



A collaboration among Keystone College, King's College, Lackawanna College, Luzerne County Community College, Marywood University, Misericordia University, Penn State Wilkes-Barre, The Commonwealth Medical College, University of Scranton, and Wilkes University



2016 Indicators Online

The 2016 Indicators, held on May 12th at Mohegan Sun Pocono, marked the ten year anniversary with the first report publishing and event held in 2006 discussing visions and goals as well as task force formation. The entire report is available at www.institutepa.org on the Regional Indicators page.

WVIA, The Institute's media partner, produced a short commercial on The Institute to introduce the audience to the organization. Click below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yT2BxrF7gXA&feature=youtu.be>

The Institute's presentation of the report and research studies is available on the link below.

http://prezi.com/zz4zesq24rw7/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy

Jobs & Economy

The *Jobs, Economy, and Economic Development Task Force* examined and compared relevant financial literacy levels among various groups

within the region and externally. The report also evaluated the impact of financial literacy on the region's economy. The findings showed that most students and community members have a better understanding of personal finance as education level or work experience increases. The study also found that financial literacy education in Pennsylvania is behind other states, but that there is a strong desire for personal finance classes as a core requirement among students in high school.

Education & Workforce Development

The *Education and Workforce Development Task Force* conducted research on the impact of socioeconomic status on academic performance and examined regional metrics and issues. The task force also worked to identify potential resources and solutions to mitigate disparities. The research showed

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that poverty and income status have an impact on educational success, although not as much as other socioeconomic indicators, particularly community-wide educational attainment. Family, environmental, and psychological factors are key to strong academic achievement. These factors and many more are part of the complex set of variables that drive student success.

Planning, Land Use, Transportation & Infrastructure

The *Planning, Land Use, Transportation, & Infrastructure Task Force* worked to develop four toolkits discussing general practices for local government, green building, recycling, and sustainable transportation. The toolkits provide definitions, descriptions, case studies, policy recommendations, implementation steps, and resources for local government officials and community leaders.

Health and Healthcare

The death rate of cancer and heart disease have trended downward in the two counties. Compared with the commonwealth, the region has high rates of smoking, excessive drinking, and a lack of exercise. The number of uninsured residents has also decreased slightly over the last year for which data was available.

The *Health and Healthcare Task Force* studied opioid issues, their prevalence, and associated challenges within Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties. The study provides a snapshot of the region's opioid challenges including resource limitations and policy implications.

Housing

The *Housing Task Force* prepared a regional home buyer and owner education guide as well as updated

and revised the [NEPA Housing](#) website.

Public Safety

The *Public Safety Task Force*, with the joint collaboration of co-chairs Congressman Lou Barletta and State Senator John Yudichak, opened SHINE in Luzerne County in 2015 following research papers on "Deterring Successful Gang Recruitment". Currently established in eight school districts, Luzerne SHINE has had a successful first year.

Energy

In 2015, the *Energy Task Force* began its work to unify the industry and energy sectors of Lackawanna and Luzerne County to form a cohesive and feasible energy model. This project continues with an implementation strategy.

2016 work

The task forces met in June to welcome new members and made deployments plans for how to distribute the studies from this year. In addition, to email blasts, social media and targeted distribution to policy makers and stakeholders. Several task for chairs will be delivering studies to various state departments and legislators personally.

Each task force identified new research for the upcoming year that will be presented at Indicators 2016. The *Planning, Land Use, Transportation and Infrastructure* task force is working on a study of regional commute patterns and availability of public transportation services. The *Health and Healthcare Task Force* is studying the quality dental health and its impact on physical & mental health. The study will look at care coordination which includes dental and supplement with local data on challenges and best practices. The *Jobs, Economy, and Economy Development Task Force* is advancing its research on financial literacy levels and its impacts on the local economy. The *Energy Task Force* is updating pipeline infrastructure paper and working with funders and partners to implement the energy economic development strategy. The *Education and Workforce Development Task Force* is Career and Technical Education as a part of STEAM curriculum and career paths – a change in culture. The *Housing Task Force* is studying land bank best practices and identifying potential properties and highest and best use.

All task force information and publications can be found [here](#).

Student Poll: Post Graduation What's New 2016

The Institute conducts polls of students in our higher education partner institutions twice a year. The most recent poll asks about student level of comfort in their job search, preparation for careers, whether or not there was an interest in remaining in NEPA and if they were prepared for college based on high school work.

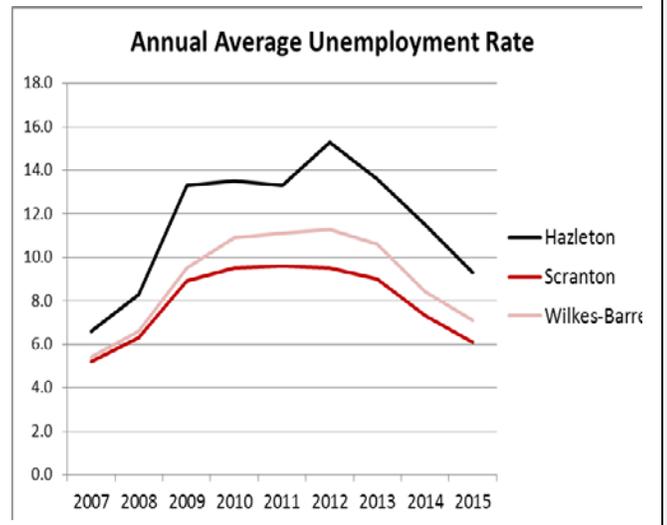
The same poll was conducted in 2015 and this group of students are more optimistic about job prospects, feel less anxiety about being prepared for the work, and more students have an interest in starting their professional career in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

A new question added to the poll inquired as to whether students were prepared for college based on their high school experience. About one quarter of the respondents indicated they were poorly or very poorly prepared for college.

From the Summer 2016 Quarterly Economy Tracker:

City-Level Unemployment Rates Improved Through 2015

The three cities in the region, like the region as a whole, experienced a spike in unemployment rates during the great recession, and like the individual counties, they have seen a significant recovery since 2013. In 2015, Hazleton's unemployment rate was 9.1 and Wilkes-Barre's was 7.1. Both of these were higher than the Luzerne County rate of 6.7 percent for that year. The City of Scranton had an average unemployment rate of 6.1 during 2015, roughly on par with Lackawanna County's six percent rate.



Summer Interns

The Institute would like to congratulate our summer interns on the successful completion of their internships. During the summer session, these two students worked hard on a variety of projects. Congratulations and good luck!

Misericordia University – Evan Bush and Matthew Klassner

The Institute offers credited internships to students of the member institutions. Non-credit internships are also available to students outside our member schools (based on availability). If you are interested in the internship program, please contact The Institute for eligibility criteria at info@institutepta.org or via phone at 570-408-9850 or visit our [Student Internships](#) page.

Who We Are

The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development (**The Institute**) is an economic research and consulting organization that provides services to businesses, government entities, educational institutions, and non-profit organizations. The Institute's extensive knowledge of regional economics and economic development, combined with a rigorous and strategic approach to research, have generated a wide range of experience conducting projects such as economic development strategies; economic impact studies; surveys and assessments; grant and program evaluation; market and feasibility

analyses; industry and workforce studies; and economic and demographic profiles. The Institute supports the business community, government, and regional economic development programs by producing signature economic reports as well as providing data and analysis.

The Institute focuses on providing its clients with credible and objective research to help them make informed and strategic decisions. The Institute staff has 35 years of combined experience in regional economic development. The organization's distinctive history and structure combines an applied research focus with the credibility and academic expertise of higher education institutions.

The organization is structured as a research institute affiliated with 10 higher education institutions and the business community in northeastern Pennsylvania. Over the past 11 years, The Institute has emerged as a nationally-scoped research center having served clients in several states.

The fees earned from client work help to support the community based research The Institute produces. The Indicators, task force research, Quarterly Economy Tracker, and the polling program are the primary initiatives that comprise the community based research efforts. Further, funds help to support student internships at The Institute.

If you or your firm is interested in becoming our next client, please contact us at info@institutepta.org.

Did you know The Institute provides services to all types of clients?

Client List

Arts & Culture

Luzerne County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Luzerne County Cultural Council

Corporate

Borton Lawson
Facility Design & Development, Ltd.
Live Nation
Williams—Transcontinental Pipeline Company, LLC
Ufberg Law
Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport
Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins

Economic Development

Carbon County Chamber & Economic Development Corp.
Downtown Bloomsburg, Inc.
Forum for Pennsylvania's Heartland
Great Valley Technology Alliance
Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business & Industry
South Valley Partnership
Wyoming County Chamber of Commerce

Education & Workforce Development

Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania
King's College
Lackawanna County Workforce Investment Board
Lehigh Carbon Community College SHINE
Luzerne County Community College
Luzerne County Head Start
Luzerne Schuylkill Workforce Investment Board
The Commonwealth Medical College
The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education
University of Scranton
Wall Street West/WIRED
Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance
Wilkes University

Government

Appalachian Regional Commission
Borough of Factoryville
City of Nanticoke
City of Scranton
Civic Research Alliance
Columbia & Montour Counties
Lackawanna County
Local Government Commission
Luzerne County
Luzerne County Municipal Cooperation Commission
Wilkes-Barre City
Wyoming County

Health & Healthcare

Healthy Northeast Pennsylvania Initiative
Moses Taylor Hospital
Volunteers in Medicine Clinic

Non-Profit Organization

AllOne Foundation
Arbor Housing & Development
Carbondale YMCA
Central Susquehanna Community Foundation
Commission on Equal Opportunity
Jewish Community Center
Lacawac Sanctuary Foundation
Municipal Cooperation Commission
Nicholson Heritage Association
Pennsylvania Economy League
Pennsylvania State Afterschool Youth Development
Network
United Way of Monroe County
United Way of Susquehanna County
United Way Wyoming Valley

The Institute prepares the following products:

Market and Feasibility Studies
Indicators – Indexes
Community Health Assessments
Housing Studies
Economic Development Strategies
Economic and Tax Impact Studies
Industry Studies
Workforce Studies
Education Studies

Economic and Demographic Profiles
Policy Analysis
Grant and Program Evaluation Support
Research Validation and Peer Review
Site Selection Research
Arts & Culture Studies
Tourism Strategic Plans
Comprehensive Plans
Asset Maps

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