On the Road Again: How Hoosiers Get to Work

How much time does the average Hoosier spend on the road en route to his or her job? Indiana's average travel time to work is 22.5 minutes, give or take 12 seconds, but the time it takes to get to work varies significantly depending on where exactly you live.

This article uses 2005 American Community Survey (ACS) data to compare the drive-time habits for various parts of the state and nation. Note: Although references are made to driving, these data apply to all of the 2.7 million Hoosiers age 16 and older who work outside their homes, regardless of whether they rode in a vehicle (the most common method by far), took public transportation, walked or bicycled.

The Time It Takes

Indiana's average travel time to work is 22.5 minutes, which is a few minutes shorter than the national average of 25.1 minutes. Double those numbers and you get the total time spent getting to and from work each day, 45 minutes and 50.2 minutes, respectively. At first glance, a difference of five minutes seems fairly insignificant, but if you calculate it out, Indiana's shorter commute saves each worker about 21 hours in travel time each year.[1] So, while the typical American spends eight-and-a-half days getting to and from work in the course of a year, the average Hoosier spends roughly seven-and-a-half days in transit to his or her job.

The ACS currently collects data for eight Indiana cities and 492 cities nationwide. In Indiana, Gary residents had the longest average travel time to work at 25 minutes, while Bloomington residents had the shortest at 13.6 minutes (see **Figure 1**). In fact, Bloomington had the shortest commute time of all 492 cities nationwide. Only two other places had average travel times under 14 minutes: Champaign, Ill., and Wichita Falls, Tex. At the other end of the spectrum, three cities in California and one in Virginia had average travel times exceeding 40 minutes. Located in the Riverside-San Bernardino area, Hesperia, Calif.,

Commuting by the Sexes

Men and women have different commuting habits; below are a few highlights from the 2005 data for Indiana:
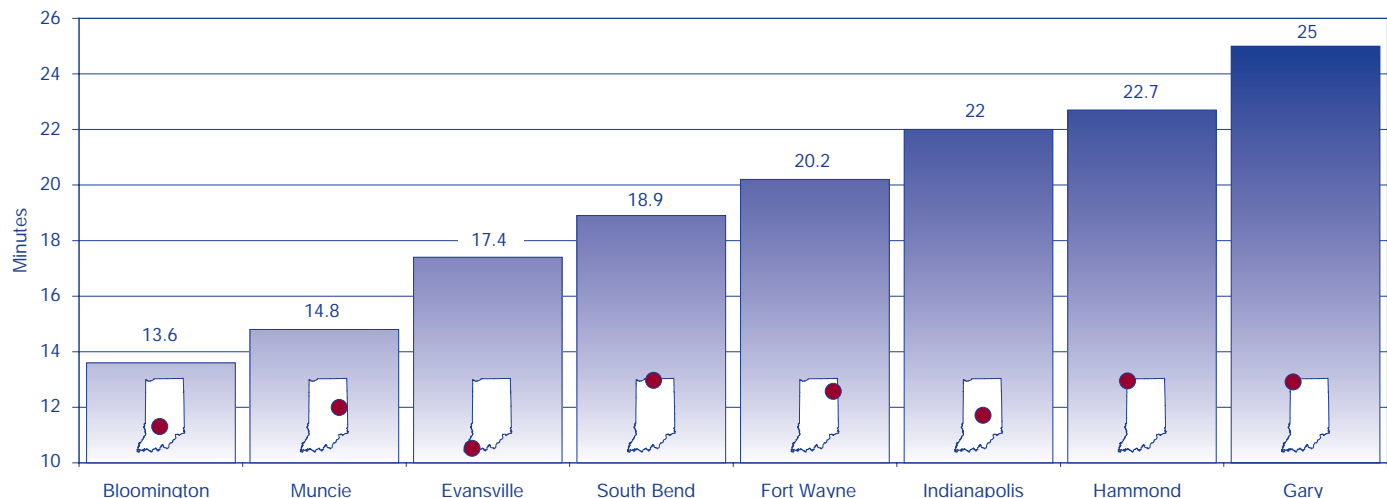
- Men are slightly more likely to carpool than women (10 percent of men vs. 9 percent of women).
- Women are more likely to work in the county where they live (73 percent of women vs. 65 percent of men). They are also more likely to work in the city or town where they live (35 percent of women vs. 29 percent of men).
- Men are more likely to leave the house before 6:30 a.m. (31 percent of men vs. 17 percent of women).
- Women are more likely to have commutes less than 30 minutes (76 percent of women vs. 67 percent of men).

FIGURE 1: AVERAGE TRAVEL TIME TO WORK BY CITY, 2005

Source: IBRC, using U.S. Census Bureau data

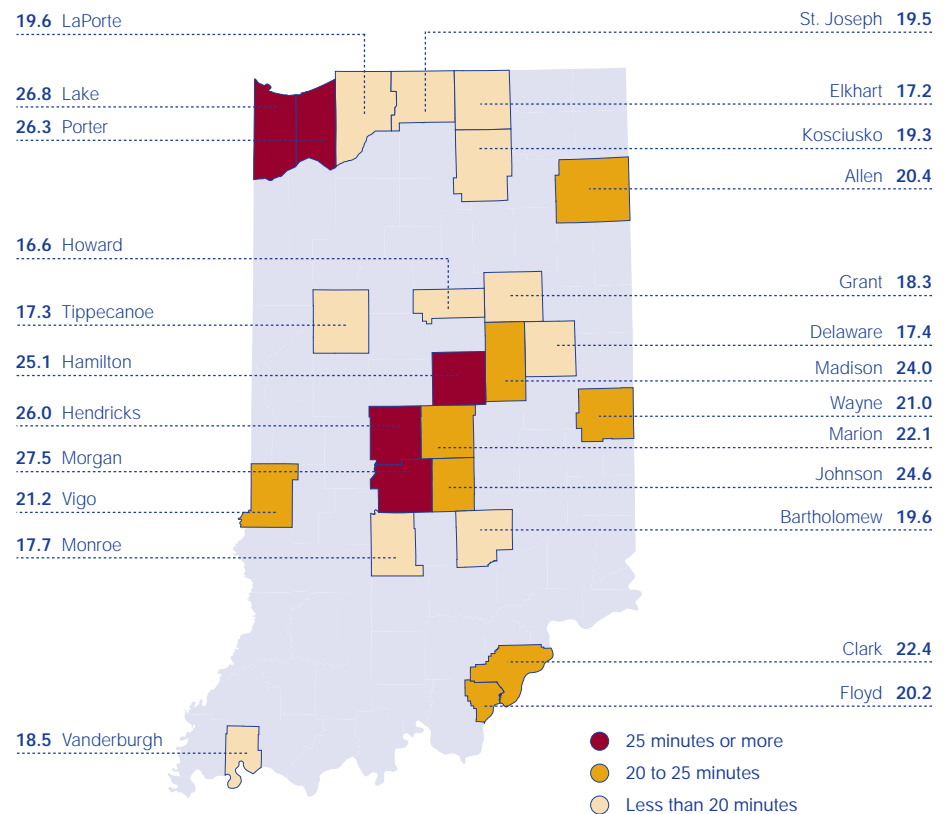topped the list with an average one-way commute time of 44.6 minutes.

As seen in **Figure 2**, the average travel time to work for the 24 Indiana counties covered by the 2005 ACS ranged from 16.6 minutes in Howard County (home to Kokomo) to 27.5 minutes in Morgan County (on the outskirts of the Indianapolis-Carmel metro area). Nationwide, commute times ranged from 14 minutes in Cascade County, Mont., to 42 minutes in Richmond County, N.Y.

The Shortest and Longest Commutes

Figure 3 takes a closer look at travel time, comparing Indiana to the nation. It takes 17.3 percent of Hoosier workers less than 10 minutes to get to work, while half of the state's workers arrive at their job in less than 20 minutes. On the other hand, 11.2 percent of Indiana workers have commutes of 45 minutes or longer, with 5.1 percent traveling an hour or more.

As seen in **Figure 4**, Elkhart and Floyd counties have the smallest percentage of workers traveling 45 minutes or longer (4.2 percent and 4.5
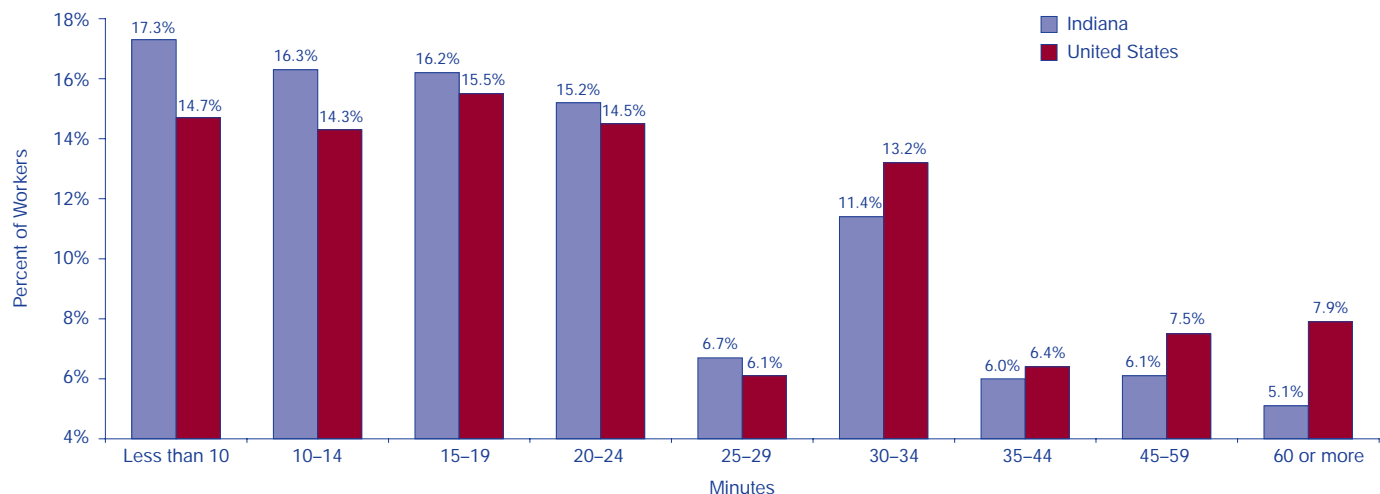
FIGURE 2: AVERAGE TRAVEL TIME TO WORK BY COUNTY, 2005

19.6 LaPorte	St. Joseph 19.5
26.8 Lake	Elkhart 17.2
26.3 Porter	Kosciusko 19.3
	Allen 20.4
16.6 Howard	
17.3 Tippecanoe	Grant 18.3
25.1 Hamilton	Delaware 17.4
26.0 Hendricks	Madison 24.0
27.5 Morgan	Wayne 21.0
21.2 Vigo	Marion 22.1
17.7 Monroe	Johnson 24.6
	Bartholomew 19.6
	Clark 22.4
	Floyd 20.2
18.5 Vanderburgh	

● 25 minutes or more
● 20 to 25 minutes
○ Less than 20 minutes

Source: IBRC, using U.S. Census Bureau data

"It takes 17.3 percent of Hoosier workers less than 10 minutes to get to work, while half of the state's workers arrive at their job in less than 20 minutes."

FIGURE 3: MINUTES OF TRAVEL TIME TO WORK BY PERCENT OF WORKERS, 2005

■ Indiana
■ United States

Minutes	Indiana	United States
Less than 10	17.3%	14.7%
10–14	16.3%	14.3%
15–19	16.2%	15.5%
20–24	15.2%	14.5%
25–29	6.7%	6.1%
30–34	11.4%	13.2%
35–44	6.0%	6.4%
45–59	6.1%	7.5%
60 or more	5.1%	7.9%

Percent of Workers

Source: IBRC, using U.S. Census Bureau data

percent, respectively), while Morgan and Lake counties have the highest percentages (18.7 percent and 18 percent, respectively). Moreover, one out of 10 Lake County workers travel an hour or more to his or her job—the highest percentage in the state, undoubtedly because many are employed in the Chicago metro.

Leaving Home

Figure 5 compares the time Hoosiers leave home to go to work to the United States overall. Half of Indiana's workers leave home between 6:30 a.m. and 9 a.m. Almost 25 percent of workers rise early and leave home to go to work before 6:30 a.m., while the remaining 25 percent leave for work at 9 a.m. or later.

Learn More

Use American FactFinder from the U.S. Census Bureau to get more detail on these commuting characteristics for any geography covered by the ACS. Go to http://factfinder.census.gov/ and select the "get data" link underneath the American Community Survey heading. Click the "Enter a table number" link and type "S0801" to bring up the commuting characteristics table. Use the sidebar links to view additional geographies or years.

Notes

1. The number of days worked per year varies by employee. This calculation assumes a five-day workweek, two weeks of vacation and six annual holidays for a total of 244 work days per year.

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FIGURE 4: PERCENTAGE OF WORKERS TRAVELING 45 MINUTES OR LONGER TO GET TO WORK, 2005
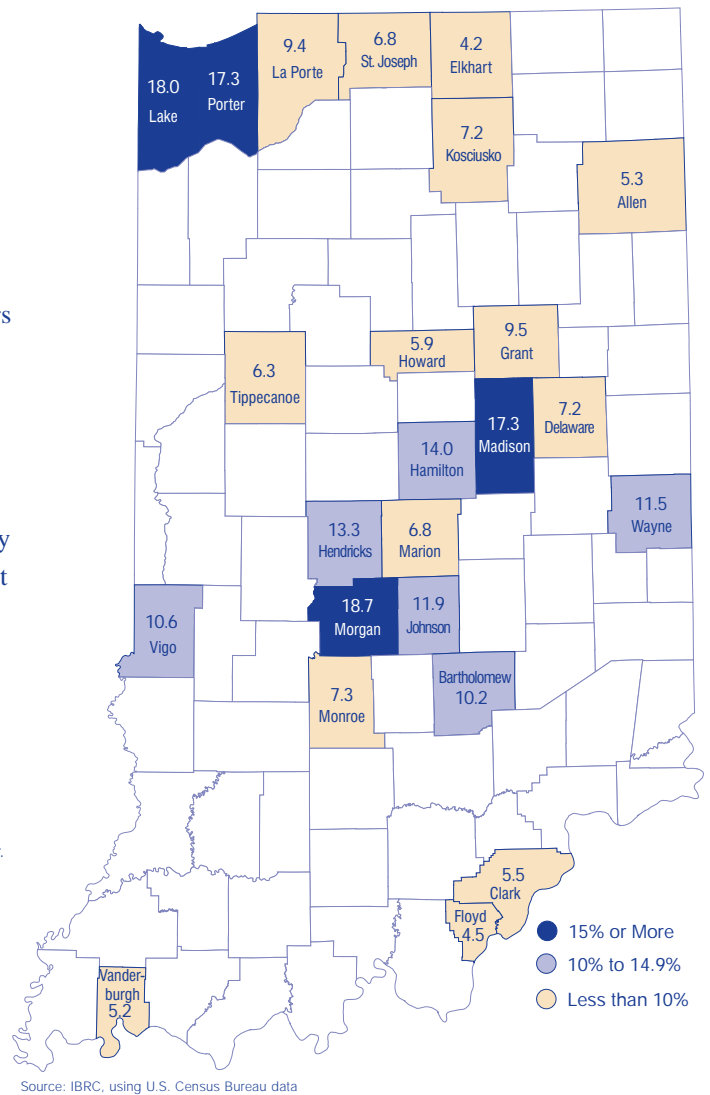

Source: IBRC, using U.S. Census Bureau data

FIGURE 5: TIME LEAVING HOME TO GO TO WORK, 2005

Source: IBRC, using U.S. Census Bureau data