



# ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025

419 Junction Ave. Toledo Oh 43607

Environmental Justice - Social Justice - Peace Education - Economic Justice



# Alicia Smith

## Executive Director



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

***"The Junction neighborhood is our home, and we love where we live. The Junction Coalition is here to support our neighbors dream - of a thriving economy, beautiful natural habitat, and healthy residents - which brings that vision to life. From the art and culture, to our community garden, to the homes we repair, you can see our decade of impact. We are thankful for the opportunity to serve our community and our city at large, and our impact will continue to grow. Thank you to everyone who has made this work possible!"***

*Alicia Smith, Executive Director*

This year marks a decade of The Junction Coalition's (TJC's) boots-on-the-ground work advancing social, environmental, and economic stewardship and peace education in Toledo's Junction neighborhood, across the city, Great Lakes Region and nation. Over the past ten years, TJC has grown from a grassroots community effort into a trusted hub for advocacy, education, and action in one of Toledo's most historically disinvested communities.

Our mission remains empowering our neighbors with a strong, unified voice and nurturing meaningful relationships to enhance our quality of life for all.

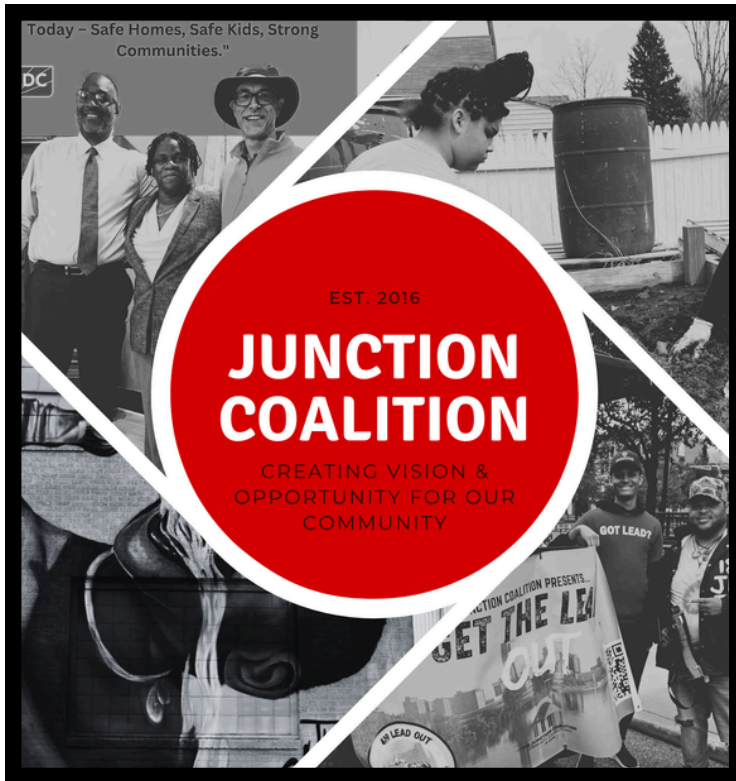
Our vision is clear: ***building a vibrant, secure, and sustainable community that offers access to resources and education, enriching lives across generations.***

TJC's work spans multiple interconnected initiatives. **LEAD:** Our lead poisoning prevention program has delivered citywide education, health screenings, and direct support to families, engaging thousands of residents and providers in direct service and healing.

Through projects like Swan Creek restoration, "What Blooms on Blum?" community garden, and urban rain garden plantings, we have restored green spaces, reduced urban heat, improved stormwater management, and increased access to safe recreational areas.

Collaboration remains a cornerstone of our impact. Partnerships with local organizations, government agencies, and neighbors ensure our work follows our value: "nothing about us, without us". The Junction's decade of partnership-driven impact centers our most affected residents through advocacy, environmental stewardship, and direct engagement. As we celebrate ten years, we recommit to expanding programs and transforming our neighborhood into a healthier, more vibrant community. This anniversary is both a celebration of past achievements and a renewed commitment to justice, growth, and long-term community well-being.

Over the next ten years, we're not just asking for a seat at the table—we're building our own table, where our community's wisdom leads, our children's futures are non-negotiable, and every neighbor has the power and resources to not just survive but thrive on their own terms.



419.408.0998

## WHO ARE WE?

### Staff + Contractors

- Alicia Smith | Executive Director
- Archie Beasley Jr. | Lead & Facilities Manager
- Donald Wiggins Jr. | Environmental Program Manager
- Clifton Porter | Housing Manager
- Anthony Davis | Media & Marketing Specialist
- Trebor Singletary | Admin Assistant
- Antione Washington | Gardening Manager & Volunteer Manager
- Stacy Green | Finance Manager
- Alicia Shields | Grants Manager
- Tiberius Tesznar | Technology Specialist

### Special Volunteers + Interns

- Marya Czech | Grants & Programs
- Alexis Smith | Environmental Program Specialist
- Alexander Devenney | Environmental Programs Intern
- Tonya Duran | J.O.Y. Coordinator

## WHO IS THE JUNCTION COALITION?

The Junction Coalition stands at the nexus of food, water, and energy innovation—with boots on the ground, placing our community at the forefront of a new industrial revolution leading Toledo, the Great Lakes region, and beyond.

From its roots as the Polish enclave of Kuschwantz to its golden era as the "Black Mecca" of the 1950s-60s, Junction has always been a hub of prosperity, innovation, and resilience. Dorr Street once thrived as Black Downtown—a corridor of Black-owned businesses and homes that anchored our community. But "urban renewal" demolished these institutions in the 1970s, widening Dorr into a five-lane divider. Industrial decline, redlining, white flight, and I-75's concrete barrier compounded structural injustices still shaping our environment and health.

The Junction Coalition and partners exists to rewrite this legacy—on the ground, block by block. Our impact is tangible: restored Swan Creek ecosystems with native plants, life-saving lead screenings, urban gardens producing pounds of food for Junction neighbors, and green career training. With boots firmly planted in Junction soil, we advocate for sustainable food systems, repair homes, and secure clean water access—reclaiming community power.

Powered by renewable energy and rooted in economic justice, environmental stewardship, and community vision, The Junction Coalition is building the future we deserve.

# VISION AND MISSION



## VISION

*Building a vibrant, secure, and sustainable community that offers access to resources and education to people of all ages, enriching the lives of everyone in the community.*

## MISSION

*Empowering our neighbors with a strong, unified voice and nurturing meaningful relationships within our community to enhance the quality of life for all.*





# 419 GET THE LEAD OUT

Funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, our 2025 lead mitigation work expanded community education, partnership, and advocacy across the Great Lakes region. Our partnership with Clever Bee Learning Center at City Park reached over 150 families with children newborn to six years old. Junction's community garden, "What Blooms on Blum" grows crops combating lead poisoning right here in Junction.

This year, anchor churches like Indiana Avenue Missionary Baptist Church hosted critical lead screenings and community events, serving dozens across the region. University of Toledo Honors partnerships and year-round interns amplified our outreach across the city. Our #419GetTheLeadOut initiative expanded into North Toledo with innovative events like the Lead Screening Sock Hop.

Partnerships with Wayman Palmer YMCA brought lead education to summer and after-school youth programs. We shared our outcomes with policy makers at the Ohio Statehouse and built coalitions at Cleveland's Better Health Partnership. The Lead Walk, our MisLEAD song by Rocky Duh, and IMPACT poverty training connected lead exposure to systemic injustice. December's partnership with Nexus Healthcare screened dozens of children during toy giveaways, delivering life-saving interventions that protect our community's future.





# JOBS OPPORTUNITY & YOUTH (J.O.Y.)



Jobs, Opportunity, and Youth (J.O.Y.) empower youth ages 10-16 through workforce development, behavioral health support, and leadership building. In 2025, students engage in social-emotional exercises, team building, reflection writing, and artistic expression while developing advocacy skills and community consciousness.

Hands-on learning includes gardening on "What Blooms on Blum"—maintaining beds, growing food, and exploring multicultural recipes with the 70-pound harvest. J.O.Y. traveled across the city to places like Swan Creek, Toledo Zoo, and restorative justice training expand horizons beyond the classroom. Through mentorship and experiential education, J.O.Y. cultivates growing confident community leaders. The impact is measurable: **improved self-esteem, enhanced writing and grammar skills, and youth equipped with the awareness and capabilities to lead Junction's future with purpose and power.**

We continue centering lead education within J.O.Y. programming, equipping officers with resources to educate parents on lead's impacts—recognizing that culturally sustaining practices honor our community's knowledge and resilience. This next training phase partners with Dr. Pam Oatis, award-winning pediatrician who served inner city Toledo families for 35 years.



# RESTORING FAMILY PRACTICE PROGRAM (RFP)



The Restoring Family Practice Program in the Junction Coalition is a transformative community effort grounded in the belief that healthy families are essential to Junction. More than traditional family support, it creates space for families to strengthen communication, rebuild trust, and form relationships rooted in dignity, equity, and mutual respect.

This program produced meaningful outcomes for both the youth and the community. RFP youth worked together to design and build a pergola that is solar powered, gaining hands-on skills in construction, sustainability, and long-term building maintenance. Through consistent mentorship and creative outlets, youth showed measurable reductions in anger and emotional outbursts. They reported increased happiness, confidence, and a stronger sense of purpose. RFP also introduced music production as a positive form of self-expression, helping RFP youth to develop discipline, and healthy ways to process emotions.

We gather residents, mentors, elders, and community resources to support healing that is both personal and political. Restoring family practice means restoring our collective humanity—peace as the presence of justice.



# HOUSING

In 2025, our housing program has been a vital resource for the Junction community, reaching out to over 50 residents and assisting with a variety of needs, from property tax help to major home repairs, tree removal, and demolitions.

A standout example includes helping a neighbor on Blum secure her home with new locks, remove hazardous appliances, and demolish a dangerous garage that posed an environmental risk. In 2025, we have many more stories of life-saving impacts.

Recognizing the connection between housing and clean water, food security, and energy efficiency, we've engaged with Toledo City officials, including the Federal EPA, to advocate for a safer, stronger Junction. This has included meetings on blight elimination, disaster preparedness, and financial literacy.

Our program is improving in efficiency thanks to a new process designed by our Housing Director, which breaks down tasks into clear, manageable stages. We currently have around a dozen active cases, from helping unhoused residents find housing to roof repairs and hoarding cleanouts. These projects are reviewed monthly by the Housing Committee, where we seek funding and support.





# J.E.T. JUNCTION ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION



Junction Economic Transformation (J.E.T.) is a powerful initiative revitalizing disinvested communities through Entrepreneurship and Workforce Training, catalyzing economic growth and community-led transformation.

Through a partnership with the Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Minority Business Assistance Center (MBAC), J.E.T. supported one contractor-led cohort of ten participants from underrepresented backgrounds. By program completion, over 50 participants to date have developed individualized business plans, including cost-benefit analyses and financial roadmaps aligned with MBAC practices.

Participants initiated the (MWBE) Minority and Women owned business enterprise certification process, apply for contracting opportunities with successful outcomes such as store fronts and growing business development. Cohort businesses reported a 20–30% improvement in operational efficiency.

Participants also reported increased confidence, reduced business-related stress, and stronger connections to Chamber resources, positioning them for sustainable growth and long-term wealth building.



# JUNCTION OFF THE GRID

The Junction Coalition's transformation to solar power marks a revolutionary step forward for Junction.

We finished the installation of the solar panels in December of 2025.

Funded by the Energy Foundation and Environment Protection Agency, (EPA), Thriving Communities Grant this initiative will generate 1800 megawatts annually, slashing our electric bills by 75% while taking us completely off the grid.

This isn't just about energy independence—it's about environmental stewardship and economic resilience for the Junction neighborhood. By harnessing the sun's limitless power, we're reducing Junction's carbon footprint and proving that sustainable infrastructure is both practical and powerful. This project is merely the foundation of energy independence of Junction.

As Junction's pioneering effort in renewable energy, we're setting a precedent that will ripple throughout our neighborhood, inspiring a greener, more self-sufficient future for our entire community.





## What Blooms on Blum?

Our award-winning ADA-friendly garden empowers J.O.Y. students and community with green agriculture career skills while addressing health equity through intersectional design that allows neighbors of all abilities to grow their own food.

Food-to-medicine raised beds feature QR codes connecting African American health disparities to healing vegetables and flowers targeting brain, liver, kidney, and heart conditions.

Accessible friendly designs reduce physical strain, welcoming all ages and abilities to grow food. The outdoor learning classroom includes an orchard with pears, apples, and cherry trees, producing 70 pounds of fresh food.

Recognized citywide for beauty, the garden transforms community health through hands-on cultivation and education.



## Restoring Swan Creek

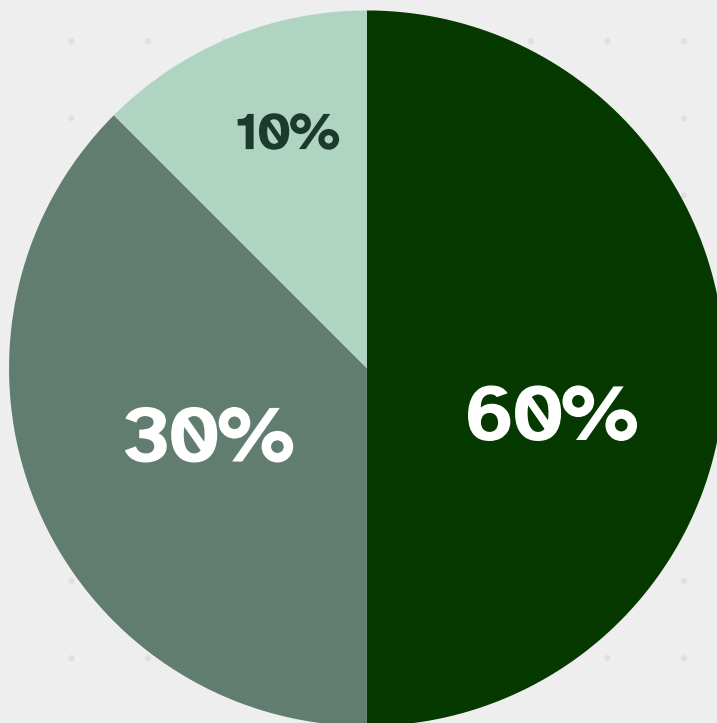
The Junction Neighborhood is a wetland built atop what was once the Great Black Swamp.

Its low elevation, aging stormwater infrastructure, and proximity to Swan Creek and the Maumee River make it highly vulnerable to climate-related flooding and erosion.

To help address these problems, we worked with community members to improve drainage and reduce flooding in the neighborhood. We planted native plants to absorb excess water and limit runoff.

We hosted workshops to teach families how to protect their homes from water damage and health risks. We raise awareness about water safety and advocated for repairs to aging stormwater systems.

# 2026 Budget Allocation



- Program
- Salary/Benefits
- Administration

## Our Programs

Joy (Jobs Opportunity & Youth)  
HomeBASE  
Housing/Lead  
RFP (Restoring Family Practice)  
E.J. Environmental Stewardship  
JET Junction Economic Transformation