

# The Institute

Turning Information into Insight

Winter 2025

Newsletter

## Save The Date **INDICATORS 2026**



**Join The Institute at our  
21st Annual Indicators Event**

**May 12, 2026  
8:00 - 11:30 AM  
Mohegan Pennsylvania**



*More*  
**INFORMATION TO FOLLOW**

**The Institute**

Turning Information into Insight

 **MOHEGAN  
PENNSYLVANIA**

[WWW.INSTITUTEPA.ORG](http://WWW.INSTITUTEPA.ORG)

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# What's new at The Institute?



Teri Ooms met with PA Auditor General Tim DeFoor to discuss the Luzerne Learns to Work program, as well as the AG's Intern to Hire Career Pathway program. They discussed opportunities to support and expand programs like these that provide students with resources to help cultivate a career pathway and provide opportunities for work-based learning and academic development.

The Greater Scranton Chamber's workforce development division, Skills in Scranton, started their program Educator in the Workplace in October at The Chamber. They invited staff from The Institute and NEIU 19 to speak at the session. Jill Avery-Stoss spoke on the workforce landscape of NEPA.



Teri Ooms had the opportunity to meet with Yolanda Moore of The Reinvestment Fund thanks to The Wright Center for Community Health. Teri was able to introduce her The Institute and our work. The Reinvestment Fund is a mission-driven federally certified community development financial institution (CDFI) that is focused on improving communities by supporting and partnering with businesses and organizations that are working to expand opportunities in their region.



The Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business & Industry has been awarded a 2025 American Water Charitable Foundation Workforce Readiness Grant for \$50,000, focusing on general career readiness, financial and business literacy, positive youth development, and life skills training for the Chamber's Luzerne Learns to Work Program. Luzerne Learns to Work is supported by The Institute and several other local career exploration and workforce development agencies.

The Institute's recent economic impact study for the F.M. Kirby Center was featured in the Citizen's Voice this fall. The study covers how the F.M. Kirby Center generates economic impact in Downtown Wilkes-Barre and the Kirby's value in the community. Read more about the study at the Citizen's Voice website.

# Many Thanks

*to our 2025 community-based underwriters  
and Indicators event sponsors*

## Signature Underwriters

- Andrew J. Sordoni Foundation
- Luzerne County
- Sordoni Family Foundation

## Contributing Underwriters

- Geisinger Health System
- The Luzerne Foundation
- PPL Electric Utilities

## Supporting Underwriters

- BlackOut Design
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- Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport

## Task Force Video Sponsor

- WVIA Public Media



## Main Event Sponsor

- The Wright Center

## Platinum Sponsor

- Geisinger Health Services
- UGI Utilities

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- Classic Properties
- Johnson College
- King's College
- M&T Bank
- Marywood University
- Moses Taylor Foundation
- The Scranton Plan
- Scranton Area Community Foundation

## Silver Sponsors

- PSA Systems

## Bronze Sponsors

- Community Bank
- Greater Wyoming Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Luzerne County Community College

## Coming Soon:

# Our 2026 Task Force research is underway!

### **Planning, Land Use, Transportation, and Infrastructure**

#### *Beyond Cars and Busses: How People Move Through NEPA*

This research will explore the alternative avenues through which people move throughout the region. It will include a walkability index, with considerations regarding bikeability, accessibility for people with disabilities and mobility challenges, and the importance of infrastructure readiness and transit-oriented communities.

### **Health and Health Care**

#### *Medicaid as a Critical Component of Community Wellness*

The demand for Medicaid, a public health insurance program for some people with limited income, is substantial in Northeastern Pennsylvania. The availability of this support often falls short of satisfying the current need. This research will address the social, economic, and public health dynamics associated with public health insurance through Medicaid.

### **Housing**

#### *What to Know About Housing in NEPA: A Primer for the Community*

This study will serve as a tool for community education regarding regional housing challenges, including commonly used terms and phrases, barriers such as jurisdictional fragmentation and subjective interpretation of building codes, potential for loss of assistance, and the implications of such loss at the individual/household level (such as homelessness and housing insecurity) along with the community and economic levels (public health risks, workforce impacts, etc.). It will also identify possible solutions (including partnerships with private or for-profit entities, and options such as tax increment financing).

### **Education and Workforce Development**

#### *Understanding, Navigating, and Alleviating the Teacher Shortage*

Demand for teachers continues to grow amid a broader workforce shortage. This study will explore contributing factors and evaluate demand by level of education and discipline, including demand for instructors in trades and career and technical fields. Rural/urban divide and other disparities will also be considered, along with dynamics impacting support for workforce development. The study will highlight regional efforts to mitigate the challenge, in addition to other programs demonstrating success in alleviating the educator shortage.

### **Jobs, Economy, and Economic Development**

#### *Artificial Intelligence and Its Impact on Northeastern Pennsylvania's Top Sectors*

Artificial intelligence (AI) has taken hold in nearly every facet of life. Its rapidly rising prominence offers potential for improved automation, efficiency, and decision-making. Its versatility allows for its utilization in sectors ranging from logistics and manufacturing to healthcare and finance. This study will profile the region's top industries and assess the role of AI in each of these sectors, identifying the skills that are most relevant and sought-after by employers.

### **Energy**

#### *Exploring the Dynamics Surrounding Data Centers in Northeastern Pennsylvania*

The Commonwealth has been identified as a prime location for data centers, and their emerging presence in NEPA is notable. This study will offer an overview of data centers and their function, addressing potential community concerns and workforce implications while building upon prior research pertaining to resource adequacy. It will also consider the need for regulatory oversight.

## Understanding Local Government

The Institute has compiled a guide to understanding the different types of local government found in Pennsylvania to help our community make informed decisions when they vote. Local government offices are critical to the function of our community but are sometimes the least understood out of all the levels of government in the United States. Voting in local elections empowers us to choose leaders and policies that reflect our values and needs, making our communities stronger and more responsive.

# The Institute

*Turning Information into Insight*

## GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I don't understand what a  
Controller is.

What's the difference  
between a borough and a  
township?

What is the county council  
responsible for?



Visit our website to learn more about the role of local elected officials and how local government is organized before election day!

## Catch up on the latest policy and economy news!

Have you seen the latest editions of our quarterly Economy and Policy Trackers?

The third quarter edition of the economy tracker explores economic data, trends, and issues related to our region's economy.

The third quarter edition of the policy tracker covers state and federal policy focused research and aims to educate and inform about relevant challenges, opportunities, and potential non-partisan solutions.

[Read the Q3 Economy Tracker here!](#)

[Read the Q3 Policy Tracker here!](#)

The Public Policy and Civic Engagement Student Poll Brief is also out now!

[Access the brief  
here](#)

Learn about:  
student perceptions of the country and the Commonwealth  
top public policy issues  
awareness of current events  
voter registration and participation  
...and more!

### 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](mailto: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

## 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](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://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 2025 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  
Sordoni Family Foundation

### Contributing Underwriters

Geisinger Health System  
The Luzerne Foundation  
PPL Electric Utilities

### Supporting Underwriters

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Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce  
KMLA Group  
M&T Bank  
Peoples Security Bank & Trust  
PNC  
Rosenn Jenkins & Greenwald LLC  
UGI Utilities

### 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 Hazleton  
Penn State Scranton  
Penn State Wilkes-Barre  
The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education  
University of Scranton  
Wilkes University

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## 2025 Board of Directors

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Robert Luciani - Empower  
Katie Pittelli, Ed.D., Advisory Board Chair - Johnson College  
Paul Rushton - Rosenn Jenkins & Greenwald, LLP

## 2025 Advisory Board

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Join our growing list of research underwriters!  
To learn more, contact Teri at [ooms@institutepa.org](mailto:ooms@institutepa.org).

