

# The Updayton Year One Report

The Health of Young Talent Attraction  
& Retention in the Dayton Region

*Talent  
on the  
Rise*



*All Report Photos by Andy Snow*

# Updayton Year One

**There are numerous universities in the Dayton region**, and those universities are pouring out thousands of new graduates each year. But too many of these graduates are leaving, and each talented young person lost is a missed economic opportunity. **We are underutilizing one of our greatest assets.**

Cities across the country are spending significant resources on programs specifically designed to attract and retain this vital demographic. They are positioning themselves for future prosperity—**if we don't get into the game, we risk falling further behind economically.**

**Updayton** was created to help the Dayton region better attract and retain young talent. Through surveys, focus groups and the 2009 Young Creatives Summit, we've highlighted both the Miami Valley's strengths and weaknesses in the hope that we will strengthen our weaknesses and create a region where more young and talented people want to stay. Over the past year **we've talked to hundreds of the Miami Valley's young creatives about their needs, cares & concerns for the region.**

We're an all volunteer initiative. Countless hours have been dedicated to the efforts that have made this report possible. We're doing this because we want our city to live up to its potential.

This report is a summary of our year one research. Our findings highlight areas for optimism, but also many areas of concern. **All regional stakeholders are called to work together** to better attract and retain this vital demographic—in fact, given the range of factors important to keeping young people in the region, **working together is the only way it is going to be possible.**

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# Executive Summary

**The good news...** The Dayton region is a leader in the percentage of our young people attending college. We have enormous talent potential.

**Our challenge...** We fall far behind in our ability to keep young talent here, and attract others. We are not living up to our economic potential.

**Who are the young creatives?** Young creatives are the next generation of the creative class and they're critical to our economic future. In their 20s they are more likely to make a major move than any other time in their life, but in their 30s the likelihood of a major move declines precipitously. Communities across the county are competing for young creatives before they lay down roots.

**Updayton Survey:** To keep young creatives here we have to understand their needs. We surveyed almost 500 young, creative professionals in the Miami Valley to ask about their needs and experiences in the Dayton region. The updayton survey revealed several insights:

- **It's not just jobs...** A number of regional attributes are important to young creatives in selecting a city. Of the sixteen attributes offered, respondents ranked five factors very important to extremely important, and eight other factors important to very important. The range of factors critical to keeping young people here are too broad for one regional stakeholder to address alone.
- **Where to focus?** Survey results show the biggest gaps in regional performance in job opportunities, entertainment and nightlife, school systems and diversity. Job opportunities had the biggest gap: 95% of respondents said job opportunities are very important or extremely important, but only 17% gave the region a good or excellent rating.
- **There's an age / performance gap.** Those over 30 were almost 40% more likely to say they are satisfied with the Dayton region compared to those age 18-26. This is a dangerous trend given that young people already have a tendency to move. Survey results showed the effect of this gap: those under 30 were twice as likely as those over 30 to say they plan to move within 3-5 years. Almost 25% under age 30 said less than 2 years.
- **A good job is not enough.** Over 65% of survey respondents reported satisfaction in their careers, but many were looking to move anyway. Surprisingly, job satisfaction showed little correlation with future plans.
- **A tale of two cities.** Breaking down results by race revealed disturbing trends. White respondents were almost 2.5 times more likely than blacks to say they are satisfied with life in the Dayton region.
- **The importance of civic engagement.** Civic engagement can be an important tool for keeping young people here. Those that are engaged with a non-profit or young professional group were 25% more like to say they are satisfied with life in the Dayton region.

# Executive Summary

## So what do we do about it?

Through a series of focus groups and the 2009 Young Creatives Summit, updayton has gained insight into the key areas effecting young people's perception of the Dayton region. Here's what we've heard:

- **Give young people an easy button.** Young creatives in the Dayton region have difficulty finding information for a variety of topics important to them: entertainment, jobs, entrepreneurship and volunteer opportunities. This generation more than any before is accustomed to having information easily accessible—so they expect the same from their city. The region has assets valuable to young people—we just need to make it simpler for young people to utilize them.
- **Provide a vibrant urban experience.** Downtown is a major focus of young creatives. Three of the top four action plan projects that received the most votes at the Young Creatives Summit are downtown focused. Also, every focus group wanted to talk about downtown. Key attributes desired:
  - Lots going on and people on the street—*excitement in the air*. One young person expressed it this way: a volume setting between Urban Nights (all the way up) versus a regular Friday and Saturday night (all the way down).
  - Lots to do in close proximity—walkability is very important. Young creatives want to park their car (or preferably not drive it in the first place) and bounce around to diverse entertainment scenes and see all types of people.
  - Make it look welcoming—and currently the aesthetics of our streets and gateways are a major barrier. Streets with vacant, drab buildings feel unsafe. Young creatives want more lighting, more green space, and more people on the street.
- **Better connect job seekers with employers.** Job opportunities is obviously a major problem in perceptions of Dayton, but we are likely underutilizing what we have. Young people perceive a disconnect between area universities and local employers. At the Summit attendees stressed a greater regional focus on internships and other college outreach to funnel graduates into the local job pipeline.
- **Cultivate diversity.** Young people told us that diversity is an important factor, and it's particularly holding the Dayton region back. Young creatives want the feeling of a melting pot or mosaic from their city—in fact, it's what helps make a place feel like a big city. Diversity and acceptance of diversity is a sign of a modern, sophisticated city.
- **Offer bold leadership, set a vision & empower young people.** A call for bold leadership was a common theme at the Summit. Young creatives want local leaders to take risks, establish a shared vision for the region and work together to tackle the region's challenges. Also, give young people a seat at the table— if you allow them to play a meaningful role in regional planning, they'll take ownership and be more likely to stay.

# Dayton's Talent Potential

## The Economic Case for Talent

In 2004 Dr. Richard Florida captured the attention of urban planners across the country with his book *The Rise of the Creative Class*. Dr. Florida gave a name to a rising segment of the world's workforce: scientists, engineers, artists, teachers, architects – anyone who creates for a living. Representing approximately 30% of Americans, the creative class accounts for over 50% of all wages and salaries. Florida argues business success is increasingly determined based on the output of the creative class, and the success of cities hinges on where members of the creative class choose to live.<sup>1</sup>

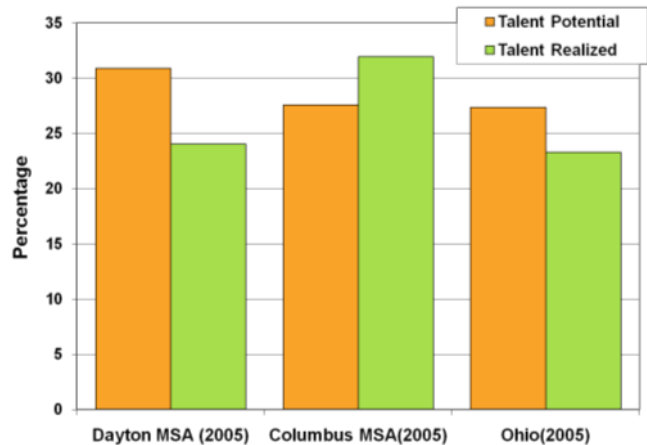
Dr. Florida's points are well-founded. According to a study conducted by CEOs for Cities – a national alliance of civic leaders, census data collected for several cities over the 1990s showed that of all factors studied, **“educational levels were the single biggest driver of economic growth.”** Also, regions with greater numbers of college graduates at the start of the decade gained college graduates faster - i.e. having more college educated people helps attract or retain college graduates at a higher rate.<sup>2</sup> In an era where knowledge drives economic growth, the potential economic boon from retaining and attracting young talent cannot be overstated. Programs that focus on strengthening the region's relationship with talent just make economic sense.



<sup>1</sup> More information is available on Dr. Florida at <http://creativeclass.com/>.

<sup>2</sup> Weissbourd, Robert and Berry, Christopher, “Changing Dynamics for Urban America,” CEOs for Cities, <http://ceosforcities.org>

**Talent Potential = % Young People Attending College**  
**Talent Realized = % Adults with College Degree**



**Data Obtained from American Community Survey**

Young talent is leaving and it is preventing the Dayton region from reaching its economic potential. Above the region<sup>3</sup> is compared to Columbus and Ohio on the basis of two metrics: talent potential & talent realized. Talent potential is defined as the percentage of the region's young people attending college, while talent realized is the percentage of the region's adults with a college degree. Combined the two metrics reflect the talent health of the region – one indicating talent production, the other measuring talent attraction and retention.<sup>4</sup>

Our talent production is high, comparing favorably even to Columbus, which is generally regarded as a college town. However, when examining talent realized, the region lags behind, revealing that too many of our college graduates are slipping away. Dayton is experiencing a brain drain, and every student that leaves is a missed economic opportunity. Considering the number of college graduates that leave the region each year is measured in thousands, **the annual economic loss from the brain drain is measured in millions.**

<sup>3</sup> The Dayton region is defined as the composite of the Dayton MSA plus the Springfield MSA.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Florida defines the ratio of these two metrics the brain drain index.

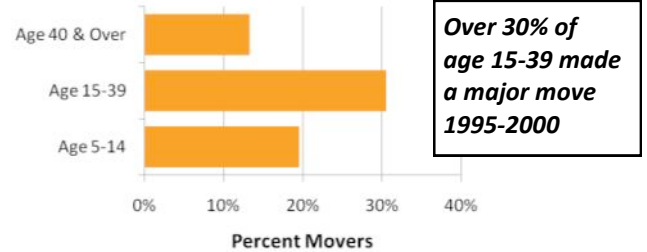
# Who are the Young Creatives?

**The young creatives** are the next generation of the creative class. They are engineers, poets, lawyers, computer programmers, scientists, artists and architects – anyone who is between the ages of 18-40 and creates for a living. Today's entire creative class accounts for 30% of the population and over 50% of all wages and salaries – young creatives and their constantly increasing college graduation rates will be an even bigger economic force in our world.

The decisions confronting young creatives are some of the most difficult and important they will make in life – choosing a job, selecting a city and continuing their education, among others. Understanding these decisions is critical to plugging the brain drain. In their mid-20s young creatives are at a stage in life when their mobility will never be higher, but in their 30s the likelihood of a major move declines precipitously.<sup>5</sup> Communities across the country are competing for young creatives before they lay down roots.<sup>6</sup> Where young creatives choose to live and work will determine the regions and businesses that are successful in the next decade.

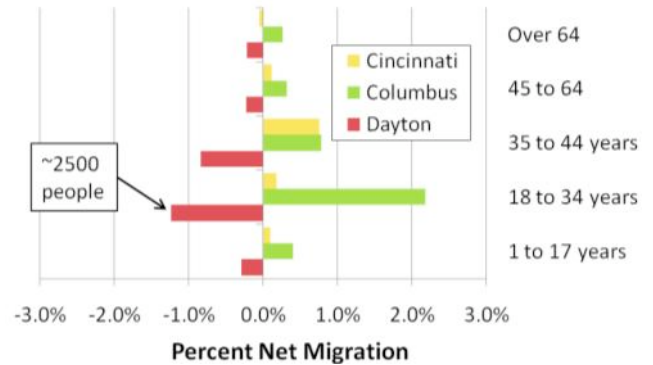
*If we want to attract & retain talented, creative-types in the Dayton region, shouldn't we focus on young creatives—the people making decisions about moving?*

**National Migration Data**  
(Across County Lines or Farther 1995-2000)



**NOTE:** Data from American Community Survey

**Yearly Net Migration for Select Ohio Cities**  
Average over 2005 - 2007



**We're losing our young people**



<sup>5</sup> "The Young & Restless: How Tampa Bay Competes for Talent," prepared by Impresa Consulting, <http://www.restlessyoung.com/yar/>  
<sup>6</sup> Several cities are working with national consulting firms to better connect young creatives with their region. Examples include <http://www.collegia.com/> & <http://nextgenerationconsulting.com/>

# The updayton Survey

## Survey Introduction

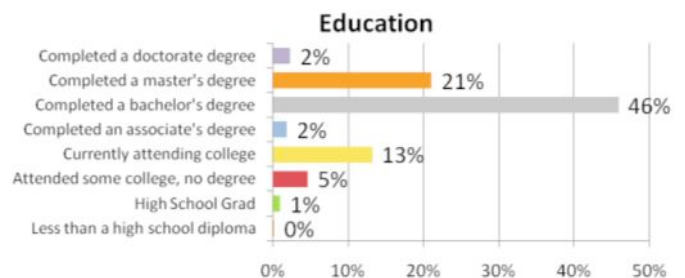
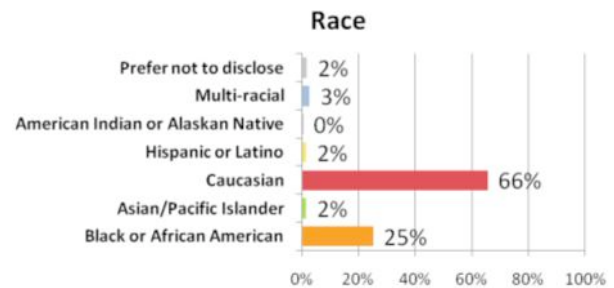
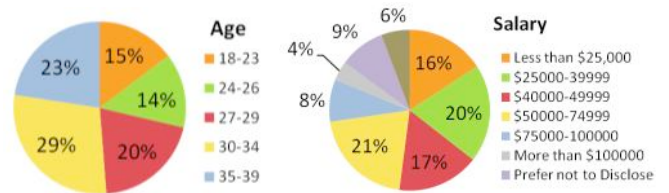
If the Dayton region is going to plug the brain drain, local leaders will need to understand the decisions confronting young creatives and develop programming to address their needs.

At every turn updayton has sought the opinions of young creatives to guide its planning. In the fall 2008 we launched a survey that touched over 500 people in the Miami Valley. The goal of the survey was to ask the region's young, creative professionals what they look for in a place to live, and to gauge the region's performance in meeting their needs. It is unlike anything that has ever been done in the Dayton region.

Updayton relied on many partnerships with local alumni groups, businesses and area young professional organizations to build the survey target population. *By intent the survey population is skewed* – we were looking for the opinions of college educated young people, which only reflects a small part of the region's population.



## Respondent Demographics



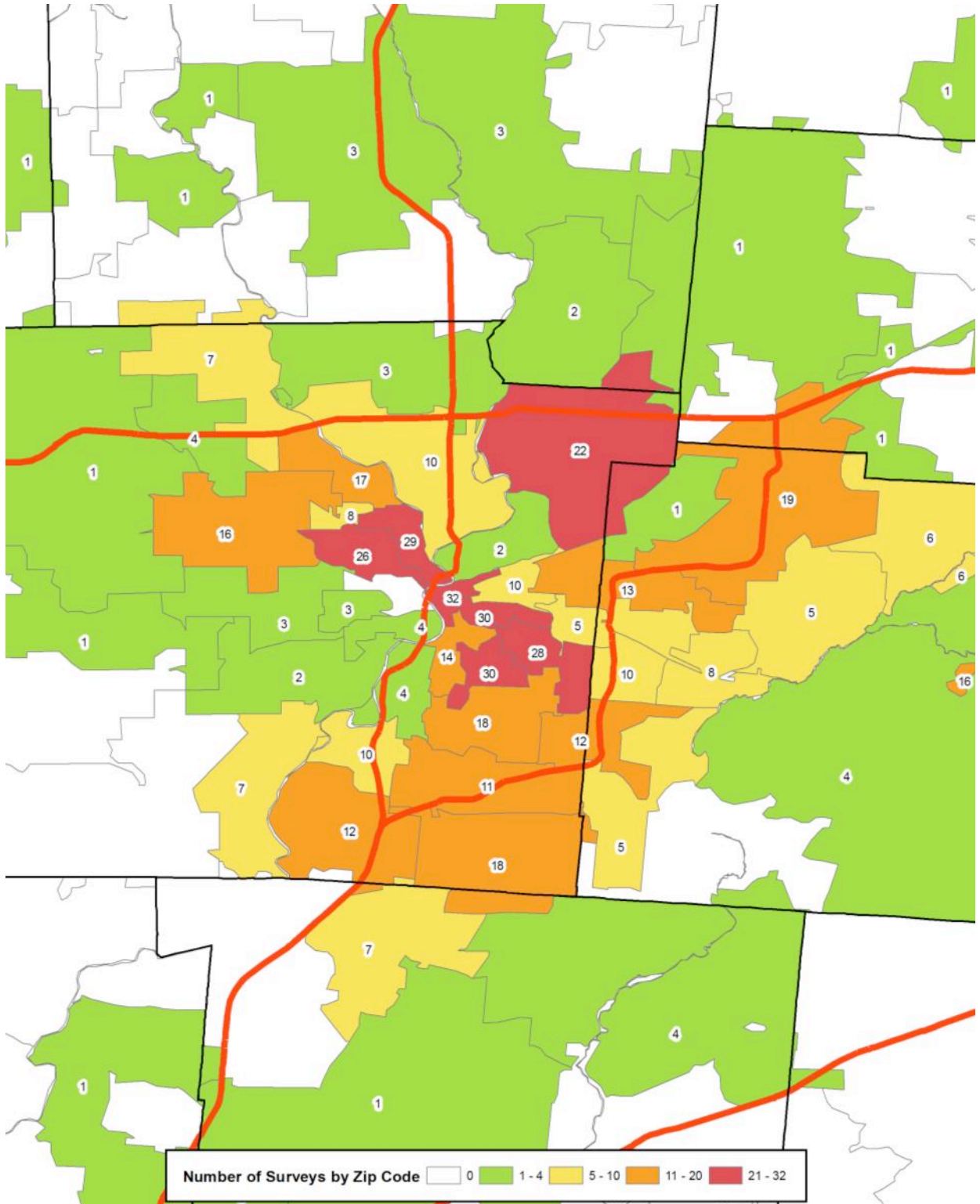
A diverse group of people responded to the survey – representing a good mix of race, age, level of income, etc.

The various Miami Valley universities were well represented: 42% attended Wright State, 28% attended the University of Dayton, 24% attended Sinclair and 12% attended Wilberforce. (some attended multiple colleges). A small group also touched Central State, Wittenberg and other local colleges.

# The updayton Survey

## Survey Respondents by Zip Code

The Updayton Year One Report



Map generated by City of Dayton Planning Department

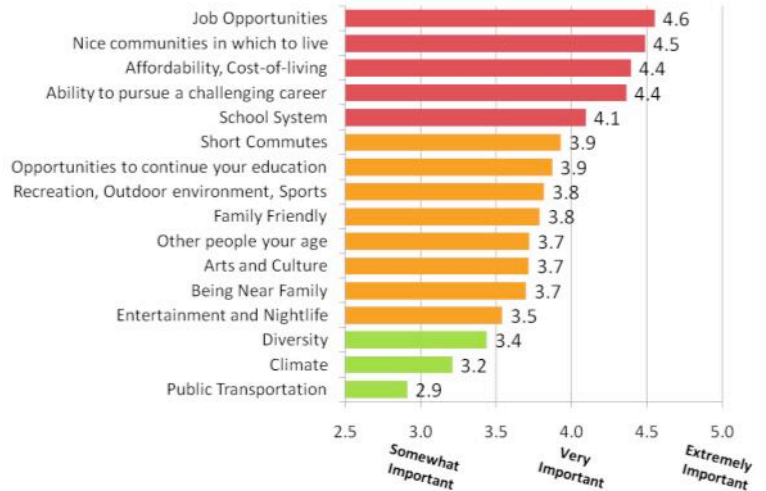
# The updayton Survey

## Importance of Regional Attributes

To help us understand what young creatives are looking for from the region, respondents were asked to rate the importance of several regional attributes when considering a place to live. The average results for a variety of attributes are shown on the right.

Often the discussion about talent attraction and retention quickly turns to the availability of jobs. The survey data shows the factors influencing a young creative's choice of city is more complex than jobs alone. Of the sixteen attributes offered, respondents ranked five factors very important or above, and eight other factors important to very important. "Job opportunities" was rated the most important, but respondents indicated several other attributes are important when selecting a city. Just focusing on jobs as a means to keep young people here is an incomplete strategy.

Young Creatives Needs Assessment



### Under 30 Top Needs

1. Job Opportunities
2. Challenging Career
3. Nice Communities
4. Affordability
5. Continuing Education

### Over 30 Top Needs

1. Job Opportunities
2. Nice Communities
3. Affordability
4. Challenging Career
5. School System

Regional stakeholders will need to work together if they want to attract and retain young creatives. An employer can affect the quality of their work place, but they can't directly influence the quality of local neighborhoods. Governments can improve a neighborhood, but they can't play a direct role in the curriculum for graduate students at near-by universities.

**The range of factors important to keeping talented people in the Dayton region is too broad for one regional stakeholder to address alone.**

The needs assessment was surprisingly static across age groups. Top needs for those over 30 were similar to those under 30. The biggest changes with age are not surprising: a vibrant nightlife is more important to younger people – those under 30 were 40% more likely to say nightlife was very important or extremely important.

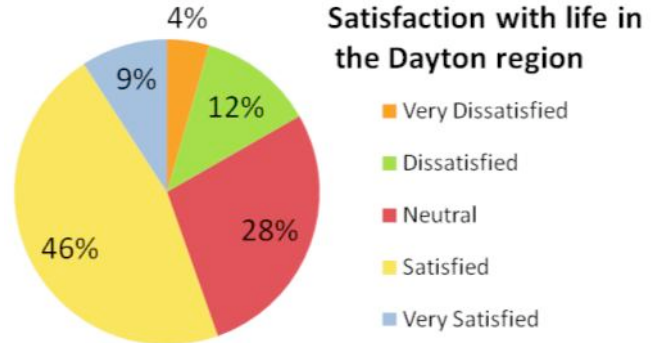
School systems and proximity to family were more important to older respondents. The gap between whites and blacks on the importance of diversity was large: 85% of African Americans said diversity was at least very important, while only 37% of whites responded similarly.

*"[Young creatives] have power — maybe much more than they realize. The community's many stakeholders need them, and no one stakeholder — not governments, businesses or colleges — can address their needs on their own... They can demand regional cooperation for the greater good. After all, they are the people the region is supposed to be building for." - Kevin Riley, Dayton Daily News*

# The updayton Survey

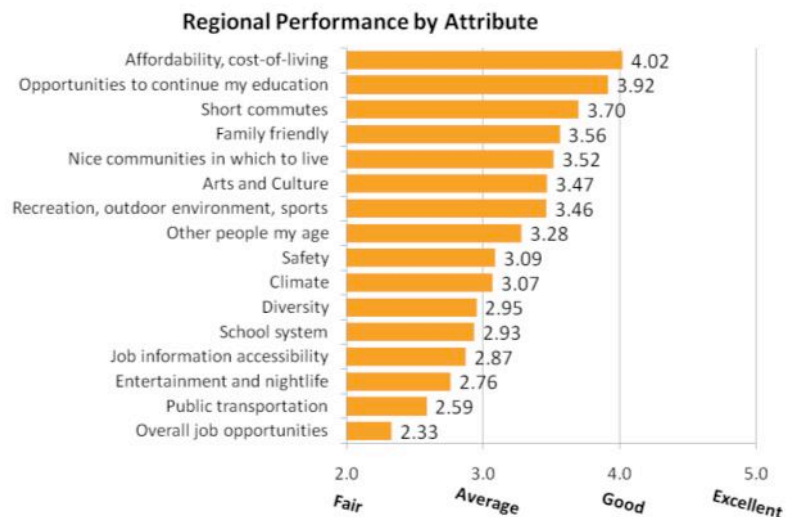
## Satisfaction with Dayton

When asked about their satisfaction with living in the Dayton region, almost 55% of respondents said they are at least satisfied. Respondents were also asked to rate the Miami Valley's performance by regional attribute. The breakdown by attribute is shown on the right.



Not surprisingly, scoring high on the list are affordability, easy commutes and family friendly. Another top performer is “opportunities to continue my education” – a regional asset that probably doesn’t get as much attention as it should, especially given it’s a top five need for young creatives under 30.

The region performed worst for job opportunities, public transportation and nightlife. While respondents were pressed to rate their experience of the region, perception certainly played a role in the scoring. No doubt the constant decline of the manufacturing and other industries in Dayton has taken a toll on the perception of job opportunities in the region.



**We asked respondents to list great things about Dayton that they didn't know about when they first started living here. Basically, what are our hidden gems? Here's what we heard:**

- *I wish I had known about living venues downtown out of the gate.*
- *Great civic and community organizations that I was unaware of my first ten years living here.*
- *There are so many places you can bike to across the region from downtown Dayton.*
- *Five Rivers MetroParks are really top notch!*
- *History of Dayton's neighborhoods*
- *Great summer festivals / low cost activities*
- *Wonderful city neighborhoods and great surrounding area parks/rec.*
- *How family friendly the community is. I had no idea when we moved here what a great place to raise kids this area would turn out to be for my family.*
- *The quality of small businesses especially in restaurants and retail establishments.*
- *There are a lot of great festivals representing the many cultures & ethnic groups of the area.*
- *The Recreational Opportunities that are not that far from downtown, i.e. Kayaking, Climbing, Hiking, Backpacking, Mountain Biking, Road Biking.*

# The updayton Survey

## Regional Performance Gaps

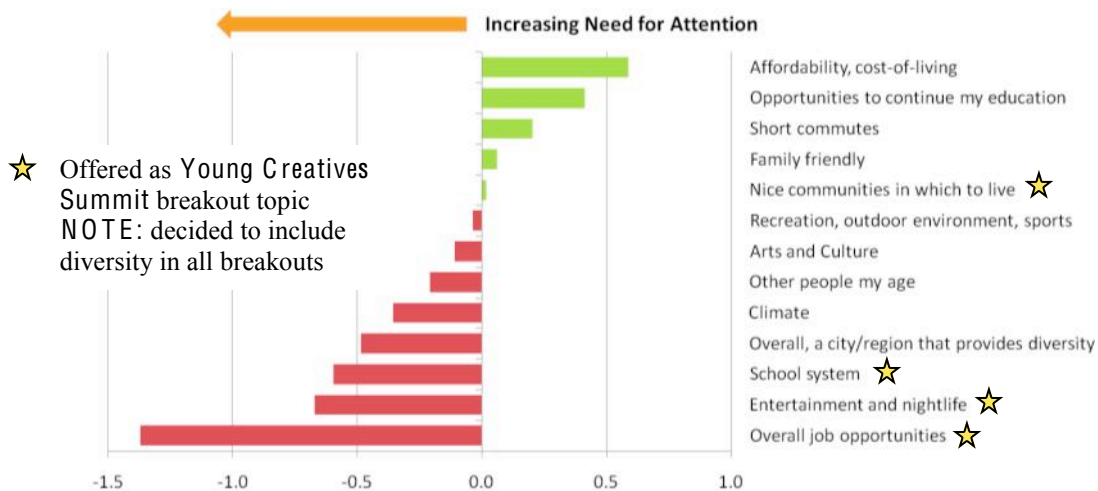
To prioritize where to place the greatest attention, updayton compared the relative performance of each regional attribute to its relative importance to survey respondents. The goal of this comparison was to isolate the regional shortfalls that could be the biggest contributors in decisions to leave the region.

To do this we needed a performance benchmark: so each attribute was measured against a mean score of 3.5 – ideally the region would score of above average to good for all attributes. The performance delta was then weighted by the importance of a particular attribute relative to the other attributes. The “performance gap” results are shown below.

Not surprisingly, the biggest gaps are reported for job opportunities, entertainment and nightlife, school systems and diversity. Greatest regional strengths are the typical attributed to the region: affordability, short commutes and family friendly. Again, opportunities for continuing education is a regional strength that should likely receive greater attention in the sales pitch for the Miami Valley.

An alternate way to assess the influence of a particular attribute on plans to stay or leave the region is to look at the correlation between the needs assessment and future plans. For example, if respondents believe a particular attribute is critical, but do not feel their need is being met in Dayton, then they may look to move elsewhere.

A few attributes showed strong correlation with future plans: those that listed entertainment and nightlife, other people my age or diversity as extremely important when choosing a place to live were also 30-50% more likely to say they plan to move away from the region in 3-5 years. Though not many said it was extremely important, climate showed the greatest correlation with likelihood to move: respondents who ranked climate as extremely important were also 74% more likely to say they will move near-term. Those that ranked job opportunities as extremely important did not show any unique behavior from other respondents – primarily because job opportunities was ranked extremely important by almost every respondent.



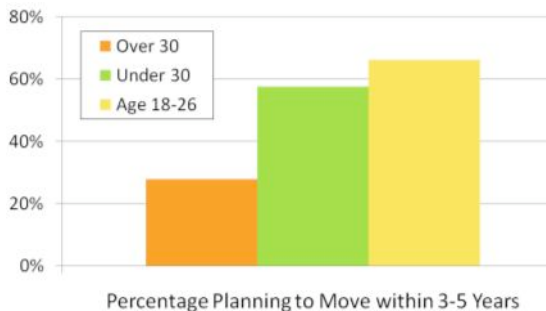
- **Jobs:** 95% said at least very important, but only 17% gave region a rating of good to excellent
- **Nightlife:** 50% said at least very important, but only 25% scored region good to excellent
- **School Systems:** 76% said at least very important, but only 37% said schools are good to excellent
- **Diversity:** 50% said at least very important, but only 32% gave region a rating of good to excellent

# The updayton Survey

## The Age / Performance Gap

Census data shows that young creatives in their mid-20s are more likely to make a major move than any other time in their life. However, once they lay down roots—find a job, build professional networks, start a family, etc.—the likelihood of a major move declines precipitously. The region must work harder to keep recent college graduates here than any other demographic.

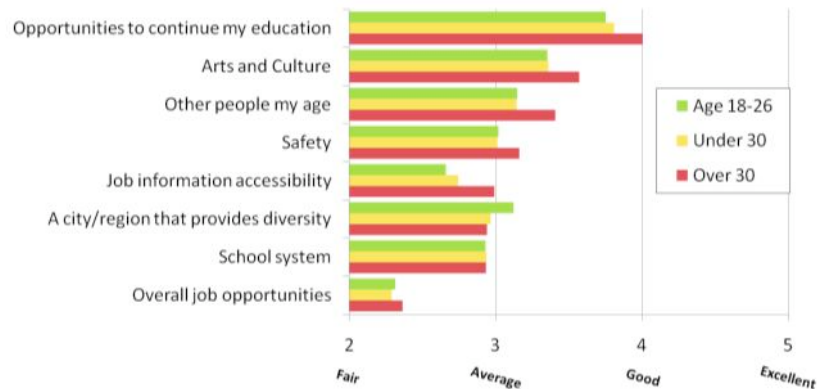
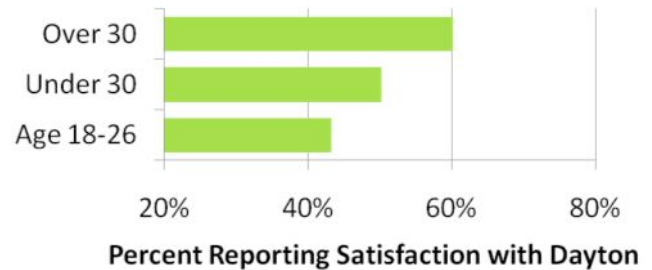
The updayton survey data shows a dangerous trend in regional satisfaction for young, creative professionals as they decrease in age. The region has a “gap” in performance for the exact demographic that it must attract and retain to insure future economic success. Shown on the right is the overall drop in satisfaction with age, plus the regional factors that showed the biggest drop in performance with decreasing age. Leading the list are job information accessibility, nice communities, and other people my age.



### A Good Job is Not Enough

**When asked about their jobs, over 65% of respondents were at least satisfied with their careers. However, job satisfaction showed little correlation with future plans. In fact, job satisfaction was unchanged across all age groups.**

## The Age / Performance Gap



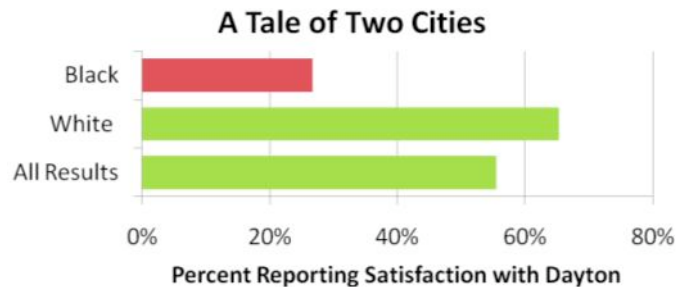
Respondents were also asked how long they planned to stay in the region. The results are shown on the left. Survey respondents under 30 were twice as likely to say they would move away from the region within 3-5 years. In fact, almost 25% of respondents under 30 said they plan to move away in less than two years. While someone who says 3-5 years is likely only displaying a tendency to leave, someone who says less than two years likely has plans to leave.

Considering the under 30 population of college students or graduates in the Dayton region is measured in the tens of thousands, the economic loss from departing graduates is substantial. If a company left the region that employed only a fraction of the people lost each year through the brain drain, it would be front page news.

# The updayton Survey

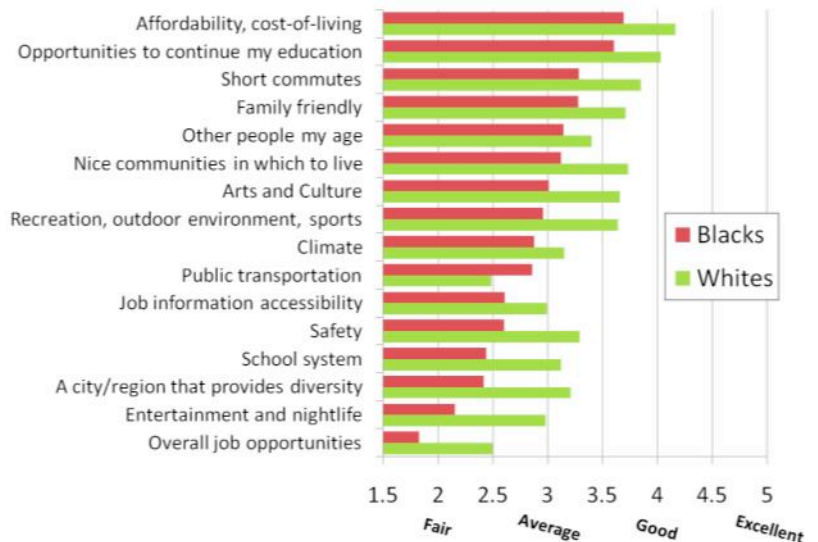
## A Tale of Two Cities

Breaking down satisfaction by race sub-groups reveals some disturbing trends. White respondents were almost 2.5 times more likely than black respondents to say they are at least satisfied with living in the Dayton region. In fact, blacks reported the lowest satisfaction of all subgroups. No other demographic was even close.



A regional performance breakdown by attribute is shown on the right. Most noticeable are the differences between whites and blacks in entertainment & nightlife (38%), job opportunities (36%), diversity (33%), school systems (27%), safety (26%), recreation & sports (23%), and arts and culture (21%). Not surprisingly, over 60% of African Americans surveyed expected to move away from the region within 3-5 years, with almost 30% saying less than 2 years. This data indicates there is a major gap in amenities available to African Americans in the Dayton region.

## Performance Breakdown by Regional Attribute



**Because of the alarming trends seen in the survey with respect to race, updayton convened a focus group of young creatives to specifically talk about diversity in our city. Here's what we heard:**

- Where are we now?**  
*"Segregated, divided, first base, stuck"*
- What are some diverse places?**  
*Our Festivals bring out the best in everyone!  
 Locations that offer good food & central access  
 Our museums and arts community all provide a gathering place  
 Other diverse locations: multicultural churches, the YMCA, and Riverscape*
- Our challenges**  
*As suburbs grow & develop, "it's possible to live your entire life south or east of town"  
 The media deals a heavy hand; some perpetuate the idea that "the only place kids fight is at Third and Main. And I know better."*

Solutions

Encourage personal responsibility; get out and make a change to make others feel comfortable.

Be careful of the labels and pictures you use - appearance is important to encourage diversity.

Don't just be against discrimination - also promote acceptance of diversity.

More opportunities to get people together in a meaningful way.

The community has a responsibility to make people comfortable, but it goes both ways. Diverse people need to help the community understand and accept them.

**Young creatives want the feel of a melting pot or mosaic – it helps make a place feel like a big city**

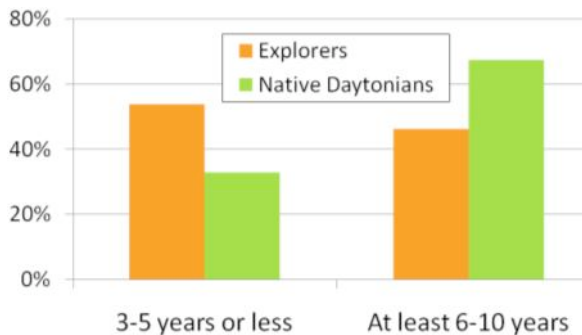
# The updayton Survey

## Explorers vs. Native Daytonians

In its 2004 study of recent college graduates from Philadelphia universities, the Knowledge Industry Partnership (now Campus Philly) concluded that the critical demographic to focus retention efforts on were explorers, i.e. college students who moved to Philadelphia from another city and then went somewhere besides home after graduation. Native Philadelphians were much more likely to stay in the region after receiving their degree.<sup>7</sup>

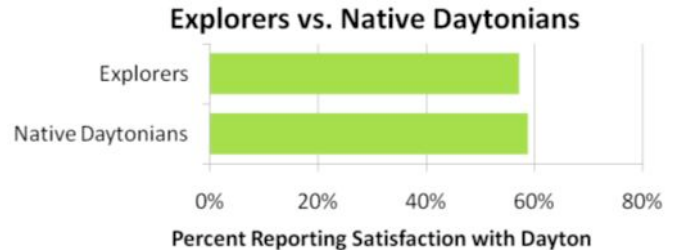
Updayton segregated survey respondents by background to see if the tendencies of resident Daytonian explorers were any different than Native Daytonians who still live here. One major difference is their future plans: 54% of explorers indicated they are likely to move within 3-5 years, while just 33% of native Daytonians indicate the same.

### How long do you plan to stay in Dayton?



So do explorers view the Dayton region any different than native Daytonians? Based on the updayton survey data, the answer is no. Explorers reported satisfaction with the Dayton region on par with native Daytonians. Performance by regional attribute was virtually identical.

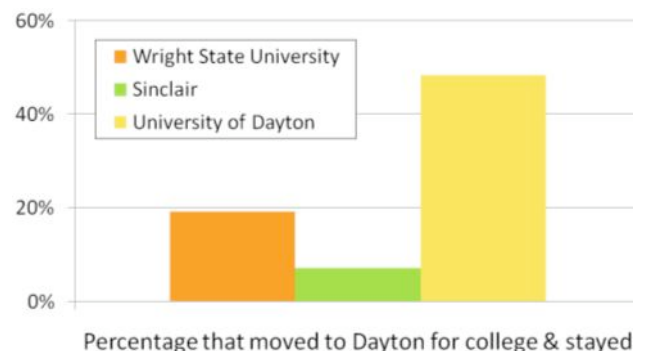
<sup>7</sup> "Should I Stay or Should I Go: Survey of Recent College Graduates," Published by Campus Philly in 2004: [www.campusphilly.org](http://www.campusphilly.org).



The only perceptible difference between the two was on the importance of the regional attribute, "being near family" – native Daytonians were much more likely than explorers to say this attribute was important when choosing a place to live.

From this data we conclude that young creatives who move to Dayton from somewhere else just have a greater tendency to move again, which makes sense given that explorers have already made a major move. This means that the local leaders must work harder to engage explorers if they want to keep them in the region.

So which local university likely attracts the most explorers? The comparison below shows the answer found by the updayton survey. Almost 50% of survey respondents that went to UD grew up somewhere else. The fractions of WSU or Sinclair grads that came to Dayton for college and stayed are much smaller.



# The updayton Survey

## The Importance of Civic Engagement

One of updayton’s primary beliefs is that civic engagement can be a critical tool for immersing young people in the region and increasing the likelihood that they’ll stay. The survey results confirm this belief.

Two questions were added to the survey to determine civic involvement:

- Are you active with a non-profit?
- Are you active with a young professional or alumni group?

Those that responded yes to the above questions were also asked to state their level of activity (hours per month) and with what group (s) they are involved.

The difference in regional satisfaction is significant between those who reported civic activity versus those who did not. **Without accounting for level of involvement**, those that reported activity with a non-profit, YP group or alumni organization were 25% more likely to say they are satisfied with life in the Dayton region. A breakdown of the attributes with the biggest performance disparities is shown below. The largest differences are in the areas of arts and culture and entertainment and nightlife. Based on these results, empowering and engaging young people through civic activity should be a key piece of any regional strategy to keep young people here.

*Updayton believes if the Miami Valley's young creatives are proud of their community & invested in shaping its future, they will be more likely to stay.*



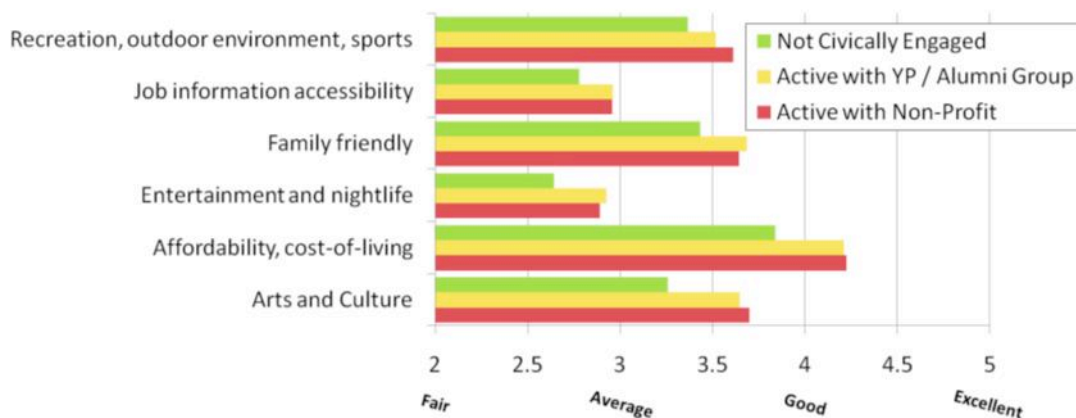
## The Impact of Civic Engagement



## Most Reported Civic Groups

YP / Alumni	Non-Profits
Generation Dayton	Various Religious - Related
Dayton Urban League YP	YMCA / YWCA
WSU and UD Alumni	Big Brothers / Big Sisters
United Way Young Leaders	Habitat for Humanity
Dayton Creative Syndicate	Girl / Boy Scouts
Various Sororities / Fraternities	Culture Works / Other Arts Groups

## Civic Engagement: Performance Breakdown by Regional Attribute



# The Young Creatives Summit

## *Young Creatives Show Passion & Power*

**On April 18th, 2009** almost two hundred of the region's diverse young people came together at the **Young Creatives Summit** to share their needs and concerns for the Miami Valley and brainstorm ideas to make the region a better place to live, work and play. Young creatives displayed their passion for building a better Dayton region.



Summit attendees were broken out by the topics found most important from the survey, Perspectives & Pints focus groups and other research conducted by updayton over the past year. The topics were:

- **Creative for hire:** Where are the jobs that I can thrive in?
- **The Dayton scene:** Creating an active nightlife with a strong cultural focus.
- **A sense of community:** Healthy, happening & affordable neighborhoods.
- **Family-friendly:** What are you looking for in a school system?
- **Entrepreneurs wanted:** What do you need to strike it out on your own?
- **Making a difference:** Getting involved with our community.

The first four topics came directly from the survey and pre-Summit focus groups, while the last two were selected based on the results of research from other communities. "Entrepreneurs wanted" was the most popular breakout topic – although interest was fairly even across all topics – except Family-friendly, which had very little interest, so it eventually was dropped as a topic.

In each breakout session attendees were asked to state their vision for the region and highlight the barriers preventing that vision from becoming reality. Attendees were then challenge to come up with project ideas that could remove the barriers and build a better Dayton region.

The following is a summary of the many cares, concerns and ideas offered by Dayton's talented young people at the 2009 Young Creatives Summit. Local leaders are challenged to use this information to make the Dayton region a place where more young, creative professionals want to stay.



# The Young Creatives Summit

## *How to Read this Section*

The remainder of the report summarizes by breakout topic the many things we heard from attendees at the Young Creatives Summit. We did our best to collect the key quotes and summarize the major themes expressed by attendees. However this was a daunting task given the mountain of information collected in the breakout sessions.

For each breakout topic we've offered a series of recommendations for local leaders —these recommendations are based on the breakout session themes plus an entire year of research and listening to young people's feedback.

Because it is not enough to just say what others should do, at the end the report we've included the entire list of project ideas devised by attendees. The top four projects will be implemented by updayton volunteers over the coming year.



# The Young Creatives Summit

## Entrepreneurs Wanted

### What are the risks to starting a business?

*"Loss of stability, career & income" "Embarrassment" "Debt" "Relationship strain" "Losing it all" "Competition" "Family stress and separation" "Means to support family" "Reputation" "Alienation from friends / family / community" "Not enough support information" "Is someone already doing this?" "Can I find customers?" "Can I find employees?" "Start up money: how much & where to get it."*



### Recurring Themes

- There is interest among young creatives to start their own business, but most don't even know where to get started
- Lack of start-up capital and a support network (or perceived lack) is preventing entrepreneurship
- Perceived personal risk (financial & reputation) from failure is a major barrier

### Recommendations

- Better advertise existing entrepreneurship resources—if you make it more available, they will use it
- Connect successful entrepreneurs with aspiring young creative entrepreneurs
- Create a climate where entrepreneurship is celebrated – this will help offset the social stigma from a failed business

### What barriers, if any, keep you from starting a business?

*"It is difficult to find resources pertaining to the logistics of starting a business" "Capital" "Risk" "Economy" "Market area" "Family support" "Age" "Support network" "Lack of mentors/leaders" "Unfamiliar with the process" "Time" "Competition" "Talent" "Space" "Risk Averse" "How to do it basics" "Start up costs" "Tax incentive lacking" "Too many conflicting government entities" "No nurturing community of entrepreneurs to support & encourage others" "Zoning laws" "People here are not risk-takers" "Lack of state government tax law support"*

### What can be done to help young creatives become entrepreneurs?

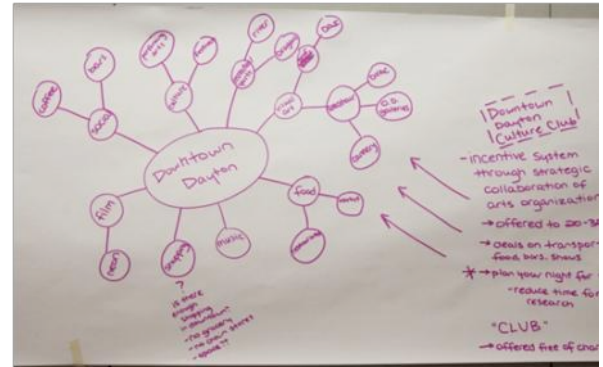
*"Daytonbusinesshelp.com: 'Wikipedia' of entrepreneurship" "Government support" "Centralizing information about organizations online" "Help people understand how to get proper funding" "Group to share ideas/support" "Organize an investors conference to give investors access to young creative entrepreneurial ideas" "Set up a mentorship program/forum for young entrepreneurs to learn for people who've had success" "Establish a coalition that can provide information and other resources to entrepreneurs" "Forum with others that have overcome issues" "Legal support" "Create a database of mentors" "Single source Entrepreneur Resource Guide or website" "Entrepreneur competition to have young creative's idea sponsored – Dayton Apprentice – would eliminate risk"*

# The Young Creatives Summit

## The Dayton Scene

### What defines an active nightlife for you?

**"Diversity"** "Businesses open at night, within walking distance" "Dancing" "Movies" "Sports" "Music" "Variety of activities" **"Lots of people"** "Food" "Plays" "Concerts" "Festivals" "Being able to bounce around from place to place" **"Having lots of options in close proximity"** "Outdoor activities" "Low cost" "Foot traffic" **"Excitement in the air"** "Safe" "Transportation" "Bright lights" "Choices" "Unique spaces" **"Multiple options in a centralized spot"**



### Recurring Themes

- A strong desire for an entertainment hub in downtown Dayton – lots of diverse venues (with diverse people) in close proximity
- Young creatives want more going on – more events, more people, etc. – it creates excitement
- A difficulty finding out what is going on

### Recommendations

- Strengthen the walking connection between existing amenities, e.g. the Oregon & the Cannery
- Just have more – young creatives like the feel of Urban Nights & want it more often
- Improve communication of entertainment info—but also, if you have more events, young people will “stumble on fun”

### What are the barriers, if any, to a more vibrant nightlife?

**"Not enough advertisement in an easily found place"** "Parking" "Affordable housing (centralized)" "Trolleys or late buses" **"Not enough people"** "Safety" "Cost" **"Drab looking buildings"** "Transportation – No cabs" "Lack of variety" **"Things seem too spread out"** "More empty buildings than full" **"No real sense of downtown Dayton"** "Variety is here, just hard to find" "Things are too spread out" "Lack of communication, promos" **"Space between venues is dark streets & abandoned buildings"**

### What can we do to remove the barriers & create a more active nightlife?

**"Provide transportation to outlying downtown"** "Building make over – Interesting buildings draw in crowds" **"Add lights & color – murals, paintings, lighting"** "Partner entertainment venues" "Transportation between 'pockets' of nightlife" **"Create center area with lots of event options in close proximity"** "Experiment with new things" "Promote friendly competition amongst bars" "Create website to market/communicate night-life" **"Improve communication of events"** "Universal cover charge for Oregon District" **"Create a well lit walkway from the Cannery to the Oregon District"** "Create an identity" "More unified events where cover charge allows entry into multiple spaces" "Weekly e-newsletter with focus on shared communication, promotion, & awareness of events" "Microbrewery" **"Downtown has to thrive for the region to thrive"** "Ballpark village—this was a good idea, but where did it go?" **"A feeling of tolerance and acceptance of diverse groups"**

# The Young Creatives Summit

## Creative for Hire

### How would you describe job opportunities in the Dayton region?

*“Nonexistent” “Saturated” “Lack of critical mass”  
“Unappealing” “Most require higher education”  
“WPAFB” “Education” “Health care” “Technology”  
“Disheartening” “Higher end manufacturing” “Lack of  
variety / businesses” “Not readily available / commu-  
nicated” “Lower wages” “Large number of applicants”*



### Recurring Themes

- A difficulty finding out what jobs are available and what industries are here
- Young creatives perceive a disconnect between area employers and local colleges
- Just wanting more job opportunities in more diverse career fields

### Recommendations

- Reinforce internships – they build a bridge between colleges and employers
- Continue to better connect job seekers with job opportunity info – people just want it to be easier – e.g. one website, one job fair, etc.
- More collaboration between the many organizations that want college grads to find a job here – we need a regional strategy to funnel grads into the job pipeline

### What barriers, if any, keep you from advancing your career in the Dayton region?

*“Not knowing what companies are here”  
“The culture of a company is important: open to youth or diversity” “Lack of work experience” “Companies not open to entry level jobs” “Schooling” “Lack of money to support local artists” “Lack of local business” “Lack of emphasis on job search while in college”  
“Better practical training / advice” “Scattered resources and leadership” “Disconnect between universities & businesses” “Large number of applicants” “Retraining” “Where are the marketing / design firms” “Companies that do exist are small / lack budgeting”*

### What can be done to foster the careers and job opportunities for young creatives?

*“Regional job posting – one site, one contact—pool of entire region” “More internships” “Better mentor students at universities”  
“Connect early to job pipelines” “Consolidate opportunities for different industries and get the word out in a simple, clear message” “Share resources and information” “Increase communication with career services at universities” “Regional Resource fair – all opportunities in region presented-en masse festival” “One stop shop for job postings and job seekers” “Reach out to better link college campuses with business community” “Facilitate more internships & co-ops linking college students with area businesses” “Local groups need to work together” “Yearbook students to market profes-*

# The Young Creatives Summit

## A Sense of Community

Describe the type of neighborhood in which you want to live.

**“Strong sense of community”** “Neighbors who know and look out for each other” **“Walkable”** “Near restaurants, shops, galleries” “Work together to beautify common areas” **“Diversity”** “Places for local business to thrive” “Well maintained, vibrant & clean” **“Unique character”** “Affordable” “Neighbors who wave at me or stop by on walks” **“Community spaces”** “Block parties” “Safe” **“A feeling of being in the heart of the action, yet have an opportunity for quiet”** “No vacant buildings” “Self contained”



What barriers, if any, keep us from creating these neighborhoods?

**“Lack of ownership – both in real estate & responsibility”** “Lack of funds” “Identification with neighborhoods” “Neighbors who don’t care” **“Kids with no supervision”** “Policy that deters from developing a neighborhood economy” **“Safety & perception of danger”** “Many people run from problems instead of addressing them” **“Affordable housing”** “Appropriate lending programs” “Empty feels unsafe” **“Broken window concept needs to be enforced”** “People give up too easily” **“Not enough pride in community”**

### Recurring Themes

- A sense of unique place is extremely important – knowing your neighbors, local shops / restaurants, community spaces, etc.
- Aesthetics are critical – sidewalks, lighting, green space, etc. Also, empty / vacant feels unsafe.
- At least among Summit attendees, there is a strong desire to connect with neighbors and improve their neighborhoods

### Recommendations

- Provide spaces for neighbors to interact
- Nurture neighborhood committees / associations—they create a sense of collective action
- Empower residents to improve their communities – they’ll take ownership & stay

What can we do to remove the barriers and make our neighborhoods a more vibrant place?

**“Trained professionals leading classes on fixing your old home”** “Get to know your community police officer” “Bike lanes” “Monthly cleanups” “Regular block parties” “Add green space” **“Engage unsupervised youth”** “Highlight renovation & renewal value” **“Enforcement of housing codes / yard standards”** “Feet on the street” “Connect through neighborhood facebook-like website” **“Public art project linking regional artists with neighborhoods”** “Community gardens” **“Dog parks”** “Downtown student housing: subsidize rent to encourage students to live downtown” “LivinginDayton.com: actively recruiting / promoting neighborhoods”

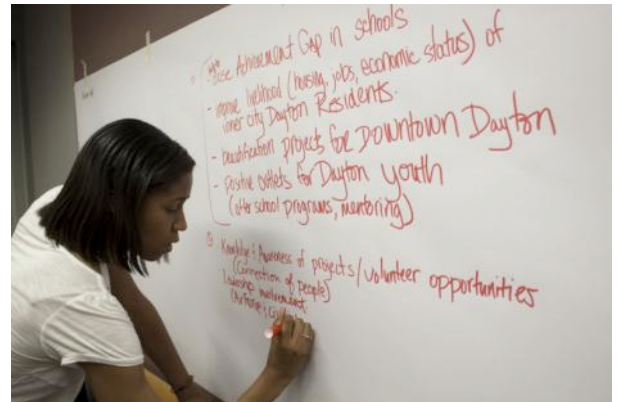
“Revitalize Priority Boards to be more active than regulatory”

# The Young Creatives Summit

## Making a Difference

### What difference do you want to make in the community?

**"Connect people"** "Foster culture of volunteerism" "Beautify where I can" "Work with students" "Be part of a move to 'unigov'" **"Create positive outlets for Dayton youth"** "Change the perception of Dayton" **"More partnership between organizations"** "More public art" "Get kids off the street" **"Restore hope"** "Make Dayton a place to stay" "Reduce homelessness" "Increase collaborative efforts in the city" **"Create a vision for our community"**



### Recurring Themes

- This generation is interested in civic engagement, but many do not know where to go to find volunteer information / opportunities
- A desire for the region's many organizations to work together to tackle its challenges
- Young creatives want bold leadership to take risks to improve the region

### Recommendations

- Continue to better connect potential volunteers with volunteer opportunity info – people just want it to be easier – e.g. one website, etc.
- Local leaders need to set a common vision for the city / region. Without a common vision, and with the current negative attitudes about Dayton, young creatives feel hopeless.

### What barriers, if any, keep you from getting involved or making an impact?

"Low Dayton self-esteem" "Lack of communication" **"Too many fiefdoms & not enough leaders"** "Lack of true cooperation" "Knowledge & awareness of projects" "Time" **"Ideology of: 'If it's not happening in my neighborhood, it doesn't matter.'"** "Community collaborations" "Policies and egos / hidden agendas" **"No centralized website to locate current initiatives"** "Expectation to fail" "Continually having the same conversation"

### What can we do to remove the barriers and get more young creatives involved in strengthening our communities?

*new ideas & quit being so risk-averse* **"Think on a regional scale"** "Start a buy local campaign to connect consumers with local businesses owners" "Promote a green Dayton" "Use public art to define cultural districts" **"Build a collaborative web of city / suburbia information"** "Increase access to leadership" "Website that consolidates non-profit volunteering info" **"Support progressive leaders"** **"Strengthen our core"** "Educate communities about each other"

"Create a central communication hub online" **"Build a Dayton identity and get people to believe in it"** "Embrace

# The Young Creatives Summit

## 2009 Summit Action Plan

At the end of the Summit attendees voted on 32 project ideas presented at the town hall. The four project ideas receiving the most votes became the Summit Action Plan. Over the coming year updayton volunteers will work to implement the following Action Plan Projects:

### 2009 Summit Action Plan

- **Community Programs for Youth:** A project to engage youth who are in the downtown areas after school in recreational or volunteer activities that are especially coordinated for them. – *“If we can get them focused in a good direction, we’ve solved multiple problems, including just giving them direction, which is a good goal.”*
- **Central Communication Hub** – A comprehensive website where people can go to get information for regional events, attributes, cultural opportunities and more. – *“Everything. It might link to other websites. But we need one website where people can get a lot of information. The website could also promote things like buy local and help our regional image if we have one central place to do that.”*
- **Grow Downtown Dayton** – A project to create more reasons to go to our downtown area; including creating more events and places to live, eat and shop. – *“Every weekend – there should never be an excuse for someone to be able to say there’s no reason to come to Dayton, there’s nothing to do.”*
- **Wayne Avenue Corridor** – A project to make the Wayne Avenue Corridor (between Fifth and Third St.) more pedestrian-friendly. Create a more interesting, colorful, and lively corridor to connect the Oregon Arts District with the Cannery. – *“Every big city has a hub where everyone goes and Dayton is pocketed as far as entertainment and nightlife. Our idea was to get a well-lit walkway between Third, where the Cannery Arts District is and the Oregon District along Wayne Ave. There’s a nice area there that could be subsidized, there could be businesses brought in, and a really well-lit walkway so people can go in between those two areas and that could be the start of an entertainment hub of Dayton.”*

On May 7th, 2009 volunteers met to form teams for each project and determine next steps. To see the plans for each team, check out <http://updayton.com/2009-action-plan/>.

Over the coming year the Action Plan volunteers will need the help of everyone in the community to be successful. Please provide them your support.

# The Young Creatives Summit

## Project Ideas Summary

### Big Ideas for a Brighter Future

Just because an idea didn't make the top four doesn't mean it's not important. In the following we've listed the other project ideas offered by young creatives at the Summit town hall. These ideas had the greatest support in their breakout session groups

#### Entrepreneurship

- **Dayton Regional Entrepreneurial Association** – An organization that would provide a collaborative marketing resource and support network to businesses once they get started. – *“We’ve got a lot of organizations to get them started, but we wanted to come up with an association to keep them going.”*
- **Investors Conference** – Organize an investors’ conference to give potential investors access to young creative entrepreneurial ideas.
- **Mentorship Forum** – A mentorship program for young creatives to learn from successful entrepreneurs that live in the Dayton region.
- **Start a Business Dayton.com / Dayton Business Help.com** – A one-stop shop website run by an independent organization to connect new business owners with information and potential customers. – *“Run a website that combines all the resources for a SCOR, the Entrepreneurial Center and all the other wonderful organizations in the area.”*
- **Entrepreneurship Coalition**– Establish a coalition that can provide information and other resources to potential entrepreneurs.
- **Multi – University Collaboration** – A multi-university student run business incubator to encourage young creatives to become entrepreneurs and stay in Dayton.
- **Dayton Apprentice Competition** – A competition for young people in high school all the way through college to motivate young people to become entrepreneurs and stay in Dayton. – *“Hopefully we’d have start-up capital for the winner and also a mentoring program as well.”*

#### Neighborhoods & Communities

- **Renters / Home Owner Support Group** – A support group for home owners and renters to provide information, resources and tools to help people maintain their homes. A neighborhood that is well maintained is good for all residents. – *“We identified some of our barriers in our small group involved safety, a sense of safety based on deteriorating facades – often which are by people who don’t have the resources, know-how or tools to do their maintenance up-keep. Combining those of us who have the tools, the resources, the know-how – providing that support might solve the problem for all of us.”*
- **Media Spotlight on Communities** – A weekly one to two minute clip to highlight different parts of Dayton. Whether it’s a neighborhood or an actual city, highlight everything from community events, to local businesses to encourage people to shop local. *“We’ve got the media here today, right? So we can get them involved. What we get is the things that are going wrong – face it, sensationalism sells, but what are the good things going on? Get people familiar with Dayton and not so afraid to get out and meet people.”*

# The Young Creatives Summit

## Project Ideas Summary

### Downtown Dayton

- **Cultural Pass:** A pass that would offer discounts to the many things going on in Dayton. Getting more people downtown would create an environment that feels safe and promotes activities within Dayton. – *“There are so many things to do – from the Dragons, the many restaurants to the Victoria Theatre.”*
- **Living in Dayton.com** – A website that puts a face to the people who live downtown and thrive there. The site would highlight all the great things about living in downtown Dayton. – *“It’s basically a glitzy, sales-pitchy, this is why it’s great to live here and why. People doing research about whether to live here would go there and be excited instead seeing how much it would cost to pay your taxes.”*
- **Downtown Student Housing** – Encourage graduate students to live downtown by enticing local universities to subsidize rent in a renovated building. Many law and med students already work downtown, and creating a livable, affordable space encourages a community environment, and will put more money into local business and restaurants. Renovating a currently unused building will increase the urban beautification in the area. – *“Picture something like the Cannery lofts, an upscale urban living area, where a discount is given to students going to school who want to rent downtown.”*
- **Connect Entertainment Pockets:** A focus on using public transportation to connect pockets of nightlife in Dayton. – *“There should be a trolley or shuttle. RTA closes down about midnight and entertainment activity lasts beyond midnight.”*

### City Beautification

- **Guerilla Gardening** – A grassroots effort to turn vacant spaces into vibrant community gardens. – *“A bottom-up organization where you take over your own public space and turn it into a community garden or a food co-op.”*
- **Public Art (murals on storefronts)** – A citizen driven initiative to beautify vacant storefronts with local mural and public art. The project will help address the unsafe feelings some residents have when downtown. – *“Take over a blighted area or closed storefront and take an artist and create a mural for that.”*
- **Green Streets** – Create a more beautiful area by developing community and roof-top gardens, and greening street medians. – *“Create a more green-friendly downtown where we can put medians in the streets and plant some trees and flowers.”*
- **Be More Interesting, Colorful and Lively** – Improve perceptions of Dayton by giving Dayton buildings a little more TLC. – *“Perhaps as you’re driving downtown from the airport and such, putting light to it. But Dayton looks dead, and it could possibly be built up by adding lighting.”*

# The Young Creatives Summit

## Project Ideas Summary

### Dayton Marketing Campaigns

- **Buy Local Dayton** – A campaign to encourage Dayton residents to patronize local businesses. – *“Understanding that the cycle of spending our funds – from the entire grass roots of it, from the manufacturing side of things or from the agricultural side – keeping everything local and keeping money within our own local area. Keep everything well supported.”*
- **Dayton Brand Image** – An effort to create a brand image for Dayton that people can identify with locally and also outside our region. *“To be known nationally as a positive image – that everybody has a positive perception of Dayton.”*
- **Marketing our Community** – Marketing the strengths of our community and creating more pride around the City of Dayton – *“Dayton is a good place to start a family or begin your life in general. How do we market Dayton as a destination instead of a stop?”*
- **Making Dayton Sexy** – Offer tax breaks or other incentives for students for take jobs in Dayton. Possibly incentivize staying in Dayton by giving graduates a certain percentage pay back on their student loans. – *“But keeping the youth here, keeping the vibrancy here, creating the social networks to keep the youth that are already here.”*

### Availability of Information

- **Greater Dayton 411** – A regional effort to virally distribute information about downtown Dayton and volunteering. – *“A grassroots network for people to unite and form a task force creating social events and using those events to also distribute info about what is going on in the Dayton area – whether be community service or any other activity.”*
- **How about this? / Organize Social Media Channels:** Consolidate the various information sources / community newsletters into one source so it is easier to find out what is going on. – *“Instead of getting five or six different newsletters weekly to find out what’s going on that week, you get one centralized newsletter so you can pick what you want to do – instead of getting five or six emails, you get one – focused on different events, venues, promotion. Something to get you to come out to a certain place.”*

# The Young Creatives Summit

## Project Ideas Summary

### Professionals Development / Networking

- **Expand Your Comfort Zone** – Using networking events to expand your horizons and develop professional relationships to grow your career. – *“Expanding your comfort zones through networking, bringing job seekers and students into networking opportunities with businesses and other professionals.”*
- **County-wide / Cross-County Job Fair:** *“A job fair that would be a little bit more fun than the typical job fair – not something focused on a university, but something outside that is something like a festival / job fair.”*
- **Fostering new perceptions:** *“Really utilizing what we have in terms of job resources to encourage further development.”*
- **Dayton Culture Club** – An organization where young creatives could collectively come together to go out and do different events, broaden their horizons, etc. – *“If we could coordinate with colleges and local sports and arts venues, it would be great if by joining a culture club you could get discounted tickets to events all over town. UD and Wright State basketball games, Sinclair plays, Dragons games, concerts, dances, and events all over town. This way, there is a unified group exploring the arts, culture, and entertainment all over town on a specific day. You can only stay in the club if you attend a certain percentage of events, so no picking and choosing things you already know.”*

### Community Service

- **Community Service Day** – Select a particular day for people to come together to volunteer in the community. – *“We get folks involved on a particular day and time to get people out to do things. We had a couple ideas tossed around, such as a community garden, painting traffic circles, or even a litter cleanup day that would basically encourage people to be the change they want to be.”*
- **Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine Stream Opportunities** – Young, creative professionals serving as mentors / tutors in technical related fields. – *“Volunteers who are willing to give their time for those certain areas to connect with children that are needing these services.”*

## What's Next?

Over the coming year updayton volunteers will work to implement the top four project ideas from the 2009 Summit. **Like DaytonCREATE, we will empower a new wave of leaders to bring change to the community.** The action plan volunteers will need your support.

Updayton will continue to highlight issues important to young, creative professionals in the Dayton region. The Young Creatives Summit will be an annual event—maintaining a constant, community coordinated focus on attracting and retaining young talent in the Miami Valley. But we can only do so much...

**Local leaders should build on our efforts.** We've taken the first steps, but the entire region must play a role if we want to keep our young and talented college graduates here. Community leaders are challenged to use the information provided in this report to create a region where more young creatives want to live, work and play. **We have the means within the Miami Valley to control our future prosperity.**

Our region has a tremendous history. Our poetry has shattered racial barriers, we have broken codes to help end a great war and we've taught the world to fly. The legacy of innovation and creativity in Dayton makes us excited about our future. We are ready for what's next.





## Thank You!

We thank our many sponsors and partners—without them this research would not have been possible:



Thank you for showing leadership in the community on an issue vital to the future of the region!

Also, thank you to the United Way, Wright State University, Sinclair Community College, University of Dayton, Dayton Urban League Young Professionals and Generation Dayton for distributing our survey. This effort would not have been possible without you.

Finally, thank you to our many friends and supporters in the community— many of whom volunteered for the Summit and other events. You’ve been great advocates, advisors and friends.

*We are updayton. Our members are of all ages, and we are passionate about building a better Dayton. When someone asks us where we live, we are proud to call Dayton our home.*