



THE 2016 ONE REGION INDICATORS REPORT

Quality of Place in Northwest Indiana

One Region

www.oneregionnwi.org
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ONE REGION

LETTER FROM PRESIDENT & CEO

It is with great pleasure to introduce One Region's 2016 Quality of Place Indicators Report. This Report would not have been possible without the support of One Region's Board of Directors, Karnerblue Era LLC, and the Indicators Research Committee who graciously volunteered their time over the last year. Thank you to those who were involved in making the 2016 Indicators Report a reality.

As you may know, there are many iterations of this report as a new report is produced every four years. Over the years, One Region has done its best to be consistent with the indicators and data to allow for an "apples to apples" assessment of progression, status quo, or regression on the various indicators.

Together we have made progress within each indicator, yet it is evident that our region has opportunities that need to be addressed in a focused and collective manner. In the 2016 report, you'll see the use of the terms "Needs Improvement" or "Improving" to assess the direction of our region: Lake, Porter, and La Porte counties.

For your convenience, One Region printed an executive summary, and the full version and its chapters can be found on One Region's website: www.oneregionnwi.org. Each chapter provides a success story from a local organization, an aspiration statement determined by the Research Committee, data and analysis, and regional action measures providing thoughts around action that could lead toward improvements.

It is the hope of One Region that this report provides value regionally to stimulate conversations, bring awareness to ongoing or new issues, and above all else to bring forth action to move the needle forward.

One Region continues to evolve to meet the needs of our region, and the indicators report has been a critical piece in helping prioritize the issues of the region. It is an absolute honor to serve as the leader of this great organization, and I am excited to see the impact we will make collectively to improve our quality of place, our home.

Sincerely,



Leah Konrady

President & CEO

THE KEY FINDINGS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This year's One Region Indicators Report, like previous ones before it, is a celebration of Northwest Indiana. Together, we are highlighting the many achievements of our region, the ongoing work towards further advancements and the collaborative spirit empowering us all forward. In the coming pages, you'll read first-hand success stories from partners and stakeholders throughout Lake, Porter and La Porte counties. These exceptional leaders and organizations are trailblazing new ways of working together to improve local quality of life.

Additionally, you'll find the latest statistical insights from your county to better understand where NWI stands today and where it is going tomorrow. These key indicators serve as a civic engagement tool, providing a framework to spark community conversations. As the information is presented, ask yourself, "What does this data mean to me? What issues does it represent? What action can be taken?"

Igniting proper dialogue is often the first step in transforming communities and inspiring change. Therefore, a brief snapshot of the report's major findings and trends are included below to serve as initial talking points, hopefully guiding residents as well as community and civic leaders towards future improvements. The outlook is positive for our region thanks to continual efforts towards sustainability. Readers are encouraged to delve deeper into each chapter for more information, and collectively celebrate Northwest Indiana's numerous strengths.

PEOPLE

Northwest Indiana is the place to be as indicated from a 4 percent population growth, occurring primarily in Porter County, from 741,722 in 2000 to 768,748 in 2014. While this growth was slower than both the state and national rates, the region's landscape is changing. Non-traditional household types continue growing with the majority of homes either married without children or living alone in 2014. The medium age is 39.3-years-old, older than the state and national averages, with the region more diversified than Indiana as a whole and more reflective of the nation. However, this high level of diversity remains fairly concentrated along race and ethnicity by locale. Persons with disabilities represent 13 percent of the total regional population — that figure remaining unchanged between 2008 and 2014. Finally, more homes, 9.3 percent, are speaking a primary language other than English in 2014 compared to 8.5 percent of regional households in 2000.

- Northwest Indiana's net domestic migration remained negative with 1,908 people exiting the region in 2014 compared to 796 people in 2000. Porter County and La Porte County gained nearly 427 residents, while Lake County lost approximately 2,335 of them between 2000 – 2014.
- International migration remains strong. The region added nearly 652 people in 2014 compared to 282 people in 2000.

- Northwest Indiana’s population is projected to grow at a rate of 6 percent between 2015 and 2050 — representing half of the rate expected for Indiana and a quarter of the rate for the nation as a whole.
- By 2050, the total regional population is expected to reach over 832,000 people. Most of the population gain will occur in Porter County. Lake County will slightly grow its population, while La Porte County will experience a 5 percent loss.
- The 2014 composition of race in Northwest Indiana was 71 percent Caucasian, 18 percent Black/African American, 6 percent some other race alone and 5 percent as the balance of Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and two or more races.
- English as the primary language spoken at home slightly decreased from 91.5 percent in 2000 to 90.7 percent in 2014.
- 15 percent of Lake County households, 7.4 percent of Porter County households and 5.9 percent of La Porte County households spoke a primary language other than English at home.

ECONOMY

Overall Trend: Needs Improvement

The region is making more money as evident with per capita personal income (PCPI) rising 41 percent from \$28,027 to \$39,580 between 2000 – 2014. Further, in 2014, the 12 largest industries in Northwest Indiana employed 114,398 workers as well as generated \$8.3 billion in income and \$48.7 billion in output. This performance resulted in \$976,452 of income per worker and \$8 million in productivity. Between 2001 and 2014, industries increased average wages by 39 percent while losing 2 percent of total jobs. Northwest Indiana’s labor force grew 2 percent from 356,702 workers in 2000 to 363,529 workers in 2014. However, during that period, the number of unemployed more than doubled from 12,919 persons in 2000 to 27,097 persons in 2014, while the number of employed declined by 7,351 or 2 percent to 336,432 workers. Locally, the unemployment rate rose from 3.6 percent in 2000 to 7.5 percent in 2014, surpassing both the state and national rates that year. Poverty also remains a persistent regional challenge, increasing steadily from 9 percent in 2000 to 15 percent in 2014, on par with the state during the same period.

The Gross Regional Product (GRP) for Northwest Indiana grew 18 percent from \$28.1 billion in 2010 to \$33.1 billion in 2014. Compared to its big-city neighbor, Northwest Indiana’s economic well-being measure of 95.1 outperformed Chicago’s at 94.3, and fell just below the state at 96.2. With an Innovation Index of 83.7, areas for improvement include Northwest Indiana measuring less innovative compared to the Chicago MSA at 96.8, Indianapolis at 97.1 and state at 90.5. The nation overall ranked 100.

- In 2014, Lake County’s PCPI increased from \$27,060 in 2000 to \$38,386 in 2014. La Porte County’s PCPI went from \$25,237 in 2000 to \$35,882 in 2014. Porter County’s PCPI rose from \$31,785 in 2000 to \$44,472 in 2014.
- Porter County’s PCPI maintained the highest level of personal income over the 14-year period, and its 2014 PCPI of \$44,472 exceeded the state’s PCPI of \$39,578 by \$4,894.

- In 2014, the top industry in Lake County by employment was iron and steel mills with nearly 12,000 employees followed by hospitals at approximately 11,500. Porter County's top industry by employment was iron and steel mills with nearly 4,800 employees followed by wholesale trade at approximately 3,780. La Porte County's top industry by employment was hospitals with just over 2,000 employees followed by physicians at approximately 1,500.
- Average wages rose from \$31,552 to \$44,013. Jobs declined from 107,118 to 104,659. In 2014, industries' average wages were \$46,902 in Lake County, \$44,811 in Porter County and \$40,325 in La Porte County.
- The 2014 unemployment rate was 8.1 percent in Lake County, 7.7 percent in La Porte County and 6.3 in Porter County.
- The GRP of Lake County was \$22.7 billion, Porter County's at \$6.3 billion and La Porte County's at \$3.9 billion in 2014.

ENVIRONMENT

Overall Trend: Improving

Multiple Northwest Indiana environmental factors continue to progress. First, the air quality index between 2000 and 2014 shows overall significant improvement. The number of good days totaled 209 and number of moderate days totaled 148 in 2014. Additionally, one of the region's greatest natural assets, Northwest Indiana's 31 beaches saw a rise in the percentage of beach season days not under a closure or advisory action, referred to as "beach action days" with 89 percent of the season without action in 2014. Environmental protection remains strong as roughly 15 miles, or 24 percent, of the 65 miles of regional Lake Michigan shoreline is protected. While 140 miles, or 6 percent, of the 2,496 miles of area rivers and streams are protected and approximately 780 miles, or 31 percent, are managed. Inland lakes represent 10,508 acres with 828 acres, or 8 percent, protected and 3,335 miles, or 32 percent, managed. Finally, solid and hazardous waste disposal significantly increased between 2000 – 2014, rising from 1.8 tons per capita in 2000 to 4.95 tons in 2014.

- During 2014, Lake County's air quality comprised of 35 percent or 128 good days, 62 percent or 226 moderate days and 3 percent or 11 days unhealthy for sensitive groups.
- Porter County's air quality consisted of 53 percent or 194 good days, 47 percent or 170 moderate days and less than zero percent or one day unhealthy for sensitive groups.
- La Porte County's air quality registered 85 percent or 306 good days, 14 percent or 49 moderate days and one percent or 3 days unhealthy for sensitive groups.
- The total acres desired for green infrastructure is 367,902 or 38 percent of total land mass. Of that amount, 38 percent of Lake County or 121,207 acres are desired. In Porter County, 34 percent of the land mass or 91,035 acres are desired. In La Porte County, 40 percent of the land mass or 155,660 acres are desired for green infrastructure uses.
- Of those desired green infrastructure acres, 42, 341 or 4 percent are currently managed lands under ownership by public or nonprofit entities.
- Of these managed lands, nearly 1,356 acres are not publicly-accessible today including 288 acres in Lake County, 75 in Porter County and 993 in La Porte County.

TRANSPORTATION

Overall Trend: Needs Improvement

Northwest Indiana is on-the-go with more commuters traveling from their Lake-, Porter- and La Porte-county homes to-work at 91,509 people or 58 percent compared to commuters traveling from another county or state into the region to work at 66,584 people or 42 percent in 2014. Little change in travel means to work occurred regionally between 2000 and 2014. A majority of commuters still drove alone, fewer carpooled, more worked from home and about the same took public transit. Regional average travel times to work of 25.7 minutes was on par with the national average and two minutes longer than the state's average. Lake County commuters took longer to travel at 27.7 minutes compared to Porter County at 26.8 minutes and La Porte County at 22.6 minutes. Overall trends indicate further improvements needed locally to diversity public transportation options.

- Commuter rail service maintained 3.6 million passengers in 2014. Regionally bus transit ridership fell 49 percent between 2000 and 2014 to 1.3 million riders. Demand response ridership also declined 55 percent over the same period to 185, 757 riders. System changes account for much of the shift in ridership that has occurred.
- The operational efficiency of local bus and commuter transit systems varies by system. In 2014, rural demand response systems and the City of Valparaiso small fixed route system outperformed statewide peers on fare recovery. The City of Gary and Michigan City transit systems operated well but at fare recovery below the statewide average. NICTD continued its strong performance.
- Northwest Indiana enjoys over 100 miles of regional off-road bike trails. Over the past 14 years, 52 miles were added to the bike trail system.

EDUCATION

Overall Trend: Improving

The level of educational attainment in Northwest Indiana continues to improve with more people graduating from high school. Additionally, ISTEP performance in math and language arts improved between 2006 – 2014. Test-takers in the fourth and eighth grades passed ISTEP on average at 80 percent and 71 percent in 2014. Student enrollment was more diverse in 2014 than in 2000. The 2014 student population was 52 percent Caucasian, 23 percent African-American, 19 percent Hispanic/Latino, 4 percent multi-racial, 1 percent Asian/Pacific Islander and less than 1 percent Native-American. The percentage of students qualifying for a free and reduced lunch continues to increase regionally and statewide. On average, 48 percent of NWI students qualified for free and reduced lunch in 2014. Poverty is a determining factor influencing a student's academic success and school performance with 47 percent of Northwest Indiana's children under age 5 living in poverty in 2014. Further, access to and ability to pay for high-quality childcare or early learning is a significant problem facing many families with working parents.

- In 2014, the percentage of people with a high school diploma was 36 percent, some college at 24 percent, bachelor's degree at 14 percent, associate's degree at 8 percent and graduate degree or higher at 7.1 percent.

- Those with a high school diploma in 2014 was 36 percent in Lake County, 35 percent in Porter County and 39 percent in La Porte County.
- Those with a bachelor's degree in 2014 was 14 percent in Lake County, 17 percent in Porter County and 11 percent in La Porte County.
- Regionally, 90 percent of high schoolers graduated within four years, up 17 points from 77 percent in 2006.
- The percentage of fourth-graders passing ISTEP in 2014 was 74 percent in Lake County, 86 percent in Porter County and 80 percent in La Porte County.
- Eighth-graders passing ISTEP in 2014 reached 62 percent in Lake County, 81 percent in Porter County and 68 percent in La Porte County.
- Students qualifying for free and reduced lunch was 54 percent in Lake County, 35 percent in Porter County and 54 percent of La Porte County in 2014.
- Average cost of childcare is \$7,494 in Lake County, \$8,509 in Porter County and \$7,046 in La Porte County. The average cost of childcare as a percent of income is 14 percent in Lake and La Porte counties and 11 percent in Porter County.
- In terms of enrollment in designated high-quality childcare programs, 43 percent of children in Porter County have access, while only 30 percent and 34 percent of children in Lake and Porter counties respectively have access.

HEALTH

Overall Trend: Needs Improvement

According to county health rankings, Northwest Indiana tended to be less healthy than the rest of Indiana and below national benchmarks between 2010 and 2014. By a number of measures, Lake and La Porte counties were among the least healthy counties in Indiana, even though the region saw improvements in health during this period. Social and economic factors influencing health outcomes include regional counties having lower rates of high school graduation, higher unemployment, greater number of children living in poverty, more families without adequate social or emotional support and a greater risk of crime when compared to national benchmarks. In terms of physical environment, NWI and the state had less access to recreational facilities and healthy food options, but more fast food restaurants in 2013. A contributing factor perhaps includes over one-third of workers on average driving more than 30 minutes to work each day. Although not meeting the national benchmark, the region is improving on air pollution, yet drinking water violations have fluctuated by county and year in each county — potentially exposing residents to water exceeding a violation limit.

- Between 2010 and 2014, mortality or premature death rates — death before the age of 75 — were higher in both Northwest Indiana and the state than in the nation overall. On the measure of morbidity, which includes the amount of time spent in poor mental or physical health, Northwest Indiana performed worse than national benchmarks with little change between 2000 and 2014. The region also performed worse than the national benchmark for the percentage of babies with low birth weight.
- On measures of health behaviors such as smoking, excessive drinking, adult obesity, teen birth and sexually transmitted infections, the region and the state performed poorly compared to

national benchmarks on average between 2010 and 2014. With the exception of sexually transmitted infections, changes were minor.

- A greater percentage of region and state residents lack medical insurance and there are more preventable hospital stays.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Overall Trend: Improving

Positively speaking, the region was relatively safer in 2014 than it was in 2000. The majority of the reported crime rates had dropped at the regional level between 2000 and 2014. In short, crime is very localized. According to data, children were generally safer from neglect and abuse in 2014 than in 2000.

- The region's murder rate dropped by 32 percent from 13 to 9 murders per 100,000 people. Lake County continued to have the highest murder rate in the region, at 12 murders per 100,000, which had fallen from 19 in 2000.
- The robbery rate dropped 31 percent from 144 to 100 robberies per 100,000 people.
- The aggravated assault rate fell 4 percent from 186 to 178 per 100,000 people.
- The reported rate of rapes dropped by 23 percent from 22 to 17 rapes per 100,000.
- Thefts of personal property dropped over the decade. After peaking at 846 in 2011, burglaries dropped 23 percent between 2000 and 2014 from 605 to 468 burglaries per 100,000 people. Larceny theft declined 15 percent from 2,199 to 1,869 per 100,000 people. Similarly, vehicle theft dropped 57 percent from 488 to 209 per 100,000 people.
- The number of juvenile delinquency case filings dropped by 33 percent from 2,739 in 2010 to 1,825 in 2014.
- Substantiated child neglect cases in Northwest Indiana decreased 1 percent overall from 2000 – 2014, but increased by 7 percent from 2010 – 2014. Lake County cases increased by 69 percent during the 14-year period. Despite decreasing 40 percent between 2000 – 2014, La Porte County experienced a 44 percent increase in child neglect cases over the past four years. Regionally, physical abuse cases dropped 64 percent from 2000 – 2014. However, Porter County substantiated physical abuse cases increased by 67 percent from 2010 – 2014. Regionally, child sexual abuse also declined by 34 percent from 2000 – 2014.

HOUSING

Overall Trend: Needs Improvement

Housing in Northwest Indiana remains steady with homes increasing in value throughout the region. The average median home value was up 37 percent to \$142,700 in 2014 from \$103,867 in 2000. Regionally, the rate of increase slowed following the national recession, but began to stabilize mid-decade with the exception of Lake County. Rents have also increased with the average regional median rent rising, primarily in Lake County, by 49 percent between 2000 and 2014 from \$555 to \$798. As property values and rents have increased, homeowners and renters are having a more difficult time affording housing, yet the number of households who struggle has improved following a 2010 – 2011 peak. Post housing crisis and recession, Northwest Indiana continues to be burdened by a hefty number of vacant homes.

Construction of new housing declined sharply from 2006 to 2011. However, since 2012, the annual number of housing starts has risen slightly, indicating the market may have stabilized.

- In Northwest Indiana, 22 percent of households struggled to make mortgage payments in 2014, compared to 17.4 percent in 2000. Still, this has improved from 2011 when just under 50,000 households, or 23.9 percent, struggled.
- In Lake County, the number of homeowners with unaffordable housing rose from 19.2 percent in 2000 to 23.4 percent in 2014. In Porter County, the number rose from 16.3 percent in 2000 to 19.4 percent in 2014. In La Porte County, the number increased from 16.8 percent to 19.9 percent. Nationally, 25 percent of homeowners paid more than 30 percent of their income for housing in 2014.
- Northwest Indiana renters struggled to afford housing at an even higher rate than homeowners, similar to renters across the nation. Regionally, the number increased from 33.8 percent of renters in 2000 to 48.9 percent of renters in 2014. The 2014 rate actually represented a slight decrease from 54.8 percent in 2010.
- Regionally, the number of vacant homes rose 92 percent from 20,897 in 2000 to 40,222 in 2014. In 2000, 7.3 percent of homes were vacant. In 2014, the percentage of vacant homes had risen to 12.3 percent.
- The annual number of housing starts fell 57 percent from 3,475 in 2000 to 1,481 in 2014. Since 2010, the number of new homes has increased by 14 percent within the region. Porter County has seen the most growth with new home construction up by 78 percent since 2010.

ARTS & CULTURE

Overall Trend: Improving

Although down following the recession, funding to the arts is improving along with many other similar trends. Reports showed Northwest Indiana arts-related businesses has increased to 1,139 and creative sector workers decreased slightly to 4,691 in 2015. It is the region's rich cultural, recreational and natural resources drawing in millions of tourists from across the globe each year. The majority of these visitors in 2012 and 2013 came from the nearby states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio but the region also saw visitors from as far away as Germany staying an average of 2.4 days and typically traveled in a party of 3.7 people. The most popular attractions continued to be the four casinos, Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, Indiana Dunes State Park, Lighthouse Place Outlets, Albanese Candy Factory restaurants, sports events and recreational facilities such as Deep River Water Park, Zao Island and Washington Park Zoo.

And while charitable giving decreased nationally following the recession, regional giving accounted for just under \$285.7 million in personal income to charity organizations annually as of 2012. Lake County residents are most generous, donating about 2.79 percent of the median income. Based on 2013 data human services, health and education remain the focus of more nonprofit activity in Northwest Indiana than the arts, environment, international affairs or civil rights. In 2014, there were 3,122 registered nonprofit organizations in Northwest Indiana, a 2 percent rise from 2000, representing 9 percent of Indiana's nonprofit sector.

- Between 2000 and 2014, Indiana Arts Commission funding to Northwest Indiana through the South Shore Arts, increased \$142,647 to \$187,679 or 12 percent. The number of grants awarded increased from 21 in 2001 to 34 in 2014, but the average grant amount decreased by 2 percent.
- According to data from 2013 and 2014, Northwest Indiana's tourism and travel industry provided 23,083 jobs and \$213 million in wages per year. Taxes generated through income and sales taxes connected to tourism and travel totaled \$300.5 million per year.
- Visitors spent over \$1.8 billion in the region per year. Lake County benefited the most from the tourism industry with \$795.3 million in spending in 2014 to generate 12,225 direct jobs. In 2013, Porter County saw \$386.6 million in revenue to generate 4,962 jobs. In La Porte County, \$619.2 million in tourism and travel revenue in 2014 generated 5,896 jobs.
- Total revenues and total assets of Northwest Indiana nonprofit organizations rose between 2000 and 2014. Revenues reached just under \$3 billion in 2014, an increase of 95 percent from \$1.5 billion in 2000. Assets grew to \$5.6 billion in 2014, an increase of 89 percent from \$2.9 million in 2000.

GOVERNMENT

Overall Trend: Improving

The total net assessed valuation of property increased significantly between 2006 and 2014. In 2006, rates reflected statewide restructuring measures changing the formulas for assessed valuation. Budget appropriations local governments rose 1 percent to \$2.06 billion in 2014. When comparing presidential election years, voter registration for the general election increased 5 percent in the region from 509,415 registered voters in 2000 to 534,731 in 2012. As everywhere, turnout in both primaries and general elections was highest during years with a presidential election. Regional commitment to ethics and civility is beginning to change perceptions within Northwest Indiana. Long term, this commitment should improve public confidence in local government, which should lead to more active civic engagement.

- The total net assessed valuation in Northwest Indiana rose an estimated \$1.2 billion, or 4 percent, between 2006 and 2014 from 18.0 billion to \$30.1 billion.
- Net assessed value increased 7 percent from \$19.2 billion to \$20.6 billion in Lake County, dropped 6 percent from \$8.9 billion to \$8.3 billion in Porter County and grew 7 percent from \$4.8 billion in 2006 to \$5.2 billion in 2014 in La Porte County.
- Total spending in Lake County decreased by 4 percent to \$1.36 billion in 2014 in Lake County, rose 14 percent to \$408 million in Porter County and rose 14 percent to \$285 million in La Porte County.
- Overall, per capita government spending increased 19 percent on average from \$1,936 in 2006 to \$2,295 in 2014. Local government spending per capita dropped 56 percent from \$3,206 in 2006 to \$1,398 per capita in 2014 in Lake County, rose 4 percent from \$1,973 in 2006 to \$2,051 in Porter County and rose a significant 490 percent from \$630 in 2006 to \$3,718 in La Porte County.
- Average voter turnout for general elections during presidential years was 61 percent in Northwest Indiana, 6 percentage points higher than the national average during the same time period.

- From 2009 – 2015, Northwest Indiana advanced its commitment to ethics with the number of governments committing to the voluntary Shared Ethics Advisory Commission’s membership requirements increasing from three in 2005 to 23 in 2016.

A REGIONAL SUCCESS STORY

ACHIEVING SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Local United Ways in Northwest Indiana believe facilitating change begins best through communication. And not just any regular old conversation will do for these organizations. Civil discourse — or conversation intended to enhance understanding — focuses on community dialogue that is respectful, constructive, collaborative, solution-focused and conducive to building healthy communities.

Throughout 2014 and 2015, local United Ways engaged their communities at the grassroots level to guide in building plans towards a collective impact. By bringing hundreds of people of all types together for one common agenda, United Ways have formed long-lasting strategies to strengthen communities unlike never before.


As Lisa Daugherty, president and CEO of the Lake Area United Way, explained, these conversations provided a safe space for people to join together. “The ultimate goal at the conclusion of the conversation is to gain an understanding of the group’s aspirations and community concerns, identify priority issues to be addressed and barriers that prevent progress, determine potential action steps that could be taken as well as gain insight into the individuals and/or organizations that the group would trust to take action and lead change,” she said.

Together the Lake Area United Way, United Way of Porter County and United Way of La Porte County strategically partnered with

numerous community- and faith-based organizations, local employers and civic organizations. Though each county had a different plan format and outcome, each United Way took the non-traditional method of “The Harwood Approach” to turn outward.

This external approach uses the community — not the conference rooms — as the main reference point for decisions. Thereby, the United Ways formed the strategies to pursue, the partners to choose, how to begin and then grow efforts over time and even how to structure and run internally.

Through one united cause, each county identified varying goals for their respective communities. In Lake County, priority issues included children and youth, education as well as public safety. Porter County learned activities for youth and families, affordable and safe housing, a drug-free community, affordable public transportation, good jobs with livable



“WE BELIEVED THAT IF YOU TURN OUTWARD AND MAKE MORE INTENTIONAL JUDGEMENTS AND CHOICES IN CREATING CHANGE, YOU WILL PRODUCE A GREATER IMPACT AND RELEVANCE IN YOUR COMMUNITY.”

- Lisa Daugherty
Lake Area United Way

wages, a diverse and inclusive community as well as a highly engaged community were priorities.

While, in La Porte County, priority issues included preparing preschoolers and students for a lifetime of success, bridges out of poverty with reduction of homelessness and children living in poverty, increased positive maternal

and child health outcomes, increased healthy lifestyles that lead to a reduction of obesity and chronic illness as well as reduction of substance abuse.

While unique, leaders said this regional grassroots approach was labor intensive. Across the counties, hundreds of hours were invested by community volunteers and United Way staff to ensure the voices heard represented the rich diversity of the region. Daugherty said, “To our knowledge, this is the only effort of its kind in Northwest Indiana.”

Additionally, a critical element of the initiative was accessibility. In Lake and Porter counties, partnering organizations served as conversation hosts, informing and inviting residents to participate in the discussion at their location. This strategy proved to be the most effective in gaining community trust and participation.

Further, the United Way of La Porte County held community conversations at a conference center, facilitated round-table discussions, made survey questions available online and held targeted focus group conversations throughout the county to ensure demographically representative responses. Additional conversations were held to discuss strengths and resources in the county, share ongoing findings, gather additional input and fine-tune funding goals. Separate summits were also held with local experts and professionals.

These conversations were a first step in understanding the communities’ aspirations. For the future, United Ways in each county will engage more community members and leaders, identify strategic partners and develop strategies to address these important community priorities. Leaders said they will continue to keep the lines of communication with the community open to engage residents, leaders and providers throughout strategy development and implementation.

“United Way improves lives by mobilizing the caring power of the community to advance the common good,” Daugherty said. “That starts with understanding the needs and priorities of the community through the perspective of its residents.”

Those interested in making their communities a better place may contact their local United Way:

Lake Area United Way

www.lauw.org

United Way of Porter County

www.unitedwaypc.org

United Way of La Porte County

www.unitedwaylpc.org

WE ARE CARING & VIBRANT PEOPLE

DOMAIN 1: PEOPLE

A dynamic, healthy and just region arises from people being more capable of fully living and flourishing in the communities contained within. As places become more accessible and nourishing, people develop and thrive. Individuals connect to one another and form stronger bonds with the world around them. When perceptions shift, culture changes. As people expand their awareness, the separation and division gives way to a sense of wholeness and unity, both individually and collectively. The deeper truth emerges - “we are all in this together.”

Behind the success of a sustainable, prosperous region are a range of developable assets and capacities uniquely tied to people and place. Northwest Indiana lies on the southern shore of Lake Michigan and within the Chicago metropolitan area. The features that make this region a premier location today rests solely on the geological processes of the last Ice Age. Its convergence of diverse climate, fertile soil, ample water created a globally-rare ecosystem. From the Indigenous culture to colonial settlement and migration history, stories abound on the inherent abundance found in this region and its ability to support diverse communities of human, plant, and animal life. People utilized the land, water and global trade routes for making this Midwest region their home and more.

The bounty of Northwest Indiana’s natural capital made it an ideal marketplace, albeit a complex one. Its proximity to Chicago and the local industrial, agricultural, commercial and technological assets fueled the development of 41 cities and towns and the migration of tens of thousands of people. Periods of economic growth afforded many, but not all, access to employment, homeownership, security, education and purpose. Today, regional progress contributes toward an improved quality of life and a more inclusive experience, however, to whom and where the benefits accumulate still concern residents.¹

The people of Northwest Indiana remain its most valuable asset. They represent the core of communities and the sum total of human capital. The culture diversity of Northwest Indiana residents makes this region strong and makes many residents region proud. A new celebration of who we are and where we are from is emerging. The old ways of doing are falling wayside to better ways of being. Collaboration, innovation, creativity and compassion are just a few of the human capacities reshaping regional identity. We are an evolving region, and a microcosm of the larger world.

Region in Motion

- In 2014, the total population of Northwest Indiana reached 768,748 persons, a growth of 4 percent from 741,722 persons in 2000.
- Most of the population increase between 2000 - 2014 occurred in Porter County.

¹ One Region. Research notes of participants’ comments at the Regional Priorities Summit held November 20, 2015.

- Northwest Indiana's 4 percent rate of growth between 2000 - 2014 was slower than both the state and the nation rate of growth at 8 percent and 13 percent respectively.
- Lake County represents 64 percent of the regional population, followed by Porter County at 22 percent and La Porte County at 14 percent.
- Northwest Indiana's net domestic migration remained negative with 1,908 people exiting the region in 2014 compared to 796 people in 2000. Porter County and La Porte County gained nearly 427 residents, while Lake County lost approximately 2,335 of them between 2000 - 2014.
- International migration remains strong in Northwest Indiana. The region added nearly 652 people in 2014 compared to 282 people in 2000.
- Natural increases in the population added 1,688 people in 2014 compared to 879 people in 2000.
- Northwest Indiana's population is projected to grow at a rate of 6 percent between 2015 and 2050, that is half of the rate expected for Indiana and a quarter of the rate for the nation as a whole.
- By 2050, the total regional population is expected to reach over 832,000 people. Most of the population gain will occur in Porter County. Lake County will slightly grow its population, while La Porte County will experience a 5 percent loss.
- Seniors are a growing segment of the regional population, while older adults will be contracting in size by 2050.
- The median age of Northwest Indiana is 39.3 years old. La Porte County is at 40.2 years, followed by Porter County at 39.3 years and Lake County at 38.3 years. The regional population, as a whole, is older than the state and nation's median ages of 37.5 and 37.7 years respectively.
- The 2014 composition of race in Northwest Indiana was 71 percent Caucasian, 18 percent Black/African American, 6 percent some other race alone and 5 percent as the balance of Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and two or more races. The Northwest Indiana region is more diverse than Indiana as a whole and more reflective of the nation.
- Northwest Indiana maintains a high level of diversity yet the mix of people remains fairly concentrated along race and ethnicity by locale.
- As a percent of the total regional population, persons with disabilities represent 13 percent. The proportion remains unchanged between 2008 and 2014. In 2014, the disabled population reached 15 percent in Lake County, 11 percent in Porter County and 13 percent in La Porte County.
- English as the primary language spoken at home slightly decreased from 91.5 percent in 2000 to 90.7 percent in 2014. More homes, 9.3 percent, are speaking a primary language other than English in 2014 compared 8.5 percent of regional households in 2000.
- 15 percent of Lake County households, 7.4 percent of Porter County households and 5.9 percent of La Porte County households spoke a primary language other than English at home.
- Non-traditional household types continue growing in number. In 2014, the majority of homes were either married without children or living alone.

Total Population

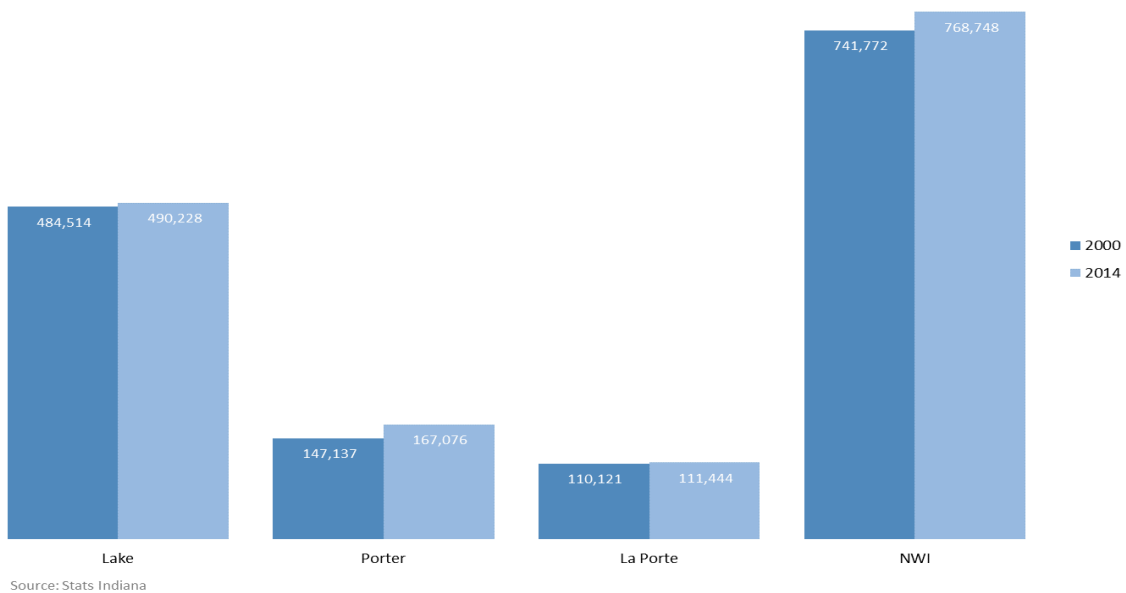
In 2014, the total population of Northwest Indiana reached 768,748 persons from 741,722 persons in 2000, a growth of 4 percent. Lake County's population grew 1 percent from 484,514 in 2000 to 490,288 in 2014. Porter County's population rose 14 percent from 147,137 in 2000 to 167,076 in 2014. La Porte County's population remained relatively flat during this time period, going from 110,121 to 111,444 people. The overall region gained 26,976 persons in total population over the last fourteen years, a majority of whom settled in Porter County.

The people of Northwest Indiana represented 12 percent of the Indiana's total population of 6.59 million Hoosiers and 0.26 percent of the United States' population of 318.8 million Americans. Within the region, 64 percent of the people reside in Lake County followed by 22 percent in Porter County and 14 percent in La Porte County. There has been relatively little shift in this regional composition since 2000.

Northwest Indiana's 4 percent growth in population lagged behind both the state's 8 percent growth, from 6.0 million in 2000 to 6.5 million in 2014, and the nation's 13 percent rise in total population, from 281.4 million in 2000 to 318.8 million in 2014.

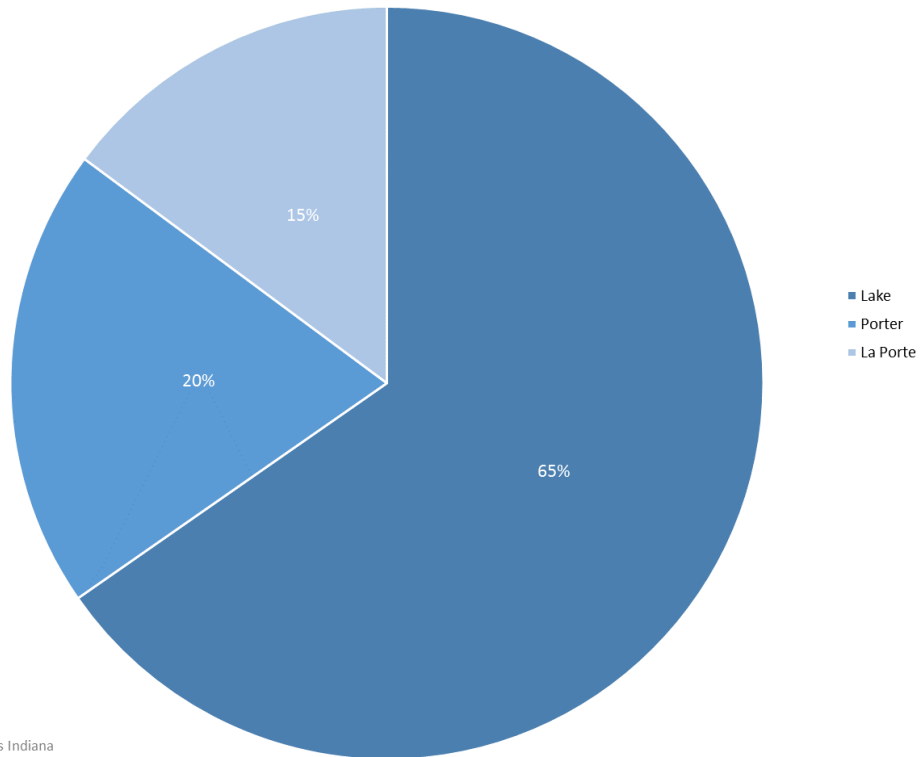
In 2015, the most populous communities within Northwest Indiana are Hammond (pop. 77,614), Gary (pop. 77,156), Portage (pop. 36,738), Merrillville (pop. 35,244), Valparaiso (pop. 32,626), Michigan City (pop. 31,459), Crown Point (pop. 28,879), Schererville (pop. 28,791), East Chicago (pop. 28,699), and Hobart (pop. 28,404).²

Total Population



² Stats Indiana, "Custom Region Profile," http://www.stats.indiana.edu/profiles/profiles.asp?scope_choice=b&county_changer2=Riarc:7, accessed June 1, 2016.

County Population as Percent of Total Population, 2000



Source: Stats Indiana

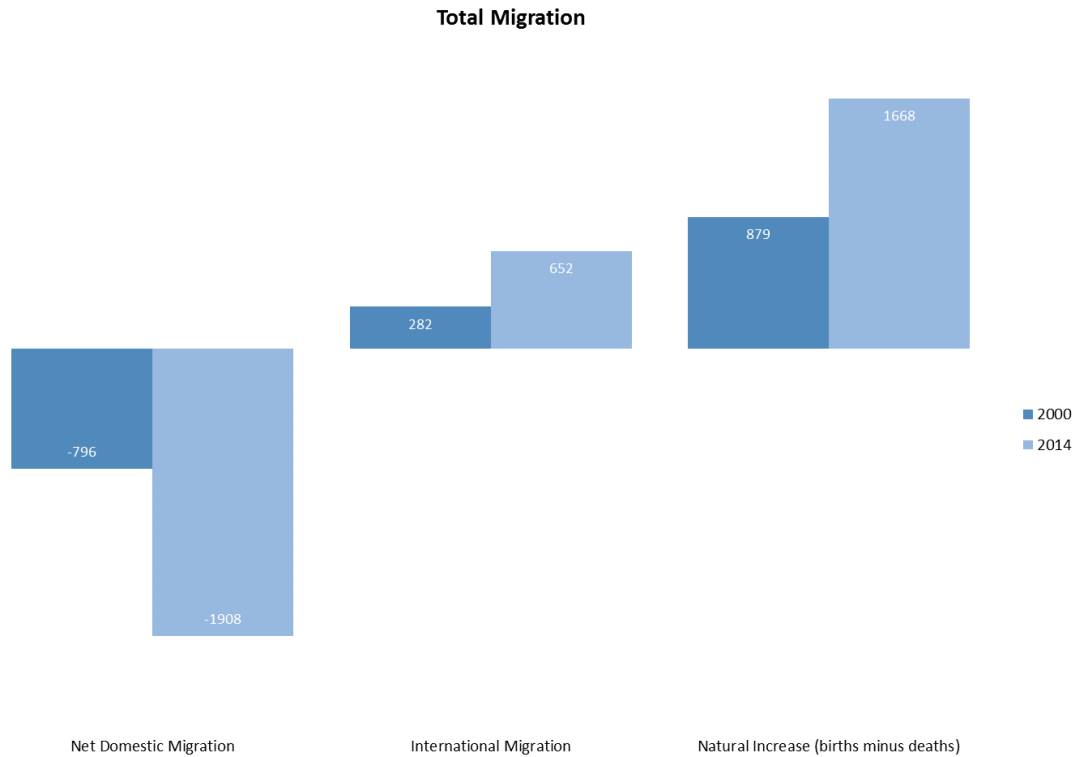
Migration

Migration patterns reveal how the population is changing over time. A positive net migration indicates that a location is faring well in providing economic and social opportunities for people, while a negative net migration means that greater challenges exist in that regard.

Northwest Indiana continued to experience a negative net domestic migration, due to the outflow from Lake County. 1,908 people left the region in 2014 compared to 796 people in 2000. Lake County lost 2,335 residents in 2014 whereas 845 people left in 2000. This overall trend mirrors state net domestic migration. Indiana lost 7,506 Hoosiers in 2014 compared to only 267 lost in 2000. Both Porter and La Porte counties gained in net domestic migration. Porter County attracted 274 persons in 2014 compared to 144 people in 2000. La Porte County shifted into a net gain in 2014 with 153 persons moving in compared to a loss of 95 people in 2000.

Northwest Indiana experienced an influx of 652 people from international migration in 2014, up from 282 people in 2000. Each county contributed to this growth by adding 411 in Lake County, 188 in Porter County and 53 in La Porte County. Likewise, Indiana attracted 12,513 people in 2014, up from 2,867 in 2000.

The natural increase of 1,668 persons in Northwest Indiana in 2014 was higher than the 879 persons in 2000. Each county positively contributed to that rise, and this trend reflects in Indiana's growth of 24,062 persons in 2014, nearly 3 times more than 2000.



Population Projections

Population projections between 2015 and 2050 suggest that Northwest Indiana will grow at a rate of 6 percent from 786,902 to 832,844 persons. Indiana and the U.S. are projected to grow at 12 percent and 24 percent respectively. Indiana is forecasted to grow from 6.7 million to 7.4 million, while the U.S. will rise from 321.3 million to 398.3 million over the 35-year period.

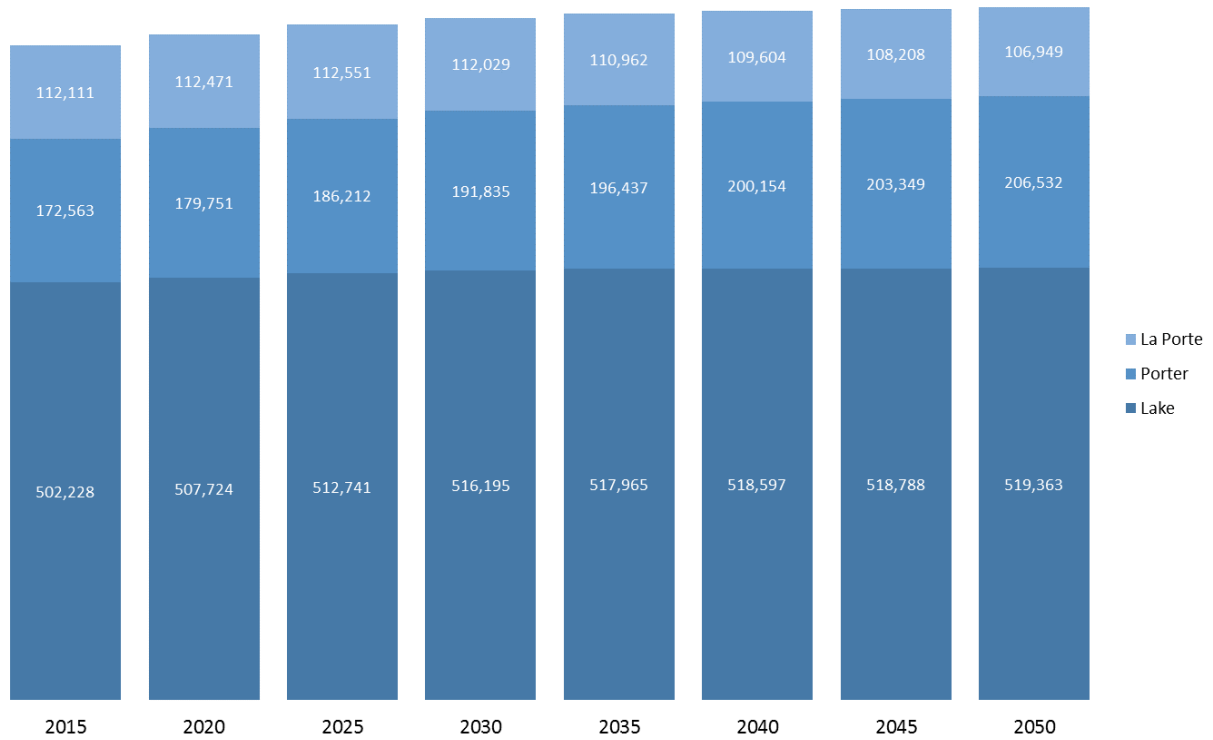
Estimates for Lake County show an increase of 17,135 persons, or 3 percent, from 502,228 in 2015 to 519,363 residents by 2050. Porter County will add 33,969 people, or 20 percent, from 172,563 in 2015 to 206,532 residents by 2050. La Porte County will lose 5,162 people, or 5 percent, from 112,111 in 2015 to 106,949 residents by 2050.

Population projections between 2015 and 2050 also capture changes in the age composition of the region. In 2015, Northwest Indiana was largely comprised of older adults, ages 45-64, at 27 percent of total population followed by young adults, ages 25-44, at 25 percent and school age children ages 5-19 at 20 percent. By 2050, young adults remain approximately 25 percent of the population, while older adults drop to 23 percent of it. Seniors rise to nearly 21 percent of the population at this time, which is 2 percent higher than school age children. College age and preschool cohorts remain the smallest portion of the population at 6 percent respectively.

The most significant population shift across all three counties will be the senior cohort. In Lake County, the senior population will rise to 20 percent. In Porter and La Porte Counties, seniors will rise to 22

percent of the total population. Indiana as a whole will experience a similar growth among those persons ages 65+.

Population Projections

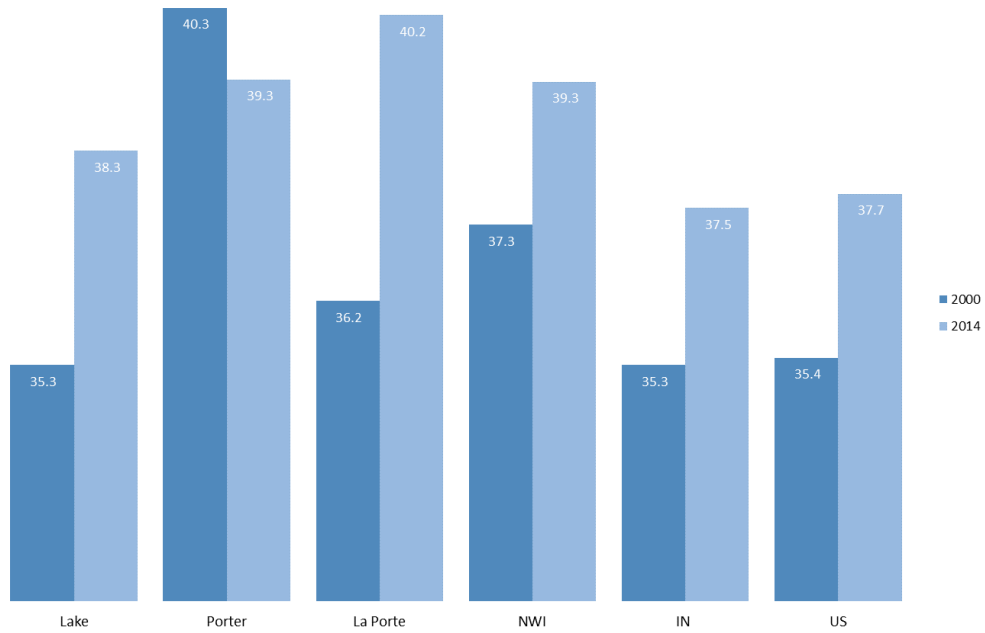


Source: Stats Indiana

Median Age

From 2000 to 2014, the median age for Northwest Indiana increased from 37.3 to 39.3 years old. La Porte County is aging most rapidly with a median age of 40.2 years in 2014, compared to Porter County at 39.3 and Lake County at 38.3 years old. Northwest Indiana is comparatively older than the median age of 37.5 for the state and 37.7 for the nation. By 2020, the projected median age of the region will be 40 years compared to 38 years for the state.

Median Age



Source: Stats Indiana

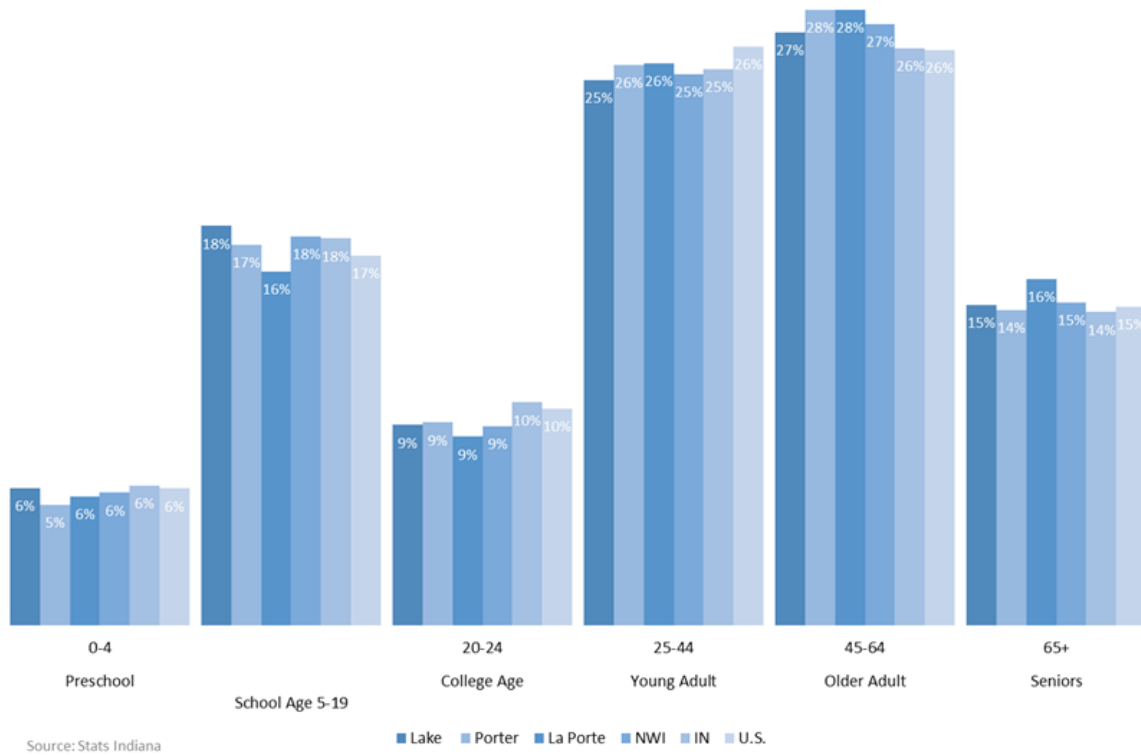
Population by Age Groups

Between 2000 and 2014, Northwest Indiana’s population continued to shift toward older age cohorts. In 2014, older adults represented the largest proportion of the population at 27 percent, or 210,556 persons. Seniors constituted 15 percent, or 113,060 persons. When combined, people ages 45+ represented 42 percent of the total population that year.

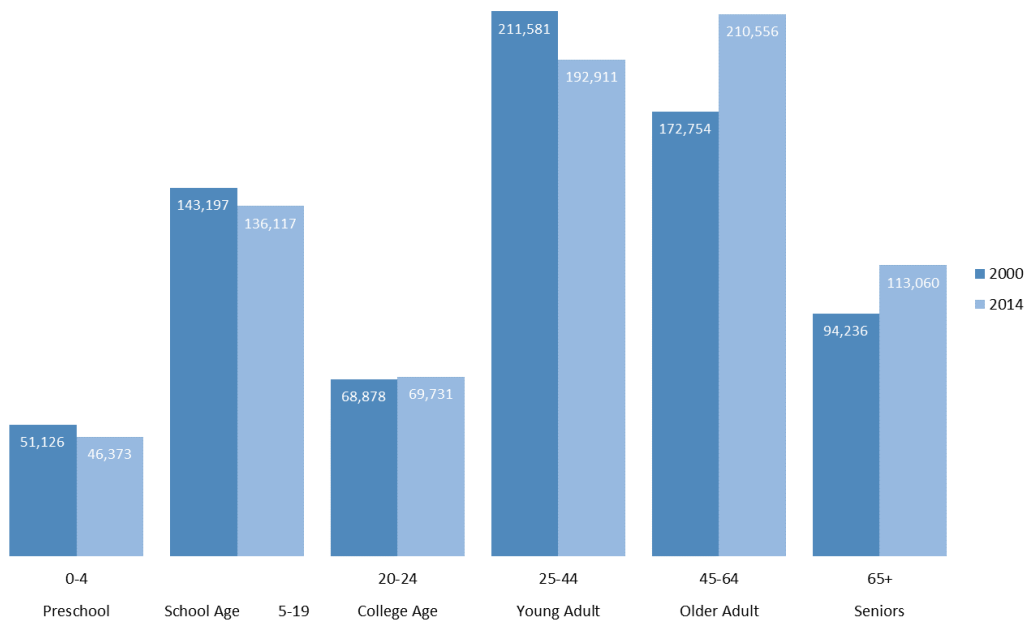
Younger adults fell from 211,581 persons in 2000 to 192,911 in 2014, a quarter of the total population. The region lost nearly 12,000 preschool and school age children between 2000 – 2014. These cohorts represent 6 and 18 percent of the population respectively. College age children grew by 853 persons to hold 9 percent of the total population in both 2000 and 2014.

On a percentage basis, Northwest Indiana tends to be comparable with state and national trends, although the region has slightly less young people and equal to or slightly more of older persons.

Population by Age, 2014



Population by Age Groups



Race & Ethnicity

The 2014 composition of race in Northwest Indiana was 71 percent Caucasian, 18 percent Black/African American, 6 percent some other race alone and 5 percent as the balance of Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and two or more races. Compared to 2000, Caucasians represented 75 percent of the population, African-American held steady at 18 percent and other race alone was 4 percent.

The Northwest Indiana region is more diverse than Indiana as a whole and more reflective of the nation. In 2014, Indiana consisted of 84 percent Caucasian, 9 percent Black/African American, 2 percent Asian, 2 percent some other race alone, 2 percent two or more races and 1 percent the racial balance. As a nation, 73 percent of Americans are Caucasian, 13 percent Black/African American, 5 percent Asian, 5 percent some other race alone, 3 percent two races or more, 1 percent American Indian/Alaskan Native and less than 1 percent the racial balance.

Out of 490,228 people in Lake County, 62 percent were white, 25 percent Black/African American, 9 percent some other race alone, 3 percent two or more races and 1 percent the racial balance. Of the 167,076 people in Porter County, 92 percent were white, 4 percent black and 2 percent the racial balance. Out of the 111,444 people in La Porte County, 83 percent were white, 11 percent black, 3 percent some other race alone, 3 percent two races or more and less than 1 percent the racial balance.

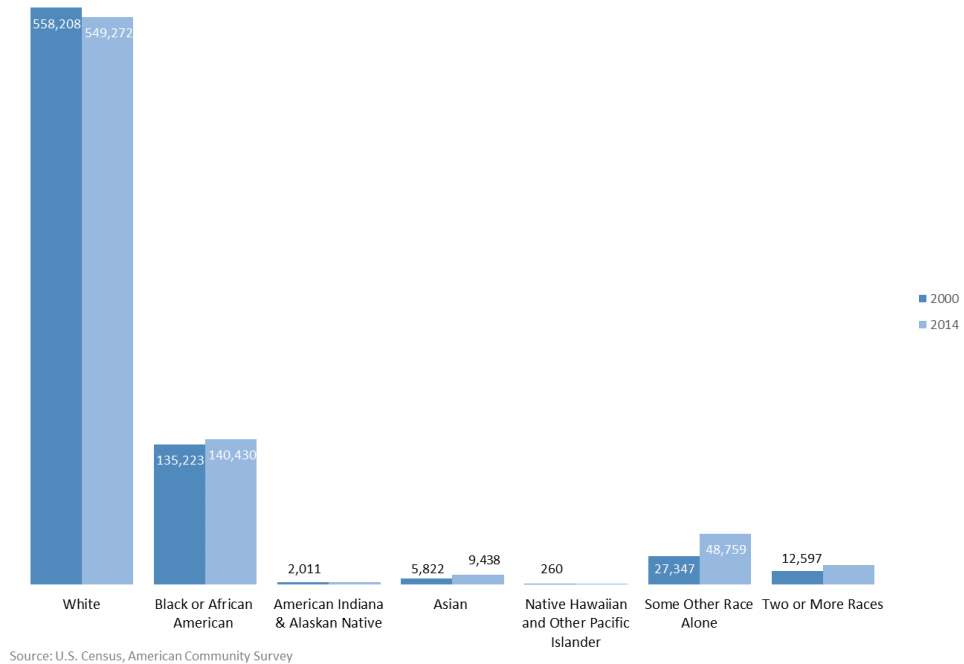
The Hispanic/Latino population of Northwest Indiana grew by 60 percent from 69,609 persons in 2000 and to 111,102 persons in 2014. In 2014, 14 percent of the total regional population was Hispanic/Latino compared to 9 percent in 2000.

In Lake County, the Hispanic/Latino population grew 18 percent from 59,128 persons in 2000 to 88,511 persons in 2014. The Hispanic/Latino population in Porter County more than doubled in size between 2000 and 2014, going from approximately 7,079 to 15,824 persons for 9 percent representation. La Porte County doubled its Hispanic/Latino population from 3,402 persons in 2000 to 6,767 persons in 2014 for 6 percent representation overall.

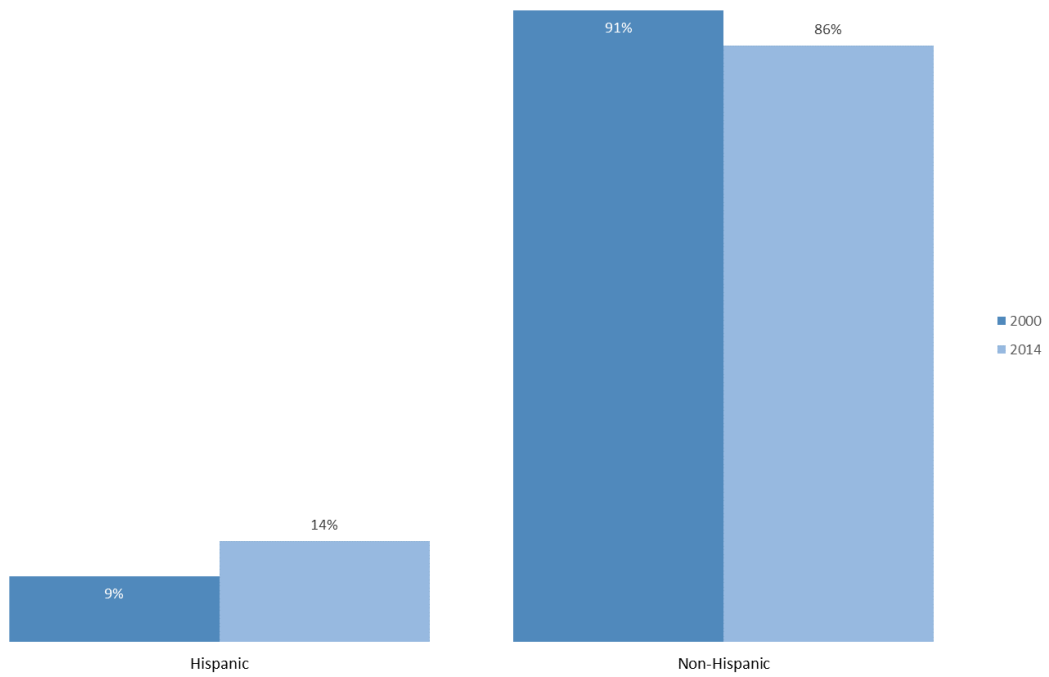
Hispanic/Latinos represent 6 percent of the state population. Between 2000 and 2014, the number of Hispanic/Latinos grew from 217,326 to 391,689 persons. In the United States, over 55.2 million Hispanic/Latinos represent 17 percent of the total population, up from 35.6 million in 2000.

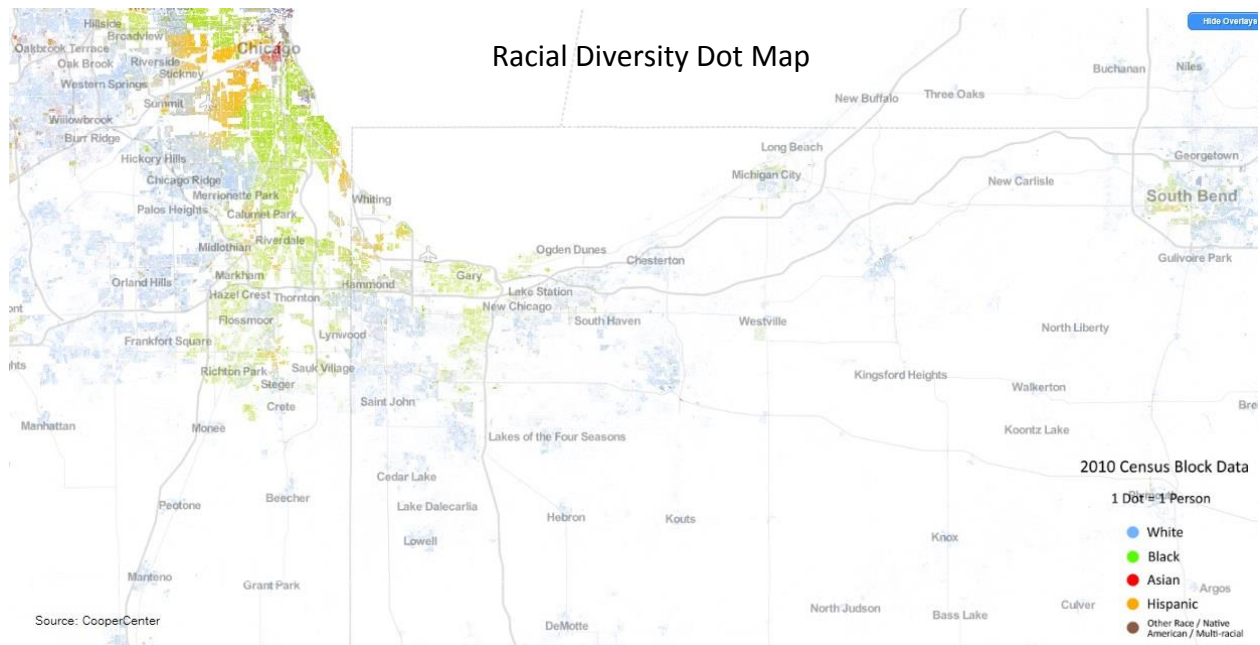
In 2015, the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center produced a racial dot map using 2010 census data to visually represent geographic distribution, population density and racial diversity in every American neighborhood. Based on this map, Northwest Indiana maintains a high level of diversity yet the mix of people remains fairly concentrated along race and ethnicity by locale.

Total Population by Race



Hispanic/Latino Population





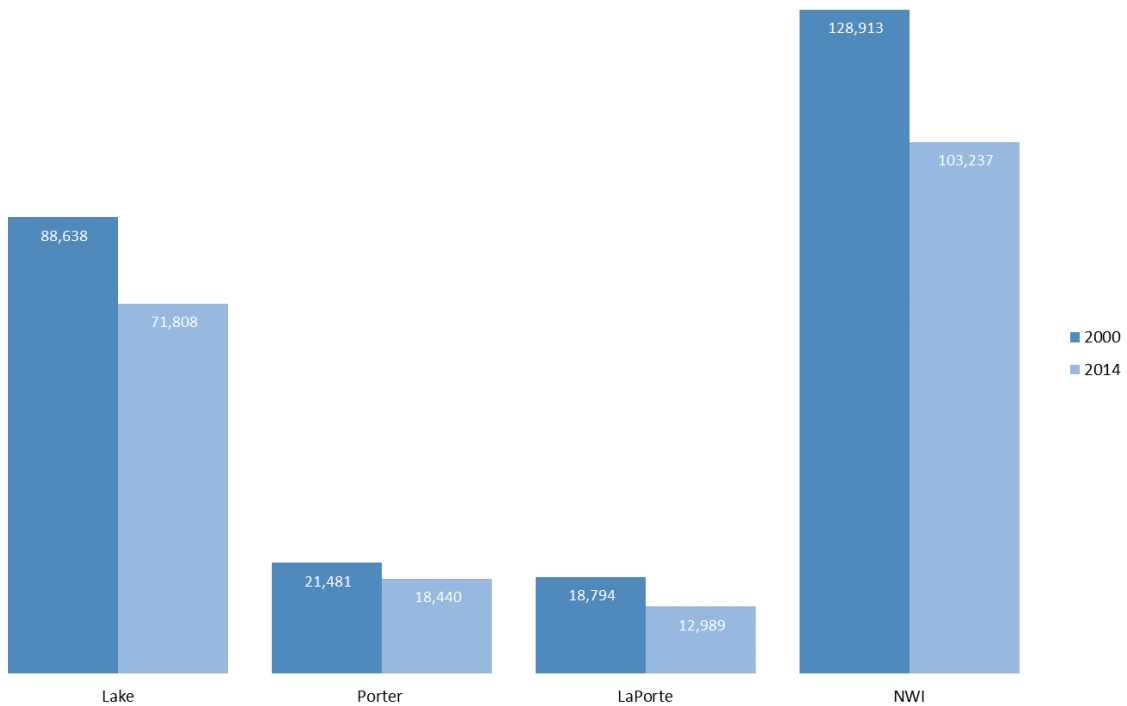
Persons with Disability

As a percent of the total regional population, persons with disabilities represent 13 percent. The proportion remains unchanged between 2008 and 2014, although the number of disabled persons rose from 95,375 to 103,237 persons over that period of time. In 2014, the disabled population reached 15 percent in Lake County, 11 percent in Porter County and 13 percent in La Porte County.

Between 2008 and 2014, the disabled population increased from 64,743 to 71,808 persons in Lake County and from 15,210 to 18,440 persons in Porter County. La Porte County's disabled population declined from 15,422 to 12,989 persons.

Statewide, persons with disability constitutes 14 percent of the population. The population grew from 791,204 people in 2008 to 903,089 people in 2014. Nationally, the number of persons with disabilities went from 36.0 million people in 2008 to 39.6 million in 2014 for 13 percent of the total population.

Persons with Disability

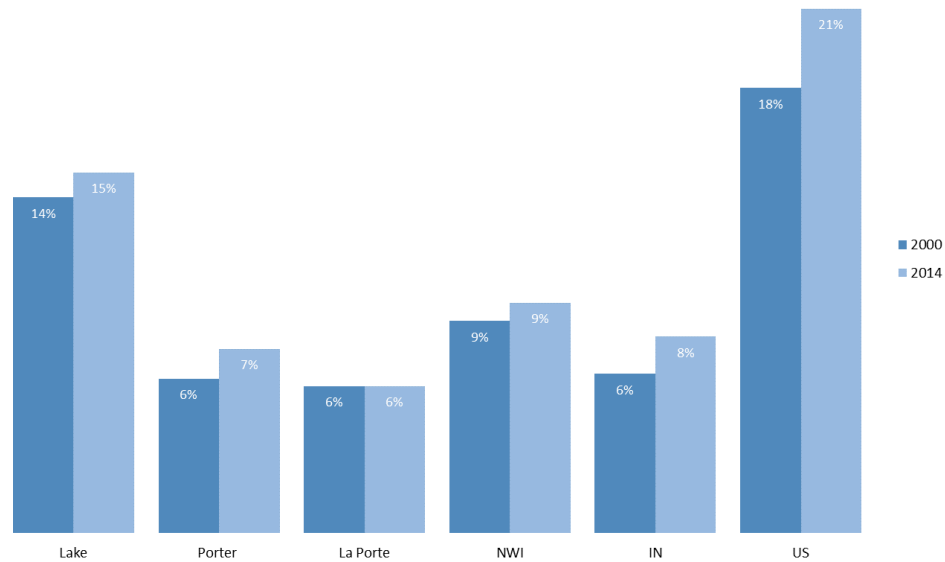


Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey

Other Primary Language Spoken at Home

Between 2000 and 2014, English spoken at home slightly decreased from 91.5 percent in 2000 to 90.7 percent in 2014. In 2014, a primary language other English spoken was prevalent in 9.3 percent of Northwest Indiana homes compared to 8.5 percent in 2000. 15 percent of Lake County households spoke a primary language other than English in 2014, up 1 percent since 2000. In Porter County, 7.4 percent of households spoke a primary language other than English, up 1.2 percent from 2000. La Porte County remained unchanged at 5.9 percent of other primary languages spoken at home. 8 percent of Hoosier households were non-English primary language spoken at home in 2014 compared to 6 percent in 2000. Nationally, 21 percent of U.S. households speak other primary languages at home in 2014 compared to 18 percent in 2000.

Other Primary Language Spoken at Home



Source: U.S. Census

Households

Non-traditional households continued being the majority of the regional household types in Northwest Indiana since 2000. In 2014, 31 percent of households were married without children and 27 percent were living alone. Traditional households consisting of married with children were 19 percent followed by the balance of household types at 14 percent. Single parent homes were 10 percent of total households.

In Lake County, 28 percent of households lived alone and 27 percent were married without children. 18 percent of Lake County households were married with children and 12 percent were single parent households leaving a balance of household arrangements at 15 percent.

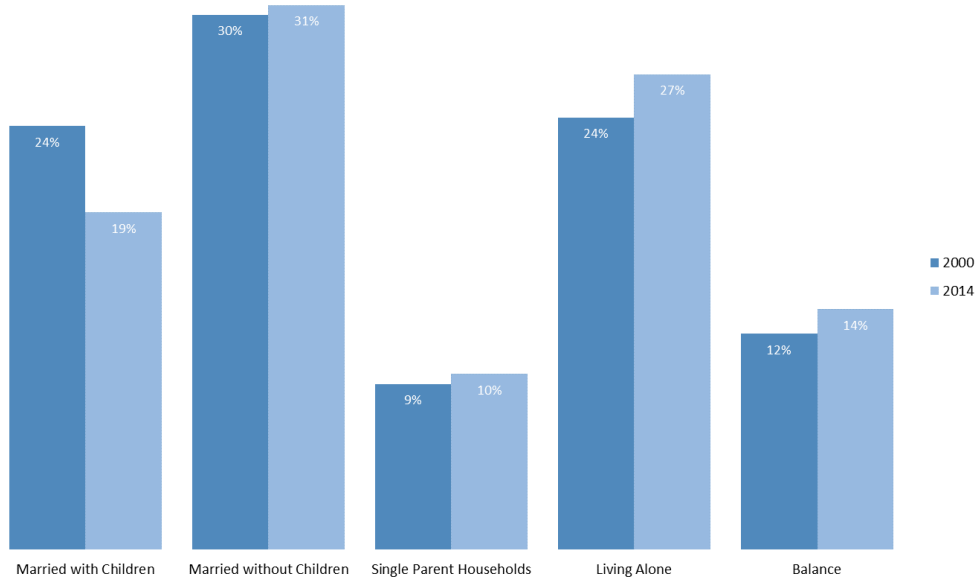
Porter County maintained the largest percentage of married with children households in the region at 23 percent. Married without children represented 32 percent and living alone at 24 percent of households. Single parent households were 9 percent leaving a balance of 12 percent for other household arrangements.

In La Porte County, 33 percent of households were married without children, followed by 28 percent living alone. Only 17 percent of households consisted of married with children and 10 percent were single parent-headed leaving a 13 percent balance of other household types.

Statewide, 30 percent of Hoosiers resided in married without children households and 28 percent were living alone compared nationally to 29 percent and 28 percent respectively. 19 percent of Hoosiers households were married with children and 10 percent were single family-headed compared nationally

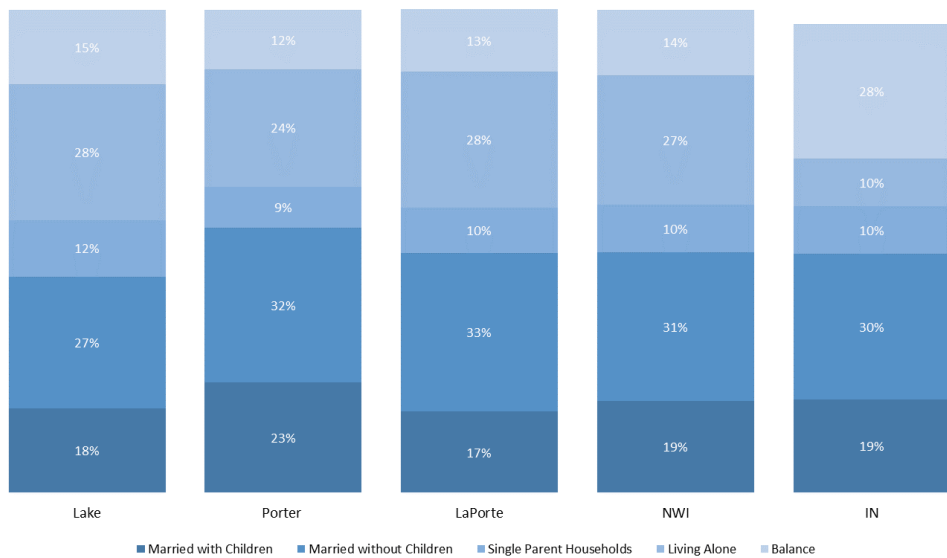
to 20 percent and 10 percent respectively. The balance of household types was 13 percent for Indiana and 14 percent for the U.S.

Household Types



Source: Stats Indiana

Household Types



Source: Stats Indiana

Regional Action Measures

Caring and vibrant people feel a deep sense of attachment to the place. Who they are and where they are from defines how they and their households thrive and succeed in daily life. An abundance of natural, economic and human capital exists in Northwest Indiana. The regional challenge is how best to unleash the untapped potential within every community and for everyone.

The demographics reveal an evolving region, a place where the people today are increasing in number, becoming more diverse, getting older, dwelling differently and facing barriers to improved quality of life. No longer standing still, Northwest Indiana is a region in motion because the heart and soul of its people will a better life.

Further development opportunities may include:

- Partner with neighborhood associations, community organizations, and local service providers to identify and address neighborhood-specific needs
- Support neighborhood advisory councils to encourage dialogue on community issues and build the social capital of neighborhoods
- Establish partnerships that engage key community groups and stakeholders in activities to advance equitable access and proximity to facilities, services, and infrastructure
- Create a team of local government staff to work collaboratively and coordinate with non-governmental organizations to provide high-quality services and reduce poverty
- Create a community-wide plan to reduce poverty

With sustainability in mind, leaders can shape and influence the next wave of empowerment and prosperity. In 2015, the Lake Area United Way and Porter County United Way jointly published “The Let’s Talk Report.” In that report, participants said they want to live in a community that cares for the children, youth and elderly, ensures children the best chances in life, fosters family values and supportive hometown feeling and provides equal opportunities for all. Similarly, the United Way of La Porte County in its “Transition to Collective Impact Funding” report found participants desire health and well-being for children, seniors, the disabled, the poor and veterans.

One Region’s Regional Priorities Summit participants expressed the need for celebrating who we are by rebranding Northwest Indiana and showcasing the positives for changing adverse perceptions. The participants encouraged that more actions be taken to attract young people and professionals to the area. They felt the region need more champions and mentors on hand and more diverse people involved. They wished for greater communication about key projects and civic happenings. They appreciated the region becoming more collaborative, creative, responsive and innovative. The participants acknowledged the socio-economic divisions of the past and offered hope that greater social unity and equity could arise in the future. Some called for eradicating poverty in the region. These collective aspirations, combined with top initiatives, constitute a regional blueprint for social transformation.

A REGIONAL SUCCESS STORY

DRIVING THE REGION FORWARD

When there's a major developmental project indicating a positive economic impact within the region, chances are the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA) has something to do with it.

The paradigm shift the RDA is executing might be summed up in a nearly 150-year-old saying attributed to author Horace Greeley, "Go west, young man." For most of the last century, the region oriented itself to the north and to the steel industry on the Lake Michigan shoreline. Today, the reality is these jobs have largely been eliminated.

Northwest Indiana continues its transition from reliance on heavy manufacturing industries to a knowledge-based economy. The region's lower taxes and cost of living allow success drivers such as the RDA and the unique advantage of the neighboring Chicago market to the west. To accomplish this goal, the RDA works with local communities to fund the infrastructure development needed to make Northwest Indiana economically competitive, but which individual communities could never afford solely.

Leaders believe return on investment and clarity in all forms are key to facilitating change. "Projects must be chosen on the basis of their value to the region, not because of political or parochial concerns," said Bill Hanna, RDA president and CEO. "Transparency is key to building legitimacy both with public officials and residents."

In addition to the state, cities and counties, the RDA has many partners with the purpose of leveraging all public and private entities into "game-changing" infrastructure for the region.

Funding ranges from grants to matching funds to loans.

Reorienting Northwest Indiana to the west is an ongoing process that could take decades to complete, RDA leaders said. And while failure unfortunately remains an option for some, these leaders are unwilling to falter in their drive.

"There are those who have learned to thrive from our region's misfortunes, who are invested in maintaining our failed assets as failures. Those failures provide them with money, power or both," Hanna said. "Only by collapsing longstanding barriers between Northwest Indiana and Chicago can we break away from attitudes and policies that once may have served us, but now hold the region back."



"THE SCOPE OF WHAT IS ACHIEVABLE WHEN COMMUNITIES WORK TOGETHER ALMOST ALWAYS EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS, AND THE LIST OF POTENTIAL PARTNERS IS LONGER THAN IMAGINED.

ABOVE ALL WE HAVE FOUND THAT WE MUST EARN THE TRUST OF OUR PARTNERS BY ADHERING TO CORE PRINCIPLES, SO THAT OUR WORK CAN CONTINUALLY BUILD ON ITSELF AND NOT STALL AFTER A SINGLE PROJECT."

- Bill Hanna
RDA

Looking ahead to the next decade, the RDA plans to continue improving the region's commuter connection to Chicago via rail investments on the existing South Shore Line and in the new West Lake Corridor.

According to the RDA/NICTD plan, by 2033, more than 5,000 people are projected to ride the West Lake extension daily, bringing almost

\$150 million in combined annual incomes back to Northwest Indiana. That money, as well as transit-oriented development (TOD) around new stations in Hammond, Munster and Dyer, will create an additional 2,000 non-commuter jobs. Meanwhile, improvements to the existing line in Gary, Porter County and Ogden Dunes will dramatically reduce trip times to Chicago and create more TOD opportunities further east.

When, not if, success is reached, the RDA hopes to have shepherded a new Northwest Indiana into being. The long-term vision includes a Northwest Indiana that:

- Is more economically diverse and better able to weather bad economic times
- Has a broader and deeper talent pool, making it a more attractive location for businesses to plant their flags
- Is connected to opportunity so that the next generation will have an option besides moving away if they want to get ahead

Hanna said, "It is by creating that 'wow, I didn't know you could do that in Northwest Indiana' that we can build the momentum to overcome the force of a failed status quo."

By 2015, the combination of currently allocated RDA investment and the accompanying leveraged capital is projected to generate a cumulative total of more than \$1.1 billion in economic output. This includes approximately \$750 million of direct investment and more than \$400 million in indirect and induced spending.

By 2025, RDA projects are projected to generate \$770 million in economic output annually (in 2012 dollars). This increased economic output in 2025 will support approximately 4,000 jobs in the Lake and Porter County region.

The increase in economic activity and employment is projected to result in an increase in personal income of \$383 million annually.

Those interested in following commuter rail and regional economic development progress may contact the RDA:

RDA

www.rda.in.gov

www.facebook.com/rdacatalyst

WE ARE STIMULATING THRIVING ECONOMIES

DOMAIN 2: ECONOMY

People thrive in places where opportunities exist for gainful employment and business growth. A diversified economy retains and attracts large industries and small businesses that are capable of competing globally and serving locally. Public sector investments support the retention and attraction of firms, and facilitate the education and training of a skilled workforce. Those efforts combined with private sector investments lead to job creation, better infrastructure and stronger tax base. As the economy thrives, communities flourish.

As one of the three pillars of sustainability, the economy strongly influences regional vitality and quality of place. The resiliency of a region comes from its foresight of and agility to market demands. Therefore, industries and businesses focus heavily on entrepreneurialism, innovation and modernization through a diverse supply of talent and assets. Businesses seek low-cost, competitive locations in which to operate. The new economy demands an educated workforce with the necessary technical and soft skills to fulfill a range of employment opportunities. Workers, in turn, seek high-paying jobs and livable wages along with benefits to support their households. Not only do strong and vibrant communities contain the physical and virtual sites where business and employees come together, but local government offers the incentives for that connection and the services contributing to the quality of life beyond the workplace.

The Great Lakes Economic Forum found that the Great Lakes economy is the fourth largest in the world at \$5.8 trillion, representing 28 percent of the U.S. and Canadian economic activity. Nested within it is the Chicago economy, ranked 23rd in the world at \$561 trillion and ranked 1st in diversified economy in the U. S. according to World Business Chicago. Within that economy, Northwest Indiana contributed \$33.1 billion in 2014.

Manufacturing and transportation & logistics fuel Northwest Indiana's competitive advantage. Emerging industries in economic growth include agribusiness/food processing & technology, information technology, telecommunications and business & financial services. The life sciences, arts/entertainment & visitor industries and education & knowledge creation clusters constitute transforming to maturing industries where regional competitiveness needs strengthening.³

One inspiring economic story often overlooked in the Northwest Indiana region is the positive impact of family farms.⁴ When a diverse group of agribusiness representatives gather, the various anecdotes of specialized roles, productivity and investments made are striking. Not only are fifth generation farms plowing the fields but they are flying overhead in high-tech planes for "prescription farming" through the U.S., Canada and South America. This farming innovation can reduce the use of herbicides and pesticides by targeting sections of a field at the source of the problem. Local crop and cattle farmers

³ Center for Regional Development, "Regional Snapshot: Northwest Indiana Region," September 2015.

⁴ Research notes from agriculture focus group, January 26, 2016.

participate in non-GMO programs through Cargill and farm-to-fork initiatives with regional distributors and direct consumers. Locally produced meats, seafood, grains, fruits and vegetables can be found at area community supported agriculture (CSA) cooperatives and farm stands. A proportion of the local corn and soybean production becomes ethanol E85 and biodiesel available at local service stations, or Cargill starches and bases to produce Albanese candy and other popular consumer products like Gatorade. The balance of farm yield moves through the Port of Indiana as international cargo or by rail to Midwest food manufacturers and processors. Partnerships between family farmers - as small businesses - extends from corporations like Cargill, Ceres and Red Gold to Board of Trade commodities brokers to Farm Bureau's youth education programs to local government on land issues and finally to their kitchen table in gratitude for all that has been given in a day. Transportation, the environment, technology and education are key issues relative to their industry's growth. Local farmers are looking ahead to future crops like barley, hops and hemp and more importantly, to the future farmers of Northwest Indiana who are trained to be cutting-edge entrepreneurs.

Additionally, economic development plays a vital role in the promotion of Northwest Indiana's assets and advancement of industry clusters. Economic development organizations and partnering agencies work diligently on growing existing businesses and attracting new firms thereby creating new jobs and expanding the tax base. Critical linkages in producing economic development successes are responsive, streamline processes within local government that welcome business.

Within Northwest Indiana, a variety of collaborations are underway in the economic development arena. The Northwest Indiana Regional Logistics Council seeks to advance the logistics industry. The Northwest Indiana Forum's Banking Committee formed in 2015 around commercial real estate finance risks and needs. Local tourism development agencies have multi-county strategies for promoting business and attractions more extensively. The area's six universities and colleges partner with industry and workforce development as well as local schools to address skill shortages and facilitate specialized training programs. The Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority continues to be a catalyst for major infrastructure investments in transportation and shoreline development. Its collaboration with the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District to seek funding on the South Shore Double-Tracking project and West Lake Corridor extension hold game-changing possibilities for Northwest Indiana, the State of Indiana and Chicagoland.

Overall Rating: Needs Improvement

Leading Indicators	Trend
Gross Regional Product	Improving
Innovation Index	Needs Improvement
Per Capita Personal Income	Improving
12 Largest Industries	Needs Improvement
Average Wages	Improving
Labor Force Participation	Needs Improvement
Unemployment Rate	Needs Improvement
Living Wage (Self-Sufficiency)	Needs Improvement
Poverty Rate	Needs Improvement

Region in Motion

- The Gross Regional Product for Northwest Indiana grew 18 percent from \$28.1 billion in 2010 to \$33.1 billion in 2014. The GRP of Lake County was \$22.7 billion, Porter County's at \$6.3 billion and La Porte County's at \$3.9 billion in 2014.
- With an Innovation Index of 83.7, Northwest Indiana is less innovative compared to the Chicago MSA at 96.8, the Indianapolis MSA at 97.1 and the state at 90.5. The nation overall ranked 100.
- Northwest Indiana's economic well-being measure of 95.1 outperformed Chicago's at 94.3 and fell just below the state at 96.2.
- Per capita personal income (PCPI) in Northwest Indiana rose 41 percent from \$28,027 to \$39,580 between 2000 – 2014.
- In 2014, Lake County's PCPI increased from \$27,060 in 2000 to \$38,386 in 2014. La Porte County's PCPI went from \$25,237 in 2000 to \$35,882 in 2014. Porter County's PCPI rose from \$31,785 in 2000 to \$44,472 in 2014.
- Porter County's PCPI maintained the highest level of personal income over the fourteen-year period, and its 2014 PCPI of \$44,472 exceeded the state's PCPI of \$39,578 by \$4,894.
- In 2014, the 12 largest industries in Northwest Indiana employed 114,398 workers and generated \$8.3 billion in income and \$48.7 billion in output. This performance resulted in \$976,452 of income per worker and \$8.0 million in productivity.
- In 2014, the top industry in Lake County by employment was iron and steel mills with nearly 12,000 employees followed by hospitals at approximately 11,500. Porter County's top industry by employment was iron and steel mills with nearly 4,800 employees followed by wholesale trade at approximately 3,780. La Porte County's top industry by employment was hospitals with just over 2,000 employees followed by physicians at approximately 1,500.
- In Lake County, the largest 12 industries employed 74,271 workers, generating \$5.7 billion in income and \$38.7 billion in output. This performance resulted in \$1.1 million of income per worker and \$12.8 million in productivity.
- In Porter County, the largest 12 industries employed 26,030 workers, producing \$1.5 billion in income and \$7.5 billion in output. This performance equated to \$716,674 of income per worker and \$2.4 million in productivity.
- In La Porte County, the largest 12 industries employed 14,096 workers, totaling \$954 million in income and \$2.4 billion in output. This performance equated to \$1.1 million of income per worker and \$3.4 million in productivity.
- Between 2001 and 2014, Northwest Indiana's industries increased average wages by 39 percent while losing 2 percent of the total jobs. Average wages rose from \$31,552 to \$44,013. Jobs declined from 107,118 to 104,659.
- In 2014, industries' average wages were \$46,902 in Lake County, \$44,811 in Porter County and \$40,325 in La Porte County.
- In 2014, the total number of jobs in Lake County was 205,458 compared to 63,872 in Porter County and 44,646 in La Porte County 2014.
- Northwest Indiana's labor force grew 2 percent from 356,702 workers in 2000 to 363,529 workers in 2014. During that period, the number of unemployed more than doubled from 12,919 persons in 2000 to 27,097 persons in 2014, while the number of employed declined by 7,351 or 2 percent to 336,432 workers.

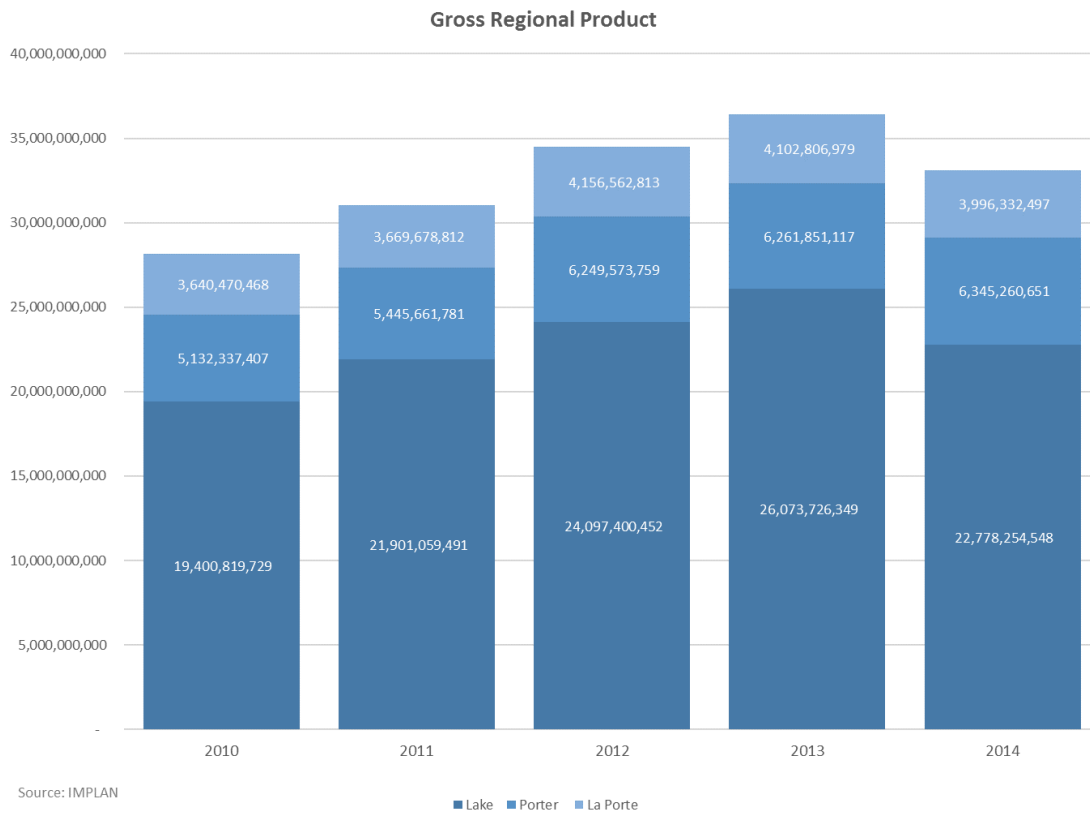
- Northwest Indiana's unemployment rate rose from 3.6 percent in 2000 to 7.5 percent in 2014 surpassing both the state and nation's rate of 6.0 and 6.2 percent respectively that year.
- The 2014 unemployment rate was 8.1 percent in Lake County, 7.7 percent in La Porte County and 6.3 in Porter County.
- On average in Northwest Indiana, an adult with two children would need an annual income before taxes of \$51,560 or \$44,866 after taxes. For two adults with one working and with two children, the required annual income before taxes would be \$44,559 or \$40,514 after taxes. By 2014 comparison to the per capital personal income of \$39,580 and average wages of \$44,103, many Northwest Indiana residents would struggle to make ends meet.
- In both Lake and Porter Counties, one adult with two children would require \$51,946 in annual income before taxes or \$45,202 after taxes to support their household. Two adults with one working and two children would require \$46,945 in annual income before taxes or \$40,850 after taxes. Lake County's 2014 PCPI was \$38,386 and annual wages were \$46,902. Porter County's PCPI was \$44,472 and annual wages were \$44,811.
- In La Porte County, one adult with two children would require \$50,787 in annual income before taxes or \$44,194 after taxes, while two adults with one working and two children would need \$45,782 or \$39,842. In comparison to La Porte County's PCPI of \$35,882 and annual wages of \$40,325, households would certainly struggle to meet basic living demands.
- Poverty remains a persistent challenge in Northwest Indiana. The poverty rate increased steadily in Northwest Indiana from 9 percent in 2000 to 15 percent in 2014, on par with the state during the same period.
- Lake County experienced higher rates of poverty overall and 18 percent in 2014 after a peak of 20 percent in 2012. La Porte County's poverty rate in 2014 was 18 percent, the highest rate over the fourteen- year period. While poverty occurred at a lower rate in Porter County, it rose to 10 percent in 2014 after a peak of 12 percent in 2013.

Gross Regional Product

Trend: Improving

The Gross Regional Product (GRP) is the market value of all final goods and services produced by all firms in an economy. Higher performing GRP indicates a strong economy and conceivably, a better quality of life experience for those living within that economic region.

The Gross Regional Product for Northwest Indiana grew 18 percent from \$28.1 billion in 2010 to \$33.1 billion in 2014. The Lake County GRP rose from \$19.4 billion in 2010 to \$22.7 billion in 2014, a 17 percent increase. The Porter County GRP rose 24 percent from \$5.1 billion in 2010 to \$6.3 billion in 2014. The La Porte County GRP grew 10 percent from \$3.6 billion in 2010 to \$3.9 billion in 2014.

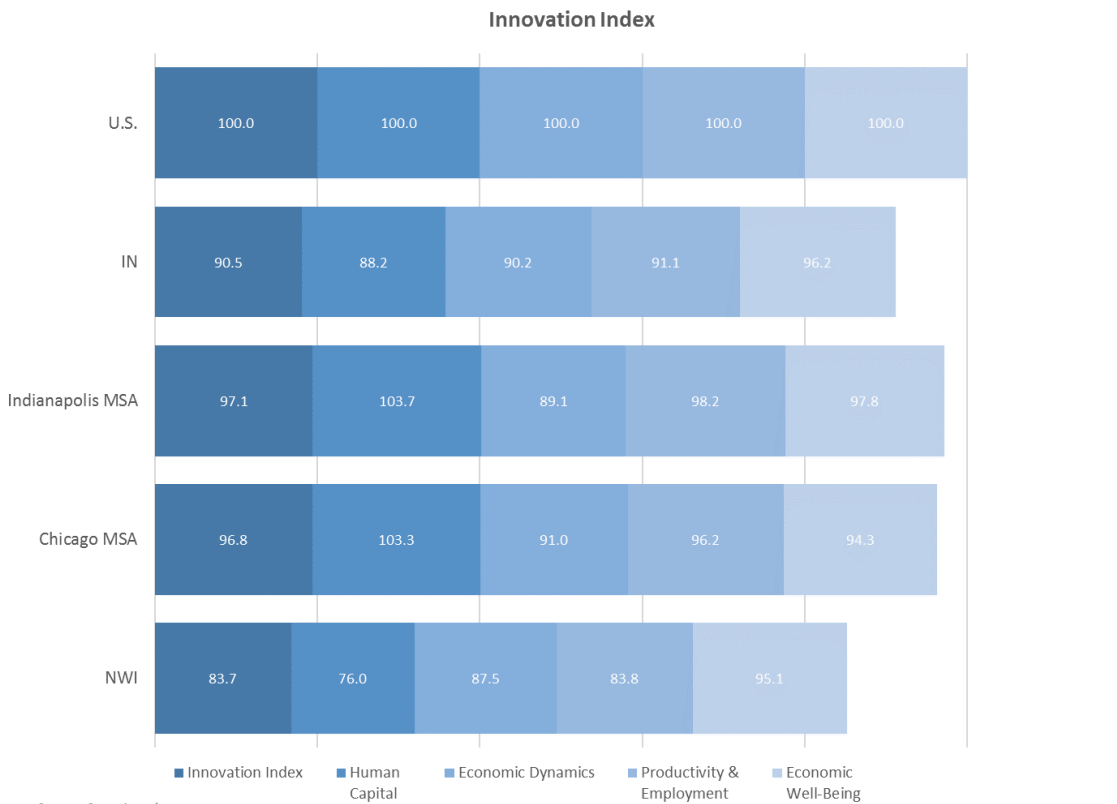


Innovation Index Trend: Needs Improvement

The Innovation Index compiled by the U.S. Commerce Department through Stats America measures innovation from both inputs and outputs. With an Innovation Index of 83.7, Northwest Indiana is less innovative compared to the Chicago MSA at 96.8, the Indianapolis MSA at 97.1 and the state at 90.5. The nation overall ranked 100.

Human capital and economic dynamics are inputs of innovation. Northwest Indiana’s population and labor force achieve a human capital measure of 76, while both Chicago and Indianapolis reached 103. Indiana’s human capital index of 88.3 trails the United States at 100.0, out of a possible 120. The ability of the regional economy to be innovative measured 87.5 compared to Chicago and Indianapolis at 91 and 89 respectively. Indiana achieved 90.2, short of the nation’s 100.

Productivity and employment along with economic well-being constitute the outputs of innovation. Northwest Indiana’s productivity and employment index measured 83.8, significantly below both Chicago and Indianapolis at 96.2 and 98.2 respectively. Indiana achieved 91.1 in this index compared to the U.S. at 100. The economic well-being of Northwest Indiana measured as the highest factor at 95.1, outperforming Chicago at 94.3. Indiana’s economic well-being index reached 96.2 slightly below the national economic well-being index of 100.

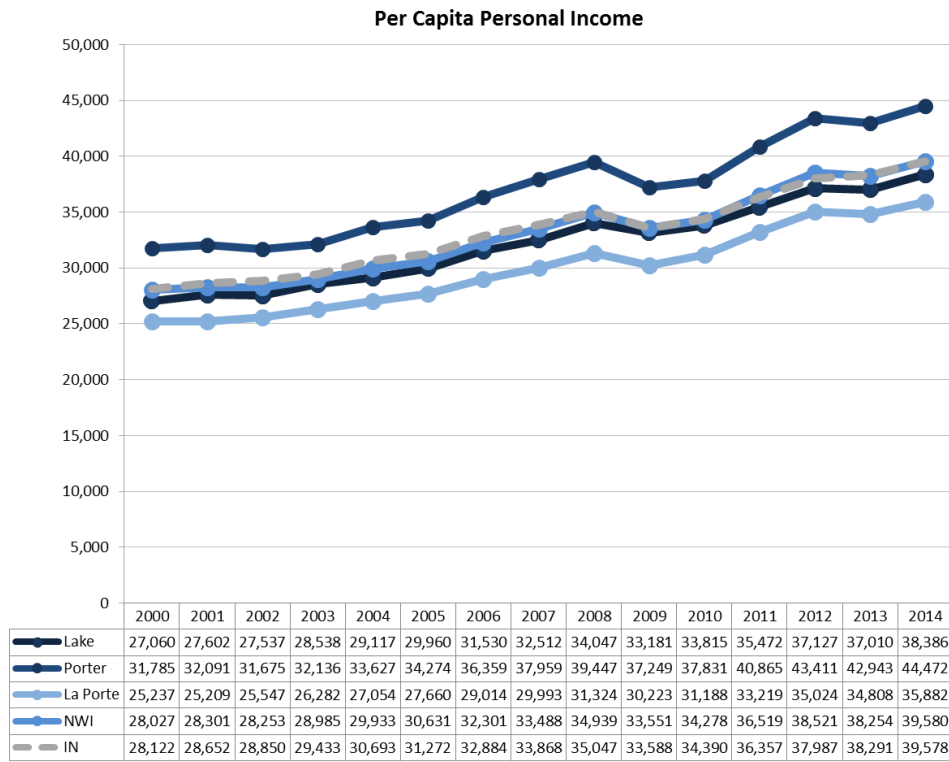


Per Capita Personal Income Trend: Improving

Per capita personal income (PCPI) in Northwest Indiana rose 41 percent from \$28,027 to \$39,580 between 2000 – 2014. This rate of growth was on par with the state’s PCPI performance. In 2000, Indiana’s PCPI was \$28, 122 compared to \$39,578 in 2014.

In Lake County, the PCPI increased from \$27,060 in 2000 to \$38,386 in 2014, or 42 percent. La Porte County grew at the same rate as Lake County going from \$25,237 in 2000 to \$35,882 in 2014. Porter County’s PCPI rose at 40 percent from \$31,785 in 2000 to \$44,472 in 2014.

Porter County’s PCPI maintained the highest level of personal income over the fourteen-year period, and its 2014 PCPI of \$44,472 exceeded the state’s PCPI by \$4,894.



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

Largest 12 Industries Trend: Needs Improvement

In 2014, the 12 largest industries employed 114,398 workers and generated \$8.3 billion in income and \$48.7 billion in output. This performance resulted in \$976,452 of income per worker and \$8.0 million in productivity.

In Lake County, the largest 12 industries employed 74,271 workers, generating \$5.7 billion in income and \$38.7 billion in output. This performance resulted in \$1.1 million of income per worker and \$12.8 million in productivity. The top industry by employment was iron and steel mills with nearly 12,000 employees followed by hospitals at approximately 11,500.

In Porter County, the largest 12 industries employed 26,030 workers, producing \$1.5 billion in income and \$7.5 billion in output. This performance equated to \$716,674 of income per worker and \$2.4 million in productivity. The top industry by employment was iron and steel mills with nearly 4,800 employees followed by wholesale trade at approximately 3,780.

In La Porte County, the largest 12 industries employed 14,096 workers, totaling \$954 million in income and \$2.4 billion in output. This performance equated to \$1.1 million of income per worker and \$3.4 million in productivity. The top industry by employment was hospitals with just over 2,000 employees followed by physicians at approximately 1,500.

Largest 12 Industries, Lake County, 2014

	Employment	Income	Output	Income/Worker	Productivity
Iron and steel mills etc	11,972	\$ 1,593,916,717	\$ 13,951,817,383	\$ 133,140	\$ 1,165,401
Hospitals	11,504	\$ 712,825,541	\$ 1,548,665,039	\$ 61,963	\$ 134,620
* Employment and payroll of loca...	11,423	\$ 620,003,052	\$ 712,398,376	\$ 54,278	\$ 62,367
Wholesale trade	8,862	\$ 547,898,441	\$ 1,818,606,079	\$ 61,824	\$ 205,208
Offices of physicians	6,888	\$ 322,102,081	\$ 370,465,698	\$ 46,761	\$ 53,783
Petroleum refineries	5,534	\$ 220,964,204	\$ 1,000,048,950	\$ 39,926	\$ 180,699
* Employment and payroll of loca...	5,515	\$ 510,838,646	\$ 752,298,340	\$ 92,622	\$ 136,402
Truck transportation	4,719	\$ 290,241,581	\$ 799,290,588	\$ 61,506	\$ 169,379
Management of companies	2,741	\$ 182,698,961	\$ 443,555,267	\$ 66,660	\$ 161,837
Gambling industries	2,177	\$ 224,346,781	\$ 457,647,614	\$ 103,051	\$ 210,215
Electric power generation	1,695	\$ 381,905,731	\$ 15,242,251,953	\$ 225,313	\$ 8,992,463
Construction of other new nonres...	1,241	\$ 186,974,655	\$ 1,686,988,037	\$ 150,695	\$ 1,359,657
	74,271	\$ 5,794,716,390	\$ 38,784,033,325	\$ 1,097,740	\$ 12,832,030

Largest 12 Industries, Porter County, 2014

	Employment	Income	Output	Income/worker	Productivity
Iron and steel mills etc	4,805	\$ 476,073,909	\$ 5,250,187,500	\$ 99,083	\$ 1,092,701
* Employment and payroll of loca...	3,787	\$ 193,449,905	\$ 222,278,580	\$ 51,080	\$ 58,692
Wholesale trade	2,659	\$ 47,305,208	\$ 104,541,672	\$ 17,788	\$ 39,310
Offices of physicians	2,572	\$ 176,659,147	\$ 556,251,587	\$ 68,683	\$ 216,263
Hospitals	2,383	\$ 119,284,217	\$ 288,180,450	\$ 50,055	\$ 120,928
Truck transportation	2,080	\$ 72,533,448	\$ 175,349,197	\$ 34,869	\$ 84,295
* Employment and payroll of loca...	1,855	\$ 87,904,091	\$ 101,102,890	\$ 47,376	\$ 54,489
Junior colleges, colleges, unive...	1,451	\$ 109,476,545	\$ 269,385,437	\$ 75,426	\$ 185,599
Construction of other new nonres...	1,411	\$ 147,281,322	\$ 208,307,251	\$ 104,414	\$ 147,678
Nursing and community care facil...	1,388	\$ 50,457,064	\$ 86,669,670	\$ 36,356	\$ 62,449
Maintenance and repair construct...	892	\$ 58,853,140	\$ 143,742,035	\$ 65,979	\$ 161,147
Full-service restaurants	746	\$ 48,930,045	\$ 131,803,238	\$ 65,564	\$ 176,610
	26,030	\$ 1,588,208,040	\$ 7,537,799,507	\$ 716,674	\$ 2,400,163

Largest 12 Industries, La Porte County, 2014

	Employment	Income	Output	Income/Worker	Productivity
* Employment and payroll of loca...	2,344	\$ 125,752,876	\$ 144,493,073	\$ 53,660	\$ 61,657
Hospitals	2,036	\$ 116,854,431	\$ 263,423,706	\$ 57,400	\$ 129,396
Offices of physicians	1,490	\$ 73,100,647	\$ 84,076,714	\$ 49,054	\$ 56,419
Wholesale trade	1,434	\$ 88,573,035	\$ 292,813,629	\$ 61,750	\$ 204,140
Ferrous metal foundries	1,256	\$ 46,923,285	\$ 218,887,863	\$ 37,369	\$ 174,318
* Employment and payroll of stat...	1,182	\$ 73,403,633	\$ 85,183,899	\$ 62,127	\$ 72,098
* Employment and payroll of loca...	1,042	\$ 115,976,130	\$ 160,739,014	\$ 111,285	\$ 154,238
All other petroleum and coal pro...	1,041	\$ 74,284,684	\$ 324,835,419	\$ 71,352	\$ 312,013
Air and gas compressor manufactu...	761	\$ 57,071,005	\$ 137,184,967	\$ 75,015	\$ 180,319
Truck transportation	722	\$ 57,666,298	\$ 382,984,222	\$ 79,921	\$ 530,784
Animal production, except cattle...	626	\$ 54,312,495	\$ 71,871,109	\$ 86,722	\$ 114,758
Gambling industries	163	\$ 70,781,319	\$ 244,683,258	\$ 433,312	\$ 1,497,911
	14,096	\$ 954,699,838	\$ 2,411,176,872	\$ 1,178,967	\$ 3,488,051

Average Wages **Trend: Improving**

Between 2001 and 2014, Northwest Indiana’s industries increased average wages by 39 percent while losing 2 percent of the total jobs. Average wages rose from \$31,552 to \$44,013. Jobs declined from 107,118 to 104,659.

Lake County industries’ average wages grew 41 percent from \$33,223 in 2001 to \$46,902 in 2014. Total jobs fell 3 percent from 211,359 to 205,458 over the same period.

Porter County industries’ averages wages and total number of jobs increased by 35 percent and 8 percent respectively. Average wages in 2014 were \$44,811 compared to \$33,206 in 2001. Total jobs reached 63,872, up from 59,092.

La Porte County industries’ averages wages grew 43 percent to \$40,325 in 2014 from \$28,226 in 2001. During the same period, total jobs dropped 12 percent from 50,902 in 2001 to 44,646 in 2014.

Industries and Average Wages	Lake				Porter				La Porte				NWI			
	No. of Jobs		Average Wages		No. of Jobs		Average Wages		No. of Jobs		Average Wages		No. of Jobs		Average Wages	
	2001	2014	2001	2014	2001	2014	2001	2014	2001	2014	2001	2014	2001	2014	2001	2014
Crop and Animal Production	497	431	\$14,893	\$21,350	549	138	\$27,516	\$20,558	614	616	\$20,254	\$26,883	554	395	\$20,888	\$22,930
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	263	109	\$53,070	\$68,533	68	23	\$67,081	\$60,462	94	18	\$24,766	\$34,294	142	50	\$48,306	\$54,430
Utilities	1,834	1,652	\$66,131	\$96,614	322	302	\$66,163	\$102,460	303	288	\$64,639	\$107,443	820	747	\$65,644	\$102,172
Construction	13,681	12,803	\$41,170	\$62,833	4,658	4,243	\$36,668	\$62,387	2,897	2,247	\$35,150	\$52,927	7,079	6,431	\$37,663	\$59,382
Manufacturing	32,204	24,867	\$51,082	\$84,114	10,891	9,850	\$50,969	\$67,720	10,498	7,673	\$36,410	\$49,323	17,864	14,130	\$46,154	\$67,052
Wholesale Trade	7,049	5,904	\$39,201	\$62,081	2,545	2,223	\$38,485	\$55,842	1,210	1,218	\$35,684	\$47,037	3,602	3,115	\$37,790	\$54,987
Retail Trade	26,588	24,775	\$19,924	\$24,734	6,686	7,517	\$20,094	\$24,057	6,175	5,606	\$17,941	\$22,125	13,150	12,633	\$19,320	\$23,639
Transportation and Warehousing	7,857	9,377	\$39,148	\$53,348	2,119	2,574	\$38,002	\$54,922	2,079	1,603	\$38,298	\$51,683	4,018	4,518	\$38,483	\$53,318
Information	2,298	1,479	\$30,796	\$43,825	694	594	\$34,173	\$45,294	744	258	\$28,402	\$30,557	1,245	777	\$31,123	\$39,892
Finance and Insurance	5,457	4,496	\$35,710	\$51,357	1,303	1,289	\$32,213	\$52,958	928	906	\$31,726	\$48,747	2,562	2,230	\$33,216	\$51,021
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	2,824	2,492	\$23,331	\$32,772	800	764	\$20,906	\$30,238	741	481	\$18,916	\$31,858	1,455	1,246	\$21,051	\$31,623
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	6,239	6,499	\$37,099	\$49,629	1,916	2,168	\$38,000	\$51,390	1,004	852	\$29,657	\$45,317	3,053	3,173	\$34,919	\$48,779
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,128	2,019	\$63,149	\$85,923	83	225	\$45,777	\$78,669	49	99	\$40,242	\$65,529	420	781	\$49,723	\$76,707
Administrative and Support and Waste Management & Educational Services	9,365	9,200	\$19,609	\$29,985	2,263	3,095	\$23,259	\$32,186	2,191	2,301	\$17,208	\$26,996	4,606	4,866	\$20,025	\$29,722
Health Care and Social Assistance	2,551	3,543	\$16,823	\$26,908	2,547	2,762	\$17,748	\$27,789	454	437	\$16,932	\$24,418	1,851	2,247	\$17,168	\$26,371
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	27,052	31,725	\$32,276	\$44,633	4,093	8,304	\$38,625	\$43,331	5,787	5,365	\$30,530	\$45,105	12,311	15,131	\$33,810	\$44,356
Accommodation and Food Services	8,434	6,444	\$23,756	\$27,561	619	620	\$14,000	\$16,605	1,515	1,430	\$23,408	\$27,481	3,523	2,831	\$20,388	\$23,882
Other Services (except Public Administration)	14,709	17,910	\$11,015	\$13,597	4,844	6,306	\$10,516	\$13,284	3,398	4,109	\$10,432	\$12,740	7,651	9,442	\$10,654	\$13,207
Government	11,314	12,170	\$17,205	\$23,103	3,021	3,517	\$15,634	\$21,720	2,212	1,969	\$15,645	\$21,169	5,515	5,885	\$16,161	\$21,997
	30,016	27,561	\$29,076	\$35,149	9,069	7,357	\$28,289	\$34,338	8,010	7,171	\$28,274	\$34,873	15,698	14,030	\$28,546	\$34,786
	211,359	205,458	\$33,223	\$46,902	59,092	63,872	\$33,206	\$44,811	50,902	44,646	\$28,226	\$40,325	107,118	104,659	\$31,552	\$44,013

Source: EMSI

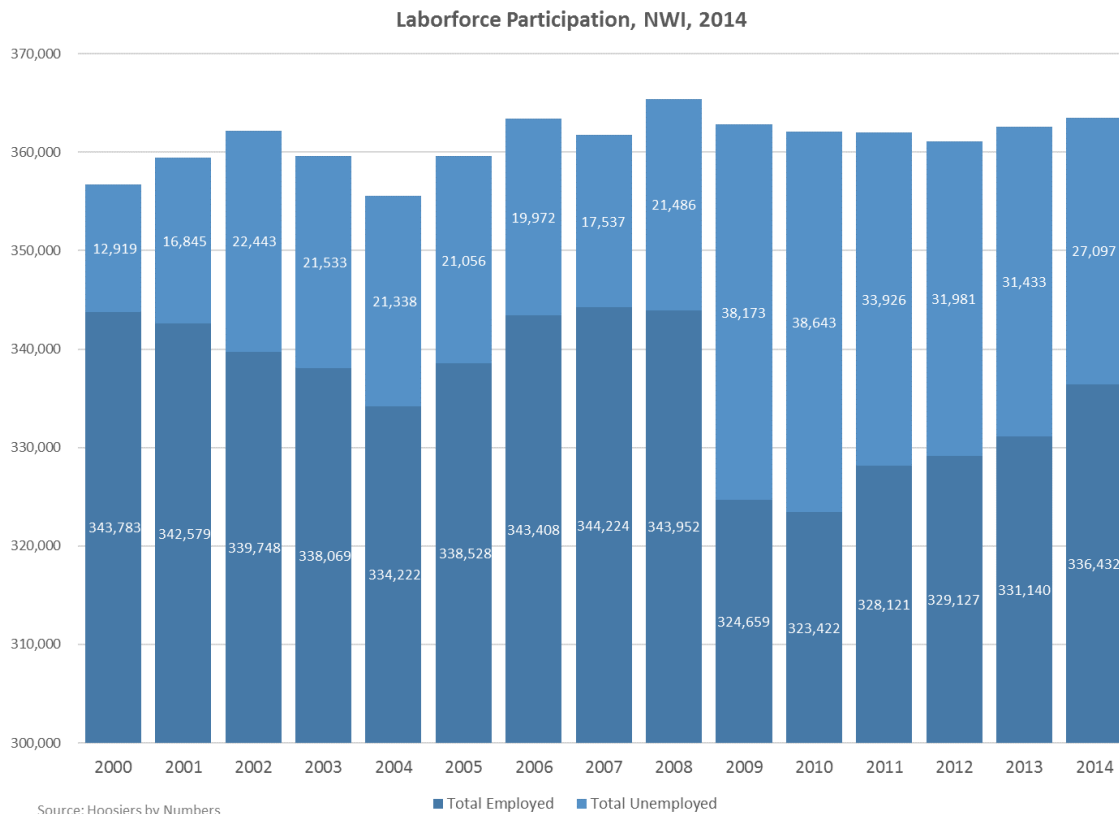
Labor Force Participation Trend: Needs Improvement

Northwest Indiana’s labor force grew 2 percent from 356,702 workers in 2000 to 363,529 workers in 2014. During that period, the number of unemployed more than doubled from 12,919 persons in 2000 to 27,097 persons in 2014, while the number of employed declined by 7,351 or 2 percent to 336,432 workers.

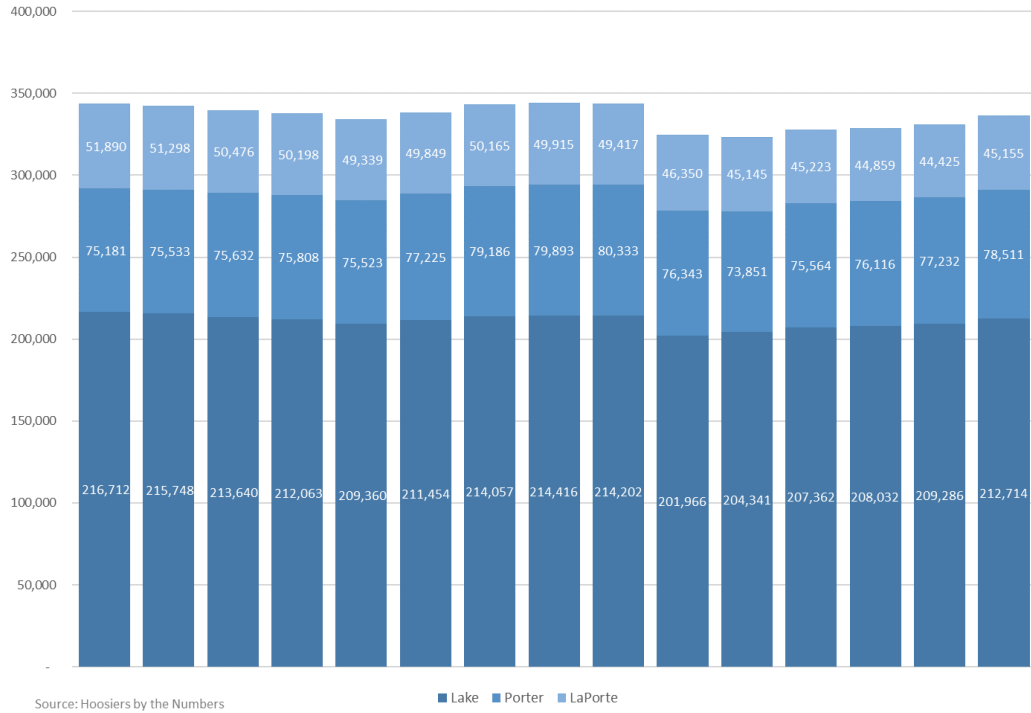
Labor force participation in Lake County increased to 231,350 workers in 2014, up 3 percent from 225,445 in 2000. Unemployed workers more than doubled from 8,733 to 18,636 persons. Employed workers decreased 2 percent from 216,712 to 212,714 over the same period.

Labor force participation in Porter County rose 8 percent from 77,445 to 83,829 workers between 2000 – 2014. Unemployed workers jumped 134 percent from 2,272 to 5,318 workers and the employed increased 4 percent from 75,181 to 78,511 over the same period.

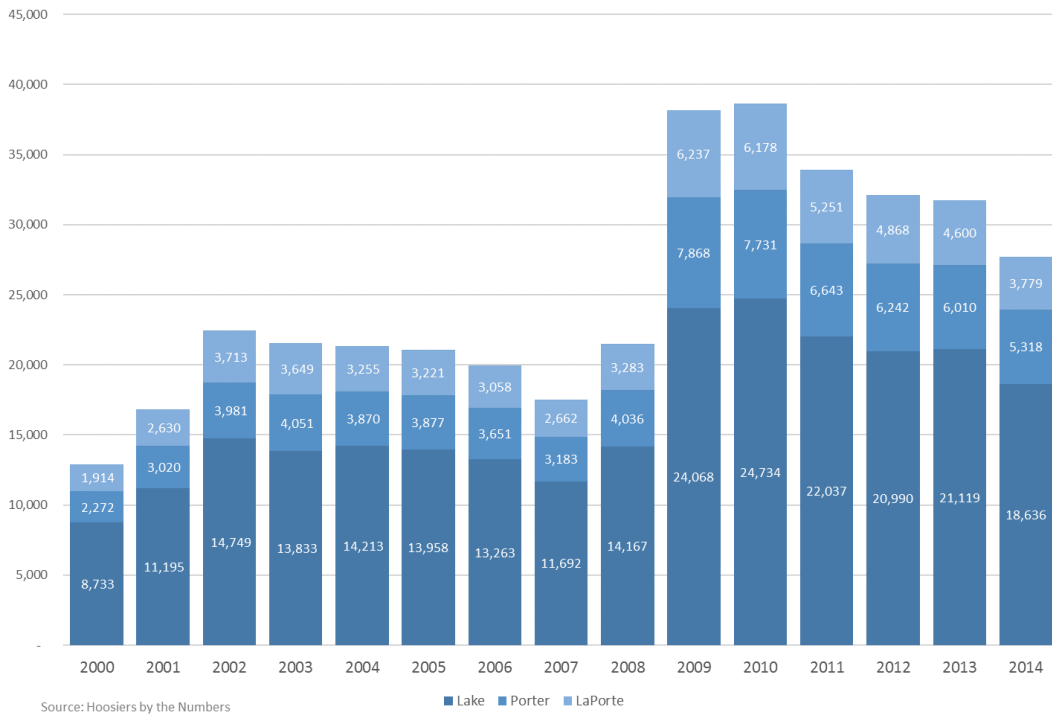
La Porte’s labor force participation declined 9 percent between 2000 – 2014 from 53,804 workers in 2000 to 48,934 workers in 2014. During that period, the number of unemployed nearly doubled from 1,914 persons in 2000 to 3,779 persons in 2014. The employed fell 13 percent to 45,155 in 2014 after a high of 51,890 workers in 2000.



Laborforce Participation: Employed Persons



Laborforce Participation: Unemployed Persons



Unemployment Rate Trend: Needs Improvement

The rate of unemployment rose for every geography between 2000 and 2014. During this period, Northwest Indiana's unemployment rate rose from 3.6 percent to 7.5 percent surpassing both the state and nation at 6.0 and 6.2 percent respectively.

The unemployment rate in Lake County reached 8.1 percent in 2014 from 3.9 percent in 2000. La Porte County also experienced a higher rate of unemployment with 7.7 percent in 2014 compared to 3.6 percent in 2000. Porter County's unemployment rate of 6.3 percent was on par with the state and nation in 2014 after enjoying a low of 2.9 percent in 2000.



Source: Hoosiers by the Numbers

Living Wage (Self-Sufficiency) Trend: Needs Improvement

The living wage calculates the self-sufficiency of adults and families based on the cost of living. On average in Northwest Indiana, an adult with two children would need an annual income before taxes of \$51,560 or \$44,866 after taxes. For two adults with one working and with two children, the required annual income before taxes would be \$44,559 or \$40,514 after taxes. By 2014 comparison to the per capital personal income of \$39,580 and average wages of \$44,103, many Northwest Indiana residents would struggle to make ends meet.

In both Lake and Porter Counties, one adult with two children would require \$51,946 in annual income before taxes or \$45,202 after taxes to support their household. Two adults with one working and two children would require \$46,945 in annual income before taxes or \$40,850 after taxes. With Lake County’s PCPI of \$38,386 and annual wages of \$46,902, households in Lake County may have a difficult time covering all of their living expenses. Porter County households would also experience a shortage, although a smaller gap, with a PCPI of \$44,472 and annual wages of \$44,811.

In La Porte County, one adult with two children would require \$50,787 in annual income before taxes or \$44,194 after taxes, while two adults with one working and two children would need \$45,782 or \$39,842. In comparison to La Porte County’s PCPI of \$35,882 and annual wages of \$40,325, households would certainly struggle to meet basic living demands.

Living Wage, 2014

Lake County		Annual Expenses	2 Adults		La Porte County		Annual Expenses	2 Adults	
			1 Adult 2 Children	(One Working) 2 Children				1 Adult 2 Children	(One Working) 2 Children
	Food	\$ 6,849	\$ 9,095		Food	\$ 6,849	\$ 9,095		
	Child Care	\$ 9,153	\$ -		Child Care	\$ 9,153	\$ -		
	Medical	\$ 5,928	\$ 5,992		Medical	\$ 5,928	\$ 5,992		
	Housing	\$ 9,636	\$ 9,636		Housing	\$ 8,628	\$ 8,628		
	Transportation	\$ 9,589	\$ 11,236		Transportation	\$ 9,589	\$ 11,236		
	Other	\$ 4,046	\$ 4,891		Other	\$ 4,046	\$ 4,891		
	Required Annual Income after Taxes	\$ 45,202	\$ 40,850		Required Annual Income after Taxes	\$ 44,194	\$ 39,842		
	Annual Taxes	\$ 6,744	\$ 6,095		Annual Taxes	\$ 6,594	\$ 5,944		
	Required Annual Income before Taxes	\$ 51,946	\$ 46,945		Required Annual Income before Taxes	\$ 50,787	\$ 45,786		

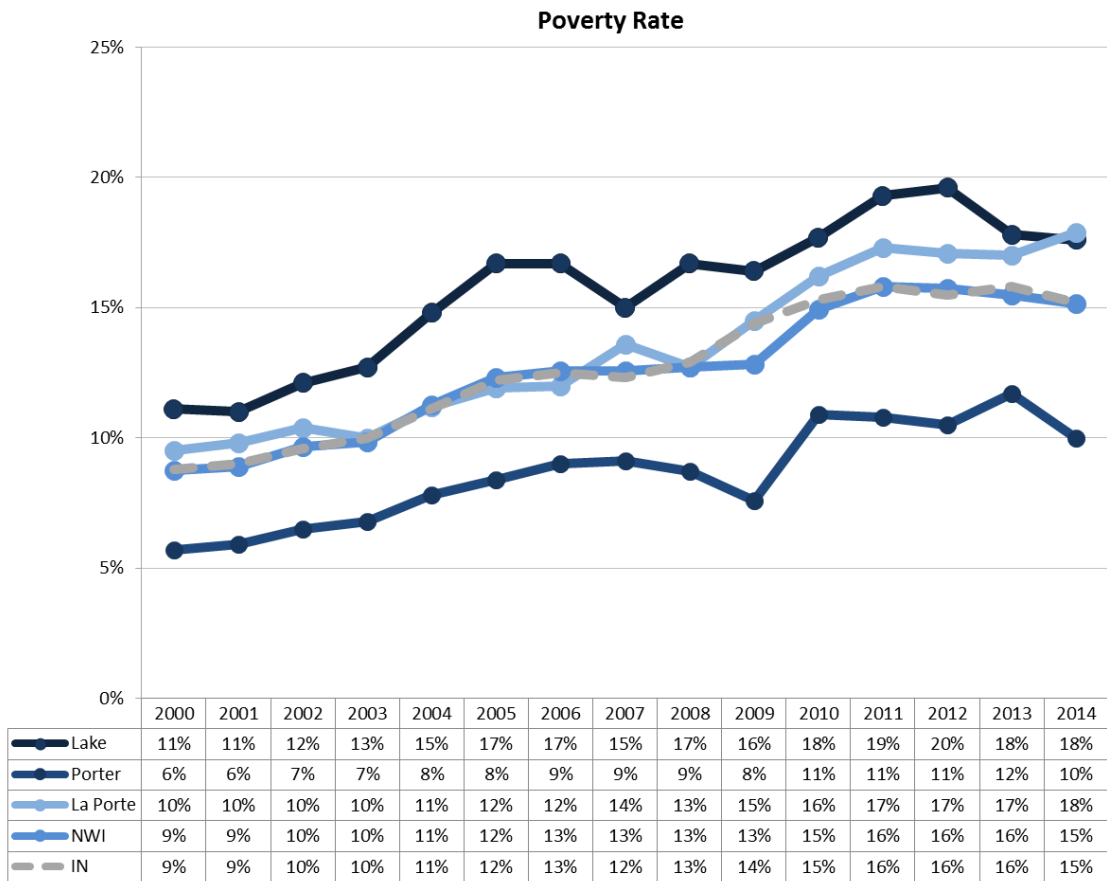
Porter County		Annual Expenses	2 Adults		NWJ		Annual Expenses	2 Adults	
			1 Adult 2 Children	(One Working) 2 Children				1 Adult 2 Children	(One Working) 2 Children
	Food	\$ 6,849	\$ 9,095		Food	\$ 6,849	\$ 9,095		
	Child Care	\$ 9,153	\$ -		Child Care	\$ 9,153	\$ -		
	Medical	\$ 5,928	\$ 5,992		Medical	\$ 5,928	\$ 5,992		
	Housing	\$ 9,636	\$ 9,636		Housing	\$ 9,300	\$ 9,300		
	Transportation	\$ 9,589	\$ 11,236		Transportation	\$ 9,589	\$ 11,236		
	Other	\$ 4,046	\$ 4,891		Other	\$ 4,046	\$ 4,891		
	Required Annual Income after Taxes	\$ 45,202	\$ 40,850		Required Annual Income after Taxes	\$ 44,866	\$ 40,514		
	Annual Taxes	\$ 6,744	\$ 6,095		Annual Taxes	\$ 6,694	\$ 6,045		
	Required Annual Income before Taxes	\$ 51,946	\$ 46,945		Required Annual Income before Taxes	\$ 51,560	\$ 46,559		

Source: Living Wage, MIT

Poverty Rate Trend: Needs Improvement

Poverty remains a persistent challenge in Northwest Indiana. The poverty rate increased steadily in Northwest Indiana from 9 percent in 2000 to 15 percent in 2014, on par with the state during the same period.

Lake County experienced higher rates of poverty between 2000 – 2014, growing from 11 percent to 18 percent. It peaked in 2012 at 20 percent. Similarly, La Porte County’s poverty rate rose from 10 percent in 2000 to 18 percent by 2014. The highest rate experienced over the fourteen- year period. The rate of poverty increased from 6 percent to 10 percent in Porter County, after a peak of 12 percent in 2013.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Regional Action Measures

In the new economy, innovative and creative people drive new ideas, start-ups and revolutions in business and industry, which in turn, stimulates thriving economies. A diversified, resilient place results from businesses, workforce, education systems and economic development entities working together in being globally-competitive and skills-relevant in the marketplace.

Further development opportunity may include:

- Engaging in more regional collaboration with other governmental, public, private, and non-governmental entities to attract and retain businesses in the region.
- Partnering with other local governments, community groups, and private entities in the region to articulate an overarching sustainable economic development strategy and work collaboratively to increase demand for green products and services.
- Creating data sharing agreements between local government and private sector employers to maximize the availability and use of data in economic and workforce development planning.
- Supporting neighborhood advisory councils to encourage dialogue on community issues and build the social capital of neighborhoods.

The 2015 One Region Northwest Indiana Poll found that residents believe the economy is a key regional priority and that the government could do more to diversify the economy. Residents expressed desire for jobs paying livable wages and jobs attractive to young talent. The areas of opportunity they felt were in technology, manufacturing and small business. Furthermore, participants at One Region's "Regional Priorities Summit" articulated three goals for the coming year: funding the South Shore Double-Tracking Project, evolving regional identity and consolidating government services. The expressed interest in better transit for accessing job centers and more transit-oriented development for improving quality of life. Participants wish to celebrate and promote more often the assets and attributes that make Northwest Indiana a great place. They see more diverse people getting involved in support of positive transformation. As one participant stated, "Talent attracts capital faster than capital attracts talent."

According to the Lake Area United Way and Porter County United Way's "Let's Talk" Report, participants care about accessing good paying jobs and the skills to obtain those positions in support of youth and families. They expressed that minimum wage jobs often do not cover the costs of rent. Transportation access to good paying jobs remains limited and sometimes the cost of tickets cannot be afforded by those on limited income. Participants in these community conversations acknowledged that many people are working but are "just one emergency away from a crisis." The lack of employment opportunities for young people means that many leave the area after graduation. Some people fear job security or see no upward mobility. Others find the region lacking in financial resources to start a business. In United Way of La Porte County's "Transition to Collective Impact Funding" Report, financial stability is a major challenge especially when residents face poverty, lack financial literacy or community systems for overcoming economic barriers.

The common bond between employers and employees of Northwest Indiana is wanting a better life for their children and grandchildren. Just as each domain of quality of place is inextricably linked to the other, so too, are the hopes and dreams for a more prosperous region.

A REGIONAL SUCCESS STORY

BREATHING A LITTLE EASIER REGIONWIDE

Simply put, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management wants you to breathe healthily. Partners for Clean Air is a coalition of Northwest Indiana businesses, industries, local governments and community groups committed to improving overall air quality and public health. Enhancing the quality of life in the region by making the air cleaner to breathe for everyone and increasing public awareness about the importance of clean air is also a goal.

Historically, air quality in the region has been poor. According to experts, a portion of Northern Lake County was once designated as nonattainment — or measuring lower than the national air quality standards — with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for four of the six criteria pollutants. These include namely ozone, particulate matter, carbon dioxide and sulfur dioxide. Additionally, Lake and Porter counties failed to achieve national quality standards for ozone and particulate matter. To the east, all of La Porte County previously did not meet ozone standards, while portions were also designated as nonattainment for particulate matter and sulfur dioxide.

These findings can pose serious threats to daily life. “Poor air quality can adversely affect human health,” Dorman said. “In particular, breathing polluted air can irritate the throat and make breathing difficult, make the eyes and nose burn and trigger respiratory and heart problems.”

Experts believe negative air quality can also have a much more far-reaching impact. “Poor air quality can also adversely affect the economy, as it has a negative impact on tourism

and on the ability of businesses and industries to locate or expand within the impacted area,” Dorman continued.

Since 1997, Partners for Clean Air have focused on outreach to educate the public on ways to improve NWI’s air quality through simple, voluntary actions. These partners include; ArcelorMittal, BP, NIPSCO, Metro Recycling, GAF, KERAMIDA, Michigan City Sanitary District, La Porte County Health Department, Gary SouthShore RailCats, Lake County Solid Waste Management District, Hammond Port Authority, Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) and South Shore Clean Cities.



“GOOD AIR QUALITY IS VITAL TO HUMAN HEALTH AND A PROSPEROUS ECONOMY, AND STRENGTHENS THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR RESIDENTS AND AREA VISITORS.”

~ Dan Dorman
IDEM NWI Partners for Clean Air Coordinator

Partners for Clean Air suggested several of these “voluntary actions” or steps individuals and businesses can take to reduce air pollution:

- Limit driving by carpooling and grouping errands in one trip
- Avoid idling and park as well as go inside instead of using the drive-thru
- Use an electric starter instead of charcoal lighter fluid to start grills
- Turn off appliances and lights when not in use
- Mow lawn and fill gas tank after sunset on Air Quality Action Days

Agency scientists, who evaluate weather conditions and other factors, determine Air Quality Action Days. These sunny, hot and humid days with little air circulation may create conditions unfavorably impacting air quality, which may also pose breathing issues for

sensitive populations like those with asthma and lung disease, children and the elderly.

While steps to improve air quality are encouraged year-round, experts said action is particularly important during these critical days. Dorman said, “Reducing air pollution voluntarily on these days can help make breathing easier for the most vulnerable residents of the region. Often, these small changes cost little or even save money for the individual or business taking action, yet cumulatively they can make a big difference.”

Most recently, the coalition has focused on innovative ways to recognize organizations by creating varying levels of membership reflecting commitments made for cleaner air. The Partners for Clean Air also refocused its annual award program on organizations that are innovative in promoting air pollution reduction through investments in alternative energy and fuel, beyond compliance projects, and redesigning communities to encourage less dependence on driving.

Once such organization, the Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission, has been an active participant with the coalition for many years. Specifically, NIRPC voluntarily distributed air quality action day information to staff and distribution networks including tips for reducing emissions, promoted carpooling with three carpool-only parking spots and allowed staff flexible scheduling to reduce contributions to rush hour traffic congestion.

NIRPC Director of Environmental Programs Kathy Luther said, “Partners for Clean Air has been a great way to help individuals, businesses, and organizations learn about air quality action days and their health and about how to take simple voluntary actions to reduce their contributions to air pollution on those days.”

Actions such as those taken by NIRPC and others through Partners for Clean Air have led to significant improvements in the region’s air quality over the years.

Currently, La Porte County is designated as achieving all of the NAAQS. Lake and Porter counties as well have met attainment with the exception of an ozone standard. Partners for Clean Air explained air quality in these counties meets the standard, yet the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency considers Lake and Porter counties part of a combined statistical area with Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin. Lake and Porter counties’ current exception is based on negative results from Illinois.

Dorman said, “Air quality in our region has never been better as a result of decades of pollution control technology placed on industries, businesses and individual vehicles,” Dorman said. “Programs such as the Partners for Clean Air will help sustain or further enhance the improvements that have been made.”

For more information, visit IDEM’s Air Quality 101 at www.in.gov/idem/airquality/2548.htm.

For a listing of all NAAQS and designations, historical and current, visit www.in.gov/idem/airquality/2339.htm.

Tips to improve air quality at home and work are available at www.in.gov/idem/airquality/2589.htm or visit www.in.gov/idem/airquality/2587.htm to create your own voluntary Air Quality Action Plan.

Visit SmogWatch or download the free mobile app, available for *smartphones*, at www.in.gov/apps/idem/smog.

WE ARE SUSTAINING OUR FUTURE

DOMAIN 3: ENVIRONMENT

A healthy ecosystem contains clean air, water and land. All forms of life flourish beyond basic survival. Sustaining our future involves wisely using available resources without diminishing the natural capacity of a given locale to support and regenerate future supply.

As the second of the three pillars of sustainability, the quality of environment affects the quality of place. As natural resources are utilized for economic and social gains, environmental conditions are impacted. Placemaking encourages smart growth of the built environment. Scale, density, proximity of development, along with industrial and commercial operational efficiencies, can minimize the ecological footprint of a place. “Green” communities afford people and businesses more conscious choices over how they can reduce their own impact on the environment and interact with nature. A major determinant of human health lies relates to the Zip code in which a person resides, therefore, places that are less congested, less polluted and more resilient improve quality of life.

In Northwest Indiana, environmental restoration is one of most visible evolutions happening in today. The local actions range from the home installations of rain barrels, process changes in business, research studies by academia, green infrastructure projects led by the public sector, LEED developments initiated by the private sector, environmental education of area youth and land acquisitions by nonprofits to social gatherings in celebration of the subject. Partnerships are proving instrumental in catalyzing environmental progress in the region.

A signature project in this regard is the restoration of the Grand Calumet River, one of Lake Michigan’s most polluted waterways. It spans an industrial corridor from Gary’s Marquette Park to the Illinois border. According to Indiana Department of Environmental Management’s Northwest Office, “the Citizen’s Advisory for the Remediation of the Environment (CARE) Committee is a collaboration between representatives of state and federal government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and industries that were appointed by the commissioner of the Indiana Department of Environmental Management. The CARE Committee has been assisting with the planning for the restoration of the Grand Calumet River Area of Concern since the late 1980s and is currently overseeing implementation of the work to clean up and restore this riverine habitat. Due to the Grand Calumet River area’s history of contamination, it was deemed one of 43 Areas of Concern around the Great Lakes by the International Joint Commission in the 1978 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

With the help of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, the Great Lakes Legacy Act, and funding from state and local partners, great progress has been made toward remediating the river and surrounding areas. Many sections of the river have been remediated and the remaining areas are currently in the planning stages. Habitat for fish and wildlife has and is being restored, with an estimated 900 acres expected to be complete by 2020. Through the hard work of the CARE Committee and other partners,

the end goal of creating a better environmental future for area residents and wildlife and delisting the Grand Calumet River Area of Concern is becoming a tangible reality.”⁵

The award-winning Marquette Plan, a vision first articulated by Congressman Peter J. Visclosky in the 1980s and now championed by many area leaders, seeks to make more of Northwest Indiana a livable lakefront. Redevelopment of economic and community infrastructure, increasing public access to Lake Michigan and completion of the Marquette Greenway are the intended goals. The 2015 report also advocates the rightsizing of and land banking in shoreline communities, the use of green deconstruction and historic preservation in revitalization, the creation of arts and cultural districts in placemaking, the improvement of public access through watershed planning and the implementation of complete streets for multi-modal transportation.⁶

The recent documentary entitled “Shifting Sands” captures the story of the creation of Indiana Dunes National Park and the juxtaposition of industry and the natural environment. It tells how Northwest Indiana developed during the industrial era, the effects of environmental degradation and the partnership which emerged to bringing about the restoration revolution occurring in the region.

Other strides in environmental regionalism are expanding the partnership base necessary to overcome legacy issues and emergent concerns such as climate change. Industries, government, schools, nonprofits and engaged youth and citizens are all playing a vital role in making Northwest Indiana healthier and more sustainable.

Overall Rating: Improving

Leading Indicators	Trend
Air Quality Index	Improving
Open Space Preservation	Improving
Beach Action Days	Improving
Shoreline & Streams Preservation	Improving
Solid & Hazardous Waste	Needs Improvement

Region in Motion

- Air quality index between 2000 and 2014 shows that overall air quality has significantly improved. The number of good days in a year was 209 and the number of moderate days in a year was 148 days in 2014.
- During 2014, Lake County’s air quality comprised of 35 percent or 128 good days, 62 percent or 226 moderate days and 3 percent or 11 days unhealthy for sensitive groups.
- Porter County’s air quality consisted of 53 percent or 194 good days, 47 percent or 170 moderate days and less than zero percent or 1 day unhealthy for sensitive groups.

⁵ Regional collaboration success story submission from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management.

⁶ The 2015 Marquette Plan, <http://www.nirpc.org/about/plans,-programs-studies/the-marquette-plan-2015.aspx>, accessed July 1, 2016.

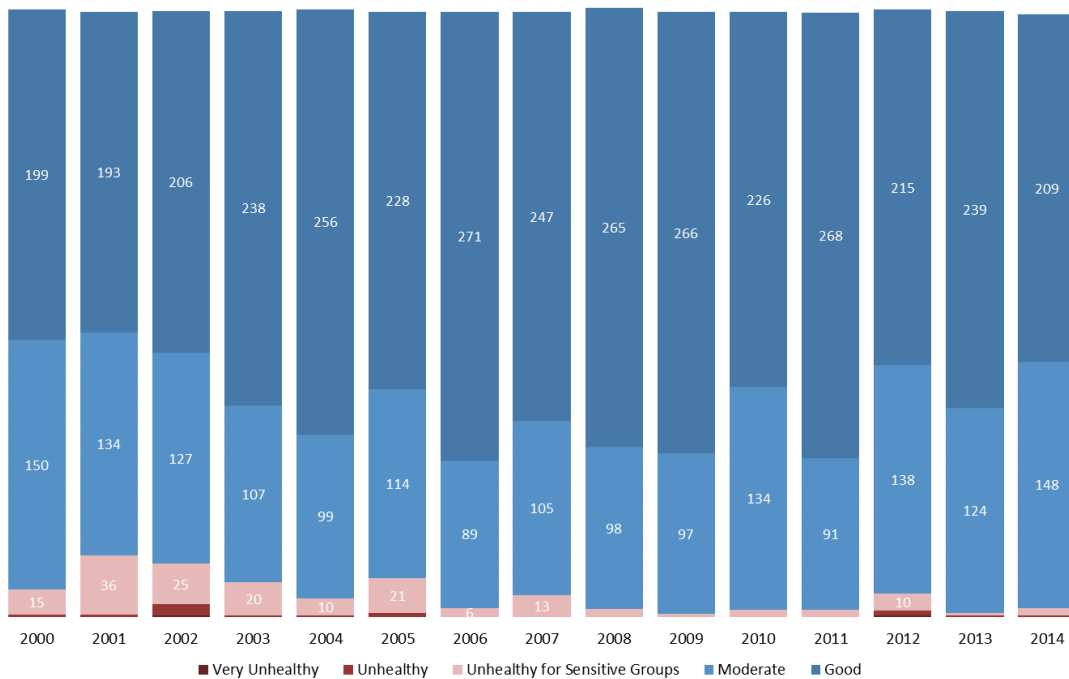
- La Porte County's air quality registered 85 percent or 306 good days, 14 percent or 49 moderate days and 1 percent or 3 days unhealthy for sensitive groups.
- The total acres desired for green infrastructure is 367,902 or 38 percent of total land mass. Of that amount, 38 percent of Lake County or 121,207 acres are desired. In Porter County, 34 percent of the land mass or 91,035 acres are desired. In La Porte County, 40 percent of the land mass or 155,660 acres are desired for green infrastructure uses.
- Of those desired green infrastructure acres, 42,341 or 4 percent are currently managed lands under ownership by public or nonprofit entities.
- Managed lands in Lake County constitute 14,121 acres or 4 percent today.
- Managed lands in Porter County include 15,587 acres or 6 percent of the land mass.
- In La Porte County, 14,121 acres are managed lands representing 4 percent of the land mass with the goal of 12 percent of the plan.
- Of these managed lands, nearly 1,356 acres are not publicly-accessible today including 288 acres in Lake County, 75 acres in Porter County and 993 in La Porte County.
- Managed lands with public access total 40,985 acres or 4 percent of Northwest Indiana's land mass. In Lake County, 13,833 acres of managed lands are accessible. In Porter County, 15,512 acres of managed lands are accessible and in La Porte County, 11,640 acres are accessible to the public.
- Northwest Indiana's 31 beaches saw a rise in the percentage of beach season days not under a closure or advisory action, referred to as "beach action days." 89 percent of the beach season in 2014 was without beach action.
- Currently, Northwest Indiana's Lake Michigan shoreline spans 65 miles. Of that amount 15.6 miles, or 24 percent, are protected and 0.4 percent are managed.
- Area rivers and streams traverse 2,496 miles. Of that amount, 140.1 miles or 6 percent are protected and 780.5 miles or 31 percent are managed.
- Inland lakes represent 10,508 acres, with 828 acres or 8 percent protected and 3,335 miles or 32 percent managed.
- Solid and hazardous waste disposal significantly increased between 2000 – 2014, going from 1.8 tons per capita in 2000 to 4.95 tons per capita in 2014.

Air Quality Index Trend: Improving

Air quality index between 2000 and 2014 shows that overall air quality has significantly improved. The number of good days in a year was 209 in 2014 compared to 199 days in 2000. The number of moderate days in a year remained relatively stable at 148 days in 2014 compared to 150 days in 2000. The number of unhealthy days for sensitive groups (youth, seniors and those with health issues) dropped to 5 days in 2014 compared to 15 days in 2000. The combined numbers of unhealthy and very unhealthy remained very low at 1 day out of the year in 2014 compared to 2 days in 2000.

During 2014, Lake County’s air quality comprised of 35 percent or 128 good days, 62 percent or 226 moderate days and 3 percent or 11 days unhealthy for sensitive groups. Porter County’s air quality consisted of 53 percent or 194 good days, 47 percent or 170 moderate days and less than zero percent or 1 day unhealthy for sensitive groups. La Porte County’s air quality registered 85 percent or 306 good days, 14 percent or 49 moderate days and 1 percent or 3 days unhealthy for sensitive groups.

Air Quality Index



Source: U.S. EPA

Open Space Preservation Trend: Improving

Open space preservation in Northwest Indiana is a combination of “managed lands” that are either publicly-owned or nonprofit-held for public benefit. “Public access” means access to water from publicly-managed or nonprofit-held lands, and may not include ADA compliance infrastructure at present.

The total land mass in Northwest Indiana is 978,359 acres, 40 percent in La Porte County, 33 percent in Lake County and 27 percent in Porter County. Through the regional “Green Infrastructure Plan,” a proportion of the overall land mass is desired for open space, high-functioning natural systems and environmental preservation. The total acres desired for green infrastructure is 367,902 or 38 percent of total land mass. Of that amount, 38 percent of Lake County or 121,207 acres are desired. In Porter County, 34 percent of the land mass or 91,035 acres are desired. In La Porte County, 40 percent of the land mass or 155,660 acres are desired for green infrastructure uses.

Of those desired green infrastructure acres, 42,341 or 4 percent are currently managed lands under ownership by public or nonprofit entities. The goal is 12 percent of the plan. Managed lands in Lake County constitute 14,121 acres or 4 percent today, the goal is 12 percent of the plan. Managed lands in Porter County include 15,587 acres or 6 percent of the land mass, the goal is 17 percent. In La Porte County, 14,121 acres are managed lands representing 4 percent of the land mass with the goal of 12 percent of the plan.

Of these managed lands, nearly 1,356 acres are not publicly-accessible to the public including 288 acres in Lake County, 75 acres in Porter County and 993 in La Porte County. Those managed lands with public access total 40,985 acres or 4 percent of Northwest Indiana’s land mass. In Lake County, 13,833 acres of managed lands are accessible. In Porter County, 15,512 acres of managed lands are accessible and in La Porte County, 11,640 acres are accessible to the public.

Open Space Preservation, 2014

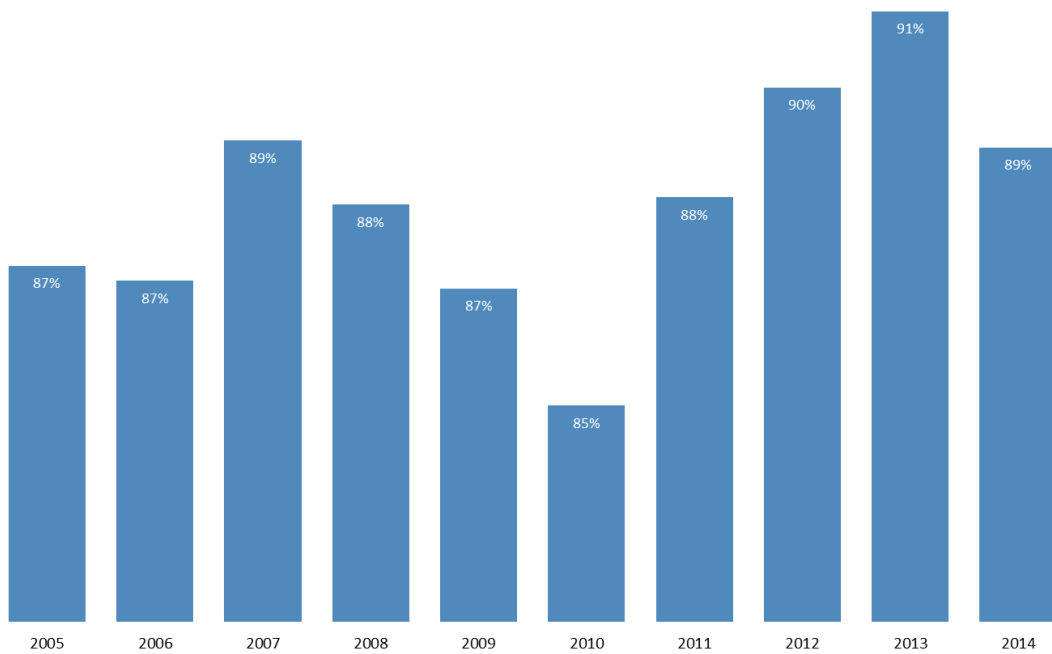
	<u>Land Mass</u>	<u>Green Infrastructure Plan</u>	<u>Managed Lands</u>			<u>Managed Lands w/Public Access</u>		
			Acres	Percent of Land Mass	Percent of Plan	Number of Acres	Percent of Land Mass	Percent of Plan
Lake	322,933	121,207	14,121	4%	12%	13,833	4%	11%
Porter	268,760	91,035	15,587	6%	17%	15,512	6%	17%
La Porte	386,666	155,660	12,633	3%	8%	11,640	3%	7%
NWI	978,359	367,902	42,341	4%	12%	40,985	4%	12%

Source: NIRPC

Beach Action Days Trend: Improving

Northwest Indiana’s 31 beaches saw a rise in the percentage of beach season days not under a closure or advisory action, referred to as “beach action days.” The beach season for monitoring water quality runs each year from Memorial Day to Labor Day. 89 percent of the beach season in 2014 was without beach action compared to 87 percent in 2005. Conversely, a total of 343 occurrences of beach closure or advisory action occurred in 2014 compared to 357 beach actions in 2005.

Beach Season not under a Closure or Advisory Action



Source: Indiana Department of Environmental Management

Shoreline & Streams Preservation Trend: Improving

Shoreline and streams preservation in Northwest Indiana represents a concerted effort by various stakeholders to improve water quality and recreational uses of area waterbodies. “Protected” means waters within managed lands, while “managed” means included in a local watershed plan.

Currently, Northwest Indiana’s Lake Michigan shoreline spans 65 miles. Of that amount 15.6 miles, or 24 percent, are protected and 0.4 percent are managed.

Area rivers and streams traverse 2,496 miles. Of that amount, 140.1 miles or 6 percent are protected and 780.5 miles or 31 percent are managed.

Inland lakes represent 10,508 acres, with 828 acres or 8 percent protected and 3,335 miles or 32 percent managed.

Shoreline and Streams Preservation, 2014

	<u>Base</u>	<u>Protected</u>		<u>Managed Watersheds</u>	
		Amount Protected	Percent Protected	Amount Managed	Percent Managed
Types of Waterbodies	Size				
Lake Michigan Shoreline	65 mi	15.6 mi	24%	0.4 mi	<1%
Rivers & Streams	2,496 mi	140.1 mi	6%	780.5 mi	31%
Inland Lakes	10,508 ac	828 ac	8%	3,335 mi	32%

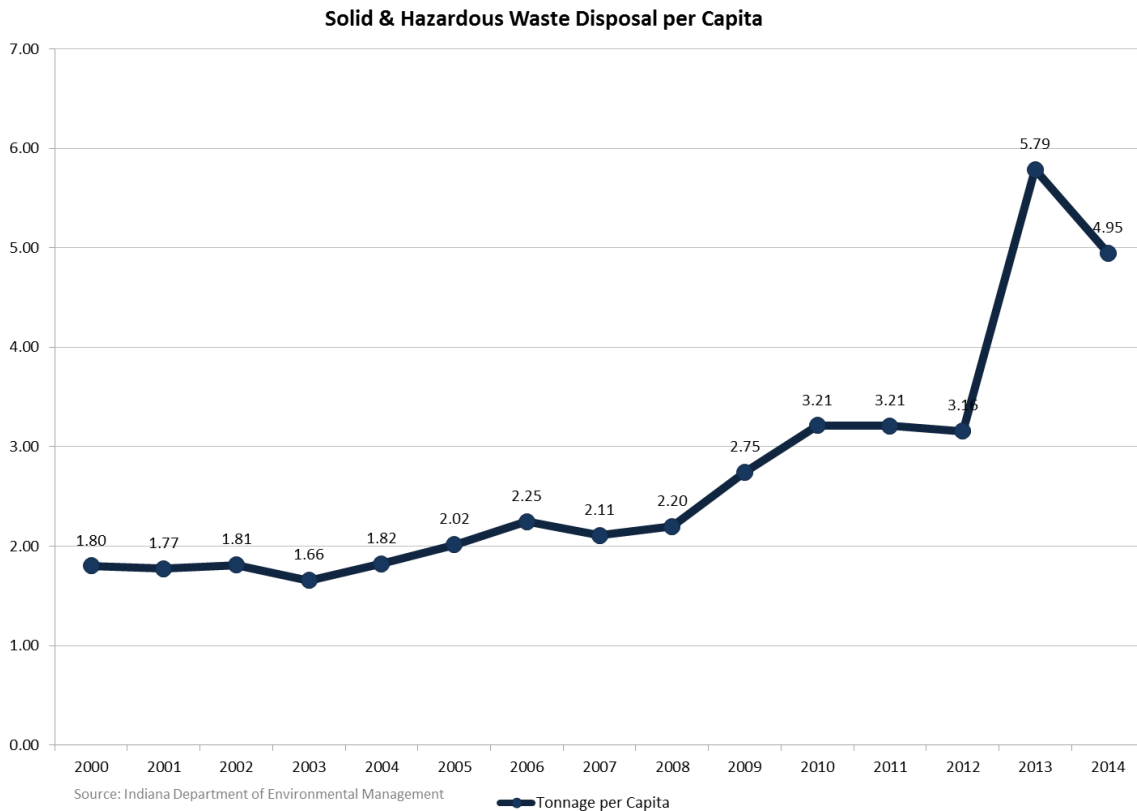
Source: Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission

Solid & Hazardous Waste **Trend: Needs Improvement**

Solid and hazardous waste disposal significantly increased between 2000 – 2014, going from 1.8 tons per capita in 2000 to 4.95 tons per capita in 2014.

Lake County’s solid and hazardous waste disposal totaled 2.2 million tons in 2014 compared to 1.1 million in 2000, an increase of 108 percent. Porter County’s solid and hazardous waste disposal totaled 1.3 million tons in 2014 compared to 106,677 tons in 2000, over a thousand percent increase. La Porte County’s solid and hazardous waste disposal totaled 204,961 tons in 2014 compared to 128, 926 tons in 2000, a 59 percent increase.

Waste disposal reporting recently changed formats therefore, definitions and calculations may account for some of the spike between 2012 and 2014.



Regional Action Measures

Being a sustainable and resilient region requires a long view coupled with near term actions, and Northwest Indiana's leaders and citizens demonstrate a strong capacity for partnering to improve the environment. Much of the groundwork for collaboration began years ago when local leaders began convening diverse groups, often working in opposition of one another, around some of the most complex environmental and economic problems of the time.

Today, the environmental bar is higher and the challenges no simpler to solve. Environmental burdens disproportionately affect environmental justice communities in the region. The uncertainties of climate change, a host of emergent issues such as local food and the balance of legacy concerns are yet to be addressed. Environmental education and raising awareness can contribute to the way people view and experience nature and the world around them.

Many of the suggested actions by STAR are underway but here are a few where further development opportunities may exist:

- Establish a climate change advisory group to engage diverse community stakeholders in identifying and implementing GHG reduction strategies
- Convene owners and operators of working lands to promote sustainable harvesting practices

Although the 2015 One Region Poll of Northwest Indiana did not specifically address the environment, the poll found that residents consider this region a unique and great place to live in Chicagoland especially for families and seniors. 41 percent of residents agreed that Northwest Indiana does not have enough public access to Lake Michigan as a factor for enhancing quality of life.

In the Lake Area United Way and Porter County United Way's 2015 "Let's Talk" Report, residents did not specifically mention the natural environment per se but the "environmental conditions" relative to many of the underlying economic and social conditions impacting quality of life. Issues such as crime, drug and alcohol abuse, mental health issues, unemployment, public transit access, bullying in school, youth activities and open mindedness are top concerns. Similarly, in United Way of La Porte County's 2015 "Transition to Collective Impact Funding" Report, residents pressed upon existing educational, health and financial stability challenges.

Sustaining our future may require transferring some of the best practices in environmental collaboration into other domains of quality of place so that the three pillars of sustainability – economy, environment and social equity become more balanced and aligned.

A REGIONAL SUCCESS STORY

PROPELLING QUALITY OF LIFE FORWARD

When the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District has a goal in mind, nothing stops their train of thought from chugging towards success.

NICTD — the operators of the South Shore Line — faced the challenge of how to best develop a bikes on trains program to adequately balance the desire for alternative transportation with safety, infrastructure and finances for years.

Thanks to extensive regional collaboration with a diverse group of partners including nonprofits, regional planning agencies, municipalities and private companies, the organization overcame this challenge. The South Shore Line rolled out its new Bikes on Weekend Trains pilot program this April.

The program encourages bicycles on select weekend/holiday trains allowing cycling enthusiasts to transport their bike via platforms located at the following stops: Chicago, Hammond, East Chicago, Dune Park and South Bend. Bike racks are provided at no charge on a first-come, first-served basis on specially designated equipped cars seasonally until the end of October.

NICTD GM Mike Noland said, “The success of this effort was largely dependent on people from a broad range of perspectives — including conflicting points of view — working together to build trust, focus on solving problems together and remaining mindful of the ways the project would benefit quality of life in Northwest Indiana.”

Lending a helpful hand, Nicole Barker of Save the Dunes approached NICTD in 2013 and offered to lead the effort to secure matching funds for a federal grant through the

Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) to study how to overcome physical and operational barriers to allow bikes on South Shore Line trains. Barker not only brought both financial resources from a number of sources and also talent from throughout the region to help forge a new vision. Soon after, a consultant was hired to chart a path towards implementing bikes on trains through NIRPC’s assistance.

Funding partners included: ArcelorMittal, NIPSCO, NICTD, National Parks Conservation Association, Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority, Greenways Foundation and governments in Porter and La Porte counties.

Additional shout outs to partners and staffers involved in the effort including Jan Dick, Belinda Petroskey, LeAaron Foley, Mitch Barloga, Geof Benson, Jack Eskin as well as engineering and operational talent from the railroad.



“THE PARTNERS WHO MADE THIS PROJECT POSSIBLE HONORED ONE ANOTHER’S MOTIVATIONS AND PERSPECTIVES ON WHY THIS ISSUE NEEDED TO BE ADDRESSED, AND WORKED STEADFASTLY TO MAKE IT WORK.

THERE IS NO DOUBT IN OUR MINDS THAT EASY BIKE ACCESS TO AND FROM CHICAGO WILL ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE AND SENSE OF PLACE IN NORTHWEST INDIANA, GIVING EVERYONE THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIENCE HOOSIER HOSPITALITY.”

~ Mike Noland, NICTD

“This group of dedicated individuals saw the potential of opening Northwest Indiana to bike enthusiasts and what that could mean for tourism and economic development,” Noland

said. “The South Shore saw it as an opportunity to increase weekend ridership and open Chicago to an entirely new market.”

Since the program began this past April, the South Shore Line said they are averaging 25 bikes each day on weekends and expect this number to increase as the warmer weather approaches.

Although boarding and exiting is currently limited to specific platforms at this time, the South Shore Line is looking to partner with communities interested in co-sponsoring bike sharing kiosks. Such an effort could expand riders’ access to Michigan City’s burgeoning downtown and lakefront, and showcase Gary’s vibrant Lake Street corridor and beautiful Marquette Park — further interweaving the region’s communities for tourism and a stronger economy. For Save the Dunes, this effort has been focused on increasing non-motorized access to the region’s greatest draws

— the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and Indiana Dunes State Park.

The South Shore Line was the last remaining commuter rail line without a bike program — leaders said Metra has allowed bikes for quite some time yet, unlike the South Shore Line, bikes on Metra occupy handicap seating. Now that this gap has been addressed, organizers believe the program will benefit those outside of Northwest Indiana as well, reaching commuters from South Bend to Chicago.

Grab your bike and come aboard! Check out the full Bikes on Weekend Trains schedule and Chicago and South Bend bikeways at www.nictd.com.

Visit www.nirpc.org/greenways-blueways for more information on bike trails in NWI.

WE ARE PROMOTING EASY, MULTIMODAL ACCESS

DOMAIN 4: TRANSPORTATION

Transportation systems provide the physical infrastructure for connecting people with places. Promoting easy, multimodal access equips people with a variety of market choices for obtaining the goods and services they need and the lifestyle they want. Businesses, in turn, rely on extensive land, air and sea networks for distributing both raw materials and final products locally and around the world.

Transit-oriented development, or TOD, constitutes a major shift in how communities leverage their proximity to public transportation assets. Through compact, mixed-used development near transit centers, TOD neighborhoods offer residents convenience to good jobs, diverse housing options and desirable amenities such as parks, trails, retail stores and restaurants. Residents enjoy a lifestyle centered upon transit ridership which saves them time and money while reducing the environmental burden of single car occupancy and urban sprawl.

Another investment that vibrant communities offer are recreational trails for bicycling, walking or paddling. Creating points of interest, in and around trailheads and launch sites, not only enhances the sense of place but generates communal space for ritualizing healthy lifestyles and social interactions between users.

Located within the crossroads of America, Northwest Indiana's proximity to Chicago and diverse transportation assets largely shaped how the region developed over the twentieth century. The region sustains its competitive advantage via the major systems: Port of Indiana, Indiana Harbor & Ship Canal, the CSX, CN, IHB, Amtrak and South Shore rail lines, the Gary/Chicago International Airport, the Porter County Regional Airport, Interstates 80/94/90/65 and U.S. highways 12/20/6/30/41 alongside a series of roadways, bus transit systems and recreational trail corridors. Much of this physical infrastructure overlays an extensive pipeline, high-speed cable and dark fiber network.

Today, Northwest Indiana's economic development interests in transportation are two-fold, both to ensure the quality of existing infrastructure systems for businesses and consumers, and to spur well-connected, transit-oriented and amenity-filled communities for people, who are the talent and magnets for economic growth. Therefore, the next evolution in regional transportation revolves around the planned investments in the South Shore commuter rail expansion and TOD initiatives with the goal of retaining population, stimulating economic growth, creating jobs and offering a high quality of life.

The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD), the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA), the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC), the Northwest Indiana Forum, One Region and Congressman Peter J. Visclosky's office formed a collaborative in 2015 to legislatively advance the \$115.0 million "Double Tracking of the South Shore Commuter Rail Line Project." The South Shore commuter rail service connects passengers between Northwest Indiana, Chicago and South Bend. 12 of its 19 transit stops directly serve Lake, Porter and La

Porte counties. Double-tracking the existing commuter service line would improve operational scheduling, reliability and maintenance. Regional leaders are also interested in building the West Lake Corridor, a proposed north/south rail line extension in Lake County. A mix of federal, state and local dollars will be required for realizing the Double Tracking and West Lake Corridor projects.

The South Shore’s economic impact upon the region and state are significant. According to recent research⁷, the average household income of South Shore riders was \$82,000 compared to the state’s median of \$48,300 in 2013. 47 percent of current South Shore riders have a household income of \$75,000 or more and 31 percent have household incomes of \$100,000 or more. Four in ten riders are corporate executives, managers/supervisors, professionals and technical specialists. Jobs in Chicago tend to pay nearly 40 percent more than the same job in Indiana. The benefits of such employment opportunities result in the South Shore ridership bringing \$427 million in personal income to Indiana annually and \$14 million in sales and income taxes to the state each year.

Public bus transit systems in Northwest Indiana remain largely disparate operations, facing service delivery and funding challenges. However, some operators are making concerted efforts to improve quality of life for riders by regionalizing routes, improving efficiency and eliminating service gaps between communities. For example, the Gary Public Transportation Corporation operates services beyond the Gary city limits into job centers located in Illinois, Hammond, East Chicago, Griffith, Merrillville and Crown Point. The City of Valparaiso offers commuter bus services between Valparaiso and downtown Chicago during the week. Michigan City, the City of La Porte, the La Porte County Board of Commissioners and Purdue University Northwest formed a partnership for creating the Transit Triangle service for better connecting residents to employment and education centers.

Northwest Indiana continues expanding recreational access and quality of it. Approximately 18 regional priority trail corridors and 8 paddling launch sites⁸, two of which are ADA accessible, connect users to safe bicycling and paddling experiences as well as other local things to do.

Overall Rating: Needs Improvement

Leading Indicators	Trend
Commuters’ Travel Patterns	Needs Improvement
Transportation Means to Work	Needs Improvement
Mean Travel Time to Work	Needs Improvement
Annual Ridership	Needs Improvement
Fare Recovery Ratio	Needs Improvement
Off-Road Bike Trails Miles	Improving

⁷ Regional collaboration success story submission from the Northwest Indiana Forum.

⁸ NIRPC Regional Greenways and Blueways Maps, <http://www.nirpc.org/greenways-blueways.aspx> accessed June 1, 2016.

Region in Motion

- Regionally in 2014, 91,509 people or 58 percent of commuters travel from their Lake, Porter and La Porte County homes to their workplace outside of the county in which they reside, while 66,584 people or 42 percent of commuters travel from another county or state where they reside into Lake, Porter and La Porte Counties to work.
- Little change in the travel means to work occurred regionally between 2000 and 2014. A majority of commuters still drove alone, fewer carpooled, more worked from home and about the same took public transit.
- The regional average travel time to work of 25.7 minutes was on par with the national average and two minutes longer than the state's average. In Lake County, work commutes took 27.7 minutes compared to 26.8 in Porter County and 22.6 minutes in La Porte County.
- Commuter rail service maintained 3.6 million passengers in 2014. Regionally bus transit ridership fell 49 percent between 2000 and 2014 to 1.3 million riders. Demand response ridership also declined 55 percent over the same period to 185, 757 riders. System changes account for much of the shift in ridership that has occurred.
- The operational efficiency of local bus and commuter transit systems varies by system. In 2014, rural demand response systems and the City of Valparaiso small fixed route system outperformed statewide peers on fare recovery. The City of Gary and Michigan City transit systems operated well but at fare recovery below the statewide average. NICTD continued its strong performance.
- Northwest Indiana enjoys over 100 miles of regional off-road bike trails. Over the past fourteen years, 52 miles were added to the bike trail system.

Commuters' Travel Patterns Trend: Needs Improvement

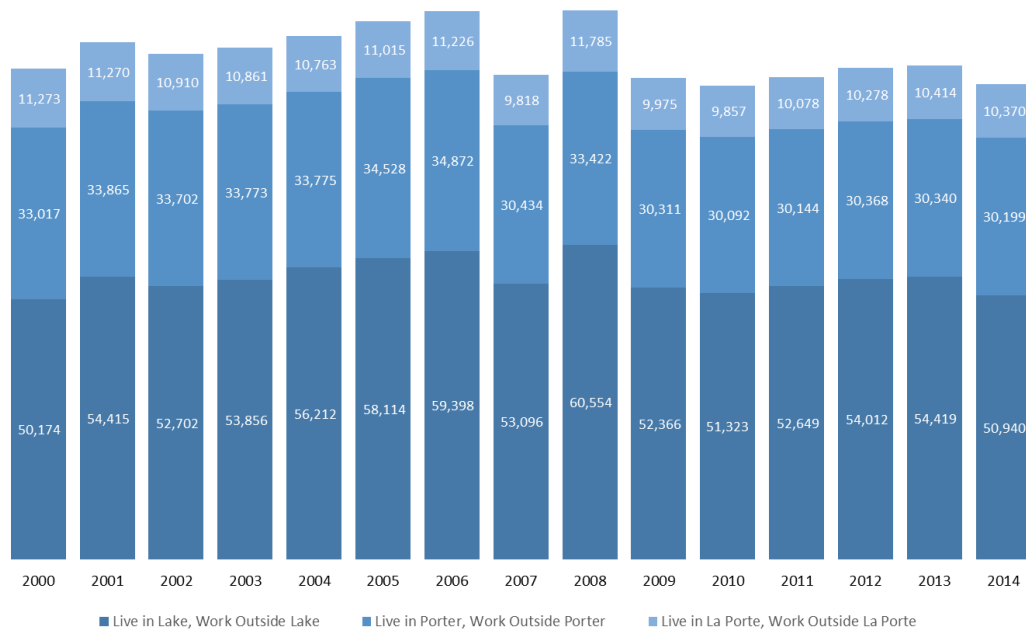
Commuters are a subset of the workforce that flow between the county in which they reside and the county in which they are employed. Regionally in 2014, 91,509 people or 58 percent of commuters travel from their respective Lake, Porter and La Porte County homes to their respective workplace located outside of the county in which they reside, while 66,584 people or 42 percent of commuters travel from another county or state where they reside into either Lake, Porter or La Porte Counties to work.

50,940 people commuted from their Lake County home to another county to work in 2014 compared to 50,174 people in 2000. Conversely 44,597 commuters travelled into Lake County to work from their homes located in another county or state in 2014, a 7 percent increase over 41,531 people in 2000.

30,199 people commuted from their Porter County home to another county to work in 2014, a decrease of 9 percent from 33,017 in 2000. 14,443 people commuted into Porter County to work from their homes located in another county or state in 2014, a 13 percent increase from 12,734 in 2000.

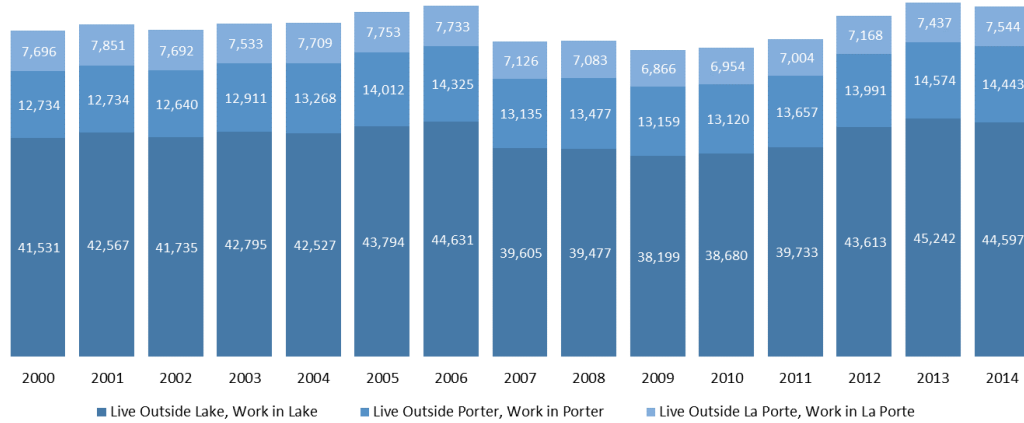
10,370 people commuted from their La Porte County home to another county to work in 2014, down 8 percent from 2000. 7,544 people commute into La Porte County to work, down 2 percent from 7,696 people in 2000.

Commuters who Live in the County but Work Outside of the County



Source: Stats Indiana

Commuters who Live Outside of the County but Work in the County



Source: Stats Indiana

Transportation Means to Work

Trend: Needs Improvement

Little change occurred in the regional travel means to work between 2000 and 2014. The vast majority of commuters continued to drive alone. In 2014, 84 percent of Northwest Indiana residents drove alone compared to 83 percent in Indiana and 63 percent in Chicago.

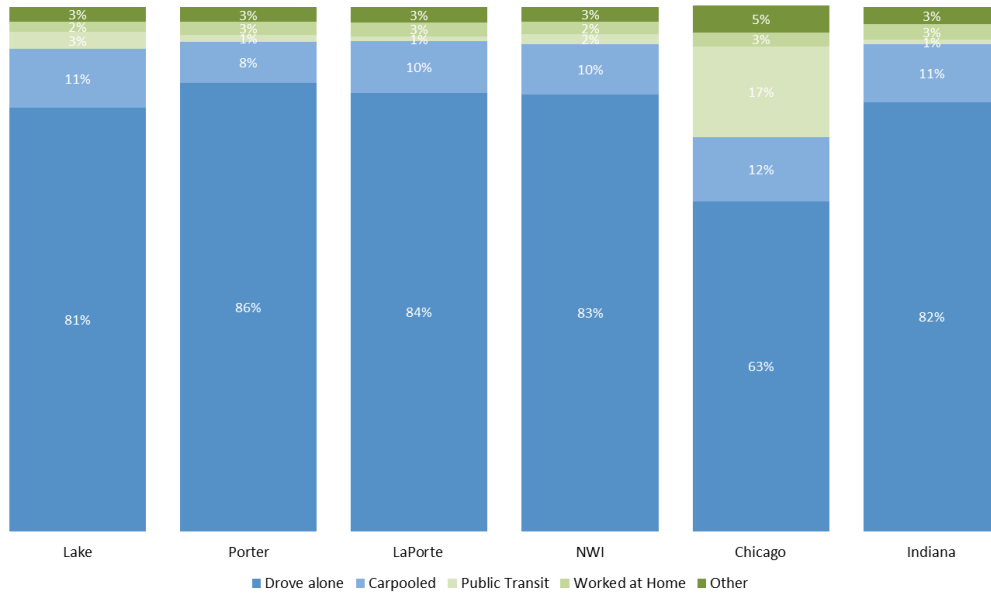
Regional commuters that carpooled declined slightly from 10 percent in 2000 to 9 percent in 2014. The largest decrease was in Lake County where carpooling dropped from 11 percent to 8 percent over this time period, while La Porte County went from 10 percent to 9 percent. Porter County increased carpooling from 8 percent in 2000 to 9 percent in 2014. Northwest Indiana was on par with both Chicago and Indiana rate of carpooling.

Regional commuting to work by public transit remains low at 2 percent of travel means, which was unchanged from 2000 and significantly below Chicago’s 18 percent travel means to work in 2014. Public transit patterns in Lake County and La Porte County held constant at 2 percent and 1 percent respectively over the time period. Public transit usage increased in Porter County from 1 percent in 2000 to 2 percent in 2014.

A growing proportion of the region’s workers worked at home, 3 percent in 2014 compared to 2 percent in 2000. Regional performance was on par with both Chicago and the state. Porter County experienced a gain of 1 percent, from 3 percent in 2000 to 4 percent in 2014. Both Lake and La Porte Counties

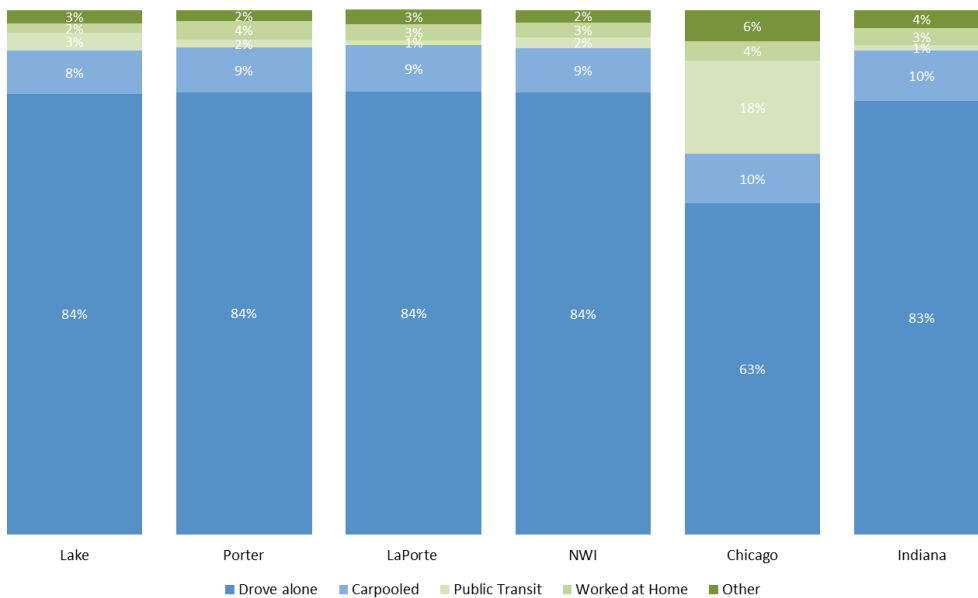
remained unchanged at 2 and 3 percent respectively. The balance of travel means to work fell from 3 percent to 2 percent regionally due to a minor decrease within Porter County.

Travel Means to Work, 2000



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey

Travel Means to Work, 2014

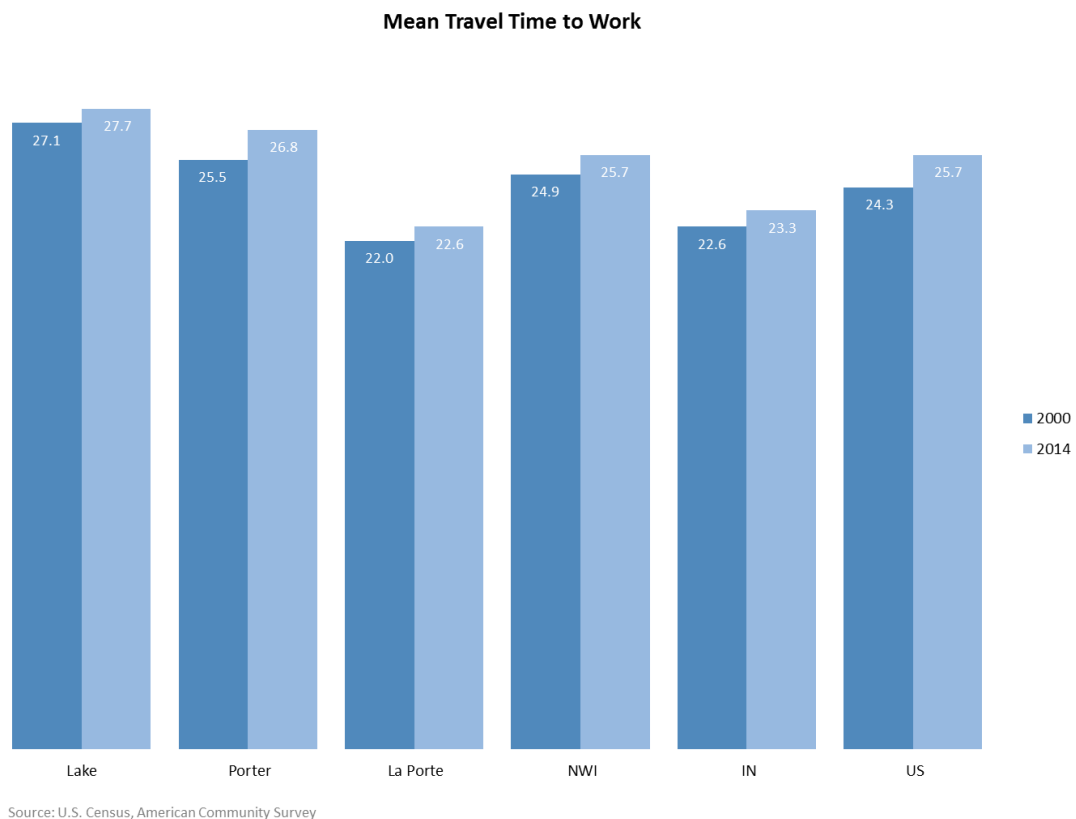


Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey

Mean Travel Time to Work Trend: Needs Improvement

The average commute into work increased slightly in Northwest Indiana from 24.9 minutes in 2000 to 25.7 minutes in 2014. Travel time to work in Lake County and La Porte County remained relatively unchanged at 27 minutes and 22 minutes respectively over the same period. Commuters in Porter County spent an average of 26.8 minutes travelling to work, a minute more than in 2000.

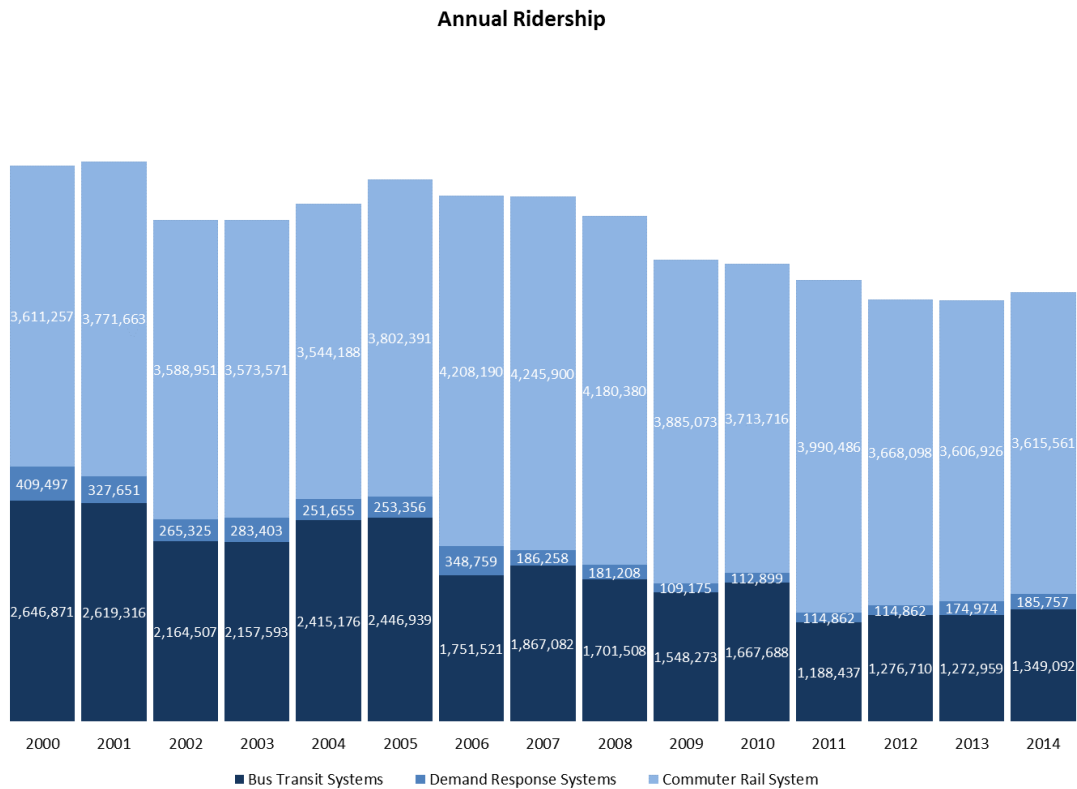
Between 2000 and 2014, the state's average travel time rose from 22.6 minutes to 23.3 minutes and the national average travel time went from 24.3 minutes to 25.7 minutes.



Annual Ridership **Trend: Needs Improvement**

Public transportation ridership in Northwest Indiana fluctuated between 2000 and 2014. For commuter rail service, ridership remained stable at 3.6 million annual riders. Ridership peaked to record highs between 2006 and 2008, with over 4.2 million riders on average.

Regional bus transit ridership went from 2.6 million annual riders in 2000 to 1.3 million in 2014. Demand response systems declined 55 percent, from 409,497 riders in 2000 to 185,757 in 2014. Several system changes occurred during this period. For example, Demand response systems decreased in ridership after operational changes in 2006 and 2007. The City of Valparaiso introduced a new bus transit system and commuter bus service to Chicago in 2009. The City of Hammond discontinued its city-based system during the upstart of a regional transit approach in 2010.



Source: Indiana Department of Transportation

Fare Recovery Ratio Trend: Needs Improvement

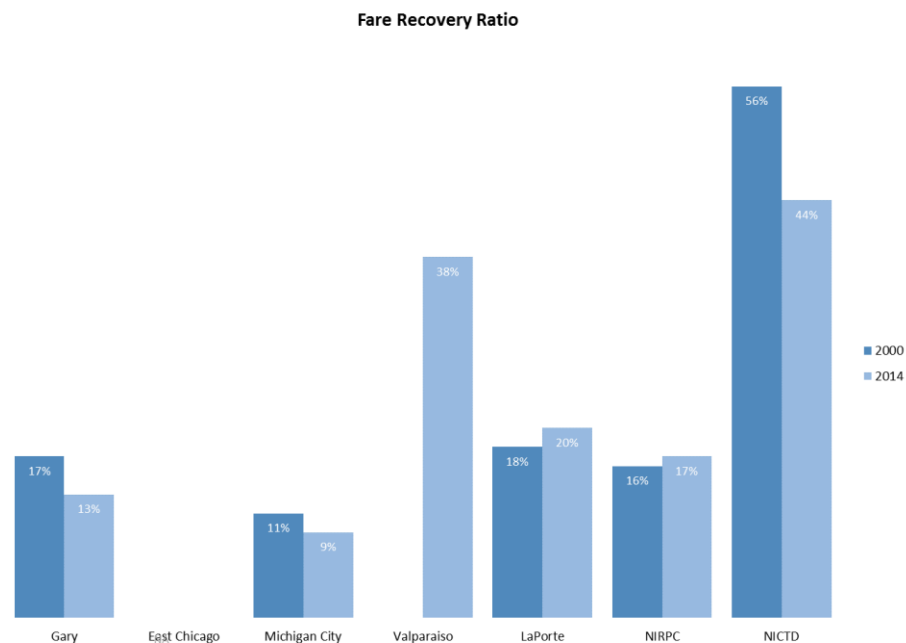
The fare recovery ratio measures the operational efficiency of public transportation systems. When a passenger purchases a ticket, the cost of the ticket covers a portion of the system’s operational expenses.

The large fixed route operator in the City of Gary operated at a fare recovery ratio of 13 percent in 2014, which was slightly less than the statewide peer group average of 17 percent and below its 2000 fare recovery ratio of 17 percent.

The small fixed route operators within East Chicago, Michigan City and Valparaiso delivered different results. The City of East Chicago’s operator provides free transit service therefore there is no fare recovery to date. The transit operator in Michigan City recovered 9 percent from passenger fares in 2014, which was below the statewide peer group average of 14 percent and down slightly from 11 percent in 2000. The Valparaiso transit system came on line in 2009 and includes both bus transit and commuter bus service into Chicago. In 2014, its operator recovered 38 percent of passenger fares, significantly outperforming statewide peers averaging 14 percent.

The urban demand response operators in La Porte and those funded through NIRPC outperformed their statewide peers. La Porte’s operator recovered 20 percent of its passengers’ fares, while NIRPC operators recovered 17 percent. The statewide peer group averaged a fare recovery ratio of 14 percent. In 2000, the operator for La Porte received 18 percent and the operators under NIRPC recovered 16 percent compared to the statewide peer average of 24 percent.

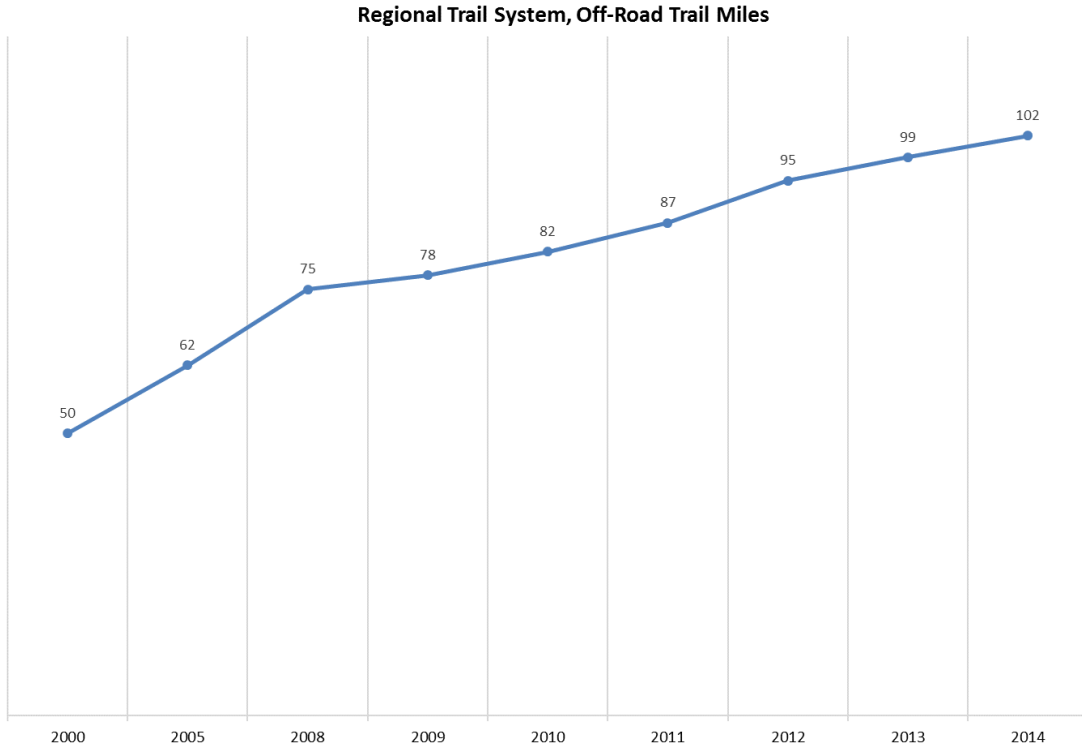
NICTD operates the South Shore Commuter Rail system, the only commuter rail system of its kind in the state. In 2014, passenger fares covered 44 percent of its operational expenses compared to 56 percent in 2000.



Source: Indiana Department of Transportation

Regional Trail System, Off-Road Trail Miles Trend: Improving

Between 2000 and 2014, Northwest Indiana added 52 miles of new off-road bike trails for a total of 102 miles within the regional trail system.



Source: Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission

Regional Action Measures

Being known for easy, multimodal access requires greater promotion of existing and new transportation infrastructure and recreational amenities. The vitality of place depends upon people having full access to various markets and activities that matter to them. Transit-oriented development enables residents to form healthier, more sustainable lifestyles that benefit the environment too. As communities become more walkable and livable, the more attractive and inviting public spaces become which attracts more businesses and visitors alike.

Further development opportunities may include:

- Increase the percentage of households with access to public transit.
- Construct or retrofit transportation infrastructure to meet standards in the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Achieve recognition as a Bicycle Friendly Community or Walk Friendly Community

Participants of One Region's Regional Priorities Summit affirmed their support for South Shore expansion, public transit, transit-oriented development and multimodal access. Additionally, they expressed interest in better road infrastructure including the Illiana proposal, better market attractions and airport development as multimodal hubs. Other issues mentioned included the closure of Cline Avenue, roadway funding prioritization and Uber-type shuttle services.

According to the Lake Area United Way and Porter County United Way's "Let's Talk" Report, community members identified lack of transportation and affordability of public transportation as key issues. Households without reliable transportation or transit access struggle with engaging their children in extracurricular activities and after school programs, obtaining good jobs, reaching medical and social services or engaging in their community. In areas with transit service, participants expressed that persons with limited income cannot afford bus tickets and cab rates, that services are limited and some neighborhoods are not walkable due to poor sidewalks. Within United Way of La Porte County's "Transition to Collective Impact Funding" Report, the issue of transportation emerged as part of the financial stability roadblocks to addressing poverty under community development and economic impact.

The One Region Harris Poll of Northwest Indiana found that 74 percent of residents feel improving transportation is an important issue. Road infrastructure is key for 3 out of 4 people, while public transportation is 3 out of 5 persons. 53 percent of residents indicated that the lack of transportation options makes it difficult for people to want to stay in the region.

Investments in Northwest Indiana's public transportation systems hold tremendous potential for community revitalization by inextricably linking people to quality of place.

A REGIONAL SUCCESS STORY

ALIGNING LOCAL SKILLS WITH GLOBAL DEMANDS

READY NWI doesn't just want to positively affect the region's workforce and economic growth today. Leaders insist this nonprofit initiative is focused on tomorrow as well.

Led by the Center of Workforce Innovations (CWI), READY NWI is a regional grassroots effort involving employers, K-12 educators, college leaders as well as economic and workforce development professionals committed to developing and maintaining a pipeline of talent to support job creation and expansion in Northwest Indiana.

By meeting the skill and education needs of area employers, this partnership envisions 60 percent or more of regional employers to gain a labor force with college degree or post-high school credential by 2025.

CWI President and CEO Linda Woloshansky said, "READY NWI is firmly grounded in the region as a key economic growth strategy. Our key to success is a commitment of individual schools and employers to promote education and training tied to rewarding occupations that are available and growing in the region."

Even throughout slumps in the labor market, business leaders continuously search for workers with the skills, knowledge and abilities demanded by the 21st century global economy. Partners noted many of these businesses have trouble filling open jobs for high skill/high wage positions due in large part to a fundamental misalignment between skills being taught in local high schools and colleges as well as those most pertinent to the world of work.

Woloshansky explained, "Specifically, employers need workers with sound literacy

and numeracy skills who are highly skilled in critical thinking and problem solving, and the ability to work in teams and adapt to rapid changes in technology. However, these skills are in short supply, placing employers from Northwest Indiana in a precarious position in a sometimes troubling economy."

Usher in READY NWI to remedy the problem. Since 2010, the initiative promises to ensure students graduate academically, socially and financially prepared to go directly to further education without the need for remediation.



**"READY NWI IS DESIGNED TO EQUIP THE
REGION'S STUDENTS FOR ECONOMIC SUCCESS
BY ATTAINMENT OF EDUCATIONAL CREDENTIALS
NEEDED TO GET GOOD JOBS.**

**THE INITIATIVE ALSO GIVES THE REGION THE
ABILITY TO ATTRACT NEW EMPLOYERS, THE
KIND THAT PROVIDE HIGH-WAGE JOBS."**

**~ Linda Woloshansky
Center of Workforce Innovations**

The "staying power" of this commitment endures with 28 of the region's school superintendents — covering nearly 90 percent of regional students — pledging to integrate academic and career planning in their middle and high schools. Further, Northwest Indiana educators vowed to ensure all graduating high school seniors move directly to specific post-secondary training and education programs to acquire credentials specifically applicable with regional employers. Employers are also being recruited via agreements to participate in multiple levels of engagement, ranging from joint planning with schools to providing internships and jobs integrating work-based learning with classroom work.

READY NWI maintains it's here to stay through its ability to regenerate and remain relevant as key individual members leave the group and are later replaced. A broad structural support base of community, school and student makes this aspect possible.

Another key feature includes agenda-setting and goal development entirely owned by local members, not by funding sources or outside influences. Members begin by sharing knowledge with each other and with studying best practices as a prerequisite for action strategies and advocacy. Leaders believe READY NWI's uniqueness in defining partner expectations and tracking outcomes on a year-to-year basis equates to the readiness of the region's students.

"READY NWI embraces a commitment to regional thinking and acting in order to ensure prosperity," Woloshansky said. The credits don't lie. READY NWI was recognized by the Lumina Foundation as one of its 75 innovative sites in the nation organized for progress in educational attainment, and is one of the few sites organized on a regional basis covering a large labor market area.

Success is unattainable without collaboration — in READY NWI's case partnering employers with K–12 schools and colleges. "In short, READY NWI's success will serve to increase employer productivity and increase the earnings of our students as they enter the workforce," Woloshansky said. "READY NWI began as and remains an economic development and quality of life initiative."

Regional employers may get involved by joining the CWI Board's sector-based planning groups and by making individual commitments to work with READY NWI K–12 member schools to integrate work and learning approaches. Additional school districts can join the other member districts by signing the member commitment and participation in monthly meetings to advance knowledge and action strategies. Most importantly, students and parents may get involved by participating fully with integrated academic and career planning structures and events sponsored by their schools, and by becoming knowledgeable about the wide array of options for acquiring credentials needed in acquiring good jobs in the region.

For more information about READY NWI, visit www.readynwi.com.

WE ARE CULTIVATING LIFE-LONG LEARNERS

DOMAIN 5: EDUCATION

Places that cultivate life-long learners benefit from engaged, productive citizenry who possess greater awareness of and the life and vocational skills for a rapidly changing world. Learning begins at home and the educational system provides the base for developing student capacities for an adult life. Learning extends beyond the mentality of just getting a job into inspiring creative ways of flourishing as a human being and in society. People who have access to quality education and training are more likely to regularly vote and have higher personal income and more choices in carrying out the good life.

Quality education and economic development are also inextricably linked. Businesses and households desire high performing K-12 schools, universities and colleges. The availability of quality childcare and afterschool programs offset scheduling restrictions of working parents. More college students value housing, employment and transit options near campus. Training programs enable adult learners and experienced workers' convenient ways to gain or enhance technical skills. Businesses require a supply of talent for filling job openings.

In the new economy, creative capacities are not only innovating the workplace but transforming the quality of place. Arts and cultural districts are emerging as economic engines for downtown revitalization across Northwest Indiana. Studies show that arts-based placemaking creates vibrant communities which strengthen economic development opportunities and outcomes.

Arts in education is instrumental in improving student success. Studies prove that youth engagement in the arts leads to better academic outcomes, higher career goals and greater civic engagement. By tapping into the imagination, the arts allow students to express themselves and engage their senses in meaning-making and problem-solving. In collaboration with schools, community organizations and nonprofits, the South Shore Arts *everykid* program provides enriching arts experiences in communities through exhibits, classes, outreach and performances.⁹ Specifically, *everykid* uses the arts to bridge the gap between children and social, emotional and academic issues. Over 30,000 area youth are served annually. A second program, *I am Influential: Positive Living through the Arts* empowers 6th grades students to make healthy life choices in response to gateway behaviors like anger or illicit behavior such as drug use. The UNIVERSO educational arts immersion after-school program serves entire school districts by using science, technology, engineering, arts and math platform in connection with art, music, dance and drama.

Education also extends into nature through experiential learning. Studies correlate learning in nature with greater achievement in science, math, language arts and social studies. Through the Northwest Indiana Mighty Acorns Partnership led by the Dunes Learning Center, Shirley Heinze Land Trust and the Field Museum of Chicago, environmental education and service learning opportunities benefit

⁹ Regional collaboration success story submission from South Shore Arts Association.

Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana students and natural areas throughout the region.¹⁰ Industry, government, nonprofits and land owners participate in the program while the Mighty Acorns students engage in hands-on STEM learning and leadership skills-building. Students generated over 5,000 hours of stewardship in 2014-15 school year.

The development of leaders in Northwest Indiana provides another avenue for adults and youth. Several regional organizations offer programs to build leadership capacity, raise awareness of key issues and collectively act upon them and connect leaders to one another. Leadership Northwest Indiana, Leadership La Porte County, Urban League of Northwest Indiana among others carry the message of servant leadership and community engagement.

The state of education in Northwest Indiana concerns many residents according to the One Region Northwest Indiana Poll conducted in 2015. Specifically, they would like better performing schools with quality education accessible to all students. A strategic step in that direction is READY NWI, a consortium of business, education, workforce development and government seeking to increase the percentage of Northwest Indiana adults holding a post-secondary degree or high-quality credential from 37 percent to 60 percent by 2025.¹¹ Through this effort they seek to create a new culture of education.

Participants of the One Region “Regional Priorities Summit” and the three United Ways’ community conversations raised the issue of poverty as a significant barrier for youth and families. In particular, the effects of poverty on student success and household survival. The precarious position of many Northwest Indiana families is evidence by Indiana ranking 30th in the nation on child well-being according to the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s 2016 “Kids Count” Report.

Overall Rating: Improving

Leading Indicators	Trend
Student Composition	NA
Educational Attainment	Improving
Graduation Rates	Improving
Passing ISTEP	Improving
Children in Poverty	Needs Improvement
Free & Reduced Lunch	Needs Improvement
Student Composition	Needs Improvement
Childcare Waiting List	Improving

Region in Motion

- Student enrollment in Northwest Indiana was more diverse in 2014 than in 2000. The 2014 student population was 52 percent Caucasian, 23 percent African-American, 19 percent Hispanic/Latino, 4 percent multi-racial, 1 percent Asian/Pacific Islander and less than 1 percent Native-American.

¹⁰ Regional collaboration success story submission from Indiana Dunes Learning Center.

¹¹ Center of Workforce Innovations, “Northwest Indiana Annual Indicators Snapshot,” October 2015.

- The level of educational attainment in Northwest Indiana continued to improve. In 2014, the percentage of people with a high school diploma was 36 percent, some college at 24 percent, a bachelor's degree at 14 percent, an associate's degree at 8 percent and a graduate degree or higher at 7.1 percent.
- The 2014 educational attainment of those with a high school diploma was 36 percent in Lake County, 35 percent in Porter County and 39 percent in La Porte County.
- The 2014 educational attainment of those with a bachelor's degree was 14 percent in Lake County, 17 percent in Porter County and 11 percent in La Porte County.
- More people in Northwest Indiana are graduating from high school. Regionally, 90 percent of high schoolers graduated within four years, up 17 points from 77 percent in 2006.
- Porter County was graduating 92 percent of its students in four years compared to La Porte County at 90 percent, Lake County at 89 percent and the state at 90 percent in 2014.
- The school corporation with the highest graduate rate was Boone Township in Porter County at 98.7 percent while the lowest graduation rate of 76.2 percent occurred at River Forest in Lake County.
- ISTEP performance in Math and Language Arts improved between 2006 – 2014. Northwest Indiana test-takers in the 4th and 8th grades passed ISTEP on average at 80 percent and 71 percent in 2014.
- The percentage of fourth graders passing ISTEP in 2014 was 74 percent in Lake County, 86 percent in Porter County and 80 percent in La Porte County.
- Eight graders passing ISTEP in 2014 reached 62 percent in Lake County, 81 percent in Porter County and 68 percent in La Porte County.
- The percentage of students qualifying for a free and reduced lunch continues to increase regionally and statewide. On average in Northwest Indiana, 48 percent of students qualified for free and reduced lunch in 2014 and 41 percent statewide.
- Students qualifying for free and reduced lunch was 54 percent in Lake County, 35 percent in Porter County and 54 percent of La Porte County in 2014.
- Poverty is a determining factor influencing a student's academic success and school performance. In 2014, 47 percent of Northwest Indiana's children under 5 years of age lived in poverty. That rate was 52 percent in Lake County, 55 percent in La Porte County and 31 percent of children under 5 who are poor.
- Looking at children under age 18, 25 percent of a total of 47,887 Northwest Indiana children are impoverished, 30 percent in Lake and La Porte Counties respectively and 16 percent in Porter County.
- Access to and ability to pay for high-quality childcare is a significant problem facing many Northwest Indiana families, especially those living in poverty. The average cost of childcare is \$7,494 in Lake County, \$8,509 in Porter County and \$7,046 in La Porte County. The average cost of childcare as a percent of income is 14 percent in Lake and La Porte Counties and 11 percent in Porter County.
- In 2014, children age 0-5 years totaled 47, 887 persons, or 6 percent, of the region's population. Within that age bracket, 55.4 percent in La Porte County, 51.5 percent in Lake County and 31.2 percent in Porter County live in homes with a family income at the 185 percent poverty level. Of this amount, nearly 36,326 children have all parents of the home engaged in the labor force. Therefore, many working parents cannot afford high-quality childcare or early learning.

- In terms of enrollment in designated high-quality childcare programs, 43 percent of children in Porter County have access, while only 30 percent and 34 percent of children in Lake and Porter Counties respectively have access.
- Between 2000 – 2014, the monthly average of children on the waiting list in Northwest Indiana rose 152 percent from 264 children in 2000 to 664 in 2014 compare to Indiana which rose 41 percent from 3,185 in 2000 to 4,448 in 2014.
- The 2014 monthly average of children on waiting list for childcare was 59 children in Porter County, 68 children in La Porte County and 537 children in Lake County.

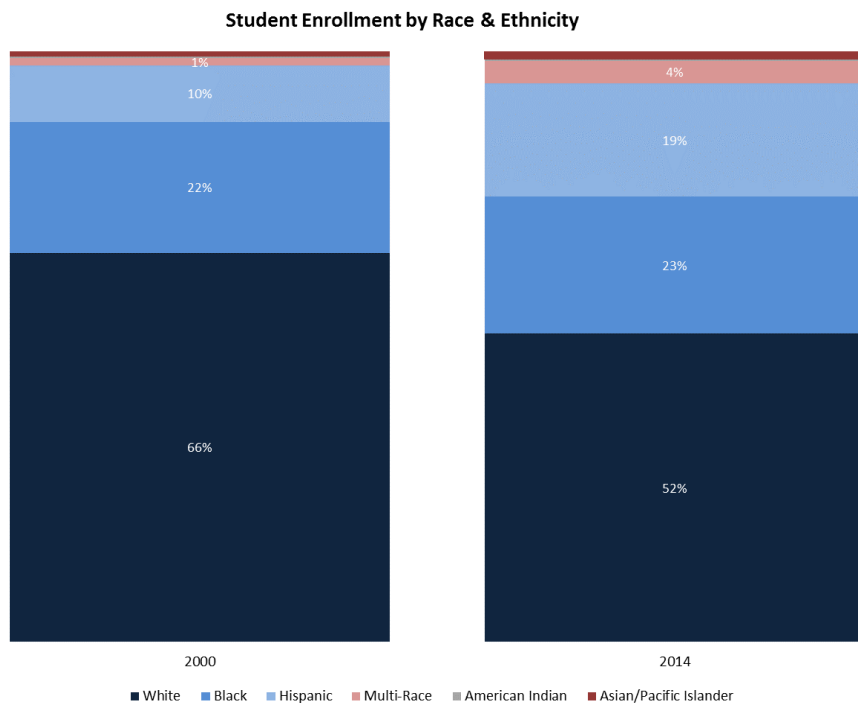
Student Composition

Student enrollment in Northwest Indiana was more diverse in 2014 than in 2000. Caucasian students comprised 66 percent of the student population in 2000, by 2014, the number declined to 52 percent. The enrollment of African-American students remained steady, 22 percent in 2000 compared to 23 percent in 2014. Hispanic/Latino students increased as a proportion of enrollment from 10 percent to 19 percent over the same period. The enrollment of multi-racial students also grew from 1 to 4 percent. In 2014, student enrollment consisted of 68,054 Caucasians, 30,158 African-Americans, 25,087 Hispanic/Latinos, 4,972 multi-racial, 1,653 Asian/Pacific Islanders and 335 Native-Americans.

The 2014 student population of Lake County in 2014 was 40 percent Caucasian, 32 percent African-American, 23 percent Hispanic/Latino, 3 percent multi-racial and less than 2 percent Asian/Pacific Islander and Native-American.

In Porter County, the student composition was 78 percent Caucasian, 13 percent Hispanic/Latino, 4 percent African-American, 4 percent multi-racial and less than 1 percent Asian/Pacific Islander and Native-American.

La Porte County's student enrollment was 71 percent Caucasian, 12 percent African-American, 10 percent Hispanic/Latino, 6 percent multi-racial, and less than 1 percent Asian/Pacific Islander and Native-American.



Source: Indiana Youth Institute

Educational Attainment **Trend: Improving**

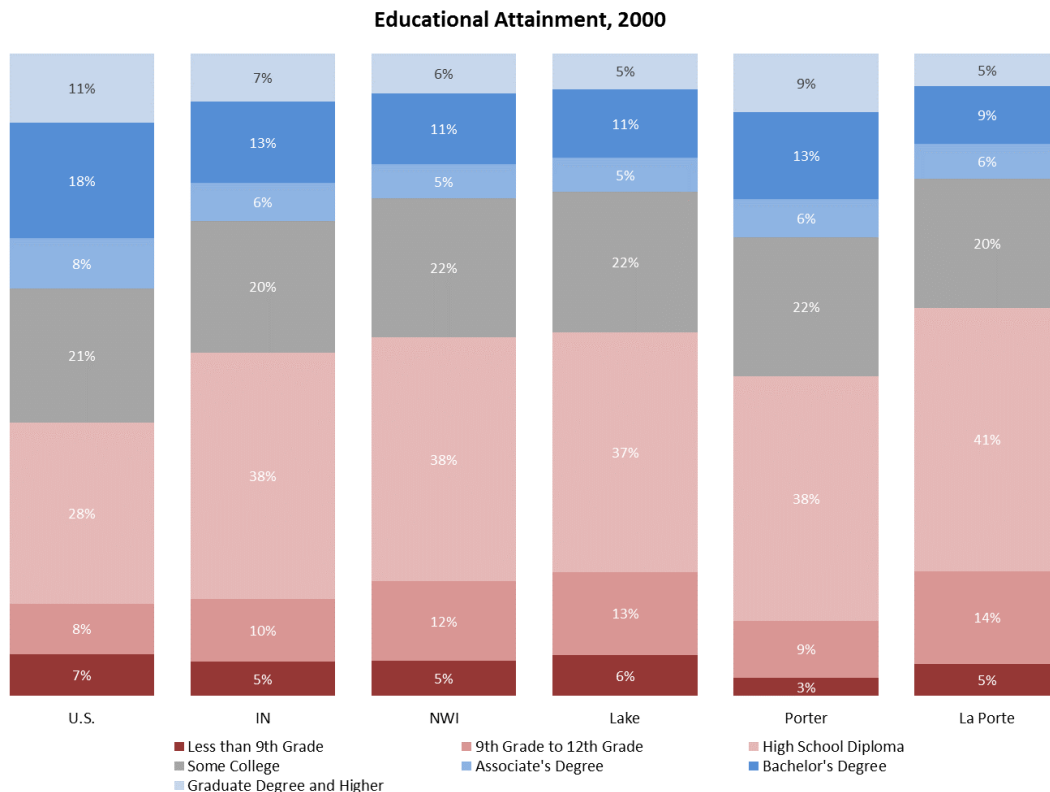
The level of educational attainment in Northwest Indiana continued to improve. In 2014, the percentage of people with a high school diploma was 36 percent, some college at 24 percent, a bachelor’s degree at 14 percent, an associate’s degree at 8 percent and a graduate degree or higher at 7.1 percent.

In comparison to 2000, the percentage of educational attainment increased for those seeking some college or higher degree while those persons without a high school diploma shrank. For high school diploma the overall percentage decreased from 39 percent in 2000 to 36 percent in 2014, however, the total number of people with a high school diploma increased from 181,825 in 2000 to 185,450.

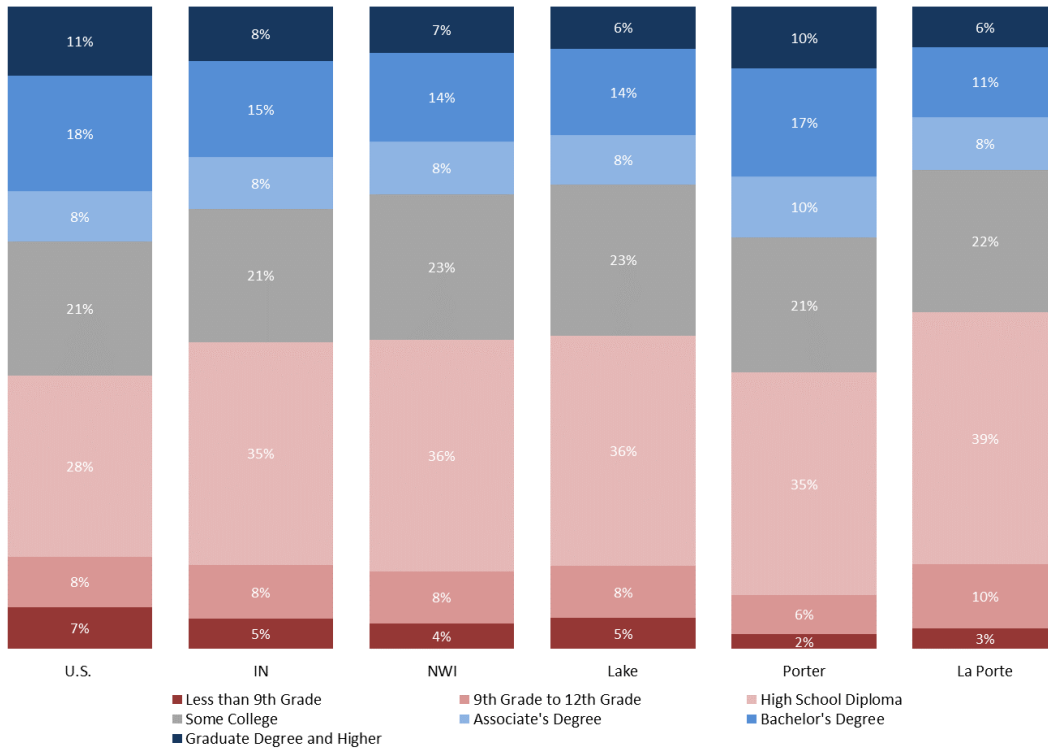
In Lake County, the 2014 educational attainment of a high school diploma was 36 percent, and those with a bachelor’s degree at 14 percent compared to 37 percent and 11 percent in 2000.

In Porter County, the percentage of those with a high school diploma was 35 percent and a bachelor’s degree at 17 percent compared to 38 percent and 13 percent in 2000.

La Porte County’s educational attainment of a high school diploma was 39 percent and a bachelor’s degree at 11 percent. In 2000, those percentages were 41 percent and 11 percent respectively.



Educational Attainment, 2014

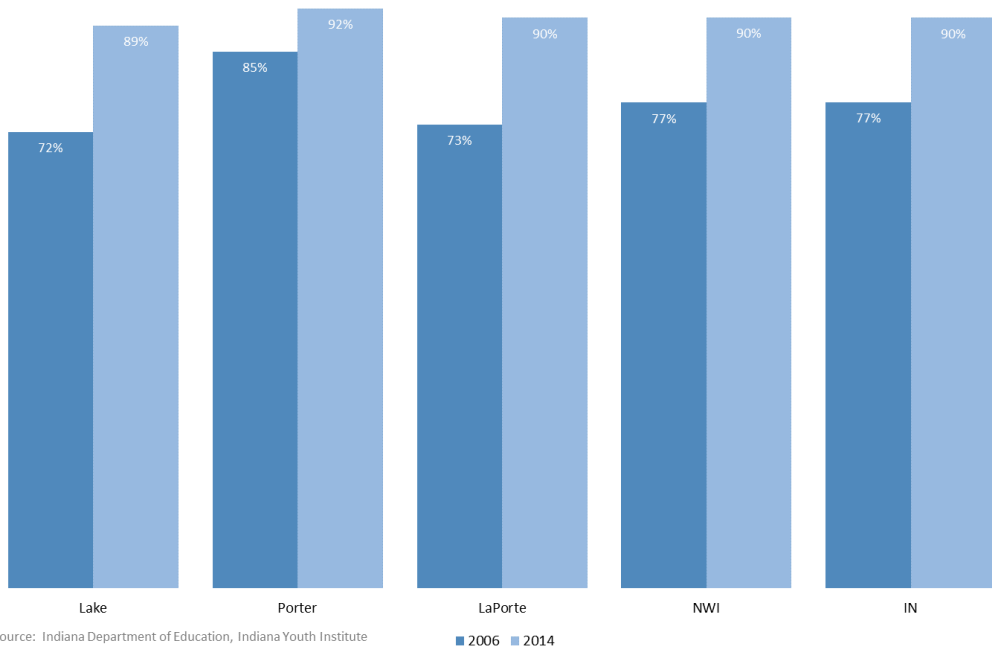


Graduation Rates Trend: Improving

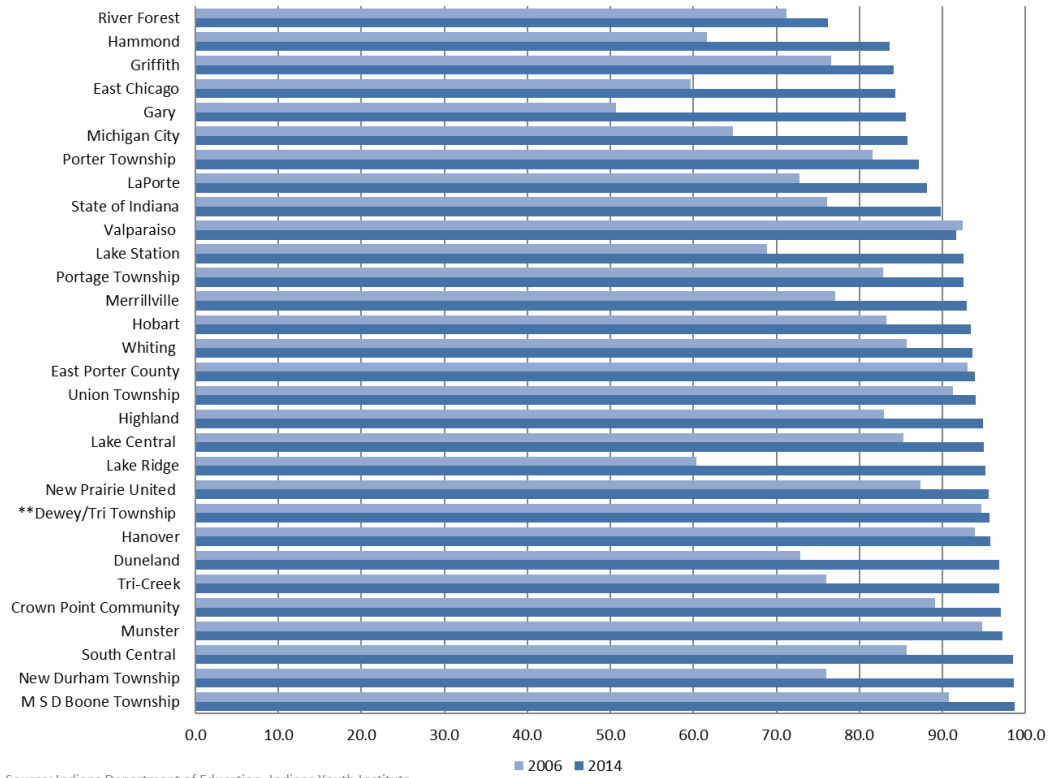
More people in Northwest Indiana are graduating from high school. Regionally, 90 percent of high schoolers graduated within four years, up 17 points from 77 percent in 2006. In Lake County, the graduation rate was 89 percent in 2014 compared to 72 percent in 2006. Porter County’s graduation rate also increased from 85 percent in 2006 to 92 percent in 2014. La Porte County’s graduation rate rose to 90 percent from 77 percent in 2006. During this same period, Indiana’s graduation rate went from 77 percent to 90 percent.

The top five rates of graduation by school corporation in 2014 were Boone Township at 98.7 percent, New Durham Township at 98.6 percent, South Central at 98.5 percent, Munster at 97.2 percent and Crown Point at 97.0 percent. Conversely, those school corporations with lower rates of high school graduation include River Forest at 76.2 percent, Hammond at 83.6 percent, Griffith at 84.1 percent, East Chicago at 84.3 percent and Gary at 85 .6 percent.

4 Year Cohort Graduation Rates



Graduation Rate by School Corporation



Passing ISTEP Trend: Improving

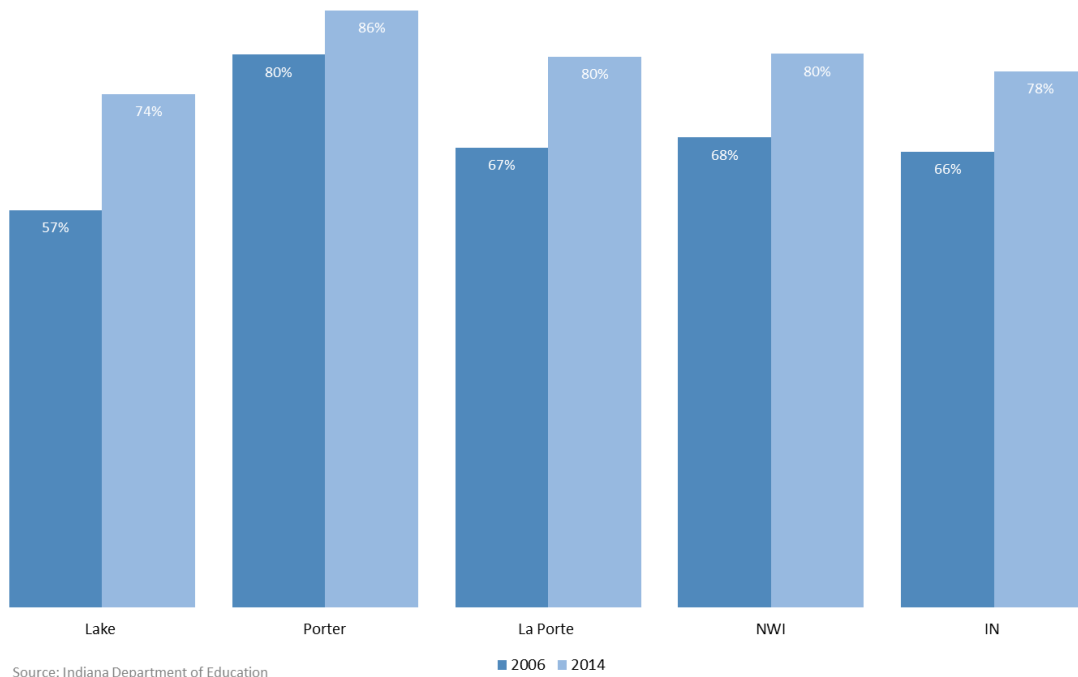
ISTEP performance in Math and Language Arts improved between 2006 – 2014. Northwest Indiana test-takers in the 4th and 8th grades passed ISTEP on average at 80 percent and 71 percent in 2014 compared to 68 percent and 61 percent respectively in 2006.

In Lake County, 4th graders passed ISTEP at 74 percent and 8th graders at 62 percent in 2014. In 2006, the 4th and 8th grades passed ISTEP at 57 percent and 52 percent.

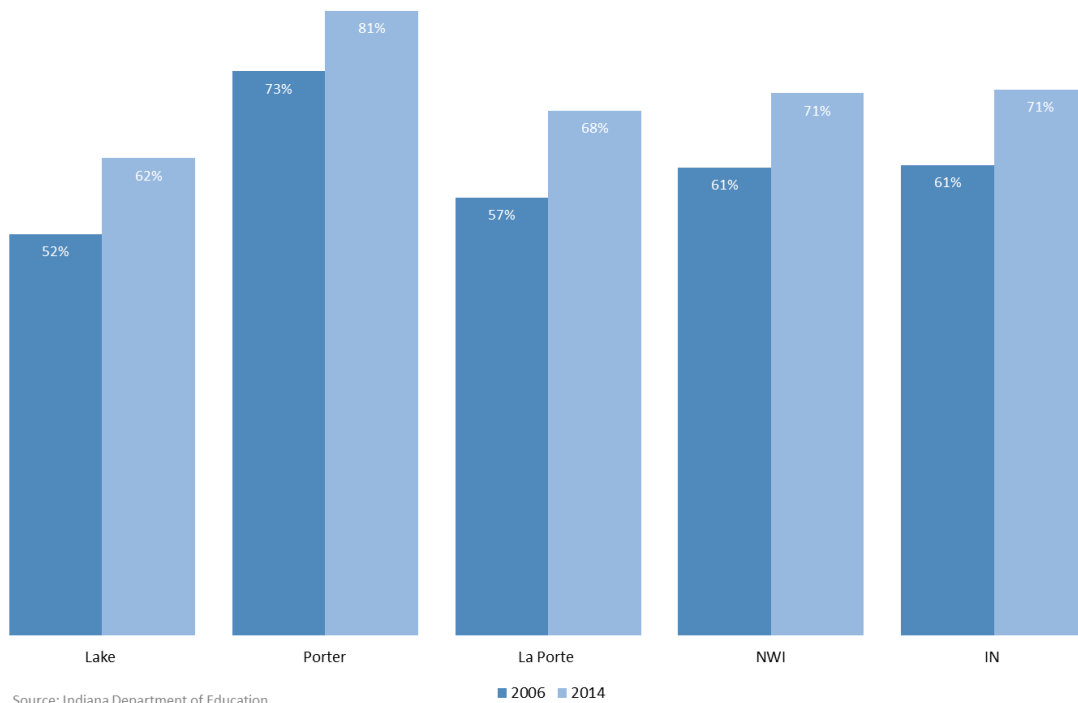
Porter County ISTEP performance reached 86 percent of 4th graders passing and 81 percent of 8th graders compared to 80 percent and 73 percent in 2006.

The percentage of 4th and 8th graders passing ISTEP in La Porte County was 80 percent and 68 percent in 2014, up from 67 percent and 57 percent in 2006.

Passing ISTEP, Math & Language Arts, 4th Grade



Passing ISTEP, Math & Language Arts, 8th Grade



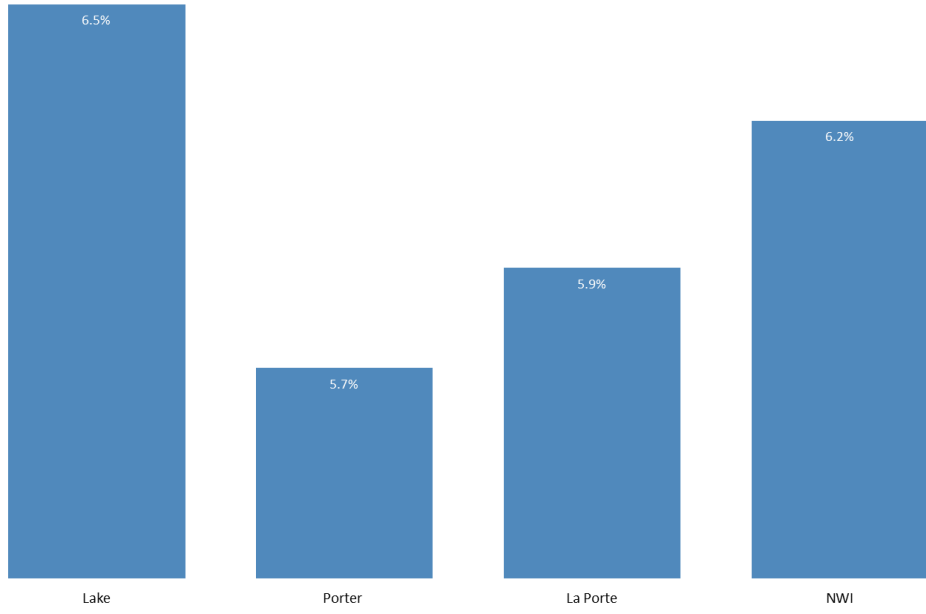
Children in Poverty Trend: Needs Improvement

Poverty is a determining factor influencing a student’s academic success and school performance. A significant number of school children live in poverty, and those households are likely facing challenges in meeting the child’s basic needs of food, clothing, shelter and child care.

In 2014, Northwest Indiana’s children under 5 years of age totaled 47,887 or 6.2 percent of the total population. Within that cohort, 47 percent of children are living in poverty. In Lake County, approximately 52 percent of children under 5 live in poverty, while in La Porte County, 34,537 children live impoverished. In Porter County, 31 percent are living in poverty.

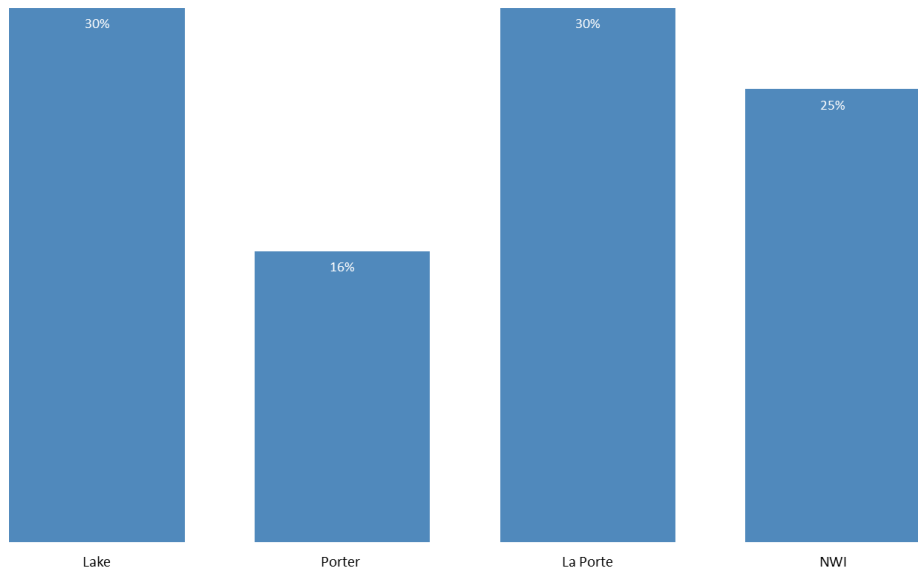
When we expanded poverty to those under the age of 18, nearly 25 percent of children on average are impoverished. Of the 49,507 children under 18 years of age in Northwest Indiana, 30 percent in Lake and La Porte Counties and 16 percent in Porter County are living in poverty.

Children under Age 5 Living in Poverty, 2014



Source: Indiana Department of Education

Children under Age 18 Living in Poverty, 2014



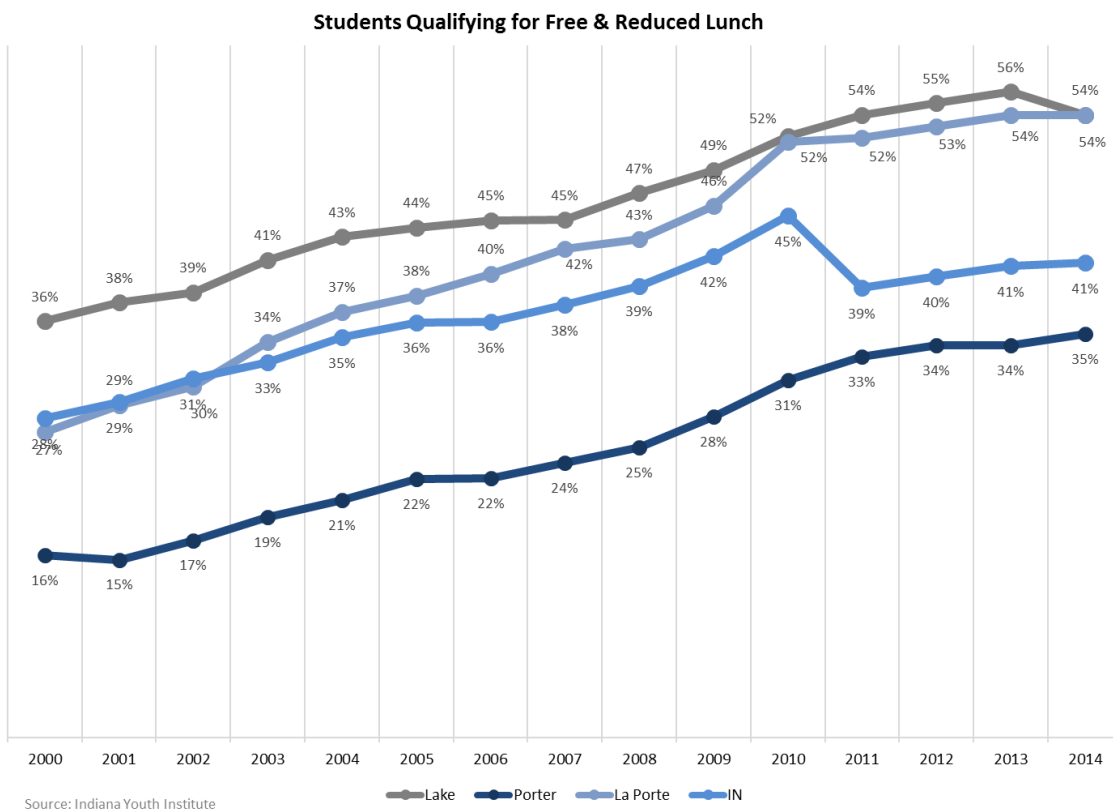
Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey

Free & Reduced Lunch Trend: Needs Improvement

One factor effecting students’ academic performance is household income. Free and reduced lunch indicates the percentage of students benefiting from access to food in school. Unfortunately, the percentage of students qualifying for a free and reduced lunch continues to increase regionally and statewide.

On average in Northwest Indiana, 48 percent of students qualified for free and reduced lunch in 2014, up 22 points from 26 percent in 2000. Statewide, 41 percent of students received free and reduced lunch compared to 28 percent in 2000.

In 2014, Lake County students qualified for free and reduced lunch at rate of 54 percent compared to 36 percent in 2000. Porter County went from 16 percent in 2000 to 35 percent of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch in 2014. During the same period, 54 percent of La Porte County students qualified for free and reduced lunch as opposed to 27 percent in 2000.



Childcare Waiting List

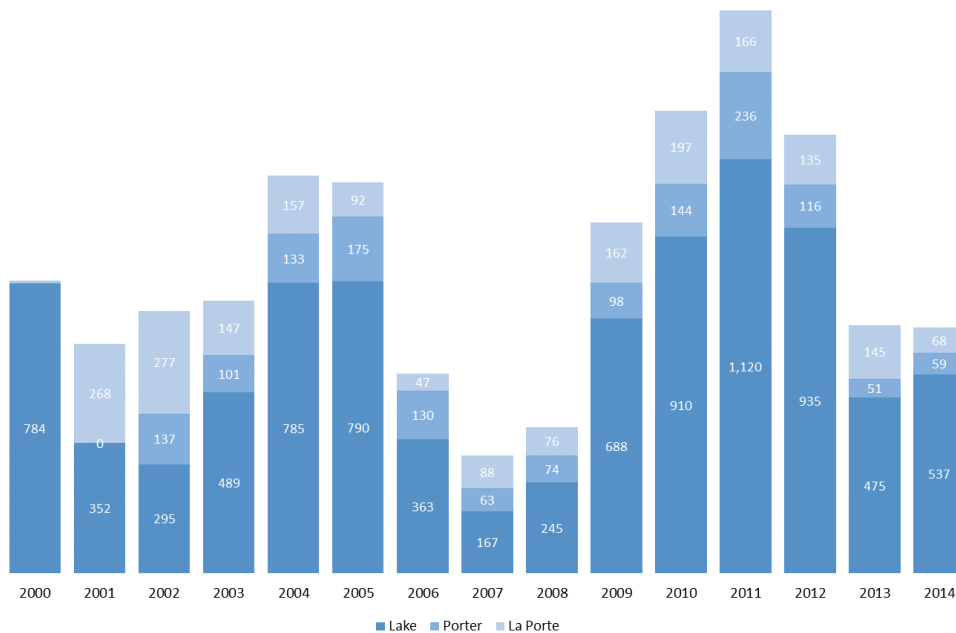
Trend: Improving

Access to and ability to pay for high-quality childcare is a significant problem facing many Northwest Indiana families, especially those living in poverty. The average cost of childcare is \$7,494 in Lake County, \$8,509 in Porter County and \$7,046 in La Porte County.¹² The average cost of childcare as a percent of income is 14 percent in Lake and La Porte Counties and 11 percent in Porter County.¹³

In 2014, children age 0-5 years totaled 47, 887 persons, or 6 percent, of the region’s population. Within that age bracket, 55.4 percent in La Porte County, 51.5 percent in Lake County and 31.2 percent in Porter County live in homes with a family income at the 185 percent poverty level. Of this amount, nearly 36,326 children have all parents of the home engaged in the labor force. In terms of enrollment in designated high-quality programs, 43 percent of children in Porter County have access, while only 30 percent and 34 percent of children in Lake and Porter Counties respectively have access. Therefore, many working parents cannot afford high-quality childcare or early learning.

The waiting list for childcare can be a challenge. Between 2000 – 2014, the monthly average of children on the waiting list in Northwest Indiana rose 152 percent from 264 children in 2000 to 664 in 2014 compare to Indiana which rose 41 percent from 3,185 in 2000 to 4,448 in 2014. Porter County experienced a rise in monthly childcare waiting list, from 2 children in 2000 to 59 in 2014. In La Porte County, 5 children were waiting for childcare on average in 2000 compared to 68 on average in 2014. Lake County experience the highest volume of children waiting for childcare but it also declined the number of children waiting by 32 percent, from 784 to 537 on average, between 2000 – 2014.

Childcare Waiting List



Source: Indiana Youth Institute

¹² OECOSL data received June 20, 2016.

¹³ OECOSL data received June 20, 2016.

Regional Action Measures

Cultivating life-long learners requires continual innovation within educational systems. Places focused on developing and retaining talent become more attractive to industries and businesses. That private capital contributes to an expanded tax base thereby equipping government with greater capacity in carrying out services contributing to quality of life. As individuals invest in themselves and receive support for realizing their potential, economies strengthen and more people thrive.

Further development opportunities may include:

- Engage local education authorities, teachers, families, and young people to advance collaborative decision-making and a community-driven framework for improving education
- Strengthening opportunities for parental and community involvement in schools

One Region's Northwest Indiana Poll found that education along with jobs are the top concerns of residents. A majority of residents grade the area's educational system as a "C or better" and roughly 19 percent believe it is a "D or F." Residents expressed that the regional educational system does not adequately prepare students for the 21st Century workplace nor provide universal access to quality education for all children. They feel that government should focus current financial resources on improving the educational system for a career-ready workforce. During the One Region "Regional Priorities Summit," participants expressed further goals of aligning education with economic development, improving literacy, fixing state school funding formulas and engaging parents.

According to the Lake Area United Way and Porter County United Way's "Let's Talk" Report, participants stated that high quality education should be accessible to all children regardless of the community in which they live or socioeconomic status. They expressed concerns over disparities in accessing programs for early childhood, students with disabilities and parental engagement. Participants cited school funding formulas, teaching to tests, safe learning environments, transportation access, family dynamics and student negative attitudes as contributing factors affecting overall educational performance. They also desire low cost, meaningful activities for youth and families and wish to teach children how to give back to their communities. The United Way of La Porte County similarly believe that greater educational aspirations should be attainable. By preparing students for life from early childhood education onward to supporting youth and families, educational systems and related support structures can make a difference in quality of place.

The inspiration for becoming life-long learners comes from an initial curiosity about life itself. The bigger questions of individual purpose and meaning in the world lead us beyond the branches of knowledge to the fruits of wisdom.

A REGIONAL SUCCESS STORY

NOURISHING COMMUNITIES THROUGH LOCAL FOODS

Members of the NWI Food Council believe understanding and strengthening the local food system will enhance the quality of life regionally, and this new group remains committed to succeed.

Serving Lake, Porter, La Porte, Newton, Jasper, Starke and Pulaski counties — the Council brings together community, government, business and agricultural interests to execute integrated and sustainable projects and policy recommendations as well as improving relationships.

“This collaboration effort hopes to work with others to bring fresh foods to schools, address food deserts in communities and educate the public about buying locally grown fresh food,” said Gabrielle Biciunas of the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) — a partner involved with the effort.

The NWI Food Council Board of Directors is comprised of geographical, gender and racial distribution representation from each of the Council’s seven counties of service. Other partners include Board members from the Food Bank of NWI, Valparaiso University as well as people involved in local agriculture, community activists and entrepreneurs.

A food system — defined essentially as the path food travels from field to fork — includes all activities of production, processing, transport and consumption of food. Gaining a better understanding of the region’s food system and how it relates to the community, economy, transportation and environment and connecting all of those aspects is the goal.

To this end, in the Council’s very beginning stages, NIRPC completed the Northwest Indiana Local Food Study in March 2012. The study looked in-depth at the local food system and established a baseline to understand the existing conditions as well as explain the key issues and challenges the system faces. Ultimately, the study recommended two actions: transition into a more permanent “Action Committee” to act as a policy and project-driven group to advance the local food movement, and develop an action agenda for developing local food system with clear goals, objectives and indicators.

The study also listed potential actions or projects to advance the local food system, such as:

- Regional food summits
- Food hub feasibility study
- Food access study
- Health food financing initiatives

Biciunas said, “This collaboration brings awareness, an opportunity to be involved and a greater understanding of the food system. The Council also provides a regional clearinghouse for food-related activities and information.”



“THE THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM THE FOOD SUMMIT WERE TO ESTABLISH CONNECTIONS WITH OTHERS IN THE LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM, LEARN ABOUT CURRENT ACTIVITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES, AND TO REALIZE THE POTENTIAL OF LOCAL FOODS IN NORTHWEST INDIANA AND WHAT COULD WORK.”

- Gabrielle Biciunas, NIRPC

Further, NIRPC later collaborated with the Valparaiso University School of Law and Purdue University Extension to host a Regional Food Summit in April 2015.

The purpose of the summit was threefold: to convene and establish relationships between farmers, producers, buyers and consumers; to highlight local success stories and provide possibilities to work together; and create jobs to expand the economy.

The summit examined opportunities for producers, distributors and emerging new markets such as food hubs and mobile grocery services.

This event led to the official formation of the NWI Food Council. A taskforce was convened during the summer of 2015 to lay the foundations, prompted by the tremendous response at the summit event. Originally, the taskforce included representatives from the Food Bank of NWI, NIRPC, Valparaiso University, Purdue Extension – Porter County, Thea Bowman Leadership Academy, GrowLocal and Victory Market.

“The mission of the NWI Food Council is to be a multi-stakeholder alliance that builds a just, sustainable and thriving locally-oriented food system for all in Northwest Indiana through networking, education, advocacy and projects,” Biciunas explained. “The purpose and objectives of the Council include research, programming and policy work for an Indiana food system

which supports healthier communities, economies and the environment in the Northwest Indiana region.”

First-year initiatives for the newly established Council’s working groups include:

- Policy – Create a "Food Action Plan" or a resource guide of recommendations to communities and policy makers
- Local Food System – Create a virtual food hub online to help develop and maintain local food relationships and serve as an online marketplace for farmers and producers to collaborate; facilitate a beginner farmer training and food entrepreneurship program
- Outreach and Education – Facilitate public events series
- Research – Research and develop a regional food economy study and build a directory of food-related projects and organizations.

For those interested in getting involved, please email info@nwifoodcouncil.org.

Join the conversation or a work group via www.facebook.com/NWIFoodCouncil.

WE ARE ACTIVATING HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

DOMAIN 6: HEALTH

Place and health are so intricately linked that a person's zip code is a greater determinant of health than genetic code.¹⁴ Access to medical infrastructure is important, but not sufficient. Healthy places are those designed to encourage and promote healthy lifestyles through active living and provide access to fresh food. They are places where people feel safe and where there are opportunities to make healthy choices where they live, learn, work and play. They are places encouraging social interactions and building social capital.

Well-designed places integrate transportation, housing and efficient use of water, energy and natural resources to improve environmental health, while contributing to a reduction in chronic disease and obesity. Healthy people are better able to learn, work and contribute positively to their communities.

Healthy and walkable places also promote economic vitality by enlivening both the commercial and residential character of streets and neighborhoods. Healthy communities can also be a draw for recreational tourism and on-site selection decisions for employers looking to locate a business.¹⁵

Northwest Indiana offers residents rich opportunities for healthy living — from an expanding trail network and outdoor recreation, to walkable neighborhoods near transit, to a growing local food movement. Today, there are more than 145 miles of off-road trails, up from just 15 miles in 1990. An additional 25 miles will be added within the next five years.¹⁶ The South Shore Line now allows riders to bring their bikes on trains, connecting regional residents and visitors directly to recreational amenities such as the Indiana Dunes and off-road trails.

Despite the opportunities for healthy living, a recent study determined Northwest Indiana has some of the highest disparities for life expectancy in the country. “A 40-year-old region resident in the top quartile of annual household income (more than \$100,000) can anticipate living seven years longer than one in the bottom quartile.”¹⁷

The 2012 Indicators Report identified health data as an information gap effecting shared understanding of health disparities and factors attributing to weak health outcomes. In 2013, One Region's Health Advisory Council convened a health summit to discuss the health findings of the prior year.¹⁸ Participants graded health as a “D.” Their views on the top three challenges facing Northwest Indiana were education on healthy choices, accessibility to all levels of health care and better behavior choices

¹⁴ Graham, Garth, Ostrowski, MaryLynn, and Sabina, Alyse. “Defeating The ZIP Code Health Paradigm: Data, Technology, And Collaboration Are Key.” Web Blog Post. *HealthAffairsBlog*. Health Affairs. 6 Aug. 2015.

¹⁵ *Why Healthy Communities Matter to Business: Data Reveals Linkages Between Health, Education, and Job Preparedness*. Princeton: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2016. Issue Brief.

¹⁶ Barloga, Mitch. “NWI trails plan to grow.” *The Northwest Indiana Times*. The Times Media Co., 7 Jan. 2016. Web.

¹⁷ Giles, Bruce. “What's Killing the Poor in Northwest Indiana.” *The Northwest Indiana Times*. The Times Media Co., 2016 May 31.

¹⁸ One Region. “Final Report: It is all Connected Health Summit,” November 22, 2013.

for healthier lifestyles. They called for action in the areas of comprehensive community partnership for health education and long-term dividends, communication and collaboration of resources and advocates for Medicaid expansion to enhance access. Projects of interests included a One Walk One Region, healthy kid curriculum, collaboration across mental health and health disciplines as well as coalition to common health protocols. The report also examined the interplay between health and other factors of quality of place. According to the poll, health was most impacted by economy and government. Environment, housing, people, public safety and transportation had somewhat of an impact upon health. Arts & culture had the least impact.

Another significant public health initiative is the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) within each county. In Lake County, Methodist Hospitals, Community Healthcare System and Franciscan Alliance have partnered on CHNA. Recognizing the need for solid data and compliance with health care law, the three major health systems are conducting a Community Health Needs Assessment to help provide a better understanding of the barriers to good health and identify opportunities for collaboration to improve the health of the community.¹⁹

Additionally, the NWI Food Council — a brand-new grassroots organization with support from Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, Valparaiso University School of Law, Food Bank of NWI and Purdue Extension — is collaboratively tackling issues of food access to build a just, sustainable and thriving locally-oriented food system through networking, education, advocacy and projects.

Finally, progress is being made with respect to advancing medical care in the region. Northwest Indiana boasts four Level III Trauma Centers now and the possibility of landing a medical residency program through Indiana University Northwest.

Overall Rating: Needs Improvement

Leading Indicators	Trend
Mortality	Improving
Morbidity	Needs Improvement
Low Birth Weight	Needs Improvement
Adult Smoking	Improving
Adult Obesity	Needs Improvement
Teen Births	Needs Improvement
Excessive Drinking	Needs Improvement
Sexually Transmitted Infections	Needs Improvement
Uninsured	Needs Improvement
Preventable Hospital Stays	Improving

¹⁹ Giles, Bruce. "Lake County Struggles in Many Health Measures." *The Northwest Indiana Times*. The Times Media Co., 5 Mar. 2016.

Region in Motion

- According to county health rankings, Northwest Indiana tended to be less healthy than the rest of Indiana and below national benchmarks between 2010 and 2014.
- Lake and La Porte counties were among the least healthy counties in Indiana. Porter County ranks within the top third and higher on most health outcomes and health factors.
- Health outcome measures, which measure length and quality of life, for residents in Northwest Indiana and the state were below national benchmarks established under the county health rankings model, with disparities between individual counties.
- Between 2010 and 2014, mortality or premature death rates — death before the age of 75 — were higher in both Northwest Indiana and the state than in the nation overall.
- On the measure of morbidity, which includes the amount of time spent in poor mental or physical health, Northwest Indiana performed worse than national benchmarks with little change between 2000 and 2014.
- The region also performed worse than the national benchmark for the percentage of babies with low birth weight.
- On measures of health behaviors such as smoking, obesity, excessive drinking and sexually transmitted infections, the region and the state performed poorly compared to national benchmarks on average between 2010 and 2014.
- Teen birth rates have fallen slightly.
- A greater percentage of region and state residents lack medical insurance and there are more preventable hospital stays.
- Although the region lags as a whole, Lake and La Porte counties are most burdened by social and economic factors, which is likely reflected in the poor health outcomes ranking for each.

Health Rankings Snapshot

On health outcomes, including length and quality of life, Porter County ranked 14th of the 92 counties in 2014, while La Porte was 72nd and Lake was 77th. From 2010 – 2014, Porter and Lake Counties both increased their rankings, up from 84th and 16th respectively. La Porte County ranked lower in 2014 than 2010 from 61st to 72nd.

On health factors, which represents what influences the health of a county and includes healthy behaviors, clinical care, socioeconomic status and physical environment, Northwest Indiana counties improved slightly over 2010. Lake County moved up to 87th from last in the state. La Porte County ranked 75th, up from 77th. Porter County ranked 12th, up from 13th in 2010.

Lake County improved on health behaviors, social and economic factors as well as physical environment between 2000 and 2014. In 2010, the county ranked last or second to last in the state on all three measures. In 2014, physical environment increased to 58th. Lake County experienced a decrease in clinical care, dropping from a rank of 68th to 73rd.

On individual health factors, La Porte County ranked lower in 2014 than in 2010, remaining in the bottom third of the state on health behaviors (77), social and economic factors (77) and physical environment (83). On clinical care, La Porte was 41st, remaining steady in the middle of county rankings with little change from 2010 to 2014.

Health Rankings of NWI Counties within Indiana, 2010-2014

Porter County’s ranks in the top third or top half statewide in most areas. On average, it ranks 9th on socio-economic factors, 31st on healthy behaviors and 43rd on clinical care. There is room for improvement in physical environment, with a three-year average ranking of 52.

	Health Outcomes	Health Factors	Mortality	Morbidity	Health Behaviors	Clinical Care	Social & Economic Factors	Physical Environment
Lake								
2010	84	92	86	76	92	68	91	91
2011	84	92	85	75	90	82	92	48
2012	84	82	80	77	79	71	80	80
2013	81	85	73	83	80	65	87	49
2014	77	87	73	78	86	73	85	58
Porter								
2010	16	13	16	22	25	38	10	67
2011	18	19	15	20	48	56	10	25
2012	18	14	18	20	21	37	8	64
2013	20	12	21	19	15	29	8	55
2014	14	12	21	12	20	28	9	55
La Porte								
2010	61	77	69	52	72	40	77	79
2011	63	65	69	56	62	41	74	46
2012	65	70	72	59	66	41	73	66
2013	69	66	68	68	55	23	75	85
2014	72	75	68	74	77	41	77	83

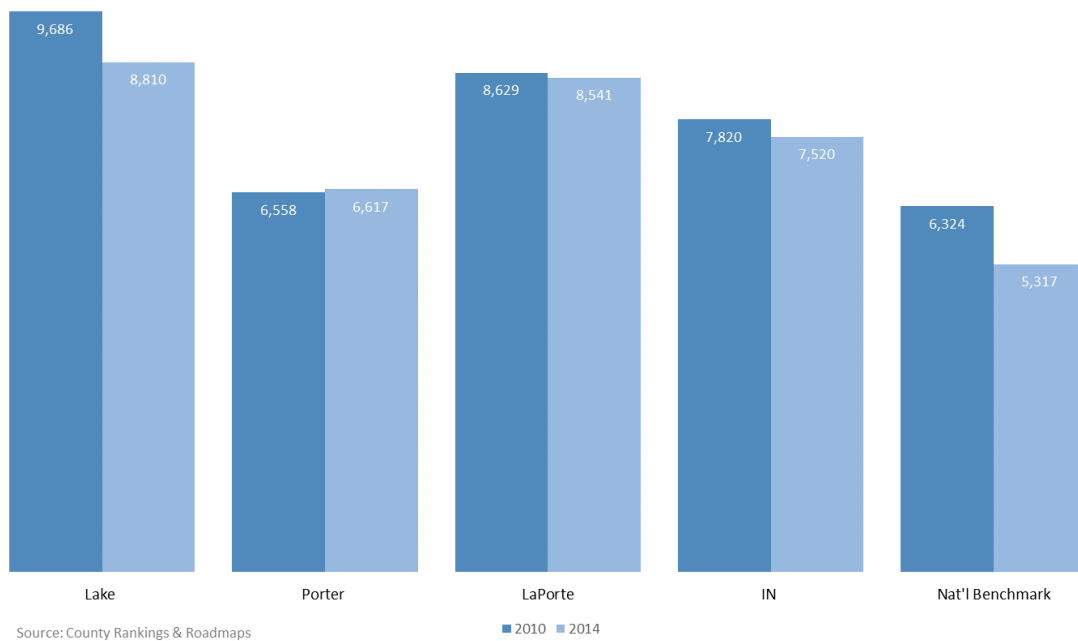
Source: County Rankings and Roadmaps

Mortality (Premature Death)

Trend: Improving

Between 2010 and 2014, mortality or premature death rates — death before the age of 75 — were higher in both Northwest Indiana and the state than in the nation overall. Premature deaths decreased by 9 percent in Lake County from 9,686 in 2010 to 8,810 in 2014. Porter County increased by 1 percent from 6,558 to 6,617. Premature death decreased 1 percent in La Porte County, from 8,629 in 2010 to 8,541 in 2014. The national benchmark decreased by 16 from 6,324 to 5,317 during the same period.

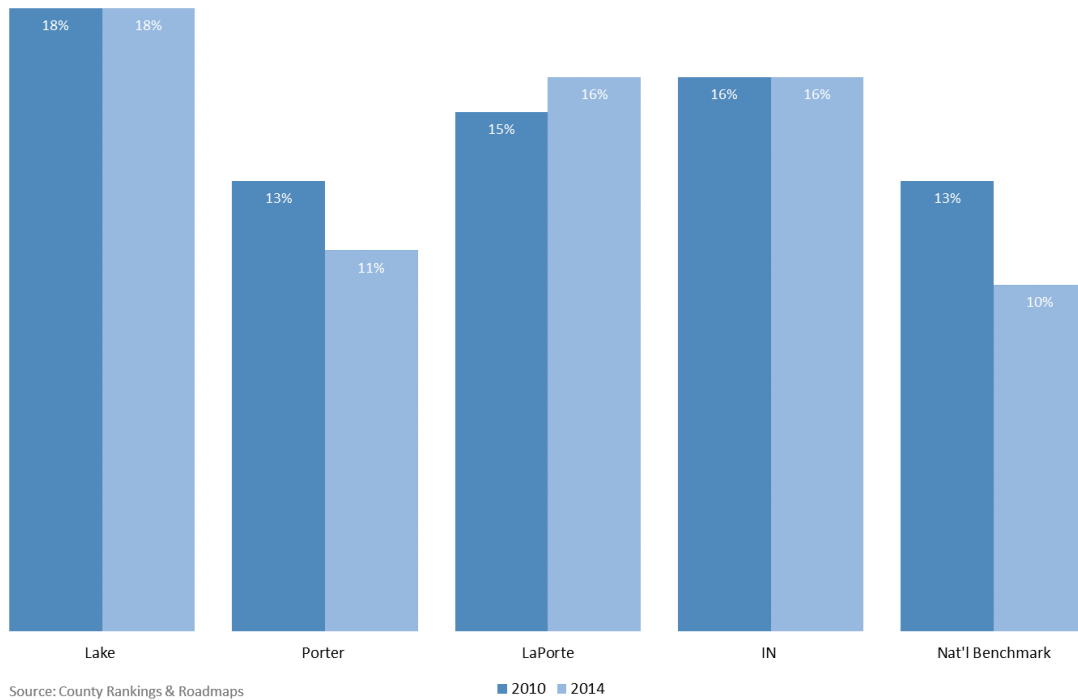
Health Outcomes: Premature Death



Morbidity **Trend: Needs Improvement**

On morbidity measures, which includes the level of time spent with poor mental or physical health, Northwest Indiana performed worse than national benchmarks, with little change since between 2000 and 2014. In 2014, 18 percent of Lake County adults, 11 percent of Porter County adults and 16 percent of La Porte County adults rated their health as “fair” or “poor.” Lake County remained unchanged from 2010. La Porte County increased from 15 percent in 2010, while Porter County fell from 13 percent in 2010. The national benchmark was 10 percent, down from 13 percent in 2010.

Health Outcomes: Morbidity, Percentage in Fair or Poor Health

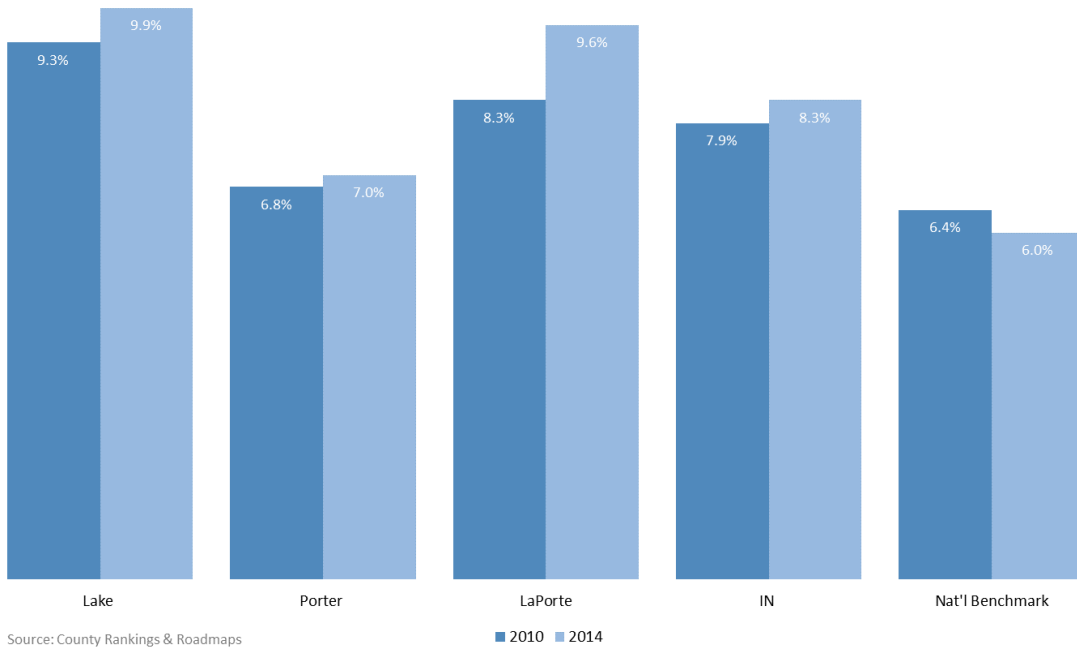


Low Birthweight

Trend: Needs Improvement

Low birth rates weight increased slightly in Northwest Indiana and the state, while decreasing at the national benchmark level. From 2010 to 2014, low birthweight rates increased by 6 percent in Lake County from 9.3 percent to 9.9 percent. Low birthweight rates in Porter County increased from 6.8 percent to 7 percent. La Porte County rates increased from 8.3 percent to 9.6 percent. Nationally, the percentage of babies born with low birthweight dropped from 6.4 percent to 6 percent.

Health Factors: Low Birth Weight

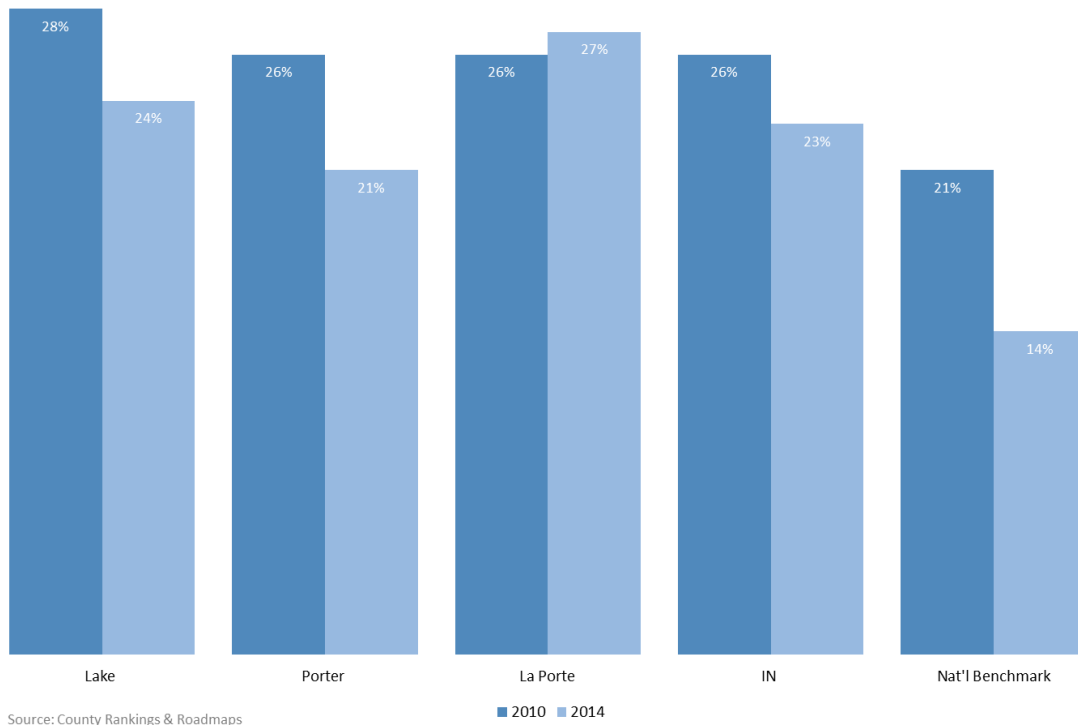


Adult Smoking

Trend: Improving

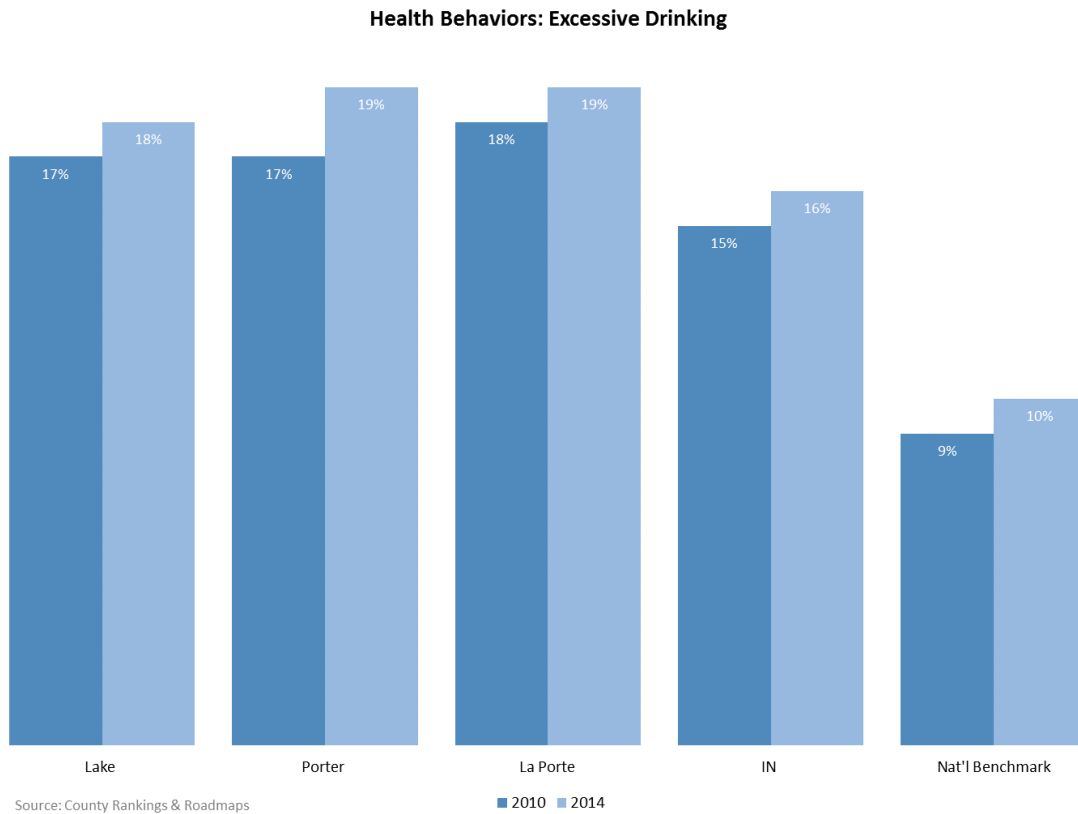
Between 2000 and 2014, adult smoking rates decreased in all but La Porte County, while remaining above state and national benchmark rates. In Lake County the percentage of adult smokers decreased from 28 percent in 2010 to 24 percent in 2014. Porter County rates were down from 26 percent in 2010 to 21 percent in 2014. Adult smoking increased in La Porte County from 26 percent in 2010 to 27 percent in 2014. During the same period, the state rate decreased from 26 to 23 percent, while the national benchmark decreased from 21 percent to 14 percent.

Health Behaviors: Adult Smoking



Excessive Drinking **Trend: Needs Improvement**

Between 2010 and 2014, Northwest Indiana’s excessive drinking rates experienced minor changes, but remained higher than state and national benchmark levels. In 2014, 18 percent of Lake County adults reported binge or heavy drinking. In both Porter and La Porte counties, 19 percent of adults reported binge or heavy drinking. Excessive drinking rates in Indiana and the national benchmark were 16 percent and 10 percent respectively.



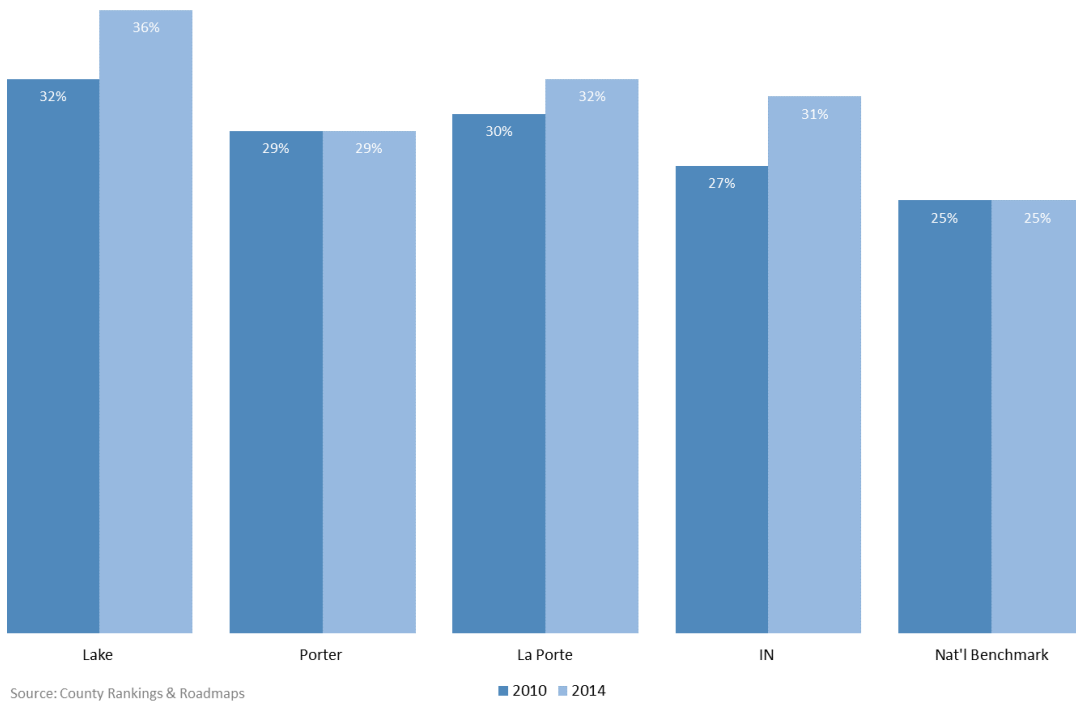
Adult Obesity

Trend: Needs Improvement

Adult obesity rose slightly in Northwest Indiana and the state between 2000 and 2014. In Lake County, the percentage of the adults with a body mass index over 30 percent increased from 32 percent in 2010 to 36 percent in 2014. La Porte County’s adult obesity rate also grew from 27 percent to 31 percent over this period. Porter County remained steady at 29 percent.

Indiana’s adult obesity rate also increased to 31 percent in 2014, up from 27 percent in 2010. Both the region and the state experience higher rates of adult obesity compared to the national benchmark of 25 percent.

Health Behaviors: Adult Obesity

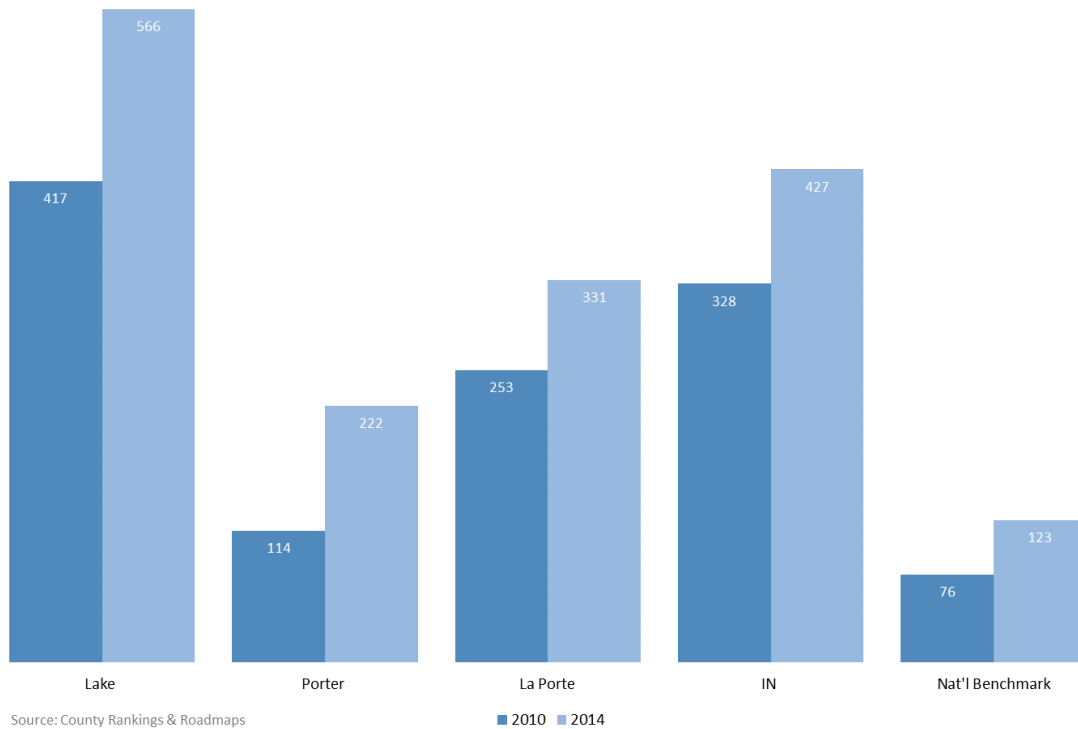


Sexually Transmitted Infections

Trend: Needs Improvement

Between 2010 and 2014, sexually transmitted infections per 100,000 people spiked in the region, state and nation. Lake County experienced an increase of 36 percent, from 417 to 566 cases. Porter County levels increased by 95 percent from 114 to 222 cases. La Porte County increased by 31 percent from 253 to 331 cases. The national benchmark increased by 62 percent from 76 to 123.

Health Behaviors: Sexually Transmitted Infections per 100,000

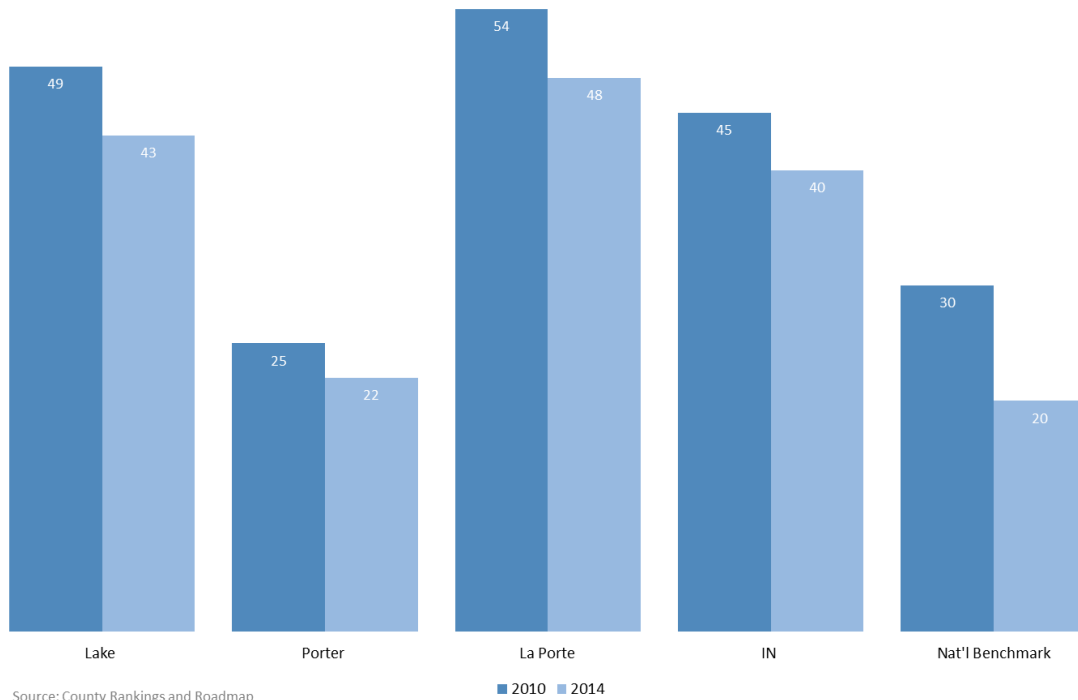


Teen Birth **Trend: Needs Improvement**

The incidence of teen births per 1,000 females decreased between 2010 and 2014. In Lake County, teen births declined from 49 per 1,000 to 43 per 1,000. Teen births dropped in Porter County from 25 per 1,000 to 22 per 1,000. La Porte County experienced the highest rate of teen pregnancy in 2010 at 54 per 1,000 and saw a decline to 48 per 1,000 teen births in 2014.

During the same period, Indiana’s teen births per 1,000 fell from 45 in 2010 to 40 in 2014. The national benchmark also decreased the incidence of teen births from 30 to 20 per 1,000. Porter County’s rate of teen births is closest to the national benchmark, while Lake and La Porte counties and the state exceed the rates of teen births nationally.

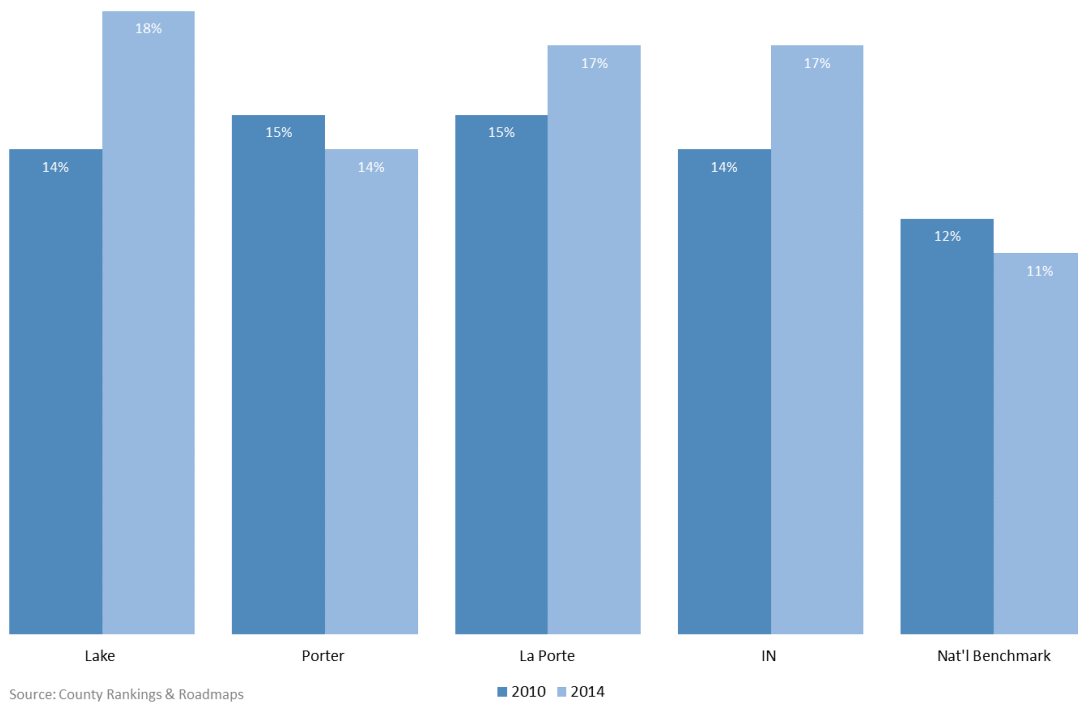
Health Behaviors: Teen Birth per 1,000



Uninsured **Trend: Needs Improvement**

Between 2000 and 2014, the percentage of residents without health insurance increased in Lake and La Porte counties and in the state, but decreased in Porter County. In Lake County, the percentage of uninsured residents increased to 18 percent in 2014 from 14 percent in 2010. La Porte County increased from 15 percent to 17 percent. The percentage of uninsured decreased in Porter County to 14 percent in 2014 from 15 percent in 2010. During the same period, the state rate increased to 17 percent from 14 percent, while the national benchmark decreased to 11 percent from 12 percent.

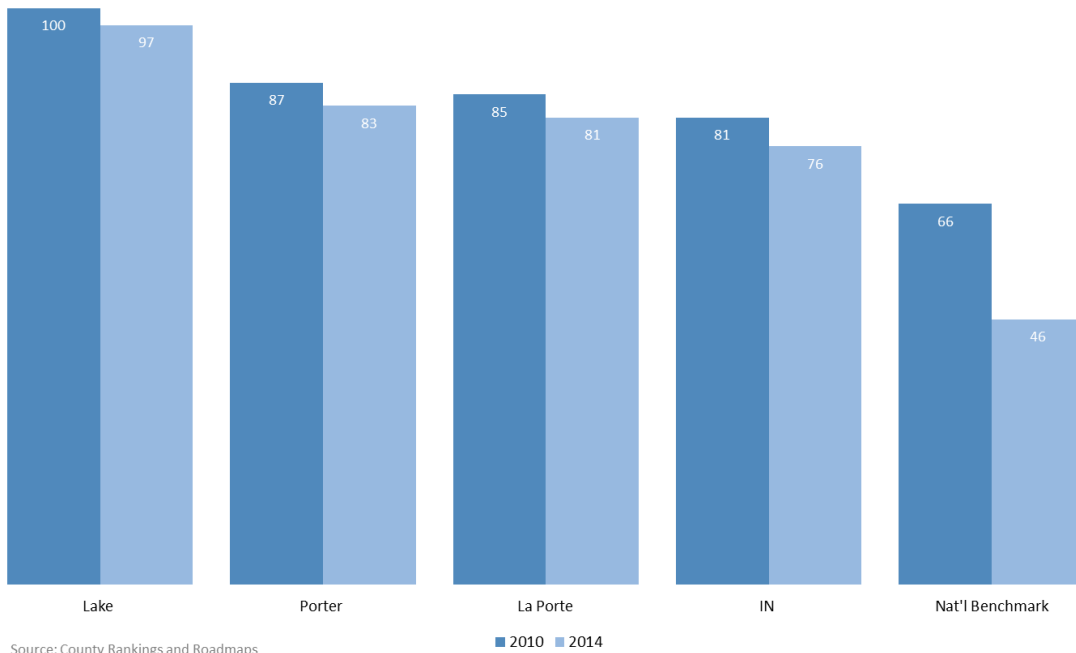
Clinical Care: Uninsured



Preventable Hospital Stays Trend: Improving

Preventable hospital stays decreased slightly between 2010 and 2014 within Northwest Indiana and the state, but at a much lower rate than the national benchmark. In Lake County, the number of preventable hospital stays decreased from 100 in 2010 to 97 in 2014. In both Porter County and La Porte County it decreased between 2010 and 2014, from 87 to 83 in Porter County and from 85 to 81 in La Porte County. During the same period, the state rate decreased from 81 to 76, while the national benchmark decreased from 66 to 46.

Clinical Care: Preventable Hospital Stays



Regional Action Measures

Activating healthy lifestyles, across all zip codes, requires a regional focus on improving health and well-being. The declining state of health beckons for more regional dialogue and coordination. Raising awareness and building capacities for healthy lifestyles necessitates health care leaders, partners such as nonprofits and school systems, coming together in more ways especially at the neighborhood level.

Further development opportunities may include:

- Expanding the comprehensive community health assessment to better understand public health conditions, trends and community issues in collaboration with residents.
- Supporting a multi-disciplinary regional food policy council.
- Incentivizing bicycle and pedestrian amenities and high-density, mixed use areas near transit stations.
- Engaging citizens on active living in the community.
- Engaging health departments on community planning and development projects.

According to the United Way's "Let's Talk" Report, Porter County residents envision a drug-free community where addiction treatment is readily available and coordinated among service providers. They also desire a walkable community with ready access to public transit and alternative transportation such as bicycles and Uber-type rental services. Further, they desire an inclusive community welcoming to all persons, including the disabled. Lake County residents seek a community fully supportive of children and youth who are free from abuse, not bullied and remain safe after school. The elimination of fears by overcoming gun violence, gang activity and distrust are important to them. They see stable family environment and the needs of children with special needs children as part of creating strong communities. In La Porte County, the "Transition to Collective Impact Funding" participants identified health as a key priority. Healthy lifestyles, affordability and access to health care, substance abuse and mental health and community support and viable systems, they believe, will bind their efforts for breaking down barriers to good health. Additionally, their proposed approach would address specific health needs of seniors, the disabled and veterans.

Prevention is the best medicine, and healthy lifestyles promote wellness. Access to quality food, recreational amenities, safe communities, routine care and good-paying jobs matters. These factors, along with green environments and healthy homes, make health a priority issue for residents.

A REGIONAL SUCCESS STORY

PLACING PUBLIC SAFETY AT THE FOREFRONT

Communities throughout the region are becoming safer thanks to a unique collaboration focused on improving, analyzing and addressing public security.

The Northwest Indiana Public Safety Data Consortium or NWIPSDC — the first of its kind in the nation — is a privately funded university-administered data sharing association of over 35 agencies across sectors and all levels of government.

Concentrating on areas between the Illinois state line to South Bend, NWIPSDC removes borders and barriers to bring analytical capabilities to departments, cities and agencies so they may address specific problems in their communities as well as regionally.

Further, there is no cost to participating agencies through this private/public partnership. “We have found a way to work together for just a fraction of what it would cost one department to have this technology, and have found incredible ways to share and collect information that is timely and meaningful,” said Indiana University Northwest associate professor Dr. Joseph Ferrandino. “Working with such innovative and forward thinking police departments, probation offices, parole agencies and other partners who provide a safer environment and better life for all of their citizens through this network represents the best side of criminal justice innovation.”

NWIPSDC has members representing all sectors with IUN serving as the anchor institution. The project is funded completely through a generous donation from NISPCO/NiSource. Another private sector entity includes *The*

Times of Northwest Indiana, who hosts the group’s crime maps on their website.

Born in 2012 with a partnership between founding members IUN and the Gary Police Department, and soon after with East Chicago and Griffith joining, NWIPSDC has since matured to utilizing new technologies and applications through this shared mapping system.



“JUST HAVING NWIPSDC HAS MADE THE REGION A LEADER IN OPEN AND TRANSPARENT PUBLIC SAFETY DELIVERY, UNDERMINING THE REPUTATION THAT THE REGION CANNOT AND DOES NOT WORK TOGETHER FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL CITIZENS.

THERE ARE INNOVATIVE AND OPEN POLICE CHIEFS ALL THROUGH THE REGION THAT NEED THE HELP OF CITIZENS AS POLICE ALONE CANNOT IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE.

EVERY COMMUNITY THAT WANTS TO TAKE PART IS WELCOMED.”

~ Dr. Joseph Ferrandino, IUN

Local law enforcement partners include police departments of: Gary, East Chicago, Griffith, Whiting, Munster, Dyer, St. John, Schererville, Highland, Lake Station, Portage, Valparaiso, Michigan City and South Bend. Participating county-level agencies include: Lake County Sheriff’s Department, Porter County Sheriff’s Office, Porter County Probation Office and La Porte County Adult Probation. Indiana State Police and Indiana State Parole as well as federal partner Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives are involved. Rounding out the large group is ShotSpotter, a private source NWIPSDC uses for data cultivation.

The effort widely focuses on serious crime across the region like homicides, robberies, shootings and gunfire but also focuses on quality of life issues such as traffic accidents and code violations. NWIPSDC fills the gap of information sharing by providing a hub with tools for use within a department while they share data across borders, leaders said. And while still focused heavily on gun violence, partners pay careful attention to neighborhoods, blocks and small areas within their jurisdictions where they can have impact.

“We seek to provide a full picture of environment, demographics, crime, business, offenders and other specific aspects of communities that impact quality of life,” Ferrandino said. Further, agencies are working to diversify their departments to better reflect their communities. For example, Griffith police established an entire workshop for the effort and recently hired their second female officer in the department’s 100-plus-year history.

This trust between university and public safety agencies has resulted with crime in the region down to historic levels, according to leaders. Just the spirit of cooperation itself, which many internally feel often goes unseen, has undoubtedly made the region safer.

“The fact that many agencies now have public crime maps that are updated weekly is a

testament to police transparency and community outreach to keep their citizens informed,” Ferrandino said. “Criminal justice and public safety are essentially about the exchange of information, and we are sharing a great deal of information across agencies and innovating in ways that have a profound impact on public safety in ways both large and small.”

Citizens may get involved by contacting their police agency if they are not publicly represented. People can also contact their local police department and find out what they can do in their own communities to get involved in public safety. This could include getting information to police, volunteering in some fashion, helping to clean up vacant properties, forming neighborhood watches and attending regular police community meetings.

Regional crime report maps for each participating community are available via *The Times’* website at:

http://www.nwitimes.com/news/special-section/regionalcrimereport/regional-crime-report---index-page/html_4a1d7c96-403c-11e4-bf11-5fd1c750bd2b.html.

WE ARE CREATING SAFE COMMUNITIES

DOMAIN 7: PUBLIC SAFETY

Sustainable, resilient communities are places where residents, business owners and visitors feel safe. When people feel safe, they are more likely to use public spaces, interact with others and be physically active. Active public spaces bring more “eyes on the street” and contribute to increased safety through passive surveillance. Safe places promote a sense of belonging, improved sociability and interconnectedness, encouraging people to take ownership. When people take ownership, they are more inclined to stay and raise families, open businesses and become civically engaged.

In placemaking, public safety and crime prevention goes beyond environmental design and traditional policing. It takes a public health approach and is built around interagency collaboration and strong relationships between law enforcement, empowered residents and business owners. Safe communities take a long-term, preventive and collaborative approach to emergency prevention and response. They are also prepared to effectively respond to and recover from natural and man-made hazards.

The 2012 Indicators Report described regional cooperation and collaboration between public agencies as an unrealized goal. Exemplary efforts in interagency cooperation are now well-underway, however. The Northwest Indiana Major Crimes Taskforce, along with the Northwest Indiana Regional SWAT Team, model how individual departments leverage a regional approach to specialized training and equipment purchasing for interjurisdictional, rapid response team deployment. Through the Northwest Indiana Public Safety Data Consortium (NWIPSDC), a data sharing association of over 35 agencies, regional crime report maps for each participating agency are now available to the public and updated weekly. From NWIPSDC, participating agencies and officials are better analyzing the nature of crime, like a pattern that crimes are often clustered into very small geographies, like blocks or street segments. NWIPSDC data are empowering area police departments and their community partners to pinpoint these “hotspots” and develop targeted, more effective crime prevention strategies accordingly. This data-driven approach to policing intelligence makes the region a national leader in public safety data sharing and transparency.

One missed opportunity for greater regional cooperation is with the Lake County 911 system. The 2007 Kernan-Shepard Report recommended public safety consolidation. The project has been plagued by political controversy ever since. Problems with delayed response times and inadequate information sharing during implementation have left room for improvement. A few communities, such as Cedar Lake and Schererville, have opted out of the county system and are forming their own separate system.²⁰

Another key development in creating safe communities are trauma centers. Until last year, Northwest Indiana lacked these vital centers. Patients needed to be transported to other regions of the state or

²⁰ Dolan, Bill and Chase, Mark. “Lake Dispatcher and Director Point Fingers Over 911 Disconnect.” *The Northwest Indiana Times*. The Times. Co. 27 Dec. 2015. Web.

into neighboring Illinois. Lake County now has two designated “in-process” Level III Trauma Centers at Methodist Hospital Northlake and St. Anthony’s Hospital. In Porter County, Porter Regional Hospital is a designated “in-process” Level III Trauma Center. Trauma injuries remain the top cause of death for Indiana residents younger than 45 and the fifth leading cause of death for all age groups. Although there are still no regional Level I or Level II facilities, the new centers will contribute to improved public safety as trauma patients are 25 percent more likely to survive when treated at a trauma center, and especially when receiving treatment within 60 minutes of being injured.²¹

Nonprofit and faith-based organizations as well as neighborhood block groups hold deep capacities for cultivating safety and prevention by strengthening community connections and care. For instance, engaged youth and community involvement help keep communities safer. Dr. Mike McGee, chief of ER at Methodist Hospitals, founded Project Outreach and Prevention on Teen Violence, or POP, after witnessing an increase in teen emergency room visits as victims of violence through blunt and penetrating trauma. He, along with Dr. Reuben Rutland, chief of trauma, are tackling the issues of violence and juvenile delinquency in Northwest Indiana and Chicagoland through a public health and preventive approach. POP promotes positive youth behaviors, healthy lifestyle choices as well as college and career readiness.²²

Crime prevention and recidivism programs remain issues of concern. The state reportedly has many in-prison and post-prison education, training and jobs programs yet funding and staffing for such programs are severely lacking.²³ Therefore, many ex-offenders may not have access to or do not participate in re-entry programs. Although formal education attainment increases the probability of post-release employment and reduces recidivism — those who do not participate correctional education programs are 3.7 times more likely to return to prison — many cannot afford these programs.²⁴

Given the region’s industrial, transportation and natural assets, disaster preparedness for natural and man-made emergencies, such as those caused by severe weather or hazard material releases, is another important aspect of public safety. While Lake, Porter and La Porte counties each have a multi-hazard mitigation plan including a risk assessment and mitigation strategies, an integrated regional approach to those plans would bolster Northwest Indiana’s preparedness and resiliency.

Overall Rating: Improving

Leading Indicators	Trend
Murder Per Capita	Improving
Robbery Per Capita	Improving
Rape Per Capita	Needs Improvement
Aggravated Assault Per Capita	Needs Improvement
Burglary Per Capita	Improving

²¹ Giles, Bruce. More Trauma Centers Likely on the Way in NWI. *The Northwest Indiana Times*. The Times Co. 10 Aug. 2015. Web.

²² Dr. McGee Presentation at the NWI Health Disparities Forum, March 4, 2016.

²³ Carden, Dan. “Indiana Struggling to Reduce Prison Recidivism.” *The Northwest Indiana Times*. The Times Co. 2015 Aug 16. Web.

²⁴ McCollum, Carmen. “Education a Key to Freedom.” *The Northwest Indiana Times*. The Times Co. 2015 Jan 22. Web.

Larceny Theft Per Capita	Improving
Vehicle Theft Per Capita	Improving
Arson Per Capita	Needs Improvement
Juvenile Delinquency Cases	Improving
Child Neglect Cases	Needs Improvement
Child Physical Abuse Cases	Improving
Child Sexual Abuse Cases	Improving

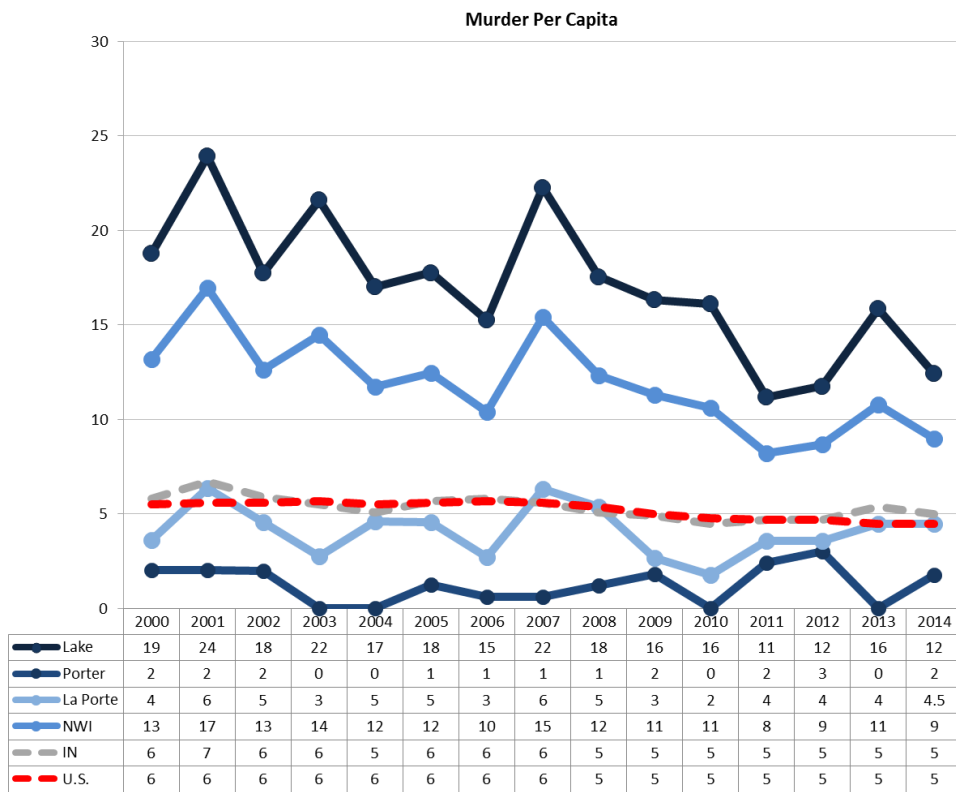
Region in Motion

- A scan of NWIPSDC’s Regional Crime Report reveals the levels and types of crime differ within each county’s respective cities, towns and unincorporated areas and within those geographies’ sub-areas.
- Northwest Indiana’s overall trend in public safety is improving. Northwest Indiana was relatively safer in 2014 than it was in 2000. The majority of the reported crime rates had dropped at the regional level between 2000 and 2014. However, rates and improvements varied by county.
- The region’s murder rate dropped by 32 percent to 9 murders per 100,000 people. Lake County continued to have the highest murder rate in the region, at 12 murders per 100,000 in 2014.
- The regional robbery rate dropped 31 percent to 100 robberies per 100,000 people.
- The aggravated assault rate for the region fell to 178 per 100,000 people.
- The reported rate of rapes dropped by 23 to 17 rapes per 100,000.
- Thefts of personal property dropped over the decade.
- The burglary for the region dropped 23 percent to 468 burglaries per 100,000 people.
- Larceny theft declined 15 percent to 1,869 per 100,000 people.
- Similarly, vehicle theft dropped 57 percent to 209 per 100,000 people.
- Regionally, the number of juvenile delinquency case filings dropped by 33 percent to 1,825.
- According to data, children were generally safer from neglect and abuse in 2014 than in 2000, but less safe than in 2010.
- Substantiated child neglect cases in Northwest Indiana decreased 1 percent overall from 2000 – 2014, but increased by 7 percent from 2010 – 2014. In part because La Porte County experienced a 44 percent increase in child neglect cases over those four years.
- Regionally, physical abuse cases dropped 64 percent between 2000 – 2014, although Porter County substantiated cases increased by 67 percent over that same period.
- Regionally, child sexual abuse also declined by 34 percent from 2000 – 2014.

Murder Per Capita **Trend: Improving**

Homicides have declined regionally between 2000 and 2014. The regional murder rate fell 32 percent, from 13 homicides per 100,000 people in 2000 to nine in 2014. In 2014, Lake County had 12 murders per 100,000 people, down 34 percent from 19 murders per 100,000 people in 2000. Porter County had two homicides per 100,000 in 2000 and 2014. La Porte County had 4 murder arrests per 100,000 in 2000 and 5 in 2014. Indiana had 6 murder arrests per 100,000 in 2000 and 5 in 2014. The U.S. rate dropped slightly from 6 murder arrests per 100,000 in 2000 to 5 in 2014

The annual number of murders in the region overall declined from 98 in 2000 to 69 in 2014, or 30 percent. Approximately 1,351 total arrests were made during the 14-year period. Arrests from murder are not distributed equally throughout the region. Of the total, 1,253, or 93 percent, were Lake County-based crimes. Porter County had 30 arrests or 2 percent of the total. La Porte County had 68 arrests, or 5 percent.

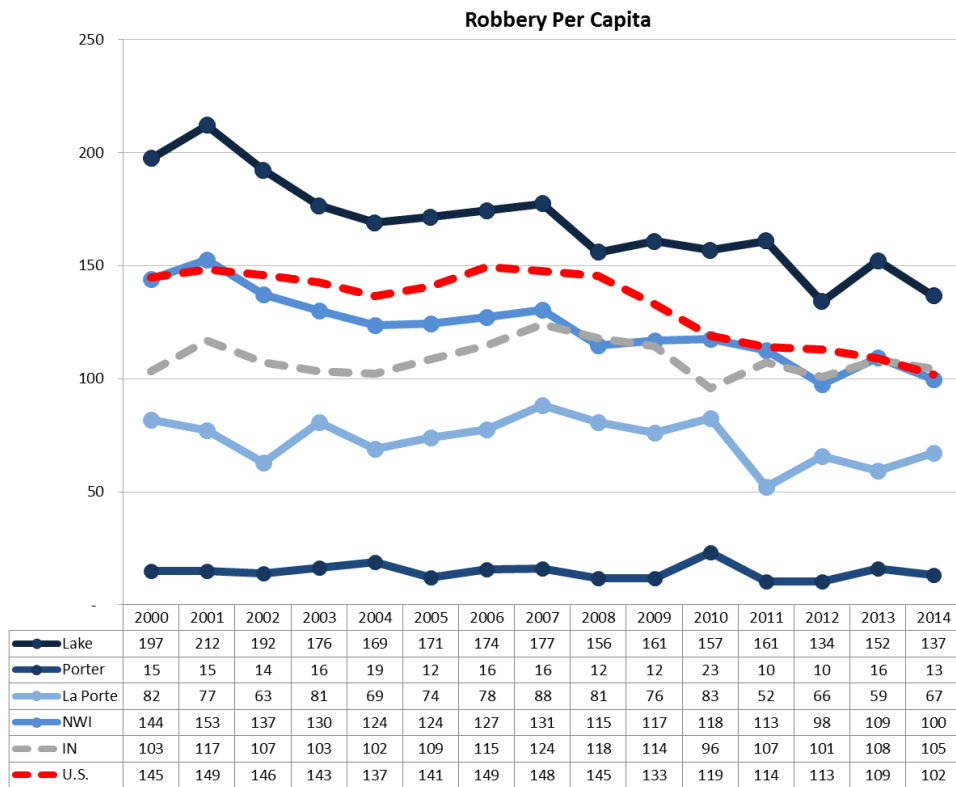


Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports

Robbery Per Capita Trend: Improving

Robberies have declined overall in Northwest Indiana. The regional robbery rate dropped 31 percent between 2000 and 2014, from 144 robberies per 100,000 people to 100. In 2000, Lake County had 197 robberies per 100,000. This rate declined by 31 percent to 137 in 2014. Porter County's rate of 15 robberies per 100,000 in 2000 decreased by 12 percent to 13 robberies per 100,000 in 2014. La Porte County had 82 robberies per 100,000 in 2000 and 67 per 100,000 in 2014, a decrease of 18 percent. At the state level, robberies increased by 1 percent from 103 per 100,000 in 2000 to 105 per 100,000 in 2014. The U.S. rate dropped 30 percent from 145 to 102 per 100,000.

The overall number of robbery offenses declined by 28 percent from 1,068 in 2000 to 767 in 2014. Approximately 13,942 total robberies were counted and reported between 2000 and 2014. Just over 88 percent or 12,384 of those robberies occurred in Lake County. La Porte County robberies accounted for 1,210, or just over 8 percent. Porter County accounted for 348, or 2.5 percent of robberies.



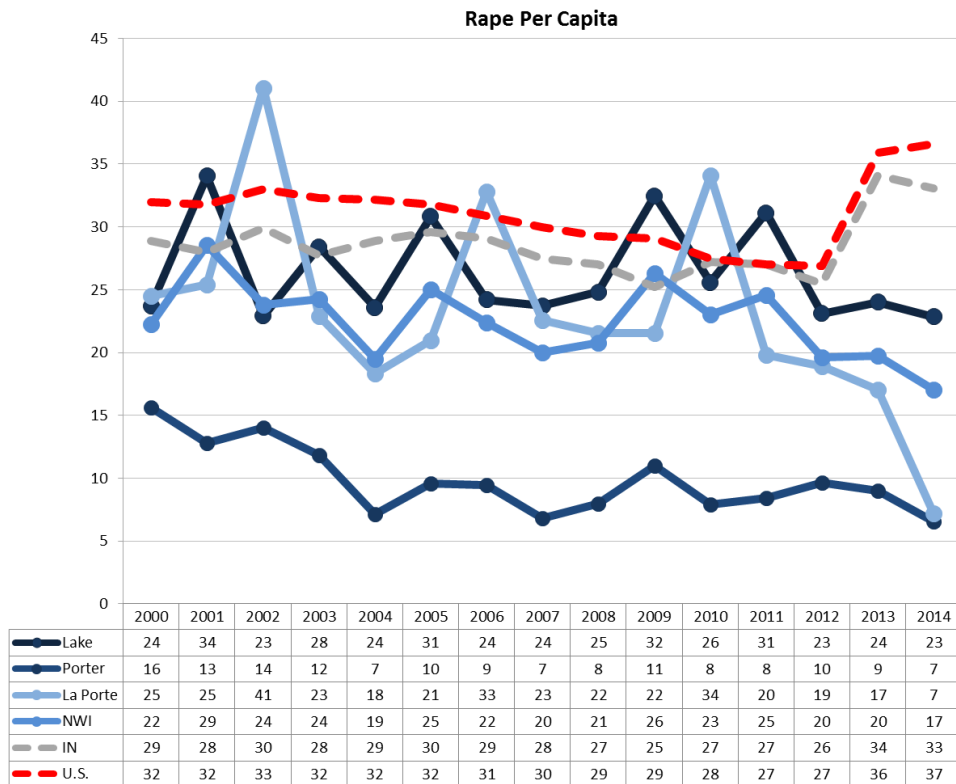
Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports

Rape Per Capita **Trend: Needs Improvement**

Although the number has peaked several times between 2000 and 2014, there has been small overall decreases in reported rapes within the region. Regionally, the rate of reported rapes declined 23 percent between 2000 and 2014, from 22 rapes per 100,000 people to 17. Lake County's dropped 4 percent, from 24 rapes per 100,000 people in 2000 to 23 in 2014. Porter County's reported rate declined 58 percent, from 16 rapes per 100,000 people in 2000 to 7 in 2014. In La Porte County, the rate of rapes as reported decreased 71 percent, from 25 rapes per 100,000 in 2000 to 7 per 100,000 in 2014.

At the state level, the rate of reported rapes increased by 15 percent from 29 per 100,000 in 2000 to 33 per 100,000 in 2014. The U.S. rate increased 15 percent from 32 to 37 per 100,000. The increase in U.S. and state rape rates at the same time rates for the region are decreasing may be the result of the change in definition for rape. Many of the communities in Northwest Indiana continue to use the legacy definition, while others within the state and country have shifted to an expanded definition.²⁵

The number of rape offenses in the region dropped by 21 percent from 165 in 2000 to 131 in 2014. Approximately 2,557 crimes were made between 2000 and 2014. Of them, 76 percent were committed in Lake County. La Porte County rape arrests accounted for 15 percent and Porter County for 9 percent.



Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports

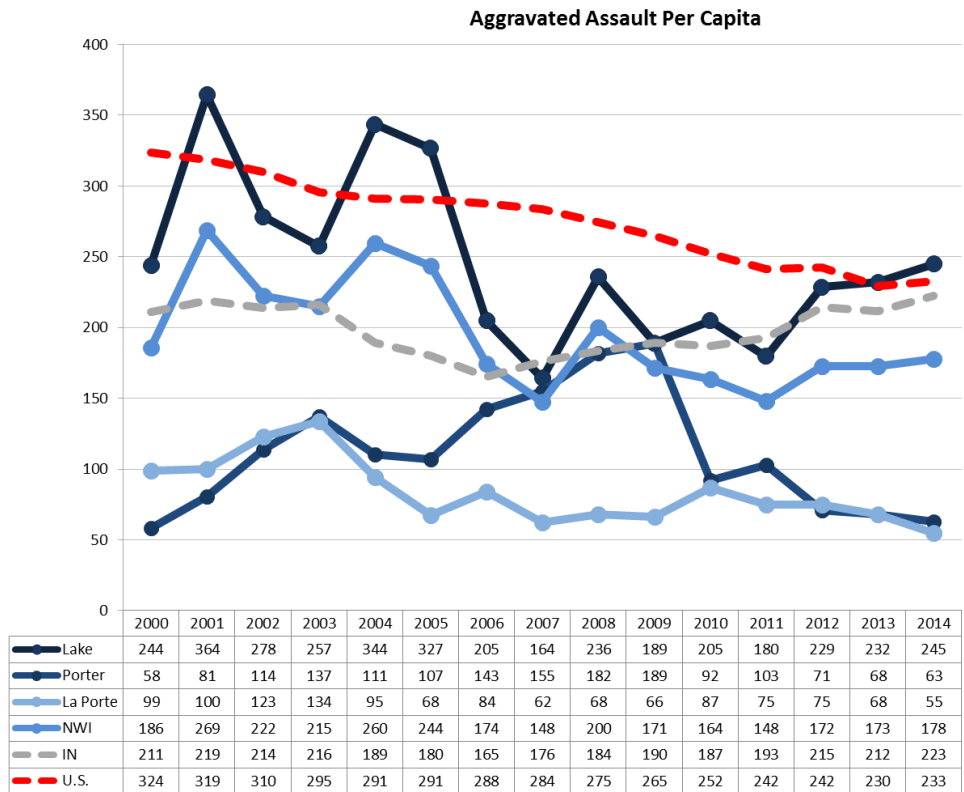
²⁵ Previously, offense data for forcible rape was collected under the legacy UCR definition: the carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will. Beginning with the 2013 data year, the term "forcible" was removed from the offense title, and the definition was changed.

Aggravated Assault Per Capita

Trend: Needs Improvement

The region's overall rate of aggravated assault dropped by 4 percent, from 186 assaults per 100,000 people in 2000 to 178 in 2014. Aggravated assault rates in the region have varied significantly by county. Lake County remained steady with 244 assaults per 100,000 in 2000 and 245 in 2014. La Porte County had 99 assaults per 100,000 in 2000 and 55 in 2014, a decline of 44 percent. Porter County had 58 assaults per 100,000 in 2000 and 63 assaults per 100,000 in 2014, an increase of 8 percent. At the state level, the rate of aggravated assault increased by 5 percent from 211 per 100,000 in 2000 to 223 per 100,000 in 2014. The U.S. rate decreased 28 percent from 324 to 233 per 100,000.

The number of aggravated assaults in the region declined by 0.8 percent from 1,377 in 2000 to 1,366 in 2014. Of the 22,157 total aggravated assaults committed between 2000 and 2014, 82 percent were committed in Lake County. Porter County accounted for 12 percent and La Porte County for 6 percent.



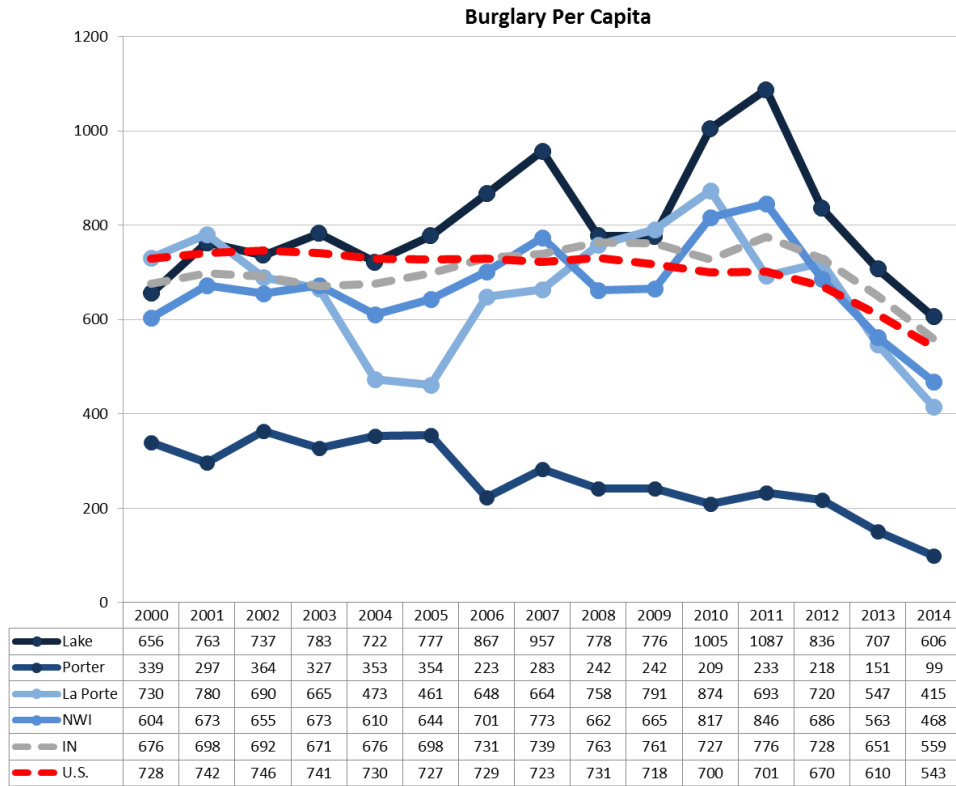
Source: FB, Uniform Crime Reports

Burglary Per Capita

Trend: Improving

The rate of burglaries in the region dropped 23 percent, from 604 burglaries per 100,000 people in 2000 to 468 in 2014, down from a 2011 peak of 846. Lake County had 656 burglaries per 100,000 people in 2000 and 606 in 2014, a decrease of 8 percent. La Porte County had 730 burglaries per 100,000 people in 2000 and 415 in 2014, a decrease of 43 percent. Porter County crime reports indicate 339 burglaries per 100,000 people in 2000 and 99 in 2014, a decline of 71 percent. At the state level, the burglary rate decreased by 17 percent from 676 per 100,000 in 2000 to 559 per 100,000 in 2014. The U.S. rate decreased 26 percent from 728 to 543 per 100,000.

The total number of burglary offenses overall decreased by 20 percent from 4,480 in 2000 to 3,598 in 2014. Approximately 76,284 burglaries were committed between 2000 and 2014. Of those, 78 percent were in Lake County, 14 percent in La Porte County and 8 percent in Porter County.

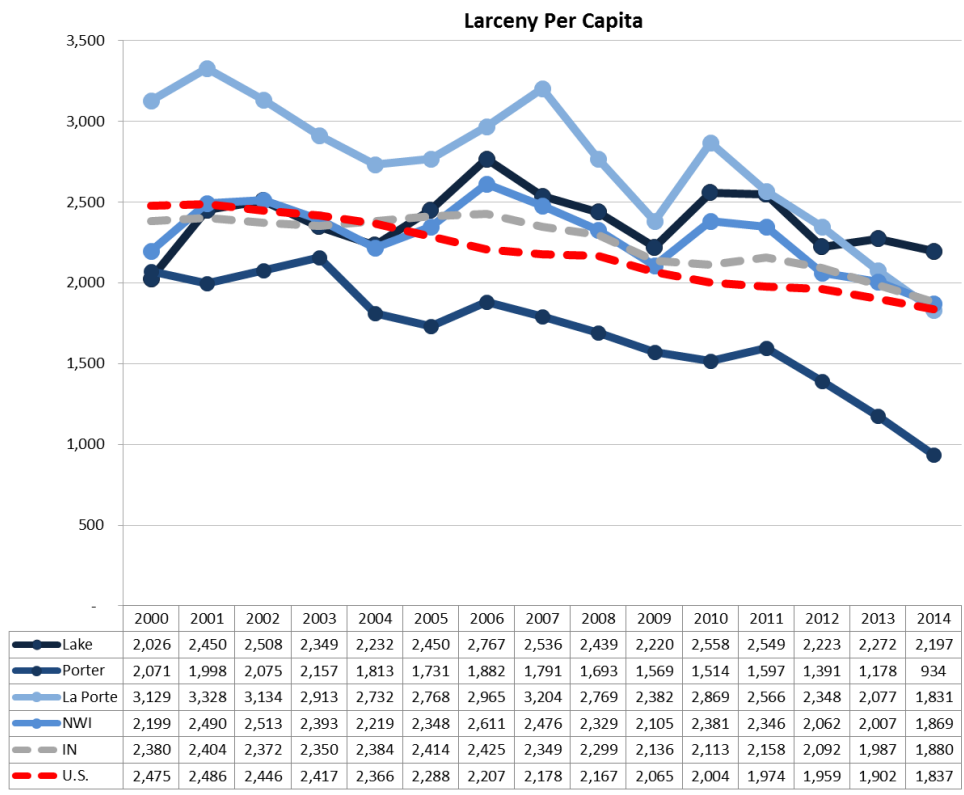


Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports

Larceny Theft Per Capita **Trend: Improving**

The overall rate of reported larceny theft, dropped 15 percent between 2000 and 2014 from 2,199 thefts per 100,000 people to 1,869. Lake County had 2,026 thefts per 100,000 people in 2000 and 2,197 in 2014, an increase of 8 percent. Porter County had 2,071 thefts per 100,000 people in 2000 and 934 in 2014, a drop of 55 percent. La Porte County had 3,129 thefts per 100,000 people in 2000 and 1,831 thefts per 100,000 in 2014, a decline of 42 percent. At the state level, the larceny theft rate decreased by 21 percent from 2,380 per 100,000 in 2000 to 1,880 per 100,000 in 2014. The U.S. rate decreased 26 percent from 2,475.3 to 1837.3 per 100,000.

The overall number of larceny crimes dropped 12 percent from 16,311 in 2000 to 14,370 in 2014. Of the total crime committed, 67 percent were Lake County-based crimes, 17 percent in La Porte County and 15 percent in Porter County.

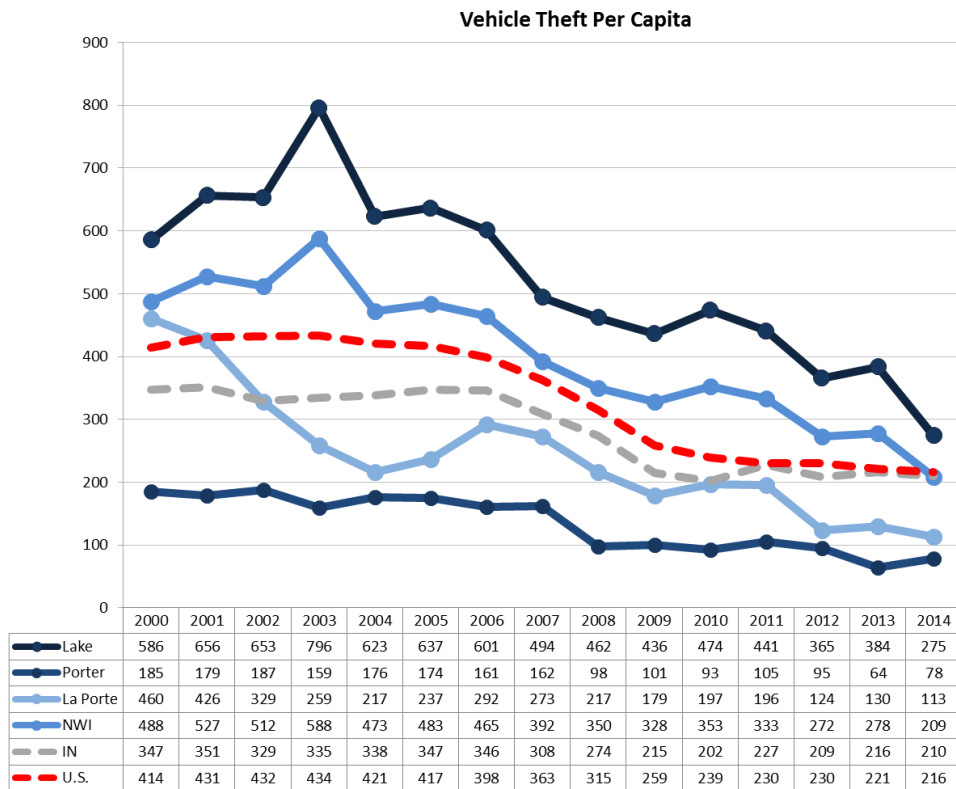


Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports

Vehicle Theft Per Capita **Trend: Improving**

The regional rate of vehicle thefts has declined. The overall rate fell 57 percent from 488 auto thefts per 100,000 people in 2000 to 209 in 2014. In Lake County there were 586 thefts per 100,000 people in 2000 and 275 in 2014, a decline of 53 percent. Porter County had 185 vehicle thefts per 100,000 people in 2000 and 78 in 2014, a decrease of 58 percent. La Porte County had 460 auto thefts per 100,000 in 2000 and 113 in 2014, a drop of 75 percent. At the state level, the vehicle theft rate decreased by 39 percent from 347 per 100,000 in 2000 to 210 per 100,000 in 2014. The U.S. rate decreased 48 percent from 414 to 216 per 100,000.

The total number of vehicles stolen in the region declined 56 percent from 3,618 in 2000 to 1,603 in 2014. Approximately 45,792 vehicles as reported were stolen during the 14-year period. Of that number, 84 percent were in Lake County, 9 percent in La Porte County and 7 percent in Porter County.

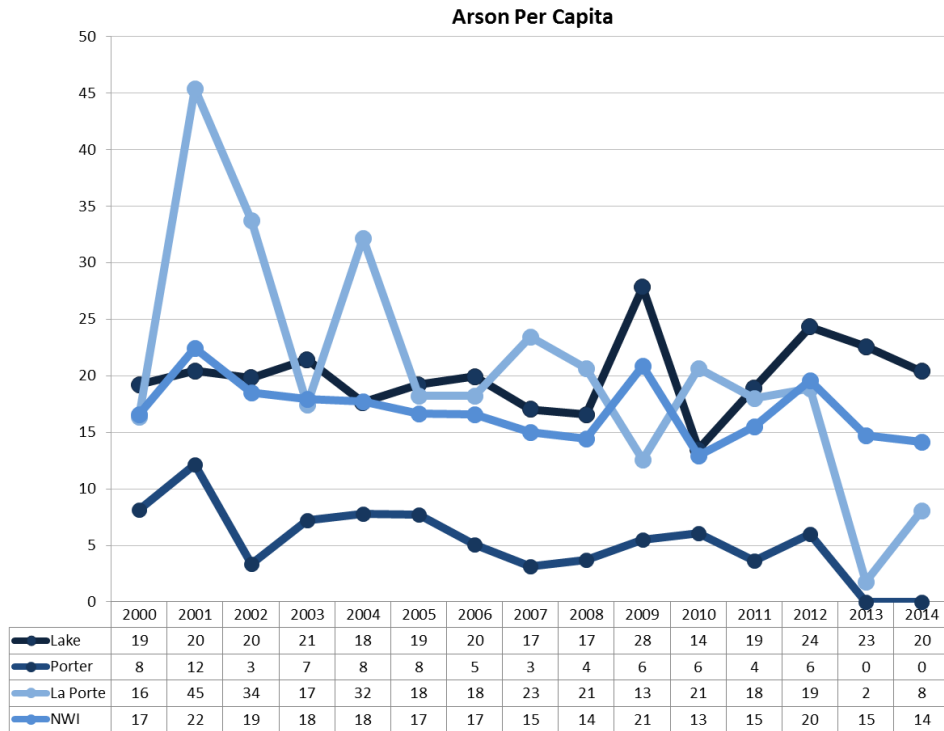


Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports

Arson Per Capita Trend: Needs Improvement

Arsons are not reported by all police departments, so the overall rate may be undercounted. The regional rate of arson has decreased slightly. The overall rate declined 14 percent from 17 arsons per 100,000 people in 2000 to 14 in 2014. In Lake County there were 19 arsons per 100,000 people in 2000 and 20 in 2014, an increase of 6 percent. Porter County had 8 reported arsons per 100,000 people in 2000 and zero in 2014. La Porte County had 16 arsons per 100,000 in 2000 and 8 in 2014, a decrease of 51 percent. Arson rates are not reported at the state or national level.

The number of reported arsons in the region declined 11 percent from 123 in 2000 to 109 in 2014. Approximately 1,926 arsons as reported were committed during the 14-year period. Of that number, 76 percent were in Lake County, 17 percent in La Porte County and 6 percent in Porter County.



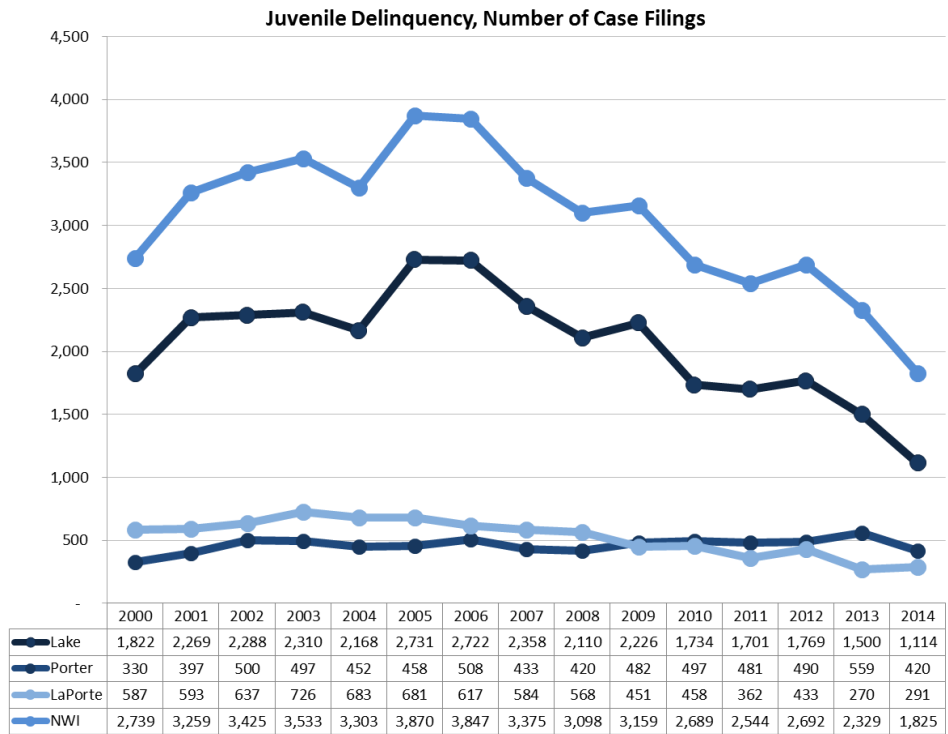
Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports

Juvenile Delinquency Case Filings **Trend: Improving**

Regionally, the number of juvenile delinquency cases filings dropped by 33 percent from 2,739 in 2010 to 1,825 in 2014. A total of 45,687 juvenile delinquency cases were filed from 2000 – 2014. Of the total, 67 percent were filed in Lake County, 17 percent in La Porte County and 15 percent in Porter County. On average, the region handled 3,046 cases each year from 2000 to 2014.

Lake County juvenile delinquency cases dropped by 39 percent from 1,822 in 2000 to 1,114 in 2014. Cases in La Porte County dropped by 50 percent from 587 in 2000 to 291 in 2014. Porter County experienced a 27 percent increase in juvenile delinquency cases, from 330 in 2000 to 420 in 2014. In Indiana, the juvenile delinquency cases decreased by 37 percent from 24,419 in 2000 to 15,350 in 2014.

One factor accounting for changes over time is Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative or JDAI. The juvenile justice centers in Lake, Porter and La Porte Counties participate in JDAI, funded through the Annie E. Casey Foundation. JDAI promotes youth development and public safety by eliminating unnecessary confinement. The process uses eight core strategies of collaboration, data driven decision-making, objective admissions, detention alternatives, case processing reforms, special detention cases, racial disparities and conditions of confinement. Since 1992, the Indiana-based JDAI programs have reduced secure detention admissions by nearly 45 percent.²⁶



Source: Annie Casey Foundation, Indiana Youth Institute

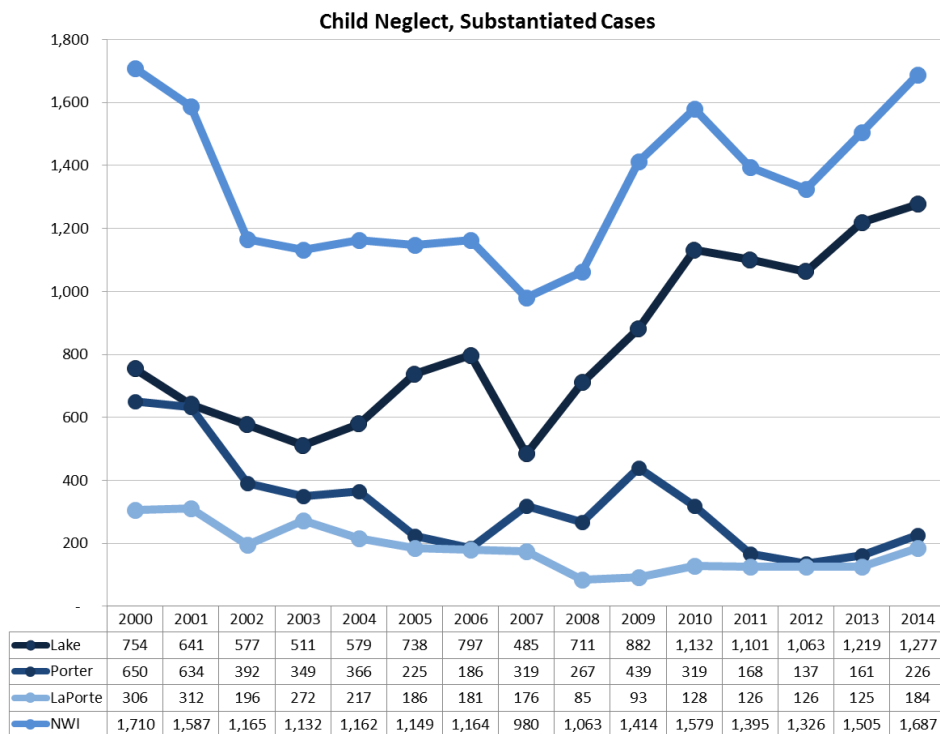
²⁶ NWI Times, “JDAI holds first steering committee meeting”, March 13, 2014 and <http://www.laportecounty.org/JudiciaryLaw/Courts/CircuitCourt/JDAI/> accessed July 1, 2016.

Child Neglect Cases

Trend: Needs Improvement

Substantiated child neglect cases in Northwest Indiana remained steady overall, while spiking in Lake County. Regionally, the number of child neglect cases substantiated by Child Protective Services decreased by 1 percent from 1,710 in 2000 to 1,687 in 2014. A total of 20,018 confirmed cases of child neglect were filed from 2000 – 2014. Of the total, 62 percent occurred in Lake County, 24 percent were in Porter County and 14 percent in La Porte County. On average, 1,335 child neglect cases were confirmed each year.

Lake County experienced a 69 percent increase in the number of substantiated child neglect cases from 754 in 2000 to 1,277 in 2014. Porter County saw a 65 percent drop in the number of cases from 650 in 2000 to 226 in 2014. La Porte County cases decreased by 40 percent from 306 to 184. At the state level, the number of confirmed child neglect cases increased by 30 percent from 15,634 in 2000 to 20,302 in 2014.²⁷



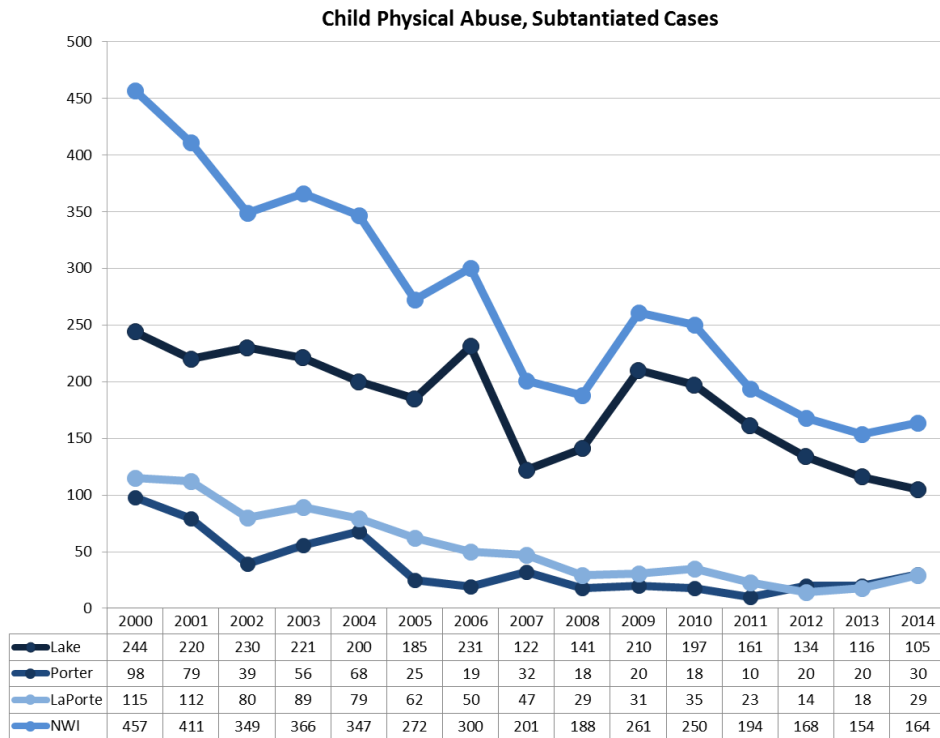
Source: Annie Casey Foundation, Indiana Youth Institute

²⁷ Starting in 2013 the Department of Child Services began counting institutional assessments of Child Abuse and Neglect separately from county of occurrence. These institutional cases are included in the state totals, but are not assigned to a specific county.

Child Physical Abuse Cases Trend: Improving

Substantiated child physical abuse cases declined in Northwest Indiana and the state. Regionally, the number of cases substantiated by Child Protective Services decreased by 64 percent from 457 in 2000 to 164 in 2014. A total of 4,082 cases were substantiated from 2000 – 2014. Of the total, 67 percent occurred in Lake County, 20 percent in La Porte County and 14 percent in Porter County.

Lake County experienced a 57 percent decrease in the number of substantiated child physical abuse cases from 244 in 2000 to 105 in 2014. Porter County cases dropped 69 percent from 98 in 2000 to 30 in 2014. La Porte County cases fell 75 percent, from 115 in 2000 to 29 in 2014. At the state level, the number of confirmed child physical abuse cases decreased by 46 percent from 4,415 in 2000 to 2373 in 2014.

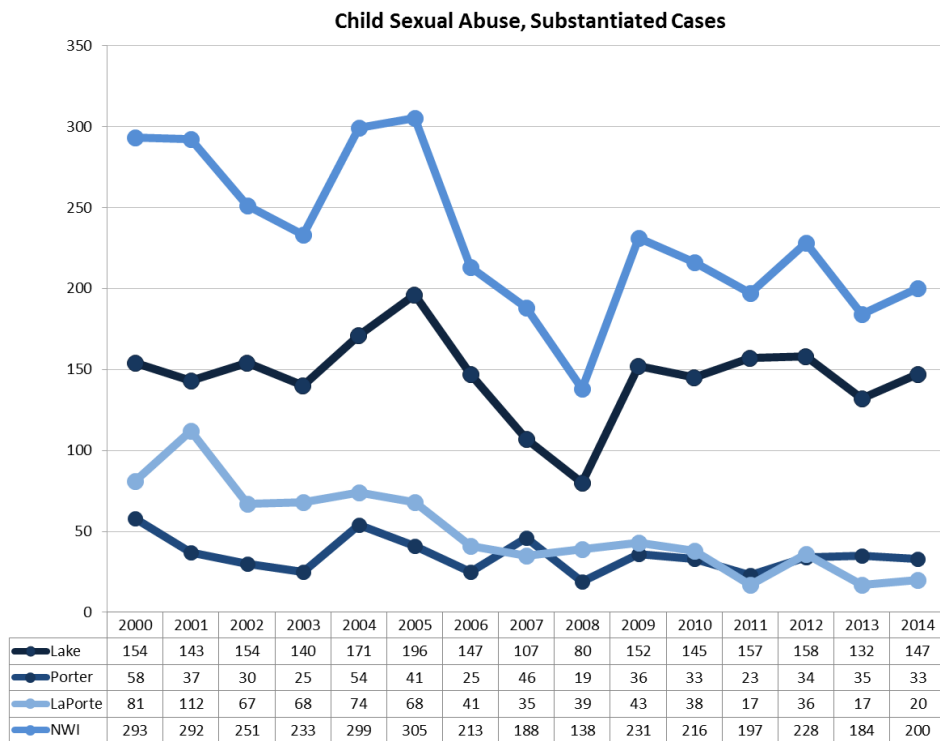


Source: Annie Casey Foundation, Indiana Youth Institute

Child Sexual Abuse Cases Trend: Improving

Substantiated child sexual abuse cases generally declined in Northwest Indiana. Regionally, the number of cases substantiated by Child Protective Services decreased by 32 percent from 293 in 2000 to 200 in 2014. A total of 3,468 cases were substantiated from 2000 – 2014. Of the total, 63 percent in Lake County, 22 percent in La Porte County and 15 percent occurred in Porter County.

During this period, decreases were not experienced equally. Lake County experienced a 7 percent decrease in the number of substantiated child sexual abuse cases from 154 in 2000 to 147 in 2014. Porter County cases dropped 43 percent from 58 in 2000 to 33 in 2014. La Porte County cases fell 75 percent from 81 in 2000 to 20 in 2014. At the state level, the number of confirmed child sexual abuse case decreased by 35 percent from 4,637 in 2000 to 3,017 in 2014.



Source: Annie Casey Foundation, Indiana Youth Institute

Regional Action Measures

In public safety, Northwest Indiana is making progress on creating regional synergy. The regional efforts of the Northwest Indiana Major Crimes Taskforce, Northwest Indiana SWAT Team and NWISDC demonstrate high levels of interagency coordination and regional collaboration relative to specialized training, community response and information technology. JDAI and other programs, like POP, look at alternative solutions in youth development. Area hospitals are filling the gap in trauma care. These are just a few of the catalytic endeavors occurring in the region.

These organizations moved from planning to implementation with positive results upon quality of place. As more communities and institutions participate in partnership with organizations such as these, the regional capacity for safer communities expands. Further development opportunities to explore may include:

- Surveying community perceptions of safety and safety issues.
- Building cross-sector, community-oriented strategies and programs.
- Integrating and communicating regional hazard mitigation and post-disaster plans.
- Considering public safety and disaster plans as part of economic redevelopment.
- Implementing violence prevention programs and strategies.
- Supporting a multifaceted, monitored re-entry program for ex-offenders.

The sense of feeling safe and secure is an essential human need. While Northwest Indiana residents may move about freely exercising a high degree of freedom and security, many residents do not feel as safe. As Lake Area United Way and United Way of Porter County discovered through their community conversation series, public safety is a priority issue for Lake County participants and a drug-free community was a priority in Porter County. According to the 2015 “Let’s Talk” Report, “residents are concerned the rise in crime, drug and alcohol abuse as well as gang and gun violence has put the public’s safety and well-being at risk. The barriers to progress, residents said, were fear, gun violence, crime and gang activity, police and community relations as well as apathy among community residents. The other priority areas identified for the two counties also captured key public safety issues such as child abuse, bullying, safe havens, dangers in schools, families in crisis, instability in home environments, abandoned buildings and addiction and treatment. United Way of La Porte County in its 2016 “Transition to Collective Impact Funding” Report also concluded safety and crime were barriers to healthy lifestyles.

By listening to residents, the breadth of public safety concerns comes into full view. Public safety lies at the nexus of a person’s health, wealth and the environment. This improving snapshot of public safety in the region does not fully encompass nor assess the entire ecosystem of law and order, equality and justice and social services necessary for sustaining safe, resilient communities.

A REGIONAL SUCCESS STORY

BRIDGING GAPS IN REAL ESTATE

The Greater Northwest Indiana Association of REALTORS® understands improving the region's quality of life cannot be achieved alone.

That's why GNIAR pledged its support to the South Shore extension West Lake Corridor Project, focusing on double tracking and transit-oriented development, towards impacting the future of the local real estate market.


GNIAR CEO Peter Novak, Jr., said, "This partnership is bringing together groups that individually have a vested interest in the growth of the local real estate market and economic development. It's bringing everyone to the table so they understand the status of the project, what's at stake and have the tools necessary to talk to others in their respective fields and communities."

The West Lake Corridor Project would extend approximately nine miles of the South Shore Line between Dyer and Hammond. Trains on the new branch line would connect with existing South Shore and Metra, adding new transit service from Dyer to downtown Chicago. GNIAR has supported the South Shore extension for years, but recently collaborative work on the project picked up speed. As the extension project progressed, GNIAR leaders worked to ensure area real estate industry and economic developers teamed up for success.

Uniting for one cause — GNIAR, Home Builders Association of REALTORS®, Indiana Commercial Board of REALTORS® and Indiana Mortgage

Bankers in partnership with the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD), Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA) and Northwest Indiana Forum — held a joint-event, "Supporting the South Shore Extension & Its Impact on the Local Real Estate Market."

The highly successful initial event included a panel discussion featuring diverse voices from commercial realtors from Indiana and Illinois, an Illinois residential realtor, an Indiana residential builder, RDA President/CEO Bill Hanna and National Association of REALTORS® Commercial & Global Division Vice President Jan Hope. NICTD CEO/General Manager Mike Noland updated attendees on the project and highlighted the impact of double tracking. GNIAR COO Joe Wszolek moderated the event. Rounding out the healthy dialogue, Hanna highlighted a look at the potential of transit-oriented development with GNIAR ending with a call for action. With the millennials currently the nation's largest living population, quality of life and lifestyle requirements now differ from previous generations, Novak urged.



"A MORE EXTENSIVE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM AND SUBSEQUENT TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PUTS US ON A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD WITH CHICAGO SUBURBS.

IF WE WANT TO KEEP OUR YOUNGER GENERATIONS FROM RELOCATING TO OTHER AREAS BECAUSE OF MORE MODERN AMENITIES, SUCH AS CONVENIENT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ACCESS THAT CONNECTS THEM TO JOBS, WE HAVE TO START MAKING CHANGES."

~ Peter Novak, GNAIR

WE ARE ENRICHING LIVABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

DOMAIN 8: HOUSING

Vibrant, livable neighborhoods integrate safe pedestrian environments, access to transit, proximity to jobs, a dense mix of uses and affordable housing. From a placemaking perspective, an adequate and diverse supply of affordable and location-efficient housing options for all residents provides the foundation for safe, healthy and active communities.

Livable neighborhoods celebrate diversity, build social capital, foster safe pedestrian environments and create a strong sense of place. Walkability contributes to more active, healthier and connected residents. Affordable housing located near employment and public transportation further contributes to livability by providing access to jobs, allowing youth to participate in extracurricular activities and reducing traffic congestion and air pollution.

The 2012 Indicators Report dealt with the aftermath of the national housing crisis and job losses related to the recession. Housing foreclosures led to a hefty supply of vacant housing and reduced property values, contributing to the instability of neighborhoods and communities. Current housing market conditions reflect stabilization with foreclosure rates at just .10 percent, only slightly above the national average of .09 percent as of May 2015.²⁸ Regional vacancy rates remain above the national average despite a slowing of the rate of increase, except for Lake County where 28,277 vacant homes still exist. New housing construction has recovered most rapidly in Porter County, where it has grown 78 percent since 2010. As further evidence of improvement in the housing market, the number of new listings rose 4.1 percent and number of closed sales was up 6.3 percent from 2014 to 2015. Median sales price for 2015 was up 4.4 percent from the prior year.²⁹ The affordability of housing improved slightly. In 2014, Northwest Indiana home owners and renters struggled less than the national average, but hefty mortgages and rents leave households vulnerable to eviction and future foreclosures.

Fully rebounding from the recession brings sustainability principles to the forefront of major economic development and regional planning initiatives. Under the leadership of the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority, Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District and the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC), communities are capitalizing on the asset of the South Shore Line to revitalize neighborhoods through Transit-Oriented Development, or TOD, at existing commuter stations as well as at future stations proposed in the West Lake Corridor Project. Transit-oriented development provides greater regional connectivity to downtown Chicago, which is the major

²⁸ "Current Foreclosure Rates in Indiana." *Indiana is Home | Real Estate Market Updates*. Indiana is Home. 15 May 2015. Web.

²⁹ Local Market Update – December 2015." *Indiana Real Estate Markets Report*. Greater Northwest Indiana Association of REALTORS®. Dec. 2015. Web.

job center for the area. These efforts make Northwest Indiana more attractive to homebuyers within Chicagoland.

In Michigan City, the Artspace Uptown Artist Lofts represents a mixed-use TOD development containing live-work housing for artists and their families with ground floor studios and commercial space in walking distance to train stops and bus transit. The Miller section of Gary intends for TOD in connection with the Lake Street station. Both Hammond and Dyer envision TOD related to the South Shore rail extension. Valparaiso continues to build out its TOD strategy for commuter bus and rail in conjunction with its downtown and cultural districts. These new developments will increase and diversify housing stock and retail options in walkable vibrant neighborhoods which are becoming increasingly preferred by Millennials and Baby Boomers.³⁰

Additionally, the Livable Centers Initiative led by NIRPC seeks community reinvestment and revitalization within urban areas to reverse sprawl. This initiative represents 78 Livable Centers across the region, where opportunities exist to better preserve environmental and agricultural assets and leverage existing physical and employment infrastructure for new mixed-used and TOD investments. Public funding through NIRPC provides for early action projects. To date, seven grants have been awarded to Gary, Crown Point, East Chicago, Winfield, Porter, Chesterton and Highland.

Overall Rating: Needs Improving

Leading Indicators	Trend
Median Home Value	Improving
Homeowner Affordability	Needs Improvement
Median Gross Rent	Needs Improvement
Renter Affordability	Needs Improvement
Housing Vacancy	Needs Improvement
Housing Starts	Needs Improvement

Region in Motion

- Homes have increased in value throughout Northwest Indiana. The average median home value in the region rose 37 percent to \$142,700 in 2014. Nationally, the median home value increased at a quicker rate, by 52 percent from \$119,600 to \$181,200 during the same period.
- Rents have also increased. Regionally, the average median rent rose 49 percent between 2000 and 2014 from \$555 to \$798. The median rent rose 51 percent in Lake County between 2000 and 2014, 37 percent in Porter County and 44 percent in La Porte County.
- In Northwest Indiana, 22 percent of households struggled to make mortgage payments in 2014, compared to 17.4 percent in 2000. Still, this has improved from 2011 when just under 50,000 households, or 23.9 percent, struggled.
- Northwest Indiana renters struggled to afford housing at an even higher rate than homeowners, similar to renters across the nation. Regionally, the number increased from 33.8 percent of

³⁰ Carden, Dan. "Region Makes Case for South Shore Line." *The Northwest Indiana Times*. The Times Media Co. 7 Oct. 2015. Web.

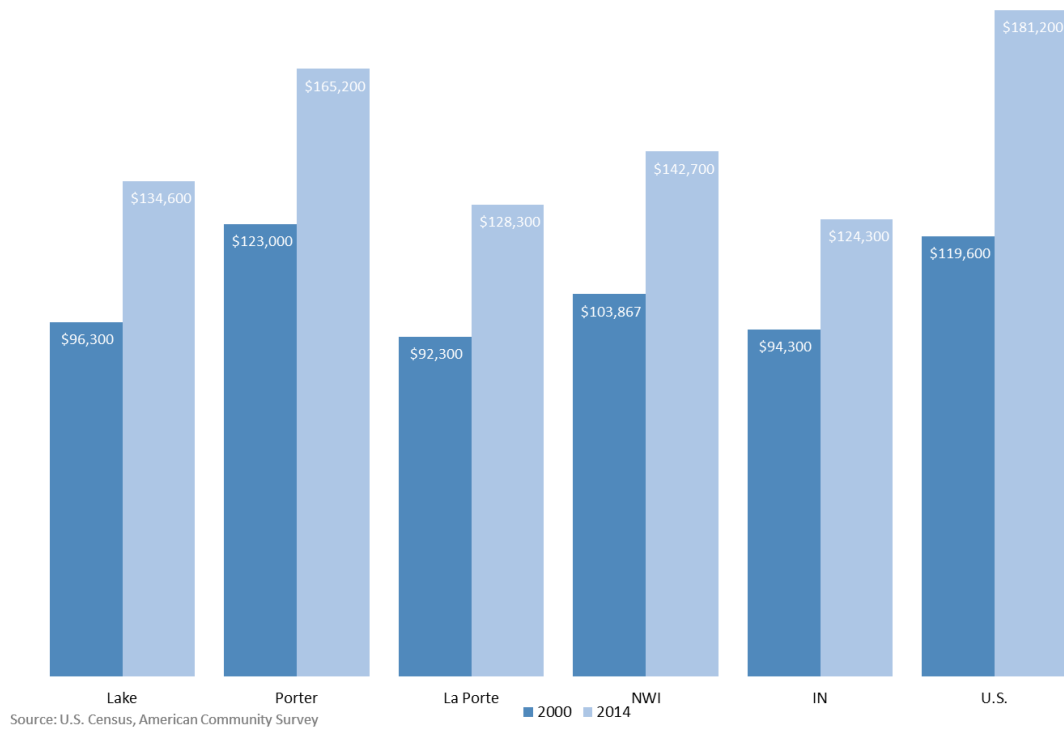
renters in 2000 to 48.9 percent of renters in 2014. The 2014 rate actually represented a slight decrease from 54.8 percent in 2010.

- Post housing crisis and recession, Northwest Indiana continues to be burdened by a hefty number of vacant homes. Regionally, the number of vacant homes rose 92 percent from 20,897 in 2000 to 40,222 in 2014. In 2000, 7.3 percent of homes were vacant. In 2014, the percentage of vacant homes had risen to 12.3 percent.
- Lake County bears the largest burden of vacant housing in terms of numbers, where vacancies rose from 6.9 percent, in 2000 to 13.4 percent in 2014 — for a total of 28,277. In La Porte County, the number of vacant homes rose from 10 percent of homes to 13.7 percent in 2014. In Porter County, vacancies rose from 5.2 percent to 7.8 percent.
- The annual number of housing starts fell 57 percent from 3,475 in 2000 to 1,481 in 2014. Since 2010, the number of new homes has increased by 14 percent within the region. Porter County has seen the most growth with new home construction up by 78 percent since 2010.

Median Home Value Trend: Improving

Home values have increased throughout Northwest Indiana. The average median home value in the region was \$142,700 in 2014, a 37 percent increase from \$103,867 in 2000 but slightly below the 2010 peak of \$145,167. Median home value rose 40 percent in Lake County between 2000 and 2014 from \$96,300 in 2000 to \$134,600. Despite the overall increase, value dropped 5 percent from \$141,400 in 2010. Porter County increased 34 percent from \$123,000 to \$165,200. La Porte County rose 39 percent from \$92,300 to \$128,300. During the same time period, the national median home value rose 52 percent from \$119,600 to \$181,200.

Median Home Value

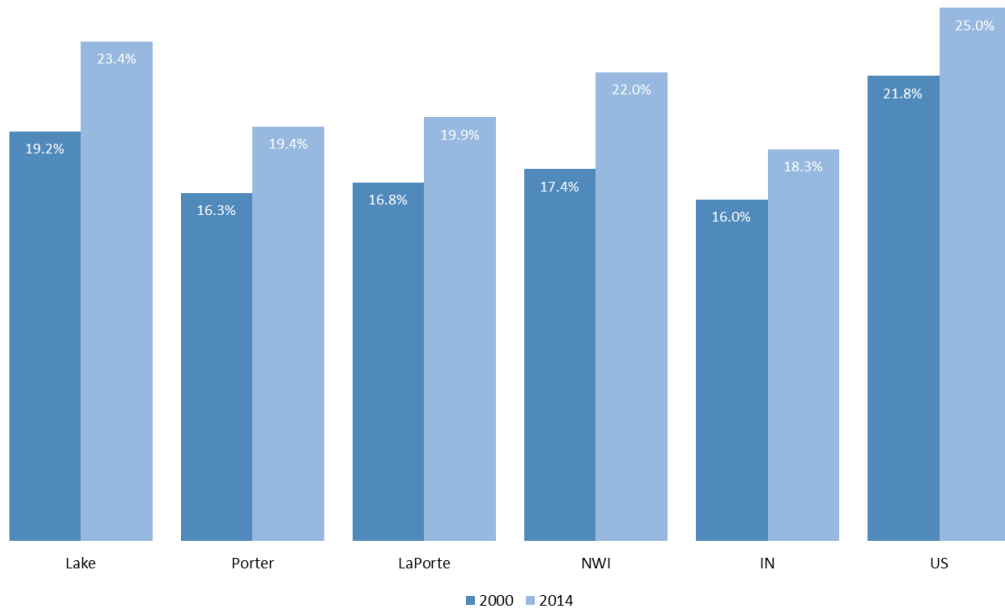


Homeowner Affordability **Trend: Needs Improvement**

The number of homeowners struggling to make mortgage payments has risen overall, as measured by the households that paid more than 30 percent of their income for housing, but the numbers have improved since 2011. In Northwest Indiana, 44,062 households, or 22 percent of the total, met that threshold in 2014, compared to 31,802 households, or 17.4 percent, in 2000. Figures from 2014 show an improvement since 2011 when just under 50,000 households, or 23.9 percent, struggled to make payments.

In Lake County, the number of homeowners paying 30 percent or more of monthly income for housing rose from 21,674 or 19.2 percent in 2000 to 29,233 or 23.4 percent in 2014. This was down from a peak of 26.3 percent in 2011. In Porter County, the number rose from 5,807 or 16.3 percent to 9,072 or 19.4 percent in 2014, but was down from a peak of 21.7 in 2011. In La Porte County, the number increased from 4,321 or 16.8 percent to 5,757 or 19.9 percent, down from a peak of 23.7 in 2011. Nationally, 25 percent of homeowners paid more than 30 percent of their income for housing in 2014. This was down from a peak of 29.9 percent in 2011.

**Homeowner Affordability,
Percent of Residences where Ownership Costs Exceed 30 Percent of Monthly Income**

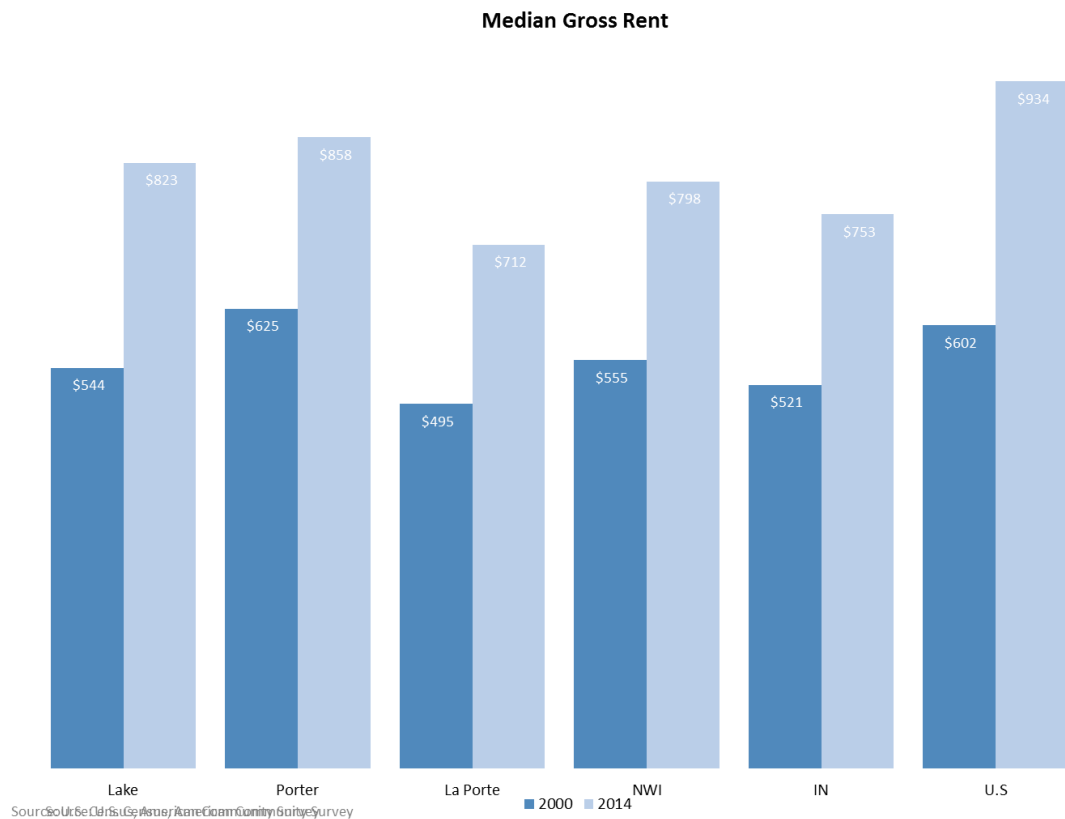


Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey

Median Gross Rent Trend: Needs Improvement

Rent increased in Northwest Indiana and across the nation. The average median rent in the region rose 49 percent between 2000 and 2014 from \$555 to \$798. The median rent rose 51 percent in Lake County between 2000 and 2014 from \$544 to \$823. Porter County rose 37 percent from \$625 to \$858. La Porte County rose 44 percent from \$495 to \$712. Median rent in the state increased 45 percent from \$521 in 2000 to \$753 in the 2014. Nationally, rent rose 55 percent from \$602 in 2000 to \$934 in 2014.

From 2010 – 2014, the median rent rose 10 percent in Lake County from \$747 to \$823, 7 percent in Porter County from \$803 to \$858 and 7 percent in La Porte County from \$667 in 2010 to \$712 in 2014.



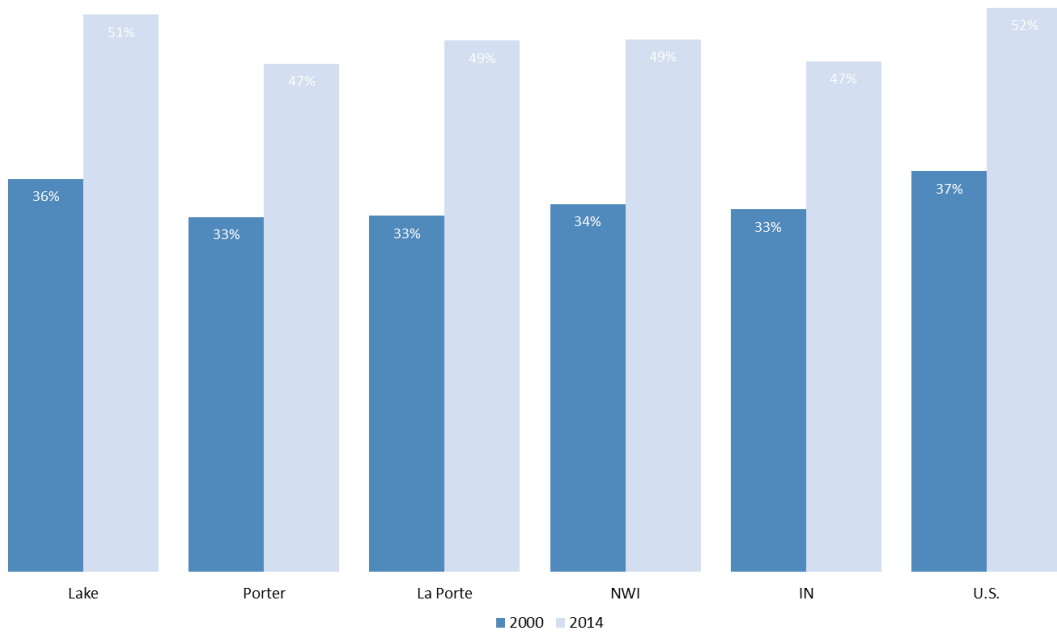
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Renter Affordability Trend: Needs Improvement

Renters in Northwest Indiana and across the nation continued struggling to afford rent, as measured by the number who spent more than 30 percent of household income on rent. In Northwest Indiana, the number increased from 27,559 or 33.8 percent of renters in 2000 to 41,255 or 48.9 percent of renters in 2014. Although an increase over the long term, the 2014 rate represented a slight decrease from 54.8 percent in 2010.

In Lake County, the number rose from 20,177 or 36.1 percent in 2000 to 28,482 or 54.7 percent in 2010. Between 2010 and 2014, the number dropped slightly to 25,493 or 51.2 percent. In Porter County, the number rose from 4,112 or 32.6 percent in 2000 to 6,127 or 52.5 percent in 2010. Between 2010 and 2014, the rate dropped from 52.5 to 46.7 percent. La Porte County experienced increased from 3,270 or 32.7 percent of renters in 2000 to 5,916 or 57.2 percent in 2010. Between 2010 and 2014, the number dropped slightly to 5,966 or 48.8 percent.

**Renter Affordability,
Percentage of Residences where Rent Costs exceed 30 percent of Monthly Income**

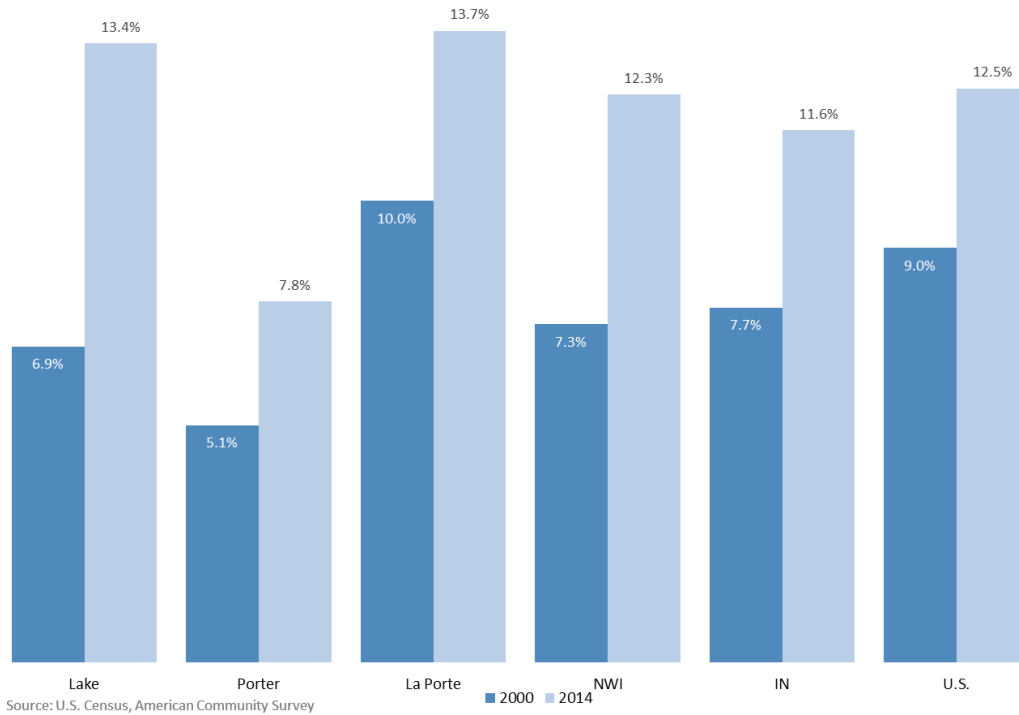


Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey

Housing Vacancy Trend: Needs Improvement

Vacant housing rates increased between 2000 and 2014. The number of vacant homes in Northwest Indiana rose 92 percent from 20,897 in 2000 to 40,222 in 2014. In 2000, 7.3 percent of homes were vacant while 12.3 percent were in 2014. In Lake County, housing vacancy rose 112 percent from 13,359 or 6.9 percent in 2000 to 28,277 or 13.4 percent in 2014. In Porter County, the number increased 77 percent from 2,967 homes or 5.1 percent in 2000 to 5,255 or 7.8 percent in 2014. In La Porte County, the number of vacant homes rose 46 percent from 4,571 or 10 percent of homes to 6,690 or 13.7 percent in 2014. The 2014 vacant housing rate for the state was 11.6 percent and was 12.5 percent across the nation.

Housing Vacancy by Percent

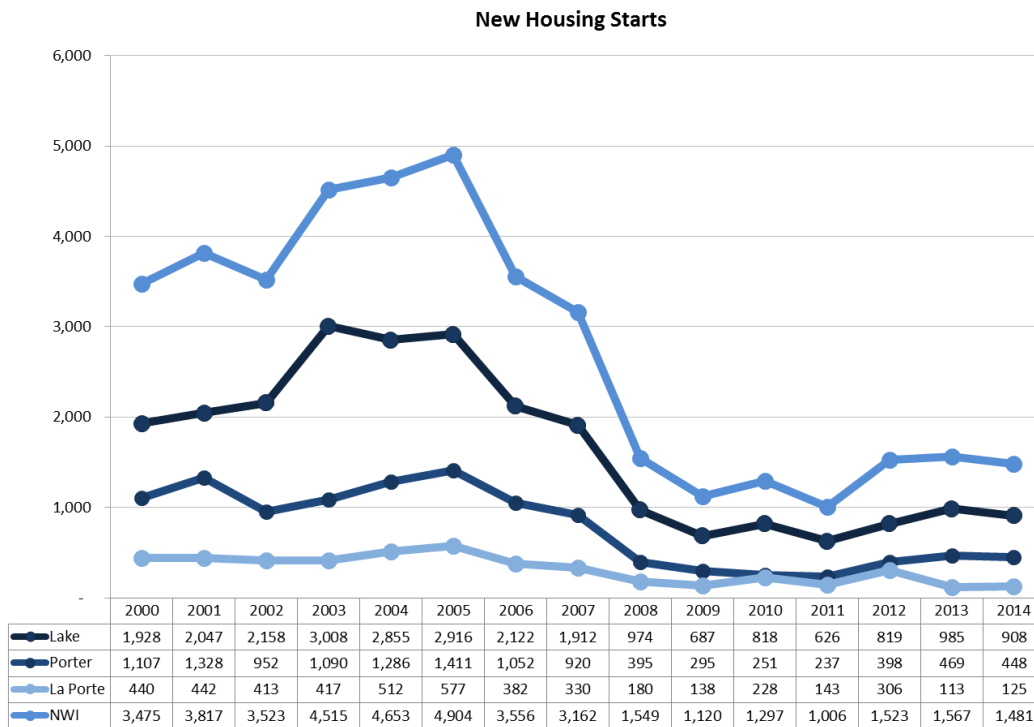


Housing Starts

Trend: Needs Improvement

The number of housing starts in Northwest Indiana peaked in 2005, dropped to a low of 1,481 in 2011 and has gradually risen since. The annual number of housing starts, as measured by building permits, has fallen 57 percent from 3,475 in 2000 to 1,481 in 2014. Since 2010, the number of new homes has increased by 14 percent within the region. In Lake County, housing starts declined 53 percent from 1,928 in 2000 to 908 in 2014. Although down from 2000, the number of permits issued increased by 11 percent since 2010. The peak construction year was 2003 when 3,008 permits were issued. In Porter County, the number dropped 60 percent from 1,107 new housing starts in 2000 to 448 in 2014.

Although down from 2000, the number of permits issued climbed by 78 percent since 2010. Porter County's peak was 2001 when 1,328 permits were issued. In La Porte County, the number of housing starts fell 72 percent from 440 in 2000 to 125 in 2014. La Porte County's housing starts peaked in 2005 when 577 permits were issued. Nationally, the number of housing starts dropped 34 percent from 1,591,628 in 2000 to 1,046,820 in 2014. However, 2014 totals are up 73 percent from 2010 when there were only 604,610 housing starts.



Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey

Regional Action Measures

The continued steady state of housing indicates room for improvement. Although Northwest Indiana lacks a coordinated regional housing strategy, the Livable Centers Initiative and local TOD plans solidify the importance of optimizing transportation infrastructure and livability principles with the Chicago market. Ancillary housing programs, as a component of development, can address broader marketplace issues such as mixed-income, homelessness and generational needs. Many communities stand to significantly gain from the game-changing rail expansion and urban revitalization projects.

Further development practices in this regard may include:

- Collaborating with other jurisdictions to address affordable housing and location efficiency needs in the region.
- Partnering with nonprofit organizations to provide education, counseling and financial assistance to homebuyers or renters.
- Developing an inventory of infill, previously developed, brownfield or gray field sites of greatest priority and potential for development or redevelopment.
- Collaborating with state and federal authorities to advance brownfield cleanups.
- Creating an alliance working to improve and expand the community-based or regional park system.
- Increasing civic participation in the decision-making process.

Home is where the heart is, and good housing is must for generating meaningful and vibrant places for people. Sprawl is unsustainable, making housing market redevelopment a regional imperative. Infill development can counter its effects. During the One Region Regional Priorities Summit and other focus groups, participants expressed interest in more conversation and planning around employer-assisted housing, resident college bound programs and alternative transportation access ranging from bike trails to Uber services.

The joint “Let’s Talk” Report by Lake Area United Way and Porter County United Way included participants identifying housing as a priority issue in Porter County and dynamics happening inside households as challenges to progress in Lake County. Porter County residents identified affordable safe housing as a key issue and felt homeless shelters and transitional housing for families are needed. The general condition of schools and state of education are additional factors concerning parents and families. Drugs and violence in communities also connect housing to the economy, health and safety with Northwest Indiana’s cities and towns. The United Way of La Porte County found in its community conversations of poverty should be a focus because households are struggling to cover basic needs and make ends meet.

Enriching livable neighborhoods requires multiple strategies that connect diverse people to vibrant places where access to jobs, good schools, recreation and cultural amenities and more. The opportunities exist for realizing the American dream in one of Northwest Indiana’s cities or towns.

A REGIONAL SUCCESS STORY

SHINING A LIGHT ON GRASSROOTS ENGAGEMENT

Northwest Indiana is comprised of countless vibrant communities, and Legacy Foundation and its partners are committed to reinvesting in these neighborhoods for sustainability. Through Neighborhood Spotlight, a collective impact and place-based initiative, Lake County communities are transformed into better places to live and work.

Legacy Foundation President and CEO Carolyn Saxton said, “After decades of significant economic decline, many neighborhoods throughout this region are struggling to thrive. But pockets of hope exist. The Legacy Foundation shines a Neighborhood Spotlight on these areas of opportunity.”

Neighborhood Spotlight provides a framework for capacity-building, planning and implementation block by block. The program kicked off in 2014 offering meaningful year-long support and training to interested Lake County neighborhoods. Neighborhoods then complete a competitive application process for grant assistance through Neighborhood Spotlight. Gary-Miller and Hobart’s west side were selected as 2015 recipients.

The Legacy Foundation funds \$50,000, along with technical assistance from the Indiana Association of Community Economic Development (IACED), towards selecting a convening organization for the two selected neighborhoods. This convening organization,

usually a nonprofit community-based organization, steers the coordination of neighborhood relationships.

Residents, business owners and others share options on the strengths and weaknesses of their communities throughout the initial year of planning. Work groups then identify concerns towards developing goals for improvements. Ultimately these goals help create a comprehensive neighborhood plan with the convening organization leading the process to hire a community builder towards implementation.

Initiative leaders ensure everyone is given the opportunity to play a role in strengthening their communities. Further, they believe transformation isn’t a one-size-fits-all approach and instead occurs neighborhood by neighborhood. We recognize that change really happens at the neighborhood level. Each neighborhood has its own unique goals, needs and personality,” Legacy Foundation Director of Grants and Partnerships Kelly Anoe said.



“BY GIVING PEOPLE A VOICE FOR WHAT THEY WANT TO SEE HAPPEN IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS AND CREATING A SENSE OF PLACE THAT PEOPLE FEEL CONNECTED TO, THAT STRENGTHENS THE LIKELIHOOD THEY’LL STAY AND RAISE A FAMILY IN THAT AT NEIGHBORHOOD AND GIVE BACK TO THEIR COMMUNITY.

WE’RE PROVIDING AN OUTLET THAT ALLOWS RESIDENTS TO GET INVOLVED AND BECOME LEADERS IN THEIR COMMUNITY.”

- Kelly Anoe, Legacy Foundation

“Neighborhood Spotlight helps to address these by developing a plan that’s really tailored to each neighborhood. Our focus to engage residents and get the community involved in that change process really helps the initiative’s success.”

Hobart’s west side

Together with the Hobart Family YMCA, the physical assets of 130-acres of conservation land, historic structures and opportunities for the development of new housing have been identified. Additionally, two city industries, CATCO and Indiana Botanic Gardens, employ over 100 people. Civic collaboration with the Department of Natural Resources and National Park Service has led to the successful creation of the Hobart Marsh Plan.

Gary-Miller neighborhood

The neighborhood’s proximity to the lakefront serves as a notable asset along with renovation of Marquette Park and historic pavilion. Several structures also have historical significance as many are on the National Register. Together with the Miller Beach Arts and Creative District, collaborative bodies continue work in the community focusing on civic engagement, professional development, philanthropic resources and safety concerns.

Saxton continued, “Legacy Foundation’s funding for projects that address physical, mental and emotional challenges is building a more inclusive community. We are breaking down barriers and negative attitudes about differences in abilities so that all community members may lead the fullest, most productive lives possible.”

In 2015, Neighborhood Spotlight selected Gary-Emerson and Griffith as recipients. These

communities have also begun the process of transformation. Anoe said, “I don’t think there are any other initiatives in Northwest Indiana that really focus on community planning from the ground up in the way that Neighborhood Spotlight has been able to do. When led by residents and supported by a nonprofit as a backbone, change truly becomes effective through this bottom-up effort.”

Immediate change can already be felt in these Lake County communities, helping to improve the quality of life throughout Northwest Indiana. Neighborhood potlucks, community clean-up days and gardens are just a few examples of instant neighborhood pride resurfacing.

As Gary-Miller and Hobart’s West Side are currently undergoing project implementation and newly selected Gary-Emerson with FAITH “Families Anchored in Total Harmony” CDC and Griffith with the Griffith YMCA are in the midst of planning stages.

For more information about Neighborhood Spotlight, visit:

www.legacyfdn.org

www.facebook.com/millerspotlight

www.facebook.com/GaryDowntownEmersonSpotlight

www.facebook.com/griffithspotlight

www.facebook.com/HobartINSpotlight

WE ARE CELEBRATING VIBRANT CULTURES

DOMAIN 9: ARTS & CULTURE

Sustainable and healthy communities celebrate and integrate culture in the creation of vibrant places built upon local assets. The availability of arts and cultural resources enriches lives through leisure activities, recreation and opportunities for self-expression. The integration of diverse cultures in placemaking nurtures community attachments and investment, increases civic engagement and promotes safe and resilient neighborhoods. Culturally-based economic development further allows communities to distinguish themselves and draw visitors from across the globe.

Placemaking really thrives when anchored by arts and culture. Artists and creatives often serve as the catalysts for reinvigorating abandoned or distressed locales. They generate the type of vibe and activities, which draw in visitors who are looking for unique experiences. A burgeoning creative sector also bolsters job creation, entrepreneurialism and community attachment to place.

Across the region, several communities are embracing their distinction by focusing on arts and culture in community and economic development arenas. Cultural districts, cultural programming, artist-based housing development and grassroots partnerships represent some of the myriad of placemaking activities underway. For instance, the Miller Beach Arts & Creative District along Lake Street in Gary has become a vibrant cultural destination and catalyst for arts-based community transformation. The Uptown Arts District in Michigan City represents arts-based economic development. The revitalized downtown offers new shops, farmers market, artist lofts, entertainment and small business incubation. The Valparaiso Creative District intends being a cultural hub for creative entrepreneurs, museums, theatre, the arts and community programming at its signature venues. In downtown Gary, Chicago artist Theaster Gates leads the Art House on Fifth Avenue, a social kitchen funded by Knight Foundation and Bloomberg. Additionally, local breweries represent another major wave of ingenuity and creativity taking place in the region. Over 21 craft brewers participate in the South Shore Brewery Trail organized by the South Shore Visitors Association and Brewers Guild of Indiana. These examples represent a few of the numerous high profile and grassroots efforts for celebrating vibrant cultures.

The 2012 Indicators Report lauded the artistic, cultural and natural amenities of the region and encouraged broader marketing of these assets. Regionally-focused tourism authorities in partnership with local communities work closely in promoting all there is to do and what is happening in the region. The visibility of Northwest Indiana in the Midwest has risen and regional tourism is poised for continued growth.

In 2016 the U.S. National Park Service celebrates its centennial at the same time the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore rings in its 50th year. Each year, over 3 million visitors enjoy Duneland's sandy beaches and rare ecosystem, while residents seek even more public access to Lake Michigan. Beyond the beach, communities offer their distinct charm to residents and visitors interested in entertainment, recreational, shopping, dining and lodging. The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, in

partnership with the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority and the Indiana Lake Michigan Coastal Program, recently updated the lakeshore reinvestment strategy for the Marquette Plan to include a cultural layer highlighting historic preservation sites and culturally-significant points of interest.

Not only is Northwest Indiana partnering more strongly within the region, its collaborative nature extends to Illinois. The Calumet Heritage Partnership represents a bi-state initiative to celebrate, preserve, protect and reclaim the natural, historical, cultural and recreational heritage of the Calumet region. This dynamic partnership seeks to create a national heritage area based on the interconnectedness of this nationally important landscape and its potential for community revitalization.

Overall Rating: Improving

Leading Indicators	Trend
Indiana Arts Commission Funding	Improving
Economic Impact of Tourism, Travel Industry	Improving
Charitable Giving	Needs Improvement
Charitable Activities	Improving
Nonprofit Revenues & Assets	Improving
Registered Nonprofits	Needs Improvement

Region in Motion

- Funding to the arts was up overall, but down following the recession. Between 2000 and 2014, Indiana Arts Commission funding to Northwest Indiana, through the South Shore Arts, increased \$142,647 to \$187,679 or 12 percent. The number of grants awarded increased from 21 in 2001 to 34 in 2014, but the average grant amount decreased by 2 percent.
- In 2009, the Indiana Arts Commission reported Northwest Indiana had 1,001 arts-related businesses and 5,248 workers employed in creative sector with the arts. In 2015, the number of creative sector businesses had increased to 1,139 businesses.
- Northwest Indiana draws millions of tourists from across the globe annually. The average visitor stayed an average of 2.4 days and typically traveled in a party of 3.7 people.
- The most popular attractions continued to be the four casinos, Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, Indiana Dunes State Park, Lighthouse Place Outlets, Albanese Candy Factory, restaurants, sports events and recreational facilities such as Deep River Water Park, Zao Island and Washington Park Zoo.
- According to data from 2013 and 2014, Northwest Indiana’s tourism and travel industry provided 23,083 jobs and \$213 million in wages per year. Taxes generated through income and sales taxes connected to tourism and travel totaled \$300.5 million per year.
- Visitors spent over \$1.8 billion in the region per year. Lake County benefited the most from the tourism industry with \$795.3 million in spending in 2014 to generate 12,225 direct jobs. In 2013, Porter County saw \$386.6 million in revenue to generate 4,962 jobs. In La Porte County, \$619.2 million in tourism and travel revenue in 2014 generated 5,896 jobs.

- Charitable giving has decreased nationally following the recession. Regionally, residents donated just under \$285.7 million in personal income to charity organizations annually as of 2012. The average annual total charitable donation in the region, including donations to churches, was \$2,834 or about 2.5 percent of the region's median income, down slightly from 3.6 percent in 2008.
- Based on 2013 data human services, health and education remain the focus of more nonprofit activity in Northwest Indiana than the arts, environment, international affairs or civil rights.
- In 2014, there were 3,122 registered nonprofit organizations in Northwest Indiana, representing 9 percent of Indiana's nonprofit sector. The number of nonprofits was up 2 percent from 3,074 in 2000, but down from a peak of 3,626 in 2010.
- Total revenues and total assets of Northwest Indiana nonprofit organizations rose between 2000 and 2014. Revenues reached just under \$3 billion in 2014, an increase of 95 percent from \$1.5 billion in 2000. Assets grew to \$5.6 billion in 2014, an increase of 89 percent from \$2.9 billion in 2000.

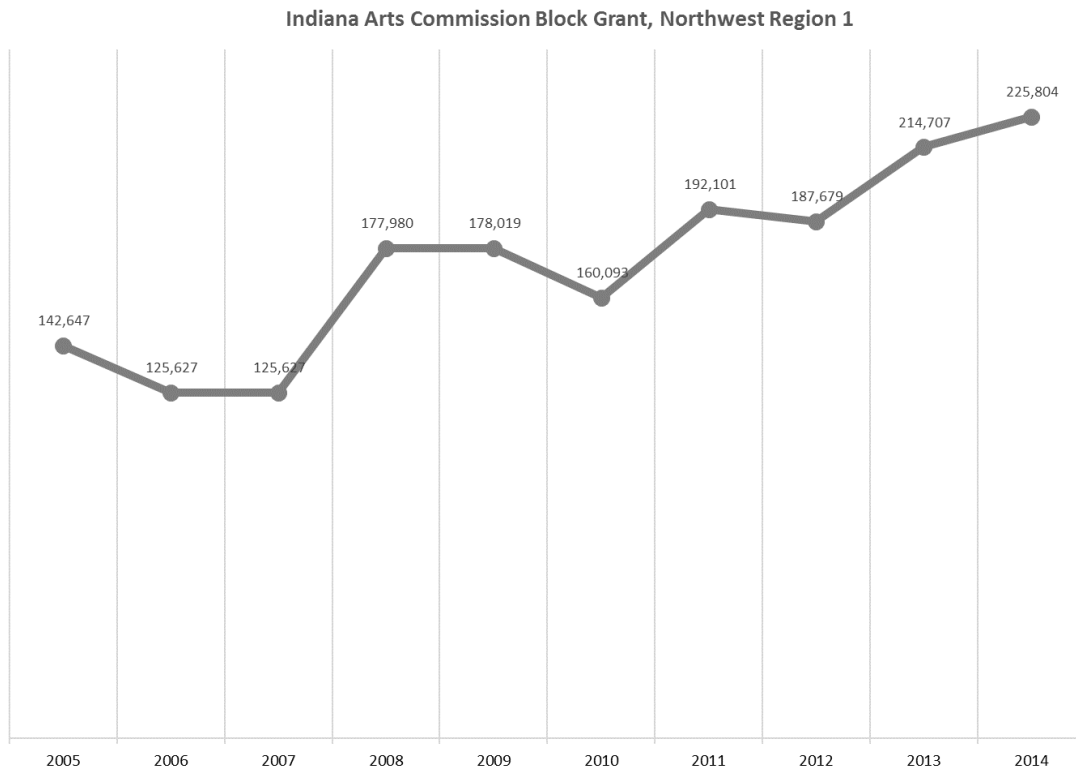
Indiana Arts Commission Funding Trend: Improving

From 2000 and 2014, Indiana Arts Commission funding to Northwest Indiana, through the South Shore Arts, grew 12 percent from \$142,647 to \$187,679. The number of grants awarded increased from 21 in 2001 to 34 in 2014, while the average grant amount decreased 2 percent from \$6,793 to \$6,641.

According to South Shore Arts, its 31 grant recipients served 555,000 people in fiscal year 2014. Of that number, 3,806 artists and 99,453 youth directly participated in 7,151 activities and there were 79,227 arts education participants.

The Indiana Arts Commission found Northwest Indiana had 1,001 arts-related businesses and 5,248 workers employed in connection with the arts in 2009. By 2015 that figure had increased to 1,139 businesses but decreased to 4,691 workers, according to Americans for the Arts' 2015 Creative Industry study. In the three counties, the study found about 3 percent of businesses were related to the arts in 2015.

In Lake County, 699 arts-related businesses, representing 3.1 percent of all businesses and employing 3,336 people. In Porter County, there were 300 arts-related businesses, representing 3.4 percent of all businesses and employing 909 people. In La Porte County, there were 140 arts-related businesses, representing 2.5 percent of all businesses countywide and employing 446 people.



Source: Indiana Arts Commission

South Shore Arts, Average Grant Award



Source: Indiana Arts Commission

Economic Impact of Tourism & Travel Industry

Trend: Improving

Visitors to Northwest Indiana stayed an average of 2.4 days and typically traveled in party of 3.7 people, according to tourism data from 2012 and 2013. A majority of visitors surveyed in 2012 and 2013 came from the nearby states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio, but the region also saw visitors from Florida, Missouri, Wisconsin, New York, Texas, California, Florida, Canada and Germany.

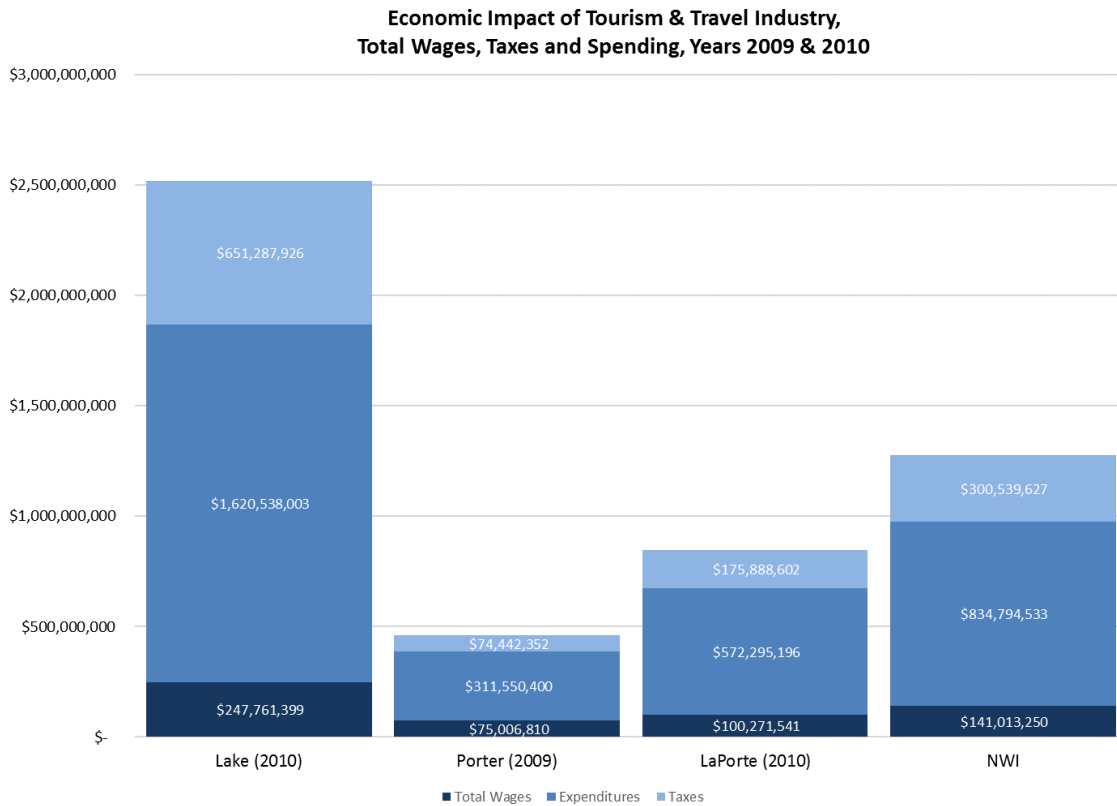
The most popular regional attractions were the four casinos, the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, Indiana Dunes State Park, Lighthouse Place Outlets, Albanese Candy Factory, restaurants, sports events and recreational facilities such as Deep River Water Park, Zao Island and Washington Park Zoo.

According to data from 2013 and 2014, Northwest Indiana’s tourism and travel industry provided 23,083 jobs and \$213 million in wages on average per year. This is up from 8,049 jobs and \$141 million in wages during 2009 and 2010. Taxes generated through income and sales taxes connected to tourism and travel totaled \$460 million per year in 2013 and 2014, up from \$300.5 million in 2009 and 2010.

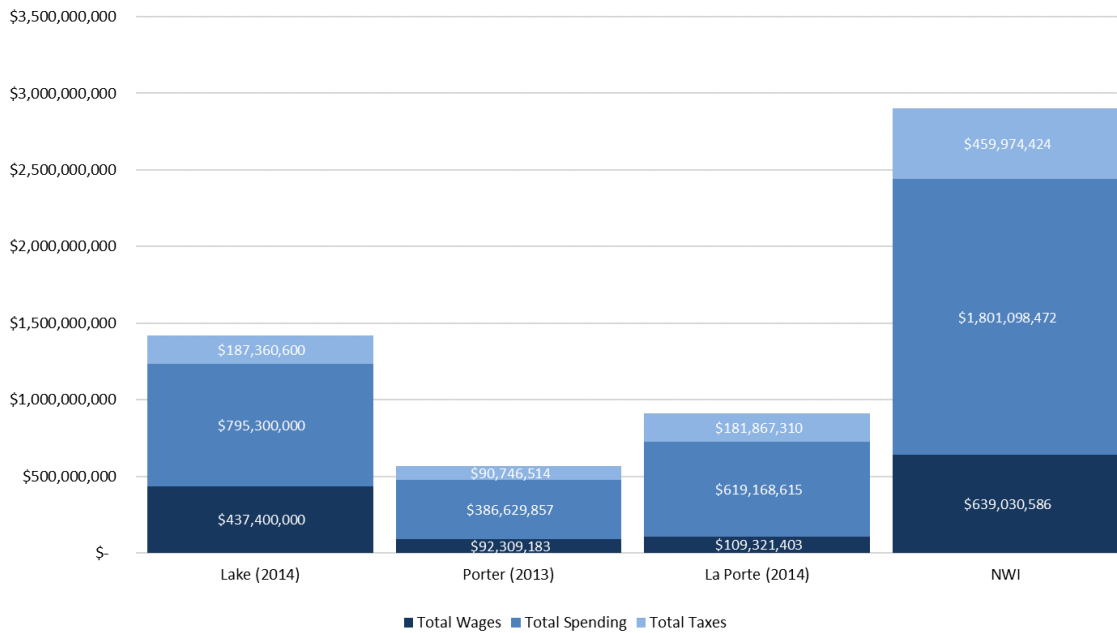
Visitors spent over \$1.8 billion in the region per year, 29 percent on attractions, 23 percent on food and beverages, 22 percent on shopping, 15 percent on transportation, 9 percent on lodging and 2 percent on

souvenirs. Average visitor spending per day by sector included \$112.78 for lodging, \$54.44 for attractions, \$66.06 for visiting friends and relatives, \$42.10 for camping and \$25.92 when just passing through.

The tourism and travel industry is largest in Lake County with \$795.3 million in spending in 2014 generating 12,225 direct jobs, \$437.4 million in wages and \$187.4 million in taxes. Porter County had \$386.6 million in revenue to generate 4,962 jobs, \$92.3 million in wages and \$90.7 million in taxes in 2013. In La Porte County, \$619.2 million in tourism and travel revenue in 2014 generated 5,896 jobs, \$109.3 million in wages and \$181.9 million in taxes in 2014.



**Economic Impact of Tourism & Travel Industry,
Total Wages, Taxes and Spending, Years 2013 & 2014**



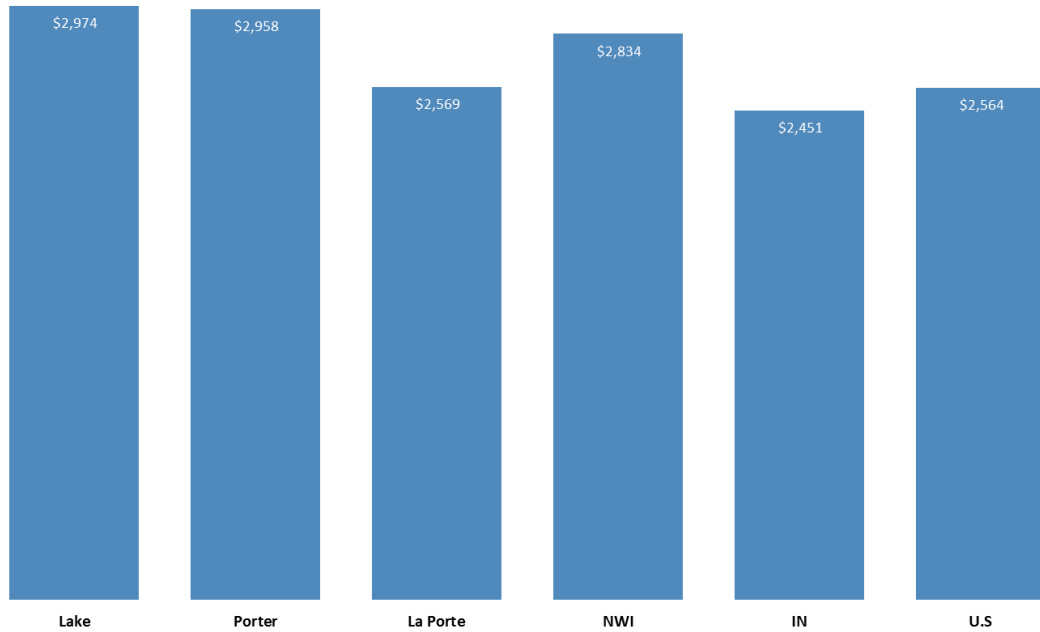
Source: County Rankings & Roadmaps

Charitable Giving Trend: Needs Improvement

Northwest Indiana residents gave just under \$285.7 million in annual personal income to charity organizations as of 2012. The average annual total charitable donation in the region, including donations to churches, was \$2,834 or about 2.5 percent of the region's median income of \$52,406. This is down from 3.6 percent in 2008. Regional giving is slightly below the state average of 3.34 percent. Per the National Center for Charitable Statistics, the national average for giving was 2.9 percent of adjusted gross income for taxable returns. The decrease in charitable giving in Northwest Indiana reflects national giving patterns. Following the recession, charitable giving as a percentage of income has decreased in most places.

Lake County residents gave \$180 million in 2012; their average contribution of \$2,974 was about 2.79 percent of the county's median income of \$48,120. Porter County residents donated \$77.15 million; their average donation of \$2,958 was 2.46 percent of the median income of \$63,050. In La Porte County, residents donated \$28.5 million; their average donation of \$2,569 was 2.51 percent of the county's median income of \$2,834.

Median Contributions of Charitable Giving, 2012



Source: Chronicle of Philanthropy

Nonprofit Public Charities Activities

Trend: Improving

Data from 2013 on nonprofit public charitable activities per 10,000 people provide an overview of which causes received philanthropic support. In Northwest Indiana human services, education and health remain the focus of more nonprofit activity than the arts, environment, international affairs or civil rights.

There were 3.71 human services organizations per 10,000 people in the region on average. Human services organizations raised private contributions and government funding of \$143 per 10,000 people, down slightly from \$154 in 2010. Health activities in the region received \$111 on average, up from \$93 in 2010. Funding for education activities increased to \$66 on average, up from \$56 in 2010.

Funding for arts still lags, but has increased slightly from \$6 in 2010 to \$7 in 2013. Environmental organizations received \$20 in 2013, up from \$12 in 2010.

La Porte County nonprofits experienced some the biggest funding increases in the region. Funding for education activities increased from \$1 per 10,000 people in 2000 to \$67 in 2013. Funding for environment activities increased from \$0 per 10,000 in 2010 to \$17 in 2013. Funding for health activities increased to \$63 on average, up from \$37 in 2010.

Nonprofit Public Charities Activities, Dollars per 10,000 People, 2013

Arts					Human Services				
	Lake	Porter	La Porte	NWI		Lake	Porter	La Porte	NWI
Number of Organizations	0.53	0.56	1.27	0.79	Number of Organizations	3.38	4.31	3.45	3.71
Private Contributions & Govt Grants	\$ 9	\$ 3	\$ 10	\$ 7	Private Contributions & Govt Grants	\$ 118	\$ 201	\$ 111	\$ 143
Total Revenue	\$ 20	\$ 7	\$ 16	\$ 14	Total Revenue	\$ 257	\$ 436	\$ 213	\$ 302
Total Expenses	\$ 24	\$ 6	\$ 15	\$ 15	Total Expenses	\$ 240	\$ 411	\$ 204	\$ 285
Total Assets	\$ 29	\$ 11	\$ 58	\$ 33	Total Assets	\$ 300	\$ 672	\$ 270	\$ 414
Education					International				
	Lake	Porter	La Porte	NWI		Lake	Porter	La Porte	NWI
Number of Organizations	1.47	1.37	1.09	1.31	Number of Organizations	0.16	0.31	0.09	0.19
Private Contributions & Govt Grants	\$ 81	\$ 50	\$ 67	\$ 66	Private Contributions & Govt Grants	\$ 1	\$ 66	\$ 3	\$ 23
Total Revenue	\$ 180	\$ 962	\$ 135	\$ 426	Total Revenue	\$ 1	\$ 66	\$ 3	\$ 23
Total Expenses	\$ 175	\$ 1,096	\$ 114	\$ 462	Total Expenses	\$ 2	\$ 64	\$ 3	\$ 23
Total Assets	\$ 359	\$ 3,175	\$ 193	\$ 1,242	Total Assets	\$ 1	\$ 66	\$ -	\$ 22
Environment					Civil Rights				
	Lake	Porter	La Porte	NWI		Lake	Porter	La Porte	NWI
Number of Organizations	0.41	0.50	0.91	0.61	Number of Organizations	0.06	0.12	-	0.06
Private Contributions & Govt Grants	\$ 23	\$ 19	\$ 17	\$ 20	Private Contributions & Govt Grants	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Revenue	\$ 27	\$ 24	\$ 25	\$ 25	Total Revenue	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Expenses	\$ 7	\$ 21	\$ 20	\$ 16	Total Expenses	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Assets	\$ 32	\$ 99	\$ 48	\$ 60	Total Assets	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Health					Other				
	Lake	Porter	La Porte	NWI		Lake	Porter	La Porte	NWI
Number of Organizations	1.02	1.00	1.18	1.07	Number of Organizations	1.49	1.69	1.82	1.67
Private Contributions & Govt Grants	\$ 161	\$ 110	\$ 63	\$ 111	Private Contributions & Govt Grants	\$ 102	\$ 64	\$ 56	\$ 74
Total Revenue	\$ 3,137	\$ 556	\$ 2,521	\$ 2,071	Total Revenue	\$ 310	\$ 99	\$ 103	\$ 171
Total Expenses	\$ 2,977	\$ 510	\$ 2,403	\$ 1,963	Total Expenses	\$ 316	\$ 70	\$ 64	\$ 150
Total Assets	\$ 2,675	\$ 425	\$ 2,492	\$ 1,864	Total Assets	\$ 1,501	\$ 362	\$ 490	\$ 784

Source: National Center for Charitable Statistics

Total revenues & Total Assets of Registered Nonprofit Organizations

Trend: Improving

Total revenues and total assets of nonprofit organizations in Northwest Indiana both rose significantly between 2000 and 2014. Total revenues reached just under \$3 billion in 2014, an increase of 95 percent from \$1.5 billion in 2000. Total assets grew to \$5.6 billion in 2014, an increase of 89 percent from \$2.9 million in 2000.

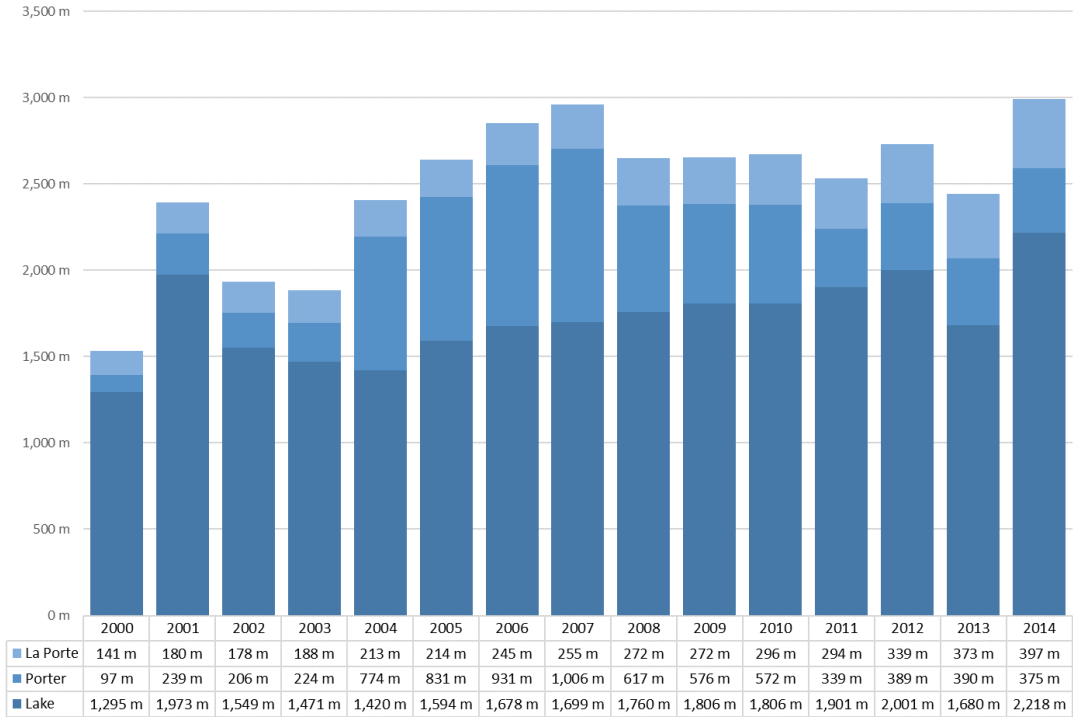
The greatest increase was in Porter County, where total nonprofit revenue increased 287 percent, from \$97 million in 2000 to \$375 million in 2014. Although an overall increase, revenue in Porter County steadily decreased from a peak of \$1 billion in 2007. Their total assets rose 17 percent from \$614 million to \$720 million.

Revenue rose 71 percent in Lake County from \$1.2 billion in 2000 to \$2.2 billion in 2014. Total assets rose 85 percent from \$2 billion to \$3.7 billion.

In La Porte County, total nonprofit revenue was \$397 million in 2014, a 182 percent increase over the \$141 million raised in 2000. Total nonprofit assets reached \$1.1 billion in 2014, a 247 percent increase from \$331 million in 2000.

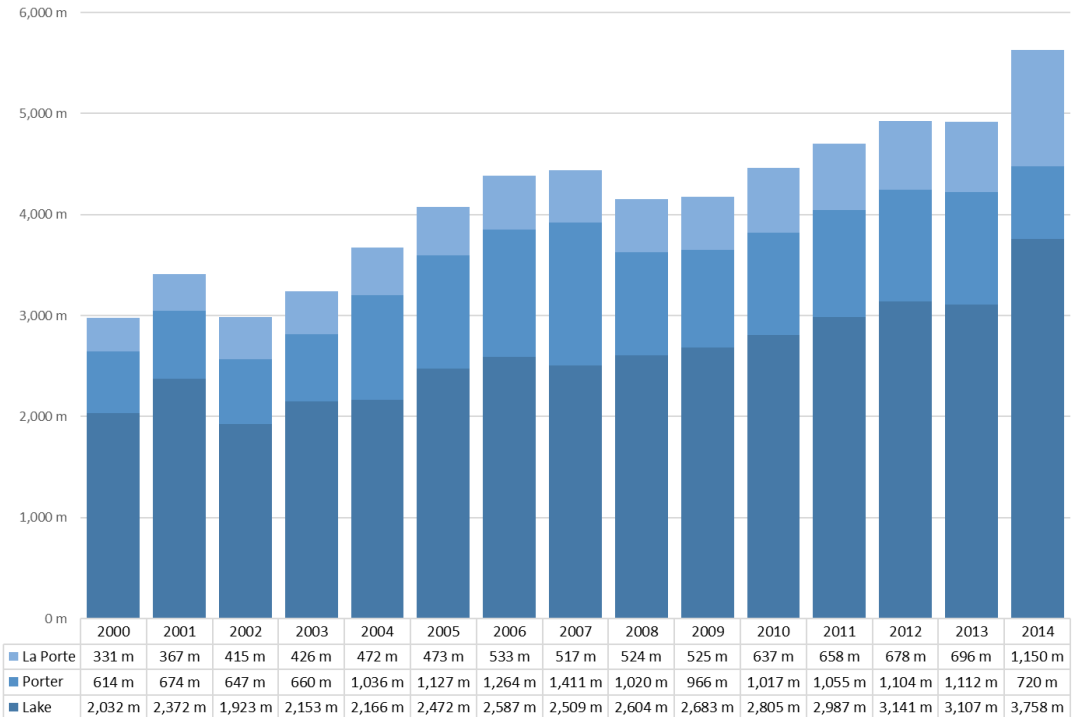
By comparison, Indiana's nonprofit sector total revenues increased 136 percent from \$18 billion in 2000 to 42.6 billion in 2014. Total nonprofit assets rose 87 percent to \$106.4 billion in 2014 from \$56.8 billion in 2000.

Total Nonprofit Revenue Reported on Form 990 (in Millions)



Source: National Center for Charitable Statistics

Total Nonprofit Assets Reported on Form 990 (in Millions)



Source: National Center for Charitable Statistics

Registered Nonprofits Organizations by Number and Assets Size

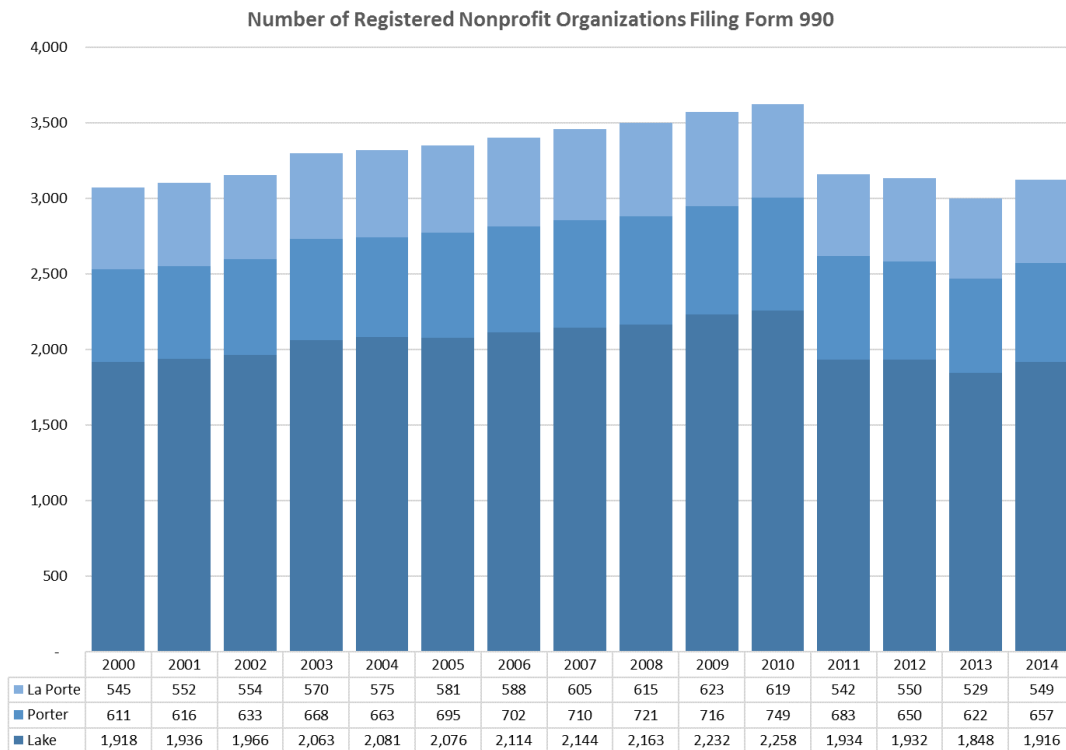
Trend: Needs Improvement

In 2014, there were 3,122 registered nonprofit organizations in Northwest Indiana, 9 percent of Indiana’s nonprofit sector. The number of nonprofits was up 2 percent from 3,074 in 2000, but down from a peak of 3,626 in 2010. Of the registered nonprofits, 1,136 filed the federal tax form 990 in 2014, compared to 1,150 that filed in 2000, a decrease of 1 percent.

In Lake County, the number of registered nonprofits decreased by .1 percent from 1,918 in 2000 and 1,916 in 2014. This is down from a peak of 2,358 in 2010. Median revenue in 2014 was \$130,571. In Porter County, the number of nonprofits grew 8 percent from 611 in 2000 to 657 in 2014, down from a peak of 749 in 2010. The median revenue generated in 2014 was \$137,380. In La Porte County, the number of nonprofits rose 1 percent from 545 to 549, down from a peak of 623 in 2009. The median revenue generated in 2014 was \$147,650.

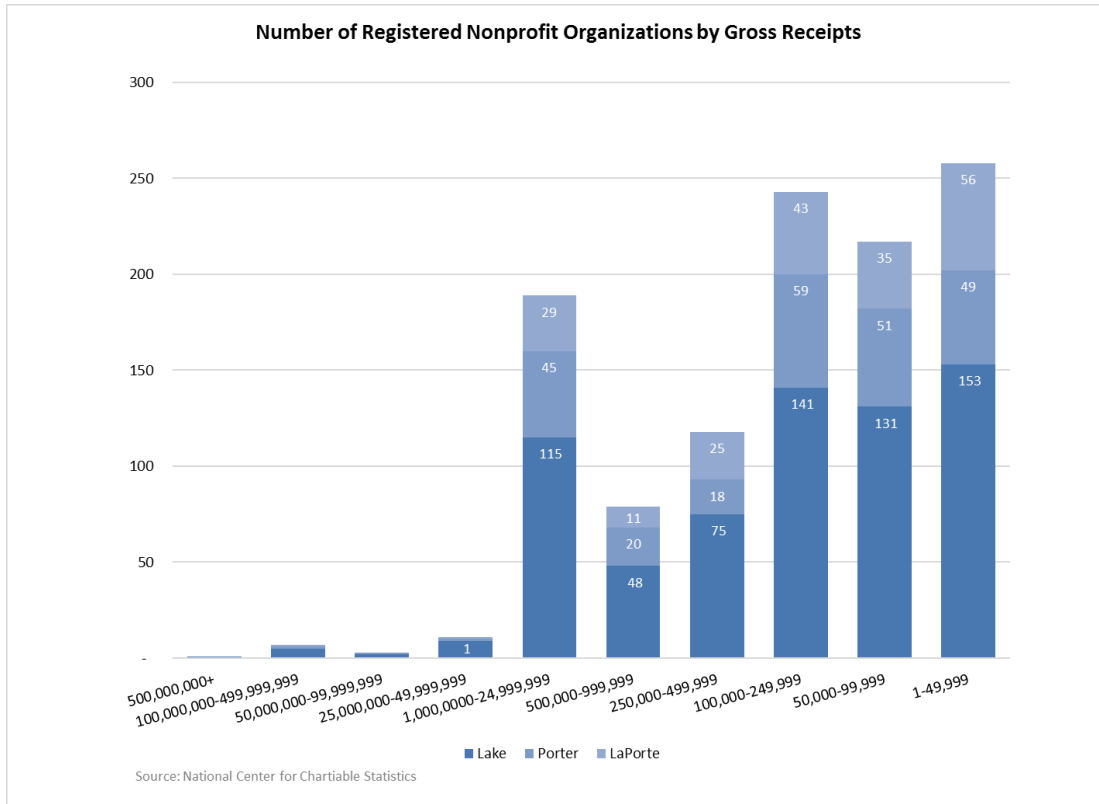
In 2014, 3.1 million registered Northwest Indiana nonprofits earned median revenues of \$138,534. Of Northwest Indiana nonprofits, 49 percent had no gross receipts. On average, 17 percent of nonprofit entities had revenues of \$1 million or more, 20 percent had between \$100,000 and \$1 million and 63 percent had less than \$100,000. These nonprofits held median assets of \$158,165.

In 2014, 12 percent of Northwest Indiana nonprofits were valued at \$1 million or more, 16 percent at between \$100,000 and \$1 million and 21 percent at less than \$100,000. One half of registered nonprofits claimed no assets. In Lake County, the median asset value was \$143,922. Porter County



Source: National Center for Charitable Statistics

nonprofits had a median asset value of \$181,771. In La Porte County, the median asset value was \$148,803.



Regional Action Measures

Arts and culture outperform every other indicator contained in this report, since its inception in 2000. Vibrant cultures nourish peoples' sense of attachment to place. Cultural and recreational amenities, staycations and local events ritualize human interactions which nourish connections to neighbors, strangers and the spaces around us. Perhaps Northwest Indiana's only weakness is not marketing its strengths and opportunities more often.

Further development opportunities may include:

- Adopting a strategic plan to protect, enhance and expand the community's arts and cultural resources and strengthen creative industries.
- Establishing arts or cultural districts or overlay zoning to encourage businesses in creative industries to cluster together and integrate with surrounding neighborhood.
- Collaborating with private, nonprofit or regional organizations to increase access to and participation in the arts.
- Collaborating with local nonprofit or for-profit entities to support local events, recognition programs and tourism efforts celebrating and leveraging the economic value of local historical resources.
- Establishing an advisory committee to provide an ongoing consultation to local departments and agencies responsible for providing priority human services.

In 2015, the Region Proud video unleashed the demand for more storytelling and celebration about who we are and where we are from. Participants of the One Region Regional Priorities Summit expressed rebranding of regional identity as one of the top three goals for Northwest Indiana. The participants noted the words we use matter, both print and social media should be utilized and marketing efforts should engage a professional firm in creating a common message. According to recent studies led by the three United Ways, residents support more meaningful, fun and low cost activities for youth and families. Residents remain concerned youth are too often left out of the development equation.

A REGIONAL SUCCESS STORY

STRENGTHENING SHARED ETHICS IN PUBLIC SERVICE

The Shared Ethics Advisory Commission (SEAC) is in a league of its own. This voluntary organization provides ethics training to heighten awareness of ethical issues within local government and assist public employees with the practical tools to make ethical decisions.

“We know of no other organization that is focused on ethics training for public employees on a multi-jurisdictional basis,” said President Calvin Bellamy. “SEAC is a group of the willing. There is no legal mandate requiring participation.”

Of the 44 local units of governments, SEAC members include: the cities of Crown Point, East Chicago, Gary, Hobart, Lake Station, Portage, Valparaiso and Whiting; the Towns of Burns Harbor, Cedar Lake, Chesterton, Dyer, Hebron, Highland, Lowell, Merrillville, Munster, Ogden Dunes, Schererville and Westville as well as Lake, La Porte and Porter counties.

The high value placed on ethics training by the region’s public employees can be felt through these numbers. The positive impact of the Commission also has lasting effects locally, leaders said.

Also unique to the Commission is its Ethics Summit, SEAC’s annual call to local governments and the general public to gather for a morning of ethics presentations — all focused on practical ethics challenges public employees could experience in their daily work. SEAC arranges attendees from urban, rural, wealthy and less wealthy communities seated together for the opportunity to appreciate other perspectives.

Attracting 200 to 300 people from all parts of Northwest Indiana, summits include a keynote address and participants engage in table discussions of practical case studies. The entire audience is equipped with electronic voting devices to reach a consensus decision on the most important ethics issues in each case. Bellamy said, “No other similar event is held in Northwest Indiana. Participants are not merely passive listeners. Now everyone has a chance to express his or her view and ultimately to vote on each of the issues.”



“WE BELIEVE THAT EMPLOYEES TRAINED ON ETHICAL DECISION MAKING ARE ABLE TO SERVE THE PUBLIC IN A MORE TRANSPARENT AND SATISFACTORY MANNER AND PERHAPS OVER TIME ENHANCE THE REPUTATION OF THEIR COMMUNITIES AND NORTHWEST INDIANA AS A WHOLE.

WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT ETHICS TRAINING, AND ULTIMATELY A LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICS CULTURE, WILL ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN NORTHWEST INDIANA.”

– Calvin Bellamy, SEAC

For the past six years, summits have been held. “We know of no other event that affords this opportunity.” This event is important to Northwest Indiana because the general public as well as elected officials and public officials come together in common discussion about ethics in government,” Bellamy said.

He continued, “Our hope for the Ethics Summit is to draw a cross section of Northwest Indiana citizens and leaders to a learning experience, to help attendees understand the many subtleties

of ethical challenges, to give participants the opportunity to express their feelings about local government ethics and for people from all parts of NWI to come to know each other a little bit better.”

The collaborative effort to form SEAC began in November 1995 when three communities — Munster, Highland and Crown Point — came together to form an interlocal agreement to provide ethics training for their employees. Each community appointed a private citizen to serve on SEAC and, further, those volunteers then selected three at-large commission members.

Employee trainers who have attended half-day training sessions, conducted by professional trainers retained by SEAC, perform actual training in each community. To date, over 60 public employees are certified as SEAC trainers. Training is also offered for private citizens who provide a vital service through membership on their community’s boards and commissions.

Commission meetings occur every other month in donated space at the Construction Advancement Foundation in Portage. Employee training — the heart of SEAC’s mission — occurs in town halls, public works garages or other venues. Board and Commission training is held as evening dinner meetings out of respect for the schedules of the private citizens who are serving their communities in this manner.

Additionally, all of SEAC’s activities are funded by modest annual dues from member communities.

SEAC leaders note its indispensable partners, which are the leadership teams in the member communities. These mayors, managers and council presidents release employee-trainers from their normal duties to be trained by SEAC to schedule training sessions for employees and provide strong support and leadership examples for their government unit’s employees.

SEAC urges continual training, similar to safety training and other important workplace issues. “Realize that ethics training is not a once-and-done proposition,” Bellamy said. “We encourage member communities to repeat and reinforce ethics training on a regular schedule.”

Is your local government committed to ethics? Individual citizens may urge membership for those government units that have not yet joined and encourage continued support for current members.

While independent from SEAC, citizens may consider forming “watchdog” groups through the region to monitor local government performance.

WE ARE EMPOWERING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

DOMAIN 10: GOVERNMENT

Vibrant and healthy communities encourage and celebrate active and equitable citizen participation in local decision making. They are places where civil public discourse is not only valued, but practiced. Exercising the right to vote allows citizens to directly engage in local decision making by determining the candidates who best represent the community. The outcome of an electoral process with high community engagement contributes to better decision-making and policy implementation, which in turn contributes to a more just allocation of resources. Equitable access to community resources within and between neighborhoods and populations also contributes to quality of place.

Sustainable communities also collaborate regionally to provide effective and efficient services, understanding the value of working together. The traditional approach to government spending addresses economic development, public safety, infrastructure and other public functions in silos. Through placemaking, communities practice an integrative approach using multifaceted strategies for creating a sense of place, knowing investments in one area are interwoven with future spending in another locale.

The Thriving Communities, Thriving State 2016 report by the Indiana University Public Policy Institute contextualized urban, mid-sized and rural communities from a place-based perspective so policymakers could better understand the unique dimensions and similarities of community types across the state.³¹ The report stressed, “For a thriving Indiana, we must embrace the needs of individual communities, the interlocking roles our communities play within regions and the importance of our communities’ collective success within and across regions. In short, we’re all in this together. Our communities are driving the economic engine. As they go, so goes Indiana.”

According to the 2015 One Region Harris Poll, 86 percent of Northwest Indiana residents believe the region needs to work together to be able to compete in a global economy and get more accomplished.³² Sharing public services can be part of the solution, they say.

Northwest Indiana can attract more direct investments through more efficient and effective local government backed by engaged citizens. The state’s renewal of the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA) last year and the provision to replicate its structure through the Regional Cities program statewide are testimonies to the innovative capacity of government to collaborate on major investments that no one entity could do alone and earn solid returns. For example, the RDA partnership with the Northern Indiana Transportation Commuter Rail District is seeking funding for rail

³¹ Indiana University Public Policy Institute. “Thriving Communities, Thriving State,” March 2016.

³² Consumer Insights North America. “Northwest Indiana Poll,” www.oneregionwi.org accessed on June 5, 2015.

expansion and double-tracking projects to catalyze the future economies of several cities and towns, the region and state as a whole.

Still other regional collaborations are making positive impacts. The White House’s Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative in collaboration with the City of Gary represents a significant interagency partnership between federal and local agencies to better economic and community conditions through targeted resources and on the ground coordination. The Gary Northside District and the Downtown District are benefiting from planning, implementation and funding supported by a range of public, private and philanthropic partners. The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission continues evolving and allocating resources toward the implementation of the region’s 2040 vision, an award-winning and comprehensive plan for transportation, environmental and land use planning. The Northern Indiana Tourism Development Commission, representing seven counties across northern Indiana, contributes to economic growth through the development of visitor industry resources such as on-demand travel information and promotion of distinct visitor experiences based on travelers’ needs. These mentions are just a few examples of governmentally-led partnerships and innovative practices transforming the public sector.

The 2012 Indicators Report reflected on the long-standing issue of public corruption in Northwest Indiana. This elusive reality overshadows public confidence and redirects private investment elsewhere. Fortunately, the Share Ethics Advisory Commission serves as an advocate for good government and best practices. The Commission promotes, educates and trains government officials and their employees on ethics and ethical behaviors. To date, 23 out of 48 communities have adopted the Shared Code of Ethics and Values and approximately 1,285 public sector employees have undergone ethics training.

Active community participation builds upon high public confidence and greater civility. The non-partisan National Institute for Civil Discourse (NICD) established a Revive Civility campaign to improve civil discourse after the tragic shooting of former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords in Tucson, Arizona. NICD’s call to action led to the Gary Chamber of Commerce and The Times launching the “Community Civility Counts” initiative in 2015 as a regional effort to reduce disrespect and intolerance in public discourse. Supporters include area businesses, schools, governments, faith-based entities, media, organizations and residents who have joined together to promote respectful and courteous engagement in business, politics, education and personal lives.

Overall Rating: Improving

Leading Indicators	Trend
Net Assessed Valuation	Improving
Budget Appropriations	Improving
Expenditures Per Capita	Improving
Registered Voters	Improving
Voter Turnout	Improving
Ethics	Improving

Region in Motion

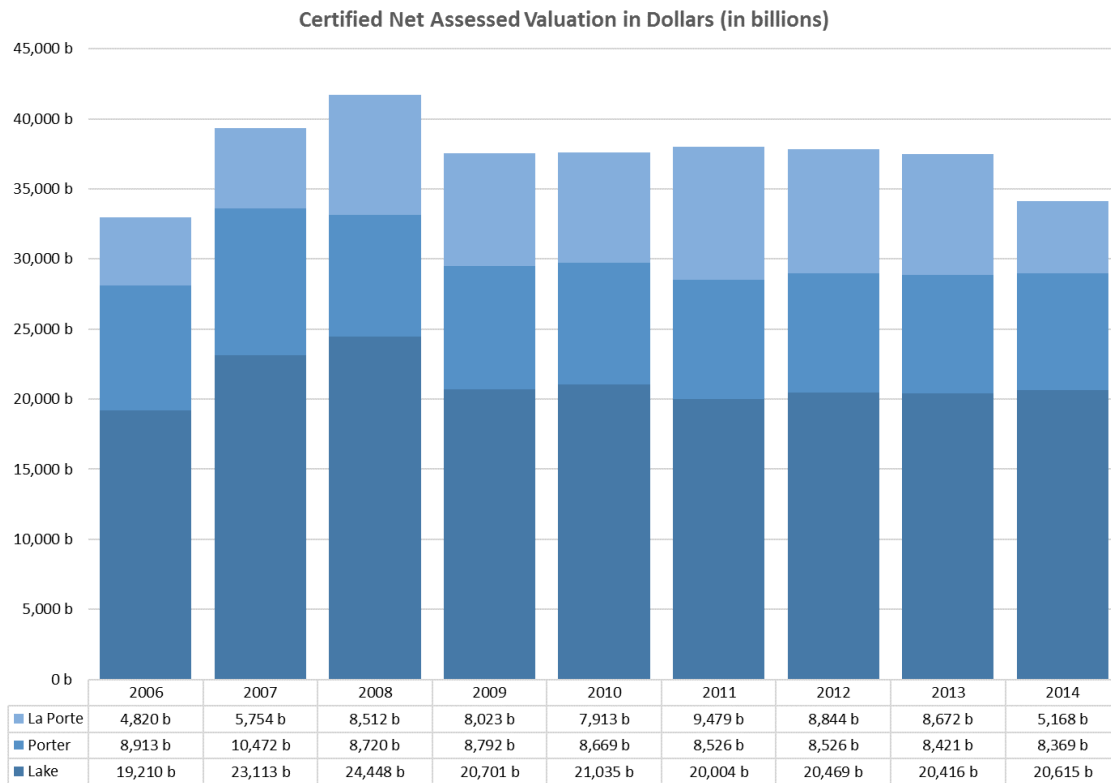
- The total net assessed valuation of property increased significantly between 2006 and 2014. In 2006, rates reflected statewide restructuring measures that changed the formulas for assessed valuation.
- The total net assessed valuation in Northwest Indiana rose an estimated \$1.2 billion, or 4 percent, between 2006 and 2014 from 18.0 billion to \$30.1 billion.
- In Lake County, net assessed value increased 7 percent from \$19.2 billion to \$20.6 billion. Net assessed valuation in Porter County dropped 6 percent from \$8.9 billion to \$8.3 billion. La Porte County's net assessed valuation grew 7 percent from \$4.8 billion in 2006 to \$5.2 billion in 2014.
- Budget appropriations by Northwest Indiana local governments rose 1 percent to \$2.06 billion in 2014.
- Total spending in Lake County decreased by 4 percent to \$1.36 billion in 2014. In Porter County, total spending rose 14 percent to \$408 million in 2014. In La Porte County, total spending rose 14 percent to \$285 million in 2014, but was down from a \$296 million peak in 2010.
- Government spending per capita by Northwest Indiana governments fluctuated significantly between 2006 and 2014, falling sharply after the imposition of tax caps in 2008 and dropping to its lowest in 2010.
- Overall, per capita government spending increased 19 percent on average from \$1,936 in 2006 to \$2,295 in 2014. In Lake County, local government spending per capita dropped 56 percent from \$3,206 in 2006 to \$1,398 per capita in 2014. In Porter County, per capita spending rose 4 percent from \$1,973 in 2006 to \$2,051 in 2014. Per capita spending in La Porte County rose a significant 490 percent from \$630 in 2006 to \$3,718 in 2014.
- When comparing presidential election years, voter registration for the general election increased slightly in the region. In 2000, there were 509,415 registered voters in Northwest Indiana. By 2012, that number had risen 5 percent to 534,731.
- Between 2000 and 2014, voter turnout during general election years in Northwest Indiana fluctuated significantly. As everywhere, turnout in both primaries and general elections was highest during years with a presidential election.
- Average voter turnout for general elections during presidential years was 61 percent in Northwest Indiana, 6 percentage points higher than the national average during the same time period.
- From 2009 – 2015, Northwest Indiana advanced its commitment to ethics. The number of governments that committed to the voluntary Shared Ethics Advisory Commission's membership requirements increased from three in 2005 to 23 in 2016.
- Between 2009 and 2015, trained government employees' awareness of the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission Ethics Code increased from 69 percent to 76 percent. Untrained employees' awareness of the ethics code increased from 36 percent to 45 percent.
- Awareness of the process for reporting ethics violations also increased during the same period. Between 2009 and 2015, trained government employees' awareness of the process for reporting ethics violations increased from 72 percent to 85 percent. Untrained employees' awareness of the reporting process increased from 26 percent to 45 percent.

Net Assessed Valuation

Trend: Improving

The total net assessed valuation of property increased significantly between 2006 and 2014. In 2006, rates reflected statewide restructuring measures that changed the formulas for assessed valuation. Assessments dipped following property tax caps of 2008 and stagnated from 2009 – 2012 as a result of the national recession and depressed real estate market. From 2012 – 2014, assessed values stabilized as the national and local economy began to recover.

The total net assessed valuation in Northwest Indiana rose an estimated \$1.2 billion, or 4 percent, between 2006 and 2014 from 18.0 billion to \$30.1 billion. In Lake County, net assessed value increased 7 percent from \$19.2 billion to \$20.6 billion. Net assessed valuation in Porter County dropped 6 percent from \$8.9 billion to \$8.3 billion. La Porte County’s net assessed valuation grew 7 percent from \$4.8 billion to \$5.2 billion in 2014.

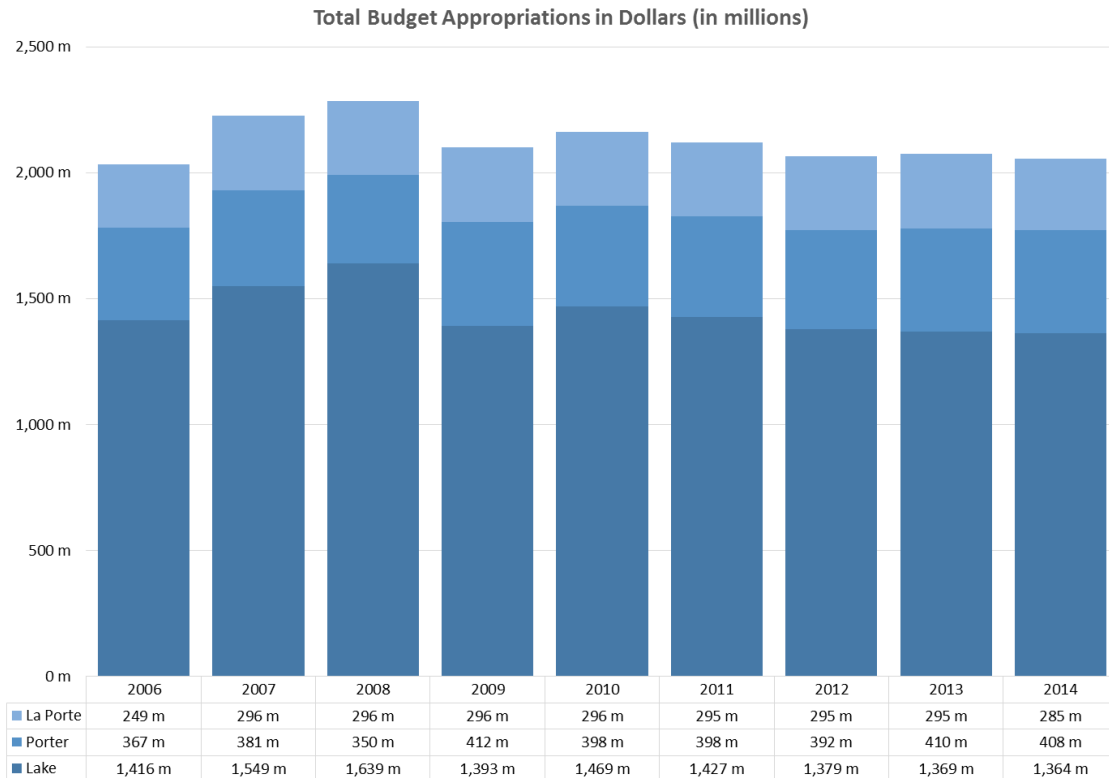


Source: Indiana Department of Local Government Finance

Budget Appropriations

Trend: Improving

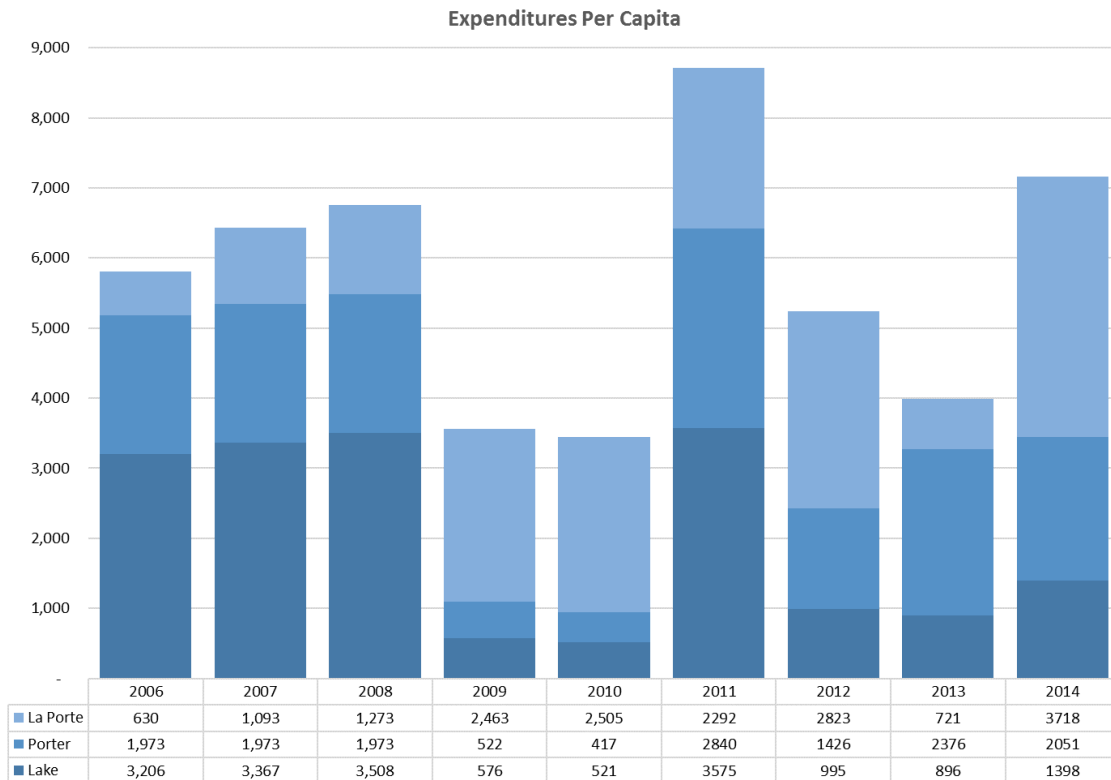
Total spending by Northwest Indiana local governments increase 1 percent from \$2.03 billion in 2006 to \$2.06 billion in 2014. Spending in Lake County decreased by 4 percent from \$1.4 billion to \$1.3 billion. That figure had peaked in 2008 at \$1.6 billion before falling as tax caps were imposed. In Porter County, total spending rose 11 percent from \$367 million in 2006 to \$408 million in 2014, an increase of \$154 million. In La Porte County, total spending by all local governments rose 14 percent from \$249 million in 2006 to \$285 million in 2014. This figure was down from a \$296 million peak in 2010.



Source: Indiana Department of Local Government Finance

Expenditures Per Capita **Trend: Improving**

Government spending per capita by Northwest Indiana governments fluctuated significantly between 2006 and 2014, falling sharply after the imposition of tax caps in 2008 and dropping to its lowest in 2010. Overall, per capita government spending increased 19 percent on average from \$1,936 in 2006 to \$2,295 in 2014. In Lake County, local government spending per capita dropped 56 percent from \$3,206 in 2006 to \$1,398 per capita in 2014. In Porter County, per capita spending rose 4 percent from \$1,973 in 2006 to \$2,051 in 2014. Per capita spending in La Porte County rose a significant 490 percent from \$630 in 2006 to \$3,718 in 2014.



Source: Indiana Department of Local Government Finance

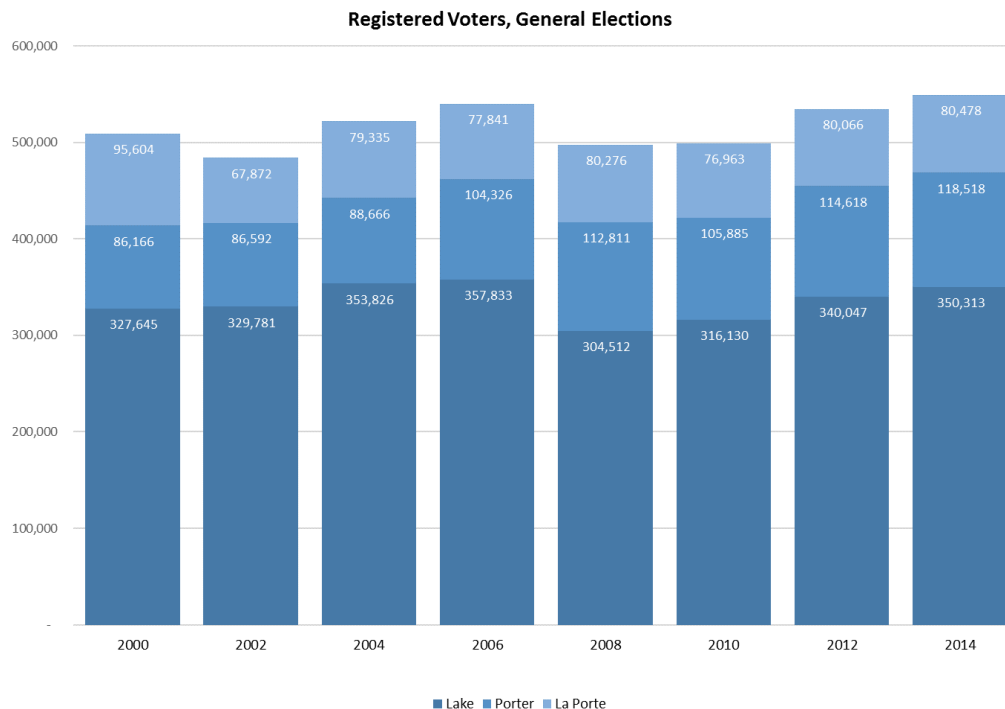
Registered Voters **Trend: Improving**

Between 2000 and 2014, the percentage of registered voters in Northwest Indiana fluctuated significantly. As everywhere, registration in both primaries and general elections was highest during years with a presidential election. However, voter registration in both general and primary elections increased slightly between 2000 and 2014.

General Elections

When comparing presidential election years, voter registration for the general election increased slightly in the region. In 2000, there were 509,415 registered voters in Northwest Indiana. By 2012, that number had risen 5 percent to 534,731. Lake County had 340,047 registered in 2012, an increase of 4 percent from 2000. Porter County voter registration increased 33 percent from 86,166 in 2000 to 114,618 in 2012. Voter registration in La Porte County dropped 16 percent from 95,604 in 2000 to 80,066 in 2012. The number of registered voters statewide grew 13 percent. In Indiana, there were 4 million registered voters in 2000 and just under 4.6 million in 2012.

When comparing non-presidential election years, voter registration for the general election actually increased more than during presidential election years. In 2002, there were 484,245 registered voters in Northwest Indiana. In 2014, that number had risen 13 percent to 549,309. Lake County registered voters increased by 6 percent from 329,781 in 2000 to 350,313 in 2014. Porter County voter registration climbed 37 percent from 86,592 in 2002 to 114,618 in 2014. Voter registration in La Porte County increased 19 percent from 67,872 in 2002 to 80,478 in 2014. In Indiana, there were 4 million registered voters in 2002 and just over 4.5 million in 2014.

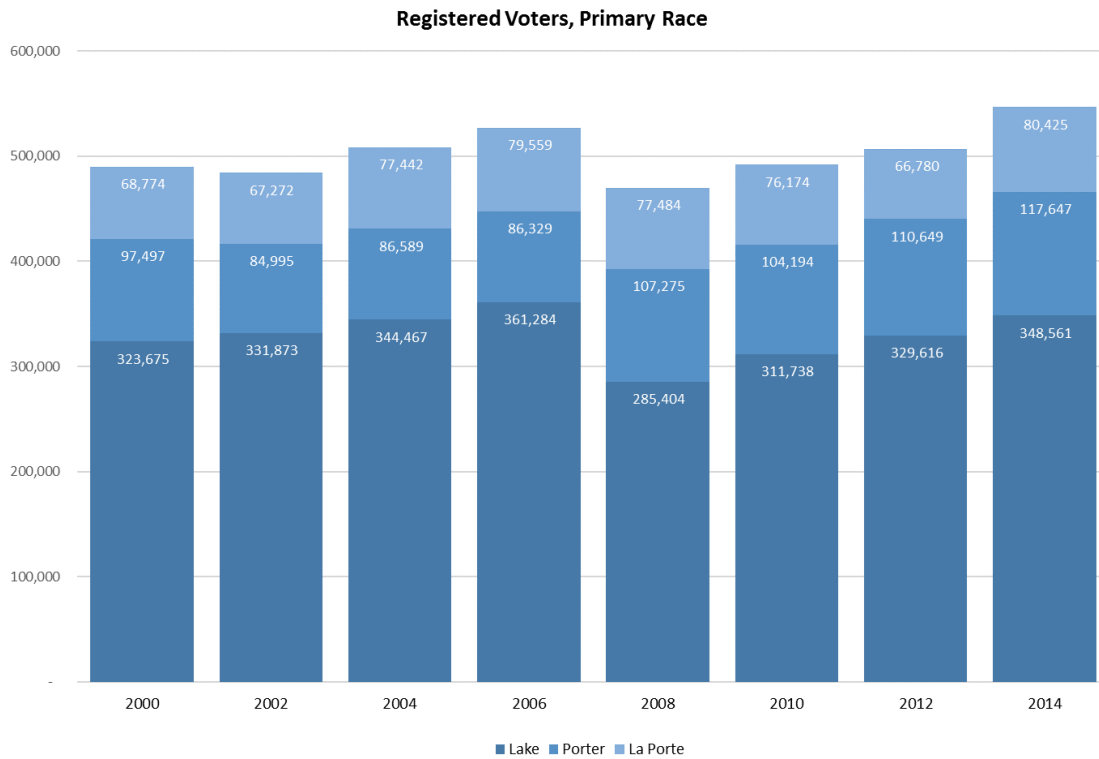


Source: Indiana Secretary of State

Primary Race

Voter registration in primary elections increased slightly between 2000 and 2014. For presidential election years, the total number of voters who were registered to vote in primaries in Northwest Indiana rose from 489,946 in 2000 and 507,045 in 2012. Primary voter registration for presidential election years rose 2 percent in Lake County from 323,675 in 2000 to 329,616 in 2012. Registration rose 13 percent in Porter County from 97,497 in 2000 to 110,649 in 2012. In La Porte County, primary voter registration fell by 3 percent from 68,774 in 2000 to 66,780 in 2012. The number of registered voters statewide grew 12 percent. In Indiana were 3.9 million registered voters in 2000 and 4.4 million in 2012.

For non-presidential election years, the overall increase in registered voters was more significant than for presidential election years. The total number of voters who were registered to vote in primaries in Northwest Indiana was 484,140 in 2002 and 546,633 in 2014. Primary voter registration in non-presidential election years increased 5 percent in Lake County from 331,873 in 2002 to 348,561 in 2014. Registration increased 38 percent in Porter County from 84,995 in 2002 to 117,647 in 2014. In La Porte County, primary voter registration in non-presidential election years increased by 20 percent from 67,272 in 2002 to 80,425 in 2014.



Source: Indiana Secretary of State

Voter Turnout

Trend: Improving

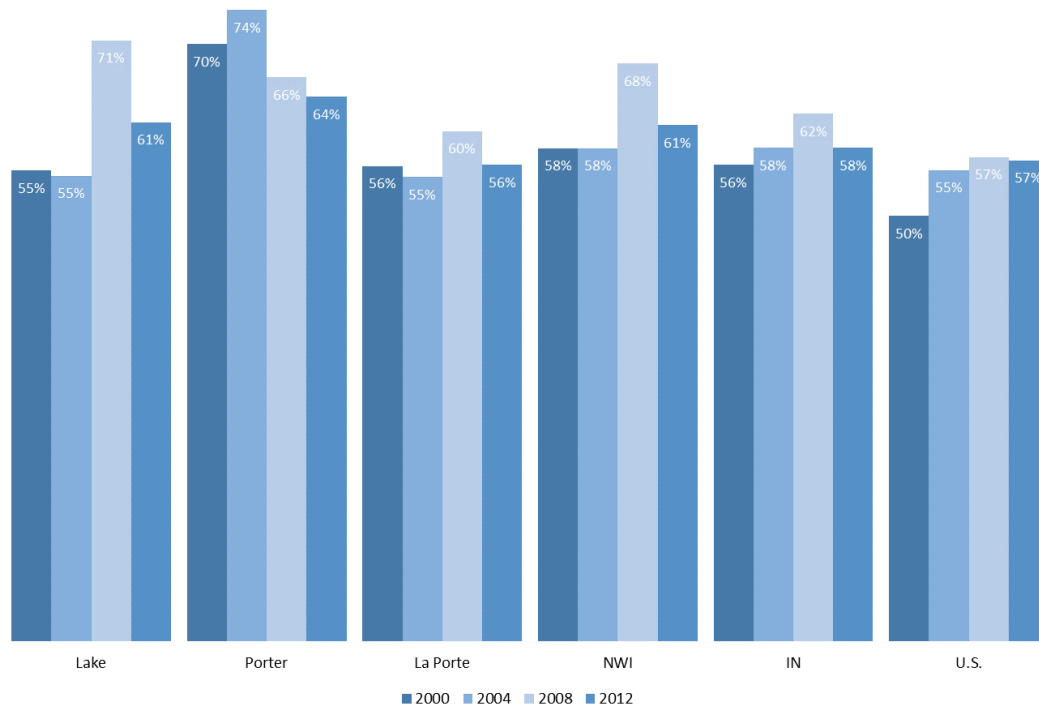
General Elections

Between 2000 and 2014, the percentage of registered voters who actually turned out to vote in Northwest Indiana fluctuated significantly. As everywhere, turnout in both primaries and general elections was highest during years with a presidential election.

General presidential elections saw an increase in voter turnout from 2000 to 2012. In the presidential year of 2000, turnout averaged 58 percent in the region, for a total turnout of 295,114 voters, compared to 56 percent in Indiana and 50 percent in the United States. Turnout increased in the presidential year of 2012 when 61 percent of Northwest Indiana, for a total of 324,305 voters, cast ballots in the general election, compared to 58 percent in Indiana and 57 percent in the nation. General election voter turnout in Lake County was 55 percent in 2000 and 61 percent in 2012. In Porter County, general election turnout was 70 percent in 2000 and 64 percent in 2012. La Porte County had 56 percent turnout in both 2000 and 2012.

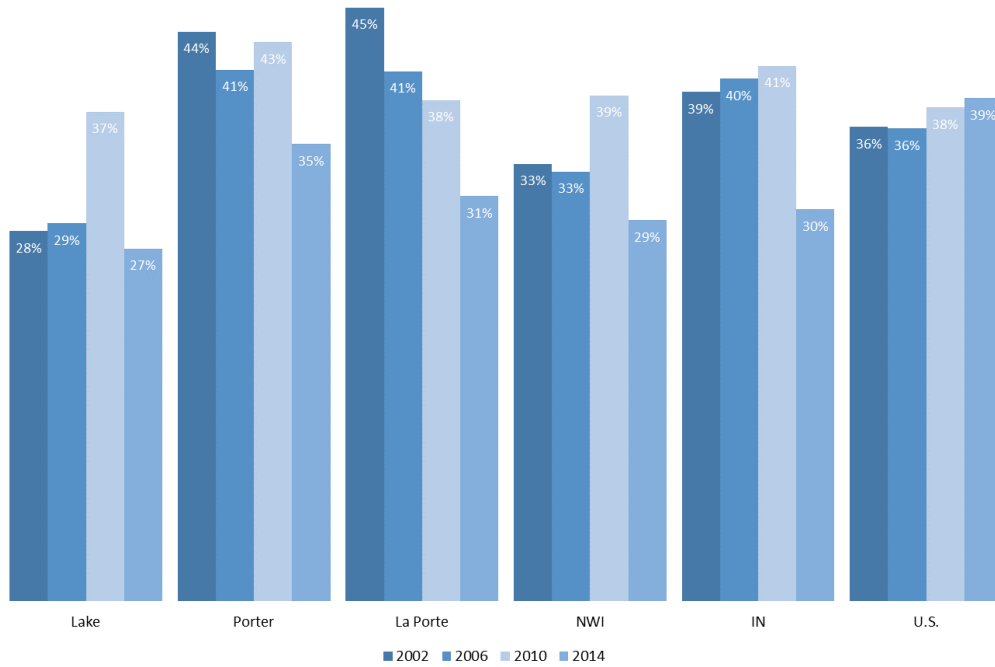
In 2014, a non-presidential year, general election turnout fell to 29 percent in Northwest Indiana with 160,169 voters casting ballots compared to 30 percent in Indiana and 39 percent in the United States. General election voter turnout in Lake County was 28 percent in 2002 and 27 percent in 2014. In Porter County, general election turnout was 44 percent in 2002 and 35 percent in 2014. La Porte County had 45 percent turnout in 2002 and 31 percent turnout in 2014. Indiana’s voter turnout rate was 39 percent in 2002 and 30 percent in 2014.

Voter Turnout, General Elections in Presidential Years



Source: Indiana Secretary of State

Voter Turnout, General Election in Non-Presidential Years

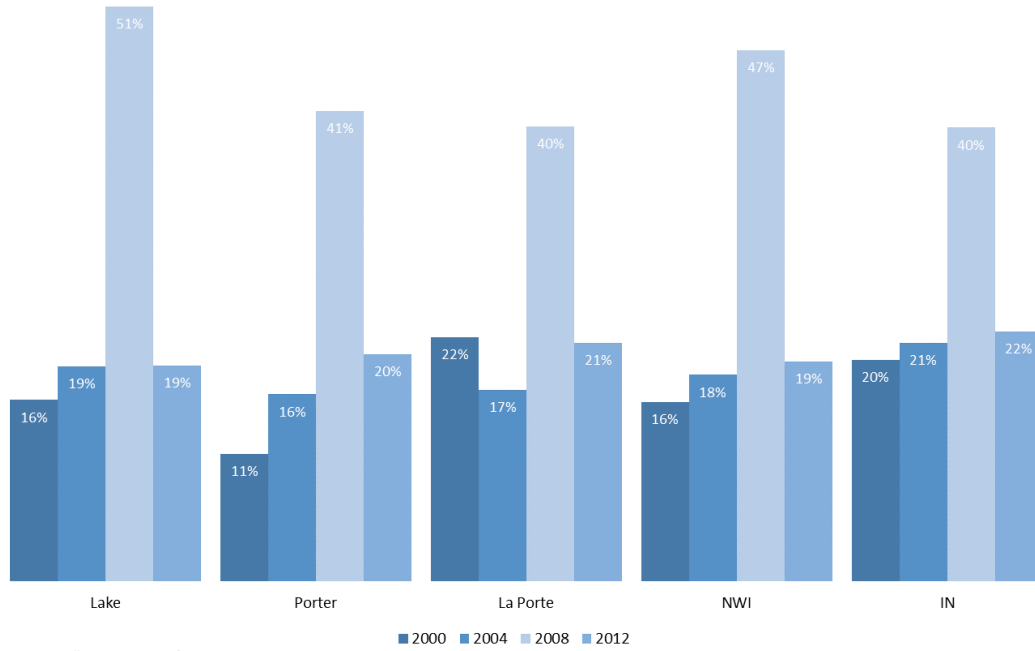


Primary Elections

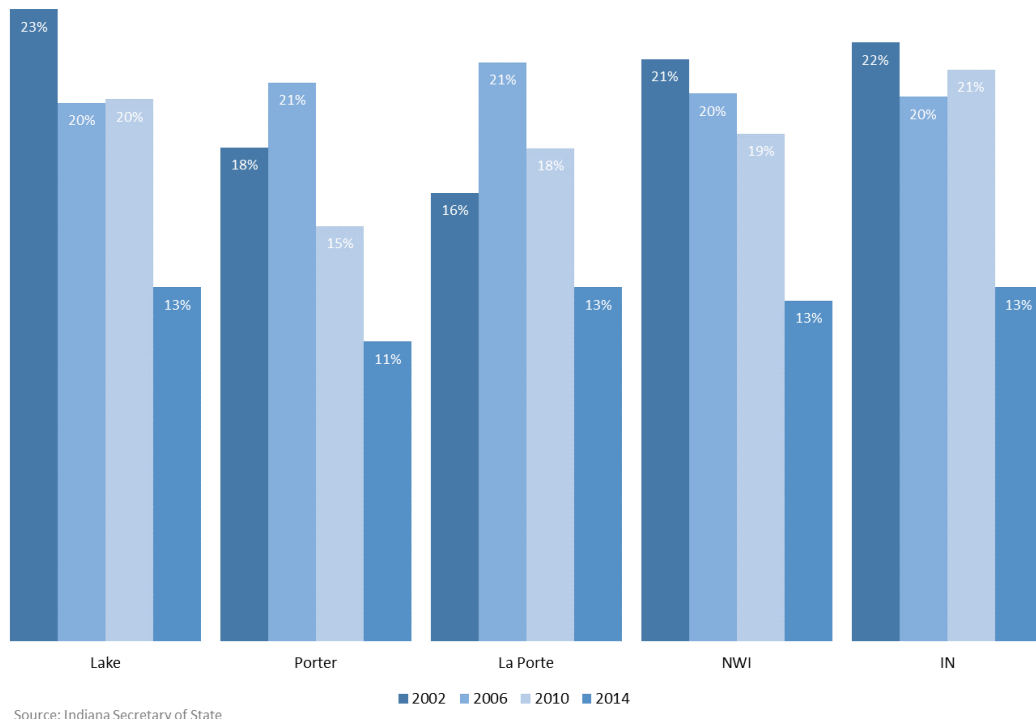
Primary elections during presidential years saw an increase in voter turnout from 2000 to 2012. In the presidential voting year of 2000, turnout averaged 16 percent in the region, for a total turnout of 77,461 voters, compared to 20 percent in Indiana. Turnout increased in the presidential year of 2012 when 19 percent of Northwest Indiana, for a total of 98,227 voters, cast ballots in the primary election, compared to 21 percent in Indiana. Primary election voter turnout in Lake County was 16 percent in 2000 and 19 percent in 2012. In Porter County, primary presidential election turnout was 11 percent in 2000 and 20 percent in 2012. La Porte County had 22 percent turnout in 2000 and 21 percent turnout in 2012.

In 2014, a non-presidential year, primary election turnout in Northwest Indiana fell to 13 percent, with 68,413 voters casting ballots, on par with Indiana as a whole. Primary election voter turnout in Lake County was 23 percent in 2002 and 13 percent in 2014. In Porter County, general election turnout was 18 percent in 2002 and 11 percent in 2014. La Porte County had 16 percent turnout in 2002 and 13 percent turnout in 2014. Indiana’s voter turnout rate was 22 percent in 2002 and 13 percent in 2014.

Voter Turnout, Primary Race in Presidential Years



Voter Turnout, Primary Race in Non-Presidential Years



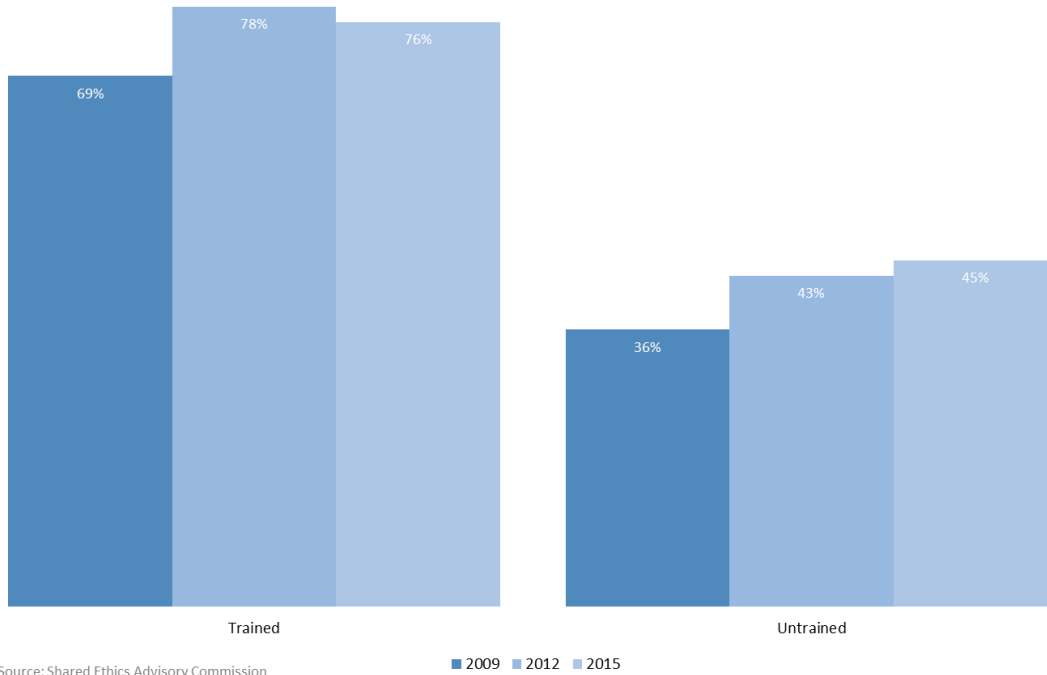
Ethics

Trend: Improving

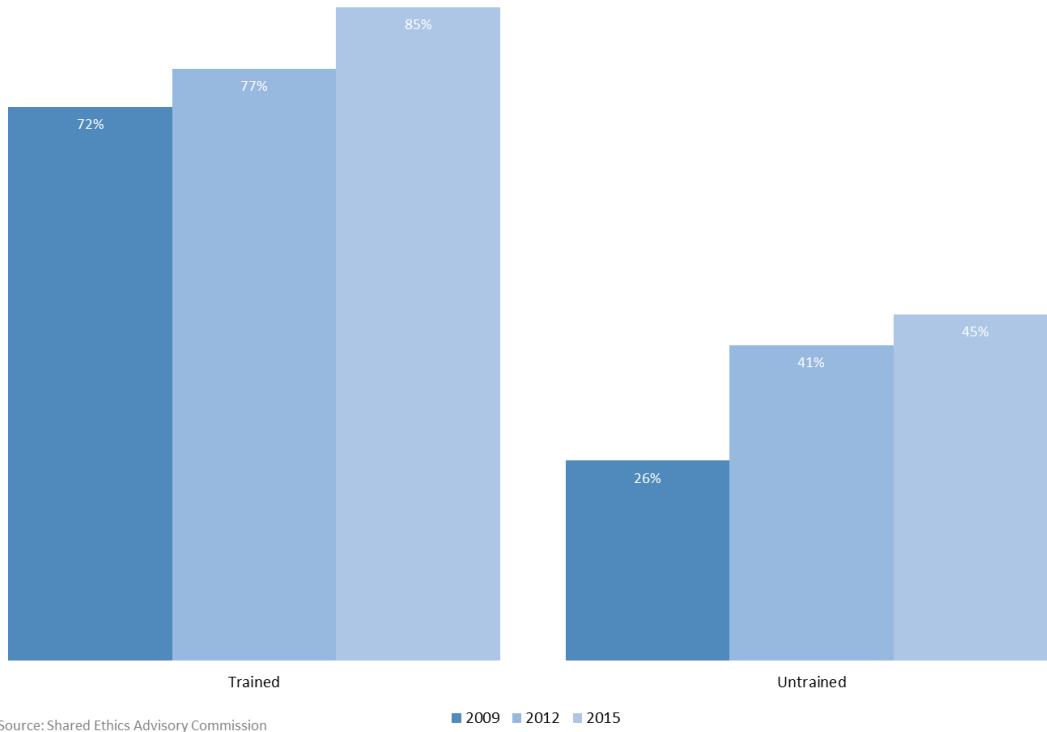
From 2009 – 2015, Northwest Indiana advanced its commitment to ethics. The number of governments that committed to the voluntary Shared Ethics Advisory Commission’s membership requirements increased from three in 2005 to 23 in 2016. Between 2009 and 2015, trained government employees’ awareness of the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission Ethics Code increased from 69 percent to 76 percent. Untrained employees’ awareness of the ethics code increased from 36 percent to 45 percent.

Awareness of the process for reporting ethics violations also increased during the same period. Between 2009 and 2015, trained government employees’ awareness of the process for reporting ethics violations increased from 72 percent to 85 percent. Untrained employees’ awareness of the reporting process increased from 26 percent to 45 percent.

Government Employees' Awareness of SEAC Ethics Code



Government Employees' Awareness of the Process for Reporting Ethics Violations



Regional Action Measures

Empowering civic engagement necessitates the region continually evolves its cultural mindset toward open and inclusive public participation and wise use of public funds. The improving state of government reflects the overall capability to adapt to fiscal policy changes and be responsive to voter interests. The collective capacity to deliver public services in the most efficient and effective way remains paramount. As the regional agencies demonstrate what is possible through greater coordination, local governments carry out much of the responsibilities for planning and implementation. The current indicators suggest civic and fiscal health are inextricably linked to place. Therefore, additional measures of public sector performance could deepen shared understanding of local conditions. Open government data and tools may enrich that process. Ultimately, informed and engaged decision making rests with elected officials and the citizens who vote.

Further development opportunities may include:

- Partnering with business, civic and neighborhood organizations to increase voter registration and turnout or ongoing civic engagement in local decision making.
- Adopting specific policies or amend the jurisdiction's charter to specifically protect the civil and human rights of all community residents.
- Establishing an independent civil and/or human rights commission to ensure access, equity and inclusion.
- Establishing partnerships that engage key community groups and stakeholders in activities to advance equitable access and proximity to facilities, services and infrastructure.

People constitute the heart of democracy. In order to form a more perfect union, Northwest Indiana must work together for the benefit of all. By coordinating and sharing public resources, wherever possible, the region could leverage more opportunities for economic growth, social equity and environmental quality. The findings of the One Region Harris Poll suggest residents are extremely concerned about how their tax dollars are being spent. They also feel government must do its part in facilitating job creation, equal access to quality education, better transportation systems and efficient public service.³³ Nearly two-thirds expressed confidence in the future of Northwest Indiana, and with holding government responsible for that better future. A majority of residents believe the region is on the right track.

The public sector plays a critical role in a flourishing society, especially in making initial investments and providing on going basic services in an ethical manner. The healthier the region's public sector is the more likely it is to attract private and nonprofit sectors' investments from within and beyond our borders.

³³ Consumer Insights North America. "Northwest Indiana Poll," www.oneregionwi.org accessed on June 5, 2015.

APPENDIX A

METHODOLOGY

The 2016 One Region Indicators Project is an ongoing commitment every four years to examine the key factors that influence the quality of place in Lake, Porter and La Porte counties and measure sustainable progress over time. One Region Co-Chairs and Research Committee oversaw the development of this report through a consultant team between January 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016.

The purpose of the study is to equip local leaders and engaged citizens with information that contributes toward shared understanding and collaborative actions in becoming a more sustainable region over time. The research objectives are 1) to objectively assess key conditions within the 10 policy domains, 2) to evaluate data trends between 2000 – 2014 and 3) to provide relevant information for deepening regional dialogue and supporting collective action.

Since the first publication of the Northwest Indiana Quality of Life Indicators Report, the concept sustainability has served as the underlying framework. In that seminal report, sustainability was defined as, “an evolving process that improves the economy, environment and society for the benefit of current and future generations. It is a pattern of livelihood in which we improve our quality of life and that of future generations by living within the means of our natural resources and expanding the capacities our human and social resources.”³⁴

This year, the report contains an additional theory of change layer called placemaking originated by an organization called the Project for Public Spaces. Placemaking is “a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value. More than just promoting better urban design, placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.”³⁵ The Research Committee and Consultant Team felt the integration of sustainability and placemaking lenses depicts a more holistic picture of the region as well as raises greater awareness for the untapped potential between people and place. Several communities in Northwest Indiana are already incorporating placemaking best practices to revitalize and transform public spaces.

The structure of the report includes an executive summary of key findings, introduction, individual chapters consisting of aspirational statements, narratives, data sets, trends, emerging measures and a regional collaboration success story and appendices. Major changes in the format from prior years is the inclusion of emerging measures and regional collaboration success stories. The People chapter characterizes who we are and the place in which we dwell, but it does not measure or trend demographic progress.

³⁴ Northwest Indiana Quality of Life Council. “The Northwest Indiana Quality of Life: Indicators for Progress Report,” October 2000.

³⁵ Project for Public Spaces. www.pps.org, accessed June 1, 2015.

The "regional action measures" section at the end of each chapter afford readers a reflection on how the aspirational statement is affected by the key indicators' progress, or lack thereof. It notes areas of further development opportunity that are based on methodology from the STAR Communities' STAR Rating System metrics for partnership and collaboration. Counties, cities and towns across the United States seek STAR Communities' accreditation as of being a sustainable community.³⁶ It serves as a north star for sustainable best practices in community development. This section also provides a forum for highlighting local actions where outcomes do not yet effect the key indicators. It concludes with summarizing the voice of Northwest Indiana residents as summarized in the "Let's Talk Regional Report" jointly prepared by the Lake Area United Way and the Porter County United Way and "Transition to Collective Impact Funding" by the La Porte County United Way.

The regional success stories are vignettes of regional collaboration. Community leaders and stakeholders of One Region were invited to share their story of how Northwest Indiana is working together in new or better ways. Each chapter received one regional success story. The balance of stories received are integrated into the report narrative. The research process utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods. Indicators data were collected from publicly-available, online sources for transparency and accessibility to report readers. Qualitative data were collected through a series of one-on-one listening sessions with organizational leaders, a June focus group delved into data indicators and November focus group explored regional priorities with respect to education, economy, transportation and regional coordination. Additional input on the data and domains were received from external subject matter experts and groups. The data were compiled and analyzed before a draft report was vetted with the Research Committee.

The 2016 One Region Indicators Report will be useful to One Region Partners and Stakeholders as well as various leaders and engaged citizens throughout Northwest Indiana. The final report was produced, edited and published by One Region in partnership with The Times.

³⁶ STAR Communities. "Star Community Rating System," March 2015.

APPENDIX B

DATA SOURCES

People

U.S. Census, www.factfinder.uscensus.gov

Stats Indiana, www.stats.indiana.edu

Hoosiers by Numbers, www.hoosiersdata.in.gov

University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center, <http://demographics.coopercenter.org/DotMap/>

Economy

Bureau of Economic Analysis, www.bea.gov

Hoosiers by the Numbers, www.hoosierdata.in.gov

U.S. Census, www.census.gov

Stats America, www.statsamerica.org/innovationindex

Living Wage, www.livingwage.mit.edu

Great Lakes Economic Forum, <http://greatlakeseconomicforum.com/>

World Business Chicago, <http://www.worldbusinesschicago.com/>

Transportation

Stats Indiana, www.stats.indiana.edu

Indiana Department of Transportation, www.in.gov/indot

Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District, www.nictd.com

Regional Transportation Authority, www.rtams.org

Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, www.nirpc.org

Environment

Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, www.nirpc.org

Indiana Department of Environmental Management, www.in.gov/idem

Education

Indiana Department of Education, www.doe.in.gov/idoe/idoe-data

Indiana Youth Institute, www.iyi.org

Stats Indiana, www.statsindiana.edu

Health

County Rankings and Roadmaps, www.countyhealthrankings.org

Indiana Department of Health, www.in.gov/isdh

Indiana Department of Healthy, Sunny Start Program, www.in.gov/isdh

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, www.hhs.gov/diseases

Center for Disease Control, www.apps.nccd.cdc.gov

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, www.epa.gov

The Annie E. Casey Foundation, www.kidscount.org
Indiana Youth Institute, www.iyi.org
Healthy City, www.healthycity.org
Foundation for Child Development, www.fcd-us.org
Health Indicators Warehouse, www.hindicators.gov
Lake County Community Health Needs Assessment, www.chscommunity.healthforecast.net/report.pdf
La Porte County Community Health Needs Assessment,
www.unitedwaylpc.org/editor_uploads/1406260245Summary_of_Needs_Report_2014.pdf

Public Safety

Federal Bureau of Investigation, www.fbi.gov
Indiana Youth Institute, www.iyi.org
Annie E. Casey Foundation, www.aecf.org
Regional Crime Report, www.nwitimes.com
Let's Talk Report, www.lauw.org

Housing

U.S. Census, www.factfinder2.census.gov
Stats Indiana, www.stats.indiana.edu
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, www.portal.hud.gov
Center for Neighborhood Technology, www.htaindex.cnt.org
Indiana Economic Digest, www.indianaeconomicdigest.net
Federal Reserve of Chicago, www.chicagofed.org
Federal Reserve of New York, www.data.newyorkfed.org
Indiana is Home, www.indianaishome.com

Arts & Culture

Americans for the Arts, www.americansforthearts.org
Indiana Arts Commission, www.in.gov/arts
Indiana Dunes Tourism, www.indianadunes.com
La Porte County Tourism, www.michigancityLaPorte.com
Legacy Foundation, www.legacyfdn.org
National Center for Charitable Statistics, www.nccs.urban.org
Porter County Community Foundation, www.portercountyfoundation.org
South Shore Arts Association, www.southshoreartsonline.org
South Shore Convention and Visitors Center, www.southshorecva.com
The Chronicle of Philanthropy, www.philanthropy.com
Unity Foundation of La Porte County www.uflc.net
Northern Indiana Tourism District Commission, www.northernindianagetaways.com

Government

Indiana Department of Local Government Finance, www.in.gov/dlgf
Indiana Board of Tax Review, www.in.gov/ibtr
Indiana Secretary of State, www.in.gov/sos/elections
Purdue University, www.agecon.purdue.edu/crd/localgov/data.htm
Stats Indiana, www.stats.indiana.edu

APPENDIX C

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The 2016 One Region Indicators Project represents the ongoing commitment of Northwest Indiana leaders to the quality of place within Lake, Porter and La Porte counties. One Region Co-Chairs and Research Committee guided the development of the Indicators Report, while One Region’s Regional Partners and Stakeholders provided input on the leading indicators and key issues across the 10 policy domains. We appreciate the combined efforts of the following people and organizations over the last year, and thank you for your contributions to this fifth edition.

ONE REGION

Thomas Keon, PhD *Co-Chair*
Chris White *Co-Chair*
Leah Konrady *President & CEO*

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Denise Dillard *Methodist Hospitals*
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Regional Economic Advisors Group
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