



# HIGH SCHOOL WORK-BASED LEARNING EXPANSION GRANTS

## A Public-Private Partnership Supported by the State's EARN Indiana Program

### Program Overview

The Employment Aid Readiness Network (EARN) Indiana—the state's work-study program—was created to ensure students with financial need have equitable access to resume-building, experiential, paid internship opportunities. In return for hiring underrepresented Hoosier students and meeting program quality standards, Indiana employers receive state matching funds that reimburse up to 50% of the student's hourly wages.

Historically limited to college-age students, in 2019 the Indiana General Assembly expanded EARN eligibility to also include high school students, beginning with the graduating class of 2023. To support the EARN program expansion, the State of Indiana has partnered with the Indiana Chamber of Commerce to match students and employers to EARN-eligible work-based learning opportunities through [Work and Learn Indiana](#) (formerly Indiana INTERNnet).

### Program Goals

The goals of the EARN Indiana program expansion are three-fold:

- 1) **Graduation Pathways:** Support Indiana high schools and students in meeting the state's Graduation Pathway requirements related to employability skills and work-based learning experiences.
- 2) **Student Opportunity:** Increase equitable access to paid work-based learning opportunities linked to high school students' career aspirations and postsecondary education/training plans.
- 3) **Employer Engagement:** Incentivize Indiana employers to proactively engage with students and schools earlier and more collaboratively to develop and retain Hoosier talent.

### Grant Opportunity Overview

In preparation for a planned statewide expansion, the Indiana Department of Education (DOE), Indiana Commission for Higher Education (CHE) and Indiana Chamber of Commerce are seeking applications from Indiana school communities for a \$1 million pilot grant opportunity in partnership with area employers.

The EARN Indiana expansion pilot grants aim to build local capacity to connecting high school students with high-quality internship/pre-apprenticeship experiences beginning in summer 2022 and continuing through the 2022-23 academic school year in alignment with the following parameters:

- 1) **Grant Pilot Scope:** A total of 5-10 pilot school districts (and/or regional school district collaboratives) that are prepared to leverage the EARN Indiana program to strengthen/expand their paid internship, pre-apprenticeship and related work-based learning programming.
- 2) **School Diversity:** A representative group of school communities reflecting both regional geographic diversity and population density diversity (rural, suburban and urban school communities) to inform best practices that can support all learners and localities.
- 3) **Student Diversity:** Cohorts of student participants from each school community that reflect gender, racial and socioeconomic diversity, including students enrolled in Indiana's [21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholars](#) program. **NOTE:** The grant pilot is open to all student populations, but the EARN wage subsidy (see additional details below) is limited to students from low-income families as defined by federal free/reduced-priced lunch eligibility guidelines.

## Grant Funding + Implementation Support

Participating pilot school communities will receive grant funding and implementation support resources, including:

- 1) **Employer Wage Subsidy** Exclusive access to EARN Indiana funding to reimburse eligible employers (up to 50% of hourly student wages) that provide high-quality internships and related work-based learning opportunities for low-income students.
- 2) **School Funding Support:** Supplemental one-time implementation support funding of up to \$25,000 to support school staff in work-based learning placements and coordination with area employers. Acceptable expenses could include staff stipends, transportation, marketing/promotional materials and appropriate workwear for students. \*Funds should not be used to fully fund a staff position
- 3) **Internship Management Support:** Free access to an online intern management tool through Work and Learn Indiana providing:
  - *Program Management:* Easily onboard users, assign and track projects, and oversee performance all in one place.
  - *Coordination/Collaboration Support:* Messaging tools to help program participants (students, educators, employers) better communicate and collaborate on projects and skill development.
  - *Performance Tracking:* Data graphs and visualizations to track program participation, completion metrics and related program analytics in real time.

## Eligible Internship + Work-Based Learning Experiences

A defined work-based learning experience that is eligible for grant funds must meet the following requirements:

- 1) **Graduation Pathways:** Student experiences must be a minimum of 75 working hours per term/per experience, including agreed upon learning outcomes both from the employer and the educator in alignment with the student's career pathway.
- 2) **Next Level Jobs Industry Sectors:** Priority placed on internships aligned with Indiana's high-demand, high-wage industry sectors, including: **Advanced Manufacturing, Building & Construction, IT & Business Services, Health & Life Sciences,** and **Transportation & Logistics.** NOTE: See the Indiana Office of Career & Technical Education (CTE)'s [Next Level Programs of Study](#) for related career pathway and high school course sequences.
- 3) **K-12 Work-Based Learning Standards:** Internship experiences should be aligned with the Indiana K-12 Work Based Learning criteria:
  - **Criteria 1:** The local school corporation provides a well-trained staff member with a manageable workload and adequate resources to oversee and coordinate a WBL program, build and nurture business partnerships, and to establish meaningful work-based learning experiences for students.
  - **Criteria 2:** The WBL program has an active process in place to gather feedback from stakeholders to assist with design, development, implementation, and continuous improvement.
  - **Criteria 3:** The WBL program implements clearly defined, equitable admission policies and procedures for identifying and enrolling students.
  - **Criteria 4:** WBL sites are in compliance with federal and state labor laws and local policies.
  - **Criteria 5:** WBL students, parents and worksite mentors complete an orientation specific to their roles and responsibilities.
  - **Criteria 6:** Each WBL student has a training plan and an updated graduation plan (IC 20-30-4) on file.
  - **Criteria 7:** Each WBL student receives regular feedback from the worksite mentor and WBL coordinator on progress toward goals established in the student's training plan.
  - **Criteria 8:** The WBL program has a process in place to maintain accurate records regarding enrollment, assessment, and awarding of credit for data and monitoring purposes.

## Grant Timeline

October 2021	Grant application window opens at <a href="http://WorkandLearnIndiana.com">WorkandLearnIndiana.com</a>
October-November 2021	Webinars for interested parties
November 15, 2021	Letters of interest due (submit to <a href="mailto:ssaydshoev@indianachamber.com">ssaydshoev@indianachamber.com</a> )
December 15, 2021	Grant applications due
January 10, 2022	Grant award notification
Spring 2022	Planning phase
Summer 2022	Start work-based learning experiences (student cohort 1)
Fall 2022	Continue work-based learning experiences (student cohort 2)
Spring 2023	Continue work-based learning experiences (student cohort 3)
June 2023	Final report and invoice

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Who is eligible to apply?

School districts, charter schools, and nonpublic schools with either new or established work-based learning programs may apply for grant consideration. Preference will be given to proposals that include the following:

- **Students Served:** Participation is inclusive of all student populations, but priority consideration will be given to applications that emphasize support for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholars and other income-eligible, underrepresented student populations.
- **Industry Alignment:** Internship creation in high-demand, high-growth industries aligned with state and local workforce needs that lead to high-wage career opportunities will be prioritized. Priority industry sectors include Advanced Manufacturing, Building & Construction, IT & Business Services, Health & Life Sciences, and Transportation & Logistics. See [Next Level Programs of Study](#) for related career pathway and high school course sequences.
- **Employer Partnerships:** While support for recruiting employer partners will be provided to pilot schools, school community proposals should include information related to existing employer partnerships and commitments from new perspective employer partners that will provide internships and other work-based learning opportunities.
- **School Staff Support:** Note what school staff (e.g., work-based learning coordinators, school counselors, etc.) will be designated to provide intermediary coordination support for EARN-supported internship placements between students and employers.
- **School Collaboration/Partnerships:** Schools/districts are encouraged to apply jointly with neighboring schools/districts in their region to increase student/employer reach, share resources, etc. If there are an abundance of applications from various schools within the same districts, schools will be asked to make final recommendations on application.

### What funding is available to applicants?

Approximately \$1 million in total grant funding is available during the pilot grant cycle, including the EARN wage subsidy and supplemental school support grants. Applicants are asked to submit budgets of up to \$25,000 for the implementation support grants. Total funding amounts for each school community will be set by the selection committee based on intended number of students served and grant capacity. Reimbursement will take place after the program or initiative is completed.

**NOTE:** The primary purpose of EARN funding is for students to access high-quality internships with area employers through the 50 percent wage reimbursement subsidy for participating employers that adhere to the program eligibility and quality requirements. Only pilot schools will have access to these funds during the grant period.

## How will applications be evaluated?

Applications will be reviewed and evaluated using the following criteria:

1. Clear description of the student population and anticipated number of students served through the work-based learning experiences.
2. Established partnerships and relations with industry/employer partners, with a priority on employers in high-wage, high-demand industry sectors (i.e., Advanced Manufacturing, Building & Construction, IT & Business Services, Health & Life Sciences, and Transportation & Logistics).
3. Clear goals and anticipated impact of the program for the community being reached;
4. Plan of evaluation for the effectiveness and impact of the program or initiative;
5. Letter(s) of commitment/support from area businesses/employers; and
6. Demonstrated infrastructure/plan for school staff to coordinate, place and track student experiences.  
(NOTE: The Work and Learn Indiana online platform is available to support local schools with program coordination/management.)

A review team composed of staff from the Indiana Department of Education, Indiana Commission for Higher Education, and the Indiana Chamber of Commerce will review each application. Scoring will be based on the components required in the application.

Each of the criteria outlined above will be scored using the following rubric:

<b>0</b>	<b>None of the criteria are addressed.</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Some of the criteria are met but many areas are incomplete or underdeveloped.</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Most of the criteria are met but some areas are incomplete or underdeveloped.</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Meets criteria.</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Exceeds criteria.</b>

## What is the application deadline?

Applications must be submitted via [WorkandLearnIndiana.com](http://WorkandLearnIndiana.com) by 5 p.m. (Eastern) on **December 15, 2021**. Only electronic submissions will be accepted.

## Where can questions be directed?

Information regarding the grant application can be found online at [WorkandLearnIndiana.com](http://WorkandLearnIndiana.com). Applicants are strongly urged to participate in instructional webinars hosted by Work and Learn Indiana prior to grant submission. Related questions also may be emailed to Sally Saydshoev, Assistant Director, Educator Engagement [ssaydshoev@indianachamber.com](mailto:ssaydshoev@indianachamber.com).