

investment summary

Making Connections Indianapolis

For nearly a decade, the Annie E. Casey Foundation has worked with a broad range of partners in Indianapolis to demonstrate through the *Making Connections* initiative that when families are strong, outcomes for even the most disadvantaged children will substantially improve.

AUGUST 2009

Our work in Indianapolis and in other sites across the country seeks to help:

- *Families work, earn, and save their way toward self-sufficiency; and*
- *Ensure that their children are healthy, prepared to succeed in school, and read proficiently by the end of third grade.*

These goals advance a “two-generation” approach—promoting parents’ economic success while assuring that their children get a good start in life. Casey’s investments in Indianapolis since 1999 have demonstrated how these results can be achieved by building community capacity to connect families to economic opportunities, strong social networks, and effective services and supports.

During tough economic times, *Making Connections* Indianapolis’ partnerships—led by the Central Indiana Community Foundation (CICF), the local management entity for the initiative—are uniquely positioned to take family economic and early grade success strategies to

scale across the city. Core strategies include: a network of Centers for Working Families to help residents increase earnings, assets, and access to benefits such as the EITC; expanding model community school and intensive literacy strategies vital to third grade reading proficiency; and an aggressive policy agenda to better connect men and women returning to the city from prison to work and support services.

A PLATFORM FOR SUCCESS

From its earliest days, *Making Connections* Indianapolis engaged a wide range of civic leaders—including CICF, United Way of Central Indiana (UWCI), the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), Ivy Tech Community College, the Indianapolis Neighborhood Housing Partnership, Public Action in Corrections/Offender Aid and Restoration (PACE/OAR), city government and public school officials, local businesses, neighborhood association leaders, and community-based

Making Connections Indianapolis Local Management Entity

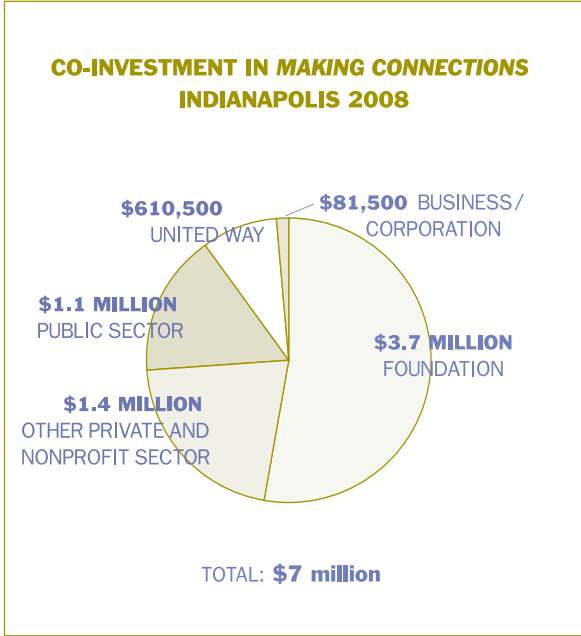
Central Indiana Community Foundation (CICF) With thousands of donors and charitable assets of \$480 million, CICF is the largest community foundation in the region. An active champion of *Making Connections* Indianapolis since the start of the initiative, CICF today plays a leading role in building the public/private alliances needed to assure family success and civic revitalization as the city and state address the impact of the recession. To that end, CICF and a coalition of funders have pooled \$3.2 million to help service providers and community centers meet increased demands for support to low-income families. The *Making Connections* Board, set up as a supporting organization of CICF, guides the implementation of two-generation strategies and includes resident leaders, representatives from CICF, local businesses, the United Way of Central Indiana, Nina Pulliam Trust, The Clowes Fund, Indianapolis Public Schools, city government, and other groups.

organizations—to advance the initiative’s goals and achieve key milestones, including:

- **Cross-sector support for place-based family strengthening strategies.** Beginning with a series of Family Strengthening Summits, convened in the first years of the initiative with support from CICE, UWCI, the mayor’s office, and numerous community groups, *Making Connections* generated support for result-focused, data-driven approaches to strengthening vulnerable families and transforming tough neighborhoods into places where children and their parents can thrive.

- **Building the capacity of residents to help achieve better results for families and children.** Family Circles, a strategy initiated by *Making Connections* Indianapolis in 2000, have helped more than 800 residents take action on public safety, education, child care, youth development, and other neighborhood issues. Supported by a small grant program, participants have created mentoring, after-school, recreation, and other programs. Nearly 100 resident and community leaders have completed basic and advanced Resident Leadership and Facilitation (RLF) training, which helps residents use data analysis, result-based planning, and other tools to achieve community goals. These investments helped develop Local Learning Partner organizations in the initiative neighborhoods that now are models for engaging residents in data-driven, strategic community planning efforts. In addition, *Making Connections* launched Neighborhood Partners—a door-to-door outreach strategy that connects isolated families to services and support.

- **Advancing community models to help more children succeed in school.** *Making Connections* helped develop Washington Community High School on the city’s near-Westside into a national model of how to unify neighborhoods, parents, local government, universities, and nonprofit organizations around the goal of academic success. Technical assistance from the Casey Foundation helped community leaders reopen the school in 2000 and offer onsite preschool, after-school, health care, counseling, adult education, community recreation, and other services to nearly 800 students and their families. More than 80 percent of the school’s graduating seniors went



on to post-secondary education in 2008. The work at Washington, recognized in 2008 with \$2.4 million in federal full service community school funding, directly influenced the resident-led design of School 51 in Martindale Brightwood, the focus school for *Making Connections*’ early grade success strategies. Casey also helped the city’s charter school program, the only one in the nation that allows the mayor to issue charters, to develop an advisory board and school selection criteria for the effort.

- **Strong co-investment from local partners.** In 2008, nonprofit, public, and private sector co-investment totaled more than \$7 million, including \$3.5 million toward strategies to increase family earnings and income, \$1.7 million to promote success in early grades, \$900,000 to help increase civic participation and resident leadership, and \$300,000 to help families build assets.

A TRACK RECORD OF RESULTS

High-capacity nonprofit organizations, committed community- and faith-based groups, skilled resident leaders, and city and state officials have helped *Making Connections* Indianapolis develop strategies to increase family income, assets, and success in the early grades.

More Families Have Increased Earnings, Income, and Assets

Making Connections Indianapolis has worked closely with neighborhood workforce development providers, city officials, local banks, community-based organizations, the United Way of Central Indiana, and others to assure that:

More residents from the initiative neighborhoods are getting connected to jobs. Although placements dropped in 2008 due to the recession, workforce strategies—including job specialists in the initiative neighborhoods, weekly outreach meetings, and improved performance tracking measures—helped *Making Connections*' partners place nearly 700 residents in jobs during the past two years, with about half providing benefits.

RESULT	2007	2008
Residents from the initiative neighborhoods placed in jobs	413	267
Percent placed in jobs that offer health benefits	53%	46%

More residents are receiving the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Since 2006, more than 2,000 residents in the initiative neighborhoods have used the Indianapolis Asset Building Campaign's free tax preparation services, which helped return more than \$955,000 in refunds in 2009. Citywide, the campaign—launched with support from *Making Connections* and now led by UWCI and Indianapolis First Lady Winnie Ballard's Save-Earn-Learn: Indy's Campaign for Financial Fitness—returned more than \$3.5 million in EITC and other tax credits to Indianapolis neighborhoods during 2008.

More Children Are Healthy and Prepared to Succeed in School

Making Connections Indianapolis has worked with UWCI, Indianapolis Public Schools, Ivy Tech, parents, resident leaders, and other partners to assure that:

PROMOTING FAMILY ECONOMIC SUCCESS: PRIORITY STRATEGIES FOR 2009-11

- *Support a network of Centers for Working Families (CWF).* With LISC as the lead operating partner, *Making Connections* and other funders are designing the network to help families “bundle” job training, asset development, and benefit programs and improve placement, retention, and advancement rates. For 2009, this strategy will focus on building the capacity of Southeast Community Services—a hub for the initiative's previous workforce efforts—to serve as a model for the network. In addition, partners will team with city and state officials to apply funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and the Food Stamp Employment and Training Act to the network.
- *Expand the EITC campaign and other asset building strategies.* *Making Connections* will support work by UWCI and other partners to expand free tax preparation sites, and increase use of mainstream banking products, financial education, and other programs through the local roll out of the national Bank On campaign.
- *Connect more men and women returning to the county from prison to work and support.* *Making Connections* and the Casey Foundation are working with Governor Daniels, Mayor Ballard, corrections officials, civic leaders, and PACE/OAR—a neighborhood-based provider of innovative pre- and post-release services—to launch the Re-Entry Leadership in Action program. With more men and women returning to Marion County from prison each year than all other areas of the state combined, and given three-year recidivism rates near 60 percent, core strategies of the effort include the Mayor's Transitional Jobs Initiative, strengthened pre- and post-release programs, alternatives to incarceration for minor parole/ probation violations, and securing federal Second Chance Act funds to improve mentoring and other support services.

**PROMOTING SUCCESS IN EARLY GRADES:
PRIORITY STRATEGIES FOR 2009–11**

- *Increase the number of children at School 51 who are reading proficiently in third grade.* By applying best practices from the community school model and through intensive interventions for striving readers—including individual learning plans, tutoring, and literacy enriched after-school programs—*Making Connections* and School 51 leaders will seek to increase the percentage of third grade students scoring proficient on statewide reading tests from 44 percent in 2008–09 to 80 percent at the end of the 2010–11 school year. Key to success will be a next-generation community school program to improve instruction; engage parents in their children’s education; increase supports for students with limited proficiency in English; intensify health, vision, dental, and mental health services through regular developmental screenings; and connect families to job and asset building supports through the Centers for Working Families network.
- *Increase the number of community schools providing a continuum of services to students and their families to assure success in the early grades.* Given deep support for the community school model in Indianapolis—the school district, city, and nonprofit agencies will invest nearly \$1 million to expand the number of community schools in the city during the next several years—*Making Connections* will seek to expand district-wide strategies from School 51 that combine the community school approach with intensive literacy instruction to assure reading success in early grades.

More children are gaining a preschool experience. Since 2006, *Making Connections* and Ivy Tech have helped more than 260 children and their families participate in

Play and Learn groups, a nationally recognized program that provides critical early learning activities to families without access to formal preschool. In addition, *Making Connections* has worked with UWCI to target resources from the citywide Success By Six initiative in the *Making Connections* neighborhoods—including the Kindergarten to College program, which helps assure that children make a good transition to first grade.

More parents are engaged as their children’s best advocates. Through the Martindale Brightwood Education Task Force, for example, parents and resident leaders played a critical role in the 2006 opening of School 51 in their neighborhood, now the focus school for *Making Connections’* early grade success strategies. Parents and residents worked with Indianapolis Public Schools, UWCI, teachers, community-based organizations, and other partners to design School 51 as a full-service community school.

**SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES
TO BUILD FOR THE FUTURE**

During the past decade, *Making Connections* Indianapolis and local partners have worked to build local capacity to help the city seize new opportunities and take on new challenges. With a national recession that has hit Indiana particularly hard, city and state officials are finding that the platform for results built by *Making Connections* and CICF—including strong resident leadership, use of good data, and innovative place-based strategies—can help maximize federal stimulus funds for development of Green Jobs, workforce training, asset development, Head Start and health center expansion, and for improving student outcomes. In addition, CICF has emerged as a city leader in responding to the recession, joining with other philanthropic leaders to create the Community Economic Relief Fund, lending staff support to recovery efforts, and maintaining commitments to promote family success and neighborhood revitalization. In the face of tough economic times, Indianapolis is pioneering a new way to keep the city’s children and families healthy, strong, and successful.