

2014 Public Policy Agenda

In order to better prepare Indiana's working families for a more secure economic future, state policies and investments that reflect the economic reality of low- and middle-income Hoosiers are more critical than ever. Policymakers should begin to provide a toolbox for families to restore the promise of economic mobility. This toolbox should: **reward** hard working Hoosiers by ensuring they share in economic growth; **strengthen** work support programs for our most vulnerable citizens and ultimately; **equip** all Hoosiers with the opportunity to obtain the skills necessary in order to attract high-paying, quality jobs that are necessary for a family's economic self-sufficiency. All policy and legislative recommendations on the Institute's 2014 Policy Agenda are based on the culmination of the Institute's analysis of research, data and national best practice models.

Unemployment Insurance

1. Indiana Should Establish a Work Sharing Program. (Legislative)

Work sharing is an unemployment insurance (UI) benefit that explicitly targets job preservation and allows businesses to retain their skilled workforce during times of temporary decreased demand. A work sharing program would allow an employer an option to reduce the hours and wages of all employees or a particular group of workers instead of laying off a portion of the workforce to cut costs. Workers with reduced hours and wages are eligible for partial unemployment benefits to supplement their paycheck. Because work sharing is voluntary, employers can make decisions about participation in the program based on their unique circumstances. For research, news and other legislative activity, please visit: <http://www.incap.org/worksharepage.html#.UpUcF8RUfVA>

Addressing the 'Cliff Effect'

2. Indiana Should Smooth Out the 'Cliff Effect' (Legislative/Administrative)

In an effort to solve the unintended consequences in current policy design, and to restore the promise of upward mobility for more families, policymakers can: encourage existing efforts at expanding access to Indiana's most vulnerable children; promise to restore the basic incentive for hard work (a raise equals an increase in net resources) and the incentive of upward mobility, and ultimately; aim to expand the innumerable benefits of high-quality childcare for Hoosier children and for their parents who face an increasingly prohibitive cost to work. For research, resources, news and other information relating to the Cliff Effect, please visit: <http://www.incap.org/cliffeffect.html#.UpUdncRUfVA>

- Continue Efforts Aimed at Reducing the Waitlist
- Increasing CCDF Exit Income Limit to 250% FPG
- Increasing CCDF Entry Eligibility to 200% FPG
- Eliminate TANF and SNAP Asset Limits

3. Require data on the effectiveness of aid to part-time students. (Legislative)

At a time when Indiana is facing a substantial skills gap, Indiana must find ways to support adults and part-time students in higher education. In order to improve services to these students, the state should provide data about part-time students' unique circumstances and needs.

4. Continue differentiation of services for students in Adult Basic Education (Legislative/Administrative)

Just as remedial coursework and associates degrees have been appropriately shifted from four-year institutions to our community colleges, certain basic skills training and language acquisition ought better be pursued through adult education and community-based agencies. Ensure that the state is providing remedial education and Adult Basic Education in the most effective ways, so students are at the right place with the right resources for the right jobs.

5. Promote the statewide establishment of Prior Learning Assessments (Legislative/Administrative)

Establish a policy that institutionalizes the practices of assessing prior-learning portfolios produced by adults with significant work experience, awarding academic credit for meritorious portfolios, accepting transfer academic-credit awarded through rigorous review by other institutions, and encouraging viable candidates to undertake the assessment process. Promote cooperation of business, public and non-profit sectors to more fully utilize PLA opportunities.

Workforce Development

6. Maximize On-the-Job Training (OJT) Opportunities (Legislative/Administrative)

Improve OJT opportunities already available through federal funds by minimizing policy barriers that prevent more employers from utilizing the program, and promote these programs throughout the state.