Recovery and Resiliency
Advisory Committee

FINAL
REPORT

and Recommendations
November 2021

THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS
ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

**DEPARTMENT OF
DEVELOPMENT**

THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS
CITY COUNCIL

Franklin County
**BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS**
1803

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Letter from Committee Leaders

Prior to the emergence of the COVID-19 global pandemic, disparities existed within our community. Now, after more than 18 months into the pandemic, gaps in access to healthcare, jobs, housing, digital connectivity and opportunity have only been further exposed. As we move forward past the pandemic together, we must pursue systemic community change and intentionally design an equitable recovery for Columbus.

The Recovery and Resiliency Committee was created in 2020 and challenged our committee members to identify recommendations focused on equity and long term resiliency that will propel all residents to an improved quality of life in Columbus and Franklin County.

The Committee, composed of community, small business, non-profit, corporate and human service leaders, has assembled a series of short, medium, and long term plans to equitably address the human service and economic impacts of the pandemic and foster future resiliency.

The report is divided into three sections:

- **Support** is focused on addressing the short term critical needs in the community such as housing, food security and human service infrastructure.

- **Readiness** is focused on addressing the mid-term stabilization needs in the community and include focus around digital inclusion, childcare, workforce and higher education.

- **Development** recommendations include the long range topics of community and economic development.

These recommendations serve as a framework for community investment and growth that will create prosperity for our entire community, and make us more resilient in the face of future challenges.

We are committed to pursuing these recommendations as a community to build a better, more equitable future.

Christie Angel
President & CEO, YWCA

Chair, Recovery and
Resiliency Committee

Andrew Ginther
Mayor, City of
Columbus

Shannon Hardin
President, Columbus
City Council

John O'Grady
Franklin County
Commissioner

About the Recovery and Resiliency Advisory Committee

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) resulted in a public health crisis that disproportionately impacted minorities, and the ensuing human services crisis and economic challenges will have a greater negative economic impact on minority communities and lower wage earners. It is imperative that our economic recovery strategy addresses the economic disparities that existed prior to COVID-19 and promotes inclusive growth post-COVID-19.

To that end, the city of Columbus convened the **Recovery and Resiliency Advisory Committee** in October 2020 to provide advice and counsel on how the City, together with the public, private and nonprofit sector partners, can support an inclusive economic recovery strategy, build community resiliency, promote shared prosperity and better position all residents to endure future economic challenges. The committee did not focus on the public health response to and recovery from COVID-19.

The committee focused on two areas:

- **Human Services** – including affordable housing, housing evictions reduction, and food security

- **Economic Recovery** – including job readiness, digital inclusion, accessible mobility options, childcare, higher education, small business support, and travel/tourism/cultural institutions

A Three-Phase Approach

During Phase 1, in October 2020 through February 2021, the committee assessed the impact of the pandemic on the economy and human services providers. The committee received briefings on these topics:

- Housing
- Economic base
- Food security
- Job readiness
- Small business
- Digital inclusion
- Accessible mobility options
- High growth/venture
- Government
- Development
- Travel/tourism/cultural institutions
- Higher education
- Childcare

During Phase 2, in March 2021 through July 2021, the committee divided into work groups to define the top issues that needed to be addressed and develop recommendations and solutions.

During Phase 3, which is ongoing, the committee meets quarterly to receive updates from implementation partners.

In framing its recommendations, the committee prioritized:

Equity   **Access**   **Stability**   **Advocacy**

Advancing from the Pre-Pandemic Landscape in Columbus: Defining an Equitable Recovery Strategy

In developing recommendations to emerge from the pandemic with strength, the Recovery and Resiliency Committee benchmarked pre-pandemic conditions across the region that represented the point from which the city could advance. The committee gathered information from community partners across numerous areas about conditions before and during the pandemic. The information gathered was detailed and comprehensive. Key points that resonated with committee members included:

- Central Ohio households spend 28% or more of their income on transportation costs, higher than the national average. (Source: COTA)

- 1 in 5 Black commuters in central Ohio do not own a car, and job centers are increasingly located outside the public transit network. (Source: COTA)

- A survey of central Ohio residents by PACT (Partners Achieving Community Transformation) found that 11.5% of respondents had no internet access. 19% of residents had internet access only through a device with a data plan, such as a smartphone or tablet. (Source: Broadband Task Force)

- The childcare workforce faced increasing instability – wages average $10.67/hour and fewer than 15% had any benefits through their employer. The turnover rate among early childhood educators was 30%. (Source: Action for Children)

- 54,000 low- and moderate-income households in Franklin County paid more than half their income to housing costs. (Source: Affordable Housing Alliance of central Ohio)

- Average home price is $277,000. It would require 176 hours per week at minimum wage to afford the average home. (Source: Affordable Housing Alliance of central Ohio)

- Wage necessary to afford a two-bedroom apartment is $19.08/hour. A single parent needs $26/hour to cover expenses. (Source: Workforce Development Board of central Ohio, IMPACT Community Action, Columbus Works)

- 1 in 3 households in Franklin County is headed by a woman, and the poverty rate for women-headed households with children is double that of all other households. (Source: Workforce Development Board of central Ohio, IMPACT Community Action, Columbus Works)

Getting the city and region to a point of economic stability and growth post-pandemic required the committee to understand the interconnectedness of all these factors. The committee recognized that before the pandemic, and during the pandemic, the major points of instability fell disproportionately on people of color and women. Addressing immediate needs was a clear priority. Developing an economic base that provided for all residents equitably is the surest way to make the Columbus region strong and resilient enough to weather any future crisis.

Advisory Committee Members

Christie Angel, YWCA - Chair

Mayor Andrew J. Ginther, City of Columbus

Council President Shannon Hardin, Columbus City Council

Commissioner John O'Grady, Franklin County

Melissa Anderson Johnson, Starting Point

Dr. Seleshi Asfaw, Ethiopian Tewahado Services

Quay Barnes, Mideast Area Commission

Trudy Bartley, The Ohio State University

Suzan Bradford, Lincoln Theatre

Angela Bretz, Nationwide Insurance

Dr. Rebecca Butler, Columbus State Community College

Jean Carter-Ryan, Columbus Franklin County Finance Authority

Erika Clark Jones, ADAMH

Toni Cunningham, Unite Us

Sandy Doyle Ahern, EMH&T

Mark Fluharty, Central Ohio Labor Council, AFL-CIO

Tasha Fowler, City Year Columbus

Gina Ginn, Columbus Early Learning Center

Stephanie Hightower, Columbus Urban League

Tom Katzenmeyer, GCAC

Candace Klepacz, Pepper Construction

Rachel Lustig, Catholic Social Services

Elizabeth Martinez, Big Brothers Big Sisters

Kenny McDonald, One Columbus

Karen Mozenter, Jewish Family Services

Jerry Revish, Unity Temple Church of God in Christ

Denise Robinson, Alvis

Brian Ross, Experience Columbus

Toshia Safford, Center for Healthy Families

Elon Simms, Crane Group

Michael Smithson, Stonewall Columbus (On Air Communications)

Keith Stevens, PSI

Mark Swanson, Stauf's Coffee Roasters/Cup O Joe

Ariana Ulloa-Olavarrieta, Ohio University

Nana Watson, NAACP

Heather Whaling, Geben Communications

Emille Williams, COTA

Sue Zazon, Huntington

The Recovery and Resiliency Advisory Committee recognizes there are a continuum of issues to address systemic change and improvements in order to have an equitable recovery. It is for that reason we have organized ourselves to address the following:

- Spending and investments to address populations and assets in crisis

  - Crisis recommendations will focus more on people and programs and require granularity.

- Investments to stabilize and enhance readiness in the short and mid terms

  - Readiness investments should address needs of our current environment.

- Investments in the immediate and long-term future of the city

  - Long-term investments are higher level, even thematic, and address long-term competitiveness/sustainability.

Recommendations

Support: Urgent Needs

- Housing

- Eviction Reduction/
  Housing Stability

- Basic Needs
  (Food Security and
  Personal Care)

- Benefits Cliff

- Human Services
  Infrastructure

Support Committee

Chair: Elon Simms
Crane Group

Quay Barnes
MACC

Erika Clark Jones
ADAMH

Sandy Doyle Ahern
EMH&T

Gina Ginn
Columbus Early
Learning Center

Rachel Lustig
Catholic Social Services

Elizabeth Martinez
Big Brothers Big Sisters

Jerry Revish
Unity Temple Church
of God in Christ

Toshia Safford
Center for Healthy Families

Mark Swanson
Stauf's Coffee Roasters/
Cup O Joe

Ariana Ulloa-Olavarrieta
Ohio University

During the pandemic, some of Columbus' communities quickly slid into a crisis state. Housing and food security are the most critical needs to stabilize communities in crisis and provide a foundation for residents to advance.

Within the first 90 days of the pandemic's onset in March 2020, The Mid-Ohio Food Collective reported that 30% of the residents it served were first-time users of the food bank.

The pandemic also revealed the critical state of housing stability in Columbus. Approximately 54,000 low- and moderate-income households in Franklin County paid more than half of their income to housing costs, according to the Affordable Housing Alliance of central Ohio. Among those households, 55% of them were Black households, a major racial disparity, since the overall population in Franklin County is 24% Black residents. In addition, a U.S. Census Bureau Pulse Survey on October 26, 2020, showed that 39% of Black households across the country reported having "No Confidence" or only "Slight Confidence" in their ability to pay rent in November 2020. During that same month, Housing Wire reported that nearly 8% of Ginnie Mae loans nationwide were in a forbearance plan. In a classroom with 28 children, that represents two sets of parents facing possible foreclosure.

To address the housing instability in the Columbus region, the Building Industry Association of central Ohio estimates that 14,000 housing units need to be built every year to keep pace with population growth. Before the pandemic, there were approximately 8,000 units being built per year. This ongoing shortfall in housing is a key contributor to the crisis state of housing stability in our community.

The need for more affordable housing and its disparate racial impact is also reflected in Franklin County's homeless population. In Franklin County, 24% of the residents are Black. However, 66% of the county's homeless population is Black, according to the Community Shelter Board.

The Support Committee made equity and closing racial disparities key focuses for making recommendations to provide solutions to critical areas of housing and food security.

Recommendation #1

In conjunction with MORPC and the suburban communities, support the MORPC Regional Housing Strategy and declare a new housing goal for the central Ohio region to be achieved by 2030. Leadership from all sectors and neighborhoods is necessary to ensure appropriate density and zoning compliance are achieved to meet the 2030 goal.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
MORPC, Suburban communities, Neighborhoods, Development community	12,000 annual new units (3,000 single-family/ 9,000 multi-family)	Columbus residents Central Ohio residents	2030* *Looking toward 2050, local studies suggest a need for adding nearly 20,000 housing units per year in Franklin County.

Recommendation #2

Direct the Assistant Director of Housing Strategies to evaluate and implement the MORPC Regional Housing Strategy to improve Columbus' processes and timeline for housing approvals. Working with the City Directors of Department of Public Service, Department of Public Utilities, Department of Building and Zoning Services, Department of Recreation and Parks, and Department of Development, streamline development plan approval for housing by implementing a Green Tape Development process (housing includes adaptive reuse of existing buildings, new market, affordable and mixed use housing) and remove unnecessary or dated requirements. Dedicated housing plan reviewers, reporting to the Assistant Director of Housing Strategies, would move plans through city departments to achieve efficient approvals.

The City of Columbus is undertaking a zoning update. The update should be completed as soon as possible and align with an improved development plan process.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
City led, Development community	Aligned city departments around a prioritized regional housing goal with streamlined approvals, reduced requirements, and improved timelines. Could consider market-based measures to account for variation in economic conditions and future growth. (Rental measures: vacancy rates, rental rates; Sales measures: average time on market, price comparison versus household income)	Development community Contractors	June 2022

Recommendation #3

Create an adaptive reuse and rehabilitation program that includes staff and funding to repurpose existing buildings for housing and allow people to stay in their current homes. This program should be initiated in the eight opportunity neighborhoods.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
MORPC, Franklin County Rise Together Innovation Center, Development community, Residents	To be determined	Columbus residents	Start 2022 (ongoing)

Recommendation #4

Reserve federal recovery funds via escrow (should US Treasury guidelines allow) for future utility, roadway, sidewalk, and transit stop improvements that directly support affordable housing.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
City Auditor, Franklin County, Development community	To be determined	Columbus residents	2021-2024

Recommendation #5

Participate in an urban revitalization demonstration project to include affordable housing, access to transportation (along a BRT Corridor), healthy food (Mid-Ohio Market), childcare, healthcare, and green space.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
COTA, Mid-Ohio Food Collective, Healthcare/childcare partners, Development community	To be determined	Columbus residents	Start 2023

Recommendation #6

Evictions are one of the leading causes of housing instability. Funding should be directed to support and continue to add to our local support system addressing eviction reduction. City should work with leaders of organizations providing emergency rental assistance so that those populations who are most at need have access to resources.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
City, County, Legal Aid Society of Columbus, Impact Community Action, other orgs offering rental assistance	To be determined	Columbus & Franklin County residents	Start 2021

Recommendation #7

Develop an extensive outreach campaign that informs the residents and landlords on opportunities to access emergency rental assistance resources.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
City, Non-profit partners, Media	To be determined	Residents	2021

Average home price is $277,000.

It would require 176 hours per week at minimum wage to afford the average home.

Source: Affordable Housing Alliance of central Ohio

Recommendation #8

In partnership with central Ohio food access organizations, support regional efforts to ensure that all residents have equal access to food of choice.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
Mid-Ohio Food Collective, Local Matters, Children's Hunger Alliance, Life Care Alliance	To be determined	Columbus residents	Start 2021 (ongoing)

Recommendation #9

Consider key investment in the Rooted in You campaign with Mid-Ohio Food Collective to support implementation of neighborhood-based food locations as soon as possible.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
Mid-Ohio Food Collective	To be determined	Residents in region	2021

Recommendation #10

Support Mid-Ohio Food Collective in its efforts to provide personal hygiene/care products (i.e., menstrual, diapers, soap, shampoo, etc.) in food pantries.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
Mid-Ohio Food Collective, Food pantries	To be determined	Residents	2021

Recommendation #11

Support and partner with Franklin County leadership, state policy makers, and other stakeholders to explore and analyze policies and solutions to address the impacts of the benefits cliff in the areas of system improvements, childcare eligibility, and employment connections.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
City, County, State, Employers	To be determined	County residents	Start 2022

Recommendation #12

Invest in the expansion of the Strategic Transformation and Research (STAR) team at Franklin County Job & Family Services by adding two data analysts who will work to gather data to inform policy and practice to improve well-being and economic outcomes for individuals and families.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
County	Hire two data analysts	JFS and county staff, public policy makers at city and county, human service organizations	2021

Recommendation #13

Direct funding toward the development of a human services community referral and information exchange system. The goal of this system would be to increase access and ensure residents are aware of the resources available to them. The system would also allow for greater collaboration within our human services sector, encourage effective service delivery, and produce better outcomes for residents and families to achieve greater self-sufficiency.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
City, County, Human service providers/ non-profits	To be determined	Residents Human services organizations and professionals	Start 2022

Recommendation #14

Create a Catalyst Fund to:

1. Support nonprofit collaborations, mergers, and/or shared infrastructure models. The Fund can offer grants to aid promising collaborative ventures in the phases of ideation, feasibility, planning, due diligence, and implementation.

2. Promote collaborations and mergers as strategic opportunities to advance equity-center mission. This can help normalize the practice of deep collaborations and mergers as strategies for preserving, improving, or expanding services within underserved and under-resourced communities focusing intentionally on populations furthest from opportunity.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
City, County, Human service providers/ non-profits	To be determined	Residents Human services organizations and professionals	To be determined

Recommendation #15

Increase the funds allotted through the City of Columbus Competitive Human Services Grant Program to $10 million per year over a three-year funding cycle. Emphasis/Focus of the grant awards should go toward meeting basic needs, economic mobility, support for human services frontline staff, and prevention efforts (mental health, violence, youth education recovery, etc.).

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
City led - Dept. of Development	To be determined	Columbus residents Human services professionals	January 2022 – December 2025

Recommendations

Readiness: Short- and Mid-Term Stabilization and Growth

- Digital Inclusion
- Childcare
- Workforce
- Higher Education

Readiness Committee

Chair: Dr. Rebecca Butler
Columbus State
Community College

Trudy Bartley
The Ohio State University

Angela Bretz
Nationwide Insurance

Toni Cunningham
Per Scholas

Tasha Fowler
City Year Columbus

Karen Mozenter
Jewish Family Services

Brian Ross
Experience Columbus

Michael Smithson
Stonewall Columbus (On
Air Communications)

Heather Whaling
Geben Communications

Emille Williams
COTA

For Columbus to emerge from the pandemic and grow from surviving to thriving, investments are needed to prepare the community to return to the workforce and strengthen opportunities to grow and thrive. The Readiness Committee focused on the workforce, and the high-priority areas of childcare, higher education and digital inclusion.

Returning to the workforce has not been even across all of Columbus' communities. While the overall unemployment rate is low, hovering around 5%, within the continuing claims for unemployment benefits, 43% of those individuals are Black, and 50% of them are women.

One of the most central obstacles to a more complete and even return to work is lack of childcare. No access to childcare is often a barrier to enter the workforce, but it is also often a field of work that has many barriers to entry. In both cases, removing the barriers drives workforce growth and development. Childcare providers are still facing both depressed enrollment and staff shortages, often simultaneously. With wages averaging just $10.67/hour, attracting qualified candidates to the field is a daunting challenge. And raising tuition only exacerbates the lack of access for low- and moderate-income workers.

Digital inclusion is also a driver of workforce growth and development because of increased access to technology and training for underserved communities. Digital equity is a central and critical part of digital inclusion, and the pandemic's remote environment for work, school and other crucial services like healthcare revealed the wide disparities in digital access and availability and worsened the divide. A Columbus Foundation report in June 2020 found that many Columbus neighborhoods have between 31% and 58% of households without internet access. That is equivalent to 76,000 to 142,000 households. The reason is that the internet service available is not affordable for the households. There are clear racial disparities in connectivity, with 11.3% of Hispanic/Latina households and 11.8% of Black households lacking internet access. That is roughly double the 5.7% of White households without internet.

Higher education is another area identified by the Readiness committee as in need of focused action to become a stronger contributor for workforce development. The pandemic drove a decline in higher education enrollment – nearly 8% at Columbus State. Students also reported a wider variety of supports needed to remain in school – technology, food and housing were the top three requests in Spring/Summer 2020.

Recommendation #16

"In April 2020, a number of Franklin County organizations began participating in informal, virtual meetings to more closely examine the status of broadband challenges for area residents. Over time, this organic gathering has grown to include business, government, education, nonprofit and social sector representatives now known as the Franklin County Digital Equity Coalition. Thanks to the investment of The Columbus Foundation, an updated assessment of our region's broadband assets and opportunities provided the Coalition with a guide for the short-, medium-, and long-term possibilities for increasing broadband adoption. The shared digital equity challenges of 2020-21 created a determination to greatly reduce or eliminate the fixed broadband digital divide." – Franklin County Digital Equity Coalition Framework

The Recovery and Resiliency Committee recognizes the significant progress of the Franklin County Digital Equity Coalition and recommends strong alignment and coordination to create an affordable, reliable, high-speed internet option for low-income residents, promote adoption of internet services, improve digital equity skills and technical support, and expand device access in the city of Columbus' eight opportunity neighborhoods and the five Franklin County Poverty Blueprint areas.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
Franklin County Digital Equity Coalition, Franklin County, City of Columbus, Columbus City Schools, Whitehall City Schools, Reynoldsburg City Schools, Hamilton Local Schools, South-Western City Schools	Serve approximately 77,000 households with 50 Mbps service for no more than $15 per month Or Serve approximately 77,000 households with 50 Mbps service at no cost or very low cost	Columbus residents living in Franklinton, Hilltop, Linden, Near East, Northland, Near South, Southeast, and Northeast and Franklin County residents living in the five Franklin County Poverty Blueprint areas: Whitehall, Lincoln Village/Havenwood, Urbancrest, Northern Lights, Blacklick Estates, Brice/Livingston (Reynoldsburg), Obetz	This is a long-term infrastructure investment that will require the partner organizations to coordinate, organize and set the proper timeframe

Recommendation #17

The Recovery and Resiliency Readiness Committee recommends the city of Columbus and Franklin County create a grant program for eligible organizations working in the city of Columbus eight opportunity neighborhoods and five Franklin County Poverty Blueprint areas to increase adoption of broadband services, improve digital life skills, increase device access, and provide technical and digital navigation support and skills training.

Short-term goal: development and adoption of community-based digital navigators to assist residents in accessing broadband services, acquiring technology, and connecting to opportunities for digital skills learning and technology support.

The city can support (i) development of an inclusive, community-based model for digital navigation and tech support, (ii) a network of digital life skills providers (this could include support for the technology & data infrastructure that would link these providers, either by supporting the FCDEC and/or in connection with the hiring of a digital inclusion officer as noted below), and (iii) digital skills training, including for digital navigation as an on-ramp to IT career pathways

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
City of Columbus, Franklin County, Franklin County Digital Equity Coalition, Private sector philanthropic community, Columbus Metropolitan Libraries, Community-based nonprofits	Outcomes would focus on creation of a network of providers and trainings that are accessible to community-based partners and residents; it would include a network of digital navigators within CBOs that serve each of the designated neighborhoods	Columbus residents living in Franklinton, Hilltop, Linden, Near East, Northland, Near South, Southeast, and Northeast and Franklin County Residents living in the five Franklin County Poverty Blueprint areas: Whitehall, Lincoln Village/Havenwood, Urbancrest, Northern Lights, Blacklick Estates, Brice/Livingston (Reynoldsburg), Obetz	Grant program targeted to be operational by Fall 2021

Recommendation #18

Create a governance and oversight organization to manage the city, county and school district(s) investment in broadband infrastructure.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
City of Columbus, Franklin County, Franklin County Digital Equity Coalition, Franklin County, City of Columbus, Columbus City Schools, Whitehall City Schools, Reynoldsburg City Schools, Hamilton Local Schools, South-Western City Schools	To be determined		December 2021

Recommendation #19

The city of Columbus hires a Digital Inclusion program officer to increase the City of Columbus' Department of Technology organizational bandwidth and to ensure direction, coordination, implementation and execution of the Digital Inclusion recommendations.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
City of Columbus	To be determined	Franklin County Digital Equity Coalition and other partners working on digital equity	September 2023

Recommendation #20

Create a "hot spot" bank for short-term broadband accessibility for households within in the eight opportunity neighborhoods and five Franklin County Blueprint area while the "network" in recommendation #1 is being built and/or if the federal broadband benefit is no longer available.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
Franklin County Digital Equity Coalition, Franklin County, City of Columbus, Columbus City Schools, Whitehall City Schools, Reynoldsburg City Schools, Hamilton Local Schools, South-Western City Schools, Private philanthropic community, Columbus Metropolitan Libraries, Community-based nonprofits	To be determined	Near East, Northland, Near South, Southeast, and Northeast and Franklin County residents living in the five Franklin County Poverty Blueprint areas: Whitehall, Lincoln Village/Havenwood, Urbancrest, Northern Lights, Blacklick Estates, Brice/Livingston (Reynoldsburg), Obetz	June 2022

A survey of central Ohio residents by PACT (Partners Achieving Community Transformation) found that

11.5% of respondents do not have access to the internet.

19% of residents had internet access only through a device with a data plan, such as a smartphone or tablet.

Source: Broadband Task Force

Recommendation #21

Industry Aligned Short-Term Credential Ecosystem: Align area providers offering short-term, certificate programs for living-wage+ jobs (Per Scholas, CSCC, OhioMeansJobs Center, etc.) with area jobs data and employer need to create a regional, comprehensive, diverse talent pipeline across industry sectors aligned with One Columbus and JobsOhio data. Fund student certificate completion beyond traditional WIOA funding model (remove burden of paying for certificate from the individual). Provide funding to support skill development as an on-ramp for certification programs (e.g., job-related ESL, digital skills), case management to address barriers to student success, and employment coaching for job readiness skills. Prepare employers to receive employees from these programs by developing meaningful employment onboarding programs, including on-the-job learning and apprenticeships. Use Hospitality Diversity Apprenticeship program as an emerging best practice for long-term funding sustainability.
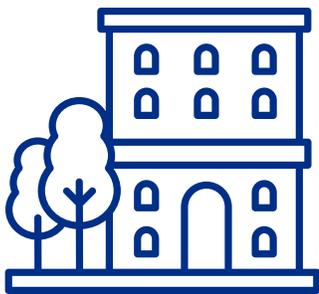
Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
City, County, State, employers • Short-term credential providers • Community-based nonprofits **Note:** It is recommended that a regional convener be determined.	Inventory current short-term credential production across targeted sectors by provider and develop targeted increase thresholds by sector and provider Success outcomes: achieving sector credential attainment and increased number of diverse employees in targeted sectors as a result of these programs	County residents	Start 2021 (ongoing) Assess every 6 months for 2021-2022 to ensure alignment with intended outcomes

Regional Youth/Young Adult Career Exploration and Work-Based Learning System:
Increase current system capacity by aligning existing programs funding additional career coaching/employment navigators for youth and young adults. Fund additional capacity to focus on the high school classes of 2020, 2021 and 2022 beyond IKIC/WDBCO program and CSCC's Forward Together. Fund capacity to work with area employers to scale successful earn and learn models. Reenvision the area's approach to youth summer jobs.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
City, County, WBDCO **In alignment with Development Sub-committee's youth recommendations	To be determined	Youth age 16-25	Recommended start date 2022

Wage necessary to afford a two-bedroom apartment is $19.08/hr.
A single parent needs $26/hr to cover expenses.

Source: Workforce Development Board of central Ohio, IMPACT Community Action, Columbus Works

The Recovery and Resiliency Committee recognizes the imminent need to remove childcare as a workforce barrier for women and families in Columbus and Franklin County. We recognize the need to strengthen the childcare sector as an employer of women and people of color and the need to invest and innovate around the childcare business model.

The recommendations of the Recovery and Resiliency Committee align with recommendations brought forward by the City of Columbus' Education working group, Action for Children and Future Ready Columbus.

Recommendation #23

Supporting the Child Care Workforce - Signing Bonuses
Cost: $362,472

Program description: This program will create a pool of funds to be used for signing bonuses incentivizing an estimated 500 individuals to join or re-join the child care workforce while also encouraging new workers to the industry. At time of hire with a licensed child care program in Franklin County, the new employee will certify they have not been employed by a licensed child care program in central Ohio for the past 30 days (exceptions will be made for employees looking for employment because of a center's recent closing), and they will receive a $100 signing bonus. After 90 days of successful employment, the employee will receive an additional $400 payment. Action for Children will develop an application form for new employee and employer to complete, maintain an online application portal, and process payments to individual new employees, including reimbursement for background-check processing. These funds will be available until exhausted.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
Action for Children	500 new childcare employees	Prospective childcare workforce	Short to immediate, 1 year estimate

IN PROGRESS:
$500,000 to fund one-time $1,000 signing bonuses was announced Sept. 20, 2021, as part of the city's childcare initiatives.

Support the Child Care Workforce – Retention Bonuses
Cost: $2,464,688

Program description: Because the issues of staffing are so great, it is important that existing early childhood educators are encouraged to continue working in the field. Action for Children will use this pool of money to distribute $250 retention bonuses to approximately 8,900 individuals working in a licensed child care program in Franklin County, using criteria developed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
Action for Children, OCCRRA	8,900 childcare employees	Current childcare workforce	Short to immediate timeframe, 1 year estimate

Support the Child Care Workforce – Credentialing
Cost: $807,747

Year 1
$261,331

Year 2
$269,171

Year 3
$277,246

Program description: Child care teacher pay is low, averaging just $10.65 per hour in Ohio, which creates a financial barrier for obtaining professional credentials increasingly expected by parent-consumers and by public and private funders, many of which use Ohio's tiered quality rating and improvement system, Step Up To Quality, as a benchmark for funding. To address this barrier to the workforce, and to increase the likelihood that programs are able to meet rising expectations and thus maximize their revenue, a credentialing fund to provide professionals the opportunity to obtain the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential will be developed and administered. The CDA Credentialing Program is administered nationally by the Council for Professional Recognition. It is available for both center-based and family child care providers. This funding will allow for up to an estimated 180 professionals to receive financial support for training from a recognized CDA Council Gold Standard™ credential program.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
Action for Children, Columbus State, Childcare providers w/CDA programs	180 professionals prepared for the CDA	Childcare workforce	Medium, over 3 years

Recommendation #26

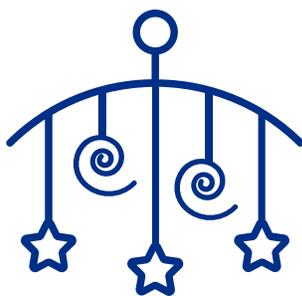**Supporting the Child Care Workforce – Worthy Work PR Campaign**

Program description: Working with a reputable local firm, Action for Children will develop a strategic marketing and communications campaign to promote child care employment opportunities in central Ohio. The campaign will focus on how to recognize and reward early childhood educators promoting respect of their critical role in education and the economy. This campaign will also encourage individuals to enter this vitally important field as early educators, helping to address the current staffing crisis faced by child care providers.

Early funding will be used to begin to develop strategy and creative assets. This funding will be used for the finalization of creative assets and campaign rollout with a schedule by media channel, utilizing a mix of digital, social, and radio. Media buys will be made through November 2021.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
Action for Children, Public Relations Firm to be selected	500-1,000 childcare employees recruited	Prospective childcare workforce	1-year campaign

IN PROGRESS:
$500,000 allocated to support a marketing campaign to assist in recruiting efforts was announced Sept. 20, 2021, as part of the city's childcare initiatives.

The childcare workforce faced increasing instability – wages averaged $10.67/hour and fewer than 15% had any benefits through their employer.

The turnover rate among early childhood educators was 30%.

Source: Action for Children

Recommendation #27

Strengthening Programs – Incentive Awards
Cost: $3,806,475 over three years

Year 1
$1,058,888

Year 2
$1,288,616

Year 3
$1,458,972

Program description: This program will create a pool of funds to provide awards to incentive programs to encourage growth and improve quality. All incentive award categories will have specific funding available for licensed child care programs in Franklin County, center- and home-based.

In order to help providers stabilize after the COVID-19 pandemic, incentive grants will be available for opening or expansion. Awards will range from $1,000 to $15,000 to an estimated 90-100 programs each year.

The second category of incentive grants will encourage providers to enter into a Publicly Funded Child Care (PFCC) Agreement or increase their number of PFCC slots. PFCC agreements are critical for ensuring children in low-income families have access to a quality early childhood education. Awards of $1,000 will be made to an estimated 60 programs each year.

The final category of incentive awards will encourage providers to achieve success with Step Up To Quality (STUQ) rating. SUTQ is Ohio's five-star Quality Rating & Improvement System for child care and early education programs. This program does require child care providers to make significant investments in order to achieve stars and is not fully funded. Incentive awards will be provided to aid in offsetting those costs. Awards ranging between $500 and $5,000 will be made for renewing or increasing SUTQ ratings to between 380 and 500 programs annually.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
Action for Children Columbus State Community College	380-500 programs	Childcare centers and home-based childcare programs	3-year initiative

Recommendation #28

Strengthening Programs – Staffed Family Child Care Network: The Village
Cost: $693,715 over three years

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
$158,675	$217,360	$317,680

Program description: Family child care (FCC) providers are a critical part of the child care infrastructure, providing care over nontraditional hours, in areas where center care may not be available, and often feel more comfortable to many new American, non-native speaking families. There are 220 FCC providers in Franklin County, and many have limited experience as business owners, limited training on how to support child development, and are often isolated from other professionals in the field. Now more than ever, home-based providers are struggling financially.

A Staffed Family Child Care Network (SFCCN) is a community-based program with paid staff who provide an array of services to FCC providers. Services can be focused on operations such as business and administrative supports and improved quality and outcomes for children. Research suggests that SFCCNs help support quality child care and child outcomes.

The Village will provide training/coaching delivered both in group settings (e.g., a training on learning environments) and individually (e.g., a consultation on a provider's space). Trainings can be offered at a centralized "hub," on-site in providers' homes, or online.

Through this program, each FFC will receive (1) four on-site quality coaching sessions per year (in addition to the on-site visits provided by Action For Children Child and Adult Care Food Program and Step Up To Quality programs); (2) up to $300 of education materials such as books, art supplies, games, and other materials, collaboratively selected by provider and coach; (3) 20 hours of professional training geared to FCC providers; and (4) three network meetings per year for information sharing, assessing needs, and community building.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
Action for Children Columbus State Community College	To be determined	120 in-home family childcare programs	3-year initiative

Strengthening Programs – Centralized Recruiting
Cost: $2,170,940 over three years

Year 1	**Year 2**	**Year 3**
$702,625	$716,609	$731,012

Program description: Recruiting and preparing new employees is time consuming and expensive, presenting an issue for child care providers. Small business owners, regardless of industry, have been noting the increased time and costs associated with hiring. These issues are critical for child care providers and limit their ability to keep classrooms open, expand capacity, and thus earn the revenue to stay open. By creating a comprehensive shared service offering that addresses child care provider recruitment needs, child care providers will be able to focus time and budget toward increasing care and stabilizing operations.

This shared service will allow for both child care providers and educators to connect, providing a centralized application location for potential employees. Providers will be able to view quality applicants, choosing which to interview. All applicants vetted through the shared service will be "work ready" with completed background and credentialing checks; a completed prescreen survey; and with completed ODJFS Orientation, Child Abuse, and Basic Licensing training. Applicants will be guided in scheduling physicals and vaccinations.

In addition, child care providers state that a substitute educator pool is necessary for their successful operations. The centralized recruitment effort will develop a shared pool of substitute educators, benefitting the centers, the teachers, and the families who rely on these providers. This funding will subsidize up to 400 memberships in the substitute pool and, with fees paid, for as many as 10 placements. Wages and other compensation paid to the substitute are not included.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
Action for Children Columbus State Community College	To be determined	Childcare employers (up to 400)	3-year initiative

Recommendation #30

Strengthening Programs – Child Care Administrator Empowerment Program (CAEP)
Cost: $1,376,320 over three years

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
$373,010	$460,680	$542,630

Program description: While child care providers may have a background in early child education, they typically do not have formal knowledge and skills in operating a business. This lack of business acumen means many providers struggle to create and manage a budget, hire and retain staff, manage time and spaces, and carry out other foundational tasks effectively and efficiently. Action for Children data shows organizational abilities, time poverty and finances to be significant barriers to central Ohio providers being able to keep their doors open, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Simultaneously, all providers serving Publicly Funded Child Care families are expected to increase their Step Up To Quality (SUTQ) star rating by 2025. Providers who are struggling to stay open are not well situated to improve the quality of care they are providing to children.

CAEP will be a three-tiered system of trainings, small group courses and individualized coaching tailored specifically for child care providers. Areas of focus will include:

- Finance (e.g., creating a budget, collecting tuition/fees, taxes)

- Technology (e.g., cybersecurity, websites)

- Organization and Policies (e.g., emergency preparedness, managing change)

- Staff (e.g., hiring, conflict management)

- Marketing (e.g., using social media, building a brand)

- Law (e.g., liability, contracts)

To meet providers where they are, all areas of focus will be addressed in each of the three tiers with increasing depth. This will enable providers both with more and less time/need to be served appropriately. Training and coaching will be provided by both staff and consultants, and by both child care and education professionals and subject area experts. In addition to services, we will provide organizational tools, tablets, and software to providers relevant to their participation.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
Columbus State Community College and Action for Children in partnership with other business organizations	To be determined	300 childcare employers	3-year initiative

Recommendation #31

Access to Child Care – Affordability Scholarships
Cost: $2,574,000

Program description: Ohio has one of the lowest income eligibility limits for subsidized child care in the nation, and many families who are over income struggle to afford access to quality child care. The program will create a pool of funds to provide scholarships to an estimated 250 children. Recognizing that providers have close relationships with families, this scholarship program will rely on child care programs to identify families needing assistance and to jointly submit an application using Action for Children's online portal. The application will include parent income information, program tuition information, and attestations necessary for program implementation. Scholarship funds will be paid monthly to the provider by AFC. The amount of scholarships will vary by tuition and by family income level (below 200% FPL, at or above 200% FPL).

The pandemic has revealed underlying realities: Child care is essential, and the child care sector is strained. Child care is not just a business. It's vital infrastructure like roads and schools. It requires additional support so families and businesses can count on child care the same way they count on other infrastructure.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
Action for Children	250 children gain access to childcare	Families in the City of Columbus/Franklin County who currently do not have access to childcare	1 year with the potential to be ongoing

IN PROGRESS:
As part of the childcare initiatives announced on Sept. 20, 2021, the City is devoting $2.5 million for 250 scholarships of up to $10,000 for low-income families earning too much to qualify for subsidies.

Recommendation #32

Explore solutions to transform the childcare business model with a specific emphasis on employee wages and employee insurance benefits.

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
The City of Columbus, Franklin County, Future Ready Columbus, Action for Children, Rise Together Innovation Center, Smart Columbus, and the business community	To be determined	Childcare centers and home-based childcare programs	September 2021

Recommendation #33

The City and County should continue to advocate at the state level to increase the publicly funded childcare threshold from current levels to 150% to 200% of the federal poverty level

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Target Audience	Timeframe
City of Columbus, Franklin County, relevant childcare community partners	Increased threshold	State government	Ongoing

Development: Investing in Long-Term Growth

- People/Workforce

- Economic Development

- Community Development

Development Committee

Chair: Kenny McDonald
One Columbus

Dr. Seleshi Asfaw
Ethiopian Tewahado
Services

Suzan Bradford
Lincoln Theater

Jean Carter-Ryan
Columbus Franklin County
Finance Authority

Mark Fluharty
Central Ohio Labor
Council, AFL-CIO

Stephanie Hightower
Columbus Urban League

Tom Katzenmoyer
GCAC

Candace Klepacz
Pepper Construction

Denise Robinson
Alvis

Keith Steven
PSI

Nana Watson
NAACP

Sue Zazon
Huntington

The Development Committee focused on areas that support the ongoing growth of the economic base and revenue generation ideas. Priority topics included small business, development, travel and tourism, cultural institutions, and venture capital.

Before the pandemic, Columbus was on track to achieve record pace in industrial construction and population growth. In Q3 2020 for example, more than 5.1 million square feet of industrial space was completed. Key industries, including e-commerce, biohealth, electric vehicles, and home and consumer goods, have weathered the pandemic better than many. However, for the Columbus region to emerge from the pandemic in an equally strong or stronger position, a high-level view that accounts for the tight integration of many issues is needed.

During the pandemic, the workforce was challenged when workers faced choosing between sustaining employment, childcare and remote education, and precautions to avoid infection. This challenge was felt by small business owners, developers and larger businesses. A stable and growing workforce in the future depends on aligning the skills match of available jobs and available workers, and doing the same for small businesses and entrepreneurs. The pandemic made it clear that capital and coaching resources need to be more targeted toward underserved neighborhoods, as well female and people of color business owners.

Community development, including quality of life growth in culture, tourism and similar areas, is reliant upon a workforce that has enough disposable income to support growing and thriving institutions. The committee paid special attention to making these areas more equitable and accessible to residents.

Recommendation #34

Principle: Continue to make the City of Columbus a place in which all citizens, existing and new, are compelled to both live and work.

- Double youth employment in the next five years

    - Inventory, assess and invest appropriately in existing youth employment programs

    - Consider the creation of private industry councils to help expose youth work, employment

- Remove barriers for employment and job training for citizens

    - Align transportation, education and childcare facilities to gain synergies and scale (Columbus State, COTA, non-profit workforce partners and daycare facilities)

    - Provide training and retraining stipends/vouchers to help remove financial barriers for minorities and working parents (heads of household)

- The future of work requires that we compete for job creation and residents: Increase residency in the City of Columbus; partner with housing, multi-family housing developers and employers to help create more density and scale in the center of the city/metro area to drive synergies

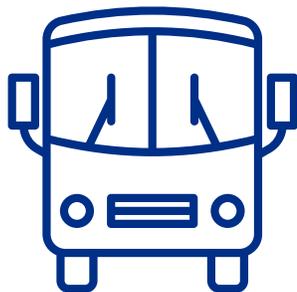| Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Timeframe
City, county, state and local workforce system, private employers, colleges and universities	To be developed. Indicators should include: • Labor participation • Net growth of jobs and residents • Increased city income tax • Increased county levy funds	25% in the next 10 years (2022-2032)

Recommendation #35

- Create tools to invest directly in Black-owned businesses (CDFI) to create wealth and additional jobs

- Provide special incentives for minority businesses

- Develop a comprehensive, sufficiently-resourced creative industries strategy and a corresponding fund to accelerate growth in the areas of fashion, film, media, music and the arts, including public art.

- Develop financial vehicles to accelerate environmental/green investment within the City

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Timeframe
City, county, chambers of commerce, non-profit organizations, private sector businesses	To be determined	2022-2030

1 in 5 Black commuters in central Ohio do not own a car, and job centers are increasingly located outside the public transit network.
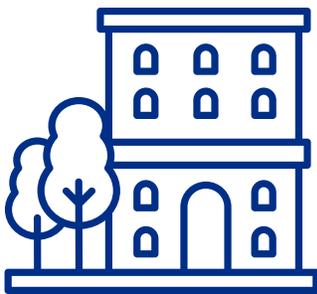
Central Ohio households spend **28% or more of their income on transportation costs,** higher than the national average.

Source: COTA

Recommendation #36

- Develop comprehensive plans equal to One Linden plan for all targeted neighborhoods

- Invest in under-utilized commercial districts (housing and commercial development)

- Reimagine significant place making investments for recreation and tourism

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Timeframe
City, county, neighborhood leaders, The Ohio State University, business and philanthropic community City, county, Experience Columbus, arts and cultural sector, state of Ohio and private sector	To be determined	2023-2031

54,000 low- and moderate-income households in Franklin County
paid more than half their income to housing costs.

Source: Affordable Housing Alliance of central Ohio

Recommendation #37

- Develop resources to invest in infrastructure to increase economic development and inclusion

  - CMH facilities (capability to house more flights and international air service)

  - Water/Wastewater infrastructure to meet future population demand and upgrade outdated infrastructure

  - Increase SMART infrastructure to reduce carbon footprint as we grow

  - Broadband access/affordability

- Invest in rapid transit corridors and full-service transit and service hubs to serve employment centers and neighborhoods

Potential Partners	Measurable Outcomes	Timeframe
City, county, state of Ohio, federal government, business community, COTA	To be determined	2023-2031

1 in 3 households in Franklin County is headed by a woman, and the **poverty rate for women-headed households with children is double that of all other households.**

Source: Workforce Development Board of central Ohio, IMPACT Community Action, Columbus Works