

2025 Adult Education Day Honors Adult Learners and Indiana Employers, Showcasing Statewide Success Stories



With more than 250 in-person and online class locations across the state, Indiana Adult Education (AE) continues to lead the country in student outcomes and workforce-based learning participation. Statewide programming is transforming lives and creating a sizeable economic impact.

On February 11, 2025, the Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD), the Indiana Association for Adult and Continuing Education (IAACE), and other partners gathered at the Indiana Statehouse for the 4th annual Adult Education Day – an event dedicated to honoring Hoosier adult learners and Indiana employers who support their educational journeys.

“Adult Education Day is a testament to the strength and determination of adult learners in Indiana. It underscores the vital partnership between educators, businesses, and adult learners,” said DWD Commissioner Richard Paulk. “Indiana Adult Education supports working adults by providing better economic opportunities. The connection is obvious. Indiana Adult Education is workforce development.”

Empowering Hoosiers Through Education

Adult learners enroll in AE programs for many reasons, but the most common motivations include earning a High School Equivalency (HSE) diploma, completing career-related training, or improving English proficiency to enhance employment opportunities. To meet these needs, partnerships with Indiana businesses are vital. Currently more than 100 business partners statewide collaborate with AE programs, ensuring accessible education and skill development in every region.

A selection of these businesses from across the state were honored during DWD’s Adult Education Day ceremony for being a shining example of success.

“Our associates can go back to school and earn their certification to become medical assistants. It’s huge for them and we’re excited to offer them other avenues to pursue in their careers,” said Jan Hoffman, Supervisor, Physician Operations with Ascension St. Vincent in Evansville.

In the most recent program year, Indiana AE students earned 2,809 career certifications, with 822 in skilled trades and construction and 719 in medical and healthcare fields. Beyond certifications, improving English proficiency plays a significant role in workforce upskilling.

“Our programs help employees not only understand workplace safety and regulations but also enhance their lives outside of work,” said Plastic Recycling, Inc. Plant Manager Katie Kingery, while attending the Feb. 11 recognition ceremony. “That’s why we took our education to the next level by offering English classes to strengthen communication and build a more connected team.”

The Economic Impact of Adult Education in Indiana

Over the past year, 25,000 Indiana adult learners enrolled in AE programs, and 4,200 earned their HSE diploma. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, individuals who obtain their HSE can experience an average annual income increase of \$8,900. The benefits extend beyond personal achievements, significantly impacting Indiana’s economy. An estimated 68% of AE students secure employment within a year of completing their programs, and participants see an average wage increase of \$5,000 within that time. Indiana’s total economic impact from AE services is valued at approximately \$74.7 million annually, against a \$17 million investment.

Indiana continues to rank among the top states for adult education, placing second in the nation for student participation and career credentialing and third for the total number of HSE diplomas earned.

Celebrating Workforce-Focused Education

Businesses like Wagler Competition Products, another Adult Education Day honoree, ensure workers have access to diverse learning opportunities. Through its Wagler Education and Training Center, a State of Indiana approved AE site, employees can earn their HSE diploma and complete specialized training and certification programs.

“We provide an enriched learning environment that has helped countless students learn, develop, and grow so they can approach the future with confidence,” said owner Jeremy Wagler.

In addition to recognizing outstanding employer partnerships, the event also celebrated winners of the Adult Learner Essay Contest, showcasing inspiring personal stories of perseverance and success.

Overall, Indiana’s approach to adult education is proving effective, and the impact extends far beyond the Statehouse celebration. By investing in workforce-driven learning, the state is empowering Hoosiers, strengthening businesses, and fueling economic growth across Indiana.

Learn more about DWD’s Adult Education program by visiting <https://www.in.gov/dwd/career-training-adult-ed/adult-ed/>.