GROW Licking County | ALL WE NEED IS YOU!

Community Improvement Corp

Photo credit: Southgate Corporation

2024 | ANNUAL REPORT

2024 | ALL WE NEED IS YOU!

Joseph Robertson
2025 Board Chair

2024 was a remarkable year for GROW Licking County Community Improvement Corporation, marked by unprecedented milestones and substantial growth. Licking County saw a record-breaking amount of private investment, totaling over $43 billion. This monumental influx of capital was instrumental in driving various development projects and fostering economic prosperity within the region.

The robust investment translated into significant economic benefits, with payrolls exceeding $860 million. This surge in payroll not only underscores the thriving business environment but also highlights the positive impact on the household incomes of the residents. The financial health of Licking County has seen a marked improvement, contributing to an enhanced quality of life for many families and businesses who locate here.

GROW Licking County's success has been made possible by our investors and dedicated staff who work in collaboration to bring development guidance to new and existing companies interested in locating in Licking County. This synergy between the public and private sectors has been a driving force behind the region's remarkable achievements. By fostering an environment of cooperation and shared vision, GROW Licking County has effectively leveraged its resources and expertise to create a thriving economic landscape.

GEALAN ESTABLISHES U.S. OPERATIONS IN HEATH

In December, European window manufacturer GEALAN announced plans to establish its U.S. operations in the City of Heath. This $1.2 million Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) includes a state-of-the-art facility that will create 27 new jobs with an average annual payroll of $2.16 million.

The Licking County facility will serve as the company's U.S. headquarters, supporting sales, customer service, and training programs to ensure clients benefit from GEALAN's industry expertise and technical support. Known for its advanced European-style window systems, GEALAN is introducing its high-performance products to the North American market.

"Heath is proud to welcome GEALAN to our vibrant business community," said Heath Mayor Mark Johns. "Their decision to make Heath their U.S. manufacturing home underscores the strength of our workforce and infrastructure, while also bringing exciting, world-class products to the American market. This investment highlights our city as a place where both foreign and domestic businesses can thrive and make a global impact."

GEALAN
INNOVATION MIT SYSTEM

COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

Marketing & Licking County Works

Scan for career pathways resources

The combined Marketing and Licking County Works committee continued collaborating to promote career pathways resources. Utilizing the Licking County Works manufacturing career pathways video, a digital advertising campaign ran across multiple social media platforms. Due to the campaign's success, we plan to increase our digital advertising in 2025. Additionally, we ran print and digital ads in Livability Licking County and Site Selection Magazine's Workforce Guide and Ohio Business Guide. We also plan to separate the Marketing and Licking County Works committees in 2025 due to increased activity.

Infrastructure

Our infrastructure committee aims to leverage relationships to secure funding and advocate for infrastructure improvements. Some of the projects discussed include roadway and safety improvements along the county's major corridors to address current and future needs. Licking County also participated in a 15-county study aimed at fostering collaboration among water and sewer providers.

GROW Licking County and LCATS cohosted the 2nd Annual Licking County Infrastructure Luncheon on June 13th. The event was moved to the Reese Center to accommodate additional guests. With almost 280 attendees, the event featured speakers from ODOT and a panel discussion. Panelists included representatives from LCATS, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC), and The Energy Cooperative.

GROW Licking County

2024 SUCCESSES

CyrusOne

GEALAN
INNOVATION MIT SYSTEM

Microsoft

OWENS CORNING

VANTAGE DATA CENTERS

cologix

Since 2012,

GROW LICKING COUNTY INVESTMENTS RESULTED IN

over	more than	over
10,570	**$43 BILLION**	**7,100**
new jobs	in new investment	jobs retained

Data source: GROW Licking County

HEATH - NEWARK - LICKING COUNTY PORT AUTHORITY

"It's critical we have a partner at our side from first prospect visit to ribbon cutting and beyond. We're grateful for GROW Licking County CIC being there in that essential role now and in the future."
- Rick Platt, President & CEO, Heath-Newark-Licking County Port Authority

COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS

Site Selectors Guild

Our staff attends the Site Selectors Guild every year to meet 1-on-1 with site selector consultants. This gives us the opportunity to hear directly from consultants what indicators they are looking at when making a decision. Some takeaways from the 2024 conference in Nashville included:

- Availability of shovel-ready sites
- Sufficient utility capacity
- Access to capital

Licking County continues to be poised as an ideal location to locate and expand economic-based businesses.

Community Engagement

Licking County is a hyper-collaborative community where organizations, businesses, and individuals come together. We are fortunate to have a network of local partners—including government agencies, nonprofits, educational institutions, and private businesses—all working together to support economic development, enhance quality of life, and drive innovation.

Our staff remains actively engaged by attending and participating in a wide range of local events, from business roundtables and industry conferences to neighborhood gatherings and civic meetings. These events provide invaluable opportunities to network, share insights, and foster meaningful connections with business leaders, community advocates, and residents alike.

Strategic Plan

In 2018, GROW Licking County adopted an economic growth plan that outlined goals for the organization to reach by the year 2025, including:

- Adding 5,000 new jobs, creating $200M in new payroll
- Generating $750M of capital investment
- Raising median household incomes by $5,000

As of the end of 2024, GROW has exceeded each of these goals. The organization will be undergoing a new strategic planning process to address growth and changes in the community. The process will include stakeholder and community engagement to set new goals for the organization.

"GROW Licking County's work is unique among our grant partners as the sole economic development organization. Their vital work supports all sectors of the community – work that is essential to our mission of improving the quality of life for all citizens of Licking County."
- Mike Schmidt, President, Licking County Foundation

LICKING COUNTY FOUNDATION

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Business Retention & Expansion

Sponsored by: OhioMeansJobs Licking County

A majority of a community's job growth is driven by existing businesses. We continue to focus on supporting existing economic base businesses through our Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) program in partnership with OhioMeansJobs Licking County. In 2024, we met with 18 companies to provide proactive support.

What we are hearing from our businesses:

- Housing concerns
- Childcare availability affordability
- Transit needs

Education

Our staff had the opportunity to present at several Licking County high schools and educate students on industries and opportunities in their own back yard. We continue to collaborate with our education partners to help prepare the next generation entering the workforce.

Childcare Survey

This survey was conducted to gather insights into the current childcare environment in Licking County. Reliable and affordable childcare empowers parents to contribute fully to the workforce. Investments in early childhood maximize outcomes for our future workforce. Communities succeed when they respect the profession of early childhood educators and collectively promote solutions that benefit families, providers, and workers.

This study was facilitated in 2024 by GROW Licking County with assistance from numerous community partners, including Licking County Job and Family Services and the Area Development Foundation of Knox County.

Scan for full survey results

Sponsored by: Southgate Corporation

WORKFORCE IMPACT

Childcare demands are disrupting our local economy, compelling more than half of our respondents to rethink their employment situation and limiting full-time work opportunities for many households.

67% of respondents have found it difficult to find childcare

56% of respondents have considered leaving their current job due to childcare needs

46% of respondents have someone in their household who is unable to work full-time due to childcare demands

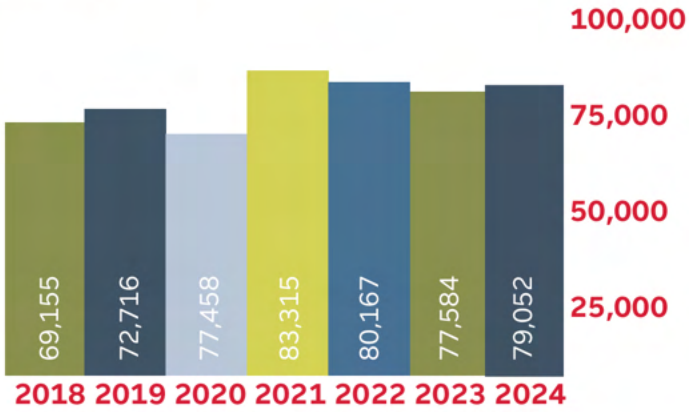
GROW BY THE NUMBERS

TRENDS TO WATCH

Licking County's econony has experienced significant growth in recent years. Between 2018 and 2023, the population increased by 4.2% and is projected to grow by another 3.7% by 2028. Job growth in the county outpaced the national average, rising by 14.3% compared to the national growth rate of 4.5%. The median household income stands at $78.5K, surpassing the national median. The county also experiences strong migration inflows, primarily from Franklin County. Overall, Licking County demonstrates positive economic trends with continued job and population growth.

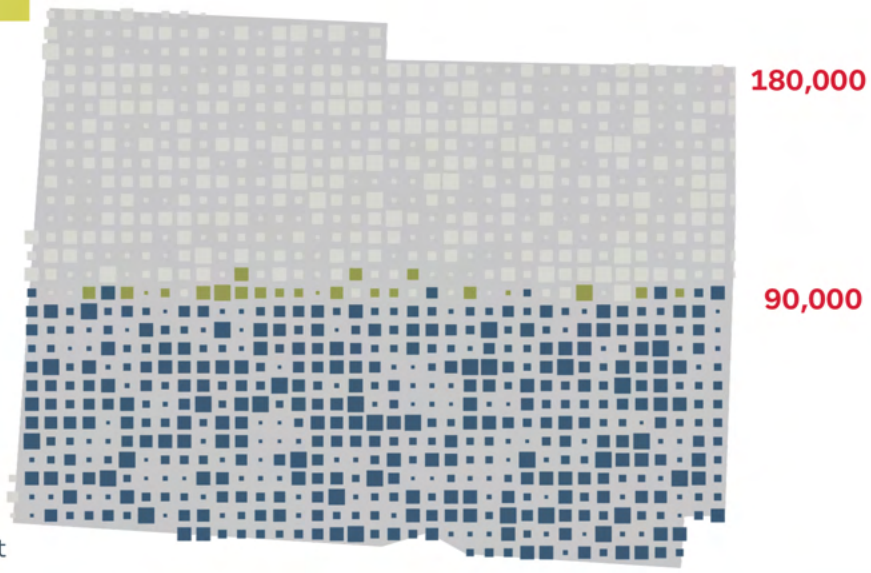
JOB TRENDS

From 2018 to 2024, jobs increased by 14.3% in Licking County from 69,155 to 79,052. This change outpaced the national growth rate of 4.5% by 9.8%.



LICKING COUNTY LABOR FORCE

Population: 184,676
Labor Force: 94,205
Employed: 91,226
Unemployed: 2,979



Data source: American Community Survey via Lightcast

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2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board Officers

Joseph Robertson, Board Chair
Trustee
Monroe Township

Corey Alton, Vice Chair
Vice President of Commercial Loans
Park National Bank

Erin Grigsby, Treasurer
Director of Finance & Compliance
Heath-Newark-Licking County Port Authority

Amy Dell, Secretary
Program Officer, Education & Scholarship
Licking County Foundation

Jennifer McDonald, Past Chair
President & CEO
Licking County Chamber of Commerce

Board of Directors

Dr. John Berry, President
Central Ohio Technical College

Tim Bubb, Commissioner
Licking County

Jennifer Ellis-Brunn, Director
Licking County Department of Job & Family Services

Mike Compton, Mayor
City of Pataskala

Brandon Hess, Broker & Partner
Shai-Hess Commercial Real Estate

Mark Johns, Mayor
City of Heath

Mark Mauter, Director of Economic & Community Development
City of Newark

Robert Montagnese, President & CEO
Licking Memorial Health Systems

Robert O'Neill, President
Southgate Corporation

Jim Roberts, Executive Director
Licking Regional Water District

2024 INVESTORS

ADR & Associates
AEP Ohio
Bricker Graydon
Buckeye Lake Region Corporation
Buckeye Valley BIA
City of Heath
City of Johnstown
City of Newark
City of Pataskala
C-TEC
Denison University
The Energy Cooperative
Etna Township
Granville Area Chamber of Commerce
Heath-Newark-Licking County Port Authority
Huntington National Bank
Legat Architects
Lehman Daman Construction Services, Inc.
Licking County Chamber of Commerce
Licking County Commissioners
Licking County Foundation
Licking County Job and Family Services
Licking Memorial Health Systems
Matesich Distributing Co
MedBen
Monroe Township
North Valley Bank
OSU at Newark/COTC
Park National Bank
Pataskala Area Chamber of Commerce
Power Connect
Project Construction Co.
Shai-Hess Commercial Real Estate
Southgate Corporation
Terracon
TrueCore Federal Credit Union
Union Township
Verdantas
Village of Granville
Village of Hebron

Whether you are a company interested in locating or expanding into one of our thriving communities, a possible employee looking for a future opportunity, or a prospective partner looking to become more involved in the continued growth of Licking County -

ALL WE NEED IS YOU!

Join us as we continue to ensure that Licking County is a premier location where everyone can live, work, play, and invest.

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Community Improvement Corp

THE COLUMBUS REGION

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