Every family in the Ypsilanti area will thrive by gaining access to programs and services through collaborative partnerships across sectors that measurably increase health outcomes and educational attainment leading to economic well-being.
What does it mean to **thrive** for youth and families in Ypsilanti?

**Fulfilling Basic Needs**

“I see it just as taking down the walls so that someone has the ability to choose whatever direction they want to go in life.”

**Awareness of Resources**

“There’s all these resources out here, there’s all these organizations with things that are meant to benefit us but... we don’t know about them or they’re not reaching us.”

**Interpersonal Communication & Connectivity**

“I think it really impacts the success of families to not feel community and supported. And we really found how many parents really love some of the support groups we’ve done for families because it’s their chance to say, ‘Oh, you’ve experienced that? I’ve experienced that.’”

**Opportunity / Above & Beyond**

“To me to thrive is to have more than just the basic needs - that you’re not living check to check, that you’re not always in need of resources that are available... Thriving is having more than your basic needs to me.”
Trust

“I think it’s just like that they know people are coming back, they know it’s you again, they know they can count on you to follow through, you know it’s that you hear them, you listen, you’re going to do something.”

Recognition & Relationships

“I thought I had lost one of my truant parents but I just got a call from her this morning and we talked for an hour. And just getting her to even take my call - I called her...maybe ten times before she actually responded and returned a call and she was like, ‘I don’t know, but something about that last message you left me made me want to call you because you kept inviting me and my family. You kept saying that you were here for me and I really appreciate you taking the time...thank you for being so persistent.’ And unfortunately, that’s what it takes ... people are dealing with so much in their lives and so many barriers ‘til they’ve been beaten down. They don’t know how to trust and to reach out to people. They just don’t and won’t. So we just have to be persistent. I’ve learned that persistence is the key.”

Language Barriers
What barriers to opportunity exist for youth and families in Ypsilanti?

Racial Bias

“I think we have a lot of organizations that are staffed by — we’ll call them well-meaning white people who may not necessarily be aware of all of the implicit biases that we’ve all been taught by media and family and all kinds of other things. I think it would be really trust-building if organizations staff had the opportunity to understand their implicit biases and learn about how they can do better at treating people who maybe have very different backgrounds from them.”

Access to Education

“School attendance went down and we have school choice... growing up in my neighborhood, 99% went to one or two schools... Now you could have eight kids the same age going to eight different schools. That speaks to that lack of contact and lack of networks that were previously existing that the neighborhood was built on.”

Fear of Judgement / Scrutiny

“You know, a lot of moms feel just looked down upon when they have more than one child and they need assistance. Some of these organizations that they go to — they feel like they have been talked to in a demeaning kind of way.”
What would work in Ypsilanti?

Historicity / Identity
“A greater plan would be something like returning citizens talking to youth about their experiences growing up. You know... just those citizens from the community talking about their experiences.”

Consistency / Persistence
“I think having a real investment — that someone will be there for a long time and knowing that the funding source is reliable and knowing that that person is not here... with the intention of studying and learning but is truly there for the benefit of the community and for mutual you know relationship, would be key to... building that trust and not repeating patterns of systems that create that distrust.”

Community-Run Resources
“But what does it look like to say the families themselves are the experts... Let’s figure out what they’re doing either organically or very intentionally that is working for them and that can be considered evidence-based even if it’s never been researched in a particular way.”

Community Spaces

Tailored Education & Information