



People **Serving** People

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

People Serving People launches financial empowerment program for families and celebrates the end of self-pay for shelter guests.

Minneapolis, MN (Date) -- People Serving People, the largest and most comprehensive emergency shelter for families experiencing homelessness in Minnesota, is celebrating two important milestones that build financial power for families - an end to Hennepin County's self-pay policy and the launch of the Families for Finance Program.

Today the Hennepin County Board took an important step to empower families toward housing stability and economic mobility. People Serving People celebrates the Hennepin County Board's action to update the Emergency Shelter Policy for Families to eliminate the requirement that eligible families contribute to the cost of their shelter stay, if they have income, which made it difficult for families to afford basic needs or save for stable housing. The intention of this policy change is to keep homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring, and empower Black, Indigenous, and People of Color ("BIPOC") residents and allow these residents to build assets. This policy change will be implemented in early 2022. People Serving People is one of two shelters partially funded by the County that is impacted by the Emergency Shelter Policy for Families.

A recurring piece of feedback from families served by People Serving People is to provide an alternative to this self-pay requirement. In response to this issue, the Family Financial Empowerment Collaborative was formed. The Collaborative includes an Action Committee comprised of families who have self-paid while experiencing homelessness, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA), Research in Action, Hennepin County, and People Serving People.

Since 2019, the Family Financial Empowerment Collaborative has been working to create alternatives to self-pay with a goal of allowing families to retain and grow their financial resources on their way to housing stability. Both the policy change announced today and the

launch of the Families for Finance Program are a result of the Collaborative's efforts. The Families for Finance program is generously supported by The Pohlad Family Foundation.

The Families for Finance Program was designed to build financial power and assets, and work toward healing financial trauma that can lead to housing instability. Currently, eleven families are actively enrolled in the pilot program. Staff will continue to offer the pilot program to families living in shelter based on program capacity.

Families who choose to participate in the Families for Finance Program will create their own individualized work plans, participate in financial empowerment and financial literacy classes, and create a saving plan with a matching incentive.

Families who have been approached about the program expressed how excited they were to get involved. One participant shared that being able to keep her income means that she doesn't have to worry about whether she'll be able to make her car payment and pay for gas. Another participant shared that her goal for her time in the program is to learn to manage two accounts—one for bills and one for personal spending.

People Serving People, CEO, Rinal Ray, says "This program and policy change are both wins for families. For years, families utilizing shelter have provided feedback on how hard it is that they can't keep their money, save, or use it on what they know they need. This program and policy change to eliminate self-pay happened because families experiencing homelessness persisted on this change. They made this happen. The program and policy change center their feedback, ideas, design, and definition of success on how we - as an organization and as systems - can all collectively do better. The Families for Finance Program provides an important opportunity for families to save, stabilize, heal financial trauma, and build power."

Images related to the organization and program are available [here](#).

People Serving People is the largest and most comprehensive emergency shelter for families experiencing homelessness in Minnesota and a dedicated leader in homelessness prevention. Our vision is healed families and transformed communities. We exist to see families thrive.

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