



# INDIANA COMMUNITY ACTION POVERTY INSTITUTE

---

## Research and Public Policy

### Testimony before the House Committee on Employment, Labor, & Pensions

3/19/2025

Supporting SB 488: Skills Training Pilot Program

Greetings Chairman VanNatter and Members of the Committee,

My name is Erin Macey and I'm Director of the Indiana Community Action Poverty Institute. We help to coordinate the Indiana Skills2Compete Coalition, where diverse stakeholder groups discuss strategies and policies to connect adult workers to training to fill in-demand jobs and improve their economic prospects. I'm very pleased to rise in support of this bill.

Education and training can be a pathway out of poverty and into self-sufficiency. In Indiana in 2023, nearly one in four of individuals without a high school diploma had income below the poverty line, whereas those with at least some training beyond high school saw poverty rate of less than 10% and those with bachelors has an even lower rate of poverty. Increasingly, jobs require a credential beyond high school, and with the rapid pace of technological advancement, nearly nine in ten jobs in Indiana now require digital skills according to new research from the National Skills Coalition.

A spell of unemployment is a great time to prepare someone for a higher wage occupation, and an enhanced payment is unique and promising strategy to do so. Not only might it incentivize more people to pursue training, it might also support persistence.

Indiana's current maximum benefit of \$390 per week, or roughly \$1,600 per month, would make it difficult for an unemployed person to maintain the foundations needed to successfully complete a training program.

- o Fair Market Rents (40th percentile for a one bedroom range from the low \$700s in places like Carroll County to over \$1000 in places like Marion
- o Average used car payment: \$525/month

These alone could consume an individual's unemployment benefit but are both necessary to successfully persist in a job training program and seek reemployment. A member of our advisory council had his car repossessed during a spell of unemployment and had to turn down job offers because he had no way to get to them. Employers lost the opportunity to hire a good candidate and it took much longer for Ray to get back on his feet. For someone with less marketable job skills, the climb back from a job loss and the subsequent financial challenges could be even more difficult.

We are really eager to see the results of this pilot and believe it will set both Hoosier workers and employers up for success.

Thank you for your time and consideration.