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Indiana Launches Statewide Campaign to Help Hoosiers Recover

'Rapid Recovery for a Better Future' focuses on meeting education, workforce and individual needs with help of \$50 million in federal funding

(INDIANAPOLIS) – In the midst of economic and individual recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, Indiana is helping individuals, communities and businesses get back to work and connected to the resources that can help people move forward.

Indiana's [Governor's Workforce Cabinet](#) (GWC) is launching the "Rapid Recovery for a Better Future" [initiative](#), which is centered on meeting individual needs by providing comprehensive support for Hoosiers to secure a job, assess and grow their skills, and get the support they need to get back on their feet.

"Rapid Recovery for a Better Future" combines the leadership of the GWC, Indiana employers, education and training providers, policymakers, and state and local partners with the goal of ensuring Indiana's recovery from COVID-19 and providing a pathway to a better future for every Hoosier.

"People are our state's most valuable resource and they are what define Indiana as a great place to live, work and grow. It is critical that our state is not only providing these services but actively helping people get connected so they take that next step to a better future," said Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb.

The Rapid Recovery initiative focuses on helping Hoosiers:

- **Learn about options** and connect to relevant, simple and real-time job, career, skill and educational resources and funding for personal advancement. An **online hub**, YourNextStepIn.org, provides connection and one-on-one supports for Hoosiers at the touch of their fingertips. A **comprehensive outreach network** will share the state's resources with Hoosiers from their own trusted sources: community leaders, pastors or other faith leaders and employers. For those thinking through their education and training options, [INvestEd](#) will provide free, **one-on-one financial aid guidance**.
- **Connect to opportunities** with the assistance of career coaches and navigators to empower Hoosiers to assess and develop their skills and gain better understanding of job needs and opportunities.
- **Take the next step** and advance their careers with convenient access to accelerated programs and credentials that value prior learning and experiences, such as the Workforce Ready Grant and [Ivy Tech's Rapid Recovery](#) program—which will provide free courses and training for 10,000 Hoosiers.
- In addition, the Rapid Recovery initiative is providing enhanced, consolidated and simplified **resources for employers** with the partnership of the [Indiana Chamber of Commerce](#).

Federal funding through the CARES Act injects \$50 million into the efforts, to scale up short-term education and training opportunities through the [Workforce Ready Grant](#) and the Employer Training Grant, as well as expanded career coaching and navigation for those who need help figuring out their next steps.

CARES Act funding enables Indiana to:

- **Grow short-term education and training** by enhancing the Workforce Ready Grant to provide support to at least 10,000 more Hoosiers in the following ways:
 - Increasing the funding cap from \$5,500 to \$10,000 for eligible programs

- Allowing Hoosiers with two- and four-year degrees who have been impacted by COVID-19 to qualify for the grant, and adding new programs, such as the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and Commercial Driver’s License (CDL)
- Support access to the [180 Skills](#) library of online, non-credit courses for up to 100,000 Hoosiers
- **Expand the Employer Training Grant** to serve 25,000 more Hoosiers, specifically supporting women-, minority- and veteran-owned businesses; and doubling the amount of reimbursable funds to employers
- **Provide outreach and promotion** to create a single online network to direct Hoosiers to career coaches; and ensure Hoosiers who are most impacted by COVID-19 – especially underrepresented populations and rural communities – are aware of the available opportunities

“The goal of Rapid Recovery for a Better Future is to streamline access to resources, help Hoosiers identify and pursue a path forward, and reach people through trusted and local outreach networks. Utilizing federal funding through the CARES Act will allow us to expand these efforts and reach even more Hoosiers,” said Teresa Lubbers, chair of the Governor’s Workforce Cabinet and Indiana’s Commissioner for Higher Education. “Taking the next step toward a better future is a manageable way for people to move toward economic and workforce recovery, whether that is reskilling for a different job, finishing a credential or finding a new career.”

Connecting with local communities

By engaging regional and community groups, and faith-based organizations through a comprehensive outreach network of more than 100 organizations, the state will share connections and support directly to Hoosiers through other trusted sources, such as pastors and faith leaders, community leaders and employers.

“The Governor’s Workforce Cabinet and other stakeholders have been working on these strategies and priorities to more precisely connect Hoosiers to resources, but the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated these efforts,” said Indiana Department of Workforce Development Commissioner Fred Payne. “By reaching individuals and families, and connecting with employers and communities, Indiana can provide resources and focus at the local level on helping Hoosiers to secure quality jobs and a better quality of life.”

Resources for employers

The Rapid Recovery initiative also focuses on providing enhanced, consolidated and simplified resources for employers in order to grow opportunity in the state in partnership with the Indiana Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber’s [Workforce Institute](#) contains the organization’s [Road to Recovery](#) resource center for businesses impacted by COVID-19.

“Our Road to Recovery center outlines guidance for getting employees back to work safely and includes a collection of free webinars that can be accessed immediately,” says Indiana Chamber President and CEO Kevin Brinegar. “A special emphasis is on the mental health of all in the workplace through our Wellness Council. Virtual internships are also something employers can consider through Indiana INTERNnet. These are among the available programs we have to help Hoosier companies emerge from the pandemic.”

To connect to centralized resources available in Indiana, visit [YourNextStepIn.org](#), [www.indianachamber.com](#) and [www.ivytech.edu](#).

“The Rapid Recovery initiative is the first iteration of a longer-term strategy to provide a clear and compelling message for Hoosiers to take that next step. We want to make it clear to people that Indiana has their back so they can move forward,” said Lubbers.

About the Governor’s Workforce Cabinet

The [Governor’s Workforce Cabinet](#) (GWC) was formed in 2018 with the mission of addressing current and future education and employment needs for individuals and employers, strengthening Indiana’s economy by integrating and aligning state and federal resources, and ensuring a talent-driven education and workforce system. The membership of

the GWC includes the business community, K-12 representatives, postsecondary institutions, Indiana lawmakers, and leaders from Indiana state agencies.

Support for the Rapid Recovery for a Better Future initiative

Ivy Tech Community College President Dr. Sue Ellspermann:

“More than 700,000 Hoosiers have filed initial unemployment claims and while many thousands have returned to work, there are still more than 200,000 individuals who are facing unemployment, reduced hours or furloughs. While we hope most will return to their jobs, this is an outstanding opportunity for Hoosiers to make the most of this time away from work to skill up and become more marketable to their current and future employers. Ivy Tech and our partners have come together to provide free relevant training for what we hope will be many more than 10,000 Hoosiers. This is just one example how as Indiana’s community college we stand ready to help Hoosiers recover, and recover quickly.”

Vincennes University President Dr. Chuck Johnson:

“Similar to Governor Holcomb's efforts to lead Hoosiers in combatting the spread of COVID-19, it is just as critical for us to move quickly to restart an Indiana economy that was hitting on all cylinders. Vincennes University is ready to do its part in this Rapid Recovery effort that will be so important to all of us.”

INvestEd President Joe Wood:

“INvestEd is thrilled to provide free individualized support as Hoosiers navigate the financial aid, education and training options within the Rapid Recovery for a Better Future initiative. For nearly 40 years, INvestEd has served Indiana with free, expert financial aid literacy and outreach. As we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential Hoosiers are made aware of the various available resources and programs.”

180 Skills CEO & Founder Joe Kitterman:

“180 Skills is proud to support and participate in the Governor’s innovative plan for Indiana’s rapid recovery that will use made-in-Indiana technology to help hundreds of thousands of Hoosiers reskill and upskill in this difficult time. Our library of more than 700 online skills courses will be organized and distributed statewide to help Hoosiers rapidly attain job-ready skills they need to return to the workforce.”

Indiana Office of Career Connections and Talent Secretary Blair Milo:

“As Indiana works to reopen, Hoosiers are beginning to think about their next steps in terms of individual and economic recovery. Meeting people where they are and connecting them with relevant employment opportunities to secure a job, educational resources to assess and grow their skills, and critical support to help them get back on their feet is essential to growing a stronger Indiana.”

Paul Perkins, President and CEO of Amatrol, Inc.:

“The Rapid Recovery initiative meets individuals looking to make a change with the information and tools necessary to successfully take their next step toward a better future. Businesses will also find the resources they need to get back on their feet and continue growing opportunities for Hoosiers across our state.”