


# LEADS



*Helping families and  
individuals move  
from crisis to  
self-sufficiency  
through core  
community services*

Annual Report 2022  
*to the community*



Nathan J. Keirns  
Chief Executive Officer

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## Message from Rochelle Paul

*Board of Trustees Chairperson*



One word that shines through the political and social turmoil of our present time is hope—the feeling that better opportunities are forthcoming... it implies a future time. Political upheaval and social injustice most deeply affect citizens who live on the fringe (from whatever causes) and have very limited resources, making hope dim and useless. Yet with a plethora of programs and a steadfast staff, LEADS makes hope tangible, brings it to fruition—now. This organization nurtures and educates young children and their families, puts food on family tables, provides a roof over those tables, and helps keep families in their homes by providing rent and utility assistance, as well as health and safety renovations, assuring that their dwelling is secure and comfortable. Senior citizens and people with disabling conditions are provided accommodations that enable them to enjoy the freedom of staying confidently in their homes. This is the LEADS mission—to empower customers caught in poverty and to eliminate the results of poverty. The Board of Trustees is entrusted with the responsibility to assure the mission is carried out, in all matters, in all situations. As their elected Chairperson, I am both humbled by their decision and emboldened by it, to help the Board ensure that LEADS customers receive all the benefits of our federal, state, and local grants and in-kind donations... hope—touching lives, today.

Rochelle Paul, *Chairperson*

*Rochelle Paul has served on the LEADS Board of Trustees for more than 25 years, many of those as chairperson. As a respected educator, Rochelle generously lends her time and talents to LEADS. She is an active member of the community who is known for her unwavering dedication to service and as a champion for causes that support our most vulnerable neighbors.*

## Welcome to Our New Board Members!



### CHAD BROWN

Licking County Health Commissioner Chad Brown brings nearly 25 years of experience working in public health. Chad holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Health from Ohio University and a Masters in Public Health from Walden University.

He is also a member of the Newark Rotary Club and serves on the board of directors for Mental Health America of Licking County, Health Policy Institute of Ohio, and the Association of Ohio Health Commissioners.



### MELISSA OWENS

Executive Director of Licking County Aging Partners (LCAP), Melissa brings a wealth of experience from her work in fundraising and marketing for several Licking County non-profit organizations. A Licking County native, she graduated from Ohio Northern University and then earned her MBA from Mount Vernon Nazarene University. She is also a member of the Newark Rotary Club, the Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council, and a member of Young Leaders of Licking County.

**452 children aged three-to-five-years-old and their families were served at our center-based locations**



*Pete the Cat reading time*

**120 infants and toddlers and four pregnant women received Early Head Start services**



*Bike Day is for everyone!*

*"I have used LEADS for both of my children's early childhood education center and we couldn't have hand-picked a better facility.*

*The staff are very kind, generous and resourceful. My children had the best teachers."*

*– Parent at Head Start Delaware*

### Head Start (HS)

Head Start prepares our community's most vulnerable young children to succeed in school and in life beyond school. Our program takes a two-generation approach, focusing on building strong parent and child relationships with an overall child goal of increasing school readiness skills. We deliver services to children and families in core areas of early learning, health, and family well-being, while engaging parents as partners every step of the way.

In 2022, we served 452 children aged three-to-five-years old and their families at our center-based locations and through our Home Based programs. We have programs in Licking, Delaware, and Union Counties.

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*Head Start prepares our community's most vulnerable young children to succeed in school and in life beyond school.*

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### Early Head Start (EHS)

Designed to nurture healthy attachments between parent and child, the Early Head Start program serves infants, toddlers, and pregnant women through one-on-one weekly home visits. We support expectant families as they prepare for the upcoming new family member through a comprehensive approach that focuses on development, nutrition, health, mental health, and education.

In 2022, Early Head Start served 120 infants and toddlers, and four pregnant women.

### Freshly Prepared Meals for Children

Proper nutrition is fundamental for children to grow and develop in a healthy manner.

LEADS HS/EHS operates and licenses two kitchens at our Newark and Marysville facilities. The program is proud that all breakfast, lunch and snacks are prepared by Nutrition Staff who are ServSafe-Certified through the County Health Departments. The meals contain required components such as grain, vegetable, fruit, meat and fluid milk for the three to five-year-olds that we serve. We also prepare individual meals for children who may have food intolerances/allergies as well as religious and cultural food requests. As our program utilizes resources from the USDA and CACFP programs, we not only prepare healthy foods but we are able to provide parent education for the families enrolled.

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*Funding for Head Start and Early Head Start is provided by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides reimbursement through the Child & Adult Food Program (CACFP) for the meals served to children throughout the year.*



## Food Service

During the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) fiscal year, October 2021 through September 2022, LEADS' two kitchens provided:

- 69,826 total meals
- 21,860 snacks
- 23,739 breakfasts
- 3,304 gallons of milk
- 24,227 lunches

The reimbursement through CACFP:

\$ 159,822.28 total food expenses | \$ 64,429.30 non-food expenses

## Serving Children with Disabilities

Of the 572 children served, 58 had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) through their local education agency or education service center. Ten families had an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) through their local early intervention agency.

*These numbers reflect we exceeded our mandate of having 10% of our enrollment serving children with diagnosed disabilities.*

## Providing Services to Incarcerated Women with Infants

Early Head Start (EHS) provided services to 15 incarcerated mothers with infants at the Ohio Reformatory for Women (ORW). The program assists the mothers by connecting them to services and programs for a successful return to society.

## Serving Pregnant Women

A total of four pregnant women were provided EHS services during the 2022 program year. All of these families continued enrollment after the newborn arrived. Each family is provided a newborn home visit and receives gift packages from Newborns in Need.

## Family Engagement

- Head Start and Early Head Start families received a wide variety of parent education and training services, including:
  - Health and safety
  - Nutrition
  - Positive parenting
  - Economic mobility
  - Mental health
  - Advocacy, child development and community supports during the pandemic
  - Chromebooks were provided for families in need to support virtual learning and communication during the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - More than 436 families planned and attended virtual family and father events during the program year.
  - 28 parent/guardians volunteered as members of the Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council and PART (Parent Activities Resource Team)

*All 5 Head Start Centers earned a 5-star quality rating, Step Up to Quality (SUTQ), awarded by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.*

**69,826 total meals**  
**21,860 snacks**  
**23,739 breakfasts**  
**3,304 gallons of milk**  
**24,227 lunches**



Snack time

**576 HS/EHS children and pregnant women received services**



Creative no-fuel car!



Family drive in movie night

**91 households received energy efficient improvements**



*New entrance deck under construction*

**134 household received home construction projects**



*New shower stall before/after*

**7,591 households received assistance with utility payments**

**268 households received assistance with rent, utility, and mortgage payments**

*“Thank you for helping me. I can always count on a great experience.”*

*– Utility Assistance client*

## Child Development

Outcomes show that in EHS/HS, the percentages of children that met or exceeded agency benchmarks for school readiness goals were:

	EHS	HS*	HS**
Approaches to Learning	62%	45%	71%
Language & Literacy	68%	52%	68%
Cognition & General Knowledge	75%	54%	65%
Physical Development & Health	58%	41%	73%
Social & Emotional Development	74%	49%	68%
English Language Learners	69%	45%	83%

*\*Non-Kindergarten eligible \*\* Kindergarten-eligible*

## Health

- 73% of EHS/HS children are up-to-date on all preventative primary health care
- 74% of children diagnosed with a chronic health condition received/completed treatment
- 45% of HS have continuous and accessible professional dental care

## COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION

### Energy Efficiency

54 households received energy efficiency improvements such as:

- New furnaces
- Home insulation
- High efficiency lighting
- Air sealing to reduce drafts and energy loss
- Home repair and improvement

134 households received home construction projects such as:

- New roofs
- Wheelchair ramps
- Handicapped-accessible bathrooms
- Other emergency repairs

## EMERGENCY SERVICES DIVISION

- 7,591 households received assistance with utility payments
- 1,428 utility disconnects were prevented

### COVID Home Relief

- 268 households received assistance
- \$1,124,321.36 in rent/deposit assistance provided
- \$15,430.46 in utility assistance provided
- \$44,993.76 in mortgage assistance provided

## Food Pantries / Food Assistance

LEADS operates food pantries in Buckeye Lake, Pataskala, and Utica. We obtain food supplies from a number of different resources, including donations from businesses, churches, groups/clubs, and individuals, as well as from the Food Pantry Network of Licking County.

- 3,557 eligible households received food from the pantries
- 6,098 hours were volunteered for the pantries



Food Pantry volunteers at Buckeye Lake

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING DIVISION

LEADS Housing Division is an experienced provider of affordable housing. To date, LEADS has participated in 40 housing developments ranging from 15 to 100 units. These developments are located in 21 counties throughout Ohio. Prospective residents must qualify under various income, credit and background guidelines for each of the programs that finance the property. Funding is provided through Low Income Housing Tax Credits, USDA Rural Development, and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

- 1,156 households were provided with affordable housing
- Occupancy rate was 94%
- 269 monthly financial statements were submitted by the management companies to LEADS' Asset Management Director
- 31 properties had audits and tax returns reviewed and approved
- 6 site visits were performed in 2022 with desktop and in-person visits

### MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The sale of Greenbriar Estates, a 15-unit conventional property was finalized in July 2022
- The transfer of LEADS ownership in Central Hotel to the City of Galion was finalized in October 2022

## VOLUNTEERS

	Volunteers	Hours
HS/EHS	259	2,297
CSD	29	6,904
Other	18	252
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>9,453</b>

**Over 300 volunteers dedicated a combined total of 9,453 hours while helping LEADS!**

LEADS Properties are located in the following Ohio counties:



Ashland	Fairfield	Jefferson	Perry
Belmont	Franklin	Licking	Pickaway
Champaign	Greene	Morgan	Richland
Clark	Huron	Morrow	Tuscarawas
Clermont	Knox	Muskingum	Washington
Crawford			

### INVESTORS & FUNDING SOURCES

Great Lakes Community Action Partnership Columbia Gas of Ohio		WarmChoice Program®
Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging (COAAA)		Home Repair & PASSPORT
Ohio Division of Development (ODOD)		HEAP, PIPP, WCP, & SCP OCD Housing Assistance Program CSBG • HWAP • Home Relief
Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development (COAD)		Electric Partnership Program
Licking County Food Pantry Network		Food Pantries
Licking County		Senior Levy Home Repair Program
Dollar Energy Fund		Neighbor to Neighbor Program
Private Donations		

*“...if we can't plant that seed and water it for them to grow, then who will?”*

Holly Unger is passionate about supporting children and families, and has been a tireless advocate for the Head Start and Early Head Start programs at local, state, and national levels.

An Assistant Teacher at the Utica Head Start Center, she has had six children participate in HS/EHS programs since 2015. A biological mom of one, an adoptive mom of nine, and foster parent to 65 children over the past ten years, Holly knows firsthand the importance of crucial early interventions for young children.

She has been a vocal and dedicated advocate for LEADS HS/EHS programs. She has participated in HS/EHS policy council;



was selected to participate in the Ohio Head Start Association Inc. (OHSAI) Parent Ambassador Program; and traveled to Washington, D.C. to tell her story to legislators.

In 2021 she enrolled in a bachelor's degree program and was hired as an Assistant Teacher at the Utica Head Start Center.

In 2022 she was elected to the OHSAI Board, and re-elected in 2023. In March of 2023, Holly testified in front of Ohio House of Representatives on House Bill 33, Ohio's Fiscal Year 2024-2025

budget bill, regarding the state publicly funded childcare and preschool programs. An excerpt of Holly's testimony is below.

*“Head Start focuses on the parents and families just as much as they do the children they serve because they know it's necessary to improve outcomes for kids. They gave us the tools to help make our children's lives so much more than we could have imagined for them, especially given their challenges early in life.*

*Head Start has been a source of stability, strength, and resources for our family as my husband and I fight for our kids to get them the help they need so that they can develop a strong foundation to serve them for the rest of their lives.*

*I often ask myself, if we can't plant that seed and water it for them to grow then who will?”*

– HOLLY UNGER



## Christina Abfall



*A believer in the adage that  
“it takes a village to raise a child”*

A dedicated, thorough and conscientious employee, Christina started at LEADS in 2013 serving as the Lead Cook of the LEADS kitchen in Marysville. During her tenure, the annual inspections from the Union County Health Department and the Ohio Department of Agriculture have consistently produced stellar reports on the cleanliness and operations of the kitchen.

Christina has always been very cognizant of keeping costs down in the kitchen operation. She utilized her knowledge of a wide variety of allergens and the special dietary needs of children to make appropriate accommodations. She also explored new recipes to present different taste experiences for the children. She has proudly maintained Serv-Safe certification during her time with LEADS.

She shared that working for Head Start has been challenging at times, yet very educational and definitely enjoyable, particularly her interactions with the families at Head Start. She shared a memorable experience: she overheard a parent scolding her child for referring to her as “Lunch”. Christina clarified that as she delivered the lunches to the classroom, the children would call out “lunch”. Being a literal thinker, this child genuinely thought that her name was “Lunch”!

A believer in the adage that “it takes a village to raise a child”, Christina always did her part as a member of our team to provide much-needed services for the health and wellbeing of the children we serve. She has gone above and beyond to help those in need and is often the first volunteer to research and refer for needed services.

Christina is looking forward to spending quality time with her husband, children, grandchildren, and Siamese cats in her retirement!

## Teri Carter



*Teri proudly recalls working closely  
with families and watching  
them move out of poverty.*

Teri Carter ended her dedicated Family Service Worker (FSW) career at LEADS just three months shy of 30 years. She started her career at LEADS while the Marysville site was being built, and during that interim she worked on the second floor of the Delaware junior high school. She recalled that the teachers that were hired conducted home visits to their families while they waited for the site to be completed. Once the site was ready, she filled four classes.

In addition to her job as a Family Service Worker, Teri also dispatched the transportation buses, and during the summer (center administrators did not work year-round at that time), she recruited children and families, gathered bids and ordered supplies. Her recruiting talents resulted in filling an entire classroom in the North Union Elementary building!

In her early days of work she would also transport families to a dentist in Hilliard as there were none in Marysville that would accept Medicaid. She also recalls often delivering meals to the Delaware and Magnetic Springs classrooms.

One unforgettable memory Teri shared was a day she was going door-to-door recruiting in Marysville, when she stepped onto a porch, knocked, and heard a dog growling. As she turned around she spotted a Doberman Pinscher chained to the porch and waiting on the sidewalk! “I slowly stepped off the porch and got away – I thought I was a goner”!

Teri proudly recalls working closely with families and watching them move out of poverty. Teri has worked with staff that she still considers family. She shared that she has been down every country road in Union County while recruiting over the years. We wish Teri numerous future travel opportunities that take her outside of the Marysville community!



## Sherry Day



*From Head Start child to  
Head Start parent to  
LEADS Head Start employee!*

Sherry Day started her Head Start journey and her personal story as a Head Start child in 1969 in Newark at LEADS. She became a proud Head Start parent in 1990 and a LEADS Head Start employee in September of 1991. The past 31 years have brought her happiness, friendships, sadness, laughter, joy, personal and professional growth, and experiences that she wouldn't give up or forget for the world.

With support from the LEADS' Employee Tuition Assistance program, she obtained an associate degree in Early Childhood Education, a bachelor's degree in Social Services and an LSW (Licensed Social Worker). She is a proud member of OHSAA (Ohio Head Start Association, Inc).

She has had the opportunity to teach, support, engage and advocate for herself, those around her, and the hundreds of children and families who received services during her time in the HS/EHS programs. She has worked hard to climb her mountain of personal and professional success along with so many who she has been fortunate to have called a friend or mentor – and with her son, David, by her side. She has fulfilled the Head Start mission of eliminating the generational poverty that once defined who/what her family was. She has four grandchildren that have never experienced Head Start in the way that she and her son have: through the eyes of poverty. Whatever the future holds for her, she will continue to advocate for LEADS and the HS/EHS community. She is and will always be Head Start!

## In Memory of Deanna "Dee" Diehl



*LEADS is proud to honor  
the late Deanna "Dee" Diehl.*

Deanna "Dee" Diehl began her career at LEADS in the fall of 1987. Over this time she held various positions within the Head Start program, with over 550 children and families on her caseloads over the years. She cherished memories from each of them and had stated, "Throughout my Head Start career, the most rewarding time was being a Home Visitor! I challenge other staff to go on a Home Visit and see the magic that happens! It is so very rewarding!"

Dee enjoyed spending time with her two children, Seth and Sophia; teaching the 4-H Cloverbuds; camping and swimming with her children; and providing guardianship for her Uncle John. "I do not believe I will get bored during retirement with this busy life!" stated Dee when she retired in May 2022. Sadly, we share that Dee passed on August 13, 2023. Dee impacted the life of her family and friends, along with the Head Start/Early Head Start families and colleagues. She will be missed greatly.

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*"Praise God for his precious organizations. I retired in July and with this economy, I find it difficult to totally live off social security. The friendly smiles at the pantry have helped fill that need for me in a very big way. They have supplied me with food and life needs. Thank you!"*

*– Client at Pataskala Outreach Center*

## Debbie Wright



*Debbie took pride in ensuring the centers and facilities were safe, welcoming environments.*

Debbie Wright began as a LEADS Head Start Bus Driver in 1995, covering both center-based and home-based routes. With her knowledge and willingness to learn, Debbie was selected to be the LEADS Transportation Manager. She drove for all program options in all three counties, including routes to/from classes, socializations, and fieldtrips. One long trip was to Richwood to pick up a home-based group and take them to the National Museum of the USAF near Dayton, Ohio.

Over the years, Debbie shared a love for the Head Start/Early Head Start programs. She often assisted families and staff and found joy in interacting with the children. She always recognized past families and happily acknowledged them. Debbie said that some of her favorite memories were the years that LEADS HS participated in "Clown Town." Drivers would volunteer to take hundreds of clowns to and from OSU/COTC campus to downtown Newark where thousands of people would be awaiting their arrival. The crowd would cheer for the buses, the drivers, and the clowns – a great time for everyone!

When busing transportation ended, Debbie transitioned to the Facilities and Maintenance Manager position. She took pride in ensuring all the Head Start centers and LEADS facilities were safe, welcoming environments, with everything necessary to provide quality services.

*"They are amazing - no matter the weather or your needs they are there with open arms. No judgement - my family would be lost without the pantry and the very nice people there!"*

*– Client at Pataskala Outreach Center*

## Charles "Bud" Moyer



*Affectionately known as "Scooby Doo" to hundreds of children, Bud's favorite part of the job was "being around the kids".*

Charles "Bud" Moyer, started working for LEADS in 1980, dedicating just under 43 years to taking care of the needs of the agency in all three counties: Delaware, Licking and Union. Bud started his career while he still had a full head of hair, first working in weatherization; then as a home repair inspector; and then in maintenance for the HS/EHS division.

Bud was affectionally known as "Scooby Doo" to hundreds of preschool children in the classrooms over the years. When he had a maintenance job to do in the classroom, he would slip into his Scooby Doo persona that the children always enjoyed and would call out to him, "Hi, Scooby Doo!"

Bud reported that he enjoyed his job and the people he worked with over the years, but the favorite part of his job was "being around the kids." He recalled a favorite memory, when staff member JoAnn Slaughters' son Adam was out on the playground as Bud was painting the tricycles. Adam couldn't wait and leapt upon a freshly painted bike seat, covering his pants in paint – and then proceeded to tell Bud he had to buy him new pants!

Bud reminisced on how things evolved over the years, recalling times when he had to change the oil and brakes on the agency vehicles instead of taking them to be serviced. Ever resourceful, Bud would also stop alongside the road to pick up discarded items to creatively use in some fashion at LEADS.

Other favorite feel-good moments were when Bud would make gift items for staff to honor them and as presents during the holidays.

Bud retired in October 2022, and has been tending his yard and house while his wife Robin continues to work. He is also enjoying doing maintenance for a local social club.



# 2022 Work + Fun + Events



Marysville team Wear Blue for Child Abuse Prevention



May the Fourth Be With You Day



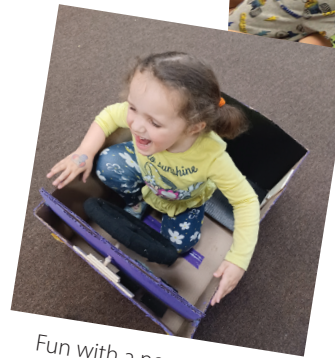
Mental Health Awareness event



Family night dance time



CEO Nate Keirns contemplates removing a wall at the Pataskala Center



Fun with a new "car"



Home-based socialization



Buckeye Lake Food Pantry volunteers at Open House



Snack time is approved!



New playground set at Pataskala



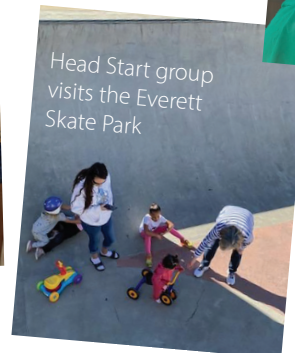
A dance with dad on family night



Field trip to Marysville Fire Department



Central Office Wear Blue for Child Abuse Prevention



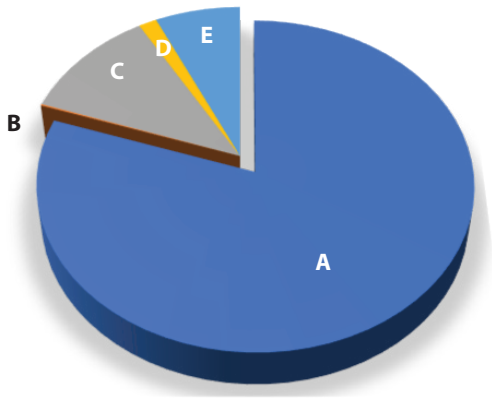
Head Start group visits the Everett Skate Park



Wear Blue for Child Abuse Prevention

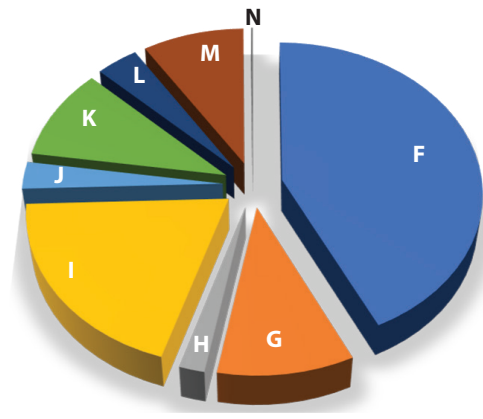


2022 REVENUE \$ 10,637,994



- A** Grant Revenue 80%
- B** Donations 1%
- C** Interest Income 11%
- D** Other Revenue 2%
- E** In-kind Contributions 6%

2022 EXPENSES \$ 10,553,554



- F** Child Education 43%
- G** Energy Assistance 10%
- H** Food Programs 2%
- I** Community Service 19%
- J** Older Adult Programs 2%
- K** Housing 10%
- L** Corporate Activities 4%
- M** Management & General 9%
- N** Fundraising 1%



**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE**

159 Wilson Street • Newark, Ohio 43055  
740.349.8606

SERVICE CENTERS

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>NEWARK</b><br>160 Wilson Street<br>Newark, Ohio 43055<br>740.349.8606         | <b>BUCKEYE LAKE</b><br>41 First Street<br>Buckeye Lake, Ohio 43008<br>740.928.4481 |
| <b>PATASKALA</b><br>12534 Adams Lane SW<br>Pataskala, Ohio 43062<br>740.927.9861 | <b>UTICA</b><br>308 North Main Street<br>Utica, Ohio 43080<br>740.892.4196         |

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PROGRAMS

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <b>DELAWARE</b><br>607 Sunbury Road<br>Delaware, Ohio 43015<br>740.363.8810                                    | <b>MARYSVILLE</b><br>111 Morey Drive<br>Marysville, Ohio 43040<br>937.642.1230 | <b>PATASKALA</b><br>12536 Adams Lane SW<br>Pataskala, Ohio 43062<br>740.209.5023 |
| <b>LICKING COUNTY</b><br><i>Home-Based Programs</i><br>161 Wilson Street<br>Newark, Ohio 43055<br>740.258.6119 | <b>NEWARK</b><br>986 East Main Street<br>Newark, Ohio 43055<br>740.345.1745    | <b>UTICA</b><br>308 North Main Street<br>Utica, Ohio 43080<br>740.892.4196       |

**MISSION STATEMENT**

*LEADS Community Action Agency is a private, non-profit corporation which seeks to identify and remove the causes of poverty and provide direct assistance to alleviate the effects of poverty to result in greater self-sufficiency among low-income citizens of our area.*