



STRATEGIC PLAN 2023



NEIGHBORHOOD
VILLAGES

neighborhoodvillages.org



Innovate | Scale | Advocate
2023-2026

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Summary

Neighborhood Villages is a Massachusetts systems-change non-profit working to create a future in which all families have access to affordable, high-quality early childhood education. Despite the critical role early childhood education plays in the lives and prospects of children and families, it has long been undervalued in the United States and, as a result, the sector has been starved of the resources it needs to provide quality programming at affordable rates to families with young children (ages 0-5).

Neighborhood Villages' mission is to transform our existing, inadequate early childhood education sector into an equitable, accessible high-quality system and to demonstrate that achieving such a system is possible. In pursuit of this mission, the organization collaborates closely with early childhood education providers and families to develop solutions to the greatest challenges they face and provides government with proven blueprints that can be scaled system-wide through adoption into public policy.

Neighborhood Villages' approach is to partner with philanthropy to innovate and evaluate these solutions and then to achieve sustainability and scale through partnership with government. This approach has proved highly successful, as demonstrated by the organization's development of multiple statewide programs that it now operates on behalf of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Neighborhood Villages' collaborative, interlocking programs are building a stronger early childhood education system in Massachusetts and advancing transformative and sustainable policy change.

Since its founding in 2017, Neighborhood Villages has experienced a period of rapid growth and far-reaching impact. In 2021, the leadership team began an extensive multi-year planning process to examine its progress, understand how it is perceived by partners and stakeholders, and chart a path forward. In this Strategic Plan, "Innovate, Scale, Advocate," Neighborhood Villages establishes the following organizational priorities for the next three years:

- Demonstrate that an equitable, accessible, and high-quality early childhood education delivery system is possible;
- Embed equity throughout Neighborhood Villages' work internally and externally; and
- Ensure organizational capacity to achieve sustainability and lasting impact.

In the next three years, Neighborhood Villages seeks to strengthen early childhood education infrastructure in Massachusetts, and, through its advocacy work, advance transformative legislation that makes early childhood education more accessible and equitable for families and ensures long overdue investments in educators and providers.

Neighborhood Villages invites early childhood education providers, educators, families, public administrators, policy leaders, community partners, and philanthropy to provide feedback on this plan and to collaborate with us to pursue a future in which all families have equitable access to affordable, high-quality early childhood education solutions that set them up to thrive.

Neighborhood Villages offers its deepest thanks to the Highland Street Foundation, which generously funded this strategic planning process, and Carolyn O'Brien, who led the leadership team through the project with her experience and expertise. The organization also extends sincere gratitude to its program partners, funders, advisors, staff, and Board of Directors, who provided unwavering guidance, dedication, and support during the planning process.

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Who We Are

Neighborhood Villages is a Massachusetts systems-change non-profit founded in 2017 to deliver solutions for the nation's ongoing early childhood education crisis.

We envision a transformed, equitable early childhood education system that lifts up educators and sets every child and family up to thrive.

In pursuit of this vision, Neighborhood Villages designs, evaluates, and scales innovative solutions to the biggest challenges facing early childhood education providers and the children and families who rely on them, and drives policy reform through advocacy, education, and research.

Our work in Massachusetts is designed to drive systemic policy change in the Commonwealth and model a path toward national early childhood education reform.

What We're Solving

Early childhood education (serving children ages 0-5) is foundational. It is an important driver of employment opportunity, financial security, and economic mobility for families and is essential to preventing the academic achievement gap for children. Moreover, it is core to gender and racial equity. Despite its centrality to family prosperity and economic growth, however, in the United States our early childhood education sector is broken. Why?

Lack of sufficient government funding makes early childhood education unaffordable for families.

Unlike public K-12 education, which is a government-funded system, early childhood education receives no meaningful public investment. As a result, it's too expensive for families to afford. In states such as Massachusetts, which consistently ranks worst in the nation for family affordability, early childhood education tuition fees exceed the cost of in-state college and, often, home mortgages. The result? Families struggle to find the care solutions they need to work, and children are denied equal access to the high-quality early education they deserve.

Without public investment, the early education workforce suffers, impacting quality and access.

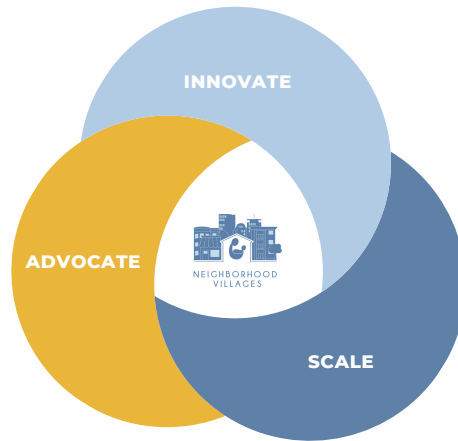
Even with sky-high tuition rates, early childhood education providers struggle to pay the staff who educate and care for our youngest learners more than minimum wage. The early childhood education workforce is almost exclusively women and disproportionately women of color, and 1 in 6 educators live below the federal poverty line. Low wages are the root cause of the workforce shortage in the early childhood education sector; providers struggle to find and retain teachers, which in turn limits providers' ability to enroll children and further reduces access for families. Tuition that families cannot afford and teacher salaries that do not provide a livable wage are indicators of a fundamentally broken sector that is failing children, families, and educators.

Early childhood education in the United States is a sector, not a true system.

In addition to insufficient public funding, early childhood education lacks systems infrastructure and opportunities for cross-sector coordination amongst providers, government, and end-users (i.e., families). Early childhood education is a complex sector of early learning centers, in-home family child care, Head Start programs, district schools, and more. Fragmentation within the sector makes it difficult to connect providers, and the children and families who rely on them, with the infrastructure supports they need to maintain and grow their capacity. The absence of systems infrastructure further exacerbates financial volatility, inefficiencies, and inequities experienced by stakeholders in the early childhood education landscape.

Children, families, providers, and educators need and deserve better. While we advocate for legislative change, we must begin to lay the foundation now for a healthier, more equitable early childhood education system. At Neighborhood Villages, that is our mission.

Our Approach



Neighborhood Villages innovates, scales, and advocates for solutions that address the biggest challenges faced by early childhood education providers and the families who rely on them.

Our approach is unique: We partner with philanthropy to pilot innovative systems solutions developed in collaboration with early childhood education providers, educators, and families; and we achieve sustainability and scale through partnership with government.

Our direct service work informs our mandate to advocate for the structural policy reforms needed to make high-quality early childhood education affordable for all families, raise wages for early educators, and build the public infrastructure needed to transform our existing broken sector into a high-functioning system.

Our interlocking program portfolio creates a continuum of early childhood education systems change, from modeling innovations that work to driving lasting policy reform.

STRATEGIC PLAN: 2023-2026

Since its founding in 2017, Neighborhood Villages has experienced a period of rapid growth and far-reaching impact. In 2021, the leadership team began an extensive multi-year planning process to chart a path forward over the next three years. Our Strategic Plan, “Innovate, Scale, Advocate,” details the guiding principles, priorities, and resources required for Neighborhood Villages to achieve its goals.

Guiding Principles

- 1) Neighborhood Villages envisions a transformed, early childhood education system that:
 - Prioritizes equity,
 - Is accessible for all families,
 - Ensures that all children enter Kindergarten ready to succeed,
 - Pays early educators a professional wage and supports their professional development,
 - Offers supportive infrastructure to providers, and
 - Is equipped to meet the most pressing needs of the children and families it serves.
- 2) Neighborhood Villages’ programs must center equity and be co-designed with and responsive to the needs of early childhood education providers, educators, and families.
- 3) Data-driven program evaluation is central to Neighborhood Villages’ approach to achieving effective, efficient, and equitable outcomes.
- 4) Neighborhood Villages defines scale as having its tested solutions adopted into public policy and thereby made available sector-wide through partnership with government.
- 5) Policy analysis and advocacy are needed to achieve the transformative change required to solve the systemic challenges faced by the early childhood education sector.

Strategic Priorities

Strategic Priority One: Demonstrate that an equitable, accessible, and high-quality early childhood education delivery system is possible.

Goal 1: *Innovate*

In collaboration with families, providers, and stakeholders, build innovative, direct-service programs that promote early childhood education systems change.

- Identify opportunities in the early childhood education landscape to enhance access and quality, promote early educator professional development, build centralized infrastructure for providers, and streamline delivery of wraparound supports to families.
- Design scalable, direct-service programs that address identified opportunities for systems change.
- Implement and evaluate high-impact direct-service programs, with an emphasis on potential for scale.

Goal 2: *Scale*

Partner with government to scale tested systems solutions that advance excellence in early childhood education.

- Promote government adoption of Neighborhood Villages' direct-service programs, practices, and tools in order to expand family access to high-quality early childhood education and wraparound supports and promote educator access to professional development opportunities.
- Create blueprints for foundational elements of an equitable, accessible, and high-quality early childhood education system that functions effectively and serves the needs of families, educators, and providers.
- Collaborate with states, municipalities, and early childhood education stakeholders to share proven solutions.

Goal 3: *Advocate*

Advocate for the adoption of equity-driven, transformative early childhood education systems solutions into public policy.

- Equip allies with data and dynamic research tools to advance early childhood education policy reforms that promote excellence in early childhood education, workforce development, and family access to early childhood education and wraparound supports.
- Partner with families, providers, educators, and stakeholders to strategically advocate for public policy that secures a high-quality early childhood education system.

Strategic Priority Two: Embed equity throughout Neighborhood Villages' work internally and externally.

Goal 1: Be an Equitable Organization

Incorporate equity into all of Neighborhood Villages' operating practices.

- Collaborate with staff, partners, and advisors to adopt and evaluate the impact of equity-driven practices across the organization.
- Provide transparency into and continually refine initiatives to fortify equity as a core organizational value.

Goal 2: Secure an Equitable Solution

Center equity in Neighborhood Villages' mission and programs.

- Ensure that Neighborhood Villages' direct-service programs and policy work promote a transformed early childhood education system that is equitable.
- Center families, educators, and providers in the organization's direct-service programs and policy work to ensure that systems solutions reflect stakeholder needs and preferences.
- Actively support Neighborhood Villages' partners in their work to elevate equity through their own missions and programs.

Strategic Priority Three: Ensure organizational capacity to achieve sustainability and lasting impact.

Goal 1: People

Invest in people to ensure that Neighborhood Villages' staff, governance, and operations enable organizational excellence, inclusivity, and high-impact direct-service programs and policy work.

- Recruit, support, and collaborate with staff and partners who share the organization's goals and contribute perspective, expertise, and resources in pursuit of its mission.
- Support excellent governance practices that cultivate a diversity of perspectives and experiences and foster a strong infrastructure for insight, collaboration, and leadership.

Goal 2: Systems

Ensure that effective internal operating systems are in place to support an inclusive, integrated, and well-functioning organization.

- Invest in practices that promote organization-wide team-building, communication, and equitable pathways for leadership development.
- Center data-driven decision-making to inform internal operations and ensure intentional organizational growth and development.

Goal 3: Investment

Identify and secure needed investments to advance Neighborhood Villages' strategic priorities.

- Determine the resources and partners necessary to achieve organizational goals for impact and scale.
- Attract the public and private funding required to ensure organizational success and sustainability.

Achieving Our Goals

The following details the work we will conduct to achieve the program goals articulated in our first strategic priority: *Demonstrate that an equitable, accessible, and high-quality early childhood education delivery system is possible.*

While priorities two and three are not further detailed in this presentation, additional information can be made available upon request.

Innovate



Neighborhood Villages will pilot and evaluate innovative systems-change solutions through continued operation of its Neighborhood program. Modeling the way in which K-12 districts support individual schools, the Neighborhood is a platform for designing and testing direct-service programs that meet the greatest challenges facing early childhood education providers and the children and families who rely on them.

Annually serving 3,000 people including 900 children, the Neighborhood is an innovation lab where we partner with philanthropy to pilot innovations that can be scaled in partnership with government.

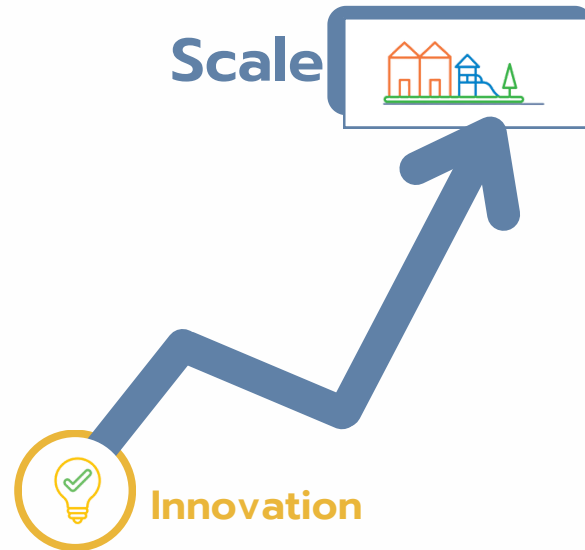


Currently, Neighborhood Villages operates the Neighborhood with five Boston-based early childhood education providers across 19 program sites, each serving economically disadvantaged neighborhoods where the majority of residents are low- or moderate-income. To the Neighborhood, we provide centralized, infrastructure-building services that 1) advance **professional development**, 2) provide **wraparound services** to families, and 3) support **program quality** through instructional coaching and curriculum development. For example, in the Neighborhood, and in partnership with early educators, academics, advocates, and families, Neighborhood Villages is piloting a first-of-its-kind, play-based curriculum for toddlers that aligns with Boston Public Schools' Focus curriculum and is accompanied by high-touch instructional coaching.

Over the next three years, to achieve our goal to further expand the scalable, direct-service programs we offer to early childhood education providers and partners, Neighborhood Villages will prioritize 1) the design, implementation, and evaluation of programming developed to meet high sector demand for early childhood mental and behavioral health services, and 2) the development of evidence- and play-based curriculum for infants and toddlers and aligned coaching models.

To achieve this, Neighborhood Villages will work with new and existing partners, including community-based and social service organizations, to ensure efficient and effective program implementation, and will utilize data and feedback to inform continuous program refinement. Further, we will continue to ground this work in building trust-based working partnerships with providers, and by hosting convenings and opportunities for cross-program collaboration that enable Neighborhood Villages to hear directly from partner programs' leadership and educators.

Scale



Neighborhood Villages will continue to promote government adoption of its direct-service programs, practices, and tools to expand family access to high-quality early childhood education and wraparound supports and promote educator access to professional development opportunities. Our track record of successfully bringing innovation to scale includes

Building infrastructure to protect the health and safety of children, families, and educators: During the COVID-19 pandemic, as K-12 districts began to implement pooled and rapid testing programs to safely return children to in-person school, early childhood education programs received little to no support, largely because the sector lacked the infrastructure necessary to distribute and operationalize such initiatives. Neighborhood Villages responded by piloting a novel COVID-19 testing protocol in partnership with philanthropy and Neighborhood provider partners. After months of iteration and evaluation, Neighborhood Villages successfully brought the pilot to scale in 2021 in partnership with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Ultimately, our state-wide Testing for Child Care program served over 120,000 people and received national attention as the first COVID-19 testing program serving the early childhood education sector in the country.

Strengthening the managerial capacity of early childhood education providers: In the wake of the pandemic, as providers struggled to manage a rapidly changing business environment (from revenue volatility to human resources and insurance challenges), Neighborhood Villages responded by piloting a Business Management Training program aimed at strengthening the business acumen of providers. Neighborhood Villages now operates Business Management Training statewide in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, United Way of Massachusetts Bay, and Urban College of Boston. The program, offered in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Mandarin, provides both center-based and family child care (FCC) providers with free high-level coursework, coaching, and technical assistance. To date, it has served more than 800 people.

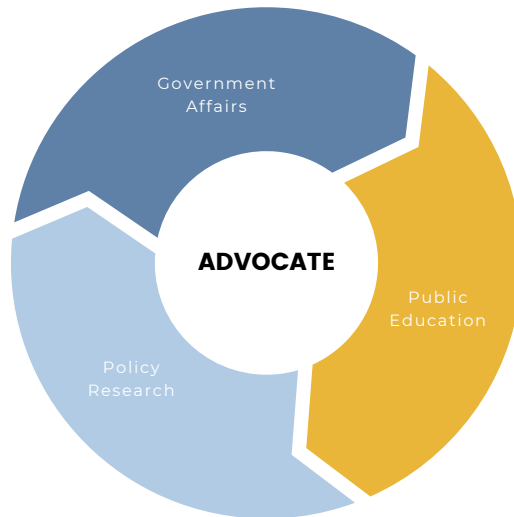
Investing in the professional development of early educators:

The early childhood education sector continues to experience an acute staffing crisis. Neighborhood Villages has responded by designing innovative solutions to improve access to the credentialing and coursework educators need to begin or advance their careers. In 2019, Neighborhood Villages launched a pilot in the Neighborhood to support early educators with enrollment in free, credit-bearing college courses and pursuit of advanced credentials and postsecondary degrees. Two years later, Neighborhood Villages was awarded with a contract with the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) to launch Professional Pathways. The program now annually connect hundreds of early educators with the courses they need to advance their careers across the Commonwealth's 15 community colleges. In 2023, in partnership with philanthropy, Neighborhood Villages further expanded its workforce development portfolio with the launch of a groundbreaking state-wide Registered Apprenticeship program, which offers an alternative, non-college pathway to begin or advance a career in early childhood education. Going forward, the program will serve 50-100 educators annually in partnership with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and the City of Boston.

These programs exemplify our capacity to bring innovations to scale in partnership with government to strengthen the early childhood education system. In the next three years, Neighborhood Villages seeks to scale the reach of its curricula for children aged 0-5 as well as to explore opportunities for improving provider access to behavioral and mental health services, sector-wide.

Further, Neighborhood Villages will create blueprints of its scaled innovations, including case-studies, operations manuals, and program design guides, to inform systems-change for foundational elements of an equitable, accessible, and high-quality early childhood education system in and beyond the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In support of this goal, and to have the greatest impact, we will continue to collaborate with states, municipalities, and early childhood education stakeholders across the country to share proven solutions.

Advocate



Neighborhood Villages will advocate for the adoption of equity-driven, transformative early childhood education systems solutions into public policy. Our innovative direct-service work informs and drives our advocacy mandate, uniquely positioning Neighborhood Villages to lead effective and persuasive policymaking conversations. We seek to advance early childhood education policy reforms that promote excellence in early childhood education, workforce development, and family access to early childhood education and wraparound supports.

We will do this by authoring and promoting data-informed research tools to support families, providers, educators, and stakeholders, and by hosting regular forums and events that address the complexities of the early education and care sector and the methods for improving it. Priority inquiries will include (a) identifying and quantifying the full-scope costs of providing high-quality early childhood education in order to advance comprehensive sector finance reform, and (b) spotlighting alternative approaches to promoting affordability of and family access to early education and care options. Although much of our policy work is centered in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, we will actively pursue thought partnership with other states and municipalities to share Neighborhood Villages' approach to systems building, inform national policy dialogues, and learn from innovations being implemented outside of Massachusetts.

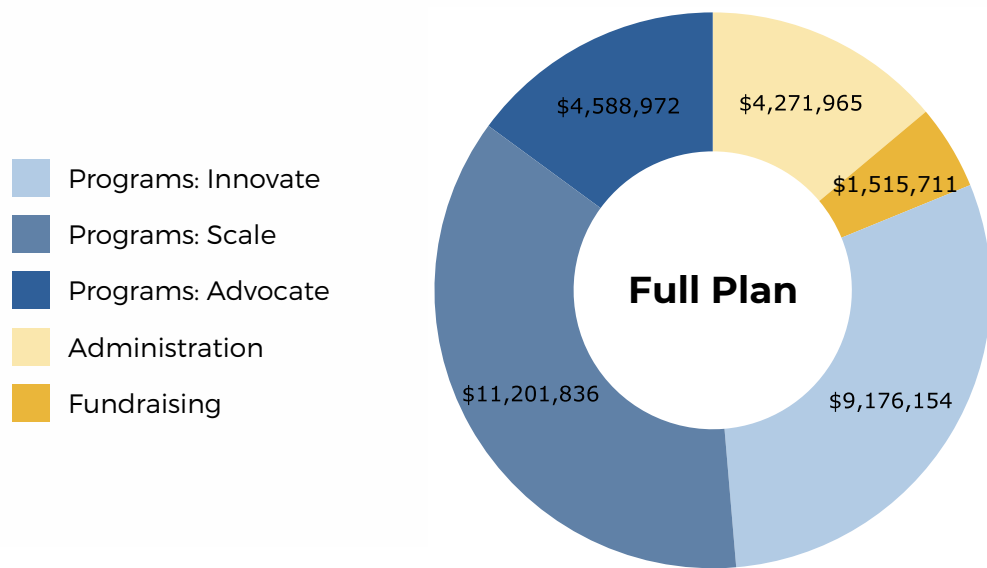
In addition, over the next three years, Neighborhood Villages will continue to drive narrative change and social engagement with the issue of early childhood education reform. From serving in leadership roles in change-making coalitions to organizing community events to executing a robust communications and press strategy, Neighborhood Villages seeks to build a movement to drive the policy reform required for meaningful early childhood education systems change. For example, in the first year of the plan, Neighborhood Villages will release the third season of its nationally-acclaimed podcast about the imperative to fix the early childhood education crisis, titled *No One Is Coming to Save Us*, which has more than 1 million listeners.

Financials

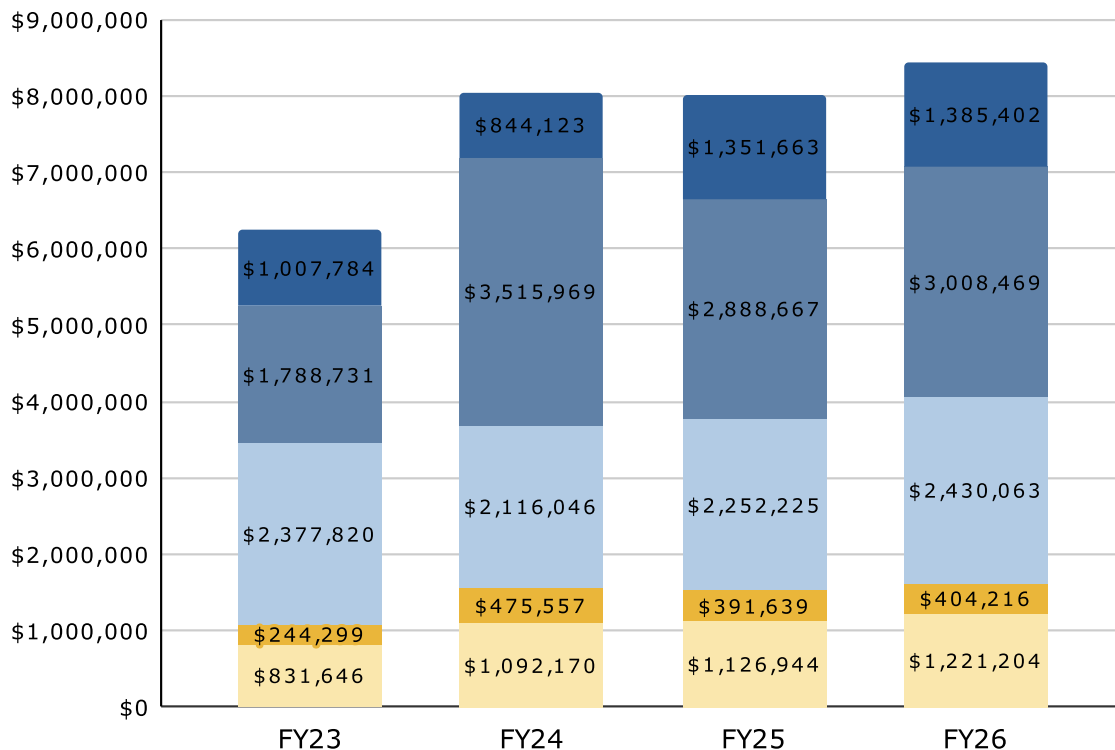
Expenses

Neighborhood Villages estimates that executing its strategic plan will require a total of **\$31 million**, including administration, fundraising, and the following program expense areas (detailed in "Achieving Our Goals" pg. 9):

- **Innovate:** Our work to design, implement, and evaluate programs to meet the biggest challenges facing early childhood education providers and the children and families who rely on them.
- **Scale:** Our work to bring innovation to scale.
- **Advocate:** Our work to promote lasting early childhood education policy change.



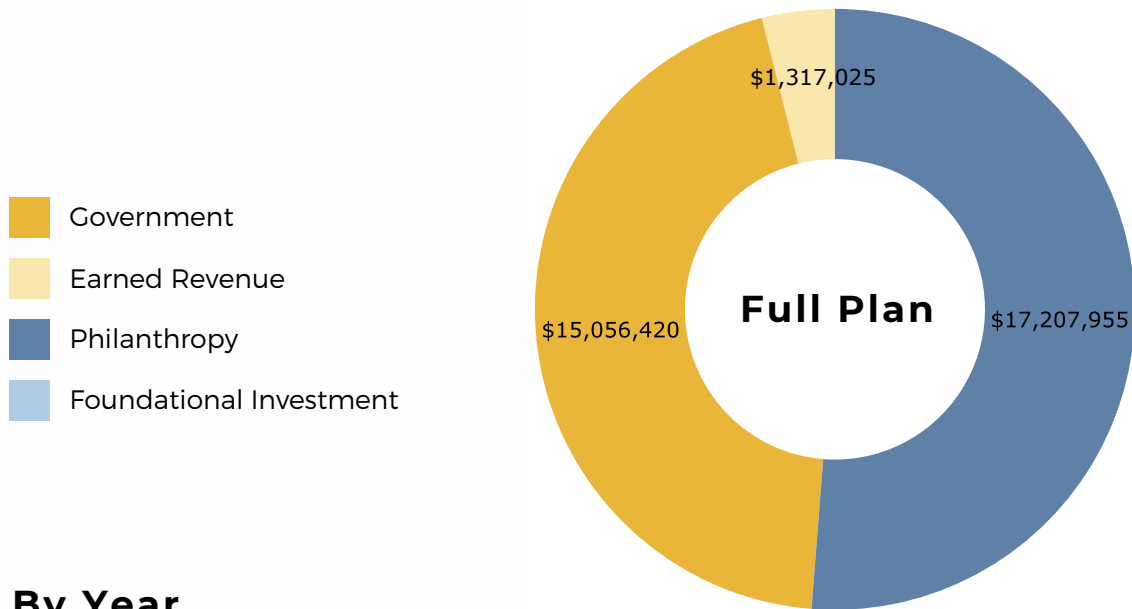
By Year



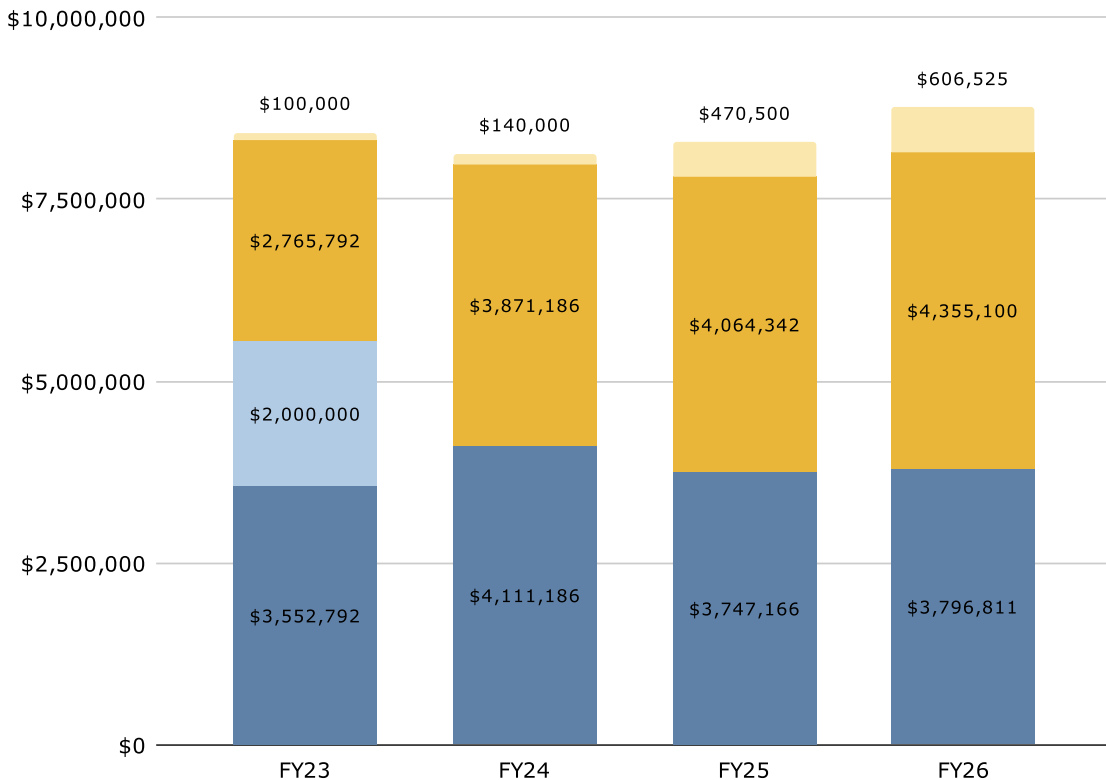
Revenues

To meet the costs of this plan and ensure the financial stability and sustainability of Neighborhood Villages, we have identified a need of **\$33 million in revenues**. We will cultivate revenue from three sources:

- **Philanthropy:** Contributions from individuals, corporations, and foundations (inclusive of a \$2 million foundational investment realized in 2023 from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott).
- **Government:** Federal, state, and municipal grants and contracts.
- **Earned Revenue:** Including media sponsorships and income from project management and technical assistance offerings.



By Year



APPENDICES

Board of Directors*

Landis Becker Young, President
Renée Boynton-Jarrett
Deborah Enos
Emily Ford, Vice President
Henry Ford, III, Treasurer
Ryan Hayden
Carol Kanin
Lauren Kennedy
Sarah Muncey, Secretary
Michelle Sanchez
Linda Smith
Natalie Tejero Serafeim
Jamie Van Horne Robinson

** As of May 1, 2023*

Staff*

Kate Armstrong	Chief of Staff
Devin Cole	Senior Director of Program Operations
Jamila Derring	Business Management Training Program Coordinator
Sarah Elahi	Early Childhood Curriculum Fellow
Shawn Fisher	Professional Pathways Program Manager
Angela Garcia	Business Management Training Program Coordinator
Latoya Gayle	Senior Director of Advocacy
Lisa Goddard	Toddler Curriculum Coach
Khadiga Hassan	Student Support Associate
Meredith Jones	Administrative Assistant
Lauren Kennedy	Co-President and Chief Strategy Officer
Amaris Kinne	Director of Research
Elizabeth Leiwant	Director of Government Relations
Katie Mayshak	Chief Growth Officer
Sarah Muncey	Co-President and Chief Innovation Officer
Binal Patel	Chief Program Officer
Valentina Pedroza Munoz	Student Support Associate
Jomaris Peña	Apprenticeship Coordinator
Karen Peterkin	Toddler Curriculum Coach
Julyana Porto	Student Support Associate
Claire Stevens-Luneau	Workforce Collaborative Program Manager
Nicia Talbot	External Relations Associate
Pamela Thompson	Teaching and Learning Manager

**As of May 1, 2023*



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