

Be Noble

Noble County Economic Development



2025 Annual Report



Star of the West



BR&E Visits



Mfg. Camp

Be Noble Inc.

401 E. Diamond Street

Kendallville, IN 46755



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About Us

Be Noble Inc. is Noble County Indiana's local economic development organization (LEDO) and 501(c)(3) nonprofit, charitable organization focused on ensuring a thriving economy.

Our team is dedicated to serving as a connector to help individuals and organizations discover and leverage the many talents, abilities, gifts, skills, and resources available in our communities. We are uniquely positioned to help Noble County thrive in the following focus areas:

- Workforce and talent development systems
- Business attraction, retention, and expansions
- Small business start-ups and resources to grow
- Quality of life, placemaking & cultural enhancement initiatives
- Infrastructure development
- Grant programs
- Access to demographic and other local data
- Business, site, and land development projects
- Access to Incentives, including tax abatements
- Collaborations and project management



Meet Our Team



MELANIE KELLOGG

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Melanie Kellogg brings a wealth of experience and a passion for community development to her role as CEO. With a background in public relations and marketing, Melanie earned her undergraduate degree from Indiana State University before furthering her education with an MBA from the Scott College of Business at Indiana State University in 2022.

Committed to giving back to her community, Melanie volunteers her time as a member of Noble County Junior Achievement and serves as the board president of Whitley County Junior Achievement. Additionally, she holds the position of board president at Warriors Inc., where she dedicates herself to supporting and empowering local veterans.

Melanie's dedication and leadership have been recognized by Fort Wayne Business Weekly, which named her one of their esteemed "40 under 40" honorees.

As CEO, Melanie is driven by a vision of fostering collaboration, innovation, and sustainable growth within the community. With her strong leadership skills and deep-rooted commitment to service, she is poised to lead our organization to new heights of success and impact.



TARA STREB

CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER

Tara Streb brings a dynamic blend of experience and commitment to community development through her multifaceted roles at Be Noble Inc. Joining Be Noble Inc. in 2019, Tara has since been an integral force in fostering growth and innovation within the local landscape.

Tara's dedication extends far beyond her role at Be Noble Inc., as she serves on various boards that shape the fabric of her community. Notably, she plays a pivotal role on the Thrive by 5 initiative, recognizing the critical importance of early childhood development. Additionally, her service on the Kendallville City Council supports the effective delivery of essential municipal services and reflects her commitment to thoughtful, community-centered leadership.

In recognition of her outstanding achievements and leadership, Tara was honored as a Fort Wayne Business Weekly 40 under 40 recipient, a testament to her exemplary contributions to both the business and civic spheres. Furthermore, her relentless pursuit of excellence led her to complete Ambassador Institute's Academy for Civic Engagement in 2024, further enhancing her capacity to effect positive change in her community.

Tara Streb's passion for community development, coupled with her strategic vision and collaborative approach, continues to drive transformative initiatives that uplift and empower those around her. Through her unwavering dedication and tireless advocacy, Tara exemplifies the servant leadership and service, leaving an impactful mark on the fabric of her community.

Vision And Mission



Mission

**Ensuring a thriving
economy in Noble
County, Indiana**

Vision

Noble County is growing and full of life, a place in which businesses choose to operate and grow. The region is known as a hub of innovation and home to a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem. Residents enjoy a high quality of life made possible by engaged leaders, a diversity of culture and amenities, and ample opportunities to enhance personal wealth.

State of Noble County's Economy



At a glance:

- Population: 47,811 (2024), up 344 residents from 2020
 - Albion: 2,254
 - Avilla: 2,494
 - Cromwell: 484
 - Kendallville: 10,326
 - Ligonier: 4,650
 - Rome City: 1,315
- Labor Force Participation: 22,173
- Unemployment Rate: 3.6%- ranked 48th in the state
- County Median Household Income: \$66,072
- Total Housing Units: 20,505 (2024), up 293 from 2023
 - Median Value (2023): \$183,400
 - Median Rent (2023): \$608
- Net Domestic Migration: 108+ since 2023
- International Migration: 79+ since 2023
- Births: 630
- Deaths: 511
 - Natural Increase: 119- Ranked 14th in the state

Employment and Earnings by Industry (2023):

Industry	Employment	Average Earning Per Job
Total by place of work	23,731	\$58,301
Wage and Salary	17,954	\$52,166
Farm Proprietors	974	\$56,843
Nonfarm Proprietors	4,806	\$35,574
Farm	1,130	\$59,304
Nonfarm	22,601	\$58,251
Private	20,725	\$57,964
Government	1,876	\$61,424

Financial Snapshot

\$490,000 from Be Noble Inc.'s Investment Trust Fund was invested into a variety of projects in Noble County. These included:

- Impact Institute- \$167,500 over the next 2 years
 - This project will transform two vacant retail spaces located in the Fairview Plaza in Kendallville into updated and current classroom and shop spaces for students of the program.
- Child Care Grants- \$50,000
 - This program is to help expand access to high-quality, home-based child care by supporting the growth and sustainability of small child care businesses in Noble County.
- BELT Program- \$22,500 over the next 3 years
 - This program is a 10-week business accelerator cohort in which up to 20 entrepreneurs, small business start-ups and/or businesses looking to grow will receive hands-on training designed to help them succeed in their launch/expansion.
- Oak Farm Athletic Complex- \$250,000 over the next 3 years
 - This project will help fund the growth of their new athletic complex which will include two soccer fields, ten tennis courts, four pickleball courts, a track, and a cross country course. This new facility will be utilized for private and public use.

In 2025, more than \$29 million in real and personal property tax abatements were approved, supporting the expansion of six businesses across Noble County. These investments contribute to local job growth, increased capital investment, and a stronger economic foundation for the community.



2025 in Review



1

Over \$91M in Capital Investments in the County

Our county welcomed over \$91 million in new capital investments this year, fueling business growth, enhancing infrastructure, and strengthening our local economy. These investments are laying the foundation for a vibrant, prosperous future.

2

READI 2.0

Three Noble County companies were awarded READI 2.0 funding which focused on talent retention and attraction. These initiatives are equipping our residents with the skills and resources needed to succeed in today's economy.

3

Childcare Advancements

We made major strides in childcare access and quality, giving families more options and children a stronger start. New programs and partnerships are supporting working parents while nurturing the next generation.

4

Kendallville Ranked 39th in the U.S.

Kendallville earned national recognition, ranking 39th among U.S. cities for livability and opportunity. This honor reflects our community's dedication to economic growth, quality of life, and a welcoming environment.

5

Latino Business Workshops

Be Noble Inc. hosted regional workshops designed to foster growth and innovation. These workshops provided valuable insights and tools to small businesses and entrepreneurs.

6

Youth Investment

Be Noble Inc. sponsored the Noble County 4H program for STEM events that include robotic sessions, engineering camps, electrical workshops, in-school STEM support and other learning workshops.

7

New Jobs Created

We saw a total of 65 new jobs created in the community which will total over \$3.4M in additional income for Noble County families.

8

New Company Growth

In 2025, we saw significant growth in companies all over Noble County. These include Flint & Walling, B&J Specialty Inc., B&J Medical, Metal Craft and the addition of Herbruck's Poultry Ranch.

9

BELT Program

Be Noble Inc. has partnered with the NIIC for an entrepreneurship coach to support the entrepreneurship and small business initiatives of Noble County. Participants are achieving measurable growth and stronger community connections.

10

Housing Development

Housing initiatives are creating new, affordable, and vibrant neighborhoods. These projects are expanding options for residents and supporting sustainable community growth.

2026 Strategic Priorities



1. Enhancing Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E)

Goal: Strengthen existing businesses to ensure sustainability, foster job growth, and attract new business opportunities.

Strategic Priorities:

- Develop Comprehensive BR&E Marketing & Communication Plan:
 - Create tailored marketing campaigns that highlight local business success stories, available support resources, and growth opportunities.
 - Focus on showcasing the benefits of being a part of the community, highlighting local assets, incentives, and workforce capabilities.
 - Utilize digital, print, and community channels for outreach.
- Build Strong Relationships with Local Employers:
 - Engage in regular check-ins with companies to assess their needs, gather feedback, and identify opportunities for business expansion or retention.
- Conduct Targeted Outreach for BR&E Visits:
 - Track businesses that have not had a visit in recent years and prioritize outreach to re-establish connections.
 - Set clear objectives for BR&E meetings (e.g., problem-solving, exploring expansion opportunities, addressing concerns).
- Create Collaborative Support Programs:
 - Develop partnerships with local chambers of commerce, business incubators, and other organizations to deliver joint support for business development.
 - Promote programs such as workforce development, financial assistance, and grants to existing businesses.
- Expand Support for Local Entrepreneurs:
 - Offer mentorship, training, and networking opportunities to foster entrepreneurship through our partnership with the Northeast Indiana Innovation Center.
 - Provide mentorship, training, and networking opportunities to support entrepreneurship and business development by organizing workshops focused on Hispanic-owned businesses.
 - Offer mentorship, training, and networking opportunities to foster entrepreneurship and business growth by hosting workshops featuring industry leaders.

2. Developing Infrastructure for County-Wide Growth

Goal: Ensure the county has the infrastructure and resources necessary to support business growth, attract new investments, and sustain a high quality of life.

Strategic Priorities:

- Invest in Key Infrastructure Projects:
 - Focus on upgrading and expanding infrastructure
- Plan for Future Economic Development Zones:
 - Identify and prioritize areas in need of infrastructure upgrades to position them as prime locations for new businesses and industries.
 - Work with local governments to create or expand industrial parks, business incubators, or mixed-use commercial spaces to attract new businesses.
- Foster Collaboration on Regional Infrastructure Development:
 - Engage neighboring communities and local governments in joint planning efforts for region-wide infrastructure projects (e.g., sewer systems, water supply).
 - Explore funding opportunities and partnerships with state and federal agencies to expedite infrastructure development.

2026 Strategic Priorities



- Support Housing and Workforce Development Infrastructure:
 - Align infrastructure development with workforce housing needs. Prioritize residential developments near business districts to minimize employee commute times.
 - Advocate for investment in local housing to support workforce attraction and retention.
- Improve Access to Capital for Infrastructure Projects:
 - Research available federal, state, and private funding sources to support large-scale infrastructure projects.
 - Provide resources and guidance to local governments and private developers on securing funding for infrastructure initiatives.

3. Enhancing Local Talent

Goal: Build a skilled and adaptable workforce to meet the evolving needs of local businesses and attract new industries.

Strategic Priorities:

- Enhance Educational and Training Opportunities:
 - Partner with local schools, vocational training centers, and community colleges to develop educational programs that match local workforce needs.
 - Increase the availability of training programs in high-demand fields such as manufacturing, agriculture, and information technology.
- Promote STEM and Manufacturing Education:
 - Support initiatives like manufacturing camps, STEM education programs, and internships for middle and high school students to introduce them to career opportunities in local industries.
 - Work with schools to create pathways for students from high school to local industries or technical colleges.
- Encourage Regional Talent Development:
 - Partner with regional employers to create apprenticeship and internship programs that allow young adults to gain experience while working toward certification or college degrees.
- Foster Entrepreneurial Talent and Innovation:
 - Develop support structures for local entrepreneurs, including incubators, mentorship programs, and small business grants to support the startup ecosystem.
 - Collaborate with regional innovation hubs to connect local entrepreneurs with larger networks and investors.
- Promote Remote Work and Telecommuting Opportunities:
 - Encourage businesses to explore remote work options and leverage technology to attract talent from outside the county while retaining the local workforce.
 - Create marketing campaigns to promote rural living advantages, appealing to remote workers seeking a high quality of life in rural areas.

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Contact Us



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