



Piece of the PI: Newsletter

A monthly publication for the members of Prosperity Indiana

February 2021

Executive Director's Letter

Stealing a line from our policy director, who has really been laying it on the line of late, let me state the obvious for those who have been following our advocacy efforts of late:

“What a month the past few days have been!”

Andrew said those words last week after we participated in a frigid 14-degree rally against the veto override last Monday, co-released a roundtable report with Indiana United Ways called “Shelter from the Storm: How Avoiding a COVID-19 Eviction Crisis Helps All Hoosiers”, and otherwise sought to hustle to support the good stuff and pushback against BILL. AFTER. BILL. designed to have housing stability proponents chasing potential disaster after disaster to thwart the worst case scenario. Or ALL of them, as the case may be. But he easily could have said those words again today. In fact, I honestly don’t even know how many different versions of testimony he’s written in the last two weeks for all of the bills we’ve supported and opposed. Some of the testimony he’s been able to give, some of the bills have been gutted before testimony was accepted that same day, and others were pulled altogether on their hearing date (and at the very end of the hearing, in one case).



And you may recall that, the last time I wrote about advocacy (in November), I said that progress toward creating reforms through the General Assembly that empower and improve community development efforts would be challenging in 2021, and that we should temper our expectations.

BUT.NOW. Now that the House has approved the override of SEA 148, which goes into effect immediately and makes eviction even easier statewide, even (or especially) in the cities that are trying to address their nationally chart-topping eviction rate issues, we MUST INSIST that more be done.

We could (somewhat) ready ourselves for not seeing much change during a budget year with a carryover of COVID-19 concerns and being OK with that. But that was *if* nothing changed with the Governor’s veto – *if* it’d been allowed to stand. Now, we must press. We cannot allow notions of futility to stop us. Because we know how much others need us – especially now. While we’re still in February, and we’re already asking how it already got to be May, we need to dig in. And in doing so, remember what a fellow advocate shared on “the Facebook” this week (and no, it’s not a Cat/Lawyer Zoom video – although that was SO GOOD for the soul, especially the more times you watch it):

"Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief. Do justly, now. Love mercy, now. Walk humbly, now. You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you set free to abandon it."

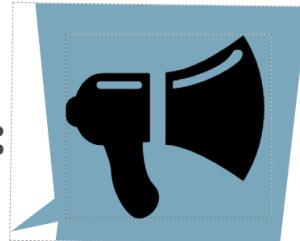
The operative word being "now" – in the dead of a frigid winter, when others are depending on us most – NOW. So, thank you to all who have already rallied, but we still need you. Now. So, be on the lookout for more opportunities to activate. For the time, to fix this mess, is NOW.

Thank you, as always, for being a Piece of the PI Network!



Jessica Love
Executive Director

This month's Piece of the PI: ADVOCACY



Now, we must press. We cannot allow notions of futility to stop us. Because we know how much others need us – especially now.

We **REAP** prosperity by providing **Resources**, **Engagement**, **Advocacy**, and **Programs** that support our members' work!

R ESOURCES

Technical Assistance

We offer an array of services, and our staff consultants provide expert guidance for organizations and communities to build resilient, quality places. In addition to deploying our technical knowledge, we focus on strengthening linkages between sectors, quantifying and communicating impact, and mobilizing community players for organizational and community change.

In partnership with the National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders (NALCAB), we also offer technical assistance (TA) to any rural nonprofit member engaged in creating community and economic development opportunities and affordable housing for low-income communities in rural areas. This TA is HUD-funded and generally provided at no cost to our members. For more information, please [contact us](#).

COVID-19 Hub

Share the wealth! Have a resource or tool you could share with your peers? We'll add it to the hub! If you're willing to share COVID-19 or other policies, plans, best practices, or funding opportunities with peers, [please share it here.](#)

Access the COVID-19 Hub



A Message from Our 2021 Summit Sponsor



First Financial Bank was honored to be the Presenting Sponsor for Prosperity Indiana's 2021 annual summit. We continue to support our commitment to advancing racial equity and inclusion not only as a financial institution, but as members of our community.

As an employer in our communities, we work to eliminate bias and build an inclusive environment. This starts by attracting, developing, and engaging exceptional people with diverse backgrounds. We then provide associates with equitable access to resources and development opportunities.

As a financial institution in our communities, we work to deliver financial services and opportunities that make lives better. We develop products and tools specifically designed to help clients no matter where they are on their financial journey. And through equitable access to financial resources and information, we provide individuals, families, businesses, and communities with the tools and knowledge to help achieve their goals and fulfill their potential.

As active members of our communities, we strive to build a more equitable society through our contributions of time, talent, and financial support to organizations and causes that drive positive change and offer support to those in need.

We launched First Financial's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Program in 2020 to help further our goal of serving our communities, understanding needs, and making lives better. We want our DEI program to foster a culture of inclusivity, to help us build the essential skills needed to be positive agents for change in our world, and to enable us to learn how to better understand and support each other. By starting with ourselves, we can identify and address our own gaps in understanding that present barriers to living more inclusive lives. Through greater awareness, connection, and compassion, we can be the positive influence that ultimately affects real change.



A DVOCACY

SEA 148, Statehouse Week, & Shelter from the Storm Report

SEA 148 Veto Override Update

Prosperity Indiana and the Hoosier Housing Needs Coalition are disappointed that the General Assembly has completed the override of Governor Holcomb's veto of SEA 148 without input from stakeholders who advocate on behalf of the 30% of Hoosiers who rent their homes and without a plan to mitigate the immediate and long-term damage it will create. The Coalition urges the General Assembly to use its remaining time this session to implement common-sense solutions that have been left out of the discussion to date. [View the press release here.](#)

Virtual Statehouse Week Recap

Thank you to everyone who participated in our first-ever virtual Statehouse Week! We were able to reach hundreds of people between our kick-off webinar, Facebook Live events, and social media updates. View the [kick-off video](#) and [slides](#) here, and don't forget to use our [Action Center](#) when we release alerts.

Shelter from the Storm Roundtable Report

Indiana United Ways and PI convened stakeholders from across Indiana's housing sector for a series of roundtable meetings and gleaned the lessons into a new report '[Shelter from the Storm: How Avoiding a COVID-19 Eviction Crisis Helps All Hoosiers](#)'. The Housing Stability Roundtable included participants from across Indiana's housing sector, including providers, community service organizations and advocates, as well as related state agencies and expert presenters to discuss how avoiding a COVID eviction crisis helps all Hoosiers.

Eviction Moratorium

The [CDC Eviction Moratorium has been extended](#) to March 31, 2021. Residents who previously submitted a declaration to their landlord should not be asked to resubmit and should have continued protection until March 31. [View the FAQ from the CDC here.](#) [View the NLIHC's moratorium updates here.](#)

COVID-19 Housing Resources

- The Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA) announced the [Emergency Rental Assistance](#) (ERA) program. Anyone that needs rental assistance, who is not currently receiving it from another source, should consider applying to this new program if they meet the eligibility requirements, [found here](#). [Subscribe to program updates from IHCDA here](#) to find out when the ERA program opens to applicants.
- Several Indiana municipalities will have local COVID-19 emergency rental assistance

programs. Renter households in the following areas will apply through the local program: Elkhart, Hamilton, Lake, Marion County/Indianapolis, City of Fort Wayne, and St. Joseph County.

- To ensure equal access and transparency, IHCDA is now providing bi-weekly updates regarding rental assistance funding. This includes information on the state's COVID-19 Rental Assistance Program as well as the Emergency Solutions Grant CARES Act (ESG-CV) rental assistance program. [View IHCDA's latest report](#).
 - The [Indy Rent Assistance Portal](#), for Marion County residents, is not accepting applications, but renters are encouraged to sign up for their waiting list.
 - The [Indy Mortgage Relief Program](#) stopped accepting applications on November 30, 2020. They do not currently have a waitlist.
 - For [Mortgage Assistance](#), Indiana's Hardest Hit Fund (HHF) is available to help Indiana homeowners who have fallen behind on their mortgage payments or who are unable to make future payments.
 - Applications are being accepted for [Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program \(LIHEAP\)](#). LIHEAP provides a one-time annual benefit to help with the high cost of home energy. An additional \$350 CARES Act benefit is also available to qualifying households experiencing a reduction in income due to COVID-19. The last day to apply is May 14, 2021.
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P ROGRAMS

Opportunity Starts at Home

PI is pleased to announce that it has been [selected to join a cohort of eight state-based organizations](#) each to receive a \$50,000 grant for the [Opportunity Starts at Home](#) (OSAH) national multisector affordable homes campaign. Prosperity Indiana will use the funding to expand the capacity of its ongoing OSAH activities and to diversify Indiana's state housing coalition to include new partners from the health, civil rights, and economic opportunity sectors. These multi-sector partnerships will be leveraged to engage Indiana's federal elected officials to enact policies which correct longstanding racial inequities and expand affordable housing for the nation's lowest income people.

In 2019, Prosperity Indiana was endorsed as the official Indiana state partner for the national [Opportunity Starts at Home](#) campaign. The goal of the Opportunity Starts at Home - Indiana Coalition (OSAH-IN) is to achieve ambitious increases in affordable housing - through existing and new infrastructure - and direct support to organizations supporting those who are unstably housed or homeless.

To find out more information or become involved, contact [Natalie James, Coalition Builder](#).



Upcoming Events

Please check with the organizer(s) of events for updated cancellations and changes due to COVID-19.

[Weekly on Friday: Inside the Statehouse 2021 - Indiana Institute for Working Families](#)

[January 16 - March 26 - Third House Meetings - American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana](#)

[January 28 - April 29: Nonprofit Capacity Building Series - Indiana Philanthropy Alliance](#)

[February 23: Redevelopment Commissions - Indiana Economic Development Association](#)

[February 24: Fair Housing Laws & Disability - Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana](#)

[February 27: Elevate - United Way of Central Indiana](#)

[March 4: Rural Opportunity Zone Initiative Webinar - Office of Community and Rural Affairs](#)

[March 4: DEI and the Corporate Giving Landscape - Indiana Philanthropy Alliance](#)

[March 30 - 31: Housing Policy Forum 2021 - National Low Income Housing Coalition](#)

[April 8: Fair Housing](#)

Job Opportunities

Impact Operations Manager
- United Way of Central
Indiana

Operations Manager -
Indiana Philanthropy
Alliance

Foundation Administrative
Assistant - MIBOR
REALTOR® Association

Chief Financial Officer -
Edna Martin Christian
Center

Operations Coordinator -
Central Indiana Community
Foundation

GIFT Program Coordinator -
Indiana Philanthropy
Alliance

ICYMI: Media Spots

House overrides Gov.
Holcomb's veto of landlord-
tenant bill

Republican lawmakers strip
Indianapolis renters of rights

Hoosiers can sign up for
new rental assistance
program

House votes to override
governor's veto of landlord-
tenant bill, allowing it to
become law

[Prosperity, United Way](#)
[Release Shelter From The](#)
[Storm Report](#)

[More vinyl villages?](#)
[Lawmaker who builds](#)
[homes pushes bill to](#)
[eliminate housing standards](#)

[Senate puts local renter](#)
[protections back on](#)
[chopping block](#)

[Senate votes to override on](#)
[tenant bill](#)

[Indiana Senate votes to](#)
[override Holcomb's veto of](#)
[landlord-tenant bill](#)

[Housing advocates plan](#)
[protest against Indiana bill](#)
[they say could increase](#)
[evictions](#)

[Learn more about housing](#)
[advocacy](#)

[Community Service Awards](#)
[Presented](#)



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Tools & Resources

2020 NAP Closeout Report Now Available

The Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority has released the 2020 NAP Closeout Report [here](#). The report is due by Monday, September 27, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. ET.

Report submissions are still due by September 27th, even if not all of an agency's 2020 NAP funds have been spent.

For 2020 NAP Tax Credits, the last day to distribute all of the credits is March 31, 2021. The 2020 NAP 100% Benchmark Report is due in [IHCDALonline](#) by Monday, April 19, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. ET.

NAP reporting resources include:

- Instructions for completing the 100% Benchmark can be found [here](#).
- A copy of the 2020 Program Manual can be found [here](#).
- The above resources and an [FAQ](#) can be found on the NAP web page [here](#).

Prosperity Now Scorecard Updates

Prosperity Now's Scorecard has been updated to generate new customizable reports on the true cost-of-living at the state level, information that is more important than ever as communities consider how to combat the ongoing economic crisis of the COVID pandemic. The profiles provide a comprehensive look at financial stability based on median monthly income, discretionary funds for savings left over after monthly bills, and data on emergency expenses and aspirational financial goals on the geographic level.

[View the scorecard here.](#)

LISC Indy Facade & Property Improvement Program Grant Open

Through the Small Business Facade and Property Improvement Program, LISC Indianapolis is providing matching grants to property and business owners willing to renovate the street-front exteriors of their structures. Business and property owners receive reimbursement for up to 50% of the cost of the project in amounts ranging from \$1,000 to \$20,000 for completed work with this rebate program. LISC Indianapolis is prioritizing minority, immigrant, and women-owned businesses, properties located in LISC [neighborhoods](#), design elements that prevent crime, and COVID-19 adaptations.

View the [grant information and eligibility here](#). Applications are being accepted February 15 – April 2, 2021. For questions, reach out to [Natalia Rodriguez-Hilt](#).

PPP Improvements

The [U.S. Small Business Administration](#) and lenders are working to improve the [Paycheck Protection Program \(PPP\)](#) and make it more accessible for small businesses. The SBA highlighted that "28% of businesses who have received funding this round are in rural communities."

The SBA is also continuing to increase partnerships with Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) and Minority Depository Institutions (MDIs) "who are trusted agents in extending economic relief to minority communities and underserved populations."

Other improvements for the program include the speed of resolving data mismatches and eligibility concerns.

[View the entire press release here.](#)

OCRA's 2020 Annual Report

The Office of Community and Rural Development (OCRA) has released its [2020 Annual Report](#).

Highlights from OCRA's report include the COVID-19 Response Program, expansion of the Main Street Program, and grant awards to communities.

OCRA stated that it plans to continue prioritizing "COVID-19 recovery through grant funding, technical assistance and capacity building," along with small businesses, the rural economy, and rural broadband.

[View the report here.](#)

Evictions Continue to Occur Across the U.S.

An article from Bloomberg CityLab covers the growing number of evictions in the United States. According to the authors, "Nearly a year into the pandemic crisis, a much-feared nationwide [‘tsunami’](#) of evictions has yet to materialize. Instead, changes in tenant protections have led to a more gradual groundswell in eviction filings."

According to the authors, advocates, including the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), are calling for reform and a "universal moratorium — one that applies whether tenants know it exists or not."

The article also references data from Princeton University's Eviction Lab, which is actively tracking evictions [across 27 U.S. cities, including Indianapolis.](#)

[Read the article here.](#)

How to Stay Healthy



Resources

[Be Well Indiana](#)

[Indiana Press Releases](#)

[Indiana State Department of Health](#)

[Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[HUD COVID-19 Guidance](#)

[Prevention Steps for Close Contacts](#)

General Information & Precautions

- Wash your hands for 20 seconds.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Encourage teleworking when feasible.
- Practice social distancing when possible and avoid close contact with others. This may include staggering work schedules and decreasing social contact in the workplace.

Decisions about the implementation of community measures will be made by local and state officials, in consultation with federal officials as appropriate, and based on the scope of the outbreak and the severity of illness. Implementation will require extensive community engagement with ongoing and transparent public health communications (CDC).

Prosperity Indiana's Response

Since July 15, Prosperity Indiana team members have been able to return to the office to work. Staff will be rotating days that they are present in the office. While most team members continue to work remotely at this time, we have compiled the following information about our return to work plan.

Our re-opening plan includes:

- Limiting staff in the office to no more than three at a time and fewer than 10 short-term, staggered visitors daily to allow for physical distancing
- Providing adequate PPE for staff and visitors, along with extra hand sanitizing supplies, tissues, and wipes for high touch surfaces.
- Implementing a return-to-work plan that complies with the Back on Track Roadmap, CDC, Indiana Department of Health, and OSHA guidelines.

The best way to reach us during this time is via email. Here is a [link](#) to contact information for full-time staff. You can also reach out to [Teresa Reimschisel](#) with admin/operations questions.

Prosperity Indiana is here to support you through this difficult time. If you have specific suggestions for webinars, FB live chats, or other resources for us to share related to COVID-19 or other topics, please reach out to our [team](#).

Please stay healthy and take the necessary measures to protect yourself and those around you. We will be sure to inform you of any further updates as needed in the coming weeks.

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Shopping on Amazon.com? Switch to our Amazon Smile page, and Amazon will donate a percentage of your purchase to Prosperity Indiana!

Shop, Smile, & Donate



If you have a success story, an upcoming event, or a job opening, please let us know! Prosperity Indiana is seeking guest bloggers and success stories from our membership to broadcast across the network. We want to highlight our greatest asset, our members!

[Send your stories.](#)

Visit [our blog](#) for more of the latest community economic development news in Indiana.

A blue rectangular graphic with a white dotted line border. In the top right corner is a small white stylized leaf or flower logo. The text "WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!" is written in large, bold, white, sans-serif capital letters, centered on the graphic.

..... WE WANT
TO HEAR
FROM YOU!

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