

2026

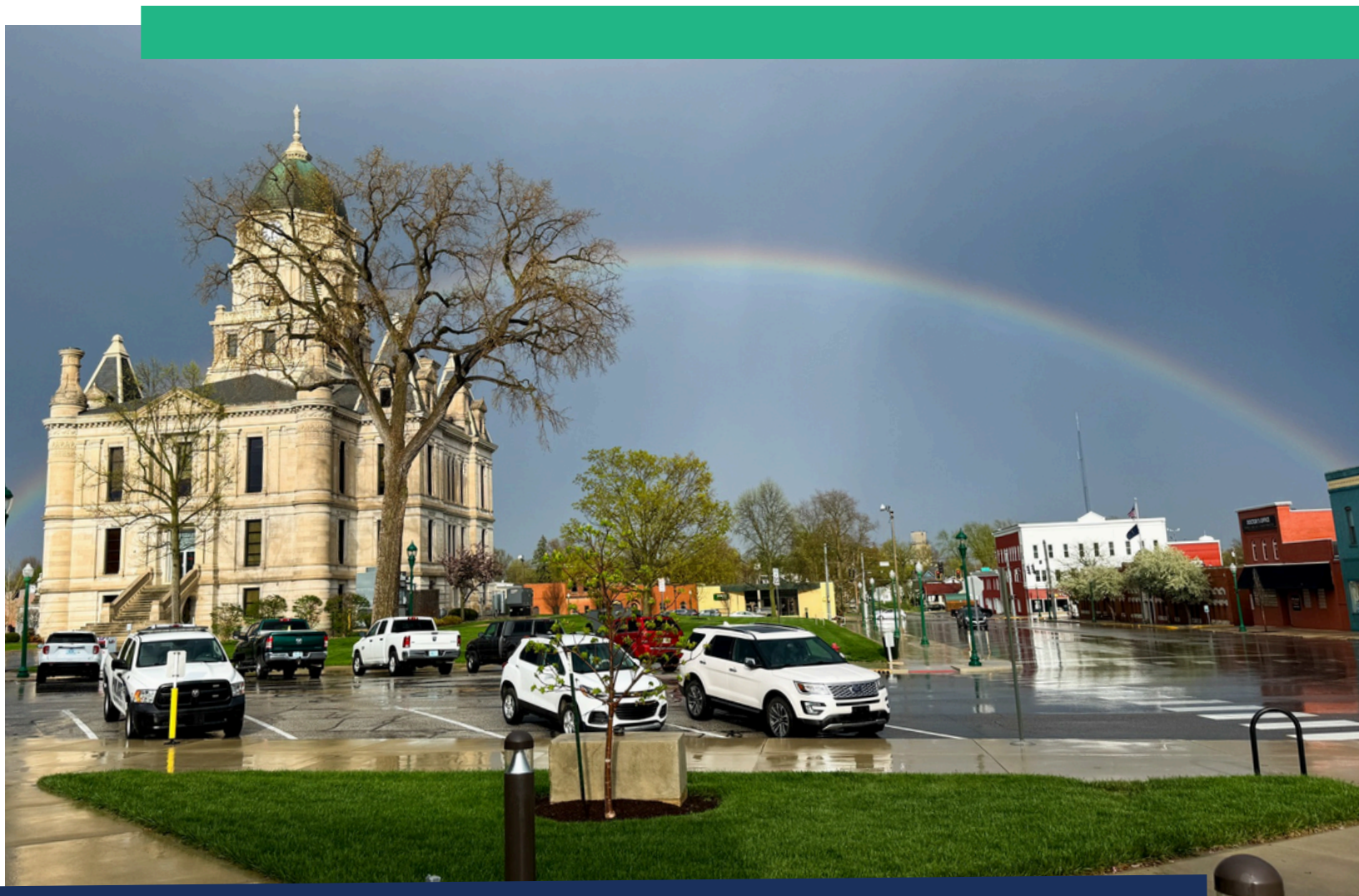


COLUMBIA CITY
CONNECT



Downtown Columbia City

BUSINESS & PROPERTY OWNER RESOURCE GUIDE



**View Resource
Guide Online**





ABOUT COLUMBIA CITY CONNECT

Columbia City Connect is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and revitalizing Columbia City's historic downtown. Designated by Indiana Main Street and accredited by the National Main Street Center, we are part of a nationwide network of over 1,600 Main Street communities working to keep America's historic downtowns vibrant and economically thriving.

Our mission is to enhance the quality of life in Columbia City by beautifying public spaces, creating engaging community events, and supporting local businesses. Through initiatives like First Fridays, Cabin Fever, Walk of Trees, and Ladies Night Out, we bring people together to celebrate our unique downtown.

Beyond hosting events, Columbia City Connect also works to strengthen our community by offering workshops for business owners, administering the City's Façade Grant program, organizing Downtown Cleanup Day, and recently launching a Downtown Historic Walking Tour to celebrate our city's rich history.

At Columbia City Connect, we are proud to help make our downtown a dynamic, welcoming space for residents and visitors alike, ensuring it remains a heart of commerce, culture, and connection for years to come.

Sign up for our business e-newsletter [here](#):



COLUMBIA CITY CONNECT STAFF

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Niki Keister

niki@columbiacityconnect.com

MARKETING DIRECTOR

Abby Carter

abby@columbiacityconnect.com

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

COLUMBIA CITY REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (RDC)

REVOLVING LOAN FUND

The initiative aims to enhance the physical and economic vitality of the downtown Columbia City TIF District by offering financial incentives for building improvements. It seeks to encourage private investment in the area and address key factors that contribute to the district's overall economic success.

- The minimum loan amount is \$10,000. / The maximum loan amount is \$50,000.

[Meetings on the second Tuesday at noon in City Hall.](#) Program scheduled for June 2025.

WHITLEY COUNTY EDC

MICROLOAN FUND

The Microloan Fund provides working capital for businesses in Whitley County. Recipients must be either currently or formerly engaged with the Whitley County EDC's Small Business Entrepreneurship Initiative (SBEI) program.

- The maximum loan amount is \$10,000

Dale Buuck, President of the Whitley County EDC, dbuuck@whitleyedc.com or 260-244-5506
[Micro Loan Fund Link](#)

WHITLEY COUNTY EDC

COMMUNITY AND SMALL BUSINESS LOAN FUND

The Community and Small Business Fund provides loans for working capital, equipment, building improvements (if no other RLF program is available), and matching funds for façade grant improvements.

- The maximum loan amount is \$25,000

Dale Buuck, President of the Whitley County EDC, dbuuck@whitleyedc.com or 260-244-5506
[Small Business Loan Fund Link](#)

WHITLEY COUNTY EDC

GROWTH VENTURE LOAN FUND

The Growth Venture Fund is primarily designed as a business incentive program and can be used for any growth or start-up related expense excluding payroll/salaries.

- The maximum loan amount is \$100,000

Dale Buuck, President of the Whitley County EDC, dbuuck@whitleyedc.com or 260-244-5506
[Growth Venture Loan Fund Link](#)

BDF / BRIGHTPOINT

SMALL BUSINESS LOAN

The Brightpoint Development Fund (BDF) provides affordable financing for small-business owners looking to grow their business and entrepreneurs who are just starting their business. BDF provide alternative financing for customers who are unable to borrow from traditional lenders due to past credit problems or are needing only a small amount of capital. Business development services are also provided to assist with business plan writing, registration, marketing, bookkeeping, and other essential activities.

Brightpoint Development Fund: [Small Business Loan Link](#) or 260-399-4108

GRANTS & TAX INCENTIVES

COLUMBIA CITY REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (RDC)

FACADE IMPROVEMENT MATCHING GRANT

Facade Improvement Matching Grant Program stimulates efforts to improve the street appearance of Columbia City's commercial and business facades. All grants awarded require a matching dollar-for-dollar expenditure by the owner or tenant. Open May 31-August 31

- The maximum grant amount is \$3,000.

Meetings on the second Tuesday at noon in City Hall.

Chip Hill, chill@columbiacity.net or 260-248-5114

[Facade Grant Application](#)

INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

FEDERAL REHABILITATION INVESTMENT TAX CREDIT (RITC)

The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program encourages private sector investment in the rehabilitation and re-use of historic buildings. The RITC is a program administered by the National Park Service and provides a 20% credit on qualified expenses toward the owners federal income taxes.

- The minimum project amount \$10,000
- The maximum project amount is \$250,000

Ashley Thomas, asthomas@dnr.in.gov or 317-234-7034

MARKETING

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Submit your event [here](#):



THE UPDATE



Submit your news to Abby Carter abby@columbiacityconnect.com

GOOGLE

Claim your business listing and reach more customers by visiting www.google.com/places
The process is free and takes about 30 minutes.

JOIN IN LOCAL EVENTS

Columbia City Connect hosts events throughout the year. Join in!

For more information, check out the website:

<https://www.columbiacityconnect.com/downtown-events/>

2026 LOCAL EVENTS HOSTED BY COLUMBIA CITY CONNECT

Foodie February - February

Cabin Fever - March

Flower Crawl - May

First Fridays - May-October

Stars, Stripes & Symphony - July

Ladies Night Out - October

Holiday Open House - November

Shop Small Saturday - November

Walk of Trees - Nov. & Dec.

BUSINESS RESOURCES

*Listed in Alphabetical Order

COLUMBIA CITY CONNECT

Elevates and energizes downtown Columbia City through events like First Fridays, the Walk of Trees, and Ladies Night Out; offers no cost business seminars; builds a stronger community through preservation-based economic development.

Website: columbiacityconnect.com

Email: niki@columbiacityconnect.com

INDIANA SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Offers no-cost business advising, training, referrals, and a library of cultivated tools and resources to help businesses, from startup through sale or retirement, succeed.

Website: isbdc.org

Phone: 260-481-0500

SCORE NORTHEAST INDIANA

Provides free and confidential one-on-one business counseling by phone, email, and in-person in Northeastern Indiana. We also conduct workshops for both start-up entrepreneurs and seasoned small business owners.

Website: <https://www.score.org/northeastindiana>

Phone: 260-422-2601

STATE OF INDIANA

The state of Indiana is dedicated to making your business experience easier than ever. INBiz is your one-stop resource for registering your business and ensuring it complies with state laws and regulations

Website: <https://inbiz.in.gov/about>

Phone: (855) 773-4647

WHITLEY COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

A paid membership organization that provides networking events and marketing opportunities that will help you grow your business.

Website: whitleychamber.org

Phone: 260-723-7131

WHITLEY COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (EDC)

Offers free resources, guidance, and incentives to help Whitley County businesses achieve success and growth.

Website: whitleyedc.com

Phone: 260-244-5506

WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITY CENTER (WEOC)

Offers no-cost business advising, training, referrals, and a library of cultivated tools and resources to help businesses, from startup through sale or retirement, succeed.

Website: <https://niic.net/wbc/>

Phone: 260-407-6442

CITY OF COLUMBIA CITY

DOING BUSINESS & RETAIL DATA

ESRI & Main Street America Market Overview:

Guiding insights for customers, locations, marketing, and growth.



Retail Market Profile:

Understanding who customers are, where they are, and how they shop.



Columbia City Connect Transformation Strategy:

A community-driven plan for downtown vision, strategies, and priorities.



Columbia City Downtown Revitalization Plan:

A roadmap to guide downtown planning, development, and future funding opportunities.



LEADERSHIP

MAYOR

Ryan Daniel

BOARD OF WORKS

Mayor Ryan Daniel

Lisa Smith

Dan Weigold

Clerk-Treasurer Leslee Robinson

CITY COUNCIL

Mayor Ryan Daniel

President, Dan Weigold

Jennifer Romano

Tad Varga

Brent Bockelman

Ryan Adamson

Clerk-Treasurer Leslee Robinson



*Meetings: 2nd & 4th Tuesday of each month at 5pm in Council Chambers

*Meetings: 2nd & 4th Tuesday of each month at 6pm in Council Chambers

CITY SERVICES

CITY UTILITIES

As a business within city limits, you have access to a variety of utility services, including electricity, water, sewage, and stormwater. Businesses are billed monthly for these services. For any utility-related questions, you can contact the Utilities Department at 260-248-5100.

RECYCLING & SPECIAL TRASH

Whitley County Solid Waste, located at 701 S Line Street, accepts a variety of waste items, including hazardous materials, which cannot be placed in your regular trash bin. They also offer recycling services to all of Whitley County. For more information, you can contact them at 260-248-3132.

SNOW REMOVAL

Businesses are required by ordinance to remove snow and ice from sidewalks within 24 hours of each weather event. It is recommended that businesses wait for snowplows to pass before clearing sidewalks and driveways, as they may become covered again. Additionally, businesses are prohibited from throwing or plowing snow back into the street.

CITY OF COLUMBIA CITY



PLANNING, BUILDING, UTILITIES, & ORDINANCES

These agencies and officials are available to help navigate through the various processes and rules regarding land use, building, development, public safety, utilities, and local ordinances.

PLANNING & BUILDING

The Columbia City/Whitley County Joint Planning and Building Department provides planning, zoning, and building services for all of Whitley County. Department staff members guide and assist residents and businesses through regulatory processes for new construction and building renovation projects, proposed land use changes, new signs and other structures, and a variety of other matters related to current conditions and future plans for the community.

- Nathan Bilger, Planning Director, 260-248-3112
- Craig Wagner, Chief Building Inspector, 260-248-3112

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Community Development Director serves as a liaison between businesses, residents, nonprofits, community groups, utilities, and government departments for the betterment of the community.

- Chip Hill, Community Development Director, 260-248-5114

WHITLEY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT - FOOD PROTECTION

The Whitley County Health Department ensures food safety through various permits, including those for retail food stores, food service establishments, mobile food units, and temporary food services.

- Traci Little, Environmental Health Food Specialist, 260-248-3121, tlittle@whitleygov.com

COLUMBIA CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT - PREVENTION & SAFETY

The fire department assists property owners and performs inspections during construction and on regular intervals to ensure compliance with fire safety rules and best practices.

- Chris LaRue, Fire Marshal, 260-248-5160 Code

COLUMBIA CITY CLERK-TREASURER'S OFFICE

The Clerk-Treasurer manages both the administrative and financial operations of local government, overseeing tasks such as utility billing, City finances, meeting scheduling, issuing permits, maintaining city records, managing budgets, and administering taxes.

- Leslee Robinson, Clerk-Treasurer, 260-248-5100



DIRECTORY

CITY CONTACT NUMBERS

Police Department 248-5121

Utility Office 248-5100

Water/Stormwater Dept. 248-5118

Mayor 248-5111

City Clerk-Treasurer 248-5112

Community Development 248-5114

Dispatch 248-5123

Parks Department 248-5180

Fire Department 248-5160

COUNTY CONTACT NUMBERS

Whitley County Sheriff 244-6410

Whitley County Auditor 248-3100

Whitley County Assessor 248-3901

Whitley County Clerk 248-3102

Whitley County Treasurer 248-3105

Whitley County Recorder 248-3106

Whitley County Engineer 248-3107

Whitley County Drainage 248-3108

Whitley County Planning/
Building 248-3112

Whitley County Health Dept 248-2131

Columbia Township Trustee 248-0045

MISCELLANEOUS NUMBERS

Columbia City Connect 264-8062

Century Link New Service 800-788-3500

CenturyLink Repair 800-788-3600

Mediacom 800-874-2924

Surf Broadband 888-274-6381

NIPSCO 800-464-7726

Recycling Center 248-3132

Whitley Environmental 248-8300

Post Office 244-5962

Post & Mail Newspaper 244-5153



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