

Maximum Accessible Housing of Ohio Strategic Plan for Program Years 2016-2019

Consider: Thirteen percent of Americans are over 65 years in age, a percentage that will continue to grow for the foreseeable future as approximately 10,000 people per day turn 65.

Also Consider: Thirteen percent of Americans have a mobility disability, a percentage that will likely continue to grow, as disability rates increase with age.

According to a National Association of Home Builders survey, 63% of seniors (ages 55 and older) plan to age in place¹. Without having accessibility features in their homes, many will have to rely on the assistance of others to live a normal day. As the NAHB report states, “It is clear that consumers could benefit from additional education and awareness regarding the advantages to the safety, comfort, and easier accessibility of [accessibility] features...”

The study, “Aging and Disability: Implications for . . . Housing Policy” looks at future needs for accessibility in housing. The authors conclude that by 2030, 20% of households will have at least one member with a disability needing accessibility features². Also, over the lifespan of a new home, there is a 60% likelihood that a person with a mobility disability will live in that home. Yet 90% of our housing stock is inaccessible to a person with a mobility disability.

Clearly, there is a lack of accessible housing today and the problem will worsen in the future if not addressed now. The “silver tsunami” of the aging baby boomers is a reality that creates a need for solutions at the individual and community level. Maximum Accessible Housing of Ohio (MAHO) developed its 2016-19 Strategic Plan to address these issues and help provide solutions.

Context

Through housing, advocacy, and education, we advance accessible and inclusive communities where all people can thrive. MAHO, founded in 1981, currently fulfills this mission through two programs, the Vistas Apartment Communities and the Anderson Center for Accessible Living.

Our five Vistas Apartment Communities—developed, owned, and managed by MAHO—provide fully accessible housing to 148 families in Northeast Ohio. These communities only begin to address the region’s needs, however, as is evidenced by the 82 families on our waiting list and the 150 applications we receive each year. MAHO therefore designed its most recent community—Cotman Vistas in University Circle, a LEED-certified building—to be a model of accessible, affordable, and sustainable housing that can be replicated by others.

A vital component of the Cotman Vistas building is a model accessible demonstration suite and other exhibit and meeting space. These serve as the home base for the Anderson Center for Accessible Living, a program that allows MAHO to extend its advocacy and educational efforts to housing professionals, individuals with disabilities, those aging in place, their families and caregivers, social service providers, and the community as a whole. The Anderson Center provides a unique combination of technical

¹ National Association of Home Builders and MetLife Mature Market Institute, *55+ Housing: Builders, Buyers, and Beyond* 2009: 5.

² Stanley K. Smith , Stefan Rayer & Eleanor A. Smith, *Aging and Disability: Implications for the Housing Industry and Housing Policy in the United States*, 2008: Journal of the American Planning Association, 74:3

accessibility expertise and a place where people can go to see and understand accessibility and accessible building products. Its initial activities—including development of resource information, seminars and presentations, exhibits, and outreach—began in 2015.

Solutions

With its long, singular focus on accessible housing, MAHO is uniquely positioned to provide much-needed housing solutions, education, information, and support. Our 2016-19 Strategic Plan delineates ways to do that through existing programs and new endeavors, while simultaneously strengthening the organization as a whole.

First, the plan focuses on our current programs. We consider how the Anderson Center can build on its initial successes and expand its influence, and we address how to continuously improve the Vistas in terms of both function and quality. Next, we consider other ways to increase accessible housing options, on our own and in partnership. The plan then moves into outreach and how to ensure that issues related to accessibility and disability get the attention they deserve. Finally, we look at the resources needed to fulfill our mission. Volunteers, including Board members, and paid staff are the human resources which are key components to the success of the plan. Ensuring that we have the necessary financial resources to fulfill the plan is also addressed.

With this plan, MAHO is well-prepared to build on its long history as the leader in Ohio in addressing the housing needs of people with physical disabilities. The need is great, the opportunities are abundant, and this plan provides clear direction for the next three years.

2017 Update: After a year of working diligently on this plan, MAHO recognized a need to update its mission, vision, and values. Our work demonstrated that fulfilling this plan requires a broader focus on community and inclusion to address the specific needs of people with all types of ability and disability. A broader focus is consistent with increased awareness of aging in place, or more aptly, aging in community. This plan continues to provide a well-defined direction for MAHO to move ahead while the new mission, vision, and values provide a clear context for these efforts.

2018 Update: In reviewing progress on the plan, the MAHO Board of Directors determined that rather than create a new plan to begin with program year 2019, it would be more effective to make minor changes to the existing plan. This includes some changes to activities and priorities. The current plan now extends through February 28, 2020.

Mission, Vision, and Values

Our Mission: Through housing, advocacy, and education, we advance accessible and inclusive communities where all people can thrive.

Our Vision: We envision a world that is accessible to all people regardless of ability:

- every person's home meets their accessibility needs;
- every community is welcoming and inclusive to all residents and visitors; and
- everyone can obtain the resources necessary to ensure accessibility.

Our values:

- *Accessibility and inclusion:* We believe that the built world should be designed without barriers based on ability. We challenge ourselves and others to treat all people equitably, with compassion and respect, so that everyone can be part of their communities.

- *Independence:* We embrace the philosophy of independent living because it allows people with disabilities, including those with age-related disabilities, to live as fully as possible in the setting of their choice.
- *Learning, listening, and sharing:* We are committed to constantly expanding our knowledge of accessibility issues. We do so through research, experimentation, and ongoing conversations with those who are impacted by a lack of access. We believe in sharing the experiences and expertise that we have gained.
- *Collaboration:* We recognize the benefit of forging and maintaining partnerships with organizations and individuals supportive of our mission and vision. We advocate in order to create a more accessible and inclusive future.
- *Creative and sustainable solutions:* We understand the importance of responsible use of our resources, which compels us to be agile, imaginative, and open to innovation

Goals and Strategies

GOAL 1: Be a leading resource in the region for information and education on accessibility, universal design, and visitability.

- Update and implement an operating plan for the Anderson Center for Accessible Living that includes regular and recurring activities.
- Train and encourage people to become active accessibility champions.
- Build a database and engage a network of professionals trained and practiced in accessibility.
- Improve community accessibility and increase inclusion by teaching organizations and businesses how to meet and exceed regulations.

GOAL 2: Continuously improve the functionality and quality of service provided by the Vistas Communities.

- Obtain regular input from tenants to identify ways that MAHO can better meet their needs.
- Identify and implement best practices for administrative property management.
- Identify and implement best practices for property operations.
- Conduct accessibility assessments at all properties and implement recommendations as appropriate.
- Ensure effective use of technology.

GOAL 3: Increase the quantity and range of housing options with practicable accessibility features.

- Work with institutions and housing creators/developers to ensure appropriate and effective accessibility.
- Explore and pursue opportunities for developing a home modifications program.
- Identify and consider opportunities to acquire and renovate existing housing.
- Explore building other types of accessible housing.

GOAL 4: Increase awareness of, understanding of, and engagement with accessibility issues and MAHO.

- Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing plan.
- Pursue and develop relationships with contacts in the media.
- Identify and engage new audiences.
- Provide and leverage experiential opportunities and demonstrations to increase awareness.
- Conduct public advocacy and activism around accessibility issues.

GOAL 5: Develop and maintain human capital to meet organizational needs.

- Identify, recruit, manage, and engage volunteers to meet program needs.
- Develop program to reach and engage young audiences in our programs, fundraising, and outreach efforts.
- Identify, pursue, and recruit new members for the Board of Directors.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive program for initial and ongoing development and training of Board members.
- Develop and support mechanisms that ensure continued staff quality to meet organizational needs.

GOAL 6: Cultivate diverse, sustainable revenue streams.

- Develop and implement a comprehensive fundraising plan.
- Identify and implement best practices in donor cultivation.
- Identify, cultivate, and engage major funders, including foundations, corporations, and governments.
- Identify and pursue opportunities for earned income.
- Develop and implement a plan for the spending and/or investment of financial assets.