



annual report

2025



transforming lives + strengthening communities

OUR MISSION

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

OUR VISION

is to help people find hope, believe in their future and take steps to make it a reality.

OUR LEADERS



President / CEO
Dr. Jacklyn Chisholm



Chief Financial Officer
Saaid Mansour



VP of Community Services and External Affairs
Douglass Bennett



VP of Children and Families
Dr. Thea Wilson



VP of Human Resources
Madeline Corchado



VP of Operations
George Phillips Olivier



VP of Communications and Outreach
Angela Graves

EVERY STEP FORWARD MATTERS

REFLECTIONS FROM THE PRESIDENT / CEO AND BOARD CHAIR

This past year reminded us that progress is a journey - one that rarely follows a straight line. For families working toward stability, for staff showing up day after day, and for an organization committed to long-term change, forward movement often comes in stages. In 2025, the road included moments that required patience, adjustment, and resolve. Still, step by step, progress happened. We are proud of the way Step Forward continued moving forward this year, guided by purpose and shaped by the realities of the families we serve.

For the families and individuals who turn to Step Forward, the journey toward economic self-sufficiency often means navigating systems that are complex and demanding. It means balancing work, caregiving, education, and unexpected challenges - all while keeping sight of a more stable future. This work takes time, support, and steady partnership. Our programs exist because families deserve more than short-term solutions; they deserve consistent guidance and resources that honor the process it takes to build lasting stability. Every step forward matters, and each one brings families closer to the goals they are working so hard to achieve.

As we look ahead, we do so with confidence and gratitude. Confidence in the determination and strength of the families we serve, and gratitude for the staff, partners, and supporters who walk alongside them. Together, we remain committed to the journey - building a community where progress is possible, support is constant, and every child and every family has the opportunity to *step forward*.

Dr. Jacklyn Chisholm President / CEO



Judge Michael Ryan Board Chair





Tanisha enrolled her daughter in Head Start when she was a little toddler with a big personality, and the program quickly helped her grow into a confident girl who loves learning. Each day she grew a little more, recognizing letters, counting blocks, and sharing new things until she was ready for kindergarten. Today, Tanisha encourages other families to consider the same path: **“If you want to see your child be the best that they can be, it starts here.”**

EARLY HEAD START

100%

of infants (Birth-1) met or exceeded expectations in early thinking skills, showing the ability to match and group objects by simple characteristics.

100%

of children ages 1-2 met or exceeded expectations in cognitive development, including sorting and grouping objects based on shared features.

91%

of children ages 2-3 met or exceeded expectations in early problem-solving skills, demonstrating growing ability to classify and regroup objects.

HEAD START

94%

of children ages 3-4 met or exceeded expectations in early math skills, including counting and understanding number concepts.

88%

of children ages 3-4 met or exceeded expectations in cognitive development, showing strong classification and problem-solving skills.

86%

of children ages 3-4 met or exceeded expectations in early literacy skills, including understanding how print works and how books are read.

802

children successfully transitioned to kindergarten

1,915

families served during the 2024-2025 academic year

2,040

children served during the 2024-2025 academic year

99%

of enrolled children were income-eligible

88%

average monthly Head Start enrollment

1,866

children received at least one well-child check during the 2024-2025 academic year

1,871

children received at least one immunization during the 2024-2025 academic year

1,126

children completed at least one dental exam during the 2024-2025 academic year

76,033

breakfasts provided

86,422

lunches provided

67,790

snacks provided

\$626,901

in USDA funding generated

1,192

total volunteers

5,452

volunteer hours

\$6,972,296

in-kind support raised



Sereniety attended Step Forward's first Safe Sleep Summit, a workshop designed to help families create safe, nurturing environments for their babies. The timing was perfect, she had just moved across town with her baby and 11-year-old son, leaving some belongings behind. At the event, she and dozens of other mothers received free, essential equipment to help their babies sleep safely.

COMMUNITY SERVICES OUTCOMES



Step Forward helped 590 individuals and families file their taxes through our free Personal Income Tax Preparation services making it easier to file accurately, access eligible credits, and keep more of their hard-earned money.



Step Forward supported 57 expectant and new moms through our Infant Wellness services, helping them and their families promote healthy early development during a critical stage of life.



Through Step Forward's Financial Opportunity Center, 303 individuals completed financial coaching and income-building services, gaining support to strengthen their finances and work toward long-term economic stability.



Harold spent decades raising two sons and two daughters on his own. Like many families, he relied on an energy assistance plan to help make ends meet. But when it came time to renew his plan in 2025, he ran into unexpected roadblocks. Just in time, Harold connected with Step Forward's HEAP program, preventing his electricity from being turned off.

HEAP OUTCOMES

The Winter Crisis Program provided emergency assistance to

4,430 households

helping families maintain safe and stable utilities during the coldest months.



The Summer Cooling Program supported

1,860

households ensuring access to utility assistance during periods of extreme heat.



The Home Energy Assistance Program served

14,379

households connecting residents to critical support to help prevent utility disruptions.



The Percentage of Income Payment Plan helped

14,098

households manage energy costs through more affordable income-based payment options.



FISCAL YEAR 2025 SOURCES OF FUNDS

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

| | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| 59 Federal Head Start | 02/01/24 - 01/31/25 | \$29,064,889 |
| 59 Non Federal Head Start | 02/01/24 - 01/31/25 | \$8,401,519 |

U.S. Department of Treasury

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Home Relief Grant (ARPAHRG) | 08/01/22-09/30/25 | \$2,665,355 |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------|

First Energy Company

| | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| First Energy Service Grant 2024 | 1/1/24 - 12/31/24 | \$378,743 |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|

Early Childhood

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| Early Childhood Education - XI | 07/01/23 - 06/30/24 | \$159,879 |
| Early Childhood Education - XII | 07/01/24 - 06/30/25 | \$333,318 |

USDA

| | | |
|---------------|---------------------|-----------|
| USDA-USDA0925 | 10/01/24 - 09/30/25 | \$256,690 |
| USDA-USDA0924 | 10/01/23 - 09/30/24 | \$403,090 |

Cuyahoga County

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| Universal Pre-Kindergarten - 3.0-3 | 08/01/23 - 07/31/24 | \$435,000 |
| Universal Pre-Kindergarten - 3.0-4 | 08/01/24 - 07/31/25 | \$320,000 |

Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|----------|
| 24 VI TA Tax Preparation | 01/01/24-12/31/24 | \$36,869 |
|--------------------------|-------------------|----------|

Ohio Department of Development

HEAP Administrative Program

| | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| 24-HA-115 | 09/01/23 - 08/31/24 | \$2,561,897 |
| 25-HA-115 | 09/01/24 - 08/31/25 | \$1,089,024 |
| Low Income Household Wa Assistance Program (LIHW AP) | 10/01/21-03/31/24 | \$1,103,863 |

HEAP Energy Assistance Program

| | | |
|-----------|---------------------|-----------|
| 24-HE-215 | 11/01/23 - 03/31/24 | \$598,709 |
| 25-HE-215 | 11/01/24 - 03/31/25 | \$189,764 |

HEAP Summer Cooling

| | | |
|-----------|---------------------|-----------|
| 25-HC-215 | 07/01/24 - 09/30/24 | \$663,653 |
|-----------|---------------------|-----------|

Percentage of Income Payment Plan

| | | |
|-------|---------------------|-----------|
| PAI-5 | 01/01/24 - 12/31/25 | \$7,504 |
| PAI-5 | 01/01/24 - 12/31/24 | \$133,303 |

Community Services Block Grant

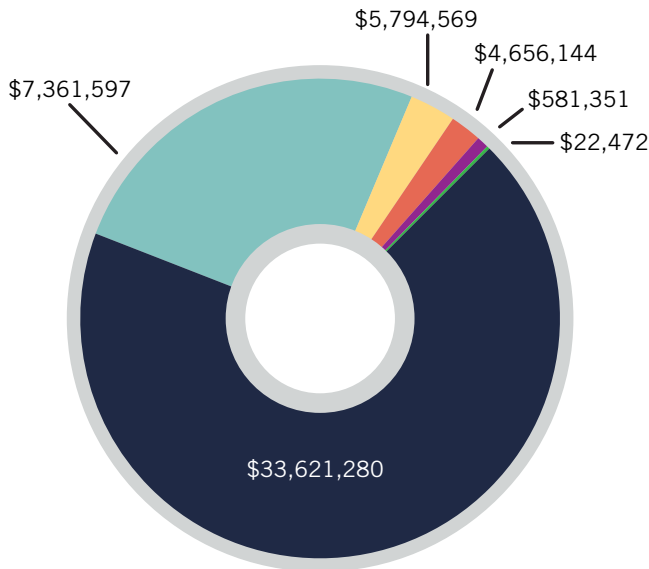
| | | |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Community Service Block Grant 2024-2025 | 01/1/24- 12/31/25 | \$3,598,322 |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|

Gund Foundation

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| Gund Foundation Grant | 01/01/24-12/31/24 | \$185,375 |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------|

2025 Expenditures

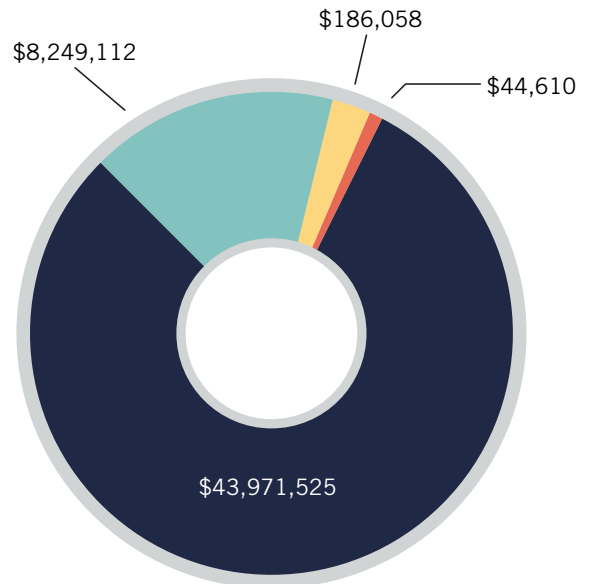
\$52,037,413



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

2025 Revenue

\$52,451,305



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

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Our work does not happen in isolation. It is made possible through a network of dedicated community partners who share our belief that every child and every family deserves the opportunity to move forward.

From local organizations to corporate supporters and individual donors, each partnership strengthens our ability to meet families where they are and walk alongside them as they build stability over time. These relationships are not simply supportive - they are essential.

We are deeply grateful for the partners who stand with us, invest in our mission and help make this work possible.



Scan to meet the partners
behind this work

Scan to support families
on their journey





LEARN MORE ABOUT STEP FORWARD

where
we
serve

- Head Start Centers 
- Opportunity Centers 
- HEAP 

for more information
about our services
please scan this code or
visit us at
stepforwardtoday.org

