



TRI-STATE

Community Wellness

INDICATORS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2011 Presented by The Welborn Baptist Foundation





Executive Summary

The Welborn Baptist Foundation proudly presents this collection of community wellness indicators to bring awareness to regional issues and to motivate action towards improvement. National, state, and, where possible, local data help tell a story about the Tri-State, a region made up of fourteen counties in southwestern Indiana, southeastern Illinois and northwestern Kentucky. This report is very much a study in contrasts, showing promise in education and sustainability, as well as areas where more work needs to be done, such as obesity, and racial and ethnic disparities. This Executive Summary is provided to underscore the principal issues brought to light in each section. For more discussion on each subject or to view the data, please refer to the full report online at www.tristatecwi.org.



Demographics

Demographics indicators help us track changes in population as well as changes in racial and ethnic groups in the Tri-State.

Since 2000, except for Posey County, Indiana counties have all showed increases in population.

Posey County, Indiana, along with all Illinois counties in the Welborn Baptist Foundation region, show decreases in population over the past 10 years.

The region is predominately White with only a few counties, including Vanderburgh, IN and Henderson, KY with over 5% Black/African American population.

Our counties contain barely over 2% Hispanic/Latino residents except for Dubois County, IN with 6% Hispanic population.

As of 2010, the population of the Welborn service area was most dense in Vanderburgh County, Indiana with a population of 179,703, followed by Warrick County, Indiana with 59,689 people, Henderson County, Kentucky with 46,250 people and Dubois County, Indiana with 41,889 people.



Health

Health indicators across the lifespan help us measure disease trends, prevention efforts, and disparities among different groups, as well as access to medical care.

Our infants are increasingly being breastfed; however, low-birth weight infants exceed the national level.

Our children are increasingly immunized with recommended vaccinations; however, childhood asthma rates show signs of increase and improvements for our children are warranted in access to routine dental care.

Our adults have experienced decreasing mortality rates for heart disease and cancer over the past decade; however, diabetes, asthma and sexually transmitted disease diagnoses have increased.

Heart disease and cancer persist as the number one and two causes of death in the region and rates continue to be much higher for certain racial and ethnic groups.

The percentage of uninsured children has shown improvement; however, much of the rural Tri-State is medically underserved and has limitations in health care access.



Obesity

Obesity-related indicators help us measure the impact of this health epidemic in the Tri-State.

Currently, two-thirds of the United States population is overweight or obese, and the Tri-State is no exception.

We spend billions of dollars nationally each year on medical care and lost productivity related to unhealthy weight.

We have greater awareness and education, increased physical activity and greater access to nutritional foods among adults and youth in the region; however, we still consume too few fruits and vegetables and drink too many sugary beverages.

Opportunities lie before us to improve our health and quality of life across the region through increased daily movement, decreased consumption of unhealthy foods, and a greater emphasis on exercise facilities, walking paths, bike lanes, and other infrastructure designed to keep us physically active every day.

Data collection should be ongoing within our medical centers, schools, workplaces to track our progress in attaining a collectively healthier weight status.



Societal Risk Factors

Societal Risk Factors refer to those community indicators of risky behaviors - including suicide, abuse/neglect, teenage pregnancy, substance use, and crime - that help measure our vulnerability as a region.

Though suicide rates fluctuate over time, certain counties in the Tri-State tend to have higher rates than the nation, states and other counties.

Physical abuse rates show signs of improvement, while sexual abuse and neglect rates seem to be worsening in certain areas.

Many counties show a decrease in teen births; however, certain counties still have rates that exceed the state and national levels.

Though there have been some decrease, many youth still use substances such as alcohol, cigarettes and marijuana at rates that exceed state levels.

Adult crime data indicates a decrease overall of violent and property crimes; however, juvenile crime in some areas is on the rise.

Our vast rural landscape makes us particularly vulnerable to the production of methamphetamine. Certain counties show record numbers of meth lab seizures.



Economy

Economy refers to a cross-cutting set of indicators that significantly affect the quality of life, access and opportunity for residents in the Tri-State.

A look at the nation, state and local economy reveals worsening economic conditions, especially since about 2008.

Except in a few counties, our household incomes have been decreasing and, as a result, expenses such as housing and childcare are increasingly less affordable.

Poverty has increased and is most pronounced among racial/ethnic minority groups and children under 18.

Other signs of a struggling economy include a greater demand for supplemental nutrition assistance (SNAP) benefits, an increase in students with free/reduced lunch status, a decrease in home ownership, an increase in vacant housing units, and an increase in unemployment.

Among the types of employment available in counties with the majority of the Tri-State population, we have recently seen the greatest increases in agriculture and the biggest decreases in manufacturing.



▶ Education

Education indicators from preschool through college help us measure preparation, learning and academic achievement.

We have made advances in educational achievement, but we could do more for the youngest of our learners.

Indiana, the only state in the Tri-State without state level funding for pre-school, shows increases in Paths To Quality™ provider enrollment. However, there are still many young children in centers, home-based care and other programs without quality oversight.

Our 3rd grade students continue to improve their math and reading scores on state standardized tests, and our high school graduation rates are showing increases. However, there are still consistent pockets of residents without a high school diploma and certain racial/ethnic groups with lower graduation rates.

College entrance scores show increases in many areas of the Tri-State; however, we also see persistent disparities with certain racial/ethnic groups earning lower ACT scores.

Many of the degrees awarded by our local four-year universities are in health and education fields; however, the number of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) degrees awarded by our local universities has declined over the years.



▶ Sustainability

Sustainability indicators help us track changes in our natural environment, trends in the production and consumption of energy resources, and efforts in conservation.

The entire region now meets all health-based air quality standards, and efforts are ongoing to make our air and water cleaner and safer. However, harmful bacteria and chemicals like e. Coli bacteria, mercury and PCBs are still found in local waterways.

In terms of energy, we see some variation among the types of energy produced in Indiana, Illinois and Kentucky, although all produce and consume coal on a significant level.

Illinois is also a leader in nuclear energy production, and Indiana leads the way in the Tri-State for renewable energy production.

All three states show decreases in energy consumption, except in the residential sector where we continue to see consumption of electricity increase.

We see a decrease in the percent of farmlands and woodlands over time; however, the region could benefit from further studies of how this land resource is being developed.

We also see decreases in solid waste generated per capita; however, we could recycle more.



▶ Culture

Culture refers to a set of indicators relating to arts, entertainment, enrichment and social engagement.

Public library visits are on the rise in many county locations as well as in the states and nation, and since membership is typically free of charge, this represents an opportunity for learning and entertainment that is more accessible to all residents.

There are a variety of venues where residents and visitors can go for recreation and leisure. Evansville, in Vanderburgh County, Indiana, is a hub of this activity for the region.

With regards to social support, we seem to be giving less volunteer time.

There are also fewer of us sharing our financial resources through charitable giving; however, those who are donating have increased the amount they give.

Finally, we see that fewer eligible voters are casting their votes over time in local, state and national elections.