



2023

# Annual Report

Indiana Commission on the Social Status of Black Males





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# MISSION

The mission of the Indiana Commission on the Social Status of Black Males (ICSSBM) is to study the social conditions of the state's black male population, develop strategies to remedy or assist in remedying serious adversities, and make recommendations to improve the educational, social, economic, employment, and other circumstances for Hoosiers. The Commission receives suggestions pertinent to issues the Commission studies from members of the general assembly and governmental agencies as well as serve policymakers, public interest groups, community organizations, and members of the general public.

# VISION

To elevate men of mission, good character, and leadership within the family and community.

# FOCUS

ICSSBM continues to address the challenges confronting Indiana's Black males while trying to aid in decreasing the problems they face in the areas of:

**Education:** Provide academic enrichment and achievement opportunities, civics education, and preparation for post-secondary education.

**Criminal Justice:** Provide incarceration prevention programming and re-entry avenues for formerly incarcerated individuals transitioning back into society.

**Employment:** Provide opportunities for skills-based training, entrepreneurship programming, and youth job engagement services.

**Health:** Provide targeted access to care, health education, and mental health services.

**Social Factors:** Provide family support services, violence reduction interventions, and self-development and empowerment initiatives.

# COMMISSIONERS

## **Kari Jones**

Indiana Family and Social Services Administration  
Division of Mental Health and Addiction  
Chairperson

## **Dave Rozzell**

State Senator Appointee  
Vice Chairperson

## **Kenneth Allen**

Speaker of the House Appointee

## **William Durham**

Indiana Department of Education Designee

## **Damein Jones**

Indiana Family and Social Services Administration  
Division of Family Resources  
Designee

## **Elijah Neal**

State Senator Appointee

## **Richard Okello**

Indiana Civil Rights Commission Designee

## **Shanel Poole**

Speaker of the House Appointee

## **Kesha Rich**

Indiana Department of Administration Designee

## **Dwayne Sawyer**

State Senator Appointee

## **Dave Stewart**

Lt. Governor Appointee

## **Larry Ervin**

Indiana Department of Health Designee

## **Lamar Sykes**

Speaker of the House Appointee

## **Tori Williams**

Indiana Department of Correction  
Designee

## **Honorable Vaneta Becker**

State Senator

## **Dr. Vernon G. Smith**

State Representative

## **Honorable Greg Taylor**

State Senator

## **Honorable Ann Vermilion**

State Representative

## WORD FROM THE CHAIR

I have been honored to serve as the Chair of the Indiana Commission on the Social Status of Black Males. Black males hold a special place in my heart as a mother of three young adult sons. It has been a privilege working with Director Virgil Giles along with the Commissioners who all are passionate about serving Black males throughout Indiana.

We understand “it takes a village to raise a child” as the African Proverb states. To cultivate and maintain healthy communities throughout Indiana it takes all of us, regardless of our race and ethnicity, for Black males to not only survive but thrive and have the opportunity to give back to their communities.

This is why we started our first ever Grant Program in 2023. We know our grassroots community-based organizations serve our communities where Black males live, go to school, and play. The Commission decided to not recreate the wheel, but support organizations who are already doing the work.



It is imperative as “the village” that we equitably support Indiana’s grassroots organizations to provide them with the support they need that will allow them the opportunity to grow in capacity and sustainability.

The Commission has also been focusing on taking programming to communities and meeting them where they are. Whether it is our longstanding IBBHI where we have partnered with local barbers, organizations, and community leaders since 2011, or our new community career fairs held across Indiana partnering with local colleges, universities, and businesses to provide educational and career opportunities.

ICSSBM is actively co-designing with our communities around our five focus areas of Criminal Justice, Education, Employment, Health, and Social Factors and we invite you to join us in doing the same.

**KARI JONES**  
CHAIR

## WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR



In March 2023, I accepted the position as the Director of ICSSBM with a mission to provide grassroots programs where the Commission would take services and resources to the communities instead of having residents travel to Indianapolis.

Now that we're out of the pandemic, it is my goal to rebuild partnerships across the state and create awareness concerning the Commission's five-key areas of focus.

2023 was a productive year for the ICSSBM as we implemented our first ever grant program with a plan to reduce or eliminate barriers to opportunities and access to meaningful employment, education, and health care.

It was truly a pleasure having an opportunity to work with other state agencies and community businesses to provide resources for Black males in the state.

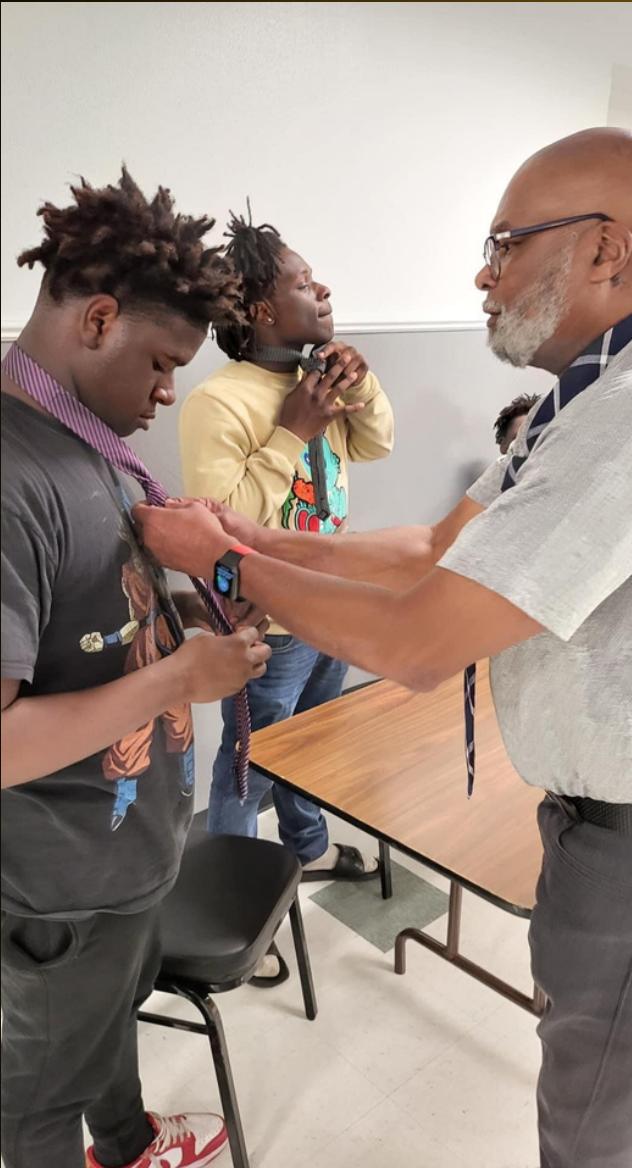
**Virgil Giles**  
DIRECTOR



# GRANT PROGRAM

In 2023, ICSSBM received twenty-three grant proposals and approved grants for four community programs. \$12,850 was approved to fund the following programs:

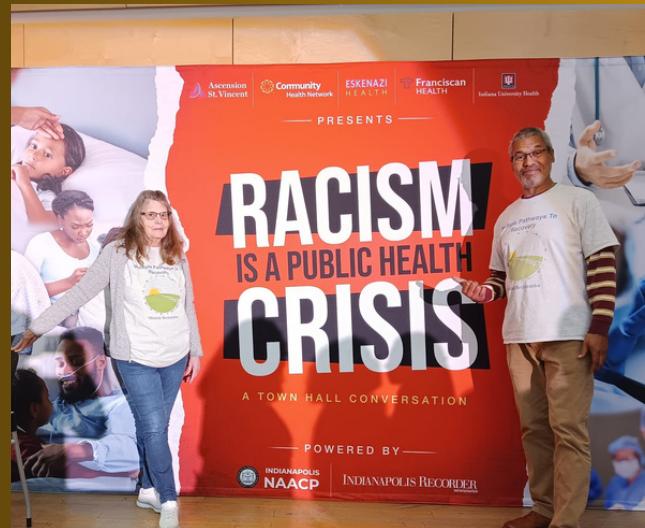
- Multiple Pathways to Recovery “MPTR” - Work primarily with Black men in Cumberland, Irvington, Raymond Park, and Warren Township. They provide one-on-one peer support and facilitate intensive outpatient programs, aftercare strategies, and group sessions of motivational speaking based on the lived experiences of their struggle and recovery from substance use disorder. MPTR also provides resources for employment, housing, health, food, clothing, and other basic needs. In addition, MPTR offers internships to Black men during their certification process to combat inequality in the recovery community.
- Indiana Black Expo “IBE” Elkhart Chapter - IBE created a three-week program that will teach Black male participants between the ages of 13 and 19 the importance of a tie and its connection to college, career, and other opportunities that can advance their social mobility and enhance their generational wealth. Black youth will meet three times per week in March 2024, to learn communication skills, the importance of appearance, financial literacy, and career and workplace readiness. In April 2024, participants will visit the Indiana State House where they will be meeting with elected and appointed officials, along with state agency leaders to learn how to engage in the legislative process, governance, and how decisions that impact their lives and communities are made.
- Side Hustle Economy Company (K.I.N.G.S. Corner) - This project aims to improve the mental health of Black male entrepreneurs by using therapy and self-care as tools they need to grow their businesses successfully. This project stems from a private, offline community of Black males across central Indiana who gather monthly to discuss their mental health and self-care. They do wellness walks, yoga and mindfulness sessions, basketball games, and prayer calls. "The K.I.N.G.S. Corner" will connect Black male entrepreneurs in central Indiana with a network of Black male therapists, psychiatrists, and psychologists in a culturally relevant way. It will also provide financial support to those Black males seeking therapy.
- Y.M.C.A. (Young Men of Distinction) - The highly interactive program features guest speakers, leadership development, life skills training, career exposure, and financial literacy for young men of color. The target audience is young men ages 10-17 in historically excluded or underserved neighborhoods primarily in Marion County.



INDIANA BLACK EXPO



Y.M.C.A.



MULTIPLE PATHWAYS TO RECOVERY

Make it Make \$ENSE

\$12,850



TO SUPPORT GRASSROOT AGENCIES

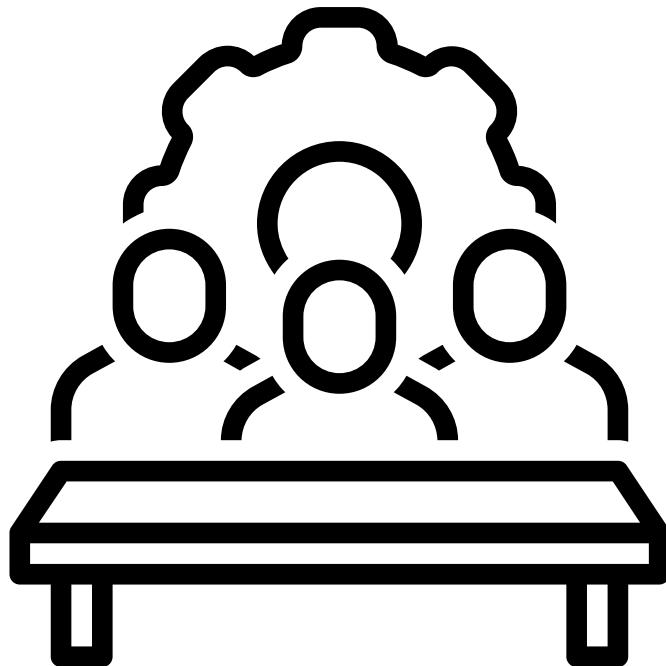
FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [IN.GOV/ICSSBM/ABOUT-US/ICSSBM-GRANT-PROGRAM](http://IN.GOV/ICSSBM/ABOUT-US/ICSSBM-GRANT-PROGRAM)

# GRANT SUBCOMMITTEE

This subcommittee met and reviewed grant proposals that supported grassroots organizations aligned with ICSSBM's mission and values. Commissioner Richard Okello served as chair to the grant subcommittee; Damein Jones and Tori Williams also served on the committee.

ICSSBM provides grants to "grassroots" efforts in the following areas:

- Education: Provides academic enrichment and achievement opportunities, civics education, and preparation for post-secondary education.
- Criminal Justice: Provides incarceration prevention programming and re-entry avenues for formerly incarcerated individuals transitioning back into society.
- Employment: Provides opportunities for skills-based training, entrepreneurship programming, and youth job engagement services.
- Health: Provides targeted access to care, health education, and mental health services.
- Social Factors: Provides family support services, violence reduction interventions, and self-development and empowerment initiatives.





For the previous 12 years in the month of April, ICSSBM, along with volunteers, sponsors, local commissions, and community partners coordinate services to conduct the annual IBBHI. In 2023, the IBBHI served over 900 Black males at more than 50 barbershop locations in 16 cities throughout the state by providing health care testing and resources.

The purpose of IBBHI is to inform and educate Black males to understand potential risk factors regarding their health and address any concerns discovered through testing.

The free health screenings consist of blood glucose and blood pressure testing and mental health assessments. In addition, informational handouts on healthy lifestyles and exercise are provided.

IBBHI's mission is to bring focus and support to Black male's health across the state of Indiana, educate men on self-advocacy of their health, and share information to promote healthy behaviors.



For more information on the IBBHI, please visit <https://ibbhi.com/>

# THE INDIANA BLACK BARBERSHOP HEALTH Initiative



JOIN ICSSBM FOR FREE HEALTH ASSESSMENTS AT PARTICIPATING BARBER SHOPS THROUGHOUT INDIANA! LEARN MORE ABOUT BEST DIET/HEALTH PRACTICES, RECEIVE BLOOD GLUCOSE SCREENING, AND BLOOD PRESSURE READINGS!

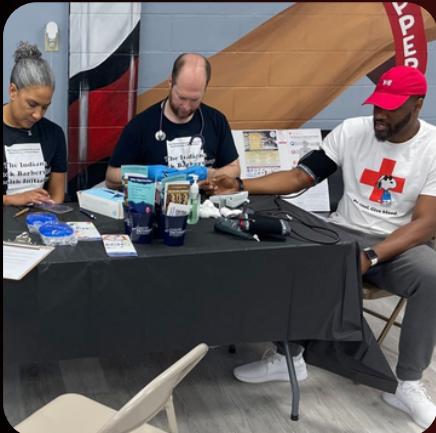
APRIL 8TH-29TH  
COMING TO LOCAL SHOPS IN:

ELKHART  
NEW ALBANY

MICHIGAN CITY  
ANDERSON

SOUTH BEND  
EVANSVILLE

JEFFERSONVILLE  
LAFAYETTE



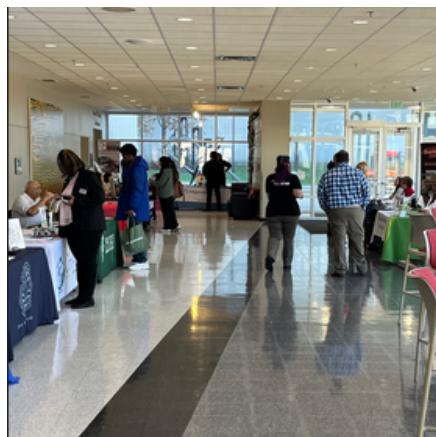
# CAREER & RESOURCE FAIRS

ICSSBM partnered with Ivy Tech Community College and Indiana University Northwest campus (Lake County) to host three career fair events across the state as part of its grassroots efforts to provide education and outreach to communities.

Approximately 150 Black males were served as well as 50 individuals of other races (women and men).

The events provided candidates and employers an opportunity to meet one another, establish professional relationships, and discuss potential job opportunities.

The career fairs offered several free workshops: Dress for Success, Resume Techniques, Job Interview Skills Techniques, Expungement Information, and Career Assessments.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Thank you, Executive Director Gregory L. Wilson, Sr. and the Indiana Civil Rights Commission, for your continued support of ICSSBM.

# CONTACT US



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WWW.IN.GOV/ICSSBM