What Is MtW?

Moving to Work (MTW) is a demonstration program of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for public housing authorities. It provides them the unique opportunity to design and test innovative, locally-designed strategies that use Federal dollars more efficiently, to help residents secure employment and become self-sufficient, and to increase housing choices for low-income families. The MTW designation gives housing authorities exemptions from many existing public housing and voucher rules providing greater flexibility with how they use their Federal funds.

What are the goals of MtW?

The United States Congress established the following three statutory goals for MTW:

1. Reduce costs and achieve greater cost effectiveness in Federal expenditures;
2. Give incentives to families with children where the head of household is working, is seeking work, or is preparing for work by participating in job training, educational programs, or programs that assist people to obtain employment and become economically self-sufficient; and
3. Increase housing choices for low income families.

How long can OHA participate in MtW?

OHA is one of 39 public housing authorities in the nation designated as an MTW agency (out of about 4,000). OHA was selected to participate in MTW in 2001 and executed its first agreement with HUD in March of 2004 for a seven year term. In February of 2009, OHA signed an Amended and Restated Moving to Work Agreement with the HUD. The new agreement extends OHA’s participation in the MTW program through June 30, 2018, unless the program is redacted by Congress.

What is OHA doing under the MTW program?

As an MTW agency, OHA has the ability to pilot programs and housing models designed to meet the specific needs of our local community. Some examples of local housing models OHA operates and is considering for future projects include supportive transitional housing for special needs populations, such as:
1. Maximizing Opportunities for Mothers to Succeed (MOMS) – A transitional housing program for women leaving the Alameda County jail system and reuniting with their children. This program is currently operational and provides 11 units of supportive transitional housing.

2. Sponsor Based Housing Assistance Program (SBHAP) – A partnership with the City of Oakland to provide housing subsidies to 110 individuals who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, and/or exiting the jail/prison system. The City provides the funding for the supportive services to assist participants in successfully maintaining their housing stability.

3. Foster Youth housing – OHA is exploring partnering with local community-based social service providers to develop a transitional housing program for youth exiting the foster care system.

OHA does not receive additional funding under the MTW program. However, another key feature of MTW is the flexibility to combine Federal funds from the public housing operating and modernization programs and Housing Choice Voucher program into a “block grant” and use these funds interchangeably to help better meet the purposes of the demonstration program and the needs of the local community. OHA has used this flexibility to fund two essential departments that provide services to our residents and participants:

1. Department of Family and Community Partnerships – MTW funding flexibility has allowed OHA to enhance the quality and reach of the client services provided both in-house and in partnership with community-based service providers to residents of the Public Housing and Section 8 programs.

2. Oakland Housing Authority Police Department (OHAPD) – The OHAPD provides public safety and community policing services to OHA properties and programs. OHAPD is internationally accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA).

Without MTW, OHA would not be able to offer the critical housing programs mentioned above or provide essential support services to residents to help them thrive in their communities.