The Institute
Turning Information into Insight

Fall 2024
Newsletter

What's new at The Institute?

Plenty!

We've been busy. Our President & CEO Teri Ooms received the Douglas G. Allen Leadership Award in recognition of her commitment to improving the health of people in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

She also joined Steve Stumbris on Keystone Edition Reports, along with Larry Newman of Diamond City Partnership and Dan Knorr of Commonwealth University. They discussed the emerging challenges facing higher education institutions in Northeastern and Central Pennsylvania.

In addition to a presentation about community 'Vital Signs' during a plenary session at the inaugural Elevate2 conference, co-hosed by the First Community Foundation Partnership, COO Jill Avery-Stoss presented at the joint chamber Legislation Education & Advocacy Day, designed to further attendees' knowledge of the legislative process, grassroots advocacy, and major current statewide and national policy initiatives.

Jill also joined Leadership Northeast's Amplify Leadership cohort for a conversation about regional challenges and opportunities, and discussed the findings of the Luzerne County Housing Study alongside Chairman Charlie Kasko, at a luncheon of the Luzerne County Association of Realtors.

We've even welcomed a new Research Analyst, Brigitte Guariglia!

In this issue:

- Special thanks to out supporters
- 2025 Task Force research preview
- Anchors for Equity updates
- Client solutions
- 2024 Task Force research
- Who we are

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 Hazleton, Penn State Scranton, Penn State Wilkes-Barre, The Wright Center of Graduate Medical Education, University of Scranton, Wilkes University, and the business community

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MANY THANKS

to our 2024 community-based underwriters and Indicators event sponsors

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- PPL Electric Utilities
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Celebrating 20 years of turning information into insight!

Take a Sneak Peak!
Here is what you can expect from our Task Forces in 2025

Planning, Land Use, Transportation, and Infrastructure
Infrastructure as a Means of Combatting Rising Temperatures and Their Adverse Impacts
This study will begin with an overview of climate change in Pennsylvania and the potential health impacts of rising temperatures on various segments of the population.

Health and Health Care
Revitalizing Mental Health and Behavioral Health Care in NEPA
This research will explore challenges and potential solutions associated with the need for high-quality, accessible, and equitable mental health and behavioral health care in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Housing
Infill Development as a Solution to the Housing Crisis
The potential for infill housing will be explored in this report from an economic perspective, and it will encompass findings from The Institute's earlier study of blight in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Alternative housing arrangements, such as nonprofit housing, increased density, multi-family units, accessory dwelling units, modular housing, etc., will be addressed as well.

Education and Workforce Development
Closing the Achievement Gap: Addressing Vulnerabilities in the Region's Youth
This research will offer a profile of the region's young population including demographic, social, economic, academic, and health-related characteristics. This information, along with review and analysis of existing programs and policies, will help identify inequities and vulnerabilities (such as violence and exposure to gang activity) and potential solutions.

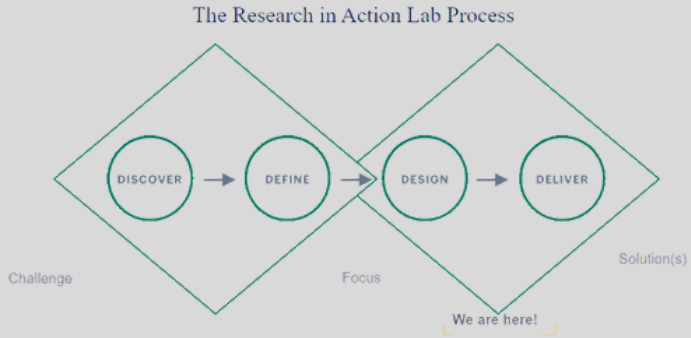
Jobs, Economy, and Economic Development
Addressing Challenges, Opportunities, and Other Driving Forces of Economic Mobility
To understand the impact of the region's average annual pay as it relates to economic mobility, a comparative study between Northeastern Pennsylvania and areas with similar economic conditions will be conducted. This report will incorporate regional data analysis and primary data collection to understand economic strengths and gaps in the region as they relate to economic mobility and identify ways to increase opportunities to support regional upward movement for all community members.

Energy--*Alternatives to Electricity Amid an Anticipated Shortage*- This report will address gaps in access to electricity anticipated by 2030, and it will explore topics such as modular nuclear and renewables, as well as identify solutions for filling the access gap in NEPA.

Anchors for Equity Activities

The Anchors for Equity Research in Action Lab is a project of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia's Anchor Economy Initiative. It has entered its final phases in Northeastern Pennsylvania!

- 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
- **Design:** 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



Individuals from participating organizations are collaborating to create new pathways to workforce success. Recent sessions included presentations from representatives of:

- the Hazleton Integration Project
- Luzerne IU I8
- U3 Advisors
- United Neighborhood Centers
- the William G. McGowan Charitable Fund

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.

Client Solutions

Arts & Culture Studies
Asset Maps
Community Needs Assessments
Comprehensive Plans
Economic and Demographic Profiles
Economic and Tax Impact Studies
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

In case you missed it...

Our 2024 Task Force Research is out now!

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 incorporates regional disability and education data for Pre-K through postsecondary learning. It examines 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, profiles the downtowns of the region's cities, including economic, housing, and demographic trends and identification of assets and barriers to revitalization. The analysis includes 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 examines policy changes and provides an update on EV implementation, while evaluating challenges such as emissions in battery manufacturing, short battery life, and disposal. The research considers 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 is considered too. Finally, the potential revenue loss associated with gas tax will is explored in conjunction with alternative funding opportunities for road maintenance.

New Task Force Research

...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 outlines 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 also incorporates primary data collection with secondary data to reveal economic strengths and gaps, and it includes recommendations to increase opportunities for upward economic mobility among all community members.

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

This study expands 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 covers healthcare interventions and best practices for promoting physical activity, and analyzes the issue through an environmental health lens by identifying gaps in access to fitness and recreational facilities. Other structural issues are addressed as well, including walkable/rideable neighborhoods and the social determinants of health.

Regionalism: Best Practices for Regional Planning Coordination

In 2023, the Regional Competitiveness Task Force prepared a primer of regional planning agencies as a way to increase effectiveness of planning activities. Several case studies were presented from other regions within Pennsylvania to illustrate possible models to adopt in Northeastern Pennsylvania. This report focuses further on implementation of such a strategy.

Housing: Luzerne County Housing Study

The Institute was awarded ARPA funds by Luzerne County to conduct a housing study. The study evaluates the market and market changes and correlate them to socio-demographics shifts and housing composition by community. The study also offers 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.

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 2024 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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