

# Indiana Department of Environmental Management

## Environmental Stakeholder Engagement

### 2025 Annual Report



# IDEM Environmental Stakeholder Engagement (ESE) 2025 Annual Summary

## Overview

The ESE program has continued the momentum of program development during the 2025 calendar year, as follows:

- **Continued Focus on Outreach**

In 2025, ESE PowerPoint presentations were revised in concurrence with Federal Executive Order 14154 and Indiana Executive Order 25-37. The ESE program outreach plan transitioned to focus primarily on meeting with municipal leaders and their staff. The meetings were intended to foster cooperation, share information about IDEM programs, explain the services provided by the OPS Compliance and Technical Assistance Program (CTAP), the Clean Community Program, and, most importantly, gather information regarding local concerns. When appropriate, and when schedules allowed, additional staff from the above programs and the agency legislative team were invited to participate in these meetings. Most municipal officials were receptive to meeting IDEM staff and several mentioned that no other state agency had reached out to them in the past. A frequently expressed concern was a lack of certified water purification and wastewater operators to replace those who are retiring. Another concern reported in the growing Hamilton County suburb of Westfield was emerging conflicts regarding water rights.

Additional concerns included data center development and lack of funding for long-term control plans. Staff in the northern part of the state fielded questions regarding new Executive Orders and requests for funding assistance for infrastructure investments. In 2025, ESE staff were able to triple the number of municipal meetings held in comparison to 2024 (twenty-five in 2025 and eight in 2024). Appendix A is a GIS-rendered map comparing 2024 municipal outreach efforts to the 2025 results.



Herb Engman speaks with municipal staff in Plainfield about IDEM functions at a meeting on 11/3/25.

Starting in January 2025, IDEM's ESE coordinators conducted thirty-three virtual and in-person external outreach presentations, with an emphasis on in-person meetings. ESE staff maintain that in-person meetings promote open dialogue and provide a better understanding of local issues. Although the primary focus in 2025 was meeting with municipal partners, ESE coordinators continued to make presentations about the program to community and partner groups upon request. A summary of these outreach events is attached as Appendix B.

ESE coordinators also followed up with community partners via email to ensure lines of communication remain open. ESE Coordinator Engman had email communication with community partners to follow up on previous meetings on 2/25/25 and 4/16/25. ESE Coordinator Evans met with community partners at previous meetings in-person on 6/5/25 and via phone on 9/5/25. Several responses resulted in additional

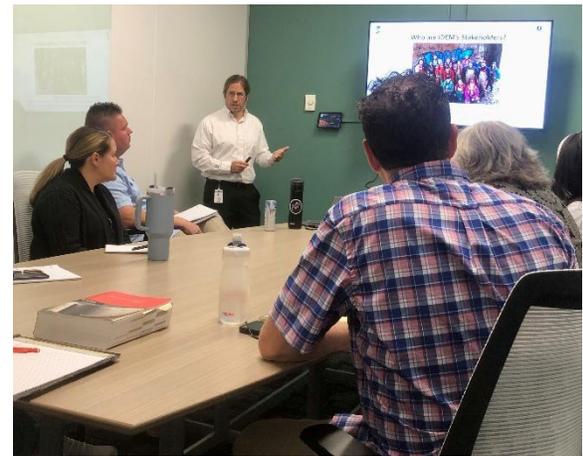
ESE requests, invitations to attend meetings for updates on the ESE program, and requests for updates on the status of IDEM’s work in the community.

ESE staff again attended multicultural community events as part of outreach efforts, including the Monarch Festival in East Chicago on 9/6/25 and the Festival del Otoño in Bloomington on 9/20/25. These outreach efforts are intended to share information regarding IDEM and the ESE program with community members, as well as to seek potential bilingual staff from within those communities. An email received from the Fiesta del Otoño organizer on 10/6/25 indicated the event had record-setting attendance. IDEM staff had valuable interactions with community members at both events.



Herb Engman interacts with stakeholders at the “Fiesta del Otoño” in Bloomington on 9/6/25.

The ESE team also revisited internal staff presentations to ensure IDEM staff are familiar with the program and how the program can assist staff in their interactions with stakeholders. ESE staff developed a presentation which was delivered during an IDEM-sponsored “Knowledge Café” on 8/28/25. Beginning September 2025, the ESE Coordinators attended sixteen section and regional office meetings to share information about the program with staff. An estimated 257 staff members were present at these meetings, representing approximately a quarter of IDEM’s total staff. In 2026, ESE staff will continue to share information about the program to IDEM staff and may collaborate with the Media and Communication Services (MACS) office to develop a video for IDEM’s new staff orientation.



An internal presentation to OLQ staff on 9/10/25.

- **Collaboration with Partners**

ESE staff supported partner agencies such as the EPA and non-profit agencies by attending community meetings. Examples are the “Reilly Tar” Superfund update meeting on 5/6/25, and the “Faith in Place” community outreach event on 5/12/25. ESE staff also attended the Water Pollution Prevention Roundtable on 1/7/2025, and quarterly Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) meetings.

ESE Coordinator Engman attended quarterly meetings of the Martindale-Brightwood Land Use Collaborative meeting to monitor progress of the lead water pipe replacement project underway by Citizens Energy in Indianapolis, as well as ask that IDEM staff provide updates on the various projects underway in that neighborhood. He also attended monthly meetings of the Indiana Latino Roundtable to maintain rapport with that group and provided an annual presentation on progress of the ESE program and IDEM updates at their December meeting.

- **Responding to ESE Requests**

In 2025, ESE coordinators received and resolved seventy-two ESE requests. Requests came from both external and internal stakeholders and covered a variety of issues, ranging from concerns about unpermitted work in designated wetlands to requests for translation assistance. The requests were

addressed and resolved in compliance with the program's established standard operating procedures (SOP), with an average resolution time of just under ten days.

ESE staff also resolved issues submitted as requests that are outside IDEM's regulatory authority. An example included a gentleman who contacted ESE staff regarding a neighbor's failing septic tank. He previously contacted the local health department and did not receive a response. ESE staff were aware that this was an Indiana Department of Health (IDOH) issue, identified the appropriate staff at IDOH, and provided the gentleman with their direct contact information. In another instance, a stakeholder in Indianapolis emailed ESE staff after trying to resolve his issue with the mayor's office. He advised a road project was completed on his block and the contractor had left a chemical toilet ("Porta-John") at the site. The mayor's staff advised this stakeholder that this was "an IDEM issue." Although chemical toilets are permitted by IDEM, IDEM staff do not usually get involved with the collection of them after a project. IDEM ESE staff were able to obtain contact information for the chemical toilet company and informed them of the complaint. The company responded that they would immediately address the issue.

- **Technology Improvements**

IDEM's ESE team spent considerable effort in 2025 making technical improvements to both the webpage and the use of GIS-based applications to document ESE outreach efforts. Webpage improvements were completed, which made the online request portal easier to access and included direct links to previous annual reports.

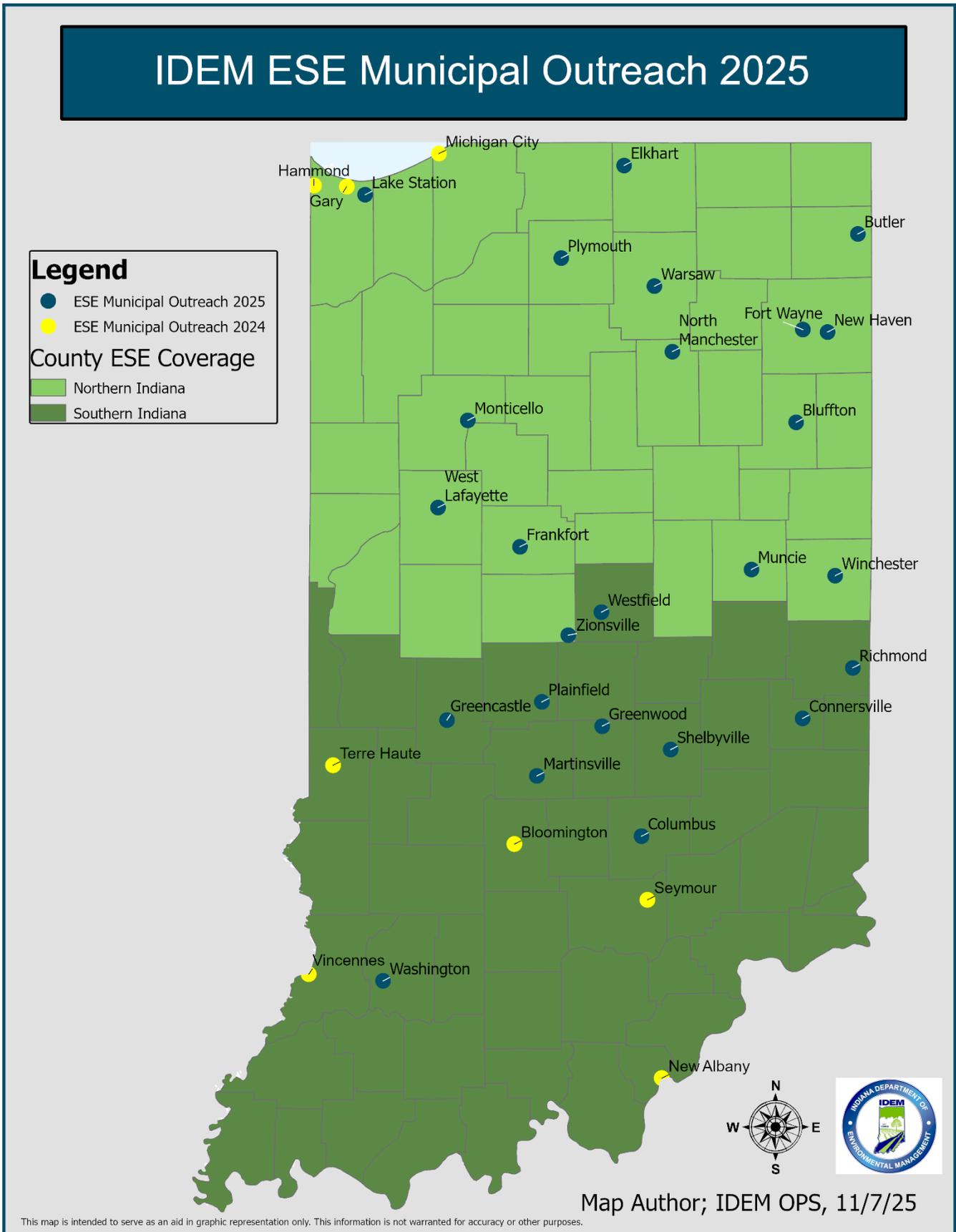
- **ESE Successes**

IDEM's ESE team engaged in extensive outreach efforts in 2025 and will continue to do so in 2026. Outreach efforts are vital for the agency to learn more about the concerns of stakeholders and make recommendations to IDEM management to address these concerns. Future goals include pivoting outreach efforts toward meeting with permittees, specifically, permittees with a history of compliance issues.

In 2025, the ESE program began reporting metrics to the Governor's Office on a regular basis. Reported metrics included the number of phone calls and emails received, as well as the average duration required to resolve requests received. As noted above, all ESE requests were resolved in a timely manner, with the resolution duration average being approximately ten days.

Appendices

Appendix A: Municipal Outreach Map



## Appendix B: 2025 Municipal Outreach Meetings

<b>Stakeholder or Group</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>ESE Coordinator</b>
U.S. Attorney Office Northern Indiana	Wayne Ault	<a href="mailto:wayne.ault@usdoj.gov">wayne.ault@usdoj.gov</a>	1/8/2025	Hammond	Lake	Evans
Indianapolis City-County Council	Mo McReynolds	<a href="mailto:mo.mcreeynolds@indy.gov">mo.mcreeynolds@indy.gov</a>	1/27/2025	Indianapolis	Marion	Engman
Muncie Mayoral Staff	Rick Conrad	<a href="mailto:rconrad@msdeng.com">rconrad@msdeng.com</a>	1/29/2025	Muncie	Delaware	Engman
Martinsville Staff	Mack Porter	<a href="mailto:mporter@Martinsville.in.gov">mporter@Martinsville.in.gov</a>	2/6/2025	Martinsville	Morgan	Engman
Shelbyville Mayoral Staff	Suzan Baughman	<a href="mailto:sbaughman@cityofshelbyvillein.com">sbaughman@cityofshelbyvillein.com</a>	2/20/2025	Shelbyville	Shelby	Engman
Elkhart Mayoral Staff	Tory Irwin	<a href="mailto:tory.irwin@coei.org">tory.irwin@coei.org</a>	2/24/2025	Elkhart	Elkhart	Evans
MSECA	Brian Lewis	<a href="mailto:blewis@mseca.org">blewis@mseca.org</a>	2/27/2025	Indianapolis	Marion	Engman
Save The Dunes	Harshini Ratnayaka	<a href="mailto:harshini@savedunes.org">harshini@savedunes.org</a>	3/3/2025	Michigan City	Lake	Evans
Richmond Mayoral Staff	Rachel Sams	<a href="mailto:rsams@richmondindiana.gov">rsams@richmondindiana.gov</a>	3/6/2025	Richmond	Wayne	Engman
Washington Mayoral Staff	David Rhoads	<a href="mailto:david.rhoads@washingtonin.us">david.rhoads@washingtonin.us</a>	3/18/2025	Washington	Daviess	Engman
Connersville Mayoral Staff	Chad Frank	<a href="mailto:mayor@connersvillein.gov">mayor@connersvillein.gov</a>	3/21/2025	Connersville	Fayette	Engman
Lake Station Mayoral Staff	Dwayne Polarek	<a href="mailto:dpolarek@lakestation-in.gov">dpolarek@lakestation-in.gov</a>	4/2/2025	Lake Station	Lake	Evans
Winchester Mayoral Staff	Kerry Sayre	<a href="mailto:clerk@winchester-in.gov">clerk@winchester-in.gov</a>	4/11/2025	Winchester	Randolph	Evans
Faith In Place	Grace Lehman	<a href="mailto:grace@faithinplace.org">grace@faithinplace.org</a>	4/14/2025	Hammond	Lake	Evans
City of North Manchester	Carrie Mugford	<a href="mailto:cmugford@northmanchester.in.gov">cmugford@northmanchester.in.gov</a>	4/28/2025	North Manchester	Wabash	Evans
City of Monticello	Bob Lindley	<a href="mailto:Rlindley@monticelloin.gov">Rlindley@monticelloin.gov</a>	5/21/2025	Monticello	White	Evans

Columbus Municipal Staff	Nancy Wagner	<a href="mailto:nwagner@columbus.in.gov">nwagner@columbus.in.gov</a>	6/11/2025	Columbus	Bartholomew	Engman
West Indianapolis Neighborhood Congress (WINC)	Jessica Saenz	<a href="mailto:jessica.saenz.rgv@gmail.com">jessica.saenz.rgv@gmail.com</a>	6/14/2025	Indianapolis	Marion	Engman
Zionsville Mayoral Staff	John Stehr	<a href="mailto:jstehr@zionsville-in.gov">jstehr@zionsville-in.gov</a>	6/23/2025	Zionsville	Boone	Engman
City of New Haven	Deb-Anne Smith	<a href="mailto:dsmith@newhaven.in.gov">dsmith@newhaven.in.gov</a>	6/23/2025	New Haven	Allen	Evans
Greenwood Mayoral Staff	Lisa Edwards	<a href="mailto:edwardsl@greenwood.in.gov">edwardsl@greenwood.in.gov</a>	7/29/2025	Greenwood	Johnson	Engman
City of Butler	Mike Hartman	<a href="mailto:mhartman@cityofbutler.in.gov">mhartman@cityofbutler.in.gov</a>	8/19/2025	Butler	DeKalb	Evans
City of Plymouth	Laura Mann	<a href="mailto:mayorsec@plymouthin.com">mayorsec@plymouthin.com</a>	9/3/2025	Plymouth	Mashall	Evans
City of Bluffton	Brenda Jackson	<a href="mailto:brenda.jackson@blufftonindiana.gov">brenda.jackson@blufftonindiana.gov</a>	9/3/2025	Bluffton	Wells	Evans
City of Fort Wayne	Cassandra Rodgers	<a href="mailto:cassandra.rogers@cityoffortwayne.org">cassandra.rogers@cityoffortwayne.org</a>	9/11/2025	Fort Wayne	Allen	Evans
Greencastle	Lynda Dunbar	<a href="mailto:ldunbar@cityofgreencastle.com">ldunbar@cityofgreencastle.com</a>	9/15/2025	Greencastle	Putnam	Engman
Frankfort	Andrea Sheese	<a href="mailto:asheese@frankfort-in.gov">asheese@frankfort-in.gov</a>	9/22/2025	Frankfort	Clinton	Evans
West Lafayette	Carol Houston	<a href="mailto:chouston@westlafayette.in.gov">chouston@westlafayette.in.gov</a>	9/29/2025	West Lafayette	Tippecanoe	Evans
Warsaw	Whitney Olson	<a href="mailto:wolson@warsaw.in.gov">wolson@warsaw.in.gov</a>	10/9/2025	Warsaw	Kosciusko	Evans
Westfield	Peg Strass	<a href="mailto:pstrass@westfield.in.gov">pstrass@westfield.in.gov</a>	10/16/2025	Westfield	Hamilton	Engman
Plainfield	Amy Western	<a href="mailto:awestern@townofplainfield.com">awestern@townofplainfield.com</a>	11/3/2025	Plainfield	Hendricks	Engman
Southern Indiana Environmental Managers	Grace Pangburn	<a href="mailto:gpangburn@augustmack.com">gpangburn@augustmack.com</a>	11/20/2025	Jasper	Dubois	Engman
Indiana Latino Roundtable	Maryori Duarte	<a href="mailto:mduarte-sheffield@marionhealth.org">mduarte-sheffield@marionhealth.org</a>	12/17/2025	Indianapolis	Marion	Engman