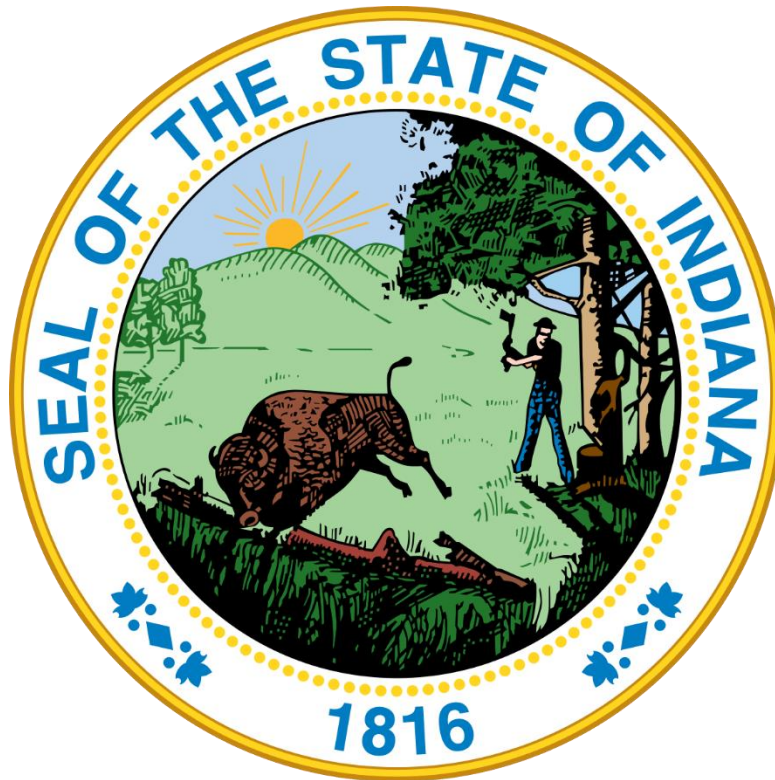


A Better Future for Every Hoosier: Indiana's Strategic Workforce Plan



2020 - 2024

Draft Version 2
March 19, 2020

Indiana Strategic Workforce Plan – Executive Summary

Indiana's first submission of a **Combined Plan** allows us to take a more holistic approach to our state's talent development system as we work towards better integration across the system. For too long, Indiana's talent development system has been focused on programs – federal programs, state programs, education programs, workforce programs, and one-off initiatives with private and philanthropic partners. This strategy has given Hoosiers multiple resources and supports to access opportunities for lifelong learning and increase personal growth, but it has also inadvertently created a complex system that is inefficient and difficult to navigate. In the past, our state plan only covered the six “core” formula grant programs authorized under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), but the Combined Plan will incorporate and integrate several additional federal and state programs that impact the workforce development system.

By having the **Governor's Workforce Cabinet** (GWC) spearhead efforts on the Plan, the GWC has been able to use all 7 state agencies represented on the Cabinet to ensure greater collaboration on the State Workforce Plan than in prior submissions. Numerous state agencies, non-profit and private partners, and the general public have provided input throughout the plan development process, all committed to a shared goal of creating a more integrated and effective workforce system that works for all Hoosiers.

A statewide **Listening Tour** at the beginning of the Plan's development and the work of multiple **Sub-Committees** formed by the GWC to assist with developing the Plan served as the primary tools in shaping the Plan's vision, goals, and strategies. The **Skillful Governor's Coaching Corps** also served as a valuable tool to incorporate ideas from individuals who engage daily with Hoosiers accessing services.

The Plan is centered on a strategic vision of creating a talent system that affords all Hoosiers equitable opportunities for lifelong learning and increased personal economic mobility and provides employers the talent to grow and diversify their workforce. Underneath this vision the Plan identifies two overarching goals: having **at least 60% of Hoosiers attain a quality credential beyond a high school diploma by 2025** and increasing engagement between employers and state and local agencies to identify and address the skills gap with greater responsiveness and efficiency. In addition to the strategic vision and overarching goals, 5 specific goals have been identified that provide a framework for how we plan to reach our targets. The 5 goals are:

- 1) Focus on meeting the individual needs of Hoosiers.
- 2) Integrate state systems to facilitate greater access to information, resources, and services for constituents, businesses, state personnel, career coaches or navigators, and case managers.
- 3) Align programs towards creating a healthy, engaged, and talented citizen.
- 4) Maximize state and federal resources through impact-driven programs for Hoosiers.
- 5) Foster impactful relationships between businesses, community partners, and government agencies.

Putting People First

The Combined Plan is laid out from the individual perspective, rather than segmented by program or funding stream. This human-centered approach allows us to examine the alignment of programs from the needs of each of our selected **target populations**. We intend for this approach to focus Indiana not just on specific programmatic requirements and funding streams, but on how the entire system can provide necessary supports an individual might need to be successful in his/her career. This approach is customizable to an individual's eligibility, needs, goals, and aspirations.

The target populations are population groups identified as requiring additional supports from our workforce system. The Plan is structured around meeting the needs of our target populations through a systemic lens and determining how we can best provide resources for Hoosiers to attain greater economic mobility. Within each section, the **Core and Program Activities**, **Activities outside the Plan**, and **Individual Services**

applicable to a target population are interwoven through the narrative. Sections may not include every program that could service a target population and individuals may fall into multiple target populations depending on life circumstances. This approach is focused on the overarching needs of a target population, rather than diving into each potential case.

Examples of target populations include those that need upskilling or reskilling, individuals with disabilities, ex-offenders, foster youth, and dislocated workers. Extensive sections are included in the plan for each target population identifying common barriers the population faces and strategies to serve them through a list of programs organized by likelihood to benefit that specific population. This framework will allow workforce partners to utilize the state plan as a guide when interacting with these populations to ensure individuals are being served in the most effective and comprehensive manner.

Sections of the Combined Plan focus on how our programs may address specific barriers unique to a particular target population or subgroup. Many of the Core, Partner, and state programs and services can be provided to almost all of the populations, depending on the individual's situation; it is the way in which these programs and services can be utilized to support the target population that will differ. By taking this approach, Indiana can differentiate how our programs can directly support and address the distinctive barriers each target population may have. The Plan emphasizes that braiding the variety of funding streams together will address the barriers the population faces to securing stable, sustainable employment.

Comprehensive Strategies

Data Sharing - Indiana will leverage Governor Holcomb's work and leadership role on the White House's American Workforce Policy Advisory Board to address federal data sharing challenges and facilitate greater data sharing between our agencies. The Plan also creates a course of action for the 7 state agencies on the GWC to enter into a data charter with the state's **Management Performance Hub (MPH)** allowing MPH to begin reporting out information on who Indiana's talent development system is serving, where we are serving them, and through what programs.

Co-Enrollment - This is the primary strategy laced throughout the Plan that will be vital to actualizing the Plan's vision and meeting the identified goals. Information gathered through data sharing will improve the state's ability to co-enroll individuals into multiple programs that jointly work to meet their unique needs. The Plan details how increased co-enrollment into Core, Partner, state, philanthropic, and sectoral programs will improve service to individuals, the action steps necessary for entities to begin increasing co-enrollment, and yield benefits for all partners in the talent development system. Individuals will be co-enrolled into the primary programs and services beneficial to them. An individual's unique circumstances or preference may not necessitate co-enrollment in each program

The specific benefits of co-enrollment to the individual are:

- **Additional Resources to Provide Training and Income Support:** Co-enrolling Hoosiers in more than one eligible program may provide them with additional training and income support and wraparound resources, reducing potential out-of-pocket costs or direct expenses from seeking additional education and training for career advancement.
- **Enhanced Service Delivery:** Co-enrollment in WIOA and/or other programs can provide eligible Hoosiers with access to a wide array of vitally important services that both directly and indirectly impact the availability of the opportunities to develop knowledge and skills for career advancement.

One-stop providers and other program administrators will yield the following benefits from co-enrollment:

- **Improved Participant Outcomes:** By coupling the various funding streams for training and income support dollars, providers increase their capacity for counseling, case management, wraparound support, and follow-up services, leading to greater performance outcomes.

- **Increased Services to Hoosiers:** Co-enrolled workers may gain access to both greater breadth and depth of supportive services, like childcare and transportation, as well as more varied opportunities for education and training, which may not be currently covered because of funding limitations. By pooling various funding streams in a coordinated manner, providers can stretch their dollars further.

As a state, increased economic mobility and aspirational fulfillment of Hoosiers comprise our primary benefits of promoting co-enrollment. Expanding our co-enrollment efforts will also serve as an important tool to maximize the efficiency and impact of each program through responsible stewardship of these funds. By ensuring that individuals are being served through the programs most appropriate for their needs, we can lessen the duplication of services, improve outcomes, and maximize the amount of Hoosiers able to be served through each funding stream. While Hoosiers may be enrolled into more individual programs, the strategies employed through co-enrollment will allow us to achieve greater impact with our federal and state investments.

Indiana's long-term solution to operationalizing a seamless co-enrollment system will be through a common application process and case management system. The Plan outlines immediate and intermediate steps over the course of the Plan's duration that will achieve progress towards reaching this long-term solution.

Co-Location - Another core strategy the Plan includes throughout is Co-location. The Plan provides programs a variety of different options to achieve increased co-location, all with a goal of improving customer service by reducing barriers for individuals accessing services. Co-location's benefit to customer service will continue to build over time through the increased ability to track a variety of important metrics including: wait times, waitlists, enrollment increases, speed of referrals, and quality of referrals and case management (e.g., scheduling appointments, co-enrollment in multiple programs, and persistence and completion rates of co-enrollment). One approach to co-location our local regions could examine is a network model, wherein the local board was responsible for overseeing staffing and management of the entire network of any and all workforce development service. Partnerships through the network model can include Partner Programs, such as SNAP and TANF, providing services to any WorkOne in the network primarily by traveling between them rather than being on-site full-time at any one location. Additional co-location strategies include:

- **Formal co-location:** Physically locating Core and Partner Programs at one office.
- **Using itinerant staff:** These are staff members who come to the WorkOne when called or requested and do not have a set schedule. Itinerant staffing models can bring services to where people are rather than concentrating programs and services in any particular center.
- **Embedding staff:** Staff habitually travel between different offices rather than being on-site full-time at any one location. These are regular work schedules that have staff working in different offices or locations and with different program staff. Staff members co-locate with various programs by moving among offices and locations recurrently.
- **Mobile/temporary locations:** Another partnership negotiated at the network level is temporarily co-locating or sharing space with the local public library system, schools, local businesses and chambers of commerce, and other locations that have community engagement throughout the local area. These are, essentially, portable WorkOnes that pop up in different centers of community activity. This initiative seeks to expand the reach of workforce resources by going to places with high community activity, rather than waiting for Hoosiers to come into the office.
- **Referral relationships:** Some of our WorkOnes have a common system, using a "warm hand-off" process, to ensure direct contact with partners or following up to ensure services had been received. Referrals between different programs must be collaborative and coordinated, as well as executed person-to-person, rather than program-to-program.

Cross-Training - To facilitate and maximize the impact of Co-enrollment and Co-location efforts, Cross-training will occur for staff of all partners in the workforce system, focused on increasing staff knowledge of eligibility requirements and program allowances. SNAP, TANF, all core WIOA programs, and federal and state financial aid opportunities will be initially prioritized. The Plan details how agencies can provide this training to staff through options such as in-person workshops or online webinars.

Employer Engagement – This final comprehensive strategy is essential if we are going to see growth in the labor force participation rate across our target populations. The Plan identifies steps the state can take to improve the value for employers of engaging with the talent development system and bring awareness to the benefits companies can accrue through increased engagement with our target populations. Priorities to strengthen the partnership and services provided to employers that will enhance the lives of those working today and drive positive outcomes for future occupations include:

1. New training and technical assistance for Workforce Development Boards and staff for a better employer experience.
2. Identifying and highlighting community partnerships for employers to engage with the talent development system.
3. Expanding the reach and connection to apprenticeships and other work-based learning experiences.
4. Assisting Hoosier small businesses and entrepreneurs to thrive in our increasingly global economy.
5. Leveraging economic and employer data to address current and future needs.
6. Modifying resources and tools based on employer feedback to provide a better user experience.
7. Promoting talent diversity and non-traditional hiring practices.

The Plan also places an emphasis on raising employer awareness about the benefits of non-traditional hiring practices that can tap into some often overlooked talent pools. By highlighting business leaders who are pioneering these types of practices, we can help employers create greater talent pipelines, take advantage of federal benefits (such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit), and become more effective, successful, and profitable.

The Plan envisions **data sharing, co-enrollment, co-location, cross training, and employer engagement** working in tandem over time to create a fully integrated system that vastly improves an individual's experience interacting with the talent development system, leads to improved outcomes across the system's various programs, and provides employers the talent they need to grow and diversify Indiana's workforce.

Measuring Progress

Measuring continuous improvement across the comprehensive strategies listed above will serve as a primary tool for the State to measure return on investment for each of our core, partner, and state programs. Additionally, the Plan calls for expanding the monitoring of the required performance metrics laid out in WIOA beyond the required Core Programs to include both the Partner and state programs in the State Plan. Indiana's Commission of Higher Education will also assess and report on the following data aligned to our Vision:

1. **Educational Attainment**
 - Measured by progress toward at least 60% of Hoosiers having a quality credential beyond a high school diploma, assessing
 - a. Postsecondary-Going Rate
 - b. On-Time Postsecondary Completion Rate
 - c. 6-Year Postsecondary Completion Rate
 - d. Adult Learner Completion Rates
2. **Career Relevance & Preparation**
 - Measured by progress toward 100% of postsecondary programs requiring an internship, work-based learning, research project, or other student engagement experience that has career relevance

3. Economic Impact

- Measured by progress toward Indiana becoming a leading Midwest state for median household income
 - a. By 2025: Above Average in Peer States
 - b. By 2030: Top 5 in Peer States

By continuously assessing our investments and if we are reaping financial and social long-term benefits, we expect to modify and amend the Plan annually.

Highlighted Activities

This section provides a sampling of how specific programs or funding streams are used in new or existing ways to benefit our target populations.

One of Governor Holcomb's signature workforce initiatives is the **Next Level Jobs** program, which contains an individualized approach with the **Workforce Ready Grant** program and an employer-led initiative with the **Employer Training Grant** program that each serve to help Hoosiers gain the necessary skills to move into high-wage, high-demand jobs. The Plan incorporates a variety of strategies towards increasing usage of these programs across our target populations, including allocating \$500,000 of Employer Training Grant state funding for upskilling SNAP or TANF recipients as a way to increase access to advanced opportunities for low-income workers and ensure employers can find the talent necessary to fill middle-skill jobs.

To maximize the impact of state funded programs like the Workforce Ready Grant and Employer Training Grant, the Plan outlines several ways for Indiana to begin working with the **Family and Social Services Administration** to increase utilization of **SNAP 50/50** funds. This program allows for a 50% reimbursement grant from the federal government for any non-federal funding spent on employment and training services for SNAP recipients. Using SNAP 50/50 for the Workforce Ready Grant and Employer Training Grant in particular will help Indiana alleviate barriers and improve the number of low-income individuals persisting and completing these programs.

We will increase the co-enrollment of WIOA participants into federal and state financial aid programs. At the state level, we will work with and encourage our WorkOnes to include filing the FAFSA as part of the application process for anyone seeking postsecondary education and training opportunities. The FAFSA will allow a low-income individual access the federal **Pell Grant** and state financial aid, such as the **Adult Student Grant**, for credit-bearing programs at our community colleges. This will ensure we maximize our current investments and extend our WIOA Adult funding to help subsidize on-the-job and work-based learning wages, as well as other wraparound supports.

The Plan seeks to increase student enrollment in **21st Century Scholars**, Indiana's early college promise program. Increased partnerships between schools and districts and workforce services and centers dedicated to low-income adults and families will begin to raise public perception and understanding of the growing need for higher learning in the changing economy. Outreach Coordinators through the Commission for Higher Education can partner with Workforce Development Boards and other services for low-income individuals, such as SNAP and TANF, to provide information to parents through different settings. Districts can work with Workforce Development Boards and other state and community partners to host informational sessions away from schools (e.g., libraries, WorkOnes, and community centers).

The Plan creates a sub-committee that will examine the population of Hoosiers between 151% and 200% of the federal poverty line and ways to help them attain self-sufficiency. The committee will particularly look at how the **benefits cliff** impacts Hoosier families' opportunities for career and wage advancement, a concern that was a consistent theme during the Listening Tour.

The Plan also encourages using federal flexibility within the **Ability to Benefit** program and **Second Chance Pell** as ways to increase individual's access to postsecondary education by reducing cost barriers. This idea is one of numerous strategies centered on increasing post-secondary attainment among our target populations. Utilizing these programs will also allow service providers to stretch other WIOA funding streams further in order to serve additional Hoosiers. Specific target populations these programs could be utilized for are outlined in the Plan.

Through the state's current **CTE Redesign** efforts under Perkins, Indiana intends to create Programs of Study that will improve postsecondary attainment across relevant target populations, providing greater opportunities for future economic mobility and personal fulfillment. The Combined Plan merges two disparate concepts established in different federal laws – career pathways under WIOA and programs of study under Perkins. We will merge these two concepts under a process of creating singularly defined pathways that provide opportunities for both youth and adults, beginning with secondary schools and running through postsecondary education and credential or degree completion. Increasing co-location between K-12 school districts, Adult Education providers, or community college campuses (in addition to school districts and community colleges co-locating with one another) will maximize our investments in equipment, facilities, supplies, and instructors.

One particular element of the CTE redesign that will particularly serve our **rural** target population is an **Entrepreneurship Capstone** in our rural schools and CTE districts. This course will encourage and support the next generation of entrepreneurs to build individual capacity and support new business creation. Our rural CTE districts and community colleges implementing career-technical education programs will be able to better link education with future careers, especially in growing industries, such as healthcare and IT, and advanced industries (agricultural biosciences, aircraft and aerospace, automotive/mobility, and logistics).

Work-Based Learning continues to be a focus for Indiana and the Plan identifies several ways to increase adult participation in work-based learning experiences. This will build upon recent progress in the K-12 space to ensure that work-based learning is seamlessly integrated into the entire talent development system and can continue to serve as a tool for employers to make individuals aware of various opportunities. Potential options identified for adults include on-the-job training, federally-recognized apprenticeships, internships, job shadow experiences, State Earn and Learn programs through our the Office of Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship, and incumbent worker training. We will leverage existing state funding through **EARN Indiana** and redesign the **Federal Work Study** program to help offset the cost of wages and align with Indiana's goal to have 100% of postsecondary education programs include an experience with career relevance. By rethinking the Federal Work Study program, we can expand to focus on work-based learning models for lower-income students enrolled in higher education.

The Office of Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship has developed a scalable framework for state level **apprenticeship** programs, entitled **State Earn and Learn (SEAL)**. The Plan identifies several unique uses for the SEAL program, including a new SEAL program specific to the **senior** population that will incorporate both subsidized employment, digital literacy, and on-the-job training through sector partnerships. The Plan lays out several strategies to increase participation in registered apprenticeship programs, including utilizing apprenticeships as a tool for **single mothers** to enter non-traditional careers.

Two pre-high school strategies we want to increase Indiana's focus on are **early learning** and **career awareness**. Both of these strategies will occur with younger children in our school system and greatly influence the success of our at-risk youth in the secondary and postsecondary space. High-quality early learning programs are a key strategy to help to narrow achievement gaps between children from low-income families and their more affluent peers. Early childhood education serves as an early intervention that improves children's cognitive and socioemotional functions. One development we endeavor to implement is to expand our K-12 system as the PreK-12 system. Creating more awareness of the diversity of postsecondary options for at-risk youth is critical to ensuring their longitudinal success in our talent system.

Indiana's Strategic Workforce Plan Executive Summary

Students must obtain a deeper understanding of career opportunities and the pathways to those careers early in their academic careers. As an early intervention, focusing on greater career exploration, engagement, and experiences will allow students to connect their K-12 education with postsecondary aspirations.

An innovative new approach included in the Plan aimed at assisting at-risk youth populations is the '**Summer-Bridge**' program. This program involves partnerships between local workforce Boards and schools. Versions of this program will be created focusing on two main populations, Basic Skills Deficient Youth and English Learners, as they leave the secondary space. Recent high school graduates deficient in basic skills would be linked to services aimed at easing the transition to adulthood and getting individuals on a path to self-sufficiency. English Learner students would receive supplemental language acquisition supports aimed at increasing language proficiency, allowing them to better interact with the post-secondary and workforce system.

Local Workforce Development Boards can work with schools and districts on ways to braid state and federal funds together to offer comprehensive wraparound services for at-risk youth. Specifically, supporting students as they transition to high school by expanding **Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG)** to middle and early high school grades and providing interventions to help at-risk students successfully matriculate into higher education or quality employment can ensure these students start adulthood on the right track.

The Plan encourages local partnerships throughout and highlights the recently created **Bi-State Plan** between Indiana's Region 10 Workforce Board and Kentuckiana Works as an example of how partnerships can advance a region's workforce. The Bi-State Regional Plan is the first of its kind in the country and creates an innovative picture of the region's economy and workforce environment through rural-urban, Indiana-Kentucky strategies to attain regional goals and objections.

Partnerships are also essential for regions to co-locate most effectively, and the Plan particularly identifies **schools and libraries** as potential locations for system partners to consider utilizing. Schools and libraries were consistently brought up by individuals involved in the Plan's development as places that offer the benefit of providing consistent access to youth and adults, as well as steady broadband. The Plan recognizes that school personnel in particular often end up spending significant time trying to connect families with resources due to their daily proximity to individuals. By increasing school partnerships, state agencies can do a better job supporting schools in providing information to families and allow school personnel to focus more of their time on their educational mission. Boards are encouraged to consider ways to utilize these established resources through partnerships in their regions.

Accelerating opportunities for **ex-offenders** to successfully transition into the workforce continues to be a focus in Indiana and the Plan specifically highlights the work of **The Last Mile** program through the Indiana Department of Corrections (IDOC). Indiana has received national recognition for this coding program that propels individuals into jobs in the tech sector upon release through focused training and education while the individual is incarcerated and post-release services towards transitional help. The Plan encourages the use of Last Mile as a model for additional programs targeted at the ex-offender population and identifies potential funding sources for IDOC to expand re-entry transition services. The Plan also includes strategies for increasing the usage and success of IDOC's **HIRE** program which works to secure pre-release employment for this target population. In the juvenile justice space, an increased focus on career and technical skills training aims to provide a new passion and career pathway for justice involved youth, in hopes of reducing recidivism upon re-entry. The Office of CTE is allocating Perkins funding towards juvenile offenders for the first time.

The Plan includes a waiver requesting for Indiana to expand use of the **Trade Adjustment Assistance Program** to workers affected by automation. This waiver will assist with combatting Indiana's expected high risk for automation in the coming years and ensure this federal funding stream is used to its maximum effect

in assisting Hoosiers. This waiver will be of particular benefit to our **rural** target population, who we expect to continue feeling the effects of automation most acutely.

Through **Next Level Connections**, Governor Holcomb has created a **broadband** initiative to bring affordable, high-speed fiber optic broadband access to unserved and underserved areas of the state. Indiana has appropriated \$100 million to this program, which offers grants for providers to bring broadband services with a minimum of 100/10 Mbps to areas of the state lacking service. As the state works with providers, communities, and other groups to design the final grant program and determine how to best optimize the investment, the Plan encourages state agencies leading this charge to consider the needs and challenges of specific target populations who may particularly benefit from this program.

Indiana continues to make servicing **Veterans** a priority and the **Next Level Veterans Program** will continue to raise awareness of various available programs as part of its effort to recruit, employ, and connect military personnel to Indiana. The Plan mentions recently passed legislation to make military pensions tax exempt as a particular program to highlight when servicing Indiana veterans.

Conclusion

The Combined Plan is a historic opportunity to take a holistic look at our talent development system. Through meaningful collaboration across agencies, non-profit and private partners, and the general public, a robust set of specific, actionable strategies have been identified to help Indiana meet our talent development system goals. Each strategy was developed with the individual needs of Hoosiers accessing services forefront of mind through the Plan's unique human-centered approach. By putting people first and bringing together a wide variety of experts across the talent development system, the Plan lays the framework for Indiana to achieve gains across the system over the Plan's duration. We know submitting the Plan is not the final step and are committed to ongoing collaboration efforts over the next 4 years to ensure the Plan is actualized across our talent development system.
