

II. Executive Summary

The overall conclusions of this 32 Appalachian Ohio counties “Affordable Housing Market Study” indicate a generally greater need for modern, affordable rental housing within Appalachian Ohio compared to other areas of the state. The housing stock within the Appalachian Ohio region is typified by older, lower-priced/lower-valued, smaller housing compared to the housing stock in the state of Ohio as a whole. According to census data and demographic statistics provided by the American Community Survey, the Appalachian Ohio region has a higher share of substandard housing units (defined as housing units that lack complete plumbing facilities) than the rest of the state.

The region has suffered from a lack of significant modern housing development over the past decades, while other areas of Ohio have experienced notable development. As such, Appalachian Ohio households have generally inferior housing opportunities than households residing in other areas of the state. This is further evidenced by the fact that Appalachian Ohio has a considerably higher aggregate share of non-conventional rental housing units (including mobile homes, boats, RVs, vans, etc.) than the rest of the state. As such, modern, quality, conventional rental opportunities are generally lacking in Appalachian Ohio compared to the rest of Ohio as a whole.

The Appalachian Ohio region has a higher share of population living in poverty than the rest of the state. In addition, the Appalachian Ohio region has a generally higher unemployment rate than the state as a whole, indicating a comparatively weak economy dependent largely upon manufacturing, mining and other “blue collar” employment sectors. In general, areas with comparatively weak economies often experience higher demand for affordable housing. Due to the limited supply of conventional affordable rentals in this region, Appalachian Ohio is in need of additional affordable housing.

The *Summary of Findings* of this report, found in Section III, discusses and lists the counties within the Appalachian Ohio region with the greatest potential need for various housing types, including general-occupancy and senior-restricted government-subsidized housing, as well as general-occupancy and senior-restricted Low-Income Housing Tax Credit housing. In addition, this section discusses the counties that lack certain types of housing. The *Comparison of Counties* of this report, found in Section IV, lists in detail how each county ranks compared to the state of Ohio, as well as all other Appalachian Ohio counties in terms of numerous key factors, including demographic statistics, economic trends, housing performance opportunities and existing housing performance.

The comparisons in Section IV of this report can help the Ohio CDC Association, OHFA and ODOD determine the specific areas of the Appalachian Ohio region with the greatest potential need and demographic support base for certain types of housing alternatives, based on the specific goals created and defined by these organizations. Considering the small demographic base of some of the Appalachian Ohio counties, it will be important for future affordable housing developments to be appropriately sized within each county/market so as to adequately provide needed housing, while not saturating the housing stock. This may be accomplished in some of the smaller counties through scattered site developments with groupings of units in a number of cities or towns comprising one “development” owned/managed by the same entity, or through other incentives or subsidies.

In conclusion, the Appalachian Ohio region has historically been neglected in terms of modern, quality housing development. As such, there is a generally limited supply of adequate rental alternatives for households residing in the Appalachian Ohio region. Based on the findings contained in this report, including the demographic support statistics combined with our in-person evaluation of existing housing options and their performance, demand exists for affordable rental housing options in this region of Ohio. The statistics and details of this analysis will help the Appalachian Housing Initiative members develop recommendations for increasing the availability of quality affordable housing in the 32-county Appalachian Ohio region.