



# The Torch

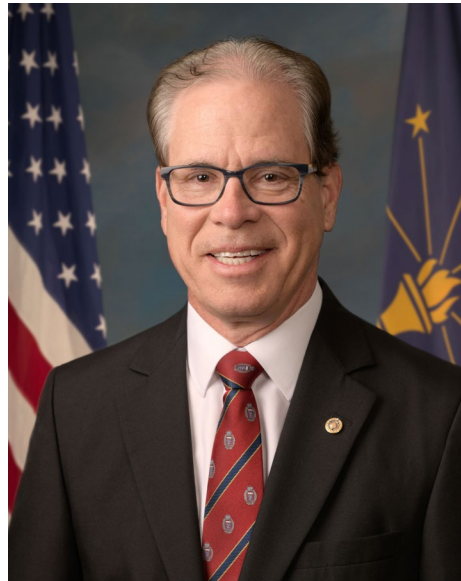
The official newsletter for State of Indiana employees

FEB  
2025

## Governor Mike Braun's 2025 State of the State Address

*On Wednesday, January 29, Governor Mike Braun delivered his inaugural State of the State Address to the Indiana General Assembly and all Hoosiers. He outlined his agenda focused on providing tax relief, enhancing government efficiency, and tackling the escalating costs of healthcare. Below is an excerpt of his prepared remarks, along with a link to the full speech.*

President Pro Tem Bray, Speaker Huston, Lt. Governor Beckwith, Chief Judge Altice, Chief Justice Rush, members of the General Assembly, honored guests, Maureen and family, fellow Hoosiers: it's my honor to address you tonight.



Every year for the last six years, I've had the privilege of visiting each of Indiana's 92 counties.

I've met thousands of Hoosiers on their farms, in their small businesses, in their schools, their churches, and their homes.

Not everyone I met has had an easy time these last few years. Many families were barely holding their heads above water as prices just kept rising.

But despite all of that, what comes through most clearly when listening to Hoosiers is our resilience, our optimism, and a shared desire to make our state truly great.

The state of the state is strong because Hoosiers are strong.

[Read the full remarks here >](#)

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The Torch is published monthly by the Indiana State Personnel Department and is available online at [on.in.gov/TheTorch](https://on.in.gov/TheTorch).

### Got a story?

Submit your story ideas to: [spdcommunications@spd.in.gov](mailto:spdcommunications@spd.in.gov)

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# INDOT's last remaining 'Blizzard of '78' snow fighter looks back

*This article has been condensed for the Torch.*

Dan Bewley is INDOT's last man standing from the Blizzard of 1978, which buried Indiana cities and citizens under an avalanche of snow 47 years ago.

The Crawfordsville District employee is the last remaining active INDOT employee who plowed snow during the historic blizzard. Bewley is set to depart INDOT in April, but before slipping into total retirement, he shared a mountain of memories about the intense blizzard and its 20-plus-foot snowdrifts.

His tale is one of courage, dedication, and understanding and it requires a trip to the past.

## Bewley Begins His Shift

At 3:45 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 25, 1978, the National Weather Service suddenly issued the first-ever statewide blizzard warning. Bewley had just turned 19. INDOT's snowplow training was minimal back then, and he had only a few snow events under his belt.

Snow started falling furiously while Bewley loaded salt into his truck at the unit's salt shed.

"Trucks back then took gas, not diesel, and we had our own gas pump," said Bewley. "I filled both saddle tanks. Thank God I did that."

## Bewley Starts Plowing

In the darkness of night, with snow coming down between one and two inches per hour, Bewley drove the truck out of the unit's parking

lot for his scheduled snowplow route, which was to be entirely in Boone County. On his route, he didn't just have to contend with the snow, but the wind, too. "And it was blowing mighty hard, the most I've experienced during winter months," Bewley said.

By 10 p.m., the winds had picked up, blowing at up to 50 mph, while snow kept piling up. Bewley persevered northbound on S.R. 75, staying in the middle of the road to create a driving lane and avoid hitting potential abandoned vehicles. The weather kept deteriorating, but Bewley made it to S.R. 47 and turned around.

## Bewley Gets Stuck — For Days

"At this point, I could not even see the truck's hood ornament, which was 5 feet in front of me," said Bewley.

Forging ahead to create a new single-lane path on S.R. 75, Bewley, in essence, was flying blind.

About a mile south of S.R. 32 and two miles north of Advance, he felt a thud.

"I hit a humongous snowdrift in the middle of the road," said Bewley. "I didn't know it at the time, because you couldn't see much, but it was deep and long. After many attempts to get turned around and head back to the unit, it was obvious that I wasn't going anywhere."

Bewley radioed the Frankfort Subdistrict, giving managers his approximate location. It was almost 11 p.m.



Dan Bewley in December 2024

"They advised that they were working on getting help to my location," said Bewley.

That help never came.

Throughout the state, 2,300 INDOT snow fighters braved the elements, some working longer than 16-hour shifts. But visibility became a major concern, and any work the crews had done was swept over by wind-blown snow within minutes. At midnight, Gov. Otis Bowen called the Indiana National Guard and, within a few hours, ordered all INDOT drivers to leave their routes to team with the Guard and local emergency officials. In order, the priorities were to: rescue stranded motorists, assist those in need of medical services, and help providers of these services get to work, and, finally, clear major roadways.

[Read the whole story on Employee Central >](#)

# Molly McGuire is chosen as a representative for the American Heart Association

FSSA employee Molly McGuire is excited to be a representative for the American Heart Association's (AHA) 2025 Go Red for Women Class of Survivors! She is 1 of 12 women selected by the AHA as a spokeswoman to represent the AHA on a national level to educate the public on maternal health and pregnancy complications related to high blood pressure disorders, something she experienced during her pregnancy with her son, Michael.

Molly learned about the callout for survivor stories while working to meet her fundraising goal for the AHA's Run with Heart 2024 Chicago Marathon Team. Molly selected the AHA as her charity because her father died when she was a senior in high school from sleep apnea with associated heart disease. She didn't realize until she saw a post on the AHA Facebook page that she was also a survivor.



Molly McGuire at the 2024 Chicago Marathon

In addition to the Chicago Marathon she participated in the New York City Marathon, representing the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma in New York City as a delegate in the Parade of Nations Opening Ceremony. For her AHA photo shoot, she chose to wear a red ribbon skirt she borrowed from another tribal member because she strongly believes that "representation matters."

Molly feels extremely blessed with all the opportunities presented to her since she began her running quest to complete a half marathon in all 50 states. Not only is she feeling the healthiest she's ever felt, but she has completed a race in 32 states and is on track to complete all 50 by the end of 2026. You can follow and track her progress on Instagram @RunningRogueMama.

Molly says, "My travel and running events are for me; however, the information I provide to those I meet along my journey is for them and those they love. I hope that others remember my medical care ordeal with preeclampsia and [HELLP](#). When you get as sick as I did, you no longer can make good decisions for yourself, and if your medical provider is dismissive like mine, then you must have friends and family who are aware and willing to step up and advocate for you when you can no longer do it for yourself."

Early diagnosis is critical because serious illness and even death can occur in about 25% of cases. As a result, patient awareness of HELLP syndrome, and how it relates to preeclampsia, is necessary to ensure the best medical care for both mother and baby. Molly also wants to bring more awareness to the mental and emotional impact after a medical crisis. She thinks it's important to make sure both parents and the baby are all supported and have access to the resources they need.

For her efforts, Molly was recognized in September 2024 as a [Hoosier Health and Well-Being Champion](#) by the Wellness Council of Indiana – Indiana Chamber of Commerce "for her unwavering advocacy and commitment to community health." She continues to set an example for her community.

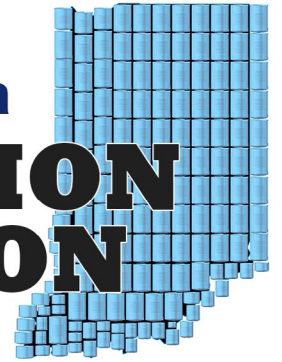
*This article has been condensed for the Torch.*



# 2025 Canstruction Competition winners announced tomorrow!

Thirty-one teams are competing in the 2025 Canstruction Competition in hopes of taking home the coveted “Best Structure,” “Most Cans Collected,” and “People’s Choice” awards. Our team of special guest judges is made up of leadership team members from select agencies as well as a representative from [Second Helpings](#). Judges are reviewing all Canstructions to determine which team will be awarded “Best Structure.”

## 2025 State of Indiana CANSTRUCTION COMPETITION



Using canned goods, art supplies, and teamwork, the teams got creative and paid tribute to Hoosier landmarks, state initiatives, pop culture and much more. Most importantly, State of Indiana employees collected and donated an outstanding 19,045 cans for food banks and shelters across the state (almost 3,000 more than in 2024!).

Thank you for your generosity in helping to restock the shelves at local food banks after the holiday season.

**Be on the lookout TOMORROW for the announcement of the winning teams!**

[View all 2025 submissions here >](#)

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## Welcoming the 2025 Governor’s Summer Interns

The Governor’s Summer Internship program for 2025 is quickly approaching! Each year, over 20 state agencies host 200+ interns for the summer. These interns work in a variety of subject matter areas of State Government, including engineering, data analytics, accounting, environmental management, and much more. During their time here, they participate in a variety of events, including meet ‘n greets with elected officials, Q&A agency leadership panels, and professional development opportunities. Currently, all Governor’s Summer Internship positions are in the interview and hiring process phase. We are looking forward to welcoming our 2025 interns in May!



2024 interns have a Q&A with the Indiana State Comptroller, Elise Nieshalla.

[Click here to learn more about the Governor’s Summer Internship program](#), orientation dates, and other helpful information!

# Dream Tomorrow Today: Empowering children to shape the future through STEM exploration

The Indiana State Museum is thrilled to announce the opening of [Dream Tomorrow Today](#), an immersive traveling experience developed by the creative minds at The DoSeum. The exhibition is toured internationally by Flying Fish, known for its commitment to bringing innovative educational experiences to audiences worldwide.

Open through May 4, Dream Tomorrow Today is a transformative journey that empowers children to positively impact the future through the lens of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).



“There’s been a real need in exhibits to be able to address serious problems from positive, solutions-based angles,” said Brian Mancuso, chief officer of engagement for the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites. “These are hard things to tackle, but Dream Tomorrow Today takes a positive approach so you don’t get overwhelmed by the problem. Instead, you can look at the possibilities and how you can participate to be part of that positive change.”

Designed to foster visitors’ STEM identities, this immersive experience harnesses the power of play to cultivate the skills and mindset necessary to shape a better world for future generations.

“We are thrilled to collaborate with The DoSeum on this exhibition and hope to inspire a new generation of creative thinkers and problem-solvers,” said Jay Brown, Principal & Managing Director of Flying Fish. “Dream Tomorrow Today offers

a transformative experience that encourages young minds to dream big and become agents of change in their communities and beyond.”

Visitors to Dream Tomorrow Today embark on a dynamic adventure where they are at the helm of shaping the future. Through interactive and hands-on activities, participants create profiles and utilize their STEM skills to tackle complex future challenges. This gamified approach to learning ensures that children are engaged and equipped with the tools needed to navigate the evolving landscape of technology and innovation.

“Children and adults of all ages will engage in joyful learning,” said Meredith Doby, Vice President of Exhibits at The DoSeum. “Children slide into the future, weave new places to hang out, clean up ‘trash’ in a ball pit ‘lake,’ build new inventions in a maker space, use augmented reality to build a city, and shop at a futuristic grocery

store. There is truly an experience for everyone, and everyone matters.”

Central to the exhibition's vision is Planet Power — a comprehensive metric encompassing health, happiness, nature and equality. By actively participating in activities throughout the experience, young learners discover practical ways to improve their Planet Power scores and, in turn, contribute to a more sustainable and equitable world.

Dream Tomorrow Today celebrates each child's unique potential to effect positive change. Upon completing the challenges and activities, visitors are rewarded with personalized STEM identities, reinforcing the skills and knowledge acquired throughout the experience. These identities serve as a reminder that their contributions, no matter how big or small, can transform the future.

*continued on page 6*

# Cardboard Storyland inspires imagination, creativity

From space travel to sea diving, exploring castles to saving cities, visitors can use cardboard and their imagination to bring their own stories to life at [Cardboard Storyland](#), a new experience at the Indiana State Museum.

Open through June 1, Cardboard Storyland will be the third unique cardboard-themed exhibit the museum has created since 2018, and each previous iteration quickly became a favorite for families.

In this immersive new experience, children and adults can choose their own adventure as they explore four story settings featuring their own distinct styling and unique characters — with every detail designed to inspire visitors' creativity.

In a sci-fi galaxy, a curious space alien needs help building robots and spaceships to explore different planets. A friendly dragon adventures through a magical kingdom that might be home to towering castles, tiny creatures and everything in between. In a bustling city, a mysterious superhero could use a special costume, vehicle, and even a sidekick to help fight crime and save the citizens. And a sea-diving dog searches for sunken pirate ships and hidden treasure amid an underwater world.

At the center of the third-floor gallery, the creation station will offer a variety of everyday materials and tools — colored

tape, yarn, scissors and, of course, an unending supply of cardboard — to help guests build whatever they can dream up.

Additionally, visitors can gain inspiration and guidance for their designs during live demonstrations by local cardboard artists Clyde Gaw and Clark Fralick offered periodically through the course of the exhibit.

Cardboard Storyland is free for Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites members and included with museum admission, which is \$20 for adults, \$14 for youth (ages 3-17) and \$18 for seniors. Visitors can go to [IndianaMuseum.org](#) to learn more and save on admission by purchasing tickets in advance.

*Article by the Indiana State Museum*



*continued from page 5*

## Dream Tomorrow Today: Empowering children to shape the future through STEM exploration

"I think visitors will really like the diversity of experiences that are offered," said Mancuso. "It weaves in physicality and kinetics with technology. There are costumes, there is a slide, there is a ball pit. There are lots of elements that allow people to go in and really immerse themselves. Plus, getting in a ball pit and going down a slide makes for a really fun afternoon."

Dream Tomorrow Today is free for Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites members and included with museum admission, which is \$20 for adults, \$14 for youth (ages 3-17) and \$18 for seniors. Visitors can go to [IndianaMuseum.org](#) to learn more and save on admission by purchasing tickets in advance.

*Article by the Indiana State Museum*



# Scientific theory: Labs helping open science careers for students with outreach programs

The Indiana Department of Health Laboratory (IDOHL) is reaching out to Hoosier students to share the joy of science and discovery and to bring future scientists and laboratorians into the fold.

Since 2022, IDOHL staff have been “working hard to spread awareness of the laboratory’s services and seeking out a public health laboratory as a career path,” Jamie Yeadon, IDOHL Advanced Molecular Detection Division Director, said.

The current outreach efforts grew out of IDOHL’s success with [Celebrate Science Indiana](#), an annual one-day event aimed at offering interactive scientific activities for elementary school students. Past exhibits have allowed attendees to take part in pipetting (equally popular among all students but tailored for different age levels), plate streaking (a microbiology technique used to identify types of microorganisms, primarily bacteria), and the ever-popular (especially among elementary students) [Glo-Germ activity](#).

Participation in the Celebrate Science Indiana festival piqued the interest of students and teachers which led IDOHL to respond with plans for activities both on and off school campuses.

In all, there are three student activity options available, the first of which is open solely to high school seniors and features a training course, tour of the laboratory, and job shadowing that matches a student with up to three lab sections. This activity was offered to 31 students in the last two years.

Yeadon said the job shadowing allows high school seniors up to 40 hours of medical science program credit time at IDOHL. Students at [McKenzie Center for Innovation and Technology](#), for example, were part of that group, and those students were able to acquire 10-20 hours of job shadowing experience. This spring will mark the McKenzie Center’s third year of participation.

The second option is for students 16 and older and includes a lab tour, an overview presentation about IDOHL, presentations from IDOHL staff about their careers, experiments in the training lab, and a Q & A with lab staff. Seven groups of 20 students took part in this program between 2023 and 2024.

The final option is the only one that involves IDOHL staff traveling off-site, such as to a classroom or special event, and features a program lineup specifically tailored for its audience. Activities include the previously mentioned pipetting, plate streaking, and Glo-Germ along with mock PCR (polymerase chain reaction), acid/base, and polymers. In 2023 and 2024, IDOHL provided 10 off-site student groups with option three.

Prep time varies with some events scheduled months-out while



IDOHL’s outreach events include an activity at the Children’s Museum of Indianapolis.

others are put together in a shorter timeframe. Yeadon said there is a pool of about 20 laboratorians and other IDOH staff who volunteer to participate on a regular basis, lending their own expertise and helping make each program something special for all involved.

The outreach programs are of great importance to Yeadon as well, and she believes the fruits of this unique labor will become apparent in time. As just one example, a 2024 IDOHL summer intern was among the earliest group of students to experience the lab outreach activities. Clearly, it made an impression.

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# Radon Action Month raises awareness of unseen danger in homes

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recognizes January as [National Radon Action Month](#), a time to raise awareness about a harmful radioactive gas that all too often goes undetected in Hoosier homes.

For Jennifer Berk, the month of recognition and call to action serve as an opportune reminder that testing for radon isn't bound to any particular season or calendar date – it's year-round and vital to public health and safety. Berk, an environmental manager within the Indiana Department of Health's (IDOH) [Lead and Healthy Homes division](#), works alongside Radon Program Manager Katie Etter and Division Director Paul Krievins as [IDOH's go-to team](#) for radon testers and anyone who'd like to know more about how to protect themselves from exposure. Berk said that IDOH's role is to serve as a reference for the numerous residential radon testers and mitigators, all of whom must be licensed by the state and nationally certified, to make sure they're aware of national standards and to establish consistency and continuity.

Radon is an invisible, odorless, tasteless gas that can only be detected through testing. Radon exposure is dangerous because it has a negative impact on indoor air quality as well as your health.

Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer deaths in the United States (second only to smoking). It can take years for radon gas exposure to lead to cancer, but by the time it does, a person has already experienced symptoms,

and it's harder to treat. Smokers may have as much as a 20% percent greater chance of developing lung cancer than those not exposed to radon.

Berk explained that Hoosiers are gradually becoming more aware of the need for testing—and mitigation if radon is found in a structure, particularly a home—but data shows there is still plenty of work to be done. According to the Indoor Environments Association/AARST, a nonprofit organization that “represents and certifies radon and vapor intrusion professionals,” Indiana received high marks on its annual report card—but, unfortunately, not in an honor roll, all A's-and-B's kind of way.

According to the report card, there were 966 radon-induced lung cancer cases in Indiana, which accounted for \$194 million in medical costs and \$204 million in economic costs. Further, of the more than 43,000 pre-mitigation radon tests performed for buildings and exposure potential reflected in the 2024 report card, 39% were found to have 4 or more picocuries per liter (pCi/L (a measurement of radon levels), an alarming number that falls under EPA and the American National Standards Institute's (ANSI) recommendations to be mitigated. A further 28% have a radon level greater than or equal to 2 pCiL, which calls for consideration of fixing the problem but does not



explicitly require it. Berk said about one in four Hoosier homes have a pCiL greater than 4. The national average is only 1.3.

“The entire state is an issue,” she said.

There are plenty of *whys* behind the numbers, such as the sheer number of residences built on radon-rich soil, drafty homes or those with poor ventilation—the list goes on and on for seemingly ages, which is perhaps appropriate; Indiana's abundant radium and uranium deposits owe much to the movement of continental ice sheets over what would become the Hoosier Heartland during the Ice Age.

Hoosiers like Berk, however, are hoping to keep raising awareness about the dangers of radon—and the importance of testing for it and mitigating it when found— so that the high levels seen throughout

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# Start earning Wellness Rewards with your preventive care visits

Employees and spouses eligible for the [ActiveHealth](#) program can each earn up to \$500 (\$1000 total) in Wellness Rewards in 2025. The beginning of the year is a great time to start scheduling preventive care visits, which are critical to understanding and maintaining your health.

Some of the largest rewards to get started on include you:

- Annual Physical: Earn \$200 (you must submit a completed [Annual Physical Results](#) form to receive this reward which may take up to four weeks to process)
- Cancer Screenings: Earn \$50 per eligible screening
- Eye Exam: Earn \$50
- Dental Exam & Cleaning: Earn \$50
- Vaccines: Earn \$25 per eligible vaccine, up to \$100 per year

Not sure where to start? Meet with a health coach and make a plan for the year. You can earn \$20 per session in Wellness Rewards for individual coaching sessions with an ActiveHealth coach for up to \$100 per year. And new this year, you can also earn up to \$100 in Wellness Rewards for participating in the [9amHealth](#) diabetes management program. You earn \$25 for enrolling in the program and creating a care plan, and an additional \$25 for each month you work with 9amHealth on your care plan.

## What is 9amHealth?

9amHealth is a diabetes management program that provides easy access to specialists and dietitians. State health plan



members (18+) who are diagnosed with diabetes can access this free app and coaching. Devices with supplies, virtual doctor visits, lab tests, and medications are subject to deductible and coinsurance. Meet with a 9amHealth or ActiveHealth coach today to start earning Wellness Rewards.

Learn more about  
9amHealth

## Frequently asked question: How do I report that I've received a dental or vision cleaning?

If you used your State Personnel Department sponsored dental insurance when receiving your dental cleaning and your State Personnel Department sponsored vision insurance when receiving an eye exam, you do not need to report anything. The activity will show as completed within two weeks of your claim being processed by Anthem.

If your claim was paid by other insurance, or your provider has not submitted a claim within 30 days, you can use the Missing Preventive Service Form to provide documentation and get your reward. You can find the instructions and a link to the online forms in the [ActiveHealth Rewards Center](#) in the Dental Exam and Cleaning activity tile and the Eye Exam activity tile. Acceptable documentation includes a visit summary, letter from provider, billing invoice, or statement from the dental/vision office. This form must be submitted by November 30, 2025 to allow for processing time.

Visit the ActiveHealth  
Portal to get started

# Take your performance to the next level for 2025

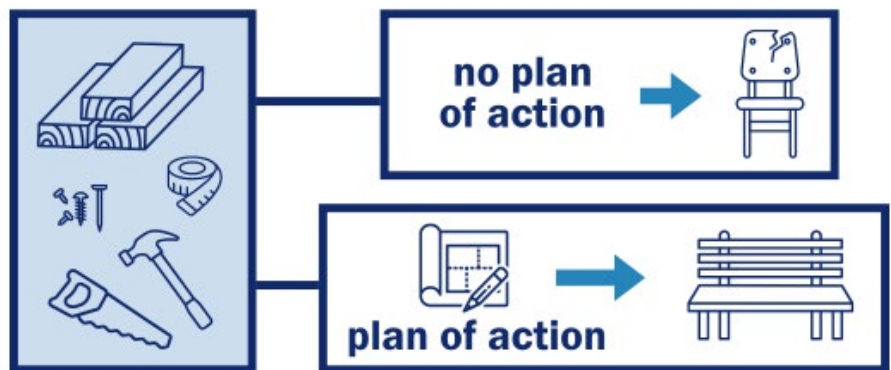
With SuccessFactors, you can document your progress, mark your achievements, and advocate for your support this year! Take your performance to the next level with these steps:

1. **Ask your manager if any goals or expectations will change** this year to prioritize what is staying the same as soon as possible.
2. **Review your job's competency assignment** to identify what is expected of your approach to work tasks. You can view competencies in your previous Performance Appraisals in SuccessFactors.
3. **Participate in training** to learn more about performance management tools and how to leverage them for your benefit.
4. **Create a plan of action** once goals are set and clarified to stay focused on your steps toward success.

## Enhanced Goal Planning

The SuccessFactors goals module has been upgraded to enhance your goal planning for 2025! This new experience allows you to:

- see all goal details,
- create a plan of action,
- update the status of progress, and
- document achievements, challenges, and needs along the way.



On your first log into the enhanced Goals module (Home > Goals), a quick tutorial shows you a few steps to get started.

Join the Workforce Strategy and Performance team for a demonstration of the recent enhancements to SuccessFactors Goals:

**February 18, 2025, from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.**

[Join the Feb. 18 Session](#)

Meeting ID: 273 938 677 489

Passcode: vb2f8nb6

## Performance Training in February

To help you kick off a successful 2025, join the Workforce Strategy and Performance team at this live training session available to all employees and managers:

### Measuring Progress & Utilizing Feedback

For employees and managers to learn about creating a plan, documenting progress, and utilizing feedback to achieve success.

**February 11, 2025, 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.**

[Join the Feb. 11 Session](#)

Meeting ID: 217 084 936 277

Passcode: SyLPBp

# FAFSA filing deadline is April 15

The 2025-2026 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is open! Filing the FAFSA is the first step toward accessing over \$400 million in state financial aid and billions of dollars in federal aid. Indiana's deadline for filing the FAFSA each year is April 15. It is strongly recommended students file the FAFSA as soon as possible when the form opens each year.

## Creating a StudentAid.gov account (FSA ID)

Students and parents (of dependent students) or spouses (of independent students) must create an FSA ID at least three days before filing the FAFSA.

Resources needed to create a StudentAid.gov Account include:

- Social Security Number (SSN)
- Full legal name
- Date of birth
- Mailing address
- Personal email address
- A memorable username and password

## How to file the 2025-2026 FAFSA

Students can file the FAFSA online at [studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov). Information needed to complete the FAFSA include:

- StudentAid.gov Account (FSA ID)
- Federal income tax returns, W-2s, and other records of money earned from 2023
- List of any federal benefits received
- Asset information including bank statements and records of investments (if applicable)
- Records of untaxed income (if applicable)



## Help is available

The Commission's Outreach Coordinators are available to assist students and families in the filing process. Outreach Coordinators are strategically located in eight geographic regions in Indiana and can help students, families, and educators with questions about state financial aid and filing the FAFSA.

To send a direct message to your region's Outreach Coordinator, visit [learnmoreindiana.org/contact](https://learnmoreindiana.org/contact).

## Additional resources:

- Hoosier families can access free FAFSA help through INvestEd at [investedindiana.org](https://investedindiana.org).
- ¿Necesitas ayuda en español? Llame al 317-617-0358 o 317-617-0318.
- The U.S. Department of Education provides email and live chat assistance for FAFSA filers as well as a helpline at 1-800-4-FED-AID.

## FAFSA filing events

Higher education institutions around the state are hosting FAFSA filing events for students and families. To view the upcoming events calendar, visit [learnmoreindiana.org](https://learnmoreindiana.org).

*Article by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education*

# Get free expert help filing the FAFSA

February 23, 2025  
2 p.m. local time

College Goal Sunday, Indiana's largest FAFSA filing event, will be held Sunday, February 23, 2025 from 2 – 4 p.m. (local time). FAFSA filing experts from across Indiana will be available during the event to help all attendees with filing their FAFSA.

On February 23, anyone wishing to file their FAFSA with free expert help needs to visit one of the [College Goal Sunday locations](#) across Indiana for FREE in-person help completing the form.

We look forward to seeing Hoosier families from all across Indiana as College Goal Sunday continues its 36th year!



[Click here for more College Goal Sunday information and list of all locations](#)

# Indiana MPH encourages State employees to complete data proficiency training

The Indiana Management Performance Hub (MPH) is helping State employees understand their role in data and to skill-up by completing a free training series hosted on IN.gov and accessible to all employees at work. MPH created the statewide Data Proficiency Program that engages employees at all knowledge levels and shows how data impacts State jobs every day.

With the ever-increasing importance on data-driven decision making for state agencies to serve Hoosiers, it is important to create a culture of data proficiency across the State.

The collection, organization and analysis of data is a part of all State employees' daily activities. From entering customer information to monitoring weather conditions to managing budgets, **data** drives operations for all agencies.

Employees are tasked to complete a collection of lessons and can earn badges by taking the quiz at the end of each series. The quizzes are hosted on Microsoft Forms and are accessible through each individual's State employee account. There are a total of three badges (Green, Blue and Gold) that may be earned. Once

you pass the test, MPH will send completed badges to your state email! Get started today on the Data Proficiency Program Home on the MPH website: [in.gov/mph/data-proficiency-program/](https://in.gov/mph/data-proficiency-program/).



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## Individual income tax season has arrived!

Individual income tax season opened on Monday, Jan. 27, and The Indiana Department of Revenue (DOR) has put together some helpful information to help you navigate filing your taxes.

### Key dates

- DOR started accepting filings for the 2025 Individual income tax season on **Monday, Jan. 27, 2025**.
- Customers must file both their state and federal tax returns and pay any taxes owed for 2024 by **Tuesday, April 15, 2025**.
- Indiana tax returns for those granted extensions are due by **Friday, Nov. 17, 2025**.
- Federal tax returns for those [granted extensions](#) are due by **Wednesday, Oct. 15, 2025**.

### File electronically and use direct deposit

- Wait until you have all your official tax records before filing. This reduces errors, return processing and refund delays, and the potential of needing to file an amended return. W-2s are [available in PeopleSoft](#).
- Electronic filing coupled with online payment and direct deposit will significantly improve the security and speed of return and refund processing.

Most information can be found on our [Individual income taxes page](#).



Send us a message in [INTIME](#) for the most efficient customer service. You can also check the status of a refund, make a payment, set up a payment plan, or request an extension of time to file your taxes. [Use INTIME guides](#) for more guidance.

Be sure to follow [@INRevenue](#) on social media and subscribe to DOR's [News & Notices](#).

*Article submitted by Indiana Department of Revenue*

# Indiana State Library offering bicentennial architecture tour

The Indiana State Library would like to invite the public to celebrate its bicentennial in 2025 with an architectural tour of the building. In marking 200 years of providing resources, education and services, the Indiana State Library looks forward to welcoming visitors to celebrate this momentous occasion. The tours offer an opportunity to explore the library's rich history and architectural beauty.

Discover the architectural wonders of the building, including its impressive Neoclassical Revival style with Art Deco influences. The tour lasts 60-90 minutes and is designed to enrich the library experience, while providing valuable insights into the resources and history of the state.



“Come celebrate with us and explore the Indiana State Library's rich history and stunning architecture,” said Michelle Sharp, collections and outreach manager at the Indiana State Library.

A total of five free tours will be available in 2025, beginning on Feb. 25. Subsequent tours will take place on April 22, June 24, Aug. 26 and Oct. 28. Each tour begins at noon at the circulation desk inside the Ohio Street entrance of the Indiana State Library. The Indiana State Library is located at 315. W. Ohio St. in downtown Indianapolis.

[Click here to register for a library tour.](#) Links to the additional tour dates can be found by clicking on the Show More Dates link. Limited spots are available.

Those interested in touring the library in groups of five or more should contact Michelle Sharp at [msharp@library.in.gov](mailto:msharp@library.in.gov) to schedule a separate tour.

*Article by the Indiana State Library*

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**THERE'S SNOW MUCH FUN IN INDIANA**  
Make the most of winter IN Indiana! Whether you're into the thrill of frigid outdoor adventures or you'd rather stay cozy inside, there's a place for you this winter.

**EMBRACE THE CHILL IN INDIANA**



# Historic Preservation Month photo contest opens

The annual DNR Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology photo contest has started, with a deadline of Friday, April 4, for entering.

Open to photographers of any age and skill level, the contest has been held since 2005 to promote Indiana's historic resources.

All structures in photo entries must be at least 50 years old and in Indiana but don't have to be fully restored. Photos of exclusively natural elements will not be accepted.

Photos must have been taken within the last two years. There are five categories to submit photographs: Color, Black & White, Altered, Kids (under 18), and Faces of Architecture, which is the theme of this year's Historic Preservation Month. For the Faces of Architecture category, send photos of buildings that feature gargoyles, grotesques, or other designs that feature carvings of faces. These faces can be of any creature, real or mythical.

Each photographer may enter up to three images along with the required entry form for each photo. Images should be emailed to [DHPAConnect@dnr.IN.gov](mailto:DHPAConnect@dnr.IN.gov) and must be JPEG files that are 10MB or smaller. Participants should only send one photo and one entry form per email.

For complete rules and guidelines and for the required entry form, see [on.IN.gov/preservation-month](https://on.IN.gov/preservation-month).

Follow the DNR Instagram account (@indianadnr) in May where, for a week, the Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology will feature selected photos along with contest winners to celebrate National Historic Preservation Month.

*News Release by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources*



Top: 2024 Preservation Month Annual Theme category winner taken by Andrew Forrester of Madison. Salm Gymnasium in Madison.

Bottom: 2024 Kids category winner taken by August Rumschlag of Indianapolis. Indiana State Capitol and the Soldiers and Sailors Monument downtown Indianapolis.

# Run for the Trees: Registration for Happy Little (Virtual) 5K opens

Registration is open for the return of the Happy Little (Virtual) 5K, which the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Indiana Natural Resources Foundation (INRF) welcome back for the third year in 2025.

In 2024, the virtual run raised more than \$18,000 for tree plantings and healthy forest initiatives in Indiana State Parks, with more than 1,000 people participating.

The event is open to everyone, and registrants can complete their 5K anywhere outdoors – on foot, by bike, skate or paddle, or using a mobility device – anytime between April 19-27, 2025, to encompass Earth Day (April 22) and Arbor Day (April 25).

For \$36 per person, each participant will receive a keepsake Happy Little T-shirt, a commemorative bib number, and a Bob Ross-inspired finisher's medal. All proceeds support tree planting and forest protection efforts in state parks.

[Read the full press release here >](#)

# Healthy Heart Fashion Show

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is nothing to skip a beat about, especially for women who serve or have served in the military. Studies show women veterans face a higher risk of CVD than women who have never served. There are multiple factors behind this elevated risk everyone should know.

While many are familiar with common heart attack symptoms; chest pains, shortness of breath, and dizziness, women often have additional signs which are less commonly identified with having a heart attack. Additional signs include abdominal pain, nausea, and extreme fatigue (to name a few). Many women do not identify these signs as being life threatening and are mistaken for temporary digestive issues. This misdiagnosis can delay essential medical treatment and can result in irreversible damage to the heart or even death.

Missed diagnosis is just one barrier women veterans are challenged with when it comes to CVD. When comparing women veterans to women who have not served in the military, the Veterans Administration (VA) Health Systems Research reports women veterans have a higher rate of obesity and a higher diagnosis of diabetes in every age group. Women veterans also face a higher risk of being homeless, surviving sexual assault, and experiencing a much higher rate of depression or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder than women who have not served in the military. When compared with their male counterparts, women veterans have a lower success rate of quitting smoking.

In an article titled, "Heart disease in women: Understand symptoms and risk factors" the Mayo Clinic acknowledges diabetes, obesity, smoking, and emotional stress and depression are all risk factors for women having CVD.

The Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs is teaming up with the Roudebush VA Medical Center to raise awareness regarding women veteran heart health during the second annual Healthy Heart Fashion Show.

The fashion show is a platform to bring the community together and inform about identifying barriers, eliminating risks, practicing prevention techniques, and seeking treatment for a healthy heart.

Join us Friday, Feb. 28 for the Healthy Heart Fashion Show at 777 North Meridian St. There will be free parking located across the street. The social hour starts at 6 p.m. with free hors d'oeuvres and the show starts promptly at 7 p.m. showcasing more than 35 looks all fitted with a healthy heart tip for attendees.

*Article by the Indiana Department of Veterans' Affairs*



**FASHION SHOW  
HEALTHY HEART**

**FEBRUARY 28, 2025**  
6:00pm-7:00pm  
Social Hour with free hors d'oeuvres  
7:00pm PROMPTLY  
Fashion Show

Free Parking ♥ Free Parking ♥ Free Parking  
**Indiana Veterans Center**  
777 North Meridian St. Indianapolis  
**Limited Seating Available**

If you have questions contact [Tamara Whitlow](mailto:Tamara.Whitlow1@va.gov)  
Tamara.whitlow1@va.gov or 317-988-9422

**PROMOTING HEALTHY HEARTS FOR  
WOMEN VETERANS**

**IDVA**  Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs  
777 North Meridian St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

**VA**  U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration  
Veteran Health Indiana

 **OPERATION:  
JOB READY VETERANS** 

## February 7, 2025

### Edible Rock Lab | McCormick's Creek State Park

Come learn about plate tectonics and how they helped shaped Indiana's topography. Use food to demonstrate how plate tectonics behave when they meet and create a fun edible rock.

[More Information >](#)

## February 8, 2025

### Beginners Wood Burning Workshop | Mounds State Park

Burn your own design into a tree cookie to take home with you and learn more about trees of Indiana as you work on your project.

[More Information >](#)

### School as It Used to Be | Chain O'Lakes State Park

Visit the warm Stanley Schoolhouse and take a step back in time to 1915 to discover what school used to be like in a historic, one-room schoolhouse.

[More Information >](#)

### Victorian Valentine Card Making Craft | Mounds State Park

Put together your own Valentine card with a Victorian theme while hearing about the history of the Victorian era and card making.

[More Information >](#)

### Enchanting Evening of Winter Tales | Indiana Dunes State Park

The Northwest Indiana Storytellers Guild is cozying up this chilly winter evening, ready to delight us with

tales inspired by the beauty of snow and perhaps a touch of romance for Valentine's Day! Enjoy a snack and hot chocolate.

[More Information >](#)

## February 15, 2025

### 2025 Polar Plunge and After Splash Bash | Versailles State Park

This bucket-list event challenges individuals and teams to be bold and get cold — taking an icy dip to demonstrate their support for the Special Olympics Indiana.

[More Information >](#)

### Nature's Mating Game | Turkey Run State Park

Courtship, honesty, and lots of mating. Come enjoy dinner, beverages, and a presentation to celebrate Valentine's Day with a twist this year!

[More Information >](#)

## February 16, 2025

### Extinct/Endangered | Brown County State Park

Join a park naturalist for a presentation about animals in Indiana. Learn the difference between extinct, extirpated, and endangered.

[More Information >](#)

## February 22, 2025

### Winter Hike Series: CCC Ruins and Deserter's Cave | Brown County State Park

Learn more about the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp area, what they did in Brown County,

and see pictures of the camp area from when it was up and running. The second part of the hike will go to Deserter's Cave.

[More Information >](#)

### Bone Detectives | Chain O'Lakes State Park

Stop by the historic schoolhouse to check out the display of skulls and bones. Can you guess which animal each came from? Take a close look at what remains of some of our native animals and "bone up" on your nature know-how.

[More Information >](#)

## February 22 & 23, 2025

### Civil War Battle | Spring Mill State Park

Explore the hardships of winter for the soldiers of the Civil War on February 22 and 23. Both before and after the battle visitors are welcome to tour the village and visit with the soldiers.

[More Information >](#)

## February 27, 2025

### Chili Hike and Friends Gathering | Ouabache State Park

Celebrate National Chili Day at Ouabache! Enjoy a crisp winter hike on one of the park's six trails. After your hike, come to the lodge for chili served by a crackling fire in our historic fireplace!

[More Information >](#)

[View all DNR special events >](#)



# This Month WITH



**February 8, 2025**

### **True Crime on the Ohio River | Lanier Mansion**

Grab your detective hats! In 1844, a heist took place at J.F.D. Lanier's Bank, and it's up to you to solve the case. Before we get to work, we'll learn about the thieves and cut-throat characters that prowled the Ohio River in the early 19th century.

[More Information >](#)

**February 9, 2025**

### **Special Tour: Judging a Book by its Cover - Fancy Bindings in the Steele Library | T.C. Steele**

During this tour, you're supposed to judge a book by its cover. We'll explore the prettiest and fanciest bindings from the House of the Singing Winds collection.

[More Information >](#)

### **Seeds of Freedom | Indiana State Museum**

"Seeds of Freedom: The Spiritual Roots of the American Civil Rights Movement" is a creative exploration of how belief and conviction can change the course of history. This production by Asante Art Institute of Indianapolis, takes the audience on a historical journey predating enslavement – migrating through the transatlantic slave trade to the Civil Rights movement, while highlighting local Indiana connections to historic moments in our nation's story.

[More Information >](#)

**February 14, 2025**

### **Lover's Quarrels in Corydon | Corydon Capitol**

Love is a wonderful thing ... but it's also very fickle. And the citizens of Corydon were no strangers to romantic flings and plights! Join us for an afternoon of stories about the zany things love made Corydon's pioneers do.

[More Information >](#)

**February 15, 2025**

### **Special Tour: IU Arts and the Steele Connection | T.C. Steele**

When T.C. Steele became the first Honorary Professor of Painting at Indiana University Bloomington, the school didn't have an art department! This tour dives into IU's first 100+ years of art education and Steele's legacy at IU.

[More Information >](#)

### **Broom Making Workshop | New Harmony**

Dust off your broom-making skills! Make your own cobweb broom while you learn about traditional materials and methods people used to make these important cleaning tools.

[More Information >](#)

### **Bushcraft Survival Skills | Angel Mounds**

Can you survive in the wild? Find out as you fine-tune your skills through the lens of Native American history.

[More Information >](#)

**February 21 - 23, 2025**

### **Geofest | Indiana State Museum**

GEOfest is back at the Indiana State Museum! Whether you are a rockhound, a fossil enthusiast, or you just love crystals and gems, there is something exciting for everyone to discover. This annual three-day program features three floors of rock, mineral, and fossil vendors, along with hands-on activities, concrete making, and community partner displays for visitors to enjoy.

[More Information >](#)

**February 28, 2025**

### **Standing Up Against Slavery: The Story of Polly Strong | Levi & Catharine Coffin**

Polly Strong took the fight for her freedom to court. Join us to learn how one of anti-slavery history's most unsung heroines took her case to the Indiana Supreme Court and find out about our state's tangled history in this fascinating presentation.

[More Information >](#)

[View all Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites events >](#)

# Valentine's Day Word Search

r b b s f k a t k z u p a g z c h v e s h h c  
d e f c a r n a t i o n d f q a u k r m n a h  
y h i x f r l i l e a r q t z n y q a q e e v  
t l e t t e r g c v e f v e p d k i d s t n o  
g j s c i f h y g u n c t u k y y t m g a d r  
u i s m f s e s o r p i y q z i s j i b l e k  
v a f f i b w c c c v i x u o x v y r w o a l  
y f o t y t s e h u p c d o o k o c e j c r c  
r n r q a g t u e s c y d b g m j b b g o m r  
a s x j z z b e a t x l o v e b i r d s h e o  
u m i e k k g x n v h c p o e m d o y s c n d  
r j u f u t r a e h q e j e i k m m b p v t s  
b u j k z i j l z n d i a p f r q r a z n l v  
e r f g b z m m t q q e o r x e s s p m z o m  
f s t l f a r r o w m m c b t a k i m d h h n  
y p w x j p i f h u n a t v a l e n t i n e h

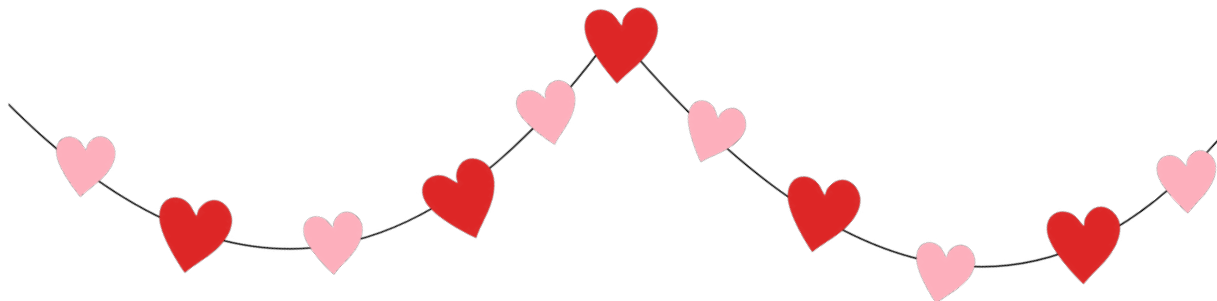
Find the following words in the puzzle.

Words are hidden     and .

sweetheart  
endearment  
chocolate  
carnation  
lovebirds  
valentine  
february

smitten  
bouquet  
admire  
letter  
heart  
candy  
cupid

arrow  
rose  
gift  
poem



## Scientific theory: Labs helping open science careers for students with outreach programs

Yeadon credited Assistant Commissioner of the [Laboratory Services Commission](#) and State Laboratory Director Lixia Liu, PhD, D (ABMM) with allowing her to helm these important outreach programs. “It’s something that I love doing,” Yeadon said. “The student events are a side passion for me that Dr. Liu has allowed me to continue to lead.” Yeadon said requests for student participation in each activity continue to grow each year, and these activities “increase the number of potential future employees by raising awareness of what the laboratory offers, one event at a time.” Along the same lines, these programs allow lab staff to talk about current topics, including the importance of water testing, vector-borne illness control, and antibiotic use.

Sharing their passion for their work is just icing on the cake for lab staff, whether they’re IDOHL stalwarts or have recently joined just after completing college. The latter group being closer in age to students is a particular benefit as they’re uniquely suited to share what students can expect in their journey to become a public health lab professional.

No two journeys are quite the same, but the roadmap Yeadon and her fellow laboratorians are creating is one that can lead only to good things for IDOHL – now and in the future.

“Our goal is to create a hands-on, fun experience but also to educate at the same time,” Yeadon said. “It’s been great so far; I enjoy it. I always tell the students, ‘We get to do their favorite parts of their science class.’”

*Article by the Indiana Department of Health*



Students look on as Anna Lay, of the IDOHL Enteric Lab Section, holds test tubes demonstrating a malonatephenylalanine reaction. Behind her is Ben Priebe of the Food and Dairy Lab Section. This photo was taken after students completed a plate streaking activity.



Indiana Department of Health Laboratory Advanced Molecular Detection Division Director Jamie Yeadon (left) receives a Fishers Health Department challenge coin as well as a card signed by a group of students from Fishers Health Department Public Health Educator Kacy Brobst.

## Radon Action Month raises awareness of unseen danger in homes

the state go the way of the woolly mammoth.

Fortunately, it appears Hoosiers are becoming more and more aware of the dangers of radon and the importance of testing.

“We do seem to be working more on research and information, trying to get the word out that radon is an issue in Indiana,” she said. “So, more and more people are looking at it.”

Berk said the easiest way to conduct a radon test at home is to purchase a test kit. Short-term, at-home tests are available at hardware stores and other retailers. The test takes place over a certain amount of time and then the results are sent to a lab. She recommends putting the test somewhere near eye level in a visible location, such as near your home’s thermostat. You can also

contact a professional to perform the test in your home.

It’s important to remember that no level of radon in your home is safe. Proximity and its presence in other nearby homes is not a good barometer for determining whether your home has radon, as it’s possible for two neighboring homes to have entirely different outcomes. The only way to know for certain is to test.

Berks’, Etters’ and Krievins’ radon-related work never ends, though their duties change a bit depending on the season with regional conferences, testing mitigation audits, making sure reports were completed correctly, and tester licensing matters. Berk is hopeful that, despite radon’s invisibility, testing will become second nature for Hoosiers, and raising awareness is key.

“It’s one of those things where ignorance isn’t bliss because it could hurt you,” she said. “So that’s the biggest part of my job that I like the most — protecting people’s health.”

### Radon testing helpful links

For a list of Indiana-licensed radon testing and mitigation companies, please refer to:

- [Indiana Professional Licensing Association](#)
- [Indiana Professional Licensing Search How-To Guide](#)
- To purchase a low-cost radon short-term or long-term test kit, please visit the [American Lung Association](#).
- Indiana Radon Hotline: 1-800-272-9723

*Article by the Indiana Department of Health*

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## New virtual workshops for all State of Indiana employees

The Indiana State Personnel Department is excited to announce its new virtual workshops for all State of Indiana employees to engage with resources, skills, and strategies presented by INSPD subject-matter experts. To review the Learning Objectives and a brief overview of these workshops, visit the [workshops link](#).

To register for a virtual workshop, please visit the class registration page in SuccessFactors Learning or select the class you wish to attend below. Please direct any

questions to the INSPD Learning and Development team at [spdtraining@spd.in.gov](mailto:spdtraining@spd.in.gov).

### February Workshops:

- 2/25/2025 from 9-10:30 a.m.: [Setting Performance Goals & Expectations as an Employee](#)
- 2/25/2025 from 1-2:30 p.m.: [Engaging in a Learning Culture as an Employee](#)

### March Workshops:

- 3/4/2025 from 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.: [Conducting Effective Evaluations as an Employee](#)

- 3/4/2025 from 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.: [Fostering & Pursuing Continuous Employee Development](#)
- 3/5/2025 from 9-10:30 a.m.: [Engaging in Effective Feedback as an Employee](#)
- 3/5/2025 from 1-2:30 p.m.: [Navigating the Multi-Generational Workplace as an Employee](#)
- 3/11/2025 from 9-10:30 a.m.: [Measuring Progress and Utilizing Feedback as an Employee](#)



## VIRTUAL GROUP COACHING



# Success at stress

Join one of your regional health coaches for our 6-week virtual, interactive group coaching series on “Success at Stress.”



## Success at stress

These virtual sessions are designed to help you better manage your stress:

- Set small, realistic goals to relax your mind
- Identify what triggers your stress
- Change negative thoughts
- Practice relaxation with deep breathing and mindfulness
- Learn time management tips

This 6-week virtual series of classes begins:

**Monday February 24<sup>th</sup> Choose from 3 series times:**

**12:30-1:00 PM EST North Region Coach Michelle**

**2:30-3:00 PM EST South Region Coach Emily**

**4:00-4:30 PM EST Central Region Coach Kevin**



Use your  
cell phone  
camera

Log into [myactivehealth.com/StateofIndiana](https://myactivehealth.com/StateofIndiana) and click on “Coaching” to register!

Group coaching is a 6-week series of interactive sessions over a specific health topic led by an ActiveHealth coach through WebEx. Each session lasts 30 minutes. You will earn \$5 for each completed group coaching session, up to five times annually to a max of \$25.



Wellness programs are sponsored by the Indiana State Personnel Department (INSPD), Invest In Your Health Indiana program and ActiveHealth Management, the Plan's wellness vendor. Services are provided by ActiveHealth Management, Inc. Our programs, care team and care managers do not provide diagnostic or direct treatment services. We assist you in getting the care you need, and our program is not a substitute for the medical treatment and/or instructions provided by your health care providers.

