



STRATEGIC PLAN 2026 - 2029



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EmployIndy enlisted the help of Transform Consulting Group (TCG) to complete a strategic plan. EmployIndy completed an internal organizational assessment. **TCG engaged 610 key community partners to solicit feedback and gather information for this report.** TCG also conducted research, gathered data, and reviewed information from EmployIndy, Central Indiana, and the workforce landscape. Using this information, TCG completed a comprehensive organizational analysis and needs assessment summary report to inform staff and board members before the planning retreat and help them make decisions about goals and strategies.

TCG facilitated a strategic planning retreat with staff and board members on April 29, 2026. During the retreat, TCG used a collaborative approach to help the board align their vision for the future of EmployIndy, and used the knowledge gathered from stakeholder feedback, organizational information, and other related research to determine the goals and strategies that will be included in the new strategic plan.

KEY FINDINGS

The following key findings served as the foundation for EmployIndy's goals and strategies.

Stakeholders view EmployIndy as a trusted connector and convener.

- 40% of funders and many community residents still express confusion about what an intermediary actually does.
- Stakeholders highlighted a fragmented system where residents often do not know how to access services

Residents and partners want a system that is easier to find, understand, and use.

- Awareness of workforce programs is strong among workforce partners (94%) and educators (92%), but more limited among the general public, where 59% are familiar and 41% are unfamiliar with EmployIndy.
- Most residents learn about workforce programs through word of mouth rather than formal outreach, and many partners and residents describe the workforce system as complex and difficult to access.
- 78% of job seekers reported not hearing back from employers, and increasingly digital application systems were named as a barrier for residents with limited access to technology, pointing to the need for simpler digital tools and neighborhood-based access points.



People need to know what's available to them and how to get it.

Many working residents do not have a path to economic mobility.

- Economic mobility is uneven across the county by place and by race. Adults who grew up in Marion County have an average household income of about \$38,000 by age 35, and median income for Black residents (\$48,557) is more than one-third below the highest reported median income in the county.
- One in four (24% or 96,281) Marion County households are ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). They are working but unable to afford the basics.
- Marion county's median household income is \$66,346. The estimated living wage for a household with two adults and one child is \$75,296. Access to livable wages was the most frequently cited workforce need across every stakeholder. It topped the list for residents (nearly two-thirds, 61%), employers (63%), staff and board (69%), and workforce partners (70%).

Employer demand is outpacing the region's talent supply.

- Health care, social assistance, and professional, scientific, and technical services industries are each projected to grow 12% in Marion County through 2033.
- Statewide, entry-level talent meets only 50% to 60% of employer demand, and less than half of demand is met in nursing, health care technician, and skilled trades roles, several of the same fields growing fastest locally.
- Skills alignment and job readiness were the second most frequently cited workforce need, with employers and educators pointing to gaps between training and what jobs require.
- Looking ahead, more than 140,000 jobs in the Indianapolis area could be exposed to AI-related change, and stakeholders pointed to digital literacy and adaptability, rather than advanced technical expertise, as the skills residents will most need.

“

Hard skills can get them the job, but soft skills help them keep their job

—Employer

EmployIndy depends heavily on grant funding.

- Funders value EmployIndy, with 80% describing it as trusted and well-regarded, yet 60% want clearer evidence of long-term impact.
- More than 95% of EmployIndy's revenue comes from grants, most of its government. Assets grew 62% from FY 2020 to FY 2024 as pandemic-era funding flowed in and then receded.
- EmployIndy reestablished formal fundraising goals, meeting a \$4 million target in 2025 and setting a \$6 million goal for 2026. Across all fundraising efforts, it has already raised \$5.8 million this year, with \$6.3 million more in pending proposals.
- Staff turnover reached 34% over the past year, nearly half from a reduction in force tied to the drop in pandemic funding, and staff described being under-resourced and asked for more structure.
- EmployIndy's Net Promoter Score of 29 is positive overall, though it sits below the nonprofit average of 63 and varies widely by group, from staff (67) to board (21).

“

I need some rails, for all of us, or we're gonna just keep as we have been.

—Staff member

OUR MISSION

EmployIndy connects talent to opportunity.

OUR VISION

An Indianapolis where every resident has a pathway to economic mobility and every employer has access to the talent they need.

STRATEGIC GOALS

EmployIndy's strategic goals were shaped through a comprehensive planning process that included surveys, focus groups, interviews, and broad engagement across the workforce system. Key findings from this input, combined with insights from staff and board members at the planning retreat, identified three foundational priorities:

1. **Clarify EmployIndy's role**
2. **Focus its program portfolio**
3. **Strengthen financial sustainability**

As the leadership team reflected on who would use this document and what it needed to accomplish, the goals were reframed around the future EmployIndy is building toward and not just the organizational work required to get there. The result is four strategic goals that preserve the intent of the original three priorities while casting them in a more aspirational forward-looking direction. They are designed to resonate with the full range of EmployIndy's audiences: staff navigating day-to-day decisions, board members setting direction, funders evaluating impact and community partners understanding where EmployIndy is headed and why.

GOAL 1 - Build a Modern + Accessible Workforce System

Create a modern, accessible workforce system that connects residents to opportunity through digital tools, neighborhood-based access, and coordinated career navigation.

GOAL 2 - Accelerate Economic Mobility

Focus investments on strategies that help residents, especially those historically left behind, move into quality careers with long-term growth potential.

GOAL 3 - Lead a Demand-Driven Regional Talent Strategy

Align employers, educators, and workforce providers around high-demand industries and future talent needs.

GOAL 4 - Build a Sustainable and High-Performing Organization

Strengthen funding, operations, talent, and systems to sustain long-term impact.

GOAL

STRATEGIES

BUILD A MODERN + ACCESSIBLE WORKFORCE SYSTEM

Trusted Workforce Orchestrator

Convene partners and turn workforce insights into action.

High Impact Program Investment

Strengthen what EmployIndy does best.

Relationship Ownership

Drive partner alignment.

ACCELERATE ECONOMIC MOBILITY

Data-Informed Decision Making

Measure what matters.

Resident-Centered Career Navigation

Make career navigation work for everyone.

Accessibility

Expand outreach and career awareness.

LEAD A DEMAND- DRIVEN TALENT STRATEGY

Business First

Align business services with workforce outcomes.

Leadership, Value Proposition + Influence

Strengthen EmployIndy's positioning and serve as the trusted voice on workforce and talent issues.

Sales-Engaged Talent Strategy

Activate staff as ambassadors in meeting employers' workforce needs.

BUILD A SUSTAINABLE + HIGH- PERFORMING ORGANIZATION

Financial Resilience

Strengthen reserve building and diversify revenue streams.

Financial Governance + Transparency

Build board and leadership accountability for financial health.

Portfolio Governance + Decision Criteria

Establish organizational guardrails and a unified framework for evaluating, prioritizing, and sunseting initiatives.

YEAR 1
2026

Clarify Role + Focus
the Portfolio

YEAR 2
2027

Align Investments +
Activate the Strategy

YEAR 3
2028

Demonstrate Impact
+ Sustain Growth

STRATEGIC PLAN - IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

GOAL 1 **BUILD A MODERN AND ACCESSIBLE WORKFORCE SYSTEM**

Create a modern, accessible workforce system that connects residents to opportunity through digital tools, neighborhood-based access, and coordinated career navigation.

OUTCOMES

Enabling (System) - Workforce system access

- ★ A more coordinated and aligned workforce system that improves access, navigation, and service delivery.
- ★ Workforce investments are aligned to programs and initiatives that create the greatest community impact.
- ★ Strong strategic partnerships position EmployIndy as the trusted workforce intermediary and convener.

STRATEGY 1: Trusted Workforce Orchestrator

Convene partners and turn workforce insights into action.

ACTION STEPS

TIME FRAME

- Partner with the One Stop Operator to more broadly convene partner networks, advisory groups, and workforce collaboratives to improve system coordination, align services, and facilitate shared learning.
- Develop a countywide workforce services map and ecosystem alignment plan that clarifies partner roles, identifies duplication, and strengthens referral pathways.

YEAR 1

YEAR 1

STRATEGIC PLAN

- IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

STRATEGY 1: Trusted Workforce Orchestrator - *continued*

ACTION STEPS

TIME FRAME

- Produce and disseminate quarterly labor market intelligence reports highlighting high-demand occupations, talent gaps, wage trends, and emerging opportunities.
- Create a formal workforce system performance dashboard that tracks participant outcomes, employer engagement, and ecosystem-wide impact.

YEAR 2

YEAR 3

STRATEGY 2: High Impact Program Investment

Strengthen what EmployIndy does best.

ACTION STEPS

TIME FRAME

- Conduct a comprehensive portfolio review of all major initiatives (WorkOne Indy, YES Indy, Talent Bound, Indy Achieves, Project Indy, WIOA Youth, Business Services) and establish investment criteria tied to economic mobility outcomes.
- Redesign Indy Achieves to strengthen Ivy Tech participation, realign completion support resources, and develop a phased countywide Promise Program strategy beginning with IPS graduates.
- Evaluate the long-term role of Talent Bound and work-based learning in response to diploma seals, graduation pathways, career-advising frameworks, and changing employer demand.
- Increase WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker investment in occupational skills training and establish a framework for evaluating investments in on-the-job training, customized training, and registered apprenticeship.

YEAR 1

YEAR 1

YEAR 2

YEAR 2

STRATEGY 3: Relationship Ownership

Reclaim convener role.

ACTION STEPS

TIME FRAME

- Establish monthly workforce provider convenings focused on professional development, best practice sharing, and coordination among career advisors and coaches.
- Create a formal employer engagement model that aligns all employer-facing staff and partners around common workforce priorities.

YEAR 2

YEAR 2

STRATEGIC PLAN

- IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

STRATEGY 3: Relationship Ownership - continued

ACTION STEPS

TIME FRAME

- Develop strategic partnership agreements with key education, economic development, and community organizations to clarify responsibilities and shared outcomes.
- Evaluate and refine partnership and engagement models based on participation and outcomes.

YEAR 1

YEAR 2

GOAL 2 ACCELERATE ECONOMIC MOBILITY

Focus investments on strategies that help residents, especially those historically left behind, move into quality careers with long-term growth potential.

OUTCOMES

Enterprise (North Star) - Residents achieve economic mobility

- ★ Workforce investments consistently improve economic mobility for Marion County residents
- ★ Residents experience seamless, personalized career navigation that leads to quality career opportunities.
- ★ Residents make informed career decisions based on increased awareness of career pathways and workforce opportunities.

STRATEGY 1: Data-Informed Decision Making

Measure what matters most.

ACTION STEPS

TIME FRAME

- Implement a countywide economic mobility measurement framework that tracks wage progression, credential attainment, retention, and career advancement across major programs.
- Assess provider implementation and participant outcomes to ensure shared investments are delivered consistently and effectively across the provider network.
- Develop an integrated data strategy that aligns reporting across WIOA, YES Indy, Lilly Endowment initiatives, NBA Foundation, Elevation Grant, Growth Opportunities, and other funding streams.
- Use outcome data annually to determine program expansion, redesign, consolidation, or sunset decisions.

YEAR 1

YEAR 2

YEAR 1

YEAR 3

STRATEGIC PLAN

- IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

STRATEGY 2: Resident-Centered Career Navigation

Make career navigation work for everyone.

ACTION STEPS

TIME FRAME

- | | |
|---|--------|
| • Establish career advising quality standards and certification expectations for career advisors, coaches, and navigators. | YEAR 1 |
| • Coordinate career advising training and support continuous professional development across schools and community organizations. | YEAR 2 |
| • Develop a common career navigation framework that integrates labor market information, career pathways, and workforce opportunities across all partner organizations. | YEAR 1 |
| • Create seamless referral pathways between schools, community organizations, WorkOne Indy, Indy Achieves, and workforce training providers. | YEAR 2 |

STRATEGY 3: Accessibility

Expand outreach and career awareness.

ACTION STEPS

TIME FRAME

- | | |
|--|--------|
| • Complete an analysis and implementation plan for WorkOne Indy community-based access, including neighborhood access points, co-location opportunities, and digital service delivery. | YEAR 1 |
| • Modernize EmployIndy's digital platform to create a "no wrong door" experience that connects residents to workforce, education, and supportive services. | YEAR 2 |
| • Shift Project Indy functionality to EmployIndy.org to improve access to coaching, career exploration, and workforce service connections. | YEAR 1 |
| • Expand labor market and career pathway awareness through schools, community-based organizations, and neighborhood partners. | YEAR 1 |

STRATEGIC PLAN - IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

GOAL 3 **LEAD A DEMAND-DRIVEN REGIONAL TALENT STRATEGY**

Align employers, educators, and workforce providers around high-demand industries and future talent needs.

OUTCOMES

Enterprise (North Star) - Employers have access to the talent they need

- ★ Employers have access to the skilled talent they need to grow and compete.
- ★ Workforce investments and regional partnerships are aligned around current and future talent needs.
- ★ Employers actively partner in developing, hiring, and retaining local talent.
- ★ Employer satisfaction and trust within EmployIndy (establish a baseline and target growth goals) - net promoter score Residents make informed career decisions based on increased awareness of career pathways and workforce opportunities.

STRATEGY 1: Business First

Align business services with workforce outcomes.

ACTION STEPS

TIME FRAME

- | | |
|--|--------|
| • Establish employer engagement expectations that encourage all employer partners to participate in work-based learning, job quality improvement, and/or hiring from EmployIndy talent pipelines. | YEAR 1 |
| • Leverage employer intelligence and employer councils to validate talent needs, workforce investments, and training priorities. | YEAR 1 |
| • Embed job quality standards into employer engagement and business services to encourage adoption of practices that strengthen wages, retention, advancement opportunities, and workforce outcomes. | YEAR 2 |
| • Align WorkOne Indy business services with labor market needs, occupational training investments, and employer hiring commitments | YEAR 1 |

STRATEGIC PLAN

- IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

STRATEGY 2: Leadership, Value Proposition + Influence

Strengthen EmployIndy's positioning and serve as the trusted voice on workforce and talent issues.

ACTION STEPS

TIME FRAME

- | | |
|---|--------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct and maintain a comprehensive workforce ecosystem mapping and alignment process that identifies funding opportunities, service gaps, workforce investments, and partnership opportunities while articulating clear value propositions for employers, education partners, workforce providers, policymakers, and funders. | YEAR 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and disseminate workforce intelligence, labor market information, career pathway data, and ecosystem impact reports that inform workforce investments, employer decisions, education strategies, public policy, and regional talent planning. | YEAR 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead and facilitate regional dialogue, partnerships, and collaborative planning efforts that align employers, educators, workforce providers, funders, and policymakers around workforce innovation, career advising, work-based learning, talent development, and future workforce needs. | YEAR 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position EmployIndy as the primary coordinator and steward of workforce investments and talent initiatives across Marion County while continuously evaluating stakeholder engagement, influence, and system-wide outcomes to strengthen impact and accountability. | YEAR 2 |

STRATEGY 3: Sales-Engaged Talent Strategy

Activate staff as ambassadors in meeting employers' workforce needs.

ACTION STEPS

TIME FRAME

- | | |
|--|--------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train all employer-facing staff on a unified employer engagement and business development approach. | YEAR 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop shared employer relationship management practices across business services, WorkOne Indy, Talent Bound, and workforce programs. | YEAR 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish coordinated employer engagement strategies for priority industries that align workforce investments with employer talent needs and hiring opportunities. | YEAR 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create performance metrics that measure employer engagement, hiring outcomes, work-based learning participation, and job quality improvements. | YEAR 3 |

STRATEGIC PLAN

- IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

GOAL 4 **BUILD A SUSTAINABLE + HIGH PERFORMING ORGANIZATION**

Strengthen funding, operations, talent, and systems to sustain long-term impact.

OUTCOMES

Enabling (System) - Operational effectiveness

- ★ EmployIndy has the financial capacity to sustain and grow its community impact.
- ★ Organizational resources, investments, and operations are aligned to maximize strategic impact.
- ★ EmployIndy is a high-performing and adaptable organization.

STRATEGY 1: Financial Resilience

Strengthen reserve building and diversify revenue streams.

ACTION STEPS

TIME FRAME

- | | |
|--|--------|
| • Develop and implement a multi-year reserve funding strategy with annual targets. | YEAR 1 |
| • Diversify funding through federal, philanthropic, corporate, and local revenue opportunities. | YEAR 2 |
| • Explore mission-aligned earned revenue opportunities that leverage EmployIndy's expertise in workforce convening, professional development, program administration, and workforce system innovation. | YEAR 2 |
| • Align funding strategies with long-term priorities and high-impact initiatives. | YEAR 1 |

STRATEGIC PLAN

- IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

STRATEGY 2: Financial Governance + Transparency

Build board and leadership accountability for financial health.

ACTION STEPS

TIME FRAME

- | | |
|--|--------|
| • Create a board-level financial sustainability dashboard with reserve, diversification, funding alignment, and organizational capacity for growth and investment. | YEAR 1 |
| • Implement regular portfolio and financial performance reviews tied to strategic goals. | YEAR 2 |
| • Strengthen staff and board financial literacy around workforce funding and sustainability. | YEAR 1 |
| • Improve transparency around investment decisions, program costs, and return on investment. | YEAR 3 |

STRATEGY 3: Portfolio Governance + Decision Criteria

Establish organizational guardrails and a unified framework for evaluating, prioritizing, and sunseting initiatives.

ACTION STEPS

TIME FRAME

- | | |
|---|--------|
| • Establish a portfolio governance framework that guides investment decisions by defining clear criteria for launching, scaling, sustaining, redesigning, and sunseting programs based on strategic priorities and measurable impact. | YEAR 1 |
| • Complete a portfolio assessment of all programs and initiatives against economic mobility, employer impact, sustainability, and strategic alignment. | YEAR 2 |
| • Establish annual strategic investment reviews to guide funding allocation decisions. | YEAR 3 |

SWOT Analysis

EmployIndy staff and board members completed a SWOT (strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis at the strategic planning retreat, which assesses the implications of all of the information presented in the organizational analysis and needs assessment.

STRENGTHS

Internal attributes that give the organization a competitive advantage.

- Knowledgeable, passionate, and mission-driven staff with a strong public service mindset
- Strong expertise, organizational capabilities, and senior leadership buy-in
- WorkOne Indy Center services provide a strong foundational platform
- Established relationships and engagement with community partners and organizations
- Strong national reputation and demonstrated willingness to innovate

WEAKNESSES

Internal challenges that may hinder performance or growth.

Organizational Perception + Brand Clarity

- Internal and external perceptions of workforce services can be inconsistent or outdated
- Employers may feel uncertain about engagement expectations or communication boundaries
- Limited local recognition and confusion around organizational identity and offerings

Implementation + Operational Capacity

- Staff capacity constraints impact execution and partnership development
- Confusion exists around program offerings and organizational priorities
- Employees often serve multiple or unclear roles, leading to inconsistency and inefficiency
- Tension between acting as an intermediary organization versus a direct service provider

SWOT Analysis

—continued

OPPORTUNITIES

External factors that the organization could exploit to its advantage.

- Flexibility in funding strategies supported by a historically successful development team
- Clarify and streamline program offerings to improve understanding and engagement
- Utilize access to real-time state outcomes data for faster reporting and decision-making
- Leverage strong community and county-wide reputation to deepen partnerships
- Align programs and operations more directly with organizational mission and strategic priorities
- Identify niche focus areas and priority populations for greater impact
- Continue fostering innovation to adapt to changing workforce and economic conditions
- Develop stronger internal processes for evaluating and pursuing new opportunities

THREATS

External factors that could cause trouble for the organization.

Funding + Political Environment

- Instability in state, city, and unrestricted funding sources threatens long-term sustainability
- Changes in political leadership and legislative priorities may affect workforce policies and support
- New education and diploma requirements may alter workforce participation pathways

Economic + Technological Change

- Economic downturns or stagnant growth could reduce labor force participation and demand for services
- AI integration and broader technological shifts may disrupt workforce models and service delivery
- Regional organizational restructuring and alignment changes may create operational uncertainty