



VINCENNES UNIVERSITY
CHARLES R. JOHNSON, JR., PRESIDENT

August 30, 2024

Mr. Joe Habig, Acting Director
Indiana State Budget Agency
State House, Room 212
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Mr. Chris Lowery, Commissioner
Indiana Commission for Higher Education
101 West Ohio Street, Suite 300
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Partners in Education,

On behalf of Vincennes University, I respectfully submit our 2025-2027 operating and capital state appropriations request. This funding remains central for continuing VU's mission to provide exceptional education, foster student success and drive economic growth in Indiana.

I am pleased to share that the Center for Health Sciences and Active Learning, which was appropriated in the 2023 legislative session, broke ground in February 2024, with an anticipated opening in Fall 2025. This state-of-the-art facility is set to transform health science education in Indiana, addressing the urgent need for skilled professionals in the healthcare sector. With nursing occupations among the highest in-demand jobs in the state and Indiana facing a significant shortage of healthcare professionals, Vincennes University is more committed than ever to expanding and supporting the health career workforce. The new Center will redefine health science education and enhance student engagement through innovative learning experiences.

The Aviation Maintenance Workforce Initiative, also a 2023 appropriation, is showing impressive growth, with significant enrollment increases already within this first year. This initiative exemplifies a robust partnership between education and industry, addressing the skills gaps that contribute to hiring challenges faced by local companies. Through this program, Vincennes University is positioned to cultivate the next generation of aviation technicians, with a goal to double student enrollment in the Aviation Maintenance Technology program. This commitment not only helps to bridge the gap in the aviation workforce but also underscores our dedication to providing meaningful career opportunities for Hoosiers. By preparing students for careers in an industry crucial to our region's development and success, the initiative supports both individual advancement and regional prosperity.

Industry 4.0 continues to reshape Indiana's economic landscape, particularly in manufacturing and technology, and Vincennes University is leading this transformation through its Center for Applied Robotics and Automation (CARA). The University has made significant strides by opening three collaborative robotics training locations at its Vincennes, Jasper and Lebanon campuses. This expansion supports hands-on learning and the development of industry-relevant skills. VU's commitment extends beyond its own campuses; the University has also integrated Industry 4.0 technologies into 11 Career and Technical Education (CTE) Centers across Indiana. Furthermore, VU is nurturing an interest in Industry 4.0 among younger students through its partnership with Purdue IN-MaC and the proliferation of Design & Innovation Studios, which introduces STEM education concepts at the elementary and middle school levels. VU's implementation of 12 Design &

Innovation Studios across Southwest Indiana provides students with practical experience in cutting-edge technologies. In July 2024, VU also opened a Design & Innovation Training Studio for STEM educators, which serves as a collaborative hub for professional development. These multifaceted efforts create a comprehensive ecosystem that connects educators, students and industry, fostering meaningful learning experiences and collaborative partnerships essential for Indiana's workforce and economic vitality.

VU continues to have a strong focus on work-based learning and apprenticeship programs through strategic partnerships with leading companies such as Amazon, Toyota, John Deere, Kimball Electronics, MasterBrand Cabinets and the Associated Builders and Contractors. In the 2023-2024 academic year, VU enrolled over 2,000 students in work-based learning and apprenticeship programs such as industrial maintenance, mechatronics, electronics technology and construction trades. Additionally, more than 4,500 students received training in specialized non-credit programs such as Mining Safety (MSHA certified), Commercial Driver's License, AC/DC Electrical, Forklift, Phlebotomy, and Certified Nursing Assistant. The success of these initiatives is supported by the robust engagement of employers. We anticipate these partnerships will continue to grow with the implementation of VU's new "Employer Gateway" website. This platform serves as a comprehensive resource, helping employers connect with and hire VU students, access training for their current workforce, and create internship and apprenticeship opportunities in partnership with the university.

Vincennes University remains dedicated to expanding career pathway exploration for all Hoosier youth through a variety of engaging on-campus experiences. This commitment is evident in the collaborative efforts of university staff, who work together to provide programs that allow students to immerse themselves in VU's dynamic, hands-on labs while interacting with expert faculty. Among these initiatives are multi-day summer programs open to Indiana 11th and 12th graders, such as STEM Academy and Techmester. These programs offer in-depth exploration of career options and skill development, all within the vibrant environment of a residential campus. By participating in these experiences, students gain valuable insights into potential career paths and develop skills that support both their personal and academic growth. Through these efforts, VU aims to inspire students to envision themselves as future college-goers, ultimately helping them to achieve their educational and career aspirations.

We look forward to growing Career and Technical Education (CTE) Early College opportunities across the state, outfitting our centers with cutting-edge industry technology and equipment. Currently, 3,600 students are gaining hands-on experience at our Early College CTE Centers. Vincennes University remains agile in meeting the state's workforce needs and has been instrumental in supplying talent to Indiana's workforce. In response to the growing demand in Indiana's automotive, welding, and electric vehicle manufacturing sectors, we propose expanding our Automotive and Welding programs. This expansion is crucial to preparing students for the future and supporting the state's critical industries.

Thank you to the Indiana Commission for Higher Education and the Indiana General Assembly for your support of Vincennes University and higher education.

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. Charles R. Johnson
President
Vincennes University

Vincennes University

2025-2027 Operating and Capital Budget Request

Operating Appropriations

Indiana's Outcome Based Funding Formula determines changes to university operating appropriations. This newly devised funding formula is based on VU's performance in the areas of: completion, enrollment and retention. The Commission for Higher Education has weighted these metrics to align with each institutions mission.

Dual Credit

Vincennes University requests \$50 per credit hour for students completing dual credit courses for a total request of \$6,708,600 per year. Through VU's two dual credit programs, Project EXCEL and Early College, 15,239 students earned 134,172 credit hours in fiscal year 2024. Vincennes University's dual credit programs are helping to increase college completion rates while significantly reducing costs and financial strains for students and their families. Project EXCEL is a nationally recognized dual credit program that has offered high quality courses to high school students across the state for more than 40 years. Vincennes University was the first institution in Indiana to provide dual credit and is accredited by the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP). Project EXCEL's NACEP accreditation demonstrates its achievement of NACEP standards for academic integrity, program rigor and student achievement. According to the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, dual credit earners are less likely to drop out of college and more likely to complete on time or early. VU values the strong partnerships that we have with schools across Indiana. These partnerships foster collaboration between our faculty and high schools, ensuring that curriculum and instruction are aligned with college standards and ultimately preparing students for college coursework. Dual credit opportunities for students allow a pathway for them to complete their postsecondary education faster, which can lead to earlier entry into the workforce. Likewise, dual credit programs encourage academic rigor and expanded access to higher education by providing opportunities for students who may not otherwise have considered college. For a state looking to boost college completion rates and keep college affordable, dual credit is a critical state investment.

Repair and Rehabilitation

Vincennes University's state budget request includes \$2,285,197 for Repair and Rehabilitation in the 2025-2027 biennium. This is based on the Indiana Commission for Higher Education's defined repair and rehabilitation formula. This funding protects and preserves the University's and the State of Indiana's capital investments by extending the life of the institution's facilities and infrastructure.

Line-Item Appropriation

Since 2015, Vincennes University has received a line-item appropriation to support Indiana's Career and Technical Education (CTE) Early College program. Vincennes University respectfully requests \$5,000,000 for FY26 and \$5,000,000 for FY27 to continue to support this effort. Vincennes University has strategically established 19 CTE Early Colleges across the state within K-12 career centers. These centers serve an important role in benefiting both local communities and the State of Indiana through several key contributions:

1. **Cost Savings:** CTE Early Colleges provide a cost-effective pathway to technical degrees, saving the State of Indiana, students, and Hoosier families significant amounts by reducing the need for expensive postsecondary education.

2. **Workforce Development:** These centers address the workforce demands of high-skill, technology-driven industries, such as Advanced Manufacturing. They support the state's economic and workforce development needs by equipping students with the skills required for in-demand careers.
3. **Career Pathways:** CTE Early Colleges foster the development of essential skills for high school students whose goals include obtaining industry-recognized certifications or Associate's degrees. This focus enables them to quickly enter the workforce and seize immediate job opportunities.

VU CTE Early College sites play a crucial role in enhancing educational outcomes, reducing costs and preparing students for successful futures in both their academic and professional endeavors. This request will ensure that Vincennes University can support the operating and equipment costs associated with previous expansion efforts as well as future programs. Additionally, it will allow VU to support and maintain over \$10 million in new technology and training equipment located at the career centers.

Capital Budget Request

Vincennes University's capital budget request places a strong emphasis on the maintenance of our current facilities and infrastructure, as well as projects that are critical to Indiana's workforce development.

Priority 1: Automotive and Welding Technology Center-\$32,000,000

The Vincennes University Automotive and Welding Technology Center is set to be a state-of-the-art facility spanning 66,000 square feet, dedicated to advancing education in automotive and welding technologies. This cutting-edge center will feature dynamic laboratories designed for hands-on training in automotive maintenance and repair, including electric vehicles (EVs), auto body technology, manual and automated machine welding and other key technical skills. The building's design emphasizes technological innovation, energy efficiency and functional optimization, ensuring a forward-thinking learning environment for students and faculty alike.

The facility will include:

- **Modern Laboratories:** Equipped with the latest tools and technologies for practical training.
- **Smart Classrooms:** To enhance the learning experience with interactive and modernized educational technologies.
- **Student Study Areas:** Providing spaces for collaborative and individual study to support academic success.
- **Faculty Office Areas:** Designed to support faculty in delivering high-quality instruction and mentorship.

The Welding Technology program at Vincennes University is renowned for its excellence in post-secondary welding education and training. Lincoln Electric, the global manufacturing leader in welding products, plays an integral part in the Welding Technology Program by providing expert training to VU faculty, providing new cutting-edge equipment and supplies each year. The program offers both a comprehensive two-year Associate Degree and a focused one-year welding certificate, with a strong emphasis on preparing students for industry-recognized American Welding Society certifications.

Graduates from the Welding program are highly sought after due to their expertise in a wide range of welding techniques, including shielded metal arc, gas metal arc, flux core arc, gas tungsten arc, oxy acetylene welding, plasma arc cutting (manual and CNC), air carbon arc cutting, pipe welding, blueprint reading, fabrication, weld inspection and welding automation. The curriculum integrates substantial hands-on lab time to ensure proficiency in all welding positions, from structural to pipe welding. VU's Welding Technology Program also

adapts to industry advancements, incorporating robotics and computer numeric control (CNC) applications. In addition to the welding majors, the program offers elective courses and training for various College of Technology programs and industry partners, including Toyota, companies in mining and construction and a summer professional development program for high school welding teachers. This comprehensive approach ensures that students are well-prepared for the evolving demands of the welding industry.

The Automotive Technology and Collision Repair programs at Vincennes University are long-standing and well-regarded, supported by strong industry partnerships. These programs excel in preparing highly skilled technicians proficient in diagnosing and repairing complex technologies using modern techniques. Both programs offer one-year certificate and Associate Degree options, with a curriculum designed to include significant hands-on lab time in our automotive bays. Additionally, many students in the College of Technology choose elective courses in these programs to enhance their skills and boost their competitiveness in the job market. Several students pursue double majors to become specialists in particular areas, such as a collision repair expert with extensive welding experience or an automotive technician with collision repair expertise. These specialized skills make our graduates highly sought after by employers.

While VU has always maintained a strong commitment to investing in the latest equipment and technology, the current automotive and collision facilities are outdated and do not reflect the modern environments our graduates will encounter in local dealership and auto collision facilities. The new Automotive and Welding Technology Center will address this by modernizing our facilities and expanding our capabilities, particularly in the electric vehicle (EV) sector, a market that is rapidly emerging in Indiana and across the nation as the rise in popularity of electric vehicles continues to grow. As Indiana's automotive industry evolves with significant investments in EV production and technology, there is a growing need for well-trained technicians who can manage the unique aspects of electric vehicles, such as their electrical systems and battery technologies. The demand for skilled automotive and collision technicians is increasing and while Vincennes University has experienced a strong demand for our graduates, our current facility constraints limit our ability to accommodate more students. The new Automotive and Welding Technology Center will enable us to meet this demand, better prepare our students for emerging industry needs and maintain our role as a leader in automotive and collision repair education.

The Welding Program is currently housed in a standalone building on the opposite side of campus from our Automotive and Collision programs. The proposed new Automotive and Welding Technology Center would streamline these programs by consolidating them into a state-of-the-art facility, placing them in close proximity to each other. This dynamic new center would facilitate valuable cross-collaboration between the Auto, Collision and Welding programs, which is not possible with the current setup. This integration would enable Vincennes University to better align class schedules and curricula, providing students with more opportunities to engage in multiple disciplines and enhance their skillsets across automotive, collision repair and welding. Such cross-disciplinary training is essential for developing versatile technicians who are well-prepared for the evolving demands of the industry.

Additionally, all three programs—Automotive, Collision Repair and Welding—are offered to Twin Rivers High School students locally and are integral to VU's Early College programs throughout the state. With changes in high school graduation requirements prompting more students to seek college-level opportunities while still in high school, especially in technical fields, we have seen increased enrollment in these CTE programs. This expanded demand underscores the need for an elevated space to accommodate the growing number of students and provide them with the high-quality training they require. The new Automotive and Welding Technology Center will not only address these space constraints but also enhance our ability to deliver comprehensive, integrated training to meet the needs of today and tomorrow's workforce.

Priority 2: Multi-Campus Infrastructure Upgrades- \$30,500,000

Vincennes University's Multi-Campus Infrastructure Upgrades project represents a crucial step in maintaining and modernizing its facilities. This initiative seeks capital funding to address essential repairs and upgrades for campus utilities and building infrastructure. These repairs and upgrades will replace existing systems and infrastructure that have exceeded their useful lifecycle and, in many cases, have gone well beyond obsolescence. The components of the project include:

- 1. Multi-Facility HVAC, Electrical, and Communication Upgrades:** This project will focus on the current Center for Health Sciences (built in 1970), the Construction Technology Building (built in 2003) and the Jasper Campus Arnold F. Habig Center (built in 1997).
 - **Scope:** Replacement and modernization of heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems; upgrades to electrical systems and communication infrastructure; and interior upgrades.
 - **Benefits:** Enhanced climate control, improved energy efficiency, reduced maintenance costs, and upgraded communication systems.

Additionally, the project will also include extending existing electrical and data infrastructure to various campus locations in order to supply more stable and efficient service to these locations.

- 2. Steam Plant and Steam Line Upgrades (Phase III):** Vincennes University is serviced by a central steam plant that provides heat and hot water to many of the facilities on the Vincennes campus. This is a continuation of the work completed during Phase I and Phase II that replaced 10,700 lineal feet of steam line.
 - **Scope:** Replacement of two of the three steam boilers in the central steam plant and connect additional buildings to the central steam system.
 - **Benefits:** Increased efficiency of the new higher capacity boilers (20% efficiency increase), lower operational costs and reduced risk of system failures.
- 3. Multi-Facility Chiller, Boiler, Water Softener, Controls, Heat Pump, and Air Handler Replacements:** Vincennes University has identified several chillers, boilers, air handlers, water softeners, controls and heat pumps on the Vincennes and Jasper campuses that have reached their end-of-life cycle:
 - **Scope:** Replacement of outdated chillers, boilers, water softeners, control systems, heat pumps, and air handlers across various facilities.
 - **Benefits:** Improved system efficiency, lower utility costs, and reduced downtime due to maintenance issues.

Benefits of the Multi-Campus Infrastructure Upgrades:

- **Cost Savings:** Upgrading outdated systems will lead to lower utility bills and operational costs through improved efficiency and reduced energy consumption.
- **System Reliability:** Modern systems will enhance overall reliability and reduce the frequency of system failures or breakdowns.
- **Operational Efficiency:** Newer infrastructure will streamline operations, allowing for better management of resources and reducing the need for frequent repairs.
- **Long-Term Sustainability:** Investing in these upgrades will extend the lifespan of the facilities and infrastructure, supporting the University's mission for the long term.

Operating and Capital Appropriations Request

	2025-2026	2026-2027
Operating Appropriation	TBD by Performance Funding Formula	TBD by Performance Funding Formula
Dual Credit	\$6,708,600	\$6,708,600
General Repair and Rehabilitation	\$1,142,599	\$1,142,598
Line Item: Career & Technical Early College	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000
Capital Budget Request		
1. Automotive and Welding Technology Center	\$32,000,000	
2. Multi-Campus Infrastructure Upgrade	\$30,500,000	