



THE POLICY
CIRCLE®

Poverty | Indiana

Discussion Guide

Let's Learn about Our State

As in America, it is true in Indiana that the enduring promise of the American Dream is that hard work earns a place in the middle class, and that each generation can - and will - do better than the one before. Though, Indiana has a 2-sided economy:

- Both as a Kiplinger Top 10 City to Start a Business, but hosting a 64% Workforce Participation Rate;
- As a Forbes Top 10 City for Young Professionals, but an 80% increase of people in poverty over the last decade; and
- As a Brookings 29th ranking in 5-year job creation, but 83% of jobs created in the last decade are below self-sustaining wages statewide.

Local trends point to the shrinking of middle wage jobs as increases in automation and technology continue. The core of the Indy Region has been disproportionately impacted, as jobs and wages in new industries have not fully replaced those in legacy manufacturing. Legacy manufacturing is disappearing, and converting to Healthcare (+53k jobs 1995-2015 @ \$53k salary), and TDL (+22k jobs @ \$44k salary). Skills now also impact job quality, with 51% of new jobs in the Indy Region requiring postsecondary training, but attainment rate of 42% in our region.

Our region, like many others is experiencing a narrower bridge to prosperity. Requirements de-plank the bridge include: clean criminal record, high school diploma, housing, clean drug test, access to transportation, sustainable wage job, postsecondary credentials, and child care. The hourly wage needed for a Marion County family is \$19.95, and 19% of Marion County residents (7% of regional residents) are below the poverty line.

Further, the Indy Region has experienced a 10.6% decrease in “nearby jobs”, and 23.6% decrease in nearby jobs in high-poverty neighborhoods. The Net Metro Migration of employers needing talent in the Indy region is concentrated in Marion and the donut counties. For Indiana, the Indy region is 20% of land area, 35% of population, and 40% of GDP—resolving the poverty issues in the Indy region is a substantial impact to the poverty issues in Indiana as a whole.

Let's Get Involved

There are a variety of ways individuals can get involved in Indiana.

- ***Understand the Barriers***

To an individual (Job Access, Physical/Mental Health, Childcare, Benefits Cliff, Drug Testing Criminal Record, Language, Skills, Financial Literacy, Lack of Insurance, Work/Life/Training Balance, Loan Debt vs. Wages) and to an employer (Drug Testing, Skills Deficit, Turnover, Lack of Applicants Liability, Stalled Productivity, Health Care Costs, Training Costs Absenteeism, Soft Skills)

- ***Break Down Barriers***

Education and skills training are critical to our long-term success, but these alone will not solve long-term challenges. A comprehensive approach must be taken to break down other barriers to people fully accessing the workforce and the economy. In a region like Indy where many organizations are doing great work to break down these barriers, it's important to make sure that efforts aren't being duplicated and that overlooked areas are being addressed

- ***Align Economic & Community Developments***

Forefront strategies include Next Level Jobs, Indy Promise, and Inclusive Public Incentives, Workforce Housing, and STEM Education. Planning around strategies underway, for Infrastructure, Parks, Food Deserts, Criminal Justice, Technology, and Mental Health Care.

- ***Influence Policy***

Research the committees on which your Senators and Representatives serve. Write to your Senators and Representative to ask for information on local leaders in your district/state when it comes to addressing poverty. Get involved with a local community organization and ask your elected officials to highlight successful examples of breaking the cycle of poverty at the local level. Highlight a local community organization success story in an Op Ed in your local paper. Take opportunities when related articles (on economic decline, inequality, lack of access to loans for entrepreneurs etc.) appear in your local paper to write a letter to the editor. Education Reform/[Regulatory Reform](#) are also necessary to break down barriers to opportunity. Keep up with current and upcoming briefs to stay active in the conversation. Encourage friends and colleagues to learn about this topic. Create a social media hashtag and tell them how to get involved as well.