Owen County Tax Abatement Manual

A Guide for Officials, Council Members, and Community Leaders

How to Use This Manual

This manual is divided into two parts. Part One is written for county commissioners, county council members, and economic development staff. It explains how the Owen County tax abatement system works, how to evaluate applications, what to watch for during the approval process, and what to do when a company does not follow through on its commitments.

Part Two is written in plain language for town officials, board members, and community leaders who may be less familiar with the technical details of tax incentive programs. It answers common questions in straightforward terms and provides a glossary of key vocabulary.

Both parts cover the same system. Officials who want full technical detail should read Part One. Those who need a shorter overview can go directly to Part Two.

PART ONE

Policymaker Guide

For County Commissioners, Council Members, and Economic Development Staff

Section 1: What Is a Tax Abatement?

A tax abatement is a temporary reduction in the property taxes owed on real estate improvements or new equipment. In Indiana, abatements are authorized under IC 6-1.1-12.1 and take the form of deductions from a property's assessed valuation for a period of up to ten years. The length of an abatement is not automatic — it is determined by the designating body based on the merits of each application.

When a business invests in new construction or major equipment, the resulting increase in assessed value would ordinarily trigger a higher tax bill. An abatement defers some or all of that increase, giving the company time to get established before paying full property taxes.

The county does not give money to the company. Instead, it agrees not to collect a portion of the taxes that would otherwise be owed on new investment during the abatement period. At the end of the abatement, the company pays full property taxes on the improved or expanded property.

> **Key Point**
> An abatement is not a grant. It is a transparent tax deferral — and it should always come with measurable expectations and accountability terms.

Why Do Local Governments Offer Abatements?

Local governments use abatements to attract or retain businesses that would not otherwise invest in a community without some incentive. A business weighing two otherwise similar sites may choose the one that offers a structured period of tax relief during startup or expansion.

In Owen County, the goal is economic diversification. With nearly half the county's workforce in manufacturing and a median age of 45, attracting new businesses — especially those offering living wages and benefits — is a strategic priority. A well-designed abatement program can help achieve that goal.

However, abatements that lack structure, standards, or accountability become giveaways. Without a clear evaluation process, the county bears all the risk while the company receives all the benefit — whether or not it delivers on its promises.

Section 2: Why Owen County Needs a Stronger Framework

Owen County's current approach to tax abatements lacks the updated structure needed to make informed, consistent decisions. The existing framework served its purpose at one point, but it needs to be modernized to reflect current best practices and community expectations. Three problems stand out.

Problem 1: No Updated Standardized Scoring System

Without an updated rubric, decisions can depend on discretionary judgment rather than measurable criteria. This creates risk of inconsistency, legal vulnerability, and difficulty explaining decisions to the public.

Problem 2: No Enforceable Clawback Mechanism

Companies that receive abatements but fail to deliver promised jobs or investment face no structured consequence. The county has no clear path to recover or reduce benefits.

Problem 3: Risk of Administrative Confusion

Confusion can exist about who receives annual compliance reports, who is responsible for DLGF reporting, and how towns coordinate with the county when an abatement falls within town limits. Clarifying these roles in advance prevents gaps from forming.

This manual introduces a framework designed to address all three problems. It gives officials the tools to evaluate applications consistently, hold companies accountable, and manage the process clearly across departments.

Section 3: The Scoring System

The Owen County scoring system converts the abatement decision from a discretionary judgment call into a structured, uniform, and measurable evaluation. Applications are scored independently for real property and personal property, using separate scoring matrices designed to match the distinct public-benefit considerations of each abatement type.

Both matrices share the same structure: applications are scored across four sections for a maximum of 100 points. The cumulative score determines the recommended abatement length. Applications scoring below 50 points on either matrix should be denied. The Abatement Review Committee completes the applicable matrix before the application advances to the governing body.

> **Note**
>
> All scores are based on projections provided in the applicant's Statement of Benefits (Form SB-1) and supporting documentation. Actual performance is verified annually through Form CF-1 filings. Misrepresentation of projections may result in revocation of the abatement.

Real Property Scoring Matrix

Used when the abatement covers new construction, renovation, or rehabilitation of real property. The matrix evaluates capital investment, land use and site commitment, employment and wage quality, and innovation and environmental responsibility.

Criteria	Threshold / Options	Points
SECTION 1: Capital Investment in Real Property (Maximum 30 points)		
Estimated Cost of Real Property Improvement (new construction, renovation, or rehabilitation)	Greater than $10,000,000	30
	$5,000,000 – $9,999,999	24
	$2,500,000 – $4,999,999	18
	$1,000,000 – $2,499,999	12
	$500,000 – $999,999	6
	Less than $500,000	2
Section Subtotal		**/ 30**
SECTION 2: Land Use & Long-Term Site Commitment (Maximum 30 points)		
Site Condition	Brownfield redevelopment or reuse of a vacant/blighted structure	10
	Infill development on a previously developed site	7
	Greenfield development on undeveloped land	3

Facility Ownership or Lease Commitment (duration of occupancy commitment post-abatement)	Owns facility outright, or lease of 10 or more years	10
	Lease of 5–9 years	5
	Lease of fewer than 5 years, or no commitment documented	2
Infrastructure Impact (burden placed on county roads, utilities, or public services)	No new infrastructure burden; existing capacity is sufficient	10
	Minor infrastructure upgrades needed; applicant contributes to cost	5
	Significant new infrastructure required at county expense	0
Section Subtotal		**/ 30**
SECTION 3: Employment & Wage Quality (Maximum 30 points)		
New Full-Time Jobs Created (FTE positions associated with this facility)	20 or more new Full-Time jobs	10
	10–19 new Full-Time jobs	8
	5–9 new Full-Time jobs	5
	1–4 new Full-Time jobs	3
	No new jobs created	0
Average Wage of New Positions (compared to Owen County median wage)	More than 150% of county median	10
	125%–150% of county median	8
	100%–124% of county median	6
	75%–99% of county median	3
	Below 75% of county median	0
Employee Benefits Offered	Comprehensive: health, dental, vision, and retirement match	10
	Partial: health only or health plus one additional	5
	Minimal or none	0
Section Subtotal		**/ 30**
SECTION 4: Innovation & Environmental Responsibility (Maximum 10 points)		

Building Design / Operational Innovation	Facility incorporates new-to-market technology, certified sustainable design, or R&D function	5
	Facility adopts emerging practices not yet standard in Owen County	3
	Standard operations; no novel local contribution	1
Environmental Practices	Documented environmental management plan; holds or pursuing formal certification	5
	Voluntary environmental practices in place without formal certification	3
	Meets regulatory minimums only	0
Section Subtotal		**/ 10**
CUMULATIVE SCORE (Maximum 100 Points)		**/ 100**

Real Property — Recommended Abatement Schedule

Match the cumulative score from the Real Property Scoring Matrix to the recommended abatement length below. The minimum qualifying abatement is 3 years.

Total Score	Recommended Abatement Length	Notes
90–100	10-Year Abatement	Exceptional proposal; maximum term
80–89	8-Year Abatement	Strong proposal; upper-tier term
70–79	7-Year Abatement	Solid proposal; mid-upper tier
60–69	5-Year Abatement	Acceptable proposal; mid tier
50–59	3-Year Abatement	Marginal proposal; minimum qualifying term
Below 50	Denial Recommended	Does not meet minimum public benefit threshold

Personal Property Scoring Matrix

Used when the abatement covers new manufacturing equipment, R&D equipment, IT infrastructure, or other eligible personal property. The matrix evaluates capital investment, employment and wage quality, strategic alignment and local economic linkages, and innovation and technology adoption.

Criteria	Threshold / Options	Points
SECTION 1: Capital Investment in Personal Property (Maximum 35 points)		
Total Estimated Cost of New Personal Property (manufacturing equipment, R&D equipment, IT infrastructure, etc.)	Greater than $5,000,000	35
	$2,500,000 – $4,999,999	28
	$1,000,000 – $2,499,999	21
	$500,000 – $999,999	14
	$250,000 – $499,999	7
	Less than $250,000	2
Section Subtotal		**/ 35**
SECTION 2: Employment & Wage Quality (Maximum 35 points)		
New or Retained Full-Time Jobs (FTE positions directly tied to this equipment investment)	50 or more Full-Time Jobs	15
	25–49 Full-Time Jobs	12
	10–24 Full-Time Jobs	9
	5–9 Full-Time Jobs	5
	1–4 Full-Time Jobs	2
Average Wage of Positions Supported (compared to Owen County median wage)	Greater than 150% of county median	12
	125%–150% of county median	10
	100%–124% of county median	7
	75%–99% of county median	4
	Below 75% of county median	0
Employee Benefits Offered	Comprehensive: health, dental, vision, and retirement match	8

	Partial: health only or health plus one additional	5
	Minimal or none	0
Section Subtotal		**/ 35**
SECTION 3: Strategic Alignment & Local Economic Linkages (Maximum 15 points)		
Industry / Equipment Type	Tier 1: Advanced Manufacturing, Ag-Tech, Life Sciences, R&D, IT Infrastructure, or direct supply chain.	8
	Tier 2: Light Manufacturing, Distribution, Energy	5
	Tier 3: Commercial or Other Eligible Use	2
Local Supply Chain Impact (sourcing of parts, materials, or services from Owen County vendors)	Greater than 40% local sourcing commitment	7
	20%–40% local sourcing commitment	5
	Less than 20% local sourcing	2
	No local sourcing planned	0
Section Subtotal		**/ 15**
SECTION 4: Innovation & Technology Adoption (Maximum 15 points)		
Technology / Process Innovation	Equipment introduces new-to-market technology or proprietary process not currently present in Owen County	8
	Equipment adopts emerging industry technology not yet standard in the county	6
	Standard industry equipment with no novel local contribution	4
Automation & Labor Balance (higher automation relative to jobs = lower score)	Primarily labor-driven operation — equipment supports workers rather than replacing them	7
	Mixed — moderate automation with meaningful labor component retained	5
	Highly automated; minimal net employment impact	3
Section Subtotal		**/ 15**
CUMULATIVE SCORE (Maximum 100 Points)		**/ 100**

Personal Property — Recommended Abatement Schedule

Match the cumulative score from the Personal Property Scoring Matrix to the recommended abatement length below. The minimum qualifying abatement is 3 years.

Total Score	Recommended Abatement Length	Notes
90–100	10-Year Abatement	Exceptional proposal; maximum term
80–89	8-Year Abatement	Strong proposal; upper-tier term
70–79	6-Year Abatement	Solid proposal; mid-upper tier
60–69	5-Year Abatement	Acceptable proposal; mid tier
50–59	3-Year Abatement	Marginal proposal; minimum qualifying term
Below 50	Denial Recommended	Does not meet minimum public benefit threshold

How to Use the Scoring Matrices

The Abatement Review Committee should complete the applicable scoring matrix — real property, personal property, or both if the application covers both asset types — after receiving the application packet from Owen County Economic Development, before the application advances to the governing body. The completed matrix should be attached to the hearing packet.

The process works as follows:

1. Review the company's submitted Statement of Benefits (Form SB-1) for investment and employment projections.
2. Identify whether the application involves real property, personal property, or both, and select the appropriate scoring matrix.
3. Score each section independently based on the thresholds in the matrix.
4. Total the score and match it to the abatement schedule for that property type.
5. Flag any application scoring below 50 for denial or referral back to the applicant.

The scoring matrix is a guide, not a legal cap. The County + Town Council retains discretion to adjust outcomes based on case-specific circumstances, but any deviation from the matrix's recommendation should be documented and explained in the record.

Section 4: What to Review Before Approving an Abatement

Before voting to approve an abatement, officials should satisfy themselves on the following questions. These are not procedural boxes to check — they are the factors that determine whether an abatement serves the public interest.

Is this project actually dependent on the abatement?

The central question in economic development is: "if not for" this abatement, would this project happen here? The strongest abatement cases are those where, if not for the tax relief, the business would not be able to locate or expand in Owen County. If a company would invest here regardless, the abatement reduces county revenue without producing additional public benefit.

Economic development staff should ask applicants directly: what changes about this decision if the abatement is denied? If the honest answer is "nothing," the case for an abatement is weak.

Are the jobs real, and are the wages livable?

Job counts should be measured in full-time equivalents, not total positions. An applicant promising 20 jobs that are part-time or minimum wage provides less community benefit than one promising 10 full-time jobs at wages above the county average. The scoring matrices weigh both job quantity and wage quality.

As a benchmark, Owen County's median household income implies an hourly equivalent of approximately $30. Proposals offering wages at or above 100% of the county median deserve more favorable treatment than proposals at or near minimum wage.

Does the project fit the county's economic strategy?

Owen County has an aging workforce, limited economic diversity, and a heavy dependence on manufacturing. Applications from businesses in target industries — including agricultural technology, life sciences, and advanced manufacturing — score higher because they align with the county's long-term development goals.

What are the red flags?

Officials should treat the following as signals to ask harder questions before approving:

- Projections that seem inflated or inconsistent with the size of the proposed facility or industry norms.
- A company with no track record in the region, no named anchor tenant, or a purely speculative development proposal.
- Applications filed after construction has already begun. Indiana law requires SB-1 filing before the project starts.
- A proposal that creates few jobs relative to the capital investment, suggesting heavy automation with minimal labor benefit to the community.

Section 5: Compliance Monitoring After Approval

The abatement decision is not final at the point of approval. The county's responsibility continues throughout the abatement period. Annual compliance monitoring is required by Indiana law and is essential to verify that the company is delivering what it promised.

Annual Reporting Requirements

Each year the abatement is in effect, the company must file Form CF-1/Real Property by May 15 with all of the following:

- The Owen County Auditor (required for all abatements — everything ultimately flows through the county)
- Owen County Economic Development (for review and recommendation purposes)
- The town council, if the abatement is a town abatement

This form documents the actual number of full-time employees and their wages, the current assessed value of the improved property, and any material changes to operations, ownership, or location.

Owen County Economic Development should maintain a compliance calendar and send reminder notices to each abatement recipient by March 15 of each year.

Who Reviews the Annual Report?

The Abatement Review Committee reviews each annual compliance report first, flags any discrepancies between promised and actual performance, and presents its findings and recommendation to the appropriate governing body.

The county council should review each annual county abatement compliance report. If the council finds no compliance issues and takes no formal action, the abatement continues for the next year.

If the abatement is a town abatement, the annual compliance report goes before the town council, not the county council. Each governing body is responsible for the abatements within its own jurisdiction.

If either council identifies a potential compliance problem, it should schedule a formal review hearing.

Section 6: Clawback — What Happens When a Company Falls Short

The clawback provision is what gives the abatement program its enforcement mechanism. Without an enforceable clawback, the county has no meaningful recourse if a company fails to deliver promised jobs, wages, or investment.

Performance Thresholds

Companies receiving an abatement are required to maintain at least 75% of their promised job creation and capital investment commitments throughout the abatement period. Falling below this threshold is the primary trigger for clawback review.

Three Enforcement Options

When a company falls short of its performance commitments, the county has three options:

Option 1: Full Elimination

The governing body may vote to revoke the abatement entirely. This is appropriate when a company has clearly and materially failed to meet its commitments without justification, or when continued abatement no longer serves the public interest.

Option 2: Repayment Schedule (Clawback)

The county may require the company to repay a portion of the tax savings it has already received, based on when the departure or non-compliance occurred.

Option 3: Cure Period

If a company can demonstrate that the shortfall resulted from circumstances outside its control — an industry-wide downturn, a natural disaster, or a documented supply chain failure — the county may grant a one-year cure period before taking action. A cure period is not automatic; the company must request it in writing with supporting documentation.

Clawback Scale (Option 2)

If a repayment schedule is applied, the amount owed is tiered based on when the company departs or ceases to meet its commitments:

Departure or Non-Compliance Period	Recapture Amount
Years 1–3	100% repayment of total tax savings received
Years 4–6	50% repayment of total tax savings received
Years 7–10	25% repayment of total tax savings received

Section 7: Administrative Roles and Responsibilities

The table below defines each party's role in the abatement process. Clearly assigning these responsibilities prevents reports from going unreviewed and ensures accountability at every stage.

Party	Primary Responsibilities
County Council	Final vote to approve or deny county abatements; reviews annual county compliance reports; authorizes clawback or revocation action.
Town Council	Final vote to approve or deny town abatements; reviews annual town compliance reports; authorizes clawback or revocation action for town abatements. Signs MOU with county where applicable.
County Auditor	Receives annual CF-1/Real Property form for all abatements; applies deduction to tax bill; notifies DLGF as required.
Owen County Economic Development	Receives abatement applications; pre-screens applicants; facilitates the Abatement Review Committee; coordinates with towns on joint abatements; presents recommendations to the governing body; maintains compliance calendar.
Abatement Review Committee	Receives abatement packet from Economic Development; meets with the applicant business; conducts initial scoring of the rubric; creates a recommendation for the governing body; conducts annual compliance reviews and flags discrepancies.
Town Council (if applicable)	Participates in abatement decisions for projects within town limits; signs MOU with county to clarify roles; receives compliance reports for town abatements.
Applicant / Company	Submits SB-1 before project begins; pays the $500 non-refundable application fee; files CF-1 forms with the County Auditor, Owen County Economic Development, and town council (if applicable) by May 15 each year; provides payroll and investment documentation.

A Note on Town and County Coordination

When an abatement falls within the boundaries of a town such as Spencer, both the county and town government have a role in the designation and monitoring process. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the county and the town is strongly recommended to prevent gaps.

The MOU should specify who receives the annual compliance report, who coordinates with the county auditor, and how the county council and town council will respectively handle compliance issues within their jurisdiction.

Section 8: Quick Reference Checklists

Process Checklist: From Application to Compliance

Use this checklist to track an abatement from first contact through ongoing compliance:

1. Company contacts Owen County Economic Development to inquire about the abatement program.
2. Company submits a formal application to Owen County Economic Development along with a non-refundable $500 application fee.
3. Economic Development pre-screens the application for eligibility and completeness, then forwards the packet to the Abatement Review Committee.
4. Abatement Review Committee meets with the applicant, completes the applicable scoring matrix, and prepares a written recommendation.
5. Economic Development presents the recommendation to the appropriate governing body (county or town council).
6. Governing body holds a public hearing and votes to approve or deny the abatement. If approved, the ERA is designated and an abatement schedule is established.
7. Company files Form SB-1 with the designating body. The County Auditor is notified.
8. Company begins filing Form CF-1 annually by May 15 with the County Auditor, Owen County Economic Development, and the town council (if applicable).
9. Abatement Review Committee reviews each annual CF-1, flags discrepancies, and presents findings to the governing body.
10. Governing body reviews the recommendation and takes action or allows the abatement to continue.

Pre-Approval Checklist

- Has the applicant filed SB-1 before the project began?
- Is the project type eligible under Indiana law?
- Has the appropriate scoring matrix been completed by the Abatement Review Committee?
- Does the application score 50 points or above?
- Has the ERA been formally designated by resolution?
- Has an abatement schedule been adopted as required by IC 6-1.1-12.1-17?
- Has the clawback agreement been reviewed by the county attorney?
- If in-town: Is an MOU in place between the county and the town?

Annual Compliance Checklist

- Has the company filed CF-1 with the County Auditor, Owen County Economic Development, and the town council (if applicable) by May 15?
- Has the Abatement Review Committee reviewed the report for discrepancies?
- Does actual employment meet 75% of projected employment?
- Does actual assessed value meet 75% of projected investment?
- Has the Abatement Review Committee made a recommendation to the governing body?
- Has the county auditor applied the correct deduction for the year?

PART TWO

Plain-English Guide

For Town Officials, Board Members, and Community Leaders

What Is a Tax Abatement?

A tax abatement is a deal between a local government and a business. In exchange for investing in the community — by building a new facility, buying equipment, or creating jobs — the business pays less in property taxes for a set number of years.

Think of it this way: when a company builds a new warehouse or factory, the value of that property goes up. Normally, higher property value means a higher tax bill. A tax abatement temporarily pauses that increase so the business can get up and running before it starts paying full taxes.

In Indiana, abatements can last up to 10 years. After that, the business pays full property taxes like everyone else.

> **Plain English**
> A tax abatement does not give money to a company. It just means the county collects less in taxes from that company — for a limited time — in hopes of getting more jobs and investment in return.

Why Do Companies Ask for One?

Starting or expanding a business is expensive. Building a new facility, buying equipment, and hiring workers all cost money before the first dollar of revenue comes in. A tax abatement reduces one of those early costs — the property tax bill — so the company can get on its feet faster.

One of the most important concepts in economic development is "if not for." If not for this tax abatement, a company may not be able to secure the financing, reduce the startup costs, or justify the investment needed to locate in Owen County. The abatement can be the deciding factor that brings a business here instead of somewhere else.

Companies often compare multiple locations before deciding where to invest. A community that offers structured, transparent incentives may win a project over a similar community that does not. Without the abatement, Owen County might not get the business at all.

Should the County Say Yes to Every Request?

No. An abatement is not something a company is automatically entitled to receive. It is a public benefit — and like any public benefit, it should come with standards.

If the county approves abatements without asking hard questions, taxpayers end up subsidizing businesses that may not deliver what they promised, may not stay long, or may not pay good wages. That is a bad deal for the community.

Every abatement request should be evaluated on its merits. The key questions are:

- How many jobs will this create, and will they pay a living wage?
- How much is the company actually investing?
- Does this business fit what Owen County is trying to build?
- What happens if the company does not follow through?

What Should the County Require Before Saying Yes?

Before any abatement is approved, the county should require the business to fill out a formal application called a Statement of Benefits, or Form SB-1. This form asks the company to estimate how many jobs it will create and how much those jobs will pay, how much it plans to invest in buildings and equipment, and when the project will start and finish. The company must also pay a non-refundable $500 application fee when submitting to Owen County Economic Development.

The Abatement Review Committee then uses a scoring matrix to evaluate the application. Owen County uses two separate scoring matrices — one for real property (buildings and facilities) and one for personal property (equipment and machinery). Each matrix awards points across four categories: capital investment, employment and wage quality, strategic alignment, and innovation. A company that scores higher gets a longer abatement. A company that scores too low should not receive one at all.

Plain English

The scoring matrices are like a report card for abatement applications. They make sure every company is judged by the same standards — not by who knows who on the council.

How Do You Know If the Deal Is Good for Owen County?

A good abatement deal has three things: real jobs, fair wages, and meaningful investment.

Real Jobs

Count full-time positions, not part-time. A company promising 20 part-time, minimum-wage jobs is a very different deal from one promising 10 full-time jobs with benefits and above-average pay.

Fair Wages

Owen County's median household income works out to roughly $30 per hour for a full-time worker. A business offering wages near or above that level is contributing meaningfully to the county's economic health. Businesses offering wages far below that are providing less community benefit and should receive a shorter or smaller abatement.

Meaningful Investment

The bigger the investment in buildings and equipment, the more the county stands to gain in long-term tax revenue after the abatement ends. A company investing millions in permanent infrastructure is a better long-term bet than one making minimal capital improvements.

What Is a Clawback, and Why Does It Matter?

A clawback is what happens when a company does not keep its promises.

If a business promises 20 jobs and only delivers 5 — or moves out of the county before the abatement ends — the county should have the right to get some of the tax savings back. That is the clawback.

Without a clawback clause, a company can receive years of tax relief and then walk away with no consequences. That is not a fair deal for Owen County residents.

> **Example**
> A company receives a 7-year abatement but closes its Owen County location after 2 years. Under the clawback, the company would owe back 100% of the tax savings it received — because the departure happened in years 1 through 3 of the abatement.

The clawback is built into Owen County's proposed abatement agreement. Every company that receives an abatement signs an agreement acknowledging these terms before approval is granted. The county also has the option to revoke the abatement entirely if circumstances warrant it.

Who Keeps Track of All This?

Once an abatement is approved, it does not run itself. Someone has to check in each year to make sure the company is actually doing what it promised. Here is how that works under the Owen County framework:

1. The company files an annual report by May 15 each year with the County Auditor, Owen County Economic Development, and the town council (if applicable). This report confirms employment numbers, wages, and property values.
2. The Abatement Review Committee reviews the report and flags any gaps between what was promised and what was delivered.
3. Economic Development presents the committee's findings and recommendation to the governing body.
4. The county or town council reviews the recommendation and decides whether to continue, reduce, or terminate the abatement.

> **Plain English**
> If nobody checks the paperwork, the county has no way of knowing whether the abatement is working. Annual reporting is not optional — it is the foundation of the whole system.

What Should Town Officials Know?

If a business seeking an abatement is located within a town's boundaries, the town government plays an important role — even if some administrative functions are handled at the county level.

Town officials should:

- Know when a business in their town is seeking an abatement and weigh in on whether it is a good fit for the community.

- Make sure a formal agreement (MOU) is in place with the county so there is no confusion about who receives compliance reports and who handles problems.
- Receive copies of annual compliance reports so they can stay informed about how the business is performing.
- Participate in any review hearing if the business falls short of its commitments. Town abatements are reviewed by the town council, not the county council.

Plain English

You do not have to be a policy expert to protect your town's interests. Ask questions, read the annual report, and make sure someone is accountable for following through.

Glossary of Key Terms

Term	Definition
Tax Abatement	A temporary reduction in property taxes on new investment, lasting up to 10 years in Indiana.
Statement of Benefits (SB-1)	The form a company must file before a project begins to apply for an abatement.
Form CF-1	The annual compliance form the company files each year to show it is meeting its promises.
Economic Revitalization Area (ERA)	The formal county designation that makes a property eligible for an abatement.
Clawback	A provision requiring the company to repay some or all tax savings if it fails to meet its commitments.
Scoring Rubric	A point-based system used to evaluate abatement applications consistently and fairly.
Abatement Review Committee	The body that scores abatement applications, meets with applicants, makes recommendations to the governing body, and conducts annual compliance reviews.
MOU (Memorandum of Understanding)	A written agreement between the county and a town clarifying each party's responsibilities.
County Auditor	The official who applies the abatement deduction and receives annual compliance filings.
DLGF	Indiana Department of Local Government Finance — the state agency that oversees local tax administration.
Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)	A measure of employment that converts part-time positions into the equivalent of full-time jobs.
Cure Period	A one-year extension granted when a company can show its shortfall was caused by extraordinary circumstances beyond its control.
If Not For	A test used to determine whether an abatement is truly necessary: if not for this tax relief, would this project happen in Owen County?