

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Institute Program Manager Receives National Skills Champion Award**

**Indianapolis, IN**-Jessica Fraser, Program Manager of the Indiana Institute for Working Families (Institute), has received a national award recognizing her as a "star advocate" for skills training and workforce development at the state and federal levels. Fraser was presented the 2015 Skills Champion Award by Andy Van Kleunen, CEO of the National Skills Coalition (NSC), at the annual Skills Summit in Arlington, VA on February 9th.

Fraser, who has led the Institute as Program Manager since 2012, also co-chairs the Indiana Skills2Compete Coalition with State Senator Dennis Kruse. Additionally, Fraser has been appointed to serve on the Indiana Career Council's Sector Strategies taskforce and to an advisory panel for the Indiana Network of Knowledge, and also sits on the NSC's Leadership Council.

Skills training policy is an integral focus of Fraser's work with the Institute to conduct research and promote public policies to help Hoosier families achieve and maintain economic self-sufficiency, believing the education and training needs of Indiana's workforce must be addressed in order for Indiana to compete in a global economy. Additionally, the Indiana Skills2Compete Coalition promotes middle-skills education and training to help close the state's skills gap, and uses research and data to further policies that will help match the skills of Indiana's workers with the demands of its workforce. During her tenure, Fraser has successfully advocated for the measurement of workforce credentials across state agencies, for improved support for Indiana's adult and part-time student population, and for better alignment of federal education and training resources with the state's specific workforce needs.

According to the NSC, the annual Skills Champion Award "recognizes a Coalition member whose exceptional organizing and advocacy efforts have moved the skills agenda forward in their state or in Washington, DC, over the past year. This member embodies the Coalition's mission to seek an America that grows its economy by investing in its people, so that every worker and every industry has the skills to compete and prosper."

"Jessica is always 'all-in' when it comes to cross-state collaboration and leveraging her state-based expertise to move forward a national agenda", the NSC wrote in their announcement of the award. "Jessica does not stop at personal engagement. She works tirelessly to ensure all necessary partners from Indiana are at the table - in both state and national conversations ranging from data to sector

strategies - and that these partners are both sharing what they know and applying their learning to efforts in their state."

The NSC's announcement from the 2015 Skills Summit can be found at: [http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/documents/NSC\\_SummitProgram2015.pdf](http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/documents/NSC_SummitProgram2015.pdf)

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## **ABOUT THE INDIANA INSTITUTE FOR WORKING FAMILIES**

The Indiana Institute for Working Families – a program of the Indiana Community Action Association (INCAA) – conducts research and promotes public policies to help Hoosier families achieve and maintain economic self-sufficiency. The Institute is the only statewide program in Indiana that combines research and policy analysis on federal and state legislation, public policies, and programs impacting low-income working families. The Institute achieves its work through advocacy and education, and through national, statewide, and community partnerships. The Institute was founded in 2004. To learn more about the Institute, please visit: [www.incap.org/iwfw.html](http://www.incap.org/iwfw.html)

## **ABOUT THE INDIANA SKILLS2CCOMPETE COALITION**

The Indiana Skills2Compete Coalition is made up of a bipartisan group of state legislators, as well as education policymakers, business, labor, and community leaders that have come together with the aim of closing Indiana's skills gap and serving as a resource for policymakers working toward that end. The Coalition uses research and data to promote public policies that will bring greater awareness to and help match the skills of Indiana's workers with the demands its workforce. For more information, please visit: [www.incap.org/indianaskills2compete.html](http://www.incap.org/indianaskills2compete.html)

## **ABOUT THE INDIANA COMMUNITY ACTION ASSOCIATION (IN-CAA)**

The Indiana Community Action Association, Inc. (IN-CAA) is a statewide not-for-profit membership corporation, incorporated in the State of Indiana in 1970. IN-CAA's members are comprised of Indiana's 23 Community Action Agencies (CAAs), which serve all of Indiana's 92 counties. IN-CAA envisions a state with limited or no poverty, where its residents have decent, safe, and sanitary living conditions, and where resources are available to help low-income individuals attain self-sufficiency. IN-CAA serves as an advocate and facilitator of policy, planning and programs to create solutions and share responsibility as leaders in the War On Poverty. IN-CAA's mission is to help the state's CAAs address the conditions of poverty through: training and technical assistance; developing models for service delivery; and providing resources to help increase network capacity. For more information about IN-CAA, please visit: [www.incap.org](http://www.incap.org)

## **ABOUT THE NATIONAL SKILLS COALITION**

The National Skills Coalition organizes broad-based coalitions seeking to raise the skills of America's workers across a range of industries. We advocate for public policies that invest in what works, as informed by our members' real-world expertise. And we communicate these goals to an American public seeking a vision for a strong U.S. economy that allows everyone to be part of its success. For more information, visit [www.nationalskillscoalition.org](http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org)