

What's new at The Institute?

The Institute's research team extends a warm welcome to James Cousins and Menah Pratt- the newest leaders in NEPA's rich ecosystem of higher education institutions - and the newest members of our Advisory Board!



James Cousins, Ph.D.
8th President of Wilkes University.



Menah Pratt, J.D., Ph.D. Regional
Chancellor for Penn State Hazleton,
Scranton, and Wilkes-Barre.



Many thanks to our
NEPA Gives donors:

- Anonymous
- Joseph Glynn
- Elizabeth Hildebrandt
- Katie Pittelli
- Joseph Salva

At the heart of The Institute's mission is a commitment to rigorous research—both community-based and proprietary. In this spirit, Institute staff engage with government officials, inform the media and the public, and collaborate with nonprofit, private, and public partners on initiatives that serve society. We are committed to fostering nonpartisanship using our convening power to bring attention to the most pressing issues of the day. [Visit our website to view our full research catalog!](#)

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Many Thanks

*to our 2026 community-based underwriters
and Indicators event sponsors*

Signature Underwriters

- Luzerne County
- PPL Electric Utilities
- Sordoni Family Foundation

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- Geisinger Health System
- KMLA Group
- The Luzerne Foundation

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The Institute has released its 2025 Impact Report!
View the whole Annual report [HERE!](#)

The Institute

Turning Information into Insight

2025 Impact Report

The Institute is a non-profit research organization dedicated to empowering business and community leaders with research-based strategies for informed decision making. For over 20 years, The Institute has helped policymakers, and community leaders from the public, private, and non-profit sectors understand and address some of the region's most challenging problems. This research and the dialogue resulting from this work have been a catalyst behind many economic and community revitalization initiatives that have produced positive outcomes for the region and changed people's lives in tangible ways.

Indicators



150+ metrics

updated annually on The Institute's data dashboard and ATLAS mapping tool

14

categories of data

3

counties covered

Client Impact: F.M. Kirby Center

"The Institute helped us tell our story and confirmed the effect the Kirby Center has on downtown Wilkes-Barre. We wanted to answer the question: are we doing the business that I feel like we're doing? The Institute did an impact report for the Kirby Center, and confirmed that we had \$14 million in local economic impact during the 2024 - 2025

\$14 million

In economic impact

fiscal year. The story that data told gave us the front page of both local newspapers. It

gave me facts to share with our current donors and prospective donors. It also prepared us for creating a new strategic plan. And most importantly to me, as the leader of our organization, it validated the hard work of our entire staff, and it is motivating all of us to keep pushing and challenging ourselves now that we understand the value we bring to the region."

Joell Yarmel

Executive Director

F.M. Kirby Center for the Performing Arts



Community Based Research

\$11,218

of research time devoted to fulfilling information requests

\$84,933

of research time in support of local non-profit projects

6

task force studies completed annually

The Institute's task forces are focused on improving the quality of life and standard of living for the residents of northeastern Pennsylvania through information, data, and analytics surrounding the following:

- Housing
- Education and Workforce Development
- Jobs, Economy, and Economic Development
- Energy
- Health and Health Care
- Planning, Land Use, Transportation, and Infrastructure

11,830

hours of community based research done annually across all projects

Economy and Policy Trackers

The Institute produces two quarterly publications:

- **Economy Tracker:** covers economic and business trends in the region, including labor force statistics, unemployment updates, and housing affordability.
- **Policy Tracker:** features state and federal policy focused research and aims to inform the reader about the challenges, opportunities, and potential non-partisan solutions.



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2025 Impact Report

months of research and
meeting facilitation

11	program evaluations	10	economic impact studies
4	strategic planning support	2	needs assessments
2	data services	1	market study
1	housing study		

hours of learning



The Institute published a **Guide to Understanding Local Government in 2025**, to help our community understand the different levels of local government, and why it is important to vote in local elections.



Our 2027 Task Force research topics are now available!
Videos summarizing the 2026 research are now on our
[YouTube Channel](#).

Planning, Land Use, Transportation, and Infrastructure

Data Centers, Land Use, and Regional Infrastructure in Northeast Pennsylvania

The development of data centers in Northeastern Pennsylvania raises important questions about whether communities have the land use policies, zoning tools, utility capacity, and regional infrastructure needed to accommodate these projects. This study will review siting considerations, zoning ordinances (with regard to noise, setbacks, visual impacts, etc.), transportation access, emergency response, and compatibility with neighboring uses, while also examining how municipal decision-making could be strengthened through regional planning approaches. It will consider impacts on the electric grid, broadband, water and sewer capacity, roads, and public safety systems. The study will also explore third-party holistic evaluation frameworks, potential incentives for participation, strategies for reusing abandoned or underused buildings, and the role of community benefits agreements in ensuring that development produces measurable local value.

Health and Health Care

Information Overload and System Fragmentation:

Accessing Health Care in a Complex Environment

Many community members face growing difficulty navigating a fragmented and increasingly complex healthcare system. Challenges involve Medicaid and ACA Marketplace eligibility and enrollment requirements, workforce shortages, possible hospital closures, specialty-care barriers, and access to trusted health information. This study will explore the factors contributing to system fragmentation, barriers to access, and information gaps. Emerging uses of artificial intelligence in health care and in media, which have the potential to complicate or alleviate these pressures, will be explored as well.

Housing

Infrastructure Readiness for Housing Development

This community-based research study will examine local infrastructure challenges, along with the roles and responsibilities of public and private sector partners. The study will also explore how capacity in areas such as grant-writing affects small developers' ability to pursue projects and access resources that may be more readily available to larger developers. The findings will inform actionable recommendations for decision-makers seeking to strengthen infrastructure readiness, clarify responsibilities, and support equitable development opportunities.

Our 2027 Task Force research topics are now available! Videos summarizing the 2026 research are now on our [YouTube Channel](#)

Education and Workforce Development

Building and Strengthening Career Pathways in Northeastern Pennsylvania

This study will explore strengthening career awareness, workforce preparation, and talent retention with particular emphasis on early career exposure in middle school, exploring whether earlier access to information, hands-on experiences, mentors, and employer connections can help students better understand their options, select aligned academic and training pathways, and remain connected to opportunities in the region. It will also examine the role of career and technical centers, high schools, after-school programs, summer camps, higher education, clinical experiences, and on-the-job learning in shaping students' aspirations and readiness for local careers and will consider how stronger employer partnerships, community-based learning, and improved onboarding can support retention, reduce brain drain, and improve outcomes for both young people and regional employers.

Jobs, Economy, and Economic Development

Expanding Livable-Wage Opportunities in Northeastern Pennsylvania's Future Workforce

This study will examine what the future workforce in the region may look like with a particular focus on identifying livable-wage opportunities that can support economic stability for residents and families, and will also explore the infrastructure needed to help residents connect to these opportunities, including transportation, workforce housing, and clearer career pathway forecasts. It will consider the impact of demographic shifts and the role of AI on these opportunities, with attention to how employers – including small businesses – can adapt responsibly while maintaining ethical guardrails around AI use.

Energy

Rather than producing one lengthy study, the Institute will develop a series of focused briefs that explore the key issues surrounding data center expansion. Together, these briefs will explain how artificial intelligence, cloud computing, streaming, e-commerce, and enterprise data storage are fueling demand for new data centers. They will also look at what this growth means for electricity use and grid readiness, including power reliability, renewable energy procurement, backup generation, and regional utility planning. Another brief will explore water use, cooling technologies, heat generation, stormwater management, and the practical steps communities can take to evaluate environmental safeguards. The series will also highlight sustainability standards and best practices, such as energy efficiency, renewable energy sourcing, waste heat reuse, green building standards, battery storage, and emerging industry benchmarks.

Catch up on the latest policy and economy news!

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

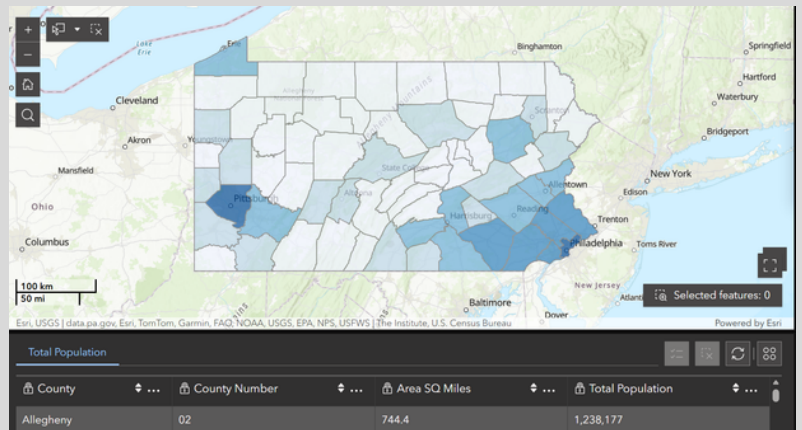
The second quarter edition of the economy tracker explores economic data, trends, and issues related to our region's economy.

The second 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 latest Economy Tracker here!](#)

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

The Institute's Economic & Social Trends Data Hub (A.T.L.A.S.) is an interactive tool designed to visualize key socioeconomic indicators across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. comprehensive and reliable foundation for analysis



The Post Graduation- What's Next? Student Poll Brief is also out now!

[Access the
brief here](#)

Learn about:
student perceptions of the country and the Commonwealth
What's next after college graduation
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@instituteupa.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

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 2026 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

Luzerne County
PPL Electric Utilities
Sordoni Family Foundation

Contributing Underwriters

Geisinger Health System
The Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce (Scranton Plan 3.0 Strategy)
KMLA Group
The Luzerne Foundation

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Greater Hazleton CAN DO
Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce
Highmark
M&T Bank
Peoples Security Bank & Trust
PNC
Rosenn Jenkins & Greenwald LLC
UGI Utilities

Academic Partners

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King's College
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University of Scranton
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Join our growing list of research underwriters!
To learn more, contact Teri at ooms@institutepa.org.

