

**Request for Quotes (RFQ) 2025-005:
Evaluation of the Indy Achieves Postsecondary Support
Model**



Release Date: July 21, 2025

Proposal Due Date: August 11, 2025

Introduction

In its role as a workforce and education intermediary operating the [Indy Achieves](#) program, [EmployIndy](#) is soliciting proposals from qualified evaluation partners to conduct a comprehensive, mixed-methods evaluation of the Indy Achieves Postsecondary Support Model. The goal of this evaluation is to assess the impact of career coaching and financial support services (Promise Scholarships and Completion Grants) on student outcomes including retention, academic performance, and credential completion. The evaluation will inform program improvement and scalability efforts.

Background

Launched in 2018, Indy Achieves, a signature initiative of EmployIndy, increases college access and completion among low-income and historically underserved residents of Marion County by offering gap-filling financial aid and personalized coaching services to students enrolled at IU Indianapolis and Ivy Tech Indianapolis. Since its inception, the Indy Achieves program has provided Completion Grants to nearly 2,000 students and Promise Scholarships to over 5,000 students.

Key components include of Indy Achieves include:

- **Promise Scholarships:** “Last-dollar” awards that cover any remaining tuition, fees, books, and supplies for eligible students after state and federal financial aid and private scholarships have been applied.
- **Completion Grants:** One-time, emergency financial support awarded to eligible students near graduation, or former students that have stopped out, that face financial barriers preventing continued enrollment or graduation.
- **Student Success Coaching:** Ongoing, personalized support to help students navigate academic and non-academic challenges.

The program serves a racially and socioeconomically diverse student population. Evaluation findings will guide enhancements to the model and support replication at other institutions.

Evaluation Objectives

Impact Evaluation

- What impact do coaching frequency, continuity, and methods have on student performance and outcomes (e.g., persistence, retention, completion)?
- What impact do the provision of Promise Scholarships and Completion Grants have on student performance and outcomes?
- Are outcomes correlated with demographic characteristics such as race, income status, or first-generation status?
- How does student performance and outcomes of students receiving Indy Achieves coaching and/or financial assistance (Promise Scholarships and Completion Grants) compare to the general student population at IU-Indianapolis and Ivy Tech?

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Implementation and Experience Evaluation

- How do students experience coaching and financial aid services?
- What aspects of the program are most and least valued by students?
- How do institutional differences shape implementation and operation of the program?
- What areas of the model could be improved or better aligned with Strada Education Foundation's [Quality Education-to-Career Guidance principles](#)?

Methodology and Data Sources

The evaluation should employ a **mixed-methods** approach, including but not limited to:

- **Quantitative Data Analysis:** Longitudinal student data (retention, GPA, financial aid, degree completion), disaggregated by demographics and institution.
- **Surveys:** Student satisfaction, perceived impact, self-efficacy, and financial stress. Surveys should include validated and customized items.
- **Focus Groups:** At least 4 focus groups (minimum 2 per institution) with a representative sample of students.
- **Interviews:** With Student Success Coaches, program staff, and institutional partners.
- **Comparative Analysis:** Alignment with Strada's five principles of Quality Education-to-Career Guidance.

The above list is not meant to be comprehensive nor should the items in the list be taken to be minimal requirements. Respondents are encouraged to develop and submit alternative approaches and/or activities which will result in the most effective completion of the stated evaluation objectives.

The selected evaluator will work with EmployIndy Indy Achieves staff and partner institutions (IU-Indianapolis and Ivy Tech) to gather quantitative data necessary to complete evaluation.

Deliverables and Timeline

Deliverables

- Evaluation plan and protocols (including IRB as needed)
- Approved survey and interview instruments
- Bi-weekly check-ins with EmployIndy project team
- Draft evaluation report with findings and recommendations
- Final report with executive summary, visualized data, and policy implications
- Final presentation to EmployIndy and partner stakeholders

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Timeline

The evaluation should be completed within **5–7 months** of contract execution, with preliminary findings shared by **February 1, 2026** to begin informing program improvements for the following academic year.

Budget

The budget for this project is \$75,000.

Proposal Requirements

Maximum 10 pages (excluding cover letter and appendices). Proposals must include:

- **Cover Letter**
- **Firm Overview** (1 page): Relevant experience, especially in postsecondary or workforce evaluations.
- **Evaluation Design and Work Plan** (up to 4 pages): Methodology, equity-centered framework, timeline.
- **Team Qualifications** (up to 2 pages): Roles, bios, and relevant expertise.
- **Budget** (up to 2 pages): Itemized, with clear cost justification.
- **References** (1 page): At least two similar evaluation projects.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be scored on:

Criteria	Weight
Evaluation design and methodology	35%
Relevant experience and qualifications	20%
Equity-centered and participant-centered lens	10%
Postsecondary program evaluation experience	10%
Timeline and feasibility	10%
Budget clarity and cost effectiveness	10%
References and prior work samples	5%

Submission Instructions + Questions

Applicants must submit one (1) electronic copy of the proposal. Please note that EmployIndy will not return any proposals it receives and will not reimburse applicants for any costs they incur in developing their proposals.

Any questions regarding this RFQ should be submitted via www.employindy.org/contractopp no later than 5:00p.m. on Tuesday, July 29, 2025.

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Answers to submitted questions will be made available on the EmployIndy website by close of business Thursday, July 31, 2025.

All proposals must be submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. EST, Monday, August 11, 2025, at www.employindy.org/contractopp.