

# ADAMS COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN 2021

PREPARED BY THE CENTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND  
COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

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PARTNERSHIP AS PART OF THE BOBCAT NETWORK PROJECT

# Adams County Strategic Plan

## Executive Summary

This report developed by Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs investigates the strategies to enhance economic development for Adams County, Ohio. This "Economic Development Strategic Plan" was funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) through the BOBCAT Network.

The Killen and Stuart power plant closures, and the closure of an associated training facility in Manchester, Ohio, will lead to the direct loss of 370 jobs. These 370 jobs generated an estimated \$56 million in employee compensation. An additional 760 jobs will be lost in a variety of industries as an ancillary consequence of the closures. In total, the closure of these facilities will result in 1,131 lost jobs, \$82 million in lost labor income, and a reduction in regional economic output of nearly \$700 million dollars. The increase in unemployment has made new growth and employment strategies for Adams County imperative. Adams County had seven industries with employment growth from 2010 to 2019, compared to six industries with employment decline. Of the growth industries, two industries had a growth rate of over 50%, including 84.89% growth in educational services

Adams County has a key decision to make to stabilize and ultimately reverse this population decline, workforce development issues, and additional challenges. This plan specifically recommends these focus areas: 1) Winchester industrial Park 2) Workforce Development. Concentrated strategic investment and support of these themes will help mitigating impact, transition, and recovery. This will help capitalize on emerging business opportunities, infrastructure improvements, and ways to retain and attract families to the area. Adams County should focus on implementing these priorities put forth in this plan.

## **Adams County Economic Development Strategic Plan**

Executive Summary

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## **Introduction**

In 2018 Adams County Commissioners and the Adams County Economic and Community Development partnered with the Center for Economic Development and Community Resilience at Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs. Through the BOBCAT Network at Ohio University a team of researchers were brought on to support Adams County and developed a scope of work 2018. The project is funded by the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) program.

This effort proposes several recommendations that were developed through findings of core research tasks. These included a comprehensive economic scan and workforce inventory, interviews with key community stakeholders, community engagement (e.g., public meetings) intended to identify economic development desires, and an analysis of regional industry clusters. We identified several areas for improvement of Adams County's Regional Economy, which are noted in the executive summary.

## **2. Existing Conditions & Community Trends**

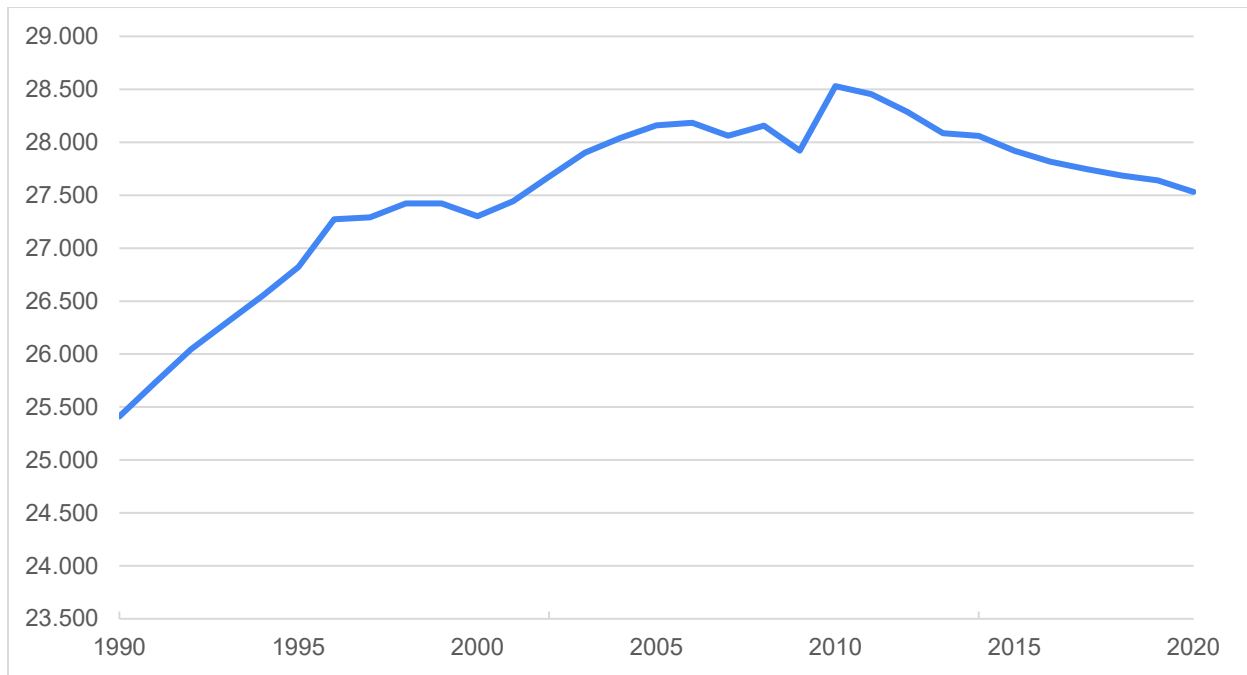
The first task associated with this work involved a demographic and economic scan in order to compile a solid informational foundation on key economic and demographic descriptors of Adams County.

This section provides the existing population and household trends and characteristics of Adams County and Ohio, including age, educational attainment, school enrollment, and household incomes.

### **2.1 Population Growth Trends**

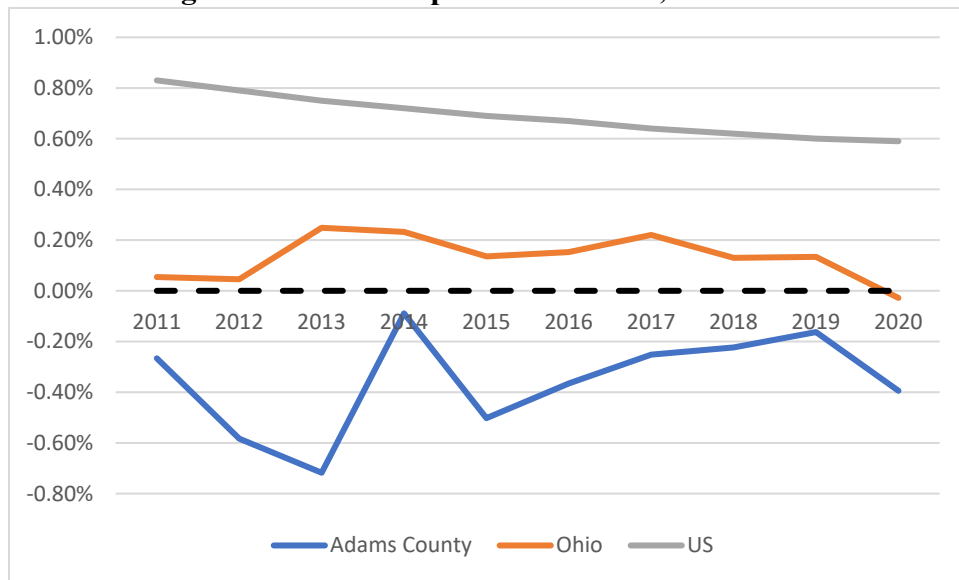
As shown in Figure 1, the population of Adams County experienced a decrease in population from 2010-2019, shrinking from 28,547 in 2010 to 27,531 in 2020. Figure 2 shows the total percent change in population in Adams County, Ohio, and the United States since 2010. From 2010 to 2020, Adams County experienced a decrease of -3.5%. However, Ohio and the United States experienced an increase of 1.33% and 6.65%, respectively, over the same period. Figure 3 breaks down the total percent change into annual percent change during the 2011-2020 period. This shows that Adams County experienced negative growth every year, while Ohio and the United States experienced positive growth each year.

**Figure 1: Adams County Population (In Thousands), 1990-2020<sup>1</sup>**



**Figure 2: Total Percent Population Change, 2010-2020<sup>2</sup>**

**Figure 3: Annual Population Growth, 2011-2019<sup>3</sup>**



<sup>1</sup>Source: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2017, U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

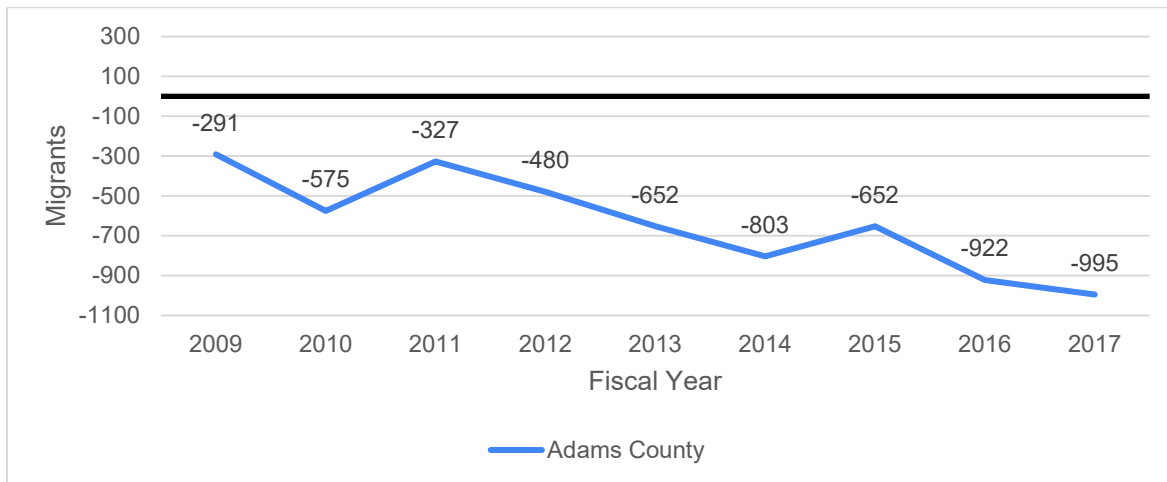
<sup>2</sup> Source: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019, U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

<sup>3</sup> Source: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019, U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

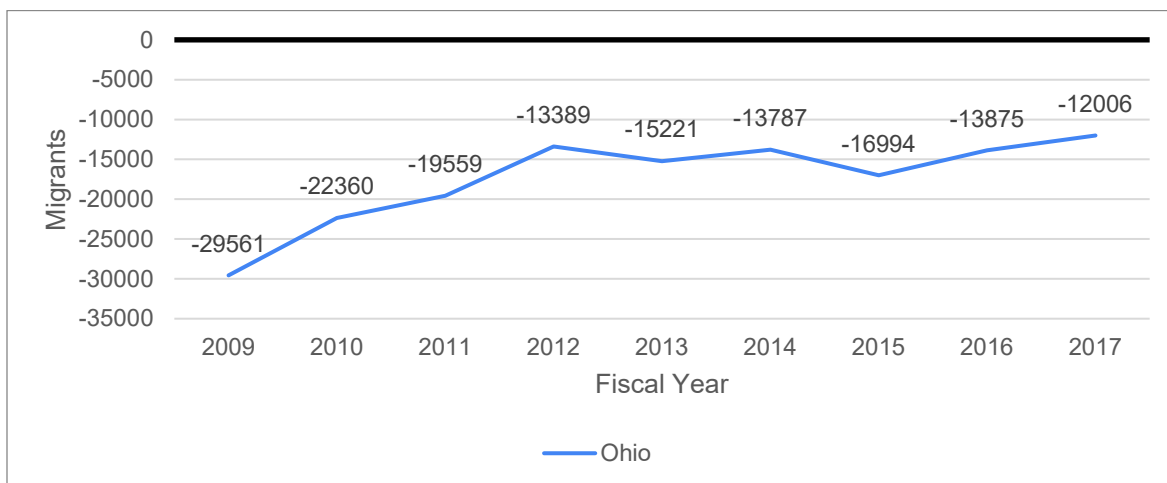
## Migration

Figures 4 and 5 shows the trends in net domestic migration in Adams County and Ohio from 2000 to 2019. Migration in both regions has been decreasing during this period, with a net total of 995 residents moving out of Adams County in 2019 and 12,006 people moving out of Ohio in 2019.

**Figure 4: Net Domestic Migration: Adams County, 2009-2019<sup>4</sup>**



**Figure 5: Net Domestic Migration: Ohio, 2009-2019<sup>5</sup>**



## 2.2 Age Distribution

<sup>4</sup> Source: County Migration Patterns, Ohio Development Services Agency, Research Office, September 2019.

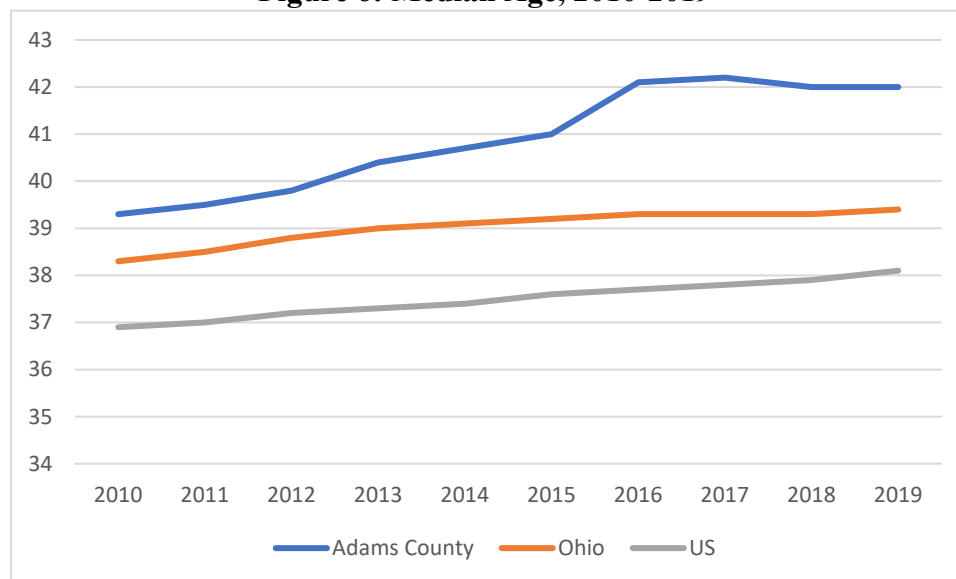
<sup>5</sup> Source: County Migration Patterns, Ohio Development Services Agency, Research Office, September 2019.

Figure 6 shows the median age in Adams County, Ohio, and United States from 2010 to 2019. The median age in Adams County has been consistently higher than in Ohio and the United States during this period. Additionally, the median age in Adams County has been increasing at a faster rate than in Ohio and the United States.

Furthermore, as shown in Table 1, 17.4% of the population of Adams County was older than 65 in 2020, compared to 17.48% of Ohio. Likewise, 19.6% of the population of Adams County was younger than 15, compared to 18.22% of Ohio. In contrast, only 12% of the population of Adams County is aged 25-34, compared to 12.92% of Ohio. Additionally, from 2010-2019, Adams County experienced an increase in population only in ages 55 and over, while Ohio experienced an increase in ages 25-34 in addition to ages 55 and over. Moreover, the median age of Adams County is 42, compared to 39.6 in Ohio. Finally, the total working age (people age 15-65) of Adams County in 2010 was 18,503 and fell to 17,719 in 2019. Adams County's working age population decreased 4.24% from 2010-2019, while Ohio experienced a 22.16% increase. This suggests that not only does Adams County have an aging population, but that they are losing a key demographic in their workforce as young people move away from the county.

This is visualized in Figure 7 which shows the distribution of the population in Adams County in all age groups and in both sexes. This population pyramid with a very wide base and a narrow top section indicates that Adams County has a population with both high fertility and death rates. The narrowing middle of the pyramid indicates that the adult labor force is leaving Adams County for more attractive job markets, which is possibly motivated by high persistent unemployment rate shown in Figure 33.

**Figure 6: Median Age, 2010-2019<sup>6</sup>**



**Table 1: Age Distribution: Adams County and Ohio, 2010 and 2019**

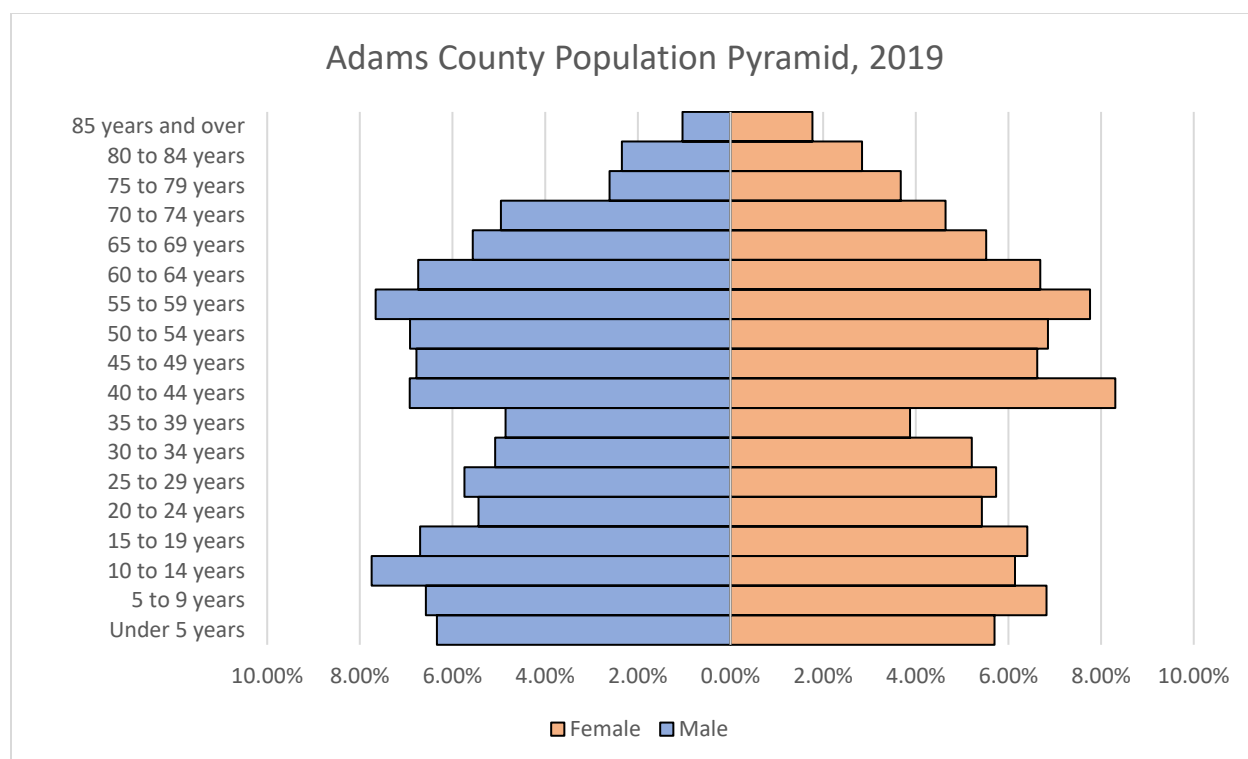
<sup>6</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010-2019

Age Range	2010		2019		Percent Change
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Adams County					
Under 15	5,963	20.90%	5,460	19.60%	-8.43%
15-24	3,538	12%	3,329	12.00%	-5.90%
25-34	3,395	11.90%	3,023	10.80%	-10.96%
35-44	3,880	13.60%	3,328	12.00%	-14.23%
45-54	4,222	14.80%	3,773	13.60%	-10.64%
55-64	3,452	12.10%	4,007	14.40%	16.07%
65 and over	4,137	14.50%	4,856	17.40%	17.38%
Total Population	28,587		27,776		-2.84%
Median Age	39.0		42.0		1.25%
Ohio					
Under 15	2,267,949	19.40%	2,129,249	18.22%	-6.12%
15-24	1,588,715	13.59%	1,510,046	12.92%	-4.95%
25-34	1,416,029	12.11%	1,544,717	13.22%	9.09%
35-44	1,542,666	13.20%	1,404,148	12.01%	-8.98%
45-54	1,738,377	14.87%	1,451,339	12.42%	-16.51%
55-64	1,369,979	11.72%	1,606,053	13.74%	17.23%
65 and over	1,577,203	13.49%	2,043,548	17.48%	29.57%
Total Population	11,500,919		11,689,100		1.64%
Median Age	38.9		39.6		1.80%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Demographic and Housing Estimates, 2010-2019					

**Figure 7: Adams County Population Pyramid, 2019<sup>7</sup>**

<sup>7</sup> Source: Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Selected Age Groups by Sex for the United States, States, Counties and Puerto Rico Commonwealth and Municipios: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019, U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division





## 2.3 Educational Attainment

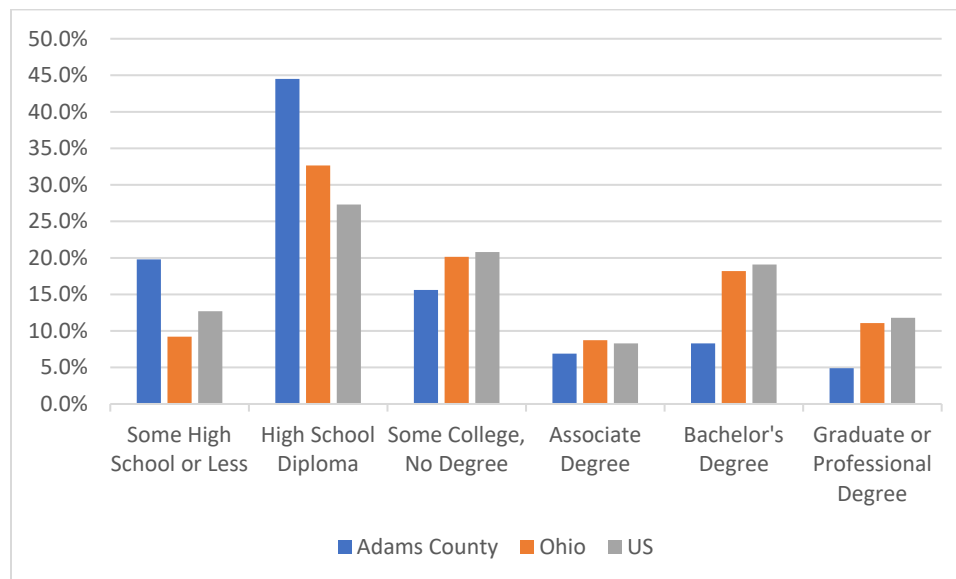
Table 2 shows estimations of the educational attainment of residents. Likewise, Figure 8 visualizes the educational attainment of the populations in Adams County, Ohio, and the United States. In 2019, roughly 35.7% of the population of Adams County reported having some amount of college education, compared to roughly 58.15% of Ohio and 61.2% of the United States. This shows that Adams County trails in comparison to state- and nationwide averages. Additionally, 19.8% of Adams County’s population did not have a high school diploma, while only 9.2% of the population in Ohio did not have a high school diploma. From 2010-2019, the proportion of the population that reported having some college education increased from roughly 28.5% to 35.7% in Adams County. Furthermore, the proportion that did not have a high school diploma decreased from 25.4% to 19.8%. This shows that both the rate of residents attaining at least some higher education and of residents graduating from high school has increased.

**Table 2: Educational Attainment: Adams County and Ohio, 2010 and 2019**

	2010		2019		Percent Change
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
<b>Adams County</b>					

Some High School or Less	4,848	25.40%	3,759	19.80%	22.46%
High School Diploma	8,819	46.20%	8,449	44.50%	-4.19%
Some College, No Degree	2,367	12.40%	2,962	15.60%	25.14%
Associate Degree	1,031	5.40%	1,310	6.90%	27.10%
Bachelor's Degree	1,145	6.00%	1,576	8.30%	37.60%
Graduate or Professional Degree	897	4.70%	930	4.90%	3.70%
<b>Population 25 Years and Over</b>	<b>19,107</b>		<b>18,987</b>		<b>-0.63%</b>
<b>Ohio</b>					
Some High School or Less	918,781	11.90%	740,847	9.20%	19.37%
High School Diploma	2,717,739	35.20%	2,627,758	32.64%	-3.31%
Some College, No Degree	1,582,774	20.50%	1,622,014	20.15%	2.48%
Associate Degree	602,226	7.80%	702,601	8.73%	16.67%
Bachelor's Degree	1,212,173	15.70%	1,464,945	18.20%	20.85%
Graduate or Professional Degree	687,156	8.90%	891,640	11.08%	29.76%
<b>Population 25 and Over</b>	<b>7,720,849</b>		<b>8,049,805</b>		<b>4.26%</b>
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Educational Attainment, 2010-2019					

**Figure 8: Educational Attainment, 2019<sup>8</sup>**



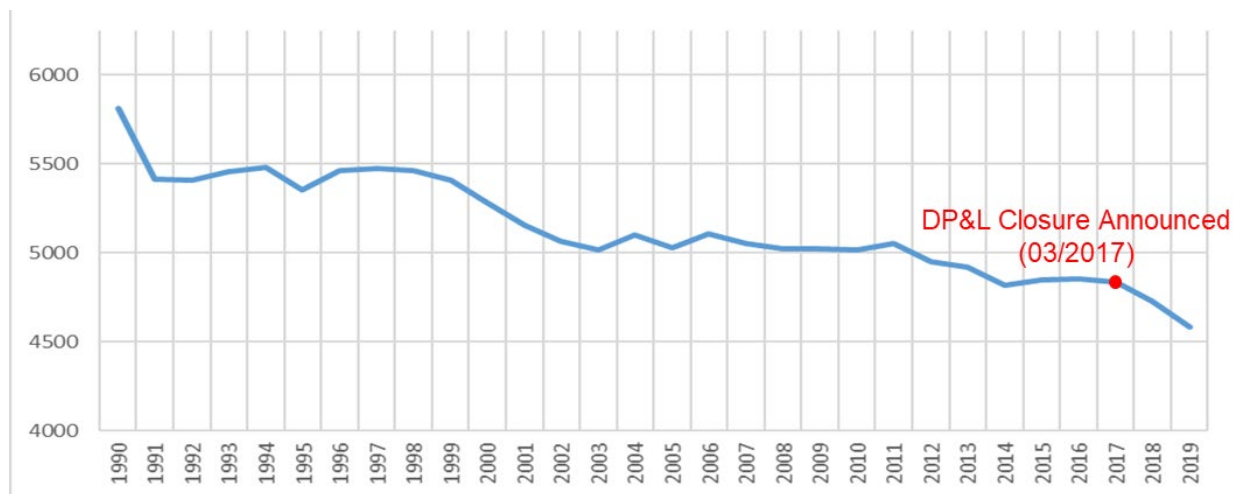
## 2.4 School Enrollment Trends

Figure 9 visualizes the number of students enrolled in Adams County's school districts from 1990 to 2019. During this period, enrollment generally declined with periods of stabilization, decreasing from 5,814 students to 4,584, an overall loss of 21.16%. To shows how this compares

<sup>8</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

to the overall state, Figure 6 shows the total enrollment of all schools in Ohio. The enrollment for the state peaked in 1998 with a total enrollment of 1,824,451 students. This declined to 1,572,954 in 2019, an almost 11.9% decrease. Therefore, while the state's school enrollment has decreased over the last two decades, Adams County's schools have been hit especially hard. Additionally, the rate of decline increased after it was announced that the DP&L plants were closing. Figures 7 and 8 show enrollment in Adams County's two school districts: Ohio Valley SD and Manchester Local SD. These figures show that while enrollment in the Ohio Valley SD has been steadily decreasing, enrollment in the Manchester Local SD had been increasing most years between 2005 and 2019. After the announcement of the DP&L closures, enrollment fell at a faster rate than previous years, decreasing to 856 students, which is the lowest the enrollment has been since 2009.

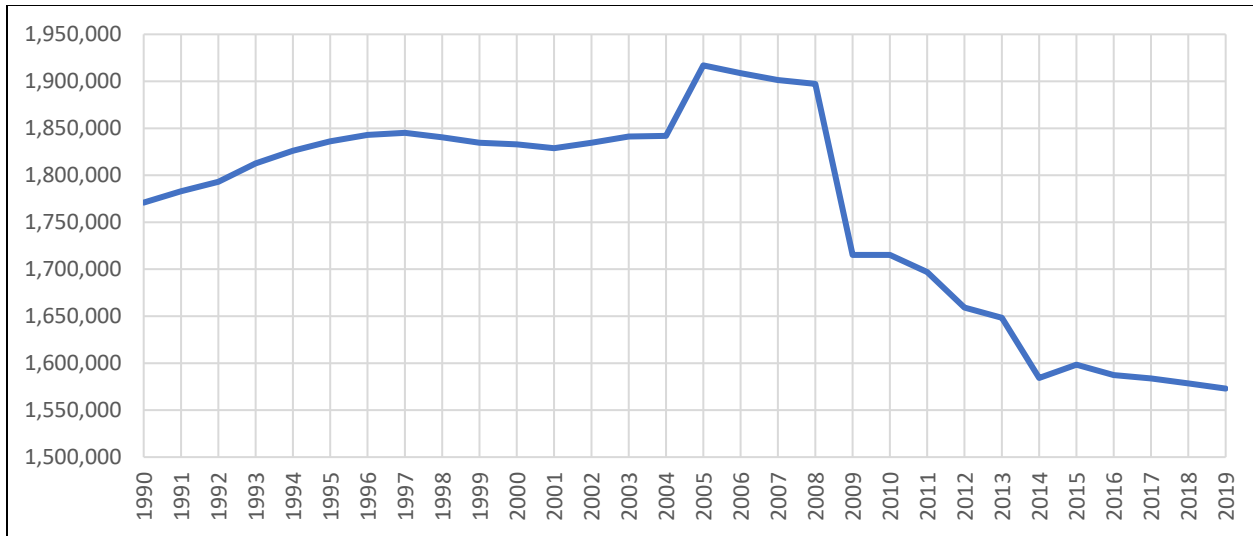
**Figure 9: Adams County School Enrollment, 1990-2019<sup>9</sup>**



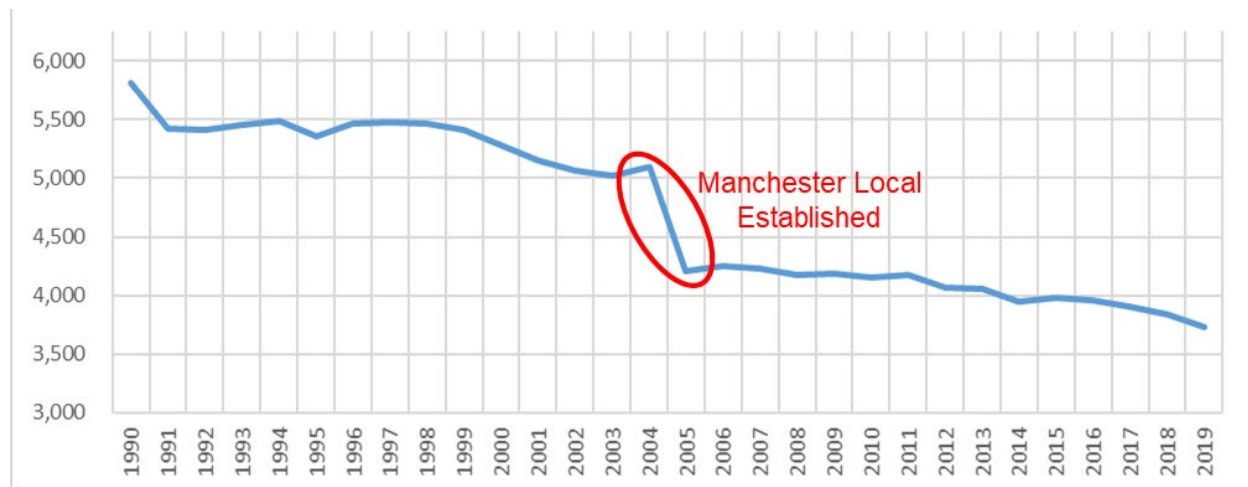
**Figure 10: Ohio School Enrollment, 1990-2017<sup>10</sup>**

<sup>9</sup> Source: Ohio Department of Education, Enrollment Data, 1990-2019

<sup>10</sup> Source: Ohio Department of Education, Enrollment Data, 1990-2019

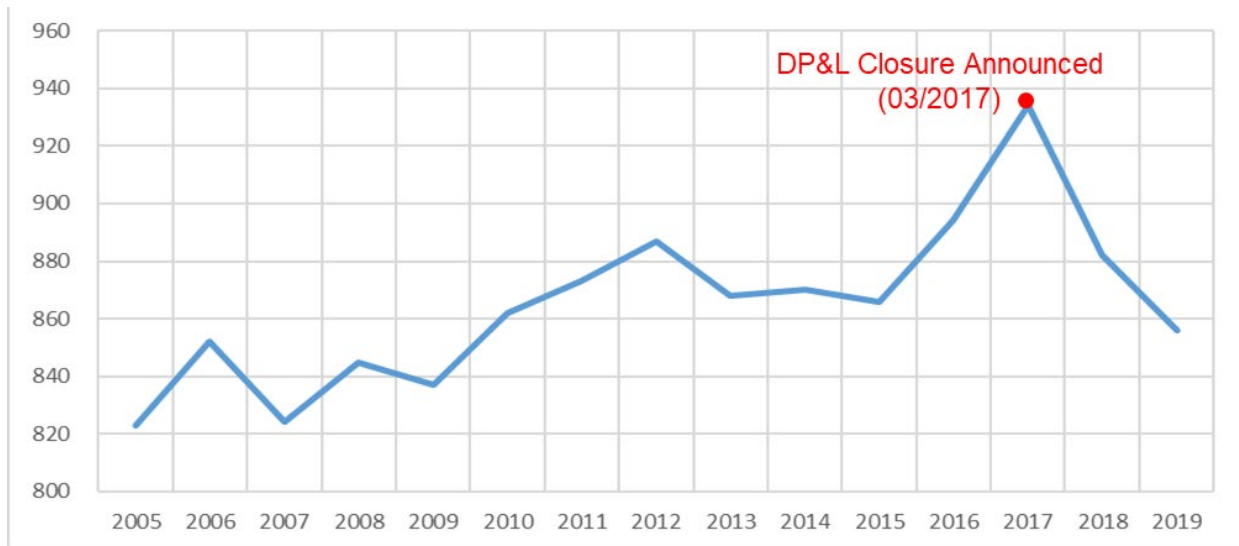


**Figure 11: Ohio Valley School District Enrollment, 1990-2019<sup>11</sup>**



<sup>11</sup> Source: Ohio Department of Education, Enrollment Data, 1990-2019

**Figure 12: Manchester Local District Enrollment, 2005-2019<sup>12</sup>**



### Quality of Schools

The Ohio Department of Education grades each school district in the state according to how well they meet certain criteria. Table 3 shows the ranking of the two school districts in Adams County, Ohio Valley and Manchester Local, in comparison to the average rankings for the state of Ohio. Overall, the two school districts of interest rank about as well as Ohio as a whole. The Manchester Local SD ranks better than or as well as the Ohio Valley SD in every category. However, the Manchester Local district was more severely impacted by the closures of the DP&L plants. One weakness worth mentioning for both school districts is how well they are perceived at preparing students for success. This component is measured as a proportion of students who either 1) earn a remediation-free score on the ACT or SAT, 2) earn an honor's diploma, or 3) earn 12 points in an industry recognized credential or group of credentials in one of thirteen high-demand fields. A score of "F" means that less than 40% have achieved any of these three goals, indicating that high-school graduates are not well prepared for successful careers. Figure 13 depicts the quality of each school in Adams County. Both schools in the Manchester Local SD were graded "C". Two of six schools in the Ohio Valley SD were graded "C". The other four schools were graded "D".

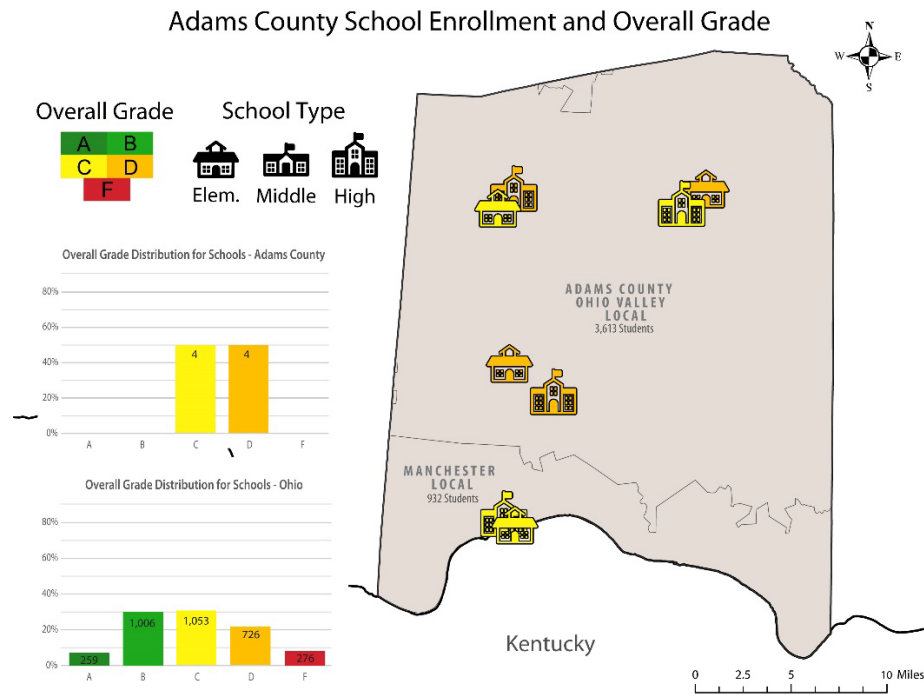
<sup>12</sup> Source: Ohio Department of Education, Enrollment Data, 1990-2019

**Table 3: Quality of Schools in Adams County's School Districts and Ohio<sup>13</sup>**

Component	Definition	Weight	Ohio	Ohio Valley	Manchester Local
Achievement	Number of students who passed the state tests	20%	C	C	C
Progress	Growth students make based on past years standardized tests	20%	C	D	B
Graduation Rate	How many students successfully complete high school in 4-5 years	15%	B	B	A
Gap Closing	How well schools meet performance expectations for all students	15%	B	B	B
Improving At-Risk K-3 Readers	How successful the school is at getting struggling readers on track to proficiency in third grade and beyond.	15%	D	D	C
Prepared for Success	How well students are prepared for all future opportunities, not just college	15%	D	F	F
Overall	Weighted total average of all six components	-	C	D	C

<sup>13</sup> Source: Ohio Department of Education, Ohio School Report Cards Data 2019

**Figure 13: Quality of Schools in Adams County<sup>14</sup>**



## 2.5 Household Income Distribution

Table 4 describes the number and annual income distributions of households in Adams County and Ohio for the years of 2010 and 2019. By the Census Bureau definition, household income is the sum of annual earnings for all residents of a household, related or unrelated to the homeowner, who are at least 15 years old. In 2019, the largest percentage of Adams County and Ohio households fell into \$15,000-\$24,999 income range and \$50,000-\$74,999 income range, respectively. Furthermore, 33.6% of Adams County’s households earned less than \$25,000 in 2019, compared to 20.1% for Ohio. Adams County’s median income grew by 19.1% from 2010 to 2019, while Ohio’s median household income grew by 30.1%.

Figure 14 shows the changes in median household income for Adams County, Ohio, and the United States from 2010 to 2019. During this time period, Ohio and the US both experienced a steady increase in per household income. Adams County appears to be mostly insulated from the growth in household income observed at the state and national levels, having real median household income increase by only \$7,000 compared to \$9,00 and \$11,000 for Ohio and the US, respectively. Additionally, Adams County experienced two years of negative real growth in 2014 and 2016.

<sup>14</sup> Source: Ohio Department of Education, Ohio School Report Cards Data 2019



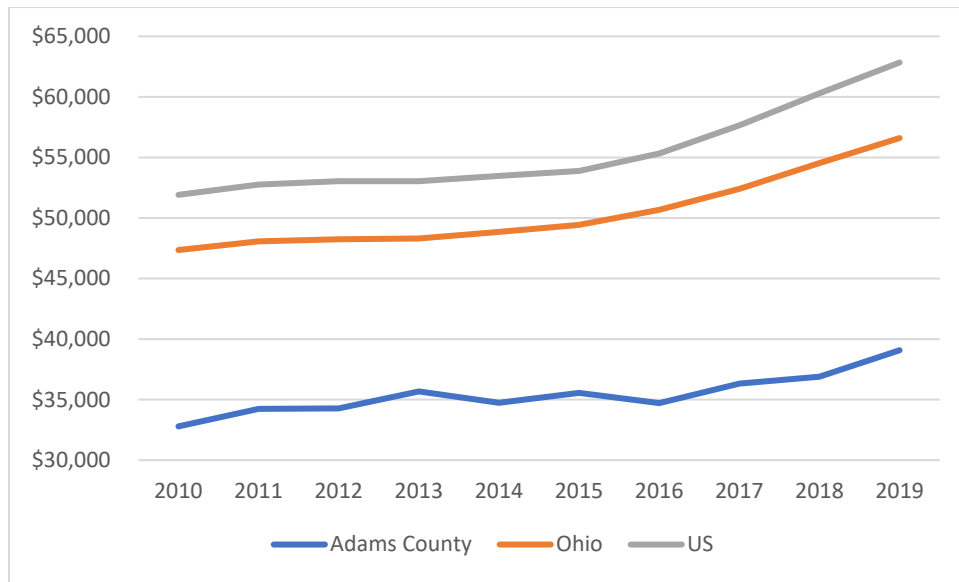


**Table 4: Household Income Distribution: Adams County and Ohio, 2010 and 2019**

	2010		2019		Percent Change
Household Income	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Adams County					
Less than \$10,000	1,420	13.20%	1,195	11.20%	-15.79%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	1,075	10.00%	544	5.10%	1.51%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	1,731	16.10%	1,846	17.30%	-42.94%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	1,441	13.40%	1,334	12.50%	13.79%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	1,731	16.10%	1,494	14.00%	-43.89%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	1,602	14.90%	1,537	14.40%	6.29%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	871	8.10%	1,067	10.00%	66.56%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	645	6.00%	1,142	10.70%	43.24%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	140	1.30%	299	2.80%	64.35%
\$200,000 or more	108	1.00%	213	2.00%	74.82%
Total	10,754		10,673		
Median income (dollars)	32,791		39,079		
Mean income (dollars)	45,351		56,865		
Ohio					
Less than \$10,000	384,631	8.50%	298,011	6.30%	-22.52%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	280,554	6.20%	203,405	4.30%	-27.50%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	574,683	12.70%	449,382	9.50%	-21.80%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	529,433	11.70%	458,843	9.70%	-13.33%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	692,335	15.30%	610,214	12.90%	-11.86%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	850,712	18.80%	889,304	18.80%	4.54%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	520,383	11.50%	614,944	13.00%	18.17%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	452,507	10.00%	681,169	14.40%	50.53%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	131,227	2.90%	269,629	5.70%	105.47%
\$200,000 or more	108,602	2.40%	255,438	5.40%	135.21%
Total	4,525,066		4,730,340		4.54%
Median income (dollars)	45,090		58,642		30.06%
Mean income (dollars)	59,654		79,505		33.28%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Income in the Past 12 Months, 2010-2019					

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Income in the Past 12 Months, 2010-2019

**Figure 14: Median Household Income, 2010-2019<sup>15</sup>**



## 2.6 Year Housing Structure Built

Table 5 shows the distribution of when housing structures were built in Adams County and Ohio. It shows that 23.4% of housing structures in Adams County were constructed between 1980 and 1999. This is greater than that of Ohio, which had 20.9%. Furthermore, 50.5% of housing units in Adams County were constructed before 1980, while 65.6% were constructed in Ohio. This shows that Adams County has constructed less new housing units, but also has fewer amounts of much older housing units compared to the statewide averages.

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Income in the Past 12 Months, 2010-2019

**Table 5: Year Structure Built: Adams County and Ohio, 2019**

Year Built	Adams County		Ohio	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Built 1939 or earlier	92	1.2%	1,042,050	19.9%
Built 1940 to 1949	220	2.9%	310,238	5.9%
Built 1950 to 1959	1,198	15.8%	726,589	13.9%
Built 1960 to 1969	1,267	16.8%	611,358	11.7%
Built 1970 to 1979	1,043	13.8%	741,174	14.2%
Built 1980 to 1989	1,318	17.4%	473,490	9.0%
Built 1990 to 1999	450	6.0%	621,908	11.9%
Built 2000 to 2009	465	6.2%	478,360	9.1%
Built 2010 to 2013	279	3.7%	81,724	1.6%
Built 2014 or later	1,227	16.2%	146,052	2.8%
<b>Total Housing Units:</b>	<b>7,559</b>		<b>5,232,943</b>	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Selected Household Characteristics, 2019

## 2.7 Housing Property Values

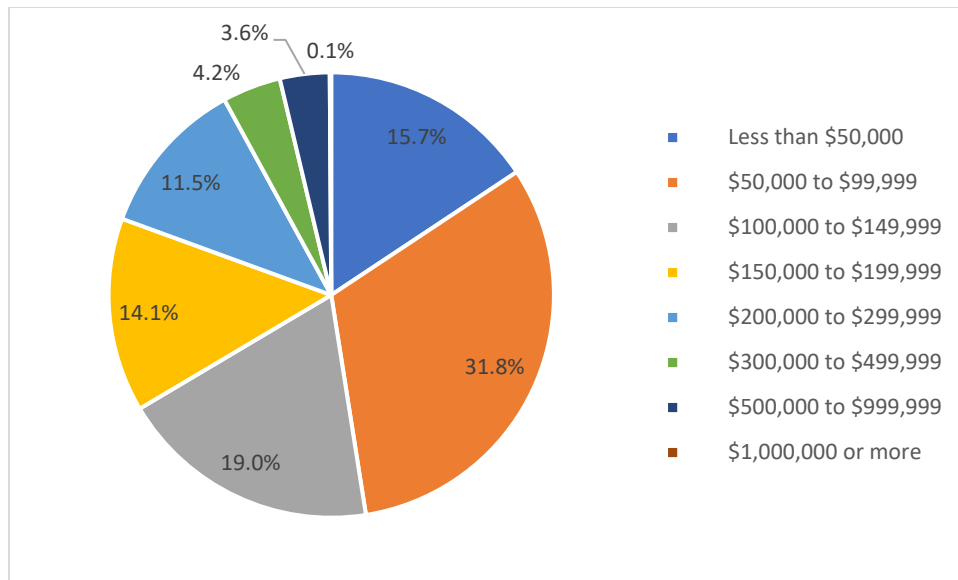
Table 6 displays the current property value distribution of housing structures in Adams County and Ohio. This data shows that the property values in Adams County are much lower than that of the surrounding area. In 2019, there were 7,559 recorded homes in Adams County with a median value of \$127,600, which is \$29,600 lower than Ohio and \$95,000 less than the United States. This is further supported by the fact that 47.5% of Adams County's housing units are valued at less than \$100,000, while only 26.8% of Ohio's are worth less than \$100,000. Figure 15 visualizes the distribution of housing property values in Adams County. The most common housing property value range was \$50,000 to \$99,999, comprising 31.8% of all houses.

**Table 6: Property Values: Adams County and Ohio, 2019**

VALUE	Adams County		Ohio	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than \$50,000	1,185	15.7%	243,405	7.8%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	2,406	31.8%	593,771	19.0%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	1,434	19.0%	626,149	20.0%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1,065	14.1%	560,671	17.9%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	867	11.5%	609,321	19.5%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	321	4.2%	365,040	11.7%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	273	3.6%	106,756	3.4%
\$1,000,000 or more	8	0.1%	18,620	0.6%
<b>Median (dollars)</b>	<b>127,600</b>		<b>157,200</b>	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Selected Household Characteristics, 2019

**Figure 15: Housing Property Value Distribution, Adams County, 2017<sup>16</sup>**



## 2.8 Rent Distribution

Table 7 presents the rent payment distribution of Adams County and Ohio in 2017. The highest rent range in Adams County has is \$1,500 to \$1,999, which only accounts for 0.7% of the units. This shows that Adams County lacks higher end rental units. Collectively, Tables 5 and 7 show that 22.54% of Adams County's households live in rent paying units, which is lower than the rest of Ohio at 28.81%. This shows that a decent portion of Adams County's population does not have a permanent residence.

<sup>16</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Selected Household Characteristics, 2019

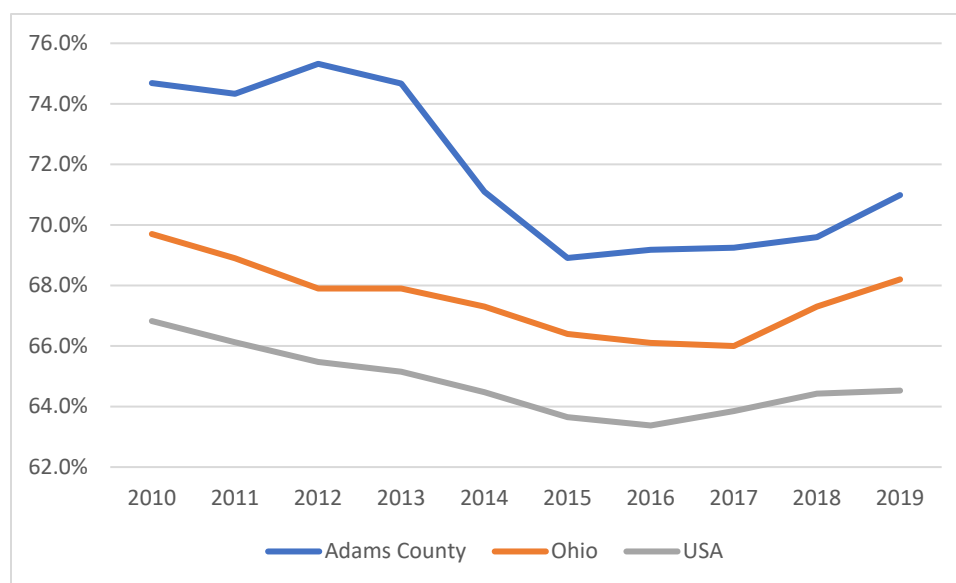
**Table 7: Units Paying Rent: Adams County and Ohio, 2019**

GROSS RENT	Adams County		Ohio	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than \$500	1,015	34.8	234,971	15.8
\$500 to \$999	1,673	57.4	908,723	60.9
\$1,000 to \$1,499	206	7.1	279,009	18.7
\$1,500 to \$1,999	20	0.7	45,776	3.1
\$2,000 to \$2,499	0	0.0	12,984	0.9
\$2,500 to \$2,999	0	0.0	4,298	0.3
\$3,000 or more	0	0.0	5,383	0.4
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>2,914</b>		<b>1,491,144</b>	
<b>Median (dollars)</b>	<b>\$571</b>		<b>\$764</b>	
<b>No rent paid</b>	<b>510</b>		<b>81,528</b>	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Selected Household Characteristics, 2019

### Homeownership

Figure 16 shows the homeownership trends for Adams County, Ohio, and the United States from 2010 to 2020. Adams County experienced decreasing homeownership rates similar to the national- and state-level trends following the 2008 housing crisis. By 2020, 71% of Adams County residents owned their house compared to 74.7% in 2010. This is a larger share than at both the national and state-level, with the national rate falling from 66.8% to 64.5% and the state rate falling from 69.7% to 68.2% during this time period.

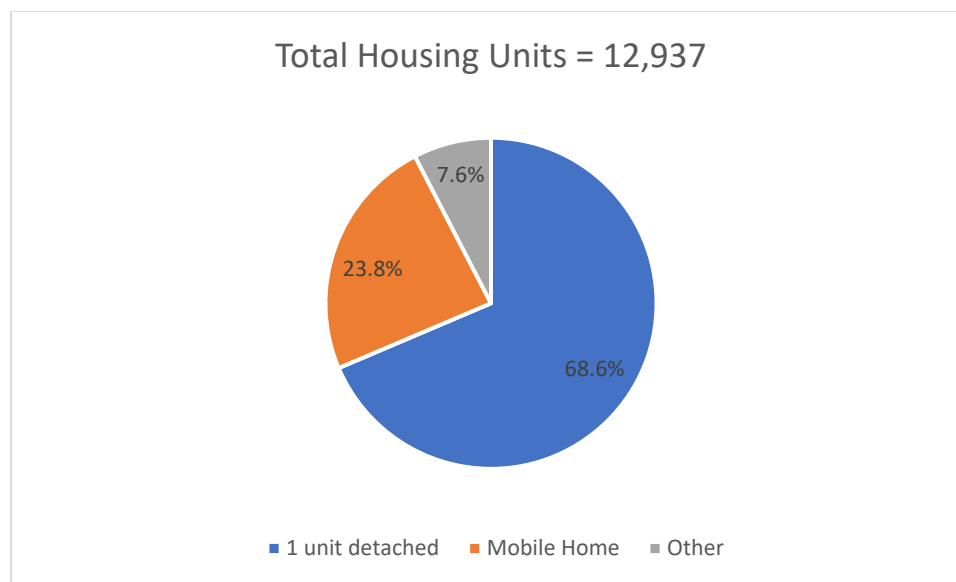
**Figure 16: Homeownership Rate, 2010-2019<sup>17</sup>**

<sup>17</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Selected Household Characteristics, 2019

## Housing Units Structure

Figure 17 shows the distribution of type of housing units in Adams County. In 2019, the most common housing unit structure was a one unit detached house, or single-family home, and accounted for over 68.6% of housing units in Adams County. Additionally, 23.8% of Adams County residents live in mobile home. This is much higher than the national average of mobile home occupancy, which was 5.6% in 2019.

**Figure 17: Housing Unit Structure Distribution, Adams County, 2019<sup>18</sup>**



## 2.9 Health Outcomes

Figure 18 depicts the percentages of diagnosed adult asthma, diagnosed diabetes, and obesity prevalence in Adams County and Ohio in 2017. Adams County's proportion of adults with asthma of 15% and with diabetes of 12% were slightly higher than the Ohio averages of 13.7% and 11.3%, respectively. Additionally, Adams County has a higher obesity prevalence of 40% than the Ohio average of 33.8%.

Figure 19 presents heart disease and stroke hospitalization and death rates from 2014-2016 in Adams County and Ohio. Per 1,000 beneficiaries, about 145 were hospitalized for heart disease and 21 were hospitalized for stroke in Adams County, showing that the county's hospitalization rates were slightly lower than those recorded in Ohio. However, death rates in Adams County were higher than those in the state, with about 64 more heart disease patients and 5 more stroke patients dying in Adams County per 100,000 people.

Figure 20 shows the rate of the four most common cancers in Adams County and Ohio in 2016. The most common cancer in Ohio is prostate cancer, followed by breast cancer, lung and

<sup>18</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

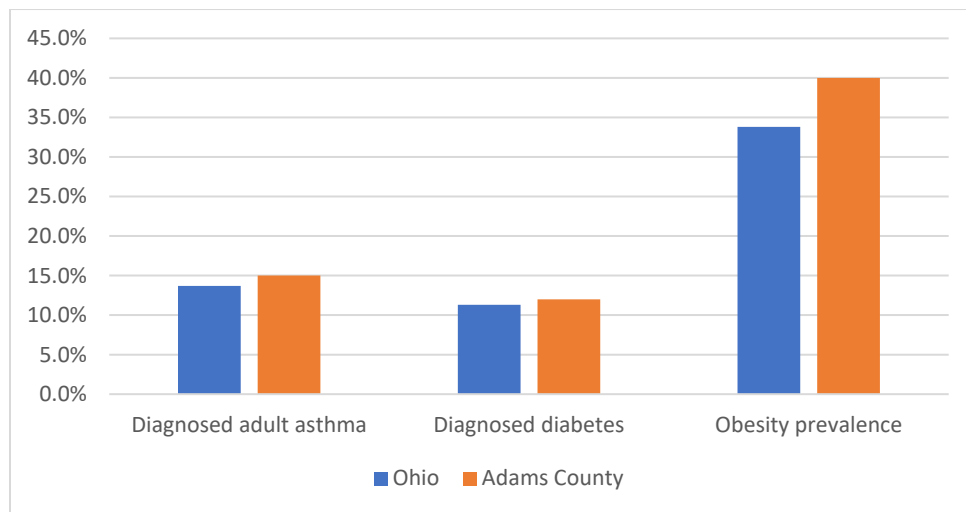
bronchus cancers, and colon and rectum cancers. The most common cancer in Adams County is lung and bronchus cancers, followed by prostate cancer, breast cancer, and colon and rectum cancers. The rates of breast cancer and prostate cancer in Adams County are lower, but comparable to the rates in Ohio. Similarly, the rate of colon and rectum cancers in Adams County is higher, but comparable to the rate in Ohio. However, the rate of lung and bronchus cancers in Adams County is much higher than the rate in Ohio.

Figure 21 shows the leading causes of death in Adams County and Ohio. Heart disease and malignant neoplasms (cancerous tumors) are the leading causes of death in Adams County and Ohio. The death rates for heart disease, malignant neoplasms, and cerebrovascular disease are slightly lower in Adams County than in Ohio. However, the death rates for chronic lower respiratory diseases and accidents are higher in Adams County than in Ohio.

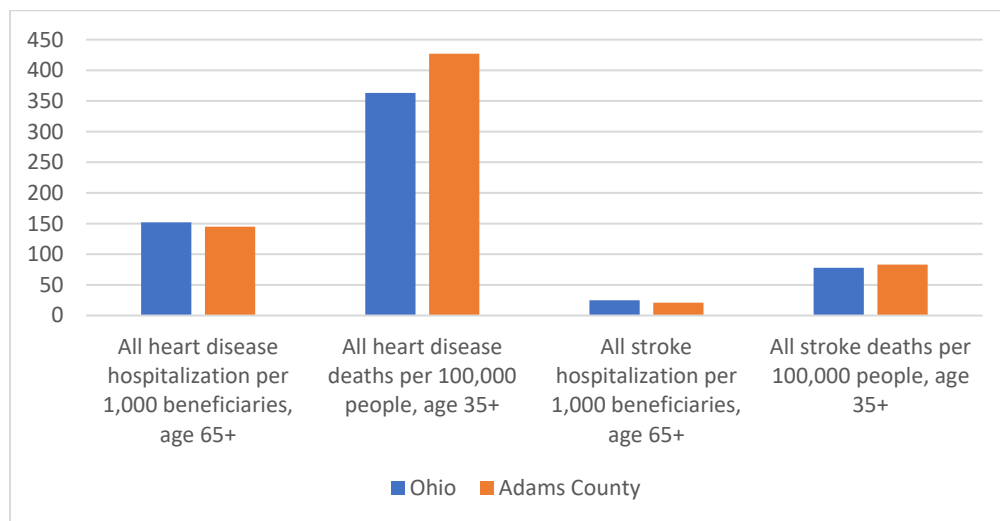
Figure 22 shows the unintentional drug overdose death rate per 100,000 people in Adams County and Ohio from 2007 to 2017. In 2017, the death rate in Adams County was 50.35 per 100,000 people, compared to 41.61 in Ohio. While the Adams County death rate has been consistently higher than the Ohio death rate, they have followed a similar increasing trend during this time period.

Table 8 compares the results of certain measures used to rank health statistics for the United States, Ohio, and Adams County in 2018. The table lists the rankings of health outcomes as well as health factors including health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and physical environments. Most notably Adams County trails behind national and state ratios comparing the population's health outcomes, access to clinical care providers, and access to exercise opportunities. Additionally, exceeds the national and state ratios comparing the population's teen birth rate and injury death rate.

**Figure 18: Asthma, Diabetes, and Obesity Percentages, 2017<sup>19</sup>**



**Figure 19: Heart Disease and Stroke Hospitalization and Death Rates, 2014-2016 estimate<sup>20</sup>**

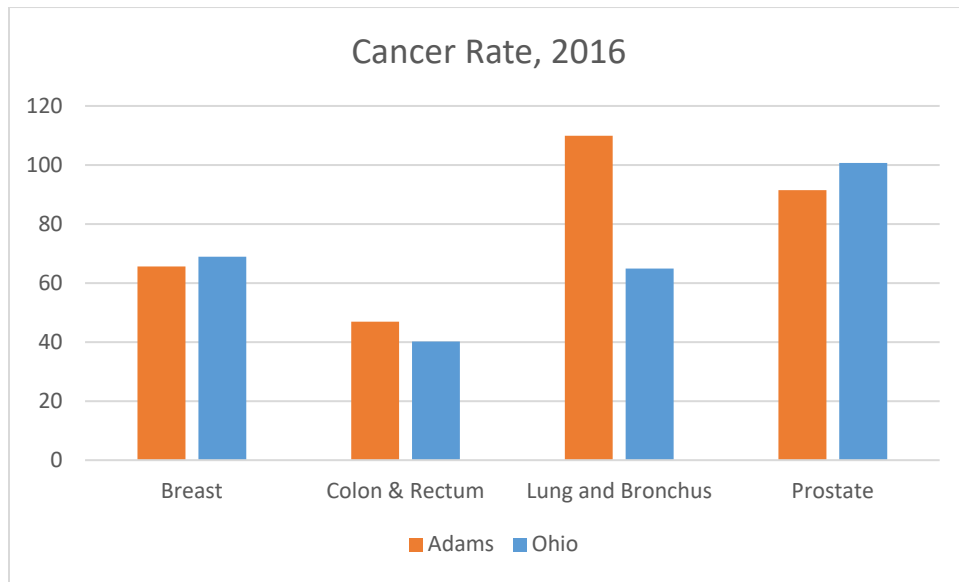


<sup>19</sup> Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2017

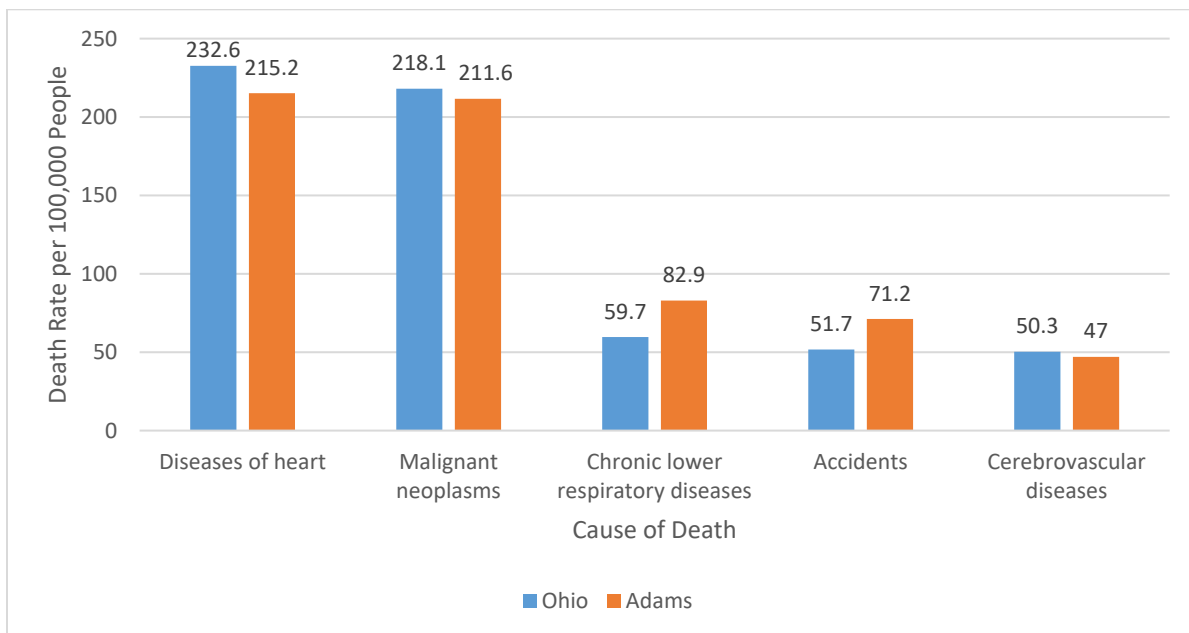
<sup>20</sup> Source: National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention, 2014-2016



**Figure 20: Cancer Rate, Adams County and Ohio, 2016<sup>21</sup>**



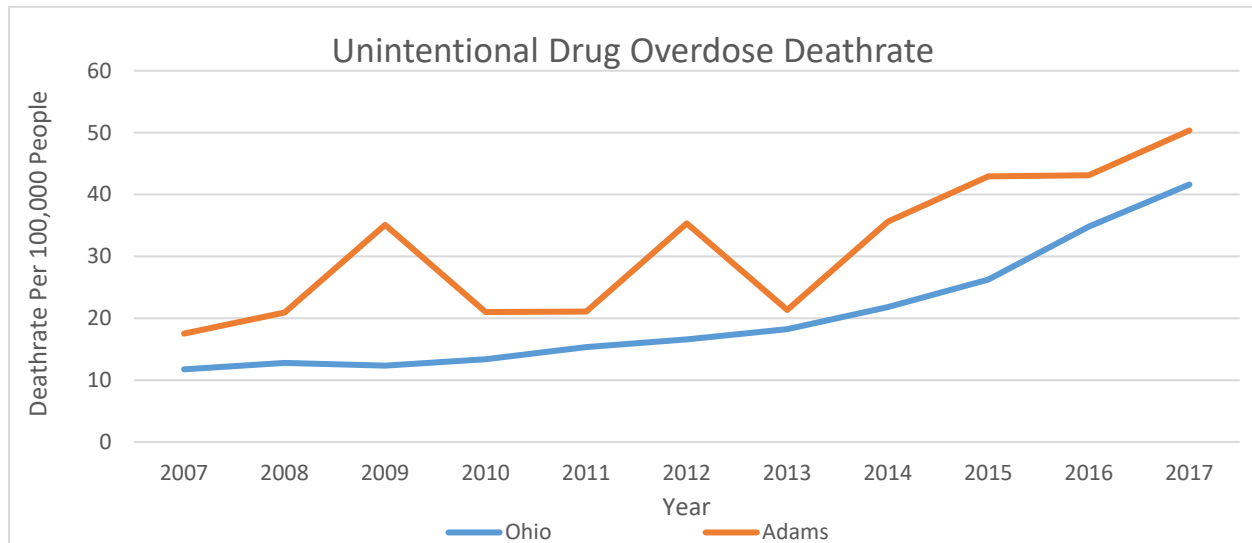
**Figure 21: Leading Cause of Death: Adams County and Ohio, 2007-2019<sup>22</sup>**



<sup>21</sup> Source: Ohio Department of Health, Cancer Incidence Data, 2016

<sup>22</sup> Ohio Department of Health, Mortality Dataset, 2007-2019

**Figure 22: Unintentional Drug Overdose Death Rate, Adams County and Ohio, 2007-2017<sup>23</sup>**



**Table 8: Health Rankings with Measures and Results: United States, Ohio, and Adams County, 2018<sup>24</sup>**

Measure	Description	US	OH	OH Minimum	OH Maximum	Adams County
<b>HEALTH OUTCOMES</b>						
<b>Premature Death</b>	Years of potential life lost before age 75 per 100,000 population	6,700	8,500	4,200	14,100	11,200
<b>Poor or fair health</b>	% of adults reporting fair or poor health	16%	18%	12%	25%	25%
<b>Poor physical health days</b>	Average # of physically unhealthy days reported in past 30 days	3.7	4.1	3.1	5.6	5.6
<b>Poor mental health days</b>	Average # of mentally unhealthy days reported in past 30 days	3.8	4.8	4.1	5.8	5.8

<sup>23</sup> Source: Ohio Department of Health, Mortality Dataset, 2007-2017

<sup>24</sup> University of Wisconsin, Population Health Institute, County Health Rankings, 2018

<b>Low birthweight</b>	% of live births with low birthweight (< 2500 grams)	8%	9%	4%	11%	9%
<b>Measure</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>OH</b>	<b>OH Min</b>	<b>OH Max</b>	<b>Adams County</b>
<b>HEALTH FACTORS</b>						
<b>HEALTH BEHAVIORS</b>						
<b>Adult Smoking</b>	% of adults who are current smokers	17%	21%	15%	31%	30%
<b>Adult obesity</b>	% of adults that report a BMI $\geq$ 30	28%	34%	26%	43%	36%
<b>Food environment index</b>	Index of actors that contribute to a healthy food environment, (0-10)	7.7	6.8	5.2	9.1	6.7
<b>Physical inactivity</b>	% of adults aged 20 and over reporting no leisure-time physical activity	23%	26%	17%	40%	38%
<b>Access to exercise opportunities</b>	% of population with adequate access to locations for physical activity	83%	84%	17%	98%	42%
<b>Excessive drinking</b>	% of adults reporting binge or heavy drinking	18%	18%	15%	22%	16%
<b>Alcohol-impaired driving deaths</b>	% of driving deaths with alcohol involvement	29%	32%	4%	63%	46%
<b>Sexually transmitted infections</b>	# of newly diagnosed chlamydia cases per 100,000 population	478.8	542.3	91	883	202
<b>Teen births</b>	# of births per 1,000 female population ages 15-19	27	22	6	49	40

Measure	Description	US	OH	OH Minimum	OH Maximum	Adams County
<b>CLINICAL CARE</b>						
<b>Uninsured</b>	% of population under age 65 without health insurance	11%	8%	5%	24%	10%
<b>Primary care physicians</b>	Ratio of population to primary care physicians	1320:1	1,300:1	14,600:1	690:1	2,310:1
<b>Dentists</b>	Ratio of population to dentists	1480:1	1,560:1	15,040:1	1,560:1	3,080:1
<b>Mental health providers</b>	Ratio of population to mental health providers	470:1	380:1	7,330:1	110:1	640:1
<b>Preventable hospital stays</b>	# of hospital stays for ambulatory-care sensitive conditions per 1,000 Medicare enrollees	49	4,901	1,041	7,940	7,070
<b>Diabetes monitoring</b>	% of diabetic Medicare enrollees ages 65-75 that receive HbA1c monitoring	63%	43%	31%	51%	42%
<b>Mammography screening</b>	% of female Medicare enrollees ages 67-69 that receive mammography screening	83%	90%	57%	96%	80%

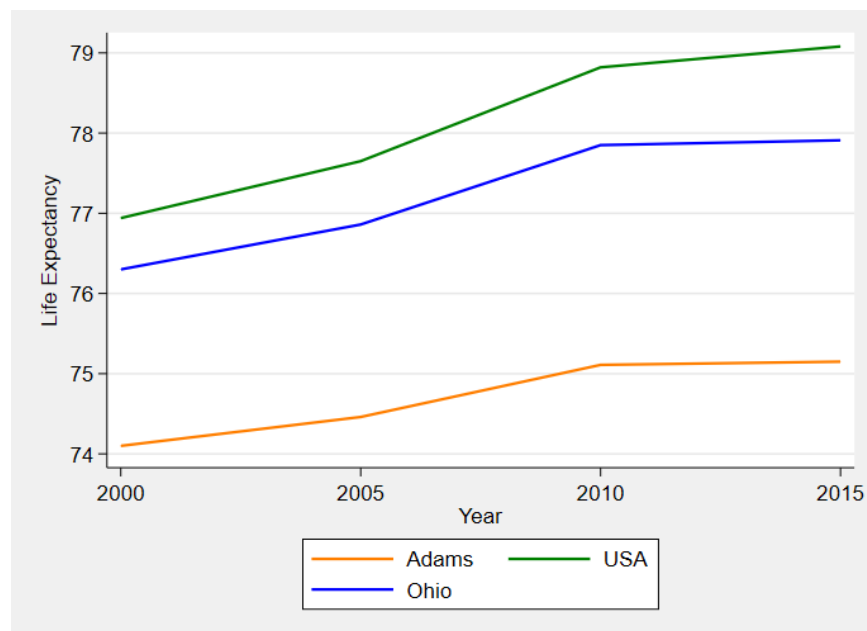
Measure	Description	US	OH	OH Minimum	OH Maximum	Adams County
<b>SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS</b>						
<b>High school graduation</b>	% of ninth-grade cohort that graduates in four years	65%	66%	19%	85%	43%
<b>Some college</b>	% of adults ages 25-44 with some post-secondary education	4.9%	4.1%	2.6%	8.3%	6.8%
<b>Unemployment</b>	% of population aged 16 and older unemployed but seeking work	20%	5%	18%	30%	30%
<b>Children in poverty</b>	% of children under age 18 in poverty	5	4.7	3.3	6.4	5.2
<b>Income inequality</b>	Ratio of household income at the 80th percentile to income at the 20th percentile	34%	27%	6%	38%	32%
<b>Children in single-parent households</b>	% of children that live in a household headed by a single parent	9.3	11	3.8	19.6	8.3
<b>Social associations</b>	# of membership associations per 10,000 population	380	293	0	824	86
<b>Violent crime</b>	# of reported violent crime offenses per 100,000 population	65	91	38	137	118
<b>Injury deaths</b>	# of deaths due to injury per 100,000 population	9.7	9	6.5	12.2	8.7

Measure	Description	US	OH	OH Minimum	OH Maximum	Adams County
<b>PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</b>						
<b>Air pollution - particulate matter</b>	Average daily density of fine particulate matter in micrograms per cubic meter (PM2.5)	9.7	9	6.5	12.2	8.7
<b>Drinking water violations</b>	Indicator of the presence of health related drinking water violations. Yes - indicates the presence of a violation, No - indicates no violation.	No	No	No	No	No
<b>Severe housing problems</b>	% of households with overcrowding, high housing costs, or lack of kitchen or plumbing facilities	19%	14%	7%	21%	16%
<b>Driving alone to work</b>	% of workforce that drives alone to work	76%	83%	52%	90%	80%
<b>Long commute - driving alone</b>	Among workers who commute in their car alone, % commuting > 30 minutes	35%	31%	17%	58%	48%

## Life Expectancy

Figure 23 shows that life expectancy in Adams County has consistently remained below the national and state averages from 2000 to 2015. Specifically, Adams County life expectancy has increased from 74.1 years to 75.15 years, about a 1.42% increase. Ohio life expectancy was 76.3 years in 2000 and increased by 2.11% to 77.91 years in 2015. The average national life expectancy was 76.94 years in 2000 and increased by 2.78% to 79.08 years in 2015. In addition to Adams County experiencing a lower life expectancy by over 4 years with respect to the national average, Adams County's growth rate has only been about half as fast as the national average.

**Figure 23: Life Expectancy, 2000-2015<sup>25</sup>**

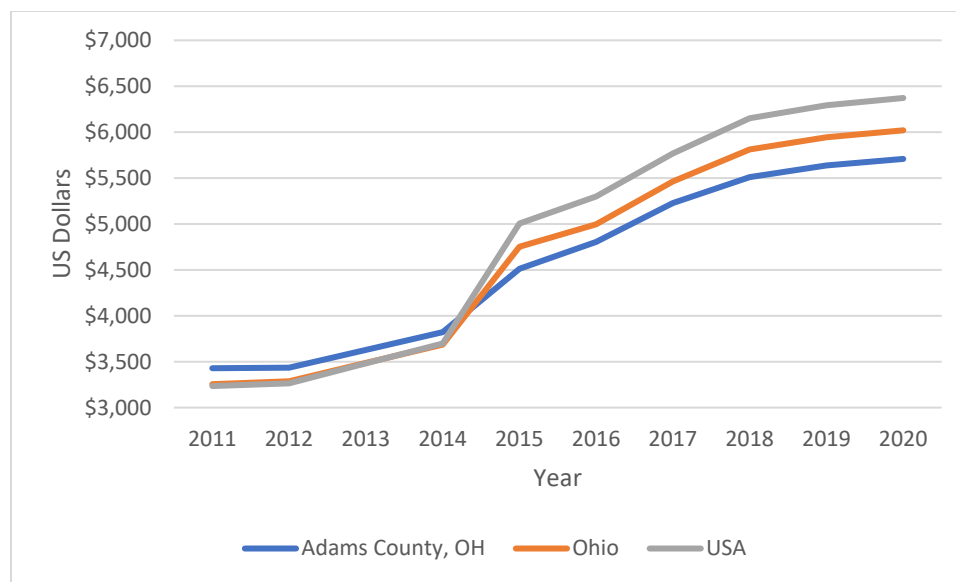


<sup>25</sup> Source: Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, Global Health Data Exchange, 2011-2020

## Healthcare Spending

Figure 24 shows that healthcare spending in Adams County has followed a very similar trend to both Ohio and the United States. Median household spending was \$3,429 in 2011 and has grown to \$5,708 in 2020 in Adams County. This spending has been consistently slightly higher than both the state and national medians, which were about \$3,255 and \$3,263 in 2011 and \$6,020 and \$6,372 in 2020, respectively.

**Figure 24: Healthcare Spending, 2011-2020<sup>26</sup>**



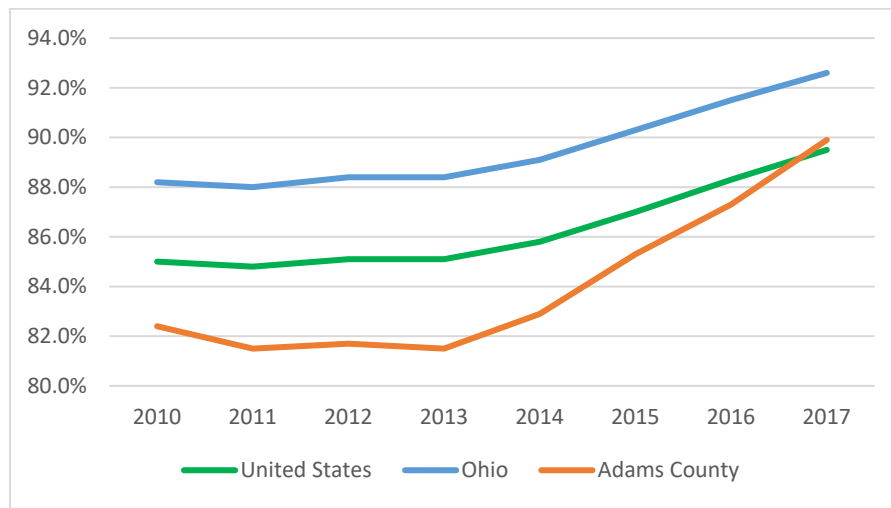
## Health Insurance

Figure 25 shows the percentage the population in Adams County, Ohio, and the United States with health insurance. The graph shows that the percentage with health insurance was relatively stable from 2010 to 2013 and then experienced an increase afterwards at all three levels. This may correlate to the enactment of the Affordable Care Act in 2014. In 2017, 89.9% of the population of Adams County had health insurance, compared to 92.6% and 89.5% of Ohio and the United States respectively. The percentage of the population with health insurance in Adams County has been consistently lower than Ohio from 2010 to 2017. Likewise, the percentage of the population with health insurance in Adams County was lower than the United States from 2010 to 2016. However, the percentage in Adams County was higher than percentage in the United States in 2017.

<sup>26</sup> Source: Easy Analytic Software, Inc <https://simplyanalytics.com/>



**Figure 25: Percent of Population with Health Insurance: Adams County, Ohio, and the United States, 2010-2017<sup>27</sup>**



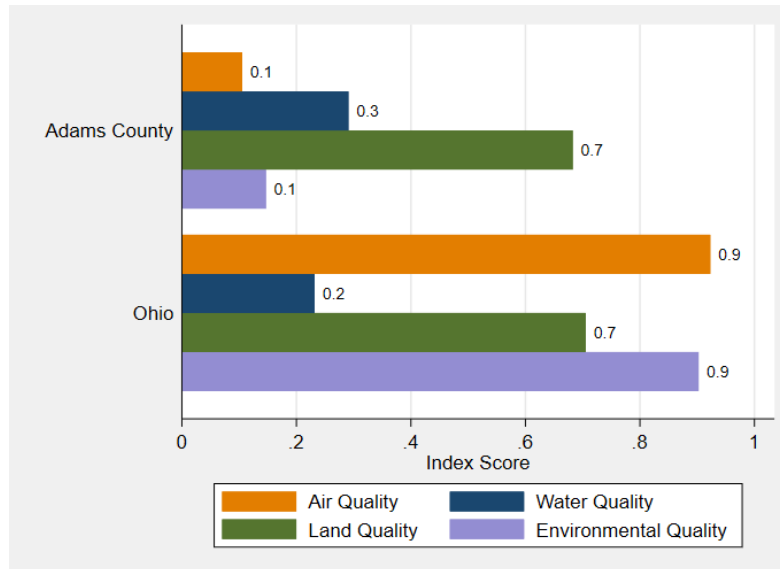
### Environmental Quality

Figure 26 shows the EPA environmental quality rankings for Adams County and Ohio, standardized with respect to the United States. While Adams County boasts higher environmental quality than the national averages, it has generally scored lower compared to the state average. Most notably, air quality in Adams County in 2017 was scored at 0.1 standard deviations higher than the national average, while the Ohio average score was 0.9 standard deviations higher.

**Figure 26: Environment Quality Index, 2017<sup>28</sup>**

<sup>27</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

<sup>28</sup> Source: Environmental Protection Agency, Environmental Dataset Gateway, Environmental Quality Index, 2017

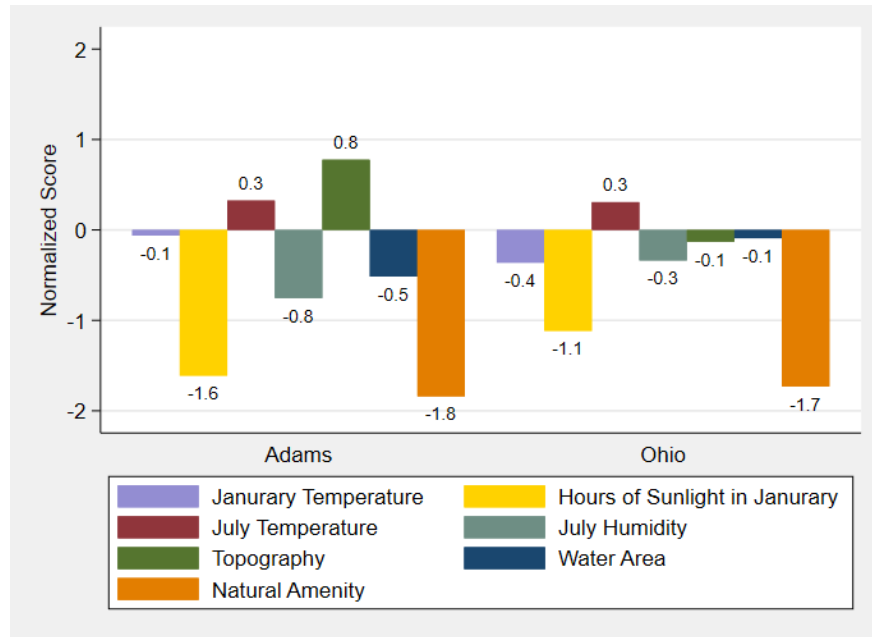


### Amenity Score

Figure 27 shows the amenity score rankings for Adams County and Ohio, standardized with respect to the United States. A positive ranking is associated with a more appealing attribute than the national average. Adams County has positive rankings for Topography and July Temperatures (indicating a milder summer). Additionally, Adams County scored better on Topography and January Temperatures when compared to Ohio. Adams County scored worse than Ohio and the US on Hours of Sunlight in January, July Humidity, Water Area, and Natural Amenity.

**Figure 27: Amenity Score<sup>29</sup>**

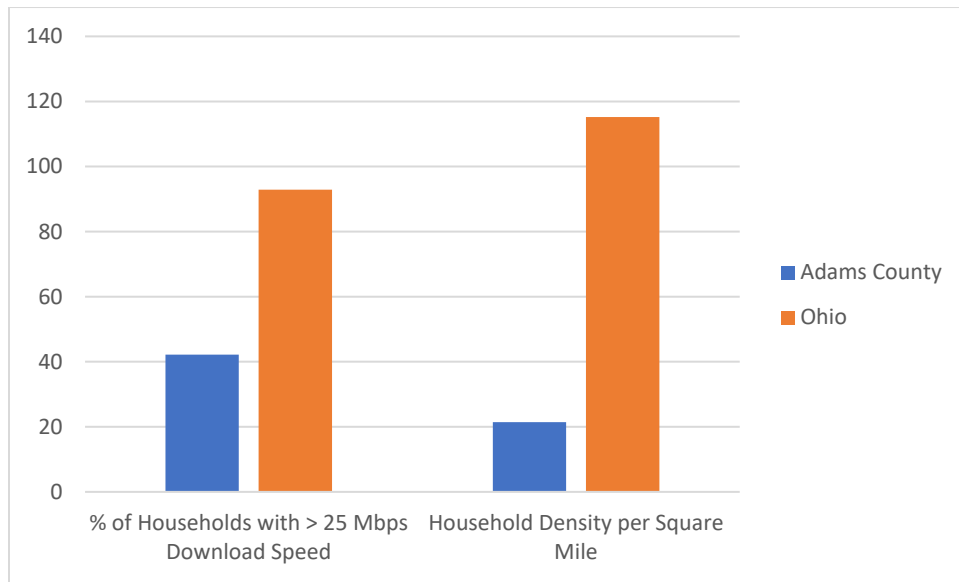
<sup>29</sup> Source: United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Natural Amenities Scale, 2019



## Broadband

Figure 28 shows the percentage of households in Adams County and Ohio with internet download speed greater than 25 Mbps in 2019. Additionally, Figure 28 shows the household density per square mile. Only 42.17% of households in Adams County have a download speed greater than 25 Mbps, compared to 92.90% of households in Ohio. However, the household density per square mile in Adams County is 21.44, which is much lower than in Ohio at 115.21. Lower population density may be prohibitive for companies deciding whether or not to invest in broadband infrastructure in rural communities.

**Figure 28: Broadband, Adams County and Ohio, 2017<sup>30</sup>**

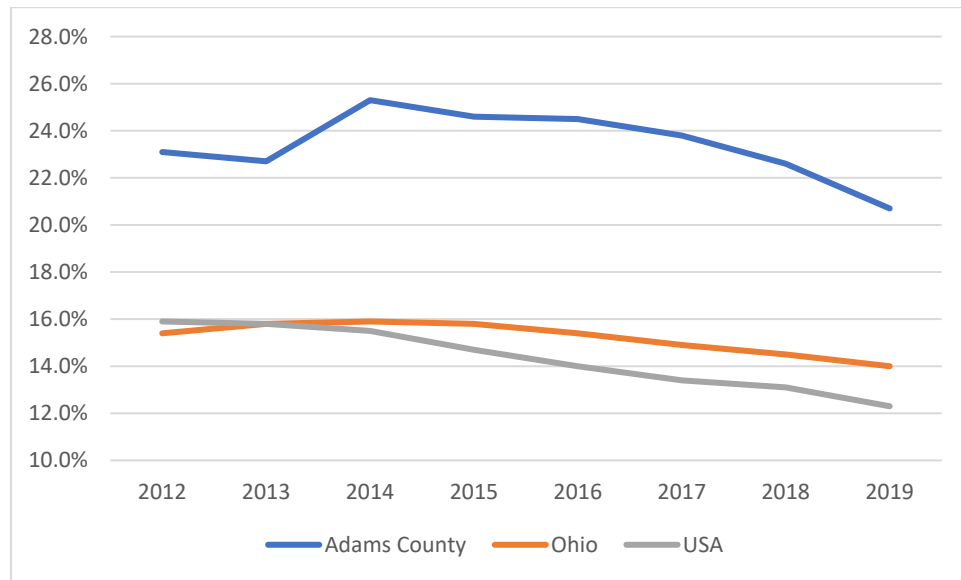


<sup>30</sup> Source: Connected Nation, Estimated Availability of Broadband Service by County Terrestrial Broadband, 2019

## Poverty

Figure 29 shows the poverty rates for Adams County, Ohio, and the United States from 2012 to 2019. Poverty rates in Adams County consistently remained high above state and national averages, fluctuating around 20% from 2010 to 2010. Meanwhile, the state and national poverty rates have both remained around mostly below 16%%.

**Figure 29: Poverty Rate, 2012-2019<sup>31</sup>**

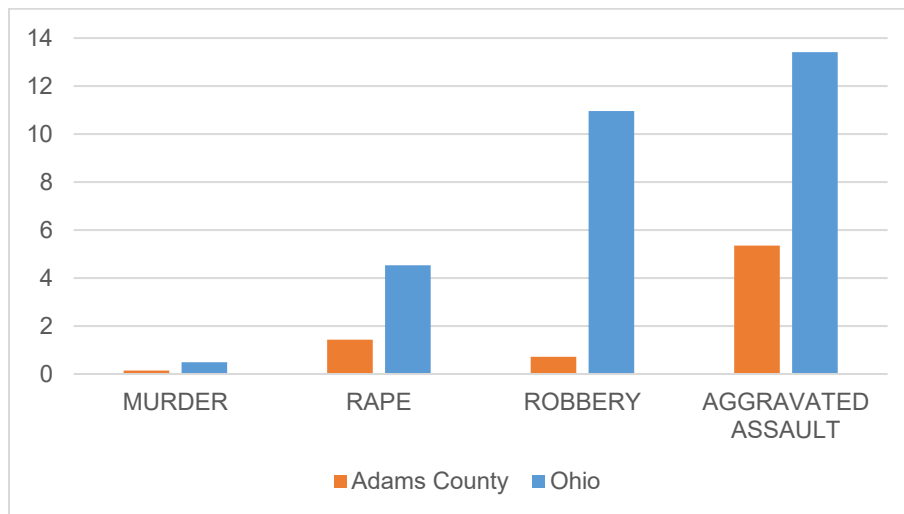


## Crime Rates

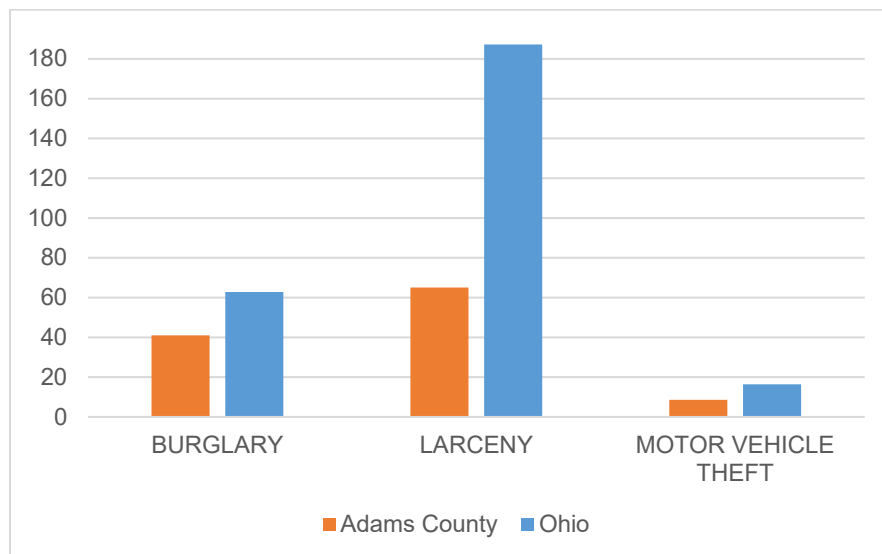
Figure 30 and 31 show the average crime rates in Adams County and Ohio from 2013 to 2017. The crime rates in Adams County are lower than the Ohio averages across all categories in violent and property crimes. Note that the “arson” category within property crimes was left out due to lack of state-level data.

<sup>31</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2011-2017

**Figure 30: Average Violent Crime per 10,000 persons: Adams County and Ohio, 2013-2017<sup>32</sup>**



**Figure 31: Average Property Crime per 10,000 persons: Adams County and Ohio, 2013-2017<sup>33</sup>**



<sup>32</sup> Source: Ohio Department of Public Safety, Office of Criminal Justice Services, Crime Statistics and Crime Reports, 2013-2017

<sup>33</sup> Source: Ohio Department of Public Safety, Office of Criminal Justice Services, Crime Statistics and Crime Reports, 2013-2017

### **3 Economic Scan and Workforce Inventory**

This section provides a report of the current and historic industry and occupational employment trends for Adams County and Ohio, as well as an analysis of regional employed resident commuter behavior.

#### **3.1 Employment by Industry**

Table 9 breaks down industry-specific employment data for Adams County and Ohio in 2010 and 2019. Education services, retail trade and manufacturing are Adams County's most significantly employed industries at 57.2% of the county's working population. These industries are also the most significant employer for Ohio, employing 51.76% of the population of Ohio.

Adams County had seven industries with employment growth from 2010 to 2019, compared to six industries with employment decline. Of the growth industries, two industries had a growth rate of over 50%, including 84.89% growth in educational services. On the other hand, three of six industries that exhibited decreases experienced employment declines of greater than 25%, including a loss of 40.44% in information.

**Table 9: Employment by Industry: Adams County and Ohio, 2010 and 2019<sup>34</sup>**

Industry	2010 Estimate	Percent	2019 Estimate	Percent	Percent Change
<b>Adams County</b>					
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining:	273	4.20%	269	3.76%	-1.47%
Construction	637	9.80%	748	10.46%	17.43%
					-
Manufacturing	1,461	22.47%	1,278	17.87%	12.53%
					-
Wholesale trade	145	2.23%	99	1.38%	31.72%
Retail trade	642	9.88%	885	12.37%	37.85%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities:	462	7.11%	700	9.79%	51.52%
					-
Information	136	2.09%	81	1.13%	40.44%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing:	277	4.26%	200	2.80%	27.80%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services:	234	3.60%	201	2.81%	14.10%
					-
Professional, scientific, and technical services	161	2.48%	100	1.40%	37.89%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance:	1,483	22.81%	1,928	26.96%	30.01%
Educational services	450	6.92%	832	11.63%	84.89%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services:	288	4.43%	359	5.02%	24.65%
Other services, except public administration	208	3.20%	218	3.05%	4.81%
					-
Public administration	255	3.92%	186	2.60%	27.06%
<b>Civilian employed population 16 years and over</b>	<b>6,501</b>		<b>7,152</b>		<b>10.01%</b>



Industry	2010 Estimate	Percent	2019 Estimate	Percent	Percent Change
<b>OHIO</b>					
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining:	38,659	1.09%	40,959	1.05%	5.95%
Construction	195,340	5.51%	221,881	5.68%	13.59%
Manufacturing	712,606	20.09%	743,811	19.03%	4.38%
Wholesale trade	130,834	3.69%	124,636	3.19%	-4.74%
Retail trade	353,980	9.98%	375,957	9.62%	6.21%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities:	203,845	5.75%	226,050	5.78%	10.89%
					-
Information	75,286	2.12%	64,323	1.65%	14.56%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing:	278,689	7.86%	298,746	7.64%	7.20%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services:	321,725	9.07%	384,485	9.84%	19.51%
Professional, scientific, and technical services	202,012	5.70%	245,264	6.27%	21.41%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance:	750,780	21.17%	894,985	22.90%	19.21%
Educational services	245,357	6.92%	294,194	7.53%	19.90%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services:	169,584	4.78%	203,126	5.20%	19.78%
Other services, except public administration	134,474	3.79%	144,155	3.69%	7.20%
Public administration	180,621	5.09%	185,617	4.75%	2.77%
<b>Civilian employed population 16 years and over</b>	<b>3,546,423</b>		<b>3,908,731</b>		<b>10.22%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Industry by Occupation for the Civilian Employed Population 2010-2019

### 3.2 Labor Force Overview

Figure 32 reports data for labor force eligibility and employment in Adams County from 2010 to 2019. In 2010, 10,551 individuals were employed in Adams County. This fell to 10,100 in 2012 and has stabilized around this level. On the other hand, the labor force size has been decreasing since 2013 with the rate of the decrease getting more severe over time.

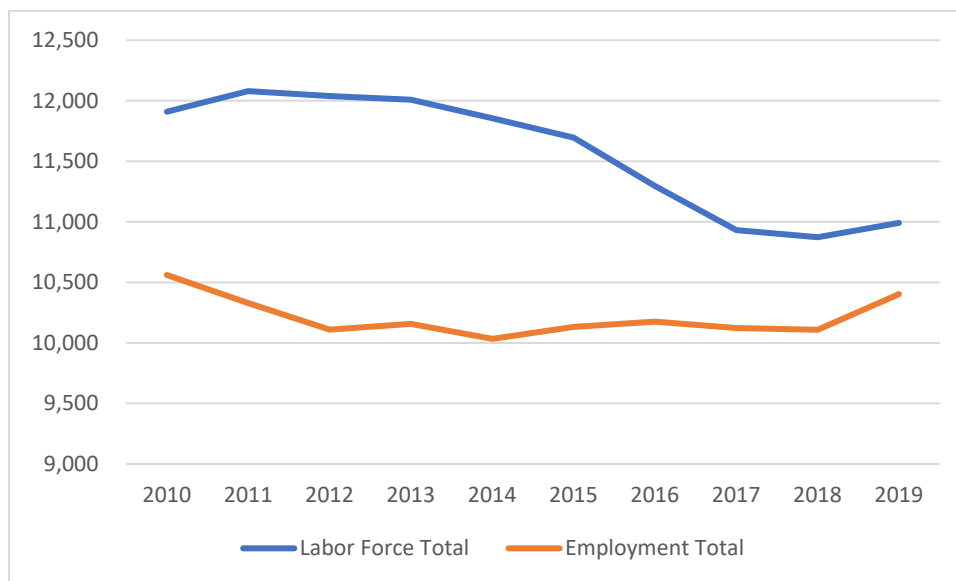
Figure 33 shows how Adams County's unemployment rate compares with Ohio and the United States. Adams County's unemployment rate has been consistently much higher than the state and national averages. Adams County experienced a reduction in unemployment from 2013 to 2016. However, it is important to note that during this time Adams County's labor force size was shrinking, while its employment remained relatively stable. From 2015 to 2017, Adams County's unemployment rate has been about 10%, while Ohio's has been at about 5%.

To further examine how the unemployment rate decreased while the amount of individuals employed remained stable, Figure 34 shows the participation rate of Adams County, Ohio, and the United States. The graph shows that while the state and national participation rates were nearly identical, Adams County's rate was significantly lower. From 2010 to 2015, Adams County's participation rate was about 10% lower than Ohio's rate. By 2017, Adams County's rate was 13.1% lower than Ohio's rate. Additionally, while participation rates decreased for all

three from 2013 to 2019, Adams County's rate decreased by 4.5%, while the state and national rates decreased by less than 2%.

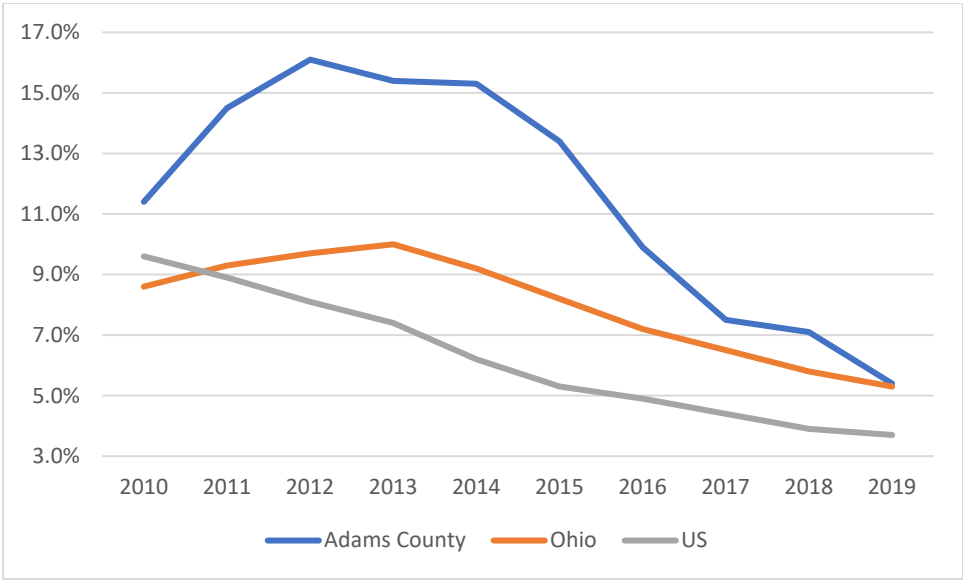
To further explore why Adams County's rate was significantly lower, Figure 35 separates the county's participation rate by gender. Women have consistently had a lower participation rate than men in Adams County, with there being nearly an 8% difference between the genders in 2019. Additionally, the graph shows that male labor force participation was stable around 58.6% from 2010 to 2013. From 2013 to 2017, the male participation rate fell 4.4%, then increased a small amount to 68.5%. Likewise, female labor force participation was stable around 50.3% from 2010 to 2014. From 2014 to 2017, the female participation rate fell 4.6% before increasing to about 60%.

**Figure 32: Adams County Labor Force and Employment, 2010-2019<sup>35</sup>**

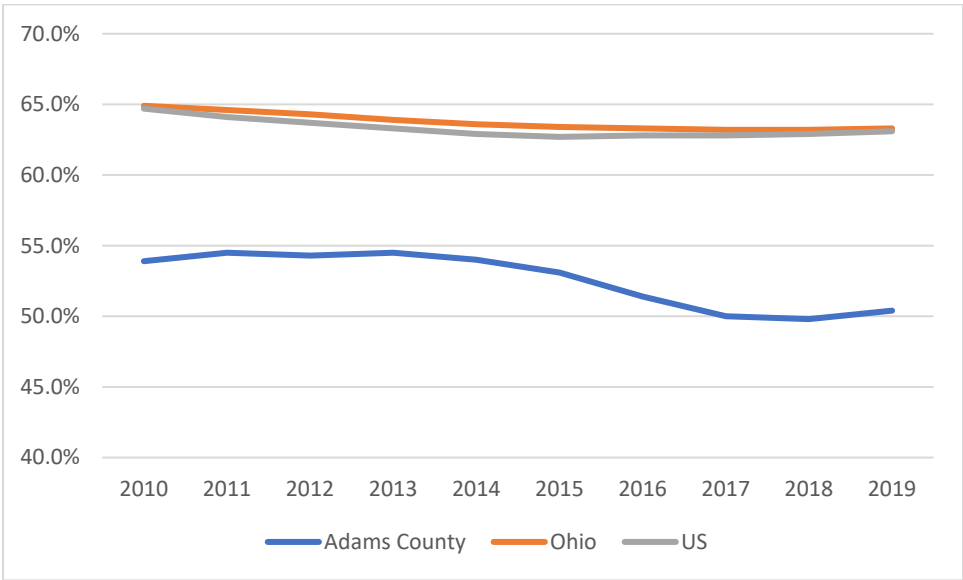


<sup>35</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010-2019

**Figure 33: Unemployment Rate: Adams County, Ohio, and the United States, 2011-2019<sup>36</sup>**



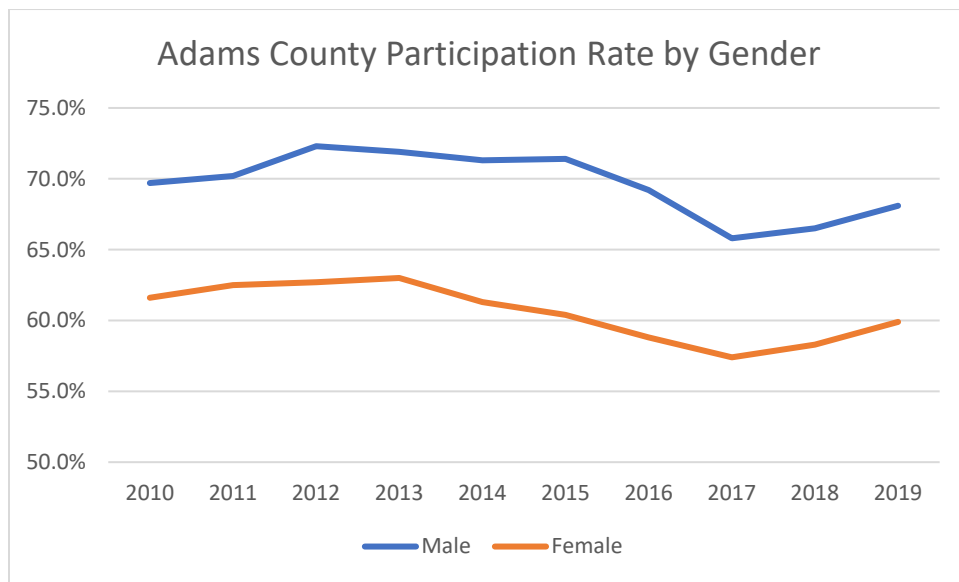
**Figure 34: Participation Rate: Adams County, Ohio, and the United States, 2010-2019<sup>37</sup>**



<sup>36</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010-2019

<sup>37</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010-2019

**Figure 35: Adams County Participation Rate by Gender, 2010-2019<sup>38</sup>**



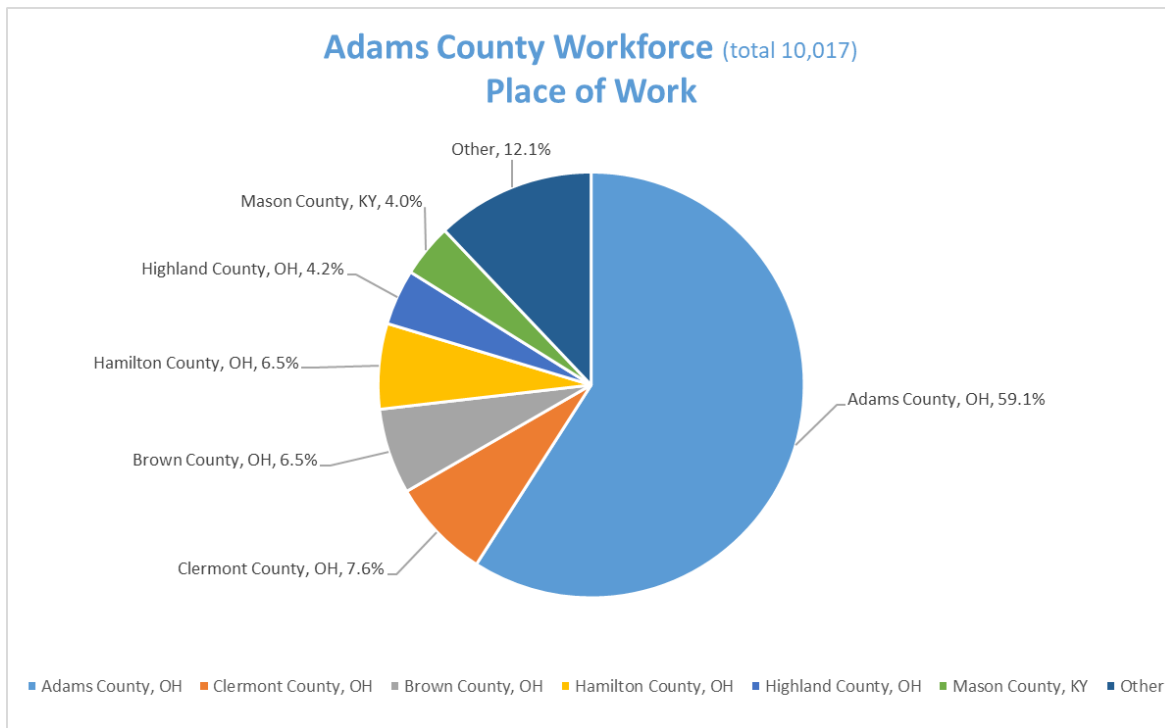
### 3.3 Employed Resident Commute Shed

Figure 36 shows the distribution of Adams County residents' place of work by county. In 2015, there were 10,017 employed residents of Adams County. 59.1% of the employed Adams County residents stayed in-county to work. Of the 40.9% of residents who left the county to work, 7.6% commute to Clermont County. Additionally, 6.2% of residents leave the state of Ohio for work with 4.0% commuting to Mason County, Kentucky.

Figure 37 shows the distribution of the place of residence of those who work in Adams County. In 2015, there were 7,109 individuals employed in Adams County. 83.2% of individuals who work in Adams County also reside in Adams County. Of the 16.8% of individuals who reside in other counties, 4.5% of Adams County workers live in Brown County. Overall, Adams County experienced a net loss of 2,908 individuals to the commuting flow patterns.

<sup>38</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010-2017

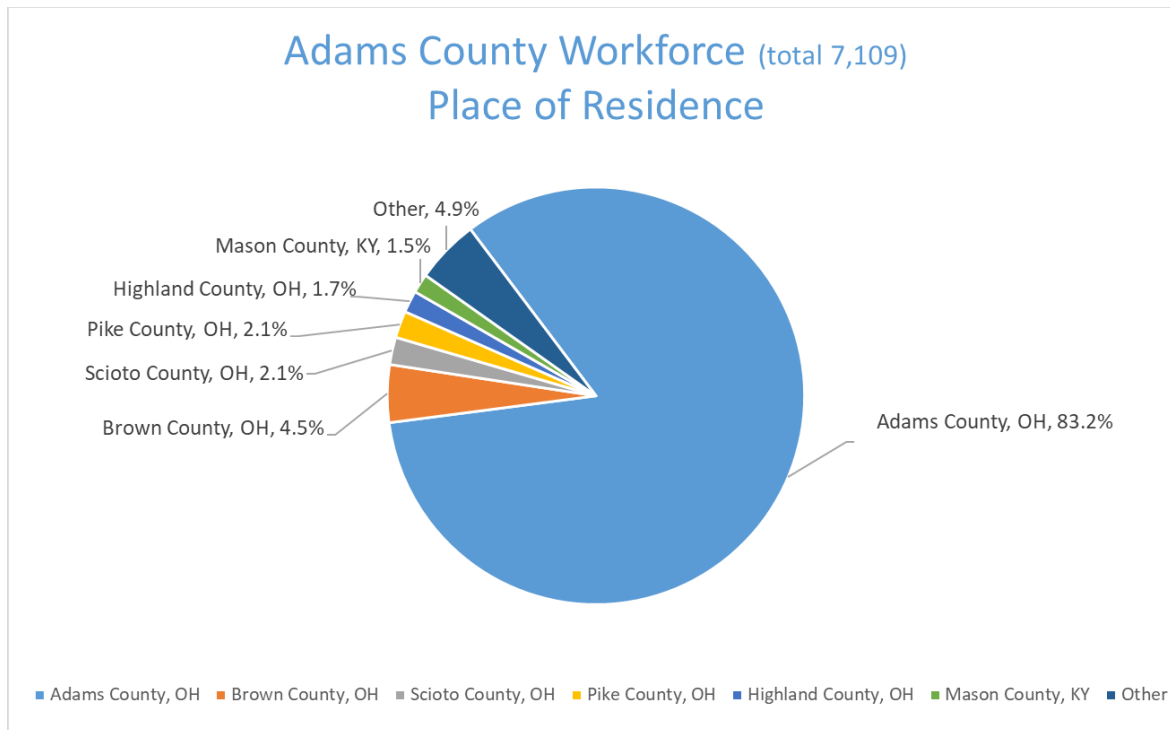
**Figure 36: Adams County Workforce Place of Work, 2011-2015<sup>39</sup>**



**Figure 37: Adams County Workforce Place of Residence, 2011-2015<sup>40</sup>**

<sup>39</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 5-Year American Community Survey, Commuting Flows

<sup>40</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 5-Year American Community Survey, Commuting Flows



## 4. Industry Cluster Analysis

### 4.1 Industry Employment by 3 Digit NAICS Code

This section examines the largest industries by employment in Adams County. Firstly, this section shows the change in employment and then compares the relative strength of each industry as compared to Ohio.

Figure 38 depicts the change in employment from 2012 to 2018 for the selected industries. While eight industries experienced growth in employment, thirteen industries experienced a decline in employment. Additionally, of the eleven industries that employed over 100 people in 2012, eight experienced a decline and three experienced growth. Furthermore, the top five industries (Food Services & Drinking Places, Transportation Equipment Manufacturing, Social Services Assistance, General Merchandise Stores, and Hospitals) all experienced a decline in employment accounting for the loss of 229 jobs. The largest declines were seen in Merchant, Wholesalers, and Durable Goods (-64%), Social Services Assistance (-35%), and Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation (-32%). The largest growth was seen in Specialty Trade Contractors (71%), Heavy/Civil Engineering (56%), and Ambulatory Health Care (39%).

Figure 39 shows the industries' Location Quotients, or the relative strength of each of the industries as compared to the industries strength in Ohio. Industries with a higher LQ are stronger or more concentrated in the county than in the state at large. This may indicate how specialized an industry is in Adams County. Industries with an LQ above 1 have a higher proportion of employees in that industry than the proportion in the industry at the state level. Likewise, industries with an LQ below 1 have a lower proportion of employees in that industry than the proportion in the industry at the state level.

Additionally, figure 39 also shows the employment of the industries in 2018 and whether the industry experienced employment loss (light blue) or gain (dark blue) from 2012 to 2018. This may indicate whether the industries are growing and shrinking and may signal the need for investment dependent on the LQ of the industry.

Investments may yield a higher impact if

The given industry is a large source of employment

The given industry has a high LQ, but is experiencing a loss in employment

The given industry is experiencing growth in employment, but still has a low LQ

Investments may yield a lower impact if

The given industry is a small source of employment

The given industry has a high LQ and is experiencing growth in employment

The given industry has a low LQ and is experiencing loss in employment

Table 10 shows how the industries fit into these categories. Bolded industries had at least 50 employees in 2018, while the italicized industries had fewer than 50 employees in 2018. The green categories indicate industries that may benefit more from investment. For category 2, this means using investment to counteract the loss of employment in an industry that is already strong in the county. For category 3, this means using investment to help specialize or strengthen the concentration of a currently growing industry in the county. The blue category indicate industries that may see less return on investment than those in the green categories. For category 5, this means industries that are both growing and strong in the county may continue along that trajectory without need of investment. For category 6, this means a substantial investment may be necessary to change both the loss of employment and to strengthen the industry in the county. This is not to say that investments should not be made in these two categories, but to acknowledge that to achieve the same results of an investment into a green category industry may require a much larger investment in the blue category industry.

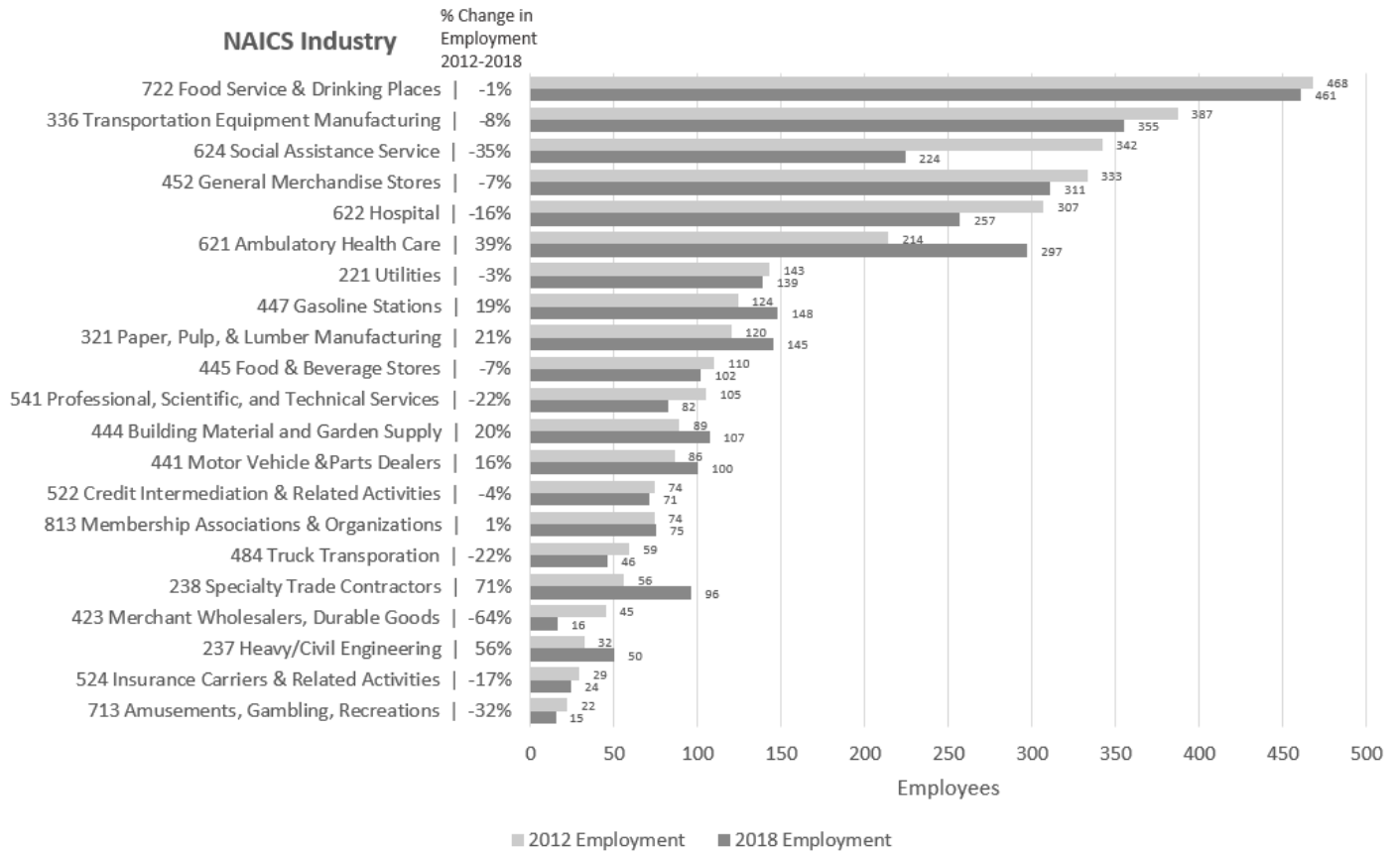
**Figure 38: Adams County Employment by NAICS Code, 2012 & 2018<sup>41</sup>**

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<sup>41</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns, 2012 & 2018

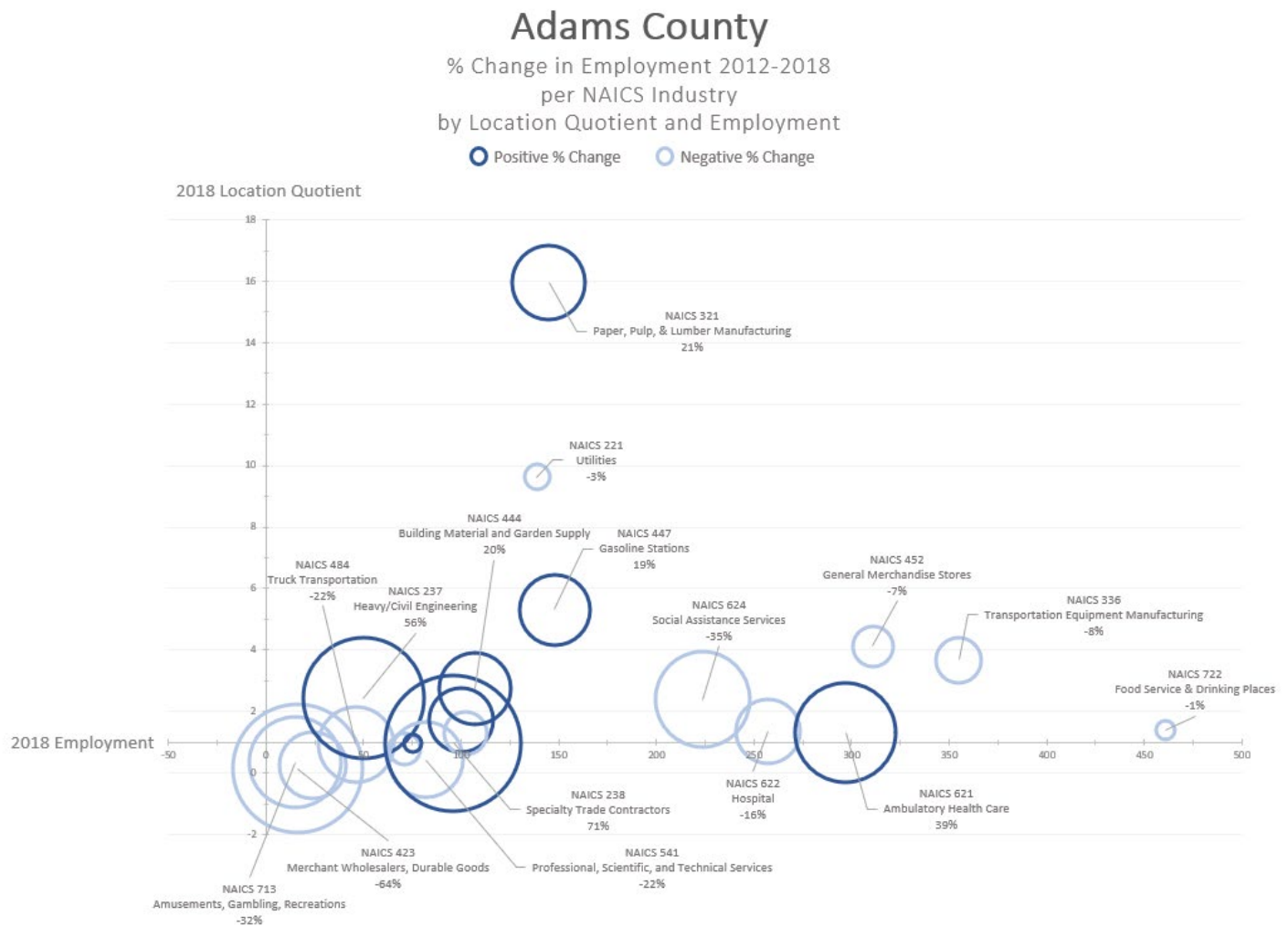
# Adams County

## Employment by NAICS, 2012 and 2018





**Figure 39: Adams County, Change in Employment by Location Quotient and Employment, 2012-2018<sup>42</sup>**



<sup>42</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns, 2012 & 2018

**Table 10: Adams County Industries by Investment Category**

	High LQ (LQ > 1)	Low LQ (LQ < 1)
Loss in Employment	(2) Social Assistance Services Hospital General Merchandise Stores Utilities Transportation Equip. Manufacturing <i>Truck Transportation</i> Food Services and Drinking Places Food and Beverage Stores	(6) <i>Amusement, Gambling, Recreation</i> <i>Merchant Wholesaler, Durable Goods</i> Professional, Scientific, Technical Serv. Credit Intermediation, Related Activities <i>Insurance Carriers, Related Activities</i>
Growth in Employment	(5) Paper, Pulp, & Lumber Manufacturing Heavy/Civil Engineering Ambulatory Health Care Building Materials & Garden Supply Gas Stations Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	(3) Specialty Trade Contractors Membership Associations & Orgs.

#### 4.2 Industry Clusters Analysis

Following the examination of the industries in Adams County, clusters of related industries were identified and the analysis was performed at this more detailed level to gain more insights into the potential for Adams County. Additionally, the analysis was further extended to examine industry clusters in the OVRDC region as a whole.

##### **Methodology:**

For this task, the industry clusters being targeted were identified. Relevant NAICS codes were assigned to each industry.

In the 2015 Adams County Economic Development/Tourism Plan, Adams County identified Healthcare, Retail, Manufacturing, Utilities, and Accommodations as sectors in which they planned to focus.

Adams County	NAICS Code
Healthcare	621, 622, 623
Retail	44-45
Manufacturing	31-33
Utilities	22
Accommodations	721

In the 2011 CEDS Performance Report, the OVRDC identified Agriculture, Healthcare, the Wood industry, and Manufacturing as the prominent clusters in the region. The OVRDC is made up of Adams, Brown, Clermont, Fayette, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto, and Vinton Counties.

OVRDC	NAICS Code
Agriculture Related Businesses	111, 112, 1151, 1152
Healthcare Related Businesses	621, 622, 623

Wood Industry and Related Businesses	321, 337110, 337121, 337122, 337127, 337211, 337212, 337215, 3379, 4232, 423310
Total Manufacturing Sector	31-33

According to the JobsOhio website, the targeted industries for Ohio are Advanced Manufacturing, Aerospace and Aviation, Automotive, Healthcare, Energy and Chemicals, Financial Services, Food and Agribusiness, Information Technology, and Logistics and Distribution. Further research into these sectors, revealed a document with nine industries and four business functions that JobsOhio focuses on as posted on the Ohio Department of Higher Education website. Additionally, this document listed the associated NAICS codes for each. These NAICS codes were used as a baseline for assigning NAICS codes.

JobsOhio Website	NAICS Code
Advanced Manufacturing	3272, 3279, 3311, 3312, 3314, 3324, 3329, 3332, 3339, 3351, 3352, 3353
Aerospace & Aviation	3345, 3364, 4811, 4812, 5174, 9271
Automotive	3336, 3361, 3362, 3363
Healthcare	621, 622, 623
Energy & Chemicals	2111, 2121, 2131, 2211, 2212, 3241, 2371, 3251, 3252, 3253, 3255, 3256, 3259, 3261, 3262
Financial Services	5221, 5222, 5223, 5231, 5232, 5239, 5241, 5251, 5259
Food & Agribusiness	111, 112, 1151, 1152, 311, 4244, 4245, 445
Information Technology	5112, 5182, 5191, 5415
Logistics & Distribution	4841, 4842, 4881, 4882, 4883, 4884, 4885, 4889, 4921, 4922, 4931
JobsOhio Document	NAICS Code
Aerospace & Aviation	3345, 3364, 4811, 4812, 5174, 9271
Automotive	3336, 3361, 3362, 3363
Financial Services	5221, 5222, 5223, 5231, 5232, 5239, 5241, 5251, 5259
Biohealth	3254, 334510, 334516, 334517, 3391
Advanced Manufacturing	3272, 3279, 3311, 3312, 3314, 3324, 3329, 3332, 3339, 3351, 3352, 3353
Energy	2111, 2121, 2131, 2211, 2212, 3241, 2371
Food Processing	3111, 3112, 3113, 3114, 3115, 3116, 3117, 3118, 3119, 3121
Information Technology and Services	5112, 5182, 5191, 5415
Polymers and Chemicals	3251, 3252, 3253, 3255, 3256, 3259, 3261, 3262
Headquarters and Consulting	5416, 5511
Back Office	5611, 5614
Logistics	4841, 4842, 4881, 4882, 4883, 4884, 4885, 4889, 4921, 4922, 4931
Research & Development	5417

To further explore the OVRDC region, the targeted industries from the three overlapping JobsOhio regions were identified. The majority of the OVRDC counties are located within the APEG region. They are Adams, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto, and Vinton Counties. According to

the APEG website, the targeted industries in the region are Polymers & Plastics, Energy Production, Food Manufacturing, Automotive and Aerospace, Petrochemical, Hardwood Products Manufacturing, Metals Fabrication, Logistics, and Consumer Products. The REDI Cincinnati region contains two OVRDC counties: Brown and Clermont. The REDI Cincinnati website identifies the targeted industries as Aerospace, Advanced Manufacturing, Food and Flavoring, Information Technology, Shared Services, and Biohealth. The Dayton Development Coalition contains one OVRDC county: Fayette. Their website identifies Aerospace and Defense, Agriculture and Food Processing, Automotive, Bioscience, Cyber, and Logistics and Distribution as targeted industries.

APEG	NAICS Code
Polymers & Plastics	3252, 3261, 3262
Energy Production	2111, 2121, 2131, 2211, 2212, 3241, 2371
Food Manufacturing	3111, 3112, 3113, 3114, 3115, 3116, 3117, 3118, 3119, 3121
Automotive & Aerospace	3336, 3361, 3362, 3363, 3345, 3364, 4811, 4812, 5174, 9271
Petrochemical	325110
Hardwood Products Manufacturing	321, 337110, 337121, 337122, 337127, 337211, 337212, 337215, 3379, 4232, 423310
Metals Fabrication	3321, 3322, 3323, 3324
Logistics	4841, 4842, 4881, 4882, 4883, 4884, 4885, 4889, 4921, 4922, 4931
Consumer Products	31-33 (businesses within codes that manufacture retail goods)

REDI Cincinnati	NAICS Code
Aerospace	3345, 3364, 4811, 4812, 5174, 9271
Advanced Manufacturing	3272, 3279, 3311, 3312, 3314, 3324, 3329, 3332, 3339, 3351, 3352, 3353
Food and Flavoring	3111, 3112, 3113, 3114, 3115, 3116, 3117, 3118, 3119, 3121
Information Technology	5112, 5182, 5191, 5415
Shared Services	521, 522, 523, 525, 54
Biohealth	3254, 334510, 334516, 334517, 3391

Dayton Development Coalition	NAICS Code
Aerospace and Defense	3345, 3364, 4811, 4812, 5174, 9271, 9281
Agriculture and Food Processing	111, 112, 1151, 1152, 311, 4244, 445, 3111, 3112, 3113, 3114, 3115, 3116, 3117, 3118, 3119, 3121
Automotive	3336, 3361, 3362, 3363
Bioscience	3254, 334510, 334516, 334517, 3391, 541714, 541715
Cyber (IT)	5112, 5182, 5191, 5415
Logistics and Distribution	4841, 4842, 4881, 4882, 4883, 4884, 4885, 4889, 4921, 4922, 4931

Next, using the JobsOhio document as a baseline, the different industries focused on by each entity were compared to see where there was overlap. Of the 13 industries focused on in the JobsOhio Document, 10 of the industries overlap with at least two other entities. These industries are Advanced Manufacturing, Aerospace & Aviation, Automotive, Biohealth, Energy, Financial Services, Food Processing, Information Technology & Services, Logistics, and Polymers & Chemicals. Additionally, the Wood Industry also overlapped within three entities, specifically, Adams County, OVRDC, and APEG. Likewise, the Wood Industry had been brought up during interviews with Adams County residents and in conversations with the Adams County Economic and Community Development Director, Holly Johnson. Therefore, the Wood Industry was added to the ten industries previously identified. Five industries were identified as lacking overlap: Back Office, Headquarters & Consulting, Research & Development, Accommodations, and Retail. As such, these five industries will be left out of the cluster analysis.

JobsOhio Document	Adams County	OVRDC	JobsOhio Website	APEG	REDI Cincinnati	Dayton Development Coalition
Advanced Manufacturing	*Manufacturing	*Total Manufacturing Sector	Advanced Manufacturing	Consumer Products; Metals Fabrication	Advanced Manufacturing	
Aerospace & Aviation	*Manufacturing	*Total Manufacturing Sector	Aerospace & Aviation	*Automotive & Aerospace	Aerospace	Aerospace and Defense
Automotive	*Manufacturing	*Total Manufacturing Sector	Automotive	*Automotive & Aerospace		Automotive
Back Office						
Biohealth	Healthcare	Healthcare Related Businesses	Healthcare		Biohealth	Bioscience
Energy	Utilities		*Energy & Chemicals	Energy Production		
Financial Services			Financial Services		*Shared Services	
Food Processing		Agriculture Related Businesses	Food & Agribusiness	Food Manufacturing	Food and Flavoring	Agriculture and Food Processing
Headquarters & Consulting					*Shared Services	
Information Technology and Services			Information Technology		Information Technology	Cyber
Logistics			Logistics & Distribution	Logistics		Logistics and Distribution
Polymers and Chemicals	*Manufacturing	*Total Manufacturing Sector	*Energy & Chemicals	Petrochemical; Polymers & Plastics		
Research & Development						
	Accommodations					
	Retail					
	*Manufacturing	Wood Industry and Related Businesses		Hardwood Products Manufacturing		

\* Industry is repeated within column as it matches more than one category in "JobsOhio Document"

After narrowing down the industry clusters, data was retrieved for each from the County Business Patterns on number of establishments, paid employees, and annual wages. Data was retrieved for the United States, Ohio, Adams County, and the OVRDC region. The number of establishments was included in the data at every level. However, the number of paid employees and annual wages were often suppressed at the county level, due to a small number of establishments in the county. In these cases, the suppressed values were substituted for a reported value in a different year, conditional on the reported value year occurring within a 5-year window of the suppressed value year. For data that was still missing, estimates were created based on average employment by number of establishments, taking into consideration the industry cluster and the urban/rural status of counties. In the few cases, where there was not enough data for either of the previous methods to work, the median value of the range given by the County Business Patterns was used to estimate the suppressed number of paid employees.

After estimating the employment data, the location quotient for each industry cluster was calculated. A location quotient of 1 signifies that the selected region is equally as strong in the industry as the comparison region. A location quotient above 1 signifies the industry is stronger and below 1 signifies the industry is weaker.

### **Results for Adams County:**

The following graphs show the relationship between the growth in the industry (percent change in employment since 2010) and the relative strength or concentration of the industry cluster (the location quotient). This relationship can be divided into four categories: Mature, Star, Transforming, and Emerging. Mature industries have a strong concentration but need investment to reverse downward growth trends. Star industries have strong growth and concentration. Star industries are the strength of the community. Transforming industries have low concentration and negative growth. Only a large investment could help change these trends and might be better invested into an industry in another category. Emerging industries have a low concentration, but high growth. These industries are poised for future growth and can use investment for support and strengthen the concentration of the industry. The graphs also show the relative number employed in the industry cluster by the size of the bubble.

Figures 1, 2, and 3 show the comparison of Adams County to the OVRDC region, Ohio, and the United States from 2010 to 2016, respectively. In all three cases, Aerospace is Adams County's highest concentrated industry. The Aerospace industry is almost 30 times stronger in Adams County than in the OVRDC region as a whole. Likewise, the Aerospace industry is over 14 times stronger compared to Ohio and over 9 times stronger compared to the United States. Because of the suppressed data and because the number of establishments have not changed from 2010 to 2016, the Aerospace industry is the one industry where the direction of growth could not be determined. However, investments in this industry could help spur growth whether the industry is considered mature or star.

Likewise, figure 1 shows that Advanced Manufacturing, Energy, Information Technology, and Logistics are considered star industries for Adams County compared to the OVRDC region from 2010 to 2016. However, when compared to Ohio, Advanced Manufacturing was categorized as emerging. This signifies that Advanced Manufacturing in Adams County is stronger than in other parts of the OVRDC and the US, but weaker than some other parts of Ohio. Also important to note is that the percent growth for Advanced Manufacturing is actually infinite as there were no establishments present in 2010. Similarly, Information Technology was classified as emerging when compared to Ohio and to the US.

Figure 1 also shows that the Wood industry and Financial Services are considered mature, while the Polymers industry was considered transforming when compared to the OVRDC region from 2010 to 2016. While the Wood industry was still considered mature when comparing to Ohio and to the US, Financial Services were considered transforming and the Polymers industry was considered mature. As seen in figures 1, 2, and 3, Financial Services and the Polymers industry are positioned closer to x-axis or a location quotient of 1.

Additionally, it is important to note that three of the eleven industry clusters do not show up on figures 1, 2, or 3. The Automotive industry and Food Processing industry do not show up because no establishments were found in 2010 or 2016. The Biohealth industry does not show because there were no establishments in 2016 even though there were establishments in 2010 indicating that all biohealth establishments had closed. It is also important to note that the data used was from before the two Dayton Power and Light plant closings in Adams County in 2018. Therefore, it is predicted that the size of the Energy industry bubble will shrink dramatically and that the Energy industry will be reclassified as mature or transforming depending on the remaining strength or concentration of other energy sector jobs in the county.

Figure 1:

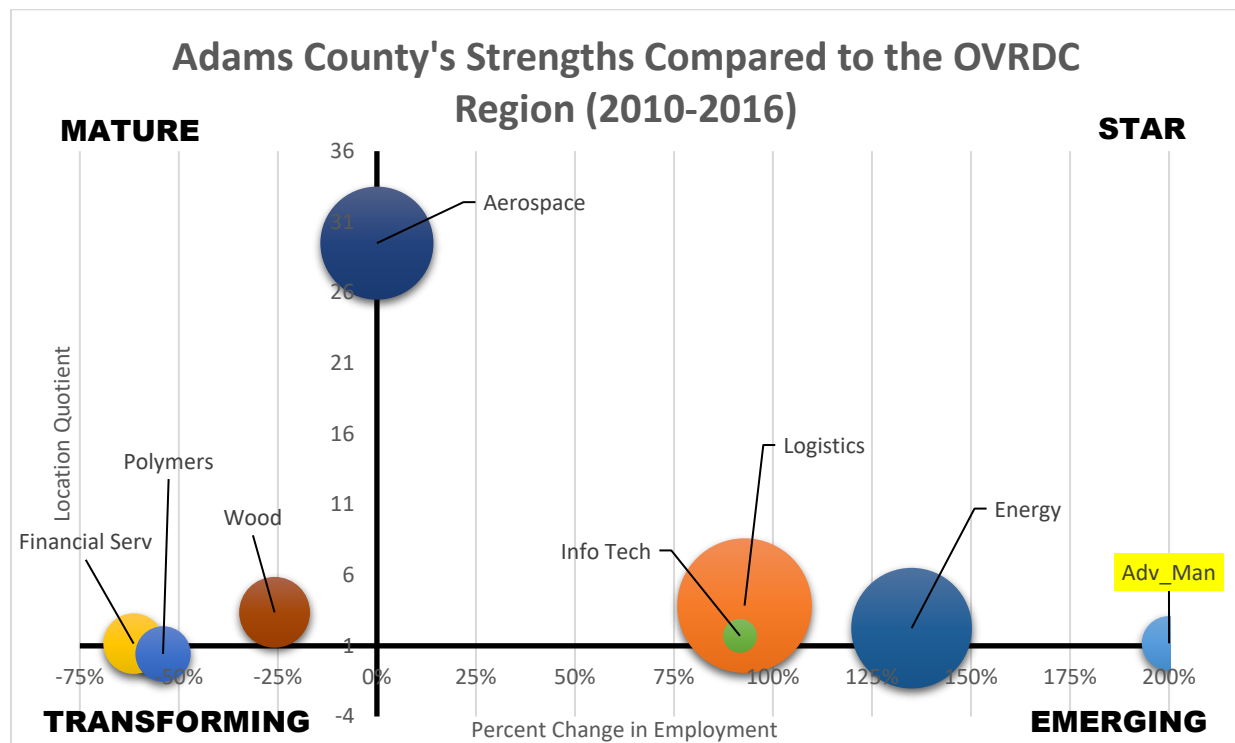


Figure 2:



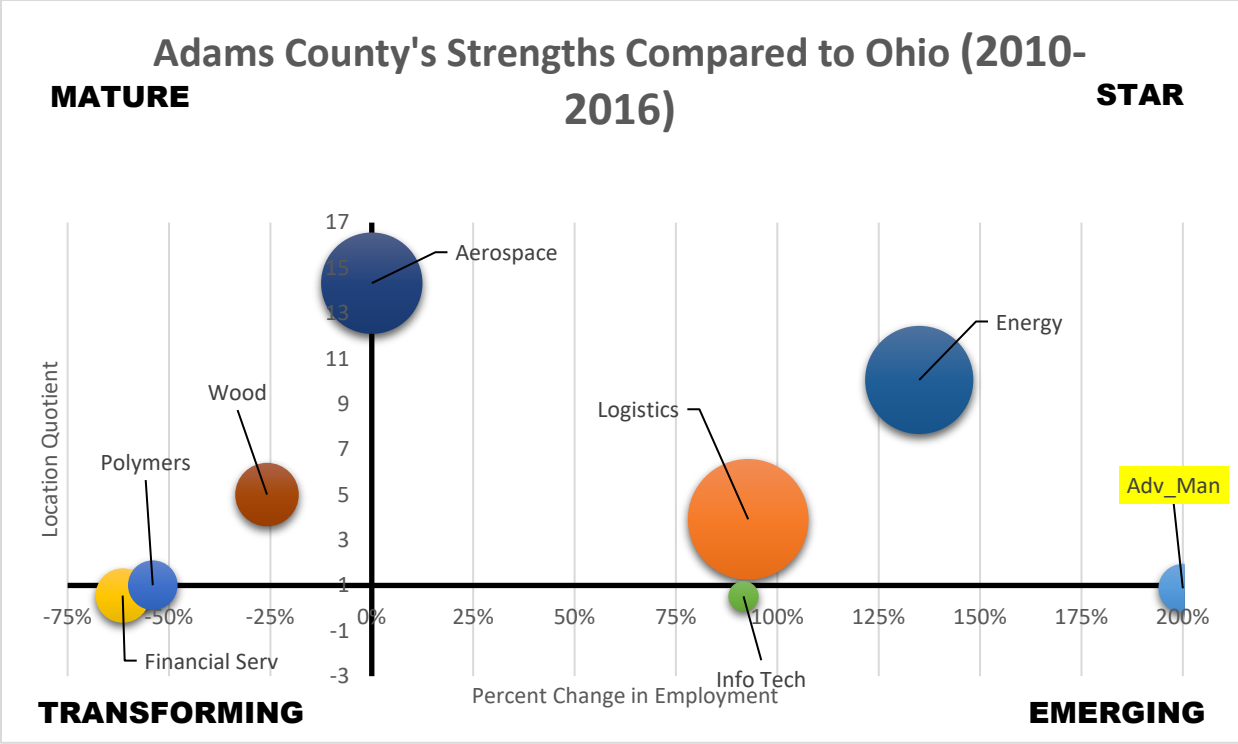
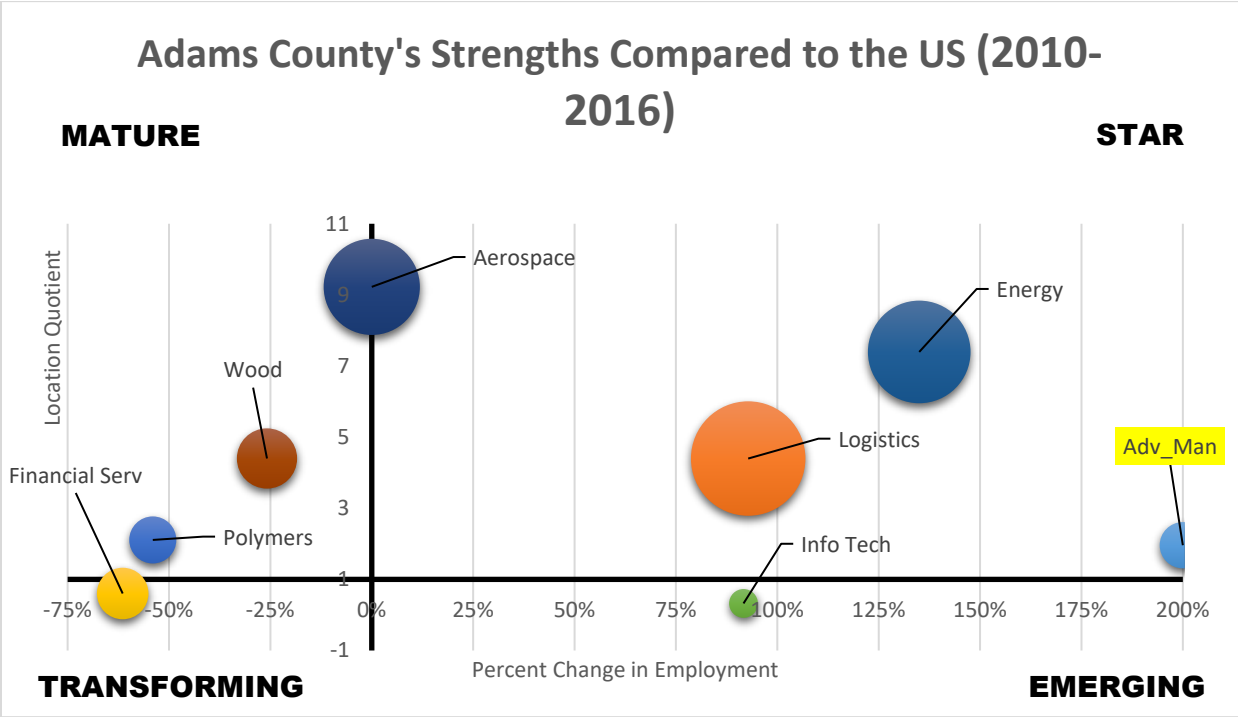


Figure 3:



**Recommendations for Adams County:**

Aerospace has a strong concentration in Adams County and is a major employer for the county. Investment should be made wisely to ensure future growth in current operations and in growing and supporting supply chain businesses.

Logistics is another major employer and investment could be made to increase strength of industry.

Advance Manufacturing is on the border of being considered a star industry by all three comparisons, but employs less than the previous two industries. Investments could be made to grow existing businesses and increase employment in the industry.

The Wood industry is relatively strong in Adams County, but needs investment to reverse the downward trend in growth. It would be beneficial to reverse the downward trend before there is a loss of concentration of the industry in Adams County.

Information Technology is also on the border of being a star industry, but employs even less people. Investment in this industry may also require broadband or fiber and other infrastructure to support the industry. Investment may be more cost effective in the previous four industries.

Depending on the remaining concentration in the Energy industry, investment in the industry could be beneficial. However, if the concentration is low, the size of the investment may outweigh benefits to the community.

## **5. Existing Industry Needs/Opportunities Assessment**

The Center for Economic Development and Community Resilience conducted a survey among the Adams County businesses to understand how the closure of the DPL Power Plant and COVID-19 has impacted their business. Of the businesses surveyed 40% said they had been impacted by the decline in the coal economy. DPL's two coal powered plants closed in 2018. The General Merchandise and Retail business sectors saw a loss of retail sales in a community that is already struggling. With the power plant closures the struggling former employees' loss of income directly impacts spending habits in the county leading to loss of retail sale while other businesses in the social sector have assisted the former DPL employees training and job searches. A business in the education sector stated they had lost over \$200,000 of yearly income after the power plants shut down. Only 10% indicated they made changes to address the impact or required more assistance to offset any losses.

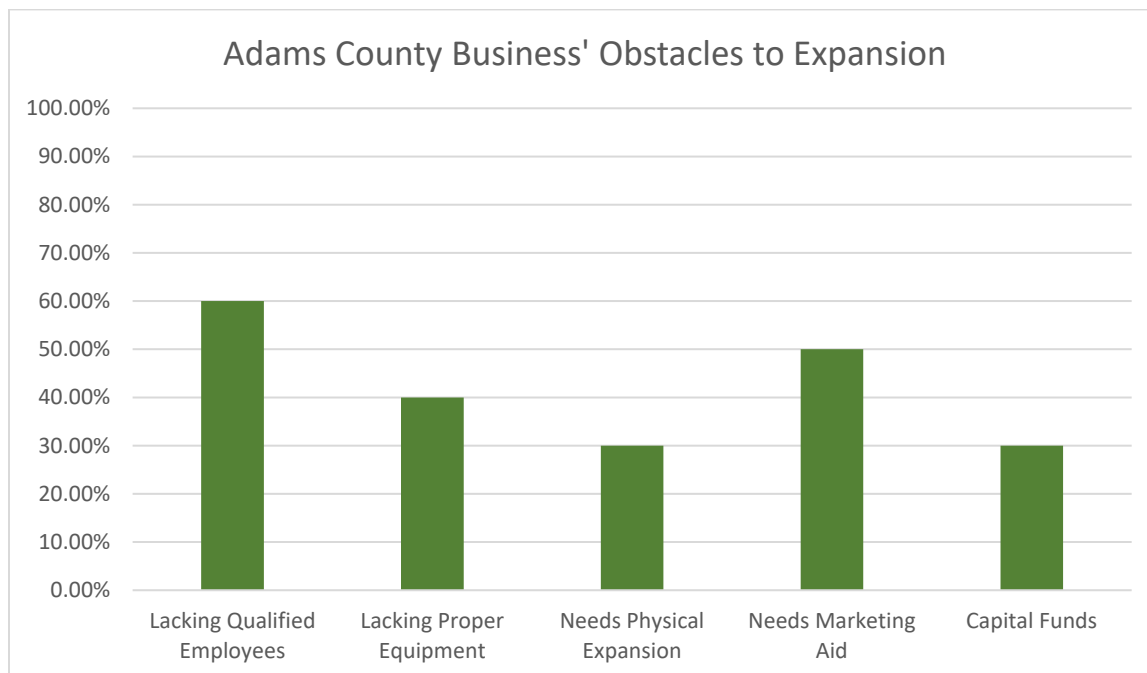
COVID-19 was declared a pandemic on March 11, 2020 the following week Governor DeWine prohibited mass gatherings, closed schools, and limited food service places to carry-out or delivery only. A few days later a state-wide Stay at Home order was issued mandating all non-essential businesses close their doors to the public. This directly impacted companies' abilities to maintain sales causing a swift decline in income. From the survey 90% of respondents commented that COVID-19 had a direct Impact on their company. 20% of businesses stated they were required to let go of employees, reduce hours, or stop overtime. From the responses the General Merchandise Retail and Restaurant Sectors saw a decrease in sales overall post COVID-19. The supply chain for merchandise stores has been notably clogged with increase demand for products and not enough trucks and containers to fill them. The banking sector faced a coin shortage due to the treasury closing from the pandemic and, like many other businesses in Adams County, saw an adjustment with work. Employees either worked from home or worked in shifts while increasing cleaning and sanitizing efforts.

Adams County businesses had to adjust to the changes through reducing staff, hours, and following Ohio Department of health (ODH) orders. The ODH allowed non-essential businesses to reopen provided that they followed certain conditions including social distancing, face masks, and constant sanitizing and cleaning. To address COVID-19s impact Adams County food service businesses were required to get creative and do carryout or delivery to keep their businesses operating. Most businesses surveyed indicated they applied for or received the Paycheck Protection Program to ease the strain of paying their employees during a time of loss of income. The businesses stated the PPP was necessary in order to better respond to the impact of COVID-19. 10% of respondents said their business was able to aid the community by procuring and selling PPE.

Businesses in Adams County have similar expansion issues. Over the last year many have sought expansion in Adams County but were hindered by certain difficulties. These issues include finding skilled labor, infrastructure, capital funding, lack of equipment, marketing etc. There is a shortage of skilled labor in Adams County with 60% of the businesses reporting issues

with staffing. 30% need bigger space for their business and are searching for new locations. Without enough space or aid to businesses requiring expansion this will drive business out of Adams County.

30% of businesses in the restaurant sector reported that the issues preventing them from expanding their business was lack of capital funding, qualified staff, and marketing. These are key areas that affect development in Adams County. Most businesses surveyed cited that they lacked capital to pursue expansion and sought assistance from outside sources to receive grants or loans to meet their needs.

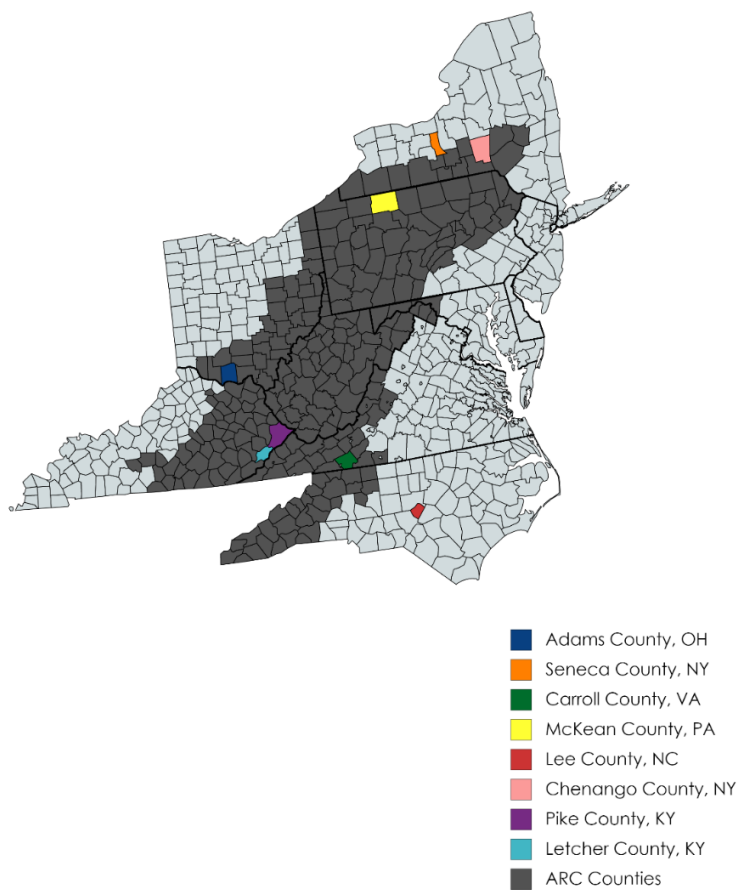


## 6. Comparable Communities Assessment

The closure of two coal-fired power plants in Adams County represents a unique regional challenge. However, there are communities elsewhere in the United States from which economic and community development insights may be drawn when guiding Adams County and regional efforts. A series of short case studies were developed to identify current best practices and facilitate learning from other communities. These case studies explore approaches used by other communities/counties with similar populations to Adams County challenged with closures and declines in industry. We mainly investigated communities with different strategic approaches to add to the richness of lessons learned. The findings of the identified case studies provide useful strategies that apply to the Adams County effort, despite not being exact matches.

### ***Strategies Used***

- Attracting new major employer
- Supporting existing businesses
- Diversifying local economy
- Developing workforce development and training programs
- Collaborating with...
- educational institutions
- local businesses
- regional partners
- the local community
- Enhancement of natural assets
- Blending/mixing of multiple strategies



Created with mapchart.net: <https://mapchart.net/usa-counties.html>

### ***Case Study 1: Industrial Redevelopment-Seneca Army Depot Closure (Seneca County, New York)***<sup>43</sup>

Seneca County (pop. 34,843)<sup>44</sup> is similar in size to Adams County (pop. 27,926), and although Seneca County is not in the Appalachian region, it borders the northern boundary of the region. Like Adams County, Seneca County had struggled with issues of poverty, limited amenities, aging and insufficient infrastructure, lack of broadband access, and inadequate funding from state and other sources. Furthermore, Seneca County has abundant natural resources very similar to those found in Adams County. Seneca County's resources include unique tourism features like the Seneca White Deer herd, a large amount of cheap and available land, and the potential for waterfront development along Seneca Lake and Cayuga Lake, which are two Finger Lakes in the county. Additionally, Seneca County's experience with the closure of the Seneca Army Depot corresponds well to the closure of the DP&L plants in Adams County. The Seneca Army Depot was the largest employer for Seneca County before closing in 2000. In 1992, Seneca County first experienced a shock as the Depot eliminated over 550 civilian jobs and 500 military jobs. Therefore, it was not a surprise when the US Army placed the Depot on the 1995 Base Realignment and Closure list. The Depot further reduced employment from 1200 to 140 over five years. The base retained some staff to oversee the property and to begin site remediation and clean-up.

By 2016, the Seneca County Industrial Development Agency (IDA) had gradually obtained as much as 10,000 acres of the Depot's property throughout the remediation efforts led by the US Army. The IDA was tasked to redevelop the property on behalf of Seneca County. The IDA looked at the current assets that existed on the Depot and leveraged those assets to attract businesses. Those assets included the barracks, cold storage igloos that once housed chemicals and munitions, open land with natural amenities, and much more. The barracks and the native facilities of the location were used to attract programs for troubled youths. In 2000, the KidsPeace Seneca Woods Campus was opened as a residential program for troubled children and became the Hillside's Children Center in 2004.

Similarly, the IDA was able to attract the Five Points Correctional Facility to locate on the property in 2000, creating 600 direct jobs. The establishment of a training center for state and local police and a training tower for volunteer firefighters was an essential project for the IDA as well. The igloos on the property were perfect for data and server storage. The igloos, given their past of nuclear storage, were relocated away from all flooding dangers, are temperature-controlled, and are incredibly secure. The IDA included this knowledge in their marketing strategy and was able to attract the Finger Lakes Tech Group.

Additionally, the IDA sold around 7000 acres, which became the Deer Haven Park. The Deer Haven Park was established to preserve the rare Seneca White Deer herd that lives on the Depot property. The Deer Haven Park offers tours that allow people to see these uncommon deer, provides the military history of the area and features a tour of one of the ammunition bunkers on the property. Additionally, the establishment of a visitor center for the unique feature of the Seneca White Deer has drawn people to the Deer Haven Park and boosted the tourism industry in the county and the region.

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<sup>43</sup> From MacCarald 2014, Roth 2018, Seneca County IDA 2011, Seneca County, NY 2014, and Seneca County Planning and Community Development Department 2014.

<sup>44</sup> All population estimates are based on the 2017 estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Like Adams County, Seneca County experienced the loss of a major employer in the county. After the closure, the Seneca County IDA focused on bringing in new large employers. In particular, they matched the existing infrastructure and special features of the Depot to benefit potential businesses. In addition to industrial development, the IDA sold part of the Depot to strengthen the tourism industry in the county. Adams County could look into what businesses could use some of the specialty features of the DP&L sites to attract potential companies that could inhabit or redevelop the site.

Additionally, Adams County could look at more out-of-the-box approaches to use the land along the Ohio River to strengthen tourism. However, one key difference exists: The Army gave the area to Seneca County, but DP&L have not sold their sites to the county or another business. This fact impacts what Adams County can do directly regarding the sites. However, the county may be able to act as an intermediary to bring the type of businesses they would like to see in the area to the attention of DP&L. The county may also be able to offer financial incentives to those businesses that will then allow them to make more competitive offers to get DP&L to sell.

***Case Study 2: Business Retention, Small Business Support, and Economy Diversification-Declining Textile and Furniture Manufacturing Industry (Carroll County, Virginia)<sup>45</sup>***

Carroll County (pop. 29,767) is a small Appalachian county in southwest Virginia, historically known for its textile and furniture manufacturing industries, which experienced long-term declines. In 1998, the Basset-Walker sewing plant in Carroll County closed. This closure resulted in 294 direct job losses. Additionally, Cross Creek Apparel, another textile manufacturer, closed in 2000, resulting in 245 jobs lost. During the early 2000s, Carroll County continued to face reductions and closures in their manufacturing industries. Carroll County's strategy for economic development was to retain their existing businesses while encouraging entrepreneurship and developing new industries to diversify their economy.

Carroll County implemented business retention strategies to keep businesses in the county. For example, in 2009, Mohawk, a carpet backing manufacturing plant and one of the county's largest employers, was having infrastructure problems that could have forced the plant to relocate. However, the Carroll County Board of Supervisors and Industrial Development Authority intervened and helped the company purchase a needed industrial power backup system. Additionally, Carroll County installed a natural gas line to help power the Mohawk plant. This gas line lowered the energy costs not only for Mohawk but for many businesses in the area and helped ensure these businesses would remain long term.

Carroll County also focused on developing entrepreneurship programs to strengthen the economy and to raise the county's resiliency. To support entrepreneurship and small businesses, Carroll County created the Crossroads Small Business Development Center in 2006 in partnership with the Wytheville Community College. This center was created to serve businesses with less than 50 employees and assists potential and existing small business owners with business planning, financing, and navigating laws and regulations for development. Additionally, they formed a joint public-private partnership, the

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<sup>45</sup> From Istrate, Mak, & Nowakowski 2014, Plan Carroll County 2010, Business Facilities 2018, Krouse 1998, and Town of Hillsville, Virginia 2014.



Crossroads Institute, which focuses on many aspects of economic and community development, including workforce training and community education.

Carroll County recognized the need to diversify their economy from the textile and furniture manufacturing industries and to grow the economy from sales outside the county. In 1994, county officials along with representatives from the Southwest Virginia Farmer's Market, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and Virginia Cooperative Extension Services met with local farmers and representatives from large retail chains located in the Mid-Atlantic region. They discovered that the county would be a prime location to serve as a pumpkin supplier to the region. Since then, pumpkin production has increased to several thousand acres and has added an estimated \$15 million to the local economy through pumpkin sales.

Like Adams County, the main factors driving population trends in Carroll County are the out-migration of young adults and the in-migration of older age groups. While Carroll County has an older median age than Adams County (47 and 42.2 respectively), Carroll County has a higher median household income, higher median property value, lower poverty rate, and larger ratio of the number of employees to the population size (0.44 and 0.36, respectively)<sup>46</sup>. This ratio means that for every 100 people residing in each county, there are 44 people employed in Carroll County and 36 people employed in Adams County. This fact demonstrates Carroll County's ability to thrive, even while facing disadvantageous population trends.

Additionally, like Adams County, Carroll County does not have a college or university. However, Carroll County was able to work with a community college in a neighboring county to help create the Crossroads Small Business Development Center. Southern State Community College operates campuses in two counties adjacent to Adams County: Brown and Highland Counties. Additionally, Shawnee State University operates in Portsmouth in the neighboring Scioto County. Therefore, Adams County could consider partnering with one or more of these local institutions to provide support to small businesses in their community.

While there are still many differences between the two counties, the key strategies utilized by Carroll County provide lessons for Adams County. Like Carroll County, Adams County can strengthen their community by working to provide strategic infrastructure and support to key businesses in the County to ensure that these businesses remain in Adams County. At the same time, Adams County can take steps to support new and small businesses and to diversify the industrial make-up of the community to become a more resilient economy in the future.

### ***Case Study 3: Tourism, Asset Development, and Regional Strategy-Declining Oil and Timber Industries (McKean County, Pennsylvania)***<sup>47</sup>

McKean County (pop. 43,640) is an Appalachian county in Pennsylvania that has experienced declines in the timber and oil industries following the 2008 recession. In response to the decline in industries following the recession, McKean County relied on strengthening its natural assets and tourism industry

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<sup>46</sup>Data from <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/adams-county-oh?compare=carroll-county-va>.

<sup>47</sup> From Boettner et al. 2019, McKean County Planning Commission 2007, and Allegheny National Forest Visitors Bureau (n.d.).

to improve economic resilience. Additionally, McKean County has utilized a regional strategy working with nearby counties to create a more buoyant region and to have greater access to more resources.

To strengthen its tourism industry, McKean County took advantage of the Pennsylvania Wilds program created by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Pennsylvania Wilds consists of 12.5 counties (Warren, McKean, Potter, Tioga, Lycoming, Clinton, Elk, Cameron, Forest, Clearfield, Clarion, Jefferson and northern Centre). The collaboration with nearby counties has brought more people to the area, helping grow rural businesses in McKean County. Additionally, by joining this regional collaboration, McKean County has gained access to regional marketing efforts, the Pennsylvania Wilds Planning Team, and a Design Guide. These resources give businesses insight into improving their properties and attracting visitors. The Pennsylvania Wilds program helps shape development in the region in a consistent manner.

With the support of their region and the Pennsylvania Wilds program, McKean County was also able to identify and grow their community's particular assets. When a tornado destroyed the Kinzua Bridge and Viaduct in 2003, the state of Pennsylvania abandoned its plans to repair and restore the bridge. McKean County worked with the Kinzua Bridge State Park to turn the Kinzua Bridge into a tourism destination. The county built an observation deck, hiking trails, the Kinzua Sky Walk, and a Visitor Center with a gift shop. Additionally, McKean County recognized the visitor center located in the adjacent Elk County. The visitor center in Elk County had already been drawing in visitors to the region to see and learn about the largest elk herd in the northeastern United States. Elk and McKean Counties designated their visitor centers as sister centers and worked to promote each other's sites to tourists. Together, they pull even more people to the region.

Like Adams County, McKean County has abundant natural resources and beauty that was perfect for strengthening their outdoor tourism. Like the Kinzua Bridge, Adams County also has a unique site in the Great Serpent Mound as well as having sites with cultural and historical significance, such as the Underground Railroad or the Amish population. Adams County could work to enhance their particular assets to create a stronger tourism industry in the county.

While there are many similarities between the two counties, one significant difference is worth mentioning. There is not an existing regional program, like Pennsylvania Wilds, for Adams County to take advantage. However, this does not mean that the lessons learned from this case study are unimportant. Instead, Adams County could strive to create a regional program with neighboring counties or with the OVRDC region as a whole to pool resources and strengthen the region's tourism industry. Additionally, Adams County could work with state-wide programs like TourismOhio to better market the county's assets. Likewise, there are funding opportunities that exist at the state and national levels, such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund or the Clean Ohio Fund programs. These sources can be used to strengthen the natural assets of Adams County, create trails for walking, hiking, and biking, and much more.

***Case Study 4: Workforce Development-Declining Manufacturing Industry (Lee County, North Carolina)<sup>48</sup>***

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<sup>48</sup> From Istrate, Mak, & Nowakowski 2014.

Lee County (pop. 59,805) is a small rural county in central North Carolina. While the county has a larger population and is not in Appalachia, there are still valuable lessons to learn from Lee County. Lee County relied on the manufacturing industry and experienced a significant downturn in its economy as the industry declined following the 2008 recession. Lee County identified a deficit of educated and trained labor in their community, which was contributing to the decline of the manufacturing industry and the inability to attract new businesses. In response, the county developed robust workforce development programming to create a competitive advantage in attracting new businesses.

Lee County collaborated with the Central Carolina Community College (CCCC) to develop their Innovation Center that operated as both an industrial incubator and a workforce training facility, which opened in 2011. The Innovation Center offers businesses and local start-ups the opportunity to launch ideas. Lee County purchased the site, and funds the utility and maintenance costs. The CCCC provides cutting edge training designed to meet the specific needs of the local companies.

One such company is Caterpillar. The county worked with Caterpillar on an expansion project for the Innovation Center and developed an apprenticeship program for high school students. The expansion project helped to teach welding, a skill that was lacking in the local labor force. Other manufacturers in the area also started taking advantage of the training offered. The apprentice program provided at the center is an award-winning collaboration between the county, CCCC, and Caterpillar. Each year, the program offers 15 high school juniors a career pathway at Caterpillar. Students graduate with their high school diplomas, college credits, and their welding certification, and are guaranteed an interview for full-time employment at Caterpillar. In return, Caterpillar receives a steady supply of trained workers that meets their specific needs.

Following the success of the Caterpillar Apprenticeship Program, the Central Carolina Works program was developed to inspire high school students to pursue career development training. This program, also partnered with by CCCC, places a career guidance counselor at local high schools providing advice and mentorship to students. The program aims to build a solid foundation for the county's future workforce by inspiring students to pursue vocational training as part of their education

Like Adams County, Lee County needed a workforce trained in the particular skills required by their major employers. Adams County should identify the skills required by employers in the area and work with nearby community colleges and high schools to offer training in these skills. Additionally, it would be mutually beneficial for Adams County and the major employers to establish an apprenticeship program. An apprenticeship program would allow businesses to tailor training to the skills they need and give them access to a steady supply of skilled workforce. Additionally, the apprenticeship program would encourage high school students to remain in Adams County after graduation by offering an interview for full-time employment.

#### ***Case Study 5: Flexible and Responsive Strategies -2008 Economic Shock (Chenango County, New York)<sup>49</sup>***

Chenango County (pop. 48,763) is an Appalachian county in New York with a rich manufacturing history. Chenango County experienced a shock with the 2008 recession but has used flexible and responsive strategies to recover. In particular, Chenango County focused on workforce and industrial development.

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<sup>49</sup> From Boettner 2019.

Chenango County's economic development organization, Commerce Chenango, recognized the importance of their county's agriculture and manufacturing industries. Commerce Chenango worked with its well-established foundation of small manufacturing businesses to draw more small businesses to Chenango. Additionally, to be more attractive to companies, the county focused on improving the quality of life and the business climate in Chenango. The county was able to use this improved attractiveness to get large employers to relocate to the county. In 2010, Chobani expanded its operations, and the Raymond Corporation relocated to Chenango County.

Furthermore, Chenango County recognized the need for flexible strategies that can respond to changes as they arise in the county. The county specifically avoided "one size fits all" types of strategies in favor of approaches that consider Chenango County's particular strengths and assets. The county identified workforce development as a priority. To maximize the impact for Chenango County, their workforce development program incorporated support services such as daycare, transportation, and counseling to assist residents of the county.

Chenango County was able to respond to changing economic conditions with flexible strategies that consider specific resources, needs, and assets of their community. In that way, Chenango County was able to limit the impact of the 2008 recession and recover much faster than similar communities. Likewise, Adams County should develop strategies that can adjust as economic conditions change. The presence of such strategies would allow Adams County to be responsive to the needs of its citizens and local businesses and industries. Additionally, Adams County should learn from Chenango County's recognition of the importance of economic development strategies that encompass a holistic, rather than piecemeal, approach to economic development. In this way, Adams County could create a similar workforce development training center that also incorporates transportation and daycare programs, which were identified as needed in task three: Community Engagement in Economic Development Priorities.

***Case Study 6: Creative Place-Making and Transitioning from Coal Jobs-Mine Closures and the Declining Coal Industry (Pikeville, Kentucky; Whitesburg, Kentucky)<sup>50</sup>***

In this case study, we are looking at two cities in adjacent counties in eastern Kentucky; Pikeville in Pike County and Whitesburg in Letcher County. Although comparing cities and not counties, there is still valuable information from this case study that could be helpful to Adams County. Pikeville (pop. 7,065) is more similar to the size of Tiffin Township (pop. 5,440), and the Pikeville Census County Division (pop. 15,743) is more similar to Adams County as a whole, while the total population of Pike County is 61,586. Whitesburg (pop. 2,230) and Letcher County (pop. 23,011) are more comparable to West Union (pop. 2,997) and Adams County.

Pikeville and Whitesburg are bright spots in a significantly disadvantaged region of Appalachia: eastern Kentucky. According to the ARC FY2020 County Economic Status designations<sup>51</sup>, eastern Kentucky has the most counties in Appalachia with a Distressed Status, both in percentages and absolute terms with 38 of 54 Kentucky counties ranking as Distressed. In fact, 47.5% of all distressed counties in Appalachia are in Kentucky. It is no wonder that eastern Kentucky became the symbolic representation for

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<sup>50</sup> From Stone 2016, Andrus 2018, City of Pikeville 2013, Semuels 2015, Appalshop (n.d.), Smith 2016, and Economic Empowerment & Global Learning Project 2016.

<sup>51</sup> Data from [https://www.arc.gov/research/MapsofAppalachia.asp?MAP\\_ID=149](https://www.arc.gov/research/MapsofAppalachia.asp?MAP_ID=149)

Appalachian poverty after President Johnson declared “War on Poverty” in 1964. Because of this, eastern Kentucky has had a long, complicated, and contentious history with economic development efforts in the region.

Eastern Kentucky has historically suffered from a lack of essential investment. The region has suffered from chronic underfunding of social services like education and healthcare and is underdeveloped in critical infrastructural systems, such as highways and broadband. Additionally, it has been unfairly stereotyped as backward and ignorant, is situated at the heart of the opioid epidemic, along with Ohio, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania. Eastern Kentucky has also relied heavily on the boom and bust cycling of the coal mining industry. However, it seems that the current condition of the coal industry is not just a temporary bust in the cycle, but a continued decline with no end in sight. Mining operations continue to be shut down in the region, which may be contributed to higher costs associated with environmental regulations, the falling costs for alternative energy sources, such as the Marcellus and Utica Shale Region, and a shifting socio-political climate that does not support the coal industry the way it once did. The region lost over 8,000 coal industry jobs from 2012-2016.

Both Pikeville and Whitesburg have become examples of success in an otherwise depressed area. While their implementation varies, both cities have used creative place-making strategies and have worked to transition from relying on the coal industry. In particular, Pikeville has worked to help transition from the coal industry by encouraging businesses that will repurpose closed mining sites and provide transitional jobs to former coal industry workers. For example, EnerBlue, a battery manufacturing company, is building a facility on the site of an old coal mine. The plant will bring an estimated 800 jobs with an average salary of \$39/hr to Pikeville.

Similarly, in 2015, BitSource, a startup tech company, opened in Pikeville. This company was created as a direct response to the community devastation from the declining coal industry. BitSource hired those who had been laid off from the coal industry and provided them with 22 weeks of training to become coders. These former coal industry employees now develop websites, augmented reality coding, and mobile applications.

Unlike in most of Appalachia, Pikeville’s population is growing. This growth has been contributed to the University of Pikeville. Although the university is small, with only around 2500 students, the university attracts individuals to fill faculty and staff positions. The university also attracts business owners who want to take advantage of research, knowledge creation spillovers, and have access to an educated population. Also, as Pikeville has grown, county officials and economic development professionals have ensured that the city is becoming amenity-dense. Specifically, they have begun revitalization efforts for the downtown area, are increasing and supporting attractions, like the Hatfield and McCoy Cemetery, and encouraging new businesses like bourbon distilleries and restaurants. Having these amenities will help safeguard that the growth is permanent and continues.

Additionally, Pikeville is undergoing efforts to integrate art and culture into the city and the community. The city has supported the Pikeville/Pike County Artisan Alliance, the construction of a new theater with year-round performances, various arts education opportunities, and much more. By recognizing its assets as an education center and developing a unique cultural and amenity-rich experience, Pikeville has separated itself from most of eastern Kentucky by experiencing growth in an otherwise depressed area.

Likewise, Whitesburg has been engaging in creative place-making since the late 1960s. In 1969, Appalshop was founded to train the local community in media skills and bolster economic development efforts by creating new jobs and new markets in the community. Appalshop has been essential in creating a unique identity for Whitesburg and for bringing in economic development projects and grant funding for the community. In fact, Lafayette College partnered with Appalshop to determine how communities can leverage their existing assets to strengthen their community with the goal of applying these lessons to communities around the world.

Another key aspect of economic development and creative place-making in Whitesburg is that it has been a collaborative and grassroots effort. Community revitalization efforts have come forth from the community itself. Many of these efforts focus on building up the cultural and artistic assets in the community by supporting artisan associations and local entrepreneurs that add to Whitesburg's cultural identity. Some of these entrepreneurs have focused on traditional crafts of the region such as woodworking. One artisan group in the area has formed the Route 7 Antique Alley. This collaboration created a listing of entrepreneurs, antique sellers, musicians, and other artists that tourists can use to create a unique shopping experience as they follow the route from business to business. This collaboration not only helps create the identity Whitesburg wants for the community, but actively increases tourism in the region. Like Adams County, Pikeville and Whitesburg have felt the impact of the declining coal industry. Pikeville has worked to bring in businesses and transition workers into new sectors. Both cities have implemented creative place-making strategies branding the towns as somewhere enjoyable for both tourists and residents. These strategies diversify the cities' economies from reliance on the coal industry. Both cities also recognized the importance of collaboration among local officials, economic development professionals, business owners, state and federal representatives, and the community as a whole. Adams County could look to attract businesses that align with the skill set of laid-off workers or that are willing to train employees with new skills. Additionally, Adams County could begin to implement creative placemaking strategies. Adams County could re-brand its own distinct identity in the region by revitalizing the main street areas of the villages, and by supporting unique cultural attractions, festivals, and businesses. Collaboration is even more critical as a county than a city. Adams County should strive to engage representatives at the county, township, and village levels, but also engage with business owners and other community members. This will assist Adams County in creating an identity that is authentic to all involved parties. The county should also follow Whitesburg's model from Appalshop by supporting grassroots efforts to encourage entrepreneurs, artisans, or other organizations to identify their community. By encouraging collaboration and ideas from within the community, Adams County works to become amenity dense, which will help attract tourism and promote sustainable growth.

### ***Findings***

The approaches communities have taken in the wake of major employer closing or an industry declining are varied. Some communities focused on gaining new major employers, while others supported their remaining businesses. Still, others sought to diversify their economies away from the industries that were declining. Several communities looked to workforce development, and training programs for their communities and many communities recognized the importance of collaboration with educational institutions, local businesses, regional partners, and the community itself. Additionally, quite a few communities recognized the importance of developing the natural assets that made their community unique. Although each case study focused only on the key strategies utilized by each community, it is

essential to note that these strategies were taking place among other economic development strategies. Therefore, Adams County does not have to choose just one approach but can mix and match the strategies that they find beneficial.

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## **7 Community Engagement**

The team completed a series of meetings with local business owners, government officials, community members and other key stakeholders in the community in fall of 2019. This list was gathered from an informed source that was knowledgeable about the key economic development related stakeholders in the community, thus the sample was not random. These meetings allowed the team to understand the concerns of the community and the priorities of the residents. The meeting was held October 29, 2019 to present the data from our economic development scan and ask for comprehensive input to economic development priorities for Adams County in a public setting. Overall, these community engagements allowed the team to identify community goals and promote community involvement in decision making.

The interviews specifically contained individuals from local government entities, businesses, and schools. They ranged from 30 minutes to 1 hour in length. Several reoccurring themes emerged from this interview process. A majority of interviewees mentioned a need for business development like an Industrial Park, Workforce Development opportunities, and entertainment.

Our second aspect of the community engagement research for this project involved a formal meeting open to the public. This meeting served as a platform to provide citizens and Adams County leadership with objective information of the area's economy and subsequently seek feedback on determining the community's economic development priorities. We invited local stakeholders, such as county commissioners, other government officials, business owners, and other community stakeholders.

After a formal presentation of the economic scan data (e.g., age, educational attainment, household income, unemployment rates, employment by industry, school enrollments, commuter patterns, etc.) our team shared the results of our interviews with community stakeholders and shared the top priorities mentioned to the team.

### **Resident Interviews:**

The interview process involved conducting nine in-person or phone interviews with community leaders and stakeholders, which ranged from 30 minutes to one hour in length. The research team conducted interviews with representatives from local economic development agencies, the public sector, the private sector, and not-for-profit sectors in an attempt to gather general feelings about the current and future economic state of Adams County. Additionally, the research team held focus groups with students from the Ohio Valley Career and Technical Center, West Union High School, North Adams High School, and Peebles High School, at a duration of 45 minutes to one hour each.

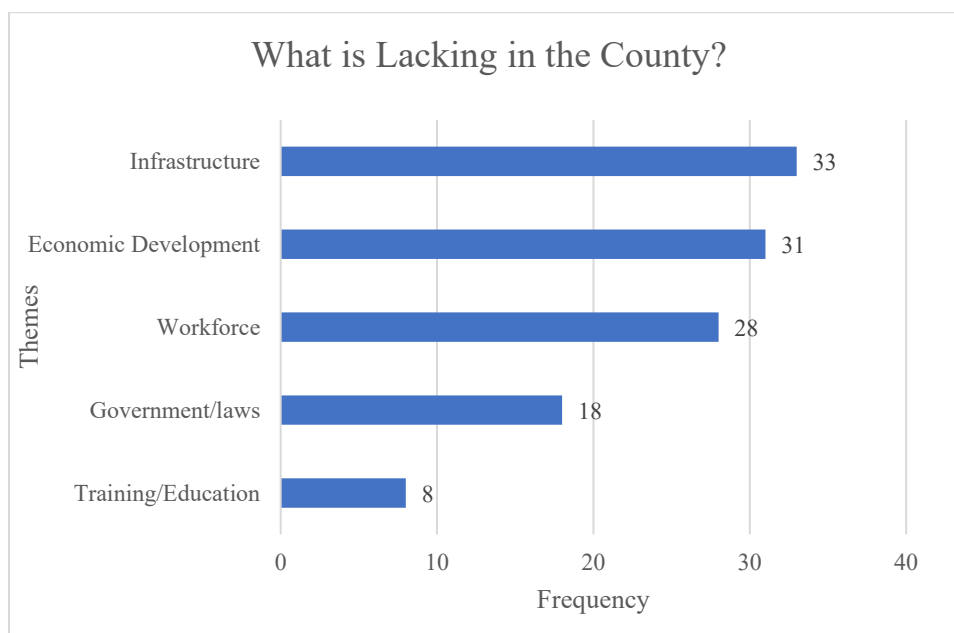
### **Community Leaders and Stakeholders:**

From the interviews with community leaders and stakeholders, the research team was able to categorize responses into three classifications. The categories were 'what is lacking in the

county,’ ‘what the county has to offer,’ and ‘what opportunities the interviewees suggest to explore.’

In the first category, interviewees identified infrastructure, economic development, and workforce needs as the most critical problems facing Adams County. Interviewees identified the lack of public transportation, the lack of daycare, the lack of industrial buildings, the lack of broadband internet access, the lack of adequate housing, the lack of hotels and other amenities for entertainment purposes, the lack of certain healthcare services, and the lack of new families and new residents as problematic for the county. In terms of economic development needs, interviewees identified a lack of consensus and teamwork on efforts, a lack of funding for projects, the lack of support for current industry/businesses, Adams County’s inability to attract and retain new businesses, the lack of adequate social programs, the prevalence of generational poverty and governmental dependence as a problem, the lack of a sense of urgency to economically develop, and the lack of funding and resources for economic development. In the realm of workforce needs in Adams County, interviewees mentioned the need for an increase in the skilled labor force, the need for living-wage employment, the need for more manufacturing jobs, the need for support for current and potential employers, and the need for remediation following the losses of jobs in the county. Figure 7.1.1 shows the frequency with which each theme was mentioned during the interviews.

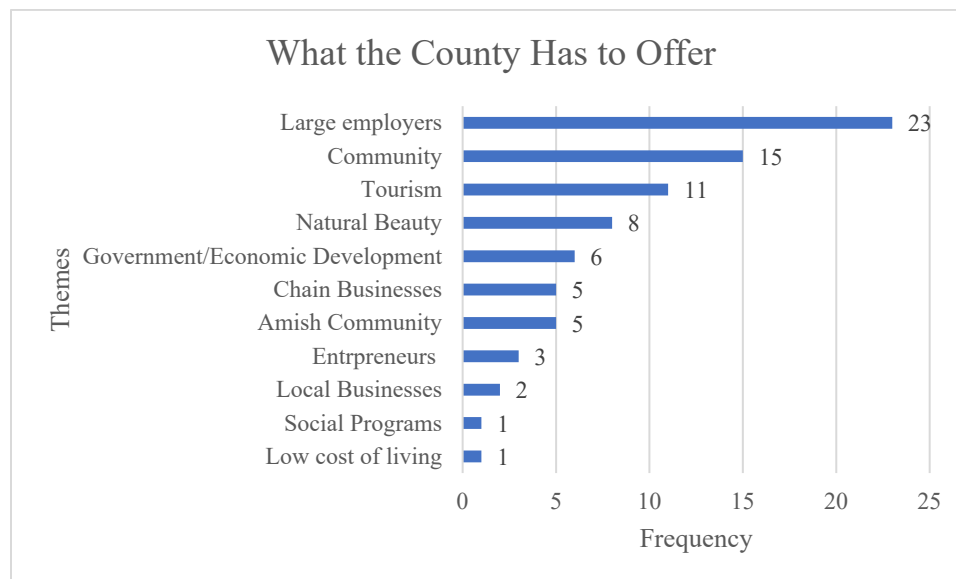
**Figure 7.1.1: Community Leader and Stakeholder Interviews: What is lacking in Adams County?**



Secondly, the interviewees overwhelmingly identified the presence of large employers, the strength of the community, and the tourism industry present in Adams County as the primary assets of Adams County. In terms of large employers as a strength in the county, the interviewees

referred to the GE Peebles Testing Facility, the Adams County Regional Medical Center, Columbus Industries, 1st State Bank, and the Cantrell Refinery as asset firms. Concerning the strength of the community, the interviewees referred to a variety of activities that highlight the depth of the community. They identified the support for development from the community, the government, local organizations, the hard-working ethics of the members of the community, and the religious community as assets to the county. Lastly, the tourism industry is an essential aspect of the economic vitality of Adams County. The Serpent Mound, the Amish Community, the natural beauty of the county, the Ohio River, and the wood industry—in terms of entertainment and timber usage—were all identified as assets to the tourism attractiveness of the county. Figure 7.1.2 shows the frequency with which each theme was mentioned during the interviews.

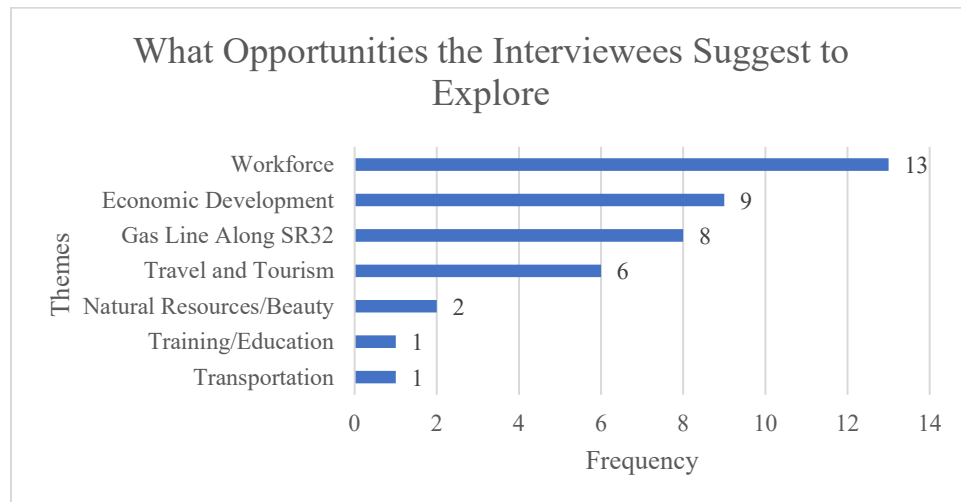
**Figure 7.1.2: Community Leader and Stakeholder Interviews: What Adams County has to offer?**



Lastly, the interviewees identified the need for exploration into workforce opportunities, economic development, and the inclusion of a gas line along State Route 32 as vital needs for Adams County. In terms of workforce opportunities, the interviewees would like to see investment in training programs, soft skills development, support for small businesses, support for current and potential employers, the need for a new large employer, the need to retrain dislocated workers, an increase in small employers, and the want for a second GE testing site in the region. The interviewees also identified the need to explore opportunities in economic development such as bottom-up development, an increase in small businesses, a regional sewer plant, an industrial park located on State Route 32, an increase in small business grants and loans, and the development of a port on the Ohio River—such as a rehabilitation of the DP&L locations. The need for a natural gas line is vital because for the county to develop manufacturing centers and industrial parks and then attract companies to these developments,

natural gas needs to be a possibility. So, the introduction of the gas line will assist the county in building infrastructure, which will then attract essential companies. Figure 7.1.3 shows the frequency with which each theme was mentioned during the interviews.

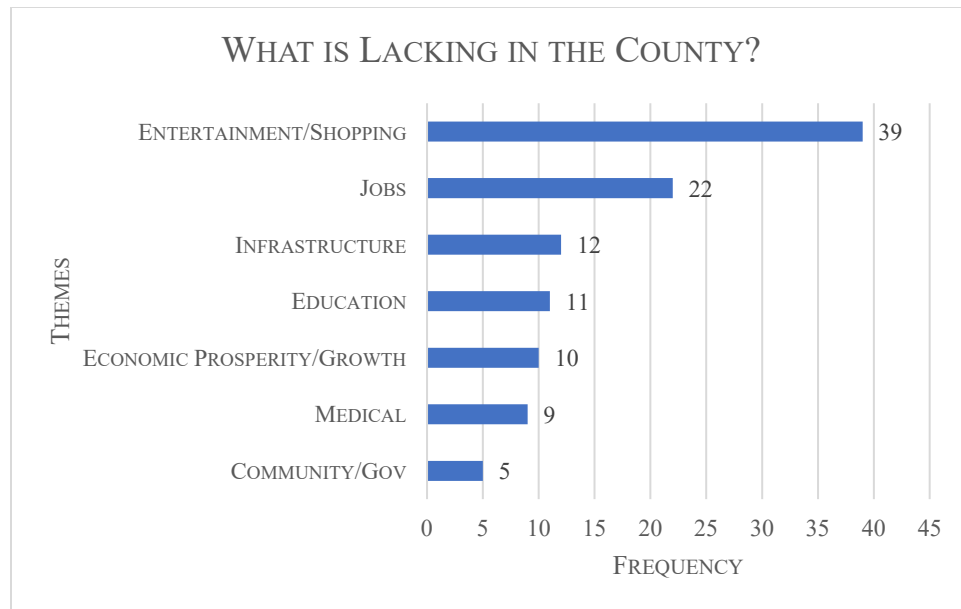
**Figure 7.1.3: Community Leader and Stakeholder Interviews: What opportunities should be explored?**



#### **Adams County Youth:**

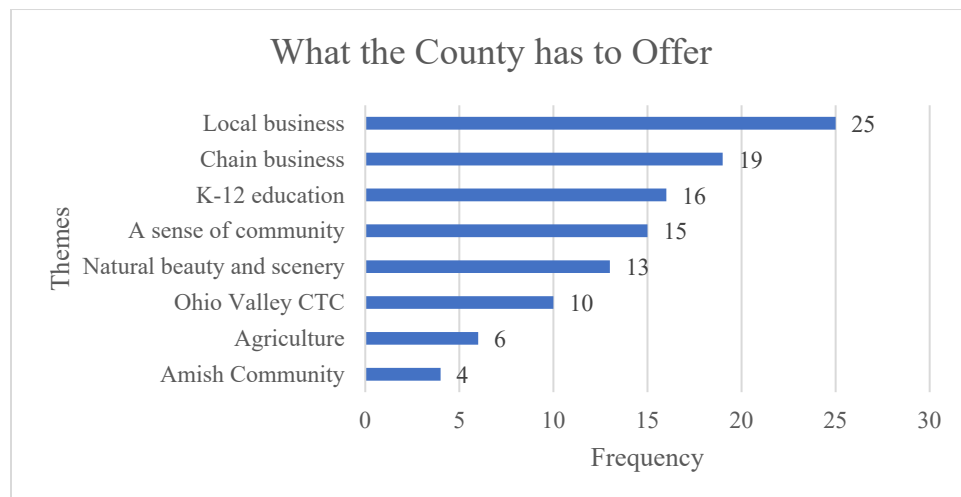
The high school students that the research team interviewed identified a multitude of underpinning problems, county offerings, and existing opportunities for Adams County. The students primarily identified the lack of sufficient entertainment and shopping opportunities, the lack of employment options, and the lack of adequate infrastructure as serious problems facing the economic stability of Adams County. In terms of infrastructure, the students identified the deteriorated state of the roadways in the county, the lack of access to broadband internet services, the lack of access to public transportation, and the lack of sufficient cellular reception as problems with infrastructure present in Adams County. Students expressed the desire for investment in the entertainment industry, as well. This investment includes attracting restaurants to the area, which is hindered by current alcohol laws, which discourage sit-down style restaurants from moving into the region. Likewise, students would like to see movie theaters, YMCAs, bowling alleys, and other entertainment offerings in the county. Furthermore, students expressed an interest in local grocery stores and clothing stores. Figure 7.1.4 shows the frequency with which each theme was mentioned during the interviews.

**Figure 7.1.4: Student Focus Groups: What is lacking in Adams County?**



However, the students also identified the presence of local businesses, chain businesses, and the strength of the relationship of the community as legitimate offerings that Adams County possesses. In times of crisis, the community is fast to react and assist its members, and community members take great pride in supporting a reciprocal relationship with local businesses. Additionally, students recognized their school systems with access to college courses and the certificate programs at the career and technical center as assets. Figure 7.1.5 shows the frequency with which each theme was mentioned during the interviews.

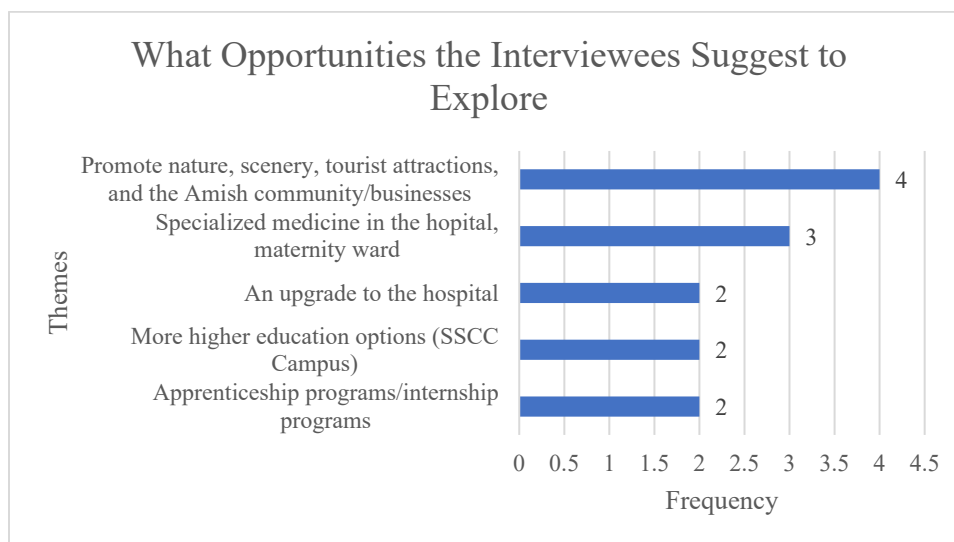
**Figure 7.1.5: Student Focus groups: What Adams County has to offer?**



Lastly, the youth of Adams County believe that local leaders should explore the implementation of a variety of beneficial programming. The introduction of apprenticeship and internship

programs for high school students would allow the youth of the county to explore career options earlier, which would ultimately lead to a variety of desirable outcomes on the labor market of Adams County. High school students in Adams County also expressed the desire to see the inclusion of a Southern State Community College branch campus located in West Union to increase higher education access in the county. Additionally, the students identified upgrades to the Adams County Regional Medical Center, such as a maternity ward and increased offering of medical specialists, and improvements to the tourist attractions and natural beauty of Adams County as viable economic improvement opportunities for the county. Figure 7.1.6 shows the frequency with which each theme was mentioned during the interviews.

**Figure 7.1.6: Student Focus Groups: What opportunities should be explored?**



### **Public Meeting:**

In addition to the interviews conducted with the residents of Adams County, our research team held a public meeting on October 29, 2019, with all those that responded to the meeting invitation through direct invitations to community leaders, chamber businesses, local religious institutions, and other stakeholders identified with help from the Adams County Economic and Community Development office, and through local radio advertisements. Over 25 individuals attended the public meeting, all of which originate from diverse backgrounds, signifying a robust public-private partnership for economic development in the county.

Individuals from governmental organizations such as the Adams County Engineer's Office, the Adams County Board of DD, Manchester Local Schools, the Adams County Commissioner's Office, the City of Hillsboro, Scott Township, Ohio Means Jobs-Adams and Brown Counties, and the Adams County Regional Water District attended the meeting. Additionally, individuals from nonprofit organizations such as Adams County Economic Development, The People's Defender, ACRMC Hospital, and Adams Brown Community Action (ABCAP) were in

attendance. Lastly, individuals from the private sector such as Ward Construction, Frontier Fiber, Freestyle Consulting, Levi Hollow Tools LLC, Showboat Majestic/Precinct/KAMT, Ohio Country Properties Real Estate, and retired pharmacists and RNs. These specialized citizens were able to provide personalized and informal input as to the preferred intended direction of Adams County’s development. The meeting itself, provided the leadership and citizens of Adams County with objective information about the area’s economy and to give feedback about the community’s economic development priorities.

Following the formal presentation of the economic scan data (e.g., age, educational attainment, household income, employment by industry, school enrollments, commuter patterns, etc.), the research team asked the members of the meeting three questions: “What opportunities or businesses would you like to see in Adams County?”, “What changes need to occur in Adams County to capitalize on business and job opportunities?”, and “What would you like to maintain or preserve in Adams County?”. The responses to these questions were discussed at the meeting and used to develop a list of potential priorities for Adams County’s economic development efforts. After this list was developed, the team wrote the responses on a series of posters, and then gave each attendee four green and one red sticky dot to place next to each of the categories that they felt should or should not be focused. The team explained that the green dots signified something that the attendee thought should be given priority in Adams County. Likewise, the red dots were explained to mean something that the attendee did not think needed to be a priority for Adams County. The detailed results of this exercise are displayed below in Table 7.2.1.

**Table 7.2.1: What priorities should be focused on in Adams County?**

<b>Subject/Theme</b>	<b>Number of Green</b>	<b>Number of Red</b>
Natural Gas	9	0
Broadband Access	9	0
Development of the Ohio River/A Floodwall	9	0
Access to Healthcare	8	0
Workforce Development/New Adult Trade School	7	0
Tourism/Marketing/Nature Tourism	6	0
Repurposing the DP&L Plants	6	5
Small Businesses/Entrepreneurs	5	0
Ties to Cincinnati MSA	5	1
Support Current Employers	4	0
Apprenticeship/Internship Programs	4	0
Airport	4	0
Attract New Employers	4	0
Agriculture/Soil Preservation	2	0
The Wood Industry	1	2



In general, the interviewees and members of the meeting are hopeful for the future of Adams County and are confident in its current assets. According to the findings of the meeting, the residents of Adams County would like to see the introduction of a natural gas line along State Route 32 to support the establishment of a new industrial park and other new construction. A gas line is vital to the county in that large and small companies prefer to use natural gas as it is a cheap energy alternative. The residents of Adams County would also like to see a substantial investment in the increase of broadband internet and cellular reception access within the county. An increase in access to modern technology will allow county residents and businesses to perform on par with other areas and will make the county more attractive to potential companies. Lastly, members of the meeting identified the desire to develop the Ohio River and to build a floodwall as an essential task to the development of Adams County—in terms of business usage, tourist usage, and recreational usage, which could all positively impact the economy of the county. Per Table 7.2.1 above, the overwhelming majority of themes from the meeting involved the need for improvements to the infrastructure of Adams County and the need to attend to employment needs, tourism needs, and economic development needs.

## 8. Priorities

Utilizing all information gathered from the economic scan, community engagement sessions, and local economic development officials the following are the current priorities in Adams County.

### 8.1 Winchester Industrial Park

The Winchester Industrial Park will provide a commercial infrastructure to aid in economic development potential of over 500 acres along the Appalachian Highway in Winchester and Seaman, Ohio. The development in this area will provide the greatest opportunity to recruit business into a planned 60- acre industrial Park and a 5-mile section along SR 32. Funding opportunities come from a multitude of sources. The Adams County CIC received a 4.2 million grant to for infrastructure to complete the Winchester Industrial Park.

Objective	Resources	Timeline	Budget
<b>Land Acquisition</b> Acquired two parcels off Dorsey Road.	Adams County CIC  Adams County Board of Commissioners	Fall 2018 Spring 2019	\$364,085
<b>Water</b>  12 in waterline from Seaman to Winchester/Graces Run Road set a master meter and water tower.  Water line from the Industrial site will also connect to the Village of Winchester to provide the Village Water.	Adams County Regional Water District  Adams County CIC  JobsOhio – Granted 4.5 Million dollars to the Winchester Industrial Park	2022	\$4.5 Million
<b>Gas Expansion</b>  Will Connect the gas line from Highland County to Seaman then to Winchester.	Adams County CIC-	2022/2023	\$15 Million

<b>Access Road</b>  Design, land acquisition, and construction of primary access Dorsey/Edmisten/136 Phase II – Connection from access road to Dorsey Rd	Adams County CIC	2022	\$3 Million
<b>Broadband</b> 6 miles of new line to be installed	Adams County Board of Commissioners  Adams County CIC	2022	\$500,000
<b>Sewer</b> Design Plant in Cherry Fork Design Regional Plant Build a new North Adams Regional Plant Design for local extension (including controls and lifts) Extension along Dorsey Rd from Behm to north boundary site.	Adams County Board of Commissioners  Adams County CIC	2022/2023	\$9.5 Million

### Workforce Development

Objective	Resources	Timeline	Budget
Adams County Training Center	Adams County Commissioners  GRIT	2022	\$2.9 Million

## BOBCAT Network Partnership

Objective	Resources	Timeline	Budget
BOBCAT Network Partnership	Ohio University Voinovich School	June 2020 to July 2021	
Staff member placed in Adams County office to assist Economic Development Director on Adams County Projects.	Keirsten Hall – Economic Development Program Associate		

### Conclusion

This report represents the effort of faculty and staff to assist Adams County in identifying economic and community development opportunities. The recommendations found in the executive summary are expanded upon in ‘6. Priorities’ provide a framework of both short-term and long-term steps for Adams County to pursue as part of the County’s economic development agenda. Our hope is that this study and the accompanying public meetings act as a starting point for the community to continue conversations about Adams County’s future.

### References

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