



Leading the Way 2025 Tour

TOLEDO POST REPORT

HIGHLIGHTING WHAT WORKS

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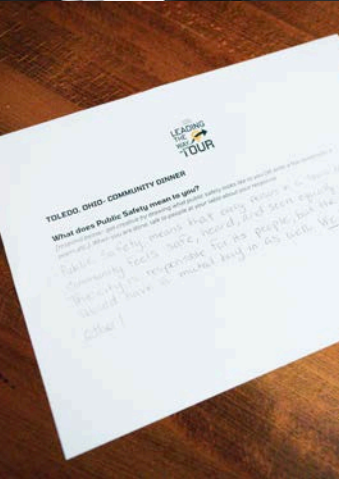
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LETTER FROM CITIES UNITED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: **AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Dear Toledo Leaders, Partners,
Leaders and Friends,

From October 7–9, 2025, Cities United joined you for the **Toledo stop of the Leading the Way Tour**—returning to a jurisdiction that continues to show what can happen when **partnership, persistence, and purpose** come together. Our relationship with Toledo deepened when your delegation attended the **2022 Cities United National Convening** and continued through the completion of the **Roadmap Academy in 2023**. That foundation helped launch our formal partnership and guided the development of **Peace in Motion**, your comprehensive **public safety framework** built around the vision of “a **safe, vibrant, and engaged Toledo** grounded in resilient individuals, empowered households, and strong neighborhoods and networks.”

Over those three days, we saw a **community moving with intention**. The conversations were honest, hopeful, and rooted in a shared belief that **safety isn’t just about reducing harm**—it’s about building **systems and relationships** that make **well-being possible**. As I shared during one of our sessions, “I see Toledo as a **model and an example** of what can be done when you have the right leadership and the right investment.”

From the **Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement** to grassroots organizations and young leaders, it was clear that **collaboration** sits at the center of this work. The reported **31 percent reduction in homicides in 2023**, followed by an additional **18 percent decline in 2024**, is proof of what’s possible when a jurisdiction applies a **public health approach** built on **partnership and purpose**. But progress isn’t just about the

We also heard real conversations about what it will take to keep that progress going. Partners lifted up the need for **clear accountability, sustainable funding**, and more **consistent engagement** from systems like housing, workforce, economic development, and law enforcement. These aren’t signs of weakness—they’re signs of growth that show a network ready to build **lasting infrastructure and ownership** across every level of the ecosystem.

And at the center of it all are **Toledo’s young leaders**. From the **Violence Interruption work** happening in schools to their growing roles across community programs, they’re not waiting to be invited in—they’re already **leading**. Their **energy, insight, and honesty** continue to remind us that young people aren’t just part of this movement; they’re **shaping it**.

Cities United is proud to walk beside Toledo in this next chapter. We’ll continue to serve as your **thought partner, connector, and amplifier**—helping strengthen **infrastructure, expand learning networks**, and share your story as a jurisdiction **leading the way toward safe, healthy, and hopeful communities**.

Thank you for your partnership, your openness, and your belief that **change happens when we move together**. Toledo’s story is one of **collaboration, courage, and community**—and it’s still being written.

In partnership,

Anthony D. Smith
Executive Director, Cities United



INTRODUCTION

Set along the western edge of **Lake Erie**, Toledo, Ohio—known as “The Glass City”—is a community shaped by **resilience, creativity, and collaboration**. Once a manufacturing hub that fueled the region’s industrial rise, the jurisdiction today reflects a dynamic blend of neighborhoods, cultures, and generations working together to strengthen **community safety and opportunity**.

At the heart of this work is a **shared vision**: “a safe, vibrant, and engaged Toledo grounded in resilient individuals, empowered households, and strong neighborhoods and networks.” Guided by this commitment, the jurisdiction seeks to **eliminate the root causes of violence** and build conditions where all residents can thrive. The **Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (MONSE)**, through its Peace in Motion framework, has taken the lead in coordinating a **public health approach** that centers **prevention, healing, and collaboration** across systems and communities.

The Leading the Way Tour came to Toledo to listen, to learn, and to support the path forward.

THE TOUR SEEK TO:

- Highlight effective, comprehensive public safety practices and models
- Foster cross-sector collaboration
- Amplify community-led solutions
- Enhance local capacity
- Evaluate progress and impact through the Cities United Roadmap Framework
- Assess and foster young leader engagement

Conversations throughout the Tour surfaced Toledo’s defining strength: its **people**. From city leaders to community organizers and young leaders, participants spoke with shared conviction about the importance of **partnership and trust**. As one outreach worker reflected, “When we show up together, the community believes us more.” That sense of collective purpose continues to guide the jurisdiction’s work and momentum.

Now in **Phase 3** of the Cities United Roadmap—**Implementing a Multi-Year Plan of Action**—Toledo is **aligning partners, refining its strategies**, and deepening its investment in **collaborative infrastructure**. The jurisdiction’s ecosystem is laying the groundwork for **lasting impact** while actively addressing current challenges.

The sections that follow highlight the **discussions, reflections, and lessons** gathered from the LTW Toledo stop—capturing the **progress, partnerships**, and **shared commitment** that define the journey toward a **safer, more connected future**.

These findings present an opportunity for Cities United and Toledo to continue working together—**aligning leadership, deepening collaboration**, and ensuring that **safety, healing, and resilience** are built and sustained for generations to come.

UNDERSTANDING THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE

Grounded Strengths: Aligning Vision and Structure

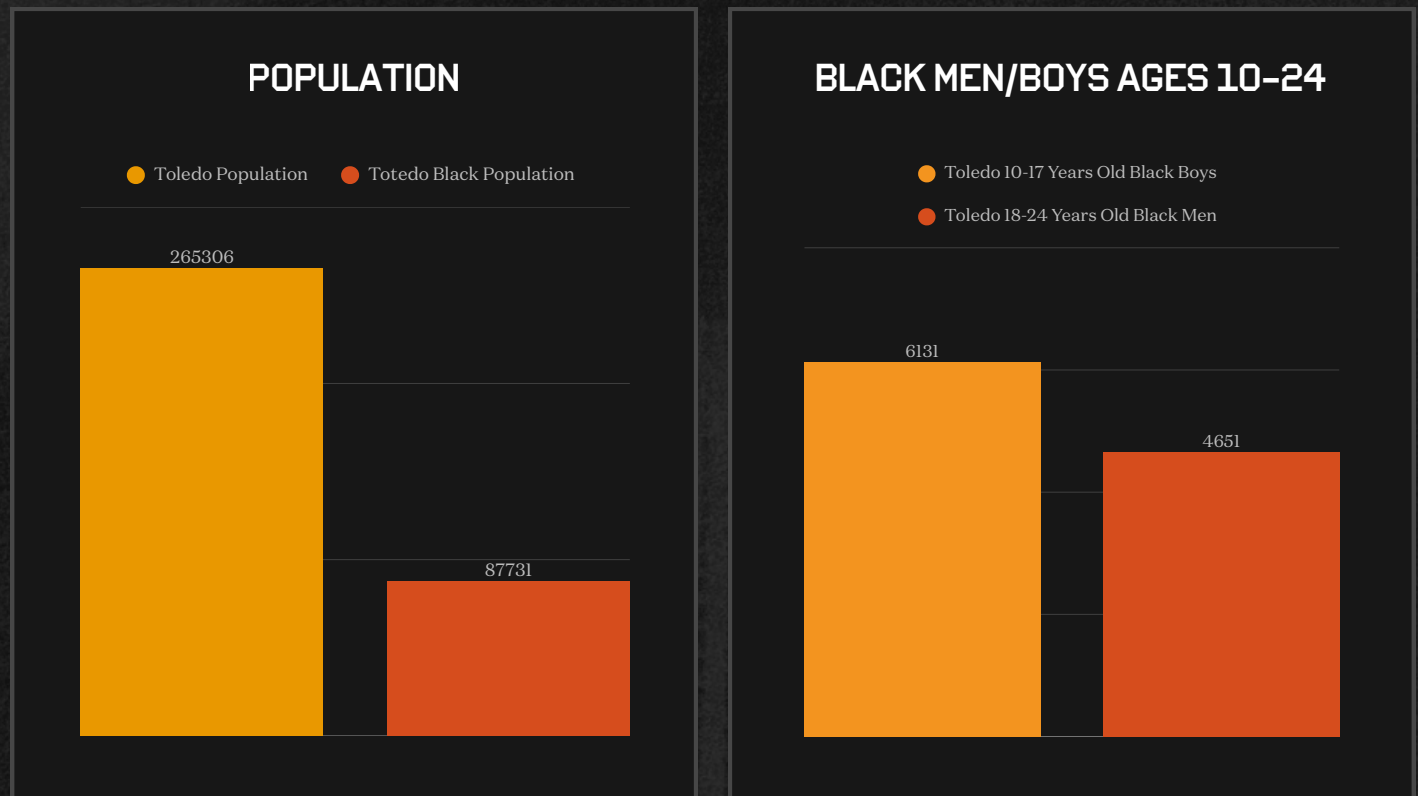
Toledo is building on a foundation established through its **Peace in Motion framework**—the jurisdiction’s comprehensive public safety plan launched in 2025. Led by the **Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (MONSE)** and supported by Cities United, the plan outlines a comprehensive, long-term public safety strategy that applies a **public health framework** to prevent and reduce gun violence while promoting healing, opportunity, and resilience. This framework embodies Toledo’s collective vision of “a safe, vibrant, and engaged community grounded in resilient individuals, empowered households, and strong neighborhoods and networks.”

The current question for Toledo is not what are our strengths? but rather, where is the **current ecosystem going collectively?** The LTW stop surfaced a shared answer: the jurisdiction is moving from isolated efforts toward an integrated ecosystem—one where **coordination, communication, and accountability** are embedded at every level. As one outreach partner reflected, “When we show up together, the **community believes us more.**” That sense of collective presence has become a defining characteristic of Toledo’s approach to public safety, signaling a shift from parallel efforts to **shared purpose.**

⚠️ MOMENT THAT MATTERED

During the Community Safety Strategy meeting, MONSE leaders and neighborhood advocates reflected on what it means to move as **one ecosystem.** A partner described how community members have begun to see the same people—outreach workers, faith leaders, young leaders, and city representatives—showing up together at schools, events, and healing circles. “We used to all be working on the same problems from different corners,” they said. “Now, when a family loses someone or a young person needs help, they see all of us there—city and community—without needing to ask who’s in charge.” This moment reflected what Toledo’s **collective movement** looks like in practice: unity in action and increasing consistency in presence.

With a population of roughly **270,000 residents**, Toledo's landscape is defined by its **diversity and deep neighborhood identities**. Nearly 30 percent of residents identify as Black or African American, and more than one in four families live below the poverty line. These realities underscore why Toledo's progress on safety and healing is both urgent and transformational.



Session participants found that the path forward is not about inventing new systems but **strengthening what already works**. Phrases like “strong collaboration but need backbone for coordination and sustained funding” and “everyone must be active and engaged—anyone on board or subcommittee” emphasized that success depends on **consistency, clarity, and shared accountability**. Participants agreed that the jurisdiction's next step is to build out the “backbone” of **Peace in Motion**—a permanent, staffed infrastructure that ensures the work continues seamlessly across administrations and partners.

The direction is clear. Toledo's **collective ecosystem** is moving toward **institutionalized collaboration**—a structure where community-based organizations, young leaders, and government partners co-own the vision, track shared outcomes, and sustain progress beyond individual programs or leadership cycles. Peace in Motion provides the framework; the **people of Toledo** provide the resolve. Together, they are laying the foundation for a **coordinated, healing-centered ecosystem** that transforms collaboration from a value into a sustained practice.



PERSISTENT CHALLENGES: DEFINING OWNERSHIP AND STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY

Toledo's progress in building a **coordinated safety ecosystem** has been steady and visible. As the jurisdiction deepens its commitment to **collective action**, the question of who owns and is accountable for what parts of the strategy has become central. Participants reflected that while coordination has improved, long-term success depends on defining who leads, who supports, and how accountability is shared across Toledo's growing ecosystem.

The **Peace in Motion framework** provides a strong roadmap, but implementing it across multiple sectors is complex. The **Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (MONSE)** serves as the coordinating hub, linking public agencies, faith-based organizations, community partners, and young leaders under one umbrella. Yet, as one community partner observed, "It feels like everyone is moving—but not always in the same direction."

This tension reflects a familiar stage in the maturation of **public safety ecosystems**—when strong relationships begin to outgrow informal systems. Participants emphasized that Toledo has cultivated trust and shared purpose, but needs **durable mechanisms** to preserve alignment as the work expands. Many called for consistent communication channels, a shared data infrastructure, and formal agreements that clarify how partners measure success together. As one discussion summary captured, "Clear accountability structure and backbone organization—follow-through and communication are critical."

Participants also reflected on opportunities to strengthen **alignment between community and system partners**. While coordination has deepened among outreach organizations and grassroots leaders, engagement from other sectors—such as law enforcement, housing, workforce development, and economic opportunity—has been less visible. Expanding collaboration across these areas will be essential to achieving **shared accountability and long-term stability**.

This need for stronger cross-sector connection is especially pressing given Toledo's broader **economic realities**. Nearly one in four residents lives below the poverty line, and the annual cost of gun violence exceeds **\$75 million**, draining community and city resources.

Many grassroots organizations operate with **limited staff capacity** and short-term funding, leaving them vulnerable to burnout. “We’re doing the work,” one partner said, “but sometimes it feels like we’re holding it together with sheer will.”

MOMENT THAT MATTERS

During the Public Safety Strategy Meeting, a long-time partner described the emotional and operational strain of keeping community programs afloat. “We have the heart—but we’re tired,” she said. “We need the structure to match our passion.” The conversation that followed turned the comment into a **planning moment**, with leaders sketching ideas for shared tracking systems, cross-agency reporting, and a formalized accountability framework. By the end of the session, partners were no longer describing exhaustion—they were mapping out **sustainability**.

As Toledo advances through **Phase 3 of the Cities United Roadmap**—Implementing a Multi-Year Plan of Action, the focus is shifting from coordination to **institutionalization**. Participants were clear that ownership cannot remain centralized within MONSE or confined to the Community Action Table. The next stage requires **co-accountability**—a structure in which each partner understands its defined role, contributes measurable outcomes, and holds shared responsibility for results.

The path forward is one of **endurance and intentional design**. Toledo’s challenge is no longer simply to maintain collaboration but to formalize it—to move from relationships to systems, from goodwill to governance. The work ahead will determine not only how deeply progress endures, but how fully the jurisdiction realizes its vision of a **safe, vibrant, and resilient Toledo**.

EMERGING MOMENTUM: STRENGTHENING COORDINATION AND EXPANDING THE ECOSYSTEM

Discussion and strategy sessions revealed that Toledo's **safety ecosystem** is entering a new phase—one defined by **expansion, coordination, and shared leadership**. The guiding question for this conversation, What does the Action Table need to look like moving forward?, invited participants to explore how Toledo's current structure can evolve from convening partners to fully operationalizing a **citywide ecosystem for safety and healing**.

The **Action Table** serves as the central coordination body within Peace in Motion, bringing together city departments, community-based organizations, faith leaders, outreach workers, and young leaders to align strategies that advance **safety, healing, and opportunity**. Convened by the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (MONSE), its purpose is to coordinate strategy implementation, align partners, and track progress toward shared outcomes under the Peace in Motion plan. Participants described the table as an essential mechanism for **relationship-building and collaboration** but noted that its current format limits its capacity to monitor implementation or measure impact consistently. As one partner shared, "We've built a strong table—but it needs legs."

Maintaining the impact of Peace in Motion now requires a deliberate shift from **planning to action**—transforming the Action Table from a discussion forum into an **operational hub**. Session participants emphasized that future versions of the table should feature working groups, data dashboards, and consistent performance review cycles to strengthen follow-through and visibility. Others noted that young leaders must hold defined roles within this structure to ensure **intergenerational ownership** of the work. As one attendee put it, "We don't just need more people at the table; we need people who are responsible for what happens after it."

Toledo's **violence interrupters** working inside schools provide a powerful example of what this intergenerational approach looks like in action. Many of these interrupters are young leaders themselves—trained peers who de-escalate conflict, connect students to resources, and model **healing-centered engagement** within educational spaces. Their work demonstrates how Peace in Motion integrates **safety and leadership development**, ensuring that youth are not only part of the conversation but also the solution.

MOMENT THAT MATTERS

During a reflection session, an **Action Table member** described how recent coordination efforts have shifted from conversation to execution. “A year ago, we’d meet, talk, and leave without next steps,” she said. “Now, every table ends with **assignments and updates.**” The comment drew nods around the room, capturing a shared understanding that Toledo’s collaboration is becoming structured—and that structure is beginning to build momentum.

Recent reports from the **Peace in Motion (2025-2029) plan** note that nearly 1,000 residents have participated in **prevention, mentoring, and healing activities** since its launch, demonstrating the reach of Toledo’s ecosystem when coordination is strong. Participants cited these figures as evidence that **intentional design and shared ownership** translate to measurable impact.

After years of rising gun violence, the jurisdiction recorded a **31 percent reduction in homicides** in 2023 and an additional **18 percent reduction in 2024**, reflecting the measurable results of cross-sector coordination. Yet leaders were clear: these numbers are not the end goal—they’re evidence that collaboration works when it is structured, consistent, and inclusive.

The momentum is also visible within the local government. The **Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (MONSE)** continues to demonstrate its role as a convener and problem-solver—facilitating alignment across departments and bridging conversations between community-based organizations, residents, and city administration. Partners credited this leadership with **normalizing collaboration**, particularly in spaces where coordination once felt fragmented.

Looking ahead, Toledo’s next phase will focus on deepening the **structure of its ecosystem**—transitioning from coordinated meetings to coordinated management. Partners expressed interest in establishing a **city-community implementation council**, expanding the use of shared metrics, and creating sustainability plans that ensure prevention remains prioritized even amid leadership changes. The direction forward is less about launching new initiatives and more about refining what exists: building an ecosystem that is **adaptive, measurable, and built to last.**

Number of people “at highest risk” of being directly impacted by gun violence in the city:

89

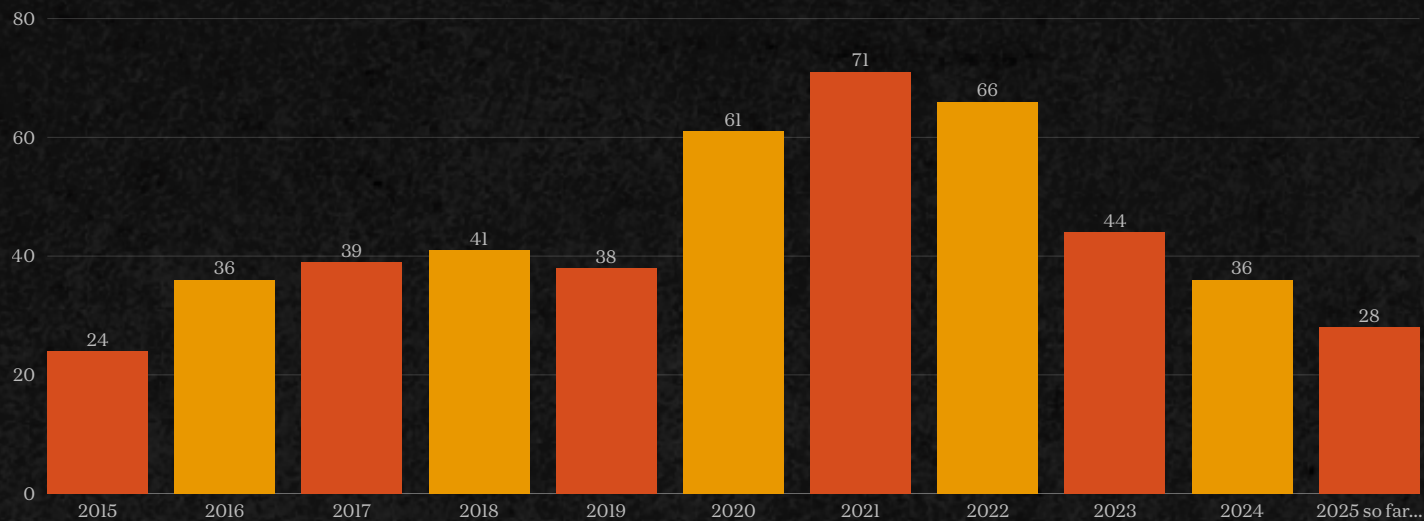
(CVIEcosystem.com)

Estimated cost for a fatal shooting in Toledo

\$883K

(<https://costofviolence.org/toledo-oh-2/>)

TOLEDO HOMICIDES



Number of violent crimes

Violent crime rate per 100,000 residents

Murder Rate per 100,000 residents

City	3,030	1142	14
State	33,770	287	5
Country	1,253,813	374	6

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS: BUILDING CONTINUITY AND SUSTAINING INFRASTRUCTURE

As Toledo's **public safety work** becomes more coordinated and measurable, the next challenge is ensuring it remains **durable**. The guiding questions—What is the new vision for the **Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (MONSE)** and the local ecosystem? What role do you play?—framed the final set of reflections during the LTW stop. Participants acknowledged that long-term sustainability depends on **strengthening leadership continuity**, clarifying roles, and ensuring every partner sees themselves within the structure being built.

Leaders across sessions emphasized that Toledo's collective progress has been made possible through **shared purpose and consistent relationships**. However, sustaining that progress will require **formal systems** that can withstand the natural turnover of administrations, staff, and funding. A community partner summarized the concern simply: "We've built something strong—but we can't build it new every few years."

Participants discussed how to define MONSE's evolving role as both a **convener and an implementer**. The office has served as a trusted liaison between government and community, but as the work matures, many called for MONSE to expand its capacity for **data management, performance monitoring, and technical assistance** for local partners. With more than 40 partner organizations now engaged in the **Peace in Motion ecosystem**, participants agreed that the jurisdiction needs **formalized systems** to coordinate information, track shared outcomes, and align strategies across this expanding network.

Participants also emphasized the importance of broadening the **safety ecosystem** beyond its current focus—more intentionally engaging systems tied to **housing, workforce development, behavioral health, and economic opportunity** as core components of prevention and long-term stability. Strengthening these cross-sector linkages, they noted, would help address the **root causes of violence** and ensure that Peace in Motion continues to reflect a comprehensive approach to community well-being.

MOMENT THAT MATTERS

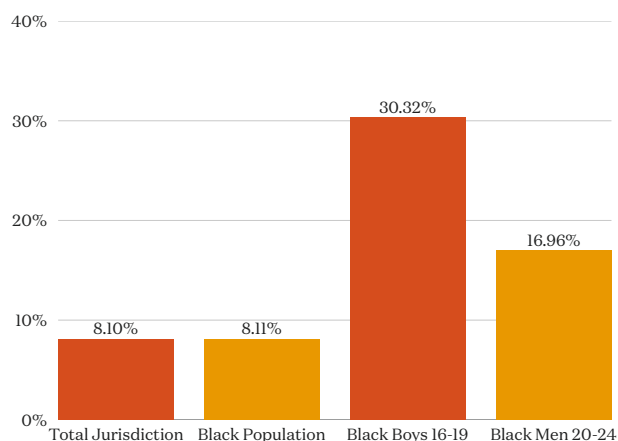
During a leadership dialogue, Deputy Mayor Abby Arnold reflected on the urgency of sustaining Toledo's current progress. "We know what to do," she said. "Now we have to make sure the structure **outlasts us**." Her comment prompted a collective nod from partners in the room—some from city departments, others from grassroots organizations—underscoring a shared understanding that **longevity depends on design, not intention**. The moment captured Toledo's transition from planning to **permanence**: a city ready to secure the work it has built.

This focus on **permanence** extended to conversations about **leadership development** and generational transition. Participants stressed the importance of building **pathways for young leaders, staff, and community members** to assume new roles within the ecosystem. As one attendee put it, “If we want a culture of safety, we need to build it into the next generation of leaders, not just the next round of grants.”

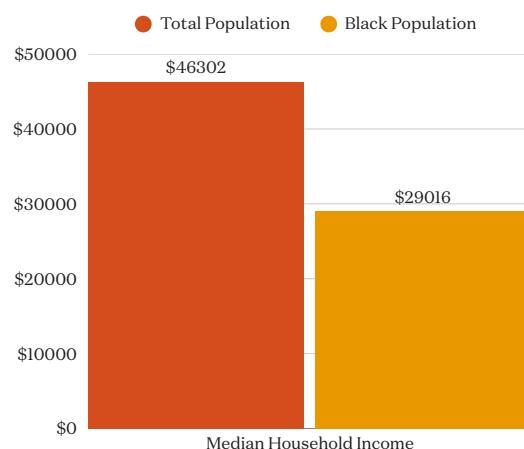
Session participants also emphasized that **sustainability** is not only structural—it is **economic**. With nearly half of Toledo households earning under \$50,000 annually, prevention and healing must remain **institutional priorities**, embedded within long-term city planning rather than dependent on temporary funding cycles. Leaders agreed that the jurisdiction’s future success will depend on identifying **dedicated funding streams** that safeguard its prevention infrastructure against political or fiscal uncertainty.

The path forward is one of **intentional stability**. Toledo’s next chapter will hinge on **formalizing its infrastructure**—clarifying leadership roles, creating permanent systems for accountability, and investing in people who can carry the work forward. The vision is not only to sustain progress, but to **embed it**—transforming Peace in Motion from a plan into a durable, citywide practice of **safety, healing, and shared responsibility**.

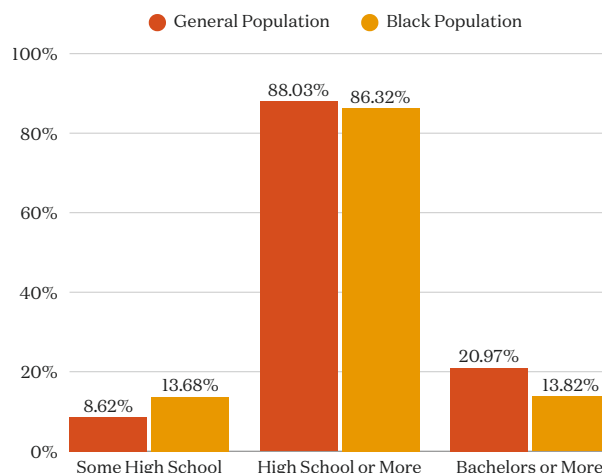
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME



EDUCATION LEVEL



TOLEDO: SAFETY & EQUITY SNAPSHOT

Informed by **tour discussions**, Cities United reflections, and local data from **Peace in Motion (2025–2029)** and the **Cost of Gun Violence in Toledo (2024) report**, the following snapshot highlights **key indicators** of Toledo’s public safety ecosystem (see Appendix for sources). These figures reflect both **measurable reductions in violence** and the persistent **inequities** that continue to influence opportunity, health, and safety outcomes across neighborhoods.

- **Population:** ~270,000 (city)
- **Black Population:** ~28–30%
- **Overall Homicides:** 31% decline (2023) and additional 18% decline (2024) following years of steady increases
- **Gun-Related Homicides:** 72 in 2021 → 44 in 2023
- **Economic Impact:** Estimated annual cost of gun violence ~\$75 million (Cost of Gun Violence in Toledo, 2024)
- **Socioeconomic Context:** ~24% of residents live below the poverty line; nearly half of households earn under \$50,000 annually
- **Geographic Concentration:** Highest impact observed in central city and West Toledo neighborhoods facing historic disinvestment and limited economic mobility
- **Governance & Coordination:** The Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (MONSE) manages Peace in Motion, Toledo’s comprehensive safety plan, coordinating over 40 partner organizations through the city’s central Action Table
- **Young Leader Engagement:** Emerging young leaders contribute to storytelling, mentorship, and community engagement efforts within the Peace in Motion network

- **Education:** Toledo Public Schools graduation rate ~81% (2023); continued disparities in academic outcomes and career readiness across neighborhoods
- **Community Assets:** Frederick Douglass Community Association; Brothers United; Junction Coalition; HOPE Toledo; The Wayman Palmer YMCA; neighborhood-based outreach and faith partners expanding violence prevention and healing programs

Toledo's measurable decline in homicides, growing young leader engagement, and expanding **network of community-based partners** demonstrate the impact of collective coordination. Yet inequities in income, education, and neighborhood investment continue to drive uneven exposure to violence. Sustaining progress will require stable multi-year funding, formalized systems for shared accountability, and ongoing inclusion of young leaders, survivors, and grassroots organizations in decision-making and implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS & OPPORTUNITIES FOR CITIES UNITED SUPPORT

Toledo's public safety ecosystem continues to evolve through the **Peace in Motion framework** and its growing network of community and institutional partners. Collaboration has expanded, and coordination structures such as the Action Table have begun to strengthen communication and shared planning across sectors. Still, Cities United team reflections and session discussions highlighted key opportunities to advance this work—particularly around youth leadership, funding diversification, partner engagement, and public storytelling.

As one CU team member reflected, “The stop reaffirmed that Toledo has the **framework and commitment**—it now needs visibility, sustainability, and new energy to keep the work moving.” The following recommendations balance immediate actions that can be advanced in the next 3–6 months with longer-term strategies to sustain coordination, deepen investment, and strengthen collective accountability. Together, they provide a **roadmap for building on Toledo's progress** while addressing structural gaps that limit scale and longevity.

IMMEDIATE ACTION STEPS (3–6 MONTH PRIORITIES)

1. Lean Into and Activate the Youth Action Table

Position the Youth Action Table as a formal structure for intergenerational leadership within Peace in Motion. Develop a clear framework for authentic engagement that trains adults to collaborate effectively with young leaders, avoiding tokenism and fostering shared ownership. . Equip young leaders with data and context so they can contribute to analysis and decision-making with confidence, building on models already in place such as young violence interrupters leading safety work in schools.

Opportunities for Cities United Support: Provide technical assistance and peer examples on data alignment and shared outcomes frameworks; support design of a community-informed data-sharing plan that integrates evaluation capacity.

2. Convene Local Funding Partners to Co-Design a Diversified Funding Strategy.

Host a strategic convening with local philanthropic, public, and private partners to collaboratively develop a funding diversification strategy for Peace in Motion. The goal is to invite funders into shared planning—not only to align dollars, but to help design a sustainable, multi-source approach that supports long-term implementation and community ownership.

Opportunities for Cities United Support: Co-facilitate the convening as a neutral convener; provide tools for multi-source sustainability planning; and connect Toledo to funders and peer jurisdictions advancing collective investment strategies.

3. Amplify the Story and Visibility of Peace in Motion

Develop a narrative and communications plan that highlights progress, including reductions in homicides, expanding collaboration, and community-led impact. Use storytelling to build public trust, attract funding, and align community partners under a shared message.

Opportunities for Cities United Support: Offer TA using CU’s Storytelling and Narrative Change Toolkit; provide messaging templates and communications coaching; support design of earned-media and social campaigns.

4. Reinforce and Refresh the Community Action Table

Review the structure, membership, and priorities of the Community Action Table to ensure alignment with current needs. Introduce opportunities for new members, strengthen workgroups, and establish clear reporting expectations.

Opportunities for Cities United Support: Provide facilitation for the refresh process, share models from CU partner cities transitioning from tables to ecosystem structures, and assist with documentation of partner roles and cadence.

5. Develop a Short-Term Implementation and Coordination Plan

Create a six-month operational roadmap to document immediate deliverables, communication timelines, and partner responsibilities. This plan can guide coordination between meetings and serve as a bridge toward long-term sustainability.

Opportunities for Cities United Support: Serve as a strategic-planning partner, share coordination templates, and help identify early milestones that maintain progress.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Institutionalize Prevention and Healing within City Systems.

Formalize prevention and healing as ongoing budget and policy priorities within Toledo's city infrastructure to protect the work from leadership and funding shifts.

Opportunities for Cities United Support:

Provide technical assistance on policy codification; connect Toledo to peer cities that have embedded prevention infrastructure within government systems.

2. Strengthen Financial and Operational Sustainability.

Develop a multi-year sustainability plan that secures recurring funding, ensures pay equity, and expands staff capacity across the ecosystem.

Opportunities for Cities United Support:

Share sustainability frameworks; connect Toledo to philanthropic, federal, and state-level funders supporting local CVI sustainability.

3. Create a Shared Evaluation and Learning Framework.

Design a transparent evaluation model that tracks performance, integrates community and young leader input, and communicates outcomes to partners and residents.

Opportunities for Cities United Support:

Offer evaluation templates, provide TA on equity-centered metrics, and connect Toledo to CU's evaluation learning network.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

4. Expand Leadership and Succession Pathways.

Develop leadership pipelines for young leaders, outreach staff, and community-based practitioners to ensure continuity and diverse representation within the safety ecosystem. Toledo's school-based violence interrupters offer a promising model for this leadership pipeline—demonstrating how early investment in young leaders can translate into sustained community safety and civic engagement.

Opportunities for Cities United Support:

Offer leadership development opportunities; connect Toledo partners to CU's leadership institutes; assist with succession and organizational planning.

5. Deepen Narrative and Public Awareness Strategies.

Sustain momentum through a long-term communications framework that celebrates community leadership, visible results, and interagency collaboration.

Opportunities for Cities United Support:

Share CU's narrative-change tools; provide communications strategy TA; support storytelling that amplifies Toledo's prevention-first model nationally.

Together, these recommendations reflect the insights gathered from **Toledo's partners, young leaders, and Cities United team members** during the LTW stop. They point to a jurisdiction ready to move from coordination to **sustained infrastructure**—aligning resources, leadership, and public trust around a shared vision for safety and healing. The next phase will depend on **collective follow-through**: ensuring that each partner, from funders to frontline workers, understands their role in sustaining progress and building a safer, more connected Toledo for generations to come.

Conclusion:

A Call for Aligned Action

The foundation built through **Peace in Motion** and the partnerships that create it reflect a shared belief that **safety is achievable** when every sector and resident plays a role. The jurisdiction's progress has been driven by collaboration, trust, and the understanding that lasting change begins with **shared ownership**.

To continue building on this progress, Toledo's partners are focusing on what it takes to make collaboration **durable**—embedding prevention and healing into everyday systems, resourcing the work for stability, and ensuring that leadership reflects the full community it serves including true representation of **young leaders**. This next stage is about refinement rather than reinvention: clarifying roles, deepening capacity, and moving from coordinated effort to **sustained ecosystem**.

Cities United will continue to walk alongside Toledo as a **thought partner and connector**—helping strengthen infrastructure, expand learning opportunities, and elevate the jurisdiction's story as one leading the way toward safe, healthy, and hopeful communities. This work is not a single initiative or plan; it is a **shared promise to future generations** that safety, healing, and opportunity will not depend on circumstance but will stand as the foundation of community life in Toledo.

APPENDIX

Referenced Quotes & Attribution

- *“We’ve built something strong—but we can’t build it new every few years.”* (Community Partner, Leadership Dialogue)
- *“When we show up together, the community believes us more.”* (Outreach Partner, Community Engagement and Healing Session)
- *“We have the heart—but we’re tired. We need the structure to match our passion.”* (Community Partner, Public Safety Strategy Meeting)
- *“We’ve built a strong table—but it needs legs.”* (Action Table Member, Roadmap Academy Session)
- *“If we want a culture of safety, we need to build it into the next generation of leaders, not just the next round of grants.”* (Participant, Leadership Development Discussion)
- *“We’re doing the work, but sometimes it feels like we’re holding it together with sheer will.”* (Grassroots Partner, Ecosystem Debrief)
- *“Clear accountability structure and backbone organization—follow-through and communication are critical.”* (Participant Summary, Session Notes)
- *“We know what to do. Now we have to make sure the structure outlasts us.”* (Deputy Mayor Abby Arnold, Leadership Dialogue)
- *“Young people aren’t waiting to be included—they’re already leading.”* (Cities United Reflection, End-of-Stop Debrief)
- *“Toledo has the framework and commitment—it now needs visibility, sustainability, and new energy to keep the work moving.”* (Cities United Team Member, Internal Debrief)

APPENDIX

Key Data Points Referenced in Report

- **Population:** ~270,000 (City of Toledo) (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2023)
- **Black Population:** ~28–30% of residents (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2023)
- **Poverty Rate:** ~24% of residents live below the poverty line (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2023; Peace in Motion (2025–2029))
- **Household Income:** Nearly half of households earn under \$50,000 annually (Source: Peace in Motion (2025–2029))
- **Homicide Reduction:** 31% decline in 2023; additional 18% reduction in 2024 (Source: Toledo Police Department data cited in Peace in Motion (2025–2029))
- **Gun-Related Homicides:** 72 (2021) → 44 (2023) (Source: Peace in Motion (2025–2029); Toledo Police Department)
- **Estimated Annual Cost of Gun Violence:** ~\$75 million (Source: Toledo Cost of Gun Violence Report, 2024)
- **High-Impact Areas:** Central City and West Toledo neighborhoods facing historic disinvestment and limited economic mobility (Source: Toledo Cost of Gun Violence Report, 2024; Peace in Motion (2025–2029))
- **Education:** Toledo Public Schools graduation rate ~81% (2023); persistent disparities across neighborhoods (Source: Toledo Public Schools, 2023; Peace in Motion (2025–2029))
- **Ecosystem Scale:** 40+ partner organizations engaged in Peace in Motion through the Action Table (Source: Peace in Motion (2025–2029))
- **Economic Context:** Nearly one in four residents live in poverty; prevention and healing framed as long-term economic priorities (Source: Peace in Motion (2025–2029))
- **Young Leader Involvement:** Violence interrupters working in schools as peer mentors and conflict mediators; young leaders co-designing engagement activities (Source: LTW Toledo Session Transcripts (Youth Empowerment Workshop, Young Leaders Engagement Meeting); CU Field Notes)

APPENDIX

Sources of CU Team & LTW Jurisdiction Member Feedback

- **CU Team Debrief & Internal Reflections**
 - Leading the Way Debrief (Toledo/Newark) Transcript and Notes
 - CU Internal Planning and Reflection Notes
- **LTW Session Transcripts & Summaries (October 7–9, 2025)**
 - Community Engagement and Healing
 - Community Engagement Strategies Meeting
 - Community Safety Narrative Meeting
 - Toledo Community Engagement Debrief (two sessions)
 - Cities United Community Meeting
 - Youth Leaders Focus Group
 - Youth Empowerment Workshop
 - Young Leaders Engagement Meeting
 - Roadmap Academy (Parts 2 & 3)
 - Social Media Intervention Meeting
 - Community Safety Strategy Meeting
 - Public Safety Strategy Meeting
 - Didi Porter’s Mother and Others
 - David Ross: Didi Porter Mural
- **Participant Reflections & Survey Data**
 - Toledo LTW Daily Reflections Form (Responses)
 - Toledo LTW End-of-Stop Reflections Form (Responses)
 - Toledo LTWT Post-Survey Responses

APPENDIX

Supplemental Materials Reviewed

- **Jurisdiction Plans & Frameworks**
 - Peace in Motion (2025–2029) Plan
 - Toledo Cost of Gun Violence Report (2024)
 - LTW Tour Pre-Assessment (Toledo)
- **Cities United & LTW Documents**
 - LTW Tour Brief – Toledo
 - LTW Project Plan (Drafts)
 - Toledo LTW Working Agenda
 - Leading the Way Toledo Internal Notes
 - Toledo/Newark Debrief Notes
- **Community & Media Coverage**
 - “Creating a Roadmap to a Safer Community” – WTOL 11 (October 2025)
 - “Toledo Pushes Gun-Violence Prevention Plan Forward with Cities United” – Toledo Blade (August 2023)
 - “Cities United to Host Roadmap Academy Bootcamp in Toledo, Kicking Off Leading the Way Tour 2025” – WTOL 11
 - “We Are Moving in the Right Direction: National and Local Anti-Violence Groups Discuss Crime in Toledo” – WTOL 11
- **Visual & Strategy Artifacts**
 - Implementation and Strategic Planning Visuals from LTW Sessions
 - Sticky-Note Reflections and Ecosystem Mapping Images from Strategy Meetings





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