



COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT
WORKSHOP
SERIES

2024

Community Report



TERRE HAUTE 10
EQUITABLE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES



City of Terre Haute
Human Relations Commission

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CITY CLERK

About Us

Terre Haute 10

The Terre Haute 10 is a group of parents, business owners, teachers, professors, laborers, pastors, doctors, and students who want schools that develop the best in our children. The group is focused on gathering input from the community to develop recommendations for how to improve educational outcomes for all students.



Human Relations Commission

The Terre Haute Human Relations Commission is an entity of the the City of Terre Haute. The group's work is focused on bettering human relations in Terre Haute. They are helping to build a vibrant, thriving, and unified community through working to eliminate barriers and promote equity, accessibility, and sense of belonging for all people.



Methodology

The Human Relations Commission and the Terre Haute 10 hosted three community conversations dubbed “Community Engagement Workshops.”

The workshops occurred on:

- February 29
- March 21
- May 6

Methodology

In preparation for this project, the group developed a set of focus areas and desired outcomes for the community engagement workshops. The group chose to focus on the following areas:



Housing



Employment



Education



Criminal Justice

Methodology

Over the course of the three workshops, the group set out to achieve the following outcomes:

- Understand the major challenges in our four focus areas
- Analyze and evaluate the causes of the challenges
- Develop strategies and solutions for solving those challenges

Findings Overview



Housing

Major Challenge #1: There is a high rate of homelessness in Terre Haute. This problem puts a strain on resources and creates long-term challenges for those who are unhoused.

- Participants cited the summer PIT (point-in-time) counts which have indicated over the past few years that there are around 500 individuals experiencing homelessness in Vigo County.
- Participants also noted that many individuals experiencing homelessness, have difficulty finding housing due to previous evictions.

Recommended Strategy: Create a resource and education hub for financial literacy, life skills, fair housing, and tenants' rights.

Major Challenge #2: Terre Haute and the greater Vigo County area lack enough affordable housing units to support the high rates of individuals who need access.

- Participants noted that 44% of Households in the Wabash Valley are considered “ALICE” Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed according to the United Way of the Wabash Valley.
- Participants also noted that the Housing inventory in Vigo County is at a notable low point and that the stock of homes is aging and their condition is poor compared to other communities.

Recommended Strategy: Develop second-chance housing opportunities that would allow individuals who have been evicted to find access to housing.

Findings Overview



Employment

Major Challenge #1: The inability to find or retain a job in Terre Haute and Vigo County is attributed to people's limited access to reliable, affordable, and effective transportation. This problem disproportionately affects individuals who do not have a vehicle and are low-income and/or have a disability.

- Participants noted that the Terre Haute Public Transit system is often unreliable and requires significant time to travel to their destination.
- Participants also noted that there is not consistent public transportation to manufacturing jobs.

Recommended Strategy: Make Terre Haute Public Transit more user-friendly with more interactive live maps, well-marked stops, and other resources to improve ridership.

Major Challenge #2: A common challenge for employers is attracting and retaining new talent attributed to the community's poor self-image.

- Participants noted Terre Haute struggles with low self-esteem and there is “a lot of negativity associated with Terre Haute.”
- Participants also noted that young people leave Terre Haute because they don't see it as a place of opportunity.

Recommended Strategy: Develop more youth programming that will make Terre Haute more attractive to potential candidates with children, and empower the next generation of workers.

Findings Overview



Education

Major Challenge #1: Educators and families noted a lack of effective professional development for teachers and staff in Vigo County's public schools, which can negatively impact staff and student culture.

- Participants noted that not all professional development is mandatory and that those who need it most tend not to opt in.
- Participants cited the importance of educating administrators, staff, and teachers about implicit bias, trauma, and restorative practices, and the ways it can create a comprehensive learning experience that will benefit students, families, staff, teachers, and administrators.

Recommended Strategy: Develop corporation-wide strategies for professional development that are adequate, effective, and incorporate the principles of equity and inclusion.

Major Challenge #2: Within Vigo County Public Schools, the staff and faculty demographic does not adequately represent or reflect the diversity of the community that they serve.

- Participants noted the struggle with retaining teachers of all backgrounds due to low teacher pay and lack of adequate resources.
- Participants mentioned that there seems to be limited recruitment efforts related to the recruitment of a diverse pool of applicants.

Recommended Strategy: Attract and retain diverse teachers, admin, and staff through new recruitment strategies, and invest in current employees, specifically those of marginalized communities.

Findings Overview



Criminal Justice

Major Challenge #1: There is distrust of the criminal justice system, especially from marginalized communities, due to the disparity of treatment in arrests, charging, sentencing, and incarceration.

- Participants noted that there was room for improvement in the training and education of law enforcement in the areas of implicit bias, crisis intervention, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Participants noted that some marginalized communities struggled to build positive relationships, because police and sheriffs were only in their neighborhoods for crisis situations.

Recommended Strategy: Collect and analyze data related to disparities in arrests, charging, sentencing, and incarceration, and promote and practice strong community policing.

Major Challenges #2: There is a lack of diversity in the criminal justice system which includes but is not limited to the Police Department, the Sheriff's Department, and the Fire Department.

- Participants noted that having diverse public safety personnel and leadership can help ensure a wider perspective of lived experiences at the table when making decisions.
- Participants also noted that when officers come from diverse neighborhoods and backgrounds it contributes to more positive community relations.

Recommended Strategy: Create a diversity oversight board of interested citizens to promote best practices for recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce.

What can you do?

- 1. Pause and Listen.** Before immediately responding with the solutions your organization has already enacted, take a moment to listen to the findings of this report and reflect on why the community has brought forward these concerns.
- 2. Incorporate these strategies into your strategic planning.** Use this community input to guide your goals, objectives, and strategies for improvement.
- 3. Review your internal policies and procedures.** Critically analyze how your own policies can contribute to the challenges our community has identified.
- 4. Spread Awareness!** Share this report with your peers, boards, commissions, friends, and family.
- 5. Continue the conversation!** Reach out to the Human Relations Commission, the Terre Haute Ten, and our broader community at large to collaborate.

**Together we can build a more vibrant,
inclusive, and unified Terre Haute.**

2024

Community Report



**Read the
full report**