



Indiana Technology & Innovation Association

Talent Policy Priorities

Technology job postings in Indiana are increasing year after year, with more than 184,000 net tech jobs in 2020 creating a \$15.6 billion impact on our economy. Indiana tech employment is projected to grow faster than all of our neighboring Midwest states, and median tech wages in Indiana are 72% higher than the median state wage (CompTIA Cyberstates 2020). To embrace this tech job growth, we must ensure Indiana has the trained workforce to match.

ITIA supports policies that help train and prepare our students for technology careers, better integrate technology into the classroom and help grow the pipeline of young talent needed to fill high-demand tech jobs, including:

- Continued funding and efforts to ensure Indiana's K-12 schools can meet the requirement to offer **computer science education** by 2021, including resources to train or hire computer science educators or partner with third party entities to offer computer science education.
- **Connecting more industry professionals to the classroom** by removing any existing barriers, streamlining the licensure process and offering incentives for industry professionals to teach.
- Resources to help schools and educators implement ongoing **eLearning and digital experiences** to aid in the development of students' technical skills, and to provide training to K-12 educators for online, hybrid and in-person uses of digital learning experiences, for example grant dollars to help schools implement technology plans and provide professional development for educators.
- Expansion of technology- and innovation-based **Career & Technical Education (CTE)** pathways.

ITIA supports efforts to provide more direct pathways into the tech industry from high school, & to connect the technology industry with Indiana's higher education institutions to ensure coursework is aligned with industry needs, including:

- Incentivizing and providing support for the creation of **apprenticeships, internships, tech trade schools** and other tech career pathways.
- Ensuring **IT credentials** are a key part of higher education offerings, incentivizing institutions to offer this credentialing or partner with entities that offer this credentialing, and providing funding to encourage completion of these training programs.

ITIA supports policies to help skill up our existing Hoosier workforce with the training needed to fill high-paying, high-demand tech jobs, including:

- Ongoing efforts to update **Next Level Jobs** to ensure that the definition of in-demand jobs and trainings that are eligible for grant funding includes the technology jobs of today and tomorrow and to increase the number of IT training programs offered.

ITIA supports efforts to recruit out-of-state technical talent to Indiana, and to make Indiana more attractive to tech workers that operate in non-traditional environments, including:

- Identifying, amplifying and building on proven, **industry-led efforts and programming** aimed at talent attraction.
- Implementing **targeted and data-driven tactics** to recruit tech workers to relocate to Indiana.
- Updating existing tools and incentives, like the IEDC's Skills Enhancement Fund, to include **employee relocation costs**.
- Clarifying that **remote workers** are eligible for EDGE tax credits if they are Indiana residents but do not work in a physical office location.



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Capital Policy Priorities

Investable capital is required for technology-based companies to start and grow. While technology is Indiana's fastest growing sector, Indiana ranks 30th in America for venture capital deployment, lagging behind all of our neighboring states. According to Kauffman Foundation research, new and young companies are responsible for nearly all net new job creation in the U.S., but Indiana ranks 47th in the nation for job creation by firms 0-5 years old and 34th for entrepreneurship. Ensuring Indiana's entrepreneurs and startups have access to capital to grow companies and create jobs is more urgent now than ever before as our state and local economies work to rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic. Incentivizing and increasing the speed of capital to companies at all stages will accelerate the growth of Indiana's technology industry and help us remain a leader in the 21st Century, data-centric economy.

ITIA supports policies to encourage investment in entrepreneurs and early stage tech companies to help accelerate the development of new, innovation-based ventures with high-growth potential, and to increase investment in and expand support services around helping Indiana startup companies take their products to market, including:

- Robust investment in the **21st Century Research and Technology Fund**, which funds critical and proven programs including Elevate Ventures and the SBIR/STTR matching grant program.
- Strengthen commitment to the **Venture Capital Investment tax credit** program, which provides a 20 percent tax credit for investments in early stage firms, by raising the annual cap and supporting future expansions of the program to better compete with neighboring states that offer larger credits, i.e. Illinois (25%) and Kentucky (40% or 50% in counties with high unemployment).
- Continued efforts to fund and raise the profile of the state's 50% match of the federal **Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR)** grants, to provide support for entrepreneurs to help them navigate the application process, and to assist SBIR/STTR grant recipients with raising additional funding and commercializing their technology.

ITIA supports efforts to facilitate the growth of existing venture capital funds and the creation of new venture funds to grow Indiana technology companies, and to make Indiana more competitive for national venture capital investment, including:

- Invest in and accelerate deployment of the **Next Level Fund**, and focus on a dedicated state effort to promote, educate and facilitate the creation of new Indiana-based venture capital funds.

To help the State rebound from COVID-19, ITIA advocates for specific recovery efforts aimed at accelerating the creation of startups and supporting entrepreneurs as a critical economic development engine, including:

- Continued support for state recovery efforts aimed at promoting entrepreneurship, including the new **Smart & Advanced Manufacturing (SAM) Focus Fund** to make seed and early-stage investments and provide entrepreneurship resources to Indiana manufacturing-focused startups through Elevate Ventures.
- Funding proven **tech accelerator programs** to jump start the creation of new, Indiana-based innovation companies.



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Place Policy Priorities

Indiana has built a reputation as a low-tax, low-cost, business-friendly state, and these efforts have helped attract companies and jobs in recent years. To continue this momentum as we transition to a 21st-century, technology-driven economy, Indiana must position and brand itself as a welcoming and attractive place to live and work in tech. Efforts to ensure Indiana has a thriving tech ecosystem and support structure are critical to our industry's ability to attract and retain top tech talent, investment and resources. Also important to making Indiana an attractive place for the tech economy are policies that improve the quality of life metrics important to today's workforce, including diversity, equality, sustainability and more.

ITIA supports continued investment in high-speed broadband and connectivity for all Hoosiers, including:

- Expand investment in the **Next Level Connections Broadband Grant program** to bring reliable and affordable broadband service to all areas of the state, and support the creation of state and local programs to help increase **broadband adoption** among consumers and businesses.
- Funding and efforts to equip Indiana's K-12 schools and students with the **digital connectivity** and tools needed for remote learning, digital literacy and skills development.

ITIA supports efforts to improve and expand transportation options for Hoosiers to better connect our state with major technology and business hubs, and to grow Indiana's technology ecosystem and support structure, including:

- Continued support for high performing **Certified Tech Parks (CTPs)** by increasing the maximum allowable CTP capture per year from \$100,000 to \$250,000.
- The reauthorization of **Indiana's Entrepreneur and Enterprise District** program in Fort Wayne and Lafayette to encourage, develop and support entrepreneurship and small business development.
- Investment in and efforts to grow Indiana's network of **coworking spaces and innovation hubs**.

ITIA supports efforts to foster an economic climate that enables technology-driven companies to start and grow in Indiana and compete across the globe, including:

- Continued **exemption of software as a service from the state's sales tax**.

ITIA supports efforts to protect consumer data privacy without stifling industry innovation and burdening small businesses, and to improve cyber security, including:

- Adoption of **federal data privacy legislation**, rather than a patchwork of state-by-state regulations in order to provide certainty and consistency to both consumers and businesses.
- Encouraging the state to verify and ensure that **essential security controls** are properly implemented on cloud systems that process, store, and/or transmit government data, and to facilitate the development of **cybersecurity guidelines and best practices** as a resource for state and local government.

ITIA supports additional policies to embrace autonomous vehicle technologies, and ensure Indiana has receptive and adaptive regulatory frameworks for this emerging industry, including:

- Identifying and **removing barriers** to developing, testing and deploying autonomous vehicle technology.

ITIA supports efforts to facilitate and accelerate Indiana's transition to clean energy, and to embrace clean energy technology and innovation, including:

- **Opposing efforts to halt Indiana's transition** to clean and renewable energy sources.

ITIA supports efforts to tell our state's tech story and advertise the benefits of calling Indiana home, including:

- Encouraging the Indiana Destination Development Corporation to highlight companies, entrepreneurs and tech talent who have chosen Indiana as part of its efforts to **rebrand and promote the State**.



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Equity Policy Priorities

We simply cannot have a thriving technology and innovation community in Indiana without diversity, inclusion and equity. Our industry recognizes the very real gap in tech talent representation. More than 60 percent of tech industry employees are men, 30 percent are women, 7 percent are Black and 8 percent are LatinX. The tech industry equity gaps begin emerging in elementary and secondary education, with girls and students of color much less likely to enroll and/or perform proficiently in STEM courses that lead to careers in tech. Indiana should position itself as a leader in closing these gaps to help our tech sector thrive and build on our State's rich heritage of innovation and entrepreneurship, and we should aim to change policies that create or fuel disparities.

ITIA supports policies to identify and address gaps in access to resources and capital, including:

- Requiring any State-funded entities, such as the IEDC, Elevate Ventures and Next Level Fund, that invest in Indiana businesses or venture funds receiving state dollars to **record and report annually on the number of investments and the amount of money invested into women, minority and veteran owned companies.**
- Encouraging State agencies and State-funded entities that support the tech and innovation community to **prioritize diversity** within their own organizations and ensure underrepresented populations have positions on staff and in leadership and decision-making roles.

ITIA supports efforts to address equity gaps in access to STEM education, technology-focused skills training and tech career pathways, including:

- **Broadening Computer Science** to be more representative of various tech disciplines to help attract girls and students of color to pursue tech credentials.
- A dedicated state effort to promote and market the job training/tech pathways available through **Next Level Jobs** to help reach more women, Black and LatinX students.
- Expanding the **Last Mile** program in Indiana, which prepares incarcerated individuals for successful reentry through business and technology training.

ITIA supports efforts to drive transparency and accountability around equity issues, and to inject transparency into our criminal justice and law enforcement systems by creating:

- A **Public Disparity Data Portal** to show how our state programs are working and to identify disparities.
- A statewide **public law enforcement database** and requirement for law enforcement agencies to collect, maintain and report data, including on egregious officer misconduct, detentions and use-of-force, as well as demographic information about arrests and detainees.

ITIA supports efforts to combat bias, discrimination and racism in Indiana, and improve quality of life and place for impacted populations so that they can succeed in the workforce and beyond, including:

- A study on **racial inequity as a public health crisis.**
- **Criminal justice reform** to divert nonviolent offenders and increase accessibility of mental health and substance abuse treatment programs.
- **Law enforcement training and reform** efforts including a review and update of use-of-force policies, implementing wide-ranging crisis response, implicit bias & cultural competency training, adding more civilian representation to the ILEA Board, and ensuring access to mental health and support services for officers.
- An **inclusive Hate Crimes Law** that explicitly lists that bias crimes in Indiana include those motivated by bias based on race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, disability, gender, age, political affiliation, sexual orientation or gender identity.