



2024 Annual Report





A message from our President/CEO and Board Chair



Dear Community,

On behalf of Step Forward, it is our honor to present our annual report for 2024. As we celebrate 60 years of service, this milestone reflects our ongoing commitment to empowering individuals and families in Cuyahoga County through education, support and opportunity.





A special anniversary message from our supporters

For 60 years, Step Forward has brought together families, partners, educators, advocates, and community leaders to create brighter futures across our community. This milestone belongs to everyone who has walked alongside us, believed in our mission, and helped shape our impact through the decades. In this special tribute, several of our valued stakeholders share their congratulations, reflections, and hopes for the future as we celebrate 60 years of service, partnership, and progress.





Head Start + Early Head Start



Fast Facts

2,018

CHILDREN
SERVED

1,899

FAMILIES
SERVED

99%

INCOME-
ELIGIBLE
CHILDREN
SERVED

97%

AVERAGE
MONTHLY
ENROLL-
MENT

1,973

CHILDREN
RECEIVED
PHYSICALS

1,812

CHILDREN
RECEIVED
DENTAL
CHECKUPS

1,441

CHILDREN
CAUGHT UP
ON IMMUNI-
ZATIONS

811

CHILDREN
TRANSI-
TIONED TO
KINDER-
GARTEN



Head Start Outcomes

Early Head Start and Head Start are comprehensive programs that have been empowering young children and families for decades, providing critical support in education, health, and family well-being. Launched as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty in 1965, Head Start has since expanded to include Early Head Start in 1994, designed to support infants, toddlers, and pregnant women. These programs offer children from low-income families the skills and resources they need to succeed in school and beyond, while also engaging parents as partners in their child's development.

98%

of Early Head Start students met or exceeded the expected skill level for interacting with their peers.

93%

of Early Head Start students met or exceeded the expected skill level when making positive connections with peers and adults.

87%

of Early Head Start students met or exceeded the expected skill level when showing curiosity and motivation toward communication, literacy, and math.

93%

of Head Start students met or exceeded the expected skill level when balancing their rights and needs of self and others.

89%

of Head Start students met or exceeded the expected skill level when managing their feelings.

89%

of Head Start students met or exceeded the expected skill level for solving social problems.



Head Start Outcomes



Meals Provided

Breakfasts Provided:
76,702

Lunches Provided:
82,758

Snacks Provided:
64,698

USDA Funding Generated:
\$626,901



Volunteer Contributions

Total Volunteers: 2,865

Parent/Former Parent Volunteers: 2,334

Total Hours Contributed: 5,452

Parent/Former Parent Hours: 4,596

In-Kind Support Raised:
\$6,972,296



Family Engagement

Parent/Child Activities: 300+

Parent Meetings:
250+

Father Engagement Participation:
715 interactions

Review Step Forward's most recent Head Start Monitoring Review.



Community Services

Community Services at Step Forward has a long history of empowering individuals and families to achieve economic self-sufficiency and improve their overall well-being. Since opening its first Neighborhood Opportunity Center in 1966, the agency has remained committed to strengthening communities through meaningful support and opportunity. In 2009, Step Forward expanded its impact by launching Employment Services with support from ARRA funding, creating new pathways for career growth and stability.

\$4m

in COVID Relief Grant funding distributed, bringing total Home Relief Assistance support to more than \$36 million and helping families recover financially from the pandemic.

400

tax returns were filed, helping clients maximize their refunds and ensure compliance while alleviating financial stress.

83

enrolled in the Baby and Mommy Support (BAMS) program, gaining valuable support & education to enhance their parenting skills and ensure the well-being of their babies.

145

clients craft tailored resumes, boosting their chances of securing employment and taking the next step in their professional journey.

109

clients took part in our professional development programs, gaining new skills and insights to help them advance in their careers and improve their job prospects.

87

community resource fairs and outreach events connected Step Forward with individuals and families, providing valuable resources and services that support their well-being and empower their futures.



Home Energy Assistance Program

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) was established in 1981 to help vulnerable households struggling with rising energy costs. Through seasonal crisis assistance and utility management programs like the Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP), HEAP helps eligible families afford their energy bills, avoid service disconnections, and maintain safe, comfortable homes.

34,134

individuals served through HEAP

14,153

Percentage of Income Payment Plan applications received and processed

\$4,304,394.82

distributed in energy assistance, helping households stay safe and connected to essential utilities

\$1,827,637

distributed in crisis funding, helping households stay safe during extreme temperatures

\$1,101,281.94

provided in LIHWAP funding, ensuring households had access to clean water and wastewater services

Fiscal Year 2024

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

PY 58 Federal Head Start	02/01/23 - 01/31/24	\$24,791,849
PY 58 Non Federal Head Start	02/01/23 - 01/31/24	\$7,246,762
COVID-19 Head Start CRSSA	04/01/21 - 03/31/23	\$61,363
COVID-19 Child Care Stabilization PH 3	07/01/22-06/30/23	\$2,190,362

U.S Department of Treasury

Home Relief Grant (ARPAHRG)	08/01/22-09/30/25	\$14,499,881
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First Energy Company

Fuel Fund XII	1/1/24 - 12/31/24	\$69,500
First Energy Service Grant 2023	1/1/23 - 12/31/23	\$553,381
First Energy Service Grant 2024	1/1/24 - 12/31/24	\$64,024

Early Childhood

Early Childhood Education - XI	07/01/23 - 06/30/24	\$328,871
Early Childhood Education - X	07/01/22 - 06/30/23	\$147,044

USDA

USDA-USDA0923	10/01/22 - 09/30/23	\$377,469
USDA-USDA0924	10/01/23 - 09/30/24	\$241,071

Cuyahoga County

Universal Pre-Kindergarten-3.0-3	08/01/23 - 07/31/24	\$435,000
Universal Pre-Kindergarten-3.0-2	08/01/22 - 07/31/23	\$485,000

Sources of Funds

Ohio Department of Development

HEAP Administrative Program		
24-HA-115	09/01/23 - 08/31/24	\$1,464,294
23-HA-115	09/01/22 - 08/31/23	\$1,392,495
Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)	10/01/21-03/31/24	\$761,787

HEAP Energy Assistance Program

24-HE-215	11/01/23 - 03/31/24	\$301,031
23-HE-215	11/01/22 - 03/31/23	\$359,529

HEAP Summer Cooling

23-HC-215	07/01/23 - 09/30/23	\$854,764
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Percentage of Income Payment Plan

23-PA-115	01/01/22 - 12/31/23	\$139,595
24-PA-115	01/01/24 - 12/31/24	\$12,689

Community Services Block Grant

Community Service Block Grant 2022-2023	01/1/22- 12/31/23	\$3,431,049
Community Service Block Grant 2024-2025	01/1/24- 12/31/25	\$284,660

Gund Foundation

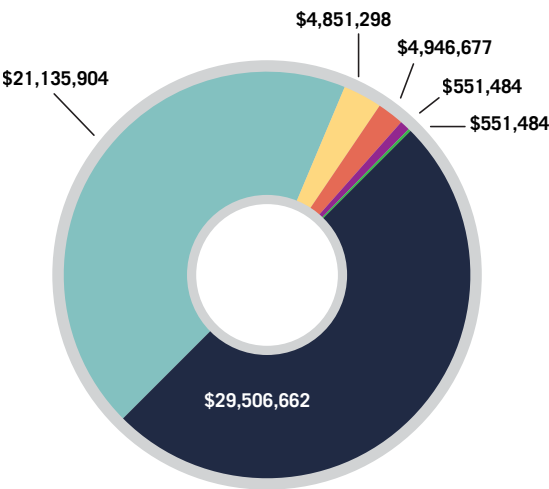
Gund Foundation Grant	01/01/24-12/31/24	\$12,000
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Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.

2024 VITA Tax Preparation	01/01/24-12/31/24	\$36,005
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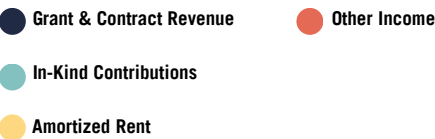
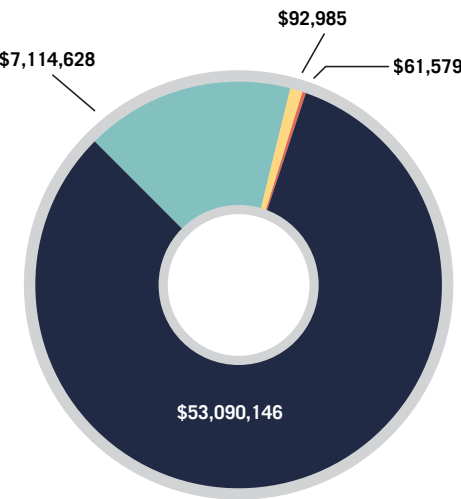
2024 Expenditures

\$61,112,920



2024 Revenue

\$60,359,338





CONTACT US

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



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