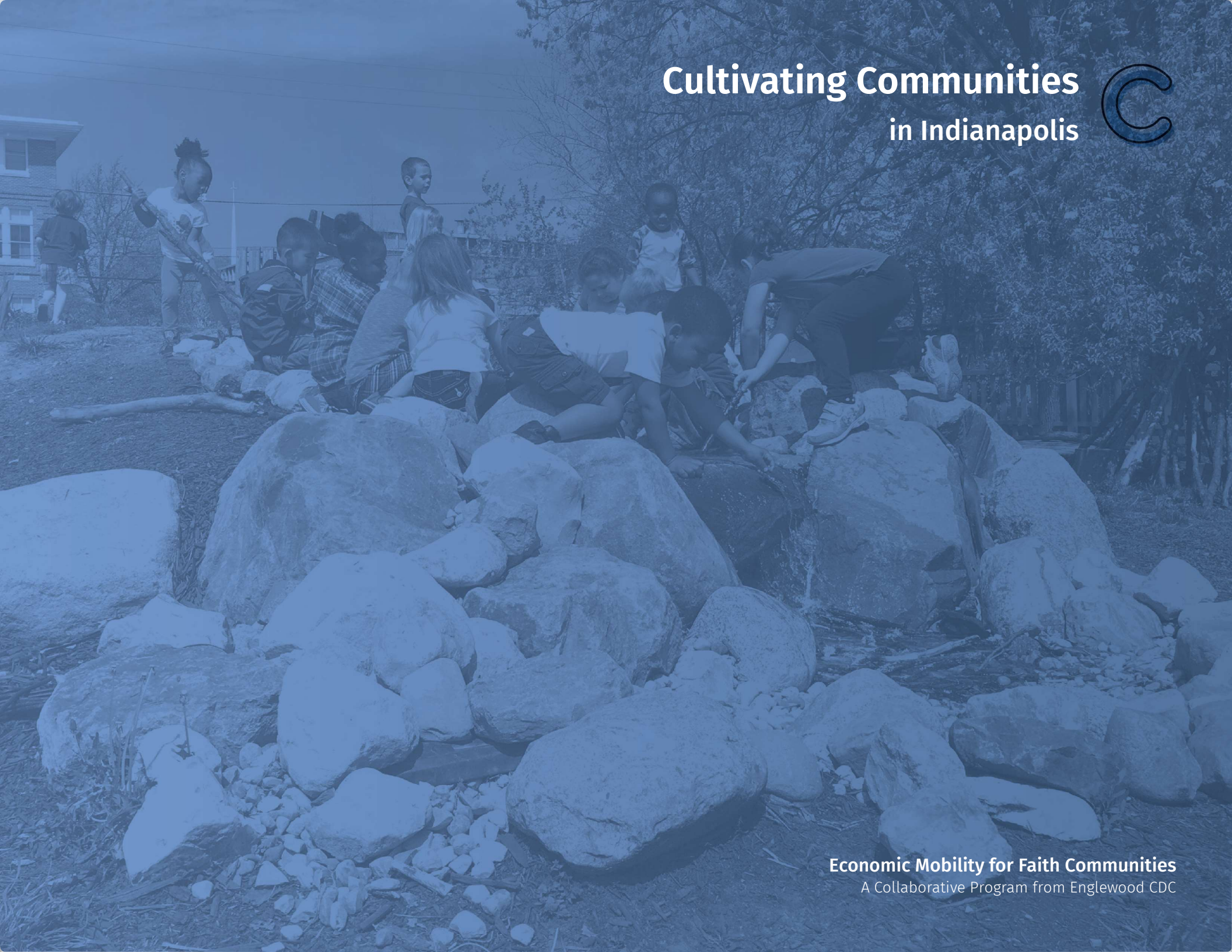


Cultivating Communities in Indianapolis



Economic Mobility for Faith Communities
A Collaborative Program from Englewood CDC



**What is
Cultivating
Communities?**



About Us

» Community-Rooted Congregational Challenges

Englewood Community Development Corporation (Englewood CDC) staff conducted a detailed survey completed by 53 different faith communities interested in community-based work from every part of the city of Indianapolis. This equates to approximately 5% of faith communities throughout our city. Respondents represent a broad cultural and religious diversity including most major Protestant denominations Catholic parishes, and non-Christian faith communities. Respondents answered 17 different questions related to the characteristics of their faith community, neighborhood, interest, and built capacities. There was a unanimous consensus stating an interest in deeper partnerships with other faith communities and with community based organizations. Furthermore, the survey reveals that faith communities interested in this type of initiative are located within, have members residing in, and have frequent engagement with non-members within census tracts where social vulnerability, poverty, and economic disinvestment persists. When survey responses are combined with neighborhood data from our partners at the Polis Center, the assertion above becomes clear: 74% of respondents are located in areas where household income is Very Low or Low to Moderate, 68% of respondents are within areas where the % of persons in poverty exceeds 20%, 42% are in areas where the percentage of persons in poverty exceeds 30%, and 64% of respondents are located within areas where social vulnerability is high. This is invaluable feedback related to persons in poverty as it describes many of the members of the participating faith communities and those they directly serve.

As we're all aware of now, neighbors experiencing economic disinvestment have been especially hard-hit by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. These neighbors are more likely to have lost jobs, struggle to facilitate e-learning, and have obstructed access to social determinants of health, making the virus all the more threatening. Of course, the challenges our neighbors face are not new, but the COVID-19 pandemic has merely exacerbated the disproportionate barriers that low-income Hoosiers face to break the cycles of poverty they find themselves in. These various barriers are as comprehensive as the communities in which they exist.

Similarly, communities of faith themselves have been deeply impacted by the pandemic, leaving many congregations in crisis. These crises range from economic matters (congregations struggling to keep the doors open), to identity crises (who are we and what is our role in this changing landscape?), to crises of faith itself (why are so many of our members leaving our congregations?) Again, the pandemic has simply served to expose societal discontentment with pedantic religiosity, while paradoxically revealing how people are starved for authentic and embodied expressions of justice-oriented spiritualities that are practically grounded in inclusivity and liberation.

While developing the strategies of Cultivating Communities in Indianapolis (CCIndy), we drew upon the ways that both our immediate neighbors and our friends from other congregational traditions have shared their experiences with us. They have consistently demonstrated capacity and enthusiasm for participating in neighbor-led initiatives which lift everyone up. Our vision for a thriving and equitable city has been shaped by the assets we see through our everyday engagements with these communities. It is these interactions with neighbors and the feedback we've received from other congregations that allows us to view faith communities as catalysts for social change whose impact can be multiplied when combined with the efforts of our city's best nonprofit partners.

» Sacred Circles in the Public Square

CCIndy is rooted in the conviction that our communities of faith belong to our neighbors around us. It is the realization that congregations do not exist for their own end, but rather, they exist to share civic responsibility and be a gift to those they live, worship, and work among. This is the vision and capacity we hope to nurture in faith communities and their neighborhoods city-wide. Through community-based dialogue, the facilitation of resources, bridge-building, training, and technical assistance, CCIndy is committed to the health of congregations for the purposes of equitable development, neighborhood empowerment, racial equity, and the economic and income mobility of their neighbors. Regardless of creed, race, doctrine, denomination, and tradition, we ask all congregations to reclaim their heritage as sacred circles around the public square.

Our Priorities

CCIndy is an initiative of Englewood CDC. We seek to partner with an empower communities of faith to lead economic mobility efforts in their neighborhoods.

» Three Guiding Priorities

CCIndy is Centered on Communities of Faith

We believe that faith communities can be a catalyst for economic mobility in their neighborhoods. Our aim is for the congregations we work with to see they have a role to play in the economic mobility of their members and neighbors. Many of the congregations we seek to partner with will not have a background in economic development. Our goal is to assist you to develop the tools you need and be a partner as you move forward.

CCIndy is a Collective-Impact Model Program

This model of planning calls upon people from different backgrounds - government, business, non-profits, philanthropy, and faith - to collaborate in a structured way towards a common goal. Englewood CDC staff, non-profits, and other institutions would act as partners, but your congregation will be the backbone of the process. Your organization will be introduced to the local economic development ecosystem that provides access to services, grant funding, and networking for various programs, to help you implement your plan.

CCIndy is Place-based

This program will assist you in working in a particular neighborhood, where your congregation is located. Planning will be focused on improving economic mobility for residents of your particular neighborhood. It may also include physical improvements, such improving roads and sidewalks to access good-paying jobs, or building daycares or affordable housing.

Our Three Initiatives

The CCIndy program consists of three main efforts, described below. The focus of this guidebook is the “Area-Based Collective Impact” effort.

» ONE: City-Wide Engagement

- Ongoing development of social and relational capital
- Ongoing learning and discovery of congregations in community-rooted work
- Ongoing gatherings with congregations for conversation around community economic development

» TWO: Affinity-based Collective Impact

- Develop alternate strategies for congregations to accomplish around particular affinities of issues, such as
 - affordable housing
 - education
 - racial justice
 - creating care
- Facilitate ongoing gatherings for dialogue and sharing information regarding particular affinity areas
- On-ramp for potential second round of Area-Based Collective Impact

» THREE: Area-Based Collective Impact

- A collective-impact model planning program of Englewood CDC.
- It is a four-year program with the goal of helping congregations develop and implement ***Neighborhood Action Plan (NAP)*** to improve economic mobility in their communities.

Outside Resources & Partners



**Neighborhood
Businesses**

**Catalyst
Congregation**

**Partner
Stakeholders**

On the Ground



Steering Committee

Trust

At the Grassroots

Relationships

PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

Cultivating Communities seeks seeking applications from congregations with the following characteristics and attributes:

- Geographic proximity to areas of concentrated poverty
- Demonstrated level of prior community-based activity
- A desire to learn/practice a faith with a primary concern for the common good
- Predisposition for partnership
- Proclivity for sustained, long-term commitment



WHAT PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE:

- Technical assistance from experienced community/economic development professionals to guide action plan creation
- Participation in cohort of like-minded congregations for planning and implementation purposes
- Training/skill building opportunities for team members
- Access to partner resources
- Seed funding to support start-up initiatives
- Support/consultation for plan implementation (i.e. fundraising strategies/support)
- Access to Seminary Now Content
- Facilitation for Chalmers Center introductory course materials

WHAT PARTICIPANTS DO:

- Participate in a 4-month planning process (2 days each month)
 - Complete associated exercises and prep-work
 - Commit 2-3 members to consistent attendance
- Participate in monthly technical assistance meetings
- Track associated data and outcomes to inform evaluation efforts
- Designate and convene a community steering committee to inform planning efforts and advance implementation activities (congregational leadership + community representatives)
- Develop a Neighborhood Action Plan to guide community/economic development efforts
- Establish a MOU between the participation organization, ECDC, and supporting partners



The NAP Process

In June of 2022, six partner neighborhoods will begin a four-month process to develop a **Neighborhood Action Plan (NAP)** to improve economic mobility in their communities.

» Six Initial Congregation Partners

An initial Request for Proposals (RFP) was released by Englewood CDC on March 1, 2022. This initial round. The schedule for this initial round is as follows:

- March 1, 2022: Request for Proposals (RFP): Identification of 6 congregations
- May 6, 2022 at 5:00 PM EST: RFP Response Deadline
- June 14, 2022: 6 congregations selected
- June 28, 2022: Launch of four-month training and planning cohort, resulting in development of each congregation's collective impact **Neighborhood Action Plan (NAP)**
- January 2023: Begin implementation of each congregation's NAP

Seven Focus Areas

» Developing Community Capital

- *Cultivating Collaboration and Partnership*
- *Developing and Supporting Local Leadership*
- *Developing Engagement*

» Affordable Housing

- *New affordable apartments*
- *Senior Housing*

» Increasing Economic Mobility

- *Job Training*
- *Adult education programs*
- *Access to transit*

» Nurturing Children and Youth

- *Daycare*
- *Before and After Care*

» Lifting Barriers

- *Re-entry programs*
- *Counseling programs*

» Enhancing Personal Wellness

- *Access to healthy foods*
- *Fitness for all age groups*

» Improving Neighborhood Livability

- *More tree coverage*
- *Walkable sidewalks and trails*

Steps to Develop a Plan

» About the Appreciative Inquiry Model

This project is intended to loosely follow the Appreciate Inquiry Model of planning.

Appreciative Inquiry is a way to engage groups of people in self-determined change. It focuses on what's working, rather than what's not working, and leads to people co-designing their future. Much of the planning of the past has been focused on the negative, or "fixing what's wrong". AI is a strengths-based or affirmative approach to planning, building on a positive core of strengths.

As much of AI models are focused on organizational improvement, this effort will modify the AI approach slightly to ensure it is relevant to place-based planning. There are four steps in developing an AI-based plan.

1. Discovery - identifying the best of what is and what gives life. For us, this is about understanding your neighborhoods assets.
2. Dream - identify what might be. For us, this is figuring out what the community collectively desires in the future.
3. Design - identify how and the ideal. For us, this is developing a shared vision with a list of action items that make up that vision.
4. Destiny - identify what will be and improvise going forward. For us, this is the process of making the dream a reality.

» STEP ONE: Discovery

Discovering the best of what your neighborhood already is and discover what you and others are already doing.

- Conduct Stakeholder/Community Engagement:
 - Make sure to include a broad range of voices
 - Conduct Survey, focus group, and/or interviews to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
- Conduct Internal/External Environmental Assessments
 - Conduct an inventory of current community efforts and plans (to support, not replace)
 - Identify congregational assets
 - Identify community assets

» STEP TWO: Dream

Imagine what is possible in your neighborhood, using positive language and imagery

- Conduct Open Dialogue with Stakeholders & The Community
 - Identify what you, your neighbors, and stakeholders want to see happen or change?
- Seek Analysis as an Input
 - Look at community input: hopes/dreams, lived experience, etc.
 - Look at community data: demographics, employment, health, crime, etc.
 - Look at community culture: social, political, ethnic, economic
 - Look at community infrastructure: built environment, real estate, residential vs. commercial
- Hold roundtable discussions
 - Provide a table for discussion for each of the seven Focus Topics and encourage everyone to have a voice in those discussions.
 - Take notes and distill these discussions into a list of desires and concerns.



Image: a group of individuals from various backgrounds work together to develop and implement a plan as part of the “King Commons” Great Places 2020 planning effort, using the collective impact model.



Image: Neighborhood leaders and residents identify what they see as their “top values” in the King Commons Great Places 2020 planning effort

» STEP THREE: Design

Reach a Shared, Inclusive Vision of What Should be in The Neighborhood Action Plan (NAP)

- Build upon input received from grass roots partners and local assets, and take advantage of available resources. The goal is to create a shared vision where everyone feels heard.
- Identify the action items that make up the **NAP**. There should be several action items from each of the seven Focus Topics
 - Example: for Affordable Housing, the plan may recommend action on affordable apartments, rental assistance, and affordable senior housing. These are just examples and your plan may differ.
- Identify several short-term priorities to advance the **NAP**
 - Clarify the list of top priorities for short term action
 - Identify the activities and steps needed to advance the priorities
- Conduct Stakeholder/Community Engagement:
 - Engage Stakeholders to confirm the action items in the **NAP** and the list of priorities
- Develop Action Plans
 - Outline timing, roles, and responsibilities for each work item

» STEP FOUR: Destiny

Enact your vision and adjust and improvise based on your needs and environmental conditions over time

- Align Resources with work items
 - Identify and align current/potential partners
 - Identify and align funding sources
 - Align capacity requirements for implementation
- Track & Analyze Outcomes
 - Develop dashboards to track and share progress
 - Establish evaluation procedures and processes to ensure data driven decision making among partners
- Formalize Partner Engagement
 - Identify communications strategies and guidelines for partners
 - Develop procedures that ensure accountability
- Coordinate Ongoing Stakeholder/Community Engagement
 - Identify a strategy to ensure ongoing community engagement



Cultivating Communities of Indianapolis

CONTACT US

Englewood CDC
57 North Rural Street
Indianapolis, IN 46201
317-749-3876