



A Century of Insight: IBRC's Role in Shaping Indiana's Workforce & Economic Strategy

The Indiana Business Research Center (IBRC) celebrated its 100th anniversary this year, marking a century of helping Hoosier leaders understand the state's economy and labor market. For generations, policymakers, employers, state and community leaders have relied on IBRC research to help guide economic planning and workforce strategy across Indiana.

For the Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD), IBRC's insights remain an essential part of preparing Hoosiers for the jobs of tomorrow.

"IBRC provides the data and context we need to make informed workforce decisions for Indiana," said Mike Smith, Interim DWD Commissioner. "Their research helps us anticipate where jobs are growing, where skills gaps exist, and how we can prepare Hoosiers for the opportunities ahead."

The IBRC began its work in 1926 with a clear mission: to provide reliable economic information to business leaders and policymakers. Early researchers recognized the importance of labor market data long before modern workforce analytics existed.

During the Great Depression, IBRC researchers began tracking employment patterns and economic activity across industries at a time when many relied on anecdotal observations to understand unemployment. By collecting and sharing real economic data, IBRC helped Hoosier leaders better understand the forces shaping Indiana's economy.

Additionally, the center launched the *Indiana Business Review*, a publication that continues to analyze economic trends across the state and inform decision-makers in both the public and private sectors.

Over the decades, the partnership of IBRC and DWD has strengthened to expand access to workforce data and analysis. Together, tools were built to allow for better understanding of labor market trends.

Platforms such as [Stats Indiana](#) and [Hoosiers by the Numbers](#) combine economic and workforce data into accessible public tools used by researchers, businesses, and workforce partners across the state. These resources help stakeholders identify industry

trends, analyze regional workforce needs, and develop strategies that align education, training, and economic development.

“From the beginning, our focus has centered on understanding the relationship between people and industry,” said Carol Rogers, Director of the Indiana Business Research Center. “People fill the jobs and industry creates the jobs. Our role is to provide the data and analysis that help leaders see where the economy is heading.”

As Indiana’s economy evolves, IBRC continues to monitor new forces shaping the labor market. Researchers track emerging trends such as artificial intelligence, demographic shifts, and changes in energy production that influence how industries grow and how workers prepare for future careers.

While technologies and industries change, IBRC continues to carry forward the same mission that launched the center a century ago: deliver reliable data, identify workforce challenges early, and help Indiana prepare for what comes next.

The partnership between IBRC and DWD demonstrates how collaboration between research institutions and public agencies strengthens workforce strategy. Combining rigorous economic analysis with workforce expertise helps ensure Indiana’s workforce policies remain informed, practical, and responsive to the needs of both workers and employers.

To learn more information about IBRC, please go to <https://ibrc.kelley.iu.edu/index.html>.