Career Day Manual

For Schools

Career Ready Indiana is a partnership of state and local organizations working to help Hoosiers of all ages prepare for their future careers. This manual is produced in partnership with the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning, Indiana Afterschool Network, Indiana Chamber of Commerce, Indiana Department of Education, Indiana Department of Workforce Development and the Indiana Youth Institute.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Introduction** 4
- What is Career Day? 4
- Goals 4

**Getting Started** 5
- Connecting with Professionals 5
- Connecting with Your Community 6
- Connecting with Your School Colleagues 6
- Leading Up to Career Day 7
- Suggested Timeline 7
- Scheduling Tips 9
- Tips for Inviting Families 10

**Career Day Resources** 11
- Promotional Materials 11
- Resources by Grade Level 11
- Employability Skills Resources 13
- Templates & More 13

**After Career Day** 15
- Participate in the Career Ready Indiana Campaign 15
- Use the Resources 15
- Grow Your Relationship with Local Businesses 15
- Thank You! 15
INTRODUCTION
Today’s students need the worldview, experience, skills and imagination they can obtain by interacting with leaders in your community. Increasingly, employers in Indiana and across the nation say the skills graduates most need are “soft skills”—those less tangible attributes, like demonstrating good communication skills or being a team player. Introducing students to the business world as soon as possible will help them understand the workforce climate early in life. It will also benefit them with increased focus and determination as they set career goals in fields that they actually know about.

Indiana’s Career Ready campaign takes place each April through July to help students of all ages prepare for their future careers by teaching them to pair their interests and skills with the economy’s demands. To kick off Career Ready, resources are being provided to K-12 schools to hold a Career Day. The statewide Career Ready kick-off week is coming in May. More information is available at LearnMoreIndiana.org/Career.

What is Career Day?
Career Day is exactly what it sounds like: a day filled with career-focused activities for K-12 students. This manual will help you learn about lessons that can lead up to Career Day, as well as tips and resources for creating your own Career Day. Your school may choose to invite professionals and/or to use the lesson plans and other resources provided by the Career Ready campaign. Career Day will be a fun—and most importantly—useful day for your students and staff, as well as families if you choose to invite them.

Goals
The goal of Career Day is to introduce students to five growing sectors in Indiana and to the concept of employability skills (also called “soft skills”). Many careers in your local community are either part of the five growing sectors or serve a supporting role. Likewise, employability skills are crucial for success in today’s economy, regardless of career choice. Career Day can also encourage students to connect their skills and interests to in-demand careers. Finally, Career Day helps highlight the education required for different careers.
GETTING STARTED
Before getting deep into planning, it’s helpful to determine a focus for your Career Day. Some of Indiana’s fastest growing sectors include:

→ Health Science
→ Information Technology
→ Architecture and Construction
→ Science, Technology, Engineering and Math
→ Marketing, Sales and Service

For your Career Day, it may be helpful to narrow in on just one or a few sectors. Remind students that they need to know about these sectors, even if they don’t at first think their interests or skills align with the sector. For example, a public relations professional could work for a business specializing in one of these areas. You may also want to consider highlighting one sector each day of the Career Ready kick-off week, culminating in Career Day with visits from professionals in the final sector. See LearnMoreIndiana.org/Career for Career Sector Handouts with more details on specific careers within each sector. Click on “Classroom Materials” at the bottom of the screen.

Connecting with Professionals
The first thing you’ll need for Career Day is people. Whether teachers and/or counselors utilize the provided lessons or professionals are invited to speak to your students, from the very start you’ll need to know who is involved.

Most professionals love the chance to share their work with students. You’ll boost your chances of success if you are prepared with a specific ask (date, time, location, students’ grade level, topics to cover). Email presenters the Tips for Presenters handout from LearnMoreIndiana.org/Career once they’ve committed, or if they have hesitations about their ability to engage students.

Where Should You Start?
Consider reaching out to professionals who are...

- Connected to your Chamber of Commerce, FFA, Purdue Extension Office, WorkOne or Regional Works Council
- Already involved in your school (sponsoring sports teams, CTE programs, etc.)
- Parents, grandparents or relatives of students
- Involved in your county’s College Success Coalition (see LearnMoreIndiana.org/our-partners/community-partners/college-success-coalitions for a list for your county)
- Spouses or friends of school staff
- Successful local business owners located near the school
- Involved in local government agencies
- Part of your personal network (friends, neighbors, service providers, etc.)
- Representative of a variety of educational backgrounds: apprenticeship, one-year certificate, associate degree, bachelor’s degree, master’s degree and beyond

Connecting with Your Community
Build up to Career Day in your community. Local businesses, chambers of commerce and Works Councils will receive information about Career Day too. Ask them to partner with you to promote the event. Perhaps a mayor or other public figure can declare Career Day throughout your community, or serve as a keynote speaker on Career Day. Consider also reaching out to your superintendent, business leaders, alumnus of your school and others who are connected to your community who can inspire and inform students.

Connecting with Your School Colleagues
Some of the best resources for Career Day are right under your nose: the educators and administrators you work with every day. Use the Career Day Handout (available at LearnMoreIndiana.org/Career) to start the conversation and to ask others if similar things are already happening. Some questions to consider:

- **For teachers:** Are you already giving lessons on these topics? How can the information about growing sectors and employability skills be incorporated? When is ideal for visits from professionals, and which careers do you want to see represented?
- **For principals, superintendents and other administrators:** Can our entire school/corporation rally behind Career Day or a Career Ready Kick-off Week? What connections do you already have (with local businesses, government, chambers of commerce, etc.) that can help us?
For Career & Technical Education (CTE) leaders: Are you already doing something similar? Are there speakers or events planned that can be opened to the whole school? What connections do you have with local employers? What advice do you have about hosting a Career Day?

For counselors: How can we use Career Day to help students make intentional choices? How can we help them make career decisions driven by their interests and Indiana’s economic needs as they transition to high school/workforce/postsecondary education?

Leading Up to Career Day
Students will need background knowledge before Career Day occurs. The resources in the next section (Career Day Resources) are arranged by grade level and are a good place to get started. Consider making sure students are familiar with:

- Career-related vocabulary
- The idea of career sectors (or career clusters)
- Their own skills and interests and how important it is to link those traits with careers that are in-demand
- Education levels and vocabulary (apprenticeship, one-year certificate, two-year associate degree, four-year bachelor’s degree, master’s degree, doctorate degree, etc.)

Suggested Timeline
The next section (Career Day Resources) will be helpful as you plan. Career Day will include advertising and educating beforehand, planning a schedule for the day, and following up afterwards. Remember, Career Day can be any date that works well for your school.

Right Away
- Plan your focus for Career Day and start inviting professionals to participate.
- Decide if you’ll need a keynote speaker (such as a mayor, superintendent, alumnus, business leader or other local public figure). Start reaching out now to secure the date.
- Decide when you’ll use Career Day resources such as lesson plans, online career interest inventories and games, etc. See “Career Day Resources” for a full list. These can be spread out over the weeks leading up to Career Day.
- Plan a tentative schedule for the day. See “Scheduling Tips” on page 9.
- Email info@che.in.gov to let us know you’re participating. Consider applying for the Career Ready Indiana $1,000 school grant. (The application is available at LearnMoreIndiana.org/Career.) Planning a Career Day gives you extra points!
Three Weeks Before Career Day

- Send a Parent Letter home to families with information about Career Day (see LearnMoreIndiana.org/Career for a template). If you are inviting parents to attend, check out “Tips for Inviting Families” on page 10.
- Start distributing and talking about Career Sectors Handouts available at LearnMoreIndiana.org/Career. Help students connect their interests to possible careers. Send the handouts home and ask students to discuss them with their parents.
- Start decorating. Use the Career Ready Indiana materials shipped at the beginning of the school year. (More are available at LearnMoreIndiana.org/Career.)

Two Weeks Before Career Day

- Confirm guest speakers and location information. Send them Tips for Presenters.
- Finalize your schedule for Career Day (which speaker will be where at what time, whether you’ll have a pep rally to start the day, etc.)
- Prepare students to talk about careers.
  - Introduce the vocabulary (simpler words like “career” and “workplace” for younger students; industry-specific terms like “clean energy” or “life sciences” for older students)
  - Introduce the idea of a changing economy and focus on jobs that our economy will need in the future
  - Talk about students’ skills and interests and how to match them to a career
  - Use the “Career Day Resources” section of this manual to help you plan
  - Go over Questions to Ask or Questions to Ask-Elementary

Career Ready Kick-Off Week

Note: Career Ready Kick-off Week does not have to be the same week as Career Day.

- Check out LearnMoreIndiana.org/Career for fun ideas and events to start a season focused on careers.
- Consider using Career Day lesson plans on the growing sectors and employability skills during this week.
- Make announcements about Career Day.
- Send students home with the Questions to Ask or Questions to Ask-Elementary handout. Remind them to be respectful and that the professional knows about a lot of jobs in his/her organization. Even if students are not interested in that particular job, chances are good that they can learn about a career that fits their interests.
- Send your speakers a reminder and thank you note for their commitment, with parking and logistical information.
On Career Day

Note: Career Day can be any date that works well in your community.

➤ Make sure everyone and everything is in place.
➤ Greet professionals and thank them for their time. Ensure that someone takes them to the correct room(s) upon arrival.
➤ Wrap it up! Tell students thank you for their attention and for being good hosts of your guests. Remind them that someday they will be in a position to talk to your school about their careers.

One Week After Career Day

➤ Send professionals a Thank You Letter. A template is available at LearnMoreIndiana.org/Career. You could ask students to sign it, or personalize it with your own observations from Career Day.
➤ Consider trying to form a deeper relationship with the businesses represented on Career Day. See LearnMoreIndiana.org/Career for ideas on engaging businesses and a sample partnership template.
➤ If you haven’t already, give students lessons in the growing sectors and employability skills.
➤ Take notes. What worked? What didn’t? Save them for next year’s Career Day!

One-Two Weeks After Career Day

➤ Finish your Career Ready Indiana grant application, due Friday, May 27. See LearnMoreIndiana.org/Career for details.

Scheduling Tips

Give Career Day the spotlight with these scheduling tips:

➤ For a school-wide Career Day, secure a location (such as an auditorium) and a keynote speaker to introduce the professionals.
➤ For smaller in-class Career Day experiences, coordinate with the teacher(s) for specials, homeroom or study hall to see if you can take use their time slots for Career Day speakers.
➤ If you want the same professional to speak to different classes, respect his or her time. Do not ask a professional to present at more than two class periods, and only if they are back-to-back.
➤ Collaborate! Similar activities may already be happening at your school. Talk to teachers, CTE teachers and teachers of classes related to the growing career sectors to see what they are already doing related to careers. They may have business connections, lesson plans or planned speakers that can align with Career Day.
Tips for Inviting Families

Career Day is the perfect opportunity to show off what students are learning in your school, and parents and families can benefit from the information too. Inviting families is a great way to make sure career planning conversations are happening at home, too. Career Day will also introduce families to rapidly changing careers that may not be within their areas of expertise. If your Career Day will include families, read through these tips to make sure your day goes smoothly.

➤ **Logistics:** Be sure to include information about where to park, which entrance to use, and where to go once family members are inside the building. Ask parents to arrive early so that everything can start on time. Use the Parent Letter template at LearnMoreIndiana.org/Career, and add your relevant information.

➤ **Safety:** Be sure to follow your school’s safety policy for checking in visitors. Communicate with all school staff, even if they aren’t involved in Career Day, so that they know to be on the lookout for lost visitors.

➤ **Welcoming guests:** Consider asking for an RSVP prior to the event so you’ll be prepared ahead of time. A hospitality room with drinks and a place to put coats can be a nice touch, and it allows families to mingle. You’ll also want to designate someone(s) to greet visitors and direct them to the classrooms or auditorium.
CAREER DAY RESOURCES
Explore these resources to make your Career Day impactful and memorable. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Learn More Indiana at info@che.in.gov or 1-888-528-4719.

Promotional Materials
The Career Ready materials sent to your school in August or September of 2015 are a great resource for your school bulletin boards, walls or windows. (See LearnMoreIndiana.org/Career if you need to print more.) The Parent Letter at LearnMoreIndiana.org/Career can be customized with your information. Make use of school announcements, a marquis, bulletin boards and more to make sure students know Career Day is coming.

Resources by Grade Level
Browse the following resources to find the ones that will work best for your students, and remember that many can be adapted to fit your grade levels.

All Grades
- Career videos: HoosierHot50.com
- College-and-career preparation magazines (see especially the “Career” sections; LEARN MORE and educator guides for grades K-10; Next Indiana for grades 11-12): LearnMoreIndiana.org/Career.
- Employability skills lesson plans (developed just for the Career Ready campaign!): LearnMoreIndiana.org/Career. Click on “Classroom Materials” at the bottom of the page.
- Your region’s Works Council: IN.gov/irwc/2335.htm. Find which high school pathways are most needed in your region by selecting your region and then clicking on the “Labor Market Demand & Talent Supply Analysis” PDF.

Grades K-5
- College- and career-focused resources: visit LearnMoreIndiana.org/Career.
- Sector-specific resources:
  - Clean energy lessons, quizzes, coloring pages and more: energy.gov/eere/education/teach-and-learn.
  - Advanced manufacturing & logistics curriculum, online games, etc.: DreamItDolItIndiana.com.
  - STEM resources: istemnetwork.org.
Grades 6-8

- Career exploration game: DriveOfYourLife.org.
- College- and career-focused resources: visit LearnMoreIndiana.org/Career.
- Indiana Career Explorer, with career assessments, career profiles and more: IndianaCareerExplorer.com (free log in required; contact Kuder, ICE developers, at 1.800.314.8972 or info@kuder.com with any questions).
- INReality career game, which helps students learn about salaries, cost of living and return on investment for education beyond high school: HoosierData.IN.gov/inreality.
- Sector-specific resources:
  - Advanced manufacturing & logistics curriculum, online games, etc.: DreamItDoItIndiana.com.
  - Agriculture and agribusiness information and middle school lesson plans: FFA.org.
  - Clean energy lessons, quizzes, and more: energy.gov/eere/education/.
  - STEM resources: Istemnetwork.org.
- Transition to high school: Use regional data from your Works Council Region (see “All Grades” above) and IndianaSkills.com to help students pick diplomas and pathways that match their academic trajectory, interests and Indiana’s economic demands.

Grades 9-12

- Employability skills framework (including interactive model): cte.ed.gov/employabilityskills.
- Indiana Career Explorer, with career assessments, career profiles and more: IndianaCareerExplorer.com (free log in required; contact Kuder, ICE developers, at 1.800.314.8972 or info@kuder.com with any questions).
- Indiana Skills database, which helps students search for in-demand careers and connect with education opportunities across the state (including short-term training, one-year certificates, and more): IndianaSkills.com.
- INReality career game, which helps students learn about salaries, cost of living, and return on investment for education beyond high school: HoosierData.IN.gov/inreality.
Sector-specific resources:
- Advanced manufacturing & logistics curriculum, online games, etc.:  
  DreamItDoItIndiana.com.
- Clean energy lessons, quizzes, and more: Energy.gov/eere/education/.
- STEM resources: Istemnetwork.org.
- Technology news and research for Indiana: TechPoint.org.

Transition to the workforce: Use regional data from your Works Council Region (see “All Grades” above) and IndianaSkills.com to help students pick postsecondary options that match their academic trajectory, interests, and Indiana’s economic demands.

Employability Skills Resources
The U.S. Department of Education’s Employability website contains detailed information about its Employability Framework, pictured on the next page. The lesson plans for Career Day were developed with this Framework in mind. Visit cte.ed.gov/employabilityskills to learn more.

Templates & More
More printer-friendly resources are available at LearnMoreIndiana.org/Career. Just click on “Classroom Materials” at the bottom of the page to find:
- Business Engagement Ideas & Sample Partnership Template
- Parent Letter Home
- Questions to Ask
- Questions to Ask-Elementary
- Resources for Businesses
- Sample Questions (for students to ask professionals)
- Thank You Letter Template (to thank professionals)
- Tips for Presenters
Source: U.S. Department of Education
AFTER CAREER DAY
How can you make sure the vital information discussed on Career Day lasts beyond one day? Consider these options.

Participate in the Career Ready Indiana Campaign
Career Day resources aren’t the only thing offered by the Career Ready campaign. An easy and fun way to engage students is the contest, which helps them think about career options at an age-appropriate level. Plus, it gives students the chance to win $529 towards their education—and education isn’t optional when it comes to today’s careers. Entries are due Friday, May 27, the same due date as the $1,000 grant application for schools. Check out LearnMoreIndiana.org/Career for more information.

Use the Resources
Career resources are always in season! If you didn't use some of the resources from the previous section during your Career Day, consider how you can incorporate them at other times of the year. For students transitioning to high school or graduating from high school, use information from IndianaSkills.com and your region’s Works Council (IN.gov/irwc/2335.htm) to help them choose high school pathways/diploma options or postsecondary education that aligns with their interests, academic strengths and Indiana’s economic demands.

Grow Your Relationship with Local Businesses
Would you like further opportunities to connect with the professionals who visited your school? The Career Day resources at LearnMoreIndiana.org/Career include business engagement ideas by sector and school need, and a sample partnership agreement. A formalized partnership can solidify expectations on both sides and helps provide direction for the future.

Thank You!
There are endless ways to teach your students about Indiana’s growing sectors and their need for employability skills. You are the best judge of which methods will work best to keep your students engaged and excited about the future, and when to implement them in your school year. We thank you for your hard work!