



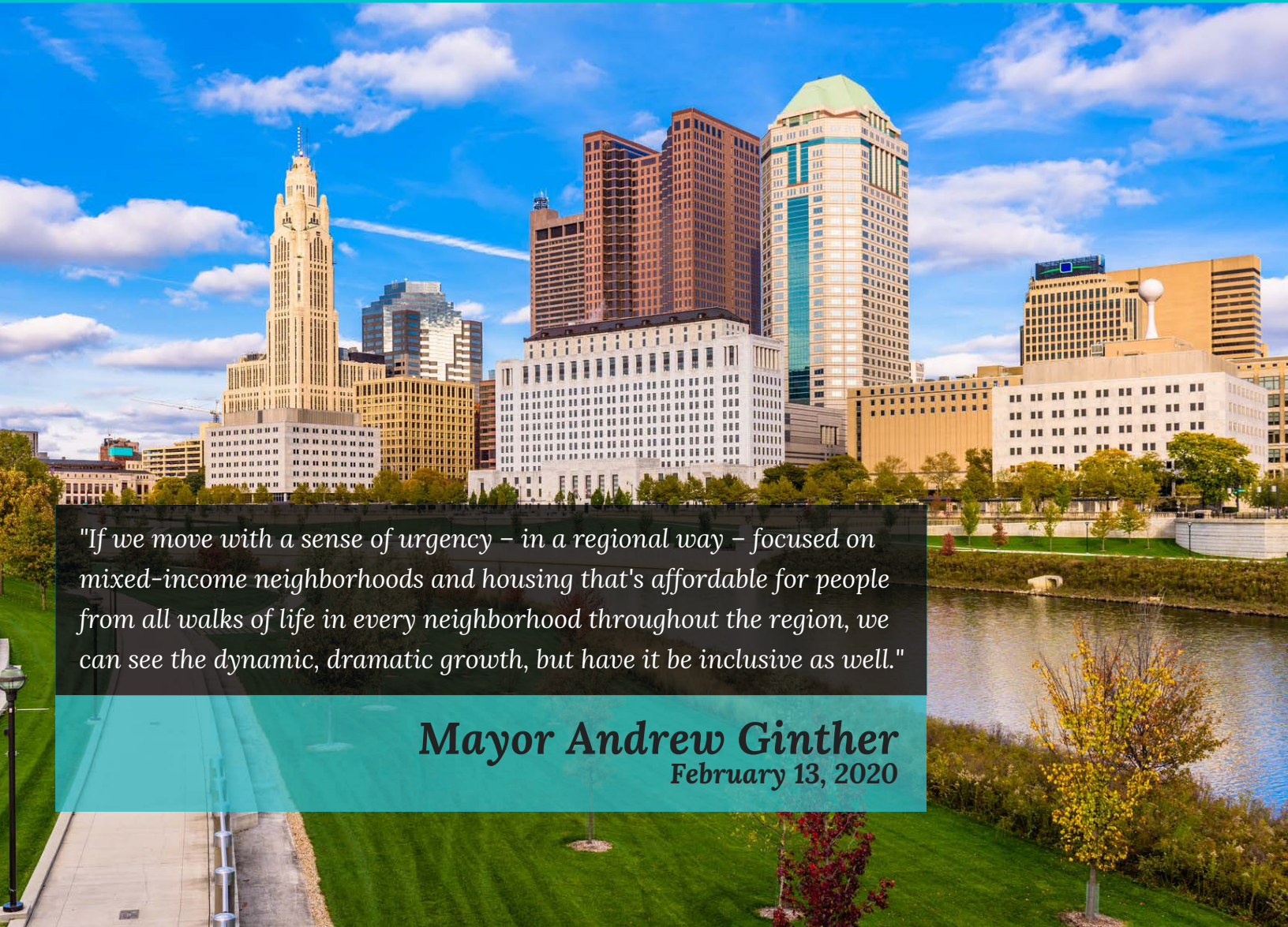
SECURING RESILIENCY

STRATEGIC PLAN

2021/2022/2023

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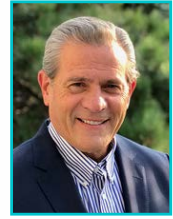
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"If we move with a sense of urgency – in a regional way – focused on mixed-income neighborhoods and housing that's affordable for people from all walks of life in every neighborhood throughout the region, we can see the dynamic, dramatic growth, but have it be inclusive as well."

Mayor Andrew Ginther
February 13, 2020

A LETTER FROM AHACO'S BOARD CHAIR



The Affordable Housing Alliance of Central Ohio is pleased to present our three-year Strategic Plan, one that will take us through 2023. In many ways, this document builds upon our ten-year vision to cut the 54,000-household affordability gap in half by 2028. Momentum towards this goal is on our side, as work by our members and strategic partners over the preceding three years has ushered in a new era of innovation in affordable housing finance and program design. Now, as the coronavirus pandemic and the economic downturn it spurred pushes hundreds of thousands of Ohioans to the brink of homelessness, the urgency of our original call to action is more pressing than ever.

Simply stated, returning to a pre-pandemic status quo is not acceptable given COVID's effects on those who depend on housing solutions as offered by our members. Leaning forward, we must be more resilient and creative than ever. Too many were in precarious housing situations at the start of 2020, and it would be unconscionable for us to leave them on the ledge waiting for the next crisis to befall them. And that is why we have expanded our original advocacy platform to elevate the need for comprehensive and enduring policy reforms. Such efforts are designed to match our ongoing commitment to meeting housing production and funding goals. The path ahead remains challenging, but we are reassured to know that solutions to the housing crisis are not just possible, they are tangibly within reach.

Our plan also reinforces an ongoing commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. As a crosscutting strategy, this will continue to influence every aspect of our advocacy and our internal operations. We also commit to supporting our member organizations in their own quests for more equitable workplaces and neighborhoods. As we advance and refine this aspect of our identity, we welcome your feedback to ensure the Alliance remains a faithful advocate for our community's advancement.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, our members, and our staff, allow me express sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to this plan. And let me further extend an open invitation for you to connect with our Executive Director and share your ideas and experiences. This plan is only the framework for our next few years. As such, know we will be appreciative of your further guidance in fashioning the tools needed to build the central Ohio region envisioned in this strategy.

Stay well and stay engaged!

TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE HOME AFFORDABLE FOR EVERYONE IN OUR COMMUNITY.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'E.J. Thomas'. The signature is stylized and fluid, with a large loop at the end.

*E.J. Thomas
Board Chair, AHACO
President & CEO, Habitat for Humanity - MidOhio*



Forward Thinking

We have long recognized the value of affordable housing and we will continue to push critical needs and big ideas to the forefront of debate.

Personal

We see that change requires empathy and understanding which can only be achieved by telling the real life story of housing's impact and challenges.

In Solidarity

We are fair champion of all low- and moderate-income residents regardless of the types of barriers that inhibit their housing stability.

MISSION

AHACO's purpose is to ensure that households in Central Ohio with lower incomes have a safe, decent, affordable home.

VISION

In 2017, Franklin County documented a 54,000 household affordability gap. We envision halving that by 2027 and continuing progress until every Central Ohioan can access dignified, affordable housing.

VALUES

AHACO is guided by these values:

Confident

We understand that affordable housing is a solvable puzzle and we remain positive while advancing practical solutions.

Empirical

We are guided by data, research, and the evidence of lived experiences.

Engaging

We find success in allyship and collaboration with our community, housing stakeholders, media leaders, and public officials.

Equitable

We promote fairness, equity, and justice in our housing system.

Focused

We know that housing is the best platform for individual and regional success, and we use that foundation as our guide.

ABOUT AHACO

AHACO was founded in 2015 by a group of nonprofit organizations to increase the supply of affordable housing opportunities in Franklin County. In 2015, in collaboration with the Greater Ohio Policy Center, we released our inaugural report “The Columbus and Franklin County Affordable Housing Challenge: Needs, Resources, and Funding Models” which found that **54,000 low- and moderate-income Franklin County residents paid more than half of their income to housing costs, posing major obstacles to family stability and regional success.** This report provided the empirical underpinnings for a ten-year plan that is designed to cut the affordable housing gap in half in a decade.

AHACO launched the first leg of that plan in 2018, with a three-year start up goal of generating \$140 million in new affordable housing program funds. This call to action was embraced by government and civil leaders. By the end of 2020, affordable housing was enshrined at the top of local government priorities, including being featured as a key policy objective in Columbus Mayor Ginther’s 2019 and 2020 State of The City addresses. It was also championed by leading businesses, who we partnered with to establish the \$100 million Housing Action Fund. As a result of these successes and more, AHACO exceeded our start-up revenue raising goals by more than 40 percent, leading to over \$201 million in new dollars for housing initiatives.

In 2020, AHACO’s founding Executive Director, Roberta Garber was honored with the Bob Lazarus Unsung Hero Award from the Community Shelter Board as she began her retirement after a successful tenure with the organization. Leadership was transitioned to Carlie J. Boos, who now serves as AHACO’s first full-time Executive Director under the continued stewardship of the Board of Directors.

AHACO is a nonprofit organization with members representing the continuum of housing experts including homeless advocates, developers, property owners, home-ownership proponents, lenders, and the philanthropic community. We use data and grounded research to make feasible housing recommendations that are customized for Central Ohio and catalyze partnerships with the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to achieve meaningful solutions that will close the housing gap.

We do this because we understand that affordability is the key to unlocking security and prosperity for our people and our region.



STRATEGIC PLAN CONTEXT

The coronavirus and its resulting economic decline is a grim illustration of what AHACO has forewarned of since our founding: that the fragility of having 54,000 households live on the brink of housing loss every single day creates deep, regional instability in which even temporary economic shocks quickly and inevitably devolve into systemwide economic failure. In the next three years, AHACO will contribute to recovery and stability efforts while advancing long-term solutions to build permanent resiliency into our housing market.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

In Spring 2020, AHACO facilitated one-on-one meetings with all available members, conducting eighteen interviews total. This was done to introduce the new executive director, learn more about member experiences and priorities, and provide an internal framework to launch the next three-year strategic planning process. A highlight of themes that emerged from these conversations is below. A parallel engagement process was conducted with the Strategic Advisory Council that resulted in similar responses. AHACO also conducted interviews of community stakeholders, including funding and government partners, to assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the Central Ohio housing landscape.

SELECTED PLANNING THEMES

Creating a Bigger Table

AHACO should strengthen alliances with housing-adjacent groups including those working in economic development, healthcare, education, service provision, and with special populations.

Building Upon Expertise

AHACO is a reliable and objective expert. We have greatly improved the quality of information available to the public and nature of the dialogue about affordable housing. We should build from that foundation as we move forward.

Expanding our Presence

AHACO should use our capacity to act as a broker for regional, state, and national issues where having a uniquely Franklin County voice will add perspective.

Advancing Racial Equity

Stakeholders acknowledged the housing industry's racist past and expressed a desire for AHACO to be more directly involved in eliminating and rectifying those abuses.

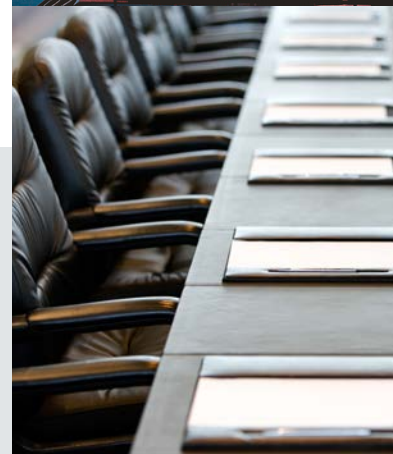
All of those responses informed the remainder of the planning process, which was designed by consultant Jeff Biehl in collaboration with AHACO leadership. On July 29, 2020, Mr. Biehl facilitated a planning meeting via the Zoom platform with the full membership that prompted attendees to consider three questions: What activities should we start/stop/continue over the next three years? What are your ideas on key partnerships needed? What are your ideas on top 1-2 actions that AHACO should take to address racial equity in housing?

On August 24, 2020, a preliminary framework for this plan was provided to the Board of Directors. In advance of the September 30, 2020, membership meeting, a first draft was provided to all members. At that meeting, members broke into small groups to brainstorm programming ideas to accomplish two priorities that were articulated in July but required further conversation: How can Central Ohio help close the minority homeownership and equity gaps? How can Central Ohio help preserve and expand Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing?

The Strategic Advisory Council was convened on October 14, 2020 and provided an overview of this plan for their review and input. The feedback centered on emerging opportunities to modernize and reform local policies, including zoning and land use practices.

A final draft of this strategic plan was provided to members in November 2020 and approved by voice vote at the November 18, 2020 membership meeting. Over the course of this plan, AHACO will maintain a reporting dashboard tracking progress towards goals. AHACO leadership may assess our current committee and workgroup structure to ensure it continues to align with the strategies contained herein.

AHACO's Board of Directors sincerely thanks all the members, stakeholders, and advisors who contributed to this plan and who will be instrumental in fulfilling its vision. Executive Director Carlie Boos further expresses her immense gratitude for the time members spent discussing and dissecting these ideas and shaping the future of our advocacy.



SECURING RESILIENCY: THE 2021-2023 STRATEGIC PLAN

Ensure Housing Development is Optimized to Meet Franklin County's Affordability Needs

- Expand funding tools to develop affordable homes for renters
- Expand funding tools to development affordable homes for homeowners
- Advance policies that facilitate affordable housing development

Promote Wealth-Building and Community Stability Through Obtainable and Retainable Homeownership

- Expand funding tools for homeownership purchase, repair, and improvements
- Advance policies that expand and preserve homeownership to reduce wealth and equity gaps

Stabilize Renter Households with Short-Term Rental Assistance and Supportive Services for Security & Economic Mobility

- Expand funding tools for eviction prevention (1-6 months; average 3 months)
- Expand funding tools for rapid rehousing (1-18 months; average 1 year)
- Expand funding tools for targeted, time-limited rent assistance (12-60 months; average 3 years)
- Expand funding tools for non-profit sponsor-based rent assistance (no time limit; average 5 years)
- Advance policies that stabilize renter households and promote economic mobility

Advance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice in Our Work and Workplaces

- Advance just policies that are informed by history, influenced by those we serve, and crafted with a racial equity lens.
- Approach internal processes, including purchasing and hiring decisions, with a racial equity lens. Equip member organizations with tools and resources to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in their internal operations.

Solidify AHACO's Reputation as a Strong, Trusted, and Reliable Authority in the Housing Space

- Promote collaboration among members and share impactful and accessible information, research, and resources with the community freely.





"The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned."

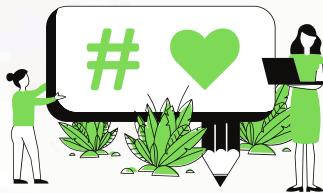
Maya Angelou

SECURING RESILIENCY: PRIMARY IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS



Research

We conduct original research, leveraging the resources and experiences of our members, and aggregate, localize, and interpret available data and literature and apply it to the Franklin County landscape.



Educate

We convert our research and knowledge into publicly consumable materials that are engaging and enlightening. We use this platform to lift up powerful stories and give audience to those with unique insights into the housing affordability atmosphere.



Thought Leadership

We support creative thinking, authentic and deep community engagement, and ideation that is not bounded by existing models of success. Our work must inspire, invest, and equip our allies with the skills and confidence to overcome the challenges before us.



Convene

We connect people across professions and backgrounds to scrupulously understand affordable housing intricacies and activate the power of group dynamics for comprehensive problem solving.



Advocate

We deploy all these tools to inform policymakers of Franklin County's housing affordability needs and collaborate with industry and government leaders to solidify our region's position as an innovator in housing justice. Together, we can eliminate the housing gap.

SECURING RESILIENCY: IMPLEMENTATION MODEL SAMPLES

A small sample of the initiatives AHACO will pursue to accomplish the five strategies is offered below; each is a "SMART" goal with identified deliverables and execution strategy.



Zoning & Land Use

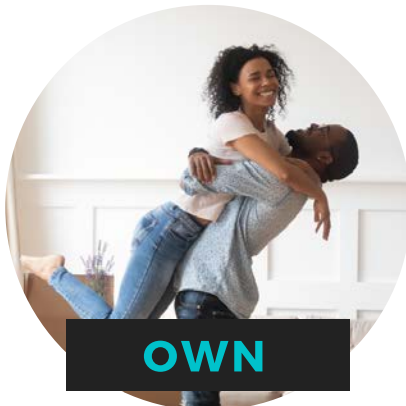
AHACO will lead a conversation on zoning's role in creating strong communities and promote adoption resources for local jurisdictions

State Funding

AHACO will lead a workgroup to focus on state funding fairness and facilitate dialogue with OHFA on Qualified Allocation Plan policies that disfavor Central Ohio

Combat NIMBY

AHACO will collaborate to create a community outreach strategy to educate on the region's housing needs and shift cultural attitudes to support the development of affordable housing



Support Home Repair

AHACO will research how it can best support initiatives to expand home repair programming, including accessibility modification programming, for low- and moderate-income homeowners

Reduce Displacement Risk

AHACO will support policy solutions that ensure property taxes do not price low- and moderate-income homeowners out of the communities while ensuring adequate capital remains available for neighborhood stabilization activities

Save the Dream 2.0

AHACO will support COVID-19 interventions to stabilize homeowners and prevent foreclosure



Avoiding Eviction

Both as a response to COVID-19 and as a long-term strategy, AHACO will support efforts to reduce or eliminate evictions

Replicate Housing & Economic Mobility Programming

AHACO will build on the momentum of the Success Bridge program to identify and formulate additional program opportunities that enable tenants to stabilize their housing through education and workforce advancement

Opportunity Port

AHACO will support the Opportunity Port project to resolve barriers to housing for people with criminal system interactions



Lead on Racial Equity

AHACO will engage more deeply in conversations about race equity and the role of housing in racial justice. In all applicable publications, AHACO will include nuanced discussion of racial equity implications. We will convene interdisciplinary dialogues and in doing so we will elevate Black, Indigenous, and People of Color and historically marginalized voices. We will hold ourselves accountable for advancing an informed understanding of racial equity issues, and we will work to earn a reputation as a regional thought-leader in the intersections between housing policy and racial justice.

Strengthen Leadership Pipeline

AHACO will develop a board- and member-leadership pipeline that prioritizes diversity, voices of people of color, and individuals with lived experience in affordable housing.



Contribute to an Informed Debate of Ideas

AHACO will engage candidates for elected office to promote a robust understanding of housing issues and the array of supported policy solutions.

Storytelling

AHACO will create opportunities for the public and members to share their housing story.

3-YEAR TARGETS

These targets were ambitious before the COVID-19 pandemic and remain so today. But closing the affordability gap is imperative to achieving long-term recovery and regional security.

DEVELOP AFFORDABLE HOUSING

505 Units Built or Preserved
\$63.6 Million in New Investments

HOME OWNERSHIP & REPAIR

1,041 Homes Impacted
\$23 Million in New Investments

STABILIZE RENTER HOUSEHOLDS

4,165 Households Supported
\$67.7 Million in New Investments





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