INDYEAST ECONOMIC MOBILITY DISTRICT

John Boner Neighborhood Centers

Lilly Endowment Inc. | IndyEast Economic Mobility District Proposal

Executive Summary

Indianapolis' Eastside has demonstrated that sustained, place-based investment — when guided by community leadership and aligned across systems — can reverse disinvestment and expand opportunity. Building on decades of collaboration led by John Boner Neighborhood Centers, Edna Martin Christian Center, Southeast Community Services, and a broad network of public, private, and philanthropic partners, the IndyEast Economic Mobility District (IEMD) represents the next phase of this work: A coordinated, District-wide strategy to stabilize families, strengthen neighborhoods, and create clear pathways to economic mobility and generational wealth.

The IEMD is grounded in a clear theory of change: economic mobility depends on the intentional alignment of housing stability, workforce opportunity, and local economic development. Too often, investments in these areas operate in silos, limiting impact and placing the burden of coordination on residents. The IEMD breaks down these silos by integrating Housing Innovation, Workforce Development, and Economic Development strategies within a single, place-based framework — ensuring that progress in one area reinforces outcomes in the others.

Housing Innovation provides the foundation for mobility by stabilizing families and preserving affordability amid rising market pressure. Through tools such as predevelopment grants, owner-occupied repair funding, housing stability navigators, and the IndyEast Homeownership Initiative, the District will expand affordable housing supply, prevent displacement, and support long-term wealth building. Stable housing enables residents to pursue training, maintain employment, and invest in long-term goals, while strengthening community development capacity ensures that affordable housing production and preservation can scale sustainably.

Workforce Development builds on this stability by connecting residents to living-wage employment through employer-aligned training, paid work experience, and comprehensive supports. Industry-recognized credentials, training stipends, and barrier-reduction funds are delivered through trusted neighborhood-based Centers for Working Families, ensuring programs reflect the realities of residents' lives. The Employer Champions model directly links training to hiring demand, while retention coaching and coordinated employer engagement improve placement, advancement, and long-term job stability.

Economic Development reinforces both housing and workforce outcomes by strengthening local businesses, activating vacant land, and ensuring that investment generates community benefit. Through a contractor-focused Revolving Loan Fund, local hiring incentives, and a formal partnership with Indy Economic Development, Inc., the IEMD will align access to capital, workforce pipelines, and redevelopment strategy. This approach ensures that local businesses can participate in District redevelopment, residents can access jobs created by new investment, and economic growth circulates within the community.

Together, these strategies form a cyclical system: housing stability enables workforce participation; workforce readiness attracts and supports employers; and economic development generates jobs and reinvestment that sustain neighborhoods over time.

Implementation is guided by a strong governance and accountability structure — anchored by the Neighborhood Center Alliance and Partner Consortium — and supported by integrated data and evaluation systems that track outcomes across programs and inform continuous improvement.

The IEMD is not a collection of standalone programs, but a coordinated ecosystem designed to produce lasting, inclusive change. By aligning housing, workforce, and economic development investments at the District level, the IEMD offers a scalable, evidence-based model for advancing economic mobility in communities facing entrenched barriers — while ensuring that growth benefits the residents who call the Eastside home.

History and Mission

Over the past two decades, IndyEast partners have worked to restore prosperity after decades of disinvestment, job loss, and population decline. Through leadership from John Boner Neighborhood Centers (JBNC), Edna Martin Christian Center (EMCC), Southeast Community Services (SECS), and a network of committed partners, our neighborhoods have leveraged public, private, and philanthropic investments to deliver visible, lasting change. Landmark initiatives such as the Super Bowl Legacy Project and the IndyEast Promise Zone mobilized nearly $400 million in combined investments, expanding housing opportunities, improving infrastructure, and strengthening resident engagement and organizational capacity.

Building on that foundation, the IEMD represents the next evolution of this work: a bold, place-based initiative designed to strengthen communities, stabilize families, and create equitable pathways to economic mobility. The vision of the IEMD is a vibrant, inclusive, and welcoming District in which all families have access to the tools and resources needed to achieve economic mobility and build generational wealth.

The IEMD was created to ensure every Eastside neighbor has the opportunity to build wealth that stays local and lasts for generations. Its theory of change centers on stabilizing neighborhoods and intentionally directing investment back into long-neglected corridors in ways that benefit existing residents. By aligning partners, capital, and community-driven strategies, the District works to remove structural barriers, unlock opportunity, and strengthen the conditions that allow families and businesses to thrive. Grounded in decades of collaboration and guided by community voice, the IEMD reflects a proven commitment to inclusive growth and lays out the foundation for lasting, shared prosperity — built by and for the people who live here.

To advance this work, the IEMD is structured around seven interconnected pillars that together support neighborhood stability, wealth creation, and long-term economic mobility: Housing Innovation, Asset Building, Entrepreneurship and Business Enterprises, Lifelong Education, Economic Development, Social Enterprise, and Workforce Development. While all seven pillars are essential to the District's holistic approach, this proposal focuses intentionally on three core pillars — Housing Innovation, Economic Development, and Workforce Development — where partners are prepared to move from planning to implementation and where near-term investment can drive measurable impact.

The IEMD theory of action translates this vision into coordinated on-the-ground implementation. Grounded in data-driven evaluation and sustained community engagement, IEMD strategies respond directly to resident-identified needs and evolving market conditions. To operationalize this work, partners organized into cross-sector workgroups aligned with the three core focus areas as well as Evaluation and Coordination. These workgroups assessed current conditions, identified gaps, and developed scalable, long-term solutions that strengthen systems and create clear, connected pathways to economic mobility for residents.

Indianapolis' Eastside is at a critical inflection point. After decades of disinvestment, the District is experiencing renewed interest, investment, and redevelopment pressure—bringing both opportunity and risk. Rising housing costs, increased property values, and accelerating commercial activity threaten to displace long-time residents if growth is not intentionally shaped to benefit the community. At the same time, employers across key industries face persistent labor shortages, while residents continue to encounter barriers to stable employment, asset-building, and wealth creation. Years of planning and coordination have positioned the IEMD to respond decisively at this moment: partners are aligned, strategies are defined, and systems are ready to move from planning to implementation. Investment now ensures that growth strengthens—not fractures—neighborhoods, locking in affordability, connecting residents to quality jobs, and building a local economy that generates lasting, inclusive prosperity.

Target Geography

The IEMD footprint resides within the Eastside and Southeast communities of Indianapolis. Specifically, the target area includes the neighborhoods commonly known as Martindale-Brightwood, the Near Eastside, Fountain Square, Twin Aire, and parts of the Southeast side. This ~15.8 square mile area is the home of approximately 60,327 residents (as of the 2023 U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimates) and follows the following boundaries: I-65/70 and the Monon Trail to the west, Raymond Street to the south, Emerson Avenue to the east, and 30th Street to the north – inclusive of parcels along both sides of each boundary street and avenue. The target area encompasses the total area of the IndyEast Promise Zone, superimposed Opportunity Zones, and surrounding neighborhoods.

Housing Innovation

The Housing Innovation workgroup, facilitated by Intend Indiana and JBNC with support from Community Solutions, brought together a coalition of 19 affordable housing partners, community centers, and technical experts to coordinate strategy, align capacity, and develop innovative housing programs within the IEMD. Over the course of five months, the group evolved from foundational coordination and assessments to designing actionable housing strategies, programs, and financial tools aimed at enhancing stability, homeownership, and neighborhood resilience. With the large working group meeting six times and six specialized subgroups convening 16 times, the Housing Innovation workgroup developed targeted deliverables across the following areas: (1) Predevelopment Grant Program, (2) IndyEast Homeownership Initiative, (3) Owner Occupied Repair Fund, (4) Housing Stability Navigators, (5) Housing Stability for School Success Replication, (6) Opportunity Savings Program, and (7) Community Development Capacity Building.

The Housing Innovation workgroup's deliverables are grounded in key findings from CommunityScale's IEMD 2025 Housing Study. The study highlighted that while households earning the District median income can generally afford local housing, they struggle to access homes priced at the citywide median. Non-white and senior residents face particularly high risks of displacement. Demographic and income trends show the fastest growth among higher-income and White households, alongside an increase in seniors and single-person households, many of whom are low-income. Overall household growth is projected to increase by 10.4% by 2035, primarily driven by residents aged 35–49. On the supply side, more than half of the area's housing stock was built before 1940 and requires reinvestment, while an additional 2,581 new units are needed by 2035 to meet demand and ease affordability pressures. Critically low rental vacancies further heighten the risk of escalating prices. These trends underscore the need for equitable housing strategies that prioritize vulnerable groups, including seniors, renters, low-income, and non-white residents.

Predevelopment Grant Program

Lead Agency: JBNC
Investment: $2,000,000
Purpose: The Predevelopment Grant Program was developed to address existing gaps in funding for affordable rental housing developments by nonprofit organizations. The program enhances organizational capacity to produce affordable housing within the District by strengthening the ability to leverage additional funding sources, particularly Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC). The program offers flexible requirements that allow organizations to move through the predevelopment phase faster than alternative funding sources.

Expected Output (5-year): 20 predevelopment grants of up to $100,000 each to support affordable rental housing development readiness.

Program Description

The Predevelopment Grant Program will support community-based nonprofits within the IEMD in advancing affordable rental housing projects by funding essential predevelopment and holding expenses. The program will provide 20 grants of up to $100,000 each to cover eligible costs such as land acquisition, site maintenance, insurance, legal and consulting services, environmental assessments, architectural and schematic design, market studies, capital needs assessments, surveys, permitting, and zoning or variance fees.

Over a five-year period, partner organizations may receive up to three grants, with no more than two active grants at a time. Eligible applicants include community-based organizations (CBOs) that have signed the IEMD memorandum of understanding (MOU), as well as partner entities working in collaboration with a CBO. Evaluation will incorporate housing data (e.g. renter cost burden, area median income levels) to inform funding decisions without serving as weighted scoring criteria. The Predevelopment Grant Program is intended to enhance organizations' capacity to produce affordable housing within the District by strengthening their ability to leverage additional funding sources, including LIHTC.

Associated Attachments: Predevelopment Grant Guide

IndyEast Homeownership Initiative

Lead Agency: Indianapolis Neighborhood Housing Partnership (INHP), IEMD Partners
Investment: $11,250,000
Purpose: This New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) investment, led by IEMD and facilitated by INHP, is intended to expand sustainable homeownership opportunities and strengthen neighborhood stability within the IEMD. Homeownership opportunities have been a key success to IndyEast's housing strategy over the past two decades. These homes create new affordable housing opportunities for residents to live and become stakeholders in creating stronger neighborhoods. However, construction costs have significantly increased, which, consequently, increases the subsidy needed to develop these homes. Meanwhile, sale prices have risen over the past five 5 years, which makes homes harder to afford for low- and moderate-income buyers. The program would pair two NMTC allocations with down payment assistance to provide a portion of the subsidy necessary to provide homeownership opportunities to 62 families with low and moderate incomes in the IEMD.

Access to NMTC allocations is bolstered by an $80 million 2026 allocation of NMTC funds to the City of Indianapolis. INHP submitted an intake form on behalf of IEMD and is optimistic about consideration.

Expected Output (5-year): 55 new affordable homes constructed and sold to income-eligible buyers, supported by NMTC financing and down payment assistance. 62 constructed and sold by year nine.

Program Description

The IndyEast Homeownership Initiative leverages INHP's track record with NMTC and IEMD partners to deploy two NMTC allocations in support of affordable homeownership and neighborhood stabilization across the District. On IEMD's behalf, INHP will pursue allocations of NMTCs, which will leverage this Investment and other subsidy sources to fund affordable homeownership development. This Investment will provide $9.25 million for the required leverage loans to support two NMTC transactions and $2 million to provide direct buyer subsidy (down payment assistance). The combined NMTC net benefit and DPA would provide roughly 50% of the necessary subsidy. IEMD would be responsible for raising the rest. INHP will manage the NMTC fund compliance and own the properties, while partnering with various Eastside community-based organizations that will function as developers for these projects. The partnership will create a total of approximately 31 new homeownership projects per NMTC Transaction for a total of 62 new homes. The funds from the leverage loans will be recaptured upon sale of the homes and retained by the IEMD team, which will work within the governance structures to determine the appropriate use of the funds, including, but not limited to, additional NMTC transactions, development subsidy, or other affordable housing related uses. The return of this capital to IEMD promotes capacity building critical to this application by promoting sustained investment in affordable housing. Without this strategy, the IEMD would need to secure a private loan, which would increase the costs with interest rates and additional transaction fees, reducing the overall benefit. In addition, the loans would likely require IEMD to provide collateral, which would be difficult to consolidate.

Associated Attachments: New Markets Tax Credit Proforma

Owner-Occupied Repair Fund

Lead Agency: JBNC
Investment: $10,000,000
Purpose: The Owner-Occupied Repair (OOR) Fund will address urgent housing needs by enabling homeowners to remain safe in their homes, preserving long-term affordability, and reducing displacement pressures. Given that more than half of the District's homes were built before 1940, investments in small, critical, emergency, and energy-efficiency repairs are essential to maintaining homeownership for long-time IndyEast residents. While many community development corporations (CDCs) and community partners in the IEMD have had OOR programs in the past, restrictive funding opportunities and limited staff capacity have hindered program effectiveness. Organizations within the IEMD need flexible funding structures, specifically tiered grants, to improve their capacity and repair output for the community.

Expected Output (5-year): 1,000+ critical, emergency, and weatherization repairs completed for low- and moderate-income homeowners.

Program Description

To protect housing stability and prevent displacement, JBNC will administer an OOR Fund that delivers essential home repairs to low- and moderate-income homeowners. Through this fund, eligible partner organizations—such as CDCs and community centers—can apply for funding to assist homeowners with repairs in four categories: critical, small, emergency, and weatherization. Funding requests of up to $1,500,000 will be accepted on a rolling basis and reviewed by a local review committee to determine project feasibility. Eligibility will be based on the number and type of repairs an organization plans to complete within a set timeframe. Priority will be given to organizations serving IndyEast homeowners below 60% of Area Median Income (AMI), seniors aged 65 and older, and populations at elevated risk of displacement.

Associated Attachments: Owner-Occupied Repair Fund Guide

Housing Stability Navigators

Lead Agency: EMCC, JBNC, SECS
Investment: $1,125,000
Purpose: IndyEast neighborhood centers have seen a significant rise in clients seeking housing stability support. Center for Working Families (CWF) coaches and case managers juggle competing priorities across financial literacy, employment coaching, income support, and housing access. The discovery process made clear that current staff lack the necessary time and resources to effectively address complex housing challenges. These needs include developing a comprehensive landlord list, strengthening collaboration between housing programs, keeping pace with evolving housing regulations, and delivering targeted assistance to clients at risk of homelessness. Introducing a dedicated, landlord-facing Housing Stability Navigator would close this gap across all three centers.

Expected Output (5-year): One Housing Stability Navigator embedded at each neighborhood center to support housing stabilization and eviction prevention.

Program Description

The role of the Housing Stability Navigator is centered on the prevention of housing displacement for residents in the District. A navigator will be placed at IndyEast neighborhood centers, where they will serve as a liaison between financial coaches, legal aid partners, and landlords. The navigator position will play a critical behind-the-scenes role in building relationships, facilitating collaboration, and developing tools and trainings that support successful tenancies and reduce eviction risk. The navigator's primary responsibilities will include monitoring changes in housing programs and policies, building trusted networks of reliable landlords, and training and coaching staff to better assist residents at risk of losing housing. The navigators will meet monthly as a team to coordinate strategies and advance shared goals. Each navigator will have an on-site supervisor at their assigned neighborhood center.

Associated Attachments: Housing Stability Navigator Job Description

Housing Stability for School Success Replication

Lead Agency: EMCC
Investment: $1,500,000
Purpose: Since 2015, JBNC has operated the Housing Stability for School Success (HSSS) program in partnership with local area schools. The program provides affordable, stable housing for families with school-aged children. The program has supported familial economic mobility, with participants experiencing a 55% increase in household income, an average of 15 job placements annually, and a 12% increase in school attendance. Based on the success of the JBNC HSSS program, EMCC will replicate the program within Martindale-Brightwood to serve families of students in KIPP Indy Public Schools. KIPP Indy Public Schools educates 1,500 students in grades K-12 in the Martindale-Brightwood neighborhood and is part of a network of over 280 public charter schools in urban and rural areas across the country.

Expected Output (5-year): At least 12 new affordable rental units advanced through predevelopment for families with school-aged children.

Program Description

The Martindale Brightwood Education Zone Housing Village will offer a range of 1-, 2-, and 3-bedroom homes intentionally prioritized for families of children within KIPP Indy Public Schools. These homes will be part of a tangible wraparound support system built to keep families strong – rooted in stability and goal attainment – as well as keeping children on a steady path to educational and life-long success. By 2031, EMCC will develop at least 12 rental units to be leased to low-to-moderate income families. This investment will provide predevelopment capital for land acquisition, environmental assessments, surveys, and architectural design.

Associated Attachments: Martindale-Brightwood Education Zone Housing Village Predevelopment Strategy

Opportunity Savings Program

Lead Agency: JBNC
Investment: $1,510,000
Purpose: The IEMD Housing Study estimates that the affordable home price for a median-income household is approximately $286,765, yet even a modest 3% down payment—nearly $8,600—remains out of reach for many households without structured financial assistance. This challenge is particularly acute in a District where 53% of residents are renters and a significant share earn below 80% of AMI, the target population for District programming. These statistics

were validated over the course of four subgroup meetings with neighborhood center staff and supporting organizations. In keeping with this, the subgroup determined that the typical $3,000 Individual Development Account (IDA) match was no longer sufficient to meaningfully support first-time homebuyers, aspiring small business owners, or individuals pursuing postsecondary education in today's economic climate. Rising inflation and increased cost of living within the District necessitate a higher level of support; as a result, a $10,000 matched savings account was identified as a more effective tool to help eligible participants achieve their goals.

Expected Output (5-year): 180 emergency and asset-building savings accounts opened to support homeownership, education, home repair, or small business goals.

Program Description

The Opportunity Savings Program (OSP) follows a two-part IDA model designed for participants to build both short-term financial stability and long-term asset-building capacity. The program is designed to address emergencies, the largest reported barrier to completing IDA programs. In Part One, participants will open an Emergency Savings Account (ESA) to establish a financial cushion for unexpected expenses. Participants will save up to $500, matched dollar-for-dollar for a total of $1,000. ESA funds will be used for urgent needs such as car repairs, medical bills, or housing stability, with no documentation required. To access the match, participants must complete at least three hours of financial education. Participants may also make early withdrawals of unmatched funds if they redeposit their withdrawal within 12 months (if necessary).

Upon completion of the ESA savings, participants can advance to Part Two of the program, where they will open an IDA to support longer-term goals such as homeownership, home repair, higher education, or small business development. In this stage, participants may save up to $2,500 and receive a 3:1 match, bringing their total possible funds to $10,000. Participants must complete an additional six hours of asset-specific financial education, and, as in Part One, may make emergency withdrawals of unmatched funds if redeposited within a year. Together, the two-part structure equips participants with both immediate financial resilience and the tools to pursue lasting economic mobility.

Associated Attachments: Opportunity Savings Program Framework

Community Development Capacity Building

Lead Agency: JBNC
Investment: $1,000,000
Purpose: Throughout the IEMD planning grant process, Community Solutions was engaged to perform organizational assessments and develop capacity building plans for housing-related non-profit organizations serving the IEMD. Seven organizations in the District participated in a process to identify the capacity-building needs most essential to their long-term success. Each organization was paired with an individual coach throughout the process. Through a shared assessment process, each organization determined which investments would have the most significant impact on its ability to serve the community and were provided with an individualized capacity building plan to inform its decision-making.

Expected Output (5-year): 22 organizational capacity-building projects completed to strengthen nonprofit readiness for housing development and delivery.

Program Description

Through the assessment process, participating organizations developed 22 unique capacity-building projects designed to strengthen their long-term effectiveness, sustainability, and impact. The projects span a range of focus areas, including program expansion and innovation, operational and business planning, organizational culture and staff retention, and technology and evaluation systems. Collectively, these investments total $1,000,000 and are intended to address critical internal infrastructure needs that enable organizations to better deliver housing-related services and respond to evolving community needs. Project budgets are grounded in actual vendor quotes and current market-based cost estimates for comparable initiatives, ensuring realistic and implementable investments.

To implement capacity building plans, JBNC will administer the program and distribute funds to participating organizations through a streamlined application and reporting process. This approach balances accountability with flexibility, allowing organizations to move efficiently from planning to implementation while ensuring responsible stewardship of resources. By aligning funding with organization-defined priorities and providing light-touch administration, the program supports meaningful, lasting capacity improvements rather than one-size-fits-all solutions.

Associated Attachments: Capacity Building Report

Economic Development

The Economic Development workgroup, facilitated by Valo Advisory, JBNC, and Intend Indiana, focused on designing a comprehensive and inclusive economic development framework for the IEMD. Composed of 17 participants from the lead community centers, CDCs, business development organizations (BDOs), and community development financial institutions (CDFIs), the full group met six times over a six-month period. Two separate meetings were conducted between IEMD lead agencies and Indy Economic Development, Inc. (IEDI) to determine alignment with IEMD strategies, discuss partnership structures, and potential sites for development within the District. A subgroup met to discuss the Revolving Loan Fund strategy with 10 participating organizations. The Economic Development workgroup developed targeted deliverables across the following areas: (1) Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund, (2) Incentive for Jobs Program, (3) Indy Economic Development Partnership, and (4) Economic Development Capacity Building.

The IEMD is a small business economy that is highly entrepreneurial but constrained by scale and capital access. Home to 2,740 businesses employing 27,472 people, these businesses are made up of predominantly small enterprises with a median of four employees. Top sectors for sales in the District are wholesale, construction, and manufacturing. This aligns closely with Indianapolis' broader inclusive growth strategy, including the Brookings-informed focus on Opportunity Industries and good and promising jobs. There is a high concentration of miscellaneous manufacturing – over four times the national average – reinforcing the District's relevance to regional workforce and economic development priorities. Across Indianapolis, civic, workforce, and economic development partners are already investing in apprenticeship pathways, employer partnerships, and sector-based training aligned with key industries. The IEMD economic development initiative could tap into this existing momentum by coordinating access to capital, workforce pipelines, and employer engagement at the District level.

Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund

Lead Agency: To be determined
Investment: $1,000,000
Purpose: The Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) is designed to strengthen the connection between housing, workforce, and economic development by providing flexible, affordable financing to small and mid-sized general contractors and subcontractors working with community partners. The fund will address a well-documented gap identified during the discovery phase: Many District-based contractors face difficulty securing short-term working capital to cover expenses during the period between project start-up and reimbursement for public or CDC-led development projects. By offering mission-driven, low-barrier loans that match construction timelines and cash flow realities, the RLF will help expand affordable housing production, strengthen local businesses, and create jobs for District residents.

Expected Output (5-year): 35 District-based contractors and small businesses financed to support housing and redevelopment projects.

Program Description

A program administrator (to be finalized) will manage day-to-day lending operations, underwriting, and compliance, under the oversight of an IEMD economic development advisory committee. The advisory committee will monitor utilization, performance metrics, and community impact, and recommend program adjustments during the implementation period to ensure alignment with District priorities. CDCs will refer qualified contractors, verify project milestones, and validate project-level impact. Technical assistance partners such as Jumpstart, LISC Indianapolis' Loan Readiness Workshops and Emerging Developer Growth Initiative (EDGI), and Urban Land Institute's Real Estate Diversity Initiative (REDI) will provide readiness coaching and pipeline support to ensure a continuous pool of eligible contractors. Loan amounts will be up to 50% of total construction costs, with an interest rate range of 6–10%, including potential rate adjustments based on local hiring commitments, minority-owned business (XBE) status, and underwriting risk factors. Funds may be used for direct construction expenses, labor, and limited soft costs related to eligible housing projects.

The Economic Development RLF transforms capital access from a barrier into a bridge — linking community development, workforce opportunity, and small business growth. By keeping dollars circulating within the District, pairing lending with technical assistance, and embedding performance accountability within program governance, the RLF ensures that economic mobility and housing delivery advance together.

Associated Attachments: Revolving Loan Fund Guidelines

Incentives for Jobs Program

Lead Agency: JBNC, EmployIndy, IEDI
Investment: $2,400,000
Purpose: The Incentives for Jobs Program is designed to address persistent barriers to local hiring faced by small and mid-sized businesses, many of which lack the internal human resources capacity, time, or financial flexibility to recruit, train, and onboard workers from within the community. While many employers are already engaged in workforce partnerships, the upfront costs of hiring and training often limit their ability—or incentive—to prioritize local and

inclusive hiring practices. This program provides a practical, low-barrier incentive that offsets a portion of these costs, reducing employer risk while reinforcing equitable hiring behavior. By supporting businesses that commit to hiring from CWF programs and invest in workforce development, the program strengthens pathways to quality employment, promotes inclusive economic growth, and aligns employer practices with the District's broader goals of job creation, wage growth, and community wealth building.

Expected Output (5-year): 90 District residents hired into full-time employment through wage-based employer incentives tied to neighborhood workforce pipelines.

Program Description

The Incentives for Jobs Program is a place-based workforce incentive designed to support local hiring, reduce onboarding costs for employers, and strengthen pathways to quality employment for District residents. The program will provide direct, wage-based incentives to new or expanding small- and mid-sized businesses located within the District that commit to hiring and retaining residents trained through CWF programs at EMCC, JBNC, or SECS. By offering a localized alternative to state and federal wage credit programs, the initiative creates a practical, low-barrier tool that aligns employer demand with neighborhood-based workforce pipelines. Eligible businesses must either participate in the Employer Champions Program (detailed on page 18) or demonstrate an established partnership with a CWF and be physically located within the IEMD geography. Employer Champions serve as visible partners in the District's workforce ecosystem, modeling inclusive hiring practices, offering career pathways, and coordinating with community organizations to reduce fragmentation across the workforce system. The IEMD will partner with EmployIndy and utilize EmployIndy's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to identify, engage, and manage relationships with eligible firms. Preference will be given to businesses operating within Opportunity Industries, including manufacturing, health care, construction, real estate, wholesale trade, and professional services.

EmployIndy will serve as fiscal agent for the program, responsible for receiving documentation, processing reimbursement requests, and disbursing funds to employers as appropriate. EmployIndy's administration of the Power Up program equips the agency with the existing infrastructure required for tracking wage reimbursements. Employers must submit a program application and regular wage reimbursement requests, including documentation of hire date, wage rate, hours worked, and total reimbursement requested. The Economic Development Manager and EmployIndy will develop shared tracking and reporting systems to ensure compliance, performance, and continuous improvement. Through this coordinated approach, the Incentives for Jobs Program advances inclusive economic growth by aligning employer incentives with workforce equity and retention.

Leveraging the Inclusivity Plan

As part of the Incentives for Jobs Program, the IEMD will leverage and expand the existing City of Indianapolis Inclusivity Plan framework to embed District-based workforce goals into City-managed incentive systems. Each company receiving a tax abatement or training grant already contributes at least 5% of its total tax savings toward activities that advance economic mobility, such as workforce training, childcare, or transit support. The IEMD can use this infrastructure to redirect a portion of those commitments to District priorities without creating new reporting requirements for employers or community organizations.

To implement this portion of the program, IEMD leadership will work with IEDI. Employers receiving City incentives within IEMD boundaries would receive an IEMD Inclusivity Addendum offering two participation options:

- **Option A:** Contribute 5% of tax savings to the CWF Workforce Development Fund, supporting training, wraparound services, and program capacity. This option is best for small employers or those without significant local hiring needs.
- **Option B:** Participate directly in the Employer Champions Program by committing to local hiring, guaranteed interviews, structured mentorship, hosting paid training, or workplace-based upskilling programs for District employees.

Together, the Incentives for Jobs and Inclusive Plan Strategy directly address long-standing equity and access gaps within the city's incentive ecosystem. By coupling local hiring incentives with the City's existing compliance infrastructure, the IEMD can ensure that economic growth generates tangible benefits for residents, small businesses and workforce partners – making the District a national model for equitable, outcomes-driven incentive design.

Associated Attachments: Incentives for Jobs Program Guidelines; Proposed Memorandum of Understanding: Indy Economic Development

Indy Economic Development Inc. Partnership

Lead Agency: JBNC, IEDI
Investment: $125,000
Purpose: Investing in an intentional partnership with IEDI is designed to operationalize the District's economic development strategy by connecting neighborhood-level relationships with citywide systems, data, and investment tools. Through this collaboration, the District will translate its 2025 planning priorities into coordinated action—supporting business retention and growth, attracting new investment, and advancing catalytic real estate redevelopment. IEDI's technical assistance, data integration, and alignment with municipal programs will ensure that District-based economic development efforts are measurable, competitive, and fully integrated into Indianapolis' broader economic development ecosystem. Together, this partnership bridges the gap between planning and implementation, strengthens local capacity, and positions the District for long-term, sustainable economic growth rooted in community priorities.

Expected Output (5-year): Five priority redevelopment sites advanced through coordinated investment strategy and technical assistance.

Program Description

This collaborative partnership seeks to integrate the priorities of the District into city-led economic development strategies, tools, and processes. Through coordinated planning, technical assistance, and shared implementation, IEDI will ensure that District-level economic development goals are aligned with—and benefit from—citywide systems, incentives, and investment mechanisms. IEDI will dedicate staff capacity to support IEMD initiatives and will work to ensure that local businesses receiving city-led incentives are encouraged to adopt Inclusivity Plan components that reflect IEMD priorities, including equitable hiring, wage standards, and community engagement practices.

Collectively, this partnership aims to increase capital investment within the District, create and retain jobs that pay a living wage, strengthen the ecosystem of small and locally owned businesses, raise household incomes and build community wealth, and support new construction and rehabilitation of commercial, industrial, and mixed-use properties. Additional objectives include reducing vacancy in industrial and commercial spaces, promoting the development of diverse, mixed-income housing, ensuring the equitable application of city economic development tools, and elevating the District's role within regional economic development strategies. By bridging neighborhood-based relationships with citywide resources, the team will advance inclusive, place-based economic growth that is responsive to community needs and positioned for long-term impact.

Priority Sites Identified

Across the IEMD, community and economic development partners reached a consensus: The potential for economic growth is vast but unrealized. The District contains more than 600 acres of former industrial and commercial land that once supported thriving employment centers. Redevelopment of these sites has the potential to generate between 2,500 and 7,500 jobs, depending on land use and industry mix, particularly in sectors such as construction, manufacturing, logistics, healthcare, and wholesale trade. Investment momentum is the strongest in commercial corridors closest to downtown. Multifamily housing leads the way in activity with adaptive reuse, and industrial expansions scattered throughout the District. Priority sites identified through this process provide a roadmap for strategic coordination among city, philanthropic, and private partners. Future phases should balance housing production with employment-based redevelopment to ensure inclusive and sustainable economic growth. City subsidies including NMTC, Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Tax Abatement, and Payment In Lieu Of Taxes (PILOT) have been essential tools for most recently completed projects, highlighting the continued need for public-private partnerships moving forward.

District partners identified several priority redevelopment sites that hold catalytic potential for future economic and community investment:

- **Black Mountain:** Offers substantial acreage for industrial reuse or employment-generating redevelopment along Washington Street, a key transportation corridor.
- **Sherman Park:** A major brownfield redevelopment and the site of significant public-private investment, including the RecycleForce headquarters.
- **Former Indiana Women's Prison:** A transformative opportunity for large-scale reuse, with strong community interest in a mix of housing, green space, and workforce-servicing uses.
- **Twin Aire Drive-in & Shopping Plaza:** Positioned near the Community Justice Campus, this site is critical to creating a connected employment and service hub in the Southeast corridor.
- **Marion County Juvenile Aid Center:** A strategically located property suitable for adaptive reuse tied to workforce, education, or social innovation programming.

Associated Attachments: Proposed Memorandum of Understanding: Indy Economic Development

Economic Development Capacity Building

Lead Agency: JBNC
Investment: $500,000
Purpose: The need for a District-based economic development role emerged clearly across multiple data points and stakeholder conversations. Eighty percent of District businesses have fewer than 10 employees yet represent the majority of local jobs. Many face growth barriers tied to capital access, permitting, and visibility – issues that require direct engagement and navigation support. Over 600 acres of vacant land or underdeveloped properties remain inactive and coordinated marketing and predevelopment support are essential to attract appropriate investment. Additional stakeholder feedback and one-on-one interviews highlighted gaps in employer engagement, site readiness, and coordination across CDCs and city departments. Neighborhood partners emphasized the importance of having a dedicated, on-the-ground representative who can build trust with small business owners, property owners, and developers while connecting them to city-level systems and strategic partners.

Expected Output (5-year): Shared tools, workplans, and coordinated district-level economic development activities established to support business growth and site activation.

Program Description

Valo Advisory will serve as a contracted economic development lead for the first year of implementation to build systems, activate early projects, and prepare for a sustainable District-based economic development position. The economic development lead will work closely with JBNC staff members, IEDI, and the IEMD leadership team. Together, this team will ensure that IEMD's business and investment initiatives are coordinated, measurable, and aligned with broader developments. Valo Advisory will work closely with JBNC staff and serve as a mentor and technical resource for professional development. The team will work together to connect small business activities into broader economic development objectives. This structure creates a paired leadership model with local expertise and on-the-ground support to foster long-term knowledge and sustainability.

After a transitional period, an Economic Development Manager will serve as the District's lead coordinator for business attraction, real estate activation, and partner alignment – translating strategic vision into tangible, measurable outcomes. The Economic Development Manager is a full-time position employed by JBNC, working in close partnership with IEDI. This unique role will serve as a District-level "concierge" for business and site developers – mapping real estate opportunities, building trust with local owners and entrepreneurs, and advocating for investment that aligns with community priorities. The core responsibilities for the role are business attraction and retention, real estate marketing and investment facilitation, relationship management, program design, and strategic alignment with workforce development initiatives. This position is designed to move from planning to action, serving as the operational engine of the IEMD's economic development strategy.

Vacant Property Map

To support data-driven redevelopment planning, CommunityScale was engaged during the planning process to create an interactive, publicly accessible Eastside Asset Map that visualizes vacant and underutilized properties across the District. This tool consolidates parcel-level data from multiple sources into a single, dynamic platform that can be updated over time. The map serves as a baseline inventory of redevelopment opportunity and will be maintained by the District, with updates scheduled every six months to capture new investment activity, property transfers, and site improvements. This allows partners – including neighborhood organizations, developers, and city agencies – to track the evolution of redevelopment within the district in real time.

Methodologically, the map identifies vacant parcels through two complementary approaches:

- **Assessor-Classified Vacant Parcels:** Properties designated as vacant commercial or vacant industrial land within the county's tax assessment data.
- **Value-Based Vacancy Proxy:** Properties are also flagged as "functionally vacant" if the land value exceeds 60% of the total assessed parcel value, indicating that the site is largely unimproved or underutilized even if it is not formally listed as vacant.

By combining both classification systems, the map captures a more accurate and comprehensive view of potential redevelopment. It also distinguishes between commercial, industrial, and residential vacancy, allowing planners and partners to visualize spatial patterns of disinvestment and prioritize redevelopment opportunities accordingly.

Associated Attachments: Proposed Economic Development Implementation Contract; Economic Development Manager Job Description; Vacant Property Map

Workforce Development

The Workforce Development workgroup, facilitated by Thomas P. Miller & Associates and SECS, advanced an equitable, coordinated workforce system designed to connect District residents to quality, living-wage employment. Over six months, the workgroup met seven times and brought together 16 participants from 10 organizations. Through this process, the group identified three core strategies to promote economic mobility within the IEMD: strengthening employer partnerships, expanding paid work experience (WEX) learning, and reducing barriers to employment.

As the work evolved, the workgroup shifted from an initial focus on customized training curricula to a stronger emphasis on work-based learning opportunities that more directly support residents. This shift led to the development of an Employer Champions Program, aimed at strengthening alignment between training providers and employers. Collectively, the workgroup produced targeted deliverables across seven focus areas: (1) Industry Recognized Certificate Programming, (2) Training Stipends, (3) Barrier Busting Funds, (4) Employer Champions Program, (5) Work Experience Learning, (6) Workforce Coordination Team, and (7) Center for Working Families Capacity Building.

The IEMD faces a complex workforce landscape, with both higher-than-average college attainment and elevated dropout rates; notably, 22% of residents lack a high school diploma, contributing to a limited middle-skills talent pipeline. Workforce efforts are largely driven by CBOs such as JBNC, EMCC, and SECS, which primarily serve Black and female residents (72%–76% and approximately 75%, respectively). At the same time, the District's concentration of miscellaneous manufacturing firms presents a significant opportunity for targeted workforce investment. In response, the Workforce Development implementation plan prioritizes employer engagement, integrated WEX programming, barrier reduction, expanded CWF capacity, and industry-recognized training pathways to improve access to quality employment for District residents.

Industry Recognized Certificates Program

Lead Agency: SECS
Investment: $1,500,000
Purpose: The Industry Recognized Certificates Program is designed to align workforce training with high-growth opportunity industries—construction, healthcare, manufacturing, and professional services—where employers face persistent talent shortages and residents seek access to stable, family-sustaining employment. These sectors offer clear pathways to upward mobility and living wages without requiring a four-year degree, yet barriers such as training costs, fragmented access, and limited employer coordination often prevent residents from entering or advancing in these fields. This program addresses those gaps by expanding access to industry-recognized credentials that are valuable to employers, applicable across the labor markets, and directly connected to local hiring demand. By investing in credentials that lead to quality jobs and long-term career progression, the program strengthens the local workforce pipeline, supports economic growth, and advances access to employment opportunities for IEMD residents.

Expected Output (5-year): 600 industry-recognized certifications completed in high-demand sectors aligned with employer needs.

Program Description

The Industry Recognized Certificates Program will establish a coordinated, District-wide approach to connecting IEMD residents with training and certification opportunities aligned to local employer demand. Financial support will be provided to approximately 600 participants to cover the cost of industry-recognized certifications, with an average investment of approximately $2,500 per individual, depending on the credential they pursue. Supported certifications include, but are not limited to, Commercial Driver's Licenses (CDL), Forklift Operator certification, NCCER Core (Construction), OSHA 30, Phlebotomy, Child Development Associate (CDA), Medical Coding, and other credentials aligned with District-identified industries. These certifications are portable, employer-recognized, and directly connected to jobs with clear wage and advancement pathways.

This program will be coordinated by SECS; however, participants will be supported throughout the process by neighborhood center-based career coaches, who will assess career readiness, identify appropriate certification pathways, and connect individuals with scheduled training cohorts. A District-wide Job Developer and EmployIndy will work in parallel to strengthen relationships with Employer Champions and industry partners, ensuring training offerings remain aligned with real-time hiring needs and creating opportunities for employer-informed credential development. Implementation timelines will vary based on the length and intensity of individual certification programs, allowing for flexibility while maintaining accountability for completion and employment outcomes. By centralizing access to training resources and prioritizing credentials valued by employers, the program reduces barriers to workforce entry and supports residents in securing stable, high-quality employment.

Associated Attachments: Industry Recognized Certificates & Training Stipends; Job Developer Job Description

Training Stipends

Lead Agency: SECS
Investment: $2,500,000
Purpose: Training and certification programs often require participants to reduce work hours or forgo income entirely, creating financial barriers that can prevent completion. Training Stipends are designed to close this gap by providing temporary financial support that allows participants to meet basic needs while enrolled in education or credentialing programs. By helping cover essential expenses such as food, utilities, and transportation, stipends increase program completion rates, shorten the time between training and employment, and improve participants' ability to successfully transition into quality jobs.

Expected Output (5-year): 600 training stipends deployed to reduce financial barriers and increase completion of credential programs.

Program Description

Stipends will be provided during the duration of approved training or certification programs to offset income loss and reduce financial stress that can otherwise derail participation. Funds are intentionally flexible, allowing participants to address immediate basic needs—such as transportation, childcare, food, or utilities—so they can fully engage in full-time or intensive training experiences required for upward economic mobility.

Approximately 600 participants will be supported through this program, with an average stipend of $2,500 per individual, calibrated to the length and intensity of the training program. Stipends will be disbursed at an hourly rate of approximately $18 during active participation, creating a financial bridge between enrollment in training and successful job placement. By streamlining stipends through SECS and expanding access, this strategy will reduce barriers to completion, accelerate transitions to employment, and ensure that workforce investments translate into measurable economic outcomes for both participants and employers.

Associated Attachments: Industry Recognized Certificates & Training Stipends

Barrier Busting Funds

Lead Agency: EMCC, JBNC, SECS
Investment: $900,000
Purpose: Barrier Busting Funds address the immediate financial crises that often prevent individuals from participating in training, maintaining employment, or achieving economic stability. Analysis of existing IEMD CWF programs demonstrates that these flexible supports are most frequently used to stabilize housing (84%) and address transportation (7%), debt (5%), and education-related needs (2%). Evidence from prior implementation shows that targeted, short-term assistance produces meaningful outcomes: 78% of participants receiving multiple payments experienced improvements in housing stability, debt reduction, or poverty status. These results underscore the critical role of barrier reduction in enabling sustained participation in workforce and economic mobility pathways.

Expected Output (5-year): 600 flexible, needs-based support payments provided to remove immediate barriers to training and employment.

Program Description
Barrier Busting Funds administered by the IEMD will establish a unified framework for providing flexible financial assistance that removes immediate obstacles to employment and training participation. Building on proven models operated by JBNC, EMCC, and SECS, the program will provide rapid-response support to address essential needs. These supports are intentionally flexible, allowing CWF coaches to respond quickly to participant needs that, if left unaddressed, would disrupt progress toward employment and economic stability. Outcomes from existing programs demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach. Between January 2024 and June 2025, 168 clients received 368 Barrier Busting payments averaging $1,351 each. As a result, 28 participants moved above the federal poverty threshold; 41 reduced their overall debt by an average of $8,740 after receiving approximately four payments; and 106 participants experienced an average monthly income increase of $1,007 following an average of three payments. These outcomes highlight the strong return on relatively modest, targeted investments.

Building on this success, Barrier Busting Funds will be expanded in the District to support approximately 600 participants engaged in CWF programming, with an average investment of $1,500 per person as needed. By directly addressing short-term financial instability, the program will improve retention in training and employment, reduce attrition, and ensure that investments in workforce development translate into sustained employment and long-term economic mobility.

Associated Attachments: Barrier Busting Report

Employer Champions Program

Lead Agency: EmployIndy
Investment: $1,125,608
Purpose: Employers across the IEMD report persistent difficulty filling critical roles in opportunity industries such as construction, human services, manufacturing, and health care; while training providers emphasize that participants are most successful when education and credentials lead directly to employment. Despite this alignment in need, gaps remain between employer expectations and the systemic barriers many workers face, including transportation access, childcare responsibilities, and reentry challenges. The Employer Champions initiative is designed to bridge this divide by engaging employers who recognize these realities and commit to flexible, inclusive workplace practices. Employer Champions partner with training providers to align curriculums with job opportunities, support paid WEX learning and transitional employment models, and adapt hiring and retention practices to broaden access to talent. By strengthening a network of Employer Champions, the District will create sustainable connections between training and employment, ensuring that residents can access quality jobs while employers build a reliable, job-ready workforce in high-demand industries.

Expected Output (5-year): 20 employers engaged and advanced to Employer Champion status through inclusive hiring and workforce partnership commitments.

Program Description
As part of the Employer Champions Program, employers will advance through clearly defined stages of engagement tracked within EmployIndy's CRM system: Prospect, Engaged Partner, Active Partner, and Employer Champion. Each prospective employer will complete a readiness

and suitability assessment to ensure alignment with District workforce priorities, job quality standards, and inclusive hiring practices. EmployIndy and the IEMD will work in close partnership to coordinate outreach, align employer engagement with neighborhood-based workforce efforts, and leverage existing relationships held by community partners. Engaged Partners will participate in introductory activities such as hiring events, roundtables, and discussions, while Active Partners will collaborate on training or hiring initiatives and host or hire at least two trainees or other IEMD-referred candidates annually.

Employer Champions will represent the highest level of engagement, sustaining high-impact partnerships that could include guaranteed interviews, paid WEX opportunities, and the hosting or hiring of at least five trainees or other IEMD referrals per year. Employer Champions also serve as visible leaders in advancing inclusive hiring practices and job quality across the District. EmployIndy will lead employer engagement, data tracking, and reporting through its CRM, while IEMD partners provide on-the-ground coordination, participant referrals, and ongoing employer support. Together, EmployIndy and IEMD will host biannual employer roundtables and targeted hiring events at partner locations, ensuring employer efforts are integrated into a cohesive, District workforce strategy.

Associated Attachments: Eastside Employer Engagement Strategy

Work Experience Learning

Lead Agency: SECS
Investment: $180,000
Purpose: By integrating WEX across training and certification pathways, the IEMD will ensure that workforce investments translate into real employment outcomes for residents while accounting for the economic and social realities many participants face. By embedding paid, structured WEX into training, the IEMD reduces attrition associated with long credentialing pipelines, provides immediate income and industry exposure, and aligns learning with employer expectations. This approach benefits both workers and businesses—supporting participants who are balancing financial, family, or reentry challenges, while enabling employers to build trust, reduce hiring risk, and improve retention. Gradually institutionalizing WEX as part of CWF programming ensures that IEMD workforce programs are both employer-responsive and designed to move residents efficiently from training to stable employment.

Expected Output (5-year): 40 paid work experience placements completed to accelerate transitions from training to employment.

Program Description

The program will align with EmployIndy's Talent Bound framework to ensure consistency and quality across WEX placements, supporting career exploration in the classroom, and engagement through employer interactions and site visits. IEMD will establish standardized expectations for WEX placements, including defined hours, job duties, supervision, and performance evaluation, with a recommended target of 160 work hours per participant. Host sites will be identified six months in advance of each training cohort, with a goal of securing 5–10 employer partners per cohort to support placement availability.

The lead IEMD organizations (EMCC, JBNC, and SECS) will coordinate WEX placements, ensure wages or stipends are provided during the WEX period, and bundle barrier removal supports to promote completion. Participants will work with a CWF coach to provide ongoing support, address challenges, and facilitate transitions to employment. Through this coordinated approach, the WEX program is expected to support approximately 40 participants while improving training completion, accelerating job placement, and strengthening employer partnerships to drive long-term improvements in workforce development across the District.

Associated Attachments: Talent Bound Framework; Eastside Employer Engagement Strategy

Workforce Coordination Team

Lead Agency: SECS
Investment: $1,500,000
Purpose: The expanded workforce coordination team is designed to ensure that training, WEX learning, and job placement efforts lead to sustained employment and advancement for IEMD residents. By adding a District-wide Job Developer and embedding Retention Coaches within each CWF, the IEMD will strengthen the critical bridge between program providers, employers, and participant success. This coordinated staffing model aligns employer engagement, credentialing, experience, and job placement while providing long-term coaching to support retention, wage growth, and career advancement beyond initial hire. Together, these roles reduce fragmentation across the workforce system, improve responsiveness, and ensure that participants not only secure employment but remain connected to career pathways that lead to living wages and long-term mobility.

Expected Output (5-year): One Job Developer serving District-wide and one Retention Coach embedded at each neighborhood center to support placement and retention.

Program Description

Additional staffing is needed to strengthen participant outcomes and coordinate relationships among employers, EmployIndy, and the CWF teams. Each CWF will add a Job Retention Coach dedicated to supporting participants after placement, with a focus on employment stability, wage growth, and career advancement. Retention Coaches will work alongside CWF staff to address barriers that threaten job retention, support upskilling and promotion opportunities, and provide ongoing coaching for up to 36 months following job placement to ensure participants continue progressing along a defined career pathway.

In addition, the District will add a centralized Job Developer role serving all three neighborhood centers. The Job Developer will lead employer engagement and workforce strategy by identifying priority sectors and employer hiring needs, strengthening connections between training and job opportunities, and supporting participants' readiness for living-wage employment. Working closely with CWF staff, EmployIndy, and business partners, the Job Developer will recruit and support Employer Champions, co-design training and WEX opportunities, and oversee employer commitments that strengthen the District's workforce pipeline. Together, these roles will provide the operational capacity needed to move the IEMD from planning to implementation of a coordinated, employer-connected workforce development strategy.

Associated Attachments: Job Developer Job Description; Retention Coach Job Description

Center for Working Families Capacity Building

Lead Agency: EMCC, JBNC, SECS
Investment: $1,500,000
Purpose: The expansion of the IEMD's workforce initiatives—including industry-recognized credentials, WEX, employer partnerships, stipends, and barrier reduction—significantly increases the scope and intensity of services delivered through CWFs. Existing CWF coaches each currently serve an average of 50 participants annually and are already operating at capacity. To successfully implement the District's expanded workforce strategy and ensure high-quality, participant-centered service delivery, additional flexible capacity is required at each Center to support increased coordination, administration, data tracking, and participant engagement.

Expected Output (5-year): Aligned systems, staffing, and tools implemented across the CWF network to deliver coordinated workforce programming at scale.

Program Description

The Center for Working Families Capacity Building strategy provides flexible, multi-year funding to EMCC, JBNC, and SECS to strengthen the operational infrastructure necessary to deliver expanded workforce programming under the IEMD. This funding is intentionally designed to allow each Center to address its unique capacity needs as program demands increase, including staffing support, technology upgrades, data and reporting systems, participant tracking, employer coordination, and administrative functions tied to stipends, certifications, WEX placements, and barrier-busting supports.

As the primary point of contact for participants, CWF staff play a critical role in coordinating training enrollment, monitoring progress, administering financial supports, and maintaining continuous engagement through job placement and retention. By investing $100,000 annually in each CWF over five years, the IEMD ensures that these neighborhood-based organizations have the infrastructure, flexibility, and resilience needed to scale workforce services sustainably. This investment strengthens the backbone of the District's workforce system, reduces staff burnout, improves coordination across partners, and ensures that the expanded workforce strategy translates into consistent outcomes for residents pursuing living-wage employment.

Program Data and Evaluation

The Data and Evaluation workgroup, led by CityStrategies and JBNC, developed an evaluation framework to measure impact, track progress, and strengthen accountability across all IEMD initiatives. Meeting bi-weekly, the group advanced from early framework design to detailed metric development, focusing on the integration of data across housing, workforce, and economic development systems. Together, the team created a framework and evaluation matrix designed to balance quantitative performance tracking with qualitative storytelling, ensuring that community impact could be captured through both measurable outcomes and lived experiences. This comprehensive approach captures the full picture of IEMD initiatives.

Community-Level Goals

Community-level goals will capture the broad, long-term conditions that define the IEMD's purpose: Fostering a vibrant, inclusive, and welcoming community where all families have the tools, support, and resources to achieve economic mobility and build generational wealth. These goals are the measurable expression of the initiative's vision, framing the kinds of lasting change the effort aims to influence. Changes in the conditions reflected within these goals over time provide a critical reference point for understanding whether the vision for the District is being realized.

This framework responds to the practical constraints of evaluating an initiative of this scale. Community-level goals remain important points of orientation, but they are shaped by many forces beyond the IEMD and are often only visible through lagging data. Relying on them alone would provide an incomplete and delayed view of progress. To address this, the framework layers measures of direct activity and near-term change alongside community-level outcomes, making it possible to track progress as it unfolds while still monitoring whether broader conditions are moving in the desired direction.

Housing Innovation

The District's approach to housing focuses on expanding the supply of affordable, quality homes — both rental and ownership — and helping residents access and maintain housing that provides stability and a foundation for long-term economic mobility. Its strategies also aim to improve the condition of existing housing and strengthen the ecosystem of community-based development organizations that deliver community development services. Additional strategies will help residents connect to housing opportunities, reduce risks of eviction and homelessness, and maintain quality, stable housing situations. Together, these efforts aim to create a housing system that supports long-term stability, equitable opportunity, and the capacity for residents to build wealth over time.

The following community-level housing measures provide context for the District's housing strategies and indicate whether local conditions are moving toward greater stability and affordability:

- % Housing cost burdened (by tenure)
- % Change in evictions relative to Marion County
- # Affordable (subsidized) units
- # and % Housing units affordable to median earning household
- % Change in residential assessed value v. Marion County
- Residential stability among supported households
- CBO capacity for increased project volume/complexity

Associated Attachments: IEMD Evaluation Plan, pg. 11-13

Economic Development

The District's approach to economic development recognizes that economic mobility depends not only on individual opportunity but also on the strength of the local economic environment—where businesses can start, grow, and reinvest. Revitalizing commercial corridors, reducing vacancy, and strengthening the base of locally-owned and minority-owned enterprises are foundational to this goal. When neighborhood vitality and economic opportunity reinforce each other, they create the conditions in which residents can access quality jobs close to home and the economic benefits of growth circulate within the District.

The following community level economic development indicators serve as reference points for understanding progress in economic development and for situating the District's nearer-term activities within the broader economic landscape.

- # Net New Jobs
  - Livable wage jobs / High quality jobs
  - Jobs in target / opportunity industries
- % Change in Commercial Vacancy
- % Change in Commercial / Industrial Assessed Value

Associated Attachments: IEMD Evaluation Plan, pg. 9-11

Workforce Development

The District's approach to workforce development focuses on expanding access to quality employment by strengthening both the talent pipeline and the conditions that support sustained participation in the labor force. Efforts are directed toward equipping residents with the skills, credentials, and experiences needed for advancement while helping employers connect to local talent that can meet their workforce needs.

The District's strategies emphasize practical, relationship-based approaches to employment and training. These include engaging employers in shaping and offering paid training opportunities, providing financial supports that help residents overcome barriers to securing and maintaining employment, and enhancing outreach to connect residents to available opportunities. Together, these efforts seek to ensure that residents not only gain access to work, but also build the skills, stability, and confidence needed for long-term economic mobility.

The following community-level measures provide context for the District's workforce development strategies:

- % District residents employed relative to Marion County (among ages 16-64)
- % District residents employed within District
- Educational attainment levels within District

Associated Attachments: IEMD Evaluation Plan, pg. 13-15

Program Coordination and Accountability

The coordination and accountability of IEMD implementation will be led by leadership from JBNC, EMCC, and SECS – formalized through a MOU. During the planning process, lead agencies built a unified governance model, refining the District's guiding vision, and strengthening partnerships to support long-term implementation of the IEMD. Over a five-month period, the workgroup formalized the District's mission, advanced shared decision-making frameworks, and established the collaborative infrastructure needed to guide future operations and accountability.

Neighborhood Center Alliance

The three neighborhood centers — JBNC, EMCC, and SECS — formed the Neighborhood Center Alliance to formalize their shared commitment to the IEMD's vision, theory of change, and theory of action. On September 19, 2025, the partners executed a MOU that codifies this collaboration and establishes the Alliance as a permanent standing committee with an advisory role to the Partner Consortium (detailed below). The MOU institutionalizes shared governance, coordination, and accountability among the Centers and provides for automatic renewal for two consecutive five-year terms unless modified or terminated by mutual agreement or written notice from a participating partner.

Associated Attachments: Memorandum of Understanding: Neighborhood Center Alliance

Partnership Consortium

The IEMD's coordination and accountability structure is designed to ensure collaborative leadership, clear oversight, and resident-centered decision-making. The Partner Consortium — comprised of representatives from all IEMD partner organizations — will meet at least twice annually to provide strategic direction, oversee implementation progress, and ensure that data systems are developed, shared, and used to inform continuous improvement.

Supporting the Consortium is the Neighborhood Center Alliance, formed by the executive leaders of the JBNC, EMCC, and SECS, along with key IEMD staff. The Alliance serves as a permanent advisory body that promotes cross-organizational alignment, shared accountability, and coordinated execution of the District's mission and goals. While advisory in nature, the Alliance plays a critical role in advancing collaboration and operational coherence across partners.

Implementation is further supported through standing and ad hoc committees and subcommittees focused on specific initiatives and strategies, which will be established or dissolved by the Consortium as needed. Resident engagement is embedded throughout all levels of governance through the community organizing and asset-based development approaches or each partner organization, ensuring that IEMD strategies remain grounded in the lived experience, priorities, and aspirations of District residents.

Associated Attachments: Proposed Memorandum of Understanding: Partnership Consortium; Proposed Addendums: Implementation Partners