



PROGRESSIVE ALLIANCE  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
CORPORATION

# Community Impact Report

2022

# ABOUT PROGRESSIVE ALLIANCE CDC

## OUR MISSION

To grow, enhance, and advocate for the Maple Valley community by bridging gaps to services, and promoting healthy families & healthy communities.

## OUR VISION

Healthy Families=Healthy communities.

In partnership with local agencies and community lead initiatives, PACDC's vision is to have a self-sustaining ecosystem where the community is able to develop and thrive with resources that exist within close proximity to their home or business. With a key focus on workforce and economic development, PACDC will support the once thriving area by collaboratively bridging gaps in services.

## HEALTHY FAMILIES HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

## OUR CORE VALUES

- *Treat people with Dignity:* We believe people, no matter who they are, should be dignified. We will treat all residents with the utmost care and respect for their person.
- *Act with Integrity:* This will form the foundation of our organization with integrity. We will always service our community with professional ethics and utmost integrity.
- *Demonstrate Compassion:* Being compassionate gives us the desire to care for other people. In being kind, we will try to notice, feel, and respond to the needs of all the LMI in our community.
- *Pursue Excellence:* We seek to be innovative in our approach to dealing with the community. We will try the do the best we can in all efforts for the betterment of our community.



# OUR JOURNEY SO FAR

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF OUR ORGANIZATION

### 2018

- Dr. Nelson founded, Progressive Alliance CDC

### 2020

- Global pandemic
- Food giveaways and vaccine pop ups.
- Microgrants & Scholarships for small business owners

### 2022

- Work Forward, workforce development created
- Summit County Connect launched
- Microenterprise Business Development cohorts launched
- West Akron Neighborhood Plan begins



### 2019

- Better Block Copley Rd. worked to reimagine the Copley Rd. area between Nome and Hawkins Ave.

### 2021

- Microenterprise Business Development program created
- Continued food giveaways



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# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Dear Community Partners,

It is a privilege to be a part of the leadership of the Progressive Alliance, an iconic, purpose-driven, and diversity-of-thought organization that is helping to make systemic change in Akron, Ohio.

As we finish this first chapter of our short history, we've been listening to you--our partners and neighbors, and we are excited for the future we all seek. With your guidance we plan to continue to build upon strong foundations, expand our impact, increase our reach, and accelerate our pace to help the community.

We are pleasantly surprised as to how our central ideas to lift humanity resonate with so many people who, "live, work and play" right here on the west side of Akron. Collectively, we all are looking to help build better futures for our families and impact our community in a positive way. This progress is a source of pride for all of us at the Progressive Alliance.

We believe that the future will be decided by how well we are able to respond to the shifting landscape.

Finally, we issue this Community Impact Report (CIP), which highlights the journey of service to the Akron community and our impact and details the connections.

God Bless you again, I remain,

Samuel DeShazor, Board Chair



We believe that the future will be decided by how well we are able to respond to the shifting landscape.

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# MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER & CEO



Dear Friends,

For the individuals and businesses we served, we survived and thrived through “the new normal” in 2021 & 2022.

## **Advocate and Adapt**

This was our mantra. Over the last few years as our community faced the impact of a global pandemic, and cultural and social unrest, our organization learned the importance and art of advocating and adapting. These adjustments led to a more focused strategy while embracing new opportunities for our organization and community. Advocating has shifted us to have healthy discussions and ensure resources are being provided for the mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being of those within our communities. Adapting has allowed us to grow our programming, resources and capacity while building vital collaborations and partnerships for community impact.

We have seen people in our community disenfranchised by the lack of adequate resources, violence, police brutality, global pandemic, under and unemployment. Therefore, we believe that it is severely critical to advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion while assisting in convening and administering resources that will address the myriad of problems that affect many families and individuals in our community and neighborhoods. Our efforts over the past two years have focused on Micro Enterprise Business Development, Digital Inclusion and literacy programs, and workforce development through our Work Forward program. We have been able to adapt to the ever changing landscape to build sustainable programs that provide resources, skills, and technical assistance to strengthen our community.

We are looking forward to what the next year will bring while continuing to grow toward the future, and maintaining our commitment to instilling hope and resiliency in the neighborhoods we serve-We want them to grow and thrive. We are guided by our focus on the rising needs of our community and grateful you have chosen to partner with us to continue to empower Healthy Families and Healthy Communities in our neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

Dr. David Nelson, Founder & CEO  
Progressive Alliance CDC

# FOCUS AREAS

We focus on a range of community development from basic needs to business development. While they are all important and interrelated, our key priorities are around small business support and development, bridging the digital divide and empowering workers holistically through our workforce development work.



## 1 / SMALL BUSINESS MICROENTERPRISE

We support local business owners through microgrants, resource connection, network building, entrepreneurial support and professional development.



## 2 / DIGITAL INCLUSION

Bridging the gap of the digital divide, we assist with connecting residents to free laptops and T-Mobile hotspots through Connect Summit County. Residents who are interested in basic computer literacy are able to sign up for free courses.



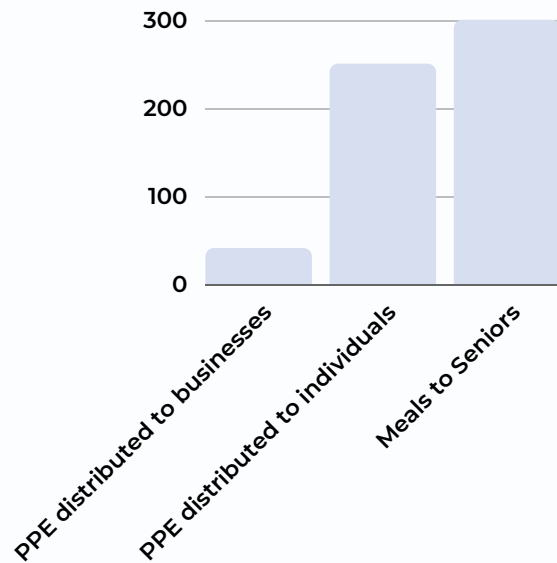
## 3 / WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Work Forward is a collaborative endeavor focused on developing workers holistically. We provide a runway for entry to increased employment or career specific workforce development programs.

# COVID-19: IMPACT & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

When our community was affected by the global pandemic of COVID-19, many families in our communities were negatively impacted. We joined together with community partners to use our resources to provide personal protective equipment(PPE) supplies to families and businesses, food baskets to families, and meals to individuals, families and seniors 55 and up. We identified local restaurants that were still operating during the pandemic, and partnered with GBO's BBQ and Nicole's Restaurant to distribute to our senior residents. We distributed 300 meals-150 from each vendor. We invited community partners to provide community resources at the distribution site in a safe, socially distanced, and accessible location.

## OUR RESULTS



**600+**

Free Meals & COVID-19 Safety Kits distributed

## PARTNERSHIPS

GBO's BBQ

NAACP

New Hope Baptist Church

Nicole's Restaurant

United Way of Summit & Medina



# COVID-19: ACCESS TO FOOD & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

COVID-19 caused some families to have reduced access to food due to reduction of income. For some youth, there was reduced access to consistent meals as they'd typically obtain in school for free. Additionally, many restaurants suffered financial losses as a result of consumer income reduction and experienced staff reduction. Many in the senior population (55+) are classified as high risk and/or have pre-existing health issues and therefore have barriers to safely obtaining food and other supplies.

In partnership with Edgar's Restaurant, we hosted a drive-through event was held to provide hot meals to seniors aged 55. We set a goal of 100 meals and exceeded that goal by providing 125. The local chapter of the NAACP assisted by distributing COVID-19 and vaccine information for each of the attendees.

We partnered with local restaurants GBO's BBQ and Gino's Pizza to provide free meals to families in the West Akron area at a Taste of Maple Valley. Our goal for the event was 100 and we exceeded that by providing meals to over 200 families. This was a two-day event, and on the next day we partnered with Hanini's Sub & Big Easy Creole Southern Cooking to provide meals to 200 families, thus total served over 400 families over two days. Additionally, we wanted to bring awareness to the local businesses so that community members continue to procure from these establishments. Summit County Health Department also provided on-site vaccines to individuals.

## OUR RESULTS

**400**

*Families served free meals*

**15**

*Vaccines  
Administered*

**125**

*Senior residents served  
free hot meals*

## PARTNERSHIPS

Big Easy Creole Southern Cooking  
First Energy Foundation  
GAR Foundation  
GBO's BBQ  
Gino's Pizza  
Hanini Sub  
Maple Valley Merchants Association  
NAACP  
Summit County Public Health



# SMALL BUSINESS MICROENTERPRISE

## **MICROGRANTS**

We provided microgrants to minority-owned businesses, and successfully launched our Small Business Enterprise program. This project focused on minority-owned businesses with less than 30 employees. We implemented the program by selecting a grant advisory committee that collaboratively developed an application, eligibility requirements as well as the rubric for selecting potential recipients. Out of 40 applicants, 20 businesses were awarded a microgrant of \$750.00.

## **MICROENTERPRISE BUSINESS WORKSHOP**

We hosted two virtual business workshops for entrepreneurs and business owners. Approximately 12 participants attended each workshop, learning about various topics from establishing business credit, to marketing, financial management, and loan packaging.

## **MICROENTERPRISE SCHOLARSHIPS**

We partnered with the Greater Akron Chamber to provide scholarships to 40 minority owned businesses to join the Greater Akron Chamber for a period of one year. The goal was to expand access to the resources of the chamber including helping them stay informed and connected to the community as well as providing access to the variety of networking and educational opportunities provided through the chamber.

## **MICROENTERPRISE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COHORT**

Many business owners are in need of training and technical assistance to develop sustainability and financially stronger businesses. Small businesses ultimately generate income and investments, and create jobs in the community while attracting and retaining needed neighborhood goods and services. Our Microenterprise Business Development Cohort was designed as a 12-month long training and technical assistance program. We've hosted 30 participants in two cohorts of 15 participants, and will be starting two new cohorts for 2023.

Some of the training included:

Capacity building, credit and eligibility requirements for SBA Prime Loans, and Marketing for small businesses.

# SMALL BUSINESS MICROENTERPRISE

## OUR RESULTS

# 30

Participants in Microenterprise Business Development Cohort

# 3

### New Businesses Started

Participants of our cohort launched brand new businesses!

# 20

### Microgrants

Out of 40 applicants, 20 local businesses were awarded microgrants to help sustain their business during the global pandemic.

## TOTAL BUSINESSES SERVED

# 80

VIA WORKSHOPS, MICROGRANTS,  
AND OUR BUSINESS COHORTS

## PARTNERSHIPS

Al Jones Marketing

Chase Bank

Chemical Bank

EDCI

First Energy Foundation

GAR Foundation

Greater Akron Chamber

Ohio CDC Association

TCF Bank

# DIGITAL INCLUSION

The global pandemic highlighted an issue that was just beginning to get research and resources dedicated to it-the Digital Divide. The Digital Divide is defined as a gap between those who do and do not have access to modern technology including high speed internet access. Research has shown that areas that were historically considered redlined areas overlap with the communities that currently have reduced or no access to digital technology which includes a high number of communities of color. From church to work and school, many families' lack of access became an imperative need versus an inconvenience. The response to our work over the past year with the Connect Summit County program- administering hotspots with 1 free year of service and/or laptops to eligible households has demonstrated the need for more access to these tools. Additionally, our organization partnered with Akron Summit County Public Library (ASCPL) and T-Mobile Government to create a hotspot lending program with 2 local library branches in our organization's service area.

## PROJECT BROADBAND

This initiative aimed to widen the digital inclusion space for underserved and communities of Maple Valley & East Copley. The lack of reliable and affordable internet access is troublesome and creates barriers including obstacles to employment, access to resources, and education for individuals and families.

We partnered with T-Mobile and Akron-Summit County Public Library (ASCPL) to lead a pilot hotspot lending program for patrons at the Maple Valley Library & Vernon Odom Library. During this 12- month program, hotspots and smartphones were available for lending to the patrons of these library branches. ASPL has been able to expand this program to other branches as well as maintain the program and expand the number of devices available at the Maple Valley and Vernon Odom Branches.

## CONNECT SUMMIT COUNTY

Too many low-income families are on the wrong side of the "Digital Divide,"- A term used to describe the gap between those who have access to computers and the internet and those who do not. Frequently, low-income communities sit on the wrong side of this digital divide. Thus, COVID-19 has changed the digital divide from a critical issue to a critical emergency.

We distributed hotspots and laptops to TANF eligible individuals and families for the Computer Distribution and Coordination of Wireless Hotspot Internet Connectivity services. PACDC staff was responsible for the following:

1. Coordination of hotspot devices for internet access and computer devices for usage for TANF eligible individuals and families.
2. Scheduling the distribution of these devices at sites county wide to ensure those who are TANF eligible receive these devices.
3. Serve as a Community Liaison between JFS and other partners to ensure we are addressing the needs of these affected by the digital divide in the community, especially those who are TANF eligible.

Lastly, we partnered with Project Learn and provided Digital Literacy Classes to the clients.

# DIGITAL INCLUSION

250

## HOW WE DID

### Project Broadband

24 Hotspots and Smartphones were available to library patrons to access internet for everything from job searches to business development. 250 patrons took advantage of this opportunity.

## CONNECT SUMMIT COUNTY

1,100

LAPTOPS DISTRIBUTED

900

HOTSPOTS DISTRIBUTED

20

## Digital Literacy

Residents completed training to develop comfort using and navigating digital content.

## PARTNERSHIPS

Akron-Summit County Public Library  
AT&T Foundation  
Department of Job and Family Services  
Joy Park Community Center  
Maple Valley Library Branch  
New Hope Baptist Church  
Patterson Park Community Center  
Project LEARN of Summit County  
Summit County Health Department  
T-Mobile  
The House of the Lord  
Vernon Odom Library Branch



# 2020-2022 FINANCIALS

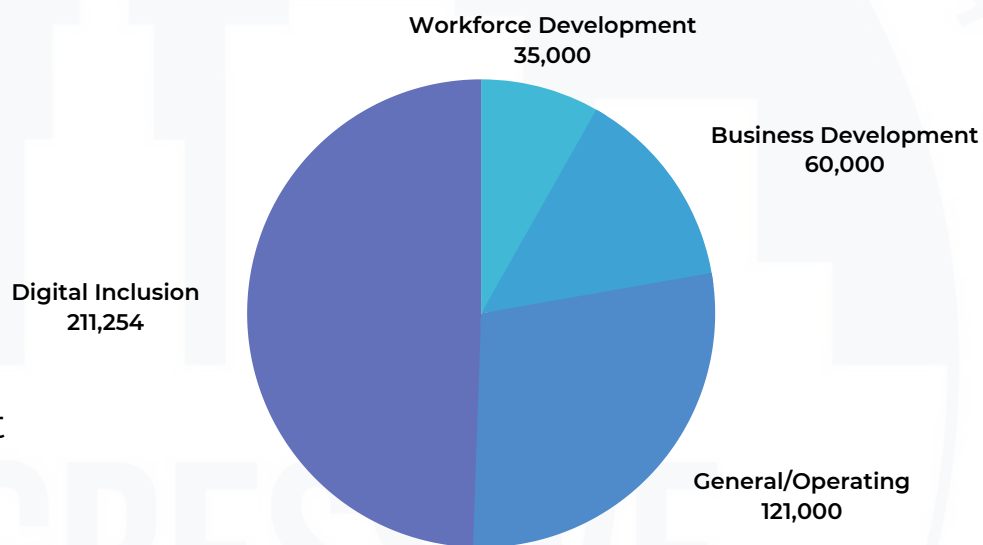
## FOUNDATIONS AND CORPORATIONS

AT&T  
Chemical Bank  
EDCI  
Knight Foundation  
First Energy Foundation  
GAR Foundation  
Lakeside Christian Church  
Ohio CDC Association  
Paramount Health  
TCF Bank  
Summit County Department  
of Job & Family Services  
Synthomer  
United Way of Summit &  
Medina  
Verizon Foundation

## GOVERNMENT

Summit County Land Bank

## FUNDING BREAKDOWN



Community donors  
have donated over  
\$3,500 to PACDC

\$55,000  
Funding for  
West Akron  
Neighborhood Plan

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# NEXT STEPS

We invite you to join us in the work whether that's your time or treasure, in helping move our work forward. We have opportunities for a wide range of volunteers as well as opportunities to donate to our programming. Want to get involved? Fill out the card on the table and we will contact you soon!

***“The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members.” - Coretta Scott King***

01

## WORK FORWARD

Work Forward was created with the intent to help create, sustain and retain a viable workforce for residents of our service area which benefits both employer and employees. Specifically, our goal was to help employees build upon existing skills and/or learn new tools to improve their workforce experience or make a career change.

For our next cohort, we've enhanced the offering to add an additional component of soft & life skills which will allow our participants to go directly into an industry specific workforce development program, into the workforce and/or improve their current employment situation.

02

## DIGITAL AMBASSADORS & DIGITAL LITERACY PROGRAM

We will address the digital divide through access and education. The program targets households of older adults and families using costly phone plans to access the internet, seeking employment, education and other self-sufficiency services that have migrated online. The goal of this program is to support full internet access, digital literacy training, and closing connectivity gaps for families and seniors within an underserved community. The program aligns with our mission to have a leading or supporting role in helping neighborhoods to address community decline challenges. Improvements stem from the combined efforts of collaborations with shared interests in community well-being.

03

## WEST AKRON NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

The West Akron Neighborhood Plan will be a collective vision for neighborhood leaders, residents, the city, and other partners in successfully guiding priorities, initiatives, and investments in the community moving forward. This plan will take a comprehensive look at the neighborhood and develop strategic economic and community development recommendations for revitalization and improvement of the neighborhood to foster a high quality of life for neighborhood residents. The process will be undertaken in four stages: 1) Project Initiation, 2) Understanding, 3) Developing & Testing Ideas, and 4) Deciding.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



Akron-Summit County Public Library  
Al Jones Marketing  
AT&T Foundation  
Big Easy Creole Southern Cooking  
Chase Bank  
Chemical Bank  
Department of Job and Family Services  
EDCI  
First Energy Foundation  
GAR Foundation  
GBO's BBQ  
Gino's Pizza  
Greater Akron Chamber of commerce  
Hanini Sub  
Joy Park Community Center  
Maple Valley Library Branch  
Maple Valley Merchants Association  
NAACP  
New Hope Baptist Church  
Nicole's Restaurant  
Ohio CDC Association  
Patterson Park Community Center  
Project LEARN of Summit County  
Summit County public health  
T-Mobile  
TCF Bank  
The House of the Lord  
United Way of Summit & Medina  
Vernon Odom Library Branch  
The Staff of PACDC  
The Board of PACDC

## Contact

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[@progressivealliancecdc](https://www.instagram.com/progressivealliancecdc)



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