Building an Integrated Services Model

A *MAKING CONNECTIONS* PEER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MATCH
BETWEEN INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA AND LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

PEER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE LEADS TO ACTION

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States. It was established in 1948 by Jim Casey, one of the founders of United Parcel Service, and his siblings, who named the Foundation in honor of their mother. The primary mission of the Foundation is to foster public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. In pursuit of this goal, the Foundation makes grants that help states, cities, and neighborhoods fashion more innovative, cost-effective responses to these needs. For more information, visit the Foundation's website at www.aecf.org.

Center for the Study of Social Policy

The Center for the Study of Social Policy, based in Washington, D.C., was established in 1979 with the goal of providing public policy analysis and technical assistance to states and localities. The Center's work is concentrated in the areas of family and children's services, income supports, neighborhood-based services, education reform, family support, community decision-making, and human resource innovations. The Center manages peer technical assistance as part of the Foundation's Technical Assistance Resource Center (TARC).

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BACKGROUND

As part of its *Making Connections* initiative, the Annie E. Casey Foundation is working with Indianapolis, Louisville, and 20 other communities across the country to strengthen neighborhoods and support families. One of the principal aims of *Making Connections* is to link neighborhood residents to the economic opportunities, social networks, and effective services that will improve the lives and well-being of children and their families.

As part of this initiative, the Foundation offers the participating communities access to technical assistance that will help them achieve their goals for strengthening families in a neighborhood context. Peer technical assistance, which allows the sites to capitalize on the practical knowledge that emerges from innovators in other places, is a particularly valuable resource these communities can use to address issues and solve problems they have identified in their own neighborhoods.

From March 18–19, 2002, a team from Indianapolis, Indiana, met with colleagues from Louisville, Kentucky, in a peer match to exchange ideas about building an integrated services model in Indiana. This report summarizes what the Indianapolis team learned from that meeting, and next steps that the team committed to undertake to realize its vision. For more information about *Making Connections* and peer matches, see page 14.

SETTING THE CONTEXT FOR THE MATCH

Indiana has embarked upon a new and exciting effort in which state, city, and local partners are rethinking and redesigning how they help families and children succeed and stay safe. The focus is on building an integrated services model for Indiana that puts families at the center, makes it simpler for them to access services, and is results-oriented.

"What is this all about? It is about cultural change. As human service providers we have existed in our silos, and we have grown very comfortable there. This is not about you doing different work. It is about you doing your work better because you are surrounded by other colleagues who can help you."

Viola Miller, Kentucky Cabinet for Families and Children

A leading partner in this work is the state of Indiana's Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA). As articulated in its *Key Biennium Priorities*, FSSA has identified three areas in which to focus its efforts through June 30, 2003. First, FSSA seeks to bring as many services as possible closer to people's homes or communities. Second, the focus of assistance to families and children will be on preventing future problems and building self-sufficiency. Third, FSSA will be accountable for and continuously improve the quality of services provided.

One of the ways FSSA will help families become self-sufficient is by *"developing and implementing a pilot program in several counties where the family support system will be family-centered with common entry points, integrated services, and measurable results."* Toward this end, the state of Indiana, through FSSA, the Department of Corrections, the Department of Health, the Department of Workforce Development, and other related agencies (collectively referred to as the "state partners"), proposes to work together with local communities to develop and operate the human services delivery system in new and better ways.

The city of Indianapolis has joined in this effort because of its strong interest in assisting families by establishing Family Investment Centers. The idea is to bring various agencies together in neighborhoods and help them deliver services that families really need. As one of the cities participating in the *Making Connections* initiative of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Indianapolis requested technical assistance to advance its efforts. In response, the Foundation set up and facilitated a peer match with a team from Louisville, Kentucky, where a successful integrated services model—Neighborhood Place—has operated for the last ten years.

The impetus for Neighborhood Place was the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 and its mandate that schools accept partial responsibility for children coming to school ready to learn. The traditional fragmented services system simply could not handle the volume of families needing help. The public school system and major public sector human services providers came together to begin planning for a new, more accessible, and "seamless" system of service delivery within Jefferson County. Their efforts started with a single pilot site, First Neighborhood Place,

which opened in 1993. Today, it has grown into a network of eight Neighborhood Places, along with three satellite sites, serving all the people in Jefferson County.

Neighborhood Place is a way of delivering services that brings together staff from multiple agencies in one readily accessible location to work with families in their own neighborhoods. The core services at each Neighborhood Place include health, mental health, juvenile services, school-related services, financial and housing assistance, and child and adult welfare services. Several executives who have been with Neighborhood Place since its inception participated in this peer match with Indianapolis.

THE CONSULTATION

The Indianapolis team consisted of 11 participants including a deputy mayor, executives from participating public agencies, and directors of several community centers. The Louisville team included executives of participating agencies and residents active in Community Councils, one of the structures that provide direction to the Neighborhood Places.

To prepare for the peer match, the facilitator set up a conference call with participants to further define the focus and expected results of the meeting. The Indianapolis team expressed a desire to visit a few Neighborhood Places and to have an opportunity to talk with the staff. An agenda was developed accordingly.

The match started with a dinner during which participants had an opportunity to get to know one another and to begin learning about Indianapolis's vision for an integrated services model and Louisville's successes in this area. Indianapolis participants were given a binder put together by their peer consultants with reference materials about the integrated services model that Louisville has developed. The next day consisted of focused, facilitated discussions on the key questions identified in advance and visits to two Neighborhood Places, Cane Run and South Jefferson. At South Jefferson, participants also observed an Integrated Services Team during a problem-solving session. The match concluded with a debriefing for the Indianapolis contingent.

The five main issues that shaped the peer match agenda were:

1. What structure has proved most effective in managing Neighborhood Place? What committees have been established? How are users involved? How is interest and attendance in committee meetings maintained?

2. What are the roles of the partners in Neighborhood Place? Does Neighborhood Place influence their work in other settings?

3. What budget is needed? What funding mechanisms have been used successfully?

4. How can success of an integrated services model such as Neighborhood Place be measured? Who should decide on desired outcomes/results?

5. What can Louisville recommend as essential elements to the success of an integrated services model? What lessons have been learned about potential problem areas?

Issue 1: Structure

Neighborhood Place has two structures to assure that partner agencies, community organizations, and residents share the decision-making. A *Community Council* in each Neighborhood Place provides general guidance to that center, and a *Managing Board* guides the network of Neighborhood Places as a whole. At each center there is a full-time Neighborhood Place administrator who makes sure that the center functions smoothly and in a coordinated fashion, but who does not have a supervisory function.

The Managing Board is made up of one representative from each Community Council and one from each full partner agency. Full partner agencies are organizations that have staff in a Neighborhood Place as well as a fiscal commitment. Each council is made up of 15–20 residents and service providers in the community. No more than one-third of the council members can be nonresidents of the area.

The Managing Board has an Executive Committee, composed of four elected officers, and three standing committees: Finance/Personnel, Nominating/By-Laws, and Operations. The function of the Operations Committee is to open and operate the Neighborhood Place centers and satellites. It develops plans for implementation of service delivery within the Neighborhood Place, allocates available resources to implement these plans, and reports to the Managing Board. Its members include "full partners" and "contributors" (see types of partners on the next page).

Special committees may be created, as necessary, with members appointed by the chair. The structure, responsibilities, and duration of these committees are delineated by the board at the time of their establishment. Special committee members need not be members of the board. Special committees include Program, Information Systems, Communications, Evaluation/Outcomes, and Training/Staff Development. The by-laws of the Managing Board and of the Community Councils (included in the binder of materials) provide a fuller description of the purpose, membership, standing committees, and operating procedures of these structures.

The issues highlighted during a discussion of this topic included:

- **Developing trust and maintaining communication**. It took four years for Louisville to formalize its governance structure. *"We didn't adopt a governance document early on. Every time you start talking about who is in charge, you lose the collaboration."* After a faulty start, representatives of the partner agencies agreed to meet weekly, and they continue this practice today. They make sure to have a policymaker from each of the agencies attending these meetings. *"A lot of key decisions are made there and, therefore, you need a policymaker who can speak for each agency."* The Louisville team emphasized that meeting and communicating regularly is a crucial element for success. *"It's built a huge amount of trust. Blaming other agencies is really gone."*

- **Defining who makes what decisions**. *"We struggled with this issue and decided that anything involving fiscal or legal responsibility had to be voted on by the Operations Committee. We also learned that community decisions and agency decisions have to work in tandem. We have managed to devise a system for involving the community, but there have been some painful moments. One of the tools that the Managing*

Board has used well is that we actually set a process whereby the Community Council is involved in changing our by-laws. Our by-laws are a living document."

- **Recruiting Community Council members**. The Indianapolis team wanted to know about recruitment and the role of council members. According to those council members who participated in the match, there is no shortage of people who are interested in, or open to, serving on the councils. Members recruit new members. Some are clients of the Neighborhood Place who are invited to participate, others are representatives of community organizations. They noted that new members tend not to be familiar with board procedures and lack confidence about their ability to participate effectively. They have found that efforts to provide board development opportunities and training for board members have been very helpful. It also has been very important to provide child care so that residents can attend council meetings.

Issue 2: The Role of the Partners

Types of partners. Louisville differentiates between three types of Neighborhood Place partners:

- The first tier consists of "full partners"—public agencies that have both staff at a Neighborhood Place and a fiscal commitment to the organization. They include: Jefferson County Public Schools, Jefferson County Department of Human Services, Seven County Services, the Kentucky Department of Community-Based Services, Jefferson County Health Department, and the city of Louisville.

- Another tier consists of "contributors"—partners that give some financial support to Neighborhood Place, such as the United Way and several foundations.

- The third tier consists of other nongovernmental agencies with which Neighborhood Place works very closely.

"**Worker bees**." Each full partner agency has a worker bee who is *"the person behind the scenes who makes sure decisions made by the Operations Committee are carried out."* For example, the Operations Committee decided within the first year of implementation that it needed to develop a curriculum to train the personnel working at Neighborhood Place, and the worker bees were the ones who developed and implemented the curriculum.

Checklists for communication and program planning. Neighborhood Place developed a series of checklists that has helped the partners by making explicit the questions that an agency must answer when considering a change in services or the introduction of a new program into the Neighborhood Place environment. (The checklists were in the package of materials.)

Role of community agencies. While nongovernmental agencies are not full partners in Neighborhood Place, Louisville noted that collaborations between governmental and nongovernmental agencies happen at every site on a daily basis. But it also recalled the apprehension many of these agencies experienced during the initial stages. *"Nonprofits were afraid that this change was going to put them out of business, that the governmental agencies were going to dictate what to do and how to do it. But instead it gave the nonprofits more freedom to devote some of their energy to other things they wanted to do in the communities."* One way Louisville bridged that fear was by allocating a couple of the seats on the councils to the ministries that are very active in Neighborhood Place communities. In this way, they became a voice at the table. They engaged in governance, bringing up community needs and gaps that need to be filled, and helping set the direction of Neighborhood Place.

Issue 3: Budget

As part of its initial conception, Neighborhood Place was designed to operate ideally at no new cost. With the goal of cost neutrality, Neighborhood Place relies primarily on the reallocation of existing resources from partnering agencies. There is no formula for staffing each center; rather, it depends on the services available from other agencies in that community and the needs of that community. Each

partner agency dedicates a minimum of eight full-time staff members to a total of four centers and contributes a minimum of $1,250 annually per staff person. If it is a new Neighborhood Place site, each agency contributes $4,200 per staff person for the first year. The Department of Human Services covers the administrators' salaries, as well as salaries for five management assistants.

Three of the sites are located in newly constructed facilities, while the others are in renovated spaces. Most sites operate on school properties. The building owners provide utilities, cleaning, and security services rent-free.

Grants constitute another large source of income. However, participants in the peer match noted that at some point they realized the many grant and funding opportunities were causing them to lose focus. Now they make sure that any grants and funds they receive are directly relevant to their primary mission. The Operations Committee is responsible for budget decisions.

Issue 4: Measuring Success

Louisville noted that it is very important for everybody in the partnership to see results from the collaboration and to feel responsible for achieving those results. About four years ago, the partners agreed on a set of goals and measurable objectives. Some of these goals are more about how they do the work (such as the goal to provide services that are coordinated and to work in concert with communities), while others identify results in the areas of health, family violence, and education. The education goal, for example, is to improve the level of student participation in school, measured by attendance rates and student suspensions.

Louisville also noted that it is very important to identify the data sources that will be used and how the information will be collected (by census tracts, by counties, etc.). *"You need a common language for data, and we decided to do it using the census tracts. We don't have responsive local data yet—that is, data that hones in specifically on families that have been served by Neighborhood Place—but we are getting there."* Louisville recognized that establishing baselines at the local level has not been easy either.

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How does Neighborhood Place use the data it gathers? First, all Neighborhood Places look at the data once a year at their annual general staff meeting. The data is reviewed and compared to data from prior years. Each site is encouraged to use the data to evaluate the effectiveness of the service delivery system it has put in place to achieve its goals and to make adjustments as necessary when planning for a new cycle. Community Councils review the data to determine if their priorities are being met and how to make changes in the coming year to better serve the clients they represent.

As to measuring success in general, each year Neighborhood Place conducts customer satisfaction surveys during which clients are asked about their treatment, whether they felt like a true partner in making decisions for themselves, and whether the time and location of the centers were convenient. At the same time, each Neighborhood Place conducts a staff survey that focuses on how well they are incorporating collaboration with partner agencies into their daily activities.

Issue 5: Elements for Success and Potential Problem Areas

Louisville noted that there is no cookie-cutter approach to this work. While Indianapolis may make use of some of Louisville's ideas, each situation is unique. When asked to identify the keys to its success, Louisville highlighted the following:

- Commitment to persistence.

- Commitment and continuity of the leadership.

- Communication—consistent, ongoing, and honest communication, not only with our partners but also with the staff and with the community. *"It is like in a marriage, we can't take one another for granted."*

- Collaboration with the school system.

- Vision—to help staff keep the focus and not lose sight of that vision.

- Listening to the community and residents—the needs they express and the assets they bring.

- Thinking about sustainability—how to keep programs going that we think are important.

- Passion—for what we are about and for what we are doing.

Louisville also identified potential problem areas, including:

Keeping the vision. You need to put some effort into keeping the vision. Early on in Louisville, the Cabinet for Families and Children created a "team of champions." It brought together groups of 100 champions at a time in order to create networks of people throughout the state who understood the philosophy, endorsed the idea, and went to their communities to roll out the concept. *"We also came up with a logo with the comprehensive services umbrella and even did a skit. It gets to a point where the nay-sayers get embarrassed."*

Buy-in from staff. Louisville noted that it was hard at first to convince staff to work in a Neighborhood Place, but now most people volunteer. Indeed, staff that met with the Indianapolis team during the site visits indicated that they had volunteered. *"It's scary to move out of your paradigm. But I actually chose to come to the Neighborhood Place and, after a year of working here, I can see the benefits."* Middle managers and supervisors have presented the biggest challenge to getting buy-in. Louisville has recently developed training for this group. Strategies suggested to get the staff to buy-in include:

- Figuring out what "hooks" staff. Working close to where they live and having flexible working hours are very good hooks.

- Collecting success stories. *"One of the things that is carrying us, is the wonderful 'one family at a time' success stories we have gathered over time."*

- Making sure you have staff meetings that celebrate successes, and look at the outcomes and positive results.

- Creating a team of champions statewide (as described earlier).

• Another statewide strategy used in Louisville has been to develop a common language around professional interaction. The Cabinet for Families and Children invites all Neighborhood Place staff to participate in Family Solutions training and pays for it.

Confidentiality. This is a critical issue. Early on, Louisville came up with a confidentiality agreement that allows the partner agencies to share information about cases with each other. Very few clients refuse to sign the confidentiality agreement.

Connectivity of database systems. Louisville is still working on developing effective technologies to support their efforts. *"The technology piece has been weak. Different agencies had different systems, and they are trying to hook them all together."* Also, technology is not cost neutral. Questions such as who owns the technology, who maintains it, and how you deal with confidentiality issues are key factors to consider.

LESSONS LEARNED AND NEXT STEPS

At the closing session, Indianapolis participants had an opportunity to reflect upon what they learned, identify next steps, and make commitments for action. In terms of what was gained from the discussion, the most frequently mentioned lesson was the power and importance of *"sticking to the vision."* Participants agreed with the importance of *"focusing on families rather than programs," "listening to families," "putting families, and their views about success, at the center,"* and *"this work being about culture change."* In several cases, the peer match gave participants a better understanding of the process of bringing others into the project, such as creating links with the Department of Health, law enforcement, and workforce development programs.

In addition, participants reported that the peer match helped them:

• Feel that this is doable, that *"if they are doing it, we can also."*

• Recognize the importance of bringing neighborhood people/residents to the table and providing them with training to be effective.

• Think about the training required. What they have and what will be needed.

• Learn about strategies for getting buy-in, such as collecting success stories.

• Recognize the importance of choosing a few key goals and measures of success *"It means that we will have to say no to some things and that it is OK."*

• Realize the importance of managing expectations.

• Recognize the importance of establishing consistent and open communication.

• Appreciate the commitment it takes.

• Recognize that collaboration is hard, continuous work and that it pays off.

The Indianapolis team agreed to take the following next steps:

1. Identify who else should be invited to participate in this planning process. The group identified some people who they thought should join the planning process, including people from the Department of Education, the Indianapolis Public Schools, local members of the Department of Health, and leaders from each neighborhood.

2. Settle on a structure and decide who is going to drive the process.

3. Decide on a meeting schedule for the group.

4. Decide on some core desired results and measures. Develop a first draft for reactions.

5. Involve the neighborhoods in the conversation, including the conversation about results. Use the Family Circles process to engage more residents. Also, take advantage of the fact that residents in the neighborhoods know about the Family Investment Centers concept proposed by the city of Indianapolis.

The Indianapolis team expressed their appreciation for the thoughtfulness that the Louisville team brought to the peer match. They recognized that in spite of the differences in their communities, the exchange gave them many ideas and insights that will allow them to move the work forward in their own community.

WHAT IS *MAKING CONNECTIONS?*

Making Connections is the Annie E. Casey Foundation's initiative to improve outcomes for some of the nation's most vulnerable children and families. The initiative is conducted through deep and durable partnerships with selected cities and neighborhoods across the United States—currently 22 cities that make up the broad *Making Connections* network. Several core ideas underlie *Making Connections:*

- *Making Connections* is based on the recognition that the greatest number of American children who suffer from "rotten outcomes" live in city neighborhoods that are in many ways cut off—disconnected—from the mainstream opportunities of American life. Thus, *Making Connections* is "place-based"— it focuses on specific neighborhoods in specific cities.

- *Making Connections* has a simple theory: that children do better when they grow up in strong families, and families do better when they live in supportive neighborhoods. Thus, *Making Connections* strategies are aimed at helping families obtain what they need to be strong, and helping neighborhoods gain the resources they need in order to support families well.

- *Making Connections* focuses on three major types of "connections" that help families grow stronger and achieve what they want for their children. The first of these is helping families connect to **economic opportunities** and to jobs that provide income, assets, and an economic future. Research and experience suggest that this type of connection is unlikely without two others: strong connections to the **social networks** of kin, neighborhood groups, and other informal ties that sustain families when times get tough, and to high-quality, **effective services and supports** that help families reach their goals.

Making Connections focuses on improving results for children and families in tough neighborhoods. Core results that *Making Connections* communities are mobilizing around include:

- Families have increased earnings and income;

- Families have increased levels of assets;

- Families, youth, and neighborhoods increase their participation in civic life;

- Families and neighborhoods have strong informal supports and networks;

- Families have access to quality services and supports; and

- Children are healthy and ready to succeed in school.

A key task in ensuring the success of *Making Connections* is making available the learning and technical assistance that the participating sites need to move forward with their work. One of the ways that the Foundation provides this kind of support is by making peer matches available.

WHAT ARE PEER MATCHES?

Since 1995, as part of a broader effort to rely more intentionally on the experience of people working in the field, the Center for the Study of Social Policy began working with several partners and funders to develop and offer a rather intensive form of peer technical assistance known as peer matches. Peer matches are structured opportunities for teams of people from two or more jurisdictions who are working on a similar issue to exchange experiences and practical knowledge toward resolving a particular challenge that has been identified in advance.

The rationale behind peer matches is straightforward. Often, the people best able to provide hands-on help are the "doers" themselves—people from states and communities who have successfully addressed a problem or created an effective new policy or strategy. These are the people who have an acute sense of what has and hasn't worked, and why and why not. They have developed good tools and strategies they can share. And they are usually eager to help others because of a strong sense of shared mission. But while good peer matches are informal, they are never

casual, using a carefully designed process and structure to focus the common interests, roles, and goodwill that exist between peers on producing meaningful change for a community.

Peer matches are a resource and time intensive strategy. Careful consideration of when, where, and how to use this approach is therefore always warranted. Experience has shown that careful preparation and execution of the matches are critical factors for their success. This approach tends to work best when the following conditions are in place:

- A specific problem or issue has been identified, and the people looking for help are at a key decision point with respect to the design or implementation of a state or community strategy;

- Stakeholders are invested in and have a high degree of ownership in solving a problem;

- The timing is right—e.g., a decision or action that will affect the community's family strengthening agenda is going to be taken and/or someone needs to be convinced to take action; and

- A reasonably small number of people have the authority and ability to act on what they learn in the match.

To date, the Center has brokered over 60 peer matches on topics ranging from creating resident-led community development corporations and governance structures, to establishing multilingual homeownership assistance centers, to building integrated services models. As illustrated in the case summaries that are part of this series, peer matches help spread good policies and practice, build relationships among different stakeholders who may not always have a chance to work together, and enable people to put changes in place that improve results for children, families, and neighborhoods.