



WHITLEY COUNTY  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
CORPORATION

# PROGRAM AND SERVICES GUIDE

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## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Whitley EDC is to lead a comprehensive economic strategy that retains and expands opportunities and attracts capital investment to Whitley County.



# ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

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The Whitley County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to serving as the single-point of contact for business and industry in Whitley County, Indiana.

The Whitley EDC is dedicated to enhancing the economy and quality of life in Whitley County, which includes the City of Columbia City and the Towns of Churubusco, Larwill and South Whitley. Located in Northeast Indiana, Whitley County is centrally located and less than a three day drive to anywhere in the United States.

Since 1992, Whitley EDC has served each client with an understanding that each client has a specific set of needs. The Whitley EDC team brings a unique skill set for each client and is ready to support the dreamers, startup, growing and seasoned businesses.

This guide includes information for industry leaders, current businesses, prospective businesses and company leaders. We've included information about our services, incentives, programs and more.

The Whitley EDC team is happy to help you however we can. Connect with us via email at [edc@whitleyedc.com](mailto:edc@whitleyedc.com) or call 260.244.5506.

You are at the right place with Whitley EDC welcome to Whitley County!

President // Dale Buuck, [dbuuck@whitleyedc.com](mailto:dbuuck@whitleyedc.com).



# LOCAL INCENTIVES

Whitley County offers incentives as part of an attraction, retention or expansion strategies. Whitley EDC believes incentives should be custom for each business who wants to move and grow in the county to meet the needs of the client.

## WHITLEY COUNTY INCENTIVES

- ▶ **Tax Abatement** — Reduction or exemption from taxes for a specified amount of time dependant on total dollar amount of project investment and number of jobs created and retained.
- ▶ **Employee Training Grants** — Grants given to companies who will upskill their current workforce and train new employees, often in lieu of a tax abatement.
- ▶ **Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Districts** — Allow the property taxes derived from a new project in the district to be used to finance public infrastructure or other project related costs.
  - » Whitley County has one of the largest TIF districts in the state and hosts a TIF in each community.
- ▶ **Income Tax (CEDIT)** — Dollars used to encourage job creating economic development projects. The Whitley EDC Invesment Board reviews requests and makes recomendations to teh County Commissioners on how to utilize funds.
- ▶ **Revolving Loan Fund Program (RLF)** — The Whitley EDC has a low-interest revolving loan program that individvuals, start-up and existing businesses can apply.
- ▶ **Environmental Study Grants** — Grants can be awarded for environmental studies to businesses interested in restoring a building or constructing a new facility.
- ▶ **Facade Grant Program** — Grants awarded to stimulate efforts to imporve the street appearance of communities.

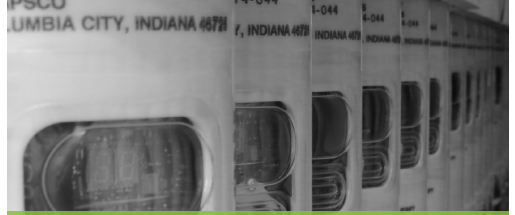
Whitley EDC partners with the State of Indiana and USDA to bundle incentives. View a full list of incentives on our website or call our office at 260.244.5506 to begin your project!

# TARGET INDUSTRIES

Whitley County is a community of makers and doers. Our industries and businesses are notable leaders in their fields and Whitley County is ready to serve as the foundation for growth and prosperity for your business.



**ADVANCED MANUFACTURING  
INDUSTRY**



**DEFENSE  
INDUSTRY**



**AEROSPACE  
INDUSTRY**



**AGRICULTURAL  
INDUSTRY**

Advanced manufacturing, specifically in the automotive and medical device sectors, create a majority of the jobs in Whitley County. In fact, more than 42% of the jobs in our county are held by the advanced manufacturing industry and earning an average of \$56,881 annually according to the 2019 NAICS statistics.\*



Whitley County has a diverse profile of industries. We encourage you to view our industry leaders at [whitleyedc.com](http://whitleyedc.com).

\*Source: StatsAmerica.org ([statsamerica.org/uscp/default.asp](http://statsamerica.org/uscp/default.asp))

# AGRIBUSINESS INITIATIVE

Whitley County has a long history and rich heritage in agriculture and the agriculture climate is always changing. The initiative is focused on education, agribusiness and innovation.

## AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

- ▶ High school programing
  - » Partnering with local schools and youth organizations to provide agricultural opportunities, training, experiences and more
- ▶ Loans and Grants for New Farmers
  - » Didn't grow up on a farm? No problem — there's options. Let the Whitley EDC provide some resources
- ▶ Educational workshops for industry and public sectors

## AGRIBUSINESS ATTRACTION AND RETENTION

- ▶ Incentives
  - » Whitley County has incentives for new and expanding businesses.
- ▶ Partnership with Purdue Extension Office
  - » Expanding our resources to help you grow and stay rooted in Whitley County
- ▶ Succession Planning
  - » What does the farm landscape look like in five years? 10 years? Let's explore the options with factual and data enhanced decisions
- ▶ Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Navigation
  - » Get your product(s) where they matter most — local

## AGRICULTURE INNOVATION INITIATIVE

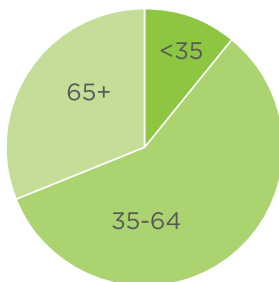
- ▶ Future projections
  - » Access to data resources
- ▶ Dual planting/rotational crop/new crop production

# Whitley County

## AGRICULTURE BY THE NUMBERS

# 1,165

Agricultural producers in Whitley County



### Age of Producers

<35	127
35-64	676
65 and older	362

### New & Beginning Producers

# 274

# \$78,922,000

Whitley County sold \$78,922,000 worth of crops, which ranks the county 47 of 92 in crop production

# \$42,025,000

Sold in livestock, poultry and products, ranking the county 32 of 92 in livestock production

# 289.06

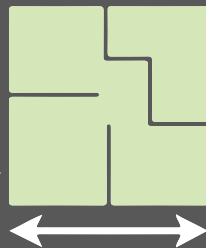
Sq. miles of Whitley County is for agricultural use

# 84%

Whitley County's land

# 185,000

Acres assessed as agricultural



## Whitley County Rankings

Whitley County's rank among all Indiana counties

# 8<sup>th</sup>

Alfalfa Hay Production, 2018

# 13<sup>th</sup>

All Hogs Production, 2017

# 33<sup>rd</sup>

Milk Cow Production, 2018

# 45<sup>th</sup>

Corn Production, 2018



# 700+

Whitley County Youth completed 4-H projects in 2020

# 3 Chapters

Whitley County hosts three nationally ranked FFA Chapters.



# START-UP, ENTREPRENEUR AND SM

Whitley EDC works to help establish and retain Whitley County start-ups and small businesses, defined as businesses with less than 50 employees.

In Whitley County, we believe in the makers and the dreamers. As just a dream scribbled on a napkin or developed into a business plan, Whitley EDC is here to support your start-up or small business.

## 1

### START-UP



- ▶ Technical Assistance and Consulting
  - » Partnering with local schools and youth organizations to provide opportunities, training, experiences and more
- ▶ Indiana's Small Business Development Center (SBDC) business planning
- ▶ Marketing Assistance

## 2

### FINANCE



- ▶ Established Revolving Loan Program
- ▶ Elevate Ventures
- ▶ Crowdfunding Campaigns

## VALUE-ADDED CONFIDENTIAL CONSULTING

We understand growing a small business takes a lot of work, and the Whitley EDC is here to help by offering one-on-one, confidential business consulting to help entrepreneurs through the process of starting and growing their businesses.

Whitley EDC can help tailor and identify coaching and programming in the following areas and more.



# ALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

## 3

### GROW AND LEARN



- ▶ Indiana's Small Business Development Center (SBDC) business planning
- ▶ Locally hosted workshops
- ▶ Co-working and Incubator Space
  - » Medical device, CNC machining and kitchen incubator availability
- ▶ Online Resources
- ▶ Networking Opportunities with Similar Business

## 4

### INNOVATE



- ▶ Economic Gardening Initiative
  - » Data Analysis
  - » Target Market Analysis

The mission of Whitley EDC is to lead a comprehensive economic strategy that retains and expands opportunities and attracts capital investment to Whitley County. As a single point of contact for all industries in Whitley County, we're ready to help. Call 260.244.5506 during normal business hours to get started.

- ▶ Accounting and Records
- ▶ Business Acquisition
- ▶ Business Liquidation
- ▶ Cash Flow Analysis
- ▶ Financial and Business Analysis
- ▶ Human Resources Management and Policy
- ▶ Loan Packaging
- ▶ Marketing Development
- ▶ Operations
- ▶ Sources of Credit and Financing
- ▶ Strategic Planning
- ▶ Technology Transfer



# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Whitley County prides itself on the local workforce development partnerships built in our local communities and the state of Indiana.

In 2020, Whitley County opened two doors for the local school corporations. Columbia City's new high school opened with state-of-the-art design and Whitko Career Academy began offering classes to promote trades.

Whitko Career Academy was made possible with Whitko Community Schools and the 80/20 Inc. Foundation Trust to begin up-skilling and promoting training for careers in agriculture, engineering, nursing, construction and much more.

In addition to the newest partnerships, Whitley EDC is committed to working with Ivy Tech, Manchester University, Purdue Fort Wayne, Purdue Manufacturing Extension Program (MEP), State Grants, training workshops and more to prepare the future and current workforce through training up-skilling and understanding the changing business climates.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

- ▶ Ivy Tech
- ▶ Manchester University
- ▶ Next Level Jobs
- ▶ Purdue Fort Wayne
- ▶ Purdue MEP
- ▶ Smith Green Community Schools (Churubusco)
- ▶ Whitley Works Program
- ▶ Whitko Community School Corporation
- ▶ Whitko Career Academy
- ▶ Whitley County Consolidated Schools
- ▶ WorkOne Northeast

# LEADERSHIP WHITLEY COUNTY

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The Leadership Whitley County (LWC), a program of Whitley EDC, celebrated 20 years in 2020 and has helped develop more than 350 diverse leaders in the community.

LWC is a seven month experiential learning program designed to empower individuals to serve and become better leaders, engage individuals in the workplace and community, and connect them with resources to continue growing as a leader at home, in the workplace and in the community.

During the fall of 2015, LWC became a program of the Whitley EDC. Through this partnership, the Whitley EDC and LWC program can combine skills and resources to help attract and develop talented individuals that excel in the workplace, and serve our community.

The Whitley County EDC has changed its structure and moved to a collaborative approach allowing our alumni to engage and help lead the program with programming and alumni councils. Each year, program applications are accepted in the spring. Find out more about LWC online at [whitleyedc.com/lwc](http://whitleyedc.com/lwc) or by searching Leadership Whitley County on Facebook.





# CONNECT

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