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Geauga Metropolitan Housing Authority MTW Demonstration Program Application

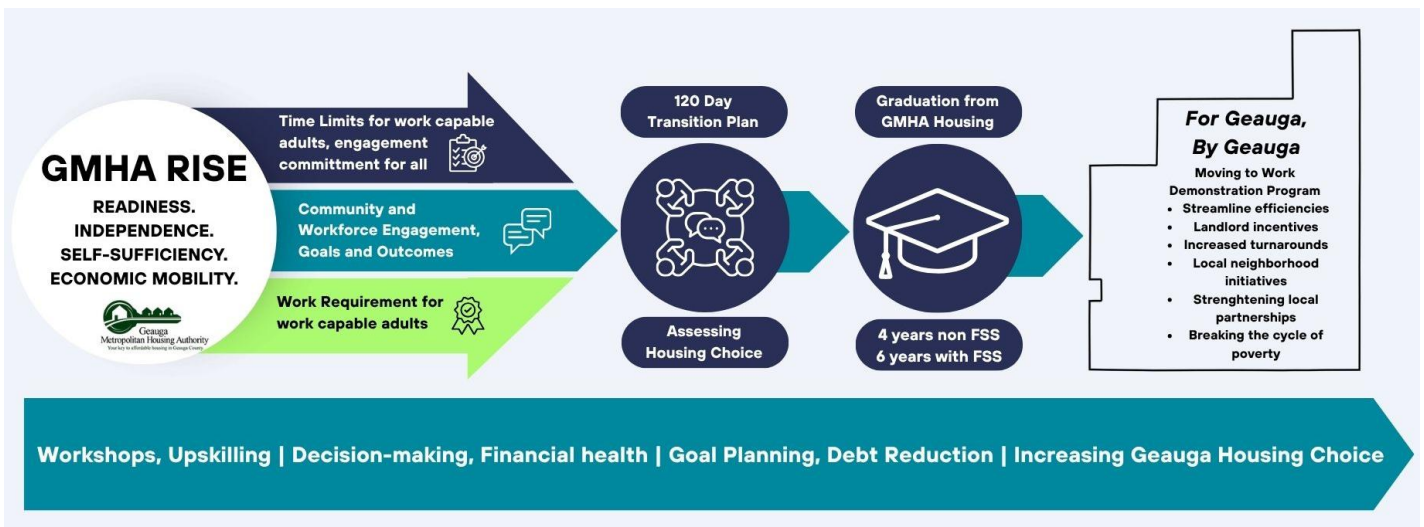
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Title: GMHA RISE (Readiness. Independence. Self-Sufficiency. Economic Mobility.)

Motto- For Geauga, By Geauga.

Submitted by: Dr. Anna Ball, Executive Director, GMHA



i. Vision for GMHA's MTW Program

The mission of the Geauga Metropolitan Housing Authority (GMHA) is to provide affordable, safe, and sanitary housing for elderly, disabled, and low-income families while creating opportunities for residents to achieve greater financial security and improved quality of life. Since 1969, GMHA has served as a critical housing resource in Geauga County, Ohio, one of the most affluent counties in the state. Today, GMHA administers 241 public housing units and 171 Housing Choice Vouchers, serving families, seniors, and people with disabilities across the county.

GMHA's vision for participation in the Moving to Work (MTW) Demonstration Program is to transform assisted housing from a permanent safety net into a platform for economic mobility, self-sufficiency, and long-term housing stability. Participation in the MTW Flexibility II Cohort would allow GMHA to leverage administrative flexibility, local partnerships, and innovative approaches to better serve residents while addressing the unique opportunities and challenges of operating affordable housing programs in a high-income county.

Although Geauga County consistently ranks among Ohio's wealthiest counties, significant disparities remain. According to local community data, approximately one in nine residents' experiences food insecurity. Additionally, Geauga County is an aging community, with a median age of 45 years, more than 10 percent higher than the Ohio average. Nearly 28 percent of county residents are between the ages of 55 and 74, while more than 9 percent are age 75 or older. At the same time, approximately 22 percent of county residents are youth under age 18, and many families face increasing housing costs and limited affordable housing options.

These demographics present two primary challenges for GMHA:

- Ensuring safe, affordable, and accessible housing opportunities for an aging population.

- Creating meaningful pathways to economic mobility and self-sufficiency for working-age households.

The MTW Flexibility II Cohort directly aligns with both challenges. Through MTW participation, GMHA intends to establish innovative programs that support workforce engagement, financial education, employment advancement, and housing stability while creating clear pathways for residents to transition to unsubsidized housing when they are financially prepared.

Through participation in one of GMHA's housing programs, eligible working-age households will be connected to the GMHA RISE (Readiness. Independence. Self-Sufficiency. Economic Mobility.) framework, which is designed to support residents in achieving greater financial stability, workforce advancement, and long-term housing success. Residents will work with GMHA staff and community partners to establish meaningful economic mobility goals and develop individualized plans that support their transition toward greater independence.

Prior to graduating from housing assistance, residents will participate in a structured transition planning process designed to connect them with the resources, support, and opportunities necessary for long-term success and housing stability within Geauga County.

For elderly and disabled households, GMHA intends to utilize MTW flexibilities to strengthen opportunities for aging in place, community engagement, wellness programming, and social connection. Through partnerships with local organizations and the GMHA Resident Engagement Committee (G-REC), residents will have increased opportunities to participate in educational, volunteer, recreational, and community-based activities that enhance quality of life, reduce isolation, and strengthen connections throughout the Geauga County community and bridge a gap to one of Geauga's main barriers: transportation.

Through this approach, GMHA seeks to ensure that assisted housing serves as both a platform for economic mobility and a foundation for long-term housing stability, consistent with the MTW statutory objectives of self-sufficiency, housing choice, and cost effectiveness.

Alignment with MTW Statutory Objectives

Cost Effectiveness

As a small public housing authority, administrative efficiency is essential to GMHA's long-term success. MTW participation would allow GMHA to evaluate and implement administrative flexibilities that reduce staff burden, streamline housing operations, improve program outcomes, and maximize the impact of limited federal resources. In conjunction with the agency's ongoing RAD conversion efforts, MTW flexibility would allow GMHA to modernize service delivery and redirect resources toward resident success initiatives.

Self-Sufficiency

GMHA views self-sufficiency as the cornerstone of its MTW vision. The agency seeks to build a comprehensive economic mobility framework that encourages employment, educational attainment, workforce development, financial capability, and community engagement. Through strengthened partnerships with OhioMeansJobs, NOC-COG workforce partners, local employers, healthcare providers, financial institutions, and skilled trades organizations, GMHA will create structured pathways for residents to increase earnings and reduce dependence on housing assistance.

Emphasis will be placed on serving the 144 youth currently residing in GMHA-assisted households. The agency plans to develop workforce pipelines, career exploration opportunities, and youth employment initiatives that disrupt intergenerational poverty and support long-term economic mobility.

Housing Choice

Geauga County offers strong schools, employment opportunities, low crime rates, and access to community resources. MTW participation would provide flexibility to further strengthen housing choice by helping residents access and remain connected to opportunities throughout the county while creating pathways to homeownership, market-rate housing, and long-term housing stability.

Reasons for Seeking MTW Participation

GMHA is seeking participation in the MTW Demonstration Program because the agency believes local communities are best positioned to develop solutions that respond to local challenges. The MTW Flexibility II Cohort would provide GMHA with the tools necessary to create a resident-centered housing model that promotes responsibility, economic mobility, and sustainable independence.

Specifically, participation would allow GMHA to:

- Expand and strengthen Family Self-Sufficiency participation through innovative enrollment and engagement strategies.
- Develop locally tailored workforce and economic mobility requirements aligned with the Geauga County labor market.
- Create structured pathways for residents to move toward unsubsidized housing.
- Enhance youth workforce development and career readiness programming.
- Improve partnerships with employers, workforce development organizations, educational institutions, mental health and addiction service agencies and community stakeholders.
- Increase administrative efficiency across public housing and Housing Choice Voucher operations.

- Utilize MTW funding and programmatic flexibilities to achieve measurable resident outcomes.

GMHA believes it is uniquely positioned to contribute to the MTW Flexibility II Cohort as a small housing authority operating within a high-opportunity county that offers significant workforce opportunities while facing growing housing affordability challenges. The agency's size allows for the rapid implementation, evaluation, and refinement of innovative policies, while its established partnerships in workforce development, behavioral health, financial empowerment, addiction services and resident engagement provide a strong foundation for successful MTW implementation. Geauga County offers a unique combination of strong county infrastructure and robust manufacturing, healthcare, skilled trades, and industrial workforce sectors that support the goals of the MTW Flexibility II Cohort. These existing workforce assets position GMHA to successfully implement term limits and work requirements while providing residents with meaningful opportunities to achieve economic mobility and long-term housing stability. GMHA's experience transitioning between Standard Performer and High Performer status has demonstrated the direct impact that administrative efficiencies can have on program outcomes. Because many of the challenges and opportunities influencing performance are operational in nature, GMHA is uniquely positioned to leverage MTW administrative flexibilities to improve efficiency, enhance compliance, and strengthen overall program performance.

As part of its MTW strategy, GMHA intends to implement a four-year term limit for work-eligible, non-elderly, non-disabled households that elect a non-Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) pathway, and a six-year term limit for households actively participating in the FSS program with a 12-month maximum limit follow successful completion of the FSS program. Both pathways will include tiered work and economic mobility through the GMHA RISE framework which is designed to promote employment, educational attainment, skill development, and increased earnings while recognizing individual circumstances and opportunities for advancement.

Through the GMHA RISE (Readiness. Independence. Self-Sufficiency. and Economic Mobility.) framework, residents will have access to workforce development services, financial coaching, educational opportunities, career pathways, and individualized goal-setting support. Participation in GMHA RISE will be available to both FSS and non-FSS participants, creating a consistent framework for resident advancement throughout their time in assisted housing.

To support successful transitions from housing assistance, all work-eligible, non-elderly, non-disabled households will collaborate with GMHA staff and community partners to develop a comprehensive transition plan at least 120 days prior to graduating from a Section 8 or Section 9 housing program. Whenever possible, this transition plan will build upon goals, achievements, and milestones already established through the GMHA RISE framework and will focus on preparing households for continued employment, long-term housing stability, and successful participation in the broader Geauga County community.

ii. Plan for Future Community and Resident Engagement

A core component of GMHA's engagement strategy will be the development of workforce partnerships that create opportunities for residents to achieve long-term financial independence. GMHA will seek to serve as a host location for the Area 19 Workforce Development Agency, NOC-COG, providing a unique opportunity to connect residents directly with workforce services. GMHA has strong partnerships already established with the PCC for FSS and will continue to strengthen the effectiveness of that group while aligning with MTW principles.

Emphasis will also be placed on youth engagement and workforce development. GMHA plans to collaborate with workforce partners to establish apprenticeships, career exploration, and employment opportunities for youth ages 14 to 17 residing in housing programs. These efforts are intended to build long-term career pathways, support educational attainment, and help disrupt cycles of poverty by connecting youth to meaningful employment opportunities early in life.

GMHA will also partner with local financial institutions, including community banking partners, to provide financial capability programming focused on budgeting, banking, credit improvement, savings, homeownership readiness, and long-term financial stability. These initiatives will support resident self-sufficiency goals and provide practical tools for economic advancement.

GMHA has established the GMHA Resident Engagement Committee (G-REC), to support community engagement activities. GMHA will continue utilizing multiple methods to gather resident feedback, including resident listening sessions, surveys, public meetings, written communications, email notifications, flyers, and direct outreach. These engagement activities will provide residents with opportunities to learn about proposed MTW initiatives, offer recommendations, raise concerns, and participate in shaping program policies. Feedback received through these mechanisms will be incorporated into program planning and continuous improvement efforts.

iii. PHA Operating and Inventory Information

The Geauga Metropolitan Housing Authority (GMHA) currently operates 241 public housing units and administers 171 Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) throughout Geauga County, Ohio. GMHA serves a diverse population of elderly individuals, persons with disabilities, and low-income families seeking access to safe, stable, and affordable housing. Due to the unique income characteristics of Geauga County, GMHA currently receives a 120% exemption for SEMAP Indicator #8 to more accurately reflect local market conditions and household incomes.

Gauga County presents a unique affordable housing environment. While the county ranks among Ohio's most affluent communities, many residents continue to struggle with housing affordability. The county is characterized by a predominantly rural landscape, township-based infrastructure, and small downtown communities. At the same time, Geauga County has an aging population, creating growing demand for affordable, accessible housing options that allow seniors to age in place. Housing affordability remains a significant concern, with average single-

family home prices approaching \$390,000, creating barriers for younger families, first-time homebuyers, and workers seeking to remain in the community.

One of the most significant challenges facing GMHA is the limited supply of affordable housing available throughout the county. While the Housing Choice Voucher program provides an important housing option for elderly and disabled households, landlord participation remains a persistent challenge. Property owners frequently cite administrative burdens, inspection inefficiencies, unit turnover concerns, and minor inspection deficiencies as barriers to participation in the HCV program.

If selected for the MTW Demonstration Program, GMHA intends to explore innovative strategies to strengthen landlord participation and improve voucher utilization. Utilizing MTW funding flexibility, GMHA may develop locally tailored landlord engagement initiatives, including maintenance assistance incentives and administrative support programs designed to address minor inspection deficiencies that often create frustration for property owners. These efforts would be implemented through formal agreements and compliance safeguards while maintaining all applicable HUD housing quality standards. The goal would be to reduce barriers to participation, improve landlord satisfaction, increase housing opportunities available to voucher holders throughout Geauga County, and further the MTW objective of expanding housing choice.

Another challenge facing GMHA involves assisting working-age households that remain employed but have not achieved the income levels necessary to successfully transition from subsidized housing while continuing to live and work in Geauga County. Rising housing costs, limited affordable rental opportunities, and transportation barriers often prevent economic advancement despite consistent workforce participation. These initiatives directly support the MTW objective of promoting resident self-sufficiency.

Transportation represents an additional barrier to economic mobility in the county's rural environment. Many employment opportunities are not easily accessible without reliable transportation. GMHA plans to collaborate with county officials, workforce partners, and transportation providers to identify opportunities for expanded transportation access, workforce route connectivity, and other mobility solutions that support residents' ability to maintain and increase employment.

GMHA is currently pursuing repositioning of its public housing portfolio, including an analysis of the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program and views MTW participation as a complementary strategy that will strengthen long-term asset preservation, operational effectiveness, and resident outcomes. As a small housing authority, these administrative efficiencies are critical to advancing the MTW objective of increasing cost effectiveness while maintaining high-quality housing services.

GMHA has demonstrated innovation and creativity through several existing initiatives. The agency operates a successful Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program that supports residents in pursuing employment, increasing earnings, building assets, and achieving personal and financial goals. The agency maintains an active Program Coordinating Committee (PCC) that brings together community partners to support resident success and strengthen service coordination. Additionally, GMHA partnered with Ravenwood Health through funding provided by the Geauga County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board to establish dedicated mental health support services for residents. This partnership has expanded access to behavioral health resources and demonstrated the agency's commitment to addressing the broader social determinants that impact housing stability and resident well-being.

iv. Plan for Local MTW Program

The Geauga Metropolitan Housing Authority (GMHA) seeks to utilize the Moving to Work (MTW) Demonstration Program to create a locally driven model that expands economic mobility, increases housing stability, improves administrative efficiency, and strengthens housing opportunities throughout Geauga County. Through its GMHA RISE (Readiness. Independence. Self-Sufficiency. Economic Mobility.) initiative, GMHA intends to leverage MTW flexibility to align housing assistance with workforce development, financial empowerment, community engagement, and long-term housing success.

As a small housing authority operating in one of Ohio's highest-income counties, GMHA faces unique challenges that require local solutions. The agency intends to utilize MTW flexibility to create innovative partnerships and tailored program approaches that support residents while preserving affordable housing resources and increasing opportunities for self-sufficiency.

Cost Effectiveness

GMHA intends to explore MTW administrative flexibilities that reduce duplicative processes, simplify program administration, and allow staff to focus more time on resident outcomes and community partnerships. These efficiencies are particularly important as GMHA advances its ongoing repositioning efforts and seeks to modernize its housing programs.

Potential MTW initiatives may include:

- Streamlining Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection processes utilizing available MTW authorities while maintaining safe and sanitary housing conditions.
- Reducing administrative barriers that discourage landlord participation in the Housing Choice Voucher Program.
- Exploring innovative landlord engagement and retention strategies that improve unit availability and reduce vacancy periods.
- Leveraging MTW funding flexibility to invest in programs and services that create measurable resident outcomes.

- Aligning administrative practices across public housing, Housing Choice Voucher, and increasing resident services programs to improve operational efficiency.

Self-Sufficiency

Self-sufficiency is the cornerstone of GMHA's MTW vision. Through the GMHA RISE initiative, the agency intends to implement this comprehensive framework and expand Self-Sufficiency opportunities.

GMHA seeks to expand participation in self-sufficiency programming by transitioning to an opt-out Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) model for eligible households. The agency believes that increasing participation in FSS services and escrow-building opportunities will encourage residents to establish goals, increase earnings, build assets, and prepare for long-term housing independence.

GMHA also seeks to strengthen resident engagement through the newly established GMHA Resident Engagement Committee (G-REC), which will encourage participation in community activities, educational opportunities, volunteer service, leadership development, and resident-driven initiatives.

Emphasis will be placed on youth development, intended to disrupt the cycle of poverty. GMHA intends to expand workforce readiness opportunities, career exploration, apprenticeship programs, and educational partnerships for youth residing in assisted housing.

Housing Choice

GMHA believes housing choice extends beyond access to subsidized housing. True housing choice includes creating pathways that allow residents to successfully choose where they live, work, and raise their families. Through MTW participation, GMHA seeks to help residents access and remain connected to local opportunities while preparing them for long-term housing success.

GMHA intends to utilize MTW flexibility to:

- Strengthen Housing Choice Voucher utilization throughout the county.
- Expand landlord participation and increase the availability of quality housing options.
- Reduce barriers that limit housing access for voucher holders.
- Develop pathways that support successful transitions to unsubsidized housing.
- Explore innovative approaches to homeownership readiness and wealth building.
- Improve mobility opportunities within Geauga County and surrounding employment centers.

Additionally, GMHA is interested in expanding the use of Project-Based Vouchers (PBVs) through strategic partnerships with organizations that serve vulnerable populations. MTW flexibilities may support efforts to streamline administration and expand housing opportunities for individuals recovering from substance use disorders, persons experiencing behavioral health

challenges, survivors of domestic violence, and other populations with specialized housing needs.

By partnering with recovery organizations, mental health providers, workforce agencies, and community service organizations, GMHA seeks to create a broader continuum of housing options that increase stability and expand housing choice for some of Geauga County's most vulnerable residents.

Through participation in the MTW Demonstration Program, GMHA seeks to create a locally responsive housing model that reflects the unique needs of Geauga County, consistent with the agency's MTW vision of "For Geauga, By Geauga". GMHA intends to make assisted housing a platform for opportunity, while building a bridge to independence, that ultimately leads to the powerful pathways of housing choice.

v. Proposed Use of MTW Funds

The Geauga Metropolitan Housing Authority (GMHA) requests authorization to utilize the MTW funding flexibility available under the MTW Demonstration Program, including the authority to combine and use Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) and Public Housing (Section 9) funds in a flexible and fungible manner to meet local housing and community needs. As a small Public Housing Authority operating in a unique high-opportunity environment, GMHA believes flexible funding authority will allow the agency to maximize resources, increase administrative efficiency, and invest strategically in activities that advance resident self-sufficiency, housing choice, and long-term housing stability.

GMHA intends to utilize MTW funding flexibility to support the implementation of its GMHA RISE (Readiness. Independence. Self-Sufficiency. Economic Mobility.) initiative, which will serve as the framework for workforce development, housing stability, and economic mobility programming.

Self-Sufficiency Investments

GMHA anticipates utilizing MTW funding flexibility to expand and strengthen resident self-sufficiency services and economic mobility initiatives, including:

- Expansion of Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) participation and supportive services.
- Financial literacy, budgeting, credit-building, and asset-development programming.
- Workforce development partnerships with OhioMeansJobs, NOCCOG Workforce Development, local employers, healthcare providers, manufacturing employers, and skilled trades organizations.
- Youth workforce development initiatives, career exploration programs, paid work experiences, apprenticeships, and employment readiness programs.
- Educational advancement, credential attainment, and skills-training opportunities for residents.

- Resident coaching, case management, and individualized economic mobility plans.
- Community engagement and leadership development opportunities through the GMHA Resident Engagement Committee (G-REC).

GMHA may utilize funding flexibility to support services for households that are not enrolled in the FSS program but would benefit from financial coaching, employment services, workforce navigation, and self-sufficiency supports designed to increase earnings and long-term economic independence through the GMHA RISE curriculum.

Housing Choice and Landlord Engagement Investments

GMHA intends to utilize MTW flexibility to strengthen housing choice opportunities throughout Geauga County by investing in landlord recruitment, retention, and housing access initiatives. Potential uses of MTW funds may include:

- Landlord outreach and engagement efforts to increase participation in the Housing Choice Voucher Program.
- Development of locally designed landlord incentive programs that encourage voucher acceptance and unit retention.
- Assistance with minor maintenance or turnover-related issues that preserve voucher housing opportunities and reduce vacancy loss.
- Programs that support successful transitions from assisted housing to market-rate housing.
- Homeownership readiness and financial preparedness initiatives for eligible residents.
- Expansion of Project-Based Voucher partnerships serving special populations, including individuals recovering from substance use disorders, persons with behavioral health needs, and households experiencing housing instability.

These initiatives are intended to increase housing opportunities within Geauga County while strengthening relationships with private landlords and community stakeholders.

Supportive Services and Community Partnerships

GMHA plans to utilize MTW flexibility to strengthen partnerships with community-based organizations that address barriers to self-sufficiency and housing stability. Funding may be used to support partnerships and programming related to:

- Behavioral health and mental health services.
- Transportation solutions that improve access to employment, education, training, and supportive services.
- Aging-in-place initiatives for elderly households.
- Family Unification efforts through community based partnerships.
- Community wellness and resident engagement activities.

- Volunteer and service opportunities developed through partnerships with local agencies.

As Geauga County's population continues to age, GMHA intends to strategically invest in programs that allow elderly and disabled residents to remain safely housed while maintaining meaningful connections to the community.

Cost Effectiveness and Administrative Efficiencies

As a small housing authority, GMHA views administrative efficiency as critical to long-term program sustainability. MTW funding flexibility will allow the agency to align resources across programs and reduce administrative duplication. Potential uses of MTW funds include:

- Streamlining program administration and operational processes.
- Supporting technology improvements and modernization efforts.
- Enhancing data collection, performance tracking, and program evaluation activities.
- Implementing administrative efficiencies related to inspections, recertifications, and program operations consistent with MTW waivers.
- Supporting repositioning efforts and long-term asset preservation strategies.
- Reinvesting operational savings into resident services and self-sufficiency initiatives.

Use of Funds Across Section 8 and Section 9 Programs

GMHA intends to fully utilize MTW funding fungibility authority to strategically blend Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) and Public Housing (Section 9) resources in a manner that maximizes resident outcomes and local impact.

Specifically, GMHA expects to use funding flexibility to:

- Expand resident services and workforce development opportunities regardless of whether participants reside in Public Housing or the Housing Choice Voucher Program.
- Strengthen landlord engagement efforts that support voucher utilization and housing access.
- Invest in supportive services.
- Develop innovative local initiatives that align housing assistance with workforce development, financial empowerment, and community success.

Through this flexible funding approach, GMHA will be able to maximize the impact of federal resources while creating a coordinated system that supports residents on their path toward greater independence, economic mobility, and long-term housing stability.

vi. vi. Discussion of Significant Partnerships

The Geauga Metropolitan Housing Authority (GMHA) recognizes that successful implementation of the MTW Flexibility II Cohort requires strong community partnerships that align housing assistance with workforce development, education, financial empowerment,

supportive services, and long-term housing stability. As a small housing authority, GMHA has prioritized building collaborative relationships with public agencies, local governments, nonprofit organizations, educational partners, healthcare organizations, workforce development providers, and private-sector employers. These partnerships form the foundation of the GMHA RISE (Readiness. Independence. Self-Sufficiency. Economic Mobility.) framework and will play a critical role in helping residents achieve the goals of economic mobility, self-sufficiency, and successful transition from assisted housing.

Workforce Development Partnerships

A cornerstone of GMHA's MTW vision is the development of meaningful workforce pathways that connect residents to sustainable employment opportunities. GMHA intends to serve as a host site for Northeast Ohio Community Council of Governments (NOC-COG), the Area 19 Workforce Development Board, creating direct access to workforce development services and resources. These workforce partnerships directly support GMHA's proposed term-limit and work requirement framework by ensuring residents have access to the training, support, and employment opportunities necessary to achieve economic mobility and housing independence. The agency intends to leverage these partnerships to create career pathways in manufacturing, healthcare, skilled trades, and other high-demand sectors that are critical to Geauga County's workforce ecosystem.

Local Community Partnerships

GMHA has actively engaged local county organizations, in meaningful discussion and the agency will continue strengthening relationships with local governments throughout Geauga County.

These partnerships will assist GMHA in identifying local resources, supporting transportation solutions, strengthening community engagement initiatives, and creating opportunities that allow residents to remain living and working within Geauga County following their transition from assisted housing.

Financial Empowerment Partnerships

Financial capability is a critical component of resident self-sufficiency. GMHA is developing partnerships with local financial institutions, including First National Bank and other community banking partners, to provide financial literacy education, budgeting assistance, banking access, savings strategies, credit improvement services, and homeownership readiness programming.

Through MTW flexibility, GMHA intends to expand financial empowerment services to both Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) participants and non-FSS participants within the GMHA RISE framework. These partnerships will help residents build the financial skills necessary to achieve greater independence, increase household stability, and successfully transition beyond assisted housing.

Behavioral Health and Supportive Services Partnerships

GMHA has demonstrated its commitment to addressing barriers to housing stability through its partnership with Ravenwood Health and funding support from the Geauga County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board. Through this collaboration, residents have access to dedicated behavioral health support services that address mental health, recovery, and wellness needs.

GMHA intends to build upon this successful model through MTW participation by strengthening supportive service partnerships that assist residents in overcoming barriers to employment, education, financial stability, and housing consistency. These services are particularly important for residents experiencing behavioral health challenges, social isolation, or other circumstances that may impact long-term housing stability.

Community Engagement and Volunteer Partnerships

To promote resident engagement and community involvement, GMHA is developing partnerships with organizations including Habitat for Humanity, Goodwill Industries, the Geauga County Hunger Task Force, and other local nonprofit organizations. These partnerships will create opportunities for volunteerism, service activities, leadership development, and community engagement.

For elderly and disabled households, these partnerships will support meaningful opportunities for social connection, lifelong learning, and aging in place. For work-capable households, they will provide pathways to develop workplace skills, build community relationships, and strengthen civic engagement.

Additionally, GMHA's Program Coordinating Committee (PCC) and newly established GMHA Resident Engagement Committee (G-REC) will serve as important vehicles for resident feedback, community collaboration, and ongoing stakeholder engagement throughout MTW implementation.

Leveraging Funding and In-Kind Resources

GMHA intends to maximize the impact of MTW funding by leveraging both financial and in-kind contributions from its community partners. Workforce partners will provide employment services, career coaching, training programs, labor market expertise, apprenticeship opportunities, and workforce navigation support. Financial institutions will contribute educational programming and financial empowerment resources. Community-based organizations will provide volunteer opportunities, supportive services, wellness programming, and resident engagement activities. Behavioral health partners will continue providing specialized services that support resident stability and well-being.

GMHA's partnership network represents one of the agency's greatest strengths and positions it for successful implementation of the MTW Flexibility II Cohort. By aligning affordable housing with workforce development, financial empowerment, behavioral health services, local

government support, and community engagement opportunities, GMHA will create a comprehensive system of support that enables residents to achieve economic mobility, successfully meet program requirements, and transition to long-term housing stability. Through these partnerships, GMHA will advance its vision of making assisted housing a platform for opportunity, independence, and success throughout Geauga County.

b. Administrative Efficiencies Information

i. Assessment of Past and Existing Effort to Achieve Administrative Efficiencies

GMHA continually evaluates its operations to identify opportunities to improve administrative efficiency while maintaining compliance with HUD requirements and providing quality service to program participants and property owners. Outside of the MTW Demonstration Program, GMHA has implemented several practices designed to maximize staff capacity, improve program administration, and promote effective utilization of available housing resources.

One significant administrative efficiency has been GMHA's utilization of available voucher resources in a flexible manner. GMHA has also implemented policies intended to reduce administrative burden associated with income reporting and certification activities.

To address limited housing turnover and an extremely constrained housing market, GMHA has adopted policies that promote efficient use of its housing inventory. Due to low turnover rates, limited housing stock, and extensive waiting lists, the agency utilizes a 90-day abandoned unit policy, except in cases involving reasonable accommodation or documented medical necessity. This policy helps ensure that scarce assisted housing resources are quickly returned to productive use and made available to families awaiting assistance.

While GMHA currently benefits from HUD's higher-income approval standards under SEMAP Indicator #8, existing regulatory requirements still limit the agency's ability to fully address local housing affordability challenges.

Looking forward, GMHA seeks additional administrative efficiencies that could improve program effectiveness and expand housing opportunities for participants. Potential areas of interest include greater flexibility in income verification methods to reduce reliance on self-certification, expanded utilization of vouchers in nontraditional housing settings, longer housing search periods that reduce extension requests, and the ability to implement ceiling rents as a rent-setting option.

ii. Assessment of Needed Administrative Efficiencies

GMHA is interested in implementing applicable administrative efficiency waivers identified within this cohort as appropriate for the agency's size, staffing structure, and housing market conditions.

Alternative Utility Allowances (1.i and 1.j)

GMHA would utilize alternative utility allowances to streamline administrative processes and reduce the frequency of utility allowance calculations and updates.

Elimination of Deductions (1.r and 1.s)

GMHA is interested in eliminating certain deductions to simplify rent calculations, and reduce staff processing time.

Standard Deductions (1.t and 1.u)

The use of standard deductions would create a more predictable and efficient certification process, allowing staff to focus resources on program administration and participant services rather than verification of numerous deduction categories.

Alternative Reexamination Schedules (3.a and 3.b)

GMHA would utilize alternative reexamination schedules to reduce administrative burden on both participants and staff while maintaining program integrity.

Alternative Inspection Schedules (5.d)

GMHA would utilize alternative inspection schedules to improve operational efficiency by reducing scheduling burdens and improving staff workload management.

PBV Selection Process Flexibilities (9.c and 9.d)

As a small PHA operating in a highly constrained housing market, GMHA is interested in utilizing PBV selection process flexibilities to expand affordable housing opportunities more efficiently.

Overall, GMHA believes these administrative efficiency waivers would reduce processing time, simplify program administration, improve customer service, and allow agency resources to be focused on serving more households and expanding housing opportunities throughout Geauga County.