



Elevate's Long-Term Life-Changing Legacy

The Bridge Campaign Case Statement

A Letter from Our CEO, Aaron Story

Ten years ago, Elevate Indianapolis was founded on a simple but radical belief: No one gets there alone. From the beginning, you, our dedicated community of supporters, have been at the heart of this journey. Your partnership has fueled a new approach to urban youth development rooted in long-term mentoring, life skills education, and character-building relationships. Because of your steadfast belief in our mission, approximately 5,000 students and alums are living proof that this model works. Together, we've witnessed young people, once overlooked, become first-generation graduates, defying expectations and rewriting their futures. We've seen teens grow into mentors, leaders, and college-bound change-makers, pouring back into their communities. We've seen communities strengthened, families supported, and cycles of poverty disrupted.



As we commemorate this 10th anniversary, we approach a significant crossroads. The demand for our programs is greater than ever, and we have a unique opportunity to expand our impact and serve even more young people. However, to seize this moment and ensure our long-term ability to create meaningful change, we must strengthen our organization and amplify our capacity to make a lasting impact.

That's why we are launching a one-time \$1 million "Bridge Funding" initiative. This is not just about Elevate Indy's future. It's about the future of our city. If we do not secure this funding, we will be forced to scale back our programs, potentially reducing the number of students we can serve and limiting our ability to provide the intensive, personalized support critical to their success. This would be a devastating setback, not only for Elevate Indy but for the young people we serve and for the entire Indianapolis community.

Conversely, with your investment, we can unlock extraordinary opportunities. We can expand our reach, deepen our impact, and equip a new generation of young people with the tools they need to thrive. This will transform individual lives and create a ripple effect, making our city safer, stronger, and more prosperous for all.

Your partnership has been essential to our success thus far. Your belief in our mission, commitment to our students, and generous support have made all of this possible. You have helped us build a legacy of impact, and we are deeply grateful for your continued investment.

With gratitude,

Aaron Story

President & CEO, Elevate
Indianapolis



Our Mission & Model

- **Why:** We desire all students to be seen, known, heard, and loved, and we believe wholeheartedly that life-on-life mentoring transforms lives and revitalizes communities.
- **How:** Reflecting the diversity and heritage of our students, our full-time, salaried teacher-mentors create trusting relationships with students by encouraging, guiding, and advocating for them 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, as they navigate challenges and explore possibilities.
- **What:** Building long-term, life-changing relationships with Indianapolis urban youth, equipping them to thrive and contribute to their community.

When Potential Meets Barriers: Why Elevate Matters Now

Across Indianapolis, young people possess tremendous promise—but many face barriers that threaten to derail their future. For Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) students, these challenges aren't hypothetical—they're daily realities.

While the statewide high school graduation rate exceeds 86%, one in five IPS students still does not graduate. Indiana spends an estimated \$35k/per year per prisoner - Bureau of Justice Stats, 2022. High School dropouts 8x more likely in prison. And for those who do, too few have access to the resources needed to succeed in college or the workforce. Fewer than half enroll in college within a year, and many who do arrive are underprepared, facing remedial coursework, low credit completion, and minimal support systems. Their ambition often outpaces the opportunity available to them.

Academic setbacks are only part of the story. Many IPS students lack access to career exposure, internships, or professional networks that provide a competitive edge. Few graduate with industry credentials or dual-credit experience—essential tools for gaining meaningful employment in today's economy. Without these stepping stones, they are more likely to enter low-wage jobs with limited upward mobility.

Outside the classroom, the barriers deepen. Many of these students grow up in neighborhoods marked by high rates of violence, incarceration, and instability. In Indianapolis, youth-involved violence remains one of the most urgent public safety concerns. Daily exposure to trauma and the absence of consistent, trusted adults can have a long-lasting impact on mental health, academic performance, and a young person's sense of possibility.

And while the need for mentorship is greater than ever, the availability is far too limited. Over 1,200 youth are currently on waitlists for formal mentoring programs in our city. IPS schools—already stretched thin—cannot often offer the intensive, long-term support students need to thrive.

This isn't a failure of potential. It's a failure of access.

That's where Elevate Indy steps in. Our work addresses not just the academic gap, but the relational gap—the absence of consistent, high-trust adult mentors who can help young people navigate life's challenges and build a path toward success. By investing in those relationships, we unlock the potential that's already there—and help shape the kind of city we all want to live in.

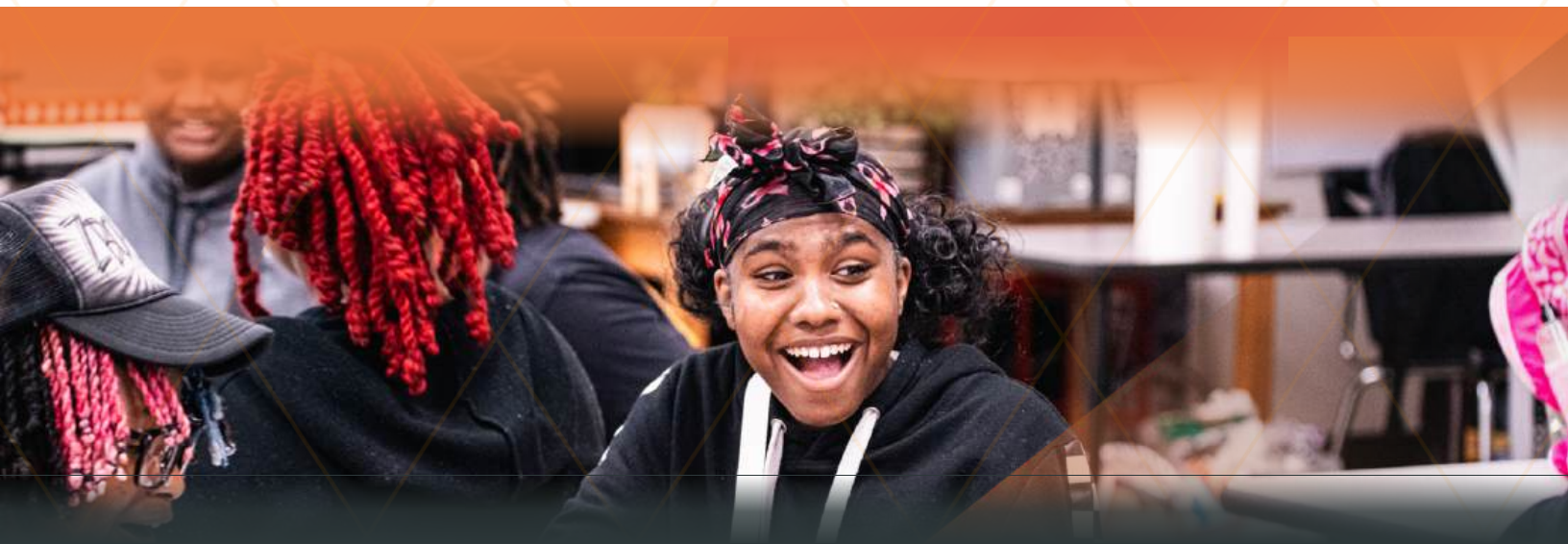
Solution: Elevate Lives. Strengthen Communities. Build a Legacy.

Elevate Indy bridges the gap between promising young people and the successful adults they aspire to become. Our model places full-time, salaried Teacher-Mentors in schools to provide long-term, life-changing relationships with students—both in the classroom and beyond. We walk alongside students through high school and into adulthood, offering consistent, high-trust support that transforms futures. Elevate Indy interrupts the cycle of missed opportunity by pairing character and leadership development with academic support, college and career readiness, and out-of-school mentorship.

We don't just help students graduate; we empower them to envision a different future and equip them to achieve it. At a time when community needs are rising and positive adult relationships are scarce, Elevate's proven model has never been more critical.

As we celebrate a decade of impact, we find ourselves at a critical juncture. Because of the strong foundation we have built, our programs are in high demand. School partners are eager for expansion, alums are returning as mentors, and new career-readiness initiatives are opening doors for our students' futures.

To meet growing demands and ensure our long-term sustainability, **we must invest in infrastructure—now.**



Your Investment Powers Strategic, Scalable Impact

Over the next ten years, Elevate Indy will expand our reach and deepen our impact in the following ways:

- Empowering over 10,000 students and alums through long-term, Long-term life-changing relationships with full-time Teacher-Mentors—trusted adults who walk with students from classroom to career, providing the consistent support that drives life transformation.
- Hiring and training additional Teacher-Mentors to directly increase our capacity—ensuring more young leaders have access to individualized mentorship, academic guidance, and personal development year-round.
- Developing scalable partnerships with local industries to connect students with high-demand career pathways. We'll equip students with skills that translate into economic mobility through paid internships, workforce training, and job placement opportunities.
- Partnering with youth development organizations across Indianapolis to align around shared, measurable outcomes that address the multifaceted needs of K-12 students and young alumni. By committing to collective success, we and partner organizations can unify goals, leverage shared resources, and build a coordinated, citywide initiative capable of scaling impact in underserved communities.
- Expanding alum support and postsecondary pathways, ensuring students receive ongoing career counseling, mentorship, and practical resources for success in college, trade school, or the workforce—long after graduation. We will continue to collaborate closely with Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) and Purdue Polytechnic High School (PPHS) to align our college and career readiness efforts with Indiana's Graduation Pathways and IDOE goals, ensuring students meet state benchmarks while pursuing their individual aspirations.

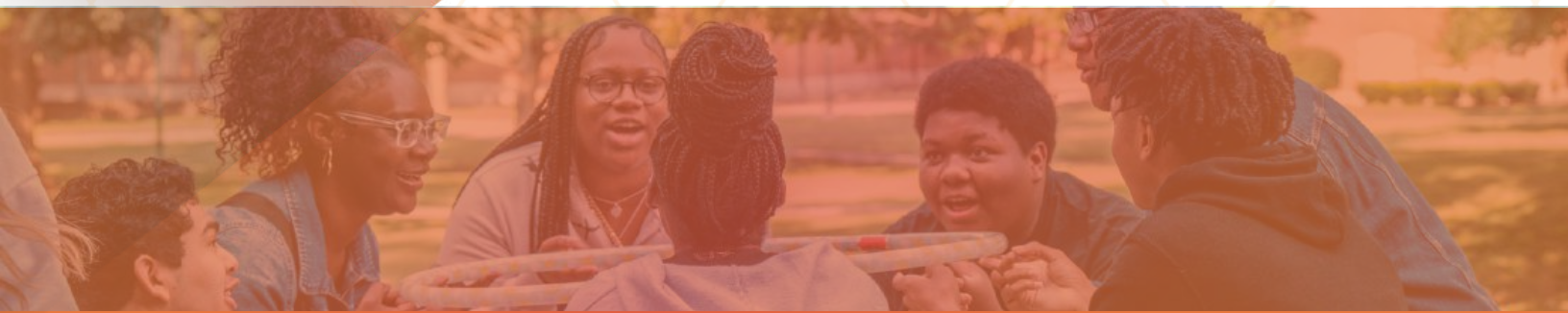


- Offering comprehensive support services—including crisis intervention, college guidance, and financial mentorship—to help families build stable home environments where students can thrive. We will also invest in an Alumni and Family Persistence Manager to strengthen long-term relationships, ensuring continued support and success for both students and their families beyond graduation.
- Strengthening internal operations and infrastructure to enhance efficiency and scalability—enabling us to serve more students without compromising our relational, high-touch approach. We will also cultivate a trauma-informed workplace culture that supports staff well-being and development, ensuring a strong, sustainable pipeline of passionate and equipped team members.
- Building long-term sustainability through diversified funding and partnerships, ensuring Elevate’s model can thrive and expand across Indianapolis for years to come.
- Driving measurable improvements citywide, including higher graduation rates, increased college enrollment, stronger job readiness, and greater civic engagement among the next generation of Indianapolis leaders. We will also expand access to internships for our high-performing high school and college-age alumni, equipping them with real-world experience and professional networks. In 2025–26, we will launch the Transformational Leadership initiative to invest in the top 10% of student leaders, accelerating their growth as future changemakers.



Your support doesn’t just change individual lives—it transforms entire communities. When you invest in Elevate Indy, you help unlock a chain of impact that strengthens the future of our city:

- When students build life skills, character, and a sense of purpose, they can make positive choices, avoid the justice system, and contribute meaningfully to their communities and careers.
- When Elevate alums step into the workforce with confidence and discipline, they answer the urgent call for skilled, values-driven professionals in fields like healthcare, education, trades, and public service—fueling the economic vitality of Indianapolis.
- When families receive consistent support through mentoring, advocacy, and crisis care, stability becomes possible. Housing is secured, food insecurity is addressed, and children are freed to focus on learning, growth, and achievement.
- When community engagement becomes a core value, students don’t just benefit from the city—they give back to it. They become civic-minded, solution-oriented leaders who shape safer, stronger neighborhoods



When Potential Meets Barriers: Why Elevate Matters Now

Research tells us that every student who graduates from high school earns over **\$10,000** more per year than a peer who drops out—and contributes more in taxes, spends more in the local economy, and requires fewer public services—the return multiplies when that same student completes a college degree or earns a professional credential.

Your investment in a student today can yield decades of economic growth, community stability, and generational change. At scale, Elevate Indy contributes directly to the workforce development pipeline, the reduction of violence and poverty, and the long-term quality of life in Indianapolis. We strengthen schools, build bridges between neighborhoods, and create safe, supportive spaces where young people can become the best version of themselves.

The need is urgent, and the opportunity is great. Your partnership in this Bridge Funding Initiative will ensure that Elevate Indy can continue to empower young people, transform lives, and build a stronger Indianapolis for generations to come. We have a bold vision for the future but cannot achieve it alone. We need your help. Your investment is not just a donation but a partnership in transformation. It is a statement of belief in every young person's potential and our city's future

Without this investment, we will be forced to scale back programs, reducing our reach when our young people need us most. This could result in:

- Fewer students are receiving mentorship and guidance
- Programs scaling back
- Alums losing post-grad support
- Job readiness efforts stalling
- Undersupported youth left without a trusted adult

But with your help, we can secure the foundation for the next decade of Elevate's work, ensuring that caring mentors continue to walk alongside young people and provide unwavering support and guidance.



When you give, here's what you help us do:

- Hire and train more Teacher-Mentors: Meeting demand to provide consistent mentorship, fostering academic, emotional, and social growth.
- Upgrade systems and data infrastructure: Tracking long-term success, refining programs, and demonstrating impact to partners.
- Expand alum support and career pathways: Provide resources for college, career, and community leadership, offering alum career counseling.
- Strengthen internal operations: Enhancing staff development, technology, and systems for efficient and sustainable growth.
- Build capacity for diversified, long-term funding and partnerships: Securing resources to sustain and expand Elevate's impact for future generations.

These investments aim to build upon past success for an even greater future impact on Indianapolis youth.

Elevate Indy is raising \$1 million in Bridge Funding to expand our proven mentorship model, train and support Teacher-Mentors, helping equip **10,000+** more youth over the next decade.



Bridge Funding Priorities

Your investment will directly support the following:

- 60%:** Hiring and training full-time Teacher-Mentors
- 10%:** Upgrading systems and data infrastructure
- 20%:** Expanding alum support and career pathways
- 10%:** Strengthening internal operations and building fundraising capacity

Be the Bridge to a Brighter Future:

You can give in many ways to empower young people, transform lives, and build a stronger Indianapolis for generations to come. Please consider:

- Planned Legacy Giving:** Leave a lasting mark through a gift in your estate plans, such as a bequest, charitable gift annuity, or beneficiary designation. Your planned gift ensures that Elevate's life-changing work continues for generations.
- Multi-Year Pledges:** A commitment over 2-3 years provides the sustained foundation needed to expand our reach and deepen our student impact. Your ongoing partnership fuels strategic growth and lasting relationships with students and families
- Tribute Gifts:** Honor a mentor, family member, or loved one with a gift made in their Name. Tribute gifts are a meaningful way to celebrate a legacy while helping others build their own.
- One-Time Gifts:** A single, generous gift can immediately help us hire Teacher-Mentors, expand alum services, or launch new career pathways for students.
- Recurring Monthly Gifts:** Consistent monthly support helps us plan and sustain critical programs throughout the year. It's an easy way to make a lasting impact.
- In-Kind Contributions:** Donated goods or services—such as technology, meals, professional services, or event support—help us reduce costs and redirect more resources to students.
- Non-Cash Gifts:** Appreciated stock, donor-advised fund distributions, and qualified charitable distributions (QCDs) from IRAs can be powerful, tax-smart ways to support Elevate Indy.
- Network Referrals:** Introduce us to others who share your passion for mentorship, leadership, and building a brighter future for Indianapolis. Your connections can open new doors for partnership and support.



All gifts to Elevate Indy are tax-deductible. We are committed to recognizing your partnership and celebrating your impact. We would be honored to discuss recognition opportunities that align with your philanthropic goals

Please contact Aaron Story at **317-201-1120** or **aaron@elevateindy.org** to learn more about how you can partner with Elevate Indy.

Together, Let's Build a Legacy That Lasts.

The Elevate logo, featuring the word "ELEVATE" in a bold, white, sans-serif font.The "10 YEARS ELEVATE INDIANAPOLIS" logo, featuring a stylized "10" with vertical lines, followed by "YEARS ELEVATE" and "INDIANAPOLIS" in a smaller font, with the tagline "OF LONG-TERM LIFE-CHANGING LEGACIES" below.

Your partnership is essential to ensuring that Elevate Indy remains a beacon of hope and a catalyst for change in Indianapolis for decades. Let's connect and explore how your legacy can shape the next decade of Elevate's impact.

The Elevate logo, featuring the word "ELEVATE" in a bold, white, sans-serif font.The "10 YEARS ELEVATE INDIANAPOLIS" logo, featuring a stylized "10" with vertical lines, followed by "YEARS ELEVATE" and "INDIANAPOLIS" in a smaller font, with the tagline "OF LONG-TERM LIFE-CHANGING LEGACIES" below.