

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the Indiana College Value Index?

The Indiana College Value Index aims to help Hoosiers answer the most fundamental questions in higher education today using the best quantitative and qualitative data available. In partnership with Indiana's colleges and universities, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education is committed to providing state- and campus-level college value profiles on an ongoing basis.

How can/should the Index be used?

By combining quantitative data (e.g., college completion rates and graduate earnings) with qualitative data (e.g., alumni satisfaction surveys), the Indiana College Value Index is designed to provide a more complete view of higher education outcomes for both students and the state. Students and families can consider the information included in the Index as one factor in determining where to pursue postsecondary education and the anticipated outcomes based on those decisions. Institutional leaders and policymakers can use insights gleaned from the Index to inform policy, programming and practice decisions that increase student success.

What should readers keep in mind when reviewing the Index?

As with any report, the data have limitations when applied to individuals. A student's personal choices, circumstances, and other factors influence individual experiences and outcomes. The Indiana College Value Index provides a picture of typical experiences and outcomes for certain groups of students. For example, completion rates are based on those who started at a college as first-time, full-time students. Workforce and salary data are based on graduates of Indiana public colleges who chose to stay and work in Indiana. Alumni survey respondents vary by age, background and chosen career path.

Given these limitations, readers should consider the data in this report as one factor when making decisions about investing in higher education and determining their actual return on investment. Students and families should consider such factors as campus size and location; degree programs offered; average class size; research, internship and study abroad opportunities; university advising and student services available; and the student's desired learning outcomes. Policymakers and members of the public should also consider a university's fidelity to its mission; the contribution of the university to the well-being of the state and regional economy; research and scholarship activities conducted by university staff; and the role of the institution in increasing the educational attainment of Hoosiers.

What are the data sources for the Index?

The data come from a variety of sources. Institution-specific completion data come primarily from submissions to the Commission's longitudinal data system (CHEDSS). National completion data are sourced mainly through the National Student Clearinghouse and National Center for Education Statistics' IPEDS. All alumni data are from the Gallup-Purdue Index and Gallup-Indiana Surveys. See the Index's Data Notes for more details on data sources and definitions.

What data elements are included in the Index?

The Index pulls together data from existing Commission reports as well as from the Gallup-Indiana Alumni Survey, input from Indiana public institutions and other sources to provide a more complete picture of the college-value proposition. Specific data elements include:

- **Completion** - On-time and extended-time degree completion rates, percentage of alumni who say they received high levels of support from a professor and/or mentor and types of support provided by the institution.



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- **Competency** - Percentage of alumni who say that their college prepared them well for life outside of college and whether they worked on a project that took a semester or more to complete, and institution responses to questions related to measurement of learning gains and competency-based programs.
- **Career** - Percentage of programs whose graduates typically earn above the state median wage, percentage of alumni who say they had an internship or other workplace experience and percentage of employed alumni who say they are fulfilled in their current work. Also included are institution responses related to smoothing the transition from college to career.

Why are data not available for every metric for every institution?

The Index has the most complete information for colleges who chose to participate in the 2015 Gallup-Indiana Alumni Survey. Among Indiana's public institutions, those campuses include Ball State University, Indiana University East, Indiana University Kokomo, Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW), Ivy Tech Community College and Vincennes University. Purdue University West Lafayette data is sourced from the Gallup-Purdue Index Survey.

What is the relationship between the Index and the other data reports produced by the Commission?

The Index combines quantitative data from the Commission's College Completion and Return on Investment reports with qualitative data from the Gallup-Indiana Alumni Survey, Gallup-Purdue Index and other sources.

How is the Index expected to evolve in the future?

The Commission aims to develop an increasingly comprehensive picture of the value of postsecondary education through incorporating, when available, more information on learning outcomes and competency measures, current student perspectives in addition to alumni perspectives, and greater detail on campus support inventories and utilization of such resources. Additional measures on the regional and statewide economic impact of Indiana's colleges and universities are also expected to be folded into the Index, with the ultimate goal of more clearly identifying value at multiple levels for multiple stakeholders.

What are other available resources for learning more about the college experience in Indiana?

The state's Learn More Indiana website (LearnMoreIndiana.org) has a wealth of helpful information and free resources to guide Hoosiers of all ages as they plan and prepare to complete education and training beyond high school.

