

# News Release

**Ilene Shapiro – Summit County Executive**  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



**ILENE SHAPIRO**  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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## **Urban Institute Names Summit County as Upward Mobility Cohort Participant**

**SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO**—Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro and the Urban Institute, a leading research organization, announced today that Summit County is one of eight counties selected through a competitive process to join the new Upward Mobility Cohort. As a cohort participant, Summit County will work to reduce racial and ethnic inequities, and support upward mobility from poverty. The other participating counties are Alameda, Calif., Boone, Mo., Philadelphia, Pa., Ramsey, Minn., Riverside, Calif., St. Lucie, Fla. and Washington, D.C.

Summit County will receive a \$125,000 grant and 18 months of technical assistance from Urban. The assistance will include data analysis, stakeholder engagement, and policy and programmatic advising. Additionally, Summit County will benefit from peer-learning opportunities where county leaders can attend convenings, workshops, and trainings to share knowledge about strategies to promote upward mobility and help develop best practices. Executive Shapiro has convened a group of community advisors from several local organizations to participate in the Upward Mobility planning process. Summit County's participation in the Upward Mobility cohort compliments the county's efforts to combat racism as a public health crisis, the Elevate Greater Akron strategy and other local economic inclusion and racial equity initiatives.

"Summit County is thrilled to participate in the Urban Institute's Upward Mobility Cohort. This grant opportunity gives our community a chance to work with pioneering researchers and an innovative framework to lift our residents out of poverty," said Executive Shapiro. "A Summit County resident living in poverty is often kept there by a number of structural forces that are far beyond the control of one person. Together with the Urban Institute and our community partners, we will create an actionable plan to boost mobility and opportunity for these individuals."

Throughout the 18-month technical assistance period, Urban will use mobility metrics to advise Summit County in its work to narrow inequities and increase upward mobility. The mobility metrics include measures of economic success while also focusing on power and autonomy and being valued in the community. These metrics can help communities establish priorities, set targets, catalyze action, change policies and practices, and monitor their progress over time.

“People deserve the chance to improve their lives by moving up and out of poverty. Through this cohort, local leaders can create a plan for equitable access to opportunity and more targeted support to the communities that need it most,” said Justin Milner, associate vice president of the Research to Action Lab at the Urban Institute. “We’re looking forward to collaborating with these counties and other community stakeholders to build the foundation that will promote successful upward mobility.”

Through these efforts, Summit County will develop a mobility action plan that will take a comprehensive approach to economic advancement for its residents and will identify key challenges across policy areas that require attention to boost opportunities for upward mobility. The plan will also highlight strategies to improve local conditions for mobility and outcomes for residents, as informed by data and community voices. Urban’s Boosting Upward Mobility from Poverty project is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Additional information is available at <https://www.urban.org/policy-centers/research-action-lab/projects/boosting-upward-mobility-poverty>.

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