



## Executive Summary



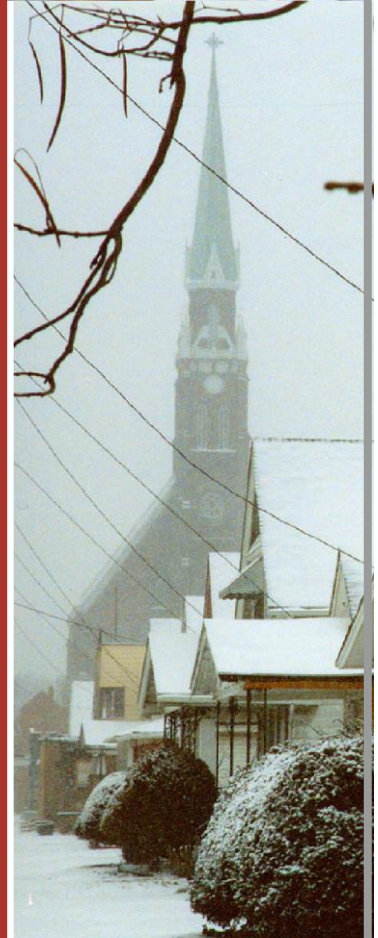
Toledo Community Foundation

# Assessing Community Needs

City of Toledo and  
Lucas County, Ohio

May 10, 2019

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INSTITUTE  
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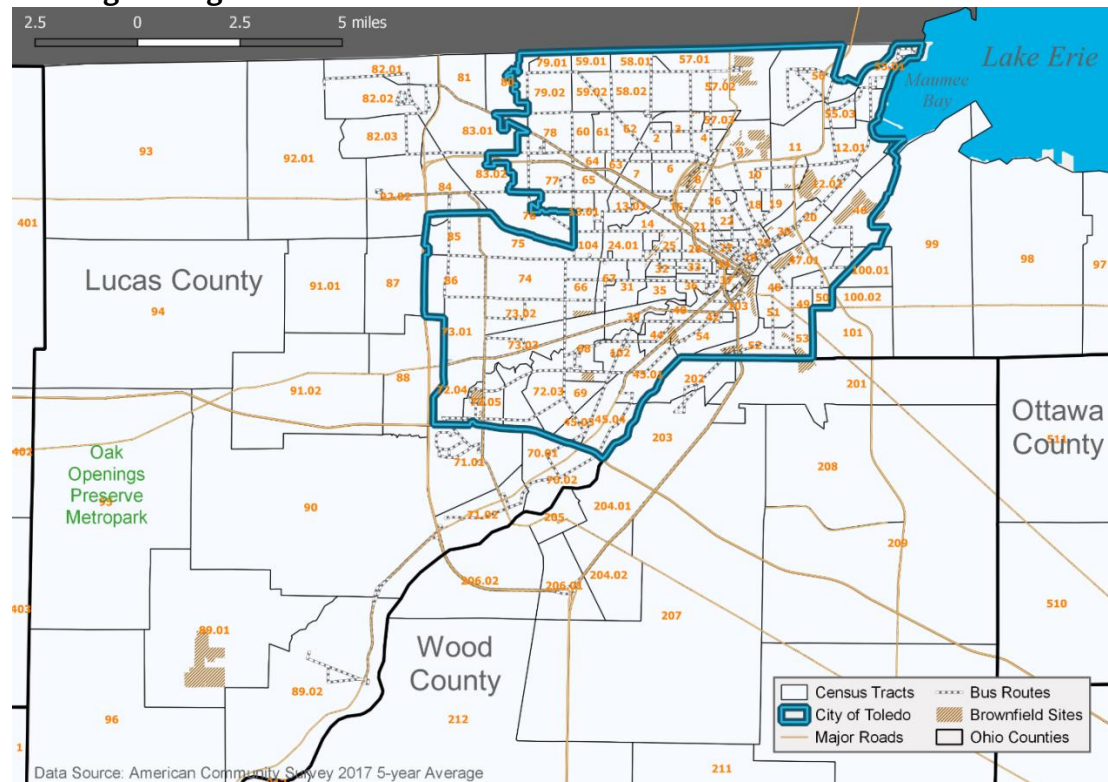




## Introduction to Project

In an effort to better understand the critical needs of the community it serves, and concurrent with implementing a new strategic plan developed by the Board of Trustees, Toledo Community Foundation (TCF) engaged W. E. Upjohn Institute to conduct research to identify and define community needs. Upjohn reviewed community documents, plans and studies created in the past five years, orchestrated focus groups with 79 stakeholders, and interviewed 15 key community leaders as well as TCF staff. That process identified multiple critical needs that are addressed in the Executive Summary that follows.

## Defining the Region



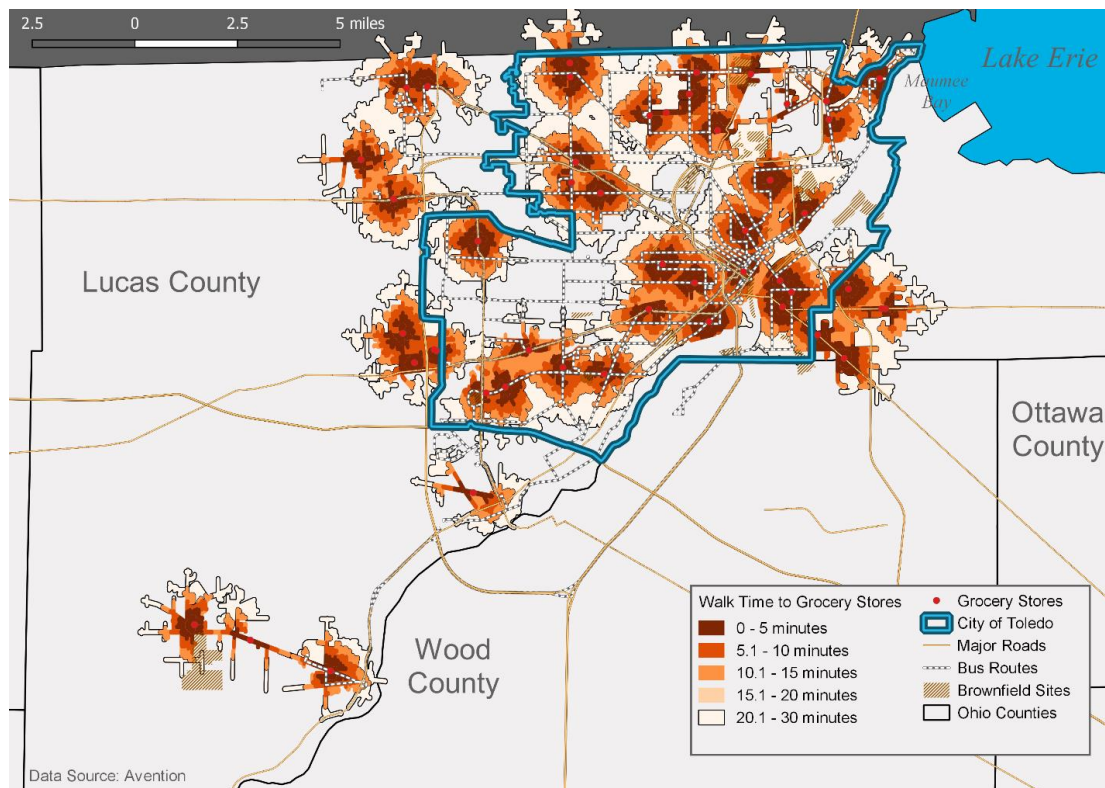
**ES Map 1: Defining the Region.** The City of Toledo, located within Lucas County in northwest Ohio, is 84.12 square miles and primarily urban in nature. The county is about 596 square miles, of which 341 square miles are land and 255 square miles are water. The city is comprised of 95 census tracts, and the county, including the City of Toledo, includes 127 census tracts. Toledo Community Foundation primarily provides support to six programmatic grantmaking areas within the City of Toledo, as well as the balance of 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.

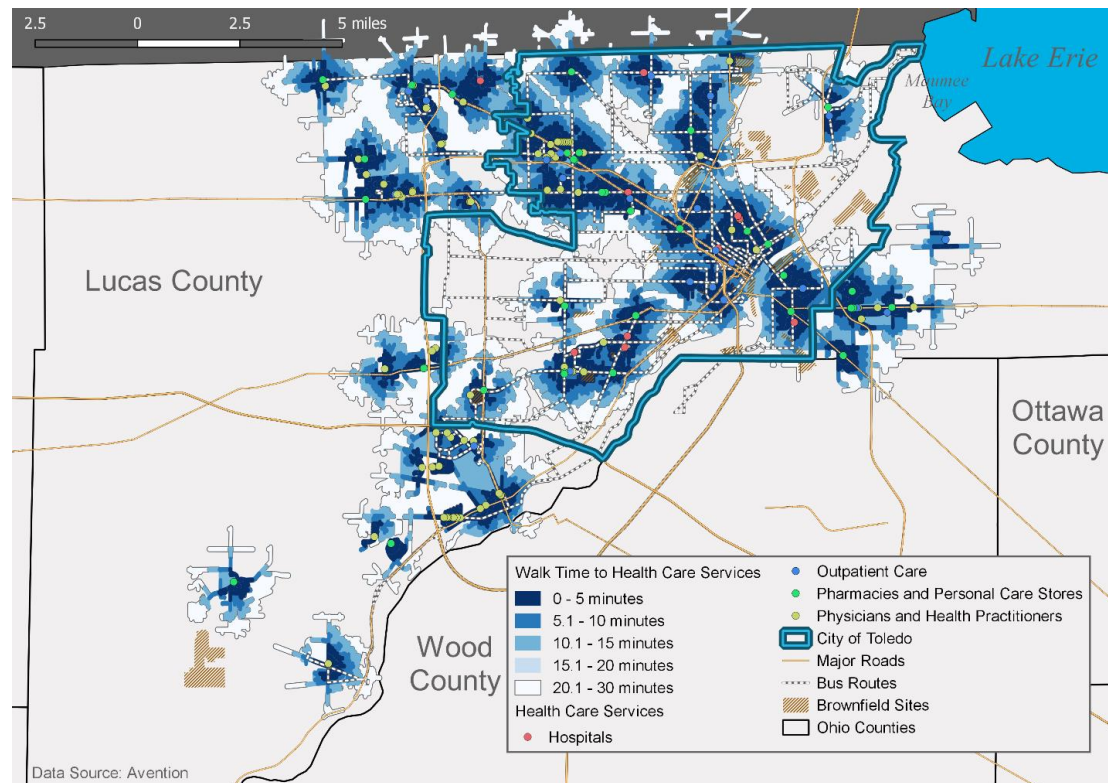
**Poverty** affects different parts of the population in different ways. In the Toledo region, as shown in the data, poverty and its outcomes are concentrated in the urban core. Lower household income, higher unemployment, lower labor force participation, higher levels of those without a high school 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.



**ES Map 2: Walk time to grocery stores.** 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, particularly when also carrying groceries.

For the youngest in the county, there are concerns about the readiness of children to enter kindergarten. Lack of kindergarten preparedness leads to concerns about 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.



**ES Map 3: Walk time to health care services.** 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 access to healthy food, 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.

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 limit 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.

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.

### **Toledo Community Foundation Contact**

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