



## **SURVEY: VAST MAJORITY OF HOOSIERS SEE VALUE IN EDUCATION BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL AND WANT GUIDANCE ON WAYS TO PAY FOR IT**

*Most Indiana residents have not heard of financial aid resources available, and many cite cost as an obstacle to enrollment.*

**INDIANAPOLIS, Feb. 1, 2023** – Eighty-nine percent of Indiana residents personally see value in education beyond high school, but among those who don't enroll, more than a quarter (28%) say it's because they perceive the cost to be prohibitive. And 62% of Hoosiers do not find understanding the full process of paying for college to be easy.

These are among the findings of a survey released today by [INvestEd](#), an Indiana nonprofit that provides free financial aid for education advising and transparent education funding options to Indiana students and families. INvestEd commissioned the survey in December and polled more than 1,700 diverse Hoosiers from across rural, urban, and suburban areas.

The new data help provide context for Indiana's declining college enrollment rates. Just 53% of Indiana high school graduates enrolled in post-high-school education in 2020, the most recent year for which data are available.

"Education beyond high school can sound like an expensive choice, but there are resources to help pay for it and organizations, including ours, that help families navigate the support available to them," said Joe Wood, president and CEO of INvestEd. "The survey results show us that much more must be done to connect Hoosiers with that support so more people pursue education beyond high-school."

While Indiana leads the Midwest in its financial-aid offerings and ranks among the most generous states in the nation for need-based aid, most Hoosiers aren't familiar with the state's signature tuition-support programs.

More than half of Hoosiers surveyed have not heard of at least one of the following state scholarship programs such as the state's work study program (58%; EARN Indiana), Next Level Jobs (55%) and the Frank O'Bannon Grant (58%), and 79% of Indiana residents think more Hoosiers might pursue education beyond high school if they knew they had a free, trusted resource – such as INvestEd – that could help them prepare to pay for college and limit student loan debt.

"Indiana is committed to addressing our college enrollment crisis, and we know that giving Hoosiers the tools they need to understand financial aid options is a critical piece of that," said Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education Chris Lowery. "We're grateful for organizations like INvestEd that are committed to helping Hoosier families so we can ensure the generous resources our state provides can be put to use."



Those surveyed agree that having help navigating financial aid for education beyond high school would benefit Indiana's residents, economy, and workforce. Hoosiers also believe employers should play a role in helping offset the cost of a post-high-school education:

- 82% of Hoosiers say it is important that Indiana families have access to free, Indiana-based financial aid literacy and advising when preparing to pay for education beyond high school.
- More than 3 in 4 (78%) Hoosiers think Indiana could better meet its future workforce needs if more Hoosiers could access a free, trusted source to help them pay for college and limit student loan debt.
- A majority (73%) of Hoosiers say companies are better positioned to attract and retain workers if they provide free access to resources that allow workers – and their families – to prepare to pay for college and limit student loan debt.

“Education helps open doors and provide Hoosiers with choice and flexibility – now and down the road,” Wood said. “With Indiana’s scholarships and aid available, we can help connect students with resources that make the cost manageable so that more Hoosiers can access this opportunity.”

###

#### **About INvestEd:**

INvestEd is Indiana's only state-based, nonprofit financial aid advising and student loan organization, one of 22 across the country. INvestEd provides programs that help Hoosier families understand college costs and how to fund postsecondary education with the least debt. INvestEd also offers responsible lending and refinancing options to Hoosiers. To learn more about us or to receive help planning for college costs, go to [investedindiana.org](https://investedindiana.org).

The statewide survey of 1,715 Indiana residents was commissioned by INvestEd and conducted online by Atomik Research from December 1-15, 2022. The margin of error fell within +/- 2 percentage points.

Media Contact:

William Wozniak

317-715-9002

[wwozniak@investedindiana.org](mailto:wwozniak@investedindiana.org)