

ANNUAL REPORT

2024 - 2025



INDIANA
COMMUNITY ACTION
POVERTY INSTITUTE

MISSION

The Indiana Community Action Poverty Institute engages in research and promotes public policies to help Hoosier families achieve and maintain financial well-being.

FOCUS AREAS

- **Foundations** like safe, stable housing, education, and child care;
- **Good jobs** that provide financial stability and time to care;
- **Support programs** to catch those who are struggling to make ends meet;
- An **end to the financial drains** like medical debt and predatory loans that make financial security impossible to achieve;
- And a **fair tax code** to promote equity and uplift Hoosier households.



DIRECTOR SPOTLIGHT

Erin Macey, Ph.D.

I am continually awed by all of the people willing to lift their voices to make Indiana a better place to live, work, and raise a family. This year in particular, the dedication of our advisory council, board, partners, and countless constituents to raising their voices to create a more secure future for all inspired me. I felt particularly grateful for the dedication of our two Policy Fellows, who joined our team from June 2024 to April 2025 and shared their lived experience with us and with policymakers.

As we face an uncertain future, it's heartening that Hoosiers continue to show up for one another. It is in difficult times that the choice to stand together becomes the most important. If you were an ally, I'm deeply grateful and if you are new to the Institute, welcome. We look forward to harnessing your support, energy, and dedication to contribute to the wider tapestry of justice that we all strive for.

ONWARD!
TOWARD BRIGHTER HORIZONS.

FAST FACTS: 2024-2025 INSTITUTE IMPACT

With three full-time analysts, two associate-level positions, and our director, the Institute has...

Published **4** research reports, **5** policy briefs, fact sheets, and memos, and **22** policy blog posts

Partnered with
14
different national, state, & local funders

Delivered
22
policy presentations

Conducted
46
one-on-one research interviews

Been quoted as experts in
66
different media pieces

Served on leadership of
7
different state-wide policy coalitions

YOU CAN HELP US DO MORE

FAST FACTS: 2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

With three full-time analysts, two associate-level positions, and our director, the Institute has...

Met individually with over 90 legislators, policymakers, and associated staff to represent **YOUR** interests

Testified in

15
hearings

Drove over

1,000
letters from Hoosiers to their legislators

Inspired **41** Hoosiers to complete **284** civic engagement skill-building challenges in our “Get IN-volved” program

Contributed to pre-session development of **7** bills and **2** resolutions

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RESEARCH PROJECTS

Research is a core part of the work we do at the Institute. With new partners and new voices featured in our research, this past year was full of meaningful projects. We published a total of 4 research reports, 5 policy briefs, fact sheets, and memos, 22 policy presentations, and 22 policy blog posts. These works highlight our growing reach in Indiana as a core policy research source that amplifies the voices of low- and moderate-income Hoosiers across the state.

In addition to our policy research engagement, our Community Needs Analyst Ashley Phillips coordinated a survey across nearly 3,000 Hoosiers in all 92 counties of Indiana for Community Needs Assessments that support our Community Action Agencies in efficiently and aptly reaching clients' needs.



Core findings from this revealed that housing and good jobs consistently continue to be high priorities for Hoosiers across the state, with regional fluctuation in needs associated with childcare, food access, and transportation. These needs ultimately shape the services offered by the Community Action Agencies, and our focus here at the Institute for future research and advocacy policy work.

“Ms. Deborah [Institute Research Associate] conducted the interview with knowledge, empathy, and understanding. She was wonderful to share my opinions with.”

-Anonymous Research Participant



Have funding and a project you and your organization want to explore?

Contact us to discuss details—we love collaborations in our focus area of holistic financial well-being in Indiana! We can be reached at institute@incap.org.



LEGISLATIVE ENGAGEMENT

Our team worked tirelessly this legislative session to represent the best interests of low- and moderate-income Hoosiers. This included defeating language that would have criminalized homelessness with misdemeanor charges; defeating predatory lending expansion; passing job-protected leave for parents to attend IEP and truancy meetings; removing Medicaid barriers including a lifetime limit on the number of months of eligibility and a cap on the number of people enrolled; blocking cuts to unemployment insurance; supporting a Skills Training Pilot Program to support upskilling Hoosiers as we modernize our workforce; and gaining unprecedented momentum forward on our initiative for a Newborn Tax Credit, which will be an area of continued investment and growth moving forward.



Another critical component of our legislative outreach and engagement this year came thanks to critical partnership with Hoosiers across the state. We launched, for the first time ever, an Institute Action Network, which mobilizes Hoosiers around the issues we hear about every day by allowing them to easily send letters to legislators about topics of passion. Our most popular Action Network focused on the issue of blocking predatory lending expansions in Indiana, an effort that culminated in a win.

Finally, the Institute hosted two Policy Fellows of lived experience thanks to a grant partnership with the Herbert Simon Family Foundation. This enabled them to engage in the 2025 legislative session after their year of mentorship from Institute staff. Policy Fellow Roshawn Neal took this opportunity to propose a resolution on that would name May as the state's Lupus Awareness Month, herself an activist with lupus who has struggled with the societal barriers that hold back individuals with chronic illness. Policy Fellow Sarah Conrad, having lived experience with homelessness, was vocal on the issue of housing policy, successfully testifying in opposition of several punitive housing bills. You can read more about their experiences on our blog (institute.incap.org/instituteblog).

Help us amplify the voices of low- and moderate-income Hoosiers in our legislative engagement work!

Donations allows us to continue to engage and lobby in areas of community need that are not presently funded by grants.

PROGRAMMATIC OFFERINGS

Mindful of the time barriers that many low-income Hoosiers perceive as an issue in civic engagement, the Institute kicked off 2024 with its first-ever run of Get IN-volved, a program that brings civic engagement to low-income Hoosiers in 10-minute lesson chunks--perfect for on-the-go or in between shifts. Lessons were combined with challenges, where participants got the opportunity to engage and apply the skills they had learned directly. This program taught everything from how to contact your legislator to understanding bill tracking - and in a non-partisan way that focused on engagement as a priority for civic empowerment. One individual wrote in their capstone reflection, ***“In about 30 minutes per week (10 minutes of [the] presentation on Mondays and ~20 minutes to complete the challenge), I learned so much! I feel far more equipped to access information myself to be educated on what is happening with our legislature and how I can take part in the wheels of government!”***

In addition to civic engagement, the Institute partnered with the Women’s Fund of Central Indiana to run a year-long Know Your Rights Campaign around the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act. Through this program, we offered pro-bono legal support and presented to a range of partners, in addition to preparing a cohort of 20 “Peer Ambassadors” who engaged as community leaders by spreading the word about the legislation.



SUPPORT OUR WORK

Donations from the community are critical to our work at the Institute, as they support our capacity to engage in community needs outside of restricted grant funding.

\$1000 - Changemaker

Allows us to work on a bill from its committee hearing onward, through meetings, media, and community mobilization.

\$500 - Champion

Allows us to publish a policy blog analyzing upcoming legislation and engage with media on our findings.

\$100 - Mobilizer

Allows us to sit down one-on-one with up to three legislators to support a priority bill or block damaging proposals.

\$50 - Advocate

Allows us to prepare and deliver testimony in a committee hearing.

\$25 - Activist

Allows us to put together an email blast urging people to contact their legislator about an upcoming vote.

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PHOTO GALLERY



LIVING WITH LUPUS: DAY 1



Institute Policy Fellow Doshawn Neal
#LUPUSAWARENESS



GIVING TESTIMONY

Presented By : Ashley Phillips



December | 2024

THANK YOU!

We could not do what we do without the support of partners, donors, volunteers, research participants, and staff. We are so grateful to each and every person that has lifted their voice or used their talents to support our momentum.



WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!
BE IN TOUCH:

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