Greater Louisville Project
ADVANCING A COMPETITIVE CITY

Fix
Build
Create
Invest
Balance

2007 Competitive City Report
The Greater Louisville Project is a non-partisan, civic initiative organized by The Community Foundation of Louisville and sponsored by a consortium of foundations and funders. Its mission is to act as a catalyst, providing research, data analysis and civic dialogue to engage the community in a shared agenda for long-term progress.

Additional data on indicators in the Competitive City Report and related topics, including data covering the entire Metropolitan Statistical Area for many measures, are available at [www.greaterlouisvilleproject.org](http://www.greaterlouisvilleproject.org).

The level of the challenge, the need to act, the potential for success—all are clear in this, the Greater Louisville Project’s second biennial Competitive City Report.

The data-based public report card again measures Louisville’s actual performance and relative standing on key economic and social indicators, ranging from education attainment and life expectancy to income and housing costs.

It documents both encouraging progress and troubling trends. But it primarily underscores the need to accelerate the pace of change to redefine Louisville as a skilled and educated community that claims its place in the top tier of American cities.

What the report can’t document is the unprecedented focus, energy and collaboration now being dedicated to those challenges by the broad array of governmental, non-profit and civic institutions that have embraced the Competitive City Agenda first outlined in the Brookings Institution report, “Beyond Merger: A Competitive Vision for the Regional City of Louisville.”

Since releasing that report five years ago, the Greater Louisville Project has enlisted thousands of citizens and scores of community groups in discussion. It has organized a [web-based Competitive City Action Network](http://greaterlouisvilleproject.org) to track the many initiatives underway to attain it. And it has entered into emerging partnerships with a growing list of dynamic civic groups and leaders.
Deep Drivers: Key Steps to Strengthen the Community

1. Improve education at all levels
   - Double projected growth in the number of young adults with a bachelor's degree to 10,000.
   - Attain the goal of Every1Reads and adopt world-class standards in math and science education.
   - Bring about comparable increases in high school graduation, associate degrees and technical certificates.

2. Grow 21st Century Jobs
   - Increase projected growth in professional and technical jobs by 15,000 and raise the median family income.

3. Balance Regional Growth
   - Think and act more as a region and strengthen the core of Louisville Metro as the regional hub.
Better Scores Across the Map

The drive to make good on Louisville’s commitment to ensuring a solid education for all children accelerated with measurable progress.

The Every1Reads initiative to ensure that every child is reading on grade level within four years has produced tangible gains, despite disappointing second-year results. Significant improvement occurred among children in southern and western neighborhoods, where progress has been slow. An equally ambitious challenge from the GE Foundation calls for adopting world-class standards to transform math and science education.

All the data, however, underscore the persistent academic gaps between races and social classes that plague American education. Although quality preschool is widely regarded as one key to reducing such disparities, the percentage of 3- and 4-year olds in any form of preschool has fallen.

### Percent 3- and 4-Year Olds Enrolled in Pre-School: Louisville Metro

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and American Community Summary

### Students Performing At or Above Grade Level by Race: 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Jefferson County Public Schools

### High School Dropout Rate (Grades 9 – 12) for Jefferson County Public Schools 1993-2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<td>2000</td>
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<td>2001</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Jefferson County Public Schools
With higher education and advanced training ever more crucial, Louisville climbed out of the bottom tier and into the middle in its 2005 rankings against peer cities on the percentage of young adults who hold a bachelor’s degree or higher.

The pace of change is striking: Although their numbers are small, a third of adults age 25-34 in Louisville Metro now hold at least a bachelor’s degree, compared to just under 23% in 1990. Even more are earning associate degrees and technical certificates.

One eye-catching statistic: Louisville ranks high on the percentage of residents who have some college, implying a large population that enters higher education but does not graduate—a potential target for action. Despite the gains, the overall education levels for the Louisville Region’s prime workforce still lag its top competitors by a large margin, and the push to “Graduate Greater Louisville!” needs to shift into high gear.

Peer City Comparison Percent Adults Age 25 – 34 with Bachelor’s Degree or Higher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raleigh</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nashville</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>28.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omaha</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cincinnati</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisville</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>33.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census and 2005 American Community Survey
Slow Turn to 21st Century Jobs

The interplay between education and jobs presents a conundrum: the necessity to grow high-skill jobs even as the community raises education attainment to meet the demand for higher skills.

The momentum building with investments downtown and new commitments to arts and recreational assets enhance Louisville as a vibrant city for young professionals and also a very livable community for families.

But all of that promise has not yet produced a transformation in the city’s economic and demographic profile. The push to grow 21st Century jobs yielded a slight gain in the number employed in professional, technical and managerial positions but not enough to change the city’s low relative standing on that measure or to raise average wages compared to other cities.

The downtown renaissance gained momentum on every front: housing, upscale hotels, clubs and restaurants, agreement to build a multi-purpose arena and plans for Museum Plaza, while the City of Parks extends the legacy of magnificent green space to suburban areas.
Louisville’s large proportion of working-class families continues to be buffeted by economic pressures, but the median income for families has risen. In fact, this significant measure rose enough to lift the community from the bottom to the middle tier among its peers in 2005 data.

Simultaneously, however, the number of low-income families also increased, as did the percentage of young children living in poverty, which stands at 28%. Housing costs grew more rapidly than incomes, resulting in a significant jump in foreclosures and pushing to 24% the proportion of families who spend more than a third of their income for shelter.

Homelessness also spread, vividly illustrated by the 6,000 homeless students enrolled in the public schools, a six-fold increase since 1993.

With the worsening crisis in health care, the number of families without health insurance continued to grow, and a recent study documented stark disparities across areas of the county in life expectancy, the ultimate health indicator.
Louisville takes great pride in its neighborhoods, and increasing home values show it’s more than lip-service.

Appreciation in the median home value edged Louisville up among its peers. Most importantly, values have risen in revitalized western and southwestern neighborhoods that had lost residents in recent decades.

The rate of homeownership, a prime indicator of neighborhood stability, produced an anomaly in 2000 that continued through 2005: the rate continued to drop among African-Americans, while it rose among white families here and among both groups in other cities.

Louisville’s crime rate continues to be one of the lowest among its peer cities, but 2005 data showed a slight uptick following steady declines over the last decade.
Louisvillians have traditionally put a high value on the cohesion and convenience that allows them to enjoy both big-city amenities and a small-town atmosphere. Both are at risk without vigorous efforts to achieve balanced growth across the metropolitan region.

The pace and extent of the community’s outward expansion picked up during the first half of this decade. While Louisville Metro experienced some growth, outlying counties experienced far more, and the city’s share of the region’s population dropped to just under 58%.

Indeed, Spencer County ranked as one of the country’s fastest growing counties, and Crawford County, Ind., made the news for having the highest rate of “exurb” commuting in the nation.

On the environment, Louisville had trouble complying with tougher federal standards on particulate pollution despite its long push for cleaner air, and traffic congestion worsened even as the average among its peer cities leveled off.
The Competitive City Action Network connects the dots between education, a skilled workforce, jobs and opportunities for families, a strong core city and balanced growth across the region.

The Greater Louisville Project laid the groundwork for stepping up the pace of change by identifying “Deep Drivers” of change and creating a Web-based map of strategies underway to achieve them.

The initiatives mapped at www.greaterlouisvilleproject.org represent groundbreaking efforts to redefine Louisville as an educated and skilled community, strengthening its competitive position and improving quality of life and prospects for the future.

Fix the Basics
K–12 Education
Louisville’s strong and stable public schools and record of steady improvement build momentum behind the commitment to ensure that all children achieve at high levels.

Build on Assets
Economic Development, Downtown Revitalization, Arts, Culture & Recreation
Targeted economic development, a vibrant downtown, and arts and recreational opportunities foster the urban environment that attracts knowledge workers and jobs.

Call to Action
• Support the Competitive City Action Network
• Align the goals of civic groups and organizations
• Unite behind the goal:

Move Louisville into the Top Tier of American Cities

Invest in Working Families
Assets, Income, Health
Shoring up working families strengthens the social fabric of the community. Affordable housing, income supports, financial services and assets can make the difference.
Fix the Basics

Higher Education

Like the national model offered by UPS Metropolitan College, higher education and workforce entities throughout the region are innovating targeted strategies to build the pipeline to higher skills.

Create Quality Neighborhoods

Housing & Community Development

Good housing in quality neighborhoods builds quality of place. Revitalization strengthens older urban areas to compete for growth and development.

Balance Metropolitan Growth

Regional Planning, Transportation, Environment

The challenge is to think and act more as a region, improving transportation and cooperation to ensure equitable development.
Louisville has distinguished itself as a community that can set a big goal and stick to it. Now is the time to build on that success and move forward. The Deep Drivers of Change are fundamental in their potential to accelerate the pace of progress by 2010:

**Improve Education at all Levels**
- Double the increase in young adults with a bachelor’s degree to 10,000.
- Attain the goal of Every1Reads and adopt world-class standards in math and science.
- Bring about comparable increases in high school graduation, associate degrees and technical certificates.

**Grow 21st Century Jobs**
- Increase projected growth in professional and technical jobs by 15,000 and raise the median family income.

**Balance Regional Growth**
- Think and act more as a region and strengthen the core of Louisville Metro as the regional hub.

The way is clear to unite behind this powerful civic agenda and redefine Louisville as a skilled and educated community that claims its place in the top tier of American cities.

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**Acknowledgements**


Its mission is to act as a catalyst, providing research, data analysis and civic dialogue to engage the community in a shared agenda for long-term progress. It is overseen by a Policy Board that includes Matthew Barzun, Gordon R. Garner, Sylvia W. Jaegers, David A. Jones Jr., Daniel W. McMahan, Sammy L. Moon, Michael B. Mountjoy, Steve O. Moya, W. Barrett Nichols, Sharon A. Receveur, C. Dennis Riggs, William E. Summers, IV, and James S. Welch Jr. An Advisory Committee of community leaders and a technical team of data specialists provide ongoing guidance.

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