



RURAL. REIMAGINED.

Accelerate Rural Indiana
Regional Development Authority
314 West Washington St.
Greensburg, IN 47240
accelerateruralindiana.com

READI 2.0 APPLICATION - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ACCELERATE RURAL INDIANA

Accelerate Rural Indiana (ARI) is a progressive group of four cities (Batesville, Greensburg, Shelbyville, and Rushville) and three counties (Decatur, Shelby, and Rush) along Interstate 74 between Indianapolis and Cincinnati. ARI's member communities are focused on delivering lasting growth and success to one of Indiana's greatest assets – its rural frontier.

In ARI, we are reimagining what rural can be. It is a place where agriculture meets innovation, where global meets local, and where a storied history meets a promising future. We are thinking outside the box, challenging the status quo of rural communities, and working collaboratively to attract the nation's top talent and accelerate the region's population growth.

ARI formed in 2021 to pursue Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI) funding. Prior to the formation of ARI, our communities were situated on the periphery of different existing economic development regions, making collaboration in prior regions difficult. As a result, ARI's members were inhibited from truly reaping the full benefits of regional partnerships. Understanding the power of regionalism, ARI members sought the opportunity to establish a more cohesive region.

ARI communities identified that their fortunes are intimately tied to one another. ARI's economy is centered on I-74, connecting anchor institutions to markets across the country, and residents to jobs and amenities within minutes. Each day, over 4,000 ARI residents cross county lines within the region for work, deeply connecting our regional economy. Many of these commuters are traveling to manufacturing jobs which account for over 25% of employment in ARI, according to the US Census Bureau. With regional manufacturing heavyweights – Honda's Indiana Auto Plant, Baxter (Hillrom), Hillenbrand, Ryobi, PK USA, NSG, Batesville Casket, Knauf, POET Biofuels, Bunge, Batesville Tool & Die, Wood-Mizer, Delta Faucet, Valeo, INTAT, and Copeland – ARI's manufacturing sector supplies the world's economy with quality products and our region's residents with quality jobs. Perhaps the greatest unifying factor for our region is our rural heritage, steeped in the values of hard work and a commitment to the betterment of our communities.

With this deep regional interconnection, ARI united in June of 2021, completed the region's first development plan and submitted the region's plan to IEDC for READI funding consideration. In February 2023, Accelerate Rural Indiana formed a Regional Development Authority (ARI RDA), accomplishing a top priority of the group's 2021 regional development plan and creating the region's first formal regional organization.

The creation and formalization of ARI has enabled our communities to tackle the most pressing issues facing our region. ARI is a region of partners – by every sense of the word – that are intimately connected, motivated, and encouraged by one another. ARI's partnership is working – and will continue to work – to accelerate rural Indiana.



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READI 1.0 – THE CATALYST

After an extensive public engagement process which involved over 3,000 residents within the region, Accelerate Rural Indiana completed its first regional development plan for READI 1.0 funding consideration. Our plan's priorities, projects, and programs were entirely shaped by residents and key stakeholders of the region through community workshops, surveys, and focus group discussions. Every step of the way, our Steering Committee consulted with stakeholders to ensure our regional development plan reflected the region's goals and objectives.

Our public engagement process, we identified a clear and consistent set of barriers preventing the region from attracting and retaining talent. We developed a set of priorities to eliminate these barriers and accelerate the region's growth potential.

Our READI 1.0 Plan contained the following 5 priorities:

Priority 1: Expand and improve housing options

Priority 2: Make place-based asset improvements

Priority 3: Increase regional education opportunities

Priority 4: Upgrade and expand infrastructure to meet current and future demands of local housing and local businesses

Priority 5: Tell our regional story

ARI was awarded \$20 million in READI 1.0 funding, the highest per capita READI award in the state. In total, the region's READI project portfolio is expected to attract nearly \$500 million of public, private, and philanthropic investment to the region by 2026. ARI's READI 1.0 project portfolio will be the most transformational investment in the region's history, adding an expected 300 additional single-family homes, 300 multi-family housing units, 280 new jobs, 268 additional childcare seats, five new parks and trails, and three new tourism destinations translating into over 170,000 annual visitors to the region.

In ARI, READI's presence is already being felt by families across the region. In Greensburg, kids with all ranges of physical capabilities are making life-long memories at the region's first fully-inclusive park, Building Bridges Inclusion Park. In Batesville, a skate park advocacy group completed a multi-year journey to bring a skate park to Batesville for kids (and kids at heart) from across the region to enjoy. In Rushville, a vacant Walmart building is being transformed into a community center with consolidated social resources and the city's first indoor pool. In Shelbyville, parents are excited at the prospect of 268 additional childcare seats at the Julia and Nicholas Runnebohm Early Learning Center.



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The READI transformation of ARI is just beginning. To date, five projects are complete, seven more projects are under construction, and the remaining four projects will commence construction in 2024. Additionally, nearly \$10 million of READI 1.0 funding (50% of award) has already been disbursed or is currently pending disbursement. All funds will be distributed well ahead of the 2026 ARPA expenditure deadline. ARI leaders are proudly turning our READI 1.0 regional development plan into reality.

READI 2.0 – THE CONTINUATION

While we are proud of the regional development plan we adopted in 2021 and the work we have done to accomplish the goals outlined in the plan, we acknowledge that there is more work to be done. We do not view READI 2.0 as a separate process; instead, we view READI 2.0 as a continuation of the work we have been doing for the past two years. In fact, our READI 2.0 public engagement process – through additional focus group discussions and stakeholder conversations – validated our READI 1.0 priorities.

For READI 2.0, we adopted the following priorities:

- Priority 1: Rally Housing Investment**
- Priority 2: Raise Incomes**
- Priority 3: Revitalize Quality of Life**
- Priority 4: Reinforce Educational Attainment & Innovation**
- Priority 5: Rural. Reimagined. Marketing Campaign**

We have developed action-oriented strategies to directly address our priorities, featuring our most ambitious set of projects to date. The past two years have allowed us to dive deeper into core areas of our plan – such as childcare, innovation, entrepreneurship and agricultural innovation – to seek more ambitious strategies to address our pressing issues. We engaged additional stakeholders, through focus groups and individual conversations, to refine our plan and ensure it is built for the sustainability of the region. Through this process, we built a long-term strategic approach – with long-term buy-in from public, private, and philanthropic partners – to successfully implement ARI’s regional development plan far beyond the completion of the READI program.

Our READI 2.0 application features over \$1 billion in transformational projects across the region. Each of these projects will directly move the needle on the state’s – and the region’s – economic development goals. ARI will add additional quality of life amenities and increase our housing stock by 900 housing units to drive population growth by potentially 2,000 residents in the next five years. ARI will expand additional education offerings to strengthen the income earning potential of our residents. ARI will invest in critical infrastructure to prepare over 6,000 acres of prime economic development sites to attract high-quality jobs that will diversity the region’s economy.



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However, most importantly, our READI 2.0 application is a billion-dollar investment in rural Indiana. Every dollar invested in ARI will be invested in rural or rural-mixed communities, accomplishing one of the most important goals of READI 2.0 – generational investment in rural Indiana.

Many of our strategies were inspired by successful regions across the country including Idaho's Region IV Development Association (RIVDA). With a similar vision and demographic to ARI, RIVDA provides insight into successful implementation of rural innovation and business development. Boasting an impressive portfolio of agricultural processing and food processing facilities, ARI is continuing to investigate their defining strategies and best practices that allowed that growth. ARI leaders are confident in our region's ability to overcome rural population decline; thus, we researched peer regions with larger populations that have an emphasis on quality of life projects. In Lincoln, Nebraska, their Mayor has outlined a 13-point plan focused on holistically improving quality of life through safety improvements, infrastructure, and downtown investments. With Purdue and Ivy Tech's presence in the ARI region, special attention was paid to the University of Nebraska's Agricultural Innovation Center, connecting aspiring agricultural entrepreneurs to co-working space, resources, and financial capital. Having a similar demographic and manufacturing economic profile to the ARI region, Waterloo, Iowa became another area of interest. Having large scale manufacturing (John Deere) and progressive quality of life projects alike, Waterloo provided inspiration to ARI leaders during the READI 2.0 planning process. ARI is committed to learning from – and collaborating with – these regions beyond READI. We are excited to visit them in the future and continue to learn best practices that leverage manufacturing, agricultural innovation, and transformative quality of life projects to create a region that others aspire to emulate.

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ARI is proving that rural communities are where true collaboration can – and must – occur for the betterment of the state's economy. ARI is where regional leaders collaborate – and not compete – with one another. ARI leaders understand that one community does not lose when a regional partner wins. Instead, ARI leaders celebrate the success of our ARI partners and truly embrace the power of regional success, creating regional empowerment and lifting all communities across the region.

ARI's leaders understand that, unlike our urban and suburban counterparts, growth in rural regions is not a guarantee. Instead, growth in rural communities only results from a steadfast dedication to a well-defined strategy. Our leaders have developed a strategy capable of spurring transformational growth and our region is committed to working together to see our plan to completion. Our goal is not to transform our rural region into a suburban outgrowth of Indianapolis. Instead, we are seeking to strategically position ourselves for growth while maintaining our beloved rural character.



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Something unique is happening along I-74's southeastern corridor. Our leadership is fully invested in regionalism and are committed to a bolder vision for our rural region. We have evolved from a loosely-associated region to a fully-functioning regional entity in two short years. Our recent success and cooperation has led to a level of regional confidence that has never been felt across the region. As a result, our long-term outlook for our region has evolved from 'that probably is not possible here' to 'together, we can accomplish anything.'

This bold attitude has our leaders thinking outside the box and challenging the realm of possibility. Our accomplishments to date have been numerous, but we are not done yet. ARI has the right team in place with leaders that are thinking big and acting bold. ARI has an ambitious set of goals backed by projects designed to transform the region. Through strong leadership and an unrelenting dedication to accomplishing the goals, strategies, and projects outlined in our regional development plan and READI 2.0 application, ARI will become a model of rural revitalization for all rural regions - not just in Indiana – but across the country.

ARI is committed to our rural revitalization, with or without READI, but we understand the magnitude of this moment. With our strong READI 1.0 performance and the limitless possibilities of READI 2.0 ahead of us, together with IEDC, we have a once in a generation opportunity to alter the trajectory of our region. Together, we will prove that housing growth, job creation, entertainment attraction, and – most importantly – population growth in rural regions is possible.

Together, we will Accelerate Rural Indiana.



Part II: READI 1.0 Evaluation

Provide an honest assessment of the region's participation in the first phase of the READI initiative:

How did the region identify and prioritize projects for investment? The region's approach to identifying and prioritizing projects for READI 1.0 reflected a robust, inclusive process. Leveraging grassroots engagement, local elected officials, economic development professionals, community foundations, private partners, non-profit organizations, focus groups and other key partners played a pivotal role in identifying projects that aligned with ARI's regional development plan and addressed the unique needs of individual communities. Once projects were identified, a Steering Committee of local leaders evaluated projects based upon the use of transparent selection criteria explicitly stated in ARI's regional development plan – READI & IEDC criteria, ARI priorities, project readiness, project feasibility, regional impact, and key performance indicators. Our regional leaders were committed to selecting projects that followed the ambitions of our regional development plan. While our primary focus was on regional impact, the Steering Committee also emphasized a balanced distribution of READI funding awards across the region, underscoring ARI's commitment to regionalism that is equitable and supports initiatives across the region. How did the region engage stakeholders in the process? Stakeholder engagement was the cornerstone of the region's READI 1.0 strategy and the foundation of the READI 2.0 application. In the summer of 2021, over 3,000 residents and stakeholders of the region participated in our planning efforts. ARI held our first region-wide workshop, published online surveys, and facilitated forums for anchor institution, youth, and educators. Our comprehensive approach ensured diverse perspectives were the foundation of our READI 1.0 regional development plan. Please provide a summary/status of the region's READI 1.0 investment to date. ARI is blazing a path toward successful implementation of READI 1.0 investment. Upon award announcement, the region swiftly evaluated projects in a collaborative manner, following transparent selection criteria (outlined above), to allocate the region's READI 1.0 award to 16 transformative projects. Once funding decisions were made, all 16 projects were submitted and approved for compliance by IEDC and EY, earning ARI recognition from IEDC as one of 11 READI regions with a fully-approved READI 1.0 portfolio at the Q3 READI Forum in September 2023. Once approved, construction activities progressed quickly. To date, nearly \$10 million of READI 1.0 funding (50% of award) has already been disbursed or is currently pending disbursement. All funds will be distributed well ahead of the 2026 ARPA expenditure deadline. Five of the region's projects are completed, including Greensburg's Inclusion Park and Batesville's Skate Park which were two of the first READI projects completed in the state. Seven additional projects are underway, demonstrating tangible progress and creating excitement amongst residents and key stakeholders across the region. The formation of the Accelerate Rural Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA) underscores a forward-looking investment in local capacity and governance structures and ensures the region's sustainability beyond READI. With the proper regional structure in place, the RDA assumed the role as ARI's READI Fiscal Agent on January 1, 2024.

Identify lessons learned and any issues that, if addressed, would increase opportunities for successful implementation of the region's READI 2.0 application.

A key lesson learned from READI 1.0 is the pivotal role of a formalized regional entity to serve as the Fiscal Agent. As a newly-formed region without a formal regional entity, assigning the role of Fiscal Agent to a



particular organization required a creative solution. The region's community foundations entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Decatur County Community Foundation (DCCF) taking responsibility as the formally-designated Fiscal Agent. DCCF's executive leadership are incredibly supportive of READI and embraced their role in the process, but it was evident that the region needed a centralized, regional entity to streamline administrative processes, enhance coordination, and serve as a focal point for managing initiatives. Recognizing this, the Accelerate Rural Indiana Regional Development Authority (ARI RDA) was formed and represents a strategic solution to overcome these issues and has proven instrumental in addressing administrative challenges. The ARI RDA is governed by a Development Board of five non-elected representatives with equal representation across the ARI region. By the time READI 2.0 awards are announced, Development Board members will be one year into their leadership of the region, and the ARI RDA will be primed and prepared for the implementation of the READI 2.0 application. Immediately after the formation of the ARI RDA, the Development Board entered into an agreement with a contract administrator to provide READI program management and support to the Development Board, ensuring all READI-related items can be handled efficiently. The Development Board has entered into an agreement with an accounting firm to provide financial oversight of the organization and handle all disbursement of READI-related funds. The ARI RDA is equipped with the tools, talent, and capacity necessary to implement READI 1.0, READI 2.0, and any future regional development initiatives. While the lesson above has been valuable, perhaps the greatest lesson learned from READI 1.0 has been the regional bonds formed as a result of the process. Strong economic ties made us confident that our region made sense, but READI has shown us the degree to which our region belongs together. Intentional cooperation through the planning and implementation processes of READI 1.0 has built a bond and level of trust amongst our team that makes our group feel far more like a family than a group of competing communities. These strong personal bonds have fostered an environment where better professional decisions are made. Because READI gives us a forum to meet, we are sharing non-READI related ideas before and after meetings, attending festivals and events in each other's communities, and gaining value from our regional partnership far beyond our READI award. For years, members of ARI had been missing out on the power of regionalism due to being involved in regions that did not make logical sense. READI has shown us just how powerful regionalism can be when done correctly. We firmly believe we are finally doing regionalism the way it should be done – as a region of partners on the same mission: to Accelerate Rural Indiana.

Describe the current capacity of the regional organization as well as strengths, weaknesses, and whether potential changes or support are needed to enhance the organization's long-term viability and sustainability.

Current Capacity:ARI is experiencing a phase of unprecedented capacity. Between the ARI RDA's Development Board and READI Steering Committee, the ARI RDA is served by nearly 30 individuals dedicated to the successful implementation of the READI program. The newly-formed ARI RDA serves as a central hub, streamlining administrative functions and providing a structured platform for effective decision-making and coordination. This newfound capacity positions ARI to fully maximize READI 1.0, READI 2.0, and future opportunities beyond READI. **Strengths:**ARI's greatest strength is its leadership team who wholeheartedly enjoys working with one another. Our elected officials, economic development professionals, non-profit organizations and private leaders are just as dedicated to the success of their regional partners as they are to the success of their own initiatives. In fact, Batesville voluntarily offered a portion of their READI allotment to ensure a priority project in Shelbyville had sufficient funding. Another prime example of this genuine



commitment has been the presence of regional leaders at groundbreaking and ribbon cutting ceremonies throughout the region. Although not mandatory events, regional leaders have traveled to neighboring communities to celebrate milestones for regional projects. Most impressively, this regional collaboration has continued with the introduction of new regional partners. In 2023, five new RDA Development Board members were introduced to the team and in 2024 two new Mayors entered office. Our regional collaboration has continued seamlessly. Our leadership strength is evident in the impressive pace of completing projects and disbursing READI 1.0 funds. ARI is on target to disburse 50% of READI 1.0 funds by Q2 of 2024 and we are well on pace to disburse all funds by the 2026 deadline. Regardless of the unexpected twists and turns that are bound to come with the implementation of such a large-scale funding opportunity, this region has proven it will find a way to link arms as regional partners and march toward a solution that makes sense for everyone.

Weaknesses:A lack of institutional history creates a need for ongoing foundational organizational building. While early efforts have focused on the formation of the RDA to create a formal regional structure, future efforts need to be focused on building on going public engagement and communicating the important work being accomplished by the region. Through more effective use of the region's website and relationships with local media, the region must tell its story.

Financial capital is not abundant in our region because we do not have large private foundations or educational endowments. However, our region has been strongly supported by our local government, community foundations, private, and community partners. Our strong partnerships give us confidence in ongoing support for delivering our READI 2.0 initiatives.

Changes/Support Needed:As the ARI RDA continues to evolve, a full-time Executive Director is needed. This leadership role would bring proactive guidance, strategic vision, and dedicated oversight, ensuring the organization remains adaptive and responsive to emerging opportunities and challenges.



Part III: Review

Keeping in mind the analysis from the previous section, regions should provide the identified data points in this section and describe how these metrics have shifted over the years. The purpose of this section is to use the economic and demographic changes occurring in the region to allow regions to conduct projections of these metrics to determine how they will contribute to the overall success of the READI 2.0 program.

Key performance indicators	Indiana	Region
Total population (U.S. Census Bureau)	6,751,340	95,140
Total employment (U.S. Census Bureau)	3,020,345	46,599
Per capita income (Bureau of Economic Analysis)	\$ 51,645.95	\$ 52,645.41
Total population with bachelor's degree or higher (U.S. Census Bureau)	1,253,299	13,321
Total housing units (U.S. Census Bureau)	2,911,562	41,150
Total rental housing units (U.S. Census Bureau)	680,964	10,426
Total owner-occupied units (U.S. Census Bureau)	1,097,622	27,306
Number of new business start-ups (Small Business Development Center)	150,067	34

Please describe the current landscape of childcare within your region. Information could include current challenges to childcare, the number of facilities and/or seats and quality of childcare in your area. Visit the READI website for supplemental information that may be available.

During the READI planning process, childcare was identified by stakeholders, particularly employers, as a significant barrier to workforce attraction and retention across the region. In fact, only 19% of the 1,800 respondents to our public survey rated childcare options as above average. According to Brighter Futures Indiana, licensed childcare capacity in ARI only accounts for 39.8% of children who may need childcare in the region which is far below average for Indiana (55.0%). As a result, 16 of ARI's 21 census tracts are considered 'childcare deserts' according to the Center for American Progress. Restricted access to childcare is hurting ARI's economy, costing an estimated \$20.6 million annually in absences and turnover due to a lack of childcare based on the methodology of a 2018 study by the Indiana University Public Policy Institute. Quality of our childcare offering is also a major issue in ARI. According to Bright Futures Indiana, only 22.6% of children in ARI that might need access to childcare have access to a high-quality Paths to Quality program. Quality early childhood education is fundamental to brain development with 90% of the brain developing before the age of five, according to the Bipartisan Policy Center. If our region aspires to increase educational attainment and income earning potential in the long-term, we must improve access to quality early childhood education in



the short-term to ensure our children are starting their educational journeys on a path that's leading toward long-term success.

Please describe the current innovation ecosystem within your region. Think about current challenges or barriers to innovation activities, the number of new business start-ups and current resources to increase innovative activities in your area (patents, research and development funding, etc).

Accelerate Rural Indiana is proving that innovation is not limited to the nation's metropolitan centers. Stats America publishes an Innovation Intelligence Index to provide a gauge of innovation in regions across the country. On the headline innovation index, ARI (118.7) outpaces Indiana (100.5). ARI's innovation ecosystem is marked by a dynamic interplay of sectors, including agriculture, manufacturing, logistics, and small business, each contributing to the diversity, economic vitality, and sustainability of our region. ARI is home to the corporate headquarters of Hillenbrand, a global industrial company that serves customers in over 100 countries. Agricultural innovation is also notable, with major agriculture industry titans calling ARI home like POET Biofuels, Bunge, Diamond Pet Foods. and Purdue University's Equine Specialty Hospital. Much of our region's innovation is driven by Foreign Direct Investment. In total, over 30 foreign companies have invested in the region (such as Honda's Indiana Auto Plant, Valeo, Intat Precision, and Ryobi Die Casting), providing high-quality jobs to the region and pushing the envelope for innovation. Another core tenant of our economy is our entrepreneurial ecosystem. Nearly 99% of businesses in ARI have under 99 employees, according to Lightcast Q4 2023 estimates. ARI is proud to be home to three small businesses featured in IEDC's 2023 Entrepreneurship Yearbook: Green Sign Company (Greensburg), Daisy's Doggie Daycare (Batesville), and The Hiviz, a Batesville female-owned start-up named IEDC's 2023 start-up of the year. To accelerate small business growth, ARI needs additional small business launch and co-working spaces.

List your top 10 employers. List your civic institutions including higher education and philanthropic organizations. Please specify companies or organizations, not industries.

TOP EMPLOYERS – Honda Indiana Auto Plant – Greensburg (2,700 employees)Baxter (formerly Hillrom) – Batesville (1,400 employees)Major Health Partners – Shelbyville (1,169 employees)Knauf Insulation – Shelbyville (1,135 employees)Horseshoe Indianapolis – Shelbyville (917 employees)Ryobi Die Casting – Shelbyville (785 employees)Valeo Engine Cooling – Greensburg (725 employees)Margaret Mary Health – Batesville (500 employees)Batesville Casket – Batesville (500 employees)Kroger Logistics – Shelbyville (471 employees)CIVIC INSTITUTIONS – SchoolsBatesville Community SchoolsDecatur County Community SchoolsGreensburg Community SchoolsRush County SchoolsShelbyville Central SchoolsShelby Eastern SchoolsNorthwestern (Shelby) Consolidated Schools Southwestern Shelby SchoolsBlue River Career CenterFFA Chapters (every high school in ARI)Independent HospitalsDecatur County Memorial HospitalRush Memorial HospitalMajor Health PartnersMargaret Mary HealthEconomic Development OrganizationsBatesville Economic Development CommissionEconomic Development Corporation of Greensburg/Decatur CountyRush County Economic and Community Development CorporationShelby County Development CorporationAccredited Main Street OrganizationsBatesville Main StreetHeart of RushvilleMain Street ShelbyvilleMain Street GreensburgCommunity FoundationsBlue River Community FoundationDecatur County Community FoundationRipley County Community Foundation Rush County Community Foundation Higher EducationIvy Tech Community College – 4 satellite locations (Batesville, Greensburg, Rushville, Shelbyville)Purdue University – Caesars Entertainment Equine Specialty Hospital (Shelbyville) & Purdue Extension



List the counties or areas that are considered rural and rural-mix. List the counties or areas that are considered disadvantaged communities. Visit the READI website for supplemental information that may be available.

Rural/Rural-Mixed Counties: Accelerate Rural Indiana is rural in every sense of the word. In fact, ARI is one of only two READI regions that are 100% rural or rural-mixed. Rush, Ripley (Batesville), and Franklin (Batesville) counties are classified as 'rural' while Shelby and Decatur counties are classified as 'rural-mix'. Every dollar of READI 2.0 funds invested in the ARI region will be a dollar invested toward accomplishing IEDC's goal of investing 25% of READI 2.0 funds in rural communities. As our name suggests, ARI represents the heart of accelerating economic development and growth in rural Indiana. Disadvantaged Communities: Accelerate Rural Indiana also represents an opportunity to invest in disadvantaged communities. Rush, Shelby, Decatur, and Franklin (Batesville) Counties are classified as disadvantaged communities. Ripley County (Batesville) is the only county in the region not classified as disadvantaged. Based on our currently proposed portfolio of READI 2.0 projects, 93% of ARI's READI 2.0 investment would be in disadvantaged communities, uplifting and empowering Hoosiers that have long been left behind by Indiana's economic growth. ARI's strategic focus on rural and disadvantaged communities aligns with IEDC's broader goal of driving growth and prosperity in regions that face unique challenges and opportunities.

Based on the datapoints above, describe how the region's metrics have shifted since 2021. What are your anticipated projections of change given your READI 1.0 projects?

With many READI 1.0 projects still under construction, the full impacts of READI 1.0 have yet to be experienced across the region. With that being said, our project portfolio has the potential to significantly shift our region's metrics. Across the region, READI 1.0 will add 300 single-family and 300 multi-family housing units. Given ARI's average household size (2.31), our region could attract nearly 1,400 residents to the region in the short-term as a result of housing investment alone. In addition to population growth, our region has also experienced substantial job growth with ARI's READI 1.0 project portfolio. In total, over 280 jobs will be created with Diamond Pet Foods adding 200 jobs, the Julia and Nicholas Runnebohm Early Learning Center adding 50 jobs, and the Rush County REC Center adding 30 jobs. In all cases, wages will be higher than local averages, adding the opportunity to increase regional income, spur additional housing growth, and enhance the region's quality of life offerings. Not to mention, several ARI READI 1.0 projects will be major drivers of tourism activity, including Greensburg's Pirate Park (sports tournaments) and Inclusion Park (inclusive playscape), Shelbyville's Indoor Sports Complex (sports tournaments), and Batesville's Kids Discovery Factor (STEAM field trips). In total, our READI 1.0 portfolio is expected to attract over 170,000 annual visitors to the region, supporting local businesses and providing an opportunity to attract talent from across the country.



Identify a regional community outside of the state of Indiana that is similar to your region to use as a benchmark. Provide the selected metrics in the table below. When selecting a peer community, please consider the following key components for comparison (not all datapoints need to be an exact match): Population size (\pm 5000), Median income (\pm \$5000), Industries, Similar assets, General demographics, Geography

Peer Community: Idaho Region IV Development Association

Key performance indicators	Region	Peer Community
Total population	95,368	213,919
Total employment	30,434	69,599
Per capita income	\$ 33,146.50	\$ 32,203.63
Total population with bachelor's degree or higher	21.03%	21.45%
Total housing units	38,693	88,204
Total rental housing units	10,588	25,240
Total owner-occupied housing units	28,095	62,964

Based on the identified benchmark community, describe any specific best practices, defining strategies, or measurable goals the community is doing that inspires action for your region.

In our search, it was difficult to find a region exactly comparable to our three-county region, as many regions across the country are comprised of 8-10 counties. Thus, we evaluated KPI's of potential peer regions on a per-county basis. Our research led us to the Idaho Region IV Development Association (RIVDA), a dynamic cluster of 8 counties surrounding, and including, Twin Falls. Comparing RIVDA to ARI on a per county basis, our KPI's align: Population – RIVDA: 26,739, ARI: 23,842 Employment – RIVDA: 8,699, ARI: 10,145 Housing units – RIVDA: 11,025, ARI:12,897 Rental housing units – RIVDA: 3,155, ARI:3,529. Similar to the vision of ARI, RIVDA aims to create "The Pathways to Accelerate South-Central Idaho." Like ARI, RIVDA, is connected by an interstate highway (Interstate 84) and continues to capitalize on its transportation infrastructure as a major asset. RIVDA's food processing portfolio is a point of inspiration with Darigold, Chobani, Idahoan, Idaho Milk, Agropur, Glanbia, McCain, New Cold, and Clif Bar all calling RIVDA home. We also took inspiration from RIVDA's capitalization of their natural landscape to promote regional tourism, something that ARI is prioritizing in READI 2.0. With Indianapolis and its adjacent suburbs continually growing into our region, the ARI team expanded our search for peer regions with larger population bases that are placing an emphasis on quality of life projects. Lincoln, Nebraska, and its surrounding counties, provide numerous quality of life ideas for ARI. In October 2023, Lincoln's Mayor outlined a 13-point plan to make Lincoln the "Quality of Life Capital of the Country." ARI takes inspiration from Lincoln's holistic approach to community improvement through safety, infrastructure, and downtown investments. Lincoln has also leveraged its agricultural economy and connection to the University of Nebraska to launch the Agricultural Innovation Center, connecting aspiring agricultural entrepreneurs to co-working space, meeting space, business resources and financial capital. ARI is motivated to leverage our partnerships with Ivy Tech and Purdue University to invest in a similar project in ARI



in the future. Waterloo, Iowa, became another area of interest with a demographic and manufacturing economy profile comparable to the ARI region. While their region may be known for its large-scale manufacturing (like John Deere), they are still creating progressive quality of life projects, such as Waterloo Center for the Arts, Phelps Youth Pavilion/Children's Museum, Lost Island Water Park, and Cedar Valley Sportsplex. ARI is committed to learning from – and collaborating with – these regions beyond READI. We are excited to visit them in the future and continue learning best practices that leverage manufacturing, agricultural innovation, and transformative quality of life projects to make our region one that others aspire to emulate.

Please describe the region's current barriers to growth (e.g., housing challenges, childcare availability, or infrastructure). Think about housing, infrastructure, childcare, and/or other feasibility studies your region has recently completed or conversations and meetings with your regional stakeholders. Examples can be attached as part of the appendix.

AVAILABLE HOUSING SUPPLY DOES NOT MEET LONG-TERM REGIONAL NEEDS – ARI is experiencing a housing shortage. Several barriers were identified that are preventing the attraction of additional housing investment, including the need to expand infrastructure access to targeted housing development sites and the need to incentivize large-scale developers and builders to invest in the region. PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE MUST BE IMPROVED TO SUPPORT GROWTH – Access to public infrastructure was identified as a barrier to housing and job growth for the region. Stakeholders identified numerous development projects that were unable to proceed due to inadequate access to public infrastructure and the relative cost to attain it. Several sites were identified across the region with transformational growth potential, including Tom Hession Drive, Business Enterprise Park, and St. Paul; however, the largest barrier to realizing that growth was inadequate access to infrastructure and the capital to prepare shovel-ready sites. Residents and leaders recognized that speed to construction completion is a new economic development incentive and investments in infrastructure are critically important for regional competitiveness. CURRENT AND FUTURE RESIDENTS REQUIRE IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE AMENITIES – The population growth rate from the 2010 to the 2020 US Census is far lower in ARI (+1.5%) compared to Indiana's (+4.7%). Our region understands that creating quality places with opportunities to experience unique cultural and entertainment options is central to retaining and recruiting talent and accelerating our population growth. Across the region, our public engagement participants echoed the need to expand entertainment, dining, lodging, and childcare options to ensure we can compete with urban centers. Through READI, we will expand our quality of life offerings to increase our population growth rate +5.0% over the next ten years. ECONOMIC GROWTH REQUIRES GROWING OUR SKILLED WORKFORCE – In such a tight labor market, a major barrier to economic growth in the region was the availability of skilled workforce. Major employers such as Honda Indiana Auto Plant, Major Health Partners, and Batesville Community School Corporation – and small businesses alike – are struggling to find skilled workers to fill open positions. Business leaders expressed a need to upskill residents to meet the technical demands for advanced manufacturing and skilled labor positions. While the region has a strong partnership with local high schools, career and technical education programs, and Ivy Tech, ARI lacks the presence of a 4-year university campus which was identified as a barrier to workforce development. THE REGION MUST TELL ITS GREAT STORY TO THE WORLD – Across the region, residents felt that ARI – and our member communities – have a very compelling story to tell prospective residents. Although community pride runs strong in the ARI region, our Hoosier humility often prevents our region from sharing our pride with folks outside the region. While our residents do not want to lose sight of that humility, the region requires a shift toward more



proactive storytelling and marketing to showcase our achievements and attract additional talent and investment.

Given the regional data and needs assessment, highlight the region's three to five priority needs.

EXPAND AND IMPROVE HOUSING OPTIONS - Across the region, we heard repeatedly that a lack of available housing and existing home quality were preventing prospective residents from moving to the region. According to our survey, over 80% of respondents rated regional housing options at or below average. We are confident that our region's housing affordability (1.86 housing price-to-income ratio compared to the state's ratio of 2.21) coupled with an increased housing stock, will create a tremendous opportunity to expand the region's population and talent pool.

UPGRADE AND EXPAND BASIC WATER, SANITARY SEWER, ROAD, AND BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE TO MEET CURRENT AND FUTURE DEMANDS OF LOCAL HOUSING AND LOCAL BUSINESSES - With expanded access to public water and sanitary sewer infrastructure, residents and leaders of our region are confident that properties across the region would be attractive to new industrial and commercial developments. Increased broadband access would also increase the attractiveness of the region to current and prospective residents. By making strategic investments in improving and expanding public infrastructure, our region can expand both our employment base and wage levels through targeted industry attraction and grow the population base to support economic growth.

MAKE PLACE-BASED IMPROVEMENTS IN ASSETS SUCH AS TRAIL NETWORKS, PARKS AND FAMILY ACTIVITY PROGRAMMING, RETAIL AMENITIES, CHILD CARE, ETC. - Throughout the region, there was a recognition that quality of life improvements are central to workforce attraction and population growth. Stakeholders expressed strong interest in expanding entertainment, dining, lodging, and childcare options. Nearly 90% of our survey respondents rated entertainment at or below average, while roughly 88% of respondents rated dining and shopping options at or below average. Increased amenities, combined with the safety, affordability, and small-town charm of our region has the potential to drive population growth.

INCREASE REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BY CREATING CLEAR PATHWAYS FOR COLLEGE-BOUND STUDENTS, STUDENTS DIRECTLY ENTERING THE WORKFORCE, AND HELPING UPSKILL ADULTS FOR CAREER ADVANCEMENT - Our K-12 educational institutions are a bright spot in our region, as 92% of our survey respondents rated public education at or above average in the region. Our region has an opportunity to leverage our quality high schools, Ivy Tech Community College, and Purdue University with community and state workforce training programs to expand the educational attainment of the region's workforce. By upskilling our workforce, our businesses and industries, both current and future, can reach their full growth potential and maximize economic output in ARI.

TELL OUR REGIONAL STORY - Across the region, stakeholders were unified in their pride of the region and their individual communities. Regional stakeholders felt the region had assets that would be attractive to visitors and future residents, but a lack of marketing to tell our story was preventing the region from realizing its fullest potential. We believe that marketing our regional assets provides an opportunity to attract prospective talent to make ARI their future home.



Part IV: Regional Growth Strategies and Action Plan

Please list three to five goals to meet your region's priorities. Also, identify 3-5 strategies to help achieve each identified goal.

Goals	Strategy
<p>GOAL #1: RALLY HOUSING INVESTMENT:</p> <p>ARI aspires to add 1,100 housing units to the region by 2030. By securing sites, investing in infrastructure, and eliminating barriers to single-family and multi-family developers, ARI will transform the region's housing stock and drive population growth.</p>	<p>STRATEGIES: RALLY HOUSING INVESTMENT:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete a regional housing study. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Utilize ARI RDA to update regional housing study to demonstrate market demand. 2. Develop additional owner-occupied subdivisions and multi-family rental housing units to expand our region's housing supply in the region and enable future population growth. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Leverage regional approach to demonstrate demand and economies of scale to developers and builders. b. Reduce development barriers by filling financial gaps (through READI and/or Residential Infrastructure Funding), reducing development time through streamlined planning and zoning approvals, reducing local fees, etc. c. Secure property for potential housing development and extend existing infrastructure to facilitate future development. d. Prioritize housing investments near existing quality of life amenities such as parks, trails, schools, public gathering spaces, economic development corridors, etc. e. Encourage a diverse array of housing options (starter/workforce, middle income, upper income, etc.) to ensure current/potential residents of the region of varying income levels can find homes in the region. f. Ensure local ordinances prioritize architectural standards that deliver the housing product desired by the region. 3. Create a regional blight elimination/in-fill housing program to expand the region's housing supply and enable future population growth while simultaneously maximizing the use of existing infrastructure, returning properties to taxable status, and minimizing the loss of farmland. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Secure blighted properties, raze existing structures, and create in-fill housing opportunities to revitalize neighborhoods, increase neighboring property values, increase community attractiveness, and restore neighborhood pride.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Develop single-family or multi-family housing units on brownfield or abandoned properties. c. Redevelop historic community structures (former schools, industrial facilities, hotels, etc.) into multi-family housing units to preserve key cultural cornerstones in communities across the region. d. Encourage the investment of housing in downtowns/urban cores, including redeveloping vacant downtown buildings, and activating the 2nd and 3rd floors of existing downtown buildings.
<p>GOAL #2: RAISE INCOMES:</p> <p>ARI aims to expand shovel-ready acreage by 6,000 acres by 2030. By investing in infrastructure for the region's most strategic sites, ARI can leverage shovel-ready sites to diversify the regional economy, and drive up regional income by 6% over the next 5 years.</p>	<p>STRATEGIES: RAISE INCOMES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Invest in growth infrastructure to ensure economic development can "operate at the speed of business." <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Expand shovel-ready acreage by 6,000-acres. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Secure property near existing economic development clusters and extend infrastructure to sites. ii. Activate currently underdeveloped I-74 interchanges: St. Paul, New Point, SR 244, Pleasant View b. Invest in utility infrastructure improvements and expansions in underinvested small, rural incorporated towns. 2. Pursue economic development to diversify the regional economy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Leverage existing agricultural bioprocessing assets (such as POET Biofuels and Bunge), to position the region as Indiana's Agricultural Innovation Corridor and attract investment in bioprocessing, industrial biotechnology, biofuels, sustainable aviation fuels, food processing, and precision fermentation. b. Leverage I-74 Business Corridor's (separate marketing region for I-74 from Shelby to Dearborn County) agricultural strategy to attract value-added agricultural investment. c. Leverage shovel-ready acreage to diversity the regional economy by marketing to data centers, advanced manufacturing, robotics, technology, artificial intelligence, semiconductors, EV and battery production, etc. d. Leverage regional strengths (logistics infrastructure, manufacturing workforce, agricultural production, and innovation) to attract additional economic development to the region. 3. Unleash the Horsepower of ARI's Entrepreneurial Economy.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Create co-working/launch spaces across the region. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Leverage Greensburg’s Studebaker Studio as a model for additional co-working spaces. ii. Create spaces where aspiring entrepreneurs, successful entrepreneurs, investors, academia, remote workers, visitors, creators and innovators can share office, lab, and conference spaces while accessing high-speed internet. iii. Utilize a networked approach to connect regional co-working spaces. b. Connect aspiring entrepreneurs to financial capital. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Facilitate the creation of an ARI angel investor fund to enable investment in additional innovation. c. Expand access to reliable, high-speed broadband internet region-wide. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Support the strategies and action plans included in county and state digital equity plans.
<p>GOAL #3: REVITALIZE QUALITY OF LIFE:</p> <p>ARI strives to attract an additional 2,500 residents by 2030. Through investments in enhanced public spaces, arts & culture, and additional entertainment options, ARI can create a more vibrant, inclusive, and desirable living environment to attract talent our region.</p>	<p>STRATEGIES: REVITALIZE QUALITY OF LIFE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand quality of life amenities to retain and attract talent. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Expand the offering of public spaces. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Leverage existing award-winning regional attractions (like Rushville’s Riverside Park and Shelbyville’s Blue River Park) to add unique parks, trails, and greenspaces. ii. Leverage Greensburg’s Inclusion Park as a model to ensure public spaces are fully inclusive. iii. Develop a regional ‘rails-to-trails’ network utilizing former railways. b. Add additional arts and cultural amenities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Celebrate local cultures and regional history with murals, art, sculptures, memorials, etc. ii. Enhance and promote regional festivals/event spaces. iii. Expand offering of performance arts venues and outdoor amphitheaters. iv. Expand offering of large-capacity event spaces. v. Fully embrace, celebrate, and integrate international cultures – such as Japanese and Latino – into the cultural fabric of the region through intentional projects, programs, festivals, events, and initiatives. c. Expand additional entertainment activity in community



	<p>cores/downtowns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Drive activity downtown through farmers markets, shared community spaces, coffee shops, dining, shopping, and pedestrian/bicycle paths. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Support and strengthen the region's four independent hospitals to ensure access to quality healthcare in the region. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Invest in the expansion of healthcare-related services including mental healthcare, substance abuse recovery, oncology, and prenatal care, etc. b. Leverage quality of life amenities to attract and retain healthcare professionals. c. Expand public transportation access to healthcare facilities. 3. Enhance social service provision. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Leverage Rush County Community Center as a model to consolidate social services. 4. Expand quality childcare access. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Enact the findings of Lilly Endowment GIFT VIII childcare planning efforts to increase the number of childcare seats across the region. b. Leverage the Shelbyville Early Learning Center as a model for future childcare projects across the region.
<p>GOAL #4: REINFORCE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT & INNOVATION:</p> <p>ARI seeks to double the post-secondary offering in the region by 2030. Through new and expanded partnerships with higher education institutions, ARI will strengthen the income earning potential of residents and develop a more educated talent pipeline for regional employers.</p>	<p>STRATEGIES: REINFORCE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT & INNOVATION:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Empower existing high-quality K-12 schools across the region. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Expand early learning opportunities across the region to improve the educational foundations for regional youth. b. Invest in hands-on career readiness education in high schools, utilizing Batesville High School's industrial lab and Rushville's emergency services high school training programs as models, to prepare students for entry into the regional workforce immediately upon graduation. c. Invest in opportunities for high school students to obtain post-secondary credits, accelerating the pathway to higher-education degrees/credentials. d. Support the region's Agricultural Education/FFA programs and other Career & Technical Education programs. e. Build a regional career center to increase access to vocational training and career readiness programs. 2. Expand Post-Secondary Offerings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Enhance educational opportunities at Purdue University's Equine Specialty Hospital by expanding the facility to offer additional diagnostic and therapeutic modalities and teaching and learning opportunities. b. Expand the presence of post-secondary educational



	<p>institutions, including Ivy Tech Community College, Purdue University, and Vincennes University to ensure residents of the region have access to credentials and college degrees. Investigate Project 140 as a potential site for post-secondary education campus.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Partner with post-secondary institutions and major employers to train and prepare residents of the region for jobs of the future (advanced manufacturing, robotics, technology, artificial intelligence, etc.). <p>3. Grow Skilled Workforce.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Incentivize the attraction of jobs with post-secondary educational requirements to diversify the local job market and provide additional employment opportunities for residents with higher levels of educational attainment. b. Reverse leakage of residents with post-secondary education. c. Incentivize professionals to live/work in the region. <p>4. Prepare workers to become successful entrepreneurs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Equip successful trades/small business workers with the business and financial background to sustain and grow the small business ecosystem.
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Section B: Funding Request: This section should be utilized to estimate and set target goals for READI 2.0. Regions should include funding from other programs that the region or organizations are seeking, such as EPA funding, College and Community Collaboration Grant, Next Level Trails, other federal funding, or any other philanthropic initiatives. READI 1.0 data from projects funded can be used as a baseline to estimate totals below. If projects have been identified for READI 2.0, those can also be utilized to fill in this section.

Overall planned investment required to implement the strategies successfully	\$ 1,031,287,000.00
Requested READI 2.0 funds	\$ 75,000,000.00
Anticipated matching funding sources	\$ 956,287,000.00
Private funding	\$ 827,000,000.00
Philanthropic	\$ 12,000,000.00
Local Funding	\$ 92,000,000.00
Other State funding	\$ 24,500,000.00
Federal funding	\$ 787,000.00
Percentage of anticipated READI funding towards rural and rural-mix communities	100



Percentage of anticipated READI funding towards disadvantaged communities	93
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For each goal/strategy, identify the action plan for proposed implementation. This includes description of specific opportunities/projects and/or examples of the types of investments the region is considering in achieving its goals. Include suggested milestones and timelines for each strategy. (300 words maximum per goal area)

Action plans
<p>Goal 1 – Rally Housing Investment.</p> <p>Park Road Acres Housing - 300 new single-family homes will be built on a 115-acre property which has been a priority of several City of Greensburg Comprehensive Plans. This housing project is located on prime, undeveloped land that is within walking distance of Greensburg’s historic downtown, bowling alley, basketball and tennis courts, golf course, fairgrounds, and business-class airport. READI 2.0 Ask: \$5,000,000 Total Budget: \$70,000,000 Timeline: 3-5 years Impact: 300 single-family homes</p> <p>Crestline Apartments - Crestline Development LLC is proposing four mostly identical 48-unit multi-family housing projects in all four cities in the ARI region. By repeating similar projects in multiple locations, the developer can benefit from efficiencies in construction and design, allowing for the standardization of architectural plans, layouts, and building components, and providing opportunities for bulk purchasing of materials. This will be ARI’s first housing development utilizing a regional approach, providing a test case for future developers. READI 2.0 Ask: \$3,333,333 Total Budget: \$44,906,066 Timeline: 1-3 years Impact: 192 multi-family rental housing units</p> <p>West 16th Street Housing - West 16th Street is a newly-extended roadway that was identified in the City of Rushville’s Comprehensive Plan as a key corridor for housing development. Rushville secured a 49-acre site on 16th Street and is acting as the prime developer for the site to prepare it for development. The City has adopted a master development plan for the property, which includes multi-family and single-family housing opportunities. The Rushville is actively pursuing three separate housing projects on West 16th Street READI 2.0 Ask: \$2,050,000 Total Budget: \$30,413,700 Timeline: 1-3 years Impact: 64 custom homes, 35 starter homes, 56 market-rate apartments</p>



Goal 2 – Raise Incomes.

Tom Hession Drive is the completion of a priority roadway corridor in Shelbyville. Phase I of the project has been completed, attracting a \$160 million investment from POET Biofuels. READI 2.0 completes the final two phases of the project, linking Phase I to Shelbyville's existing industrial park and creating an agricultural innovation corridor.

READI 2.0 Ask: \$8,000,000

Total Budget: \$166,000,000

Timeline: 2-3 years

Impact: 1,000+ acres of development potential and wage growth

The Business Enterprise Park would extend utilities to approximately 550 acres of property directly across I-74 from Honda's Indiana Auto Plant in Greensburg. The site benefits from significant electric infrastructure, making it a prime location for a data center (a hyper-center and/or a series of smaller enterprise centers).

READI 2.0 Ask: \$250,000

Total Budget: \$102,750,000

Timeline: 1-2 years

Impact: 550 acres of development potential and wage growth

Industrial Park Road is the completion/extension of roadway and related infrastructure to provide access to roughly 20 acres in Batesville's Industrial Park. With abundant water access, the site is ideal for food processing.

READI 2.0 Ask: \$2,000,000

Total Budget: \$34,000,000

Timeline: 1-2 years

Impact: 20 acres of development potential and wage growth

Long Term: The St. Paul I-74 interchange is located on the borders of Shelby, Decatur, and Rush Counties and has the potential to be Indiana's next mega development. Surrounding the interchange is approximately 4,000 acres of land for potential development, perfect for technology/innovation industrial, commercial, mixed-use, and/or residential investment. St. Paul is where Indiana's transportation network meets Cincinnati's labor shed.

READI 2.0 Ask: \$2,365,000

Total Budget: \$104,730,000

Timeline: 5-10 years

Impact: 4,000+ acres of development potential and wage growth



Goal 3 – Revitalize Quality of Life

Trails at Margaret Mary Health - Margaret Mary Health (MMH) announced plans for a new hospital as the first phase of an expanded health and wellness campus in Batesville. The new 124,000 square foot hospital is designed to enhance the patient experience by using innovative technology. READI funds would build walking trails and green spaces surrounding the new campus. Future phases of the MMH campus could include residential development.

READI 2.0 Ask: \$2,000,000

Total Budget: \$117,200,000

Timeline: 2-3 years

Impact: 5k walking trail, enhanced healthcare, and future residential development

Non-Profit Center - The Blue River (Shelby County) Community Foundation developed a plan for creating a Non-Profit Center to co-locate social services-oriented organizations. The space will include a centralized food pantry operation, industrial kitchen, visitation space, family resource center, navigator services, and computer lab. A 30,000 square foot blighted building was donated to the project.

READI 2.0 Ask: \$2,750,000

Total Budget: \$2,750,000

Timeline: 2-3 years

Impact: Enhanced social services provision

Shelby County Players Civic Theatre - The Shelby County Players (SCP) is a nonprofit organization that has produced over 150 plays and musicals. SCP desires a safe, accessible facility to fulfill its mission and has purchased a blighted building to repurpose for an award-winning community theater.

READI 2.0 Ask: \$1,000,000

Total Budget: \$8,250,000

Timeline: 1-2 years

Impact: 5,000 square foot 175-seat theatre

Decatur County Fairgrounds - Decatur County has completed a Master Plan to upgrade the Decatur County Fairgrounds, including a new multi-use convention building, commercial kitchen, Purdue STEM Lab, new equine facility, and outdoor amphitheater.

READI 2.0 Ask: \$2,000,000

Total Budget: \$4,000,000

Timeline: 2-3 years

Impact: Enhanced regional destination.



Goal 4 – Reinforce Educational Attainment & Innovation.

The Batesville Innovation Hub is an 8,000 square feet expansion of the Batesville Memorial Public Library and will feature space for innovation, creativity, and community activities including: a 200-person multipurpose room, meeting spaces, maker space; outdoor amphitheater; and study spaces.

READI 2.0 Ask: \$2,000,000

Total Budget: \$8,000,000

Timeline: 1-2 years

Impact: 8,000 square feet of innovation activities

Purdue University Equine Specialty Hospital - In 2017, Purdue University opened the Caesar Entertainment Equine Specialty Hospital in Shelbyville, which offers extensive diagnostic and therapeutic modalities. Purdue owns 50 acres of developable property adjacent to the hospital and plans to expand the hospital, adding a new surgical suite, laboratory space, and imagining center.

READI 2.0 Ask: \$2,000,000

Total Budget: \$33,000,000

Timeline: 1-2 years

Impact: Enhanced higher-education presence and Midwestern equine destination

The Rushville Launch Center, the final aspect of Rushville's 2016 Stellar Communities Designation, will be a space where solo professionals, satellite teams, growing businesses, and established enterprises can collaborate and thrive.

READI 2.0 Ask: \$550,000

Total Budget: \$1,700,000

Timeline: 1-2 years

Impact: 13 remote work spaces and new business start-ups

Project 140 seeks to revitalize the historic Indiana Soldiers' and Sailors' Children's Home, a 387 acre campus in Rush County founded in 1865 for the orphaned and destitute children of Civil War Union Army veterans. The home still serves youth today; however, the campus is in decline. The campus includes 53 buildings in total; 12 still in use, and 23 of which are featured on the Registry of Historic Places. The campus also features roughly 229 acres of undeveloped land, prime for future development.

READI 2.0 Ask: TBD

Total Budget: TBD

Timeline: 3-5

Impact: Redevelopment of 387 historic acres

A 4:1 match will be required for READI 2.0 investment. Based on this requirement, what is your expected commitment from public and private partners including anchor institutions? What are their expected roles in helping to implement the plan?

During READI 1.0, the region experienced exceptional financial commitment from various entities, both public and private. Community foundations (both local and the Lilly Endowment), private donors (from small contributions to multi-million-dollar donations), anchor institutions (such as Major Health Partners, Diamond



Pet Foods, and Batesville Community School Corporation), housing developers, redevelopment commissions, county councils, city councils, and local residents all played pivotal roles in securing the funding to make our projects possible. Each financial contributor played a crucial role in securing \$38,000,000 of local public match and \$415,000,000 of private match. ARI's public match ratio (\$1.91 to \$1) and private match ratio (\$20.79 to \$1) surpassed match requirements by a considerable margin. Building on the success of READI 1.0, the region expects a strong match for READI 2.0. The region acknowledges that tighter budgets may prevent matching ratios at the excess levels of READI 1.0, but ARI remains committed to sufficient match commitments to meet program requirements. Both public partners and private stakeholders (including new private partners such as Margaret Mary Health), housing developers, community foundations, and engaged community members have remained active in the READI 2.0 process and are anticipated to maintain their commitment levels. The matching funds commitment evaluation process for READI 2.0 will be rigorous and meticulous. All projects will undergo scrutiny based on select criteria, with match commitment being a critical factor. Projects without a robust match commitment sufficient for program guidelines will not be considered for READI 2.0 allocation. To ensure matching funds requirements will be met, ARI is prepared to embrace creative financing strategies (such as TIF funding, Food & Beverages taxes, READI loan programs etc) to fund projects. The region is prepared to dedicate up to 10% of the region's READI 2.0 award to a loan program to address the strategies outlined in our plan, ensure adequate local public match, and increase the longevity of READI's impact in the region. Our region has discussed the possibility of utilizing a READI loan program to reduce financing costs for housing developers and reduce a major barrier to housing development in rural areas given already tight margins. Additionally, the region has discussed a rural infrastructure READI loan program to enable our region's smallest towns to make much-needed upgrades to existing utility infrastructure or expand infrastructure to enable future growth.

Describe the process the region will utilize for intake, prioritization, and evaluation of projects.

The process for project intake, prioritization, and evaluation in the ARI region involves a collaborative approach, ensuring local input, regional collaboration, and equitable opportunities for all communities. ARI's READI 2.0 project evaluation process will mirror our successful READI 1.0 evaluation process. At the local level, community engagement is a cornerstone of the process. Through community-level discussions, local governments, community foundations, and economic development organizations actively participate in identifying and proposing projects. This bottom-up approach ensures that projects align with the unique needs and priorities of each community within the region. Local stakeholders play a vital role in providing insight into the challenges and opportunities specific to their areas, fostering a sense of ownership, commitment, and support for the proposed initiatives. Local submissions form the initial phase of the project evaluation process. To date, local stakeholders have already identified a robust offering of potential projects for READI 2.0 funding consideration. Projects proposed thus far have guided the development of our READI 2.0 funding request and project impacts featured throughout this application. We fully acknowledge that our current list of potential projects is not fully exhaustive, and we welcome future local submissions throughout this process. To be included in this list, projects are required to go through a local vetting process, involving consultations with relevant stakeholders. This ensures that proposed initiatives are well-informed, feasible, and aligned with the specific goals and aspirations of the local communities. By mandating that projects must be submitted locally, ARI encourages grassroots involvement and empowers communities to actively contribute to the region's development narrative. Once READI 2.0 funding awards are announced, ARI will undertake a rigorous process to ensure our region has surfaced the most impactful project and the most transformational projects are



selected to receive READI 2.0 funding. To properly evaluate each project and strategically select the projects that had the greatest potential to improve our region's core set of metrics, ARI's Steering Committee adopted a set of criteria that will be used to evaluate projects and select projects for READI 2.0 funding consideration: READI and IEDC criteria, ARI priorities, project readiness, project feasibility, and impact on Key Performance Indicators. The Indiana General Assembly and the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) formed READI with the goal of enabling regions across the state to stand out from a crowded field of options for prospective talent and to grow the overall population of regions and the state. IEDC has noted, and appropriately so, that to maintain the state's economic momentum and continued growth, communities across the state must accelerate efforts to attract and retain talent by working together to create high-quality, vibrant, and dynamic places. The foundation of READI is built upon three key areas: quality of life, quality of place, and quality of opportunity. Each of our proposed projects will be evaluated by the Steering Committee and only those that align with a READI priority will be eligible for READI 2.0 funding consideration. Our regional development planning process was driven by a set of regional priorities that were developed through an extensive public engagement process. As outlined in the previous chapter, we engaged over 3,000 residents of the region through community workshops, a regional workshop, a public survey, a youth survey, and focus group conversations. Out of these conversations, five regional priority goals emerged: rally housing investment, raise incomes, revitalize public spaces, reinforce educational attainment and innovation, and regional marketing. Only projects which align with ARI's priorities will be eligible for READI 2.0 funding consideration. Our region is committed to only investing in projects that we are confident can become a reality. Readiness of projects will also be a determining factor in the final selection of projects or programs. With that being said, a few shovel-worthy projects were also included in our potential project list, but priority was given to those projects that were more shovel ready. We dreamed big in our project development phase but remained steadfast in our dedication to accomplish every project and program that was included in the plan. We were not searching for just easy wins. Rather, we were seeking projects that will individually, or collectively, have a major transformational impact on the region. Each project's feasibility will also be a determining factor for final selection. As the Steering Committee evaluates each project, the following attributes will be viewed favorably: committed public and private funding, strong leadership of implementing partners, sustainability beyond READI funding, and high likelihood of being implemented in the appropriate time period. Projects not meeting these criteria will be excluded from funding consideration. Finally, projects will be selected based upon their ability and level of impact to the region. We certainly understand that some regional priorities – like public infrastructure for housing and economic development – require local solutions. But we also understand that these local solutions create exponential regional impact when amplified across the region. We evaluated each project proposal to find our greatest opportunities to create transformational regional impact in our effort to recruit the nation's greatest talent. The ARI region has developed a robust and inclusive process for project intake, prioritization, and evaluation. By involving local communities, fostering regional collaboration, and ensuring equal opportunities, ARI strives to create a comprehensive and impactful development strategy that benefits all stakeholders across the region. This collaborative and data-driven approach positions ARI to effectively leverage READI funding for transformative and sustainable regional development.



If applicable, explain how the proposed or potential investments described above leverage additional investments within immediate proximity of another investment. You may consider a plan to make additional investments within the surrounding area to enhance the viability and economic benefit (e.g., accelerating population growth) of the project's implementation.

Several of the proposed projects in the ARI region serve as the culmination of major investments, leveraging READI as the final piece to cap off transformative initiatives. For example, the first phase of Tom Hession Drive has already been completed and READI will act as the critical investment to complete the final two phases of the project. While READI investment will finish the infrastructure investment, it will only be the start of overall investment in this key economic development corridor for the region. The final phases of Tom Hession Drive will open over 1,000 acres of future development potential near POET Biofuels, one of the region's strongest agricultural innovation assets. In other instances, READI acts as the cornerstone investment, strategically positioned to generate additional investments within the immediate proximity of the project. The West Side Apartments, Shelby County Players Civic Theatre, and Showers Development projects in Shelbyville exemplify this approach. READI will serve as a catalyst to spur further investment in a blighted area which has long needed investment. By investing in these projects, READI aims to create a domino effect, attracting additional investments in housing and community amenities. This strategic approach not only addresses the immediate blight elimination, housing, retail, and quality of life needs of the area but also lays the groundwork for a more comprehensive and sustained revitalization of the surrounding area.

Broad stakeholder input in the planning and execution of READI 2.0 projects will be critical for a successful regional development strategy. Describe how the region proactively engaged a diverse group of individuals, organizations, and interest groups during the planning process and how you solicited input when developing the plan. Describe any challenges and how the region came together.

During the planning and preparation of this READI 2.0 application, the ARI region prioritized proactive engagement with a diverse range of residents, stakeholders, and major employers. The region's READI 1.0 planning process outlined earlier in this application, engaged 3,000 stakeholders through a public survey, youth survey, county workshops, a regional workshop, anchor institution engagement, a youth forum, and an educators' forum. During this process, local and regional barriers – and potential strategies to eliminate those barriers – were identified. Due to the brisk pace of engagement, subject-specific engagement was difficult. For READI 2.0, ARI opted to capitalize on the extended timeline to dive deeper into specific priority areas. Through stakeholder focus group discussions, we identified solutions to major regional barriers. We engaged stakeholders in three priority areas: childcare, innovation & entrepreneurship, and agricultural innovation. School administrators, in-home childcare providers, childcare center operators, YMCA directors, after-school care providers, and state legislators were invited to participate in a READI 2.0 childcare focus group discussion. During the discussion, participants identified regional childcare assets and barriers to expand access. While the discussion was spirited and productive, the region quickly realized that many major barriers to expanding childcare access across the region – wages, licensing, regulations, high costs for families – are, broadly speaking, programmatic in nature and ineligible for READI 2.0 funding. ARI leaders will not be deterred from finding solutions to alleviate the region's childcare burdens. Upon the announcement of Lilly Endowment's GIFT VIII planning and implementation grants, ARI convened regional community foundations and proposed utilizing GIFT VIII as an opportunity to join forces and tackle the childcare issue in the region. As a result, all three county community foundations in the region are participating in childcare planning with GIFT VIII planning grant funding. ARI's community foundations hope to capitalize on this unique moment in time to



identify which projects can leverage READI 2.0 and GIFT VIII funding to help positively move the childcare needle in the region. In addition to childcare stakeholders, restaurant owners, mid-size employers, small business owners, community foundations, main street organizations, chambers of commerce, and economic development professionals were invited to participate in a READI 2.0 innovation and entrepreneurship focus group discussion. Through the discussion, participants expressed a strong appetite for regional launch and co-working spaces, commercial kitchens, and trades education. Projects like Batesville's Innovation Hub and Rushville's Launch Center were touted as priority READI 2.0 projects with the potential to unleash ARI's entrepreneurial ecosystem. Through both READI 1.0 and READI 2.0 public engagement, rooted in stakeholder engagement, the region ensured a comprehensive understanding of the unique needs and opportunities that exist consistently across the region and defined a set goals, priorities, strategies, and action items to address our greatest needs and opportunities. This inclusive and thorough engagement process allowed the region to harness collective wisdom and foster a sense of shared ownership in the READI program across the region.

How do you plan to maintain stakeholder engagement?

The ARI RDA Development Board and ARI READI Steering Committee are committed to sustaining stakeholder engagement as a cornerstone of the region's work. All meetings of the ARI RDA Development Board are subject to Indiana's Open-Door Laws. All meeting notices are published, and the public is welcome to attend each meeting. By choosing an RDA as our organizational structure, our region intentionally committed to including the public in all decision-making functions of the region. Beyond public board meetings, ARI will engage stakeholders through periodic forums, focus groups and committees. In May 2023, ARI hosted its inaugural 'State of the ARI Region' event and welcomed local and state elected officials, project partners, and regional stakeholders to share regional updates, celebrate the awarding of READI funds to projects, and hear stories of some of the region's most impactful projects. ARI will host this event annually, ensuring stakeholders feel validated for their hard work and updated on the region's great work. Additionally, during our READI 2.0 public engagement focus group discussions, stakeholders made it clear that the ARI RDA is a useful forum to bring subject-matter experts together to discuss shared issues and use regionalism to solve the issues they are all facing. ARI will continue to have regular focus group discussions on important regional topics, ensuring that the region remains responsive to the evolving needs of stakeholders and that stakeholders know that regional leaders are committed to being their partner in solving difficult problems.

How will the organization sustain itself?

While READI will occupy resources in the near-term, the ARI RDA is built to last far beyond the conclusion of READI. By creating the RDA, ARI member communities committed to being members of the organization for at least eight years. Even our RDA Development Board members are committed to the RDA for the long-term, volunteering to serve for four years on the board. While READI funding will remain the priority of the organization through the completion of the program, the RDA is motivated to find additional non-READI funding sources to accomplish the goals of its regional development plan and READI 2.0 application. The RDA Development Board will utilize upcoming meetings to hear from speakers from local, state, and federal funding sources to learn more about potential funding opportunities and ensure the RDA is properly positioned to apply for additional funds. In the future, a full-time RDA Executive Director will provide much-needed capacity to identify and apply for grant funding beyond the READI program and also add



capacity to enhance communication from the organization to build ongoing support from public and private stakeholders. ARI member communities have provided the initial financial support to fully fund the organization for the next two years and each partner has committed to budget for future investments to provide the financial resources to sustain the organization. With ARI member contributions and READI administrative funding, the organization is in a solid financial position for the duration of the READI and READI 2.0 programs.

If applicable, use this space to describe the plan to maintain, or activate the asset(s) the IEDC is investing in if more information is needed.

IEDC's investment in ARI through the READI program is just the first chapter of our regional history. First, ARI is committed to investing in projects which are built for long-term sustainability. For example, the construction of Rushville's Community Center is one of the greatest transformational investments in Rushville's history; however, there is a great need to build a coalition which can sustain the asset. Rushville has built an organizational structure, backed by a committed group of steering committee members and significant philanthropic funding to fund the organization for the long-term. ARI is committed to investing in projects which can demonstrate this type of long-term sustainability. Beyond READI, ARI is committed to finding additional funding sources to further activate IEDC's investments in the region. Through funding sources such as Federal EDA, Lilly Endowment GIFT programs, OCRA Stellar Pathways, and future state regional development efforts, ARI is committed to leveraging our READI investments to attract additional funding to the region. We truly view READI as the start of a long-term commitment to regional investment.



Part V: Outcomes, KPIs and Metrics

Define the region’s expected outcomes if the plan is successfully implemented. Consider the economic development potential of this plan and how this plan demonstrates both regional and local impact.

ARI’s READI 2.0 plan will: Add 900 housing units to the region’s housing stock. ARI’s ambitious READI 2.0 application outlines 13 housing projects which will attract a total investment exceeding \$325 million. Representing a wide variety of housing types, our housing portfolio has the potential to attract an additional 2,000 residents to the region. Invest \$184 million in quality of life. Our READI 2.0 plan includes 10 quality of life projects, adding miles of trails, additional parks, community centers, childcare seats, and enhanced healthcare in our region. While the exact estimation of population growth potential from these projects is difficult to estimate, there’s no doubt these projects will drive additional talent to the region. Enable 6,000 acres of economic development potential. Our plan outlines seven infrastructure and economic development projects, totaling over \$450 million of investment in the region. By adding a portfolio of shovel-ready sites in strategic locations across the region, ARI has the potential to add over 400 high-income jobs. Invest \$39 million in ARI’s entrepreneurial ecosystem. Our plan outlines four projects which will connect our regional employees and entrepreneurs with co-working & launch spaces, shared commercial kitchens, and partnership with higher-education institutions. Beyond READI 2.0, ARI remains committed to pursuing additional funding sources to accomplish the goals and priorities of our regional development plan. In addition to the outcomes outlined above, our regional development will undoubtedly transform the region for generations to come.

Please complete the table below with 5-year and 10-year projections with Indiana’s economic development priorities.

Key performance indicators	Current	5-year projection	10-year projection
Total Population	95,140	97,565	100,161
Total Employment	46,599	47,042	48,018
Per capita income	\$ 52,645.41	\$ 57,909.50	\$ 63,174.00
Educational attainment	21%	23%	26%
Total new housing units	997	1,099	2,397
New rental housing units	74	337	667
New owner-occupied housing units	1,151	876	1,958
Percentage of affordable housing units	62	70.88	80



Please describe your 5-year and 10-year projections for childcare within your region. Factors you may want to consider: Increase the number of childcare facilities and/or the number of seats in specific counties or regional total with the overall goal of decreasing childcare deserts in the state, Increase quality of childcare.

Organization and collaboration amongst regional childcare stakeholders have never been greater. Through READI 1.0, ARI will add an additional 268 seats, improving the percentage of children with access to licensed childcare seats from 39.8% to 46.6%. Shelby County's Early Learning Center, funded by READI 1.0, serves as a childcare model built for replication across the region. Furthermore, the region is currently focused on childcare planning efforts through the Lilly GIFT VIII Planning Grant. While these conversations are preliminary, numerous regional partners have expressed a desire to partner with the region to expand childcare access, including Honda's Indiana Auto Plant, Delta Faucet, Valeo, Shelby Eastern Schools, and Shelby County Boys and Girls Club. Early indicators suggest that these planning efforts will result in a robust pipeline of childcare projects, with the potential to nearly double licensed childcare seats in the region by 2034.

Please describe your 5-year and 10-year projections for innovation activities within your region. Factors you may want to consider: Increase specific number or percentage of new business start-ups within specific counties or increase regional total, Increase number of patent filings or SBIR/STTR activity, Increase in research and development spending of university or other partners

During our READI 2.0 innovation and entrepreneurship focus group, participants touted agricultural innovation – with regional assets such as POET Biofuels, Bunge, Diamond Pet Foods, Fischer Seeds, and Purdue University's Equine Specialty Hospital – as an innovation bright spot for the region. We see tremendous opportunity to leverage existing bioprocessing assets to accelerate innovation in value-added agriculture in our region such as industrial biotechnology, biofuels, sustainable aviation fuels, food processing, and precision fermentation. The completion of Tom Hession Drive, one of our top READI 2.0 potential projects, would facilitate 1,000 acres of future economic development directly adjacent to POET Biofuels. Through completion of this critical infrastructure, ARI will become synonymous with bioprocessing innovation in the next 5 to 10 years. Beyond agriculture, Rushville's Launch Center and Batesville's Arts & Innovation Hub has the potential to increase yearly new business start-ups by over 60% by creating a setting for entrepreneurial collaboration.

Include additional metrics that are specific to the region if applicable.

ARI's READI 1.0 plan included a series of key performance indicators not addressed within the READI 2.0 application. With a strong focus on increased educational attainment through the READI program and other community initiatives, we anticipate the number of associate degree holders to increase by 2.36% within the next 10 years (roughly 2,250 additional degree recipients). With continual investments into infrastructure and economic development projects, gross assessed values across the region have the potential to increase by \$612 million (10%) by 2034. READI 1.0 and READ 2.0 investments will be transformational for individual earning potential. We forecast median household income to increase from \$67,627.06 to \$77,771.12 and average annual wage from \$50,969.31 to \$57,085.63 within 10 years. Through READI, ARI is reimagining what rural can be. In ARI, rural is a place with increased educational attainment, growing assessed values, and higher incomes while maintaining our quality of life.



General Information

Legal Name as registered with Indiana Secretary of State (Region Name)	Accelerate Rural Indiana Regional Development Authority
Business Structure	Government - Regional Development Authority
List counties within your region	Decatur, Rush, and Shelby Counties + City of Batesville
Website	https://www.accelerateruralindiana.com

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