



Arts & Culture Plan

2025 – 2035

We Make things Here | Appendix

**TRANSFORMING
COMMUNITIES • ART**
through the power of arts and culture

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
WELCOME	11
The Project	12
The Plan	13
THE REGION	17
East Central, IN	18
State of the Arts	23
Defining Success	32
Goals & Strategies	34
The Big Ideas	52
Call to Action	61
THE COUNTIES	65
Introduction	66
Blackford County	67
Delaware County	73
Fayette County	79
Grant County	85
Henry County	91
Jay County	97
Randolph County	103
Wayne County	109
THE TOOLKIT	115
Introduction	116
A. Ideas & Inspiration	117
B. Project Funding	124
C. Data & Advocacy	125
D. Glossary	128
APPENDIX	129
A. Data Tables	130
B. Methodology	139
Acknowledgements	147



Images from Winterfest, Downtown Connersville

A. DATA TABLES

Overview

This section provides detailed data and context aligned with discussion in the body of the plan. They are included to help the region with benchmarking and case-making with leaders. At the same time, they provide support for the regional overview, the State of the Arts assessment, goals, and strategies overall. Finally, it provides a quick recap of related investments for planning purposes.

List of Data Tables

1. Livability Index
2. Technology & Broadband
3. Arts Vibrancy
4. The Asset Inventory
5. Recent Arts & Culture Funding
6. Forge ECI READI Projects



Note to the Reader

The Forge ECI site numbers may from these because:
1) The region includes Rush County for all but READI; or 2)
Some numbers lean on estimates for different years.



"Paint By Monster is an educational comedy about Art and being an Artist, created and performed by me, Dan Wright." (Muncie)

<https://www.paintbymonster.com/gallery>

1. Livability Index (AARP, 2024)

	Regional Average	Delaware	Wayne	Henry	Blackford	Fayette	Randolph	Grant	Jay	U.S. Median
Overall Score	49 - 1	51	51	49	49	48	48	48	48	50
1. Engagement	64 +17	66	60	73	65	63	62	60	59	47
2. Opportunity	60 +10	58	58	58	66	55	60	61	62	50
3. Health	48 +8	47	61	49	35	44	51	56	41	40
4. Housing	48 - 11	56	51	43	51	45	44	49	44	59
5. Transportation	47 +3	49	48	41	51	46	49	40	53	44
6. Environment	44 - 17	41	49	48	43	49	39	39	41	61
7. Neighborhood	33 - 3	37	33	31	32	35	32	30	36	36



Green boxes highlight each county's highest score.

Pink boxes highlight each county's lowest score.

Plus/minus numbers under regional average are the difference between the region and U.S. overall.

Index Scores are based on 61 Indicators (including 40 metrics and 21 policies - details at [//livabilityindex.aarp.org/methods-sources/](https://livabilityindex.aarp.org/methods-sources/).)

	Engagement	Opportunity	Health	Housing	Transportation	Environment	Neighborhoods
METRICS	Broadband cost/speed Voting rate Social involvement index Cultural, arts, and entertainment institutions	Income inequality Jobs per worker Age diversity Local government creditworthiness	Smoking prevalence Obesity prevalence Access to exercise opp. Healthcare prof. shortage areas Preventable hospitalization rate Patient satisfaction	Zero-step entrances Housing costs Housing cost burden	Local transit service freq. ADA-accessible stations and vehicles Walkability index Congestion Access to jobs by auto Speed limits Crash rate	Drinking water quality Regional air quality Near-roadway pollution Local industrial pollution Household transportation costs	Access to grocery stores/farmers' markets ... to parks ... to libraries ... to jobs by transit Destinations diversity Activity density Crime rate Vacancy rate
POLICIES	Municipal Laws LGBTQ+ anti-discrim. State Voter participation support laws	State & Local Min. wage inc.	State & Local Laws Smoke-free	State & Local Inclusive design laws Housing trust funds State Manufactured protections Foreclosure prevention and protection Acc. dwelling unit support	State & Local Policies Complete Streets State Human services transport coordination Volunteer driver policies	Local Plans Multi-hazard mitigation State Policies Utility disconnection Energy efficiency scorecard	State & Local TOD programs

2. Technology & Broadband

Below is additional detail aligned with the discussion on page 21.

Purdue University Center for Regional Development

	No Internet			Cell Data Only			Mobile Dev. Only			No Computing Dev.		
	2017	2022	Diff.	2017	2022	Diff.	2017	2022	Diff.	2017	2022	Diff.
Blackford	26.4	13.8	(12.6)	13.3	14.8	1.5	11.9	24.3	12.4	19.0	10.8	(8.2)
Delaware	20.3	10.1	(10.2)	8.7	13.0	4.3	9.6	18.4	8.8	14.2	6.8	(7.4)
Fayette	32.2	15.2	(16.9)	7.4	16.7	9.3	9.9	23.8	13.9	20.7	9.9	(10.8)
Grant	25.6	12.6	(13.0)	10.7	14.8	4.1	13.4	22.3	8.8	18.2	9.6	(8.5)
Henry	25.6	12.4	(13.2)	7.8	14.5	6.7	10.7	19.4	8.8	19.0	8.7	(10.3)
Jay	29.0	17.2	(11.8)	10.7	20.4	9.7	12.6	25.9	13.4	23.3	13.5	(9.8)
Randolph	24.1	15.8	(8.3)	12.2	18.9	6.7	12.1	20.5	8.4	17.6	8.8	(8.8)
Wayne	27.5	11.7	(15.8)	8.1	14.9	6.8	11.4	20.1	8.6	18.6	9.5	(9.1)
Regional Average *	26.3	13.6	(12.7)	9.9	16.0	6.1	11.5	21.8	10.4	18.8	9.7	(9.1)

<https://pcrd.purdue.edu/analyzing-indianas-digital-landscape-bridging-gaps-and-unveiling-trends-in-internet-access-and-device-usage/>

* Each of the differences measured in this study were deemed to be statistically significant EXCEPT for those with stars. Regional averages were calculated as part of this plan, not the underlying research.



Check out [A Practitioner’s Guide to Rural Digital Inclusion](#)

Center for Rural Innovation Blog (October 8, 2025)

Rural communities must pair broadband expansion with affordable devices, hands-on training support, and AI literacy—to turn connectivity into jobs, entrepreneurship, and long-term local prosperity.

“ Rural people need to see themselves as **creators** and not just consumers of technology.

Shaniqua Corley-Moore,
Head of Tech Talent Development at CORI

Digging Deeper into Internet Benchmarks

Indiana

	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Total
No Internet				
2017	19.5	17.3	24.5	20.2
2022	9.8	10.2	14.6	10.6
Difference	(9.7)	(7.1)	(9.9)	(9.6)
Cellular Data Only				
2017	11.7	8.5	4.5	8.9
2022	11.9	13.2	17.7	13.0
Difference	0.2	4.7	13.2	4.1
Mobile Devices Only				
2017	10.3	8.9	10.4	10.1
2022	17.6	15.9	17.9	17.2
Difference	7.3	7.0	7.5	7.1
No Computing Device				
2017	14.2	11.9	17.2	14.5
2022	6.9	6.8	9.8	7.3
Difference	(7.3)	(5.1)	(7.4)	(7.2)

United States

	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Total
No Internet				
2017	16.2	18.7	24.7	17.6
2022	8.0	9.8	13.8	9.0
Difference	(8.2)	(8.9)	(10.9)	(8.6)
Cellular Data Only				
2017	6.9	8.1	10.5	7.5
2022	10.5	11.5	15.2	11.2
Difference	3.6	3.4	4.7	3.7
Mobile Devices Only				
2017	8.9	8.7	10.0	9.0
2022	14.1	14.8	17.4	14.6
Difference	5.2	6.1	7.4	5.6
No Computing Device				
2017	14.2	11.9	17.2	14.5
2022	6.9	6.8	9.6	7.3
Difference	(7.3)	(5.1)	(7.6)	(7.2)

[Analyzing Indiana’s Digital Landscape \(January 2024\)](#)

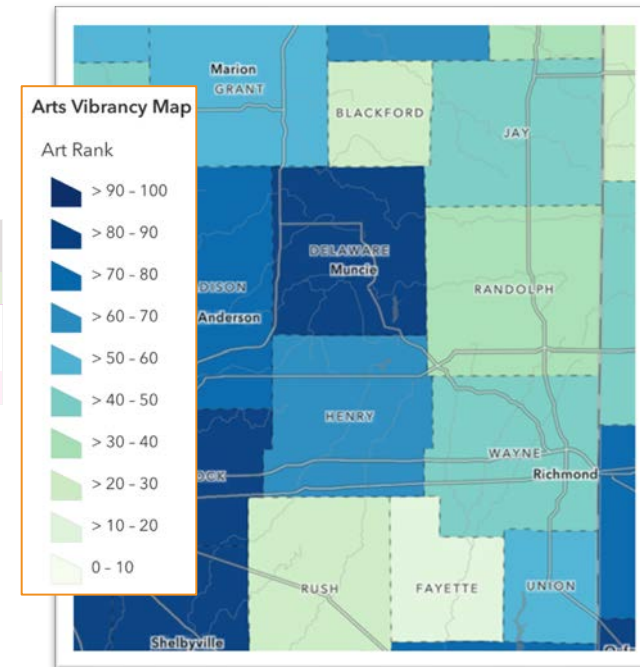
3. Arts Vibrancy (SMU DataArts, 2024)

Some Indiana communities use the Arts Vibrancy Index in their benchmarking and communications. It is both an imperfect measure, particularly as it gives funding greater weight than arts organizations or activity. Even so it is useful in highlighting the differences among the region's counties. As such, it tells a compelling story of have vs have-not in arts vibrancy.

Indices (Percentile)	Delaware	Henry	Grant	Wayne	Jay	Randolph	Blackford	Fayette
Arts Vibrancy	84	67	59	49	48	38	28	20
Arts Providers	50	82	38	79	43	52	24	54
Arts Dollars	64	89	80	49	39	49	60	36
Public Support	75	44	57	49	55	34	26	13

Source: <https://dataarts.smu.edu/ArtsVibrancyMap/>
<https://culturaldata.org/arts-vibrancy-2024/executive-summary/> and <https://culturaldata.org/arts-vibrancy-2024/methodology/>

Index scores show how a county performs relative to other counties nationally (3,143 counties) on a 0-100% scale. For example, a county scoring 85 would be performing better than 85% of other counties, while one scoring 15 would be performing worse than 85% of others. All measures are calculated on a per capita basis.



Variables & Weighting Used for Calculating Arts Vibrancy

WT	(aggregated at X level)	DESCRIPTION	SOURCES
21%	Arts Providers		US Census Bureau, IRS 990s
7%	Artists (zip code)	Freelance artists primarily engaged in performing in artistic productions, in creating artistic and cultural works or productions, or in providing the technical expertise necessary for these productions	
5%	Employees (county)	Number of employees (salaried and contract) by the museum, historical site, theater, dance, music, opera, and other performing arts sectors	
2%	Organizations (zip code)	Number of nonprofit organizations in the museum, arts education, community, dance, music, opera, performing arts center, orchestra, theater, multidisciplinary performing arts, or arts alliance and service organization sectors	
7%	Firms (zip code)	Number of arts, culture, and entertainment firms, weighted for size. Includes museums, theaters, dance companies, opera companies, music groups and performers, music producers and presenters, fine arts schools, and recording, motion picture, and video production companies	
22%	Arts Dollars		IRS 990s, SMU DataArts' Cultural Data Profile, Theatre Communications Group
3%	Program revenue	All revenue earned due to people participating in the activities of nonprofit arts and cultural organizations *	
7%	Contributed revenue	All revenue from contributions to nonprofit arts and cultural organizations (includes public funding) *	
7%	Total expenses	All expenses of nonprofit arts and cultural organizations *	
5%	Total compensation	All payment to staff and artists by nonprofit cultural organizations *	
56%	Gov. Arts Support		National Endowment for the Arts, Institute of Museum and Library Services, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies
12%	\$ State DOLLARS	All state arts dollar funding in the community *	
12%	# State GRANTS	Number of state arts grants awarded in the community	
11%	\$ Federal DOLLARS	All NEA and IMLS dollar funding in the community *	
10%	# Federal GRANTS	Number of NEA and IMLS grants awarded in the community	
11%	\$ Total Government	All government dollar funding in the community (federal, state, and local)	

* Adjusted by a cost-of-living index

4. The Asset Inventory

Both the region and the individual counties will have received the complete cultural asset inventories as collected by the end of this work. They will also have access to mapped versions online via Felt.com. It is everyone's hope that local leaders will add to the inventories and maintain them over time; use them in planning, outreach, program delivery, and advocacy; develop public maps from them; and use them in implementation of this plan. The detail is included here for ease of access and as back up to numbers in the body of the document

		B	D	F	G	H	J	R	W	Total
Art in Non-Art Spaces N = 121	Local art, in business	1	5	2			4	1	2	15
	Local art, in non-art NPO					1	1			2
	Museum/Art, in higher ed.		3		2				1	6
	Programs, in business		1					1		2
	Programs, in k12 or higher ed	2	4		5	1				12
	Programs, in non-art NPO		3		2	1	4		1	11
	Programs, in public library	2	7	1	8	4	3	5	5	35
	Venue, in bar etc.		1	1	5	3			4	14
	Venue, in k12 or higher ed		3		3				1	7
Artist / Creative Industry N = 272	Venue, in local gov	1	4	1	2		2	1	1	12
	Venue, in non-art NPO		1			1	1	1	1	5
	Artists, Coop/Guild							1		1
	Community Art Ctr/School								1	1
	Design, Various	2	9	1	6	1	4	3	2	28
	Film				4	1				5
	Folk/Traditional Arts					2				2
	Literary Arts	1	5	2	1	4			6	19
	Performing Arts, Dance	1	6	1	4	1	1	1	4	19
	Performing Arts, Music		14	1	13	7			1	36
	Performing Arts, Theater			1		2				3
	Retail, Books		2				1			3
	Retail, Fiber		1	1			1	1	1	5
	Retail, Framing		1			1				2
	Retail, Gallery				1			1		2
	Retail, Music	2	2		1	1			1	7
	Retail, Supplies		1	1						2
	Venue, in bar etc.		1							1
	Venue, Music		2				2		1	5
	Venue, Other		1							1
	Venue, Theater					1	1			2
	Visual Arts	2	15	4	9	1	2	3	11	47
	Visual Arts - Craft, Ceramics		6	2		3		3	4	18
	Visual Arts - Craft, Fiber	1	2	1				1		5
	Visual Arts - Craft, Glass		3	2		1		1		7
	Visual Arts - Craft, Jewelry	1	2		1		2			6

WARNING

The cultural asset inventory is a compilation of as many of the arts and culture assets as possible within the project's desk research and crowdsourcing. ***It is not about "regional" assets but rather assets in the region.***

It is incomplete, and that is okay. Errors are a byproduct. Almost by definition, any asset inventory like this will be incomplete. Information is always incomplete; someone is always moving; something is always changing. Someone (or several ones) will be missing and may even be wrong.

Readers may argue with categories. That's okay too. ***The purpose is less about perfection than about identifying opportunity to build from.***

With that in mind, the cultural asset inventory should be considered ***a living, working tool for communities and the region.***



Hunt Guitars, Hartford City
Doug Hunt is one of the Designers for
the Stem Guitar Project

		B	D	F	G	H	J	R	W	Total
Artist / Creative Industry	Visual Arts - Craft, Metal						1			1
	Visual Arts - Craft, Wood	1	1					3		5
	Visual Arts, Photography	2	3	2	7	3	1	5	12	35
	Visual Arts, Tattoo		1				1			2
Arts / Informal Group N = 57	Literary Arts		1						1	2
	Performing Arts, Dance		1			1				2
	Performing Arts, Music		1	2	23				1	27
	Performing Arts, Theater			1	2					3
	Visual Arts		3		2		1			6
	Visual Arts - Craft, Fiber		5	1	2	1	1	1	1	12
	Visual Arts - Craft, Wood		1	1			1			3
	Visual Arts, Photography		1			1				2
Arts Nonprofits N = 55	Arts Council or Assoc, NPO	1	1	1	2	1		3		9
	Arts Council, Local Gov	1			1					2
	Community Art Ctr/School	1	1		1		1	1		5
	Film	1				1				2
	Literary Arts		1							1
	Museum (any type)		3		1		1		2	7
	Performing Arts, Dance			1				1		2
	Performing Arts, Film	1	7						3	11
	Performing Arts, Mult		2		2	1	2	2	2	11
	Performing Arts, Music	1				1				2
	Performing Arts, Theater/Story		2		2	1	2	2	2	11
	Other		1						1	2
	Various		1		1	6	1	1	3	13
Former Asset History & Heritage N = 175	Historic Building/Site/NRHP	1	35	6	16	14	9	8	32	121
	Historic Society/Club	4	4	1	4	1	2	3	2	21
	Museum		3	3	6	4	4	1	11	32
	Other						1			1
Public Art N = 508	Barn Quilt			64		2		47	3	116
	Mural	2	6	11	18	10	12	18	109	186
	Other	1	10			1				12
	Sculpture	8	75		14	6	2	2	7	114
	Utility Wrap		80							80
Misc.	Events & Traditions	15	31	12	23	28	27	12	20	168
	Civic	16	53	20	58	40	19	39	48	293

If the region or individual counties maintain their online asset inventories or maps, these numbers will continue to evolve.

Digging Deeper into Cultural Assets – What are they?



PUBLIC ART

Murals or sculptures designed to enhance or beautify a space (usually not monuments without sculpture)

CREATIVE INDUSTRY

Artists earning income from their craft as a business (with an online or built presence) as well as for-profit entities like a gallery, design or architectural firm, musical group, etc.

ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

Nonprofits dedicated to the arts (e.g., museums, theaters, performance venues, arts councils, arts education entities)

HISTORY & HERITAGE

Historic sites and history-focused organizations (but usually not historic markers)

ART IN NON-ART SPACES

Places like bars, libraries, or parks that regularly host arts activities, creative groups, or rotating art displays

INFORMAL GROUPS

A collective that meets regularly, such as quilting circles or history clubs

EVENTS & TRADITIONS

Those signature gatherings, festivals, celebrations unique to every community

5. Recent Arts & Culture Funding State & Federal Grants *

One of the important stories to tell in this work is the wide variation in resources that have been available to each county in the region. This data makes that case from the perspective of government (state and national) arts grant programs. **Of the total funding, 39% came from covid-related programs.** The remaining 61% came from regular agency programs.

Grant Programs	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	Total
Indiana Arts Commission							
Delaware	61,058	74,249	58,590	77,065	70,211	127,546	\$468,719
Wayne	49,566	47,911	50,175	38,761	39,024	59,160	\$284,597
Grant	27,204	32,204	33,430	27,960	18,269	42,005	\$181,072
Randolph	24,244	28,244	25,008	25,126	26,386	45,348	\$174,356
Jay	17,700	20,700	17,192	18,446	15,724	20,183	\$109,945
Henry	8,787	9,837	6,591	--	5,486	12,923	\$43,624
Fayette	--	--	--	3,667	5484	7,000	\$16,151
Blackford	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
ARPA & CARES via IAC							
Delaware			201,758	21,000			\$222,758
Wayne			173,987	12,000			\$185,987
Grant			97,011	15,000			\$112,011
Randolph			12,944	3,000			\$15,944
Jay			55,341	3,000			\$58,341
Henry			28,081	--			\$28,081
Fayette			3,000	--			\$3,000
Blackford			--	--			--
Shuttered Venue Operators Grant							
Grant			524,109				\$524,109
Wayne			447,234				\$447,234
Delaware			286,170				\$286,170
Randolph			105,451				\$105,451
National Endowment for the Arts							
Delaware	50,000	10,000	30,000		30,000		\$120,000
Jay				75,000			\$75,000
Grant				\$10,000			\$10,000
National Endowment for Humanities							
Delaware	99,996		200,000	196,000			\$495,996
Wayne			402,629				\$402,629
Institute of Museum and Library Services							
Wayne		249,668	48,889	209,983	48,771		\$557,311
Delaware				99,146	66,000		\$165,146
Forge ECI Region Totals	\$338,555	\$472,813	\$2,807,590	\$835,154	\$325,355	\$314,165	\$5,093,632

* Counties may also have received arts related grants from other state or federal agencies and budgets that we did not research.

6. Forge ECI READI Projects Completed, In Progress, or Approved

These details are included to continue to make those variations plain, while simultaneously highlighting projects (green rows) – already funded or complete – within the READI initiative that support goals or strategies in this plan.

Given the ongoing nature of this work, the status of projects or their numbers may have changed since this document.

			READI	Public	Private	Total	READI multiplier
1.0 IEDC							
Blackford	Hartford City	Blackford County Broadband Improvements	700,000	2,661,000	--	3,361,000	5
Delaware	Muncie	McKinley-Whitely Live Learn Neighborhood	2,650,000	910,000	37,075,000	40,635,000	15
	Yorktown	Yorktown Downtown Revitalization	250,000	17,750,000	8,000,000	26,000,000	104
	Albany	Albany Commercial Park Initiative	250,000	520,000	330,000	1,100,000	4
	Salem Twp	Salem Township Shovel Ready Site Initiative	250,000	739,360	--	989,360	4
	Selma	Selma Accessibility Improvements	250,000	119,720	--	369,720	1
Fayette	Connersville	Market Street Plaza	200,000	340,605	85,000	625,605	3
Grant	Gas City	Gas City Performing Arts Center	2,750,000	16,543,183	--	19,293,183	7
	Marion	Kennedy Arts Center	100,000	--	1,133,215	1,233,215	12
Henry	Mooreland	Wilbur Wright Trail Phase 3	245,000	1,732,540	178,800	2,156,340	9
	New Castle	Henry County YMCA	3,625	800,000	1,149,000	1,952,625	539
	Knightstown	Knightstown Library Expansion	190,000	110,000	--	300,000	2
	--	Ashbury Fields	186,375	--	--	186,375	1
Jay	--	Jay County Early Learning Center	291,000	--	3,222,472	3,513,472	12
	Salamonia	Salamonia Schoolhouse and Park Improvement Project	9,000	71,232	--	80,232	9
Randolph	Union City	Vision Corner Learning Center	1,375,000	4,665,627	250,000	6,290,627	5
	--	Randolph County 4-H Improvements	250,000	650,000	1,300,000	2,200,000	9
Wayne	Richmond	Richmond Rising: Filling the Gap Workforce Housing	2,950,000	8,945,500	21,652,390	33,547,890	11
Region	--	ECI Talent Collaborative Birth to Five Initiative	1,500,000	662,955	198,000	2,360,955	2
	--	ECIRP Grant Administration	144,000	--	--	144,000	1
Totals			\$14,544,000	\$57,221,722	\$74,573,877	\$146,339,599	10

			READI	Public	Private	Total	READI multiplier
2.0 IEDC							
Blackford	Hartford City	Project - TBD					
Delaware	Muncie	Muncie Central City Housing					
	Muncie	Revitalizing the Village					
	Yorktown	Canal Street Lofts					
Fayette	Connersville	Reid Health - Connersville Construction & Spartan Square Dev.					
	Connersville	Imagine Performing Arts 406 N Central Arts Center					
Grant	Upland	Main Street Mile Initiative: Expanding Housing in Upland, Indiana					
	Gas City	Gas City YMCA at Turner Park					
	Marion	River Rock Lofts					
Henry	New Castle	Develop New Castle Residential					
	--	Henry County Infrastructure					
	New Castle	Henry County 4-H Center (Formerly Henry County Expo Center)					
Jay	Portland	Jay County 68-Acre Development Site					
	Portland	Jay County Early Learning Center - Phase II					
	Portland	The Hood Building					
	Pennville	Pennville Community Park Revitalization					
Randolph	Winchester	Project - TBD					
	Union City	Brave Little Learners and Brave Little Day Care					
	Winchester	Second Welding Lab at Winchester Community High School					
Wayne	Richmond	Smith Hill Mixed Residential Neighborhood					
Region	--	Forge ECI Grant Administration					
State	--	State Administration					
Totals			\$34,500,000	\$85,117,588	\$483,227,219	\$602,844,807	17
2.0 L.E.I. Blight							
Wayne	Richmond	Wayne County Revitalization	5,100,000				
Region		Forge ECI Grant Administration	TBD				
State		State Administration	TBD				
Totals			\$ 5,100,000				

Project Specifics & Allocations
Completing the Approval Process

B. METHODOLOGY

1. Process

This plan emerged from a community-driven, asset-based approach to arts and culture planning. It used a wide range of engagement modalities including:

- **A Website** for transparency and to ensure that anyone in the region could participate.
- **Desk & Field Research** to collect and assess available information about the region.
- **Crowdsourcing** to fill gaps, connect with residents and encourage participation.
- **In-Person Engagement** to develop trust while truly listening to residents and leaders.
- **Deep Follow Up** to test ideas, explore new avenues, and develop the plan itself.

This ground-up approach, this allowed for deep and diverse participation across sectors and communities. Work progressed in three parts as depicted here.

	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Pre-Work January - March										
Initial Meetings										
Key Assessment Interviews										
Logistics & Design										
Part 1 February – June										
Asset Inventories										
Doc. Review / Opportunity Research										
Part 2 April – November										
Visioning in Counties										
Focus Groups										
Steering Committee Work										
Synthesis & Drafting										
Project Coordination Ongoing										

Methodology Sections

1. Process
2. Engagement Summary & Detail by Interaction
3. Goal Prioritization Survey Results
4. Documents, Projects & Plans Reviewed



YART (Yard Sale for Art), Muncie

Specific tasks focused on the development of a forward-looking regional arts and culture strategy for East Central Indiana that reflects the diversity and cultural aspirations of the region's residents. Using those tools and the principles on page 16, the process included:

- An inventory of existing arts, cultural, and creative assets
- Engagement with local artists, cultural institutions, local leaders, and the public
- Alignment with existing plans for assets, stakeholders, and strategic opportunities
- Facilitated sessions in each county to envision a vibrant, authentic future
- Follow up with focus groups, interviews, and benchmarking – testing and review
- Online survey for the region to prioritize and comment on vision, goals, and strategies

Readers may notice overlaps between the Arts & Culture Plans for SEI READI and Forge ECI. This was a product of the process and of the team's intent to have both plans speak to each other.

First, these adjacent regions share key elements of geography and history. As largely rural areas, they share challenges best addressed with like strategies. In fact, their regional development plans are similar as well.

Not only did the regions follow similar processes, but participants often shared the same ideas. This was true across all 14 counties in these regions. The creative sector in both share capacity needs – needs heard by all of the consulting teams across the state. The differences here came from the intensity and uneven impacts of those needs. When that is the case, best practices from the field take hold.

Most importantly, in drafting the plans we found them talking to each other. When we learned something in one region, it informed how we thought about the other. An idea heard in one was shared or tested in the other. Just as The Big Ideas amplify core goals in each plan, this dialogue amplified the good of regionalism across an even larger footprint.

All of that said, there are significant differences between the plans. The regions start with different strengths, funding profiles, and density of arts and culture assets. After that, the nuance and details matter. They can be found throughout. Certainly, in the flavor of each region, its geography, its history, its leaders – *its identity* – and the big ideas that resulted.

Digging Deeper into Community Visioning

County by county and then together, this process asked the region to imagine a Vibrant Arts & Culture Future for itself. One that embraces an “Arts and” mindset and through which East Central Indiana's:

Arts & Culture have been Transformed with:

Resident engagement across boundaries, amenities that are accessible to the entire community, and a critical mass of authentic, yet bold, sustainable assets.

AND Have Transformed the Region in return – Elevating quality of place across cities and towns

What emerged as East Central Indiana's Vision for the Future describes 2035 where Arts are a Driving Force in Shaping a Thriving, Connected, & Resilient Region

What is a “Vision”?

“... a description of what it should look like once it has successfully implemented its strategies and achieved its full potential. This is [its] “vision of success.” OR ... “visioning” exercises... develop enough of a consensus on purposes and values to guide ... strategy formulation...

John Bryson. Strategic Planning for Public & Nonprofit Organizations (1995)

Inevitably, readers come to this with different expectations for a “vision.” We lean toward:

1. Success of Plan or “What will we have achieved?”
2. Ideal for the Future or “How __ should look when it is working extremely well” (Bryson)

2. Engagement Summary

In total, **over 450 individuals** participated in or provided information to the project including:

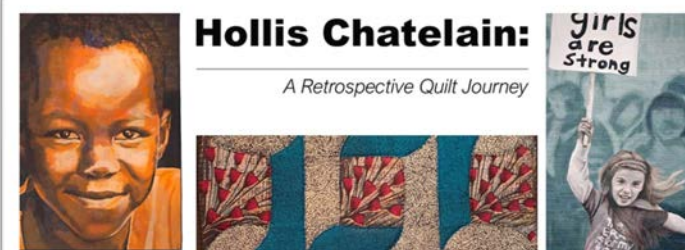
- Kickoff Webinar** 99 individuals participated live, and 11 viewed the recording at a later date.
- Community Visioning** 165 individuals participated in total across the region, 56% of whom were from the Creative Sector
- Other** Dozens reached out in other ways to ask a question or suggest an asset (e.g., emails, website contact forms, asset submissions, focus groups)
- Website** 258 unique visitors to project-specific pages
Any number of these may be in addition to the 400+ participants we tracked.
- Contact Generation** Along the way we expanded project contacts from <500 to >1,100. The final list included >30% arts and culture focused individuals. And the list – aka interest in this work – keeps growing. Dozens of new emails came from the prioritization survey.

Breaking down that participation by county and by sector:

Participation vs 2020 Pop			Sector	Participation
Delaware	20%	30%	Arts, Culture & History	41%
Wayne	17%	18%	Education (K12 & Higher Ec.)	8%
Jay	14%	5%	City/County Government	7%
Fayette	11%	6%	Economic Dev. & Related	5%
Blackford	10%	3%	Foundations / Funders	5%
Henry	10%	13%	Libraries & Misc.	4%
Grant	8%	18%	Finance & Professional Services	4%
Randolph	8%	7%	Health & Social Services	3%
Multi/Other	2%	--	Chambers & Main Streets	3%
			Business & Manufacturing	3%
			Tourism & Attractions	2%
			Real Estate, Construction, Etc.	1%
			Other/Unknown	13%

Two members of the Indiana State Legislature also participated in the process.

* Misc. includes media, extension, and nature.



Detail by Interaction

= count of events/items

N = number of participants/attendees

Personal		Digital
Public (# = 8) Community Visioning Sessions <i>all from 4:30-6:30 pm</i> 2024 Blackford , Nov 14 City Hall, Hartford City (N = 22) Jay , Nov 12, 2024 John Jay Learning Center, Portland (N = 21) 2025 Delaware , Apr 10, Minnetrista Museum & Gardens, Muncie (N= 30) Fayette , Apr 16 Ivy Tech, Connersville (N =16) Grant , Apr 22 Kennedy Art Center, Marion (N = 25) Henry , Apr 1 Smith Auditorium, New Castle (N = 30) Randolph , Apr 30, Towne Square Community Center, Winchester (N = 13) Wayne , Apr 24 Earlham College, Richmond (N = 41)	Group (# = 8) 4 Focus Groups (virtual) — Arts Organization Leaders: Jul 21 9am & 5 pm (total N =16) — History Leaders: Jul 16 (N = 5) — Tourism Leaders: Jul 15 (N = 8) 4 Regional Leader Discussions — Steering Committee (virtual): • Feb 18 (N = 9) • Mar 28 (N = 4) • May 14 (N = 7) — Regional Leaders: Arts Plan Goals & Strategies Workshop Sep 10 Muncie (N = 15) Individual (# = 47) 13 Arts & Culture — Arts-Specific <i>Arts Place, Marion Arts Commission, Richmond Symphony & Art Museum, Whitewater Valley Arts Association, Start with Art, Artists</i> — History/Culture <i>Historic Elmhurst, History Center at the Marion Public Library, Historic Connersville, Overbeck Museum</i> 7 Funders — Foundations & Community Foundations <i>Ball Brothers Foundation, Blackford, Delaware, Henry, Jay, Randolph, Wayne County Community Foundations</i> 27 Local Government & Civic — Mayors & Leaders (<i>Hartford City, Dunkirk, Montpelier, Portland</i>) — Economic Dev. & Tourism (<i>Blackford, 2 Fayette, Henry, 2 Wayne</i>) — Local Business Leaders & Creative Placemakers (<i>Portland, Hartford City, Connersville, Marion, Union City, Winchester, Purdue Extension</i>) — Universities (<i>IU East, Taylor, Earlham, Combo</i>) — Other (<i>IU Health, John Jay Learning Center, 2 Main Streets, IDA, ICI</i>)	Webinar (# = 1) — Kickoff : Feb 28 (N = 99 + 11 after) Website Interactions — 117 Google Form Submissions from 20-60 ind. — 41 Website Contacts from 33 individuals — Project-Specific Web Pages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 258 Unique Visitors • 710 Sessions • 1,955 Page Views <i>Web analytics through 11/16/2025</i> Prioritization Survey (# = 1, N = 230) — N = 12 Blackford — N = 62 Delaware — N = 32 Fayette — N = 16 Grant — N = 11 Henry — N = 16 Jay — N = 31 Randolph — N = 51 Wayne Misc. Additional Our Town Process beginning in 2024 — Focus Groups (# = 6, N = 35) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Blackford Focus Groups • 2 Jay Focus Groups • 1 Blended Focus Group — Interviews (N = 11, included in left) — Prioritization Survey (# = 1, N = 64) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N = 27 Blackford • N = 37 Jay — Website (59 unique visitors, 110 sess., 126 p. views)

3. Goal Prioritization Survey Results

Items were randomized in the survey to increase the quality of response.

VISION		5 Really Exciting!		4 -----		3 Pretty Good		2 -----		1 Needs Help		Score		N
	Blackford	3		3		2		--		--		4.1	83%	8
	Delaware	17		18		6		3		--		4.1	82%	44
	Fayette	9		10		4		1		2		3.9	78%	26
	Grant	8		1		3		--		--		4.4	88%	12
	Henry	4		1		1		1		--		4.1	83%	7
	Jay	5		5		1		--		2		3.8	77%	13
	Randolph	11		7		4		1		--		4.2	84%	23
	Wayne	16		12		9		1		1		4.1	81%	39
Total Response		42%	72	34%	57	17%	29	4%	7	3%	5	4.1	82%	172
Balanced Score												4.10		

GOALS		1 Top		2 -----		3 -----		4 -----		5 -----		6 -----		Rank	Score	N
Arrange in priority order, top = most important																
★	1. Activate Downtowns	35%	78	27%	61	14%	32	10%	22	8%	17	6%	14	1	4.5	224
	2. Connect Communities	12%	26	15%	33	17%	39	15%	33	19%	43	22%	50	5	3.2	224
	3. Deepen Next Generation Attachment	7%	16	17%	39	17%	39	24%	54	20%	44	14%	32	3	3.3	224
	4. Generate Business Opportunity	15%	33	22%	50	19%	42	18%	41	13%	29	13%	29	2	3.7	224
	5. Mobilize, Collaborate, & Communicate	11%	25	11%	24	15%	34	18%	41	25%	57	19%	43	6	3.1	224
	6. Formalize Sustainable Commitments	21%	46	8%	17	17%	38	15%	33	15%	34	25%	56	3	3.3	224

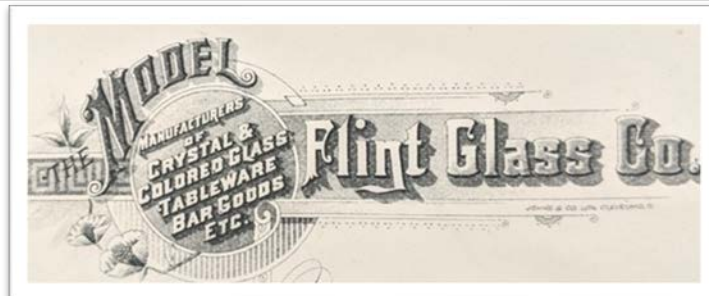
STRATEGIES for...		1 Top		2 -----		3 Bottom		Rank	Score	N
GOAL 1: Activate Downtowns										
	1. Enhance through Identity & Design			18%	34	36%	68	46%	87	3 1.7 189
	2. Activate with Public Art & Programming			24%	45	35%	66	41%	78	2 1.8 189
★	1. Restore & Reuse Downtown Assets			58%	110	29%	55	13%	24	1 2.5 189
GOAL 2: Connect Communities										
	1. Celebrate Cultural Heritage			26%	49	39%	75	35%	68	2 1.9 192
★	2. Link Physical & Cultural Assets			44%	84	34%	66	22%	42	1 2.2 192
	2. Advance Regional Tourism			31%	59	27%	51	43%	82	2 1.9 192
GOAL 3: Deepen Next Generation Attachment										
	3. Empower Civic Engagement			30%	52	34%	60	36%	64	3 1.9 176
★	3. Expand Arts Opportunity			41%	72	29%	51	30%	53	1 2.1 176
	3. Build Creative Career Opportunity			30%	52	37%	65	34%	59	2 2.0 176

STRATEGIES for...		1 Top		2 -----		3 Bottom		Rank	Score	N
GOAL 4: Generate Business Opportunity										
★	4.	Empower Creative Capacity	56%	70	44%	54		1	1.6	124
	5.	Grow Creative Opportunity	44%	54	56%	70		2	1.4	124
GOAL 5: Mobilize, Collaborate, & Communicate										
	1.	Mobilize Creative Networks	42%	46	58%	63		2	1.4	109
★	6.	Catalyze a Sustainable Arts & Culture Coalition	58%	63	42%	46		1	1.6	109
GOAL 6: Formalize Sustainable Commitments										
	7.	Build Support for Arts & Culture Strategy	39%	75	29%	55	33% 63	2	2.1	193
	8.	Build Policy Infrastructure	17%	33	38%	74	45% 86	3	1.7	193
★	9.	Secure Sustainable Funding	44%	85	33%	64	23% 44	1	2.2	193

COMMENTS CODED BY TYPE

Substantive	12	Many of the open-ended responses to this survey are embedded in the body of the document.
• Suggestions	7	
• Concerns / Questions	4	
• Process Critique	1	
Supportive	22	All of the responses were provided to Forge ECI as part of project documentation
• Simple Thanks	9	
• Thanks + Suggestion	8	
• Comment	5	
Other	3	
• Name	1	
• Process Comment	1	
• Reflection	1	
Total	35	

ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS	Complete	Partial
Blackford	12 5%	7
Delaware	62 27%	13
Fayette	32 14%	16
Grant	16 7%	5
Henry	11 5%	6
Jay	16 7%	3
Randolph	31 13%	8
Wayne	51 22%	16
N =	231	74



4. Documents, Projects & Plans Reviewed

In addition to asset mapping and public engagement, existing plans in the community informed goals and strategies, including the following 52 documents:

Location	Year, Title, & Hyperlink *
Blackford	2025 Arts & Culture Master Plan (Our Town Project rolled over into this one) 2025 Hartford City Park Master Plan (draft) 2024 Blackford County Comprehensive Plan 2024 Kevin Ford Aerospace Park & Outdoor Museum Plan 2023 Montpelier Comprehensive Plan
Delaware	2024-28 Town of Yorktown 5-Year Parks Master Plan 2024 Muncie: Creative Space Action Plan 2023 BSU: Village Revitalization Plan 2022 Comprehensive Plan for the Delaware-Muncie Region 2022 Vision 2027 Muncie-Delaware County, IN 5-Year Economic Development Plan
Fayette	2024 Connersville Parks & Recreation 5-Year Master Plan 2022 Connersville Strategic Investment Plan (OCRA-HELP) 2022 Connersville Comprehensive Plan
Grant	2025 Grant County Comprehensive Plan (adoption draft) 2024 Grant County Strategic Visioning Plan (ICI) 2023 Taylor Thrives (Main Street Mile) (CCC) 2023 Indiana Wesleyan University (CCC)
Henry	2025 New Castle Downtown Master Plan 2023 New Castle Main Street Transformation Strategy 2018 City of New Castle Comprehensive Plan 2018 Henry County Comprehensive Plan 2016-2035 Knightstown Comprehensive Development Plan
Jay	2025 Arts & Culture Master Plan (Our Town Project rolled over into this one) 2024 Portland IN Downtown Economic Development Plan 2023 Jay County Strategic Investment Plan (OCRA-HELP) 2022 Portland Park Plan 2022-2026 2019 Pennville Comprehensive Plan 2019 Jay County Economic Development Plan



Location	Year, Title, & Hyperlink *
Randolph	2020-2025 Plan & Ongoing Efforts: Cultivating Community Randolph Co. (ICI CBAP) 2024 Randolph County Trails Master Plan 2023 Winchester Comprehensive & Strategic Reinvestment Plan 2018 Randolph County Comprehensive Plan
Wayne	2024 Concept Paper: Wayne County Community Foundation (GIFT VIII) 2023 Revitalize Richmond: Earlham & Richmond Growing Together (CCC) 2023 Whitewater Gorge Activation Plan 2023 Wayne County Strategic Investment Plan (OCRA-HELP) 2022 Hagerstown Comp Plan Update 2020 Richmond Rising: Community Action Plan 2020 Cambridge City Comprehensive Plan 2020 Richmond Parks & Recreation Master Plan 2020 Wayne County Comprehensive Plan
ECI Region	Forge Your Path: East Central Indiana Regional Development Plan (READI) 2024 IU East Regional Business Confidence Index & East-Central IN Business Survey 2023 EIRPC Comp. Economic Dev. Strategy (Fayette, Henry, Randolph, Union, Wayne) 2022 ECI Regional Development District CEDS Plan (Blackford, Delaware, Grant, Jay)
State Arts & Culture	2024 Embracing a Culture of Creativity: IN's Overlooked Economic Engine (Study) 2024-2028 Indiana Arts Commission Strategic Framework 2023-24 Indiana Arts Commission Artist Needs Assessment (Study) 2022 Planning with Arts & Culture: How Indiana Municipalities Are Utilizing... (Study) See also IAC Research Repository https://www.in.gov/arts/programs-and-services/research/
State Tourism	2024 Indiana Destination Development Corporation Strategic Plan 2024 Indiana Destination Development Corporation Future Asset Study 2024 Tourism at Work: The Impact of Travel & Tourism in Indiana (Study) See also IDDC Research Repository https://www.visitindiana.com/about-iddc/tourism-research/

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 page 63 "Small Decisions" Cartoon, Guy Downes, [available for purchase](#)
 page 126 "Careers in the Arts" Poster, [Vincent Hofer](#) (2024) for Arts South Dakota, [available for download](#)
 page 127 "We Believe in Art" Poster, [Sayuri Sasaki Hemann](#) (2019), [available for purchase](#)

Digging Deeper into Document Design

For those curious about the unusual colors or fonts in this document. It deliberately combines Forge ECI's official branding / style guide with that of the consultant team as described here.

Forge ECI

Designed by	IronGate Creative Hagerstown, Wayne County, IN
Header Font	Roboto (Regular)
Accent Font	<i>Milkshake</i> (Regular)
Hex Colors	Each with lighter/darker variations
Dove	F8F7F7
Green	789E4A
Navy	003764
Orange	F09020
Pink	ED336E
Purple	872D74

TransformingCommunities.art

Designed by	Sara A. Peterson & Paige Sharp
Body Font	Avenir Next (Ultra Light, Reg, Med, & Demi Bold)

Special Thanks to Avery Eberle
for design assistance along the way.



Why include this?

Because we want to walk the talk from the beginning – not just giving credit to the creators but making that credit transparent to all.

