



Intergovernmental Issues in Indiana: 2004 IACIR Survey



Center for Urban Policy and the Environment
Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs

March 2005

Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations
342 North Senate Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46204-1708

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Executive Summary

Intergovernmental Issues in Indiana (2004) is the seventh in a series of periodic surveys of elected officials designed to help the Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (IACIR) and the Indiana General Assembly understand issues facing local governments. The 2004 survey included 19 questions and addressed many issues included in previous IACIR surveys, as well as “hot topics” affecting local governments currently. The heart of the survey is a series of questions about 55 community conditions in six categories: health, public safety, economics, land use, local services, and community quality of life. Answers to these questions provide useful insights about how local officials feel about the directions in which their communities are heading.

Methods and Response Rate

The IACIR administered the survey to 1,219 officeholders in the fall of 2004, including all members of the Indiana General Assembly, county council presidents, county board of commissioners presidents, mayors, and school board presidents. The commission also surveyed a randomly-selected member of each town council for towns with populations over 500, and two randomly-selected township trustees from each county. The effective response rate was 41 percent.

Findings

Officials show increasing optimism about the future of communities

Almost three-quarters of officials reported being optimistic about the future of their communities. This represents a slight increase from 2003, but still less optimism than in 1999, 2001, and 2002.

Cost of healthcare, substance abuse, and the health of the economy remain the most pressing issues for many communities

While *high speed internet access, parks and recreation, K-12 education, police-community relations, and community involvement* were chosen most often as improved, no condition was chosen by more than one-quarter of respondents. Similarly, *community involvement, vitality of downtown, K-12 education, water quality, police/sheriff services, and fire services* were chosen most often as most improved, but no condition was chosen by more than one-quarter of respondents. Officials identified similar issues most often as worsening, most deteriorated, and most important to work on, including *cost of health services, drug abuse and drug crime, the health of the economy, traffic, and vitality of downtown*.

Local governments share services

More than one-quarter of respondents reported that their local government receives the following services from another local government: *juvenile detention, jail, emergency dispatch, emergency medical services, and economic development*.

Awareness of brownfields issues and solutions is increasing over time

Education and outreach efforts by the Indiana Development Finance Authority and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management have increased awareness about brownfields issues and solutions among local elected officials. All groups of officeholders, except mayors, have reported increasing knowledge about brownfields since 2001. The decreased awareness among mayors may be the result of the significant electoral turnover that occurred in 2003 and may suggest a need for targeted outreach.

Parks and recreation is perceived as an important service

Parks and recreation has been reported most frequently as an improved condition for several years. Respondents reported overwhelmingly that the public benefits associated with parks and recreation, such as aesthetic beauty, health and fitness, open space, and access to all income levels and to disabled residents,

are important in their communities. Although distributed more widely than responses about the importance of benefits, respondents also reported being generally satisfied with the provision of each benefit.

The utilization of stormwater utilities is increasing

A number of communities are now planning how to comply with state and federal regulations regarding stormwater quality and how to finance new environmental activities. Survey responses show that at least 33 communities and 5 counties have adopted stormwater utilities. The number of communities considering and adopting utilities is likely to rise as stormwater quality planning and implementation progress.

Communities experienced a number of problems associated with reassessment

More than three-quarters of respondents indicated that the increased tax burden on older neighborhoods, insufficient cash flow, and the inequity of assessments across counties were problems for their communities.

Officials identify local government as having an increased role in service provision over time

Respondents identified more services as appropriately the primary responsibility of local government or as a shared responsibility between state and local government than in 1999. The majority of officials indicated that responsibility for nine services (*corrections, courts, economic development, healthcare for indigent, information services, counter-terrorism measures, public education, roads and streets, and workforce development*) should be shared by state and local government. *Drinking water, emergency medical services, police and fire, property tax assessments, solid waste disposal or handling, and wastewater treatment* were services identified by a majority of respondents as appropriately provided by local government.

Tax controls and welfare mandates were reported most frequently to have local impact

A majority of respondents chose *tax controls* and *welfare mandates* as one of three mandates that had the most significant impact on meeting local needs. *Health, water quality* and *adult corrections* also were identified by one-fifth or more of the respondents.

Conclusions

State and local elected officials in Indiana face increasingly more complex and, at times, difficult circumstances as they seek to provide public services for their citizens. Respondents continue to say that the community issues that are important for action include the cost of healthcare, substance abuse and crime, and the health of the economy. Respondents identified a greater number of services that should be the primary responsibility of local governments or the shared responsibilities of state and local governments than in 1999. Many local governments report interlocal arrangements for the provision of particular types of public services. Tax controls, particularly those passed in Senate Enrolled Act 1 (2004), are increasingly identified as a mandate has created significant hardships for local governments. Indiana governments must develop new structures and skills to manage the changing environment.

Introduction

Intergovernmental Issues in Indiana (2004) is the seventh in a series of periodic surveys of elected officials designed to help the Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (IACIR) and the Indiana General Assembly understand the issues that are important to local governments. The IACIR conducted similar surveys in 1996, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2002, and 2003. The original survey was modeled after a regular survey of local elected officials conducted by the National League of Cities.

A complete description of the survey methodology appears in Appendix A. The 2004 survey included 19 questions and addressed a number of issues that were included in one or more previous surveys. The survey also addressed several “hot topics” affecting local communities in 2004, including reassessment, stormwater utilities, and federal and state mandates. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, and the Indiana Development Finance Authority assisted IACIR staff in developing selected questions. The questionnaire appears in Appendix B. The IACIR mailed the 2004 survey to 1,219 state and local elected officials in early fall.

This report presents the results of the 2004 survey. Survey responses are reported by topic area. With a few exceptions, the results are presented in the order they appear in the questionnaire. To account for non-responses to specific questions and questions addressed to specific officeholders, the number of responses is provided with the table or figure for each question.

Questions 9, 12, 13, 15, and 18 gave respondents the option of writing in a specific response to *other*. In cases when these responses closely matched an option in the list provided, the response was grouped with that option. A complete list of *other* responses is provided in Appendix C. Appendix D includes a complete list of responses to the open-ended Question 19 at the end of the survey along with miscellaneous written comments. In a few cases, names and other identifiers were removed to ensure that no individual respondent can be associated with a particular response.

Response Rates

The IACIR mailed 1,219 surveys to state and local elected officials, including all legislators, county council presidents, county board of commissioners presidents, mayors, and school board presidents. The survey also was mailed to one randomly-selected town council member from each town with population over 500 (according to 2003 Census estimates) and two randomly-selected township trustees from each county.

The effective response rate was 41 percent (500 out of 1,205). Fourteen (14) returned surveys were excluded from the analysis either because they were undeliverable, the respondents were not elected officials, the respondents did not complete more than a few questions, or the survey was returned without a tracking number.

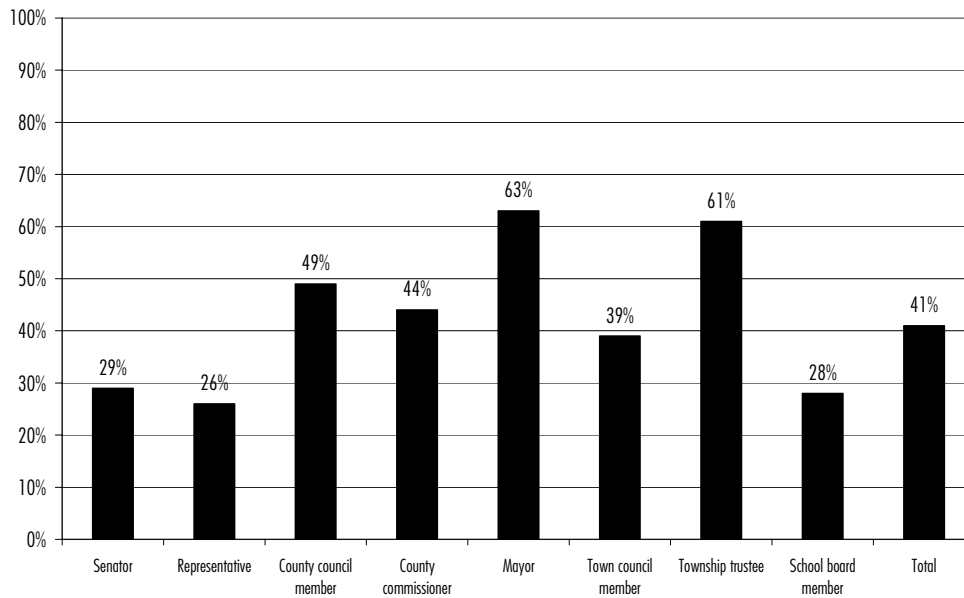
Question 1 asked respondents to identify the office they hold. Table 1 shows the number of surveys mailed and returned for each type of officeholder. Ten respondents indicated *other*. Aside from the two respondents who were excluded because they were not elected officials, the remaining eight were assigned to an office category based on the type of local government they represent. For example, several school board members chose *other* and indicated that they were school board presidents. Each of these surveys was coded as *school board member*.

As shown in Table 1 and Figure 1, mayors had the highest response rate for the 2004 survey (63 percent), and state representatives had the lowest (26 percent). Mayors, town councilors, and township trustees had higher response rates in 2004 than in 2003, and the remaining groups had lower response rates (see Table 2, page 5). Although the overall response rate for 2004 was lower than in 2003 (47 percent), it was comparable to the response rates achieved in 2002 (41 percent) and 2001 (40 percent).

Table 1: Response rates by office (Question 1)

Office	Effective responses	Mailed	Undelivered or excluded	Effective return rate
Senator	14	49	1	29%
Representative	26	100	0	26%
County council member	45	91	0	49%
County commissioner	40	91	0	44%
Mayor	73	117	1	63%
Town council member	114	297	2	39%
Township trustee	109	184	4	61%
School board member	79	290	6	28%
Total	500	1,219	14	41%

Figure 1: Response rates by office (Question 1)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2004

Table 2: Response rates by office by survey year

Office	2004	2003	2002	2001	1999
Senator	29%	40%	32%	30%	46%
Representative	26%	28%	23%	19%	35%
County council member	49%	64%	54%	52%	61%
County commissioner	44%	53%	41%	51%	60%
Mayor	63%	52%	50%	56%	61%
Town council member	39%	37%	38%	32%	44%
Township trustee	61%	57%	57%	43%	68%
School board member	28%	44%	34%	47%	45%
Total	41%	47%	41%	40%	51%

In addition to office held, respondents were asked to identify the area code they live in. As shown in Table 3, respondents were evenly distributed across the area codes associated with northern, central, and southern Indiana. About one-third of the respondents were from each of the three geographic areas of the state.

Table 3: Geographic distribution of respondents

Area code	Region	Percent of total
219	Northern	10%
260	Northern	11%
574	Northern	11%
317	Central	9%
765	Central	25%
812	Southern	34%

Local Conditions and Services

Questions 4–8 addressed local conditions and services. Question 4 queried respondents about their feelings regarding the future of their communities. Questions 5–8 addressed 55 local conditions in six general categories: health, public safety, economics, land use, local services, and community quality of life. Respondents were asked about the current status of each condition and change in the last year. Respondents also were asked to identify the conditions that had improved and deteriorated most over the last year, as well as the conditions most important to work on over the next two years.

The 2004 survey reflects a few changes from previous years. The list of community conditions included 17 conditions that had not appeared in previous surveys and one (*youth crime*) that had been removed from the survey previously. Respondents also were asked which conditions had improved and deteriorated most over the *last year*, rather than over the last *five* years.

Community Direction

As shown in Table 4 and Figure 2, respondents are generally optimistic about the direction their community is heading (74 percent). This represents a slight increase in optimism; a greater proportion reported being optimistic and a smaller proportion reported feeling pessimistic or neutral than in 2003 (see Table 5, page 7). The proportion of respondents who reported being *very optimistic*, however, has declined

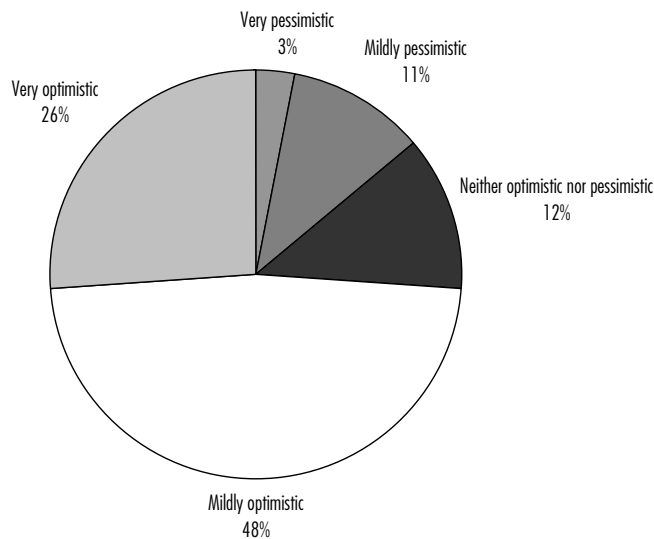
since 1999. Mayors continue to be the most optimistic group of officeholders (93 percent), and school board members reported being most pessimistic (27 percent) about the direction of their communities. In 2003, township trustees reported being the most pessimistic (16 percent).

Table 4: Feelings about the direction the community is heading by office (Question 4)

	Very optimistic	Mildly optimistic	Neither optimistic nor pessimistic	Mildly pessimistic	Very pessimistic
Senator (n=13)*	23%	62%	8%	8%	0%
Representative (n=26)*	19%	50%	15%	12%	4%
County council member (n=44)	9%	58%	14%	19%	0%
County commissioner (n=37)	30%	49%	16%	5%	0%
Mayor (n=72)	51%	42%	4%	3%	0%
Town council member (n=112)	38%	51%	4%	4%	3%
Township trustee (n=109)	15%	47%	18%	13%	6%
School board member (n=78)	13%	43%	17%	23%	4%
Total (n=491)	26%	48%	12%	11%	3%

*While the cover letters that accompanied the questionnaire directed legislators to respond for the community in which they live, their responses may reflect a variety of conditions that exist across legislative districts.

Figure 2: Feelings about the general direction the community is heading (Question 4; n=491)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2004

Table 5: Feelings about the general direction the community is heading by survey year

	Very optimistic	Mildly optimistic	Neither optimistic nor pessimistic	Mildly pessimistic	Very pessimistic
2004 (n=491)	26%	48%	12%	11%	3%
2003 (n=502)	27%	45%	14%	11%	3%
2002 (n=543)	28%	47%	13%	9%	2%
2001 (n=542)	34%	50%	9%	5%	2%
1999 (n=599)	38%	44%	10%	7%	1%

Current Status of Conditions

Most communities appear to be stable. When asked about the current status of the 55 conditions, a majority of respondents identified more than half of the conditions (29 of the 55) as *minor or no problem* (see Table 6). As in 2003, the *cost of health services* was the only condition chosen as a *major problem* by a majority of respondents (see Table 7). Figure 3 (see page 9) shows the five conditions identified most often as *major or moderate problems* in 2004. The cost of healthcare, substance abuse, and the health of the economy remain the most pressing problems for an overwhelming number of Indiana communities. With the exception of *drug abuse*, a smaller proportion of officials reported these issues as problems in 2004 than in 2003. Among the remaining conditions, a noticeably higher proportion officials reported *youth crime* (11 percent increase) and *brownfields* (8 percent increase) than in previous surveys.

Table 6: Current status of community conditions (Question 5)

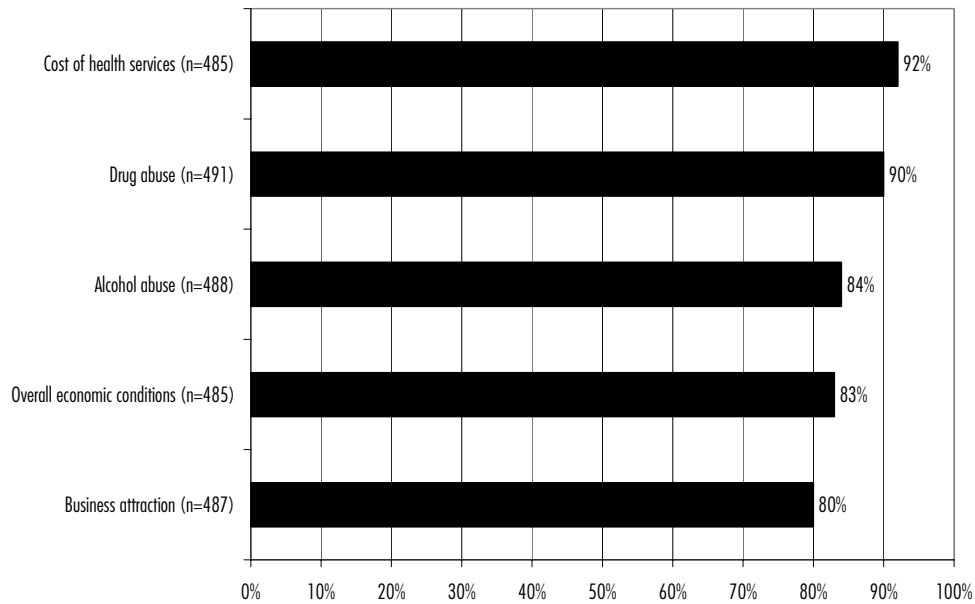
Category	Condition	Major problem	Moderate problem	Minor or no problem
Health	Cost of health services (n=485)	59%	33%	8%
	Availability of health services (n=482)	8%	35%	56%
	Drug abuse (n=491)	44%	46%	10%
	Alcohol abuse (n=488)	25%	59%	16%
	Care for the elderly (n=487)	14%	49%	38%
Public safety	Police/sheriff services (n=486)*	5%	20%	76%
	Police-community relations (n=488)	4%	22%	74%
	Fire services (n=487)*	2%	13%	85%
	Emergency medical services (n=489)*	6%	25%	70%
	Violent crime (n=485)	3%	34%	62%
	Drug crime (n=486)*	27%	49%	24%
	Youth crime (n=485)	10%	58%	32%
	Family/domestic violence (n=485)*	8%	55%	36%
	Terrorism (n=489)	2%	8%	90%
	Jail facilities (n=477)	18%	25%	58%
	Youth detention facilities (n=475)	18%	35%	48%
	Disaster response (n=481)*	3%	24%	73%
	Economics	Overall economic conditions (n=485)	32%	51%
Unemployment (n=481)		27%	52%	21%
Business attraction (n=487)*		39%	41%	20%
Business retention (n=480)*		26%	46%	28%
Job quality (n=482)*		27%	49%	24%
Workforce training (n=480)		17%	48%	36%

Table 6: Current status of community conditions (Question 5) (continued)

Category	Condition	Major problem	Moderate problem	Minor or no problem
Land use	Quality of development (n=476)	14%	40%	46%
	Increased amount of development (n=470)	18%	35%	47%
	Lack of development (n=472)*	20%	29%	51%
	Quality affordable housing (n=478)	16%	41%	43%
	Mix of housing types and prices (n=477)*	11%	43%	46%
	Mix of residential and non-residential development (n=475)*	12%	34%	54%
	Opens space/green space (n=470)	8%	28%	64%
	Farmland conversion and loss (n=471)*	16%	35%	49%
	Brownfields (n=464)	8%	34%	58%
Local services	K-12 education (n=477)	6%	22%	72%
	Drinking water (n=482)	5%	18%	77%
	Sanitary sewers (n=477)	19%	30%	51%
	Storm sewers (n=473)*	21%	37%	42%
	Local roads and streets (n=482)	21%	43%	36%
	Highways (n=481)*	14%	38%	48%
	High-speed internet access (n=473)	14%	32%	54%
	Telephone (n=483)	2%	19%	79%
	Cellular telephone (n=481)	11%	29%	60%
	Parks and recreation (n=482)	5%	25%	70%
	Solid waste management (n=481)	8%	26%	67%
	Cable TV (n=475)	6%	23%	71%
	Public transportation (n=471)	18%	28%	54%
Community quality of life	Race-ethnic relations (n=481)	3%	24%	73%
	Air quality (n=483)	5%	28%	67%
	Water quality (n=477)	4%	23%	72%
	Traffic (n=480)	15%	39%	46%
	Poverty (n=482)	17%	49%	34%
	Vitality of neighborhoods (n=473)	8%	40%	52%
	Vitality of downtown (n=469)	29%	43%	29%
	Arts and cultural resources (n=461)*	12%	34%	54%
	Childcare (n=474)*	9%	38%	53%
	Community involvement (n=476)	14%	42%	43%

*New conditions added to 2004 questionnaire.

Figure 3: Top five issues identified as major or moderate problems (Question 5)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2004

Table 7: Conditions reported as major or moderate problems by survey year

Category	Condition	2004	2003	2002	2001
Health	Cost of health services**	92%	94%	91%	68%
	Availability of health services **	44%	47%	46%	
	Drug abuse**	90%	90%		
	Alcohol abuse**	84%	86%	85%	84%
	Care for the elderly	62%	69%	63%	57%
Public safety	Police/sheriff services*	24%	–	–	–
	Police-community relations	26%	30%	31%	26%
	Fire services*	15%	–	–	–
	Emergency medical services*	30%	–	–	–
	Violent crime	38%	37%	33%	36%
	Drug crime*	76%	–	–	–
	Youth violence and crime**	68%	–	57%	58%
	Family/domestic violence*	64%	–	–	–
	Terrorism**	10%	7%	–	–
	Jail facilities**	42%	47%	–	–
	Youth detention facilities**	52%	50%	–	–
	Disaster response*	27%	–	–	–
Economics	Overall economic conditions**	83%	91%	85%	–
	Unemployment	79%	89%	74%	63%
	Business attraction*	80%	–	–	–
	Business retention*	73%	–	–	–
	Job quality*	76%	–	–	–
	Workforce training	64%	71%	59%	56%
	Workforce retraining**	–	–	58%	49%

Table 7: Conditions reported as major or moderate problems by survey year (continued)

Category	Condition	2004	2003	2002	2001
Land use	Quality of development	54%	55%	53%	50%
	Increased amount of development	53%	52%	51%	53%
	Lack of development *	49%	–	–	–
	Quality affordable housing	57%	57%	61%	61%
	Mix of housing types and prices*	54%	–	–	–
	Mix of residential and non-residential development*	46%	–	–	–
	Opens space/green space	36%	34%	33%	37%
	Farmland conversion and loss*	51%	–	–	–
	Brownfields	42%	34%	36%	32%
Local services	K-12 education	28%	34%	31%	36%
	Drinking water	23%	19%	22%	23%
	Sanitary sewers**	49%	–	–	–
	Storm sewers**	58%	53%	52%	46%
	Local roads and streets	64%	67%	66%	62%
	Highways*	52%	–	–	–
	High-speed internet access	46%	44%	43%	27%
	Telephone	21%	20%	23%	27%
	Cellular telephone	40%	36%	32%	21%
	Parks and recreation	30%	26%	25%	34%
	Solid waste management	33%	37%	37%	29%
	Cable TV	29%	29%	34%	38%
	Public transportation	46%	45%	47%	29%
Community quality of life	Race-ethnic relations	27%	26%	26%	29%
	Air quality	33%	28%	22%	23%
	Water quality	28%	22%	24%	24%
	Traffic	54%	53%	56%	60%
	Poverty	66%	71%	60%	50%
	Vitality of neighborhoods	48%	51%	42%	43%
	Vitality of downtown	71%	70%	66%	60%
	Arts and cultural resources*	46%	–	–	–
	Childcare*	47%	–	–	–
	Community involvement**	57%	57%	54%	39%

*New conditions added to 2004 questionnaire.

**Over time, the community conditions included in the survey have changed for a number of reasons. The number of conditions was expanded significantly in 2001 and 2004. In some cases, conditions have been disaggregated to allow finer analysis. In other cases, conditions have been modified or deleted because of the changing environment or space limitations.

Change in Conditions

With the exception of *cost of health services* and *overall economic conditions*, the majority of respondents reported *no change* over the past year for all conditions (see Table 8, page 11). None of the conditions was reported as improved by more than a quarter of respondents. Many of the same conditions have been reported as worsened by 25 percent or more of respondents since 2001 (see Table 9).¹ Figures 4 and 5

¹ The rather stark relative differences between the proportion of respondents in Question 5 and Questions 6–8 are a function of question structure. In Question 5, respondents provided information about all 55 conditions. In Questions 6–8, respondents chose only 3 of the 55 conditions.

show the five issues officials identified most often as improved and as worsened over the past year, respectively.

Similar issues were reported most often as improved and deteriorated in Questions 5-7 (see Tables 10 and 11, pages 15 and 16). Seven and eight conditions were reported by 10 percent or more of respondents as most improved and most deteriorated over the last year, respectively. Figures 6 and 7 (see page 17) show the top five issues identified as most improved and as most deteriorated over the past year, respectively. Interestingly, *vitality of downtown* was reported by more than 10 percent of respondents as both most improved and most deteriorated. This outcome shows that communities across the state face a variety of conditions on similar issues.

Table 8: Change in local conditions since last year (Question 5)

Category	Condition	Improved	Worsened	No Change	
Health	Cost of health services (n=456)	3%	51%	46%	
	Availability of health services (n=454)	14%	9%	77%	
	Drug abuse (n=457)	6%	42%	52%	
	Alcohol abuse (n=450)	2%	20%	78%	
	Care for the elderly (n=452)	8%	11%	81%	
Public safety	Police/sheriff services (n=453)*	15%	9%	76%	
	Police-community relations (n=450)	18%	8%	74%	
	Fire services (n=449)*	16%	6%	78%	
	Emergency medical services (n=452)*	15%	9%	76%	
	Violent crime (n=454)	3%	11%	85%	
	Drug crime (n=450)*	5%	38%	57%	
	Youth crime (n=449)	3%	26%	71%	
	Family/domestic violence (n=447)*	5%	16%	79%	
	Terrorism (n=448)	2%	2%	95%	
	Jail facilities (n=444)	11%	20%	69%	
	Youth detention facilities (n=441)	7%	18%	75%	
	Disaster response (n=451)*	17%	5%	79%	
	Economics	Overall economic conditions (n=460)	13%	42%	45%
		Unemployment (n=458)	11%	38%	51%
Business attraction (n=462)*		17%	26%	57%	
Business retention (n=457)*		9%	31%	60%	
Job quality (n=459)*		6%	24%	70%	
Workforce training (n=448)		14%	13%	73%	
Land use	Quality of development (n=448)	13%	16%	72%	
	Increased amount of development (n=453)	14%	20%	66%	
	Lack of development (n=438)*	8%	14%	78%	
	Quality affordable housing (n=443)	9%	18%	72%	
	Mix of housing types and prices (n=445)*	9%	14%	78%	
	Mix of residential and non-residential development (n=445)*	7%	12%	82%	
	Opens space/green space (n=441)	8%	12%	80%	
	Farmland conversion and loss (n=441)*	2%	26%	72%	
Brownfields (n=436)	7%	11%	82%		

Table 8: Change in local conditions since last year (Question 5) (continued)

Category	Condition	Improved	Worsened	No Change
Local services	K-12 education (n=447)	19%	11%	70%
	Drinking water (n=451)	11%	10%	80%
	Sanitary sewers (n=452)	17%	16%	66%
	Storm sewers (n=448)*	14%	18%	68%
	Local roads and streets (n=451)	17%	26%	57%
	Highways (n=446)*	15%	21%	64%
	High-speed internet access (n=439)	24%	9%	67%
	Telephone (n=449)	7%	5%	88%
	Cellular telephone (n=451)	17%	10%	74%
	Parks and recreation (n=448)	20%	6%	73%
	Solid waste management (n=450)	10%	10%	80%
	Cable TV (n=445)	7%	12%	82%
	Public transportation (n=437)	5%	13%	82%
Community quality of life	Race-ethnic relations (n=445)	7%	6%	87%
	Air quality (n=445)	4%	13%	82%
	Water quality (n=445)	8%	8%	84%
	Traffic (n=445)	5%	33%	61%
	Poverty (n=447)	1%	34%	65%
	Vitality of neighborhoods (n=436)	7%	19%	74%
	Vitality of downtown (n=443)	17%	30%	52%
	Arts and cultural resources (n=429)*	11%	10%	79%
	Childcare (n=437)	7%	10%	83%
	Community involvement (n=440)	18%	17%	65%

*New conditions added to 2004 questionnaire.

Table 9: Conditions identified as improved or worsened over the past year by survey year

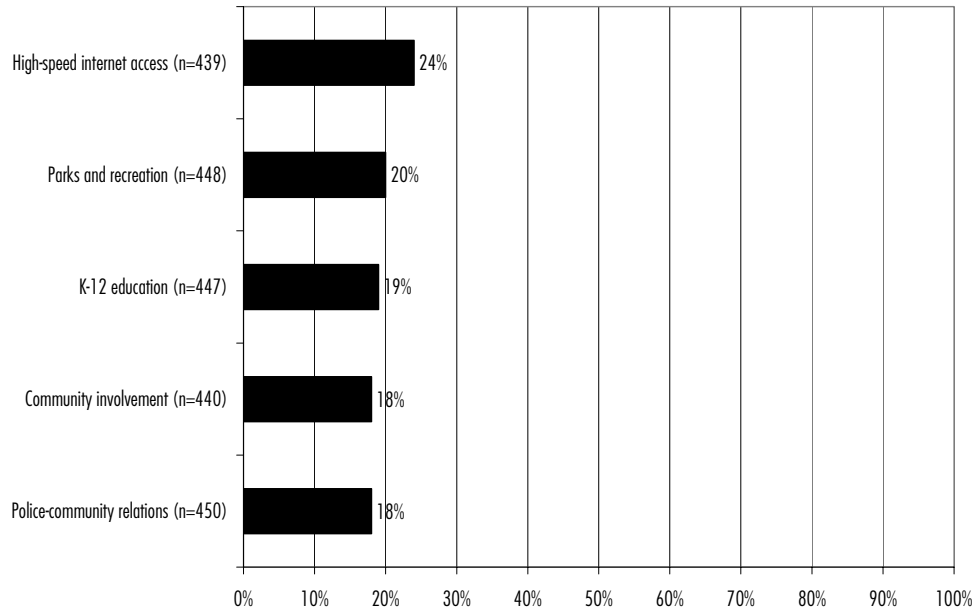
Survey year	25% or more of respondents indicated improved	25% or more of respondents indicated worsened
2004		Cost of health services (51%) Overall economic conditions (42%) Drug abuse (42%) Unemployment (38%) Drug crime (38%) Poverty (34%) Traffic (33%) Business retention (31%) Vitality of downtown (30%) Youth crime (26%) Business attraction (26%) Farmland conversion and loss (26%) Local roads and streets (26%)

Table 9: Conditions identified as improved or worsened over the past year by survey year (continued)

Survey year	25% or more of respondents indicated improved	25% or more of respondents indicated worsened
2003	High-speed internet access (27%)	Unemployment (55%) Cost of health services (54%) Overall economic conditions (54%) Poverty (35%) Drug abuse (34%) Traffic (34%) Vitality of downtown (28%) Roads and streets (25%)
2002		Overall economic conditions (59%) Cost of health services (54%) Unemployment (53%) Traffic (37%) Drug and alcohol abuse (31%) Vitality of downtown (30%) Roads and streets (29%) Poverty (29%) Youth violence and crime (26%)
2001	Police-community relations (43%) Parks and recreation (40%) Amount of development (37%)* Internet access (36%)* K-12 education (34%) Quality of development (29%)* Sewer (27%) Roads and streets (27%) Solid waste management (27%) Volunteerism (25%)*	Traffic (51%)* Unemployment (48%) Roads and streets (37%) Cost and availability of health care services (34%) Drug and alcohol abuse (34%) Vitality of downtown (32%)* Youth violence and crime (29%) Quality affordable housing (26%) Open space (25%)
1999	Economic conditions (50%) Parks and open space (50%) Police-community relations (49%) Infrastructure (49%) Unemployment (44%) Educational quality (39%) Solid waste management (37%) Workforce development (34%) Vitality of neighborhoods (34%) Healthcare (32%) Corporate responsibility (28%) Affordable housing (27%)	Cable TV rates (61%) Youth crime (29%) Substance abuse (26%)

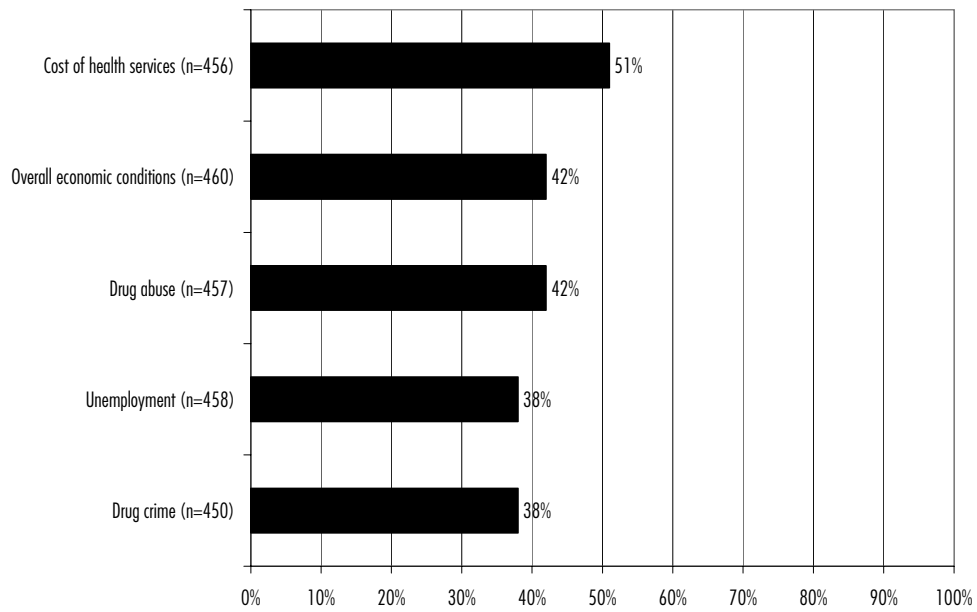
*The number of conditions expanded significantly in 2001. Thus, readers should interpret the changes in responses from 1999 to 2001 cautiously.

Figure 4: Top five issues identified most often as improved during the past year (Question 5)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2004

Figure 5: Top five issues identified most often as worsened during the past year (Question 5)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2004

Table 10: Conditions ranked as most improved or most deteriorated during the past year (Questions 6 and 7)

Category	Condition	Reported as one of three most improved (n=372)	Reported as one of three most deteriorated (n=457)
Health	Health**	5%	5%
	Cost of health services	1%	19%
	Availability of health services	5%	0%
	Drug abuse	1%	16%
	Alcohol abuse	0%	4%
	Care for the elderly	2%	0%
Public safety	Public safety**	5%	2%
	Police/sheriff services*	10%	1%
	Police-community relations	5%	1%
	Fire services	10%	0%
	Emergency medical services*	8%	1%
	Violent crime	1%	2%
	Drug crime*	0%	10%
	Youth crime	1%	5%
	Family/domestic violence*	1%	1%
	Terrorism	1%	0%
	Jail facilities	4%	5%
	Youth detention facilities	2%	1%
	Disaster response*	6%	1%
	Economics	Economics**	5%
Overall economic conditions		5%	7%
Unemployment		3%	10%
Business attraction*		6%	6%
Business retention*		2%	6%
Job quality*		2%	4%
Workforce training		3%	1%
Land use	Land use**	4%	2%
	Quality of development	5%	1%
	Increased amount of development	2%	2%
	Lack of development*	1%	3%
	Quality affordable housing	3%	2%
	Mix of housing types and prices*	2%	2%
	Mix of residential and non-residential development*	0%	0%
	Opens space/green space	1%	1%
	Farmland conversion and loss*	0%	6%
Brownfields	2%	1%	

Table 10: Conditions ranked as most improved or most deteriorated during the past year (Questions 6 and 7) (continued)

Category	Condition	Reported as one of three most improved (n=372)	Reported as one of three most deteriorated (n=457)
Local services	Local services**	5%	3%
	K-12 education	11%	2%
	Drinking water	2%	1%
	Sanitary sewers	7%	4%
	Storm sewers*	2%	7%
	Local roads and streets	8%	10%
	Highways*	5%	4%
	High-speed internet access	9%	1%
	Telephone	1%	0%
	Cellular telephone	2%	1%
	Parks and recreation	7%	0%
	Solid waste management	2%	0%
	Cable TV	2%	1%
	Public transportation	2%	2%
Community quality of life	Community quality of life**	2%	2%
	Race-ethnic relations	6%	3%
	Air quality	3%	5%
	Water quality	10%	6%
	Traffic	4%	19%
	Poverty	2%	15%
	Vitality of neighborhoods	7%	6%
	Vitality of downtown	12%	16%
	Arts and cultural resources*	9%	3%
	Childcare*	10%	4%
Community involvement	20%	6%	
Other	Other***	2%	7%

*New conditions added to 2004 questionnaire.

**In some cases, respondents identified general categories rather than specific conditions.

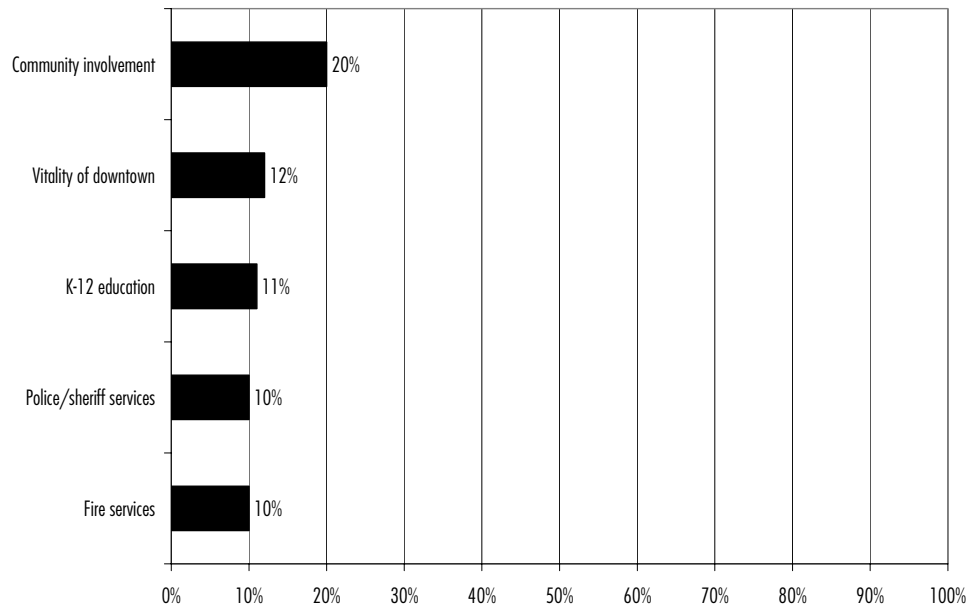
***In other cases, respondents identified conditions not listed in Question 5 or in a manner that did not allow the responses to be interpreted as one of the provided conditions. A list of these responses is provided in Appendix C.

Table 11: Conditions chosen most often as most improved or most deteriorated over the last year (Questions 6 and 7)*

10% or more of respondents indicated most improved	10% or more of respondents indicated most deteriorated
Community involvement (20%)	Cost of health services (19%)
Vitality of downtown (12%)	Traffic (19%)
K-12 education (11%)	Drug abuse (16%)
Police/sheriff services (10%)	Vitality of downtown (16%)
Fire services (10%)	Poverty (15%)
Water quality (10%)	Drug crime (10%)
Childcare (10%)	Unemployment (10%)
	Local roads and streets (10%)

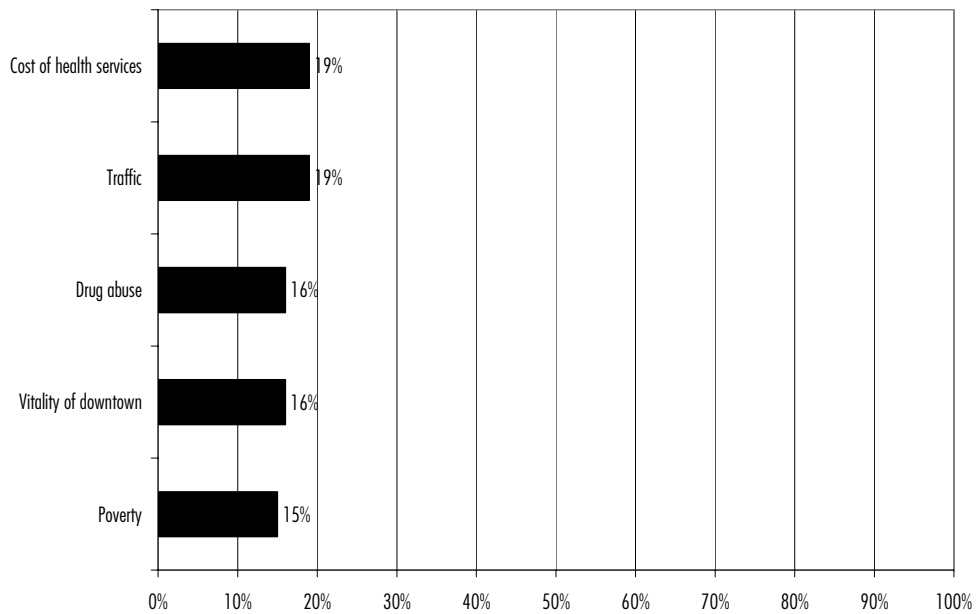
*This question was changed in 2004 to assess the most improved and deteriorated conditions over the last year, rather than over the last five years. This table is provided for consistency, but does not have comparisons over survey years because of this question change.

Figure 6: Top five issues ranked as most improved during the past year (Question 6, n=372)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2004

Figure 7: Top five issues ranked as most deteriorated during the past year (Question 6, n=457)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2004

Priorities for Action

Officials reported the need to address *cost of health services*, *drug abuse*, economics (including *unemployment*, *business attraction*, and *poverty*), *local roads and streets*, *downtown vitality*, and *traffic* over the next two years (see Table 12 and Figure 8). These issues are consistent with those that have been identified most frequently since 1999 (see Table 13, page 21).

Table 12: Conditions ranked as most important to work on during the next two years (Question 8, n=440)

Category	Condition	Reported as one of three most important to work on (n=440)
Health	Health**	8%
	Cost of health services	18%
	Availability of health services	1%
	Drug abuse	15%
	Alcohol abuse	2%
	Care for the elderly	1%
Public safety	Public safety**	3%
	Police/sheriff services	0%
	Police-community relations*	0%
	Fire services	1%
	Emergency medical services*	3%
	Violent crime	1%
	Drug crime*	4%
	Youth crime	2%
	Family/domestic violence*	1%
	Terrorism	0%
	Jail facilities	5%
	Youth detention facilities	0%
	Disaster response*	0%
	Economics	Economics**
Overall economic conditions		8%
Unemployment		10%
Business attraction*		16%
Business retention*		6%
Job quality*		5%
Workforce training		1%
Land use	Land use**	2%
	Quality of development	3%
	Increased amount of development	1%
	Lack of development*	3%
	Quality affordable housing	4%
	Mix of housing types and prices*	1%
	Mix of residential and non-residential development*	1%
	Opens space/green space	0%
	Farmland conversion and loss*	2%
	Brownfields	1%

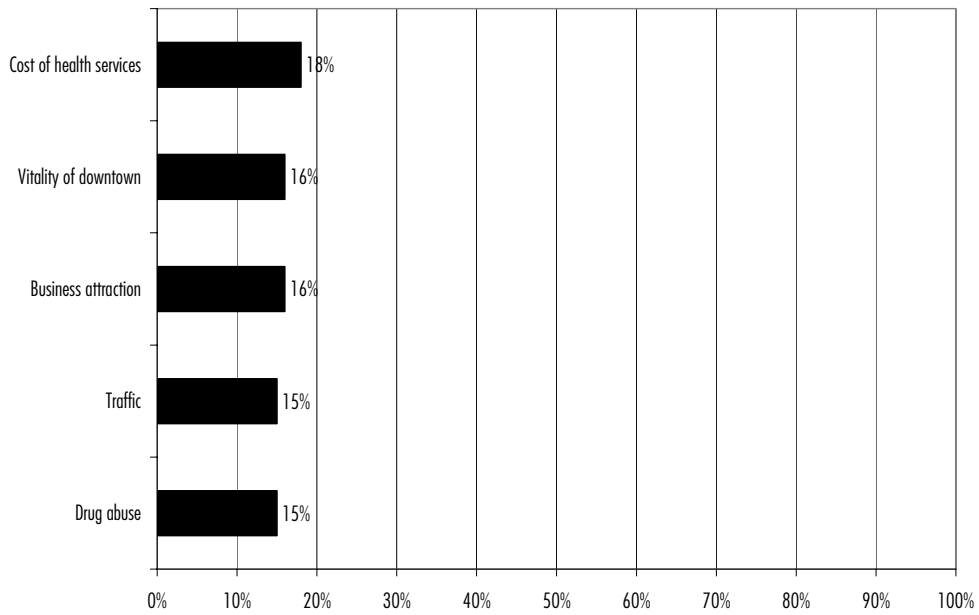
Table 12: Conditions ranked as most important to work on during the next two years (Question 8; n=440), (continued)

Category	Condition	Reported as one of three most important to work on (n=440)
Local services	Local services**	4%
	K-12 education	6%
	Drinking water	1%
	Sanitary sewers	6%
	Storm sewers*	6%
	Local roads and streets	12%
	Highways*	3%
	High-speed internet access	1%
	Telephone	0%
	Cellular telephone	1%
	Parks and recreation	1%
	Solid waste management	1%
	Cable TV	0%
	Public transportation	2%
Community quality of life	Community quality of life**	2%
	Race-ethnic relations	3%
	Air quality	6%
	Water quality	8%
	Traffic	15%
	Poverty	12%
	Vitality of neighborhoods	8%
	Vitality of downtown	16%
	Arts and cultural resources*	1%
	Childcare*	5%
	Community involvement	10%
Other	Other**	7%

*New conditions added to 2004 questionnaire.

**Questions 6-8 required respondents to identify the top three conditions from the list in question 5. In some cases, respondents identified general categories rather than specific conditions. In other cases, respondents identified conditions not listed in Question 5 or in a manner that did not allow the responses to be interpreted as one of the provided conditions.

Figure 8: Top five issues ranked as most important to work on (Question 8, n=440)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2004

Table 13: Conditions ranked as most important to work on over the next two years by survey year

Survey year	10% or more of respondents indicated as most important to work on
2004 (n=440)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of health services (18%) Business attraction (16%) Vitality of downtown (16%) Drug abuse (15%) Traffic (15%) Economics (13%) Local roads and streets (12%) Poverty (12%) Unemployment (10%) Community involvement (10%)
2003 (n= 457)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall economic conditions (28%) Cost of health services (26%) Unemployment (21%) Drug abuse (17%) Roads and streets (13%) Health (12%) Economics (12%) K–12 education (12%) Traffic (12%) Sewer (11%)
2002 (n=476)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of health services (26%) Overall economic conditions (22%) Unemployment (21%) Roads and streets (18%) Sewer (16%) Drug and alcohol abuse (13%) Poverty (11%)
2001 (n=462)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roads and streets (27%) Sewer (20%) Traffic (18%) Unemployment (15%) K–12 education (15%) Cost/availability of health services (13%) Drug and alcohol abuse (13%) Economics (general) (12%) Vitality of downtown (11%) Land use (10%)
1999 (n=625)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure (30%) Economic conditions (25%) Affordable housing (24%) Educational quality (23%) Youth crime (19%) Healthcare (16%) Substance abuse (16%)

Intergovernmental Cooperation

Question 9 queried respondents about intergovernmental service provision in their communities. As shown in Table 14, respondents reported most often receiving services from other local governments for *juvenile detention* (72 percent), *jail* (52 percent), *emergency dispatch* (41 percent), *emergency medical services* (35 percent), *economic development* (33 percent), and *planning* (28 percent). Only *economic development* was reported by more than 10 percent of respondents as a service provided to other local governments.

Table 14: Interlocal service provision among local governments (Question 9)

	Within the jurisdiction of my local government, this service is provided solely by my local government	My local government mostly PROVIDES this service to other local government(s)	My local government mostly RECEIVES this service from another local government(s)
Jail (n=461)	41%	6%	52%
Juvenile detention (n=443)	21%	7%	72%
Roads and streets (n=454)	79%	6%	15%
Parks and recreation (n=453)	80%	5%	15%
Drinking water utility (n=433)	71%	5%	24%
Sewer utility (n=433)	78%	4%	18%
Police services (n=459)	78%	7%	15%
Fire services (n=468)	78%	8%	13%
Emergency medical services (n=461)	57%	8%	35%
Emergency dispatch (n=461)	51%	8%	41%
Planning/plan commission (n=452)	66%	7%	28%
Economic development (n=438)	56%	11%	33%
Purchasing (n=427)	84%	5%	11%
Office space/ location (n=401)	88%	5%	7%
Other (n=16)*	67%	11%	22%

*Other services are listed in Appendix C.

Investment in Services

Question 10 queried respondents about the adequacy of investments, through public or private sources, in a number of public services. A majority of respondents indicated that investment was adequate for all services (see Table 15). Two-fifths or more of respondents reported over-investment in *road infrastructure* (51 percent), *storm sewer infrastructure* (44 percent), *drug abuse treatment and prevention* (42 percent), *transportation services* (41 percent), and *land use, planning, and local growth-related issues* (40 percent). Only *local public schools* (17 percent) was reported by more than five percent of respondents as receiving too little investment.

Responses to this question are seemingly inconsistent with responses about community problems and the most important issues to work on over the next two years, as well as comments about the negative effects of recent tax controls. For example, drug abuse was noted as a serious recurring problem that has improved little over the years, yet a large proportion of respondents indicate overinvestment in drug abuse treatment and prevention. Responses about investment may reflect opinions about other issues, including

the performance of local governments, the balance of investments among competing priorities, the appropriateness of mandates, or the recognition of limited resources. More research is needed to further understand the attitudes of elected officials about investment, particularly in light of new economic development goals.

Table 15: Adequacy of local investment in public services (Question 10)

	Too much investment	Adequate investment	Not enough investment
Local public schools (n=470)	20%	63%	17%
Road infrastructure (n=466)	51%	47%	2%
Drinking water infrastructure (n=464)	20%	79%	0%
Wastewater infrastructure (n=461)	32%	66%	2%
Storm sewer infrastructure (n=457)	44%	54%	2%
Transportation services (n=455)	41%	57%	2%
Air quality (n=460)	19%	80%	1%
Alcohol abuse treatment and prevention (n=466)	36%	62%	2%
Drug abuse treatment and prevention (n=465)	42%	55%	3%
Police services (n=478)	13%	83%	4%
Fire services (n=477)	12%	86%	2%
Emergency medical services (n=474)	16%	82%	2%
Parks, open space, and recreation (n=469)	26%	70%	4%
Land use, planning, local growth-related issues (n=471)	40%	58%	3%

Brownfields

The redevelopment of brownfields often is cited as one of the important issues in debates about growth management and has received increasing attention in many Indiana communities. Brownfields are defined as “abandoned or underutilized commercial or industrial property, upon which development is difficult due to the perception or actual existence of environmental contamination.” Many different types of properties can be classified as brownfields, including abandoned gas stations, old foundry sites, former industrial facilities, vacant school buildings, underutilized downtown structures, former hospitals, previous farm cooperative locations, abandoned methamphetamine labs, and vacant land. Question 11 was developed in cooperation with the Indiana Development Finance Authority (IDFA) and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) to gauge awareness among elected officials about brownfields issues and available solutions. A similar question was included in both the 2001 and 2002 surveys.

This year’s responses indicate an increased general knowledge about brownfields among all types of elected officials except mayors (see Table 16). While this is not particularly surprising given the number of new mayors who took office in 2003, it may indicate the need for a targeted educational effort by the IDFA and IDEM.

Table 16: Officials' knowledge and experience with brownfields (Question 11)

	Not familiar with the brownfields issues	Familiar with brownfields issues, but don't know many details	Understand the brownfields issues and solutions	Have participated in the redevelopment of a brownfield
Senator (n=14)	7%	29%	57%	7%
Representative (n=25)	8%	28%	52%	12%
County council member (n=44)	14%	45%	30%	11%
County commissioner (n=40)	15%	45%	28%	13%
Mayor (n=70)	4%	31%	33%	31%
Town council member (n=110)	19%	45%	27%	9%
Township trustee (n=104)	51%	34%	14%	1%
School board member (n=76)	25%	47%	20%	8%
Total (n=483)	23%	40%	27%	11%

Public Benefits of Parks and Recreation

In this and previous surveys, parks and recreation services often are reported as stable or improving across Indiana communities. Questions 12 and 13 addressed the importance of the public benefits of parks and recreation facilities as well as satisfaction with their community performance in providing those benefits. Respondents reported overwhelmingly that the public benefits of parks and recreation are important in their communities (see Table 17). All benefits were identified as *very important* or *somewhat important* by more than 80 percent of respondents. *Availability to residents at all levels of income* (75 percent), *quality of life* (69 percent), *availability to disabled residents* (67 percent), *community pride* (67 percent), *playground facilities* (58 percent), and *health and fitness* (56 percent) were identified by a majority of respondents as *very important*. Although more distributed than the responses regarding importance, respondents reported being generally satisfied with the provision of parks and recreation services (see Table 18, page 25). More than two-thirds of respondents indicated being satisfied with the provision of each public benefit associated with the service. Respondents reported being *very satisfied* most frequently for *availability to residents at all income levels* (48 percent), *community pride* (39 percent), *playground facilities* (38 percent), and *convenience* (38 percent).

Table 17: Importance of public benefits associated with local parks (Question 12)*

	Very Important	Somewhat important	Not important or unimportant	Somewhat unimportant	Not at all important
Aesthetic beauty (n=473)	48%	45%	4%	1%	1%
Community pride (n=475)*	67%	29%	3%	1%	1%
Quality of life (n=481)	69%	25%	4%	1%	1%
Health and fitness (n=479)	56%	35%	7%	1%	1%
Rest and relaxation (n=481)	50%	42%	7%	1%	1%
Team sports and recreation (n=481)	43%	47%	8%	2%	1%
Playground facilities (n=481)*	58%	38%	3%	1%	1%
Open space (n=477)*	48%	37%	11%	3%	1%
Convenience (n=475)	47%	39%	10%	3%	1%
Available to residents at all income levels (n=475)	75%	20%	3%	1%	1%
Available to disabled residents (n=476)	67%	26%	4%	1%	1%
Other (n=8)**	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

*The responses for some benefits total more than 100 percent due to rounding.

**Respondents wrote in several additional benefits as *very important*, including: safety and cleanliness(3), locations for church and community gatherings, availability of an indoor pool, modern facilities, providing visitor attractions, and the provision of an adequate number of parks.

Table 18: Satisfaction with the public benefits associated with local parks (Question 13)*

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	Somewhat unsatisfied	Very unsatisfied
Aesthetic beauty (n=473)	36%	44%	13%	5%	3%
Community pride (n=478)	39%	40%	11%	8%	3%
Quality of life (n=478)	36%	42%	13%	6%	3%
Health and fitness (n=477)	31%	39%	20%	8%	3%
Rest and relaxation (n=477)	34%	41%	18%	5%	2%
Team sports and recreation (n=478)	36%	39%	17%	6%	3%
Playground facilities (n=477)	38%	38%	13%	8%	3%
Open space (n=479)	33%	38%	21%	5%	3%
Convenience (n=474)	38%	37%	18%	5%	3%
Available to residents at all income levels (n=474)	48%	32%	13%	5%	2%
Available to disabled residents (n=454)	37%	36%	18%	7%	2%
Other (n=8)**	13%	13%	13%	38%	25%

*The responses for some benefits total more than 100 percent due to rounding.

**Respondents who wrote in responses to Question 12 generally indicated that they were somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the provision of that particular benefit. One respondent indicated concern about the lack of concrete walkways.

Stormwater Utilities

A number of Indiana communities are now planning how to comply with new state and federal regulations governing stormwater quality and drainage, formally referred to as Phase II NPDES stormwater regulations. Stormwater utilities are one tool available to communities for financing stormwater activities. HEA 1798 extended the ability to establish stormwater utilities to county governments. Typically, stormwater utilities use measures of impervious or hard surfaces on properties to establish fees. Question 14 asked municipal and county officials whether a stormwater utility exists or had been considered.

As Table 19 shows, 33 municipalities and at least 5 counties have adopted stormwater utilities. Almost two-thirds of county respondents and more than one-third of municipal respondents said that their communities had not considered stormwater utilities. Given the fiscal constraints faced by the state and local communities, it is likely that the number of communities considering and adopting this tool will rise.

Table 19: Stormwater utilities (Question 14)

Office	Local government has a stormwater utility	Local government has considered, but not implemented a stormwater utility	Local government has not considered a stormwater utility
Mayor (n=66)	26% (17)	50% (33)	24% (16)
Town council member (n=93)	17% (16)	37% (34)	46% (43)
County commissioner (n=32)	16% (5)	19% (6)	66% (21)
County council member (n=31)	16% (5)	19% (6)	65% (20)
Total (n=228)	19% (44)	36% (81)	45% (103)

Reassessment

In 2001 and 2002, the IACIR hosted public forums on implementation of property tax reassessment. Question 15 addressed many of the issues identified during the forums. The question first appeared in the survey in 2003. Based on those responses, a number of issues were added or disaggregated in 2004. Results from 2003 and 2004 are not easily compared because a number of counties were still completing reassessment at the time of the first survey, and some of the dynamics associated with these changes were likely to take some time to become apparent.

Communities across the state experienced a variety of problems regarding the recent reassessment process (see Table 20, page 27). Officials most often identified a *greater burden on older neighborhoods* (83 percent), *too little time for implementation* (77 percent), *insufficient cash flow* (76 percent), and *inequity of assessments among counties* (75 percent) as problems. Almost all issues were identified as problems by a majority of respondents; only *assessor turnover* and the *reduced usefulness of tax abatement* were identified by a majority of respondents as a *minor or no problem*.

Table 20: Problems with reassessment (Question 15)

	Major problem	Moderate problem	Minor or no problem
Fairness of new rules			
Greater burden on low/fixed income neighborhoods (n=426)	36%	38%	26%
Greater burden on older neighborhoods (n=437)	46%	37%	18%
Greater burden on agricultural land owners (n=398)	36%	35%	28%
Negative effect on residential property values (n=406)	22%	35%	43%
Inequity of assessments within counties (n=387)	34%	36%	29%
Inequity of assessments among counties (n=351)	36%	39%	25%
Communication and Notice			
Lack of public awareness (n=438)	35%	39%	26%
Administration			
Too little time for implementation (n=400)	41%	36%	23%
Lack of required computer software and hardware (n=367)	34%	32%	34%
Assessor turnover (n=355)	12%	22%	66%
Lack of training (n=356)	28%	31%	41%
Lack of funding (n=350)	30%	29%	41%
Local Fiscal Matters			
Inability to complete local budgeting (n=423)	41%	27%	32%
Insufficient cash flow (n=421)	50%	26%	23%
Reduced usefulness of tax increment financing (n=344)	22%	35%	42%
Reduced usefulness of tax abatement (n=355)	16%	31%	52%
Appeals Process			
Increased number of appeals (n=344)	31%	39%	30%
Insufficient funding for the local appeals process (n=303)	23%	31%	47%
Ability to bring up new issues at state appeal (n=293)	24%	34%	42%
Other (n=15)*	100%	0%	0%

*Other services are listed in Appendix C.

Responsibility for Services

Question 16 addressed whether state or local governments should be primarily responsible for various public services, or whether the responsibility should be shared. For respondents who said that local government should have primary responsibility for particular services, Question 17 asked which type(s) of local government should be responsible. The majority of officials said that responsibility for the following nine services should be shared between state and local governments: *corrections, courts, economic development, healthcare for indigent, information services, counter-terrorism measures, public education, roads and streets, and workforce development* (see Table 21). Officials most often identified *drinking water, emergency medical services, police and fire, property tax assessments, solid waste disposal or handling, and wastewater treatment* as services that local governments should have primary responsibility for providing. Officials were evenly split on *tax collection* between resting primary responsibility with local governments and shared state and local responsibility. Similarly, they were split evenly on the provision of *welfare services* between resting primary responsibility with state government and shared state and local responsibility. Respondents generally reported services more often as the primary responsibility of local government or as a shared responsibility between state and local governments than they did in 1999.

Table 21: Primary responsibility for services (Question 16)

	State government	Local governments	Shared responsibility between state and local governments
Corrections (n=459)	27%	10%	63%
Courts (n=460)	17%	25%	58%
Drinking water (n=462)	3%	60%	37%
Economic development (n=465)	3%	35%	62%
Emergency medical services (n=457)	2%	70%	27%
Healthcare for indigent (n=463)	35%	14%	52%
Information services (n=460)	11%	27%	62%
Police and fire (n=463)	1%	80%	19%
Counter-terrorism measures (n=465)	33%	5%	63%
Property tax assessments (n=463)	8%	53%	39%
Public education (n=463)	13%	32%	55%
Solid waste disposal or handling (n=465)	7%	50%	43%
Roads and streets (n=468)	6%	41%	52%
Highways (n=467)	54%	6%	40%
Tax collection (n=462)	13%	45%	42%
Wastewater treatment (n=460)	3%	64%	33%
Welfare (n=464)	43%	14%	44%
Workforce development (n=461)	25%	12%	63%

Among the services identified as primarily local or shared, respondents indicated that counties generally should be assigned *corrections*, *courts*, *healthcare for the indigent*, *property tax assessments*, *welfare*, and *workforce development* (see Table 22, page 29). Other services such as *economic development*, *emergency medical services*, *information services*, *counter-terrorism measures*, *solid waste disposal or handling*, and *roads and streets* often were assigned to both county and municipal government. *Drinking water*, *wastewater treatment*, and *police and fire* are perceived most often as most appropriately assigned to municipal governments. Not surprisingly, *public education* was assigned most often to school districts.

Table 22: Primary local responsibility for local or shared services (Question 17)

	Counties	Townships	Cities and towns	School districts	Other*
Corrections (n=273)	93%	5%	24%	3%	3%
Courts (n=310)	92%	3%	24%	1%	2%
Drinking water (n=386)	30%	10%	83%	3%	3%
Economic development (n=357)	76%	12%	59%	4%	4%
Emergency medical services (n=402)	72%	17%	47%	1%	2%
Healthcare for indigent (n=238)	78%	26%	34%	1%	7%
Information services (n=306)	69%	21%	59%	16%	9%
Police and fire (n=421)	49%	29%	81%	2%	2%
Counter-terrorism measures (n=236)	80%	18%	50%	16%	15%
Property tax assessments (n=373)	80%	34%	23%	3%	3%
Public education (n=341)	29%	12%	25%	71%	5%
Solid waste disposal or handling (n=365)	72%	7%	56%	2%	4%
Roads and streets (n=372)	72%	10%	77%	1%	4%
Wastewater treatment (n=387)	33%	6%	86%	2%	4%
Welfare (n=217)	80%	38%	23%	1%	6%
Workforce development (n=265)	65%	14%	32%	8%	9%

*Respondents were not provided with an opportunity to identify to what *other* refers.

State and Federal Mandates

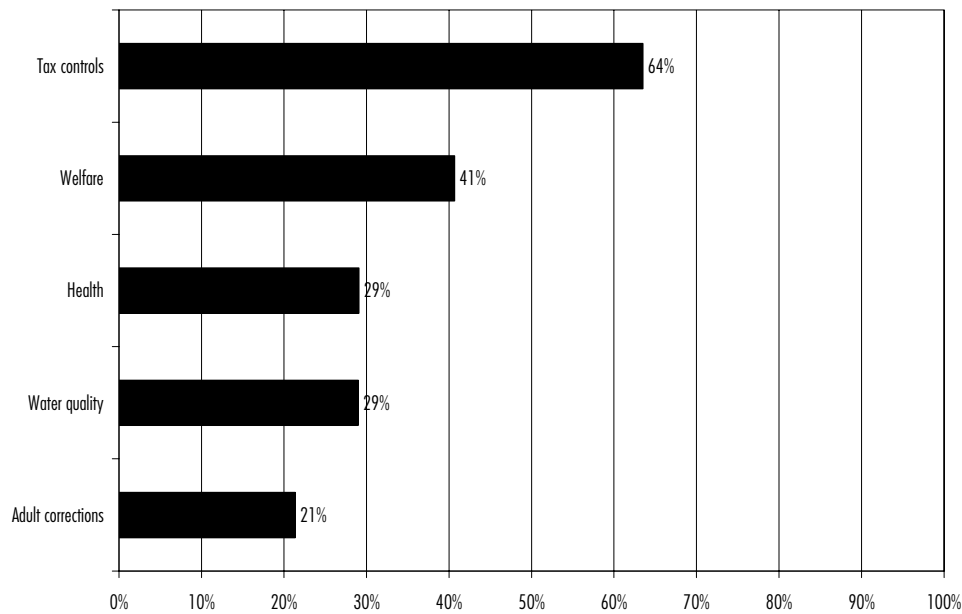
Question 18 addressed state and federal mandates, and how they affect local governments' abilities to meet community needs. The question in 1999 distinguished between federal and state mandates and included broader categories than in 2004.

Similar to responses from 1999, respondents chose *tax controls* (64 percent) and *welfare* (41 percent) most frequently as having the most significant impact on local governments' abilities to meet local needs. *Health* (29 percent), *water quality* (29 percent), and *adult corrections* (21 percent) rounded out the top five most significant mandates in 2004 (see Table 23 and Figure 9).

Table 23: State and federal mandates with most significant local impact (Question 18, n=338)

Mandate	Percentage
Adult corrections	21%
Juvenile corrections	18%
Pensions	9%
Tax controls	64%
Welfare	41%
Courts	19%
Health	29%
Water quality	29%
Air quality	13%
Solid waste	19%
Health and safety (OSHA)	8%
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	13%
Other-general	5%
Other- public education/No Child Left Behind Act	3%

Figure 9: Top five state and federal mandates with significant local impact (Question 18, n=338)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2004

Information Technology

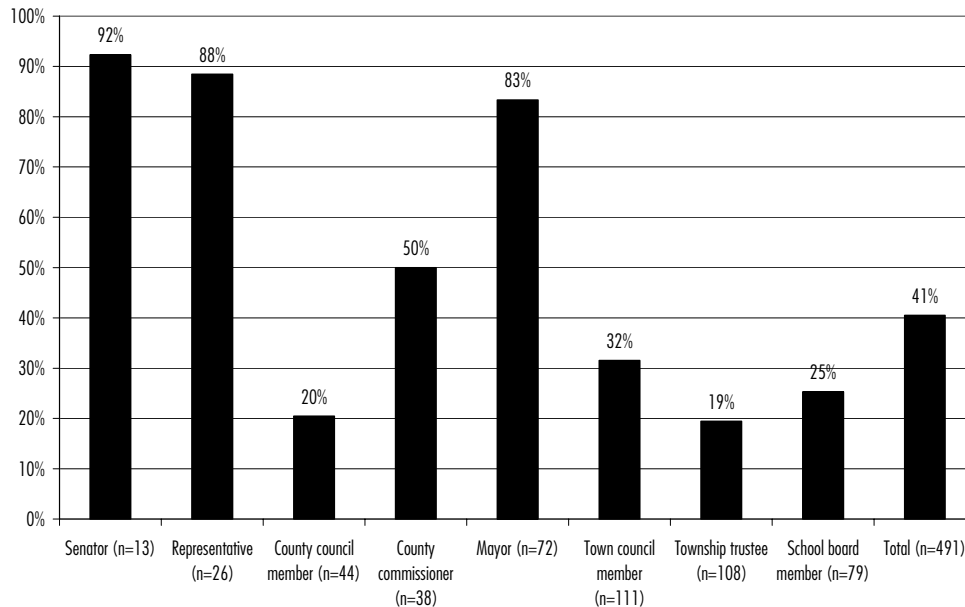
Telecommunications and information technology (IT) have become increasingly important components of the successful implementation of economic development and other local government activities and services. E-mail is an ever-present component of information technology. Question 3 asked officials about whether they have e-mail accounts for official government business.

In 2004, a majority of state senators, state representatives, and mayors reported having e-mail accounts for government business (see Table 24 and Figure 10). Only state senators, mayors, and township trustees reported a higher proportion of e-mail accounts in 2004 than in 2003 and 2002. The variation from year to year among particular categories of officeholders may reflect significant variation among and within local elected bodies regarding the use of information technology.

Table 24: Officials with e-mail accounts by year (Question 3)

	2004	2003	2002	2001
Senator	92%	87%	69%	100%
Representative	88%	90%	86%	100%
County council member	20%	41%	33%	41%
County commissioner	50%	66%	64%	55%
Mayor	83%	75%	53%	80%
Town council member	32%	64%	37%	36%
Township trustee	19%	16%	15%	21%
School board member	25%	31%	20%	55%
Total	41%	48%	41%	49%

Figure 10: Officials with e-mail accounts (Question 3)



Source: Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2004

Other Issues

Question 19 allowed officials to comment about issues facing state and local government in Indiana. Many respondents also wrote in responses to a number of other questions. The complete set of these comments is provided in Appendix D.

While the issues addressed in this forum varied widely, a number of issues were mentioned several times, including unfunded mandates, limited local fiscal resources and fiscal restructuring (Senate Enrolled Act 1 (2004)), reassessment, and restructuring local government.

Conclusions

State and local elected officials in Indiana face increasingly more complex and, at times, difficult circumstances as they seek to provide public services for their citizens. Respondents continue to identify the cost of healthcare, substance abuse and crime, and the health of the economy as important community issues. Respondents identified a greater number of services as the primary responsibility of local governments or the shared responsibilities of state and local governments than in 1999. Many local governments reported interlocal arrangements for the provision of particularly types of public services. Tax controls, particularly those passed in Senate Enrolled Act 1 (2004), are increasingly identified as a mandate that creates significant hardships for local governments.

The changing institutional and fiscal environment warrants creative thinking. Effective state and local governments are important to the success of individuals and businesses in Indiana. At a time of such change, it is rational to consider whether government structures are effective.

Reform efforts such as the work of the General Assembly's Local Government Efficiency and Financing Study Committee are a critical beginning, and they are likely to be most effective in the context of our goals for Indiana and its communities. How can we address the problems identified by local officials? How can we ensure strong performance of critical government functions, such as investments in infrastructure, quality education, and safe neighborhoods? How can we create opportunities and reduce transaction costs for individuals, businesses, and nonprofits?

Success is likely to take long-term political and popular support and a sustained effort over many years or even decades. Effective reform may take many guises. Some reforms clearly will require changes to the state constitution or major legislation. Others may be non-structural solutions, such as further embracing technology, educating and providing technical assistance to local governments about options for sharing services, and clarifying current legislation.

In sum, state and local governments face a changing institutional, fiscal, and economic environment. Indiana governments must develop new structures and skills to manage these changes.

Appendix A

Survey Methodology

Survey Methodology

The survey process involved four steps: developing the survey, selecting the sample population, administering the survey, and coding and analyzing the results.

Questionnaire Development

The 2004 questionnaire was modeled after surveys from six previous years. Some questions have been repeated consistently to allow comparisons over time. The 2004 questionnaire also reprised a number of questions that have appeared one or more times in the past. Commission staff consulted IACIR members, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, the Indiana Development Finance Authority, and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management regarding current issues for the 2004 survey. The questionnaire is provided in Appendix B.

Selection of Sample Populations

IACIR administered 1,219 surveys to officeholders. The sample population included all members of the Indiana General Assembly, mayors, county council presidents, county board of commissioners presidents, and school board presidents. The sample also included a randomly-selected member of each town council for towns with a 2003 population of 500 or more persons and two randomly-selected township trustees from each county. Names and addresses of officials were obtained using printed directories or lists provided by the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns, the Association of Indiana Counties, and the Indiana Township Association.

Administration of Survey

IACIR staff administered the survey by mail generally according to the procedures recommended by Dillman.² Cover letters explaining the purpose of the survey, the questionnaires, and business reply envelopes were sent on September 8, 2004 and were followed by reminder postcards sent on September 20, 2004. Officials who did not respond were sent another letter and replacement questionnaire on October 4, 2004. A final follow-up postcard was sent to all non-respondents on November 3, 2004.

Coding and Analysis

Respondents returned questionnaires to the Center for Urban Policy and the Environment, the office location for IACIR staff. Surveys received by December 1, 2004, were coded using Access software and checked for accuracy. Staff completed all analyses using statistical procedures in SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

Some respondents answered only a portion of the survey questions. In order to account for non-respondents of particular questions and questions addressed to specific types of officeholders, the number of responses is provided in the table or figure for each question.

² Dillman, D. (1999). *Mail and Internet telephone surveys: The tailored design method*. New York: Wiley.

Appendix B Questionnaire



INTERGOVERNMENTAL ISSUES IN INDIANA 2004

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 relationship 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. Legislators should respond for their community of residence. Please feel free to consult others within your local government if you are unsure about the correct response to particular questions.

1. What office do you hold?
 - Senator
 - Representative
 - County council member
 - County commission member
 - Mayor
 - Town councilor
 - Township trustee
 - School board member
 - Other (specify) _____
2. What is the area code for your residence?

3. Do you have an e-mail account for government business?
 - Yes
 - No
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

5. For the following conditions, please indicate (a) the extent to which each is currently a problem in your community, if at all; and (b) how each of the following conditions has changed in your community during the last 12 months.

CONDITION	CURRENT STATUS OF CONDITION			CHANGE IN CONDITION SINCE LAST YEAR		
	<u>Major problem</u>	<u>Moderate problem</u>	<u>Minor or no problem</u>	<u>Improved</u>	<u>Worsened</u>	<u>No change</u>
HEALTH						
Cost of health services	2	1	0	2	1	0
Availability of health services	2	1	0	2	1	0
Drug abuse	2	1	0	2	1	0
Alcohol abuse	2	1	0	2	1	0
Care for the elderly	2	1	0	2	1	0
PUBLIC SAFETY						
Police/sheriff services	2	1	0	2	1	0
Police-community relations	2	1	0	2	1	0
Fire services	2	1	0	2	1	0
Emergency medical services	2	1	0	2	1	0
Violent crime	2	1	0	2	1	0
Drug crime	2	1	0	2	1	0
Youth crime	2	1	0	2	1	0
Family/domestic violence	2	1	0	2	1	0
Terrorism	2	1	0	2	1	0
Jail facilities	2	1	0	2	1	0
Youth detention facilities	2	1	0	2	1	0
Disaster response	2	1	0	2	1	0
ECONOMICS						
Overall economic conditions	2	1	0	2	1	0
Unemployment	2	1	0	2	1	0
Business attraction	2	1	0	2	1	0
Business retention	2	1	0	2	1	0
Job quality	2	1	0	2	1	0
Workforce training	2	1	0	2	1	0

CONDITION	CURRENT STATUS OF CONDITION			CHANGE IN CONDITION SINCE LAST YEAR		
	Major problem	Moderate problem	Minor or no problem	Improved	Worsened	No change
LAND USE						
Quality of development	2	1	0	2	1	0
Increased amount of development	2	1	0	2	1	0
Lack of development	2	1	0	2	1	0
Quality affordable housing	2	1	0	2	1	0
Mix of housing types and prices	2	1	0	2	1	0
Mix of residential and non-residential development	2	1	0	2	1	0
Open space/green space	2	1	0	2	1	0
Farmland conversion and loss	2	1	0	2	1	0
Brownfields	2	1	0	2	1	0
LOCAL SERVICES						
K-12 education	2	1	0	2	1	0
Drinking water	2	1	0	2	1	0
Sanitary sewers	2	1	0	2	1	0
Storm sewers	2	1	0	2	1	0
Local roads and streets	2	1	0	2	1	0
Highways	2	1	0	2	1	0
High-speed internet access	2	1	0	2	1	0
Telephone	2	1	0	2	1	0
Cellular telephone	2	1	0	2	1	0
Parks and recreation	2	1	0	2	1	0
Solid waste management	2	1	0	2	1	0
Cable TV	2	1	0	2	1	0
Public transportation	2	1	0	2	1	0

CONDITION	CURRENT STATUS OF CONDITION			CHANGE IN CONDITION SINCE LAST YEAR		
	Major problem	Moderate problem	Minor or no problem	Improved	Worsened	No change
COMMUNITY QUALITY OF LIFE						
Race-ethnic relations	2	1	0	2	1	0
Air quality	2	1	0	2	1	0
Water quality	2	1	0	2	1	0
Traffic	2	1	0	2	1	0
Poverty	2	1	0	2	1	0
Vitality of neighborhoods	2	1	0	2	1	0
Vitality of downtown	2	1	0	2	1	0
Arts and cultural resources	2	1	0	2	1	0
Childcare	2	1	0	2	1	0
Community involvement	2	1	0	2	1	0

6. Of the conditions listed in question 5, which three have improved most in your community during the PAST YEAR?

a. _____ b. _____ c. _____

7. Of the conditions listed in question 5, which three have deteriorated most in your community during the PAST YEAR?

a. _____ b. _____ c. _____

8. Of the conditions listed in question 5, which three are the most important to address during the NEXT TWO YEARS?

a. _____ b. _____ c. _____

9. Please indicate (a) which services in your community are provided by interlocal agreement or some other cooperative arrangement and (b) whether your local government mostly provides or receives those services. (Check only one option for each service.)

SERVICE PROVIDED COOPERATIVELY

Within the jurisdiction of my local government, this service is provided solely by my local government

My local government mostly PROVIDES this service to other local government(s)

My local government mostly RECEIVES this service from another local government(s)

	Within the jurisdiction of my local government, this service is provided solely by <u>my local government</u>	My local government mostly PROVIDES this service <u>to other local government(s)</u>	My local government mostly RECEIVES this service <u>from another local government(s)</u>
Jail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Juvenile detention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Roads and streets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parks and recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drinking water utility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sewer utility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency medical services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency dispatch	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning/plan commission	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Economic development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Purchasing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Office space/location	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. Do you think your community, through public or private sources, over invests, adequately invests, or under invests in the services listed below?

	<u>Too much investment</u>	<u>Adequate investment</u>	<u>Not enough investment</u>
Local public schools	3	2	1
Road infrastructure (highways, roads, streets, and bridges)	3	2	1
Drinking water infrastructure	3	2	1
Wastewater infrastructure	3	2	1
Storm sewer infrastructure	3	2	1
Transportation services	3	2	1
Air quality	3	2	1
Alcohol abuse treatment and prevention	3	2	1
Drug abuse treatment and prevention	3	2	1
Police services	3	2	1
Fire services	3	2	1
Emergency medical services (EMS)	3	2	1
Parks, open space, and recreation	3	2	1
Land use, planning, local growth-related issues	3	2	1

11. Brownfields are defined as “abandoned or underutilized commercial or industrial property, upon which development is difficult due to the perception or actual existence of environmental contamination.” Many different types of properties can be classified as brownfields, including abandoned gas stations, old foundry sites, former industrial facilities, vacant school buildings, underutilized downtown structures, former hospitals, previous farm cooperative locations, abandoned residential methamphetamine labs, and vacant land.

The redevelopment of brownfields has received increasing attention in many Indiana communities. Please indicate your level of understanding of the issues and the available solutions.

- I am not familiar with the issues associated with brownfields.
- I am familiar with the issues associated with brownfields, but don’t know many details.
- I understand the issues associated with brownfields and available solutions.
- I have participated in the redevelopment of a brownfield in my community.

12. Please rate the importance of the public benefits of parks and recreation facilities and services in your community .

	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>Not important or unimportant</u>	<u>Somewhat unimportant</u>	<u>Not at all important</u>
Aesthetic beauty	4	3	2	1	0
Community pride	4	3	2	1	0
Quality of life	4	3	2	1	0
Health and fitness	4	3	2	1	0
Rest and relaxation	4	3	2	1	0
Team sports and recreation	4	3	2	1	0
Playground facilities	4	3	2	1	0
Open space	4	3	2	1	0
Convenience	4	3	2	1	0
Available to residents at all levels of income	4	3	2	1	0
Available to disabled residents	4	3	2	1	0
Other (specify)_____	4	3	2	1	0

13. Please rate how satisfied you are with your community's efforts to provide these public benefits associated with parks and recreation facilities and services.

	<u>Very satisfied</u>	<u>Somewhat satisfied</u>	<u>Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied</u>	<u>Somewhat unsatisfied</u>	<u>Very unsatisfied</u>
Aesthetic beauty	4	3	2	1	0
Community pride	4	3	2	1	0
Quality of life	4	3	2	1	0
Health and fitness	4	3	2	1	0
Rest and relaxation	4	3	2	1	0
Team sports and recreation	4	3	2	1	0
Playground facilities	4	3	2	1	0
Open space	4	3	2	1	0
Convenience	4	3	2	1	0
Available to residents at all levels of income	4	3	2	1	0
Available to disabled residents	4	3	2	1	0
Other (specify)_____	4	3	2	1	0

14. FOR MUNICIPAL AND COUNTY OFFICIALS ONLY: A number of communities in Indiana are now planning how to comply with new state and federal regulations governing stormwater quality and drainage, formally referred to as Phase II NPDES stormwater regulations. Stormwater utilities are one tool available to local communities for financing stormwater activities. Typically, stormwater utilities use measures of impervious or hard surfaces on properties to establish fees.

Please indicate whether your local unit of government has considered using a stormwater utility to pay for managing stormwater quantity or quality.

- My local government currently has a stormwater utility.
- My local government has considered a stormwater utility, but has not implemented one yet.
- My local government has not considered a stormwater utility.
- I don't know whether my local government has or has considered a stormwater utility.

15. In 2001 and 2002, the IACIR held forums regarding the implementation of property tax reassessment. In these forums, participants identified concerns about many issues such as the fairness of the new system, effective communication and notice to taxpayers, administration, state and local fiscal matters, and the appeals processes.

Based on the experiences in your community and county, please indicate the extent to which each of the following issues has been a problem.

	<u>Major problem</u>	<u>Moderate problem</u>	<u>Minor or no problem</u>	<u>Don't know/no opinion</u>
FAIRNESS OF NEW RULES				
Greater burden on low/fixed income neighborhoods	4	3	2	1
Greater burden on older neighborhoods	4	3	2	1
Greater burden on agricultural land owners	4	3	2	1
Negative effect on residential property values	4	3	2	1
Inequity of assessments within counties	4	3	2	1
Inequity of assessments among counties	4	3	2	1
COMMUNICATION AND NOTICE				
Lack of public awareness	4	3	2	1
ADMINISTRATION				
Too little time for implementation	4	3	2	1
Lack of required computer software and hardware	4	3	2	1
Assessor turnover	4	3	2	1
Lack of training	4	3	2	1
Lack of funding	4	3	2	1
LOCAL FISCAL MATTERS				
Inability to complete local budgeting	4	3	2	1
Insufficient cash flow	4	3	2	1
Reduced usefulness of tax increment financing	4	3	2	1
Reduced usefulness of tax abatement	4	3	2	1
APPEALS PROCESS				
Increased number of appeals	4	3	2	1
Insufficient funding for the local appeals process	4	3	2	1
Ability to bring up new issues at state appeal	4	3	2	1
OTHER				
Other (specify)_____	4	3	2	1

16. Should state or local government have primary responsibility for the following services or should responsibility be shared?

	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY		Shared responsibility between state and local governments
	State governments	Local governments	
Corrections	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Courts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drinking water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Economic development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency medical services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Healthcare for indigent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police and fire	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Counter-terrorism measures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Property tax assessments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Solid waste disposal or handling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Roads and streets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Highways	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tax collection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wastewater treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Welfare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workforce development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. For services that you indicated should be the primary or partial responsibility of local governments, please indicate which local government(s) should be responsible at the local level. (Choose all that apply.)

	<u>Counties</u>	<u>Townships</u>	<u>Cities and towns</u>	<u>School districts</u>	<u>Other</u>
Corrections	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Courts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drinking water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Economic development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency medical services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Healthcare for indigent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police and fire	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Counter-terrorism measures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Property tax assessments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Solid waste disposal or handling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Roads and streets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wastewater treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Welfare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workforce development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18. Which three state or federal mandates most significantly affect your local government's ability to meet the needs of your community? (Rank from 1 to 3, with 1 indicating the greatest impact and 3 indicating the least impact. Choose only three.)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adult corrections | <input type="checkbox"/> Water quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile corrections | <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pensions | <input type="checkbox"/> Solid waste |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tax controls | <input type="checkbox"/> Health and safety (OSHA) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Welfare | <input type="checkbox"/> Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Courts | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____ |

19. Please use this space or attach additional pages to make any other comments about the issues affecting your local government and intergovernmental relations in Indiana.



Your participation in this survey is greatly appreciated.
If you have any questions, call or contact:

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Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations
342 North Senate Avenue, 3rd floor
Indianapolis, IN 46204-1708

Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.

Appendix C

Other Responses

Other Responses

Questions 1, 6-9, 12, 13, 15 and 18 allowed officials to identify responses not included in the survey.

Other responses to “What office do you hold?” (Question 1)

- City council (2)
- Clerk treasurer (2)
- Township trustee/assessor (2)
- Assessor
- Auditor
- Council president
- Township assessor

Other responses to “Of the conditions listed in question 5, which three have improved most in your community during the past year?” (Question 6)

- City government
- Community relations
- Development
- EMA services
- Local government
- Telecommunications infrastructure

Other responses to “Of the conditions listed in question 5, which three have deteriorated most in your community during the past year?” (Question 7)

- Arrest for DUI
- Court cost burden
- Crime
- Development
- Drug use and crime
- Drugs
- Employee health insurance
- Lack of safety regulations
- Local government
- Methamphetamine use
- Minor crimes
- No post secondary education
- People moving out of the county
- Sanitary and storm sewers
- Sidewalk infrastructure
- Small towns
- Taxes

Other responses to “Of the conditions listed in question 5, which three are the most important to address during the next two years?” (Question 8)

- Drugs (4)
- Crime (3)

- Development (2)
- Business development
- Sanitary and storm sewers
- Insurance
- Community college
- Vitality of small towns
- School funding
- Loss of jobs to China
- Methamphetamine production
- Aftercare program for the elderly
- Drug use and crime
- Drugs and alcohol
- Employee health insurance
- Public service
- Infrastructure

Other responses to “Please indicate (a) which services in your community are provided by interlocal agreement or some other cooperative arrangement and (b) whether your local government mostly provides or receives those services.” (Question 9)

Within the jurisdiction of my local government, this service is provided solely by my local government

- Electric utility (3)
- Sanitation/recycling (3)
- Poor relief (2)
- Gas utility
- Library
- Public transportation

My local government mostly provides this service to other local governments

- Special education
- Vocational education

My local government mostly receives this service from another local government

- Sanitation/recycling
- Animal control
- Code enforcement

Other responses to “Please rate the importance of the public benefits of parks and recreation facilities and services in your community.” (Question 12)

- Church and community area gathering
- Clean and safe
- Indoor pool
- Keeping all state parks open
- Modern

- Park rangers and security
- Safe
- Visitor attraction to covered bridge

Other responses to “Please rate how satisfied you are with your community’s efforts to provide these public benefits associated with parks and recreation facilities and services.” (Question 13)

- Clark county state forestry
- Concrete walkway not available
- Indoor pool
- Modern
- Park rangers and security
- Number of public parks
- Visitor attraction

Other responses to “Based on the experiences in your community and county, please indicate the extent to which each of the following issues has been a problem.”

- State procrastination (2)
- Poorly functioning software (2)
- State unfunded mandates (2)
- County independently funding assessment
- Lenient appeal board
- Local ability to increase funding
- Local flexibility
- Mobile homes not uniformly assessed
- Assessment still not complete
- Only receiving 91 percent of previous tax draw
- Rebates to steel and oil
- Senate Enrolled Act 1 (2004)
- Cost of administering property tax system

Other responses to “Which three state or federal mandates most significantly affect your local government’s ability to meet the needs of your community?” (Question 18)

- Stormwater management (3)
- Education/school funding (2)
- Combined sewer separation (2)
- Healthcare for indigent
- Unfunded mandates
- Wastewater

Appendix D

Additional Comments

Additional Comments

The final survey question provided an opportunity for officials to make any additional comments. These comments are transcribed below. They have been edited in cases where a particular elected official potentially could be identified.

Table D1. Additional comments by respondent (Question 10)

Office	Comment
Representative	We need greater funding for local streets and all our highways. Need to look at reassessment procedures in state.
Representative	Question 9: Emergency medical services provided by a nonprofit hospital. In regards to economic development, there is an agreement with a private development corporation.
Senator	Question 5: Drinking water is becoming cost prohibited.
Senator	Question 12: These should all rate a four but do not.
County council member	Give our road money back to the counties.
County council member	The old issue of mandates from government that have to be financed locally. Example-salaries of probation officers. Costs of insurance (Health liability) going up faster than tax-generated income.
County council member	Our county has been squeezed financially to a point where we can no longer fund our local services properly. We just finalized our budgeting process for 2005 and our budget expenditures ended up equal to 2002 budget amount due to the lack of projected revenue for 2005. Under the current rules we have no way to improve our revenue picture. How can we be expected to move on in the 20th century with no room or ability to increase our revenue?
County council member	The reassessment with large homestead exemptions and credits has made a big shift of the property taxes from residential property to agricultural property in [our county].
County council member	I am sick and tired of the state using a double standard in its relationship with local government. We can't do this or that but they change the rules to benefit their ineptness at their whim. The Indiana General Assembly caps local taxes, while increasing the cost of welfare.
County council member	Question 16: What kind of taxes? Some should be local.
County council member	Question 9: This is not a good question. The answers to some questions are a joint service.
County council member	Question 15: There is a monopoly of providers for computer software.
County council member	State law should be amended to eliminate excess exemptions for state and local taxes. Currently many workers claim 8 or 9 exemptions on their w-4 and then fail to file tax returns - costing local governments 1.25% of their incomes. We need to fix this!
County commissioner	No property taxes. Sales taxes that way everybody pays their way in the Indiana.
County commissioner	State legislators need to listen and act upon constituents' concerns, restructure taxes, and learn to work for the good of the whole state.
County commissioner	Question 9: Jail is a service purchased from another local government to allow us to remain under the ICLU cap.
County commissioner	Local governments need to talk. State (and federal) governments need to listen. There is a lot more going on than is in this survey. State (and federal) decisions are only as good as the information available; a lot of local people have good ideas.
County commissioner	ADA is demanding putting voting machines in every polling place whether or not there is any disabled resident living there.
County commissioner	Problems would be fewer if all local option tax collections from the county were returned in a timely manner by state authorities.
County commissioner	New tax plan is hurting our county. Welfare costs also are hurting.
Mayor	Mandates without funding places a real burden on the city.
Mayor	Senate Enrolled Act 1 (2004) has nearly destroyed our ability to expand services and to maintain the services we already provide. We have been punished for our frugality and lost 2 million in unused levy. Now we will have to borrow money to provide the services and equipment we need. Thank you, Indiana General Assembly. Your micromanagement has really helped. We will be sure to share the facts with our taxpayers.
Mayor	Government reform and restructuring was not addressed in this survey.
Mayor	Some government services could be done by private business.

Mayor	Some elected positions should be hired professionals with proven skills.
Mayor	The loss of the inventory tax with no substantial replacement and the enactment of Senate Enrolled Act 1 (2004) concerning the tax levy has greatly hampered our ability to supply the needed services for our city!
Mayor	Question 14: [Our county] has a stormwater utility and is collecting from municipal residents but has not shared the monies collected with us. The ordinance passed stated that the money collected was supposed to come back to us. There was supposed to be an inter-local agreement as prescribed by state law but the county has refused our request for one.
Mayor	Joint effort between local government and Main St. business owners to paint store fronts on Main St. here in [our city]. Many volunteers have stepped up.
Mayor	Force counties to treat cities within fairly. Improve budget process for local governments.
Town council member	It would be nice to have the help of the state for small communities who have trouble raising the revenue to support our programs and needs.
Town council member	To sum up the problem, we are a small town without funds to run our town well.
Town council member	We have no land use planning in our county. We need help developing a program.
Town council member	This is my first year serving on the town council. A small town with less than 4,000 people. We are implementing a stormwater utility this year for the first time. A lot of unknowns at this time but feel confident about the program.
Town council member	The state must cut its budget over several years to balance. We must get people to work and off welfare. Like unemployment, welfare should only be a stop gap for 95% of participants.
Town council member	Generally we have a good relationship with the county. Major issue is push to unify city-county government. This was tried last year with no input or communication with smaller towns. This caused an uproar from citizens which torpedoed attempts for present. This could have been avoided if city and county had talked to and included small towns as equals rather than taking a "like it or lump it" attitude.
Town council member	Question 16: If there is a problem with an area of a county or the state and water and sewer are required by IDEM, then state should shoulder the financial burden with local government.
Town council member	Property tax statements still in limbo!
Town council member	The whole issue of the role of townships in our current society must be addressed. If the township system continues, it must be modernized and standardized. The study commission may very well determine that the system has served its purpose but is no longer needed. Efficiency and accessibility should be the focus - not political and historical allegiances.
Town council member	Our biggest issues have to do with re-developing an established neighborhood. Our infrastructure is deteriorating substantially including collapsing culverts, stormwater drains, and even sinkholes. Because of Senate Enrolled Act 1 (2004) and the city's current economic condition, we're struggling to resolve these issues. We surveyed residents of our town and asked what their concerns were. Their response, in order of importance, was (1) sidewalks-to give everyone better and safer access to our parks (2) drainage-address deteriorating system (3) recycling programs-inform and encourage use (4) remodels and tear downs-as they affect drainage and setbacks.
Town council member	IDEM mandates wastewater requirements, but does nothing to help pay for it. Every mandate should include funding. At least equal to low/moderate income percentages of the mandated community.
Town council member	Our town abides by State Board of Accounts rules and regulations and receives excellent reports from annual audits. We are in trouble with money only when inflicted by poor policies and practices of county and state governments.
Township trustee	The questions on this form do not cover the real problems of local government, and give a false picture of what is going on and a waste of my time.
Township trustee	I believe that getting rid of township assessors would cause an increase in incorrect assessing. Hiring someone outside of the community would cause more taxpayers to refuse to pay their property taxes. My township respects and trusts my husband and I. He has lived here all his life. I feel taxpayers would be even more frustrated with big government than they already are.
Township trustee	Low-income residents are in need of counseling services on how to get and retain employment. Job training programs are not visible or non-existent. Jobs are out there!
Township trustee	Question 8: Don't allow businesses to come in, take tax exemptions, and then leave when expired. No building project should be allowed unless old building reused or put land use back. E.g., WalMart to Super WalMart and an empty building. Two empty factories in our town.
Township trustee	Question 11: Old school torn down to build Town Hall. Project in progress.
Township trustee	Question 15: Unfair to taxpayers to face unknown bills just before Christmas and obviously after elections.
Township trustee	Question 10: Majority have home wells and own sewer systems.
Township trustee	Smaller rural areas seem to be overlooked while large towns get most attention.

Township trustee	Both the legislature and DLGF are placing more requirements on assessors, but place no responsibility for funding these requirements on the county. Assessors are doing more, including getting certified. Counties are not increasing salaries for the increased responsibilities.
Township trustee	We are very concerned that some want to do away with township government. For many, this is the only place people will listen to them. Especially for poor relief, local people are able to do a better job at the local level because they know the situation and the people.
Township trustee	If the state does away with township assessors, there will be a bigger expense on the taxpayer. There is no way they could hire a professional appraiser (which is still a judgment call) for the salaries paid to township assessors.
Township trustee	The townships should remain open in Indiana. We are helping more people today than at any time in my last 12 years. Many old and disabled residents find it much easier to get to township facilities than to be forced to go to a downtown central location.
Township trustee	These are my beliefs, not matter of facts. I felt like many of these questions should not be answered by me, but someone more qualified.
Township trustee	The trustee system needs to be continued in rural townships. The trustee is the most informed person to deal with personal property assessment, fire protection, poor relief assistance, weed control, and cemetery care. To centralize is to make the system less personal, less caring.
Township trustee	[Our township] is a very rural agricultural community with no city or town, parks, public transportation, public water or sewer. We have some manufacturing plants and several poor trailer parks. As such, much of this survey is inapplicable to my township.
Township trustee	Question 14: Just a note. I personally have brought this to the attention of my town council. After more than two years, my yard still floods with stormwater. [One local road] has not been cleaned out to let runoff. [One local business] needs to lower their culvert. Several septic still run off into this sand branch.
Township trustee	Better communication between governments- state government- county- township- cities- towns- license branches- social security offices- etc.
Township trustee	The inability of IDEM to enforce state law has created hardship on our township! Need help to correct!
Township trustee	We are a small township with about 70 percent of our community being a farm community. In the past 2 years we have lost the two primary businesses in our community resulting in many families being forced to move elsewhere. We have lost a lot of tax dollars out of these tax buildings resulting in a bigger burden on our community. My biggest concern would be finding a way to get these two large buildings back in production to bring jobs and families back to our township.
School board member	Tax reassessment the depressed economy due to the steel industry has crippled our area. It has also forced all of the school systems in this area to borrow money to meet expenses resulting in paying interest that was not in the budget.
School board member	Little or no cooperation from auditor and assessor's office. State should intervene and either force these offices to get the work done or force these county officials to resign.
School board member	Local control is disappearing.
School board member	Mandates from state legislature and federal government that are not adequately funded or not funded at all is irresponsible. And, it is negligent if/when funding stops or is cut and the mandate continues.
School board member	From school perspective: No Child Left Behind / PL221 have unfunded costs. Schools have no say in decisions about tax base (i.e. ERAs and TIFs). Schools should be represented in all planning decisions.
School board member	The equation for dollars per students given from the state to local school districts needs to be readjusted. The state is still using the census from 1970. Therefore, any school district that has had substantial growth in the past 30 years does not get its equal share. Governor O'Bannon ignored 3 meetings we had with him and his financial secretary. This is a major issue for the children of this state. We have a solution.
School board member	It is a major hardship on schools to borrow money.
School board member	Question 15: Local office not accountable to get done on time-totally unacceptable.
School board member	Question 18: The increase in property taxes has affected my community across the board regarding individual homeowners, town management, and especially the ability to manage school finances. It has led to unprecedented borrowing (at interest) for our town and schools to function. It never should have happened in the manner it did (reassessment was ordered in 1998).
School board member	Question 17: The township system is archaic and should be abandoned. This rural county would function much better with a unigov system!
School board member	Enforcing ICAN in public school without letting the community have a vote.



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