



Indiana Economic
Development Association

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

2026

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Powering Local and Regional Economic Development Ecosystems, Strengthening Indiana Businesses, Entrepreneurship & Innovation:

Indiana's economic policy must empower communities to retain and create high-wage jobs and diverse economic sectors of the future. Key initiatives include:

- **Partner with Local & Regional Economic Development Organizations:** Invest in capacity building so no region of the state is left behind. Work with locals to develop a cohesive business retention, expansion, and attraction strategy that provides one voice and certainty to all parties. Focus on developing collective tools, funding for LEDOs, and policy collaboration. Work collectively to grow grass-roots strategies to build into a state-wide comprehensive plan.
- **Tax Increment Financing:** This tool currently provides flexibility for local needs and should be enabled to allow maintenance of TIF funded projects and collaboration between units for the use of TIF revenues.
- **Robust Business Attraction, Retention, and Foreign Direct Investment:** Economic development must work hand-in-hand with upskilling workers, entrepreneurship, innovation, and small businesses. Policies should create more opportunities for workers and job creators, raising the average per capita income, population, and tax base. Economic development tools should be enlarged to incentivize talent and capital investments while maintaining a balance for above-average wages and quality jobs. The decision to preserve READI regions is sound and provides certainty for local economic developers and regions.
- **Enhanced Quality of Life:** Invest in infrastructure, healthcare, education, housing, and cultural amenities to attract and retain businesses and talent, and recreational facilities across the state. Policies should prioritize funding for community-driven projects that enhance livability and sustainability.
- **Entrepreneurship & Innovation:** Foster an entrepreneurial ecosystem with robust support for startups and small businesses. This includes retooling financial incentives to increase access to capital through grants and forgivable loans to grow small businesses, reducing regulatory barriers, and encouraging partnerships with universities to commercialize research and innovation.

2 Upskill the Hoosier Workforce:

Indiana must enhance its appeal by upskilling existing workers and attracting new workers from other states:

- **Workforce Development:** Expand and diversify workforce training programs to meet industry demands. This includes enhancing the Power Up Indiana Program and other flexible workforce training tools to support upskilling and reskilling efforts tailored to emerging industries, and Career and Technical Education Training at the high school level. Workforce training occurs through institutions of higher education, but also within companies; workforce training incentives should be flexible enough to support both options.
- **Workforce Reskilling:** Scale up efforts to align workforce training programs with high-demand industries such as advanced manufacturing, agribusiness, life sciences, biotech, animal health, energy storage and batteries, cloud computing, and technology.
- **Worker Attraction Efforts:** Pursue a bold policy to grow Indiana's workforce by attracting skilled talent from other states with strong job opportunities, affordable living, and a high quality of life. We must compete with other states for talent, population, and be nimble to seize emerging opportunities.
- **Welcoming Culture:** All efforts should be made to promote a culture that is open and supportive of a competitive, diverse, dynamic workforce, and encourages active collaboration with local economic development corporations as partners in implementation.

3 Infrastructure for an Advanced Economy:

Indiana must invest in sustainable infrastructure to support economic resilience and growth:

- **Quality of Life Investments:** Enhance access to affordable housing, childcare, healthcare, and recreational facilities across the state. Support initiatives that improve community health outcomes and essential services.
- **Sustainability Focus:** Adopt sustainable practices in infrastructure development, including energy, buildings, transportation, and water measures. Implement innovative technologies to enhance infrastructure resilience against climate change impacts.
- **Public-Private Collaboration:** Foster partnership between government entities, private sector partners, and academia to plan, finance, and implement infrastructure projects. This includes leveraging federal funding opportunities, creating incentives for private investment, and incorporating tax incentives supporting project and real estate development.
- **Funding Security:** Establish stable funding mechanisms for critical infrastructure projects, such as roads, bridges, water systems, and broadband expansion. Advocate for policies that diversify funding sources and ensure long-term financial sustainability to support ongoing maintenance and upgrades.
- **Energy:** Continue to ensure an adequate supply of energy that balances reliability, affordability, and environmental impact by embracing new technology and optimizing existing resources.
- **Broadband:** Invest in broadband infrastructure expansion to support remote work, telehealth, and learning capabilities statewide. Develop policies that support remote education and digital literacy initiatives to bridge the digital divide in rural and underserved communities.
- **Water:** Undertake and adopt a comprehensive 50-year water plan looking at quantity.



Mark Shublak, Partner
Taft Stettinius & Hollister
mshublak@taftlaw.com
(317) 713-9547



Ann Cottongim, Director Municipal and Legislative Relations
Taft Stettinius & Hollister
acottongim@taftlaw.com
(317) 713-3584