



The Torch

The official newsletter for Indiana state employees

April, 2021

Employee Pulse survey now open

Results to help improve employee experience, engagement

Great government service for Hoosiers starts with a great employee experience.

Because of this, it is important to regularly assess and understand the quality of that experience. State employees now have an opportunity to share their thoughts in the **2021 State of Indiana Employee Pulse Survey**. The online survey is available until end of day Monday, April 12.

The survey does not require any additional log-in information, is anonymous and confidential, and takes only about four minutes to complete. Survey results will help identify strengths and challenges in the areas of employee satisfaction and engagement enterprise-wide.

The State of Indiana Employee Pulse Survey measures employee engagement by asking a number of questions about your employee experience and engagement:

1. Growth & Potential “Can I grow here?”



2. Teamwork & Belonging “Do I belong here?”
3. Individual Needs & Contributions “What do I give?”
4. Basic Needs “What do I get?”

Your input is extremely important to this process because **your responses help determine how the employee experience can be improved.**

Click [here](#) to begin the survey.

If you have any trouble completing the employee survey, please contact the Performance Management Division at performancemanagement@spd.in.gov.

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The Torch is published monthly by the Indiana State Personnel Department and is available online at <https://www.in.gov/spd/employee-resources/the-torch/>

Got a story?

Submit your story ideas to: spdcommunications@spd.in.gov

Social media



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Like [@SOIEmployees](https://www.facebook.com/SOIEmployees)



Follow [State of Indiana Employees](https://www.youtube.com/StateofIndianaEmployees)

Hoosier Lottery, Ivy Tech team up for free financial literacy course

April is National Financial Literacy Month

The designation was created in 2004 to highlight the importance of understanding financial decision making and teach Americans how to create and maintain good financial habits. This year, the impact of COVID-19 brings even more challenges to many individuals and families.

The Hoosier Lottery teamed up with Ivy Tech Community College to design a free financial literacy online course, which provides an understanding of how money fits into everyday life plus gives the knowledge needed to play lottery games positively.

“The course was designed to achieve a dual role,” said Hoosier Lottery Executive Director Sarah M. Taylor. “Each short course navigates important money related topics to help you learn how to control your finances before they control you.”

Ivy Tech Community College President Sue Ellspermann agrees and sees the value now more than ever.

“During this past year, not only were people concerned about health and safety, but also the burden of new and unexpected financial challenges,” she said. “Ivy Tech continuously offers resources to students and community partners, so a free financial literacy course available to all Indiana residents is an important effort that aligns with the community college’s mission.”

The four free courses range in length from 25 to 40 minutes each and cover a variety of topics to help participants make educated financial decisions, including how to read a credit report, make wise investments, plan a budget, as well as providing tips for buying a car, picking a mortgage lender, and choosing the right financial institution for individual needs.

Feedback from students ranges from “this course was beneficial to understanding my finances” to “this is a good course for someone looking to buy a home.” And many who complete the course agree, “It’s an excellent amount of information in a short time frame.”

The courses are as follows:

Tracking and Budgeting Your Money: Learn the basics of keeping track of your money, creating a budget, and planning your finances.

Net Worth, Savings and Personal Credit: Learn about how to determine your net worth, ways to save your money, and how loans and interest work.

Managing Consumer Credit and Debt: Learn about consumer loans, paying off debt, calculating interest and managing consumer credit and debt.

Investing, Insurance and Retirement: Learn about planning for retirement, preparing and investing plan and how insurance options can create financial stability.

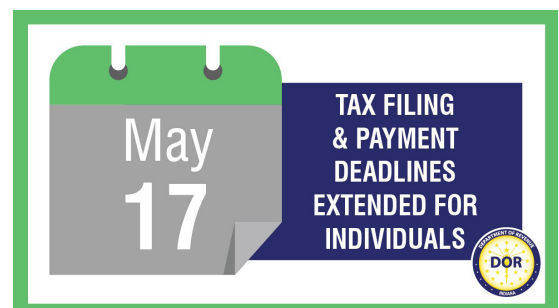
You can visit [Financial Literacy Course](#) to explore and learn more about each course. While visiting hoosierlottery.com, check out the Spend Tracker. This positive play tool is designed to help players calculate how much they are spending while playing lottery games.

Don't wait until the last minute! See if you can file your taxes for free!

Still waiting to file your 2020 taxes?

Why wait when you can file for free with the Indiana Department of Revenue's Indiana *INfreefile* program? If your adjusted gross income was \$72,000 or less in 2020, you may qualify to file both your state and federal taxes for free.

INfreefile provides a faster, easier and secure way to file your taxes. Visit freefile.dor.in.gov today to see if you're one of the nearly two million Hoosier taxpayers who qualify to file taxes for free with *INfreefile*.



Prevention is the key to staying well

Complete a wellness visit and earn a \$100 e-gift card

Taking time for [preventive care](#) is one of the best ways you can be healthy now – and in the future.

Getting regular check-ups and exams can help you catch problems early and keep you from getting sick, and that goes a long way toward increasing your chances of staying healthy. For state of Indiana employees, preventive care is also covered at 100 percent—no copays or deductibles-- and that means less stress on your wallet.

Recommended exams, tests, and screenings vary based on age, gender, and other factors, so a great resource to find the types of preventive care best suited for you is health.gov/myhealthfinder.

ACTIVEHEALTH WELLNESS REWARDS
 Earn \$100 for completing a wellness visit.
[Tell me more](#)



Other types of preventive care, such as an annual physical, [eye exam](#), and [dental check-up](#) are appropriate for everyone. If you aren't sure what exams or types of preventive care are right for you, be sure to talk with your primary care provider.

If you need help finding a primary care provider, try the [Sydney app](#) or call the Anthem Health Guide at 877-814-9709.

The peace of mind that can come from a [preventive exam](#) is its own reward, but state of

Indiana employees eligible for the [ActiveHealth](#) program can receive another: a \$100 e-gift card! All you have to do is schedule and complete an annual physical with your primary care provider or a wellness visit with a [CVS MinuteClinic](#). Don't delay because the results of your visit must be loaded in your ActiveHealth portal by Nov. 30.

For more information on staying well, from tips for healthy eating to fitness advice (and [discounts!](#)), make sure to check out InvestInYourHealthIndiana.com.

Make family time active time!



The family that stays active together has fun together!

Physical activity is great for kids, because they learn how to stay healthy and feel good by being active. Fortunately, busy parents can combine family time with exercise time. Check out these tips to learn how.

Getting started:

- As a family, make a list of activities you would like to do together.
- Make sure your list includes things that everyone can do and enjoys.
- Keep a family physical activity

log, or hang a calendar on the wall to stay organized.

- Try to plan at least one or two family events each week.
- Once a month, plan a special event like a trip to the zoo, a day hike, or camping.
- Use a safe backpack, stroller, or bike trailer so that smaller children can be included in family activities.

Every day can be an active day!

You may not realize it, but your normal day is full of opportunities to be active. Anything that raises your heart rate and makes you breathe harder counts! Here are

some tips for staying active at home:

- Give the kitchen floor a good scrubbing.
- Wash the car, clean the garage, or wash windows.
- Walk or bike to the store or try parking further away.
- Try an exercise video or app for a little while in the morning or evening.
- Read the newspaper on a stationary bike or listen to a podcast while walking.

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Make family time active time!

If you are looking for more information to help you on your health journey, be sure to visit MyActiveHealth. There is a wealth of information on this website regarding many different health and wellness topics. Other resources:

- **Health Coaching**
Call to schedule: 855-202-4219
- **Login to MyActiveHealth Engagement Platform**
www.myactivehealth.com/StateofIndiana
- **Download the ActiveHealth Mobile App**
Located in the app store and google play

Learn how to leave the couch behind and start being active in next ‘Learning Lab’

Is it time to break up with your couch?

Living an active life is important to staying healthy, but it can be hard to find your workout style and what fits best into your daily routine. Join ActiveHealth’s next Learning Lab if you’re considering starting to exercise but don’t know where to begin. Once you get started, you’ll feel better--mentally and physically. And, really, your couch will understand.

Join ActiveHealth’s Learning Labs! Your ActiveHealth coach, Sarah Anderson, will host new presentations every other month. Come explore important, lasting changes you can make in your daily life. Each Learning Lab lasts approximately 30 minutes and covers topics like healthy eating, being active, getting better sleep, and being more mindful.

Join the Wednesday, April 28 program at [10:30 a.m. here](#) or [12:30 p.m. here](#) to learn:

- Tips for overcoming obstacles to exercising
- How to bust the biggest exercise excuses
- How to get started safely
- Simple and fun ways to make moving and physical activity more enjoyable

Start your journey to better health & earn a **2022 PREMIUM DISCOUNT**



Get Started! Deadline: Sept. 30

Complete four health coaching sessions (in person or by phone).

OR

Reach Level 5 (9,000 hearts) in online education.

Call (855) 202-4219, or log in to ActiveHealth, www.myactivehealth.com/StateofIndiana.

New state employee discounts available now

Looking for fun this summer?

Check out these new [discount offers](#) for state of Indiana employees:

[Indianapolis Zoo](#) - Discounted admission tickets to the Indianapolis Zoo are now available for state of Indiana employees and their guests.

State employees must use this link to access the tickets: <https://indyzoo.doubleknot.com/state-of-in/74234>



[Kentucky Kingdom & Hurricane Bay](#) – The park opens May 8.

Learn about this year's 25 percent discount [here](#).



[Holiday World & Splashin' Safari](#)

- Holiday World will open to the general public **Saturday, May 15**, with Splashin' Safari opening **Friday, May 21**.

State of Indiana employees will

save on their ticket purchases when they visit www.holidayworld.com/funclub and enter the (case sensitive) username and password:

Username: Holiday123
Password: World123



BUYER BEWARE. A listing on the state's employee discount page does not signify endorsement by the Indiana State Personnel Department, that there was any competitive procurement, or the existence of a state contract. Purchasers must examine, judge, and test for themselves.



East Wing Re-Opening!

Abe Martin Lodge

in beautiful Brown County State Park - Nashville IN



Our newly remodeled East Wing rooms are now open. We can't wait for you to see them!

Featuring:
Large TVs - Coffee Makers
Refrigerators

IndianInns.com 1.877.LODGES 1



Learning where your tax refund comes from: The Indiana Auditor of State

Welcome back to the Indiana's Tax Dollars at Work Campaign from the Indiana Department of Revenue (DOR).

If you missed the first article all about the campaign you can check it out in the [March edition of The Torch](#).

In April, DOR is working to explore the work of the Indiana Auditor of State (AOS), Tera Klutz. As you probably already know, your paycheck comes from the AOS, but did you know your tax refund is also issued through this office?

Not only that, but Auditor Klutz is responsible for accounting for all state funds, paying the state's bills, and oversees and disburses county, city, town, and school tax distributions. For the last 27 years, the AOS has won the Certificate of Achievement and Excellence in Financial Reporting award for their

detailed reports on state funds.

Check out the [AOS Tax Talk Blog](#) to learn about everything this team does to keep the state running smoothly.

Want to know more? You can learn which agencies will be featured each month, see past blogs and subscribe for updates on DOR's [Indiana's Tax Dollars at Work](#) webpage.

Stay tuned! Next month, DOR will be exploring how the Indiana Board of Animal Health uses state tax dollars.

The Indiana Auditor of State: Where Your Tax Refund Comes From

April 5, 2021



State of Indiana Employee Pre-retirement Seminar set for April 21

You are invited to attend a pre-retirement seminar hosted by the Indiana State Personnel Department Learning and Development team from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 21.

This seminar is designed specifically to help state employees understand their options and benefits as they navigate a successful transition into retirement. Community partners from the Indiana Public Retirement System (INPRS), Secretary of State, Social Security, and more will be

available to answer questions during the seminar.

Topics include Hoosier S.T.A.R.T, insurance benefits, legal affairs, and much more.

Please note: This seminar will be conducted over Zoom and will not be recorded.

If you are unable to attend or if you have questions or concerns, contact Christie Hochstetler at nhochstetler@spd.in.gov.

Join the April 21 meeting [here](#).

Stay up to date with COVID-19 news

- [2019 Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Indiana Department of Health](#)
- [Governor Eric J. Holcomb](#)

Helpful resources

Anthem Resources

- [Anthem Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#)
- [Anthem NurseLine](#)
- [LiveHealth Online](#)
- [211.org](#)

General Resources

- IDOH COVID-19 Call Center– 877-826-0011
- Contact the INSPD Benefits Hotline – 317-232-1167 (Indianapolis area), 1-877-248-0007 (toll- free outside Indianapolis)
- Disaster Distress Helpline – 800-985-5990, or text “TalkWithUs” or “Hablanos” to/al 66746.
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Helpline – 800-662-HELP
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 800-273-TALK or 888-628-9454 (español)



Artwork by Jerry Williams

Indiana State Fairgrounds education program offers augmented reality experiences for students

In celebration of [National Ag Day](#), the [Indiana State Fairgrounds and Event Center](#) and the [Indiana State Department of Agriculture](#) have teamed up to launch a new augmented reality education opportunity for students of all ages but with a focus on grades eight, nine and 10.



“The ability for students to learn about our diverse agricultural systems through a cutting-edge experience like augmented reality is outstanding,” said Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch. “The hard work put into these education modules from the State Fairgrounds staff will help capture our children’s minds while also serving as a good representation of our agriculture industries in Indiana.”

The augmented reality curriculum launched March 23 and is intended to immerse and excite Hoosier students about the practices, products, and careers in three distinct Indiana agricultural sectors. Students will utilize their mobile device or school tablet to download an app and activate the experience, which operates by scanning a QR code:

Indiana Crops Experience - An augmented reality exercise where students will operate a combine to harvest a field of corn,

learning various facts about crop production along their journey.

Indiana Dairy Experience - An augmented reality exercise where students will have the opportunity to visit a virtual dairy farm, learning about four different areas of the farm used in milk production and cow comfort.

Indiana Hardwoods Experience - An augmented reality exercise where students will navigate a logger around a virtual forest. They will help manage the forest by harvesting four varieties of hardwood trees (ash, hickory, maple and oak) while learning about products made from each type of hardwood.

“These apps help to deliver ag education to students in a unique and engaging way,” said Cindy Hoye, executive director, Indiana State Fair Commission. “We also plan to offer these augmented reality experiences to our guests at the 2021 Indiana State Fair, so that’s exciting as well.”

As an introduction to the augmented reality experience, each of the three apps includes an animated video overview of the industry followed by a narrated quiz for students to complete for comprehension retention. The augmented reality experience in each module ties directly back into career options, and students are provided a variety of resources to learn more about careers in agriculture after completing the experiences.



“These augmented reality learning opportunities are critical for students to see how agriculture products make their way into Hoosier homes,” said Bruce Kettler, Indiana State Department of Agriculture director. “We are looking forward to this curriculum increasing interest in the exciting possibilities of careers in Indiana agriculture.”

On March 23, all of Indiana’s agriculture teachers received an invite to register for the newly-offered experiences. These apps can also be used by students outside the agricultural classroom and can be downloaded by non-agricultural teachers [here](#). All three apps are available for download at no charge on both Apple and Android devices.

Funding for the development of the apps came from a grant from the Indiana State Department of Agriculture. Additional funding, expertise and time was provided by Beck’s Hybrids for the Indiana Crops Experience. Time and expertise were also provided by the Indiana Hardwood Lumberman’s Association and the American Dairy Association of Indiana to develop the Indiana Hardwoods Experience and the Indiana Dairy Experience.

WorkSmart 365's Spring of Learning kicks off this week!

Starting this week, WorkSmart 365 is hosting free training sessions on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays through the end of June on many Microsoft 365 topics!

In 2020, WorkSmart 365 was able to reach nearly 2,000 users at more than 30 agencies across the state of Indiana during the premier Spring of Learning. This year, through a partnership with Microsoft WorkSmart 365, 19 different courses covering more than 10 Microsoft 365 applications are offered in the hopes of reaching even more users!

Training topics this year include Microsoft Teams, SharePoint, Forms, Yammer, and much more! [Check out the full list of topics and the complete schedule here.](#)

THIS WEEK'S SESSIONS:

[Teams 200 | Wednesday April 7 | 10 to 11 a.m.](#)

This course is designed to build on existing Microsoft Teams knowledge to establish best practices and etiquette across available apps.

[SharePoint 100 | Thursday, April 8 | 10 to 11 a.m.](#)

This course focuses on the SharePoint Online experience in communication and team sites. Attendees will learn how to share and manage content, find information, and collaborate across their organization. This introductory course focuses on the experience for site members.

WorkSmart 365 was launched in 2018 and is a community of people from around the state interested in getting the most out of the Microsoft 365 tools. Most Indiana Office of Technology (IOT) customers already have access to Microsoft 365 at no additional charge. This



community is hosted and led by IOT but represents active members from more than 40 agencies.

WorkSmart 365 provides learning, community, and networking opportunities throughout the year – most notably an annual fall conference, a Champions Program, and an active Yammer Community. If you would like more information about WorkSmart 365, [please visit the WorkSmart 365 Portal here.](#)

[Visit WorkSmart 365 on Yammer](#)

[Looking for Microsoft 365 Training Materials?](#)

A colorful banner for the 2021 Summer Camp. The background features a young girl with her hands raised, showing blue and purple paint on her fingers. The text '2021 SUMMER camp' is prominently displayed in white and teal. To the right, it says 'REGISTRATION IS OPEN AND SPOTS ARE FILLING FAST!'. At the bottom left is a 'REGISTER NOW' button, and at the bottom right is the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites logo with the website 'indianamuseum.org'.

DNR Fish & Wildlife's top performers reel in awards

The Indiana DNR Division of Fish & Wildlife recently recognized its top-performing employees for their contributions to conservation, mentoring, and teamwork during 2020.

Award winners were Jeff Thompson, Anna Smithey, Elizabeth Middleton, and the Shrubs for Shrikes program team.

Thompson was awarded the Fish & Wildlife Mentor of the Year Award. In his long tenure as a wildlife biologist in the west/southwest part of the state, Thompson has guided many staff members, providing them with the practical training needed to manage Indiana's wildlife for present and future generations of Hoosiers. Thompson's mentoring efforts carry forward a tradition of conservation excellence.

Smithey earned the Conservation Cornerstone Award, which is given annually to one support staff member to recognize excellence advancing the division's programs. Smithey took on many roles as an office manager in 2020, supporting staff in three different offices in addition to her regular duties at Atterbury Fish & Wildlife Area, and provided exceptional customer service.

Middleton received the Fish & Wildlife Champion Award, which is given to one biologist or program manager to recognize their outstanding contributions to fish and wildlife conservation. In her two-year tenure with DFW as the stewardship outreach



specialist, Middleton has increased collaboration across divisions and offices within DNR, partnering with state parks staff, wildlife biologists, and property managers. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Middleton adjusted quickly, creating virtual programming and digital content to help Hoosiers connect to Indiana's fish and wildlife resources.

The Director's Team of the Year Award went to the Shrubs for Shrikes program team. Last year, DNR Fish & Wildlife, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, and the Indiana Audubon Society began working with private landowners to create nesting habitats for state endangered loggerhead shrikes. Their collaborative partnership provided the funding necessary to purchase, plant, and maintain cedar trees favored by shrikes for nesting and shelter. Landowners received monetary incentives to protect the shrikes' nesting areas for years to come. Shrikes born in spring 2020 were observed later in the year using the newly planted trees for shelter. Learn more about loggerhead shrikes [here](#), and find out more about the Adopt-a-Shrike program [here](#).

The division also recognized employees for their years of service with the state of Indiana:

- Five years - Rachael Stouder, Andrew Fairchild, Sadie Dainko, Alexander Ingersoll, Savanna Vaughn, Erica LeRose, Steve Rumade, Susan Myers, Leticia Trevino, Allisyn--Marie Gillet, Andrew Buelmann, Jonathan Roales, Jodi Daugherty, Dawn Johnson, Byron Getz
- 10 years - Matthew Bredeweg, Jason Mirtl, Timonthy Records, JoAnne Cummings, Douglas Green, Timothy Shier, Martin Daugherty
- 15 years - Sam Whiteleather, Robert Bonewitz, Matt Buffington, Michael Rhoades, Adam Phelps, Dennis Workman
- 20 years - Ken Hasselkus, Christie Stanifer, Brian Boszor
- 25 years - Robert Ackerson, Brant Fisher, Patrick Mayer, Shannon McMillan, Linnea Petercheff, Bill Seegers
- 35 years - Jeffrey Bott, Scott Lane, David Potts, Gregory Rainford





A PARTNERSHIP
**built
for you.**



INDIANA**TECH**

Tuition Benefit

**for all State of Indiana employees
and their spouses and children**

Indiana Tech and the State of Indiana are working together to make pursuing a degree an easier and more affordable endeavor for its employees and their spouses. In partnership with the State of Indiana, Indiana Tech will award a 20 percent tuition scholarship for undergraduate or graduate tuition.

- Programs for associate, bachelor's and master's degrees.
- Graduate certificates in five business concentrations, including management and marketing.
- Student success advisors provide one-on-one support and resources that help students stay on track.
- Classes are always starting soon, allowing rapid progress toward degree completion.
- Textbook rental included in tuition.

The Indiana Tech Family Grant is extended to immediate family members only (defined as spouse, children, siblings, and parents). To be eligible for an Indiana Tech Family Grant, students must be enrolled full time each semester. Full-time equivalency for CPS students is a minimum of 12 credit hours across four concurrent sessions. Full-time equivalency for traditional students is a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester. The amount awarded will be calculated based on the lowest tuition rate of each of the students enrolled.

ENROLL TODAY.

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