

Office of Community & Rural Affairs 2021 Year in Review



A letter from Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch and Executive Director Denny Spinner

In 2021, the Office of Community and Rural Affairs continued its mission of fueling community and economic development, building capacity, and investing in infrastructure to build relevant and economically thriving places where Hoosiers want to live, work, play, study and stay.

We saw the unveiling of monuments celebrating historic Hoosier women through the Women's Preserving Legacy Grants. We joined local leaders to break ground on water infrastructure projects, homes and businesses. Broadband access expanded, downtowns were revitalized, and historic structures were preserved, all made possible through the help of OCRA.

Throughout the year, the agency's hard work and dedication led to the funding of 217 projects across 86 Hoosier counties. New programs were established to help towns, cities and counties build vibrant communities while moving their economies forward. Additionally, OCRA launched the new Indiana Connectivity Program to expand the reach of the Next Level Connection initiative, helping more underserved Hoosiers obtain fast, reliable broadband.

Overall, in 2021, more than \$51.9 million was awarded to 175 cities, towns and counties. The 2021 OCRA Annual Report highlights a number of additional successes including:

- Next Level Connections saw a record number of letters of intent for the third round of the program, totaling \$606 million in requests;
- Through the Community Development Block Grant programs, a total of 343,809 Hoosiers were directly impacted by funding provided for CDBG projects; and
- Two communities were each awarded \$2 million under the newly launched Preserving Main Street Program for transformational façade and building improvements.

In the coming years, we are excited to see the impact the projects funded in 2021 will have on communities, as towns install safer drinking water systems, cities preserve historic buildings, and we collectively establish lasting legacies.

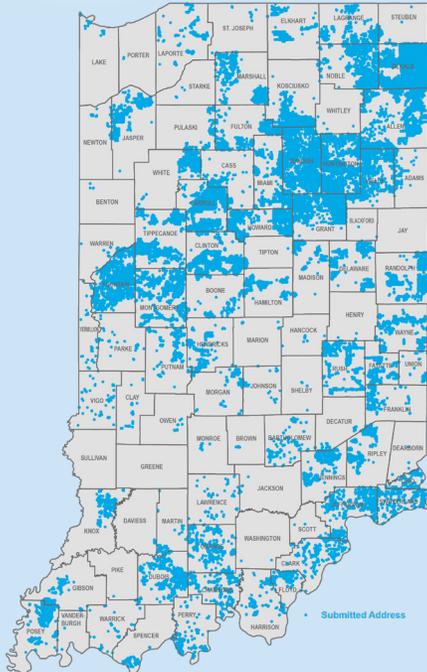
Rural Indiana is truly the heart of our great state. Thank you for your continued work to make our communities and our state an even better place. We look forward to working with you more this next year.

Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch
Executive Director Denny Spinner



Next Level Connections

Next Level Connections Round 3 interest

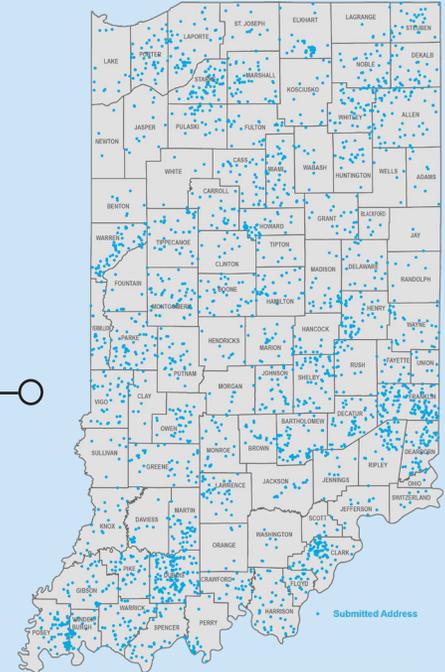


Next Level Connections

Round 3 saw letters of intent from **48** different broadband providers with more than **\$606 million** in requests, covering over **140,000** homes, businesses and other locations across **89** counties.

The Indiana Connectivity

Program launched in Sept. 2021. Over **3,300 Hoosiers** applied for consideration for the program across all **92** counties in 2021.



Indiana Connectivity Program applications

Preservation and economic development

2021 REVIEW

- Historic Renovation Grant Program: Awarded \$712,989 to 11 projects and leveraged over \$2.4 million in private investment for a total investment of \$3.1 million into the communities;
- PreservINg Main Street: Awarded \$4 million to two communities;
- HELP: Nine communities designated for the year-long program, split into three cohorts; and
- Taking Care of Main Street: Awarded \$205,000 to 15 Hoosier Main Streets.

The Hoosier Enduring Legacy Program, or HELP, launched in 2021. HELP is a year-long initiative working to support communities directly by building capacity, creating a peer network system between communities participating in the program, developing a strategic investment plan and providing access to set aside funding.



In May 2021, OCRA launched PreservINg Main Street to help stimulate local economies while preserving historic buildings. After receiving 25 applications, the **City of Kendallville** and the **Town of Brookville** were selected as the pilot communities. Both communities will receive up to **\$2 million** to implement downtown preservation projects.

Community Development Block Grants

2021 REVIEW

- Wastewater and Drinking Water Program: Awarded \$8,787,011 to 13 communities;
- Stormwater Improvements Program: Awarded \$2,150,542 to four communities;
- Planning Grants: Awarded \$1,880,465 to 31 communities; and
- Blight Clearance Program: Awarded \$2,575,294 to nine communities.



Hoosiers directly impacted by
CDBG projects: 343,809.

Through the new Owner Occupied Rehabilitation Pilot Program, **five projects** were awarded **\$1,189,000** in funding. The OOR pilot program aims to empower communities to directly fund homeowners of low-moderate income to make needed repairs on their homes.



In 2021, OCRA partnered with the Indiana Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services to create the Community Connections for People with Disabilities grant program. Through the initiative, **23 grants** totaling more than **\$3.2 million** have been awarded to Hoosier communities.

OCRA launched the Recovery Housing Pilot Program, partnering with the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, Division of Mental Health. Funding provided through the program will go toward building or rehabilitating facilities to provide temporary, supportive housing. A total of two allocations, totaling **\$1,706,000**, have been granted to the State to administer the pilot program.





Under the leadership of Lieutenant Governor Suzanne Crouch, who also serves as the Secretary of Rural Development, the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs' (OCRA) mission is to work with local, state and national partners to provide resources and technical assistance to assist communities in shaping and achieving their vision for community and economic development. For more information, visit ocra.in.gov.



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