



THREE-YEAR GOALS

Updated 5/19/2020

Health

Increase the number of health screenings in rural areas and increase collaborative interventions to improve access to healthcare and reduce the burden of lifestyle related chronic diseases.

Diseases affected by lifestyle (e.g. COPD, high cholesterol, type 2 diabetes mellitus, or obesity) are seven of the top ten leading causes of death in Indiana¹, with a large burden carried by rural areas. In order to prevent and reverse these diagnoses, rural Hoosiers must have greater access to care and healthy choices. The Center for Rural Engagement will approach this solution by working not only within health, but across disciplines. By using a multidisciplinary approach, methods to promote healthy lifestyle options will be integrated into policies and interventions across multiple sectors, bringing evidence-based interventions and enhancing community planning and capacity to address these issues.

Create a comprehensive suite of interventions to address substance use disorder and its stigma, and increase access to prevention and treatment resources by deploying the suite in partnership with communities.

Indiana is ranked one of the worst in the country on incidence and treatment substance use disorder² and the center is mobilized to address this growing problem. Communities around the country are identifying novel approaches to address this crisis and the center will glean and compile the most effective, evidence-based strategies to create a suite that can be used by communities to increase residents' access to care. Acknowledging that each community has specific needs and resources, the center will collaborate with local partners to plan the most appropriate intervention and ensure its efficacy.

Increase access to care through evidence-based interventions aimed to reduce the rate of teen pregnancy and infant mortality in order to improve maternal and child health.

Poor maternal and child health has lasting repercussions and Indiana ranks near the bottom (44/50 for infant mortality rates and 39/50 for teen pregnancy¹) in both areas. By identifying which counties have the highest rates in these areas, the center will work in partnership with faculty; hospitals; schools; and national, state, and community networks to plan, address, and increase community capacity to face these challenges.

¹ "Stats of the State of Indiana," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, April 11, 2018, <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/states/indiana/indiana.htm>.

² "Indiana: Opioid-Involved Deaths and Related Harms," National Institute on Drug Abuse, April 3, 2020, <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/opioids/opioid-summaries-by-state/indiana-opioid-summary>.



Quality of Place

Partner with public, private, non-profit, and community sectors in at least two communities to integrate arts and culture into local economic development strategies.

Arts and culture are key ingredients of successful places that attract and retain residents and workforce, create new businesses, and enrich quality of life.³ Harnessing IU's arts and culture initiatives to strengthen community identity and support new narratives, the Center for Rural Engagement will create and test replicable planning and engagement processes that effectively build quality of place in partnership with communities. Through arts programming and capacity-building partnerships, we will work with communities to co-produce inspiring creative experiences and build a cultural and social infrastructure to expand economic opportunity and attract a dynamic workforce to the region. These processes will also connect local students to a broader world of arts and culture careers and expose university students to Indiana places where they may want to consider starting careers in arts and culture, reside, and start a family.

Equip communities with strategies, data, and research in order to increase residential housing development.

Foundational for rural prosperity, housing is a key component of a thriving community. A good supply of desirable housing helps attract and retain residents, who in turn contribute to the vibrancy of public life, the tax base, the local workforce, and a prosperous economy. When housing is too expensive, too scarce, or in poor condition, residents start to look elsewhere for a place to call home. The housing market in rural Indiana lags behind the current need for diverse workforce housing and is, in many cases, inhibiting economic growth.⁴ The center has published the Housing Ready Toolkit to assist rural communities meet the challenge of housing through a practical, collaborative, strategic approach. In addition to the toolkit, the center will connect rural communities with resources and expertise of IU faculty and external organizations that will assist in increasing residential housing development in rural Indiana.

Design creative residential solutions to address housing needs of rural communities that fit the local character and place.

Rural communities have evolving housing needs and blighted or underused properties that could be redeveloped into desirable homes.⁵ Collaborating with IU architecture and design faculty and students, the center aims to address these needs in partnership with rural communities. By applying design-thinking concepts and working with communities to identify specific needs, the center will apply innovative methods to increase new, sustainable, and design-oriented market-rate housing for workers, retirees, and those with mobility issues alike.

Provide planning, advising, and design resources around spaces that enhance creativity, local identity, and innovation in rural communities.

A deep sense of local identity can be magnetic and contribute to health, happiness, and wellbeing of residents and visitors.⁶ Center staff, along with IU faculty and students, will develop and implement inclusive processes

³ "Rural Prosperity through the Arts and Creative Sector: A Rural Action Guide for Governors and States," National Governors Association, 2019, https://www.nga.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/NGA_RuralArtsReport.pdf.

⁴ "Indiana Uplands Housing Study," Regional Opportunity Initiatives, October 2, 2019, <https://regionalloppportunityinc.org/housing/>.

⁵ Randall Arendt, "Rural by Design: Planning for Town and Country, Second Edition," New York: Routledge, 2014.

⁶ Jamie Levine Daniel and Mirae Kim, "Creative Placemaking: Creating Change by Building Partnerships," Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs, accessed May 6, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.20899/jpna.6.1.96-110>.



that inspire and engage local and regional expertise to reimagine and enhance communities' sense of place. We will conduct placemaking workshops—building upon statewide, regional, and local efforts—to engage residents and develop projects that infuse creativity into everyday life and public spaces and reflect the unique history, traditions, and assets of communities. Possible projects include murals, public art, wayfinding and signage, branding, and park design.

Community Resilience

Educate and advise rural leaders and residents on the importance of safe and secure water resources and deploy IU expertise to ensure access to them.

Fundamental to life, water is a resource in high demand in the Indiana Uplands, whether it be for drinking, manufacturing, or recreating. The region's topography—covered with vast forests, farms, and communities—matched with its limestone geology results in complex dynamics that impact water quality and supply.⁷ These variables affect the social, economic, and environmental health and resilience of the region. Indiana University faculty and students—in partnership with government agencies, community organizations, and citizen scientists—will develop a knowledge base about the region's water quality and supply that rural residents and leaders can use to secure safe water for the future.

Increase access to local food for residential and institutional consumers by cultivating the local food value chain across southern Indiana.

Consumers in the Indiana Uplands purchased \$1.2 billion of food in 2019, the vast majority of which was not grown by local farmers.⁸ Following the Local Food, Local Good listening tour and the Indiana Uplands Winter Food Conference, the region has generated the momentum to begin cultivating the local food value chain by coordinating food system stakeholders in the public, non-profit, and private sectors and seeking investment for capacity, infrastructure, and education. The Indiana Uplands Food Network, a key center collaboration, will lead this effort, pursuing the region's highest priority of increasing access to local food for home and institutional consumers.

Partner with three communities to better capitalize on their parks, public lands, and recreation assets by developing new capacity to sustain, safeguard, and leverage them.

In the Indiana Uplands, conservation or recreation areas make up 14 percent of the land, more than 450 trails are existing or planned, and nearly 5,000 recreation and tourism facilities sit in communities.⁹ This robust collection of assets positions the Indiana Uplands to be a recreation and tourism destination for the Midwest, which could bolster the social, economic, and environmental resilience of rural communities across the region. Through partnerships with three communities, the center will leverage IU assets to develop new leadership capacity to sustain and enhance parks, forests, and recreation assets, such as steering committees, parks boards and other supportive nonprofits. The center will work with communities and nonprofits to evaluate, research, and develop strategic plans for safeguarding local natural areas and the vital ecosystem services they provide.

⁷ "Karst Features in Indiana," Indiana Geological and Water Survey, accessed May 6, 2020, <https://igws.indiana.edu/Bedrock/Karst>.

⁸ Kirby Kalbaugh, "Data," Purdue University Local Food Program, accessed May 6, 2020, <https://www.purdue.edu/dffs/localfood/data/>.

⁹ "Indiana Uplands Park, Recreation, and Protected Land Inventory and Opportunity Mapping." Indiana University Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands, 2019.