

Summary of the Innovation

Indiana 211's partnership with the Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD) represents an innovative, system-level approach to connect callers to adult education and employment supports. By embedding a targeted education-level trigger question within Indiana 211's needs assessment and enabling consent-based data sharing through a secure portal, the partnership allows DWD to proactively engage individuals who may benefit from adult education services.

This innovation moves beyond traditional referral models by combining real-time data, informed consent, and coordinated outreach. As a result, Indiana 211 significantly increased referrals, eliminated unmet need for adult education, and improved outcomes across multiple employment-related service categories.

Problem / Challenge Addressed

Prior to this innovation, individuals contacting Indiana 211 with education or employment-related needs often faced fragmented systems, unclear pathways, and limited follow-up. Adult education referrals relied heavily on caller self-navigation, which resulted in lower engagement and unmet needs due to barriers such as limited system knowledge, competing priorities, or lack of direct contact with service providers.

Additionally, workforce and human services data systems operated largely in parallel, limiting the ability to identify shared clients and coordinate timely outreach. This fragmentation reduced the effectiveness of referrals and made it difficult to ensure that callers received the services most aligned with their readiness and goals.

Decision-Making and Implementation Process

The decision-making process was intentional, collaborative, and data informed. Indiana 211 and DWD jointly identified adult education as a critical leverage point for improving employment outcomes and recognized the opportunity to integrate workforce access earlier in the 211-engagement process.

Key components of the implementation included:

- **Stakeholder engagement:** Leadership and operational staff from Indiana 211 and DWD collaborated to design workflows, define data-sharing protocols, and ensure compliance with consent and privacy requirements.

- Strategic system design: A trigger question identifying education level was embedded into Indiana 211's existing needs assessment, minimizing disruption to call flow while maximizing actionable insight.
- Consent-based data sharing: With caller consent, information is securely shared through a portal that allows DWD staff to identify and reach out to individuals directly.
- Operational alignment: Staff were trained in referral processes and follow-up procedures to ensure consistent and effective implementation.
- Continuous improvement: Referral data and unmet need metrics were reviewed regularly to assess performance and refine processes.

Outcome / Impact of the Innovation

The outcomes of this partnership demonstrate significant and sustained impact.

Adult Education Referrals

- 2024:
 - 759 referrals
 - 0.97% unmet need
- 2025:
 - 1,813 referrals
 - 0% unmet need

This represents a 139% increase in referrals and the complete elimination of unmet need, indicating both increased access and successful connection to services.

Employment-Related Referrals

Building on the adult education model, Indiana 211 expanded referrals to include job placement, job training, pre-employment guidance, ex-offender employment programs, career counseling, and youth employment programs.

- 2024:
 - 6,790 referrals
 - 7.8% unmet need
- 2025:
 - 8,641 referrals
 - 1.7% unmet need

In 2025, unmet needs decreased across every employment-related taxonomy, while career counseling and youth employment programs were added to the referral network for the first time, addressing previously unmet service gaps.

Collectively, these outcomes reflect stronger system coordination, improved service accessibility, and more effective workforce engagement.

Applicability to Other Members

This innovation is highly adaptable and scalable for other 211 organizations and workforce agencies. Key elements—including trigger questions, consent-based data sharing, and coordinated outreach—can be implemented using existing needs assessment frameworks and referral systems.

The model does not require significant new technology investments and can be customized to align with local workforce structures and priorities. Its emphasis on collaboration, data-informed decision-making, and proactive engagement makes it applicable across diverse communities and service environments.

Other organizations can replicate this approach to strengthen cross-system partnerships, reduce unmet needs, and improve outcomes for individuals seeking education and employment pathways.

Supporting Materials

Supporting materials include:

- Data dashboards or referral trend summaries

2024

Need Category	Count of Clients	Count of Interactions	Count of Referrals	% of Interactions with Unmet Needs
Housing	51,520	65,912	157,279	16.0%
Utility Assistance	26,020	30,295	84,600	13.2%
Food/Meals	25,342	29,840	75,927	4.0%
Legal, Consumer and Public Safety Services	19,622	22,966	37,007	4.5%
Individual, Family and Community Support	19,033	21,442	23,530	20.0%
Health Care	17,600	19,922	25,977	5.0%
Income Support/Assistance	11,965	13,179	14,820	9.7%
Transportation	9,799	11,172	12,789	19.9%
Information Services	8,439	9,837	9,847	1.9%
Clothing/Personal/Household Needs	8,000	8,979	15,685	24.0%
Mental Health/Substance Use Disorders	6,194	7,079	12,909	5.5%
Other Government/Economic Services	4,790	5,450	6,115	3.4%
Employment	4,039	4,259	5,790	7.8%
Disaster Services	1,916	1,990	2,272	11.5%
Education	1,806	1,882	2,664	7.9%
Arts, Culture and Recreation	510	532	500	29.5%

Need Category: **Employment**
 % of Needs That Went Unmet: **7.8%**

Top Referred Services for this Need Category:

Referred Service	Count of Clients	Count of Interactions	Count of Referrals	% of Interactions with Unmet Needs
Job Search/Placement	3,115	3,257	4,467	6.82%
Comprehensive Job Assistance Centers	699	713	659	0.56%
Welfare to Work Programs	274	276	249	3.99%
Occupation Specific Job Training	246	248	388	5.65%
Ex-Offender Employment Programs	202	205	163	14.15%
Job Fairs	197	203	198	24.14%
Prejob Guidance	178	180	193	10.00%
Senior Community Service Employment Pr..	83	86	101	8.14%
Job Banks	82	82	58	28.05%
Youth Employment Programs	52	53	85	11.32%

2025

Need Category	Count of Clients	Count of Interactions	Count of Referrals	% of Interactions with Unmet Needs
Housing	55,977	71,111	154,374	10.1%
Utility Assistance	36,892	44,285	116,366	5.1%
Food/Meals	28,204	32,590	65,451	3.4%
Individual, Family and Community Support	23,504	26,695	32,808	11.4%
Health Care	19,943	22,421	28,558	3.4%
Legal, Consumer and Public Safety Services	19,093	21,964	34,982	2.6%
Income Support/Assistance	14,903	16,524	19,610	7.1%
Transportation	11,183	13,459	17,963	10.9%
Information Services	9,144	10,471	10,575	1.5%
Clothing/Personal/Household Needs	7,719	8,635	15,298	22.4%
Mental Health/Substance Use Disorders	5,080	5,206	9,485	1.7%
Employment	5,251	5,565	8,541	1.7%
Other Government/Economic Services	4,733	5,319	5,274	2.6%
Education	2,676	2,786	3,468	2.5%
Disaster Services	2,552	2,677	5,612	9.4%
Arts, Culture and Recreation	232	239	337	7.5%

Need Category: **Employment**
 % of Needs That Went Unmet: **1.7%**

Top Referred Services for this Need Category:

Referred Service	Count of Clients	Count of Interactions	Count of Referrals	% of Needs That Went Unmet
Job Search/Placement	4,614	4,826	6,868	1.16%
Occupation Specific Job Training	354	363	604	1.93%
Ex-Offender Employment Programs	302	307	339	2.93%
Comprehensive Job Assistance Centers	278	279	267	1.43%
Prejob Guidance	146	146	162	0.00%
Job Training Expense Assistance	83	83	77	4.82%
Vocational Rehabilitation	81	81	79	3.70%
Senior Community Service Employment Pr.	73	76	82	2.63%
Career Counseling	51	51	44	7.84%
Youth Employment Programs	33	33	46	9.09%