

ABSTRACT

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Degree Received: December 2021

Title: The Role of Transit in the Upward Mobility of Low-Income Indianapolis Residents

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This study examines the extent to which transit may be able to assist with the upward mobility of low-income groups, specifically those making less than a living wage. Previous studies relating to job accessibility have examined the feasibility of reaching jobs using various modes of transportation, and some have factored educational requirements into the attainability of those jobs. However, no studies thus far have attempted to quantify accessibility to jobs that are conducive to upward mobility. Employment data relevant to the labor force of Indianapolis, Indiana, is used to determine the salaries associated with occupations, and which occupations require no more than a high school education. Those occupations are then paired with the various industries they are found in, and the salary belonging to the industry's highest-earning occupation is associated with that industry. The median household incomes of low-income Census block groups (CBGs) are then compared to the salaries of each industry to evaluate whether the salary is large enough to induce upward mobility for those living in the CBGs. The bus routes and bus stops for the local transit system (IndyGo) and the jobsite locations are mapped in ArcGIS to assess the low-income population's accessibility to various industries.

Bus routes that service both downtown Indianapolis and low-income CBGs were found to provide people living in those CBGs with access to some of the most lucrative jobs, particularly those found in the *Finance and Insurance* industry. Over half of the industries located in Indianapolis have salaries large enough to induce upward mobility for those living in all the low-income CBGs; this corresponds to 8,651 (53%) of all Indianapolis jobsites. Findings from this study suggest that low-income people would benefit from having access to transit routes that pass through downtowns and other areas with high concentrations of white-collar jobs. Furthermore, low-income Indianapolis residents informed of this study's results may be motivated to explore the possibilities for better-paying jobs accessible to them by transit.