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CMHA is kicking off the largest summer construction season in its 92-year history to promote affordable housing opportunities

The eight projects, totaling more than \$334 million, are generating more than 6,500 jobs in Franklin County and will boost Central Ohio's economy by nearly \$750 million

COLUMBUS, Ohio – The **Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA)** is embarking on the largest slate of summer construction projects in the agency's 92-year history to promote and upgrade affordable housing communities that serve low-income and middle-wage earners, the elderly, and people with disabilities.

The record-setting total of combined investments in the eight projects that are underway or will kick off this summer exceeds \$334 million and will boost Central Ohio's economy by approximately \$748 million, based on a forecasting model CMHA commissioned through the **Ohio Chamber of Commerce Research Foundation** and **SRC EvalMetrics LLC**. The projects are estimated to employ a combined total of 6,532 workers in the construction trades this summer.

"Housing and economic growth go hand in hand. The projects we're launching this summer will create thousands of jobs, generate significant economic activity, and expand housing opportunities across Franklin County," said **CMHA President and CEO Charles Hillman**.

"As Central Ohio continues to grow, CMHA remains committed to ensuring that people of all income levels have access to quality housing and help support their ability to thrive in the communities they call home."

The projects are expected to provide the region with a strong employment and economic boost, as CMHA's general contractors and its partners have pledged to use local labor and materials as much as possible. At any given time, there will be 500 to 1,300 construction workers on-site during the projects, and their spending on meals, lodging, equipment, and other purchases will support hotels, restaurants, material shops, and local businesses.

CMHA's summer 2026 schedule of projects includes:

- **Nelson Park:** CMHA, Renewal Housing Associates and The Orlean Company are partnering on a \$74.4 million renovation of this 140-unit affordable housing community in Columbus' Eastgate neighborhood on the Near East Side. Originally constructed in 1958, the redevelopment will preserve and modernize this long-standing housing resource for future generations. **GC Drake Construction Co. is serving as the general contractor. Jobs created: 1,172.**
- **Westrich:** Construction is nearing completion with leasing to begin in June on the new, \$71.1 million, 234-unit development on vacant land adjacent to the River & Rich apartment community in Franklinton. CMHA's partners include CASTO, The Robert Weiler Company, The Kelley Companies, and S. Cain Development and Construction.

General Contractor: CK Construction Group (formerly Corna Kokosing). Jobs created: 1,304

- **The Falls:** \$46.6 million to fund new construction of a planned 220-unit mixed-income apartment community at 3349 Refugee Road that will serve middle- to low-wage earning residents, with CMHA as the sole developer. **General Contractor: Elford Construction. Jobs created: 1,061**
- **Walnut Grove:** This \$41.8 million partnership with Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH) is a major renovation of apartments located at 751 Chester Grove Dr. in Blacklick, rehabilitating 176-mixed-income apartment homes comprised of a mix of townhomes and single-family homes. **General Contractor: Ruscilli Construction Co. Jobs created: 888**
- **Heights on Main:** No contractor is selected yet, but groundbreaking is anticipated later this summer to build a \$30 million, 103-unit mixed-income apartment community, which will sit adjacent to City Hall in Reynoldsburg. This development is in partnership with the **City of Reynoldsburg. General Contractor: Ruscilli Construction Co. Jobs created: 567**
- **Aspire Columbus:** Construction is underway on the new \$29 million, five-story, 82-unit development that will serve middle- and low-wage earning families and people with disabilities at the former downtown United Way headquarters. **General Contractor: Daimler Group. Jobs created: 546**
- **All In Dublin:** This is a first-of-its-kind partnership with All Inclusive Living, The Finch Group DBA, and TFG Housing Resources. The approximately \$24 million disability-inclusive and senior, affordable housing development is a four-story, 75-unit multifamily community that will be built on a transit-accessible, 1.6-acre vacant lot at the corner of Dublin Center Drive and West Dublin Granville Road in Dublin. **General Contractor: Ruscilli Construction Co. Jobs created: 464**
- **Demorest Townhomes:** Breaking ground later in June in Grove City, CMHA will start construction on a \$14.3 million expansion phase that will grow the community from 48 units to more than 150 apartment homes. **General Contractor: Daimler Group. Jobs created: 530.**

CMHA now serves as a construction lender to fund projects on a scale the housing authority has never before achieved in its 92-year history through bond issuances. Since 2020, CMHA has issued nearly \$500 million in bonds, resulting in the acquisition or preservation of nearly 2,300 units across 14 Franklin County communities.

The bonds provide developers with access to competitive financing that can significantly reduce borrowing costs, making it possible to deliver high-quality housing at more affordable rents. This approach is central to CMHA's strategy for strengthening the region's housing stock and addressing central Ohio's shortage of attainable housing. These initiatives were bolstered by CMHA's A+ rating from **S&P Global Ratings**, which helps secure favorable financing terms and investor confidence.

"Our efforts extend far beyond the realm of housing," Hillman said. "We are not simply building structures, we are building communities and deploying substantial financial resources to stimulate economic growth. Through strategic investments in housing for all and community development programs, we are laying the groundwork for a more equitable and vibrant Columbus and beyond."

Data shows that for every \$1 spent by CMHA, the state economy gains an impressive \$2.24 return on investment, with CMHA issuing more than \$1 billion in annual subsidies to private landlords while creating or sustaining over 9,000 jobs across Ohio.

Those are among the findings from a 2024 study conducted for CMHA by the Ohio Chamber of Commerce Research Foundation in collaboration with financial consultant SRC EvalMetrics LLC that measured CMHA's impact on Franklin County, the Columbus metropolitan statistical area (MSA) and Ohio.

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce Research Foundation is a nonprofit organization that provides nonpartisan research to public policymakers. The research helps Ohio lawmakers understand how policies will impact the state's economy, competitiveness and job creation.

"CMHA's activities have left an undeniable mark on our community as well as the residents we serve by working together to provide affordable housing to all," said **CMHA Board of Commission Chair James L. Ervin Jr.**

"The investments in new construction and renovation this summer are equally undeniable: CMHA is a major driving force that spurs local economies throughout Central Ohio, not just benefiting CMHA residents but also supporting businesses and workers across the Buckeye State," Ervin said.

CMHA's proactive investments are a response to the acute shortage of affordable housing in central Ohio, with only 29 units available per 100 extremely low-income households, according to data from the **Affordable Housing Alliance of Central Ohio (AHACO)**.

Estimates show 54,000 low- and moderate-income households in Franklin County pay more than half their income towards housing costs, AHACO reports. Central Ohio also faces a deficit of 11,000 to 14,000 new housing units every year to support a healthy housing market.

The challenge is compounded by rising rents and low vacancy rates, underscoring the urgency for sustainable housing solutions. Rents nationally have risen 14% overall since 2021, going up much more than wages, according to census data. Experts say the spike is partly due to landlords making up for their inability to raise rents during the COVID-19 pandemic and current vacancy rates at their lowest point in 35 years.

CMHA By the Numbers:

- CMHA owns and operates over 6,200 mixed-income apartment homes with a portfolio valued over \$1 billion.
- Its workforce/market rate units house over 4,000 people, while CMHA's federally issued Housing Choice Voucher program houses over 14,000 families or 35,000 people, including 13,500 Franklin County youth.
- CMHA's resident population includes 25% who are older adults on fixed incomes, and 50% of its households are headed by a person with a disability.
- The average household size is 3.54, typically comprising one adult and two children.
- Residents are predominantly in the 16-to-64 age bracket (54%), followed by children (37% under 15 years) and seniors (10% over 65 years).
- All combined, more than 160,000 people live in a unit owned, managed or funded by CMHA.

- To put it in perspective, CMHA’s resident population of 160,000 people would make CMHA the sixth-largest city in all of Ohio.
- In 2013, CMHA’s federally funded programs were \$3 million in the red and projected to worsen yearly. CMHA’s portfolio at that time counted 1,827 assisted units, 80 workforce housing units and 80 market-rate housing units.
- Since that time, CMHA has committed to identifying new sources of revenue and strategically redirecting its existing resources by successfully diversifying its housing portfolio.
- In the past decade, CMHA has effectively shifted its portfolio balance and improved across the board. CMHA’s 2026 portfolio includes 2,253 deeply affordable units, 2,002 workforce housing units and 2,030 market-rate housing units.

About Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority

CMHA helps people access affordable housing through collaborative partnerships, promotes neighborhood revitalization and assists residents in accessing needed social services. CMHA owns more than 6,200 units of affordable housing, and through its Housing Choice Voucher and Project-Based Rental Assistance programs, it provides rental assistance to more than 160,000 Ohio and Washington, D.C. residents. Learn more at cmhanet.com.

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