



**Annual Report**  
October 1, 2022 to  
September 30, 2023  
*Submitted: November 30, 2023*

**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 (E-REP includes what was formerly 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, several other community partners are participating in 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, 2022 to Sept. 30, 2023)

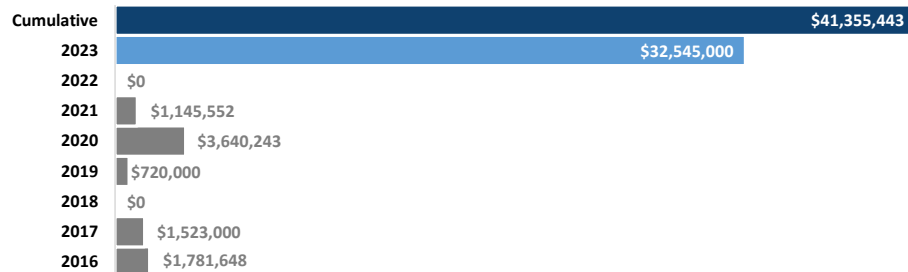
An overview of key milestones and accomplishments of the Evansville Promise Zone is provided below. Subsequent sections review progress for each of the specific goal areas. To understand the long-term impact, annual and cumulative data are presented as available.



### Direct and leveraged community investment

Significant community investment in the amount of **\$884,737,489** 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.

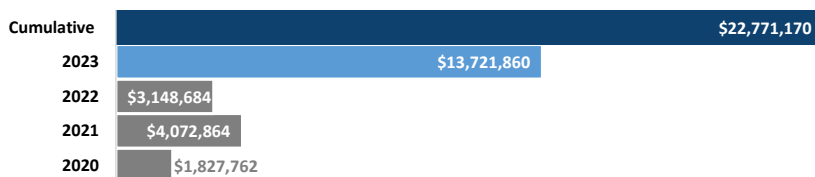
**\$41,355,443** in cumulative federal grant awards and allocations received (since June 2016)



- (Oct. 1, '22 to Sept. 30, '23): \$32,545,000 received
  - \$2,500,000 USDOE Full-Service Community Schools Grant (FY2022), Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation; \$30,000,000 Promise Neighborhoods Grant (FY2023), University of Evansville; \$45,000 Department of Housing & Urban Development Section 4 Capacity Building Grant, ECHO Housing Corporation.
- (Oct. 1, '21 to Sept. 30, '22): \$0 received
- \$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).
- (Oct. 1, '19 to Sept. 30, '20): \$3,640,243 received
  - \$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.
- (Oct. 1, '18 to Sept. 30, '19): \$720,000 received

- \$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).
- (Oct. 1, '17 to Sept. 30, '18): \$0 received
- (Oct. 1, '16 to Sept. 30, '17): \$1,523,000 received
  - \$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.
- (Jun. 6, '16 to Sept. 30, '16): \$1,781,648 received
  - \$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.

**\$22,771,170** in cumulative federal grant allocations supporting the Promise Zone (Note: New investment tracking beginning in October 2019 to September 2020 reporting period)

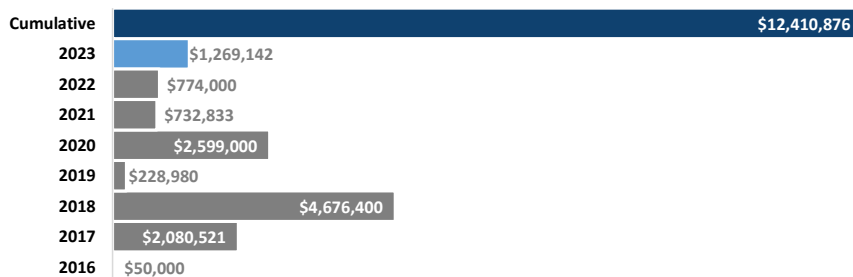


As a HUD Entitlement Community, the City of Evansville receives a direct allocation from the federal government to provide decent housing and economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income persons. While the funds are available city-wide, the city has flexibility in developing these programs, and 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 are provided below. In addition, other funding sources where the city received and allocated funds (e.g., American Rescue Plan) that address PZ priorities are also include below.

- (Oct. 1, '22 to Sept. 30, '23): \$13,721,860
  - \$13,331,860 in America Rescue Plan Funding (approximately 20% of City of Evansville's contribution) allocated to support projects within the Promise Zon (e.g., food insecurity, affordable housing, mental health).
  - \$390,000 allocated by the City of Evansville from the Community Wide Assessment Grant through the Indiana Finance Authority (IFA) and the Indiana Brownfields Program.
- (Oct. 1, '21 to Sept. 30, '22): \$3,148,684 allocated
  - \$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.

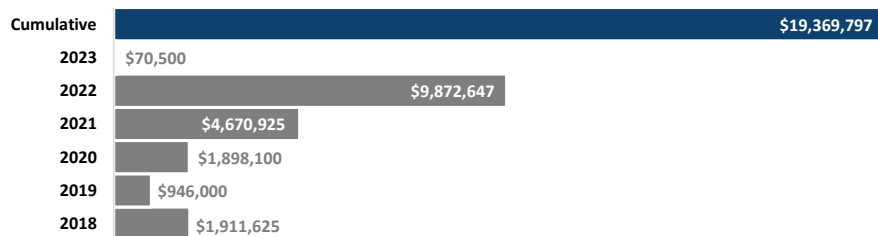
- \$322,270 Public Service Community Development Block Grant (Tri-State Food Bank, Meals-on-Wheels, YMCA, and CAPE are a few of the agencies who will provide services in food and nutrition, senior services, and youth services).
- \$2,243,253 Non-Public Service Community Development Block Grant (organizations 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).
- (Oct. 1, '20 to Sept. 30, '21): \$4,072,864 allocated
  - \$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).
- (Oct. 1, '19 to Sept. 30, '20): \$1,827,762 allocated
  - \$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 aid seniors and individuals with disabilities (Missing Pieces CDC, The ARC of Evansville).

**\$12,410,876** 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)



- (Oct. 1, '22 to Sept. 30, '23): \$1,269,142 received
  - PZ operations (\$124,000 administration, PZ Express, consulting; ECHO Housing).
  - Youth First and Forefront Therapy (\$645,142 received from the City of Evansville's allocation of the Indiana Opioid Settlement Fund; December 2022).
  - Housing Trust Fund is an annual allocation of \$500K and currently all funds have been allocated. In 2022, CAPE received \$200K for Cody Street; Habitat \$300K for 15 homes; HOPE of Evansville \$30,000 for down payment assistance for 15 homes; Aurora \$20,786.22 for emergency utilities and just recently Memorial \$500K for new rental units.
- (Oct. 1, '21 to Sept. 30, '22): \$774,000 received
  - 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).
- (Oct. 1, '20 to Sept. 30, '21): \$732,833 received
  - 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).
- (Oct. 1, '19 to Sept. 30, '20)\*: \$2,599,000 received
  - 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.
- (Oct. 1, '18 to Sept. 30, '19): \$228,980 received
- (Oct. 1, '17 to Sept. 30, '18): \$4,676,400 received
- (Oct. 1, '16 to Sept. 30, '17): \$2,080,521 received
- (Jun. 6, '16 to Sept. 30, '16): \$50,000 received

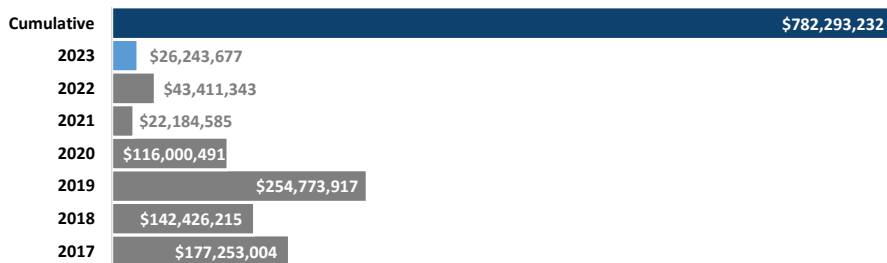
**\$19,369,797** in cumulative Promise Zone capital investments reported through the Southwest Indiana Small Business Development Center (through December 2021)



- (Oct. 1, '22 to Sept. 30, '23) Total 2022 Promise Zone capital investment (reported in January 2023 and includes portions of prior performance year) equals \$70,500; reported for 4 clients of the ISBDC (based on FY 2022).
- (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).

### **\$782,293,232** 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. An initial 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 was 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. In addition, the Evansville Regional Economic Partnership (E-REP) in collaboration with the Southwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (SWIRDA), Success Warrick County, and the Gibson County EDC, received \$50 million in funding from Indiana to advance transformational projects through the Regional Economic Acceleration + Development Initiative (READI). Several projects are expected to impact the PZ.*



- (Oct. 1, '22 to Sept. 30, '23): \$26,243,677
  - Note: Three tax credit applications submitted for development near or in the Promise Zone in July 2023 (Gratus Development, LLC (Jacobsville Homes), KCG Development, LLC (The Evanston), and BH Affordable, LLP (DaleHaven Estates).

- \$26,243,677 in water and sewer upgrades (Jan. 2022 to Dec. 2022; reported annually in January).
- (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 studios, 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

Cumulative	\$6,536,971
2023	\$0
2022	\$0
2021	\$2,304,654
2020	\$4,232,317



- **(Oct. 1, '22 to Sept. 30, '23): \$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, '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

Selected examples of public-private partnerships occurring during the performance period follow:

- 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 was approved for the development. Phase I of the project was completed in the previous reporting period and phase II was completed in the current reporting period.
- Dollar General opened a DG Market in the Jacobsville Neighborhood (PZ census tract 20). The store provides 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 routed \$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.
- ECHO Housing Corporation broke ground on Promise Home, which will offer 27, 1-bedroom units of permanent supportive housing. The property will feature on-site case management to support the needs of tenants who have previously experienced homelessness. The project is made possible with financial support from the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority, the City of Evansville, Department of Metropolitan Development, Centerpoint Energy, United Way of Southwestern Indiana, and the Greater Evansville Relief Fund.
- Memorial Community Development Corporation has now completed 5 of the 10 planned new homes of Memorial Villas, which are funded by the City's Affordable Housing Trust Fund and HUD HOME Funds.
- Habitat for Humanity of Evansville continues to meet its goal of building 20 new homes each year. In 2022-2023, the Jacobsville neighborhood was the focus. In 2023-2024, Habitat will focus on the southside neighborhoods. Habitat received funding from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund along with HOPE of Evansville, which will provide down payment assistance for Habitat clients.
- House Investments broke ground in January 2023 on a 52-unit affordable housing complex for seniors in the Jacobsville area. Baker Flats, partially funded with HOME dollars, will offer affordable housing to seniors 55 and above in studios and one-two bedroom units across from the Forge on Main.
- TruVest completed two new homes, with another in process, through funding from the affordable housing trust fund.

**Commented [A1]:** Should this be moved to the housing section?

- ECHO Housing Corporation and several other Promise Zone stakeholder organizations were invited to partner with the City of Evansville on a U.S. Department of Transportation Reconnecting Communities planning grant application. The \$800,000 two-year project will result in a plan to reconnect Jacobsville, a Promise Zone neighborhood, to downtown Evansville by mitigating the physical divide caused by the Lloyd Expressway. The focus will be on multi-modal mobility and creating economic opportunity.



## Communication and awareness of goals and objectives

- The Evansville Promise Zone director continues to participate in the National Coalition of Promise Zones. Efforts are being made to strengthen awareness of the Promise Zone's value and importance in supporting communities.
- Workgroups reviewed goals and outcomes from the original PZ evaluation plan to ensure relevancy and identify specific areas of focus for subsequent years of the designation. These priorities are outlined below in the overview of goals and progress.
- Evaluation briefs specific to each goal area were developed by the Promise Zone data and evaluation partner and shared with each workgroup. The briefs outline each goal area performance measure, the desired target, and current progress.
- 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., small business mapping).
- The Evansville Redevelopment Commission (ERC) allocated funds from the Jacobsville TIF to hire a community development director for the Jacobsville Area Community Corporation. This director will assist Jacobsville in implementing strategies from the soon to be updated Redevelopment Master Plan.



## 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 community leaders coordinating city resources to enhance livability within the Zone.
- The number of implementation partners (with signed MOUs) remains at 27.
- Two VISTAs served as neighborhood support specialists and assist 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 a direct example, Promise Zone partners established a youth mentoring program in two of the Promise Zone schools. To support this work, the City of Evansville allocated \$140,000 from CDBG-CV funds to ECHO Housing.
- ECHO Housing Corporation received a competitive HUD Section 4 Capacity Building grant, through Enterprise Community Partners (Intermediary), to increase the organization's capacity in community development work. The funding allows ECHO to commit 10 hours of their Chief Operations Officer's time per week for 18 months to Promise Zone operations. It also funds professional development for organization leadership and a facilitated strategic planning process for the Board of Directors and staff.
- In April 2023, the University of Evansville was awarded a US Department of Education Promise Neighborhood (PN) Grant along with major partners (Evansville Regional Economic Partnership, Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation, Promise Zone), and 21 other community partners. The grant award was \$30 million with \$32 million identified as matching funds. The grant focuses on implementing a pipeline of solutions in four areas: early learning, K-12, postsecondary, and neighborhood and community. The geographic area overlaps with 80% of census tracts included in the PZ. The grant involved considerable planning among partners over a 12-month period. The Promise Zone director participated on the core planning team and assisted with raising funds to support grant development. Data from the PZ survey was also used to document need within the area.
- In addition to the grant award, PN planning efforts were leveraged to support the development of a second Full-service Community School grant application which was awarded to the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation. This second full-service grant serves four EVSC schools located in or near the Promise Zone (i.e., Glenwood, Lincoln, Lodge, and Bosse High School). The new full-service grant complements the original full-service grant currently serving four additional schools located in or near the Promise Zone (i.e., Caze, Fairlawn, McGary, and Harrison). These initiatives are directly aligned with PZ priorities and will assist in reaching PZ goals.
- Five broadband access points continue to provide free internet service throughout the Promise Zone with funding from the city. A monthly usage report shows approximately 1,700 to 1,800 unique users each month with over 250-350 people using the service daily.



## Community engagement

- Most workgroup meetings have continued to occur as hybrid (virtual and in-person).
- Social media has been used effectively to communicate with residents and partners. Push notifications continue to be sent out through the PZ app.
- New chairs have been appointed to restart the community engagement and education workgroups and to replace outgoing chairs for the economic development and housing

workgroups. In addition, workgroups have been encouraged to invite residents to participate. VISTA's have assisted with canvassing and getting the word out.



## 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, workgroups have made progress towards identified goals. A key priority will be to assess the relevancy of the initial goals and to mobilize initiatives to address important aspects of each goal area. Most workgroups have new workgroup chairs that will be tasked first with revitalizing the workgroups.
- (2) Strengthen communication among workgroups.** Most workgroup meetings and PZ Chair meetings operated as hybrid meetings (virtually and in-person). The PZ director also meets with chairs regularly. However, workgroup meetings were not consistently attended. There is a need to strengthen communication among the PZ, workgroup members and residents of the PZ.
- (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 development, financial literacy education, increasing affordable housing, increasing participation in afterschool programs, and addressing food insecurity. Collaboration among workgroup members will continue to focus on navigating challenges while addressing emerging community needs.
- (4) Continue efforts to expand public-private partnerships.** The Evansville PZ 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. The Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund will be reviewed to see how it can be leveraged to support Promise Zone residents.
- (5) Strengthen tracking of leveraged investments.** The Evansville PZ 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 (e.g., funds awarded by Welborn Baptist Foundation, United Way of Southwestern Indiana). 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. It will be important to initiate this formal process as the (CDFI) Fund provides additional opportunities for leveraged funding. The challenges in tracking investments have primarily been the result of limited operational capacity. This will be a continued priority for this year.

- (6) Identify and secure funding for Promise Zone infrastructure, growth, initiatives, and sustainability.** Prior to the Promise Neighborhood award, Evansville PZ partners experienced limited success in obtaining federal funding and allocations to support specific PZ infrastructure and initiatives. The Southwest Indiana region has been more successful with Indiana's regional funding initiatives that have supported numerous projects located within the PZ. The City of Evansville has provided administrative support for PZ operations and select projects. 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. While PZ 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 also continuing efforts to navigate challenges associated with the decline in federal entities offering preference points. A key strategy will be the use 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 PZ 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, working, and maintaining their health. A key accomplishment in prior years involved the installation of five broadband access points throughout the PZ. 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. The city intends to provide funding to continue the service at the five original beacons through 2024 while identifying additional sites to expand the service to key areas of the Zone. As the CDBG-CV funding is expected to expire soon, sustaining the program past 2024 will be a priority for the partners.
- (8) Build awareness and continue to engage more residents in Promise Zone initiatives.** The PZ app and social media (Twitter, Facebook) efforts continue to be successful at reaching a portion of residents. Continued efforts will focus on communication and resident engagement to ensure the people living in the zone drive the work. This includes increased awareness of the Evansville PZ by organizations within the community and inviting residents to participate in workgroups. Further, the redevelopment work within Jacobsville and the revitalized community engagement workgroup will also serve to strengthen community engagement.





## Considerations

As the Evansville Promise Zone (PZ) works to address the above priorities, several considerations are recognized.

- There is a need to identify additional funding sources to support sustainability of the Promise Zone and support goal workgroups as they implement plans. This may be hindered by challenges associated with the decline in federal entities offering preference points.
- The recent Promise Neighborhood (PN) grant award was a significant accomplishment for the Evansville community. PZ leadership has met with PN leadership and is committed to collaboration. Given the similarities in name and some overlap with intended results, it will be important to develop communication strategies that help residents understand the priorities of the two initiatives and benefits to the community. It is also important to recognize and continue to provide resources to the PZ census tracts and schools that are not within the Promise Neighborhood grant.
- As the PZ approaches the last three years of the initial designation, emphasis will need to be placed on keeping partners engaged in workgroups and focused on core goals and objectives.
- Nationally, round 1 and round 2 of PZ designations are coming to an end. As a round 3 designation, partners have expressed concern with fewer federal resources being used to support designations and the overall perceived relevance of the initiative at a national level.

## 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 and reported in the November 2022 report. The survey is administered every other year to monitor changes and trends. The next survey administration is scheduled for spring 2024 and will be included in the 2024 report. This timeline differs slightly from previous years to coincide with the Promise Neighborhood survey and avoid overburdening residents who would be included in both surveys.

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 what was formerly 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 continues to meet and is chaired by the Business Services and Communications Manager of Southwest Indiana Workforce, which promotes alignment with other initiatives.
- Old National Bank provided funding for the Old National Real Life Finance program. The program will assist up to 1,000 residents in the Promise Zone wanting to increase their financial literacy.
- Increased access to job skills education and training:
  - *WorkOne hosted 12 job fairs for area residents and 28 individual employer hiring events (June 1, 2022 to May 31, 2023). Participation in job fairs ranged from 5 to 32 residents, with an average of 11 residents attending each job fair. A total of 23 residents participated in the hiring events.*
  - *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 2023, with a total of 1,134 residents receiving these services over the last six years. During the most recent reporting period, 176 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 584 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.).*
- 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 38*

*participants attended the program and 16 continued to attend one-on-one housing counseling through HOPE of Evansville. During the Comprehensive Financial Coaching program participants engage in intensive financial and credit coaching program and can receive up to \$500 towards rent, utilities, or debt reduction.*

- Access to internet:
  - *Five broadband access points continue to operate throughout the Promise Zone. While increased access is a focus within job development, this work involved collaboration across workgroups.*
- Increased access to transportation supporting resident employment:
  - *Missing Pieces Community Development Corporation operated the Missing Pieces Employment Express to provide Evansville residents with transportation to employers. Collectively, the program has funding to provide transportation to 392 riders, 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 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 (E-REP), Southwest Indiana Small Business Development Center, Junior Achievement of Southwest Indiana, Downtown Evansville – Economic Improvement District, Downtown Evansville – Development Corporation, and Evansville Trails Coalition

### Milestones and Accomplishments:

- The Forge on Main is a multi-family and retail mixed-use development with 15,000 sq. ft of commercial space in Jacobsville (PZ census tract 20) planned in two structures. Phase II of the project was completed in the current reporting period.
- A new market opened in 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 provides 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 provided \$500,000 to Dollar General, via ECHO Housing Corp. (Promise Zone Lead Organization), for the build-out of DG Market. As a requirement of the grant, the DG Market must maintain designated space for grocery items including fresh fruits and vegetables. 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.
- ECHO Housing Corporation broke ground on Promise Home, which will offer 27, 1-bedroom units of permanent supportive housing. The property will feature on-site case management to support the needs of tenants who have previously experienced homelessness. The project is made possible with financial support from the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority, the City of Evansville, Department of Metropolitan Development, Centerpoint Energy, United Way of Southwestern Indiana and the Greater Evansville Relief Fund.
- The City of Evansville was allocated \$390,000 from the Community Wide Assessment Grant through the Indiana Finance Authority (IFA) and the Indiana Brownfields Program to identify and investigate sites that may be contaminated with petroleum products or hazardous substances for the purpose of addressing potential brownfield contamination. The IFA has hired Cash Waggner & Associates to provide the assessments and reporting for the Evansville area. The City identified a project team to help identify sites, potentially prioritize sites for assessment, and coordinate site access as well as assist in hosting public meetings.

- Upgraded and expanded infrastructure capacity to guide increased economic activity:
- *The Akin Park Story Trail was installed in December 2022, partially funded by the Indiana DOE and Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library. The Story Trail is a trail on a smaller scale for children up to 12 years. It is a feature that has book pages to promote physical activity and literacy within a local park.*
  - *The Upgrade Bike Share added a new station within the PZ, Walnut St./Bob Jones Way, across from the Double Tree Hotel at the corner and adjacent to the trail. Five Explore Evansville bikes were placed there. Most of the Upgrade Bike Share stations are in the PZ area. Since the program's relaunch in 2021, 1549 people have signed up to be members taking 1495 rides. Upgrade Bike Share ride fees have not been increased to ensure affordable health, recreation, and alternative transportation for community members.*
  - *Since the Promise Zone designation in 2016, a total of 7.81 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. Currently, Phase 3 of the project, which is within the Promise Zone is not complete, but once finished, will connect to Vann Avenue and Downtown Evansville.*
    - *Story Trail-Akin Park (.04 miles, 2022).*
    - *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.*

- Evansville Trails Coalition (ETC) identified several notable accomplishments:
  - *ETC and the Evansville Parks and Recreation Department have formed a formal partnership as of October 2023. The highlight of this agreement allows ETC to relocate to the lower level of the Pagoda Pavilion, a prime location along the Greenway and within the Promise Zone.*
  - *ETC hosted a series of Urban Hikes within the Promise Zone in 2023. Participants were able to experience urban hikes and learn about local trails such as: North Main St., Virginia St., and the Bob Jones Way multi-use trails. In addition, participants hiked along the Pigeon Creek Greenway and different corridors. Urban Hikes offer participants firsthand experience about trails and trail etiquette (safety). Roughly over 100 participated in our Urban Hikes in 2023.*
  - *ETC continues its efforts to connect several smaller trail segments near the Wesselman Park (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.*
  - *ETC partners with the National Center for Safe Routes to School (NCSRTS), the agency coordinating the Walk and Bike to School Day events. Like NCSRTS, ETC is committed to empowering our community to make walking and bicycling to school a safe, appealing, preferred choice for families and children. ETC partnered with Caze Elementary School (PZ focus school) to participate in National Bike to School Day and National Walk to School Day in 2023.*
- \$26,243,677 in water and sewer upgrades (January 2022 to December 2023; reported annually in January). This represents 73% of encumbered funds associated with overall planned water/sewer upgrades in the Promise Zone (as of January 2023).
- A total of two new businesses receiving support from the Southwest Indiana Small Business Development Center were added in the Promise Zone in 2022 (January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022), which represents a total of 48 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).
- A total of \$70,500 in capital investments were provided to businesses located in the Promise Zone. This consisted of four 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 10 compared to baseline (20 certified minority, women, and veteran owned businesses as of 2023).

#### 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 with the

City of Evansville accessed through support of the Southwest Indiana Small Business and Development Center.

❖ Promote and communicate the new availability of CDFI funding for entrepreneurs and small businesses.

- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Continue the efforts of the Community Wide Assessment Grant project team to identify brownfield sites and prioritize sites for assessment.
- ❖ 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.

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## 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:

- A new chair for the PZ education workgroup was appointed in 2023 and will revitalize efforts of the partners to provide initiatives to support goals of the PZ along with coordinating efforts with the newly funded Promise Neighborhood solutions.
- An afterschool coalition continues to meet monthly to coordinate high quality service delivery and strengthen collaboration among partners.
- 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 an 18% 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 2023, 63% (24/38) 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 38 locations.*
  - *Building Blocks is continuing 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 initial 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. Year two data are pending analysis.*
- Progress is being made toward increasing social emotional adjustment and engagement in learning for students enrolled in schools located in the Promise Zone.
  - *Students receiving social work services (2022-2023) through Youth First decreased individual behavioral concerns by 23% as reported by students and by 6% as reported by teachers.*

- *Schools located in the Promise Zone have reported increases in suspensions and absences in 2021-22 compared to baseline (2015-16). While improvements were noted in prior years for suspensions, absences have remained steady and have grown to be more prevalent in the last years. Educators and partners attribute these changes to negative effects of the pandemic, which aligns with the national trend. Importantly, several initiatives are being undertaken to address these changes (e.g., school district attendance initiatives, case managers). Both Full-Service Community Schools grants and the Promise Neighborhood grant include a focus on reversing these effects.*
- A total of 436 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.
- A key priority has been a focus on increasing student enrollment in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholars program. The program provides free in-state tuition assistance to at-risk youth. Beginning in summer 2023, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholars program moved to an automatic sign-up process. This policy change will positively impact a larger number of eligible students attending PZ schools.
- In September 2022, the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation received a second Full-Service Community School (FSCS) 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 (Glenwood, Lincoln, Lodge) are located directly in the Promise Zone, and one high school (Bosse 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. This grant will complement the original FSCS grant received in 2019, which is providing services in three additional PZ schools (Caze, Fairlawn, McGary).
- In April 2023, the University of Evansville was awarded a \$30 million 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 proposed pipeline of solutions will provide considerable focus on the goals of the education workgroup.
- The PZ established a youth mentoring program in two of the Promise Zone schools. The City of Evansville allocated \$140,000 from CBDG-CV funds to support this work.

### Top Priorities for the Next Year:



- ❖ Continue to implement primary activities associated with expanding high quality early childhood programming, PBIS implementation, and expanding involvement in afterschool and summer programs.
- ❖ Increase data and information on early childhood options to gain insight into their capacity, as well as the different options available to residents.
- ❖ Continue the youth mentoring program in partnership with two of the PZ schools.
- ❖ Focus on increasing attendance and supporting reading achievement within programs and services offered to PZ students.



## 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 28% overall decrease in crime from baseline to 2022. 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. This survey will be administered again in spring 2024.
- A total of 331 blighted properties within the Promise Zone, which are often magnets for crime, have been removed since receiving the designation (Based on current and prior data reported by the Building Commission, LandBank, and the Blight Elimination Project; data do not include blighted properties removed by private owners). Approximately 7% (24) of these properties were removed during the current reporting period.
- A total of 237 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 2022 to December 2022).
- A total of 28 residents participated in the Evansville Police Department's Crime Prevention Multi-Housing (CFMH) program, and 38 residents participated in the Citizens Academy in the most recent evaluation performance period (January 2022 to December 2022).
- The crime workgroup has provided support to the Woodlawn Park area. Specifically, PZ worked with the Evansville Housing Authority and HUD to allow residents to leave their lease early to move to a different location due to issues within the apartment complex.
- New chairs have been leading the PZ 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.
- Promise Kids is a partnership between ECHO Housing Corporation, Young & Established, Lincoln and McGary Schools/Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation (EVSC), and Southern Indiana Mentoring Association (SIMA). Funded in part through funding received by ECHO Housing Corporation from the City of Evansville Department of Metropolitan Development, the partnership provides support to select students from Lincoln School and McGary Middle School by providing individual mentoring through

SIMA at Lincoln School and Young & Established at McGary. From April 2023 through October 2023, 56 students participated in mentoring representing a total of 270 mentoring contacts. The program will continue through the end of the year.

### 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, Urban Seeds, Junior League of Evansville, Purdue Extension, St. Vincent Health, United Way of Southwestern Indiana, Vanderburgh County Health Department, Welborn Baptist Foundation, Forefront Therapy, 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.
- The Jr. League of Evansville Mobile Market successfully launched. The Mobile Market travels once a week to different neighborhoods, gives out free lunches to children, and sells groceries. The groceries are discounted for families receiving SNAP benefits.
- Urban Seed continues to support SNAP and an increase of Double Bucks at 3 farmers markets in Evansville during the summer months.
- ECHO Housing received funding through the Promise Neighborhood grant to support healthy food access. Planning is underway in how funds can be used to support PZ health workgroup goals.
- The opioid workgroup completed substantial brainstorming, preparation, and submission of a \$1.2 million dollar grant proposal to Indiana surrounding the Opioid Settlement Funds grant. This was in partnership with Youth First with Forefront Community Therapy as the lead author as well as the City of Evansville supporting the initiative with a dedicated 50% match on funds. Although not awarded, the Youth First and Forefront partnership received a \$645,142 grant from the City of Evansville through the Opioid Settlement Funds opportunity with evidence-based multidisciplinary services through mental health social work, physical therapy, and occupational therapy. This project surrounds prevention, intervention, and sustainability efforts to combat the opioid epidemic throughout the lifespan. Funds will go to support ongoing Youth First programming in the school systems as well as ongoing sliding fee scale programs for the uninsured and underinsured through Forefront's outpatient services. Forefront will also lead the development and provision of services to mothers and babies dealing with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome. This grant will support clinician specialization training that will lead to driving community and provider education with an opioid symposium and quarterly educational seminars to parents, teachers, and coaches to improve health

education, screening, and prevention. Research will be supported on these educational efforts to assess the efficacy and aim to improve sustainability efforts.

- 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, Dollar General opened a DG Market in the Jacobsville Neighborhood (PZ census tract 20). The store provides dairy, fresh meats, fresh fruits and vegetables, frozen and canned vegetables, grains, and other foods—in addition to everyday household items. The search for a grocery store had been a high priority over the last four years after the 2018 closure of the last remaining full-grocery store in the PZ.
- 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 to increase access, provide nutrition education, and build understanding of trauma-informed nutrition practices.
- Urban Seeds received a sub-grant from the Northwest Indiana Food Council as part of their USDA funded Regional Food System Partnership Program. The program increases access to locally grown foods by encouraging farmers to scale production for direct retail sale.

### Top Priorities for the Next Year:



- ❖ Continue to implement primary activities associated with connecting residents with healthcare and promoting a healthy environment.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Opioid workgroup will support programs and strategies connected with the Opioid settlement allocation.



## 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. In 2022, HOUSE approved a strategic plan which targets the Central and Near-East housing submarkets and households earning \$40,000 or less. The increased activity by HOUSE over the past year has gained a reputation across the State of Indiana as a leader in collaborative modeling for addressing housing issues. Objectives are to:
  - Produce 385 new affordable housing units by December 31, 2026.
  - Repair, rehab or replace 555 housing units by December 31, 2026.
  - Improve communication with stakeholders to advocate and educate for residents facing housing crisis.
  - Provide financial and housing related education and resources for residents.
- The City will submit a \$10 million dollar request to HUD's Pathways to Removing Obstacles to Housing (PRO Housing) grant program to provide backbone support to HOUSE's network and implement initiatives identified in its strategic plan.
- A total of three low-income tax credit applications were submitted in 2023 for development near or in the PZ in July 2023 (Gratus Development, LLC (Jacobsville Homes), KCG Development, LLC (The Evanston), and BH Affordable, LLP (DaleHaven Estates)).
- The new Promise Neighborhood grant will provide funding to ECHO Housing to fund a position to address housing policy within the area.
- Blight elimination efforts have continued at varying levels. Based on current and prior data reported by the Building Commission, LandBank, and the Blight Elimination Project, the following changes have occurred (Note: Data do not include blighted properties removed by private owners).
  - *Of the 655 blighted properties originally identified for elimination within the Promise Zone (2016), 109 have been removed. 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 331 blighted properties have been removed since receiving the designation (24 during the current reporting period).*



- A total of 545 (135 of which are in the current reporting period) 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 [2022]). 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 exceeds 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 2023=180; baseline=140; data for this performance measure are based on available units from the 2023 calendar year). Despite the overall increase in 2018, this number has remained consistent for the last five years.
- A 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:



- ❖ Submit grant application to HUD's PRO Housing program to evaluate, develop and implement housing strategies to facilitate the production and preservation of affordable housing.
- ❖ Pursue EPA and other funding to address lead remediation and infrastructure needs within the area.
- ❖ HOUSE will collaborate to ensure that the \$10 million of allocated ARPA funds are expended prior to the December 31, 2026 deadline. Should awarded projects not be able to expend their allocation prior to the deadline, HOUSE will work to identify other projects that could fulfill that requirement, with a focus on neighborhoods within or near the Promise Zone and households earning less than \$40,000 per year.

- ❖ HOUSE will coordinate services among its partners to create an Empowerment Center that provides low-to-moderate income households programs in financial education, credit coaching, housing counseling and downpayment assistance to help individuals and families to become self-reliant enabling them to secure safe, affordable housing.
- ❖ HOUSE will continue to work with the Building Commission to target homeowners receiving notice of violations to connect owners with resources to make needed repairs. Most 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.
- ❖ HOUSE will make a concerted effort to identify and secure funding for blight elimination, either through rehabilitation or demolition. Blight has been identified as an ongoing problem in the Promise Zone, contributing to low property values, difficulty attracting new investment, and a general detraction from the desirability of Promise Zone neighborhoods.



## Increase Community Engagement

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

### Milestones and Accomplishments:

- A new chair has been appointed to restart the community engagement workgroup. In addition, workgroups have been encouraged to invite residents to participate.
- A Promise Zone convening was held in June 2023. Federal partners provided information on available federal resources and strategies for accessing them. A pre-meeting was held with workgroup chairs and members, along with federal partners to share information about goals and objectives and identify areas of support.
- 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 continues to maintain an app. The app allows residents and partners to share and connect to community resources. The tool also assists in messaging key events.
- Two VISTAs provided support during the current performance period. VISTAs served as neighborhood support specialists and were primarily responsible for assisting the Promise Zone in achieving goals. VISTAs attended neighborhood association meetings, assisted workgroup chairs, and assisted 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 workgroups and in the programs and services offered within the Promise Zone (e.g., Fair Shot).
- ❖ Continue implementing communication and marketing plans based on the Promise Zone app.
- ❖ Continue to effectively utilize social media (Twitter, Facebook Live).

## **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 30, 2023

### **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 fulfilling 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?**
  - No changes have been made in the current reporting period.
- 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.