



Strengthening communities through applied research, community-engaged teaching, and student service.



## About the Indiana University Center for Rural Engagement

The Indiana University Center for Rural Engagement brings together people, research, cultural assets, and expertise to improve quality of life and address rural challenges from addiction to the arts.

Together with our partners, we have become a national model for how universities can support the needs and futures of rural residents and communities.

Working in full-spectrum community innovation through research, community-engaged teaching and student service, we build vision, harness assets, and cultivate sustainable leadership structures within the communities to ensure long-term success.

### Focus areas



Health and wellness



Quality of place



Resilient communities



Educational attainment



Economic development



Capacity building

We leverage the resources of IU Bloomington to improve rural 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 this year.



**590+**

student organizations, community engagement programs, and service learning classes are connected to opportunities through IU Corps.



**7,900+**

community members in 43 communities have been engaged to build collaborations and refine our understanding of community opportunities.

**193**

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.

# Together we're creating a healthier Indiana.

In collaboration with community leaders, we have prioritized population health issues to promote the well-being of people in rural communities, with a focus on substance use disorder, obesity and diabetes, maternal and infant health, tobacco use, mental health, aging-in-place, and chronic disease.



## Chronic disease

We are addressing major chronic conditions—the leading causes of death in Indiana—including type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and obesity. We do this through Community Health Improvement Plans and assessments, a rural nursing home-health program, and health professional training and continuing education.

## Maternal health

We seek 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. The School of Public Health launched Project UNITE to reduce Indiana's rates of teen pregnancy and reduce smoking among expectant mothers and families.

## Mental health and addictions

We are working to reduce the cumulative impact of substance abuse in rural communities with the development of an opioid response program and community education modules. We are implementing best practices in rural addictions treatment and prevention in partnership with the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration and the Indiana Rural Health Association.

In collaboration with a team from the School of Social Work, we are working to increase access to mental health services in rural communities. This year, the team identified customized solutions for Martin County—including new service sites and telehealth technology.

## Aging in Place

We support safe and healthy aging-in-place through a partnership with the Luddy School of Informatics, Computing, and Engineering, researching peer caregiving activities and conducting feasibility testing of CareBand wearable device technology.

## Professional development

We have facilitated more than 40 community education and training sessions on topics ranging from adverse childhood experiences to substance use disorder. We are partnering with the School of Social Work and the School of Public Health to develop a free, online training module on trauma informed care for communities.

# Together we're improving the resilience of our land, water, and food.

Our environment is changing. As communities seek new approaches to flood control, water sources and treatment, food security, and parks and public land management, our center is a connection point to the research and resources that inform future steps.

## Food systems

We seek 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.

IU Sustainable Food Systems Science is working to identify community food system needs, gather ideas for improvement, and map regional food systems. A multi-disciplinary team is collaborating with local leaders and residents to examine food programs, increasing seniors' access to food.

## Parks, recreation, and public lands

We are heightening 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.

As part of these efforts, the Indiana Geological and Water Survey is launching improved topographical maps of the Knobstone escarpment, and the Luddy School of Informatics, Computing, and Engineering is working in collaboration with Hoosier National Forest to monitor light pollution and gain Dark Sky Designation.

## 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. We are dedicated to examining water resources, including karst aquifers that require greater understanding of their role on Indiana's water supply resilience.

Indiana Geological and Water Survey has launched a karst aquifer study and a springs inventory in the Indiana Uplands region to gain a better understanding of these resources and the region's resilience for future water source and treatment demands.



## Together we're helping arts and culture thrive in rural communities.

The arts and humanities are a critical part of community, contributing to our understanding of the human experience and increasing community quality of place. Through our partnership with more than a dozen IU departments and programs, rural residents are crafting their own narratives and reimagining a creative horizon that is both individually and collectively fulfilling.

### Arts Administration

We have coordinated with the School of Public and Environmental Affairs to offer an IU Rural Arts Certificate program to build capacity, strategy, and sustainability of community rural arts programs. The Master of Arts Administration program developed strategic plans for Huntingburg, Nashville, and Salem, Indiana.

### Housing

We have convened a regional housing coalition that is creating a housing ready toolkit, and a replicable, collaborative rural regional housing planning process to create 3,500 new housing units for varied income levels, which will serve as a model for additional housing initiatives across rural Indiana to meet workforce needs.

### Creative aging

In partnership with Traditional Arts Indiana and the Mathers Museum of World Cultures, we are developing creative aging guides, activity kits, and workshops that leverage folk arts to improve quality of life for older adults in rural communities.

### Rural arts series

We are working with IU Arts and Humanities faculty to bring arts performances and exhibitions, such as music, dance, film, and theatre; museum exhibits; lectures; creative writing; and initiatives to assist local arts groups with community development and capacity building.

### Arts education

The IU Eskenazi Museum of Art's Rural Teachers Engaging Art program provides school-based techniques for engaging with museum collections in ways that help teachers understand and utilize the healing and educational power of the arts. The program uses an emergent approach to outreach that features co-created, arts-based experiences that speak to the needs and goals of individual teachers.

### Artist exchanges and residencies

Campus artists and writers join partnering rural communities for month-long residencies during which they have space and time to practice their craft as well as lead community workshops, teach public school students, host open studio hours, and participate in local exhibits. We plan to host similar residencies for community artists to work on campus.



**Learn more**  
**Become a partner**  
**Propose a project**

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**RURAL ENGAGEMENT**