

2026 Indiana Work-Based Learning Conference and 20th Annual Impact Awards

February 12 | Embassy Suites, Noblesville

PRESENTED BY



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

PLTW

8:30 a.m. Registration

Breakfast and Networking

9:00 a.m. Welcome and Conference Opening

Welcome

Todd Hurst, Senior Vice President, Strategic Partnerships and Impact, Indiana Chamber of Commerce

Celebrating the 25th Year of Work and Learn Indiana and the 20th Impact Awards

Sally Saydshoev, Executive Director, Institute for Workforce Excellence

Keynote Introduction Sponsored by Project Lead The Way

Dr. David Dimmett, President and CEO, Project Lead The Way

Sally Saydshoev, Representing Project Lead The Way

9:10 a.m. Keynote

Keynote Presentation: Expanding Work-Based Learning Through EPIC (Employer Provided Innovation Challenges)

Joe Bamberger, Managing Partner with Emerge, will share an in-depth look at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's EPIC program and Emerge's role in supporting its implementation across Michigan. Joe will highlight key implementation strategies, lessons learned, and outcomes from Michigan's three-year EPIC pilot, demonstrating how employer-driven projects can expand access to high-quality work-based learning.

The presentation will explore how EPIC supports WBL capacity building, address student barriers, and building sustainable partnerships that connect real-world business challenges to student learning. The keynote will conclude with a facilitated discussion between Joe and Vanessa Green Sinderson, Indiana Chamber President and CEO, examining scaling work-based learning, strengthening talent pipelines, and aligning education and industry needs. Questions are encouraged to be submitted by the audience.

Vanessa Green Sinderson, President & CEO, Indiana Chamber of Commerce; and Joe Bamberger, Founder and Managing Partner, Emerge Consulting

10:10 a.m. Break

10:30 a.m. Educational Session One

A. Work-Based Learning (WBL) – Definition, Types and Strategies

This session will provide an overview of key information related to WBL, including the definition experiences must meet toward diploma seals and Career and Technical Education (CTE) course requirements, types of WBL experiences with examples from across Indiana and other recent updates from the state. Participants will explore how WBL aligns with Indiana's new graduation requirements and diploma seals. This session will also discuss reporting on WBL experiences at the secondary level. Participants will learn about the different

requirements for WBL experiences that count toward diploma seal requirements and those that meet requirements for CTE courses. This presentation will cover important elements to consider when setting up a WBL experience including the training plan and common questions that arise for employers and schools, such as age restrictions and liability.

Sam Rourke and Mitchell Durnil, Indiana Commission for Higher Education ([Waters D](#))

B. More Than a Job Site: Designing Work-Based Learning Opportunities That Build Confident, Career-Ready Students

While not every student will pursue a career in construction, all students can benefit greatly from the skills, confidence and professional insights gained through a thoughtfully crafted WBL experience. In this panel, The Skillman Corporation, a leader in providing construction management services across Indiana, shares how its statewide WBL program uniquely supports student growth through structured mentorship, intentional learning opportunities and real responsibilities on active construction projects. Hear directly from the leaders who guide the program (from executive vision to hands-on supervision), along with a former intern who now champions Skillman's approach as part of its leadership team. Attendees will leave with insights into what makes a program truly meaningful for students and actionable strategies to build a program that prepares young talent for any path forward.

Moderator: Victor Landfair, Executive Vice President, The Skillman Corporation. Panelists: Lindsey Kraick, Student Internship & Training Coordinator; Tyler Barker, Senior Project Manager; and David Yancey, Director of Client Services, The Skillman Corporation ([Waters E](#))

C. Case Study: Streamlining Compliance in Work-Based Learning for Healthcare

This session presents a case study of the Indiana Chamber partnering with a single healthcare employer, Reid Health, to implement a skills-based, WBL approach across multiple roles and for various educational levels. Together, they co-developed standardized documents, processes and procedures while defining clear roles for program staff and educators. The session highlights step-by-step strategies for designing job shadowing and internship experiences that focus on specific skill development, coordinating multiple placements and maintaining compliance with labor laws, including prohibited and hazardous occupations. Attendees will learn how collaborative planning and a skills-based focus can build capacity, ensure meaningful learning, and strengthen sustainable employer and program partnerships.

Sally Saydshoev, Executive Director, Institute for Workforce Excellence; Michelle Holliday, Manager, Educational Pathways Relationships, Reid Health; and Shawntel Baker, Director of Employer Engagement, Wayne County Area Chamber of Commerce ([Ditslear](#))

11:20 a.m. Break

11:35 a.m. Educational Session Two

D. High School Healthcare Talent Pipeline

Healthcare is a pillar of society. It impacts everyone throughout their lives. Unfortunately, healthcare has faced significant talent shortages in recent years. The demand for healthcare professionals has never been greater. At Indiana University Health, we are taking a proactive approach to co-develop the next generation of healthcare professionals by partnering with local high schools and CTE districts. Learn how this innovative model has evolved and helped prepare Indiana youth for success in healthcare.

Presenters: Matt DeGolyer and LaShelle Tipton, Indiana University Health. Panelists: Sydney Copeland, EMT; Shawn Phosingkham, Medical Assistant; Huda Hussain, Medical Assistant; and Jadince Whitus, Medical Assistant, Indiana University Health ([Waters D](#))

E. Built for Impact: Creating Business Value Through Work-Based Learning

In 2025, UpSkill America and Strada Education Foundation connected with 40 employers across the country to understand the business case for WBL – why companies invested, the objectives they were seeking to meet, the metrics measured, and the factors that supported success and sustainability. This interactive session will

share the new research and seek insights from participants to drive future efforts in expanding high-quality WBL among employers.

Haley Glover, Upskill America ([Waters E](#))

12:25 p.m. Break

12:30 p.m. 20th Annual Impact Awards Luncheon

Diamond Sponsors: Rare Bird, Inc. and Indiana Career Apprenticeship Pathway (INCAP) ([Waters A-C](#))

Awards Ceremony

Emcee, Kayla Sullivan

2:00 p.m. Break

2:10 p.m. Educational Session Three

F. From Classroom to Career: Building Innovation Hubs That Empower Real-World Learning

How can schools move beyond traditional models of instruction to prepare students for the innovation economy? This session, led by the STARTedUP Foundation, explores how educators can transform classrooms into thriving Innovation Hubs – spaces where students identify real problems, design solutions, and collaborate with mentors, employers and community leaders.

Participants will learn how to apply the 3 M's of support – Mentors, Media and Mayors – to build sustainable networks that connect students directly with real-world opportunities. Through case studies and actionable strategies, attendees will discover how to integrate entrepreneurial thinking and open-source learning into WBL programs that not only prepare students for the workforce but also inspire them to become problem solvers and innovators in their own communities.

By the end of the session, participants will leave equipped with practical tools to make the decision that their school is an innovation hub – and to lead the cultural shift that turns that idea into reality.

Don Wettrick and Kristin Fuller, STARTedUP Foundation ([Waters D](#))

G. Hours That Matter: When Graduation Requires Work Experience, What's Your Role?

Indiana's new high school diploma makes work-based learning hours a core expectation, not a nice-to-have—and students can't meet those requirements without employers and community partners at the table. In this session, we'll unpack what's changing in the diploma and readiness seals, including how WBL hours factor into graduation options for Indiana students. Then we'll explore a practical "easy / medium / hard" menu of ways schools, employers, chambers, and higher education can team up—from simple career talks and job shadows to internships, youth apprenticeships, and regional WBL collaboratives. You'll leave with concrete next steps you can implement in your own community to help more students earn meaningful experiences that count toward graduation.

Jason Bailey, PLTW; and Amy Marsh, IndySTEM Alliance ([Waters A-C](#))

H. Launching and Managing Registered Apprenticeships: A Step-by-Step Guide

This session will provide a comprehensive roadmap for successfully launching and managing Registered Apprenticeship programs. Attendees will gain insight into the key steps involved in developing a program, from building employer partnerships and meeting registration requirements to structuring on-the-job training and classroom instruction. Additionally, we will cover strategies for effective program management, ensuring compliance, and engagement from both apprentices and employers. This presentation is perfect for organizations seeking to create sustainable apprenticeship programs that address industry needs and support workforce development.

Jason Graves, Office of Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeships, DWD ([Waters E](#))

3:00 p.m. Break

I. Beyond Silos: Elevating Workforce Ecosystems Through Collective Action

Workforce ecosystems thrive when education, industry and community work in alignment to prepare, connect and support talent. Yet too often, these sectors operate in silos, limiting the impact of their collective efforts. This interactive session, *Stronger Together: Collaborating to Build Resilient Workforce Ecosystems*, explores how cross-sector collaboration can elevate outcomes for both employers and job seekers while strengthening local economies. Through a mix of short presentations, group discussions and hands-on activities, participants will examine the core elements of successful partnerships, identify common barriers and explore opportunities to transform challenges into solutions. A practical framework – the "3 C's" of Communication, Coordination and Co-Creation – will guide participants in mapping their own ecosystems and pinpointing strategies to deepen collaboration. By the end of the session, participants will have actionable insights, a clearer understanding of the strengths and gaps within their workforce ecosystems, and a concrete step they can implement immediately to strengthen partnerships across education, industry and the community.

Vicki Thompson and Kelly Friend, Thomas P. Miller & Associates (TPMA) ([Waters D](#))

J. Ensuring Compliance in Work-Based Learning Programs

WBL programs provide valuable, real-world experience for participants, but they also require strict adherence to labor laws and safety regulations. This session will focus on the key compliance responsibilities that protect both participants and employers, including accurate documentation, supervision requirements, and adherence to federal and state labor standards. Special emphasis will be placed on identifying and avoiding prohibited and hazardous occupations, understanding age and hour restrictions, and ensuring all placements meet safety and legal guidelines.

Lacey Houle, Wage & Hour Division, U.S. Department of Labor ([Waters E](#))

**Pending government shutdown procedures this session may be subject to change.*