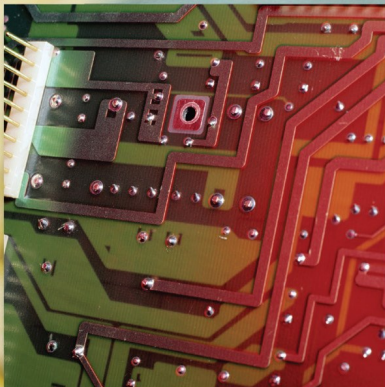
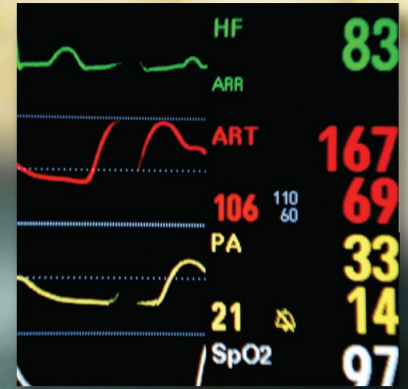
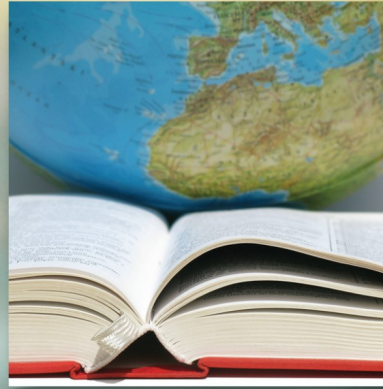


# The Institute

*Turning Information into Insight*

## 2019 Year in Review



A collaboration among Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine, Johnson College, Keystone College, King's College, Lackawanna College, Luzerne County Community College, Marywood University, Misericordia University, Penn State Scranton, Penn State Wilkes-Barre, The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education, University of Scranton & Wilkes University



# The Institute

*Turning Information into Insight*

## Annual Report 2019

The Institute was founded on the belief that good decisions are driven by good data. Since 2004, it has been our public mission to serve organizations and communities by providing empirical, objective research that drives discussion and informs decisions. Our goal is that Institute data and research on a wide range of topics will help policymakers and community leaders from the public, private, and non-profit sectors understand and address some of the region's most challenging problems.

Each year, the annual report gives us the opportunity to thank our generous community of supporters who care deeply about the region they call home. Our work would not be possible without these academic partners, stakeholders, advisory board members, task force teams, and clients who entrust us to solve problems and create opportunities.

These partnerships have helped Institute research initiatives positively impact the region and its residents. Our successes are your successes and it is your commitment that will help ensure that data and research continue to drive decisions that fuel greater economic vitality for business, residents, and the region as a whole. A heartfelt thanks to each of you.



***Turning Information into Insight***

A collaboration among Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine, Johnson College, Keystone College, King's College, Lackawanna College, Luzerne County Community College, Marywood University, Misericordia University, Penn State Scranton, Penn State Wilkes-Barre, The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education, University of Scranton, and Wilkes University



***Thank you to our Academic Partners & Research Underwriters***

***Academic Partners***

Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine, Johnson College, Keystone College, King's College, Lackawanna College, Luzerne County Community College, Marywood University, Misericordia University, Penn State Scranton, Penn State Wilkes-Barre, The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education, University of Scranton & Wilkes University

***2019 Research Underwriters***

***Signature Underwriters***

Andrew J. Sordoni Foundation, Luzerne County, PPL Electric Utilities, Sordoni Family Foundation

***Contributing Underwriters***

Borton-Lawson, Commonwealth Health Systems, Geisinger Health System, Mohegan Sun Pocono

***Supporting Underwriters***

Berkshire Asset Management, BlackOut Design, Classic Properties, Greater Hazleton CAN DO, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, Navient, NET Credit Union, Riggs Asset Management, Sanofi Pasteur, The Wright Center for Community Health, UGI Utilities, Wells Fargo Foundation

***Indicator Event Sponsors***

**Platinum**

The Wright Center for Community Health

**Gold**

NET Credit Union  
Power Engineering Corp.  
Prudential Retirement Services

**Silver**

The Scranton Plan

**Bronze**

Community Bank  
Peoples Bank & Trust.  
Penns Northeast  
Quandel Construction

**Individual**

John Cognetti   Carl Witkowski

# The Year in Review

## Community-Based Research Initiatives

Community-based research is at the core of The Institute's mission. This work, funded by our academic partners and stakeholders, is made available to organizations and communities needing reliable research, data, and best practices to make smart decisions. Studies are focused primarily on northeastern Pennsylvania. **Community-based research underwriting dollars support the Indicators Initiative, Task Force Research, the Quarterly Economic Tracker, Cost of Living Index Study, Special Projects Research, Information Requests, (nearly \$21,000) Research Support (nearly \$50,000), The University & College Student Poll, and the Student Internship Program.**

## Indicators Initiative 2019

May 9th, Mohegan Sun Pocono

Over 200 guests attended Indicators 2019. The event included the Indicators and task force presentations, a special report on automation and workforce disruption in Northeastern PA, and community indicators at the municipal level.

The event also featured *Research in Action* (RIA). RIA are short vignettes from individuals and organizations that have implemented the research, data and/or recommendations into programs, initiatives, or policies. They include:

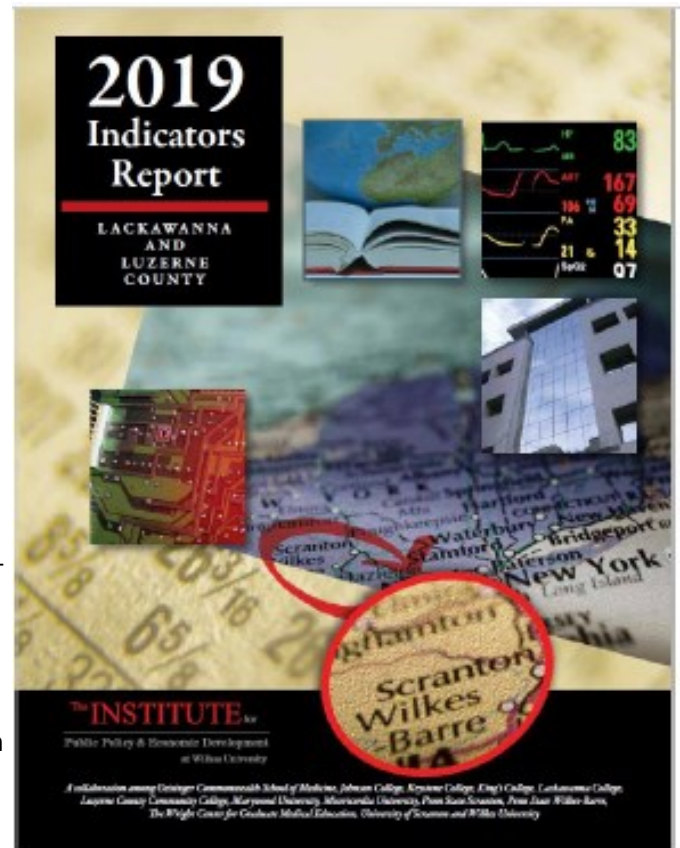
- Strategic planning and targeted marketing at NET Credit Union
- Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance (LERTA) policy
- Psychiatry in residency program as well as addiction and recovery services through The Wright Center for Community Health and its affiliate Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education
- Moses Taylor Foundation's strategic initiatives regarding senior isolation and school-based health
- NEPA Moves, engagements of girls and women in STEM fields, and Scranton Area Community Foundation's capacity-building efforts for nonprofits.

Since the event, the report has been distributed to the entire northeast delegation of both federal and state representatives, Indicator sponsors, local government, and to the public through social media and eblasts.

## Special Projects

The research team also stepped beyond regional indicators data to address other areas of interest. They presented data on the ways automation is influencing Northeastern Pennsylvania's workforce—and on the ways it is likely to continue. These insights allow educators along with business and community leaders to prepare for and embrace technological developments.

Furthermore, researchers dove past regional and county data to target the unique characteristics of individual municipalities. They presented a dashboard displaying information grouped by urban core and satellite cities, valley legacy communities, suburban growth centers, established suburbs and centers, and perimeter communities.



**Task Force Research Presentations**— Topic-based research is generated from volunteer task force teams consisting of diverse groups of professionals. Insight from their respective expertise helps the team evaluate opportunities to improve our region in critical areas. Representatives from business, government, non-profit, economic development, and institutional sectors serve on the task forces.

Research or policy agendas are established each June. Task force members vet the research and are responsible for distribution and advocacy. This research has served as a basis for statewide legislation, has been used in legislative testimony, and has helped organizations focus on strategic priorities and best practices.

Community-Based Research	
Task Force	Task Force Research Topics
Jobs, Economy and Economic Development (JEED)	<a href="#">“Economic Competitiveness in Northeastern Pennsylvania”</a> - Research study evaluating the size of the labor market and projected number of jobs due to both expansion and replacement demand in the region. Data is compared against regional degree completions in order to ascertain areas of potential workforce shortage.
Education & Workforce Development	<a href="#">“Economic Competitiveness in Northeastern Pennsylvania”</a> - Strategy development based on the labor market assessment referenced above. It covers career awareness and exploration, education, and training for youth and incumbent workers. Furthermore, it encompasses career change, entrepreneurship, vocational rehabilitation, and other programs and services.
Housing	<a href="#">“The Implications of the Region’s Aging Housing Stock”</a> - Study of the region’s aging housing stock includes a profile with detailed data on the age and conditions of housing, an explanation of the issue’s importance and implications across a variety of areas of public policy interest—particularly health, social services, and the economy. Socioeconomic data is reviewed to show how homeowners’ financial statuses are related to housing conditions. Best practices related to aging housing stock are included as well.
Health & Healthcare	<a href="#">“Healthy Food: Environments, Access, and Literacy”</a> - A study on food insecurity and food literacy in the region includes examination of socioeconomic, cultural/linguistic, and knowledge/educational barriers to healthy food choices. The research also includes an analysis of regional food deserts and case studies of potential interventions.
Planning, Land Use, Transportation and Infrastructure (PLuTI)	<p><a href="#">“Bus Systems Analysis”</a>- A follow-up to the 2016 Transit Analysis further explores route-planning considerations. The study focuses on route-planning best practices that are currently in place in peer regions with higher public transit use. Frequency, hours of operation, and route design are compared with local services to identify potential areas of improvement.</p> <p><a href="#">“Getting to Work in NEPA”</a> - Commuter data examines activity of workers in several regional employment hubs—downtown Scranton, downtown Wilkes-Barre, Pittston-area industrial parks, and Humboldt Industrial Park. The analysis explores workforce characteristics and home locations of workers traveling to the aforementioned locations, along with comparison to existing transit routes in order to determine the number or proportion of workers in those locations who live in close proximities to direct bussing to their workplaces.</p>
Energy	<a href="#">“Economic Impacts and Effects of Coal Mining in Northeastern Pennsylvania”</a> - Supported by the Appalachian Regional Commission, an economic impact study explores the effects of the decrease in coal mining. Economic and workforce development organizations can use the research to increase their competitiveness when applying for ARC POWER funds, which support economic growth in coal-mining counties and communities along the region’s coal supply chain.

## Stay Informed with the Quarterly Economy Tracker (QET)

We would like to thank **Sordoni Family Foundation**, our Signature Underwriter, for providing the seed capital and ongoing support for the QET, as well as our generous Supporting Underwriter **UGI Utilities**.

The Institute is part of a national effort of **Cost of Living Index (COLI)** researchers to collect data on cost of living indicators. The Institute publishes periodic updates in the QET.



## Polling



In 2015, The Institute began a polling initiative to assess the opinions and perceptions of the region's college student population. The Institute polls students at our 13 partnering institutions twice per year — once in the fall on issues of public policy and civic engagement, and then in the spring on post-graduation plans, an assessment of northeastern Pennsylvania, and their levels of preparation for college upon high school graduation.

In March 2019, The Institute received 1,512 responses to the Spring Poll. Students from all class years, a variety of majors, and part-time and graduate statuses are well-represented in the data.

**When deciding where to locate, family matters.** The results showed that **students from NEPA are likely to stay in NEPA, but others are not as likely to do so.** Students planning to stay in the area were likelier than average to assign higher value to a location's proximity to family and its suitability to raise a family. Conversely, students planning to depart the area after graduation were likelier than average to value the availability of housing options as well as diversity and inclusiveness.

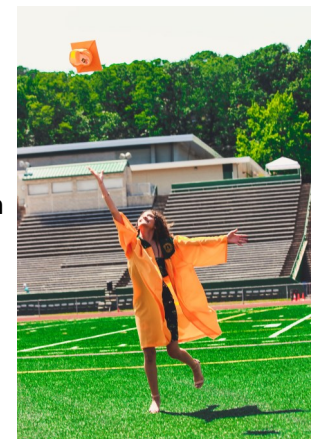
**Completion of a regional internship may induce students to remain in the region after graduation.** Approximately 82 percent of students planning to remain in the area have completed internships in the region—compared to 45 percent unlikely to stay in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

**Over 70 percent of respondents indicated that their college or graduate school education prepared them somewhat well or very well for their careers.** Less than five percent of respondents felt that their education did not prepare them well.

A total of 1,896 students participated in the 2019 Public Policy & Civic Engagement fall survey. The poll concluded that the **top three most important national public policy issues are healthcare policy, the cost of education, and jobs and economic development.** Policies related to national debt were rated least important.

**An overwhelming majority of students are registered to vote,** and are very likely to vote in the 2020 elections. **Students felt reasonably well-informed about current events,** crediting the internet, television, and word of mouth over podcasts, smartphone apps, or newspapers. Other themes include students' perceptions of the direction of the country and Pennsylvania, along with political activism.

The findings of all the polls are located on The Institute's website and provide valuable insight into relevant issues from the perspective of college students.



## 2019 Clients

**Non-profit:** Capital Area Head Start, Commission on Economic Opportunity (CEO), Community Justice Project, Cooperage Project, Family Business Alliance, Geisinger Health System, Hexagon Project, Indraloka Animal Sanctuary, Leadership Wilkes-Barre, Northeast Sight Services, Pittston YMCA, SHINE Luzerne County, Lehigh Carbon Community College SHINE, United Way Wyoming Valley, Voluntary Action Center, Wayne/Pike Workforce Alliance SHINE

**Foundations:** AllOne Foundation, Community First Fund, The Luzerne Foundation, The Moses Taylor Foundation, Scranton Area Community Foundation, Willary Foundation

**Government:** Appalachian Regional Commission, Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Small Business Development Center Network, Plymouth Township, Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport

**Educational Institutions:** Lehigh Carbon Community College, The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education, University of Scranton, Wilkes University

**Private Business:** Studio BE

*Many thanks to our 2019 clients!*

### Propelling Higher Education Investment

#### **Wilkes University**

The Institute conducted a market study among university students to identify housing needs, amenities, and price points using a mixed methods approach. Research included an evaluation of student housing supply from private sector property owners and comparison to student demand, along with recommendations for enhanced university housing. Additionally, the team conducted a post mortem survey among accepted non-matriculate students.

#### **The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education**

Researchers completed an economic impact report of the organization's national network of graduate medical education programs in their respective communities.

### Supporting Business and Economic Development

#### **Pennsylvania Small Business Development Center**

A lean study provided the new PASBDC lead office with recommendations that address potential realignment of center territories, responsibilities, funding allocation, and process improvements. Expected outcomes include greater efficiencies of the PASBDC network while delivering no-cost consulting and education to nascent and established entrepreneurs in the Commonwealth.



#### **Studio BE**

The Institute designed a mindfulness tool to determine impact and outcomes regarding corporate mindfulness meditation as it relates to emotional, mental, and physical well-being and workplace productivity. Analytics then inform program effectiveness and outcomes.



### **University of Scranton**

The 2016 Regional Living Wage Study was updated and presented at a working event coordinated and sponsored by the University of Scranton. Over 100 community leaders convened to discuss the study's findings and identify ways to enhance livability throughout the area.

### **Wilkes-Barre Scranton International Airport**

An Institute study assessed airport size, organization, and staffing structure and provided a comparative analysis to other similar sized airports in Pennsylvania and around the country.

### **Wilkes University Family Business Alliance**

Institute research informed the development of an organizational strategic plan.

## **Evaluating Education Outcomes & Youth Development**

### **Capital Area Head Start**

Researchers began a needs assessment to support federal funding and help refine services in Dauphin, Perry, and Cumberland Counties.

### **Lehigh Carbon Community College SHINE**

LCCC SHINE celebrated its 17th successful year in 2019. For the past six years, The Institute has served as a data analyst and has prepared annual trend data reports that include numerous measures of program outcomes. These are additions to other data-driven reports that can be used for outreach and fundraising.



### **Lehigh Carbon Community College (LCCC) S-STEM Research**

The Institute will serve as the primary researcher for the LCCC's National Science Foundation S-STEM grant of the Start SMART—Self-Motivated, Academic, Reflective, Talented program. Research assesses e-Portfolios and the STEM program's impact on students.

### **Luzerne County SHINE**

The Institute continues to support this innovative and successful after-school and summer program with assessment of program data, evaluation, and reporting. The SHINE program began as a result of Institute research indicating that such programs effectively deter youth from participation in gang activity. This project replicated the Lehigh Carbon Community College SHINE model. In just the 2018-19 school year, the SHINE program served over 467 students in pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade from five Luzerne County school districts.

### **Wayne/Pike Workforce Alliance SHINE**

The launch of a SHINE program in Wayne and Pike Counties (also replicating the Lehigh Carbon Community College SHINE model) allows The Institute to build on existing evaluation and reporting efforts.

## **Information Requests**

The research team accommodated 50 requests for information throughout the year. This accumulated to nearly 200 research hours for ten for-profit organizations, four government agencies, 24 nonprofits, nine educational institutions, three media outlets, and one student at a value of nearly \$21,000 of Institute in-kind time.

# ***“Turning Information into Insight”***

## **Empowering Health Care Clients**

### **Geisinger 4Ride Initiative**

The Institute provided program evaluation services to determine whether access to transportation is reducing the negative implications of the social determinants of health on the population in the target geography. The research measured effectiveness, satisfaction, and outcomes of Geisinger's transportation program on physical and mental health, job outlook, access to food, services, education/training, and other quality-of-life indicators.

### **The Wright Center**

An economic impact report revealed the influence of the organization's clinic and graduate medical education programs in the regionally and nationally. The Institute also provides quantitative research services to assess the efficacy of the Healthy Mom program (addressing opioid use disorder in pregnant women).



## **Working to Improve Equity**

### **CEO**

In a consulting capacity, The Institute assists CEO with a research and planning grant from the Robin Hood Foundation. The Mobility Labs project is designed to identify local factors influencing poverty and economic mobility, and to create/realign structures and systems to address those factors.

### **Scranton Area Community Foundation NEPA Moves**

NEPA Moves, formally part of the Economic Mobility Initiative of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia began through the vision of the Scranton Area Foundation several years ago. The Institute continues to provide research support for the transportation needs of the vulnerable populations in the region. This underreported challenge to low-income workers trying to find jobs and manage daily life can be a major hurdle to employment and a drain on the economy. Efforts involve engaging the business community in the initiatives through research and convening assistance.

## **Helping Non-Profits, Foundations, and Government Clients**

### **AllOne Foundation**

The Institute is conducting a program evaluation for the organization's autism program. The Autism Collaborative Centers of Excellence (ACCE) was formed to enhance the service delivery system and minimize the service gaps for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and their families living in Northeastern and North Central Pennsylvania.



### **Appalachian Regional Commission**

An assessment of Basic Agency Services programs across Appalachia explores processes, costs, and outcomes. The analysis includes recommendations for operational efficiencies and effectiveness.

### **Community First Fund**

The Institute evaluates the impact of the Community First Fund's various economic and redevelopment initiatives in Lancaster. Potential projects and strategies for neighborhood revitalization are identified, and efficiencies and effectiveness of resource deployment are evaluated.

### **Community Justice Project**

This analysis identifies the difference in housing market appreciation over time, to identify if any inequities exist due to infrequent housing property tax assessments in several Pennsylvania counties.

### **Leadership Wilkes-Barre**

LWB is working with The Institute to conduct an evaluation of its five major programs, and to prepare an impact report. The project will evaluate participants using a mixed-methods approach over a span of 18 months. The data gathered will serve as the basis for the evaluation and formal economic impact study.

### **Moses Taylor Foundation**

The Institute is serving as the program evaluator for the MTF five-year strategic initiatives – school-based health and senior isolation. These two initiatives form the cornerstone of MTF efforts through 2023. Working with the Foundation, The Institute is developing metrics and protocol to measure outcomes through a formal evaluative process. Responsibilities include gathering data, preparing research briefs, and assisting with two planning retreats.

Researchers are also supporting the foundation's efforts to raise awareness of the 2020 Census. The project involves the development and dissemination of informational materials in multiple languages and at appropriate literacy levels.



### **Northeast Sight Services**

A needs assessment identified programs and services that the organization can implement to support its existing client base as well as new clients in every age group. The project included the development of toolkits to help various types of businesses become more accessible to people who are visually impaired.

### **Pittston YMCA**

The Institute conducted a market study to determine the best mix of programs, services, and structure and facilitate the organization's growth in the community.

### **Plymouth Township**

Researchers are conducting an income survey designed to meet U.S. HUD guidelines for CDBG and USDA RUS funds for storm water and sewer improvements.

### **The Luzerne Foundation**

A strategic planning study consisted of stakeholder surveys to identify needs, ascertain perceptions of the foundation, and evaluate its impact. Stakeholders included donors, fund managers, grantees, and community members.

### **The Scranton Area Community Foundation**

In addition to the creation and implementation of an evaluation tool for the foundation's capacity-building initiatives, The Institute acts as executive in residence and provides short-term technical assistance and consulting to nonprofits. The Institute worked with the Cooperage Project, Hexagon, Indraloka, and Voluntary Action Center on projects related to nonprofit finance, accounting, and recordkeeping, self assessments, and client impact reporting.

### **United Way Wyoming Valley**

The Institute prepared a market study to assess the need for home visit services across health and social services. Demand, supply, gaps, and potential future needs were examined. The third annual Child Well-Being Index was also prepared.



## Grantmakers Initiative

The concept was developed by LaTida Smith, President and CEO of Moses Taylor Foundation, in an effort to provide foundations, their grantees, and the community at large with education and information on a variety of issues that affect the region, their work, and their clients. One of the funded initiatives resulted in a publication called the *Institute Review*. In addition, a public policy initiative was developed and implemented whereby The Institute develops an annual issues briefing book with policy briefs and analysis on education, workforce, public safety, environment, government, health care, equity, and social services. The book was presented to the federal and state northeast delegation in a private retreat in September. The Scranton Area Foundation and The Willary Foundation supported the initiative.

# The Institute Review

*Your insight into health, social services, economic, equity and policy news from the local to the international levels.*

Dear friends,

On behalf of the Scranton Area Community Foundation, the Moses Taylor Foundation, and the Willary Foundation, we are proud to help support the development and publication of *The Institute Review* – a new periodical from The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development.

We cannot underscore enough the importance of an informed and engaged public, and support The Institute's mission of turning information to insight. To that end, *The Institute Review* was designed with the goal of relaying a relevant blend of regional, state, national, and international news on economics and policy in an abridged format to local stakeholders.

We hope organizations and individuals find it useful in aiding their decision-making and enhancing their overall knowledge base.

Sincerely,

*LaTida Smith*

LaTida Smith  
Moses Taylor Foundation

*William Scranton*

William Scranton  
Willary Foundation

*Laura Ducceschi*

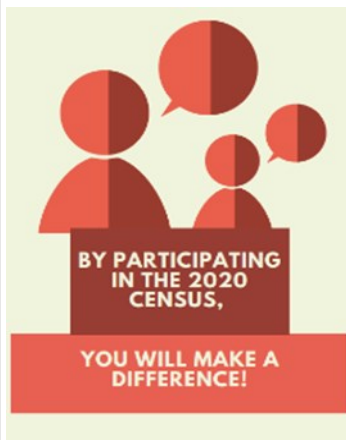
Laura Ducceschi  
Scranton Area Community Foundation

## Regional and State

### Spreading the Word About the 2020 Census

The Moses Taylor Foundation is supporting a regional Census Awareness Initiative to educate the community on the importance of participating in the census. On behalf of the foundation, The Institute develops and distributes informational materials.

[Click here to learn more about the Census](#) and how it affects infrastructure, health care, economic development, social services, housing programs, and health care.





## Census Education with the Moses Taylor Foundation

Appropriate Census counts facilitate not only sufficient congressional representation, but also adequate funding for education, housing, infrastructure, social and health services, and more. That's why The Institute is assisting the Moses Taylor Foundation in an effort to educate the public about the Census and subsequently enhance participation. The Foundation has led the charge regionally to ensure that all are counted in NEPA.



Information in multiple languages and reading levels is available via digital and hard copy on a monthly basis. The materials are distributed to health care centers, libraries, schools, an array of regional nonprofit organizations, and other community stakeholders. Over 5,000 pieces of information are distributed monthly.

### Academic Accomplishments



**Student Interns** — In 2019, 14 undergraduate students successfully completed internships, representing six of The Institute's 13 partnering higher education institutions. These students represented a variety of disciplines, including history, economics, mathematics, computer science, business administration, and sociology. Government, Law, and National Security was the most common area of study. They contributed to community-based research as well as the 2019 Indicators and multiple client projects. Together, they completed 1,725 hours of work and received skills training and mentoring in the process. Many of these students elected to receive academic credit for their internships. Since their time at The Institute, students have embraced opportunities such as entering Ph.D. programs, interning with state senators, and conducting medical research for Geisinger.

In a survey of their experiences, students identified "getting firsthand experience with research," "data collection and analysis," "professional writing," and "critical thinking," as some of the greatest benefits of their internships. In terms of the most interesting aspects of their internships, students mentioned the spring poll, the 2020 Census education project, the living wage study, and conducting phone surveys. One individual enjoyed contributing to the Quarterly Economic Tracker, stating, "While researching my topic, I was able to learn so much more and understand how data is collected and compiled into graphs before the reports are made."



Another survey was distributed in late 2019, which invited individuals who interned as early as 2014 to describe the academic and professional progress they have made since their time with The Institute. Nearly 29 percent reported that they had moved on to masters and Ph.D. programs. Over 64 percent indicated that they were employed either part time or full time. Approximately 67 percent of those employed were working within the region.

### ¿A QUIÉN LE IMPORTA EL CENSO?

¡Debieras!

El gobierno federal utiliza los datos del Censo de EE. UU. Para determinar la cantidad de fondos que recibirá un estado para los programas de servicio social, así como la cantidad de representación que su área tendrá en el gobierno.

¡Si no está incluido en el Censo, su comunidad y su vecindario podrían verse afectados negativamente!

## 2019 News

### Welcoming the newest addition to our Research Team

One team member moved toward an exciting new opportunity. We wished luck to Research Analyst Chris Ritter as he left to pursue his Ph.D. at Duke University.

The Institute then welcomed Research Analyst Megan Stachowiak, who brings extensive health and market research and analytics experience to the team. She is a Wilkes University alum, with a master's degree in business administration.

### Equitable Transit



On April 18th, Senior Research & Policy Analyst Andrew Chew visited Reading Area Community College and spoke to community stakeholders regarding transportation equity. He discussed The Institute's study on equitable transportation in northeastern Pennsylvania, commissioned by the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia. He also discussed subsequent work surveying employers and employees to learn more about the ways transportation (or lack thereof) impacts hiring and job sustainability in the region, on behalf of NEPA Moves, an equitable transportation initiative through the Scranton Area Community Foundation. He was joined by presenters from the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia. The group was

convened by Berks Alliance.

### Recognition from the Community

The team was honored to receive a 2019 Featured Partner Award from the Scranton Area Foundation at the 65th Community Celebration in November. This recognition showcased The Institute as a regional change-maker in 2019. Furthermore, Executive Director Teri Ooms was presented with a mentoring award for student engagement by the Allan P. Kirby Center.



### Living Wage Seminar

In partnership with The University of Scranton, The Institute released the 2019 Living Wage Report. It addresses the barriers regional families face when earning enough to live modest and dignified lives, and provides relevant recommendations for navigating those challenges. The report identifies the differences in regional costs of basic needs relative to income and potential policy solutions to mitigate the problem. The information was presented to community leaders and other stakeholders at an event coordinated by and hosted by The University of Scranton on November 15th.

### Mini-Indicators

The W-B Chamber hosted the second Mini Indicators event at the THINK Center on October 14th. The Institute shared important research and data to help address regional workforce development, and the economic and quality-of-life trends critical to the future of our region. The program was live-streamed and recorded, with 333 views (and an additional 37 on YouTube), 12 engagements, and a reach of 781 to date.



### Newsmakers and PA Live!

Executive Director Teri Ooms and Susan Magnotta, Director of Community Outreach, were featured on Newsmakers with Jayne

Ann Bugda and Andy Mehalshick in January. They discussed The Institute's latest research and its impact on important programs and services in the region. Ooms and Magnotta were also featured on PA Live! in early November. They discussed The Institute's mission, the importance of regional indicators, and all the value NEPA has to offer.

## Adapting to Change

A September event held at Penn State Scranton allowed employees of Lackawanna County to learn about regional demographic trends and racial and ethnic diversity and the economic impact and other advantages to the region as a result of diversity.

## Data Rocks



The Scranton Area Foundation's NEPA Learning Conference also took place in September. That's where Ooms explained how nonprofits and other organizations can use data to inform planning and storytelling.

## Healthy Families, Healthy Communities

The annual education conference of the Family Service Association of Northeastern PA took place on November 22. Ooms facilitated a learning session on the ways indicators such as income, education, and health insurance coverage impact health outcomes.



Family Service Association of  
Northeastern PA  
FSANepa.org

## Educational Conference

*Keeping Families Resilient & Healthy*

## Attraction Through Marketing

Ooms presented at another big event in November—the Wilkes-Barre Connect Conference. There she spoke at a session regarding strategies for attracting innovative professionals and businesses to the region.



## Skills in Scranton



In conjunction with the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce, Skills in Scranton works with local school districts, higher education institutions, employers, and data analysts to align the regional workforce with future employment demands. At December's Skills in Scranton Higher Education Forum, Ooms shared insights into ways education, business, and economic development communities can work together to address workforce challenges and maximize opportunities.

## In Other News...

In January, Senior Analyst Andrew Chew was interviewed on Fox56 regarding The Institute's 2018 Talent Report. In February, Director of Outreach Susan Magnotta and Research Assistant Kara McGrane were interviewed on Fox56 regarding the economic impact of coal production decline in the region. Additional presentations on a variety of topics were delivered through organizations such as the League of Women Voters and multiple Chambers of Commerce. There was even participation in a private roundtable on inclusion and diversity, held by philanthropic organizations.



## Marketing Report

### Outreach

Outreach continues to current, former, and potential underwriters via personal visits and meetings. Visits with past, current, and potential clients are ongoing as well. Community and board engagement includes organizations such as Circle 200, Diamond City Partnership, the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business & Industry, the Luzerne County Historical Society, North Branch Land Trust, Penn's Northeast, Scranton Chamber, Scranton Tomorrow, Social Fabric Collective, STEM Ecosystem, The Appleseed Foundation, United Way of Wyoming Valley, and Volunteers in Medicine. All efforts raise The Institute's profile.

### Media

The 'Institute Insights' column remains strong in the Times Leader. With the goal of bringing regional data to the public and raising awareness of The Institute, 25 articles appeared in the newspaper throughout 2019. In addition to the 'Institute Insights' column, the organization made 14 print media impressions. The team also made four television appearances and one radio/podcast appearance. The Institute has been active on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. The number of followers has reached 1,045 and grows by the month.

### Website

Top page visits include the home page, About Us, Indicators, QET, Staff, Client Solutions, Census information, and Students. Most keywords were unidentifiable, although others included *economic development*, *economic research*, *public policy*, *institute*, *institution*, and staff names. There were visitors from traditional networks as well as the U.S. House of Representatives, the U.S. Senate, the PA State Senate, and major universities. Networks or users in at least nine other countries were reported. There were 6,486 website hits and over 12,300 page views!

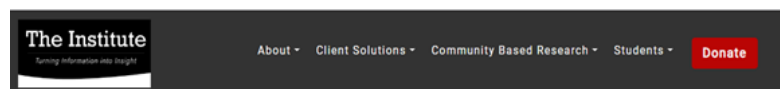
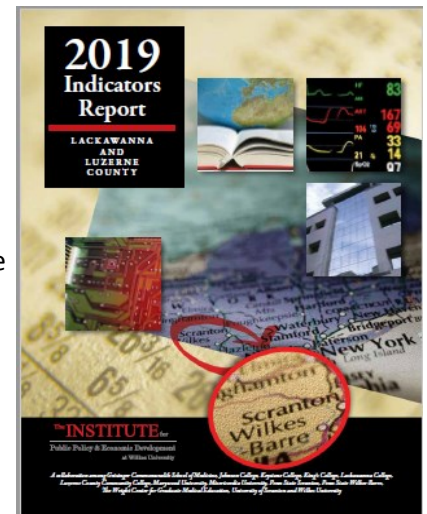
## Research in Action

It is our goal that policymakers and community leaders put Institute research into action to address big challenges and help improve our region. Here are some examples of positive outcomes resulting, in part, from Institute research.

### Helping Those in Need

**St. Joseph's Center** is a gem in our region that has supported those with intellectual disabilities with state of the art care and most of all compassion. As an organization, it faces the challenges that any organization does. *"As the Board approached its strategic planning process in 2018, there was an interest in obtaining objective data from the broader region especially to understand more fully unmet needs. Tracking services rendered is useful for evaluating need, but doesn't explain the complete picture of what the community may need. With the encouragement of Board members, the Administration met with Teri to learn how The Institute could assist in providing data to further define trends and need. The report has proven to be useful in affirming the scope of services offered as well as expanding consideration for future initiatives. The research team under Teri's direction is knowledgeable, responsive and dedicated to improving the community through the assistance it provides."*

**"Sr. Maryalice Jacquinot, IHM President & CEO, St. Joseph's Center"**



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## Research in Action (continued)

### Introducing LERTA

LERTA—Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance—is a statewide tax abatement program. As part of The Scranton Plan, it offers residents, developers, investors, and business owners opportunities to grow their enterprises and portfolios. According to **Robert Durkin, President & CEO of the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce**, “We went to The Institute and we said we know what LERTA is, we just don't know enough about it. And so they took on a research project. They went across the Commonwealth, they looked at identifying about a dozen different municipalities of similar size to Scranton and came back to us with a **white paper** that showed us that in most cases the communities that would be similar to Scranton, such as Lancaster, Erie, Johnstown, these communities have adopted LERTA policies and said that all initiatives: commercial, industrial, or residential properties that came and were looking for improvements could adopt a LERTA policy right out of the gate...The Institute research did really two important things: One, **they informed us** as an organization so we now knew more about what LERTA was and how we might be able to apply this to the city of Scranton; but also it gave us the standing to be able to go to the taxing bodies in the city of Scranton, Scranton School District, Lackawanna County, and show them in real world—in real **hard numbers** and experience what other municipalities were doing across the Commonwealth.”

### Informing Strategic Initiatives

The Moses Taylor Foundation has relied on Institute research to form strategic initiatives—addressing school-based health and senior isolation in particular. “Many of our grantees have used data from The Institute but as a Foundation we also used their data extensively and most recently that was in the process of **developing our strategic initiatives**,”

**Moses Taylor Foundation Program Office Christine Marcos** reported. “So once they provided us with that data they not only shared it with our foundation but at a community gathering of our stakeholders, which really gave us the opportunity to **interpret that data together** and to process and tease out what the implications were and that helped us get to the process of the specific goals in our initiatives...So I think I would just emphasize that for us it was really important to recognize that **the process didn't end when that data was provided to us**, it was so important to take the time and really interpret and **discuss the data** with the data gatherers who helped **provide a context** of what is being seen in broader areas but also the people that are living that data and really impacted by that data and that was really what helped us get to where we are now with our initiatives.”



### Targeted Marketing

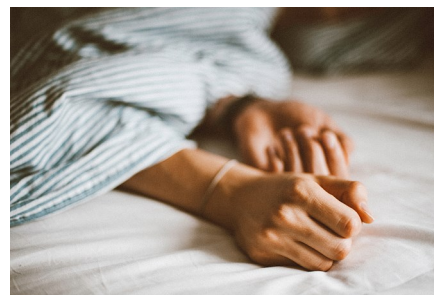


Data allows businesses and community organizations to better understand their audiences and focus their energies efficiently and precisely. **Clarence Baltrusaitis, NET Credit Union President & CEO**, indicated, “We use it to put together **marketing plans** and **target specific sectors**...What also surprised us in strategic planning (was) to see an age gap where people leave the area and come back. So it helped us put together some plans to bring in some technology to hopefully grab those people who leave the area and eventually come back with their spouse to settle, because northeastern Pennsylvania is a great place to live...So it really helped give us some **direction** and validate what we're doing as an organization.”

## Research in Action (continued)

### Program Evaluation

Evaluation services help agencies define the impact of their programs, and identify ways to yield even greater influence. According to **Linda Thomas-Hemak, MD, President & CEO of The Wright Center for Community Health**, *"The work of The Institute really catalyzed the development of our psychiatry in residency program which is now in full bloom just a few short years later with eight training and soon to be 12 resident physicians...They come and they **evaluate** many of our programs because frankly we take money from generous foundations like the AllOne, the Moses Taylor Foundation, and Weinberg...We're really proud of The Institute's constant openness and I can tell you that after they recently just produced a beautiful **economic outcome report** for us that showed an almost \$82 million annual economic impact on the region."*

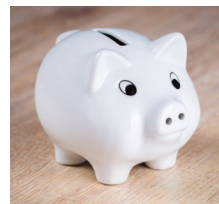


### Shaping Equitable Transportation

Insufficient transportation severely challenges individual and community health, along with the regional workforce and overall well-being. That's why multiple transportation initiatives have been launched in northeastern Pennsylvania. The **Scranton Area Foundation** has been particularly responsive to the issue. As **President & CEO Laura Ducceschi** has explained, *"...years ago, the Scranton Area Foundation and other partners had convened several individuals in the region to start to look at transportation as a potential critical driving force to quality of life. And one of the key partners at that table was The Institute because we knew that we heard nuances in the community at that time about how transportation was a barrier to access to employment, to health care, to arts and culture, but we really didn't have a specific handle on how exactly those barriers were impacting people in our community...But what The Institute did was initiate the Northeast Pennsylvania Transportation Study, which relied specifically on **focus group research** on the end users...was the direct context between transportation and workforce...And now we're working together to develop specific pilots that will provide more equitable transportation to these employees and these pilots will be launching later in 2019 and 2020... if we did not have that partnership with The Institute, in addition to all the regional support from partners, I don't think we'd be able to say that we're moving forward as far and making a difference in equitable transportation..."*

### Elevating the Arts

Arts and culture are critical to community vibrancy. An **impact study** highlighted just how much the **F.M Kirby Center for the Performing Arts** contributes to the region. According to **Director of Development Joell Yarmel**, *"As the F.M. Kirby Center for the Performing Arts was accelerating on an ever-growing incline of mainstream performances, we saw firsthand the increase of ticket buyers, tour members and staff visiting local businesses and restaurants on show nights. Funding through grant opportunities is instrumental for any non-profit and we knew that presenting factual data to support our economic impact would be strong evidence that the Kirby Center is crucial to downtown Wilkes-Barre and its surrounding communities. Donors are impressed by the nearly \$9.8 million impact, and also proud to be supporting an organization that not only provides arts and education to children and live cultural events for adults, but also generates unparalleled business to the surrounding area."*



### Creating Better Banking Opportunities

Through the Jobs, Economy and Economic Development Task Force, The Institute produced a 2018 study on the region's unbanked population. That research has since facilitated the access of previously-ineligible individuals to a trustworthy financial resource. *"You may have heard, **NET Credit Union** provides a free Credit Score Service to its members," Marketing Director Mileise Sabbatini stated. "This service has proven to help thousands of members raise their credit score, save money with lower interest rates, and stay protected from predatory lenders. From the research you provided about the underbanked and unbanked, we realized there was a large population in our back yard that needed these services; but they were not eligible to bank with NET. The NCUA, National Credit Union Association, governs who can and cannot bank with NET Credit Union. With the citation of your research, we proved there were 69,344 people in our community who could possibly benefit from not only our Credit Score Service, but from all the personal finance products and services NET Credit Union offers. NET Credit Union is an exclusive membership. Not just anyone can bank with us. Thanks to your research, in conjunction with our application, the underbanked and unbanked in our community now have a trusted financial institution which will educate and help them secure a stable financial foundation."*



### Upward Mobility

**Cindy Beeman, Executive Director of Susquehanna County Interfaith**, relies on Institute research and data for multiple purposes—including **support for grant applications**. She reported, *“I have enjoyed reading and studying the reports provided by The Institute for a variety of reasons. First, the data collected helps provide a broad gauge of important information that may help the 20 percent of the population I represent, those who are one paycheck away from crisis. Often the skills needed to survive and thrive in this economy are overlooked or not mentioned; but that is not true with The Institute. You have examined closely the skills needed, and have begun to develop a network between industry and education by which some of those skills can be advanced. Recently, I wrote a grant for the Appalachian Regional Commission for helping individuals overcome the barriers they face when returning to the workforce after battling addiction. I was able to reference and support the need for the grant based on the research data provided by The Institute.”*



### Success in Early Childhood

Throughout the state and beyond, there is an ongoing need for affordable and accessible child care and early childhood education. In some cases, waiting lists are as long as enrollment lists. **Luzerne County Head Start** is a chief responder to the issue. As **Executive Director Lynn Evans Biga** indicated, *“The Institute for Public Policy and Economic Development, under the direction of Teri Ooms, completed a needs assessment for Luzerne County Head Start. This assessment is used as a road map to determine the need for our services in Luzerne and Wyoming Counties. The data and analysis helped our program determine how to move forward in 2018 and the few years to follow. As a result, we were awarded state funding for 72 additional Head Start children and their families to be served throughout Luzerne County. All stakeholders were involved in the process and we are indebted to The Institute for their excellent work.”*

### Driving Justice

Equal access to justice is another high priority for service providers in the region. **Attorney Joe Price** is quite familiar with this need. The partner in **Dougherty, Leventhal & Price, LLP** is part of a collaborative navigating the challenge in Lackawanna County. *“The needs assessment study performed on behalf of the Weinberg Foundation and the Lackawanna County Bar Association Committee on Equal Access to Justice was invaluable,”* explained Price. *“Utilizing the study findings, the committee worked hand in hand with North Penn Legal Services, Lackawanna County Public Defender, and Lackawanna County Court Administrator to enhance the presence of Legal Aid in the community, increase staffing in the Public Defender’s office, and implement programs to address the rising number of Pro Se litigants in county courts. The efforts of The Institute and its staff were critical in enhancing access to justice in Lackawanna County for those citizens most in need.”*



### Legislative Impact

Thomas Caffrey is the Director of the Pennsylvania Governor’s Northeast Regional Office. He relied on Institute research when garnering support for legislation to increase the state minimum wage.

According to Caffrey, *“...earlier this year the Institute for Public Policy and Economic Development, along with the University of Scranton, released their 2019 Living Wage Report. The report highlights, among other things, that many families in Northeastern Pennsylvania still struggle to achieve economic security. In their recommendations for helping more families in our region, the Institute recommended raising the Pennsylvania minimum wage and further increasing economic development and workforce activities. Fighting to raise the current minimum wage here in Pennsylvania helps families “to be able to live a modest but dignified life in Northeastern Pennsylvania.”* Fighting for fairer wages for those working in Pennsylvania has been a hallmark of Governor Wolf’s tenure. This bill, if enacted, is a significant step forward for our Commonwealth and affords us the opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of Pennsylvanians.”

On November 20, 2019, the State Senate passed a bill to raise the minimum wage to \$9.50 by 2022. It is currently awaiting action by the PA House of Representatives.



## The Team



### **Teri Ooms, Executive Director**

Teri was appointed Executive Director of The Institute in 2004. Since its inception, she has been responsible for all facets of research, organizational strategy, and management. Her strategic skills have allowed The Institute to expand its services to the private and non-profit sectors for research and analysis. Under her direction, The Institute has completed over 100 client and community-based studies. These studies have resulted in new jobs, new programs, sustained initiatives, and new legislation throughout Pennsylvania and New York. Ooms also serves on a number of local and regional non-profit boards. She holds an MBA in finance and a bachelor's degree in public administration from the University of Scranton.



### **Andrew Chew, AICP, Senior Research and Policy Analyst**

Andrew is a policy, economic development and urban planning professional. He is experienced in Geographic Information Systems (GIS), statistical software, and other technologies to perform data analysis and policy research. Andrew joined The Institute in 2013. He holds a master's degree in city and regional planning from Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University and a bachelor's degree in political science from Muhlenberg College.



### **Megan Stachowiak, Research Analyst**

Megan joined the team in 2019 and is responsible for analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, along with the preparation of community-based and proprietary studies and reports. In her previous roles, Megan managed market research and intelligence for Blue Cross of Northeastern Pennsylvania, and more recently she was Lead Market Research Analyst at Highmark Health. She holds a master's degree in Business Administration from Wilkes University, as well as a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Susquehanna University.



### **Joseph Gallo, Research Assistant**

Joseph is responsible for providing research support for a variety of projects at The Institute, in addition to assisting with outreach and working with interns. He has experience in qualitative and quantitative research, as well as analytical writing. Joseph graduated from Rutgers University in 2017 with a Master of Public Policy (MPP). He also holds a BA in international relations from SUNY Geneseo, where he wrote and presented an honors thesis about the role of global norms in causing the Arab Spring revolutions.



## *The Team*



### **Kara McGrane, Research Assistant**

Kara works under the supervision of the Executive Director on community-based and client projects by way of data accumulation, qualitative research, and analysis. She supports The Institute with event logistics as well as administrative functions. Kara is a graduate of Maynooth University, with a master's degree in geography, and of Syracuse University, with a bachelor's in international relations and political science. Kara is also an Adjunct Professor in the history department at King's College.



### **Jill Avery-Stoss , Research, Data, Intern and Administrative Coordinator**

Jill joined The Institute in June 2018 to fill the newly-created role. Following a successful career in the nonprofit sector, Jill directed her attention to online content creation and editing. She produced hundreds of articles, press releases, and other copy on a wide array of topics. Jill studied English and Women's Studies at Penn State University. Her background and knowledge of underserved populations are ideally suited to the region's development needs.



### **Susan Magnotta, Director of Community Outreach**

Susan is responsible for marketing, business development, fundraising, and community outreach. She joined The Institute team in January of 2017. She is a graduate of Villanova University with a bachelors degree in English. Prior to joining The Institute, Susan enjoyed a successful career with Pfizer Pharmaceuticals in both the Harrisburg region and northeastern Pennsylvania.

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*Office locations: Scranton and Wilkes-Barre, PA  
Mailing address: 85 South Main Street Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701*



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