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PRESS RELEASE

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New Report: More Indiana Working Mothers Are Low-Income

39% of the State's Low-Income Working Families are Headed by Working Mothers

Indianapolis, IN — (WASHINGTON, D.C.) – Nationwide, there are now 4.1 million low-income families headed by working mothers, with more than 91,000 of those in Indiana, according to the new report, “Low-Income Working Mothers and State Policy: Investing for a Better Economic Future.”

The report, which was released by the Working Poor Families Project and utilizes the latest data from the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, finds that Indiana ranks 18th in the nation for the number of female-headed low-income working families. As of 2012, there were 235,831 low-income working families in the state, with 91,703 headed by working mothers.

“While demands have increased exponentially over the past several decades, state policies do not reflect the reality of low-income working families. The broken rungs on the ladder to economic mobility have resulted in too working families working harder for less”, said Jessica Fraser, Program Manager, Indiana Institute for Working Families.

Many of the factors keeping working mothers in poverty can be addressed at the state level, the report found. State governments have significant authority and opportunity to help low-income working mothers gain the education and skills they need to provide for their children, as well as provide important supports that can assist them as they strive to become economically secure.

The report found that 38% of women heading low-income working families in Indiana have no postsecondary education. According to the report, improving access to and success within postsecondary education by providing need-based financial aid to part-time students along with affordable child care is among the most meaningful reform that can help low-income families. Other reforms states can take include improving the quality of low-wage jobs by raising the minimum wage and assuring all workers have paid sick leave and paid family leave; and facilitating a strong network of work supports, such as a state-refundable Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and expanded Medicaid eligibility.

“Policy makers should begin to provide a toolbox for families to begin to restore the promise of economic mobility. This toolbox should: Reward hard working Hoosiers by ensuring they share in economic growth; Strengthen work support programs for our most vulnerable citizens and ultimately; Equip all Hoosiers with the opportunity to obtain the skills necessary in order to attract high-paying, quality jobs that are necessary for a family’s economic self-sufficiency.” said Jessica Fraser, Program Manager, Indiana Institute for Working Families.

The report defines “low-income” working families as earning no more than twice the federal poverty income threshold; in 2012, the low-income threshold for a family of four with two children was \$46,566.

“Too many female-headed working families have no pathway out of poverty,” said Deborah Povich, co-manager of the Working Poor Families Project and one of three authors of the report. “Public policy can and must play a critical role in increasing opportunities so families can achieve economic security. Addressing the needs of low-income working mothers will benefit their children and future generations.”

“Low-Income Working Mothers and State Policy: Investing for a Better Economic Future,” can be found on the WFPF website at <http://www.workingpoorfamilies.org>.

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ABOUT THE WORKING POOR FAMILIES PROJECT:

The Working Poor Families Project is a national initiative designed to help working families achieve economic security by strengthening a variety of policies at the state level. The WFPF is supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Ford Foundation, Joyce Foundation and Kresge Foundation. For more information, please visit: <http://www.workingpoorfamilies.org/>

ABOUT THE INDIANA INSTITUTE FOR WORKING FAMILIES

The Indiana Institute for Working Families – a program of the Indiana Community Action Association (INCAA) – conducts research and promotes public policies to help Hoosier families achieve and maintain economic self-sufficiency. The Institute 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. The Institute achieves its work through advocacy and education, and through national, statewide, and community partnerships. The Institute was founded in 2004. To learn more about the Institute, please visit: www.incap.org/iwfw.html

ABOUT THE 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. IN-CAA’s mission is to help the state’s CAAs 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: www.incap.org