

Local Strategies for Community Revitalization

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The Joint Urban Studies Center (JUSC), a research-based think tank working in collaboration with six area colleges and universities, recently completed a localized analysis of a report on statewide economic revitalization. The report, issued by the Brookings Institution, identifies key areas the Commonwealth needs to address in order to revitalize its economy and is based on statistical data and interviews with key business, government and non-profit leaders. Brookings also completed a review of the state's investment policies, economic development practices and economic trends in various regions of the state, including Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties - a region which was found to be facing the same difficulties and mirror the five challenges affecting the state as a whole. The JUSC's analysis of the Brookings Report focuses on regional solutions. The Center created a list of in-depth recommendations for the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre/Hazleton Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) that fall under each of the five statewide initiatives identified by Brookings. JUSC made recommendations on land use and transportation, zoning and codes as well as methods to make local government operate more efficient and effectively.

In addition, JUSC provided recommendations for K-12 educators and workforce providers to improve the college going rate among area youth and increase the skill level of the region's workforce, making the area more attractive to business.

These suggestions could be adopted and implemented by local government, non-profits, higher education institutions, K-12 schools, business, industry, and civic and service groups in northeastern Pennsylvania.