



The Torch

The official newsletter for State of Indiana employees

NOV
2023

2023 Governor's Public Service Achievement Awards Issue

On Monday, October 23, exceptional State of Indiana employees were honored at the Governor's Public Service Achievement Awards. These awards celebrate individuals and teams who, through their commitment and innovation at work, have produced a measurable, positive impact on their agency's finances, operations, or population served from January 2022 through June 30, 2023. The awards were reintroduced this year by Governor Eric J. Holcomb. To celebrate their accomplishments, we have gathered summaries of their accomplishments in this special edition of the Torch. Thank you to all our public servants who support Indiana and its initiatives statewide.



Terri Holaday

Nominated by the Bureau of Motor Vehicles

Teresa (Terri) Holaday has been a Bureau of Motor Vehicles team member for more than 25 years and her creativity, problem solving, talent and passion have set her apart. In 2022, she received a perfect branch audit for both the Peru and Carmel BMV branches, sent help to branches outside of her regions more than 127 times, has provided endless support in the creation of policies and programs, and more. As evidence of her exceptional public service, Terri received the Allison Kelm award in 2022—the highest honor a BMV Commission team member can receive.



Sheryll Espinas

Nominated by the Criminal Justice Institute

Sheryll Espinas has successfully guided an entirely new fiscal team to substantially reduce errors and processing times for the Criminal Justice Institute. She has also provided exceptional service to their partners across the state. Her positive outlook and tireless work to improve the financial performance and efficiency of the agency has earned her the respect of her coworkers and the Hoosiers served by CJ.



Caleb Slocum

Nominated by the Department of Administration

Caleb Slocum has worked for state government since 2014 and came to the Department of Administration in 2022 to be the Data Manager for Public Works. He developed an automated, online certification process for IDOA Public Works that has turned a sometimes weeks-long process into one that now takes as little as 37 minutes. When IDOA staff needs to research a contractor's certification and status, they can now find all information in the Public Works Certification Database in minutes. His innovative approach has provided a significant benefit for his team, contractors and designers who work with IDOA.



Continuous Quality Improvement Team

Nominated by the Department of Child Services

Comprising nine dedicated employees, the Continuous Quality Improvement team aims to improve their agency's efficiency based on Lean principles by minimizing waste in current processes. They facilitated 58 improvement events between January of 2022 and June of 2023 to streamline the agency's processes, save money, prevent waste and educate other teams on Lean principles. Their work has been vital and has positively impacted every aspect of the Department of Child Services.



Rudee Depasse



Kasey Doyle



Harmony Gist



Joey Hamby



Tracy Hopkins



Haley Inman



Christina Leonard



Maximillian Liseabee



Jason Shampo

John Mather

Nominated by the Department of Correction

Nominated by the Department of Correction, John Mather has been a leader for the implementation of Case Plan Credit Time, a program that helps incarcerated individuals as they re-enter their communities. He co-chaired the task force, developed the timeline, reviewed policy development and made sure training for all staff and incarcerated individuals was completed and implemented correctly. Because of his hard work, Credit Time is now awarded for individualized case plan progress. In addition to facilitation of the program, John also served as a trusted expert witness for court cases involving Credit Time.



Melissa Ambre

Nominated by the Department of Education

Melissa Ambre is the Department Director of School Finance and has played a major role in a number of successes for the agency. She and her team worked to ensure \$160 million in funding to help support Governor Eric J. Holcomb's plan to eliminate school and textbook fees for parents and helped to disperse K-12 public school funding after it had a historic 10.1% increase. She also manages the School Choice Program, which is often used as a standard for other states building their own School Choice programs. Melissa has made a lasting community impact on schools and students within Indiana.



Fran Metcalfe

Nominated by the Department of Environmental Management

Fran Metcalfe was a key part of the soil disposal project after the East Palestine Ohio train derailment on February 3, 2023 that gained national attention. She provided in depth analysis of the contaminated soil, establishing the parameters and test methods for lab analysis, determining acceptable disposal levels, and managing an environmental contractor to perform the work. She ensured that the disposal was as protective of human health and the environment as possible. This high profile and intensive project was successfully completed in July of this year under her oversight and resulted in approximately \$645,000 in fees paid to the Department of Environmental Management.



Voluntary Protection Program Team

Nominated by the Department of Labor

The Voluntary Protection Program Team achieved certification for 88 sites that cover more than 23,000 Hoosier workers. This certification is the highest level of occupational health and safety recognition a company and its employees may receive. The VPP Leaders work with more than 90 special government employees who are representatives from Indiana's VPP-certified sites to perform assessments of readiness, mentoring of teams at different sites and evaluations for participation in the program. This team has also recently established an online reporting form and training to make application for the VPP easier and more efficient than ever. Thanks to their hard work, Indiana now ranks second among all OSHA-approved State Plans for site participation.



Beth Gonzalez



Patricia McIntire



Lisa Stephenson



Bill Tandy

Management Information Systems Team

Nominated by the Department of Natural Resources

The Management Information Systems Team has focused their efforts on completing fiber cable projects in-house rather than utilizing contractors for increased efficiency and cost savings. In just one of their many projects, they buried almost 50,000 feet of fiber cable, saving over \$4 million and making connectivity speeds 10 times faster at Patoka Lake. They've also completed projects at Tippecanoe River State Park, Spring Mill State Park, Kingsbury Fish and Wildlife Area, and more. Their projects have buried thousands of feet of cable, saving millions in tax-payer dollars, and improving connectivity for DNR properties throughout the state.



Raymond Kester



Tim Marcum



Jeff Motz



Al Schumacher

Project NextDOR Team

Nominated by the Department of Revenue

The Project NextDOR team achieved tremendous success with its modernization goals. Through a series of carefully planned rollouts, the new tax system and portal replaced the agency's legacy tax systems that had been in production for more than 25 years. The tax system now enables Hoosiers to manage their taxes in one convenient location, 24/7. DOR also issued 8.6 million Automatic Taxpayer Refunds on the new system, returning \$1.4 billion to over 4.3 million Hoosiers. The project required tens of thousands of hours of analysis and development, and it has dramatically improved service to Indiana taxpayers while improving efficiencies, closing internal control gaps, minimizing risks and improving revenue management. Although this was an agency-wide accomplishment, the team members being recognized had a huge part in the project's success.



Angela Conley



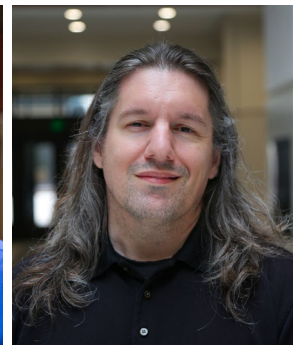
Suvarna Daruri



Kevin Gulley



Scott Hanny



Craig Hurst

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Project NextDOR Team cont.



Michelle Leech



Laurie Mendez (IDOH)



Sandy Mowery



Matthew Ogden



Luann Pelsor



Jeff Raney



Cristen Reed



Roger Sharritt



Emily Wann



Christie Worden



Nurain Yusuf

Kathy Eaton-McKalip

Nominated by the Department of Transportation

Kathy Eaton-McKalip has 43 years of service with the state and has been the Local Program Grant Administration Director with INDOT for the last 12 years. During that time, she has worked with a majority of the communities across the state of Indiana through the administration of the local federal aid program as well as the Community Crossing Matching Grant program—which she helped to create. She has worked extensively with COVID relief funding, American Rescue Plan Act dollars and Bipartisan Infrastructure programs to help the communities she serves. Her work has allocated approximately \$400M annually to cities, towns and counties across Indiana to make improvements to local roads and bridges.



Elsadig Ibrahim

Nominated by the Department of Transportation

Elsadig Ibrahim has been the field general of all major projects in Marion and surrounding counties for the last decade, where he managed billions of dollars in construction projects. He has helped deliver high quality and on-time completion of huge projects. His current project has had a peak of 543 project personnel to complete aggressive construction, making the final connections between I-69 and I-465. Elsadig has also acted as a mentor to countless young professionals, created lasting partnerships with contractors and, above all, served as a leader in his industry.



COVID-19 Response Team

Nominated by the Department of Veterans Affairs

The COVID-19 Response Team adapted the existing Military Family Relief Fund to aid veterans and their families during the pandemic. The success of the COVID-19 program led to the expansion of the MFRF program to include the back to school program (in fall of 2022) and the holiday program (in winter of 2023). The legislative and outreach teams administered a campaign that increased the volume of applications by 228% in the 2022 fiscal year and 190% in the 2023 fiscal year. Finally, the MFRF team increased the total funds delivered to veterans in need from \$278,958 in the 2021 fiscal year to an incredible \$1,300,010 in the 2023 fiscal year.



Kirsten Clark



Joseph Devito



Lynn Dickey



Janie Gregory



Laura McKee



Salon Osborne



Gabrielle Owens

Norma Bowman

Nominated by the Department of Workforce Development

Nominated by the Department of Workforce Development, Norma Bowman has served her fellow Hoosiers for nearly 50 years. As a program coordinator with DWD's Legal Division, she meticulously reviews thousands of pages of documentation each year for time-sensitive requests, and from January 2022 to June 2023, she successfully processed a record number of documentation requests. Norma further exemplifies great government service through the steady, diligent and calm approach she consistently embraces when undertaking her work.



Melisa Matthews

Nominated by the Department of Workforce Development

Melisa Matthews serves as a division director for DWD and spearheaded the All Hands on Deck effort to address Unemployment Insurance's backlog of approximately 68,000 issues that built up during the pandemic. She and her team aimed to return to a standard volume by February 2024, a vital undertaking for the agency. Under Melisa's leadership, the team significantly reduced their backlogged issues nearly a year ahead of schedule in May of 2023.



Education Employment Relations Board Team

Nominated by the Education Employment Relations Board

The Indiana Employment Relations Board staff worked in a team of five rather than their usual seven to issue 305 compliance reports for every Indiana teacher collective bargaining agreement. These agreements ranged from 12 to 60 pages and required close attention to detail, applying the law consistently across each agreement. Not only did they accomplish this goal with a smaller team, but for the first time, they received no appeals in response to their 2023 Compliance Reports and Recommendations. Their work is essential in promoting cooperative and harmonious relationships between school employers and their employees.



Traci Hackleman



Sarah Masterson



Jake May



Cheri Spicer

Not pictured:
Ryan Preston

Division of Family Resources & Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer Team

Nominated by the Family & Social Services Administration

The Division of Family Resources and Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer team helped to ensure that Indiana's children continued to receive free and reduced lunch throughout the pandemic. When the federal government first made the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer available, Indiana was one of only five states to apply. This team worked tirelessly to collect the necessary data and create a secure portal to aid students and their families while also creating permanent support for eligible children during the summer months. Between January of 2022 and June of 2023, the team facilitated almost \$500 million federal dollars in benefits to more than 600,000 children.



Adrienne Shields



David Smalley



Suzanne Tryan

State Hospital Incompetent to Stand Trial Team

Nominated by the Family & Social Services Administration

The State Hospital Incompetent to Stand Trial team has worked tirelessly to reduce wait times at state psychiatric hospitals. Between 2012 and 2022, the number of individuals committed to the state increased by 200% and with the staffing issues of the pandemic, the number of staffed beds at hospitals declined significantly. This team created partnerships with private inpatient hospitals and several jails to expand services and built on Governor Eric J. Holcomb's Next Level Work initiatives and compensation reform to restore staffing levels. Their hard work directly led to a wait time reduction of over 85% in just one year and has helped to offer increased evidence-based care to patients.



Jenny Braun



Jay Chaudhary



Kelli Jensen



Justin McAfee



Elizabeth Mills

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State Hospital Incompetent to Stand Trial Team cont.



Josh Nolan



Katrina Norris



Lisa Passarelli



Hamilton Smith (GOV)



Matthew Stucky



Dirk Turner

Not pictured:
Leslie Huckleberry

Alternative Dispute Resolution and Compliance Division of the External Affairs Unit Team

Nominated by the Civil Rights Commission

The Alternative Dispute Resolution and Compliance Division of the External Affairs Unit provides neutral dispute resolution services, without charge, to assist parties in voluntarily settling discrimination complaints. In 2022, they helped 71% of their parties reach a settlement and helped to attain \$756,000 in monetary relief, a 37% increase from 2021. Their dedication and record of success has only continued into 2023 and in addition to monetary relief, their actions have helped to heighten public awareness of civil rights, influence laws and regulations, and more.



Debra Bluit



Tracy Richardson

Not pictured:
Diane Graves

Major Jerry Williams

Nominated by the Indiana State Police

Major Jerry Williams was born and raised in Gary, Indiana and has been a State Trooper for more than 30 years. He was named the Interim Police Chief for Gary in January of 2023 and quickly handled the immense pressure of the role, working to tackle the unique concerns of the city. He worked tirelessly to support the department during their time of transition and immersed himself within the culture of the department. He led his team with enormous success and was instrumental in helping to put the Gary Police Department on the right track.



PLA Call Center Team

Nominated by the Professional Licensing Agency

The Professional Licensing Agency Call Center was fully implemented in February 2023 and the team has substantially reduced the wait time for the 3,000 Hoosiers who work with the agency every week, from nearly one hour down to 5 minutes. Their hard work has given licensing analysts essential time to complete more processing requests for the agency. Their efforts have also helped to bring the average time to licensure down to 14 days in June of 2023.



Hadley Branham



Sarra Foster



Aisha Jimenez



Anne Smith



Dawn Miller



Edgar Nieves Rodriguez



Barbara Otchere



Elizabeth Walker



Danielle Wilson

Not pictured:
Tiana Craig
Chandra Williams

Anderson Community School Corp. Investigation Team

Nominated by the State Board of Accounts

The Anderson Community School Corporation Investigation Team uncovered a nearly million-dollar theft from the Anderson Community Schools. The process started with an auditor noticing a missing, canceled check to a vendor during a routine audit. After suspecting misappropriation of funds and further investigating the irregularity, the team discovered that a bookkeeper had issued 312 checks to herself over the course of five years that totaled almost a million dollars. This discovery resulted in FBI involvement and a restitution order in excess of \$1.1 million.



Michelle Janosky



Kathleen Kemp



Matthew Stone



Kim Wesley

Benefits and Wellness Team

Nominated by the State Personnel Department

Susan Barnhart and Christy Tittle have worked year after year to combat the huge increases in the cost of healthcare, keeping rates low and quality high. One of the outcomes of their work was the implementation of HealthSync for the State Employee Health Plan. By implementing this tiered network, the State Employee Health Plan and its members paid \$39.9 million less in 2022 than they would have without HealthSync and its partnerships.



Susan Barnhart



Christy Tittle

State and Local Cybersecurity Team

Nominated by the Office of Technology

The State and Local Cybersecurity Teams have held more than 60 meetings with representatives of all 92 Indiana counties to improve the state's cybersecurity. These meetings have involved over 1,000 local officials, creating a dialogue between statewide and local governments about cybersecurity resources and concerns. Their work has increased participation with the cybersecurity incident reporting law by over 375% compared to 2022 and has improved the overall cybersecurity of the entire state.



Brad Hagg (DOE)



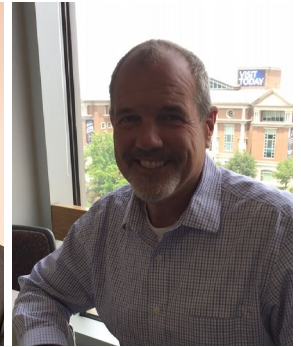
Taylor Hollenbeck



Scott Huffman (DHS)



Graig Lubsen



Tad Stahl



Mike White

**Congratulations and
thank you for your
service to the State
of Indiana!**

