



The Torch

The official newsletter for State of Indiana employees

JAN
2025

State employees celebrated at 2024 Governor's Long-Term Employee Reception

Over 300 honorees were recognized last month at the Governor's Long-Term Employee Reception. Governor Eric J. Holcomb personally congratulated each of the honorees present for 35, 40, 45, 50, and even 55 years of service, speaking about the immeasurable impact they've had on the State of Indiana. James Sells and Ronald P. Siebert, both from the Indiana Department of Transportation, reached the incredible 55-year milestone.

The world looked a little different in 1969 when they started with the State of Indiana. Here's a snapshot of what was happening at that time:

- 650 million people watched Neil Armstrong become the first person to walk on the moon as part of the Apollo 11 mission.
- The Brady Bunch and Sesame Street premiered on TV.
- The New York Jets defeated the then Baltimore Colts in the Super Bowl.
- Richard Nixon was sworn into office as President of the United States.
- The average price of gas was \$0.34/gallon.
- The Woodstock musical festival took place.
- Katharine Hepburn and Barbra Streisand tied for Best Actress at the Oscars.

Things may have changed, but the State of Indiana's long-term employees have consistently given back to Hoosiers with each year that has passed. Congratulations to this year's honorees!

[View program of all honorees >](#)

[View photos from the reception >](#)

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The Torch is published monthly by the Indiana State Personnel Department and is available online at on.in.gov/TheTorch.

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INSPD General Counsel Keith Beesley retires from the agency he helped create

In 1977, Keith Beesley was a new addition to the State of Indiana. Making just \$209 per paycheck (a little over \$5,000 a year), he wasn't sure what his future held. But he recalls some words of wisdom from then Personnel Director, Bob Roeder, on his first day: "State government is like a railroad train. If you jump in front of it, it will run you over. The most you can hope to do is nudge the tracks a little in the direction you want it to go."

Forty-eight years and eight Governors later, Keith Beesley has done more than just nudge the tracks. He's cemented himself as a part of State of Indiana history, going from watching coworkers manually write staffing updates on green bar paper to leading the charge in acquiring PeopleSoft, writing the law that created the Indiana State Personnel Department, being awarded the Sagamore of the Wabash Award from two different Governors (Governor Robert D. Orr and Governor Eric J. Holcomb) for his distinguished service, and more. After so many years with the State, "a large part of my identity really does relate to the job," said Beesley.

But looking back to his younger days, Beesley didn't always know he wanted to be a lawyer. He knew the importance of a strong work ethic—his grandfather put the kids to work as soon as they had enough body weight to move the clutch on the tractor. The bigger question was how he wanted to apply that work ethic.

It was perhaps clearer to those around him that he was headed for a career in law. As a high school

sophomore, he took his chemistry teacher to the principal's office for (allegedly) violating a classmate's civil rights. And when he reached his senior year, his classmates voted him Best Musician (he had received a scholarship to play the trumpet) but he rejected the honor in favor of Most Outspoken.

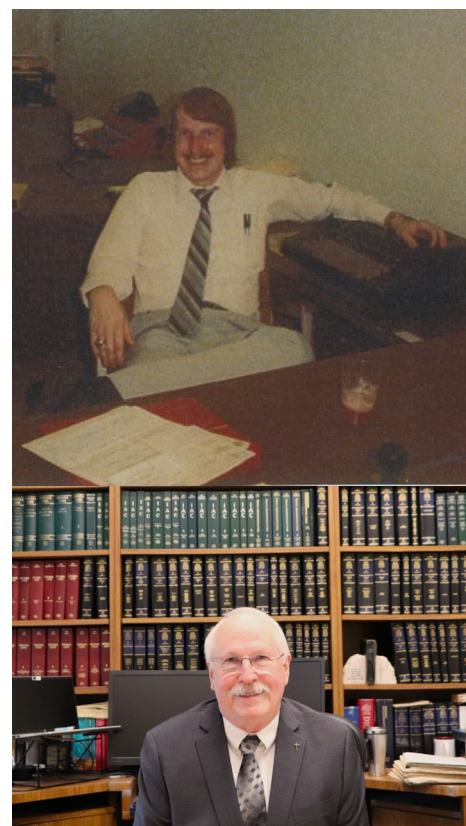
Still, it wasn't until he started working at INSPD that he committed to becoming an attorney. He went to law school at night and quickly climbed the ranks to become Deputy Director at 28-years-old and eventually settled into his current position as General Counsel which he says is a "kinder and gentler" role. It's a journey that's been both challenging and rewarding as he balanced his career and the two children he shares with his wife Susie.

Beesley recalls a time when he was on vacation at Disney World—before pagers were widespread. He came back to the motorhome they were traveling in and found a note on its windshield that read "Call the Governor of Indiana." To this day, he remembers that it was a question about the Fair Labor Standards Act.

From phone calls with the Governor, to implementing short and long-



Beesley with former Governor Robert D. Orr, one of two Indiana Governors to award him the Sagamore of the Wabash Award.



Top: Beesley in his office near the beginning of his 48 year career.

Bottom: Beesley in his current office.

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WIC mobile lactation unit making the rounds in rural northern Hoosier communities

A grant from the Indiana Department of Health (IDOH) WIC program is helping bring breastfeeding support to rural Indiana communities.

Neighborhood Health's mobile lactation unit is on the road and servicing Adams, Blackford, Huntington, Jay, Randolph, and Wells counties. IDOH WIC Breastfeeding Services Manager Emily Lynch took time to share important information about this initiative and how it's helping Hoosiers.

IDOH: This project was made possible by the WIC General Infrastructure Grant. In addition to the mobile lactation unit created and now in use by Neighborhood Health, what are some other projects this grant can make possible? Or is this the only such grant?

Lynch: The WIC General Infrastructure grant is released by USDA for WIC state agencies to advance program access and equity, improve the client experience, and to invest in technology projects.

Each state can submit an application to use the funds in different ways, but for Indiana, we chose to apply and use the funds solely for the mobile lactation unit.

IDOH: What kind of feedback have you and your team received throughout the process of implementing the mobile lactation unit?

Lynch: During the planning of the project, we received a lot of feedback about how this was a creative use of the funding. This was truly an out-of-the-box idea and one that the team really took and ran with. This is the first ever WIC mobile lactation unit, and we truly hope that it serves as a replicable model to get advanced lactation support into rural counties and regions without International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners (IBCLC) support. We are really excited that the unit is now out in the community and hope to start getting some client feedback soon.

IDOH: What community needs can this new initiative help address, and



Indiana Department of Health WIC Breastfeeding Services Manager
Emily Lynch

what are your hopes for the project and those it serves going forward?

Lynch: Our Breastfeeding Program Coordinator Anna Thompson led a local needs assessment in coordination with then-Neighborhood Health WIC Coordinator Tiann Aughinbaugh (now WIC nutrition consultant), to identify the needs of the communities in the targeted counties. This needs assessment revealed large gaps in breastfeeding support within the communities and disparities in breastfeeding rates, birth outcomes, infant mortality, etc. We know that breastfeeding decreases the risk of infant mortality and improves maternal health throughout the lifespan, and having IBCLC and peer support during a parent's breastfeeding journey can help families reach their feeding goals.

Our hope is that the addition of the mobile lactation unit will boost



A ribbon cutting ceremony for Neighborhood Health's mobile lactation unit took place Dec. 10. From left to right, Jackie Schenkel (Neighborhood Health WIC interim director), Tashery Riner (mobile unit designated breastfeeding expert) and Desire Dozois (mobile unit peer counselor).

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‘Outside the box’ and on the mark: Immunization team, director take home AIM awards

The Indiana Department of Health’s (IDOH) Immunization division and its director were honored with a pair of prestigious awards in New Orleans this month for efforts to expand vaccine access to children that could serve as a model nationwide.

The Association of Immunization Managers (AIM) recognized IDOH’s “Thinking Outside the Box – Pharmacies as VFC Providers” with a Bull’s-Eye award. AIM gives out only three such awards each year, which recognize programs “whose immunization strategies have ‘hit their mark,’ achieving goals and increasing awareness by encouraging replication in other programs,” according to AIM. VFC stands for Vaccines for Children, a federal program that provides free vaccines to children of families who cannot afford them.

Equal parts ingenuity and persistence, the program utilizes Kroger as a means of providing communities with additional options for getting childhood vaccines, working to close a disparity and allow more people to obtain needed

immunizations. To that end, 112 Kroger Pharmacy locations were added to the program just this year. Immunization Director Dave McCormick noted that smaller Kroger outlets are coming onboard as well, and those locations can offer vaccines for children as young as 6 months old.

“So, we’re really creating better access,” McCormick said.

As a whole, the program helps expand that access by allowing busy, working families more options to get their needed vaccines, regardless of their insurance status. The award wasn’t a surprise for McCormick and his team, but a second honor was unexpected—one for the division director himself.

McCormick received the Impact award, which is for immunization program managers, during AIM’s annual educational conference. This is the second time he’s received the award having first won in 2017. McCormick has served on multiple AIM committees including the Adult Immunization Committee and the Conference Planning Committee and also serves as an AIM Peer Connect mentor to new members. Immunization and Assessment Program Manager Tami Johnson called the achievements “great work for Indiana.”



IDOH Immunization Division Director Dave McCormick (second from right) accepting two AIM awards in New Orleans in December.

Article by the Indiana Department of Health

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WIC mobile lactation unit making the rounds in rural northern Hoosier communities

breastfeeding rates within these counties to improve birth outcomes and decrease infant mortality. We also hope to see increases in WIC participation in those counties!

IDOH: Who are some of the people who deserve special recognition for their role(s) in this project?

Lynch: This project has been such a huge labor of love and there are a ton of people who deserve special recognition for their contributions. First, Laura Chavez, WIC director, and Rose Douglass, MCH director (then WIC deputy director) who supported such a big endeavor. The local staff at Neighborhood Health WIC (Tiann Aughinbaugh, Jackie Schenkel, Desire Dozois, and Tashery Riner) and Community and Family Services WIC (Amanda Slentz and Kim Schmitz) for their devotion to seeing this project through to fruition and making it even better than we anticipated.

The entire WIC team who supported the application, planning, designing, implementation, reporting, etc. for this project (specifically Magesh Arjunan, Lindsey Reuter, Lindsey Downs, Anna Thompson, Ashley Brown, Darcy Wade, Sarah Johnston, Nona Mahari, Elise Yates, and Legita Wilson). This team is truly one-of-a-kind, and I am honored and humbled to work with all of them on such a unique and important project.

Article by the Indiana Department of Health

Indiana Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families

As of January 2024, the Indiana Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families is fully operational, marking a major milestone in the state's commitment to addressing suicide prevention for the Indiana Veteran Community (IVC).

The Indiana Governor's Challenge (IGC) team is comprised of dedicated members from the Indiana National Guard (INNG), the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA), and the Indiana Department of Health (IDOH) and is led by the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA). Federal and state agencies, nonprofit organizations, and Purdue University's Military Family Research Institute (MFRI) support this main team.

The IGC team empowers local community coalitions across the state with data, proven concepts, and resources to plan and implement suicide prevention strategies tailored to the needs of their local veteran community. To support the community coalition, the IGC team brings detailed information on the (3) main priorities of the Governor's challenge,

1. Identifying the Indiana Veteran Community and screening for risk.
2. Eliminating isolation by curating connection.
3. Lethal means safety, including safe storage, handling, and education.

The team also delivers essential

information on suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention, while fostering a deeper understanding of the military/veteran culture.

Purdue's MFRI is essential to Indiana's data-driven approach. Incorporating valuable data on the mental health and suicide risk factors of service members, veterans, and their families, MFRI provides the IGC with a data-driven roadmap for rolling out the program to community coalitions with the necessary insights to guide its mission effectively. Some of the critical insights include Veteran and community trends, risk factors, and gaps in services, helping

to shape the state's prevention efforts with precision. The data provided by MFRI allows Indiana to track progress, assess the impact of various initiatives, and adapt strategies.

The IGC is bolstered by federal resources from the U.S. Veterans Administration (VA) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). These critical federal partners provide training, guidance, and resources aligned with the National Governor's Challenge. Additionally, Community Engagement Partnership Coordinators (CEPC) from the VA

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The Indiana Governor's Challenge team is comprised of members from the IDVA, FSSA, IDOH, INNG, and MFRI.

Back row, left to right: Obadiah Smith- FSSA, Joseph DeVito- IDVA, Bryan Schmidt - IDVA, Kathy Broniarczyk- MFRI, Brad Harper- IDVA, Kyle Gross- IDVA, Dennis Wimer- IDVA

Front row, left to right: Michelle Fox- FSSA, Katie Schmitz- MFRI, Carlye Gibson- IDOH, Morgan Sprecher- IDOH, Lesley Evans- IDVA, Laura McKee- IDVA, Alfredo Espinoza Garcia- IDVA, Gabrielle Owens- IDVA

Kneeling: Brookelynn Deaton- IDVA

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Indiana Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families

collaborate with local coalitions, offering the IGC valuable on-the-ground insights. With these partnerships, the IGC can better target its efforts and ensure that the solutions put in place are effective and tailored to local communities' real needs.

With pilot programs completed, the IGC is now poised to accelerate its efforts, ensuring that local communities are supported and empowered with the resources they need to make a meaningful impact.

The IGC invests in community coalitions with planning grant opportunities, followed up with implementation grant opportunities, enabling communities to focus on the unique needs of their service members, veterans, and families.

This initiative is a testament to the real-life impact that federal and state partnerships, interstate agency collaboration, and community empowerment can fuel. This unique partnership has produced suicide prevention programs grounded

in evidence and derived from collaboration offering a chance of saving lives. Under the dedicated leadership of the IDVA and its mission to Support, Serve, and Advocate for the Indiana Veteran Community, Indiana leads by example in the fight against veteran suicide.

Article by the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs

Labs pass critical CLIA inspection

The Indiana Department of Health Laboratory (IDOHL) recently passed a critical certification process.

The objective of the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) is "to ensure quality laboratory testing," according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). IDOHL Director of QA and Internal Training Chris Grimes explained that two CMS surveyors visited the lab Nov. 19 and 20.

"They surveyed the testing we have done over the past two years (since our last CLIA survey) in each of our clinical lab areas: TB, Serology, Reference Bacteriology, Virology, Clinical Chemistry, Antimicrobial Resistance, Enterics, Chemical Threat, and Biological Threat," he said. "The surveyors reviewed training records, procedures, employee qualifications, test reports, specimen receiving, and analytical methods."

Grimes credited the teams for the positive outcome.

"This regulatory survey of the IDOH Laboratory was a success thanks to the diligence and hard work of our dedicated laboratorians," he said.

Article by the Indiana Department of Health



Virology microbiologist Emma Chen at work at IDOHL.

Yeary named 'Environmental Health Specialist of the Year'

The rules and regulations for aquatic venues in Indiana are, well, pretty deep. Fortunately, the State of Indiana has people like Steve Yeary to help. Relying on more than two decades of experience, Yeary is an environmental manager within the Indiana Department of Health's Environmental Public Health (EPH) division. Along with Marion County Health Department's Jason Ravenscroft, he teaches a certification course on community pool requirements that is geared toward helping local health department professionals stay well above water with the knowledge they need to keep their aquatic venues safe and in compliance with state law.

Through that role, Yeary has come to be seen by colleagues as a subject matter expert on aquatic venues. His efforts earned him a special distinction when he was named Environmental Health Specialist of the Year by the Indiana Environmental Health Association (IEHA). The award came as a pleasant surprise for Yeary, who didn't suspect he was an honoree when he attended the IEHA's annual Fall Educational Conference awards banquet this September. Nominated anonymously, the award submission said Yeary's "dedication to his job and the pool program is unmatched."

Yeary described the honor as "humbling" and credited numerous colleagues, current and past, for helping shape his career and lead to this important recognition among his peers.

Aside from his aquatic venue know-how, Yeary has also pushed to highlight important aspects of environmental health, such as clean-up of homes that were previously used for illegal methamphetamine production. He wants tasks like these to be second nature and to get county health departments more involved with the construction oversight of pools and the like. The Indiana Department of Homeland Security is the agency that reviews and approves plans for the construction of public swimming pools, but EPH staff have an integral role that goes a long way in determining whether a project sinks or swims.

Yeary feels this is best accomplished by not emphasizing enforcement for enforcement's sake. He believes important working relationships are built on better foundations when each situation is looked at individually and without a "one-size-fits-all" approach.

"Just promote what we're supposed to promote and enforce what we're supposed to enforce and do it in a



The Indiana Department of Health's Steve Yeary was recently named Environmental Health Specialist of the Year.

reasonable, balanced way," he said, describing his approach to his vital work. "I've really enjoyed my career in public health so far. Ultimately, it's like we're trying to contribute back because we're thankful for what's been done for us."

Article by Brent Brown, Indiana Department of Health

AmeriCorps program opens doors to public health careers

A Venn diagram of Abby Pequignot's work might end up looking more like the Olympics emblem than a couple of circles drawn on paper.

Part Indiana Department of Health, part Department of Workforce Development, Pequignot is the Health First Indiana (HFI) Public Health AmeriCorps (PHA) program manager. She's been in her position for only a little more than a year, yet those circles keep expanding.

AmeriCorps memory unlocked

In a way, it's come full circle for Pequignot who came out of college with public health career aspirations amid an uncertain job market but can now help others with similar interests in this wide-ranging field. She's filling a community need and building a foundation for a new generation of public health workers.

AmeriCorps in Indiana has provided \$67.3 million in scholarships since 1994 and boasts about 4,200 members statewide and PHA grew out of a partnership between AmeriCorps and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Pequignot shared that the majority of IDOH's Public Health AmeriCorps participants are college students, from undergrads to those looking to complete their master's, though there are others who have taken different routes. "My most experienced [participant]... she's a full-time mom, [she's] been in the workforce for 10 years and decided to go back to school and then decided she wanted to go into public health," Pequignot said.

That AmeriCorps participant received a job offer from the Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) in October for a grants

manager position with the Division of Mental Health and Addiction (DMHA). She's also working on her master's, which speaks volumes about the dedication of AmeriCorps participants. PHA also helps to fill staffing gaps in areas where it's needed most — notably, local health departments (LHD). Those involved get valuable, hands-on experience, and the LHDs get new staff members who are eager to help, learn, and work hard to fulfill their department's mission.

The next generation of public health workers

PHA members complete what is known as a "service year" where they work six to 10 months (all financial aspects covered by the grant) in full, half, or part-time positions. In the program's first year, 10 PHA members were placed in Hoosier LHDs and contributed in areas like emergency preparedness, data analyses, community outreach, and program evaluation. At its core, PHA is a professional development program where participants will gain new skills and hands-on knowledge. They also do so with the knowledge that Pequignot is there to assist. She said she checks in on her members regularly as part of her myriad duties.

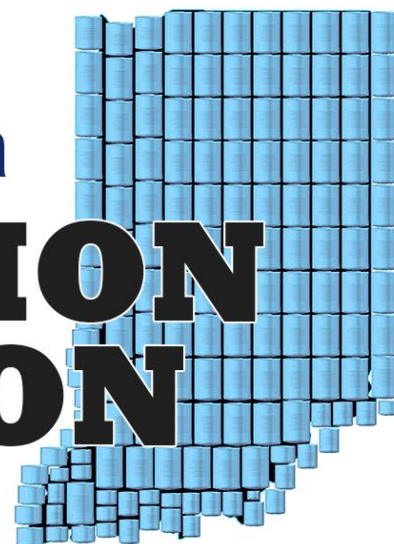
"It's been successful for everyone that's participated," Pequignot said. "I feel like a proud mom. I feel incredibly blessed to be presented with this opportunity."

Article by Brent Brown, Indiana Department of Health



PHA members Alkesh Kumar (far left) and Jessica Baker (far right) are seen here with Henry County Health Department representatives.

2025 State of Indiana CANSTRUCTION COMPETITION



It's time to bust out those Canstruction hard hats again! Registration is now open for Canstruction 2025. Last year, the Department of Correction - Wabash Valley Correctional Facility swept all three categories—Best Structure, Most Cans Collected, and The People's Choice. They set the bar high, so bring your A-game this year!

What is Canstruction?

Canstruction is a structural design competition and a canned food drive all in one! Agencies compete to make the most creative design made entirely of donated cans. And most importantly, it's a fun and creative way to help food pantries restock their shelves after the holidays! With a little bit of creativity—and a lot of canned goods—State employees CAN make a difference in their communities.

Teams will compete for three awards: Most Cans Donated, Best Structure, and The People's Choice.

Be sure to register by Jan. 14!

The structures must be completed between Wednesday, Jan. 15 and Wednesday, Jan. 29. Photos with descriptions and total number of cans should be sent to spdcommunications@spd.in.gov by noon on Wednesday, Jan. 29.

At the end of the competition, each team will dismantle their structures, and coordinate the donation of all food collected to a local food bank or another charity chosen by the participating team.

Things to remember:

- **New this year:** You may wrap individual cans with paper (do not remove or cause damage to labels), but you may **not** wrap a group of cans or your whole structure.
- *TIP: You don't need to wrap your cans—try sourcing cans of certain colors to complete the look of your structure.*
- There is no limit to the number of teams per agency.
- The competition is open to any branch of State government.
- Structures should be designed in a location where they will not disrupt operations, block walkways, or create safety issues.
- Structures must be made from unopened canned food with labels still intact.
- Methods and materials must provide easy, safe deconstruction without damaging the labels and cans.

[Find more details for the Canstruction competition >](#)

[Register your team >](#)



Wabash Valley Correction Facility took home the title in all three categories in 2024 with their "The Hunger Subtractor."



DCS Hamilton County was the runner up for Most Cans Collected in 2024 with their "Cherry Pie" structure.

The Governor's Summer Internship Program is just around the corner!

The internship program was created in 1989 to introduce bright and motivated college students to the operations and officials of state government. This program provides interns the opportunity to work with state agency officials, as well as participate in co-curricular components to enrich their experience.

Last summer, interns visited with Governor Eric J. Holcomb, Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch, and various leaders from across State government. They also volunteered at Gleaners Food Bank and were able to participate in a resume building and professional development workshop with Indiana State Personnel Department's Talent Acquisition team.

The program kicks off in May and positions are posted at [workforindiana.in.gov](https://www.workforindiana.in.gov). Search "internships" to view the openings.

New GSI Instagram

Be sure to follow us on our new Governor's Summer Intern Program Instagram account, [@indianagovinterns](https://www.instagram.com/indianagovinterns)



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

Bottom: 2024 interns with Indiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Rush.

WHAT'S IN

WINTER FARMERS MARKETS IN INDIANA

Winter may seem like an off-season for fresh produce, but Indiana's thriving winter farmers markets prove otherwise. Visit these standout markets around the state!

FRESH PRODUCE THIS WINTER IN INDIANA



Introducing the Agency Health Assessment Battle

Beat your agency's 2024 completion rate!

The 2025 Wellness Rewards Program is starting off with a new opportunity to earn \$50 in Wellness Rewards with the Agency Health Assessment Battle!

How do you win?

If you complete your health assessment by January 31, 2025, and if your agency has a higher percentage of employees with completed Health Assessments in January 2025 compared to January 2024, you will earn a bonus \$25 in Wellness Rewards on top of the \$25 for completing your health assessment (\$50 total).

Check your agency's January 2024 health assessment completion rates [here](#).

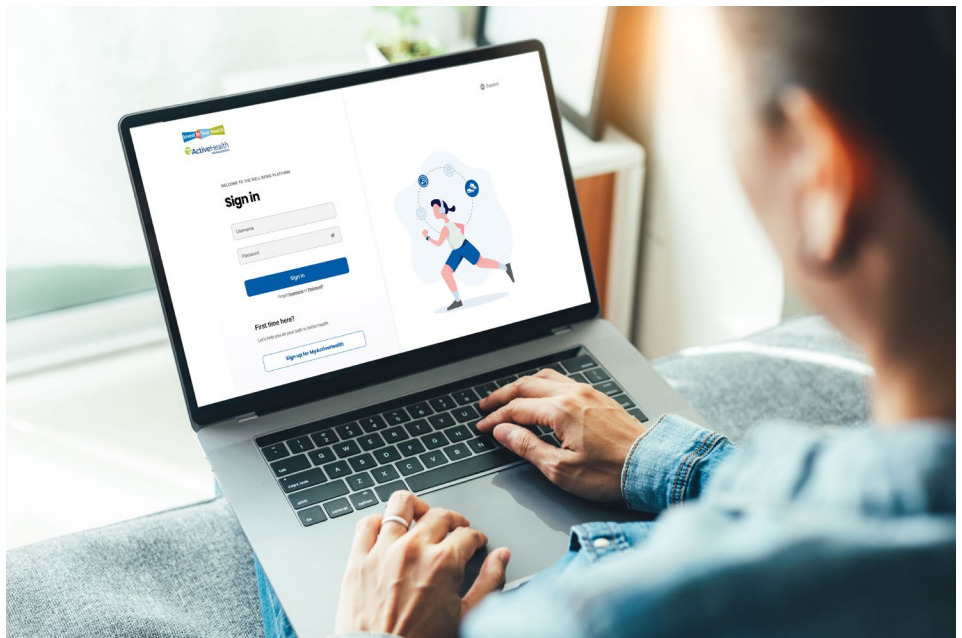


Complete your Health Assessment

How to participate?

All you need to do is [log in to the ActiveHealth portal](#) and successfully complete a health assessment by January 31! The health assessment will give you an easy-to-understand summary of your current health, and only takes 5 to 10 minutes. Note: You will earn \$25 in Wellness Rewards for completing your health assessment even if your agency does not win the Agency Health Assessment Battle.

The Agency Health Assessment Battle activity is available to employees and spouses eligible for the ActiveHealth program. Spouse participation will not factor into the agency completion percentages, however, spouses must complete their health assessment by Jan. 31, 2025, to be eligible to receive the bonus \$25 in Wellness Rewards.



Complete your Health Assessment

2025 Wellness Rewards Program—Get Rewarded for What Matters

Complete wellness activities to earn up to \$500 in gift card rewards.

Log in to ActiveHealth to learn more and get started: www.myactivehealth.com/StateofIndiana

Wellness Rewards Program: Looking ahead to 2025

In 2025, the Wellness Rewards Program will again reward employees and spouses on the State Employee Health Plan with up to \$500 each in gift card rewards. With more than 25 rewardable activities to choose from, the program is designed to help you build healthier habits in ways that work for you.

Here's what's new and continuing into 2025:

- Preventive care rewards: You'll still earn \$200 for completing an annual physical, \$50 for a dental cleaning, and \$50 for an eye exam. These are simple and effective ways to prioritize your health and get rewarded.
- Enhanced diabetes support: 9amHealth, the new diabetes management program, continues to be available to eligible employees and their dependents. Participating in the program not only supports your health but also earns eligible employees up to \$100 in rewards.
- Rewardable activities to keep you engaged: From participating in a 5K to mental health check-ins and building healthy habits, there are plenty of ways to personalize your wellness journey.
- To get started, visit the ActiveHealth Portal and explore the Rewards Center. You'll find a full list of activities, track your progress, and see how much you've earned.

[Log in to ActiveHealth](#)

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 >](#)



Save the date for the Indiana Commission for Women's free International Women's Day Event

Please save the date and join the Indiana Commission for Women (ICW) for the free **International Women's Day Event** on Tuesday, March 4 at the State of Indiana Government Center South's Auditorium (302 W. Washington St Indianapolis, IN 46204) from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

International Women's Day (IWD) is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. This year's theme **#AccelerateAction**, will center on strategies designed to promote women's advancement. [Check out the IWD 2024 photo gallery](#) to experience the event's spirit.



Free Booth Space

Free booth space is available at the event but apply soon because space is limited! To apply please complete the [2025 IWD Exhibitor Application](#).

Volunteers Needed

ICW is seeking volunteers who are passionate about the mission and eager to contribute to the success of this event. To sign up please complete the [2025 IWD Volunteer Application](#).

Event Page

Please visit the [2025 International Women's Day Event page](#) to keep updated on upcoming event details.

ICW looks forward to seeing you in March!

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.

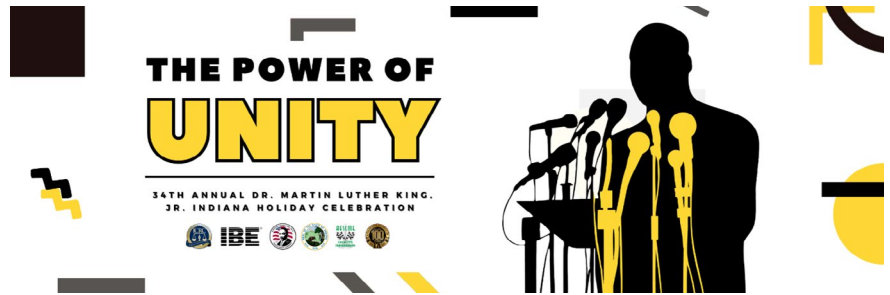
Employees are tasked to complete a collection of lessons and can earn badges by taking the quiz at the end of each series. The quizzes are hosted on Microsoft Forms and are accessible through each individual's State employee account. There are a total of three badges (Green, Blue and Gold) that may be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



RSVP today! 34th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Indiana Holiday Celebration

The Indiana Civil Rights Commission alongside The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Indiana Holiday Commission, Indiana Black Expo, Inc., and AFSCME Local #725, invites you to celebrate the remarkable legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.!



On January 16 at 6 p.m., gather at the Indiana War Memorial: Soldiers and Sailors Monument for a tribute featuring a wreath-laying ceremony and a commemorative light show.

Then, on January 17 at noon, celebrate at the Indiana Statehouse for an awards ceremony honoring outstanding Hoosiers committed to civil rights. This year's theme echoes Dr. King's call for unity: "We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools."

Both events are free and open to the public. Please [RSVP for the MLK Celebration](#) at the Statehouse today! Can't join us in person? [Watch the live MLK Celebration](#).

[Learn more about the 34th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Indiana Holiday Celebration.](#)

RSVP today! 26th Annual Holocaust Remembrance Program

On January 24, from noon to 1:30 p.m. at the Indiana Statehouse, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Indiana Holiday Commission, ICRC, and the Indianapolis Jewish Community Relations Council are proud to host the 26th Annual State of Indiana Holocaust Remembrance Program.

This year's theme, "Righteous Among the Nations," honors the brave individuals who risked their lives to protect and save their Jewish neighbors and strangers during the Holocaust. Attendees will gather to honor the legacy of these heroes, whose selflessness provided hope.



The program will also feature awards for community members, and high school students who participated in the Hoosier Student Artistic Expressions Contest.

This event is free and open to the public. Please [RSVP for the Holocaust Remembrance Program](#) today or [watch the live Remembrance Program](#).

[Learn more about the 26th Annual State of Indiana Holocaust Remembrance Program.](#)

The Pre-Retirement Seminar is coming up

Are you a soon to be retiree?

This program is designed to assist State employees with advance retirement planning by providing information useful in making informed decisions.

The recommendation is for an employee to attend this event if they are planning to retire within the next rolling calendar year.

If you are serious about retiring from State employment within the next rolling calendar year, register now for the upcoming Pre-Retirement Seminar, sponsored by the Indiana State Personnel Department (INSPD). **This day-long workshop is from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on March 13, 2025 in the IGC-S Auditorium and overflow seating in Conference Rooms A, B and C.** The agenda includes an hour break for lunch.

A sound retirement requires careful planning involving a variety of

topics, including:

- Indiana Public Retirement System (INPRS).
- Social Security information and options.
- Insurance – options for continuing both life and health insurance.
- Benefits obtainable through Social Security and Medicare.
- Hoosier START – saving for your future retirement and replacing your income in retirement.
- Key elements in estate planning including: last will and testament, living will, health care authorization, durable power of attorney and death taxes.
- The Indiana Long-Term Care Program as an element of retirement planning.

[Reserve your seat today by self-enrolling into the Pre-Retirement seminar!](#)

- Registration is required to attend, and seating is limited.

Your spouse or a companion are welcome to attend. Registration is not necessary if they are not a state employee.

- Employees may attend the seminar one time on state time in their career as a State of Indiana employee.
- Please let your supervisor know if you plan on attending this seminar. Your supervisor's approval is not required for you to attend. However, it is your responsibility to let your supervisor know you have enrolled in the seminar.
- Neither travel time, lodging, mileage, nor vehicle allowance is paid/allowed. *Should employees choose to attend additional sessions of this seminar, they are expected to use their own accrued leave time.

Questions may be directed to INSPD Learning and Development at spdtraining@spd.in.gov.

Veteran Resource Group

If you are a veteran or have family members who are veterans, consider connecting with the Veteran Resource Group (VRG). The VRG's mission is to foster a community of learning, promote veteran benefits, and enrich the lives of State employees and their families who have served or are currently serving in the United States Armed Forces. The group also provides an opportunity to network and connect with other veterans and operates an outreach program for new state employees.

Many State of Indiana agencies are represented, and more are welcome to join. Members benefit by improving their knowledge of veteran benefits, military disability claims, and veteran-focused state programing. Your participation is encouraged, valued, and welcomed!

Join the next meeting on **Thursday, Jan. 30 from noon to 1 p.m. at the Indiana War Memorial** (55 E Michigan St, Indianapolis, 46204). A special behind-the-scenes tour of the War Memorial will be available following the meeting. A Microsoft Teams option for virtual participation will also be available.

If you are interested in attending or would like to learn more about VRG, please reach out to Laura McKee (LaMcKee@dva.in.gov) or Sam Whiteleather (SWhiteleather@dnr.IN.gov).

Prepare for a successful year with live training from the Workforce Strategy & Performance Team

Make this year the best yet with tools to advocate for your success and development. SuccessFactors makes documenting your progress, marking your achievements, and advocating for your support easier. Using these tools can help ensure your manager is aware of and can accurately assess your performance.

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 team for demonstrations of the recent enhancements to SuccessFactors Goals:

January 29, 2025 | from 1:30 to 3 p.m.

[Join the Jan. 29 Session](#)

Meeting ID: 216 433 677 099

Passcode: AgCK6W

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

[Join the Feb. 18 Session](#)

Meeting ID: 273 938 677 489

Passcode: vb2f8nb6

2025 Performance Goals

To help you kick off a successful 2025, join the Workforce Strategy & Performance Team at these live training sessions available to all employees and managers:

Setting Performance Goals & Expectations

For employees and managers to learn about goals, competencies, and how to clarify expectations.

January 21, 2025 | from 9:30 to 11 a.m.

[Join the Jan. 21 Session](#)

Meeting ID: 268 825 951 335

Passcode: f7pTAj

February 5, 2025 | from 1 to 2:30 p.m.

[Join the Feb. 5 Session](#)

Meeting ID: 250 862 162 335

Passcode: fhGJah

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 to 3 p.m.

[Join the Feb. 11 Session](#)

Meeting ID: 217 084 936 277

Passcode: SyLPBp

Reminder: Remote Work Agreements renewed on January 1

If you are eligible and interested in working remotely in 2025, you will need to submit a new Remote Work Agreement in the Remote Worker tile on your PeopleSoft Employee Self-Service homepage starting January 1, 2025. Please note that working remotely without an approved agreement is in violation of the Flexible Work Arrangements policy, so be sure to get a 2025 Remote Work Agreement approved in PeopleSoft before continuing to work remotely this year.

New Remote Worker Agreements must be completed on January 1 each year by all employees working remotely.

What you need to do:

Employees who Work Remotely:

Log into [PeopleSoft](#) Employee Self Service, navigate to the Remote Worker tile, and complete the Remote Work Agreement starting January 1.

Managers of Remote Workers:

Log into [PeopleSoft](#) Manager Self Service, navigate to the Remote Worker tile, then evaluate and either approve or deny requested Remote Work Agreements promptly.

Employees who have accommodations for Remote Work:

Contact your agency's HR team if you do not have a copy of your accommodation approval free of medical information. Upload that approval document to your annual request and select Accommodation as the Reason in the Remote Worker module.

Helpful resources:

- Job Aids with instructions for Employees and Managers, as well as a Flexible Work Arrangements FAQ, can be found in [SuccessFactors' JAM](#).
- The updated Flexible Work Arrangements policy can be found on INSPD's [Laws, Rules, and Standardized Policies page](#).



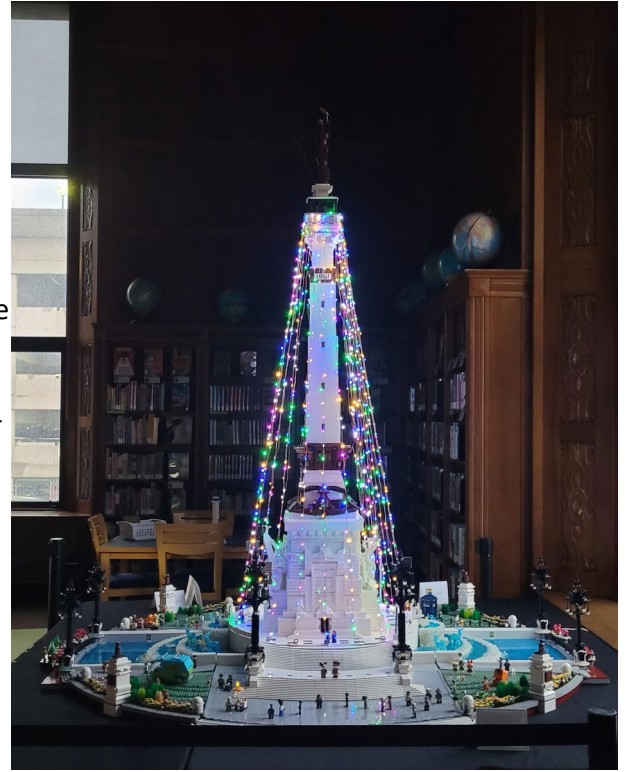
Left Artwork by Lisa Kreischer (Office of Administrative Law Proceedings)

Right Artwork by Riona submitted by Shweta Salvi (Indiana Supreme Court)

Lego Monument back at the State Library

Visitors to the Indiana Young Readers Center will get a treat this holiday season. For the fifth time since 2018, a seven-foot-tall replica of the Indianapolis Soldiers and Sailors Monument is on display from now until Valentine's Day, 2025. Startlingly similar to the real monument, the replica is made out of Lego, over seventy-five thousand Legos to be precise. Jeffrey Smythe of Center Grove, Indiana is the artist behind the Lego sculpture. Smythe attended the Herron School of Art and Design and graduated from IUPUI with a degree in interior design. He loves sharing his piece with the Indiana public, and especially with field trips who visit the Indiana Young Readers Center. New this year is Clifford the Big Red Dog, the street around the entire monument, and Indy's beloved horse-and-carriage rides.

The Indiana Young Readers Center is free and open to the public Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Visitors can also view the monument on select Saturdays; January 11 and February 8 from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. If you have questions about viewing the Lego Monument, reach out to Suzanne Walker, Indiana Young Readers Center Librarian at suwalker@library.in.gov.



New mass notification emergency alert system is coming

The State of Indiana soon will be implementing a new mass notification emergency alert system, [Everbridge](#), to communicate emergency procedures and high-impact information to state employees.

Everbridge will be used in a variety of ways to communicate emergency information, including some based on your work location. For example, if severe weather or other threats are near the Indiana Government Center, only those employees with a designated work location as the downtown Indianapolis campus would receive such an alert. The system will integrate with current messaging capabilities from the Indiana Capital Police, Indiana

Department of Administration and the State Emergency Operations Center. Through the accompanying Everbridge app, employees can stay in-the-know based on their current location throughout the state.



As a State employee, you will be automatically registered to receive some messages based on content. Those messages will be sent to your work devices (phone, text, email). Additionally, employees will be able to opt in for additional messaging types on personal devices, if desired.

Everbridge is a leading provider of situational alert systems, trusted by more than 3,700 public safety agencies in the country (including FEMA, DHS, and several other states). This enhancement will greatly improve the alert capabilities and the safety of employees across Indiana.

There's nothing to do now, but more information and instructions regarding the [Everbridge](#) implementation will be shared in the coming months as the system is onboarded with state employee platforms.

January 11, 2025

Winter Wetland Wander | Indiana Dunes State Park

Join a naturalist for this winter morning wander through part of the park's extensive wetland ecosystem. You will learn about creatures that call this place home and what they might be doing during the cold winter months.

[More Information >](#)

Winter Tree ID for Beginners | Fort Harrison State Park

Join the naturalist for a walk on Tree Line Trail to learn some tips for identifying common Indiana trees in the winter.

[More Information >](#)

Caves of Spring Mill | Spring Mill State Park

Visit one of Spring Mill's caves and learn the significance it played in the 2015 dredging of the lake.

[More Information >](#)

January 11 & 18, 2025

Critter Feeding | Chain O'Lakes State Park

Come to the warm Stanley Schoolhouse for feeding time and learn about our live educational animals and their wild relatives that call Indiana home.

[More Information >](#)

January 12, 2025

The S.S. JD Marshall: Shipwreck of the Dunes | Indiana Dunes State Park

Learn about the state park's shipwreck on a 1.5-mile flat hike or a chat in the auditorium.

[More Information >](#)

January 17, 2025

Earth's Most Venomous Snakes | Brown County State Park

Join the park naturalist for a presentation and discussion about snakes and their venom. Learn what types of venom are found in Indiana's venomous snakes and how these snakes compare to the rest of the world!

[More Information >](#)

Winter Sowing Workshop | Dream Lake SRA

Learn about seed dormancy and how to successfully winter-sow native seeds in this hands-on workshop.

[More Information >](#)

January 18, 2025

Shelf Ice Patrol! | Indiana Dunes State Park

Shelf ice is beautiful but dangerous! Meet a naturalist for an exploratory walk along the State park's beach. Not only will we discuss how shelf ice is formed and why we must respect it, we'll also see if any fun beach mysteries may have washed ashore!

[More Information >](#)

Saving America's Largest Salamander—The Hellbender | Falls of the Ohio

Indiana is home to America's largest salamander, the Hellbender. It is only found in one Indiana river – the Blue River in Harrison County. Come and learn about this amazing aquatic animal, what makes it special, and what you can do to keep its habitat clean.

[More Information >](#)

Pajama Story Time at the Potawatomi Inn | Pokagon State Park

Put your jammies on and come to the Potawatomi Inn's Lonidaw Lounge for winter story time with the naturalists.

[More Information >](#)

January 19, 2025

Celebrate National Squirrel Day | Potato Creek State Park

Learn more about some of Potato Creek's smallest mammals. After introducing our four native squirrels, the naturalist will turn you into one, to see if you have the adaptations it takes to survive!

[More Information >](#)

January 25, 2025

Painting at the Park | Mounds State Park

Get creative as Park Place Arts leads a step-by-step painting class in the Mounds State Park Nature Center. All supplies and instructions are provided.

[More Information >](#)

January 29, 2024

What happened to mastodons and how do we know? | Falls of the Ohio State Park

Catalina Tome', curator of vertebrate paleontology at the Indiana State Museum, explores the extinction of many mammal species at the end of the Ice Age.

[More Information >](#)

**View all DNR special
events >**

This Month WITH



January 10, 2025

Candlelight Tours | Levi & Catharine Coffin Home

Tour the Levi and Catharine Coffin home by candlelight and engage with stories of the experience of the freedom-seekers who chose to risk everything to escape slavery. Understand why winter was a common season for escapes, learn why some freedom-seekers stayed in Fountain City before moving further north, and find out how free Black people were instrumental to the Underground Railroad.

[More Information >](#)

January 18, 2025

Writing of the Past: Calligraphy | Corydon Capitol

Why is the handwriting on old documents hard to read? Discover the art of calligraphy and try your hand at different styles as we learn about this tradition's importance over time.

[More Information >](#)

January 20, 2025

Free Day: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day | Multiple Locations

Honor the legacy and contributions of Martin Luther King Jr. through a day of celebration and reflection. Enjoy multicultural performances, contribute to a community mural, try speech-making, and more. Engage with community members and learn more about the ongoing struggle for civil rights and equity through artifact investigation, curator chats and videos highlighting Dr. King's most iconic speeches as we reflect on what we can do to ensure Dr. King's dream lives on.

[More Information >](#)

January 24, 2025

African American History in Southern Indiana | Vincennes

Explore the history of African Americans and their impact throughout southern Indiana with fascinating presentations from local subject matter experts. Hear from representatives from the Evansville African American Museum, the Knox County African American History Research Project, and Larry Curry, a Vincennes volunteer from the Lawrenceville Historical Society, who specializes in African Americans' involvement in the Civil War.

[More Information >](#)

January 25, 2025

Special Tour: 1920s Tech | T.C. Steele

The Steeles brought the best tech the 20th century had to offer when they moved to Brown County in 1907. Check out this special tour dedicated to the modern improvements the Steeles enjoyed — including the first home in the county with electric lights, a real refrigerator, and Selma's Model-T.

[More Information >](#)

Victorian Letter Writing | Lanier Mansion

Grab a quill pen for some enchanting, old-school fun! Learn about Victorian letter writing etiquette, write your own letter, and learn how to fold or lock your message to keep it private.

[More Information >](#)

January 26, 2025

Special Tour: Staff Favorites in the Steele Library | T.C. Steele

The staff at T.C. Steele have pulled their favorite books from the shelves in the House of the Singing Winds! Check out the insights these volumes contain during this special tour.

[More Information >](#)

February 1, 2025

Guided Interpretive Nature Hike | Angel Mounds

Explore local plants, try your hand at foraging, and dive into the rich history of Angel Mounds during this exciting hike! Learn how the first nations people and homesteaders may have used the land to feed themselves, make tools, and accomplish other things.

[More Information >](#)

February 1 & 2, 2025

Children's Tour of Historic Buildings | T.C. Steele

On the first weekend of the month, we offer a morning tour especially for children, designed to serve ages 4-14.

[More Information >](#)

View all Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites events >

INSPD General Counsel Keith Beesley retires from the agency he helped create

term disability programs, managing healthcare contracts, dedicating himself to civil service reform, and more, it's clear that Keith has taken the role of public servant seriously. He's also learned some lessons along the way.

Beesley said he's learned to "be more circumspect" and choose his words carefully. He remembers a comment he made early in his career to a journalist, trying to set the record straight on misconceptions about government spending. He'd said that the government wouldn't even reimburse him if he couldn't get away for lunch and all he ate was a Twinkie during a meeting. The Indianapolis Star printed the Twinkie comment, and let's just say Twinkies have followed him ever since. To this day, he still has one on his desk to remind him not to be flippant with reporters.

When it comes to law, Beesley said, "nothing beats preparation" and that over time "the pendulum swings." He compares it to when he was at Assembly Hall and watched Bobby Knight throw the chair across the basketball court. "There are certain things you just know you're going to see again." Because of this natural back-and-forth in law, Beesley emphasized "you need to be respectful of the other side... there's always going to be a next issue that will arise." That's why he says prioritizing dignity is essential, even when someone has a different viewpoint.

Ultimately, Beesley has valued giving back in his career. "I like getting to pick my client and this is a good one," he said. "I hope we've made the lives of employees better." When speaking with current and past colleagues, it's clear he has. "Keith has been instrumental in

my professional development; selflessly mentoring me, supporting my application to law school, and serving as my trusted advisor for many years since," said INSPD Director, Matthew Brown. According to Betsy Huffman, former Employee Relations Director for INSPD, "Keith's dedication and willingness to help others is truly inspiring. He has a way of bringing out the best in everyone around him, and I feel fortunate to have been his colleague."

And another former colleague, Barbara Knott said "If I had to use only one [word to describe him], it would have to be integrity. And that is a wonderful legacy to leave."

It certainly is. Best wishes to Beesley in his retirement, and congratulations to him on an incredible 48 years of service to the State of Indiana.



Beesley receiving a Sagamore of the Wabash Award from Governor Eric J. Holcomb, with his wife and members of the INSPD team.



January 2025: Tips for well-being

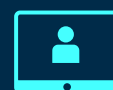
Be clear about your health

Do you ever feel fuzzy about what your provider says at a health visit? You're not alone. But it's easier to manage your health when you understand what to do and why.*

Ask your provider to explain unclear health terms or test results. Review any instructions, like foods to avoid or how to take medication.

Here are a few more tips:*

- Write down all your questions before your visit
- Make eye contact with your doctor as you talk and listen
- Ask them to repeat and explain what they tell you
- Talk over all treatment options before you choose one
- Find out how to reach them with more questions or concerns



Wellness Webinar

Defining your health: Health literacy*

What is health literacy? It's how you get and understand important info about your health. And how you use it to make better health decisions. Learn how to improve what you know about your health.

Tuesday, January 21, 2025

10:00 AM | 12:30 PM | 3:30 PM | 6:30 PM, ET

* The wellness webinar classes are not offered in Spanish.

* FOR HEALTH LITERACY SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Understanding health literacy. Accessed Nov. 15, 2024.

* FOR TALKING ABOUT YOUR HEALTH SOURCE: UCSF Health. Communicating with your doctor. Accessed Nov. 15, 2024.

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