



LORAIN COUNTY STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN  
**BENCHMARK REPORT**  
OHIO, USA  
DECEMBER 2023





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This report summarizes the benchmarking analysis that is part of the Lorain County Strategic Action planning project. This report has been produced as part of the Lorain County Strategic Action Plan process which aims to create a Strategic Action Plan for Lorain County looking out to 2035.

This report and the associated data analysis are available at:  
[lab2.future-iq.com/lorain-county-strategic-action-plan-project/](http://lab2.future-iq.com/lorain-county-strategic-action-plan-project/)

REPORT PREPARED BY:

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Create Future Intelligence®



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Benchmarking is an important step in evaluating the potential gaps and strengths of a region. It also helps inform the strategic actions taken to fill those gaps and build agility and resiliency over the long term.

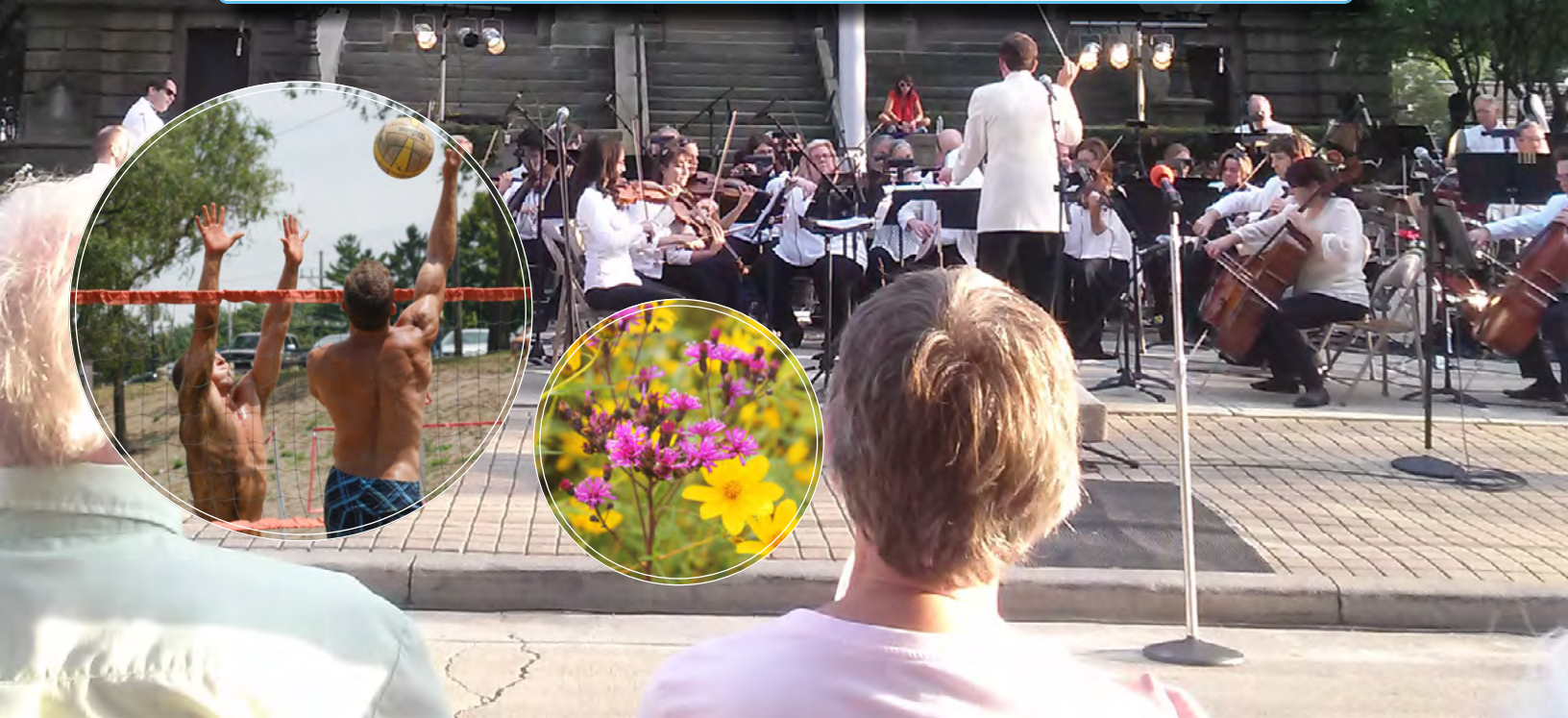
**Lorain County, Ohio, is a diverse and dynamic region situated in the northeastern part of the state.**

This benchmark report for the county government serves as a tool to assess and evaluate various aspects of the county's performance in multiple subjects. The report covers a wide range of topics, including economic performance, infrastructure, education, healthcare, social services, and more. By examining these key indicators, the benchmark report offers valuable insights into the county's current status.

**One of the central focuses of the Lorain County benchmark report is its economic performance.**

This includes metrics such as employment rates, income levels, and business growth. The report provides a clear picture of the county's economic health, which is crucial for local policymakers and businesses to make informed decisions and plan for the future.

In addition to economics, the report delves into various social and quality of life factors. This includes data on educational achievement, healthcare access, crime rates, and other vital components of community well-being. The Lorain County benchmark report aims to be a vital resource for government officials, businesses, and residents alike, aiding in strategic planning and policy decisions that can help improve the overall quality of life in the County.





Lorain County generally has seen its position improve in relation to the state in a number of demographic categories.

# 1.0 | KEY DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS

Lorain County, Ohio, has experienced a number of demographic changes since 2010. These changes have been driven by a number of factors which are key indicators for the county.



## POPULATION GROWTH

One of the most significant demographic changes in Lorain County has been population growth. The county's population grew by 4.7% between 2010 and 2021, from 301,479 to 315,595. This growth rate is slightly higher than the state of Ohio's growth rate of 3.2% over the same period<sup>1</sup>.



## MIGRATION

The migration patterns in Lorain County have changed significantly since 2010. Prior to 2010, the county was losing population due to net out-migration. However, since 2010, the county has seen a net influx of migrants. The net influx of migrants is due to a number of factors, including the county's proximity to major metropolitan areas such as Cleveland and Akron, affordable housing costs, and relatively low cost of living<sup>2</sup>.



## DIVERSITY

Lorain County is becoming more diverse, with a growing Hispanic population and a larger share of residents who identify as multiracial. The Hispanic population in Lorain County increased by 2.3% between 2010 and 2021, while those identifying as white dropped by nearly 3%<sup>3</sup>.



## EDUCATION

Lorain County's educational attainment levels have increased since 2010. The share of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher increased from 23.1% in 2010 to 26.2% in 2021<sup>4</sup>.



## INCOME

The median household income in Lorain County was \$66,330 in the 2022 American Community Survey, above the State median of \$65,720. By family type, the median income for families was \$89,754, married-couple families was \$106,413, and non-family household were \$38,808. Poverty was slightly less than the State sitting at 12.9%<sup>5</sup>.

1. Census 2020
2. County Migration Flows, Census 2020
3. Census 2020
4. Census 2020
5. American Community Survey 2022





## 2.0 | LORAIN COUNTY FOCUS AREAS

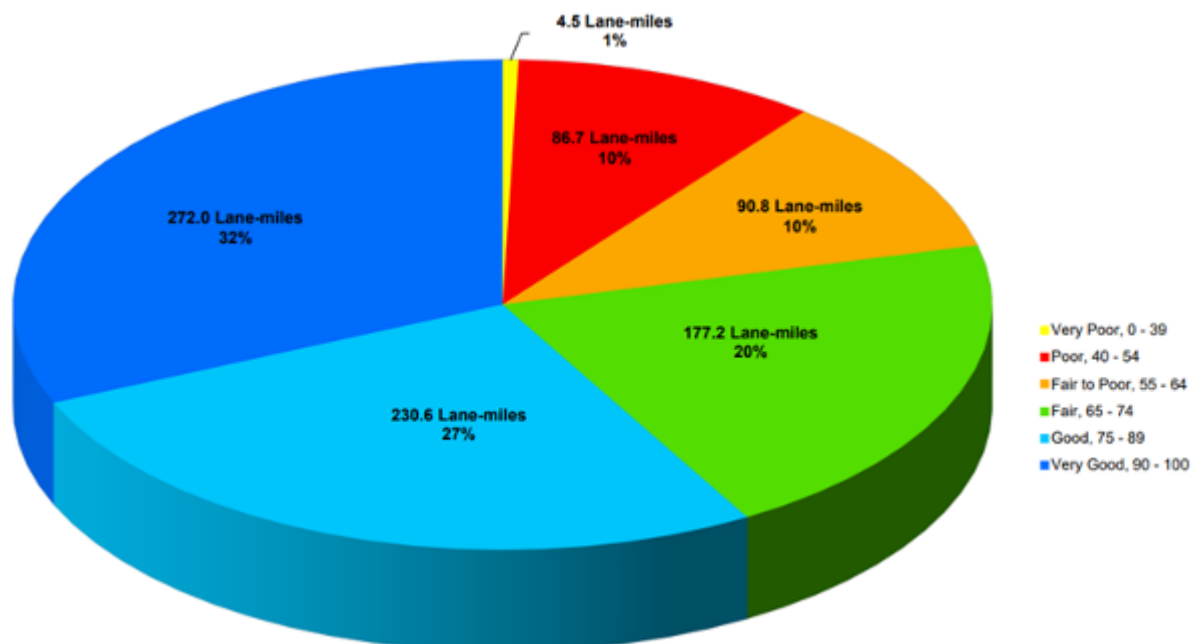
### 2.1 | LORAIN COUNTY ROAD AND BRIDGE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Lorain County benefits from a robust road and bridge transportation infrastructure system that underpins its economic vitality and quality of life. The county’s road and bridge network is a cornerstone of its infrastructure. With easy access to major highways like I-90, I-80, and the Ohio Turnpike, Lorain County is strategically located, making it an attractive hub for businesses and industries. The Port of Lorain on Lake Erie plays a role in the region’s logistics, facilitating the transport of goods and raw materials, particularly for the steel and manufacturing sectors. Additionally, the Lorain County Transit system provides public transportation for residents. Both the Port of Lorain and Lorain County Transit have opportunities that can enhance the economic growth of the County.



The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) gave the Northeast Ohio Region, which includes Lorain County, a grade of D+ for its infrastructure in 2019<sup>6</sup>. Which highlights opportunities for the county moving forward.

The region received a C- for its bridges, a D+ for its roads, and a D+ for its drinking water systems<sup>7</sup>. Positively, 59% of pavement lane miles are in good or very good condition with just 11% of lane miles being in poor or very poor condition<sup>8</sup>. Beyond that, of the 235 bridges in the county, 88% of them are rated as being in fair or better condition<sup>9</sup>.



6. 2019 ASCE Report Card  
 7. 2019 ASCE Report Card  
 8. 2023 Roadway Pavement Maintenance Report, NOACA  
 9. 2020 Lorain County Bridge Report

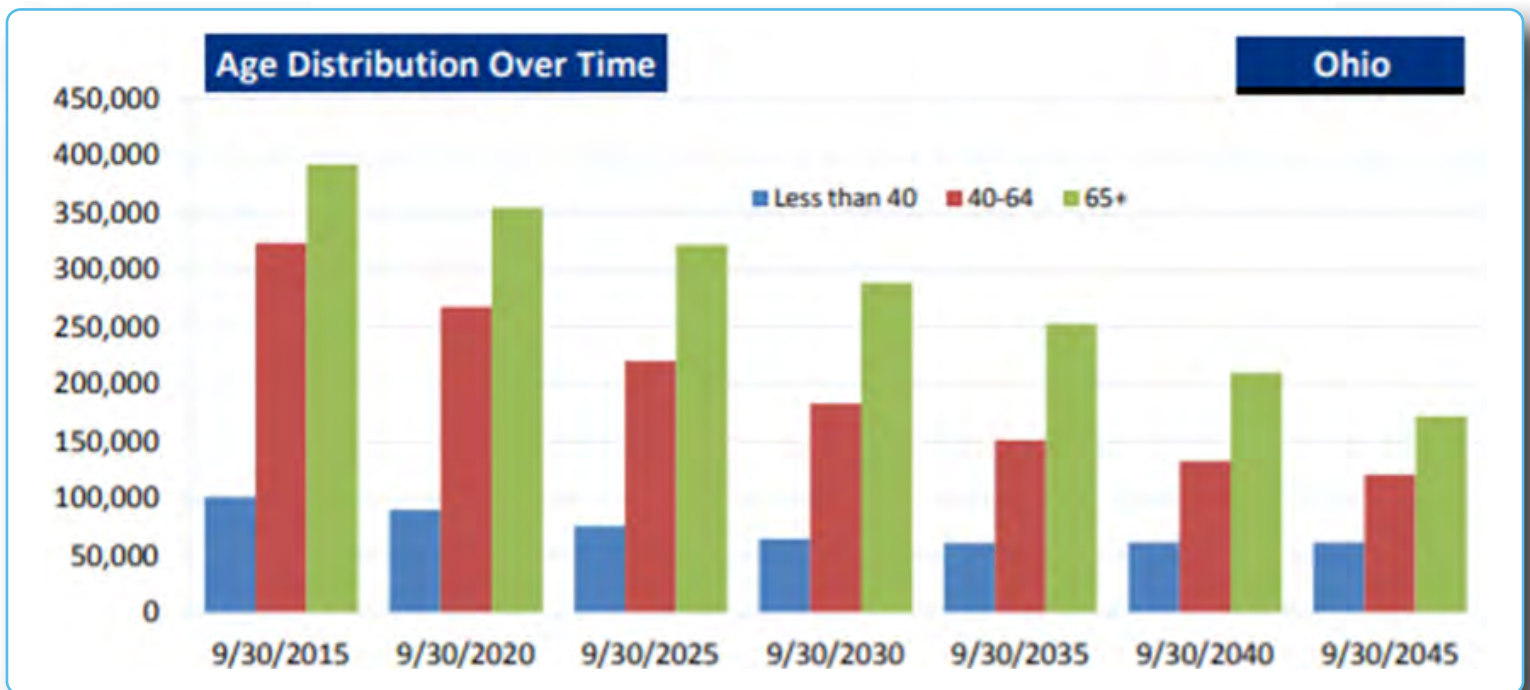


## 2.2 | VETERANS SUPPORT

The number of veterans in Lorain County was 23,865 in 2010<sup>10</sup> and represented more than 9% of the population in Lorain County. This number dropped in the prevailing decade to an estimated 16,150 according to the US Census.

Even with dropping numbers, the changing needs of veterans have also driven changes in veteran support in Lorain County. Veterans who have returned from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have different needs than veterans from previous wars. There continues to be strong demand for healthcare services, particularly as the veteran community continues to age. Of the total 111,000 veterans served in the Northeast Ohio region, over approximately 70% are from wars and conflicts prior to 1990<sup>11</sup>.

The availability of access to healthcare has changed in Lorain County. In 2021, a new VA clinic opened in that serves approximately 7,800 veterans<sup>12</sup>. It is projected that the total population will continue to decrease throughout the next 20 years nearly halving the total veteran population in the state<sup>13</sup>.



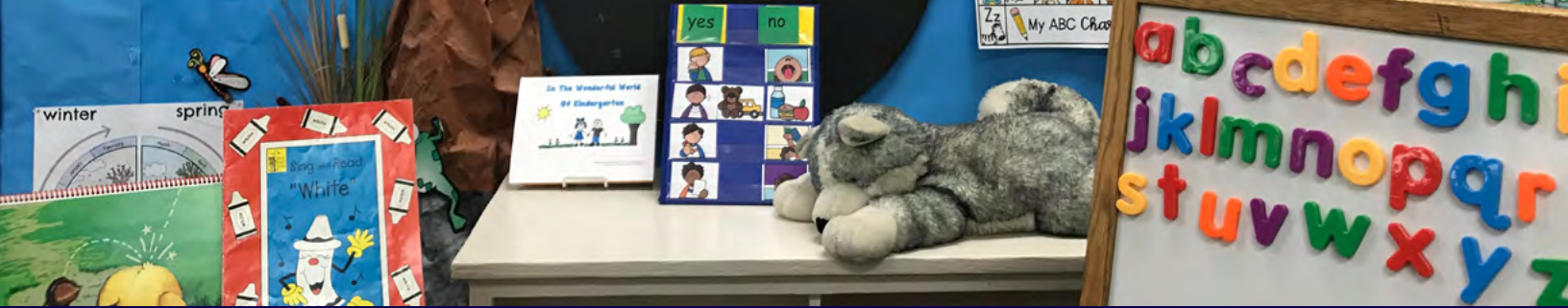
10. ACS 2022

11. VA Northeast Ohio 2021 Annual Report

12. VA Northeast Ohio 2021 Annual Report

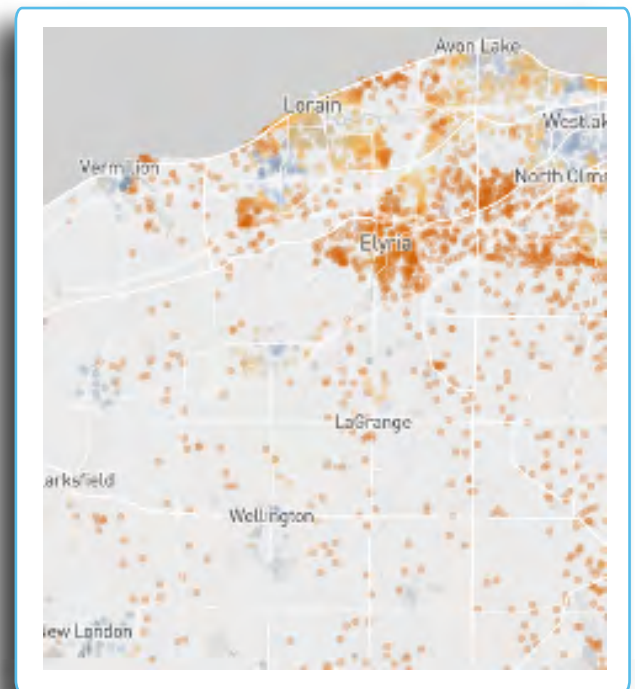
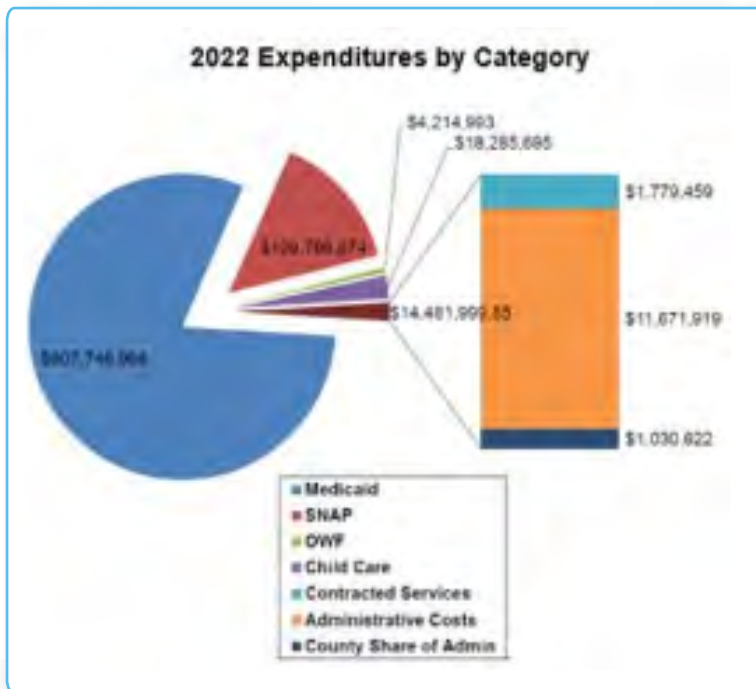
13. US Dept VA Affairs, Ohio





## 2.3 | CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Providing support to families is a key component to ensuring the social needs of the citizens of Lorain County are met. This has become more salient during and after the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic which is still impacting families and regional economies. Over the course of the last three years, the need for various services has ebbed and flowed with contracted services being the category having the largest drop in expenditures for the County<sup>14</sup>. Much of the demand for services offered by the County has also remained relatively stable with small increases or decreases depending on the service line being explored.



Childcare continues to be a significant challenge for communities across the country and Lorain County is no exception. Using census tracts, the orange on the map above represents areas considered to be childcare deserts<sup>15</sup>. Childcare deserts are any census tract with more than 50 children under age 5 that contains either no child care providers or so few options that there are more than three times as many children as licensed child care slots.



14. 2022 Lorain County Job and Family Services Annual Report  
 15. Center for American Progress 2023





## 2.4 | HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Housing Affordability remains a critical issue for families throughout Ohio and that remains true for Lorain County. Compared to the national average, Lorain County has a less burdened homeowner and renter<sup>16</sup>. This may be due to relatively lower housing costs when compared to the US average.

### HOMEOWNERS

Owner-Occupied Housing Units

**89,489**

Percent **Moderately-Burdened** Owners = 11.5%

Percent **Severely-Burdened** Owners + 7.4%

Total Percent **Cost-Burdened** Owners = **18.9%**

**3.1 Percentage Points Below the Nationwide Share of Cost-Burdened Owners**



### RENTERS

Renter-Occupied Housing Units

**34,011**

Percent **Moderately-Burdened** Renters = 21.3%

Percent **Severely-Burdened** Renters + 25.6%

Total Percent **Cost-Burdened** Renters = **46.9%**

**2.5 Percentage Points Below the Nationwide Share of Cost-Burdened Renters**



*Definitions: A household is **cost-burdened** if 30 percent or more (**moderately-burdened** if between 30 and 50 percent and **severely-burdened** if over 50 percent) of household income is spent on housing costs (i.e., gross rent, mortgage or other monthly owner costs).*



16. NACo Analysis of: U.S. Census Bureau - Population Estimates Program (PEP) 2021.

## 2.5 | ECONOMIC INDEX

Lorain County is moderately scored on the Economic Development Administrations (EDA) Innovation Index, indicating that it is slightly above average in terms of the state's economic strength. This index is calculated using a variety of factors, including business dynamics, employment and productivity, and economic wellbeing.

One of the reasons for Lorain County's relatively high Innovation Index is its strong manufacturing sector. The county is home to several major manufacturing companies. These companies and others are investing in new technologies and processes, which help drive innovation in the region. Access to major transportation infrastructure is a key enabler of economic prosperity for the County.

On the whole, Lorain County is well-positioned in the years to come. The county has a strong manufacturing sector, a growing economic ecosystem, and relatively low costs. The county also has several advantages that can be leveraged to drive innovation, such as its proximity to major markets and its transportation infrastructure.

Lorain County's individual measures within the Innovation Index are noted below:



### HUMAN CAPITAL AND KNOWLEDGE CREATION INDEX

Lorain County's top measures within this index are university based spillovers and a high associates degree attainment. Both of these higher patterns indicate a moderate degree of business competitiveness.

### BUSINESS DYNAMICS INDEX

Lorain County scores moderately in this index compared to its peers with measures showing strength in the areas of high tech establishment ratio and total employment ratios.



### BUSINESS PROFILE INDEX

This index scores the highest within the overall measures with drivers in this index being the high degree of industry diversity and access to broadband for those in the rural economy (ie. farmers).

### EMPLOYMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY INDEX

Lorain County scores moderately well from existing productivity with top measures in this index being parent diversity and a strong patenting rate.



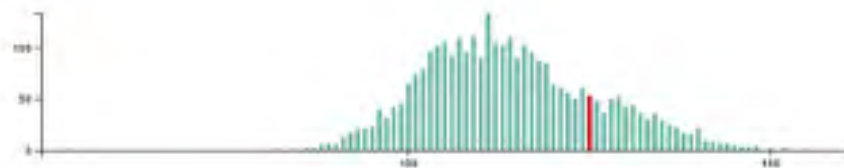
### ECONOMIC WELL BEING INDEX

Lorain County is noted for having a moderately scored economic well being index which highlights a good standard of living for county residents. Top measures in this index are broadband infrastructure and adoption along with personal income measures.

#### Innovation Intelligence Index

**125.9**

Rank: 558



The graph above, and the similar graphs below, show the distribution of index values for all counties. The value for Lorain County, OH is highlighted in red.

This area has **moderate** relative Innovation Capacity. The innovation index incorporates statistical data from a wide variety of sources. Review the indexes below to learn more about how this number was determined.

# 3.0 | BENCHMARKING PEER COUNTIES

Lorain County is located in the northeastern part of Ohio, bordering Lake Erie to the north. Its neighboring counties include Medina to the south, Erie and Huron to the west.

Medina, Erie and Huron counties share similar geographic features, including access to Lake Erie and proximity to major cities like Cleveland and Akron. This geographic proximity facilitates economic growth and collaboration among the counties, allowing them to leverage their shared resources and advantages.

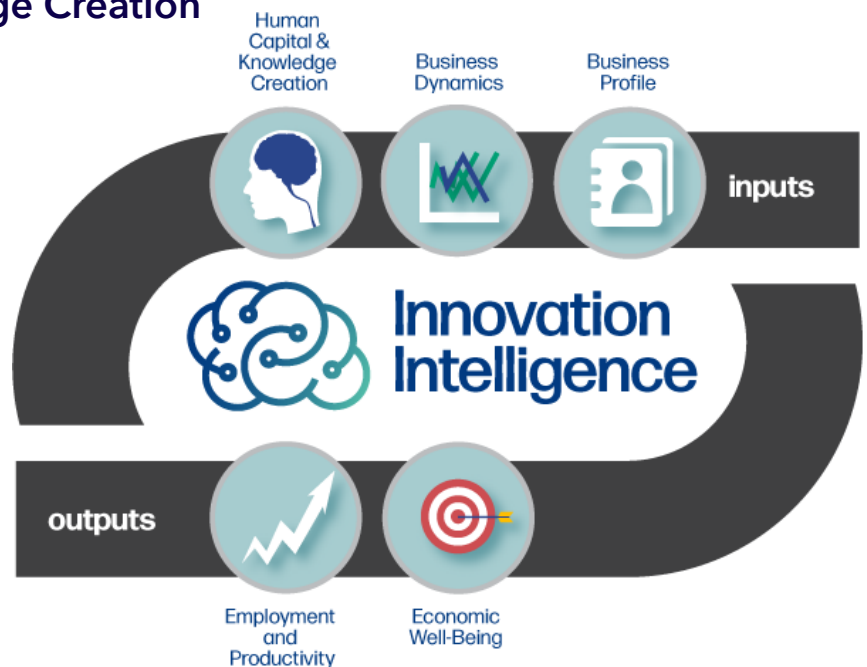
Lorain County has a population of approximately 315,000, making it the ninth most populous county in Ohio. Its neighboring counties, Medina, Erie, and Huron, have populations of approximately 182,000, 76,000, and 58,000, respectively. While there are some variations in population size, these counties share similar economic profiles. They heavy blends of manufacturing- and agricultural-based economies. This shared economic profile allows for benchmarking and comparison of economic indicators, such as job growth, unemployment rates, and median household income.

Despite their shared strengths, the counties of Lorain, Medina, Erie, and Huron face common challenges. One of the key challenges is the transition from a traditional manufacturing-based economy to a more diversified economy. The decline of manufacturing jobs has led to economic uncertainty and a need for retraining and reskilling initiatives. Additionally, these counties face challenges related to infrastructure, education, and healthcare, which require collaboration and investment to address effectively. By benchmarking and comparing their approaches to these challenges, the counties can learn from each other's successes and implement best practices to improve the overall quality of life for their residents.

Lake and Stark Counties have also been included in the benchmarking for various reasons. Lake County's inclusion is due to its proximity to Lake Erie and large population (approximately 232,000). Stark County's is for its similar composition of benchmarking characteristics as well as its population (approximately 374,000) making it the eighth most populous county in Ohio.

One measure being used for an economic comparison is the Innovation Capacity Profile of the peer communities. This indexing system, supported by the Economic Development Administration (EDA), measures the overall health of a county's economy by weighing different business and community factors. This allows us to benchmark each county with one another, highlighting its relative strengths and weaknesses. The indexes allow a comparison between the inputs driving the economy and the outputs extracted from it. The index is built using five categories:

1. Human Capital and Knowledge Creation
2. Business Dynamics
3. Business Profile
4. Employment and Productivity
5. Economic Well-Being





## 3.1 | BENCHMARK - MEDINA COUNTY

### 3.1.1 | KEY DEMOGRAPHICS - MEDINA COUNTY

Lorain County and Medina County in Ohio exhibit significant differences in their economic and demographic characteristics. Lorain County, with its larger population and proximity to Cleveland, boasts a more diverse and economically robust profile. Its economy thrives with manufacturing, healthcare, and education, offering a wider array of employment opportunities. The presence of cities like Lorain and Elyria has led to more extensive urban development and commercial activity, resulting in a dynamic economic landscape. Demographically, Lorain County is more diverse, with a broader range of ethnic backgrounds and cultures, and it may attract residents who commute to work in nearby Cleveland.

In contrast, Medina County maintains a smaller population, fostering a more rural and agrarian demographic and economic landscape. Agriculture plays a significant role in Medina County, with a focus on farming and related industries. The county's economy is marked by small communities, local businesses, and a traditional, small-town atmosphere. Demographically, Medina County has a more homogenous population.

#### LORAIN COUNTY

Total Population	312,964
Median Household Income	\$66,330
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	30.10%
Employment Rate	58.20%
Total Housing Units	134,341
Without Health Care Coverage	6.10%
Total Employer Establishments	5,574
Total Households	126,500
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	32,917

#### MEDINA COUNTY

Total Population	182,470
Median Household Income	\$87,796
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	36.20%
Employment Rate	62.90%
Total Housing Units	75,169
Without Health Care Coverage	5.60%
Total Employer Establishments	4,033
Total Households	73,250
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	4,592

### KEY SIMILARITIES & DIFFERENCES

1. Education trends higher than the national average for both counties
2. Both economies are diversified with strengths in manufacturing, agriculture, and healthcare
3. Lorain County has a stronger urbanized population creating different opportunities for the County and a stronger connection to the urban core
4. Median income is much higher in Medina County than Lorain



## 3.1.2 | ECONOMIC INDEX - MEDINA COUNTY

Medina County performs quite well compared to peer communities. In the indexes, measured the following are the relative strengths for Medina County:

### HUMAN CAPITAL AND KNOWLEDGE CREATION INDEX

Medina County's top measures in this index are university-based spillovers and high education attainment. These two higher rankings indicate that there is a high degree of business competitiveness for this index. This is similar Lorain County with both measures being cited.

### BUSINESS DYNAMICS INDEX

Medina county measures moderately within the business dynamics index with top measures in average small establishments and a stronger high tech establishments ratio.



### BUSINESS PROFILE INDEX

Medina County scores high within this index as well. This indicates that there is a relatively high degree of resources for businesses in the county. Top measures in this index included an increase in venture capital creation and a high degree of farm operators with access to high speed internet.

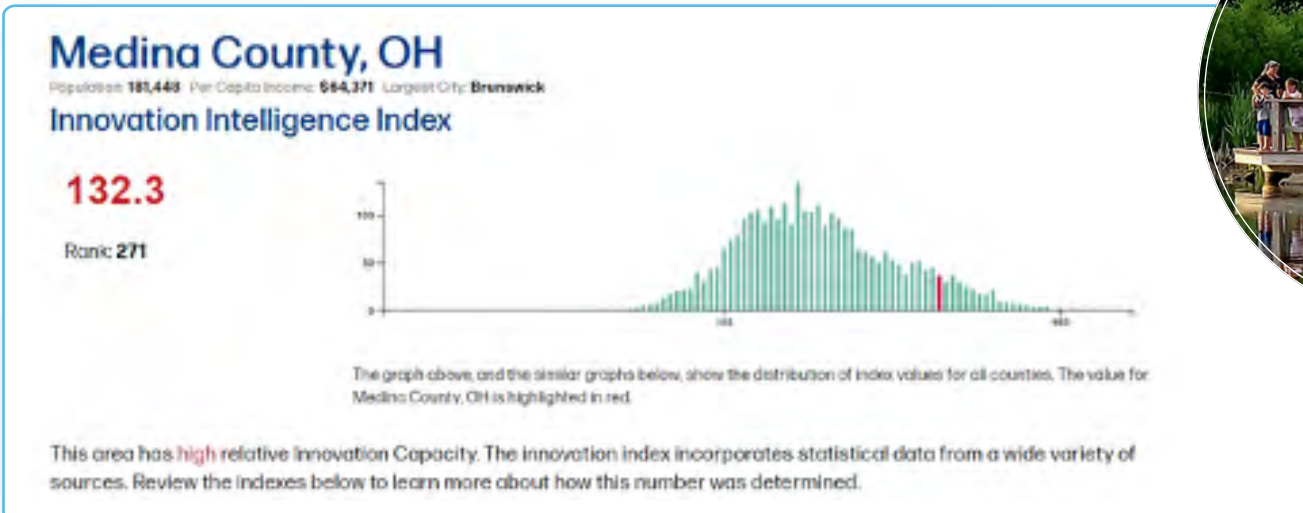


### EMPLOYMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY INDEX

Medina County scores high on this output measure with positive outcomes from existing economic activity. The two measures scoring the highest within this measure are patent diversity and job growth relative to population growth.

### ECONOMIC WELL BEING INDEX

Medina County has a moderate standard of living with a lower average poverty ranking and a reduction in barriers to high speed broadband adoption.





### 3.1.3 | HOUSING AFFORDABILITY - MEDINA COUNTY

Medina County could be categorically described as an ex-urban/rural county with significantly higher median incomes, lower costs, and a 40 minute drive from Medina to Cleveland.

When compared to Lorain County, the housing affordability burden is roughly 3% lower for homeowners and 7% lower for renters. Migration patterns noted later in this report may be supported by lower cost housing options in counties like Medina.

#### HOMEOWNERS

Owner-Occupied Housing Units

**56,973**

Percent <b>Moderately-Burdened</b> Owners		9.9%
Percent <b>Severely-Burdened</b> Owners	+	6.1%
Total Percent <b>Cost-Burdened</b> Owners	=	<b>16.0%</b>

#### RENTERS

Renter-Occupied Housing Units

**14,387**

Percent <b>Moderately-Burdened</b> Renters		23.0%
Percent <b>Severely-Burdened</b> Renters	+	17.0%
Total Percent <b>Cost-Burdened</b> Renters	=	<b>40.0%</b>

6.0 Percentage Points Below the Nationwide Share of Cost-Burdened Owners



9.4 Percentage Points Below the Nationwide Share of Cost-Burdened Renters



Definitions: A household is **cost-burdened** if 30 percent or more (**moderately-burdened** if between 30 and 50 percent and **severely-burdened** if over 50 percent) of household income is spent on housing costs (i.e., gross rent, mortgage or other monthly owner costs).





## 3.2 | BENCHMARK - ERIE COUNTY

### 3.2.1 | KEY DEMOGRAPHICS - ERIE COUNTY

Lorain County and Erie County share a border along Lake Erie, and exhibit a mix of demographic and economic similarities along with key differences. Demographically, both counties have a strong connection to their waterfront, with Lake Erie shaping their communities and lifestyles. Residents in both counties have the opportunity to utilize the lake recreationally along with promoting the lake for tourism.

However, when it comes to their economic characteristics, there are notable distinctions. Lorain County, with a larger population, has a more diversified economy, providing a wide array of job opportunities. In contrast, Erie County, which is smaller in population, leans into tourism and the maritime industry, with a focus on activities related to Lake Erie, such as fishing and boating. While there are small differences between the two economically, manufacturing, education, and healthcare remain the largest industry sectors between the two.

#### LORAIN COUNTY

Total Population	312,964
Median Household Income	\$66,330
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	30.10%
Employment Rate	58.20%
Total Housing Units	134,341
Without Health Care Coverage	6.10%
Total Employer Establishments	5,574
Total Households	126,500
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	32,917

#### ERIE COUNTY

Total Population	75,622
Median Household Income	\$69,296
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	27.80%
Employment Rate	61.90%
Total Housing Units	38,262
Without Health Care Coverage	2.80%
Total Employer Establishments	1,783
Total Households	33,454
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	3,130

### KEY SIMILARITIES & DIFFERENCES

1. Lake Erie access provides opportunities for tourism, economic development, and recreational initiatives.
2. Erie and Lorain counties share a common agricultural base which has historically benefited both counties.
3. Lorain has a larger population with a greater number of urban centers which creates more opportunities for employment and a more diverse economic profile.



## 3.2.2 | ECONOMIC INDEX - ERIE COUNTY

Erie County performs quite well compared to peer communities. In the indexes measured, the following are the relative strengths for Erie County:

### HUMAN CAPITAL AND KNOWLEDGE CREATION INDEX

Generally in the middle of the pack, Erie County ranks moderately in this index. Two measures putting adding positive movement are both high school and associate degree attainment.

### BUSINESS DYNAMICS INDEX

Ranking in the middle of the pack here, the measures related to the number of establishments in the county along with hi tech ratios are supporting this index.

### BUSINESS PROFILE INDEX

The highest scoring index in the group, the business profile index ranks high because the two top measures related to salaries and industry growth are quite high for the county.

### EMPLOYMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY INDEX

Productivity is a measure of existing economic activity. Erie County has a moderate level of employment and productivity outcomes when ranked against its peers. This is led by patent diversity and job growth to population growth ratios.

### ECONOMIC WELL BEING INDEX

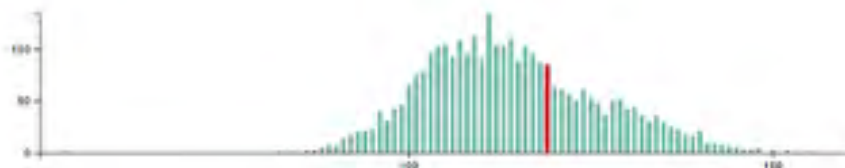
As a measure of the County's standard of living, Erie County sits just below the middle of the pack. Income ratios and lower poverty levels help push the index into the moderate section of the score.



#### Innovation Intelligence Index

**119.1**

Rank: 975



The graph above, and the similar graphs below, show the distribution of index values for all counties. The value for Erie County, OH is highlighted in red.

This area has **moderate** relative Innovation Capacity. The innovation index incorporates statistical data from a wide variety of sources. Review the indexes below to learn more about how this number was determined.





Erie County would be classified as a rural county with higher incomes and lower costs but with a larger geographical distance between Sandusky and Cleveland. Lake tourism is a driver in this county which may account for stronger economic positioning.

### 3.2.3 | HOUSING AFFORDABILITY - ERIE COUNTY

When compared against Lorain County, housing affordability burden is roughly 3% less for homeowners and 4% less for renters.

#### HOMEOWNERS

Owner-Occupied Housing Units

**22,308**

Percent **Moderately-Burdened** Owners = 8.9%

Percent **Severely-Burdened** Owners + 7.0%

Total Percent **Cost-Burdened** Owners = **15.9%**

#### RENTERS

Renter-Occupied Housing Units

**9,676**

Percent **Moderately-Burdened** Renters = 17.3%

Percent **Severely-Burdened** Renters + 25.5%

Total Percent **Cost-Burdened** Renters = **42.8%**

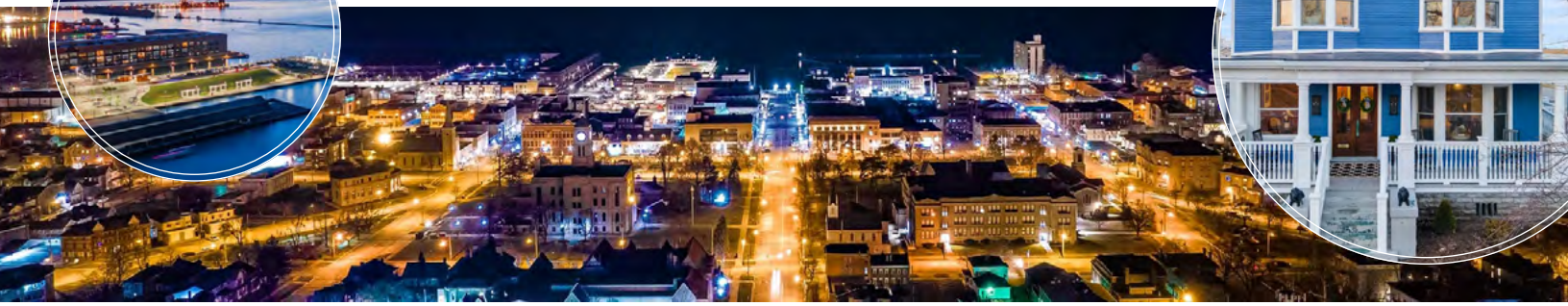
**6.1 Percentage Points Below the Nationwide Share of Cost-Burdened Owners**



**6.6 Percentage Points Below the Nationwide Share of Cost-Burdened Renters**



Definitions: A household is **cost-burdened** if 30 percent or more (**moderately-burdened** if between 30 and 50 percent and **severely-burdened** if over 50 percent) of household income is spent on housing costs (i.e., gross rent, mortgage or other monthly owner costs).





## 3.3 | BENCHMARK - HURON COUNTY

### 3.3.1 | KEY DEMOGRAPHICS - HURON COUNTY

Lorain and Huron counties exhibit distinct demographic and economic characteristics. Both counties are heavily impacted and influenced by the urban landscapes centering around Cleveland. Despite their proximity, Lorain and Huron counties diverge in terms of population density, urbanization levels, and median household income.

Lorain County boasts a larger population, with over 315,000 residents compared to Huron County’s approximately 58,000. This difference is reflected in the counties’ urbanization levels, with Lorain County exhibiting a more urbanized character, evident in its larger cities and towns. Additionally, Lorain County’s median household income stands at \$66,330, while Huron County’s residents sit a little lower at \$59,049.

Despite these differences, Lorain and Huron counties share notable similarities. Both counties possess diversified economies, with strengths in manufacturing, agriculture, and healthcare. This economic diversity contributes to the overall stability and resilience of the region. Lorain has a more urbanized trending economic model while Huron County’s agro-based sector plays a larger role in its economy.

#### LORAIN COUNTY

Total Population	312,964
Median Household Income	\$66,330
Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	30.10%
Employment Rate	58.20%
Total Housing Units	134,341
Without Health Care Coverage	6.10%
Total Employer Establishments	5,574
Total Households	126,500
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	32,917

#### HURON COUNTY

Total Population	58,565
Median Household Income	\$59,049
Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	15.00%
Employment Rate	59.10%
Total Housing Units	25,499
Without Health Care Coverage	6.30%
Total Employer Establishments	1,082
Total Households	23,288
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	4,084

#### KEY SIMILARITIES & DIFFERENCES

1. Both counties have a diverse economic and reliant profile which aids in regional economic stability.
2. Both counties benefit from the economic influence of the larger Cleveland MSA.
3. Huron County differs considerably in educational attainment.



## 3.3.2 | ECONOMIC INDEX - HURON COUNTY

Huron County sits right in the middle of the peer group. In the indexes measured, the following are the relative strengths for Huron County:

### HUMAN CAPITAL AND KNOWLEDGE CREATION INDEX

Sitting just below the middle of the peer communities, Huron County ranks moderately in this index. Two measures that appear to support this index include university-based spillovers and technology based occupation clusters.

### BUSINESS DYNAMICS INDEX

Ranking in the middle of the peer communities here, the measures related to new establishment startups and jobs attributed to establishment expansions are supportive.



### BUSINESS PROFILE INDEX

Scoring in the middle as compared to peers, the business profile index is supported by industry diversity and a relatively large number of large establishments in the county.

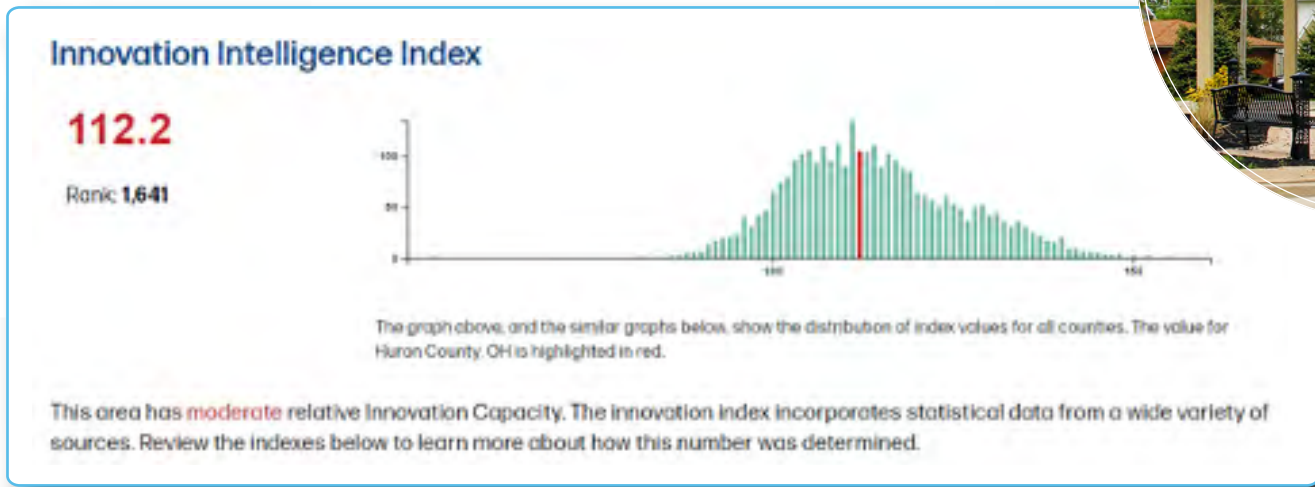


### EMPLOYMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY INDEX

Huron County has a high level of employment and productivity outcomes when ranked against its peers. This is led by patent diversity and job growth to population growth ratios.

### ECONOMIC WELL BEING INDEX

As a measure of the County's standard of living, Huron County's top measures in this category are related to investments and utilization of broadband technology.





Similar to Erie County, Huron would be considered a rural county but with lower income and employment opportunities. Similar in distance to the urban core, Huron may benefit the least from the geographical and economic strengths of the region.

### 3.3.3 | HOUSING AFFORDABILITY - HURON COUNTY

When compared to Lorain County, homeowner burden is 2.5% less for homeowners and nearly 10% for renters.

#### HOMEOWNERS

Owner-Occupied Housing Units	
<b>16,771</b>	
Percent <b>Moderately-Burdened</b> Owners	9.2%
Percent <b>Severely-Burdened</b> Owners +	7.3%
Total Percent <b>Cost-Burdened</b> Owners =	<b>16.5%</b>

#### RENTERS

Renter-Occupied Housing Units	
<b>6,517</b>	
Percent <b>Moderately-Burdened</b> Renters	20.6%
Percent <b>Severely-Burdened</b> Renters +	17.1%
Total Percent <b>Cost-Burdened</b> Renters =	<b>37.7%</b>

**5.5 Percentage Points Below the Nationwide Share of Cost-Burdened Owners**



**11.7 Percentage Points Below the Nationwide Share of Cost-Burdened Renters**



Definitions: A household is **cost-burdened** if 30 percent or more (**moderately-burdened** if between 30 and 50 percent and **severely-burdened** if over 50 percent) of household income is spent on housing costs (i.e., gross rent, mortgage or other monthly owner costs).





## 3.4 | BENCHMARK - LAKE COUNTY

### 3.4.1 | KEY DEMOGRAPHICS - LAKE COUNTY

Lorain County and Lake County, exhibit a mix of demographic and economic similarities alongside notable differences. Demographically, both counties share a strong connection to their proximity to Lake Erie and benefit from the lake recreationally and economically. This connection is like other counties explored in this report. These two counties may be the most similar to one another as compared to the others noted.

Lorain County, with its larger population, has a more diversified and urbanized economy lending to its more cosmopolitan environment. On the other hand, Lake County, with its smaller population, has a somewhat stronger focus on manufacturing and tourism with a higher median household income. In both cases, the counties relative strengths work hand in hand to create a regional resilience that benefits from their proximity to Cleveland along with their ties to the lake, tourism, and baseline manufacturing strengths.

#### LORAIN COUNTY

Total Population	312,964
Median Household Income	\$66,330
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	30.10%
Employment Rate	58.20%
Total Housing Units	134,341
Without Health Care Coverage	6.10%
Total Employer Establishments	5,574
Total Households	126,500
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	32,917

#### LAKE COUNTY

Total Population	232,603
Median Household Income	\$75,615
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	33.00%
Employment Rate	63.00%
Total Housing Units	105,315
Without Health Care Coverage	4.30%
Total Employer Establishments	5,513
Total Households	100,923
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	11,362

### KEY SIMILARITIES & DIFFERENCES

1. Both counties benefit from the proximity to Lake Erie
2. Lake County has a significantly higher median income than Lorain County
3. Educational services, healthcare, and social assistance make up the largest industry in Lorain County similar to that of Lake County.
4. Lake County has a larger percentage of Manufacturing industry relative to Lorain County.



## 3.4.2 | ECONOMIC INDEX - LAKE COUNTY

Lake County sits right above the middle of the pack of the peer group. In the indexes measured, the following are the relative strengths for Lake County:

### HUMAN CAPITAL AND KNOWLEDGE CREATION INDEX

Sitting above the others in the peer group, Lake County ranks high in this index. Two measures that appear to support this index include a high ranking in the high-tech employment sector and university-based knowledge spillovers.



### BUSINESS DYNAMICS INDEX

Ranking in the middle of the peer communities, the measures related to new establishment startups and high tech startups are noted as supporting this index.

### BUSINESS PROFILE INDEX

Scoring in the middle as compared to peers, the business profile index is supported by industry diversity and industry cluster growth.



### EMPLOYMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY INDEX

Lake County has a high level of employment and productivity outcomes when ranked against its peers. This is led by patent diversity and job growth to population growth ratios.

### ECONOMIC WELL BEING INDEX

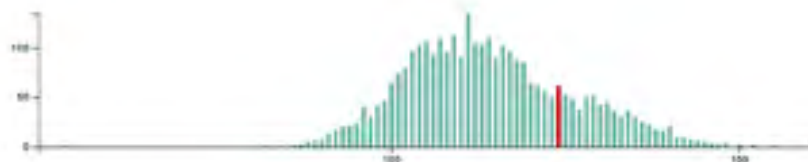
As a measure of the County's standard of living, Lake County's top measures in this category are related to lower poverty rates and access to broadband.



#### Innovation Intelligence Index

**124.6**

Rank: 631



The graph above, and the similar graphs below, show the distribution of index values for all counties. The value for Lake County, OH is highlighted in red.

This area has **moderate** relative Innovation Capacity. The innovation index incorporates statistical data from a wide variety of sources. Review the indexes below to learn more about how this number was determined.



Lake County may be the competitive peer in this analysis. With stronger metrics on the whole and a near peer on the economic index, Lake County has fewer residents yet positions itself more strongly on many measures.

### 3.4.3 | HOUSING AFFORDABILITY - LAKE COUNTY

When compared to Lorain County, homeowner burden is 2% less for homeowners and nearly 6% for renters.

#### HOMEOWNERS

Owner-Occupied Housing Units

**73,148**

Percent <b>Moderately-Burdened</b> Owners		<b>11.1%</b>
Percent <b>Severely-Burdened</b> Owners	+	<b>6.0%</b>
Total Percent <b>Cost-Burdened</b> Owners	=	<b>17.1%</b>

**4.9 Percentage Points Below the Nationwide Share of Cost-Burdened Owners**



#### RENTERS

Renter-Occupied Housing Units

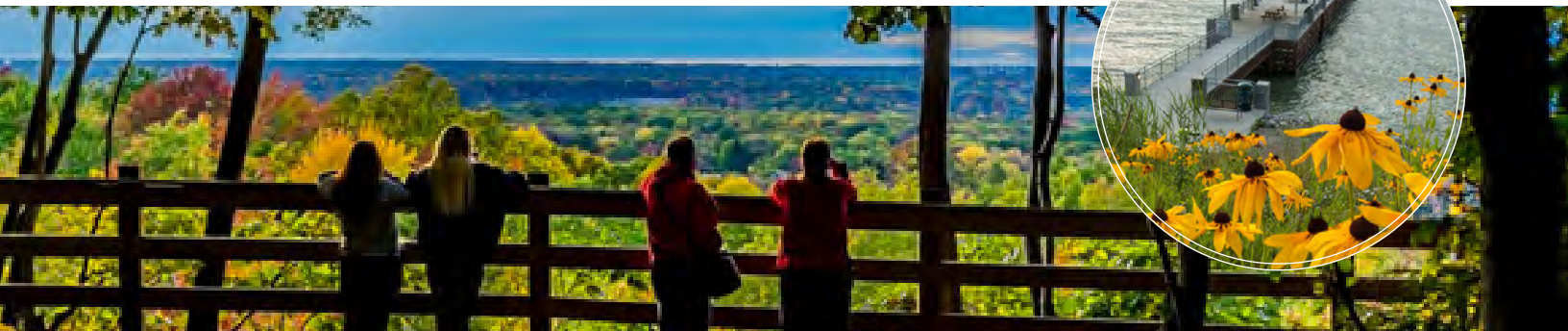
**25,069**

Percent <b>Moderately-Burdened</b> Renters		<b>23.5%</b>
Percent <b>Severely-Burdened</b> Renters	+	<b>17.1%</b>
Total Percent <b>Cost-Burdened</b> Renters	=	<b>40.6%</b>

**8.8 Percentage Points Below the Nationwide Share of Cost-Burdened Renters**



Definitions: A household is **cost-burdened** if 30 percent or more (**moderately-burdened** if between 30 and 50 percent and **severely-burdened** if over 50 percent) of household income is spent on housing costs (i.e., gross rent, mortgage or other monthly owner costs).



# 4.0 | COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS-PEER COUNTIES

A comparative analysis examines two or more subjects, focusing on their similarities and differences. This meticulous investigation delves into their characteristics, features, and potential outcomes, providing a deeper understanding and facilitating evaluation. Ultimately, the analysis allows for informed decision-making based on the comprehensive comparison. In this case, the peer counties were studied and trends were identified. The following are highlighted trends in the analysis.

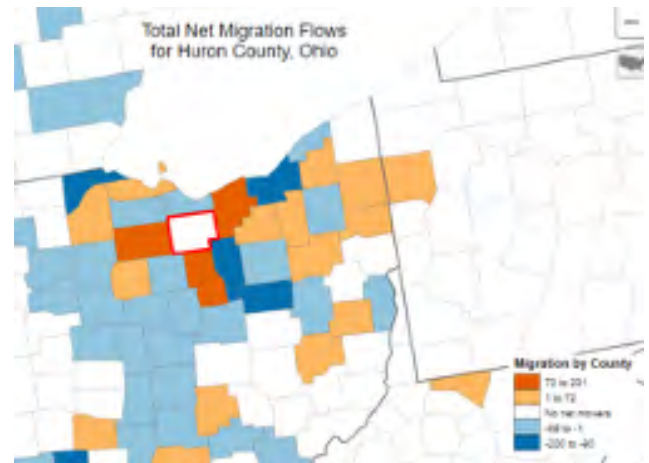
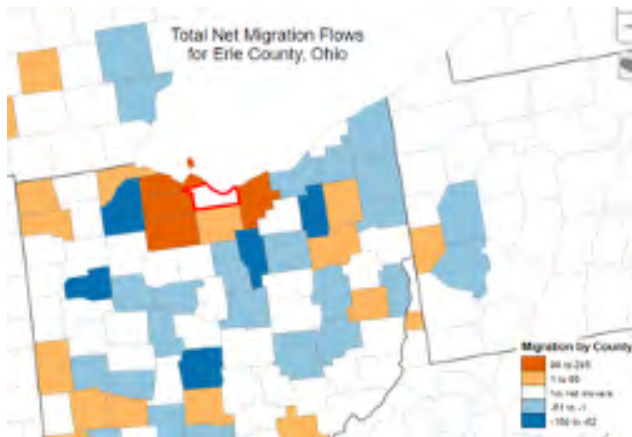
## 1. THE POPULATION AND URBANIZATION LEVEL OF THE COUNTIES VARY DRASTICALLY.

While they all are impacted by the center of gravity of Cleveland, they are each impacted by it relative to their geographical proximity to it. The larger counties of Lorain, Medina, and Lake share similar characteristics having some of the highest levels of education achievement, stronger economic and community wellbeing scores, along with greater degrees of economic dynamism that makes them attractive places to live.



## 2. THE SMALLER COUNTIES ARE IMPACTFUL, TOO.

While the big counties do have higher scores on the indexes, they themselves stack up competitively against the bigger counties. In a changing economic scene and costs increasing in the urban areas, places like Erie and Huron Counties are seeing relatively high net migrations—and they are coming from their neighboring counties. The trend of moving out of urban core and into the suburbs is being replaced with the trend of moving out of the suburbs and into the ex-urbs. This is happening all over the country and Lorain County will see the impacts, albeit perhaps more slowly than the larger urban centers.



## 3. LARGER COUNTIES LIKE LORAIN COUNTY ARE DRAWING FROM A MORE NATIONAL INFLOW OF MIGRANTS TO THE COUNTY.

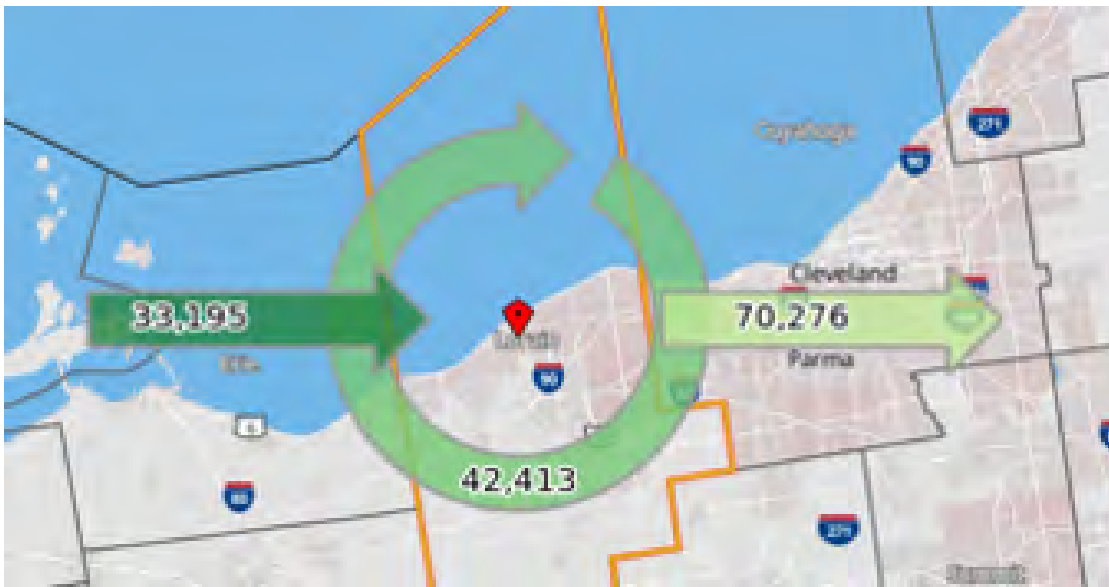
The smaller counties are drawing heavily from their local regional cluster. While they all are impacted by the center of gravity of Cleveland, they are each impacted relative to their geographical proximity to it. The larger counties of Lorain, Medina, and Lake share similar characteristics having some of the highest levels of education achievement, stronger economic and community wellbeing scores, along with greater degrees of economic dynamism that makes them attractive places to live.





#### 4. REGIONALLY, THE GREATER CLEVELAND AREA HAS A HIGH DEGREE OF ECONOMIC VARIATION.

It is quite clear from the indexes that there is a significant degree of economic resilience of which Lorain County and the surrounding counties contribute. As the data suggests, manufacturing, healthcare, and social services play a large workforce role in the region. When it comes to regionalism, over 70,000 people work outside of Lorain County and are considered outflow by the US Census. It is shown that 18% of them work in a “goods producing” class, 25% work in a “trade, transit, or utility,” and 58% work in the “all other services” class. This implies the regional importance Lorain County must continue to place on growing businesses and developing resilience in regional partnerships and business.



#### 5. IMPORTANTLY, NEARLY HALF OF THE COUNTY’S WORKFORCE WORKS WITHIN LORAIN COUNTY ITSELF.

25% of the total workforce is considered inflow by the US Census. Interestingly, this same ratio holds roughly true in Medina and Huron Counties. Lake and Erie Counties show a 75% inflow and a 60% inflow, respectively. As the geographical distance from Cleveland expands, the nature of the economics related to tourism and recreation may be partially to explain the positive net inflow of workers from other counties. Just a little less than half of those workers on inflow to Lake County are indicated in the “All Other Service” industry class with roughly a third working in a “goods producing” class.

#### 6. HOUSING AFFORDABILITY IS A CHALLENGE ALL OVER THE COUNTRY.

Each jurisdiction is trying to find the right model that works to address the issue. When reviewed comparatively, the region is below the national average likely due to lower housing costs when compared to other metro areas. However, amongst its peer group, Lorain County does have the higher cost-burden as measured by the thresholds set by the US census.





## 5.0 | ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A Strategic Engagement Committee was formed to help guide this project. We would like to acknowledge the Strategic Engagement Committee members.



### STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

<b>Tom Demaline</b>	<b>Eric Flynn</b>	<b>Mark Costilow</b>
<b>Mary Felton</b>	<b>John Ciarrone</b>	<b>Jack Bradley</b>
<b>Barb Tamas</b>	<b>Dave Blevins</b>	<b>Jeff Riddell</b> (Lorain County Commissioner)
<b>Sean Brady</b>	<b>Tracy Green</b>	
<b>Ben Norton</b>	<b>Marcia Ballinger</b>	
<b>Neil Lynch</b>	<b>Bryan Jensen</b>	



Additionally, appreciation is extended to Dave Greenspan (Special Projects Coordinator/ Manager) at Lorain County Government. He and his team provide the local expertise that helps guide this project. Their time and dedication are greatly appreciated.

Appreciation is also extended to Cynthia Andrews (President and CEO) and the team at the Community Foundation of Lorain County for their outreach to the Lorain County community for this important process.





## »»»» 6.0 | FOR MORE INFORMATION

This initiative is focused on planning for the future of Lorain County. It is exploring where and how the county can fit into a rapidly changing world, looking out to 2035. The result will be a shared Strategic Action plan, that will contain an initial implementation roadmap looking out to 2035 – with actions – to move toward the shared vision for the county.

For more information on the Lorain County Strategic Action Plan project please contact:

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Please stay connected to the collaborative regional planning initiative at:  
[lab2.future-iq.com/lorain-county-strategic-action-plan-project/](http://lab2.future-iq.com/lorain-county-strategic-action-plan-project/)





LORAIN COUNTY STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN  
**BENCHMARK REPORT**  
OHIO, USA  
DECEMBER 2023