



CLEVELAND  
**Children's Coalition**

A vision for child well-being and Cleveland's future



# CLEVELAND Children's Coalition

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## Dear Mayor-Elect Bibb,

As organizations that serve Cleveland's children, we are grateful for the many thoughtful conversations you held during your campaign to discuss the critical needs of Cleveland children and youth. We are excited to work with you and your transition team to build on your priorities to improve the health, education, safety, and wellness of Cleveland's youngest residents.

As you build your transition process, we would like to offer the expertise and partnership of this coalition to support the needs of Cleveland's children in your transition plan and in your new administration. We are eager to work with you to create a city government that reflect the urgent priorities of children and is responsive to the voices of Cleveland's residents and communities.

As issues impacting children and youth intersect across most, if not all, of the ten priority areas identified through the transition committees, we encourage you to consider a cross-sectional approach that recognizes the needs of children within each issue area, as well as sets an overall vision and roadmap for creating a child-friendly city. Specifically, we offer the following detailed recommendations for the transition and new administration:

- **Appoint Staff Leadership and an internal Children's Cabinet to identify and coordinate effective responses to issues impacting the well-being of Cleveland's children:** While we appreciate the care the Transition Committees are taking to examine their respective issues through a child-specific lens, we also urge your Administration to create an inter-departmental Children's Cabinet of senior Administration officials whose areas of work impact children. Additionally, we urge the appointment of a lead staff person, such as a Director or Chief of Children's Initiatives, inside the Administration to lead the Children's Cabinet's work within the first 100 days. The staff person and Cabinet would be capable of and empowered to look across departments and agencies to identify and enable policy, program, and funding decisions with a child-centered focus. This person and Cabinet would operationalize the cross-sector nature of the Transition Committees into the day-to-day work and strategies of your Administration. It is critical that in the near term, the Administration creates plans that support children with a cross-sector lens as well as implement programs and services, into the future, with that lens.
- **Create a vision for a "Child-Friendly City" and Child and Youth Impact Statement:** We urge you to work in partnership with our coalition and other community stakeholders, including a representative group of young people and families, to create a shared, community-wide vision for what a "child-friendly" Cleveland would look like. Use this vision to map out planning and resources, as well as to help hold city leaders, along with other public and private partners, accountable for success. Additionally, we recommend developing a "children and youth impact statement" as a tool that can ensure that child well-being is integrated throughout the Administration's priorities and against which policy, programs, and funding can be measured.
- **Strategically deploy Federal Funding to Support Cleveland's Vision for Children:** The enormous resources currently available to the city through federal ARPA and Infrastructure bills, and possibly forthcoming if a deal is struck on Build Back Better legislation, is unprecedented.

These funds present myriad ways to invest in programs and strategies that prevent or otherwise address the root causes of challenging childhood conditions. In order to capture all available funding and build internal expertise on allowable fund deployment, we recommend that a specific Administration team be identified to track and understand fully how federal funds can be used. Throughout this briefing book, members of our coalition have identified in their issue briefs many opportunities to effectively invest federal funds to aid and benefit Cleveland children. Support for this work can also be engaged through the Center for Community Solutions' new Greater Cleveland American Rescue Plan Council.

We are grateful for the opportunity to submit these recommendations, and we request the opportunity to discuss these ideas further with individual transition committees and members of your transition leadership team.

All the best,



Center for Community Solutions  
The Cleveland Foundation  
Empowering Youth Exploring Justice  
Enterprise Community Partners  
First Year Cleveland  
The George Gund Foundation

Lead Safe Cleveland  
Mt. Sinai Health Care Foundation  
PRE4CLE  
Say Yes Cleveland  
Schubert Center for Child Studies, CWRU  
Starting Point



## Introduction

### Shaping A Vision for Child Well-Being and Cleveland's Future

Cleveland's children are supported by families, organizations, and communities passionately committed to their wellness and success, but they face significant challenges. Cleveland's agencies and initiatives that serve children stand out for having a scale, depth, and level of collaboration that is unique among communities across the country. This is the network that the next Mayor will inherit. As a community, we look to the next Mayor to offer the vision and leadership needed to fully leverage the resources of the City of Cleveland to make meaningful change for our youngest citizens.

While many issues are addressed in this briefing book, they all stem from the systemic challenges that Cleveland families have faced for generations—poverty, racism, disinvestment in housing and neighborhood development, and lack of access to resources such as employment, transportation, child care, health care, and education. Cleveland's organizations are addressing these structural challenges, but the leadership of the mayor is critical to making the deep and sustainable structural changes needed to lift Cleveland's children out of poverty, protect them from preventable health issues, ensure they have the resources needed to receive a high-quality education, and enable them to grow up in a safe, stable, and healthy environment.

Throughout the following issue briefs, you will see recommendations from many organizations related to their issue areas. The briefs also include calls to action for the new mayor that are evident throughout these requests, including:

- Work strategically and transparently with local community-based partners and families to innovate and solve the most pressing challenges facing Cleveland's children and families.
- Make meaningful, scaled investments in proven programs that are demonstrating success, including maximizing the use of American Rescue Plan Act and other federal funding to support the needs of children and families.
- Support the progress already underway in critical areas related to children, including maintaining the leadership role of the Mayor's Office on many of the boards and committees guiding children's initiatives in Cleveland.
- Engage in advocacy at the state and federal levels to share Cleveland's experiences, work with other local leaders to call for needed investments, and ensure that Cleveland's children are being represented in conversations impacting their health and well-being.
- Use a framework of equity and inclusion as you identify challenges and co-create solutions alongside children and families who are most impacted by the issues at hand.

We are grateful for the opportunity to share these ideas with you, and we look forward to continuing this dialogue as you prepare for office and map out your vision for Cleveland's children.

# Leveraging The American Rescue Plan Act to support Cleveland's Youngest Citizens

## Summary

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) provides critical and unprecedented support to children, families, and communities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic downturn, which have been exacerbated by historic racial injustices. ARPA funding provides a comprehensive approach to transform the way we support children and families to meet communities where they are and address system inequalities.

As a bold step forward in the fight for our children's future, the American Rescue Plan aims to cut child poverty in half and funds essential services such as child care, Head Start, preventative child welfare interventions, family violence prevention, energy assistance, and short-term pandemic emergency assistance. As one of the largest stimulus packages in U.S. history, the American Rescue Plan provides states and cities with resources to better serve the children, families, and communities now, as well as build a strong foundation for the next generation.

## Critical Information

Cleveland's next mayor has the opportunity to shape and impact how ARPA funds are used for children and families through a number of pathways. As the leader that will provide the strategic vision for the use of Cleveland's local ARPA allocation, the mayor has a critical role in convening community-based agencies and families to craft ARPA recommendations that reflect and support critical work already underway, while also addressing immediate and long-term needs that have emerged related to COVID-19. Several recommendations throughout this document include specific ARPA-related requests already submitted to the city for consideration.

Additionally, the next mayor has the opportunity to work with county and state leaders to advocate for ARPA funding to be directed toward critical priorities for children and families, including the priorities already outlined [in this document](#) compiled for state leaders earlier this year by the Greater Cleveland COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund.

## Priorities for the Next Mayor of Cleveland

- Convene agencies that work on children's issues and the families they serve to inform and shape Cleveland's ARPA plan to ensure it maximizes impact for children.
- Use the rich data sources available to the Cleveland community to make data-driven decisions about the use of ARPA funding.
- Facilitate strategic alignment among City of Cleveland departments to guide the planning and implementation of the ARPA funding.
- Create greater transparency regarding the ARPA funding process, including opportunities for public testimony and public information about deadlines and final decisions.
- Advocate for other local and state ARPA funds to be allocated strategically to support the needs of Cleveland's children and families.

## Further Reading

- [Kids Count: Recommendations for Local Governments Using American Rescue Plan Act \(ARPA\) Funding](#)
- [Early Childhood is Critical to Recovery: Utilizing Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to Support Vulnerable Children and Families](#)
- [Local Allocations in the American Rescue Plan Act, National League of Cities](#)





# EDUCATION



## Cleveland Transformation Alliance

Cleveland's Plan for Transforming School (The Cleveland Plan)  
[myCLEschool.org](http://myCLEschool.org)

### Summary

In 2012, community leaders developed Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools, a citywide school improvement initiative to reinvent Cleveland's public education. Its goals are twofold: to effect lasting systemic change in Cleveland's education system and strengthen educational outcomes for all students in Cleveland public schools, both district and charter. The Cleveland Transformation Alliance (CTA) was created to oversee the implementation of the Plan.

Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools outlines six strategies for CTA: (1) Publish and widely distribute an annual report on the quality of all Cleveland's schools (district and charter); (2) Implement ongoing, consistent, and two-way communication and engagement with students, families, educators, and other stakeholders about high-quality education and the Cleveland Plan; (3) Raise awareness about available high-quality teaching and learning options in the city and how to access them; (4) Periodically revisit and refine the Cleveland Plan with stakeholder input and innovate best practices; (5) Participate in local, state, and federal advocacy efforts that support the policy and funding needed to implement the Cleveland Plan; and (6) Identify and actively engage a broad array of partners to support and successfully implement the Cleveland Plan.

### Critical Information

CTA is a registered non-profit chaired by the Mayor of Cleveland that assesses the quality of all district and charter schools in Cleveland, communicates to parents about quality school options; monitors charter sector growth; and ensures fidelity to the Cleveland Plan. CTA strengthens families by providing the information needed to make school choices based on their child's individual needs and interests. Our programs are built around our guiding principle that when a child is excited about their school and learning, they will feel safe, nurtured, and inspired to learn and succeed. This, in turn, means more stability for the family.

The Alliance is currently developing its first-ever strategic plan, focused on a five-year vision, and centered on two projects that will be able to adapt to future needs of and changes in the community landscape. The final plan is anticipated by the end of October 2021.

### Priorities for the Next Mayor of Cleveland

- Advocate for the Cleveland Transformation Alliance as a resource for families to make informed school choice decisions.
- As chair of the Cleveland Transformation Alliance, work with the other members of the CTA Board to help build impactful collaborations to further the goals of the Cleveland Plan.
- Continue to advocate for the benefit and success of all public education in Cleveland.
- Help the Cleveland Transformation Alliance build organizational capacity.

### Further Reading

- [Refreshed Cleveland Plan](#)
- [2020 Cleveland Plan Progress Report \(Note: 2021 Report anticipated by 10/29/21\)](#)

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**PRE4CLE**  
High-Quality Preschool  
[pre4cle.org](http://pre4cle.org)

### Summary

PRE4CLE is a plan to expand access to high-quality preschool to all 3- and 4-year-old children in Cleveland. PRE4CLE helps families find and enroll in high-quality preschool programs, connects preschool providers to tools and resources to increase their quality and serve more children, and provides strategic leadership and advocacy to accelerate the availability of high-quality preschool in Cleveland. Research shows high-quality preschool prepares children for success in kindergarten, throughout school, and into adulthood. The vision of PRE4CLE is that every child in Cleveland enters kindergarten ready to succeed.

PRE4CLE is part of Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools and is led by the Cleveland Early Childhood Compact. Starting Point and The Educational Service Center of Northeast Ohio act as the lead agencies for PRE4CLE.

### Critical Information

When PRE4CLE began in 2014, lack of access to high-quality preschool was a driving factor in only 16 percent of children entering kindergarten in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) fully prepared, as measured by Ohio's Kindergarten Readiness Assessment.

Due to the work of PRE4CLE and our partners, enrollment in high-quality preschool increased by 72 percent between 2014 and 2020, with greater access to high-quality preschool in nearly every Cleveland neighborhood. This resulted in an eight-percentage point increase in kindergarten readiness among children entering CMSD and contributed to rising literacy rates in kindergarten through third grade. PRE4CLE's advocacy efforts have also helped to secure an additional \$100 million in new state and local funding for early learning programs in Cuyahoga County along with critical supports for quality improvement, evaluation, and expansion of high-quality preschool.

### Priorities for the next Mayor of Cleveland

- Continue to prioritize access to high-quality preschool as a core goal of The Cleveland Plan.
- Work with PRE4CLE and other early learning partners to prioritize early learning within the ARPA investment strategy.
- Work with Mayors across Ohio to support additional state investments in high-quality early education.

### Further Reading

- [PRE4CLE's 2019 Annual Report](#)
- [PRE4CLE's Request for ARPA Funds for Early Learning Spaces](#)
- [Ohioans Have Spoken - It's Time to Invest in Early Learning, Groundwork Ohio](#)

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### Summary

Say Yes Cleveland (SYC) is an independent, local organization that launched in 2019 to provide two big things for Cleveland's students: support services throughout school and scholarships after high school.

SYC support services are intended to help students from PreK through 12th grade overcome barriers and stay on-track for success. This year, Say Yes support services are available in 69 CMSD and partner charter schools and will be offered in all CMSD and partner charter schools by the fall of 2022. Services include afterschool programming, legal services, mental and physical health services, and a Family Support Specialist based in each school to connect students and families to needed assistance.

SYC also provides scholarships covering the cost of college or postsecondary tuition, after federal and state grants, to every eligible graduate of a CMSD or a partner charter high school, for the next 25 years. Say Yes scholarships can be used at all public universities, community colleges, and Pell-eligible certificate programs in Ohio – as well as over 100 private colleges and universities across the nation. To be eligible for scholarships, students must enroll in a CMSD (or partner charter) high school from 9th grade through graduation and live within the City of Cleveland (or CMSD boundaries) from 9th grade through graduation.

### Critical Information

- From CMSD's classes of 2019 and 2020, nearly 1,200 Cleveland students have enrolled in college or career training through SYC. The organization has already paid out more than \$3 million in scholarships.
- During the past school year, SYC Family Support Specialists logged more than 40,000 case notes about individual students, making nearly 6,000 individual referrals for services and support. Referrals were usually in the areas of mental health assistance, food insecurity, and medical and legal assistance.

### Priorities for the next Mayor of Cleveland

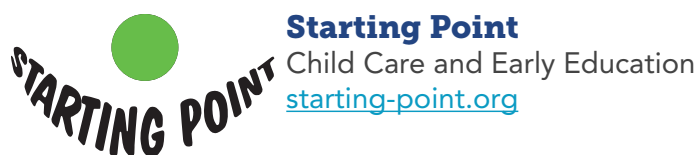
- Continue the City of Cleveland's leadership role as one of the original conveners of SYC.
- Work with CMSD and other partners to keep SYC a priority for the community.

### Further Reading

- [Say Yes Cleveland's 2020 Report](#)
- [SYC 2021 Update](#)

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### Summary

Starting Point is a non-profit organization working to ensure that high-quality learning opportunities are available to every child in our community, regardless of where they were born, their race, or their ZIP code. Starting Point's services achieve a dual purpose: providing a safe place for children and youth so their parents can work while giving young brains the foundation they need to succeed in school and beyond.

Starting Point is designated by the State of Ohio as Cuyahoga County's Child Care Resource and Referral Agency; it also serves in this capacity for Ashtabula, Geauga, and Lake Counties. In this role, Starting Point connects children, youth, and families to high-quality child care, pre-school and out-of-school time opportunities; provides training and technical assistance to child care programs; and leads efforts to increase the quality and availability of child care. Starting Point reaches more than 40,000 individuals per year through its services.

### Critical Information

High-quality child care and a strong workforce are intimately intertwined. In order for parents to be able to work, child care must be accessible. To build a strong workforce for the future, high-quality child care, early education, and after-school and summer programs are critically important.

In Cleveland, nearly two-thirds of kids are not prepared for kindergarten; for Black children, that number is even worse, with only 1 in 4 demonstrating kindergarten readiness. Decades of research show that children who get high-quality early education are more likely to graduate from high school and go on to be employed, and less likely to be dependent on government assistance. Yet the ability to provide high-quality child care to our youngest citizens is at risk due to low wages and staff shortages. In July 2021, 77 percent of child care programs reported that they were short-staffed. It is imperative that the community make investments to stabilize the child care system, ensuring that parents can work today and that children receive high-quality education that gives them a foundation for success tomorrow.

### Priorities for the next Mayor of Cleveland

- Prioritize access to affordable, high-quality child care in all Cleveland neighborhoods.
- Stabilize child care workforce through investments in living wages.
- Identify and expand workforce development strategies to attract talent to early childhood education field.

### Further Reading

- [National Association for the Education of Young Children State Survey Data, page 35](#)
- [Ohio Early Childhood Race and Rural Equity Report: Cuyahoga County, Ground Work Ohio](#)

### Contact

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## Summary

Starting Point is a non-profit organization working to ensure that high-quality learning opportunities are available to every child in our community, regardless of where they were born, their race, or their ZIP code. Starting Point's services achieve a dual purpose: providing a safe place for children and youth so their parents can work while giving young brains the foundation they need to succeed in school and beyond.

Starting Point is Cuyahoga County's designated Out-of-School Time intermediary as a part of the MyCom Cleveland Initiative. In this role, Starting Point maintains strong relationships with after-school and summer programs by: providing coaching and training to program leaders and staff; connecting providers to public and private funding opportunities; and coordinating quality improvement activities for programs. In September 2021, Starting Point released an RFP to provide \$1.2 million in funding to Out-of-School Time (OST) programs, in partnership with Cuyahoga County's Family and Children First Council. Programs are anticipated to be selected in December with funding to begin in early 2022.

## Critical Information

After-school and summer programs, often referred to as Out-of-School-Time (OST) or Expanded Learning, are a critical component of healthy youth development. Research shows that high-quality OST programs can support social, emotional, and academic development; reduce risky behaviors; promote physical health; and provide safe and supportive environments for children and youth.

For every \$1 invested in OST programs, communities see a \$3 return on investment through increasing youth's earning potential, improving their performance at school, and reducing crime and juvenile delinquency. Yet the 2020 America After 3PM report found that there is not enough programming available in most communities. In Ohio, for every child in out-of-school time programs, 5 more would participate if a program were available. It is no surprise that unmet demand is highest among traditionally underserved communities. More than half of Black (58 percent) and Latinx children (55 percent) who are not in an afterschool program would be enrolled in a program if one were available.

## Priorities for the Next Mayor of Cleveland

- Expand access to high-quality OST programs in Cleveland's neighborhoods.
- Support development of sustainable funding streams for Out-of-School Time programs at state level.

## Further Reading

- [Ohio Afterschool Fact Sheet 2021, Afterschool Alliance](#)
- [The Value of Out-of-School Time Programs, The Rand Corporation](#)

## Contact

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## Cuyahoga County Office of Early Childhood

### Invest in Children

Early Childhood

[Investinchildren.cuyahogacounty.us](http://Investinchildren.cuyahogacounty.us)

#### Summary

Invest in Children is a public-private partnership that mobilizes resources and energy to ensure the well-being of all young children in Cuyahoga County. We provide supportive services to parents and caregivers, advocate, and build awareness and momentum in the community. We aim to achieve equity in access to services and eliminate racial/ethnic disparities in child and family outcomes. Our programs include the Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program (UPK), as well as early childhood literacy and mental health efforts, programs to support pregnancy and infant health, and advocacy work to ensure the needs of young children and families are considered in public policy. More than half of our clients reside in the city of Cleveland.

#### Critical Information

The UPK program is the gold standard of high-quality preschool at sites throughout the city of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County. Thirty-four of our UPK Preschools are in the city of Cleveland, where we partner with organizations like Starting Point and PRE4CLE to deliver a great experience for families and kids. The program's funding and guidance enables training, technical assistance, parent engagement activities, and an array of quality enhancements, along with scholarships to make high-quality care available to both low- and moderate-income families. The UPK Program has achieved proven results:

- 66 percent of children who regularly attended a UPK program were "on track" for language and literacy milestones at kindergarten entry, compared with 47% of similar children who attended pre-school at a high-quality non-UPK site.
- Children who regularly attended a UPK program scored 7 points higher on the Social Foundations test for kindergarten readiness than those not enrolled in UPK.

#### Priorities for the next Mayor of Cleveland

- Ensure that high-quality preschool options in the city of Cleveland remain available and accessible to all families with young children.
- Fully support the MomsFirst program and other home visiting programs within the Cleveland Department of Public Health to reduce infant mortality, and the high level of racial inequity in newborn health outcomes.
- As a strategy in the city's efforts to eliminate lead poisoning, support the work of the Lead Screening and Testing Commission within the Cleveland Department of Public Health, to identify and support the high number of young children with elevated blood lead levels.

#### Further Reading

- [Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program Evaluation](#)
- [Early Childhood Lead Exposure in Cuyahoga County and the Impact on Kindergarten Readiness](#)
- [Sleep Related Deaths in the City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County](#)

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# HEALTH

## Summary

Established in December 2015, First Year Cleveland (FYC) is a public-private partnership committed to decreasing infant mortality in Cleveland and Cuyahoga County. FYC's vision is that every baby born in Cuyahoga County will celebrate a first birthday. Its mission is to mobilize the community through partnerships and a unified strategy to reduce infant deaths and eliminate racial disparities. A community movement, FYC uses a collective impact model focused on three priority areas: reducing racial disparities, addressing extreme prematurity, and eliminating sleep-related deaths. To achieve its goals, FYC leads the development and coordination of strategies and mobilizes Action Teams to implement health care and community-based activities and interventions. FYC is supported by the City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, local foundations, individuals, and Ohio Department of Medicaid.

## Critical Information

For more than five decades, Cuyahoga County has had one of the highest infant mortality rates (IMR) in the United States, and the most extreme health issues occur in infants born at 22 weeks or less, referred to as extreme prematurity. The IMR for Black infants has been consistently higher than the rate for white infants. Early in FYC's work, racism was identified as the leading root cause of the racial inequities in birth outcomes for Black women and babies. According to preliminary 2020 infant mortality data, Black babies made up 38 percent of births in Cuyahoga County and 73 percent of infants deaths. The Black IMR was 14.6 per 1,000 live births compared to the white IMR of 3.5. In the City of Cleveland, the Black IMR was 15.9 compared to the white IMR of 4.2. There has been progress in decreasing infant deaths, but more work is still needed to achieve equitable birth outcomes.

## Priorities for the Next Mayor of Cleveland

- Address the ways racism affects health, including an examination of current policies and the development of new policies through an equity framework. Advocate against policies that perpetuate inequity and racial disadvantage.
- Prioritize equitable resource allocation in communities most adversely impacted by poor maternal and infant health outcomes, including investing in community, resident-driven initiatives, and community-based organizations that lead and sustain efforts to reduce Black infant mortality. Leverage the City of Cleveland's ARPA and other federal funds to address Black infant mortality.
- Develop and fund upstream approaches to address the political, structural, and social drivers of health inequities, including housing, transportation, digital divide, food insecurity, and workforce development.

## Further Reading

- [Black Mothers Grieve the Babies They Lost](#)
- [2020 March of Dimes Premature Birth Report Card](#)
- [2019 Cuyahoga County Child Fatality Report](#)

## Contact

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### Summary

The Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition is an inclusive public-private partnership founded in 2019 to address the lead poisoning crisis through a comprehensive, preventive, and long-term approach. Today, the Coalition has over 500 members, representing over 150 cross-sector organizations including community stakeholders, all who believe that no child should ever be lead poisoned. The Coalition was instrumental in the passage of landmark legislation passed by Cleveland City Council in 2019 creating a proactive inspection system to ensure the lead safety of rental properties built before 1978. This lead safe law does not stand alone though; it is strategically married with resources to help families and property owners comply with the law, stabilize our housing stock, and ultimately, protect Cleveland's next generation of children from lead poisoning.

### Critical Information

The Lead Safe Home Fund, created by the Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition, are those resources to help families and property owners. The Fund is a first-of-its-kind, public-private fund supporting two interrelated functions: 1) Lead Safe Resource Center to provide Lead Safe Certification navigation, workforce development, community education, a hotline, and 2) Lead Safe Home Loans and Grants to help property owners to make lead safe home repairs. Developed on rigorous research conducted by Case Western Reserve University, home repair experience, and lead poisoning prevention best practices, the Fund has an overall five-year, \$99.4 target budget. As of September 2021, the Coalition has raised just over \$45 million in commitments and pledges. Grants to property owners who have lower incomes or operate on smaller margins, are an outstanding area of greatest need. In addition to resources to assist property owners with compliance, ultimately the success of the lead safe certification depends on enforcement from the City of Cleveland.

### Priorities for the Next Mayor of Cleveland

- Allocate \$17.5 million of ARPA dollars toward the Lead Safe Home Fund for the express purpose of grants to property owners to make their units lead safe.
- Enforce the lead safe certification law to ensure full compliance.
- Maintain leadership in the city-created bodies (Lead Safe Advisory Board, Lead Safe Housing Action Board & Lead Screening and Testing Commission) and the Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition.

### Further Reading

- [Characteristics of Rental Properties and Landlords in Cleveland](#)
- [Downstream Consequences of Childhood Lead Poisoning: A Longitudinal Study of Cleveland Children from Birth to Adulthood](#)

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## Mt. Sinai Health Care Foundation

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

[mtsinaifoundation.org](https://mtsinaifoundation.org)

### Summary

Traumatic experiences and causes of toxic stress in childhood, often referred to as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), include various forms of abuse, neglect, and household challenges like substance use in the home. Childhood trauma also stems from poverty, homelessness, involvement in foster care, bullying, and exposure to community violence. Racism and other forms of discrimination underpin many ACEs and are sources of toxic stress in and of themselves (source: [Center for Youth Wellness](#)).

ACEs can cause serious mental and physical health issues for children that persist into adulthood, perpetuating economic hardships for families and communities, according to the Health Policy Institute of Ohio (HPIO). However, ACEs and their lifelong impacts are not inevitable. Reducing traumatic experiences, creating safe, stable, and nurturing environments, and promoting resilience—especially among Cleveland’s children of color and low-income Clevelanders—are key to preventing and mitigating the harms of adversity. Strategies include ensuring a strong start for kids, enhancing parents’ and children’s coping skills, connecting youth with caring adults, promoting anti-violence norms, and providing economic supports for families (source: [HPIO](#)).

### Critical Information

Ohio ranks 46th in the nation for the proportion of children with 3 or more ACEs (source: [Groundwork Ohio](#)). One in five Ohio kids are exposed to ACEs and, among those screened in a [local program](#) conducted by OhioGuidestone, NEON Inc., and UH Rainbow Center for Women and Children, one in three young children in Cleveland have experienced at least one ACE. These disproportionate rates of trauma stem from some of the highest rates of abuse and neglect, domestic violence, violent crime, and poverty in the country. If ACEs were eliminated in Ohio, one in three cases of depression, one in three cases of habitual smoking, and one in four cases of asthma could be prevented (source: [HPIO](#)). Eliminating ACEs would also curb \$10 billion in health care spending and \$320 million in lost wages statewide (source: [HPIO](#)).

### Priorities for the Next Mayor of Cleveland

- Fund and scale comprehensive early child care across Cleveland Universal Pre-K sites to include trauma-informed education, family supports, and linkages to health care (model: YWCA Greater Cleveland’s [Early Learning Center](#)).
- Create a centralized hub for mental health clinicians and community-based organizations to receive no-cost training on evidence-based trauma screening, treatment, and prevention practices (model: City of Philadelphia’s [Trauma Transformation Initiative](#)).
- Create a local navigator program for families to enroll in the expanded Child Tax Credit with ARPA funds (model: [Ohio Children’s Budget Coalition](#)).

### Further Reading

- [Center for Youth Wellness: ACEs Resources & Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Health Policy Institute of Ohio \(HPIO\)’s Ohio ACEs Impact Project](#)

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**Children's Defense Fund-Ohio**  
Behavioral Health  
[cdfohio.org](http://cdfohio.org)

### Summary

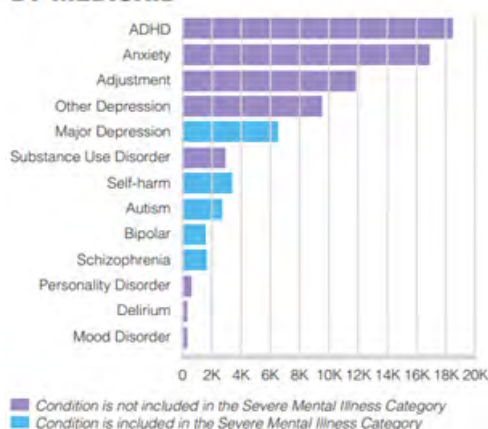
According to many [reports](#), child behavioral health is reaching a crisis level – especially during the pandemic as isolation, inconsistent health care, and family stress have grown. In the years leading up to the pandemic, research shows that mental illness and substance use disorders impacted young Ohioans of all ages, genders, ethnicities, and income levels, and this situation has only grown more serious. For these reasons, the Children's Defense Fund-Ohio in partnership with the Mental Health & Addiction Advocacy Coalition (MHAC) co-authored the report, [Mind the Gap: Creating a Robust Continuum of Behavioral Health Care for Young Ohioans](#). This report, released in April of this year, proposes that the state of Ohio adopt a standard continuum of behavioral health care for children that meets their developmental needs from prenatal through age 25. Further, the report examines challenges and opportunities in strengthening our system throughout the state and offers recommendations. Finally, county profiles on behavioral health are included to detail demographics, statistics on diagnosis, Medicaid coverage, and self-reported data from counties on services.

### Critical Information

Using data from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), and population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, it is estimated that more than 550,000 children and adolescents and 560,000 young adults aged 18 to 25 in Ohio have a mental illness or substance use disorder. These disorders can be especially devastating to young people, impacting current health and school success and contributing to serious lifelong consequences.

A child, adolescent, or young adult's access to quality services, ongoing treatment for chronic challenges, and coordination of care for complex circumstances, increase the likelihood of positive life outcomes and benefits everyone – the youth, their families, and their communities. According to the 2019 State of Mental Health in America report developed by Mental Health America, although Ohio ranked 13th in access to mental health care for youth, more than half of children who experienced major depression did not receive mental health services and only 33 percent received consistent treatment.

### BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONDITIONS<sup>2</sup> AMONG YOUNG OHIOANS<sup>1</sup> AS DEFINED BY MEDICAID



The COVID-19 pandemic created unprecedented disruptions to the lives of individuals and families. Even before these impacts became apparent, researchers, clinicians, teachers, caregivers, and young Ohioans themselves had voiced concerns about the increasing stress, anxiety, and depression among youth. The pandemic has compounded the already rising negative trends, as isolation, loss of routine, and missed milestones exacerbate these feelings. Further, the role of systemic racism and its history in our society plays a significant role in the behavioral health of individuals and communities, adding stress and trauma to the experiences of young people of color.

Cuyahoga County is home to about 377,822 young Ohioans (ages 0-25), representing nearly 10 percent of the state's

population in this age group. Further, the U.S. Census Bureau identified Cleveland as having the highest levels of child poverty in the nation for a city its size. Over half of young Clevelanders receive their healthcare coverage through the Medicaid program (56 percent or 211,580). In fact, analysis of Medicaid reimbursement data indicated that the most frequent diagnosis for youth in Cuyahoga County were for ADHD, Anxiety, Adjustment Disorder, and Depression. This is a snapshot prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and we know that the behavioral health situation has grown worse for many youth who were already struggling.

Issues of economic insecurity, increased behavioral health concerns, and the pandemic compounded with the race equity issues facing the city creates a situation where youth who are Black and Brown and the many who are living in poverty are facing the daily violence of poverty, racism, and trauma. Our children deserve to thrive and flourish, and we must protect the dignity of childhood and dismantle racism in policies and how we invest public dollars so that all children, no matter their race or neighborhood, are able to realize their dreams and potential in the City of Cleveland.

### **Priorities for the Next Mayor of Cleveland**

- Strengthen the child behavioral health continuum of care available for children and youth in Cleveland with a focus on youth who most disenfranchised and have greatest barriers to care.
- Support collaboration for the multiple points of entry to services that could be strengthened such as the schools, juvenile justice system, child welfare system, and community-based health services.
- Support federal, state, and local efforts to build the child behavioral health workforce through targeted recruitment and retention efforts.
- Continue robust support of Cleveland Metropolitan School District focus on “whole child well-being” – we know children are better able to thrive in their education when their basic needs – especially their behavioral health needs - and that of their families are met consistently.
- Support and expand existing collaborations with government, school, community, and faith-based organizations to increase children’s access to afterschool, and summer programs that provide social and emotional support and behavioral health services when school is not in session.

### **Further Reading**

- [Mind the Gap: Creating a Robust Continuum of Behavioral Health Care for Young Ohioans](#)
- [Children’s Defense Fund-Ohio](#)
- [Mental Health & Addiction Advocacy Coalition](#)

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## THE GEORGE GUND FOUNDATION

### The George Gund Foundation

CMSD/Say Yes to Cleveland Integrated School-based Health Initiative

#### Summary

Children must be healthy in order to learn. “Health” must be defined to include both physical and behavioral health if we expect to meet the needs of the whole child. The CMSD/Say Yes Integrated Health Initiative’s purpose is to help CMSD students and their families identify and overcome health-related barriers that may inhibit a child’s ability to thrive and learn. The vision is to provide all CMSD scholars access to high-quality preventive, primary, and behavioral care services that help students stay healthy and academically on track, and graduate ready to take advantage of Say Yes’s tuition scholarships for college or other postsecondary educational opportunities. Services will be available through 4 access points: in-school clinics, mobile clinics, telehealth, and provider sites. Through partnerships with contracted local mental, behavioral, and physical health providers, the Initiative expands access to well visits, primary care, mental and behavioral health services, acute care, chronic disease management, and vision and dental services. This model promotes early intervention in order to prevent more complex, severe downstream health issues. To grow and sustain this model, public funding must be secured through maximizing eligible state Medicaid reimbursement and pursuing all available federal funds for school-based health care.

#### Critical Information

Research shows school-based health centers (SBHCs) promote health and educational equity because they:

- Increase school attendance and decrease disciplinary actions.
- Help eligible students enroll in health insurance.
- Connect students’ family members with health coverage.
- Provide sustainable and reimbursable health services in schools.
- Offer services that support students at-risk of poor health and education outcomes.
- Promote healthy school practices through nutrition, physical activity, and health education.
- Improve prevention and wellness policies.
- Build local partnerships to support expanded health services.
- Reduce emergency room visits.
- Create a positive school climate that fosters learning.

#### Priorities for the next Mayor

- Support use of ARPA and other federal funds to develop and test a model of integrated physical and behavioral health care for all CMSD scholars.
- Support the CMSD/ Say Yes to Education’s Integrated Health Task Force’s request to the Ohio Department of Medicaid to maximize Medicaid reimbursement for integrated school-based health as permitted by federal law and regulation.
- Endorse and have the City join the statewide coalition working collaboratively to secure Ohio Department of Medicaid support for maximizing allowable reimbursement of federal funds for integrated school-based health services.

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# JUVENILE JUSTICE



SCHUBERT CENTER  
FOR CHILD STUDIES

**Schubert Center for Child Studies, Case Western Reserve University**  
[case.edu/schubertcenter](http://case.edu/schubertcenter)

## Summary

Preventing children and youth from entering the juvenile justice system and supporting their healthy development is essential for the well-being of our young people and our community. Too many pathways lead children to justice system involvement, including the removal of students from school for misconduct, an overreliance on law enforcement for intervening with youth, and a lack of adequate diversion from detention and trauma-informed interventions and supports. Black and brown children are overrepresented in all of these pathways and many of our justice-involved youth have multiple system needs, including mental and behavioral health and child welfare. Once placed in the county juvenile detention center (CCJDC), young people are confined for months or longer, often isolated in their cells for extended times with extremely limited programming or therapeutic supports. Limiting the likelihood of success for our justice-involved youth not only deprives them of future opportunities, but harms the families and communities they leave behind and ultimately undermines the vitality and social fabric of our city.

## Critical Information

Despite the current concern about gun violence, juvenile arrest rates for all crimes have been [steadily declining since the mid-1990s](#). Last year there were [3,263 delinquency and unruly cases](#) in our county, down from 3,346 in 2019. This represents a significant decline of about one-third of cases since 2007 when there were more than 9,100 cases.

Based on a [growing body of research](#) about the teen brain, adolescent development, and what works programmatically with youth engaged in delinquent or other risk-taking behaviors, [juvenile justice reforms](#) over the last decade have sought to increase legal protections, [reduce justice-system pathways, and divert children from deeper system involvement](#). While our state and local juvenile justice systems have engaged in a number of efforts to divert justice-involved youth from residential placements (e.g., a [series of evaluations](#) conducted by the Begun Center for Violence Prevention at CWRU), significant [challenges remain](#) and the current conditions at the CCJDC [raise serious concerns](#).

Cleveland youth make up a significant portion of those involved with our juvenile justice system. While the juvenile court system is county-wide, the [2020 Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court Annual Report](#) notes that Cleveland cases (1,617) make up just over half of all the 3,263 delinquency and unruly cases in the county. Of the 2,195 youth charged with delinquency, 972 are from Cleveland. While most youth under 18 charged with offenses remain in the juvenile system, Cuyahoga county had 113 bindovers last year and [leads the state with 50 percent](#) of all bindovers in Ohio (Franklin County's population is similar to Cuyahoga but our county [transfers four time more youth to adult court](#)).

In 2018, national experts from the Center for Children's Law & Policy [found a series of concerns](#) with the CCJDC, including "staffing problems", a "significant and dangerous dependence on the use of room confinement", and a failure of training to "equip staff with skills for working with adolescents, particularly youth with trauma histories and mental health needs". Many of these serious problems persist today, like [excessive confinement](#) that lead to a recent disturbance in the CCJDC, with increasing risks given the added challenges of COVID-19.

Given that police are often the first responders with youth in crisis and those engaging in delinquent behavior, they serve as key system gatekeepers and should be [equipped to respond to](#)

[youth in a developmentally appropriate and trauma-informed manner](#). While the Cleveland Division of Police (CDP) Consent Decree did not have a special focus on youth, it does include some provisions based on the status of being a child, as described in this [Citizen’s Guide to the Consent Decree](#). Recognizing that children and teenagers are developmentally less mature and the [unique nature of police interactions with youth](#), the CDP adopted a first-of-its-kind “Interactions with Youth” [policy](#) this year. The CDP policies include guidance for age-appropriate de-escalation, communication and other protections, as well as promoting the use of redirection and referrals to help to divert youth from justice-system involvement. Effective training and implementation of CDP policy as it relates to encounters with children and youth will be key.

In an effort to deter the school-to-prison pipeline, the CDP Interactions with Youth policy also limits the use of police in the CMSD schools. This aligns with the [Ohio SAFE Act \(HB 318\)](#), which prohibits out of school suspension of students pre-K through the third grade, promotes positive behavioral interventions and supports and, if school police/resource officers are in the school, requires specific training on child and adolescent development and other protections to help keep youth successful in school.

### Priorities for the Next Mayor of Cleveland

- Establish a system for monitoring the CCJDC to ensure Cleveland children and youth are safe and have access to appropriate education and trauma-informed behavioral health and other supports.
- Work with the juvenile court to ensure effective, racially equitable diversion options for Cleveland youth.
- Conduct regular briefings with the Chief of the Cleveland Division of Police and the CMSD Police Chief to assess the progress of the implementation of the CDP Youth Interactions policy and related policies with youth-specific protections, including appropriate training on how to interact with young people using trauma-informed, racially equitable and developmentally appropriate practices.
- Support local investments in positive youth development programs and collaborative efforts to reduce reliance on law enforcement for youth in crisis and to deter justice-system involvement.
- Establish a system for partnering with CMSD to reduce reliance of police in schools and to ensure CMSD has complied with the S.A.F.E. Act.
- Identify and support local strategies for supporting and advancing racially equitable juvenile justice reforms and opportunities for healthy youth development.

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The [Schubert Center for Child Studies](#) bridges research, practice, policy, and education for the well-being of children and adolescents. Through strategic collaborations the center seeks to ensure that public policy reforms, primarily state and local, reflect an understanding of the principles of child and adolescent development, credible social science research and data, and best practices. [More Here.](#)



**EYEJ: Empowering Youth, Exploring Justice**

[eyej.org](http://eyej.org)

**Summary**

EYEJ empowers young people to be advocates for change through YDJ: Youth Discussing Justice, its Youth Council, and its Millennial Task Force. The EYEJ community includes 1,200 diverse members, donors, allies, and organizations who engage with and learn about social justice issues through dialogue with young people. EYEJ has graduated 65 Changemakers, individuals who help better their community by positively impacting underserved youth. Since 2013, more than 1,700 young people from Cleveland have participated in social justice discussions and helped implement positive change for a better community through EYEJ’s programming.

**Critical Information**

EYEJ’s work aims to empower youth to drive social justice reform through community action. In recent years, the EYEJ Youth Council has been focused on two primary issues:

- In 2018, the EYEJ Youth Council declared that 100 percent of young people in Cleveland have or are experiencing toxic stress. Many of the youth participating in our programming witness this epidemic first-hand, and the impacts have only been amplified during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Last year, The EYEJ Youth Council chose to focus on the digital divide in our community and has made great strides in researching and organizing around the issue. EYEJ is committed to implementing digital literacy programming and policy solutions for the 2021-2022 school year.

**Priorities for the Next Mayor of Cleveland**

- Provide equitable and sustaining funding to EYEJ for the YDJ program as an intervention for toxic stress. (From Katie Ross, Director of Programming, YDJ: Youth Discussing Justice)
- Transparently and equitably collaborate with our young advocates for change to support digital literacy policy and programming, including joining the EYEJ task force focused on tackling digital literacy and the digital divide. (From Alana Garrett-Ferguson; Director of Policy, EYEJ Youth Council)
- Create a line item budget that will aid in the alleviation of the digital divide in Cleveland.
- Help implement programming and policy developed to help our young people and others with digital literacy. (From Arnav Khanna, EYEJ Youth Council Member Co-Chair)
- Authentically engage with youth. (From Peter Chmiel, Co-Chair of the Millennial Task Force)

**Further Reading**

- [EYEJ Impact One-Pager](#)
- [EYEJ Executive Summary](#)
- [YDJ: Youth Discussing Justice Program One-Pager](#)
- [EYEJ Youth Council Program One-Pager](#)

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**Juvenile Justice Coalition**

[jjohio.org](http://jjohio.org)

**Summary**

The Juvenile Justice Coalition (JJC) is a youth-centered organization for people and communities affected by the juvenile justice system. We work to replace punitive juvenile justice policies with restorative practices and equitable resources, so all youth and families can live in safe communities.

Young people in Cleveland make up half of the cases in the Cuyahoga County Court. JJC regularly participates in walkthroughs with children detained in Cuyahoga County Juvenile Detention Center (CCJDC) and advocates to the administration on behalf of the 100+ young people detained. In addition to this local facility, the county is also the largest contributor to the state’s juvenile system, Ohio Department of Youth Services (ODYS). JJC has monitored and advocated to reduce the number of transfers of youth from the juvenile to adult court system, known as bindovers, which are detrimental to young people’s safety. Cuyahoga County is the source of 50 percent of all bindovers in the state. Based on research that demonstrates the benefits of keeping youth in the juvenile system and of alternatives to incarceration, we envision a Cleveland where young people and families are resourced, not caged.

**Critical Information**

Poor conditions have been recorded at CCJDC for years. In the facility, children from Cleveland and surrounding areas have been subjected to physical violence, hunger, room isolation, lack of legally mandated education, and an absence of programming. These issues mean young people do not have their basic adolescent needs met, let alone receive rehabilitative care, and are only being sent back into their communities or other facilities with further trauma and experiences with violence.

Youth incarceration can increase recidivism compared to more humane approaches, so JJC advises smart budgeting to move resources toward alternatives to incarceration. Incarcerated youth are subject to poor educational and work outcomes long after release, which can entrench poverty and inequality. Eighty-three percent of youth in CCJDC are Black. The facility has the largest population of any juvenile jail in the state, but there are many opportunities to reduce the population and shift toward alternatives to detention.

**Priorities for the Next Mayor of Cleveland**

- Work with grassroots organizations, community-based services, and youth and family programs to support the creation and expansion of community-driven alternatives to incarceration.
- Communicate with the CCJDC to safeguard the conditions of confined Cleveland youth, and with the Cuyahoga Juvenile Court and ODYS to encourage lower detention population numbers and improved funding for alternatives in Cleveland.

**Further Reading**

- [Detained youth in Cuyahoga County face unacceptably harsh conditions](#)
- [Moving Ohio toward a more effective, humane youth rehabilitation system](#)
- [Factsheet 2019: Cuyahoga County’s Treatment of Children](#)

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# POVERTY



## Enterprise Community Partners

Housing & Homelessness

[enterprisecommunity.org/about/where-we-work/ohio](http://enterprisecommunity.org/about/where-we-work/ohio)

### Summary

Enterprise Community Partners is a national nonprofit that exists to make a good home possible for the millions of families without one. Home is where life happens, where plans are made and futures begin. The foundation for dignity, health, education, wealth and community. Yet rents keep going up, paychecks don't keep pace, and good homes in strong neighborhoods are increasingly out of reach. The system doesn't work. It must be changed. Together with partners and funders, Enterprise's Ohio Market has created or preserved over 35,000 affordable homes throughout Ohio. We convene and lead coalitions to bring housing-based programs and creative policy solutions to support residents in achieving housing stability and economic mobility. Some of our key programs include:

- Lead Safe Cleveland: Leads public-private partnership supporting effective, enforceable and equitable solutions to prevent lead poisoning
- Justice Involved Homes: Increases availability of all types of housing as one element of comprehensive support for people formerly incarcerated
- Cuyahoga EITC Coalition: Supports upward mobility by coordinating services that lead to greater financial security and wealth building
- Homelessness programming: Creates, improves and scales housing, support services and policy for adults, young adults and families experiencing homelessness
- Capacity building: Supports nonprofits to create and preserve affordable homes
- State and local policy: Advances equitable housing and opportunity for low-income residents throughout Ohio

### Critical Information

There is an indisputable body of evidence that shows safe, decent, affordable housing is critical to a child's well-being and opportunity. For example, children who experience housing instability are more likely to drop out, repeat grades, perform poorly in school, and suffer from learning disabilities. Further, substandard and unstable housing are linked to asthma, lead poisoning, food insecurity, chronic disease, mental health issues, infant mortality, and substance abuse.

Housing stability – access, stability, and affordability – is hard to come by and only becoming harder. The most recent census data show that 26 percent of Cleveland homeowners are housing instable and that numbers jumped to 51 percent for Cleveland renters. What's more, 60 percent of Cleveland residents are renters.

### Priorities for the Next Mayor of Cleveland

- Meaningful, scaled investment in proven affordable housing programs like new development gap financing, home repair, homelessness, eviction prevention, and renter assistance.
- Protect renters by addressing discrimination, preventing eviction, improving housing quality, and ensuring long-term affordability.
- Implement the newly created 10-year Cleveland Housing Study.

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## Children's Hunger Alliance

Hunger

[childrenshungeralliance.org](http://childrenshungeralliance.org)

### Summary

Federally subsidized Child Nutrition Programs – including the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and National School Lunch Program (NSLP) – are proven to increase access to nutritious meals for at-risk children. Children need access to healthy food in the environments where they spend the most time, often in early childcare settings, school, afterschool care, and summer programs. Children's Hunger Alliance's (CHA) role in the community as an approved CACFP and SFSP sponsor is to help provide financial support to caregivers allowing them to provide nutritious foods to children in their care. Regular consumption of nutritious food over the course of time positively impacts children's long-term health and academic outcomes. In addition to the federal nutrition programs, we provide meals during weekends and extended school breaks, a program that does not qualify for federal reimbursement. Over the last year, CHA and its partners have provided more than one million meals to children in Cuyahoga County.

### Critical Information

Cuyahoga County is home to the highest number of food-insecure children in Ohio with a projected 23.4 percent experiencing food insecurity (Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap). According to the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates from 2014 – 2019, [47 percent of children in Cleveland live in households where the income is below the poverty level](#). Based on estimates from Feeding America, COVID-19 may have increased these figures. Additionally, the [Center for Community Solutions data](#) show that 34.5 percent of households in Cleveland's wards utilize Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. However, [these benefits are often not enough to provide food for a household for an entire month](#). These statistics demonstrate the need to maximize access to Child Nutrition Programs.

### Priorities for the Next Mayor of Cleveland

- Strengthen Child Nutrition Programs that provide summer and afterschool meals, to make the program more accessible for children and families.
- Support federal, state, and local efforts to expand food access for children.
- Support increasing the number of children who participate in school meals.
- Form and support collaborations with government, school, community, and faith-based organizations to increase children's access to nutritious meals in early childcare settings, school, afterschool, and summer programs.
- Provide funding to CACFP and SFSP sponsors to increase meal access for food insecure children.

### Further Reading

- [CHA's 2020 Annual Report](#)
- [CHA's Agency Brochure 2021](#)
- [Ohio Program Performance 2020](#)

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# FOUNDATION PARTNERS

# Bruening

The Bruening Foundation  
[brueningfoundation.org](http://brueningfoundation.org)

## Summary

The Bruening Foundation invests in efforts to disrupt the cycle of poverty for young families in Cuyahoga County through its proactive and responsive grantmaking. The Foundation's proactive Strong Start Strategy seeks to ensure that every child in the county gets a strong start in life. Through the strategy, the foundation develops partnerships with organizations and programs that deliver interventions to the youngest children, ages 0-3, and their families; work to facilitate language and social-emotional development; and provide support for parents as their child's first teacher. The strategy also proactively seeks to address the social determinants of health that impact early childhood development, including the settings in which children live, learn and play. Finally, through the strategy, the foundation supports advocacy initiatives to promote policies that are conducive to the healthy development of young children.

## Critical Information

Development of the Strong Start Strategy was heavily influenced by brain research from the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University that shows the neural connections for different brain activities develop sequentially, which means that babies need visual, sensory, and language inputs to develop the higher cognitive functions that contribute to lifelong success. It was also influenced by the work of Dr. James Heckman, Nobel-prize winning economist at the University of Chicago, that shows the economic return on investment of social and educational interventions are strongest in the earliest years and actually begin to decrease by age 4.

## Priorities for the Next Mayor of Cleveland

- Prioritize implementation of the Cleveland lead safe legislation, as even low levels of lead exposure have been shown to harm the cognitive development of young children
- Prioritize early learning and lead safety and testing within the ARPA investment strategy
- Work with Mayors across Ohio to support additional state investments in early childhood mental health care, lead safety, evidence-based home visiting and high-quality early education

## Further Reading

- [Three Core Concepts in Early Development](#)
- [8 Things to Remember about Child Development](#)
- [Early Childhood Lead Exposure in Cuyahoga County and the Impact on Kindergarten Readiness](#)

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**Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland**

Cleveland Central Promise Neighborhood  
[clevelandpromiseneighborhood.org](http://clevelandpromiseneighborhood.org)

**Summary**

Since 2010, [Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland](http://Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland) has led the Cleveland Central Promise Neighborhood as a founding partner alongside neighborhood residents and organizational partners whose shared goal is to help every child in the Central neighborhood achieve success in learning, work and life. Promise partners have remained dedicated to collaboration and new ideas that can shape the future of the Central neighborhood for all residents, especially children and families. Through a longstanding partnership with Starting Point, Promise employs an early learning network coordinator specifically to support early learning centers in Central. A whole-family initiative, Family Partners, launched in 2019 to bring a two-generation approach to Central’s families with young children and integrate supports for both children and caregivers.

**Critical Information**

- Promise’s early learning network coordinator connects centers with state resources to participate in the Step Up To Quality program. As of July 2021, nine of the 12 early learning centers in the Central neighborhood had a high-quality (3- to 5-star) rating from the state of Ohio. This is one of the highest concentrations of high-quality opportunities in any neighborhood in Cleveland.
- Family Partners whole-family program, designed for home visits, pivoted to virtual support in spring of 2020. Retained 27 Central families for SPARK early learning program and connecting families to additional resources.
- In the 2020 cohort, more than 70 percent of participating children gained learning skills in pre-literacy, and 77.5 percent of participating parents grew their ability to teach their children—which became imperative during periods of school closings and virtual learning.
- Family Partners core team connected 17 families of the 2020 cohort to mental health coaching and partnered with Care Alliance to provide emergency access to child psychiatric services not previously offered in Central.

**Priorities for the Next Mayor of Cleveland**

- Continue to prioritize access to high-quality preschool as a core goal of The Cleveland Plan
- Work with PRE4CLE and other early learning partners to prioritize early learning within the ARPA investment strategy
- Work with Mayors across Ohio to support additional state investments in high-quality early education

**Further Reading**

- [Promise Year in Review: 2020-21](#)
- [Blog post: Central Neighborhood A Hub for High-Quality Early Learning \(2019\)](#)
- [Promise-Starting Point Program Guide for Early Learning](#)
- [Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland Pandemic Response Report](#)

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## United Way of Greater Cleveland

[unitedwaycleveland.org](http://unitedwaycleveland.org)

### Summary

United Way of Greater Cleveland's work on behalf of those in need includes essential programs serving Cleveland residents including United Way 211, Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition, Right to Counsel Cleveland, Family Space, and Child Advocacy Center. These programs are essential lifelines in communities, help stabilize communities, individuals, and families, saw an increase in demand and need for services during and throughout COVID, and are an integral part of local community recovery.

### Critical Information

- **United Way 211:** 211 provides comprehensive screening and navigation services to community members who need help accessing social services. In 2020, 211 served over 135,000 Clevelanders with assistance to housing and shelter, food, and utilities. Children's services include after school programs, school supplies, clothing, mentoring, and tutoring.
- **Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition:** United Way of Greater Cleveland is a founding member of the Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition which was created to reduce home lead exposure and lead poisoning for children in Cleveland. Children exposed to lead can have long-term neurological damage. The coalition raises funds to provide grants and loans to landlords to bring their properties into compliance with the Lead Safe Certification.
- **Right to Counsel Cleveland:** The City of Cleveland, Legal Aid Society, and United Way partnered to provide free legal representation to renters with at least one minor child in the household living at or below the federal poverty level. In its first six months, Right to Counsel avoided eviction or displacement in 93 percent of its cases. Avoiding evictions prevents disruption to families and education for school-age children.
- **FamilySpaces:** FamilySpaces provides programming, community-building, family coaching, and access to basic resources for families with children ages 0-5.
- **CANOPY / Child Advocacy Center:** United Way funded the planning process for a local child advocacy center which is a national model utilized to reduce potential trauma for children and families impacted by child abuse and to improve services through interagency collaboration working together to effectively investigate, prosecute, and treat child abuse.

### Priorities for the Next Mayor of Cleveland

- Expand access and increase funding to healthy food, safe, affordable housing, and the United Way 211 for children, families, working adults, and seniors.
- Address the root causes of systemic racism in Cleveland and advance policies that increase diversity, equity, and inclusion for children and families.
- Improve coordination between health and human service providers and systems to better provide holistic care and improve health outcomes in our community for children and families.

### Further Reading

- [United Way of Greater Cleveland Annual Report](#)
- [United Way 211 Data](#)
- [Right to Counsel Cleveland Annual Report](#)

### Contact

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# STATEWIDE PARTNERS



## Summary

Groundwork Ohio is a public policy, research and advocacy organization with a mission to champion high-quality early learning and healthy development strategies from the prenatal period to age five, that lay a strong foundation for Ohio kids, families and communities. Groundwork's vision is to make Ohio the best place to be a young child so that all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Groundwork advances its mission by working closely with local partners and community-based organizations to advance state level policy that reflects the unique needs of children, families and the professionals that serve them in local communities. Groundwork enjoys significant funding from Cleveland-based foundations who recognize the importance of having a strong state partner and advocate that works to increase investments in young children and families across the state and support state early childhood system infrastructure on which local communities rely. Groundwork Ohio has strong and diverse relationships with Cleveland and Cuyahoga County community leaders, organizations, programs and professionals that serve pregnant women, infants, toddlers, young children and their families.

## Critical Information

- [Case for Support & Policy Agenda](#)
- [The State of Infants and Toddlers, Cuyahoga County](#)

## Priorities for the Next Mayor of Cleveland

- Continue to invest in and increase local investment in evidence-based interventions that support the healthy development of young children ages 0-5 and their families. (i.e. child care, preschool, home visiting, early childhood mental health, lead prevention).
- Work strategically with local community-based partners to innovate and solve the most pressing challenges facing young Cleveland children and families. Share your learnings to inform statewide policy.
- Honor families as experts of their own lives by developing and identifying regular opportunities to listen to families, particularly low-income families and families of color to inform your policy agenda.

## Further Reading

- [Building Brains. Building Communities. The case for investing in young children prenatal to age 3 and how local leaders can support a prenatal to age 3 agenda.](#)
- [Ohio Early Childhood Race & Rural Equity](#)

## Contact

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**Ohio Mayors Alliance**  
[ohiomayorsalliance.org](http://ohiomayorsalliance.org)

### Summary

The Ohio Mayors Alliance is a bipartisan coalition of mayors in Ohio's 30 largest cities. We believe that by coming together and speaking with one voice about the challenges and opportunities of Ohio's cities, we can more effectively advocate for our communities and our constituents. Our mission is to strengthen Ohio's cities and metropolitan regions through collaboration, communication, improved advocacy, and stronger partnerships with policymakers. We advance policy priorities that bring communities and leaders together, ensure a high quality of life for our citizens, and strengthen the economic vibrancy of our communities and our state.

OMA has a broad policy agenda, approved unanimously by its bipartisan membership each year. The 2021 policy agenda is as follows: supporting a safe, stable, and strong recovery from the coronavirus pandemic; addressing racial inequality, promoting justice, improving public safety; advocating for a balanced redistricting process that strengthens our democracy; promoting the economic impacts of cities and the value of continued investments; strengthening educational attainment and career pathways for the next generation; advancing clean energy solutions and supporting improved sustainability; promoting healthy communities and continuing to confront the addiction crisis, protecting and promoting the importance of home rule for local communities; and finding solutions for more accessible housing and cities' comprehensive infrastructure needs.

### Critical Information

An issue that the Ohio Mayors Alliance has been prioritizing is the effect of working from home (or remote working) on Ohio cities under Ohio's current municipal income tax laws. A reduction in local municipal income tax revenues will affect cities' abilities to provide public services. Cities like Cleveland that have a high percentage of non-resident commuters are particularly vulnerable to a shift to remote working. The OMA has commissioned a report to assess the future of remote working based on national trends and interviews with Ohio employer groups. The report also estimates the long-term fiscal impacts on a cross-section of Ohio cities. This report will help our cities understand how to estimate the long-term fiscal impacts of remote working, and it will inform our state-level advocacy strategy.

### Priorities for the Next Mayor of Cleveland

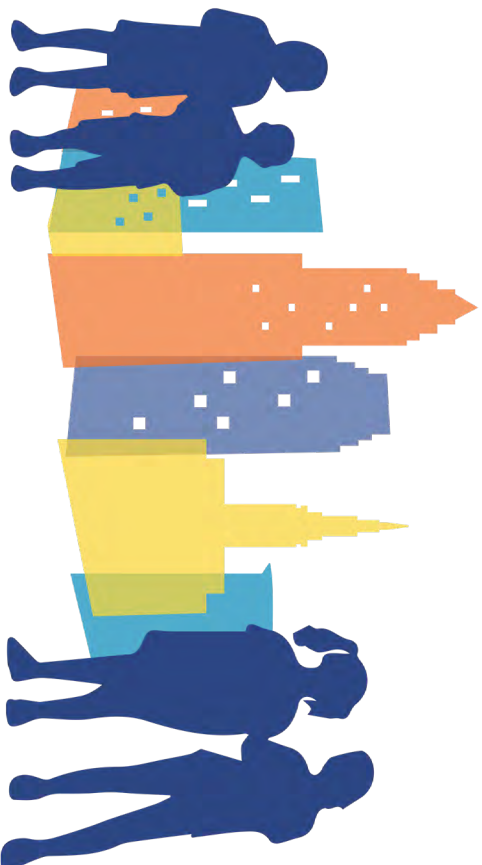
- Effectively utilizing ARPA funds and supporting a safe, stable, and inclusive recovery.
- Addressing racial inequality, promoting justice, improving public safety.
- Promoting the economic impacts of cities and the value of continued investments.

### Further Reading

- [OMA 2020 Annual Report](#)
- [Power in Working Together](#)
- [OMA Police Reform Support Network, Findings and Recommendations, Enhancing Public Trust](#)

### Contact

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# CONTACT INFORMATION

## Children's Coalition Members

Organization	Contact Name	Contact Title	E-Mail	Phone Number
<b>The Cleveland Foundation</b>	Dale Anglin	Vice President, Program	danglin@clevelandfdn.org	(216) 615-7137
<b>Center for Community Solutions</b>	John Corlett	President & Executive Director	jcorlett@communitysolutions.com	(216) 781-2944
<b>Empowering Youth Exploring Justice</b>	Mai Moore	Co-Founder & Executive Director	mai@eyej.org	216-200-7042
<b>Enterprise Community Partners</b>	Emily Lundgard	Senior Program Director, State and Local Policy	elundgard@enterprisecommunity.org	(216) 631-0280, ext. 4120
<b>First Year Cleveland</b>	Katrice Cain	Interim Executive Director	Katrice.D.Cain@case.edu	(216) 368-5017
<b>The George Gund Foundation</b>	Marcia Egbert	Program Director	megbert@fdn.org	(216) 401-3914
<b>Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition</b>	Wyonette Cheairs	Senior Program Officer, Enterprise Community Partners	wcheairs@enterprisecommunity.org	(216) 631-0280 ext. 4139
<b>Mt. Sinai Health Care Foundation</b>	Daniel Cohn	Vice President, Strategy	daniel.cohn@mtsinaifoundation.org	(216) 421-5500
<b>PRE4CLE</b>	Katie Kelly	Executive Director	katie.kelly@escneo.org	(216) 224-9554
<b>Say Yes Cleveland</b>	Diane Downing	Executive Director	ddowning@sayyescleveland.org	(440) 773-7649
<b>Schubert Center for Child Studies, CWRU</b>	Gabriella Celeste	Policy Director	mgc36@case.edu	(216) 368-5314
<b>Starting Point</b>	Nancy Mendez	President and CEO	nancy.mendez@starting-point.org	(216) 702-7328

## Contributing Partners

Organization	Contact Name	Contact Title	E-Mail	Phone Number
<b>The Bruening Foundation</b>	Jeanine Gergel	Associate, Foundation Management Services	jgergel@fmscleveland.com	(216) 621-2901
<b>Children's Defense Fund-Ohio</b>	Tracy Nájera, Ph.D	Executive Director	tnajera@childrensdefense.org	(614) 221-2244
<b>Children's Hunger Alliance</b>	Judy Mobley	President & CEO	jmobley@childrenshungeralliance.org	(614) 643-8025
<b>Cleveland Transformation Alliance</b>	Meghann Marnecheck	Executive Director	Meghann.Marnecheck@Clevelandta.org	(216) 210-4333
<b>Cuyahoga County Office of Early Childhood Invest in Children</b>	John Ladd, MNO	Program Officer IV	John.Ladd@jfs.ohio.gov	(216) 443-6583
<b>Groundwork Ohio</b>	Shannon Jones	President & CEO	sjones@groundworkohio.org	(937) 525-0944
<b>Juvenile Justice Coalition</b>	Kenza Kamal	Policy Director	kenza@jjohio.org	(614) 450-0034
<b>Ohio Mayors Alliance</b>	Keary McCarthy	Executive Director	Keary@OhioMayorsAlliance.org	(614) 425-9163
<b>Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland</b>	Richaun Bunton, LSW, MSW	Managing Director, Cleveland Central Promise Neighborhood	rbunton@socfcleveland.org	(216) 376-0747
<b>United Way of Greater Cleveland</b>	August A. Napoli	President and CEO	anapoli@unitedwaycleveland.org	(216) 436-2101

## Supporting Partners

Organization	Contact Name	E-Mail	Phone Number
<b>Achievement Centers for Children</b>	Bernadette Kerrigan	Bernadette.Kerrigan@achievementctrs.org	(216) 292-9700
<b>Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Cleveland</b>	Jessica Walters	jwalters@bbbscle.org	(216) 452-5211
<b>Birthing Beautiful Communities</b>	Jazmin Long	jlong@birthingbeautiful.org	(216) 400-4090
<b>Bright Beginnings</b>	Karen Mintzer	kmintzer@brightbeginningskids.org	(216) 236-0819
<b>Canopy Child Advocacy Center</b>	Jennifer L Johnson	jjohnson@canopycac.org	(216) 574-4325
<b>CCOAL</b>	Robin Brown	projectinfo216@gmail.com	(216) 744-0761
<b>Center on Trauma and Adversity</b>	Dr. Jennifer King	jak292@case.edu	(216) 368-0433
<b>Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital</b>	Alec Kulik	kulika@ccf.org	(216) 312-4725
<b>Cleveland Neighborhood Progress</b>	Edward Stockhausen	estockhausen@clevelandnp.org	(216) 952-2293
<b>Cleveland Public Library</b>	Dr. Shenise Johnson Thomas	shenise.johnson-thomas@cpl.org	(216) 623-2940
<b>Cleveland Rape Crisis Center</b>	Andrew DeFratis	andrewd@clevelandrcc.org	(216) 658-1970
<b>Esperanza, Inc.</b>	Victor Ruiz	victor@esperanzainc.org	(216) 651-7178
<b>The Greater Cleveland Neighborhood Centers Association (NCA)</b>	Allison Wallace	awallace@gcnca.org	(216) 298-4440
<b>Journey Center for Safety and Healing</b>	Melissa Graves	mgraves@journeyneo.org	(202) 262-5430

Organization	Contact Name	E-Mail	Phone Number
<b>The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland</b>	Melanie Shakarian	melanie.shakarian@lascllev.org	(216) 861-5217
<b>The Literacy Cooperative</b>	Robert Paponetti	rpaponetti@literacycooperative.org	(216) 776-6181
<b>Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry</b>	Margie Glick	mglick@lutheranmetro.org	(216) 650-3918
<b>OhioGuidestone</b>	Pamela Harris	Pamela.Harris@ohioguidestone.org	(216) 970-3883
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<b>Positive Education Program (PEP)</b>	Habeebah Rasheed Grimes	hrgimes@pepcleve.org	(216) 361-7760 Ext. 123
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<b>Saint Luke's Foundation</b>	Peter Whitt	pwhitt@stlukesfdn.org	(216) 431-8010
<b>Step Forward</b>	Dr. Jacklyn Chisholm	Jchisholm@stepforwardtoday.org	(216) 696-9077
<b>University Hospitals Rainbow Babies &amp; Children's Hospital</b>	Elyse Mulligan	elyse.mulligan@UHhospitals.org	(216) 286-9329
<b>Wingspan Care Group; Bellefaire JCB; Applewood Centers and Bluestone Child &amp; Adolescent Psychiatric Hospital</b>	Beth Pollack	pollackb@wingspancg.org	(216) 320-8320
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CLEVELAND  
**Children's Coalition**

A vision for child well-being and Cleveland's future