

Thriving Communities Thriving State

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A PROJECT OF THE POLICY CHOICES INITIATIVE

Recommendations for Thriving Urban Communities

Thriving Communities, Thriving State is a Policy Choices project of the Indiana University Public Policy Institute. Informed by a representative group of community leaders and other stakeholders, it explores state and local strategies and policies that can help Indiana communities of all sizes thrive and fulfill their critical roles in attracting businesses, new business investment, and workers to Indiana.

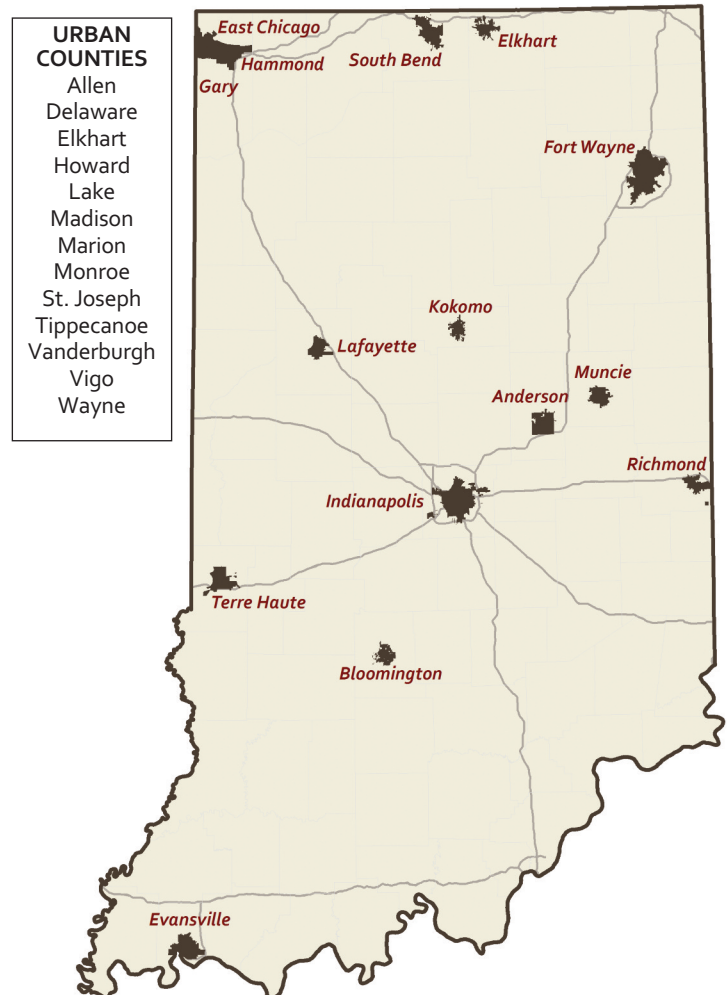
Instead of examining local issues on a one-size-fits-all basis, *Thriving Communities, Thriving State* frames Indiana's changing demographic and economic realities for three kinds of communities:

- **Urban:** First- or second-class cities that have been among the 10 largest cities since 1900, generally with a population of 50,000+
- **Mid-sized:** 15,000+ population in 2010 that are not included in urban
- **Rural/small town:** Small towns are those not captured above with a population between 5,000 and 15,000 or a seat of county government smaller than 5,000. For the purposes of these designation, small communities and unincorporated areas are considered to be rural.

The Urban Communities Commission

In January 2015, 19 commissioners from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors in urban communities came together with one researcher and one facilitator to determine what a thriving urban Indiana should look like. In subsequent meetings over 15 months, commissioners developed strategies and recommendations for how urban Indiana communities could maximize their contributions to a thriving state.

Map 1. Urban Indiana Cities and Counties



The data available for communities sometimes is reported specifically for city and town geography, but often at the county level. For our project, a county is considered urban when it contains one or more urban cities; mid-sized when the county has a mid-sized city or town and no urban city; and rural when the county has no urban or mid-sized cities and towns.



Summary of findings and recommendations

When their research and deliberations were complete, members of the Urban Communities Commission came to believe:

One bold statement: Talent drives urban economies

Indiana's urban counties must, therefore, do a better job of developing, retaining, and attracting talent.

- While many think of talent as something marked by solely a college degree, commission members recognize that it takes talent to work in advanced manufacturing and logistics as well as in life sciences or software development. To compete in a global economy, Indiana needs talent in all kinds of professions and industries.
- Most of Indiana's urban counties suffer from net outmigration to other states/regions. This makes developing and retaining local talent a critical part of our cities' and state's collective success. High quality preschool programs, K-12 education, and university/vocational programs are essential to developing homegrown talent and creating opportunities for all urban Hoosiers.
- While retaining a greater share of locally developed talent is critical to achieving net in-migration, capturing a higher share of out-of-state in-migration is also important. Attracting people from other places also encourages the diversity of ideas and approaches so critical to innovation.
- Indiana's urban counties compete nationally and globally for talent. For a thriving Indiana, our urban communities must become destinations for out-of-state people, less dependent on attracting talent from other parts of Indiana. Quality of place and lifestyle are essential to retaining our own residents and attracting others – especially today's Millennial generation.

Two critical outcomes: A thriving urban Indiana must:

1. Win the net domestic migration game
2. Improve educational outcomes
 - People vote with their feet. Achieving net domestic migration requires that current residents and those living elsewhere perceive

available opportunities and quality of life in Indiana's urban communities as better than elsewhere.

- While keeping Hoosiers at home is an important part of urban Indiana's contribution to the state's economic and social vitality, it is imperative that we step up our effort and successfully compete with other regions and states for talent.
- Educational attainment in urban Indiana is currently polarized. Compared to other parts of the state, our cities have a higher share of population with less than a high school diploma. On the other hand, our cities have a higher share than their rural and suburban counterparts when it comes to the percent of population with an associate's degree or more. To ensure that urban residents have the opportunity to maximize their academic and earning potential, we need to do a better job of preparing the entire population to learn more and earn more. This means improving birth-to-kindergarten interventions, building world-class educational opportunities, and enhancing educational offerings from kindergarten through college that are available to all. Creating opportunities for adults to take a vital step up and achieve certificates and diplomas will help them individually. It also will help urban areas collectively compete in a talent-driven global economy.

Three big ideas

For our cities to be successful – to attract and retain tax-paying residents, attract and recruit talent, and reduce poverty – our Urban Communities Commission identified three priorities that 21st century state, community, and opinion leaders must embrace if we're to build a strong urban and state economy.

1. **Developing talent is critical – and the job begins with better preschool.** Talent is what drives the new urban economy, and without more than our fair share, urban Indiana will flounder.
2. **To attract and retain talent, we must embrace diversity.** Talent comes in many shapes and forms. It isn't dictated by gender, nationality, religious preference, or any other personal trait. Currently, Indiana and its cities export more talent

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than we import. That has to change if we're to succeed. Accepting diversity is essential to broadening the talent pool and making our cities more attractive to that talent.

3. If our cities are to deliver maximum benefits to our state, urban communities must have more flexibility (including revenue) so they can quickly respond to opportunities and challenges.

Indiana's urban communities are under enormous pressure to balance the conflicting demands of global competition, poverty, basic services, and more – all within strict legislative restrictions and a constantly changing tax environment. If they're to serve the state better, they need the freedom to move quickly and better control their own destinies.

To learn more about the process that *Thriving Communities, Thriving State's* Urban Communities Commission followed to arrive at its statement, outcomes, and ideas – and to learn more about how urban communities can achieve success and contribute to a Thriving Indiana – turn the page and dive into the how, what, and why of our 15 months of research, deliberation, and – ultimately – recommendations.

For Indiana to thrive, Indiana's urban counties must drive.

Indiana's image may be rural, but our people, jobs, wages, talent, and tax base are increasingly urban.

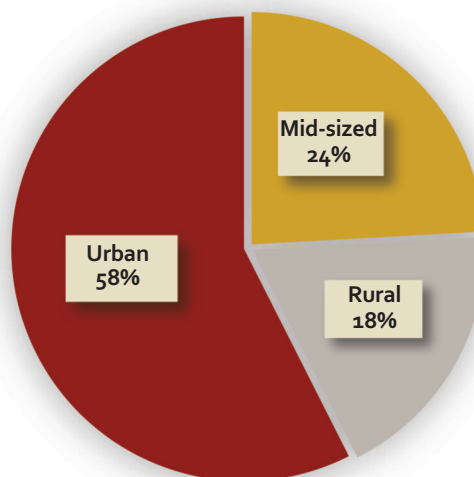
Quick: Picture Indiana. Most folks conjure up cornfields, soybeans, and new-mown hay. It's a beautiful, honest-to-goodness image. But when it comes to jobs, wages, and population, urban Indiana drives the state's economic train.

- **Indiana's cities: Where the jobs are.** In 2014, more than 58 percent of all Indiana jobs were located in the state's 13 most-urban counties.
- **Indiana's cities: Where the wages are.** Those who work in Indiana's urban counties earn nearly 61 percent of the state's wages¹. In fact, Indiana's urban

counties are such an important source of jobs and wages that in 2013 nearly 405,000 workers commuted into them each day.

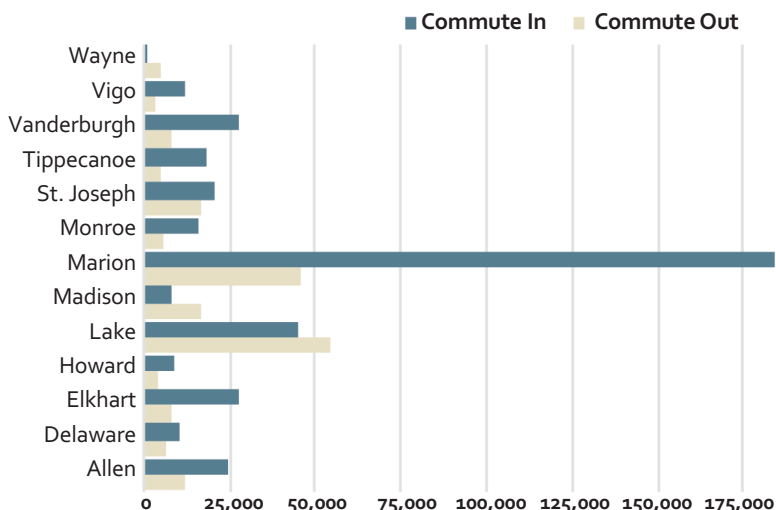
- **Indiana's cities: Attracting out of state talent.** Indiana's urban counties are talent attraction magnets for individuals from throughout the nation and world.
 - o More than one million people currently living in urban Indiana were not born in Indiana².

Figure 1. Percentage of jobs by community type, Indiana 2014



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2015). Occupational employment statistics by county, annual averages.

Figure 2. Commuting in Urban counties in Indiana, 2014



Source: U.S. Census via STATS Indiana. (2014).

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- o The share of people from other states who chose to move into Indiana cities is 34 percent, compared to 31 percent for the state as a whole³.

- **Indiana's cities: Attracting and retaining workplace talent.** Urban Indiana doesn't just attract residents; it also draws and retains more highly skilled workplace talent.

- o In our cities, the share of individuals with an associate's degree or higher is 32 percent, while in the rest of the state, it is only 30 percent.

- **Indiana's cities: The glue that holds state finances together.** There may be a perception that urban counties are drains on other counties. But a study by the Indiana Fiscal Policy Institute⁴ found that Indiana's cities, and the counties and regions they anchor are, in fact, net fiscal contributors to Indiana's state government.

Bottom-line context: As goes the urban economy, so goes Indiana's economy.

While urban communities are important economic drivers, they face significant challenges.

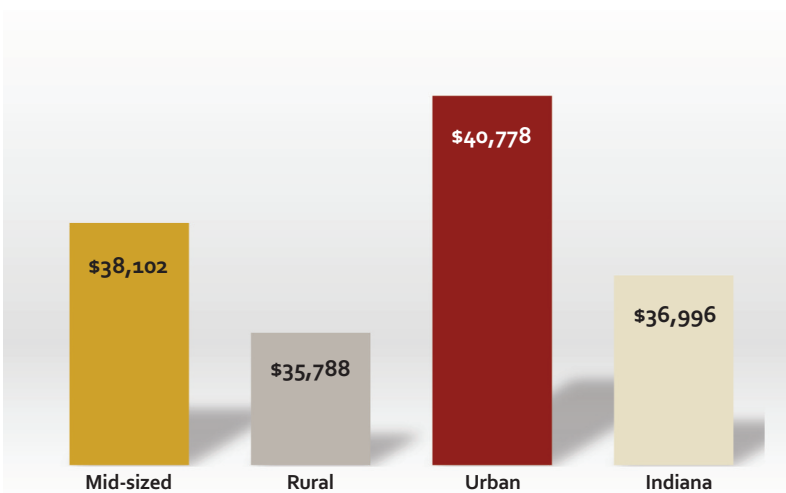
Urban Indiana is unquestionably vital to the state. But our cities' ability to drive the state's economy depends on their ability to compete globally, nationally, and regionally for investment and talent. While much is going well in many of our cities, there are significant challenges that threaten their – and, therefore, the entire state's – economic vitality.

- **Indiana cities: Suffering from population loss and brain drain.** People vote with their feet, and migration data suggests that most urban Indiana counties are losing in the national competition for population and talent. Between 2009 and 2013, every urban county saw more individuals moving out to other states than moving in from other states. During this same period of time, our urban counties collectively lost around 40,000 individuals per year. What's

more, only six urban counties are net importers from other Indiana counties, and many of those (Delaware, Monroe, Tippecanoe, and Vigo) benefit from being home to significant state universities. All of Indiana's urban counties benefit from international immigration.

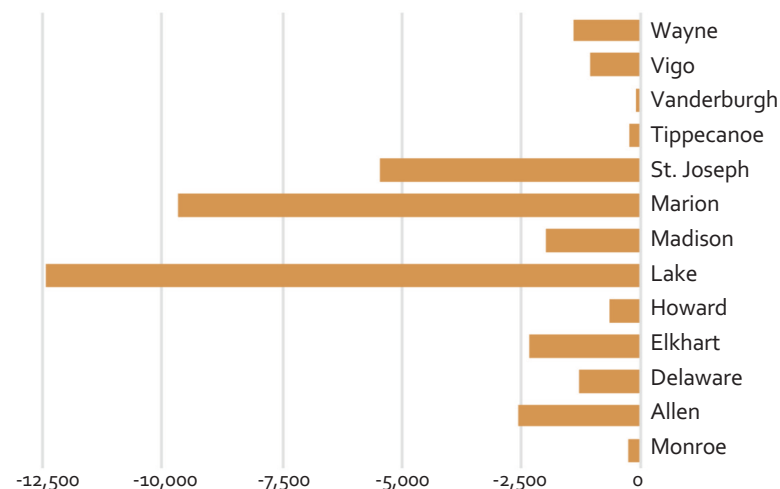
- **Indiana cities: The burdens of poverty.** Urban counties are challenged by some of the highest

Figure 3. Average annual wages by type of county in Indiana, 2014



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2015). Occupational employment statistics by county, annual averages.

Figure 4. Net domestic migration, Urban counties in Indiana, 2010-2014



Source: U.S. Census, (2015). American Community Survey, 5 year estimates-2010-2014.

Chart Note: Due to data restrictions, the chart includes in-state net migration as well as out-of-state migration

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concentrations of poverty in the state. While Indiana's 13 urban counties are home to 49 percent of the state's population, they must address 61 percent of those living in poverty – and that percentage is climbing. These high levels of poverty create costs and challenges for urban communities and their school systems as they strive to ensure that our communities' and our state's citizens have the opportunity to maximize their potential.

Most important, for all of Indiana to thrive, its urban counties must compete more effectively with other national and even international metropolitan areas rather than relying on other parts of Indiana for much of its human capital.

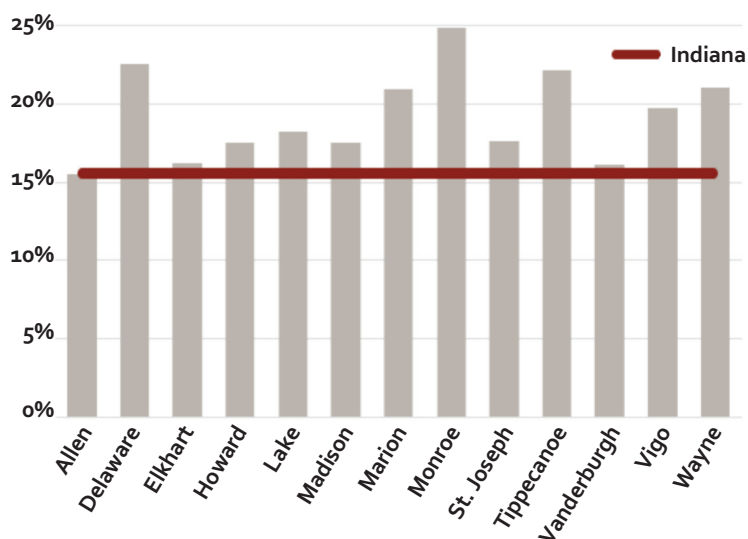
- **Indiana cities: Addressing inadequate education.** Education is increasingly important in creating job opportunities and wage growth. But in all but two urban Indiana counties (Monroe and Tippecanoe), more than 1 in 10 adults lack a high school diploma or GED⁵.

- **Indiana cities: Global competition imposes different needs than rural and mid-size communities.** Unlike many of their rural and mid-sized community counterparts, Indiana's urban counties must now compete for investment and talent throughout the Midwest, the U.S., and the world if they're to do themselves and our state the most good. In that arena, they need the amenities to meet global standards. If we want our cities to succeed, then the rural vs. urban, us vs. them mentality must give way to understanding that we all fare as our cities fare.

- **Indiana cities: Operating with their hands tied.** Indiana cities too often lack the ability to respond quickly to both opportunity and crisis. Economic and social changes occur at the speed of light. To capitalize on opportunity or mitigate risk, cities can't wait for future legislative sessions. They must be able to respond with creativity and urgency.

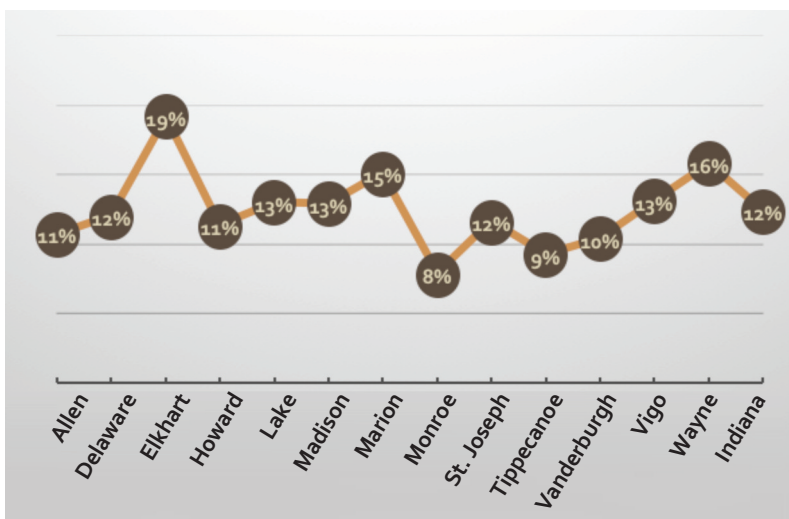
Bottom-line context: For Indiana to thrive, the state and its urban counties must collectively recognize and address the challenges our cities face and allow them the freedom and other means to address those challenges.

Figure 5. Poverty rates in Urban counties in Indiana, 2014



Source: U.S. Census, (2015). American Community Survey, 5 year estimates-2010-2014.

Figure 6. Percent with less than high school diploma in Urban counties in Indiana, 2014



Source: U.S. Census, (2015). American Community Survey, 5 year estimates-2010-2014.



Three priorities for making Indiana's cities more successful





Key measures of urban success

In talking with stakeholders statewide, the *Thriving Communities, Thriving State* Urban Communities Commission homed in on three key measures of urban success.

Places where people want to live. A thriving state has more citizens moving in than moving out. For our state to accomplish that, our cities must accomplish that. Net domestic (non-Indiana) migration means that Indiana's urban cities are preferred destinations that people perceive to have a higher quality of life, better schools, more solid infrastructure, and more opportunities than cities in other states.

- Key measure: Increase net domestic migration

Places with less poverty. With more residents and talent, higher levels of educational attainment, and more opportunities to put that education to work, we should see a reduced share of the urban population living in poverty. If we can make this happen faster than the other 49 states, we'll most certainly have thriving urban communities.

- Key measure: Reduce poverty rate

Better early education outcomes. The better our children fare in school, the better our communities will fare socially, economically, and in their ability to deliver stronger return on investment locally and statewide. We can buy education today, or we can buy poverty programs, remedial education, prisons, and social programs tomorrow. Education is the smartest investment our cities can make.

- Key measures: Increase number of children in publicly funded preschool and 4th grade ISTEP scores

Three priorities for making Indiana's cities more successful

For our cities to be successful – to attract and retain tax-paying residents, attract and recruit talent, and reduce poverty – our urban communities commission identified three priorities that 21st century state, community, and opinion leaders need to embrace if we're to build a strong urban and state economy.

1. **Developing talent is critical – and the job begins with better preschool.** Talent is what drives the new urban economy, and without more than our fair share, urban Indiana will flounder.

2. **To attract and retain talent, we must embrace diversity in all its forms.** Talent comes in many shapes and forms. It isn't dictated by gender, nationality, religious preference, or any other personal trait. Currently, Indiana and its cities export more talent than we import. That has to change if we're to succeed. Accepting diversity is essential to broadening the talent pool and making our cities more attractive to that talent.

3. **If our cities are to deliver maximum benefits to our state, urban communities must have more flexibility so they can quickly respond to opportunities and challenges (including revenue).** Indiana's urban communities are under enormous pressure to balance the conflicting demands of global competition, poverty, basic services and more – all with strict legislative restrictions and a constantly changing tax environment. If they're to serve the state better, they need the freedom to move quickly and better control their own destinies.

Strategic considerations:

Criteria for recommendations and evaluation

In developing recommendations for policymaking changes and other potential developments, the Urban Communities Commission established a set of filters. Each suggestion was required to meet these standards.

Each idea must:

1. **Allow urban Indiana to compete and win nationally and globally.** It is essential that we set our sights on competing beyond our borders. If we merely focus on competing with one another – your community vs. my community in Indiana – then we are playing a zero sum game
2. **Contribute to a long-range sustainable plan.** Quick fixes and incremental tinkering are not likely to create transformation change. If we want to alter Indiana's trajectory, we must be dedicated to long-term efforts.
3. **Create a forward-leaning, transformational vision.** To go forward, we must retain the fundamental elements that make us Hoosiers, while embracing the changes necessary to compete in an ever-changing world.



4. Provide an assortment of short-, medium-, and long-term benefits. The Urban Communities Commission recognizes that short-term wins are essential to maintaining long-term commitment.

5. Recognize that local innovation and statewide collaboration are both vital. If something is working, it should be shared immediately – shared, but not mandated. The Urban Communities Commission recognizes that local adaptation is essential.

Talent development

Rationale: For individuals, society, and the economy, education is key.

From an individual standpoint, all urban Hoosiers should have the opportunity to achieve their fullest education and career potential. Whether it's in advanced manufacturing, shipping and logistics, or as a scientist or lawyer, we all deserve the opportunity to thrive.

From a societal standpoint, Indiana has historically been a net-outmigration state. As a result, our urban areas have been dependent on homegrown (in-state) talent, as well as migrants from other Midwest states. In other words, rural and suburban Hoosiers filled many of the jobs in our Indiana cities. But that can't and won't last. Already, company leaders in Indiana complain that they can't find enough skilled workers to meet their needs.

To address this talent shortage, Indiana's cities need to start at the very beginning: With enhanced early childhood education.

BIG IDEA: Develop intentional, long-term, birth-to-kindergarten education interventions available to all urban children.

There is much research suggesting that children who participate in high-quality preschool programs have better health, social-emotional, and cognitive outcomes than those who do not participate. The gains are particularly powerful for children from low-income families and for those at risk of academic failure who, on average, start kindergarten 12 to 14 months behind their peers in pre-literacy

and language skills. Yet Indiana ranks 45th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia for publicly funded preschool. Early childhood education investments should be priority one for Indiana's cities.

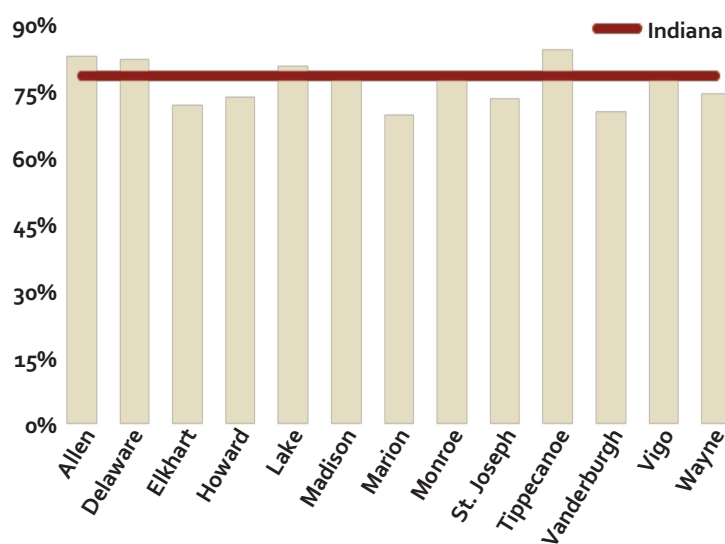
Success measures:

- Increased percent of four-year-olds in publicly funded pre-K
- Improved reading proficiency for third graders
- Improved fourth grade ISTEP scores (Figure 7)
- 60 percent of urban Indiana's population to attain an associate's degree or greater by 2025 (baseline is 32 percent)

Other education recommendations

- **Develop and support step-up programs to help those just short of a degree.** Many Hoosiers are just hours short of a degree. In fact, nearly 445,000 urban county residents over the age of 25 have attended college without graduating. Step-up programs help many individuals get to the next level of education and increase their long-term earning potential.
- **Improve counseling for non-academic, post-secondary pathways that lead to jobs with reasonable wages.** The Urban Communities

Figure 7. Percent of fourth graders passing math and language arts ISTEP (2014)



Source: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>



TALENT DEVELOPMENT

BIG IDEA: Give our cities greater political and fiscal flexibility so they can quickly respond to opportunities and challenges.

Provide and sustain
HIGH QUALITY INTERVENTION PROGRAMS (birth to pre-K), for all.



Develop, adopt, and
SUPPORT STEP-PROGRAMS
to assist those just short of a degree

IMPROVE COUNSELING
for non-academic post-secondary
pathways that lead to jobs with
reasonable wages.

Increased accountability and
**EMPOWERMENT OF
SCHOOL LEADERS**



Strong leadership driven towards
**IMPROVED SCHOOL
CHOICES**

A 10 year concerted effort to
**DEVELOP CULTURE THAT
VALUES EDUCATION**

IMPROVED AFFORDABILITY
and accessible post-secondary school





Commission believes there is a bias toward an academic post-secondary path and against labor-based opportunity. Yet many high-skill, high-wage jobs are going unfilled. We can change that if we improve the flow of information about these opportunities and encourage students who might otherwise flounder academically.

- **Enhance urban school choices in general and STEM education in particular.** Commission members support the notion that learning occurs in many different ways. So having a single approach to education makes little sense. Charter schools, while controversial, are the most common way to provide that choice. STEM degrees represent a specific area of concern for commissioners, who feel that improving STEM pathways is critical to growing Indiana's economy and increasing economic opportunity.
- **Increased accountability (and empowerment) for school leaders.** Indiana has been experiencing a contentious period as education leaders strive to improve education outcomes. The myriad individuals and organizations involved have blurred responsibilities and, thus, accountability. The Urban Communities Commission wants empowered leaders to drive innovative and creative approaches accompanied by accountability for results.
- **More affordable and accessible post-secondary school options.** While there is much discussion about the cost of attending college and the burden of student loan debt, programs such as 21st Century Scholars have reduced the cost barrier for some. Yet social and cultural constraints tend to be more difficult for potential students to overcome. The Urban Communities Commission suggests increased focus by counselors and others on helping students overcome these barriers.
- **A 10-year concerted effort to develop a culture that values education.** The Urban Communities Commission believes that the state suffers from a too-common attitude that says, "If it was good enough for me, it's good enough for my children." As a result, many youngsters who might thrive in an academic environment face barriers within their own families and among friends. This will require a concerted, long-term effort to grow an appreciation for education within Indiana.

Talent attraction/retention

Rationale: Urban economies are increasingly driven by innovation, so our communities' ability to attract and retain talent is critical. Talent drives the innovation economy and increasingly, innovation enables the production economy. If we don't get more than our fair share of talent, urban Indiana will flounder and so will our state.

BIG IDEA: Embrace diversity in all forms.

Indiana's urban communities compete globally, nationally, and regionally for the talent required to compete in the information and innovation economies. Life sciences require scientists. Advanced manufacturing needs engineers. Information technology needs coders and programmers.

In their early post-college years, talented individuals are mobile – sometimes choosing a place before they have jobs, other times picking the most exciting combination of job and place. In other instances, these talented individuals choose to stay close to home and try to combine, job, place, and family. In either situation, talented people have choices, and as Richard Florida has often noted, welcoming, diverse places tend to be the most successful.

In "The New Geography of Jobs," Enrico Moretti notes a growing divide between thriving cities that attract and retain high percentages of college graduates and other cities that export college graduates and struggle to change their fate. Recently, in the *Indianapolis Star*, Lumina Foundation for Education President Jamie Merisotis wrote that Indiana won't get to the level of talent required for success in today's economy if we treat LGBT citizens as anything less than equal partners.

It's not just the knowledge economy that's affected by an unwelcoming image. Moretti notes that high school graduates' earning increases by 7 percent for every 10 percent increase in college graduates in a region. What's more, every innovation job creates 5 additional jobs, compared to a 1.6 increase in employment for each manufacturing job.

Visit Indy recently suggested that the fallout from an unwelcoming reputation created by publicity over the Religious Freedom Restoration Act during the 2015 legislative session may have cost Indianapolis 12 conventions and \$60 million dollars. In addition, leaders of many of the state's most significant and legacy com-

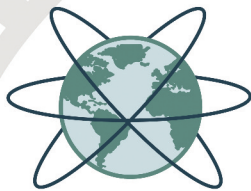


TALENT ATTRACTION & RETENTION

BIG IDEA: Embrace diversity in all forms

EMBRACE DIVERSITY
in all forms

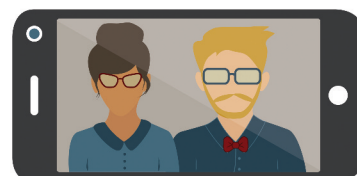
Develop and implement a to encourage
HIGHER ASPIRATIONS



Increased
**COMMITMENT TO
INFRASTRUCTURE**
that supports place making



Compete better for **MILLENNIALS**





LOCAL GOVERNMENT FLEXIBILITY

BIG IDEA: Give our cities greater political and fiscal flexibility so they can quickly respond to opportunities and challenges (including revenue).

Develop civic and public sector job rotation
MENTORING PROGRAM

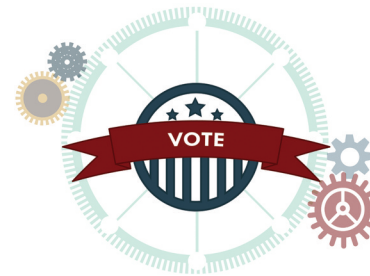


Create a
FELLOWSHIP NETWORK
program in nonprofit and public sector



Improved access to
HIGH SPEED INTERNET
and develop free high speed downtown
and airport

Develop a diverse
LEADERSHIP NETWORK
by identifying exiting leaders



Enable forward thinking leadership
through broader and deeper
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Increased
**ACCESS TO
MASS TRANSIT**



Develop sustained investment in
QUALITY OF PLACE
projects at local level

Increased commitment to stable road funding and
QUALITY ROAD NETWORK

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panies have expressed grave concern over their ability to attract talent and retain their current employees in such an environment.

Talent is talent, regardless of where it came from, what color it is, what its religious preferences are, or what its sexual orientation might be. As Indiana's urban counties compete for that talent, they are in no position to be selective. In fact, many studies suggest the more diverse you are, the more talent you attract.

If Indiana's cities aren't welcoming and committed to diversity, they will not retain the talent they develop, and they will not be as attractive to talent developed elsewhere. Without talent, we don't compete in the innovation economy. And if we don't compete, it's not just our cities that suffer, but also the entire state. If a thriving Indiana requires a thriving set of urban communities (and it desperately does), then Indiana must embrace diversity.

Success measures:

- Positive net domestic migration
- Decrease in share of population with less than high school diploma
- Increase in number of advanced degrees or greater

Local government flexibility

Rationale: If Indiana's urban communities are to remain a key economic engine for the state's economy, help keep our children in state, and compete for human capital across the globe, they will need the fiscal flexibility to raise funds and invest in quality-of-life amenities and economic drivers (both public facilities and leveraged private investments). They also will need the ability to respond immediately, innovatively, and creatively to fast-emerging opportunities and challenges – inevitable byproducts of international competition.

BIG IDEA: Give our cities greater political and fiscal flexibility so they can quickly respond to opportunities and challenges (including revenue).

Indiana's urban communities are under enormous pressure as they try to balance:

- Managing conflicting demands of global competition for diverse talent.
- Addressing fundamental issues associated with poverty in a manner that creates opportunity.

- Providing basic services, including safe neighborhoods, pothole repair, maintenance of regional amenities (e.g. sports stadiums, convention centers, and cultural venues), and trash collection.

And our urban communities are being asked to do all this in a constantly changing tax environment that, according to a recent study⁶ of the 20 largest cities in Indiana (not including Indianapolis) conducted by the Indiana Fiscal Policy Institute, has resulted in six cities in urban counties (Hammond, South Bend, Anderson, Terre Haute, Muncie, and Gary) experiencing a fiscal health index of less than 90 and falling into the concern category. Two other urban communities (Kokomo and Elkhart) are listed as modestly falling behind, while Evansville is listed as barely falling behind. Only Bloomington, Lafayette, and Fort Wayne listed as urban gainers under Indiana's new local tax environment. (Indianapolis, because of its size, was not included in the study.) In general, those falling behind have less core revenue today, when adjusted for inflation, than they did in 2008.

Within this decline of core revenue is often a precipitous increase in public safety cost. Consequently, many urban communities have even less money to spend on other basic services. They also face greater challenges when searching for revenue to invest in the types of amenities, ranging from basic infrastructure (streets, sewers, sidewalks, schools) to bike trails, dog parks, and WiFi, that are commonplace in the communities with which they compete throughout the nation and world. Finally, with a disproportionate share of jobs and entertainment amenities, these cities are being asked to provide services that support thousands of commuters and visitors.

Even with increased efficiencies, Indiana's urban communities are hard pressed to function within the revenue and policy constraints imposed by the state legislature, while concurrently:

- Meeting the challenges that arise from serving a disproportionate share of the state's poverty population;
- Trying to support a quality of life that supports opportunities for current residents; and
- Providing an attractive place for the mobile human capital that drives the innovation economy.

Indiana's urban communities often find themselves having to ask the legislature for permission when



seeking to respond to opportunities or crises. For example, Central Indiana has spent years working with the state legislature as it strives to expand the mass transit, an amenity that appeals to young, well-educated human capital, as well as lower-income residents who need mass transit to get to jobs and economic opportunities.

Success measures:

- Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (IACIR) survey of local government leadership reveals increased confidence on the part of local government officials.
- Passage of various legislative initiatives gives cities the ability to respond more immediately and flexibly to events rather than passing legislation related to specific events or issues.
- Voter turnout increases.

Leadership development

With greater flexibility, leadership both within the public and not-for-profit sector becomes increasingly important.

A community is only as strong as its leaders. To create a successful 21st century Indiana, new urban leadership must build networks of leaders who are plugged into an intentional system that engenders meaningful collaboration civic, elected, and not-for-profit organizations and leaders.

Inclusivity, openness, consensus, and diversity are the pillars that will empower bold civic leaders within multiple generations, with a specific focus on connecting Millennials, Gen-Xers and Boomers to the causes they embrace. To engage the next generation, Indiana work to identify and empower and increasingly diverse and fragmented group of emerging civic leaders. A more informed and more engaged voting population will provide our elected officials with the same forward-thinking and bold approach.

Leadership development recommendations

- Broaden and deepen civic engagement.
- Develop civic/public sector job rotation/mentoring program.
- Create more intentional effort to identify existing leaders and encourage diversity.

- Create a not-for-profit/public-sector version of Lilly Fellows/VISTA programs.

To ensure that Indiana 's urban counties are attractive to a diverse collection of individuals, cities must use increased flexibility to focus on infrastructure and place-making

With more fiscal, regulatory, and political freedom, cities need to work on infrastructure and place-making initiatives that enhance their ability to compete regionally, nationally, and globally.

The Urban Communities Commission identified many priorities that would help our cities succeed in their efforts to enhance our state and its economy.

Infrastructure and place-making recommendations

- Increase commitment to stable road funding and a quality road network.
- Increase access to mass transit for those who need and want it.
- Improve access to high-speed Internet and develop free high-speed downtown and airport WIFI.
- Develop sustained investment in urban quality-of-place projects.

Conclusion

In the final analysis, the Urban Communities Commission identified three priorities for helping Indiana's urban counties better compete for and develop talent. These priorities – **early childhood education, embracing diversity, and greater government flexibility** – are interrelated. Advanced together, they will help urban counties win the migration game against other regions and other states rather than relying on other parts of Indiana to support our urban economy and quality of life.

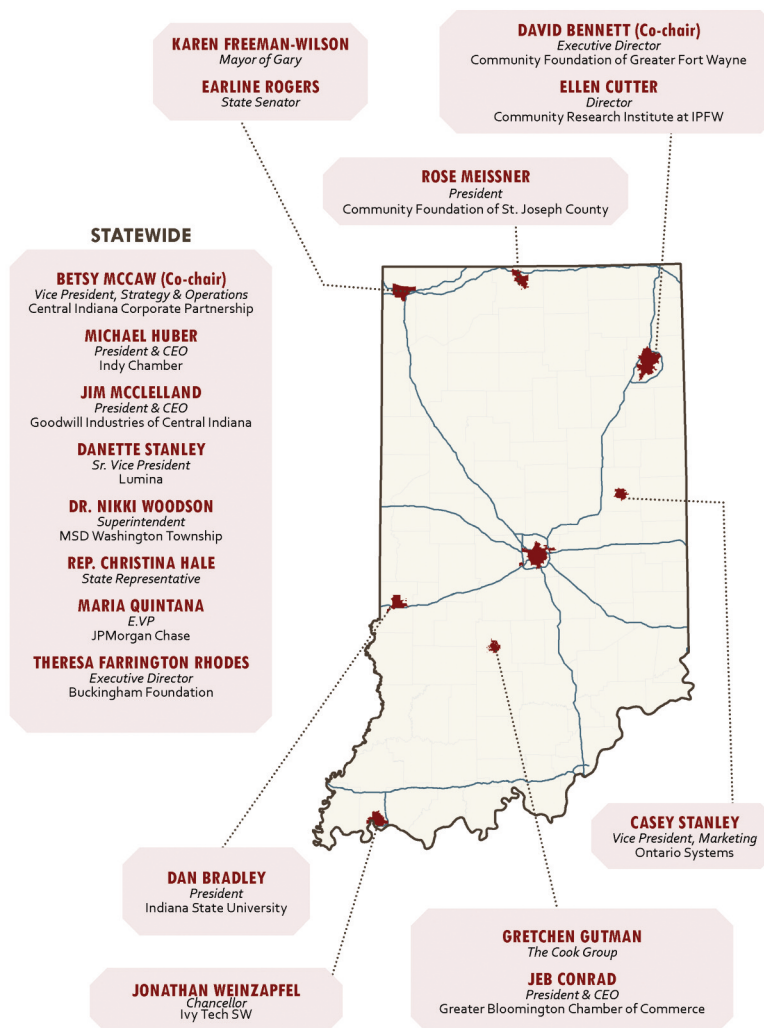
When we ensure that all are welcome in urban Indiana and that all urban Hoosiers have the right to receive the lifelong education that is essential to achieving one's highest potential, then a larger share will choose to stay home and contribute to the innovation, production, and attribution sectors of the economy. Greater government flexibility for funding and programs will ensure that urban Indiana is full of the amenities – great roads, schools, bike trails, parks and green spaces, and vibrant, walkable and bikeable

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neighborhoods – required to attract and retain businesses and individuals.

Indiana's urban counties want to thrive and are willing to do the hard work and take the calculated, innovative steps required to get there. Give cities the tools to do so, and a thriving urban Indiana will contribute to a thriving Indiana.

Map 2. Urban Commission members



Endnotes

- 1 - U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2015). Occupational employment statistics by county, annual averages [Data files]. Accessed from www.bls.gov
- 2 - U.S. Census, (2015). American Community Survey, 5 year estimates-2010-2014 [Data files]. Accessed from www.factfinder.census.gov
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- 5 - U.S. Census, (2015). American Community Survey, 5 year estimates-2010-2014 [Data files]. Accessed from www.factfinder.census.gov
- 6 - Stafford, J. (2015, December). The Fiscal Health of Indiana's Larger Municipalities. Indiana Fiscal Policy Institute. Accessed from www.indianafiscal.org

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