



Indy Reads
1066 Virginia Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46203

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:
Sam Ferrante
Marketing Coordinator
(317) 384-1496 ext 715 | sferrante@indyreads.org



MARGOT L. ECCLES ARTS & CULTURE FUND

A CICF FUND

Indy Reads Receives \$125,000 Grant from the Margot L. Eccles Arts & Culture Fund, a CICF Fund

Indianapolis, IN — (March 22, 2022) This week, the Margot L. Eccles Arts & Culture Fund, a CICF fund, awarded Indy Reads a \$125,000 grant to support Indy Reads' new Customer Service Skills Program. This grant will fund an innovative pilot program that provides Central Indiana adults with intensive soft skills development through work at Indy Reads' bookstore while they earn an industry-recognized credential.

Indy Reads serves adult learners through free literacy, ELL, job readiness, and credential-earning certification courses. The Customer Service Skills Program aims to enroll 25 students in its first year in a paid mentorship and work experience program based in Indy Reads' bookstore in Fountain Square. Indy Reads is proud to partner with local businesses such as Heartland Resolution Group, who have committed to prioritizing hiring students who complete its Customer Service Skills Program.

"Margot Eccles was instrumental in bringing our bookstore to life ten years ago. We couldn't be more grateful to the Margot L. Eccles Arts & Culture Fund for enabling her legacy's continued support as we implement this innovative program," said Ruba Marshood, Indy Reads' CEO. "We are thrilled to offer real-world retail experience and training to students in our bookstore at a living wage of \$15 per hour while they participate in our Customer Service Skills course and prepare for the nationally-recognized Retail Industry Fundamentals certification."

"44% of our adult learners at Indy Reads live below the poverty line," Marshood said. "These students are working so hard to make ends meet that they do not have the time or opportunity



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to participate in traditional soft skills training programs. With our new Customer Service Skills course that combines employment with education, as well as our partnerships with national and local businesses, we can combat some of that persistent poverty. Thanks to the support and trust of the Margot L. Eccles Arts & Culture Fund and CICF, we are able to help Hoosiers develop crucial transferable soft skills and credentials, and find sustainable employment here in Central Indiana. We encourage anyone interested in participating or finding out more to reach out and get started!"

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About Indy Reads

Indy Reads builds literacy, English language, and job readiness skills to empower adults and families to reach their full potential. For over 30 years, we've worked toward a vision of 100% literacy for all. High literacy levels give access to greater developmental, educational, and career opportunities. Current statistics show that 1 in 6 adults in Indiana read at or below a fifth-grade level. Through its Community Classrooms and workforce development programs, Indy Reads helps adult learners increase their literacy and English language proficiency, prepare for their High School Equivalency (HSE) diploma and improve employment opportunities.

To learn more about Indy Reads, visit indyreads.org.

About the Margot L. Eccles Arts & Culture Fund, a CICF Fund

The Central Indiana Community Foundation's mission is to mobilize people, ideas, and investments to make this a community where all individuals have equitable opportunity to reach their full potential—no matter place, race or identity. The foundation has existed for more than 100 years. For more information about the Central Indiana Community Foundation and the causes they support, please visit www.cicf.org.

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