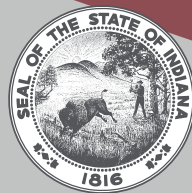




PARTNERSHIP PENTAGON:

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS
TO BOLSTER INDIANA'S HIGHER
EDUCATION HOPE AGENDA



INDIANA COMMISSION *for*
HIGHER EDUCATION

Introduction

THE PARTNERSHIP PENTAGON

About the Indiana Commission for Higher Education

Created in 1971 by an act of the General Assembly and signed into law by then Governor Edgar Whitcomb, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (Commission) is now in its fifth decade of service to the State of Indiana. The Commission is a fourteen-member public body created to:

- Define the educational missions of public colleges and universities;
- Plan and coordinate Indiana's state-supported system of post-high school education, taking into account the plans and interests of independent colleges and universities;
- Review both operating budget and capital budget appropriation requests from public colleges and universities;
- Approve or disapprove for public colleges and universities the establishment of any new branches, campuses, extension centers, colleges, or schools;
- Approve or disapprove for public colleges and universities the offering of any additional associate, baccalaureate, or graduate degree or certificate program of two semesters or more in duration;
- Review all programs of study of public colleges and universities and make recommendations to the governing board of the institution, the Governor, and the General Assembly concerning the funding and the disposition of these programs;
- Administer more than \$400 million annually in student financial aid programs; and,
- Designate and employ the Commissioner for Higher Education.

The Commission is not a governing board, but a coordinating agency that works closely with Indiana's public and independent colleges and universities, in partnership with the Independent Colleges of Indiana.

Acknowledgments

Since April 2023, more than 100 partners from business, education, government, non-profits (community- and faith-based organizations), and philanthropy have participated in the Partnership Pentagon. The Commission gratefully acknowledges their engagement, thought leadership, and feedback which informed the development of this final report. The Commission acknowledges that it cannot take on the challenges and opportunities facing higher education in Indiana alone. The unique ideas borne from the Partnership Pentagon signify the strength and possibilities of intentionally bringing together partners from the five key sectors. A full list of participants can be found in the Appendix. The Commission especially appreciates the leadership of the Partnership Pentagon sector committee chairs:

- Business: **Dan Peterson**, Vice President, Industry and Government Affairs, Cook Group
- Education: **Dr. Ron Rochon**, Former President, University of Southern Indiana
- Government: **Chris Lowery**, Commissioner, Indiana Commission for Higher Education
- Non-Profit: **Marlene Dotson**, President and CEO, Indiana Latino Institute
- Philanthropy: **Claire Fiddian-Green**, President and CEO, Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation

There are many examples of successful policies, programs, and partnerships used throughout the report. However, the Commission recognizes it by no means captured everything being implemented across the state. If you do have a best practice that is not included in this report, please share it with the Commission by emailing info@che.in.gov.

The Commission also recognizes the contributions of the Hunt Institute. The Hunt Institute collaborated with the Commission to engage the Partnership Pentagon, supporting each meeting through agenda development, guest speaker and panelist coordination, meeting facilitation and notetaking, and development of issue briefs and key takeaways to inform the final report.

© Indiana Commission for Higher Education, 2024
"All Rights Reserved."

Table of CONTENTS

Introduction.....	02
Partnership Pentagon Overview.....	04
HOPE Agenda Goal 1: College-Going Rate for Youth and Adults.....	08
HOPE Agenda Goal 2: Attainment for Veterans, Individuals with Disabilites, and the Justice-Involved.....	12
HOPE Agenda Goal 3: Credit for Prior Learning.....	14
HOPE Agenda Goal 4: Completion of Postsecondary Education and Training.....	16
HOPE Agenda Goal 5: Graduate Retention.....	20
Conclusion.....	22
Appendix: Partnership Pentagon Committees.....	24
Resources.....	30

Partnership Pentagon OVERVIEW



THE HOPE AGENDA

The Commission is guided by the HOPE (Hoosier Opportunities and Possibilities through Education) Agenda. Announced in 2023, the HOPE Agenda serves as the strategic plan for the Commission's work through 2030. The long-term goals within the HOPE Agenda are borne of the current challenges and opportunities facing higher education in Indiana. The key pillars of the HOPE Agenda — enrollment, completion, and graduate retention — ensure all Hoosiers can seize the hope higher education provides, employers have access to a better-prepared workforce, and communities are strengthened.

The HOPE Agenda calls for Indiana to be a top 10 state in the nation by 2030 in:

1. **Post-high school training and education** going rates for youth and adults, across all demographics;
2. Postsecondary attainment for **veterans, individuals with disabilities, and the justice-involved**;
3. **Utilization of credit for prior learning** to honor the work, training, and education already achieved by adult learners;
4. The rate at which Hoosiers successfully **complete** their chosen areas of study;
5. **Retaining talent** once someone has graduated from a postsecondary training or education program;
6. Measurable distinction in **economic and social mobility and prosperity outcomes**; and
7. As the recognized state for growing or starting a business, based upon the **strength of human capital**.

THE PARTNERSHIP PENTAGON

While the Commission pursued an historic agenda during the 2023 legislative session aimed at reversing declining trends and catalyzing opportunities, Commissioner Lowery believed that deep and long-term improvements would require collaborative and concerted efforts by five key sectors of civil society for genuine transformational change. Thus, the Commission created the Partnership Pentagon. The Partnership Pentagon is intentionally comprised of leaders who possess a variety of ideas and beliefs with the common goal of discussing big ideas and topics impacting higher education and the workforce in Indiana.

The Partnership Pentagon has allowed the Commission to enhance critically important collaboration with thought leaders from five key sectors of Indiana society, including business, education, government, non-profits (community- and faith-based organizations), and philanthropy. The partners work in tandem with the Commission to better understand and propose solutions to Indiana's higher education challenges and opportunities. The partners' work aims to maximize the impact of the five sectors amongst one another as multiplicative rather than simply additive. The guiding principles of the Partnership Pentagon are the seven goals of the Commission's HOPE Agenda, designed to increase opportunities to access economic and social mobility and prosperity for all Hoosiers. For employers, these goals yield a robust and future-oriented talent pipeline and more stable and thriving communities throughout Indiana.

From April 2023 through June 2024, the full Partnership Pentagon met for six meetings in Indianapolis at the Indiana State Library. In advance of each meeting, partners received an agenda, a brief overview of the meeting topic, a summary of the policy landscape in Indiana, and a review of relevant best practices across the country. Following each meeting, partners received a report outlining key takeaways. The philanthropy sector held additional meetings.

Overview of Partnership Pentagon Meetings

Meeting 1 (April 4, 2023): **The Return on Investment for Pursuing Higher Education.** This meeting explored the return on investment for pursuing higher education and the various benefits of different types of postsecondary credentials.

Meeting 2 (June 26, 2023): **The Role of K-12 in Higher Education Access and Completion.** This meeting explored the importance of K-12 partnerships and alignment with higher education, dual credit and dual enrollment, work-based learning, and other college-readiness initiatives at the K-12 level.

Meeting 3 (October 16, 2023): **Engaging Adult Learners in the Higher Education Ecosystem.** This meeting explored engaging and re-engaging adult learners to complete their credentials, as well as various support services needed to serve adult learners, including veterans, individuals with disabilities, and the justice-involved.

Meeting 4 (January 29, 2024): **Improving Access to Higher Education.** This meeting featured discussions on improving access to Indiana's higher education institutions, as well as ways to engage students in the college-going process early in their academic careers.

Meeting 5 (March 25, 2024): **Pathways to Workforce Development and Advancement.** This meeting featured discussions on the alignment of higher education priorities with Indiana's economic and workforce needs, including career coaching, employer engagement, internships, upskilling, reskilling, and stemming the brain drain in Indiana.

Meeting 6 (June 24, 2024): **Strategic Recommendations to Bolster Indiana's Higher Education HOPE Agenda.** This meeting featured discussions on the recommendations in this final report.

Recommendations

The issue briefs, presentations, discussion notes, and key takeaways from each meeting have been used to formulate a comprehensive set of strategic recommendations from the Partnership Pentagon to bolster the success of the Commission's HOPE Agenda. The recommendations outlined in this report serve as a menu of options for leaders from all five sectors of the Partnership Pentagon.

This report is not an implementation plan with a defined timeline. The Commission does not expect all recommendations to be enacted. Instead, the Commission encourages all industries to consider what role they play in execution – **whether it is through a leadership or supporting role.**

The recommendations in this report do not necessarily represent the views of any individual partners, or the organizations they represent. However, the recommendations have been formulated based on themes drawn from the discussions in each of the six Partnership Pentagon meetings and additional philanthropy sector meetings. Furthermore, the recommendations are not inclusive of every idea mentioned in issue briefs, meeting discussions and key takeaways, and reflection emails received from partners. Rather, the recommendations have been intentionally selected based on the ability of one or more sectors of the Partnership Pentagon to implement and on their relevance to the HOPE Agenda.



HOPE Agenda Goal 1:

College-Going Rate for Youth and Adults

21st Century Scholars enrollment. The share of total low-income enrollment varies greatly by institution. The expansion of Scholars' access provides a unique opportunity to increase low-income student enrollment across the state. **The Commission shall incentivize low-income enrollment growth by targeting specific enrollment goals for Scholars through a performance incentive in the state's Outcomes-Based Performance Funding formula for public institutions during the 2025 legislative session.**

21st Century Scholars expansion. Following the automatic enrollment of Scholars, beginning with the graduating class of 2027, Scholars cohorts have doubled in size. This requires additional support and preparation on our high school and college campuses. **The Commission shall identify best practices, allocate resources, and determine policy proposals by 2025 to support these expanded Scholar cohorts at all Indiana private and public institutions.**

Adult education: Ability to Benefit model. The Ability to Benefit (ATB) model allows a student without a high school diploma or equivalency to receive federal financial aid to pay for postsecondary education and training if they are enrolled in a career pathway program. One way students can qualify for ATB is through a state-defined process. As of 2023, only six states had approved ATB plans. **Submit a State Process Application for Indiana.**

Adult education program transition. Increase awareness of the various state and local adult education programs including Excel Centers and WorkOne Career Centers that provide adult learners with valuable support and resources. **Following completion, provide a systematic way of transition navigation for postsecondary education and training through a focus on transferable credits, credit for prior learning (CPL), and financial aid opportunities.**

Adult learner enrollment support. Adult learners experience unique challenges driven by their life circumstances that require intentional support and guidance. The Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation's *College Matters* initiative provides support to adult learners at Excel Centers in Marion County through navigating Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) filing and college application processes. **Mirror that direct support for adult learners statewide as they navigate postsecondary education and training opportunities with employers, labor organizations, training providers, and higher education. Support should include FAFSA completion, postsecondary education and training program applications, financial aid literacy, and holistic process navigation.**

Dual Enrollment: Indiana Course Access Portal. Indiana is a national leader in early college credit access and completion. However, many schools throughout the state are limited in their early college course offerings for a variety of reasons. The Indiana Course Access Portal (iCAP) provides online access to both dual credit and dual enrollment courses. **Increase utilization of iCAP so additional high schools throughout the state that lack sufficient resources can develop standalone dual enrollment programs.**

Expand Jobs for America's Graduates. JAG is a state-based, national non-profit organization dedicated to helping high school students of promise who have experienced challenging or traumatic life experiences. The JAG program currently serves 125 of Indiana's 400+ high schools. **Double the reach of JAG in Indiana. The Commission will create a framework for collaboration between JAG and the 21st Century Scholars program by 2025.**

FAFSA completion campaign. Following the challenging federal rollout of the simplified FAFSA application, national submission and completion rates plummeted. While Indiana has led the nation in closing these gaps, more outreach is needed to inform Hoosiers of the opportunities created through completing the FAFSA. **Utilize the Commission's 2024-2025 FAFSA Completion Campaign for Indiana implementation plan to inform the 2025-2026 campaign. Support the Commission and INvestEd in investing in and implementing future robust FAFSA direct outreach campaigns. This includes amplifying INvestEd's media campaign that targets the counties with the lowest FAFSA filing rates and lowest college-going rates.**

FAFSA completion specialists. Making individuals aware of the opportunities created by filing the FAFSA is the first step. However, many students and families need one-on-one assistance to file. Programs such as the H&R Block FAFSA Experiment and Michigan's Retired Educator FAFSA Specialists Program expand the availability of direct FAFSA filing support. **The Commission will develop a plan and work with INvestEd and industry partners to mobilize current and retired accountants, financial advisors, educators, Indiana 529, and other professionals to bolster FAFSA completion through direct support.**

Learn More Indiana. Learn More Indiana is a digital resource for secondary students and their families as they prepare for postsecondary opportunities. However, these resources are most effective when paired with physical media located in K-12 schools and partner organizations. **By early 2025, the Commission will expand and implement communications toolkits to educate students and families on financial aid and programs offered by the state. The Commission shall develop a plan for business, philanthropy, and non-profit partners to assist in creating content and translating it into most in-demand languages by the end of 2025.**

Open Educational Resources. Cost is a pervasive barrier raised by prospective college students when considering enrollment. Open Educational Resources (OER) are free learning materials that reduce the need for, or take the place of, textbooks and other course materials. Ivy Tech Community College has leveraged OER in its Ivy+ Textbook model which provides learning materials for just \$17 per credit hour. **Incentivize individual instructors through stipends to move their course materials to OER, thus lowering the overall cost to students.**

Pre-Admissions. Indiana's college-going rate for high school students has remained flat at 53 percent for three consecutive years following a high of 68 percent in 2012. Last year, Indiana began sending letters to high school seniors and their families informing them of colleges and universities where they had been "pre-admitted." **Instead of waiting until a student's senior year, the Commission shall provide a tool using existing systems by 2025 to allow students to select institutions and career paths they would like more information about starting in 9th grade. Additionally, the Commission will begin consistent communication about pre-admissions to students and families beginning in the 9th grade to build awareness of the program. Also, the Commission will develop a framework for institutions and employers to partner with the state to provide information about the steps a student needs to take to be prepared to enter these pathways.**

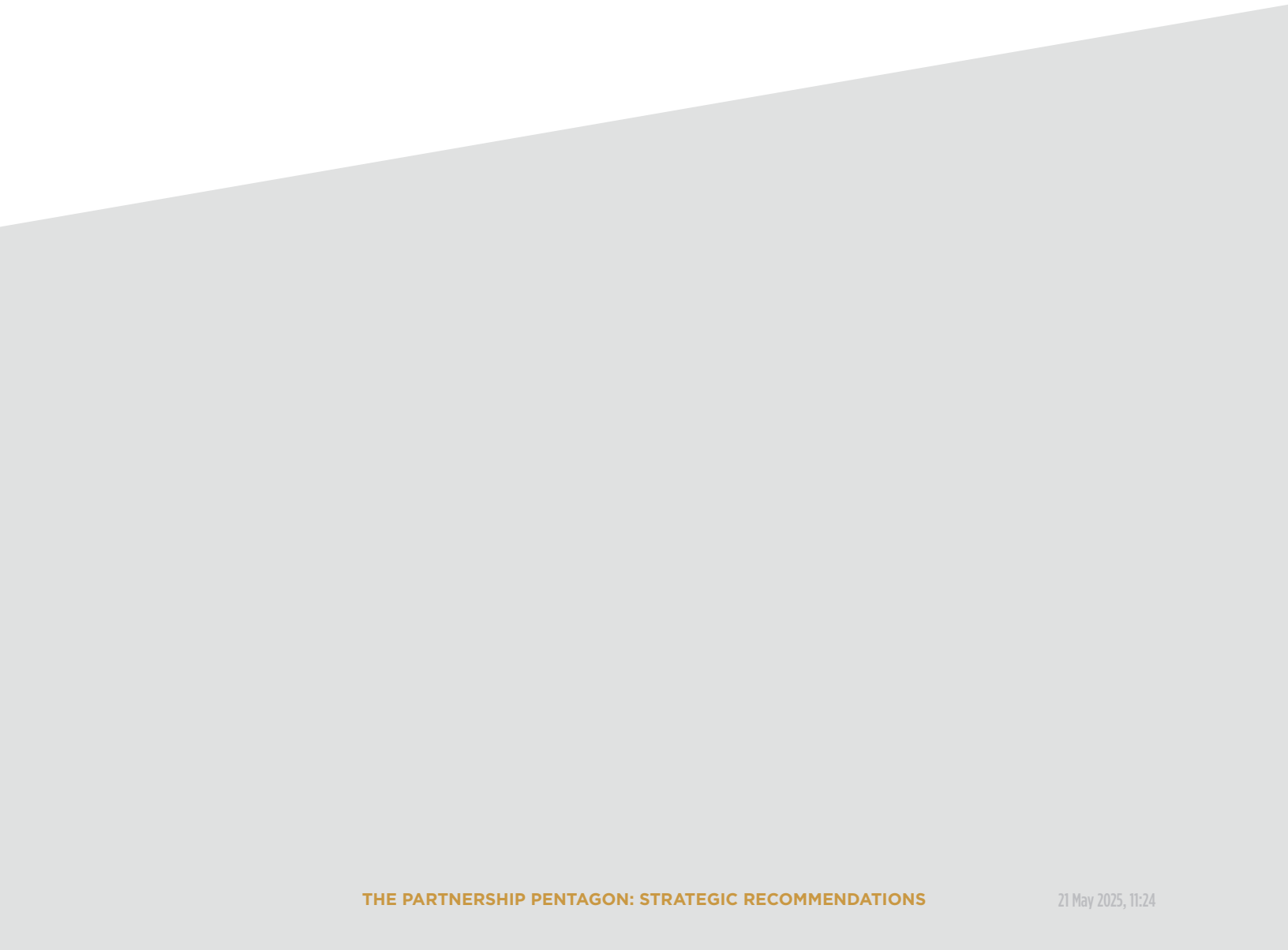
Scholar Success Program. To improve outcomes, the Commission launched the Scholar Success Program (SSP) which includes 12 activities aimed at increasing college and career readiness for all students, but required for 21st Century Scholars. Although the program has been successful in closing the completion gap for low-income students, the current activities are not aligned with Indiana's new Career Coaching Framework. **The Commission shall align SSP with the new framework by 2026 to allow for all students to participate and provide better data collection.**

Statewide student information system for K-12 education. Information systems containing student data are often siloed and cumbersome to integrate. This disparate approach to data collection and record-keeping limits program analysis and insights. Improving data collection will allow Indiana to better remedy roadblocks that keep students from enrolling in postsecondary education, entering the workforce, or enlisting after high school graduation. **Move to a single, statewide information system for all K-12 schools to better track student performance.**

Tuition for employees. Cost is a pervasive barrier raised by prospective college students when considering enrollment. However, most tuition reimbursement programs require students to pay upfront and wait for reimbursement at the end of the semester. This cost can be a barrier to skilling up. Programs such as Achieve Your Degree at Ivy Tech Community College and My Cook Pathway remove this barrier by providing up-front funding. **Develop and distribute materials to employers and labor organizations to catalyze the transition away from tuition reimbursement models to up-front tuition-first support for employees. The Indiana Chamber of Commerce, Central Indiana Corporate Partnership (CICP), Indy Chamber, and other local chambers should develop such a uniform model for their members and others, showing the benefits in terms of ease of use and return on investment.**

Tuition for undocumented students. Indiana is one of eight states which do not provide resident tuition to undocumented students. Consequently, paying for college is incredibly difficult, if not impossible, for this population. **Allow resident tuition for undocumented students who have graduated from an Indiana high school.**

Value of higher education. To reverse Indiana's current flatlined college-going rate, the state must communicate and market the value of postsecondary education. In addition, the state must create a college-going culture in Indiana and increase the awareness of the return on investment for postsecondary education and training. This can be done by funding a multi-year campaign through the 2025 budget session following the August 2024 release of findings from research being conducted by Heart+Mind Strategies on behalf of the Commission. **Develop and implement a campaign in 2025 that is comprehensive, including traditional and digital marketing, statewide influencers, and grassroots efforts across various mediums and channels. Additionally, encourage Indiana's institutions to incorporate findings from the research into their marketing strategies to further the message.**





HOPE Agenda Goal 2:

Attainment for Veterans, Individuals with Disabilities, and the Justice-Involved

Co-located services. Various government and community organizations offer services and funding to support education and training, but these generally are not connected or optimized in a systematic way, leading to duplication or gaps in supports for students. **Co-locate local and regional workforce and social services with regional campuses and service centers.**

Crosswalk the Joint Services Transcript (JST). Military-affiliated students typically have a wide variety of experiences that well-position them for academic achievement, yet they often face a lack of institutional supports for their specific needs, including awarding academic credit for military experience relevant to their chosen program of study. **Leverage the CPL Framework, Core Transfer Library, and other tools to crosswalk the JST to every public institution.**

Local talent pipelines for the justice-involved. Look to the Judicial Users Manufacturing Partnership (JUMP) program in Delaware County as an example of collaboration between the Delaware County Courts Probation Department, Ivy Tech Community College's WorkMatters Initiative, local manufacturers, the Ball Brothers Foundation, and the East Central Indiana Regional Planning District. **Expand local collaborations between higher education institutions, employers, courts, probation systems, and philanthropies to create talent pipelines for the justice-involved.**

On-campus support for individuals with disabilities. The number of undergraduate students enrolled at Indiana colleges registered for disability services is growing, yet few campuses offer comprehensive support beyond meeting federal law compliance. Further, opportunities exist to connect the broader disability community to postsecondary education and training pathways. **The Commission shall develop a recognition program/framework of excellence to scale campus support for individuals with disabilities – using the Collegiate Purple Star of Indiana as a potential model – by fall 2025.**

Postsecondary enrollment support for non-Indiana Department of Corrections (IDOC) re-entry population. Education is highly correlated with lower rates of recidivism. Yet those who are justice-involved – both currently and previously incarcerated – face several systemic obstacles to achieving a credential. **The Commission shall partner with emerging stakeholder collaboratives such as the Justice Reinvestment Advisory Councils at the state level and in at least one county to develop by fall 2025 an education navigation/coaching support model for formerly short-term incarcerated individuals who don't have access to the current IDOC education/training programming and support infrastructure. Additionally, the Commission will incorporate into the model existing resources such as Workforce Ready Grant (WRG) and CPL and establish appropriate data-sharing agreements to track education outcomes.**

Transition supports for prison education participants. The re-established Indiana Prison Education Program provides access to Federal Pell Grant funding to eligible incarcerated students. With these changes to Pell Grant eligibility, some state aid also could be accessible for this population to support credential completion. **The Commission shall collaborate with the IDOC and prison education/training providers to establish a consistent transition process by 2025 where 100 percent of program participants are screened for potential CPL and funding opportunities such as WRG to continue education and training upon release.**



HOPE AGENDA GOAL 3:

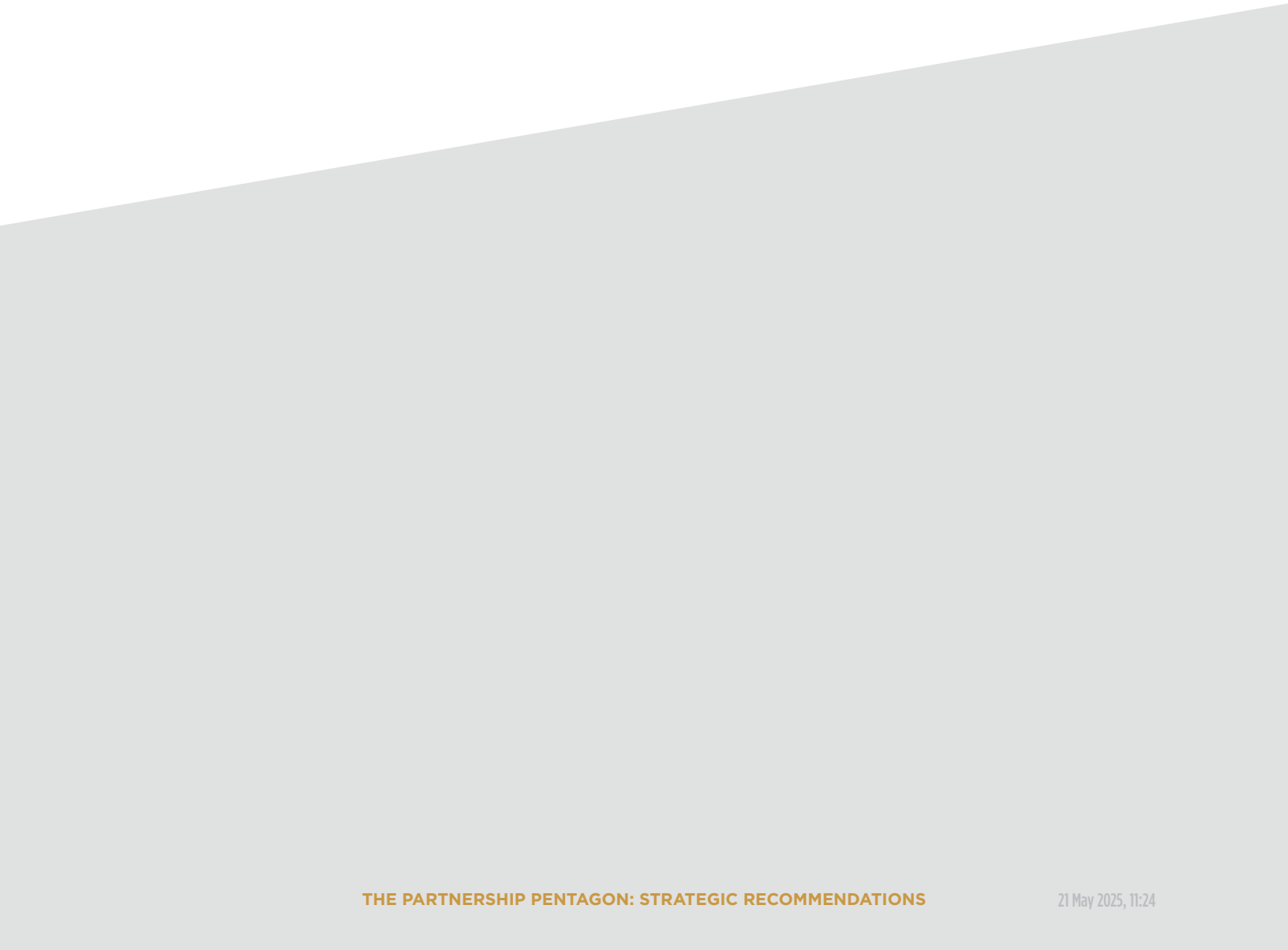
Credit for Prior Learning

Admissions. CPL is an important tool for helping adults further their education and training beyond high school by honoring their work, training, and college-level learning already achieved and aligned to their chosen program of study. **Make admissions and enrollment processes more accessible and transparent for adult learners, including CPL screening for every credential pathway – from short-term certificates to doctoral degrees – at public institutions, and adopt cost-effective technological solutions to screen students for CPL.**

CPL framework. The recently approved Statewide CPL Model Policy Guidelines can greatly enhance Indiana colleges' capacity to expand awareness, utilization, and consistency of CPL in support of educational attainment. The opportunity for institutions to report CPL success via the Commission for Higher Education Data Submission System (CHEDSS) will be provided for the purpose of incentivizing and rewarding expansion through the Outcomes-Based Performance Funding formula. The data reported in CHEDSS should be consistent with how CPL credit is recorded on transcripts and should be reported in sufficient detail to track methods by which credit is awarded. **All Indiana institutions fully adopt the model practices outlined in the Statewide CPL Model Policy Guidelines.**

Crosswalking training for academic credit. Some Indiana employers provide in-house training to their employees as a way of upskilling. While this training is beneficial, it is often not aligned with academic programs and prevents employees from earning academic credit which can be put toward completing a credential. **Connect with public and private enterprises to crosswalk in-house training for academic credit in programs aligned to the organizations' needs.**

Funding to supercharge CPL. CPL opportunities vary by institution and program of study, and no centralized CPL repository currently exists. The CPL Clearinghouse 2.0 would provide an interactive tool linked to the credentials and competencies published in the Indiana Credential Registry to showcase and explore CPL options leading to the desired skills and competencies. **Identify funding by 2025 to develop a robust CPL Clearinghouse 2.0 as part of a statewide, cross-sector effort led by the Commission to increase awareness and utilization of CPL by 2026.**





HOPE Agenda Goal 4:

Completion of Postsecondary Education and Training

21st Century Scholars completion. The extended-time graduation rate for 21st Century Scholars is nearly 10 percentage points higher than their non-Scholar, low-income peers. However, the Scholars' graduation rate still trails the state average. In line with incentivizing Scholars' enrollment goals via a performance incentive in the state's Outcomes-Based Performance Funding formula, each institution should set completion goals for their 21st Century Scholars. **Ensure the completion rates for Scholars at institutions match or exceed the overall student population by utilizing College Success Grants and reinstating the College Scholar Success Program.**

Career Scholarship Accounts funding. The Indiana General Assembly created Career Scholarship Accounts (CSAs) to expand access to work-based learning experiences. Eligible high school students in grades 10, 11, and 12 are provided a \$5,000 annual scholarship to enroll in approved programs. Students receive the full \$5,000 regardless of whether they will use the full amount. This limits the number of students who can utilize CSAs. **During the 2025 legislative session, advocate to cap the annual amount of scholarship received by a CSA student at \$5,000, or the cost of the program, whichever is less.**

Crossing the Finish Line. The Crossing the Finish Line initiative provides free tuition and books, and covers fees to high school students who are a few credits away from completing a credential. Due to the recently passed Senate Enrolled Act 8-2024 and Indiana's high school redesign, more students are expected to be eligible for Crossing the Finish Line. **Allocate additional funding to Crossing the Finish Line so that more students can participate and complete a credential over the summer.**

Credit transfer. Indiana is a national leader in the number of students earning college credit before high school graduation. Programs such as the Core Transfer Library, the Indiana College Core, and the Transfer Single Articulation Pathways (TSAPs) help ensure that credits earned in high school count toward a student's chosen degree program. However, gaps persist and some high school students who earn less than the 30 credits required for the Indiana College Core are not guaranteed their courses will count toward college graduation. **The Commission shall update the Indiana College Core requirements by the 2025-2026 academic year to ensure all eligible courses are on the Core Transfer Library.**

Employer engagement. Support CICP and the Indiana Chamber of Commerce in formalizing employer and labor organization engagement in postsecondary education and training. **This includes engagement in developing a qualifications framework for Indiana, modeled from the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), which includes a formalized vocational education and training (VET) and professional education and training (PET) system, like that in Switzerland and other countries, particularly in Europe.** As recommended by the Center on

the Economics and Management of Education and Training Systems (CEMETS) Implementation Lab (iLab) Indiana, this is a critical step for enabling broadly recognized labor market value for competency-based experiences in career and technical education (CTE) and PET, such as youth professional apprenticeships. Immediate needs include approval of a credentials of value list for K-12 education, included in new high school diplomas, and expanded access to paid work-based learning for K-12 and postsecondary students, especially internships, co-ops, and apprenticeships. **Capitalize on work already being done across the state to drive implementation on a regional or county level of Talent Pipeline Management by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation.**

Funding for CPL. Indiana is one of the only states in the nation to allow state financial aid to be applied to Prior Learning Assessments (PLA). PLA is a tool for institutions to provide CPL. **Despite funding being available to support PLA, it has been underutilized due to a lack of awareness. Increase awareness of PLA and CPL through targeted email campaigns and updates to admissions communications.**

Holistic wraparound supports. Though they can positively impact educational attainment, some needed supports are not best delivered by K-12 schools and higher education institutions. These supports include but are not limited to access to food, off-campus housing, childcare, reliable internet, transportation, and mental health services. Possible solutions include public-private partnerships, resource coordination, financial aid that is not limited to tuition and fees, and incentives for employers to invest in employees (matching funds for work-based learning, tax abatements, tax credits, etc.). **Seek funding to develop evidence-based models and practices that advance talent development through increased access to postsecondary education and training with particular attention given to rural communities.**

Jobs for America's Graduates. JAG is a state-based, national non-profit organization dedicated to helping high school students of promise who have experienced challenging or traumatic life experiences achieve success through graduation. The program recently expanded to college-level programs to ensure these students have the necessary supports when they enroll. However, not all colleges have a JAG program. **Increase data sharing between colleges and universities and the JAG program to ensure former JAG students receive the support needed. Identify campuses where additional college-level JAG programs are needed and utilize thought leadership and venture capital to expand these programs throughout the state.**

Localized data. Localizing data such as college-going, completion, and attainment by school, school district, county, and legislative district can help show potential correlations between educational attainment and various challenges impacting civil society. **The Commission shall leverage this data, coupled with ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) data by zip code, to create targeted, localized solutions to engage and deploy the Partnership Pentagon sectors intentionally across the state by 2026.**

Short-term credentials. Indiana currently ranks 5th in the nation in attainment among working-age adults with only a certificate or certification. It is imperative that these short-term credentials be universal and recognized by the broader business community to ensure that students are prepared to meet the needs of the current and future economy. Additionally, credentials should also be stackable, meaning that the various credits and programs can accumulate towards the attainment of an associate degree or bachelor's degree. **Increase data transparency in degree outcomes, including employment rates and earnings. Advocate for policy changes that help students determine the value-add of specific programs and degrees.**

Upskilling to mitigate unemployment. As Indiana’s workforce needs evolve, certain jobs are more likely to face obsolescence. It is critical to be proactive in supporting and honoring individuals who may be impacted by obsolescence to keep them in the workforce and employed, rather than waiting for eventual unemployment. By utilizing data from reports such as the Brookings GPS study created for CICP, additional analysis could further inform areas to provide upskilling. **Identify the jobs that are most likely to face obsolescence and upskill the Hoosiers in those jobs to mitigate unemployment. Analyze a policy proposal to pull forward unemployment funding to retrain individuals rather than waiting for them to become unemployed.**

Youth professional apprenticeship. Youth apprenticeship is a two- to four-year program that provides high school students with paid, hands-on experiences that complement their coursework. Typically starting in their junior year, youth apprentices pursue jobs in growing fields such as banking, insurance, health care, life sciences, and advanced manufacturing. The Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation funded an ETH Zurich CEMETS iLab Indiana experience with more than 100 Hoosier leaders with the goal of ensuring that by 2030 every Hoosier has access to high-quality education and training, including youth apprenticeships. **Collaborate with the CEMETS iLab Indiana to expand youth professional apprenticeships across Indiana.**





HOPE Agenda Goal 5:

Graduate Retention

Alumni engagement. Indiana is a national leader in attracting students to our state's public and private universities. However, the state ranks 36th in the country for retention and migration of college graduates. Engaging alumni in recruiting, mentoring, career coaching, and connecting students to work-based learning opportunities in Indiana can provide a low-cost opportunity for improving our state's ability to retain our graduates. **Develop and scale promising and successful models such as Ball State University's County Ambassador Program and others with each public and private college and university in the state via their admissions, alumni, and related teams.**

Career coaching centers. Career coaching can increase enrollment, completion, and graduate retention by supporting students in selecting a career path aligned with their interests and talents, helping them identify and attain the education and training needed to get there, and supporting them in discovering opportunities in Indiana. Strada's *State Opportunity Index* illustrates a lack of quality career coaching on a national level. Expansion to mobile delivery may address transportation challenges until statewide accessibility is achieved. **Develop hubs where employers, labor organizations, intermediaries, high schools, and postsecondary institutions can implement career coaching and facilitate connections to work-based learning and full-time employment while driving awareness of the opportunities that exist today with Indiana employers and communities.** The CEMETS iLab Indiana is working to establish industry talent associations by sector to represent and engage employers in support of this work.

Career Discovery Meetings. All high school juniors and seniors, and certain postsecondary state financial aid recipients, are required to meet with an intermediary, employer, or labor organization to discuss future career opportunities and their necessary education levels. High school students can also meet with a postsecondary institution. By making students more aware of employment opportunities within their communities, the likelihood that college graduates will stay following degree completion improves. **Remove current statutory barriers and align provider requirements for Career Discovery Meetings by making them available virtually and increasing the capacity of meetings beyond the current five-student limit during the 2025 and 2026 legislative sessions.** If career coaching centers are established in the future, leverage those centers to enhance the implementation of Career Discovery Meetings.

Outcomes-Based Performance Funding. Enhance work-based learning opportunities and develop new community and employer engagement opportunities for students. **The Commission shall increase the portion of Outcomes-Based Performance Funding available to public institutions in Indiana during the 2025 legislative session based upon their improvement in connecting college students with employers and communities that ultimately lead to in-state retention following graduation.**

Work-based learning. Strada's *State Opportunity Index* identifies the value in work-based learning, specifically paid educational work opportunities, in ensuring students are provided the greatest likelihood they utilize their degree for employment purposes, thus driving higher wages. Work-based learning can strengthen the effectiveness by which Indiana's higher education institutions and communities retain college graduates in Indiana. **Establish local or regional "Mini Partnership Pentagons" to demonstrate the return on investment for employers (across business, education, government, non-profits, and philanthropy) for developing intentional work-based learning opportunities that are mutually beneficial for college students' careers and employers' talent pipelines. Embed in every Indiana degree program work-based learning – including but not limited to internships, co-ops, apprenticeships, assistantships, fellowships, and clinicals – or employer-driven project-based learning. Expand the geographic diversity of internships offered through Work and Learn Indiana that qualify for EARN Indiana funding to dramatically enhance the matter of employers' ability to offer paid experiences. Strengthen the utilization of Federal Work Study for career-relevant positions in approved off-campus non-profit organizations.**

CONCLUSION

Postsecondary education and training are still the best avenues to economic and social mobility and prosperity, both for individuals as well as the state's and nation's futures. Data show that with additional levels of educational attainment beyond high school, the prospects for an individual, their family, employers, and communities improve.


The unemployment rate for someone without a high school diploma is five times higher than a college graduate. Labor participation rates in the same comparison are about 29 percentage points higher for a bachelor's degree holder. Median income is almost twice as high for a bachelor's holder than for a high school graduate.


Social outcomes are also starkly different. Infant mortality is nearly three times as high on average for a home of individuals with less than a high school diploma. And life expectancy is eight years greater in the home of the college graduate. Yet while over 76 percent of Hoosier high school graduates say they intend to go on to some form of higher learning, only 53 percent enroll at a postsecondary institution.

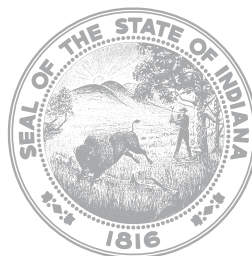
Indiana must embrace changing demographics and worker migration to remain economically competitive in the coming decades. We need to be clear here about focusing on and communicating around affordability and accessibility.

As previously mentioned, the Commission acknowledges it cannot take on the challenges facing higher education in Indiana alone. It is going to take a concerted all-hands effort from business, education, government, non-profit, and philanthropy to drive progress. The recommendations outlined in this report, which are fundamentally aligned with the Commission's HOPE Agenda will serve as the blueprint for the state for years to come.

Again, this report is not an implementation plan with a set timeline. The Commission invites leaders from all five sectors in the Partnership Pentagon to be involved - however that may look - in using these recommendations as a menu of options to guide policy, programs, and future partnerships in the very near-term, mid-term, and long-term.

 ECONOMIC METRICS by Education Level				
EDUCATION LEVEL	INDIANA UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (2024)	INDIANA LABOR PARTICIPATION RATE (2024)	WAGES – MEDIAN INCOME (U.S.)(2023) (AGES 25+)	WAGES – AVERAGE NET WORTH (U.S.)(2022)
LESS THAN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA	10.1%	45.1%	\$37,510	\$175,627
HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA	4.0%	56.0%	\$48,810	\$413,275
SOME COLLEGE OR ASSOCIATE DEGREE	3.6%	67.1%	\$57,618	\$540,873
BACHELOR'S DEGREE + UP	1.8%	73.3%	\$89,410	\$1,992,935

 SOCIAL METRICS by Education Level				
EDUCATION LEVEL	PERCENT OF WORKING-AGE ADULTS USING MEDICAID/CHIP (U.S.)(2022)	PERCENT OF WORKING-AGE ADULTS USING SNAP BENEFITS (U.S.)(2022)	INFANT MORTALITY (PER 1,000 BIRTHS)(U.S.)(2022)	LIFE EXPECTANCY (U.S.)(2014)
LESS THAN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA	41%	23%	10.0	65 YEARS
HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA	28%	14%	9.7	71 YEARS
SOME COLLEGE OR ASSOCIATE DEGREE	22%	11%	6.3	74 YEARS
BACHELOR'S DEGREE + UP	7%	3%	3.8	79 YEARS



INDIANA COMMISSION *for*
HIGHER EDUCATION



Strategic Recommendations

APPENDIX: PARTNERSHIP PENTAGON COMMITTEES

Since April 2023, more than 100 partners from business, education, government, non-profit organizations, and philanthropy have participated in the Partnership Pentagon. The Commission gratefully acknowledges their engagement, thought leadership, and feedback which informed the development of the recommendations in this final report. Names and organizations were documented at the time of participation and may no longer be representative of current participation, employment, or sector representation.

Business

- Dan Peterson, Cook Group (Chair) (Indiana Commission for Higher Education)
- Al Hubbard, E&A Industries (Indiana Commission for Higher Education)
- Allison Barber, Indiana Fever
- Betsy Delgado, Goodwill of Central and Southern Indiana
- Betsy McCaw, Heritage Group
- Bridget Boyle, Roche
- Chad Timmerman, Resultant
- Chris LaMothe, Elevate Ventures (Indiana Commission for Higher Education)
- Chris Pohl, OneAmerica
- Evan Wood, Fort Wayne Metals
- Jason Bearce, Indiana Chamber of Commerce
- Joyce Irwin, Community Health Network
- Kent Kramer, Goodwill of Central and Southern Indiana
- Mark Hill, Collina Ventures
- Matt Weinzapfel, Jasper Engines
- Melanie Zaber, RAND Corporation
- Mike Alley, Patriot Investments, LLC (Indiana Commission for Higher Education)
- Nancy Jordan, Bulldog Consulting Services (Indiana Commission for Higher Education)
- Pepper Mulherin, AT&T (Indiana Commission for Higher Education)
- Rene Williamson, OneAmerica
- Robin DeProspero, OneAmerica
- Scott Glaze, Fort Wayne Metals
- Steven Fry, Eli Lilly and Company
- Susan Brock Williams, Eli Lilly and Company
- Susan Carlock, Mursix Corp
- Terry Morris, Eli Lilly and Company
- Tim George, Central Indiana Corporate Partnership
- Todd Hurst, Indiana Chamber of Commerce

Education (K-12 and Higher Education)

- Ron Rochon, University of Southern Indiana (Chair)
- Aaron Baute, Ivy Tech Community College
- Aleesia Johnson, Indianapolis Public Schools
- Anne Bowen, Indiana State University (Indiana Commission for Higher Education)
- Arveneda McDonald, Joshua Academy Schools
- Becca Polcz Rice, Ball State University
- Beth Doyle, Council for Adult and Experiential Learning
- Chad Lochmiller, Indiana University (Indiana Commission for Higher Education)
- Chuck Johnson, Vincennes University
- Deborah Curtis, Indiana State University
- Dottie King, Independent Colleges of Indiana
- Edward Berger, Purdue University (Indiana Commission for Higher Education)
- Geoff Mearns, Ball State University
- Jake Burns, Independent Colleges of Indiana
- Jeffrey Buck, Purdue Global
- Jennifer Gasiorek, Ivy Tech Community College
- Jodie Ferise, Independent Colleges of Indiana
- Jon Harbor, Purdue Global
- Laura Treanor, Vincennes University
- Lela Simmons, Indianapolis Public Schools
- Letise Jenkins, Indiana TRIO
- Maceo Rainey, Indiana TRIO
- Melody Coryell, Indianapolis Public Schools
- Molly Dodge, Ivy Tech Community College
- Mung Chiang, Purdue University
- Pam Whitten, Indiana University
- Ryan McCombs, Purdue University Fort Wayne
- Shelly Blunt, University of Southern Indiana
- Sidney Steinhauer, Ivy Tech Community College
- Sue Ellspermann, Ivy Tech Community College
- Susan Sciame-Giesecke, Indiana University

Government

- Chris Lowery, Indiana Commission for Higher Education (Chair)
- Brooke Huntington, Indiana Department of Education
- David Adams, Indiana Department of Workforce Development
- Elaine Bedel, Indiana Destination Development Corporation
- Erika Steuterman, retired Major General, Air Force (Indiana Commission for Higher Education)
- Flora Jones, Indiana Department of Education
- Jessica Tower, Indiana Economic Development Corporation
- Karrah Herring, State of Indiana
- Katie Jenner, Indiana Department of Education
- Kimberly Brant, Indiana Economic Development Corporation
- Molly Williams, Indiana Department of Education
- Richard Paulk, Indiana Department of Workforce Development
- Tom Saunders, former State Representative, District 54 (Indiana Commission for Higher Education)
- Tony Denhart, Indiana Economic Development Corporation
- Whitney Ertel, Governor's Workforce Cabinet

Strategic Recommendations

APPENDIX: **PARTNERSHIP** **PENTAGON** **COMMITTEES**

(CONTINUED)

Non-Profit (Community- and Faith-Based Organizations)

- Marlene Dotson, Indiana Latino Institute (Chair)
- Aaron Story, Elevate Indianapolis
- Alice Watson, Indiana Black Expo
- Andrea Neely, Simon Youth Foundation
- Bill McKinney, Council for Adult and Experiential Learning
- Brent Wake, Indiana Afterschool Network
- Ceann Bales, YMCA
- Christal Stinson, UNCF
- Denise Luster, United Way of Central Indiana
- Dennis Bland, Center for Leadership Development (Indiana Commission for Higher Education)
- Doneisha Posey, Black Onyx
- Elizabeth Bushnell, Questa Foundation
- Fred Payne, United Way of Central Indiana
- Jason Kloth, Ascend Indiana
- Jay Height, Shepherd Community
- Joe Zachary Jr., Center for Leadership Development
- Katrina Owens, Indiana Black Expo
- Lakshmi Hasanadka, Indiana Afterschool Network
- Le-Angela Thompson-Burgess, Simon Youth Foundation
- Marie Mackintosh, EmployIndy
- Mark Russell, Indianapolis Urban League
- Miriam Acevedo Davis, La Plaza
- PJ McGrew, INvestEd
- Rachel Santos, Indiana Latino Institute
- Sam Snideman, United Way of Central Indiana
- Shamika Anderson, UNCF
- Stephanie Fritz, United Way of Central Indiana
- Steve Corona, Latinos Count
- Tami Silverman, Indiana Youth Institute
- Tenika Holden-Flynn, Teach for America
- Terry Webster, Nu Corinthian Baptist Church
- Tony Mason, Indianapolis Urban League

Philanthropy

- Claire Fiddian-Green, Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation (Chair)
- Bill Hanna, Dean and Barbara White Family Foundation (Indiana Commission for Higher Education)
- Chibuzo Ezeigbo, Joyce Foundation
- Emily Goldman, Joyce Foundation
- Jason Terrell, Walton Family Foundation
- Jenny Kane, Bloomberg Philanthropies
- Jud Fisher, Ball Brothers Foundation (Indiana Commission for Higher Education)
- Larry Garatoni, Garatoni-Smith Family Foundation
- Lorenzo Esters, The Indianapolis Foundation
- Marianne Glick, Glick Family Foundation
- Melanie Heath, Lumina Foundation
- Nick Watson, Bloomberg Philanthropies
- Paola Santana, Lumina Foundation
- Patrick Bueshing, Don Wood Foundation
- Ruth Watkins, Strada Education Network
- Wendy Sedlak, Lumina Foundation

Guest Speakers, Panelists, Resources Experts, and Moderators

- Aaron Baute, Ivy Tech Community College
- Anthony Carnevale, Center on Education and the Workforce, Georgetown University
- Beth Doyle, Council for Adult and Experiential Education
- Brianna Morse, Indiana Department of Workforce Development
- Chad Addie, GEAR UP South Bend
- Charity Flores, Indiana Department of Education
- Chris Lowery, Indiana Commission for Higher Education
- Claire Fiddian-Green, Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation
- Dan Peterson, Cook Group
- De’Niece Harrison-Hudson, OneAmerica
- Denise Luster, United Way of Central Indiana
- Earl Buford, Council for Adult and Experiential Education
- Erica Vevurka, The Hunt Institute
- Flora Jones, Indiana Department of Education
- Heather Jackson, iExplore
- Jason Bearce, Indiana Chamber of Commerce
- Jeffrey Buck, Purdue Global
- Jennifer Gasiorek, Muncie “Work Matters” Initiative
- Joe Zachery, Jr., Center for Leadership Development
- Josh Garrison, Indiana Commission for Higher Education
- Julia Ahrns Hoffman, The Hunt Institute
- Kent Kramer, Goodwill of Central and Southern Indiana
- Letise Jenkins, Indiana TRIO
- Maceo Rainey, Indiana TRIO
- Madeline Smith, The Hunt Institute
- Marlena Everett, The Hunt Institute
- Marlene Dotson, Indiana Latino Institute
- Melanie Zaber, RAND Corporation
- Michelle Ashcraft, Indiana Commission for Higher Education
- Molly Dodge, Ivy Tech Community College
- Pam Whitten, Indiana University
- Paola Santana, Lumina Foundation
- Raven DeRamus-Byers, New America
- Stacy Townsley, Indiana Commission for Higher Education
- Stephanie Fritz, United Way of Central Indiana
- Todd Hurst, Indiana Chamber of Commerce
- Troy Byler, Indiana University

Strategic Recommendations

APPENDIX: PARTNERSHIP PENTAGON COMMITTEES

(CONTINUED)

Commission Staff

- Aaron Olson, Assistant Director of Data Analytics
- Allison Kuehr, Associate Commissioner for Marketing and Communications
- Ashley Utnage, Governor's Summer Intern - College Enrollment
- Basu Maharjan, IT Director
- Brooke Kile, Associate Commissioner for Business Intelligence
- Cara Short, Communications Specialist
- Christina Maggart, Director of Finance
- Davyd Hall, Director for Adult Strategy Engagement
- Doug Lintner, Creative Director
- Emily Price, Communications Director
- Emma Mann, Outreach Intern
- Eric Altemus, Office Coordinator
- Greg Harrell, Director for Legislation and Program Implementation
- Griffin Vermeulen, Governor's Summer Intern - State Financial Aid
- Hilary Deardorf, Director for K-12 Outreach
- Joe Conde, Governor's Summer Intern - College Enrollment
- Josh Garrison, Senior Associate Commissioner and Chief of Staff
- Kayla Walke, Content Marketing Specialist
- Ken Sauer, Senior Associate Commissioner and Chief Academic Officer
- Lucas Norrington, Graduate Medical Education Board and Events Manager
- Madison Prillwitz, Assistant Commissioner for Strategic Partnership and Events
- McKalah Legault, Director for Postsecondary Program Implementation
- Michelle Ashcraft, Senior Associate Commissioner and Chief Program Officer
- Rajinder Heir, Associate Commissioner for Business Intelligence and Chief Technology Officer
- Reagan Ayala, Governor's Summer Intern - Marketing and Communications
- Sam Rourke, Director for CTE Outreach and Implementation
- Seth Hinshaw, Senior Associate Commissioner and Chief Financial Officer
- Stacy Townsley, Associate Commissioner for Adult Strategy
- Steve St. John, Director for Adult Program Implementation
- Tony Harl, Associate Commissioner for K-12 Strategy

Resources

More information about the Commission can be found at <https://www.in.gov/che/> and questions can be directed to info@che.in.gov. A list of resources pertaining to the Commission's and other initiatives referenced throughout this report follows.

21st Century Scholars

<https://learnmoreindiana.org/scholars/how-to-enroll/scholars@che.in.gov>

Ability to Benefit

<https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/library/dear-colleague-letters/2024-06-12/ability-benefit-state-process-and-eligible-career-pathway-programs>

Adult Education

<https://www.in.gov/dwd/career-training-adult-ed/adult-ed/AdultEd@dwd.IN.gov>

Adult Student Grant

<https://www.in.gov/che/state-financial-aid/state-financial-aid-by-program/adult-student-grant/awards@che.in.gov>

Career Coaching Framework

<https://www.in.gov/che/policy-and-legislation/career-coaching-and-navigation-system/grants@che.in.gov>

Career Discovery Meetings

CDM@che.in.gov

Career Scholarship Accounts

<https://www.in.gov/tos/csa/>
CSA@che.in.goc (Indiana Commission for Higher Education)
CSA@doe.in.gov (Indiana Department of Education)
CSA@tos.in.gov (Treasurer of State)

Career and Technical Education

<https://www.in.gov/che/cte/>
CTE@che.IN.gov

Central Indiana Corporate Partnership

<https://www.cicpindiana.com/>

CEMETS iLab Indiana

<https://www.rmff.org/our-work/ilabindiana>
iLab@RMFF.org

College Matters (Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation)

<https://www.rmff.org/our-work/college-matters/>
college@RMFF.org

Collegiate Purple Star

<https://www.in.gov/che/adult-strategy/collegiate-purple-star/>
CollegiatePurpleStar@che.in.gov

Core Transfer Library

<https://transferin.net/earned-credits/core-transfer-library/>

County Ambassador Program (Ball State University)

<https://www.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/governmental-relations/county-ambassador-program>
engage@bsu.edu

Credit for Prior Learning Clearinghouse

<https://transferin.net/ways-to-earn-credit/credit-for-prior-learning-cpl-clearinghouse/>

Credit for Prior Learning Framework

<https://www.in.gov/che/adult-strategy/credit-for-prior-learning/>

EARN Indiana

<https://www.in.gov/che/state-financial-aid/state-financial-aid-by-program/earn-indiana/awards@che.in.gov>

e-Transcript

<https://transferin.net/earned-credits/how-to-transfer-credit/transcripts/>
<https://www.in.gov/doe/students/indianas-common-electronic-transcript/>

Excel Center

<https://excelcenter.org/>

FAFSA

<https://learnmoreindiana.org/paying-for-college/fafsa/>
schools@che.in.gov

Frank O'Bannon Grant

<https://www.in.gov/che/state-financial-aid/state-financial-aid-by-program/frank-obannon-grant/awards@che.in.gov>

H&R Block FAFSA Experiment

<https://scholar.harvard.edu/btl/hr-block-fafsa-experiment>

Indiana529

<https://www.indiana529direct.com/clientservice@indiana529direct.com>

Indiana Career Explorer

<https://indianacareerexplorer.com/INCEHelp@dwd.in.gov>

Indiana Chamber of Commerce

<https://www.indianachamber.com/info@indianachamber.com>

Indiana GEAR UP

<https://indianagearup.org/index.php>
IndianaGEARUP@purdue.edu

Indiana GPS Project

<https://indianagpsproject.com/>
mdroberts@cicpindiana.com

Indiana Pre-Admissions: Your Path to College

<https://learnmoreindiana.org/preadmit/>
preadmissions@che.in.gov

Indiana TRIO

<https://indianatrio.org/>
indiana-president@eoaa.org

INvestEd

<https://www.investedindiana.org/>
outreach@investedindiana.org

Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG)

<https://www.in.gov/dwd/jag/>
JAGIndiana@dwd.in.gov

JUMP Program

<https://www.ballfdn.org/news-archive/jump-program-grant>

Learn More Indiana

<https://learnmoreindiana.org/schools@che.in.gov>

Michigan Retired Educator FAFSA Specialists

<https://www.micollegeaccess.org/jobpostings/1233>
info@micollegeaccess.org

My College Core

<https://mycollegecore.org/>
ICC@che.in.gov

Outcomes-Based Performance Funding

<https://www.in.gov/che/budget-and-finance/performance-funding/finance@che.in.gov>

Scholar Success Program

<https://learnmoreindiana.org/scholars/schools@che.in.gov>

School Finder Tool

<https://finder.learnmoreindiana.org/>

State Financial Aid

<https://www.in.gov/che/state-financial-aid/state-financial-aid-general-information/awards@che.in.gov>

Strada: State Opportunity Index for Indiana

https://stradaeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/SOI_States_Indiana-May-2024.pdf

Talent Pipeline Management

<https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/solutions/workforce-development-and-training/talent-pipeline-management>

Work and Learn Indiana

<https://www.workandlearnindiana.com/>
WorkandLearnIN@indianachamber.com

Workforce Ready Grant

<https://www.in.gov/che/state-financial-aid/state-financial-aid-by-program/workforce-ready-grant/awards@che.in.gov>

WorkOne

<https://www.in.gov/dwd/WorkOne/locations.html>



INDIANA COMMISSION *for*
HIGHER EDUCATION
CHE.IN.gov