



# THE PROMISE ZONE CONNECTING THE DOTS INITIATIVE

A FEDERAL INTERAGENCY  
PARTNERSHIP

## SAN ANTONIO EAST SIDE PROMISE ZONE PROFILE

### ABOUT THE PROMISE ZONE “CONNECTING THE DOTS” INITIATIVE

**Promise Zones** are high-poverty communities where the federal government has partnered with local leaders to improve educational opportunities, reduce violent crime, enhance public health, increase economic activity, leverage private investment, and address other priorities identified by the community. The Connecting the Dots (CTD) initiative, an interagency collaboration of the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that began in May 2015, sought to focus Promise Zone community efforts on providing targeted supports to local children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness.

### ABOUT THE SAN ANTONIO CTD INITIATIVE

#### GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

The San Antonio Promise Zone, known as the **Eastside Promise Zone**, is located immediately to the east of downtown San Antonio. It consists of 22 square miles that are home to approximately 81,000 residents in 27,000 households. The City of San Antonio and its Promise Zone partners are focusing their efforts on EastPoint, a 4-square mile area inside the Promise Zone. San Antonio's Promise Zone CTD efforts focused attention on one early childhood center and five EastPoint-area schools, including three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school that are part of the same school feeder pattern.

#### PARTNERS

The Eastside Promise Zone has implemented a collective impact model, bringing together over 20 local agencies in partnership to improve the lives of EastPoint residents. Primary partners in the Eastside Promise Zone CTD initiative included The United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County, the San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD), Family Service Association, Trinity University, the University of Incarnate Work, and the University of Texas at San Antonio.

## EDUCATION AND HOUSING GOALS

The shared vision of the Eastside Promise Zone is that EastPoint will be a vibrant, mixed-income community that is rich in diversity and opportunity by 2025. In keeping with the broader Promise Zone vision, the San Antonio CTD initiative sought to connect homeless families with Promise Zone services to help families exit homelessness to permanent housing, and to increase the school stability and performance of students in homeless situations.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND OUTCOMES

Local university partners placed social work graduate students as interns in five SAISD school locations. Reporting to the SAISD local McKinney-Vento liaison and the CTD site lead, the interns worked with students experiencing homelessness and their families to ensure that the students received all services for which they were eligible under the [McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act](#), and that the parents were aware of community supports to help them resolve their homelessness. The work of the interns brought needed attention to the issue of student homelessness within CTD schools, with participating schools acknowledging the need to make additional investments in supporting their homeless families in the form of dedicated staff time, targeted identification efforts, and intentional connection to local supports. As a result of the work of CTD partners, including through assistance provided by the student interns, local families are more aware of the support that is available at school and within the community.

## LESSONS LEARNED

San Antonio CTD leaders noted the importance of engaging a wide variety of partners early on to leverage community resources for maximum impact. Engaging partners early is key to ensuring that partners have the opportunity to establish mutually beneficial goals and ensure sufficient agency capacity for conducting agreed-upon work. Fortunately, the Promise Zone education liaison knew the local McKinney-Vento liaison and they could easily align homeless education activities with education goals for the Promise Zone. While this initiative enabled the recruitment of interns for five schools, having stipends to support extra time, effort, and travel would have enabled even better case management and interagency coordination.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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For more information about the San Antonio Eastside Promise Zone CTD initiative, please contact:

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