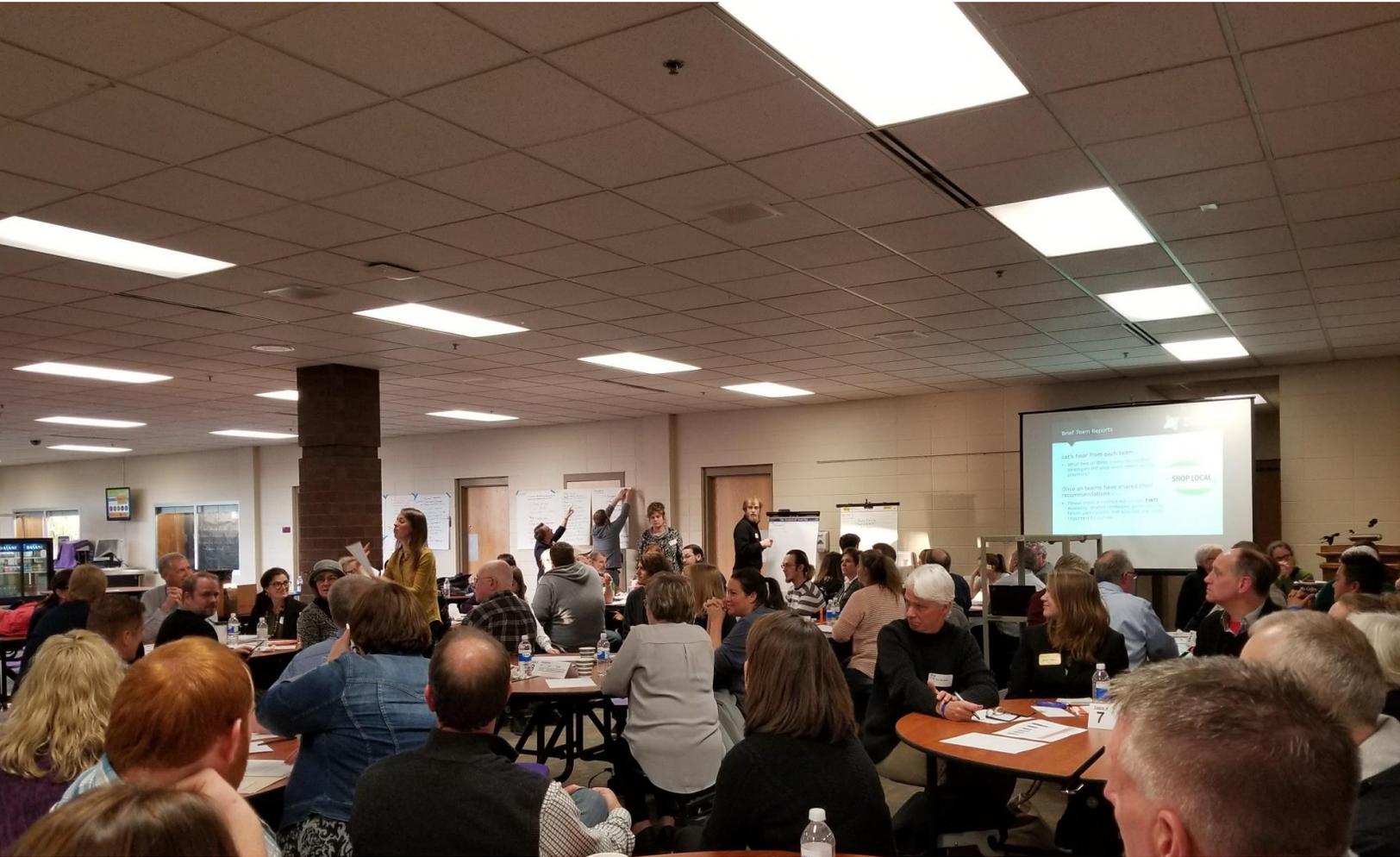




**PURDUE**  
UNIVERSITY



APLU

INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY UNIVERSITIES  
AWARDS PROGRAM

CASE  
STUDY  
2019

IEP CATEGORY • PLACE

**Purdue University: Purdue Center for  
Regional Development - Advancing  
Local/Regional Collaborations &  
Innovations**

## ABOUT PCRD

Over ten years, a steady decline in coal jobs struck Indiana’s Crawford, Dubois, Orange, Perry, Pike, and Spencer counties. The Indiana 15 Regional Planning Commission (IN-15) wanted to understand the economic impact of this downturn, but identifying region-wide economic data was a challenge.

The Purdue Center for Regional Development (PCRD) was the first to analyze industry and workforce data to help examine this issue. PCRD determined that since 2009, coal jobs in the region had decreased by 74 percent. Using this critical data, the IN-15 Commission was able to demonstrate the significant impact of the downturn and earn two Economic Development Administration grants totaling \$5,399,000. The grants are focused on diversifying the job market and expanding workforce development activities, as well as improving the Tell City River Port, water lines, and the Hoosier Southern Rail in Perry County.



Figure 1

PCRD was formed in 2005 in response to our nation’s call for research universities to become more engaged in promoting regional prosperity. “Many key social and economic challenges and opportunities might be better addressed from a regional perspective, and we help communities and counties achieve that goal,” said PCRD Director Dr. Lionel “Bo” Beaulieu. “PCRD accelerates innovation with approaches to regional engagement that are agile, adaptive, and responsive.” PCRD develops stronger communities throughout Indiana in many ways:

### *Hometown Collaboration Initiative*

Conducted in partnership with Ball State, the Hometown Collaboration Initiative (HCI) is available to Indiana communities with populations of 25,000 or less that are committed to building on their existing assets. HCI is comprised of three phases: (1) Building a strong, broadly representative team, gathering and studying data, and garnering public input; (2) Growing local capacity in leadership, economy, or placemaking; and (3) Executing a project that serves as the springboard for pursuing longer-term community development plans. Since its launch in 2015, HCI has worked with 19 Indiana communities, helping them capture nearly \$1.1 million in support. Several successful projects include the development of Bicentennial Park in the City of Corydon; the entrepreneurial website in Rush County; the “Logansport Re-Imagined” local neighborhood beautification program; and the revitalization of the Farmer’s Market in Auburn. HCI is less about projects and more an effort to re-ignite the civic spirit in Indiana’s rural communities. HCI has been highly successful, recruiting 400 Hoosiers to serve on their local coordinating committees, attracting over 1,200 residents to their local community forums,

securing responses from 16,100 residents to local surveys, and drawing over 12,000 volunteer hours to the HCI effort.

#### *Wabash Heartland Innovation Network (WHIN)*

PCRD was among the first to assist the Community Foundation of Greater Lafayette (CFGL) in pursuing community development funding from Lilly Endowment. The Wabash Heartland Innovation Network (WHIN) is dedicated to fueling prosperity throughout Pulaski, White, Cass, Benton, Carroll, Tippecanoe, Warren, Fountain, Montgomery, and Clinton counties. WHIN's vision is to increase access to the power of Internet- and sensor-based technology as it applies to digital agriculture, next-generation manufacturing, and quality of life. PCRD provided critical grant-writing support, prepared regional industry cluster and workforce data for the region's economic development plan, and built the metrics to track the progress of the 10-county initiative. These multi-pronged activities enabled the team to secure the \$38.9 million WHIN grant in Fall 2017.

#### *Broadband Mapping and Adoption*

PCRD, in partnership with Purdue Extension, has completed the most extensive study ever conducted on the benefits/costs of providing broadband to households in rural Indiana. This study prompted Indiana Governor Holcomb to pursue a \$100 million investment to expand broadband to unserved areas of Indiana. In-depth broadband reports also were produced for four Indiana Association of Regional Planning Council regions, resulting in the formation of Broadband Task Forces to address gaps in broadband access and utilization in targeted geographic areas. PCRD/Extension has teamed with the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs to develop and implement Rural Broadband Planning Grants. Five sites have been awarded grants and the Purdue team is providing awardees with key data and technical assistance to guide the formation of a Broadband Readiness Plan. An exciting new program, Digital Ready Businesses, has also been designed to help small Indiana businesses and entrepreneurs expand their online presence.

#### *Online Data Dashboards*

There was a need for easily accessible data and maps on housing and fiscal attributes of rural communities in Indiana. PCRD built a website that empowers users to quickly find information in socioeconomic, housing, fiscal, and broadband data. To help guide the Indiana State Department of Agriculture in determining best sites for value-added agricultural activities, PCRD recently added original mapping of Indiana's agricultural commodities across the state's 92 counties. Data are available in a searchable tabular format as well as interactive GIS maps. PCRD also provides rural typology maps and CVI maps. The website is regularly used by the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs, Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority, the

Indiana State Department of Agriculture, the Indiana Economic Development Association, as well as local community and economic development professionals.

- PCRD unveiled a data dashboard built on Tableau for the Indiana Association for Regional Councils (IARC) in November 2017 at the IARC annual meeting in Indianapolis. The website contains a select set of 10 indicators for the 15 IARC regions, including key industry clusters, demographic and labor market indicators, and broadband.
- *A Dimensions of Poverty* online story map provides in-depth information on the nature and extent of poverty between 1970-2016 in the 12 states of the North Central Region of the U.S. The data are being used to develop a better understanding of the socioeconomic features of Indiana's 156 Opportunity Zones, a new federal policy designed to attract private sector investments in impoverished census tracts in the nation.

PCRD is proud of the pioneering approaches that have consistently improved the communities of Indiana and the lives of our citizens. By defining the contours of regional engagement, we will continue to build mutually beneficial collaborations, foster trust, and advance economic development throughout Indiana and beyond.

*Additional Links*

<https://www.pcrd.purdue.edu/>

<http://indianahci.org/blog/>

<http://www.iarcdatadashboard.com/>

<http://pcrd.purdue.edu/ncpoverty>

<http://whinsmartregion.org/>

<https://www.pcrd.purdue.edu/media/index.php>

## ABOUT APLU

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) is North America's oldest higher education association. APLU is a research, policy, and advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening and advancing the work of public universities in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. The association's membership consists of public research universities, land-grant institutions, state university systems, and affiliated organizations.

APLU's mission is to: expand access and improve student success to deliver the innovative workforce of tomorrow; advance and promote research and discovery to improve society, foster economic growth, and address global challenges; and build healthy, prosperous, equitable, and vibrant communities locally and globally.

Based in Washington, DC, the association's work is furthered by an active and effective advocacy arm that works with Congress and the administration as well as the media to advance federal policies that strengthen public universities and benefit the students they serve.

## ABOUT THE IEP UNIVERSITIES PROGRAM

APLU and its **Commission on Economic and Community Engagement (CECE)** established the Innovation and Economic Prosperity (IEP) Universities Program to help higher education institutions codify, elevate, and advance their campus enterprise supporting economic and community development.

The **IEP designation program** recognizes institutions that have demonstrated a meaningful, ongoing and substantial commitment to economic and community development, growth, and economic opportunity.

The **IEP awards program** recognize exemplary and innovative projects in university-based economic and community engagement:

- **Talent** and workforce development
- **Innovation**, entrepreneurship, and tech-based economic development
- **Place** development through public service, outreach, and community engagement

Learn more at: [www.APLU.org/IEP](http://www.APLU.org/IEP)