



SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH-BLOOMINGTON EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Two-Year Leadership Program for Parks or Recreation Professionals

April 4-7, 2027

Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana

You Chose to Lead... Now Choose IU EDP!

IU EDP is organized around a two year curriculum focusing on leadership and management skill development. To continually offer cutting edge education opportunities, the curriculum is reviewed annually by the IU EDP Board of Trustees who are past program graduates.

- IU EDP is the original Executive Development Program, established in 1967, with a solid commitment to the profession and a reputation for excellence in the field of parks and recreation.
- Instructors with many years of experience in the parks and recreation profession come from all over the country to bring a fresh perspective to participants.
- Class size has a direct impact on learning, so classes are held to a maximum size of 40 people.
- One of the important tenants of IU EDP is the building of lasting relationships among participants. Networking opportunities are a priority.
- Over 1,900 professionals have completed IU EDP.

Get Excited, Here Comes Your Future!

This energizing keynote message is designed to help park and recreation professionals reconnect with their purpose, influence, and ability to move forward with intention. In a time of growing complexity, shifting expectations, and professional fatigue, this session challenges participants to examine the mindset they bring to their work, the choices they make each day, and the role they play in shaping outcomes for their teams, organizations, and communities.

Through a practical and encouraging message, participants will be reminded that the future is not something that simply happens to them. It is something they help create through their actions, attitudes, decisions, and willingness to take the next step. This keynote will inspire professionals to get going again with greater clarity, confidence, and commitment to the impact they can make.



The 2026 class included practitioners from: Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee & Wisconsin!

*"This was not 'just another professional development'.
IU EDP was relevant, engaging, timely, and collaborative.
The instructors were amazing!"*

*Jen Brandt, City of Kettering
Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts*

Graduates of IU
EDP Year 2 can earn 2.0
CEUs during the 2027 program.
Reconnect with EDP and select
your sessions! For details contact Dr.
Julie Knapp at julknapp@iu.edu.

For 58 years the Indiana University Executive Development Program has helped park and recreation professionals at all levels build and strengthen the fundamental skills needed to manage and lead in a public and non-profit setting.

In & Out of the Classroom

Networking

One of IU EDP's Best Resources

A variety of out of class opportunities are offered during EDP: dinner at Brown County State Park, tours of IU sport facilities and Bloomington Parks & Recreation facilities, and pickleball at the Crimson Pickle. These activities provide participants with an opportunity to get to know classmates in a non-structured atmosphere. Informal optional group dinner outings are scheduled for Monday and Tuesday nights.



"By far the best professional development program I have been a part of. I love learning and growing with 'my people' from all over the country."

*Laura Mortier, Canton Parks,
Recreation and Community Services*



Get Started!

IU EDP kicks off Sunday, April 4th with dinner, the opening keynote and a networking social.



IU EDP Benefits

Leadership Growth With Lasting Impact!

Enjoy: Learning and networking with fellow professionals in a fun and relaxed environment.

Learn: New ways to solve old problems.

Experience: A campus that embodies Parks & Recreation.

Energize: Yourself and your skills through dynamic speakers who challenge and motivate.

Share: Knowledge, ideas, techniques and information that you can apply when you get back to the office.

Discuss: Issues and ideas that are 'hot topics' in our field and critical to success in your agency.

Network: Out-of-session social and educational activities offer great opportunities to connect with other professionals from around the country.

IU EDP Board of Trustees

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Scholarships

Eight 50% Tuition Scholarships Available!

Contact Julie at 812-856-1068 for scholarship criteria and application. Deadline is December 16, 2026. Also, check with your state association, as many provide scholarships for continuing education.

"This is by far the most valuable program I've ever attended! The connections I've made and things I've learned are invaluable."

*Molly Ealy,
Newport Parks and Recreation*

Year 1

Leading with Impact: Navigating Culture to Elevate Leadership

Explore the powerful intersection of leadership and organizational culture through real-world scenarios, group collaboration, and guided discussion. Participants will uncover the often-invisible forces that shape culture and influence leadership effectiveness—and vice versa. Leaders will engage in strategic reflection to assess their own cultural impact and learn how to shape environments that foster trust, innovation, and high performance. The session provides tools for evaluating and evolving culture with intention, while highlighting how inclusive, values-driven leadership builds resilient and adaptive teams. Attendees will leave equipped to lead with authenticity and cultural acuity.

Elevating Parks and Recreation Through Innovation and AI-Driven Technology

Innovation and artificial intelligence are rapidly reshaping how parks and recreation professionals lead, communicate, problem-solve, and serve their communities. This session explores practical, real-world strategies for leveraging AI and widely available technology tools to increase innovation, boost productivity, improve decision-making, enhance audience engagement, streamline creative development, and strengthen communication. Through examples, data, exercises, and emerging best practices, you will gain actionable approaches to work smarter, accomplish more with limited resources, and prepare for the evolving future of parks and recreation leadership. This will help you maximize your impact on the people, places, and resources you serve.

SHIFT Happens: Building Resilient Systems for a Changing Future

The pace and scale of change today is unlike anything we've experienced before. Economic volatility, demographic diversification, technological acceleration, and environmental disruption are reshaping the landscape of public service. While these shifts bring undeniable challenges, they also offer a powerful invitation: to reexamine our systems, rethink our roles, and realign our work for long-term resilience. This session will explore how embracing change—rather than resisting it—can lead to stronger, more adaptive systems that serve the citizens of 2050. What do you need to shift?

Year 2

Building Perspective and Enhancing Communication for Park & Recreation Services and Programs

During this interactive session, participants will engage in exercises that highlight communication and perspective building. This will help with gaining insight into the experiences of individuals from different backgrounds and lived experiences. Through these exercises, participants can develop a greater understanding of the barriers that marginalized individuals might face and brainstorm strategies to overcome them. The creation of action list of items that participants can incorporate into their respective organizations will be created. This list may include tangible steps, policies, or practices that can enhance inclusiveness and belonging. By the end of the session, participants should leave with a renewed commitment to inclusivity and belonging, armed with practical strategies and a clear action plan to implement positive changes within their organizations.

Blocks to Breakthroughs

Sometimes the biggest breakthroughs start with your hands. In this interactive, hands-on session, participants will use the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® method to surface ideas, unlock creativity, and communicate more clearly. Grounded in research and designed to foster deep listening, collaboration, and problem solving, this method helps individuals see challenges and articulate bold, forward-moving strategies. You'll leave with a tangible model—and a powerful story—to help move your organization from stuck to strategic.

True North: Hanging on to Our Principles in an Age of Pressure

"True North" is often used as a powerful metaphor for character or what many refer to as their inner compass. It suggests that, just like a compass that points unwaveringly toward magnetic north, a person's True North represents their core values, the non-negotiable beliefs and ways of being and doing that guides our decisions, actions, and sense of purpose, especially under pressure. We will explore the concept of True North as a metaphor for ethical decision making and unshakable character and dive into the personal values and inner convictions that anchor us - especially when navigating conflicts between special interests, community expectations, and political and financial realities.

Joint Year 1 & Year 2 - Opportunities for Collaboration & Discussion

Challenging Traditional Approaches

What practices and experiences can you share with your fellow IU EDP classmates? What issues are impacting you and your agency? This joint session is an opportunity for you to call the sessions you want to, and be part of the conversations you need to. Using a technique from the Art of Hosting, you'll host roundtable discussions that allow you to network, learn, and share with other attendees, board members, and instructors. This will give you the opportunity to interact with many professionals from across the country on subjects important to you, providing you with needed resources to navigate change and make improvements. If you're in need of a solution or inspiration, bring a topic with you to discuss!

Disrupting Our Confidence

Parks and recreation organizations across the country are facing rising costs, workforce constraints, aging infrastructure, affordability concerns, and increasing pressure to justify public investment. But the deeper challenge may not be financial alone. It may be systemic. For decades, the profession has often equated success with more: more parks, more programs, more facilities, and more amenities. Some of these investments have created meaningful public value. Others have been shaped by political pressure, special interests, inherited assumptions, competitive comparisons, and a professional culture reluctant to say no. This interactive session challenges us all to examine the cognitive dissonance between what we say we value and what we fund, subsidize, maintain, and protect. We will explore how public value, community demand, political influence, and organizational habits can, and in some cases, have become blurred over time.

Registration

What's Included

Registration fees include:

- Classroom instruction, reference materials and notebooks
- 2.0 continuing education units
- Break refreshments
- A Sunday social
- Late afternoon facility tours and hikes
- Sunday dinner & Wednesday luncheon

Lodging and other meals are at the expense of the participant.

Tuition Prior to January 31, 2027

\$515/person \$500/person for two or more from same agency.

Tuition After January 31, 2027

\$550/person \$525/person for two or more from same agency.

Register at www.iuedp.org

You may pay by purchase order, credit card or check.

Register by March 10, 2027.

Once your registration is received, you will be sent detailed information. Cancellation of registration must be made in writing to IU EDP by March 10, 2027 to receive a full refund. A processing fee of \$200 will be assessed for cancellations after this date.

"My experience with IU EDP has been incredibly valuable- it creates a collaborative, supportive environment where you can openly share challenges and learn from a strong network of experienced professionals. The guidance from executive board members ensures every voice is heard and conversations stay meaningful."

Philip Cornelius, Mooresville Parks, IN

Getting to IU EDP

IU EDP is located on the campus of Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana, just one hour south of Indianapolis. Air transportation is available through the Indianapolis airport, and a shuttle bus service is available from the airport to Bloomington. Call 800-589-6004 for more information.

Classes are in the Indiana Memorial Union Hotel and Conference Center. The Indiana Memorial Union is the heart of the IU campus, conveniently located next to IU attractions and within walking distance to over 20 restaurants and downtown shopping.



2.0 CEUs

You'll earn 2.0 CEUs for over 17 hours of professional instruction!



Lodging

Indiana Memorial Union Biddle Hotel

Approximately \$118 per night for state or municipal employees. You will be required to show government employee ID at check-in for the reduced rate.

Call 812-856-6381 for reservations, and ask for the IU EDP room block using code EXEC27. Hotel reservations must be made before March 10, 2027.

"Choosing to come to IU EDP was the best choice I have made for my career in parks. The knowledge and connections I gained in my time here have allowed me to grow exponentially."

Nathan Kane, City of Elkhart Parks