

Central Indiana Rapid Re-employment Response

Executive Summary



REGIONAL WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS



EmployIndy

Ascend



INDIANA COMMISSION for
HIGHER EDUCATION



INDY
CHAMBER



SKILLFUL
A MARKLE INITIATIVE

Indiana Office of
**WORK-BASED
Learning**
and Apprenticeship



CONEXUS
INDIANA

United
Way
United Way
of Central Indiana

Working together to rapidly connect Central Indiana residents
to training and employment.

OVERVIEW

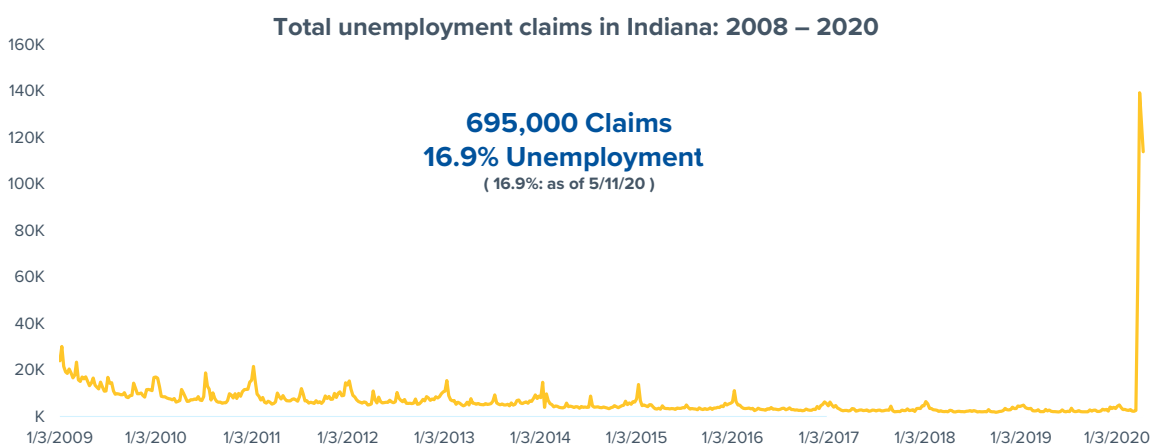
As our economy recovers, Central Indiana residents will require support and connection to training and jobs, especially those who have been historically disproportionately impacted by economic downturns. The purpose of this document is to outline the Regional Workforce Partnership's Rapid Re-employment Response Plan's strategic approach to supporting and re-employing people in Central Indiana in concert with Federal and Statewide efforts.

CURRENT LANDSCAPE

The coronavirus pandemic has caused the highest unemployment levels in both Indiana and the nation since the Great Depression.¹ Given the exponential increase in temporarily and permanently dislocated workers, the State of Indiana has taken a significant step forward in launching a comprehensive recovery plan, *Rapid Recovery for a Better Future*. Due to the unprecedented scope of the current crisis, however, this reality also requires a coordinated response from state agencies, municipalities, nonprofits, employers, and community organizations to support Hoosiers in returning to work and training both immediately and as the economy recovers in the coming years.

COVID-19's Impact on Indiana's Economy

Indiana has seen unemployment claims skyrocket since the pandemic began. At the end of March, 138,000 people submitted initial claims in a single week.² By comparison, pre-pandemic, Indiana saw approximately 2,000 claims each week. More than 700,000 claims have been submitted across the state since the pandemic began.



Source: Adapted from a DWD presentation to Ascend Indiana's Board May 2020. Original Source: Department of Workforce Development.
2 Indiana Department of Workforce Development - Research and Analysis: http://www.hoosierdata.in.gov/dpage.asp?id=58&view_number=2&menu_level=&panel_number=2

This massive uptick in demand for unemployment assistance has strained workforce development boards and organizations that support dislocated workers. Although these agencies are well-positioned to support re-employment efforts in a strong economy, they require additional resources and capacity to support re-employment efforts at this scale.

From an industry perspective, businesses across sectors have been severely impacted. Specifically, Indiana's manufacturing industry has accounted for over one-third of unemployment filings while accommodation and food services, retail trade, health care and social services, and administrative and support and waste management have also seen significant job loss.³ Most sectors have not yet returned to capacity and are unlikely to in the near future.

Central Indiana's Labor Market

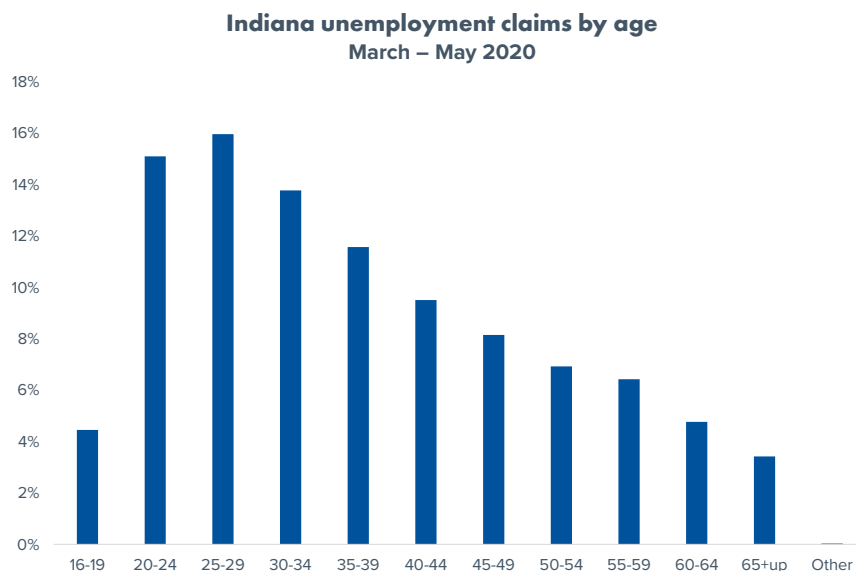
Central Indiana, a hub of business activity and home to 15% of the Indiana population has borne a significant brunt of the pandemic and unemployment impact, accounting for over a quarter of statewide unemployment claims. Nearly

¹ Hoosiers by the Numbers. 11 April 2020. Indiana Department of Workforce Development. <http://www.hoosierdata.in.gov/>

² Hicks, Justin. 31 March 2020. Indiana unemployment claims more than double as COVID-19 shuts manufacturing. WFYI. <https://www.wfyi.org/news/articles/indiana-unemployment-claims-more-than-double-as-covid-19-shuts-manufacturing>

³ Stats Indiana: Indiana's Public Data Utility, Weekly Claims Dashboard. 13 June 2020. Information for Indiana. <http://www.stats.indiana.edu/claims/industry-visualization.asp>

half of the unemployment claims have come from individuals with a high school diploma or less, while 9% had some college, about 15% had an associate degree, 16% had a four-year degree, and about 5% had an advanced degree.⁴ Additionally, approximately 35% of those unemployed are 29 and under, with over 60% under the age of 40.

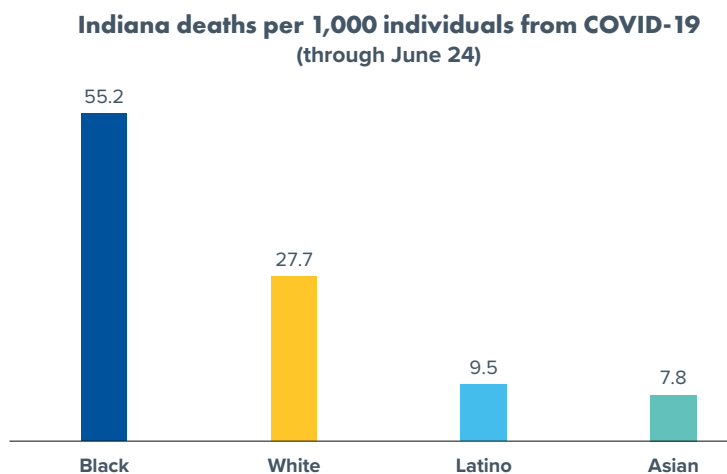


Source: Adapted from an EmployIndy presentation, June 2020. Original source: DWD Unemployment Claims Data

Similar to trends statewide, job loss in Central Indiana extends across sectors. The leisure and food services industries were significantly impacted and make up the largest percent of unemployment insurance claimants. This sector, which provides employment opportunities to individuals with lower levels of education attainment, will likely be the slowest to return. Additionally, many facilities across Central Indiana's manufacturing industry were forced to shut down, resulting in high unemployment. With the sector starting to reopen, however, employers are now looking to rapidly rehire its workforce.

Individual Impact

Americans at all education levels are struggling to pay their bills. Food insecurity has increased, particularly for families with children, who are contending with this challenge at an unprecedented rate.⁵ Individuals who had been engaged in the workforce for decades now find themselves un- or underemployed due to furloughs, layoffs, or reduced hours. Finding jobs or connecting to training in the attempt to reenter the labor force has required substantial effort, and government programs cannot reach everyone eligible for support. It comes as no surprise that mental health challenges and associated impacts are on the rise.⁶



Source: Berube, Alan. 25 June 2020. Brookings Metro Inclusive Economic Indicators: The virus has affected Black Americans more severely than others. Sourced from APM Research Lab: The Color of Coronavirus. <https://www.apmresearchlab.org/covid/deaths-by-race>

COVID-19 has illuminated long-existing inequities in our social systems and labor market, as the

⁴ EmployIndy. 11 June 2020. Marion County and Central Indiana Unemployment Insurance Claims by Education Level. https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1LITWhqTY8ldB1nVffaIWYfFg5MvWp4VrPON8aSO-jec/edit#slide=id.g899590d6ef_0_60

⁵ Bauer, Lauren. 6 May 2020. The COVID-19 crisis has already left too many children hungry in America. 6 May 2020. The Hamilton Project. https://www.hamiltonproject.org/blog/the_covid_19_crisis_has_already_left_too_many_children_hungry_in_america

⁶ Ananat, Elizabeth O. and Anna Gassman-Pines. Snapshot of the COVID Crisis Impact on Working Families. The EconoFact Network. <https://econofact.org/snapshot-of-the-covid-crisis-impact-on-working-families>

recession is impacting some populations more than others and drastically exacerbating existing economic and health difficulties for the most vulnerable. In Indiana, 75% of Black households and 65% of Latinx households are affected by job loss compared with 43% of White households.⁷ The death rate among Black Hoosiers is nearly double that of White Hoosiers. Compared to White and Asian Americans, Black and Latinx Americans are more likely to have been laid off and to have changed or canceled their education plans.⁸ And although initial job loss was felt by all racial and ethnic groups in Indiana, the Black unemployment rate has remained constant while White unemployment rate has improved.⁹

Workers at both ends of the age spectrum have been hit especially hard with likely long-term impacts. Those nearing retirement may need to prolong their time in the workforce despite being at higher risk of infection. To that end, many will be forced out of the workforce before they are financially prepared to do so. While in-school youth have lost instruction time due to the rapid adjustment to e-learning and varying levels of connectivity, employment of young adults ages 16 to 24 has severely declined.¹⁰ Recovery efforts must be especially strategic in connecting young people to education and training opportunities so we can prevent another “lost generation” as in the 2008 recession and intentionally equip youth with workforce readiness skills necessary to enter the workforce.



RAPID RE-EMPLOYMENT RESPONSE PLAN

The State of Indiana’s *Rapid Recovery for a Better Future* plan lays a strong foundation for Central Indiana’s response to the current economic crisis. This reality necessitates a coordinated response from state agencies, municipalities, nonprofits, employers, and community organizations. The Regional Workforce Partnership (RWP) brings together leadership to pursue meaningful policy priorities that create a stronger climate for businesses, individuals, and our community. At the request of Mayor Joe Hogsett, the RWP has turned its collaborative efforts toward a unified rapid re-employment response plan.

The RWP seeks to address persistent challenges through targeted solutions in its Rapid Re-employment Response Plan. The team designed a set of coordinated strategies that will provide Hoosiers with information about career pathways and quality training opportunities and enable job seekers to pursue opportunities for higher skilled, higher wage employment.

⁷ Berube, Alan. 25 June 2020. Brookings Metro Inclusive Economic Indicators: The virus has affected Black Americans more severely than others. Sourced from APM Research Lab: The Color of Coronavirus. <https://www.apmresearchlab.org/covid/deaths-by-race>

⁸ Strada Center for Consumer Insights. Public Viewpoint: COVID-19 Work and Education Survey. 10 June 2020. <https://www.stradaeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Public-Viewpoint-Report-Week-9.pdf>

⁹ Indiana May Current Employment Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics. 22 June 2020. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://calendar.in.gov/site/dwd/event/may-indiana-employment-report-4/>

¹⁰ Kochhar, Rakesh. 9 June 2020. Hispanic women, immigrants, young adults, those with less education hit hardest by COVID-19 job losses. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/06/09/hispanic-women-immigrants-young-adults-those-with-less-education-hit-hardest-by-covid-19-job-losses/>

Vision: Central Indiana will have a coordinated response process for supporting and re-employing residents.

Mission: Deploy the human and technological capacity to rapidly aggregate employment opportunities; identity, support, and connect job seekers to training and/or employment; and inform regulatory and statutory decision-making.

The scope of this plan includes strategies for supporting employers and job seekers across the region. Priority areas include Employment, Training, and Coordinated Workforce Response, Marketing and Communications, Organizational Capacity, and Required Resources.

Connect People to Employment

Challenge: Considerable confusion exists within the labor market, as job seekers struggle to navigate an antiquated search process and connect with employment opportunities.

Solution: Design a coordinated platform to connect job seekers with employment opportunities.

Engaging employers is a crucial component to aggregating available opportunities and connecting Central Indiana residents to employment. Likewise, it is essential to provide a clear path for the unprecedented number of individuals seeking training and employment and to leverage technology to support implementation at scale.



Objective 1: Profile employers and post career opportunities

Through existing efforts, EmployIndy, Ascend, Conexus, BioCrossroads, the Indiana Chamber, and the Indy Chamber are well positioned to work with employers to capture available good and promising job opportunities, synthesize job characteristics, and increase the visibility of in-demand job postings. Employer engagement efforts will allow the RWP to aggregate demand, resulting in streamlined and enhanced ongoing support systems for employers and visibility to employment opportunities for job seekers.

Objective 2: Support dislocated workers, college students and recent graduates, youth, and other job seekers

The plan includes strategies to support dislocated adults, youth and young adults, as well as recent college graduates. A streamlined intake process for job seekers that captures their relevant skills, abilities, and credentials will enable them to connect with applicable, up-to-date resources, training, and employment. This intake process will combine people and technology to achieve scale commensurate with need while focusing on overrepresentation of low-income individuals and people of color.

Objective 3: Use technology to support and connect people to jobs at scale

Ascend and EmployIndy will update and scale the Ascend Network technology platform to help job seekers navigate the employment landscape, facilitate meaningful connections between job seekers and Central Indiana employers, and enable scale for the rapid recovery effort.

Connect People to Training

Challenge: People lack access to training and education required for available jobs and desired career paths.

Solution: Provide Hoosiers with individually relevant skill and educational resources to empower personal advancement.

As the economy begins to reopen and employers look to rehire, lingering effects of the coronavirus crisis will exacerbate existing misalignment between demand for skilled talent and availability of that talent. Economic recovery plans must

establish a better foundation with built-in flexibility to prepare for a new normal ahead.¹¹ The State of Indiana's *Rapid Recovery for a Better Future* plan provides resources and support for Hoosiers to prepare for new employment opportunities through education and training, skill and career coaching, and access to quality roles.¹² Ascend and EmployIndy will leverage strategies within the State's plan to connect job seekers with education and training resources.

Objective 1: Connect job seekers in need of further education attainment with publicly funded educational and career building opportunities

Over 80,000 Hoosiers in Central Indiana do not have a diploma. The first step in career advancement for these individuals will be to secure their high school equivalency. Therefore, the City of Indianapolis will identify available providers of high school diplomas and equivalencies funded by the State and City. Leveraging the CARES Act to grow the Next Level Jobs Workforce Ready Grant, the State plans to make investments in short-term education and training opportunities and provide access to accelerated and high-demand degree and credentialing programs. Ascend will design the Network to identify individuals through job seeker intake process who are considering pursuing a degree or career change in high demand sectors so that Ascend and EmployIndy team members can provide necessary guidance through the application and enrollment process.

Coordinate Workforce Efforts

Challenge: The disconnected workforce ecosystem makes it difficult to respond to unprecedented crises.

Solution: Coordinate workforce organizations to leverage existing assets and recommend public policies that will improve efficiency and scale of workforce development boards' employer and job seeker support structures.

The RWP identified potential policy opportunities to better enable implementation of a comprehensive and effective response to widespread unemployment. The RWP is engaging regulatory and legislative bodies to accelerate overall re-employment efforts and lead to opportunities for replication across the state.

Communications and Organizational Capacity

The RWP will implement unified strategies to communicate the Rapid Re-Employment Response Plan to the public. Through broad-based communications and by equipping community-based organizations across the region, the RWP will enable individuals and organizations to connect to available resources. To reach its targeted audiences and raise awareness of resources available to both job seekers and employers, the RWP will roll out a communications strategy that governs the launch of the Rapid Re-employment Plan in early August and a subsequent marketing campaign to run through fall 2020.

To execute effectively against the articulated priorities, Ascend and EmployIndy will each increase staff capacity sufficiently to meet the demands of the rapid re-employment plan and ensure the necessary number of job seekers are supported in their employment search.

To date, Ascend and EmployIndy have already secured \$1 million in funding from the City of Indianapolis. The immediate investment of local funds demonstrates the existing support for and confidence in the RWP's plan.

CONCLUSION

Uniquely positioned to respond to these pressing economic challenges, Central Indiana's Regional Workforce Partnership has come together to assist our economy in its recovery by engaging employers and supporting job seekers in accessing the resources, training, and jobs necessary to sustain themselves and their families. By leveraging our existing strengths and collaborative relationships to quickly create an actionable Rapid Re-employment Response Plan, the RWP is prepared to implement its comprehensive strategies in concert with the State of Indiana's *Rapid Recovery for a Better Future* plan. Through its strategies for both employers and job seekers, Central Indiana's Rapid Re-Employment Response Plan will enable thousands of Hoosiers to access essential workforce resources and expedite our economy's recovery.

¹¹ Eggers, William D., Michael Flynn, John O'Leary, Bruce Chew. 16 April 2020. Governments' response to COVID-19. Deloitte Insights. <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/economy/covid-19/governments-respond-to-covid-19.html>.

¹² *Rapid Recovery for a Better Future Accelerated Action Plan*. May 2020. State of Indiana.