

Making Connections Denver



- Helping schools be ready to receive them
- Ensuring that parents are supported by the school and the community

3. Engaged Residents Lead to Systems Change

- Using community organizing and social networking, Making Connections helps residents transform their neighborhoods and the institutions that affect their lives.

Strengthening Families and Neighborhoods

Making Connections-Denver is a partnership of residents and organizations working to improve the lives of vulnerable children and families in four diverse neighborhoods:

- Baker
- Cole
- La Alma/Lincoln Park
- Sun Valley

We believe that residents who build leadership skills and work with local partners can influence public policy and change systems over time.

Priority Outcomes

Three priority outcomes and supporting strategies guide our work.

1. Family Economic Success

- Creating access to employment and advancement into better jobs, through higher education and training
- Helping residents repair credit and build assets for financial security

2. School Readiness and Beyond

- Improving access to quality childcare and healthcare so that children are healthy and prepared to succeed in school

Funding and Governance

Making Connections-Denver is one of 10 cities supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Other investors are: The Piton Foundation, Mile High United Way and the City of Denver. We achieve results through grants to local organizations who work with MC-D staff. The Making Connections-Denver partnership is composed of residents from the four neighborhoods as well as organizational partners from The Piton Foundation, Mile High United Way, Project WISE, Metro Organizations for People (MOP), the Chinook Fund, the City of Denver, and the University of Denver.

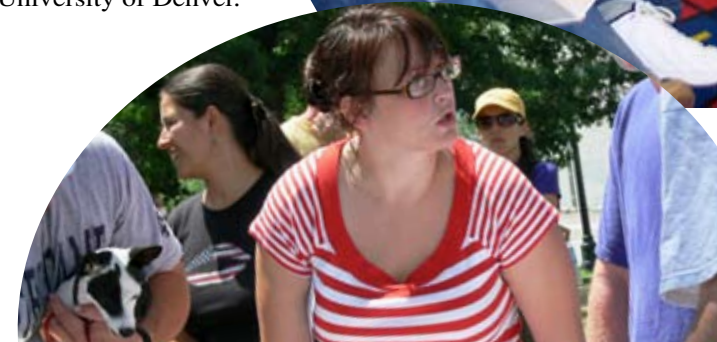


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Making Connections - Denver
2980 Curtis St., Denver, CO 80205
Phone: 720-891-4911
Fax: 303-308-8140

www.makingconnectionsdenver.org

MAKING CONNECTIONS - DENVER





Achieving Core Results

Workforce, Income and Economic Development.

Making Connections has developed an employment “pipeline” to better jobs in partnership with Denver’s Department of Workforce Development. It is expected to yield **family-supporting jobs for more than 400 neighborhood residents**. Working together, MC-D, resident leaders, the Front Range Economic Strategy Center, the city and others were able to secure an unprecedented Community Benefits Agreement for the redevelopment of the former Gates Rubber Plant in the Baker neighborhood. The agreement:

- Sets aside jobs and affordable housing for neighborhood families



- Establishes a program with Emily Griffith Opportunity School to prepare residents for union apprenticeship opportunities.

Career Advancement, Asset Building and Social Networks. With Mile High United Way, MC-D is helping families employed by the city and Denver Health to get training and education needed to qualify for higher paying jobs and promotions. We have intensified efforts to link residents with **opportunities to repair their credit and increase their savings**. Since social networks help all families find jobs, MC-D works with the Piton Foundation and others to help residents build personal networks as they search for steady work.

Helping Children to Succeed in the Early Grades and Beyond. We believe that success comes from strong parent involvement, best practices in early childhood education and supportive partners and co-investors. Our focus is on children from birth to age eight with a goal of improving third grade reading scores. Recent successes include:

- Increasing access to preschool for 4-year olds through passage of The Denver Preschool ballot initiative
- Funding Parent Liaisons at three Denver Public Schools to increase parent involvement and help children make the transition from preschool to kindergarten.
- Increasing school nurse time at two schools in a pilot study to demonstrate the effect on attendance of providing health screening and follow-up services to children.

Resident Leadership and Community Organizing. MC-D supports several efforts to empower residents through leadership development and organizing so they can create lasting change in their communities. Neighborhood residents and our partners have demonstrated their ability to change policy and hold

systems accountable for helping vulnerable people succeed:

- With MOP, residents are renegotiating use of “weighted student funding” in the Denver Public Schools budget to ensure that more resources are apportioned to students growing up in severe poverty.
- Residents are taking legal action against the State Board of Education for eliminating funding for “fifth year” high school options that allowed students to earn college credit before graduation.

These advocacy efforts have earned national attention. Denver was selected as a demonstration site for the Fund for Education Organizing — a three-year investment by the Ford Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Piton Foundation and Making Connections-Denver.

Research and Evaluation

Making Connections is a source for data, research and evaluation. Our resident-led Community Learning Network is **evaluating the cumulative impact of our strategies with a multi-year 100 Family Survey**. By chronicling the progress of families deeply involved in MC-D strategies, this study will help assess both the strength of individual strategies and how they “add up” to improve access and quality of services and opportunities. Other evaluations include:

- Implementing a **performance tracking system** that documents progress towards annual goals and the long-term effects of strategies to improve outcomes and opportunities.
- Analyzing data from a survey of all 10 Making Connections cities that provides **useful comparisons from neighborhood to city and across the sites**.

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Join Us

Making Connections-Denver welcomes new investors, partners, residents and volunteers who are interested in making a difference for Denver families and their neighborhoods. Visit the website or contact our office just north of downtown Denver.

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