

hunden partners

**SOUTHWEST INDIANA
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

Evansville Regional Arts & Culture Strategic Plan

October 2025

SOUTHWEST INDIANA
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY



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Plan Summary



Introduction

Evansville Regional Arts & Culture Strategic Plan

The Evansville Regional Economic Partnership (E-REP or Region) engaged Hunden Partners (Hunden) to complete a regional arts and culture development plan for the region comprised of Gibson, Posey, Vanderburgh, and Warrick counties. The goal of the Project is to establish actionable next steps for both existing and future venues and a defined arts and culture vision for the region. This study, made possible by the Indiana READI Grant and Lilly Endowment, will help structure the Region's entertainment, arts, and culture strategy based on existing gaps and opportunities in the market. With \$65 million in contributions to the Indiana Economic Development Corporation from the Lilly Endowment to be dedicated to arts and culture projects in the state, this study will help align priorities for future funding initiatives from these funds among other sources.



Lilly Endowment Inc.
A Private Philanthropic Foundation



Vision Statement



“Leveraging our connection to the Ohio River, our history and historic architecture, our prized location between many major cities, our arts and cultural institutions, organizations, and experiences, our can-do artists & creatives, and our proud and industrious regional residents, the Evansville Region will punch above its weight as an arts rich community attracting residents & visitors to enjoy and grow our unique arts & culture destination.”

★ Priority Project Recommendations

Mid-Size Entertainment Venue

Hunden recommends the development of a vibrant, mid-sized venue in the Evansville Region with a capacity of approximately 600. This space would be a crucial addition that fills the existing gap between 300- and 700-seat venues. This type of venue unlocks new opportunities for the city's entertainment and cultural landscape, offering a right-sized option for performers and events that are too large for small clubs but too intimate for venues such as the Ford Center or Victory Theatre.

The space should be highly flexible, allowing for a range of seating configurations and event formats — whether it's a standing-room-only concert, a cabaret-style comedy night, a speaker series, or a traveling theatrical production.

By providing a fresh platform for mid-scale live events, this venue can become a creative hub for the Evansville Region — boosting foot traffic, supporting restaurants and bars, and attracting regional visitors. Using comparable projections, Year One could host roughly 25 events as described above. By Year Four and stabilization, the venue could be hosting 40 events and generating roughly 1,500 room nights annually.

Explore Evansville would make sense as the driving entity for such a development.



Priority Project Recommendations

Festival Grounds

Hunden recommends the development of a permanent, purpose-built festival grounds to accommodate large outdoor events. Essential infrastructure such as fencing, power, and restrooms will support efficient, high-quality operations.

Positioning this space along the Ohio riverfront could be a transformational move. It would directly align with the Ohio River Vision and Strategic Plan, activating underutilized space in downtown and turning it into a dynamic cultural anchor for the region. The waterfront has potential to thrive with activity — from music festivals and food truck rallies to artisan markets and community celebrations.

By establishing a permanent home for large-scale events, the Evansville Region can better attract and retain signature festivals, regional visitors, and national attention. Additionally, this can be a shared space that locals feel proud to call their own. This is a chance to make the riverfront not just a backdrop, but a bold centerpiece of the city's cultural and economic future.

The festival grounds should align with the Ohio River Vision and Strategic Plan, which key areas identified in Evansville, Newburgh and Mt. Vernon. This also aligns with Explore Evansville.



Priority Project Recommendations

Centralized Promotion & Marketing

Hunden recommends an investment in a centralized, well-supported digital platform to promote the region's events, venues, and experiences — available both online and via a dedicated app.

Past efforts like the EVV App have shown promise but ultimately fell short due to insufficient funding, coordination, and long-term vision. With the right backing, a modern platform could become the go-to resource for locals and visitors alike — housing everything from festival calendars and restaurant guides to ticketing, wayfinding, and real-time updates.

This digital hub would not only strengthen community engagement and drive tourism but also serve as a critical tool for economic development, helping connect audiences with the rich supply of arts, culture, and entertainment Evansville has to offer.

In order to cover the entire region, The Evansville Regional Economic Partnership (E-REP) would be an entity that makes sense to drive this initiative.

Sustainable Funding

Hunden recommends the development of a sustained funding strategy and policy framework to support arts and cultural initiatives across the Evansville region. A long-term commitment to funding the arts is not only a cultural benefit, but it is also a proven economic development strategy that enhances quality of life, strengthens workforce retention, and drives regional competitiveness.

One key mechanism is the creation of a dedicated arts funding stream, such as a **regional ticket tax** applied to live performances, sporting events, and entertainment venues. Revenue from this modest tax could be allocated directly to arts and cultural programming, facility improvements, and community engagement initiatives.

To ensure sustainable impact, local governments should explore, matching grant programs, formal partnerships with philanthropic and corporate entities, and other shared funding mechanisms across the region. In parallel, public engagement strategies — such as participatory budgeting, arts councils, and regular stakeholder meetings — can build broad-based support and ensure community alignment.

By institutionalizing funding and support for the arts, the region positions itself not only as a cultural leader but also as a forward-thinking, economically vibrant place to live, work, and visit.

This initiative can be addressed by the City of Evansville as well as the EID.

★ Priority Project Recommendations

Visual Arts

Hunden recommends the expansion of public art installations — such as sculptures, murals, and interactive pieces — throughout Evansville and the surrounding four-county region of Gibson, Vanderburgh, Warrick, and Posey counties. These installations can serve as powerful placemaking tools, enriching the visual identity of communities while fostering civic pride and cultural connection.

Strategically placed public art can activate underutilized spaces, create photo-worthy destinations, and encourage deeper engagement with local history and creativity. Flexible in form and scale, these works can reflect community values, celebrate regional heritage, and provide new platforms for both emerging and established artists.

By investing in a cohesive public art initiative, E-Rep can spark collaboration across municipalities, enhance tourism appeal, and contribute to a sense of shared identity across urban and rural areas alike.



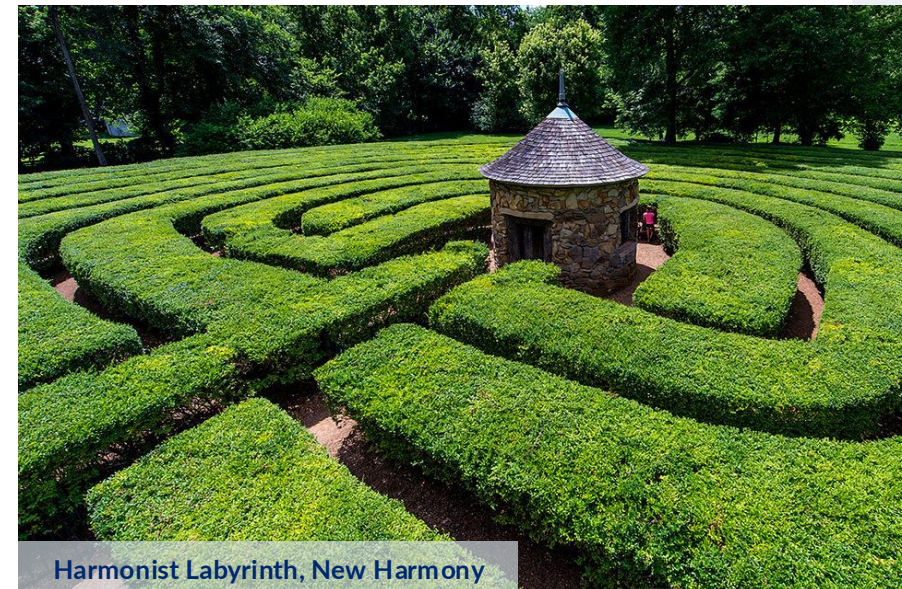


Other Considerations

Riverfront Development: The Ohio River Vision and Strategic Plan, led by nationally recognized design firm Sasaki, offers a transformative framework for reimagining the Region's riverfront. This 50-mile effort is a bold 10-, 20-, or even 30-year vision that will unfold with investment from government, philanthropic, and private partners. A funded architectural competition for two new buildings on Downtown Evansville's riverfront is expected to draw both established and emerging firms from around the world. By aligning arts and culture priorities with this long-term redevelopment, the region can create shared spaces for festivals, public art, and performances that enrich community life, attract visitors, and strengthen downtown identity while advancing a unified cultural vision.

Link to plan: https://www.evansvilleregion.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/EvansvilleRiverfrontProjectUpdate_Jan_2025.pdf

New Harmony Community: The Blaffer Trust is working to reinvigorate New Harmony's two centuries of thought leadership in the arts and beyond. Building on its historic role as the driver of nearly all major cultural efforts in New Harmony, the Trust is undergoing a process of reinvention to secure its long-term future. This next chapter is expected to focus less on traditional performance and art installations and more on programming centered on ideas. Such a shift reflects New Harmony's legacy as a community of innovation and reflection, while also positioning it to remain a unique cultural destination within Region. Aligning this renewed emphasis on thought leadership with the region's broader arts and culture strategy will help ensure that New Harmony continues to be both a local and national asset for creativity, history, and ideas.



Regional Benefits

ECONOMIC RIPPLE EFFECTS

New venues and festival spaces attract regional audiences, boosting hotels, restaurants, and small businesses throughout all four counties.

SHARED ACCESS & COLLABORATION

Centralized promotion and sustainable funding ensure arts and culture are visible, supported, and accessible across the four-county region.

WORKFORCE & TALENT RETENTION

Enhanced cultural amenities make the broader region more attractive for young professionals, families, and employers.

STRENGTHENED REGIONAL IDENTITY

Public art and cultural programming weave together communities, celebrating local heritage while building a unified sense of place.



Alignment with Regional and Tourism Plans

Hunden reviewed additional studies to inform this analysis. Both the Ohio River Vision and Strategic Plan and the Evansville Tourism Master Plan were incorporated into our research process. These studies provided important context and high-level takeaways that shaped the findings and recommendations in this report.



OHIO RIVER VISION AND STRATEGIC PLAN

Sasaki, May 2024

- Key areas of interest include Mt. Vernon, Evansville, and Newburgh. Additional sites include Burdette Park, Angel Mounds Historic Site, and Newburgh Lock & Dam.
- Themes across the region include regional cooperation as well as reorienting to the river.
- “The plan’s recommendations focus on connecting the region, enhancing urban centers, leveraging and protecting natural assets, and harnessing tools to focus investment and transformative energy strategically.”

EVANSVILLE TOURISM MASTER PLAN

Conventions Sports & Leisure (CSL),
April 2021

- The study benchmarked the Evansville-Vanderburgh County area against nationwide destinations such as Huntsville, Alabama; Lexington, Kentucky; Fort Wayne, Indiana; South Bend, Indiana; and more.
- The Evansville region ranked near the bottom of the comparable destinations in many categories including entertainment, outdoor activities, nightlife, and museums.
- Specific recommendations for downtown Evansville as it relates to this study included unique immersive art, cultural and entertainment experiences, as well as large gathering spaces for public art.

Study Methodology & Key Questions

Study Process & Project Overview



Where you are now

Hunden analyzed economic, demographic, and tourism data along with the current supply of arts and culture assets in the region to identify gaps in the market that should be prioritized in the future.



The opportunities

Based on market research, inventory assessment, and stakeholder engagement, Hunden identified initial gaps within the arts and culture market.



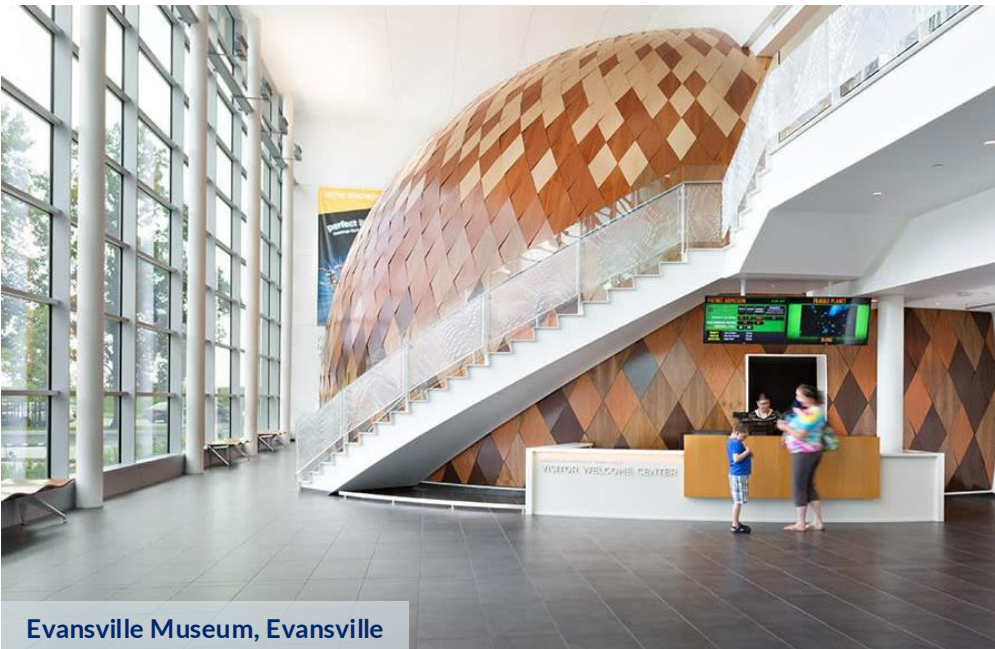
How we get there

Hunden discussed opportunities and identified a vision as well as priority projects. Hunden also offered high-level funding strategies and current funding gaps.



Stakeholder Engagement

Throughout the study, Hunden interviewed local stakeholders throughout the region. In addition to market data, interview feedback provided an understanding of local needs and opportunities to ultimately determine the optimal recommendations and overall strategy for the Project. A list of organizations interviewed for this study is provided to the right.



Evansville Museum, Evansville

MARKET REPRESENTATION

In-Person Focus Groups:

- | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| • City of Evansville | • Posey County | • Warrick County |
| • Gibson County | • Vanderburgh County | |
-
- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| • Arts Council of Southwestern Indiana | • Bell Road Library | • Evansville Public Library |
| • Evansville Museum | • Newburgh Community Theater | • Arts Council of Southwestern Indiana |
| • Indiana Arts Commission | • Success Warrick County | • Victory Theatre |
| • Children's Museum of Evansville | • Downtown Princeton | • University of Southern Indiana |
| • Reitz Home | • The Hub 127 | • Wesselman Woods |
| • Explore Evansville | • Oakland City University | • E-REP |
| • Old National Events Plaza | • New Harmony Town Council | • Evansville African American Museum |
| • University of Evansville | • Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation | • EVV APP |
| • Grow Poseyville | • Evansville Philharmonic Orchestra | |
| • Newburgh Museum | | |

Economic, Demographic & Tourism Summary

Local market area characteristics such as population, demographics, a diversified economy, access, and attractions influence the potential demand for new development as well as the overall attractiveness of an area for current and potential visitors and residents.

CONNECTIVITY

The Evansville region is well-connected through major transportation infrastructure, which ensures accessibility for residents, businesses, and visitors. Interstates 69 and 64 link the tri-state area to additional larger metropolitan areas and will be further enhanced by the under-construction \$1.4B I-69 bridge across the Ohio River. These highways play a vital role in supporting economic activity, particularly in manufacturing, logistics, and tourism.

INCOME & SPENDING

The Evansville region exhibits a diverse range of household incomes, with some areas surpassing a median household income of \$150,000. Understanding income distribution helps ensure the Regional Arts and Culture Development Plan supports access to cultural experiences for everyone, regardless of income or background.

MARKET REPRESENTATION Four-County Region

1.8%

Population Increase
2010 – 2024

10.4M

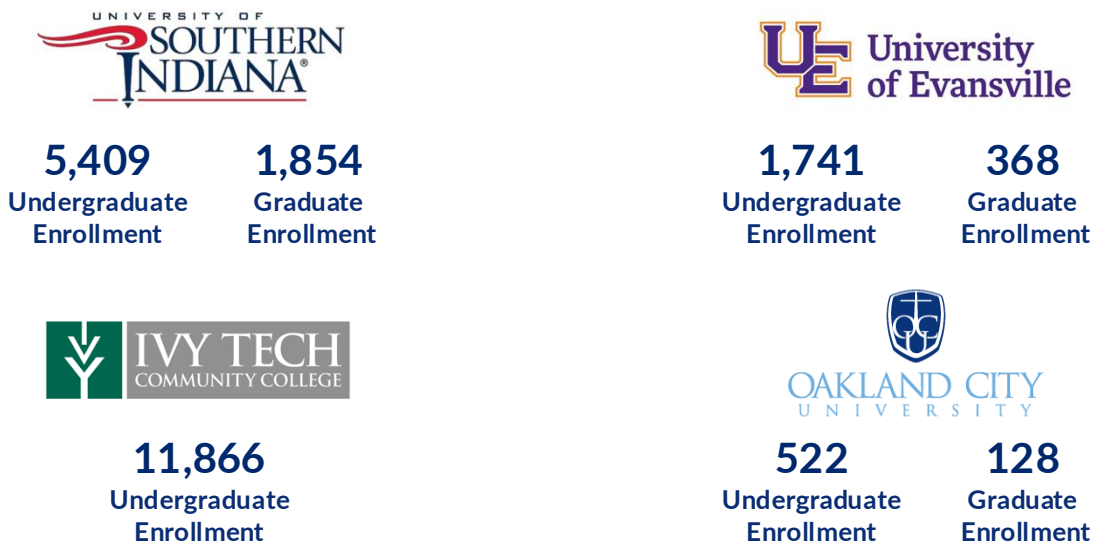
Population
within a 3-hour drive time

Educational Attainment

The largest higher education institutions within the Evansville region are the University of Southern Indiana, the University of Evansville, Ivy Tech Community College, and Oakland City University, which collectively enroll nearly 22,000 students. These institutions play a vital role in shaping the regional economy by producing a skilled workforce across various industries.

Additionally, they contribute to the arts and culture landscape by fostering creative talent through arts programs, performances, and public events. Many students who major in the arts or engage in creative disciplines seek opportunities to continue their artistic pursuits post-graduation. Ensuring access to cultural spaces, workshops, and community arts initiatives allows them to remain engaged in the region’s creative scene.

INSTITUTIONS WITHIN THE REGION



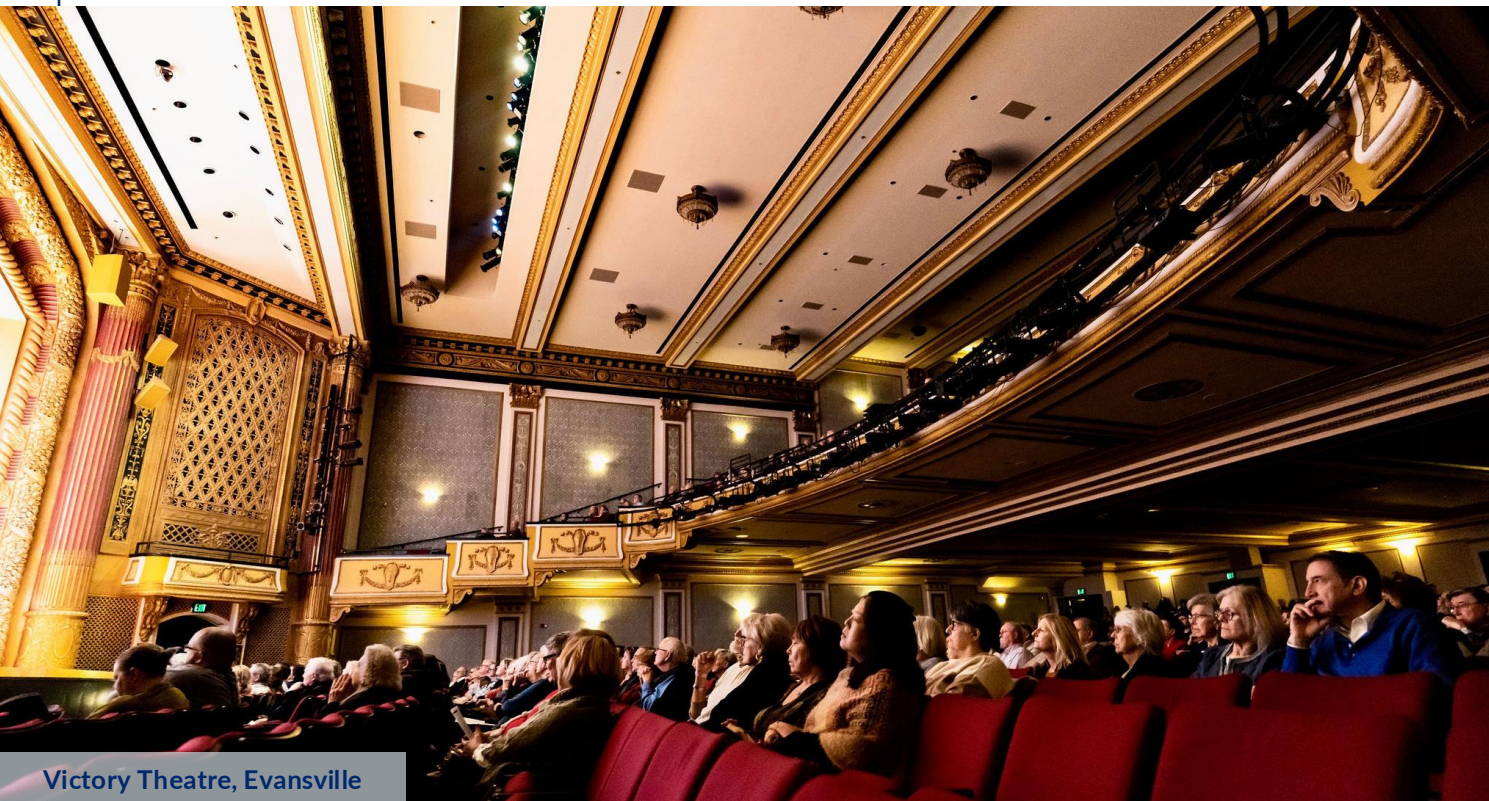
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (2023)

Population Age 25+	Indiana	Gibson County	Vanderburgh County	Posey County	Warrick County
Did Not Complete High School	9.5%	9.2%	8.4%	6.7%	4.8%
Completed High School	32.2%	40.3%	35.0%	35.3%	30.4%
Some College	18.9%	18.6%	18.8%	20.0%	20.1%
Completed Associate Degree	9.2%	12.9%	10.7%	12.7%	9.2%
Completed Bachelor Degree	19.1%	13.5%	17.3%	16.3%	23.8%
Completed Graduate Degree	11.1%	5.5%	9.8%	9.0%	11.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Arts & Entertainment Assets

Arts and entertainment venues provide the opportunity for residents and visitors to engage in the arts in its various forms such as concerts, theater, exhibits, and workshops. These types of assets, when available, can add to the diverse activities that residents experience, helping to increase their quality of life.



Victory Theatre, Evansville

Performing Arts

The region is home to relatively large venues including the Ford Center, Old National Events Plaza, and Victory Theatre. Outside these major venues in Evansville, the Region lacks mid-size venues to accommodate smaller acts and community programming.

Visual Arts

The Evansville region has a gap in dedicated spaces to exhibit public art as well as places that provide education and programming opportunities across art forms. Public art installations are an ongoing desire from stakeholders in the four-county region.

Community Spaces

Community centers and event venues can often be an ideal location to showcase both performing and visual arts. The region has a moderate supply of these venues; however, there is an opportunity to increase programming efforts.

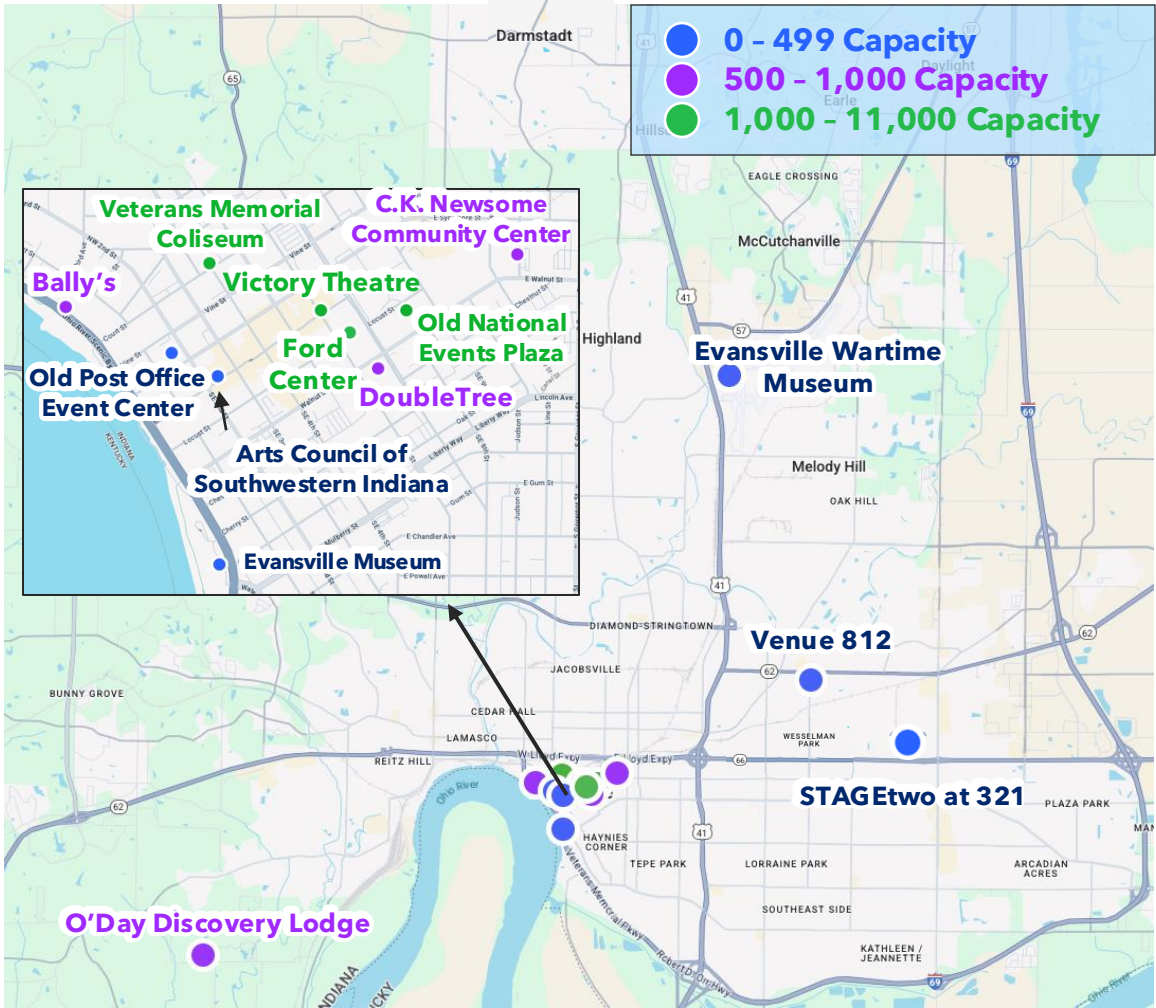
Event Space Inventory Analysis

Through conversations with stakeholders and an evaluation of the current inventory of event spaces, a significant gap has been identified in the availability of performance venues with capacities between 300 and 700 seats. While there are existing venues within this range, they are primarily designed for meetings or weddings and lack the necessary infrastructure to support live performances. As a result, performers are often left with the option of using the Victory Theatre, which may exceed their audience size and result in an underwhelming experience for both artists and attendees.

VANDERBURGH COUNTY EVENT VENUES

Venue	Capacity	Venue Type
Ford Center	10,900	Arena
Evansville Coliseum	4,055	Event Space
Old National Events Plaza Aiken Theatre	2,500	Theater
Victory Theatre	1,950	Theater
DoubleTree by Hilton Evansville	775	Hotel
O'Day Discovery Lodge at Burdette Park	650	Event Space
C.K. Newsome Community Center	650	Event Space
Bally's Evansville	560	Casino
Old Post Office Plaza	300	Event Space
Evansville Museum	250	Museum
Venue 812	200	Event Space
Evansville Wartime Museum	150	Museum
Arts Council of Southwestern Indiana	100	Gallery
STAGetwo at 321	100	Theater

EVANSVILLE EVENT VENUES MAP



Cultural & Heritage Assets

The historical significance of the region to the state is important to the ongoing education of the Region's and state's youth. Many original buildings and structures provide unique experiences that can attract visitors to the area, which can aid in increasing spending within the Evansville region.



Ritz Home Museum, Evansville

Historic Buildings

The region has several historic buildings and sites such as the Reitz Home and Lyles Station. Additional redevelopment projects are occurring across the counties and present opportunities for the arts and culture space.

Museums

Museums provide residents and visitors the opportunity to be educated on the roots of its communities. Some counties within the region could use additional space dedicated to local artifacts and history. These assets rank lower in terms of visitation and draw.

Other Cultural Assets

Facilities like Bosse Field in Vanderburgh County also help engage visitors through unique and immersive experiences. As one of the oldest professional baseball stadiums in the country still in regular use, it blends historic charm with community-focused events, making it a regional destination for sports and cultural tourism.

Support Amenities Analysis

Exhibit Space

Galleries and flexible display areas are vital for visual artists to share their work with the public. Additional exhibit space is needed to showcase student, community, and emerging talent.

Artist Studios

Studio spaces provide artists with dedicated areas to create, experiment, and collaborate. These spaces foster local talent and support year-round cultural activity and professional development.

Restaurants and Stores

Nearby dining and retail support event activity by extending visit time and boosting local spending. Limited evening and weekend hours currently reduce the overall impact of cultural events.

Rehearsal Space

Dedicated rehearsal space enables consistent practice and event preparation. Music and dance ensembles often struggle to find affordable, acoustically appropriate locations to rehearse.

Theater Support Space

Dressing rooms, lighting booths, green rooms, and technical infrastructure are critical for successful performances. Many regional venues lack these elements, limiting the types of shows they can host.

Storage Space

Back-of-house storage is essential for props, equipment, and exhibit materials. Many groups currently rent off-site storage, which can be costly and inconvenient, limiting participation and programming capacity.



Victory Theatre, Evansville

Support Amenities Analysis



Feedback on Current Facilities



Downtown Evansville, IN

Downtown Evansville has a strong foundation with existing infrastructure and support from the Evansville Improvement District (EID). However, working with local businesses to align and extend their hours around events and performances could help increase foot traffic and create a more connected and engaging experience for visitors.



Victory Theatre

The Victory Theatre serves as a strong example of a well-equipped performing arts venue, with key support amenities such as green rooms, dressing rooms, and rehearsal space.



Newburgh Museum

The Newburgh Museum is a valuable historical asset for Warrick County but lacks adequate storage for its artifacts. It must rent off-site storage, which creates a financial burden.



Feedback



All feedback summarized here reflects input from stakeholders during the engagement process.

VANDEBURGH COUNTY

Marketing and Communication Gaps:

There is no centralized source for arts-related events, and any form of promotion relies heavily on fragmented social media.

Venue Needs: Lacks mid-sized (300–700 persons) performance-specific venues and festival-ready outdoor spaces. Some currently available spaces are underutilized.

Underserved Communities and

Programming Gaps: Lack of offerings for young adults, non-sports audiences, and ethnic groups. Many events are nonprofit-led with limited capacity to scale.

Assets and Opportunities: Burdette Park, 4-H Fairgrounds, the riverfront, and the Fall Festival offer major cultural value. Public art, music, and gallery events exist but need better infrastructure and awareness.

WARRICK COUNTY

Communication Challenges: Lacks a centralized marketing strategy or calendar. Visit Warrick is hiring someone to help address this.

Infrastructure Needs: Storage for museums and theaters is limited. There is also a need for more signage and wayfinding.

Venues and Programming: The performing arts is established in schools but has room for enhancement. Some venues lack dedicated programmers, leading to underutilization. Increasing visibility and engaging younger audiences are also key opportunities for growth.

Engagement and Accessibility: Downtown identity unclear (“What is Newburgh?”). There is a lack of events programming for young adults.

GIBSON COUNTY

Historic and Cultural Assets: Lyles Station and Cockrum Hall are significant historical assets but are underfunded. Additional funding would help increase events programming and restoration.

Downtown and Venue Development:

New development in Downtown Princeton is expected to revitalize the downtown area, but the county could use an outdoor event space like an amphitheater. Current projects in the planning stage include a multicultural restaurant and new maker spaces.

Youth and Engagement Gaps: Young adult involvement is limited.

Tourism and Facilities: Toyota Event Center, 4-H buildings, and wedding/music venues are strong assets within the county.

Limited Staffing: Lyles Station would benefit from additional staff and volunteers.

POSEY COUNTY

Infrastructure Needs: While Posey County has valuable historic venues and cultural spaces, specifically in Historic New Harmony, many are underutilized due to limited funding, staffing, or maintenance.

Venue and Programming Gaps: Across the county, cultural programming is primarily sustained by nonprofits with little or no paid staff. Existing venues lack the resources to scale.

Engagement and Accessibility: There are few formal ties between cultural communities and regional institutions. Better integration and outreach, especially for young professionals, could increase participation and retention.

Economic Development and Policy Support: Local leaders have expressed the need for more public investment, stronger university partnerships, and revitalization of key assets.

Current Regional Gaps



These regional gaps reflect aggregated stakeholder feedback combined with Hunden's observations.

MID-SIZE PERFORMANCE VENUES

Lack of venues that seat between 300 and 700 people, limiting the ability to host mid-scale concerts, comedy shows, and touring productions.

Most venues are either small bars or very large arenas, creating a gap in the market for flexible mid-size spaces.

CENTRALIZED PROMOTING AND MARKETING

No single entity is responsible for promoting arts and cultural events across the region.

Residents must rely on fragmented social media feeds or word of mouth to learn about events, which results in missed opportunities for engagement.

Stakeholders highlighted the need for a regional arts-focused events calendar and a unified marketing strategy.

Previous efforts (e.g., "EVV" app) are helpful but underfunded and not widely adopted across all communities.

FESTIVAL GROUNDS

No permanent, flexible festival grounds exist in the region for large outdoor events.

Parks Fest is held in a city park that is poorly suited for festivals, and the Fall Festival is along several blocks of a commercial street, both relying on makeshift infrastructure.

County parks and fairgrounds are occasionally used, but they are not always centrally located or easily accessible.

Festival programming often depends on nonprofit organizations with limited staff and resources, affecting sustainability and growth.

SUPPORT AMENITIES

Storage and back-of-house space for arts organizations and theater productions is minimal, and renting off-site storage is often cost prohibitive.

Many businesses are closed during evening or weekend event times, limiting pre- and post-event spending opportunities.

Lack of accessible signage and wayfinding, especially in downtown areas, creates a confusing experience for visitors.

PUBLIC ART & FUNDING FOR ART ORGANIZATIONS

While initiatives like mural-filled alleyways and public sculpture are making a visible impact, public art remains limited in scale and visibility. There is a significant opportunity to expand and integrate public art into community development projects, downtown spaces, and regional gateways.

Many arts organizations lead valuable programs and events but struggle with sustainability due to limited staffing, insufficient marketing support, and minimal access to long-term funding.

Economic, Demographic and Tourism Analysis



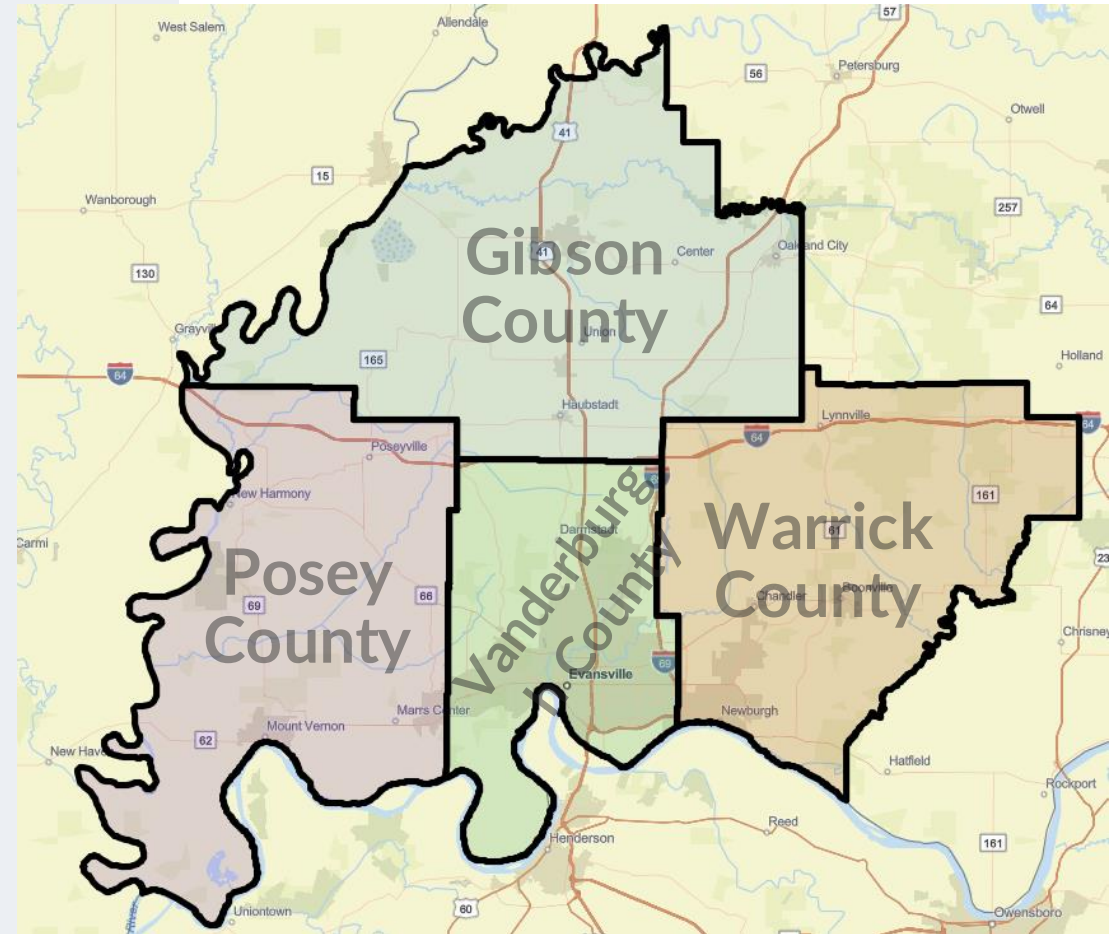
Regional Overview

The Evansville region, which encompasses Vanderburgh, Warrick, Posey, and Gibson counties, is a growing economic and cultural hub in southwest Indiana. Anchored by key industries such as healthcare, manufacturing, and logistics and transportation, the region benefits from strong transportation networks and a skilled workforce. Its location along the Ohio River, with access to interstates, rail, and air travel, supports economic growth and regional connectivity.

Understanding the region's demographics and economic landscape is key to enhancing quality of life through arts and culture. As population and income levels vary across counties, so do opportunities to invest in cultural amenities that align with community needs. Higher education institutions play a role in both workforce development and the creative sector, which helps ensure access to lifelong learning and artistic engagement.

As the region continues to grow, integrating arts and culture into development plans can help attract talent, boost tourism, and foster a stronger sense of place.

REGIONAL MAP



Drive-Time Statistics

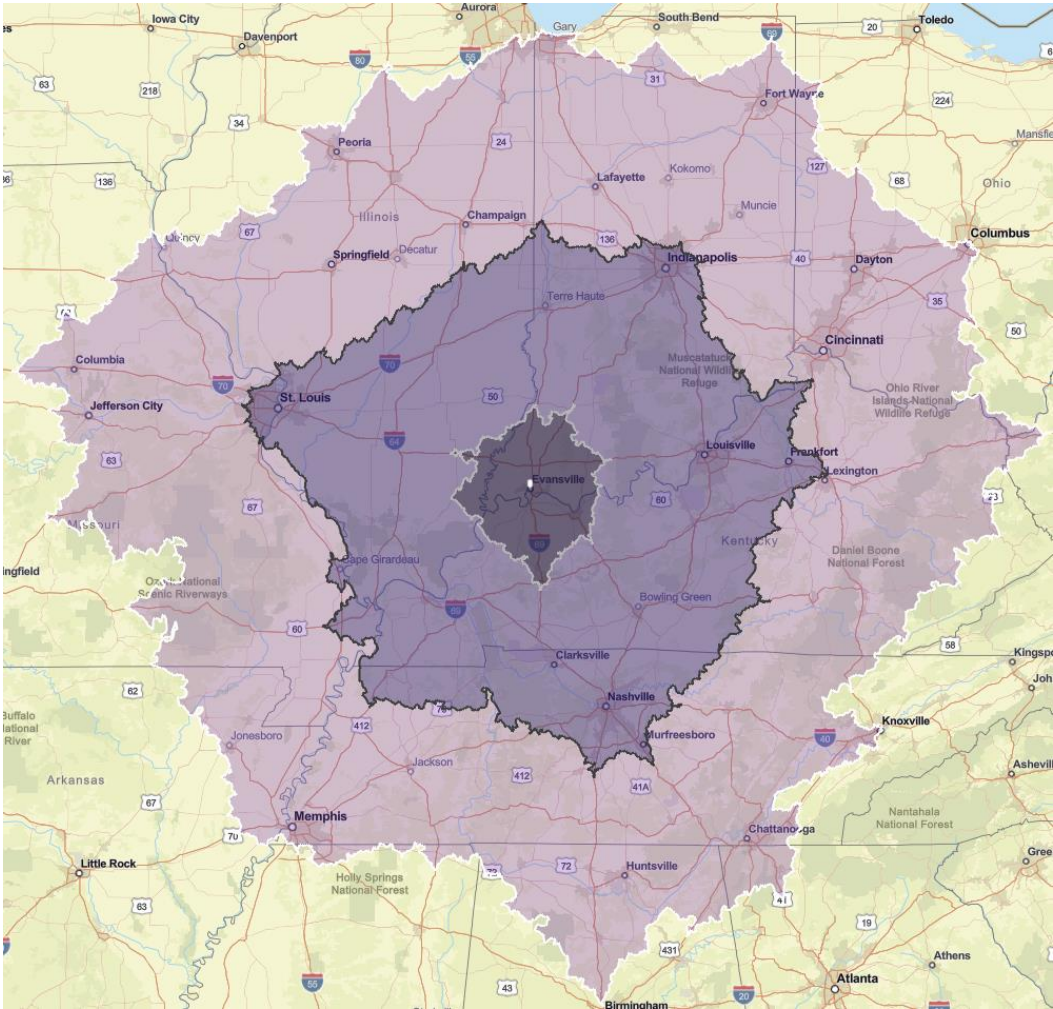
Assessing an area’s drive-time population provides valuable insight into its potential visitor base and market reach. Within a one-hour drive of Evansville, the population is approximately 578,000 people across nearly 237,000 households with a median household income of \$64,299. Expanding to a three-hour drive significantly increases the potential market as there are more than 10.3 million people within key metropolitan areas such as St. Louis, Louisville, Nashville, and Indianapolis. Extending to a five-hour drive expands the reach even further to more than 28 million people and more than 11.3 million households, which reinforces the area’s potential as a regional destination.

ESTIMATED DRIVE-TIME STATISTICS FROM EVANSVILLE, IN (2024)

	1-Hour	3-Hour	5-Hour
Population	577,701	10,389,602	28,172,217
Households	236,928	4,196,878	11,314,521
Median Household Income	\$64,299	\$70,630	\$69,638
Median Home Value	\$200,416	\$256,984	\$243,870
Median Age	40.6	38.6	39.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

DRIVE-TIME POPULATION



Connectivity & Transportation

The Evansville region is well-connected through major transportation infrastructure, ensuring accessibility for residents, businesses, and visitors. Interstates 69 and 64 link the tri-state area to larger metropolitan centers and will be further enhanced by the \$1.4-billion I-69 bridge currently under construction across the Ohio River. This new bridge not only strengthens regional mobility but also presents a prominent opportunity to introduce public art as a welcoming gateway to the region. These highways support key sectors such as manufacturing, logistics, and tourism.

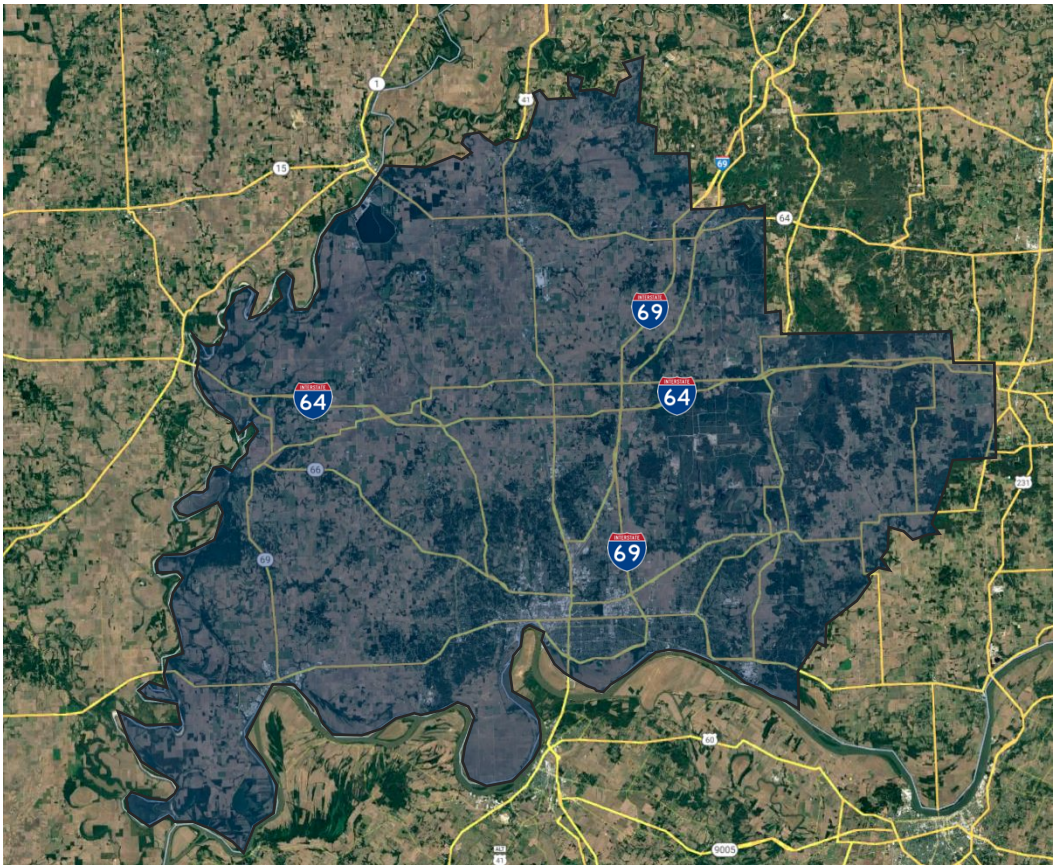
Additionally, Evansville Regional Airport (EVV) provides essential air service, including a recently added nonstop route to Chicago. Though air travel declined during the pandemic, the airport continues to recover. The Ohio River bolsters connectivity, serving as a major asset for industrial and commercial shipping. Together, these assets position Evansville as a vital hub for commerce, culture, and regional growth.

Evansville Regional Airport (EVV)

Year	Enplanement	Deplanement	% Change
2018	228,000	227,000	--
2019	242,000	241,000	6.2%
2020	105,000	105,000	-56.4%
2021	165,000	165,000	57.1%
2022	153,000	151,000	-8.5%
2023	164,000	165,000	9.3%

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

REGIONAL MAP



Income, Spending & Other Demographic Data

The Evansville region exhibits a diverse range of household incomes, with some areas surpassing a median household income of \$150,000. Warrick County leads the region with an average median household income of \$95,000, which significantly exceeds the Indiana state average of \$70,000. Homeownership rates also vary, with Vanderburgh County reporting a rate of 64.5 percent, which is considerably lower than Posey and Warrick counties, which exceed 82 percent.

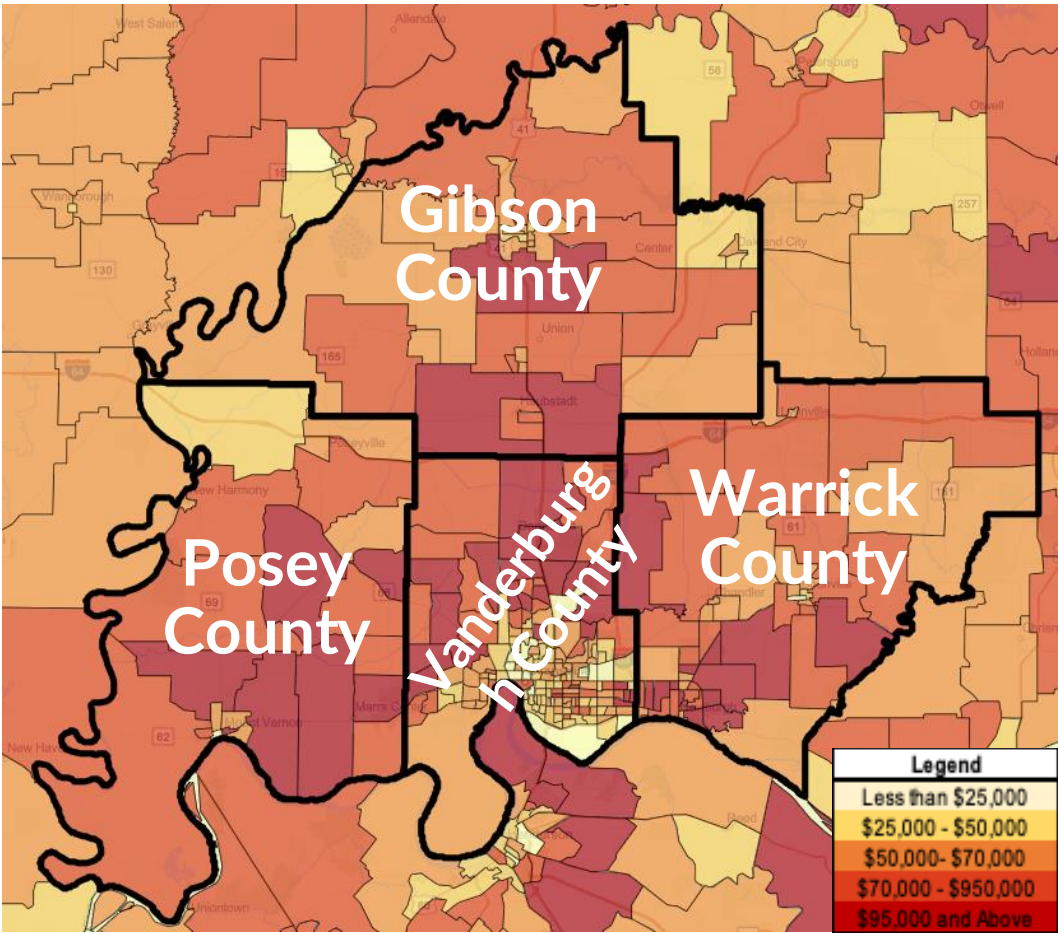
Understanding income distribution is crucial for shaping the Regional Arts and Culture Development Plan, as residents differ in their ability to pay for cultural experiences. To ensure equitable access, it is important to offer affordable options that reflect the region’s range of incomes. By aligning cultural investments with demographic realities, E-REP can foster inclusive arts experiences that engage the full community.

Estimated Drive-Time Statistics from Evansville, IN (2024)

Category	Indiana	Vanderburgh County	Posey County	Warrick County	Gibson County
Homeownership Rate	70.4%	64.5%	82.1%	82.5%	75.8%
Median Value of Owner-Occupied Housing Units	\$201,600	\$172,300	\$218,000	\$228,900	\$170,500
Average Household Size	2.47	2.25	2.42	2.58	2.45
Median Household Income	\$70,051	\$60,938	\$79,124	\$95,027	\$67,763

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (2023)



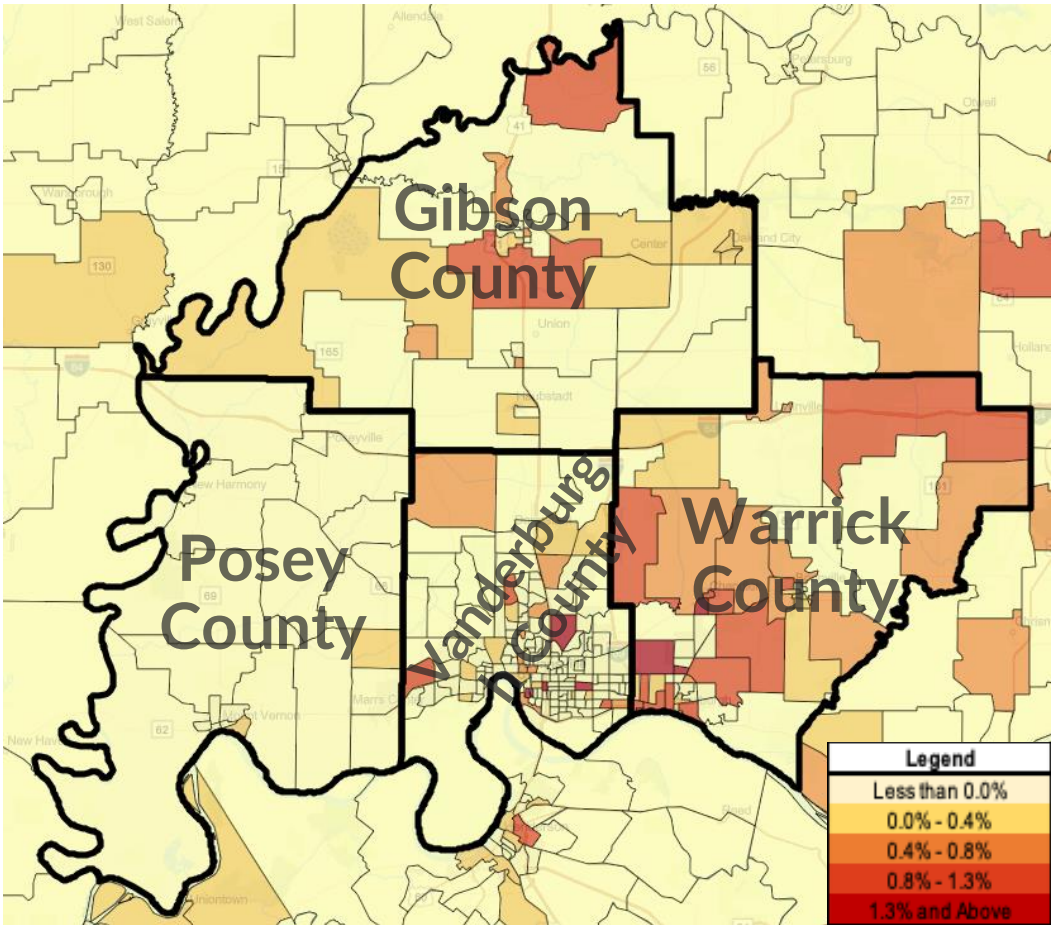
Population and Growth Rate

The Evansville region has experienced modest population growth over the past decade, with variations across its counties. From 2010 to 2024, the combined population of Vanderburgh, Posey, Warrick, and Gibson counties increased by 1.8 percent. Growth patterns differ significantly by location. Warrick County stands out as the fastest-growing area, with a 10.7-percent increase since 2010. On the other hand, Posey and Gibson counties have seen population declines of 3.7 percent and 1.7 percent, respectively, which indicate potential challenges related to economic opportunities and housing demand.

Population and Growth Rates					
	2010	2020	2024	2029 Projected	% Change 2010 - 2024
United States	308,745,538	331,449,281	338,440,954	344,873,411	9.6%
Indiana	6,483,802	6,785,528	6,907,141	6,989,187	6.5%
Vanderburgh County	179,703	180,136	180,209	178,155	0.3%
Posey County	25,910	25,222	24,950	24,692	-3.7%
Warrick County	59,689	63,898	66,056	67,665	10.7%
Gibson County	33,503	33,011	32,922	32,832	-1.7%
Sum of Four Counties	298,805	302,267	304,137	303,344	1.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Population Growth Rate (2024 – 2029)



Major Employers

The Evansville region is home to a diverse range of industries, which include manufacturing, healthcare, and logistics and transportation. Deaconess Health System, the largest healthcare network in the tri-state area, is headquartered in the region. The manufacturing sector is also a key economic driver, with Toyota and Berry Global, a Fortune 500 leader in plastic packaging.

Beyond their economic impact, Evansville’s major employers play a vital role in shaping the region’s arts and culture landscape. These industry leaders have the resources and influence to support cultural initiatives through sponsorships, philanthropic efforts, and corporate engagement. By investing in public art, performance venues, and creative programs, these businesses can help foster a vibrant cultural scene that enhances quality of life and attracts talent.



Top Employers in the Regions

Company	Industry	County	Number of Employees
Deaconess Health System	Healthcare	Vanderburgh	10,500
Toyota Motor Manufacturing Indiana	Automotive Manufacturing	Gibson	7,500
Evansville Vanderburgh School Corp.	Education	Vanderburgh	3,450
Amcor f/k/a Berry Global (North American HQ)	Advanced Manufacturing	Vanderburgh	3,200
Ascension St. Vincent	Healthcare	Vanderburgh	3,000
Koch Enterprises	Manufacturing	Vanderburgh	2,800
TJ Maxx	Distribution	Vanderburgh	2,300
University of Southern Indiana	Education	Vanderburgh	2,119

Source: E-REP

Educational Attainment

The largest higher education institutions within the Evansville region are the University of Southern Indiana, the University of Evansville, Ivy Tech Community College, and Oakland City University, which collectively enroll nearly 22,000 students. These institutions play a vital role in shaping the regional economy by producing a skilled workforce across various industries.

Additionally, they contribute to the arts and culture landscape by fostering creative talent through arts programs, performances, and public events. Many students who major in the arts or engage in creative disciplines seek opportunities to continue their artistic pursuits post-graduation. Ensuring access to cultural spaces, workshops, and community arts initiatives allows them to remain engaged in the region’s creative scene.

INSTITUTIONS WITHIN THE REGION



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (2023)

Population Age 25+	Indiana	Gibson County	Vanderburgh County	Posey County	Warrick County
Did Not Complete High School	9.5%	9.2%	8.4%	6.7%	4.8%
Completed High School	32.2%	40.3%	35.0%	35.3%	30.4%
Some College	18.9%	18.6%	18.8%	20.0%	20.1%
Completed Associate Degree	9.2%	12.9%	10.7%	12.7%	9.2%
Completed Bachelor Degree	19.1%	13.5%	17.3%	16.3%	23.8%
Completed Graduate Degree	11.1%	5.5%	9.8%	9.0%	11.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Tourism Overview

Vanderburgh County

Vanderburgh County boasts the majority of the region’s premier attractions, drawing substantial visitor numbers each year. The Ford Center alone attracted more than 530,000 visitors in 2024, with over 342,900 coming from areas more than 50 miles away. Bosse Field, home to the Evansville Otters, saw 11 percent of its visitors travel from beyond that same distance. These attractions are cornerstones of the region’s cultural and economic vitality. In addition to these, youth and collegiate sports are major drivers of tourism and hotel demand. Deaconess Sports Park is a leading venue for softball and soccer tournaments, while NCAA basketball tournaments hosted at the Ford Center and other regional venues generated 3,816 room nights in March 2025 alone. Together, these assets significantly boost regional visibility and contribute to year-round visitor activity.

Most Visited Local Attractions Vanderburgh County (2024)

Name	Attraction Type	2024 Visits	2024 Visitors	Average Number of Visits	2024 Visits More Than 50 Miles
Ford Center	Arena	532,500	308,200	1.73	151,900
Bally's	Casino	509,400	115,500	4.41	142,000
Old National Events Plaza	Convention Center	285,300	179,400	1.59	53,100
AMC Evansville 16	Theater	239,700	117,500	2.04	25,300
Deaconess Sports Park	Sports Complex	235,900	72,400	3.26	65,100
Bosse Field	Baseball Field	137,400	51,000	2.69	44,300
Mesker Park Zoo	Zoo	134,300	103,700	1.30	44,900
Deaconess Aquatic Center	Aquatic Center	92,500	19,300	4.79	18,200
Burdette Park & Aquatic Center	Aquatic Center	64,900	38,400	1.69	4,000
Victory Theatre	Theater	52,200	39,200	1.33	8,400
The Evansville Museum	Museum	32,200	25,600	1.26	6,200
Total	--	2,316,300	1,070,200	--	563,400

Source: Placer.ai



Tourism Overview

Warrick County

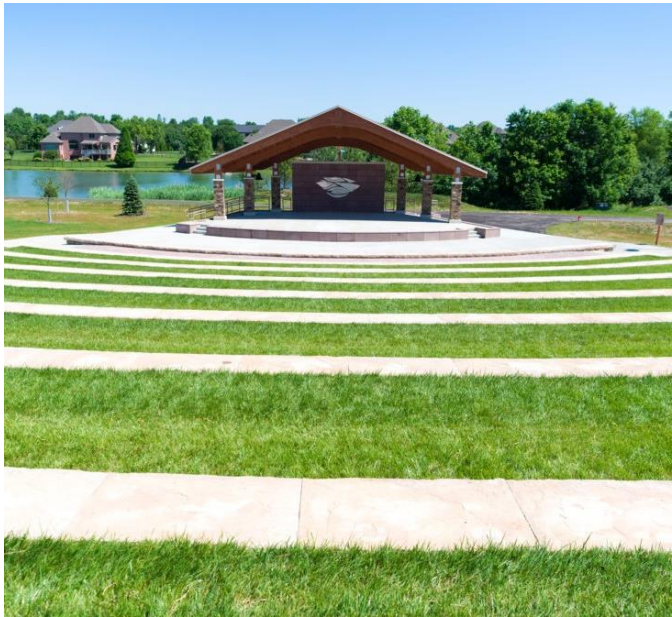
Warrick County has experienced significant development in tourist attractions, particularly near the city of Newburgh.

Notable new sites include the Friedman Park Amphitheater, which attracted nearly 8,000 visitors in 2024. Additionally, Showplace Cinema in Newburgh drew more than 236,000 visitors, with 14,500 of those coming from more than 50 miles away.

Smaller cities like Boonville also offer several sites with potential for improvement, such as the Old Warrick County Jail, which could become a key attraction following renovation.



Friedman Park Event Center



Friedman Park Amphitheater

Most Visited Local Attractions Warrick County (2024)

Name	Attraction Type	2024 Visits	2024 Visitors	2024 Visits More Than 50 Miles
Showplace Cinema Newburgh 12	Theater	236,400	107,200	14,500
Friedman Park Amphitheater	Amphitheater	7,600	6,500	200
Warrick County Museum	Museum	3,200	1,600	100
Newburgh Museum	Museum	2,900	1,000	300
Total	--	258,300	121,600	15,550

Source: Placer.ai

Tourism Overview

Posey County

New Harmony, Mount Vernon, and Poseyville are the main cities contributing to the most frequented local attractions in Posey County.

New Harmony's distinctive history of a utopian community has profoundly influenced its culture, which has fostered a robust arts scene. The Rapp-Owen Granary draws the largest group of visitors from beyond 50 miles.

Mount Vernon, located along the river, has the opportunity to leverage its picturesque setting to attract tourists. Its riverside location makes it an appealing destination for new and distinctive tourism experiences that could integrate the scenic river environment.



Rapp-Owen Granary



The Roofless Church

Most Visited Local Attractions Posey County (2024)

Name	Attraction Type	2024 Visits	2024 Visitors	2024 Visits More Than 50 Miles
Rapp-Owen Granary	Venue	11,400	6,500	2,200
Yellow Tavern	Restaurant	10,900	7,000	2,000
Posey Lanes	Bowling Alley	7,000	3,000	600
Atheneum Visitors Center	Visitor Center	3,300	2,900	200
Total	--	34,800	21,400	5,200

Source: Placer.ai

Tourism Overview

Gibson County

Gibson County boasts several unique attractions. Gil Hodges Field, the most visited site, is named after Princeton native and former Dodgers first baseman, Gil Hodges. It drew significant attention with nearly 32,000 visits in 2024; however, only 1,100 of those visits were from more than 50 miles, cementing Gil Hodges Field as a local resource.

The Tri-State Speedway also encountered considerable traffic, hosting more than 11 events in 2024 and attracting more than 27,500 visitors.

Additionally, the Toyota Indiana Experience Center stands out as an interactive museum that shows the company's history. This venue illustrates how corporations can significantly enhance quality of life regionally through educational and cultural contributions.

Lyles Station hosts frequent school field trips and community events each year. Popular programs like the Heritage Classroom and Work & Play offer hands-on experiences with early 20th-century schooling and pioneer life. Annual events include a fall corn maze, Juneteenth celebration, farm-to-table dinner, and Night at the Museum performances.



Gil Hodges Field



Tri-State Speedway

Most Visited Local Attractions Gibson County (2024)

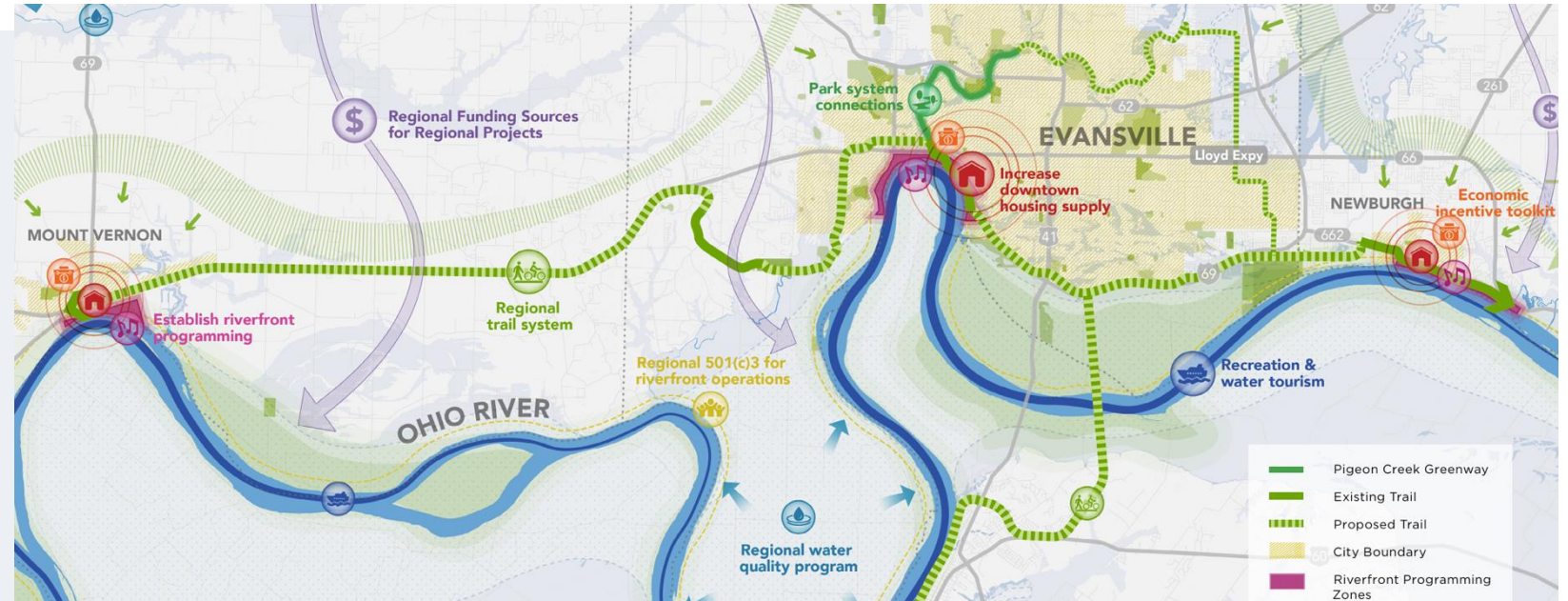
Name	Attraction Type	2024 Visits	2024 Visitors	2024 Visits More Than 50 Miles
Gil Hodges Field	Stadium	31,300	13,200	2.37
Tri-State Speedway	Racetrack	27,700	17,500	1.58
Toyota Indiana Experience Center	Attraction	25,600	11,300	2.27
Princeton Aquatic Center	Aquatic Center	24,800	14,000	1.77
The Princeton Theatre & Community Center	Theater	9,700	6,200	1.56
Lyles Station	Museum	1,800	1,200	1.50
Total	--	120,900	63,400	--

Source: Placer.ai

River Vision Plan

The River Vision Plan, led by Sasaki, connects Posey, Vanderburgh, and Warrick counties through a continuous riverfront trail system that links Mount Vernon, Evansville, and Newburgh. Each community contributes to the vision with improvements like pedestrian corridors, riverfront parks, and expanded trails, creating a unified regional experience.

The plan also integrates arts and culture through features like amphitheaters, event spaces, and public art installations. These elements help activate the riverfront, celebrate local identity, and foster community connection across the region.



Observations

- The Evansville region exhibits strong locational advantages, supported by a well-planned highway system, a regional airport, and access to the Ohio River.
- Given the wide range of median household incomes across the region, it is critical to develop arts and cultural offerings that are accessible to all community members.
- Engaging industry leaders is essential to strengthening local arts and culture. Their resources and commitment to regional and community vitality play a pivotal role in enhancing quality of life and attracting talent that seeks vibrant arts programming and dynamic cultural venues.
- Incorporating the river into the regional arts and culture strategy aligns with the Ohio River Vision by leveraging this natural asset as a unifying and transformative force. This approach not only enhances connectivity between communities and activates underutilized riverfront areas, but also unlocks significant potential for cultural development, tourism, and regional investment.



Regional Arts & Culture Venues Inventory and Needs Assessment



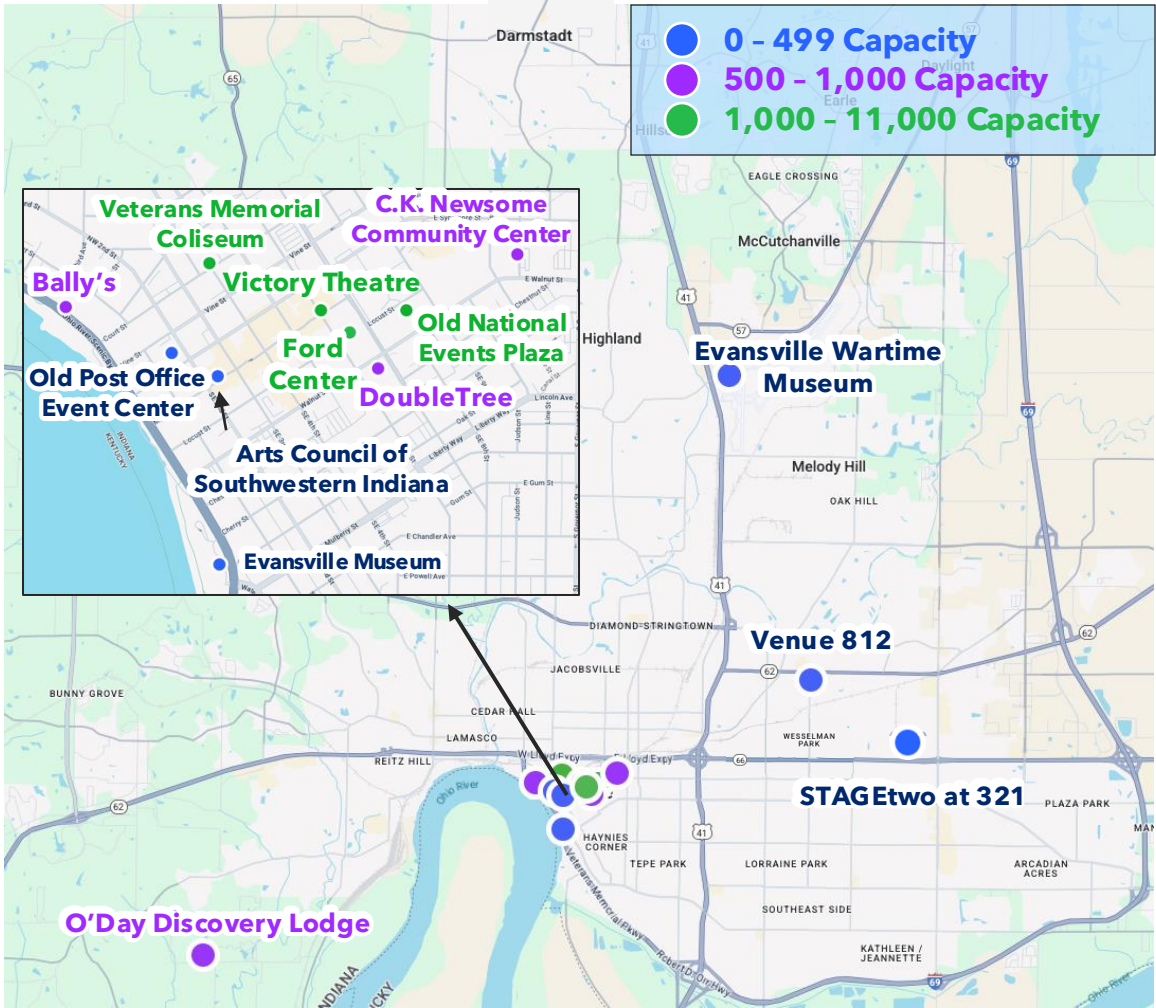
Event Space Inventory Analysis

Through conversations with stakeholders and an evaluation of the current inventory of event spaces, a significant gap has been identified in the availability of performance venues with capacities between 300 and 700 seats. While there are existing venues within this range, they are primarily designed for meetings or weddings and lack the necessary infrastructure to support live performances. As a result, performers are often left with the option of using the Victory Theatre, which may exceed their audience size and result in an underwhelming experience for both artists and attendees.

VANDEBURGH COUNTY EVENT VENUES

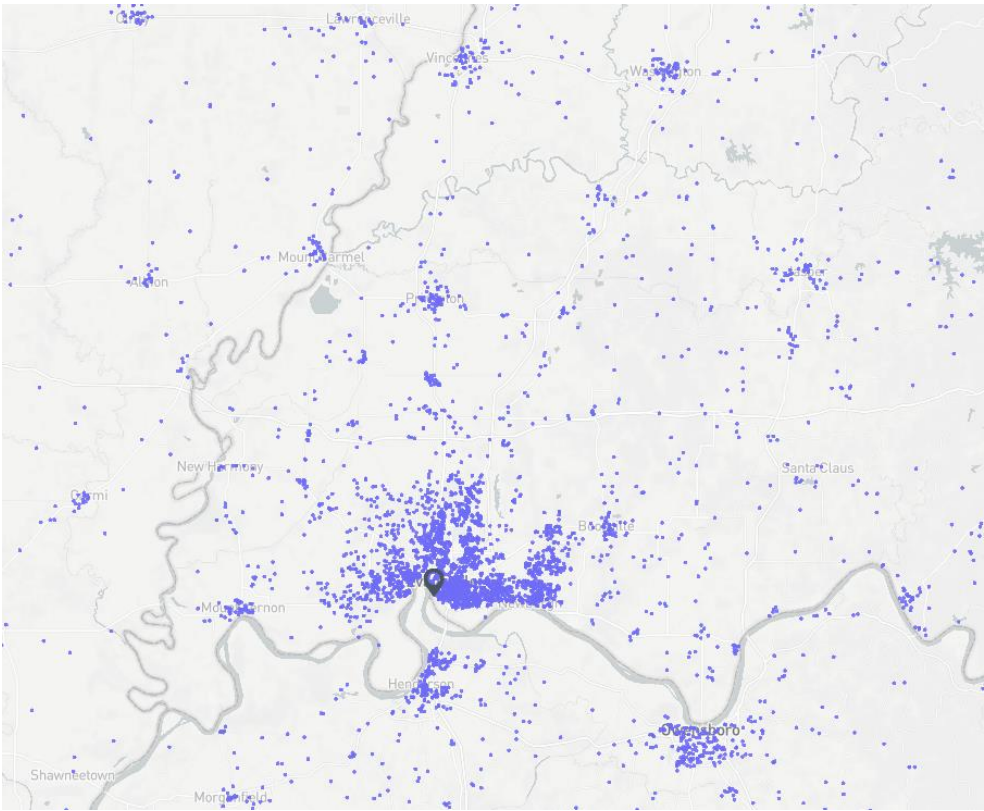
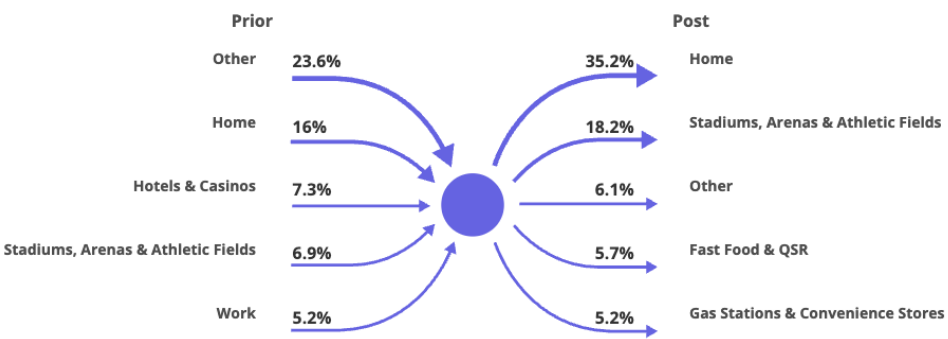
Venue	Capacity	Venue Type
Ford Center	10,900	Arena
Evansville Coliseum	4,055	Event Space
Old National Events Plaza Aiken Theatre	2,500	Theater
Victory Theatre	1,950	Theater
DoubleTree by Hilton Evansville	775	Hotel
O'Day Discovery Lodge at Burdette Park	650	Event Space
C.K. Newsome Community Center	650	Event Space
Bally's Evansville	560	Casino
Old Post Office Plaza	300	Event Space
Evansville Museum	250	Museum
Venue 812	200	Event Space
Evansville Wartime Museum	150	Museum
Arts Council of Southwestern Indiana	100	Gallery
STAGetwo at 321	100	Theater

EVANSVILLE EVENT VENUES MAP



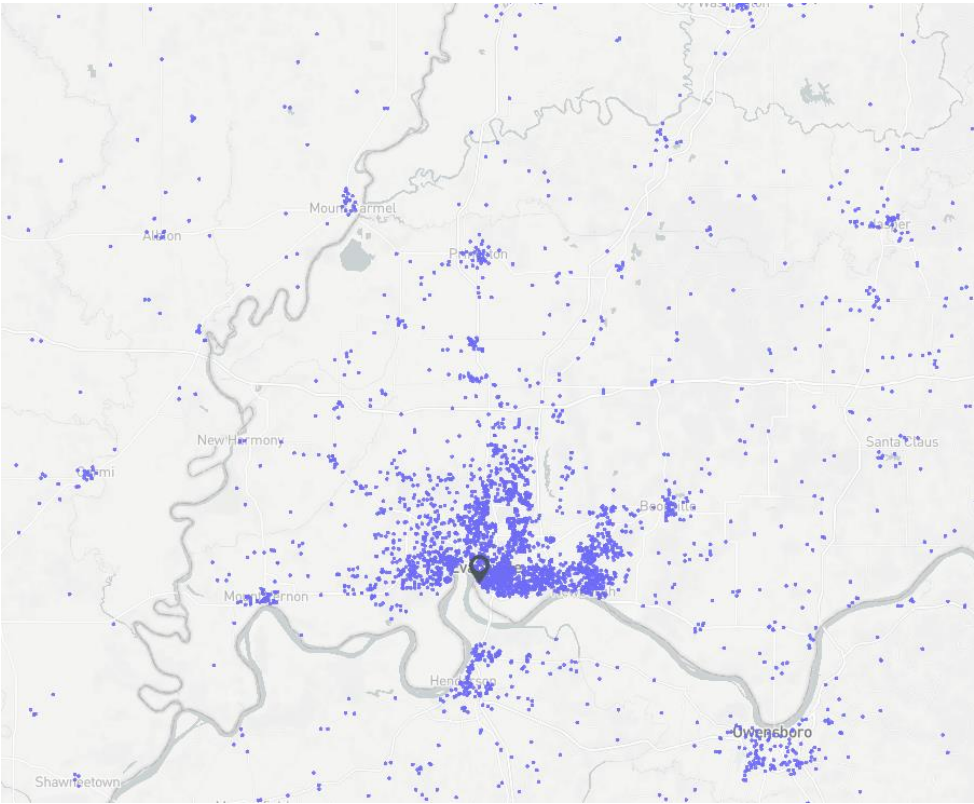
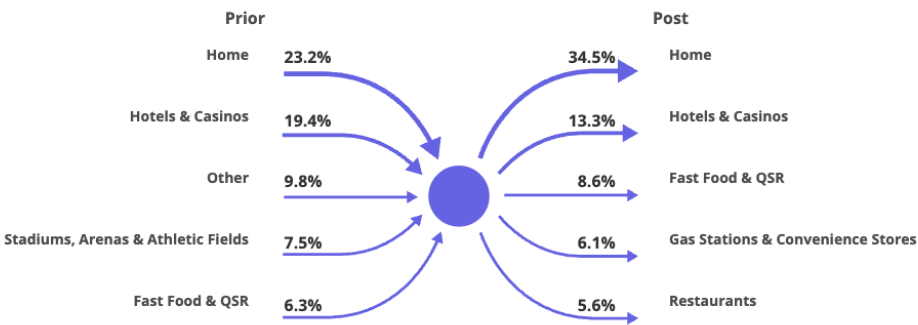
Victory Theatre

The Victory Theatre in Evansville, Indiana, is a historic 1,950-seat venue that opened on June 16, 1921. After undergoing a \$15-million renovation, the theater reopened in 1998 and now serves as the home of the Evansville Philharmonic Orchestra. The venue also hosts local ballet and modern dance companies, theater groups, and touring productions. In 2024, the Victory Theatre hosted nearly 30 major performances and had an estimated annual attendance of 52,200. While the Victory Theatre experiences a significant number of visitors, many attendees leave the area immediately after events rather than spending additional time in the city.



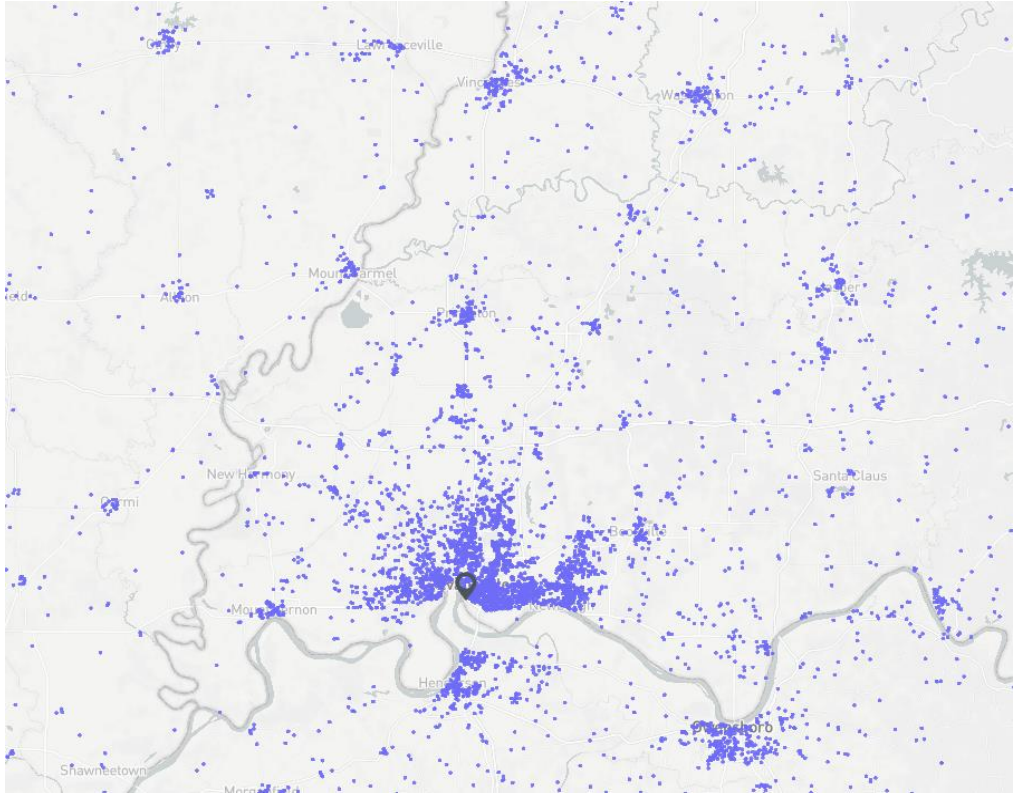
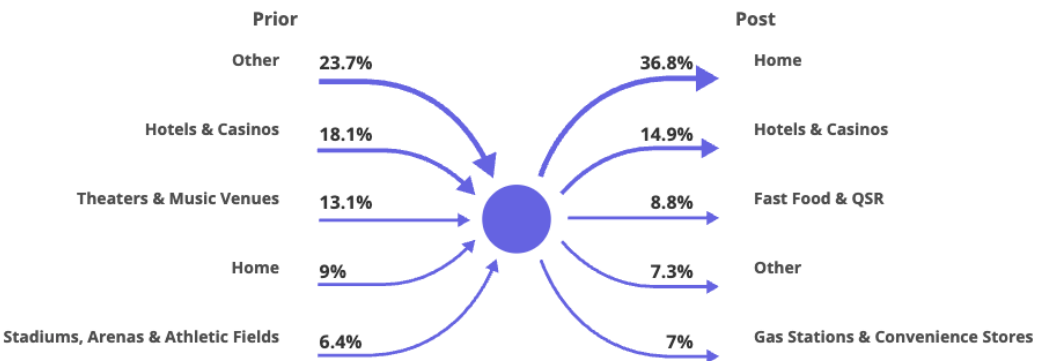
Old National Events Plaza

The Old National Events Plaza (ONEP) is a major event facility located in downtown Evansville, Indiana. It includes approximately 95,000 square feet of event space, featuring a 36,000-square-foot exhibit hall, a 13,500-square-foot ballroom, and additional meeting rooms. The venue is anchored by the Aiken Theatre, which seats 2,500 and is used for a variety of performances and public events. ONEP is connected by skywalk to the Ford Center and the adjacent DoubleTree by Hilton. In 2024, the venue recorded approximately 285,300 total visits, with 45.9 percent coming from outside the region.



Ford Center

The Ford Center, located in downtown Evansville, Indiana, is a versatile indoor arena with a maximum seating capacity of 11,000. Opened in November 2011, it serves as the home for the Evansville Thunderbolts of the Southern Professional Hockey League and the University of Evansville Purple Aces men’s basketball team. The arena hosts a diverse array of events, including concerts, sporting events, graduations, and family shows. In 2024, the Ford Center hosted more than 50 events and welcomed an estimated 532,500 attendees. Similar to the Victory Theatre, a large portion of the attendees travel home rather than exploring the downtown area.



FORD CENTER VISITATION (2024)

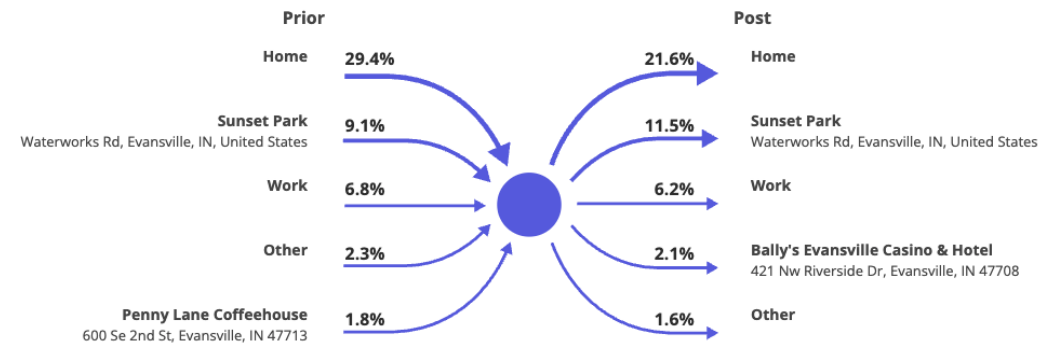
532.5K
Total Visits

46.4%
% of Visitors from within the Region

53.6%
% of Visitors from outside the Region

Evansville Museum

The Evansville Museum of Arts, History & Science features a permanent collection of more than 30,000 objects, with exhibitions spanning the disciplines of art, history, and science. In 2012, the museum discovered a rare glass mosaic titled “*Seated Women with Red Hat*” by Pablo Picasso, which had been miscataloged and stored since its donation in 1963. Following the completion of security upgrades and funding efforts, the museum unveiled the Picasso piece to the public on June 26, 2024. In 2024, the museum welcomed more than 32,000 visitors.

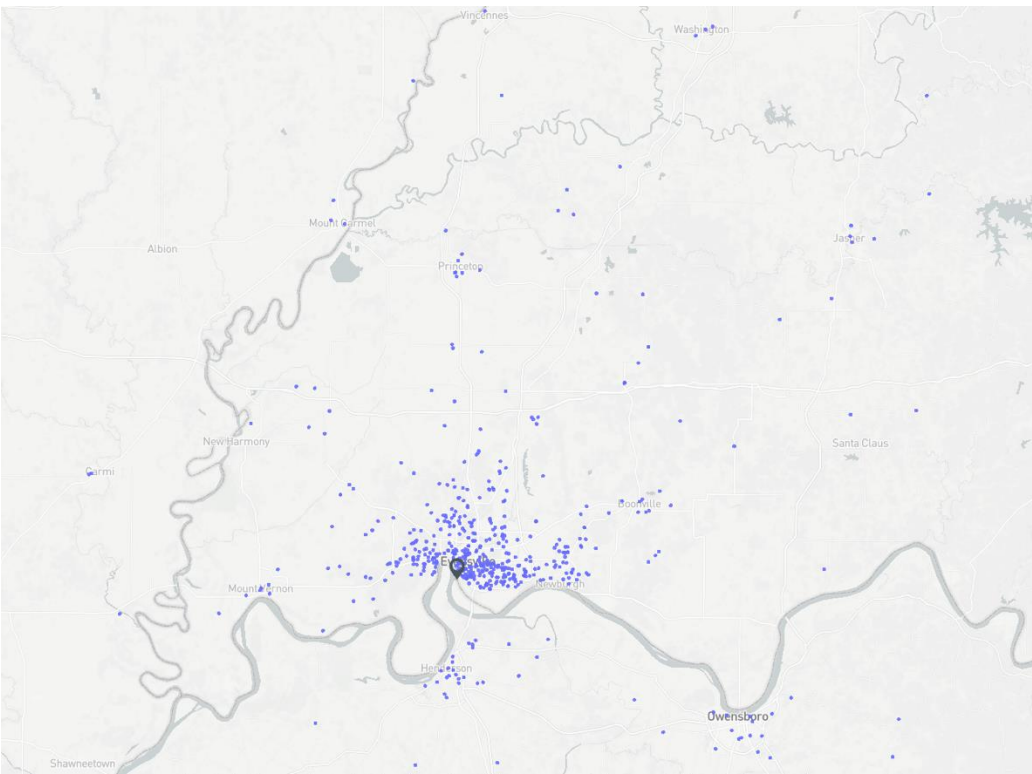


EVANSVILLE MUSEUM VISITATION (2024)

32.2K
Total Visits

68.8%
% of Visitors from within the Region

31.2%
% of Visitors from outside the Region

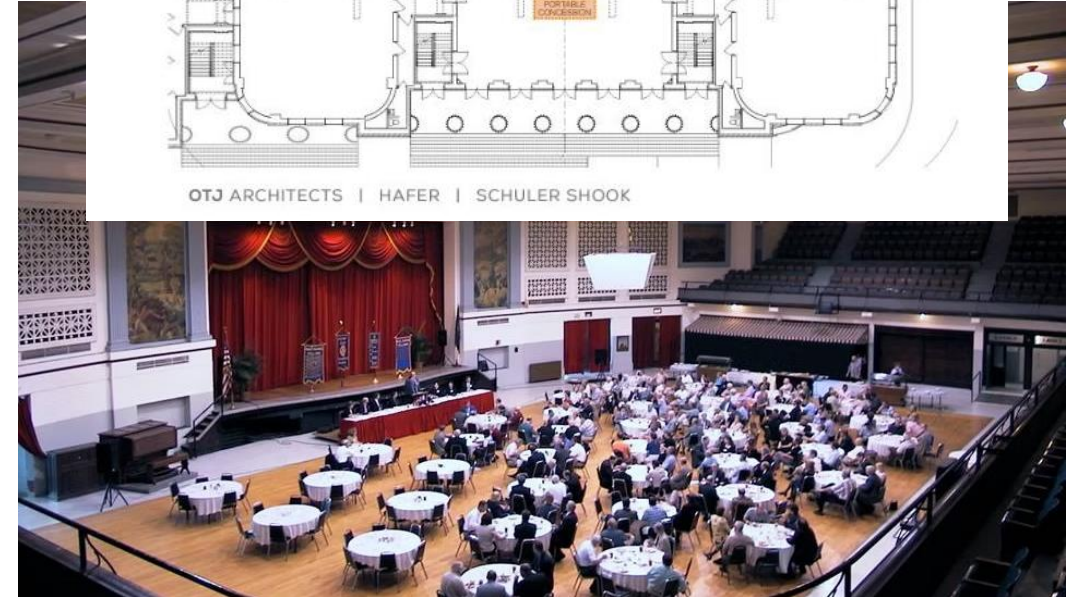
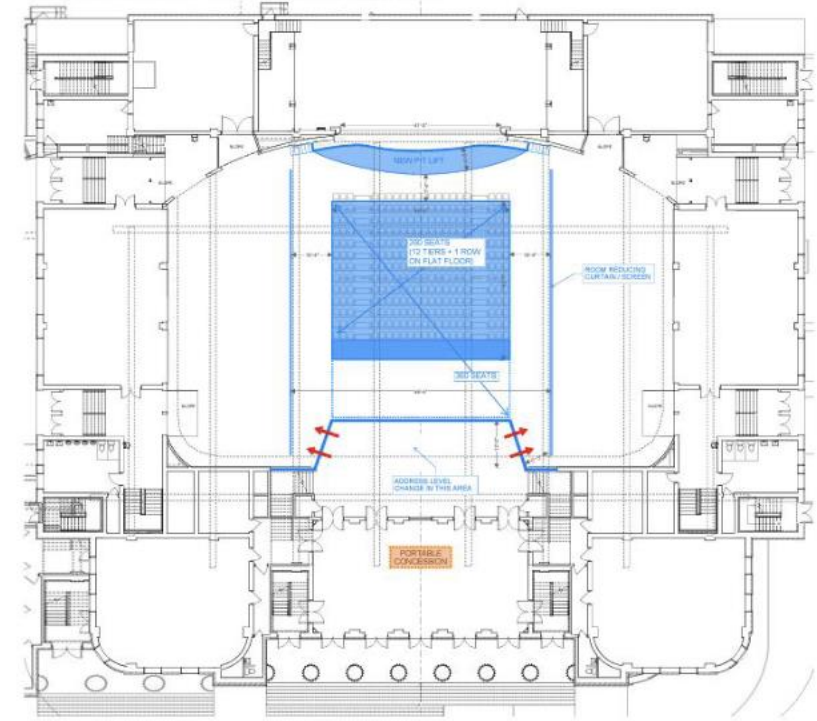


Coliseum

The Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Coliseum in Evansville, originally built in 1916 to honor veterans, is undergoing a multimillion-dollar stabilization effort. Funded in part with \$6 million from the county's American Rescue Plan funds, the upgrades include modern HVAC, electrical, fire suppression, and security systems. Future phases will enhance accessibility and restore historic spaces like the Grand Army of the Republic Room. The long-term goals are to revitalize the venue for community use and tourism.



THEATRICAL CONCEPT DIAGRAMS
ORCHESTRA LEVEL - THEATRICAL CONFIGURATION



Haynie's Corner Association

Incorporated as a not-for-profit in 2015, Haynie's Corner Association encompasses four neighborhoods: Riverside, Culver, Goosetown, and Blackford's Grove. The district is Evansville's sole arts district and the city's primary source for cultural events. It is home to restaurants, bars, and renovated apartments. The community, led by the Haynie's Corner Arts District Association, collaborates with the Arts Council of Southwestern Indiana and Patchwork Central to promote the arts, support local artists, host events, and create a sense of creativity and community.



21

Events per year hosted, showcasing local art, culture, and community spirit

Front Porch Fest, First Fridays, Summer Wiffle Ball, Haunted Historic Evansville, Pumpkin Carving, Free Thanksgiving, etc.



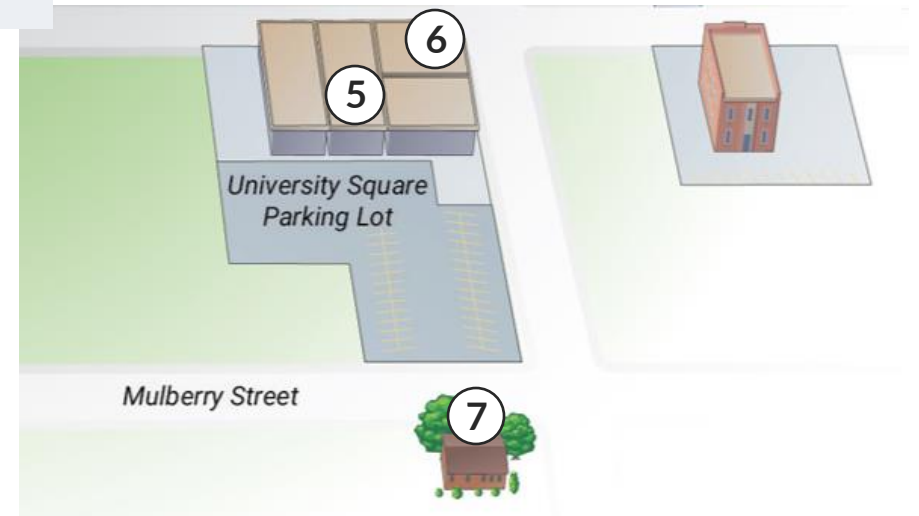
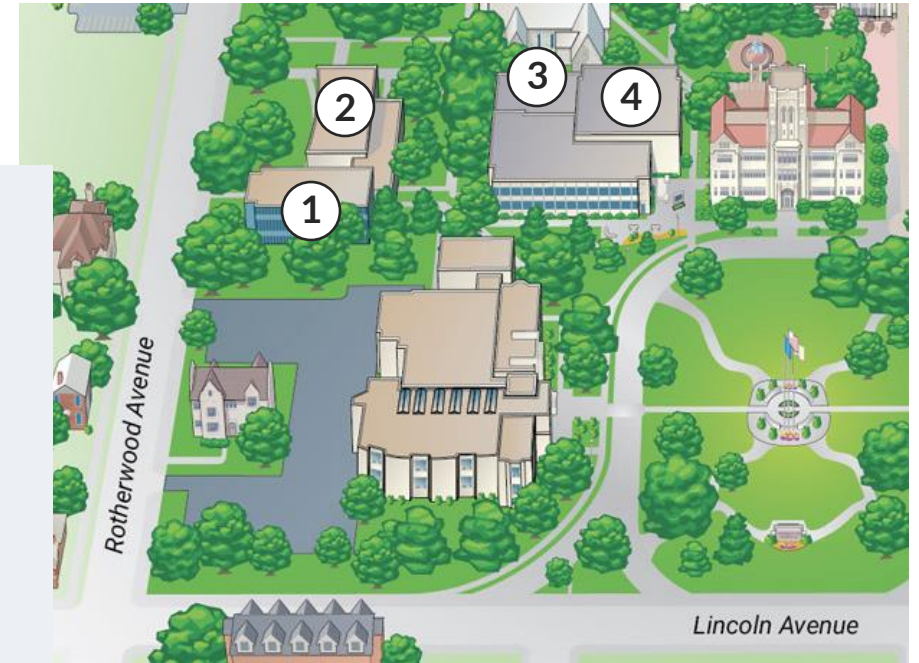
The goal is to foster economic development through a network of artists, businesses, and residents

University of Evansville Venues

As shown in the adjacent map, the University of Evansville has seven buildings on campus that are dedicated to the arts.

- The University produces more than 50 music conservatory recitals and performances each year.
- Course selections range from computer graphics and painting to ceramics and metalwork.
- The University supports internships with design firms, publishers, marketing departments, museums, photography studios, galleries, and more.
- The University's nationally recognized Department of Theatre, which includes the Shanklin Theatre, is a flagship arts program, known for producing high-caliber talent and performances. It serves as a key cultural and educational asset within the University and the broader region.

1. Krannert Hall of Art and Music
2. Wheeler Concert Hall
3. May Studio Theatre
4. Shanklin Theatre
5. Art Annex
6. Melvin Peterson Gallery
7. Art Studio



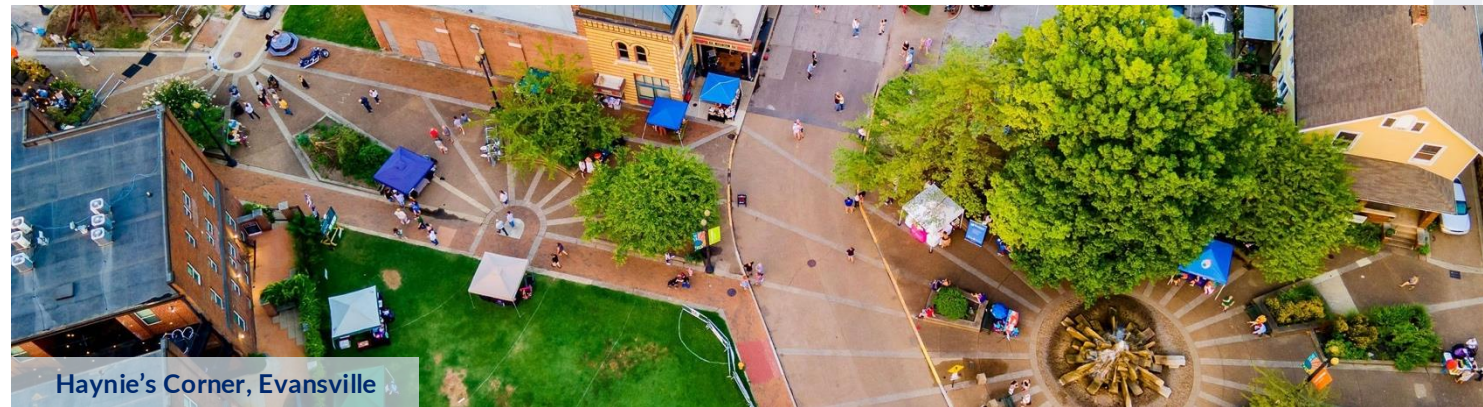
Festival Grounds

Evansville hosts a variety of lively festivals that highlight the city's community spirit and cultural richness. Most are held directly on city streets and in neighborhood settings, reinforcing a strong sense of place and accessibility. The standout is the West Side Nut Club Fall Festival, one of the largest street festivals in the United States, drawing more than 200,000 visitors to Franklin Street. It features more than 137 food booths operated by local nonprofits, free entertainment, carnival rides, and a grand parade, making it a beloved tradition for locals and visitors alike.

Other street-based festivals include the Fall Funk in the City Art Festival at Haynie's Corner, the Lincolnshire Front Porch Festival with live music on neighborhood porches, and For the Sake of the Song at Wesselman Woods, which blends music with nature in a more informal, community-focused setting. These events reflect the region's creative energy and strong community identity, while also highlighting the lack of a designated festival ground. Most festivals depend on street closures and temporary infrastructure to take place.



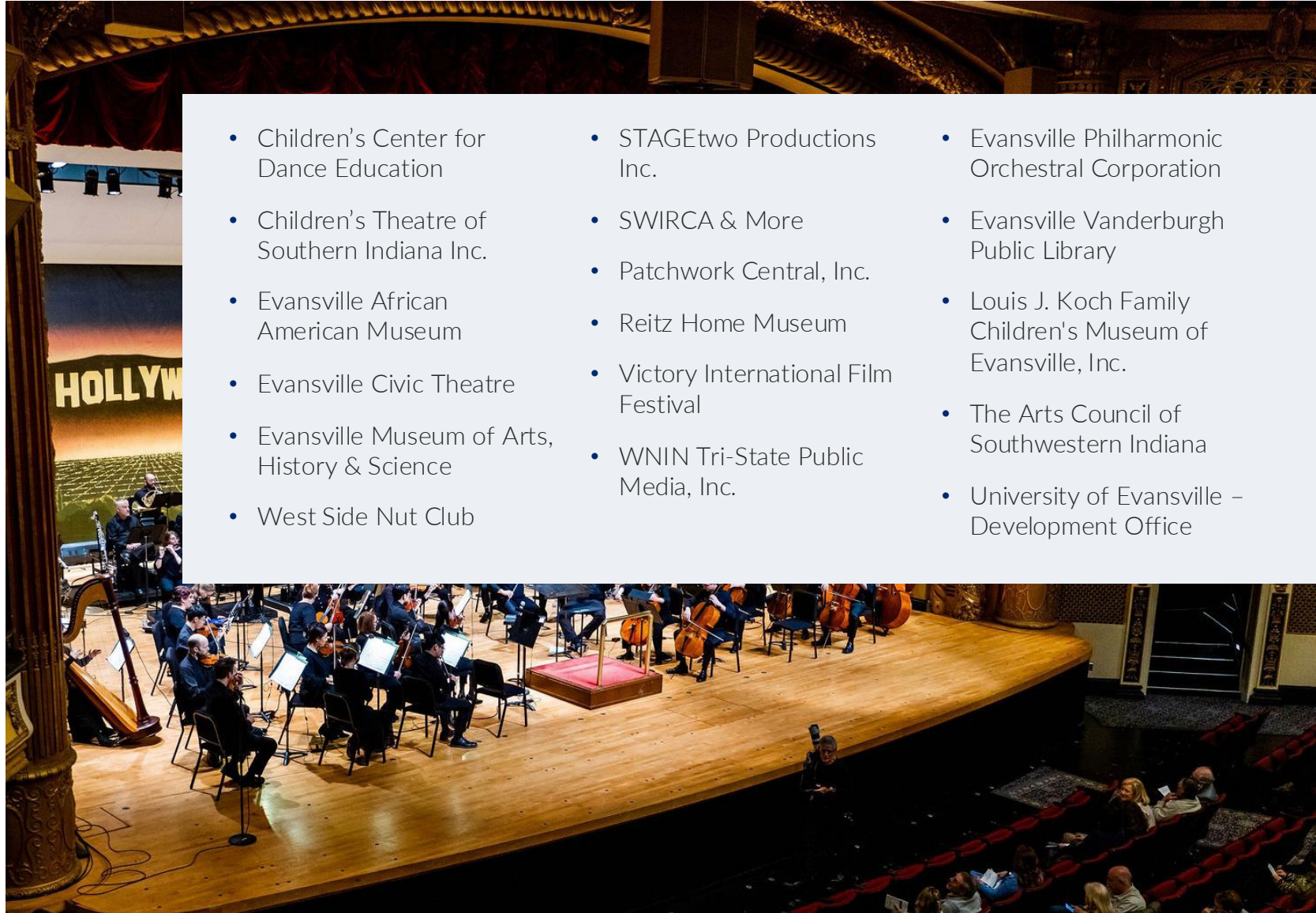
Fall Festival, Evansville



Haynie's Corner, Evansville

Organizations

Strong organizations are vital to promoting and improving arts and culture within the Evansville region. Vanderburgh County stands out as a cultural hub with a broad array of nonprofit and institutional stakeholders dedicated to enhancing the quality of life through creative expression, education, and public engagement. While many organizations are physically based in Evansville, their influence and programming often extend far beyond county lines to benefit the entire region. Just to detail a few, events and programming based in the historic Victory Theatre draw more than 300,000 annual visitors and the Evansville Philharmonic Orchestra reaches students through youth concerts. The Arts Council of Southwestern Indiana supports artists and co-hosts popular events like First Fridays in Haynie's Corner, helping build a vibrant creative ecosystem. Adequate funding is crucial for these organizations to maximize their impact.

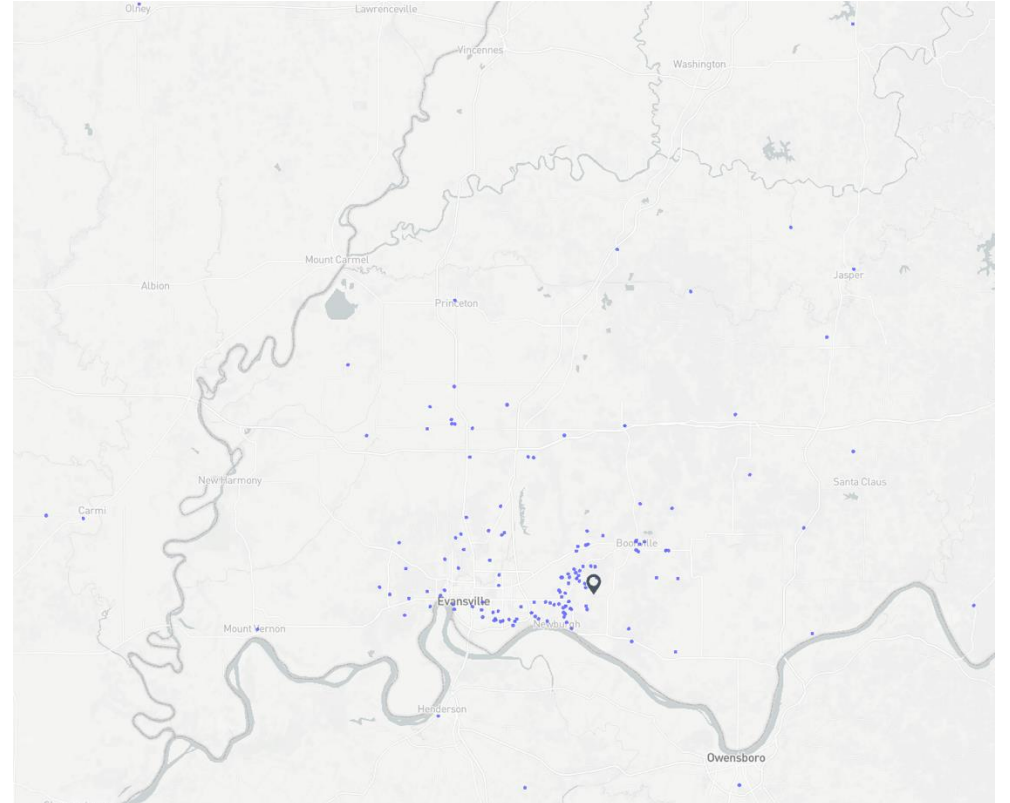


- Children's Center for Dance Education
- Children's Theatre of Southern Indiana Inc.
- Evansville African American Museum
- Evansville Civic Theatre
- Evansville Museum of Arts, History & Science
- West Side Nut Club
- STAGEtwo Productions Inc.
- SWIRCA & More
- Patchwork Central, Inc.
- Reitz Home Museum
- Victory International Film Festival
- WNIN Tri-State Public Media, Inc.
- Evansville Philharmonic Orchestral Corporation
- Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library
- Louis J. Koch Family Children's Museum of Evansville, Inc.
- The Arts Council of Southwestern Indiana
- University of Evansville – Development Office

WARRICK COUNTY

Friedman Park

Friedman Park in Newburgh, Indiana, spans 180 acres with an outdoor amphitheater and the Friedman Park Event Center. The amphitheater includes a covered stage and terraced seating, which makes it suitable for community performances and concerts. The adjacent Event Center offers 16,000 square feet of space and is regularly used for weddings, conferences, and public events. While it is considered a valuable community asset, some stakeholders noted that rental costs can be prohibitive for smaller local organizations, which limits accessibility for certain groups. In 2024, the venue drew 8,200 visits, with 84.5 percent of visitors coming from within the region.



Allen Family Amphitheater

The Allen Family Amphitheater in Newburgh, Indiana, is a versatile outdoor venue featuring concrete seating for approximately 100 people and a spacious grassy hillside for additional attendees. Despite its potential as a community asset, the amphitheater has faced challenges related to underutilization and limited programming, leading to lower visitation rates. While it has hosted events such as the University of Evansville Music Conservatory's Shepard Brass concert in September 2022 and the annual Strawberry Festival in May 2024, such occasions are infrequent. Enhancing the frequency and diversity of events could significantly increase community engagement and attendance at this venue.



ALLEN FAMILY AMPHITHEATER VISITATION (2024)

778

Total Visits

92.8%

% of Visitors from
within the Region

7.2%

% of Visitors from
outside the Region



Organizations

Arts and culture organizations play a vital role in enhancing quality of life by fostering creativity, education, and community connection. In Warrick County, a range of dedicated groups provide enriching experiences, from music and storytelling to visual and performing arts. These organizations not only nurture local talent and lifelong learning but also build stronger, more vibrant communities through accessible, inclusive programming.



RIVERTOWN STORYTELLERS AT THE RIVER'S BEND

Dedicated to preserving and promoting the art of storytelling through performances and workshops that enrich community life

WARRICK PUBLIC EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Enhances educational opportunities within the Warrick County School Corporation by awarding teacher grants, providing academic assistance, and hosting the annual Warrick County Summer Musical

HISTORIC NEWBURGH

Dedicated to preserving and revitalizing the charm of downtown Newburgh, Historic Newburgh hosts community events, supports local businesses, and promotes the town's rich cultural heritage. From seasonal festivals to beautification projects, the organization plays a vital role in enhancing the quality of life.

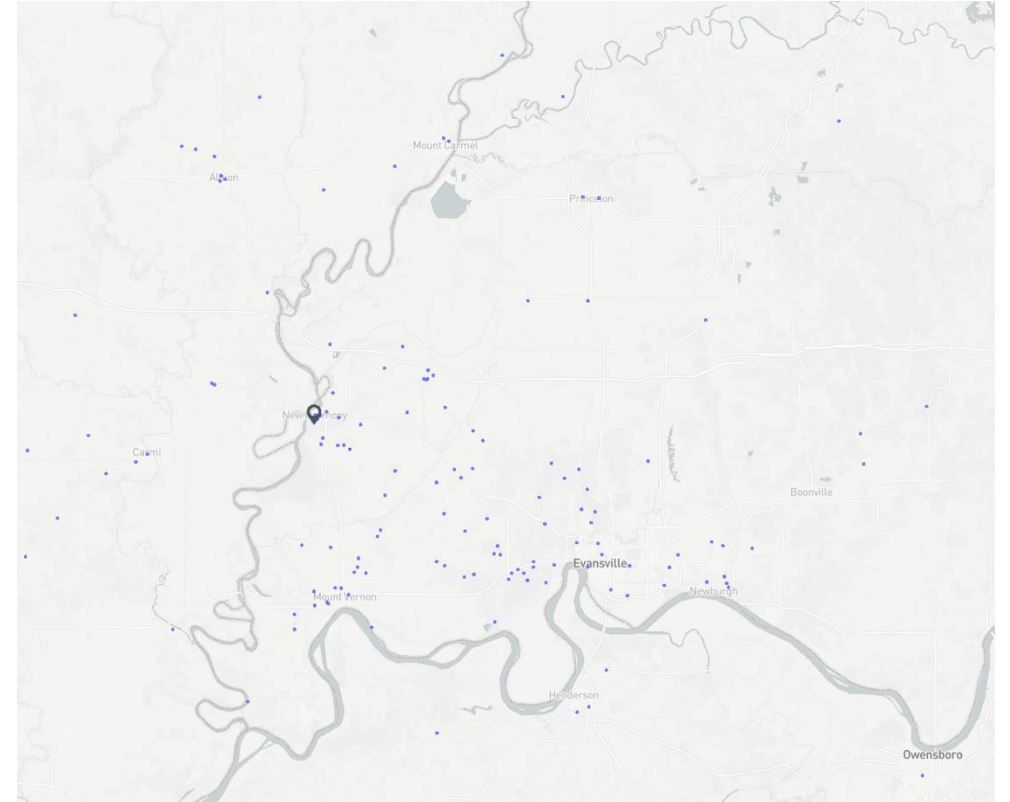
CASTLE HIGH SCHOOL SHOW CHOIR AND MARCHING BANDS

Castle High School is well known for the excellence of its show choir and marching band programs. The marching band recently had the honor of performing in the prestigious Rose Parade. The show choir earned state recognition as the runner-up in 2018, reflecting the school's strong commitment to the performing arts.

POSEY COUNTY

Rapp-Owen Granary

The Rapp-Owen Granary is a five-and-a-half-story stone and brick structure located in New Harmony, Indiana. Originally constructed in 1818 by the Harmonist community, the building was used for grain storage and other agricultural purposes. The facility has since been restored and now serves as a venue for weddings, receptions, and community events. In 2024, the Rapp-Owen Granary received approximately 11,400 total visits, with 67.2 percent of visitors coming from within the region and 32.8 percent from outside the region. The Under the Beams concert series was previously held at this venue but has since relocated. Introducing new programming could help boost the venue's utilization and community engagement.



RAPP-OWEN GRANARY VISITATION (2024)

11.4K
Total Visits

67.2%
% of Visitors from
within the Region

32.8%
% of Visitors from
outside the Region



POSEY COUNTY

Under the Beams Concert Series

Under the Beams is an annual concert series held at Murphy Auditorium in New Harmony, Indiana. The series began in 2001 and presents a range of music genres from artists across the country and around the world. The series hosts approximately five events per year and is held in Murphy Auditorium, a historic 230-seat venue originally constructed in 1913. Under the Beams emphasizes cultural enrichment and community engagement through live performance. In 2024, Murphy Auditorium received approximately 3,700 total visits during Under the Beams concerts, with 79.7 percent of visitors coming from within the region and 20.3 percent from outside the region.

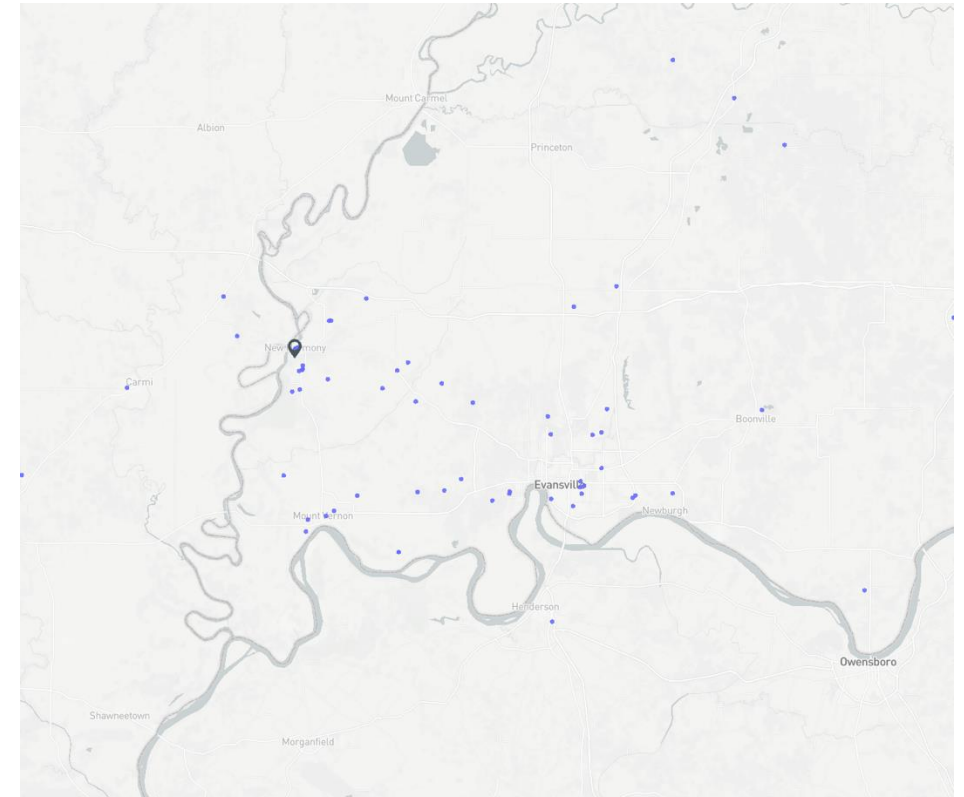


UNDER THE BEAMS VISITATION (2024)

3.7K
Total Visits

79.7%
% of Visitors from
within the Region

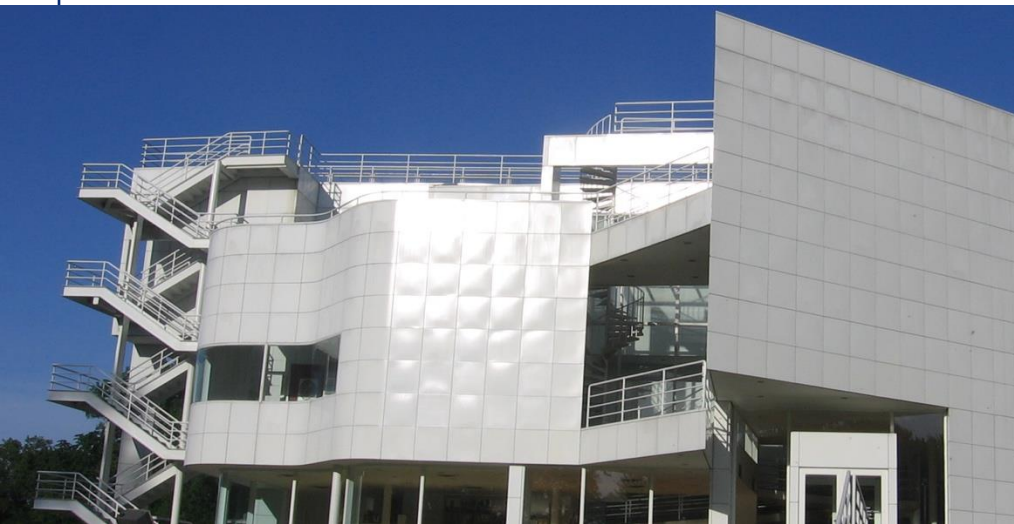
20.3%
% of Visitors from
outside the Region



POSEY COUNTY

Atheneum

The Atheneum is the official visitor center for New Harmony, Indiana, and serves as the primary gateway for exploring the town's historical and cultural landmarks. Designed by renowned architect Richard Meier and completed in 1979, the building features modernist architecture and offers views of the surrounding landscape and town. The facility includes exhibit space, a theater for introductory films, and access to guided tours of New Harmony's historic sites. In 2024, the Atheneum recorded approximately 3,300 total visits, with 50.9 percent of visitors coming from within the region and 49.1 percent from outside the region. The high percentage of out-of-region visitation highlights the Atheneum's role as a cultural tourism asset.

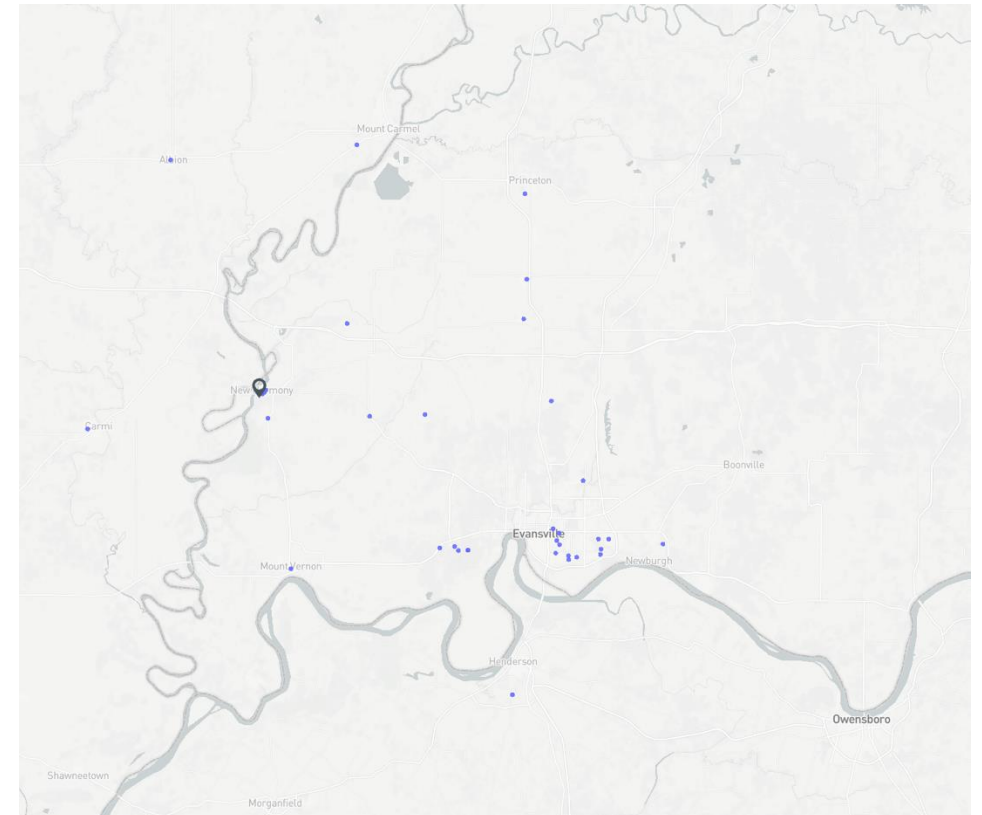


ATHENEUM VISITATION (2024)

3.3K
Total Visits

50.9%
% of Visitors from
within the Region

49.1%
% of Visitors from
outside the Region



Organizations

Posey County is home to a rich cultural legacy anchored in the historic town of New Harmony, a nationally recognized center for arts, history, and community innovation. This national profile provides a strong foundation for promoting New Harmony as a cultural destination. Local organizations contribute to the county's identity by fostering creativity, lifelong learning, and public access to the arts. From artist residencies and contemporary galleries to historic libraries and educational programs, these institutions preserve the past while actively shaping the region's cultural future. Greater collaboration among New Harmony's cultural and civic organizations may enhance visibility, attract broader audiences, and maximize collective impact. Sustained funding is essential to ensure these efforts continue to thrive.

UNDER THE BEAMS

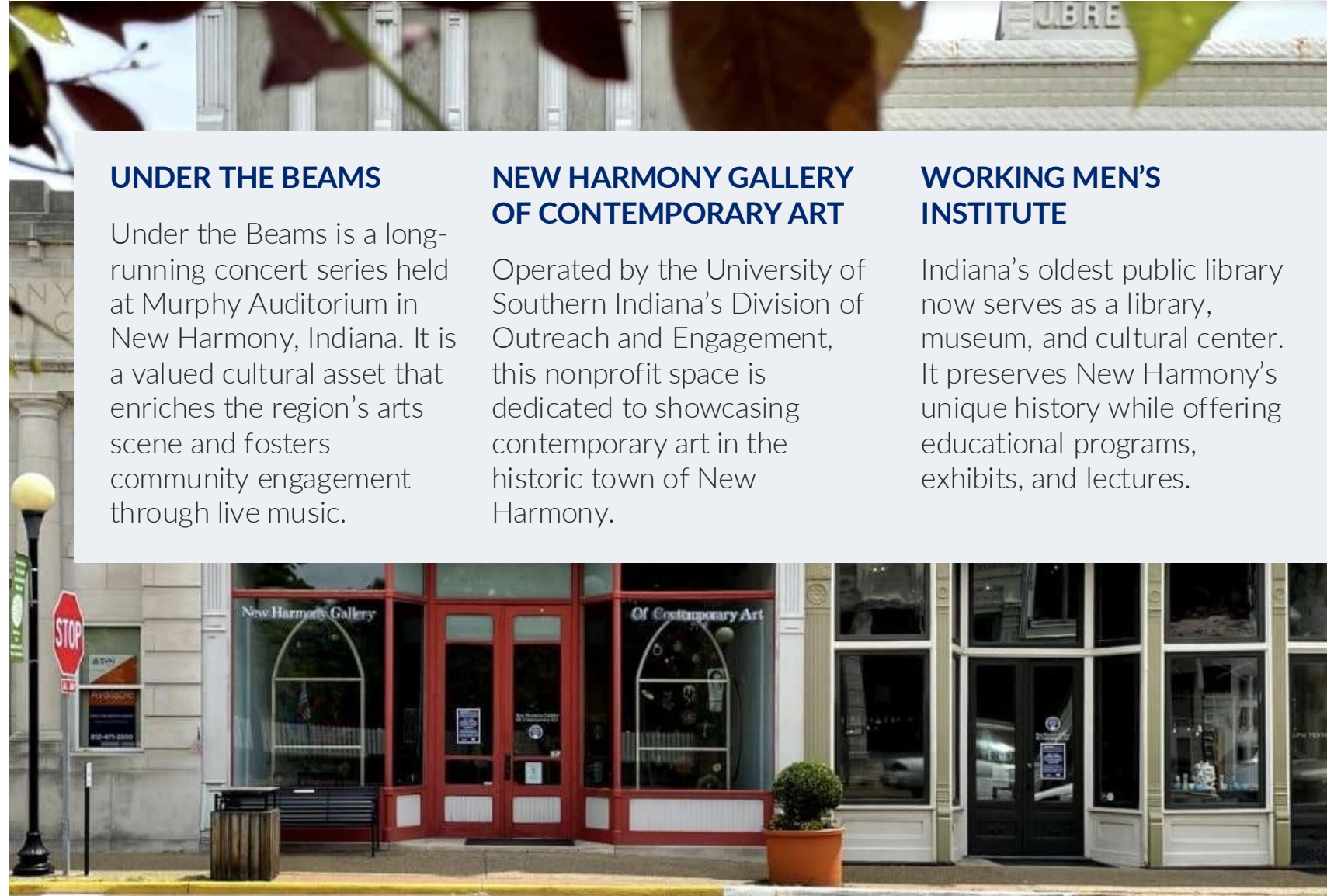
Under the Beams is a long-running concert series held at Murphy Auditorium in New Harmony, Indiana. It is a valued cultural asset that enriches the region's arts scene and fosters community engagement through live music.

NEW HARMONY GALLERY OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Operated by the University of Southern Indiana's Division of Outreach and Engagement, this nonprofit space is dedicated to showcasing contemporary art in the historic town of New Harmony.

WORKING MEN'S INSTITUTE

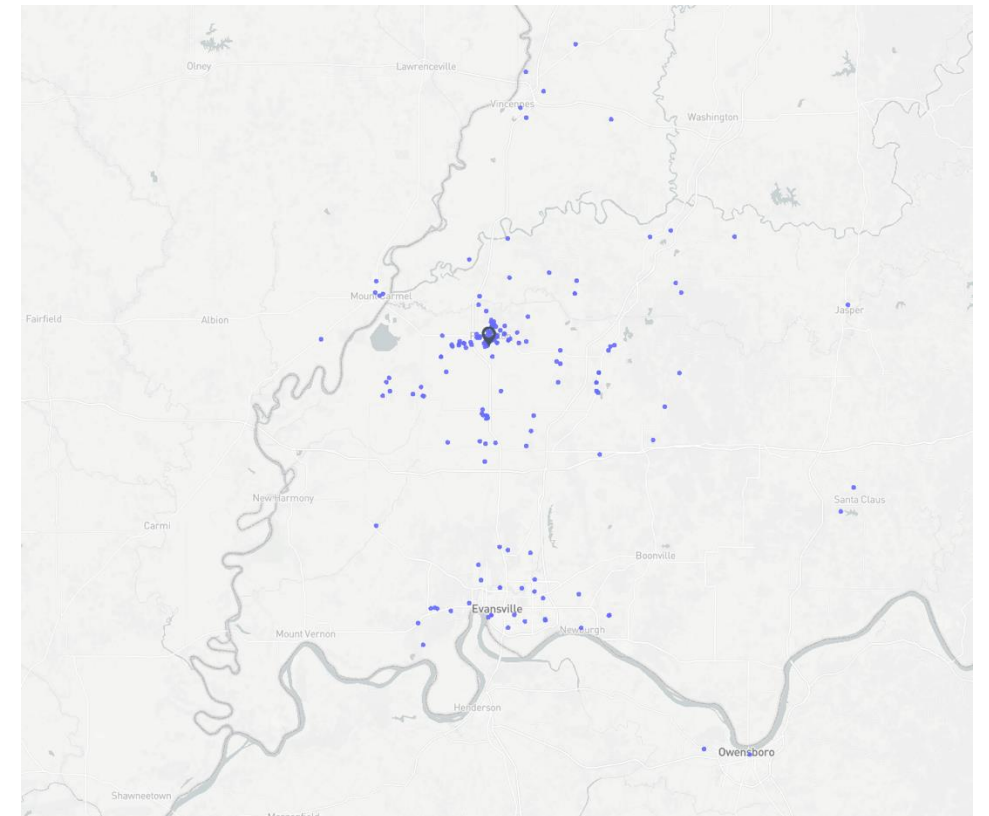
Indiana's oldest public library now serves as a library, museum, and cultural center. It preserves New Harmony's unique history while offering educational programs, exhibits, and lectures.



GIBSON COUNTY

Princeton Theatre

The Princeton Theatre, located in Princeton, Indiana, is a restored historic venue that hosts a variety of performing arts events, film screenings, and community gatherings. The facility has undergone significant renovations in recent years and maintains its original Art Deco-inspired architecture. In 2024, the venue welcomed approximately 9,700 total visitors, with 78.7 percent coming from within the region and 21.3 percent from outside the region. While the number of events reflects the absence of a full-time promoter, primarily a result of constrained funding, the events that are hosted are typically well attended, which reflects community interest in expanded programming.



Toyota Event Center

The Toyota Event Center, a multi-use venue located in Princeton, Indiana, has a variety of public and private events including banquets, weddings, trade shows, and community functions. The facility features flexible indoor space that can be configured for large gatherings and is frequently used for both regional and local events. In 2024, the venue recorded approximately 14,500 total visits, with 62.8 percent of visitors coming from within the region and 37.2 percent from outside the region. The center represents a successful example of a public-private partnership, with Toyota investing in the community to enhance quality of life and provide a valuable gathering space for residents and visitors.

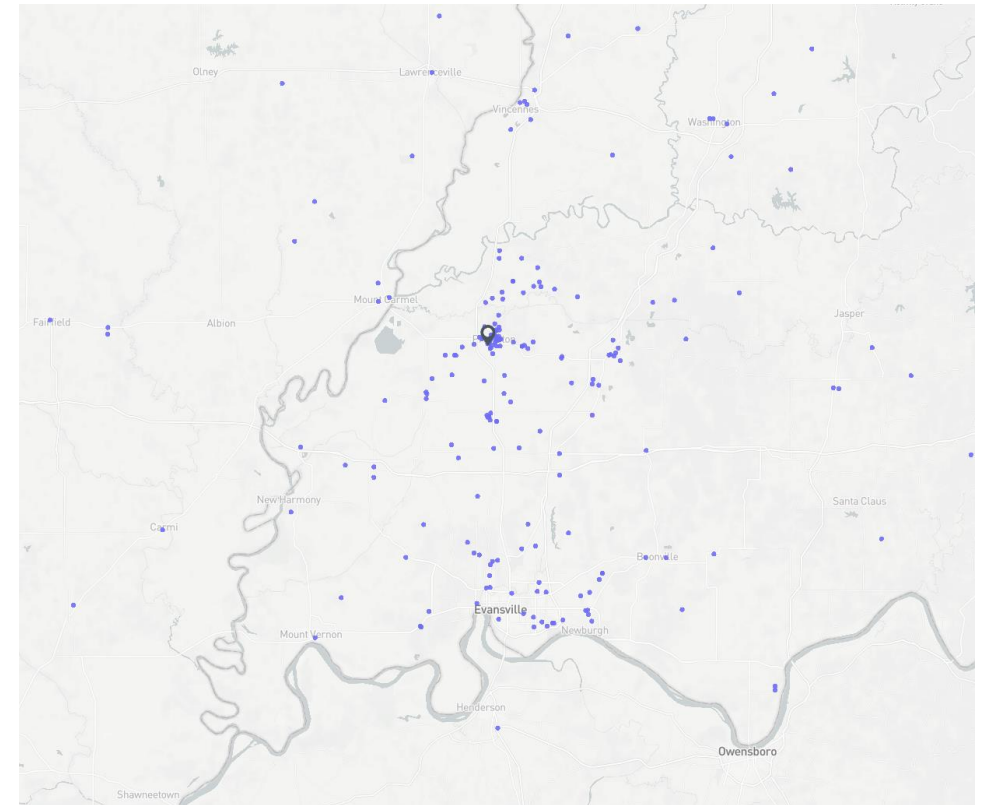


TOYOTA EVENT CENTER VISITATION (2024)

14.5K
Total Visits

62.8%
% of Visitors from within the Region

37.2%
% of Visitors from outside the Region



Lyles Station

Lyles Station is a historically significant African American settlement located in Gibson County, Indiana, and is one of the last remaining Black settlements in the state. The site includes the restored Lyles Consolidated School building, which serves as a museum and cultural center highlighting African American history, rural education, and local heritage. The facility regularly hosts educational programming, with a large portion of its visitation coming from school field trips. In 2024, Lyles Station recorded approximately 1,800 total visits, with 44.1 percent from within the region and 55.9 percent from outside the region. However, total visitation is likely underrepresented, as Placer.ai data does not count individuals under the age of 18, which excludes many student visitors, potentially skewing overall figures.



LYLES STATION VISITATION (2024)

1.8K

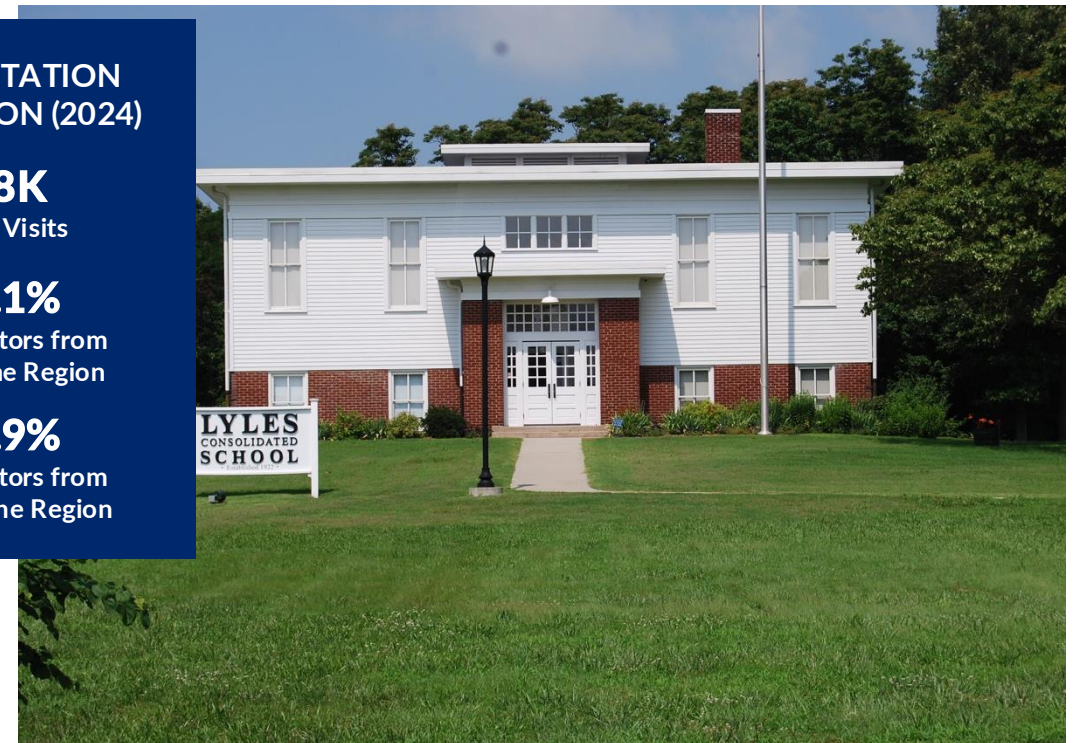
Total Visits

44.1%

% of Visitors from
within the Region

55.9%

% of Visitors from
outside the Region



Organizations

Gibson County has a small but passionate foundation of arts and culture organizations, such as the Princeton Band Boosters and Broadway Players at the Princeton Theatre. These groups bring meaningful opportunities for youth and community engagement through music and performance. However, dedicated arts and cultural organizations remain limited across the county. To unlock the full potential of the creative sector, stronger leadership and sustained funding are needed to support existing efforts.



PRINCETON BAND BOOSTERS

A nonprofit supporting the Princeton Community High School band program. The Boosters help fund instruments, uniforms, travel, and other needs — enabling students to access meaningful music education.

PRINCETON THEATRE & COMMUNITY CENTER

Housed in the restored Princeton Theatre, this local community theater group offers entertaining and thought-provoking productions, along with educational opportunities for the community.

Support Amenities Analysis



Support Amenities Analysis

EXHIBIT SPACE

Galleries and flexible display areas are vital for visual artists to share their work with the public. Additional exhibit space is needed to showcase student, community, and emerging talent.

RESTAURANTS AND STORES

Nearby dining and retail support event activity by extending visit time and boosting local spending. Limited evening and weekend hours currently reduce the overall impact of cultural events.

THEATER SUPPORT SPACE

Dressing rooms, lighting booths, green rooms, and technical infrastructure are critical for successful performances. Many regional venues lack these elements, limiting the types of shows they can host.

ARTIST STUDIOS

Studio spaces provide artists with dedicated areas to create, experiment, and collaborate. These spaces foster local talent and support year-round cultural activity and professional development.

REHEARSAL SPACE

Dedicated rehearsal space enables consistent practice and event preparation. Music and dance groups often struggle to find affordable, acoustically appropriate locations to rehearse.

STORAGE SPACE

Back-of-house storage is essential for props, equipment, and exhibit materials. Many groups currently rent off-site storage, which can be costly and inconvenient, limiting participation and programming capacity.



Support Amenities Analysis



Feedback on Current Facilities



Downtown Evansville, IN

Downtown Evansville has a strong foundation with existing infrastructure and support from the Evansville Improvement District (EID). However, working with local businesses to align and extend their hours around events and performances could help increase foot traffic and create a more connected and engaging experience for visitors.



Victory Theatre

The Victory Theatre serves as a strong example of a well-equipped performing arts venue, with key support amenities such as green rooms, dressing rooms, and rehearsal space.



Newburgh Museum

The Newburgh Museum is a valuable historical asset for Warrick County but lacks adequate storage for its artifacts. It must rent off-site storage, which creates a financial burden.

Long-Term Regional Priority Project/ Opportunity Matrix















Opportunity Matrix


The matrix below shows the supply of arts and culture assets across Vanderburgh, Warrick, Posey, and Gibson counties. A common theme across the region is the limited supply of coordinated arts and culture marketing. All four counties rely heavily on fragmented communication methods, which impacts awareness and attendance. In contrast, each county maintains a relatively strong supply of historical museums, heritage sites, and community event spaces, reflecting a solid foundation of cultural infrastructure that supports local identity and engagement.

	Performing Arts Center	Amphitheater	Artist Support Services	Art Gallery/ Studio	Public Art	Historical Museum/Site	Arts and Culture Marketing	Community Event Space	Festival Grounds
Vanderburgh	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
Warrick	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
Posey	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
Gibson	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>













SUPPLY: High Moderate Low


Opportunity Matrix


Performing Arts Center	Amphitheater	Artist Support Services	Art Gallery/ Studio	Public Art	Historical Museum/Site	Arts and Culture Marketing	Community Event Space	Festival Grounds
								
SUPPLY:  High  Moderate  Low								


-  **Performing Arts Center**
Vanderburgh has large-scale performing arts venues but lacks mid-sized venues for 300- to 700-person performances, limiting options for smaller acts and community productions.
-  **Amphitheater**
Mesker Amphitheatre remains closed and requires significant investment to reopen. No other amphitheaters currently exist in Vanderburgh.
-  **Artist Support Services**
Groups like the Arts Council and library offer some exhibit and residency support, but affordable studios, funding programs, and artist development resources are still limited.
-  **Art Gallery/ Studio**
While galleries and studios exist through institutions like the Evansville Museum and Arts Council, access to flexible, community-driven exhibition space is limited.
-  **Public Art**
Vanderburgh County has a strong public art presence, especially in Evansville. Efforts like the Radiant Revival mural show growing investment in public art. However, there is still a strong opportunity to increase its presence.
-  **Historical Museum/Site**
Anchored by the Evansville Museum, Reitz Home, and Wartime Museum, Vanderburgh has a strong offering of historical and heritage-based venues.
-  **Arts and Culture Marketing**
There is no centralized marketing hub or events calendar. Promotion is reliant on fragmented social media and word of mouth, hindering public awareness.
-  **Community Event Space**
Multiple venues such as the Coliseum, DoubleTree, and community centers are used for events, providing high availability of flexible space.
-  **Festival Grounds**
Festivals like the Fall Festival rely on temporary setups. Permanent, flexible grounds with built-in infrastructure like fencing or power are not currently available.


Opportunity Matrix

Performing Arts Center	Amphitheater	Artist Support Services	Art Gallery/ Studio	Public Art	Historical Museum/Site	Arts and Culture Marketing	Community Event Space	Festival Grounds
								
SUPPLY:  High  Moderate  Low								


 **Performing Arts Center**
Warrick County lacks a dedicated performing arts center. Existing spaces like Friedman Park Event Center serve general event needs but are not designed for regular performance programming.


 **Art Gallery/ Studio**
Exhibit opportunities exist within local museums and community organizations, but a lack of standalone gallery space limits regular visual art showcases.


 **Arts and Culture Marketing**
Warrick lacks a centralized communication channel for arts events. Visit Warrick is hiring a dedicated staff person, but current marketing efforts remain limited.


 **Amphitheater**
Friedman Park Amphitheater is a well-developed outdoor venue with terraced seating and a covered stage used for community events and concerts.

 **Public Art**
While there is enthusiasm for arts and culture, the county has few visible public art installations and limited funding to support new ones.













 **Community Event Space**
The Friedman Park Event Center and other town-managed spaces provide large, flexible venues for a wide range of gatherings and performances.










 **Artist Support Services**
While some workshops and maker activities exist, there is no formalized artist support infrastructure. Limited funding, promotion, and coordination inhibit sustained artist development.

 **Historical Museum/Site**
The Newburgh Museum and other sites provide strong coverage of local history, though some face challenges like inadequate artifact storage.













 **Festival Grounds**
Festivals use public parks and parking lots, but no purpose-built festival grounds exist. This limits growth and operational efficiency for larger events.





Opportunity Matrix

Performing Arts Center	Amphitheater	Artist Support Services	Art Gallery/ Studio	Public Art	Historical Museum/Site	Arts and Culture Marketing	Community Event Space	Festival Grounds
								
SUPPLY:  High  Moderate  Low								

-  **Performing Arts Center**
Posey County has Murphy Auditorium and the Granary in New Harmony, but beyond that, there are no dedicated performing arts venues elsewhere in the county.
-  **Amphitheater**
Riverbend Park in Mount Vernon has the county's only amphitheater with built-in seating, but it is underutilized and could support more consistent arts programming and community events.
-  **Artist Support Services**
New Harmony offers a strong artist community with occasional residencies and gallery support, but services are localized and not widely accessible across the county.
-  **Art Gallery/Studio**
New Harmony hosts multiple galleries and art studios, making it a regional anchor for visual arts in Posey County. There is a lack of these spaces outside of New Harmony.
-  **Public Art**
Posey County has a strong concentration of public art in New Harmony. However, other major towns in the county have little visible public art, revealing a clear opportunity to expand creative efforts.
-  **Historical Museum/Site**
Sites such as the Atheneum, Roofless Church, and Rapp-Owen Granary provide strong historical and cultural representation, attracting both local and out-of-region visitors.
-  **Arts and Culture Marketing**
Similar to other counties, there is no central calendar or coordinated promotion for arts and cultural events across Posey County.
-  **Community Event Space**
New Harmony and Mount Vernon have multipurpose venues, but flexible community space is still limited for larger or recurring programs.
-  **Festival Grounds**
New Harmony hosts festivals and events throughout the year, but lacks dedicated infrastructure like staging, power, or restrooms to support large-scale or recurring festivals.

Opportunity Matrix

Performing Arts Center	Amphitheater	Artist Support Services	Art Gallery/ Studio	Public Art	Historical Museum/Site	Arts and Culture Marketing	Community Event Space	Festival Grounds
								
SUPPLY:  High  Moderate  Low								

-  **Performing Arts Center**
Venues like the Princeton Theatre offer some infrastructure for performing arts, but programming is limited due to the absence of full-time staff or promoters.
-  **Amphitheater**
Gibson does not currently have a dedicated amphitheater. While outdoor venues exist, they are not equipped for frequent cultural programming.
-  **Artist Support Services**
There is currently no structured support for artists in Gibson. The HUB 127 is developing creative workspaces, but broader funding, networking, and artist development programs are lacking.
-  **Art Gallery/ Studio**
Gibson lacks consistent access to artist galleries and studios. There are efforts underway to develop creative spaces at The HUB 127, but these are in early stages.
-  **Public Art**
Gibson lacks public art, with few sculptures or installations found throughout the area. Aside from a small number of murals or pieces by local artists, there is little visible investment in public art.
-  **Historical Museum/Site**
Sites like Lyles Station and the Toyota Indiana Experience Center offer meaningful educational and cultural value, drawing regional visitors.
-  **Arts and Culture Marketing**
There is no centralized marketing system in place. The county relies on word-of-mouth and siloed digital platforms, reducing event visibility.
-  **Community Event Space**
Facilities like the Toyota Event Center and fairgrounds support a range of events, but more flexible and affordable indoor spaces are needed.
-  **Festival Grounds**
Gibson County hosts events in parks, fairgrounds, and in the downtown area of towns like Princeton. However, these spaces lack permanent infrastructure to support larger festivals.

Project Recommendations and Sustainable Funding Strategy



Current Regional Gaps



These regional gaps reflect aggregated stakeholder feedback combined with Hunden's observations.

MID-SIZE PERFORMANCE VENUES

Lack of venues that seat between 300 and 700 people, limiting the ability to host mid-scale concerts, comedy shows, and touring productions.

Most venues are either small bars or very large arenas, creating a gap in the market for flexible mid-size spaces.

CENTRALIZED PROMOTING AND MARKETING

No single entity is responsible for promoting arts and cultural events across the region.

Residents must rely on fragmented social media feeds or word of mouth to learn about events, which results in missed opportunities for engagement.

Stakeholders highlighted the need for a regional arts-focused events calendar and a unified marketing strategy.

Previous efforts (e.g., "EVV" app) are helpful but underfunded and not widely adopted across all communities.

FESTIVAL GROUNDS

No permanent, flexible festival grounds exist in the region for large outdoor events.

Parks Fest is held in a city park that is poorly suited for festivals, and the Fall Festival is along several blocks of a commercial street, both relying on makeshift infrastructure.

County parks and fairgrounds are occasionally used, but they are not always centrally located or easily accessible.

Festival programming often depends on nonprofit organizations with limited staff and resources, affecting sustainability and growth.

SUPPORT AMENITIES

Storage and back-of-house space for arts organizations and theater productions is minimal, and renting off-site storage is often cost prohibitive.

Many businesses are closed during evening or weekend event times, limiting pre- and post-event spending opportunities.

Lack of accessible signage and wayfinding, especially in downtown areas, creates a confusing experience for visitors.

PUBLIC ART & FUNDING FOR ART ORGANIZATIONS

While initiatives like mural-filled alleyways and public sculpture are making a visible impact, public art remains limited in scale and visibility. There is a significant opportunity to expand and integrate public art into community development projects, downtown spaces, and regional gateways.

Many arts organizations lead valuable programs and events but struggle with sustainability due to limited staffing, insufficient marketing support, and minimal access to long-term funding.

Priority Project Recommendations

Mid-Size Entertainment Venue

Hunden recommends the development of a vibrant, mid-sized venue in the Evansville Region with a capacity of approximately 600. This space would be a crucial addition that fills the existing gap between 300- and 700-seat venues. This type of venue unlocks new opportunities for the city's entertainment and cultural landscape, offering a right-sized option for performers and events that are too large for small clubs but too intimate for venues such as the Ford Center or Victory Theatre.

The space should be highly flexible, allowing for a range of seating configurations and event formats — whether it's a standing-room-only concert, a cabaret-style comedy night, a speaker series, or a traveling theatrical production.

By providing a fresh platform for mid-scale live events, this venue can become a creative hub for the Evansville Region — boosting foot traffic, supporting restaurants and bars, and attracting regional visitors. Using comparable projections, Year One could host roughly 25 events as described above. By Year Four and stabilization, the venue could be hosting 40 events and generating roughly 1,500 room nights annually.

Explore Evansville would make sense as the driving entity for such a development.



Priority Project Recommendations

Festival Grounds

Hunden recommends the development of a permanent, purpose-built festival grounds to accommodate large outdoor events. Essential infrastructure such as fencing, power, and restrooms will support efficient, high-quality operations.

Positioning this space along the Ohio riverfront could be a transformational move. It would directly align with the Ohio River Vision and Strategic Plan, activating underutilized space in downtown and turning it into a dynamic cultural anchor for the region. The waterfront has potential to thrive with activity — from music festivals and food truck rallies to artisan markets and community celebrations.

By establishing a permanent home for large-scale events, the Evansville Region can better attract and retain signature festivals, regional visitors, and national attention. Additionally, this can be a shared space that locals feel proud to call their own. This is a chance to make the riverfront not just a backdrop, but a bold centerpiece of the city's cultural and economic future.

The festival grounds should align with the Ohio River Vision and Strategic Plan, which key areas identified in Evansville, Newburgh and Mt. Vernon. This also aligns with Explore Evansville.



Priority Project Recommendations

Centralized Promotion & Marketing

Hunden recommends an investment in a centralized, well-supported digital platform to promote the region's events, venues, and experiences — available both online and via a dedicated app.

Past efforts like the EVV App have shown promise but ultimately fell short due to insufficient funding, coordination, and long-term vision. With the right backing, a modern platform could become the go-to resource for locals and visitors alike — housing everything from festival calendars and restaurant guides to ticketing, wayfinding, and real-time updates.

This digital hub would not only strengthen community engagement and drive tourism but also serve as a critical tool for economic development, helping connect audiences with the rich supply of arts, culture, and entertainment Evansville has to offer.

In order to cover the entire region, The Evansville Regional Economic Partnership (E-REP) would be an entity that makes sense to drive this initiative.

Sustainable Funding

Hunden recommends the development of a sustained funding strategy and policy framework to support arts and cultural initiatives across the Evansville region. A long-term commitment to funding the arts is not only a cultural benefit, but it is also a proven economic development strategy that enhances quality of life, strengthens workforce retention, and drives regional competitiveness.

One key mechanism is the creation of a dedicated arts funding stream, such as a **regional ticket tax** applied to live performances, sporting events, and entertainment venues. Revenue from this modest tax could be allocated directly to arts and cultural programming, facility improvements, and community engagement initiatives.

To ensure sustainable impact, local governments should explore, matching grant programs, formal partnerships with philanthropic and corporate entities, and other shared funding mechanisms across the region. In parallel, public engagement strategies — such as participatory budgeting, arts councils, and regular stakeholder meetings — can build broad-based support and ensure community alignment.

By institutionalizing funding and support for the arts, the region positions itself not only as a cultural leader but also as a forward-thinking, economically vibrant place to live, work, and visit.

This initiative can be addressed by the City of Evansville as well as the EID.

Priority Project Recommendations

Visual Arts

Hunden recommends the expansion of public art installations — such as sculptures, murals, and interactive pieces — throughout Evansville and the surrounding four-county region of Gibson, Vanderburgh, Warrick, and Posey counties. These installations can serve as powerful placemaking tools, enriching the visual identity of communities while fostering civic pride and cultural connection.

Strategically placed public art can activate underutilized spaces, create photo-worthy destinations, and encourage deeper engagement with local history and creativity. Flexible in form and scale, these works can reflect community values, celebrate regional heritage, and provide new platforms for both emerging and established artists.

By investing in a cohesive public art initiative, E-Rep can spark collaboration across municipalities, enhance tourism appeal, and contribute to a sense of shared identity across urban and rural areas alike.





Other Considerations

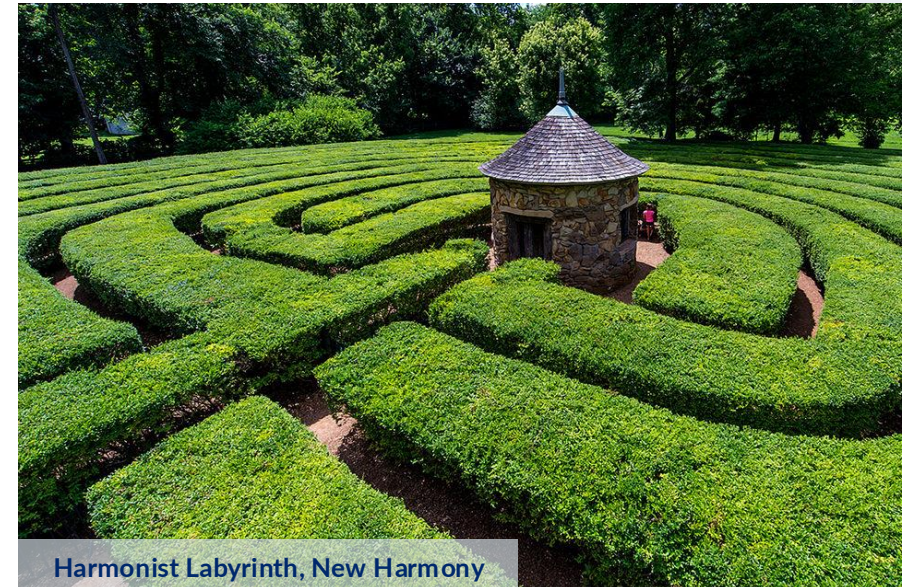
Riverfront Development: The Ohio River Vision and Strategic Plan, led by nationally recognized design firm Sasaki, offers a transformative framework for reimagining the Region's riverfront. This 50-mile effort is a bold 10-, 20-, or even 30-year vision that will unfold with investment from government, philanthropic, and private partners. A funded architectural competition for two new buildings on Downtown Evansville's riverfront is expected to draw both established and emerging firms from around the world. By aligning arts and culture priorities with this long-term redevelopment, the region can create shared spaces for festivals, public art, and performances that enrich community life, attract visitors, and strengthen downtown identity while advancing a unified cultural vision.

Link to plan: https://www.evansvilleregion.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/EvansvilleRiverfrontProjectUpdate_Jan_2025.pdf

New Harmony Community: The Blaffer Trust is working to reinvigorate New Harmony's two centuries of thought leadership in the arts and beyond. Building on its historic role as the driver of nearly all major cultural efforts in New Harmony, the Trust is undergoing a process of reinvention to secure its long-term future. This next chapter is expected to focus less on traditional performance and art installations and more on programming centered on ideas. Such a shift reflects New Harmony's legacy as a community of innovation and reflection, while also positioning it to remain a unique cultural destination within Region. Aligning this renewed emphasis on thought leadership with the region's broader arts and culture strategy will help ensure that New Harmony continues to be both a local and national asset for creativity, history, and ideas.



Potential Riverfront Development, Evansville



Harmonist Labyrinth, New Harmony

Regional Benefits

ECONOMIC RIPPLE EFFECTS

New venues and festival spaces attract regional audiences, boosting hotels, restaurants, and small businesses throughout all four counties.

SHARED ACCESS & COLLABORATION

Centralized promotion and sustainable funding ensure arts and culture are visible, supported, and accessible across the four-county region.

WORKFORCE & TALENT RETENTION

Enhanced cultural amenities make the broader region more attractive for young professionals, families, and employers.

STRENGTHENED REGIONAL IDENTITY

Public art and cultural programming weave together communities, celebrating local heritage while building a unified sense of place.



Sustainability

Arts Council of Southwestern Indiana Faces Unique Funding Challenges

- The Arts Council of Southwestern Indiana* is one of the few major city arts councils in Indiana that receives no direct city funding, despite being a central resource for regional arts coordination and programming.
- In contrast, peer cities like Indianapolis, Bloomington, Fort Wayne, and South Bend provide recurring public funds to their arts councils.
- The lack of funding places Evansville at a disadvantage in building a stable arts infrastructure and scaling programming, especially for underserved communities.

*With the recent announcement of the Arts Council of Southwestern Indiana's closure and the transition of select services to the Evansville Public Library, this development reflects the evolving arts and cultural landscape of the region. This change has immediate implications for how arts programming, support, and community engagement will be administered, as well as long-term impacts on creative placemaking and regional collaboration.

Nonprofit-Led Programming Faces Capacity Constraints

- Across the region, the majority of arts and cultural events are produced by nonprofits with limited staffing and resources, which creates challenges for long-term planning and growth.
- Without consistent funding, event continuity, facility upkeep, and artist compensation are at risk, which can weaken both audience engagement and regional cultural identity.
- Building a regional arts sustainability model that includes public-private funding and earned revenue strategies is key.

Emerging Local Funding Mechanism: \$1 Ticket Fee at City-Owned Venues

- Evansville is exploring a \$1-per-ticket administrative fee on events held at city-owned venues like the Ford Center and Victory Theatre.
- This proposed fee, similar to models used in Louisville and Indianapolis, could generate significant dedicated revenue to support arts programming and facility upgrades.
- The fund could provide financial independence for local arts groups and reduce reliance on fundraising or unsustainable volunteer labor.



Roofless Church, New Harmony

Organization Funding

Across the Evansville region, arts and culture organizations are essential to improving quality of life by fostering creativity, education, civic pride, and social connection. While many of these organizations rely on funding from the Indiana Arts Commission, a recent 33-percent cut in that funding puts their operations at risk. For smaller or volunteer-run groups in particular, this loss could mean reduced programming or even shutting down entirely. Even before these cuts, most organizations did not receive enough support to fully maximize their impact.

Local and regional investment is now more critical than ever. While the region has built valuable infrastructure such as theaters, museums, and event venues, these spaces are only effective when strong organizations are in place to activate and manage them. Without proper support, even well-designed facilities can sit underused.

A greater commitment to funding and empowering arts and culture organizations is necessary to ensure they continue to drive community engagement.

Organizations That Received Funding by IAC (2025)

Organization	County	Amount Awarded
Children's Center for Dance Education	Vanderburgh	\$14,832
Children's Theatre of Southern Indiana	Vanderburgh	\$12,177
Evansville African American Museum	Vanderburgh	\$14,880
Evansville Civic Theatre	Vanderburgh	\$8,172
Evansville Museum of Arts, History & Science	Vanderburgh	\$17,314
Evansville Philharmonic Orchestral Corporation	Vanderburgh	\$10,000
Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library	Vanderburgh	\$3,150
Louis J. Koch Family Children's Museum of Evansville	Vanderburgh	\$4,000
New Harmony Clay Project	Posey	\$4,000
New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art	Posey	\$4,000
Patchwork Central	Vanderburgh	\$4,000
Princeton Band Boosters	Gibson	\$4,000
Reitz Home Museum	Vanderburgh	\$5,000
Rivertown Storytellers at the River's Bend	Warrick	\$4,000
STAGEtwo Productions	Vanderburgh	\$9,766
SWIRCA & More	Vanderburgh	\$4,000
The Arts Council of Southwestern Indiana	Vanderburgh	\$7,250
The Foundry Center for the Arts	Warrick	\$10,032
Under the Radar Concert Series	Warrick	\$4,000
University of Evansville - Development Office	Vanderburgh	\$3,000
Victory International Film Festival	Vanderburgh	\$4,000
Warrick Public Education Foundation	Warrick	\$4,000
WNIN Tri-State Public Media, Inc.	Vanderburgh	\$4,000
Working Men's Institute	Posey	\$4,000

Public Support

Public support is essential for arts and culture to thrive in Evansville and across the region. While funding and infrastructure play critical roles, the long-term vitality of the creative sector depends on active community engagement, grassroots advocacy, and a shared belief in the value of the arts.

When residents participate in cultural events, champion local artists, and voice their support to elected officials, they create the conditions in which arts initiatives can take root and grow.

This kind of civic buy-in strengthens the case for continued investment, ensures programming reflects community identity, and helps arts organizations remain resilient through economic shifts or leadership transitions. Public support also creates momentum for regional collaboration — encouraging partnerships across counties, schools, and sectors. In a region as interconnected as Southwest Indiana, arts and culture are not a luxury but a catalyst for community pride, economic revitalization, and quality of life.





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