

THE COST

OF GUN VIOLENCE

THE DIRECT COST TO TAXPAYERS

Seated at the western shore of Lake Erie, the City of Toledo serves as a Great Lakes port. It is known as “The Glass City.” Toledo is home to 270,871 residents. The city’s population is majority White (56.6%), with Black (28.1%), Latino (8.9%), and Asian (1.3%) residents.

Similarly to many cities across the United States, Toledo reached a record-high number of homicides during the COVID-19 pandemic,¹ with a 50-year record of 71 homicides in 2021.^{2,3} The city had a violent crime rate of 1,146.3 incidents per 100,000 residents in 2022, which is over double the national average of 380.7 that same year.⁴ At the same time, the city has been grappling with high poverty rates: In 2022, its poverty rate stood at 23.3%,⁵ while the national poverty rate was 11.5%.⁶ This is notable because poverty is often linked to violence, as economic hardship can lead to increased stress, limited access to resources, and higher crime rates in disadvantaged communities.

When someone is shot in Toledo, there is an immediate, multifaceted, and very expensive response from an array of government agencies. The Fire Department dispatches Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), government-contracted ambulances respond, and several Toledo Police Department (TPD) units descend on the scene. Investigators from the Lucas County Prosecutor’s Office also often arrive, and if

the victim is declared dead on the scene, the Coroner is called. All of this is only for the shooting scene itself. For a surviving victim, there is also typically a hospitalization, which is frequently paid for by tax dollars. Rehabilitation follows in the case of serious injury, and victim compensation is generally provided. There is also often a lengthy investigation by the Toledo Police Department and the Lucas County Prosecutor’s Office, who are sometimes joined by the US Attorney. With the TPD homicide clearance rate at 72.13% in 2022, a trial and a long incarceration period frequently follow.⁷ When there are multiple victims and/or suspects, these efforts and costs multiply for a single shooting incident. These are just some of the costs of each shooting in Toledo.

The National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR) was commissioned by the City of Toledo to conduct this detailed analysis that documents the government expenses accompanying every fatal or nonfatal shooting in Toledo. In tracking the direct costs per shooting incident, NICJR has deliberately used the low end of the range for each expense. For example, this study does not include the loss-of-production costs when the victim or suspect were working at the time of the incident. Nationally, those costs have been estimated at an additional \$1–2 million for each shooting incident. This means that the calculated cost of \$883,771.95 for a

fatal shooting in Toledo is a conservative estimate; the real cost is likely even higher. Although shootings have decreased since the 2021 peak, over the past three years, Toledo has averaged approximately 60 fatal shootings and 276 nonfatal shootings annually. At this rate, each year of shootings will ultimately cost taxpayers more than \$210.91 million, with both immediate costs such as crime scene response and longer-term costs such as lost tax revenue and long-term incarceration. If Toledo could reduce its gun violence rate by just 20%, that could result in government savings of more than \$42.18 million for every year of shootings.

Toledo has already made notable strides in this direction. In late 2021, the City established Save Our Community, a community violence intervention and prevention program that focuses on young adults ages 18–24.^{8,9} In 2023, Toledo launched a Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, a government agency that utilizes a public health approach to reduce risk factors and increase protective factors related to violence at individual, relational, communal, and policy levels.¹⁰ The Office is currently in the process of creating a five-year Comprehensive Safety Plan to address violence in the city in partnership with Cities United.¹¹

While these are crucial steps toward addressing gun violence in Toledo, it is important to recognize that gun violence reduction requires long-term commitment. Even a relatively small investment in effective gun violence reduction strategies, when sustained over time, can yield significant reductions in shootings, save lives, and produce massive savings.

1. Throughout the report, “fatal shootings” and “homicides” are not used synonymously. “Fatal shootings” refers to shooting incidents resulting in the death of the victim; “homicides” encompasses all cases of unlawful killings.
2. Toledo Police Department Crime Statistics
3. Toledo Police Department 2022 Annual Report
4. FBI Crime Data Explorer Tool

5. US Census Bureau: Toledo City, Ohio Income and Poverty
6. Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in the US: 2022
7. FBI Crime Data Explorer Tool
8. Save Our Community: What We Do
9. Save Our Community to take on Lagrange neighborhood
10. Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement
11. Toledo Comprehensive Five-Year Plan



THE GREATER COMMUNITY COST OF GUN VIOLENCE

There are significant community costs of gun violence beyond the direct costs included in NICJR's calculations. In addition to the direct financial burden borne by taxpayers, areas with high rates of gun violence experience the loss of community resources and decreases in property values. Businesses, community events, and other vital resources often flee from violent neighborhoods. Further, a study by the Controller for the City of Philadelphia examining the economic impact of gun violence on property values found that "a single homicide lowers sale prices by 2.3 percent in the immediate neighborhood (within 0.75 miles of the homicide)."¹²

Community members in neighborhoods where rates of violence are highest also bear the burden of community tension and trauma. The normalization or expectation of violence can lead to high rates of gun possession and the resolving of minor disputes with gun violence. The public health approach to violence shows that violence is a contagion that can breed in areas of social dysfunction. The National Institutes of

Health notes that "Contagious diseases and violence tend to cluster in similar ways.... There are geographic 'hot spots' for contagious diseases, such as the 2015 measles outbreak linked to Disneyland in California involving clusters of unvaccinated children. Likewise, there are geographic hot spots for violent crime on specific streets and in specific neighborhoods."¹³

Finally, experiencing violence, witnessing violence, and having close friends or family members victimized by violence produces trauma and vicarious trauma among children. In the 1990s, the groundbreaking Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) study by the Centers for Disease Control and Kaiser Permanente revealed that children who have traumatic experiences when they are young have significantly higher rates of poor health outcomes as they age.^{14,15} Additional studies have proven that the experience of trauma negatively impacts the brain function of young people and can cause depression, behavioral challenges, academic disruption, and delinquency.

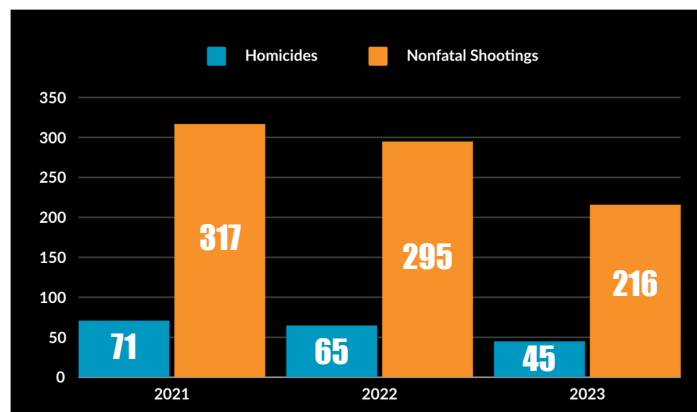
Population

270,871



Police Force 627¹⁶

Homicides and Nonfatal Shootings 2021-2023



Homicide Clearance Rates

2020	57.89%
2021	58.21%
2022	72.13%

12. [Report on the Economic Impact of Homicides: Philadelphia Controller](#)

13. [The Contagious Spread of Violence Among US Adolescents Through Social Networks](#)


14. [Relationship of Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction to Many of the Leading Causes of Death in Adults](#)

15. While the CDC-Kaiser ACEs study is not available to the public, information about the study may be found [here](#).

16. This figure does not include civilian personnel at the Toledo Police Department.


Toledo, Ohio

COST BREAKDOWN




CRIME SCENE RESPONSE

The crime scene response to a fatal shooting or severe nonfatal shooting typically includes a heavy police presence, fire/EMT staff, and medical transport staff. Based on data from the Toledo Police Department, TPD could deploy up to 16 officers, including patrol, crime scene investigative unit personnel, and other supervisory-level officers, to respond to a typical fatal shooting.




HOSPITAL & REHABILITATION

Once a victim has been transported to the hospital, the costs of treatment in an emergency room (ER) trauma unit, surgery, inpatient stay, and rehabilitation are exorbitant. Average costs can range from \$88,525.00 to \$144,617.00 per incident. With a little more than 40% of gunshot victims either uninsured or on Medicaid, these costs represent a tremendous strain on Toledo's hospital network.



CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Justice system costs include police investigation, prosecution and defense attorneys, court personnel and judges, and the use of court facilities. Due to the consequences of a homicide conviction, these cases go to trial more often than other types of cases. Sometimes these cases involve multiple suspects with multiple court dates and separate trials. From the time of arrest, court proceedings in fatal or nonfatal shooting cases average about two years.



INCARCERATION

Incarceration accounts for a large portion of the costs once a suspect is arrested. A stay in the Lucas County jail system costs an average of \$152,613.80 for the pretrial incarceration period. Following a trial, an inmate is incarcerated within the Ohio prison system at a cost of \$182,427.00 for those convicted of attempted murder and \$474,310.20 for those convicted of homicide.



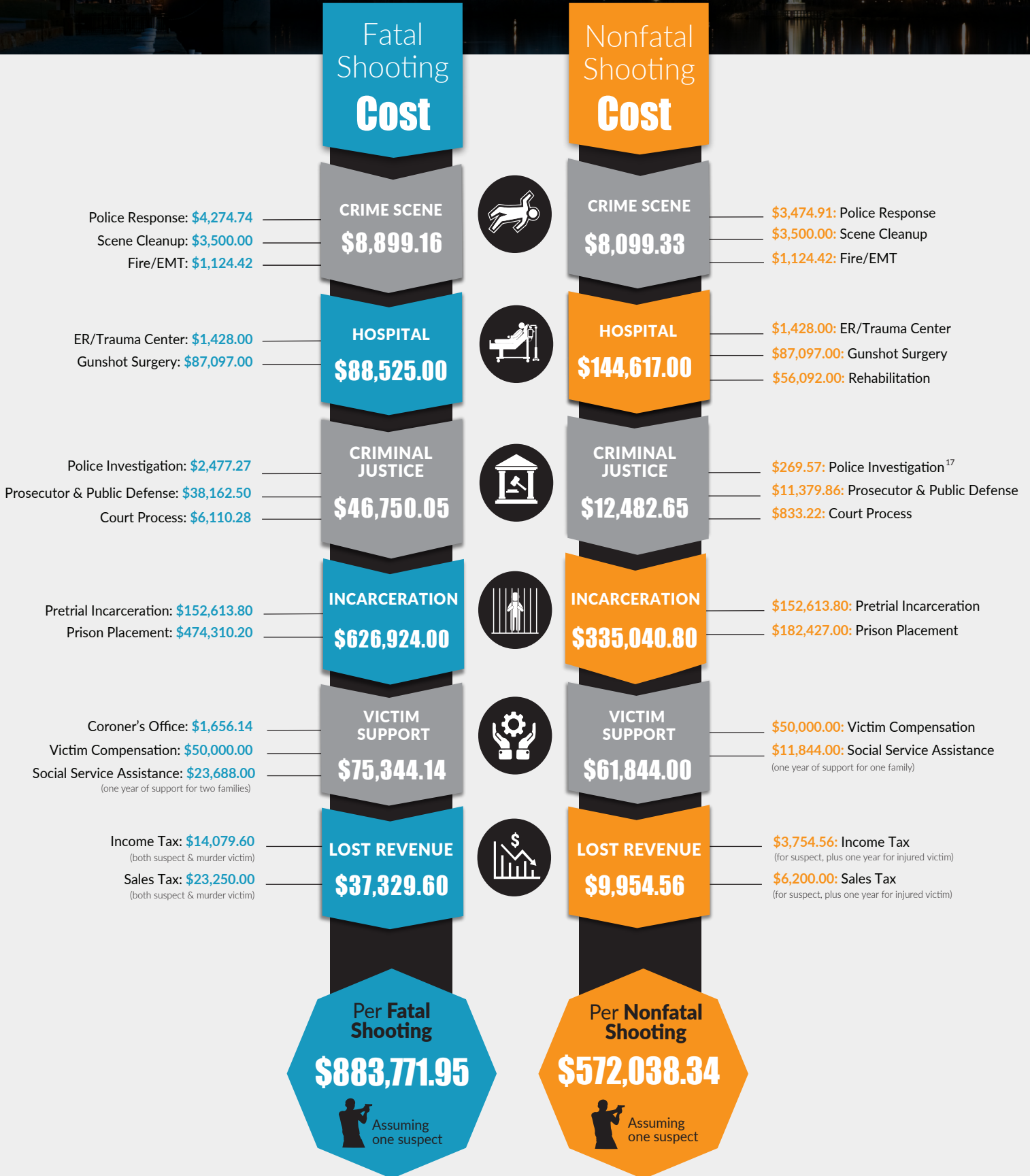
VICTIM SUPPORT

Many victim support costs are covered by the Attorney General's Crime Victim Services Section. Surviving victims of nonfatal shootings and families of homicide victims can receive up to \$50,000.00 in compensation to cover costs such as burial expenses, medical expenses, and counseling. Including costs such as autopsies and Social Security benefits increases the total cost for victim support to \$75,344.14 for a fatal shooting.



LOST TAX REVENUE

Ohio has a state income tax flat fee of \$360.69 plus a rate of 2.75% for any income over \$26,050.00 for individuals who make \$26,051.00–\$100,000.00 per year. The state also has a sales and use tax of 5.75%, Lucas County has a county general tax of 1.5%, and the City of Toledo has a 0.5% transportation tax. When a fatal or nonfatal shooting occurs, both income and sales tax often cannot be collected from the incarcerated individual(s) and fatal shooting victim(s). Each incident can represent lost tax revenue from a minimum of two individuals for 7 to 15 years.



17. The following Toledo Police Department divisions provided financial information: the Crime Scene Investigation Unit, the Field Operations Division, and the Investigative Services Bureau. Only the Investigative Services Bureau report included specific cost details for police investigation in nonfatal shooting cases.

CRIME SCENE

Subject:	Police Response	Fire / EMT Transport	Scene Cleanup
Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2024 shooting response and salary information provided by Toledo Police Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Toledo 2023 Proposed Budget Toledo Fire and Rescue Department 2022 Calls for Service - Internal Data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bio-Trauma 911, Inc.
Notes	<p>Initial police response to a homicide scene typically includes up to 16 personnel, including 8 patrolmen, 4 sergeants, 3 detectives, and 1 lieutenant. Initial police response to a nonfatal shooting scene typically includes up to 13 personnel, including 8 patrolmen, 3 sergeants, and 2 detectives. Crime scene response cost is calculated by multiplying the average hourly rate for each classification by the average number of hours required on scene.</p> <p>Police response staff (combined rate): \$4,274.74 for a fatal shooting Police response staff (combined rate): \$3,474.91 for a nonfatal shooting</p>	<p>FY23 Fire and Rescue Budget: \$70,008,393.00</p> <p>Total responses: 62,262 Cost per response: \$1,124.42</p>	<p>Average cost among competitive Midwest vendors to clean up crime scenes involving blood: \$3,500.00</p>

HOSPITAL

Subject:	Emergency Room / Surgery for Gunshot Victim
Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2020 National Trends and Cost Burden of Surgically Treated Gunshot Wounds in the US 2021 Firearm Injuries: Health Care Service Needs and Costs
Notes	<p>Average cost of gunshot victims treated and released the same day: \$1,428 (ER base cost) Average cost of gunshot victims requiring surgery and hospital stay: \$87,097 (surgery cost) + \$56,092 (hospital stay and care) Average cost of gunshot victims requiring surgery, hospital stay, and release to outpatient care: \$144,617 (ER, surgery, rehabilitation)</p>

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Subject:	Police Investigation	Prosecutor & Public Defense	Court Process
Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2024 shooting response and salary information provided by Toledo Police Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 325.11. Salary of Prosecuting Attorney Standards and Guidelines for Appointed Counsel Reimbursement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Judicial Salary Chart 2022 Annual Salaries Lucas County Lucas County Employment Opportunities: Deputy Clerk III and Magistrate Bailiff (job descriptions accessed online 5/23/24)
Notes	<p>The police investigation cost is calculated by multiplying the average hourly rate for each classification by the average number of hours required to investigate the case.</p> <p>Average cost for a fatal shooting: \$2,477.27 Average cost for a nonfatal shooting: \$269.57</p>	<p>The cost of prosecution is calculated by multiplying their average salary and benefits by the average amount of time spent by the prosecutor working on a fatal or nonfatal shooting case. For the cost of the defense, appointed counsel cost schedules for a felony-level case were used.</p> <p>Fatal shooting Prosecutor: \$67.31/hour x 418.4 hours = \$28,162.50 Public Defense: \$10,000.00 Nonfatal shooting Prosecutor: \$67.31/hour x 20.5 hours Public Defense: \$10,000.00</p>	<p>The cost to the court system is calculated by multiplying hourly rates by the average amount of time spent by judges and court staff (combined hourly rate) working on a fatal or nonfatal shooting case.</p> <p>Fatal shooting Judge: \$70.30/hour x 44 hours = \$3,093.20 Court staff: \$68.57/hour x 44 hours = \$3,017.08 Nonfatal shooting Judge: \$70.30/hour x 6 hours = \$421.80 Court staff: \$68.57/hour x 6 hours = \$411.42</p>

INCARCERATION

Subject:	Pretrial Incarceration	State Prison: Attempted Murder Case	State Prison: Murder Case
Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lucas County Sheriff's Office Corrections Center 2022 Housing Cost - Internal Data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2022 Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction Section 2929.14. Definite prison terms Section 2923.02. Attempt to commit an offense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2022 Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction Section 2929.02. Murder penalties Section 2923.02. Attempt to commit an offense Section 2929.03. Imposition of sentence for aggravated murder
Notes	<p>Average annual cost per individual incarcerated: \$76,306.90 Average period of pretrial incarceration: 2 years \$76,306.90 x 2 years = \$152,613.80</p>	<p>Ohio law mandates an indefinite prison term with a stated minimum term selected by the court of 3-11 years and a maximum term of imprisonment for life. NICJR has used seven years in these calculations, as it is the median minimum term. Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) annual cost to house an adult: \$36,485.40 Injury shooting conviction sentence: 7 years, subtracting pretrial time served: \$36,485.40 x (7 years - 2 years) = \$182,427.00</p>	<p>Ohio terms for murder charges vary by degree, but in general, a murder charge mandates imprisonment of an indefinite term of fifteen years to life. Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) annual cost to house an adult: \$36,485.40 Murder conviction sentence: 15 years, subtracting pretrial time served : \$36,485.40 x (15 years - 2 years) = \$474,310.20</p>

VICTIM SUPPORT

Subject:	Victim Compensation	Social Service Assistance	Medical Examiner's Office
Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crime Victims Compensation Guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> USDA Fiscal Year 2024 Cost-of-Living Adjustments Ohio Works First Payment Information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2022 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report Lucas County Coroner's Office 2022 Autopsies - Internal Data
Notes	<p>Maximum award is \$50,000.00 for expenses such as burial costs and lost wages.</p>	<p>A severely injured shooting victim often cannot return to work immediately. Since the victim and perpetrator may be major financial contributors to their households, many families may need to apply for social services support.</p> <p>SNAP monthly benefit for a family of 3 with \$30,000.00 annual income: \$766.00 Ohio Works First (TANF) monthly benefit for family of 3 with \$30,000.00 annual income: \$221.00 One year of assistance: Fatal Shooting: \$987.00 monthly benefit x 12 months x 2 families = \$23,688.00 Nonfatal Shooting: \$987.00 monthly benefit x 12 months = \$11,844.00</p>	<p>Lucas County Coroner's Office FY22 budget: \$2,010,558.00</p> <p>FY22 autopsies conducted: 1,214 Cost per autopsy = \$1,656.14</p>

LOST REVENUE

Subject:	Lost Tax Revenue: One Person Incarcerated	Lost Tax Revenue: Murder (Loss of Revenue for Two People)
Source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2023 Ohio Department of Taxation Annual Tax Rates Toledo, Ohio Sales Tax Rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2023 Ohio Department of Taxation Annual Tax Rates Toledo, Ohio Sales Tax Rate
Notes	<p>State income tax: Flat fee of \$360.69 + 2.75% of any income over \$26,050.00 for individuals who make \$26,051.00-\$100,000.00 per year. Total annual income tax at \$30,000.00/year: \$469.32 Sales and use tax (including city transportation and county general tax): 7.75% Total annual sales tax for person earning \$30,000.00/year and spending 1/3 of income: \$775.00 Total annual combined tax: \$1,244.32 Lost tax revenue for a 7-year sentence for attempted murder (\$1,244.32 x 7 years): \$8,710.24 If the shooting victim does not work for one year, an additional \$1,244.32 of revenue is lost. Total Lost Tax Revenue = \$9,954.56</p>	<p>State income tax: Flat fee of \$360.69 + 2.75% of any income over \$26,050.00 for individuals who make \$26,051.00-\$100,000.00 per year Total annual income tax at \$30,000.00/year: \$469.32 Sales and use tax (including city transportation and county general tax): 7.75% Total annual sales tax for person earning \$30,000.00/year and spending 1/3 of income: \$775.00 Total annual combined tax: \$1,244.32 Lost tax revenue for a 15-year sentence for murder (\$1,244.32 x 15 years): \$18,664.80 If the shooting victim loses their life, an additional \$18,664.80 of revenue is lost. Total Lost Tax Revenue = \$37,329.60</p>