



For Immediate Release
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\$20 Million Investment to Support the Well-being of Indiana Youth Workers

With funding from Lilly Endowment Inc., Indiana youth serving intermediaries announces a multi-year, phased plan to support youth serving professionals across the state

January 24, 2023 (INDIANAPOLIS, IN) – An Indiana coalition of youth-serving intermediaries (the youth coalition) announces a \$20 million investment to help youth development professionals who implement programs that support the educational, social, emotional, and physical development of Indiana youth (ages five to 18). Funding for the Indiana Youth Worker Well-Being Project is made possible through a Lilly Endowment Inc. grant to Indiana Youth Institute.

Five agencies make up the youth coalition and are working together on this project. They are the Indiana Afterschool Network (IAN), IARCA Institute for Excellence (IARCA Institute), Indiana Youth Services Association (IYSA), Indiana Youth Institute (IYI), and Marion County Commission On Youth (MCCOY).

During the next four years, the youth coalition will lead the comprehensive statewide effort that will focus on the following six strategies to improve the lives of youth workers so they can more effectively work with Indiana youth:

- Increase access to virtual (or telehealth) services, including mental health counseling and short-term financial consultation.
- Facilitate peer learning groups to provide opportunities for youth workers to share experiences and support one another.
- Launch an emerging leaders of color professional development series to help diversify leadership at youth-serving organizations.
- Convene leaders of youth-serving organizations (virtually and in-person) to provide information on how to improve working conditions and business practices to improve youth-worker well-being.
- Provide opportunities for youth-serving organizations to apply for funding to pilot and/or implement customized strategies that improve diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) within their organizations.
- Support youth workers exposed to trauma (directly and indirectly).

“Youth workers are critical to the future success of young Hoosiers, who spend much of their time with these professionals in a variety of programs outside of the school day,” said Ted Maple, Lilly Endowment’s vice president for education. “By improving youth worker well-being, these caring and dedicated people can do their jobs more effectively. We are grateful that IYI and other members of the youth coalition listened to the field and have developed a solid plan to improve the lives of youth workers and ultimately the youth they serve.”



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During 2022, the youth coalition worked closely with youth workers and agency leaders to identify and prioritize the strategies that would make up the Youth Worker Well-Being Project. Through focus groups, surveys and key informant interviews, the youth coalition learned about the most significant individual- and organizational-level issues affecting youth worker well-being,

The youth coalition learned that the top challenges Indiana youth workers face are the emotional consequences of the trauma experienced by the youth they serve; distress caused by negative workplace cultures and policies in some youth-serving organizations; increased workloads as the needs of youth expand; inadequate workplace benefits, particularly for mental health services; workplace environments where individuals of color and LGBTQ+ youth workers feel they cannot thrive; lack of pathways for career development and leadership training; and stress caused by the overall effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The six strategies on which the project will focus are designed to address these challenges.

A managing committee of the youth coalition's executive leaders will work with IYI to oversee the project and continue to seek input from an advisory committee composed of youth workers in the field, executives, board members, and community leaders.

The youth work profession encompasses staff of youth recreation and youth development organizations and service bureau staff, mental health counselors, child and family welfare professionals, mentors, family support clinicians, residential treatment staff, and others at community-based organizations.

Through their work, Indiana's youth development professionals are having an impact on more than 1.5 million children under age 18 across the state. Children benefit when those professionals are engaged, aware of the needs of youth and families, knowledgeable about best practices, and when they are able to cope effectively with stress. The Youth Worker Well-being Project will address individual youth worker well-being, workplace conditions, and root causes of stress in the sector to promote comprehensive change to benefit youth workers and the youth they serve.

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About the Indiana coalition of youth-serving intermediaries

Indiana Afterschool Network

IAN advances opportunities for learning beyond the school day so that all Indiana youth can grow into healthy, thriving adults. Its vision is to help every young person in Indiana have access to quality out-of-school programs provided by valued professionals. IAN has developed a research-based system of continuous quality improvement to help programs better meet the needs of youth through afterschool standards, professional development, self-assessment, and coaching. IAN works with communities across the state to increase access to high-quality out-of-school time programs.



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IARCA Institute for Excellence

The IARCA Institute provides training, practice advancement support, and transparency to Indiana's child and family welfare community. Founded in 2000, the Institute supports a culture of ongoing practice and system improvement so that Hoosier children, youth, and families have access to the quality services they need and deserve.

Indiana Youth Services Association

IYSA is a membership organization that supports 30 Youth Service Bureaus, serving youth in 70 counties in Indiana to fulfill the four core roles of prevention programming, advocacy, community education, and information & referral. IYSA leads many statewide initiatives including an anti-human trafficking program, youth worker renewal fellowships, youth work competency trainings and certification, public awareness campaigns regarding medical amnesty, and Indiana ACEs Coalition.

Indiana Youth Institute

Since 1988, IYI has worked to improve the lives of all Indiana children by strengthening and connecting the people, organizations, and communities that are focused on kids and youth. IYI provides critical data, capacity-building resources, and innovative training for over 2,500 diverse youth-serving organizations and 17,000 youth workers each year. IYI has a long history of actively listening to Indiana's youth workers and community leaders, leveraging their feedback to facilitate collaboration and promote problem-solving and collective advocacy on a statewide scale. IYI is serving as the administrative lead for this project, employing the dedicated staff and providing supportive services.

Marion County Commission On Youth

As Gateway, Connector, Advocate, Capacity Builder and catalyst for Youth Engagement, MCCOY strengthens and supports the thousands of individuals, hundreds of organizations, and scores of systems in Marion County that serve our youth. MCCOY's goal is to ensure that every young person has equitable access to the supports, programs, and services needed to grow, learn, and thrive into successful adulthood.

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About Lilly Endowment Inc.

Lilly Endowment Inc. is an Indianapolis-based, private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly Sr. and sons J.K. Jr. and Eli through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. While those gifts remain the financial bedrock of the Endowment, the Endowment is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. In keeping with the founders' wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion and maintains a special commitment to its hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana.