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Assessing Community Needs: City of Toledo and Lucas County, Ohio

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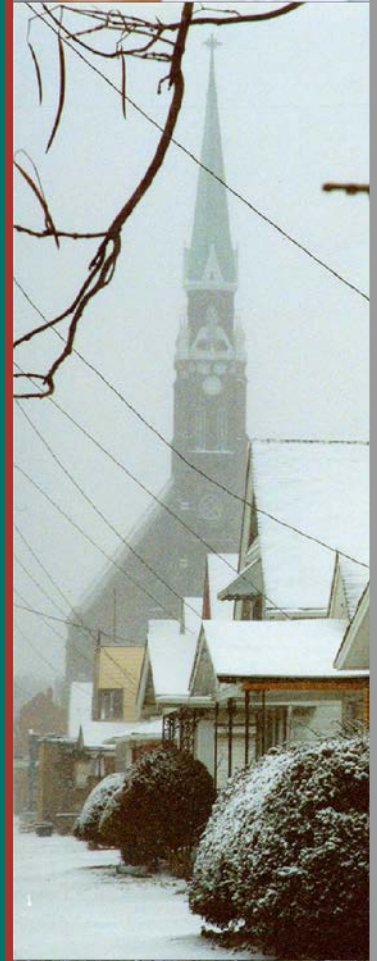
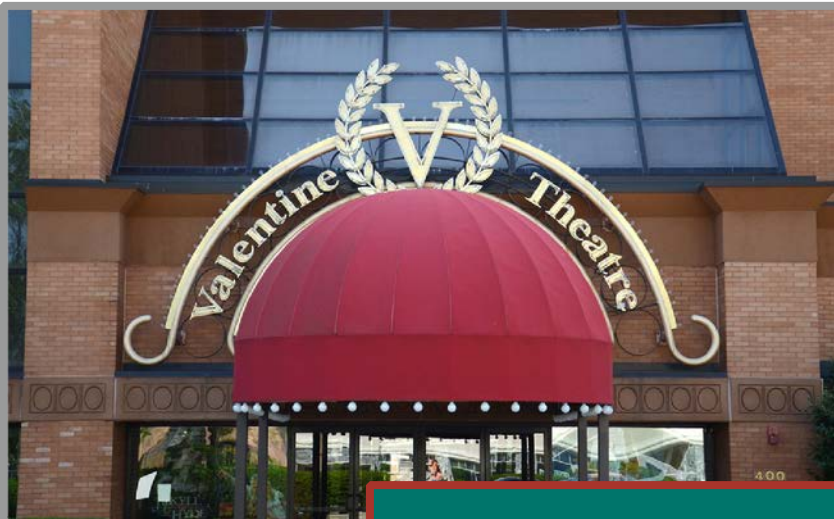
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Assessing Community Needs

City of Toledo and
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

05	Executive Summary
09	Literary Review of Community Strategies, Plans, and Documents
9	Research Approach
9	Community Strengths and Weaknesses from the Plans
15	Concluding Comments
17	Economic Landscape of the City of Toledo and Lucas County
17	Defining the Study Area
18	Using the American Community Survey
19	Unemployment
20	Labor Force Participation Rate
21	Median Household Income
22	Persons in Poverty
23	Single-Parent Households
24	Percentage of Households with Fewer Vehicles Than Workers
26	Walk Time to Grocery Stores
27	Walk Time to Health Care
27	Education
30	Population Trends
35	Summary of Socioeconomic Conditions
37	Observations from the Toledo Region
37	Research Approach
38	Focus Group Observations
48	Summary of Focus Group Observations
50	Observations from Key Informant Interviews
54	Observations from Foundation Staff Interviews
57	Final Thoughts
61	Works Cited
63	Appendices
65	Appendix A: Plans Reviewed and Plan Recommendations
67	Appendix B: Migration Tables
69	Appendix C: List of Organizations Participating in Focus Group Sessions
71	Appendix D: List of Organizations Participating in Key Informant Interviews

LIST OF TABLES, FIGURES, AND MAPS

TABLES

- 67 Table 1A: Total In- and Out-Migration
- 68 Table 2A: Total Brain-Drain/Brain-Gain Migration
- 68 Table 3A: In- and Out-Migration of Prime-Aged Workers
- 69 Table 4A: Organizations Participating in Focus Groups
- 71 Table 5A: Organizations Participating in Key Informant Interviews

FIGURES

- 31 Figure 1: Lucas County Population

MAPS

- 18 Map 1: Defining the Region
- 20 Map 2: Unemployment
- 21 Map 3: Labor Force Participation Rates
- 22 Map 4: Median Household Income
- 23 Map 5: Persons in Poverty
- 24 Map 6: Single-Parent Households
- 25 Map 7: Percentage of Households with Fewer Vehicles Than Workers
- 26 Map 8: Walk Time to Grocery Stores
- 28 Map 9: Walk Time to Health Care Providers
- 29 Map 10: Persons with Less Than High School Education
- 30 Map 11: Persons with a Bachelor's or Higher Degree
- 32 Map 12: Out-Migration for All Persons from Lucas County
- 32 Map 13: Out-Migration of Residents Aged 25 to 34 from Lucas County
- 33 Map 14: In-Migrations by All Persons to Lucas County
- 34 Map 15: In-Migration of Residents Aged 25 to 34 to Lucas County

Executive Summary

At the core of issues in Lucas County and, in particular, the City of Toledo is poverty. While this does not necessarily provide an “Aha!” moment, current conditions that contribute to being economically disadvantaged in many areas of the city and county affect not only current residents but will also affect future residents—without meaningful and targeted interventions. It is beyond the scope of the Toledo Community Foundation, or any single institution for that matter, to unilaterally address the range of issues presented in this study. Remedying these issues must be accomplished through the coordination and leveraging of resources, including public, private, personal, and not-for-profit resources.

Poverty affects different parts of the population in different ways. In the Toledo region, as shown in the data, poverty and its outcomes are concentrated in the urban core. Lower household income, higher unemployment, lower labor force participation, higher levels of those without a high school degree, and lower levels of those who haven’t finished college are all concentrated in census tracts within the city and, notably, the urban core. In the very urban and more exurban places in Lucas County, mobility is an issue for some, with reduced access to personal, public, and for-hire modes of transportation. This limits access to jobs, child care, and a healthy lifestyle, including efficient access to both healthy food and health care.

For the youngest in the county, there are concerns about the readiness of children to enter kindergarten. Lack of kindergarten preparedness leads to concerns of the quality of early childhood education. Access to health care, healthy food, a clean environment without lead contamination, and other factors all affect a child’s educational performance. While solving these issues now won’t immediately change the statistics on poverty, changing these conditions may help future generations to emerge from poverty.

Senior citizens are also affected by poverty. Fixed incomes and low incomes, often with only cost-of-living adjustments based on the Consumer Price Index, may not keep up with actual cost changes within the local economy. Also, as seniors try to “age in place” they increasingly experience loneliness and isolation as they become more homebound. Mobility becomes limited for those in later stages of life—by both physical and structural issues—increasing the importance of senior-specific care services and access to reliable transportation.

In the middle are those affected by barriers to entry to jobs, including barriers such as access to reliable transportation and child care. Many households in the City of Toledo-Lucas County study area have fewer vehicles than workers and experience unreliable “for-hire” transportation services. Although TARTA routes crisscross the city, access outside the city to public transit is limited. Budget restraints limits services (including Sunday service bus routes being reduced), and the system is not always an efficient way to get to work. Limited and lack of access to transportation is also a barrier to accessing safe and reliable child care.

Exacerbating these problems is a perceived lack of services for particular groups, including the LGBTQ, ethnic, veterans, those in poverty, the working poor, and immigrant communities, and the lack of sensitivity and understanding when providing services to these communities. There is a significant need for training to understand the impacts of culture, orientation, economics, and other factors when assisting clients, constituents, families, and students. This also includes training on how to help those impacted by the opioid crisis in Lucas County.

The issues revealed throughout the Toledo region are no different from other places across the nation. Each area, with the right leadership, commitment, and collaborative heart, can and has made strides in tackling their issues and improving their economic situations. There are significant resources in Lucas County to begin to address many of the issues discussed in this study; however, better organization of these resources, including the coordination of activities, sharing of information and resources, and collaboration among agency service providers, is at the forefront of how to be more effective.

Developing a shared vision with support agencies, institutions, and groups would help to better align and focus strategies to address the issues. Regular meetings among providers, from large to small and with equal voice, would help to reduce duplication and increase collaboration. Such meetings could be facilitated by an organized and structured system, where information is shared to the benefit of all stakeholders.

Shared services among some organizations would prove useful in creating efficiencies and enhancing effectiveness. The process of applying for grants, and then managing the data necessary for evaluations and reporting, is often difficult, particularly for smaller organizations. A shared services or back office, which includes clerical, accounting, and payroll assistance, would help organizations apply for grants and better assist with service delivery.

Finally, Lucas County agencies and organizations see the need for a change in how grants can be used: first, to help with sustaining operations, and second, to expand the types of things that can be funded, such as the ability to access “emergency” grants for unexpected expenses such as technology or heating failures.

There is a significant need to help alleviate the causes and conditions of poverty in Lucas County, but more specifically in the City of Toledo. The causes and consequences affect all aspects of the population, but intervention in Pre-K and early childhood education can do more than alleviate current conditions: it can change the conditions of the region. While there are many resources targeted to many of the causes and consequences across Lucas County, better coordination of physical, financial, information, and human capital is believed to be the key to changing the trajectory for the region.

FOCUS OF THE STUDY

The Upjohn Institute was engaged by the Toledo Community Foundation to undertake a study to assess the critical needs of the City of Toledo and Lucas County, based on its grantmaking priorities of education and literacy, social services, physical and mental health, neighborhood and urban affairs, natural resources, and arts and culture. A needs assessment provides a deeper understanding of the community and reveals the major areas of concern that need to be addressed. Convening conversations with community representatives helps those in the community to focus on priorities—there are many issues, but it is important to focus on what are the most important or most critical issues right now, and how these will change over time. Such conversations help earn community support for those priorities. Through this study, the Foundation hopes to better understand the most pressing challenges within the community, as well as the changing needs of the Toledo region. This information will aid the Foundation with intervention strategies through grants and partnerships.

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Literary Review of Community Strategies, Plans, and Documents

RESEARCH APPROACH

As part of the initial analysis, the Upjohn team reviewed relevant documents, plans, and studies provided by the Toledo Community Foundation (Foundation) to understand previous community discussions and priorities conducted within the past 5 years. These documents were examined specifically to identify the level of connectivity between the Foundation's six grantmaking priority areas and ongoing community efforts. The objective of this document review is also to determine any alignment between these plans and to help develop a common set of goals and objectives to build from moving forward.

This review first identifies community strengths and weaknesses as stated in the examined documents. The programs or recommended programs that closely align with each of the Foundation's six grantmaking areas of education and literacy, social services, physical and mental health, neighborhood and urban affairs, natural resources, and arts and culture are then discussed. In reviewing the documents, special attention is focused on identifying connections between different community partners and envisioned partnerships with the Foundation. A list of the documents reviewed and the recommendations of each are shown in Appendix A.

COMMUNITY STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES FROM THE PLANS

Strengths

Overall, the documents identified several strengths within the City of Toledo and Lucas County relative to the Foundation's grantmaking areas:

- A population with high school diplomas on par with the national average and a high proportion of the city's residents with a bachelor's degree (25%) (education and literacy grantmaking area)
- A health care sector with dedicated community partners and growing employment opportunities (social services grantmaking area)
- A low percentage of current smokers and good health insurance coverage (physical and mental health grantmaking area)
- A high percentage of women- and minority-owned businesses and a low cost of living, making housing affordable for most populations (neighborhood and urban affairs grantmaking area)

- The Maumee River is noted as an asset to downtown development (natural resources grantmaking area)
- The Toledo Museum of Art stands out as an exemplary institution (arts and culture grantmaking area)

Weaknesses

Despite these strengths, however, the documents also identified several weaknesses within the city and county:

- A low level of kindergarten readiness, with only 18% of children entering kindergarten prepared to learn, and a low four-year graduation rate (education and literacy grantmaking area)
- A high level of food insecurity (over 18% of residents are food insecure), a high level of poverty (21.1% versus a statewide average of 15.9%), and a high number of low-income individuals (31.8% versus a statewide average of 24.8%) (social services grantmaking area)
- High rates of binge drinking, obesity, and infant mortality (physical and mental health grantmaking area)
- A high number of homes with lead issues, safe and affordable low-income housing, and geographic segregation of minority populations (neighborhood and urban affairs grantmaking area)
- Toledo ranks low, compared to other cities, in the availability and coverage of parks, and the Toledo water crisis has created doubts about the city's water quality (natural resources grantmaking area)
- Increasing youth and minority participation in arts and the overall quantity of art in public spaces was noted as a goal (arts and culture grantmaking area)

The identified strengths and weaknesses from the examined documents are discussed below relative to their association with the Foundation's six grantmaking areas. Here, the programs designed to benefit from the identified strengths or to resolve the recognized weaknesses are summarized.

Education and Literacy

According to the 2016 Head Start and Early Head Start Community Needs Assessment, students living in the City of Toledo are less prepared to enter kindergarten than students living in the outlying suburbs. Four-year graduation rates are also lower for students matriculating in the central city than for those living outside the city limits. The availability of high-quality day care centers is also an issue, with placements for less than 3% of the children

in Lucas County (Toledo Public Schools, 2016). Additionally, Head Start programs are not accessible for many families that have child care needs.

As a remedy to these issues, Toledo's mayor has proposed a universal prekindergarten potentially for all 3- and 4-year-olds in the city. Early childhood education not only provides students with the skills necessary for kindergarten but has also been shown to increase high school graduation rates (Elms, 2018). Funding for this initiative has not yet been revealed. Also unidentified at this time are the community partners who will work to build the capacity and infrastructure for such an initiative.

The Toledo Talent Alignment Strategy (2018) finds that the Toledo area produces a high number of bachelor's degree holders, with health care (3,900), science and engineering (1,500), business (1,400), and education (1,400) degrees being the most popular among graduates. However, retaining graduates is becoming increasingly challenging as the number of jobs available for degree holders does not match the number of positions available in the region, indicating there is a misalignment between education and employment opportunities in the region. To help retain and attract a younger workforce, Toledo-area educational facilities and businesses are developing partnerships to develop the skills and credentials needed for employers in the region. For example, TechHire Toledo is piloting two initiatives with Northwest State Community College to certify and train potential employees in information technology skills and place them in internships and apprenticeships with local area employers.

Social Services

As the health care sector in Toledo has grown, so has the influence of ProMedica Health Systems, the largest employer in the city. In 2014, in collaboration with the New York City-based Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), ProMedica launched the Ebeid Neighborhood Promise (ENP) to revitalize Toledo's Uptown community, a high-poverty, high-unemployment neighborhood in the city. Specific programs include financial coaching presented in collaboration with LISC, United Way, and the Toledo Community Foundation; an oasis in a food desert, Market on the Green, a full-service grocery store offering fresh and affordable healthy food choices; and community programming, such as health screenings and classes in cooking and nutrition, CPR, and fitness. This intervention is designed to address issues such as poverty and food insecurity in the city.

The Ohio Statewide Transit Needs Study of the Toledo Region (2015) further highlights the issue of poverty in the city. According to the study, the percentage of low-income individuals¹ in Lucas County has grown from 22.1% in 2000 to 31.8% in 2012. This means that Lucas County has a poverty rate significantly higher than the statewide average of 24.8%. A need for lower-income residents is reliable transportation. The Needs Study highlights that

¹ Low-income individuals are defined as those belonging to a family earning an income of less than 1.5 times the poverty threshold set by the federal government.

there are significant gaps in the coverage of the Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority (TARTA), as residents have become more dispersed and the funding for programs has become variable. The authors highlight the partnership between TARTA and Owens Community College as a potential blueprint for community partnerships to provide and fund transportation for those in need.

Building on the already existing development, the revitalization of Uptown is also featured prominently in the Downtown Toledo Master Plan (2017). The Uptown District was identified as an area with the greatest potential for new housing development. The plan specifically mentions working to infill the areas around Uptown Green to transform it into a community anchor. The plan lists the City of Toledo, property owners, Lucas County, Lucas County Land Bank, Toledo Design Center, LISC, Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority, Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce, RGP-Jobs Ohio, banks, TARTA, local developers, and the Uptown District Association as partners in this project.

There's also a growing need in Lucas County for families to foster children. According to the 2019 PCSAO Factbook, Ohio's opioid epidemic is largely responsible for the increase in the number of children entering foster care. In 2016, there were 288 fatal opioid overdoses in northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan, and 151 of those were in Lucas County (Toledo Blade, 2018). A total of 1,052 children in Lucas County were placed in care outside of their homes in 2016 by the Lucas County Children Services; in 2018, that number increased to 1,464 (PCSAO Factbook, 2019). Of the 1,464 children placed in 2018, 26% were removed from their homes due to neglect, 13% for parental drug dependency, 11% for physical abuse, 2% for sexual abuse, and 48% for other reasons. The goal is to eventually reunite children with family, but in the interim children need of a safe place to live. In 2018, children in Lucas County were primarily placed in licensed foster homes (57%), but many were placed with relatives (34%). A small percentage of children in 2018 were placed in a group home (5%), 3% were adopted, and 1% were able to live independently. The cost for placing children in foster care increases annually. The Lucas County Children Services 2018 budget for placing children in foster care was \$48.2 million, with the agency spending \$1.1 million per month on foster care placement (Toledo Blade, 2018).

Physical and Mental Health

The 2016/2017 Lucas County Community Health Assessment found that nearly one-fourth (24%) of Lucas County adults were considered binge drinkers (defined as five or more drinks for males or four or more drinks for females on one occasion) in the past month (the highest of any other city in Ohio). Additionally, 73% of adults were either overweight or obese. One initiative designed to help curb obesity is the Eat Fresh, Live Well program, which works to increase the number of Toledo corner stores that carry fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as other healthy options. The program is administered by the Lucas County Health Department and produce for the corner stores is delivered by a local nonprofit, Lott Industries, which provides jobs for developmentally disabled residents.

An additional program designed to improve health and increase physical activity is the Live Well Greater Toledo initiative. The goal of Live Well Greater Toledo is to improve access to fruits and vegetables and incentivize restaurants to serve healthy options. The initiative also aims to develop safe walking and biking routes. Partners in the effort include the YMCA and the Jewish Community Center of Greater Toledo, the University of Toledo, the City of Toledo, the Toledo Community Foundation, the Board of Lucas County Commissioners, the Toledo-Lucas Department of Health, and other local government, health, school, and business partners.

Another serious issue facing the residents of Toledo is a high rate of infant mortality (Healthy Lucas County, 2017). In 2014, the county's overall rate of infant mortality was 9.3 deaths per 1,000 compared to the state average of 6.8 deaths per 1,000. There is a stark racial divide in infant deaths, with 13 deaths per 1,000 for Black infants versus only 6 deaths per 1,000 for White infants. In 2018, the Ohio Department of Health provided \$850,000 to the Healthy Lucas County project to combat infant mortality. The project involves providing rental assistance, transportation, and utilities grants as well as home visits to women in high-risk census tracts. The grant was awarded to the Hospital Council of Northwest Ohio, which coordinates the project with Mercy Health, the Neighborhood Health Association, ProMedica, the Toledo-Lucas County Health Department, and the Northwest Ohio Pathways HUB care coordination system.

Neighborhood and Urban Affairs

The prevalence of lead in primarily minority-occupied areas of the City of Toledo was identified as a major health and safety issue. According to the Toledo Lead Poisoning Prevention Coalition in its 2016 report, over 35,000 children under the age of 6 in Lucas County are at a high risk for lead poisoning. The homes with higher risks of lead tend to be those that are older and lower valued. To help combat the issue, the Toledo City Council passed a law in 2016 requiring rental properties with one to four units and home day care centers built before 1978 to be inspected and tested for lead hazards by the Lucas County Health Department. Fines of \$50 per day up to \$10,000 were to be levied for tenant-occupied properties out of compliance. As of June 2018, the law had been struck down and litigation is currently pending; however, other efforts to address this issue are also underway.

In addition to the ordinance, the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) strives to develop a comprehensive approach to healthy housing. This includes the creation of a local triage team to prioritize and coordinate the delivery of services and a unified plan for partnering agencies to coordinate service delivery. The Toledo Community Foundation brought the national Green and Healthy Homes model to Toledo to help address the issue of unsafe housing in the community. Partners in GHHI include the Foundation, Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, the City of Toledo Department of Neighborhoods, ProMedica Health System, Mercy Health, United Way of Greater Toledo, LISC Toledo, NeighborWorks Toledo Region, Neighborhood Health Association, and the Hospital Council of Northwest Ohio.

Toledo community partners have worked to promote the growth of minority- and women-owned businesses. The University of Toledo Minority Business Development Center provides training and networking opportunities, as well as a launchpad incubator. Partners include Assets Toledo, the Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce, JobsOhio, the Northwest Ohio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Toledo African American Chamber of Commerce, and the City of Toledo. Additionally, the City of Toledo Office of Diversity and Inclusion has strategic Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) and Women Business Enterprise (WBE) certifications. The state of Ohio has set a goal of purchasing 15% of all goods and services from MBEs and WBEs. The downtown development plan also lists the creation of a business innovation center as one of the primary projects. The goal of the center is to complement already-existing incubators in the region including Seed Coworking in Downtown, the LaunchPad Incubation Program at the University of Toledo, and ProMedia Innovations, as well as to provide linkages between already existing groups such Startup Toledo and Tech Toledo.

A major new strategy underway in Toledo is the JumpStart Core City program. JumpStart is a venture development organization based in Cleveland that helps entrepreneurs start and grow new companies. Core City is an intense business-advising program focused on non-tech businesses and start-ups owned by minority and women entrepreneurs. Five entrepreneurs are chosen twice each year for the program, which includes 12 weeks of business advising, industry-specific mentoring, and collaborative learning. Each 12-week session culminates with a competition among the five companies, who pitch their products to a panel of judges for monetary prizes.

Natural Resources

The Maumee River is cited as an asset to further the development of downtown. Three of the six catalytic projects mentioned in the Downtown Toledo Master Plan revolve around the riverfront. The first involves the extension of the downtown riverfront with a new Riverfront Promenade. Potential partners are the Downtown Toledo Development Corporation, City of Toledo, Lucas County, Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority, Destination Toledo, Metroparks Toledo, boating community (Lucas County Sheriff's Office, U.S. Coast Guard, Toledo Police Department), and property owners. The second project involves investing in parking space along the Marina District site. Potential partners are the Downtown Toledo Development Corporation, City of Toledo, Lucas County, Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority, Metroparks Toledo, Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments, and property owners. The final project involves the development of the Nautical Mile, connecting the Anthony Wayne Bridge to the I-280 Bridge with green space, trails, and an accessible riverfront. Potential partners are the Downtown Toledo Development Corporation, Metroparks Toledo, City of Toledo, Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority, Great Lakes Museum, property owners, and river users. The Maumee River is also cited as a targeted area of improvement by the Arts Commission, with plans to integrate art into cultural activities and public spaces along the river.

Lake Erie provides a challenge for Toledo residents. In 2014, one-half million residents lost access to drinking water as algae fed by phosphorus runoff (microcystin) rendered the water supply unsafe to drink. Since then, several measures have been passed by the Ohio General Assembly, including restrictions on fertilizer and loans to upgrade water treatment systems. Much of the local effort has focused on reviving trust in the water supply and increasing tests for microcystin during algae bloom season.

The Toledo Community Foundation has led a successful effort to establish the Great Lakes One Water Partnership, a coalition of more than 30 community foundations throughout the Great Lakes region, that is dedicated to advancing clean water strategies at the local and regional levels. Beginning in 2019, a subgroup of seven foundations and their community partners launched a 3-year citizen science initiative designed to accurately measure nutrient loading in the Lake Erie basin and advocate for collaborative solutions to combat toxic algae blooms.

Arts and Culture

The 2015 Toledo Strategic Plan for Arts and Culture focused on building upon existing strengths in the community while increasing access and participation for underrepresented groups. Many of the strategies involve increasing collaboration between local partners including universities, Toledo Public Schools, Head Start, the Toledo City Council, the Toledo Museum of Art, the Toledo Community Foundation, churches, and local businesses, among others. Some key provisions of the plan include the creation of arts and culture districts, increasing housing for artists, and implementing place-based public art projects.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The Toledo community has rallied to respond to the challenges identified in the various plans and studies examined to date. However, the efficacy of these interventions is difficult to assess, as they lay out potential paths forward rather than evaluate how well these programs are performing. In examining what has been put into action based on these documents, there are issues that need to be addressed.

First, all these plans emphasize collaboration; however, they fail to designate how that collaboration will occur. Although all the plans list partners or potential partners, it is difficult to assess what each actor's role is in the overall delivery of services. Additionally, the major player that oversees coordinating the project often is not identified. While the various organizations in Toledo seem willing to work together to institute change, the mechanism for how they should do so is underdeveloped.

Second, many programs rely heavily on governmental funding and actors. Securing state and federal funding is an excellent strategy for committing to achieving various short-term

objectives. It is often not a long-term solution, however, as funding and political will for certain projects can vary. Many of the plans reviewed suggest large-scale transformative projects, yet do not provide a plan for funding such initiatives. This also feeds into the issue of coordination. Potential partners are identified, but not what each is expected to contribute funding-wise.

Overall, the community is prioritizing the issues identified in previous plans and studies and building upon already existing strengths. Community organizations seem to be willing to work together to combine and pool resources; however, who is contributing what and who oversees implementation is a detail many of the plans gloss over. Improving coordination and finding long-term funding for projects would contribute to the continued success and sustainability of community efforts.

Economic Landscape of the City of Toledo and Lucas County

DEFINING THE STUDY AREA

The Toledo Community Foundation provides support to six programmatic grantmaking areas within the City of Toledo, as well as the balance of Lucas County. The city, located in Lucas County in northwest Ohio, is 84.12 square miles and primarily urban in nature. The county is about 596 square miles, of which 341 square miles are land and 255 square miles are water.

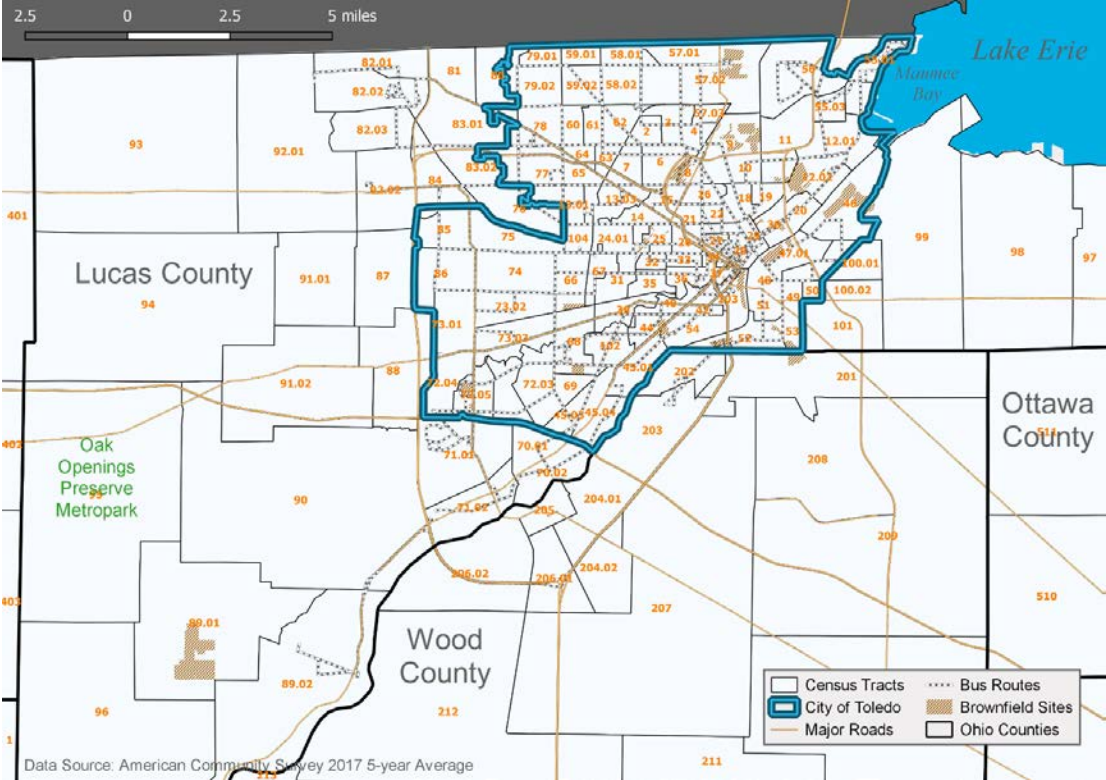
The city is comprised of 95 census tracts, and the county, including the City of Toledo, includes 127 census tracts (see Map 1). The mean or average number of residents for census tracts in the city is 2,931, with a range on the lower end at 889 residents and on the higher end, 6,163 residents. For all of Lucas County, the mean census tract size is 3,413 residents, with a range from 889 to 12,407 in population. There is the potential, based on the 2020 Census, that if these estimates are correct, tracts with a low number of residents may be combined into neighboring tracts and large tracts may be divided into more “normal” sized tracts. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the average tract is about 4,000 residents, with the minimum size being 1,200 and the maximum size 8,000.

According to the most recent U.S. Census Bureau estimates for 2017, the population for the City of Toledo was 279,455. The overall population was 51.7% female. The two largest ethnic groups were White alone at 63.1% and Black or African American alone at 27.2%. The average rate of foreign-born persons between 2013 and 2017 was 3.7%. Median household income was \$35,808 and the percentage of persons in poverty was 26.5%.

The population estimate was 430,887 for Lucas County in 2017 and the non-city portion of the county was about 35% of all county population. When looking at all of Lucas County, including the City of Toledo, White alone and Black or African American alone represent about 95% of the population at 74.6% and 23.1%, respectively. The share of foreign-born persons was about the same as the city at 3.8%. Median household income was higher for the entire county at \$44,820 and persons in poverty was lower at 17.9%.

It is important to note that the 2020 decennial census of population for the United States will soon be underway. Complete and accurate collection of data in Lucas County and the City of Toledo is essential for residents to receive their “fair share” of transfers. In fiscal year 2017, the city and county received \$2 billion in transfers that supported an array of needs including (but not limited to) transportation, health care, and education, as well as support

for low-income and minority communities. To help ensure that the count will be as complete as possible, the city and the county have partnered to create the Toledo-Lucas County Complete County Committee to Support the 2020 Decennial Census. This committee consists of members from business, health care, religious, education, labor, and the community at large. As mentioned above, not only will funding allocations be determined by these counts, but the definition of tracts may change and with it the spatial nature of how data are collected and reported. Both have the potential to impact the level of resources, including public, private, personal, not-for-profit, and philanthropic resources, and where need is identified and resources directed.



Map 1: Defining the Region

USING THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

Micro-geographic estimates of many economic indicators are provided by the American Community Survey, commonly referred to as the ACS. For use in this research, subcounty and subcity data are used at the census tract level and are from 2017. Aside from the limitation of the data being from 2017, the estimates are also based on five-year averages, from 2013 to 2017. The implications for this are particularly important when using the absolute values of the indicators. As the national and regional economy recovered from the Great Recession, it is likely that some indicators improved over the data-collection period, and that improvement will be diminished by using the average, given that the basis for that average is more than 2 years old.

Given the potential issue of the absolute estimates not being consistent with current conditions, the indicator for any given census tract should be used as a “pointer” that shows strength or weakness relative to other tracts in the city or the county. As an example, the unemployment rate for Lucas County was 5.2% in February 2019, while the range for tract-based unemployment was less than 5% on the low end, to 42% on the high end. It is likely that, if more current estimates were available, unemployment may be lower in many of these tracts. However, using the ACS estimates as pointers, and while tracts may have actually shown improvement, they still can be used to identify areas that may need assistance based on an assumption that “while a rising tide lifts all boats,” tracts that are relatively distressed in the ACS data may still be the same today.

UNEMPLOYMENT

The unemployment rate that most people commonly refer to is the U-3 rate. It is defined as “the total unemployed, as a percent of the civilian labor force.”² This is the part of the population that is actively seeking work, but unemployed. The rate or percent is calculated by dividing the number of unemployed by the total labor force.

As mentioned earlier, the tract-level data are based on five-year ACS data that are from 2013 to 2017. Over that period and into the current time frame, the national, state, and local economies have improved; thus, for many geographies, the rates in all those geographies have likely declined. According to the data service at the St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank,³ the unemployment rate for Lucas County was 6.6%, but has dropped and was most recently at 5.2% in February of this year. Similarly, the rate for Ohio decreased from 5.8% in mid-2014 to 4.6% in February 2019, as did the national U-3 rate, dropping from 6.1% in 2014 to 3.8% in the most recent estimates.

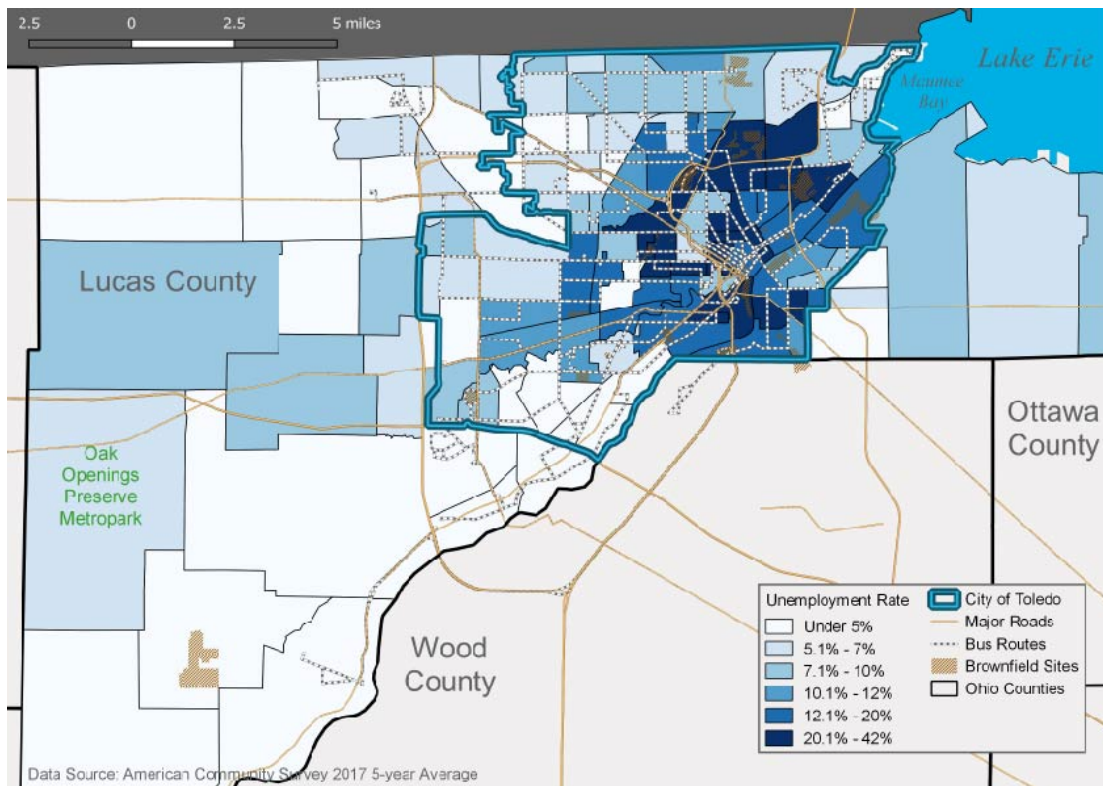
While it can be hypothesized that rates have decreased in all Lucas County census tracts, it may also be hypothesized that, on a relative basis, tracts that have higher rates of unemployment in the ACS data will continue to have higher rates of unemployment when compared relatively to the portfolio of census tracts in the county. Although the tracts are likely doing better in an improving economy, more distressed tracts may continue to now be further distressed.

Looking at Map 2, the relatively higher levels of unemployment are more concentrated in the urban core and within the City of Toledo. Much of the suburban and exurban parts of Lucas County have some of the lowest levels of unemployment. Several tracts in the urban core had between 20.1% and 42% rates of unemployment. The important thing to note about

² <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t15.htm>

³ <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/OHLUCA5URN>

these values is that, for this period and depending on the census tract, one to two people out of every five actively involved in the labor force were actively looking for work.



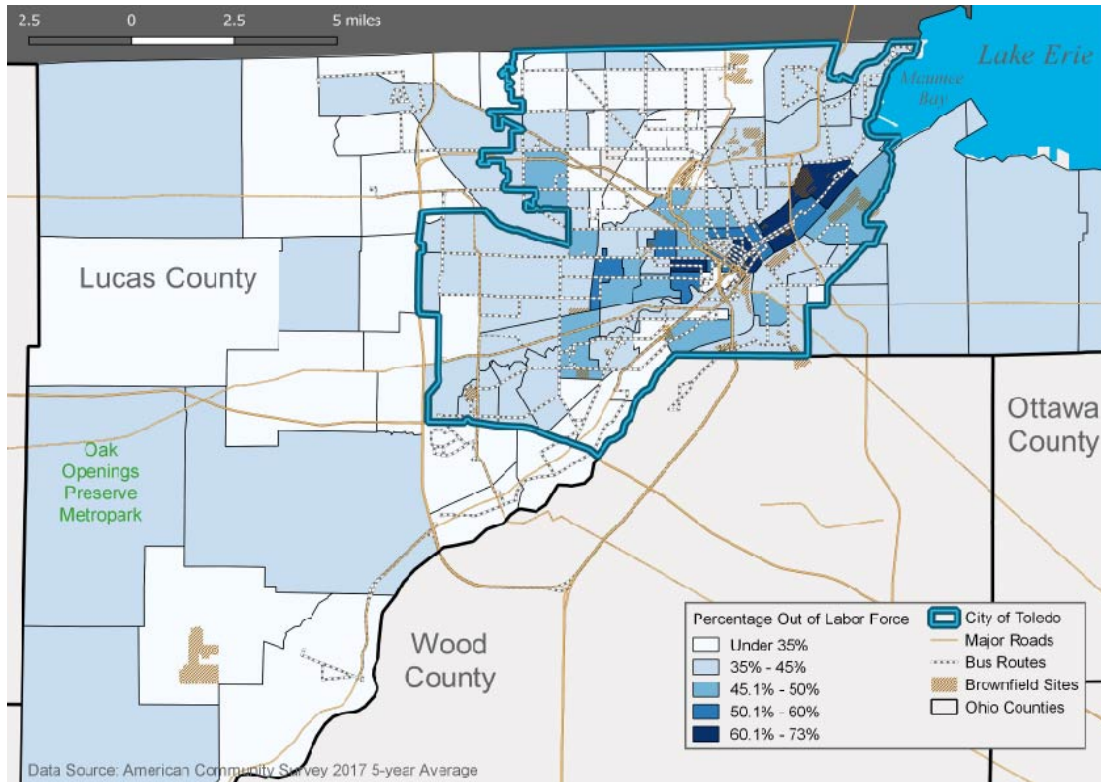
LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE

The labor force participation rate (LFPR) “represents the proportion of the total 16 years old and over population that is in the labor force.”⁴ Although there are other measures that could work equally well, the ACS reports the LFPR rate for census tracts. While there is some error in this measure, including younger people who may be students and with no age bounds on the older end, this also includes retired individuals. In this case, distribution of those aging in a place may affect the rate.

Within Map 3, the LFPR was converted to a percentage of people out of the labor force by subtracting the LFPR from 100. Here it is important to remember that those not in the labor force are those not actively employed or seeking employment. While LFPR is not calculated at the county level, shares of the population not in the workforce for Ohio were 36.7% in mid-2014 and 37.4% in 2019, and 37.2% and 37%, respectively, for the United States in the same time frame.

⁴ <https://www.census.gov/topics/employment/labor-force/about/glossary.html>

While less pronounced than the unemployment rates, urban core tracts tended to have lower participation rates and a larger share of people out of the labor force. In the poorest performing tracts, at least 6 out of every 10 residents were not in the labor force, which translates into a labor force participation rate between 27% and 40%. Many of the census tracts contained more than half of possible residents in the labor force. Interestingly, many tracts in the county as well as the city had less than 35% of residents out of the labor force, which roughly translates to a 65% labor force participation rate.



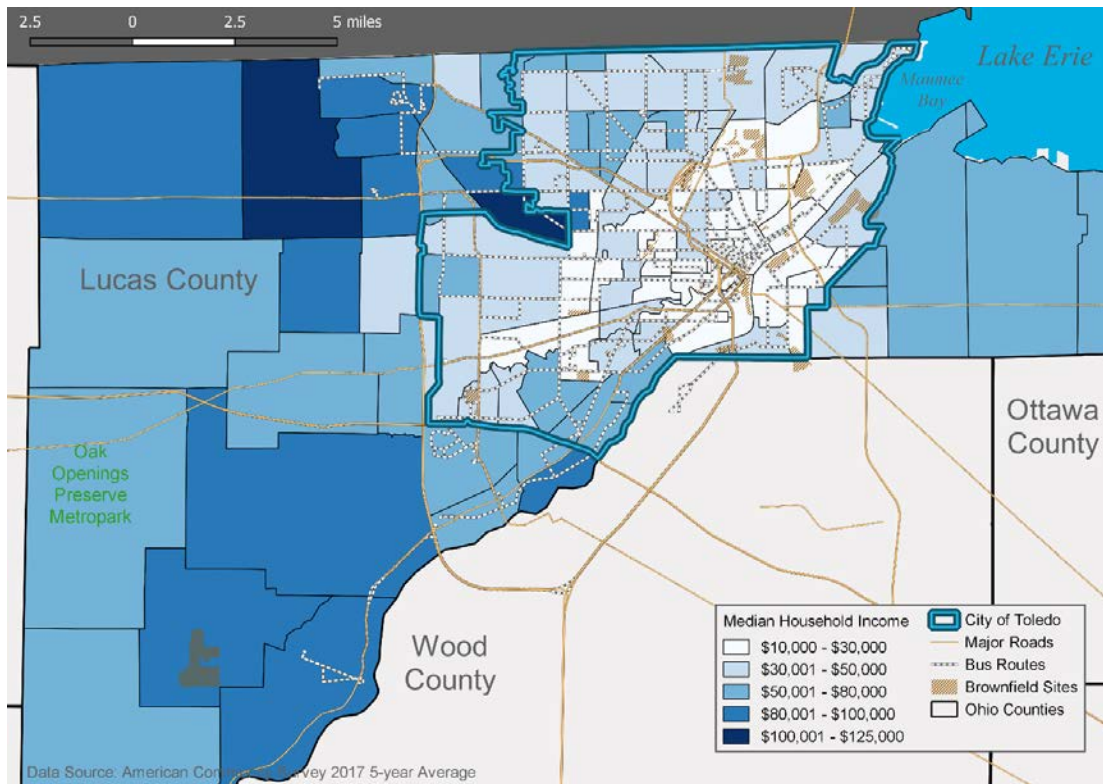
Map 3: Labor Force Participation Rates

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

In the most recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau (2019), the national median household income (HHI) was \$60,336; for Ohio, it was less than the national median, at \$54,021. Locally, the most recent estimates of household income for Lucas County and the City of Toledo were \$44,802 and \$35,808, respectively.

As shown on Map 4, the higher incomes tend to be in the parts of Lucas County that are not part of the City of Toledo. Using ACS five-year data, two census tracts located in the northern part of the county, but outside the city, had median incomes of between \$100,000 and \$125,000. Most of the other tracts that were in the county but outside the city had estimates of household income that are above the county's average HHI.

Within the city, most of the tracts were below the county’s HHI, but there were some tracts that were in the \$50,001 to \$80,000 range, as well as a couple that were in the \$80,001 to \$100,000 range. Most of the tracts with lower household income are clustered in or near the urban core, as indicated on Map 4, with HHIs of less than \$30,000.



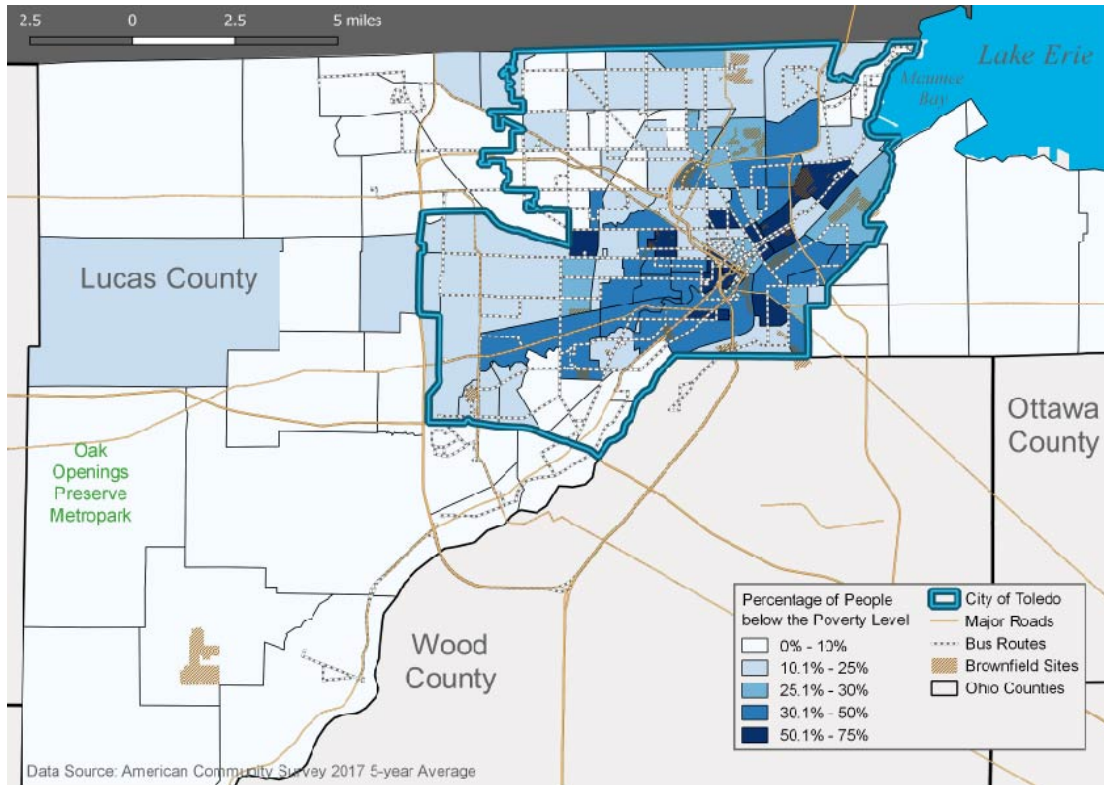
Map 4: Median Household Income

PERSONS IN POVERTY

The most recent estimates of persons in poverty in the United States is 13.4%, with Ohio at 14%. The current estimate of persons in poverty for Lucas County is 19.8% and for the City of Toledo, 26.5%, which means that slightly more than 1 person in 4 is in poverty.

As shown on Map 5, only two census tracts in the non-City of Toledo tracts in Lucas County have more than 10% of persons in poverty and those two tracts fall into the 10% to 25% rate, consistent with the county averages. The northern part of the City of Toledo tends to have tracts that are at or below the county’s average rate as well as below the city’s average rate. Similarly, there are many of the tracts in the western portion of the county that are at or below the city’s average rates. While there are a few moderately higher rates in the western portion of the city, persons in poverty, at least when measured by census tracts, tend to cluster in the city’s core and the eastern sections of the city. In these areas, many of the

census tracts have 30% to 50% of residents in poverty, with some tracts reaching 3 out of 4 residents, for a rate of 75% persons in poverty.



Map 5: Persons in Poverty

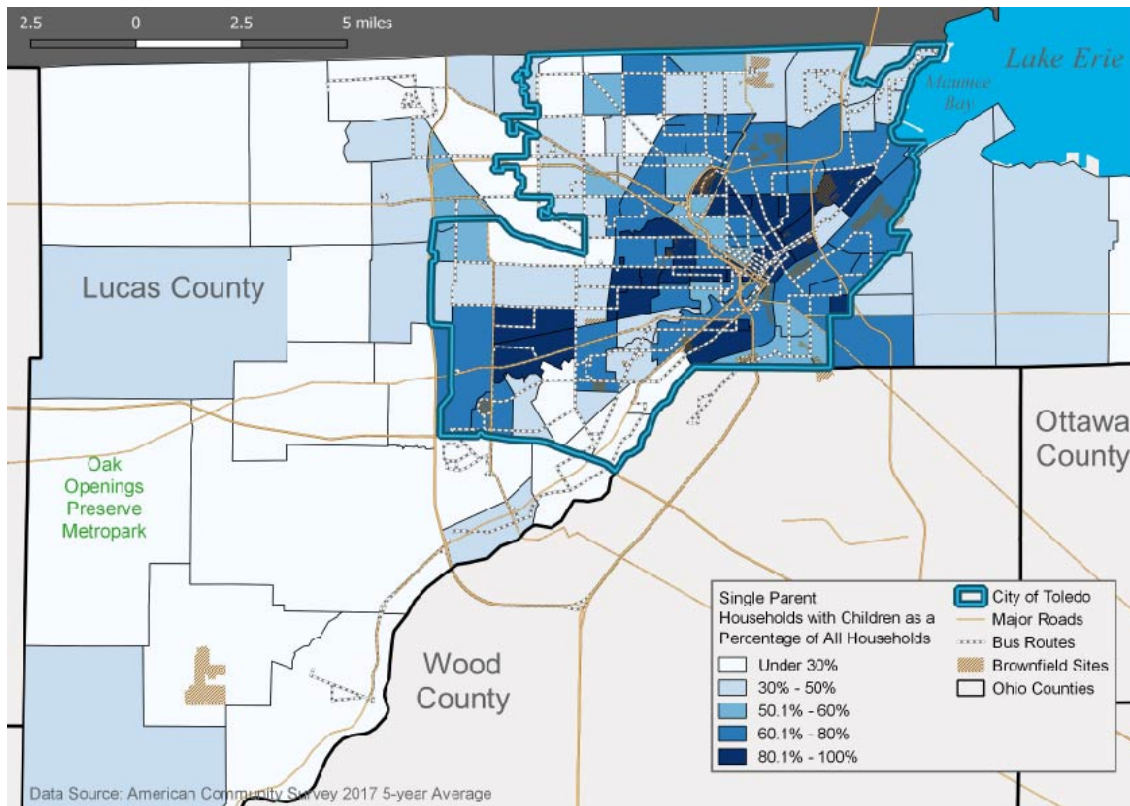
SINGLE-PARENT HOUSEHOLDS

Households with a single parent have received a significant amount of attention in the research recently. Across the country and based on the five-year ACS data, nearly 1 in 3 (32.2%) of households were headed by a single parent; Ohio was relatively the same at about 35.8%. The rate jumps to 47% for all of Lucas County, which includes the City of Toledo. In only the City of Toledo geography, nearly 6 out of 10 households are headed by a single parent, for a rate of 57.9%.

Single-parent households in Lucas County tend to be clustered in the urban core. While most of the non-city parts of Lucas County tend to have fewer single-parent households, a few of the tracts also have single-parent families in the 30% to 50% range. Within the city, most census tracts tend to be higher, with at least 50% of households being headed by a single parent.

Some census tracts within the urban core have percentages above 80%, as shown on Map 6. A few of the tracts show that 100% of families are headed by single parents. Interpreting this as fact that all families in the tract are headed by a single parent should be done carefully.

First, these tracts tend to have a low number of families in what are relatively small tracts. Second, the data reported in the American Community Survey are based on sampling, and with that technique comes some level of sampling error. As geographies get smaller (the data are based on a 1% sample), the sampling error can get quite large. That noted, the sample data in the ACS do suggest that some of these tracts have very high levels of single-parent households, and that may be a factor, when combined with other measures, in identifying tracts in distress.



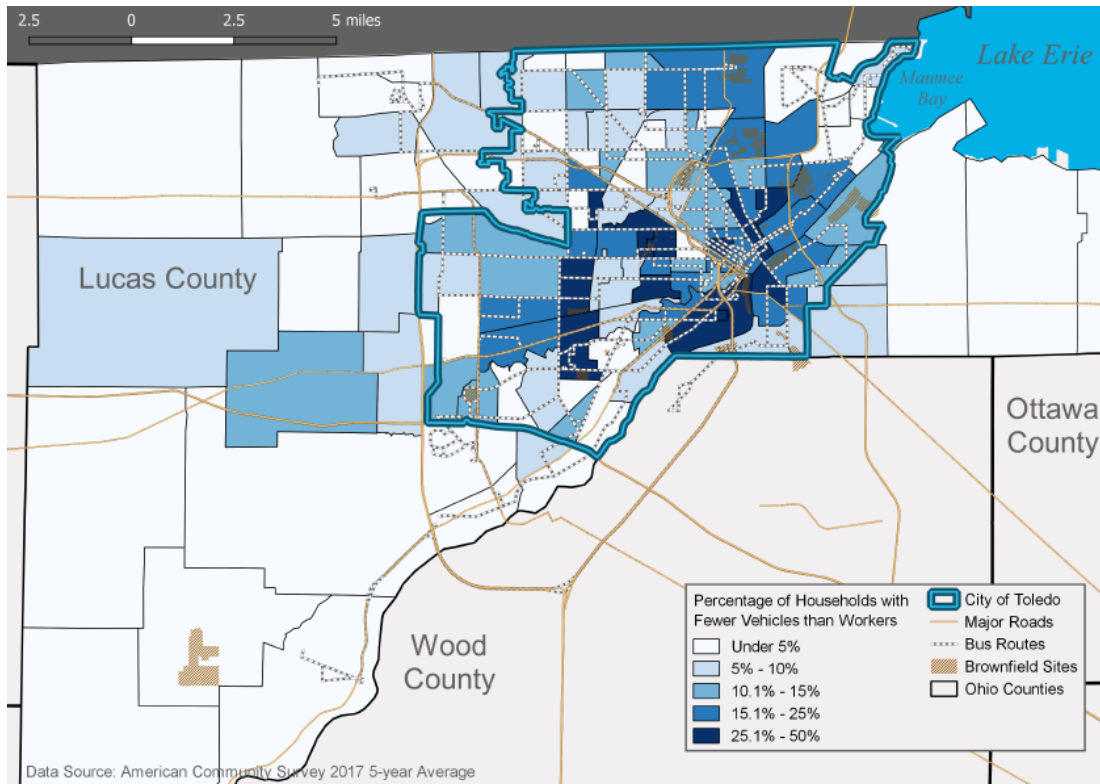
Map 6: Single-Parent Households

PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH FEWER VEHICLES THAN WORKERS

One of the common barriers to entry for staying in school, as well as keeping a job, is access to reliable and efficient transportation. The Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority (TARTA) offers good coverage of the city, with some extension of service beyond the city and into the county (see Map 7). Public transit, however, doesn't always offer the right times, the right routes, or sufficient access to meet the needs of all families, students, and workers.

The availability of a personal vehicle is often necessary to be able to have access to work and school, as well as to health care, child care, and groceries. Map 7 shows the share of households that have fewer vehicles than workers. This map doesn't address the issues of access to education, health, social, and personal services and in meeting those needs. What

this map does show is the share of households with more workers than vehicles. In this measure, this could be a single-person household with no vehicle, a two-person household with only one vehicle, or a five-person household with fewer than five vehicles.



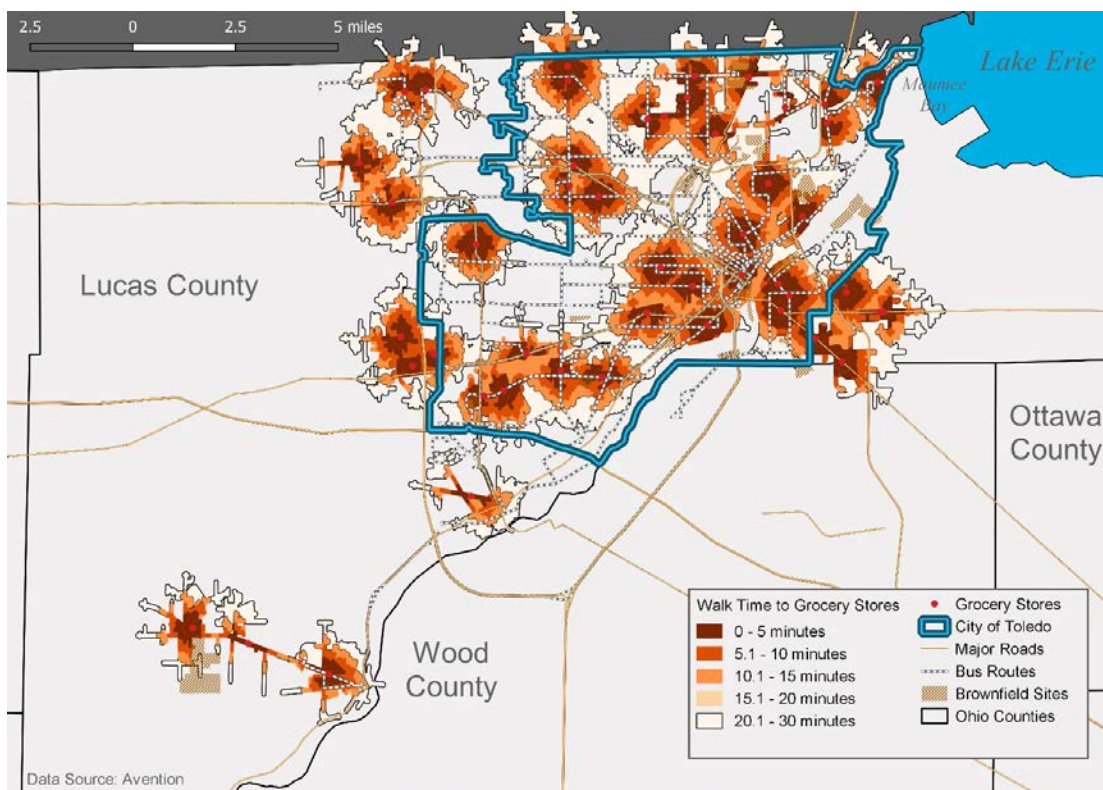
Map 7: Percentage of Households with Fewer Vehicles than Workers

Most of the county that is outside the City of Toledo tends to have households with fewer vehicles than workers, at a relatively low rate of less than 5% of households. While the suburbs and exurbs have a relatively small share of households, this can still be a limiting factor to obtaining a job because public transportation is also relatively limited in these areas. In the non-City of Toledo portion of Lucas County, a few census tracts are in the 5% to 10% range and one tract is in the 10.1% to 15% range.

The urban core within the City of Toledo tends to have the highest levels of households with fewer vehicles than workers. Within the urban core, some tracts have rates as high as 50%, while other areas in and near the core have rates of 15.1% to 25%. While many of these tracts are serviced by TARTA, it is unknown how much access to a vehicle or access to TARTA affects the ability of workers in a household to obtain and maintain employment. Also note that many tracts within the city also have significantly lower rates of households with fewer vehicles than workers that are more comparable to the rest of the county, including some census tracts in or near the urban core.

WALK TIME TO GROCERY STORES

A major concern in many urban areas is access to healthy, fresh, and unprocessed food. The lack of access to grocery stores is related to health issues, including increasing obesity by being unable to maintain a “healthy lifestyle.” In many urban areas, this lack of access is often referred to as a “food desert,” where only processed and fast food are available. Although the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 2011 defined a food desert as “no car and no supermarket within a mile,”⁵ for purposes of this research we are using a definition based on the assumption that mobility is often limited by lack of access to either private or public transportation. As shown on Map 8, walk times of up to 30 minutes are shown from full-service grocery stores, as reported by Avention.⁶



Map 8: Walk Time to Grocery Stores

As shown on Map 8, access to a full-service grocery store with healthy options is limited in many places in Lucas County, notably in much of the non-City of Toledo portions of the county; within the city there are many areas that exceed a 30-minute walk time to gain access to a grocery store. Given climatic conditions in northwest Ohio, a 30-minute walk for seniors, persons with disabilities, parents with children, and others can prove challenging,

⁵ <http://americannutritionassociation.org/newsletter/usda-defines-food-deserts>

⁶ Avention is a business-to-business marketing database that reports establishments, including industry and location. <https://www.dnb.com/products/marketing-sales/sales-acceleration.html>

particularly when also carrying groceries. As mentioned earlier, while TARTA provides service in several census tracts, it does not offer complete transportation coverage in either the city or the county. Further, there are many areas where there are more workers in the household than vehicles. These data also do not account for the potential for additional non-working family members, such as caregivers, having access to vehicles for non-work needs.

WALK TIME TO HEALTH CARE

Health care and access to health care continue to be major topics across the country today. While there is not generally a “health desert” designation like the concept of a food desert, CityLab⁷ does use the term relative to conditions in global cities, such as the Indian city of Mumbai. While part of its discussion centers on sanitation, wastewater, and air quality, which appear to be less of an issue in Lucas County, it does discuss the disconnect between transportation and access to health care and the need to include both in the planning process.

Map 9 shows the walk times from points of hospitals, outpatient clinics, pharmacies, and offices of doctors and other health care practitioners in Lucas County. Similar to the food desert condition, access to health care providers without access to a vehicle is very limited in much of the non-City of Toledo portions of Lucas County.

Within the city, access to health care providers is again mixed. While TARTA routes cover much of the city, and many health care providers are located along bus routes, there is a significant portion of Toledo that does not have access to any health care services within a 30-minute walk time. As mentioned previously, a 30-minute walk time for people in need of services, including seniors, those with disabilities, and those with children, is still quite a distance, and particularly so in inclement weather. In addition, some of the areas that don’t have walkable access to health care services also are places where there are more workers than vehicles. As noted earlier, this measure does include access by non-working family members to vehicles, but only indicates the relationship between the number of vehicles and workers in the household.

EDUCATION

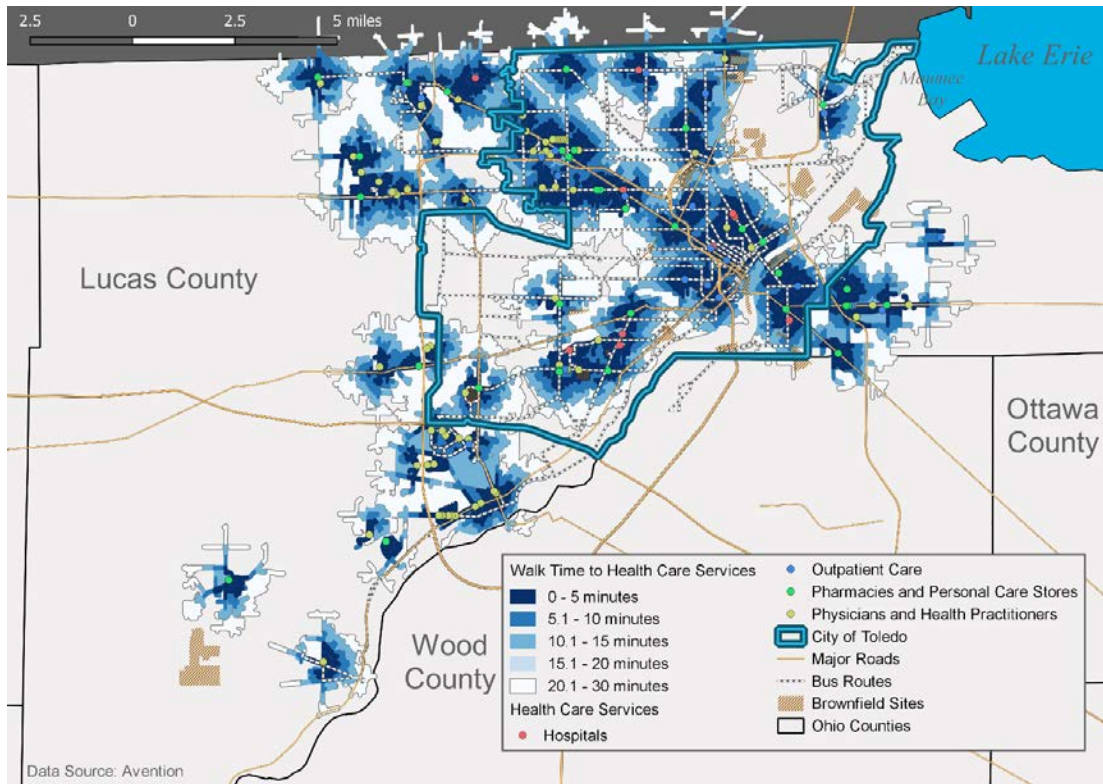
Across the world, there is an expectation that the increased use of technology will lead to a reduction in many occupations. Deloitte,⁸ in a 2015 study, notes that routinized production employment can easily be replaced with technology, while non-routinized work such as skilled nursing cannot. Capgemini,⁹ in its report from 2017 on smart factories, which are

⁷ <https://www.citylab.com/transportation/2012/05/urban-health-desert/2144/>

⁸ <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/uk/Documents/finance/deloitte-uk-technology-and-people.pdf>

⁹ https://www.capgemini.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/dti-smart-factories-full-report-rebranded-web-version_16032018.pdf

often referred to as Industry 4.0 or the “digitalization of manufacturing,”¹⁰ has estimated that 78% of factories in the United States are either “smart” or in the process of becoming so.



The implication for this transition to digitalization and away from routinized forms of production is to expect higher rates of productivity and higher skill levels from employees. A key factor in achieving these higher levels of productivity come from better-educated workers. It is likely that these workers will need training beyond the high school level up to a pre-baccalaureate level. The training and these workers are increasingly referred to as “middle skilled.”

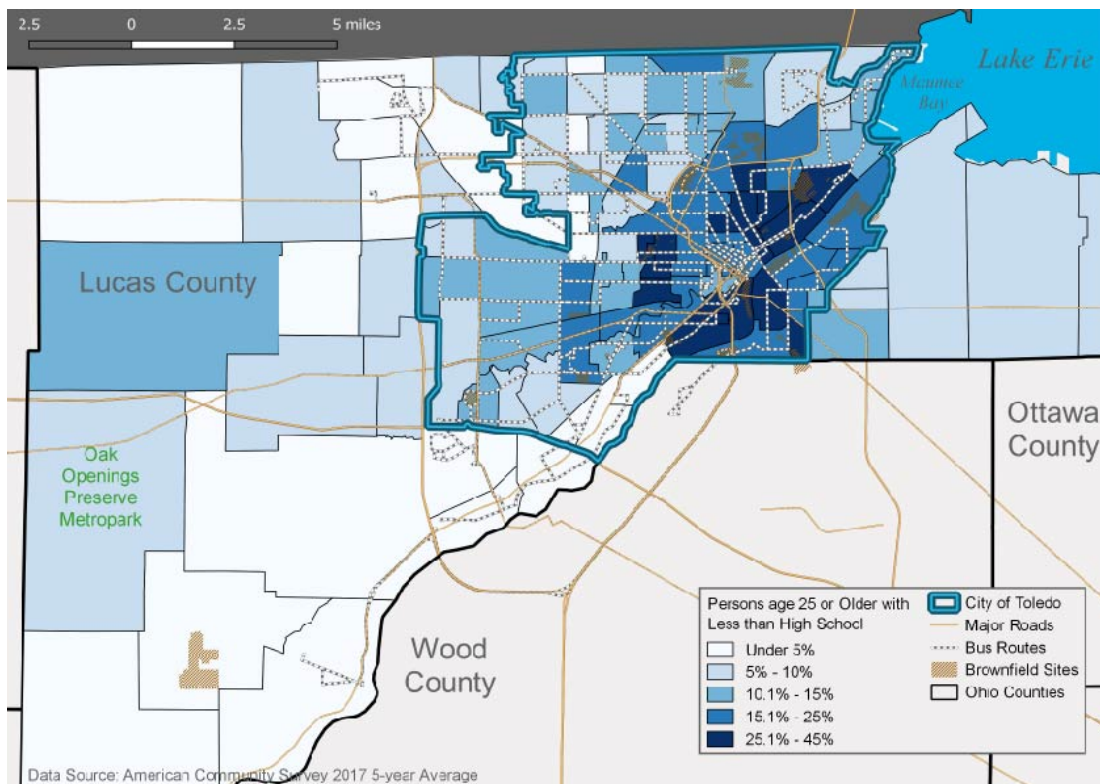
Given this need for post-high-school training, there is concern around high school completion as a necessary step to receiving training and being able to gain sustaining employment. Currently, 12.8% of U.S. residents have not completed high school. Ohio’s statistics are slightly better at 10.2% of residents without completion. Lucas County, including the City of Toledo geography, is in between, at 11.4%. The City of Toledo’s completion rate is a bit higher at 14.8%.

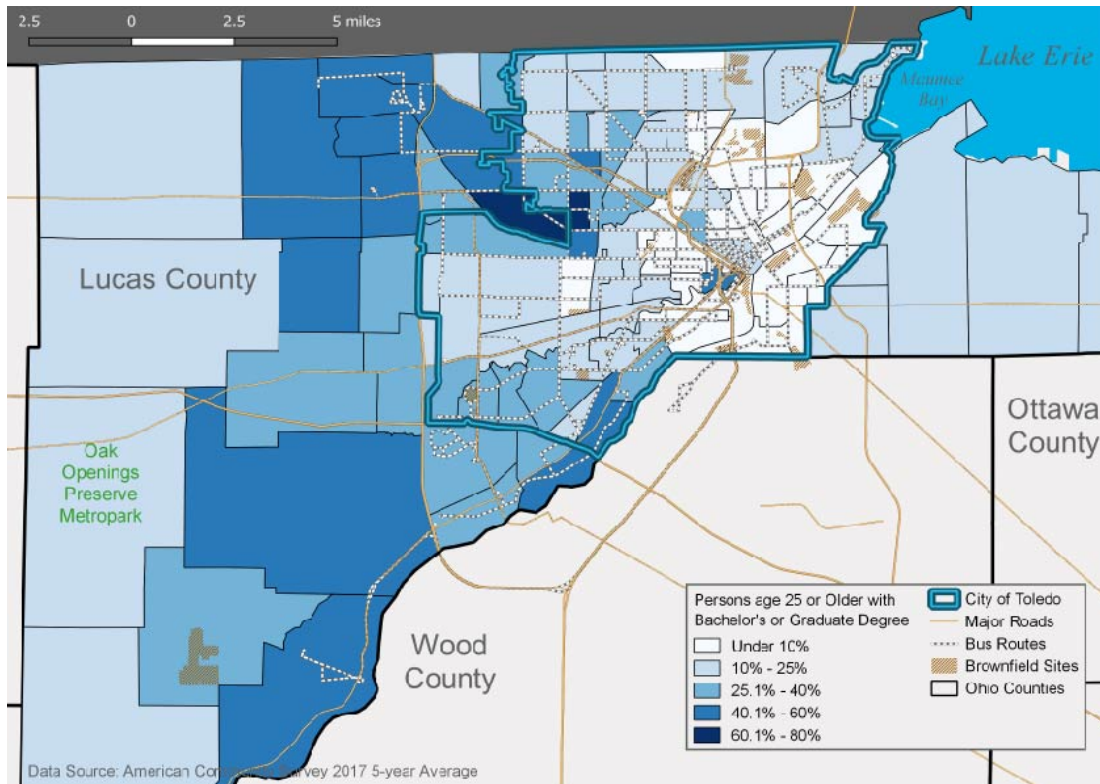
¹⁰ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/bernardmarr/2018/09/02/what-is-industry-4-0-heres-a-super-easy-explanation-for-anyone/#35fdd8df9788>

The county, but not including the City of Toledo geography, does relatively well with census tracts ranging from less than 5% to a few tracts with high school noncompletion rates between 10% and 15%. Within the city and as shown on Map 10, the western and northern parts of the city do as well as the county. Within the urban core, rates reach as high as 45%, and these rates extend up into the northeast portion of the city.

The other side of the equation is the need for skilled workers with at least a bachelor’s degree. These are commonly referred to as “knowledge economy” jobs. As shown on Map 11, the census tracts with the highest college-and-above completion rates are in the western suburbs adjacent to the city, with one tract reaching a completion rate of 80%. The eastern census tracts outside the city and the far western tracts have completion rates between 10% and 25%.

Similar to the high completion rates, the college-and-above completion rates in the City of Toledo are focused mainly on the western and northern regions, with some areas reaching between 60.1% and 80%. Completion rates under 10% are found in the very urban core and in the city’s eastern tracts.





Map 11: Persons with a Bachelor's or Higher Degree

POPULATION TRENDS

Lucas County has lost population between 2013 and 2017, according to both census and ACS estimates. The average annual loss totals about 1,527 for the period, with a range of -1,344 on the low end to -1,906 on the high end. Again, based on ACS data and as shown in Figure 1, the population has dropped from 439,511 in 2013 to about 433,404 in 2017. The U.S. Census Bureau has not released substate estimates of population for 2018 at the time of this writing.

On a more regional perspective, the Toledo Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which includes Lucas, Ottawa, and Wood counties, is also losing population. Using ACS estimates, the Toledo MSA population fell from 608,145 in 2013 to 603,668 in 2017.

The persistent and often-asked question is, "Where have those people gone?" To answer this question, we apply data from Infutor Data Solutions,¹¹ a company that uses census data as its source but allows the migration of people between counties to be analyzed. In this study, we were able to identify where people have moved to from Lucas County, as well as track where people have come from when they moved into Lucas County.

¹¹ <https://infutor.com/company/about-infutor/>

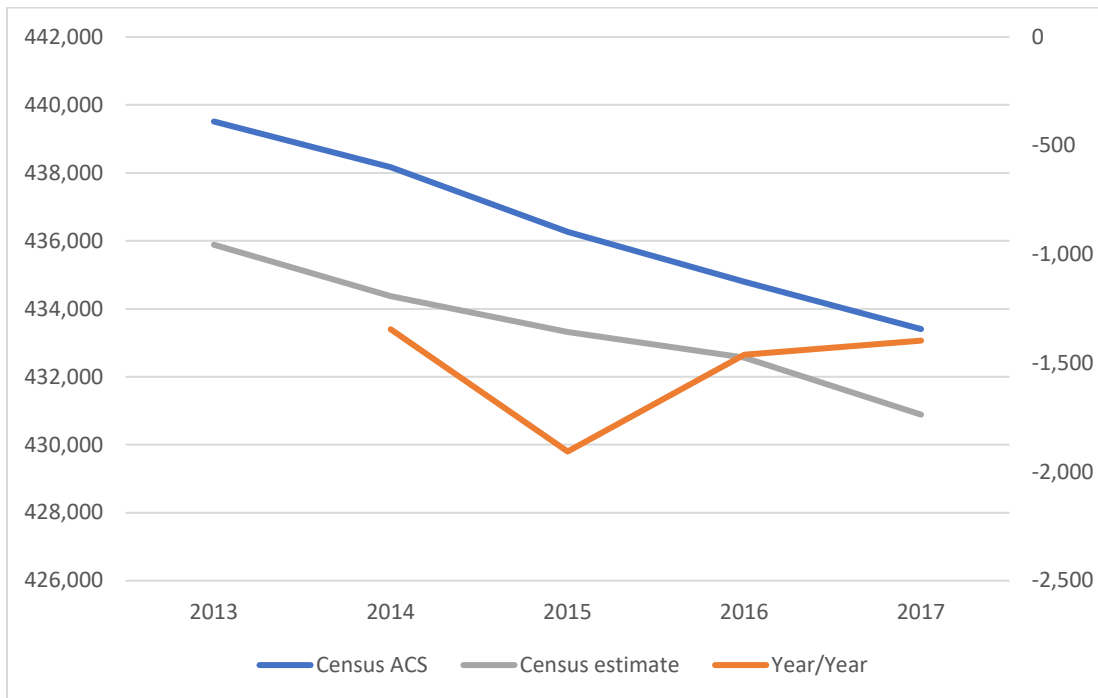
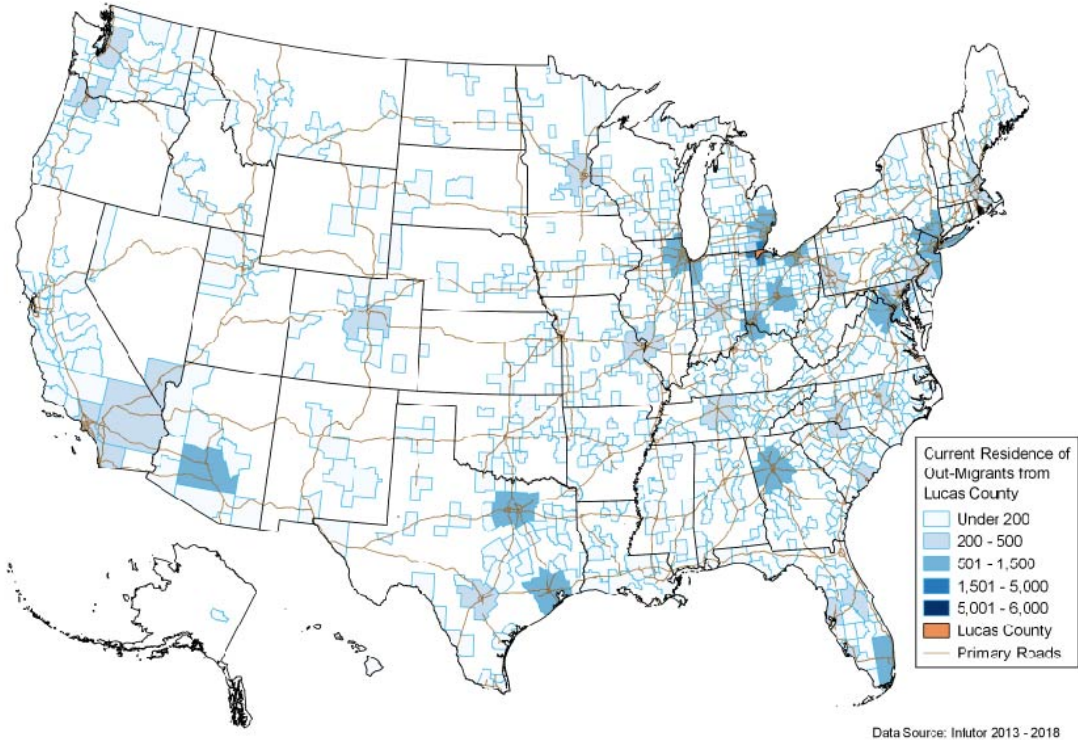


Figure 1: Lucas County Population

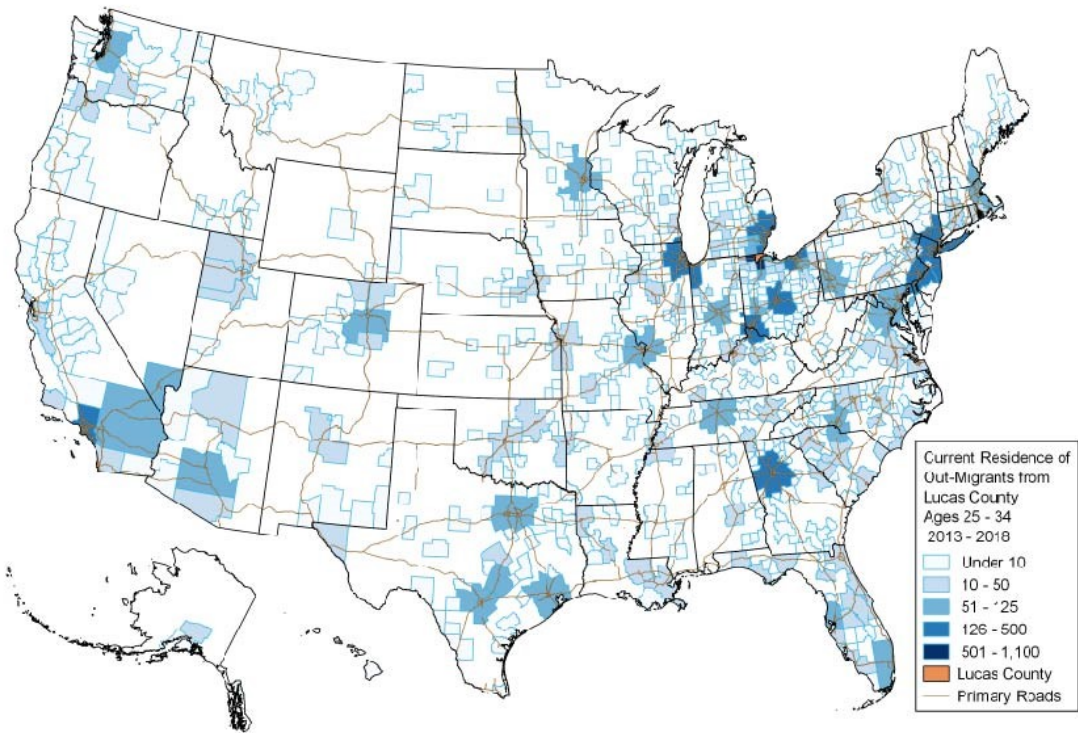
Within this study, the data are aggregated and reported for the period 2013 to 2018, with 2013 used as the starting point because the economy had returned to the longer-run trend (or more normal growth), as measured by gross domestic product. This condition may suggest that, while migrants may be economic in nature, migration may be based more on advancing opportunity rather than fleeing poor economic conditions during the Great Recession.

As shown on Map 12, for the period 2013 to 2018, the outflow of residents from Lucas County was distributed across the country, including not only the Detroit, Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, and Chicago regions, but also the east coast, the near south, Texas, and the west and southwest parts of the country. Most noticeable, however, is migration from Lucas County to Wood and Ottawa counties. Certainly, this is less troubling than other out migration, as these migrants stay within the Toledo labor shed.

Of particular interest is to where the Toledo region is losing recent entrants to the labor market, those aged 25 to 34. As shown on Map 13, “brain drain” to metro areas is experienced across the country, but most noticeably within driving distance of Toledo and Lucas County. While there is a significant share of intra-MSA commuting, the places with the highest shares of outbound moves are the regions of Columbus, Detroit, Chicago, Cleveland, and Cincinnati.

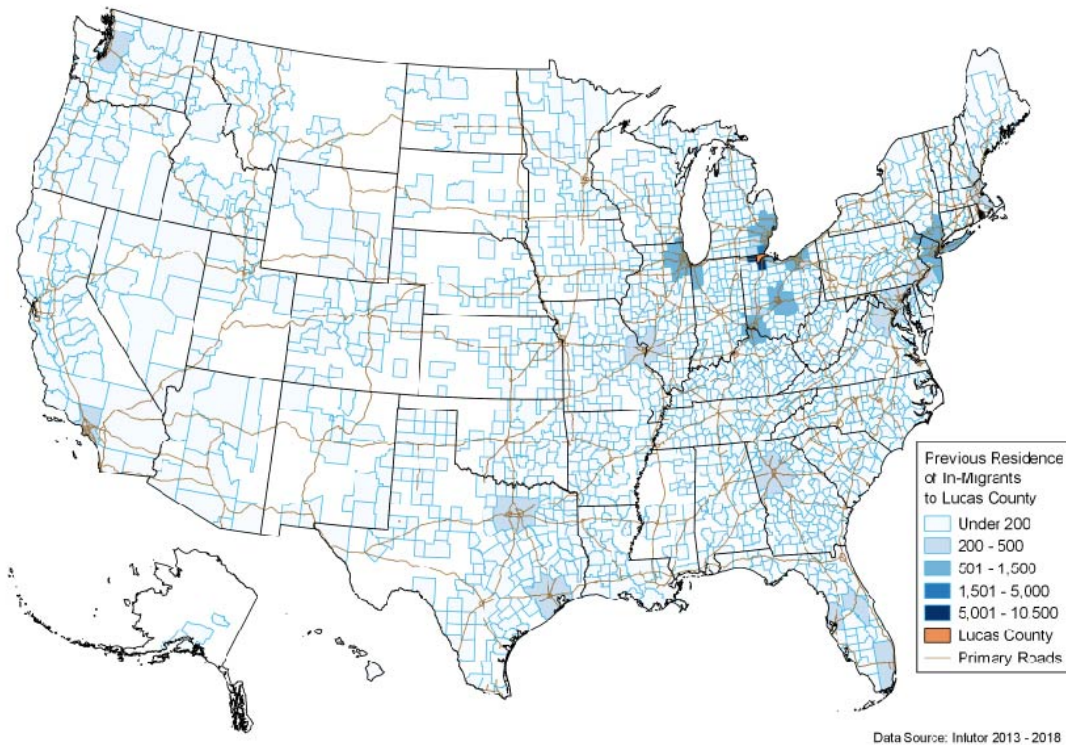


Map 12: Out-Migration for All Persons from Lucas County



Map 13: Out-Migration of Residents Aged 25 to 34 from Lucas County

But what about in-migration? As the estimates from the U.S. Census and ACS have shown, net migration is negative, with both the region and the county losing population between 2013 and 2017. The sources of in-migration provide a slightly different picture when compared to out-migration. While people move, at least at some level, from all parts of the country, in-migration is more regional in nature. Sources of in-migration (as shown on Map 14) between 2013 and 2018 include Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati.



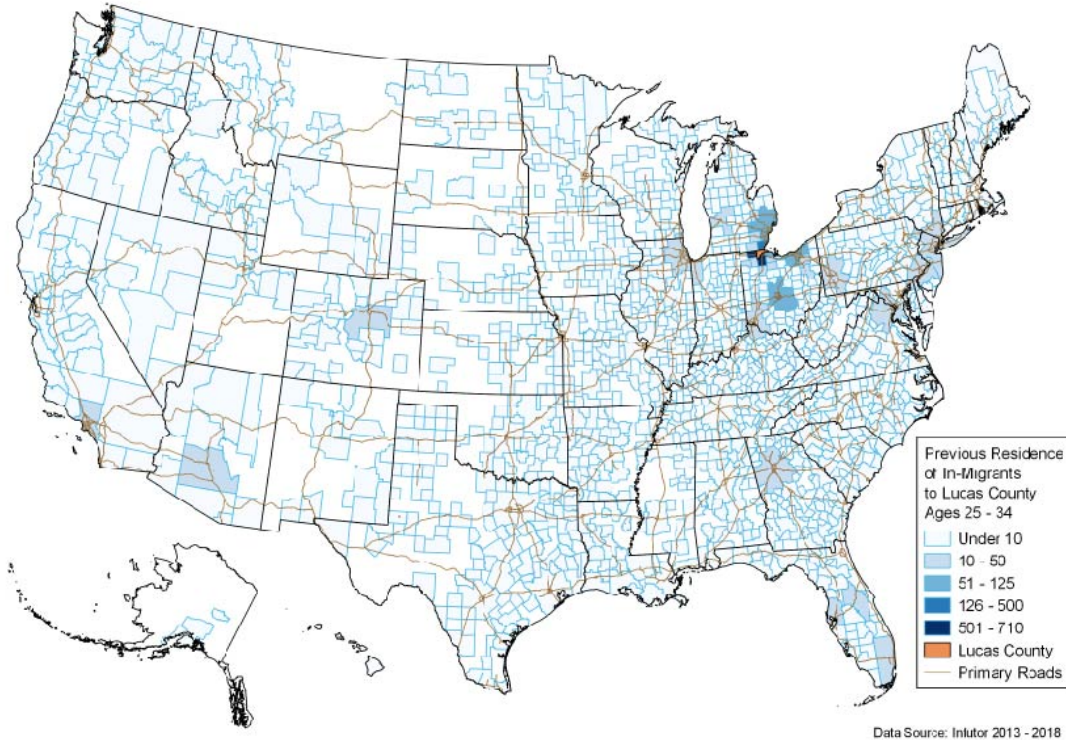
Map 14: In-Migration by All Persons to Lucas County

As shown on Map 15, most in-migration by new residents aged 25 to 34 is coming from the Columbus, Cleveland, and Detroit regions. It is also interesting to note that there is some noticeable in-migration from southern California, Phoenix, and Denver, the New York City region, and some of the metro areas in Florida.

More detailed information on migration between Lucas County and the top metropolitan areas can be found in Appendix B. The data include the top in- and out-migration as well as net migration, and include all over-aged-25 migration, brain drain/gain for migrants aged 25 to 34, and prime-aged workers aged 35 to 54.

As with many places, most migration in Lucas County is to nearby counties. Using the ACS data and for the period 2013 to 2018, total out-migration was 42,104 and total in-migration was 29,994, for a net migration of -12,110. Primary destinations and sources of migration include counties within the Toledo MSA with +185 net migrants, Monroe, MI with -456 net

migrants, Columbus, OH with -391 net migrants, Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI with -116 net migrants, and New York-Newark-Jersey City (NY, NJ, and PA) with -233.



Map 15: In-Migration of Residents Aged 25 to 34 to Lucas County

Increasingly important is the notion of “brain drain,” where younger talent aged 25 to 34 moves away from a region. The opposite is “brain gain,” which occurs when a region has in-migration in the same age group. Overall, Lucas County had net negative migration between 2013 and 2018, losing a net -2,565 residents in this age group. Net migration in the Toledo region overall was small at -14. Net migration in the region was negative with Monroe, MI at -59, but Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI had positive net migration at +24. Rounding out the top five based on out-migration were Columbus, OH at -213 and Cleveland-Elyria, OH at -75.

In looking at prime workers, aged 34 to 55, the migration was fairly well balanced in the Toledo MSA, with a net loss of -23. Net migration with Monroe, MI was -310, Columbus, OH was -123, New York-Newark-Jersey City (NY, NJ, and PA) was -106, and Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI was -95. These workers are important, as they are in their prime working years and have already received their training.

SUMMARY OF SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

While the data show some levels of distress across most of Lucas County, most measures of distress, particularly those that show some form of poverty, tend to be clustered in the city and, in particular, the urban core. The American Community Survey (ACS) data are the most current and do represent a five-year average for measure in census tracts from 2013 to 2017. In that period and in the intervening period up to 2019, the national, state, and local economies continue to improve. It is hoped that all or most of these tracts now have lower unemployment rates, higher labor force participation rates, higher median household income, and fewer persons in poverty due to generally better economic conditions.

Although conditions may have improved, the areas that were in distress in the historical data are likely still in some distress, at least relative to other tracts that were doing better. Net migration in and out of the county is negative, but much of the movement is within the Toledo Metropolitan Statistical Area, as well as the adjacent areas of Michigan in the Monroe and Detroit areas. The intra-regional moves to and from Ottawa and Wood counties may be more choice of place of residence rather than economic migration for a job. Some of that may be true for Monroe and Detroit; however, if this is true, it doesn't necessarily mean a loss of workers for the labor market.

While conditions have likely improved over time, there is still more work that needs to be done to be "average." The unemployment rate in February 2019 for Lucas County was 5.2%, higher than compared to Ohio, at 4.6%. Many of the census tracts in the urban core and according to the ACS have more than 6 out of 10 residents not in the labor market. Both create opportunities for companies to employ workers and for the economy to grow. The current rate of persons in poverty is 14%, while the five-year ACS rate for the county is 19.8% and 26.5% for the City of Toledo. Finally, there are challenges to accessing reliable transportation, whether public, private, or for hire. This impacts the ability of the population to access both healthy living through fresh and unprocessed food as well as health care.

Even with a rising tide more boats may need to be lifted. The data suggest there is more work to do.

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Observations from the Toledo Region

RESEARCH APPROACH

To better understand the needs of the Toledo region, focus groups and interviews were conducted by the Upjohn Team with representatives of community organizations and key community leaders throughout Lucas County. The objective of these conversations was to broadly explore and identify the region's most pressing needs. It is important to note that statements given by the focus group and interview participants are not conclusive but are their *perceptions* of the conditions of Lucas County by those who live and work there. Although perceptions aren't always based on fact, they do affect decisions and should be considered when crafting strategies to address issues.

The Upjohn Team facilitated focus groups for each of the Foundation's grantmaking priorities—arts and culture, education and literacy, social services, physical and mental health, natural resources, and neighborhood and urban affairs. Stakeholders from organizations representing each of the six areas voiced their knowledge of and experience with the region's most significant challenges. Discussion centered on identifying community needs, what needs aren't being met, what efforts are already underway in the community to address these challenges, and how the Foundation could help in addressing the identified needs. A total of 79 stakeholders participated in the focus group sessions. Organizations represented in the focus group discussions are shown in Appendix C.

Telephone interviews were conducted with key thought leaders across Lucas County, those with in-depth knowledge of the Toledo region's most pressing challenges and how these challenges have changed over time. A total of 15 key leaders were interviewed. The interviews were conducted by phone between March 8 and 27. The organizations represented are shown in Appendix D.

In-person interviews were also conducted with Foundation key staff members to get their thoughts and ideas on the most pressing concerns relative to the Foundation's six grantmaking priority areas. The staff members were asked what they perceived to be the Foundation's vision or strategy to grantmaking. Foundation staff were also asked their thoughts on efforts already occurring in the region to address these concerns and, of the identified needs, with which the Foundation would be able to assist.

FOCUS GROUP OBSERVATIONS

Education and Literacy

There were several issues of concern identified in this focus group session, with **transportation** deemed as the most critical issue. The participants spoke of lower school attendance because school bus routes are limited and don't extend to all children; thus, parents without access to a vehicle aren't able to get their children to school. Declining parent-teacher engagement was also cited as a result of parents being unable to find transportation to parent-teacher meetings and school events. Funding issues and budget cuts with the public transit system have resulted in the loss of Sunday bus routes. This was noted as a critical issue for parents unable to travel to work without public transit. The participants indicated that the public transit system is limited in that the current system "doesn't seem to coordinate with child care or employment hours, or school days."

Kindergarten readiness was mentioned as another significant concern, particularly that children need to be academically and socially ready for kindergarten (e.g., knowing how to talk and interact with other children and adults, knowing how to adapt to a routine). Focused Pre-K programs can assist in readying children in these areas, but all participants agreed that parents are key. Educating parents on the importance of preparing children for kindergarten was deemed essential to children not lagging behind and succeeding beyond kindergarten years. Focus group participants expressed hope in a fairly new initiative underway—universal Pre-K—that would make quality Pre-K available to all children.

Another identified major issue during this focus group session was the **training and the inconsistency of training teachers in child care**. The participants said that many child care teachers aren't certified by the Ohio Department of Education as teachers, and as such, don't have training in teaching education principles. It was noted that the Lucas County Department of Job and Family Services does require several hours of child care training, but many said that this was insufficient. The group also indicated that more stringent background checks are needed for child care teachers. Because of the high turnover rate in this field, many newly hired child care teachers were previously employed in non-education-related jobs, thus requiring more training.

The participants also stated that **training and retaining teachers** is increasingly challenging, particularly considering the violence and other threats occurring daily throughout schools. Finding teachers trained in trauma situations (e.g., arguments, fights, bullying, active shooters) and preparing teachers for these situations is difficult. Cultural sensitivity training was also mentioned as necessary to prepare teachers for the changing school environment. Participants also voiced concern over losing teachers to the Maumee school system, where they said teachers are paid as much as \$20,000 per year more than in the Toledo school system.

Increasing **high school graduation rates** was another area of high concern expressed by the focus group participants. The participants emphasized the need for high school completion for all seniors, as well as for parental assistance in helping high school students to prepare for graduation and beyond. They stressed the need for high-school-educated seniors being better prepared for the workforce, technical and community colleges, and universities. The participants were in support of an education and workforce effort by the Toledo Chamber of Commerce that aids students in preparing for future jobs.

The participants indicated that **higher education** needed a strong role in the community, particularly in underserved communities, to help better inform and engage high school students. The group also cited **family wellness** as a major concern, stating that there are many social determinants that impact education. Changing family situations can affect a student's overall performance in the classroom (e.g., single-parent families, grandparents raising grandchildren, cultural diversity, teen pregnancy) and throughout life.

Also mentioned by the participants was the **large number of nonprofit organizations** in Lucas County that seem to provide the same or similar services, contributing to confusion for families when seeking assistance. The participants expressed the need for a more streamlined way for families to access these organizations for information and services.

With so many issues mentioned around education, the group suggested that the Foundation create a **vehicle for neighborhood/community input** regarding these concerns. The participants thought it would also be helpful if the Foundation **convened a regular forum** of nonprofits to address issues, share and coordinate resources, and discuss services and how to avoid duplication of these services.

The group also noted some ways the Foundation could assist with the transportation issues faced by the county: (1) offer small stipends to those in need of transportation to work, child care, and medical situations; (2) create or fund a network or directory of transportation services available to those with specific transportation needs. The directory could include some lesser-known transportation benefits, such as those provided through medical insurances for medical appointments or health services; and (3) secure funding to expand the Mommy and Me Ride Free program of Northwest Ohio.

Additional suggestions from the participants on how the Foundation could assist in resolving education and literacy challenges were (1) provide small grants to help subsidize child care support for families who don't qualify for child care support through other social service and government-provided programs; and (2) offer stipends to help cover training and professional development costs for nonprofit staff. The Center for Nonprofit Resources Training was mentioned as a provider of training for nonprofit workers.

Social Services

Among the major concerns of the participants in this focus group was the need for **increased services for senior citizens**. The participants said older adults want to age in their own homes and don't want to move to nursing homes or assisted living facilities. Given this preference and the lack of home caregivers, the participants said there is an increasing demand for in-home meals, nutritional education, general home health care, and assistance with errands and medical appointments. Socialization and companionship for homebound seniors was also noted as a concern. The participants said they are also seeing an increase in grandparents becoming caregivers and offering child care support to family members. They pointed out that many senior caregivers are dealing with their own medical, mobility, nutrition, and other issues, and are on fixed incomes, all of which limit their caregiving abilities.

Transportation was cited as another major challenge, particularly for low-income individuals and those without access to a vehicle. The participants stated that the TARTA issues would not be remedied by Foundation support, but with structural policy changes.

Poverty was considered a significant challenge for Lucas County. The focus group participants spoke of the "tremendous disconnect" from low-income individuals. Although employed, low-income individuals struggle to pay rent and feed and clothe their families, not only because of low wages but also because of what the participants referred to as the "benefits cliff." Salary increases for low-income earners can jeopardize child-support care, Medicaid, food assistance, and other types of family support.

The participants also said there was a fundamental lack of understanding, in general, of what it means to live in poverty and how people and agencies can serve the poor. They indicated that this lack of knowledge creates barriers and access to resources for people in poverty. Other poverty issues cited were the increasing number of children qualifying for free meals and locations in the county where families are unable to access free healthy foods. **Homelessness prevention** was also mentioned, as well as the issue of understanding debt and debt recovery.

The **opioid epidemic** was viewed as a growing threat among adults and younger-aged individuals. The participants spoke of assisting women whose husbands are opioid-addicted, and whom are being trafficked by their husbands to landlords in exchange for rent.

Support for immigrants seeking employment was another pressing need identified by the focus group participants. Some immigrants have credentials that don't transfer and don't have employment experience in the United States, thus restricting employment opportunities. Others have few or no English language and writing skills and/or don't know how to access job training support. Navigating access to housing, mental health, medical, and other services are additional challenges faced by immigrants in Lucas County.

The group pointed out that some of the same obstacles faced by immigrants are also challenges for the non-immigrant population. They suggested that having access to an **information network** of agencies and the services they provide would be helpful to those in need, as well as to those providing the services.

As with the Education focus group participants, training for agency workers on **cultural sensitivity** was stated as a pressing need. The participants indicated that workers should be educated on being aware of and responsive to the background, life situations, and needs of client populations.

The **limitations of how and within what time frame grant funds** can be spent pose some barriers to use of the funds when assisting those in need. The participants suggested that more flexible parameters for grant use would be helpful to their agencies. The agency representatives acknowledged that some of them provide the same types of services, but contrary to those in the Education focus group, they said that the services provided aren't the same at each of the different agencies because some organizations have more staff and funding to provide services. They believed that it is helpful for multiple social service agencies to offer the same services because "not everyone can get to one organization for help."

The participants did offer some suggestions on ways the Foundation could additionally assist their agencies:

- Create an agency network referral system where every agency can access, provide, and update information on the clients served
- Offer "rolling grants" to address agency emergency needs (e.g., boiler replacement)
- Offer grants to assist agencies with general operations (e.g., hiring temporary staff)
- For those grants requiring metrics, allow funding within the grant to support the staff and/or software needed to produce the metrics
- Don't require client stories for grant funding; many of their clients want their privacy and don't want to make their situations public
- Support cross-organizational funding solutions where organizations collectively work to address issues
- Convene a forum to help organizations understand and address the barriers that exist between organizations, identify what's being done by agencies to serve communities, help agencies to network and share information, and offer access to data
- Fund grantee cultural sensitivity and bias training, as well as training to understand the situations of those in poverty
- Help to bring resources to neighborhoods, such as senior centers, so many don't have to travel across town

Physical and Mental Health

Much of the concerns of these focus group participants centered on client/patient care, education, and access to health care resources, as well as education for providers to help them better understand patient needs. As mentioned in other focus group sessions, the participants emphasized a strong need for **cultural sensitivity training** for providers. Many said that some providers aren't sensitive to the culturally diverse needs of their clients/patients. In addition to cultural sensitivity training, the participants said that **mental, physical, and adaptive disability training** was also needed for providers. They noted that many staff often don't fully understand how to assist those with physical and mental disabilities because they have received minimal training in this area.

Educating clients/patients on medical services, processes, and follow-up care was also a challenge voiced by the focus group participants. For example, they said that many patients need some form of counseling but have difficulty understanding what it is and why it's important to their overall care. Clients/patients also struggle with how to access and use Medicaid and other subsidy programs. The participants spoke of difficulties in having patients understand the follow-up care they'll need for recovery when transitioning from hospital to home (e.g., medication dosage and frequency, bathing and grooming, meal delivery, and meal preparation). **Educating clients/patients on preventative care** was cited as also being difficult for providers, particularly on topics of pregnancy care and healthy living options, in part because of the lack of coordination between physical and mental health organizations on prevention. The participants also suggested that a **community resources directory** would be helpful in providing information to clients/patients, as well as to the organizations providing services.

There is also a growing concern for **loneliness and isolation** with homebound older adults. Health risks increase in these instances, said the participants. One agency recruits and co-trains, along with the police department, volunteers to visit homebound older adults each week. The police and volunteers conduct weekly safety checks, which the police then follow-up with a phone call. Volunteers are severely needed for this program, they said.

Focus group participants also emphasized the need for a **comprehensive strategy to address the opioid crisis**, including not only health care agencies but education and social services agencies as well. Splintered efforts with these agencies aren't effective, but the participants stated that perhaps a collaborative strategy would yield results. The strategy, participants said, should include **education and training** for staff who provide substance abuse treatment, particularly for nonprofit staff. Because staff turnover is high among clinicians at community health agencies, training and education is a continuous challenge. Experienced clinicians, they said, are difficult to keep, and many nonprofits have no choice but to hire clinicians with little education and no experience. These agencies provide training, as well as education reimbursement, to hired clinicians but lose them to private practices that pay higher wages. Other **medical staffing** needs included mental health

therapists and home health care providers. Wages for home care providers have historically been low, said the participants, such that this is an issue being addressed nationally by state health councils.

Grants to assist with operations could assist nonprofits with some staffing and other issues, stated the participants. Sustainability grants to cover items not funded by insurance companies—housing and food, for example—would also help to bridge budget gaps.

Reliable transportation was again mentioned as a pressing need for Lucas County. The participants spoke of cab schedules covered by managed-care plans not being reliable and the inconsistency of public bus schedules. Additional health areas of concern cited by the participants were **bedbug infestations** in group homes, **elevated lead levels**, and the high **infant mortality rate**.

Suggestions were made by the focus group participants on how the Foundation could help to address these issues:

- Extend grant support beyond 1 year for proven projects, thus helping to better stabilize the initiative and allowing time for better results
- Funding to support data structure within organizations (e.g., to enable agencies to “talk” across systems; many can’t afford needed data or don’t have the staff to mine data; would aid in helping measure patient impact and recovery)
- Help to align and advocate for state health care policy changes in Columbus
- Develop, fund, and maintain a community resources directory of health care and other services
- Develop and fund a framework for training in cultural sensitivity, as well as a meaningful and impactful communication around inclusion
- Offer funding support and explore possibilities for accessing healthy food options, such as stipends for grocery delivery to those homebound
- Funding to assist those homebound and in need of care
- Help to design socialization opportunities for older adults and fund events at senior centers, branch libraries, and other areas

Neighborhood and Urban Affairs

The major concerns of the participants of this focus group centered on having a **collaborative vision for development** in the neighborhoods and urban core. Participants cited the omission of a strategic policy for development, stressing a need for the county and its municipalities to work together to plan development projects to maximize impact rather than having it occur “piecemeal” throughout cities and neighborhoods. The participants are concerned with land use and how it impacts neighborhood development and urban redevelopment. Some said brownfields are “grossly underestimated” and that, in some

neighborhoods, many residents are abandoning properties. The **out-migration** of city and county residents was also noted as a concern, particularly how the population loss impacts government-provided services to these neighborhoods and the urban core (for example, sustaining public transit, road repair, snow removal, and other services).

Group participants spoke of the lack of a **formal neighborhood structure** to address policy issues, as well as the lack of an organized commitment to community development. They said the lack of an organized structure, such as a community development corporation, leaves neighborhood development vulnerable to “random acts of brownfield kindness and other acts of random kindness.” The participants suggested that the Foundation take the lead to convene organizations to identify synergies on sharing resources to aid neighborhoods. Participants also stressed a need for corporate engagement in neighborhood development efforts.

One particularly important element brought forth was to **include downtown development** organizations in neighborhood and urban development discussions. It was noted that conversations on neighborhood, community, and economic development, housing, and other aspects of development all impact the downtown. The participants indicated that downtown partners and businesses may be able to offer insights and resources to aid in development discussions. The participants also spoke of the need for **satellite locations of nonprofits** in neighborhoods, of bringing the resources and services provided by nonprofit agencies to neighborhood community centers.

The need for **affordable housing** was another important issue stressed in the focus group. The participants were concerned with housing conditions, particularly the upkeep and maintenance of rental properties by landlords. Participants said that the enforcement of rental property maintenance is difficult because renters are afraid to speak up about poor housing conditions at hearings because their landlords are in the audience and they fear eviction or retribution.

The focus group participants suggested ways in which the Foundation could help remedy some of these concerns:

- Expand and diversify grantee qualifications; for example, offer grants for advocacy, discrimination, and civil rights
- Educate Foundation fund donors on how they might alter their grants to better reflect the diverse needs of the community
- Help to fund or facilitate access for those in need to health care, healthy food, reliable transportation, child care, and other basic needs
- Help to organize grant efforts for collaborative, multi-organizational strategy development
- Leverage Foundation local funders to engage with national funders to broaden and expand the capacity and impact of grants

- Support new homeownership and affordable housing
- Find ways to expand funding programs beyond current grantmaking areas
- Provide funding for training agency staff in various areas
- Develop an interactive database, inventory, or network of organizations, the services they provide, and training on how to access these services
- Become involved in the health equity discussion currently underway with Healthy Lucas County's Community Health Improvement Plan

Natural Resources

The participants of this focus group identified several natural resources challenges, one of which was carving out **green space** in Toledo's urban core. They said there's currently little green space for children to play or for families to gather downtown. The participants also said that more **trees should be planted downtown**, not only to enhance green spaces but to help with stormwater management. They additionally mentioned creating downtown spaces for public gardens.

The group spoke of the need for how to **properly recycle** to reduce the use of natural resources. Many recycle the wrong items, they said, and need to receive education on how and what to properly recycle. The city sponsored a campaign to help educate the public on proper recycling, but many said it was unsuccessful. Participants noted that businesses, particularly restaurants, also need to understand the importance of recycling. City and county leaders, they said, have discussed creating a materials recycling facility, like those in Ann Arbor, MI and Bowling Green, OH. The participants suggested that incentives be offered to residents and businesses for properly recycling items. They mentioned the Toledo Zoo's annual Party for the Planet, where electronics and other items can be brought for recycling.

The participants would like higher education institutions to become more engaged in natural resources programs and initiatives, as well as to **incorporate more natural resources courses** and programs into curriculum. They cited the collaboration of Bowling Green University and the University of Toledo in partnership with the Toledo Zoo on several natural resources projects and noted that the University of Toledo has a natural resources center on campus—the Lake Erie Research Center.

Water quality and lead abatement were other issues cited by the participants. They said that water connection to the city is an issue because of high levels of lead in the pipes. The participants also noted that once the water lines containing lead are replaced by the city, lead remediation is needed by homeowners and businesses to ensure water quality.

Transportation was also mentioned in this focus group as a major challenge for the county. The participants spoke of the loss of the TARTA Sunday bus route, as well as the limited field trip options for students because of transportation costs.

Suggestions were offered on how the Foundation could assist natural resources agencies in resolving and easing these challenges:

- Have the Foundation clarify and define its natural resources grant-giving category (are these grants for parks, zoos, rivers, lakes, water, trails, quality of life?) to better guide those applying for grants
- Provide professional development funds for natural resources and environmental education and training
- Offer matching funds for state and federal natural resources grants
- Work with natural resources groups to administer a survey of what communities want in terms of natural resources (e.g., they want to better assess what's needed within Lucas County communities to help prioritize their efforts)
- Provide small grants to cover student field trips for natural resources and environmental activities

Arts and Culture

One of the most important issues related by participants in this focus group was the need for **arts education in public schools**. The participants said there are no arts classes in grades K through 8 and that high school arts options should be expanded to include dance and theater. The group indicated that better coordination is needed between the Toledo Arts Commission and the Toledo Public School system to add and expand arts education for grades K through 12.

The participants voiced the need for **corporate sponsorships** for student arts programs. They noted, for example, that the Toledo Opera offers school performances at a cost of \$500 per performance. Corporate sponsors are sought to aid schools unable to cover the cost. The Valentine is also continuously seeking sponsors for its student arts programs. Most businesses are generous sponsors, said the participants, but felt this wasn't a sustainable funding method for bringing these types of programs to students.

Many participants indicated that, compared to other Ohio cities of similar size, Toledo doesn't have a **diverse offering of arts programs**. They noted that Dayton has diverse offerings for Latin, Jewish, and Black cultures, but that Toledo's arts offerings aren't as culturally diverse. Participants said that there also are limited arts offerings across the county, particularly theater experiences. Because of limited arts and cultural events, the group said many residents travel to Cleveland and elsewhere for cultural experiences.

The group of participants suggested that a **cultural center** was needed from which several arts programs could operate. The center could house arts agency operations, activities, and programs, as well as music performances and arts events. Many participants stated there was also a need for downtown studio space for artists and suggested that an **incubator** be created for artists. A cultural center could be a place to house this incubator. The need for

training in arts administration and nonprofit management was also cited; a cultural center was also suggested as a place to conduct this training.

Many spoke of how their organizations are becoming more like social services organizations, providing not only arts programs and activities but also after-school care, child care, and after-school meals. These organizations said they have seen a shift in their missions because of the expansion of services, and struggle to manage budgets and secure funding to assist arts as well as social services activities. For example, one organization offers arts programs to underserved youth, while another's after-school cooking class has become an after-school meal program supplying food to those in need.

The participants appreciated the opportunity to come together to voice their needs on arts and culture. They said that for many this was the first time to do so, and that they wanted to continue to meet as a group. Participants said that the Toledo Area Cultural Leaders group meets monthly; however, they said that membership was "exclusive." The participants said they **want to organize as a group** to meet regularly to address issues.

Many also expressed the need for **funding to support organizational operations and staff**. Rather than apply for new yearly grant funding, the participants said that funding to sustain operations and extended-term grants would help to maintain arts programs over longer periods.

The participants of this focus group also suggested ways in which the Foundation could assist in helping to remedy the identified challenges:

- Facilitate discussions with the Arts Commission and the Toledo Public School system to include and expand arts education in public schools. WGTE expressed interest in partnering with the Foundation to train teachers on how to incorporate art into school curricula and to create programming to educate the community on the arts.
- Advocate with businesses for corporate sponsorships for arts education programs
- Decrease the amount of paperwork in applying for small grants and reduce the evaluation requirement for grants
- Assist in developing an arts incubator downtown
- Facilitate the development of a directory of available resources accessible to organizations and the public
- Help to facilitate the organization of this group to meet regularly to discuss issues and resolutions to issues; also help to organize a meeting of arts organizations with the Ohio Arts Commission on how to promote Toledo's arts scene

SUMMARY OF FOCUS GROUP OBSERVATIONS

The most pressing concerns across Lucas County were related during focus groups of participants representing the Foundation’s six grantmaking priority areas, with seven issues repeatedly resonating across all sessions:

- Transportation
- Poverty
- Training and education
- Wellness and health care
- Sharing resources and information
- Senior citizen assistance
- Coordinated planning and development

Transportation

Transportation was clearly one of the most pressing needs identified among the majority of the focus group participants. The loss of the TARTA Sunday route was a concern but making sure those without access to a vehicle are able to reach jobs, schools, medical appointments, health care facilities, food stores, and agency offices is viewed as a top priority. Lack of reliable transportation limits opportunities for finding and keeping jobs and the ability to care for basic needs. Funding and budget issues need resolution, with both state and federal assistance, but strategies are needed to address the more immediate issues.

Poverty

The many aspects of poverty impact and impede economic progress. Lucas County faces the same challenges with poverty as do many other counties across the country—low-wage jobs that don’t afford self-sufficiency; children and families having access to food, medical, and basic needs; finding safe, livable, and affordable housing; homelessness; debt; and so many other barriers to economic independence. The research documents that one path to breaking the cycle of poverty is education— better training and education leads to higher paying jobs (Bartik, 2011, 2014). Intervention strategies are needed, perhaps those that offer “two-generation” programmatic solutions—parents participate in GED, job training, and parenting classes while their children attend free child care in structured, learning environments—that provide a supportive network for individual transformation.

Training and Education

Training and education were deemed essential across all focus groups. The type and scope of the training differed based on the focus group; however, there was a strong desire for enhancing skills and knowledge, learning what to do in volatile situations and how to cope with the after-effects of these situations, and learning about and understanding cultural

similarities and differences. Training also included educating parents on the importance of readying their children for kindergarten—socially as well as academically—and public awareness and prevention campaigns for senior citizens, students, parents, and older adults.

Wellness and Health Care

The importance of quality health care needs no explanation. Quality care is vital to reducing infant mortality rates, minimizing risks and increasing safety for senior citizens, easing discomfort and curing illness, extending life expectancy, and ensuring quality of life. Having access to health care services and resources, as well as practicing wellness and prevention, is essential to healthy living. Lead is also harmful to health, especially for children, and abatement is a top concern among all agencies and organizations. The misuse and overdosing of opioids also affect public health and impacts social and economic welfare. The annual economic burden of the opioid epidemic to the United States is an estimated \$78.5 billion per year (Florence, Zhou, Luo, & Xu, 2013). The agencies would like to see a comprehensive strategy developed to address Lucas County’s opioid crisis, one that involves health care, education, social services, and other pertinent partners.

Sharing Resources and Information

The Lucas County community has a strong desire to collaborate to resolve issues and share resources to provide services. The agencies want to better understand the services each provides and better match the community’s needs with the programs offered by those providing services. They also want to come together regularly to share, discuss, and help to address issues and needs, and to discuss how they can better share resources and staff among their agencies. An accessible portal for Lucas County agencies where they can inform and share services and information—similar to the health portals shared among hospitals and health care providers—would help to educate agency staff and assist in better coordinating community services among agencies.

Senior Citizen Assistance

The increasing aging U.S. population presents challenges for health care providers, families, employers, and policy makers (for example, Social Security and Medicare programs). Important to those in later stages of life are mobility, transportation, health care, personal care, and nutrition. Equally important are emotional needs, such as security, connection and regular communication with family and friends, personal leisure, and a sense of community. Senior citizen care and assistance is a predominant concern in Lucas County—not only making sure older adults receive care (e.g., home health care, medical care) and have access to services and information, but that those who are providing care to their grandchildren or other family members receive assistance and support.

Coordinated Planning and Development

Planning for development helps to physically transform communities over time. Some assets to the planning process include examining the physical, environmental, and social conditions of a community; identifying the impediments to future development; offering an opportunity for public input, participation, and education; and helping to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of a community. A collaborative vision and strategic policy for development throughout Lucas County was a major concern, one that includes brownfield redevelopment and abandoned properties. An organized commitment to neighborhood and community development was seen as an important part of a collaborative development strategy.

OBSERVATIONS FROM KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

The questions for the key informant interviews were developed with information and input gathered through the series of focus group sessions. A collective summary of the responses for each question from those interviewed are presented below.

What do you perceive as the current challenges and needs most crucial in the City of Toledo and Lucas County?

- **Education.** There is a need for more investment in early childhood education. Success rates of retention and low graduation rates must improve. Several arts and cultural organizations provide education for children and adults. Each of the trades offers job-training programs.
- **Community Development.** Many people have moved out of Toledo neighborhoods, contributing to a loss of population. Community Development Corporations should be rejuvenated and develop a comprehensive plan to address the opportunities and challenges in each of the neighborhoods. Each neighborhood should have a community center.
- **Affordable Housing.** Affordable and safe housing is needed. Families live in vacant housing with no heat in the winter. Obtaining affordable housing is difficult. There is a need to better define the homelessness issues and what homelessness means today.
- **Health and Sustainability.** Climate change adaptation and mitigation at the local level is a serious issue that must be addressed. Emergency management agencies must consider how they will respond to sustainability problems such as more frequent flooding and heat waves. The harmful algae blooms present an immediate problem regarding water safety. Engaging with the rural community on algae blooms caused

by fertilized fields run-off is problematic. Collectively, the toxic lead issues must be addressed, and homes need to be remediated to make them environmentally safe for residents.

- **Public Safety.** Easy access to guns continues to be an issue. Human trafficking is a concern that needs diligent action to develop solutions. Toledo records 1,100 runaways a year. Police have limited resources to search for runaways. Running away is the number one cause of sex trafficking. Toledo has a very strong re-entry coalition program that needs to be supported. Crime is down. Law enforcement is effective and continues to address the gang-crime problems.

You've identified what you feel are the most critical needs for the city and the county. Would you consider any of the following as critical needs?

- **Transportation.** Public transportation is a serious issue. Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority (TARTA) needs to provide reliable public transportation to help drive the economy in places where people live and work. A tax referendum to provide needed funds for TARTA has been stalled due to suburban officials who are against placing a property tax on the ballot. The TARTA issue with the suburbs disinvesting in the system is leaving some of the most vulnerable population at risk. The community also needs more bike lanes.
- **Collaboration Portal to Communicate, Manage, and Share Information Resources among Organizations.** There is a lack of a community agenda. The issue of service and program duplication is taking place at city, suburban, county, and state levels. Improved communication methods and agendas are needed. What is needed is a “navigator agency” that will match the person’s needs to the appropriate services and programs. There is a need to assemble the leadership of these organizations to initiate better communication between groups.
- **Poverty.** Toledo and Lucas County have the largest percentage of families in poverty compared to the other major cities in Ohio. Poverty negatively affects social well-being and the employment challenge of getting and keeping a job. Opportunities for upward mobility are linked largely to employment.
- **Various Types of Training and Education.** People need training that is relevant to different manufacturing jobs. We also need more computer training.
- **Shared Staff Resources among Organizations and a Location to House These Shared Staff.** Some of the organizations in the community tend to work in silos (isolation). The duplication of services and programs through various types of nonprofit organizations is concerning. There is a significant financial impact of nonprofit

administrative overhead costs due to duplicate services. Assembling the leadership of these organizations to discuss the issue and determine a solution is reasonable.

- **Various Types of Assistance for Senior Citizens.** A needs assessment is warranted. Seniors want to stay in their homes; however, there is not enough money to subsidize repairs and upkeep of those homes. We need to coordinate health care services specifically for seniors. This would reduce the number of seniors visiting the more-costly source of health care—the emergency room.
- **Organized Neighborhood and Community Development Initiatives.** Neighborhoods need to be revitalized. Neighborhood development efforts are fragmented. There is no cohesive plan for the neighborhoods, and as a result, success is limited.
- **Environmental Medical and Physical Health and Welfare.** There is a need to develop and implement state regulations to maintain and continue the improvements of water quality. There is a lack of organized advocacy and not enough shared information. Prevention of early teen pregnancy needs to be addressed. Mental health problems are associated with poverty, drug addiction, unhealthy lifestyles, and stress.

Thinking somewhat into the future, what are the changing needs for the region?

- Providing education for medical/health professionals, technology, and communication skills. Emphasize downtown development while recognizing the need for raising healthy children. Developing and implementing state regulations to maintain and continue the improvements of water quality is essential. Over the next 5 years, there will be a need to fill 200 jobs annually that include entry level and master level nurse training.

What information programs are needed to act? What actions are needed to address the issues you have identified?

- An effective regional system that includes information gathering and dissemination is crucial. This information would serve as a way to connect people with jobs, encourage national and international businesses to relocate to Ohio, and highlight a better understanding of newer industries such as solar energy. Regional collaboration and strong communication would not only be helpful to businesses, but also useful within the arts and culture sector, child welfare services, and expectant mothers' programs. Restoring a strong transportation network would also encourage collaboration and access. Providing universal communication access through an informational website would help to eliminate bad information and encourage shared information and advocacy. The Toledo Regional Growth

Partnership is developing asset maps of micro systems in adjacent counties and communities correlated to education and training resources within the region. This will help to create a macro response when major national or worldwide businesses consider Northwest Ohio as a potential site in which to locate.

How can the Foundation address these issues?

- In addition to the current support projects funded by the Foundation, respondents also suggested the Foundation broaden its scope to include partnerships and networks to help implement projects, strengthen relationships, and gauge redundancy. Suggested relationships should include state and federal grantmaking organizations, trade associations, and conservation groups. Land Trust of the Great Lakes, which includes the Gund Foundation, Kellogg Foundation, and the Mott Foundation, could partner with the Foundation to address water quality problems that are affecting the Great Lakes. Due to the Foundation's great source of knowledge regarding Toledo and Lucas County, the organization could do greater assessments of grant recipients' use of funds and apply performance indicators to determine the return on investment.

What partners, organizations, or entities could help the Foundation in addressing these needs?

- Partnership with The Toledo Public Schools is essential in support of a progressive curriculum (K-12) to increase graduation rates and its efforts to address children's needs, such as free breakfast and lunch in the district and academic opportunities during the summer. Due to the lack of community development corporations, organizations like the Arts Commission of Greater Toledo can continue to provide some services through its Community Placemaking program, as well as work with ProMedica and Mercy Health to combat chronic health issues. The Sustainability Commission, YMCA, United Way, and University of Toledo offer good opportunities for partnership.

Do you have anything else you would like to share?

- This moment should not be squandered. The situation in Toledo over the past 9 years has been remarkable. Determination and conviction of so many people to give so much of their time outside of their professional obligations is extraordinary. They have collectively communicated and decided what to do together. That is something that should be promoted and strongly encouraged. These interviews are an excellent thing. We need to make sure we are paying attention to basic human needs, basic social justice, basic human rights, and basic well-being. The Toledo Community Foundation does a nice job of coordinating and aligning the nonprofit community.

OBSERVATIONS FROM FOUNDATION STAFF INTERVIEWS

The Foundation operates two separate grantmaking processes, donor advised and discretionary. Donor advised grants are administered under directions established by the individual donors. Discretionary grants are administered at the discretion of the Foundation. Staff described the discretionary granting process as reactive based on the six priorities and available resources. The Foundation seeks to fund “innovative” projects that are “impactful” and address “big” issues. The six priority areas cover most aspects of community, with most of what the Foundation funds falling within one of the six areas. Education and economic opportunity were identified as internal priorities and drive the remaining areas. It was stated that Foundation staff have differing opinions regarding the definitions for each of the six priority areas. A summary of the themes from the staff interviews is presented by grantmaking priority area.

No significant differences were identified regarding the differences in need between the City of Toledo and Lucas County. The most significant needs identified were similar within the city and county.

Education and Literacy

Pre-kindergarten support was identified as the single most important need under education and literacy. Pre-kindergarten support was defined as going beyond education, encompassing social, emotional, and physical needs for children and their families. Staff stated current work and future goals of the Foundation include establishing the structure for a universal pre-kindergarten system that would address broad support needs impacting families and school readiness.

Social Services

Staff described duplication of services and inefficiencies within social service agencies as limiting the ability of agencies to be impactful when addressing pervasive community concerns. A significant need exists for increased collaboration, resulting in strategic and efficient utilization of resources across social service agencies. Staff stated the Foundation could be a convener of a process that would increase collaboration and reduce inefficiencies.

Physical and Mental Health

Staff identified significant concerns regarding substance abuse, homelessness, veteran support, and treatment for severely mentally ill citizens as pervasive and long-standing issues impacting the community. Broad gaps in services and treatment exist with no effective solutions. As with the Social Services priority, staff identified the Foundation as a

convener that could initiate a collaborative community-based process to develop a strategic model to address the issues.

Neighborhood and Urban Affairs

A lack of neighborhood organizational structure currently exists as identified by staff. Efforts to address community needs are isolated by neighborhood. Inequity exists in accessing resources, depending on the neighborhood. A community development and management organization is needed. Staff stated the Foundation could fund the creation of a community development and management model. Staff also identified the Foundation as having a place in supporting infrastructure development around housing, community beautification, and safety.

Natural Resources

Clean water was universally identified as the most significant natural resource issue impacting the city and county. Staff stated the Foundation plays a significant role in addressing the issues, and clean water will continue to be a priority for the Foundation in the future.

Arts and Culture

Staff identified community arts and culture groups as isolated with little or no interaction, resulting in duplicative support requests. Organizations face operational support issues due to limited and reduced funding. A need for collaboration and consolidation exists. Staff stated the Foundation assisted with the merger of the symphony and ballet. The Foundation could play a similar role with other local arts groups.

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Final Thoughts

Poverty is at the heart of all issues voiced by the community, and this likely isn't a great surprise. As both a cause and effect, poverty is part of the cycle of homelessness, poor education, lack of employment and underemployment, poor health, and hunger, among other issues. Like anywhere else, this issue is beyond the scope of the Toledo Community Foundation to singlehandedly solve. Possibly the most important thing to note is that issues surrounding poverty are often longstanding, sometimes intergenerational, and likely won't be solved quickly; however, the Foundation's efforts can help both directly through funding and on the margins by financially leveraging the efforts and endorsing the work of others in the community. Foundation efforts cannot only help to alleviate current distress but also can be a catalyst to help effect long-run change.

The needs and challenges for the City of Toledo and Lucas County that were derived from various data sources, gathered from members of the community during focus group sessions and interviews with key stakeholders, and from interviews with Foundation staff, all contribute to and are caused by issues of poverty.

Transportation, whether personal, public, or contract (cabs/taxi), is often unreliable for people in poverty and for those with complex situations such as elder or child care or both. Time and effort to get to work or school may be one of the barriers to gaining or maintaining employment. Access to affordable and reliable, including timely, transportation is essential.

Access to **health care and healthy food** can be problematic, not only in the city but in parts of the county, if some form of transportation is not readily available. While TARTA covers much of the city and some of the county, and a significant portion of the study area has fewer vehicles than workers in households, the intervening spaces often are health and food "deserts." In these places, access to both health services and healthy food are often limited.

Education, while not generally a problem in much of the county, is an issue within the urban core. In the city, there are areas with low college completion and high rates of people without high school degrees. While all jobs don't require a college degree, the need for a high school diploma or a surrogate is increasingly essential. Equally important to educating and retaining students is the need to retain teachers and other school-related staff. While Toledo Public Schools is an entry point for new teachers, once certifications and education needs are met, teachers leave for suburban school districts for better pay and better working conditions.

Teachers and social services professionals, however, also need more **training**. While all people in the field are trained and credentialed, the work environment has aspects of conditions that need additional training for providers and teachers to be effective as well as beneficial to their clients and students. First are issues of safety and the ability to manage behaviors and situations that put both the staff and others in danger. It is necessary for these workers to be trained in dealing with this in what might be called “crisis management” training. A second area in which training is needed is in diversity. Toledo, as is the case with almost any urban area, is highly diverse, and service providers need to be trained in how to work with and deal with this diversity. Diversity needs to include not only race/ethnicity, but also sexual orientation, age, language, immigration status, country of origin, military service status, and other factors.

The issues of the **senior citizen community** were raised, as senior citizens have challenges with access to transportation, health care services, and healthy food. Aging adults also need a sense of community and have issues of isolation.

While the aforementioned issues are both causes and outcomes of poverty, the following are institutional issues that can affect the success of programs designed to help and break cycles of conditions. This may sound simplistic, but there are many areas in the Foundation’s service area where **sharing** could extend the reach and resources of service providers. First, the sharing and leveraging of **resources and information** could help to reduce duplication of efforts while maximizing effectiveness. Next, **staff support**, including training, combining back office support, network and technical support, and in some cases just the opportunity to meet, would, at least in the participants’ views, yield results. Finally, better **urban planning and development**, including coordinating resources, could yield more efficient decisions.

In part, quoting an overused phrase, “These are the best of times...,” and while conditions have generally improved as seen through low unemployment and increased labor force participation, parts of the Foundation’s service area still show signs of distress. Although the fundamentals of the economy remain strong and the economy is forecast to grow in the near and mid term, economic conditions will change, and a recession will happen sometime in the future.

Given current economic strength, no recession is currently on the horizon, but acknowledging that the potential for one is possible, there may be no better time to act. As noted earlier, the Toledo Community Foundation cannot solve all these issues as a single entity. The Foundation must partner across the city and the county with private, public, and not-for-profit entities to combine missions and resources to meet the needs of the community.

To best utilize the assets of the Foundation, the needs voiced by the community and the projects and programs outlined and proposed in the Foundation's new strategic plan should be viewed and resourced using one of three lenses:

1. **Should the Foundation Own it?** In this lens, the Foundation would be actively engaged in project work, including oversight. Work in this area, with direct or directed funding from the Foundation, would be essential to its mission and identified as a priority within the goals of the strategic plan.
2. **Should the Foundation Support it?** In this lens, the program activities and work would be owned by another entity but would receive Foundation support, including financial support and/or staff, in-kind, and other types of support, to achieve the mission and goals as defined in the strategic plan.
3. **Should the Foundation Endorse it?** In this lens, the Foundation would lend support with no or minimal financial support, but may supply letters of support, limited staff, or limited in-kind and other types of support. In most cases, endorsing such work would be in areas considered important by Foundation leadership, but not directly part of its mission or as it pertains to one of the goals of the strategic plan.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Plans Reviewed and Plan Recommendations

Appendix B: Migration Tables

Appendix C: Table 4A—List of Organizations Participating in Focus Group Sessions

Appendix D: Table 5A—List of Organizations Participating in Key Informant Interviews

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Appendix A: Plans Reviewed and Plan Recommendations

📖 Our Pathway to a Brighter Future: OHIO'S NEW AMERICANS (George Gund Foundation, 2018)

Key Recommendations:

- Philanthropy should seek out and fund
 - ✓ adult ESOL services and Spanish GED services throughout the state
 - ✓ legal services that are affordable and available regardless of legal status
 - ✓ a full range of health care services that are available regardless of legal status, and that address physical, mental, and oral health

📖 Downtown Toledo Master Plan (22nd Century Committee, 2017)

Key Recommendations:

- Advance a better-connected downtown
- Establish downtown housing incentives
- Identify strategic redevelopment and infill sites
- Conduct a downtown economic plan
- Conduct a parks master plan
- Conduct convention center study and develop strategic plan
- Complete the Riverfront Promenade
- Advance the Nautical Mile concept
- Acquire Marina District site
- Establish incubation and innovation center downtown
- Streetscape improvements to Summit Street
- Implement bike plan

📖 Toledo Strategic Plan for Arts and Culture (the Arts Commission, 2015)

Key Recommendations:

- Ten objectives in the action plan
 - ✓ Education and youth and family engagement
 - ✓ Image, marketing, and sense of place
 - ✓ Racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity
 - ✓ Arts and culture in urban planning and development
 - ✓ Capacity and stability
 - ✓ Arts and culture in neighborhoods
 - ✓ Funding
 - ✓ Collaboration
 - ✓ Cultural tourism, heritage, anchor events, and public art
 - ✓ Downtown and Maumee River

📖 The Effects of Lead Poisoning on African-American and Low-Income Families in Toledo, Ohio (Toledo Lead Poisoning Prevention Coalition, 2016)

Key Recommendations:

- City should enact an ordinance to require residential rental property owners to fully inspect for and correct lead hazards before the property is rented to a family with children; this can prevent lead poisoning from occurring in the first place.

📖 Ohio Statewide Transit Needs Study, Market Analysis: Toledo Region (Ohio Department of Transportation, 2015)

Key Recommendations:

- A county-wide transit service funded through sales tax.

📖 2016/2017 Lucas County Community Health Assessment (Healthy Lucas County, 2017)

- No Recommendations

📖 Toledo: Green & Healthy Homes Initiative Work Plan (2017)

- No Recommendations

📖 From Akron to Zanesville: How Are Ohio's Small and Mid-Sized Legacy Cities Faring? (Greater Ohio Policy Center, 2016)

- No Recommendations

📖 Toledo: Building a Community of Excellence (MKSK, 2018)

- No Recommendations

📖 Head Start and Early Head Start Community Needs Assessment (Toledo Public Schools, 2016)

- No Recommendations

📖 RWJF Culture of Health Sentinel Community Snapshot: Toledo, Ohio (RTI International & the RAND Corporation, 2017)

- No Recommendations

📖 Toledo Talent Alignment Strategy (CAEL Avalanche/Lucas County, Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce, University of Toledo, Toledo/Lucas County Port Authority, Wood County Economic Development Commission, BGSU, Toledo Community Foundation, Fulton County Economic Development Corporation, 2018)

- No Recommendations

📖 PCSAO Factbook (2019)

- No Recommendations

Appendix B: Migration Tables

Table 1A: Total In- and Out-Migration

	Out- migration	In- migration	Net
Migration to and from:	Aged 25+	Aged 25+	
TOTAL MIGRATION	42,104	29,994	-12,110
Toledo, OH	5,018	5,203	185
Monroe, MI	1,993	1,537	-456
Columbus, OH	1,344	953	-391
Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI	1,254	1,138	-116
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA	1,007	774	-233
Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI	886	568	-318
Cleveland-Elyria, OH	839	732	-107
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	695	423	-272
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA	683	418	-265
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	590	379	-211
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL	579	473	-106
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	572	317	-255
Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN	556	501	-55
Port Clinton, OH	548	516	-32
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	534	376	-158

Table 2A: Total Brain-Drain/Brain-Gain Migration

	Out-migration	In-migration	Net
Migration to and from:	Aged 25-34	Aged 35-54	
TOTAL MIGRATION	8,972	6,407	-2,565
Toledo, OH	1,058	1,044	-14
Monroe, MI	373	314	-59
Columbus, OH	444	231	-213
Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI	255	279	24
Cleveland-Elyria, OH	225	150	-75
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA	220	232	12
Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI	205	131	-74
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA	161	88	-73
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	146	81	-65
Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN	131	74	-57
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	108	59	-49
Port Clinton, OH	107	87	-20
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	91	111	20
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	81	73	-8
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL	79	76	-3

Table 3A: In- and Out-Migration of Prime-Aged Workers

	Out-migration	In-migration	Net
Migration to and from:	Aged 35-54	Aged 35-54	
TOTAL MIGRATION	17,604	12,445	-5,159
Toledo, OH	2,182	2,159	-23
Monroe, MI	932	622	-310
Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI	592	497	-95
Columbus, OH	571	448	-123
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA	403	297	-106
Cleveland-Elyria, OH	389	350	-39
Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI	381	238	-143
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	335	199	-136
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA	315	193	-122
Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN	253	223	-30
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	248	94	-154
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	238	154	-84
Port Clinton, OH	237	201	-36
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	182	111	-71
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL	158	147	-11

Appendix C: List of Organizations Participating in Focus Group Sessions

Table 4A: Organizations Participating in Focus Groups

Organizations Participating in Focus Groups		
A Renewed Mind	Leading Families Home	The Mannik & Smith Group
Ability Center of Northwest Ohio	Lucas County Board of Commissioners	Thomas M. Wernert Center
Advocates for Basic Legal Equality	Lucas County Childrens Services	Toledo Design Center
Advocating Opportunity	Lucas County Department of Job & Family Services	Toledo Fair Housing Center
African American Legacy Project of Northwest Ohio	Lucas County Family Council	Toledo Grows
American Rivers	Lucas County Mental Health & Recovery Services	Toledo LISC
Area Office on Aging	Lucas County Soil & Water Conservation District	Toledo Museum of Art
CareNet	Madd Poets Society	Toledo Opera
Center of Hope Family Services	Mercy Health Partners	Toledo Symphony
Children's Theatre Workshop	Metroparks Toledo	Toledo Technology Academy
City of Toledo Brownfield Redevelopment Program	Mom's House	Tutor Smart
City of Toledo Department of Public Utilities	Monroe Street Community Center	University of Toledo College of Nursing
City of Toledo Division of Environment Services	National Wildlife Federation	University of Toledo Honors College
City of Toledo Neighborhood & Business Development	Neighborhood Health Association	US Together
ConnecToledo	Ohio State Extension Service, Lucas County Office	Valentine Theatre
Connecting Kids to Meals	Partners for Clean Streams	Warren Senior Center
East Toledo Family Center	Partners in Education	Water for Ishmael
Equality Toledo	ProMedica	Wayman Palmer YMCA of Greater Toledo
Family & Child Abuse Prevention Center	Radiant City Arts	WGTE Public Media
Harbor Behavioral Health	Sofia Quintero Art & Cultural Center	YMCA & Jewish Community Center of Greater Toledo
Hospital Council of Northwest Ohio	Sunshine Communications	YWCA
Imagination Station	The Arts Commission	

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Appendix D: List of Organizations Participating in Key Informant Interviews

Table 5A: Organizations Participating in Key Informant Interviews

Organizations Participating in Key Informant Interviews		
Black Swamp Conservancy	Lucas County Workforce Investment Board	Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority
Hospital Council of NW Ohio	Mercy Health	Toledo Museum of Art
Lucas County Board of Commissioners	ProMedica	Toledo Public Schools
Lucas County Juvenile Court	The Arts Commission	University of Toledo
Lucas County Metropolitan Housing Authority	The Zepf Center	

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