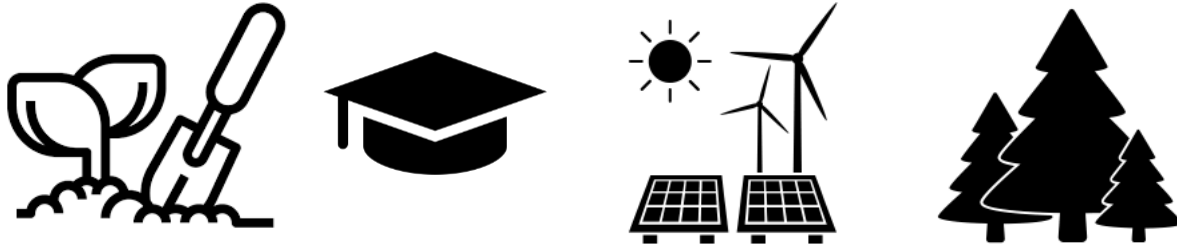


Sherene's Plan for Economic Development



"I am working to support the building of a skilled and resilient workforce for both the current and future needs of job seekers and employers."

- Workforce Enhancement
- Supporting Agriculture, Forestry, and Food Systems
- Demonstrating Leadership

There is a significant proficiency gap between the skills required for today's jobs and future jobs. Employers need a competent, trained workforce that can learn quickly and continually adapt to the change demanded by innovations. This is critical to our country's ability to successfully compete in the world marketplace. As commissioner, I will continue to work with others to find ways to meet the current and future needs of employers and job seekers.

"We are about to embark on a new era for Indiana County, notably our small towns and rural areas. This is where we can truly address critical workforce demand challenges, foster inclusive economic growth among underrepresented communities, and really position Indiana County to best compete in the 21st Century economy."

I will continue to:

- Maintain my efforts with the Tri-County Workforce Investment Board, which partners with PA CareerLink, Career TRACK, and other agencies that match job seekers with employers.
- Serve on the Youth Committee of the workforce investment board, which aims to provide summer work experiences for youth and young adults that teaches skill building and preparing for the responsibilities of working for an employer.
- Collaborate with policymakers to ensure the workforce development system will support the middle-skill workforce and teach skills that are in high demand, often leading directly to a job upon graduation.
- Work to keep employers engaged while maintaining a focus on serving less-skilled populations.

- Introduce and promote the agriculture industry to our youth and others as a business that can lead to a gratifying way to make a living or a career change; Within the next decade, there will be at least 70,000 openings in the agriculture industry in Pennsylvania.

Workforce Enhancement

“My eight years as your county commissioner and my twenty-five years of professional experience and public service have firmed my resolve to support the people of Indiana County.”

Many people are surprised to learn that most American jobs are middle-skill jobs, meaning they require more education and training than a high school diploma but do not necessarily require a four-year college degree. These opportunities will represent approximately 43% of the job market, compared to 25% high-skill jobs (Bachelor’s degree or greater) and 32% low-skill jobs.

Growth jobs:

- Middle-skill jobs are the fastest growing segment of the job market.
- Healthcare occupations will add more jobs than any other group of occupations.
- Jobs that require technical expertise, such as engineering and science.

Supporting Agriculture, Forestry, and Food Systems

“Agriculture, forestry, and food systems play a critical role in our economy by providing food, raw materials, and employment opportunities to a large percentage of our population. We need to think of agriculture as beyond essential food products. Broadly, agriculture is the processing, marketing, distribution, and promotion of agricultural products including forestry and essential food crops.”

We need to prepare workers for the types of skills required for future employment in the field of agriculture.

In my next term, my plan to support agriculture includes the following:

- Working with bankers who understand farming.
- Consulting with accountants who know the tax implications of long-range planning and management systems.
- Conferring with attorneys who have the skills to solve management and transition challenges.
- Collaborating with financial planners who specialize in helping to bring all the experts' advice together into one package.

- Seeking help from extension specialists with Cooperative Extension who can help with budgets, cash flow projections and bias-free analysis of farm situations.
- Consulting with local leaders to promote the agriculture industry to rural youth as a career opportunity.
- Working with educational institutions to develop technical programs to teach current and future farmers how to integrate new technology that is designed to support and improve agriculture.
- Continuing my relationships with local, state, and federal agencies, such as the new workforce development and training initiative through the PA Department of Agriculture.
- Maintaining collaborations with legislators to pursue policies that will continue Pennsylvania's commitment to support agriculture; I have been doing so with the administrations of four governorships over decades. These relationships are making a difference for Indiana County!

Demonstrating Leadership

“As a rural county, we need to sustain and advance our agricultural practices as well as prepare to participate in the emerging renewable energy sector.”

I have served as the Chair of the Indiana County Sustainable Economic Development Task Force for six years.

The task force was established in 2017 by Indiana County Commissioners with the aim to broaden our rural economy for all its citizens through job creation and job training in the renewable energy sector and in sustainable and advanced agriculture practices. The results of this process linked directly into the County's long-range Economic Development/Work Force Development Plan.

The Task Force was charged with identifying new opportunities in economic development that include citizen education and job training in the following areas:

- Renewable energy sector
- Innovative agriculture
- Sustainable building construction and renovation
- Restoration and wise use of the county's natural resources

The Task Force is unified by the efforts of a steering committee in collaboration with the following organizations:

- Indiana County Office of Planning & Development
- League of Women Voters of Indiana County and Pennsylvania
- Center for Community Growth
- Evergreen Conservancy
- IUP Sustainability Studies Program
- Indiana Borough

- Indiana County Center for Economic Operations
- Consortium of IUP
- Chamber of Commerce
- Indiana County Development Center
- Indiana County Tourist Bureau
- County Commissioner

Membership on the Task Force is open to any individual who wants to participate.