

# The Institute

Turning Information into Insight

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

## The results are in...

Results of the 2020 civic engagement poll are now available!

Over 2,200 students participated in this annual poll, and answered the following questions:

- How do Northeastern Pennsylvania's college students feel about the state of the country?
- What do they think about the Commonwealth's current trajectory?
- Which policy issues do students prioritize?
- Where do they obtain their news - and are they well informed?
- How engaged are college students in political activity and civic duty?
- Are any of these trends changing?

[Explore the brief here](#)

### In this Issue:

- **The Institute's 2021 Supporting Underwriters and Event Sponsors**
- **Community Based Research and Underwriting Opportunities**
- **The Latest Insights into COVID-19**
- **Fall Issue of the QET Available**
- **Client Solutions**

PUBLIC POLICY & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT 2020

## The Institute

Turning Information into Insight

A partnership 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.

The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development (The Institute) launched a polling program in 2014. The Institute regularly polls students at its partnering higher education institutions. These polling and survey research services are part of The Institute's menu of services offered to all types of clients.

This 2020 poll assesses students' opinions about public policy issues and civic engagement. Over 2,200 students participated in this poll—from all class years and a variety of majors. Part-time and graduate students are well represented in the data. The poll is distributed online through our academic partners, and the data was collected during September 2020.

The Institute is an applied research and economic consulting organization that fulfills two related priorities—(1) customized client solutions and strategies to facilitate decision-making, and (2) planning that enhances growth, impact, and sustainability for organizations. The Institute also serves a public mission to provide data, analytics, and research to the community at large. This empirical, objective information is intended to drive discussion and innovative solutions that enhance regional quality of life and standard of living.

"There is a lot to learn from the information revealed in this annual poll. For instance, the degree of students' mistrust in others points not only to a growing need for greater community cohesiveness—but also to the fact that we need remain mindful of our own trustworthiness."  
Greg Cant, Ph.D., President, Wilkes University

**Overall, students do not think the United States is moving in the right direction. Their perceptions of Pennsylvania's trajectory, however, are not as clear.**

Approximately 14 percent of students believe that the United States is headed in the right direction, while nearly 51 percent believe the country is on the wrong course. Yet another 23 percent indicated feelings that the country's direction is ultimately unchanged, while a final 12 percent are uncertain about the country's direction. The margin between 'right track' and 'wrong track' answers has grown, from a deficit of 18 percentage points in 2018 to 25 in 2019 and 37 in 2020. The deficit in the 2017 poll was 31 percentage points. Students' perceptions of Pennsylvania's direction are considerably less certain, as nearly 38 percent did not register an opinion on the subject. Additionally, 24 percent claim that the Commonwealth's direction is fundamentally unchanged, 20 percent express optimism, and 18 percent have concerns.



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*Many Thanks to Our 2021 Community-Based Research Underwriters as of November 30, 2020...*



*...And to UGI, for a generous gold sponsorship of the 2021 Indicators Event—in addition to underwriting support...*

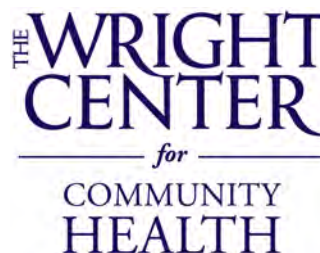


*Energy to do more®*

*...Along With Sincere Gratitude for Our Multi-Year Contributors and Academic Partners!*



**Andrew J. Sordoni Foundation**



**Are You Interested in a Partnership?**

Do you feel a personal connection to the culturally-rich northeast?

Would you like to further invest in the region?

If so, we invite you to join our growing list of generous community of supporters.

Your underwriting will help The Institute provide our community with data and research that promotes informed decision-making and leads to greater economic vitality for the area.

**Your partnership will contribute to:**

- Task Force Research
- Indicators Report
- Quarterly Economy Tracker
- Regional College Student Poll
- Regional College Internship Program

Please contact Teri Ooms at [ooms@institutepa.org](mailto:ooms@institutepa.org) to discuss the possibilities!

## Academic Partners



Geisinger  
Commonwealth  
School of Medicine



Wilkes  
University

*Explore economic data and trends that affect the region's future, learn how Northeastern Pennsylvania is progressing in terms of critical quality-of-life issues, and empower yourself and your organization with the knowledge needed for good decision-making.*

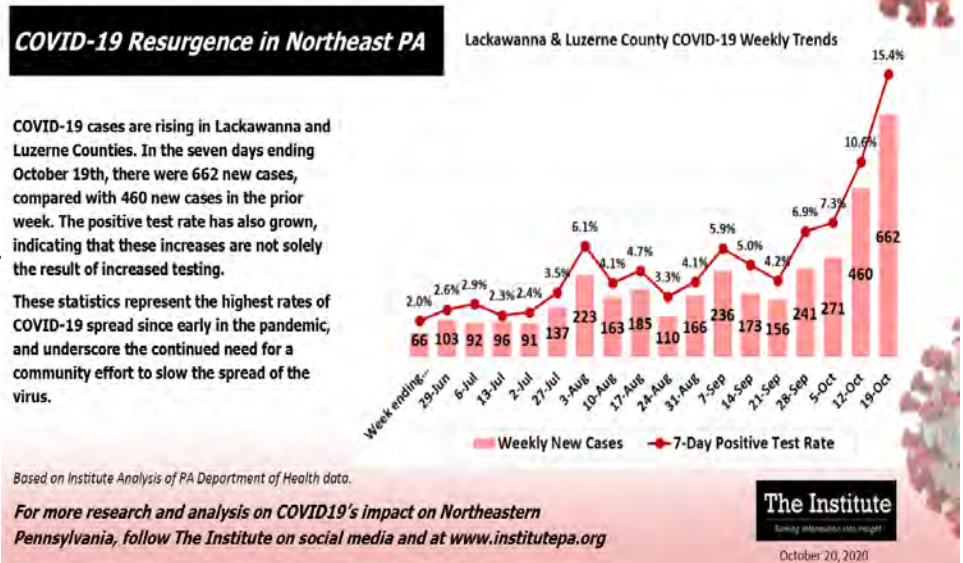
[Access the 2020 Indicators  
Here](#)

# Institute Insights into COVID-19

The Institute is responding to the COVID-19 crisis by embarking on a timely and ambitious program of research. Our agenda examines the effects of the pandemic on Northeastern Pennsylvania, and provides data-driven insights to help community members and leaders better understand, address, and overcome unique challenges.

For more research and analysis on COVID 19's impact on the region, visit <https://institutepea.org/covid.php>

Valuable information like this is also available on The Institute's YouTube channel. [Visit and Subscribe!](#)



The Institute extends many thanks to the sponsors of the COVID-19 Research Initiative:

*Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce*

*Sordoni Family Foundation*

*UGI Utilities*

*Luzerne County COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund of The Luzerne Foundation*

*Scranton Area Community Foundation's NEPA COVID-19 Response Fund*



## Media Spotlight



We greatly appreciate our media supporters, who help us spread the word about our research findings and recommendations.

Many thanks to:



- ◇ [The Times Leader](#)'s Mike Murphy and Bill O'Boyle for their weekly features of our studies
- ◇ [RealClear Public Affairs](#) for profiling our work
- ◇ and WVIA for using our research as a basis for their latest public affairs show—

[Keystone Edition](#)

# Research at Your Fingertips

Since the launch of this new initiative in Spring 2020, The Institute's research team has been hard at work putting together specialized research on COVID-19's impact, along with recommendations for recovery. Take a look at all we've studied this fall....

## **The Impact of COVID-19 on K-12 Education: Parts I & II**

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on public school education is undoubtedly substantial, though the full extent and variety of the effects are yet to be determined. As such, The institute is conducting a series of studies to explore these dynamics.

The first part of this analysis examines the approaches used by school districts in Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties to provide Continuity of Education following the mandated closure of all Pennsylvania schools in mid-March.

The second part of this analysis examines the approaches adopted by schools as they reopen in the fall as they reopened for the 2020-2021 academic year.

[The Impact of COVID-19 on K-12 Education: Part 1](#)

[The Impact of COVID-19 on K-12 Education: Part 2](#)

## **Regional Telehealth Services**

While virtual medical visits are not new, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have forced medical professionals to add more and more virtual visits to their schedules—and forced patients to rethink how they seek access to medical care.

This research reveals many challenges to the provision of telehealth services, which remain apparent despite the current waivers and special considerations.

Recommended changes to these challenges can be tedious and potentially expensive, but telehealth is providing much needed help in a difficult time and, regardless of its drawbacks, will have the chance to grow and evolve as the field of medicine continues to make strides in the coming months and years.

[Regional Telehealth Services](#)

## **Workforce Development in the Face of COVID-19**

This report includes an analysis of unemployment claim activity by industry and demographics, and identifies which categories of workers have been most impacted by recent job losses.

Furthermore, this study describes likely post-pandemic workforce changes in regard to automation, skills gaps, and unstable industries. It explores how workers can reskill, upskill, and outskill to enter industries or occupations that have not been as affected as their own. Recommendations are provided with the consideration that economic distress will cause further hardships for certain populations, industries, and occupations—and that these impacts will vary as the pandemic and economic recovery continue.

[Workforce Development in the Face of COVID-19](#)

# In case you missed it...

The Fall 2020 edition of the Quarterly Economic Tracker is available!

In this issue, find out:

- How is COVID-10 influencing certain workforce demographics?
- What do trends in job postings suggest about the region's economic recovery?
- Have there been significant shifts in income and poverty trends?
- How are the area's public schools adapting to the pandemic?
- What are the latest dynamics surrounding telehealth care and insurance coverage?

**Quarterly Economy Tracker**  
 Fall 2020

**The Institute**  
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**Impact of COVID-19 on Workforce Demographics**  
 By Megan Stachowiak, Research Analyst and Kara McGrane, Research Assistant

While the nation seeks to recover from the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, an analysis of unemployment claims data indicates certain segments, including women, younger workers, and some minority groups have been disproportionately impacted by job losses. Women have been leaving the labor force in much higher numbers than men since the pandemic began. Nationally, there are more than 2.5 million fewer women in the labor force than before the pandemic began, and the labor force participation rate for women, or the share of women working or looking for a job, fell from 57.9 percent in January 2020 to 55.6 percent in September.

*continued on page 3*

**DISTRIBUTION OF CONTINUED UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMS BY GENDER  
 LACKAWANNA & LUZERNE COUNTIES**

Month	Total Claims	Male (%)	Female (%)
Jan-20	7,720	68%	32%
Feb-20	7,447	67%	33%
Mar-20	7,271	70%	30%
Apr-20	26,661	46%	54%
May-20	56,628	46%	54%
Jun-20	38,456	40%	60%
Jul-20	28,766	45%	55%
Aug-20	27,046	45%	55%
Sep-20	24,712	49%	51%
Oct-20	19,701	45%	55%

Source: PA Department of Labor & Industry, Center for Workforce Information & Analysis

*The Economy Tracker is a quarterly publication of The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development which seeks to explore economic data, trends, and issues related to our region's economy. Subscribe at [www.institutepa.org](http://www.institutepa.org) to receive an electronic edition of the Tracker free of charge. In all its publications, The Institute uses the most current data available at the time of release.*

**In This Issue:**

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**For more research and analysis on COVID-19's impact please visit us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and our website!**

[Access the issue here!](#)

Many thanks to the Sordoni Family Foundation as Signature Underwriter, and to UGI Utilities as Contributing Underwriter!

## Client Solutions

Market & Feasibility Studies  
 Indicators- Indexes  
 Community Needs Assessments  
 Housing Studies  
 Economic Development Strategies  
 Economic and Tax Impact Studies

Survey Research  
 Industry Studies  
 Workforce Studies  
 Education Studies  
 Policy Analysis  
 Site Selection Research  
 Arts & Culture Studies

Economic and Demographic Profiles  
 Grant and Program Evaluation Support  
 Research Validation and Peer Review  
 Tourism Strategic Plans  
 Comprehensive Plans  
 Asset Maps

## Community-Based Research

Access the latest regional research on the Institute's website. [www.institutepa.org](http://www.institutepa.org)

### Regional Indicators Data & Research

Indicators data tracks the region's progress over time. They include economy, healthcare, environment, education and infrastructure measures.  
<https://institutepa.org/perch/resources/indicators18.pdf>

### Task Force Research

Recent and archived research studies identify and address the region's challenges. This research is a driving force behind many important economic development and community revitalization initiatives, which produce positive outcomes for our area.  
<https://institutepa.org/indicators.php>

### Quarterly Economic Tracker

This quarterly electronic publication explores the region's economic and business trends.  
<https://institutepa.org/economy-tracker.php>

### Polling Program

Better understand the subject matter interests, public policy views, and civic engagement of our local college students and future leaders.  
<https://institutepa.org/polling-program.php>

## Who We Are

The Institute is dedicated to empowering business and community leaders with researched-driven strategies for informed decision-making.

We conduct community-based, empirical research to identify the opportunities and challenges unique to our region, and offer innovative solutions for the problems facing our communities. **This research is funded by generous academic partners and sponsors who share our vision for a strong regional economy and vibrant communities.**

## Thanks to our 2020 Research Underwriters!

Sincere thanks to our generous stakeholders who share our vision for a strong regional economy and healthy communities. Your support makes our work possible!

### **Signature Underwriters**

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

### **Contributing Underwriters**

Borton-Lawson  
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Rosenn Jenkins Greenwald, LLC  
The Luzerne Foundation  
The Wright Center for Community Health  
Topp Business Solutions  
UGI Utilities

### **Academic Partners**

Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine  
Johnson College  
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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

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