

## Press Release

For Immediate Release:

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# State Officials Designate West Central Region Indiana's newest 21st Century Talent Region

**INDIANAPOLIS** – Indiana Secretary of Career Connections and Talent Blair Milo joined state and local officials today to announce the West Central Region Indiana's seventh [21st Century Talent Region](#), a statewide designation awarded to Indiana communities focused on working collaboratively to attract, develop and connect talent.

“It’s been fantastic to watch the West Central 2025 regional team emerge as a statewide leader in strategic, collaborative planning to attract, develop, and connect talent,” said Secretary Milo. “The efforts that have led them to earn a designation as a 21st Century Talent Region will undoubtedly aid the region in achieving its goals to reduce population decline by 2025, increase the region’s industry certificate and degree holders to 60 percent of the population, and raise income levels for all households. I couldn’t be more proud of this team and the results they are already delivering, for not only their six member counties, but for all of Indiana.”

The Office of Career Connections and Talent, with support from the Indiana Economic Development Corporation and technical assistance from [CivicLab](#), launched the 21st Century Talent Region initiative to encourage local governments, businesses, educational institutions, nonprofits, and economic and workforce development partners to create and implement plans to increase educational attainment, raise household income and grow the population in a region. By taking a comprehensive, systems approach, participating regions will identify strategic priorities and projects aimed at helping its communities create a better quality of place, develop and skill up its workforce, and connect talented Hoosiers with businesses seeking to fill high-demand, high-wage jobs.

During the event, Secretary Milo and Indiana Destination Development Corporation Secretary & CEO Elaine Bedel presented Kristin Craig, President of Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce, with the official 21st Century Talent Region designation. The West Central Region, supported by [West Central 2025](#), is a six-county region encompassing Clay, Parke, Putnam, Sullivan, Vermillion and Vigo Counties.

“On behalf of the six counties represented in the West Central Region, I am thrilled to be receiving this recognition from the State,” said Craig. “Right now, there are many collaborative efforts taking place in our region that all strive to attract, develop and connect talent. The goals we are collectively tackling are the critical factors in moving our individual counties, as well as a region as a whole forward. This conversation is especially important given the impact of COVID-19. Now, more than ever, it is important for us to consolidate efforts and use every advantage we have to ensure West Central Indiana continues to be a growing, thriving region in the state.”

Spearheaded by West Central 2025, created under the umbrella of the [Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce](#) and its foundation, the West Central Region identified key priorities through the 21st Century Talent Region initiative, including:

- Immediately begin building individual community teams focused on: leveraging placemaking strategies and related performance goals, examining data to determine next steps in achieving equitable opportunities for the entire west central Indiana population, and growing partnerships across the region;
- By the end of 2020, analyze available data and work to complete regional goal setting for talent attraction and connection milestones, and;
- By 2025, halt population decline to a negligible number and connect talent with equitable economic opportunities to raise per capita personal income to 85 percent of the state average.

“Congratulations to the West Central Region on their designation as a 21st Century Talent Region,” said Bedel. “Over the years I have personally watched this region grow and collaborate, all while showing their commitment to make this region a great place to live, work and play. Their efforts and innovative thinking truly embody our pioneering Hoosier spirit, and I look forward to seeing the continued development and regional planning in the years ahead, building upon this great accomplishment.”

For more information on how to receive the designation, visit [in.gov/cct/21CTR.htm](http://in.gov/cct/21CTR.htm) or contact the Office of Career Connections and Talent at [secretary@cct.in.gov](mailto:secretary@cct.in.gov) to communicate your interest and discuss next steps.

#### **About the Office of Career Connections and Talent**

*As part of his Next Level Indiana Agenda, Governor Eric J. Holcomb established the Secretary of Career Connections and Talent as a new cabinet-level position in state government to serve as Indiana’s chief talent and recruiting official. Secretary Blair Milo and the Office of Career Connections and Talent is dedicated to continuously assessing needs, identifying promising practices, connecting Hoosier workers to employment opportunities, and coordinating future priorities to improve the quality and quantity of Hoosier workers to ensure a skilled and talented workforce within the state of Indiana.*

#### **About CivicLab**

*CivicLab is a nonprofit institute dedicated to advancing the practice of civic collaboration. CivicLab emerged from the Community Education Coalition (CEC) in Columbus, Indiana, a nationally recognized partnership of education, business, and community leaders focused on aligning and integrating the community’s learning system with economic growth and a high quality of life. Since its inception, CivicLab has partnered with over 275 communities and organizations across the U.S. and trained more than 10,000 leaders of foundations, educational institutions, community government, corporations, and community development organizations.*

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