

# PROMISE



# ZONE

## Evansville, Indiana

### Promise Zone Mobile App

In December of 2019, the Evansville Promise Zone (EPZ) announced the launch of the Promise Zone Mobile App (PZMA). Developed for use on smart phones, the PZMA is designed to function as a technology-driven resource guide for Evansville residents to quickly identify essential community services and supports.

An early goal of the EPZ was to develop a mechanism to provide community resource information that is updated in real-time, as traditional paper resource guides quickly become out of date as programs and services evolve over time.



Early data indicated that utilizing technology to connect with EPZ residents would provide a more efficient solution to distributing resource information. According to EPZ Director, Silas Matchem, Sr., “Community surveys indicated that nearly 80% of those residing within the Evansville Promise Zone have a smart phone. That data

provided us with an opportunity to develop a platform upon which vital resource information can be quickly disseminated on mobile devices. Our goal was to develop an app that immediately places a comprehensive database of local resources and services in the hands of every person in the Promise Zone who might need them.”



Developed in partnership between the Evansville Promise Zone, Sebree Consulting, and the City of Evansville, the PZMA is available for download on both Apple and Android platforms. According to Matchem, “Our partners in City Government were early promoters of the PZMA, which helped to increase awareness very quickly. Kelley Coures, Director of the Department of Metropolitan Development, championed the effort and was able to identify funding to support PZMA development and maintenance.”

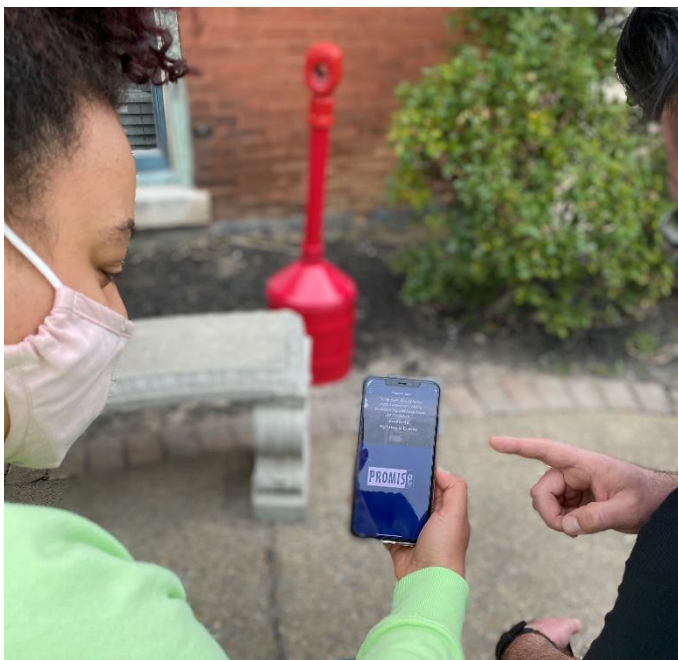
The app includes resources for housing, shelter, clothing, children, food, health, jobs, safety and small businesses, with categories further subdivided into more specific categories for easy and efficient app navigation. The PZMA works with the mapping technology on smartphones such that users receive step-by-step

navigation directly to the location of the service they are seeking. A key strategy in ensuring the app contained up-to-date information involved working with local agencies to provide them with the access needed to update the specific services and resources available at their agency.

## COVID-19

On March 26, 2020, the Evansville Promise Zone announced the addition of a new section containing resources specific to COVID-19 to the Promise Zone Mobile App. These resources included grab-and-go and delivery food resources, disaster loan information and applications, resources for small businesses, COVID-19 testing and safety information, access to PPE and the ability to apply for unemployment directly from the app.

"As we continue to reopen our community, these additional resources will be invaluable for residents," said Evansville Mayor Lloyd Winnecke. "People need to know where resources are and how they can be connected. We're appreciative of the Promise Zone for developing the PZMA to help make those connections."



According to ECHO Housing Executive Director, Chris Metz, "Our Evansville Promise Zone workgroups, led by EPZ Director Silas Matchem, Sr., quickly acknowledged the need to be able to provide resources specific to COVID-19 through a platform that can be accessed via smartphones. This is precisely the spirit of the Evansville Promise Zone: identify community need and provide a platform upon which innovative solutions can be developed by leveraging existing, and creating new, resources."

To date, the PZMA has assisted over 6,000 EPZ residents in identifying and accessing the services and resources available throughout the Evansville Promise Zone.

## IMPACT

"I've never relied on food pantries before, but during the pandemic our family needed additional resources, and I was able to use the Promise Zone app to quickly find those resources that helped us through a very difficult time. The app even gave us driving directions to get to the food pantry." - Sara R., Promise Zone Resident

"I've used the Promise Zone app to find housing, employment, and childcare this year, I'm not sure how I would have gotten through 2020 without it." - Robert E., Promise Zone Resident

"Paper resource guides were always difficult to keep updated, but the Promise Zone mobile app is regularly updated with resource information, so I recommend this app to all of my clients who have smart phones as a way to quickly access the services they need." - Liz A., Community Social worker

## ABOUT US

The **Evansville Promise Zone** is a 10-year designation in partnership with The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Promise Zones are high poverty communities where the federal government partners with local leaders to increase economic activity, improve educational opportunities, leverage private investment, reduce violent crime, enhance public health and address other priorities identified by the community.

**ECHO Housing Corporation**, the lead organization for the Evansville Promise Zone, is a community non-profit founded in 1998; our mission is to create and sustain affordable housing, to provide supportive services and to promote community and economic development. EHC envisions communities where everyone has a place to call home and the opportunity to thrive. Our organization is guided by five core values: advocacy, empathy, innovation, integrity and accountability.

