Call to Action for Indiana Employers to Join the You Can. Go Back. Initiative

February 11, 2016

WHEREAS, many Indiana employers face significant education and skills gaps in filling positions;

WHEREAS, Indiana has adopted a Big Goal of increasing postsecondary attainment to 60 percent by 2025 that aims to bridge this gap;

WHEREAS, 750,000 Hoosiers have earned college credit but not completed a degree or credential;

WHEREAS, at least 200,000 Hoosier adults must go back and earn a degree, certificate or industry credential by 2020 to meet the state’s Big Goal;

WHEREAS, adults often face budget constraints and must balance work and family obligations that make it difficult to further their education;

WHEREAS, the State of Indiana has dedicated $7.5 million in state grants for adult students and Indiana colleges are offering special programs and incentives to eliminate barriers for returning adults;

WHEREAS, employers are essential partners in removing obstacles that prevent their employees from completing postsecondary education and advancing in their careers; and

WHEREAS, better-educated Hoosiers contribute to a stronger Indiana workforce and help Indiana attract and retain a strong employer base, contributing to its economic success;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Commission calls upon Indiana employers to:

I. Encourage their employees to go back and complete a degree or credential by:
   a. Discussing the benefits of increased education in the context of professional development and periodic performance reviews;
   b. Displaying college Return on Investment Reports prominently in workspace, break rooms and digital systems and distribute in appropriate internal communications materials; and/or
   c. Increasing employees’ awareness of federal, state and employer-specific funding available to help with tuition and related costs.

II. Support their employees who choose to go back and complete a degree or credential by:
   a. Assisting employees with the costs of continuing their education through upfront tuition support or tuition reimbursement;
   b. Negotiating with nearby colleges to secure tuition discounts, defer tuition until reimbursement is received or other accommodation for their employees; and/or
   c. Allowing employees to use company space and equipment during non-work hours to complete their degrees.

III. Help employees balance work, school and family by:
   a. Permitting employees to modify work schedules to accommodate class schedules.
   b. Partnering with nearby colleges to offer courses or whole programs at their places of business; and/or
   c. Adopting flexible policies that allow Paid Time Off to be used for school-related activities.