



2024 IMPACT REPORT

Learn how BEI advances racial equity by focusing on
People, Procurement, and Policy.

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A Letter From Our Chairman



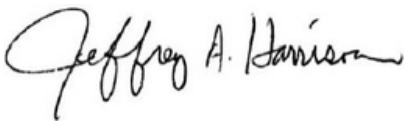
At Citizens Energy Group, where I serve as President & CEO, we serve around 900,000 people in Central Indiana. Inclusion is a core value at Citizens.

We believe that facilitating diversity and inclusion in our workforce, our business partners, and our community investments helps us ensure that our services are accessible, equitable, and responsive to the needs of the communities we serve and that we are active contributors to enhanced quality of life and economic development in Central Indiana. Since Business Equity for Indy was established in October 2020, advancing racial equity throughout Indiana has remained a key priority for local organizations who are empowering our businesses and our employees to create and sustain inclusive, diverse, and equitable workplaces, and policies.

Central Indiana faces many longstanding challenges in creating inclusive communities, as do our neighbors around the country. According to SAVI, in 2022 the Marion County unemployment rate for Black residents was almost 2.5 times the unemployment rate for white residents, at 9.7% and 3.9%, respectively. Median household income in Marion County similarly shows disparities, with more than \$71,000 for white households and only about \$41,000 for Black households. In addition to economics, there are clear impediments to health that affect our state's population. According to the Indiana Department of Health, in 2022 Black infant mortality reached 14.1 per 1,000 live births in the state, while white infant mortality reached 5.6 per 1,000 live births.

These are just a few of the disparities we see across our region, and the business community has the opportunity to identify and develop supports and provide resources to help our local economy, workforce, and community thrive. By focusing on creating more good and promising jobs for workers at all education levels, advancing sustainable wages and new business opportunities, and advocating for a diverse and inclusive region and state, we can unlock the full potential of our community and foster a more prosperous future for everyone. Let's continue to work together towards building a thriving and inclusive economy that benefits all individuals and contributes to the overall success of Central Indiana.

Sincerely,



BEI Chairman
Citizens Energy Group

Join BEI Today! For additional information, please visit us at www.businessequityindy.com.

BEI by the Numbers

14.1 DEATHS

Despite historic improvements in recent years, Indiana's Black infant mortality rate is still 14.1 deaths per 1,000 births— compared to 5.6 for White infants. That's nearly three times the national rate.

Source: [Indiana Department of Health](#)

The Commission for Higher Education's most recent [Indiana College Readiness Report](#) finds that in 2021, while 62% of white females enrolled in college directly after high school, only 51% of Black females enrolled.

51%

Similarly, 48% of white males enrolled while only 38% of Black males did so.

Source: [Indiana College Readiness Report](#)

BEI's strong commitment to promoting inclusive procurement practices has resulted in substantial investments in diverse suppliers, totaling over:

\$277,000,000

Source: [BEI Procurement Roundtable](#)

As of 2020, if Black-owned businesses were proportionate to the Black population in the Indianapolis metropolitan area, there would be

6,006 more

Black businesses.

Source: [Brookings Institution](#)

In 2022, the unemployment rates in Marion County varied significantly across different racial and ethnic groups.

Here's a high-level breakdown:

- **Asian: 1.8%**
- **Black: 9.7%**
- **Hispanic: 4.8%**
- **White: 3.9%**

These figures highlight disparities in employment opportunities and economic outcomes among different racial and ethnic groups within Marion County during the specified year.

Source: [SAVI](#)

442 OF 3,077 BLACK STUDENTS GRADUATED

In Marion County, of the 3,077 Black students who graduated high school in 2012-2013, just 442 graduated from an Indiana public postsecondary institution in six years with either a two- or a four-year degree.

Source: [Indiana's Evolving Labor Market report by Ascend Network and EmployIndy](#)

About Us

Business Equity for Indy (BEI) was created as a joint venture between the Central Indiana Corporate Partnership and the Indy Chamber, in collaboration with the Indianapolis Urban League. This alliance aspires to cultivate a more inclusive business landscape, fostering greater equity and economic opportunities for Black residents and people of color within Central Indiana.

The BEI Story

BEI began in the wake of the protests in 2020 after the murder of George Floyd. Business leaders in the Indy area became more vocal in their requests for help making their workplaces more accessible and equitable. At BEI, we knew that changes like this required a holistic and intersectional response.

In our first two years, BEI started with a dedicated focus on outreach, research, and the development of resources, programs, and recommendations that can support transformative change.

This foundational period was crucial in laying the groundwork as we prepared to supply businesses and employers with strategies that advance racial equity comprehensively.

Why This Matters

Black and Hispanic students faced disparities in academic outcomes prior to COVID-19, but the pandemic has widened the opportunity gap.

In 2022, the median income of White households in Marion County was 1.71 times higher than that of Black households. If Black

households earned the same median income as White households, it would mean an additional \$26,000 for over 100,000 households, resulting in \$2.6 billion in additional income across Indianapolis. (Source: SAVI). This significant income disparity highlights the ongoing issue of racial inequality within our communities. Addressing this gap is crucial for creating a more equitable and just society. By closing this income divide, not only will individual households benefit, but the entire city of Indianapolis stands to gain from increased economic stability and growth.

It is imperative that we work together to implement policies and initiatives that promote fairness and opportunity for all residents, regardless of race. By striving for equality, we can build a stronger and more prosperous future for everyone in Marion County.

To achieve this mission, BEI initiated a series of five taskforces over the first two years of its existence. The following taskforces are dedicated to crafting innovative solutions, orchestrating ongoing initiatives, and amplifying proven strategies for maximal impact.

Our Foundation

Equity and Inclusion in the Workforce

The multifaceted approach of BEI encompasses several key areas. First and foremost, it is committed to eliminating hurdles that obstruct equity and inclusion. Through targeted initiatives, BEI is instrumental in creating an environment where individuals from diverse backgrounds can find representation, cultural care, affirmation, and celebration within the workplace.

Support Black-owned Businesses

Part of BEI's mission revolves around amplifying the launch, growth, and success of Black-owned businesses. By offering supportive programs, mentorship opportunities, and strategic guidance BEI has become a catalyst for fostering economic empowerment in Indianapolis.

Learning and Education

BEI helps to develop and promote opportunities and access for members of the Black community to receive high-quality education and training. By collaborating with educational institutions and community partners, BEI actively contributes to creating pathways for skill development and upward mobility.

Improving Healthcare Access

BEI's intersectional approach to equity includes a commitment to holistic healthcare as a prime contributor to economic well-being. BEI helps to address disparities in healthcare access and funding. Although this is an ever-evolving need, BEI started by addressing critical issues like access to COVID-19 vaccinations, infant and maternal healthcare access, and co-creating a community rooted in food security. Through targeted initiatives and partnerships, BEI is working to ensure high-quality healthcare resources are accessible to all.

Community Advocacy

Through a multifaceted approach, BEI fosters and guides immediate change within organizations across Indianapolis. Together our efforts create an equitable and inclusive future for the entire region through legislative advocacy. As we continue to evolve and expand BEI's impact, we are dedicated to the principles of empowerment, education, and transformation.

Since the inception of Business Equity for Indy, the Indianapolis Urban League has been proud to partner with the Central Indiana Corporate Partnership and the Indy Chamber and applauds the unwavering commitment to address inclusivity and racial disparities through the Workforce Pilot and HR Professionals Community of Practice, advocacy and health efforts.

Tony Mason, President & CEO at Indianapolis Urban League

BEI's Focus Areas

This impact report serves as a testament to the profound influence BEI has had on Black residents in Central Indiana and how businesses engaged in its collective mission have experienced and created impactful change throughout the region.

BEI began with five taskforces that remain operational, but has streamlined into three focus areas to allow for more businesses to understand and begin meaningful changes to address racial equity in the workplace. In 2023, BEI evolved from its inception into a dynamic membership-based initiative, focusing on three pivotal pillars: **People, Procurement, and Policy**.

People

BEI is committed to dismantling systemic barriers in the Indianapolis workforce. The People pillar of BEI recognizes the importance of a diverse and inclusive workplace and the impact these changes have on the community at large. People Community of Practice and the Workforce Pilot are two of the relationship-driven mentorship programming opportunities within the People pillar that support employer-centric learning of best practices and provide support in the implementation journey within their organizations.

BEI works hand-in-hand with Central Indiana business leaders, policy makers, and community leaders to eliminate hurdles that hinder equity and inclusion in the workplace.

Through outreach programs, educational initiatives, and partnerships with local organizations, BEI has successfully increased awareness and successfully advocated for Black residents. The impact is tangible, with more businesses recognizing the value of a diverse

workforce and actively implementing strategies to foster an inclusive workplace culture.

Businesses that have joined BEI as members are committed to action within their own internal workings, and engage in meaningful, ongoing conversations about workplace equity by being part of BEI's transparent data collection, and participate in either roundtable discussions or the Policy Taskforce.



Today, BEI functions as a membership-based collective. BEI offers Silver and Gold level memberships at no cost to an organization. Each membership offers a different level of involvement, depending on the capacity of the organization.

Procurement

Part of BEI's mission is to foster economic empowerment. Recognizing the importance of economic self-sufficiency, BEI has actively worked to increase the growth and success of Black-owned businesses. Businesses engaged in BEI's membership model actively contribute to this success by implementing strategies that prioritize the growth of Black-owned enterprises. Through collaborative efforts, BEI and its members have created a network that not only encourages economic empowerment but also serves as a model for sustainable and inclusive business practices.

BEI helps create an environment where Black entrepreneurs can thrive. Through our Procurement Roundtable, we intentionally hold the space to focus on increasing the launch, growth, and success rates of Black-owned enterprises by facilitating relationships, creating opportunities, and positioning suppliers to gain access to new business contracts.



Companies that have participated in the Procurement Roundtable have made a commitment to adopt eight national best practices to increase supplier diversity. The eight best practices for supplier diversity ensure corporate commitments at the highest level to ensure action to increase equity. The impact is evident in the success stories of Black-owned businesses that have flourished under the guidance and support provided by BEI through targeted support programs, mentorship initiatives, and advocacy efforts.

Policy

BEI recognizes the pivotal role that advocacy plays in shaping the path toward racial equity. BEI engages and supports the community through advocacy efforts that are part of this inclusive and intersectional approach to economic well being. Through partnerships with community organizations, grassroots initiatives, and policy forums, BEI works alongside those who are implementing effective policies for change.

BEI and its members work hand in hand to create lasting change, demonstrating the collective impact of businesses committed to advancing racial equity through collaborative policy initiatives like the Policy Taskforce.

Membership

The data collection process instituted by BEI allows these businesses to self-report - offering transparency into the implementation and effectiveness of their strategies. This collaborative effort ensures that the workforce and business impacts are tracked, contributing to the development of BEI's scorecard — a dynamic tool that will reflect the collective progress made by businesses committed to advancing racial equity.

Many organizations in Central Indiana want to show their commitment to an equitable workplace, but struggle with knowing what to do. BEI saw this as an opportunity to bring together experts and resources that provide guidance and support. BEI also facilitates workshops and programming tailored to the unique needs of organizations. Membership with BEI represents a pledge to prioritize equity, foster an inclusive environment, and embark on a journey alongside other organizations as partners. It is a commitment to implementation, an invitation to take action, and an affirmation of the organization's dedication to contributing to BEI's pillars of People, Procurement, and Policy.

Initially, 11 companies supported the launch of BEI. Today, we have 40 members as part of the coalition. [Join us!](#)

Why Join BEI?

Joining BEI is more than checking a box — it's a commitment to collaboration and a physical extension of community. As a member,

organizations get to serve as a voice in transformational change and gain access to a wealth of resources aligned with BEI's pillars: **People, Procurement and Policy.**

Membership Levels

BEI offers two distinct membership tiers, and each is tailored to accommodate the unique capacities and aspirations of participating organizations.

BEI Silver Membership

- ✓ Collect and provide aggregated and anonymized data and metrics.
- ✓ Participation in the Procurement Roundtable.
- ✓ Adoption of at least one recommendation, program, or strategy from BEI's pillars.

BEI Gold Membership

- ✓ Collect and provide aggregated and anonymized data and metrics.
- ✓ Participation in the Procurement Roundtable.
- ✓ Adoption of at least one recommendation, program, or strategy from BEI's pillars.
- ✓ Adoption of an additional (two in total) recommendation, program, or strategy from core pillars.
- ✓ Provision of a representative to actively serve on the Policy Taskforce.

Memberships and Pillar Expectations

As organizations become members, they actively become part of a narrative of collective impact. Some of the ways that organizations help to create an equitable community is by adopting a recommendation, program, or strategy from one or more of BEI's three pillars.

People

- Silver and Gold memberships provide access to People Community of Practice events, which offer hiring professionals invaluable guidance and support in attracting, retaining, and advancing Black professionals.

Procurement

- Both Silver and Gold memberships include participation in the Procurement Roundtable, which offers the chance for businesses to pitch to purchasers or buy from a curated list of diverse suppliers.
- Additionally, participants can learn best practices of creating, and benefits of building, a supplier diversity program

Policy

- Gold memberships uniquely position organizations to actively engage in policy and advocacy with a representative serving on the Policy Taskforce.
- Gold members have an exclusive invitation to the Indy Chamber Policy Summit, the premier policy forum for business leaders, legislators, and experts in Central Indiana.

Membership Eligibility

Organizations or institutions with operations and staff in Central Indiana's nine-county region (Marion, Hamilton, Boone, Hendricks,

Morgan, Johnson, Shelby, Hancock, Madison) are eligible for BEI membership.

Signing up entails a commitment to fulfilling all requirements specified for the chosen membership level of Gold or Silver. This includes providing aggregated and anonymized data on workforce, procurement practices, and, if applicable, engaging in policy advocacy.



Measuring BEI's Impact: Key Achievements

Since its inception, BEI's programs, partnerships, and reports have created meaningful positive change in Central Indiana. Learn more about a few of our key initiatives from years past:

1

Peer Advisor Program is a monthly meeting and resource for supplier diversity professionals.

2

Procurement Roundtable is an in-person quarterly event where Black-owned suppliers can give a presentation on their business.

3

People Community of Practice (PcP) exists to increase diverse representation in companies.

4

Workforce Pilot is an intensive, two-year cohort with a DEI focus.

5

Learning and Talent Opportunities Summit addressed gaps in the education-to-workforce journey.

6

Impediments to Health Playbook helps employers provide resources for Covid-19 vaccinations, maternal health, food security and mental health.

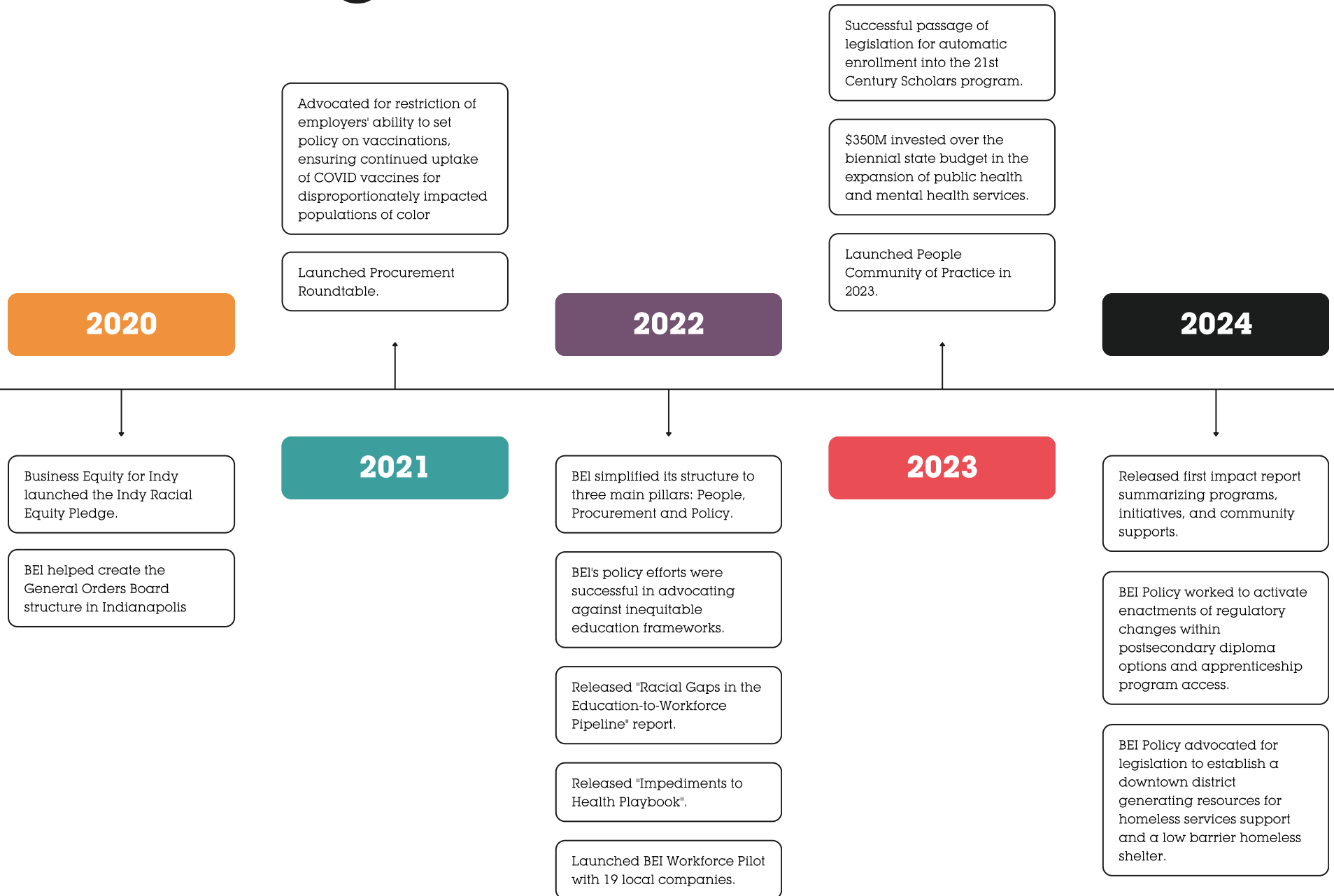
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Racial Gaps in the Education-to-Workforce Pipeline report offers employers resources to make meaningful improvements in education and employment outcomes for Indiana's Black population.

8

Successful passage of automatic enrollment legislation to the 21st Century Scholars program, which will vastly expand access to postsecondary education for students of color.

BEI's Progress



Economic Empowerment

BEI's commitment to promoting inclusive procurement practices has resulted in substantial investments in diverse suppliers. Notably, a significant portion of these investments have contributed to job creation and economic growth in underserved communities.

Support for Black Entrepreneurship

In 2020 when BEI began, the rate of Indiana Black-owned businesses was small. A Brookings Institution analysis found that if the number of Black-owned businesses was proportionate to the Black population in the Indianapolis metro area, there would have been 6,006 more Black businesses at the time. BEI had a big challenge ahead.

BEI's initiatives have played a pivotal role in supporting Black entrepreneurship in Central Indiana. Although it is difficult to attribute the exact number of businesses that began, grew, or flourished due to BEI's guidance, there are a few indicators that speak to the health of a more diverse business ecosystem in Central Indiana.

Addressing Racial Disparities

BEI has been instrumental in advocating for systemic change to address historical inequities faced by the Black community of Central Indiana. BEI has helped connect Black residents to vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health resources, and address food insecurities in the region. BEI's policy efforts have helped set up community boards to monitor police actions, advocate against inequitable education frameworks, and helped pass legislation to automatically enroll qualified Black students in the 21st Century Scholars program. These efforts are essential for strengthening the Black community of Central Indiana.

Sustainable Supply Chain

By challenging organizations to embrace diversity and equitable practices, BEI has contributed to a 45% increase in diverse spending by entities such as the Indianapolis Airport Authority and Eli Lilly & Co. Through the expertise and dedication of BEI leaders, we have successfully facilitated collaboration between businesses and minority-owned enterprises, leading to tangible outcomes such as increased diverse spending and economic empowerment.

BEI's impact on Indiana's economic landscape has been significant and far-reaching. As a community-focused initiative, we are committed to helping create sustainable equity and inclusion practices that are a long term catalyst for positive change.



People



People

The People pillar of BEI is perhaps the best representation of our ability to listen to the needs of the Black community and the business ecosystem of Central Indiana, then adjust our efforts to meet those needs.

Historical Context of BEI's People Pillar Initiatives

The People pillar within BEI has its origins in a dedicated effort to advance the careers of Black professionals in Central Indiana. This initiative began with three taskforces: Hiring and Promotion, Learning and Talent, and Impediments to Health. They played a vital role in identifying systemic barriers that were hindering the advancement of the Black community in the workforce, education, and healthcare sectors.

Education and employment gaps hinder individuals' ability to prosper, businesses' ability to thrive and the vitality of our community. Employers also struggle to fill knowledge- and skill-based positions with the diverse talent they need.

[Racial Gaps in the Education-to-Workforce Pipeline and Indiana's Opportunity to Close Them, 2022]

Hiring and Promotion

BEI worked diligently to dismantle entry barriers and promote inclusivity within Central Indiana's workforce. Their efforts underscored the urgent need to address racial disparities in hiring and promotion practices. Our pillar's and key priorities:

- **Priority I: Promote Sustainable Wages through the Good Wages Initiative (GWI)**
 - This initiative promotes employers paying at least \$18/hr and offering employer-sponsored healthcare to all full-time employees.
- **Priority II: Connect Black Talent to Opportunities**
 - We encourage companies to join the The Ascend Network is an innovative job matching platform that helps job seekers – particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds – find good & promising career opportunities.
- **Priority III: Create Apprenticeship Opportunities**
 - We encourage companies Connect with the Modern Apprenticeship Program (MAP) team and Talent Bound team to learn more about the programs.

Learning and Talent

BEI worked alongside educational institutions, nonprofits, community organizations and workforce development groups to find ways that employers can provide equitable access to quality education and training opportunities.

Our findings highlighted the critical importance of closing gaps in the education-to-workforce pipeline to uplift the Black community of Central Indiana.

In the [Racial Gaps in the Education-to-Workforce Pipeline report](#), BEI identified factors contributing to racial disparity at work and in schools. For example, BEI found that more Black and Hispanic students fall behind in K-12 education, which causes them to face high rates of waiver diplomas and college remediation needs. BEI also documented a shortage of Black and Hispanic STEM college graduates, and a shortfall in degree completion at Indiana’s public colleges and universities.

BEI also developed recommendations for how employers of all sizes can support the success of Black children and adults in three key areas: early learning, K-12, and postsecondary education. Just a few of these methods include advocating for early learning data systems and Paths to Quality participation, engaging in K-12 career exposure and academic proficiency initiatives, and promoting postsecondary opportunities through scholarship awareness and employee college savings contributions.

Impediments to Health

BEI’s [Impediments to Health Playbook](#) delved into disparities in healthcare access, advocating for targeted interventions to address critical issues such as COVID-19 vaccinations, maternal health, food security, and mental health within communities of color.

BEI Impediments to Health Playbook provide a roadmap for companies to implement strategies that support equitable outcomes, enhance employee health, and benefit business operations. This playbook draws from successful practices of innovative companies worldwide, offering tangible steps for organizations of all sizes and industries to contribute to advancing racial equity.

Find more of BEI's recommendations and resources at businessequityindy.com/resources.

Health in Action:

- BEI’s guidance helped IndyGo set up a temporary COVID-19 vaccination clinic at transit centers. Individuals who received the vaccinations at this clinic were rewarded with a 31-day pass for free rides.
- The Irsay Family's “Kicking the Stigma” initiative gave out \$2.9 million in funds to programs that offer assistance, support, and resources to individuals struggling with mental health issues.
- BEI collaborates with local organizations — like the Indy Hunger Network and the Food Access Commission — to increase access to healthy food options, change the narrative to focus on nutrition security, and engage employees in efforts to support equitable food access initiatives.
- BEI supports companies in educating employees about prenatal care, linking them to community resources, offering lactation support programs, and promoting flexible work schedules for pregnant and postpartum mothers. These initiatives aim to reduce the Black infant mortality rate in Marion County and improve health outcomes for mothers and babies.

BEI guides businesses in playing a proactive role in advancing racial equity and addressing health disparities in the community. We do this by providing businesses with actionable insights, supportive community connections, and thorough educational resources. By implementing the strategies outlined in the BEI Health Playbooks, companies can not only improve employee health and well-being they can also contribute to creating a more inclusive and equitable business environment in Central Indiana.

Continuing the Work: New BEI Programs and Projects

During the early efforts of the Hiring and Promotion, Learning and Talent, and Impediments to Health programs, BEI identified a pattern of pervasive obstacles hindering career advancement and educational opportunities; and at the same time, also found tangible solutions to address many of these issues. The Workforce Pilot and People Community of Practice emerged as powerful activations stemming from our deep-rooted commitment to address systemic barriers faced by Black professionals in Central Indiana.

People Community of Practice (PCP)

PCP serves as a crucial platform for enhancing diversity within organizations. PCP events provide education, guidance, and support to hiring professionals, focusing on attracting, retaining, and advancing Black and other minority employees. These efforts are rooted in historical taskforce recommendations and serve as practical activations to promote DEI in hiring and talent management.

Workforce Pilot

Launched in 2022, the Workforce Pilot program is designed to aid companies in implementing effective diversity strategies. The Workforce Pilot is an intensive, two-year program for 19 selected companies offering consultation to companies. We assist them in implementing evidence-based strategies and collaborating with industry experts to reduce disparities, promote equity, and support talent development. The program equips businesses with the tools and resources needed to enact meaningful changes. Before providing implementation support, the program assesses a companies' understanding of DEI issues, benchmarking their knowledge and readiness. This ensures that companies receive tailored guidance aligned with their specific needs, ultimately facilitating the adoption and execution of diversity strategies.

BEI program leaders taught me so much. Their validation is a great reminder that whenever I'm engaging with folks, validating and affirming them has nothing to do with me agreeing with it — regardless of what I actually think. Doing this taught me how important it is to create a culture of feeling seen, heard, and valued.

Lloyd Daley Graham, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion & Workforce Pilot Participant

Examining Education-to-Workforce Pipelines

BEI, in partnership with Ascend Indiana and the Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation, led research that documented the racial and gender disparities in the education to workforce talent pipeline across the state. This data, disaggregated by race and ethnicity on a statewide and Marion County level, continues to be referenced today.

Our city and state face significant disparities in education and employment outcomes, particularly affecting Black and Hispanic residents compared to their white counterparts at every stage of the education-to-workforce pipeline. These gaps are especially pronounced for Black individuals. These disparities not only hinder

personal prosperity but also impede the success of businesses and the overall vitality of our community. Employers struggle to find diverse talent for knowledge- and skill-based positions, exacerbating these challenges. These racial disparities aren't the responsibility of any single institution or sector; rather, they are community-wide. Addressing them requires sustained and intentional efforts from all sectors in our community.

Fortunately, there are actionable steps employers can take to improve education and employment outcomes for Indiana's Black population.

To address gaps in the education-to-workforce pipeline, we hosted a Learning and Talent Opportunities Summit in Spring 2022. This virtual event featured moderated panel discussions with regional leaders actively working to promote equity through early learning, work-based programs, and support for postsecondary education.

Events and Partnerships

Business Equity for Indy (BEI) and Mentors of Color hosted the Mentors of Color Brunch and Networking Event, an event for 40 Black young professionals and local business leaders at 16 Tech. This event was focused on building mentoring relationships with Black professionals.

This event intentionally featured representatives from Black-led young professional organizations like The Exchange (Young Professionals within the Indianapolis Urban League), the Indy Black Professionals, IndyHub, and the Ascend Network. Participants in the event shared they left with new connections, guidance in their careers, and potential job opportunities.

BEI saw the synergy with Mentors of Color due to their belief in creating a space for people of color to obtain visibility, connection, and knowledge is a critical step for the expansion of opportunities

and community engagement. Mentoring is impactful to encourage steps that boost the personal and career trajectory of people of color. Find more details at www.mentorsofcolor.com.

With the Mentors of Color partnership, BEI is building upon its commitment to advance racial equity in Indiana.

Impact in Action: A Case Study with IndyGo and the Workforce Pilot Program

BEI worked alongside IndyGo to help develop a DEI plan that will impact how the public transit agency hires, expands, and evolves.

Through this partnership, we not only empowered IndyGo to navigate the complexities of DEI initiatives but also played an integral role in shaping the strategic planning process. This collaboration underscores our ability to forge close alliances with public institutions, leveraging our expertise to drive equity and inclusivity within the community.

Since its inception, the program has raised awareness among companies about talent challenges relating to diversity. Through targeted interventions and support, BEI has guided companies towards implementing their DEI plans effectively. In fall 2022, 19 businesses participated in the program to identify areas for greater equity and drive measurable outcomes.

Over its two-year duration, the Workforce Pilot program has played a pivotal role in leveraging BEI's collection of resources, recommendations, and general best practices for diversity at participating companies. The Workforce Pilot program lays the foundation for sustained progress in DEI initiatives within the business community.



Mentors of Color

Procurement

Procurement

BEI's Procurement Taskforce serves as a cornerstone of support for local businesses, championing economic growth and sustainability within the Central Indiana community. By prioritizing procurement from diverse, local vendors we aim to fortify the regional economy while fostering a chain of positive impacts throughout the business ecosystem. This initiative is grounded in the belief that empowering local businesses leads to stronger neighborhoods, increased job opportunities, and enhanced community resilience.

Empowering Minority-Owned Enterprises

The core of BEI's Procurement Taskforce holds a dedication to advancing minority-owned enterprises. Through intentional outreach and engagement efforts, we strive to break down barriers to entry and cultivate pathways for underrepresented entrepreneurs to flourish. BEI convenes Central Indiana suppliers and purchasers with a desire to build sustainable supplier diversity programs and build connections with Black-owned businesses.

We encourage businesses to diversify their procurement relationships and direct their business toward Black-owned enterprises, directly funneling economic growth toward the Black community of Indiana. This connection fosters the ongoing relationships that are the lifeblood of economic equity.

Fostering Collaboration

A key driver of success for our Procurement Taskforce is the cultivation of collaborative partnerships among local businesses, government agencies, and community stakeholders. Foundational to the work undertaken by the Procurement Pillar are key alliances with community partners well positioned to provide crucial support and

resources to business owners looking to scale. In collaboration with Indiana Black Chamber of Commerce, Indiana University Kelley School of Business and MidStates Minority Supplier Development Council BEI offers quarterly supplier training workshops before each Procurement Roundtable. Topics have included Financial Strategy, Certification and Marketing. Also quarterly are opportunities to earn an Executive Education Certification from the Kelley School. Many of the companies engaged with BEI's Procurement Pillar have expressed a need for assistance and guidance to build their organizational infrastructure and expand diversity and inclusion in business.

In response, the Peer Advisor program was established. Peer Advisors represent a "go to" resource that will help companies build their infrastructure, generate new stakeholders and drive diversity and inclusion through business partnerships. Advisors serve as peer mentors for 2 to 4 companies each, meeting once a month to help implement best practices solutions and assist in launching ground-up supplier diversity programs as well as advanced alternatives for companies requesting assistance.

The bottom line is that we have to move the needle with increasing spend with diverse companies and the diverse companies—minority, women and veteran—cannot afford to be stagnant either. So they also need better tool kits in order to compete because it's not a giveaway program; it's competition, and I'm very, very competitive. I think with the right strategies, we can actually improve upon the bottom line of spending more dollars with these companies. Business Equity for Indy was one of those strategies that I looked to and embraced."

Richard Wise, Director of Supplier Diversity at Indiana University Bloomington

Impact in Action: A Case Study of the Procurement Roundtable

BEI's Procurement Roundtable is a quarterly meeting focused on empowering Black-owned enterprises. These events serve as dynamic platforms for fostering relationships, creating opportunities, and positioning suppliers for success in securing new business contracts. During a recent roundtable on February 2024, Black-owned catering services and food providers were highlighted, showcasing their offerings to potential clients. This meeting resulted in immediate connections and opportunities for participating businesses, demonstrating the Roundtable's effectiveness in catalyzing growth and fostering new business connections within the Black entrepreneurial community.

To learn more about the Procurement Roundtable or attend an upcoming event, visit www.businessequityindy.com.

The BEI Procurement Roundtable isn't just about formal presentations. It's a vibrant networking space where connections are made and relationships are nurtured. Even for businesses that don't secure a presentation slot, the value of attending these events is immense. A notable example is a business owner who regularly attends these roundtables and recently secured a contract opportunity solely through networking, underscoring the broader impact of the Roundtable beyond formal pitches.

The BEI Procurement Roundtable serves as a catalyst for growth and opportunity within the Black entrepreneurial community, providing a space where relationships are forged, opportunities are created, and barriers are addressed to promote the success of Black-owned enterprises in Central Indiana.



The BEI Roundtable event gives Black-owned businesses the opportunity to be heard by so many that may not be in touch with what the local Chefs have to offer. We're always grateful to network with individuals who have never had the opportunity to try food from our kitchen, Paul's Kitchen.

Chef Paul Dickens, Founder & CEO of Paul's Kitchen

8 Best Practices for Supplier Diversity

BEI's Procurement Taskforce identified eight best practices for companies participating the BEI Procurement Roundtable. These practices serve as tangible demonstrations of their commitment to fostering inclusive supply chains. By adopting these best practices, organizations not only showcase their dedication to equitable supplier diversity but also recognize the strategic imperative to collaborate and nurture resilient, sustainable business ecosystems that mirror the diversity of our community.

We encourage you to leverage this list as a valuable resource and reach out to us at info@businessequityindy.com for further assistance in implementing these practices within your own organization.

- **Resource Allocation:** Designate an individual or team responsible for supplier diversity within the organization, ensuring accountability in advancing corporate goals for Black Business Enterprises.
- **Prioritization:** Integrate supplier diversity goals and metrics into corporate scorecards at the highest level, demonstrating a commitment to equity and inclusion.
- **Goal Setting:** Establish both short- and long-term spending and utilization objectives for Black Business Enterprises, while diligently tracking and reporting expenditure data at a detailed level.
- **Relationship Building:** Foster connections with Black Business Enterprises through initiatives such as mentorship programs, with reserved spots specifically for these enterprises, facilitating meaningful partnerships and support.
- **Training Initiatives:** Provide supplier diversity training for middle management and above, empowering employees with the knowledge and tools to support diverse suppliers effectively.
- **Supportive Payment Practices:** Implement flexible payment options, such as net 30 or net 14 terms, to accommodate the needs of Black Business Enterprises, while also offering complimentary membership to business support organizations.
- **Collaboration:** Actively engage with organizations like the Mid-States Minority Supplier Development Council, leveraging collaborative efforts to enhance supplier diversity initiatives and foster a more inclusive business ecosystem.
- **Investment in Programs:** Allocate resources to support the BEI Procurement Roundtable program, contributing annually to help small- and midsize Black Business Enterprises enhance their capabilities and scale effectively.

Policy



Policy

BEI is committed to addressing systemic barriers faced by the Black community of Central Indiana, both through direct support initiatives and policy advocacy.

Central to BEI's success in driving political change has been its ability to foster collaboration and bridge divides among community stakeholders, business leaders, and policymakers. By cultivating relationships between leaders from the Black community, the business sector, and beyond, BEI has forged a powerful coalition united by a shared vision of a more equitable future for Indianapolis. Through strategic advocacy and grassroots mobilization, BEI has not only secured legislative victories, we have also fostered a culture of collective solidarity in the fight against racial injustice.

As Central Indiana continues to grapple with entrenched inequities, BEI's Policy Taskforce remains at the forefront of efforts to enact meaningful change. By leveraging its expertise in government affairs and community engagement, BEI continues to identify and support key advocacy opportunities that advance the interests of the Black community and promote equity across all sectors of society. As a testament to its impact, BEI's policy initiatives have not only transformed the local business landscape but also set a precedent for collaborative, community-driven advocacy in the pursuit of racial justice.

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BEI Policy Priorities

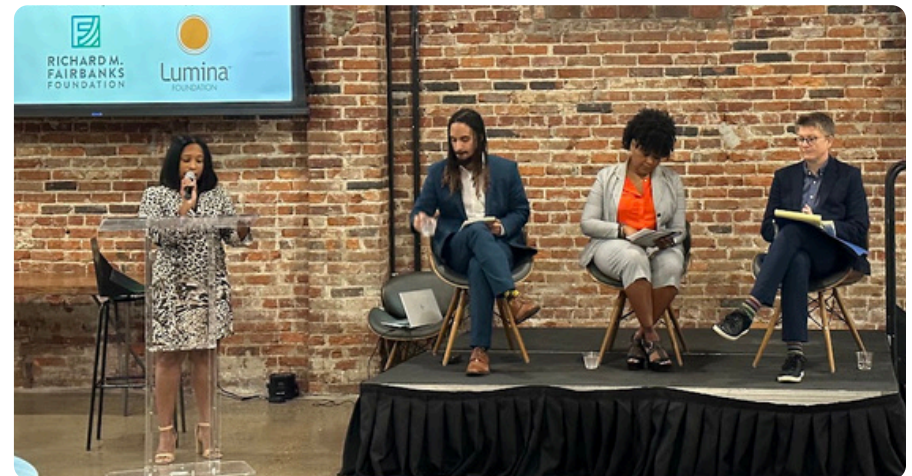
- **2024: Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning**
 - Enactments of regulatory changes within postsecondary alternative diploma options and increased access to apprenticeship programs.
- **2023: Postsecondary and Health Investment**
 - Successful passage of automatic enrollment legislation to the 21st Century Scholars program, which will vastly expand access to postsecondary education for students of color.
 - \$350M invested over the biennial state budget in the expansion of public health and mental health services.
- **2022: Diversity Education**
 - Successful in making Indiana one of the only conservative states in the nation to prevent the passage of "anti-CRT" laws restricting the teaching of truth in K-12 classrooms.
- **2021: Vaccination**
 - Prevented restriction of employers' ability to set policy on vaccinations for their workplace to ensure continued uptake of COVID vaccines, especially for disproportionately impacted populations of color.
- **2020: Law Enforcement Accountability**
 - Prevented state takeover of IMPD, preserving police proximity and accountability to the communities they serve. Also preserved the General Orders board structure in Indianapolis.

Impact in Action: A Case Study in Policy Advocacy

The inception of BEI marked a pivotal moment in Central Indiana's advocacy landscape. Observing the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and responding to the global unrest sparked by the murders of Black community members like George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, stakeholders across the city recognized the urgent need for collective action to address systemic inequities. Against this backdrop, BEI emerged as a unifying force; rallying businesses, community leaders, and policymakers around the shared goal of advancing racial equity in Central Indiana.

One of the most significant contributions of BEI's Policy Taskforce has been its role in advocating for tangible policy reforms aimed at fostering greater accountability and equity within law enforcement agencies. Recognizing the need for increased transparency and community oversight in police policy-making, BEI successfully lobbied for the establishment of the General Orders Board — an initiative that prioritized civilian input in shaping law enforcement protocols. By empowering civilians to influence police policy decisions, this innovative board represents a tangible step towards accountability from law enforcement to the communities they serve.

BEI's impact extends beyond local jurisdictions, influencing legislative debates at the state level. In the face of nationwide conversations around critical race theory in schools, Indiana stood out as a beacon of resistance. Thanks in part to BEI's advocacy efforts and the coalition it helped forge, Indiana became one of the only conservative-leaning states to impact the legislation aimed at censoring educational curricula. By championing the importance of truth in education and combating attempts to suppress historical narratives, BEI demonstrated its commitment to promoting inclusive learning environments while challenging systemic barriers to racial equity.



Our Leadership

BEI Chairman

Jeffrey Harrison

Citizens Energy Group

Management Committee

Gail Boudreaux

Elevance Health

Justin Christian

BCforward

Kristen Corbitt

Mays Chemical Company

Sherry Davis

Eli Lilly & Company

Scott Davison

OneAmerica Financial

Jason Eckerle

PNC Bank

Claire Fiddian-Green

Richard M. Fairbanks
Foundation

Melina Kennedy

Central Indiana Corporate
Partnership (CICP)

Tony Mason

Indianapolis Urban
League

Matt Mindrum

Indy Chamber

Dennis Murphy

IU Health

Mamon Powers III

Powers & Sons
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Tierra Sims

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Christina Snorten

Indy Chamber



LEARN MORE ABOUT US

Business Equity for Indy (BEI) is a joint effort of the the Central Indiana Corporate Partnership and the Indy Chamber, in collaboration with the Indianapolis Urban League to grow a more inclusive business climate and build greater equity and economic opportunity for the Indy Region's Black residents and people of color. This effort launched a set of taskforces to develop new efforts, organize ongoing work, and scale proven solutions for maximum impact.

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