About the Indiana University Center for Rural Engagement

The center collaborates with Hoosier communities—and the many organizations that serve them—to address the community’s and state’s goals by creating scalable, flexible, and replicable solutions to complex challenges common to rural communities everywhere.

The center calls on the research, teaching, and service of IU Bloomington faculty, staff, and students to address the challenges these communities face and to enhance opportunities identified by the communities themselves.

The mission of the center is to partner with rural communities to improve Hoosier lives. It does so by providing rural communities and small regional cities with access to IU’s cultural assets, research, data, community-engaged teaching, and student service. The center builds, coordinates, and deepens sustained relationships between communities and the university to address rural challenges and opportunities.

The center leverages the resources of IU Bloomington to improve Indiana Communities.

- 9K faculty and staff
- 550+ academic programs
- 200+ research centers
- 40K students
- 324+ community ideas were gathered from initial listening meetings.
- 4,900+ students have participated in community-engaged projects and activities.
- 590+ student organizations, community engagement programs, and service learning classes are connected to opportunities through IU Corps.
- 7,300+ community members in 39 communities have been engaged to build collaborations and refine our understanding of community opportunities.
- 158 community-identified projects have been launched since 2017.
- 658,000+ student service hours for 2018–19 through IU Corps, which provided volunteer-hour value of more than $16 million.
Top priorities

**Maternal health**
The IU Center for Rural Engagement seeks to improve the health and well-being of children, women, and families with increased maternal and infant care by lowering smoking and other behaviors that are dangerous to mothers and infants.

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<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>28% (SWCI*), 32% (IN)</td>
<td>of moms without 1st trimester prenatal care</td>
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<tr>
<td>22.1% (SWCI*), 15% (IN)</td>
<td>of moms smoke during pregnancy</td>
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**Housing**
The IU Center for Rural Engagement is developing a replicable, collaborative rural regional housing planning process to create 3,500 new housing units for varied income levels and establish a model for additional housing initiatives across rural Indiana to meet workforce needs.

**Food systems**
The IU Center for Rural Engagement seeks to increase the consumption and production of local food in Indiana’s strong agricultural economy with a local food value chain advancement plan, harnessing the buying power of institutions and organizations and connecting them to Indiana’s food producers.

**Parks, recreation, and public lands**
The IU Center for Rural Engagement is working to heighten awareness of Indiana’s excellent parks and recreation resources to promote tourism and health for both Hoosiers and visitors with an inventory and opportunity mapping project.

**Substance use disorder**
The IU Center for Rural Engagement is working to reduce the cumulative impact of substance use disorder in rural communities with the development of an opioid response program and education modules, and implementing best practices in rural addictions treatment and prevention.

**Chronic disease**
The IU Center for Rural Engagement is addressing major chronic conditions—the leading causes of death in Indiana—including type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and obesity. The center does this through Community Health Improvement Plans and assessments, a rural nursing home-health program, and health professional training and continuing education.

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<tr>
<td>12.5% (SWCI*), 10% (IN)</td>
<td>of population diagnosed with diabetes</td>
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<tr>
<td>32.7% (SWCI*), 31.8% (IN)</td>
<td>of population diagnosed with obesity</td>
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<tr>
<td>295 (SWCI*), 256 (IN)</td>
<td>deaths from hypertension per 100,000 people</td>
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**Water resilience**
A 2014 study by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce notes that Indiana ranked first in the nation in the percentage of its economy that depends on water. The IU Center for Rural Engagement is dedicated to examining water resources, including karst aquifers that require greater understanding of their role on Indiana’s water supply resilience.

**Quality of place**
The IU Center for Rural Engagement is increasing the quality of place of rural communities with arts and cultural resources for residents from school-age children to senior citizens, including comprehensive community planning, arts and humanities events and activities, creative aging toolkits, an IU Rural Arts Certificate program, and a model for cultural festivals.