

## 2021 PRIORITIES

As the world moves through the next 12 months, Isi should anticipate continued change as we react to the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic recession. The effects across industries varies significantly, and Isi's role in promoting a fiscally-stable, business-friendly environment is crucial in allowing all business size and type to rebound and flourish. Recent events afford us an opportunity, as a community, to create a better, more inclusive environment moving forward.

### COVID Recovery

- The role of public policy in facilitating recovery for area businesses is vital for residents returning to work and shoring up the local tax base.

### Minority Business Development

- We support opportunity and success initiatives to assist our minority businesses to both overcome the effects of bias and to drive innovation for regional benefit.

### Small Business Recovery

- Different industry sectors are facing varied COVID recovery experiences, but small businesses are most impacted and in need of unique support.

### COVID-related Liability Protections

- Specific indemnifications against COVID-related lawsuits should protect businesses that are prudent in protecting both employees and customers.

### Workforce Retraining

- Providing individuals with necessary skills through accessible education and training will help them reenter to workforce if they need additional skills to transition to new industries.

### Broadband Deployment

- One of the greatest challenges exposed by the pandemic is how a lack of access to broadband affects all aspects of work, learning and health care.

### Outdoor Recreation

- Locally and statewide, Hoosiers have shown an increased desire to enjoy outdoor activities and with this focus we have a great opportunity to implement and maximize the regional benefits of River Heritage Conservancy's Origin Park.

### Infrastructure

- Many infrastructure projects were put on hold due to the uncertainties presented by COVID. In some instances, roads and bridges remain in a state of disrepair. These critical transportation and connectivity routes are essential economic growth strategies for Southern Indiana.

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# 2021 ADVOCACY AGENDA

## Governing Principles & Priorities

### ABOUT ONE SOUTHERN INDIANA

*Mission: To help businesses thrive in the southern Indiana and Metro area.*

*Vision: That our Southern Indiana region will be economically strong, and all businesses will flourish; providing viable jobs, prosperity, and quality of place.*

One Southern Indiana (Isi) is an advocate for the local business community. Through engagement at all levels of government, Isi is building a reputation as the primary advocacy resource for members, for the region and for key decision makers. We support public policy that facilitates high wage/high skill job creation, entrepreneurship, capital investment and existing business retention and expansion. We also support public policy that contributes to a strong quality of life and place that attracts and retains jobs and investment.

### INTRODUCTION/STRUCTURE

The role of Isi in promoting a fiscally-stable, business-friendly environment is deeply impacted by local, regional, state and national issues. Through our advocacy initiatives, we promote positive change by serving as the "Champions of Ideas" to achieve economic and business vitality for the region. Additionally, we strive to provide for our investors and members access to policy makers at all levels of government through forums, roundtables and one-on-one meetings.

The 2021 Advocacy Agenda provides the basis for Isi's supported positions over the next 12 months. Our Governing Principles, constituting those matters generally deemed most important to Southern Indiana businesses, serve as the broader foundation for these positions and provide the framework from which specific priorities are developed and supported. In turn, our stated Priorities for 2021, which follow our Governing Principles, serve as our hot button legislative and policy issues upon which we expect to focus in the coming year. We will continue to monitor these and any other issues that may arise while new Isi Advocacy policies and processes are implemented during the next several months. The goal of both our Governing Principles and Priorities for 2021 is to further establish Isi as the voice for Southern Indiana businesses.

### GOVERNING PRINCIPLES

One Southern Indiana has built its Advocacy Agenda to ensure our current business environment is strong and the foundation for sustainable economic growth is primary.

## Sustainable Economic Growth is One Southern Indiana's Most Important Objective

Economic development is a priority for Isi investors. The goal of the organization's economic development activities is to enhance the metro area's vibrancy by facilitating economic transactions that generate wealth and add to community prosperity. We work to create a positive environment to support existing business retention and growth, as well as the creation and attraction of new businesses to the area. We need economic development policy and will support those measures that meet one or more of these criteria:

- Encourage flexible and responsible use of local economic development tools to meet business needs.
- Recognizing the importance of the regional nature and influence of the greater metro area, support incentive reciprocity between Kentucky and Indiana.
- Encourage repurpose and remediation assistance for site redevelopment.
- Urge continued economic development and technical training for local elected and appointed officials.
- Support our health care industry both to ensure quality health care services and to stabilize costs for current and future employers.

## Career-Ready Workforce and Educational Initiatives

Meeting our job attraction and retention goals is increasingly more dependent on the availability of a qualified workforce. Prior to the global pandemic, our area was seeing historically low unemployment rates, and while the effects of COVID have created sectors with job loss, the need for talent with specific skills sets has a negative effect on our economic recovery.

Also prior to the pandemic, this trend was not unique to our region, and many factors through 2019 – including strong business growth, a declining workforce participation rate, and retirements of baby boomers – contributed to the tightening labor force. A low unemployment rate is good for area residents, but also concerning for businesses struggling to fill positions or expanding to take advantage of new opportunities.

Ensuring business vibrancy in the community cannot be done without a sustainable pipeline of talent for growing businesses. Removing barriers for area residents to participation in today's workforce is a priority.

- Promote our role as the voice of the demand side of the supply-demand workforce equation.
- Increase the attainment of bachelors and associate degrees, as well as certifications and licenses, in fields that are in demand by area employers.
- Support school corporations to advance the college and career preparedness of our youth, starting in early levels.
- Enhancing Treatment and Recovery Efforts designed to prevent, treat and/or support employees and prospective candidates with substance abuse and/or mental health issues.
- Explore opportunities, where appropriate and in the best interest of public safety, for streamlining the expungement process.

## Infrastructure and Transportation

A strong infrastructure network is key to serving the region's existing employers, attracting new companies and growing startup entities. We encourage efforts to identify the critical gaps and develop recommendations for infrastructure that will support economic growth strategies for Southern Indiana.

- Develop and maintain transportation access of critical infrastructure for moving goods and people.
- Deploy broadband and communications Infrastructure, critical to community survival.
- Regulate natural resources such as water aquifers for long-term benefit.
- Enhance regional air service to move goods and people, utilizing the most appropriate assets.

## Inclusivity

Isi creates a stakeholder experience that embraces the entire region – along with its diversity of partners – as individual business members with unique opportunities and distinctions that add to the economic and workforce opportunities for our complete communities.

- Support initiatives promoting diversity to drive innovation, which is good for business growth.
- Enhance talent development opportunities for minorities to maximize their potential.

## Regional Initiatives

Coordinating the activities and positions of the communities in Clark and Floyd counties offers several advantages – and creates greater influence – when compared to individual community agendas in other parts of the state. Additionally, recognizing our connectivity to Louisville adds impact in policy discussions that cross state and other jurisdictional boundaries. Isi will monitor and communicate on the following priority areas:

- Support incentives for partnerships and collaborations with proven regional benefit.
- Support the Our Southern Indiana Regional Development Authority in developing regional quality of place solutions.

## Civic Engagement

Harnessing the voice of business is essential for good policy at all levels of government. By hosting events to increase access to policy makers, we can assure our business voice is heard. Isi will promote civic engagement of our business members in the following priority areas:

- Provide investors and members access to policy makers at all levels of government through forums, roundtables and one-on-one meetings.
- Provide educational forums for local businesses to access technical updates and opinions from subject matters experts in their respective fields.