



# LEADS

HELP THAT LEADS YOU IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

## COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

2021-2023



# OHIO

Approved by the LEADS Community Action Board of Trustees

June 2021



**APPROVAL OF THE LEADS COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT  
RESOLUTION  
BY THE LEADS BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

On June 17, 2021 the LEADS Board of Trustees met for their scheduled monthly meeting and 11 Board members were present which represents a legal quorum of the Board of Trustees.

The LEADS Board of Trustees approved the 2021 LEADS Community Needs Assessment.

John Whittington made the motion to approve the 2021 LEADS Community Needs Assessment and Ben Broyles seconded the motion. Motion carried with the vote being unanimous.

Resolution recorded and prepared by:

Ramona Russell  
Executive Assistant

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ramona Russell".

Resolution approved as written by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rochelle C. Paul".

Rochelle C. Paul  
LEADS Board Chairperson

# Table of Contents

## Community Needs Assessment

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1. Executive Summary of Key Findings and Community Needs

##### 1.1.2. Collection, analysis and reporting of data

##### 1.1.2.3. Licking County Demographics

### 2. Maximum Feasible Participation

#### 2.1. Board, Staff & Client Participation

#### 2.2. Community Engagement

(participation from five sectors)

#### 2.3. Low-Income Client Needs Surveys

#### 2.4. Stakeholder Surveys

#### 2.5. Forums & Committees

## Appendices and Data Collection

### 3. Community-Based Sector

#### 3.1. The United Way

#### 3.2. Licking Housing Coalition

#### 3.3. Food Pantry Network

#### 3.4. LC County Veterans

### 4. Faith Based

#### 4.1. Reverend Jeff Gill Interview and meeting

#### 4.2. Salvation Army

#### 4.3. LC Coalition of Care Invitation to participation

### 5. Private Sector

#### 5.1. Licking County Chamber of Commerce 2021 Wage & Benefit Survey and Meeting

#### 5.2. Licking Memorial Health Systems

### 6. Public Sector

#### 6.1. Licking County JFS

#### 6.2. LCJFS Advisory Committee

#### 6.3. CARES Act Meeting

### 7. Educational Sector

#### 7.1. Central Ohio Training Center (C-TEC)

#### 7.2. LEADS Head Start Survey

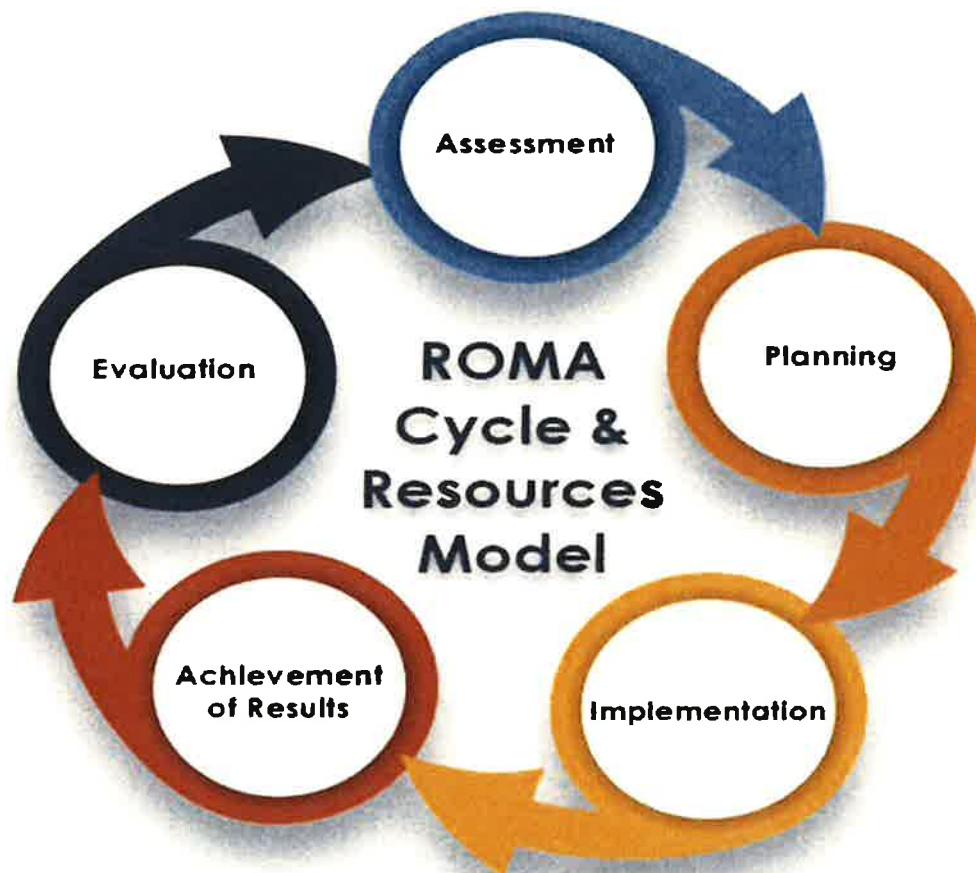
#### 7.3. Brittany Misner Lakewood School Board Member Meeting

### 8. Documents- Reports & Other Key Poverty Data

## 1. Introduction

In 2019, the LEADS Board of Trustees established a plan to conduct and complete a comprehensive Community Needs Assessment (CNA) in 2020. Then, early in 2020 the novel coronavirus, now commonly referred to as “COVID-19,” emerged causing widespread shutdowns. At this time, the long-term CEO of more than 25 years also announced his plan to retire. The Board formed a search committee and began a national search for a replacement CEO. The Board determined that with the ongoing pandemic, the employment search, and the fact that LEADS’ current CNA is valid through June 2021, it was prudent to postpone the CNA process until the new CEO was hired. This would allow time for society to reopen and data to become more available for review. It would also allow time for post-pandemic community needs to become more apparent.

LEADS, as a Community Action Agency, uses the Results Orientated Management and Accountability (ROMA) model to compliment the Performance Management Implementation. The graph below shows the ROMA Cycle to assess and treat poverty needs and conditions within the community. This assessment is the first step in a perpetual process of planning, implementation, results and evaluation.



The ROMA Cycle is a graphic representation of IM 49 created for "Planning for Results" © 2006, B. Mooney and J. Jakopic, National ROMA Training Project, Association of Nationally Certified ROMA Trainers, with funding from the US Department of Health and Human Services –Office of Community Services.

Early in 2021, LEADS staff implemented a systematic approach to collecting data. Staff reviewed poverty data and census information for Licking County, conducted key informant interviews, and surveyed various stakeholders. The data was collected, collated, and analyzed by staff with the goal of presenting findings and community needs to the Board of Trustees at their June 2021 meeting.

LEADS contacted representatives from five sectors: **Public** (e.g., Licking County Job and Family Services); **Private** (e.g., Licking County Chamber of Commerce); **Faith Based** (e.g., Salvation Army, Reverend Jeff Gill, and Pastor Deb Dingus); **Educational** (e.g., Central Ohio Technical College, C-TEC of Licking County, and Lakewood Local Schools); and **Community Based** (e.g., Licking County Coalition for Housing). The complete list of organizations is included in the assessment. Those who participated in stakeholder surveys represented more than twenty zip codes. The respondents provided their perspectives on community needs. This was achieved by providing those completing the survey with a list of possible needs, the option to identify any additional needs, and then the opportunity to prioritize needs using a Likert scale.

The results of all the surveys including Board of Trustees, the community-at-large, volunteers and clients were subsequently compiled to produce a guide for prioritization of agency efforts and a roadmap for investing resources to treat the causes and conditions of poverty in our community.

The purpose of this process is to identify needs, prioritize funding utilization, and create a strategy that assists low-income individuals and families to become self-sufficient; to improve the conditions in which low-income people live; ensure low-income residents have a stake in the community; enhance partnerships among supporters and providers of services for low-income community members; increase agency capacity; and by strengthening family and support systems to provide opportunity to vulnerable community members.

## **1.1. Executive Summary of Key Findings and Community Needs**

LEADS Community Action Agency conducts a Community Needs Assessment at least every three years to identify needs in the community, to prioritize programming, and determine best strategy for investing Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds and other resources. The information gleaned from the most recent CNA will be used as the basis for the LEADS Community Action Plan that will be developed later in 2021.

### **Housing**

Safe, healthy, and affordable housing continues to be a significant need for Licking County families. In fact, housing assistance was selected as the highest need among 64% of low-income survey respondents. Some community members need long term housing supports while others have episodes of need that are often the result of temporary crises brought on by illness, mental health, or job loss or reduction in hours. The need for assistance with housing includes rent and mortgage assistance and assistance with utilities. There is a large need for assistance with water and sewer bills, which can range from \$40 to more than \$150 per month. Access to water and sewer services is paramount for the safety and health of the individual or family as well as the community as a whole. There are few resources available to assist with water and sewer payments, making it one of the most requested unmet needs.

In Licking County, affordable housing complexes are full and often have waitlists. The local Metropolitan Housing Authority also has a waitlist for its voucher programs. There are currently no known new developments in progress to add affordable housing units in Licking County. LEADS will continue to pursue opportunities to develop affordable housing units locally and will strive to preserve its current affordable housing portfolio.

Requests for home repair are at an all-time high due, at least in part, to the exponential increase in material and labor costs. This is exacerbated by the shortage of workers, as will be noted later, which is impacting nearly all businesses including construction and skilled trade companies.

Energy and utility assistance are frequently requested and needed services. This includes request for gas, electric, and bulk fuel to support basic needs, such as heating and cooling; hygiene and sanitation; and food storage and meal preparation to list a few examples.

In recent years, Licking County and surrounding communities have experienced a significant increase in nuisance insect infestations, including bedbugs. Treatments to eradicate bedbugs is labor intensive and prohibitively expensive. Without financial resources available to adequately mediate infestations, the infestation cycle cannot be controlled. Dealing with insect infestations can interfere with school attendance and employment, negatively impact quality of life, and adversely impact one's housing.

## **Food and Nutrition**

21% of survey respondents indicated that food and nutrition were the top priority, making food and nutrition the second highest need. The Food Pantry Network of Licking County provided statistics on the number of families and individuals who need emergency food assistance. In 2020, the Food Pantry Network reported providing a record number of pounds of food.

Concerned about children who rely on free and reduced school lunches being able to access food during the summer break, organization like the Salvation Army have implemented summer feeding locations in areas of poverty around the county.

Licking County Job and Family Services shared data about SNAP utilization. SNAP benefit amounts were elevated during the COVID pandemic to make sure the most vulnerable members of society had access to food. The increased SNAP benefits are temporary and will result in a benefit cliff for those individuals and families who are surviving on the margins.

## **Transportation**

Licking County, at 682.5 square miles, is one of the largest counties in Ohio by land area. While Licking County does have urban pockets, in Newark, Heath, Pataskala, and elsewhere, much of the county remains rural. As such, transportation is critical for commuting to work (the average work commute is 26.2 minutes), school, attending medical appointments, to visit shopping centers, and enjoying recreational pursuits. The Licking County Health Department has identified several “food deserts” in Licking County, where health food options are not available within walking distance, emphasizes the need for transportation.

Licking County does have a limited public transportation system, but does not provide the flexibility individuals need for shopping, employment, and entertainment.

The size of the county; the distance between residential areas, shopping centers, employers, schools, and medical providers; and the limited public transportation system underscores the dependence residents have on personally owned vehicles to conduct their daily lives.

Many residents are unable to afford to maintain or repair their vehicles after a breakdown.

## **Health and Medical**

In several key information interviews, it became apparent that there is an unmet demand for additional durable medical equipment closets in Licking County, particularly at the county’s western edge. The existing medical equipment closet is not easily accessible to the western part of the county as it is located at a church in the north end of Newark. In fact, it takes 25-30 minutes to drive from Pataskala to the church. Rev. Jeff Gill indicated that the Newark medical equipment closet cannot keep up with demand, nor can it accept all the available donations of equipment. Conversations with representatives from the Licking County Aging

Program, United Way of Licking County, Pataskala volunteers, and Adult Protective Services confirmed the need for additional durable medical supply closet(s).

### **Workforce**

Licking County employers, like employers in many jurisdictions, have a record number of positions available with seemingly few people to fill them. As our population ages, less individuals are in the workforce. Furthermore, as the result of fear of the COVID-19 pandemic, many older workers decided to exit the workforce sooner than originally planned. In other situations, parents left their employment to care for children as schools and child care facilities closed. This has resulted in many job vacancies to go unfilled. Many businesses, including stores and restaurants, have shortened their operational hours due to staff shortages. Many employers in Licking County have raised wages and implemented sign on bonuses. Employers at the local level and nationally are reviewing prerequisites, such as drug screening in an effort to bolster employee recruitment.

### **Additional Community Assessment Key Findings-Needs**

While housing, food, transportation, medical equipment, and workforce development, as noted above, frequently rose to the top as the most significant needs, the CNA highlighted many other areas that contribute to the causes and conditions of poverty in our community. A more complete list of community needs identified during the assessment appears below:

- |   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| ✓ Utility Assistance                            | ✓ Un-skilled Service Workers |
| ✓ Water Assistance                              | ✓ Child Care                 |
| ✓ Housing Assistance                            | ✓ Broadband/Computer         |
| ✓ Bug Infestation Re-mediation                  | ✓ Food Assistance            |
| ✓ Drug Abuse Intervention                       | ✓ Medication Assistance      |
| ✓ Transportation                                | ✓ Mental Health Service      |
| ✓ Durable Medical Equipment                     | ✓ Skilled Tradesmen          |
| ✓ Veteran Issues and Navigating Assistance Help |                              |

#### **1.1.2. Collection, analysis and reporting of data**

Members of the LEADS Board of Trustees as well as the management team sit on a variety of local boards, committees, forums, and attend many stakeholder meetings throughout the year. This allows the Board and management to stay advised of the latest poverty trends and causes in Licking County.

LEADS clients/customers are offered and encouraged to complete a short survey on what the low-income needs of the community are through their own lived experiences and needs. More than 700 customer surveys were collected.



### **1.1.2.3 Licking County Demographics**

In 2019, Licking County, OH had a population of 176k people with a median age of 39.7 and a median household income of \$62,715. Between 2017 and 2018 the population of Licking County, OH grew from 170,678 to 172,293, a 0.946% increase and its median household income grew from \$59,747 to \$62,715, a 4.97% increase.

The 5 largest ethnic groups in Licking County, OH are White (Non-Hispanic) (90.6%), Black or African American (Non-Hispanic) (3.69%), Two+ (Non-Hispanic) (2.41%), White (Hispanic) (1.24%), and Asian (Non-Hispanic) (1.15%). 0% of the households in Licking County, OH speak a non-English language at home as their primary language, and 99% of the residents in Licking County, OH are U.S. citizens.

The largest universities in Licking County, are The Ohio State University-Newark Campus (688 degrees awarded in 2019), Central Ohio Technical College (686 degrees), and Denison University (643 degrees).

In 2018, the median property value in Licking County was \$164,100, and the homeownership rate was 72.8%. Most people in Licking County drove alone to work, and the average commute time was 26.2 minutes. The average car ownership in Licking County, OH was 2 cars per household.

Licking County, OH borders Coshocton County, OH, Delaware County, OH, Fairfield County, OH, Franklin County, OH, Knox County, OH, Muskingum County, OH, and Perry County, OH.

# LEADS

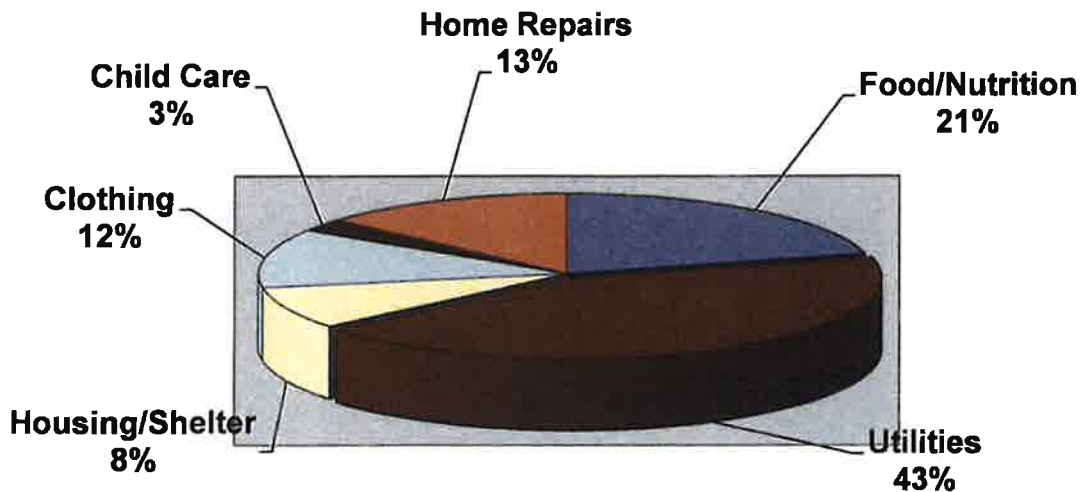
## Community Needs Assessment

### Community Service Block Grant (CSBG)

The LEADS Community Action Agency Community Needs Assessment was completed for the CSBG Application every three years to determine which programs will be funded and the level of investment needed based on the local needs of the low-income community.

During the agency year of 2020, LEADS Community Action Agency asked customers for their opinions on the problems facing our community, as well as what they see as their personal barriers and opportunities. As part of this survey, we also asked that respondents share demographic information about themselves. The Community Needs Assessment chart below summarizes the information provided by 777 of our customer's household needs throughout the year.

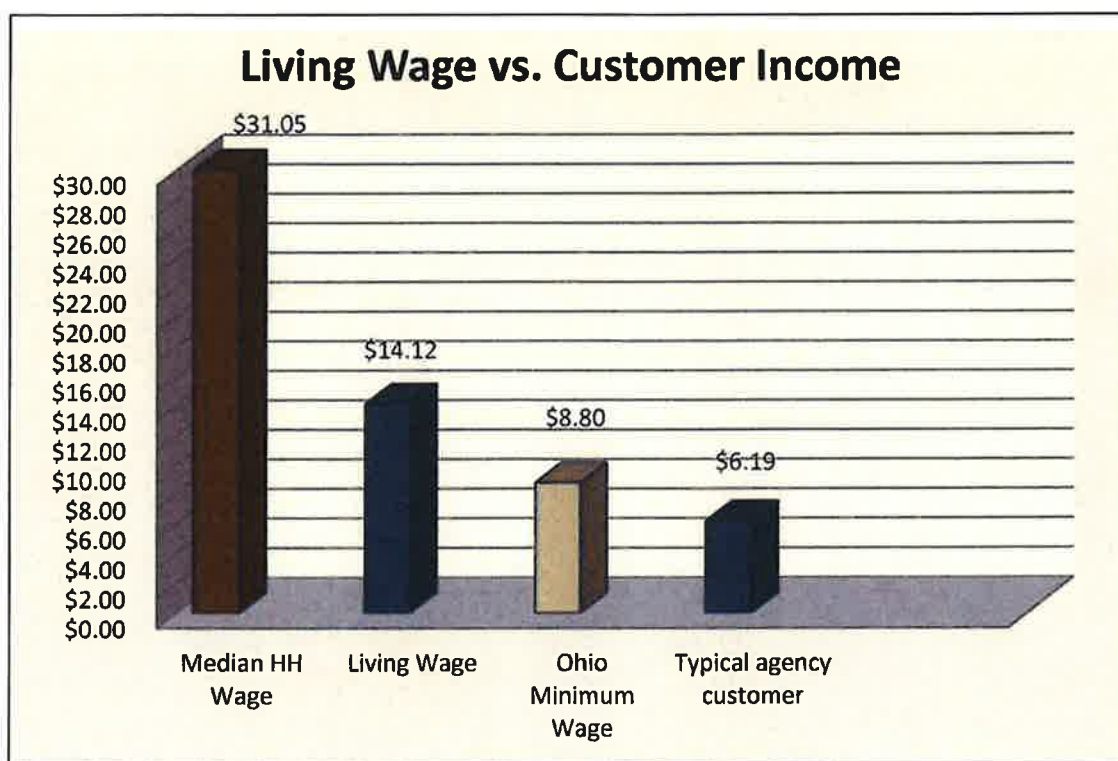
LEADS uses all of the information shared by customers to gain insight into how, as an Agency, we can better assist our customers achieve self-sufficiency. The information generously provided by customers and gathered here assists us in designing and refining programs, documenting local unmet needs and providing the data needed to improve the systems that impact our low-income customers' lives.



### **Living Wage vs. Typical Customer Income:**

The living wage in Licking County for a single adult is <sup>1</sup>\$29,369 or \$14.12, which is the hourly rate that an individual must make to support themselves if they are the sole provider and are working full-time (2080 hours per year). The new Ohio Minimum Wage of \$8.70 increased it to \$8.80 an hour on January 1, 2021.

Most of LEADS customer base is at or below 100% of the federal poverty guideline<sup>2</sup>. The current poverty rate is at \$6.19 per hour or \$12,880<sup>3</sup> annually using the same criteria listed above. The graph below shows the difference between living wage, minimum wage and our typical customer from whatever the source.



<sup>1</sup> Source: Living Wage Web Site 3/17/2021: <http://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/39089>

<sup>2</sup> CSBG Annual Information Survey (IS) Report

<sup>3</sup> HHS Federal Poverty Guidelines 2/2021 <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>

Note: Median Household Wage <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/lickingcountyohio/PST045217>

## Community Needs Assessment (CNA) Maximum Feasible Participation

### Community Engagement

---

#### Community-Based Organizations

- ✓ The United Way
  - ✓ Licking County Housing Coalition
  - ✓ Licking County Aging Program
  - ✓ Food Pantry Network of Licking County
  - ✓ The Harbor Buckeye Lake
  - ✓ Licking County Coalition of Care
  - ✓ Licking County Veterans' Service Commission
- 

#### Faith Based

- ✓ Salvation Army
  - ✓ Licking County Coalition of Care
  - ✓ St Vincent dePaul
  - ✓ Reverend Jeff Gill
- 

#### Private Sector

- ✓ Licking County Chamber of Commerce
  - ✓ Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS) - Ben Broyles
- 

#### Public Sector

- ✓ City of Newark Development Office
  - ✓ Licking County Jobs & Family Services
  - ✓ Licking County Health Department
  - ✓ Licking County Planning
  - ✓ Ohio Means Jobs
  - ✓ Clerk of Courts- Marcia Phelps
  - ✓ Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging
-

### **Educational Institutions**

- ✓ Central Ohio Training Center- Advisory Committee
  - ✓ Head Start and Early Head Start Grantee
  - ✓ Newark City School Board- Warren Weber
  - ✓ Lakewood School Board Member- Brittany Misner
- 

### **Key Informant Interviews**

- ✓ Reverend Jeff Gill
  - ✓ Brittany Misner - Vice President Licking County Chamber of Commerce; Lakewood School Board
  - ✓ John Fisher – Licking County Jobs & Family Services
  - ✓ Mellissa Owns- Licking County Aging (LCAP)
  - ✓ Nick Sunday - Veterans Comprehensive Assistance Program (VCAP)
- 

### **Staff and Board Input**

- ✓ Board Meetings
  - ✓ Executive Staff Meetings
  - ✓ Staff Meetings
- 

### **Surveys Collected from Stakeholders**

- ✓ Low-Income Customers
  - ✓ Volunteers
  - ✓ Public Survey (HS)
-

## Committees & Forums

- ✓ Licking County Jobs & Family Services Planning Committee
  - ✓ Newark Vision 2028 - Neighborhood Revitalization Group- Member
  - ✓ Licking County COVID Forum- Member
  - ✓ Young Leaders of Licking County
  - ✓ Emergency Food & Shelter Program LRO Board (EFSP)
  - ✓ Licking County Housing Initiative- Member
  - ✓ The Harbor Buckeye Lake - Presentation
- 

## Community Assessment Key Findings-Needs

- ✓ Utility Assistance
  - ✓ Water Assistance
  - ✓ Housing Assistance
  - ✓ Bug Infestation Re-mediation
  - ✓ Drug Abuse Intervention
  - ✓ Transportation
  - ✓ Durable Medical Equipment
  - ✓ Veteran Issues and Navigating Help Assistance
  - ✓ Skilled Trades Workers
  - ✓ Un-skilled Service Workers
  - ✓ Child Care
  - ✓ Broadband/Computer
  - ✓ Food Assistance
  - ✓ Medication Assistance
  - ✓ Mental Health Service
- 

## Barriers to Hiring-Employment:

- Small pool of willing able workers
  - COVID
  - Unemployment COVID Stipulates
  - Drug Abuse (Test)
  - Stimulus Payments
  - Lack of Insurability (Driving Record)
  - Unable to Pass Background checks
  - Lower Wages
-

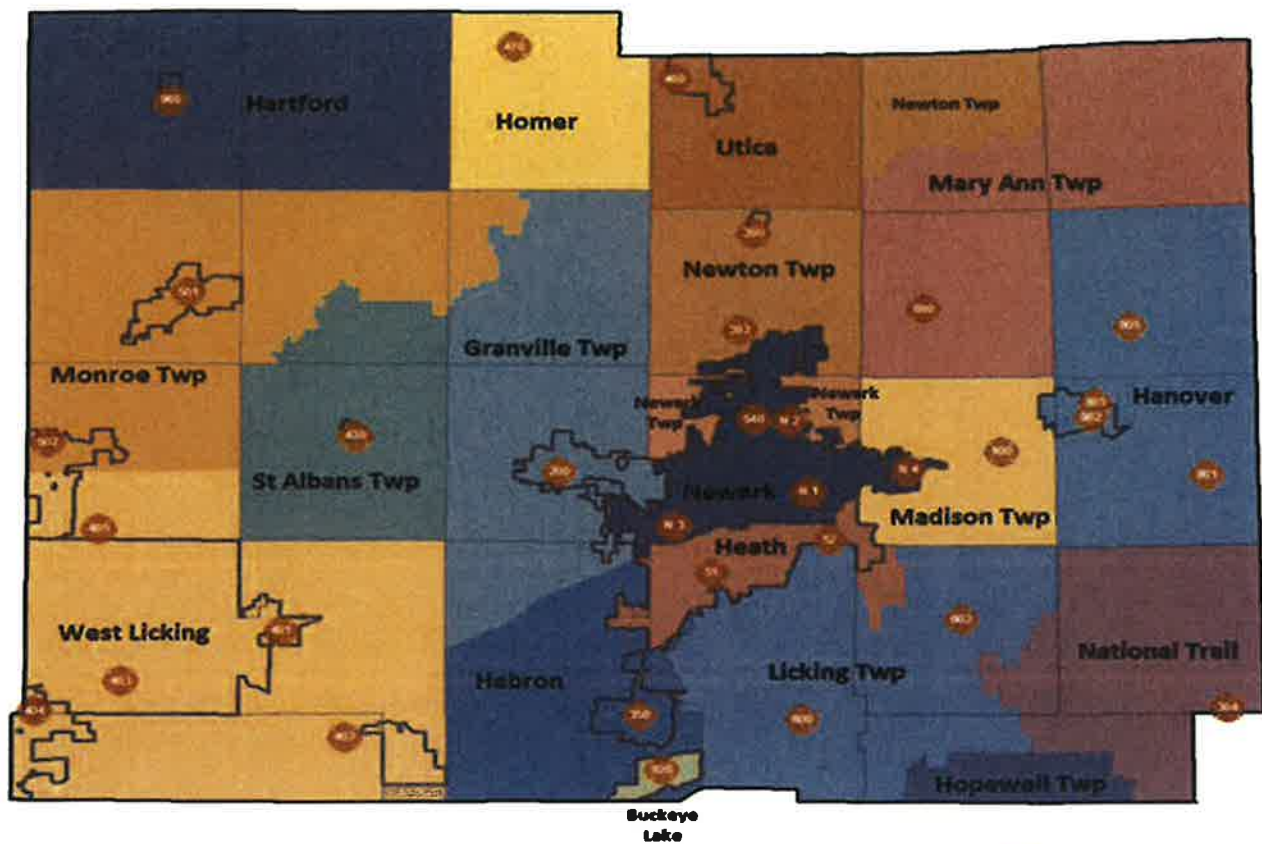
## **Collection of Qualitative and Quantitative Information Processes and analysis**

**Qualitative** - relating to, measuring, or measured by the quality of something rather than its quantity. Often contrasted with quantitative.

**Quantitative** - Quantitative analysis may refer to quantitative research, application of mathematics and statistics in economics and marketing; Quantitative analysis (chemistry), the determination of the absolute or relative abundance of one or more substances present in a sample Quantitative analysis of behavior, quantitative models in the experimental analysis of behavior

### **Documents and Data Collected**

1. Community Assessment Key Findings
2. National Community Action Partnership Assessment Tool
3. The five main sectors engaged during the CNA:
  - a. Community-based organizations;
  - b. Faith-based organizations;
  - c. Private sector;
  - d. Public sector, and
  - e. Educational institutions.
4. Key Stakeholder Interviews
5. Central Ohio Technical College (COTC) Needs Assessment
6. Surveys
7. Licking County Demographics
8. Community Service Block Grant 2020 Annual Report
9. Poverty Data



## Demographics Quick Facts Licking County, Ohio

Demographics Quick Facts provides statistics for all states and counties, and for cities and towns with a *population of 5,000 or more*.

PEOPLE	
Population	
<b>Population estimates, July 1, 2019, (V2019)</b>	<b>176,862</b>
Population estimates base, April 1, 2010, (V2019)	166,482
Population, percent change - April 1, 2010 (estimates base) to July 1, 2019, (V2019)	6.2%
Population, Census, April 1, 2010	166,492
Age and Sex	
Persons under 5 years, percent	6.0%
Persons under 18 years, percent	23.0%
Persons 65 years and over, percent	16.8%
Female persons, percent	50.9%



**Race and Hispanic Origin**

White alone, percent	90.8%
Black or African American alone, percent(a)	4.2%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent(a)	0.3%
Asian alone, percent(a)	2.3%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent(a)	0.1%
Two or More Races, percent	2.4%
Hispanic or Latino, percent(b)	2.1%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent	89.1%

**Population Characteristics**

Veterans, 2015-2019	12,600
Foreign born persons, percent, 2015-2019	2.6%

**Housing**

Housing units, July 1, 2019, (V2019)	71,200
Owner-occupied housing unit rate, 2015-2019	72.9%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2015-2019	\$170,200
Median selected monthly owner costs -with a mortgage, 2015-2019	\$1,403
Median selected monthly owner costs -without a mortgage, 2015-2019	\$488
Median gross rent, 2015-2019	\$852
Building permits, 2019	262

**Families & Living Arrangements**

Households, 2015-2019	64,035
Persons per household, 2015-2019	2.65
Living in same house 1 year ago, percent of persons age 1 year+, 2015-2019	86.5%
Language other than English spoken at home, percent of persons age 5 years+, 2015-2019	3.8%

**Computer and Internet Use**

Households with a computer, percent, 2015-2019	91.2%
Households with a broadband Internet subscription, percent, 2015-2019	85.1%

**Education**

High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2015-2019	91.5%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2015-2019	26.1%

**Health**

With a disability, under age 65 years, percent, 2015-2019	11.6%
Persons without health insurance, under age 65 years, percent	7.1%

**Economy**

In civilian labor force, total, percent of population age 16 years+, 2015-2019	63.7%
In civilian labor force, female, percent of population age 16 years+, 2015-2019	59.7%
Total accommodation and food services sales, 2012 (\$1,000)(c)	212,700

Total health care and social assistance receipts/revenue, 2012 (\$1,000)(c)	624,976
Total manufacturers shipments, 2012 (\$1,000)(c)	2,958,944
Total merchant wholesaler sales, 2012 (\$1,000)(c)	1,634,752
Total retail sales, 2012 (\$1,000)(c)	2,454,948
Total retail sales per capita, 2012(c)	\$14,653

### Transportation

Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+, 2015-2019	26.2
--	------

### Income & Poverty

Median household income (in 2019 dollars), 2015-2019	\$64,589
Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2019 dollars), 2015-2019	\$31,617
Persons in poverty, percent	9.3%

## BUSINESSES

### Businesses

Total employer establishments, 2019	3,042
Total employment, 2019	55,592
Total annual payroll, 2019 (\$1,000)	2,292,098
Total employment, percent change, 2018-2019	0.5%
Total nonemployer establishments, 2018	12,173
All firms, 2012	13,336
Men-owned firms, 2012	7,470
Women-owned firms, 2012	4,400
Minority-owned firms, 2012	694
Nonminority-owned firms, 2012	12,249
Veteran-owned firms, 2012	1,440
Nonveteran-owned firms, 2012	11,032

## GEOGRAPHY

### Geography

Population per square mile, 2010	243.9
Land area in square miles, 2010	682.50