What we know about Elkhart County... 

**Education.** Of the adult population (age 25 and older) in Elkhart County, 73 percent had at least a high school diploma and another 14 percent had a bachelor's or higher degree (based on the most current attainment data from the 1990 Census). At that time, 27 percent did not have a high school diploma.

According to Indiana Department of Education figures, of the 1,561 high school graduates in the 1996/97 school year, 73 percent planned to go on to a secondary education institution (see graph below). The graduation rate in this county was 86 percent (based on grades 9 through 12 for the year 1996/97). The dropout rate, based on enrollment in grades 7 through 12, was 2.7 for the 1996/97 school year in Elkhart County (358 dropouts). The rate was 3.8 in the 1989/90 school year (439 dropouts).

**Employment.** There were 94,120 Elkhart County residents in the labor force in 1997; of those, 91,040 were employed in either full or part-time jobs. The unemployment rate in the county was 3.3 for the year, with 3,080 persons out of work but seeking jobs.

There were 133,658 jobs* in Elkhart County in 1996; 44 percent in manufacturing, 14 percent in retail trade, and 18 percent in services. The average wage per job in 1996 was $26,194 and Elkhart County ranked 16 out of 92 counties.

*Jobs are not equivalent to people since people can hold more than one job; jobs are also held by people who may live in other counties or states and commute.

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**Graduates to Higher Education**

Percent of All Graduates in '96/97

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Institution</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two Year Institution</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocation/Technical</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Year Institution</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Questions to ponder ...**

Is adequate vocational training and on the job training available locally? What skills are employers in this county or area looking for in its work force? Are there sufficient jobs in the area to pay a "living" wage? Is health insurance a benefit most employers in the area offer? Who works with local communities and businesses to develop a work strategy for the community? Are there services available to help welfare families in their transition to work?