INDIANA PROSPERITY 2035

A Refined Vision for the State's Future

By Rebecca Patrick

Three years after launching its statewide vision plan, *Indiana Prosperity 2035 (IP35)*, the Indiana Chamber of Commerce is sharpening that focus to meet a faster-moving economic moment. The result is more targeted priorities, strengthened benchmarks and a call to employers and partners to help accelerate Indiana's progress.

The *Indiana Prosperity 2035 Summer 2026 Update*, developed by the Indiana Chamber Foundation and the *IP35* Task Force, narrows the original 31 goals to 18 top priorities while retaining the plan's six strategic pillars. It also adds clearer methods to track whether Indiana is making meaningful progress. Every goal is now tied to a specific metric and data source.

The refinement comes at a pivotal time.

"It's about focus and urgency," remarks Indiana Chamber president and CEO Vanessa Green Sinders. "Indiana's future will be shaped by how we respond to fast-moving technology, workforce shortages, the need for stronger educational attainment, housing constraints, ongoing health cost and access challenges, and infrastructure demands. Together, these issues will influence our ability to attract people, investment and high-growth employers for years to come.

"Indiana has tremendous strengths, but the pace of change around workforce, technology, education and quality of place means we cannot afford to drift. The updated plan helps us concentrate on the areas that will matter most to Indiana's competitiveness over the next decade – and gives us a clearer way to measure whether we are moving fast enough."

Refining the roadmap

The new version was designed to make *IP35* more actionable, not simply more current. That meant moving beyond a routine refresh and taking a hard look at where the plan could be sharpened, measured and put to work.

"We did not want the plan to sit on a shelf or remain static," offers Todd Hurst, senior vice president of strategic partnerships and impact for the Indiana Chamber. "At the outset of 2026, we began updating *IP35* to make the Chamber's economic vision plan more laser-focused, more measurable and more useful for action. That process included reconvening the task force – led by economic development expert Larry Gigerich of Ginovus – engaging relevant state agencies and bringing in key experts across Indiana."

The refreshed framework remains organized around six foundational areas: workforce; birth-to-12 education; economic growth, innovation and entrepreneurship; superior infrastructure and energy; quality of place strategies; and healthy, prosperous communities and citizens. Each pillar now features three strategic goals, giving employers, policymakers, education leaders and community partners a clearer roadmap for coordinated action.

The update also reflects both the progress Indiana has made and the challenges that have intensified since the original plan was released. Among the notable wins: Indiana has reached the plan's target of reducing the adult smoking rate below 15% and implemented automatic enrollment for eligible students in the 21st Century Scholars program.

Sinders says those gains matter because they show what is possible when statewide partners rally around clear priorities. "Those successes demonstrate that ambitious statewide goals can move from vision to action when business, government, education and community partners align around shared objectives."

Heading the list

The latest goals hone in on the issues most closely tied to Indiana's long-term competitiveness. Several center on people and work readiness, including increasing the share of Hoosiers with high-quality credentials, improving population growth across every economic growth region, expanding STEM-related bachelor's degree attainment, strengthening early childhood education, improving IREAD proficiency and Indiana's National Assessment of Educational Progress rankings, and ensuring every high school graduate leaves with a designated path toward enrollment, employment or enlistment.

Other priorities address the broader conditions that help communities and employers thrive: strengthening small business development financing, growing the innovation ecosystem, improving productivity through AI and emerging technologies, supporting highway and energy investment, advancing workforce housing and outdoor recreation, and improving health outcomes and civic engagement.



That broader view reflects how economic development decisions are increasingly made: not around a single factor, but around the full ecosystem that determines whether companies and workers can succeed.

"Businesses are making decisions based on the total environment around them," Hurst observes. "They are looking at infrastructure, housing, schools, health, recreation and whether communities can support the workforce they need. *IP35* recognizes that these issues are connected, and our strategies have to be connected too."

A call for engagement

For the Indiana Chamber, releasing the summer update is the beginning of a disciplined implementation phase. The organization will use the new goals to guide public policy priorities, Foundation research, member programming, regional conversations and partnerships with state and local leaders.

"The Indiana Chamber is at its best when we are bringing people together around big issues and helping turn ideas into action," Sinders says. "The *IP35 Update* gives us a clear, shared framework for such action. We want Indiana's business community, in particular, to see where it can lead, where it can partner and where it can help accelerate measurable results."

RESOURCE: *Indiana Prosperity 2035 Summer 2026 Update* at www.indianachamber.com/2035

UPDATED STRATEGIC GOALS

The new *Indiana Prosperity 2035* plan was developed around six pillar policy areas with corresponding goals for each pillar:

PILLAR 1: BUILDING A TALENT PIPELINE THAT MEETS WORKFORCE NEEDS	
Goal Description	**Current Data and Rankings**
Increase to 70% the proportion of Hoosiers having earned a high-quality credential, certification and/or degree.	Currently Indiana's proportion is **43.8%** of the population, indicating a need for net growth of **760,000** more individuals with such credentials.
Achieve Top 15 status nationally and lead the Midwest in population growth with every economic growth region showing growth year over year.	Indiana shows positive growth but ranks **24th nationally** since 2020. Reaching our goal would require the addition of approximately **18,000 new Hoosiers per year**.
Increase to 20% the proportion of residents with bachelor's degrees in STEM-related fields.	Currently Indiana's proportion is **14.5%** of the population, indicating a need for net growth of **72,500** more individuals with STEM degrees.

PILLAR 2: BUILDING A BIRTH-TO-12 EDUCATION SYSTEM THAT PREPARES ALL CHILDREN FOR ECONOMIC SUCCESS	
Goal Description	**Current Data and Rankings**
Increase the capacity of Indiana's early childhood system to serve every newborn-to-five youth in need of care/education.	Currently Indiana has capacity to serve **62.3%** of children ages five and under in need of care, leaving nearly **123,000 children** unserved.
Improve student achievement by reaching 95% third-grade IREAD proficiency and Top Five in NAEP rankings for fourth- and eighth-grade reading and math.	Currently, **87.3%** passed IREAD-3 in 2025, while Indiana's NAEP rankings are sixth in both fourth- and eighth-grade reading, and ninth and 13th in fourth- and eighth-grade math, respectively.
Ensure every student graduates high school with a designated path toward enrollment, employment or enlistment.	The graduating high school class of 2021 had **84.5%** actively employed or enrolled in postsecondary education one year after graduation.

PILLAR 3: ECONOMIC GROWTH, INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP	
Goal Description	**Current Data and Rankings**
Increase the rate and quality of small business development financing year over year.	In 2025, **$695M** in 7(a) and 504 SBA loans were distributed, a slight decrease (1%) from 2024.
Strengthen the state's innovation ecosystem to ensure entrepreneurs and emerging industries have access to research partnerships, capital networks, commercialization support and innovation hubs that position Indiana as a national leader in advanced manufacturing, applied innovation and technology-enabled growth.	Currently Indiana ranks **29th** nationally on the U.S. Economic Development Administration's Innovation Intelligence Index with a score of **107**.
Improve worker and enterprise productivity to rank best in the Midwest and Top 10 nationally through the adoption of AI, automation and emerging technologies across all sectors of the economy.	Currently Indiana ranks **23rd** nationally with a value-add per employee of **$134,075**.

PILLAR 4: SUPERIOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY	
Goal Description	**Current Data and Rankings**
Increase year-over-year state and federal investment in Indiana's highway infrastructure.	Indiana invests **$20,279** per functional lane mile, an increase of 23% since 2020. Federal investment is **$259** per capita, an increase of 3% since 2020.
Increase overall energy generation capacity of the state, supported by a varied mix of resources – including carbon-free and traditional energy sources – to meet the growing needs of Indiana communities and businesses, strengthening the state's competitiveness in attracting and sustaining economic growth.	Indiana had approximately **27.8** gigawatts of net summer capacity in 2024, ranking **16th** nationally.
Increase freshwater and wastewater capital investment per customer to be in the Top 10 nationally in terms of infrastructure investment needs.	Indiana currently ranks in the 20s nationally in terms of estimated 20-year need for infrastructure investment in wastewater **(ranked 21st, $1,483 per capita)** and freshwater **(ranked 24th, $1,731 per capita)**.

PILLAR 5: MAKING QUALITY OF PLACE STRATEGIES A PRIORITY	
Goal Description	**Current Data and Rankings**
Increase availability and affordability of workforce housing across the state.	Currently **26.5%** of Hoosier households pay over 30% of income on housing needs, up 4% from 2021.
Increase outdoor recreation access, usage and value-add, specifically as a percentage of overall state GDP.	The outdoor recreation economy accounted for **3.3%** of current-dollar GDP for Indiana in 2024, ranking it **10th** nationally.
Achieve Top 25 status in air and water quality measurements in the state.	**73%** of Hoosier days are considered good air quality days, ranking **33rd** nationally.

PILLAR 6: HEALTHY, PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES AND CITIZENS	
Goal Description	**Current Data and Rankings**
Improve health outcomes for the state of Indiana by reducing obesity, substance-use disorder and other mental health concerns.	**37.8%** of the adult Hoosier population is considered obese. Nearly a million Hoosier adults would need to decrease their BMI to reach a healthy indicator.
Expand access to affordable, high-quality healthcare in Indiana and advocate for increased investment in public health strategies.	The Indiana Department of Insurance is conducting an analysis of Indiana hospitals providing care as a percent of Medicare costs. Indiana currently ranks **48th** nationally with respect to public health funding with an average investment of $73 per person.
Increase civic and community engagement by Hoosier citizens to be in the Top 10 nationally.	Only **60%** of Hoosier citizens reported having voted in an election in 2024, ranking **40th** nationally. We must increase at least 5% in order to achieve the national average.