



[VOTE411: Voter's Guide](#)

Learn more about how Sherene Hess has led our community in her eight years of service as our Indiana County Commissioner by reading her question responses that were posted on the VOTE411 platform.

1. Office Qualifications

I bring to my candidacy extensive professional experience. I'm a problem solver who knows how to work with a team. I believe in a balanced, reasoned approach to complex issues and in fair and effective public policy. My relationships with state and federal officials are key in ensuring that Indiana County fully maximizes its opportunities for the historic and generational funds that are being delivered to rural and small towns across America. I have raised my family here; I'm convinced that Indiana County must work for its people now and for future generations.

2. What are the most important qualities for a county commissioner?

County commissioners are the business of helping communities and people find solutions to problems. Commissioners must lead Indiana County communities and citizens into the future with vision, optimism, transparency, inclusivity, and wisdom. I have spent nearly eight years as county commissioner and possess the experience, the knowledge, and the work ethic to accomplish even more. Though we continue to face many challenges, we have made strides. We welcomed new businesses and supported our existing ones. We constructed community facilities for workforce support, education, and public safety. We delivered services to help individuals in their time of need. I played a key role in the delivery of these efforts and I am committed to more.

3. What do you see as the most pressing needs for infrastructure or capital projects in the county?

The county works constantly to diversify its economic portfolio through a focus on healthcare, light manufacturing, agriculture, leveraging the energy economy that is transitioning and various other types of economic development. Continued broadband expansion efforts are critical to Indiana County's economic and educational progress, as well as to accessing healthcare providers and allowing for small business expansion. No less important is how to support county mental health services and boost access to them. The system that delivers programs for people in need is crumbling due to lack of

funding. In my role as 1st vice president of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, I'll advocate for more funding from the state to fix the system.

4. If new resources were available, what one area of county services would you feel most needs additional resources?

New resources ARE here: The 1.2 trillion Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill is bringing 17.8 billion dollars to Pennsylvania and millions to Western Pennsylvania, promising to trigger a boom in construction and manufacturing in PA and the region; It is a major victory for America's counties, and it will transform infrastructure and economy.

In Indiana County we are seeing federal highway aid, bridge repairs, critical investments in water, stormwater, and broadband projects, long term surface transportation reauthorization for highway, bridge, and transit systems, and public transportation improvements. These efforts help the businesses and people of Indiana County participate in the wider regional economy and the opportunities that building regional competitiveness will bring. I will continue to build relationships with federal and state officials to keep the needs of Indiana County on the radar screen, and to find new resources to meet the needs of all of Indiana County's communities.

5. How do you plan to involve residents in the decision-making process?

I strongly support a process of making appointments that involves a transparent and widespread invitation to the community when a vacancy on any county board or authority occurs. It is on elected officials to be creative in the way they connect with citizens. I appreciate it when people attend public meetings, but I am very pleased to meet with citizens in their communities to listen and discuss concerns. I think social media is an important tool and hope to use it even more. I believe residents want to be part of the process and that it is my responsibility to make that as easy as possible. I will do my best to build that trust, listen for new ideas, increase opportunities for engagement, and empower citizens.