure equal access to assisted housing. Lake MHA remains responsive to claims of unfair treatment and works with complainants to resolve concerns. If the matter is of a nature requiring a greater response, staff directs individuals to the Lake County Fair Housing Resource Center and Equal Opportunity Office of HUD. Lake MHA will continue to work in partnership with Lake County, as well as the Fair Housing Resource Center, Inc. to implement a shared Assessment of Fair Housing. In addition, Lake MHA in partnership with the Lake County Fair Housing Resource Center continues to receive annual training through the Fair Housing webinar training series. Lake MHA has completed its Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing Plan. The plan will be structured to target and address the lack of affordable housing units in Lake County among extremely low to low-income families and individuals with disabilities and address housing discrimination against members of protected classes.
- C. Lake MHA continues to explore more housing opportunities for individuals living with a disability. Lake MHA seeks to secure partnerships with Extended Housing Inc. and the Lake County ADAMHS Board to further explore the possibility of bringing project-based housing assistance opportunities to individuals living with mental and physical disabilities in Lake County. Lake MHA will continue conversations with our partners at Project Hope for the Homeless and Lake Geauga Habitat for Humanity to both collaborate and vet additional voucher assistance and housing opportunities.

Strategic Direction No. 5: Continue to improve systems and customer service to enable Lake MHA to be more proficient, proactive, and responsive.

Objectives:

- A. Seek ways to strengthen landlord relations to increase location and quality of housing choices for program participants.
- B. Support and be responsive to the active participation of the Resident Advisory Board.
- C. Proactively review and update both HUD-mandated and PHA discretionary policies that are in the best interest of the residents and the PHA.
- D. Maximize Access to Publicly Supported Housing - ensure both Public Housing and HCV Voucher leasing are maximized.

Progress:

- A. Lake MHA has launched the landlord incentive program to engage new landlords and develop/maintain existing landlord relationships. Lake MHA remains hopeful that the program will improve landlord engagement among landlords of residential single-family home units. In addition, Lake MHA co-sponsored a landlord education and appreciation event which was well attended. Lake MHA will continue to hold these events on an annual basis including smaller community meetings throughout the year.
- B. Lake MHA has resumed resident meetings to facilitate discussion on housing, assess the needs of its residents, and ensure that services and support are aligned to meet those needs.
- C. Lake MHA undertakes this activity annually, in conjunction with its annual plan submissions. Lake MHA will seek HUD approval to continue offering the maximum payment standard of 120% of FMR. This will ensure that housing vouchers remain an attractive option for landlords amidst rising rental prices across the local market. In addition, Lake MHA has initiated Choice Mobility which will offer Housing Choice Vouchers to eligible Multifamily residents interested in finding affordable housing in communities of their choice.
- D. Lake MHA continues to aggressively hire staff and repurpose existing personnel to bolster needed administrative support to offer more housing opportunities to the residents of Lake County.