



# Graduation & Career Coach Initiative

ROI

REGIONAL  
OPPORTUNITY  
INITIATIVES, INC.



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# Overview

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# About Regional Opportunities Initiatives, Inc.

- ROI is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and a supporting organization of the Community Foundation of Bloomington and Monroe County.
- Funded by a Lilly Endowment Inc. grant that's focused on advancing the economic, community and educational growth of 11 Southwest Central Indiana counties.
- Established in 2016, ROI is implementing an education and workforce plan and a regional opportunity fund for quality-of-place investments in Southwest Central Indiana.



# About Ivy Tech Community College

*Ivy Tech Community College prepares Indiana residents to learn, live, and work in a diverse and globally competitive environment by delivering professional, technical, transfer, and lifelong education. Through its affordable, open-access education and training programs, the College enhances the development of Indiana's citizens and communities and strengthens its economy.*



# About Ivy Tech Community College

- Indiana's only community college.
- Indiana's largest post-secondary institution and the largest singly-accredited statewide community college system in the entire country.
- Offering more than 150 programs in the divisions of Health, Technology, Business & Public Services, and University/Transfer (and offering more than 100 transfer programs with in-state and out-of-state colleges/universities).
- Teaching classes in more than 75 communities
- Serving more than 100,000 students a year
- Accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, and a member of the North Central Association.
- Affordable tuition (less than \$4,100/year)

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# Background Information



## The Franklin Initiative's Graduation Coach Initiative

- Individualized counseling using the Check & Connect model
- Career preparation
- Focused on students struggling in high school
- Goal: high school diploma attainment

## Ivy Tech's College Connection Coach Initiative

- College transition services, assistance with admissions applications, financial aid, and college visits
- Assistance with exploring careers, education, and training options
- Development of an academic/career plan
- Assistance reviewing career assessments ([www.indianacareerexplorer.org](http://www.indianacareerexplorer.org))
- Career planning

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# Pilot Graduation and Career Coaching Initiative

Aimed at improving graduation rates and preparing students for pathways into technical certifications, associate degrees, and other postsecondary degree programs.

- Individualized high school completion plans, including ensuring students attend school, arrive on time, fulfill academic requirements and graduate with a high school diploma.
- Opportunities for students to experience and participate in work-based learning initiatives.
- Career learning activities such as mock interviews, financial literacy training, soft skill training, and college and industry visits.
- Partnership with Ivy Tech Bloomington who employ and supervise coaches. Training provided by ROI and Ivy Tech. Funding from ROI.



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# 8 Graduation and Career Coaches in 10 High Schools throughout Southwest Central Indiana

- Bedford North Lawrence High School
- Bloomfield High School
- Bloomington High School North
- Bloomington High School South
- Crawford County High School
- Edgewood High School
- Loogootee High School
- Owen Valley High School
- Salem High School
- Washington High School



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# Funding Process

- Competitive request for proposal (RFP) process
  - RFP's were reviewed by a committee made up of ROI and Ivy Tech members
  - Scored each RFP using a rubric - quality of application and impact
  - Conversated and agreed upon recipients
- 27 school districts in Southwest Central Indiana
  - 12 school districts responded
  - 8 school districts were funded
- 3 additional school districts self-fund their participation and involvement in the program
- 1 of the 3 self-funded school districts raised the necessary funding through their county and have a full-time Graduation and Career Coach

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# Hiring Process

- Positions were posted on Ivy Tech's employment website in addition to other employment sites (i.e. indeed.com)
- Applicants reviewed/selected initially by ROI and Ivy Tech
- Round 1 interviews conducted by a committee comprised of ROI, Ivy Tech and two Graduation Coaches already in place
- Candidates selected for Round 2 by the initial committee
- Round 2 interviews conducted by a committee comprised of ROI, Ivy Tech and the school district
- Final hiring decision made by ROI and Ivy Tech

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# Career and Education Backgrounds of our Coaches

## Career backgrounds:

- Human Resources
- Probation officer
- Retired teacher
- Social worker

## Education Backgrounds:

- Criminal Justice
- Education
- Human Services
- Psychology
- Philosophy
- Social Work



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# Implementation Process

One week training on Ivy Tech's campus prior to going into the high school's

- Provided detailed information about the initiative:
  - The importance of the initiative
  - Additional training that would be provided
- Provided documents to be used when meeting with students initially:
  - Career Plan
  - Stay In School Plan
  - Student Plan of Care
  - Student Survey
- Data tracking requirements
- Met with the college Chancellor and the Community Foundation of Bloomington and Monroe County's President and CEO

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# Implementation Process

- Several team building activities
- Learned about the Graduation and Career Coach role
  - A day in the life of a coach
  - Expectations and goals for the initiative
- Talk/Tours with several of the college program chairs and deans to learn more about the programs that Ivy Tech has to offer
- Training Sessions
  - Check & Connect Training
    - All of our coaches, in addition to some other high school administrators, attended Check & Connect Mentor Training
  - WorkKeys
  - Indiana Career Connect
  - Indiana Career Explorer

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# Graduation and Career Coaches



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# A Day in the Life of a Graduation and Career Coach

- Review student records (attendance, discipline, grades)
- Be visible to students
- Attend any meetings as necessary
- Maintain strong communication (students/teachers/administration/guidance)
- Make referrals to social worker, outside agency, etc
- Track data and success stories
- Home visits as necessary

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# Variations



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# Consistencies

- While all these factors create different atmospheres to work in, there are consistencies throughout our work.
- We:
  - Believe all students are capable of success
  - Create support systems and safe spaces for our students
  - Never judge a student's choices or actions
    - Provide honest and level-headed feedback
  - Spotlight positives in individuals
  - Are patient and persistent
  - Respect and value all students

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# A Meeting in the Life... (activity)

- For experienced and inexperienced mentors
- You are either a *Graduation and Career Coach* or a *student*

## Student:

- How are you feeling?
- What are you thinking?
- Is there an issue with the school, your family, or your friends?

## Coach:

- Do you focus on the student's grades?
- How are you actively problem-solving?
- What kind of approach do you want to take with your student?

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Year: 10 GPA: 1.356 Credits Earned: 6 of 14 Semester Absences: 9.5		<b>Homeroom Teacher's note:</b> They are a nice student, but seem unmotivated or apathetic to do homework.		
Class	Period	Teacher	Percent	Grade
Geometry	1	Blarkins, Timothy	62%	D-
Gym	2	Smith, Alexis	94%	A
Biology I	3	Tucker, James	66%	D
English 9	4	Lincoln, Morgan	23%	F
Welding	5	Kramer, Rachael	89%	B+
US History	6	Quinn, Stanford	70%	C-
Painting	7	Winston. Violet	0%	F

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# Year 1

- Mentored over 500 students within nine school districts
- Participated in business/industry tours
  - Cook Medical
  - Crane
  - Jasper Engines
- Coordinated college/university visits, assisted with college/career applications, resume writing assistance, mock interviews, etc.
- 58 seniors received their high school diploma
  - 22 are currently attending an Ivy Tech campus
  - Four are attending a four year college or university
  - One is attending Vincennes University
  - Three have joined the military
  - Five entered the workforce
- Students attending Ivy Tech campuses have been assigned a mentor

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# To Learn More

- Regional Opportunities Initiatives, Inc.: <https://www.cfbmc.org/southwest-central-indiana-regional-opportunity-initiatives-inc/>
- Ivy Tech Community College - Bloomington: <https://www.ivytech.edu/bloomington/>
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