



**For Immediate Release**

November 30, 2022

## **Mayor Joe Hogsett Highlights Elevation Grant Recipient** *ACE Initiative provides mental and behavioral enrichment for at-risk students*

**INDIANAPOLIS** – Today, Mayor Joe Hogsett joined Office of Public Health and Safety (OPHS) Director Lauren Rodriguez, Edna Martin Christian Center leadership, and representatives from the Indianapolis Foundation to visit the Achieving, Elevating, and Completing (ACE) Initiative, an Edna Martin Christian Center (EMCC) program and recent recipient of \$175,000 in Elevation Grant funding.

“The goal of the Elevation Grant Program is to empower residents and give them the opportunity to live in safe neighborhoods with high quality of life,” said Mayor Joe Hogsett. “The ACE Initiative does just that, equipping young people with the skills necessary to overcome challenging circumstances and guiding them to rewarding choices.”

The ACE Initiative provides Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Dialectical Behavioral Therapy to middle and high school students ages 14 to 18 who are identified as high risk for suspension or expulsion. In collaboration with EMCC Partners, Phoenix Nicholas Center, We Bring HOPE, and the Co-Created Studio, Edna Martin Christian Center delivers a therapeutic framework where participating students will receive positive behavioral supports through specific program activities that enhance student’s post-secondary exploration and plans while cultivating character development through a curriculum rich in civility and soft skills.

“Initiatives like ACE with an emphasis on mental health and supportive, positive activities for Indianapolis youth are absolutely vital for the continued progression and well-being for all in our city,” said OPHS Director Rodriguez.

ACE curriculum was first developed and implemented by Jazzmin Williams, Outreach and Program Manager of EMCC, under the direction of Immanuel Ivey, EMCC’s Senior Director of Workforce Development and Entrepreneurship. The curriculum now includes daily social-emotional programming, conflict resolution skill-building, self-reflection, art, boxing, yoga, and meditation. Additionally, students are provided weekly one-on-one, education-based social emotional learning mentorship and support by IUPUI collegiate volunteers and Crown Mentoring. Collectively, these activities provide students with tools to best equip them for navigating relationships with peers, parents, teachers, and community.

“With this funding opportunity, EMCC wanted to pivot and focus more on prevention rather than intervention work,” says Senior Director Ivey. “Our goal is to receive referrals for additional education, skilling up, and entrepreneurship from the school system rather than the justice system. In order to accomplish this, we want to prevent our youth from committing crimes by furthering their education, skilling up, and making positive behavioral and mindset shifts.”

The [Elevation Grant Program](#) (previously known as the Violent Crime Prevention Grant Program) is a partnership between the City of Indianapolis and the Indianapolis Foundation. The program will invest \$45 million in neighborhoods over the next three years (2022, 2023, and 2024) to address the root causes of violent crime in Indianapolis through a comprehensive approach, including neighborhood empowerment and community building.





"The ACE Initiative is a crucial resource in addressing the root causes of crime," said Alicia Collins, senior consultant for The Elevation Grant Program. "Through its commitment, Edna Martin Christian Center empowers young adults and their families to stabilize Martindale Brightwood households."

Mayor Hogsett announced a comprehensive violence reduction plan in fall 2021, powered by \$150 million in American Rescue Plan funds unanimously approved by the City-County Council. The plan emphasizes law enforcement investments, including \$9 million in modern policing technology, 100 new IMPD officer positions, and up to 40 IMPD civilian positions to cover non-emergencies. It also addresses root causes of violence through \$45 million for grassroots violence prevention organizations, 50 peacemakers to engage with those at risk of becoming perpetrators or victims of gun violence, \$30 million for mental health resources, and more.

### **ABOUT THE INDIANAPOLIS FOUNDATION**

The Indianapolis Foundation, founded in 1916, is a public charity and an affiliate of Central Indiana Community Foundation (CICF). As Indiana's oldest and largest community foundation, The Indianapolis Foundation aims to mobilize people, ideas and investments to make this a community where all individuals have equitable opportunity to reach their full potential—no matter place, race or identity. It awards nearly \$7 million to support current and future community needs and is governed by a board of six publicly appointed directors. Learn more about The Indianapolis Foundation.

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View photos of the event [here](#).

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