

## Hoosier Support Centers: Breaking the Cycle of Crisis

Imagine what it is like for a Hoosier family to experience a sudden, life-changing event such as a loss of a job, a devastating health diagnosis or a natural disaster. These individuals and families are suddenly thrown into crisis. The everyday living expenses or the immediate costs of housing and health care can often times prove to be overwhelming. Stress on the personal budget could even lead to the dilemma of choosing between paying bills or buying food.

The burdens of meeting these immediate needs are even more complicated by the continuing chronic needs of Hoosiers who are dealing with the ongoing crisis of housing, hunger and health issues. When these foundational needs of housing, hunger and health are jeopardized, other needs become secondary. Every teacher knows you cannot teach a hungry child. You cannot give job training to an out-of-work Hoosier if they are worried about where they will sleep tonight. Helping seniors negotiate the maze of post-retirement options is pointless if they are consumed with easily manageable health issues but health care is difficult to access or impossible to pay for.

Hoosiers are some of the most compassionate people in the United States. Several faith-based and community organizations try to make a dent in these needs. However, connecting those-who-need with those-who-can-provide can prove frustrating regardless of what side of the equation you're on. That's where an innovative concept called Hoosier Support Centers comes in.

Hoosier Support Centers would be conveniently located in local communities creating strategic partnerships of existing, local services focused on meeting the foundational needs of housing, hunger and health, helping families to "Break the Cycle of Crisis" in their lives. We all know the key to "Breaking the Cycle of Poverty" is EDUCATION. However, if an individual and/or the family unit are continually living from crisis to crisis (Food, Shelter or Medical insecurity), we will never maximize our educational investment. In addition, each center will host a "Hoosier Advocate" to provide a network of resources and educational opportunities.

It's a simple strategy. Instead of trying to recreate the wheel with a new State or Federal solution, the "spokes" that already exist in the "wheel" of a specific community are gathered and anchored in support centers. Sites identified as Hoosier Support Centers would serve as clearinghouses, or one-stop shops, where individuals with various needs could find multiple resources under one roof.

As communities work together to designate a Hoosier Support Center, they may discover that they are missing resources to address one or more of the foundational needs. In this example, the [Fuller Center for Housing](#), [Habitat for Humanity](#), [Home Repair Ministries](#), and [One Heart Many Hands](#) could partner with the local Hoosier Support Center to meet housing needs.

Another Hoosier Support Center may not have connections with organizations that provide health care to individuals in need. They could partner with organizations like, [Timmy Global Health](#), [Gennesaret Free Clinics](#), and [Indiana Medical Reserve Corps](#).

Maybe a Hoosier Support Center is trying to address all of these foundational necessities but their food pantry needs restructured or reinforced. Organizations combating hunger in Indiana like [Midwest Food Bank](#), [Feeding Indiana's Hungry](#), and [Gleaners Food Bank](#) could partner with community based Hoosier Support Centers to stretch food pantry dollars, reduce spoilage, and extend coverage into adjacent rural areas that lack the resources to meet the local needs.

Now imagine a person who arrives at a Hoosier Support Center whose needs are even greater. They need access to educational opportunities and additional state and federal resources. The feeling of being overwhelmed is an understatement as they wrestle with the various applications and requirements for each government agency. Add to that additional hurdles such as language, aptitude, or transportation, and many individuals fail to find the help they need.

To address situations like this, each Hoosier Support Center would have a Hoosier Advocate to help people cut through the clutter and access the support they need. These Hoosier Advocates could connect individuals in similar situations to resources like, [The Benefit Bank](#), [Meet the Need](#), [Connect to Help – Dial 211](#), or the [Christian Emergency Network](#) to name a few.

As organizations, who previously worked independently combine their efforts, they will likely find other areas where they could apply the “force-multiplier” of Hoosier Support Centers. Often times this results in new and innovative ways of meeting the foundational needs of housing, hunger and health, while at the same time connecting people to a variety of available resources that they may not be aware of.

Progress in meeting these immediate foundational needs, will fuel the long-term efforts already being made in breaking the cycle of generational poverty caused by educational disparities, producing greater results in these initiatives. Meeting the needs of housing, hunger, health and education will stabilize and strengthen Indiana communities in ways that will have ripple effects long into the future.

There are additional benefits to Hoosier Support Centers. In times of natural or man-made disasters the infrastructure of Hoosier Support Centers will enable recovery efforts and supplies to be provided immediately. Hoosier Support Centers can also function as Volunteer and Donation Reception Centers in times of crisis that would receive supplies and volunteers from around Indiana and surrounding states, and strategically target those resources to the locations that need them the most. At the same time, it will keep affected areas free from the congestion of those who want to help and allow first responders to respond quicker and more efficiently to emergency situations.

Finally imagine a Hoosier Support Center springing up in your neighborhood. The hunger needs of children in your community are reduced or eliminated. As a result, it’s easier for them to learn and their test results get a needed boost. And the results continue to ripple.

An out-of-work Hoosier locates a Hoosier Support Center and, after being assured that the housing needs for his family will be met, he focuses on retooling his resume. On his next interview, or the one after that, he lands a job and regains some of the dignity he thought he lost. Now your community has another family that is stabilized and paying state and local taxes. And the results continue to ripple.

The elderly widow down the street, who has ignored basic medical care for too long because the grocery bill always defeated the doctor visit in the monthly budget battle, is now receiving personal advice from caring physicians who volunteer their services at the local Hoosier Support Center. In addition, a Hoosier Advocate has connected with her and reminded her of resources she can access because of her service to the country. Now she can stay in her home and contribute to her neighborhood in ways that would have been impossible if her immediate needs had not been met. And the results continue to ripple.

Whether it is unforeseen personal misfortune, regional disasters, or chronic issues related to generational poverty, Hoosier Support Centers will soon become a valuable tool that will enable Hoosiers to continue to help Hoosiers, to do it more efficiently, and with improved results.