The EcO Network was created in 2007 by the community foundations of Southeast Indiana, coordinated by the Heritage Fund, the Community Foundation of Bartholomew County, in partnership with the Community Education Coalition (CEC) of Columbus, Indiana (which has served as the region’s backbone organization since inception). The EcO Network was launched with an unprecedented $38 million grant provided by Lilly Endowment Inc. to support educational infrastructures and common support services focused on economic opportunity. In 2012 a second grant of $9 million was provided by Lilly Endowment to further broaden and deepen the work of the region. It is estimated that the EcO Network stakeholders have leveraged an additional $19.7 million (cash and in-kind) over the nearly nine years of working together.

The EcO Network focuses on increasing educational attainment, especially linked to the economic sectors that are the most well-paying in Southeast Indiana, and currently focused on advanced manufacturing (representing 30% of people employed in the region) and health care (representing 10% of people employed in the region).

Four regional organizations within Southeast Indiana have agreed to work together collectively with the shared purpose of creating a coordinated and aligned learning system. Specifically, the EcO Network seeks to bring economic opportunities aligned to the region’s economic strengths through educational attainment supported and served by a regional guiding team. The partnership believes that all parties are coming together willingly to be a part of something larger than themselves. It is anticipated that more stakeholders will become involved as the partnership work continues to unfold.

A CASE STUDY

Economic Opportunities through Education

Building a Regional Talent and Learning Development System

The EcO Network is to create a regional system of life-long learning connecting the residents of ten counties within rural Southeast Indiana to better economic opportunities through education by the year 2015 and beyond. EcO has three strategic goals: 1) Move residents up at least one level in their education, training, and/or job placement, 2) Coordinate and align a regional learning system and strategies that can work together to coordinate educational program offerings for students that connect with well-paying occupations. The network builds relationships to ensure student-centered, “seamless educational pathways” are being implemented to attract, enroll, educate, and place students into well-paying advanced manufacturing careers.

Advanced Manufacturing Network

The purpose of this network is to bring together educators, advanced manufacturing leaders, workforce, and community-based organizations that can work together to coordinate educational program offerings for students that connect with well-paying occupations. The network builds relationships to ensure student-centered, “seamless educational pathways” are being implemented to attract, enroll, educate, and place students into well-paying advanced manufacturing careers.

Health Care Network

The purpose of this network is to better align education and career opportunities as part of a “next level up” strategy for the healthcare industry and associated education offerings in the region.

Attainment Network

The purpose of this network is to significantly increase the region’s high school graduation rate, post-secondary attainment rate, and the percentage of adults possessing a high school diploma. The network is composed of teams working within adult education, post-secondary retenion/ completion, and high school success and transition to post-secondary education. The focus of the network includes co-created strategies for academic and career awareness, recruitment, outreach, engagement, persistence, and attainment.
The EcO Network: Creating a Regional Learning System

**NETWORK GOALS**

- Create economic opportunities aligned to the region’s economic strengths

**POST SECONDARY ATTAINMENT (2008-2010)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>High School Graduation Rate</th>
<th>Per Capita Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>70.7%</td>
<td>$36,799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
<td>$39,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>84.5%</td>
<td>$400K</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**STEM ENROLLMENTS (POST-SECONDARY 2 AND 4 YEAR)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enrollments (500)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PROJECT LEAD THE WAY (EGR 9)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total (1,751)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1,751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LATINO OUTREACH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total (382)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RISK FACTOR REDUCTION**

**NETWORK TIMELINE: OUR COLLECTIVE CONTRIBUTION**

- Early Childhood Study
  - 2008: $400K
- ECO Initiative Launch
  - 2008: ECO Regional Seed Award
- Project Based Learning in Southeast Indiana
  - 2008: $1M
- Math Matters Initiative
  - 2008: $1M

**SOURCES**

- Bureau of Economic Analysis
- Stats Indiana
- Indiana Department of Education
- EcO15/Network Programmatic Data

**COORDINATE AND ALIGN A REGIONAL LEARNING SYSTEM**

- Be a catalyst of regional leadership, collaboration, and systems-building

**ECONOMIC INNOVATION**

- Coordinate and align a regional learning system

**ECONOMIC STRATEGIES**

- Regional SCHIZOTOME (Columbus MSA, $41.940)
- 2010: $200K
- 2012: $720K
- 2016: $1.8M

**POST SECONDARY ATTAINMENT**

- High School Graduation Rate
  - 2008: 77.7%
  - 2009: 82.2%
  - 2010: 86.3%

**ECONOMIC STRATEGIES**

- Economic Innovation
  - Regional SCHIZOTOME (Columbus MSA, $41.940)
  - 2010: $200K
  - 2012: $720K
  - 2016: $1.8M

**POST SECONDARY ATTAINMENT**

- Per Capita Income
  - 2008: $36,799
  - 2009: $39,600
  - 2010: $400K

**STEM ENROLLMENTS**

- Post-Secondary 2 and 4 Year
  - 2008: 2,000
  - 2009: 80
  - 2010: 85

**PROJECT LEAD THE WAY (EGR 9)**

- Total (1,751)
  - 2008: 1,751
  - 2009: 50
  - 2010: 50

**LATINO OUTREACH**

- Total (382)
  - 2008: 35
  - 2009: 30
  - 2010: 35

**RISK FACTOR REDUCTION**

- Total (1296)
  - 2008: 1296
  - 2009: 1412
  - 2010: 1599

**NETWORK TIMELINE: OTHER COLLECTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS**

- Early Childhood Study
  - 2008: $400K
- ECO Initiative Launch
  - 2008: ECO Regional Seed Award
- Project Based Learning in Southeast Indiana
  - 2008: $1M
- Math Matters Initiative
  - 2008: $1M

**SOURCES**

- Bureau of Economic Analysis
- Stats Indiana
- Indiana Department of Education
- EcO15/Network Programmatic Data