

Expanding Access to High-Quality Child Care in Franklin County, OH

American Rescue Plan Community Profile

June 2022 | Early Childhood



American Rescue Plan Funding

Total State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds in Franklin County: \$256 million

Amount of American Rescue Plan Funds Featured in This Profile: \$22.5 million

- State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds: Approximately \$22 million¹—\$11.4 million for family scholarships and \$10.9 million for incentive awards for providers
- Emergency Rental Assistance Program Funds: \$500,000

Project Summary

The Franklin County Board of Commissioners has committed to aiding early childhood providers and families with young children by making a historic investment of approximately \$23 million in the [Franklin County RISE initiative](#).² This “whole system approach” is funded by Franklin County and the City of Columbus, and is administered by Action for Children. [Action for Children](#) is a local child care resource and referral agency that provides services to families throughout central Ohio. Statements released by the Commissioners indicate the funds will be allocated for the following purposes:

- early learning scholarships up to \$10,000 for families with incomes between 142% to 300% of the federal poverty line;
- incentive payments for licensed child care centers and family child care homes; and
- rental support for child care workers.³

This investment comes at a critical time for many families who were left without access to high-quality

care during the COVID-19 crisis. Franklin County RISE will benefit those who do not qualify for publicly funded child care but are otherwise unable to afford care. This investment is also highly beneficial for educators and providers. One in six child care centers were forced to close their doors during the pandemic.⁴ Incentives built into this initiative will provide essential financial assistance to remaining providers.

Age Group Served

Early childhood

Funding Streams Used

- Local Fiscal Recovery Funds
- Emergency Rental Assistance Program Funds

Key Partners

- Franklin County
- City of Columbus
- Action for Children

Local Perspective

Unique Challenges

Franklin County staff members praised their commissioners for their efforts in prioritizing child care investments at the local level and also expressed a desire for more financial support from the state of Ohio to expand their work. Bart Logan, deputy director of communications at Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services, notes that more county-state collaboration is needed to expand access to child care resources and services; however, the state needs to provide more resources.⁵

Ensuring Accountability

Action for Children is considered the best entity to administer funds and, ultimately, the county is committed to ensuring that the organization disburses dollars in an equitable and compliant manner. The current contract between the county and Action for Children is valid for one year with the option to renew for a second year so long as the program runs smoothly.⁶ Franklin County and Action for Children staff currently meet weekly to discuss RISE Initiative's pain points and determine plans of action to resolve them.⁷ This is one way stakeholders can maintain effective implementation.

Jennifer Walton, communications consultant with the RISE Initiative, further highlights the program's commitment to transparency with the general public. Her team is responsible for determining the best strategy for Franklin County's Board of Commissioners to communicate scholarship and incentive rewards to its audience of families and providers, respectively.⁸

Lessons Learned

Franklin County staff emphasize the importance of community input in driving American Rescue Plan allocation decisions. Moriah Lieberman, policy director for Commissioner Erica Crawley at Franklin County Board of Commissioners, specifically notes that the county established a child care support team to develop recommendations for investments, which ultimately became the basis for the RISE Initiative.⁹ In a conversation about equity, Lieberman explains that maintaining an equity lens is critical when approaching this work as it ensures children across a wide range of providers will be served. Logan and Walton add that data monitoring and evaluation is an important piece to the equity discussion. Data reveals the extent to which families and providers are being served and whether the program meets the outcomes it was developed to achieve.

Geographic Region

Midwestern United States

Community Size

Total Population (2020): 1.3 million¹⁰

Racial Demographics¹¹

- White 66.8%
- Black or African American 23.8%
- American Indian and Alaska Native 0.3%
- Asian 5.7%
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander 0.1%
- Two or More Races 3.3%
- Hispanic or Latino 5.8%
- White alone, not Hispanic or Latino 62.1%

Socioeconomic Status

- Median household income (2019): \$62,352¹²
- Children living in poverty (2020): 20.3%¹³

Acknowledgment

Thank you to Bart Logan, deputy director of communications at Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services; Jennifer Walton, communications consultant with the RISE Initiative; and Moriah Lieberman, policy director for Commissioner Erica Crawley at Franklin County Board of Commissioners, for contributions to this community profile.

To view additional resources and find American Rescue Plan allocations for other communities, visit childrensfundingproject.org/american-rescue-plan.

Endnotes

- ¹ Tyler Lowery and Jodi Andes, “Commissioners Announce Major New Child Care Initiative” Franklin County Board of Commissioners, news release, March 24, 2022, <https://commissioners.franklincountyohio.gov/news/2022/commissioners-announce-major-new-child-care-initia>.
- ² Ibid.
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ Bart Logan, deputy director of communications, Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services, personal communication, April 29, 2022.
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ Jennifer Walton, communications consultant, RISE Initiative, personal communication, April 29, 2022.
- ⁹ Moriah Lieberman, policy director for Commissioner Erica Crawley at Franklin County Board of Commissioners, personal communication, April 29, 2022.
- ¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, “Quick Facts,” Franklin County, OH, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/franklin-countyohio/POP060210>.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ U.S. Census Bureau, “Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates,” Franklin County, Ohio, https://www.census.gov/data-tools/demo/saipe/#/?map_geoSelector=u18_c&s_measures=u18_snc&s_year=2020&s_state=39&s_county=39049.

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