

Southeast Indianapolis Workforce Development Assessment

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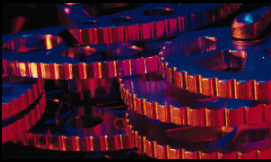


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- ◆ Mark Stewart, President, Southeast Neighborhood Development (SEND)
- ◆ Cynthia Cunningham, Southeast Local Learning Partnership (SELLP)
- ◆ Tara Evans, Indianapolis Private Industry Council (IPIC)
- ◆ Lena Hackett, AECF
- ◆ Nicole Hazel, Southeast Community Services (SECS)
- ◆ Yvonne Margedant, Southeast Umbrella Organization (SUMO)
- ◆ Lisa Osterman, University of Indianapolis
- ◆ Ed Parman, Shepherd Community
- ◆ Nancy Silvers Rogers, AECF

A larger committee of community partners supported and participated in the initiative and will continue to play a significant role through the implementation planning phases of this project, which will follow the release of this assessment. These individuals will greatly inform the resulting recommendations and plans and therefore be critical to the success of the planning phase of the project.

Local residents and others from the Indianapolis area conducted hundreds of interviews with residents of Southeast Indianapolis. Lisa Osterman and Cynthia Cunningham on behalf of the Southeast Local Learning Partnership led this effort and achieved great success. Their activities ensured that the voice of Southeast Indianapolis residents was central to the findings of this assessment. The interviewers included the following:

- ◆ Becky Besser
- ◆ Naomi Briggs
- ◆ Elaine Cates
- ◆ Isaias Guerrero
- ◆ Paul Osterman

Each of the people listed above worked hard to ensure that the assessment was thoughtful and complete, and we thank them for their investment in the project.

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Southeast Indianapolis Workforce Development Assessment

In 2005, a partnership of Southeast Indianapolis organizations launched a project to identify the greatest employment-related needs of Southeast neighborhood residents, the types of employees that area employers wanted to hire, and the types of training offered to local residents. The partnership includes the following organizations:

- ◆ Southeast Neighborhood Development (SEND)
- ◆ Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF)
- ◆ Southeast Local Learning Partnership (SELLP)
- ◆ Southeast Umbrella Organization (SUMO)
- ◆ Southeast Community Services (SECS)
- ◆ Shepherd Community
- ◆ Indianapolis Private Industry Council (IPIC)
- ◆ University of Indianapolis

The first step in the process of this workforce development assessment is targeted at gathering practical and real-time information about employee and employer needs that will guide the efforts of local organizations working everyday for Southeast neighborhood residents. The main parts of the study are as follows:

- ◆ **Resident Interviews:** Three-hundred and twenty six Southeast residents were interviewed about their job history, work skills and barriers to getting the job they want and need.
- ◆ **Employer Survey:** A total of 24 area employers were surveyed to find out what jobs they have available, including the skills needed to get the jobs and what wages and benefits are paid.
- ◆ **Training Provider Survey:** Fifteen area training providers were surveyed to find out what kinds of job training they provide to Southeast residents.
- ◆ **Sector Analysis:** The team analyzed the industries and occupations in the area (e.g., construction, health care, transportation services, etc.) to determine which industries expect future growth in jobs with good pay and benefits.

The findings of the assessment and initial recommendations are summarized in this document. The next step will be for the partnership to develop a strategic plan to determine what jobs and employers should be targeted for Southeast residents to get the training and job referrals that will get them the best jobs available in the area. The partnership of neighborhood organizations will use the information gathered through this assessment to develop job training and placement strategies that will benefit Southeast residents.

Summary of Findings

The assessment highlighted many of the unique strengths and challenges for Southeast Indianapolis residents and employers, which are summarized below:

- ◆ The percent of unemployed residents in Southeast Indianapolis is much higher than Marion County's – according to Census data 49% of Southeast Indianapolis residents (16 and over) are employed, compared to 65% in Indianapolis as a whole.
- ◆ On average, Southeast Indianapolis residents (25 and older) have much less education than residents of the county as a whole – 45% of Southeast residents do not have a high school diploma or GED, compared to less than 20% in Marion County as reported in the 2000 Census.
 - The Latino/Hispanic population has the most challenges related to education – almost 70% of Latinos surveyed in Southeast Indianapolis do not have a high school diploma or GED.
 - The African-American population in Southeast Indianapolis has the most education of any racial or ethnic group – only 18% of residents surveyed do not have a high school diploma or GED, and 55% have at least some college-level education.
- ◆ Southeast Indianapolis residents surveyed without a high school diploma or GED are more often unemployed; over 50% of those who didn't complete high school are unemployed.
- ◆ Half of the workers surveyed in Southeast Indianapolis plan to look for a different job within the next two years.
- ◆ Residents report that the biggest challenge that prevents them from getting jobs is transportation or lack of a driver's license, followed by lack of training and childcare costs.
- ◆ Another reason why unemployed Southeast Indianapolis residents aren't looking for a job is disability, followed by staying home with a child or family member; **30% of unemployed residents reported that they were not seeking work due to a disability.**
- ◆ Unemployed Southeast Indianapolis residents surveyed are most interested in jobs in health and hospital services, hotel and food services, warehouse and distribution, or construction.
- ◆ 25% of Southeast Indianapolis residents surveyed have received job skills training, mostly from their employers; 10% have received training from community training providers.
- ◆ Focus group participants believed that the underutilization of available education training services might be due to embarrassment in seeking support or a lack of understanding of services available in the community.
- ◆ There was a perception among resident focus group participants that they were not granted interviews or considered for jobs simply due to the way they looked, the fact that they spoke "street talk," or where they were from.

- ◆ The two biggest employers in Southeast Indianapolis are Eli Lilly and Company and Redcats USA. The biggest industries after that are retail stores, the service industry (including many restaurants), manufacturing, and construction.
- ◆ The Southeast Indianapolis employers surveyed report that they most often hire people through current employee referrals or word of mouth, followed by advertisements in the local newspaper.
- ◆ Southeast Indianapolis employers surveyed report that the most important skills or qualities for their employees to have are work ethic, teamwork, customer service, punctuality and good attendance, and respect in the workplace.
- ◆ The most common services offered by area training providers surveyed are initial assessment, career planning, job search, counseling, job placement and referrals.
- ◆ The kinds of training that the surveyed providers would like to provide more of in the future include leadership development, mentoring, entrepreneurship and GED preparation.
- ◆ The industries that provide the best opportunities for Southeast Indianapolis residents were categorized into high, medium and low-level opportunities. These industries and occupations were chosen based on several factors, including wage earning potential, advancement possibilities, job stability, availability of jobs in Southeast Indianapolis and occupational interest expressed by respondents. The list includes the following:
 - Construction and landscaping (highest potential)
 - Health and hospital services (highest potential)
 - Manufacturing (highest potential)
 - Transportation and automotive (highest potential)
 - Administrative and clerical (medium potential)
 - Hotel and food services (medium potential)
 - Warehouse and distribution (medium potential)

These findings, presented in greater detail in the full assessment report, led to the following high-level recommendations. These recommendations provide a starting point and guide for the planning discussions that will occur among all the Southeast Indianapolis partners during the fall of 2005. The plan that is created from the assessment may include some or all of these items, or may even include new strategies that the partners develop as a result of their discussions.

- ◆ Improve the education levels of Southeast Indianapolis residents
- ◆ Identify ways to address transportation barriers to employment
- ◆ Improve Southeast Indianapolis residents' and employers' awareness of training offerings
- ◆ Increase the level of use of disability-related employment services

Executive Summary

- ◆ Encourage training offerings in life skills and “soft skills”
- ◆ Encourage training offerings in entrepreneurship, or self-employment
- ◆ Find ways to better connect local employers with skilled, area residents
- ◆ Encourage residents to participate in WorkKeys assessments to help them determine their skill level in Applied Math, Locating Information and Reading for Information
- ◆ Encourage job training and placement in the highest potential industries for Southeast Indianapolis residents, including the following:
 - Construction and landscaping
 - Health and hospital services
 - Manufacturing
 - Transportation and automotive
- ◆ Consider strategies to make it easier for Southeast Indianapolis residents to find jobs, keep jobs, and move up in their careers in the following “medium potential” industries:
 - Administrative and clerical
 - Hotel and food services
 - Warehouse and distribution

The next step for the Southeast Indianapolis partnership will be to review these findings and recommendations and develop a plan to help Southeast residents find and keep better jobs than they have now, through strategies that involve both area employers and training providers. The result should be a stronger workforce that can support a growing economy in the years to come.