Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood Rental Assistance Program Evaluation

First Year Report

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Wilder
Research

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Acknowledgments

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Summary

The Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood (SPPN) Rental Assistance Program is a transitional rental assistance program focused on stabilizing the housing of families and improving the attendance of children in the Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood located in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Launched in 2014, this program is part of a statewide pilot initiative that is examining whether stabilizing housing affects children's school attendance. The program serves homeless and highly mobile families living in the SPPN that have at least one child attending one of the three SPPN schools, Jackson Elementary, Maxfield Elementary, and St. Paul City School.

Wilder Research is conducting an evaluation to tell the stories of the families who participate in the SPPN Rental Assistance Program and to document the success of the program and its specific characteristics. This report reflects the first year of program implementation.

The evaluation is informed by data from a variety of sources including program records that describe the participating families, discussion groups with and a survey of participating families, attendance data for the youth in the program, and documents describing the program. The following is a list of key results—see the full report for more details:

- During its first year, the program was able to enroll and house 49 families, provide them with rental assistance, and offer them a host of wraparound supports such as tenant training, employment training, and peer-support networking.

The families in the program:

- Are mostly headed by a single female parent (86%)

- Are primarily black or African American (81%)

- Have an average monthly income of approximately $1,000

- Were primarily homeless, doubling up with family or friends before enrolling in the program (51%; 39% with family and 12% with friends)

The children in the program:

- Had a slightly lower average attendance rate in 2013-14 than all students enrolled in Saint Paul Public Schools

- Had a higher rate of chronic absence in 2013-14 than all students enrolled in Saint Paul Public Schools

Key findings from small group discussions and a survey indicate that:

- The application process for the program was clear and went smoothly for the families

- Once in the program:

    - Most families secured housing that met all their needs

    - Families experienced improvements in the safety and health of their home relative to prior housing

    - Families were able to spend more time together and improve their family relationships

    - Families were experiencing improved wellbeing and reduced stress, both financially and psychologically

    - Families felt concerned about the extent of the financial resources available through the program and wished for more than two years of assistance

Moving forward, the evaluation will continue to tell the stories of the families in the program and to gauge the factors that are important for their success through interviews with key staff involved in the program, tracking of program records and data that describe families' participation and outcomes, and additional discussion groups with and surveys of participating families. Wilder Research will prepare a second report following the conclusion of the pilot program in December 2015.

Introduction

The Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood (SPPN) Rental Assistance Program is a transitional rental assistance program focused on stabilizing the housing of families and improving the attendance of children in the Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood located in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Launched in 2014, this program is part of a statewide pilot initiative that is examining whether stabilizing housing affects children's school attendance. The program serves homeless and highly mobile families living in the SPPN that have at least one child attending one of the three SPPN schools, Jackson Elementary, Maxfield Elementary, and St. Paul City School.

Wilder Research is conducting an evaluation to tell the stories of the families who participate in the SPPN Rental Assistance Program and to document the success of the program and its specific characteristics. The evaluation will provide information and data to inform the potential expansion of the program from a multi-site pilot to scalable, state-level implementation. This report reflects the first year of program implementation. Families began enrolling in the program in March 2014, and, by November 2014, the program had served 49 families. Wilder Research will prepare a second report following the conclusion of the pilot program in December 2015.

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) will also conduct an evaluation of the SPPN Rental Assistance Program along with two similar programs in Minneapolis, Minnesota (Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ)) and Clay County, Minnesota. The evaluation conducted by MDE will be more quantitative in nature, but will also focus on assessing the effect of the program on school attendance among children in participating families. The MDE evaluation is scheduled to be completed before the 2017 Minnesota Legislative Session. Due to the timing of MDE's evaluation, Wilder Research was asked to include some tracking of attendance measures in this evaluation.

Program description

The SPPN Rental Assistance Program is a partnership of the SPPN, Wilder Foundation FSHS, the Cultural Wellness Center (CWC), and the Frogtown Rondo Home Fund (FRHF). While these organizations serve children and families living in the greater Saint Paul area, the SPPN and FRHF specifically focus their services within the 250-block area in Saint Paul's historic Frogtown and Summit-University neighborhoods. A map of this neighborhood is provided in the Appendix. These organizations worked together to shape the program, apply for the funding, and acquire necessary resources and staff to

help the program run smoothly. Funding for the SPPN Rental Assistance Program is provided by the MHFA.

Eligibility

The SPPN Rental Assistance Program provides rental assistance and supportive services for up to 50 families. To be eligible for the program, families must complete an application and meet the following eligibility requirements:[1]

1. Families must have at least one child, enrolled in K-5, in one of the three SPPN partner schools (Jackson Elementary, Maxfield Elementary, and St. Paul City School—a charter school in the SPPN).

2. Families must be currently experiencing homelessness (lack a fixed, regular, and adequate night time residence) or be highly mobile (moved more than once during the school year).

3. Family's income must not exceed 60% of the Area Median Income as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (less than $4,150/month for a household of four).

4. Families must be eligible for transitional housing as determined by the Ramsey County Coordinated Access to Housing and Shelter (CAHS) Screening Tool.[2]

Rental assistance

Families who meet these criteria and who are selected for the program receive monetary rental assistance of up to 70% of Fair Market Rents as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. They also have access to assistance with application fees, security deposits, and vacancy payments. Families can receive rental assistance for up to 24 months. Wilder Foundation FSHS administers the rental assistance for the program.

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[1]   A copy of the program application is included in the Appendix.

[2]   In Ramsey County, home to the SPPN, CAHS works with Catholic Charities to provide a centralized intake process for families with children who are homeless and are seeking access to housing, services, and shelter. CAHS conducts a standardized assessment to determine if the family is eligible for transitional housing—the type of housing support offered through the SPPN Rental Assistance Program. If the family is deemed eligible for transitional housing, they are able to be housed by the program. Families who are highly mobile do not need to complete the CAHS assessment to determine eligibility.

Wraparound supports

Participating families also receive various wraparound supports. Many of these wraparound supports are provided by Community Navigators from the CWC. Community Navigators are contracted through community organizations by the SPPN and are co-located in each of the three SPPN partner schools. One primary Navigator works with all of the families in the program. The Navigator works with the families to understand their specific community, culture, challenges, and strengths. The Navigator helps the families locate appropriate housing once they have been accepted to the program and works with them to determine what types of wraparound supports would be most appropriate for them. Given this family-specific approach, the supports that each family receives may differ. Families are expected to meet with the Navigator for monthly check-ins while participating in the program.

The Community Navigator also works in conjunction with the SPPN Rental Assistance Program Housing Specialist, housed in Wilder Foundation FSHS, to support families in the program. The Housing Specialist works with the Navigator and families to locate housing and to mediate and resolve conflicts that arise between families and their landlords. Furthermore, each family meets with the Community Navigator and Housing Specialist every six months for a housing transition meeting in which they receive one-on-one tenant advocacy support, review permanent housing options, set goals for attaining permanent housing, and prepare for transitioning out of the program.

Lastly, families in the program have access to other services that are provided by SPPN partners separate from the SPPN Rental Assistance Program, including housing and employment workshops from the Wilder Foundation and Community Stabilization Project.

Expectations of participating families

Families who participate in the program are asked to commit to improving their child's school attendance. They are also asked to commit to meeting with the Navigator at least once a month, attending quarterly family gatherings to help families build a network of peer support, attending a housing transition meeting every six months, and attending "Scale of Engagement" meetings in which the Community Navigator and parents set goals, create action plans, and reflect on movement on previous goal plans. The framework for these Scale of Engagement meetings is provided in the Appendix. Lastly, they are expected to enroll with the Department of Education for service under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, such as Project REACH of the Saint Paul Public Schools.

Contents of the report

This report is organized into the following sections:

■ Research methods

■ Families' experiences

■ Program design and implementation

■ Contextual factors

■ Conclusion and recommendations

Thirteen research questions guiding the evaluation are presented in the research methods section. The next three sections are organized around these thirteen questions and present findings to date. However, only a subset of the research questions is addressed in this first program year report. Additional evaluation efforts will be undertaken during 2015 to address the full set of research questions. Wilder Research will prepare a concluding report that addresses all of the research questions following the close of the pilot program in December 2015.

Research methods

The research questions and evaluation plan were developed in consultation with staff at the Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood (SPPN), Wilder Foundation Family Supportive Housing Services (FSHS), Cultural Wellness Center (CWC), and Frogtown Rondo Home Fund (FRHF). The research questions and methods are described below.

Research questions

Evaluation efforts were guided by the following research questions that are organized into three overarching categories: families' experiences, program design and implementation, and contextual factors.

Families' experiences

The three following research questions seek to understand the characteristics of the families that participated in the program and the experiences these families had while participating. Research questions in this category include:

1. What are the characteristics of the families that participated in the program (e.g., demographics, housing history, etc.)?

2. What are the families' experiences with the program? Are the families satisfied with their experiences? Were they able to fully exercise/realize their housing choice while participating in the program?

3. Does participating in the program improve children's attendance?

Program design and implementation

Research questions that address program design and implementation focus on understanding the key features of the program, how the program was implemented, and how the program features are, or are not, related to families' success in the program. Research questions in this category include:

4. What is the role of the partnership between the Wilder Foundation Family Supportive Housing Services, Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood, Cultural Wellness Center, and Frogtown Rondo Home Fund?

5. What is the role of the Community Navigators in the program?

6. What is the role of Wilder Foundation Family Supportive Housing Services in the program?

7. What aspects of the application process worked well? What aspects of the application process should be adjusted if the program continues?

8. What aspects of the program design are related to families' success (e.g., rental assistance, Scale of Engagement meetings, quarterly family gatherings, etc.)? What aspects of the program should be adjusted if the program continues?

9. What gaps or holes exist in the services offered by the program and in the broader community?

Contextual factors

The following four research questions seek to understand contextual factors that may influence the success of families in the program. These contextual factors will be important to consider if the program receives further funding and is scaled up to cover other neighborhoods, cities, or regions in the state. Research questions in this category include:

10. What kinds of housing units are most in need (e.g., size, proximity to transportation, etc.)?

11. What was the average cost and average amount of rental assistance by family size?

12. What is the supply of affordable housing in the SPPN?

13. What other contextual factors influence the success of families and the program overall?

These 13 research questions are addressed using various sources of data that are described below.

Data collection procedures

Data collection procedures for the evaluation are described below. Specific research questions addressed through each method are denoted.

Document review
(Questions 4, 5, and 6)

Documents regarding the program were provided to Wilder Research for review. These documents included the Wilder Foundation's response to MHFA's Request for Proposal,

the application completed by families who were interested in enrolling in the program, letters of request for additional funding to support staff, and documentation of some activities and trainings that families attended.

Small group discussions
(Questions 2, 3, 9, and 13)

During the second quarterly family gathering in August 2014, small groups of families were engaged in a set of discussion questions about the services they were receiving and their experiences thus far in the program. These small group discussions, similar to focus groups, were documented by note takers. Following the small group discussions, representatives from each group shared their group's feedback with the entire gathering of families. Similar small group discussions will take place at quarterly family gatherings in February, August, and November of 2015 and will inform the final report.

Participant survey(s)
(Questions 2, 5-8, and 10)

During the third quarterly family gathering in November 2014, a short survey ("Mini Survey #1") was offered to the families regarding their impressions of the application process, their current housing, and the features of the program. This survey is presented in the Appendix. An additional short survey will be administered at the quarterly family gathering in May of 2015.

School attendance data
(Question 3)

School attendance data for students attending two of the three SPPN schools (Jackson Elementary and Maxfield Elementary) are analyzed to begin tracking students' attendance. Attendance data for the third SPPN school (St. Paul City School) was not available at the time of the report. Attendance data from the 2013-14 academic year provides an approximation of pre-program attendance. Indicators of attendance, including attendance rates and rates of chronic absence will be tracked every year.

HMIS data and other program records
(Questions 1, 3, 10, and 11)

Information about the families who enroll in the program is entered into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). HMIS captures information about demographics, income, and program participation status. Other records provided by the program staff include details of the families' housing, rental costs, and subsidies. These data are

analyzed to provide a description of the families who are participating in the program and the amount of subsidy they receive.

Data from the paper applications of families that applied but were not accepted into the program was entered and analyzed to understand the characteristics of these families and the reasons their applications were denied. Analysis of this data is presented in the appendix.

Interviews
(Questions 4-10, 12, and 13)

During the summer of 2015, a set of six to eight interviews will be conducted with key staff at the Wilder Foundation, SPPN, CWC, and FRHF who have worked closely with the program. These interviews will contribute information about the program, impressions about what worked well, thoughts about what should be adjusted if the program continues, and contextual factors that influence the program's success.

Families' experiences

Research question 1.

What are the characteristics of the families that participated in the program (e.g., demographics, housing history, etc.)?

Participating families

In total, 49 households have been supported by the program in 2014. Figure 1 shows the number of households that have enrolled in the program by the month in which they started. Most of the households enrolled during the first half of 2014, but a few households continue to enroll every month with six new households enrolling from September through November 2014. Figure 1 also shows the total number of individuals that have enrolled in the program, by the month in which they enrolled. The 49 households that have been supported contain a total of 188 individuals.

1. Number of households served by month of entry (2014)

Entry month	Number of households	Percent of total households	Number of individuals	Percent of total individuals
March	6	12%	26	14%
April	11	22%	48	26%
May	9	18%	31	16%
June	5	10%	19	10%
July	4	8%	14	7%
August	8	16%	24	13%
September to November	6	12%	26	14%
Total	**49**	**100%**	**188**	**100%**

Source: Homeless Management Information System, report through November 24, 2014.

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.

At the time of this report, one of the 49 households has exited the program. All of the 49 households that have been served by the program, to date, are included in the following analysis.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of the size of the households participating in the program. Household size ranges from two to seven people, but the most common household size is four people (33%).

2. Household size

Number of household members	Number of households	Percent of total households
2	9	18%
3	11	22%
4	16	33%
5	7	14%
6 to 7	6	12%
Total	**49**	**100%**

Source: Homeless Management Information System, report through November 24, 2014.

Most of the households (86%) who have participated in the program are headed by single female parents (Figure 3).[3] Four households contain a couple with children, and three households contain a single male parent.[4]

3. Household composition

Household composition	Number of households	Percent of total households
Couple with children	4	8%
Female single parent	42	86%
Male single parent	3	6%
Total	**49**	**100%**

Source: Homeless Management Information System, report through November 24, 2014.

Figure 4 shows the age distribution of both the heads of the households and all of the household members. The heads of the households range in age from 22 to 50 years old with 45 percent of household heads being between 31 and 40 years old. The household members range in age from less than one to 66 years old. Forty-one percent of all the household members are between the ages of six and 12 years old.

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[3]   Female single parent reflects households that are headed by a single mother or a single grandmother.
[4]   Some of the households are intergenerational – grandparents are also living in the household.

4. Age distribution of household heads and all individuals

Age group	Number of household heads	Percent of all household heads	Number of individuals	Percent of total individuals
Under 1	0	0%	5	3%
1 to 5	0	0%	33	18%
6 to 12	0	0%	77	41%
13 to 17	0	0%	15	8%
18 to 25	5	10%	6	3%
26 to 30	14	29%	15	8%
31 to 40	22	45%	23	12%
41 to 50	8	16%	10	5%
51 and over	0	0%	4	2%
Total	**49**	**100%**	**188**	**100%**

Source: *Homeless Management Information System, report through November 24, 2014.*

Notes: *Age is determined as of January 1, 2014.*

Figure 5 shows the primary race and ethnicity of the household members who have participated in the program. The majority of household members are black or African American (81%) and identify as Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino (90%). Sixty-three percent of all individuals in the program are female (Figure 6).

5. Primary race and ethnicity of all program participants

Race	Number of individuals	Percent of total individuals
Asian	5	3%
Black of African American	152	81%
White	31	16%
Total	**188**	**100%**
Ethnicity		
Hispanic/Latino	18	10%
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	170	90%
Total	**188**	**100%**

Source: *Homeless Management Information System, report through November 24, 2014.*

6. Gender of all program participants

Gender	Number of individuals	Percent of total individuals
Female	118	63%
Male	70	37%
Total	**188**	**100%**

Source: *Homeless Management Information System, report through November 24, 2014.*

The average monthly income of the households at the time they entered the program was $1,020 (Figure 7). The majority of households (56%) were earning $1,000 or less a month.

7. Household income (monthly)

Income category	Number of households	Percent of total households	Average household size
$0	4	8%	3.5
$1 to $500	12	24%	3.3
$501 to $1,000	12	24%	3.7
$1,001 to $1,500	12	24%	4.0
$1,501 or higher	9	18%	4.8
Total	**49**	**100%**	**3.8**
Average Income		*$1,020*	

Source: *Homeless Management Information System, report through December 9, 2014.*

Notes: *Total income includes earned income and non-wage income.*

Upon entering the program, 63 percent of the households were homeless (Figure 8). Among the homeless families, most were experiencing their first time homeless (55%). Other homeless families were either long-term homeless (32%) or had been homeless multiple times, but not long term (13%). [5] Thirty-seven percent of the households were not currently homeless, but they were highly mobile meaning they had moved more than once in the past year.

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[5]   Long-term homeless is defined by the state of Minnesota as being homeless for at least one year or at least four times in the past three years.

8. Extent of homelessness of participating households

Extent of homelessness	Number of households	Percent of total households
Homeless	**31**	**63%**
1st time homeless and less than 1 year without a home	*17*	*55%*
Long term homeless: At least 1 year OR at least 4 times in past 3 years	*10*	*32%*
Multiple times homeless, but NOT meeting long-term homeless definition	*4*	*13%*
Highly mobile[a]	**18**	**37%**
Total	**49**	**100%**

Source: Homeless Management Information System, report through November 24, 2014.

Notes: Extent of homelessness is based on Minnesota's definition.

[a] Highly mobile families were not considered homeless at the time they entered the program. Highly mobile families had moved more than once in the past year.

Prior to entering the program, 39 percent of the households were staying or living in a family member's room, apartment, or house, also known as "doubling up" (Figure 9). Thirty-seven percent of the households were residing in their own rental housing and were not receiving a housing subsidy. The remaining households were either living in emergency shelter (12%) or staying or living in a friend's room, apartment, or house (12%).

9. Living situation prior to entry for participating households

Living situation last night	Number of households	Percent of total households
Staying or living in a family member's room, apartment, or house	19	39%
Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy	18	37%
Emergency shelter, including hotel or motel paid for with emergency shelter voucher	6	12%
Staying or living in a friend's room, apartment, or house	6	12%
Total	**49**	**100%**

Source: Homeless Management Information System, report through November 24, 2014.

Families not accepted

Some information regarding households that applied but were not accepted to the program was compiled from paper application records that are maintained by Wilder Foundation FSHS. According to these records, 35 households applied but were not accepted.[6]

An analysis of the information collected from these applications is presented in the appendix. One finding from this analysis is that most of these applications were denied because the family was not homeless or highly mobile (51%). The program staff may want to consider how families are brought into the program and approaches that could be used, if the program continues, to maximize the applicants who qualify and could be accepted to the program.

Please see the appendix to learn more about the families who were not accepted to the program.

> ### Research question 2.
>
> *What are the families' experiences with the program? Are the families satisfied with their experiences? Were they able to fully exercise/realize their housing choice while participating in the program?*

Discussion group findings

In August 2014, 27 of the participating families gathered at the Rondo Library in Saint Paul, Minnesota. During this gathering, the families were engaged in a set of small group discussions about their experiences thus far in the program. The families were specifically asked to reflect on what was present for them in the services they were currently receiving. This discussion gave families an opportunity to describe, broadly, what they were experiencing be it a specific service or a sentiment or emotion related to their experience in the program. While some of the specific services provided by the program were mentioned (e.g., the rental assistance), most families used this opportunity to describe the positive changes they experienced in their lives as a result of participating in the program. The specific discussion question and primary themes from the discussion are described below.

Discussion question: What is present for you in the services you are receiving?

The following three themes emerged from the discussion:

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[6] These records were provided on October 9, 2014. More applications may have been received and denied since that time.

Theme 1:   Families were able to spend more time together and were experiencing improvement in their families' relationships.

Several of the parents and other adults in the families described positive changes within their families such as having more time to spend with their children and an improved ability to care for and support their children. Parents also described a stronger sense of "togetherness" and improved communication within their family.

Theme 2:   Parents and other adults in the families were experiencing improved well-being.

Many discussion group participants described improvements in their well-being such as lower stress, a greater sense of comfort and security, and enhanced peace of mind. Some participants also mentioned that they were sleeping better and able to relax.

Theme 3:   Families were experiencing reduced financial stress and appreciation for the financial assistance.

Families described a reduction in financial stress and an improved ability to manage their money. Discussion group participants mentioned that they were better able to afford their daily needs such as clothing, food, and transportation, no longer needed other emergency assistance, and were able to save money to prepare for the future.

In addition to these three key themes, families also described that they had more time to focus on other important things in life, they were feeling more informed and educated, and were witnessing improvements related to their child(ren)'s education.

Families were also asked to share any other stories or information about their experiences in the program up to that time. The specific discussion question and primary themes from the discussion are described below.

Discussion question: Are there any stories or additional information you would like to share about your experience in the rental assistance program so far?

The following three themes emerged from this discussion:

Theme 1:   Families reiterated that they were happier, less stressed, and felt more able to handle life's challenges.

Families described how all members of their household were happier and more relaxed. Some participants described how the day-to-day challenges of life were becoming easier and how their new-found stability helped them to deal with stressors that arose.

Theme 2:   Parents shared additional stories of improved family relationships and providing a better life for their children.

Parents described how they felt closer to their children and had more time to spend with their family. Parents described having more opportunities to talk about their family's goals, aspirations, and expectations for the future. Parents also described comfort in being able to provide stability and a roof over their family's head.

Theme 3:   Discussion group participants told stories of personal change and growth.

Participants talked about their own personal change and growth. They described openness to self-study and an ability to think about how they got to where they are in life and their goals for the future.

Furthermore, discussion group participants described a sense of thankfulness and hope, shared their current experiences with and plans for career growth, and expressed an appreciation for the shared stories and experiences with the other families.

Survey findings

In November 2014, 25 adults from the 48 families enrolled at the time (one family had exited the program by this time) completed a short survey in which they were asked several questions about the housing they secured upon entering the program and how it compared to their previous housing.

Prior to entering the program, many families had moved several times during the previous five years. Forty percent of the survey respondents had moved three to five times, while 32 percent of the respondents had moved more than five times (Figure 10). Now that these families are part of the rental assistance program, their housing can be stabilized for up to 24 months with the hope that they will be able to successfully transition out of the program and remain in their home for many months to come.

10.   Survey responses: "How many times have you moved in the last five years?"

	N	%
1-2 times	7	28
3-5 times	10	40
More than 5 times	8	32
Total	**25**	**100**

Source: Table draws on information from the SPPN Rental Assistance Program – Mini Survey #1

Upon enrolling in the program, the majority of survey respondents (67 %) were able to secure housing that met all the needs of their family (Figure 11).

Several of the respondents (33%) felt that their housing met some but not all of their needs. Two of these respondents commented that "it was [too] high of rent, and I was looking for cheaper housing," and "[it has] no laundry, no yard." The other families that gave this response did not comment on the rationale.

11. Survey responses: "Upon enrolling in the SPPN Rental Assistance Program, were you able to secure housing that met the needs of your family?"

	N	%
Yes, meets all needs	16	67
Meets some but not all needs	8	33
Does not meet my needs	0	0
Total	**24**	**100**

Source: Table draws on information from the SPPN Rental Assistance Program – Mini Survey #1

Most of the families also experienced improvements in the safety and health of their home, relative to prior housing, as well as the amount of their income that was being spent on housing. Eighty-six percent of the respondents stated that their current home is "a healthier and safer place to live" (Figure 12). Fifty-nine percent of the respondents said that they were "spending less of [their] income on their current housing." Some families were still spending the same amount of their income on housing (18%), while some indicated that they were spending more than they were previously (23%).

12. Survey responses: Compared with your previous home,

is your current home…	N	%	are you currently…	N	%
A healthier and safer place to live	19	86	Spending less of your income on housing	13	59
About the same	3	14	Spending about the same amount of your income on housing	4	18
A less healthy and safe place to live	0	0	Spending more of your income on housing	5	23
Total	**22**	**100**	**Total**	**22**	**100**

Source: Table draws on information from the SPPN Rental Assistance Program – Mini Survey #1

In future discussion groups and short surveys, families will be asked to provide additional information regarding their experiences in the program.

Research question 3.

Does participating in the program improve children's attendance?

A primary goal of the SPPN Rental Assistance Program is to improve school attendance among children of the participating families. Families in the program must have a child in attendance at one of the three SPPN partner schools: Jackson Elementary, Maxfield Elementary, and St. Paul City School (a charter school in the SPPN). The greatest share of families have a child enrolled in Maxfield Elementary (45%), while the smallest share of families have a child enrolled in St. Paul City School (16%) (Figure 13).

13. Current SPPN school of participating families

School	N	%
Jackson Elementary	19	39
Maxfield Elementary	22	45
St. Paul City School	8	16
Total	**49**	**100**

Source: Program records provided by Wilder Foundation FSHS in January 2015.

In 2013-14, 77 youth in the program were enrolled in a Saint Paul Public School (SPPS).[7,8] Fifty-eight of these children were enrolled in Jackson Elementary and/or Maxfield Elementary. Figure 14 shows the distribution of these students across the two schools—the majority of the students enrolled at Maxfield Elementary (53%). Attendance data for St. Paul City School was not available at the time of this report.

14. Enrollment of participating children, by school (2013-14)

School	N	%
Maxfield Elementary	31	53%
Jackson Elementary	27	47%
Total	**58**	**100%**

Source: SPPS attendance data and HMIS report through November 24, 2014.

Note: For this analysis, one student who was enrolled in both schools is counted once at the school where he/she had the greater number of days of enrollment.

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[7] St. Paul City School is not part of SPPS. It is a charter school that is located in the SPPN.
[8] The names and birthdates of youth in the program, according to the HMIS report as of November 24, 2014, were used to identify students who enrolled in SPPS (based on presence in the 2013-14 SPPS attendance data file).

Figure 15 shows the distribution of these 58 children who enrolled at Jackson Elementary and/or Maxfield Elementary in 2013-14 across grade levels. The largest share of these children (33%) was enrolled in the first grade.

15. Enrollment of participating children by grade (2013-14)

Grade	N	%
KG	7	12%
1	19	33%
2	7	12%
3	6	10%
4	10	17%
5	9	16%
Total	**58**	**100%**

Source: *SPPS attendance data and HMIS report through November 24, 2014.*

Figure 16 presents the average number of days these students were enrolled in an SPPN school as well as the average number of days they attended. "Days enrolled" is the number of days a student was enrolled in the school and expected to attend. "Days attended" is the number of days the student was present at school. On average, these 58 students were enrolled in Jackson Elementary and/or Maxfield Elementary for 158 days out of 168 possible days in the school year. These students were in attendance for 145 days, on average, giving an attendance rate of 92% (Figure 17). The average attendance rate does not differ across the two schools represented in the data.

16. Days enrolled and attended (2013-14)

Days enrolled	N	Average	Minimum	Maximum
Days enrolled at any SPPN school (not including St. Paul City School)	58	158	47	168
Days enrolled at Jackson Elementary	27	151	47	168
Days enrolled at Maxfield Elementary	31	164	85	168
Days attended				
Days attended at any SPPN school (not including St. Paul City School)	58	145	46	168
Days attended at Jackson Elementary	27	140	46	166
Days attended at Maxfield Elementary	31	150	79	168

Source: *SPPS attendance data and HMIS report through November 24, 2014.*

Figure 17 shows that, relative to all students attending SPPS in 2013-14, the attendance rate of the students in the rental assistance program is somewhat lower (92% compared to 94%). Looking specifically at Jackson Elementary, the average attendance rate for all students enrolled is 96 percent, somewhat higher than the attendance rate of students who are in the rental assistance program (92%). At Maxfield Elementary, however, the attendance rate of the students in the rental assistance program is the same as that of all students at the school.

All 58 of these children in the SPPN Rental Assistance Program qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. When restricting comparisons of the students in the program to SPPS students who also qualify for free or reduced-price lunch (i.e., are low income students), similar findings appear.

17. Average attendance rate (2013-14)

Students in SPPN Rental Assistance Program	All students	Students who qualify for free or reduced price lunch
Any SPPN school (not including St. Paul City School)	92% (58)	92% (58)
Jackson Elementary	92% (27)	92% (27)
Maxfield Elementary	92% (31)	92% (31)
All SPPS students		
SPPS Schools	94% (37,865)	93% (27,722)
Jackson Elementary	96% (429)	95% (393)
Maxfield Elementary	92% (334)	92% (326)

Source: *SPPN attendance data, HMIS report through November 24, 2014, and Minnesota Department of Education Minnesota Report Card.*

Note: *Ns are in parentheses.*

SPPS considers students who are absent for 11 or more days in a school year to be "chronically absent." Among the 50 students in the program who enrolled for at least 150 days, 48 percent were chronically absent in 2013-14 (Figure 18). The rate of chronic absence was higher among students who enrolled at Maxfield relative to Jackson (52% compared to 43%). When comparing program participants to all students enrolled in SPPS or one of the SPPN schools, rates of chronic absence are much higher among program participants. Twenty-five percent of all students who enroll in SPPS for at least 150 days are chronically absent.

18. Chronic absence (2013-14)

Students in SPPN Rental Assistance Program [a]	N	Percent chronically absent
Any SPPN school (not including St. Paul City School)	50	48%
Jackson Elementary	21	43%
Maxfield Elementary	29	52%
All SPPS students [b]		
SPPS Schools	-- [b]	25%
Jackson Elementary	-- [b]	26%
Maxfield Elementary	-- [b]	36%

Source: *SPPS attendance data, HMIS report through November 24, 2014, and SPPS Data Center.*

[a] *These calculations are done for students who had at least 150 days of enrollment at Jackson and/or Maxfield.*

[b] *These calculations, completed by SPPS, are also done for students who had a least 150 days of enrollment in the district. The number of students who meet this criterion is not provided.*

In February 2015, participating families will be engaged in a set of small group discussions about their perceptions of the impacts the rental assistance program has had on their child(ren)'s attendance and education.

Program design and implementation

Research question 4.

What is the role of the partnership between the Wilder Foundation Family Supportive Housing Services, Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood, Cultural Wellness Center, and Frogtown Rondo Home Fund?

The SPPN Rental Assistance Program is a partnership of the Wilder Foundation Family Supportive Housing Services (FSHS), Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood (SPPN), Cultural Wellness Center (CWC), and Frogtown Rondo Home Fund (FRHF). While all four organizations work together to implement the program, they each play specific roles. The Wilder Foundation FSHS manages the program's application process, assists families in finding appropriate housing, administers the rental subsidies, and provides a variety of other tenant advocacy supports. The SPPN staff provides overall guidance and support for the program and the families. The SPPN also contracts with the Community Navigators from the CWC who provide ongoing support, in various forms, to the families that are in the program. The FRHF supplies additional funding to support a Housing Specialist who works in FSHS, and the coordinator of the FRHF provides ongoing guidance and support for program implementation.

In spring 2015, several key informant interviews will be conducted with staff at the Wilder Foundation FSHS, SPPN, CWC, and FRHF to dig deeper into how the partnership has worked and how it might be expanded or adjusted moving forward if the program continues.

Research question 5.

What is the role of the Community Navigators in the program?

The SPPN Community Navigators are contracted through community organizations by the SPPN and are co-located in each of the three SPPN partner schools. The Navigators often serve as the primary referral source for the SPPN Rental Assistance Program. One primary Navigator works especially closely with all of the families in the Program. This Navigator meets with each family on a monthly basis (or more often as needed) and organizes family gatherings. The Navigator helps families to recognize their successes, resolve problems, connect to support services and training opportunities, and set goals for the future.

In May 2015, a short survey will be offered to the participating families. This survey will collect families' perceptions of and examples of the support they have received

from the Navigator as well as suggestions for how the role of this Navigator might be adjusted to better support the families. Key informant interviews conducted in spring 2015 will collect additional feedback about the role of the Navigators.

Research question 6.

What is the role of Wilder Foundation Family Supportive Housing Services in the program?

The Wilder Foundation FSHS manages the application process for the program, assists families in finding appropriate housing, administers the rental subsidies, and provides a variety of other tenant advocacy supports. One Housing Specialist in FSFH works especially closely with the families in the program to help them locate appropriate housing, manage relationships with landlords, and resolve housing issues.

The short survey that will be conducted in May 2015 will collect families' perceptions and examples of the support they have received from the Housing Specialist as well as suggestions for how the role of the Housing Specialist might be adjusted to better support the families. Key informant interviews conducted in spring 2015 will collect additional feedback about the role of the Housing Specialist and Wilder Foundation FSHS.

Research question 7.

What aspects of the application process worked well? What aspects of the application process should be adjusted if the program continues?

To apply for the program, families must submit a completed paper application along with documentation of their income. Families must have at least one child enrolled in one of the SPPN partner schools—an enrollment check with the school is completed to verify enrollment. Homeless families must also complete the Ramsey County CAHS assessment to determine their eligibility for transitional housing.

In November 2014, 25 adults from the 48 families enrolled at the time (one family had exited the program by this time) completed a short survey that collected information about their experiences with the application process.

Most of the respondents felt that the application process for the program was clear—88 percent either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement (Figure 19). Furthermore, most of the respondents felt that the process went smoothly for their family—96 percent either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. Only four percent (one respondent) felt that the application process was not clear and did not go smoothly (i.e., strongly disagreed). The survey also requested recommendations for adjusting the application process for future families—none of the respondents provided a recommendation.

19. Families' experiences with the application process

	Percent of respondents that selected…				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The application process for the SPPN Rental Assistance Program was clear. (N=25)	4%	0%	8%	20%	68%
The application process for the SPPN Rental Assistance Program went smoothly for my family. (N=25)	4%	0%	0%	24%	72%

Source: *Table draws on information from the SPPN Rental Assistance Program – Mini Survey #1*

Additional information about the application process will be collected in spring 2015 through interviews with key staff at the Wilder Foundation FSHS, SPPN, CWC, and FRHF. The interviews will collect information about what worked well in the application process and what might be adjusted if the program continues.

> **Research question 8.**
>
> *What aspects of the program design are related to families' success (e.g., rental assistance, Scale of Engagement meetings, quarterly family gatherings, etc.)? What aspects of the program should be adjusted if the program continues?*

The SPPN Rental Assistance Program provides not only rental assistance, but also a host of supportive services, trainings, and peer networking activities (including the quarterly family gatherings). In the short survey offered in November 2014, families were asked to indicate the three features of the program they found to be most helpful or important for their success. Unfortunately, many respondents did not provide an actual ranking of the top three features of the program, but several respondents (N=15) still provided useful information by indicating up to three factors that were important.

According to the respondents that provided useful responses, the Keys to Self-Care meetings were most frequently ranked among the three most important features of the program (Figure 20). The Keys to Self-Care meetings are guided by the Navigator and other staff from the Cultural Wellness Center (CWC), an organization that partners with the SPPN. The mission of the CWC is to "unleash the power of citizens to heal themselves and to build community." The CWC recognizes that cultural communities that have a history of oppression and disenfranchisement need to heal and build trust before people will participate in institutions and systems. The Keys to Self-Care meetings offer the program participants a guided opportunity to reconnect with their own culture, focus on their own self-care, and heal themselves as well as their children.

The tenant training offered at the Wilder Foundation, the assistance provided by the primary Community Navigator, and the employment training course offered at the Wilder Foundation were also indicated to be important features of the program by at least five respondents each. The Fathers for Education course, a course geared toward helping fathers to be more involved in their children's education, did not receive any top-three rankings by respondents. One should interpret these findings with caution, as not all participating families attend all of the activities. Furthermore, there are few fathers in the program, which may contribute to the Fathers for Education course receiving no top three rankings (Figure 3).

20. Important features of the SPPN Rental Assistance Program (N = 15)

	# times ranked in top three	% of respondents who ranked feature in top three
Keys to Self-Care	13	87%
Tenant training at Wilder	7	47%
Assistance/support from the Community Navigator ([name])	6	40%
Employment Training at Wilder	5	33%
Assistance/support from the Housing Specialists ([names])	4	27%
Quarterly family gathering/meeting	3	20%
Scale of Engagement meetings with Community Navigator ([name], monthly check-ins)	2	13%
Tenant Training at Community Stabilization Project	1	7%
Fathers for Education	0	0%

Source: *Table draws on information from the SPPN Rental Assistance Program – Mini Survey #1*

Key informant interviews conducted in spring 2015 will collect additional feedback about the features of the program that appear to contribute to families' success as well as what features might be adjusted moving forward.

> ### Research question 9.
>
> *What gaps or holes exist in the services offered by the program and in the broader community?*

In hopes of learning more about the services and supports families may still need, a discussion group question during the August 2014 family gathering asked families to describe what was missing in the services they were receiving. The specific discussion question and primary themes from the discussion are described below.

Discussion question: What is missing for you in the services you are receiving?

A few key themes emerged from this discussion.

Theme 1:   Families expressed a desire for more education- and job-focused opportunities or services.

Discussion group participants described a desire for more information about educational opportunities as well as access to affordable education opportunities (e.g., college scholarships, Saint Paul College opportunities). Participants also stated a need for more employment-related opportunities and services.

It is important to note that, shortly after this discussion, families were invited to an employment training that started in September 2014. In the short survey offered later in the fall, five out of 25 respondents indicated that this training was one of the more important features of the program (Figure 20).

Theme 2:   Families expressed concern about the extent of the financial resources available through the program.

As a transitional housing program, 24 months is the maximum amount of time that support can be provided. Discussion group participants suggested that two years was not enough time, and they felt a need for longer-term assistance. Some families described a desire to continue receiving support if they complied with the program requirements. Program staff have indicated that they are working with some families who may qualify for permanent supportive housing to help them transition into these programs which could provide support for a longer period of time.

Participating families also expressed knowledge of friends and family who would also benefit from assistance if the program is scaled up or continued.

Theme 3:   Many families felt that nothing was missing.

Encouragingly, several discussion group participants stated that nothing was missing.

In addition to these three key themes, participants described some frustration with a lack of participation from some SPPN Rental Assistance Program families, a need for more coordination across the various services and programs the families access, and a desire for other services (e.g., tenants' rights training, legal assistance). Again, this discussion occurred relatively early in the program, and in the subsequent months, families were invited to tenant trainings at both the Wilder Foundation and the Community Stabilization Project in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

Key informant interviews conducted in spring 2015 with key staff at SPPN, the Wilder Foundation, and FRHF will collect additional feedback about the gaps and holes they observed in the program or in the services that are more broadly available to these families throughout the community.

Contextual Factors

Research question 10.

What kinds of housing units are most in need (e.g., size, proximity to transportation, etc.)?

House or apartment size

Families in the program range in size from two to seven persons. Figure 21 shows the distribution of house/apartment sizes (based on the number of bedrooms) needed for these families. The rules used for assigning the number of bedrooms a family needed are presented in the Appendix.

21. Number of bedrooms needed and secured

Number of bedrooms	Number of families with # bedrooms needed		Number of families with # bedrooms secured	
	N	%	N	%
2	18	37	23	47
3	28	57	17	35
4	3	6	9	18
Total	**49**	**100**	**49**	**100**

Source: *Authors calculations from HMIS report through November 24, 2014, program records from FSHS.*

Families in the program needed between two and four bedrooms to house their household members. The majority of families (57%) needed a three-bedroom unit. A few families needed a larger, four-bedroom unit (6%). Some families expressed a strong interest in an house or apartment other than the size that may have been recommended for them. As a result, only 35 percent of families actually ended up in a three-bedroom unit while 18 percent ended up in a four-bedroom unit.

Program staff also indicated that it was difficult to find appropriately sized housing, especially two-bedroom units, in the SPPN. The concluding report, that Wilder Research will write following the close of the pilot program, will address the current supply of housing in the SPPN and projects that are underway to increase the supply.

Other important housing features

In addition to finding the family a house or apartment with an appropriate amount of space, it was also important to the program staff that families be close to their schools.

Communications with program staff indicated that all families live within the busing zone for their primary school. Program staff also indicated that, due to housing supply constraints within the SPPN boundaries (see Appendix), six families were housed outside of the SPPN zone.

In the short November 2014 survey, families were asked to indicate the three most important factors they consider when making a housing choice. Unfortunately, many families did not provide an actual ranking of the top three features of the program, but several families (N=13) still provided useful information that indicated up to three important factors.

According to the respondents that provided useful responses, the most important factor that families consider when making a housing choice is the monthly cost (Figure 22). Several families (N=5) also indicated that proximity to their children's school and/or daycare, proximity to transportation, and cleanliness and maintenance status of the housing are important factors they consider.

22. Important factors in housing choice (N = 13)

	# times ranked in top three	% of respondents who ranked feature in top three
The monthly cost is affordable	8	62%
It is close to my child(ren)'s school and/or daycare	5	38%
It is close to transportation	5	38%
The house or apartment is clean and well-maintained	5	38%
The house or apartment is big enough	4	31%
It is close to my place of work	2	15%
It is close to grocery stores and/or food	2	15%
The landlord is willing to rent to me based on rental history, credit or criminal background	2	15%
It is close to family or friends	1	8%
It is close to my church/mosque/place of worship	1	8%
It is close to a clinic and/or doctor	1	8%
The house or apartment will accommodate my family's physical abilities	1	8%

Source: *Table draws on information from the SPPN Rental Assistance Program – Mini Survey #1*

The monthly cost of housing is important to families, and, at this time, the program is subsidizing the cost to make it affordable. While families are in the program, they are provided with employment training to help them secure appropriate employment in

hopes of affording the housing, moving forward, without a subsidy. Furthermore, the Navigator and Housing Specialist work with participating families to develop transition plans that prepare them more fully to transition off of the subsidy by the end of December 2015.

Research question 11.

What was the average cost and average amount of rental assistance by family size?

Figure 23 displays average house/apartment size, average rental price, and average subsidy amount received by the number of household members. For the smaller households (with two people), the average house/apartment size is two bedrooms and average rent is $851. These families receive $582, on average, in rental subsidy. For larger families (with six to seven people), the average house/apartment size is 3.8 bedrooms and average rent is $1,229. These families receive $955, on average, in rental subsidy.

23. Average rent and subsidy by household size

Number of household members	N	Average house/apartment size (# of bedrooms)	Average rent	Average subsidy
2	9	2	$851	$582
3	11	2.3	$918	$820
4	16	2.8	$971	$790
5	7	3.3	$1,114	$784
6 to 7	6	3.8	$1,229	$955
All households	**49**	**2.7**	**$989**	**$778**

Source: *Program records provided by FSHS and HMIS report through November 24, 2014.*

Note: *This rent data does not include utilities costs. The rent and subsidy data used in the above calculations are from the time the families entered the program. Some families have had changes in rent and subsidy amounts since that time. This will be tracked in the final report.*

Participating families are receiving sizable monthly rental subsidies—$778 on average. In order for these families to remain in their homes at the close of the pilot program, it will be important for the Navigator and Housing Specialist to work closely with them to ensure that they can cover their rent without a subsidy or find other sources of financial assistance. This work is ongoing as part of the development of the families' transition plans.

Research question 12.

What is the supply of affordable housing in the SPPN?

Program staff have indicated that it was challenging to find housing for the participating families in the SPPN, suggesting a shortage affordable and appropriately sized units in the area. In spring 2015, key informant interviews with staff at FRHF and Wilder Foundation FSHS, who are very familiar with the current state of housing in the SPPN, will collect information about the supply of affordable housing in the area and about projects that are underway to increase the supply.

The Coordinator of the FRHF will also conduct some analysis of the supply of housing in the geographic area of interest. Some of this analysis may be summarized in the concluding report.

Research question 13.

What other contextual factors influence the success of families and the program overall?

Beyond the services and supports offered by the SPPN Rental Assistance Program, program staff are interested in knowing about other factors that influence the success of the families in the program. In future small group discussions, families will be asked to describe other elements of their life, features of their neighborhood, or other contextual factors that have had either a positive or negative impact on their success in the program.

Key informant interviews will also request feedback from individuals at the Wilder Foundation FSHS, SPPN, CWC, and FRHF about contextual factors they witnessed as playing a role in the success of the families. These findings will be included in the concluding report following the close of the pilot program.

Conclusion and recommendations

The SPPN Rental Assistance Program serves homeless and highly mobile families with children attending school in the SPPN. During its first year, the program was able to enroll and house 49 families, provide them with rental assistance, and offer them a host of wraparound supports such as tenant training, employment training, and peer-support networking.

The families in the program:

■ Are mostly headed by a single female parent (86%)

■ Are primarily black or African American (81%)

■ Have an average monthly income of approximately $1,000

■ Were primarily homeless, doubling up with family or friends before enrolling in the program (51%; 39% with family and 12% with friends)

The children in the program:

■ Had a slightly lower average attendance rate in 2013-14 than all students enrolled in Saint Paul Public Schools

■ Had a higher rate of chronic absence in 2013-14 than all students enrolled in Saint Paul Public Schools

Key findings from small group discussions and a survey indicate that:

■ The application process for the program was clear and went smoothly for the families

■ Once in the program:

    – Most families secured housing that met all their needs

    – Families experienced improvements in the safety and health of their home relative to prior housing

    – Families were able to spend more time together and improve their family relationships

    – Families were experiencing improved wellbeing and reduced stress, both financially and psychologically

    – Families felt concerned about the extent of the financial resources available through the program and wished for more than two years of assistance

Moving forward, the evaluation will continue to gauge the factors that are important for families' success in the program. A primary goal of the program is to improve children's attendance in school. As such, the evaluation will track the attendance rates and chronic absence of students in the program into the 2014-15 year to look for changes relative to 2013-14. We will also hold discussion groups with parents to understand other ways that participating in the program may be impacting their child(ren)'s education.

Individuals at the SPPN, Wilder Foundation FSHS, CWC, and FRHF that work with the SPPN Rental Assistance Program may want to consider the following recommendations moving into the second year of the program.

- A primary goal of the SPPN Rental Assistance Program is to improve the attendance of participating children. As such, it is important to educate the parents regarding the importance of attendance and ways to encourage and support attendance. Parents of Maxfield and Jackson Elementary students are invited to monthly meetings at the schools to discuss concerns they may have about their child(ren)'s education. We recommend that attendance be discussed at these meetings, if it is not already.

- Families expressed a desire for more education- and job-focused opportunities or services. Some of these services were offered to the families, but program staff may want to consider offering additional services along these lines, such as informational sessions about affordable college opportunities (e.g., college scholarships, community or technical college opportunities).

- Some families felt concerned about the extent of the financial resources available through the program and wished for more than two years of assistance. The program offers transitional housing assistance and thus may not be able to provide assistance beyond 24 months. However, program staff may want to focus on connecting families to services and supports that can assist them well beyond the 24-month period during which they can be in the SPPN Rental Assistance Program.

Appendix

Map of SPPN

SAINT PAUL
PROMISE NEIGHBORHOOD
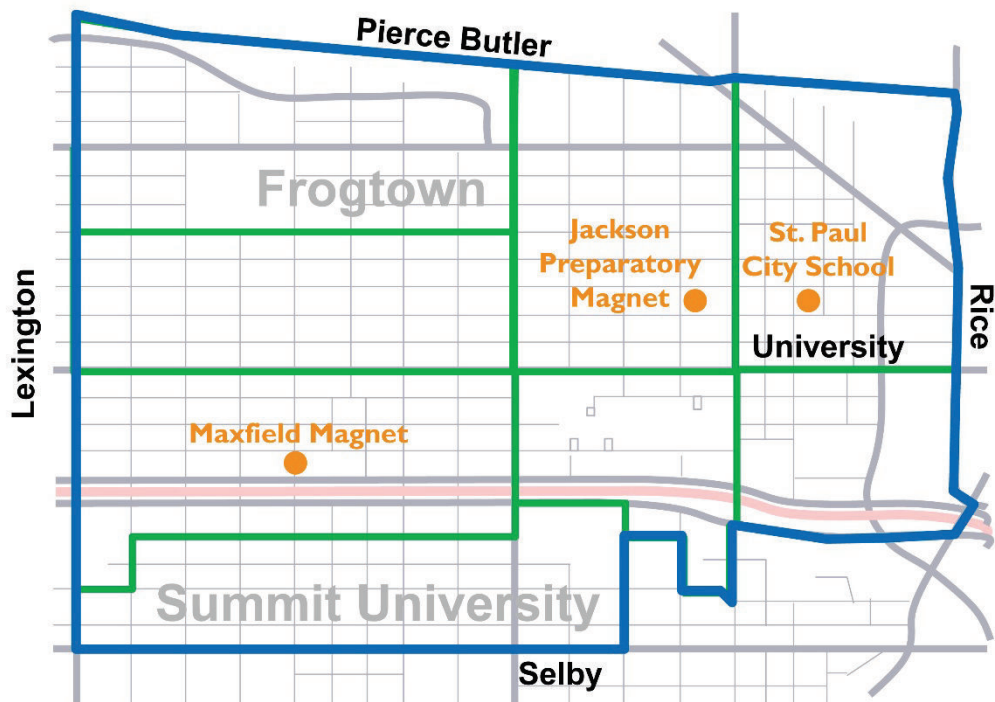
SPPN Rental Assistance Program application

Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood Rental Assistance Program Application

The Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood Rental Assistance Program has openings for 50 families to receive rental assistance and supportive services. To qualify, families must meet the Eligibility Requirements listed below as of **January 28, 2014.** Priority will be given to families that also meet the Program Preferences.

Eligibility Requirements:
- Families must have at least one child, enrolled in K-5, in one of the three Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood Schools (Jackson Elementary, Maxfield Elementary, or St. Paul City School).
- Families must be currently experiencing homelessness (lack a fixed, regular and adequate night time residence).
- Families who moved more than once during a school year, but are not homeless as of January 28, 2014 are considered highly mobile and are also eligible for assistance.
- Family income cannot exceed 60% of the Area Median Income as determined by HUD for the metropolitan area (less than $4,150/month for a household of four).
- Families must be eligible for transitional housing as determined by the Ramsey County Coordinated Access to Housing Screening Tool.

Program Preferences:
- Families connected with a St. Paul Promise Neighborhood navigator in the last calendar year and/or who have participated in a Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood sponsored program (Freedom School, SPPN Early Learning Scholarship, etc.) in the last calendar year.
- Families that are currently residing in the Ramsey County shelter system.

Program Expectations:
- Work on the educational goals and improving the school attendance of your child(ren).
- Communicate with a community navigator at least every 30 days.
- Participate in a Map to Wellness plan and Housing Transition Plan meetings.
- Participate in a quarterly Scale of Engagement meeting.
- Enroll with the Department of Education for service under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act.

Application Instructions:
Completed applications will be considered if mailed in and postmarked prior to and including **February 7, 2014**. Applications postmarked after the date will be ineligible.

ONLY MAILED APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED
(Do not hand deliver, fax or email.)

Mail completed applications to:
Amherst H. Wilder Foundation
P.O. Box 4489, St. Paul, MN 55104

Applications will not be selected on a first come first serve basis. Instead, applications that meet the program requirements and preferences will be entered into a lottery. **You will be notified in writing of the status of your application.** An intake with Ramsey County will be scheduled with all 50 applicants that are selected from the lottery. If all 50 families do not qualify through the Ramsey County intake process, more applications will be selected from the lottery to go through the Ramsey County intake process until the program is full.

Include the Following Documentation with your Application:
1. Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood Rental Assistance Program Application
2. A photocopy of a picture I.D. for all adult members (Examples include Driver's license, State ID)
3. Release of Information (include a release for all adult members over the age of 18).
4. Income Verification: For all adults in the household 18 years of age and older (do not send original documents)
   a. MFIP Verification-copy of current benefits
   b. Child Support Statement- copy of current benefits
   c. Employment Verification- copy of a minimum of one month of paystubs, if employed
   d. SSI Verification- Copy of the current year award letter
   e. Other income- Copy of verification of that income

Any applicant who purposefully falsifies misrepresents or withholds any information related to program eligibility or submits inaccurate and/or incomplete information on this application or during the intake may be rejected for housing

Amherst H. Wilder Foundation
Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood Rental Assistance Program Application   Page 1 of 5
This information will be made available in alternative format upon request.

1/2/2014

Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood Rental Assistance Program Application

1. Applicant Contact Information

Adult Household Member Name(s) List all applicants 18 yrs. of age and older	Current Address	City	State	ZIP	Phone number

2. Household Information (Enter names of all household members)

Household Member Name	Relationship to Head of Household (Son, significant other, etc.)	Birthdate
	self	

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Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood Rental Assistance Program Application   **Page 2 of 5**
This information will be made available in alternative format upon request.

1/2/2014

Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood Rental Assistance Program Application

3.Elementary School Information (Record all children enrolled in Jackson Elementary, Maxfield Elementary, and St. Paul City School)

Name of Child Enrolled in Elementary School	School Currently Enrolled (Enter number from list below)	Enrollment Date in School

Number	Source
1	Jackson Elementary
2	Maxfield Elementary
3	St. Paul City School

4. Earned Income for All Household Members

Household Member	Name and Address of Employer	Gross Earnings
		$ per
		$ per
		$ per
		$ per

5. Other Sources of Income for All Household Members (Examples: MFIP, GA, Social Security, SSI Disability, Compensation, Alimony, Child Support, Pensions, Trust Funds, Annuities, Tribal Income, Income from Rental Property, and Armed Forces Reserves)

Household Member	Source	Gross Earnings
		$ per
		$ per
		$ per

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Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood Rental Assistance Program Application   **Page 3 of 5**
This information will be made available in alternative format upon request.

1/2/2014

Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood Rental Assistance Program Application

6. Current Residence

Current Residence Status (Enter # from list below)	Move-in Date	Address				

Number	Source	Number	Source	Number	Source
1	Hotel/motel without emergency shelter	5	Hospital	9	Jail, prison or juvenile facility
2	Living with family	6	Psychiatric facility	10	Emergency Shelter
3	Living with friends	7	Substance abuse treatment center, including detox	11	Apartment, townhome, or house that you rent
4	Foster care/group home	8	Place not meant for habitation	12	Other

Contact to Verify Residence Landlord (If on lease)	Contact Number	Contact Address			

7. Previous Residence

Previous Residence Status (Enter # from list below)	Move-in and Move-out Date	Address				

Number	Source	Number	Source	Number	Source
1	Hotel/motel without emergency shelter	5	Hospital	9	Jail, prison or juvenile facility
2	Living with family	6	Psychiatric facility	10	Emergency Shelter
3	Living with friends	7	Substance abuse treatment center, including detox	11	Apartment, townhome, or house that you rent
4	Foster care/group home	8	Place not meant for habitation	12	Other

Contact to Verify Residence Landlord (If on lease)	Contact Number	Contact Address			

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Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood Rental Assistance Program Application   **Page 4 of 5**
This information will be made available in alternative format upon request.

1/2/2014

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood Rental Assistance Program Application

SIGNATURES

I/We understand:

- the information in this application will be used to determine eligibility for housing assistance and that this information will be verified.
- that any false information may make me/us ineligible for housing assistance.
- that if any of this information is false, misleading or incomplete, my application may be declined or, if move-in has occurred, terminate my/our lease agreement.

I/We also certify that all information given in this application is true, complete and accurate.

Applicant Signature(s): _____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

Amherst H. Wilder Foundation Non-Discrimination Notice: The Amherst H. Wilder Foundation is committed to ensuring that all individuals have equal access to our programs, services and facilities without regard to race, color, ethnicity, language, national origin or ancestry, religion, gender, age, veteran status, political beliefs, mental or physical challenges, social economic condition or status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information or medical history.
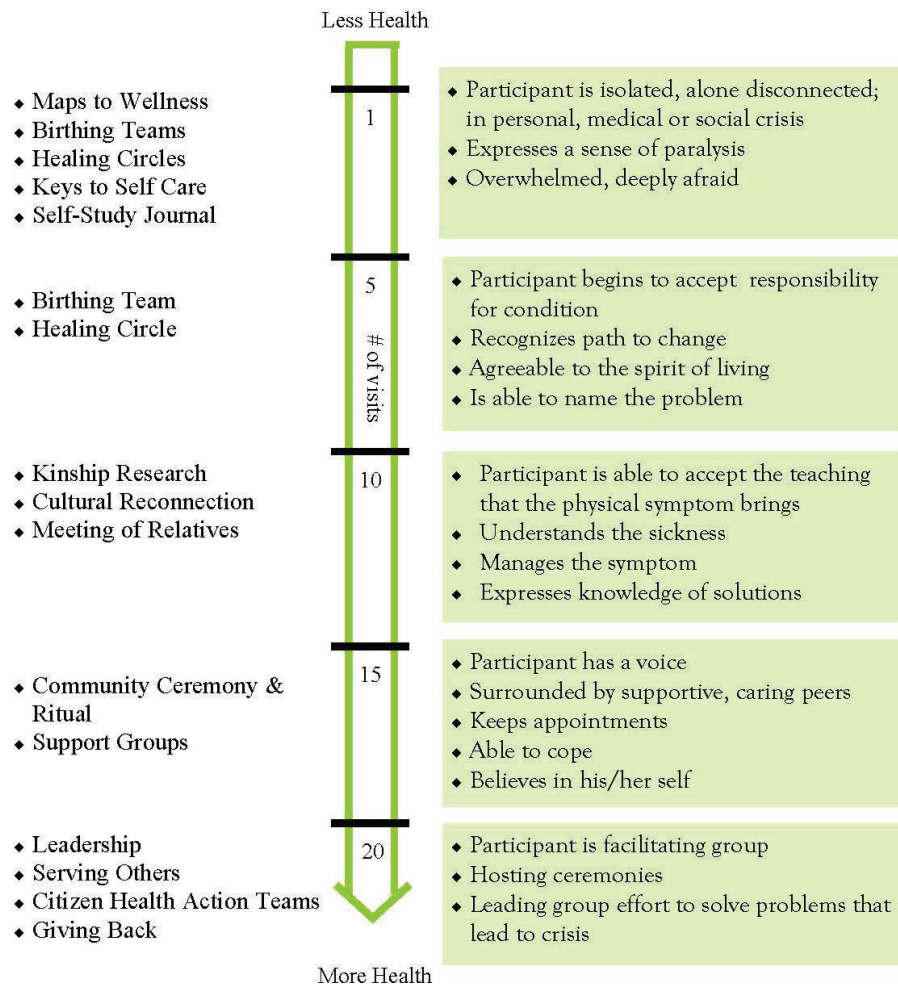
Program Partners:

Amherst H. Wilder Foundation
Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood Rental Assistance Program Application   **Page 5 of 5**
This information will be made available in alternative format upon request.

1/2/2014

Scale of Engagement Model

The Scale of Engagement

Each visit is counted as a step toward improved personal well-being.

Less Health

# of visits

- Maps to Wellness
- Birthing Teams
- Healing Circles
- Keys to Self Care
- Self-Study Journal

1

- Participant is isolated, alone disconnected; in personal, medical or social crisis
- Expresses a sense of paralysis
- Overwhelmed, deeply afraid

- Birthing Team
- Healing Circle

5

- Participant begins to accept responsibility for condition
- Recognizes path to change
- Agreeable to the spirit of living
- Is able to name the problem

- Kinship Research
- Cultural Reconnection
- Meeting of Relatives

10

- Participant is able to accept the teaching that the physical symptom brings
- Understands the sickness
- Manages the symptom
- Expresses knowledge of solutions

- Community Ceremony & Ritual
- Support Groups

15

- Participant has a voice
- Surrounded by supportive, caring peers
- Keeps appointments
- Able to cope
- Believes in his/her self

- Leadership
- Serving Others
- Citizen Health Action Teams
- Giving Back

20

- Participant is facilitating group
- Hosting ceremonies
- Leading group effort to solve problems that lead to crisis

More Health

Families not accepted

Some information regarding households that applied but were not accepted to the program was compiled from paper application records that are maintained by Wilder Foundation FSHS. According to these records, 35 households applied but were not accepted.

Households that applied but were not accepted ranged in size from two to nine members (Figure A1). Similar to the households that were accepted into the program, the most common household size was four people.

A1. Household size of non-accepted households

# of household members	Number of households	Percent of total households
2	6	17%
3	7	20%
4	8	23%
5	7	20%
6 to 9	6	17%
Missing	1	3%
Total	**35**	**100%**

Source: Paper applications from Wilder Foundation FSHS.

The average monthly income of non-accepted households was $904 (Figure A2). Similar to accepted households, the majority of households (54%) had monthly income less than or equal to $1,000.

A2. Household income (monthly) of non-accepted households

Income category	Number of households	Percent of total households
$0	3	9%
$1 to $500	5	14%
$501 to $1000	11	31%
$1001 to $1500	5	14%
$1501 or higher	6	17%
Missing	5	14%
Total	**35**	**100%**
Average monthly income	*$904*	

Source: Paper applications from Wilder Foundation FSHS.
Notes: Total income includes earned income and nonwage income. Average income is calculated using the 30 non-missing values of income.

Households that applied but were not accepted were primarily living in an apartment, townhome, or house that they rented (37%) or living with family (34%) (Figure A3). Smaller shares of households were also living with friends (14%) or in emergency shelters (6%).

A3. Living situation for non-accepted households

Current residence (at time of application)	Number of households	Percent of total households
Apartment, townhome, or house that you rent	13	37%
Living with family	12	34%
Living with friends	5	14%
Emergency shelter	2	6%
Missing	3	9%
Total	**35**	**100%**

Source: *Paper applications from Wilder Foundation FSHS.*

There were several reasons that households were not accepted into the program (Figure A4). The most common reason was that the family was not homeless or highly mobile (51%).

The second most common reason was that the family did not complete the application process (23%). Program staff indicated that families failed to complete the application for a variety of reasons despite efforts made by staff to reach out to these families and assist them in completing the process.

A4. Reason application denied

Reason denied	Number of households	Percent of total households
Family is not currently experiencing homelessness or had not moved more than once during [time frame].[a]	18	51%
Family did not complete the application process.	8	23%
Do not currently have custody of children.	3	9%
Family does not have at least one child enrolled in K-5 at one of the three SPPN schools.	1	3%
Application was not postmarked by the deadline.	1	3%
Do not qualify for transitional housing.	1	3%
Other	3	9%
Total	**35**	**100%**

Source: *Paper applications from Wilder Foundation FSHS.*

[a] *Due to multiple waives of applications, the time frame during which families' homeless/highly mobile status was determined varied across the applications.*

SPPN Rental Assistance Program – Mini Survey #1

November 2014

This survey includes a few questions about your experience so far in the SPPN Rental Assistance Program. The survey is voluntary and your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your ability to continue participating in the program. We would appreciate your participation because the information collected in this survey will be very useful to those who provide the program. Your responses to this mini survey are anonymous—you do not need to write your name on the survey.

Please answer the questions and return your completed survey to the box labeled "Mini Survey Responses."

Application Process

Based on what you remember about the application process, please answer the following questions.

1. The application process for the SPPN Rental Assistance Program was clear.
   - ☐ Strongly Agree
   - ☐ Agree
   - ☐ Neutral
   - ☐ Disagree
   - ☐ Strongly disagree

2. The application process for the SPPN Rental Assistance Program went smoothly for my family.
   - ☐ Strongly Agree
   - ☐ Agree
   - ☐ Neutral
   - ☐ Disagree
   - ☐ Strongly disagree

3. Do you have recommendations for how we might adjust the application process for future families?
   - ☐ Yes ➔ **IF YES,** please describe these recommendations._____
   - ☐ No   _____

Housing

4. How many times have you moved in the last five years?
   - ☐ 0
   - ☐ 1-2
   - ☐ 3-5
   - ☐ More than 5

5. Upon enrolling in the SPPN Rental Assistance Program, were you able to secure housing that met the needs of your family?
   - ☐ Yes, meets all needs
   - ☐ Meets some but not all needs
   - ☐ Does not meet needs

   Please explain. _____

6. Compared with your previous home, is your current home…
   ☐ a healthier and safer place to live
   ☐ a less healthy and safe place to live
   ☐ about the same

7. Compared with your previous home, are you currently…
   ☐ spending more of your income on housing
   ☐ spending less of your income on housing
   ☐ spending about the same amount of your income on housing

8. Please **rank the three** most important factors you consider when making a housing choice (1 = most important, 2 = 2nd most important, 3 = 3rd most important).
   ___ It is close to my place of work
   ___ It is close to family or friends
   ___ It is close to my child(ren)'s school and/or daycare
   ___ It is close to my church/mosque/place of worship
   ___ It is close to grocery stores and/or food
   ___ It is close to transportation
   ___ It is close to a clinic and/or doctor
   ___ The monthly cost is affordable
   ___ The house or apartment is big enough
   ___ The house or apartment is clean and well-maintained
   ___ The landlord is willing to rent to me based on rental history, credit or criminal background
   ___ The house or apartment will accommodate my family's physical abilities
   ___ Other, please specify:
   _____

SPPN Rental Assistance Program

9. What features of the SPPN Rental Assistance Program have been most helpful or important for your success? Please **rank the top three** (1 = most important, 2 = 2nd most important, 3 = 3rd most important).
   ___ Tenant training at Wilder
   ___ Employment Training at Wilder
   ___ Quarterly family gathering/meeting
   ___ Fathers for education
   ___ Keys to self-care
   ___ Tenant Training at Community Stabilization Project
   ___ Assistance/support from the Community Navigator (Pam)
   ___ Assistance/support from the housing specialists (Adora/Ellie)
   ___ Scale of engagement meetings with Community Navigator (Pam, monthly check-ins)
   ___ Other, please specify: _____

Bedroom sharing determination criteria

To determine how many bedrooms a family needed, the following rules were applied. These rules were set based on bedroom sharing standards recommended by the Public Housing Agency of the City of Saint Paul and conversations with a Housing Specialist at Wilder Foundation FSHS.

1. The following minimum and maximum occupancy standards must be met:

    a. A one-bedroom unit must house at least one person but no more than four persons.

    b. A two-bedroom unit must house at least two persons but no more than six persons.

    c. A three-bedroom unit must house at least three persons but no more than eight persons.

    d. A four-bedroom unit must house at least four persons but no more than 10 persons.

2. Children of the opposite sex, who are six years of age or older, are not required to share a room.

3. No more than three children can share a room.

4. Children of the same gender who have more than a nine-year age difference are not required to share a room.