

APPLICATION QUESTIONS.

Applicant City & Respondent Information

Q1. Provide your City and State.

Toledo, OH

Q2. Respondent Contact Information -- Please provide first name, last name, title and email address of the person responsible for submitting this application on behalf of the mayor and city.

Simon Nyi
Commissioner, Grants and Government Affairs
simon.nyi@toledo.oh.gov

City Election Information

City elections often bring new priorities and shifted ambitions. Administration continuity is critical for the success of a fellow and the fellowship impact. We want to confirm that the nominated Mayoral priority and city administration will be consistent over the full two-year fellowship term.

Q3. Please provide the date of the next mayoral election in your city as well as the associated inauguration date. Date format: mm/dd/yyyy.

Election: 11/4/2025
Inauguration: 1/2/2026

Q4. Please describe how your team will minimize the impact of a potential mayoral transition, including if your city government is overseen by a city manager or administrator whose term extends beyond the mayor's electoral and inauguration timelines.

Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz is running for re-election for his third term on November 4. The election follows the 2024 passage of a ballot issue in which voters approved increasing term limits for Toledo mayors from two consecutive terms to three.

Toledo has a strong-mayor form of government, and department heads serve at the pleasure of the mayor. However, all mayoral candidates have identified housing and population growth as priorities, and the results of the election will likely be known prior to our initial scoping call, if we are selected. If a mayoral transition were to occur, senior leadership, including the current Deputy Mayor, will brief the incoming administration prior to transition, and the incoming mayor would be included in the scoping call. Additionally, most appointed leaders have served the City

in some capacity for many years under multiple mayors, and it's expected that they will be able to provide continuity.

Scoping the Anchor Challenge

City Hall Fellows join city halls for a period of two years to help the mayor advance progress on a key priority. An important part of the host city selection process is the scoping and "rightsizing" of this "anchor challenge" for fellows. For now, we are asking you to identify a problem that would benefit from the application of new perspectives and approaches. You should already have resources devoted to addressing this problem and the desired outcomes should be aspirational but realistic. Past examples of fellows' work include implementation of a new, data-centered approach to addressing gun violence and removal of service delivery pain points, slashing licensing fees and piloting performance management tools.

(Up to 200 words per question)

Q5. Anchor Challenge

What problem is your city currently facing that would benefit from a rigorous exploration into the causes and factors that contribute to the challenge, as well as new approaches to try and address it?

Once-declining cities across America's industrial heartland are undergoing remarkable turnarounds – diversifying their economies, reinvesting in their urban cores, and reversing decades-long population losses. Redevelopment efforts have also brought promising changes to Toledo, transforming our downtown riverfront and revitalizing long-vacant sites. Our population, however, has yet to start growing again.

Mayor Kapszukiewicz will soon announce a bold goal for his final term: grow Toledo's population to 300,000 by 2040. With the release of a new Strategic Plan in 2026, the City will identify five strategic priorities unified around this goal.

We cannot know with certainty, during this administration, whether this goal will become a reality. In this context, it is all the more critical to establish a clear, shared, and measurable understanding of progress – and to orient our work around it.

City leadership has begun to develop a preliminary list of actionable initiatives to advance the plan's objectives. However, more work remains to be done. We need to identify evidence-based, context-specific indicators of progress; align our portfolio of initiatives – and the way we prioritize and coordinate their implementation, as well as our stakeholder engagement approach – with those indicators; and build in rigorous and ongoing evaluation.

Our challenge is one of time, and of measurement: With a 14-year goal and a 4-year time horizon, what are the most critical near-term interventions necessary to establish the long-term conditions for growth? How must our departments coordinate with one another, and with

external stakeholders, to deliver those interventions successfully – and how do we know whether they're working?

Toledo seeks a Bloomberg City Hall Fellow to help us address these questions, with a core focus in two strategic priority areas: **building safe and connected neighborhoods** and **promoting economic growth and inclusive opportunity**.

While no strategic priority stands on its own, these two areas are uniquely interdependent and interdepartmental, and offer perhaps the clearest opportunities both to make early impact and to generate sustained momentum. A confluence of promising initiatives in housing, land use, and economic development – a zoning code rewrite; new affordable housing developments; the launch of the Community Improvement Corporation – are underway or planned in Toledo. Being situated at the intersections of these initiatives, as well as new initiatives emerging from the Strategic Plan, will provide the ideal context for work that is simultaneously cross-cutting and focused.

With new clarity of vision and existing momentum, Toledo is ready to build a strong foundation for growth. Our Bloomberg City Hall Fellow will help us create the blueprint and lay the first stones.

Q6. Defining Success

What does success look like with regards to your nominated problem? What long-term capabilities would you like to build within city hall to address this and other problems? Please be as specific as possible.

A successful Fellowship will result in:

A research-based, context-specific understanding of the most critical measurable indicators for progress toward our goal within the time frame of our administration:

Toledo has done much to develop its understanding of the factors contributing to our challenges related to population growth within specific focus areas, including through a 2021 Comprehensive Housing Strategy, the 2024 Forward Toledo land-use plan, as well as various neighborhood-level community development planning efforts. Several promising efforts in the land-use, economic development, and housing spaces are also planned or underway.

However, our sense is that cities comparable to Toledo that have successfully reversed population decline – Buffalo, Detroit, Cincinnati, and others – have pioneered bold combinations of innovative policy, public-sector investment strategy, and sustained cross-sector partnership-building that Toledo can learn from. A successful Fellowship will synthesize findings about successful practices from other cities with a deep understanding of the conditions, challenges, and existing efforts specific to Toledo: what are the factors that have most significantly contributed to success in cities that have reversed population decline? What new tools does Toledo need to add to its toolkit, how do we need to adapt those tools for Toledo's context, and

how can we ensure that we're using our existing tools in an integrated, measurably results-oriented way?

A subset of high-impact, cross-cutting early action initiatives: while we do not have prescriptive expectations about the format of our Fellow's findings, it is critical that their answers to these questions result in more than just a planning document. They should clearly translate into a well-defined and measurable – even if preliminary – set of indicators against which we can prioritize and benchmark our work.

Our Fellow will arrive in Toledo amid the ongoing refinement of our strategic initiatives, and a successful Fellowship will contribute to the refinement and prioritization of that list. In a context of limited personnel time and financial resources, what achievable interventions will most significantly contribute to the development of the long-term environment for growth? What operational conditions need to be in place to implement those interventions successfully?

As all of our strategic priority areas are inherently cross-cutting and interdepartmental by nature, we expect that our Fellow will participate actively in leadership-level planning conversations, with the critical role of ensuring coordination and integration. While our Fellow will initially engage most deeply around housing, economic development, and land use, we expect that other departmental intersections will naturally arise, and focus may evolve.

An evaluation framework: We want to begin rollout of early action initiatives well within the timeline of our Fellowship, and developing a means of evaluating the impact of these initiatives against our key indicators. While execution of initiatives at the operational level will be managed by City departments, evaluation should be formative as well as summative – 1) what lessons can we learn, and what adjustments can we make, in real time; and 2) how should the outcomes of a given initiative inform future work?

Long-Term Capacity Building

Evaluation for scalable operational improvements: While our Fellow's evaluation framework should be rigorous, it should not be esoteric – it should be something that City departments can continue to use and refine, and that the City can increasingly scale and operationalize across the organization, over the long term. Ultimately, we hope our Fellow will put us on the path toward an organizational disposition of agile yet rigorously focused orientation toward measurable results.

Stakeholder engagement, collaboration, and ecosystem-building: while only one of many factors that will likely inform our Fellow's work, our initial sense is that stakeholder engagement will likely play into some of our key indicators. While the City has a relationship with every anchor institution in our area to some degree and an increasingly strong track record of collaboration with community-based organizations, our sense is that cities that have successfully reversed population decline, like Cincinnati, Buffalo, and Detroit, mobilize their stakeholder networks in a more sustained way that bridges disparate projects and focus areas

into a common long-term commitment – what might be described as an ecosystem-based collaboration paradigm. We see untapped potential in this area.

Although it's important that any specific action recommendations on this front emerge as organic results of our Fellow's work rather than prescriptively, one potential long-term outcome for the City may be a path toward an approach to stakeholder engagement – which can sometimes be nebulous in terms of objectives and actionable results – that charts a clearer relationship between strategy, execution, and impact.

Q7. Initiated Action

Over the past 24 months, what has the city done to address the problem? Who has been engaged and what were the results of those efforts?

Downtown revitalization efforts are gaining momentum, and the City has sought to create the conditions for this revitalization to drive broader transformation and growth throughout our neighborhoods. In September 2024, the City adopted the Forward Toledo plan, its new comprehensive land-use plan. With high-level guidance from local elected officials and public agencies, the planning process engaged over 5,000 residents from across the city. Under the overarching vision of making Toledo “a city where more and more people choose to belong,” the plan identifies five goal areas that broadly focus on housing, connectivity, neighborhood and economic development, and quality of life.

Notably, the plan includes strategies for improving housing variety and increasing affordable housing, both key challenges identified in previous planning efforts (see Q8, “Data”). In late 2024, the City was awarded a HUD grant to implement key recommendations of the plan, including a comprehensive zoning code rewrite and the development of financing incentives and streamlined approval processes. In 2025, the City launched the Toledo Community Improvement Corporation (CIC), a dedicated funding source for preparing sites for job-creating projects and housing. The City has also successfully facilitated redevelopment of numerous vacant sites for affordable housing and economic development projects.

Q8. Data

What data sources have you used to help inform your understanding and diagnosis of the problem and your city's response to it? How have you used this data, and what insights have you derived from it?

Toledo Together, the City's 2021 comprehensive housing strategy, analyzed market conditions, housing needs, and population and demographic trends, and qualitative stakeholder engagement data. It found that affordability is a significant challenge despite low home values and declining population, and that the city faces unmet demand across all market segments. Toledo's situation is distinctive in that our housing challenges are partly a function of low property values, which (along with high construction costs) disincentivize both new development

– particularly market-rate development – and preservation of existing stock. Combined with increasing vacancy and population loss, the result is that housing unit loss has outpaced new unit construction at a rate of 2 to 1 in the past 35 years. Toledo Together also found that Toledo needs more diversity of housing type and price point; existing stock, dominated by single-family homes, is neither well-suited to the changing needs of current residents nor conducive to attracting new residents.

Housing is only one of many factors in Toledo’s population problem. However, Toledo Together made it clear that Toledo has a context-specific housing challenge that requires innovative and context-specific solutions. It also suggests an opportunity: by solving for housing diversity, Toledo can begin to solve for growth.

Q9. Stakeholders

Who are the primary stakeholders (both inside and outside of city hall) that you have engaged to help address the problem? Who are the stakeholders you have not engaged yet but would like to engage in the future?

The City has engaged a broad range of internal and external stakeholders in various planning efforts around housing, land use, and economic development; Forward Toledo and Toledo Together included contributions from local elected officials, City staff, private-sector civic leaders, and residents. We have also collaborated successfully with other public agencies and the private sector to prepare vacant sites for redevelopment and attract job-creating projects and affordable housing development. However, our sense is that cities that have successfully reversed population decline, like Cincinnati, Buffalo, and Detroit, mobilize their stakeholder networks in a more sustained way that bridges disparate projects and focus areas into a common long-term commitment. While the City has a relationship with nearly every anchor institution in our area to some degree, we see untapped potential for deeper collaboration with some key players, including in the higher education and housing development sectors.

Supervisor Information

The proposed supervisor should have responsibilities across a portfolio (not just a single department), thus encouraging the transfer of skills and capabilities beyond the designated anchoring priority challenge. Past successful supervisors have included chief of staff, deputy mayors and city managers. Who, on behalf of the city, will serve as a supervisor to a fellow?

Q10. Supervisor’s First Name, Last Name, and E-mail

Abby Arnold
abby.arnold@toledo.oh.gov

Q11. Supervisor’s Role and Responsibilities – What is this person’s overall responsibility

within your city hall? And what is this person's role in addressing the challenge described in this application?

Abby Arnold is Deputy Mayor of the City of Toledo. Deputy Mayor Arnold oversees all City Departments, with public safety departments under the direct oversight of Safety Director George Kral. Deputy Mayor Arnold is responsible for overseeing implementation of the Mayor's strategic priorities, and leads the development of the City's strategic plan.

Q12. Supervisor's Commitment – To your knowledge, are there any planned shifts in the role, responsibilities, or priorities of the proposed Supervisor that could impact the support they would provide to a fellow? If so, please describe briefly.

No