



# *Rooted in Community*

**LEADS**

2024 Annual Report to the Community







Nathan J. Keirns  
*Chief Executive Officer*

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## Message from Rochelle Paul

*Board of Trustees Chairperson*



### *Courage. Commitment. Community.*

These words describe the strength, sincerity, and scope of the work LEADS does in order to empower people in greatest need. Customers striving to care for themselves while dealing with personal crises, economic volatility, and significant national challenges, find a lifeline at LEADS. With services ranging from Early Head Start/Head Start family support, to providing affordable housing, to assisting with home quality improvement, to emergency services and food distribution, LEADS is there. As a Community Action Agency, it has worked for decades improving quality of life for individuals, while developing a strong network with other agencies to promote efficient use of resources for its customers. LEADS' unique structure promotes outreach to multiple communities in multiple counties.

LEADS was incorporated 2 years after the signing of the Economic Opportunity Act in 1964. At that time, the national poverty rate was around 19%. The latest census figures, from 2023, report it is around 11%. LEADS' exceptionally skilled and devoted staff now, and over the years, have been instrumental in lowering the poverty rate by empowering its customers. More work is needed. So, LEADS' staff continue being courageous and devoted, rolling up their sleeves and opening their hearts.

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.*



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



## 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 goal of increasing the child's 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.

During the 2023-24 school year, we served **349** 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.

## 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.

During the 2023-24 school year, Early Head Start served **120** infants and toddlers, and **6** pregnant women.



**HEAD START**

## 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's CACFP program, 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 | EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM OUTCOMES

### Food Service

During the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) fiscal year, October 2023 through September 2024, LEADS' two kitchens provided:

- **66,380** total meals
- **22,496** breakfasts
- **23,067** lunches
- **29,817** snacks
- **3,064** gallons of milk

The reimbursement through CACFP:

**\$ 110,829.99** total food expenses

**\$ 15,200.39** non-food expenses

### Serving Pregnant Women

A total of **6** pregnant women were provided EHS services during the 2023-24 program year; of these families, **6** continued enrollment after the newborn arrived.

Each family is provided a newborn home visit and receives gift packages from Newborns in Need.



All LEADS Head Start Centers earned a quality rating through the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Step Up to Quality (SUTQ).

### Serving Children with Disabilities

Of the **469** children served, **51** had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) through their local education agency or education service center. Nine families had an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) through their local early intervention agency.

*These numbers reflect that 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 **10** 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.



**HEAD START**

### 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
- More than **173** families planned and attended virtual family and father events during the program year.
- **24** parent/guardians volunteered as members of the Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council and PART (Parent Activities Resource Team)





## COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION

### 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	23%	58%	49%
Language & Literacy	20%	54%	49%
Cognition & General Knowledge	25%	57%	32%
Physical Development & Health	24%	47%	46%
Social & Emotional Development	20%	50%	32%
English Language Learners	8%	29%	62%

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

### Health

- **89%** of EHS/HS children are up-to-date on all preventative primary health care
- **79%** of children diagnosed with a chronic health condition received/completed treatment
- **72%** of HS have continuous and accessible professional dental care

### Energy Efficiency

**80** 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

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

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

**154** households received essential home repairs or modifications such as:

- Electrical and plumbing repairs
- HVAC and A/C
- Minor roof repairs
- Other essential repairs
- Handicap accessibility modifications such as: wheelchair ramps, grab bars and railings

## EMERGENCY SERVICES DIVISION

**17** households avoided eviction

**6,747** households participated in utility assistance programs

### 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.

- **1,398** eligible individuals/households received food from the pantries
- **1,107** eligible individuals/households received senior food boxes







## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

LEADS continues to be a leader in affordable housing development and management in Ohio. To date, the organization has participated in **40** housing developments totaling **1,476** units across **22** counties.

Funding Sources:

- Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)
- USDA Rural Development
- HUD

All tenants must meet eligibility based on income, credit, and background checks per funding program requirements.

### 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

Brookside Place Apartments (Pataskala, OH)

Awarded 2024 LIHTC funding for a \$7M+ rehabilitation. Updates include modern kitchens/baths, energy-efficient systems, new windows, siding, and roof. Originally developed in 1994; now entering a new LIHTC cycle with Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing as the syndicator.

### 2024 OUTCOMES

- 1,151 households housed in safe, affordable units
- 95% average occupancy rate

#### COUNTIES WITH LEADS HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

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

LEADS Properties are located in the Ohio counties shown at right



## PARTNERS & FUNDERS

US Department of Health & Human Services (HHS)  
*Head Start & Early Head Start*

US Department of Agriculture (USDA)  
*Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)*

Great Lakes Community Action Partnership (GLCAP) & Columbia Gas of Ohio | *WarmChoice Program®*

Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging (COAAA)  
*Home Repair & PASSPORT*

Ohio Department of Development  
*Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)*  
*Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP)*  
*Winter Crisis | Summer Crisis*  
*Housing Assistance Grant Program*  
*Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)*  
*Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP)*

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

US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA)

Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing (OCCH)

USDA Rural Development

Multiple Private Equity and Financial Institutions | *Affordable Housing*

## VOLUNTEERS

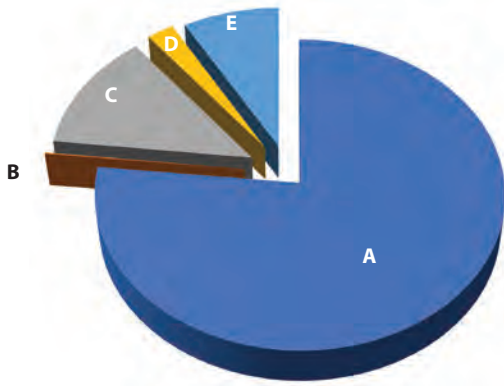
	Volunteers	Hours
HS/EHS	328	3,635
Emergency Services Division	54	4,697
Other	17	177
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>8,509</b>



# Thanks to Our Staff

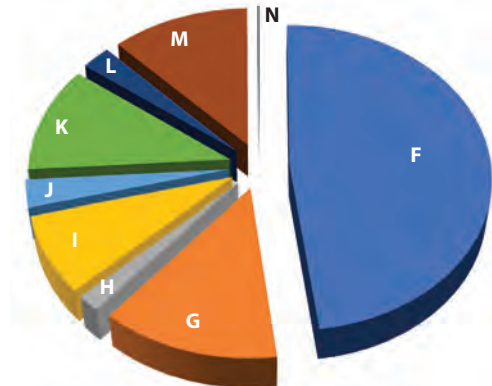


2024 REVENUE \$ 10,131,759



<b>A</b>	Grant Revenue	76.64 %
<b>B</b>	Donations	.12 %
<b>C</b>	Interest Income	12.59 %
<b>D</b>	Other Revenue	2.34 %
<b>E</b>	In-kind Contributions	8.31 %

2024 EXPENSES \$ 10,039,512



<b>F</b>	Child Education	48.03 %
<b>G</b>	Energy Assistance	13.09 %
<b>H</b>	Food Programs	1.70 %
<b>I</b>	Community Service	8.21 %
<b>J</b>	Older Adult Programs	2.93 %
<b>K</b>	Housing	11.28 %
<b>L</b>	Corporate Activities	2.57 %
<b>M</b>	Management & General	12.05 %
<b>N</b>	Fundraising	.14 %



# LEADS

## 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.*