

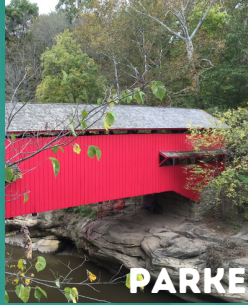
# RESILIENT



CLAY



PUTNAM



PARKE



SULLIVAN



VERMILLION



VIGO

Resilient published July 2022

WEST CENTRAL

# THRIVE

## INTRODUCTION

1-4



## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

5-13

## HEALTHCARE

14-21

## QUALITY OF LIFE

22-27

## EDUCATION

28-33

# WHY RESILIENT?

**RESILIENT** is designed to **identify** and **inform** West Central Indiana communities of the most **pressing needs**, make **recommendations** for improvements, and act as a **catalyst** for change.

“

"West Central Indiana is facing a turning point. As we look to the future and strive for resilience and prosperity, we begin to focus on seizing opportunities in areas identified through the Resilient planning process: workforce development, healthcare, quality of life, and education. By building on our region's strengths and enhancing other aspects to better the lives of our residents, West Central Indiana will begin to see improvements in the wellbeing of citizens and in our region's ability to experience growth in population attraction and development."



– Ryan Keller,  
Executive Director

## GOALS OF RESILIENT

- 1** Identify the most pressing economic-related challenges and opportunities
- 2** Identify public, private, and non-profit resources that local/regional leaders can use
- 3** Provide a unified framework for how communities in our region can pursue and build resiliency and prosperity.

## ABOUT RESILIENT

Resilient addresses our region's most pressing economic issues. It is intended to serve as a guide for communities to achieve long-term resiliency and economic prosperity.

## REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS



2000 Population  
**224,206**



2010 Population  
**↑ 227,719**



2020 Population  
**↓ 223,101**



2021 Population  
**↓ 221,889**

Since 2010, the region has experienced a **decrease** in population. If current trends hold, West Central Indiana's population is projected to **decrease** by **6.5%** from 2020-2050, compared to increases of **7%** for Indiana and **17%** for the United States.

### Age Breakdown:



- 5.5% Persons 0-4
- 15% Persons 5-17
- 61.6% Persons 18-64
- 17.9% Persons 65+

From 2020-2040 the proportion of older adults (aged 65+) in West Central Indiana's population is projected to grow from **17.9%** to **21.3%**. This creates both economic **opportunities** and **challenges**.



## 2020 Per Capita Personal Income (PCPI):

**\$59,510 United States**

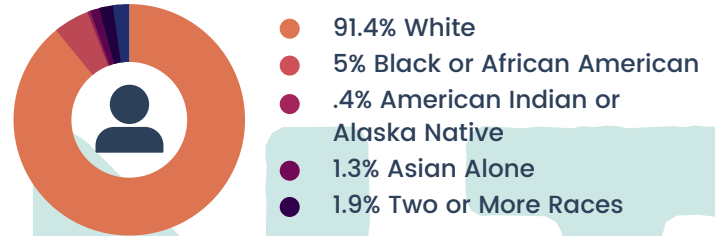
**\$51,926 Indiana**

**\$41,349 West  
Central Indiana**

For the past two decades, West Central Indiana has had the lowest PCPI of any region in Indiana. PCPI is often used in determining the overall quality of life.

Source: Stats Indiana

## Race and Ethnic Backgrounds:



West Central Indiana has a robust culture and heritage stemming from European descent. The region continues to steadily grow its ethnic diversity with ample opportunities for employment, entrepreneurship, education, and community support for individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

# METHODOLOGY

Over the course of two years, Thrive West Central gathered input from community members and key stakeholders through forums, surveys, and interviews. Thrive conducted additional research and data collection to bridge information gaps.

**24**  
Months

**12**  
Regional Forums

**465** Targeted  
Survey Responses

Based on these findings, four overarching themes emerged.



**WORKFORCE & BUSINESS  
DEVELOPMENT**



**HEALTHCARE**



**QUALITY OF LIFE &  
COMMUNITY NEEDS**



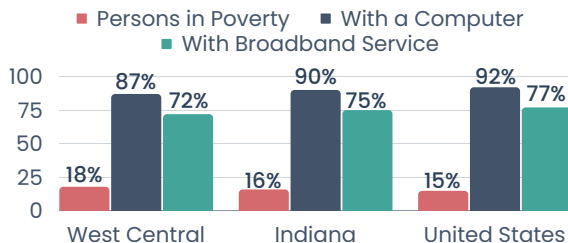
**EDUCATION**

# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



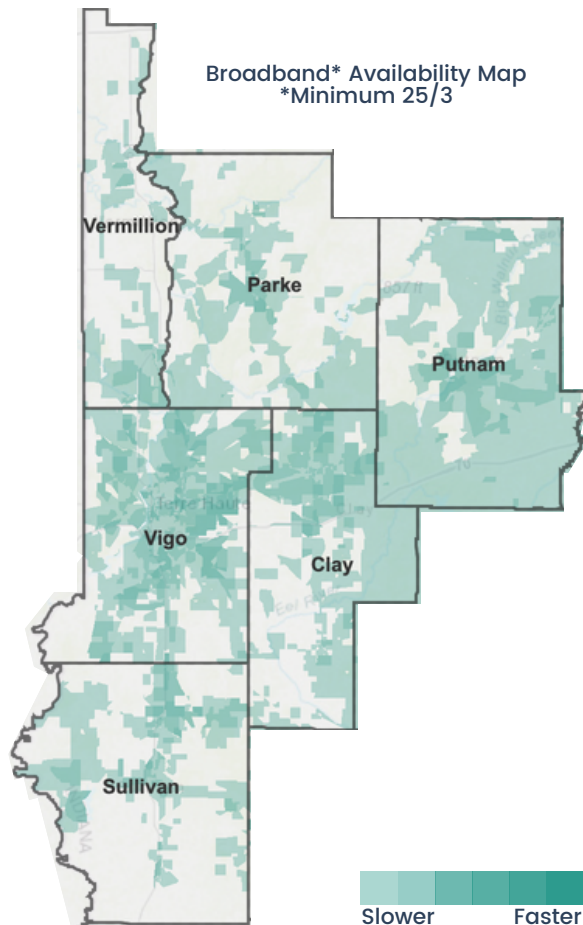
RESILIENT

## BROADBAND & DIGITAL INCLUSION



West Central Indiana ranks **below** the state and national averages in terms of internet connectivity, which correlates with an **above-average** level of poverty.

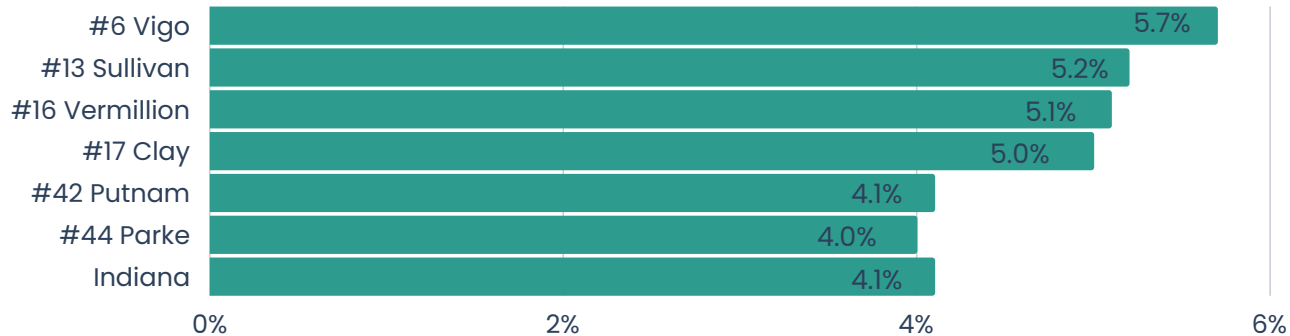
Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Source: indianabroadbandmap.com

## UNEMPLOYMENT

## % of Unemployment Rates and Rankings Within the State



Regarding educational attainment, individuals with a high school diploma or less often hop in and out of employment opportunities and earn **significantly** less income over their careers than individuals with an **associate** or **bachelor's** degree. Investing in educational attainment outcomes is an opportunity for the region.



**TALENT ATTRACTION  
& RETENTION**

In 2018, college students in West Central Indiana were asked to participate in a West Central Indiana Graduate and Undergraduate Survey that would assess their feelings towards West Central Indiana and the likelihood of staying in the region following college graduation. On a scale of 0-100, college students rated their likelihood of staying in West Central Indiana at **56**, compared to a state average of **71**. Which is representative of the region's lack of connection and retention of college students.

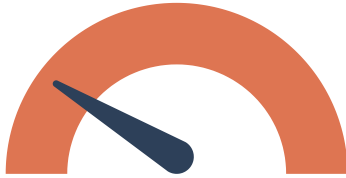
Source: West Central Indiana's 21st Century Talent initiative

## CASE STUDY

### BRAIN GAIN INITIATIVE

To address statewide concerns regarding attracting and retaining top talent, Purdue University launched the “Brain Gain Initiative” in 2018. Their strategy includes utilizing TMap, an Indiana startup focused on connecting job candidates with appropriate opportunities, to target Purdue alumni, inviting them to relocate back to Indiana to fill high-quality professional roles. In 2021, Hamilton County launched a similar county-wide initiative and has identified more than 5,000 individuals who are interested in relocating to the area.

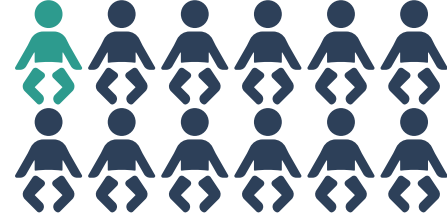
## STATE & FEDERAL FUNDING



West Central Indiana received the **second-lowest** amount of OCRA Phase 1 COVID-19 relief funding, and the **fifth-lowest** amount for Phase 2 of OCRA funding. This illustrates rural communities' lack of ability or willingness to access state resource funding opportunities.

Source: Indiana Office of Community & Rural Affairs (2020)

## CHILDCARE

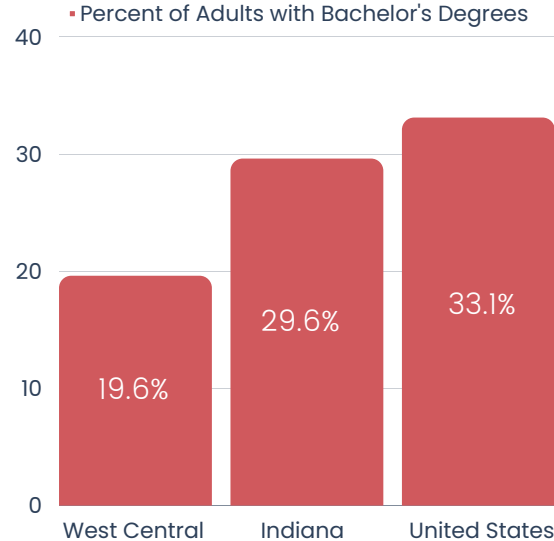


West Central Indiana has the **lowest** availability of spots at licensed childcare **centers** of any region in the state. The region is the **highest** in the state in licensed in-home childcare. Low availability, as well as high costs, makes formal childcare **centers** out of reach for many families.

Source: Indiana Family and Social Services Administration

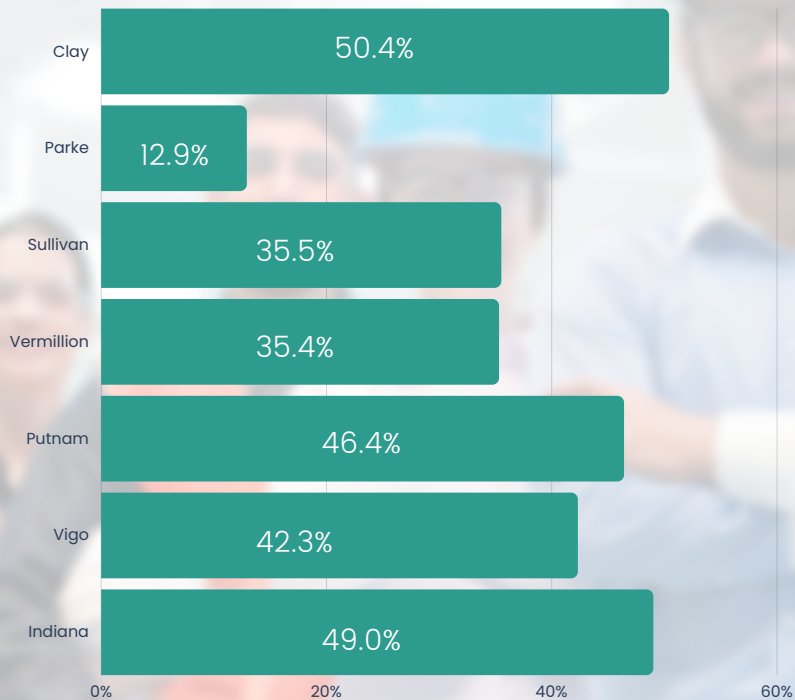
## TRAINING & EDUCATION

West Central Indiana **exceeds** state and national averages in the proportion of adults with a high school or college education. The region **lags** in bachelor and graduate degrees.



Source: 2019 American Community Survey

% of Students Enrolled in Public College and Met All Early College Success Benchmarks



Source: 2022 College Readiness Report



## OPPORTUNITIES

There is an **opportunity** to partner with educational institutions to lessen our region's educational gap. West Central Indiana must invest in outcomes that **advance** and **elevate** post-secondary education opportunities. Examples include:

- Accessing and promoting Indiana's College Core Program
- Promoting the 21st Century Scholar Program
- Utilizing early college credit programs such as dual credit and advanced placement
- Investing in broadband and digital inclusion
- Support early learning programs
- Create intern and externship programs

# HEALTHCARE



# RESILIENT



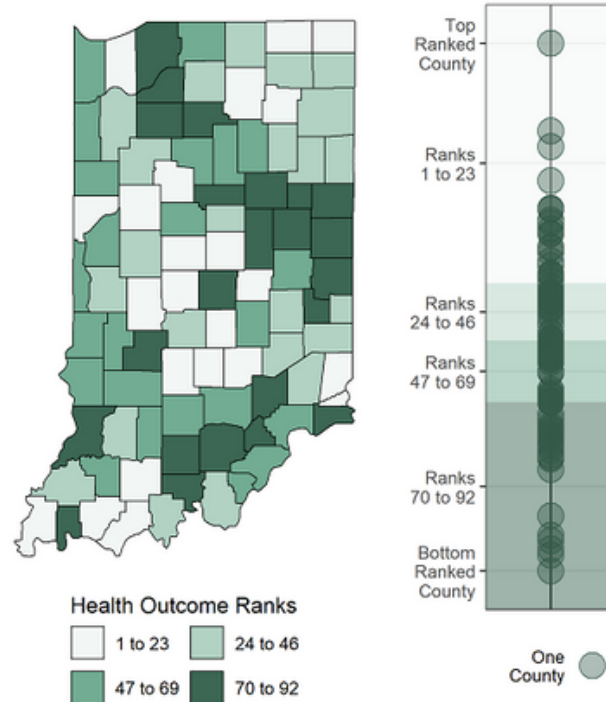
## COVID-19 SOUNDED THE ALARM

Indiana's public health system is chronically underfunded and undervalued. Indiana ranks 48th for state-provided public health funding.

Hoosiers experience higher rates of preventable diseases and injuries, as well as healthcare costs, compared to other states. Indiana ranks 41st out of 50 states for overall health.

Only one county (Putnam) in West Central Indiana is in Indiana's top quartile.

Source: 2021 Indiana Public Health System Review



Source: countyhealthrankings.org

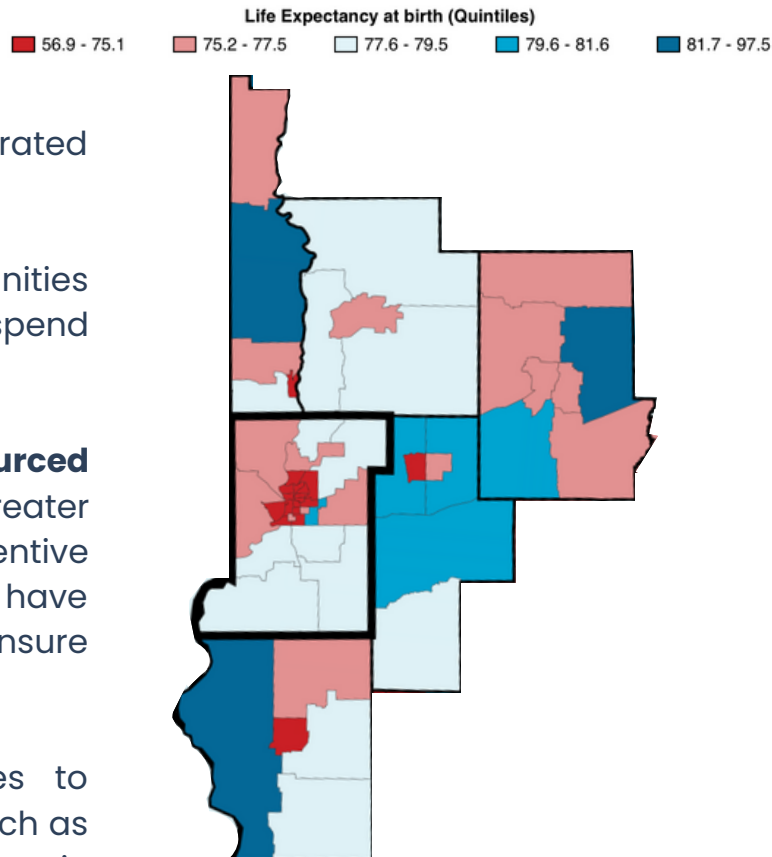
## LIFE EXPECTANCY

In 2020, a child born in the areas illustrated on the right could expect to live to...

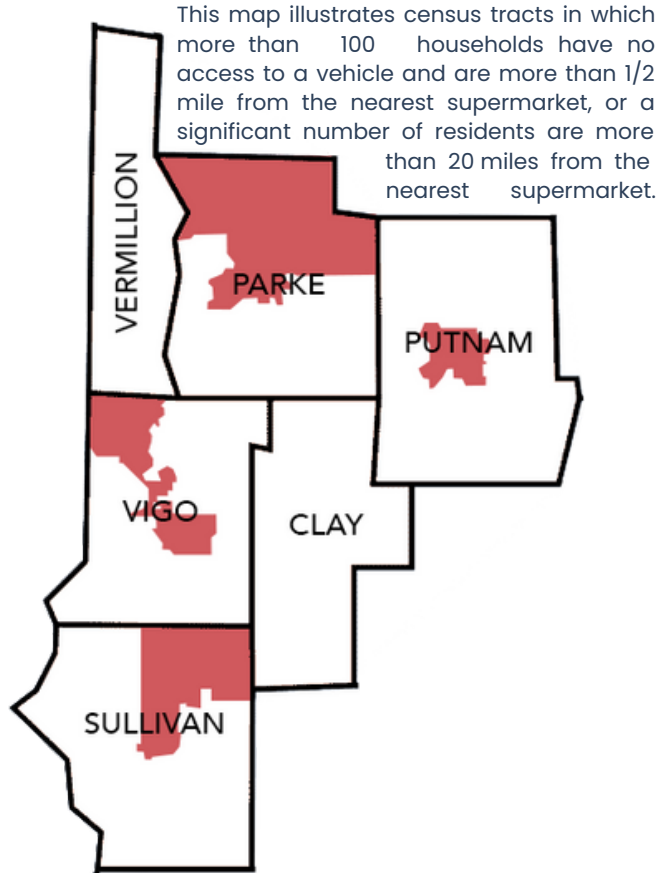
Evidence shows that when communities **invest** more in public health, they spend less on health care and live longer.

This means that **less-resourced communities** that likely have a greater need for the protection and preventive services public health provides also have less funding and less capacity to ensure that they receive them.

Opportunities exist for communities to partner with local health agencies, such as Thrive's Area Agency on Aging, to invest in better public health outcomes.



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture –  
Economic Research Service

## TRANSPORTATION



6.7%

without access to a  
vehicle

**6.7%** of West Central Indiana households do not own at least one car. Due to limited public transportation options for rural and urbanized areas, residents have unmet needs. An opportunity exists to partner with existing providers to expand medical, business, and recreational transportation services.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

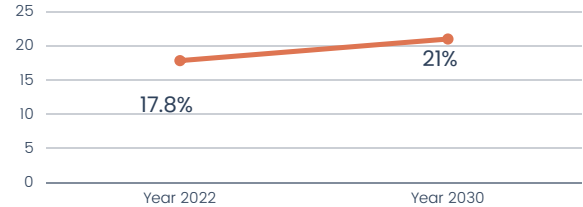


## CASE STUDY ALEXANDRIA, MN

Prioritizing a healthier lifestyle among its aging population and seeing an opportunity to attract more retirees, the City of Alexandria, Minnesota, directly surveyed seniors to understand their needs and then developed an action plan surrounding two main pillars: transportation and health/community services. Alexandria became the first rural city in the country to receive AARP's "Age-Friendly Community" designation. Through these and other efforts to improve the quality of life, the City of Alexandria grew its population over age 65 by nearly 12% and its overall population by roughly 22% from 2010–2019.

### AGING CARE

Share of the Population Age 65+



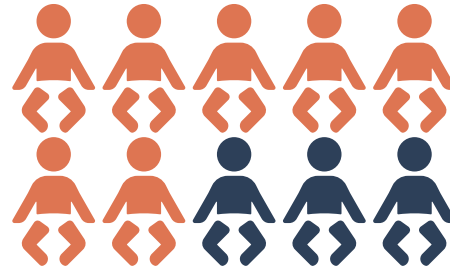
The share of the population that is 65+ is expected to increase by **3.2%** by 2030. A 3.2% increase represents **7,100** individuals looking for an **opportunity** to age in place. This creates various opportunities for communities to increase population, improve economic prosperity, and quality of life.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

## SUBSTANCE ABUSE

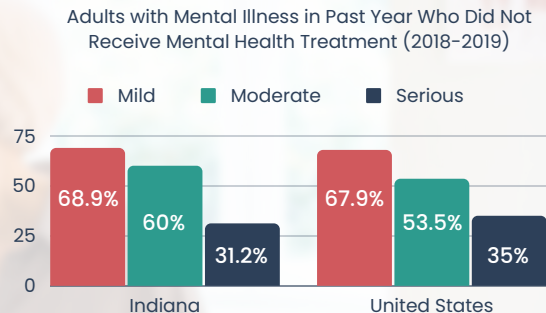
In 2020, **295/400** or **74%** of children removed from their homes in West Central Indiana occurred due to parental drug/alcohol use. The harsh reality is that kids who grow up in these situations are more likely to continue the cycle of substance and alcohol addiction.

There is an opportunity to create or reinforce the presence of community-based programs to help parents and children overcome substance abuse.



## MENTAL HEALTH

In 2018–2019, Indiana averaged a **higher** percentage of mild and moderate mental illness who did not receive treatment than the United States. This suggests there is a **lack** of social workers and access to local mental health facilities.



Source: Kaiser Mental Health Report Indiana

Throughout this study, a few overarching issues emerged.

- Public health is often not well understood, undervalued, and underfunded.
- There is a lack of specific programming, awareness, and expertise at the local level.
- There is a lack of connectedness and communication between health providers, community resources, and the general public.
- There is insufficient use of technology and essential infrastructure coupled with inconsistent data for evidence-based programming and decision-making.
- The local public health system does not consistently provide essential public health services across communities.

## OPPORTUNITIES

There is an **opportunity** for West Central Indiana communities to significantly impact their public health outcomes by actively pursuing means to address the issues presented. West Central Indiana must start taking healthcare and health outcomes seriously. A few opportunities are:

- Physician groups and community partners hosting public education events
- The attraction of gerontology professionals to our region
- Expanding rural and medical transportation services throughout the region
- Become an age-friendly community and invest in amenities that promote healthy living

# QUALITY OF LIFE

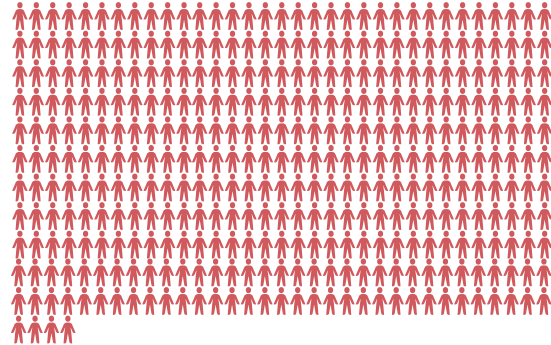


RESILIENT



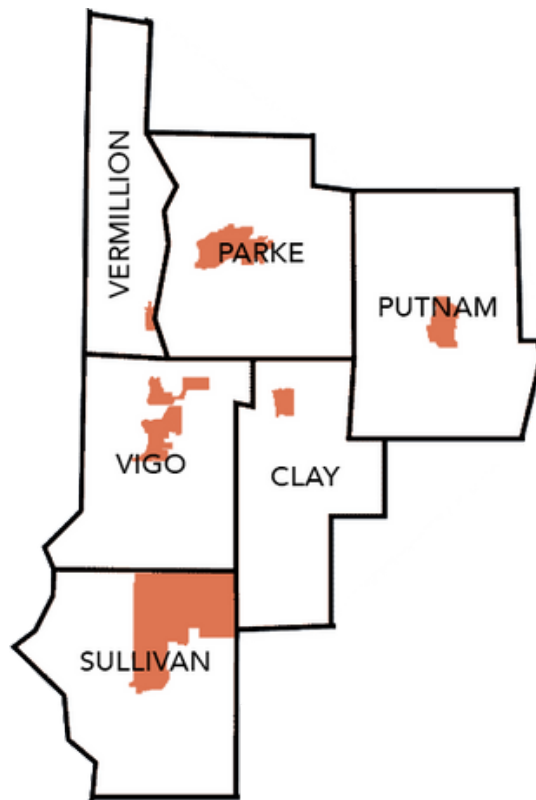
## HOMELESSNESS

An estimated **367** individuals are experiencing homelessness in **Vigo County** alone. Due to the lack of resources, acquiring regional data on this population is not possible. Homelessness exists throughout rural counties in West Central Indiana, but it cannot be quantified.



**FOOD  
INSECURITY**

As a region, West Central Indiana has a **higher** proportion of food insecure individuals (including children) than both the state and country. The data to the right illustrates low-income census tracts where a significant number or share of residents is more than 1 mile (urban) or 10 miles (rural) from the nearest supermarket.



Source: Funding America

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture - Economic Research Service

The following data displays the projected percentages of individuals and children in each county who are food insecure.

County	2020 Child Projected	2020 Projected	2021 Child Projected	2021 Projected
Clay	21.7%	15.9%	19.3%	14.7%
Parke	21.3%	16.0%	18.8%	14.8%
Putnam	19.1%	14.4%	16.0%	12.9%
Sullivan	21.2%	16.0%	18.1%	14.5%
Vermillion	24.5%	17.5%	21.2%	15.9%
Vigo	24.6%	18.7%	21.6%	17.2%
West Central Indiana (average)	22.06%	16.42%	19.16%	15.0%
Indiana	19.5%	14.8%	16.6%	12.9%
United States	19.9%	13.9%	17.9%	13.3%

Source: Feeding America & STATS.INDIANA.EDU

## CASE STUDY

### REGIONAL HOUSING ANALYSIS

The U.S. housing market has undergone a radical shift since 2020. Resilient captured this shift, which prompted Thrive into action. The study aims to develop a clear understanding of the regional housing market and the factors impacting supply and demand and to analyze key policy, infrastructure, or other constraints on housing. Using these findings, Thrive West Central will work with its partners to identify opportunities and tools for developing new housing, upgrading existing housing stock, and increasing access and affordability of quality housing throughout a seven-county region. The release date is in the fall of 2022.

#### HOUSING



Median Listing Price

**\$122,450**

as of August 2, 2021

On August 2, 2021, the median home list price was **\$122,450**, a **\$37,750** increase from the January 2020 listed price of **\$84,700**. This is a reflection of inflation and the demand for affordable housing.

Source: Terre Haute Area Association of Realtors

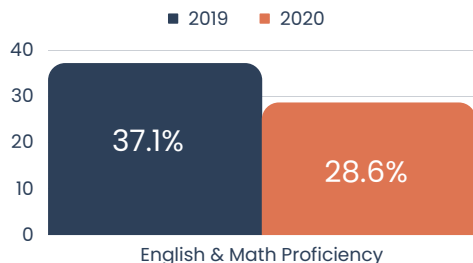
## OPPORTUNITIES

Good **quality of life** encompasses a variety of needs of individuals. Health, happiness, community support, comfort, entertainment, economics, culture, and more are all facets of a good quality of life. To be a sustainable community, West Central Indiana must address the quality of life offered to individuals during a time of crisis and during times of contentment. Examples of **opportunities** for West Central Indiana communities include:

- Develop a robust rural transportation system to provide access to food, medical treatments, and healthier choices
- Expand infrastructures like water, sewer, broadband, sidewalks, and trails to promote housing developments and spur public-private partnerships
- Partner with community organizations, educational institutions, and health systems to advance healthy, nutritious, and active lifestyles

# EDUCATION

## LEARNING LOSS



The 2020 ILEARN exam determined only **28.6%** of students statewide (grades 3–8) are **proficient** in both English & Math. That's an **8.5%** drop from the previous year. There may be a correlation between learning loss and non-traditional (e-learning) classroom settings.

Source: Indiana Department of Education

% of Students Proficient in both Math and English Since Returning to Traditional Classroom Setting

Statewide	2020–2021 Both ELA & Math Proficient	2021–2022 Both ELA & Math Proficient
Grade 3	33.7%	36%
Grade 4	32.1%	34.3%
Grade 5	29.3%	31.1%
Grade 6	26.6%	28%
Grade 7	25.7%	27%
Grade 8	24.4%	25.5%
	28.6%	30.2%

Source: Indiana Department of Education

School Corporation	State Grade
Clay Community Schools	B
North Central Parke Community Schools	C
Southwest Parke Community Schools	C
Cloverdale Community Schools	B
Greencastle Community Schools	C
North Putnam Community Schools	B
South Putnam Community Schools	B
Northeast Schools	B
Southwest Schools	B
North Vermillion Community Schools	C
South Vermillion Community Schools	C
Vigo County Schools	B

## SCHOOL QUALITY

**A+** 0/12

The Indiana Department of Education assesses schools annually based on their graduation rate and other factors. In 2020, **none** of the region's school districts received an **"A"** grade. Employers and families looking to relocate often look for robust "A" rated schools.

Source: Indiana Department of Education



STUDENT  
HEALTH

3,700,000

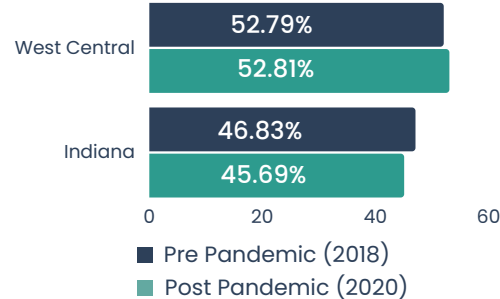
Number of adolescents who depend on educational settings for mental health care

The Kaiser Family Foundation found that **3.7 million** adolescents depend on educational settings for their primary source of mental health care. **71%** of parents believe the pandemic has impacted their children's mental health. The opportunity exists to increase mental health and social work counseling and serve in an educational setting. In addition to developing programs and services to help students mitigate or overcome stressors.

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation

FREE & REDUCED  
LUNCHES

% of Food Insecure Individuals



Before and during the pandemic, West Central Indiana had a **higher** proportion of students receiving free and reduced lunches than the state. During COVID-19, these students often did not have access to adequate, nutritious meals.

Source: Stats Indiana

## BROADBAND & DIGITAL INCLUSION

During the 2020–2021 school year, in some parts of West Central Indiana, we had as high as **33%** of students who **did not** have access to a **computer and internet**. This hindered student educational outcomes and significantly contributed to our region's **8.5%** learning loss.

Source: Indiana Department of Education

## CASE STUDY LEARNING COMMUNITIES

In response to a high volume of families in need of safe, reliable locations for their children to participate in e-learning, The Mind Trust, an Indianapolis-based non-profit that “works to ensure high-quality education for all kids,” provided grants to several community centers to provide free, facilitated learning communities for children to participate in virtual classes. These communities ensured that children had access to reliable internet and met the needs of working parents who required dependable childcare.

## OPPORTUNITIES

Educating the next generation is something most individuals, regardless of their differences, can rally to work together on. There is an opportunity for West Central Indiana communities to significantly impact their public education outcomes by actively pursuing activities that promote college readiness, remediation programs, opportunities to advance school ratings, digital inclusion, access to technology, mental health programs, and programs that support both parents and students in achieving long-term educational outcomes. A few examples of opportunities are:

- Developing a regional map of free/public WiFi locations or hotspots for parents/students while broadband infrastructure is being developed.
- Partner with community organizations to offer mental and social health support programs.
- Partner with State and local organizations to access programs that advance school corporation ratings as well as improve or develop college readiness activities.
- Develop community resources that promote lifelong learning and post-secondary educational achievements.

# RESILIENT IN ACTION

Resilient has already spurred local and regional activities. A few include:



## **READI FUNDING**

The data sourced for Resilient served as the backbone for the Wabash River Regional Development Authority's READI application in 2021. This application was awarded 20 million dollars in federal funding, equating to over 122 million dollars of private investment throughout the region.



## **SPARK: REVOLVING LOAN FUND**

The Resilient data supported the need for a 1 million dollar EDA Revolving Loan Fund award fused into Thrive's Spark Revolving Loan Fund program, supported a READI-funded early learning center project by Indiana State University, and other quality of life projects throughout the region.



## **REGIONAL HOUSING ANALYSIS**

Resilient launched Thrive West Central to conduct a Regional Housing Analysis in the fall of 2022 in conjunction with a READI-funded Homes for the Future Pilot for 1.8 million dollars to assist with housing development throughout the region.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



*Resilient was made possible through a grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration.  
We are thankful for their continued support in our mission.*

# ABOUT THRIVE

Thrive is made up of over sixty employees who improve the quality of life in West Central Indiana by being an innovative regional leader. We provide expertise in the following areas of service:

COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT

TRANSPORTATION  
PLANNING

AGING & DISABLED  
SERVICES

## OUR TEAM



**RYAN KELLER**  
Executive  
Director



**JON FORD**  
Director of Business  
Development



**KAREN SCHNEIDERS**  
Director of  
Transportation Planning



**JESSICA TAYLOR**  
Director of Aging &  
Disabled Services



**KRIS KRUEGER**  
Director of Economic &  
Community Development



**ASHLEY MORGAN**  
Community Development  
Specialist



**THOMAS WRIGHT**  
Community Development  
Specialist



**ABBEY MARTIN**  
Community Development  
Specialist

**Does your community  
or organization need  
assistance?**

**We can help!**

E-mail:  
[resilient@thrivewestcentral.com](mailto:resilient@thrivewestcentral.com)



**SCAN ME**

to access the full  
plan

## **OUR MISSION**

Thrive West Central's mission is to be an innovative regional driver dedicated to enhancing and maximizing community assets to improve the quality of life in West Central Indiana.

Thrive exists to help individuals, families, businesses, and local governments reach their goals in a proactive and sustainable way.

**Read the full plan: [thrivewestcentral.com/resilient](http://thrivewestcentral.com/resilient)**

**THRIVE**  
WEST CENTRAL



