



annual report **2020** - **2021**

10 Head Start Centers
4 Neighborhood Opportunity Centers

Neighborhood Opportunity Centers ★

Community Action Partner - May Dugan Center 



our mission is to
propel educational attainment
and **economic self-sufficiency**
for **multiple generations**
throughout **Cuyahoga County.**

transforming lives + strengthening communities

mission + locations

Dear Friends,

What a year it has been. As we've all made our adjustments to acclimate to our new "normal", unwavering support has allowed Step Forward to continue its outreach uninterrupted.

COVID-19 changed everything. It still is changing things, but what has not changed is the need for our programs and services in our community.

Yes, it's been an unusual year, but we haven't slowed down. We made the switch to virtual learning for our Head Start students, before safely welcoming them back into the classrooms this past spring. We moved many of our adult programs to an online platform – allowing more people to join our virtual job fairs than ever before. We opened a new Neighborhood Opportunity center in the Middleburg Heights community, expanding our reach to an area where we previously had no physical location. **The funding we've received from the federal government has allowed us to provide emergency assistance to thousands of households that experienced hardship because of COVID-19.** Those dollars are still available to those who need the help.

We're happy to serve those in need in our community, to let them know that a brighter future is possible and we are here to help them get there. But we can't do it alone. We ask that you help us reach out to those who can utilize our services and those who want to help along the way:

▶ **MAKE A DONATION** ▶ **SPREAD THE WORD** ▶ **JOIN OUR TEAM**

We are better together. With your help we will continue to **transform lives and strengthen communities.** We will all be better for it.



Joseph D. Chisholm



Kathryn M. Hall



Board Officers

Kathryn M. Hall, Board Chair

James Kenny, Board Vice Chair

LaRese Purnell, Board Treasurer

Shadonna Griffin, Board Secretary

Board Directors

Cassandra Brown-Collier, Eugenia Cash-Kirkland, Chamille Cotton

Brian Gallagher, Yomarie Gonzalez, Cecil B. Lee, Kira Kammenzind

Bishop Christian O. Medina, Michael Moore, Judge Michael J. Ryan

Yvonne N. Sims, Sherelle L. Tucker, Ed Purcell, Issa Elkhatib

message from our **board chair and president**



Step Forward **Family Development Specialists** are here for you as you prepare for the arrival of your little one! Our Baby and Mommy Support (BAMS) classes offer one-on-one consultations as well as guidance about how to care for your baby, nutrition and wellness, self-care, how to cope with stress, breastfeeding, postpartum depression and more.

Dads are also encouraged to participate in the program! Moms that require additional support can be referred to Step Forward parenting classes and/or a social worker.

In addition to support and resources, Step Forward connects moms to our Early Head Start and Head Start programs to support you and your baby from 0-5 years of age.

The *2020 and 2021* annual BAMS baby showers connected **51** expectant mothers to support services and baby items in preparation for their newborns.

The Step Forward Early Head Start program serves pregnant women and children from birth to age three. It offers prenatal support and assistance to the mother, then, when the child is born, the Early Head Start program offers a nurturing and developmentally enriching environment for the newborn to grow.

Step Forward offers its Early Head Start services as a home-base option, as well as a center-based program at several locations in Cuyahoga County.

Our Early Head Start centers feature warm and inviting classrooms with age appropriate toys, equipment and learning materials, plus necessary baby items like formula and diapers. Our qualified staff will care for your child as you watch him or her grow from infant to toddler.

The Early Head Start program assists students in meeting developmental milestones as they grow; our teachers follow an assessment strategy where they can make any necessary adjustments to a child's learning plan to give them the best opportunity for success in Early Head Start, Head Start, Kindergarten and beyond.

At the conclusion of the *2020-2021* school year, at least
72% of Early Head Start Students
met or exceeded the expected skill level for
social language development.*

At the conclusion of the *2020-2021* school year, at least
83% of Early Head Start Students
met or exceeded the expected skill level for
social-emotional development.*

At the conclusion of the *2020-2021* school year, at least
81% of Early Head Start Students
met or exceeded the expected skill level for **mathematics.***

*Data based on Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment tool.



When a child turns three, he or she moves on to **Head Start** until Kindergarten.

Head Start offers a holistic approach to learning for children and their families; combining classroom instruction, field trips and fun.

All of Step Forward's 10 Head Start centers are rated high-quality by the State of Ohio's *Step up to Quality* initiative. This indicates all centers are excellently implementing standards for curriculum, technology and kindergarten readiness.

The eight Head Start centers located in the City of Cleveland also are PRE4CLE partners. All 10 locations are UPK sites funded by Invest in Children.

Support for children and families extends beyond the classroom in several ways; Head Start also provides health and dental screenings and nutritious meals.

If a center-based program isn't right for you, Step Forward offers Home Base Head Start, which enables parents to teach their children right in their own homes under the guidance of the Head Start program, and a weekly visit.

Step Forward also partners with childcare centers and school districts across Cuyahoga County to provide Head Start education through collaborative partnerships.

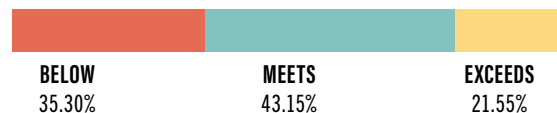
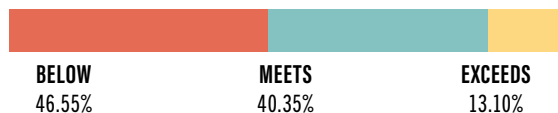
These collaborative partnerships allow more of our community's preschoolers to receive the benefits of the Head Start holistic approach to learning.

To find the Head Start program that's right for you, or to enroll, please visit **stepforwardtoday.org/head-start**.

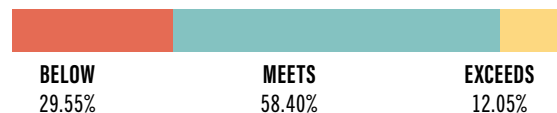
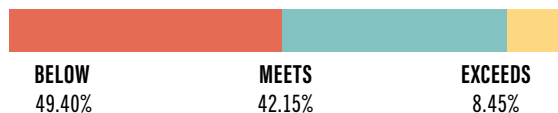
fall 2020

spring 2021

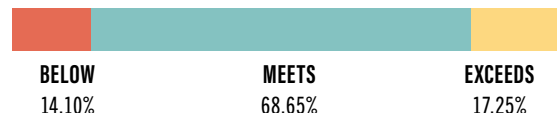
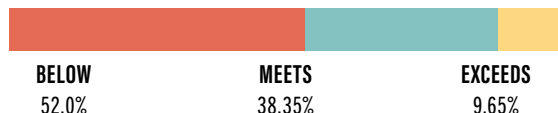
social emotional



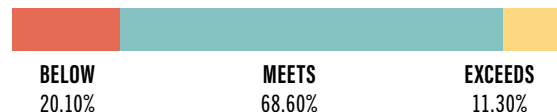
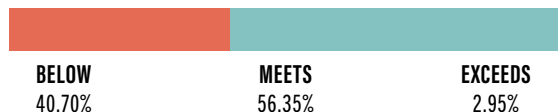
language



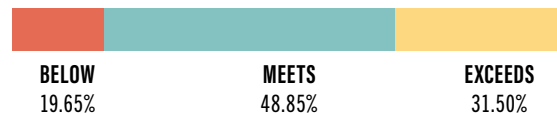
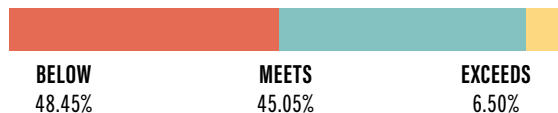
cognitive



literacy



mathematics



*Data based on Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment tool. Color-coded categories measure the percentage of students that are below, meeting or exceeding expectations for school readiness.

head start

Step Forward's **Professional Development** courses are here to help you take the next step in your career. It all starts with a personal meeting to determine interests, assess skills, set goals and establish a plan to achieve them.

Whether you're looking for employment opportunities, workshop offerings or advanced skill level certification trainings – we're sure to have the program to help you take on the challenge of finding the right next step for you.

Step Forward's monthly virtual job fairs connected more than **600 job seekers** with actively hiring agencies between *August 2020 - August 2021*.

Our programs do more than just assist you in updating your résumé and practicing your interview skills; we equip you with the confidence and tools you need to succeed in today's workforce. In fact, certain programs offer refurbished computers after successful completion.





Over 8 workshops, **40 clients** successfully completed the Digital Connection course and received a refurbished computer for personal use between *August 2020 - August 2021*.

Once you have the tools in place, you can feel confident knowing the right job is out there. Step Forward has an extensive network of area employers who are looking to hire qualified candidates quickly! We'll work with you to make sure you're finding the right job.

From *August 2020 to July 2021*, **89%** of Step Forward job placement graduates reported securing a living wage job.

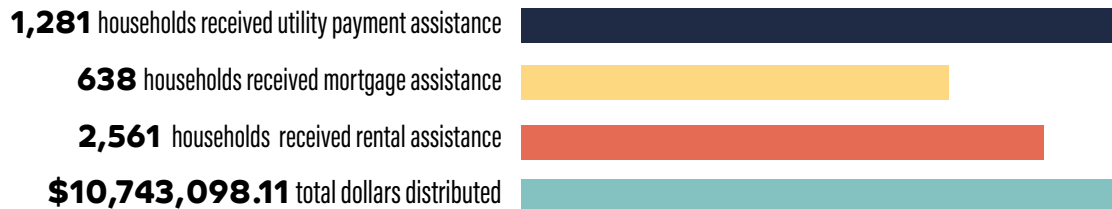
To learn more about Step Forward's professional development courses, or to enroll, please visit **stepforwardtoday.org**.



The **COVID-19** pandemic has had devastating effects on the country, including right here in Cuyahoga County. At Step Forward, we know many residents have been - and continue to be - impacted by the pandemic.

In late 2020, Step Forward expanded its emergency assistance services as a direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Between August 2, 2020 and September 30, 2021:



We are still accepting applications. If you are in need of assistance, or you know someone who is, please visit **stepforwardtoday.org** and click on the **"COVID Assistance"** button to complete an application.

We are here for you. Our Neighborhood Opportunity Centers help individuals and families access resources to address immediate needs while building long-term skills to transform their lives.

These services are available **free of charge** for income-eligible Cuyahoga County residents.

On July 8, 2021, **Step Forward** formally opened its **4th Neighborhood Opportunity Center.**

It is located in **Middleburg Heights** and brings personal and professional development courses, as well as energy assistance programs to the area.

Our **personal development courses** include individual and family counseling, parenting classes, anger management workshops and even tax preparation.

Between 2020 - 2021, **87%** clients in counseling services completed individual service plans.

We know poverty is complex. We will work one-on-one with each person or family to address immediate concerns, identify barriers to success and utilize resources and free workshops to build skills that enable them to step toward a better life.

Between 2020 - 2021, **more than 150** households received assistance in securing basic needs like food, hygiene products and school supplies.

For a complete list of offerings, or to find the Neighborhood Opportunity Center near you, please visit **stepforwardtoday.org**.

Emergency Assistance: The emergency assistance program helps residents with rent payments, utility assistance, internet services and additional emergency support including, food, mortgage assistance, child care, car repair assistance and more.

Personal Income Tax: Personal Income Tax services are offered by Family Development Specialists that are certified by the Internal Revenue Service. Tax Preparers will help participants identify if they are eligible for Earned Income Tax Credit and enable them to retain all of their tax refund while avoiding preparation costs.

Counseling: Counseling services are offered by Licensed Social Workers and paraprofessionals who assess clients and work with them one-on-one to create an Individual Service Plan that will guide their treatment and improve functioning.

Family Development: Family Development Specialist provide one-on-one assistance to address immediate needs by identifying barriers to success and creating goals with clients as they walk beside them to achieve their goals.

Baby and Mommy Support (BAMS): Baby and Mommy Support Program services include one-on-one consultation and training, life skills, sharing circles, wellness workshops and special guest speakers and vendors. Topics include how to care for your baby, nutrition and wellness, self-care, how to cope with stress, breastfeeding, postpartum depression and more.

Parenting: Step Forward's Parenting program teaches participants about child development and building healthy relationships. Participants receive peer support while gaining skills needed to reduce stress and support healthy interactions.

Anger Management: This curriculum-based workshop is run by our Licensed Social Workers who teach participants how to effectively manage their anger. Participants will monitor their own emotions, work on communication skills and learn how to respond instead of react.

Domestic Violence: This workshop will walk participants through this difficult topic and provide strategies to deal with anger in a non-violent way. In addition to the workshop, staff can assist the entire family by providing resources to treat all who are involved. Successful participants receive a certificate at the conclusion of the workshop.

Energy Assistance: These programs assist income-eligible Cuyahoga County residents with heating and cooling bills. The HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program) office is open year-round to assist residents with long-term solutions and/or short-term needs.

Customer Service Training I + II Program(s): The Customer Service / Computer Based Training course is a blend of instructor-driven curriculum and online courses that provides foundational understanding to Microsoft software. The program is designed to prepare individuals for an office computer-based work environment.

MOVERS program: This training introduces 18-24-year-olds to certification and credentialing opportunities, as well as entry-level job and career opportunities in the Information Technology field. Participants receive hybrid instruction, engage in networking sessions and participate in on-the-job training experiences.

Adult Basic Literacy Skills: This workshop is designed to promote and improve a client's reading, writing, and mathematics skills to improve their educational and employment opportunities. Individuals who complete this workshop may be referred to other classroom trainings to further enhance their career goals and training opportunities.

Job Readiness: This workshop is designed to assist clients who have been unemployed for more than 100 days in acquiring employment while updating their job search toolkit. Participants practice mock interviews after being introduced to their Employment Specialist who will answer questions and prepare them to meet with potential employers.

Microsoft Office Suite Training: This training is designed to provide enrichment for clients with a basic grasp of Microsoft Office Software applications, hardware components, the Windows Operating Systems and more while working alongside certified IT professionals.

Job Placement Assistance: The One Day Job Placement offers opportunities for clients with fewer than 100 days of unemployment to work towards employment by consulting one-on-one with an Employment Specialist.

Digital Connection: This workshop is open to students who have successfully completed the Step Forward Customer Service Training Program. Participants receive a refurbished computer and work alongside the Digital Connection Personal Computer Technician in learning skills designed to assist them in installing and setting up their personal computers in the convenience of their own home.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: including eligibility requirements and upcoming workshop dates, PLEASE VISIT stepforwardtoday.org.

Ambassador: Champion Step Forward’s mission

CAPLAW	Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies	State Representative Phillip Robinson
The Center for Community Solutions	Ohio Head Start Association	State Representative Bride Rose Sweeney
Citizen’s Coalition	Ohio Partners for Affordable Energy	State Senator Kent Smith
Cleveland City Council	Ohio Urban Resources System (OURS)	State Senator Sandra Williams
Community Action Partnership	PRE4CLE – Cleveland Metropolitan Schools	U.S. Representative David Joyce
Cuyahoga County Council	State of Ohio Department of Development	U.S. Representative Marcy Kaptur
Family and Children First Council	State Representative Janine Boyd	U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown
National Community Action Foundation	State Representative Juanita Brent	U.S. Senator Rob Portman
National Head Start Association	State Representative Stephanie Howse	

Funder: Provide funding from private or public sources to Step Forward

Arby’s Foundation	DigitalC	PNC Bank – Grow Up Great Initiative
Cleveland Foundation	Early Childhood Education	United Way of Greater Cleveland
Cuyahoga County Fatherhood Initiative	First Energy	
Cuyahoga County – Invest in Children	Step Up to Quality	

In-Kind Supporter: Give time, donate services or provide funding to Step Forward’s Head Start program**

Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine	Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority	Radio Adventista
CareSource*	East Cleveland City Schools - Pre-Kindergarten Program*	Standstill Radio
ChildPlus	Euclid City Schools – Pre-Kindergarten Program*	Step Forward Board of Directors
Children’s Museum of Cleveland	Friends and Family of Step Forward Head Start	Step Forward Policy Council
City of Cleveland Police Department	Ideastream*	
Cleveland Clinic Foundation	Meyer Design	
Cleveland Metropolitan School District*	Progressive	

Referral Partner: Refer individuals or families to Step Forward for programs and services

BEST Community Resource Center Breakthrough Schools Brenda Glass Trauma Center The Centers for Families and Children Cleveland Department of Aging Cleveland Neighborhood Progress Cleveland Municipal Court Cleveland State University Community of Faith Collaborative Cuyahoga Community College Cuyahoga County Children and Family Services Cuyahoga County Department of Senior and Adult Services (DSAS) Cuyahoga County Library System Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry Cuyahoga Jobs and Family Services Donna Smallwood Senior Center	Friendly Inn Settlement Corp. Help Me Grow Hilton Hotels JACK Casino Julia De Burgos Cultural Arts Center Lissette Quiñones Ministries Manufacturers Advocacy Growth Network (MAGNET) May Dugan Center MedCerts The MetroHealth System Ministerio Dorcas Molina Health Care Moms First Nueva Luz Northeast Ohio Neighborhood Health Services, Inc. (NEON)	Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District* Seeds of Literacy Shaw High School – Early Childhood Program Slavic Village Development Corporation* Smart Development Inc. Stella Maris Spanish American Committee Starting Point United Pastors in Mission University Hospitals Case Medical Center Union Miles Development Corporation Urban League of Greater Cleveland* Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Women’s Recovery Center Workforce Investment Board – Youth Council
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Services Partner: Provide integral/complementary services to the people Step Forward serves

Achievement Centers for Children Applewood Centers Asian Services in Action, Inc. Beech Brook Burlington Coat Factory Case Western Reserve University Francis Payne Bolton School of Nursing Case Western Reserve University Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences CHN Housing Partners Cleveland Furniture Bank Cleveland Job Corps Cleveland Public Library System Community Housing Solutions	Daily Dose of Reading Dave’s Supermarkets Discount Drug Mart Dress for Success East End Neighborhood House The Free Clinic Gesher Cleveland Benefit and Resource Center Goodwill Greater Cleveland Food Bank Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority Hunger Network of Greater Cleveland Ibn Sina Free Clinic	The Literacy Cooperative Music Settlement Nature Explore NEO Skill Corps (Americorps Volunteers) Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) OhioMeansJobs – Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Playhouse Square Rainey Institute The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Shaker Lakes Nature Center Towards Employment Youth Opportunities Unlimited
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*Denotes partner meets criteria to fit into more than one category. ** As a Head Start agency, Step Forward is required to fund 20 percent of its Head Start program.



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

PY 55 Federal Head Start	\$25,292,501
PY 55 Non-Federal Head Start	6,950,998
PY 55 Federal Head Start COVID-19	1,355,230
COVID-19 (PSP-1)	180,702
COVID-19 (PSP-2)	47,638

First Energy Company

Fuel Fund IX	112,128
Fuel Fund VIII	50,973
First Energy Service Grant 2021	235,877
First Energy Service Grant 2020	531,580

Early Childhood

Early Childhood Education - VIII	353,159
Early Childhood Education - VII	152,496

USDA

USDA-USDA0921	169,142
USDA-USDA0920	90,436

Cuyahoga County

Universal Pre-Kindergarten - 2.0-3	220,719
Universal Pre-Kindergarten - 2.0-4	227,887

Local Programs

Digital Equity Fund	10,000
Early Care and Education Rapid Relief Fund	23,096

Ohio Department of Development

HEAP Administrative Program	
21-HA-115	\$800,899
20-HA-115	1,120,666

HEAP Energy Assistance Program

21-HE-215	180,047
20-HE-215	297,403

HEAP Summer Cooling

20-HC-215	425,007
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Percentage of Income Payment Plan

21-PA-115	11,436
20-PA-115	130,550

Community Services Block Grant

COVID-19 (CSBG-CARES)	419,705
CSBG20-2116	3,441,048
Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF-ESP)	5,609,747

Cleveland Foundation Grant

Cleveland Foundation	72,500
COVID-19 RAPID RESPONSE	14,000

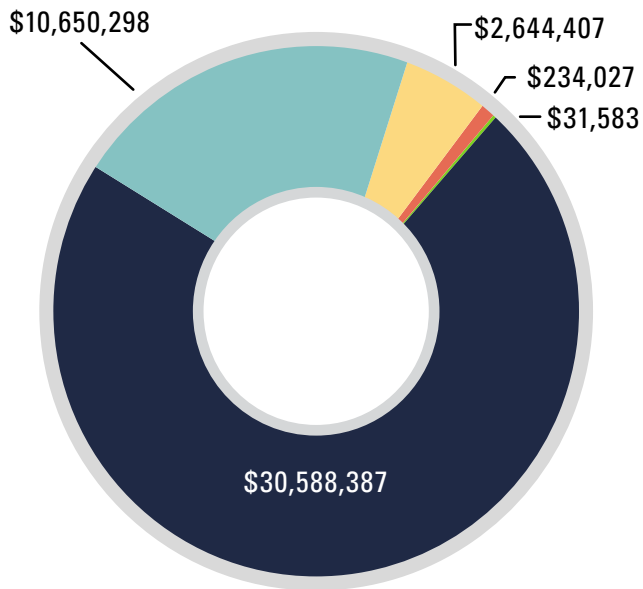
United Way of Greater Cleveland

United Way Services-EHS	85,000
United Way Services 2.0-EHS	39,069



2021 Expenditures

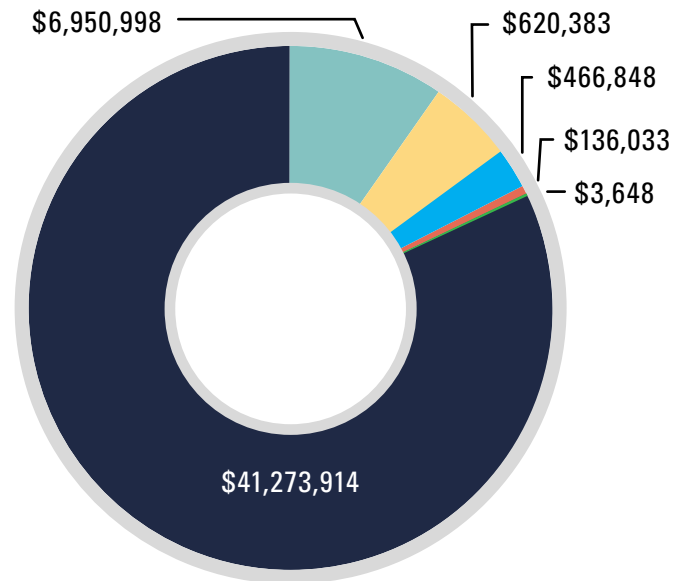
Total: \$44,148,702



- Child Education
- Community Service
- Energy Assistance
- Food Programs
- Other

2021 Revenue

Total: \$49,451,824



- Grant & Contract Revenue
- In-Kind Contributions
- Other Income
- Contract Revenue
- Amortized Rent
- Donations

stepforwardtoday.org    [stepfwrtdtoday](#)

1801 Superior Avenue, Suite 400 • Cleveland, Oh 44114  (216) 696-9077