

Pillars of a Strong Community

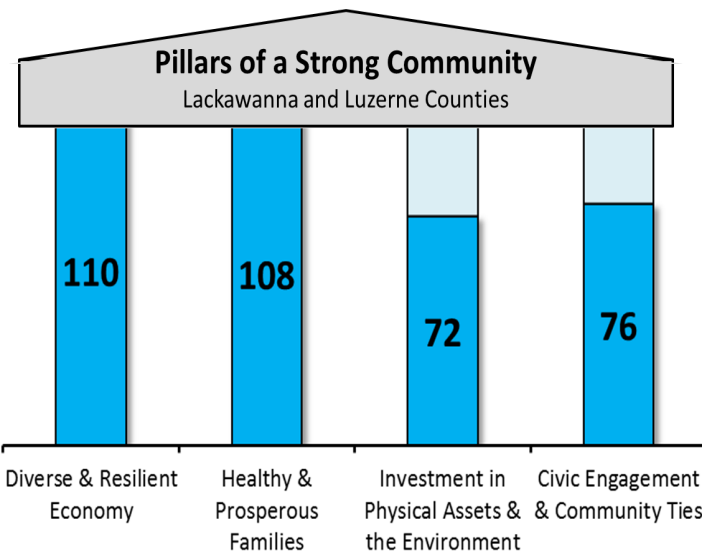
What does it take to be strong as a region, and how well are we doing at attaining it?

Pillars of a Strong Community is a model designed to systematically measure progress at achieving overall community strength, and provide a framework for benchmarking progress against other regions around the United States.

The Institute identified four broad characteristics that make a community strong. They overlap with many of the topics covered in the 2016 Indicators report. They are:

- **Diverse and Resilient Economy.** A region’s economy exhibits growth, is conducive to business and innovation, and is able to withstand periods of recession.
- **Healthy and Prosperous Families.** A region’s residents are safe from violence, in good health, sufficiently educated, and have enough income to be financially secure.
- **Investment in Physical Assets and the Environment.** A region’s physical attributes, including housing stock and public infrastructure, are well maintained, and environmental resources are well cared for.
- **Civic Engagement & Community Ties**
The region’s residents are engaged as members of a community with a strong sense of citizenship and high social capital.

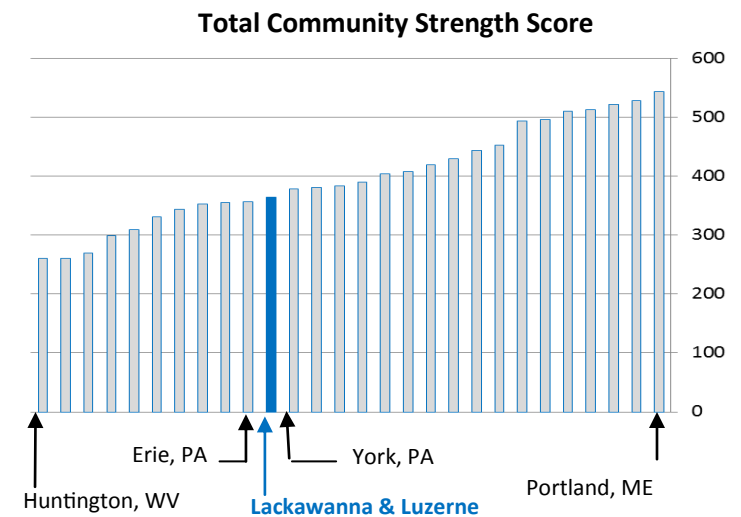
This table shows scores for Lackawanna and Luzerne County for each of these areas where a value of 100 represents the average value of comparable metro areas around the United States.



How do we stack up against our peers?

The Lackawanna and Luzerne County region scores above average in **Diverse and Resilient Economy** and **Healthy and Prosperous Families** criteria, but scores below average in **Investment in Physical Assets and the Environment** and **Civic Engagement and Community Ties**.

Comparable metro areas were identified based on population size, age and racial composition, median income, and unemployment rates. Metro areas that were approximate matches in at least three of these areas were included in the model. The chart below shows the Total Community Strength Score, the sum of the four individual pillar scores for each metro area. Lackawanna and Luzerne County falls directly between two other regions in the Commonwealth: Erie and York.



As the 2016 Indicators Report shows, Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties perform very well in some measures of quality of life, but challenges remain in other areas. In this way, our region is not unlike the peer regions analyzed here. While specific areas of need differ from region to region, every community has its own challenges. Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties have significant strengths, as well as the tools needed to improve upon shortcomings.



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