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PRESS RELEASE

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Indiana Institute for Working Families Announces New Grant from The Joyce Foundation

Indianapolis, IN — The Indiana Institute for Working Families (Institute), a program of Indiana Community Action Association, announced today it has received a \$100,000 grant from The Joyce Foundation, located in Chicago, Illinois. This grant will allow the Institute to conduct focus groups with Indiana employers regarding their views of postsecondary education and other credentials, and publish a report on the findings of these focus groups.

The rise of income inequality is often attributed to the failure of the American workers' skills; however, research shows that the share of the workforce with a college degree has nearly doubled since 1973. Yet, median college wages have seen poor performance in recent decades and have lagged productivity growth by an unhealthy margin.

America's workforce is our country's most valuable resource, but right now there are more than 14 million people who can't find a job. However, a large percentage of job openings remain unfilled due to a shortage in workers who have the skills these positions require. Middle-skill jobs represent the largest share of jobs in Indiana and a substantial share of future job openings and are jobs that require more than a high school diploma but less than a four-year degree. In 2009, about 55 percent of all jobs were classified as middle-skill, but only 49 percent of Indiana workers had the education or training required to fill these positions.

“This grant award from The Joyce Foundation will allow us to examine employer demands in the growing job industries. In our changing economy, Indiana must ensure that our workforce has the skills needed to meet workforce demands,” said Lisa Travis, Program Manager.

Additionally, this award will support the Institute's Skills2Compete Campaign and Coalition. The Skills2Compete Campaign and Coalition promote effective state strategies for improving the skills of the state's workforce through sector partnerships, pathways, public-business partnerships, and public policy. The Coalition released its policy recommendations in December of 2010 and is actively working with members of state government to pass related legislation and bring further attention to the skills gap in Indiana.

Changes in public policies that increase access to credentials not only lead to increased educational attainment and competitiveness levels, but provide economic benefits through

increased levels of individual earnings, decreased number of working adults requiring public assistance, and increased opportunities for economic development.

The Institute intends to use the research findings and policy recommendations produced as a result of this grant award to help inform current policies that govern access to financial aid and education and training dollars for low-income and long-term unemployed adults. The Institute is focusing policy change efforts on adults as close to two-third of the people who will be in Indiana's workforce in the year 2020 were already working adults in 2005—long past the traditional high school to education pipeline.

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TheJoyceFoundation

The Joyce Foundation

The Joyce Foundation supports efforts to protect the natural environment of the Great Lakes, to reduce poverty and violence in the region, and to ensure that its people have access to good schools, decent jobs, and a diverse and thriving culture. The Joyce Foundation is especially interested in improving public policies, because public systems such as education and welfare directly affect the lives of so many people, and because public policies help shape private sector decisions about jobs, the environment, and the health of our communities. To ensure that public policies truly reflect public rather than private interests, we support efforts to reform the system of financing election campaigns. To learn more about The Joyce Foundation, please visit: www.joycefdn.org.

Indiana Institute for Working Families

The Indiana Institute for Working Families (Institute) is a program of the Indiana Community Action Association, Inc. (IN-CAA). The Institute was founded in 2004 and is the only statewide program in Indiana that combines research and policy analysis on federal and state legislation, public policies, and programs impacting low-income working families with organized education and outreach. The goal of the Institute is to promote data-driven research and public policy that result in opportunities for Hoosier families to achieve and maintain economic self-sufficiency. The Institute fulfills its mission by focusing its work activities in the following areas: Public Policy; Research and Analysis; Education and Outreach; and National, Statewide, and Community Partnerships. To learn more, please visit: www.incap.org/iwvf.html.

Indiana Community Action Association (IN-CAA)

The Indiana Community Action Association, Inc. (IN-CAA) is a statewide not-for-profit membership corporation, incorporated in the State of Indiana in 1970. IN-CAA's members are comprised of Indiana's 23 Community Action Agencies (CAAs), which serve all of Indiana's 92 counties. IN-CAA envisions a state with limited or no poverty, where its residents have decent, safe, and sanitary living conditions, and where resources are available to help low income individuals attain self sufficiency. IN-CAA serves as an advocate and facilitator of policy, planning and programs to create solutions and share responsibility as leaders in the war against poverty. Therefore, it is IN-CAA's mission to help the state's Community Action Agencies address the conditions of poverty through: training and technical assistance; developing models for service delivery; and providing resources to help increase network capacity. For more information about IN-CAA, please visit IN-CAA's web site at: www.incap.org.