



**Annual Report**  
October 1, 2021 to  
September 30, 2022  
*Submitted: November 22, 2022*

**Promise Zone (PZ):** Evansville, Indiana

**Lead Organization:** ECHO Housing Corporation

**Lead Partner:** City of Evansville Department of Metropolitan Development

**Key Partners (current implementation partners):** ECHO Community Health Care, United Neighborhoods of Evansville, Evansville Police Department, Housing Organizations United Serving Evansville (HOUSE), Vanderburgh County Health Department, Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation, Building Blocks, Ivy Tech Community College Southwest, School Community Council After School Coalition, Welborn Baptist Foundation, St. Vincent Evansville, Youth First, Inc., Memorial Community Development Corporation, WorkOne Southwest, Evansville Water/Sewer Utility, Metropolitan Planning Organization, Old National Bank, Evansville Regional Economic Partnership (includes the Growth Alliance of Greater Evansville, Chamber of Commerce, and the Economic Development Coalition of Southwest Indiana), New Hope Baptist Church, Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library, Junior Achievement of Southwest Indiana, Aurora, Joshua Academy, United Caring Services, and Missing Pieces Community Development Corporation. In addition to the implementation partners, a number of other community partners are participating on workgroups and contributing significantly to the overall goals and objectives of the initiative.

## SECTION 1: YEAR IN REVIEW

### Promise Zone Overview

In June 2016, Evansville, Indiana was awarded a 10-year Promise Zone (PZ) designation by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). ECHO Housing Corporation serves as the lead organization, and the City of Evansville Department of Metropolitan Development is the lead partner. Additionally, 27 implementation partners have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) committing to support the goals and activities of the Promise Zone plan, and various other organizations throughout the Evansville community are working with implementation partners to support these efforts.



The Promise Zone serves the city's highest poverty, yet most promising neighborhoods. The target area population is low-income men, women, and children of all ages, races, ethnicities, and backgrounds. Primary challenges include poverty, low educational attainment, low-performing schools, blight, high crime, and limited access to health care and healthy foods.

## Annual Summary (Oct. 1, 2021 to Sept. 30, 2022)

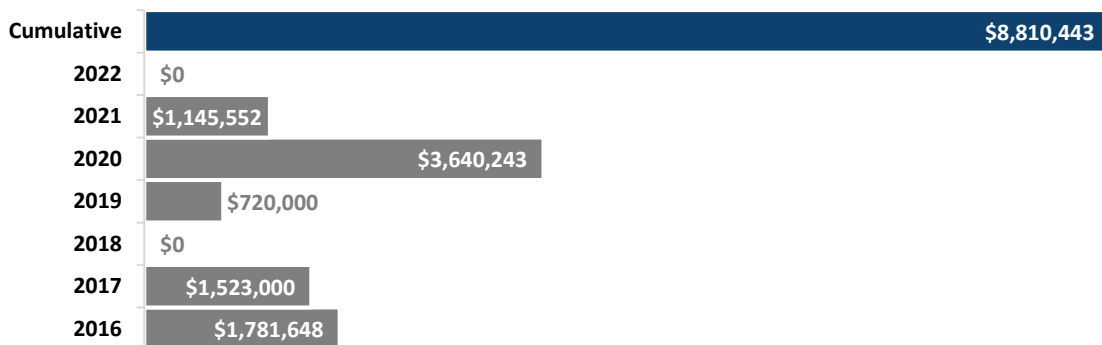
An overview of key milestones and accomplishments of the Evansville Promise Zone is provided below. Subsequent sections review progress for each of the specific goal areas. To understand the long-term impact, annual and cumulative data are presented as available.



### Direct and leveraged community investment

Significant community investment in the amount of **\$810,887,310** has been made in the Promise Zone since the June 2016 designation award. Investments reflect direct funding received through competitive grant or tax credit applications awarded to Promise Zone partners, as well as leveraged private and public investments occurring within the Promise Zone area. Investments impact the quality of life of Promise Zone residents.

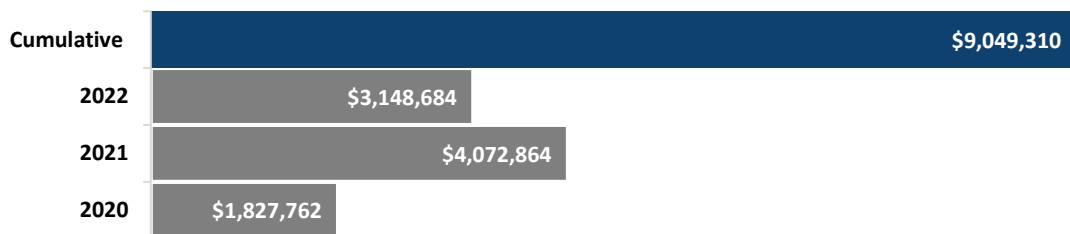
**\$8,810,443** in cumulative federal grant awards and allocations received (since June 2016)



- **\$0** received (Oct. 1, '21 to Sept. 30, '22)
- **\$1,145,552** received (Oct. 1, '20 to Sept. 30, '21)
  - \$900,000 US Department of Labor, Advantix Development Corporation (Youth Build); \$245,552 Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (broadband connectivity).
- **\$3,640,243** received (Oct. 1, '19 to Sept. 30, '20)
  - \$2,489,432 USDOE Full-Service Community Schools Grant, Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation; \$690,554 OJJDP Opioid Affected Youth Initiative, Vanderburgh County Prosecutor's Office; \$460,257 US Department of Labor Homeless Veterans Reintegration Grant, ECHO Housing.
- **\$720,000** received (Oct. 1, '18 to Sept. 30, '19)
  - \$683,000 Department of Justice Grant, Children of Incarcerated Parents, County of Vanderburgh; \$37,000 Department of Housing and Urban Development, Housing Counseling Grant, Hope of Evansville (portion of funding through Housing Action Illinois).
- **\$0** received (Oct. 1, '17 to Sept. 30, '18)
- **\$1,523,000** received (Oct. 1, '16 to Sept. 30, '17)

- \$250,000 Department of Housing and Urban Development, Lead Hazard Demonstration Grant, Indiana Housing and Community Development Association; \$173,000 Department of Labor, Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program, ECHO Housing Corporation; \$1,100,000 Department of Labor, Youth Build, Evansville Housing Authority.
- **\$1,781,648** received (Jun. 6, '16 to Sept. 30, '16)
  - \$1,721,100 Department of Health and Human Services, HRSA: Advanced Nursing Education Grant, University of Southern Indiana; \$60,548 Department of Health and Human Service, Delivery Systems Health Information Investment Grant Opportunity, ECHO Community Healthcare.

**\$9,049,310** in cumulative federal grant allocations supporting the Promise Zone (Note: New investment tracking beginning in October 2019 to September 2020 reporting period)

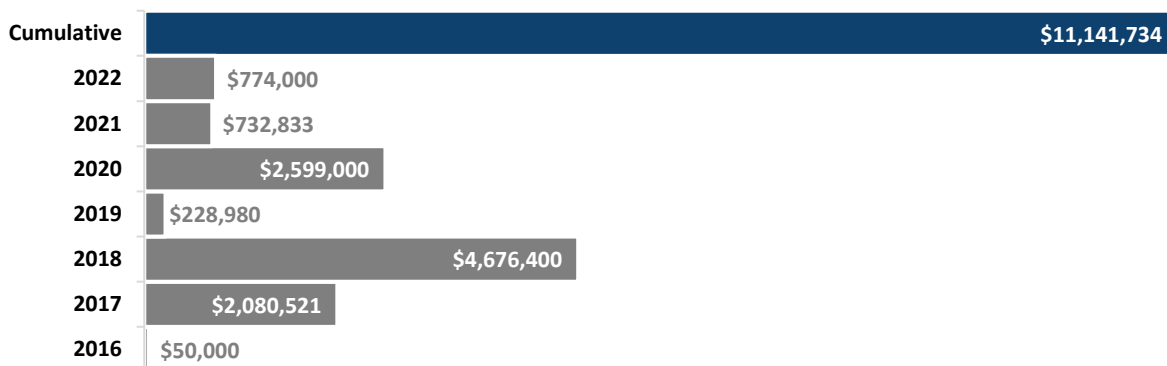


As a HUD Entitlement Community, the City of Evansville receives a direct allocation from the federal government to provide decent housing and economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income persons. While the funds are available city-wide, the city has flexibility in developing these programs, and many of its allocations focus on neighborhoods of the Promise Zone where the highest concentration of low- and moderate-income persons resides. The city's fiscal year for HUD allocations does not follow the same reporting period as that of the Promise Zone, and projects may take multiple years to complete. Main categories to which funds have been allocated include:

- **\$3,148,684** allocated (Oct. 1, '21 to Sept. 30, '22)
  - \$230,911 Emergency Solutions Grants (provided to Promise Zone partners, Aurora, United Caring Services, and others for shelter and the prevention of homelessness). Homeless services may not exceed \$129,963 with the remaining funds going towards rapid re-housing.
  - \$322,270 Public Service Community Development Block Grant (Tri-State Food Bank, Meals-on-Wheels, YMCA, and CAPE are a few of the agencies who will provide services in food and nutrition, senior services, and youth services).
  - \$2,243,253 Non-Public Service Community Development Block Grant (organizations such as Advantix, CAPE, Carver Community Organization, Hope of Evansville, ECHO Housing, and Memorial CDC will provide a variety of programs in housing, family enrichment and transportation).
  - \$352,250 HOME (CAPE, Habitat for Humanity, Hope of Evansville, and Memorial CDC will be awarded funds for building, buying, and/or rehabilitating affordable housing for rent or homeownership or providing direct rental assistance to low-income residents).
- **\$4,072,864** allocated (Oct. 1, '20 to Sept. 30, '21)
  - \$303,375 Emergency Solutions Grant (provided to Promise Zone partners, Aurora, United Caring Services, and others for shelter and the prevention of homelessness).

- \$761,955 Public Service Community Development Block Grant (Tri-State Food Bank, Meals-on-Wheels, YMCA, and CAPE are a few of the agencies who will provide services in food and nutrition, senior services, and youth services).
- \$3,007,534 Non-Public Service Community Development Block Grant (organizations such as Advantix, New Hope, CAPE, Carver Community Organization, Hope of Evansville, ECHO Housing, and Memorial CDC will provide a variety of programs in housing, family enrichment and transportation).
- \$637,000 HOME (Aurora, CAPE, Hope of Evansville, and Memorial CDC will be awarded funds for building, buying, and/or rehabilitating affordable housing for rent or homeownership or providing direct rental assistance to low-income residents).
- **\$1,827,762** allocated (Oct. 1, '19 to Sept. 30, '20)
  - \$1,190,263 Community Development Block Grant (Food & Nutrition Services, Youth & Childcare Services, Home Repairs and Down Payment Assistance, Youth Employment); \$325,000 HOME Investment Partnership Program; \$229,219 Emergency Solutions Grant for sheltering and prevention of homelessness.
  - \$83,280 allocated by Evansville MPO from the Section 5310 program, which allows local nonprofits to acquire vehicles to aide seniors and individuals with disabilities (Missing Pieces CDC, The ARC of Evansville).

**\$11,141,734** in cumulative local and state grant awards and funding (not including tax credit awards; includes some federal allocations from the city to support Promise Zone operations and key initiatives (i.e., administration, consulting, PZ Express) (since June 2016)

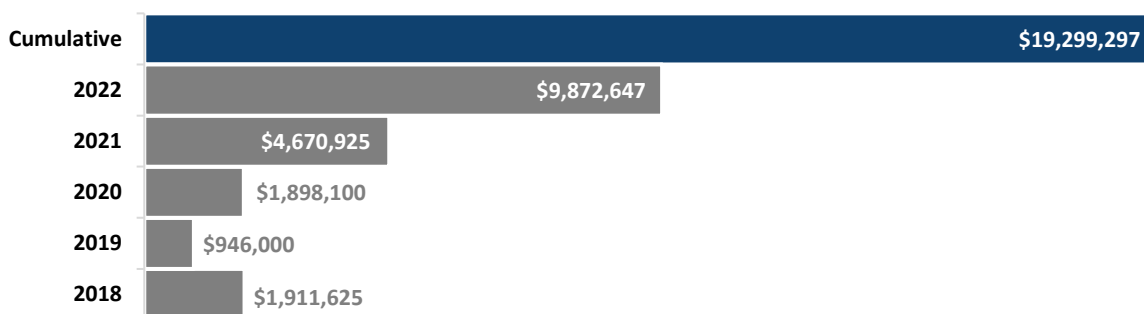


- **\$774,000** received (Oct. 1, '21 to Sept. 30, '22)
  - PZ operations (\$124,000 administration, PZ Express, consulting; ECHO Housing).
  - ECHO Housing (\$450,000 in security upgrades for Garfield Commons, Lucas Place and Lucas Place II, from Indiana Department of Homeland Security).
  - Promise Neighborhood Grant Support (\$50,000 received from the City of Evansville and Fifth Third Bank to University of Evansville and Dream Center to support development of the 2022 PN grant application).
  - Bayard Park Redevelopment (\$150,000 from the Housing Trust Fund to support housing development).
- **\$732,833** received (Oct. 1, '20 to Sept. 30, '21)
  - PZ operations (\$124,000; ECHO Housing); Housing/capacity assistance (\$208,833; Hope of Evansville/Forefront Community Therapy); Afterschool and community school programming (\$400,000 over 4 years awarded to the YMCA); IDOE 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC: Renewability (awarded for three schools but only one [Delaware] is directly in the Promise Zone) (August 2021 award funding through July 2026).
- **\$2,599,000** received (Oct. 1, '19 to Sept. 30, '20)\*
  - PZ operations (\$124,000; ECHO Housing); Afterschool and community school programming (\$1,500,000 over 4 years awarded to Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation (EVSC); IDOE 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community

*Learning Centers (CCLC): Cohort 10, September 2020 award-funding through July 2025 [Glenwood, Cedar Hall, Lincoln, Lodge]; Afterschool and community school programming (\$975,000 over 4 years awarded to EVSC; IDOE 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC: Renewability [McGary, Caze, Fairlawn] September 2020 award-funding through July 2025). \*Note: Updated in 2021 report to include 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC awards in September 2020.*

- \$228,980 received (Oct. 1, '18 to Sept. 30, '19)
- \$4,676,400 received (Oct. 1, '17 to Sept. 30, '18)
- \$2,080,521 received (Oct. 1, '16 to Sept. 30, '17)
- \$50,000 received (Jun. 6, '16 to Sept. 30, '16)

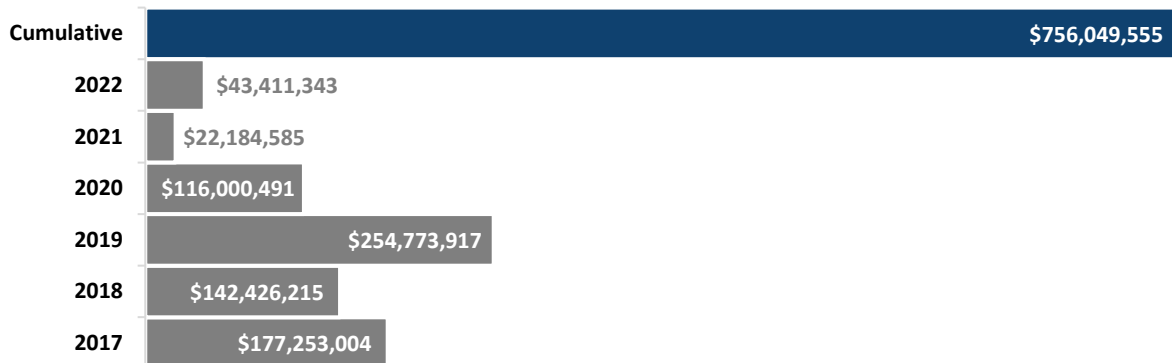
**\$19,299,297** in cumulative Promise Zone capital investments reported through the Southwest Indiana Small Business Development Center (through December 2021)



- (Oct. 1, '21 to Sept. 30, '22) Total 2021 Promise Zone capital investment (reported in January 2022 and includes portions of prior performance year) equals \$9,872,647; reported for 16 clients of the ISBDC (based on FY 2021).
- (Oct. 1, '20 to Sept. 30, '21) Total 2020 Promise Zone capital investment (reported in January 2021 and includes portions of prior performance year) equals \$4,670,925; reported for 35 clients of the ISBDC (based on FY 2020).
- (Oct. 1, '19 to Sept. 30, '20) Total 2019 Promise Zone capital investment (reported in January 2020 and includes portions of prior performance year) equals \$1,898,100; reported for 15 clients of the ISBDC (based on FY 2019).
- (Oct. 1, '18 to Sept. 30, '19) Total 2018 Promise Zone capital investment (reported in January 2019 and includes portions of prior performance year) equals \$946,000; reported for 9 clients of the ISBDC (based on FY 2018).
- (Oct. 1, '17 to Sept. 30, '18) Total 2018 Promise Zone capital investment (reported in January 2019 and includes portions of prior performance year) equals \$1,911,625; reported for 14 clients of the ISBDC (based on FY 2017).

## **\$756,049,555** in cumulative leveraged economic development and capital improvements

While tax credit awards received Promise Zone [PZ] designation priority points, other leveraged investments occurring within the PZ are included because of the alignment with goal areas, the impact on PZ residents, and/or because they were identified within the original PZ application. One significant funding source included Regional Cities. In December 2015, the Indiana State Legislature awarded Southwest Indiana a \$42 million Regional Cities Initiative grant to benefit the City of Evansville and three surrounding counties. Regional Cities is intended to leverage private funds to enhance quality of place that will attract and retain talent in the area and was highlighted in the PZ application as a leveraged investment. Since June 2016, a large number of related projects have been developed in the PZ.



### ● (Oct. 1, '21 to Sept. 30, '22): \$43,411,343

- \$27,312,553 in total development cost associated with affordable housing development resulting from low-income tax credit awards (\$861,111) combined with local investment: (a) Baker Flats new construction (\$9,450,00 total development cost; \$861,111 tax credit award received by Partnership for Affordable Housing, Inc. (Jacobsville Senior Housing LP)); (b) Evansville Townhomes III new construction and rehab (\$10,612,079 total development cost; \$1,020,000 tax credit award received by Advantix Development Corporation (Evansville Townhomes III, LP)); (c) Jacobsville Apartments II Rehab (\$7,250,474 total development cost; \$692,551 tax credit award received by Gratus Development, LLC (Jacobsville II Apartments Rehab)).
- \$16,098,790 in water and sewer upgrades (Jan. 2021 to Dec. 2021; reported annually in January).

### ● (Oct. 1, '20 to Sept. 30, '21): \$22,184,585

- \$6,228,030 in total development cost associated with affordable housing development resulting from low-income tax credit awards (\$579,423) combined with local investment for Jacobsville Apartments Rehab (\$6,228,030 total development cost; \$579,423 tax credit award received by Gratus Development, LLC).
- \$15,956,555 in water and sewer upgrades (Jan. 2020 to Dec. 2020; reported annually in January).

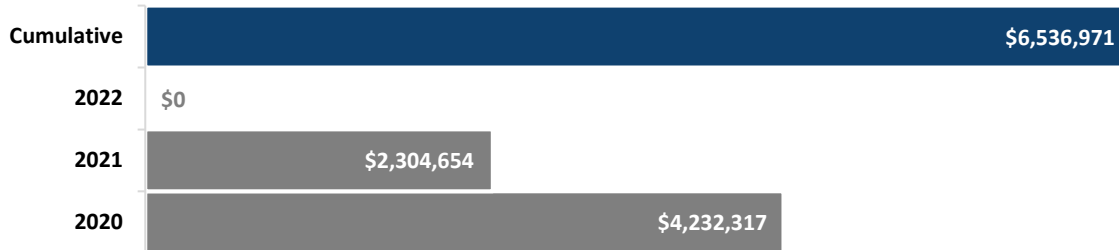
### ● (Oct. 1, '19 to Sept. 30, '20): \$116,000,491

- \$240,365 in façade improvements for properties within the Promise Zone from local city funds and leveraged investments. In 2019, the City of Evansville announced the availability of \$100,000 from local city funds for façade improvements for properties within the Promise Zone. The demand far exceeded the funds available, and the city determined those properties that were located within the Jacobsville NRSA would receive funding (from HUD CDBG NRSA set aside funds), allowing for nearly \$175,000 in total allocations. The pandemic stalled several of these projects and some may not proceed, while other projects within the NRSA came forward. Between October 2019 and September 2020, nine contracts encumbered \$100,365, with six additional projects to begin in 2021. Contracts are maximized at \$25,000 and cannot exceed 50% of the project. The city's investment leveraged another \$140,000 in exterior improvements to buildings within the Promise Zone.



- \$26,000,000 in total development costs associated with *The Forge on Main*: 180 studio, 1 and 2 bedroom units, and 15,000 sq. ft of commercial space in *Jacobsville* (PZ census tract 20) are planned in two structures. The multi-family and retail mixed-use development broke ground in August 2020.
- \$20,639,187 in total development cost associated with affordable housing development resulting from low-income tax credit awards (\$2,210,525) combined with local investment for (a) *Memorial Lofts* received by *Memorial Community Development Corporation* (\$8,582,473 total development cost; \$825,000 tax credit award), (b) *Erie Pointe* received by *Advantix Development Corporation* (\$8,447,532 total development cost; \$825,000 tax credit award), and (c) *Evansville Townhomes II* received by *Advantix Development Corporation* (\$8,593,291 total development cost; \$669,083 tax credit award; Note: 25 of 60 units are located in or near the *Promise Zone*, so adjustments include \$3,609,182 (42% of total units) and \$560,525 tax credit award).
- \$69,120,939 in water and sewer upgrades (Jan. 2019 to Dec. 2019; reported annually in January).
- **(Oct. 1, '18 to Sept. 30, '19): \$254,773,917**
  - \$23,003,675 in total development costs associated with affordable housing development resulting from low-income tax credit awards (\$3,200,000) combined with local investment for *Homes of Evansville II* received by *HOPE of Evansville* (awarded in November 2018) and *Evansville Townhomes* received by *Advantix Development Corporation* (awarded in November 2018).
  - \$28.7 million in total development cost associated with the *Post House*: 144 apartments, office, parking, and retail in downtown *Evansville*. The development was initiated during the 2018-19 performance period and completed in 2020 (partially supported by *Regional Cities*).
  - \$39 million in total development costs associated with the *Deaconess Clinic Downtown*. The clinic and research facility were initiated during the 2018-19 performance period and completed in 2020. The clinic accommodates primary care, speciality care, and outpatient-based research. The facility received \$9 million from *Regional Cities* and approximately \$30 million from the private sector.
  - \$3 million in expansion for *Signature School*, which is a charter high school located in downtown *Evansville* (partially supported by *Regional Cities*).
  - \$24.8 million in total development costs associated with the new *Deaconess Aquatic Center* located in *Garvin Park* (*Jacobsville* neighborhood). Site clearing occurred in June 2019. The 70,000 square-foot swimming facility replaces the 43-year-old *Lloyd Pool* and will open in 2021.
  - \$136,270,242 in water and sewer upgrades (Jan. 2018 to Dec. 2018; reported annually in January).
- **(Oct. 1, '17 to Sept. 30, '18): \$142,426,215**
  - \$23 million *Silver Birch of Evansville* (119 unit assisted living facility) located in the *Promise Zone* (completed fall 2018; significant portion of the work conducted within performance period).
  - \$70 million *Stone Center for Health Sciences* completed in downtown *Evansville* (August 2018).
  - \$13,092,518 in total development cost associated with affordable housing development resulting from low-income tax credit awards (\$1,149,319) combined with local investment for *Central Lofts* (awarded in January 2017; project in development stages).
  - \$18 million in total development costs for the *YMCA of Southwestern Indiana* located in downtown *Evansville* (original building is being transformed into *Central Lofts*; partially supported by *Regional Cities*).
  - \$18,333,697 in water and sewer upgrades (Jan. 2017 to Dec. 2017; reported annually in January).
- **(Oct. 1, '16 to Sept. 30, '17): \$177,253,004**
  - \$69 million *Double Tree Hotel* opened in downtown *Evansville* (February 2017).
  - \$50 million *Evansville Tropicana* land-based casino located in downtown *Evansville* (opened in October 2017; significant portion of the work conducted within performance period).
  - \$16 million *North Main Street enhancement* project (completed November 2017; significant portion of the work conducted within performance period).
  - \$21,453,004 in total development cost associated with affordable housing development resulting from low-income tax credit awards (\$2,928,204) combined with local investment for *Garfield Commons* (awarded in January 2016; ground broken in April 2017), *Garvin Flats*, and *St. Joseph School Redevelopment* (January 2017 awarded; project in development stages).
  - \$20.8 million in water and sewer upgrades (up to Dec. 2016; reported annually in January).

**\$6,536,971** in cumulative local, state, and federal funds to support COVID-19 relief



● **(Oct. 1, '21 to Sept. 30, '22): \$0 (in new funding)**

- Due to the pandemic and emergency relief from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and the American Rescue Plan Act passed by Congress, the City of Evansville received additional funding to prepare for and respond to the impacts of the virus. The city continues to expend these funds in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the Acts.

● **(Oct. 1, '20 to Sept. 30, '21): \$2,304,654**

- \$215,000 in additional Economic Development Administration (EDA) Revolving Loan Fund COVID-19 response funding. Due to the pandemic and emergency relief from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act passed by Congress, the City of Evansville received additional funding to prepare for and respond to the impacts of the virus. EDA \$550,000 (\$215,000 allocated to PZ businesses in 2021).
- As the administrators of an existing Economic Development Administration (EDA) Revolving Loan Fund, the city was offered an additional \$500,000 to provide for loans in response to COVID-19. This award received final approval at the end of August 2020, and no loans were made from it prior to the September 30, 2020 year-end reporting date. By October 1, 2021, \$420,000 of the loan's capital base had been lent to area businesses, with \$215,000 going to businesses within the Promise Zone. As noted below, the \$550,000 amount was originally included in the 2020 annual report. Since loans did not happen until the 2021 annual report, this amount was adjusted, and only those funds supporting PZ businesses in 2021 were included in the 2021 annual report.
- \$2,089,654 in funding awarded from the Greater Evansville COVID-19 Crisis Response Fund to organizations serving the Promise Zone. The Crisis Response Fund was initiated by the nonprofit funding community, businesses, and individuals to respond to community needs during the pandemic. Each month, COVID-19 Crisis Response Fund grantees indicate whether their funded programs serve residents of the Promise Zone. From October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021 (i.e., funding rounds 10 through 19), a total of 47 grantees served the Promise Zone. This represents 46% of awarded grantees during this time period. Award amounts for these grantees varied, ranging from \$1,450 to \$214,500. While funded programming was not necessarily limited to the Promise Zone, each of these grantees indicated that the Promise Zone was served. Programs serving the Promise Zone were split across the following: Relief efforts (34%), such as meeting basic needs and providing gap support to ALICE (asset-limited, income-constrained, employed) households; Recovery efforts (36%), such as technology enhancements and mental/relational health initiatives; and Restoration efforts (30%), such as fostering collaboration across agencies, advancing diversity and inclusion, and surfacing and scaling model programs.

● **(Oct. 1, '19 to Sept. 30, '20): \$4,232,317**

- \$3,323,875 in city COVID-19 response funding. Due to the pandemic and emergency relief from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act passed by Congress, the City of Evansville received additional funding to prepare for and respond to the impacts of the virus. Funds received included: ESG I \$790,000; CDBG \$1,592,787; ESG II \$941,088; and EDA \$550,000.
- The ESG and CDBG funds went to support many of the same projects identified under traditional allocations as their needs to serve their constituents in a crisis increased. Agencies were asked to identify how they were directly using the funds to respond to the crisis. Specific allocations that DMD requested included: a) \$300,000 to HOPE to assist renters with paying their housing costs to avoid eviction; and b) \$200,000 to businesses to provide for a safer environment for customers and staff. Primary users of these NRSA-CV funds were restaurants in Jacobsville and the Haynie's Corner Arts District who used funds to expand their outdoor seating capacity to allow for social distancing.



- *As the administrators of an existing Economic Development Administration (EDA) Revolving Loan Fund, the city was offered an additional \$500,000 to provide loans in response to COVID-19, along with \$50,000 to administer the fund. This award received final approval at the end of August 2020, and no loans were made from it prior to the September 30 year-end reporting date. Prior to the EDA funds becoming available, the city announced the Restart Evansville Post Pandemic (REPP) loan program, from which 12 loans for \$5,000 each (\$60,000) with 0% interest were made for a term of 5 years to assist businesses shut down during the pandemic to get back up and running. Five of these businesses are located in the Promise Zone. Note: The \$550,000 amount was originally included in the 2020 annual report. Since loans did not happen until the 2021 annual report, this amount was adjusted and only those funds supporting PZ businesses in 2021 were included in the 2021 annual report.*
- *\$908,442 in funding awarded from the Greater Evansville COVID-19 Crisis Response Fund to organizations serving the Promise Zone. The Crisis Response Fund was initiated by the nonprofit funding community, businesses, and individuals to respond to community needs during the pandemic. Each month, COVID-19 Crisis Response Fund grantees indicate whether their funded programs serve residents of the Promise Zone. From April 1, 2020 through September 30, 2020, a total of 40 grantees served the Promise Zone. This represents 51% of awarded grantees. Award amounts for these grantees varied, ranging from \$3,000 to \$156,000. While funded programming was not necessarily limited to the Promise Zone, each of these grantees indicated that the Promise Zone was served. The most common services involved provision of food and supplies, though it should be noted that programs around housing, education, transportation, and health were also funded. In some cases, funding was also available to support operational expenses for organizations serving the Promise Zone.*



## Public-private partnerships

- A key redevelopment project in the Promise Zone continues to show progress. The Forge on Main is a multi-family and retail mixed-use development that broke ground in August 2020, and apartments were available for rent in November/December 2021 (180 studio, 1 and 2 bedroom units, and 15,000 sq. ft of commercial space in Jacobsville (PZ census tract 20) planned in two structures). The use of housing vouchers has been approved for the development. Phase I of the project was completed in the previous reporting period and phase II is in progress. A new market was recently announced for the Jacobsville Neighborhood (PZ census tract 20). Dollar General agreed to partner with The Forge on Main and add their differentiated DG Market. This store will provide dairy, fresh meats, fresh fruits and vegetables, frozen and canned vegetables, grains, and other foods—in addition to everyday household items. To support this partnership, the Evansville Redevelopment Commission (in October 2022) approved an agreement that will route \$500,000 to Dollar General, via ECHO Housing Corp., for the build-out of DG Market. The search for a grocery store has been a high priority over the last four years when the area became a food desert with the 2018 closure of an IGA store.
- To further address food access, Promise Zone partners, including but not limited to New Hope Baptist Church Bridge Builders, Missing Pieces Community Development Corporation, and the City of Evansville, continue to operate the PZ Express. Many Promise Zone neighborhoods do not have a grocery store within walking distance. The PZ Express transports shoppers to and from the grocery store. For the current reporting period, a total of 288 rides were provided by the PZ Express, averaging 24 riders per month.



## Communication and awareness of goals and objectives

- The Evansville Promise Zone director continues to participate on the National Coalition of Promise Zones. Efforts are being made to strengthen awareness of the Promise Zone's value and importance in supporting communities.
- Consistent with the prior year, each workgroup continues to work towards workgroup goal areas. Some workgroups are using subcommittees to focus more specifically on tasks.
- Evaluation briefs specific to each goal area were developed by the Promise Zone data and evaluation partner. The briefs outline each goal area performance measure, the desired target, and current progress.
- Results of the third administration of the Promise Zone Community Survey were released in January 2022. Results help to inform progress toward key indicators associated with PZ goals and outcomes, while also informing ongoing community needs.
- The Promise Zone continues to maintain a PZ app. The app allows residents and partners to share and connect to community resources. The tool also assists in messaging key events.
- Promise Zone VISTAs have attended neighborhood association meetings to better understand the needs of neighbors and engage with the community. VISTAs also helped to support workgroup chairs with designated tasks and provided data to support PZ initiatives (e.g., housing assessment). VISTAs also assisted in collecting follow-up surveys for the Promise Zone Community Survey by going door to door in designated areas of the neighborhood.



## Capacity and infrastructure to support goals and objectives

- The City of Evansville Department of Metropolitan Development continues to employ a liaison between the Promise Zone and the City of Evansville. The liaison works closely with the Promise Zone director and workgroups, while coordinating city resources.
- The number of implementation partners (with signed MOUs) remains at 27.
- Three VISTAs served as neighborhood support specialists and are primarily responsible for assisting the Promise Zone in achieving goals.
- An evaluation framework continues to be implemented and guide the initiative. This includes a comprehensive tracking of indicators connected to the original PZ goals and outcomes.
- As shown above, local and state funding sources have been leveraged to support several key PZ priorities. As one example, the PZ and partners will be establishing a youth mentoring program in one of the Promise Zone schools this next performance period. To support this work, the City of Evansville allocated \$140,000 from CDBG funds.

- In September 2022, various community partners submitted a Promise Neighborhood grant with a focus on key areas of the Promise Zone. The grant involved considerable planning among partners over a 12-month period. Additionally, these planning efforts were leveraged to support the development of a second Full-service Community School grant application submitted by the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation. These initiatives are directly aligned with PZ priorities. If successful, the applications will assist in reaching PZ goals. However, the collaborative planning that took place will continue to ensure the strategies identified in the applications are implemented at some level to address the significant needs identified.
- In 2020, the City of Evansville received technical assistance through an EPA and USDA partnership, Local Foods, Local Places. This technical assistance led to the development of an action plan to: assist food producers to develop and grow a business; provide for year-round healthy foods to those experiencing food insecurity; elevate the community's awareness of food insecurity issues; and increase Evansville's capacity to address food system challenges. The city has since created a Food Security Commission and offered financial assistance to a shared commercial kitchen under development in the Promise Zone, as well as seen the hiring of a Value Chain Coordinator to assist producers expand their markets and in November 2022 will see the launch of a mobile market to serve many of the Promise Zone neighborhoods identified as food deserts.
- A key accomplishment this year involved the installation of five broadband access points throughout the Promise Zone. The city receives a monthly usage report that shows approximately 1,200 to 1,600 unique uses each month with over 200 people using the service daily.



## Community engagement

- Most meetings have continued to occur virtually. Social media has been used effectively to communicate with residents and partners. Push notifications continue to be sent out through the Promise Zone app. Partners have held webinars to provide education on workgroup priorities (e.g., economic development workgroup). In addition, the Promise Zone director hosted a community podcast on the PZ social media channel (conversations in the zone).



## Upcoming Priorities

Over the next year, the Evansville Promise Zone (PZ) seeks to continue working towards goals of increasing jobs, increasing economic development activity, improving educational opportunities, reducing violent crime, promoting health and access to healthcare, and increasing access to affordable housing. In addition, several key areas reflect major priorities for this next year. Importantly, priorities are largely consistent with previous years, but build on the progress that has been made.

- (1) Refocusing efforts to address key priorities.** Since the PZ designation, our partnership has made progress towards the goal areas guiding our work. However, the pandemic has led to increased need among residents and created challenges for addressing these needs. A key priority this year will be to refocus efforts as we work to address each of the PZ goal areas.
- (2) Strengthen communication among workgroups.** Most workgroup meetings and PZ Chair meetings operated virtually. However, meetings were not consistently scheduled. Our partnership intends to move toward a hybrid (in-person/virtual) meeting format this next performance period. We will also work to strengthen communication among members and ensure a more consistent meeting schedule and location is communicated across partners.
- (3) Implement annual priorities.** Each workgroup has identified annual priorities and will work to address these in the subsequent year. Selected examples of key strategies specific to workgroups include job fairs, financial literacy education, supporting the PZ Express, developing incentive packages for small businesses to locate in the PZ, administration of the revolving loan fund, increasing affordable housing, increasing quality and participation in afterschool programs, expanding enrollment in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholars, youth mentoring, addressing food insecurity, and healthcare enrollment. In doing so, our partners recognize the significant challenges of implementing strategies during the pandemic. Therefore, collaboration among workgroup members will continue to focus on navigating these challenges while also pivoting to address emerging community needs.
- (4) Continue efforts to expand public-private partnerships.** The Evansville Promise Zone continues to demonstrate examples of successful public-private partnerships. As in the prior year, subsequent work will continue to focus on better identifying and strengthening connections with existing efforts and working to address emerging community needs.

**(5) Strengthen tracking of leveraged investments.** The Evansville Promise Zone continues to lack a formal process for capturing leveraged investments. As a result, it continues to be highly likely that investments within the zone are being underreported. A formal process for tracking the investments of key partners continues to be warranted. This process would include a clear definition of what investments qualify for reporting and ongoing tracking throughout the year. The challenges in tracking investments have primarily been the result of limited operational capacity. In the previous report, we indicated that VISTAs would assist in developing and implementing a process to track investments for ongoing reporting. This will be a continued priority for this year.

**(6) Identify and secure funding for Promise Zone infrastructure, growth, initiatives, and sustainability.** Since June 2016, Evansville Promise Zone partners have experienced some success in obtaining grant funding and allocations to support selected aspects of Promise Zone infrastructure and initiatives. The City of Evansville has also provided key infrastructure and operational support. The addition of VISTAs has also served to strengthen capacity. However, continued efforts are needed to identify and secure funding to increase overall capacity and support priorities. Additionally, only four federal grants were received to support initiatives over the last three reporting periods. While Promise Zone is a federal designation, dedicated funding sources to support capacity are unavailable. Continued efforts to bring more federal support to the zone will be pursued, while continuing efforts to navigate challenges associated with the decline in federal entities offering preference points. A key strategy will be the development of a funding forecast to assist in guiding opportunities for growth and sustainability.

**(7) Continue efforts on strengthening broadband internet.** Strengthening broadband internet within the Promise Zone was originally identified as an objective under the job development goal area, but the work has involved collaborative efforts across workgroups. The pandemic reinforced the importance of this vital infrastructure as residents have had to adjust to different ways of learning and working (e.g., virtual learning, meetings). A key accomplishment this year involved the installation of five broadband access points throughout the Promise Zone. The City of Evansville has provided funding through its CDBG-CV allocations to fund the project through 2023. Additionally, the city had paid for the licensing of the hardware/software through 2025. Promise Zone partners will be working on funding the internet service in 2024 and 2025 and will continue to work to strengthen resident access to broadband internet. This is an important step to developing the necessary infrastructure throughout the zone.

**(8) Build awareness and continue to engage more residents in Promise Zone initiatives.** The Promise Zone app and social media (Twitter, Facebook) efforts continue to be successful at reaching some residents. However, the most recent Promise Zone Community Survey (October-December 2021) continued to highlight the

need to increase awareness and understanding of the Promise Zone. Specifically, 20% of residents reported being aware of the initiative, while only 7% reported understanding the purpose. While this represented an increase from baseline, it represented a decline from the survey period immediately before the pandemic (October-December 2019). Therefore, continued efforts will be focused on communication and resident engagement to ensure the voices of people living in the zone drive the work. This also includes increased awareness of the Evansville Promise Zone for local nonprofits and other organizations within the community. A key strategy towards this overall priority is the addition of a new VISTA who will be focused on community engagement within the area.

## Overview of Promise Zone Goals and Progress

The following sections highlight milestones and accomplishments for the current reporting period. Highlights are based on a review of data provided in quarterly reports submitted throughout the year, progress reports submitted by workgroup chairs, and feedback from Promise Zone leadership and partners. Selected indicators from the evaluation framework are also integrated. Indicators represent a combination of categories A, B, C, and D from the original designation agreement, which includes various primary and secondary data sources. In October 2021, the third administration of the Promise Zone Community Survey was initiated. Results were released in January 2022. The survey is administered every other year to monitor changes and trends.

Subsequent sections include progress toward community engagement efforts and address the following goal areas:

- ① Increase Jobs
- ② Increase Economic Activity
- ③ Improve Educational Opportunities
- ④ Reduce Violent Crime
- ⑤ Promote Health and Access to Healthcare
- ⑥ Increase Access to Affordable Housing





## Increase Jobs

**Promise Zone Goal:** To increase meaningful and fair wage job opportunities for families who reside in the Promise Zone through workforce development, family asset building, and access to better transportation options.

**Key Implementation Partners:** Grow Southwest Indiana Workforce Board, Old National Bank, Fifth Third Bank, HOPE of Evansville, Evansville Regional Economic Partnership (includes the Growth Alliance of Greater Evansville, Chamber of Commerce, and the Economic Development Coalition of Southwest Indiana), Metropolitan Planning Organization, New Hope Baptist Church, Memorial Community Development Corporation, and United Way of Southwestern Indiana

### Milestones and Accomplishments:

- The workgroup continued to meet and is chaired by the director of Grow Southwest Indiana Workforce, which promotes alignment with other initiatives.
- The Southwest Indiana Workforce Board secured funds through United Way to provide mobile services to area neighborhoods. Neighborhood Navigators provide access to WorkOne services but also connect to other resources available to meet the needs of the individual. Mobile locations include: Caldwell Community Center, Tepe Park Clubhouse, Potter's Wheel, CAPE, Carver Community Organization, and Gresham House.
- Increased access to job skills education and training:
  - *WorkOne hosted five job fairs for area residents and 16 individual employer hiring events (June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2022). Participation in job fairs ranged from 6 to 22 residents, with an average of 12 residents attending each job fair. Participation in individual hiring events ranged from 1 to 7 individuals, with an average of 3 people attending each event. Given the challenges with COVID-19, partners remain committed to identifying solutions to ensure opportunities are provided to residents (e.g., virtual job fairs, drive-through job fairs).*
  - *A total of 500 Promise Zone residents were expected to receive job skills education and training by 2021. This target was exceeded during the 2020 performance period and continued to grow in 2022, with a total of 958 residents receiving these services over the last five years. During the most recent reporting period, 138 Promise Zone residents were provided with job skills education and training through WorkOne Southwest (based on an unduplicated count of individuals identified as receiving Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment [RESEA] or Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act [WIOA] services). In addition, across various education and training opportunities through WorkOne, a total of 242 contacts were made with Promise Zone residents during this reporting period (based on a duplicated count of*

- individuals identified as receiving RESEA or WIOA services, job fairs, adult education, Youth Build, etc.).*
- *The percentage of residents (who are currently employed part-time or full-time) reporting that their current job met their financial needs has increased by 12% (46% in 2017; 46% in 2019; 52% in 2021) based on the 2021 Promise Zone Community Survey.*
- Increased financial security of Promise Zone residents:
- *A Fair Shot Financial Empowerment Program continues to be implemented to help residents build their knowledge and finances and improve their credit. A total of 162 participants attended the program (more than double that of the prior year), and 67 participants graduated (attended both class 1 and 2). Further, a total of 134 clients through HOPE of Evansville actively engaged in housing counseling (either before or after attending Fair Shot).*
  - *There was a slight increase in the percentage of residents reporting having an emergency fund in place to cover unexpected expenses based on responses to the Promise Zone Community Survey (26% in 2017; 25% in 2019; 28% in 2021). Although promising, other survey items specific to financial security (having a savings account during the last 6 months, using a written personal budget or spending plan) decreased during the time period.*
- Access to internet:
- *Prior to the pandemic, employers had increasingly begun to rely upon online applications to identify prospective employees. COVID-19 accelerated the rate at which this became the primary option of applying for a job. During the current reporting period, five broadband access points were installed throughout the Promise Zone. While increased access is a focus within job development, this work involved collaboration across workgroups.*
  - *There was a slight increase in the percentage of residents reporting having access to the internet based on responses to the Promise Zone Community Survey (83% in 2017; 77% in 2019; 85% in 2021). The original indicator included all devices (e.g., tablet, iPad, phone, desktop). If phones were excluded, 64% reported having internet access in 2019 and 74% report having access in 2021. While promising, only 54% reported fast connections (e.g., broadband, DSL). Importantly, data from residents was collected from the Promise Zone Community Survey which was completed in December 2021. The impact of the five new broadband access points is not accounted for in these results.*
- Increased access to transportation supporting resident employment:
- *The Bridge Builders program operated through New Hope Baptist Church through December 2021. The program was transitioned to Missing Pieces Development Corp. in January 2022 (now called Missing Pieces Employment Express). Collectively, the program provided transportation to 134 residents, assisting them with accessing employment.*

## Top Priorities for the Next Year:



- ❖ Continue to implement primary activities associated with increasing access to job skills education and training, financial literacy, transit-oriented infrastructure, and broadband internet.
- ❖ The Job Development Committee will be focusing on identifying employers, their open positions, and the training required to fill those positions. Also, the committee is working with United Neighborhood Association and neighborhood navigators to better understand what barriers residents are facing that may be preventing them from returning to work.
- ❖ The Fair Shot Financial Literacy Program will continue to be provided in targeted Promise Zone neighborhoods and expanded with Promise Zone partners. The program provides education in budgeting and homeownership.



## Increase Economic Activity

**Promise Zone Goal:** To improve the local economy through long-term growth and to upgrade the standard of living for all citizens within the Promise Zone.

**Key Implementation Partners:** Evansville Water and Sewer Utility, Evansville Loan Administration Board, Evansville Regional Economic Partnership (includes the Growth Alliance of Greater Evansville, Chamber of Commerce, and the Economic Development Coalition of Southwest Indiana), Southwest Indiana Small Business Development Center, Junior Achievement of Southwest Indiana, Downtown Evansville – Economic Improvement District, Downtown Evansville – Development Corporation, North Side Business Association, and Evansville Trails Coalition

### Milestones and Accomplishments:

- The Forge on Main is a multi-family and retail mixed-use development that broke ground in August 2020, and apartments were available for rent in November/December 2021 (180 studio, 1 and 2 bedroom units, and 15,000 sq. ft of commercial space in Jacobsville (PZ census tract 20) planned in two structures). The use of housing vouchers has been approved for the development. Phase I of the project was completed in the prior reporting period; Phase II is in progress.
- A new market was recently announced for the Jacobsville Neighborhood (PZ census tract 20). Dollar General agreed to partner with The Forge on Main and add their differentiated DG Market. This store will provide dairy, fresh meats, fresh fruits and vegetables, frozen and canned vegetables, grains, and other foods—in addition to everyday household items. To support this partnership, the Evansville Redevelopment Commission (in October 2022) approved an agreement that will route \$500,000 to Dollar General, via ECHO Housing Corp. (Promise Zone Lead Organization), for the build-out of DG Market. The search for a grocery store has been a high priority over the last four years when the area became a food desert with the 2018 closure of an IGA store.
- Upgraded and expanded infrastructure capacity to guide increased economic activity:
  - *The Evansville Trails Coalition (ETC) announced (November 2021) that the Upgrade Bike Share Program fully launched a new fleet of bicycles. Four stations are located in areas of the Promise Zone, including Downtown YMCA, Haynie's Corner, Four Freedoms Monument, and North Main Street. ETC will be working on 2022 Upgrade Bikeshare Sponsorships to keep the program moving forward.*
  - *Since the Promise Zone designation in 2016, a total of 7.77 miles in biking and walking trails have been added in or connected to the Promise Zone, and 3.1 miles (Walnut Street Corridor) were started in 2020 with portions completed in 2021 and 2022. The Walnut Street Corridor is approximately 3.1 miles and is identified as a "road diet project," reducing the number of vehicular traffic lanes from four to three. The project to improve Walnut Street involves rehabilitation*

*of the pavement, curbs and gutters, and south sidewalk. In addition, the north sidewalk is being replaced with a multi-use trail from Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard to Vann Avenue. Construction began in 2020, and portions of the trail were completed in 2021.*

- *Walnut Street Corridor (3.1 miles; in development; portions extend beyond the PZ).*
- *Story Trail-Garvin (.07 miles, 2020).*
- *Vine Street Trail (.7 miles, 2020).*
- *Bob Jones Way (.2 miles, 2018).*
- *High Rail Trail (2.5 miles, 2018).*
- *North Main Street multi-use trail (1 mile, 2018).*
- *Virginia Street multi-use trail (.6 miles, 2018).*
- *Evansville African American Heritage Trail (1 mile, 2019).*
- *Mid Levee Corridor (1.7 miles, 2019).*
- *Story Trail-Akin Park (trail was fully funded and work on the trail commenced in September 2021)*
- *Efforts are underway to connect several smaller trail segments near the Roberts Park area. This will create connections from downtown to Evansville East as well as connecting to the bike route that runs through the Promise Zone area.*

- In October 2021, The Evansville Trails Coalition announced that the Evansville Common (City) Council voted unanimously to adopt the Evansville Complete Streets Ordinance G-2021-17. The ordinance will support active transportation policies including improved streets to safely and conveniently accommodate numerous modes of transportation for a safer, more accessible multimodal community for everyone.
- \$16,098,790 in water and sewer upgrades (January 2021 to December 2021; reported annually in January). This represents 67% of encumbered funds associated with overall planned water/sewer upgrades in the Promise Zone (as of January 2022).
- 71% of the 34 commercial properties removed within the Promise Zone from 2016 to 2018 were transformed for an economic purpose (e.g., new or existing business, maintained green space) after approximately three years.
- A total of 5 new businesses receiving support from the Southwest Indiana Small Business Development Center were added in the Promise Zone in 2021 (January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021), which represents a total of 46 new businesses since the original designation (Note: Indicator is a proxy for business starts and may not reflect all new business within the Promise Zone. Also, the definition of new business starts changed during the 2018-19 performance period).
- Over 9.8 million in capital investments were provided to businesses located in the Promise Zone. This consisted of 16 clients of the Southwest Indiana Small Business Development Center.
- The number of certified minority, women, and veteran owned businesses in the zone has increased by 11 compared to baseline (21 certified minority, women, and veteran owned businesses as of 2022).

→ In August 2022, the first in-person, post pandemic Business Resource Roundup session was held. Several area organizations (CAPE, Elevate Ventures, PTAC, City of Evansville, EVPL, SCORE, ISBDC, UE Microloan program, WorkOne), as well as the Promise Zone, presented what support their organizations can provide for small businesses. Moving forward, this will be an annual event.

### Top Priorities for the Next Year:



- ❖ Continue to implement primary activities associated with expanding and upgrading neighborhood infrastructure, supporting new and existing businesses, and place-making opportunities.
- ❖ Continue to engage individuals interested in new business opportunities through existing revolving loan programs accessed through support of the Southwest Indiana Small Business and Development Center.
- ❖ Continue to provide education opportunities to encourage area businesses and broadcast opportunities (e.g., I69 ORX).
- ❖ Inform, educate, and conduct outreach to small businesses on the value of businesses being certified as minority, women, and veteran owned.
- ❖ Strengthen tracking of current direct and leveraged investments within the Promise Zone to better capture the overall impact of the designation.
- ❖ Create and broadcast an incentive package for small businesses to locate in the Promise Zone. This will involve a partnership with city and county governments, economic development, ISBDC, and the Promise Zone.





## Improve Educational Opportunities

**Promise Zone Goal:** Increase educational opportunities through a coordinated community school strategy that includes high quality early childhood experiences, community and school partnerships, systems that support learning, and connecting youth with resources to support postsecondary education.

**Key Implementation Partners:** Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation (EVSC), Building Blocks, Ivy Tech Community College Southwest, School Community Council Afterschool Coalition, and Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library

### Milestones and Accomplishments:

- An afterschool coalition meets monthly to coordinate high quality service delivery and strengthen collaboration among partners. Most educational strategies are coordinated through partners, so meetings occur as needed.
- Increased quality of early learning opportunities:
  - *Efforts to improve quality of early childhood experiences for children within the Promise Zone have shown progress. Specifically, there has been a 29% increase in the number of early childhood centers with a 3 or higher rating on Paths to Quality since baseline (for those participating in the rating system). In 2022, 69% (24/35) of participating early learning locations had a rating of 3 or higher, compared to 53% (16/30) at baseline. The number of locations participating increased from 30 to 35 locations.*
  - *Building Blocks (Chair of the education workgroup) initiated a three-year pilot of an early learning Regional Training Center (RTC) Model of service delivery. Several sites included in the pilot are in or near the Promise Zone. During the pilot year (2021-2022), promising outcomes specific to provider effectiveness and child outcomes were found. Specifically, early learning educators demonstrated a significant increase in quality on several domains related to teacher-child interactions, emotional support and instructional support, aspects of the classroom environment, and use of literacy practices. In addition, children also demonstrated a significant increase in areas specific to math and executive functioning.*
- Progress is being made toward increasing social emotional adjustment and engagement in learning for students enrolled in schools located in the Promise Zone. However, renewed focus on these issues is important given the impact of COVID-19 on student learning.
  - *Students receiving social work services (2021-2022) through Youth First decreased individual behavioral concerns by 24% as reported by students and by 14% as reported by teachers.*

- *Schools located in the Promise Zone reported fewer suspensions in 2020-21 compared to baseline (2015-16). However, the percentage of students with 10 or more unexcused absences increased in 2020-21 because of challenges schools faced during the pandemic.*
- A total of 415 youth participated for 30 or more days in high quality afterschool programs within EVSC schools located within the Promise Zone, representing 14% of all enrolled students. Other community partners (e.g., Dream Center, Boys and Girls Club, YMCA) are actively participating monthly in the Evansville Afterschool Program Coalition and continue to provide programming within the zone. The EVSC and YMCA are also continuing to implement afterschool programs funded through 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center grants and Indiana Department of Education REACH grants.
- Community partners continue to identify strategies to sign youth up for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholars in direct partnership with EVSC. However, COVID-19 impacted enrollment during the 2021-22 school year. Specifically, for 2020-21, the EVSC reported a 29% increase in the percent of 8<sup>th</sup> graders enrolled in Promise Zone schools or feeder middle schools who are enrolled in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholars program. However, during the last reporting period, the percentage of students participating was lower than baseline. The program provides free in-state tuition assistance to at-risk youth.
- In September 2020, the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation received a Full-Service Community School grant from the US Department of Education. The grant allows four schools to establish full-service community schools providing a pipeline of evidence-based strategies from early childhood through high school. Three schools (Caze, Fairlawn, and McGary) are located directly in the Promise Zone, and one high school (Harrison High School) serves students residing in the zone. Several partners in the initiative are members of the education workgroup and collaborated to align strategies with Promise Zone education goals. The EVSC is continuing to implement this grant within these focus schools.
- In September 2022, various community partners submitted a Promise Neighborhood grant with a focus on key areas of the Promise Zone. The grant involved considerable planning among partners over a 12-month period. The EVSC also submitted another Full-service Community School grant with several of the focus schools (Glenwood, Lincoln, Lodge, and Bosse).
- The PZ and partners will be establishing a youth mentoring program in two of the Promise Zone schools this next performance period. To support this work, the City of Evansville allocated \$140,000 from CBDG-CV funds.

## Top Priorities for the Next Year:



- ❖ Continue to implement primary activities associated with expanding high quality early childhood programming, PBIS implementation, expanding involvement in afterschool and summer programs, and enrolling students in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholars.
- ❖ Increase data and information on early childhood options to gain insight into their capacity, as well as the different options available to residents.
- ❖ Increase training for non-educators in the afterschool and early childhood programs on secondary trauma and social emotional development to match current training at EVSC.
- ❖ Provide training to afterschool program providers in the Indiana Quality Self-Assessment to improve quality of programming offered to youth.
- ❖ Provide training to community partners in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholars enrollment and partnership opportunities to increase enrollment.
- ❖ Launch the youth mentoring program in partnership with two of the PZ schools.



## Reduce Violent Crime

**Promise Zone Goal:** Work with neighborhood residents and stakeholders to generate and strengthen initiatives that aim to prevent serious and violent crime and reduce the number of physical locations in Promise Zone neighborhoods suitable for criminal activity.

**Key Implementation Partners:** Evansville Police Department, United Neighborhoods of Evansville, and Youth First, Inc.

### Milestones and Accomplishments:

- Crime rates within the Promise Zone have declined since the initial designation. Specifically, there has been a 30% overall decrease in crime from baseline to 2021. However, the impact of COVID-19 (e.g., stay at home order) should be considered when interpreting findings. For example, when 2019 data were examined, there was a 3.6% decrease in crimes compared to baseline. While these decreases are promising, an increase in the percentage of residents reporting violent crime as being a problem in their neighborhood was higher in 2021 compared to 2017, based on responses to the 2021 Promise Community Survey.
- A total of 307 blighted properties within the Promise Zone, which are often magnets for crime, have been removed since receiving the designation. Approximately 4% (12) of these properties were removed during the current reporting period.
- A total of 227 youth participated in Evansville Police Department programming, such as Choose Not to Lose Camp, Bigs with Badges, and Cops Connecting with Kids in the most recent evaluation performance period (January 2021 to December 2021).
- A total of 28 residents participated in the Evansville Police Department's Citizens Academy in the most recent evaluation performance period (January 2021 to December 2021).
- The crime workgroup supported the Promise Neighborhood application by providing crime data and suggestions for focus areas in partnership with the Evansville Police Department.
- The crime workgroup has provided support to the Woodlawn Park area and continued efforts are underway to create a neighborhood association in the area. In response to issues at Woodlawn Park apartments, various community organizations and community members went door-to-door to survey tenants to understand their housing needs. In partnership with HOUSE, a plan was developed for tenants and data were collected to determine what resources could be offered.
- New chairs have been appointed to lead the crime workgroup. Chairs represent the Evansville Police Department and the City Council, which will help strengthen alignment of the PZ and other initiatives within the city.

## Top Priorities for the Next Year:



- ❖ Continue to implement primary activities associated with community policing, crime prevention through environmental design, marketing and outreach, and youth programming.
- ❖ Continue working in partnership with the Evansville Police Department, neighborhood associations, and residents to strengthen community policing.
- ❖ Creating space for police and community relationships to grow, and a focus on reducing crime in key hotspots of the zone by working with community agencies and community leaders.
- ❖ Assist the Woodland Park neighborhood in establishing a neighborhood association to support advocacy efforts.



## Promote Health and Access to Healthcare

**Promise Zone Goal:** Improve access to mental, physical, and dental health care and promote an environment supporting overall health and well-being of Promise Zone residents.

**Key Implementation Partners:** ECHO Community Health Care, Healthy Community Partnership, Purdue Extension, St. Vincent Health, United Way of Southwestern Indiana, Vanderburgh County Health Department, Welborn Baptist Foundation, and Youth First, Inc.

### Milestones and Accomplishments:

- The health workgroup has maintained two subcommittees to advance workgroup goals. The opioid subcommittee is working to address the opioid epidemic in the area, while the food access committee is actively working to analyze data on food access and identify innovative strategies to address resident needs.
- Several grants were received by community partners to support health initiatives in the Promise Zone (as reported by the Health Workgroup Chair).
  - *Impact Evansville received funding from the Welborn Baptist Foundation to repair neighborhood sidewalks and improve school crosswalks at Glenwood Leadership Academy (\$43,100).*
  - *Purdue Extension Nutrition Education Program (NEP) received funding to hire a Spanish speaking Nutrition Education Program Administrator (\$40,000).*
  - *Urban Seeds received funding to continue support for the Nourish Community Food Buying Club (\$300,000).*
  - *Vanderburgh County Health Department received funding to implement a produce prescription program to complement their Pre-Diabetes Prevention Program (\$31,000). The program currently hosts 5 participants that receive \$20 worth of produce bi-weekly through Nourish.*
- In the 2022 season, Market on Main and Franklin Street Bazaar began accepting Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to promote food access, as well as offering a Double Bucks matching incentive program. Both markets also operated the “Power of Produce” kids’ program. Evansville’s Farmers Market, located at Washington Square mall (located on the border of the PZ) operates every Saturday and is currently in the process of applying to be a SNAP accepting market.
- There was a new partnership facilitated between Heliponix and a Jacobsville resident. Heliponix is using their vertical growing technology to grow leafy greens inside of the Dream Center (located in Jacobsville). Produce has been distributed through Junior League. The long-term plan will utilize funds from Local Food Purchasing Assistance to pay for produce to be distributed throughout the PZ.



- Primary outcomes associated with the workgroup are focused on increasing access to health care and creating an overall environment supporting wellness, including access to fruits and vegetables and prevention programs. Progress measures are aligned to the Promise Zone Community Survey. Despite initial efforts, the most recent survey results continue to highlight a need.
  - *16% of residents reported not having health insurance, 75% reported visiting a doctor for a routine check-up, and 12% reported not being able to attend an appointment because of lack of transportation.*
  - *30% reported that their general health is fair or poor, and 30% reported wanting to purchase fruits and vegetables but being unable.*
- To address food access, Promise Zone partners, including but not limited to, New Hope Baptist Church Bridge Builders, Missing Pieces Community Development Corporation, and the City of Evansville, launched the PZ Express in 2019. Many Promise Zone neighborhoods do not have a grocery store within walking distance. The PZ Express transports shoppers to and from the grocery store. For the current reporting period, a total of 288 rides were provided by the PZ Express, averaging 24 riders per month.
- Urban Seeds continues to implement the Nourish Community Food Buying Club. The project allows families to order nutritious foods (fresh vegetables, meat, dairy, etc.) and pick them up on a regular basis in an effort to increase access, provide nutrition education, and build understanding of trauma-informed nutrition practices. Funding has been secured for the next two years to continue to make high quality nutritious foods available at a significant discount.

### Top Priorities for the Next Year:



- ❖ Continue to implement primary activities associated with connecting residents with healthcare and promoting a healthy environment.
- ❖ Based on the technical assistance received and initial planning efforts, continue to implement the comprehensive plan to address food insecurity and nutrition within the Promise Zone and nearby community.
- ❖ Urban Seeds and Evansville Healthy Communities Partners (HCP) will continue to partner to provide a community food buying club for residents of the Promise Zone to create a supply of affordable groceries.
- ❖ Host a family engagement event to promote the existing Garvin Park Story Trail as well as bring attention to the upcoming Akin Park installation.
- ❖ Aim to develop a multidisciplinary and inter-organizational series on collaborative education on best practices in combating the opioid epidemic with a goal to improve multidisciplinary care and inter-organizational collaboration in the Promise Zone.



## Increase Access to Quality Affordable Housing

**Promise Zone Goal:** To collectively elevate quality neighborhoods and housing in the Evansville Promise Zone.

**Key Implementation Partners:** Housing Organizations United Serving Evansville (HOUSE)

### Milestones and Accomplishments:

- Housing Organizations United Serving Evansville (HOUSE) continues to serve as the housing workgroup. HOUSE works to build trust and foster relationships among housing organizations to leverage individual strengths for even greater success through collaboration.
- A total of \$2,573,662 in low-income tax credit awarded in 2022:
  - *Partnership for Affordable Housing, Inc. (Jacobsville Senior Housing LP) received \$861,111 in tax credits to provide new construction to 52 units of affordable housing in the Jacobsville neighborhood of the Promise Zone (Baker Flats). The tax credits leveraged \$9,450,000 in total development costs for the project.*
  - *Advantix Development Corporation (Evansville Townhomes III, LP) received \$1,020,000 in tax credits to rehab and provide new construction to 64 units of affordable housing in various locations within the Promise Zone. The tax credits leveraged \$10,612,079 in total development costs for the project.*
  - *Gratus Development, LLC (Jacobsville II Apartments Rehab) received \$692,551 in tax credits to rehab 36 units of affordable housing in the Jacobsville neighborhood of the Promise Zone. The tax credits leveraged \$7,250,474 in total development costs for the project.*
- Blight elimination efforts and use of the Land Bank in Promise Zone neighborhoods have continued.
  - *Of the 655 blighted properties originally identified for elimination within the Promise Zone (2016), 109 have been removed (1 during this reporting period). This represents 16.6% of all properties originally identified for removal.*
  - *Since the Promise Zone designation, other blighted properties within the Promise Zone have also been identified for demolition. When all properties identified for demolition are considered, a total of 307 blighted properties have been removed since receiving the designation (12 during the current reporting period).*
- A total of 410 mixed-use residential housing units (single family, two family, and multi-family housing units, including affordable and market rate units) have been built or are in the process of being built since the original Promise Zone designation (Note: Data for this performance measure are based on building permits from the most recent calendar year [2021]). Housing units have been completed by nonprofit partners (Habitat for Humanity, Memorial Community Development Corporation, HOPE of Evansville, Evansville Brownfields Corporation, Evansville Land Bank, Community Action Program of

Evansville) and various private partners (individuals, development companies). Collectively, the number of units to date represents accomplishment of the 2021 goal of 250 units.

- There has been a 29% increase in the number of permanent supportive housing units available within the Promise Zone compared to baseline (2018 through 2022=180; baseline=140; data for this performance measure are based on available units from the 2021 calendar year).
- Through Hope of Evansville, 261 people received affordable housing services and developed a sustainable household budget. Of these, 26 families purchased a home through Hope of Evansville's down payment assistance program for a total of \$120,670 provided in down payment assistance.
- A new committee was developed with a focus on environmental issues within the area. The group is pursuing an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant to address lead remediation, while improving area infrastructure and supporting health, nutrition, and active lifestyles which connects with goals outlined in other workgroups.

### Top Priorities for the Next Year:



- ❖ Pursue EPA funding to address lead remediation and infrastructure needs with the area.
- ❖ HOUSE will recommit to its 2019 strategies with specific action items to ensure the successful expenditure of a \$10 million allocation from ARPA funds prior to the December 31, 2026 deadline, with a focus on neighborhoods within or near the Promise Zone and households earning less than \$40,000 per year.
- ❖ Through the next 4 years, HOUSE intends to add 400 new housing units and repair or rehab another 500 units, leveraging the ARPA allocation 3:1 for a total \$40 million investment.
- ❖ HOUSE will foster a new relationship with the Building Commission to target homeowners receiving notice of violations to connect owners with resources to make needed repairs. The majority of single-family homes within the Promise Zone were built prior to 1970.
- ❖ HOUSE will support tenant rights by monitoring the eviction processes and helping those threatened by eviction to remediate the issue and expunge any filings that were dismissed or settled within their favor. Indiana has the highest eviction rate in the Midwest with Vanderburgh County the 4<sup>th</sup> highest county (of 92) in the state.



## Increase Community Engagement

**Key Implementation Partners:** United Neighborhoods of Evansville, along with all implementation partners

### Milestones and Accomplishments:

- A virtual Promise Zone convening was once again held in June 2021. Federal partners provided information on available federal resources and strategies for accessing them. As part of the National Coalition of Promise Zones, the Evansville Promise Zone attended and supported the convening.
- Evaluation briefs specific to each goal area were developed by the Promise Zone data and evaluation partner. The briefs outline each goal area performance measure, the desired target, and current progress. Briefs will continue to be updated throughout the year based on data availability.
- The Promise Zone launched a new application (app) in December 2019. The app allows residents and partners to share and connect to community resources. The tool also assists in messaging key events. From November 2019 through October 2021, there have been a total of 7,086 contacts with the app. In addition, 676 users signed up for custom push notifications.
- Three VISTAs provided support during the current performance period. VISTAs are serving as neighborhood support specialists and are primarily responsible for assisting the Promise Zone in achieving goals. VISTAs are attending neighborhood association meetings, assisting workgroup chairs, and assisting with collecting data to support needs connected to Promise Zone initiatives.

### Top Priorities for the Next Year:



- ❖ Provide workgroups with impact briefs based on available data from the time period.
- ❖ Engage more residents in the programs and services offered within the Promise Zone (e.g., PZ Express, Fair Shot).
- ❖ Continue implementing communication and marketing plans based on the Promise Zone app.
- ❖ Continue to effectively utilize social media (Twitter, Facebook Live).
- ❖ Using data from the 2021 Promise Zone Community Survey, develop strategies to improve community engagement.

## **SECTION II-ANNUAL REPORT: Promise Zone Work Plan for the New Federal Fiscal Year**

Note: Work plan is included within the requested Excel attachments.

## **SECTION III-ANNUAL REPORT: Annual Update on Promise Zone Plan and Operations**

**Promise Zone:** Evansville, Indiana

**Promise Zone Director:** Silas Matchem

**Community Liaison:** Andrea Ekiyor

**Date:** November 15, 2022

### **Proposed Amendments to the Promise Zone Plan**

**1) Changes to the geographic boundaries of the Promise Zone.**

→ No proposed changes.

**2) Changes to the Promise Zone Lead Organization or roles it has committed to play in the MOU and/or the Promise Zone Application.**

→ No proposed changes.

**3) Removal of an organization or organizations listed as Implementing Partner Organizations in the MOU, and/or changes to their roles and responsibilities as listed in the MOU and the Promise Zone Application. Please provide a copy of your most recent MOU and Partnership Structure Chart if it has been changed in the last year.**

→ No changes have been made to roles and responsibilities.

**4) Changes to the goals set forth in the Promise Zone Application (not changes to subgoals/objectives/strategies/activities).**

→ No proposed changes.

**5) Placement of limitations upon the UGLG(s)' support for the strategy committed in the Promise Zone Application by the UGLG.**

→ None.

## Update on Promise Zone Operations

- 1. Please describe any significant changes to the Promise Zone partnership and how those changes will affect the implementation of the Promise Zone Plan. Significant changes to the Promise Zone partnership would include: the departure of a major partner, or the addition of a new major partner that has committed to fulfill specific responsibilities under the Promise Zone Plan.**
  - No significant changes.
  
- 2. Has the Lead Organization's staff or organizational structure changed? If so, how will this change affect the organization's work on the Promise Zone?**
  - In August 2022, ECHO Housing Corporation announced a restructuring and leadership transition, resulting in the appointments of two executives to newly created roles: Savannah Wood as Chief Executive Officer and Erik Tilkemeier as Chief Operating Officer. The changes are expected to bring increased expertise and capacity to the organization. Erik has significant expertise in community development, economic development, community engagement, and facilitating collaborative efforts. He has direct Promise Zone experience, having worked with the San Diego Promise Zone. Silas Matchem will continue to direct the Promise Zone initiative, reporting directly to Mr. Tilkemeier. The Promise Zone (PZ) remains a key initiative of ECHO Housing and community partners. The new leadership expects to take an active role in supporting the PZ through long-term sustainability planning and facilitation of the partnership. The goal is for the PZ to continue beyond the original 10-year designation.
  
- 3. What, if any, changes have been made to the Promise Zone Partners' MOU? What is the expected impact of those changes?**
  - No changes have been made to the MOU.
  
- 4. Looking forward, what, if any changes are anticipated in the Promise Zone's Lead Organization, the UGLG, and key implementing and supporting partners between now and the end of the next year? How are these changes projected to affect the Promise Zone's operations?**
  - No changes are anticipated. The Evansville Promise Zone intends to continue to add implementation partners as deemed beneficial to the goals and objectives of the initiative.