

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# HOC FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2029



# INTRODUCTION

## *Dear Friends of HOC,*

Finding and affording a place to live is one of the toughest challenges faced by so many across the United States and housing has a direct correlation to so many key fundamental factors needed to have a good quality of life — health, education access, employment opportunities and so much more. The basic need of housing is particularly acute for our low- and moderate-income neighbors here in Montgomery County, where a fast-growing population has created an ever-increasing demand for affordable housing that hasn't been met. This is why the deliberate work of HOC is needed more than ever before.

HOC has created this Five-Year Strategic Plan as a guide for focusing our work on meeting that need. We produced this plan by listening to what our customers and members of the community told us they need from HOC, taking a hard, critical look at what we as an agency have been doing, honestly identifying what we must do better and determining what actions we need to take to meet Montgomery County's affordable housing needs and to help improve the lives of our customers.

This Five-Year Strategic Plan broadly describes what HOC will do during the next five years to provide more affordable housing and supportive services. Central to that effort is developing, training and equipping a world-class staff that always puts our customer needs first. Moreover, we will explore innovation in all that we do, to expand our reach and impact. These tenets will be our guide for developing the detailed Implementation Plan for how we will accomplish our goals and objectives. Built into the Implementation Plan will be the detailed, transparent reporting protocol HOC will implement to keep us accountable and all of our stakeholders informed of our progress in delivering on our promises.

Thank you to everyone who contributed their time, thoughts, ideas and energy to the development of this plan. With your support, we are committed to **expanding affordable housing** across our county, **enhancing the lives of those we touch** and **excelling as a world-class organization**. We look forward to working with you — and on behalf of you — to help shape the bright future of Montgomery County.

## *Together in the Mission,*



**ROY  
PRIEST**  
*Chairman*  
Housing  
Opportunities  
Commission



**CHELSEA  
ANDREWS**  
*President &  
Executive Director*  
Housing Opportunities  
Commission



## **HOC'S VISION**

**It is our vision that everyone in Montgomery County has access to the safe, affordable, high-quality housing and attendant services that they need to reach their fullest potential.**



# HOC's CORE VALUES

HOC has identified a set of Core Values that will guide the Commission and staff's pursuit of the outlined Strategic Plan goals and shape the strategies and policies implemented over the next five years. These include:



## PEOPLE-FIRST WITH DIGNITY & RESPECT

**OUR STAFF** is our most valuable asset in fulfilling our vision and mission. We provide our teams with the resources and support needed to excel in their performance and roles while making HOC a competitive, great place to work and thrive.

**OUR CUSTOMERS** are front and center in everything we do as we create and foster opportunities for them to secure safe, affordable and high-quality housing. We aspire to provide outstanding customer service through caring, listening, communicating, partnering, and timely responding to our customers' needs, concerns, and insights.



## INNOVATIVE AND ENTREPRENEURIAL

Addressing the severe shortage of affordable housing will require agility, innovative partnerships, adoption of state-of-the-art technologies, and nationally acclaimed financial tools that create a robust portfolio of housing opportunities that incentivize resident economic mobility.



## EQUITY IN EVERYTHING WE DO

Equitable access to safe, affordable and high-quality housing enables people to live with the security and comforts of home, experience community, and generate intergenerational wealth. We recognize that systemic and institutional inequities pose substantial barriers and hardships for communities of color. We commit to addressing these barriers as they impact our customers while embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion in our organization's culture.



## POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

Collaboration with community-based, public and private sector organizations provides resources and services that empower our residents to reach their full potential, secure and maintain housing, and achieve economic independence.



## COMMUNITY-ENHANCED HOUSING

When we develop, construct, and renovate properties, we are also building community and supporting sustainable neighborhoods. We cultivate social interaction among neighbors through mixed-income development, rather than isolate vulnerable households within pockets of concentrated poverty. This philosophy runs deep in everything that we do.



## STEWARDSHIP

We have been entrusted to wisely manage and deploy valuable resources to create and maintain environmentally sustainable affordable housing throughout Montgomery County. We respect the public's trust by being results-driven, accountable, and transparent in our efforts and operations while employing strategies to assure the financial solvency of HOC.

## HOC's MISSION

HOC exists to provide people with low and moderate incomes the opportunity to live in safe, affordable, high-quality housing in Montgomery County. We strengthen families by offering opportunities for personal and economic growth through partnerships and supportive services.



# A GLIMPSE AT WHAT'S NEW & EXCITING IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS



## **HOC has identified several innovative and exciting initiatives**

that we will explore over the next five years to advance our Strategic Plan. They encompass both what we do and how we do it.

### **Create a Nonprofit Preservation Fund (NPF)**

We will partner with the county to support the preservation of naturally occurring affordable housing.

### **Expand the HOC Volunteer Corps**

Expansion will provide greater customer service and deepen community engagement.





**This Strategic Plan is as dynamic as the Montgomery County community it is intended to serve.**

As conditions and realities develop and change during the next five years, HOC will adapt and evolve our tactics and activities to ensure we remain focused on achieving the goals and objectives set forth in this plan.

### **Establish a Direct Rental Assistance Program**

The program would allow housing subsidies to be paid directly to recipients rather than through contracts with landlords.

### **Employ Artificial Intelligence**

Responsible and creative AI solutions will improve operational efficiency and enhance customer service.

### **Invest in Advanced Data Analysis Capabilities**

This investment will lead to better-informed decision making.



2024-2029

# HOC'S THREE PRIMARY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**EXPAND**  
Affordable  
Housing in  
Montgomery  
County

**ENHANCE**  
the Lives We  
Touch Through  
Supportive Services  
& Partnerships

**EXCEL**  
as a World-Class  
Organization



## **EXPAND** Affordable Housing in Montgomery County

### **A. Expand HOC's Portfolio of High-Quality Affordable Housing**

- *Set Clear Priorities for HOC's Real Estate Pipeline*
- *Maximize Production of New Affordable Housing*
- *Preserve At-Risk Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing*
- *Grow HOC's Financial Capacity*

### **B. Expand Housing Supply in Montgomery County**

- *Advocate for Adequate Resources*
- *Advocate to Remove Barriers to Housing Production*
- *Maximize Partnerships with Private Housing Providers*

### **C. Expand and Optimize Rental Assistance**

- *Maximize All Available Funding for Rental Assistance*
- *Maintain "High-Performer" Status*
- *Create a New Direct Rental Assistance Program: HOC Bridge*

## **ENHANCE** the Lives We Touch Through Supportive Services & Partnerships

### **A. Enhance HOC's Resident Services Programs**

- *Boost Awareness of Available Services*
- *Ensure Customers' Voices are Heard*
- *Extend HOC's Multilingual Resources*

### **B. Enhance Partnerships with Government and Non-Profit Partners to Provide More Services**

- *Deepen Partnerships with Nonprofits that Serve our Customers*
- *Pursue Opportunities from Federal, State and Local Partners*
- *Integrate HOC's Application Process with Universal Screening for Benefits*
- *Amplify Collaboration with the Homelessness Continuum of Care*





**C. Enhance Wealth-Creation and Homeownership Programs to Further Housing Equity**

- *Create Affordable For-Sale Properties*
- *Maximize HOC's Mortgage Purchase Program*
- *Support Fair Housing Enforcement Efforts*

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**D. Enhance Opportunities for Applicants on HOC's Wait List**

- *Improve the Application Experience*
- *Review and Update Wait List Preferences and Policies*

**EXCEL as a World-Class Organization**

**A. Excel as a World-Class Place to Work**

- *Refine the Hiring and Onboarding Process*
- *Strengthen Employee Training and Resources*
- *Foster Diversity, Equity and Inclusion*

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**B. Excel by Providing World-Class Customer Service**

- *Ensure Adequate Staffing Levels*
- *Provide Additional Customer-Service Training*
- *Expand the Use of Trained Volunteers to Assist Customers*
- *Make HOC Easy to Reach*

**C. Excel Through Modern Technology and Data Systems**

- *Protect the Security of HOC's Systems*
- *Ensure that Technology is a Benefit, Not a Barrier*
- *Invest in Data Analysis Capabilities*
- *Explore the Use of AI Tools*

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**D. Excel with Transparent and Accountable Implementation of this Plan**

- *Develop a Detailed Implementation Plan*
- *Create Dashboards to Track Progress*
- *Report and Revisit the Implementation Plan Annually*

“This Strategic Plan is as dynamic as the Montgomery County community it is intended to serve. To meet the ever-increasing demand for affordable housing over the next five years and expand our reach and impact,  
**THE DELIBERATE WORK OF HOC IS NEEDED NOW MORE THAN EVER.”**

**CHELSEA ANDREWS**

*President & Executive Director*  
Housing Opportunities Commission



Visit our Strategic Plan page to learn more.



**HOCMC.ORG**