

Community Vitality Indicators: Technical Information

This brief document provides more in-depth information on the Community Vitality Indicators (or CVI). The CVI, developed by the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs, is comprised of the following six variables:

- Population estimates
- Public school enrollment as a % of population under 18 years of age
- Public high school graduation rate
- Percent adult population with associates degree or higher education
- Per capita market income
- Per capita gross assessed value

Population: The resident population of a county reflects the magnitude of the local demand for goods and services, including the supply of the labor force. Counties with populations above or below certain thresholds are important in determining their urban or rural classifications. A decrease in population may be indicative of key demographic changes resulting from outmigration or the aging of the population, or could be the result of major jobs losses in the area.

Public School Enrollment: Public school enrollment as a percent of the population under 18 years of age captures the reach of the elementary, middle, and high schools in the county. This indicator does not encompass the entire school-aged population, such as students who may be attending private schools, are home tutored, or enrolled in some alternative educational program. This variable also designed to serve as an indirect proxy of the vitality of a county. Schools that are growing in enrollment tend to viewed as high quality educational institutions and/or located in places that are realizing population expansion.

Public High School Graduation Rate, This indicator tracks how well counties are doing in terms of ensuring the timely completion of a high school degree by students. High rates of graduation from high school infers that schools are equipping students with the knowledge and skills they need to move into their young adult roles (be it work or post-secondary education opportunities).

Percent of the Adult Population with Associates' Degrees or Higher: This variable reflects to degree to which a county has a solid pool of adults (25 years of age and higher) with the education and skills needed to secure good quality jobs. A county with a significant percentage of adults with associates' degrees or higher are more likely to prove attractive to businesses and industries that are in need of a talented and highly skilled workforce.

Per Capita Market Income (PCMI): Per capita income is a measure that includes wages and salaries, other labor income, proprietor's income, rental income of persons, personal dividend income, and transfer payments (from such sources as Social Security, TANF, etc.). PCMI, however, is different from per capita income in that it does not include income secured from transfer payments. Therefore, it is the average income garnered on a per person basis from all sources with the exception of transfer payments.

Per Capita Gross Assessed Value: *Gross assessed value* is the total assessed value of agricultural property, businesses, homesteads, and other residential properties in Indiana, without considering deductions. The *net assessed value* pertains to taxable assessed value after deductions, which can be specific to a county. The *per capita gross assessed value* is determined by dividing the gross assessed value by the mid-year population in the county.

Data Sources:

Data for the six selected indicators were compiled for the most recent date in which final estimates of population and income were released from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Economic Analysis. The gross assessed values were also compiled for each of the 92 counties in Indiana. The gross assessed value for one particular county was not available in the years prior to 2014.

More about the Rankings:

The ranking highlighted in the *Rural Indiana Stats* website employs a simple ranking method where each indicator is ranked based on the magnitude and order regardless of the differences in scale. For example, Marion County is ranked 1st in population and

Allen County is ranked 3rd but Allen County's population is not exactly 1/3rd of Marion County's population. The final ranking is based on the linear sum of ranks of all the six variables arranged in ascending order so that the lowest sum receives the highest rank. This is the simplest method to rank a set of variables assuming that all variables have equal weights. The method can generate ties in ranking where two counties receive the same ranks, but it is intuitive, and easy to estimate and interpret. Boone County emerges as the first ranked county followed by Hendricks, Hamilton, Porter, and Hancock counties with 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th ranks respectively. Dearborn is 6th, Dubois and Floyd are tied at 7th, Johnson is 8th, Warrick is 9th, and Kosciusko County is ranked 10th. In contrast to the top ten ranked counties, the lower ranked counties include Crawford at 92nd, Parke is 91st, and Switzerland as the 90th ranked county in Indiana. Owen, Fayette, Blackford, Jennings, Orange, Perry, and Starke counties are ranked 89th, 88th, 87th, 86th, 85th, 84th, and 83rd, respectively.