

SCALING MODERN YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP IN INDIANA OVERVIEW OF CEMETS iLAB INDIANA

INDIANA'S WORKFORCE CRISIS

Indiana's long-standing talent shortages worsened during the pandemic and are [projected](#) to increase. Further, by 2031, [72% of jobs](#) in the U.S. will require postsecondary education and/or training. Unfortunately, Indiana is not on track to meet that need:

- Only [39% of Hoosier adults](#) 25 years and over have an associate degree or higher.
- College enrollment in Indiana has declined from [65% in 2015 to 53% in 2021](#).
- [Fewer than half of Indiana's college students](#) graduate on time. Too few of those graduates earn degrees in high-demand careers, contributing to Indiana's skills gap.

Because [just over half](#) of Indiana's high school graduates go on to college, and only [about two-thirds](#) of the students who attend an Indiana public college complete a program within six years, **a majority of Hoosier students are entering the labor market without a degree or credential.** Indiana must take bold action to reform its education and workforce development system to deliver better outcomes for individuals, employers, and the state's economy.

INDIANA'S MODERN YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP HISTORY

In 2016, Indiana leaders began learning about Switzerland's dual vocational education and training (VET) [system](#) through convenings led by the bipartisan National Conference of State Legislatures and funded by the [Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation](#). Discussions centered on the [NCSL](#) report, "[No Time to Lose: How to Build a World-Class Education System State by State](#)," which highlighted the Swiss dual VET system. Considered the "gold standard" for educating young people and meeting labor market demand, about 70% of Swiss youth participate in a three- or four-year paid apprenticeship spanning the entire labor market, totaling about 180,000 people ages 16 to 19.

These learning sessions culminated in a planning process in 2019 led by the Partnership to Advance Youth Apprenticeship (PAYA). A 25-person planning group took a deeper dive on the Swiss model and benchmarked with other states piloting youth apprenticeship. The group determined the [CareerWise Colorado](#) model aligned best with Indiana. Colorado's model has youth begin three-year, paid apprenticeships in 11th grade, culminating in a high school diploma, college credit, and an industry credential.

In July 2019, a subset of the Indiana planning group attended [CEMETS Institute](#) in Zurich to see first-hand the Swiss system and develop a plan for Indiana. The group decided on a two-pronged approach to implementing a Swiss-style youth apprenticeship system:

1. **Launch of Swiss-style pilot programs in Indiana.** The first cohort of apprentices launched in Elkhart County in 2019 through the work of [CareerWise Elkhart County](#). Marion County launched the [MAP](#) program in 2020 through the joint efforts of [Ascend Indiana](#) and [EmployIndy](#), placing its first cohort of apprentices in 2021.
2. **Create a statewide Community of Practice (COP) to convene communities across Indiana working to implement Swiss-style youth apprenticeship programs.** Ascend designed and currently oversees the COP, which launched in March 2020. Through the COP, Ascend has raised additional national and state funding and provided planning grants and technical assistance to support the launch of eight additional sites. As of 2023, there are five sites operating and five more in the planning phase.

CHALLENGES TO SCALE IN INDIANA

The five operating Swiss-style youth apprenticeship sites in Indiana, which collectively support more than 400 apprentices statewide, list the same implementation challenges: limited business interest, high school scheduling constraints, limited career counseling capacity in high schools, and little to no public transit. To date, each apprenticeship experience has been customized for the student and employer, which makes it difficult to design scalable processes. To address these issues, pilot site leaders recommend that Indiana focus on scaling youth apprenticeship in a few industry sectors with critical talent shortages. This would help Indiana build out scalable solutions that can then be replicated by other sectors.

In June 2023, 14 Indiana leaders attended CEMETS Institute in Switzerland. While there, they identified a key barrier to scale – the lack of a governing and operating body that spans business, education and government and can withstand leadership turnover.

In September 2023, the Indy Chamber's Leadership Exchange ([LEX](#)) took place in Zurich. Attendees included more than 100 leaders in business, higher education, government and philanthropy, the majority of whom agreed we need to expand youth apprenticeship in Indiana. While there, the Fairbanks Foundation announced a grant to CEMETS to support scaling Indiana's apprenticeship efforts through a comprehensive 10-month Implementation Lab (iLab).

NEXT STEPS WITH CEMETS iLAB INDIANA

As part of iLab Indiana, leaders across business, education and government will receive technical assistance from CEMETS to develop an implementation plan for scaling youth apprenticeship in Indiana. The following shared vision and priorities, established by the Indiana CEMETS planning group in August 2023, will guide the efforts:

Vision

- By 2030, Indiana's education to workforce system will ensure every student and adult learner has access to high-quality education and training options, enabling all Hoosiers to discover their passions, reach their fullest potential, and meaningfully contribute to the economic and civic vitality of their communities.
- As a result, Indiana will become a Top 10 destination for employers seeking to expand existing businesses and entrepreneurs working to launch new businesses.

To achieve this vision, Indiana's initial focus should be on scaling youth apprenticeship statewide. Once this system is operating statewide, it can be expanded to serve adult learners.

Short-term priorities

- Establish a governing and operating structure to oversee a statewide youth apprenticeship system.
- Identify a group of employers within three or four industry sectors with significant talent shortages and work to scale youth apprenticeship in these sectors.
- Identify a group of public high schools to address school-level barriers to scaling youth apprenticeship.
- Identify a group of higher education institutions to build out a permeable system for youth apprentices and adults.
- Identify policies that inhibit scaling youth apprenticeship and work to address barriers.
- Develop and launch a marketing and communications strategy to encourage participation in youth apprenticeship.

iLab Indiana, which is being staffed by Ascend Indiana and the Indy Chamber, kicked off in December 2023 and will conclude by August 2024. The iLab's final deliverable is an implementation plan focused on scaling youth apprenticeship in Indiana.