

LEADS



"Believe you can and you're halfway there." – THEODORE ROOSEVELT

Annual Report 2023 to the community





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Chief Executive Officer

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Message from Rochelle Paul

Board of Trustees Chairperson



In my capacity as chair of the LEADS governing board, I have the privilege and honor of seeing the overall effort and achievements of the Divisions: Fiscal, Community Services, Head Start, Housing, and Human Resources.

Looking back over the years is joyful. Decades ago, a group of committed people performed a Licking County Economic and Development Study, ergo the acronym LEADS. From that study, an organization developed to empower people living in poverty and to alleviate the effects of poverty. And that's what it did. Today, it still does, but with greater expertise and efficacy. With a stronger economy and the assistance of LEADS's programming, customers continue getting critical financial and socioeconomic support. As I think about the tens of thousands of children, women, men, and families who have benefited from the agency's effort and growing federal and state funding, the LEADS acronym evokes new words and nuances:

Legacy and labor of love. Employees see this job as a calling and customers are uplifted.

Economy and education. Through multiple programs, families can maintain a home, put food on the table, and send their kids to a premier early childhood program.

Administration and advancement. Through the expert administration of multiple programs, families move forward.

Dedication and development. Agency employees dedicate themselves to empowering customers to improve their quality of life.

Striving for success. Well, that's for everyone.

Looking forward, as LEADS continues its mission and as the economy and social service programming continue improving, perhaps LEADS can begin expanding its focus on assisting customers not only to improve today, but also in their future, to thrive.

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.



*"However difficult life may seem,
there is always something
you can do and succeed at."*

– STEPHEN HAWKING



"We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future."

– FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT



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 2023, we served **523** 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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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 2023, Early Head Start served **189** infants and toddlers, and seven 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 licensed 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. 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.

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 Care Food Program (CACFP) for the meals served to children throughout the year.



HEAD START

Food Service

During the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) fiscal year, October 2022 through September 2023, LEADS' two kitchens provided:

- **66,236** total meals
- **22,156** breakfasts
- **22,934** lunches
- **21,146** snacks
- **3,059** gallons of milk

The reimbursement through CACFP:

\$ 167,193.13 total food expenses | **\$ 6,864.99** non-food expenses



Serving Children with Disabilities

Of the **712** children served, **59** had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) through their local education agency or education service center. **14** 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 **11** 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 seven pregnant women were provided EHS services during the 2023 program year; of these families, four 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 **253** 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 LEADS Head Start Centers earned a quality rating through the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Step Up to Quality (SUTQ).

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	48%	65%	77%
Language & Literacy	47%	70%	75%
Cognition & General Knowledge	35%	51%	68%
Physical Development & Health	35%	48%	87%
Social & Emotional Development	44%	67%	77%
English Language Learners	50%	57%	93%

*Non-Kindergarten eligible ** Kindergarten-eligible



Health

- **84%** of EHS/HS children are up-to-date on all preventative primary health care
- **78%** of children diagnosed with a chronic health condition received/completed treatment
- **55%** of HS have continuous and accessible professional dental care

COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION

Energy Efficiency

55 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

188 households received health and safety improvements within their home, such as:

- Lead, radon, carbon monoxide & fire hazard reduction
- Disability accessibility modifications

91 households received essential home repairs or modifications such as:

- Electrical and plumbing repairs
- Minor roof repairs
- Other essential repairs
- Handicap accessibility modifications such as: wheelchair ramps; grab bars and railings

EMERGENCY SERVICES DIVISION

18 households avoided foreclosure

311 households avoided eviction

9,698 households participated in utility assistance programs

COVID-Related American Rescue Plan Home Relief Grant

- **212** families/households received rental assistance
- **\$575,109.02** in rent/deposit assistance provided
- **172** families/households received utility assistance
- **\$66,747.98** in utility 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.

- **3,964** eligible individuals/households received food from the pantries
- **1,176** eligible individuals/households received senior food boxes



AFFORDABLE HOUSING DIVISION

Housing - 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 totaling 1,476 units. Of these developments, 35 were funded using tax credits, 19 were funded with USDA Rural Development, three were funded with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and one with conventional funds. The affordable housing developments are located in 22 counties in Ohio. The prospective residents must qualify under various income, credit and background guidelines for each of the programs the property is financed under.

- **1,169** households were provided with affordable housing
- Occupancy rate was **94%**

MILESTONE

LEADS exited the Griggs Village, a 44-unit property located in Columbus, Ohio.

LEADS Properties are located in the Ohio counties shown at right



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

VOLUNTEERS

	Volunteers	Hours
HS/EHS	272	2,680
Emergency Services Division	37	5,540
Other	18	180
TOTAL	327	8,400



Volunteers from Grange

Over 300 volunteers dedicated a combined total of 8,400 hours while helping LEADS!

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 | | |

In Memory of

Theresa "Terry" Moore



Theresa "Terry" Moore began her career with LEADS in 2015. She was a lead teacher at our Buckeye Lake and Pataskala Center. Terry's smile always greeted the children and families at the door. She had a creative style of teaching through art and this was evident in her classroom as children were always painting and drawing. One of the highlights was having her artistic daughter, Rachael, visit the classroom and complete a canvas art project with the children.

Terry enjoyed spending time with her family, gardening, making delicious salsa, tending to her many plants, enjoying Dr. Pepper, sweet tea, chocolate, and cheering on The Ohio State Buckeyes. Terry was looking forward to retirement with her husband, Brien.

Sadly, our hearts were broken December 26, 2023, the day of Terry's passing. Terry impacted the life of her family and friends, along with the Head Start/ Early Head Start families and colleagues. She will be missed greatly.

Nancy Gifford



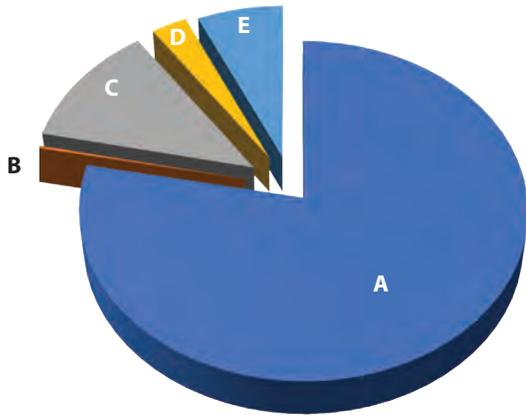
Nancy was dedicated to helping her community. In addition to serving on the Board for LEADS, she was a member of Newborns in Need, Twigs and the Newark Garden club. She was also active in many groups within the St. Francis de Sales church. In her spare time she would crochet, read and do puzzles. Nancy was

very family oriented, she loved spending time with her children. She was a proud Nana and was very close to her grandkids, supporting them in all their activities. Her home was a gathering place, and she enjoyed hosting the family holidays. One thing she will be remembered for is her pies, she made the best!

Thanks to Our Staff

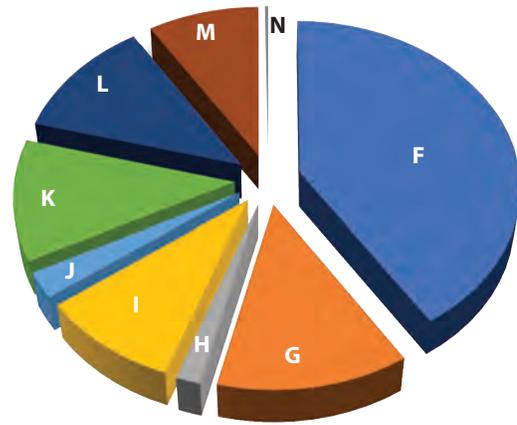


2023 REVENUE \$ 9,861,236



A Grant Revenue	78.14 %
B Donations	.24 %
C Interest Income	12.00 %
D Other Revenue	2.84 %
E In-kind Contributions	6.78 %

2023 EXPENSES \$ 10,714,521



F Child Education	40.88 %
G Energy Assistance	12.90 %
H Food Programs	1.65 %
I Community Service	9.50 %
J Older Adult Programs	2.53 %
K Housing	11.70 %
L Corporate Activities	11.86 %
M Management & General	8.92 %
N Fundraising	.06 %



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

159 Wilson Street • Newark, Ohio 43055
740.349.8606

SERVICE CENTERS

NEWARK

160 Wilson Street
Newark, Ohio 43055
740.349.8606

BUCKEYE LAKE

41 First Street
Buckeye Lake, Ohio 43008
740.928.4481

PATASKALA

12534 Adams Lane SW
Pataskala, Ohio 43062
740.927.9861

UTICA

308 North Main Street
Utica, Ohio 43080
740.892.4196

HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PROGRAMS

DELAWARE

607 Sunbury Road
Delaware, Ohio 43015
740.363.8810

MARYSVILLE

111 Morey Drive
Marysville, Ohio 43040
937.642.1230

PATASKALA

12536 Adams Lane SW
Pataskala, Ohio 43062
740.209.5023

LICKING COUNTY

Home-Based Programs
161 Wilson Street
Newark, Ohio 43055
740.258.6119

NEWARK

986 East Main Street
Newark, Ohio 43055
740.345.1745

UTICA

308 North Main Street
Utica, Ohio 43080
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.