

MARION COUNTY  
HOUSING TRUST FUND  
A HOME WITHIN REACH

For Immediate Release:  
May 4, 2006

***Community partners launch “A Home Within Reach”***

***Partners call for a permanent and reliable revenue source for the  
Marion County Housing Trust Fund***

*Indianapolis* – A coalition of community partners today launched “A Home Within Reach,” a public awareness drive which calls for a permanent and reliable revenue source for the Marion County Housing Trust Fund. The Housing Trust Fund, which was created by the Indiana General Assembly in 2000, has never had a dedicated revenue source.

“Indianapolis has long been recognized for its reasonable home prices,” said Bill Moreau, board chair of the Coalition for Homelessness Intervention and Prevention (CHIP), “yet there are approximately 22,000 households who pay over half of their modest incomes on their rent and utilities, leaving them with barely enough to get by each month.”

Joining Moreau at the launch of “A Home Within Reach,” were: Rep. Bill Crawford (D-Indianapolis); Christie Gillespie, chairperson of the Indianapolis Housing Trust Fund Advisory Committee; Barry Olshin, director of the office of student assignment, Indianapolis Public Schools; Bill Stephan, senior vice president, community relations and communications, Clarian Health Partners; and Monroe Gray, president of the Indianapolis-Marion County City-County Council.

“A Home Within Reach” was launched at Washington Irving IPS# 14, which has one of the highest turnover rates of children who move in and out of the school. In the 2004-2005 school year, there were 24,000 moves in and out of IPS schools, in which a lack of affordable housing was a contributing factor.

“Homelessness places a terrible burden on a child” said Dr. Eugene G. White, IPS superintendent. “Imagine trying to learn your A,B,Cs while not knowing where you’ll sleep at night. Investing in the Housing Trust Fund is critical if our children are to have the future they deserve.”

For housing to be considered affordable, a low-income household should spend no more than 30 percent of its income on it. Many are at or below 30 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI), which translates to roughly \$19,200 per year. The AMI in Indianapolis is \$64,000.

“With minimum wage at \$5.15 an hour, a minimum wage employee would have to work 101 hours a week to afford the Fair Market Rent for a local two bedroom apartment,” said Christie Gillespie, chairperson of the Housing Trust Fund Advisory Committee. “The lack of affordable housing hurts not just working families, but seniors, people with disabilities, and veterans. That’s why the time is now to secure a permanent and reliable revenue source for the Housing Trust Fund.”

While the Marion County Housing Trust Fund has relied in recent years upon discretionary funding to help stabilize low income residents, a trust fund requires at least one dedicated revenue source to be fully effective. Based on housing trust fund allocations in cities of similar size, as well as based on the need in our community, “A Home Within Reach” partners are calling for a minimum of \$5 million per year to level the playing field for working families and others of modest means.

“While we are proactive in bringing funding options to the table we recognize that there will be a process for determining funding options and are open to suggestions from those elected officials who are charged with making these decisions,” said Gillespie. “What matters is the Housing Trust Fund is effective and functional.”

Over the last year, a subcommittee of the Trust Fund’s advisory group has been researching potential funding options that could help working families and others bridge the housing gap.

“There are a number of funding options for the Housing Trust Fund,” said Rep. Bill Crawford, “but it is critical that we take the necessary steps to act now. Between 20 and 30 percent of our neighbors in every township are spending over 35 percent of their income on their rent and utilities. These are folks who are working every day for better opportunities, yet despite the hours they work, they just don’t make enough.”

“I can’t think of a better opportunity for us all to reach across the aisle and fashion a workable solution to help stabilize our lowest income neighbors,” said City-County Council President Monroe Gray. “In addition to protecting taxpayer investment in the social services we all pay for, it would be a major breakthrough in our ongoing commitment to secure reliable, local and public investment in the Blueprint to End Homelessness.”

*For more information on “A Home Within Reach,”  
please visit [www.AHomeWithinReach.org](http://www.AHomeWithinReach.org).*