

An illustration on a blue background featuring several hands of different skin tones (orange, brown, tan) holding large, stylized hearts in green, blue, yellow, and purple. A small yellow heart floats near the top left. A yellow arc is on the top left, and a purple arc is on the middle left. A green arc is at the bottom right.

Delivering

HOPE

SELF

Annual Report 2020



Thanks to your help,
SELF was able to serve nearly

6,000 families
in 2020

Dear Friends,

The year 2020 reminded the entire world that anything is possible, and hope should not be abandoned. No life has gone untouched by the COVID-19 pandemic. When the state of Ohio shut down in March of 2020, Supports to Encourage Low-income Families continued operating. Staff worked remotely from their homes to ensure Butler County families would continue receiving access to critical resources and support.

In 2020, SELF supported its mission to help low-income individuals and families living in Butler County become more self-sufficient. Not only did we continue offering our self-sufficiency classes and workshops via Zoom, but we also began offering emergency support, such as emergency rent and utility help, for community members affected by the pandemic. Thanks to your help, SELF was able to serve nearly 6,000 families in 2020.

Even with the world in a state of uncertainty, SELF made some huge changes in 2020. The biggest change for SELF, outside of the pandemic, was the move of its Hamilton headquarters. The building, which was purchased in late 2019, was largely renovated through dedicated volunteer labor. With a fresh coat of paint on the outside and a lighted sign proudly displaying our new logo, SELF was able to make its new home in Hamilton's Second Ward.

With a larger facility that SELF is free to use however it needs, our organization can now better ensure Butler County families have stability to move their lives forward. SELF helps people break the chains of poverty through emergency support, utility assistance, home repairs, career training, self-evaluation, planning, financial education, and asset building.

Through your continued support, SELF continues to deliver hope through its services to meet the needs of our community and be a positive force in Butler County.

Thank you,



Pat Moeller,
President,
Board of Directors



Jeffrey Diver,
Executive Director

HISTORY

Supports to Encourage Low-income Families (SELF) is a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization and the state-designated Community Action Agency for Butler County, Ohio.

Founded in 1995, SELF's focus is on offering employment and educational services to help low-income individuals achieve long-term self-sufficiency.

GOALS

SELF's overall goals aim to help clients:

- Move beyond crisis situations toward improved financial stability and general well-being
- Retain the skills and attitudes necessary for sustained employment and self-sufficiency
- Build and maintain assets to disrupt the cycle of poverty

VISION

Through SELF's efforts, an environment is created in which:

- Individuals and families have the opportunity, resources, and tools to make decisions which lead to self-sufficiency and the development of their full potential
- The community is inspired to actively contribute to the goal of self-sufficiency and personal development
- Policy makers are advocates for the needs of all within the community
- A cycle of self-sufficiency is perpetuated which raises the quality of life in the community

MISSION

"Enhance the quality of life for Butler County residents by impacting the causes of poverty and empowering individuals to achieve, sustain and advocate self-sufficiency."

In fulfilling its mission, SELF strives to perform the following roles at the highest standards of excellence.

- To be an advocate for the needs of the community and the development of individual potential
- To be a facilitator in linking individual needs to the full network of services available
- To be a provider of quality services
- To be a trusted and respected partner with individuals and organizations in addressing the needs of the community

PROGRAMS

Emergency Rent and Utility Assistance

SELF began offering emergency assistance in the second half of 2020, as funding was made available by the federal and state governments. Assistance became an option for those in Butler County who had been affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic and were in danger of losing their homes, having their electricity cut off, and more. For many families who found themselves in need of help for the first time, SELF was able to restore their hope at a time of darkness.

SELF began processing emergency requests in March of 2020; however, those numbers remained at just a few per month until August, when they began to trend upwards.

SELF received **787** emergency requests in 2020

Emergency Assistance Applications outside of SELF's offices have been available throughout the COVID-19 pandemic

351 families were assisted through emergency funds

10 graduates of Build-Up Academy in 2020. A 100% graduation rate!



Butler County Microenterprise and Microloan Program

Helps low-and-moderate-income individuals to learn in group workshops about all aspects of starting a business, including hands-on assistance in writing a business plan and the opportunity to apply for a \$5,000 microloan to launch the business.



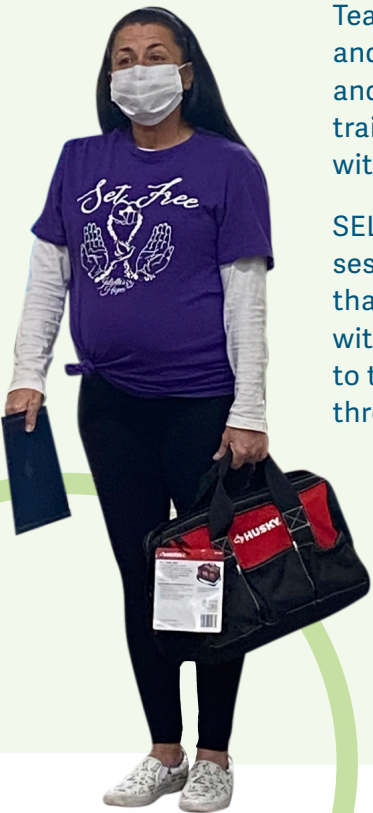
In 2020, 15 participants enrolled in the microenterprise program.

11 clients completed the program

Build-Up Academy

Teaches low-income adults construction skills and connects them to jobs, apprenticeships, and advanced training programs. Employment training and hands-on work included, along with industry-recognized credentials awarded.

SELF was only able to hold one traditional session of its Build-Up Academy in 2020, rather than two. However, SELF began a partnership with Marshall High School in Middletown to teach their students construction skills through our program.



2020 BUA graduates received a certificate and tool kit and got to say a few words before SELF's Board of Directors.

Marshall High School students work with SELF's Housing and Construction Programs Coordinator getting hands-on experience at a home SELF purchased for renovation.



Getting Ahead

"Getting Ahead in a Just Gettin' by World" is a workshop that assists individuals living in poverty with evaluating their life and developing life skills necessary to survive and flourish. Getting Ahead participants develop a series of mental models to examine their own pasts while planning for the future. In 2020, Getting Ahead was offered at a variety of locations across Butler County until the COVID-19 pandemic made holding class in-person impossible. SELF continued to offer Getting Ahead virtually through the State-mandated shelter-in-place rule in 2020.

Classes which had not finished amid the chaos gracefully transitioned to being held via Zoom. When facilities began to open again, SELF held its Getting Ahead class at Ohio Means Jobs in Fairfield as part of the Butler County Employment Success Program. Students could attend via Zoom or in person, where they were required to wear face masks.

In 2020, SELF had 79 clients enroll in Getting Ahead. This program continued to have steady enrollment throughout the year! Some 27 clients even gained employment despite uncertain circumstances.

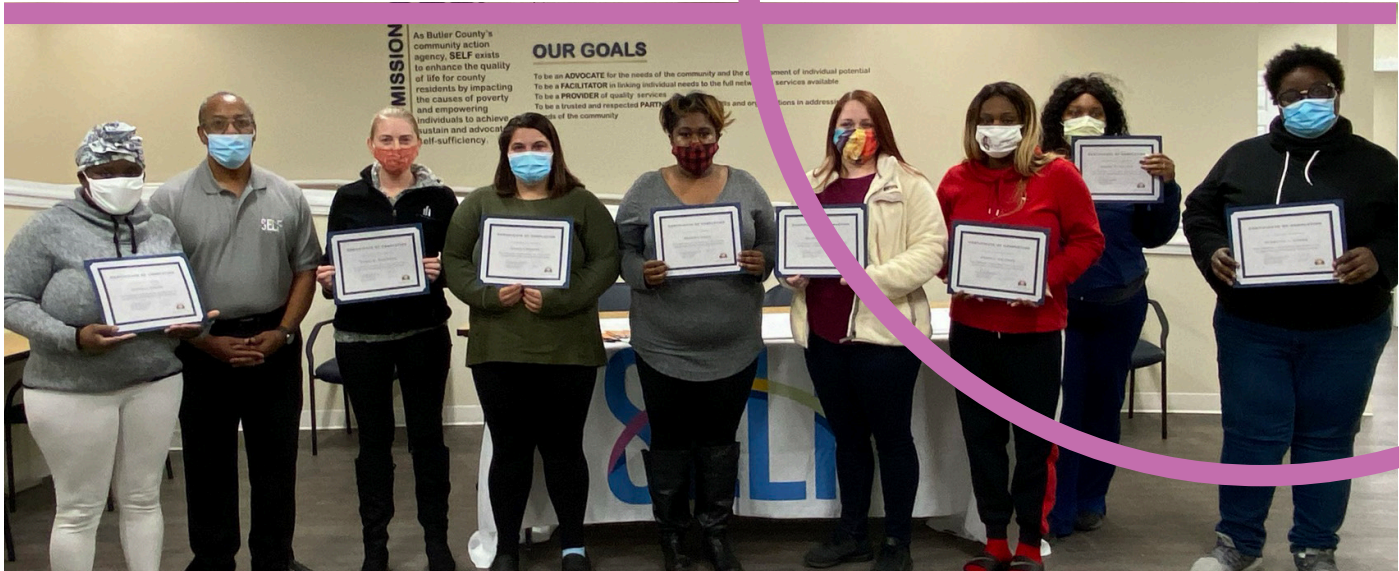
When SELF's offices closed in late March, this Getting Ahead class went virtual and completed the class via Zoom with the help of GA facilitator, Ashley.



A group of Getting Ahead graduates with their facilitator, Beth, in February of 2020.



This IDA class, made up entirely of women, proudly posed with their instructor, Jerry, after graduating from the program.



Individual Development Account Program (IDA)

Offers financial literacy classes and goal-specific education combined with matched savings accounts for low-to-moderate-income clients so they may acquire a home, start a business, or access higher education. Client savings are matched by SELF \$2 to every \$1.

19 clients enrolled and all 19 graduated

100% graduation rate

10 clients opened a savings account

6 assets were acquired, including

4 homes
2 businesses

JOBS NOW!

A powerful employment and education program for low-income individuals to improve economic stability by obtaining employment or better employment. Multi-session workshops are taught by business professionals. Limited emergency services available such as utility assistance, interview clothing, and job-related transportation. Most importantly, this program offers job leads! In 2020, JOBS NOW! was held at Ohio Means Jobs in Fairfield as part of Butler County's Employment Success Program. Classes were hybridized to allow virtual enrollment via Zoom, or for participants to take part in person wearing face masks. SELF even began laying the groundwork in 2020 to begin offering classes throughout Butler County!

Despite a challenging year, JOBS NOW! continued to help local residents. Some 57 people enrolled in the program and 44 completed the employment workshop, a 77% graduation rate.

43 graduates gained employment in 2020



JOBS NOW! facilitator, Marilyn, poses with a recent graduate in August 2020.

Emergency Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)



Winter Emergency Home Energy Assistance and the Summer Cooling Programs help low-income families being threatened with shut off of heat in the winter or electric in the summer. Additionally, SELF verifies and re-verifies participants on the Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) Plus program and assists with intake for free weatherization services. SELF had to adapt the way it served clients in 2020, moving from in-person appointments to offering remote assistance and secure drop boxes outside each of its locations.

1,637 households assisted with PIPP Plus

1,861 households assisted through the Winter and Summer Crisis programs

Neighbors Who Care: Home Repair

Volunteer-driven home repair projects in Butler County which help low-income homeowners, primarily senior citizens, people with disabilities, and families with young children. Activities spike each summer with two home repair blitz weeks and thousands of hours of labor donated by hundreds of volunteers. Although these large blitz weeks were cancelled in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic,

SELF was able to continue to perform outdoor home repairs using local volunteer groups and individuals. SELF also received CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) funds, and a grant from the Butler County Department of Community Development, which allowed the organization to hire contractors for larger-scale home repairs.

145 home repairs were completed on **95 different homes** in 2020



Volunteers donated **9,000+** hours to the organization despite the challenges 2020 provided



Volunteers worked outdoors throughout the pandemic to help homeowners who needed mobility modifications to their homes, like these wheelchair ramps.

Neighbors Who Care: Renovations

This social enterprise program completes renovations with the help of volunteer support. SELF purchases properties, rehabilitates them, and sells them to credit-worthy low-to-moderate-income families.

Two properties were acquired in 2020, one located in the historic Dayton Lane District of Hamilton and the other located in Downtown Middletown. Both homes were in need of extensive renovations.

SELF received support from one AmeriCorps NCCC team in 2020, who assisted with home renovations as well as framing in the organization's new office building.

AmeriCorps NCCC members working on air ducts of SELF's new office in August of 2020.

This home located in Downtown Middletown needed extensive T.L.C. that began in mid-2020 with the thanks of an AmeriCorps NCCC team who worked to clean out the trash inside.

Then SELF's volunteers and Build-Up Academy students began work on the exterior and interior of the building.

Another home in the Dayton Lane District of Hamilton was also trashed and in need of lots of cleanup. Once again, SELF's AmeriCorps team and volunteers came to the rescue!



NEW CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Moving Amid a Pandemic

SELF purchased a building in late 2019 and about one year later, moved its Hamilton headquarters to that space from its rented office to its new location at 415 S. Monument Avenue. In its 24 years of service, SELF had always rented its office space. SELF was operating solely out of its Hamilton office at this time due to the pandemic, so all employees assisted with the move.

Not only is this new headquarters located conveniently close to Downtown Hamilton, but it is also much larger, with additional offices and warehouse space to store housing and construction supplies! Several AmeriCorps NCCC Teams and a group of key volunteers made renovating this property from a warehouse to an office an affordable reality.

SELF held a ribbon cutting ceremony in November of 2020 to officially celebrate its new location with the public.

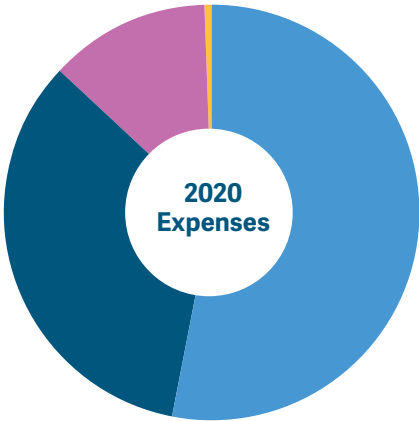
The front of SELF's new office building as it was purchased. It had previously housed offices and warehouse space for Mighty Auto Parts.



SELF's new office took nearly a year to renovate.

FINANCIALS

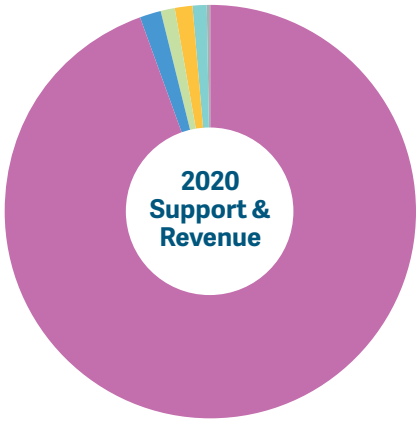
- Self Sufficiency Programs \$1,966,568
- Home Energy Assistance \$1,254,013
- Supporting Services \$461,133
- Fundraising \$16,251



Total | \$3,697,965

- Grants/contracts \$3,475,299
- Contributions \$61,529
- In-Kind \$43,159
- Program Income \$47,840
- Interest and dividends \$1,857
- Rental income | \$37,752
- Investment gains | \$6,287

Total | \$3,673,723



SELF SUCCESS STORY: JUNE

June enrolled in Getting Ahead in early 2020, planning to attend once a week at the Booker T. Washington Community Center. When class began, June wanted to meet goals in her life, but she wasn't sure how to go about it, and she felt like she'd never reach them. When the COVID-19 Pandemic reached Ohio, June agreed to continue participating in Getting Ahead over Zoom.

The class still met weekly, only virtually instead of in-person. June went on to learn tools and resources to improve her life through setting SMART goals. She gained employment as an interpreter for immigration court cases, improved her credit score by 30 points, and even purchased a home for herself and her son with special needs. Ultimately, June wanted to provide a secure and stable life for her son and herself and was able to do so with the help of SELF and the Getting Ahead program.

June posing with her Getting Ahead facilitator, Ashley, after winning SELF's Client of the Year Award.



2020 DONORS

We thank the following list of donors for their gracious support of SELF. With their generosity, SELF's community impact is much greater.

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