

October 2024

Community Needs Assessment Report

Welcome Toledo-Lucas County



Produced by Language Equity & Access Partners

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Executive Summary overviews the Language Equity and Access Partners' (LEAP) Community Needs Assessment developed for Welcome Toledo-Lucas County (TLC)

This assessment aims to support Welcome TLC's work in building a welcoming and inclusive community for immigrants, refugees, and people of diverse cultures in the City of Toledo and Lucas County. As such, the report outlines the demographics of linguistically and culturally diverse communities in the City of Toledo and the Lucas County area and the services provided by service providers. It also seeks to identify the strengths, needs, gaps in service, and barriers faced by linguistically and culturally diverse communities in accessing the programs. The findings outlined in this report will inform the strategic planning process in the second phase of LEAP's work with Welcome TLC.

The sections include Methodology, Data Collection Summary, Welcoming Standards and Best Practices, and Data Analysis and Findings. The **Methodology** section describes LEAP's Strategic Planning Framework, which guided the creation of this needs assessment and a description of the data collection methods. The **Legal Standards, Best Practices, & Welcoming Standards** section overviews the benchmarks to assess and build a roadmap for accountability and innovation in building truly welcoming communities. The **Data Analysis and Findings Section** summarizes the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) data on persons who speak a language other than English at home (LOTEH)¹ including those with limited English proficiency (LEP)², and foreign-born individuals in Lucas County and Toledo. This section includes the key findings from our analysis of the **Community Scan**. Table 1 and Table 2 list the findings

¹ Persons who speak a language other than English at home (LOTEH) is a term used in the American Community Survey (ACS) to denote whether a person aged five (5) years and older speaks a language other than English. This is a broader term compared to Limited English Proficient (LEP), the legal term denoting any person aged five (5) years and older who self-reports as speaking English less than "very well" in the US Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS).

² English-speaking ability data is collected in the American Community Survey (ACS) and asks about whether a person speaks a language other than English at home, what language he/she speaks, and how well he/she speaks English. Those who speak English less than "very well" are considered Limited English Proficient. More detailed information is found in Appendix I of this report.

included in the Data Analysis and Findings Section.

LEAP is grateful for the collaboration with Welcome TLC's Team and Advisory Committee and appreciates their invaluable support throughout this assessment's conceptualization, analysis, and drafting.

Table 1: Demographic Analysis Findings

Demographic Analysis: Lucas County and City of Toledo

Lucas County Foreign-Born Population

- 3.70% of Lucas County's population, or 15,917 individuals, are foreign-born.
- China, Mexico, India, Lebanon, and Canada are the top five places of birth for the foreign-born population.

Lucas County's LOTEH and LEP Populations

- 6.2% of Lucas County's population five (5) years and older, or 25,095 individuals, speak a language other than English at home.
- 1.62% of Lucas County's population have limited English proficiency or speak English less than "very well."
- Spanish is the top language spoken by persons with LEP, with 39.5% of persons with LEP speaking Spanish.

The City of Toledo's Foreign-Born Population

- 3.27% of the City of Toledo's population, or 8,840 individuals, are foreign-born.
- Mexico, China, Lebanon, India, and Germany are the top five places of birth for the foreign-born population.

City of Toledo's LOTEH and LEP Population

- 6.24% of the City of Toledo's population over five (5) years and older, or 15,770 individuals, speak a language other than English at home.
- 1.7% of the City of Toledo's population have limited English proficiency or speak English less than "very well."
- Spanish is the top language spoken by persons with LEP, with 45.5% of persons with LEP speaking Spanish.

According to Survey Respondents, the top languages encountered are Spanish, Arabic, Chinese Mandarin and Cantonese, Haitian Creole or Cajun, and Russian, and there is a trend in higher linguistic diversity among people with LEP in the Lucas County and City of Toledo area.

Table 2: Community Scan Findings

Community Scan Analysis	
<i>Equitable Access, Economic Development, and Education</i>	
1	Employment is a top issue, with language accessibility playing a factor.
2	Housing is a top issue, and housing, disability accessibility, and language access issues intersect.
3	Cultural and religious beliefs and practices must be considered for housing accommodations.
4	Education is a top issue; schools play a critical role in newcomer integration, and access to English learning resources and courses is one of the most important needs.
5	Healthcare is a top issue.
6	Language access is necessary to access most needs and services.
7	Access to legal services was a priority for immigrants and refugees.
8	The pandemic impacted participants in various ways.
9	Transportation was a top issue for newly arrived immigrants and refugees.
<i>Safe Communities</i>	
10	Safety was an issue for some participants.
11	The range of experiences with discrimination and racism is broad. Some participants shared their encounters with these issues, whereas others indicated they had not faced them.
<i>Connected Communities, Civic Engagement, and Government and Community Leadership</i>	
12	There are various community spaces for immigrant and refugee community members.
13	Funding deficits impact community organizations' staff capacity, language assistance services, and other services community partners can offer newcomers.

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| 14 | Organizations and service providers play a critical role in supporting the needs of refugee communities. |
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| 15 | According to participants, a “checklist” for refugee community members on the systems and processes required to access the most important services would be a useful tool. |
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| 16 | There is a need to centralize resources and communication. |
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| 17 | Social media, including Facebook, Whatsapp, and WeChat, are the most accessed channels for receiving updates and notifications. |
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| 18 | Trust ensures equity and meaningful access for immigrant and refugee communities. |
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| 19 | Community partners envision Welcome TLC as a resource hub for advocacy, coordination, collaboration, and resource mapping. |
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INTRODUCTION

Founded in 2014, the Welcome Toledo Lucas County Initiative (Welcome TLC) is a cross-sector network housed in the Toledo Lucas County Public Library (TLCPL) as part of its New American Services initiative. The initiative is in partnership with the Board of Lucas County Commissioners and the City of Toledo.

Welcome TLC's mission is to build a more welcoming and inclusive community for immigrants, refugees, and people of diverse cultures that supports a vibrant civic, economic, and social fabric for all.

Welcome TLC is guided by an Advisory Committee and four working committees, which include Community Outreach, Legal Services, Language Access, and Workforce and Economic Development. The aim of each working committee is outlined below.

- **Community Outreach:** To inform and influence the initiative and educate and engage the community and stakeholders about Welcome TLC's activities.
- **Legal Services:** Provide immigration relief and pathways to citizenship by focusing on immigration status & naturalization matters.

- **Language Access:** Educate and share information regarding language access in the community.
- **Workforce and Economic Development:** Identify opportunities for employer engagement and for immigrants to have access to jobs and job training.

In 2019, Lucas County was the second county in the nation to earn the Certified Welcoming designation by the national nonprofit Welcoming America. In 2022, the City of Toledo achieved the designation for inclusivity and welcoming of immigrants, New Americans, and refugees, the 16th community to earn the title.

Organizations represented on the Advisory Committee include Advocates for Basic Legal Equality (ABLE), Greater Toledo Newcomer Center, Advocating Opportunity, Legal Aid Western Ohio,

Inc., Toledo Sister Cities International, Latino Alliance of Northwest Ohio, LISC Toledo, Nuestra Gente Community Projects, Sisters of St. Francis, Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce, US Together Toledo, United Way of Greater Toledo, University of Toledo Center for International Studies and Programs (CISP), University of Toledo College of Law Immigrant Justice Clinic, Water for Ishmael, and Women of Toledo.

In 2022, the City of Toledo and Lucas County became the first city and county to earn the Certified Welcoming designation together. Partnership with Welcome TLC has been critical in supporting compliance with recertification in Welcoming America, with Lucas County achieving recertification in 2023. As part of the welcoming infrastructure in the City of Toledo and Lucas County, Welcome TLC has been recognized for its clear direction, inclusion of diverse voices, and strong commitment to inclusion and equity. The Welcome TLC network has allowed for capacity building for community partners and organizations serving immigrant and refugee communities in the area. Further, Welcome TLC has provided direct assistance to immigrant and refugee community members with navigating local government structures.

Welcome TLC strategically engages with the community. Initiatives include a Welcome TLC quarterly newsletter that provides content from the initiative and its partners. Welcome TLC also implements programs and initiatives with immigrant and refugee stakeholders, hosts community events attended by community leaders and members of immigrant, refugee, and diverse communities, and publishes data.

With a deep commitment to building a welcoming and inclusive community for immigrants, refugees, and people of diverse cultures within the City of Toledo and Lucas County, Welcome TLC contracted with Language Equity and Access Partners (LEAP) in November 2023 to conduct a community needs assessment and strategic plan. As a critical step towards the strategic plan, this community needs assessment aims to identify and assess the following areas:

1. Demographics of linguistically and culturally diverse communities in the City of Toledo and Lucas County.
2. Service providers and community organizations and the programs and services offered.
3. Strengths, needs, gaps in service, and barriers faced by linguistically

and culturally diverse
communities in accessing
programs.

This report presents key findings from a demographic analysis and a community scan. The community scan included a survey of 29 leaders of organizations in the City of Toledo and Lucas County and community conversations (or focus groups) with six groups, including refugees, immigrant youth, internationally trained professionals, and Mandarin-speaking, Spanish-speaking, and Arabic-speaking community members. In total, there were 102 participants in the community conversations. The findings presented in this report serve to guide Welcome TLC in building a welcoming and inclusive community for immigrants, refugees, and people of diverse cultures in the City of Toledo and Lucas County. Further, this report aims to support the long-term aim of Welcome TLC in building a more welcoming and inclusive community for immigrants, refugees, and people of diverse cultures that supports a vibrant civic, economic, and social fabric for all.

METHODOLOGY

This section describes the design and execution of this needs assessment, which followed the steps in LEAP’s Language Access Planning Framework.

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT & STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK



In alignment with LEAP’s framework, this Needs Assessment comprises Phase 1, including Research on Legal Standards and Best Practices; Demographic Research and Analysis; and a Community Engagement and Scan. These steps will inform Phase 2, Welcome TLC’s planning and

implementation phase. Phase 2 will include strategic prioritization and recommendations, as well as the development of an implementation plan. Figure 1 shows the six distinct steps of LEAP’s framework. Collaborative work with clients is a

central feature of LEAP's project implementation approach and is central to the success of organizational change projects. Welcome TLC's project team was integral to this project and actively designed and implemented data collection goals and activities. Welcome TLC's project team took the lead in identifying stakeholders, coordinating and scheduling interviews, sharing the survey and reminders, and compiling and delivering background information and data.

The Legal Standards, Best Practices & Welcoming Standard section outlines standards and best practices to serve immigrant and refugee individuals and communities equitably. Additionally, the section identifies federal and state requirements and guidance on providing equitable access to foreign-born individuals and individuals with LEP.

The Data Analysis and Findings section includes two sections. The demographic

analysis identifies and maps the languages spoken by communities that use LOTEH and those born outside of the United States. The community scan outlines primary data collected through multilingual community conversations hosted for individuals who are immigrants or refugees and a survey of organizations serving immigrants and refugees in the Lucas County and City of Toledo area.

Data Collection Summary

The community scan was designed to examine and define the challenges encountered by immigrants and refugees and solicit broad input and recommendations for solving them. This ensures that Phase 2, the strategic planning process, prioritizes the immediate needs of immigrant and refugee communities while considering the differences across each group. Table 1 outlines the seven parts of the community scan's data collection methods.

Table 1: Community Scan Data Collection Summary

Data Collection Methods	Timeline	Participants
Service Provider Survey	March - April 2024	29 Respondents
Spanish-Speaking Community Conversation (CC)	April 2024	7 Participants
Mandarin-Speaking CC	April 2024	15 Participants
Arabic-Speaking CC	April 2024	20 Participants
Immigrant Youth CC	May 2024	21 Participants
Internationally Trained Professionals CC	May 2024	21 Participants
Recently Arrived Refugees CC	May 2024	18 Participants

Service Provider Survey

The service provider survey, conducted over Survey Monkey, was conducted from Monday, March 4 to Monday, April 8, 2024. The survey includes 18 questions aimed to gather community leaders' perspectives on the infrastructure, services, and their interactions with community members who are immigrants and refugees. Survey respondents represented diverse

stakeholders and community partners, including advocacy and non-profit organizations, religious and faith-based organizations, federal, county, and city agencies, and higher education institutions. Of the respondents, 23 serve all of Lucas County, and 25 serve the City of Toledo. Agencies provide diverse services like food, workforce development, health, and immigrant assistance. Table 2 lists the names of the organizations represented in the survey.

Table 2: Survey Respondent Organizations

Advocates for Basic Legal Equality	Latino Alliance of Northwest Ohio	Sofia Quintero Art and Cultural Center
Advocating Opportunity	Local Initiatives Support Corporation Toledo (LISC Toledo)	The University of Toledo College of Law
Bowling Green State University	Lucas County Job and Family Services	Toledo Lucas County Public Library
US Together	Lucas County Department of Planning and Development	Toledo Public Schools
Cherry Street Mission Ministries	Multifaith Council of Northwest Ohio	United Way of Greater Toledo
Chinese Association of Greater Toledo	Nuestra Gente Community Projects, Inc.	Water for Ishmael
CommunityCare Clinics	Peace and Justice Committee at St. Rose	Women of Toledo
Greater Toledo Newcomer Center	Social Services for the Arab Community	

Community Conversations

The community conversations, conducted between Sunday, April 7 and Friday, May 10, 2024, aimed first to understand experiences and perceptions regarding the quality, effectiveness, and accessibility of services, programs, and opportunities; and second, to identify the type of information, systems, and tools immigrants and refugees need most immediately to better access existing community resources and improve their quality life.

The community conversation sessions were conducted in-person in community spaces and lasted approximately 90 minutes, with a five-minute break. The community conversations were organized into Sections 1: Community Experiences and Priorities and 2: Recommendations. The community conversations were semi-structured, with a facilitator leading the discussion with a list of questions and a conversation-style interview.

As outlined in Table 3, the community conversation included six groups: Spanish-speakers, Mandarin-speakers, Arabic-speakers, internationally trained professionals, youth and young adults, and refugees. Each conversation was hosted by an organization that frequently serves or interacts with the specific community. Host organizations were selected by Welcome TLC and LEAP. In total, 102 immigrant and refugee community members participated in the community conversations. Participants were recruited by the host organizations

and additional recruitment partner organizations that were selected by Welcome TLC. These organizations recruited participants by word of mouth and by circulating recruitment fliers. The diversity among the community conversation participants allowed this Needs Assessment to capture the complexities and nuances of immigrants' and refugees' experiences in the City of Toledo and Lucas County area while capturing shared experiences.

Table 3: Community Conversations Summary

Community	Date	Host Organization	Recruitment Partners	Location
Spanish-Speaking Community	April 7	SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Escuela Smart Sofia Quintero Arts & Cultural Center Latins United Nuestra Gente Community Projects, Inc 	SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
Mandarin-Speaking Community	April 12	Chinese Association of Greater Toledo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Toledo, Center for International Studies & Programs 	Toledo Chinese Alliance Church
Arabic-Speaking Community	April 23	United Muslim Association of Toledo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Services for the Arab Community Al Madinah Community Center 	Islamic Society of Northwest Ohio
Immigrant Youth & Young Adults	May 4	Welcome TLC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water for Ishmael Escuela Smart Women of Toledo 	Washington Branch Public Library
Internationally Trained Professionals	May 8	Welcome TLC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water for Ishmael Women of Toledo Latino Alliance of NWO 	Washington Branch Public Library
Refugee Community	May 10	Greater Toledo Newcomer Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sisters of St. Francis 	Greater Toledo Newcomer Center

LEGAL STANDARDS, BEST PRACTICES & WELCOMING STANDARDS

The Legal Standards, Best Practices, and Welcoming Standards below highlight the applicable policies and practices to ensure equitable access for immigrants and refugees.

First, federal and state guidelines exist for covered entities receiving federal financial assistance to prevent discrimination against foreign-born individuals or those with LEP. Second, the Welcoming Standards outline effective strategies for building a welcoming and inclusive community for immigrants, refugees, and people of diverse cultures.

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and Implementing Guidelines and Regulations

The requirements and standards discussed in this section serve as the basis for framing compliance. Agencies and organizations receiving federal financial assistance must adhere to the

regulations and standards set by the federal agency from which they receive funding as they relate to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the relevant implementing regulation.

Federal Guidance: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 13166

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 USC. § 2000d (1964), prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Executive Order 13166, *Improving Access to Services for*

*Persons with Limited English Proficiency*³ (2000), requires federal agencies to take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to their programs and activities for individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP). This includes providing interpretation and translation services to individuals who may require language services to meaningfully access and engage in federally conducted programs and activities. The primary distinction between EO 13166 and Title VI lies in their scope of application, specifically whether they pertain to federally conducted or federally funded programs and activities. EO 13166 mandates language access in federally conducted programs and activities, while Title VI applies this requirement to federally funded programs and activities. A program or activity is federally conducted if it is carried out or overseen by the federal government - e.g., immigration activities, federal prison operations, etc.

EO 13166 requires all federal agencies to develop and implement a Language Access Plan (LAP) to “improve access to its federally conducted programs and activities by eligible LEP persons.” In November 2022, the Attorney General published a memorandum on strengthening the federal government’s

³ See Executive Order No. 13166, 3 C.F.R. 50121 (2000). <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2000-08-16/pdf/00-20938.pdf>

commitment to language access.⁴ As part of the one-year anniversary of the memorandum’s publication, several federal agencies released updated LAPs. A listed repository of updated LAPs and LAPs that are in the process of being updated can be found on LEP.gov.⁵

Department of Justice LEP Recipient Guidance

In 2000, the US Department of Justice (DOJ) issued its first guidance document on national origin discrimination against persons with limited English proficiency (DOJ LEP Guidance).⁶ This initial guidance, published with the intent to clarify existing responsibilities under Title VI, introduced what is now referred to as the four-factor analysis. Recipients of federal funding and assistance must consider four main factors when determining reasonable steps for ensuring meaningful access. The factors listed include (1) the number or proportion of LEP individuals, (2) the frequency of contact with the program, (3) the nature and importance of the program, and (4) the resources available.

⁴ See Memorandum for Heads of Federal Agencies, Heads of Civil Rights Offices, and General Counsels (November 21, 2022). <https://www.justice.gov/file/1553196/download>

⁵ See Language Access Plans (last accessed on November 21, 2023). <https://www.lep.gov/language-access-plans>.

⁶ See Enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964-National Origin Discrimination Against Persons with Limited English Proficiency: Policy Guidance (65 FR 50123) (2000). <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2000/08/16/00-20867/enforcement-of-title-vi-of-the-civil-rights-act-of-1964-national-origin-discrimination-against>

In 2002, the DOJ published language access guidance that supplanted the initial DOJ LEP Guidance.⁷ This final policy guidance document, which was subjected to public comment, is far more comprehensive than the initial guidance. It includes sections on legal authority, covered entities, four-factor analysis, language access services, language access plans, and voluntary compliance. This guidance document was, in part, designed for funding agencies to consult when developing guidance for their recipients with regard to providing language access to their programs and activities.

Welcoming Standard

Welcoming America is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization that “leads a movement of inclusive communities to become more prosperous by ensuring everyone belongs.”⁸ Nonprofit and local governmental organizations participate in the Welcoming America Network, which allows organizations to receive and share tools, resources, and technical assistance to promote inclusivity.

⁷ See Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons (67 FR 41455) (2002).

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2002/06/18/02-15207/guidance-to-federal-financial-assistance-recipients-regarding-title-vi-prohibition-against-national>

⁸See “About Welcoming America.” Welcoming America. <https://welcomingamerica.org/about/>

According to the Migration Policy Institute,⁹ peer-to-peer networks, such as the Welcoming America Network, allow stakeholders to discuss challenges, address operational needs, and share best practices related to integration. Lucas County achieved Certified Welcoming in 2019 and was recertified in 2023, and the City of Toledo achieved the designation in 2022. Both are active in the Welcoming America Network.

The Certified Welcoming Standard, a program of Welcoming America, is a formal designation for cities and counties that participate in a rigorous independent audit to evaluate existing policies and programs and determine whether they meet the Welcoming Standard. The Welcoming Standards delineate the benchmarks for assessing and building a roadmap for accountability and innovation in building truly welcoming communities.

Updated in 2023, the Welcoming Standards¹⁰ include seven framework areas that define truly welcoming places, including Civic Engagement, Connected Communities, Economic Development, Education, Equitable Access, Government and Community Leadership, and Safe Communities.

⁹See “Improving Stakeholder Coordination in Refugee Resettlement.” Migration Policy Institute.

<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publi>

¹⁰See “The Welcoming Standard.” Welcoming America. <https://welcomingamerica.org/the-welcoming-standard/>

Table 4 outlines the Welcoming Standards as defined by Welcoming America.

Table 4: The Seven Framework Areas of the Welcoming Standard

	Description
Civic Engagement	All residents — including immigrants — are able to participate fully in civic life. Immigrant residents have access to democratic spaces and shape community priorities and policies. Immigrants hold leadership roles in the community, and local institutions are invested in increasing access to leadership positions for immigrant residents.
Connected Communities	Connections and trust are built between residents. Community institutions—including local government, businesses, faith communities, and nonprofits—create opportunities and spaces for immigrant and non-immigrant residents to have constructive interactions, develop relationships, and deepen their understanding of one another. Institutions support residents in building their personal capacity to engage with people different from themselves on equal footing and in sustained ways that reduce prejudice and strengthen diverse community relationships.
Economic Development	All residents — including immigrants — can participate fully in the economy. Workforce and economic development infrastructure address the priorities and needs of immigrant residents and immigrant job seekers. Programs that support entrepreneurship, business development, and workforce development are accessible to all residents, including immigrants. Local businesses are committed to diverse hiring and retaining employees with diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.
Education	The education system ensures all students, including immigrant students, have the support they need to thrive in school and the knowledge they need to succeed in the workforce. Schools and community education programs are informed by the needs and priorities of immigrant students and families, and are accessible to all residents, including immigrants. Welcoming and inclusion efforts are not siloed within a single school or program, but incorporated into the schools and school districts that serve the community.
Equitable Access	Welcoming communities ensure local services are accessible to all residents, including immigrants. Immigrant residents provide feedback to local government and community-based organizations to identify and address demographic disparities and gaps in services, and to improve access to programs, particularly in the areas of housing, health, transportation, financial services, and the justice system.
Government and Community Leadership	Welcoming communities have infrastructure in place to support immigrant participation, inclusion, and equity. The local government and community-based organizations regularly seek feedback from immigrant residents to understand the challenges and priorities of immigrant residents. Institutions work closely together to prioritize and build capacity to implement immigrant participation, inclusion, and equity strategies.

Safe Communities

Welcoming communities prioritize safety for all residents, including immigrants. Policies and practices are in place that prevent discrimination. Strong, trusting relationships are built between immigrant residents and local safety services, such as law enforcement, fire departments, code enforcement, and emergency response. Effective bidirectional communication between safety services and immigrant residents exists, and programs are in place to address implicit and structural bias. Community partnerships are built to identify and address needs and gaps in services.

Note: The standards defined in the table are directly sourced from Welcoming America.

DATA ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

The following data analysis presents the findings from the demographic data analysis, and the community needs assessment.

The findings outlined will inform the strategic planning process to further Welcome TLC’s work to build a welcoming and inclusive community for immigrants, refugees, and people of diverse cultures in the City of Toledo and Lucas County communities. Each finding is presented with a summary of the data and responses that support them.

Findings: Demographic Data Analysis

The primary goal of the demographic analysis is to provide a linguistic and demographic profile of Lucas County and the City of Toledo to support the targeted provision of services and effective community engagement. The demographic analysis utilizes datasets collected from the 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates provided by the US Census

Bureau,¹¹ to identify the following demographic information:

1. The number of persons who are foreign-born in the City and County as a percentage of the total population.
2. The places of birth of the City and County’s foreign-born population to understand cultural and linguistic diversity.
3. The number of persons with LEP in the City and County as a percentage of the total population.
4. The languages other than English most commonly spoken in the City and County by individuals ages five (5) years and older who speak English less than “very well” and are LEP.

¹¹ See Appendix 1: Explanation of Data Used in the Demographic Analysis for detailed information on the data selected and used in the demographic analysis.

Lucas County

Lucas County's Total Population:

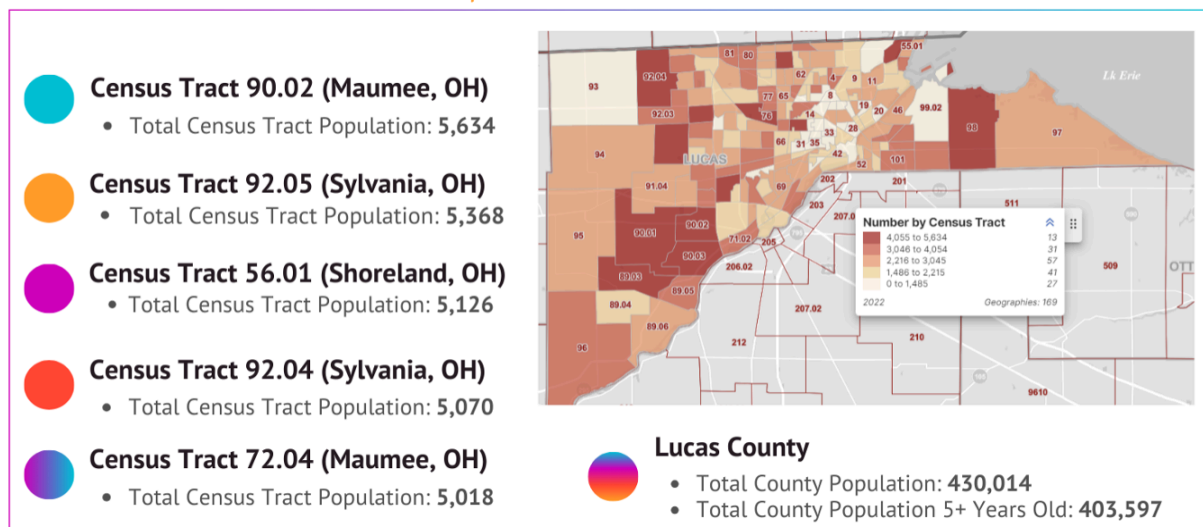
According to the 2022 ACS data, Lucas County has a total population of approximately 430,014 residents.¹² Figure 1 shows the population concentration by census tract and the top five census tracts by population.

Lucas County Foreign-Born Population

3.70% of Lucas County's population, or 15,917 individuals, are foreign-born.

The County of Lucas has an estimated foreign-born population of 15,917 individuals, or 3.70% of the county's population. For comparison, according to the 2013-2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates, the foreign-born population was 16,444 individuals or 3.79% of the total population at the time (433,404 individuals),¹³ and in 2008-2012, the foreign-born population was 15,454 individuals or 3.50% of the total population at the time (15,454 individuals).¹⁴

Figure 1: Map of Lucas County's Population Concentrations by Census Tract



Source: US Census Bureau, ACS, 2022 5-Year Estimates (Tables B05002)

¹² See US Census Bureau, 2022 *American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates* (Table B05002).
[https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2022.B05002?t=Place%20of%20Birth&q=050XX00US39095.39095\\$1400000&moe=false.%20Accessed%20on%20April%202022.%202024](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2022.B05002?t=Place%20of%20Birth&q=050XX00US39095.39095$1400000&moe=false.%20Accessed%20on%20April%202022.%202024)

¹³ See US Census Bureau, 2017 *American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates* (Table B05006)

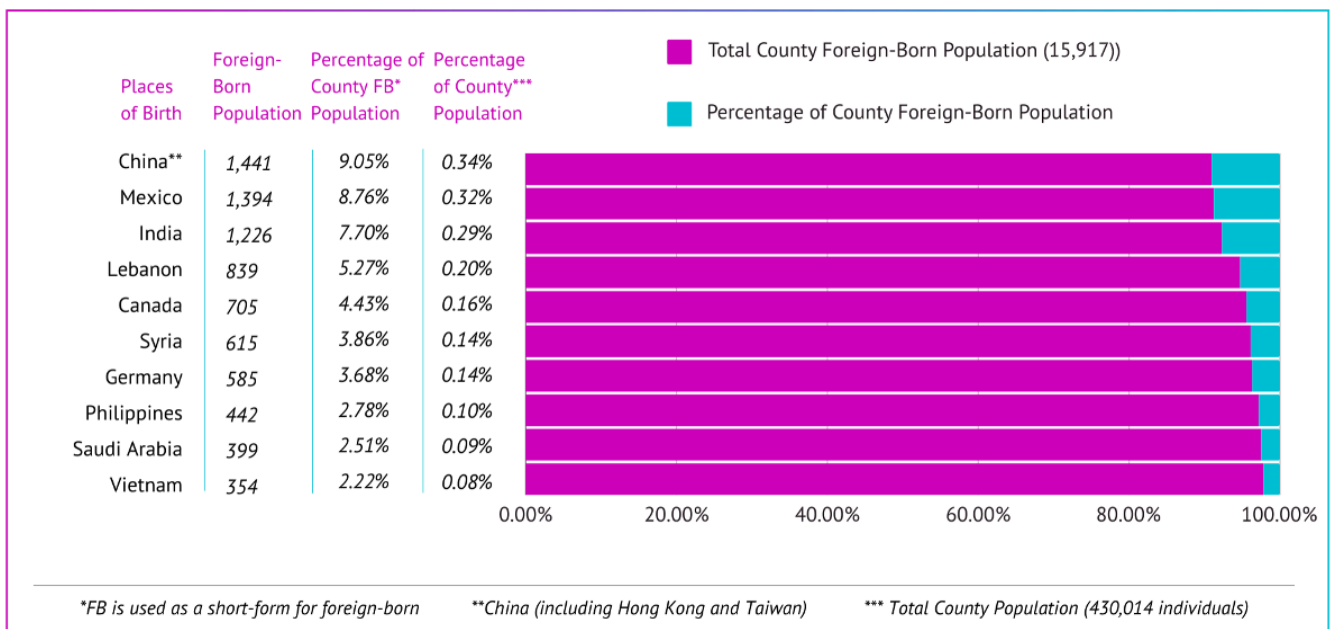
¹⁴ See US Census Bureau, 2012 *American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates* (Table B05006)

China, Mexico, India, Lebanon, and Canada are the top five places of birth for the foreign-born population.

Identifying the countries of origin of Lucas County's foreign-born population helps ensure that programs are tailored to the specific populations' needs and effectively promote equity and inclusion. By understanding the countries of origin, specific needs of individuals and communities can be identified, as well as the cultural and linguistic nuances that may impact their communication and

understanding. The top five places of birth for Lucas County's foreign-born population are China (0.34% of Lucas County's population, 1,441 individuals), Mexico (0.32% of Lucas County's population, 1,394 individuals), India (0.29% of Lucas County's population, 1,226 individuals), Lebanon (0.20% of Lucas County's population, 839 individuals), and Canada (0.16% of Lucas County's population, 705 individuals). Figure 2 lists the top places of birth for foreign-born populations in Lucas County.

Figure 2: Top places of birth for the foreign-born population in Lucas County



Source: US Census Bureau, ACS, 2022 5-Year Estimates (Tables B05002 and B05006)

Lucas County's LOTEH and LEP Populations

6.22% of the Lucas County population five (5) years and older speak a language other than English at home.

According to the 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 25,095 individuals, or 6.22% of Lucas County's estimated population five years and older (403,597 individuals), speak a language other than English at home.¹⁵

For comparison, according to the 2013-2017 ACS 5-Year estimates, the population of people five years and older who spoke a language other than English at home was 27,251, or 6.7% of the population at the time, meaning Lucas County had a 0.05% decrease in its population who speak LOTE in the last five years.¹⁶

1.62% of Lucas County's population have limited English proficiency or speak English less than "very well."

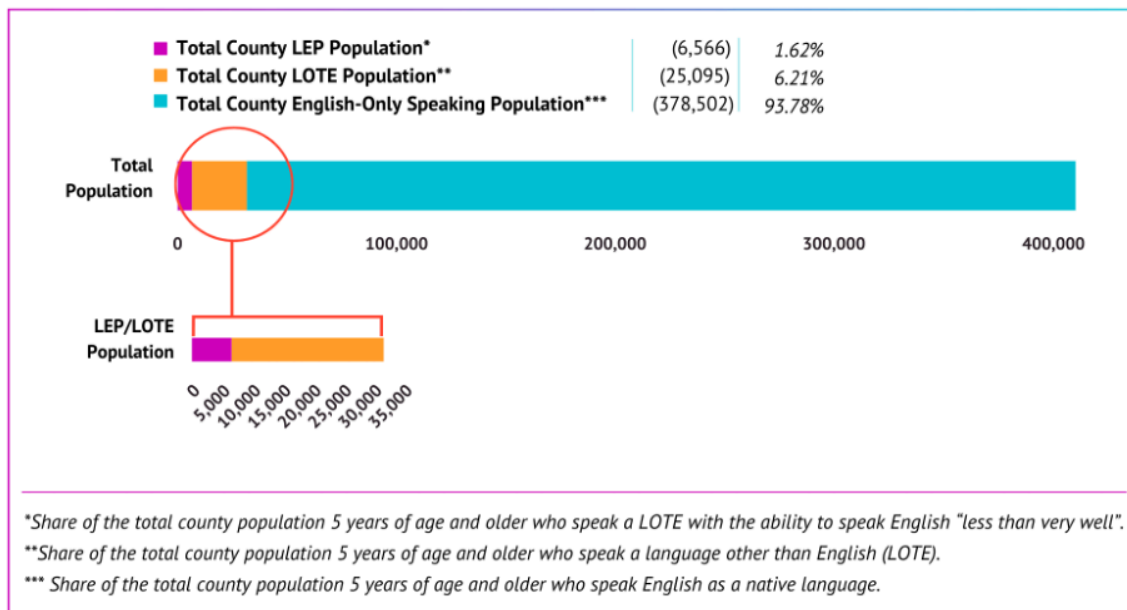
The population of those five years and older with LEP is 6,566 individuals or 1.62% of the total population. Of the county's population who speak LOTE, 26.16% have limited English proficiency or speak English less than "very well."¹⁷ Figure 3 shows the county's total population compared to individuals who speak LOTE and those with LEP.

¹⁵ See US Census Bureau, 2022 *American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates* (Table C16001). [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2022.C16001?t=Language%20Spoken%20at%20Home&g=050XX00US39095,39095\\$1400000&moe=false](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2022.C16001?t=Language%20Spoken%20at%20Home&g=050XX00US39095,39095$1400000&moe=false)

¹⁶ See US Census Bureau, 2017 *American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates* (Table C16001). [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2017.C16001?t=Language Spoken at Home&g=050XX00US39095,39095\\$1400000&moe=false](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2017.C16001?t=Language%20Spoken%20at%20Home&g=050XX00US39095,39095$1400000&moe=false)

¹⁷ See Appendix 1: Explanation of Data Used in the Demographic Data Analysis for further details about the description and use of LEP.

Figure 3: The Share of Lucas County LOTEH & LEP Populations



Source: US Census Bureau, ACS, 2022 5-Year Estimates (Tables C16001)

Spanish is the top language spoken by persons with LEP in Lucas County.

The top five languages and language groups¹⁸ spoken by persons with LEP in Lucas County are Spanish,¹⁹ Other Asian and Pacific Island languages,²⁰ Chinese

(including Mandarin and Cantonese),²¹ Other Indo-European languages,²² and Other and Unspecified languages.²³

¹⁸ The US Census Bureau has over 1,333 language codes that are collapsed into a set number of language group classifications. According to the US Census Bureau, "The determination of whether to show an individual language or collapse it into an aggregated category depends chiefly on the size of the population in the United States speaking that language at home. In tabulations, smaller languages are aggregated with other languages in a way that meets a certain population threshold, but has some utility for translators or researchers." See About Language Use in the US Population." <https://www.census.gov/topics/population/language-use/about.html>

¹⁹ Per the US Census, this language category includes: Spanish, Ladino, etc.

²⁰ Per the US Census, this language category includes several languages including: Japanese, Hmong, Khmer, Thai or other Tai-Kadai languages, Burmese, Karen, Turkish, Uzbek, Illocano or other Austronesian languages, etc.

²¹ Per the US Census, this language category includes: Mandarin Chinese, Min Nan Chinese (incl. Taiwanese), Yue Chinese (Cantonese), etc.

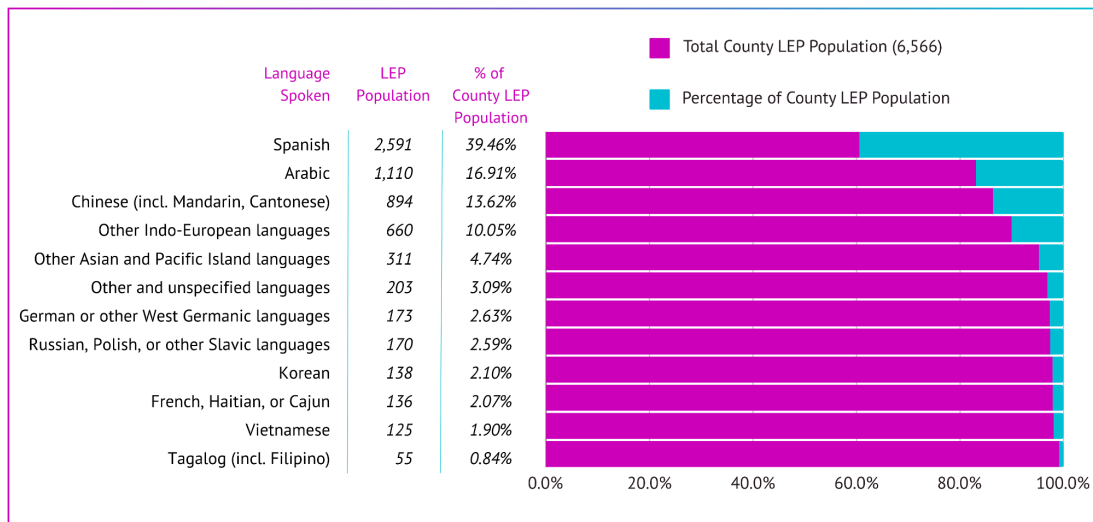
²² Per the US Census, this language category includes: Italian, Portuguese, Greek, Armenian, Persian, Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali, Nepali or other Indic languages, Albanian, Lithuanian, Pashto, Romanian, Swedish, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam or other Dravidian languages, etc.

²³ Per the US Census, this language category includes languages such as Uralic languages like Hungarian; Semitic languages like Arabic and Hebrew; languages of Africa like Amharic; Native North American languages like American Indian and Native Alaskan languages; and indigenous languages of Central and South America.

In Lucas County, Spanish speakers with LEP number 2,591, according to the 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates. This group represents 39.5% of the county's 6,566

individuals identified as LEP. As such, Spanish is the top language for persons with LEP in Lucas County. Figure 4 lists the top languages spoken by persons with LEP in Lucas County.

Figure 4: Top languages spoken by persons with LEP in Lucas County



Source: US Census Bureau, ACS, 2022 5-Year Estimates (Tables C16001)

City of Toledo

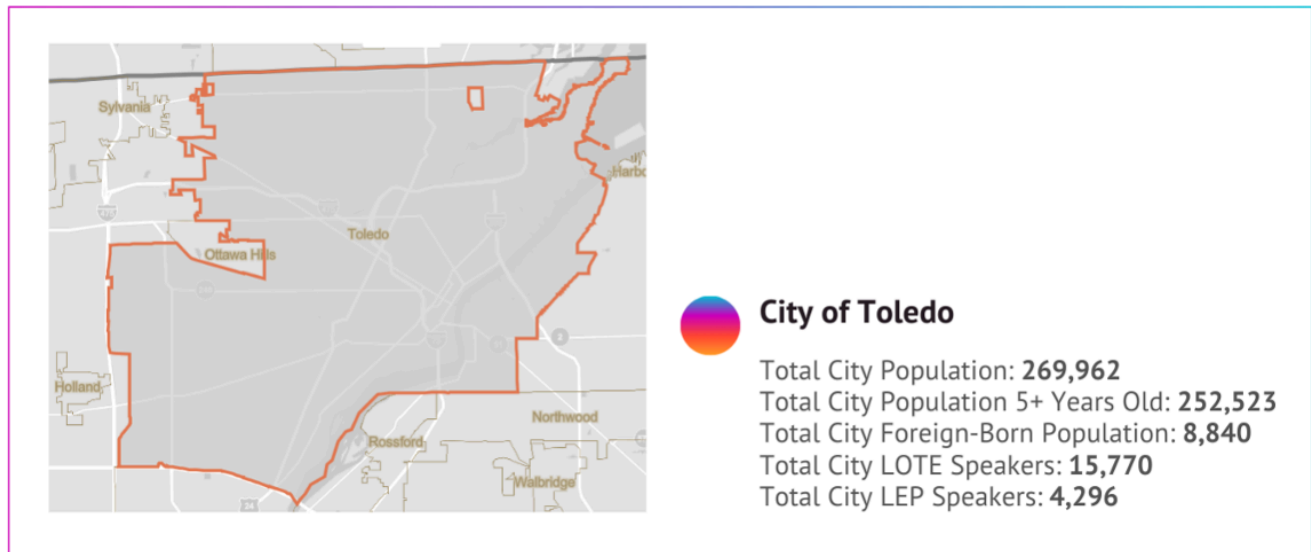
City of Toledo's Total Population

According to the 2022 ACS data, the City of Toledo has a total population of approximately 269,962.²⁴

Figure 5 shows the key demographic data related to Toledo's culturally and linguistically diverse communities

²⁴ See US Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table B05002). https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2022.B05002?t=Place of Birth&g=050XX00US39095_160XX00US3977000.

Figure 5: An overview of the City of Toledo Demographics



The City of Toledo's Foreign-Born Population

3.27% of the City of Toledo's population, or 8,840 individuals, are foreign-born.

The City of Toledo has an estimated foreign-born population of 8,840 individuals or 3.27% of Toledo's population. For comparison, according to the 2013-2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates, the foreign-born population was 10,476 individuals or 3.75% of the total population at the time (279,455 individuals),²⁵ and in 2008-2012, the foreign-born population was 8,979 individuals or 3.12% of the total population at the time (287,487 individuals).²⁶

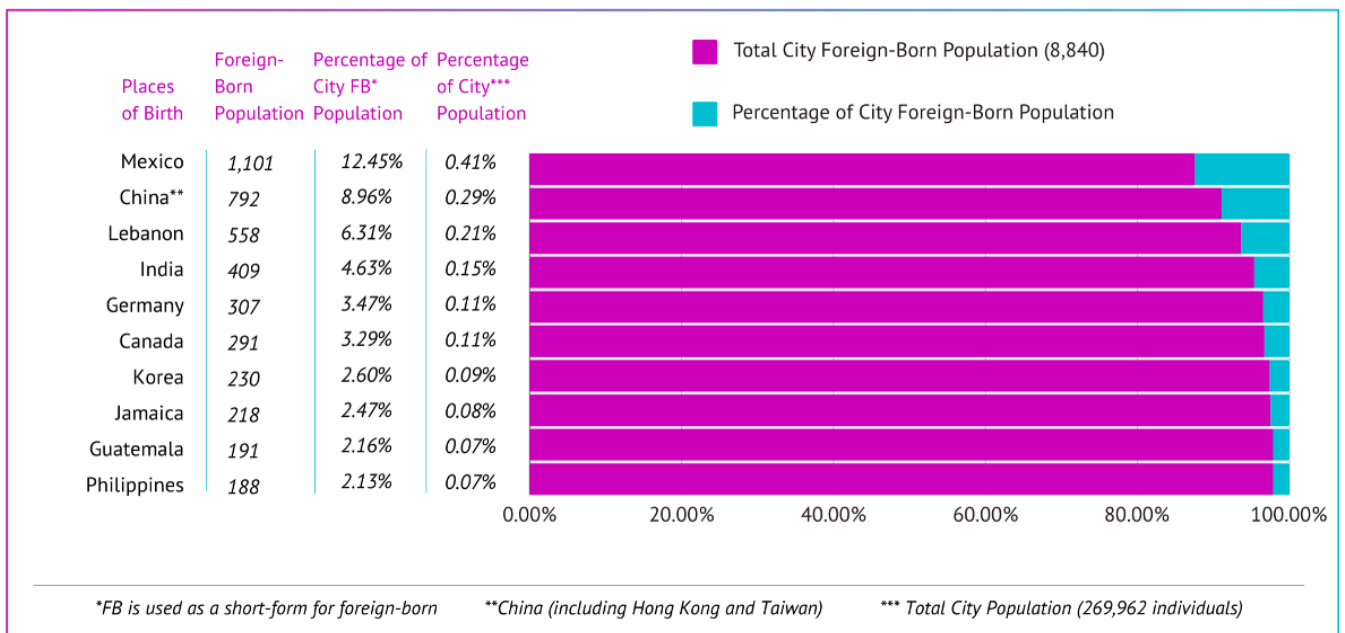
Mexico, China, Lebanon, India, and Germany are the top five places of birth for the foreign-born population.

The top five places of birth for the City of Toledo's foreign-born population are Mexico (0.41% of Toledo's population, 1,101 individuals), China (0.29% of Toledo's population, 792 individuals), Lebanon (0.21% of Toledo's population, 558 individuals), India (0.15% of Toledo's population, 409 individuals), and Germany (0.11% of Toledo's population, 307 individuals). Figure 6 lists the top places of birth in the City of Toledo.

²⁵ See US Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table B05002)

²⁶ See US Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table B05002)

Figure 6: Top places of birth for the foreign-born population in the City of Toledo



Source: US Census Bureau, ACS, 2022 5-Year Estimates (Tables B05002, and B05006)

City of Toledo's LOTE and LEP Population

6.24% of the City of Toledo's population five years and older speak a language other than English at home.

According to the 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 15,770 individuals, or 6.24% of the City of Toledo's estimated population five (5) years and older (269,962 individuals), speak a language other than English at home.²⁷

For comparison, according to the 2013-2017 ACS 5-Year estimates, the population five years and older who spoke a language other than English at home was 18,619 or 7.15% of the total population (260,300 individuals), meaning the City of Toledo had a 0.91% decrease in its population who speak LOTE in the last five years.²⁸

²⁷ See US Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table C16001).

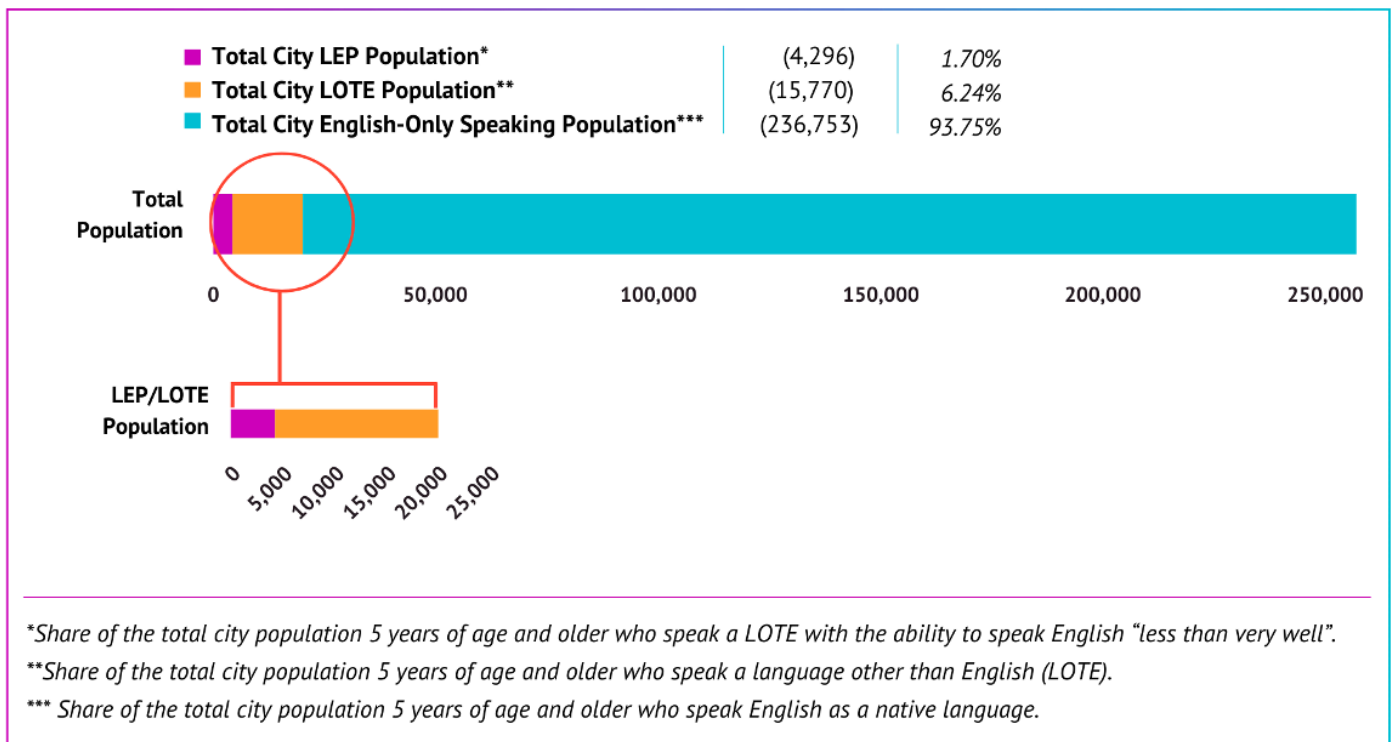
²⁸ See US Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Table C16001).

1.7% of the City of Toledo's population have limited English proficiency or speak English less than "very well."

Of the City of Toledo's population who speak LOTE, 1.7% have limited English proficiency or speak English less than "very well."²⁹

The population of those five years and older with LEP is 4,296 individuals or 1.70% of the total population. Figure 7 shows the share of the City of Toledo's LEP and LOTE populations.

Figure 7: The share of the City of Toledo's LEP & LOTE Populations



Source: US Census Bureau, ACS, 2022 5-Year Estimates (Table C16001)

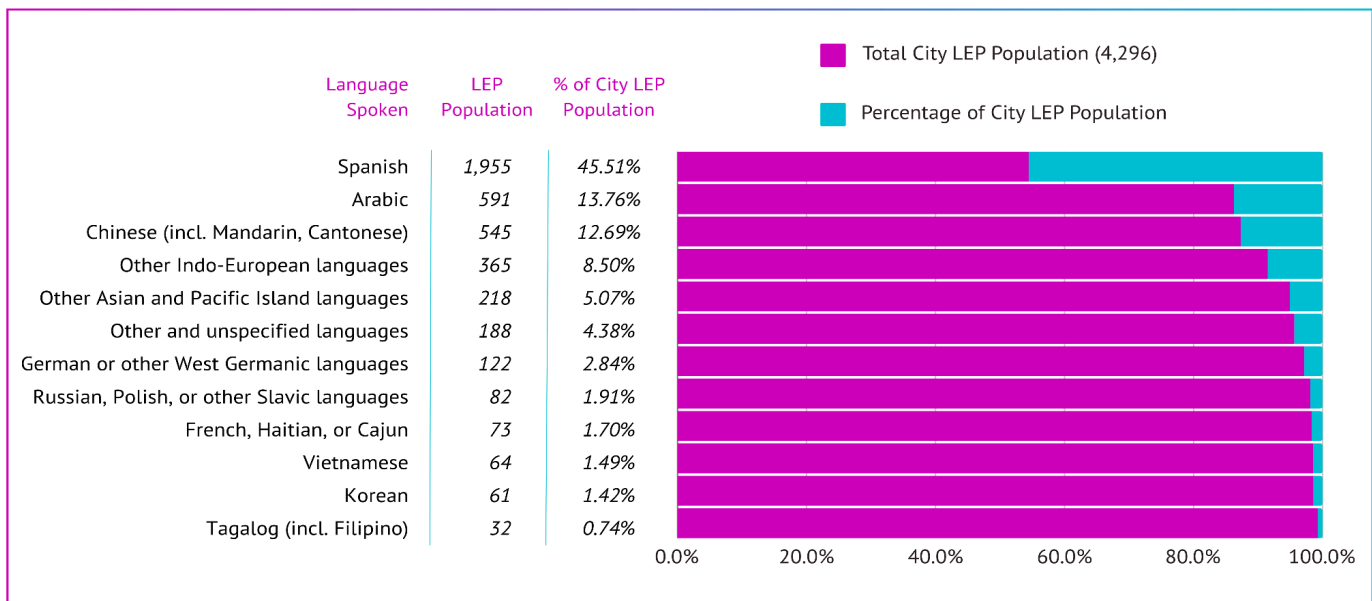
²⁹See Appendix 1: Explanation of Data Used in the Demographic Data Analysis for further details about the description and use of LEP.

Spanish is the top language spoken by persons with LEP in Toledo.

The top five languages and language groups spoken by persons with LEP in Toledo are Spanish, Arabic, Chinese (incl. Mandarin, Cantonese), Other Indo-European languages, and Other Asian and Pacific Island languages.

According to the 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 1,955 individuals in Toledo speak Spanish and have limited English proficiency (LEP). Significantly, Spanish speakers comprise 45.5% of the total population with LEP in Toledo (4,296). Figure 8 shows the Top languages spoken by persons with LEP in the City of Toledo.

Figure 8: Top Languages Spoken by Persons With LEP in the City of Toledo



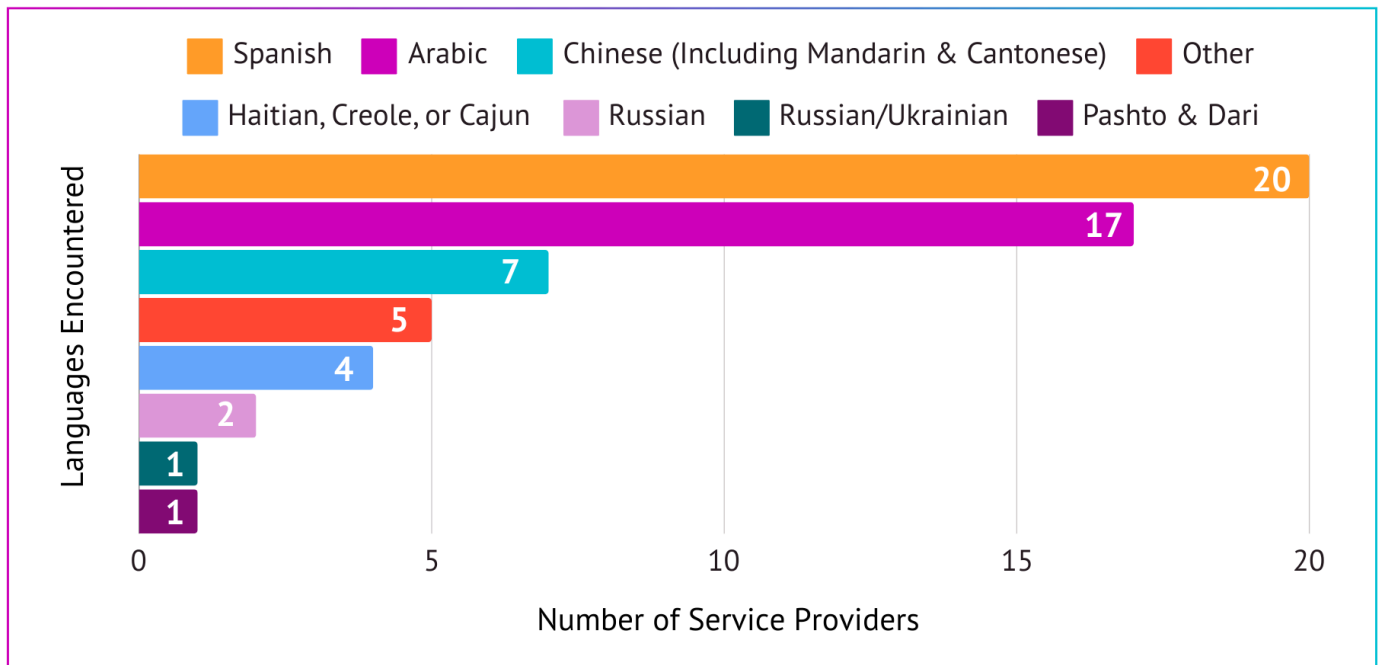
Source: US Census Bureau, ACS, 2022 5-Year Estimates (Table C16001)

According to Survey Respondents, the top languages encountered are Spanish, Arabic, Chinese Mandarin and Cantonese, Haitian Creole or Cajun, and Russian, and there is a trend in higher linguistic diversity among people with LEP.

Survey respondents identified Spanish, Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Haitian Creole or Cajun, and Russian as the top languages they encountered.

Figure 9 lists the number of organizations that encountered each language for the top languages.

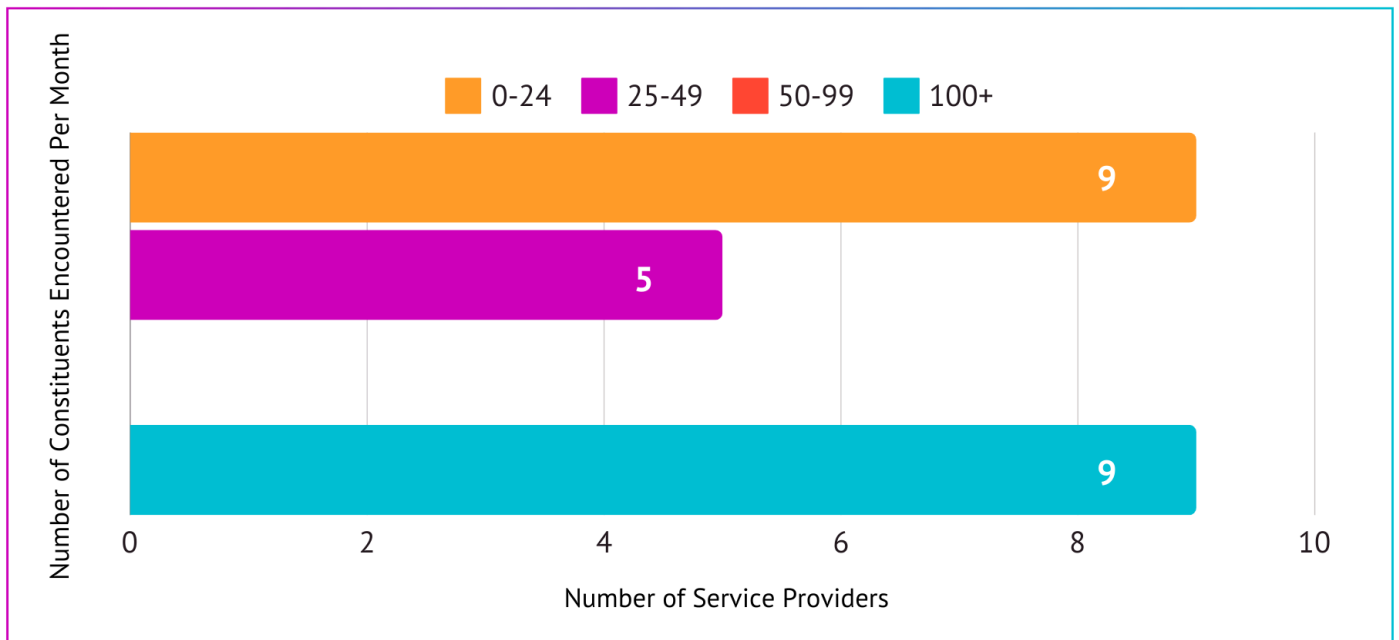
Figure 9: Languages Encountered by Community Organizations and Service Providers



Spanish and Arabic are mentioned as the most frequently encountered together, which reflects their significant presence in the community. The Chinese Association of Greater Toledo highlighted frequent encounters with Chinese speakers, including Mandarin and Cantonese speakers. United Way of Greater Toledo and Greater Toledo Newcomer Center identified the languages encountered most: Spanish, Arabic, Haitian, Creole, or Cajun. Lucas County Job and Family Services

identified Spanish, Arabic, Haitian, Creole, or Cajun, Pashto and Dari as the languages they most encountered. Moreover, service providers indicated variation in the number of times they encounter or provide services for immigrant and refugee community members. Figure 10 outlines responses from service providers on the number of community members with an immigrant or refugee background their organization services or encounters on a monthly basis.

Figure 10: Number of Immigrant or Refugee Community Members Community Organizations Encounter Monthly



While discussing trends in the cultural and linguistic diversity of community members, some survey respondents described an increase in Spanish-speaking residents from Central America and South America, particularly from Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, Nicaragua, Honduras, Bolivia, Guatemala, Peru, Ecuador, and El Salvador. They also mentioned a growing African refugee population resettled from Zimbabwe, Sudan, the Republic of Congo, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria, and Cameroon. India, Ukraine, Haiti, Afghanistan, and Syria were also named by survey respondents as additional places of birth increasingly represented among the region's foreign-born population. Moreover, a survey respondent described an increase in the number of arrivals from China since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Respondents also noted the growing linguistic diversity within faith-based communities. For example, the Muslim immigrant community in Toledo and Lucas County speaks Arabic, Pashto, and other languages. There is also linguistic diversity among Hindu immigrants and Ukrainians.

The community conversations highlighted the linguistic diversity among refugee and immigrant communities. For example, in the Mandarin-language community conversation, one participant described language variation among family members when describing language assistance needs. The participants had taught English and technology in China, and after moving to Lucas County, the linguistic variation differed from that of their relatives. The participant described how the language their relatives spoke was “colloquial” compared to the language they spoke in China, which was “mainly language from textbooks.” Such linguistic variation should be considered when providing interpretation and translation services.

Findings: Community Scan

“I think in the future, if the government of Toledo had such an organization to centralize resources, it would be more standardized and better. This way, they could directly understand our demands and needs and perhaps take action from the municipal government's perspective, which would be of greater assistance to new immigrants.” (Participant, Mandarin Community Conversation)

Lucas County and the City of Toledo have been home to linguistically and culturally diverse communities for decades. Toledo is described as a “small city” with easy-flowing traffic, a friendly and welcoming community, a sustainable cost of living, and pleasant weather. Community members described the City of Toledo as convenient, with easy access to entertainment, stores, and other commodities. In community conversations, immigrant and refugee community members described being able to access outstanding medical services within a two-hour drive to Cleveland and access to international airports, allowing them to travel to their home country.

There is diversity among immigrant populations; some have lived in the area for decades, while others have

immigrated in recent years. Participants in the community scan included newcomers to the area and immigrants and refugees who had lived there for decades. Further, participants described finding opportunities in the area. One participant stated, “When I came here, I didn’t dare speak a single word of English, and now I’m a professor” (Participant, Mandarin-speaking Community Conversation). The changing demographics of linguistically and culturally diverse communities have a widespread impact on the area. For example, participants described finding interpreters more easily in hospitals, stores, and other spaces.

Participants in the community conversations described finding support in other immigrant communities and the City of Toledo's residents who have been living in the area for many years. Some immigrants arrived after living in other states, such as Washington, North Carolina, New York, Minnesota, or other parts of the state, such as Cleveland. According to participants, there are diverse reasons why immigrants have made the City of Toledo home, including for economic security and in pursuit of educational and career opportunities.

The community scan highlighted the diverse needs of immigrant and refugee communities. For example, according to the community survey, employment, education, transportation, job opportunities, business development, housing, language and community belonging are top needs for immigrants and refugees. The community conversations highlighted the overlap in the needs and experiences of the

language groups, including Spanish, Arabic, and Mandarin speakers, as well as the internationally trained professionals, youth and young adults, and refugees who have some common needs. However, the needs and priorities vary at a group and individual level.

Table 5 outlines a summary of the needs and priorities of the different groups.

Table 5: Community Needs and Priorities Summary

Data Collection Method	Identified Priority Needs
Internationally Trained Professionals Community Conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment • Education & Skill Building • Mentorship
Youth and Young Adults Community Conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment • Education • Healthcare
Refugees Community Conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment • Education • Transportation
Arabic Speakers Community Conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment • Housing • Education & English Language Learning
Spanish Speakers Community Conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Health Care • Employment • Legal Services
Mandarin Speakers Community Conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment • Education • Health Care • Housing
Community Partner Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding • Resource Mapping • Cultural Competency Training • Language Access

Equitable Access, Economic Development, and Education

According to the Welcoming Standard framework, findings related to equitable access highlight gaps in services related to housing, healthcare, and the justice system. These findings inform initiatives Welcome TLC can implement to address disparities

and gaps in services and improve access to programs.

Table 6 outlines essential service providers for housing, utilities, emergency assistance services, schooling, and education and health services.

Table 6: Service Providers by Service in the Lucas County and City of Toledo Area

Service Type	Organizations
Housing, Utilities & Emergency Assistance	Greater Toledo Newcomer Center, United Way 211 (United Way of Greater Toledo), Cherry Street Mission Ministries, Nuestra Gente Community Projects, Inc.
Schools/Education	Toledo Public Schools, Water for Ishmael, Lucas County Department of Planning & Development, Bowling Green State University
Mental Health Services	Sofia Quintero Art and Cultural Center, United Way 211 (United Way of Greater Toledo), Lucas County Job and Family Services, CommunityCare Clinics
Medical Health Services	United Way 211 (United Way of Greater Toledo), Lucas County Job and Family Services, Nuestra Gente Community Projects, Inc., CommunityCare Clinics (including Dental, Vision, and Supplemental Health Services such as WIC and Medicaid)

Findings related to economic development highlight the priorities and needs of immigrant and refugee residents that support entrepreneurship, business development, and workforce development. Findings inform initiatives Welcome TLC can implement to improve

workforce and economic development infrastructure that supports the hiring and retention of employees with diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, including immigrants and refugees.

Table 7 outlines essential service

providers of workforce development.

Table 7: Service Providers Supporting Workforce Development

Service Type	Organizations
Workforce Development	Greater Toledo Newcomer Center, United Way 211 (United Way of Greater Toledo), Water For Ishmael, Lucas County Department of Planning and Development, Cherry Street Mission Ministries, Nuestra Gente Community Projects, Inc.

Finding 1: Employment is a top issue, with language accessibility playing a factor.

“It is a big difficulty to find a job as a refugee. You are new to the country, you have no language and you have no knowledge of the laws of the country.”
(Participant, Arabic Community Conversation)

“Immigration is a chicken-and-egg problem, right? When you want to immigrate, you need to find a job, but it's hardest to find a job when you haven't immigrated yet, correct? For example, when you first arrive, like when I came on a marriage visa, no one wants to hire you anywhere. But once you obtain a green card later on, everyone wants to hire you.” (Participant, Internationally Trained Professionals-Community Conversation)

The community conversations shed light on the areas of service most important to immigrant and refugee communities, and all groups discussed employment as a

top issue. For example, in the Mandarin-speaking immigrant community, a participant described assistance with employment as the “most difficult” support to find. In addition to qualifications, employers would consider the unique knowledge, skills, and experiences possessed by immigrant and refugee workers.

Employment and skill building were the most critical issues related to employment and economic development for Arabic-speaking residents. For example, participants described how, before immigrating to the US, they practiced diverse and skilled professions such as mechanics, drivers, construction builders, welders, carpenters, and nutritionists. In the US, challenges emerged throughout the employment process: emphasis on diploma requirements over skills, being unprepared for job interviews, and issues with job retention. For example, a participant described that after working for one or two months, an employee

might be “let go” because they may not have had the right skills.

The youth and young adults group also echoed employment as a top issue. For example, one participant described how, upon arrival, their parents were first concerned with finding employment and then their children’s access to a good education. One participant explained how their father’s job opportunity in the US led to their immigration to New York and then to the Lucas County area.

“The strongest part was having someone to help me with employment, because once I had employment, I could pay for the housing and take care of some of the other [needs].” (Participant, Internationally Trained Professionals)

The internationally trained professional group participants and the refugee group participants described finding employment as a significant challenge because of credential recognition and the certification process. It is essential to understand the required documents for the application process for credential evaluation. The process is further complicated by the need to transfer documents such as evaluations or transcripts (digital or hard copy) internationally. A participant stated that a priority is to “understand the process of converting your degree to a US degree, which takes a lot of time, and a lot of

research.” For example, some participants described having graduate degrees and experience working in the field and even teaching at the university level, yet finding employment in the US was challenging.

One participant received support from a coach during the job search, who helped them prepare their resumes for the interview. Then, the participant subsequently secured employment unrelated to their educational background. Eventually, they enrolled at a university in the US, earned a degree, which took years and financial resources to complete, and were able to secure a job relevant to their education.

Participants described a need for resources to learn the requirements and process for recertification. Knowing where to study, how to prepare for the tests, and how to submit and complete an application is also important. A participant described conversational English language skills as critical. While they could read textbooks and write papers, the job market required oral communication.

Moreover, cultural practices such as the use of eye contact also play a role in the hiring process. The effect is that individuals might be perceived as lacking confidence, although they are fully

capable of doing the job. Participants described how a mentorship program related to employment would be helpful.

In the community conversation with refugees, a participant described taking a “low-level job” because they did not have the experience, and having arrived less than six months ago, their opportunities were limited.

Language accessibility played a significant role in access to employment. A participant in the Arabic-speaking community conversation stated, “It’s all because of language. Many of us leave our jobs because of the language barrier.” Participants described access to interpretation during work as helpful. Participants described having access to English courses, two hours a day, two days a week. However, they felt they needed more extensive English language courses, as outlined in other areas of the needs assessment.

Other aspects of economic development discussed in the community conversations included financial literacy, including managing credit and insurance (life, auto, home, and health), loans (auto and mortgage), the tax system, and retirement accounts. Participants described the need for more educational programs related to these areas.

Finding #2: Housing is a top issue, and housing, disability accessibility, and language access issues intersect.

Participants from all groups identified housing as a top issue for various reasons. For example, in the Arabic-speaking community conversation, a participant with a refugee background described frequent moves between hotels and houses, or even state to state, with limited communication with host organizations. After securing a home, residents described having difficulty “keeping up” with a limited income, such as the income from working at Walmart. One participant stated, “The rent keeps changing on us. We feel that the [landlord] is controlling the rent on a whim” (Arabic speaker, Community Conversations). The participants described needing support advocating for a fixed rent amount, as navigating the changes was difficult.

Participants in the Arabic and Spanish-speaking groups described wanting support from organizations to complete housing forms. Participants described how the identification document requirements complicate access to housing, including shelters, for undocumented immigrants and refugees. A high down payment also limits people's ability to buy a home. They described a need to learn how to

negotiate a lower down payment or interest rate.

Participants also described Lucas County and surrounding area services as strained—with housing issues impacting all groups. For example, a participant in the community survey explained how the lack of affordable housing is a critical issue for international students and families in Bowling Green.

In the Spanish-speaking group, a participant described needing help learning about mortgage loans and home financing. When applying for housing assistance, participants were also worried about the possible consequences of accessing financial aid on their legal status. Another issue was the limited opportunity to apply and qualify for the Housing Choice Voucher Program, a Section 8 Program that only opened twice a year.

Further, participants explained how challenging it was to find housing without proper language support. Lack of language assistance is also a concern for navigating eligibility requirements, limiting the access of immigrant and refugee groups to quality services. In the Spanish-speaking group, participants described how resource access depends on the family's income and legal status. For instance, some families may have an

income above the qualification threshold yet still need resources. Additionally, while children may be eligible for support, such as in the case of COVID-19 stimulus assistance, their parents' undocumented status may disqualify them, limiting the family's access to resources.

For individuals with refugee status and accessibility needs, like requiring a wheelchair or having autism, the absence of language support made it difficult for them to communicate their housing accommodation requirements. Participants described how an organization downtown helped them access support for bills based on income.

Finding #3: Cultural and religious beliefs and practices must be considered for housing accommodations.

Another significant issue was housing accommodations that did not consider the person's religious and cultural practices. For example, a community member described being placed in a home where a dog lived, which is unacceptable in their religion. The area was also secluded, adding issues of accessibility to other resources.

In another instance, an Arabic-speaking community member requested accommodation in a hotel because they

didn't want to inconvenience the host and felt uncomfortable staying there. However, they experienced difficulties communicating with their host organization and did not immediately respond or make accommodations.

Finding #4: Education is a top issue; schools play a critical role in newcomer integration, and access to English learning resources and courses is one of the most important needs.

Findings related to education highlight the needs and priorities of immigrant and refugee students and families regarding education and schooling. This finding informs initiatives Welcome TLC can implement to ensure immigrant and refugee students and families thrive in school and have the knowledge they need to succeed in the workforce.

As described in the Mandarin community conversation, for newcomers, schools were primarily entry points to the community and resources. Initial meetings through the school provided support on arrival. Then, schools also sent frequent announcements. Further, for the Arabic-speaking community conversation participants, while participants described accessing all services and programs as difficult, registering the children in school was described as “easy.”

The Spanish-speaking community group highlighted education as the most important service to themselves or their family. Participants described the critical role educators and school staff played in providing services. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, schools, teachers, and principals provided food. Schools also provided Spanish-language resources and updates regarding their children’s progress.

There were mixed responses on children’s integration into schooling spaces in the youth and young adult community conversation. One participant described the role of language in integration and how the “language barrier” prevents children from “assimilating.” The participant stated, “Even though they do have school activities and stuff, it’s still super hard for them to adjust fully to the American education system.” Another participant described how it was “easy” to find and participate in clubs, after-school, and tutoring programs. Teachers and staff were also available after school and provided tutoring and additional support. Further, service hours are required for graduation. A participant described how volunteering at an elementary school “helped him help his community.”

The community conversation with youth

and young adults highlighted higher education institutions' role in supporting immigrants and refugees. International student organizations were described as helpful for youth and young adults. On-campus organizations provided legal services for a low cost, helping with matters such as police citations and tickets. Food pantries, available to all students, are especially helpful to international students. After-school programs for students help through tutoring. Further, student groups support students' fields of study and support understanding other social and justice issues, such as different types of biases, shared experiences, and allyship.

"When I came here, my kids were small, and I had to work, so I could not study English. Now that my kids are older, if I want to study, I find it very hard, and they tell me that now it's too late"
(Participant, Arabic Community Conversation)

When asked what is the single most important action that they would like to see Welcome TLC take over the next two years to create a safe and culturally sustaining space/ecosystem for its diverse immigrant and refugee communities, participants in the Arabic-speaking community conversation described access to English language learning as the most important. As the community member

described in the quotation above, access to English courses is an issue for mothers with childcare responsibilities. Further, a participant asked if there was an opportunity to host intensive English courses in the library. The Spanish-speaking group also prioritized access to English learning as services and support systems they wished were available.

The community conversation with refugees highlighted how obtaining a GED is complicated for refugees who have been in refugee camps and have not had an opportunity to obtain it. Arabic-speaking participants described wanting public learning spaces for refugees free of cost where they can learn English in addition to their primary language and religion. Participants recognized the need to recruit more volunteers to help refugees. One participant described English-speaking people as a resource for learning English. For example, they had worked in an English-speaking environment and had learned English through immersion. In the Mandarin-speaking community conversation, a participant recommended recruiting retired people to help with the English tutoring of newcomers.

*“He’s 16, and he is 18, and they were not in school when they first came here. They are in school now, and they would like, even though they are taking ESL classes, there are no opportunities for interaction. It is isolated, and they aren’t getting the exposure they need to the language. Services to improve on could be getting them into the real world and interacting with English speakers”
(Participant, Youth and Young Adult Community Conversation)*

As implied in the quote above, various instances in the community conversation with youth and young adults delineated the need for English language training. Youth and young adult participants described services provided by Water for Ishmael and programs at local colleges and universities as helpful. However, they expressed needing more “day-to-day basic language skills.” Given the financial circumstances of some immigrants and refugees, the cost of some English learning programs is prohibitive.

Participants also described how, in school, younger children find it difficult to integrate because of language use and English learning. A participant stated, “Even if they have after-school tutoring and programs, it is hard for them to adjust and integrate into the education system here.” One participant described family members attending an extended

English program over the summer in Sylvania that incorporated engaging activities.

Further, youth and young adult participants and the internationally trained professional group also mentioned the need for help preparing for college, including information on scholarships, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) tuition, and the application process. For instance, some immigrants and refugees may find the US's higher education systems and institutions different from what they are familiar with, such as those following the French school system. Although the students may have experience with the school system from being enrolled early, their parents might not be familiar with it and may need extra support.

Refugees and immigrants might need help connecting with people in their age group outside of formal educational spaces. The internationally trained professional group described the need for community-building and gathering events. While the summer months are busier with events, the winter “really slows down.”

Finding #5: Healthcare is a top issue.

“A lot of times, we go to a place, and they say that they can’t attend us because we do not have insurance. And when they can attend us, they tend to give us a high price.” (Participant, Spanish-Speaking Community Conversation)

When asked about top issues, the Spanish and Mandarin-speaking group and youth and young adults described healthcare as a top issue, and participants described varied aspects of healthcare as impacting access. For example, a participant in the youth and young adult community conversation noted, “The concept of insurance is kind of new. We could not understand what the insurance would cover exactly. I think insurance education, where we could learn about insurance, would be helpful.”

A participant in the internationally trained professionals group described differences in the health care system. Navigating the healthcare system includes information such as cost, insurance coverage, and healthcare services. The participant also described financial assistance for those who do not have health insurance as an issue. Another participant described how access to mental health services is essential for immigrants and refugees, stating, “You miss everything about your

contacts, your environment. So when you can get to another state. It is something completely new. It’s a big challenge. So, I think we need help...” Like housing, access to healthcare should be understood through an intersectional lens, where legal status, income, and language use should be considered.

Finding #6: Language Access is necessary to access most needs and services.

As described in other findings, language access is an issue in access to housing, employment, healthcare, and legal services. For example, in the Arabic-speaking conversation, a participant described how his friend repeatedly failed the Bureau of Motor Vehicles driving test. While the friend had passed the written test, which was translated, he failed the driving test five times because of the lack of interpretation services, although they had been driving in their home country for many years. Further, although he brought friends to help interpret, the friends were asked to leave, and there was inadequate language assistance for the driving test. This anecdote emphasizes the challenges immigrants and refugees encounter when accessing state and local services, which may have lasting legal implications if not obtained.

In the Mandarin-speaking community conversation, participants described receiving information about services through mail, phone, and email. However, participants stated that most communication is not translated unless it is from the federal government in cases of immigration or other governmental programs. When language assistance is offered, such as in accessing food stamps, participants described the process as “easy.” Further, the community group describes accessing language assistance resources in Mandarin, such as water, fire, electricity, gas banks, government health care, and legal services. However, some places require a long wait time to access the services. Similarly, in the Spanish-speaking community group, participants described the need for Spanish-language support for electricity services.

Comparing the needs described in the community conversations with the priorities described by service providers sheds light on how to address gaps in Welcome TLC’s work. For example, in the

survey, service providers ranked Welcome TLC’s committees by priority. Significantly, the language access committee was ranked the highest by 48% of participants (10 service providers). In comparison, the workforce development committee was ranked the highest priority 29% of survey participants (6 service providers). Three participants ranked the legal services committee as the highest priority, while two participants ranked community outreach committee as the highest priority. These responses, paired with the findings from the community conversations highlight the importance of language access.

Finding #7: Access to Legal Services was a priority for immigrants and refugees.

“Even if we may know a little English, we do not know the laws of the country to know what we can or cannot do or ask for” (Participant, Arabic Community Conversation)

Table 8 outlines essential service providers of immigration services.

Table 8: Service Providers Supporting Immigration Services

Service Type	Organizations
Immigration Services	ABLE (Immigration Legal Services), SSFAC (Immigrant Assistant Services, Immigration Legal Services), Chinese Association of Greater Toledo (Immigrant Assistant Services), University of Toledo College of Law (Immigration Legal Services), Advocating Opportunity (Immigration Legal Services), Water for Ishmael (Immigrant Assistant Services), Nuestra Gente Community Projects, Inc. (Immigrant Assistant Services)

Access to legal services was a prominent issue, as demonstrated in the quote above from the community conversation. In the Spanish-speaking community conversation, participants described lacking acceptable identification documents, such as a passport, as significantly limiting. Participants described needing support acquiring services such as vehicle plates from the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. Not having a driver's license was also an issue. While participants recognized this is a state issue, they seemed hopeful of the potential for policies such as the driver's license policy for undocumented people in Michigan and Illinois.

The youth and young adult group community conversation echoed the need for accessible legal services. A participant described how immigration services are difficult to access and recounted how they worked with an organization for three to six months and were then left to navigate everything

themselves. Another participant described how their family received services for their grandmother in Mexico to apply for and receive a passport and tourist visa. The organization is no longer running because of internal issues, and the participant described needing financially accessible legal services and support.

Refugee community members face unique needs, such as the need for support in helping immediate family members in other countries access resources to immigrate to the United States. The need to access legal services where basic questions can be answered and assistance for issues such as domestic violence is significant. Further, documents in the mail related to immigration and legal services are in English. A participant described how they did not receive adequate support when they requested assistance from a community organization.

Finding #8: The pandemic impacted participants in various ways.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted equitable access to healthcare, financial services, and information. For example, a Spanish-speaking participant described not receiving support for the COVID-19 stimulus. So, they continued to work despite being concerned with their health and safety. Moreover, the pandemic impacted the available services. For example, a participant in the youth and young adult community conversation described receiving services for interpreting and preparing their green card application material and visa petitions for their family members from an organization that could not survive financially after the pandemic.

Finding #9: Transportation was a top issue for newly arrived immigrants and refugees.

Other findings have illuminated the diverse needs of immigrant and refugee groups. While most groups described positive experiences with transportation, community conversation participants described how transportation is a significant issue for newcomers. While there is some support for transportation, the cost of transportation can be limiting for newcomers, especially for activities that might not be considered critical, such as volunteering. In a translated

conversation, a participant stated, “Transportation is a big issue, especially for the newcomers. For example, this guy doesn’t have a car. They used to use his bike to go to Walmart. They don’t have transportation, and it’s very difficult.” The participant described needing support with a loan to help buy a car.

Safe Communities

Findings related to safe communities reveal implicit and structural biases that impact immigrants and refugees. Findings inform policies and practices Welcome TLC can implement measures to prevent discrimination and build a trusting relationship.

Finding #10: Safety was an issue for some participants.

While most participants described positive experiences living in and around the Lucas County and City of Toledo areas, some participants described safety as an issue. A participant in the Arabic-speaking conversation described feeling unsafe in their housing, where they were uncomfortable and scared of leaving their wife and kids alone while they went to work because the area was dangerous. A Spanish-speaking participant also described concern over insecurity and fear of robbery and assault in some neighborhoods. A

participant in the internationally trained professional group described the safety of their children as a concern, especially before they arrived in the area. Another participant mentioned that limited financial resources result in fewer housing options in safe places.

Finding #11: The range of experiences with discrimination and racism is broad. Some participants shared their encounters with these issues, whereas others indicated they had not faced them.

“It depends on the person who serves us or who we end up with because there are people who are good people and some who are rude to us. We feel like they make fun of us because we try to speak English, yet we have an accent, and we feel discriminated against. Even in stores... they tell us that they can’t understand us, but when our kids speak, which they are bilingual, even they get judged” (Participant, Spanish-Speaking Community Conversation)

The Spanish-speaking participant's account of discrimination reveals immigrants' and refugees' diverse experiences with discrimination and racism. In this case, the participant describes a language-related prejudice. Additionally, they described how they perceived the racial discrimination their child faced while interpreting.

Significantly, when asked directly about experiences with racism and discrimination, other participants did not detail their experiences with racism or discrimination. However, the experiences described by the participants hinted at deeper experiences with racism. A youth conversation participant stated, “People are nice, rarely ever experience discrimination or racism or have any bad experiences” (Youth, Community Conversation). As the youth participant's quote highlights (below), people perceive and experience discrimination and racism in complex and nuanced ways.

“And now the way it ties into the services is that the public here is getting the wrong impression about immigration, immigrants, cultures. They're vilified. They've seen inhuman, or substandard, subhuman. So when you get here, and you try to get these services, you're treated like you are, let's say if Jobs and Family Services where they, you know, made me feel like you're undeserving, you know, we're Americans, we're having a hard time making it. Why should we help you, you know, they may be mandated to help you by law, but then they may not be cooperative when you actually meet them” (Participant, Youth and Young Adult Community Conversation)

The quote above further highlights the complexity of racism and discrimination. The youth participant connects broader narratives of immigrants and culture to the experiences of immigrants as they access social services. While the participant did not share this quote when asked about racism and discrimination, this dialogue emerged later as the youth discussed current issues. Similar to the Spanish speaker's experience with racism, in the following quote, a participant in the youth community conversation outlined a relationship between linguistic and racial discrimination.

“Whenever I try to speak with them, they start getting rude. But since I know English well, and start using legal talk, they start being nicer. They try to push back if you aren’t good at English. My dad needed unemployment because he could not work, and they kept pushing back his stuff for years, so he had to take them to court, which also took years. They need better workers”
(Participant, Youth Community Conversation)

While the quotes come from different community conversations (youth and Spanish speakers) and participants from different backgrounds (immigrant, refugee), the two quotes illustrate intergenerational experiences of racism and discrimination. Overall, the findings

highlight how racism and discrimination pose complex challenges for immigrants and refugees due to the various forms of racism, including overt, covert, and systematic.

Connected Communities, Civic Engagement, and Government and Community Leadership

Findings related to civic engagement and government and community leadership reveal strategies that support immigrants and refugees in participating in and taking leadership in shaping community and civic spaces. These findings inform the initiatives Welcome TLC can implement to seek feedback and build capacity for implementing participation, inclusion, and equity strategies. Findings related to connected communities highlight how organizations can create opportunities and spaces for immigrant and refugee residents to develop deep relationships. Findings inform initiatives Welcome TLC can implement to reduce prejudice and strengthen diverse community relationships.

Finding #12: There are various community spaces for immigrant and refugee community members.

In the Mandarin-speaking community conversation, participants described connecting through various networks,

including friends, colleagues, employees, employers, schools, WeChat groups with community members, and Chinese churches. These networks allow community members to access resources. Further, various organizations serve the Mandarin-speaking community, providing a sense of community. Organizations include the Chinese Association of Greater Toledo, churches, and the Chinese center and school. Gatherings include the Chinese community's annual picnics and winter holiday parades, dinners, dances, and Tai Chi lessons.

Participants in the Arabic-speaker group recommended Welcome TLC work with the mosques. There is also an opportunity to place posters and flyers to advertise programs and opportunities or share updates and information with Arabic language speakers. Additionally, Middle Eastern grocery stores and schools would be a strategic placement. English language text messages can be translated on the phone.

In the Spanish-speaking community conversation, which took place at a church, the group mentioned the church's important role in providing

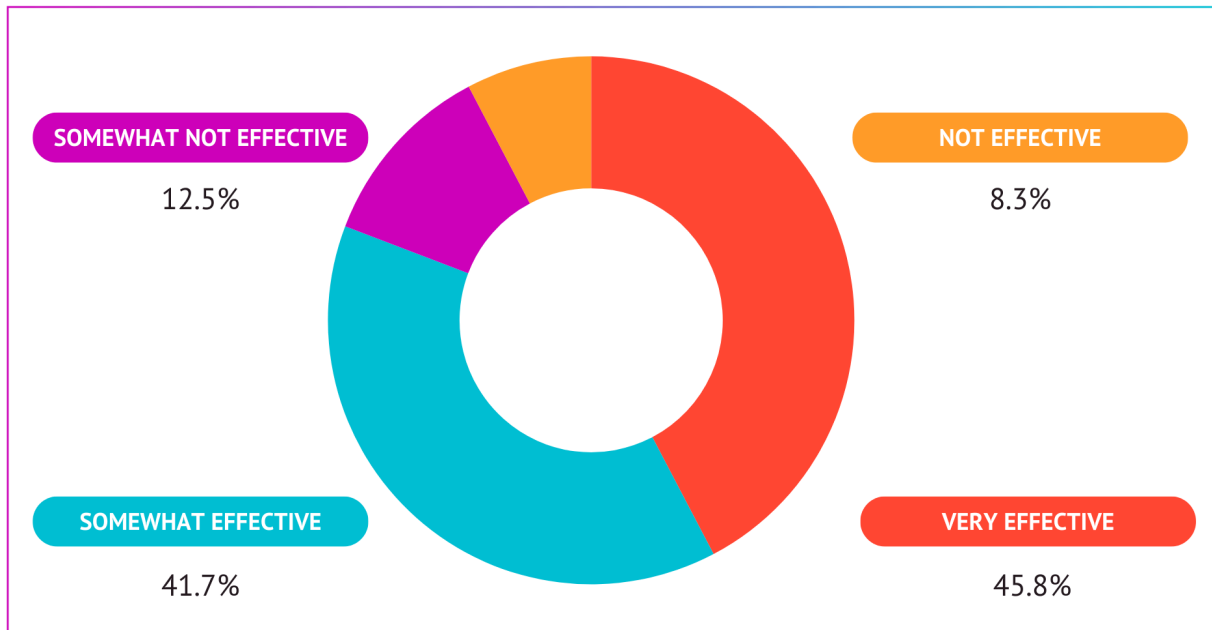
services. For example, one participant highlighted the medical services provided by a church. Further, participants highlighted how church bulletins and flyers passed out at the end of church services would help communicate information. Participants suggested service providers do direct outreach at churches.

Participants in the youth and young adult conversation described volunteering in the Islamic Food Bank as a way to give back.

Finding #13: Funding deficits impact community organizations' staff capacity, language assistance services, and other services community partners can offer newcomers.

Most survey respondents (21) indicated being very effective or somewhat effective in meeting the needs of immigrant and refugee community members they served. Three participants indicated being somewhat not effective and two participants indicated not being effective. Figure 11 outlines how service providers described their effectiveness in meeting the needs of immigrant and refugee community members they serve.

Figure 11: Service Provider's Perception of Effectiveness in Meeting the Needs of Immigrant and Refugee Community Members



One obstacle described is the availability of translation services, especially in nonprofit organizations. For example, one respondent explained that while they serve a high linguistic and cultural diversity, most resources focus on Spanish and Arabic speakers. Lack of funding means organizations have limited staffing capacity.

In addition to general staffing issues, some organizations rely on volunteers to provide interpretation and translation, which often 'get stretched thin' as there is limited language service capacity compared to the number of clients with LEP.

Another issue is funding for English education, including English for the workforce and ESL.

Barriers to Service Provision

Survey respondents were asked to rank the barriers they face from 1 (most significant barrier) to 8 (least significant barrier). The following list outlines the top three most common key barriers identified.

1. **Lack of funding and adequate resources to meet community demand for programs and services:** Ranked #1 by 13 Service Providers (54.17%) and #2 by five (20.83%) respondents.
2. **Lack of adequate staffing:** Ranked #1 by seven respondents (29.17%), Ranked #2 by 5 (20.83%) respondents.
3. **Lack of training and technical assistance for building staff skills and knowledge about the tools and resources to be used to serve culturally and linguistically diverse community members:** Ranked #1 by two respondents (8.33%), #2 by 7 (29.17%) respondents

Findings #14: Organizations and service providers play a critical role in supporting the needs of refugee communities.

As demonstrated, community organizations are critical in supporting immigrant and refugee community members' diverse needs. Moreover, refugees' unique needs, experiences, and cultural and religious practices mean each organization serves a critical role in equity and integration for refugees in the City of Toledo and Lucas County ecosystem. Community organizations support diverse needs, including English

courses, filling out documents such as social security and health insurance, providing furniture, and hosting local events.

Participants repeatedly described the importance of accountability when providing services, such as communicating after an accommodation is requested or providing adequate language assistance services. In another case, a participant suggested, "If there is any supervision done, to follow up with the refugee and make sure that the services the organization promised are being fulfilled" (Arabic-speaking

participant, Community Conversations). Further, the presence of Welcome TLC in civic spaces means other organizations feel accountable for ensuring immigrant and refugee community members participate equitably and meaningfully.

According to the Arabic-speaking community, organizations to partner with include Toledo Muslim Community Center (TMCC), Masjid Saad, and refugee organizations broadly. A participant from the Arabic-speaking community group recommended partnering with refugees, Arab-speaking volunteers, or employers who would support the civic participation of immigrant and refugee community members. A participant also suggested that the Welcome TLC partner with insurance companies to facilitate access to insurance information for refugees.

Findin #15: According to participants, a “checklist” for refugee community members on the systems and processes required to access the most important services would be a useful tool.

“I believe that in life, including food, clothing, housing, and transportation are the most practical aspects because when you arrive in a new place, you need to solve questions like where to eat, where to stay, where your children will go to school, and how you will get around [whether by walking or driving]”
(Participant, Mandarin Community Conversation)

As the quote highlights, newcomer immigrants and refugees have unique and immediate needs. During multiple community conversations, participants suggested creating a “checklist” for immigrant and refugee community members on the most important systems and processes for newly arrived immigrants and refugees. Throughout the community conversations, participants highlighted the following as immediate newcomer needs: assistance in daily life (information on food, clothing, housing, and transportation), children’s education information; ways and methods to solve problems provided by friends; maps and other materials related to tourism accommodations, national parks, and general information. Incorporating specific resources and information responding directly to the needs outlined in this report would strengthen such a checklist.

Finding #16: There is a need to centralize resources and communication.

The community conversations mentioned the need to centralize resources and communication. For example, a participant described how a centralized resource would mean a more standardized, “better” process, where municipal governments could understand and act on the demands and needs of new immigrants.

A Spanish-speaking participant described accessing resources through the City or County website; however, other resources, such as healthcare, are unavailable there. While other organizations provide services such as resources for childcare, health insurance, and language access, increasing awareness about the programs is also important. Another participant highlighted United Way and the 211 phone number, which can be accessed for help and resources.

Further analysis is needed to understand how partnerships between service organizations can support the centralization of resources and communication for sharing resources and coordinating efforts supporting immigrant and refugee communities. For example, in the survey, service providers were asked how effective their organization was in partnering with other

organizations in the region to share resources and coordinate efforts that support immigrant and refugee communities. Most survey respondents (21, 88%) described being very effective or somewhat effective in partnering with other organizations in the region. Two respondents described being somewhat not effective, and one respondent described being not effective.

Finding #17: Social media, including Facebook, Whatsapp, and WeChat, are the most accessed channels for receiving updates and notifications.

Participants described various ways they received information, including through community organizations and then receiving information from other community members through word of mouth. Further, participants described having access to “a lot of information” but having difficulty understanding because the information is in English. According to participants, providing culturally and linguistically appropriate channels means providing information beyond word-for-word translation, which may not always be accurate.

Mandarin speakers described accessing updates and notifications from service providers and community organizations through Facebook, WhatsApp, and other social media networks through their websites. Participants also received

important information through mail and text messages. For the Arabic-speaking community participants, Facebook, emails, and emails are the most accessed information channels. Participants recommended that community organizations serving refugees partner in strategically providing information. The Spanish-speaking group also described accessing information mostly through online media.

Spanish-speaking participants suggested placing communication in public places such as schools, stores, and gasoline stations. Other suggestions included car advertising decals, aerial banners, and printed ads around the city. Spanish-speaking participants suggested that Welcome TLC partner with organizations that provide information and services related to healthcare assistance, healthcare insurance, and financial information (such as banks).

The internationally trained professional participants discussed how different types of platforms should be considered for the different age groups and newcomers. For example, while some people might be comfortable using emails and social media, others might prefer printed mail or posters displayed around public areas. Grocery stores and businesses serving linguistically and

culturally diverse communities would also be strategic locations to place brochures and flyers.

Finding #18: Trust ensures equity and meaningful access for immigrant and refugee communities.

“Legal assistance is also very important. For instance, regular legal aid is always available, but the key is if you don't have money, can you find lawyers you can trust, especially among the Chinese community?” (Participant, Mandarin Community Conversation)

As demonstrated in the quote, the value of trust frequently appeared in the community conversation. While the participant described trust as an issue for accessing legal assistance, other participants described trust as an issue for accessing information and resources online. For example, a participant described reading reviews and then consulting with people they trusted and people who had been residents for a longer time to provide more trustworthy information. The Chinese-audience newspapers also provide trustworthy information. Spanish-speaking participants also highlighted the need for pages with trusted information.

Participants are also concerned with having a feedback process where they can express their needs and

experiences. They suggested Welcome TLC implement programs in the style of listening sessions. For example, one participant in the Spanish-speaking session stated, “How can we know what is said here today, or how will we be able to know if there is a solution or a process for something?”

Finding #19: Community Partners envision Welcome TLC as a resource hub for advocacy, coordination, collaboration, and resource mapping.

“Everyone is developing their own process and response. It would be amazing if there was one hub/starting point that directed organizations on how to proceed so we are consistent in not duplicating efforts and confusing those who are trying to help” (Participant, Service Providers Survey)

According to the survey, significant needs include communication, partnerships between service organizations, and education about those services and qualifications for newcomer communities. Survey respondents described the key roles Welcome TLC can play in supporting community organizations. First, Welcome TLC can serve as a central hub for refugee and immigrant families in the community. Survey respondents described coordination, collaboration, and resource mapping as a significant

priority, and they emphasized the need for collaboration with governmental agencies that might not be providing adequate and sufficient language assistance services. For example, it can connect with commissioners, state representatives, and other key community leaders to build resources and advocate for community partners and organizations. This would include communicating the contributions of immigrants, migrants, and refugees to the county and country. Welcome TLC can also organize opportunities for organizations to network, partner, and share resources. Significantly, community partners surveyed recommended that Welcome TLC focus on maintaining and moving forward the language access committee as the high priority; other priorities include workforce and economic development, community outreach, and legal service committee (in order).

Second, Welcome TLC can strategically lead and maintain resources and a database of community partners and organizations. This would include sharing demographic analysis of the county’s population and any demographic changes and keeping translated documents and paperwork from other community organizations.

Organizations expressed a need for

visual mapping to show where resources are available and where there are gaps.

A long-term goal would be to create a 211-call service directory for newcomers.

Technical Assistance Recommendations:

Survey respondents recommended that Welcome TLC prioritize the following order designing technical assistance to support county-wide language access implementation.

- 1) **Advocate for and secure funding** that can be used to address immediate needs and fill gaps in programs and services available to immigrant and refugee families and business owners.
- 2) **Develop and regularly update a list of culturally and linguistically specific community-based organizations, partners, and ethnic media outlets** that service provider organizations can partner with to extend their reach into the county's diverse immigrant and refugee communities.
- 3) **Create a space for service providers and immigrant and refugee-led organizations** to build relationships, share best practices, and establish effective mechanisms for referrals and resource sharing.
- 4) **Design comprehensive language access and cultural competency training modules and materials** that help organizations equip their frontline staff with the skills and knowledge they need to serve immigrant and refugee communities.
- 5) **Increase knowledge and understanding about the country's immigrant and refugee population** by routinely conducting and sharing a demographic analysis of the country's immigrant and refugee populations and the languages spoken by individuals who use a language other than English.

Finally, respondents recommended committees focused on organizing action, multicultural topics or issues, and business development for newcomers. The community conversations highlighted other services Welcome TLC can provide, such as sewing, cooking classes, and cultural programs. The internationally trained professional group described how childcare and

accessibility of time and date should be considered when planning these programs. Further, a participant in the community conversation with refugees stated that when they arrived in the area, volunteering helped them socialize, interact, and be proactive in the English language. The implication is that Welcome TLC might provide volunteer opportunities.

CONCLUSION

The immigrant and refugee experiences in the City of Toledo and Lucas County area are diverse. Immigrants and refugees have diverse cultural backgrounds, speak diverse languages, and have varied settlement histories. As outlined in the findings, the top issues are employment, housing, education, and healthcare. However, each group prioritized the issue differently, with variation among group participants. Participants highlighted how language use and cultural and religious practices must be considered when addressing these issues.

The findings presented in this report are a novel contribution to understanding the experiences of immigrant and refugee individuals and communities and are not duplications of existing research. The use of focus groups through community conversations, which included 102 participants, and a survey with community leaders, which included 29 participants, and the thematic analysis conducted in analyzing the data ensure a comprehensive understanding of the issues faced by immigrants and refugees.

Using the Welcoming Standard as a lens, the Needs Assessment identifies strengths and gaps in services for immigrants and refugees in the Toledo and Lucas County area. The demographic analysis and the nineteen findings outlined in the community scan will inform the next phase of the project and strategic process, which will include an organizational scan. Overall, the report will support Welcome TLC's mission of building a more welcoming and inclusive community for immigrants, refugees, and people of diverse cultures that supports a vibrant civic, economic, and social fabric for all.

LIMITATIONS

The primary limitation of the needs assessment report is the fact that the demographic data analysis utilizes data from the American Community Survey, which can be limited due to reliance on a sampling of self-reported data and often groups languages of lesser diffusion into more generalized language groups. This makes it difficult to correctly identify small language communities within the county. Additionally, data collected from the survey is constrained by the varying levels of detail provided by the respondents; some offered comprehensive and detailed responses, while others were more vague.

While this Community Needs Assessment provides a thorough overview of the needs and experiences of immigrants and refugees in the City of Toledo and Lucas County area, it is difficult to prioritize them due to the community's diverse needs and experiences. This report is meant to inform future Welcome TLC initiatives that address the issues outlined in the report.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Explanation of Data Used in the Demographic Data Analysis

The demographic analysis analyzes data from the American Community Survey 2018-2022 5-year estimates to determine the languages spoken at home, English language abilities, and places of birth of the foreign-born population within the Toledo and Lucas County area. The ACS is a large-scale survey conducted by the US Census Bureau. It provides population estimates based on data collected over 1-year, 3-year, and 5-year periods, including demographic characteristics (such as age and race), languages spoken, place of birth, educational attainment, income and poverty, housing, employment, and other topics for states, counties, cities, and other geographic areas.

While both 1-year and 5-year estimates are available for the City of Toledo and Lucas County, the data used for this report is from the ACS 5-year estimates,³⁰ which combines data collected over a 60-month period between 2018 and 2022. This data set was selected because it provides increased statistical reliability compared with that of single-year estimates and offers greater precision to identify the languages other than English (LOTE) spoken at home in the City of Toledo and Lucas County. English proficiency of speakers of those languages and their places of birth. Additionally, 5-year estimates provide block group data, the lowest level of geography available through the ACS data.

While the ACS 5-year estimates are often the only source of demographic, social, economic, and housing data for communities that are too small or infrequently surveyed, making it useful to organizations for planning and research purposes, it is also important to note its limitations. Smaller populations will be grouped together, and diverse languages may not specifically be named. A community-based assessment directly engaging community stakeholders and partners is needed to better identify and map

³⁰ US Census Bureau (2022) When to use 1-year or 5-Year estimates, Census.gov. Available at: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/guidance/estimates.html>

smaller language communities that speak languages of lesser diffusion.

The ACS³¹ collects data on speakers of languages other than English and on their English-speaking ability by asking participants if they speak a language other than English at home. Participants who self-report speaking a language other than English at home are asked to identify the language and indicate whether they speak English “Very Well,” “Well,” “Not Well,” or “Not at All.” All but those who select “Very Well” are considered to be limited English proficient or LEP. This data was pulled at the state and county level using the code B16001. This report uses the term LOTE as a proxy for individuals with LEP. It is recommended to focus language access implementation efforts on individuals with LEP and not all speakers of languages other than English to better direct resources as limited English-proficient populations face significant barriers to accessing important services and information. By ensuring that LEP individuals have access to interpretation and translation services, Welcome TLC can help promote equity and reduce disparities in access to critical resources and opportunities.

³¹ US Census Bureau (2022) Language Spoken at Home. Available at:
<https://www.census.gov/topics/population/language-use/about.html>