

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ACCESS TO THE *MAKING CONNECTIONS* CROSS-SITE SURVEY DATABASE

The Annie E. Casey Foundation invites policy researcher professionals and advanced graduate students to utilize a unique survey database developed as part of the Foundation's *Making Connections* initiative.

About the Foundation

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is one of the largest private foundations in the nation. The Foundation's primary mission is to foster public policies, human services and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of disadvantaged children and families. Headquartered in Baltimore, Maryland, the Foundation has been working to promote the well-being of the nation's most vulnerable children since it was established over 60 years ago by Jim Casey, the founder of UPS. More information on the Foundation and its initiatives is available on the Annie E. Casey Foundation website, at www.aecf.org

About *Making Connections*

Launched in 1999, *Making Connections* is a decade-long major initiative of the Annie E. Casey Foundation based on the belief that the best way to improve outcomes for vulnerable children living in tough neighborhoods is to strengthen their families' connections to economic opportunity, positive social networks, and effective services and supports. The initiative seeks to demonstrate this theory in disinvested communities across the country and in full partnership with residents, community-based organizations, local government, businesses, social service agencies, community foundations, and other funders. The *Making Connections* neighborhoods are located in *Denver; Des Moines; Hartford; Indianapolis; Louisville; Milwaukee; Oakland; Providence; San Antonio; and King County (Seattle)*. Neighborhood size ranges from approximately 20,000 to 40,000 residents, according to the 2000 census (with the exception of the San Antonio neighborhood which includes 138,000 residents).

About the Cross-site Survey

An important component of Casey's *Making Connections* initiative is a strong emphasis on collecting and using data for planning, management, and self-assessment, and a commitment to achieving and sustaining measurable, concrete results. In order to obtain relevant data unavailable from other sources, the Foundation commissioned a household survey in the *Making Connections* neighborhoods, conducted by NORC, the National Opinion Research Center (www.norc.org). The survey produces data on a broad range of *Making Connections* results areas including employment, income, assets, civic participation, social networks, human and financial services, neighborhood characteristics and child well-being. The survey also collects a rich body of data on the composition and demographic characteristics of *Making Connections* households.

The *Making Connections* Cross-site Survey has two characteristics of particular value to social policy research:

- » The survey covers an exceptionally broad set of topics. It was designed in this way to allow analysts to examine interconnections among a wide variety of conditions, characteristics and outcomes.

- » The survey is simultaneously longitudinal (tracking a sample of families with children over time, including “mover” families who left their baseline address) and cross-sectional (providing a snapshot of neighborhood conditions at each wave, based on current residents including newcomer families that moved in post-baseline)

Analysis of the survey by Foundation-funded researchers at the Urban Institute (www.urban.org) has produced a wide range of products for in-house use by the Foundation and the *Making Connections* sites. Additionally, a series of public reports has been produced based on the *Making Connections* Cross-site Survey. Copies of these reports and full details about the application process can be found at: www.aecf.org/mcresearch.html

Process for Acquiring *Making Connections* Cross-site Survey Data

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is committed to making maximum use of the *Making Connections* Cross-site Survey in pursuit of its mission of improving outcomes for disadvantaged children and families. To that end, the Foundation, in partnership with NORC, is making the *Making Connections* Cross-site Survey data available to selected policy research professionals and advanced graduate students for use in research projects that build the knowledge base required for public policies, human services and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of low-income children and families in isolated, disinvested neighborhoods.

Researchers who wish to access the *Making Connections* Cross-site Survey data are invited to submit application materials including:

1. Brief (1-2 page) project description covering:
 - » Relevance of the project to the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s mission of improving outcomes for disadvantaged children, families, and communities
 - » Questions to be addressed in the research project
 - » Intended audience and initial products (e.g. dissertation, journal article, report, book chapter, etc).
 - » Timeline for completion of the project
2. Curriculum Vitae
3. Graduate Students only: Faculty sponsor contact information

Application materials may be submitted to Cindy Guy, Associate Director for Policy Research, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, 701 St. Paul Street, Baltimore MD 21202 or cguy@aecf.org. Applicants will receive a response within 3 weeks.

Approved applicants will be authorized to apply to NORC to receive the *Making Connections* Cross-site Survey dataset. NORC will provide access to the data to all AECF-approved applicants that meet NORC’s standard IRB requirements. Those requirements will include completing a data sharing agreement form and submitting a non-exempt certificate approval to conduct research from your own institution.

As a condition of use, researchers must share copies of research products based on the *Making Connections* Cross-site Survey Data with the Annie E. Casey Foundation prior to publication or presentation.