

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 24, 2019

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U.S. Bank Invests in Family Independence Initiative

ST. PAUL, Minn. – A partnership between the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation and U.S. Bank will help hundreds of families in the Twin Cities find their way from poverty to prosperity.

Through its Community Possible giving and engagement platform, U.S. Bank has invested \$500,000 in the Family Independence Initiative Twin Cities (FII) housed at the Wilder Foundation. FII is a data-driven strategy that invests in the strength of low-income families to break multi-generational cycles of poverty. Different from other direct service models, families take the lead in connecting with each other, sharing resources and activating the changes they want to see in their lives and communities.

“FII is effective because it is built on trust—trust that families know and want what is best for them,” says Janayah Bagurusi, Wilder’s director of Family Supportive Housing Services. “We see families as experts in their own lives and agents of their own change.”

FII is a national model that has taken hold in communities across the country, including Boston, Oakland, Albuquerque and New Orleans. Families participating in FII commit to meeting with their cohort monthly, to collecting their own data, and to setting and working towards their self-identified goals. Through FII, families have gone on to increase their income, pay off debt, and start small businesses.

“Our goal is to empower people to succeed in the workforce, grow small businesses and gain greater financial wellness,” said Reba Dominski, Chief Social Responsibility Officer for U.S. Bank. “Through our partnership with Wilder and FII we know we will help Twin Cities families do just that.”

Funds from U.S. Bank will help FII expand to reach more Twin Cities families over the next three years. In addition, Wilder and U.S. Bank will create a learning forum designed for financial services organizations to listen to families and understand how to improve access to safe and affordable financial products.

Says Bagurusi, “We’re grateful for U.S. Bank’s support, and for the opportunity to demonstrate what is possible when we invest directly in families to improve entire communities.”

About the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation

The Amherst H. Wilder Foundation combines knowledge, compassion and action to improve lives today and for generations to come. We create lasting, positive change rooted in people through direct services, research and community partnerships. For more information about the Wilder Foundation visit www.wilder.org.

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