



Press Release

For Immediate Release:

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Holcomb rolls out Indiana's 'Next Level Jobs' initiative with two programs to help meet current workforce demand

INDIANAPOLIS – Governor Eric J. Holcomb, Commissioner for Workforce Development (DWD) Steve Braun, Commissioner for Higher Education (CHE) Teresa Lubbers, and Secretary of Career Connections and Talent Blair Milo today kicked off Indiana's Next Level Jobs initiative and announced two new grant programs designed to put Hoosiers to work in high-demand, high-wage jobs as quickly as possible. The Workforce Ready Grant, created earlier this year by the Indiana General Assembly, will skill-up adults to fill jobs in high-demand industries. The Employer Training Grant, developed by the Indiana Department of Workforce Development, will help offset the costs employers assume when they train new employees in high-demand industries.

Together, these programs provide more than \$20 million over the next two years for Hoosiers and employers for training and certifications that help Indiana meet current workforce demand. Applications for both grant programs are available at NextLevelJobs.org.

"Indiana's unemployment rate has reached historic lows, and we currently have about 95,000 job openings around the state. Now more than ever, our state needs to ramp up efforts to prepare Hoosiers for the jobs available today—and for the one million more we expect to have open by 2025," Gov. Holcomb said. "Next Level Jobs will drive our efforts to meet that demand and will put hardworking Hoosiers in high-need, high-wage careers."

The Workforce Ready Grant was a key component of the governor's Next Level legislative agenda and earned bipartisan support from lawmakers. The grant covers full tuition costs for adult learners to earn career certificates in high-growth sectors of Indiana's economy: advanced manufacturing, building and construction, health and life sciences, IT and business services, and transportation and logistics. Hoosiers can earn these certificates through Ivy Tech Community College or Vincennes University campuses around the state. The first two years of the grants will be paid for through \$4 million provided by the General Assembly plus more than \$10 million CHE financial aid funds.

"The Workforce Ready Grant removes a key barrier for adult students to get the skills they need for a better-paying job in some of our state's most in-demand industries," Commissioner Lubbers said. "This grant launches the Next Level Jobs initiative with a powerful opportunity to improve Hoosiers' lives and boost Indiana's economy."

The Employer Training Grant program will provide up to \$2,500 per new employee to qualifying companies that train and retain new hires. DWD will launch a pilot of the grant for 2018 and 2019, paid for with \$10 million in Career Technical Education Innovation Funds. The Employer Training Grant also targets key high-demand industries: advanced manufacturing, agriculture, building and construction, health and life sciences, IT and business services, and transportation and logistics.

“Within the next two or three years, two-thirds of all jobs will require training beyond high school – and Indiana will need skilled and ready Hoosiers to fill these jobs,” Commissioner Braun said. “Helping Indiana companies offset the costs of training for new employees they retain in high-demand fields helps meet this challenge. Together with the Workforce Ready Grant, the Employer Training Grant will get Indiana’s Next Level Jobs Initiative off to a strong start.”

Indiana’s first Secretary of Career Connections and Talent Blair Milo helped kick-off Next Level Jobs today and will support the initiative by ensuring that Hoosiers are connected with these new grants and other programs available through the state. Additionally, Secretary Milo will ensure that employers are connected to the many postsecondary institutions, organizations and state programs that can help meet workforce demands.

“Connecting business leaders and employees will continue to be a key focus as workforce demands grow, as baby boomers retire and our economy expands and diversifies,” Secretary Milo said. “Next Level Jobs presents a streamlined way for Hoosiers and employers to access state resources and programs that help address our workforce needs.”

Short, simple applications for both the Workforce Ready and Employer grants are available online now at www.NextLevelJobs.org. After submitting an application, Hoosiers and employer applicants will receive individualized contact from DWD or an eligible training provider within 48 hours.