

Center City, Center of Learning and Earning? Considering Sub-Baccalaureate Options For Downtown Toledo

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Executive Summary

Findings

- Educational attainment in Toledo is lower than the Ohio average at every level from high school through to graduate degrees, and Ohio's is lower than the national average. Across the board, educational attainment by Toledoans is only 2/3rd the rate of the US average. A severe deficit exists in the downtown Toledo area, where educational attainment rates are one-half to one-third of the City as a whole, and as low as one-sixth the national average.
- Residents and workers in Toledo (and especially the near downtown area) have limited opportunities to pursue educational attainment and skill enhancement in a timely manner, since the main campuses of the public post-secondary educational institutions are more than 5 miles from the center of the city and there is limited mass transit service to those sites.
- Low rates of degree completion from the high school to graduate levels reduces the ability of the City, Port Authority, and Regional Growth Partnership to retain and to attract new firms, and impedes the ability of Toledoans to secure jobs when they are created and/or maintain the skills needed to perform jobs as the skill levels of those jobs are increased.
- As service-based and information-based activities dominate the economy, educational and skill attainment are crucial to maintaining a local economy and attracting new firms.
- Other Ohio and US cities have increased the education of their citizens, the economic vitality, and their ability to attract new industry by locating a college with a comprehensive curriculum (GED, certificate, AA, and BA degrees) in their center city. As few as 1,000 students might have an economic impact of \$8 million dollars on the local economy.

Recommendations:

To effectively address the needs of its residents and businesses, the City of Toledo should:

1. Secure a (sub-baccalaureate and/or baccalaureate) college with a comprehensive curriculum in proximity to the transit hub and low income/low education population found in downtown Toledo.
2. Initiate discussions with Owens Community College and with The University of Toledo to ascertain the interest of each institution in creating high quality education and lifelong learning opportunities in the downtown area as part of a process of assuring the current and future economic vitality of the City and region.

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