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22

# GEO IMPACT REPORT



Office of  
**Community Empowerment and Opportunity**  
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Us	02
Message from Executive Director	03
Overview of Programs and Investments	06
Income Supports	07
Housing Security	10
Workforce Development	11
Financial Inclusion	16
Place-Based Initiatives	19
COVID-19 Response	21
Community Engagement	24
Advocacy	26
Budget	27
Looking Ahead	28

# ABOUT US

The Office of Community Empowerment and Opportunity (CEO) provides leadership on issues of economic justice to advance racial equity and inclusive growth so that all Philadelphians might share in the city's prosperous future.

## OUR FOUR KEY ROLES



**COMMUNITY ACTION.** CEO serves as the Community Action Agency (CAA) for the city and county of Philadelphia. As a CAA, CEO administers Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds in support of the agency's mission to promote economic mobility for Philadelphia residents by advancing racial equity and economic inclusion. The Community Action Program was created by the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act as a means to fight against poverty. Its mission is to help families and individuals with low incomes gain self-sufficiency and mobility out of poverty. At CEO, we go beyond addressing the symptoms of poverty by advocating for more just and fair policies.

**PUBLIC SERVICE.** In addition to serving as the city's CAA, CEO is a public agency, serving as part of the City of Philadelphia's Health and Human Services (HHS) Cabinet. We work in collaboration and partnership with other HHS departments, including the Office of Homeless Services, the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services, the Department of Public Health, the Mayor's Commission on Aging, and the Office of Domestic Violence Strategies. CEO also serves in leadership roles addressing structural racism within the city's neighborhoods and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION.** Our dual roles in community action and public service guide our activities, programs, and investments. CEO has four key roles that serve as the pillars of our strategic framework. They define how CEO functions on a day-to-day basis and provide the underlying structure that guides how CEO organizes itself as well as how it allocates personnel and investment dollars.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a driving force behind President Lyndon B. Johnson's Economic Opportunity Act that created the Community Action Program.



# MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**Poverty is a policy choice.** That was never more evident than last fall when the Census Bureau released data showing that child poverty had decreased by a whopping 46 percent in the U.S. in 2021. The decrease resulted from federal legislation that expanded the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit.

Those interventions at the national level worked, giving families in Philadelphia and across the nation access to the resources they needed for essentials like food and shelter, which reduced stress and improved mental health for parents and children. CEO was proud to lead the charge locally in making sure households received those credits. Yet, the wealthiest nation in the world allowed those measures to expire, thrusting many families back into a perpetual struggle. This underscores the importance of federal policy in addressing generational poverty.

The fact that roughly 1 in 4 Philadelphians still don't have what they need to thrive should upset all of us. Poverty is a systemic failure, not an individual one. And those policy choices made at all levels of government reverberate through our schools, our neighborhoods, our strained health systems, our crowded prisons, and our families. It's felt everywhere, but especially in communities of color.

These challenges make it all the more important that CEO be a leader in advocating for policy change by developing data-driven strategies, supporting and leading programs, and convening stakeholders in the region to advance this work. Achieving our mission requires holistic approaches to serving our communities and the willpower to address racial inequities that exist in our city. It means removing structural barriers from households to meet their basic needs, creating pathways to mobility by increasing access to economic opportunities, and fostering prosperity through the building of generational wealth.

In this report, you will see how CEO is investing in solutions that support residents in achieving stability, mobility, and prosperity:

- Our income support work put more than **\$31 million** directly back into the pockets of residents;
- Our investment of **\$7.5 million** in CARES Act funding leveraged community-driven solutions to support equitable recovery;
- Our benefit assistance work translated to at least **\$3.6 million** in public benefits;
- And our financial counseling removed barriers for more than **150 individuals** who were formerly incarcerated to obtain more secure housing.

This report shows how we are fulfilling our mission, but we know that significant challenges lie ahead. Despite positive signs of recovery in 2022, Philadelphia's unemployment rate still lags behind the national figure. Unjust systems, raging inflation, and the looming threat of another recession also pose roadblocks on the path to prosperity for too many Philadelphians. Nonetheless, we are confident that many of the lessons learned from these last few years will allow us to remove these roadblocks.

As we look ahead to 2023 and beyond, we are excited about our advocacy, continuing to cultivate innovation, and scaling up those investments that have shown success in advancing racial equity and economic mobility. We invite you to join us in our work toward a more equitable city for all by connecting with us on social media, signing up for our email updates, or joining us at one of our upcoming events.

**Mitch Little**  
CEO Executive Director





# OUR PROGRAMS AND INVESTMENTS

In Philadelphia and across the country, race too often determines a person's destiny. Decades of under-investment in public education, unfair wages, high rates of criminal justice involvement, deindustrialization, discriminatory lending and unfair housing policies still resound across the city. CEO continues to build on its existing grants investment portfolio and fund programs that have been proven to promote economic mobility among people living in poverty in the areas of income support, housing security, employment services, financial inclusion, and place-based initiatives.

## ICON GUIDE

These icons appear throughout the report to indicate the goal(s) of each investment:



### STABILITY

Programs that remove barriers for residents to meet their basic needs.



### MOBILITY

Programs that remove barriers to advance residents toward greater economic autonomy.



### PROSPERITY

Programs that remove barriers for residents to achieve their personal and financial goals and building wealth.





# INCOME SUPPORTS

Removing barriers to receiving vital assistance and changing the narrative about those receiving assistance can reduce poverty and inequity. CEO invests in the following solutions to improve the social safety net for residents who are unemployed, underemployed, or retired to help them achieve stability.

## BENEPHILLY

Managed by CEO, the BenePhilly program offers free one-on-one enrollment support to help residents apply for more than a dozen public benefits. Residents can apply by calling a hotline operated by Benefits Data Trust or visiting a BenePhilly Center operated by five community-based organizations.

## MOBILE UNIT

CEO operates a mobile Benefits Access Unit, made up of CEO staff members who are deployed to community events and high-needs areas throughout the city to screen residents for benefits and connect them to resources.

## BENEFITS REPRESENTATION

CEO provides funding to Community Legal Services (CLS) to offer legal assistance to individuals who are denied benefits. CLS also hosted a utility clinic to help residents resolve issues.

**4.5K**  
Completed applications for public benefits through BenePhilly

**\$3.6M**  
Cumulative benefits from 2,096 confirmed enrollments for BenePhilly clients

**254**  
Estimated number of events attended by the Benefit Access Unit, representing more than 1,000 interactions

**700**  
Prepared meals distributed to residents during the winter holidays organized by the Benefits Access Unit

**25**  
CLS clients achieved successful outcomes in their appeals for public benefits

# INCOME SUPPORTS

Recent research suggests that income from the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit leads to benefits at virtually every stage of life, including improved school performance, higher college enrollment, and increased work effort and earnings in adulthood.

## FREE TAX PREPARATION

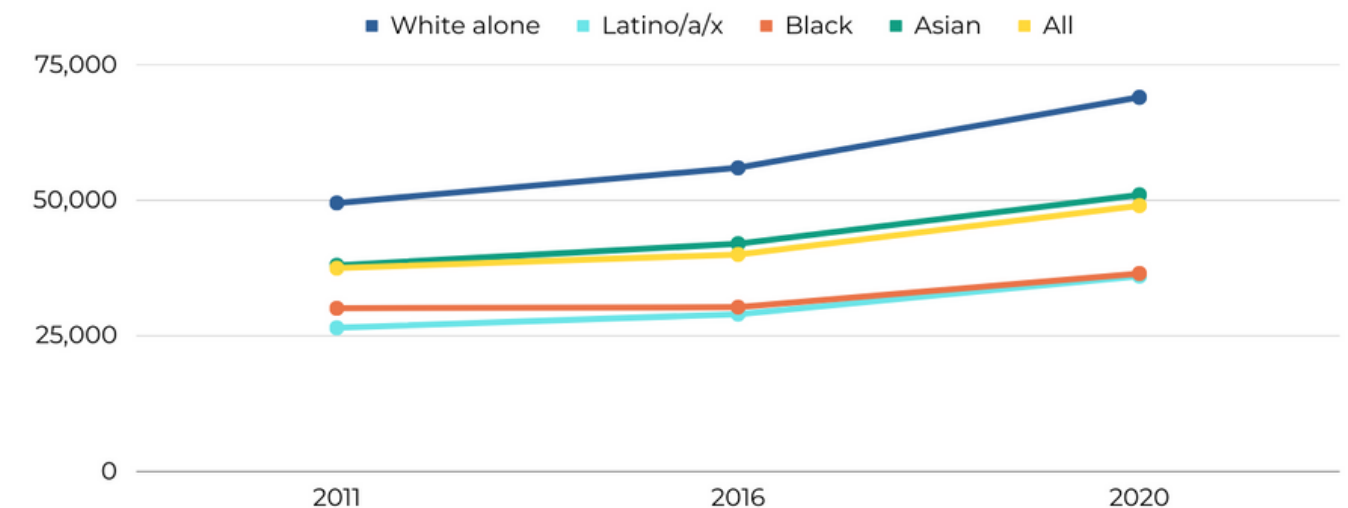
CEO funds Campaign for Working Families (CWF) and the Latino Economic Development Collective (LEDC) to provide free tax preparation, helping households access key benefits such as the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit. LEDC is led by Ceiba and includes HACE, Congreso, and Esperanza.

**12.5K**  
Tax returns filed by CWF and LEDC

**\$31.2M**  
in income tax refunds put back in the pockets of Philadelphia households

## MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY RACE/ETHNICITY IN PHILADELPHIA

The racial wealth gap is persistent in Philadelphia. In 2020, Black households made 75% of the median income, and Latino/a/x households made 73%, while white households made 140%.



Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates



# CLIENT STORY

Wayne Pressley, 71, called the BenePhilly Center staffed by Utility Emergency Services Fund in October 2022. Wayne is among the nearly 5 million older adults aged 65+ living in poverty nationwide.

## THE CHALLENGES

Wayne is on a fixed income and needed assistance to reduce his expenses or increase his income. Administrative burdens that make it difficult for people to renew their benefits are among the many structural barriers that older adults like Wayne face.

## THE OUTCOMES

Benefits Counselor Rahsheda Lockett took Wayne through an intake and provided him with a benefits screening that showed that he was likely eligible for SNAP. He received assistance with the SNAP application and was approved in November to receive an estimated amount of \$194 per month.

By receiving SNAP, Wayne was able to get help buying groceries and put more money toward his utility costs.

“He was happy to know that he got approved and surprised at the fact that he would probably get extra food stamps... It's always a good feeling to help someone with their basic needs.”

Rahsheda Lockett  
UESF Benefits Counselor 



# HOUSING SECURITY

People of color are disproportionately caught in what the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness has termed a “cycle of homelessness and incarceration.” CEO works to remove barriers to secure housing, which is critical to individuals being able to maintain a job, further their education, and achieve stability.

## RENTAL ASSISTANCE

CEO provides funding to the Office of Homeless Services (OHS) to offer financial assistance to those facing homelessness.

## REENTRY SUPPORT

Created by CEO, the Financial Empowerment Center (FEC) Reentry Housing Program offers one-on-one financial and housing counseling to formerly incarcerated individuals paired with a \$1,000 microgrant that can be used to aid in the client’s financial goals. Counseling is provided by Clarifi with funding from CEO and JPMorgan Chase. OHS also provides rental assistance for up to 6 months to qualified applicants.

## LEAD REMEDIATION

CEO provided funding to the Department of Public Health’s Lead and Healthy Homes Program to give support to families with children under age six who test positive for elevated blood lead levels to help them stay in their homes.

557

Households that received rental assistance to remain in their homes or relocate to suitable housing

\$1.4M

Distributed to individuals for rental assistance, excluding CARES funding

\$152K

Microgrants distributed to 152 clients in the Reentry Housing Program

307

Households received lead remediation and/or virtual lead poisoning prevention education



# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Barriers to employment disproportionately impact women of color, people who experience housing instability, and people who were formerly incarcerated. CEO works to combat these issues by investing in employment services for historically marginalized individuals who face the most significant barriers.

## FIRST STEP STAFFING

CEO provides funding to First Step Staffing, a non-profit, light-industrial alternative staffing agency, which offers employment and training opportunities for individuals transitioning out of homelessness.

## JEVS WORK READY

CEO provides funding to JEVS Human Services to administer the Work Ready program. Work Ready is an intensive case management services program for families receiving temporary assistance for needy families (TANF) to address barriers to employment. Clients are referred by the County Assistance Office.

## CENTER FOR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

CEO provides funding to the Center for Employment Opportunities, or CEO Works, which offers comprehensive workforce training services exclusively to individuals with recent criminal convictions.

“  
Everyone, regardless of background or personal circumstance, should have access to economic opportunity.  
- First Step Staffing  
”

# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

4.5K

Total clients enrolled in the three employment services programs

250

Participants enrolled in Work Ready secured employment

100%

of First Step Staffing clients received transportation to work sites, saving them time and money

58%

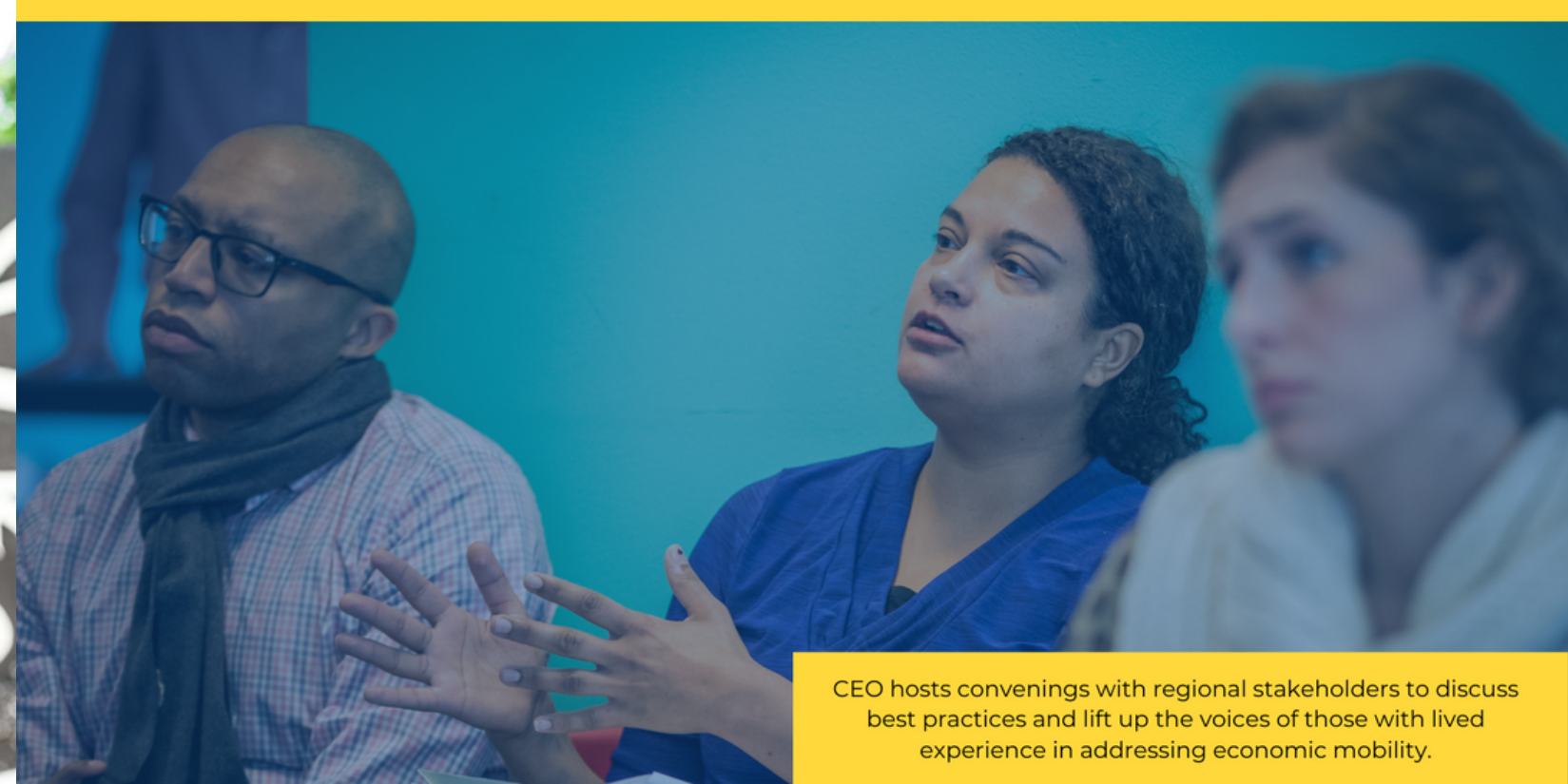
of CEO Works clients that were placed were retained for at least 180 days

42%

of CEO Works clients were placed in unsubsidized employment

80%

of participants enrolled in Work Ready had a one-on-one consultation with a licensed counselor or social worker



CEO hosts convenings with regional stakeholders to discuss best practices and lift up the voices of those with lived experience in addressing economic mobility.



# CLIENT STORY

Tina Miles, 28, went to the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO Works) in February 2022 after being referred by her parole officer. While employment is key to reintegration, those with justice involvement experience higher unemployment and lower wages than their peers without justice involvement.

## THE CHALLENGES

When Tina came to CEO Works, she was living with her grandmother and had recently been laid off. Like many other people who were formerly incarcerated, Tina faced huge obstacles to finding stable employment. She had made multiple attempts to secure employment but had been rejected due to her criminal background. In one instance, the employer did a background check before scheduling her interview and rejected her before she was even able to meet.

## THE OUTCOMES

With assistance from CEO Works, Tina was placed on a transitional work crew, which allowed her to start saving money right away. She was able to learn new skills, practice interviewing, and apply for jobs, all while earning a steady income, thanks to the structure of CEO Works. Additionally, the skills she gained working on a crew boosted her resume and helped her to secure her current position with RR Donnelley, a paper manufacturing company. Tina earned enough money to afford her own apartment and move out of her grandmother's house. She also went back to school at DeVry University, where she is majoring in computer programming.



“ They helped me improve my life by telling me where to look for apartments and have shown me all the opportunities that are out there. [They have helped me to] look not just for a job, but a career. ”

**Tina Miles**  
CEO Works Client



# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

## SAME DAY WORK AND PAY

For those experiencing homelessness, substance use disorder, and/or those who are formerly incarcerated, the institutional barriers they face are multifaceted. Standard aspects of most jobs, such as having a bank account, working set hours, and submitting a resume may not be possible, no matter how much that person wants to be employed. This makes it hard to get a job, let alone hold it down.

Same Day Work and Pay provides a unique model to break these barriers and for people experiencing financial insecurity to earn wages and connect to social services. After signing up, all the participants need to do is show up for their slots. At the end of their shift, they get paid for their work. Participants are paid with cash so that anyone can do the job, no matter their banking or documentation status.

CEO convenes the partners and is responsible for creating a standard of practice, improving training and long-term employment opportunities, and expanding the number of employer partners. In addition to CEO, there are currently four organizations either offering work opportunities or participating in the community of practice: Mural Arts, the Community Life Improvement Program (CLIP), the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, and the Philadelphia Department of Public Health. DBHIDS provides Certified Peer Support Specialists and other trauma-informed resources to the community of practice.

**\$48.50**

Participants were paid almost \$50 for each four-hour shift. That is roughly \$12.15 per hour, almost \$5 more hourly than the state minimum wage.



Final touches are put on artwork before the dedication event for a new mural in Kensington as part of the Mural Arts Color Me Back program.



# DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN PHILADELPHIA

People of color make up a larger percentage of the homeless population in Philadelphia than they do of the general population due to structural barriers related to housing, employment, mental health treatment, etc. Advocates say the number of Latino/a/x residents experiencing homelessness may be underreported.

	Philadelphia	Percentage	Homeless	Percentage
All	1,581,531		4,489	
Black	654,092	41.4	3,254	72.5
Latino/a/x	238,112	15.1	543	12.1
White	622,027	39.3	965	21.5
Asian	117,274	7.4	33	0.7
American Indian or Alaska Native	5,255	0.3	18	0.4
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	588	0.0	30	0.7
Multiple Races	67,307	4.3	189	4.2

The total percentage of people experiencing homelessness is more than 100% because some individuals identifying as Latino/a/x also identify as a certain race.

Sources: 2020 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate; Philadelphia Office of Homeless Services Point-in-Time Count, 2022



## FINANCIAL INCLUSION

The racial wealth gap represents the cumulative effect of centuries of systemic racism and is tied to other inequities. CEO invests in money management and asset-building strategies that can advance equity by improving economic mobility for historically marginalized groups.

### FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT CENTERS

CEO operates seven Financial Empowerment Centers (FEC) across the city to assist residents in reducing debt, increasing savings, improving credit scores, preparing for homeownership, and opening bank accounts.

### SUMMER JOBS CONNECT

This is a partnership between CEO, Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN), the Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund, and local financial institutions to provide banking access, direct deposit, and financial empowerment training to youth and young adults ages 12-24 participating in PYN youth employment programs.

**\$1.5M**

Total debt reduction by FEC clients

**1.1K**

Total FEC clients served for a total of 1,685 counseling sessions

**163**

FEC Clients who improved their credit scores

**\$215K**

Combined increase in savings for FEC clients

**138**

Financial education workshops provided to PYN youth by local financial institution partners

**1.6K**

Total attendance by PYN youth for financial education workshops



# FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Wealth-stripping mechanisms disproportionately impact Black people and deprive Black communities of resources. CEO works to protect residents from predatory actors.

## CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION TASK FORCE

In May 2022, Mayor Kenney signed an Executive Order creating the Philadelphia Consumer Financial Protection Task Force to address this issue. CEO championed the Task Force, serves as co-chair, and provides staffing.

The Task Force identifies issues that pose the most significant threat to Philadelphia consumers and proposes appropriate litigation, legislation, or consumer awareness campaigns to address those threats. Other Task Force members include:

- City Treasurer, Co-Chair
- Community Legal Services
- Philadelphia Legal Assistance
- City Solicitor, Co-Chair
- Community Legal Services
- Philadelphia Legal Assistance
- Irv Ackelsberg, Consumer Attorney
- SeniorLAW Center
- Clarifi
- Philadelphia District Attorney's Office
- Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office
- Mayor's Office

### PROGRESS: STANDING UP FOR VULNERABLE HOMEOWNERS

Community Legal Services, which is part of the Task Force, was contacted by several Philadelphia homeowners who had signed troubling agreements with a real estate firm named MV Realty. The company offered homeowners quick cash in exchange for the right to serve as their real estate agent but deceptively locked them into a 40-year mortgage that requires payment of thousands of dollars when the owners sell or transfer their homes. Roughly 7 out of 10 affected property owners were Black.

The Task Force worked with City departments to mail notices to the estimated 500 affected homeowners and hold community information sessions. Members also testified before City Council and provided information to the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office. The Attorney General filed suit against MV Realty, accusing them of unfair and deceptive practices in violation of the Unfair Trade Practices and Consumer Protection Law.

# 500

Estimated number of Philadelphia homeowners who were contacted by the Task Force regarding an MV Realty deed against their property. Several eligible homeowners received assistance from Community Legal Services. Others were referred to the Philadelphia Bar Association.

# CLIENT STORY

\*Janet, a Black woman in her 70's, first began financial counseling at a Financial Empowerment Center (FEC) in March 2020, at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Janet was initially concerned about her student loan debt and improving her credit.

### THE CHALLENGES

Janet experienced structural barriers to achieving financial wellness, such as student loan debt and fraud on her credit report, an unfair and deceptive practice that disproportionately affects the elderly and communities of color nationwide. Janet was two months away from student loan rehabilitation ending when she reached out to the FEC for advice on navigating student loan repayment.

### THE OUTCOMES

FEC counselors helped Janet apply for Student Loan Income-Driven Repayment so that payments remained affordable. Student loan navigation ended up not becoming a major barrier due to the COVID-19 Loan Payment Pause. Janet's counselor helped her dispute and remove the fraudulent claims from her credit report while assisting her with budgeting. As a result, her credit score has increased from 470 to 651, her credit card debt reduced from \$582 to \$185, and her collection debt decreased from \$722 to \$0 due to settlement. Janet's savings was last reported at \$1,000, an increase from previously being \$0.

\*not the client's actual name

“The participant's progress is a testament to sticking to the plan, and really proves how working with a counselor on a regular basis can provide for major financial successes.”

Tyler Young,  
Program Manager, FEC





# PLACE-BASED INITIATIVES

Providing coordinated, strategic investments in neighborhoods experiencing disinvestment can put residents on a path to mobility and prosperity. CEO coordinates initiatives in the West Philadelphia Promise Zone.

## WEST PHILADELPHIA PROMISE ZONE



First designated in 2014, West Philadelphia was one of the first five Promise Zones in the country. The ten-year designations by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) were created to advance community-driven strategies and programs to support the attainment of goals defined by the community.

The designation does not come with any direct funds but provides preference points that make West Philadelphia more competitive for a variety of grant opportunities from federal agencies and supports a team of 5 AmeriCorps VISTAs that work with CEO to advance the work in the Promise Zone.

## OLDER ADULT CARE



CEO provided funding to six older adult centers managed by Philadelphia Parks and Recreation to offer low-income senior citizens recreational and support services, including health and wellness, social services, public benefits, emergency food referrals, and transportation.

**\$2.1M** Total amount of grants awarded to four applicants that were supported by the Promise Zone

**125** Partner organizations and institutions engaged through events and committee meetings in the Promise Zone

**5.9K** Seniors who received prepared meals through the six older adult centers funded by CEO

**3.6K** Individual counseling sessions for seniors provided by Center staff

# PLACE-BASED INITIATIVES

Removing barriers from youth in West Philadelphia to access college or career opportunities can break the cycle of poverty by preparing young people for family-sustaining employment. CEO leads the West Philadelphia Promise Corps program.

## PROMISE CORPS



Promise Corps hires AmeriCorps College and Career Coaches to provide academic assistance, graduation support, career exposure, college access guidance, and peer mentoring to students in four West Philadelphia high schools.

In the 2021-2022 academic year, Promise Corps launched two new in-school time career exposure internship programs that will run annually in the spring and fall semesters.

**370** 12th graders who received assistance with college and financial aid applications

**213** Students enrolled in Promise Corps in the 2021-2022 academic year

**100%** 12th graders enrolled in Promise Corps who graduated

**452** Individual coaching sessions for students enrolled in Promise Corps

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Six community listening sessions were conducted in West Philadelphia by the Promise Zone Public Safety Committee, engaging more than 127 youth and adults. Participants discussed strategies to reduce gun violence and crime to inform the implementation of an evidence-based community violence intervention and prevention strategy, funded by a \$1 million Department of Justice grant received by Mount Vernon Manor CDC.
- The Promise Zone Research Connection conducted a soft launch of the West Philadelphia Community Research Review Board (CRRB) from August to October.



Promise Corps students from High School of the Future enrolled in an 8-week Creative Entrepreneurship and Digital Literacy internship program with REC Philly.

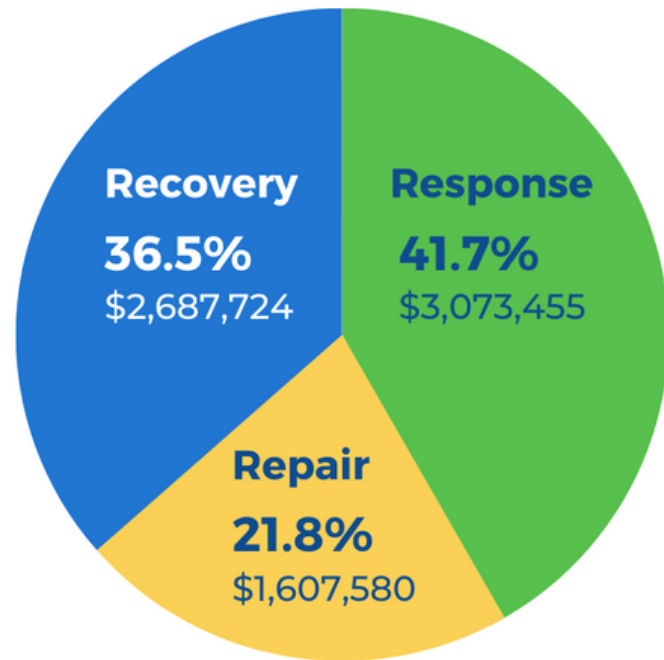


# COVID-19 RESPONSE

The CARES Act provided one-time funding for CEO to invest in programs and initiatives to ensure an equitable recovery.

## CARES SUPPORT

COVID-19 had a disproportionate impact on communities of color and immigrant and refugee communities. To support an equitable recovery, CEO used a three-tiered investment strategy:



## RESPONSE

Programs and resources that support the immediate needs of individuals and communities, including emergency food, housing assistance, health supports (including adequate supplies of personal protective equipment), and other essentials.

## REPAIR

Investments that target the frayed safety net and strengthen neighborhood services, including support for critical services and resources that may be lost or diminished due to closures, bankruptcies, or staffing cuts.

## RECOVERY

Investments in programs and initiatives to address the prolonged impact of COVID-19. These measures will ensure that public agencies, non-profit services, and small minority-owned businesses are equipped with the necessary information, technology, and resources to operate effectively and contribute to the city's economic recovery.

# COVID-19 RESPONSE

## \$7.5M

Total amount dispersed by CEO towards COVID-19 relief. That included direct investments to relief and recovery as well as support to meet increased demand in ongoing programs related to social determinants of health

## \$1M

Invested in The Black Community Leaders Fund (BCLF) launched by the Philadelphia Foundation in May 2021. The Fund fortifies Black-led nonprofits serving Black communities in the Greater Philadelphia area

## \$170K

Invested in a partnership with Philabundance and Maternity Care Coalition to support low-income families with infants by providing formula, personal care items, prepared meals for adults, and personalized support

## \$365K

Invested to create the Promise Zone Sustainability Fund to support grassroots nonprofits empowering community-driven solutions in the West Philadelphia Promise Zone



Philadelphia Young Playwrights received a Community Champions grant from CEO to support its performance arts work with students in the School District of Philadelphia.



# GRANT RECIPIENT STORY

## COVID-19 RECOVERY EFFORTS

Casa de Venezuela is one of 10 nonprofit organizations that received a \$20,000 Community Champions Grant from CEO. The organization provided COVID-19 education, vaccine access, and other critical services to the growing Venezuelan population. Many immigrants become isolated from the city and the general population because they live in clusters, but the services provided helped Venezuelans maintain a sense of connection.

## ACTIVITIES

Casa de Venezuela used the funding to support five core programs in Spanish and English, including activities for Venezuelan Week and two workshops specifically geared towards Venezuelan immigrants. Each activity featured education about the COVID-19 vaccine and booster.

## INCREASING ACCESS TO COMMUNITY RESOURCES

With the support from CEO, Casa de Venezuela was able to host a workshop on Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for eligible Venezuelans in August 2022. The workshop assisted Venezuelans in the re-registration of their status. It included assistance and support from two pro bono law firms and a visit from the Venezuelan Ambassador to the United States, Carlos Vecchio. A total of 47 individuals received assistance completing their TPS form during the workshop, which had about 90 people in attendance. Attendees also received COVID-19 test kits, hand sanitizer, and information about the vaccine and booster.

“Many Venezuelans are coming to the city with literally nothing but the clothes they are wearing. This funding was a life-saver for many of them as Casa de Venezuela, in addition to the programming activities, also assisted them with basic goods, clothes, and with some funds to help them stay with a roof above their heads.”

**Emilio Buitrago**  
Casa de Venezuela Philadelphia



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

CEO engages underserved communities directly and through grassroots partners to work towards racial equity by connecting them to vital resources and lifting up their much-needed voices.

## CHILD TAX CREDIT OUTREACH

In partnership with the Scattergood Foundation, CEO awarded grants to 17 community-based organizations to conduct grassroots outreach to Philadelphia households at risk of missing out on the temporarily expanded federal Child Tax Credit.

## LIHWAP OUTREACH

In partnership with the Philadelphia Water Department and the Mayor's Policy Office, CEO conducted a texting campaign to notify delinquent customers about the statewide Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) and provide them with information on how they could apply or connect them to BenePhilly.

**\$192K**

Total amount of grants distributed to community-based groups for CTC outreach

**42K**

Number of delinquent Philadelphia Water Department customers who received text messages from CEO about LIHWAP grants



CEO distributed 700 meals in the community during the winter holidays. Food was provided by Philabundance and a generous donation from ShopRite of Oregon Avenue.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

120

Individuals engaged by the HSWG, representing 60 organizations

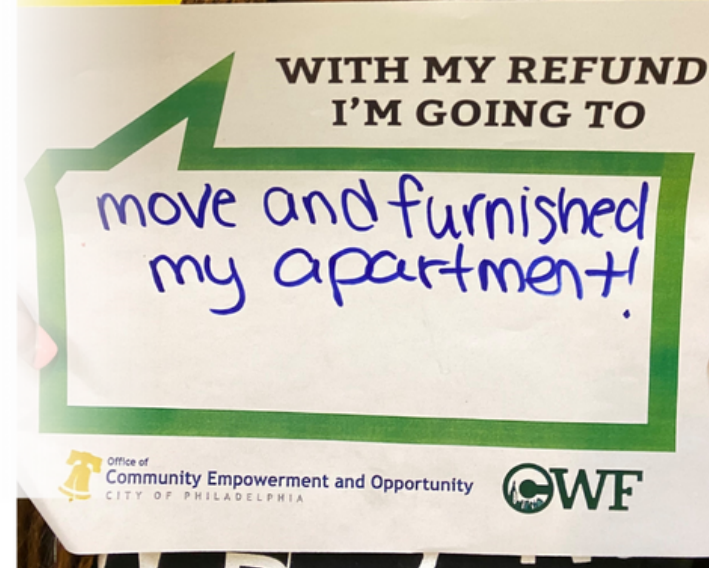
550+

Attendees at CEO virtual and in-person convenings

## HOUSING SECURITY WORKING GROUP (HSWG)

CEO convenes the Housing Security Working Group (HSWG), which strives to collectively advance changes to systems, policies, and programs to prevent evictions and ameliorate the effects of evictions for Philadelphia residents. Through collaboration, planning, advocacy, and outreach, the HSWG contributed to several new housing initiatives in the last year, including the rollout of Right to Counsel in the target areas of 19122 and 19139.

CEO VISTA Victoria Eronwu tables at an event in the West Philadelphia Promise Zone.



A volunteer with Why Not Prosper participated in a social media campaign to raise awareness about the Child Tax Credit.

# ADVOCACY

CEO advocates for policies that create stability for families living at or near poverty, opportunities for upward mobility, and that advance racial equity for all Philadelphians. In 2022, that advocacy included federal, state, and local efforts, some of which are outlined below. For more on CEO's advocacy, look for our Policy Agenda, which will be released in Spring 2023.

## Fighting to make the expanded Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit permanent.

The expanded Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit for the 2021 tax year reached millions of extremely low-income households, increasing families' ability to meet basic needs for food, housing, transportation, and other costs. CEO partnered with the White House to advocate for the extension or permanency of the programs and urged our U.S. House and Senate delegation to support the policies when included in the Build Back Better Act.

## Passing the CSBG Modernization Act through the U.S. House.

CEO won the support of all three of Philadelphia's representatives in the U.S. House in favor of HR 5129, the Community Services Block Grant Modernization Act. CSBG funds community action agencies including CEO, and the bill reauthorizes the program for 10 years and boosts funding to \$1 billion per year for the first five years, a 25% increase from FY22 funding.

## Pushing for solutions to the "benefits cliff."

Access to public benefits like SNAP, LIHEAP, Medical Assistance, and other programs are critical for lower-income households to maintain stability, but strict income limits that disqualify households if their income grows even slightly are a disincentive to mobility. CEO continues to call attention to policy solutions to the benefits cliff, including staggering eligibility as income increases.

## Releasing our Upward Mobility Action Plan.

CEO and the Division of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) teamed up with the Urban Institute to take part in the Upward Mobility Cohort, which led to the release of our Upward Mobility Action Plan in August 2022. This plan builds on the insights of the US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty that upward mobility is not just economic success, but also belonging and autonomy.

## Reducing and eliminating municipal fines and fees.

The Commonwealth of PA courts impose fines and fees on criminal defendants which can be an enormous barrier to their stability and economic mobility. CEO is advocating for new policies that would reduce or eliminate fines and fees that trap individuals who are extremely low-income with expenses they cannot pay.

## Advocating for low-income water customers.

CEO partnered with other city departments to protect low-income water customers from shut-offs due to their inability to pay.



# BUDGET

	FY21 Actual	FY22 Actual	FY23 Budget
Personnel	\$2,308,317	\$2,464,543	\$2,895,002
Contracted Services & Community Funds	\$19,991,924	\$20,446,140	\$28,121,097
Supplies & Equipment	\$190,323	\$212,407	\$59,482
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$22,490,564	\$23,143,090	\$31,075,581

Our Fiscal Year runs from July 1st - June 30th.

# LOOKING FORWARD

Over the next few years, CEO will continue to advance racial equity and mobility out of poverty by building on our data-driven investments and identifying new investments to impact more Philadelphians.

- Boosting our community engagement capacity. In 2023, Philly Counts and the Office of Civic Engagement and Volunteer Service (OCEVS) will merge with the Office of Community Empowerment and Opportunity (CEO). All three offices share similar missions, and the merger is intended to enhance our ability to engage our most vulnerable communities using a trauma-informed approach.
- Piloting guaranteed income for TANF participants. CEO will launch its Guaranteed Resources Optimize Wellbeing (GROW) project in the spring of 2023. GROW will provide \$500 per month for 12 months to 50 Philly households currently enrolled in Extended Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (E-TANF), the vast majority of which are single Black mothers. The project will be evaluated by a team of expert researchers to determine if increasing cash income while holding their benefits and services steady will better position people for economic mobility.
- Debt collection representation. Of the 20,000 cases brought to Philadelphia Municipal Court each year, 65% of them are for debt collection. Debt collection cases disproportionately impact Black residents, including those who can't afford a lawyer. Building on the Right to Counsel law that Philadelphia began implementing in 2021 to support renters, CEO is working to build support for a program to provide legal counsel to low-income residents facing suit over consumer debt, as well as reform to Court processes.
- West Philadelphia Promise Zone Sustainability Fund. As the 10-year Promise Zone designation comes to an end in 2024, CEO is planning for the future of our work in the Promise Zone, including the launch of the Promise Zone Sustainability Fund. This fund will provide grants to community-based organizations located within or serving the Promise Zone to advance safety, health, and prosperity in West Philadelphia.



CEO's Benefits Access Unit staff at Morris Park.



# THANK YOU

## OVERSIGHT BOARD

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Chief Executive Officer

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Entrepreneur Works  
President & CEO

Cathy Carr  
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Dr. David E. Thomas  
Community College of  
Philadelphia,  
VP Strategic Initiatives &  
Community Engagement

Eric Westbrook  
Mayor's Office of Black Male  
Engagement  
Director

Tonie Willis  
Ardella's House  
Founder & Executive Director

# THANK YOU

## PARTNERS AND FUNDERS

### CEO would like to acknowledge its provider-partners who serve our communities:

Benefits Data Trust  
Campaign for Working Families  
Catholic Social Services Southwest  
Ceiba  
Center for Employment Opportunities  
Community Legal Services  
Congreso  
Clarifi  
Department of Behavioral Health and  
Intellectual disAbility Services  
Department of Public Health Department  
of Parks and Recreation Federation of  
Neighborhood Centers  
First Step Staffing  
HACE

### CEO would like acknowledge its funding partners who support our work:

PA Department of Human Services  
PA Department of Community and  
Economic Development  
Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency  
Drexel University  
PHENND  
Human Services Development Fund  
Philadelphia Works  
Urban Institute  
JPMorgan Chase  
Arnold Ventures  
Cities for Financial Empowerment  
Fund

Impact Services  
JEVS Human Services  
Nueva Esperanza  
Office of Homeless Services  
One Day at a Time  
Philabundance  
Philadelphia FIGHT  
Philadelphia Corporation for the  
Aging  
Scattergood Foundation  
UESF







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