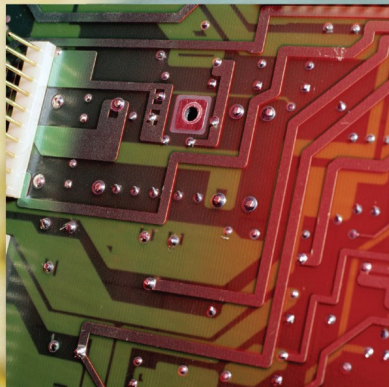
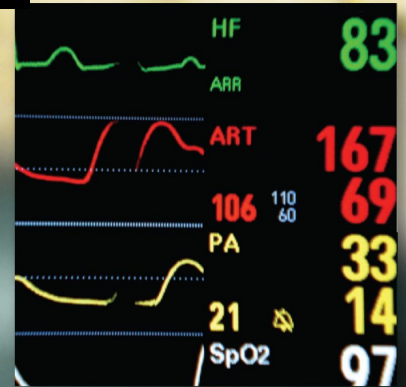
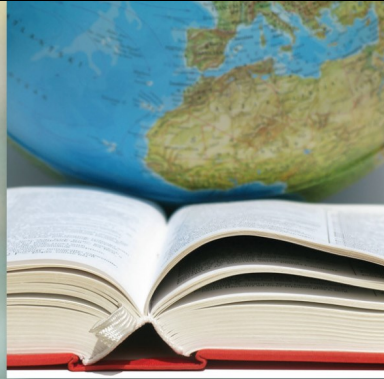


# The Institute

*Turning Information into Insight*

**2020**

***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

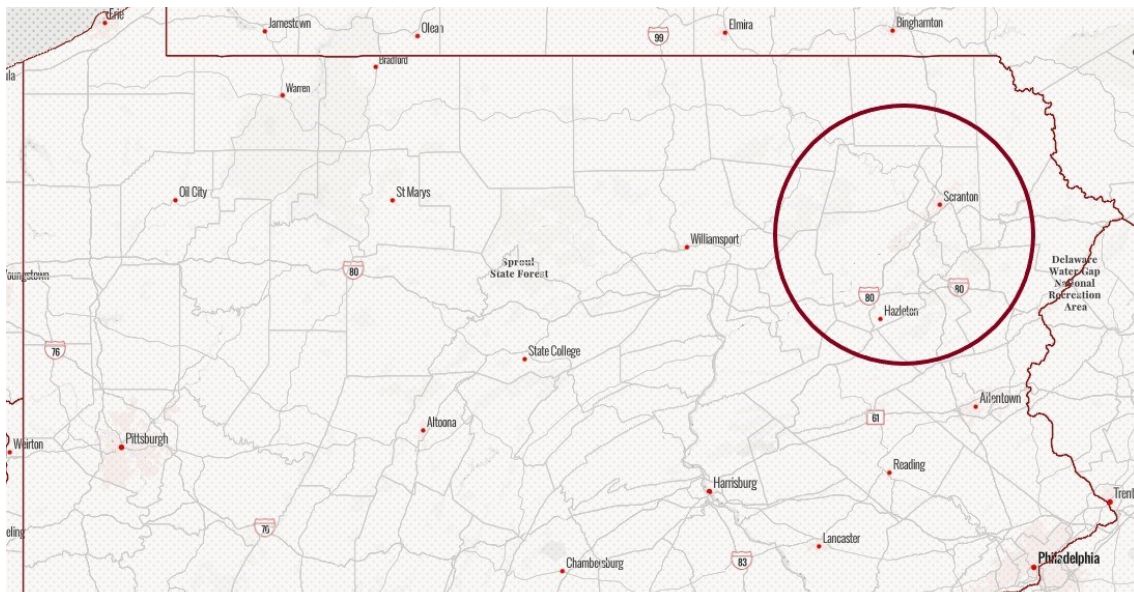
*Turning Information into Insight*

## Annual Report 2020

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

### ***Research Partners***

#### **Signature Underwriters**

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

#### **Contributing Underwriters**

Borton-Lawson  
Geisinger Health System

#### **Supporting Underwriters**

Berkshire Asset Management  
BlackOut Design  
Commission on Economic Opportunity  
FNCB  
Greater Hazleton CANDO  
Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield  
M&T Bank  
McCarthy Tire  
Mohegan Sun Pocono  
Navient  
NET Credit Union  
PNC  
Prudential Retirement Services  
Rosenn Jenkins Greenwald, LLC  
The Luzerne Foundation  
The Wright Center for Community Health  
UGI Utilities

### ***Event Sponsors***

#### **Platinum Sponsor**

The Wright Center for Community Health

#### **Gold Sponsors**

Allied Services  
Coal Creative  
NET Credit Union  
Quandel Construction  
Scranton Area Community Foundation  
UGI Utilities

#### **Silver Sponsor**

McCarthy Tire  
The Scranton Plan

#### **Bronze Sponsor**

Berkshire Hathaway Guard Companies  
Community Bank  
Johnson College  
Luzerne County Community College  
Luzerne County Visitor Bureau  
Marywood University

## The Year in Review

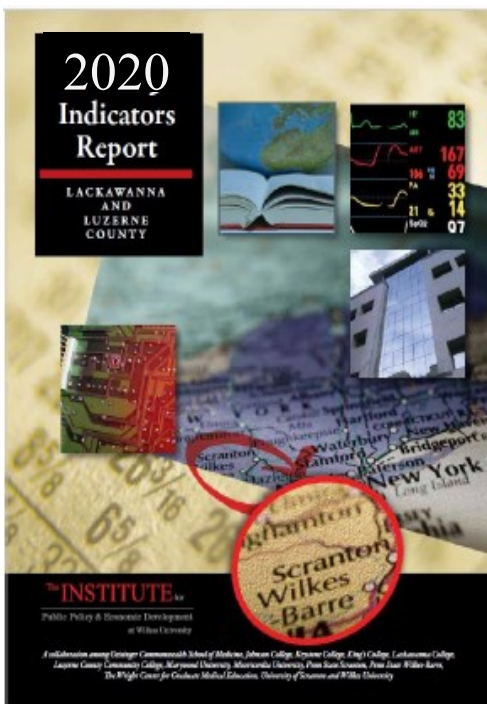
### Indicators Initiative 2020

June 2020—via ZOOM

Over 150 guests attended Indicators 2020 on Zoom. The event included the Indicators and task force presentations, a special report from the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, and community indicators at the municipal level.

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.

This year's Indicators also addressed the influence of COVID-19 on the region, and how it will impact trends and patterns moving forward. Some of *The Institute's Insights on COVID 19* research was also highlighted.



Keith Wardrip, community development research manager at the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, discussed research estimating the early effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labor force, small businesses, neighborhoods, and housing affordability. Kyle DeMaria, research analyst at the Philadelphia Fed, presented the findings from a study exploring how the transferability of in-demand skills could lead to economic mobility for lower-wage workers, highlighting the implications of this new research on the current economic environment.

This year's task force research was presented in video by our task force chairs. Their presentations can be viewed on our YouTube channel. The studies are located on our website and summarized on the next page.

## 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, but also include other counties and statewide perspectives.

Community-based research underwriting dollars support the Indicators Initiative, Task Force Research, the Quarterly Economic Tracker, Cost of Living Index Study, Special Projects Research, The University & College Student Poll, the Student Internship Program and Information Requests.

Over \$15,000 in research time was devoted to fulfilling information requests from local non-profits, governments, elected officials, higher education institutions, health care, media, and business and industry.

In addition, The Institute applied over \$30,000 in research time in support of proprietary research projects for our local non-profits.



Institute Indicators 2020:  
Housing Task Force...



Institute Indicators 2020:  
Education and Workforce...



Institute Indicators 2020:  
Jobs, Economy, and...



Institute Indicators 2020:  
Health & Healthcare with Dr...



Institute Indicators 2020:  
Planning, Land Use,...

**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 & Education and Workforce Development	<p>To further elaborate on subject matter covered in the 2019 Economic Competitiveness report, numerous briefs were produced. The consist of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Millennial Workforce</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rethinking the Trades</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Soft Skills</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Rethinking the Senior Worker</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Labor Demand</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Industrial Automation</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Skill Shortages</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Comparative Analysis of Job Opportunities &amp; Higher Education Completions</a></li> </ul>
Housing	<p><a href="#">“The Housing Divide in Northeast Pennsylvania”</a> - While data show that housing affordability in the region is good compared to other metro areas, security is still out of reach for some households. To better understand the housing divide, this analysis of the regional housing market—along with other socioeconomic indicators (like wages and debt)—focuses on those who struggle to afford housing. It also considers issues such as homelessness, transitional housing issues, and housing needs of those leaving incarceration. It evaluates inventory, affordability trends, and geographic patterns, and identifies recommendations to ensure that regional housing needs are met.</p>
Health & Healthcare	<p><a href="#">“The State of Child Abuse and Neglect in Our Region and Beyond”</a> - An evaluation of data on child abuse and neglect, using a variety of public and private sources, reveals the scope of the issue as well as the availability of related resources. The report also details the broader public health implications of child abuse and neglect, identifies shortages and gaps in serves, and describes best practices to effectively prevent child abuse and neglect and mitigate its consequences.</p>
Planning, Land Use, Transportation and Infrastructure (PLuTI)	<p><a href="#">“The Impact of Transportation in the Logistics Industry”</a>- As industrial parks continue to grow and the region’s warehousing industry cluster matures, it is vital to understand the implications on land use and transportation. In light of the growth in transportation-centric industry and decentralization of employment, this study explores the types of transportation infrastructure and land use planning tools that are needed for continued growth and sustainability.</p> <p>The research considers the full build-out state of planned regional economic development projects in order to identify points of traffic congestion, consider impacts on transit utilization and bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure, and freight movement via road, rail, and air. It is complemented by an evaluation of predominant commute patterns, road counts, and pass-through truck traffic. Finally, it relates to planning and zoning, and identifies opportunities for adaptive reuse and infill development in urban core to reduce congestion and meet housing demands.</p>



## 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 2020, The Institute received 1,576 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 entertainment, recreation and dining options as well as diversity and inclusiveness.

**Completion of a regional internship may induce students to remain in the region after graduation.** Approximately 76 percent of students planning to remain in the area have completed internships in the region—compared to 46.6 percent unlikely to stay in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

**Nearly 76.0 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 2,204 students participated in the 2020 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 newspapers, radios, or smartphone apps. Other themes include students' perceptions of the direction of the country and Pennsylvania, along with political activism.

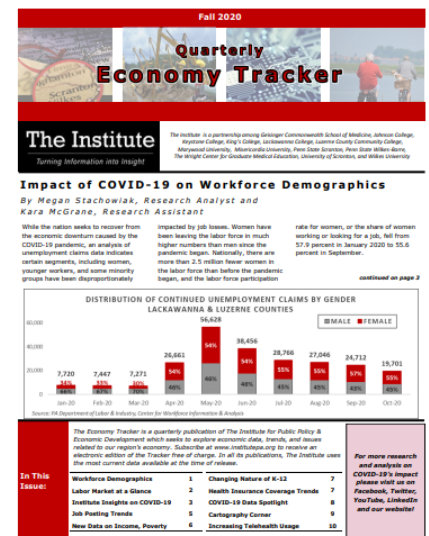
The findings of all the polls are located on The Institute's website and provide valuable insight into relevant issues from the perspective of college students.



## 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.



## **2020 Clients**

**Non-profit:** Capital Area Head Start, Commission on Economic Opportunity (CEO), Community Justice Project, Hazleton Partners in Education (PIE), Leadership Wilkes-Barre, NeighborWorks NEPA, Scranton Lackawanna Human Development Agency Head Start, SHINE Luzerne County, Lehigh Carbon Community College SHINE, St. Joseph's Oblates, United Neighborhood Centers, Wayne/Pike Workforce Alliance SHINE

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

**Government:** Appalachian Regional Commission, Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, Small Business Development Centers, Plymouth Township

**Educational Institutions:** Alvernia University, Johnson College, Lehigh Carbon Community College, The Wright Center for Community Health and Graduate Medical Education

**Economic Development:** Greater Wyoming Valley Chamber of Commerce and University of Scranton & Wilkes University Small Business Development Centers

**Business & Industry:** Famous Reading Outdoors, Laird Landscape Architecture, LLC for Earth Conservancy, Sanofi Pasteur, Williams Transcontinental Pipeline

***Many thanks to our 2020 clients!***

### **Propelling Higher Education Investment**

#### **Alvernia University**

Reading CollegeTown is a strategy and model for championing economic redevelopment in downtown Reading. Through partnerships and collaborations with the city as well as local businesses and organizations, the university serves as a strategic enabler for strengthening the downtown economy. The Institute is conducting an annual economic impact study and evaluation of the investment and a market study of proposed regional campuses expansion.

#### **Johnson College**

The Institute developed an impact study of the college on the regional economy. Analysis included the role of graduates in the community as well as the regional workforce.



#### **The Wright Center for Community Health and Graduate Medical Education**

Researchers completed the fourth annual economic impact report of the organization's collective work in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

### **Supporting Business and Economic Development**

#### **Famous Reading Outdoors**

Famous Reading Outdoors has repurposed 20,000 acres of coal land for motorized and non-motorized recreation in Carbon, Schuylkill, and Northumberland Counties. An economic impact study and market analysis were completed to support the need for and procurement of funding.



### **Greater Wyoming Valley Chamber of Commerce**

Project EVOLVE was launched to gather information regarding the ways businesses in various industries have been coping during the pandemic. To better identify potential resources and solutions to the biggest challenges, The Institute analyzed input from surveys and multiple roundtable discussions, and complemented the synthesis with a regional economic overview.

### **University of Scranton & Wilkes University Small Business Development Centers**

Small Business Development Centers at the University of Scranton and Wilkes University have been in great demand since the onset of the pandemic. The Institute assisted them with the development, deployment, and analysis of consumer surveys. This effort helped the business community accommodate unique shopping needs during the holiday season.



### **Sanofi Pasteur**

Review of community health needs assessments and secondary data, along with facilitation of listening sessions, allowed The Institute to identify gaps in health care services and determine the best approach to enhanced delivery. This research serves as a basis for defining high-impact priority areas for philanthropy.

### **Williams Transcontinental Pipeline**

The team is creating a companion piece to support an economic impact study of a pipeline expansion in Luzerne and Monroe Counties, as well as enhancements to compressor stations in Chester and York Counties. The companion report will document findings and highlight community leader perceptions of the project.



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

### **Capital Area Head Start**



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

### **Scranton/Lackawanna Human Development Agency Head Start**

Researchers completed a needs assessment to support federal funding and help refine services in Lackawanna, Pike, Susquehanna, and Wayne 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 serves 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.

## **Empowering Health Care Clients**

### **The Wright Center for Community Health**

The Institute 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: Commission on Economic Opportunity**

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 participate in the collaborative.

## **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 explored the impact of the Community First Fund's various economic and redevelopment initiatives in Lancaster. Potential projects and strategies for neighborhood revitalization were identified, and efficiencies and effectiveness of resource deployment were 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.

### **Hazleton Partners in Education (PIE)**

The Institute's research on workforce needs, as well as education and training opportunities, in the greater Hazleton area informs initiatives for PIE's strategic plan.

### **Laird Landscape Architecture, LLC for Earth Conservancy**

The research team supported a market study on the use of conservancy land for off-roading and hiking activities. An economic impact study and market opportunities are evaluated based on the findings.

### **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.

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

### **NeighborWorks Aging in Place Initiative**

NWNEPA has implemented a program to conduct assessments in the homes of seniors, to inform critical modifications to help these residents age in place. The Institute prepared a formative and summative evaluation assessing the impact of the program.

### **Plymouth Township**

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

### **St. Joseph's Oblates**

This market study included demand indicators such as trends in population and household size, economic and community profiles, an overview of local housing opportunities, and identification of new developments in the area. The Institute leveraged this data to determine feasibility for a housing initiative and put forth relevant recommendations.

### **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 Scranton Public Library System and NeighborWorks NEPA on projects related to human resources and service accessibility and satisfaction. The team also facilitated a strategic-planning effort for the Animal Collaborative.

Furthermore, the Foundation's Building Confident Smiles pilot program provides restorative dental care to local women (through the Scranton Primary Health Care Center). It is funded through Women in Philanthropy (WIP) supporters, and The Institute is preparing a formative and summative evaluation to assess the program's impact.

### **United Neighborhood Centers**

A study of rent reasonableness in Lackawanna County covered diverse property types and characteristics, rates and amenities, and other characteristics in multiple submarkets.



### Grantmaker 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**. This is an equity, economic, and social innovation weekly newsletter.

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.*



**The Moses Taylor Foundation, and The Institute** entered into a partnership to produce the **Quarterly Policy Tracker**. This Tracker focuses on public policy briefs to identify potential legislative solutions for regional and statewide challenges.



## *Institute Insights on COVID—19*

The Institute realizes regional leaders needed reliable information, unbiased fact-based analysis, and real-time data to make the tough decisions necessary for a successful economic recovery. These decisions needed to be data-driven - and The Institute answered the call.

Studies including research on the economy, workforce, business and industry, local government, education, housing, social services, health, and emergency planning were completed, and further research will continue into 2021.

This research was underwritten by **the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce, Sordoni Family Foundation, and UGI Utilities** and with support from **the Luzerne County COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund of The Luzerne Foundation, the Scranton Area Community Foundation COVID 19 Fund and the Wells Fargo Foundation.**



### **Academic Accomplishments**

**Student Interns** — In 2020, 18 undergraduate and four graduate students completed internships, representing six of The Institute's 13 partnering higher education institutions. These students represented a variety of disciplines, including history, business and health care administration, social work, public policy, statistics, and psychology. They contributed to community-based research as well as the 2020 Indicators and multiple client projects. Together, they completed 3,595 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. and fellowship programs.

When surveyed regarding their internship experiences, all respondents agreed that staff members were available when they had questions or needed help, that they felt adequately trained or prepared to complete their assignments, and that they improved their research skills through the internships. Nearly 85.0 percent were very satisfied with their experiences, and the remaining were satisfied.

Asked to identify the greatest benefits provided by the internships, students shared comments such as:

- ◇ *"Having the opportunity to contribute to research and help provide facts and information to those in the community."*
- ◇ *"This internship allowed me to expand my research skills and knowledge exponentially. I also have been able to complete very meaningful community health reports."*

*One hundred percent of the respondents would recommend the internship to friends!*

In terms of the most interesting experience afforded by the internship, one individual noted *"Conducting research that was published on The Institute website!"*

## 2020 News

### Institute Team Changes

One team member left The Institute to pursue new opportunities. We wished luck to Susan Magnotta, Director of Community Outreach in her new business.

### New Board Members

**Dr. Greg Cant** became the 7th Wilkes University President and the 3rd Chair of The Institute's Advisory Board in 2020.



Dr. Cant jumped into his role as Chair very quickly with the annual Indicators Forum occurring during his first few weeks. Dr. Cant also worked to form a regional issues committee of the board in order to utilize the collective boards' knowledge and influence to engage in major regional issues and to promote collaboration amongst all sectors. Special thanks to **Dr. Paul Adams**, Wilkes Interim President and Vice President of Student Affairs for his time during the transition.

In 2020, we welcomed **Jill Murray, President of Lackawanna College** and extend our thanks and best wishes to **Mark Volk** who retired after serving on our board for since Lackawanna became an academic partner. We also thank **Kevin O'Donnell, President & CEO of CAN DO** who retired in December 2021 and we welcome **Joe Lettiere** to our board in 2021. Finally, welcome to **Carla McCabe, President & CEO of WVIA!**

### Tech Talk Podcast with Katie Leonard

Teri Ooms joined **Katie Leonard** for a two part discussion on workforce development that was aired on Johnson College's podcast Tech Talk with Katie Leonard. The segments were produced by **Sweda Advertising**.



### Research in the Community: Conferences & Presentations



The **Scranton Area Community Foundation** conducted its second learning conference in 2020. Andrew Chew and Teri Ooms were featured session presenters. A presentation on **Diversity & Inclusion** called **Change is Constant** was presented to the Greater Wyoming Valley Chamber and their Diversity, Inclusions & Equity Committee. Senior Research & Policy Analyst **Andrew Chew** gave a presentation on economic and business trends to the **Greater Wyalusing Chamber of Commerce** at their annual dinner.

**SCRANTON AREA**  
*Community* FOUNDATION

### Reinventing Our Communities – a program of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia

Through the efforts of the **Scranton Area Foundation**, Lackawanna County has been accepted for the 2020 Reinventing Our Communities Cohort Program. This six-month cohort program will provide hands-on equity training and a deep dive into research and strategies that advance housing equity. The Institute has been invited to be a part of the team is working with the [Government Alliance on Race and Equity \(GARE\)](#), a project of Race Forward and the Othering and Belonging Institute at University of California Berkeley. GARE is a national network of local government working to advance racial equity and lift up outcomes for all groups. GARE supports leadership and staff to **normalize** equity as a key value and to have clear understanding and shared definitions, **operationalize** equity via new policies and by transforming the underlying culture of our organizations, and finally, **organize**, both internally and in partnership with other institutions and the community.

### Sponsored Research

The study ***Redlining and Patterns of Racial Segregation and Poverty in Northeastern Pennsylvania*** underwritten by the **Robert H. Spitz Foundation at the Scranton Area Community Foundation** identifies regional equity challenges as a result of public policies with embedded systemic racism.

— The —  
**Robert H. Spitz**  
— Foundation —



## Marketing & Outreach Report

### Outreach

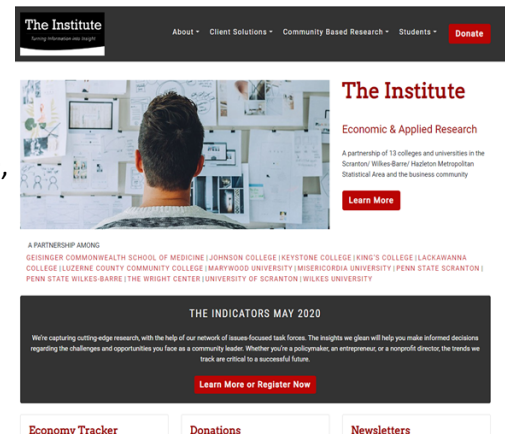
Outreach continues to current, former, and potential underwriters. Visits with past, current, and potential clients are ongoing as well. Community and board engagement includes organizations such as AHEC, Circle 200, Diamond City Partnership, the Greater Wyoming Valley Chamber, Luzerne County Head Start, Penn's Northeast, Scranton Chamber, Scranton Tomorrow, The Appleseed Foundation, United Way of Wyoming Valley, and Volunteers in Medicine. All efforts raise The Institute's profile.

### Media

The **Times Leader** published weekly research updates for seven months in 2020 covering all of the Institute's Community Based Research. Seventeen indicators and studies were covered on **RealClear Public Affairs'** Pennsylvania page. The team also made one television appearance and one radio/podcast appearance, and WVIA has launched a public affairs program using The Institute's research for issue identification and information. The Institute has been active on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn as well. The number of followers has reached 1,253 and grows by the month. Additionally, the organization has launched a YouTube channel, showcasing videos of task force presentations and COVID-19 highlights. **Newsmakers** - 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. **Keystone Edition** The new WVIA public affairs show is "Guided by research from [The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development](#) and ideas from a volunteer editorial advisory panel, including veteran journalists throughout the region, *Keystone Edition* explores important topics in economic development, community affairs, education, workforce development, business, public health, organized labor, climate change, arts and culture, all with a goal of improving the quality of life in our region." The live show airs Thursdays at 8 pm.

### Website

Top page visits include the home page, About Us, Indicators, Institute Insights on COVID-19, QET, Staff 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 11,400 website hits and over 20,400 page views!



## Spreading the Word About the 2020 Census

The Moses Taylor Foundation supported an 18 month 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,



## 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.

### Information Requests & Inkind Research Support—The Institute Gives Back!

The research team accommodated 66 requests for information throughout the year. This accumulated to over 113 research hours for four for-profit organizations, 10 elected officials and government agencies, 41 nonprofits, four educational institutions, six media outlets, and one student at a value of **\$15,322** of Institute inkind time. Through calendar year 2020, The Institute has been able to provide in-kind research support to regional non-profits valued at **\$33,158**.

### Public Policy

In the Institute's 2019 Legislative Issues briefs, there was a recommendation on housing tax credits to be used for blight remediation. In 2020, SB 30 was passed by the PA State Senate. Senator John Yudichak was one of the sponsors.

### Helping Those in Need

**Scranton Lackawanna Human Development Agency (SLHDA)** contracted with The Institute to perform a **Community Needs Assessment** for our Early Learning Program in a multi county service area. This information was used to help identify the educational needs of low to moderate

income families in SLHDA's service area. The data provided by The Institute helped SLHDA determine a location and need for an Early Learning Center in the City of Scranton. SLHDA acquired a building and is renovating in order to meet the needs of the low to mod income families located in Lackawanna County.



"SLHDA worked with The Institute to examine the community needs, using the data and findings to raise capital and show funders the need for Early Learning Programs in our service area," said **Jim Wansacz**, Executive Director of SLHDA.



### Education & Advocacy

#### Institute Research Guides WVIA's *Keystone Edition* Program

"WVIA is proud to partner with The Institute to address important Northeastern Pennsylvania issues in the new weekly multi-platform public affairs program, *Keystone Edition*. Several WVIA staff members serve on task forces to stay informed on trends affecting our region, and Institute Executive Director Teri Ooms has helped WVIA identify key topics and qualified guests as a member of the Editorial Advisory Panel. She and Senior Research and Policy Analyst Andrew Chew have been interviewed on the program during its first season.



After months of planning, **Keystone Edition** premiered on WVIA TV in October 2020 and continues each Thursday night at 8 PM. The first Thursday of each month *Keystone Edition Reports* explores community issues such as the 2020 vote, the evolution of education, the changing face of NEPA. Each second Thursday the focus is on *Business: workforce development, working from home, NEPA manufacturing and skilled trades*. The third Thursday is *Keystone Edition Arts: community arts, children and the arts, creativity through jazz, Black History Month and Women's History Month and the arts*. And each fourth Thursday is devoted to *Health: social determinants of health, our aging population, food insecurity, mental health matters*.

WVIA's goals for *Keystone Edition* are to engage our region in important conversations, connect our residents with resources for assistance, and emphasize success stories of individuals and communities overcoming challenges as we work to improve the quality of life in Northeastern and Central Pennsylvania. We applaud the work of The Institute and appreciate their input in building this valuable public service series." **Carla McCabe, WVIA President & CEO**



## Research in Action (continued)

### Informing Public Policy & Planning

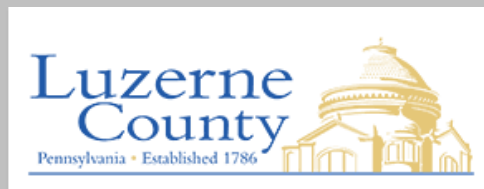
In spring of 2020, Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties initiated an update to their **Joint Comprehensive Plan**. With the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the planning process started at a challenging time and required a different approach to informing the community of the planning process and proactively receiving their input and feedback on the Comprehensive Plan update. The update of the Joint Comprehensive Plan is required by the Commonwealth to occur every ten years. Comprehensive Plans set the aspirational goals and actions to address growth, community and economic development, transportation, environmental conservation, housing, and land use in the region.



Updating the Joint Comprehensive Plan required engagement of the larger community and a clear way of communicating where the region is today and where it hopes to go in the future. Foundational to this process was providing the data to help tell the story of where the region has been, where it is now, and where it could go next. Teri Ooms, Executive Director of The Institute, provided this prospective to community members and regional stakeholders at the Comprehensive Plan Community Forum in Summer 2020. The Institute provided statistics on the region's demographics, economy, educational systems and attainment, housing, social services, healthcare, public safety, government, and the observed impacts on these areas as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Institute's data and research provided a strong base for the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, municipal and regional leadership, and community stakeholders to make an informed assessment of how to update the Plan and provide a framework to guide growth and development in the region.

The public draft of the Joint Comprehensive Plan was released in January 2021. The document utilizes data and information shared by The Institute at the summer 2020 Community Forum. The work of The Institute informs many of the Plan's proposed regional policies, goals, and actions, particularly as they relate to community and economic development and housing. The Institute's Living Wage Reports from 2016 and 2019 are an important part of understanding economic opportunity and job growth in the region. The Institute's reports on housing, including "Housing Indicators Report 2020: The Housing Divide in Northeastern Pennsylvania" and "Housing Indicators Report 2019: Implications of an Aging Housing Stock," provide regional data and context for the draft Plan's recommendations to improve housing stock and ensure housing is accessible across the region.

The final Lackawanna Luzerne Counties Joint Comprehensive Plan will be adopted in spring 2021. The Institute's data analysis and reporting will continue to serve as a way to assess the progress and impact of the Plan's proposed policies, goals, and actions.



### Informing Strategic Initiatives

*"When the **Scranton Public Library** approached its first-ever Strategic Plan, we wanted to make sure we listened to the community, but we were not sure how to get the community to speak to us. The Institute helped us design a community survey, assisted us in the distribution of the survey, and conducted focus groups with staff, Board, and community members. As a collector and analyzer of economic and demographic data, The Institute was able, in its report to us, to link the survey and focus group results to larger local trends. This led directly to a four year Strategic Plan that reflects community aspirations and ensures that the public library will continue to meet the changing needs of the people it serves."*



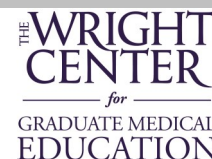
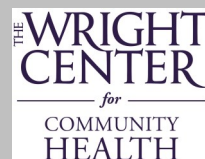
**Scott Thomas, Chief Executive Officer / Director Scranton Public Library**



## Research in Action (continued)

### Demonstrating Impact

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.”



“The Institute has been an invaluable resource for our participation in NEPA’s **Mobility LABs** project. A critical component of Mobility LABs is the importance of community member input. Mobility LABs is about helping families move sustainably out of poverty and those closest to the problem have the best insight on the solution. With resident surveys and interviews conducted by The Institute, we had timely and relevant data from our target audience. The Institute brought the experiences and opinions of those living in poverty into the planning process.” **Gene Brady, Commission on Economic Opportunity, President & CEO**

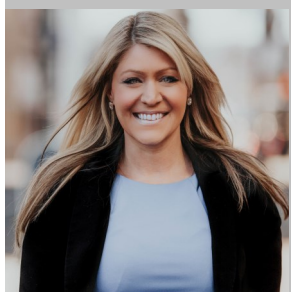
“Through the **Johnson College Economic Impact & Graduate Study** we learned that the Johnson College economic impact of our graduates is even greater than we anticipated. Those entering our technical fields possess high earning potential. This has a positive impact on the entire region because a majority of our graduates work and live here. Thanks to this study, we plan to highlight alumni success stories in a variety of ways. We also plan to share the data on our website, with our accrediting bodies, and in our Johnsonian newsletter,” according to **Katie Leonard, Ed.D., Johnson College President & CEO**.



### Developing Solutions



“The Pandemic has altered the Valley’s socio-economic landscape and it is imperative that we understand the dynamic shifts our business, industry and workforce is experiencing in order to respond most effectively. With The Institutes’ economic, innovation and applied research expertise, Project Evolve targeted the key industry sectors in the county with business surveys, questionnaires and virtual roundtable sessions. The results were then leveraged into separate solution roundtables with our Wilkes Barre Connect Partners, Community Leaders and Network Resources to help them sustain, evolve, and thrive.”



“In 2020, we partnered with The Institute on a workforce initiative called NEPA Works that successfully launched in 2021 to further our recovery efforts. NEPA Works is made of two key projects, **Re-imagining the Workforce** and **Coding the Coal Region**. Both were designed to align workforce needs to increase job placement rates and satisfy the immediate top workforce needs in our region. **Re-imagining the Workforce** partners with CareerLink and The Institute to encourage employer and job seeker participation to fulfill the workforce needs in our community through innovation and connection. **Coding the Coal Region**, with Penn State Wilkes-Barre, designed to increase the computer programming skills in NEPA in our ongoing effort to train and upskill our workforce.

**Coding the Coal Region** will be the first in a series of data driven workforce skill set initiatives in partnership with The Institute designed to bring family sustaining jobs and businesses to the Valley. The impacts of all programs are measured, reported, and driven by the expertise of The Institute to bring long term sustainable skill sets to our community. Both pilots are under consideration for regional and statewide implementation.” **Wico van Genderen, President & CEO and Lindsay Griffin, Executive Vice President & COO, Greater Wyoming Valley Chamber of Commerce**

"Thanks to the **Workforce Education & Training Needs Assessment** of the Greater Hazleton Area, done by The Institute, **Greater Hazleton Partners in Education** was able to work with CAN DO and the Greater Hazleton Chamber of Commerce to begin addressing opportunities within the area to help nurture our current and future workforce. Specifically, PIE is able to use this data to create programming, curriculum, and opportunities for K-12 students and teachers to help them prepare for the changing workforce of tomorrow. Additionally, together with partners, Greater Hazleton can use the data collected to help drive workforce training in our backyard as well as a marketing initiative to help propel those training opportunities. The industries located here are desperate for a dependable workforce and together, with the help of The Institute, we will be able to begin to develop a plan to help grow local talent into the ready workforce that's needed. Much of the feedback gathered by The Institute centered around the need for early development of "employability" or "soft" skills. In order to address those needs, PIE is currently preparing to introduce two new programs to be offered to middle and high school students in Hazleton and surrounding areas. "Make a Difference. Healthcare Careers Matter", funded by the NEPA Health Care Foundation and in partnership with the Lehigh Valley Health Network Hazleton, a program designed to inspire middle school students to pursue careers in healthcare while learning practical skills needed to be successful in the workplace, will kick off in Spring, 2020. To meet the growing need for critical thinking, time management and leadership skills, a mini-course in the fundamentals of Project

Management for high school students will begin in March 2020." **Jocelyn Sterencheck, Director of Economic Development Greater Hazleton CAN DO and Cathy Colangelo, Executive Director, Partners in Education**



## Outcomes Based Measurement

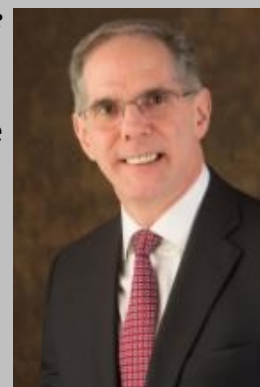


"As a global life sciences company and one of the largest organizations in Monroe County, **Sanofi** cares about the footprint we occupy and operate in. We are committed to improving access to healthcare and supporting the people we serve throughout the continuum of care. Recently, I reached out to the Institute of Public Policy and Economic Development (the Institute) to help determine the best way to ensure everyone in our community has equal access to healthcare resources. I plan to use the data from the study facilitated by the

Institute to determine how to close access to healthcare gaps in Monroe county. Our primary target will be the Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed, or otherwise known as ALICE individuals. With the data provided by the Institute, three areas were identified that impact people in Monroe County from accessing the healthcare they need: Healthcare Navigation, Mental Health Services, and Transportation. From this information we now know where to focus our time and energy to become a change agent in our community and get the residents of Monroe County the necessary resources for improved health. This data has been a game changer! "

**Phillip St. James, U.S. CSR & Community Relations, Lead Sanofi U.S.**

**AllOne Foundation & Charities** always strives for collective impact. "We believe working with a strong partnership network is the best way to achieve it. For example, the Autism Collaborative Centers for Excellence (ACCE) was launched in September 2018 to address gaps in services for people with autism in Northeastern and North Central Pennsylvania. Now, as this multi-year, multi-million-dollar initiative moves into its third year, we need to better understand the collective impact ACCE is having in our community. That is where the Institute for Public Policy comes in. The Institute is a full partner with the 24 ACCE organizations throughout 13 counties. From the start, the Institute has been measuring how well ACCE is doing to connect people with autism spectrum disorders, along with their families, with services and support systems. The data and analysis they provide is invaluable to our network as we strive to make life better for our friends and neighbors living with ASD." **John W. Cosgrove, Executive Director, AllOne Foundation & Charities**



# The Institute

*Turning Information into Insight*

## 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. Andrew joined The Institute in 2013, and helps guide several of The Institute's community-based research initiatives and is responsible for data analysis and report preparation for numerous studies and reports. Andrew contributes his skills in Geographic Information Systems (GIS), statistical software, and other research tools to many of The Institute's projects. 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.



## The Team (Continued)



### **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.



### **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.

# The Institute

*Turning Information into Insight*

*Economic, Impact, Health,  
Social, and Education  
Research, Evaluation, and  
Consulting*



## Advisory Board

Greg Cant, Ph.D. Chairman  
Wilkes University, President

Frank Joanlanne, Vice Chairman  
Borton Lawson Engineering, President

Heather Acker Gentex Corporation	Robert Luciani, Jobs, Economy, & Economic Development Task Force Chair	Bill Sordoni, Energy Task Force Chair, Sordoni Construction
Ron Beer, MHA, FACHE Geisinger Health Systems	Prudential Retirement Services	Matthew Sordoni Sordoni Construction
Don Brominski UGI Utilities	Carla McCabe WVIA	Linda Thomas-Hemak, MD The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education and Community Health
Tracey Brundage, Ph.D Keystone College	Jill Murray Lackawanna College	
Terry Casey Chancellor Financial Group	Kevin O'Donnell Hazleton CAN DO	Marleen Troy, Ph.D., Planning Land Use, Transportation and Infrastructure Task Force Chair Wilkes University
Cornelio Catena Commonwealth Health Systems	Kathleen Owens Ph.D. Misericordia University	Wico van Genderen Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business and Industry
John Cefaly Cushman Wakefield	Mary Persico, IHM, Ed.logosD. Marywood University	
Robert Durkin Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce	Rev. Scott Pilarz, S.J. University of Scranton	Lucyann Vierling, Education & Workforce Development Task Force Chair Wayne Pike Workforce Alliance
Dale Jones, Ph.D. Penn State Wilkes-Barre	Alana Roberts PPL Electric	Marwan Wafa, PhD. Penn State Scranton
Charles Kasko, Housing Task Force Chair	Eugene Roth Rosenn, Jenkins & Greenwald	Tara Mugford Wilson Power Engineering Corporation
Thomas Leary Luzerne County Community College	John J. Ryan, C.S.C., Ph.D. King's College	State Senator John T. Yudichak, Public Safety Task Force Chairman Pennsylvania State Senate, 14th Senatorial District
Katie Leonard, Ed.D. Johnson College	Steven J. Scheinman, M.D., Health & Healthcare Task Force Chair Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine	

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



# The Institute

---

*Turning Information into Insight*

*Economic, Impact, Health,  
Social, and Education  
Research, Evaluation, and  
Consulting*