

CEF Highlighted in National Nonprofit Case Study

The survey of financial services providers, entitled "Meeting People Where They Are: Five Lessons for Integrating Financial Capability Services," lauds CEF for its creative partnership with Urban Ministries of Durham and for effectively building staff capacity with well-trained volunteer advocates!

According to the study, there are five essential lessons when it comes to financial services delivery:

Lesson #1: Understand which financial capability services are right for which clients.

Lesson #2: Find out what motivates clients and reduce barriers to participation.

Lesson #3: Think creatively about partnerships, and make sure partners have what they need to serve clients well.

Lesson #4: Secure buy-in from staff at all levels of the organization.

Lesson #5: Build staff capacity to deliver or refer to financial capability services.

“ CEF Mentions: ”

Community Empowerment Fund (in partnership with Urban Ministries of Durham), Durham, NC

Community Empowerment Fund (CEF) provides financial capability services to 400 clients per year. Through the Learning Cluster, they provided financial capability services to clients at Urban Ministries of Durham who were experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness. Specifically, CEF staff helped 13 clients file their taxes for free, remotely opened a credit union account for 34 clients and provided a matched savings account to 40 clients.

Lesson #3



FOOD, SHELTER AND A FUTURE



Community Empowerment Fund (CEF) & Urban Ministries of Durham (UMD)

formed a partnership in which CEF provided on-site financial coaching for UMD clients to expand CEF's service delivery and fulfill unmet needs of UMD clients. Early in the partnership, clients were not fully taking advantage of the financial coaching. In response, the two partners refined the process by which UMD staff referred clients to CEF's financial coaching. Together, they streamlined the online intake process to make it easier for both clients and staff. The organizations also worked more closely with UMD case managers to ensure they knew which clients to refer and when. After these changes were made, more and more UMD clients signed up for the coaching sessions until they were at capacity.



Community Empowerment Fund's

(CEF) financial coaching program is staffed almost entirely by student volunteers from local universities. CEF has developed a rigorous training program and set of standards to ensure that volunteers are equipped to provide financial coaching effectively to low-income clients. After all, just because someone has the time or desire to provide services, doesn't mean they have the necessary training and experience to serve clients well. CEF demonstrated that college student volunteers can be trained as financial coaches and other service providers, but it takes time and effort to develop a robust program of trained volunteers. CEF also builds buy-in and cultural competency among their frontline staff by hiring former clients as staff members. These staff members know what clients are going through and embody a real-world success story.

Lesson #5

