

The Bowen Center for Public Affairs at Ball State University, the Indiana Humanities Council, and several statewide partners are offering a series of community workshops designed to help regions in Indiana address their most challenging concerns. The Orange County Community Foundation has been chosen to participate in this year's workshops, to address the need for a county-wide cleanup campaign throughout Orange County.

- The Bowen Center for Public Affairs and the Indiana Humanities Council will work with the Orange County Community Foundation to:
- Convene regional conversations among community leaders and citizens from public, private and non-profit sectors to address the issue.
- Evaluate possible solutions for addressing the community challenge and discuss best practices.
- Provide access to resources, technology, and expertise in the creation of solutions to the problem.
- Provide ongoing consultation.

"These workshops will present the latest insights into developing competitive community strategies through collaboration, open dialogue, well-leveraged human capital, cultural assets, and a shared vision for the region across public, private, and non-profit sectors," said Keira Amstutz, president and CEO of the Indiana Humanities Council. "Recognizing the importance of action as well as vision, the agenda will be tailored to each community's needs and designed to bring communities into an open civic dialogue."

The workshops are typically a day-long meeting, beginning the morning and concluding in mid-afternoon. A nominal fee will be charged to participate to cover the cost of meals and materials. The cost of the speakers, planning and promotion will be covered by the Bowen Center for Public Affairs, the Indiana Humanities Council and event sponsors. After the workshops, the Bowen Center for Public Affairs will provide additional consultation as needed.

In addition, these partners have agreed to lend their expertise and support as part of this program:

- Indiana Chamber of Commerce
- Association of Indiana Counties
- Indiana Association of Cities and Towns
- *Inside Indiana Business* with Gerry Dick
- Indiana Grantmakers Alliance
- Indiana Association for Community Economic Development
- Indiana Office of Community and Rural Projects
- Jeffersonville Chapter of the NAACP

"Difficult economic times like these create a unique challenge for cities, towns, counties and regions," said Dr. Sally Jo Vasicko, co-director of the Bowen Center for Public Affairs. "On the one hand, regions must find new and creative ways to set themselves apart as vibrant places to live, work, play and do business; on the other hand, they have a harder time finding the resources needed to pursue those new ideas. We want to help."

Communities applying for the program could choose to create a customized program from issues such as a green agenda/sustainability, community/economic development, arts and culture as a community development strategy, the future of governing, 21st Century learning strategies, and rural/urban connections.

Bringing economic development, business and community experts together to serve on panels and facilitate conversations is an ideal vehicle for discussion on regional economic growth and collaboration. This opportunity will bolster the community effort to improve the quality of life in Orange County, drive economic expansion and promote cooperation county-wide.