



INDIANA  
BLACK  
EXPO

Impact Report

Forging  
Our Future

2025

[www.indianablackexpo.com](http://www.indianablackexpo.com)



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# A Message from Our President & CEO

Alice Watson

The year 2025 has been marked by both meaningful progress and significant challenges. Amid a shifting political climate and increasing uncertainty around funding for advocacy and community-based organizations, Indiana Black Expo (IBE) has remained steadfast. Together, we have continued to create opportunities, uplift Black excellence, and serve our community with unwavering purpose.

Our impact in 2025 is a testament to our collective commitment. However, leadership requires courage to evolve. To ensure IBE remains a consistent and powerful force for progress, we must be diligent stewards of our resources, ensuring every dollar invested in us yields the highest possible return for the community we serve.

Leadership often requires making difficult but necessary decisions to protect the future of an organization. This year, we will undertake a rigorous evaluation of all our initiatives and events to ensure they align with our long-term mission and make sound economic sense in today's landscape.

As a nonprofit, we are unable to maintain legacy programs that drain vital resources from our core areas of impact. We are committed to prioritizing initiatives that provide clear and measurable benefits to our families. We will focus our energy and capital on high-impact, innovative programming that directly empowers our youth and families, advocates for the health and well-being of our communities, supports our businesses, and expands post-secondary access.

This evolution is not simply about change; it is about sustainability. Our goal is to ensure that every dollar entrusted to us by our donors, partners, and the community



is maximized to create the greatest sustainable change for generations to come.

We are especially grateful to our sponsors, partners, and supporters. Your sustained investment, particularly as resources grow more constrained, has allowed us to continue addressing the economic, educational, and health-related challenges facing our communities. Your partnership matters now more than ever, and we do not take it for granted.

To our dedicated volunteers and our tireless staff: your creativity and determination continue to move this organization forward. And to our community: thank you for trusting IBE to be your advocate and your partner in progress.

With gratitude,

**Alice Watson**  
**President & CEO**  
**Indiana Black Expo**



# Cultivating Economic Impact

For more than five decades, IBE has served as the premier engine for the growth, sustainability, and visibility of Black-owned businesses across the state. Our commitment to economic empowerment is rooted in the belief that a thriving community requires a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Black business owners often navigate a landscape fraught with limited access to capital, smaller staff sizes, and intense competition from established corporations.

In 2025, executive actions and judicial challenges created a “chilling effect” on programs designed to level the playing field, creating significant ambiguity regarding the future of minority, women, and disadvantaged business certification programs. As state agencies review and potentially restructure supplier diversity goals, Black and brown entrepreneurs face an “unknown” that threatens their ability to secure government contracts, a vital revenue stream for scaling businesses.

**To counter these systemic challenges, IBE provides resources, programs, and high-level visibility for businesses. Through initiatives like the Black Business Training Institute (BBTI) and our Annual Business Conference, we provide:**

## **Direct Technical Assistance:**

Upskilling entrepreneurs to compete in any political and economic climate.

## **Strategic Networking:**

Connecting small businesses with private sector partners who remain committed to diverse supply chains.

## **Capital Awareness:**

Providing transparency and pathways to traditional banking and alternative funding sources when traditional banking falls short.

## **Capital via Growth Grants:**

Providing eligible businesses with capital to enhance their operations and increase their revenue.

# Black Business Training Institute

Through the BBTI, two cohorts of **70 entrepreneurs** sharpened their foundational business skills and secured greater access to capital. The program served as a vital incubator, providing these business owners with the strategic roadmap and networking opportunities necessary to drive sustainable growth.

## Black Business Training Institute at a Glance

**70**

Participating  
Entrepreneurs

**24**

Workshops

**22**

Presenters

**2**

Cohorts

Week 1: Program Overview

Week 2: Business Development and Planning

Week 3: Operational Management

Week 4: Marketing and Branding – Part 1

Week 5: Marketing and Branding – Part 2

Week 6: Technology

Week 7: Financial Management

Week 8: Procurement –

Doing Business with the Public and Private Sector

Week 9: Legal Components – Part 1

Week 10: Legal Components – Part 2

Week 11: Access to Capital

Week 12: Networking Reception

## BBTI Participant Quote

“I am so grateful I clicked the link and said yes to the opportunity to participate in the BBTI Cohort through Indiana Black Expo. Not only have my revenue and connections increased, but my knowledge as a small business owner has expanded significantly.

From the leadership of Tearra Dotson to the expert facilitators, this cohort was exactly the experience I needed to elevate my business. The program set me up for success and pushed me professionally in areas such as acquiring accounting software, standing out during networking opportunities, and implementing best practices for staffing, finances, standard operating procedures, marketing, and copyright/trademarks.

I fully leaned in and learned so much, and I continue to use the resources and review my notes from this incredible experience. If you are considering this cohort, I encourage you to jump in. I promise you won't regret it! ”

- Brittany Wayman, Founder and CEO. Soul Care Coaching

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

### Participating Businesses:

Grammy's Mini Mart Corp	Wellness LLC	Transport LLC	CT Walker Services dba	Nowlen Solutions
Excellent Dream LLC	Making It 2gether LLC	Taste Buddies	Walking Strong Solutions	IO Creatives LLC
Story Isle Media, LLC	Three Sixty Five	Zxent LLC Maintaining	Exquisite Soires	I'Ona Stillness
Soul Care Coaching, LLC	Entertainment LLC	Normalcy and Balance	Rastas Customs LLC	Brandi Jenae Beauty
The Trolley Tap	J & N Towel Services LLC	Counseling	Yummyscape	All Ways at
SMPLY DRVN	Hair Hub LLC	BIY Baudi	Nanas Home Care	Home Care
CULTUREWEAR LLC	2Hope360	Stay Inspired	Receremedies LLC	Authentic Encounters
Yoni Shield LLC	Renewed Wellness	Knowledge Is Power, LLC	Love Mercy & Beyond	C Monique Boutique
Suga Rae's Inc.	Home Health Agency LLC	Nekeydee Boutique LLC	Mingo Medical Agency	Carbide King Industries LLC
Sweetener	Bag-ish LLC	Gracious Estate Law	BB Closet	Elegant Changes
Reel Saluteons LLC	SHE Vision	Jess Caring Hands	Empirical Consulting	Gowdy Group Reality
KgsuniversalNailz	Flawlessly Pampered LLC	Unlimited Beauty Empire	LLC dba	Impact Her Mentoring
Beauty Bar LLLC	Posh Coiffure Studios LLC	Workmanship	The Docs Agency LLC	and Coaching
Decor By Dannie LLC	A Sincere Place, LLC	MudiaCaters LLC	Rosie's Dollz LLC	NurtureWise Inc
Body Mechanics Health	Off tha Block Unlimited	Ball of Love	FocusEd Scholars	The Laboratory
and Wellness LLC	Unlimited Credentialing	Prettii Fit	LULU'S Learning Lab	Candle Company LLC
Azura Natural	Preferred Solutions	XLM Health Life Fitness	Graceful Comfort	

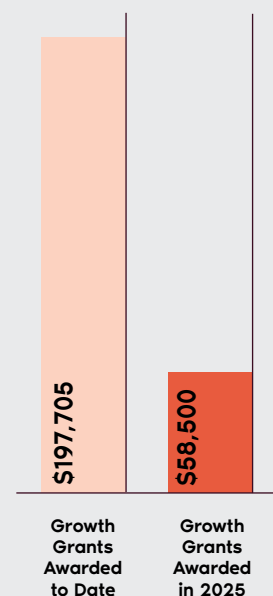
### Growth Grants:

To further catalyze the success of our BBTI participants, IBE awarded **\$58,500 in growth grants** to eligible businesses headquartered in Central Indiana. These strategic investments provided essential capital to cover critical scaling costs, including marketing, legal services, equipment upgrades, and operational expenses.

### 2025 Growth Grant Recipients:

She Vision LLC  
Butterfly Sarae  
Kim Lee Stuart  
Raise of BARR  
Talented Taylor  
Bag-ish, LLC  
Body Mechanics Health and Wellness  
Hair Hub LLC  
KgsuniversalNailz & Beauty Bar LLC  
MAKIN' IT TOGETHER! LLC  
Market Square Popcorn Company  
Preferred Solutions Transport, LLC  
SHE VISION LLC  
Soul Care Coaching LLC  
sweetener LLC  
Unlimited Credentialing LLC  
Yoni Shield LLC  
ZXENT LLC DBA ZXENT Photography

### Growth Grants At a Glance



### Pre/Post Test Results

- 88% of participants reported that they increased their knowledge of credit, SBA lending and other loan and financing opportunities, and the importance of banking relationships
- 70% of cohort participants better understand available technology that may aid in efficiency, customer satisfaction and business growth
- 76% of participants are now aware of and understand the procurement opportunities in Indiana
- 73% of the participants currently feel that they have enhanced their skills in operations, finance, banking, networking, marketing and sales, customer service and human resources
- 70% of participants reported that they better understood how to read financial statements, cash flow and sales projections and related documentation



### BBTI Success Stories

“There was a lot of things that we thought and we assumed, but after going through the Black Business Institute, there was no assumption. It was on paper, it was plain, and it was all led by experts. My business now has locations in Indianapolis and Cincinnati.”

- Jonathan Warren, Founder, Market Square Popcorn

“Being a part of the Black Business Training Institute was one of the best business decisions I could have ever made. I had a phenomenal opportunity to network with some other incredibly talented small business leaders. The training, the information, the resources that were shared during our sessions, valuable. And not only that, as a part of being in that cohort, it has helped me take my business to the next level”

- Deondra Wardell, Founder, On to the Next One Consulting

# Business Conference

From July 21–22, IBE’s Business Conference convened 536 entrepreneurs and professionals at the Indiana Convention Center. This two-day summit served as a powerful catalyst for economic growth, providing attendees with high-level networking and the actionable insights necessary to scale their businesses.



## Business Conference at a Glance

**536**

Attendees

**33**

Moderators and  
Presenters

**7**

Workshops

## Workshop Topics:

- City of Indianapolis - Project Pipeline: 2026 Opportunities and Beyond
- Lunch & Learn - Economic Pulse: Indiana’s Outlook and What We’re Watching
- Project Pursuits Basics
- Are You Lender Ready?
- Preparation Meets Opportunity: Doing Business Across the State
- Get Game Ready to do Business with SEI(s)
- Lunch & Learn - State of the Shift: Indiana Small Business in Motion



# Empowering the Next Generation Of Leaders

For over five decades, IBE has championed the belief that education is the primary catalyst for social and economic equity. Our mission is built on creating a continuous pathway of support that guides students from their early years through post-secondary success, ensuring they are equipped to lead in an increasingly complex global society. In 2025 alone, IBE's educational and youth development initiatives reached more than **9,562 youth** across the state, providing a critical bridge to resources and opportunities that define future success.

While we celebrate these successes, we remain acutely aware of the shifting landscape facing students today. Educational equity is under renewed pressure, and our youth are navigating a world where resources are increasingly constrained, and the paths to higher education are becoming more difficult to navigate.

To counter these challenges, IBE provides a comprehensive suite of programs designed to empower the whole student.



## Performing Arts Academy

IBE's Performing Arts Academy (PAA) is designed to transform artistic talent into career-ready expertise. This year, **86 youth** engaged in specialized tracks for music production, digital media, and the performing arts, gaining mastery of industry-standard tools and techniques. The PAA's unique "Academic-First" mandate ensures that creative growth is matched by educational progress, ensuring our students graduate with the discipline and the portfolio necessary to thrive in high-growth creative industries.



### PAA at a Glance

**86**

Youth Served

**120**

Classes

**288**

Hours of  
Instruction

**2**

Productions



# Statewide Education Conference

At IBE, we believe that to effectively support the student, we must first empower the educator. On Thursday, July 17, our Statewide Education Conference assembled some of the nation's most visionary leaders to provide Indiana teachers and administrators with professional development to advance educational outcomes for our youth. Our 2025 keynote speakers brought unparalleled expertise to our participants:

## 2025 Keynote Speakers



### Brandon P. Fleming

**Award-Winning Educator and  
Founder of the Veritas Schools**

An award-winning educator and former Harvard debate coach, Fleming transformed his journey from at-risk youth to the Founder & CEO of the Veritas Schools. His insights on academic excellence and resilience provided a powerful roadmap for reaching students in underserved communities.



### Dr. Shaun Woodly

**Creator of the "Teach, Hustle, Inspire"  
Transforming Urban Education with  
Purpose and Passion**

A nationally recognized speaker and creator of *The Science of Modern Classroom Management*. As the founder of the "Teach Hustle Inspire" movement, Dr. Woodly equipped our attendees with science-based behavior management tools and student engagement frameworks designed to help every learner thrive.

## EDUCATION AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



By providing high-level training to **227 educators**, IBE has indirectly enhanced the classroom experience and academic environment for over **30,000 students** throughout the state of Indiana.

### Education Conference at a Glance

**227**

Participants

**30,000+**

Youth Indirectly  
Impacted

**8**

Workshops  
Sessions

**2**

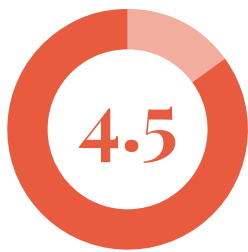
Keynotes

### Workshop Topics:

- How Fathers & Men Can Change Your School's Culture
- Building Math Clubs - Boosting Access and Inspiring Excellence
- Rewiring Together: Cultivating Connection and Regulation in School Communities
- Speak Life: Creating Positive School Culture through Intentional Teacher Language
- Future-Ready Leadership: Driving Change, Building Impact, and Creating Lasting Success
- Sending the Elevator Back Down with a Roadmap: LEADS to Leadership
- Self-Efficacy and Co-Creation as Tools of Transformational Learning
- The Art & Science of Transformational Instruction: Engaging Every Student, Everywhere



## Education Conference Workshop Evaluations



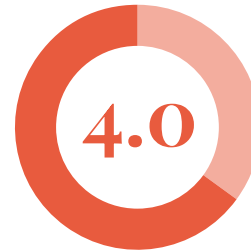
Relevance of  
Session Content



Quality of  
Session Content



Quality of  
Session  
Presentation

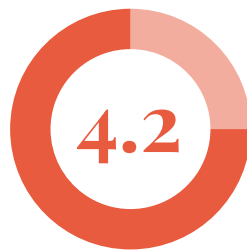


Relevance of  
Information for  
Classroom  
Implementation

## Evaluation of Indiana Black Expo as a Service Provider



Quality of  
Information  
Provided by the  
Indiana Black Expo



Overall Quality of  
the Conference



Online  
Registration  
Process

## ATTENDEE SURVEY RESPONSES

# What did you enjoy most about the 2025 IBE Education Conference?

"Dr. Woody was a phenomenal presenter. I feel inspired to get back into my classroom and implement ideas he has shared." "

- Kaycie Ludkey, Liberty Grove Schools

"It's been a good experience so far. I've enjoyed the morning keynote and the first session. I've gained practical tools that I can consider."

- Kim Jenkins, Indiana University

"I really appreciated the "language scenario" the speaker had with a participant! The enactment heightened my understanding of how others engage in the moment of impact."

- Charlotte Gupton, Charity Dye CFI IPS#27

"Re-engaging my brain with higher level concepts combined with the more practical workshops gets me centered and stabilized for the start of the school year."

- Lori Armstrong, Shortridge High School

# Circle City Classic® Scholarship Fund

This fund remains the cornerstone of our academic mission. By prioritizing financial need and first-generation college students, we ensure that the legacy of the Classic lives on through the degrees earned by our recipients. To date, this investment has cleared the path for more than **5.5 million dollars** to be awarded to thousands of Hoosiers to attend the post-secondary institutions of their choice.

## 2025 Scholarship Recipients at a Glance

Regan Auguste	Purdue University	Regina A. Jones	Yale University
Ruta Baguma	Indiana University Indianapolis	Tiana Keene	Indiana Wesleyan University
Reece Berry	Purdue University	Gloria Kinningham	Indiana University - Bloomington
Jayla Berry	Ball State University	Amya Lange	Ball State University
Myles Berry	Savannah College of Art and Design	Bryce McElroy	Indiana University Indianapolis
Adreanna Brown	Indiana University - Bloomington	Obenijah Monestime	Indiana University - Bloomington
Jade Bryant	Indiana University - Bloomington	Emilio Munoz	Western Michigan University
Donovan Buford	Indiana University - Bloomington	Jayla Patrick	Ball State University
TaNiliah, Chestnut	Louisiana State University	Maykayla Washington-Cobb	Tennessee State University
Preslee Goodwine	Indiana University - Bloomington	Jabrea Watford	Butler University
Karis Gorman	Indiana University - Bloomington	Eric Whisler	Indiana Wesleyan University
Victoria Guyse	Butler University	Addison Yoder	Purdue University
Jendayi Gyamerah-Oliver	Xavier University	Camille Zoe	Butler University
		Joshua Sargeant	Manchester University
		Aaliyah Spidell	Indiana University - Kokomo

# Education Day

Hosted on Saturday, September 27, at Lucas Oil Stadium, Education Day reimagines the traditional college fair by merging academic opportunity with youth culture. In 2025, the event provided **2,581 students** with a high-energy environment to connect directly with university representatives, secure on-site admissions, and access critical scholarship data. To bridge the gap between inspiration and action, the day featured a keynote appearance by acclaimed actor and singer Rotimi (Starz’s Power). By layering academic excellence with contemporary music and celebrity insight, IBE transforms the college search into a motivating, tangible experience that resonates with today’s generation.

## Participating Universities:

Purdue University	University of Indianapolis (UIndy)
IU Bloomington	Butler University
IU Indianapolis	Wilberforce University
Ball State University	Marian Univ-Saint Joseph’s College
Bethune-Cookman University	Miles College
Indiana State University	Scholarship Success Center
HBCU Campaign Fund	GEO Next Generation Academy
Founder’s College at Butler University	Valparaiso University
Morgan State University	Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology
Martin University	Simmons College of Kentucky
	United States Air & Space Force

## Education Day at a Glance

<b>2581</b>	<b>21</b>
Youth Participants	Universities and Organizations

# Youth Leadership Summit

Held from July 18–20 during Summer Celebration, the Youth Leadership Summit served as a transformative incubator for **145 emerging leaders**. This immersive weekend inspired participants to step into their power as active agents of change. Through a curated series of high-impact workshops, students gained the essential skills and strategic mindset needed to navigate their futures and lead with purpose in their communities.

Additionally, AT&T and Human IT provided each of the YLS participants with a Dell Laptop. During the distribution, youth had the opportunity to hear from and meet WNBA player Dijonai Carrington who plays for the Minnesota Lynx.

## YLS at a Glance

**145**

Youth  
Participants

**17**

Chaperones

**18**

Volunteers

**14**

Workshops  
& Activities

## Demographics:



## Schedule

### Friday, July 18

- Get to Know Purdue
- YLS Pep Rally
- 2025 Welcome Dinner & Awards
- Talent Show Pajama Jam

### Saturday, July 19

- YLS Trades Breakfast
- Celebrate Purdue
- Summer Celebration Sports
- Jacob Latimore & College Coin
- Real Talk, Real Solutions Townhall

### Sunday, July 20

- Made Man Improv
- Dinner
- WNBA All-Star Watch Party
- Praise & Worship
- When I Grow Up Breakfast

## Youth Entrepreneur Series

We believe that the seeds of economic self-sufficiency must be planted early. The Youth Entrepreneur Series (YES) is a cornerstone of our youth development strategy, designed to introduce middle and high school students to the fundamentals of business management and economic literacy.

On July 15, 2025, YES provided a dynamic curriculum to **92** youth that included Power Pitch competitions and workshops on personal branding and business preparation. YES continues to provide a safe yet rigorous platform for young visionaries to innovate.

By bridging the gap between a creative idea and a successful venture, YES ensures that Indiana's youth are not just consumers in the economy, but its future creators, owners, and leaders.

### YES at a Glance

**92**

Youth  
Participants

**3**

Workshops

**5**

Facilitators



## Circle City Classic® Talent Day presented by Eli Lilly & Company

A pillar of our workforce development strategy is the Circle City Classic® Talent Day. Talent Day is more than a traditional job fair. It is a high-impact networking platform designed to connect HBCU student-athletes, recent graduates, and aspiring professionals directly with Indiana's leading employers. On September 27, we placed **276** college students and young professionals face-to-face with **10** employers from healthcare, technology, finance, and engineering sectors.

### Talent Day at a Glance

**276**

Job Seekers

**10**

Employers



# Special 2025 Events

## Melanin Table Talk: State of the Black Community

In partnership with the Let Them Talk Coalition, IBE hosted the 2nd Annual Melanin Table Talk on April 23, 2025. This initiative serves as a sophisticated, data-driven engine for dismantling the systemic barriers facing Black youth and families. By convening **176 high-level stakeholders**—including policymakers, educators, and parents—the event moved beyond discussion to the development of actionable frameworks for mental health, educational equity, and violence prevention. To maximize this impact, the initiative was integrated into the IBE Statewide Conference, empowering all **12 IBE chapters** to lead these critical community solutions in every corner of Indiana.

## College Matters: Equipping Parents for Success

On October 23, 2025, IBE hosted **College Matters: Equipping Parents for Success – “Blueprints and Brunch: Building FAFSA Ready Parents.”** This strategic financial aid initiative was designed to demystify the complexities of post-secondary funding for families. In collaboration with eight community partners and local school systems, IBE provided expert-led workshops that translated the FAFSA process, scholarship identification, and the nuances of financial award letters into actionable steps. By dismantling information barriers, we empowered parents to serve as informed advocates for their children’s academic and financial futures.



# Providing Access to Critical Healthcare for Our Community

IBE prioritizes health equity as a cornerstone of our work, directly addressing the significant disparities that impact the well-being of African Americans and those underserved in our communities. Through dedicated resources and community support, we are transforming lifestyles and working tirelessly to ensure every individual has the opportunity to thrive.



## The Indiana Health Fair

Addressing health equity is a cornerstone of our mission. Last year, IBE's Health Fair delivered **4,409 free screenings** to our community—providing access to care that carries a fair market value of **\$4,000 per participant**. This means that for every person who walked through our doors, IBE's partners provided access to **\$4,000 worth of clinical-grade screenings**, risk assessments, and immunizations they would have otherwise had to fund out-of-pocket. By removing this massive financial barrier, we generated a total community healthcare impact of **more than \$17 million**. This targeted investment focuses on the early detection of chronic conditions—such as diabetes and hypertension—directly dismantling the systemic health disparities that disproportionately affect Black, Brown and underserved families.

### Indiana Health Fair at a Glance

**4,409**

Screenings

**\$4,000**

Market Value of  
Services Per Person

**\$17 Million +**

Total Healthcare  
Value Delivered

## Mental Health Symposium

### Cherish Your Mind: Understanding the Importance of Brain Health

*Cherish Your Mind* is one of IBE's most recent initiatives, bridging the gap between clinical science and community wellness. Through our high-impact Mental Health Symposium on Saturday, July 19, and a city-wide public awareness campaign, we empowered the Black community in Indianapolis to prioritize brain health and mental resilience.

Our sessions go beyond theory, providing practical strategies for **self-care, stress reduction, and boundary-setting**, while ensuring families know how to access essential community resources.

A powerhouse panel of advocates and experts, including actress and author Holly Robinson-Peete, former NBA player Greg Oden, NAMI Indiana Executive Director Barbara Thompson, and Dr. Dwight Holland, amplified last year's mission. Together, they helped normalize the conversation around mental wellness and provided our community with the tools to maintain optimal brain health for a lifetime.



## Cherish Your Mind: The Student-Athlete Edition

On September 25, IBE hosted Cherish Your Mind: Understanding the Importance of Brain Health—Student-Athlete Edition at Warren Central High School. This youth-focused symposium brought together **over 200 student-athletes** for an urgent and honest dialogue about the intersection of mental health, identity, and the intense pressures inherent in competitive sports.

Through a blend of visual storytelling, guided discussions, and reflective activities, the program challenged the “strength-at-all-costs” narrative. We highlighted a critical truth: even students who appear confident and successful on the field may be silently navigating stress, anxiety, or self-doubt. By fostering a safe environment, IBE empowered these young leaders to prioritize their emotional well-being alongside their physical performance. The symposium was moderated by Olivia West (In-Game Host for the Indiana Pacers and Fever), who facilitated a high-level exchange between the students and a distinguished panel of experts and athletes:

- **Dr. Russell Ledet:** A physician-scientist and triple-board resident psychiatrist specializing in pediatric and adolescent mental health.
- **Antoine Bethea:** NFL Champion, community leader, and former Indianapolis Colt.
- **Greg Oden:** Former NBA No. 1 draft pick and legendary Lawrence North High School standout.
- **Richard Dixon:** Program Director for NAMI Indiana.

By connecting these high-profile role models with our youth, the objective was to provide a lifeline of support and a roadmap for maintaining mental resilience in the face of public and personal pressure.





# Health & Wellness Sports Pavilion

IBE's Health and Wellness Sports Pavilion, a vibrant, three-day hub of activity, took place from July 18–20 at the Indiana Convention Center. The Pavilion attracted **1,146 attendees**.

The Pavilion served as a center for community engagement, offering a diverse slate of programming that blended athletic competition with essential life skills. These featured activities provided a platform for participants of all ages to showcase their talents, strengthen family ties, and access vital wellness resources.

## YOUTH ATHLETICS & MENTORSHIP



### Father Knows Best Basketball Clinic:

Presented by the Allan Houston Legacy Foundation & FISLL, this clinic used the game of basketball to strengthen the bond between 25 fathers and their daughters. Featuring WNBA players and community mentors, the event focused on “The Huddle”—a space for heart-to-heart chats on leadership and life.



### Indy Premiere League & LNO/Hamp Summer League:

These tournaments brought together hundreds of rising stars from 4th grade through high school. Beyond the thrill of competition, the leagues fostered teamwork and confidence, connecting athletes and their families with ambassadors sharing resources on health and mentorship.



### Midwest Invitational Boxing Showcase:

A high-energy exhibition featuring top amateur boxers from Indiana, Kentucky, and Ohio. Athletes across all weight classes demonstrated the discipline and athleticism that are the hallmarks of the sport.

## COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELLNESS

### Active Lifestyle Classes:

The community stayed in motion with Indy Elite Steppin' dance classes and Cyn-City Bounce Kangaroo workouts. These free, accessible sessions proved that fitness can be a soulful and joyful community experience.

### Resource & Wellness Hubs:

Central to the Pavilion's mission, our Health and Resource Booths provided families with immediate access to mental health education and wellness tools, empowering them to take proactive steps toward healthier lives.

# A Legacy of Belonging and Advocacy

At the heart of IBE is the drive to elevate the African American voice and foster a sense of belonging. Our community empowerment initiatives are designed to celebrate our rich heritage while proactively addressing the systemic disparities that impact our daily lives. By convening hundreds of thousands of people annually through our signature events, we create a powerful platform for unity, advocacy, and cultural pride.



## Summer Celebration

As one of the largest cultural events in the nation, Summer Celebration is a premier showcase of Black excellence that attracted **162,191 attendees** over 11 days. From July 9 to July 20, IBE hosted a diverse array of events ranging from the Ecumenical Service to the Music Heritage Festival. These gatherings generated a massive economic footprint for Indianapolis while providing a vital stage where our community is seen, heard, and celebrated nationally.



### Summer Celebration at a Glance

**\$10 Million**

Economic Impact

**11**

Days

**162,191**

Attendees

**60**

Events and Initiatives

### Events and Initiatives Include:

Business Conference  
Corporate Luncheon  
Education Conference  
Policy Summit  
Exhibition Hall  
Cultural Arts Pavilion  
Indiana Health Fair  
Health & Wellness Sports Pavilion

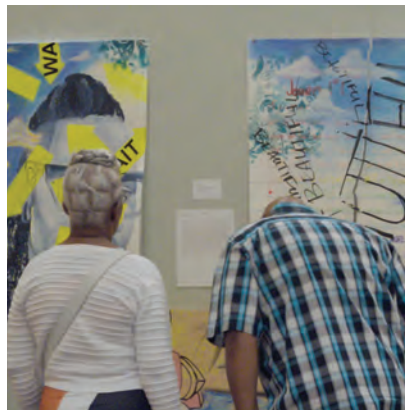
Black Film Festival  
Cultural Arts Pavilion  
Music Heritage Festival  
Ecumenical Service  
Youth Entrepreneurial Series  
Youth Leadership Summit  
All White Affair  
Fashion Show



## Cultural Arts Pavilion

The Cultural Arts Pavilion serves as the creative soul of our Summer Celebration. Themed *Court Vision: The Art of Resilience and Excellence in 2025*, the pavilion featured a special art exhibition celebrating the power of women and girls and highlighted the stories of athletes, artists, and change makers who have pushed boundaries, broken barriers, and redefined excellence. Through the Art Speaks Café and immersive gallery exhibitions, we provided a high-visibility platform for **33 Black artists**.

The Cherish Your Mind exhibit featured a public awareness campaign designed to educate the Black community on brain health and wellness. Faces of Mental Health was a powerful art exhibit that challenged assumptions and invited deeper understanding by revealing a simple truth: mental health struggles were often invisible. Through a collection of portraits, the exhibit presented individuals of different ages, cultures, professions, and life experiences and reminded audiences that mental health does not have a “look.”



### Cultural Arts Pavillion at a Glance

**29,737**

Attendees

**33**

Artists

**38**

Performances

**9**

Arts Institutions



## Circle City Classic®

The Circle City Classic weekend celebrated historically Black colleges and universities. This cultural experience featured a captivating parade, Business Entrepreneurship Day, Education Day, Talent Day, HBCU football game, and high-energy Battle of the Bands. Each element of the experience showcased the rich traditions, talent, and spirit of HBCUs, drawing 74,865 attendees and fostering a deep sense of pride and community.

### Circle City Classic® At a Glance

**74,865**

Attendees

**\$1 Million**

Investment

**\$5.5 Million**

More than \$5.5 Million  
scholarships awarded to date

## Miss Circle City Classic® Coronation

The Miss Circle City Classic® Coronation is a 12-week program for African American high school senior girls, designed to empower young women of color through education, leadership development, and social responsibility. The program includes workshops on teamwork, leadership, test prep, college admissions, study skills, communication, dress for success, social etiquette, financial aid, and modern dance.

### 2025 Circle City Classic® Coronation Ladies

A'Rynn Halliburton	Cathedral High School
Alicia Harvell	Warren Central High School
Almaz Kebede	Charles A. Tindley Accelerated High School
Araye Higgs	Pike High School
Ariah Lax	Lawrence North High School
Bailey Barker	Warren Central High School
CaMya Webster	Carmel High School
Erica Davis	Cathedral High School
Kyla Stiles	Ben Davis High School
Laniya Henson	Lawrence Central High School
Laurn Hill	Hamilton Southeastern High School
Markayla Frieson	Lawrence North High School
Rylee-Gabriel Moore	Pike High School
Shalila Gadis	Cardinal Ritter High School



### Coronation Court

BeNea Daniels: Miss Circle City Classic	Providence Cristo Rey High School
Almaz Kebede: 1st place runner up	Charles A. Tindley Accelerated High School
Araye Higgs: 2nd runner up	Pike High School

# Taking Your Seat Leadership Institute

Taking Your Seat Leadership Institute (TYSLI) is an elite leadership incubator focused on amplifying community voices within Indiana's legislative and civic landscapes. This comprehensive program empowered **19 Fellows** to master the complexities of local and state government, campaign strategy, and public policy. By the conclusion of the institute, YYSLI Fellows emerge as a unified network of advocates, equipped with the messaging and lobbying skills required to drive systemic change. Whether through board service, electoral candidacy, or grassroots organizing, YYSLI graduates are prepared to lead with precision and purpose.

## Session Topics:

- Introduction to Public Policy & Running for Office
- Strategy, Power & Policy Change:  
Turning Policy Ideas Into Legislation
- Navigating Election Law in Indiana
- Messaging & Advocacy, Telling Your Story,  
Championing Justice
- The Power of Lobbying, Turning Advocacy Into Action
- Crisis Management & Opposition Research,  
Safeguarding Your Campaign - Part I
- Crisis Management & Opposition Research,  
Safeguarding Your Campaign - Part II
- Celebration, Reflection & Civic Inspiration,  
TYSLI at Summer Celebration

## TYSLI at a Glance

8

Sessions

19

Fellows

## Participant Quotes:

"The most impactful thing that resonates with me ... is how imperative it is that people get involved in the process of civil leadership. You do not necessarily have to run for an office—there are many ways to be involved and to make a difference."

"Taking my seat means stepping into a space that I have rightfully earned, not one that was handed to me ... It's about using it to uplift others, challenge injustice, and create space for those who have been historically excluded."

## COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

### TYSLI Lunch & Learns

Beyond its core intensive, TYSLI expanded its reach through a dynamic Lunch & Learn series, attracting **934 participants** across the year. This initiative served as a vital community forum, cultivating informed and purpose-driven leaders through high-level dialogue and mentorship. By creating a space where emerging leaders could engage directly with seasoned professionals, the series successfully equipped nearly 1,000 individuals with the confidence and strategic voice needed to lead in professional, civic, and community settings.

#### TYSLI Lunch & Learns At a Glance

**934**

Attendees

**6**

Subject Areas



#### Lunch & Learn Topics:

- Addressing Health Outcomes in the Black Community
- Crafting Compelling Campaign & Advocacy Messages that Resonate
- State of the Shift: Indiana Small Business in Motion
- Investing in the Next Generation of Black Leaders
- Power in Participation: Engaging Black Communities in Local Governance
- From Maps to Movements: The Future of Voting and Representation







## VOLUNTEERISM AND SERVICE

# 6

# Making A Difference

IBE's ability to deliver life-changing programs is powered by the unwavering dedication of our volunteers. In 2025, **1,054 individuals** generously contributed their time and expertise to move our mission forward. To honor this commitment, IBE hosted a Volunteer Appreciation Reception, where we recognized exceptional leaders whose service has left a lasting mark on our community.

Beyond individual service, IBE remains a premier partner for corporate social responsibility. By collaborating with a diverse range of corporations and community organizations, we provided employees with meaningful opportunities to give back during our signature events, including Summer Celebration and the Circle City Classic®. These partnerships not only expand our operational capacity but also strengthen the bond between Indiana's workforce and the communities we serve.

### The following individuals were recognized as Volunteers of the Year for Summer Celebration and the Circle City Classic®:

Dorshan Jones, Summer Celebration

Tracey Bush, Circle City Classic®

Judy Driver, Circle City Classic® Golden Award for over 30 years of service

### The following individuals were recognized as Volunteers of the Year for each IBE chapter:

Shamarie Miles, Anderson chapter

Tony Kirkland, Evansville chapter

Cynthia M. Hendricks, Kokomo chapter

Felicia Seals Buchanan, South Bend chapter

Leila Darden, Indianapolis chapter

Jason Jordan, Fort Wayne chapter

# Statewide Programming

As a 501(c)(3) community service organization, IBE extends its reach through **12 chapters** strategically located across the state. These chapters serve as vital local hubs, translating IBE's statewide mission into tailored programs that address the needs of their unique communities. To ensure these leaders remain equipped for high-impact service, IBE hosted its **31st Annual Statewide Conference** in Anderson on April 26. During this summit, **79 chapter leaders** engaged in intensive training focused on board governance, financial wellness, and brand protection. By investing in the professional development of our local leadership, we ensure that every community in Indiana has the tools to drive meaningful, sustainable change.

## A Snapshot of Our Chapters

**12**

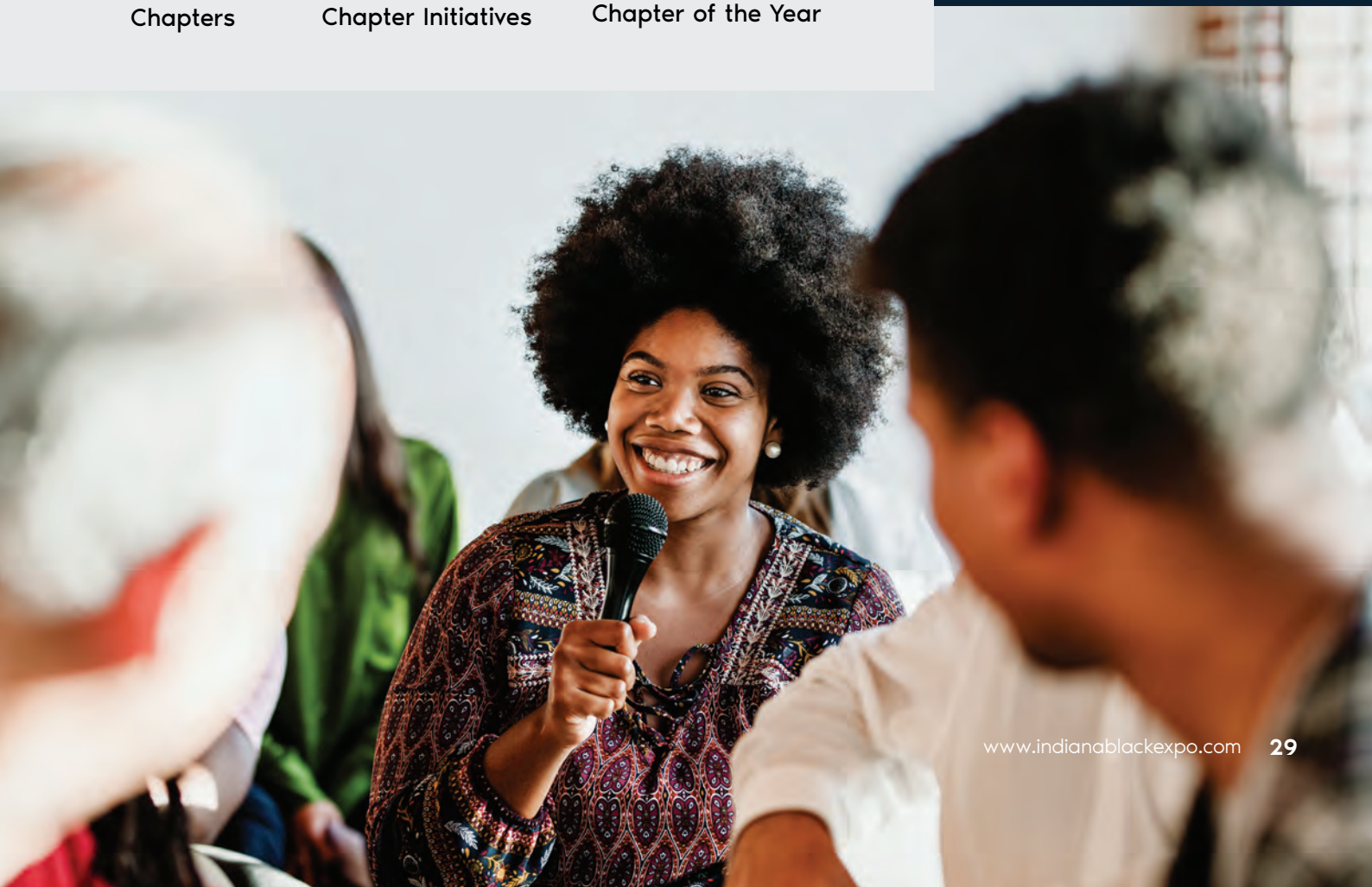
Chapters

**94**

Chapter Initiatives

**Elkhart**

Chapter of the Year







# Your Impact

*Thank you to all our funders and partners,  
as we could not do what we do without you!*

## **\$1,000,000+**

Lilly Endowment, Inc.

## **\$50,000 - \$999,999**

Arts Council of Indianapolis  
Capital Improvement Board  
Cummins Foundation  
Cummins Inc.  
Indiana African American  
Quality of Life Initiative (IAAQLI)  
Indiana Civil Rights Commission  
Indiana Department of Health  
Indiana Hoosier Lottery  
Indiana University  
Lilly Foundation  
NBA Foundation  
Pacers Sports and Entertainment  
Purdue University  
Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation, Inc.  
Visit Indy

## **\$15,000 - \$49,999**

Allen Whitehill Clowes  
AES  
Capital Group  
Carrier Corporation  
Eli Lilly & Company  
Everwise Credit Union  
Honda Manufacturing  
of Indiana, LLC  
Ice Miller  
Indianapolis Airport Authority  
Indianapolis Colts  
Indianapolis Foundation  
JD Sports/Finish Line Foundation  
JP Morgan Chase  
KeyBank  
Kroger  
Labcorp  
The Mind Trust  
NCAA

## **\$5,000 - \$14,999**

Arthur Jordan Foundation  
Black Onyx Management  
CBIZ Advisors  
Central Indiana  
Community Foundation  
CNO Financial Group  
Coke Cola Consolidated  
Crossroads Public Affairs  
Engaging Solutions, LLC  
Enterprise Holdings  
FISLL Foundation  
Girl Scouts of Central Indiana  
Indiana University Health  
Indianapolis Motor Speedway  
Indianapolis Urban League  
Lumina Foundation  
Markey's  
Noyes Jr. Memorial Foundation  
Old National Bank  
Penrod Society  
Vincennes University

## **Up to \$4,999**

National Black MBA  
Association Indianapolis

## **Partners**

AFSCME Local 725  
Children's Museum  
City of Indianapolis  
Eiteljorg Museum  
Fern  
Harrison Center for the Arts  
Indiana African American  
Genealogy Group  
Indiana Commission for  
Higher Education  
Indiana Historical Society  
Indiana State Museum

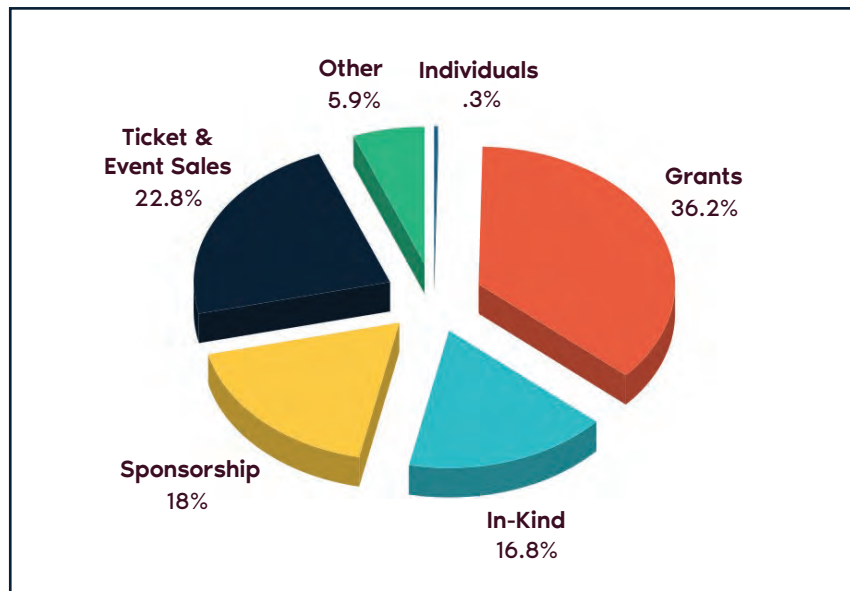
Indiana State Police  
Indianapolis Department of  
Public Safety  
Indianapolis Department of  
Public Works  
Indianapolis Fire Department  
Indianapolis Recorder  
Indy Eleven  
IndyGo  
InnoPower  
IU Indianapolis  
National Alliance on Mental  
Illness (NAMI Indiana)

Newfields  
Radio One  
Ransburg YMCA  
Sports Graphics  
Teach for America  
WISH TV  
WTHR

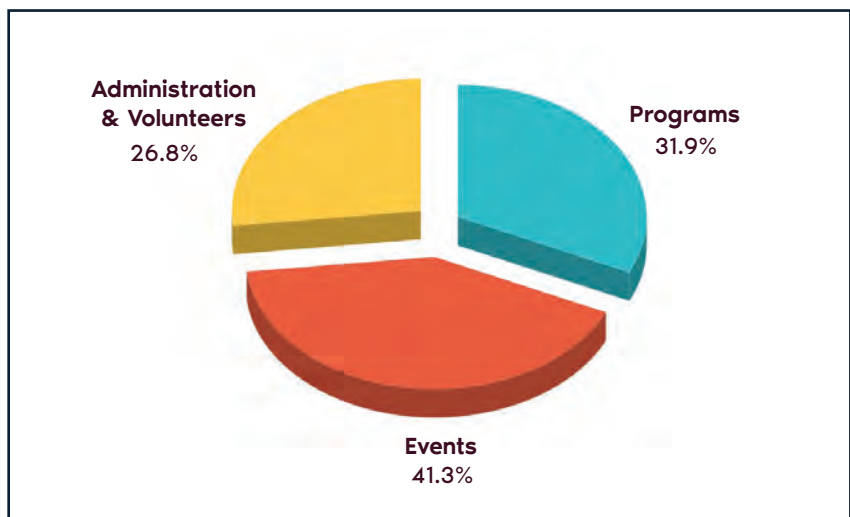
# 2025 By the Numbers

In fiscal year 2025, IBE had total public support and revenue of **\$4,885,615.00**, assets of **\$4,800,542.81** and operating expenses of **\$5,751,400.69**.

## IBE 2025 Revenue Sources



## IBE 2025 Expenses



## OUR BOARD

# 2025 IBE Board of Directors

### Executive Board

Vop Osili, III, *Executive Board Chair*

Melissa Profitt, *Executive Vice Chair*

Nick Bontreger, *Treasurer*

Gisele Carter, *Secretary*

John Upshaw, *Vice Chair – Central Region*

Denicka Foster, *Vice Chair – Northern Region*

Yvonne Harrington, *Nominating Committee Chair*

Al London, *Personnel Committee Chair*

### At-large members and chapter representatives

Joe Ayers

Hayley Boling

Felecia Seals Buchanan

Dr. Colette Pierce Burnette

Tamara Cypress

Dennis Hayes

Joe Jordan

Jamilia King

Tenaytia Nelson

TaKesha Wilson

Kobi Wright

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Indianapolis, IN 46219**

**Website:** indianablackexpo.com

**Phone:** 317-925-2702

### CONNECT

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BLACK  
EXPO**