



# ANNUAL REPORT

# 2014

A NEW BEGINNING

# 2015



## Impacting Our Community

SMHA values its commitment to provide decent, safe, and affordable housing to eligible residents in Stark County. Maintaining a good quality of life depends upon a community having sufficient affordable housing and housing options.

We strive to positively impact families by enabling them to secure high quality housing through our various housing programs and services.

SMHA operations also contribute to the local economy. Our partnerships with local community agencies and governmental entities provide valuable resources to our residents and strengthen our commitment to continue community efforts in the future.

SMHA also works closely with contractors and local vendors, pays wages to its employees, and provides responsible landlords a secure rental income; in turn, impacting our local economy by investing in our community.

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## Mission Statement

The Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority (SMHA) provides eligible residents of Stark County with quality affordable housing in decent, safe, and nourishing neighborhoods. By working in partnership with the public and private sectors, SMHA provides families with housing choices and opportunities.



# A Message from the Executive Director

Dear Community Stakeholders,

I am proud to present the Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority Report to the Community for the 2015 fiscal year, a year which marks a new beginning for SMHA, our residents, and the community in which we serve. SMHA embarked on an exciting journey several years ago beginning with a change in leadership and staff who have reaffirmed our core values. By reflecting on the challenges of our past, I am confident we will continue to positively impact our future.

Throughout the 2015 fiscal year, focus was placed on reviving our partnerships with community agencies, increasing the quality of services provided to our residents, and restoring accountability. Our various supportive program initiatives have continued to foster self-sufficiency in our clientele and collaborative efforts with governmental and community organizations have provided families with opportunities and resources to bond and grow.

SMHA has established partnerships with local agencies to offer permanent supportive housing opportunities to the homeless. SMHA's commitment to help end homelessness in our community is evidenced, in part, by our participation in the Homeless Continuum of Care of Stark County and the Homeless Services Collaborative. Programs assist homeless individuals and their families to increase housing stability, increase skills and/or income, and obtain greater self-sufficiency.

I, like many others, actively support military heroes living in our community who have served our great nation at home and abroad. I am pleased that the strides SMHA has taken to assist our veterans have provided a number of needed services and increased the number of available housing vouchers.

As we move further into 2015, SMHA will continue to address smart policing strategies, provide fair housing opportunities for all residents, streamline operations, build sustainable partnerships, and effectively invest in our communities.

I would like to thank the SMHA Board of Commissioners, our community partners, executive leadership team, and staff for upholding our mission to provide quality affordable housing in decent, safe, and nourishing neighborhoods to the residents of Stark County.

We have taken great pride in changing the culture of SMHA and embracing the philosophy of serving others. We must learn from our past, focus on the present, and initiate a strong plan for a brighter future. I hope that you will continue to support SMHA as we continue on our journey, achieve our goals, and serve the residents of Stark County—this is only the beginning!

Sincerely,



Herman L. Hill, MPA, PHM  
Executive Director



## Executive Staff

**Bruce Allison**  
Chief of Security

**Marty Chumney**  
Director of Housing Choice Voucher Program

**Michael Cody**  
Director of Asset Management

**Veda Davis**  
Assistant Director of Asset Management

**Aaron Ledet**  
Director of Planning & Development

**Robin Mingo-Miles**  
Director of Resident & Community Affairs

**Corey Minor Smith**  
Director of Legal Services

**Jeff Patterson**  
Director of Finance

**Annette Smith**  
Director of HR/Risk Management

**Shellie Thomas**  
Director of Freed Housing

## Board of Commissioners



FRONT: Jeffrey McDaniels, Daniel Fonte, Roger Mann,  
BACK: Dan McMasters and Marilyn Frazier

## “People Housing People”





# Services at a Glance

## Public Housing Program

2,546 Housing units  
Serving over 4,000 residents  
24-hour online application  
Renovated 395 units

## Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV)

Administered over 1,500 Vouchers  
Over 1,500 Section 8 participants  
1,700 inspections completed  
600 participating landlords  
Over \$6.4 million paid to landlords

## Security

Responded to 321 security hotline calls  
Served 110 violation notices  
Hosted 74 security meetings with residents  
Addressed over 1,700 incident calls

## Reasonable Accommodations

Received and responded to over 150 requests

## Assisted Housing

48 Tax Credit units  
194 Multi-Family units

## Development

Completed 22 projects  
Awarded \$588,643.45 in construction, service,  
and maintenance contracts

## Special Programs

Administered 275 transitional and permanent  
supportive housing vouchers







## Resident Services

SMHA offers a wide variety of services and activities to assist our residents with providing the needed tools and resources to facilitate self-sufficiency, success, and an improved quality of life. We continue to focus on education, safety, and health and wellness initiatives which benefit the full spectrum of our resident population. Collaborating with various community agencies, SMHA provided many services in 2014 which benefited and positively impacted Stark County residents.

### Resident Initiative Program

The Resident Initiative Program was designed to assist residents with achieving self-sufficiency through employment opportunities, job training, mentorships, and access to educational resources. The program supports residents through their educational and career endeavors and serves to promote these efforts through local partnerships and programs in our community.

### Summer Lunch Program

In collaboration with Plain Local Schools, SMHA offers lunch to school-aged children at various housing sites. We recognize the importance of promoting healthy lifestyle choices for our residents; providing a nutritious lunch during the summer months is one way that SMHA impacts and serves our youth.

### Senior Support

SMHA prides itself on providing programs and services that benefit the health and wellness of our senior residents. Influenza vaccines are made available to qualifying residents at little or no cost. Meals on Wheels provides hot lunches at various locations, and Senior Council forums meet monthly to exchange information on topics of concern and provides valuable resources to our senior residents.

### Albert H. McIlwain Scholarship

For over 20 years, the Albert H. McIlwain Scholarship has provided educational opportunities to worthy members of the Stark County community. Annually, SMHA honors two Public Housing residents or HCV participants with a \$500 scholarship to help fulfill academic and career goals. These scholarships are an intricate part of SMHA's goal to develop opportunities for our residents to build leadership skills, a strong work ethic, and foster education and career success.



## Building Strong Partnerships

“We’re a better, stronger and healthier community when all youth and families have access to places like the Y. We, at the Y, want to do all we can to strengthen the foundation of the community by positively impacting the lives of youth, families, and seniors.”

**Tim Shetzer, CEO**  
YMCA



“With over 270 Membership Vouchers issued to our residents, our partnership with the YMCA will greatly benefit the health and wellness of our residents and will positively impact our agency as a whole.”

**Herman L. Hill**

## Impacting Our Community

### YMCA Partnership Provides Healthy Lifestyle Choices

The YMCA and SMHA formed a partnership in March 2015 to assist residents with access to YMCA programs and services throughout the county. With access to 250 group exercise classes, a variety of health and wellness programs for youth and families, residents are able to learn about healthy lifestyle choices and are provided the support to implement them in their daily lives.



### Family Resource Rooms Open at Linwood Acres and Jackson Sherrick

In collaboration with the Early Childhood Resource Center, Incept, and Stark County Job and Family Services, SMHA is proud to announce the opening of two family learning stations which offer a dramatic play area, an art station, and a quiet reading area.







Victor Mitchell, a U.S. Army Veteran who served from 1980– 1983, has been a SMHA Veteran’s Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program participant since November 2013 and has been a regular attendee at weekly Substance Use Disorder (SUD) group meetings for over a year. Reflecting on his tumultuous experiences, Victor stated, “I had to make a decision coming out of high school and I chose to go to the military which was the best decision of my life. I was a medical specialist, stationed in Fort Polk, Louisiana in the early 80’s and later worked for Alliance Community Hospital. From there, things took a turn for the worse and I was homeless, living in abandoned buildings and cars”. When asked about his experience with SMHA’s VASH program, Victor can’t help but smile. “I’ve come a long way and am very grateful. I’ve been given the opportunity to acquire quality affordable housing and many household items which has been a life changing experience. I was hopeless and homeless; receiving a housing voucher means a lot and truly saved my life.”

## HCV Program Offers New Housing Voucher Opportunities for Homeless Veterans

In 2014, HUD awarded SMHA funding for 15 new VASH vouchers. These housing vouchers are administered in partnership with the Louis Stokes Veterans Administration Medical Center/Akron Community-Based Outpatient Clinic which serves homeless veterans in both Stark and Summit counties. For the past several years, SMHA has focused on providing housing opportunities and expanding the VASH program, increasing the total number of available vouchers from 25, in 2013, to 40, in 2014, for eligible veterans and their families. SMHA in collaboration with the local VA, identify chronically homeless veterans who qualify for the VASH program and facilitate both the voucher issuance and housing lease-up process.



Marlo Havey, a U.S. Army Veteran who served in Desert Storm expressed her gratitude to SMHA, “I’m appreciative for SMHA for providing a space for local veterans to meet.”



# FAIR HOUSING HOT TOPICS: VAWA & PREFERENCES

ALLISON KRETZ, HUD FHEC STAFF



## “Fair Housing” Education



## Fair Housing and Section 504 Compliance

The Fair Housing Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act give residents the right to request a Reasonable Accommodation and/or Modification. The request can be for a change in policy or a modification to the unit. Reasonable Accommodations are available to residents or a household member that has a disability. If a resident or household member has a disability and the request is related to the disability, then SMHA will work with the resident to make:

A change/modification, an exception, or adjustment in the rules, policies, practices or services that will give residents an equal chance to enjoy or participate in the Public Housing or Section 8 program; or a change in the way SMHA communicates and provides information.



“Through education of staff and continuous efforts to affirmatively further fair housing, SMHA was able to successfully resolve Fair Housing complaints filed by a Fair Housing Assistance Program (“FHAP”) with no findings of probable cause.”

Corey Minor Smith  
Director of Legal Services







# Doing Business with SMHA

## How to Become a Registered Vendor



Your company information is subject to certification and background screenings performed by SMHA staff including, but not limited to, verification through the following sources: System for Award Management (SAM), Limited Denial of Participation through HUD, registration through the Secretary of State, and business reference checks.



# Over a Half-Million Dollars Invested in Our Communities

Working closely with registered vendors and contractors, SMHA Planning and Development Department awarded and closed over 20 projects in 2014-2015. These projects include: construction, maintenance, and service contracts that vary in both scope of work and award amount; however, the end result remains consistent for all—an improved quality of life for SMHA residents.

## Completed Projects

Turner Tower Fire Damage

Linwood Catch Basin Repairs

Roof Replacements at Various Locations

Alliance Community Center Parking Lot

Jackson Sherrick Water and Mold Damage Repair

McKinley Park Asbestos Testing

Certified Manager of Maintenance Training

Rent Drop Boxes at Various Locations

Fire Damage Repairs at Jackson Sherrick

Rent Comparability Study

Resident Property Appraisals

Concrete Replacement at Various Locations

Evacuation Plans for Various Buildings at Various Sites

Central Office Cost Center Security Plans

Answering Service for Public Housing Operations

Kimberle Gardens Masonry Wall Repair

Leshdale Concrete Stoop Replacement

Renovation Repairs at Colebrook

**Total— \$588,643**



## Security and Management Staff Improve Operations

A confidential 24/7 information hotline assists our residents in reporting criminal and drug activity and other lease violations on SMHA property. Many valuable calls have been received since its implementation which have helped police and security investigate activity that is detrimental to the safety and welfare of SMHA residents. The security hotline helps ensure all residents are able to enjoy a safe living environment.

“Criminal background check investigations for all new housing applicants is the first step in providing better safety and security for our residents. The Security Department at SMHA strives to provide all residents with a safe and secure place to live. Our department has increased resident awareness over the past year, and we are confident that we will continue to see positive safety trends in the future.”



Bruce Allison  
Chief of Security

## Increasing Safety and Security Measures

Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority security staff is committed to providing all SMHA residents and employees a safe, secure, and healthy living and working environment. Our current partnership with county-wide law enforcement and security agencies embodies that commitment. The desired goal of these partnerships is to improve resident security and safety through proactive policing strategies and better communication with residents, managers, and employees. The Security Department assigns officers to various SMHA properties who have numerous duties and assignments that promote resident and employee health and safety.

### Smart Policing

- Security Meetings for Residents.
- Police Officers stationed at Central Office lobby. Increase in police presence at SMHA sites and Central Office.
- Police patrol at Canton, Massillon, and Alliance locations totaling over 4,831 field hours.





## Finance Department Streamlines Accounting Procedures

Strides have been made over the past year to improve several key areas in the Finance Department which positively impact SMHA employees, tenants, taxpayers; as well as, business partners and landlords. Employees now receive their paychecks through direct deposit which saves time and resources and is a more convenient alternative, than paper checks, for employees.

Contractors and vendors are encouraged to scan and email invoices to SMHA instead of utilizing traditional mail. This expedites the delivery of goods and services and simplifies the billing process. A new policy was also implemented which requires mandatory Electronic Fund Transfers (EFT) of landlord rent payments. This has not only streamlined the department's accounting records but also is beneficial to landlords who receive their payments more timely.

The Finance Department has began to work with residents who request Automatic Clearing House (ACH) payment processing, money drawn directing from an individual's bank account, to pay their rent. Although only about 10% of residents are utilizing this option, we are confident that interest in this service will continue to grow.







## Looking Ahead

### Development Department



The Planning and Development Department will be hosting a series of workshops to assist new vendors and contractors with its registration process and demonstrate how to seek various business opportunities. Other topics that will be covered in each workshop include: departmental policies, Davis Bacon Act of 1931—prevailing wage rules and regulations, Section 3 Certification, and completing and submitting all applicable HUD forms. The department will also be compiling and maintaining an active client database that will be available to potential employers seeking to identify and hire workers.

### Public Housing Operations

Several site improvement projects are currently underway at various housing locations. Plumbing work at several sites, floor replacement, and general housing renovation projects have been scheduled and are anticipated to be completed in the next several months.

### Housing Choice Voucher Program

SMHA staff members are excited to offer new housing opportunities to eligible residents in the future. The wait-list, which opened on May 1st and closed on June 15th has attracted over 3,000 applicants.

A woman in a blue shirt and a young girl in a pink shirt are sitting at a wooden table. They are both smiling and looking at a piece of paper on the table. There are some small objects and a box on the table.
A man in a grey shirt and two young children in red shirts are sitting at a wooden table. They are all smiling and looking at a piece of paper on the table. There are some small objects and a box on the table.



# SMHA Operating Statement

(April 1, 2014—March 31, 2015)

## Statement of Revenue and Expenses

### Revenue

Subsidy and Grant	\$18,870,598
Tenant	5,693,548
Other	497,773

Total Revenue	<u>\$25,061,919</u>
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### Expenditures

Operating and Administrative	\$4,684,428
Utilities	3,610,213
Maintenance	5,522,007
Insurance Premiums and Protective Services	890,663
Other General Expenses	2,854,303
Housing Assistance Payments	7,775,246

Total Operating Expenses	<u>\$25,336,860</u>
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Excess of Revenue over Expenses	<u><u>(\$274,941)</u></u>
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## Economic Impact

Paid \$6,545,678 to vendors

Paid \$6,673,336 to Housing Choice Voucher landlords

Paid over \$4,660,837 in gross wages in calendar year 2014

Remitted \$95,315 in local, \$116,655 in state, and \$456,952 in federal income taxes



# Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority

“People Housing People”

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