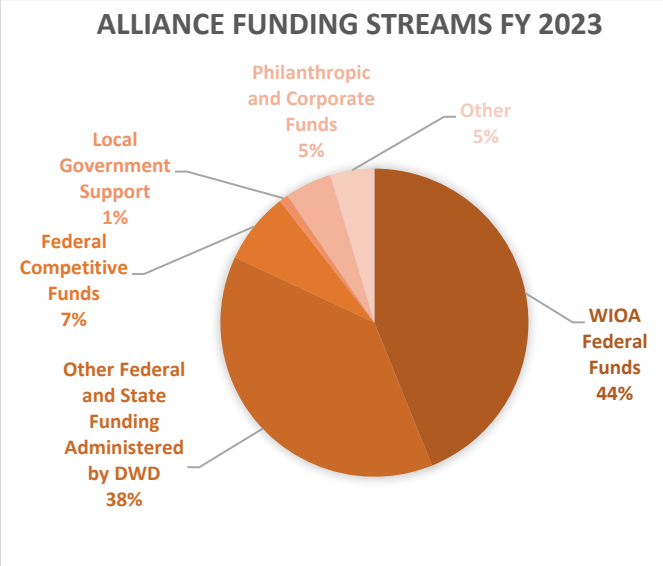
WORKFORCE ALLIANCE

2025 POLICY PRIORITIES

Background: The Indiana Workforce Alliance is a collective body, representing all of Indiana's 12 Workforce Development Boards. In 2023, Alliance members leveraged a combined $91 million in funding to provide career services to more than 311,000 Hoosiers and business services to over 15,500 employers.

2023 Highlights

- 311,500 Individuals Served and/or Provided Information
- 56,000 K-12 Students Enrolled in Youth Programming
- 43,500 Career Services Provided
- 9,000 Placed in Employment
- 6,000 Received Training
- 4,000 Credentials Awarded
- 3,000 Work-Based Learning Placements
- 15,500 Businesses Served



Priority #1: Move the administration of TANF/SNAP employment services to Indiana workforce development boards. In many states and localities, the administration of TANF/SNAP employment services (which are mandated for recipients) are contracted to workforce development boards.

- *Coordination of IMPACT* - Indiana IMPACT provides employment resources and support to Hoosiers receiving SNAP or TANF and is not coordinated with the public workforce system, as administered by Indiana's workforce development boards. The Alliance believes that moving IMPACT to workforce development boards (like the Texas Choices program) will better serve TANF/SNAP recipients who require employment and training services to achieve self-sufficiency.
- *Leverage Existing Infrastructure* - Workforce development boards are required by federal law to have at least one comprehensive brick-and-mortar presence within their region (known as a WorkOne career center in Indiana), and many have far more physical access points in which to connect with jobseekers, making them ideal to serve SNAP/TANF recipients. This move would leverage the existing public workforce infrastructure to serve these Hoosiers.

Priority #2: Continue state funding for workforce development at existing levels. Workforce development boards value state funded programs to help us serve at-risk youth and adults, as well as employers in our communities. Please continue this funding and consider increasing it over time. A loss of any of this funding will be detrimental to board operations and will result in fewer Hoosiers receiving employment services. Continued state funding support is particularly necessary, as the federal government continues to reduce workforce funding Indiana, due to the state's consistently low unemployment rate. It is important to remember that while unemployment is low, employer demand for talent increases.

- *Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG)* - JAG is particularly sensitive to state funding decisions. Governor Holcomb expanded JAG by diverting flexible TANF funds to the program. If this funding is prioritized for another use, then the workforce development boards that administer JAG must eliminate programs or be forced to secure additional private funding to continue programs stood up in 2024. JAG national research indicates that JAG graduates are 2.3 times more likely to be employed full-time, are projected to produce over $5,000,000 in increased earnings and spending annually, and are estimated to increase state and local tax revenue by over $200,000 by the midpoint of their careers.
- *Employer Training Grant* – Workforce development boards are required (by federal law) to provide business services to area employers, but with virtually no funding to do so. When the Employer Training Grant is administered at a regional/board level, workforce development boards can use this as a tool to serve employers. Some boards have previously provided priority awards to employers who are working with state/local economic development partners on business expansion and retention projects.
- *Workforce Ready Grant* – This tuition support makes it possible for jobseekers and incumbent workers who want to learn new skills to enroll in free short-term educational opportunities. This gives Indiana a competitive edge compared to other states – many workforce development boards elsewhere must use federal workforce funding to pay for training for these populations. The Employer Training Grant and Workforce Ready Grant make it possible for Indiana workforce development boards to serve more Hoosier jobseekers through the provision of comprehensive career services.
- *Adult Basic Education (ABE)* - While most Indiana workforce development boards do not directly provide ABE, all the boards work with their area ABE providers daily to provide career advising and employment to youth and adult learners. Continued funding for ABE at or above current levels is critical, as these individuals are often not in the labor force and with minimal intervention may be served, trained, and matched with a good job.

Priority #3: Leverage Workforce Development Boards as the state builds out more youth workforce programming. Workforce development boards are naturally suited to lead in this work. All of Indiana's workforce development boards administer JAG in their regions. All the boards have been designated as Registered Apprenticeship intermediaries by the United States Department of Labor. Many of the boards are actively acting as Commission for Higher Education approved intermediaries and career coaching providers. Several boards are currently operating or building comprehensive youth apprenticeship or YouthBuild programs.

- *Leverage the existing workforce development ecosystem* **-** Workforce development boards are employer-led, making them perfect regional conveners as Indiana looks to build the necessary infrastructure to provide more opportunities for Hoosier K-12 students. Alliance members ask that as more youth programming is created, Indiana leverage these existing relationships and the existing work of the boards. The Alliance already has great relationships with employers, K-12 partners, and higher education –workforce development boards can uniquely provide career awareness and education to Hoosier K-12 students and help them connect to Good Jobs.
- *Consider increasing funding for youth programming, including youth apprenticeship, Next Level Programs of Study, and K-12 career coaching and navigation* – the Alliance has supported the recent work to enhance Career and Technical Education (CTE) offerings and to create youth apprenticeship and employment opportunities for high school students. However, the Alliance knows that for these programs to work, it will take significant time and investment before they become truly sustainable.

Priority #4: Streamline Indiana's public workforce system, remove inefficiencies, and eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy, thereby providing more local autonomy and flexibility. Indiana's federal workforce funding (WIOA) has decreased 40% in the past decade. At the same time, many resources remain at the state level and are not available for regional workforce development boards to use to serve jobseekers and employers. The Alliance recommends making changes at the state level that will provide flexibility for local employers and local elected officials who govern workforce development boards – in this way, they may make decisions that best suit their regional needs.

- *State Governance* - Statutorily designate a seat on the Governor's Workforce Cabinet to a representative of a Workforce Development Board, as nominated by the Alliance.
- *Support Regional Administration and Decision Making* - Streamline programs and build efficiencies at a state level and identify flexible state and federal funding that may serve more Hoosiers if deployed at the regional level by workforce development boards.