



THE FAMILY INDEPENDENCE INITIATIVE

Families Escaping Poverty,
Not Just Surviving It



FAMILIES WORKING TOGETHER

The Family Independence Initiative **invests in families struggling with poverty** as well as the solutions they discover on their own. We do away with the traditional top-down approach to fighting poverty by **letting families themselves be the change agents**.

FII families meet and come together in their neighborhoods to solve the problems that keep them from leading more economically secure lives. The progress of individual families is tracked and we use that data to identify and invest in the solutions that are working for the families.

Think about it — If Amazon and Google can use data to help us find a new book or a faster way to navigate traffic, we can do the same thing for thousands of families working together to find solutions to the challenges of poverty.

With this approach, **the families are the experts** and our staff act only as story-gatherers, connectors, and advocates for the FII model.

FAMILIES MAKING MEASURABLE CHANGE

There are almost 5,000 family members providing FII with data about their choices, growth, and new connections. The resources we invest in families are matched by the families and ultimately saves millions in social services and other government spending.

DURING TWO YEARS OF ENGAGEMENT WITH FII, AN AVERAGE FAMILY REPORTS:

\$1000+

Families increase their average monthly savings account balance **from less than \$100 to over \$1,000.**

▲ 20% INCREASE
of total income

— with a —

▼ 62% DECREASE
in federal assistance

▲ 70% INCREASE **+** **▲ 100% INCREASE**
in the amount FII families help others in the amount of help FII families receive from their communities

ONE FAMILY'S STORY

Romona, a single mother in San Francisco, enrolled in FII in 2010. Her main goals have been to better educate herself and her two boys, secure reliable transportation, save money, and help her community. Through FII's Resource Hub, Romona accessed a savings match, a scholarship, zero-interest loans, lending circles, and social clubs. After just a few years, she earned her Masters of Arts in Counseling Psychology and sent her oldest son to Arizona State University. She has lowered her credit card debt and led events to help feed the homeless and clean up local streets. Romona says, "FII has taught me what it means to be accountable, a fierce leader, and a trustful role model to my family."



HOW THE MODEL WORKS

- 1 Families work together to set goals and find solutions for the problems they face.
- 2 Families report monthly on their overall progress to FII's social networking platform, UpTogether.
- 3 FII compiles and analyzes data from UpTogether to capture trends among families.
- 4 FII's analysis is used to make capital resources available to families based on their initiatives.
- 5 FII informs policymakers and other funders about what works in order to steer resources directly to family-driven solutions.

CHANGING THE WAY WE ADDRESS POVERTY

Fifty years into the war on poverty has made life more tolerable for struggling families. By making the families the warriors, we can finally win this war.

With the old way of thinking, the investment was in programs or interventions that tried to alleviate poverty. FII is going straight to the source: have the families tell us how they would fix problems and then we track and invest in what works. We put the family front and center in creating solutions.



JOIN THE MOVEMENT TO CHANGE THE WAY
OUR COUNTRY THINKS ABOUT LOW-INCOME FAMILIES.

EVERYONE HAS A ROLE



As much as FII families are changing the way we think about poverty, we also need more Americans to change the way they think about families struggling with poverty. People in poverty are our house and office cleaners, gardeners, caregivers and more.

At a time when there's an important national debate about income inequality, we also have to think about the cultural gap between struggling working families and Americans who are more financially secure.

FII families are leading the charge on a new conversation about struggling families to end stereotypes and other misconceptions.

For more information visit fii.org.