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## Increased Educational Attainment Blunts Poverty, Data Shows

The more education one has increases the likelihood of being employed and avoiding poverty, an analysis of American Community Survey (ACS) data for northeast Indiana shows.

Data for the period between 2012 and 2016 shows 47.3 percent of northeast Indiana residents 25 to 64 years old with less than a high school education were unemployed; 28.8 percent of high school graduates were unemployed; 22.0 percent with some college or an associate's degree were unemployed, and 15.5 percent with a bachelor's degree or higher were unemployed.

For the purposes of this analysis, the term "unemployed" refers to people who are not working and are either looking for a job or not looking for a job.

A similar trend exists for those living in poverty: 22.8 percent of people 25 years old and older with less than a high school education are living in poverty; 11.8 percent for high school graduates; 9.5 percent for some college or an associate's degree, and 3.9 percent for a bachelor's degree or higher.

Adams County has the highest percentage of people living in poverty with less than a high school education (29.8 percent) and the lowest percentage of people living in poverty with a bachelor's degree or higher (0.9 percent).

The U.S. Census Bureau determines poverty using a set of income thresholds that vary by family size and composition.

The good news is that the percentages of northeast Indiana residents 25 and older with post-secondary educational attainment are increasing. ACS data shows that the percentage of people with an associate degree rose from 8.6 percent for the period between 2007 and 2011 to 9.2 percent for 2012-2016; the percentage for those with a bachelor's degree increased from 13.4 percent to 14.2 percent; and the percentage of people with graduate or professional degrees went up from 7.0 percent to 7.6 percent.

Conversely, percentages are dropping for those with less than a high school education.

In 2017, Northeast Indiana Works issued a report showing there's also a direct correlation between educational achievement and wages. Among those findings: Over the course of a career, a person with an associate's degree is likely to make more than twice as much money as a person without a high school degree.

Edmond O'Neal, president of Northeast Indiana Works, said not only is it important to pursue educational opportunities beyond high school, it would be wise to specifically consider training and education that meets the occupational needs of employers.

"One way people can do that," he said, "is by taking advantage of the state's Next Level Jobs initiative, which provides free training leading to certifications and high-growth, in-demand careers, or by considering other free training opportunities that may be available through WorkOne Northeast.

"These training opportunities are beneficial for people not yet in the workforce and those in the workforce who want to upgrade their skills to meet the ever-changing needs of the region's employers."

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**About Northeast Indiana Works:** Northeast Indiana Works, the region's workforce development board, provides public and private financial and employment resources to businesses and individuals for education and skills training to meet the needs of regional industries. The nonprofit sets policy for how public and private funds are utilized to support talent development. It also operates and staffs the 11 county-based WorkOne Northeast career centers in the region. Individuals and companies may access resources and services by visiting or calling WorkOne in their county. To find your local WorkOne, log on to [www.neinworks.org](http://www.neinworks.org)