

## WINTER AGENCY AT A GLANCE



The new decade is here, and the OHFA staff is embarking on new opportunities to help Ohioans ‘open doors to an affordable place to call home.’

Our homeownership department is on track to meet a \$600 million production goal after a great first half of the 2020 fiscal year. As warmer weather moves into Ohio and homebuyers begin exploring homeownership, the team is gearing up for a busy season. This year, the department has added manufactured housing to our portfolio with hopes that it could appeal to a wider customer base.

Every three years, OHFA revisits and updates its Annual Plan. The office of Housing Policy is hard-at-work throughout this process, working with the OHFA Board, program offices, and partners to understand what housing challenges exist and how OHFA’s programming might play a positive role.

*The three divisions of our Multifamily Housing department have a number of projects in process:*

Developers from around the state submitted their 9% competitive housing credit applications on Feb. 13. Now that applications are in, the review process begins for our Development team: conducting site visits, competitive scoring and underwriting. It is a herculean effort, but worth the result.

Thanks to feedback from partners, Compliance is in the early stages of re-branding one of our platforms from DevCo Inspection to OHFA Inspection. This new platform will allow better communication between staff and external partners.

The Training and Technical Assistance staff will be busy this spring as they offer a new Acquisition/Rehabilitation course in conjunction with Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing. Starting in April, the team will host a multi-city Compliance Policies and Regulations course.

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# 2020 OHIO HOUSING CONFERENCE PREVIEW

**DORCAS TAYLOR JONES**  
CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

In just over seven months, affordable housing professionals will gather in Columbus for the 22nd annual Ohio Housing Conference. While that is likely plenty of time for prospective attendees to make decisions about attendance, for OHC coordinators planning is already in full swing. The clock began its countdown shortly after the close of the 2019 conference and will continue in earnest until the 2020 conference begins.

The 2020 Ohio Housing Conference runs Tuesday, Dec. 1 – Thursday, Dec. 3, 2020 at the Columbus Convention Center. Pre-conference training occurs on Monday, Nov. 30.

In those first post-conference conversations, OHFA and OCCH coordinators review feedback from attendees, discuss structure for the coming year and begin discussing a new theme.

This year's theme reflects a desire to include a diversity of thought, experience and ideas within the conversations at the conference.

**(You read it here first.)** The 2020 theme is “emPowered: People. Partnerships. Possibilities.”

For planners of the largest affordable housing conferences in the Midwest, it's about more than a theme. That was clear from the start of 2020 planning.

## Innovation.

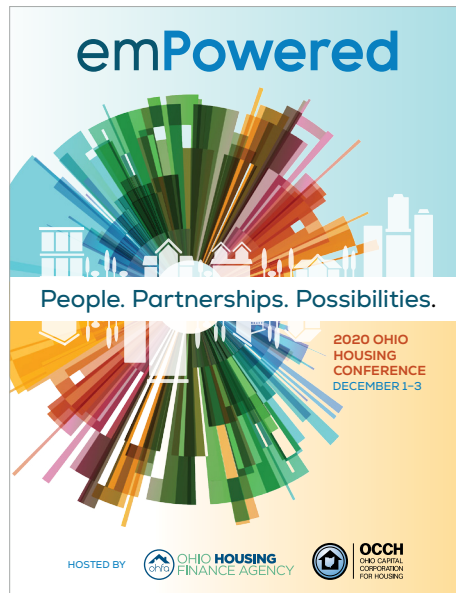
Innovation informed the coordinating committee's decision to open the conference to session proposals for the first time in its 22-year history. Organizers understand that significant ideas often come from collaborative efforts.

Coordinators received more than 47 proposals with session ideas ranging from dealing with natural disasters, better customer care through responsible self-care, finding great financing, public/private partnerships in development, exploring health disparity issues, building tiny houses, protecting personal information and more.

Session proposals are just one of several ways OHC organizers are working to make sure the conference remains a premier event. Other changes will be announced throughout the year as the event draws closer.

Ultimately, this year's conference will highlight the residents we serve, the professional relationships that make it happen, and peek into the future of housing.

The Ohio Housing Conference creates space for progress in housing and housing-related issues. Just hosting an event is never the sole goal. Making a difference is. #MissionIsWork



## *OHFA Congratulates Bill Faith*

*2020 recipient of The Cushing Niles Dolbeare  
Lifetime Service Award from the  
National Low Income Housing Coalition*

Thank you for your tireless advocacy,  
leadership, and dedication to secure decent,  
safe, and affordable homes for the lowest-  
income people in Ohio and across the U.S.

## DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

**KELAN CRAIG**

DIRECTOR OF MULTIFAMILY HOUSING

The office of Multifamily Housing's Development division is well into the first quarter of the year and is excited to advance affordable housing production in the decade ahead. Like those hoping that Punxsutawney Phil would foretell an early spring, the multifamily team has been eagerly awaiting the arrival of the 2020 Competitive Housing Credit application deadline. This is one of our most anticipated times, as we review applications that our partners have spent months, if not years, on to tackle our state's most pressing housing needs. We recognize and appreciate the time, resources and effort that the many teams have put into their proposals. As OHFA embarks on the development of a new three-year strategic plan, we know how critical the nearly \$300 million in housing credits are to be able to fulfill the Agency's mission.

The deadline to submit applications was February 13, followed immediately by threshold reviews. Competitive scoring, underwriting and select site visits commenced on March 2; notice of preliminary scores and underwriting issues will be sent to applicants by April 6; and results of competitive scoring will be released and presented to the OHFA board of directors on May 20. This herculean effort will be led by Karen Banyai, Operations Manager; Diane Alecusan, Program and Policy Manager; housing credit underwriters Trevor Britton, Kathy Hottinger and Samantha Makoski; and Architectural and Construction team members Nigel Simpson, Mark Schluetz and Manickavalli Bose.

Development staff are hard at work on a variety of other initiatives:

- Review of non-competitive housing credit applications submitted in the January application window;
- OHFA's response to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's 811; Project Rental Assistance Notice of Funding Availability;
- Final application reviews for Bond Gap Financing projects;
- Subsidy Layering Reviews on behalf of HUD; and,
- Processing of 8609s, and more.

OHFA is proud to participate in several interagency housing policy workgroups. Our partnerships include the Ohio Department of Health's Lead Advisory Committee and the Housing Subcommittee of the Recovery Supports Workgroup, an offshoot of Governor DeWine's Recovery Ohio Initiative. The group is tasked with, among many other things, identifying ways to effectively provide housing opportunities for individuals with mental illness and/or substance abuse disorders. Kelan Craig is co-chairing the housing subcommittee and the housing committee of the Ohio Attorney General's Task Force on Criminal Justice and Mental Illness. We're excited to see what new housing initiatives and collaborative partnerships are borne out of these statewide efforts.

We're excited to share some recent staffing changes in our department. David Foust joined the team on January 6 as our new multifamily lending manager. David previously worked at PACT, a special initiative involving OSU, City of Columbus and CMHA, and as a project manager with the Ohio CDC Association. He'll be working on the Multifamily Lending and Multifamily Bond programs. Rachel Grass was promoted to project administration manager, officially joining the Development team on January 19. She has been with OHFA since 2010, serving in various capacities, most recently as policy and technology manager in the Training & Technical Assistance division. She'll be overseeing construction monitoring, gap financing draws, 8609s, among many other post-allocation activities. We're thrilled to have them on board.

## COMPLIANCE DIVISION UPDATE

ATHENA LUNSFORD  
COMPLIANCE OPERATIONS MANAGER



The Office of Multifamily Housing's Compliance Division is excited to begin a new decade. As we do, we are streamlining the Annual Owner Certification submission process and continuing to roll out our new OHFA Inspection software. We're also hard at work preparing for our busiest audit year on record. In December, compliance auditors took part in a Housing Credit Certified Professional training hosted by OHFA.

We recently posted four compliance auditors positions to help us manage an increased workload – a result of new IRS Compliance Monitoring Regulations released last February. Auditors are projected to conduct more than 460 audits this year, including approximately 10,000 units, 10,000 files and over 6,000 buildings.

Because our partners have expressed challenges with differentiating between our multiple DevCo platforms, we are in the preliminary stages of re-branding DevCo Inspection to OHFA Inspection. We hope that this change will reduce confusion that partners have experienced when accessing other OHFA systems with similar names. The OHFA Inspection platform will provide a better mode of communication between OHFA staff and external partners. To access the [OHFA Inspection system](#), owners must be registered as a DevCo online user and have access to each of their projects in DevCo. The owner may grant access to designees of their choosing, e.g., on-site property managers, regional managers, etc., through DevCo online.

All communication regarding audits should be submitted directly through OHFA Inspection. External partners who are registered for DevCo online access, including owners, regional managers, site staff and syndicators will be able to view the progress made on their Compliance Audit Report responses in real time. Once the audit has been closed, external partners will also have the ability to view their most recent archived audits.

Make sure to [update your Constant Contact options](#) to include news from OHFA's Compliance Division, so you can stay informed as changes occur. OHFA staff have been busy updating various compliance forms, letters and documents to better serve our partners. We recommend weekly checks of OHFA's website to be sure you are using the [most current versions of forms](#).

Please submit all DevCo, Compliance and OHFA Inspection questions to the [DevCo Help Desk](#). This helps us effectively track and address your concerns. We are continuing to dedicate time, energy and resources to developing our capacity to respond to your questions as quickly as possible.

Thank you to OHFA staff and our external partners for continuing to further OHFA's mission by opening the doors to an affordable place to call home. We look forward to another great year of partnership and collaboration.

## TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE UPDATE

BETSY KRIEGER  
ADMINISTRATOR

### ANNUAL OWNER CERTIFICATIONS

Owners are required to submit 2019 annual certifications and tenant data via OHFA's online reporting system, [DevCo](#). OHFA recommends starting the reporting process as early as possible to ensure timely and accurate certifications. Submissions were due March 1, 2020. Questions regarding the use of DevCo should be submitted through the [DevCo Helpdesk](#). For a summary of the AOC reporting requirements, review the [2019 Multifamily Annual Certification Requirements Chart](#).

### COMING SOON: ACQUISITION/REHABILITATION TRAINING

OHFA and the Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing will offer a new, three-hour acquisition/rehabilitation training in late summer/early fall this year for free. Participants will receive an overview of the complexities and issues with acquisition/rehabilitation deals and provide best practices to make this type of deal successful. Topics include acquisition/rehab essentials, certifying residents, tenant relocation and maximizing credits. Training dates and locations will be posted on the Agency [training webpage](#).

### COMPLIANCE POLICIES AND REGULATIONS TRAINING IS BACK FOR 2020

The free CPR training has been updated to reflect updates in industry regulatory issues and OHFA policy changes. The training is free and lasts 3.5 hours. The training focuses primarily on OHFA's requirements for its multifamily programs. It provides industry professionals with tools and knowledge of OHFA-specific requirements, policies and best practices. Other topics include tax credit basics, verifications, forms and tenant files, VAWA regulations and digital-age income sources. The training fulfills the QAP training requirement. Listed below are training dates and venues. Look for additional dates on the [training webpage](#).

Wednesday, April 1 Columbus Main Library

Tuesday, May 19 at Parma Branch of Cuyahoga County Public Library

Tuesday, June 9 at Interact for Health in Cincinnati

Tuesday, July 14 at Dayton Metro Library

All training times will be from 12:30 p.m. - 4 p.m.

### EMPLOYEE NEWS

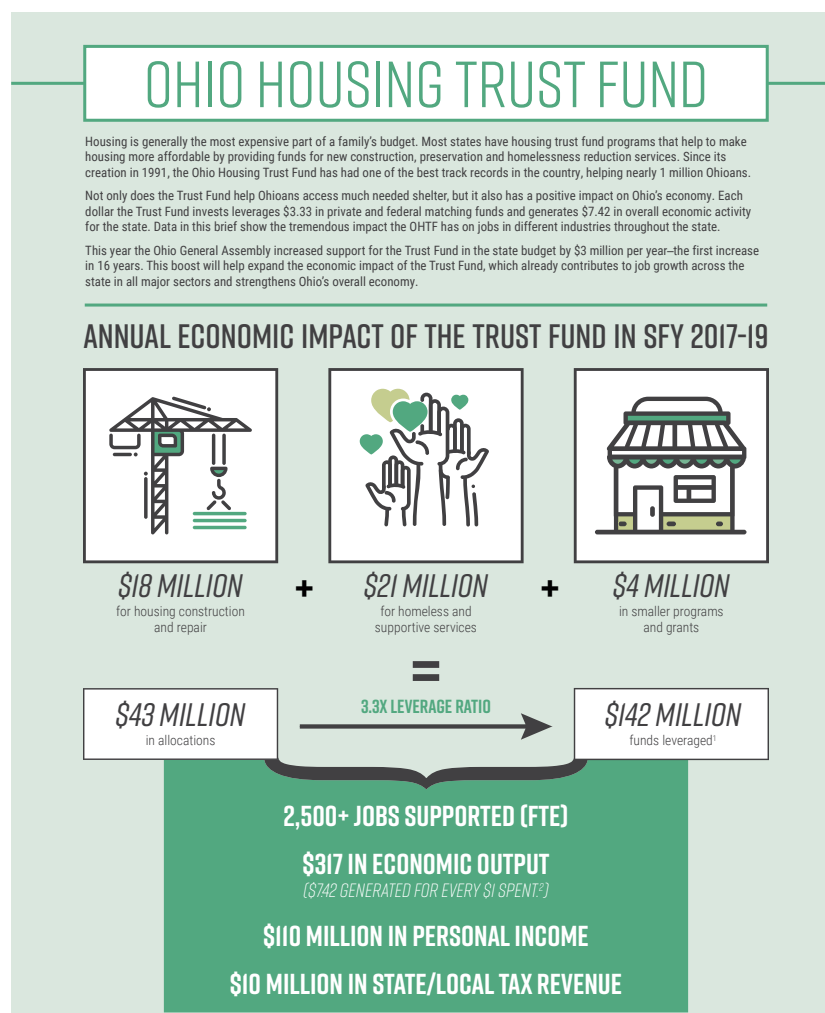
Rachel Grass, who served as our department's policy and technology manager, was recently promoted to project administration manager in the Agency's development department. She will continue to work on several training tasks during a transition period. Rachel began working at OHFA as an intern and has worked in the Compliance and Training and Technical Assistance offices for over nine years. Her work in both offices has been a tremendous asset to OHFA and our industry partners. She will be missed by the training and technical team.

# OFFICE OF HOUSING POLICY DIVES BACK INTO HOUSING NEED IN OHIO

KATIE FALLON  
DIRECTOR OF HOUSING POLICY

The Office of Housing Policy has been spending the winter working on data visualization and delving into the FY2021 strategic planning process. In December, we celebrated the holidays mapping out **Santa's route through Ohio**, where we might expect to see the **most snowmen** and the places in Ohio most likely to **experience a silent night**.

We updated our analysis on the **Ohio Housing Trust Fund**, finding that spending from the Trust Fund in state fiscal years 2017-2019 leveraged more than \$142 million for Ohio. Spending from the Trust Fund helped to create and support 2,500 full time jobs, generated \$317 million in economic output, and contributed \$10 million in state and local tax revenue. In total, the Trust Fund generated about \$742 for every \$1 spent, making it an effective program for targeting housing affordability.



As we dive into strategic planning, we are working with the OHFA board, program offices, and partners around the state to better understand key housing challenges and how OHFA's programs can address them. This fiscal year will begin a new three-year planning cycle, and we are working hard to identify the most pressing challenges and promising opportunities that may arise in the coming years.

The Office of Housing Policy has a new intern on staff. Olamide Bola will be working with us to develop the Housing Needs Assessment, and working with OHFA homeowner data to better understand ownership trends in Ohio. Olamide is majoring in economics at The Ohio State University. She has strong independent research experience, focusing on the impact of race on faculty wage data and analyzing the relationship between police stops and gentrification.

## HOMEOWNERSHIP UPDATE



Our Homeownership team is eagerly preparing for warmer weather and the spring homebuying season. We're hoping for a lively season that keeps us busy answering questions from partners, attending education and outreach events, and processing homeowners' loans.

Homeownership loans remain steady. The first six months of FY20 resulted in 2,227 units for \$286 million in loans, which puts us on track to meet the \$600 million production goal during this spring's homebuying season. Conventional loans continue to outperform government loans at 54% and 46% respectively, but that may shift with recent changes to Fannie and Freddie programs. The 80% AMI borrower cap may increase the challenge of hitting FY20 production goals, but could shift some borrowers from conventional to government loans. One potential boost to loan productions is the re-implementation of manufactured housing options for OHFA loans and programs. Another plus -- the elimination of the .50% fee for FICO scores ranging from 650-659.

As the Race for a Place (to Call Home) 5K approaches, the *Sole Trainers* homeownership team is training hard for our interoffice Get OHFA Moving competition. The contest promotes fitness and wellness through challenges and a point system for activities and steps. The annual contest helps prepare employees for the race in April with a competitive edge.

Ambitious training is happening in other parts of the homeownership team as well. Two members of the team attended the NCSHA Hardest Hit Fund Summit in Washington, DC in early January and another attended the National Realtors Association Conference, a valuable outlet for promoting OHFA's products. Others attended the annual Emphasys conference on upcoming enhancements and features to the system.

The team continues to process the remaining funds for the Neighborhood Initiative Program, which reimburses county land banks for demolishing blighted properties. This is the only active program of the federal Hardest Hit Fund program, which officially ends December 31, 2020. So far, 15,000 blighted properties have been demolished in Ohio with thousands more expected during 2020. The team is also working with the Ohio Department of Health to help eliminate lead paint in homes.

# GRAND OPENINGS AND GROUNDBREAKINGS



## **THE WILDS AT HARVEST ROSE – GRAND OPENING**

Ravenna, Portage County

The first of its kind in affordable housing, the Wilds at Harvest Rose (top photo) includes nine one-bedroom and 36 two-bedroom yurts. The unique design of the development provides for an economical, creative, durable and versatile form of housing, including materials that complement natural surroundings and provide low maintenance and durability. Located in Ravenna, Portage County, the project was awarded for its stable job growth and number of households experiencing housing problems (over 30%). The Wilds received \$860,002 in housing tax credits and a \$1.5 million housing development loan from OHFA.

Six units will be affordable to households at 30% AMGI, 10 units at 50% AMGI and 29 units at 60% AMGI. Twenty-three units have project based Section 8 subsidy where tenants pay no more than 30% of their income for rent and utilities.

## **ARLINGTON RIDGE TOWNHOMES – GRAND OPENING**

Akron, Summit County

Arlington Ridge Townhomes is a 46-unit workforce housing development in Summit County consisting of six buildings, including a community building, containing a mix of one-, two- and three-bedroom townhomes and flats affordable to 30%, 50% or 60% AMGI. OHFA contributed \$850,000 in housing tax credits to the project. Located in Green, Ohio, the development is within the highly-rated Green Local School District and includes an education partnership with the district. Recently ranked the “16th best place to raise a family” by Bloomberg Businessweek, Green, Ohio is a high-growth area dedicated to employment, economic development and neighborhood investment. Residents will have access to services such as financial assistance to an accredited adult education provider, direct transportation services, free on-site health clinic and childhood educational programming.

### **OTHER GRAND OPENINGS AND GROUND BREAKINGS**

**BROADWAY PARK – GRAND OPENING**  
Youngstown, Mahoning County

**COTTAGES AT RIVERVIEW –  
GRAND OPENING**  
Elyria, Lorain County

**MIDDLEBURY COMMONS  
APARTMENTS – GRAND OPENING**  
Akron, Summit County

**RIVERSIDE PARK PHASE II –  
GRAND OPENING**  
Cleveland, Cuyahoga County



## NEW EMPLOYEES

**Luis Amaya**  
Bond Accountant 1, Finance

**Olamide Bola**  
College Intern, Housing Policy

**David Foust**  
Multifamily Lending Manager, Multifamily Housing

**Paula Steele**  
Policy Administrator, Director's Office

**Gina Scheiderer**  
Director of Human Resources, Human Resources

## PROMOTIONS

**Timothy Glasser**  
Director of Capital Markets, Capital Markets

**Rachel Grass**  
Project Administration Manager, Multifamily Housing

**Duane McCrobie**  
Senior Capital Markets Analyst, Capital Markets

## EMPLOYEE MILESTONES

### 5 Years

**Staci Riley**  
Multifamily Housing

### 15 Years

**Guy Ford**  
Director's Office

**LaVern Sanford**  
Multifamily Housing

### 30 Years

**Michelle Noel-Shierloh**  
Multifamily Housing

## WINTER 2019 EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER

### **KAREN BANYAI**

*Operations Manager, Office of Multifamily Housing*



Karen Banyai is a hard-working, innovative and dedicated member of the OHFA team. Always open to questions, Karen has extensive knowledge of OHFA programs which is frequently on display during her presentations to the Multifamily Committee and Board meetings. Karen represents the agency with drive and passion and works to ensure funds are used responsibly and effectively.

Her friendly and encouraging attitude help to build a collaborative work environment among her team. Her enthusiasm for holidays and staff events brings cheer to the office, along with her efforts to make the workplace a more enjoyable place. Between holiday decorations, homemade gifts and scavenger hunts, Karen's festivity and energy are unmatched.

Although she is not an attorney, when the legal team lacked a real estate attorney, Karen was the go-to person to help answer questions or decipher issues brought to our legal department's attention. Her knowledge and ability to communicate simply and effectively is a valuable resource for team members and partners.

Karen's expertise and guidance to others serve as a valuable asset to her team, our agency and partners alike. She is an indispensable part of OHFA's team and mission.