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PRESS RELEASE

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**New Report Finds Way to Boost Community College Degree Completion**  
***'Reverse Credit Transfer' would help those who transfer, but drop out, to get a degree***

The Indiana Institute for Working Families, a program of IN-CAA, announced today that it has released *Reverse Credit Transfer: A Completion Strategy that Indiana's Earned*, a report generously supported by the Duke Energy Foundation and the Working Poor Families Project. The report describes the impact reverse credit transfer would have for Indiana, examines best practices from other states, and makes recommendations for how Indiana can create its own program to boost educational attainment.

At a time when Indiana is falling short of its higher education completion goals and the proportion of Hoosiers with some college but no degree exacerbates the skills gap, an education process called 'reverse credit transfer' can help address both needs. This strategy would award associate's degrees to students who have earned all the right credits but who missed out on a diploma after transferring from community college to a four-year university.

This report finds that over half of the students who transfer from Indiana's community colleges to four-year universities have no degree after six years. Meanwhile, there are almost 890,000 Hoosiers with some college education, but no degree to show for it, including over 600,000 with a year or more of studies. At the same time, only 33.8 percent of Indiana's working population has at least an associate's degree, well short of its goal of 60 percent attainment by 2025. These Hoosiers are often stuck in low-skill, low-wage jobs, and are the target population for reverse credit transfer.

Earning an associate's degree through reverse credit transfer would benefit Indiana's students, employers and the state. Students with an associate's degree earn an average \$5,000 more per year than those with some college education, but no degree, and are nearly a third less likely to be unemployed. Going along with increased personal earnings, for every Hoosier who earns a degree through reverse credit transfer, the state stands to gain \$292 per year in increased revenues. If Indiana can convert a third of its 'some college, no degree' population to associates degrees through reverse credit transfer, the state stands to gain an additional \$59,259,356 each year.

While a dozen other states have received grants of up to \$500,000 to implement reverse credit transfer programs, Indiana has been left behind because to date the state has not articulated a cohesive statewide plan. This has become an issue of competitiveness, as states and neighbors such as Ohio have used reverse credit transfer to advance their 'number one priority' of college completion.

The report makes six recommendations for Indiana to create a reverse credit transfer program and to become competitive for potential grants: 1. incorporate a coordinated reverse credit transfer program into the state's existing completion strategy; 2. cast the widest net possible to get degrees for the most students possible; 3. scale up to a statewide approach that includes as many majors and degree pathways as possible; 4. reach back and boost completion by including 'near completers' from previous years; 5. communicate effectively and keep student costs to a minimum; and 6. use best practices from other states to Indiana's benefit.

The report can be read and downloaded at:

<http://incap.org/reversecreditfullreport2013.html#.UnPMgnCfiSp>

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## **ABOUT THE INDIANA INSTITUTE FOR WORKING FAMILIES**

The Indiana Institute for Working Families (Institute) is a program of the Indiana Community Action Association, Inc. (IN-CAA). The Institute was founded in 2004 and conducts research and promotes public policies to help Hoosier families achieve and maintain economic self-sufficiency. The Institute is the only statewide program in Indiana that combines research and policy analysis on federal and state legislation, public policies, and programs impacting low-income working families with education and outreach. The Institute achieves its work by focusing its activities in the following areas: Public Policy: Research and Analysis; Education and Outreach; and National, Statewide, and Community Partnerships. To learn more about the Institute, please visit: [www.incap.org/iwif.html](http://www.incap.org/iwif.html)

## **ABOUT THE INDIANA COMMUNITY ACTION ASSOCIATION (IN-CAA)**

The Indiana Community Action Association, Inc. (IN-CAA) is a statewide not-for-profit membership corporation, incorporated in the State of Indiana in 1970. IN-CAA's members are comprised of Indiana's 23 Community Action Agencies (CAAs), which serve all of Indiana's 92 counties. IN-CAA envisions a state with limited or no poverty, where its residents have decent, safe, and sanitary living conditions, and where resources are available to help low-income individuals attain self-sufficiency. IN-CAA serves as an advocate and facilitator of policy, planning and programs to create solutions and share responsibility as leaders in the War Against Poverty. IN-CAA's mission is to help the state's CAAs address the conditions of poverty through: training and technical assistance; developing models for service delivery; and providing resources to help increase network capacity. For more information about IN-CAA, please visit: [www.incap.org](http://www.incap.org)