

# STATE DESIGNATED ANTI-POVERTY AGENCY STEPS INTO 2021 WITH A NEW NAME

CLEVELAND, OHIO, UNITED STATES, January 27, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Council for Economic Opportunities in Greater Cleveland (CEOGC) is now Step Forward. The State's designated anti-poverty agency for Cuyahoga County formally changed its name to better represent the organization and the people it serves today and in the future.



"For decades, we quietly, steadfastly opened our doors to help low-income individuals and families in Cuyahoga County take steps toward brighter futures," said Dr. Jacklyn A. Chisholm, Step Forward President and CEO. "Throughout our 55-year history, we continuously evolved to meet people's changing needs as the barriers and challenges of poverty changed. Our new name reflects the next step forward for the agency to continue as a vital resource to Cuyahoga County and the low-income residents who call it home," she added.

Step Forward helps people find hope, believe in their future and take steps to make it a reality. With a \$40 million operating budget, it is tasked and trusted to lead the fight on the ground against poverty in the community by helping the people it serves access resources and support to address immediate needs and build long-term skills and opportunities to transform their lives. It has been one of the area's leading recipients of CARES funding to fight the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on low-income residents.

"Poverty is complex. It can be hard to make ends meet and difficult to ask for help or know where to start," Chisholm said, adding "Step Forward counselors, coaches and teachers work with each individual or family to sort through the chaos and help them restore hope in their future."

Step Forward is building a stronger community one person, one family, one step at a time in three ways:

- Temporary assistance to deal with immediate distress , such as energy assistance to ensure

people are warm in the winter and cool in the summer

- Early childhood education that ensures every child has the opportunity to begin an education right, is prepared to enter kindergarten and develops a love of learning from the start
- Adult skills training that leads to better jobs and more stable families through personal and professional development, along with career planning and job training

## Organization Joins People in Need in Looking Ahead

Chisholm says the new name, Step Forward, symbolizes the journey of the people the agency serves, as well as the organization's journey to help meet their needs. Step Forward is a vital community resource, but also an advocate and guide for low-income individuals and families during times of need.

Step Forward Board Chair, Kathryn Hall, indicated the milestone represents more than just a name change. "This is the culmination of a multi-year, strategic look within the organization. We also explored the evolving nature of poverty, the needs of the people we serve and established goals and a plan to achieve them," she said.

Going forward, Step Forward will take more of a leadership role in the community. The agency intends to use its unique, holistic, on-the-ground vantage point to raise awareness of the urgency of poverty, the services it provides and the impact it has on the children, adults and families it serves. Greater awareness, understanding and leadership mean Step Forward can more fervently fight to find, address and eliminate the causes of poverty in the community.

"Everyone starts from a unique place, and with each step has the opportunity to move forward and upward toward an improved unique place. That requires courage and commitment," Chisholm said. "To be most effective, we as an organization also must take brave and bold steps forward. Now, our name announces our intent and our continued promise to help people find their best path to lead toward a stable future, toward hope and toward their dreams," she added.

For more information on Step Forward programs and services, visit the agency's new website at [www.StepForwardToday.org](http://www.StepForwardToday.org). It can be found on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @stepfwrtdtoday.

Step Forward helps people find hope, believe in their future and take steps to make it a reality. As the State's designated anti-poverty agency for Cuyahoga County, Step Forward is tasked and trusted to lead the fight on the ground against poverty in our community. The nonprofit organization helps low-income individuals and families address immediate needs and build long-term skills to transform their lives through early childhood education programs, adult skills training and other support. Programs include Early Head Start (birth to three), Head Start (three-five years of age); personal development programs to enhance life skills, manage anger or get on track with personal goals; career planning and job training to enable people to learn or

enhance skills, earn certifications or improve readiness to pursue and win better job opportunities. Step Forward also delivers the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). For more information, visit [stepforwardtoday.org](http://stepforwardtoday.org).

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Step Forward

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