

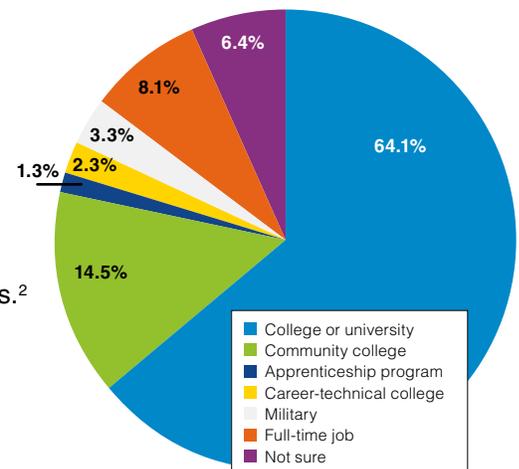
Postsecondary Pathways: College and Career Considerations for Young People

The transition from high school to college, technical training, or career is a critical step in a young adult's life. As young adults become independent, their immediate post-high school decisions will have a significant impact on their lifetime earnings, opportunities for career advancement, and life satisfaction.¹ When planning for life after high school, students must consider not only their future economic prospects, but also the extent to which they will be satisfied in their job, their interests, level of motivation to pursue their career, and how well prepared they are for their intended career or postsecondary education.

In a job market increasingly demanding high-skilled workers, the return on investment from additional education beyond a high school diploma increases.² Nationally, median annual earnings for high school graduates decreased by 10.8 percent from 1965 to 2013, while earnings increased by 17.2 percent for those with a bachelor's degree or higher during this same time period.³ Recognizing the need for a well-trained workforce, as well as the personal economic benefits of postsecondary education, the state of Indiana has set a goal of having 60 percent of adult Hoosiers with a state-defined high-quality degree or credential by 2025.⁴ As of 2014, 33.1 percent of adults 25 and older had attained an associate degree or higher.⁵

In this Brief,
"young adults" are defined
as 18-24 year olds, unless otherwise
specified.

Post-High School Plans of
12th Grade Students,
Indiana: 2015



Source: Learn More Indiana Survey



Nationally, median annual earnings for high school graduates decreased by 10.8 percent from 1965 to 2013, while earnings increased by 17.2 percent for those with a bachelor's degree or higher during this same time period.³

The value of postsecondary education is not only economic. Postsecondary education facilitates intellectual and personal growth and helps students develop skills that are applicable to life in general, including those related to problem solving and interpersonal relationships.⁶ In postsecondary education environments, students also develop social skills and refine their set of moral values.⁷ According to research, happiness with life increases with the number of years of schooling an individual completes, as does job satisfaction.⁸ Additional years of schooling are also associated with better self-reported health outcomes and higher occupational prestige.⁹ Completion of additional years of school has been found to be positively related to rates of voting and volunteering.¹⁰

Nearly two-thirds of respondents from the 2015 Learn More Indiana survey planned on attending a four-year college or university after high school (64.1%).¹¹ A smaller percentage (14.5%) intended to enroll in a community college, and 2.3 percent planned to attend career or technical college. Only 1.3 percent planned to participate in an apprenticeship program, with 3.3 percent planning on joining the military. Another 8.1 percent intended to enter the workforce directly after high school.

This issue brief focuses on the postsecondary education and career options high school students have after graduation and seven considerations they should keep in mind when making career and related postsecondary education decisions. Resources are provided to help young adults and their parents and advisors make informed decisions after high school.



About two-thirds of in-state students (63.6%) who graduated from high school in 2014 and attended a postsecondary institution were enrolled in a bachelor's degree program.¹⁷

The on-time completion rate at Indiana's four-year colleges was 36.1 percent for the college cohort graduating in 2014.

Nearly half of students who eventually completed a bachelor's degree needed extended time (5-8 years).¹⁸

Postsecondary Pathways

The postsecondary pathways described in this section are commonly taken by students after high school but are not all inclusive. For example, students may study abroad or go on a mission trip after high school. It also should be noted that career pathways are often nonlinear, meaning students may enter one path and end up in another. With the exception of becoming unemployed, which has serious negative long-term consequences, each path has advantages and disadvantages.¹²

Four-year College

Students have a wide variety of in-state four-year colleges from which to choose. There are 24 public college campuses, 40 private nonprofit college campuses and 28 private for-profit college campuses located in Indiana.¹³ When choosing a college, students should consider the cost of attendance, financial aid availability, academic reputation of the school, available majors and degree programs of interest, distance from home, and the size and composition of the student body.¹⁴

Equally important is the choice of a major, in terms of personal interest, job demand, and earnings. According to a Georgetown University study, the typical employee with the highest earning major (petroleum engineering) earns \$91,000 more in a year than the typical employee with the lowest earning major (counseling psychology).¹⁵ Many students value other factors in their careers above earnings, but it is important for all students to have as much information as possible when making decisions about majors and careers.

According to the 2015 Learn More Indiana survey, 12th grade students were familiar with four-year colleges as a postsecondary option:¹⁶

- 75.9 percent of respondents could describe a four-year college.
- 72.8 percent of respondents knew what to do to get into a four-year college.

The class of 2014's enrollment in any higher education institution varied considerably by diploma type, with 92 percent of Honors Diploma recipients, 59 percent of Core 40 Diploma recipients, and 24 percent of General Diploma recipients enrolling.¹⁹

Two-year College

Two-year colleges offer both certificates and associate degrees.

Associate degrees typically take two years of full-time coursework and certificates can last one to two years. Due to the lower cost per credit hour and the ability to transfer credits to many four-year colleges, associate degrees can be used as stepping stones to the completion of bachelor's degrees.²⁰

Two-year colleges can be either for-profit or nonprofit institutions. There are 48 two-year college campuses in the state, of which 30 offer associate degrees, and 52 four-year institutions which also offer associate degrees.²¹ Ivy Tech – the state's largest two-year college enrolling 171,491 students in 2014-15 on 15 campuses – offers associate degree courses in more than 60 fields of study.²²



The 2015 Learn More Indiana survey found that 12th grade students were relatively familiar with two-year colleges as a postsecondary option:²³

- 67.3 percent of respondents could describe a two-year or community college.
- 62.4 percent of respondents knew what to do to get into a two-year or community college.

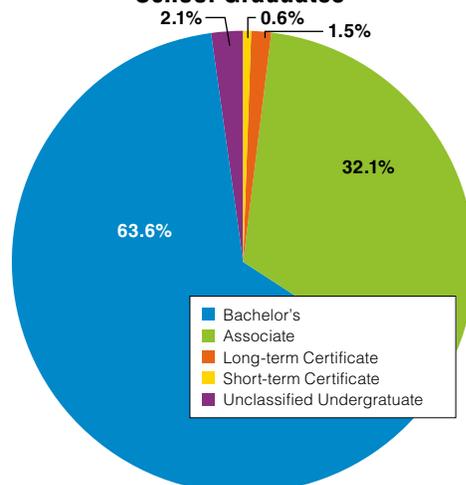
Of the students from the 2014 graduating cohort who attended a postsecondary institution, 32.1 percent of students were pursuing an associate degree.²⁴ In the same cohort, 9,494 students attended Ivy Tech, equaling 27.3 percent of the student population attending an Indiana higher education public institution or system.²⁵ According to the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, only 6.2 percent of students complete a two-year degree program on time. Over three out of four of the students who eventually completed an associate degree needed extended time (3-6 years.)

Technical Training

Technical training comes in the form of apprenticeship programs, certificate programs and on-the-job training.

Apprenticeship programs combine on-the-job training with classroom instruction supervised by skilled workers in a technical trade, such as plumbing or ironworking.²⁶ Certificate programs typically take less than two years to complete and provide participants with training in an occupation that is not considered a technical trade, including long-haul truck driving and barbering. Ivy Tech, the state's largest certificate-granting institution, offers certificates in 42 fields of study, ranging from automotive technology to entrepreneurship.²⁷ Some employers offer technical training to employees to develop their specific job-related skillset, often in the manufacturing industry.²⁸

College Enrollment by Degree Type, Indiana: 2014 High School Graduates



Source: Indiana Commission for Higher Education

Based on the 2015 Learn More Indiana survey, 12th grade students were relatively unfamiliar with technical training as a postsecondary option:²⁹

- 45.9 percent of respondents could describe an apprenticeship program, 37.5 percent could describe a private career college, and 67.8 percent could describe on-the-job training.
- 30.1 percent of respondents knew how to get into an apprenticeship program, and 30.1 percent knew how to get into a private career college.

Indiana ranks in the top 10 states for the number of active apprentices, with 11,283 apprentices in 831 active programs during federal fiscal year 2015.³⁰ A survey of Indiana manufacturers found that more than 60 percent of surveyed plants had apprenticeship programs.³¹ In the state of Indiana, 94 campuses award certificates at public and private institutions, with some institutions having multiple campuses.³²

Young adults can join the military by enlisting, participating in an ROTC program, joining the military reserves or being accepted into a service academy. Unlike many careers that require only a high school diploma, members of the military receive extensive job training and have many opportunities for career advancement.³⁶ Service members are eligible to receive postsecondary education funding through the GI Bill.³⁷ Young adults who participate in the ROTC program may receive free tuition and a stipend while in college in exchange for varying years of service depending their branch of the armed services.³⁸



Military

Joining a branch of the military as a young adult is a choice few young Hoosiers make. In 2014, 2,962 young adults – 2,495 males and 467 females – enlisted in a branch of the military, equaling less than one half of one percent of young adults in the state.³³ Nationally, the overwhelming majority of active duty military members (77.0%) attained a high school diploma or some college, with 92.1 percent of enlisted soldiers reaching this level of attainment.³⁴ With few exceptions, a high school diploma or equivalent is required to enlist in all branches of the military.



According to the 2015 Learn More Indiana survey, 12th grade students were unfamiliar with the military as a career option:³⁵

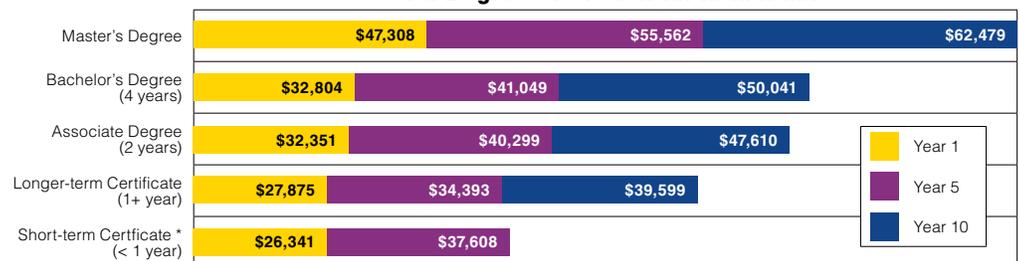
- 35.2 percent of survey respondents could describe the job training that is available in the military.
- 42.5 percent of respondents knew what to do to get into the military.

Workforce

Reasons why young adults enter the workforce directly after high school include:

- a lack of qualifications to be admitted to a postsecondary institution;
- limited personal or financial support to attend a postsecondary institution;
- a desired career which does not require additional training;
- a lack of interest in postsecondary education; or
- the need to enter the workforce to support themselves or family.

Earnings 1 Year, 5 Years, and 10 Years after Completion of a Degree or Credential in Indiana



*Year 10 data unavailable

Source: Indiana Commission for Higher Education

Seven Considerations

High schoolers and their parents and advisors have a wealth of resources to help guide the students' post-high school plans. In fact, there is so much available information that it can be difficult to sift through what is useful. To help guide the decision making process, this brief provides key questions for seven important considerations when making career and education decisions. The Resources section offers online resources to help answer these questions.

Seven Considerations, Key Questions and Resources When Making Postsecondary Plans

Consideration	Key Questions	Resources
Interests 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which classes did I find particularly interesting in high school? What types of activities do I get excited about doing? What activities do I feel most in my element doing? 	Indiana Career Explorer The Indiana Career Explorer provides career interests, skills confidence, and work values assessments, which, when completed, provide a list of occupations matching the results from the assessments. The website also provides job search resources and information about colleges and financial aid. http://www.indianacareexplorer.com
Motivation 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does my motivation for pursuing a degree, credential or employment opportunity come from within me or from something outside of me? Does my motivation for pursuing a career come from seeking prestige, a high salary, intellectual curiosity, desire to make the world a better place or something else? How long am I willing to work on my degree or credential? Am I willing to make sacrifices to complete my degree or credential? 	P20 Motivation & Learning Lab; University of Kentucky The P20 Motivation & Learning Lab provides research resources regarding student motivation and self-efficacy, as well as links to motivation assessments. http://p20motivationlab.org
Preparation 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In which classes did I excel and struggle during high school? Are there any subject areas or skills where I feel like I need additional help in my postsecondary program or career? 	College and Career Readiness; Indiana Department of Education The College and Career Readiness website provides information about dual credit programs, remediation, college readiness assessments, and career pathways. http://www.doe.in.gov/ccr
Affordability 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How much does it cost to be trained for my career? Is financial aid available for my degree program or credential? What type of financial aid do I qualify for? How much student debt am I willing to take on to complete my degree? 	Indiana College Costs Estimator; Learn More Indiana The Indiana College Costs Estimator provides college cost comparisons for Indiana public and private two- and four-year colleges. Users can calculate their estimated after-financial aid cost of attendance. Links to scholarships from granting organizations in the county in which a student resides also are available. http://www.indianacollegecosts.org/research-other-planning-steps
Job Demand 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there current demand for jobs in my desired field of employment? Will there be demand for jobs in my desired field of employment in 5 years, 10 years, 20 years, etc. from now? Are in-demand jobs well-paying and secure, and do they offer a track for career advancement? Does my current educational background and work experience make me qualified for an in-demand job? What type of education and training do I need to find an in-demand job? 	Hoosiers by the Numbers; Indiana Department of Workforce Development The Future Demand resource provides estimates of current and projected occupational employment for a 10-year period for the state and by region. Data also are available for future demand by the type of degree earned. http://www.hoosierdata.in.gov/FD/overview.aspx The Hoosier Hot 50 tool provides a list of well-paying, in-demand jobs for Hoosiers in the year 2022. Educational qualifications and typical salaries for 50 careers are displayed. https://netsolutions.dwd.in.gov/hh50
Job Satisfaction 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will I find happiness and meaning in my career now and in the future? What level of income will I be satisfied with earning? What are my values and will I be able to adhere to them in my career? Will I be challenged to grow intellectually and personally in my career? 	Job Meaning Tool; PayScale Human Capital The Job Meaning Tool provides data visualizations on the relationship between job meaning and salary for 24 job categories and 500 unique job titles. The tool also lists jobs by salary, the percentage of people reporting high job meaning, and high job satisfaction. http://www.payscale.com/data-packages/most-and-least-meaningful-jobs
Return on Investment 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How much time and money am I willing to spend on my education? Am I willing to wait on earning an income in order to pursue a degree or credential which will help me earn more in the future? What degree or credential will yield the highest return on investment? 	College Return on Investment; Learn More Indiana The College Return on Investment resource provides data visualizations on the annual cost of college before and after financial aid, graduates' average debt, and the percentage of graduates with debt. Data visualizations are available for the most common areas of employment in the state for graduates based on their program of study. Users also can compare typical annual salaries for graduates in the state based on their program of study, college, and years of experience after graduation. http://www.learnmoreindiana.org/cost/college-costs/college-return-on-investment

IYI Postsecondary Pathways Resources

College & Career Counseling

The Indiana Youth Institute's College & Career Counseling (C3) services provide parents, educators, youth workers, communities, and civic and government leaders with the information and resources they need to ensure all Indiana youth are motivated to pursue the possibilities of postsecondary readiness, access and success. C3 services include: webinars, the Postsecondary Counseling Institute, and Trip to College Text Alerts. <https://www.iyi.org/college-career-counseling>

IYI Resources

The latest data is at your fingertips with IYI's Data Center. Search statistics and gather data to improve your program planning and grant writing or, request customized data. Go to www.iyi.org/data.

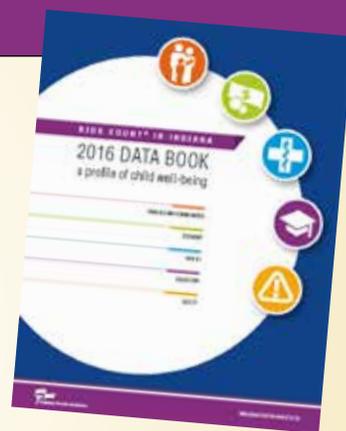
Get the most comprehensive overview of children's well-being in Indiana. **Download the Kids Count in Indiana Data Book** at www.iyi.org/databook.

Want in-depth information on youth? Check out the free resources at **IYI's Virginia Beall Ball Library**. We will mail you the library materials and include a postage paid return envelope. Go to www.iyi.org/library for details.

Text the word "grad" plus your or your student's high school graduation year to 69979 to receive free, grade-specific text reminders about test and application deadlines and other great tips for college and career readiness.

Looking for training on youth issues? IYI provides regional trainings and free webinars on youth development and nonprofit management. Go to <https://www.iyi.org/professional-development/trainings> for details.

Need **one-on-one assistance** with planning, evaluating, or expanding your organization? Benefit from IYI's **Consulting Services** and receive professional help at affordable hourly rates – discounted far below market value. Go to www.iyi.org/consulting-services for details.



Sources

¹ United States Department of Education. (2010). Postsecondary Education Transition: A Summary of the Findings From Two Literature Reviews. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/ccllo/transition-literature-reviews.pdf>

² Carnavale, A., Rose, S., & Cheah, B. (2011). The College Payoff: Education, Occupations, Lifetime Earnings. Retrieved from <https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/collegepayoff-complete.pdf>

³ Pew Research Center. (2014). The Rising Cost of Not Going to College. Retrieved from <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/02/11/the-rising-cost-of-not-going-to-college/>

⁴ Indiana Commission for Higher Education. (2015). Indiana College Completion Report 2015. Retrieved from http://www.in.gov/che/files/2015_College_Completion_Report_COMPLETE_Final_08-06-15.pdf

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey. (2015). Table S1501: Educational Attainment. Retrieved from <http://factfinder2.census.gov/>

⁶ Blimling, G. (2010). The Resident Assistant: Applications and Strategies for Working with College Students in Residence Halls. DuBuque, IW: Kendall Hung Publishing.

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Oreopoulos, P. and Salvanes, K. (2011). Priceless: The Nonpecuniary Benefits of Schooling. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 25(1), 159-184. Retrieved from <http://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/jep.25.1.159>

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Baum, S. Ma, J. & Payea, K. (2013). Education Pays 2013: The benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society. Retrieved from <https://trends.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/education-pays-2013-full-report.pdf>

¹¹ American Student Achievement Institute. (2015). Learn More Indiana Survey [Data File]. Retrieved from <https://cgi.asainstitute.org/cgi-bin/schoolcounseling/learnmoreresults>

¹² United States Congress Joint Economic Committee. (2010). Understanding the Economy: Unemployment Among Young Workers. Retrieved from http://www.jec.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/adaef80b-d1f3-479c-97e7-727f4c0d9ce6/understanding-the-economy--unemployment-among-young-workers.pdf

¹³ National Center for Education Statistics. (n.d.). College Navigator. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?s=IN>

¹⁴ The College Board. (n.d.). How to Find a College That Fits You. Retrieved from <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges/how-to-find-your-college-fit/how-to-find-a-college-that-fits-you>

¹⁵ Carnevale, A., Strohl, J., & Melton, M. (2011). What's It Worth? The Economic Value of College Majors. Retrieved from <https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/whatsitworth-complete.pdf>

¹⁶ American Student Achievement Institute. (2015). Learn More Indiana Survey [Data File]. Retrieved from <https://cgi.asainstitute.org/cgi-bin/schoolcounseling/learnmoreresults>

¹⁷ Indiana Commission for Higher Education. (n.d.). College Readiness Dashboard. Retrieved from <http://www.in.gov/che/4553.htm>

Sources continued

- ¹⁸ Indiana Commission for Higher Education. (2015). Indiana College Completion Report 2015. Retrieved from http://www.in.gov/che/files/2015_College_Completion_Report_COMPLETE_Final_08-06-15.pdf
- ¹⁹ Indiana Commission for Higher Education. (n.d.). College Readiness Dashboard. Retrieved from <http://www.in.gov/che/4553.htm>
- ²⁰ Kolesnikova, N. (2010). Community Colleges and Economic Mobility. Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis Review, 92(1), 27-53. Retrieved from <https://research.stlouisfed.org/publications/review/10/01/Kolesnikova.pdf>
- ²¹ Ibid
- ²² Ivy Tech Community College. (n.d.) Ivy Tech Community College Annual Unduplicated Headcount Enrollment. Retrieved from <https://www.ivytech.edu/files/14-15-Annualized-headcount.pdf>
- ²³ American Student Achievement Institute. (2015). Learn More Indiana Survey [Data File]. Retrieved from <https://cgi.asainstitute.org/cgi-bin/schoolcounseling/learnmoreresults>
- ²⁴ Indiana Commission for Higher Education. (n.d.). College Readiness Dashboard. Retrieved from <http://www.in.gov/che/4553.htm>
- ²⁵ Ibid
- ²⁶ United States Department of Labor. (n.d.). Apprenticeship: Frequently Asked Questions. Retrieved from <http://www.dol.gov/featured/apprenticeship/faqs>
- ²⁷ Ivy Tech Community College. (n.d.). Degrees & Certificates. Retrieved from <https://www.ivytech.edu/degrees/>
- ²⁸ Katz, Sapper & Miller. (2014). 2014 Indiana Manufacturing Survey: Strong for Today, Concerned for Tomorrow. Retrieved from <http://www.ksmcpa.com/2014-indiana-manufacturing-survey-results>
- ²⁹ American Student Achievement Institute. (2015). Learn More Indiana Survey [Data File]. Retrieved from <https://cgi.asainstitute.org/cgi-bin/schoolcounseling/learnmoreresults>
- ³⁰ United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. (2015). Registered Apprenticeship National Results. Retrieved from www.doleta.gov/OA/data_statistics.cfm
- ³¹ Katz, Sapper & Miller. (2014). 2014 Indiana Manufacturing Survey: Strong for Today, Concerned for Tomorrow. Retrieved from <http://www.ksmcpa.com/2014-indiana-manufacturing-survey-results>
- ³² National Center for Education Statistics. (n.d.). College Navigator. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/?s=IN>
- ³³ CNA. (n.d.). Appendix B: Active Component Enlisted Accessions, Enlisted Force, Officer Accessions, and Officer Corps Tables. Retrieved from <https://www.cna.org/pop-rep/2014/appendixb/appendixb.pdf>
- ³⁴ United States Department of Defense. (n.d.). 2014 Demographics Profile of the Military Community <http://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2014-Demographics-Report.pdf>
- ³⁵ American Student Achievement Institute. (2015). Learn More Indiana Survey [Data File]. Retrieved from <https://cgi.asainstitute.org/cgi-bin/schoolcounseling/learnmoreresults>
- ³⁶ Bureau of Labor Statistics. (n.d.). Occupational Outlook Handbook: Military Careers. Retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/military/military-careers.htm#tab-4>
- ³⁷ United States Department of Veterans Affairs. (n.d.). Post-9/11 GI Bill Pamphlet. Retrieved from http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/docs/pamphlets/ch33_pamphlet.pdf
- ³⁸ United States Government Accountability Office. (2013). Military Personnel: Actions Needed to Improve Evaluation and Oversight of Reserve Officers' Training Corps Programs. Retrieved from <http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/658996.pdf>
- ³⁹ American Student Achievement Institute. (2015). Learn More Indiana Survey [Data File]. Retrieved from <https://cgi.asainstitute.org/cgi-bin/schoolcounseling/learnmoreresults>
- ⁴⁰ Indiana Department of Workforce Development. (n.d.). Hoosiers by the Numbers: Future Demand. Retrieved from <http://www.hoosierdata.in.gov/FD/overview.aspx>
- ⁴¹ Indiana Department of Workforce Development. (n.d.). Hoosier Hot 50 Jobs Booklet. Retrieved from https://netsolutions.dwd.in.gov/hh50/downloads/HH50_Booklet.pdf
- ⁴² United States Congress Joint Economic Committee. (2010). Understanding the Economy: Unemployment Among Young Workers. Retrieved from http://www.jec.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/adaef80b-d1f3-479c-97e7-727f4c0d9ce6/understanding-the-economy---unemployment-among-young-workers.pdf
- ⁴³ Ross, M., Gatz, C., Ng, J., & Prchal Svajlenka, N. (2015). Unemployment Among Young Adults: Exploring Employer-Led Solutions. Retrieved from http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/reports/2015/07/20-young-adults-jobs/bmpp_srvy_unemploymentyouth_july20.pdf
- ⁴⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey. (2015). Table S2301: Employment Status. Retrieved from <http://factfinder2.census.gov/>
- ⁴⁵ Ibid
- ⁴⁶ National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). Unemployment Rates of Persons 16 to 64 Years Old, by Age Group and Highest Level of Educational Attainment [Data File]. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_501.80.asp?current=yes

Issue Briefs are short,
easy-to-read reports
on critical youth trends.

To see past issues, go to:
www.iyi.org/issuebriefs



603 East Washington Street, Suite 800
Indianapolis, IN 46204
317-396-2700
800-343-7060

[iyi.org](http://www.iyi.org)

