



Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority

STRATEGIC PLAN

2018-2023



Message from the Executive Director

I am proud to present the Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority's 2018 - 2023 Strategic Plan. The strategic vision and directives outlined in this document are designed to achieve SMHA's mission to provide eligible residents of Stark County with decent, safe and affordable housing and contribute to nourishing neighborhoods by working in partnership with the public and private sectors.

SMHA has been meeting the housing needs of Stark County residents for nearly 80 years. In that span of eight decades we have seen the housing market fluctuate, the needs of individuals, families and seniors evolve and the community adjust to changing economies. One thing that has remained constant through the change is SMHA's commitment to provide quality affordable housing throughout Stark County.

SMHA has a strong history in the community. We are positioned with this strategic plan in hand to grow in our positive impact and influence. We boast a strong leadership team of qualified professionals committed to excellence. We have strong diversity in culture, race, gender and ethnicity among staff and residents. SMHA staff is unparalleled in its unwavering commitment to provide a quality housing experience for our residents.

In fall of 2017 the Board and executive leadership team embarked on a journey to develop a long-term vision for our agency and explore opportunities to strengthen SMHA. We asked many of you to join us on this journey, and we are grateful for the overwhelming response we received. We disseminated surveys, held meetings and focus groups and otherwise engaged you in conversations. We appreciate your candor and your reflective thoughts on SMHA and our shared future. You will find your words, ideas and suggestions woven into the fabric of this strategic plan.

SMHA serves our residents, but we recognize that we have a broader role in improving our community. During this process we revised our mission statement to better outline our intent to contribute to nourishing neighborhoods by working in partnership with the public and private sectors while we continue to provide affordable housing options to the community. We also articulated an enhanced vision statement to provide the ideal for which we strive in our quest for excellence. SMHA is determined to be the premier housing provider, championing an improved quality of life for SMHA residents and the Stark County community.

I ask for your continued partnership with our organization in our quest for impact and influence. Please invite us to join you at your table. We are open to your thoughts and suggestions and partnership. I ask you to hold us accountable for our strategic direction and I invite you to come alongside us to make a greater impact in our community.

Respectfully,

Herman L. Hill, MPA, PHM, EDEP
Executive Director



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

SMHA is governed by a five-member Board of Commissioners authorized under Ohio Revised Code Chapter 3735. The board actively participated in the development of this strategic plan. The current SMHA Commissioners are:

- Roger Mann, Chair** *Appointed by Stark County Board of Commissioners*
- Dan McMasters, Vice Chair** *Appointed by Stark County Court of Common Pleas*
- Jeffrey McDaniels** *Appointed by City of Canton Mayor*
- Nenya Ross** *Appointed by City of Canton Mayor*
- Tim Shetzer** *Appointed by the Stark County Court of Common Pleas, Probate Division.*

EXECUTIVE TEAM

SMHA is led by its Executive Director, Herman Hill and a strong executive team. The executive team participated directly in the development of this strategic plan through strategic planning work sessions, one-on-one meetings and facilitated discussions. The team also encouraged and paved the way for staff and constituents to participate in the process. The Executive Team will largely be responsible for implementation of the strategic plan through the respective departments and areas of oversight. The current Executive Team is:

- Bruce E. Allison**, *Chief of Security*
- Marty Chumney**, *Director of Housing Choice Voucher Program*
- KimberLee Centeno**, *Director of Asset Management*
- Veda Davis**, *Ass't Director of Asset Management*
- Jeff Patterson**, *Director of Finance*
- Kevin Schaack**, *Director of Human Resources and Risk Management*
- Corey Minor Smith**, *Director of Legal Services*
- Ashley Wright**, *Interim Director of Planning and Development*





INTRODUCTION

This document presents Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority’s Strategic Plan for 2018 through 2023. Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority (SMHA) is a political subdivision of the state of Ohio and funded in part by the United States Department of Housing & Urban Development to provide subsidized housing and self-sufficiency opportunities for eligible citizens of Stark County.

SMHA operates in accordance with the Federal Fair Housing Law. It is the policy of SMHA to house persons without regard to race, color, religion, sex, family status, handicap, or national origin.

SMHA’s mission is to provide eligible residents of Stark County with decent, safe and affordable housing and contribute to nourishing neighborhoods by working in partnership with the public and private sectors. The Strategic Plan outlines a set of strategic directions, goals, objectives, and performance measures to provide a framework for the delivery of SMHA’s mission and vision. The plan will serve as a guide for what SMHA will achieve, how the organization will achieve it, and how success will be measured and monitored.

Since the organization was established in 1939, the agency has provided affordable housing to the community - first as Canton Metropolitan Housing Authority then as Canton Massillon Metropolitan Housing Authority and now as Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority. Though the name has evolved over the years, the commitment to provide quality affordable housing to low-income families and individuals in the community has remained steadfast.

Over the past five years, SMHA has worked tirelessly to strengthen its core competencies, engage new partners, and adjust policies and protocol to better serve the residents of Stark County. This strategic plan represents the organization’s dedication to continuous improvement and its unwavering desire to continue its community impact into the future. It’s a new day at SMHA – one that reflects the organization’s commitment to be both the premier affordable housing provider in the county and an example to housing authorities across the Midwest. SMHA has refined its mission and vision and has identified core values to drive the organization forward. SMHA has involved its community partners, residents, staff and leadership in the process of developing this plan and the result is a strong pathway to strengthen SMHA and guide its steps forward in meeting the affordable housing needs of the community into the future.



MISSION, VISION AND CORE VALUES

As part of the strategic planning process, SMHA refined its mission and vision statements to clearly identify the agency’s current charge and articulate where the team envisions its future. This process included the adoption of ten core values that will drive the culture of SMHA into the future.

Mission

To provide eligible residents of Stark County with decent, safe and affordable housing and contribute to nourishing neighborhoods by working in partnership with the public and private sectors.

Vision

SMHA is a premier housing provider, championing an improved quality of life for SMHA residents and the Stark County community.

In addition to mission and vision, the executive leadership team and Board of Commissioners adopted a list of ten core values to create the culture in which the organization will function.

Core Values

- Teamwork
- Customer Focus
- Safety
- Ethics
- Community engagement
- Respect
- Professionalism
- Efficiency
- Diversity
- Innovation

CORE VALUES

The core values that were identified by SMHA during the strategic planning process will create a culture for staff and residents that fully support the achievement of the strategic directions outlined in the strategic plan. These tenets will be posted in conspicuous places at our headquarters and at each SMHA property. The SMHA team will seek to represent these values in their interpersonal relationships and their respective roles in the organization.

Teamwork: Our team is supportive of each other's efforts, loyal to one another, and cares for each other both personally and professionally.

Customer focus: We recognize residents are our customers. We will treat them with respect, address their needs and honor commitments that we have made to them.

Safety: We are uncompromising in our commitment to the safety of our employees, residents, and community. We will continually strive to improve our processes, demonstrate leadership, and promote comprehensive safety.

Ethics: We commit to maintain the highest levels of integrity and ethical conduct. We will expect all staff to uphold the highest ethical standards and management will lead by example in our dealings with co-workers, residents, partners and vendors.

Community engagement: SMHA will continually seek out opportunities to partner with community organizations and provide opportunity for community influencers to participate in the work of SMHA.

Respect: We approach our work with a deep respect for different opinions and seek to find common ground. We will treat those we encounter with respect and dignity and will foster a culture of respect within our teams.

Professionalism: We commit to abide by high ethical standards of behavior, encourage professional development and apply specialized knowledge for the public good.

Efficiency: We seek effective and efficient ways to solve problems and better serve our residents. We will strive to continuously enhance the results of our work and will be good stewards of the resources allocated to us.

Diversity: We commit to lead and model diversity in staff, residents, partners, and vendors. We will embrace differences and see them as an enhancement to our organization and our work.

Innovation: We value and encourage change, creativity, and commitment in achieving and sustaining a quality work environment through continuous improvement. We will continually seek better, more efficient ways to fulfill our mission.

OUTLOOK



Trends and Facts

In the process of developing SMHA’s strategic plan, the organization monitored and explored external trends and environmental conditions in Stark County that may impact the agency and its work over the next five years. These trends and conditions are instructive in considering strategic direction and establishing opportunities for the organization moving forward:

- **There are growth opportunities for employment.** There are large numbers of companies in Stark County positioned for growth. There is opportunity as companies expand employment opportunities and prepare for the next generation of workers to replace those retiring. The Johnson Controls Hall of Fame Village development will also provide workforce opportunities and expand tourism in the county with an anticipated economic impact of \$25billion over the next 25 years.
- **Relative wealth in the community is decreasing and poverty rates are increasing.** The increase in poverty is increasing the demand for affordable and subsidized housing and is putting a strain on the social services agencies in the community.
- **Stark County’s population is declining.** The population in the county fell 6% between 2000 and 2017 and current conditions indicate the population will continue to decrease unless there is intentional intervention.
- **The number of working age adults in Stark County is declining.** Between 2010 and 2015 the number of working age adults *nationwide* increased but in Stark County the number fell by 5%. A continued decline in working adults will result in a continued reduction in the county’s tax base.
- **Stark County’s population is aging.** If current trends continue, in less than a decade 23% of Stark County’s residents will be age 65 or older and younger adults, ages 17-34, will comprise only 17% of the population.
- **Opportunities through public-private partnerships may expand opportunities for SMHA.** *Strengthening Stark: a Call for Economic Transformation* is actively pursuing public-private partnerships to address job creation, job preparation and job access, which may result in increased opportunity for SMHA to be involved in new partnerships and increased opportunity for SMHA’s residents.

- **There is increased demand for public transportation in the county.** A growing number of Stark County residents do not have access to a car and rely solely on public transportation. This trend is likely to continue.
- **The majority of housing in Stark County was built prior to 1980.** The housing stock in Stark County is aging and there is limited growth in new housing development.
- **Technological advances are accelerating.** Technology is changing rapidly and changing technology will be increasingly essential for accessing housing and related services.
- **Viability and sustainability of federal public housing funding is uncertain.** The current federal administration has voiced concern with continuing public housing and other affordable housing subsidy programs at current levels. The future viability of public housing is uncertain.



Impact of Trends and Environmental Conditions

There are some predictable changes for which SMHA can plan and prepare and others that may require monitoring to assess impact over time. The impact of current trends and environmental conditions have been integrated into this strategic plan.

Predictable changes

- Advances in technology
 - Information technology
 - Building and design of housing
- Consumer/customer preferences
 - Housing location – part of county, proximity to necessities (grocery store, bus line)
 - Housing style – single family detached, high-rise, complex
- Property aging
- Changing business practices
- Changing workforce expectations

Unpredictable changes

- Uncertainty around federal funding
- Supply and demand of social services/supportive services

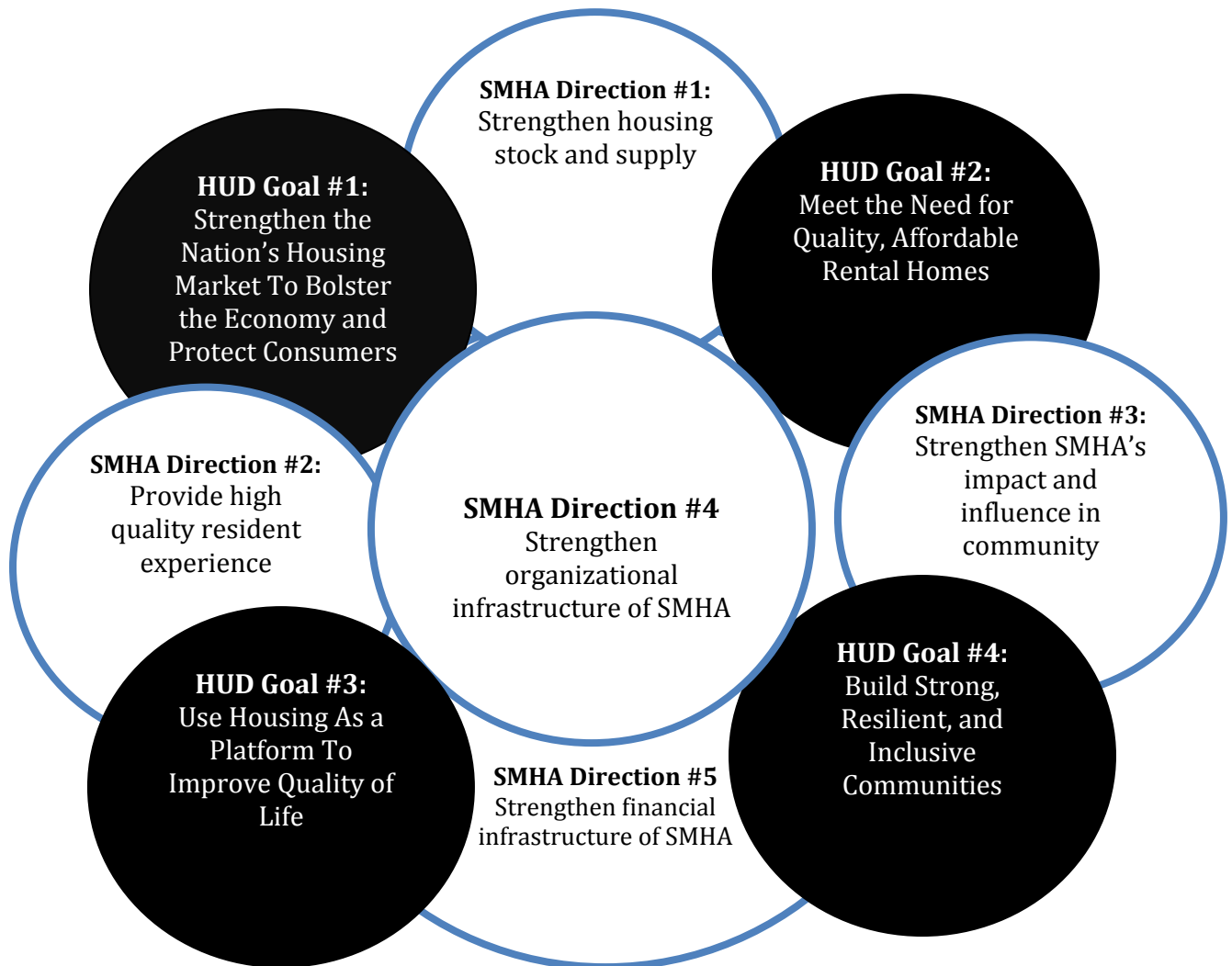
STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS, GOALS & OBJECTIVES



Strategic Direction

The SMHA strategic plan contains five strategic directions to guide the organization into the future. These directions provide a clear course and framework for decision making for the organization. Each strategic direction is supported by identified goals and objectives.

As a public agency funded largely by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, SMHA has created its directions in consideration of HUD’s current strategic goals. The integration of these SMHA directions and HUD goals are represented below:





Strategic Direction 1: Strengthen housing stock and supply

Strategic Direction 1 is directly aligned with the mission of SMHA and HUD's strategic goals to (1) *strengthen the nation's housing market to bolster the economy and protect consumers* and (2) *meet the need for quality, affordable rental homes*. This strategic direction will be met through the attainment of three goals with accompanying objectives as follows:

Goal 1.1: Improve quality of existing housing stock

Objective 1.1.1: Aggressively work to meet UPCS standards on 100% of units in SMHA-owned property.

Timeline: May 31, 2020

Person Responsible: Director of Asset Management

Objective 1.1.2: Identify other property improvements needed to improve quality of SMHA-owned properties and outline plan to make improvements.

Timeline: May 31, 2019

Person Responsible: Director of Asset Management

Objective 1.1.3: Create process for conducting ad hoc inspections and ensuring maintenance of HQS quality standards for Section 8 properties.

Timeline: May 31, 2019

Person Responsible: Director of Housing Choice Voucher Program

Objective 1.1.4: Develop plan for modernization of identified properties.

Timeline: May 31, 2020

Person Responsible: Director of Asset Management

Goal 1.2: Maintain ongoing knowledge of ongoing affordable housing needs in Stark County

Objective 1.2.1: Identify and commit to participate in local CoC and other coalitions and consortiums involved in affordable housing

Timeline: May 31, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Resident Services Manager

Objective 1.2.2: Review relevant studies and plans that identify affordable housing needs in Stark County

Timeline: May 31, 2019

Person Responsible: Resident Services Manager

Objective 1.2.3: Review federal and state documents and studies that impact affordable housing. Identify industry trends and offer instructive recommendations to SMHA.

Timeline: May 31, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Executive Director

Goal 1.3: Explore opportunities to increase affordable housing stock

Objective 1.3.1: Actively explore opportunities to diversify housing portfolio.

Timeline: May 31, 2020

Person Responsible: Director of Planning and Development

Objective 1.3.2: Explore opportunities to create housing in underserved areas and communities of need.

Timeline: May 31, 2021

Person Responsible: Director of Planning and Development

Objective 1.3.3: Explore opportunity to increase number of housing vouchers

Timeline: May 31, 2021

Person Responsible: Director of Housing Choice Voucher Program



Strategic Direction 2: Provide high quality resident experience

Strategic Direction 2 is directly aligned with the mission of SMHA and HUD's strategic goals to (1) *strengthen the nation's housing market to bolster the economy and protect consumers* and (3) *to use housing as a platform to improve the quality of life*. This strategic direction will be met through the attainment of seven goals with accompanying objectives as follows:

Goal 2.1: Enhance orientation for new residents

Objective 2.1.1: Design, develop and provide packet of information to all new residents regarding SMHA, landlord/tenant law, resident councils, process and protocol for grievances and communications.

Timeline: January 31, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Resident Services Manager

Objective 2.1.2: Hold orientation sessions for new residents to review information about residency and answer questions.

Timeline: May 31, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Resident Services Manager

Goal 2.2: Demonstrate strong customer service skills

Objective 2.2.1: Provide agency-wide training on customer service

Timeline: January 31, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Director of Human Resources and Risk Management

Objective 2.2.2: Codify protocol, policy and processes that align with culture of customer service.

Timeline: May 31, 2019

Person Responsible: Director of Human Resources and Risk Management

Goal 2.3: Provide responsive and quality maintenance

Objective 2.3.1: Standardize protocol and processes for maintenance responses and completions across properties.

Timeline: January 1, 2019

Person Responsible: Director of Asset Management

Objective 2.3.2: Explore ways to improve efficiencies for responding to work orders

Timeline: May 31, 2019

Person Responsible: Director of Asset Management

Objective 2.3.3: Establish and implement procedure to monitor responsiveness and quality

Timeline: May 31, 2019

Person Responsible: Director of Asset Management

Goal 2.4: Provide responsive and proactive communication

Objective 2.4.1: Standardize internal communication protocol for addressing and responding to resident concerns.

Timeline: May 31, 2019

Person Responsible: Director of Asset Management

Objective 2.4.2: Explore ways to improve efficiencies for responding to resident concerns.

Timeline: May 31, 2019

Person Responsible: Director of Asset Management

Objective 2.4.3: Establish and implement procedure to monitor responsiveness and resolution.

Timeline: May 31, 2019

Person Responsible: Director of Asset Management

Objective 2.4.4: Establish and/or strengthen resident councils at each property

Timeline: May 31, 2019

Person Responsible: Resident Services Manager

Goal 2.5: Provide opportunities for residents to engage in supportive services

Objective 2.5.1: Create formal partnerships with local nonprofits to provide quality services and programs to residents in the areas of workforce development, life skills (cleaning, budgeting, etc) and health and wellness.

Timeline: May 31, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Resident Services Manager

Objective 2.5.2: Explore and disseminate opportunities for residents to participate in existing supportive services available in community.

Timeline: May 31, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Resident Services Manager

Objective 2.5.3: Explore opportunities for SMHA staff or residents to provide quality services and programs to residents in the areas of life skills and mentoring.

Timeline: May 31, 2019

Person Responsible: Resident Services Manager

Goal 2.6: Provide safe living environment

Objective 2.6.1: Conduct safety check at each property and outline plan to address physical safety concerns.

Timeline: January 1, 2019

Person Responsible: Chief of Security

Objective 2.6.2: Develop or update safety plan for each SMHA-owned property.

Timeline: May 31, 2019

Person Responsible: Chief of Security

Objective 2.6.3: Engage and train resident councils to serve as ‘neighborhood watch’ and follow safety plan protocol.

Timeline: September 1, 2019

Person Responsible: Chief of Security

Objective 2.6.4: Asset manager/on-site management develop personal relationship with local police.

Timeline: January 1, 2019

Person Responsible: Director of Asset Management

Goal 2.7: Enhance living environment for families

Objective 2.7.1: Establish and strengthen resident councils at family properties to create avenue for resident-input on enhancing living environment.

Timeline: May 31, 2019

Person Responsible: Resident Services Manager

Objective 2.7.2: Explore installation and management of playgrounds on properties.

Timeline: May 31, 2019

Person Responsible: Director of Planning and Development



Strategic Direction 3: Strengthen SMHA's impact and influence in the community

Strategic Direction 3 is directly aligned with the mission of SMHA and HUD's strategic goals to (2) *meet the need for quality, affordable rental homes* and (4) *build strong, resilient and inclusive communities*. This strategic direction will be met through the attainment of seven goals with accompanying objectives as follows:

Goal 3.1: Increase participation in community coalitions, consortiums and task forces.

Objective 3.1.1: Seek out opportunities to lead and participate in community efforts consistent with SMHA's strategic directions, goals, and objectives.

Timeline: May 31, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Resident Services Manager



Objective 3.1.2: Strengthen the relationship and partnership with Homeless Continuum of Care of Stark County (HCCSC)

Timeline: January 1, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Director of Planning and Development

Goal 3.2: Strengthen partnerships with local municipalities and county.

Objective 3.2.1: Create intentional connections between Executive Director and local public officials.

Timeline: January 1, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Executive Director

Objective 3.2.2: Explore opportunities for c-level participation on collaborations requiring public-private partnerships.

Timeline: May 31, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Executive Director

Goal 3.3: Strengthen SMHA partnerships with local influencers.

Objective 3.3.1: Identify local leaders and influencers.

Timeline: January 1, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Executive Director

Objective 3.3.2: Create intentional connections between Executive Director and local leaders and influencers.

Timeline: May 31, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Executive Director

Objective 3.3.3: Explore opportunities for participation in civic organizations (Rotary, Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce, Stark Civic Group)

Timeline: January 1, 2019

Person Responsible: Executive Director and executive leadership team

Objective 3.3.4: Participate in civic organizations (Rotary, Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce, Stark Civic Group)

Timeline: March 1, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Executive Director and executive leadership team

Goal 3.4: Identify formal partnership opportunities to further SMHA's directions, goals, and objectives.

Objective 3.4.1: Explore opportunities with community partners that align with SMHA directives.

Timeline: March 1, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Director of Planning and Development

Goal 3.5: Explore opportunities to better market SMHA in community

Objective 3.5.1: Identify and resource position to drive marketing and community engagement effort.

Timeline: January 1, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Executive Director

Objective 3.5.2: Create external communication strategy that includes newsletter, blog, social media

Timeline: March 1, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Director of Planning and Development

Objective 3.5.3: Explore new channels for community engagement including events and resource fairs

Timeline: March 1, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Resident Services Manager

Goal 3.6: Provide avenue for monitoring impact and influence of SMHA in community.

Objective 3.6.1: Define indicators of success of SMHA's impact and influence in the community and develop monitoring tools.

Timeline: May 31, 2020

Person Responsible: Executive Director and executive leadership team

Objective 3.6.2: Create and disseminate annual survey to community partners

Timeline: November 1, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Executive Director

Objective 3.6.3: Create comment option on website to garner feedback from the community.

Timeline: March 1, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Director of Finance (IT)

Objective 3.6.4: Monitor and respond as appropriate to community feedback from website.

Timeline: March 1, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Director of Finance (IT)

Goal 3.7: Celebrate accomplishments and milestones with community

Objective 3.7.1: Identify upcoming accomplishments and milestones for SMHA

Timeline: November 1, 2018 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Director of Planning and Development

Objective 3.7.2: Outline plan to celebrate or notify community of accomplishments and milestones for SMHA.

Timeline: March 1, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Director of Planning and Development

Objective 3.7.3: Plan and hold event in celebration of SMHA 80-year anniversary

Timeline: November 1, 2019

Person Responsible: Executive Director



Strategic Direction 4: Strengthen organizational infrastructure of SMHA

Strategic Direction 4 is required to fulfill the mission of SMHA and is necessary to fulfill HUD's strategic goals to (1) *strengthen the nation's housing market to bolster the economy and protect consumers*; (2) *meet the need for quality, affordable rental homes*; (3) *to use housing as a platform to improve the quality of life*; and, (4) *build strong, resilient and inclusive communities*. This strategic direction will be met through the attainment of six goals with accompanying objectives as follows:

Goal 4.1: Enhance organizational culture

Objective 4.1.1: Explore new branding for SMHA, including name change, logo, slogan, marketing methodologies or a combination of these elements.

Timeline: November 1, 2019

Person Responsible: Executive Director and executive leadership team

Objective 4.1.2: Explore how to use mission, vision and values to enhance organizational culture for residents and staff.

Timeline: November 1, 2018

Person Responsible: Director of Human Resources and Risk Management

Objective 4.1.3: Conduct team meetings to introduce staff to new mission, vision and values; engage them in understanding the direct connection to daily work; and, shape standards for practical application in each department.

Timeline: January 1, 2019

Person Responsible: Director of Human Resources and Risk Management

Objective 4.1.4: Explore new ways to increase staff-engagement in decision-making for SMHA and make recommendations for change in policy and processes.

Timeline: August 1, 2018

Person Responsible: Director of Human Resources and Risk Management

Goal 4.2: Enhance training opportunities for staff.

Objective 4.2.1: Develop formal training for orienting new staff on SMHA mission, vision and core values.

Timeline: January 1, 2019

Person Responsible: Director of Human Resources and Risk Management

Objective 4.2.2: Develop formal orientation and on-going training for job-specific responsibilities and tasks.

Timeline: January 1, 2019

Person Responsible: Director of Human Resources and Risk Management

Objective 4.2.3: Develop developmental goals, objectives and methods for evaluating and measuring success for each department and each staff position.

Timeline: May 31, 2019

Person Responsible: Executive Director and executive leadership team

Objective 4.2.4: Develop annual staff training schedule to develop soft skills, such as leadership, teambuilding, problem-solving, decision-making and conflict resolution

Timeline: December 1, 2018 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Director of Human Resources and Risk Management

Goal 4.3: Strengthen use of technology

Objective 4.3.1: Identify specific organizational inefficiencies and explore use of current technology (software and hardware) to improve efficiencies.

Timeline: March 1, 2019

Person Responsible: Director of Finance (IT)

Objective 4.3.2: Provide training to staff on existing software and hardware.

Timeline: September 1, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Director of Finance (IT)

Objective 4.3.3: Develop and manage agency-wide master calendar to show activities and due dates for deliverables.

Timeline: March 1, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Director of Finance (IT)

Objective 4.3.4: Explore additional technology needed to improve impact, influence or efficiencies.

Timeline: March 1, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Director of Finance (IT)

Objective 4.3.5: Develop plan to secure additional technology needed to improve impact, influence or efficiencies.

Timeline: September 1, 2019

Person Responsible: Director of Finance (IT)

Goal 4.4: Provide productive work environment

Objective 4.4.1: Assess current workloads for staff and realign to reasonable levels as appropriate.

Timeline: December 1, 2018 and ongoing

Person Responsible: All Directors

Objective 4.4.2: Standardize protocol for on-site management/staff by codifying policy and procedures across all SMHA-owned properties

Timeline: December 1, 2018 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Director of Asset Management

Objective 4.4.3: Improve understanding of roles, responsibilities and tasks across departments of SMHA

Timeline: December 1, 2018 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Executive Director

Objective 4.4.4: Create internal communication strategy to disseminate information from Executive Director and leadership to agency-wide staff

Timeline: December 1, 2018 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Director of Planning and Development

Objective 4.4.5: Create protocol for providing regular communication from supervisor, managers and directors to staff regarding performance, including positive remarks and corrective actions.

Timeline: December 1, 2018 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Director of Human Resources and Risk Management

Objective 4.4.6: Identify opportunities to celebrate milestones and accomplishments with staff; plan and resource celebration events.

Timeline: May 31, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Director of Human Resources and Risk Management

Goal 4.5: Provide safe work environment

Objective 4.5.1: Conduct safety check at each property and outline plan to address physical safety concerns.

Timeline: January 1, 2019

Person Responsible: Chief of Security

Objective 4.5.2: Develop safety plan for each SMHA-owned property in concert with asset managers/on-site staff.

Timeline: May 31, 2019

Person Responsible: Chief of Security

Objective 4.5.3: Train staff to follow safety plan protocol.

Timeline: September 1, 2019

Person Responsible: Chief of Security

Objective 4.5.4: Asset manager/on-site management develop personal relationship with local police.

Timeline: January 1, 2019

Person Responsible: Director of Asset Management

Goal 4.6: Provide avenue for monitoring health of organization over time

Objective 4.6.1: Provide opportunity for annual organization evaluation, including achievement toward attainment of agency goals and objectives and staff and departmental goals and objectives.

Timeline: November 1, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Executive Director

Objective 4.6.2: Provide face-to-face and anonymous opportunities for staff and residents to provide annual feedback about SMHA.

Timeline: November 1, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Executive Director

Objective 4.6.3: Develop methods for reporting and investigating incidences of non-alignment with strategic directions, goals and objectives.

Timeline: November 1, 2018

Person Responsible: Executive Director



Strategic Direction 5: Strengthen financial infrastructure of SMHA

Strategic direction 5 is required to fulfill the mission of SMHA and is necessary to fulfill HUD's strategic goals to (1) *strengthen the nation's housing market to bolster the economy and protect consumers*; (2) *meet the need for quality, affordable rental homes*; (3) *to use housing as a platform to improve the quality of life*; and, (4) *build strong, resilient and inclusive communities*. This strategic direction will be met through the attainment of five goals with accompanying objectives as follows:

Goal 5.1: Explore opportunities to seek grant funding for programs and services to residents

Objective 5.1.1: Identify current and potential programs and services and seek out appropriate funders to support programs/services.

Timeline: November 1, 2018

Person Responsible: Director of Planning and Development

Objective 5.1.2: Develop meaningful relationship with local funders.

Timeline: March 1, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Director of Planning and Development

Goal 5.2: Explore opportunities to provide contract-for-service with other organizations in the community in the areas of core competency for SMHA, including inspections, property management, skill trades, etc.

Objective 5.2.1: Identify core competencies and opportunities for contracts-for-service within SMHA.

Timeline: November 1, 2019

Person Responsible: Director of Asset Management

Objective 5.2.2: Explore marketing contracts-for-service in community.

Timeline: February 1, 2020

Person Responsible: Director of Planning and Development

Objective 5.2.3: Implement contracts-for-service marketing plan and services.

Timeline: March 1, 2020 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Director of Asset Management

Goal 5.3: Explore funding to supplant administrative costs of operating Section 8

Objective 5.3.1: Identify gaps in funding for Section 8.

Timeline: November 1, 2018

Person Responsible: Director of Housing Choice Voucher Program



Objective 5.3.2: Explore potential funding sources for administration of Section 8, including networking with other Section 8 providers and programs statewide and nationally to discover promising practices.

Timeline: March 1, 2019

Person Responsible: Director of Housing Choice Voucher Program

Objective 5.3.3: Develop funding proposals to funders to support administration of Section 8.

Timeline: June 1, 2019 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Director of Housing Choice Voucher Program

Goal 5.4: Explore funding opportunities to expand housing options in community

Objective 5.4.1: Research potential funding sources for housing development.

Timeline: May 31, 2021

Person Responsible: Director of Planning and Development

Objective 5.4.2: Build relationships with local, state and federal funders and strengthen presence at conferences and trainings.

Timeline: May 31, 2021

Person Responsible: Director of Planning and Development

Objective 5.4.3: Develop and submit funding proposals to support housing development.

Timeline: June 1, 2021 and ongoing

Person Responsible: Director of Planning and Development

Goal 5.5: Explore establishment of nonprofit agency to expand funding options

Objective 5.5.1: Conduct feasibility study for creation of new nonprofit.

Timeline: November 1, 2020

Person Responsible: Executive Director



Objective 5.5.2: Explore implementation procedures and processes for new nonprofit.

Timeline: March 1, 2021

Person Responsible: Executive Director

Objective 5.5.3: Outline strategic plan for new nonprofit (if applicable)

Timeline: June 1, 2021.

Person Responsible: Executive Director



Methodology and Process

The development of this strategic plan was a five-month process commencing in October 2017 and concluding in February 2018. SMHA involved its community partners, residents, staff and leadership in the process of developing this plan to ensure the result of a clear pathway to strengthen SMHA and guide its steps in meeting the affordable housing needs of the community into the future. The process was facilitated by two senior staff members of Community Development Professionals, Mindy Muller and Carla Wright.

Initial session

The process began with an opening session of the executive leadership team on October 3, 2017. Those in attendance from SMHA included Warren Richardson, James Hicks, Veda Davis, Kevin Schaack, Jeff Patterson, Corey Minor Smith, Robin Mingo-Miles, Marty Chumney, Ashley Wright, Bruce Allison, Kelley Foster-Lever, and Herman Hill.

Mindy Muller and Carla Wright gave introductions to the team about CDP and their anticipated role in the process of developing a strategic plan for SMHA. This meeting included an overview of the process in anticipation of the strategic planning session scheduled for November 2-3, 2017. The team was asked to identify their individual expectations for the process, i.e., what they thought was important to include or consider in the strategic plan or for the future of SMHA.

The team shared their expectations and outlined community partners that should be included in the process of developing the long-term plan for SMHA. Director Kevin Schaack also shared the results of a recent employee survey that may assist in the development of the strategic plan.

Strategic Work Session

A strategic planning work session was held at Kent State University – Stark Conference Center on Thursday and Friday, November 2-3, 2017. The session was attended by the five members of the Board of Commissioners: Roger Mann, Chair, Appointed by Stark County Board of Commissioners; Dan McMasters, Vice Chair, Appointed by Stark County Court of Common Pleas; Jeffrey McDaniels, Appointed by City of Canton Mayor; Nanya Ross, Appointed by City of Canton Mayor; and Tim Shetzer, Appointed by the Stark County Court of Common Pleas, Probate Division. Ten members of the executive leadership team were also present: Herman Hill, Executive Director; Bruce E. Allison, Director of Security; Marty Chumney, Director of Housing Choice Voucher Program; James Hicks, Director of Asset Management; Veda Davis, Assistant Director of Asset Management; Robin Mingo-Miles, Director of Resident and Community Affairs; Jeff Patterson, Director of Finance; Kevin Schaack, Director of Human Resources and Risk Management; Corey Minor Smith, Director of Legal Services; Ashley Wright, Planning and Development Manager; Warren Richardson, Manager; and, Kelley Foster-Lever, Executive Assistant.

The agenda for the session included the following:

Define scope of project.

- Outline individual and collective expectations. What are we trying to accomplish over what period of time?

Outline strategy to engage constituents and other stakeholders.

- Who needs to provide input? What do we want to know from them? How do we get information?

Review current visioning/strategic plans.

- What current plans to do we have on the table? What do we want to keep? What do we want to discard?

Review mission and vision statement of SMHA. Identify core values that drive organization.

- Who are we now? Is it accurate and relevant? Who do we want to be? Where are we headed and where do we want to go?

Explore leadership team of SMHA. Identify core values.

- What personalities do we have? How does that impact our work? What are our core values?

Review directives, mandates, and known limitations.

- What do we have to do? What can't we do?

Identify flagship programs and activities.

- Identify strengths and challenges.

Identify other programs and activities.

- Why do we do them? Are they core to who we are or what we do?

Brainstorm.

- What do we imagine, envision and/or desire to do?

Community meetings and conversations

There were a total of fourteen community meetings and conversations held during the process. The discussions with community stakeholders centered around five questions:

- What experience do you have with SMHA?
- What do you think of when you think about SMHA?
- How much do you know about the organization and its housing programs?



- What do you think SMHA could do to improve its effectiveness in the community?
- What do you envision for your community in terms of affordable housing?

A community survey was also disseminated to more than thirty community organizations with seven surveys reviewed and assessed for inclusion in the strategic plan. Fifty-four surveys were received from community landlords who partner with SMHA for the Section 8 program. Compiled results from the surveys are included at the conclusion of this section.

- **Six meetings were held with public officials** representing the City of Canton Community Development office, City of Canton Police Department, City of Alliance, City of Massillon, Stark County Regional Planning Commission and Stark County Board of Commissioners.
- **Conversations were held with three funders** including Timken Foundation, Stark Community Foundation and Sisters of Charity Foundation.
- Information was gathered through **meetings with five community organizations** including Stark County Fair Housing, YMCA, ICAN Housing, Stark County Community Action Agency, and Stark County Regional Planning Commission.
- **Community surveys were received from community organizations** including Goodwill Industries, SARTA, Refuge of Hope, Stark County CoC, Eden, Inc. YWCA, Legal Aid, Crisis Intervention and Recovery Center, United Way, Alliance for Children and Families, Anchor House Alliance, Canton City School District, Stark County Educational Services Center and Domestic Violence Project.

Staff meetings

SMHA provided an opportunity for staff to meet with CDP to offer suggestions, concerns or provide input into the strategic plan. The discussions with staff centered around six questions:

- The greatest strength of our organization is.....
 - The legacy I want to leave with SMHA is.....
 - If I could change one thing, it would be.....
 - What do you wish SMHA management knew?
 - What would improve the impact of SMHA in the community? With the residents?
 - What do you want to see included in a long-term vision or plan for SMHA
- **Focus groups were held with four departments** of SMHA including Finance (including IT), Asset Management, Resident and Community Affairs, and Section 8.

- **Individual meetings were held with representatives from five departments** including Administration, Legal Services, Human Resources, Asset Management, and Maintenance.

Resident engagement

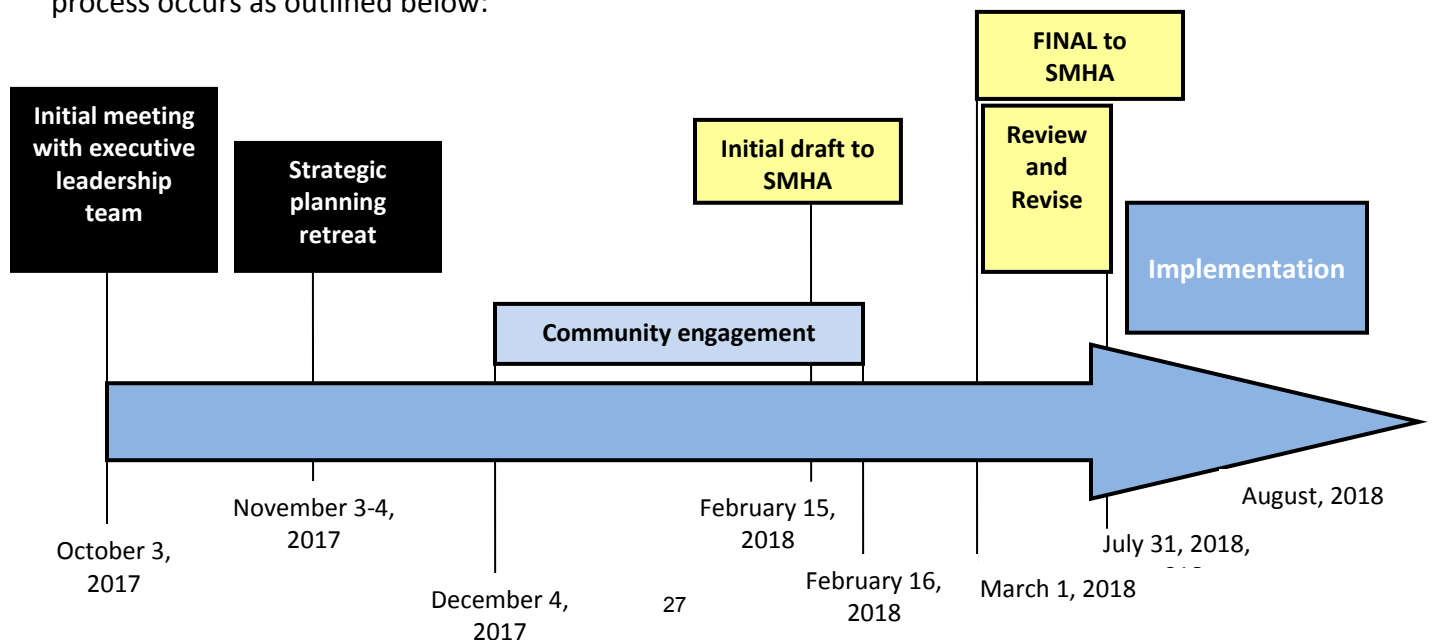
Residents were invited to participate in the strategic planning process. Residents were engaged through one-on-one meetings, focus groups and surveys. The discussions with residents centered around five questions:

- One thing I like about SMHA is.....
- If I could change one thing it would be.....
- What do you wish SMHA management knew?
- What would improve the impact of SMHA in the community? With the residents?
- What do you want to see included in a long-term vision or plan for SMHA?

- Focus groups were held with **two resident groups**.
- One-on-one conversations were held with **three residents**, one from a scattered site property and two residing in high rises.
- Surveys were disseminated to both public housing residents and section 8 residents. A total of **261 resident surveys were returned**, 192 public housing surveys and 69 Section 8 surveys.

Timeline

The strategic planning process started in October 2017 and ran through February 2018. The process occurs as outlined below:



RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the strategic directions, goals and objectives outlined in the strategic plan, the following are additional recommendations for consideration:

Goal 2.7: Enhance living environment for families

Objective 2.7.2: Explore installation and management of playgrounds on properties.

Recommendation: Explore the pursuit of KaBoom! Grants for playgrounds. KaBoom!’s best practice process includes involving residents and the community in the playground design and installation.

Goal 4.1: Enhance organizational culture

Objective 4.1.2: Explore how to use mission, vision and values to enhance organizational culture for residents and staff.

Recommendation: Implement Kent State University Lean Management principles, which involved staff conducting a client-centered assessment of the value of services and working to create or streamline systems and processes for the highest level of customer service at the highest levels of efficiency and effectiveness.

Goal 4.2: Enhance training opportunities for staff.

Objective 4.2.4: Develop annual staff training schedule to develop soft skills, such as leadership, teambuilding, problem-solving, decision-making and conflict resolution

Recommendation: Consider adoption of conflict resolution policy and process, including identification and reporting of conflicts, consequences for infractions and anti-retaliation policy.

Goal 5.5: Explore establishment of nonprofit agency to expand funding options

Objective 5.5.1: Conduct feasibility study for creation of new nonprofit.

Recommendation: Research housing authorities that have successfully developed a nonprofit agency. Connect and visit with these housing authorities to evaluate performance, achievement of goals and identify best practices and lessons learned.

Public Housing Resident Survey - Compilation

Surveys were distributed to public housing tenants by Director of Resident and Community Affairs, Robin Mingo-Miles and Commissioner Nanya Ross. Residents were asked to return the surveys by February 1, 2018. There were 192 surveys returned.

The following represents the compiled results of 192 responses.

1. On a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 is very unsatisfied and 10 is very satisfied, Overall, how satisfied are you with the following: *Put N/A if the question does not apply to you.*
 - a) The overall service provided by SMHA? 7
 - b) The quality and conditions of your home/apartment? 7
 - c) The quality and conditions of the other indoor spaces in your community? 5.7
 - d) The quality and conditions of the outside grounds, including parking lots and parks? 5.7
 - e) The safety and security of your neighborhood? 7.5
 - f) Your landlord’s maintenance services? 6.8
 - g) Your landlord’s management staff? 6.8
 - h) SMHA’s Housing Choice Voucher program? 6.3
 - i) The quality and availability of social services in your community? 5.1

2. Over the past year, how many times have you contacted Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority for reasons related to your rent? 1.3

3. Over the past year, how many times have you contacted your landlord for maintenance or repairs? 3.5

4. On a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 is very unsatisfied and 10 is very satisfied, based on your experience over the past year requesting maintenance or repairs from your landlord, how satisfied were you with: *Put N/A if the question does not apply to you.*
 - a) How easy it was to request repairs 7.5
 - b) How well you were treated by the person you contacted for repairs 8
 - c) How well the repairs were done 6.9
 - d) The amount of time it took to complete the repairs 5.3
 - e) How well you were treated by the person doing the repairs 8.1

5. On a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 is not at all safe and 10 is extremely safe, how safe do you feel about the following: *Put N/A if the question does not apply to you.*
 - a) Alone at night in your home? 7.2
 - b) Alone at night in the hallway/lobby/laundry room of your apartment building? 2.4
 - c) Alone at night walking on the outside grounds of your development? 5.9
 - d) Allowing your school-age children to walk through the community alone during the day? 3.3

6. Over the past year, how many times have you contacted housing management for reasons other than a repair request or rent-related issues? 1.6

7. On a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 is very unsatisfied and 10 is very satisfied, based on your experience in the past year with your property management (excluding maintenance staff), how satisfied were you with the following: *Put N/A if the question does not apply to you.*
 - a) The way you were treated by staff? 6.9
 - b) Their timeliness in returning your telephone calls? 5.7
 - c) Their responsiveness to your questions and concerns about your rent? 5.7
 - d) Their responsiveness to your questions and concerns about your lease responsibilities, policies, procedures? 5.4
 - e) Their responsiveness to your questions and concerns about your apartment? 4.7

10. On a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 is strongly disagree and 10 is strongly agree, to what extent do you agree with the following statements: *Put N/A if the question does not apply to you.*
 - a) I am satisfied with my housing unit. 7.3
 - b) I would recommend my housing property to a friend or family member. 6.9
 - c) Information provided by SMHA is accessible, timely, and relevant. 7.4
 - d) My community is open and accepting toward people of diverse backgrounds. 6.7

Comments

There were several written comments that appeared on ten or more resident surveys. Those are represented in the comments below. Suggestions for improvement include:

- Communication
- Show respect to residents, especially on-site managers
- Drug Activity – address it, don’t ignore it
- People violating lease -- many instances where people not on lease living in unit
- Playgrounds for kids

- Safety in and outside of units
 - Locks on windows
 - Security lighting outside
 - Security Cameras
 - More police presents
- Unit properly maintained
 - Painting units
 - New flooring
 - Kitchen Updates
 - Bathroom updates
- Things getting fixed in a timely manner
- Things getting fixed correctly so they don't have an issue again

Section 8 Resident Survey - Compilation

Surveys were mailed out to Section 8 tenants by Director of Housing Choice Voucher Program, Marty Chumney. Residents were asked to return the surveys by February 13, 2018. There were 69 surveys returned.

The following represents the compiled results of 69 responses.

1. As a resident how often in the past year have you had to contact SMHA?

52% Never 30% 1 - 2 17% 3 - 5 1% > 5

2. If you contacted SMHA, how did you make contact? *Mark all that apply.*

64% Telephone 9% Email 27% In-person 0 Other

4. If you contacted SMHA, how satisfied were you with the following:

- The way SMHA dealt with your inquiry/concern.

35% Very satisfied 58% Satisfied 3% Dissatisfied 3% Very dissatisfied

- Staff having sufficient knowledge to handle the inquiry/concern.

30% Very satisfied 57% Satisfied 13% Dissatisfied 0 Very dissatisfied

- The resolution of your inquiry/concern.

36% Very satisfied 52% Satisfied 9% Dissatisfied 3% Very dissatisfied

- Staff having sufficient knowledge to handle the inquiry/concern.

32% Very satisfied 65% Satisfied 3% Dissatisfied 0 Very dissatisfied

- The efficiency of handling your inquiry/concern.

31% Very satisfied 63% Satisfied 6% Dissatisfied 0 Very dissatisfied

- The courteousness of staff in handling your inquiry/concern.

34% Very satisfied 63% Satisfied 3% Dissatisfied 0 Very dissatisfied



5. How satisfied are you with the level of communication between you and SMHA?

42% Very satisfied 49% Satisfied 7% Dissatisfied 2% Very dissatisfied

6. How satisfied are you with the SMHA Housing Inspector?

58% Very satisfied 38% Satisfied 4% Dissatisfied 0 Very dissatisfied

7. How satisfied were you with how the inspection process addressed your maintenance concerns?

60% Very satisfied 33% Satisfied 7% Dissatisfied 0 Very dissatisfied

Comments

There were several written comments that appeared on ten or more resident surveys. Those are represented in the comments below. Suggestions for improvement include:

- Communication – voice mail boxes are often full and no option to leave a message; several complaints of calls not being returned promptly or not at all
- More accountability for landlords. Landlords are fixing things only when inspection is due.

In addition, there were several comments about Brenda Bentley and the good job she is doing with residents. There were also many mentions about how staff does a great job.

Section 8 Landlord Survey - Compilation

Surveys were mailed out to Section 8 landlords by Director of Housing Choice Voucher Program, Marty Chumney. Landlords were asked to return the surveys by February 13, 2018. There were 54 surveys returned.

The following represents the compiled results of 54 responses.

1. As a landlord how often in the past year have you had to contact SMHA?

31% Never 29% 1 - 2 25% 3 - 5 15% > 5

2. If you contacted SMHA, how did you make contact?

60% Telephone 30% Email 10% In-person 0% Other

4. If you contacted SMHA, how satisfied were you with the following:

- The way SMHA dealt with your inquiry/concern.

43% Very satisfied 49% Satisfied 3% Dissatisfied 5% Very dissatisfied

- Staff having sufficient knowledge to handle the inquiry/concern.

39% Very satisfied 58% Satisfied 0% Dissatisfied 3% Very dissatisfied

- The resolution of your inquiry/concern.

42% Very satisfied 52% Satisfied 3% Dissatisfied 3% Very dissatisfied

- Staff handling the inquiry/concern in a timely manner.

30% Very satisfied 50% Satisfied 14% Dissatisfied 6% Very dissatisfied

- The efficiency of handling your inquiry/concern.

36% Very satisfied 50% Satisfied 8% Dissatisfied 6% Very dissatisfied

- The courteousness of staff in handling your inquiry/concern.

37% Very satisfied 57% Satisfied 3% Dissatisfied 3% Very dissatisfied

5. How satisfied are you with the level of communication between you and SMHA?

28% Very satisfied 56% Satisfied 10% Dissatisfied 6% Very dissatisfied

6. How satisfied are you with the HQS Inspection Reviews at your units?

34% Very satisfied 60% Satisfied 2% Dissatisfied 4% Very dissatisfied

7. How satisfied are you with the HQS Inspection process in assisting you to address maintenance issues?

33% Very satisfied 60% Satisfied 5% Dissatisfied 2% Very dissatisfied

I would plan to attend a one-day landlord training hosted by SMHA? 65% Yes 35% No

Topics of interest:

Review of the request for tenant approval form and leasing process	<u>18%</u>
Review of the rent reasonableness process and requesting rent increases	<u>28%</u>
Review of SMHA payment standards & utility allowance schedules	<u>16%</u>
Review of Housing Quality Standards Inspection Process	<u>23%</u>
Lease enforcement and eviction process	<u>30%</u>
Review of common tenant-landlord issues	<u>35%</u>
Presentation on fair housing and landlord responsibilities	<u>30%</u>

Comments

There were several written comments that appeared on five or more landlord surveys. Those are represented in the comments below. Suggestions for improvement include:

- Communication – voice mail boxes are often full and no option to leave a message; several complaints of calls not being returned promptly or not at all
- Lack of inspectors to conduct inspections. Takes too much time to get inspection scheduled and done.
- Need ore communication and training on how to do rent increases.

Community Partner Survey

An introductory email and survey link were sent to 30 community organizations. Responses from the survey were compiled and included as appropriate in the recommendations and strategic plan. The responses were consistent with recommendations and impressions heard through focus groups and one-on-one meetings. Responders were anonymous although the specifics of some responses identified the responding organization. There was no quantifiable information gathered. The questions posed to the community partners through a *Survey Monkey* link are outlined below:

1. What experience do you have with SMHA? What impression do you have of SMHA?
2. What would you like to see SMHA include in its strategic plan?
3. What do you envision for your community in terms of affordable housing?
4. How can SMHA help you achieve your long-term vision for your community/ organization?