Intergovernmental Issues in Indiana
2014 IACIR Survey
This survey is administered by the Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (IACIR) on a periodic basis to gather information on current issues affecting the relationships between governments in the state. The IACIR seeks your opinions on the issues presented in the survey. The survey must be completed by a person holding elective office with the exception of appointed school board members. Please feel free to consult others within your local government if you are unsure about the correct response to particular questions.

Completion of the questionnaire is voluntary. Respondents have the option to complete the survey online at www.iacir.spea.iupui.edu or to return the printed questionnaire in the enclosed postage paid envelope. Online participants will need the identification number printed on the cover letter and on the back of the questionnaire in the lower right-hand corner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>What elected office do you hold?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>County council member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>County commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mayor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City council member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Town council member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Township trustee or trustee-assessor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School board member (elected or appointed position)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other (please)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2</th>
<th>What local government do you represent?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>In which county(ies) is your local government located?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>How long have you held your current elected (or appointed) position?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Years ____________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>How many years have you held any elected positions with this local government (current and past)?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Years ____________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2014 Topics

- Community conditions
- Responses to fiscal challenges
- Business personal property taxes
- Fiscal benchmarking
- TIF, tax abatement, PILOTs, SILoTs
- Service arrangements, joint purchasing
- Relationships between local governments and other governments, local businesses, and nonprofits
2014 Topics

• Pensions, health insurance, and training
• Infrastructure, road funding
• Communication
• Aging in place
## Response Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Effective responses</th>
<th>Mailed</th>
<th>Undelivered or excluded</th>
<th>Effective return rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County council member</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County commissioner</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayor</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City council member</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town council member</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>892</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Township trustee</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School board member</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>2,441</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>26%</td>
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## Response rates

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County council member</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County commissioner</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayor</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City council member</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town council member</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Township trustee</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School board member</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Responses by County

• Began asking to identify local government in 2008
• 2012:
  – Represent 549 individual local governments (401 in 2012)
  – At least two local governments from every county
## Feelings about Community Direction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Very optimistic</th>
<th>Mildly optimistic</th>
<th>Neither optimistic nor pessimistic</th>
<th>Mildly pessimistic</th>
<th>Very pessimistic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County council member (n=48)</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County commissioner (n=40)</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayor (n=35)</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City council member (n=25)</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town council member (n=157)</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Township trustee (n=160)</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School board member (n=134)</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Some of the totals may be slightly more or less than 100 percent due to rounding.*
Feelings about Community Direction

Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2014 Survey of Local Elected Officials
Community Conditions

• 75 conditions
• Categories
  – Health
  – Economics
  – Public safety
  – Local services and infrastructure
  – Land use
  – Community quality of life
Community Conditions

• Current: Major, moderate, or minor or no problem
• Last year: Improved, worsened, or no change
• Last year: 3 most improved
• Last year: 3 most deteriorated
• Next 2 years: 3 most important to work on
Major or Moderate Problems

Health

- Cost of health insurance (88%, 61% major)
- Drug and alcohol abuse (87%, 49% major)
- Obesity (85%)
- Cost of health services (82%)
- Chronic disease (heart disease, diabetes, etc.) (72%)
- Smoking (72%)
Major or Moderate Problems
Health (cont.)

• Availability and cost of mental health services (69%)
• Availability of health insurance (67%)
• Availability and cost of dental services (66%)
• Care for the elderly (64%)
Major or Moderate Problems
Economics

- Overall economic conditions (80%)
- Job loss/unemployment (79%)
- Job quality (78%)
- Business attraction/retention (73%)
- Workforce readiness (71%)
- Workforce training and retraining (70%)
- Shovel ready properties (53%)
Major or Moderate Problems
Public Safety

- Drug crime (79%)
- Family/domestic violence (66%)
- Youth crime (64%)
Major or Moderate Problems
Local Services and Infrastructure

• Local roads, streets, and highways (71%)
• Sidewalks and trails (54%)
Major or Moderate Problems
Land Use

• Abandoned properties (71%)
• Foreclosures (69%)
• Private property maintenance (61%)
• Quality affordable housing (55%)
• Lack of development (54%)
Major or Moderate Problems
Land Use & QOL

• Land Use
  – Abandoned properties (71%)
  – Foreclosures (69%)
  – Private property maintenance (61%)
  – Quality affordable housing (55%)
  – Lack of development (54%)

• Quality of Life
  – Vitality of downtown (59%)
  – Vitality of neighborhoods (53%)
Top Five Issues Identified Most Often as Improved Since Last Year

- K-12 education (n=535) - 24%
- Overall economic conditions (n=554) - 23%
- Vitality of downtown (n=526) - 22%
- Community involvement (n=531) - 20%
- Job loss/unemployment (n=550) - 20%
- Police-community relations (n=548)* - 20%

*Six issues appear here because of a tie
Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2014 Survey of Local Elected Officials
Top Five Issues Ranked as Most Improved During the Past Year

1. K-12 education: 17%
2. Vitality of downtown: 12%
3. Community involvement: 12%
4. Parks and recreation: 11%
5. Overall economic conditions: 11%

Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2014 Survey of Local Elected Officials
Top Five Issues Identified Most Often as Worsened Since Last Year

- Cost of health insurance (n=542), 51%
- Drug and alcohol abuse (n=541), 44%
- Cost of health services (n=544), 41%
- Drug crime (n=548), 40%
- Local roads, streets, and highways (n=545), 40%

Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2014 Survey of Local Elected Officials
Top Five Issues Ranked as Most Deteriorated During the Past Year

1. Local roads, streets, and highways - 18%
2. Drug crime - 14%
3. Cost of health insurance - 14%
4. Poverty - 13%
5. Drug and alcohol abuse - 13%

Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2014 Survey of Local Elected Officials
Top Five Issues Ranked as Most Important to Work on over the Next Two Years

- Local roads, streets, and highways: 19%
- Poverty: 13%
- Cost of health insurance: 12%
- Drug crime: 11%
- Business attraction and retention: 10%
- Overall economic conditions: 10%
- Drug and alcohol abuse: 10%

Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2014 Survey of Local Elected Officials
Responses to Fiscal Challenges

Options:

• New revenues
• Changes to workforce
• Cuts or reductions in services
• Changes in service arrangements
## Changes Reported Most Frequently

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Before 2012</th>
<th>12-13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cut or delay in capital expenditures</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal operation changes</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased fees and charges</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced spending on roads and streets</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced employee benefits/increased contributions</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chosen Least Frequently</td>
<td>Before 2012</td>
<td>12-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidation with another unit</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced spending on solid waste mgmt</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privatized capital assets or govt services</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laid off employees</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cooperative Arrangements

Questions asked how local officials:

- Made changes to address fiscal challenges
- Whether particular services were provided through agreements with another local government, a private sector firm, or a nonprofit organization
- Cooperative purchasing
- Amount and character of cooperative activity within each county
Cooperative Arrangements

Responses to Fiscal Challenges:

- Adjusted the terms for contract services
- Implemented cooperative service arrangements with other local governments, and
- Engaged in joint purchasing with other local governments
Cooperative Arrangements Services

- Jail
- Juvenile detention
- Roads and streets
- Parks and recreation
- Drinking water utility
- Solid waste services
- Sewer utility
- Police services
- Fire services
- Emergency medical services
- Emergency dispatch
- Planning/plan commission
- Economic development
- Vocational education
- Special education
- Property assessment
Cooperative Arrangements

Internal Resources:

• The majority of respondents indicated they provided most services with internal resources.
• The two services reported most often that were not provided by internal resources were:

  1. Juvenile detention (39%)
  2. Special education (38%)
Cooperative Arrangements

Contracts with other local governments:

- Vocation education (48%)
- Solid waste (45%)
- Juvenile detention (39%)
- Special education (38%)
Cooperative Arrangements

Contracts with private firms:

- Property assessment (23%)
- Solid waste (21%)
- Roads and streets (14%)
- Juvenile detention (11%)
Cooperative Arrangements

Contract with a nonprofit organization:

- Economic development (22%)
- Fire services (16%)
- Emergency medical services (15%)
- Vocational education (12%)
- Special education (11%)
Joint Purchasing

- County council member: 46%
- County commissioner: 61%
- Mayor: 35%
- City council member: 36%
- Township council member: 29%
- School board member: 9%
- Total: 38%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Government Type</th>
<th>Positive Relationship (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County governments</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City governments</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town governments</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Township governments</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School districts</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libraries</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local businesses</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local charities and other non-profits</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TIF and Tax Abatement

- Counties and municipalities continue to use TIF and tax abatement (2012 and 2013)
- Generally, reported using tax abatement more than TIF (except towns)
- Strong majorities of county officials and mayors reported using TIF
- Strong majorities of county and city officials reported using tax abatement
Business Personal Property Exemptions

• De minimus exemption (<$20K)
  – Yes (46%)
  – No (30%)
  – Undecided/don’t know (25%)

• Full exemption
  – Yes (14%)
  – No (64%)
  – Undecided/don’t know (21%)
Business Personal Property Exemptions

• Extended tax abatements
  – Yes (25%)
  – No (50%)
  – Undecided/don’t know (25%)
Payment In Lieu of Taxes for Governments and Nonprofits

• Will present these data at next meeting
Local Government Benefits
Pension/Retirement Contributions

• Presented last fall
Infrastructure Investment

- Highways
- Local roads and streets
- Bridges
- Parks
- Public school classrooms
- Public school performance and athletic facilities
- Libraries
- Drinking water

- Sanitary sewers
- Storm sewers
- Telephone
- Cellular telephone
- High-speed internet
- Electricity
- Natural gas
- Other
Infrastructure Investment

- A majority of respondents reported adequate investment in all infrastructure categories, except roads and streets and highways.
- Public school performance and athletics (12%), public library facilities (11%), and public school classrooms (7%) chosen most often for overinvestment.
Infrastructure Investment

• Underinvestment:
  – Local roads and streets (69%)
  – Highways (49%)
  – Bridges (43%)
  – Sidewalk and trails (40%)
  – High speed internet (31%)
Funding Options for Roads and Streets

• Expand local funding options (47%)
• Increase vehicle excise tax (32%)
• Expand public private partnerships (30%)
• Increase fuel taxes (29%)
# Communications

## Web Sites and Social Media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Use Website</th>
<th>Website Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County council member</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County commissioner</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayor</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City council member</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town council member</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Township trustee</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<tr>
<td>School board member</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>65%</strong></td>
<td><strong>54%</strong></td>
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# Communications

## Web Sites and Social Media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County council member</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>County commissioner</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayor</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City council member</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town council member</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Township trustee</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School board member</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Intergovernmental Issues in Indiana

A Survey Administered by the Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations

2016

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   - County council member
   - County commissioner
   - Mayor
   - Town council member
   - Township trustee or trustee-assessor
   - School board member
   - Other (specify)

2. What local government do you represent?
   __________________________

3. In which county(ies) is your local government located?
   __________________________

4. How do you feel about the general direction in which your community is heading?
   - Very optimistic
   - Mildly optimistic
   - Neither optimistic nor pessimistic
   - Mildly pessimistic
   - Very pessimistic

CONTINUE