

# Pillars of a Strong Community 2017

## *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 similar regions around the United States. The index was first prepared in 2016. This year, the index was updated to reflect the most current data available.

The Institute identified four broad characteristics that make a community strong. They overlap with many of the topics covered in the 2017 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.

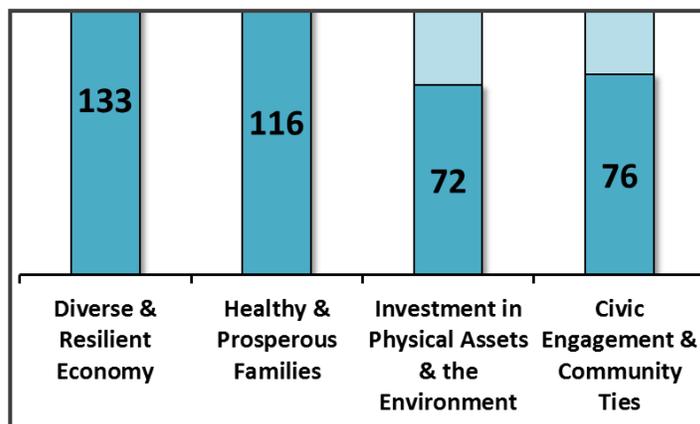
- **Healthy and Prosperous Families.** A region's residents are safe from violence, in good health, sufficiently educated, and have enough income to be financially secure.

- **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 chart 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.

**Average Pillar Scores: Lackawanna & Luzerne Counties**

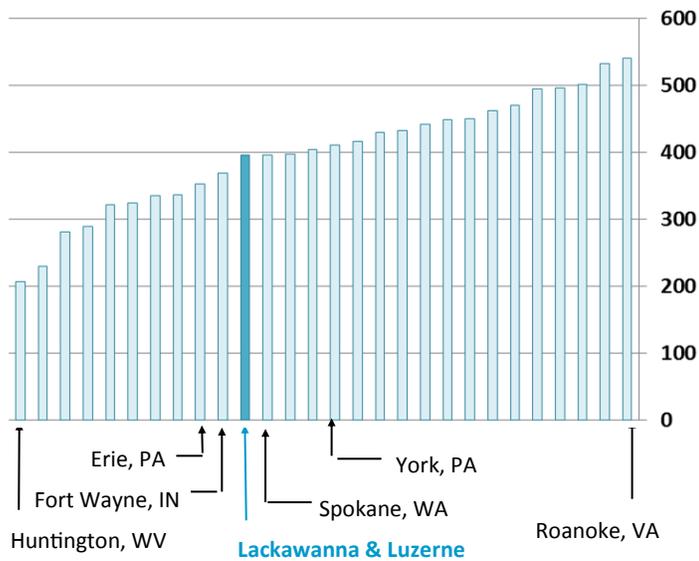


## How do we stack up against our peers?

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 demographic and economic characteristics. The chart below shows the Overall Community Strength Score, the sum of the four individual pillar scores for each metro area. Lackawanna and Luzerne County falls very close to two other regions in the Commonwealth: Erie and York.

Overall Community Strength Score



As the 2017 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.

The **INSTITUTE** for  
Public Policy & Economic Development  
at Wilkes University

A partnership 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, The Wright Center, University of Scranton & Wilkes University