

Thank you for making Indicators 2023 a success!



In addition to the virtual event hosted by WVIA, more than 160 regional leaders attended the in-person event at The Woodlands Inn, and Wayne County was added to the initiative!

[Access
the
2023
Indicators
here!](#)



We Moved!

The Institute's new Wilkes-Barre office is located at:
169 N Pennsylvania Blvd

(in the Wilkes-Barre Campus of
The Wright Center for Community Health).

The Scranton office remains in
St. Thomas Hall
at the University of Scranton.

The Institute still operates as a hybrid operation.

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Sincere Thanks



to our 2023 community-based research underwriters
and Indicators event sponsors

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WVIA Public Media

2023 Task Force Research Review

Check out our
[YouTube channel](#)
for video overviews
of our research!

Jobs, Economy, and Economic Development:

A Strategic Approach to Growing the Region's Economy

This research serves as a blueprint for regional economic development by identifying growth opportunities and providing a guide for increasing economic diversity.

Health and Health Care: Lifestyle Medicine Issues in Northeastern Pennsylvania

Lifestyle medicine refers to practice of medicine through a lens of modifiable behaviors, such as diet choices, physical activity, and substance use. The study focuses on a broad range of lifestyle medicine issues as they pertain to the region.

Housing: An Action-Focused Plan for Meeting Housing Demand

This study serves as a continuation of the task force's study on workforce housing opportunities completed in 2022. It includes recommendations for local governments to modify policies and zoning codes and promote development.

Education and Workforce Development:

Bringing Young Adults Into Education and the Workforce

In this case, research takes a deep dive into the phenomenon of "checked out" young adults (aged 18-25) who have not pursued postsecondary education and are unemployed or underemployed. It reviews factors leading to this issue, including economic dynamics, disillusionment, substance use, and educational gaps.

Regionalism: Best Practices for Regional Planning Coordination

The Institute compiled national and state best practices for regional land use, transportation, and economic development to explore opportunities for improved planning effectiveness and capacity. Special attention is also given to ways in which regional planning can be used to more effectively address emerging challenges.

Planning, Land Use, Transportation, and Infrastructure:

Community Impacts of Investing in Transportation and Infrastructure

This study outlines various ways in which investments in transportation and infrastructure lead to economic growth. Previous reports, data, and studies on economic impact of major proposed projects (such as the restoration of passenger rail service to Northeast PA) are analyzed to connect the dots between capital investments and regional well-being. The report aligns closely with funding sources and priorities identified in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Energy: Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

The study examines trends related to electric vehicle adoption nationwide and regionally, including economic impacts and a special emphasis on charging infrastructure. It reviews the current policy landscape related to funding of this infrastructure, local and state planning activities, and makes recommendations around effective regional planning for electric vehicle charging. Freight electrification implications are also analyzed in light of the region's concentration of distribution industries.

Anchors for Equity

An Initiative of the Philadelphia Reserve Bank

Reprinted from—[Research in Action Lab: Anchors for Equity \(philadelphiafed.org\)](https://www.philadelphiafed.org/research-in-action-lab/anchors-for-equity)

The Institute was recently awarded a Research in Action Lab initiative by the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia under their Economic Growth and Mobility Project. The Institute and NEPA are one of only two awarded in their three state district. The [Anchor Economy Initiative](#) explores how hospitals and higher education institutions sustain jobs, drive economic growth, and support equitable regional development. The [Economic Growth & Mobility Project](#) brings together researchers and community partners to find innovative, actionable, and community-driven solutions to local or regional economic challenges. Research is conducted through [Research in Action Labs](#) that help advance solutions to specific challenges for achieving economic equity in communities.

We will be engaged in a multi partner process over 18–24 months to address a workforce challenge, with the communities' anchor institutions as lead participants. In NEPA, [The Institute](#) will function as the lead community organization; it specializes in providing informed decision-making with the use of data analysis, research, and consulting. Two of our Academic Partners will assist in co-chairing this initiative – Johnson College and Lackawanna College. All our Academic Partners are engaged in the initiative. As some of their region's largest employers, and as institutions that train and educate the workforce, anchor institutions play a pivotal role in creating and connecting people to job opportunities. Both organizations will collaborate with their selected anchor institutions and focus on workforce solutions to improve equity in training, provide support for workers, and create quality job opportunities. This effort has four phases:

- **Discover:** The formation of regional collaboratives with a workforce focus, including at least one higher education or hospital anchor institution and one community organization
- **Define:** Leveraging research, data, and community input to define a workforce challenge that the collaborative will address
- **Develop:** Learning from experts, community organizations, and residents in order to shape solutions to the workforce challenge identified, and using a design thinking approach to synthesize research and learnings to forge solutions
- **Deliver:** Identifying the structure and resources needed for solution implementation

There are several benefits for participating community groups:

- **Research:** Data from the Federal Reserve Bank and the Anchor Economy Dashboard focused on the impact anchors have in your region, as well as guidance on conducting qualitative research – interviews and focus groups – with community members
- **Expertise:** National experts on workforce development, the anchor mission, and research techniques will be brought in by the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia for key phases of the Research in Action Lab
- **Facilitation:** Guided process – leveraging design thinking – to elicit partner collaboration and input
- **Promotion:** the opportunity to highlight innovations in employment equity developed by your community on the local, state, and federal levels.

Additionally, participants will have opportunities to:

- **Build partnerships:** bring more members of the community together to address regional workforce challenges
- **Increase capacity:** through a collaborative process that brings in new partners and resources
- **Grow trust:** among residents, institutions, nonprofits, and government by collaborating on regional workforce challenges and developing solutions together
- **Implement solutions:** use the Research in Action Lab to identify solutions and the partners and resources needed to implement those solutions

New Task Force Research Underway

Here's a sneak peek!



Education and Workforce Development:

A Community-Based Approach to Support Inclusive Education

Research demonstrates a correlation between education and key life outcomes (such as occupation, poverty level, and physical and mental health), as well as economic growth and community well-being. The same is true with regard to inclusive education and social and economic returns. This report will incorporate regional disability and education data for Pre-K through postsecondary learning. The study will examine opportunities for social support systems to collaborate with schools and promote inclusive education that furthers positive community and economic outcomes.

Planning, Land Use, Transportation, and Infrastructure:

A Comprehensive Study of the Downtown Revitalization Landscape in NEPA

This study, from an urban planning perspective, will profile the downtowns of the region's cities, including economic, housing, and demographic trends and identification of assets and barriers to revitalization. The analysis will include a matrix of existing plans and strategic documents to compare different approaches to economic development. Opportunities for development around the arts and the concept of creative placemaking will also be addressed, along with the role of transportation infrastructure, considering funding availability through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.



Energy: Electric Vehicle Infrastructure—Follow Up

The study will examine policy changes and provide an update on EV implementation, while evaluating challenges such as emissions in battery manufacturing, short battery life, and disposal. The research will consider federal implications and climate change, in addition to the need for electric infrastructure upgrades or expansions. Funding to meet these needs and impact on ratepayers will be considered too. Finally, the potential revenue loss associated with gas tax will be explored in conjunction with alternative funding opportunities for road maintenance.

Regionalism:

The topic has not been defined, though the task force is engaging in meetings with Chamber leaders to discuss prior research and other data needs.

New Task Force Research Underway

Sneak peek cont.

Jobs, Economy, and Economic Development: A Study of Regional Economic Resilience

Improving upward economic mobility is critical to supporting and strengthening regional economic resilience. This report will outline case studies and best practices to reverse outward migration and bolster economic resilience, building on this theme from the Task Force's 2023 research. It will also incorporate primary data collection with secondary data to reveal economic strengths and gaps, and it will include recommendations to increase opportunities for upward economic mobility among all community members.

Health and Health Care: Lifestyle Medicine Deep Dive: Physical Activity

This study will expand on last year's report on lifestyle medicine by drilling down more deeply on physical activity, one of the six pillars of lifestyle medicine. This study will approach healthcare interventions and best practices for promoting physical activity as well as analyze the issue through an environmental health lens by identifying gaps in access to fitness and recreational facilities. Other structural issues will also be addressed, such as walkable/rideable neighborhoods and the social determinants of health.



Health and Health Care: The State of Telemedicine

This policy-focused report will provide background and context on the current state of telehealth services (availability, cost, barriers to access, etc.) in a rapidly evolving regulatory environment. Special attention will be given to opportunities and barriers to using telehealth to address behavioral health needs. Digital equity and its relationship with social determinants of health will also be discussed as it relates to telehealth access. Policy recommendations to promote effective use of telemedicine and local solutions to increase access to telehealth and digital equity will be included.



Housing: Luzerne County Housing Study

The Institute was awarded ARPA funds by Luzerne County to conduct a housing study. The study will evaluate the market and market changes and correlate them to socio-demographics shifts and housing composition by community. The study will then develop a series of recommendation on housing needs for the county to use as part of their housing strategy, to coordinate with the landbanks, and developers to ensure a stable, steady supply of housing at multiple price points to meet demand.

The Institute needs your support!

Data-driven decisions are essential for enhancing the vibrancy of the region and ensuring its long-term economic prosperity. That's why we hope you will contribute to our community-based research. Consider joining our growing list of underwriters.

To learn more, contact Teri at ooms@institutepa.org.

Board Member Brief

Institute Board Member Don Brominski recently spent a weekend supporting Patriot's Cove—a charity that helps Veterans.

Don told us, "When you help veterans and organizations such as Patriots' Cove, you too can feel like the Top Dog."



Academic Partner News

The University of Scranton and Seton Hall University School of Law have entered a direct admissions agreement that begins in fall 2023.



Many thanks to our Summer 2023 Research Interns!

Sunhyang An, The University of Scranton
Girmachew Wasihun, The University of Scranton
Derek Cunius, Wilkes University
Elizabeth Glowacki, Syracuse University
Isabelle Polgar, Davidson College
Parth Raval, Scranton High School

Client Solutions

Arts & Culture Studies
Asset Maps
Community Needs Assessments
Comprehensive Plans
Economic and Demographic Profiles
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Economic Development Strategies
Education Studies
Grant and Program Evaluation Support
Housing Studies
Survey Research
Indicators- Indexes
Industry Studies

Market and Feasibility Studies
Policy Analysis
Research Validation and Peer Review
Site Selection Research
Tourism Strategic Plans
Workforce Studies

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.

Community-Based Research

Access the latest regional research on The Institute's website. 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://www.institutepa.org/dashboard/>

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://www.institutepa.org/research-hub/>

Quarterly Economy Tracker

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

Policy Tracker

This tracker covers state and federal policy focused research and aims to educate and inform the reader about the challenges, opportunities, and potential non-partisan solutions.
<https://www.institutepa.org/policy-tracker/>

Polling Program

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

Thanks to our 2023 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!

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Join our growing list of research underwriters!
To learn more, contact Teri at ooms@institutepa.org.

