



INDIANA CAREER APPRENTICESHIP PATHWAY

Opening Doors for More Hoosiers to Pursue Promising Careers



An Update on the Work of CEMETS iLab Indiana to
Build the Indiana Career Apprenticeship Pathway

NOVEMBER 2025

PREPARED BY

CEMETS iLAB
Indiana



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Letter from the Co-Chairs of iLab Indiana

NOVEMBER 2025

Since the release of the CEMETS iLab Indiana strategic plan just 14 months ago, our efforts have significantly advanced the work necessary to build a new education and training pathway in Indiana. What began less than two years ago as a statewide coalition with an ambitious goal has led to the Indiana Career Apprenticeship Pathway (INCAP), which is set to welcome its first students next year.

We are pleased to share this update, which reflects on the progress and insights we've gained since the publication of iLab Indiana's strategic plan, along with the challenges and opportunities that await. While there is still much left to do to build and scale INCAP, we're proud of what we've accomplished in a short time. We have no doubt we will continue this momentum and reach our goal of 50,000 total INCAP students by 2034.

Thank you to all iLab members and partner organizations for your continued commitment to building a pathway that opens doors for more Hoosiers to pursue promising careers.

Warm regards,

DAVID BECKER

*Co-Chair, CEMETS iLab Indiana
Chairman and CEO, First Internet Bank*

CLAIRE FIDDIAN-GREEN

*Co-Chair, CEMETS iLab Indiana
President and CEO, Richard M.
Fairbanks Foundation*



David Becker



Claire Fiddian-Green



SECTION ONE

Charting the Path Forward How We Got to Today

What is CEMETS iLab Indiana?

CEMETS iLab Indiana is a coalition of over 300 Hoosier leaders representing a variety of sectors, including business, K-12 education, higher education, government, non-profit, and philanthropy. Established in December 2023 by the [Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation](#), the coalition's members joined forces to create a new statewide professional education and training pathway as one solution to Indiana's education and workforce challenges.

Laying the Groundwork

The seeds for iLab Indiana took hold in 2016, when Indiana leaders, led by the Fairbanks Foundation, first learned about Switzerland's renowned Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPET) system. VPET is rooted in youth apprenticeship experiences that begin in high school, but the system also offers on-the-job education and training programs for adults throughout their careers.

Inspired by Switzerland, Indiana stakeholders spent the next several years studying the Swiss system, launching youth apprenticeship pilot programs in several regions of the state, and establishing a forum for youth apprenticeship practitioners to collaborate.

While the pilot programs created new opportunities for students, several systemic challenges emerged, which led to the creation of iLab Indiana and its charge to build a statewide professional education and training pathway for high school and adult students, now known as the [Indiana Career Apprenticeship Pathway](#).

A DECADE OF INVESTMENT

Since 2016, the Fairbanks Foundation has allocated more than \$25 million in funding to study the Swiss VPET system and build INCAP, including:

- **\$319,000 to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)** to support convenings of an Indiana delegation to explore the Swiss model and potential next steps in Indiana.
- **\$250,000 to the Partnership to Advance Youth Apprenticeship at New America** to lead a year-long planning effort in Indiana to launch a Community of Practice and youth apprenticeship pilot programs statewide.
- **\$9 million to Ascend Indiana** for the creation of a statewide Community of Practice and design of the Marion County youth apprenticeship pilot program with pass-through funding to EmployIndy to implement the Marion County pilot.
- **\$2.1 million to launch and support INCAP Industry Talent Associations.**
- **\$1.8 million for the Indy Chamber** to conduct employer outreach and engagement.
- **\$700,000 for support from CEMETS at the Chair of Education Systems, ETH Zurich.**
- **\$9.6 million to Ascend Indiana** to support implementation of iLab Indiana's strategic priorities and the continued management of the iLab Indiana coalition, including \$1.2 million in sub-grants for regional intermediaries (referred to as INCAP Connectors).

WHY IS THE COALITION CALLED CEMETS iLAB INDIANA?

The idea for the iLab – short for Implementation Lab – is based on a structure created by education system experts at the Center on the Economics and Management of Education and Training Systems (CEMETS) at the Chair of Education Systems, ETH Zurich. Made possible through grant funding from the Fairbanks Foundation, CEMETS continues to provide iLab members with invaluable guidance on how to adapt proven strategies to meet the unique needs of Hoosier students.

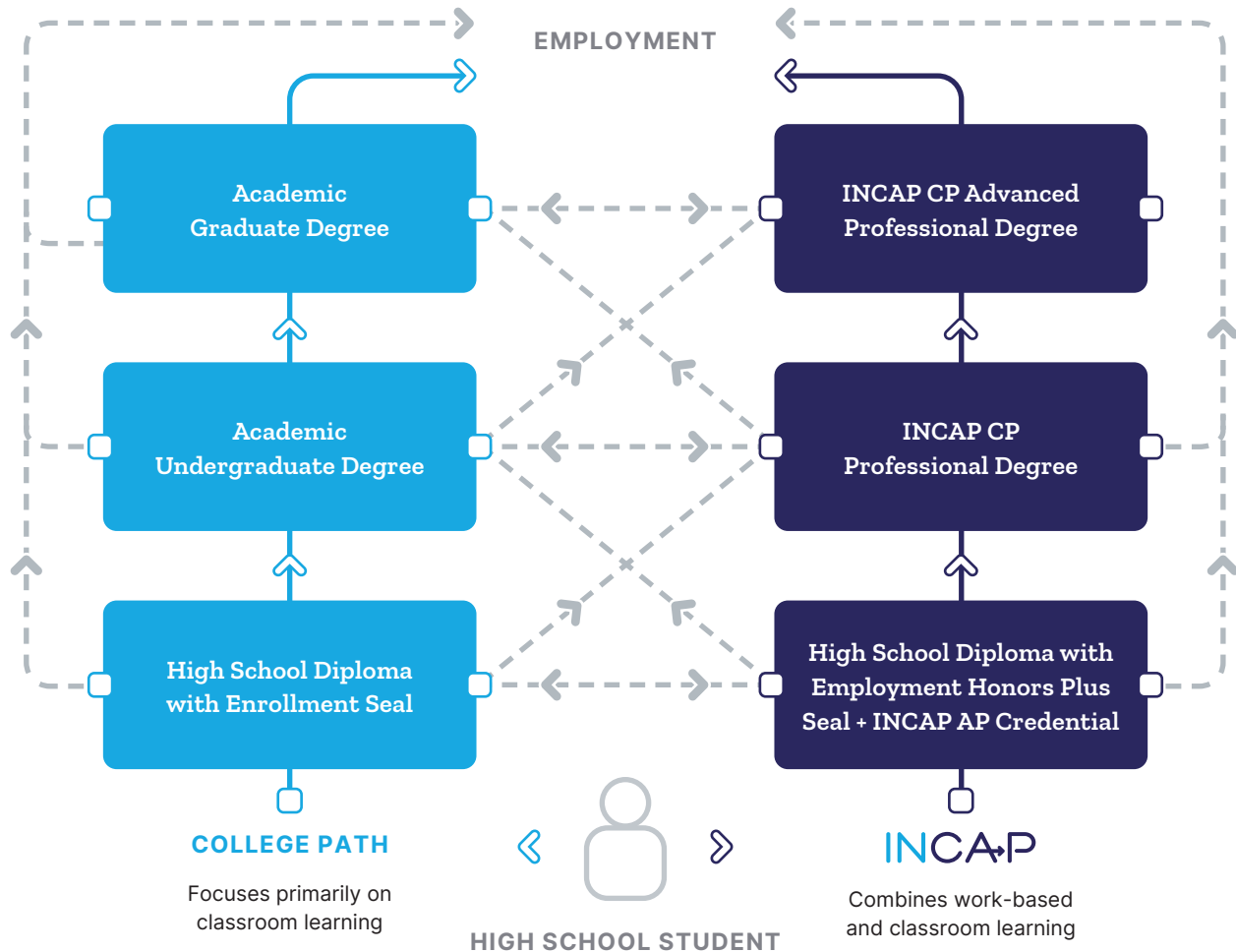
What is the Indiana Career Apprenticeship Pathway?

The [Indiana Career Apprenticeship Pathway](#) offers a new option for Hoosiers to access education and training that prepares them for in-demand careers and for Indiana businesses to build a skilled workforce. INCAP offers two education and training programs:

➤ **The INCAP Apprenticeship Program (INCAP AP)** offers multi-year apprenticeships that begin in high school and combine classroom learning with paid on-the-job training. When students graduate high school, they receive the Employment Honors Plus diploma seal. At the end of their apprenticeship, they earn an INCAP AP credential, which will be recognized by colleges and employers statewide as evidence of the knowledge and skills they gained during their apprenticeship.

➤ **The INCAP Career Program (INCAP CP)** offers industry-led training for adults to build new skills and advance professionally. Most participants complete their program while working part- or full-time. Upon completion, they earn an INCAP CP professional degree, which is equivalent to an academic bachelor's degree, or an INCAP CP advanced professional degree, which is equivalent to an academic graduate degree.

INCAP's alignment with the college pathway means students have the flexibility to adjust their path to fit their goals.



Key Differentiators

INCAP is structured to align the needs of students and employers in a way that doesn't exist elsewhere in the U.S.

1. EMPLOYERS PLAY THE LEADING ROLE.

Through Industry Talent Associations – organizations charged with leading statewide employer engagement within their industry – employers help define the skills and knowledge students need to fill in-demand jobs. Led by the ITAs, employers also help create training materials and assessments for workplace learning. This ensures graduates are well prepared for the jobs employers seek to fill.

2. EMPLOYERS COLLABORATE WITH EDUCATORS TO CREATE TRAINING MATERIALS AND SCHOOL-BASED CURRICULUM.

Educators play a vital role in INCAP by partnering with employers to develop the school-based curriculum that complements on-the-job training and by delivering classroom instruction.

3. INCAP AP STUDENTS SPEND MOST OF THEIR TIME WITH THEIR EMPLOYER.

Each INCAP AP occupation follows a standardized schedule that states at least 50% of a student's time – ideally three or four days per week – should be spent with an employer. This ensures the student gains in-demand skills while also contributing to business needs.

4. INCAP STARTS IN HIGH SCHOOL AND EXTENDS THROUGH ADULTHOOD.

The pathway begins with INCAP AP, which offers high school students apprenticeships that combine classroom education with paid on-the-job training. It progresses to higher levels of industry-led education and training for adults via INCAP CP. This ensures INCAP apprenticeships are not a dead-end for students.

5. INCAP CREDENTIALS AND DEGREES ARE RECOGNIZED BY EMPLOYERS AND COLLEGES.

As career goals change, students who earn a degree or credential can transition to a more advanced program in either INCAP or the college pathway by completing certain requirements like classes, exams, or work experience, building on the credit for the education and/or training they have already completed.



INCAP is structured to align the needs of students and employers in a way that doesn't exist elsewhere in the U.S.



ORGANIZATIONS LEADING CEMETS iLAB INDIANA AND INCAP START-UP ACTIVITIES



- The **Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation** is the leader and funder of CEMETS iLab Indiana. Since 2016, the Fairbanks Foundation has awarded more than \$25 million in grants for youth apprenticeship, iLab Indiana, and INCAP. Because of this nearly decade-long investment and deep subject matter expertise, Fairbanks Foundation President & CEO Claire Fiddian-Green and other members of the Foundation's staff are leading the initial implementation phases and overseeing the work of all iLab committees.

CEMETS iLAB *Indiana*

- **iLab Indiana's Governing Committee** is comprised of 20 Hoosier leaders responsible for creating the strategic direction for INCAP and guiding critical decisions. This includes proposing a future governance structure to replace the iLab, selecting INCAP Connectors (regional intermediaries), recommending a long-term funding model for INCAP, and developing a process for ensuring the degrees and credentials earned by INCAP graduates are formally recognized by the education system.



- **Ascend Indiana**, the talent and workforce development initiative of the Central Indiana Corporate Partnership, is the lead implementation partner for INCAP. Despite its regionally focused name, CICP represents large businesses, universities, and foundations statewide. Ascend is responsible for supporting INCAP's Industry Talent Associations, launching the regional infrastructure for INCAP implementation, implementing marketing and communications efforts to increase INCAP awareness and engagement, and managing operations for **CEMETS iLab Indiana**.

ORGANIZATIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING INCAP

Three types of organizations are critical to the implementation of INCAP: **Industry Talent Associations**, which work with employers; **regional INCAP Connectors**, which work with middle and high schools and their students and act as the liaison between ITAs and schools; and **regional chambers of commerce**, which support employers and connect them with ITAs and students.

- **Industry Talent Associations (ITAs)** are responsible for uniting employers in their industry to speak with one voice about their talent needs, identifying priority occupations for the industry, and defining required, standardized knowledge and skills within these occupations. The ITAs also develop on-the-job training materials and assessments for employers and collaborate with educators to ensure classroom content is aligned with occupational requirements.
- **Regionally based INCAP Connectors** serve as bridges between the ITAs and participating schools and students, helping high schools recruit students for INCAP AP, supporting student success, and providing other assistance.
- **Regional chambers of commerce** support employer engagement and student career exploration at the local level. They connect employers to ITAs and support regional career fairs and other career planning opportunities.

Once INCAP is implemented, ITAs, INCAP Connectors, and regional chambers of commerce will collaborate and share information to ensure INCAP functions effectively for all stakeholders.





SECTION TWO

Making Progress

An Update to the 2024 Strategic Plan

In September 2024, iLab Indiana's Governing Committee introduced a [strategic plan](#) with four key priorities. Since then, iLab Indiana members and partners have made significant progress while also gaining valuable insights that are shaping INCAP's next steps.



Priority 1:

Establish Industry Talent Associations to convene employers, identify priority occupations, and create INCAP programs.

BACKGROUND

Prior to the establishment of Industry Talent Associations, employers from across Indiana participated in industry-focused learning trips to Switzerland. These visits offered insight into the Swiss system and helped build consensus around the need to develop a similar model in Indiana. Funded and led by the Fairbanks Foundation and organized by Ascend Indiana, the trips included presentations from Swiss system experts at ETH Zurich. The U.S. Embassy in Bern and the Swiss Consulate General in Chicago assisted ETH in making introductions to site visit hosts in Switzerland.

Each ITA is responsible for developing two deliverables pivotal to their operations: a business plan detailing ITA start-up activity and training plans for their priority INCAP occupations.

The business plan will establish clear goals and objectives, define tasks and timelines, allocate appropriate staffing and resources, and develop a budget to guide effective implementation. Each ITA's training plans will outline occupations selected by employers for INCAP, including the essential competencies for each role and the education and training materials required for students to master them. The ITAs will partner with employers to develop education and training materials and assessments for use during on-the-job training. ITAs also work with education partners to ensure classroom content aligns with learning requirements for each occupation.

**Each ITA
is creating
training plans
for the priority
occupations
selected by
employers.**



PROGRESS

With the support of funding from the Fairbanks Foundation, six Industry Talent Associations are now active and are recruiting employers to help identify occupations and design relevant INCAP education and training programs. The iLab Industry Committee selected the following organizations to lead the ITAs and based those selections on each organization's expertise and employer networks:



Advanced Manufacturing and Logistics ITA
Led by [Conexus Indiana](#)



Banking ITA (referred to as the Financial Services Academy)
Led by [Indiana Bankers Association Foundation](#)



Construction ITA
Led by [Indiana Construction Roundtable Foundation](#)



Healthcare ITA
Led by [BioCrossroads](#)



IT ITA (referred to as TechIndiana)
Incubated by the [Indiana Chamber of Commerce Foundation](#)



Life Sciences ITA
Led by [BioCrossroads](#)

Since their launch, the Industry Talent Associations have engaged in a variety of activities:

- Each ITA launched a Steering or Advisory Committee comprised of employers alongside other critical stakeholders from K-12, college, and INCAP Connectors. This feedback has informed strategies and next steps for each ITA.
- The first four ITAs – Advanced Manufacturing and Logistics, Banking, Healthcare, and Life Sciences – have draft business plans guiding their implementation and have identified priority occupations for INCAP AP programs.
- The ITAs for Advanced Manufacturing and Logistics, Banking, and Healthcare have drafted training plans for their INCAP AP programs.

KEY LEARNING

Early support from employers plays a crucial role in the success of an ITA, particularly in identifying priority occupations for the industry and shaping INCAP program content.

NEXT STEPS

ITA leaders are collaborating with iLab members who are early INCAP champions to connect them with employers who are unfamiliar with INCAP. ITAs are also using new marketing materials to promote employer investment in INCAP's start-up phase and for employer involvement in designing occupation-specific education and training materials. The materials clearly define the business case for INCAP and the critical role employers must play as co-developers of talent to meet longer-term industry staffing needs in our highly competitive global economy.

Several ITAs plan to welcome INCAP Apprenticeship Program students in fall 2026, with the remaining industries planning to offer apprenticeships beginning in fall 2027.

Contact information for each of the ITAs can be found at IndianaCAP.org/employers. iLab Indiana is considering additional industries, including hospitality and culinary, insurance, and microelectronics, for future INCAP participation.



Priority 2:

Create a structure that allows students to transition between INCAP and the high school-to-college pathway, giving credit for their previous education and training experiences in both pathways.

BACKGROUND

For the system to work as intended, students must be able to move between the college pathway and INCAP without losing credit for the education and training they've already completed. This flexibility – a hallmark of the Swiss system – is enabled by a qualifications framework (QF), a structured model that defines and categorizes qualifications by levels of knowledge and skills. QFs help compare qualifications across different education and training pathways by focusing on learning outcomes, which are defined as professional competencies. These competencies outline what graduates must know and be able to do to enter their chosen profession or pursue additional education.

More simply, QFs enable universities and employers to recognize education and/or training from both the INCAP and college pathways, so students don't have to start over when they switch between the two.

PROGRESS

On May 1, 2025, Governor Braun signed SEA 448 into law, directing Secretary of Education Katie Jenner to prepare a plan to develop a statewide qualifications framework aligned with the International Standard Classifications for Education (ISCED) no later than Nov. 1, 2025.

To help inform the Secretary of Education's plan for a statewide qualifications framework – which directly aligns with the iLab's priority in this area – iLab Indiana developed and shared a draft Indiana Qualifications Framework, along with a recommended process for recognizing both INCAP and academic degree programs within it. This approach ensures alignment between higher education and employers by clearly defining the learning outcomes of each occupation. As a result, students can move more easily between INCAP and the college pathways, creating greater flexibility and opportunity.

KEY LEARNING

In Switzerland, assigning programs to the correct learning level involves an independent expert body reviewing the training materials and required competencies. The iLab sees a critical need to identify a neutral, independent entity that is equally recognized by employers and the academic system and could play this role in Indiana, and potentially across the United States.

NEXT STEPS

The iLab intends to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to identify an organization to support the rollout of the Indiana Qualifications Framework over the coming years. The iLab will share more information on the RFP process and timeline soon.





Priority 3:

Design a labor market-aligned career advising system that serves students across Indiana starting in middle school.

BACKGROUND

To help Hoosier students better understand their education and training pathway options, Indiana needs a robust, independent career exploration and advising system that operates in partnership with K-12 schools and is driven by labor market needs. In this new system, career advisors would have access to current data about in-demand careers and have specialized training to guide students as they explore career options that fit their individual goals. Students would be encouraged to begin this process in the eighth grade via regional career advising centers, which will continue to support students through high school and into adulthood. These centers would also serve adults seeking to build new skills within their current careers or transition to new careers.

PROGRESS

Over the past year, iLab Indiana's Career Advising Working Group identified critical gaps in Indiana's career advising services and developed a draft framework to address them. The framework ensures that by the end of ninth grade, every Indiana student has a personalized plan aligned with their career goals. The plan should outline the classes and experiences needed throughout high school to prepare for their next steps, whether that's applying for the INCAP Apprenticeship Program, pursuing college, or enlisting in the military. It also allows students' interests and aspirations to evolve.

The career advising framework ensures that by the end of ninth grade, every Indiana student has a personalized plan aligned with their career goals.



KEY LEARNING

Indiana middle and high school students lack access to personalized, one-on-one career guidance that reflects their strengths, aligns with labor market trends, and helps families understand the pathways available to support their career goals. While schools play a key role in supporting students' career exploration and awareness, there is a need to establish additional, industry-informed career advising capacity outside of schools to ensure all Hoosier students receive the support they need. Importantly, career centers that operate independently from – but in close partnership with – schools would have the ability to serve adults in non-school locations.

NEXT STEPS

The Career Advising Working Group recommended a framework for a new career exploration and advising system, which iLab Indiana intends to pilot alongside the launch of the INCAP Apprenticeship Program next fall.

Part of this pilot will include career fairs for Central Indiana eighth, ninth, and 10th graders organized by the Indy Chamber (via a grant from the Fairbanks Foundation to the [Indy Chamber Foundation](#)). These career fairs will engage employers and help connect them with students. The Indy Chamber Foundation is also responsible for creating a playbook that outlines how regional chambers across the state can implement similar career fairs in their communities.



Priority 4:

Define clear roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders, including employers, educators, nonprofit, and government representatives.

BACKGROUND

The work to develop and implement INCAP has elevated the need for a public-private governance structure that provides oversight to ensure consistency and continuity.

PROGRESS

The iLab's Governing Committee identified several guiding principles for this statewide oversight structure, which are summarized here:

- Is led by industry
- Is coordinated and focused on outputs, versus a fragmented system focused on inputs
- Provides Hoosier high schoolers and adults with access to education and training pathways that lead to rewarding careers
- Ensures students can transition seamlessly between INCAP and the college pathway with credit earned for the education and/or training they've completed
- Values quality through an accountability-based system that is centered on positive outcomes for youth, adults, employers, and the economy
- Leverages existing assets and infrastructure

To ensure the various stakeholders engaged in INCAP implementation are represented within INCAP governance, the iLab Governing Committee approved a two-level structure that includes representatives from three areas: state government, the private sector, and regional implementors. **Both levels will be chaired and convened by the private sector.**

KEY LEARNING

Employer leadership is central to INCAP, but implementation requires engagement from the public and non-profit sectors in addition to the private sector. This is especially important given that qualifications earned via INCAP will be formally recognized by Indiana's education system.

NEXT STEPS

Once established, representatives from INCAP's new governance structure will have the following responsibilities:

- Ensure INCAP enables Hoosiers – starting in high school and continuing through adulthood – to develop the skills they need for in-demand careers.
- Streamline employer engagement to maximize the employer and student experience and ensure an adequate supply of INCAP opportunities for high school students and adults.
- Establish and oversee a regional implementation structure.
- Enable permeability across the college and INCAP pathways.
- Monitor roles and responsibilities across government, the private sector, and regional implementors, and update as needed.
- Establish a long-term funding model for INCAP.

Until the launch of the first INCAP occupations, the iLab Governing Committee will continue to serve in the governing role. Starting in 2026, iLab Indiana will begin implementing elements of the new governance structure to ensure a successful transition by 2027. **CEMETS iLab Indiana** plans to sunset once the new three-sector INCAP governance structure is fully implemented.

Private Sector Leads Both Levels of Governance Structure

State

Private Sector

Regional Implementors

EXECUTIVE LEVEL

INCAP's executive-level governance representatives are responsible for statewide oversight and decision-making and will meet once or twice each year. This group will be no larger than 15-20 people and include:

Executive Branch

- Governor
- Secretary of Education

Legislative Branch

- Speaker of the House
- Senate President Pro Tempore

Industry

- Central Indiana Corporate Partnership and Ascend Indiana presidents
- Indiana Chamber of Commerce president

Private Foundations

- Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation president
- Up to four other private foundation presidents with an education and/or workforce focus

INCAP Implementors

- One INCAP Connector leader (1-year term)
- Indy Chamber president
- One additional regional chamber of commerce president (1-year term)

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

INCAP's implementation-level governance representatives are responsible for INCAP strategy and implementation and will meet four to six times each year. This group will be no larger than 35-40 members and include:

Executive Branch

- Leadership from the Indiana Department of Education and Indiana Commission for Higher Education, and any other members appointed by the Governor and Secretary of Education

Legislative Branch

- Chairs of House and Senate Education Committees and any other members appointed by the Speaker of the House and Senate President Pro Tempore

Industry

- Leader from each Industry Talent Association
- One representative each from Ascend Indiana and Indiana Chamber of Commerce
- One Indy Chamber representative
- One additional regional chamber of commerce representative (1-year term)

Private Foundations

- One representative from the Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation
- One representative each from up to four other private foundations with an education and/or workforce focus

INCAP Implementors

- Leader from each INCAP Connector

K-12

- One representative each from the Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents, Indiana Principals Association, Indiana Charter Innovation Center, Non-Public Education Association, and Indiana School Counselor Association

Higher Education

- One private college leader (1-year term)
- One two-year public college leader (1-year term)
- One four-year public college leader (1-year term)



SECTION THREE

Laying the Foundation Implementation Updates

Selection of Regional INCAP Connectors

PROGRESS

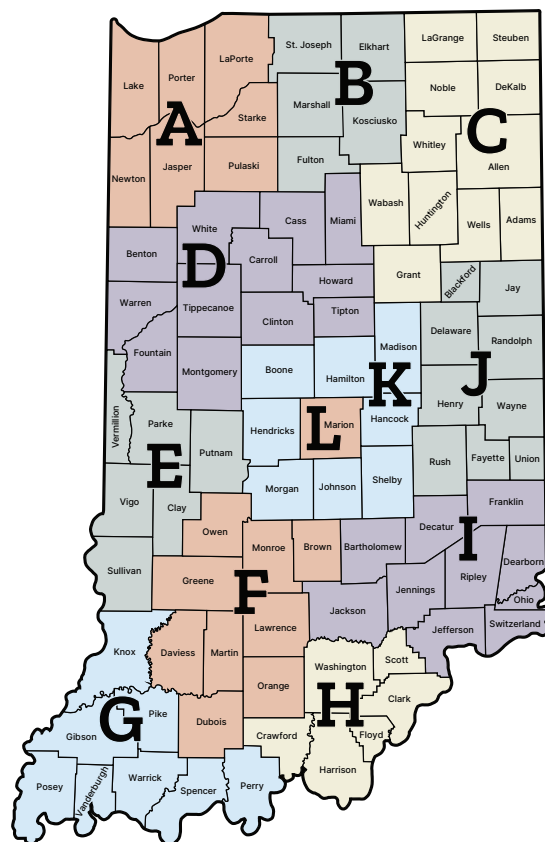
As part of its work to implement INCAP, [Ascend Indiana](#) conducted a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to identify organizations to serve in the regional INCAP Connector role. INCAP Connectors serve as bridges between ITAs and participating schools and students, helping schools recruit students for the INCAP Apprenticeship Program, supporting student success, and providing other assistance.

In July 2025, Ascend Indiana issued an RFP and received letters of intent from 35 organizations interested in serving as INCAP Connectors. Of those, 19 were selected to submit full proposals.

Ultimately, 12 organizations were chosen to serve as INCAP Connectors due to their relevant experience, regional focus, and demonstrated partnerships with K-12 schools, postsecondary institutions, and employers. At scale, these 12 organizations will provide services to INCAP AP students in all 92 counties.

NEXT STEPS

The INCAP Connectors are completing an onboarding process led by Ascend Indiana and will soon begin recruiting school partners based on the INCAP AP regions of focus launching in fall 2026. Recruitment for the first INCAP AP students will begin in early 2026. Schools interested in getting involved can learn more at IndianaCAP.org/educators.



INCAP CONNECTORS

- REGION A Center of Workforce Innovations
- REGION B Horizon Education Alliance
- REGION C Region 8 Education Service Center
- REGION D Region 4 Workforce Board
- REGION E Western Indiana Workforce Development Board
- REGION F Regional Opportunity Initiatives
- REGION G Southern Indiana Education Center
- REGION H Southern Indiana Works
- REGION I Southeast Indiana Workforce Investment Board
- REGION J Eastern Indiana Works
- REGION K Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana
- REGION L EmployIndy

Employer and Student Engagement

PROGRESS

The [Indy Chamber](#) (via the Indy Chamber Foundation) is using a \$1.7 million grant from the Fairbanks Foundation to do two things: raise awareness of career opportunities in Indiana and promote INCAP AP as an option for Central Indiana students to prepare for in-demand careers and for employers to strengthen their talent pipelines. This work includes the organization of career fairs for eighth-, ninth-, and 10th-grade students in Central Indiana and the development of a playbook to help other regional chambers implement similar efforts.

NEXT STEPS

This fall, Indy Chamber staff will travel to Switzerland to observe career fairs in Basel, Lucerne, and Zurich. Insights from these visits will inform the design and planning efforts for an annual, multi-day Central Indiana career fair, the first of which will take place in fall 2026.

Marketing INCAP

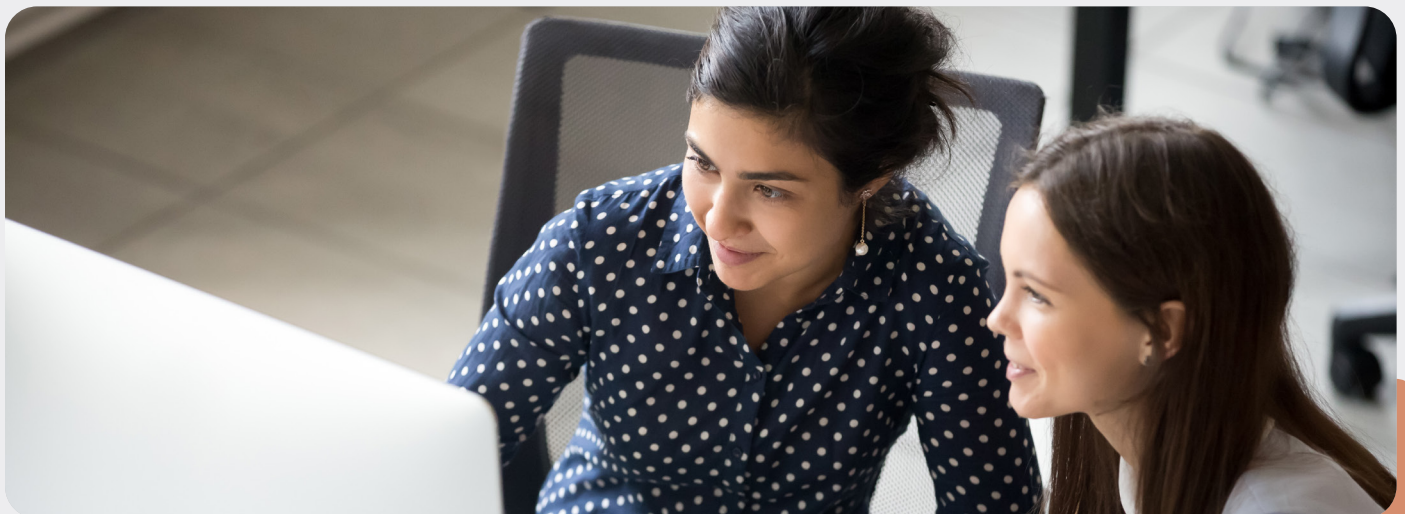
PROGRESS

Over the past year, the Fairbanks Foundation and Ascend Indiana have developed branding and marketing materials for INCAP. Items include a brand book with general and audience-specific messaging along with visual guidelines, a website (IndianaCAP.org), branded templates, infographics, a brochure, fact sheets, a toolkit for the ITAs to assist in recruiting employers, and materials for INCAP Connectors to use to recruit schools and students.



NEXT STEPS

In 2026, marketing efforts will focus on building awareness of INCAP, especially among employers.





SECTION FOUR

Embracing Opportunity **Considerations and Next Steps**



iLab Indiana members and partners have made significant progress in building and launching INCAP. While important considerations remain, iLab Indiana has established a clear path forward to tackle the most urgent issues.





Insight: Launching an employer-led pathway requires changing organizational mindsets and activities.

In the U.S., the idea that employers can (and should) lead an education and training pathway is still new, adding a layer of complexity to its implementation. There is also the need to build in a learning period to help employers understand how the INCAP Apprenticeship Program will function, including the length of time students will work on-site and how that is directly linked to the return on investment for employers who train INCAP students.

NEXT STEPS

ITA leaders will use a variety of strategies to continue recruiting new employers as well as support existing employers. This includes leveraging early INCAP employer champions to engage with those who are considering joining their industry's ITA. That way, employers hear about INCAP from their peers.

Also, the ITAs will use the new INCAP ITA marketing toolkit to meet employers where they are in their journey, from those who are familiar with INCAP to those just learning about it for the first time. Part of this will include educating employers about what they receive from their ITA, which includes robust education and onboarding for their administrative team along with training for employees who will directly supervise INCAP AP students. Finally, ITA leaders may decide to organize smaller industry-specific visits to Switzerland, offering firsthand insight into the Swiss system for new employer participants.

Employer recruiting will leverage early INCAP employer champions to engage with those who are considering joining their industry's ITA. That way, employers hear about INCAP from their peers.





Insight

Indiana's work-based learning landscape is fragmented.

The current work-based learning landscape involves multiple education, intermediary, and government actors, making it difficult for Indiana employers to navigate program options. This results in multiple entities trying to engage separately with the same employer, which is burdensome for businesses. While INCAP is in the start-up phase, early activities may contribute to this fragmentation and lead to confusion among employers, schools, and students.

NEXT STEPS

Industry Talent Associations are designed to be the "one-stop shop" for employer talent needs, decreasing the amount of time employers spend engaged in the development of work-based learning programs, and creating standardized, occupation-aligned training materials that can be implemented by all employers within the industry.

Over time, a major goal is for ITAs and the INCAP Connectors to simplify communications to and from employers, contributing to less fragmentation within the work-based learning landscape. In addition, INCAP's new governance structure includes stakeholders who are involved in or oversee other work-based learning programs, helping to align efforts, reduce duplication, and improve coordination across Indiana.

Also, the INCAP website and related communications toolkits for ITAs and INCAP Connectors, along with a visual that clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of all parties engaged with implementation, should help alleviate confusion. These items will be complete and available by spring 2026 to assist with external communications efforts for all INCAP participants.



Insight

Transportation solutions require collaboration between schools, families, and community-based organizations.

While some school districts can rely on their own transportation fleets or public transit, many lack affordable and practical options. Previous high school apprenticeship pilot programs revealed that inconsistent schedules from student to student and limited time commitments (e.g., three-hour slots) at employer sites made it difficult to coordinate effective and affordable transportation for students.

NEXT STEPS

Because INCAP AP requires high school students to be at their employer site for a full day at least three days each week, it will be easier for schools to arrange transportation that works for more students. Also, consistent, full-day work schedules for INCAP apprentices may also make it possible for families that provide transportation to and from school to instead arrange to drop off and pick up their student at the employer site.

Further, iLab members and partner organizations will work with regional INCAP Connectors to identify additional options for transportation. This could include creative solutions that tap into organizations with unused capacity, such as vehicles owned by churches or community-based organizations.





Insight

It takes significant time and resources to onboard personnel.

Onboarding staff from INCAP partners and other related organizations has been time-intensive due to the complex nature of the work to build a new education and training pathway that is not found anywhere in the U.S. and is different from Indiana's previous apprenticeship pilot programs. Further, because INCAP is modeled on Switzerland's acclaimed Vocational and Professional Education and Training system, stakeholders have traveled overseas, some multiple times, to learn about and speak with those involved in the creation of the Swiss system and its ongoing implementation. This requires substantial time and resources.

NEXT STEPS

iLab members and partner organizations are creating standardized orientation materials that combine the most important components of the Swiss system with information about INCAP as it stands today, all in clear and concise language. These materials, along with explanatory videos from Swiss system experts, will help members of INCAP's new governance structure, ITAs, INCAP Connectors, and other new partners get up to speed as quickly and efficiently as possible. Eventually, once INCAP programs are operational in Indiana, the need to travel to Switzerland is expected to decrease.



Insight

Implementation efforts must account for inevitable staffing turnover.

As Indiana works to reform its education system, it is inevitable that some of the people involved in iLab Indiana and INCAP will move on to new opportunities. Because of the length of time it takes to learn about INCAP, implementation activities may be delayed as new people are onboarded into the work. In the two years since the announcement and launch of iLab Indiana, turnover has already occurred among the sectors participating in the iLab and among the organizations involved in the early planning and implementation of INCAP. This is a reality for any complex, long-term initiative.

NEXT STEPS

The standardized onboarding materials previously mentioned will enable new participants to get up to speed more quickly and help maintain momentum. Additionally, once it is implemented, INCAP's three-sector governance structure will formalize each organization's role, ensuring that if a representative leaves, another person from the same organization can step in. It will also be important for ITAs, INCAP Connectors, education partners, and individual companies participating in INCAP to develop their own standardized onboarding processes.





SECTION FIVE

Ensuring Stability

Preliminary INCAP Funding Recommendations

At scale, INCAP will deliver economic benefits for employers and the state of Indiana that outweigh the costs of implementation. To achieve this, INCAP is designed to be supported by a blend of public and private funding sources. Employers contribute primarily by financing the work of the ITAs – along with the salaries for the INCAP students they employ – and engaging in career exploration activities.

PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT CRITICAL TO INCAP'S INITIAL SUCCESS

Creating a new education and training pathway is a major undertaking, and it requires substantial start-up funding. While the Fairbanks Foundation has committed more than \$25 million since 2016, and other foundations have helped support pilot activities, additional funding is essential to move INCAP from its current phase to full-scale implementation. A combination of government and employer funding will be necessary to support ongoing implementation activities at scale.

INCAP is designed to be supported by a blend of public and private funding sources.



KEY FUNCTIONS AND THEIR FUNDING

During start-up planning and implementation work that included discussions with CEMETS leadership and visits to Switzerland, iLab Indiana defined INCAP's key functions and examined how those functions are funded within the Swiss system.

INCAP Function	Funding Source for Applicable Swiss Function in VPET System
Career advising centers for students and adults	Government
Marketing of available INCAP AP and CP occupations	Government, professional associations, and employers
Industry Talent Associations (ITAs)	Employers
INCAP student wages	Employers
INCAP Connectors (regional intermediaries)	There are no intermediaries. The closest functional equivalent is cantons, which are regional governmental entities that fund and oversee schools, career advising centers, and other activities.
Inter-company training centers for INCAP AP occupations	Employers
INCAP AP classes	Government
Supervisor training for employers that hire INCAP AP students	Government (required basic training) and professional associations (occupation-specific training)
INCAP AP student onboarding	Schools, professional associations, and employers
Training centers for INCAP CP occupations	Employers, professional associations, and student fees
INCAP AP and CP assessments	Professional associations, employers, and government (workplace and classroom-based assessments)
Transportation	Government (public transit), employers, and families
Research and evaluation	Government
INCAP governance structure	Government and professional associations

NEXT STEPS

Using learnings from the Swiss system coupled with an assessment of existing public and private funding streams available in Indiana, the iLab Governing Committee will begin developing an INCAP funding model at the end of 2025. The iLab High School, Higher Education, and Policy Committees, along with ITAs and INCAP Connectors, will contribute to this effort. The Governing Committee will share their funding model recommendations in 2026.



SECTION SIX

Continuing the Momentum 2026 and Beyond

Taking INCAP National

Over the past year, INCAP has gained national recognition as the first pathway of its kind in the U.S. iLab Indiana members and partner organizations have shared their insights with stakeholders across the country, helping to shape the future of education and training.

In addition to numerous speaking engagements by iLab members, the Fairbanks Foundation co-hosted and was the primary funder for the inaugural U.S. Advanced CEMETS Institute held in September 2025 at Lone Rock Retreat in Bailey, Colorado. In partnership with CareerWise USA, the event convened teams from Alabama, California, Colorado, Indiana, Maryland, North Carolina, and Utah – each of which has had teams

attend the summer CEMETS Institute in Switzerland – to discuss efforts to implement Swiss-inspired education and training pathways in their states. Attendees focused on the shared goal of expanding employer engagement. Leadership from CEMETS at ETH Zurich helped plan the Institute, facilitate team case presentations, and provide implementation recommendations to each state team.

The second U.S. Advanced CEMETS Institute will take place in October 2026 in Indiana and will engage the first cohort of attendees from the inaugural event, along with representatives from additional state teams who have attended the CEMETS Institute in Switzerland and are working to implement pathway initiatives inspired by the Swiss system.

DRIVING FORWARD

The work to build and scale INCAP continues to gain momentum, with the following key activities planned for 2026:



Finalize plans and launch at least three INCAP occupations.



Raise awareness of INCAP among middle and high school students and their families, along with school administrators.



Recruit and onboard education partners, first focusing on the regions where INCAP AP programs will be available in the fall.



Launch the first INCAP career fair for Central Indiana students in the fall.



Recruit high school students in late winter and early spring for INCAP AP programs that begin in the fall.



Begin designing additional INCAP AP and CP programs, based on employer feedback to their ITA partners.



Continue to engage employers and increase ITA membership.



Identify short-term and long-term funding solutions.

As the Indiana Career Apprenticeship Pathway continues to progress and evolve, one constant remains: This work would not be possible without the dedication of iLab members and partner organizations. INCAP is driven by collaboration and a shared vision for our state's future, and Indiana is better for it.



**Here's to opening doors for more
Hoosiers to pursue promising careers.**



The Indiana Career Apprenticeship Pathway (INCAP) opens new doors for tens of thousands of Hoosiers — including many who are not planning to attend college — by combining on-the-job education with relevant coursework.



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