



A collaboration among Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine, Keystone College, King's College, Lackawanna College, Luzerne County Community College, Marywood University, Misericordia University, Penn State Wilkes-Barre, Penn State Worthington, the Wright Center, University of Scranton, and Wilkes University



## Regional Indicators 2017 How are we doing, NEPA?

On May 11<sup>th</sup>, over 155 regional leaders gathered at the Mohegan Sun Pocono as The Institute shared research on the issues, challenges and opportunities facing our region. While our region, like any other, faces challenges, *the data shows that both Luzerne and Lackawanna counties are making progress and have significant strengths and valuable assets that can be harnessed to move the region forward.*

### Jobs & Economic Development

#### Success in NEPA:

- Unemployment has improved in recent years and has had modest job growth since 2009.
- Innovation is a key aspect of a strong economy and **STEM jobs have increased.** Nearly 50 patents per year are awarded regionally.
- **Fastest growing industries** are professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management.

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### **On The Prisons Remaining Open....**

*“Without The Institute’s quick and trusted research, a thousand workers would have had no voice in the fight to keep their jobs and to keep their homes in Northeastern Pennsylvania.”*

-Senator John T. Yudichak

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### A Special Welcome to Our New Academic Partners!

**Penn State  
Worthington  
Scranton  
&  
The Wright  
Center**

## Welcome to our Newest Academic Partners!

The Institute would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest academic partners. We would like to thank Dr. Linda Thomas and Brian Ebersole from The Wright Center and Dr. Marwan Wafa from Penn State University/Worthington for their support and for sharing our vision of a stronger regional economy and healthier communities.

### The Wright Center

The Wright Center joined The Institute in April. They are the largest teaching health center graduate medical education consortium in the United States. The Wright Center has a strong focus on primary and preventative healthcare and has residency and fellowship programs in six states. We are excited to partner with Dr. Linda Thomas and Brian Ebersole, a member of our Health & Healthcare task force who will also now be a valued member of our marketing committee.

### Penn State University/Worthington

Penn State/Worthington joined The Institute in May. The 45-acre campus outside of Scranton, has 1,200 students, 30% of which are adult students. The campus offers 10 baccalaureate and 4 associate degrees, with plans to grow programs offered to 15 degrees. We are excited to partner with Chancellor Marwan Wafa who will bring new and valuable insight to our Jobs, Economy and Economic Development task force.

## Seeking Fall Student Interns

The Institute is accepting applications for fall and winter 2017 sessions. Students of all majors from our academic partner institutions may qualify for both academic credit and a stipend of up to \$599. For more information or to apply, contact Erin McCormick at 570-408-9850 or [mccormick@institutepa.org](mailto:mccormick@institutepa.org).

## Student Intern Program

The Institute's internship program has hosted over 255 students from collaborating higher education partners to date. Students receive credit, stipend and the opportunity to be published. The interns will participate in essential research, analysis and interpretation of data on a variety of community and business issues with real world application in a professional environment. During the summer, (space permitting) regional resident students from non-participating schools are invited to apply for internships.

### Research Associate

**Robert Graham**, Stetson University, 2016, BS in Business Management

### Summer Interns 2017

**William Bucher**, East Stroudsburg, BA in Political Science

**Gaetano Buonsante**, Misericordia University, BA in Government, Law and National Security, BA in Psychology

**John Cahill**, East Stroudsburg University, MA in Political Science

**Sabrina Chan**, Penn State University, BA in Economics

**Timothy Dodds**, University of Scranton. BS in Psychology & Philosophy

**Thomas Farley**, Merrimack College, Girard School of Business, BS in Business Administration

**Michael Kavanagh**, Gettysburg College, BA in Economics and Public Policy

**Caitlin Meehan**, Luzerne County Community College, AAS.GCD Commercial Art Graphic Design Specialization and B.A. Communications – Misericordia University

**Douglas Ooms**, Saint Joseph's University, BS in Marketing

**Wyatt Scott**, Misericordia University. BA in Government, Law & National Security

**Peter Zabiegala**, University of Scranton, BS in Economics and International Business

## Economic Development

### Room for Improvement

- Our unemployment rate, while improving, **remains slightly higher than the statewide rate.**
- Household income has increased but remains below state average.
- Poverty rates in the region are higher than the statewide and national averages; **over 15% of residents live in poverty. The poverty rate among children is 20%.**

### Top Industries by Employment:

1. **Education and Health Care**
2. **Retail Trade**
3. **Manufacturing**

### Fastest Growing Industries:

1. **Professional, Scientific, and Administrative Services**
2. **Wholesale Trade**
3. **Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities**

### Percentage of Residents in Poverty:

Lackawanna County

**16%**

Luzerne County

**15%**

Pennsylvania

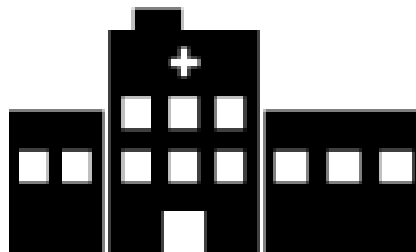
**13%**

## Health & Health Care Progress in NEPA:

- The region has seen **improving trends in cancer and heart disease.**
- Death by heart disease has been declining and reached a new low in 2014.
- **Teen pregnancy rates saw significant improvements in Luzerne (50% drop) and Lackawanna County (22% drop).**
- Rate of residents covered by health insurance has improved gradually from 2010 to 2015.

### Room for Improvement:

- **Cancer rates in both counties, while improving, remain about the state average.**
- Though there has been a modest improvement in cigarette smoking and excessive drinking rates, these behaviors are more prevalent in our region than statewide.



## Education & Workforce Development

### Successes:

- The number of college degree holders in the region has grown, both 2 & 4 year degrees.
- For the five years recorded, both counties had higher four year cohort graduation rates than the state as a whole.
- AP courses offered by the region's high schools increased from last year in both counties.

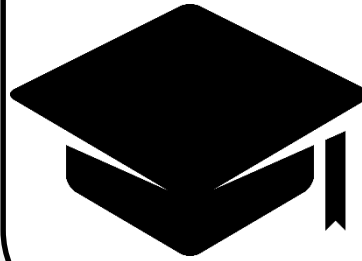
### Room for Improvement:

- Four year high school graduation rates have trended downward in both counties over the past several years, however did show an increase in the most recent year measured.
- There is significant variation of academic performance indicators from district to district. **It is important for struggling schools to continue to strive for improvement.**

Higher education institutions in the two counties awarded a total of

**8,514**

degrees and certificates in 2014-15.



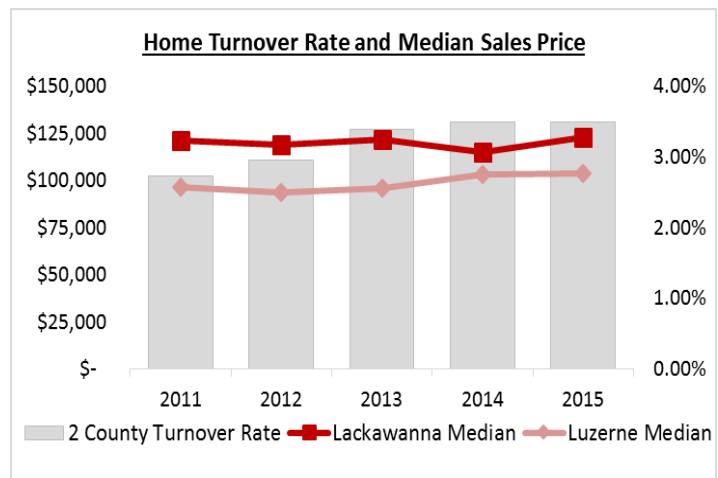
#### Top fields:

Business (589 degrees)

Nursing (464 degrees)

## Housing

- Foreclosures fell in 2015, while the statewide foreclosure rate rose.
- The region's housing stock is generally older and home values below average.
- Home prices have appreciated relatively slowly in the region.



## Task Force Research 2017

Each year, task force teams comprised of diverse groups of professionals in respective fields convene and generate strategies, plans and policy solutions based on research to help improve quality of life and standard of living for residents of the region.

Visit [www.institutepa.org](http://www.institutepa.org) for the Indicators book and to access this year's task force papers.

### Jobs, Economy & Economic Development Task Force

**Topic: *The Impact of Regional Financial Literacy on The Economy***

<http://www.institutepa.org/PDF/Indicators/2017/finlit2.pdf>

### Education & Workforce Development Task Force

**Topic: *A Study on Vocational Education and Its Role in STEM Education***

<http://www.institutepa.org/PDF/Indicators/2017/cte.pdf>

### Energy Task Force

**Topic: *Natural Gas Pipeline Infrastructure***

<http://www.institutepa.org/PDF/Indicators/2017/pipeline17.pdf>

**Topic: *An Examination of Natural Gas & Electricity Costs in NEPA***

<http://www.institutepa.org/PDF/Indicators/2017/energycost.pdf>

### Health & Healthcare Task Force

**Topic: *Oral Health Challenges in Lackawanna & Luzerne Counties***

<http://www.institutepa.org/PDF/Indicators/2017/oral.pdf>

### Housing Task Force

**Topic: *Measuring the Impact of Economic Blight in Lackawanna & Luzerne Counties***

<http://www.institutepa.org/PDF/Indicators/2017/blight.pdf>

**Topic: *The Foundation of a Successful Land Bank***

<http://www.institutepa.org/PDF/Indicators/2017/landbanks.pdf>

### Planning, Land Use, Transportation & Infrastructure Task Force

**Topic: *Regional Public Transit Demand***

<http://www.institutepa.org/PDF/Indicators/2017/publictransitdemand.pdf>

### Education & Workforce Development and Jobs, Economy and Economic Development Joint Task Force

**Topic: *Understanding Unemployment in the Region: A Structural Analysis***

<http://www.institutepa.org/PDF/Indicators/2017/structural.pdf>

## A Huge THANK YOU to our Task Force Chairs!

Jobs, Economy & Economic Development, **Robert Luciani**, PNC Retirement

Education & Workforce Development, **Lucyann Vierling**, Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance

Energy, **Bill Sordoni**, Sordoni Construction

Health & Healthcare, **Steven Scheinman, MD**, Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine

Housing, **Charles Kasko**, Wyoming Valley Motors

Planning, Land Use, Transportation & Infrastructure, **Marleen Troy, Ph.D.**, Wilkes University

Public Safety, **Congressman Lou Barletta** and State Senator **John T. Yudichak**

# What is Community Based Research?

Community based research is at the core of The Institute's mission. The Institute was founded on the belief that it is critical to the future of our region to have an organization working to both identify our challenges, issues and opportunities and find innovative solutions to meet these challenges. This research is funded by our academic partners and our generous sponsors.

## Indicators Initiative

Each May, The Institute holds an Indicators forum to share data measuring the regions progress on the economic, healthcare, environmental, education and infrastructure measures. Dialogue resulting from past events has been a driving force behind many important economic development and community revitalization projects that have produced positive outcomes for our region and its residents.

<http://www.institutepa.org/PDF/Indicators/2017/indicators17.pdf>.

## Task Force Research

Diverse groups of professionals in respective fields convene and generate strategies and policy solutions to identify and address the challenges faced by our region. Findings are presented at the Indicators event. The research has been used by leaders and civic entrepreneurs in initiatives to move our region forward.

[http://www.institutepa.org/Regional\\_Indicators.html](http://www.institutepa.org/Regional_Indicators.html)

## Pillars of a Strong Community

In 2016, The Institute previewed the *Pillars of a Strong Community Index*. This index measures and benchmarks the region in an index highlight four pillars of strong communities - economic, health and families, infrastructure and physical assets and community. The 2017 Index highlights depicts the most current data and change from 2016.

<http://www.institutepa.org/PDF/Indicators/2017/pillars17web.pdf>

## Quarterly Economic Tracker

This free online publication explores the region's economic and business trends as well as the latest economic data. Funded by the Willary Foundation as signature underwriter, UGI Utilities and PNC Foundation, it is an important tool for those who want to be in the know regarding the regional economy.

### Spring 2017 Issue

Our most recent issue highlights:

- Female entrepreneurship in the region
- The region's changing retail sector and the challenges faced by the global retail industry
- Pillars of a Strong Community highlights

<http://www.institutepa.org/PDF/EconomyTracker/qetsp17.pdf>

## Polling Program

In 2015, The Institute along with its higher education partners, formed a polling program within the organization. The intent was to poll college students on a variety of topics in order to better understand what our future leaders think is important, their perceptions of the region, and interests in civic engagement.

[http://institutepa.org/community\\_research\\_polls.html](http://institutepa.org/community_research_polls.html)

## Cost of Living Index

The Institute participates on a national research team lead by *The Council for Community and Economic Research* to gather quarterly data on various goods and services in the region in order to develop a regional cost of living index. Results are published in the QET.

<http://institutepa.org/Economy%20Tracker.html>

## **Who We Are:**

The Institute is a non-profit research organization dedicated to empowering business and community leaders with research based strategies for informed decision making. We conduct independent, non-biased research to identify the opportunities, issues and challenges unique to the region and find innovative solutions to help solve the problems facing our communities. The Institute also offers a wide array of research, consulting and support services to help organizations boost productivity, increase profitability and be successful in their missions.

## **Academic Partners**

Geisinger Commonwealth  
School of Medicine  
Keystone College  
King's College  
Lackawanna College  
Luzerne County Community College  
Marywood University  
Misericordia University  
Penn State Wilkes-Barre  
Penn State Worthington Scranton  
The Wright Center  
University of Scranton  
Wilkes University

## **A Sincere Thank You to our Generous 2017 Sponsors**

The Institute would like to sincerely thank our generous stakeholders who share our vision for a strong regional economy and healthy communities. Your support makes our work possible!

### **Signature Underwriters**

Andrew J Sordoni Foundation  
Luzerne County  
Moses Taylor Foundation  
PPL Electric Utilities  
Sordoni Family Foundation

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BlackOut Design  
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Commonwealth Health Systems  
Geisinger Health System  
Luzerne County Housing Partnership  
Mohegan Sun Pocono

### **Supporting Underwriters**

Berkshire Asset Management  
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Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield  
OneSource Staffing  
Sanofi Pasteur  
Wells Fargo Foundation

### **Public Media Partner**

WVIA Public Media

Thank you to **Vice Chairman Frank Joanlanne**, President Borton Lawson and Precise Visual Technologies for you participation in Indicators 2017!

## Research-Based Client Solutions

The Institute provides a full range of customized research, consulting and support services to public and private organizations on a fee-for service basis. As a non-profit and by harnessing the resources of our higher education partners. We are able to offer superior products at very competitive prices. Research-based client solutions include but are not limited to the following:

Market &  
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

### Client List

#### Arts & Culture

Lackawanna County Arts & Culture Department  
Luzerne County Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Luzerne County Cultural Council

#### Corporate

Borton Lawson  
Live Nation  
Martz Group  
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  
Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business & Industry  
Wyoming County Chamber of Commerce

#### Education & Workforce Development

Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania  
Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine  
Kings College

Lackawanna County Workforce Investment Board  
Lehigh Carbon Community College SHINE

Luzerne County Head Start  
Luzerne Schuylkill Workforce Investment Board  
Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool Youth Development Network  
The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education Wall Street

West/WIRED/US Dept. of Labor  
Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance  
Wilkes University

#### Government

Appalachian Regional Commission  
Borough of Factoryville  
City of Nanticoke  
City of Scranton

Columbia & Montour Counties  
Lackawanna County

Local Government Commission  
Luzerne County

Luzerne County Municipal Cooperation Commission  
Wilkes-Barre City  
Wyoming County

#### Health & Healthcare

Geisinger Health System  
Healthy Northeast Pennsylvania Initiative  
Volunteers in Medicine Clinic

#### Non-Profit Organizations

All One 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  
Pocono Alliance

Primary Care Progress  
Scranton Area Foundation  
Scranton Cultural Center

United Ways of Monroe & Susquehanna Counties, and of Wyoming Valley



## Locations in:

*Scranton and Wilkes-Barre, PA*

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