



Listening To The Community, Looking For What Matters

Since 2001, the citizens of Northeast Ohio have been providing ideastream direction on meeting its mission to “strengthen our communities.” Through the yearly Listening Project surveys held since the inception of ideastream, more than 11,000 participants have responded to the organization about what matters most to them and to the region.

With each survey, respondents are consistent in identifying a short list of Northeast Ohio’s key assets and challenges, concerns that could be understood as a civic agenda and provide key points around which to organize new programming initiatives. The Listening Project has also helped ideastream align its mission, strategies and tactics closely with Northeast Ohio’s perceived priorities.

In June 2008, ideastream returned to the residents of Northeast Ohio with the latest installment of The Listening Project in order to learn: the public’s assessment of the region, its assets and challenges and its viability as a place to live; the public’s idea about the role ideastream plays in Northeast Ohio; and educators’ assessment of the issues surrounding Northeast Ohio education.

The Listening Project 2008 survey asked respondents to list the assets they felt were most important to the region. The results showed, by a large margin, that culture is the most important asset for Northeast Ohio. Respondents were also polled about the challenges faced by Northeast Ohio. According to the response, the economy of Northeast Ohio is the region’s largest challenge.

The Listening Project 2008 once again asked respondents to rate the region as a place to live, and the results showed that a majority thought the region was a “good” or “excellent” place to live.

ideastream asked respondents to identify whether the organization was making an impact on the community. The results continued the positive trend from previous Listening Project reports; a majority felt both WVIZ/PBS and 90.3 WCPN were contributing to the quality of life in Northeast Ohio.

In the education portion of the survey, respondents were asked to rate the overall quality of education in Northeast Ohio. More than half believed that education in the region was very or generally effective. Respondents were also asked to state the best thing about education and the most critical educational challenge in Northeast Ohio. The most prominent education asset was the range of excellent schools available, while the most critical educational challenge is funding.

Full results of this survey, in a downloadable PDF report, can be found online on the Listening Project page, at ideastream.org/lp.