

2009 Annual Report

A Message from the Program Manager

This year has been a busy year for the Indiana Institute for Working Families. The Institute has successfully completed several research reports and conducted multiple community meetings across the state. The Institute continues to advocate for policy and legislative changes on the state and federal level to improve the lives of working Hoosier families. However, as the economy continues to worsen we know that the needs of working families and individuals will continue to grow. We hope the Institute will continue to serve as the voice for those in need and make changes to improve the economic conditions and opportunities in Indiana.

On behalf of the Indiana Institute for Working Families Staff, I would like to thank IN-CAA's Board, our funders, partners, and other stakeholders for your support in 2009. We look forward to working with all of you in the coming year.

Lisa M. Travis

Lisa Travis, Team Leader, CAA Network Support

2009 Supporting Funders

The Institute would like to thank the following funders for their support of our mission in 2009.



TheJoyceFoundation



NASW – Indiana Chapter

RICHARD M. FAIRBANKS FOUNDATION, INC.

Who We Are and Guiding Principles

The Indiana Institute for Working Families established a new home and became a program of the Indiana Community Action Association (IN-CAA) in 2009. The goal of the Institute is to help Hoosier families achieve and maintain economic self-sufficiency. The Institute remains the only statewide program in Indiana that combines research and policy analysis to improve the lives of Indiana's working families by advocating for policy and legislation that will increase opportunities that promote economic self-sufficiency.

Research conducted by the Institute shows that in today's economy, there are too many jobs that do not pay self-sufficient wages. As a result, 27% of Indiana's working families earn less than poverty level wages. To progress towards economic self-sufficiency, families must find a viable means to increase their income. Work support programs, as well as, state and/or federal tax credits can help narrow the gap between earned income and the income a family requires to be economically self-sufficient.

The Institute will continue to work on addressing these challenges faced by many Hoosier working families and to keep families from falling below the Federal Poverty Guidelines. The Institute will also work to help IN-CAA fulfill its mission of having a state with limited or no poverty; where its residents have decent, safe, and sanitary living conditions and where resources are available to help low-income individuals attain self-sufficiency.

Financial Aid for Adult Workers

Economic self-sufficiency cannot be achieved without obtaining gainful employment. Nearly 1 million Hoosier workers lack adequate skills to acquire jobs that pay self-supporting wages. In June 2008, the Institute published a report, funded by Lumina Foundation for Education, which underscored the need for Indiana's workforce to increase its educational attainment and skill levels. The report emphasized that education and training beyond a high school diploma is needed and the

state must expand its financial aid offerings to adult workers if Indiana is to remain economically competitive in a global economy.



The report, *Investing in Indiana's Adult Workforce: Financial Aid Opportunities*, proposes eighteen policy recommendations to increase the financial aid opportunities for working adults and to remove barriers that prevent adults from obtaining postsecondary credentials.

To accompany the report, the Institute invited community members and stakeholders to a policy symposium held in June 2009, where the urgency of investing in Indiana's workforce was further discussed. Those in attendance included representatives from Lumina Foundation for Education, the Indiana Department of Workforce Development, the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, and the Indiana Commission on Higher Education.



A New Self-Sufficiency Standard for Indiana

Even before the “Great Recession” Indiana’s working families found it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. Years of stagnant wages and slow economic growth left Hoosier workers earning less every year. As a result, more Hoosier families are living in poverty than at the beginning of the decade.

In October 2009, the Institute released *The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Indiana 2009* in conjunction with The Center for Women’s Welfare at the University Of Washington School Of Social Work. The report was made possible through financial support from the Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation and The Indianapolis Foundation, a CICF affiliate.

The Standard calculates a self-sufficiency wages for 70 family types in all of Indiana’s 92 counties. The Standard accounts for food, transportation, housing taxes, child care, and health care costs. This tool is intended to provide a specific income target to be used by job seekers, guidance counselors, case workers, community organizations, and Indiana’s policymakers in evaluating jobs and their ability to pay self-sufficient wages.

Fall Forums

During the month of October, Institute Staff hosted three fall forums sponsored by the Duke Energy Foundation. The Fall Forums created an environment for the Institute to receive commentary from direct service providers regarding the needs of the constituents they serve while sharing its most current research, reports, and policy recommendations with community partners and stakeholders. The forums were attended by over 60 individuals and were held in Whiting, in collaboration with Northwest Indiana Community Action and Lake Area United Way, Indianapolis, hosted by INCAA, and in Huntingburg, Indiana in cooperation with TRI-CAP.

Educating the General Public

The Institute released several press releases in 2009 to education the general public and raise awareness

about the issues and challenges faced by Indiana’s working families. The Institute received press coverage on many issues including poverty, fair taxation, self-sufficient wages, and increasing access to postsecondary education for adult workers. These articles were published in *USA Today*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *WIBC*, *The Indianapolis Star*, *Chronicle Tribune*, and *The Journal Gazette*.



Public Policy

The Institute published a 2010 Public Policy Agenda for issues being considered in the current session of the Indiana General Assembly. The main areas of focus for the Institute are unemployment insurance, higher education for adult workers, and tax reform. We continue to monitor and advocate on these issues. You can follow our progress by receiving our weekly e-publication *Inside the Statehouse*.

Join Us

You can follow the work and progress of the Institute by joining our list serves. If you visit www.incap.org and click on the e-newsletter sign-up button, select Networker to receive the Institute’s monthly newsletter and/or Action Alerts to receive *Inside the Statehouse* and action alerts. You can also become a fan of the Institute on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Indiana-Institute-for-Working-Families/429277330606>.

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