

### WINSTON COUNTY

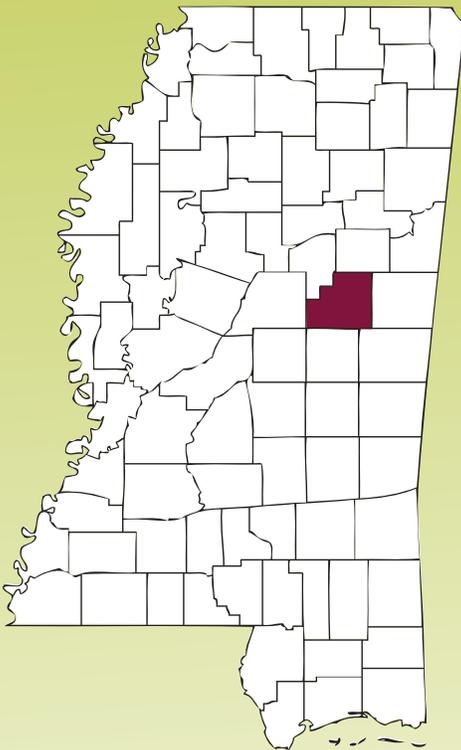
**Population:** 18,478

**Estimated median household income:** \$30,821

**Estimated individuals below poverty level:** 29.8%

**Study Circles:** 5

**Study Circle Participants:** 94



*"Tide helped people to see one another in a different manner."*

— Tide Committee Member

Note: Statistics from [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov) Quick Facts.

Like many rural places, Winston County was lacking in communication mechanisms to help link residents to community organizations, events and elected leaders. These missing linkages led to people feeling disconnected or even alienated from existing resources. Turning the Tide on Poverty helped to change that story.

### Connecting Elected Officials

Before Tide, Winston County residents had an "us" versus "them" mindset when it came to their elected officials. Limited communication led to feelings of disunity and thwarted efforts toward creating and reaching common goals. Through Turning the Tide on Poverty, people began making important linkages. A common website for the county and its county seat of Louisville was established to help residents connect to the political resources. Establishing a robust social media network also increased connections, with over a million hits in the first year. These expanded avenues helped residents gain a better understanding of political resources and how to work with them, which led to residents' changed perspectives: viewing their political leaders as accessible rather than distant.

### Linking Resources & Agencies

The more unified community resulting from Tide led to other accomplishments that could not have otherwise happened. A Community Resource Guide was created to combine information of city and county resources into one location for people in need of services or resources to easily access. This unified resource has helped establish information and resource flows that are more efficient and effective in meeting

the community's and individuals' needs.

### Increasing Food Access

Increased food access was made possible through several projects of the Tide action teams. Community gardens were planted with the assistance of county staff and volunteers. Families were educated about healthy eating and made more aware of healthy food options. Also, raised bed gardens were constructed in local schools so children could participate in planting fruits and vegetables as well as explore the science of food sources.

Additionally, the local farmers' market was expanded so that more vendors could participate. With a greater variety of options, more customers come. The farmers market has even begun to accept EBT cards which is beneficial to residents who depend on this resource to purchase food for their families.

### Strengthening Education

Educational efforts took a primary focus with Tide. Excel by Five, an innovative early childhood community process, was adopted by schools in the county through encouragement of Tide teams. The purpose of the program is to prepare children for kindergarten, giving them a head-start in their education. Excel by Five also emphasizes the important role of both parents and early childhood educators in children's education.

Another resource for educating children is the Good News Club after-school program in the elementary school. Combining mentoring, tutoring, education, and recreation in a wholesome environment is strengthening both the students as well as the adult volunteers.

## Providing Wholesome Recreation

Tide also fostered the development of the Turnipseed Recreational Park, constructed in a small community that previously had no nearby amenities for recreation. With the hands of many volunteers to raise funds and to

construct the site, the community now has a safe and enjoyable place to visit, exercise, and play.

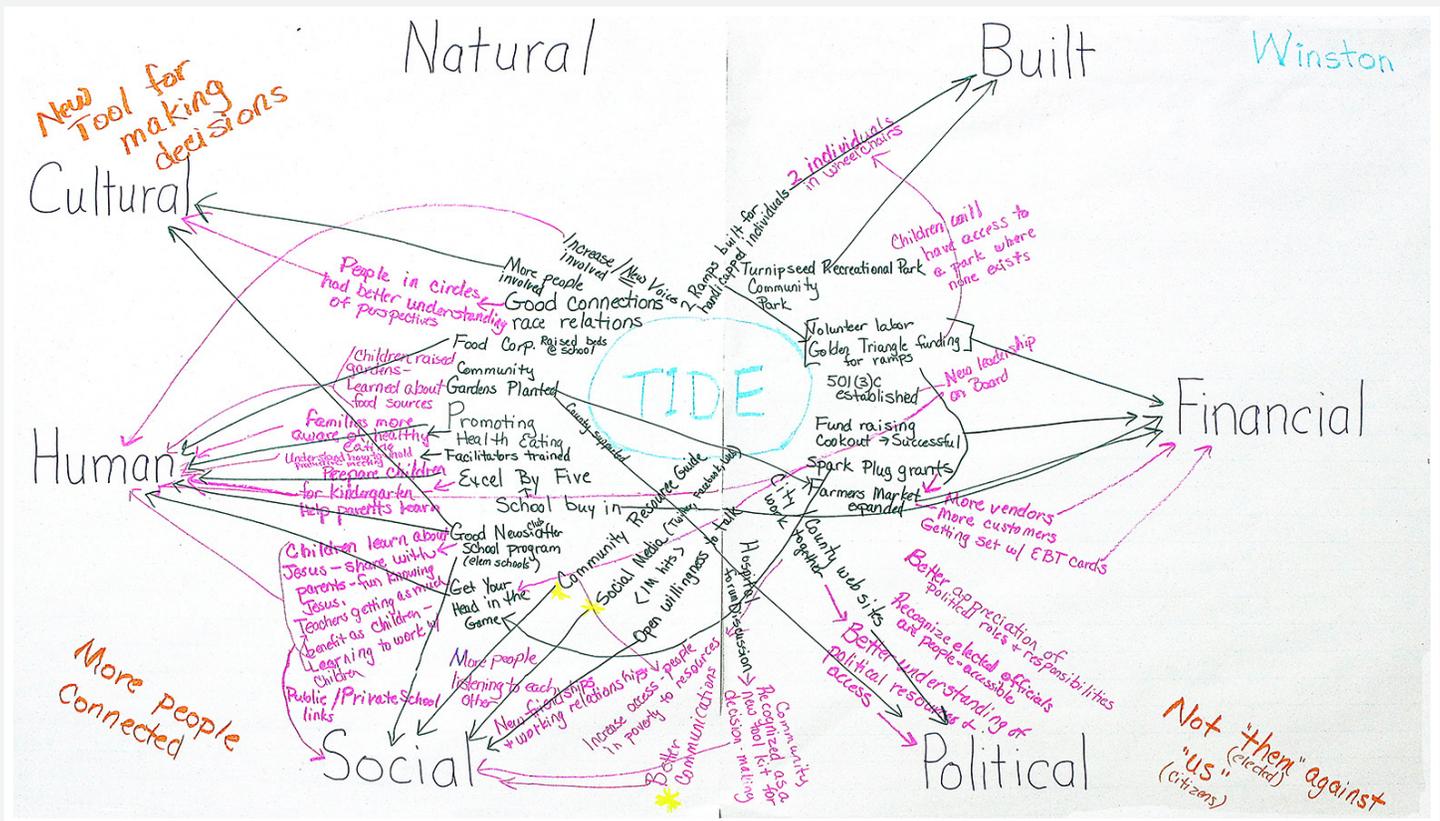
## Summary

Community members now recognize they have a new tool for decision-making in the model that Turning the

Tide on Poverty provided. As people became comfortable speaking up and participating in the community decision-making process, the community became more connected and presented greater opportunities for residents, resulting in a better place to live.

## What is Turning the Tide on Poverty?

Turning the Tide on Poverty is a community circles initiative that has been taking shape across the South for the last five years. The program seeks to involve a wide range of community members in seeking a solution to poverty that is grounded in local talents and concerns and led by local voices engaging in thoughtful discussion and exploration. Participants gather for five sessions and work in study circles of 10 to 15 people. Through much collaboration, each group proposes three possible action ideas to address concerns in the community. All ideas are then considered in an Action Forum where participants finalize their community action plan.



## What is Ripple Mapping?

Ripple Mapping, based on the concept of ripples in a pond, is used to explore Tide's impacts. This process uses community participants' collective memories to map the steps the community has made through their civic engagement process. The first circle contains steps or actions that the community made. The next circle indicates who benefitted and how they benefitted from those actions. These effects are then linked to big level changes, the seven community capitals: natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial and built. Lastly, the biggest "wins" in each community are noted and identified with a yellow star.