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ECHO Housing & Community Development Receives \$1 Million Grant to advance locally founded E3 Initiative

Evansville, IN – ECHO Housing & Community Development has been selected as one of only five grantees statewide to receive a \$1 million award through the Mobile Crisis Accelerator Program (MCAP) to expand the E3 Initiative, a locally founded cross-sector crisis response model.

The E3 Initiative—Educate, Encourage, Enforce—was originally developed in partnership with the Evansville Police Department and Southwestern Behavioral Healthcare and has since grown to include a network of community partners such as the Vanderburgh County Sheriff’s Office, Aurora, Brentwood Springs, United Caring Services, Evansville Rescue Mission, and many others. Together, these partners are building a more responsive, coordinated, and effective system for individuals experiencing crisis.

- Educate – equipping community members, service providers, and first responders with knowledge and tools to prevent and de-escalate crises.
- Encourage – fostering collaboration, building trust, and offering supportive pathways to recovery and stability.
- Enforce – ensuring safety and accountability while connecting individuals to appropriate treatment, housing, and long-term support.

This new investment will allow ECHO and its partners to expand the E3 model into a 24/7 Mobile Crisis Response network. Teams of trained peer specialists and crisis responders will be available at any time of day or night to respond to calls from 988, 911, and community partners, providing on-site de-escalation, assessment, and direct connections to housing, treatment, and supportive services.

“Many people in crisis are not only facing mental health challenges but also homelessness, substance use, or other barriers that cannot be solved in a single moment,” said Savannah Whicker, CEO of ECHO Housing & Community Development. “This investment allows us to build on what our community has already started through E3—meeting people where they are, in the moment of crisis, and walking alongside them to ensure long-term success.”

What This Means for Vanderburgh County

- A locally founded successful model is now expanding with state investment.
- 24/7 mobile crisis response paired with housing navigation and long-term wraparound supports.
- Stronger coordination among E3 partners to ensure safety, stability, and recovery.
- Direct assistance navigating services such as shelter, housing, mental health care, and substance use treatment.
- Potential for expansion to additional counties as the model grows.

Vanderburgh County, including Evansville, faces one of the highest per-capita rates of homelessness in Indiana alongside significant unmet behavioral health needs. The E3 Initiative's expansion to 24/7 coverage represents a major step forward in addressing these intersecting crises through a collaborative, community-driven approach.

ECHO joins four other grantees — serving Lake, Porter, St. Joseph, and Allen counties — in the statewide MCAP cohort, coordinated by Black Onyx Management.

For more information about ECHO's Mobile Crisis Response, visit <https://echohousing.org/e3-initiative/>

About ECHO Housing & Community Development

ECHO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit Community Development Corporation with a mission to improve lives by reducing barriers to housing, social wellbeing, and economic opportunity. ECHO operates eight homeless service programs across the housing continuum, including emergency shelter, permanent supportive housing, and affordable housing. In addition to addressing housing insecurity, ECHO serves as the backbone organization of the Collective Action Network (CAN), a regional cross-sector initiative focused on collaborative, resident-informed strategies that address the root causes of community challenges. *website: www.echohousing.org*

About the Mobile Crisis Accelerator Program (MCAP)

MCAP provides grant funding, training, and technical assistance to Mobile Crisis Teams across Indiana, ensuring timely, community-based crisis response for all Hoosiers. Learn more at www.mcapindiana.org.