



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Central Indiana secures funding to develop regional economic development strategy
Process and plan will help create a more resilient regional economy post COVID

The Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization (IMPO) has been awarded a \$120,000 grant from the [Economic Development Administration \(EDA\) through the CARES Act](#) to develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Boone, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Johnson, Madison, Marion and Morgan counties. Federal assistance for the planning project comes from a \$1.5 billion EDA budget designed to help communities across the nation prevent, prepare for, and respond to economic setbacks caused by the coronavirus.

Developing a CEDS is key for the Central Indiana region to access more federal funding in the future, but even more importantly, will help create a plan for a more resilient economy as the region emerges from the pandemic.

In addition to the federal planning support, the Indy Partnership and Indiana Economic Development Corporation are contributing an additional \$30,000 each and providing input on the project. The IMPO is contributing in-kind services via staff time. The process will involve hiring a consultant and collaborating among the 8-county region to ensure each community is fairly represented in any future request for regional relief.

“This is a significant step for Central Indiana because better regional collaboration will allow our region to have greater access to tools and funding through the EDA,” said Anna Gremling, IMPO executive director.

The CEDS has four functions.

1. Provide a common Central Indiana economic development story nationally and globally.
2. Establish regional priorities and illustrated how local priorities fit into the larger picture.
3. Draw a connection between local, regional and state efforts.
4. Provide the basis for future EDA grant funding for local projects.

Next steps include hiring a consultant to work with the IMPO project manager, Rose Scovel, AICP and a new committee to develop a plan and implement the strategy. A request for proposals will be issued this month, and the consultant is expected to be voted on at the Jan. 29 IMPO Executive Committee meeting.

The strategy committee comprised of individuals throughout the eight-county region will be named in January and begin meeting in March. The committee, consultant and IMPO will work together to develop the strategy document, and once complete in late 2020, the draft CEDS plan will be shared publicly. Public input will be incorporated, and by the end of 2021, the IMPO will submit the CEDS plan to EDA.

Once the strategy document is complete, an application to become an Economic Development District (EDD) will be submitted to EDA in 2022. A to-be-formed EDD board will support efforts by specific communities to seek funds from the EDA, as well as guide the direction of the district.

The CEDS will update and replace [the regional economic development strategy](#) completed in 2015 by the Indy Chamber, City of Indianapolis, the Central Indiana Council of Elected Officials (CICEO) and other regional partners, including financial sponsor JPMorgan Chase.

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About the Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization

The Indianapolis MPO plans and programs federal transportation funds for local projects in the eight-county Central Indiana region. Planned in conjunction with cities, towns and counties, the projects – including bike trails, highways, roundabouts, transit vehicles, and sidewalks – receive public feedback and then are built with oversight by the IMPO Transportation Policy Committee. The IMPO planning team draws from its experience and expertise in urban issues, data collection and analysis, and technical requirements to ensure that the federal dollars paying for projects align with regional goals.

Central Indiana governments also rely on the IMPO's knowledge and reliable and fair processes for guidance on other municipal concerns, including land use, housing, economic development, and water policies. The IMPO is leading the development of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Boone, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Johnson, Madison, Marion and Morgan counties. Learn more at <https://www.indympo.org/>.

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