



# Preserving Toledo's History: All About the Historic South Initiative

By Jordyn Windnagle - March 08, 2024



Toledo's Old South End (OSE) is one of the longest-standing neighborhoods in the area. Toledo was founded in 1837 and the Old South End was established in the mid 1840s. Today, the OSE connects the Toledo Zoo and the downtown Central Business District with the Broadway Corridor acting as the main access point into and out of the neighborhood.

The abundance of old houses in the OSE reflects its status as one of the city's most historic, enduring districts. Since March 2023, approximately 250 homes have been listed with a Realtor in 43609. Nearly 65% of those homes were over 100 years old. Many of the Historic South End homes have been in dire need of a facelift, which is how a grassroots organization came to be a purveyor of hope for the community.

The Historic South Initiative (HSI) is a 501(c)(3) working to revitalize the OSE through housing, education, community development, and workforce efforts. Property rehabilitation is a major focus for the organization. We've previously [reported](#) on the critical influence that housing has on other facets of life— a community can't thrive without safe and healthy homes. HSI is championing this progress in the OSE.

Over the last ten years, the group has completed home repairs on 200 units, fully rebuilt and sold 12 properties, invested \$1.9 million in full home rebuilds, and invested \$4.3 million toward exterior home repairs. They also currently have 2 full home remodels in progress. HSI is funded by government grants, partnerships with other community organizations, and the generosity of donors. The average grant is between \$20,000 and \$35,000. Applicants must be in the target area which is defined as I-75 highway to Danny Thomas Park and between the Anthony Wayne Trail and the Maumee River.



The following repairs qualify for the program:

1. New windows and/or doors
2. New siding and/or painting
3. Roof repair and/or replacement
4. Gutter replacement

A list of program requirements can be found [here](#). Unlike many grants of its kind, the HSI Home Repair Program does not have income caps.

Since HSI's founding, property values in the OSE have experienced a 228% increase. The average sale price in the area was just over \$20,000 in December 2014— last month that figure reached \$65,725. Progress takes time and as more remodeled homes are sold, homeowners will benefit from higher property values. For HSI's full home rebuilds, the average sale price is \$82,500.

In addition to its successful housing efforts, HSI has facilitated/invested \$4.5 million toward commercial development and funded the Old South End Master Plan with supervision from the Toledo Design Center. Over \$1 million has been invested toward education along with support for the Mosaic Early Learning Center and fundraising for after school and summer programs at Queen of Apostles Catholic School. The organization's community development includes renovating Danny Thomas Park and Carnegie Library.

The work of the Historic South Initiative shows how far grassroots efforts can go to restore housing habitability, preserve history, and encourage the growth of a neighborhood. For more information on HSI, visit [historicsouth.org](http://historicsouth.org).