The Polis Center at IUPUI
How can we partner with you?

What we do
We collaborate to create innovative place-based solutions that lead to healthier and more resilient communities. Polis has developed more than 700 projects with grant and contract funding exceeding $85 million.

How we do it
To enhance the capacity of communities to respond meaningfully to change, we produce actionable information, develop creative collaborations, build capacity, perform place-based research, and employ technology effectively.

We are committed to the smart use of advanced technologies to help solve problems and help communities take advantage of opportunities. Geospatial technologies, especially GIS, are our preferred technical tools because of their unique ability to integrate and visualize information by location.

Our Resources
- Community research infrastructure
- SAVI community information system
- Staff
- Technical skills
- Extensive project and project management experience
- Long record of attracting external funding

Community Research Infrastructure
Polis brings together data and information technologies, knowledge, expertise, and skills across a variety of domains to create an infrastructure that:

- supports research and analysis for better decision-making
- improved policy for the greater good of communities in Indiana

The Polis Center empowers communities to become healthier and more resilient by creating and employing an internationally-recognized community research infrastructure to facilitate innovation and knowledge-sharing.

In the next 3-5 years, Polis will expand, focus, and improve its skills, methods, technologies, and data through its relationships or behalf of its partner communities.

"Efficient RIs enable the greatest discoveries in science and technology, attract researchers from around the world, and build bridges between research communities. They allow the training of researchers and facilitate innovation and knowledge sharing.”

Examples of Our Community Research Infrastructure at work

The Indiana Data Partnership. We are working collaboratively with state government’s Management Performance Hub and three other IU centers—the IU Public Policy Institute, the IU Network Sciences Institute, and the Indiana Business Research Center—to develop a scalable, integrated data and decision-making framework for the State of Indiana. Our aim is to increase the availability and usefulness of data-sharing among state agencies and between the state and various local government and nonprofit organizations.

Indiana Partnership for Healthy Communities. We are working with the Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health with support from the Indiana Clinical Translational Research Institute to translate knowledge generated by the academy and by communities into replicable, evidence-based processes to support community health needs assessment and improvement planning. Our aim is to provide improved and sustainable processes for understanding and affecting community health and ultimately to improve the health of Indiana communities. This effort includes collaboration with the Community Health Network on the development of its 2018 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and 2019-2021 Implementation Strategy, and with the nine-hospital Parkview Health System in northeast Indiana on its 2019 CHNA as well as its 2016 CHNA and an assessment of their 2017 implementation strategies.

Our Areas of Emphasis

Community
We create community intelligence to support the decision-making process with and for nonprofits, community-based organizations and researchers, and faith-based organizations. Our community informatics work builds community information systems like SAVI and decision-support tools like IndyVitals.org; translates data to practice with and for communities; provides decision support – applied research, consulting, dashboards, other technology systems; and builds capacity in others to use information for decision-making.

Health
We work in partnership with hospitals, local health departments, non-governmental health agencies, and health researchers to develop new information and place-based approaches for understanding and affecting community health. We combine and analyze community and clinical data and develop innovative processes and tools to improve community health, population health, and clinical decision-making.

Resiliency
We develop innovative processes that help communities enhance their capacity to respond meaningfully to change. Our disaster informatics initiatives combine geospatial analysis, modeling, and outreach activities to support planners, engineers, and government officials in preventing or reducing significant losses from natural disasters.

Spatial Humanities
We serve an international community of humanities scholars interested in applying geospatial technologies to the disciplines within the humanities to explore new questions about the relationship of space to human behavior and social, economic, political, and cultural development.

Education
We specialize in the application of geographic information systems tools and methods that support disaster risk assessment and mitigation planning. We have conducted courses in 111 cities in 35 states and 10 countries.