



A Learning Laboratory

2016 ANNUAL REPORT

An Assignment:

Learn from Each Other

Dear Friends,

The Fund for Our Economic Future—an alliance of nearly 50 funders whose goal is to transform the Northeast Ohio economy—has long prided itself on being more than just a piggy bank. Our members have honed a distinct know-how from working collaboratively over the last 12-plus years that brings significant value to their communities and Northeast Ohio at large. Our Fund is in many ways “a learning laboratory” where philanthropy comes together to advance and share research on how to increase Northeast Ohio’s economic competitiveness; test new approaches to solving age-old problems; learn from one another what works in other parts of the region and put those lessons into action; and work with local communities to strengthen assets and build capacity on the ground in ways that connect to the regional economy.

Underpinning all of this is our commitment to Growth & Opportunity (G&O for short). Substantial research (our own and that of others) establishes that our region’s growth will not be sustainable unless more people participate in and benefit from it. If we are to grow our economy, we must be mindful of not only how many jobs we create, but how good the jobs are (do they offer a family-sustaining wage and a path to a career?), how well our workforce is prepared for them, and how accessible, both geographically and socially, they are to those who need them.

This three-fold strategic frame of **job creation, job preparation and job access** must be reinforced at both the local and regional levels. It’s a strategic balance we’ve sought since the early days of our Fund in 2004. While we have had much success in establishing a regional identity and building regional capacity, sadly, it is increasingly evident that still too many people are living in neighborhoods that have been cut off from our economic gains.

If our prosperity is to continue, we need to strengthen local communities and advance the regional economy of Northeast Ohio. We hope the “notes” on the following pages provide a useful illustration of how our Fund can be a resource for knowledge, collaboration and capacity-building, how we’re working to bridge our local places with the regional economy, and what you might do in your own community to strengthen these bonds.

We encourage you to share these notes with others. Go ahead! It’s not cheating. Our future may very well depend on it.

Ever Onward,

Brian R. Frederick

Brian Frederick
President and CEO
Community Foundation of Lorain County
Chair
Fund for Our Economic Future

Brad Whitehead

Brad Whitehead
President
Fund for Our Economic Future



Fund Quick Facts

What is the Fund?

A nonprofit alliance of funders who pool their resources and know-how to advance economic growth and increased access to opportunity.

What does the Fund do?

Builds shared community commitment; supports high-impact collaborations; and marshals strategic funding to support job creation, job preparation and job access.

Where does the Fund work?

We serve an 18-county region, that includes four metros (Akron, Cleveland-Elyria, Canton, and Youngstown-Warren); 4 million people; and \$200 billion in annual gross regional product.

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Key Background and Context:

The Evolution of Regionalism

In the early years of our Fund, developing our regional economic identity was a key focus, as we worked to engrain “Northeast Ohio” into our lexicon and how we work.

And we've been wildly successful in this regard; the regional capacity our Fund has worked with others to create over the past dozen-plus years has been substantial and presents tremendous leverage. Collectively, we've built an interconnected network of economic development organizations and initiatives that have created and retained more than 24,400 jobs, added nearly \$1.1 billion in payroll, and attracted just over \$6 billion in capital to the region. We've helped increase investment in the region. And we've nurtured a respected network of civic leaders, working effectively and collaboratively to address economic issues and inclusion.

Yet, while we know that economies are regional, most civic structures (and those who work for and within them) are community-based. We are part of one regional economy, but we identify with our local communities. It is this understanding that drives how we work today.

Our friend **Pete Carlson** of consulting firm Regional Growth Strategies recently reinforced this thinking in a blog post. He wrote: “... there appears to be a limit to what even the best regional organizations can accomplish in the absence of strong and effective partners at the local level. ... When those partners are in place, regional organizations can make better decisions about which clusters to focus on, what kind of interventions would make the biggest difference, who to target for recruitment efforts, and where there may be opportunities to strengthen supply chains.

“In turn, regional organizations can add value to local efforts by creating more favorable conditions for business growth, connecting local businesses to regional clusters, capturing and sharing lessons learned about what's working and what's getting in the way at the local level, collectively addressing issues of common concern across localities, providing technical assistance and shared services, and making strategic investments to improve the performance of the overall system. That kind of interplay between the regional and local levels can create a virtuous cycle, which is what drives an effective regional economic development system.”

“... interplay between the regional and local levels can create a virtuous cycle, which is what drives an effective regional economic development system.”

- Pete Carlson
Regional Growth
Strategies President

Economic data tell us we must do more to strengthen local community assets and improve their connections to the regional economy. From 2012 to 2014, the number of economically distressed census tracts across our region increased by nearly 25 percent, while the number of people living in areas of economic distress rose by 23 percent. That translates to one in 17 residents living in neighborhoods cut off from the regional economy. Too many neighborhoods, families and individuals are not sharing in our regional prosperity.

To address this disturbing trend, our Fund has been engaging with local communities to understand how we can better embed **Growth & Opportunity** at the local level, while we continue to think, plan and act regionally. This is not a one-size-fits-all formula; rather, it requires a diverse approach depending on the local community assets and needs.

The stories in the following pages showcase in many ways what it means to build local-regional connections, and exemplify our Fund at its best as a learning laboratory. If interested in learning more about how our Fund might be able to help build capacity in your community, contact **Director of Regional Engagement**
Kevin Alin, kalin@thefundneo.org.



One in 17 residents
lives in neighborhoods
that are cut off
from the regional
economy.



What is Growth & Opportunity?

It's the Fund's approach to growing the economy in ways that also increase opportunities for all people through interconnected, collaborative, cross-sector strategies that advance **job creation, job preparation and job access.**

Lesson:

Tapping into Regional Capacities

New Research



Published in October 2016, our Fund's Collaboration Handbook, authored by Chris Thompson, is a must-read guide for anyone who is a part of a cross-sector collaboration or who is trying to get one off the ground.

The Handbook can be found online at collaboration.thefundneo.org

The partners working in Summit County on growing the manufacturing sector and improving talent development have taken a page—or, really several—from our Fund's Collaboration Handbook, published in the fall of 2016, which outlines what is needed for a collaboration to be successful.

In Akron, the preconditions needed for collaboration around talent development were present:

- 1) **A compelling cause:** Future workforce needs in Summit County are great, as the manufacturing sector is set to lose a significant percentage of workers to a wave of retirements in the coming years. At the same time, connectivity among manufacturers was low, and MAGNET, a regional manufacturing advocacy and support organization, and one of the Fund's job creation grantee partners, had struggled to make inroads in this part of the region.
- 2) **Galvanizing leadership:** Late County Executive Russ Pry was an early and effective advocate for strengthening the talent development system in Summit County. He took the risk of leading a group of civic leaders through a rigorous process that led to the establishment of ConxusNEO, a nonprofit designed to create a demand-driven talent development system in Summit County. Throughout the development process, Russ pushed everyone involved to stay focused on the needs of companies and residents. His successor, Ilene Shapiro, has been a strong leader throughout the entire process, as well, and continues to advance this critically important initiative.
- 3) **High-performing organizations:** An assessment of the talent development system, supported by our Fund, found that system included a handful of high-performing organizations, including Stark State College. However, those organizations weren't well-aligned and coordinated. ConxusNEO was created to facilitate and coordinate collaboration among the talent development organizations. Subsequently, our Fund helped coordinate a connection between ConxusNEO and MAGNET, as a way to help MAGNET break into the Akron market.

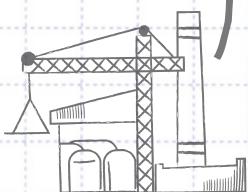


Late Summit County Executive Russ Pry, a galvanizing leader.

CUYAHOGA

GEauga

SUMMIT



Goal:

Help manufacturers grow in Summit County

ConxusNEO and MAGNET jointly hired Rick Stockburger to coordinate the industry-led manufacturing network in Summit County and ensure broader workforce needs are addressed and met, ultimately informing ConxusNEO's work. Meanwhile, MAGNET added Emily Lipovan to its staff as manufacturing liaison for Summit and Medina counties. She works with local manufacturers to make sure they are connected to and can draw on all the regional resources MAGNET offers to the industry.

"From the beginning, with the encouragement of the Fund, we knew we wanted to set ourselves up to leverage regional assets like MAGNET so that they better benefit our part of the region," said **ConxusNEO President Sue Lacy**. "For us, that means, how do we create a conduit for an organization like MAGNET to deliver its services and resources in a way that is well-received and strategic."

This set-up has helped "bring MAGNET where we need to be," said **Ethan Karp, MAGNET president and CEO**. MAGNET is now working deeply with 10 manufacturers in Summit County—something Ethan said would not be possible without the partnership with ConxusNEO. And that number is growing every day, he said.

"We're joined in a cause to help manufacturers grow in Summit County," Ethan said of ConxusNEO and MAGNET. And because of their shared compelling cause, they've been able to build trust with each other. "It's not a straight line in between this work," Sue said. "All of us have had to address missteps when they happen and to remain committed to the ultimate goal."

ConxusNEO Chair Kirstin Toth, senior vice president of GAR Foundation, a member of the Fund, summarized the relationship like so: "Our close work with MAGNET—sharing key staff and aligning our missions—is the precise example of how regional capacity supported by the Fund is enriching our local, on-the-ground experts and resulting in real wins."

What does ConxusNEO do?

ConxusNEO uses data to determine the talent needs of area companies and then pinpoints high-demand jobs and works with partners to help residents prepare for these opportunities.

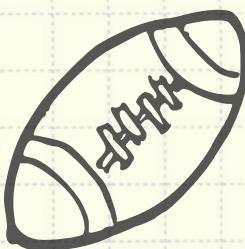
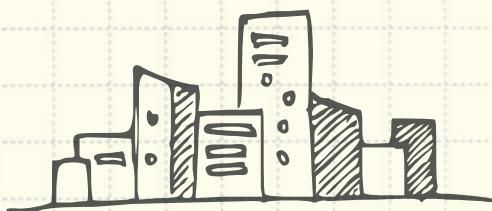
conxusNEO
connecting work to prosperity

"We're joined in a cause to help manufacturers grow in Summit County."

— Ethan Karp
MAGNET President & CEO

Lesson:

Seeing Opportunity in Alignment



In early 2016, a handful of civic leaders in Stark County got together to talk about their respective strategic plans for the community, to better understand what each was doing and discuss how they might help each other be successful. The impetus for these conversations was a realization that Canton and Stark County were significantly lagging behind other communities of their size in population and job growth.

“It maybe took longer than it should have, but the community has awakened to this reality and to knowing something must be done,” said **Mark Samolczyk**, president and CEO of Fund member Stark Community Foundation, who convened the initial conversations, along with **Jim Porter**, publisher of The Canton Repository, and **Dennis Saunier**, president and CEO of the Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce.

“We are developing shared responsibility for our future. And, we wouldn’t be so advanced in our discussions without the engagement of the Fund and its research on Growth & Opportunity.”

— **Mark Samolczyk**
Stark Community Foundation
President & CEO





These initial conversations have grown into substantial actions, as together, armed with economic data supplied by our Fund and grantee partner Team NEO, these leaders realized that their community needed a comprehensive, aligned and well-coordinated economic competitiveness plan that focuses attention on improving job creation, job preparation and job access.



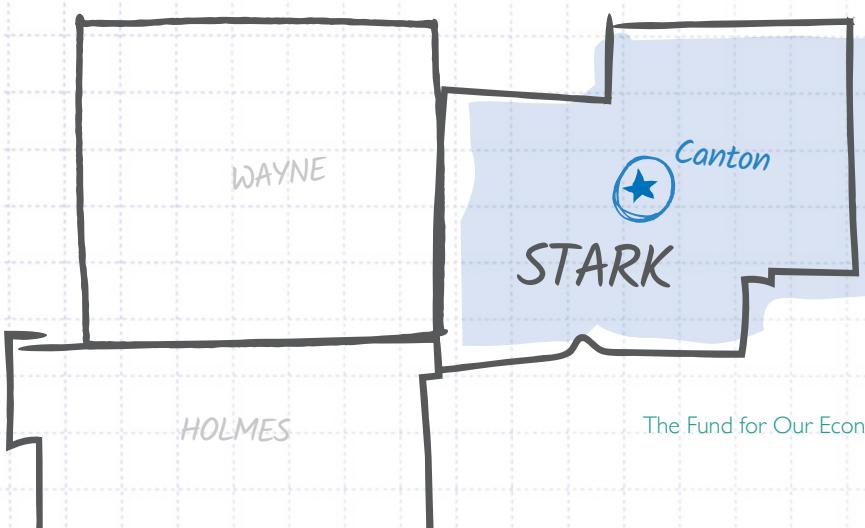
Image courtesy of Pro Football Hall of Fame

Civic leaders in Stark County are working together on a comprehensive plan for the community's future that, among other things, looks to leverage the development of the Hall of Fame Village, a \$500 million development of the Pro Football Hall of Fame campus, as rendered above.

Our Fund helped facilitate the early conversations and is now working with this group of leaders, which includes the United Way of Stark County, the Akron-Canton Regional Airport, the city of Canton, the Pro Football Hall of Fame, and the Stark Development Board, to develop such a plan.

"There are many tools in economic development," said Ray Hexamer, president of Stark Development Board. "Those tools need to be organized, and we're starting to do that with the help of the Fund. Having that outside expertise is helping facilitate what we all know needs to be done, and point us to what tools we don't have that we maybe need to add to the box."

Mark doesn't want to underestimate the significance of this group coming together. "This is the first time that I'm aware of that we're envisioning the future of our community together, as a whole. We are developing shared responsibility for our future. And, we wouldn't be so advanced in our discussions without the engagement of the Fund and its research on Growth & Opportunity."



Lesson:

Spreading and Scaling What Works



Five years ago, our Fund was presented with a compelling prospect to partner with the Center for Economic Opportunity in New York City, social policy research firm MDRC, and other national and local partners on a workforce development pilot called WorkAdvance. If WorkAdvance outcomes were positive, Northeast Ohio would benefit from being part of a model that worked nationally and would have access to rich data to understand how the model worked locally. Coordinated locally by Cleveland-based nonprofit Towards Employment, WorkAdvance had test sites in New York and Tulsa, Oklahoma, in addition to Northeast Ohio, and was structured as a randomized control trial, meaning some individuals received WorkAdvance services, and others did not, but were free to access other services.

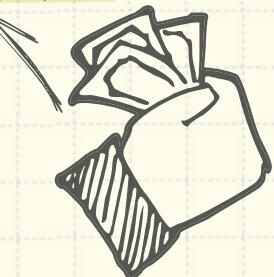
Fast forward to August 2016, and results of the rigorously evaluated pilot showed WorkAdvance as a clear winner. Northeast Ohio program participants accessed more services; were 49 percent more likely to work in a targeted, in-demand sector (health care or manufacturing); and were more likely to be working regular shift, full time, or in a permanent job, and in a job with opportunities for career advancement. On top of that, after two years, WorkAdvance participants' earnings were on average 14 percent higher than the control group's.

What made the difference? A comprehensive set of services, tied to in-demand jobs in growing sectors with a focus on advancement (not just job placement), delivered by and coordinated through an aligned network of industry partners and service providers.

How is that different?

While comprised of some very successful organizations and service providers, our current workforce system could be likened to a disorganized potluck dinner, where the individual offerings can be quite good on their own, but don't always offer all of what an individual needs to be successful (think too much meat and not enough vegetables).

WorkAdvance demonstrated that there is a better way. Our system is capable of more effectively delivering workforce services so individuals advance along a career path and into jobs that provide family-sustaining wages. And, it can connect employers to the talent they need for their businesses to prosper, at a cost that is comparable to what is spent today.



“Our Fund is committed to helping others understand the findings and how they might apply these learnings to their own organizations and communities.”

— Deborah Vesy
Deaconess Foundation
President & CEO

New
Research!



More details on the local impact of WorkAdvance and next steps can be found in “Redefining Workforce Development in Northeast Ohio: How National WorkAdvance Demonstration Made Local Impact,” which was released in November by the Fund and members The Raymond John Wean Foundation and Deaconess Foundation.

For more information on how the principles are being embedded locally, a copy of the report, or a briefing on the results, contact Director of Strategy and Resource Allocation **Bethia Burke**, bburke@thefundneo.org.

Presented by the Fund for Our Economic Future with a support from Deaconess Foundation and The Raymond John Wean Foundation

WA **WorkAdvance**

“Nothing has been tested and vetted like this model,” said **Deborah Vesy**, president and CEO of Fund member Deaconess Foundation, who leads job preparation efforts for our Fund. WorkAdvance presents immense promise, but it will require practitioners, policymakers, philanthropic funders, and private-sector businesses to work together to bring this successful model to scale.

“It is critical that local partners take up the lessons from this demonstration,” Deborah added. “To that end, our Fund is committed to helping others understand the findings and how they might apply these learnings to their own organizations and communities.”

Already, the findings from WorkAdvance are influencing strategy development and investment priorities across the region and the state. Notably, in Cuyahoga County, the office of the county executive, informed by business and philanthropic leadership, is advancing county-wide workforce strategies that embed WorkAdvance principles.

Additionally, The Raymond John Wean Foundation, a Fund member, is supporting the continuation of WorkAdvance delivery in the Mahoning Valley.

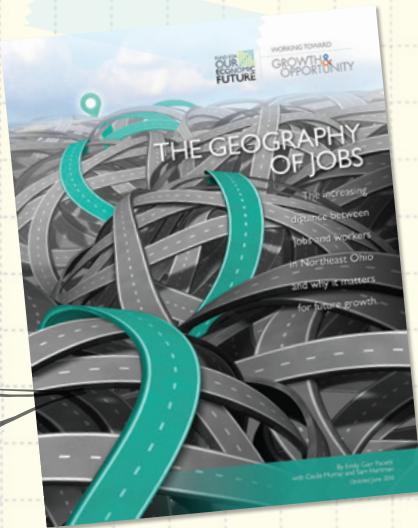
“When powerful work such as this aligns with our mission,

it is our responsibility to leverage resources—human and capital—to support organizations so that all who seek access are included,” said Wean Foundation President **Jennifer Roller**. “We look forward to the day when WorkAdvance can deliver services that empower residents to create a healthy, vibrant and economically stable Northeast Ohio.”

Lesson:

Understanding the Geography of Jobs

Our Fund's Growth & Opportunity frame calls for creating good-paying jobs that offer career advancement, preparing our workforce for the jobs of today and tomorrow, and making jobs more accessible. That last priority doesn't always get as much civic attention as the other two, nor, we'd argue, as much as it deserves. In 2016, our Fund made a concerted effort to bring increased focus to the issue of job access and the economic importance of improving connections of people to jobs, bringing more jobs to where people who need them live, and breaking down social barriers that prevent individuals from accessing jobs.

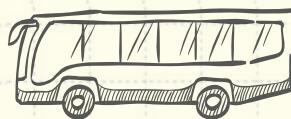


New Research

As part of this effort, we published "The Geography of Jobs," which looked at how decades of outward expansion, without the population or job growth to justify it, has resulted in access to fewer jobs for all residents. Indeed, the number of jobs within a typical commuting distance of Greater Clevelanders fell by 26 percent from 2000 to 2012—a decline in proximate jobs measurably worse than anywhere else in the U.S., according to data from the Brookings Institution.

Proximity to jobs is especially dismal in high-poverty neighborhoods—the places where people who arguably need jobs the most live (and who often don't have access to or can't afford a car). More than a quarter of "accessible" jobs have disappeared for residents in high-poverty neighborhoods.

This has major implications for commuters, specifically due to the costs in time it takes to get to work and the distance between workers and their jobs.



Proximity to jobs is especially dismal in high-poverty neighborhoods—the places where people who arguably need jobs the most live.

Take, for instance, the city of Elyria, where both the number of companies and the number of jobs located there declined from 2000 to 2014, by 15 percent and 19 percent, respectively. In 2014, 65 percent of employed Elyria residents traveled to places other than Elyria or nearby Cleveland for work; only a quarter of employed residents actually work in the city of Elyria. On top of this is the fact that among those employed residents living in economically distressed areas in Elyria, only one in four has access to a vehicle.

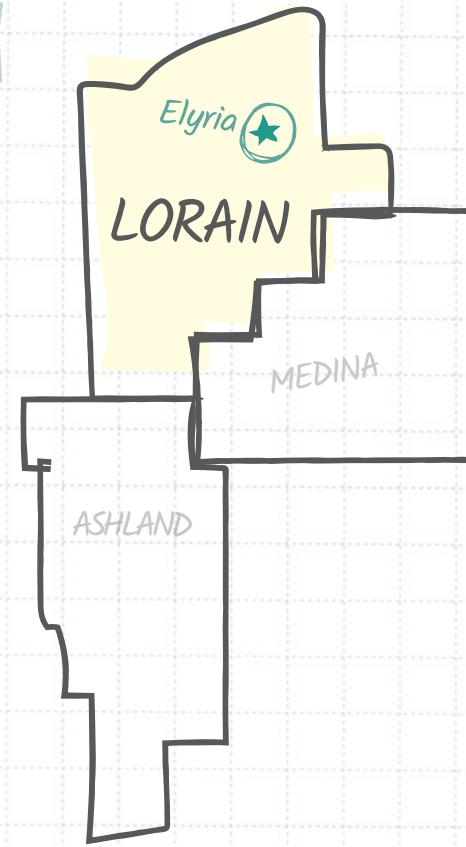
At the same time, outward expansion has made public transportation challenging and, as a larger community, there hasn't been much of an appetite to address this. The state of Ohio's investment in public transportation ranks 36th (out of 46 states that provide funds for public transit), spending 63 cents per person, dramatically below other large states like Illinois and Pennsylvania, which spend more than \$60 and \$80 per person, respectively.

In Lorain County, our job access research and awareness-raising efforts struck a chord. Conversations between residents and civic leaders about the lack of transportation options in the county had been escalating, and there were discussions around what the community might do to bring attention to and solve this issue. "Having this on the agenda at the Fund, having good data—it elevated the issue of job access and was the impetus for work we're doing in Lorain County," said **Brian Frederick**, president and CEO of the Community Foundation of Lorain County and chair of the Fund.

Brian is vice chair of an effort called Mobility and Opportunity for a Vibrant Economy, or MOVE Lorain County, which developed out of the above-mentioned conversations. Incorporated as a 501(c)4 nonprofit in the summer of 2016, MOVE is led by a diverse, cross-section of Lorain County leaders who have come together to develop a shared vision of a quality transportation system.

With organizations like the Community Foundation, the United Way of Greater Lorain County, the Lorain County Chamber of Commerce, the Oberlin Project, Lorain County Urban League, and El Centro de Servicios Sociales around the leadership table, MOVE is collectively a respected voice in the community.

"I feel very good about this group," said **Victor Leandry**, executive director of El Centro in Lorain and a member of the MOVE executive committee. "If we ever want to change and bring the economy and jobs and access to health and even culture and life to our community, transportation needs to be one of our priority issues."



**"Transportation
needs to be
one of our
priority issues."**

— Victor Leandry
El Centro de Servicios Sociales
Executive Director

Lesson:

Leveraging Local Assets

PORTAGE

TRUMBULL

Youngstown



MAHONING

Northeast Ohio has a strong history of making things. America Makes, the National Additive Manufacturing Innovation Institute, based in Youngstown, has the potential to ensure our region makes things well into the future using in-demand technology.

Established in 2012 by a broad, cross-regional partnership, America Makes has a mission to accelerate the research and development of additive manufacturing and to transition technology to the U.S. manufacturing industry. Our Fund actually played a role, along with many other key partners, in helping the region win the grant that brought America Makes to Northeast Ohio. Since its founding, it has leveraged substantial public and private dollars to assist organizations around the country.



America Makes



3-D printing, or additive manufacturing, is a process of making three-dimensional solid objects from a digital file. In an additive process, an object is created by laying down successive layers of material (plastic, metal, concrete, or even human tissue) precisely where it's needed until the object is created. Each of these layers can be seen as a thinly sliced horizontal cross-section of the eventual object.

This differs from the approach of carving a usable part out of a large block of material.

Source: 3dprinting.com and YBI

In late 2015, our Fund made a small grant with the goal of better understanding the market opportunities in additive manufacturing and 3-D printing, and how Northeast Ohio might capitalize on the technology advancements happening at America Makes. This work involved sizing the market, prioritizing focus areas, and identifying who is (or could be) involved. The result was an "Asset Map of Additive Manufacturing Opportunities in Northeast Ohio," jointly authored and released in August 2016 by a team from the Youngstown Business Incubator (YBI), Team NEO, MAGNET, and America Makes.

What is 3-D Printing?

The bottom line? Northeast Ohio is well-positioned to win in this market. Additive manufacturing could result in as many as 65,000 jobs over the next 15 years in the state of Ohio, improve the competitiveness of our existing manufacturing sector, shift high-value occupations into the region, and capture attractive new markets. According to the authors, this opportunity is relevant to 1,900 metal fabricators and 800 plastic processors that collectively employ more than 100,000 people, or about 5 percent of our regional workforce.

So, what now? The report indicated several steps must be taken to capitalize on this grand opportunity:

- { (1) Work with the local manufacturing community and the entities that serve them to drive adoption of these technologies;
- (2) equip the workforce and help individuals transition into the digital manufacturing era; and
- (3) develop partnerships, since no single entity can do this alone. }

“We can’t do that unless we have all the players with the potential to shape the industry at the table, working toward this shared goal.”

*— Deborah D. Hoover
Burton D. Morgan Foundation
President & CEO*

Since the release of the report, YBI and its partners have begun to develop a more comprehensive plan to shore up the additive manufacturing cluster, forming a steering committee and an executive committee—which includes representatives from YBI, MAGNET, America Makes, Team NEO, and the Fund—to move beyond identifying strategies and toward identifying initial actions to take.

One of the first steps is getting all of the relevant players in the same room. In March 2017, YBI and its partners hosted a cluster-wide meeting to pull together universities, businesses, nonprofits, and tech-based economic development organizations with an interest in additive manufacturing.

The aim is “to focus the findings from the study and build working groups to address challenges and opportunities,” said **Barb Ewing**, YBI chief operating officer.

Deborah D. Hoover, president and CEO of Burton D. Morgan Foundation, a Fund member and supporter of the additive manufacturing cluster, is confident the region can make good on the vision laid out in the report of Northeast Ohio as a national leader in additive manufacturing by 2023. But “we can’t do that unless we have all the players with the potential to shape the industry at the table, working toward this shared goal.”

For more information, go to www.NEOhioAMCluster.org

Fund Stats

2016

\$10.1 million
Raised for
2016-2018
Work

\$4.4 million
Resources Awarded

+\$1.26 million
of additional philanthropic resources
that the Fund helped channel
to its priorities

Growth & Opportunity Initiatives

Job Creation

- Growing bioscience and energy clusters
- Fostering entrepreneurship
- Supporting companies with high-growth potential
- Advancing regional economic competitiveness strategy
- Strengthening business development system

Job Preparation

- Improving effectiveness of workforce service delivery
- Experimenting with skills-based hiring
- Fostering industry-focused talent initiatives

Job Access

- Driving strategies to bring jobs to people
- Championing enhanced connections of people to jobs
- Addressing social barriers to job access

Efforts Supported

Research

- The Geography of Jobs, and companion piece Roads Less Traveled
- Asset Map of Additive Manufacturing Opportunities in Northeast Ohio
- Collaboration Handbook
- Redefining Workforce Development: How National WorkAdvance Demonstration Made Local Impact

Convening

Our Fund helped convene collaborations around the region through engagement, facilitation and network building. We devoted time and staff expertise to efforts in Lorain County, the Mahoning Valley, Stark County, Summit County, and Cuyahoga County, as evidenced in the pages of this report.

Job Creation RESULTS

Our job creation partners drove the following outcomes:

Average salary / job:
\$58,000 compared with regional average just under \$50,000

Since 2004, our job creation grantee partners have helped retain or create more than 24,400 jobs, add nearly \$1.1 billion in payroll, and attract just over \$6 billion in capital.

5,856 jobs
(54% of three-year goal)

**+\$321 million
of payroll**
(63% of three-year goal)

**+\$2 billion
of capital**
(130% of three-year goal)

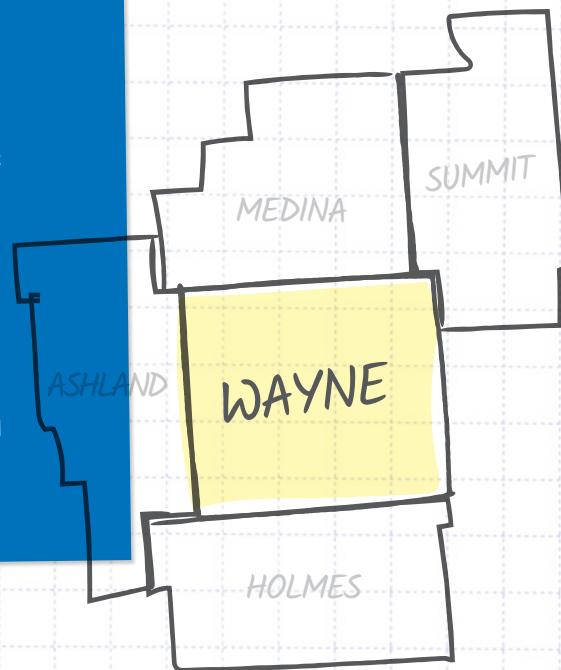
Funded Partners:

BioEnterprise
Brophy & Reilly LLC
Caruso Consulting
Civic Collaboration
Consultants LLC
Cleveland State University
ConexusNEO
Downtown Akron Partnership
JumpStart
MAGNET
Mapleton Sloan LLC
PolicyBridge
Roux Creative
RW Ventures LLC
Team NEO
Tech Belt Energy Innovation Center
Towards Employment
Twist Creative

Spotlight on Wayne County: Punching Above its Weight

When it comes to job creation results, Wayne County continues to “punch above its weight” relative to its Northeast Ohio peers. Wayne County represents 2.6 percent of Northeast Ohio’s population, 2.3 percent of the region’s gross domestic product, and 2.4 percent of the region’s employment. Yet, it attracted \$233 million of capital in 2016—the third highest in the region. It also added 719 jobs, representing 12 percent of all jobs created in Northeast Ohio by the Fund’s job creation grantees, trailing only Cuyahoga County, and added \$32 million of payroll, behind only Cuyahoga and Summit counties.

A diversified industry base, stated measurable goals, and a collaborative working relationship between the public and private sectors have proven instrumental in Wayne County’s results, said Rod Crider, president of the Wayne Economic Development Council, which is part of a collaborative known as the Wayne Growth Partnership, a member of the Fund. “Communities across Wayne County provide excellent investment options for businesses seeking to relocate or expand and a very high quality of life that you might not expect to find in a non-metro, agricultural area,” he said.



Next Assignment:

Assessing Opportunity

Our Fund’s current strategy reflects the importance of job growth in strategic industry clusters, an understanding of how workforce preparation must be coupled with industry demand to create avenues into well-paying jobs with advancement opportunities, and an awareness that sprawling job growth has cut many people off from our region’s economic gains. Unless our region effectively addresses all three of these strategic imperatives, we threaten to stifle our promising progress, as well as leave tens of thousands of our fellow citizens behind.

In 2017 and beyond, our Fund is focused on better understanding whether the historic jobs, payroll and capital gains of our job creation grantee partners advance Growth & Opportunity, and whether and where to consider strategic shifts.

The impetus of this assessment stems from our long-standing commitment to racial and economic inclusion. Historically it’s been difficult to accurately and appropriately reflect progress on this commitment, for a variety of reasons. Armed with new information, we now have years of job creation data and a spatial frame through which to analyze results. This is serving as the foundation of a **Job Creation Growth & Opportunity Impact Assessment**.

Through the Impact Assessment, we will review collective performance and grantee-by-grantee results, and will provide actionable suggestions for ways to more robustly ensure our job creation grantees support both the “Growth” and “Opportunity” elements of our agenda going forward. We are engaging several advisors to help shape this work, including our members, our grantee partners and their clients, community-based leaders, national and regional experts, and others.

We expect to release the assessment in mid-2017. For more information, or for a copy of the assessment when it’s released, email **Director of Civic Innovation and Insight Peter Truog**, ptruog@thefundneo.org.

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Voting members contribute \$100,000 or more over three years

If interested in learning more about the benefits of Fund membership and how our work can help advance your organization's mission, contact Director of Development and Funder Engagement

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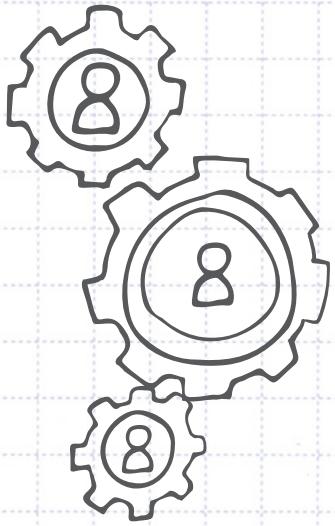
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OUR MISSION

The Fund for Our Economic Future is an alliance of funders dedicated to advancing economic growth and equitable access to opportunity for the people of Northeast Ohio by building shared community commitment, supporting high-impact collaborations and marshalling strategic funding.

Together, we enhance our knowledge.

Together, we advance our missions.

Together, we leverage our impact.

We are better together.

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