



Department of Communications

401 Broadway • Suite 211 • Gary, Indiana 46402-1236

Phone 219.881.1314 • Fax 219.881.1337

Email ldburns@ci.gary.in.us

Karen Freeman-Wilson
Mayor

LaLosa Dent Burns
Director of Communications

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CITY OF GARY TAKES STOCK OF GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AS PART OF IU INAUGURAL RESILIENCE COHORT

Gary, Indiana-The City of Gary will spend the summer collecting information about community-wide and local government operations greenhouse gas emissions as one of thirteen communities selected to be a part of Indiana University's first Resilience Cohort.

Information collected from the community-wide greenhouse gas inventory will be used to help residents and local officials understand city's current emissions profile and to help city employees create an action plan to reduce emissions, increase energy efficiency and improve air quality. Findings from the local government operations inventory will be used to help city employees identify greenhouse gas reduction strategies for municipal activities.

In 2017, the City of Gary participated in the global community of about fifty cities committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions with Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson's signing of the Chicago Climate Charter. Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson is part of the Climate Mayors (aka Mayors National Climate Action Agenda), a group of mayors who have promised to work locally, and advocate nationally for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. The group is comprised of more than 100 cities.

"While we have, and work with a number of agencies and groups as it relates to curbing greenhouse gas emissions in Gary, one of the first priorities on the Mayors National Climate agenda is to develop a community greenhouse gas emissions inventory," stated Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson. "The timing of IU's first Resilience Cohort this summer is excellent and we are excited to learn of the findings; as well, happy to be one of the participating cities." The City of Gary's Green Urbanism Department spearheaded by Director Brenda Scott-Henry will lead the City's first Greenhouse Gas Inventory Project this summer.

The City of Gary is additionally a part of the Great Lakes Climate Adaptation Network (GLCAN), a regional network of local government staff and partners that actively work together to identify and act on the unique climate adaptation challenges of the Great Lakes region. Apart from that, the city is also part of the Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN) Partner Network Program of Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana (OKI), which aims to accelerate adoption of sustainability practices within the region. The inventory project will be a stepping stone for the city to move forward with significant emissions reductions, while playing a crucial role in driving climate action in the United States.

A greenhouse gas inventory is a fundamental first step for Hoosier cities, towns and counties committed to combating the climatic changes communities in Indiana are already experiencing, such as heavier rainfalls in spring and winter, more river and flash flood events and more freeze-thaw events wreaking havoc on transportation infrastructure and potholes. The inventory process will provide 2017 and 2018 data on the amount of energy consumed, the diversity of energy supplied to the grid, vehicle fuel use within the city boundary, the amount of waste generated within the city boundary and more.

The Resilience Cohort was established by the Environmental Resilience Institute, an Indiana University Prepared for Environmental Change Grand Challenge initiative. The Cohort is made up of 13 Indiana cities, towns and counties that will complete their inventories this summer. As part of the Cohort, City of Gary has access to technical resources, a peer network, and training through ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, a nonprofit that specializes in helping local governments with emissions inventories.

“We are delighted that these 13 Indiana communities have chosen to take a critical early step on the path to reducing carbon emissions and enhancing air quality,” said Ellen Ketterson, Director of IU’s Environmental Resilience Institute. “The findings from these greenhouse gas inventories will provide a roadmap for local officials to address emissions produced in their own backyards, improve public health, and strengthen the resilience of Hoosier communities.”

A partnership with Sustain IU’s Indiana Sustainability Development Program is providing eight of the 13 communities with summertime externs – IU students – to help with the data collection and processing. City of Gary received an extern placement -- Reena Azlan is a first-year Master Candidate at IU O’Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs who will be completing her Master of Public Affairs in Environmental Policy in 2020.

Director of Sustain IU Andrew Predmore commented, “I am thrilled that the Resilience Cohort was launched this summer as part of the Indiana Sustainability Development Program. Not only are these students developing professionally through these work experiences, but they are also making real sustainability contributions by doing the foundational work needed to seriously address the challenges posed by climate change.”

The City of Gary anticipates a June start and that the inventories will be done by the completion of the Resilience Cohort, September 15, 2019.

Other Resilience Cohort participants include Bloomington, Carmel, Columbus, Delaware County / Muncie, Evansville, Fort Wayne, Greencastle, Goshen, Michigan City, Oldenburg, Richmond and West Lafayette.

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About the Prepared for Environmental Change initiative:

The Indiana University Prepared for Environmental Change Grand Challenge initiative brings together a broad, bipartisan coalition of government, business, nonprofit and community leaders to help Indiana better prepare for the challenges that environmental changes bring to our economy, health and livelihood. Announced in May 2017, Prepared for Environmental Change is working to deliver tailored and actionable solutions to communities across the state of Indiana.