

PLAY TO WIN

Brad Chambers' Plan to Build Indiana's Winning Economy of the Future

The number one job of a governor is to grow the state's economy, creating the conditions for economic growth and prosperity that lifts people up and puts more money in their pockets.

When Hoosiers are economically secure, their health is better, their housing is better, their education is better, their family is better and their quality of life is better. That means government can be smaller and taxes lower.

But for far too long, Indiana's economic growth and average wages have lagged the national average.

As Indiana's Secretary of Commerce, I built a dynamic team and implemented an aspirational, strategic plan that proved Indiana could win in the global economy, attracting and retaining businesses both small and large that provide high-wage careers for Hoosiers. In just two years, we brought in a historic \$51 billion in new committed capital investment, growing state revenues and creating tens of thousands of high-wage careers with wages 30 percent higher than at any time in state history. That included two new high-wage industries: semiconductors and EV batteries.

We proved that Indiana can shoot higher, run faster and aspire for more than its fair share. That is why I am proposing the **Play to Win** plan, which we will use to continue Indiana's unprecedented economic momentum.

1. Play Economic Offense

Indiana can and should secure more than its fair share of the economic opportunities provided by the record levels of onshoring of American companies — especially manufacturing companies — in industries like semiconductor manufacturing and electric vehicle production and life sciences, orthopedics and agricultural and defense-related technologies.

But this will require Indiana to be ready in more ways than one — we must have the talent and the sites.

1. Play Economic Offense Cont'd

That is why I will work with leaders of Indiana's colleges and universities to ensure that their degree programs truly prepare Hoosier students with in-demand skills and pursue the creation of innovative educational partnerships to make Indiana an academic leader for semiconductor manufacturing, EV and life sciences programs. This effort will be bolstered by partnerships between companies and universities and colleges.

As governor, I will also work to make Indiana a national leader in development-ready sites, complete the LEAP District and continue to build out Indiana's Hard-Tech Corridor.

Other Areas of Focus

- Continue to tell the winning story of Indiana across the country and the globe
- Expand Indiana's foreign trade relationships by increasing exports, especially agricultural exports.

2. Strategically Invest in Indiana's Infrastructure

Roads, bridges, rails, trails, ports, and water should be viewed as more than just a way to get Hoosiers from place to place — they should be viewed as an economic development opportunity. That is why I will aim to increase collaboration and synergies between state agencies like the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM), the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) and Indiana Ports to capitalize on these opportunities and ensure the highest return on investment for our infrastructure spending.

I will also create a cabinet-level position that manages, optimizes and protects our most valuable resource — water — and on day one, begin the creation of a state water resource plan that will allow Indiana to strategically use its abundant water supply to grow our economy while ensuring a stable supply for local communities.

Other Areas of Focus

- Maximize the potential of Indiana's ports by adding a deep-water port at Burns Harbor
- Evaluate the creation of a globally important center of testing and training for the aerospace industry
- Urgently improve airline transportation and connectivity for local communities

3. Ensure Energy Affordability, Resource Adequacy and Reliability

Indiana's fall from one of the most energy-affordable states to middle of the pack is simply unacceptable.

As we look to grow our economy, we must urgently address this issue with a particular focus on resource adequacy and affordability. Hoosiers and Indiana businesses need to be able to rely on the power needed to grow and thrive at an affordable price. Indiana has benefitted from being an all-of-the-above state, and we must continue this work by crafting a strategic plan and incentivizing energy technology and production innovation for all sources of power, including wind, solar, natural gas, coal, hydrogen and nuclear.

We must also push back on the federal government's continued overreach to prematurely close Indiana's coal-fired power plants, and when such a plant does close, require identification of new sources that will replace the lost capacity.

Other Areas of Focus

- Work with utilities, the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission and the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) to create a credible plan for building and financing natural gas-fired power plants capable of producing at least 5 GW of new electric power over the next five years
- Continue to support the innovation at the Midwest Hydrogen Hub in Northwest Indiana to bring high-paying jobs to Indiana

4. Strategically Lower Taxes

The state legislature has done a good job in ensuring that Indiana's overall tax environment is competitive — keeping us ranked among the Top 10 states — but we should aim to be among the Top 5. I believe we can get there over time and get there responsibly.

To do so, we must first establish a strategic plan to grow the state's economy that will lift up Hoosiers, put more money in their pockets and raise their quality of life. In turn, government can be smaller and therefore require fewer resources.

From there, we must take action to simplify and streamline an array of taxes, especially property taxes. We should simplify, standardize and improve the understanding of property tax assessments in Indiana to combat the unpredictable increases in assessed values that have led to unexpected tax hikes on property owners. Additionally, we should evaluate the portability of the homestead property tax credit so that Hoosiers who move within the state can maintain their deduction. Furthermore, I will propose extending the property tax relief granted by HEA 1499 (2023) beyond 2025.

5. Support Small- and Medium-Sized Business

Small- and medium-sized businesses are the backbone of communities across the state.

To support them, we will urgently reduce bureaucratic red tape, as well as the number and amount of fees, permits and licensing requirements that may unnecessarily increase costs, hamper expansions or inhibit innovation. Along those lines, we will allow for the full expensing of short-lived capital investments. Instead of requiring a deduction for a qualifying capital investment to be made over years or even decades, let's provide for a full deduction for state taxes in the year the investment was made.

Furthermore, we will expand the Manufacturing Readiness Grant program to assist more small- and medium-sized businesses looking to increase efficiency by adopting new technology.

6. Make Indiana a Top State for Entrepreneurship

While Indiana is known as a business-friendly state, there remains much more work to do to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation.

Indiana ranks 44th in the country for its rate of new entrepreneurs (Kauffman Indicators of Entrepreneurship) and 40th for venture capital disbursed to Indiana companies (National Science Foundation: Science and Engineering Indicators).

That's why on day one, I will name a Secretary of Entrepreneurship and Innovation, a cabinet-level position dedicated to growing Indiana's entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystems.

And it's why we will create a more favorable regulatory and tax environment for venture capital investment by continuing to expand the Venture Capital Investment Tax Credit for investments made into Indiana-based startups and funds, and exploring additional incentives to promote venture capital firms to operate within the state.

We will also reinvest in the Next Level Indiana Fund as a key source of capital to support VC funds that are investing in Indiana companies.

To encourage innovation, we will continue and expand the Innovation Voucher Grant program, which can be vital to ensuring the necessary time is spent on research and development, and continue to support the development of facilities for startup innovators that are necessary for early-stage research and development.

6. Make Indiana a Top State for Entrepreneurship Cont'd

Furthermore, as proposed in my **Learn More, Earn More** plan, we must foster robust entrepreneurial education and awareness in our schools, which would also include an expansion of the Innovate WithIN program so that students across the state can explore the opportunities of entrepreneurship.

Other Areas of Focus

- Continue to bring leading global investors to Indiana to spotlight the state as a place where new business owners and entrepreneurs can thrive
- Continue to develop the entrepreneurial ecosystem in all communities across the state to foster innovation and support for entrepreneurs, as highlighted through the state's ConnectIND platform
- Reduce regulations that stifle innovation and remove barriers to starting a new business

7. Build a Workforce of the Future

To build an economy of the future, we must have the workforce to support it — that is why we must fully reimagine the way Indiana approaches talent development.

Additionally, we must prioritize and educate our students about the number of career pathways available to them to earn a good living and build a great life right here in Indiana, as proposed in my **Learn More, Earn More** plan. Furthermore, we should expand the scope of the state's post-secondary financial aid programs so they can be leveraged by students who wish to pursue a technical education and increase funding for the Career Scholarship Accounts (CSA) program.

But we also must ensure Hoosiers can enter the workforce, which means tackling Indiana's ongoing child care availability and affordability crisis.

We will explore strategic expansions of all-day Pre-K for three- and four-year-olds, including potentially increasing the income eligibility level for state-funded Pre-K programs, and create a state-level child care tax credit that requires recipients to work to be eligible to receive it. Beyond this, we must reevaluate the bureaucratic red tape surrounding child care and early childhood education — while prioritizing safety and well-being — and evaluate incentives for employer-sponsored child care solutions.

Additionally, to encourage workforce participation, we must work to reinstate work requirements for able-bodied, working-age recipients of Medicaid and develop a plan that will allow the state to gradually reduce their benefits as their income increases so that the benefits do not become a disincentive to work, but rather a tool for maximizing earning potential.

8. Protect Farmers and Invest in the Future of Agriculture

We must continue to respect our farmers and the agricultural industry, recognizing how vital it is not only to our economy — but our local communities across the state — and fight against overregulation at both the state and federal levels that make their lives and work harder.

That includes encouraging the DNR to move to “general permits” to significantly reduce the time farmers must spend dealing with bureaucratic red tape that increases costs and decreases farm efficiency, and pushing back against federal regulations that aim to alter how Hoosier farmers do their work.

But we can also support farm efficiency by attracting and supporting agricultural technology and innovation startups to the state. And to help farmers adopt this technology, we will propose an “Agriculture Readiness Grant” program, similar to the state’s current Manufacturing Readiness Grant program, to provide matching grants to farmers looking to modernize their operations or implement new technology that will increase their output and farming efficiency.

Other Areas of Focus

- Prohibit adversarial countries, like China, from purchasing an inch of Hoosier soil, as proposed in my **Combating China** plan

9. Invest in All Hoosier Communities

Through the Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI), which I administered as Secretary of Commerce, Indiana has made great strides in supporting the growth and vibrancy of communities across the state, investing an unprecedented \$1 billion to support quality of place, quality of life and quality of opportunity projects.

Those projects, combined with the hundreds of economic development projects we landed, brought much-needed investment and opportunities to communities, especially those in rural areas. As governor, I will work to continue these investments through READI and prioritize areas experiencing high unemployment or low wages for new projects.

Other Areas of Focus

- Align the efforts of OCRA’s Indiana Main Street program with the IEDC’s Redevelopment Tax Credit to further encourage the rapid revitalization of communities
- Aggressively finish the job on broadband, ensuring no community is considered underserved

10. Make Housing Available and Affordable for All Hoosiers

Indiana's ongoing housing shortage not only impacts Hoosiers' livelihoods but also the state's economy, keeping home prices high and reducing Hoosiers' economic mobility.

As governor, I will modernize the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA) and create a 10-year strategic plan to support the increased construction of all forms of housing across the state, including single and multi-family housing. Additionally, I will work with the state legislature to create a Revolving Down Payment Assistance Loan Fund, which can be repaid over 10 years or from the sale of the home in the first 10 years, and evaluate expanding the statutory definition of affordable housing above 80 percent of Area Median Income (AMI) to support the financing of newly constructed homes.

The Gist

My **Play to Win** plan sets an aspirational, strategic vision to help us build Indiana's winning economy of the future, raising wages and creating more opportunities for Hoosiers to build a great life right here in Indiana.

The Pillars

1. Play Economic Offense
2. Strategically Invest in Indiana's Infrastructure
3. Ensure Energy Affordability, Resource Adequacy and Reliability
4. Strategically Lower Taxes
5. Support Small- and Medium-Sized Businesses
6. Make Indiana a Top State for Entrepreneurship
7. Build a Workforce of the Future
8. Protect Farmers and Invest in the Future of Agriculture
9. Invest in All Hoosier Communities
10. Make Housing Available and Affordable for All Hoosiers

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